

# ANALYSIS OF THE NEWLY HOMELESS FAMILIES ACCOMMODATED BY DUBLIN'S HOMELESS SERVICES DURING 2016

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Holly Morrin  
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# Foreword

Nine hundred and two families who experienced homelessness for the first time presented to one of the four local authorities in the Dublin Region during 2016. This report details the reasons these families gave for their experience of homelessness. It also provides demographic information on the families and tracks their progression through homeless accommodation.

In June 2014 the DRHE began tracking the number of new families who were presenting to homeless services in the Dublin Region. In the seven months in 2014 there had been an average of 34 new families presenting each month. In 2015 there were 744 new families who presented to homeless services which is an average of 62 families each month. As detailed in this report, the monthly average increased to 75 in 2016 and has increased again to 82 per month for the first nine months of 2017. The trend is clear. The number of families experiencing homelessness is increasing. The solution to this problem is access to affordable housing.

As detailed in Figure 1, in 2014 the primary source of housing available to families who were in emergency accommodation (EA) was social housing and to a lesser extent, private rented accommodation. There were a total of 792 adults, both with and without accompanying children, who moved to tenancies during 2014. In 2015, the homeless Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)<sup>1</sup> pilot was introduced and an increased allocation of social housing was made to families in homeless accommodation. As a result of this, the number of adults who moved to tenancies increased to 1,059 that year. However, it was not until 2016 when homeless HAP became the primary mechanism for housing persons experiencing homelessness that numbers moving to tenancies began to grow significantly with 1,833 adults being accommodated during the year. Figures for 2017 are even higher as both social housing allocations and HAP tenancies have increased resulting in a total of 2,308 adults moving to tenancies between January and September 2017.

So while the number of new families presenting has increased, so has the number of families moving to tenancies but not by enough to significantly reduce the total number of families accessing homeless accommodation. What has been achieved is a reduction in the rate of increase and more recently a minor reduction in the number of families. However to successfully address the issue of family homelessness there needs to be an increase in housing supply so that the number of new families presenting decreases and the number of families being moved out of homeless accommodation increases.

This report begins with a focus on the reasons given by families for presenting to homeless services. The DRHE have been monitoring the reasons for family homelessness since the numbers began increasing in 2014 in an attempt to address the issues being identified by families. The evidence gathered helped to inform the design of the homeless HAP pilot and prompted the introduction of the Tenancy Protection Service, operated by Threshold in the region. These initiatives have been responsible for the provision of tenancies for 2,442 adults and protecting a further 3,780<sup>2</sup> tenancies, thus preventing homelessness, since June 2014.

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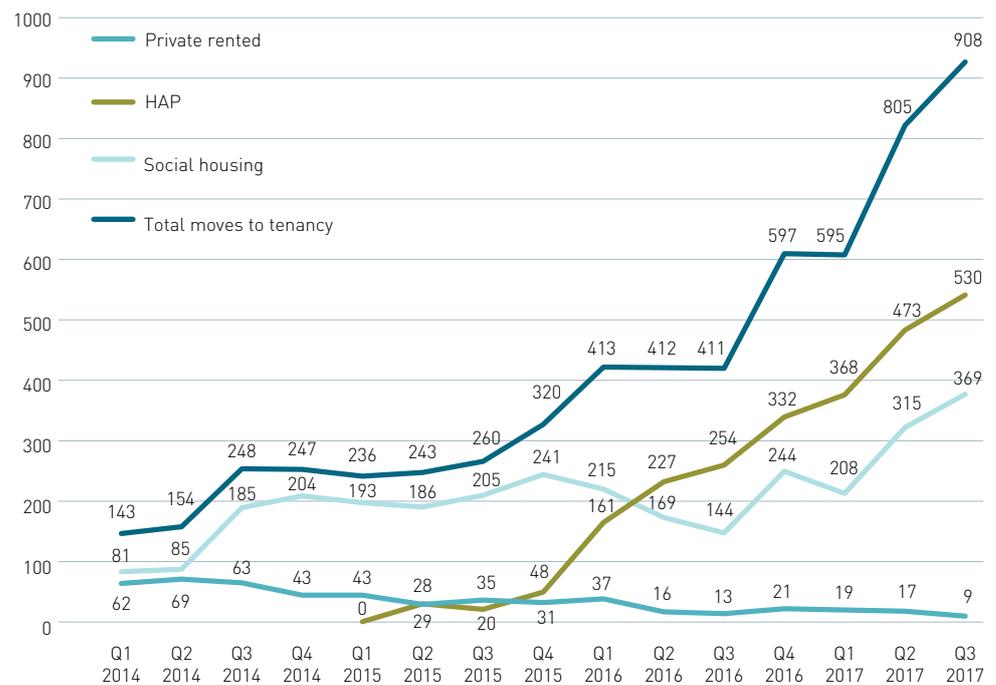
1. HAP is a social housing support that allows tenants source private rental accommodation. Under HAP, local authorities will make a monthly payment to a landlord, subject to terms and conditions including rent limits, on a HAP tenant's behalf. In return, the HAP tenant pays a weekly contribution towards the rent to the local authority.

2. June 2014 – December 2015 1,905 tenancies were protected [DRHE Q4 2015 protocol report]; January – December 2016 899 tenancies protected [DRHE Q4 2016 protocol report]; January to September 2017 976 tenancies protected [DRHE Q3 2017 <http://www.homelessdublin.ie/publications?tags=23,24,22,29,30,21,25,31,32,26,33,34,28,35,27,37,36,38&text=Quarterly%20Report>]

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## Foreword (cont.)

**Figure 1: Number of adults experiencing homelessness moving to tenancies in the Dublin Region**



The findings in this report identify departures from tenancies in private rented accommodation, on foot of Notices to Quit (NTQ), and departures from family or friends because of relationship breakdown or overcrowding as the primary reasons for homelessness amongst the families. As administrative data was used as the primary data source for this research, a detailed exploration of the often complex set of circumstances that can lead to homelessness was not undertaken. Instead, the single primary reasons for homelessness provided during the initial assessment process were extracted and reviewed. However, previous qualitative research<sup>3</sup> commissioned by the DRHE on family homelessness found that many families who moved in with family or friends did so following a loss of private rented accommodation. Their expectation was that the move would be temporary, as they expected a quick return to the private rented sector but the lack of access to an affordable alternative left them with little choice except to present to local authority homeless services. Given this, the push into services experienced by families accessing private rented accommodation may be understated in the report.

<sup>3</sup> S. Stamp (2017), The Experiences of Newly Homeless Families Accommodated by Dublin's Homeless Services in August 2015. Dublin:DRHE.

This report moves on to compare the demographic details of the families with families in the general population and this reveals that lone parents, families with four or more children and non-Irish nationals were more vulnerable to homelessness than other families. When looking at the progression of families out of emergency accommodation, a key finding was that almost half of the families had left emergency accommodation by May 2017. Thirty two percent moved to tenancies and an additional 17% departed without providing a reason to local authority or non-governmental organisation (NGO) support staff.

While the DRHE report on how many adults depart to tenancies each quarter, no data has been published in relation to the number of families who have departed emergency accommodation with no reason recorded for the departure until now. The most recent analysis of PASS<sup>4</sup> data by Richard Waldron and Declan Redmond, UCD, revealed that 80% of all adults who have successfully moved through homeless services between 2012 and 2016 stayed in services for an average of sixty one days<sup>5</sup>. However, the quarterly figures published for moves to tenancies do not reflect departures for 80% of service users. This report reveals that amongst the cohort of families investigated, 17% transitioned through services without active engagement with support staff. In other words, one in six families using emergency accommodation depart without the support of the local authority or NGO staff, a very significant finding. Further investigation is needed, however, to determine whether these departures are as sustainable as other supported departures to tenancies.

Overall, this report provides valuable insight into the most common causes of family homelessness in the Dublin Region, an interesting profile of the families most likely to experience homelessness and comprehensive details on the rate of families' progression through services. So notwithstanding the limitations of a focus on administrative data, 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 issue of housing supply.

**Dr. Bernie O'Donoghue Hynes**

Head of Research,  
Dublin Region Homeless Executive

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

5. O'Donoghue Hynes, B., Waldron, R., and Redmond, D. (pending publication) Patterns of access to emergency accommodation and rough sleeping in the Dublin Region 2012-2016. Dublin:DRHE.

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# List of Abbreviations

AHB	Approved Housing Body
DHPLG	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
DRHE	Dublin Region Homeless Executive
EA	Emergency Accommodation
EU	European Union
HAP	Housing Assistance Payment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTQ	Notice to Quit
PASS	Pathway Accommodation and Support System
PRS	Private Rented Sector
SLÍ	Support to Live Independently

# 1. Executive Summary

In 2016, a total of 902 new families were accommodated in emergency accommodation (EA) in the Dublin Region who had no active or previous PASS record i.e. they were 'new' to homelessness. A review of the initial assessments conducted with families upon their presentation to homeless services reveals two primary reasons for homelessness; leaving private rented accommodation on foot of a Notice to Quit<sup>6</sup> (NTQ) and leaving family or friends' accommodation due to relationship breakdown or overcrowding. A small number of families reported 'other' reasons for their presentation to homeless services.

## 1.1 Reasons for homelessness

### 1.1.1 Private rented sector

An analysis of these household's circumstances at presentation to homeless services reveals that for 45% of the families the primary reason for homelessness related to a loss of or inability to secure private rented accommodation.

Further analysis of these household's circumstances at presentation confirms that:

- Notices to Quit were issued to 342 families;
- Thirteen families left their accommodation as it was of poor quality or unsuitable to their needs;
- Three families were unable to source private rented accommodation after their previous lease expired;
- One family had left a private rented property as they sourced an alternative but this fell through at the last minute;
- Nine families, who were either new or returning to Dublin, could not afford private rented accommodation in the Dublin Region;
- Three families had to leave the parental home as it was sold and could not source private rented accommodation.

### 1.1.2 Family circumstance

There were a total of 427 families (51%) in this category, of which 95 families stated the primary reason for their presentation to homeless services was that they were departing an overcrowded living situation while 304 families stated that there was some element of relationship breakdown that triggered their experience of homelessness. General family circumstance (n=23) and family reunification (n=5) make up the remainder.

It should be noted that further investigation would be required to fully determine whether these factors arose in some instances as a direct result of losing private rented accommodation (e.g. departing private rented accommodation and moving in with other family members and thereby residing in unsuitable and overcrowded living situations that can contribute to relationship breakdown).

### 1.1.3 Other

Causation among the remaining 37 families (4%) breaks down as follows:

- Five families were evicted from social housing;
- Three families, who were previously home owners, presented to homeless services after their property was repossessed;
- Ten families cited no income source as their reason for homelessness;
- Fourteen families left properties due to being victims of anti-social behaviour;
- Five families left their properties voluntarily, i.e. without a valid NTQ.

There was insufficient information available for the remaining 67 families.

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6. Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1992 states that a notice by a landlord or a tenant to the other of termination of the tenancy of a house let for rent or other valuable consideration shall not be valid unless it is in writing and is served not less than 4 weeks before the date on which it is to take effect <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1992/act/18/section/16/enacted/en/html>

## 1.2 Demographic information

The demographic data has been reviewed for 878 of the 902 families who newly presented to homeless services in the Dublin Region during 2016.

- A total of 1,170 adults with 1,802 accompanying children were newly accommodated by homeless services in Dublin during 2016;
- As in all analysis done to date, two thirds of families were lone parenting (n=586 or 66%) and one third were headed up by couples (n=292 or 34%);
- The majority of families were accompanied by either one or two children (n=643 or 74%);
- Two thirds of the families were Irish (n=599 or 66%) while one third were non-Irish national families (n=279 or 34%);
- The average age for adults in this cohort of homeless families was 32 years with the majority under the age of 30 (n=561 or 48%);
- The average age for children in this cohort of homeless families was 7 years. The majority of children were between the ages of 4 and eleven (n=751 or 42%).

## 1.3 Accommodation status of the families as of May 31st 2017

Further analysis was carried out on the 902 families in order to determine how many were still accessing homeless services five months into 2017. The findings were categorised into three groups:

- Families who were no longer using emergency accommodation but reported a departure to tenancy (n=288 or 32%);
- Families no longer using emergency accommodation who had given no reason for their departure (n=149 or 17%);
- Families who were still in emergency accommodation (n=433 or 48%);
- There was insufficient information available for the remaining 32 families (3%).

## 2. Introduction

From January to December 2016 a total of 902 families newly presented to homeless services within the four local authorities across the Dublin Region<sup>7</sup>. As can be seen in Table 1 below, the number of families presenting varies each month with January being the highest at 125 and December the lowest at 39. There is a consistent pattern of families deferring presentation to homeless services over the Christmas period as low numbers in December are followed by a peak in January.

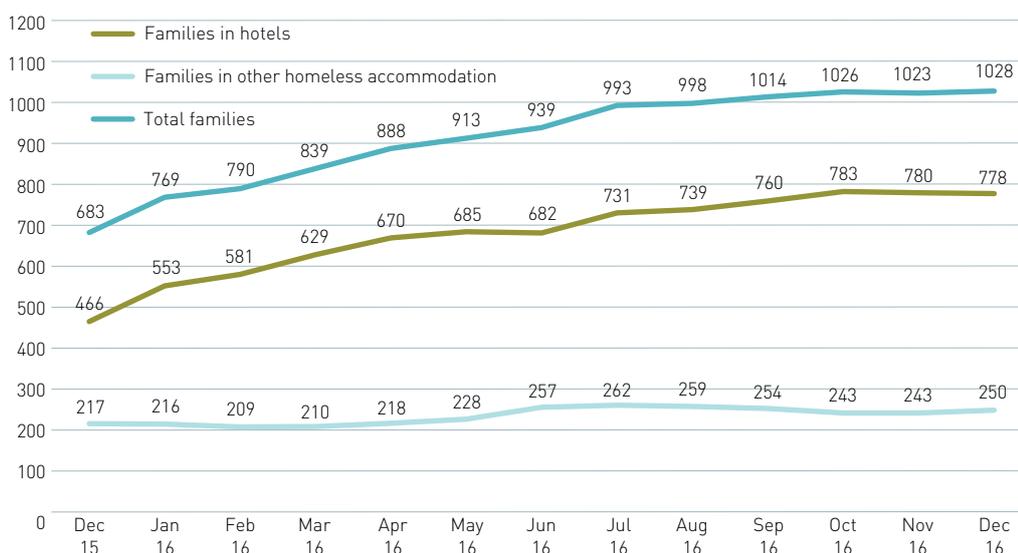
While 902 new families accessed emergency accommodation, a number of families also departed to take up tenancies during the same period. The net increase in families accessing emergency accommodation between January and December was 345 or 51%. The number of families accessing emergency accommodation increased from 683 in December 2015 to 1,028 in December 2016 as detailed in Figure 2.

**Table 1: Number of new families accessing homeless accommodation, January to December 2016**

Month of presentation	Number of presentations per month
January '16	125
February '16	83
March '16	84
April '16	74
May '16	64
June '16	72
July '16	97
August '16	72
September '16	65
October '16	67
November '16	60
December '16	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>902</b>

7. This figure represents the number of families who became homeless from January to December 2016 and had not been counted as homeless in the past.

**Figure 2: Number of families in emergency accommodation in the Dublin Region each month**



### 2.1 Presenting to homeless services in the Dublin Region

When families in the Dublin Region are at risk of homelessness or newly experiencing homelessness they present to the housing section of their local authority. The local authority housing section is responsible for completing an initial assessment with the family to determine their housing need and what supports may be available to them. Prevention (i.e., sustaining their existing tenancy or rapid re-housing through the homeless HAP scheme) is the optimal course of action, failing that families are placed in emergency accommodation.

### 2.2 Objective

The specific objective of this research was to identify the reasons for homelessness for families newly experiencing homelessness in the Dublin Region; share demographic information on families presenting as homeless and track the rate of progression to tenancies. This information can then be used to inform operational and policy developments relating to homeless families in the Dublin Region.

### 2.3 Methodology

This report was compiled using a combination of administrative data, recorded by the four local

authorities in the Dublin region, and PASS data. The process involved collecting the initial assessments for all new families who presented to homeless services over the course of 2016. The initial assessment is a form filled out by local authority staff with the newly presented family. A family was deemed new to homelessness when they had no previous PASS record or accommodation history as a family unit with dependent children. The data was analysed using SPSS.

### 2.3 Outline

Chapter 1 provided a summary of the findings detailed in this report. Chapter 2 further introduces the research and its objectives. Chapter 3 presents the reported reasons for family homelessness in the Dublin Region and provides a month by month analysis. Chapter 4 explores the demographic information for the families newly presenting to homeless services in 2016 and makes comparisons to the National Census 2016, where possible. Chapter 5 identifies the accommodation status of the families as of May 31st 2017. Chapter 6 summarises the findings of the research identifying: the primary reasons for homelessness; families most vulnerable to homelessness; and rates of progression to tenancies.

## 3. Reasons for Homelessness

This chapter details the reasons for homelessness as reported by the 902 families who newly presented to homeless services from January to December 2016. A review of administrative data reveals two primary reasons for homelessness; forced departure from a tenancy in private rented accommodation and family circumstances such as relationship breakdown and overcrowding. This chapter provides a detailed breakdown of such reasons for the cohort of families newly experiencing homelessness during 2016 and aims to highlight the key trends and common causes for family homelessness in the Dublin Region on a month by month basis.

**Table 2: Reasons for homelessness reported by families in the Dublin Region, 2016**

		Total number of families	Total percentage of families
<b>3.1 Private Rented Sector</b>			
Notice to Quit		371	45%
- General	219		
- Invalid notice/illegal eviction	5		
- Landlords family use	15		
- Property to be sold	49		
- Landlords bankrupt/receivership	11		
- Tenant rent arrears/rent increase	33		
- Tenant anti social behaviour	2		
- Building work to be carried out on property	8		
Unsuitable accommodation	13		
Expiry of lease	3		
Parental family home sold – unable to afford rent	3		
Rented property secured but fell through	1		
New/return to Dublin – unable to afford rent	9		
<b>3.2 Family Circumstance</b>			
Relationship breakdown		427	51%
- General	127		
- Parent	127		
- Partner	50		
Overcrowding	95		
Family reunification	5		
General family circumstance	23		
<b>3.3 Other</b>			
Evicted/surrendered social housing	5	37	4%
Property repossessed	3		
No income source	10		
Voluntarily left property without NTQ	5		
Victim of anti social behaviour	14		
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>835</b>	<b>100%</b>
Insufficient information <sup>8</sup>		67	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>902</b>	<b>-</b>

8. Insufficient information was not included in the calculation of the percentages presented in this chapter.

### 3.1 Private rented sector (45%)

Almost half of the families (n=371 or 45%) presented directly from the private rented sector, with the various contributory factors briefly discussed below.

#### 3.1.1 Notice to Quit (41%)

As detailed in Table 3 below, landlords issued 342 families with a NTQ. There was no detailed reason provided on the type of NTQ for 219 of these families. Based on the detail provided by the remaining families at their initial assessment, 15 properties were being taken back by landlords for family use and 49 were to be sold, while 11 landlords had gone into receivership. A total of 33 families stated they were issued with a NTQ because of rent arrears and five were subject to illegal evictions. In eight cases families had to depart a property for repairs or renovations to take place and two families were issued with a NTQ due to anti social behaviour.

**Table 3: Notice to Quit type reported by families new to homelessness in the Dublin Region, 2016**

Notice to Quit	Total
General	219
Invalid/illegal	5
Landlord/family use	15
Property to be sold	49
Landlord bankrupt/receivership	11
Tenant rent arrears	33
Anti social behaviour	2
Building work/repairs	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>342</b>

#### 3.1.2 Other reasons for leaving the private rented sector (4%)

There were a total of 29 families in this category. One family stated that they had secured a property in the private rented sector but it fell through. Difficulties finding another suitable property resulted in the family presenting to homeless services. Three families were unable to source private rented accommodation after their previous lease expired. Unfitness or unsuitability

of the property for habitation (n=13) was also cited as a reason for having to vacate a rented property. An additional nine families were either new or returning to Dublin and could not afford rent in the region. Three families had to leave the parental home as it was sold and could not source private rented accommodation.

### 3.2 Family circumstance (51%)

For most of the remainder (n=427 or 51%), homelessness resulted from relationship breakdown, family conflict and/or some form of overcrowding.

#### 3.2.1 Overcrowding (11%)

Ninety five families stated the cause of their homelessness was a result of living in overcrowded accommodation. In line with previous qualitative research commissioned 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 family or friends was unsustainable<sup>9</sup>. This, however, could not be determined from the information contained on the initial assessment form.

#### 3.2.2 Relationship breakdown (37%)

Of the 304 families that reported relationship breakdowns, 127 were with parents, 50 with partners, while 127 families cited general relationship breakdown as the primary cause for presenting to homeless services.

#### 3.2.3 Family circumstance - other (3%)

There were a total of 28 families in this category, five of which stated that family reunification was the cause of their homelessness. In these instances, changes in household types (i.e. new family members joining them in Ireland) resulted in a different housing need and subsequently a need to present to homeless services when suitable accommodation could not be sourced. Twenty three families experienced homelessness as a result of a change in family circumstance. No further information was included on the initial assessment form.

<sup>9</sup> S. Stamp. (2017), *The Experiences of Newly Homeless Families Accommodated by Dublin's Homeless Services in August 2015*. Dublin: DRHE.

## 3. Reasons for Homelessness (cont.)

### 3.3 Other (4%)

#### 3.3.1 Other (4%)

Causation among the remaining 37 families breaks down as follows:

- Five families stated that they were evicted from social housing; the reasons for such are unknown;
- Three families presented to homeless services after bank repossession of their properties;
- Fourteen families left properties due to being victims of anti-social behaviour;
- Ten families cited no income source as the main reason for homelessness. In these instances, the majority of the families (n=8) were headed by migrant parents with difficulty accessing social welfare;
- Five families departed the private rented sector voluntarily i.e. without a valid NTQ upon presentation to homeless services.

#### 3.3.2 Insufficient information

Insufficient or partial information was available for 67 families. In some of these cases, no

initial assessment was completed as the family may have been placed into private emergency accommodation after business hours and subsequently did not present to their local authority to have an assessment form completed. For the purpose of analysis insufficient information was not included in the in the percentages presented in this chapter.

### 3.4 Reasons for homelessness - monthly analysis

In order to look comparatively at the period and see any trends emerging, the data was summarised by month. On average 45% of families presented directly from private rented accommodation while 51% of the remaining families presented from staying with family or friends. However, as can be seen in Figure 3 and Table 4, there is some variation across the months. April, July and October 2016 saw the highest percentage of families presenting from the private rented sector while a high percentage of families presented from living with family or friends in January, May and June 2016.

**Figure 3: Summary of primary reasons for family homelessness in the Dublin Region – percentage of families**



**Table 4: Summary of primary reasons for family homelessness in Dublin Region – number of families**

	Jan'16	Feb'16	Mar'16	Apr'16	May'16	Jun'16	Jul'16	Aug'16	Sept'16	Oct'16	Nov'16	Dec'16	Total
<b>Private Rented Sector</b>													
Notice to Quit	43	30	33	34	20	21	41	27	30	33	23	7	<b>342</b>
Other reasons for leaving PRS	1	1	3	2	1	1	5	3	1	2	2	7	<b>29</b>
<b>Family Circumstance</b>													
Overcrowding	14	8	9	2	12	10	5	8	5	7	8	7	<b>95</b>
Relationship breakdown	63	31	19	18	24	26	27	26	22	19	19	10	<b>304</b>
Other – family circumstance	-	5	7	5	-	2	1	1	-	-	4	3	<b>28</b>
<b>Other</b>													
Other	4	4	2	4	1	-	8	4	4	2	1	3	<b>37</b>
Insufficient information	-	4	11	9	6	12	10	3	3	4	3	2	<b>67</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>902</b>

## 3. Reasons for Homelessness (cont.)

### 3.5 Summary

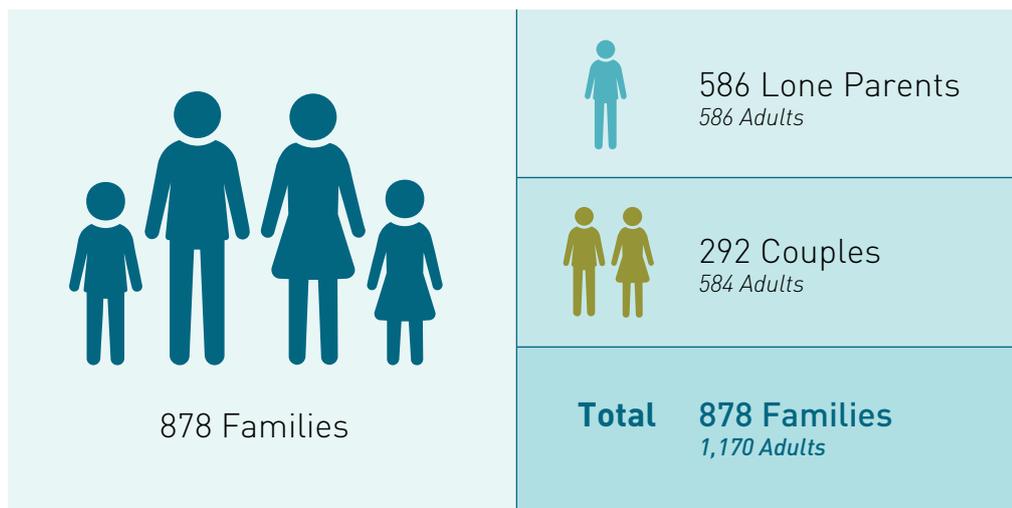
The method used here captures a single reason for homelessness and demonstrates that on average 45% of families presented directly from private rented accommodation while 51% of the remaining families presented from staying with family or friends, although some may have moved out of private rented accommodation prior to moving in with family or friends. Indeed, it is important to note that reasons for homelessness are often more complex. The nature of administrative data makes it difficult to fully track the ancillary and compounding factors which may combine to bring about such a situation for each family and thereby lead to each newly presenting to homeless services. Overall, the data presented in this chapter reveals valuable insight into the reasons for homelessness for the cohort of families newly experiencing homelessness from January to December 2016.

## 4. Demographic Information

This section reviews demographic data for the families who newly accessed emergency accommodation in the Dublin Region during 2016. Information was available for a total of 878 of the 902 families. The profile data presented here includes information on family composition, nationality and age. Comparisons have been made with the 2016 Census, for both the general population and the homeless population where possible. Of the 4,761,865 persons enumerated in the State on Census night, April 24th 2016, 6,906 were either counted in accommodation providing shelter for homeless persons or were identified as sleeping rough. There were 896 family units counted among the national homeless population, 829 of which had children. These data provide an important contextual backdrop for a detailed analysis of the families newly experiencing homelessness during 2016.

### 4.1 Family composition

Figure 4: Family composition for 878 of the new families who accessed EA in the Dublin Region, 2016



As in all analysis done to date, two thirds of families were lone parenting (n=586 or 66%) and one third were headed up by couples (n=292 or 34%). As such, 1,170 new adults were accommodated by homeless services in the Dublin Region during 2016.

Table 5: Census 2016 comparison – family composition

	New families who accessed EA in Dublin Region, 2016 (n=878)	Homeless families nationally, Census 2016 (n=829)	General population nationally, Census 2016 (n=862,721)
Couples	34%	32%	75%
Lone Parents	66%	68%	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 5 shows the high representation of lone parents to couples in families experiencing homelessness (both in the Dublin Region and nationally) when compared with family units in the general population.

A total of 1,802 children accompanied the 878 families accommodated by homeless services in the Dublin region during 2016. As demonstrated in Table 6, 643 of the 878 families (74%) had either one or two children while 235 families (26%) were accompanied by three or more children.

## 4. Demographic information (cont.)

**Table 6: Number of children in family units newly accessing emergency accommodation in the Dublin Region, 2016**

Number of children	Couples	Lone Parents	Total families	Percentage of families	Total Children
1 Child	100	298	398	46%	398
2 Children	84	161	245	28%	490
3 Children	42	71	113	12%	339
4+ Children	66	56	122	14%	575
<b>Total</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,802</b>

**Table 7: Census 2016 comparison - family units with children**

	New families accessing EA in Dublin Region, 2016 (n=878)	Homeless families nationally, Census 2016 (n=829)	National general population, Census 2016 (n=862,721)
1 Child	46%	39%	39%
2 Children	28%	32%	36%
3 Children	12%	16%	18%
4+ Children	14%	13%	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

We can see a similar percentage breakdown in the number of children in family units in the cohort of families newly accessing homeless services in the Dublin Region and the homeless families enumerated nationally as part of the 2016 Census. However what is noticeable, is the higher percentage of families with four or more children in the families experiencing homelessness both nationally (13%) and in the Dublin Region (14%) when compared with family units in the general population (7%).

**Table 8: Census 2016 comparison - average number of children in family units**

	New families accessing EA in Dublin Region, 2016	Homeless families nationally, Census 2016	National general population, Census 2016	General population in Dublin Region, Census 2016
Average number of children per family	2.05	2.07	1.38	1.17

In the cohort of families who newly accessed homeless services in 2016 the average number of children per family was 2.05, notably higher than 2016 Census data for the general population which shows an average of 1.17 children per family in the Dublin Region and an average of 1.38 nationally.

#### 4.2 Nationality

Figure 5: Nationality of families newly accessing emergency accommodation in the Dublin Region, 2016 (n=878)

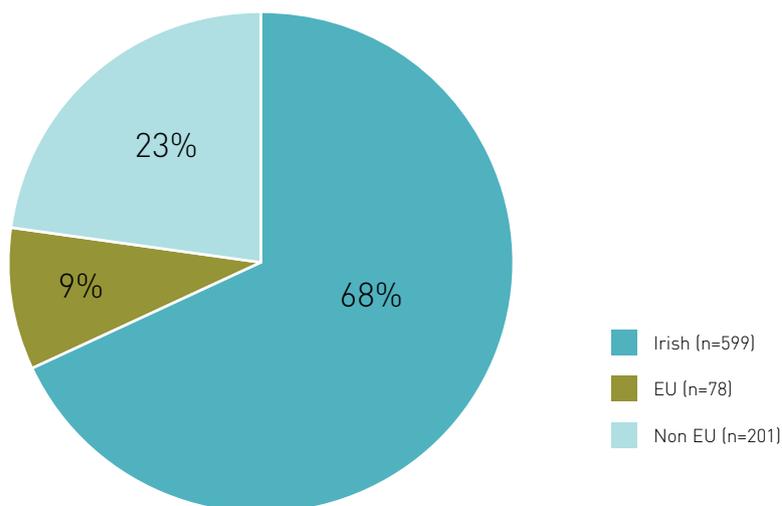


Figure 5 shows that just over two thirds of the families were Irish nationals (n=599 or 68%) while 9% were from the European Union (EU) (n=78) and 23% were non EU nationals (n=201).

Table 9: Nationality of adults in family units newly accessing emergency accommodation (EA) in the Dublin Region<sup>10</sup>

	Adults in family units accessing EA in Dublin Region, 2016 (n=1,170)
Irish nationals	66%
Non-Irish nationals	34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 10: Nationality of the homeless population and general population (all individual adults and children), Census 2016<sup>11</sup>

	All individuals in the national homeless population, Census 2016 (n=6,906)	All individuals in the national general population, Census 2016 (n=4,617,988)
Irish nationals	86%	88%
Non-Irish nationals	14%	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

It needs to be noted that Table 9 refers to only the adults in family units newly accessing accommodation during 2016 whereas Table 10 refers to the nationality of all individuals (i.e. adults with and without children and the children themselves). A further breakdown of the Census data was not available, as such, a direct comparison between the 902 families in this report and the 829 homelessness families enumerated in the 2016 Census could not be made. However, the percentage breakdown of the national homeless population and the national general population (adults with and without children) is indicative of a disproportionate representation of non-Irish nationals amongst the families who newly presented to homeless services in the Dublin Region during 2016. The 2016 Census reported that just under 12% of the general population were non-Irish nationals, significantly lower than the 34% of non-Irish nationals in the cohort of families newly experiencing homelessness in the Dublin Region during 2016.

10. This data refers to the nationality of adults with children in the cohort of families newly accessing emergency accommodation during 2016.

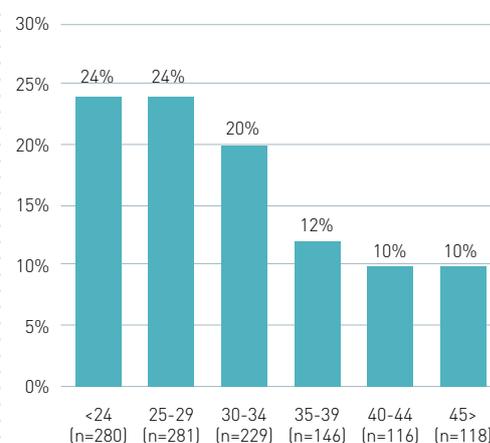
11. This data refers to all individuals (i.e. adults with and without children and children) in the homeless population and national population as per the Census 2016.

## 4. Demographic information (cont.)

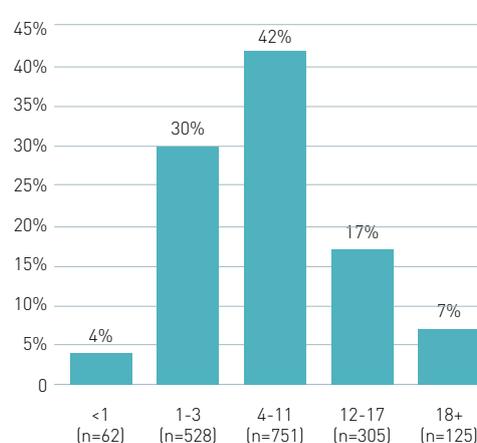
### 4.3 Age

The average age of the adults in this cohort of homeless families was 32 with ages ranging from 18 to 65 years. Almost one quarter of the adults were aged 24 or under (n=280 or 24%). The majority were under the age of 35 (n=790 or 68%) while 32% were aged 35 or older (n=318)<sup>12</sup>.

**Figure 6: Age groups of adults in family units newly accessing emergency accommodation in the Dublin Region, 2016 (n=1,170)**



**Figure 7: Age groups of children in family units newly accessing emergency accommodation in the Dublin Region, 2016 (n=1,771)**



As previously stated 1,802 children were recorded across the 878 families. The ages could be determined for 1,771 of these children. Of these, one third of children were aged three or under (n=590 or 34%). The majority of children were aged between four and 11, i.e. primary school going age (n=751 or 42%). 17% of children were aged between 12 and 17 (n=305) while a minority were aged 18 or over (n=125 or 7%).

**Table 11: Census 2016 comparison – age groups of children**

	Children accessing EA in Dublin Region, 2016 (n=1,514)	Children among national homeless population, Census 2016 (n=1,694)	Children among national general population, Census 2016 (n=1,006,552)
0 -4 years	47%	45%	33%
5 – 9 years	33%	33%	35%
10-14 years	20%	22%	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 11 presents a cursory look at the age groups of children in the cohort of families newly experiencing homelessness in the Dublin Region during 2016 compared with the age groups of children in the homeless and general population as reported in the 2016 Census. As the National Census use an age group of 15-19 the data is not directly comparable with the age groups used by the DRHE. It was not possible to distinguish those aged over 18 who were experiencing homelessness outside a family unit in the national Census data. As such a comparison is done for all children up to the age of 14. However, when we look at the data for just those aged 14 and under we see a higher percentage of younger children in both homeless populations.

12. The ages displayed in Figure 6 and 7 were calculated at a specific point in time and reflect the ages of the adults and children as of May 2017.

#### 4.4 Summary

This chapter reviewed the demographic data available for 878 of the 902 families who newly presented to homeless services in the Dublin Region during 2016, composed of a total of 1,170 adults with 1,802 accompanying children. The majority of families were headed by a parent or parents under the age of 30 (48%). Just over two thirds of families were Irish nationals (68%). Two thirds of families were parenting alone (66%) and the majority had one or two children in their care (74%). However, when compared with the National Census 2016, some significant distinctions were apparent. The average number of children for homeless families both in Dublin and nationally (Census data) was notably higher than the average number of children per family in the general population. There was also a higher percentage of families with four or more children in both of the homeless populations in comparison with the general population. Also of note was the disproportionate representation of non-Irish nationals amongst the families who newly presented to homeless services in the Dublin Region during 2016.

## 5. Accommodation status of families as of May 31st 2017

Further analysis was carried out on the data relating to the 902 families new to homelessness in the Dublin Region during 2016 in order to determine their accommodation status five months into 2017. This was done by reconciling the data to the monthly Department of Housing Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) return compiled by the DRHE for May 2017 to determine the number of families still accessing emergency accommodation. Data was also reconciled with departures to tenancy reported for 2016 and 2017 to determine how many families had exited homelessness.

To this end three distinct categories were identified: families no longer using emergency accommodation with a reported departure to tenancy, families no longer using emergency accommodation who had given no reason for their departure and families who were still in emergency accommodation. A summary of the results is presented in Table 12 below.

**Table 12: Accommodation status of families as of 31st of May 2017**

Accommodation status as of May 31st 2017	Number of families	Percentage of families
No longer using emergency accommodation - departed to tenancy	288	32%
No longer using emergency accommodation - no reason for departure	149	17%
Still in emergency accommodation	433	48%
Insufficient information available	32	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>100%</b>

Notably, as of May 31st 2017, a total of 288 (32%) families had departed from emergency accommodation to a tenancy. An additional 149 (17%) families were no longer accessing emergency accommodation and had provided no departure reason to the local authority or service provider. As detailed in Table 12, just under half of the families (n=433 or 48%) were still accessing emergency accommodation and no information was available on the status of the final 32 (3%) families.

### 5.1 No longer using emergency accommodation – departure to tenancy (n=288)

Table 13 presents the type of tenancy for the 288 recorded departures from homeless services. The majority of moves to tenancies have been driven largely by the homeless HAP initiative with 204 of the 288 families (71%) accommodated through the scheme. All moves to tenancy are supported and administered through local authority staff and recorded on PASS with Support to Live Independently (SLI) post settlement supports available to all families for a minimum of six months.

**Table 13: Type of tenancy for the families whose departure from homeless services is reported**

Type of tenancy	Number of families	Percentage of families
Housing Assistance Payment	204	71%
Local Authority Housing	51	18%
Approved Housing Body <sup>13</sup>	33	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>100%</b>

13. Approved Housing Bodies (including Housing Associations and Co-operatives) provide and manage social rented housing. They are not for profit organisations formed for the purpose of relieving housing need.

### 5.2 No longer using emergency accommodation – no departure reason reported (n=149)

**Table 14: Families' duration accessing homeless accommodation prior to departure with no recorded departure reason**

Duration accessing services	Number of families	Percentage of families
Up to 6 nights	23	15%
1-4 weeks	51	35%
1-5 months	54	36%
6-11 months	18	12%
12+ months	3	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100%</b>

A total of 149 families left emergency accommodation who did not inform the local authority or the service provider of a reason for their departure. As demonstrated in Table 14, a majority of these families (n=74 or 50%) accessed homeless services for less than a month before departing services. A minority of the families (n=21 or 14%) who reported no reason for their departure were in emergency accommodation in excess of six months.

### 5.3 Still in emergency accommodation (n=433)

A total of 433 families were still accessing emergency accommodation as of May 31st 2017. Table 15 provides a breakdown of the number and percentages of families in emergency accommodation by month of presentation. Table 16 details how many months the families have been accessing homeless services.

**Table 15: Families still in emergency accommodation by month of presentation as of May 31st 2017**

Month of presentation	Number of presentations per month	Number of families still in EA as of May 31st 2017	Percentage of families still in EA as of May 31st 2017
January '16	125	57	46%
February '16	83	40	48%
March '16	84	27	32%
April '16	74	35	47%
May '16	64	29	45%
June '16	72	31	43%
July '16	97	49	51%
August '16	72	36	50%
September '16	65	32	49%
October '16	67	35	52%
November '16	60	38	63%
December '16	39	24	62%
<b>Total</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>(Average) 48%</b>

## 5. Accommodation status of families as of May 31st 2017 (cont.)

As previously mentioned, 48% of families who first experienced homelessness in 2016 were still in accommodation as of May 31st 2017 and, as would be expected the most recent months have a higher percentage of families still accessing emergency accommodation while the earlier months have less families remaining in emergency accommodation.

As of the 31st of May 2017, 188 (43%) of the families who newly presented in 2016 had been accessing homeless accommodation services in the Dublin Region for over 12 months. A total of 221 families had been accessing emergency accommodation for periods ranging from 7-12 months while the remaining 24 families had presented in December 2016 and as such were accessing accommodation for 6 months or less.

**Table 16: Number of months accessing services for families still in emergency accommodation as of May 31st 2017**

Number of months accessing services as of May 31st 2017	Number of families	Percentage of families
13-18 months	188	43%
7 -12 months	221	51%
6 months or less	24	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 5.4 Summary

Of the 902 families who newly accessed emergency accommodation during 2016, 288 had moved on to tenancy by the 31st of May 2017. Notably, 149 families had departed emergency accommodation but did not inform the local authority or the service provider of a reason for their departure. A total of 433 families were still accessing emergency accommodation as of this date.

## 6. Conclusion

The purpose of this report was to increase knowledge about family homelessness in the Dublin Region. Firstly, it presents the reasons which led to the 902 families newly presenting to homeless services during 2016 as well as a month by month trend analysis. Secondly, it provides detailed demographic profiles of the families experiencing homelessness in the Dublin Region. The final aspect of the report looked at the accommodation status of the families to identify how many of the families were still accessing homeless services as of the 31st of May 2017.

The findings highlight the interaction between homelessness and the private rented sector with an average of 45% of families stating that they presented directly from private rented accommodation. In addition, for 51% of families, homelessness resulted from relationship breakdown, family conflict and/or some form of overcrowding. However, previous research reported that many families defer presenting to homeless services by moving in with family or friends following the loss of private rented accommodation. As such, factors relating to the private rented sector may be understated. Notwithstanding this limitation, the data raises key insights into the primary reasons why families presented to homeless services across the 12 months.

With regards to demographic information there was a notable consistency across the 12 months. In line with previous research two thirds of families were lone parenting. The majority of families were accompanied by one or two children (n=643 or 74%). However, there was also a higher than average number of children per family when compared to the average for the Dublin Region as outlined in part 1 of the Census 2016 summary results. The majority of the adults in this cohort of homeless families were under the age of 30 (n=561 or 48%) and the majority of children were of primary school going age, i.e. between the ages of four and eleven (n=751 or 42%). Of note was the disproportionate

representation of non-Irish national families (i.e. clients who were not born in Ireland but may hold Irish citizenship) with 34% of non-Irish nationals in this cohort of homeless families compared to just under 12% in the general population. Therefore, lone parents, families with four or more children and non-Irish national families would appear to be more vulnerable to homelessness than other families.

Further analysis was carried out on the 902 families in order to determine how many were still accessing emergency accommodation as of May 31st 2017. Two hundred and eighty eight families had a recorded departure to tenancy on PASS (32%). A notable finding, however, was the number of families who exited homeless services giving no reason for their departure (n=149 or 17%). A total of 433 families (48%) were still accessing emergency accommodation as of May 31st 2017. However, more investigation is needed to determine the sustainability of departures where families leave without engagement (i.e. giving no reason for departure) compared with those who depart with the knowledge and/or assistance of support staff.





