

Monthly Report to Dublin City Councillors-Covid-19 and Homelessness

This is the fourteenth report/update on homelessness in the Dublin region that we have issued since the onset of Covid-19 early last year. Since the beginning of 2020, national data has been showing a significant and welcome reduction in the number of people (in particular families) that are residing in emergency accommodation throughout the country. This report focuses on the situation in the Dublin Region at the end of **February 2021**.

Number of *individuals in Emergency Accommodation in the **Dublin Region*** – from February 2020 to February 2021, as published nationally:

Month	Families	Adults in Families	Children	Singles	Total Adults	Total Individuals
Feb 2021	716	1,083	1,760	3,046	4,129	5,889
Jan 2021	742	1,121	1,823	3,054	4,175	5,998
Dec 2020	755	1,131	1,864	3,027	4,158	6,022
Sep 2020	865	1,257	2,008	2,994	4,251	6,259
July 2020	862	1,269	2,017	2,919	4,188	6,205
May 2020	893	1,309	2,065	2,855	4,164	6,229
Apr 2020	974	1,412	2,232	2,854	4,266	6,498
Feb 2020	1,178	1,720	2,669	2,830	4,550	7,219

1. Family Homelessness

In Dublin at the end of February 2021, there were **716** families in emergency accommodation. This is the lowest monthly figure since **December 2015**. The figure for February represents a further decrease of **26** on the January 2021 number and a total decrease of **462** families when compared to February 2020, when there were **1,178** families in emergency accommodation.

The number of children residing in emergency accommodation at the end of February was **1,760**. This represents a decrease of **63** on the January 2021 figure. This number has been reducing steadily since September 2019, when the figure reached **2,872**. It also represents a decrease of **909** when compared to February 2020.

1.1. Reducing the Use of Commercial Hotels:

At the end of February, there were **156** families residing in hotels. **This is the lowest number of families in hotels since September 2014.**

The highest number was in March 2017 when it reached **871**. In relation to the **156** families, this is broken down between contracted hotels (72) and self-accommodation (84). It is important to note that self-accommodation now refers to accommodation not under contract with the DRHE. Families are no longer sourcing accommodation themselves and booking renewals are monthly in the main. There has been a steady reduction in the use of self-accommodation from 584 at its highest point in 2018 to 84 at the end of February 2021. The main reasons why we have retained some such usage include a lack of alternative provision in a specific area or the room configurations allow for larger family sizes.

1.2. New Family presentations - February 2021:

47 families entered emergency accommodation for the first time in February 2021. **This compares to 54 in the previous month and 80 in February 2020.** The table below shows family presentations for the previous 12 months.

Feb 2020	Mar 2020	Apr 2020	May 2020	Jun 2020	Jul 2020	Aug 2020	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020	Jan 2021
80	42	14	25	59	56	78	71	64	56	60	54

*1.3. New Family Presentations – Nationality and reasons for homelessness**

Nationality	No. of Families	No. of Adults	No. of Children
Irish	30	40	44
EU	12	21	24
Non EU	4	5	4
Unknown	1	1	2
Total	47	67	74

*30 of the new family presentations were related to family circumstances, 2 were related to private rented issues and the remaining 15 came from other situations.

1.4. Prevention - Family Homelessness

In February 2021, **78 families** were prevented from entering emergency accommodation, mainly through the HAP Scheme with 7 other tenancies created (AHB/LA). The prevention figure does not include tenancies protected by the (DRHE funded) Threshold Tenancy Protection Service or other prevention services.

1.5. Families – Exit to Tenancies

In February 2021, **86 families** exited emergency accommodation into new tenancies. 55 moved to HAP, and to 31 Social Housing.

1.6. Support to Families

Residents in family hubs receive onsite support and families in private operated emergency facilities (PEAs) receive housing advice and social support from NGO/DRHE Housing teams as well as in-reach support from HSE and TUSLA. We have been able to move more families from Commercial or Privately Contracted arrangements to family hubs in February. There is strong support in the hubs to exit emergency accommodation.

2. Single Adult Homelessness

As we indicated in our previous reports, the situation in relation to **single persons** is currently much more challenging. There were **3,046** single adults in emergency accommodation at the end of February.

2.1. New Single Adult Presentations – February 2021

The number of single adults presenting as homeless and using emergency accommodation for the first time has remained high, the number in February was **126**. That represented a decrease of 23 on the previous month and 34 less than February 2020.

Feb 2020	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	Aug 2020	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020	Jan 2021
160	108	99	123	105	176	134	135	156	116	133	149

We continue to manage presentations from other counties and from other countries. In cases where the person has access to better outcomes in their local authority of origin we liaise with the Local Authority, the Outreach Team and the individual to achieve the best outcome. We increased bed capacity in response to more constricted bed spaces in recent times because of Covid-19. It is important however, that development of homeless services is balanced across all regions to retain natural supports where possible.

2.2. Prevention – Single Adult Homelessness

In February 2021, **67 single adults** were prevented from entering emergency accommodation mainly through HAP (57), AHB/LA (9) and LTA (1). This does not include tenancies protected by the (DRHE funded) Threshold Tenancy Protection Service and other prevention services.

2.3. Single Adult Homeless – Exit to Tenancies

93 single adults exited to tenancies in February 2021, with **71 (HAP) 14 (AHB/LA), 6 (LTA), 2 (PR)**

2.4. Housing Support Officers and Other Supports to Private operated facilities (PEA)

There are now a range of supports to single adults in PEAs, either through Local Authority Housing Support Officers or visiting support teams from HSE and NGO teams providing case management, specialist support and addiction/medical services on an in-reach basis.

3. Housing Assistance Payment Scheme (HAP):

The Homeless HAP Scheme has continued to operate successfully, with our Housing Support Officers and Place-Finders assisting households to move out of emergency accommodation. The level of exits to Homeless HAP tenancies has increased by 55% from 2019 to 2020. That is a significant advance and reflective of the effort of all teams from the NGOs and Local Authorities to move households to tenancies.

A further **254** Homeless new HAP tenancies were sourced in February 2021

Breakdown of family type and previous accommodation of those accessing HHAP in February:

19	Families leaving hotels - Private Emergency Accommodation
36	Families leaving Supported emergency accommodation
71	Families who did not use emergency accommodation (Prevention)
31	Singles/Couples leaving Private Emergency Accommodation
40	Singles/Couples leaving supported emergency accommodation
57	Singles/Couples who did not use emergency accommodation (Prevention)

4. Duration accessing emergency accommodation:

4.1. Families:

Duration in EA	Total Families	%
24+ months	180	25%
18-24months	61	9%
12-18 months	106	15%
6-12 months	99	14%
6 months or less	270	37%
Total	716	100%

The Housing Support Officers Team are undertaking a detailed analysis of the families that are in emergency accommodation for over 2 years. There are 28 families close to social housing offer with the 4 Dublin Local Authorities.

The team has identified large family sizes and unwillingness to consider a private rented tenancy as the primary blocks to exiting homelessness. In some cases this is due to a previous negative experience but not all. A small number of the families (4) are waiting for supported housing LTA. We have more detailed analysis in the next report.

4.2. Single Adults:

Duration in EA	Total Single Adults	%
24+ months	679	23%
18-24months	182	6%
12-18 months	313	10%
6-12 months	493	16%
6 months or less	1,379	45%
Total Adults (Singles)	3,046	100%

The Housing First Programme, works with persons experiencing chronic homelessness as well as with rough sleepers. Dublin City Council nominates for singles/couples who have experienced long-term homelessness for Housing First as well as rough sleepers. This is based on length of time in emergency accommodation and need for the support levels provided for by Housing First.

5. Information

There are new regulations amending the Social Housing Assessment process '*Social Housing Assessment (Amendments) Regulations 2021*'. The main changes provide for a revised Social Housing Support Application form from the 19th April 2021, changes to proof of income, removal of the tax relief stamp and a new requirement for a Local Property Tax check and fulfils requirements under GDPR informing applicants how their information is used. The new regulations will eliminate the anomaly whereby a large family solely in receipt of social welfare payments exceeds the income threshold. The latter was an issues in authorities with a lower income band than that of Dublin City Council. The form will also standardise the medical information requirements for persons applying on disability or grounds.

6. Deaths in Service

There were 6 deaths reported by homeless services during the month of February. 3 were residents of Long-Term Supported Accommodation which by the nature of the accommodation only takes persons with a long experience of homelessness and complex medical and/or addiction needs. 1 was resident in a shielding facility (an indicator of health vulnerability) and 2 were resident in hostels.

7. Covid-19

Shielding continues to be provided for most at-risk persons experiencing homelessness. The Housing Support Team is engaging directly with all clients and key workers to identify longer-term accommodation solutions. This work requires a multi-agency approach and we are working closely with the HSE, the 4 Dublin Local Authorities and NGO providers to progress people to tenancies from shielding.

The number of COVID-related deaths has remained at 3 (all resident in long-term supported accommodation) since the onset of the Pandemic in early 2020. At the end of February, there were **192** confirmed (cumulative) cases within Dublin Homeless Services.

This increased starkly from January when there were 116 confirmed cases, but as mentioned in the last report there was a comprehensive Covid-19 response in place by the DRHE and the HSE to respond.

As ever, we express our thanks to all frontline staff for keeping homeless services running.

There is a HSE webinar on the 14th April 2021 to provide information and guidance on the COVID-19 vaccination programme for all (national) homeless services and to answer questions on the different vaccines.

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12th April 2021.



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Homeless FREEPHONE 1800 707 707; for access to Emergency Accommodation out of hours service for the Dublin Region.

Download Rough Sleeping Application from APP Store.