

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

This is the thirteenth 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 **January 2021**.

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

Month	Families	Adults in Families	Children	Singles	Total Adults	Total Individuals
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
Nov 2020	783	1,150	1,914	3,093	4,243	6,157
Oct 2020	858	1,246	2,070	3,051	4,297	6,367
Sep 2020	865	1,257	2,008	2,994	4,251	6,259
Aug 2020	856	1,242	2,023	2,962	4,204	6,227
July 2020	862	1,269	2,017	2,919	4,188	6,205
Jun 2020	871	1,276	1,979	2,895	4,171	6,150
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
Jan 2020	1,159	1689	2,561	2644	4,268	6,829

1. Family Homelessness

In Dublin at the end of January 2021, there were **742** families in emergency accommodation. This is the lowest monthly figure since **December 2015**. The figure for January represents a further decrease of **13** on the December 2020 number and a total decrease of **459** families when compared to January 2020, when there were 1,201 families in emergency accommodation.

The number of children residing in emergency accommodation at the end of January was **1,823**. This represents a decrease of **41** on the December 2020 figure. This figure has been reducing steadily since September 2019, when the figure reached **2,872**. It also represents a decrease of **738** since the start of the 2020.

1.1. Reducing the Use of Commercial Hotels:

At the end of January, there were **175** families residing in hotels. **This is the lowest number of families in hotels since September 2014.** The highest ever figure was in March 2017 when it reached **871**. In relation to the **175** families, this is broken down between contracted hotels (71) and accommodation sourced through self-accommodation (104). It is important to note that self-accommodation now refers to any 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 104 at the end of January 2021. The main reasons why we have retained 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 - January 2021:

54 families entered emergency accommodation for the first time in January 2021. **This compares to 60 in the previous month and 94 in January 2020.** The table below shows family presentations for the previous 12 months.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
94	80	42	14	25	59	56	78	71	64	56	60

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

Nationality	No. of Families	No. of Adults	No. of Children
Irish	33	40	41
EU	16	29	36
Non EU	5	6	7
Total	54	75	84

*36 of these new family presentations were related to family circumstances, 7 were related to private rented issues and the remaining 11 came from other situations.

1.4. Prevention - Family Homelessness

In January 2021, **65 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 January 2021, **81 families** exited emergency accommodation into new tenancies. 59 moved to HAP, and 22 to 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.

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 **3,054** single adults in emergency accommodation at the end of January.

2.1. New Single Adult Presentations – January 2021

The number of single adults presenting as homeless and using emergency accommodation for the first time has remained high, the number in January was 149 that represented an increase of 16 from the previous month. However it is 30% lower than in January 2020.

Jan 2020	Feb 2020	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	Aug 2020	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020
215	160	108	99	123	105	176	134	135	156	116	133

Since mid-December 2020, 110 persons presented looking for emergency accommodation from outside Dublin and from outside the country. 13 came from Wexford, 9 from Limerick, 7 each from Kildare, Cork and Galway, 6 from Laois, 5 each from Mayo, Westmeath, Kilkenny and Monaghan, 4 from Meath, 3 each from Louth and Wicklow and 2 each from, Cavan, Waterford and Longford. 25 came from outside the country: UK/Northern Ireland, Australia, USA, Nigeria, Mauritius, Netherlands, Finland, Belgium, Romania, Malta and Brazil. Most of this has occurred during a period of stringent Level 5 travel restrictions and created a real risk of the pandemic spreading throughout the entire emergency accommodation system in the city. The DRHE has had to manage this situation very carefully.

Many of these are **not** included as new presentations as they were using emergency accommodation in other regions prior to presenting to Dublin. For those who already have accommodation in another local authority area or who have supports in another county, every effort is made to work with them and their local authority to seek the best result for them.

We try to ensure that long established protocols with respect to hospital and prison discharges and the management of sex offenders are not bypassed in favour of a discharge to the Dublin Region if it is not appropriate.

In previous reports, we confirmed that there was a high number of emergency beds unused each night over the last 6-8 months, but that level of excess bed capacity has now reduced significantly over recent weeks due to the constant demand and on occasion the overall capacity can be further reduced at short notice due to COVID-19 outbreaks.

2.2. Prevention – Single Adult Homelessness

In January 2021, **58 single adults** were prevented from entering emergency accommodation through HAP. 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

110 single adults exited to tenancies in January 2021, with 100 to HAP.

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 **273** Homeless HAP tenancies were sourced in January 2021

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

19	Families leaving hotels - Private Emergency Accommodation
40	Families leaving Supported emergency accommodation
58	Families who did not use emergency accommodation (Prevention)
42	Singles/Couples leaving Private Emergency Accommodation
58	Singles/Couples leaving supported emergency accommodation
56	Singles/Couples who did not use emergency accommodation (Prevention)

4. Duration accessing emergency accommodation

4.1. Families:

Duration in EA	Total Families	%
24+ months	179	24%
18-24months	68	9%
12-18 months	112	15%
6-12 months	104	14%
6 months or less	279	38%
Total	742	100%

The Housing Support Officer Team are undertaking a detailed analysis of the families that are in emergency accommodation for over 2 years. This category has larger family sizes than the other categories. We know in some cases, estate management or welfare issues have had an impact on their progress towards an exit from homelessness.

4.2. Single Adults:

Duration in EA	Total Single Adults	%
24+ months	689	23%
18-24months	196	6%
12-18 months	278	9%
6-12 months	536	18%
6 months or less	1,355	44%
Total Adults (Singles)	3,054	100%

5. Covid-19

Shielding continues to be provided for most at-risk persons experiencing homelessness. At the end of January, there were 270 homeless individuals residing in shielding facilities in the Dublin Region. 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 January, there were **116** confirmed (cumulative) cases within Dublin Homeless Services. This increased from December when there were 88 confirmed cases, but we anticipated this increase and there was a comprehensive Covid-19 response in place by the DRHE and the HSE to respond. Due to the increase in cases and symptomatic presentations, we opened an additional facility to accommodate close contacts identified in homeless services.

The DRHE and the HSE have a robust system in place to deal with all suspected or confirmed cases that occur within homeless services in the Dublin Region, including a dedicated homeless testing service, referral and transportation to isolation facilities where required. When a suspected case is identified, this system is immediately triggered, along with contact tracing and a general audit of any other risks to public health in the facility that need to be managed. We work closely and very regularly with the HSE on Covid-19, issues and we very much value their ongoing strong support.

We express our thanks to all frontline staff in homeless services for keeping the services running.

Mary Hayes

Director,

Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) – 23rd March 2021.