

Migration and Homelessness

MIGRANTS AND HOMELESS SERVICES IN THE DUBLIN REGION: A RESEARCH BRIEFING PAPER

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Foreword

Migrants are an increasing group within homeless populations across European cities, creating new challenges for policymakers and service providers working for cities and their partner agencies. The causes of this emerging problem include restrictive welfare and public housing policies set by national and regional governments aimed specifically at migrants that create gaps in entitlements to services, exclusions from labour markets, increasing numbers of migrants residing in European cities with limited or no such entitlements, and a context of financial crisis and austerity measures in some parts of Europe that has fuelled the causes of homelessness and destitution whilst limiting the capacity of agencies to respond adequately.

Notwithstanding these challenges, this research finds that inter-agency working at the local level can ensure an effective response to the needs of migrants accessing homeless services. Dublin City Council's *Pathway to Home* model of homeless services, with its emphasis on homeless prevention and the delivery of a housing-led approach as the most effective and sustainable response to homelessness, continues to ensure the supports required for service innovation to meet the needs of migrants is delivered. Working with its partner agencies in homeless service delivery, Dublin has maintained access to emergency accommodation for destitute migrants at risk of rough sleeping and has also established a dedicated Homeless Action Team to work with migrant service users. Funding is also provided for a project dedicated to working with Central and Eastern European migrants whose economic resilience was reduced and severely impacted as a result of loss of employment and income in the aftermath of Ireland's economic crisis from 2010. Additional resources are being provided to improve information and employment advice services to homeless migrants.

However, migrants continue to experience exclusion and homelessness in Dublin in 2015 and there remains a demand for access to emergency accommodation from destitute migrants experiencing homelessness. For example, Dublin's last rough sleeping count in the spring of 2015 discovered 105 persons actually sleeping rough. A further 46 persons were using Dublin's city-centre night café for homeless on the night of the count. Of these, approximately one on five rough sleepers are non-Irish (i.e. migrant) nationals while one in three using the night café service on the same night are also non-Irish nationals. In order to fulfil our obligations to prevent and effectively respond to homelessness and rough sleeping in Dublin, we will continue to seek to maintain access to emergency accommodation for persons and households in these circumstances

Furthermore, Ireland's Habitual Residency Condition (HRC) and the 'right to reside' test that limit the forms of social protection available to migrants to Ireland remains in place. We must continue to seek alternative and successful solutions to the challenges this creates for homeless service providers. That is why Dublin has formally joined with four other EU cities who have sought to address homelessness and destitution amongst excluded migrants through innovative policymaking and service development. A working group has been established among these cities to help them share their experiences and help improve the way they work with migrant communities. Through a process of action-oriented learning, participant cities will explore new ways of addressing problems and make tangible changes within their communities. The *Homelessness and Destitution Working Group* is part of the Open Society funded *Action for Inclusion in Europe* project, led by the Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity at COMPAS (Centre for Migration and Policy), University of Oxford. The *Action for Inclusion in Europe* project aims to secure tangible reforms in city practices – for participating cities and more broadly – through action orientated learning exchange. The inaugural meeting of the *Homelessness and Destitution Working Group* will be held in Dublin in the Autumn of 2015 and will help maintain Dublin's commitment to innovative policymaking and service development to address the needs of homeless migrants.

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Executive Summary

In this paper the intersection between low income employment, insecure housing options and the limits to the forms of social protection available to immigrants in Ireland is presented. The interplay between low income levels, insecure employment, limited housing options and restricted social protection has led to some migrants being at risk of becoming homeless. In the Dublin region, a project was set up in response to an increased number of migrants accessing homeless services.

Immigration to Ireland is dominated by two broad national groupings: Irish nationals, and nationals from the EU-12. Recent studies also show that immigrants have lost jobs at a faster rate, and earlier, than Irish nationals since the onset of the recession in Ireland (Goodwin-White 2013). This means that they are more likely to experience unemployment or underemployment. There are also important differences in housing tenure by nationality. While over three quarters of households headed by an Irish national are owner-occupied, the corresponding figure for households headed by a non-Irish national is around a quarter. The limited regulations of the private rental market in Ireland – for example in relation to accommodation standards, inspection, long-term rent control or long-term leases – mean that private tenants have limited security of tenure.

Despite the growing concern with homelessness as an issue for migrants across Europe, there are limits on the forms of social protection available to immigrants in Ireland who are at risk of becoming homeless. These limits are enforced through two key mechanisms, the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) and the “right to reside” test.

In Dublin, 350 non-Irish individuals were identified as being homeless in the 2011 census (CSO. 2012c). A project was developed and introduced in January 2012 to provide help and support to the increased number of migrants that were accessing homeless services in the region. Dublin City Council, in conjunction with the Mendicity Institute, provided the funding for the Barka Foundation operated project. The aim of the project has been to reduce the number of homeless migrants accessing homeless services in Dublin by assisting them with reconnection to their country of origin. In total, Barka Ireland engaged with 173 homeless migrants in year one of the project. Of these, 164 name an EU-28 country as their country of origin. In its first year, the project facilitated the reconnection of fifty two homeless migrants to their country of origin. This exceeded the initial target of three reconnections per month by almost 45%. The project in Dublin was adapted to provide information and employment advice services for individuals who wished to exit homelessness and remain living in Dublin.

Introduction

In Ireland, distinct differences have emerged in the types of housing tenure and employment secured by Irish nationals and those secured by immigrants. In this paper the intersection between low income employment, insecure housing options and the limits to the forms of social protection available to immigrants in Ireland is presented. These factors have led to a noticeable number of immigrants accessing homeless services in Dublin and the development of a subsequent homeless migrant project to assist these individuals. In this paper the context that led to the need for an intervention and the impact of the first year of this intervention are presented.

Methodology

This research is based on a combination of: primary empirical data gathered through semi-structured interviews with 12 staff members from 7 stakeholder organisations involved in the homeless migrant project, an examination of the secondary data and an examination of data gathered from the Pathway Accommodation and Support System¹ (PASS).

¹ PASS is an online system that generates vital information in terms of managing access to accommodation. The system provides 'real-time' information in terms of homeless presentation and bed occupancy across the Dublin region.

Immigration, employment and housing tenure

Between 2005 and 2012, just over 678,000 people immigrated to Ireland. **Table 1** shows the breakdown of this number with reference to broad national groupings.

Table 1: Immigration to Ireland by national grouping, 2005 to 2012

Nationality	Total number (000s)	Percentage
Irish	173.0	25.5
UK	42.6	6.3
Rest of EU-15	75.4	11.1
EU-12	274.9	40.5
Rest of World	112.6	16.6
Total	678.5	

Source: CSO Table PEA 12 Estimated Population Immigration

As **Table 1** shows immigration to Ireland is dominated by two broad national groupings: Irish nationals, and nationals from the EU-12. These two groups make up 64.6% of immigration to Ireland. The third most important grouping is Rest of World, which accounts for 17.7% of immigrants to Ireland in the period from 2005-2012.

There is growing evidence of sectoral employment clustering of immigrants in Ireland.

Table 2 shows key areas of employment for immigrants across a broad range of sectors in 2011. It is important to note that immigrants from the EU-12 in particular, but also from the Rest of World, are concentrated in employment sectors which tend to have lower pay and more precarious working conditions, such as wholesale and retail trade, and accommodation and food services. Recent studies also show that immigrants have lost jobs at a faster rate, and earlier, than Irish nationals since the onset of the recession in Ireland (Goodwin-White 2013).

This means that they are more likely to experience unemployment or underemployment. The most recent statistics on unemployment, from April 2014, show that 68,422 people with a nationality other than Irish are on the Live Register, almost 17.5% of the total number (CSO, 2014).

Immigration, employment and housing tenure (cont.)

Table 2: Employment by nationality and sector, 2011

	Total	Irish	UK	Other EU-15	EU-12	Rest of World
Sector	%	%	%	%	%	%
Wholesale & retail	14.6	14.3	15.6	9.3	22.7	10.5
Health & social work	11.0	11.2	12.3	5.5	4.1	19.3
Manufacturing	10.2	9.9	10.0	12.7	16.0	6.4
Education	9.2	10.1	8.9	7.7	1.7	4.7
Public administration & defence	6.3	7.2	3.4	1.2	0.4	1.6
Accommodation & food services	5.8	4.2	6.0	10.9	18.1	12.9
Financial & insurance	5.1	5.5	5.3	8.5	1.8	2.3
Professional, scientific & technical	5.1	5.5	6.0	5.8	2.0	2.9
Construction	4.8	5.1	4.6	1.3	4.5	1.9

Source: CSO 2012b

There are also important differences in housing tenure by nationality. **Table 3** shows the 2011 statistics for housing tenure by broad national groups. The reliance of non-Irish nationals on the private rental market is important to note. While over three quarters of households headed by an Irish national are owner-occupied, the corresponding figure for households headed by a non-Irish national is around a quarter. Close to two thirds of households headed by a non-Irish national are rented from a private landlord, in contrast to an eighth of households headed by an Irish national. This difference is most stark for households headed by EU-12 nationals, with

around 6% owner-occupied, and 84% rented from a private landlord. The limited regulations of the private rental market in Ireland – for example in relation to accommodation standards, inspection, long-term rent control or long-term leases – mean that private tenants have limited security of tenure. While some protections exist for mortgage holders who are in arrears or default, specifically a stay on evictions, there are no such protections for private tenants in a similar situation. The cost of moving between private rental properties may also cause difficulties for people under financial pressure.

Table 3: Housing tenure by nationality, 2011

	Total	Irish	UK	Other EU-15	EU-12	Rest of World
Type of tenure	%	%	%	%	%	%
Owner occupier with mortgage	35.35	38.34	34.11	18.36	5.67	15.61
Owner occupier, no mortgage	34.36	38.08	28.35	10.07	0.43	3.15
Rented from private landlord	18.51	12.02	25.46	64.22	84.37	66.58
Rented from local authority	7.82	7.93	8.55	3.25	5.95	8.53
Rented from voluntary body	0.91	0.85	1.03	0.95	1.22	1.66
Occupied free of rent	1.54	1.57	1.70	1.44	0.60	1.84

Source: CSO 2012a

The intersection of employment and housing experiences make some immigrants in Ireland, such as those from the EU-12 or Rest of World, more susceptible to homelessness. Employment and housing are key components of the structural factors of vulnerability highlighted by Busch-Geertsema et al (2010: 51). Unemployment or low incomes from low-skilled or unstable jobs “have contributed to homeless entries for almost all persons who have become homeless” (2010: 49), and this is exacerbated by problems with access to housing (2010: 49). In Ireland, the interplay between employment and housing experiences for some immigrants has created the conditions for a potential growth in homelessness. This is in line with the experiences of other European countries, where there is a growing proportion of EU-12 and third country nationals “among rough sleepers and homeless service users” (Busch-Geertsema et al 2010: 79).

In most west European countries, “the situation of roofless and destitute migrants from eastern countries, refused asylum seekers and undocumented migrants has been seen as a growing problem” (Busch-Geertsema et al 2010: 54).

Social Protection available to immigrants

Despite the growing concern with homelessness as an issue for migrants across Europe, there are limits on the forms of social protection available to immigrants in Ireland who are at risk of homelessness. These limits are enforced through two key mechanisms, the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) and the “right to reside” test.

The HRC was introduced on 1 May 2004. In order to qualify for access to a wide range of services, a person must meet the HRC. While each case is assessed separately, there are five factors that are taken into account. These are:

- length and continuity of residence in Ireland or in any other country
- length and purpose of any absence from Ireland
- nature and pattern of employment
- the applicant’s main centre of interest
- future intentions of the applicant as they appear from all the circumstances (Crosscare et al 2010).

The HRC must be met if a person is to qualify for social welfare payments including jobseeker’s allowance, non-contributory pensions, supplementary welfare allowance, child benefit and disability allowance (though there are some limited exceptions for EEA citizens who may not be required to satisfy HRC for family benefits and supplementary welfare). This also affects access to other social welfare payments, such as rent supplement. In general, Irish and British nationals are more likely to satisfy the HRC than nationals from other EU/EEA member states, but there is no guarantee of this. In some instances, Irish or British nationals have been deemed to not meet the HRC, and thus have not been able to access social welfare payments.

The “right to reside” was introduced by the Social Welfare and Provisions (No. 2) Act 2009. It is a legal test that is applied in conjunction with the HRC. People who do not have the right to reside in Ireland include “people in the asylum, leave to remain or subsidiary protection processes” (FLAC

2010), as well as undocumented or irregular migrants. An individual who is refused asylum and is not eligible for subsidiary protection may be granted leave to remain in Ireland. This is granted at the discretion of the Minister for Justice, usually on humanitarian grounds (Citizens Information 2013). People who may lose the right to reside in Ireland include EU nationals, who have a right to reside for three months only. The “right to reside” is conditional on not becoming a burden on the host state’s social security system (Shaw and Miller 2013). This means that after three months, an EEA national must be engaged in economic activity, have sufficient independent resources, be a student or vocational trainee, or be a family member of an EEA national who qualifies in one of the three preceding categories. If this is not the case, a person no longer has the right to reside in Ireland. A person who does not have the “right to reside” cannot be “habitually resident” regardless of how long that person has lived in Ireland.

The HRC combined with the right to reside test mean that many residents of Ireland are excluded from accessing social welfare payments. This is further exacerbated by the misapplication and inconsistent application of the HRC and right to reside test (FLAC 2010). Access to other social welfare payments such as Jobseeker’s Benefit is based on PRSI contributions. It is possible to combine contributions made in other EEA states in order to qualify for these payments (Crosscare et al. 2010). Again, though, there is evidence of misapplication and inconsistent application of these rules (FLAC 2010). Immigrants are at particular risk of homelessness because of the application or misapplication of rules in relation to social welfare payments. Once homeless, immigrants may not have access to the same range of support services from non-governmental and other organizations because of language and other barriers. This has further implications for immigrants being able to access pathways out of homelessness in the short to medium-term.

Homeless Migrants in the Dublin Region

In Dublin, 350 non-Irish individuals were identified as being homeless in the 2011 census (CSO, 2012c). Using the Pathways Accommodation and Support System (PASS) it was possible to access up to date information on the number of homeless migrants that accessed homeless accommodation over a given period of time. The Pathways Accommodation and Support System (PASS) is an online system where 'real time' information on access to homeless accommodation is recorded.

An examination of PASS data revealed that in 2013, 296 unique individuals from countries in the European Union (excluding Ireland) and 112 unique individuals from outside of the European Union, spent a minimum of one night each in homeless accommodation in the Dublin region.

This group of 408 non-Irish nationals represents 9% of all unique individuals that accessed homeless accommodation in the region in 2013.

The Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) monitors the number and nationality of individuals sleeping rough in the Dublin region on a bi-annual basis through the Rough Sleeper Count. The results from the Rough Sleeper count that took place between winter 2007 and spring 2014, displayed in **Figure 1**, show that proportionally there has been a significant number of migrants sleeping rough in the city. If these individuals do not have the 'right to reside' or do not satisfy the HRC, then they do not have access to the range of support services that they may require.

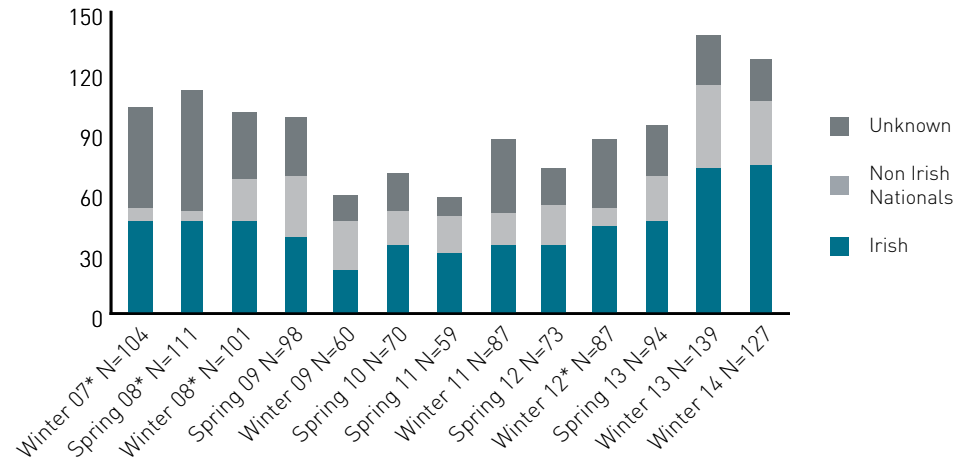
Table 4: Non Irish nationals that accessed emergency accommodation in 2013.

Ethnic group	
EU 28	296
Outside EU	112
Total	408

Source: PASS Data. Accessed in February 2014.

Homeless Migrants in the Dublin Region (cont.)

Figure 1: Results from the rough sleeper counts 2007-2014



Source: Dublin Region Homeless Executive. 2014.

Barka Ireland Intervention

In Dublin, a project was developed and introduced in January 2012 to provide help and support to the increased number of migrants that were accessing homeless services. Dublin City Council, in conjunction with the Mendicity Institute, provided the funding for the Barka Foundation operated intervention. The aim of the project has been to reduce the number of homeless migrants accessing homeless services in Dublin by assisting them with reconnection to either their family; a Barka Foundation operated community or a community operated by a partner organisation in their country of origin. The target for the first year of the intervention was to reconnect three homeless migrants to their country of origin each month.

The team working for Barka Ireland engages with homeless migrants who have varying levels of need. The migrants range from the long term homeless who are not HRC compliant and not eligible for social welfare assistance to vulnerable migrants who are on the verge of becoming homeless. The clients that engage with Barka Ireland are predominantly single males, with many suffering from; addiction issues, poor mental health and/or behavioural problems. Through interviews with staff from Barka Ireland it was established that these individuals generally become homeless as a result of falling into financial difficulty and subsequently not having access to sufficient welfare supports.

The Barka Ireland model relies on building trust and developing relationships between the Barka team and the homeless individuals, in an effort to provide them with the necessary support to make the decision to reconnect to their family in their country of origin. In some situations the homeless migrants may not be in a position to return to their family and are invited to stay in one of the Barka Foundation operated communities in Poland, or with a partnership organization in the migrant's country of origin, where they can participate in rehabilitation, detoxification and therapeutic programmes.

In order to maintain their residency in these Barka operated communities each individual is required to comply with structured timetables, abstain from alcohol and drugs, forego any welfare income payments and participate in work to help sustain the community. It has been argued that these communities provide the necessary supports for homeless men with low support needs (Johnson 2010). On the other hand, the residential community model has been criticized for being poorly equipped to cater for individuals with high support needs. Johnson (2010) argues that membership of these communities could foster dependence and potentially impede an individual's pathway to independent living. It is clear that a greater level of research into how successful these communities are is required.

Barka Ireland Project: Outcome

In total, Barka Ireland engaged with 173 homeless migrants in year one of the project. In Table 5, the nationality of these individuals is displayed, showing that 164 of these individuals name an EU-28 country as their country of origin.

In response to the limited accommodation options available to homeless migrants who have lost the 'right to reside', Dublin City Council financed and Depaul Ireland operated the North Frederick Street Hostel. Barka Ireland was given priority by Dublin City Council to refer homeless migrants to this hostel. Once a client was admitted to the hostel they were required to engage with either Depaul Ireland or Barka Ireland in order to maintain their residency. According to the Depaul Ireland case management team, 86 homeless migrants

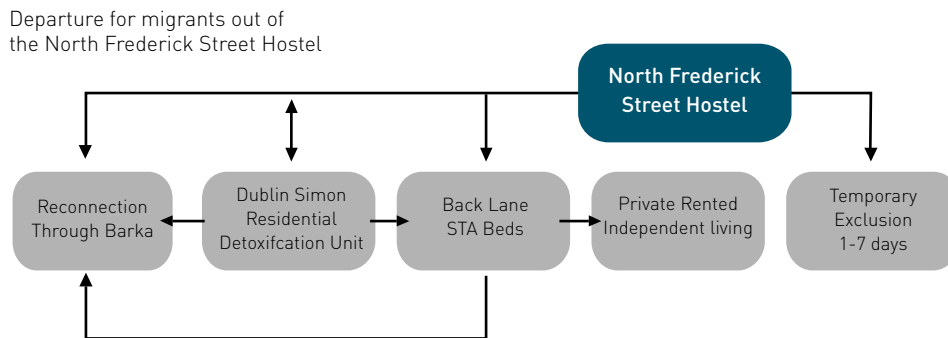
passed through the hostel over the course of the first year of the project. The hostel has been used to accommodate some homeless migrants while they prepare to reconnect to their country of origin. The various departure pathways taken by these individuals from the hostel can be seen in **Figure 2**. For some, reconnection to their country of origin was not a viable option and therefore pathways were developed to assist homeless migrants move into independent living in Dublin. In January 2013, there remained a cohort of fifteen long term homeless migrants living in the North Frederick Hostel. They have been residents since the hostel opened in March 2012. These individuals were categorised by the Depaul Ireland team working at the hostel as having high support needs.

Table 5: Country of origin for Clients

Ethnic group	
Irish	1
EU 28	164
Outside EU	4
Unknown	4
Total	173

Source: Barka Ireland. 2013. **N=173**

Figure 2: Departures for migrants out of North Frederick Street Hostel

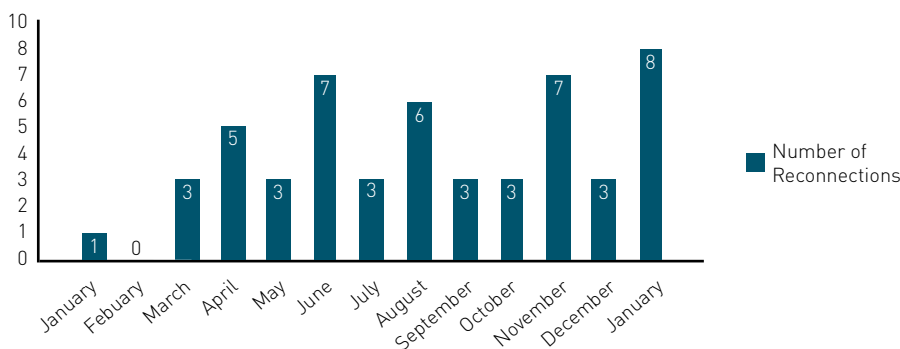


Source: Data gathered through interviews. 2013.

In its first year, the homeless migrant project has facilitated the reconnection of fifty two homeless migrants to their country of origin. This exceeded the initial target of three reconnections per month by almost 45%. The number of reconnections that took place in each month of the year can be seen in **Figure 3**. The project has assisted clients reconnect predominantly

to either their families or to a Barka Foundation operated community (see **Figure 4**). There is no accessible data that tracks the recovery of each individual once they have been reconnected to their country of origin. This makes it impossible to assess the long term benefit that the project has had on individuals who were assisted with reconnection to their country of origin.

Figure 3: Number of reconnections between January 2012 and January 2013



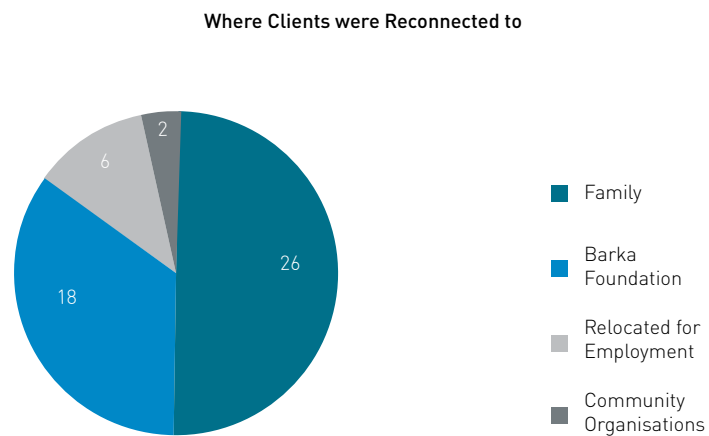
Source: Barka Ireland. 201. N=52.

Barka Ireland Project: Outcome (cont.)

The project in Dublin was adapted to provide employment advice services for individuals who wished to exit homelessness and remain living in Dublin. According to data provided by Barka Ireland on the first year of the project, a total of twenty seven homeless migrants secured either full or part time employment in the following areas: recycling; construction; mechanical;

warehousing; leaflet delivery; catering; factory work; fishing or cleaning. Through interviews with the staff working for Barka Ireland it was made clear that many of these positions held by this group of homeless migrants were not permanent, had low pay and unfavourable working conditions.

Figure 4: Who Barka Ireland Clients were reconnected to



Source: Barka Ireland. 2013. N=52.

Homeless Migrants in Copenhagen

The emergence of a group of homeless migrants is not a scenario that is unique to Dublin. A recent study (Schmidt, 2012) on homelessness in Copenhagen suggests that the city has a significant homeless migrant population, with many migrants being attracted to the city by its low unemployment rate. The primary data for the Copenhagen study was gathered through semi-structured interviews with staff from fifteen social programmes. In addition to this, secondary data was gathered from case notes and journals from the Fonden project UDENFOR and the 'Udeligger' project in Copenhagen. The study characterises homeless migrants in Copenhagen as having; limited language skills; substance abuse issues and severe social problems. Many of these individuals had been employed in the construction industry in Denmark and had been exploited in the form of cash-in-hand employment, which left them without access to social protections.

Homeless migrants in Denmark who do not have a Danish Central Persons Registration Certificate or who are not covered by the Social Services Act are not permitted to make use of homeless services that receive state support. The study recommended that at a municipal level homeless migrants should be given access to advice services and existing state funded homeless programmes. At a European Union level it was recommended that each member state should take responsibility for their citizens by developing receiving centres that would provide the necessary supports for returning homeless migrants.

Conclusion

Similar to Copenhagen, the situation for homeless migrants living in Dublin remains difficult. The interplay between low income levels, insecure employment, limited housing options and restricted social protection has led to some individuals being at risk of homelessness. The project, which was set up in response to an increased number of migrants accessing homeless services in Dublin, successfully reconnected fifty two homeless migrants to their country of origin in its first year. In addition, the work carried out through the project has assisted homeless migrants secure employment, access detoxification facilities, accommodation and pathways out of homelessness. However, this intervention does not provide a comprehensive solution to the issues that face destitute homeless migrants in Dublin, but rather simply provides them with the supports that they may need to help them exit homelessness in Dublin and return to their country of origin.

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