Patterns of Emergency Accommodation Usage in the Dublin Region by Single Adults and Families, 2017-2024

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Executive Summary

This report investigates patterns of Emergency Accommodation (EA) usage among single adults and families in the Dublin region from 2017 to 2024. Over this eight-year period, 10,052 single adults and 5,863 families (or 15,915 households) who were assessed as homeless under Section 2 of the Housing Act, 1988 by the four Local Authorities in the Dublin region were provided with EA and included in this study.

Singles

Between 2017 and 2024, the number of single adults accessing EA at a point-in-time in the Dublin region more than doubled, rising from an annual average of 1,949 in 2017 to 4,601 in 2024, a 136% increase. Over the eight-year period, the 10,052 single adults included in this study generated over 4.2 million EA bed-nights.

Cluster analysis revealed three distinct patterns of EA use: short-term (66% of users), cyclical (11%), and long-term (23%). While short-term cases dominated by headcount, long-term and cyclical cohorts exerted disproportionate pressure on resources. Long-term users accounted for 61% of all bed-nights despite representing less than a quarter of the population in the study, while cyclical users generated a similar volume of episodes as the short-term group, creating operational churn through repeated entries and exits.

Housing outcomes varied sharply by cluster. Overall, 38% of single adults secured housing, but nearly half (46%) exited EA without a housing solution, and 14% remained in EA at year-end, 31 December 2024, predominantly long-term users. Short-term users were most likely to achieve housing (41%), typically within six months and experiencing one episode of EA use. Cyclical users had the poorest outcomes: only 21% secured housing, with median time-to-housing at 18–24 months and frequent recurrence (4–10+ EA episodes). Long-term users achieved housing in 37% of cases, but exits were protracted, often requiring two to five years of engagement.

Demographic analysis highlighted differentiated risks: cyclical EA use was concentrated among men aged 25–44, while long-term EA use disproportionately affected older adults and non-EEA nationals.

Families

Between 2017 and 2024, the number of families accessing EA at a point-in-time in the Dublin region fluctuated from a high of 1,311 in 2018 to a low of 735 in 2021. Over the eight-year period, 5,853 families included in this study generated over 2.4 million EA bed-nights.

Of the 5,863 families included, the majority (70%) experienced short-term EA use, exiting the system within a year and often after a single episode. A smaller group (3%) fell into the cyclical cluster, marked by repeated episodes and moderate durations. The long-term cluster (27%) comprised families with prolonged stays, often exceeding two years, and accounted for the majority of bed-nights used.

Seventy-six percent (4,479) of families exited EA to housing. Short-term families had the highest success rate, with 80% (3,303 families) exiting to housing, with long-term families followed at 69% (1,084 families), while cyclical families had the lowest housing exit rate at 51% (92 families). A total of 893 families (15%) exited EA without a housing outcome but sustained their exit without returning. The majority were short-term families (18%, 757 families) and cyclical families (23%, 42 families), while only 6% (94 families) of long-term families managed sustained exits without housing. By 31 December 2024, 406 families (7%) remained in EA without a housing outcome. Long-term families accounted for the majority (23%, 358 families). Cyclical families represented 17% (31 families), and short-term families were minimal at 0.4% (17 families).

Key demographic insights reveal that lone-parent households, particularly female-headed families, dominate the families using EA in the Dublin region. Migrant families and those with larger household sizes are disproportionately represented in the long-term cluster.

In brief, this report aims to provide a high-level summary overview of trends in EA use in the Dublin region over the eight-year study period, 2017-2024, and in subsequent reports, further nuanced analyses will explore in greater detail the demographic profile of entries to, and exits from EA, and duration in EA, to inform policy and practice.

Acknowledgements

The DRHE would like to express its sincere thanks to the following individuals and stakeholders for their contributions to the development of this research project and the completion of this report:

- **Professor Dennis P. Culhane**, University of Pennsylvania, for very helpful and incisive comments on earlier drafts.
- **The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH)**, for the funding provided to the DRHE and for their valuable feedback on the report.
- **Councillors of the 4 Dublin Local Authorities**, for their continued support in the provision of homeless services.

Contents

1. Introduction and Context

This report explores patterns of Emergency Accommodation (EA) usage among single adults *and* families in the Dublin region from 2017 to 2024. Over this eight-year period, 10,052 single adults and 5,863 families (or 15,915 households) who were assessed as homeless under Section 2 of the *Housing Act, 1988* by the four Local Authorities in the Dublin region were provided with EA and included in this study.

In 2017, the annual average of singles in EA at a point-in-time stood at 1,949 individuals; by 2024, this figure had more than doubled to 4,601, an absolute increase of 2,652 (+136%) and a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of approximately 13.1%. The increase between 2020 (2,938) and 2021 (3,061) was comparatively modest (+4.2%), but from 2022 onward, use of EA re-accelerated. The year 2023 saw the largest annual increase in both absolute (+632) and percentage terms (+18.0%), followed by a further rise in 2024 (+460; +11.1%), culminating in a series high.

In the case of families, in 2017 the annual average in EA stood at 1,112; by 2024, had increased to 1,473, but in the intervening period had declined by 34% to 735 in 2021 before increasing once again over the next 3 years. As with single adults, 2023 saw the largest annual increase in both absolute (+309), but in percentage terms the largest annual increase was in 2022 (+36.7%),

Table 1 presents the yearly average number of *single adults* in EA, with **Table 2** presenting the yearly average number of *families* in EA, with both tables highlighting the differing scale and pace of change for singles and families. Comparing periods, the pre-2020 average (2017–2019) for singles was 2,239, versus 3,650 in 2020–2024 - a +63% increase for singles, indicating a post-2020 reset to a higher baseline. Notably, 58% of the total increase for singles occurred since 2021, with 2022–2024 alone accounting for 41%, underscoring intensifying demand in recent years. In the case of families, the pre-2020 average (2017–2019) was 1,228, versus 1,042 in 2020–2024 - a 11.1% decrease for families, highlighting the differing patterns for singles adult's and families.

Table 1: Yearly Average Number of Singles Using EA in Dublin, 2017 - 2024

Year	Annual Average	YoY Change (absolute difference)	YoY Change (as %)	Index (2017=100)
2017	1,949			100.0
2018	2,214	265	13.6	113.6
2019	2,554	340	15.4	131.0
2020	2,938	384	15.0	150.7
2021	3,061	123	4.2	157.1
2022	3,509	448	14.6	180.0
2023	4,141	632	18.0	212.5
2024	4,601	460	11.1	236.1

Table 2: Yearly Average Number of Families Using EA in Dublin, 2017 - 2024

Year	Annual Average	YoY Change (absolute difference)	YoY Change (as %)	Index (2017=100)
2017	1,112			100.0
2018	1,311	199	17.9	117.9
2019	1,262	-49	-3.8	113.5
2020	933	-329	-26	83.9
2021	735	-198	-21.3	66.1
2022	1,005	270	36.7	90.4
2023	1,314	309	30.8	118.2
2024	1,475	161	12.2	132.6

While growth for single adults was broadly steady, several inflection points (periods or times of structural change - see Glynn et al, 2021 for an analysis of inflection points and homelessness rates in the US). Notably, there were sharp increases in 2018 (+13.6%) and 2019 (+15.4%), followed by continued growth in 2020 (+15.0%) despite that year recording the highest number of single exits (n=1,660, with 934 to housing). COVID-19-related restrictions, such as eviction bans and rent freezes, did not significantly curb the rise in single adult EA use. These measures primarily protected tenants with formal lease agreements, leaving many single adults, often reliant on informal arrangements like sofa-surfing or shared living, vulnerable. Lockdown restrictions on household mixing further reduced the availability of such informal accommodation and likely contributing to increased EA entries for singles. On the other hand, it is likely that these COVID-19-related restrictions, alongside an enhanced rate of exits to housing (2,334 or 34% of all exits over the full eight-year period) during the period 2019-2020 resulted in the observed decrease in families in EA at a point-in-time over this period (see O'Sullivan et al, 2024 for further details on trends in homelessness during the Covid-19 related restrictions).

It is important to note that the data in **Tables 1 and 2** is derived from point-in-time (PIT) counts taken during the fourth week of each month, averaged annually for this report. While PIT counts offer helpful consistency and comparability, they provide a static or snapshot portrait of EA use and do not fully capture the dynamic nature of EA use. This can be illustrated when we look at the number of new entries for single adults and families to EA in Dublin over the same period in **Tables 3 and 4**. We observe a relatively modest increase (with the exception of 2020) of single adults, with significant fluctuations in the number of families who entered EA for the first time rather than the significant year-on-year increase at a point-in-time as observed for singles in **Table 1** and the U pattern observed for families in **Table 2**.

Table 3: Yearly Number of Singles entering EA in Dublin, 2017 - 2024

Year	Annual Average	YoY Change (absolute difference)	YoY Change (as %)	Index (2017=100)
2017	1,719			100.0
2018	1,989	270	15.7%	115.7
2019	1,870	-119	-5.9%	108.8
2020	1,660	-210	-11.2%	96.6
2021	1,829	169	10.1%	106.4
2022	2,059	230	11.1%	119.8
2023	1,970	-89	-4.3%	114.6
2024	2,152	182	9.2%	125.2

Table 4: Yearly Number of Families entering EA in Dublin, 2017 - 2024

Year	Annual Average	YoY Change (absolute difference)	YoY Change (as %)	Index (2017=100)
2017	976			100.0
2018	1,112	136	13.9%	113.9
2019	1,022	-90	-8.1%	104.7
2020	699	-323	-31.6%	71.6
2021	749	50	7.2%	76.7
2022	847	98	13.1%	86.8
2023	867	20	2.4%	88.8
2024	909	42	4.8%	93.1

In the case of single adults, the highest number of entries to EA was 2024, and the lowest in 2020, whereas the highest number of family entries to EA is observed in 2018 and 2019, and the lowest number of entries in 2020. The period of greatest fluctuations year-on-year is not surprisingly during the Covid-19 period, and in the period 2022-2024, modest levels of change are evident for entries to EA in comparison with the much higher levels of change in the point-in-time data as shown in Tables 1 and 2. This flow data provides information on the annual demand for EA with the fluctuations observed reflecting the interaction between individual and structural drivers of entries to EA, and the rate of prevention.

Table 5: Yearly Number of Single Adults Exiting EA to Housing in Dublin, 2017 - 2024

Year	Annual Average	YoY Change (absolute difference)	YoY Change (as %)	Index (2017=100)
2017	576			
2018	395	-181	-31.4	68.6
2019	575	180	45.6	99.8
2020	924	349	60.7	160.4
2021	1,079	155	16.8	187.3
2022	504	-575	-53.3	87.5
2023	558	54	10.7	96.9
2024	821	263	47.1	142.5

Significant fluctuations from year-to-year are also evident in the number of exits from EA to housing for both single adults and families over the period 2017-2024 as shown in **Tables 5** and **6**.[1] In the case of single adults, the highest number of exits to housing was in 2021 at 1,079 and the lowest in 2018 at 395; in the case of families the highest number of exits was in 2020 at 1,221 and the lowest in 2022 at 456. The rate of exit from EA to housing reflects the availability of social housing tenancies (from the 4 Local Authorities in the Dublin region and from Approved Housing Bodies) and supports (private rented tenancies with support, primarily the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)).

1 There were a further 5,107 adult (single adults and adults in families) exits to largely insecure non-housing solutions such as returning to family or entering medical and correctional facilities.

Table 6: Yearly Number of Families Exiting EA to Housing in Dublin, 2017 - 2024

Year	Annual Average	YoY Change (absolute difference)	YoY Change (as %)	Index (2017=100)
2017	932			
2018	780	-152	-16.3	83.7
2019	1,113	333	42.7	119.4
2020	1,221	108	9.7	131.0
2021	737	-484	-39.6	79.1
2022	456	-281	-38.1	48.9
2023	461	5	1.1	49.5
2024	708	247	53.6	76.0

Over this period, expenditure on services for households at risk of or experiencing homelessness by the 4 Local Authorities in the Dublin region increased significantly from €131m in 2017 to €346m in 2024, an increase of 164%, with the majority of this expenditure on the provision of EA (for further details, see O'Sullivan et al, 2025). Expenditure by the 4 Local Authorities in the Dublin region for 2025 is estimated to be €376m, and €433m for 2026.

The data in the preceding tables provide useful contextual information on recent trends in the use of EA in the Dublin region. Understandably, much of the focus in recent years has been on the steady increase in the number of singles and families in EA on a monthly basis; however, also observing the flow of single adults and families entering and exiting EA shows a more nuanced, complex and dynamic situation. In this report, we delve further into this data utilising the *Pathway Accommodation and Support System* (PASS) administrative data over the eight years between 2017-2024. The report examines patterns of service use among single adults and families in the Dublin region through multiple lenses: duration and episodes in EA, demographic characteristics, and exit pathways by duration and episode - including housing outcomes, exits without housing, and individuals remaining in EA. Together, these analyses provide a comprehensive understanding of dynamics of EA use and user trajectories, and how single adults and families engage with EA over time.

This report aims to provide a high-level summary overview of trends in EA use in the Dublin region over the eight-year period, 2017-2024, and in subsequent reports, further nuanced analyses will explore in greater detail the demographic profile of entries to, and exits from EA, and duration in EA, to inform policy and practice.

2. Measuring Homelessness, Administrative Data, Policy Design and the Dynamics of Homelessness

In June 2021, all Member States of the European Union signed up to the *European Platform on Combatting Homelessness* (EPOCH) aiming to work together towards tackling and substantially reducing homelessness by 2030 (Leterme and Develtere, 2023). In the most recent Irish governmental housing and homelessness strategy, *Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025-2030: An Action Plan on Housing Supply and Targeting Homelessness* published in November 2025, this commitment was reiterated whereby the Plan states that: "Ireland continues to work with the European Platform for Combatting Homelessness to achieve the aims of the Lisbon Declaration; to work towards ending homelessness by 2030 (2025, p.61).

In the majority of countries in Europe, estimating the extent of homelessness is primarily captured via a *point-in-time* (PIT) count of those in emergency and temporary accommodation (Charbonnier and Coupechoux, 2025; Develtere, 2022; OECD, 2025) and / or an unsheltered street count, either regularly or periodically (Galloway, 2017, and for a nuanced discussion of the differences between city counts, street counts and rough sleeper counts, see Drilling et al, 2020). A PIT count has also been used in the United States since 2007 to provide estimates of the extent of homelessness at national and state level, with an estimated 771,480 people experiencing homelessness (497,256 in shelters and 274,224 unsheltered) on a single night in January 2024 (de Sousa and Henry, 2024). In the case of the United States, the limitations of the PIT count, which in particular, underestimates the extent of the unsheltered, particularly amongst Black and Latino people, are well documented (Richard, 2025; Roncarati et al, 2021; Tsai and Alarcon, 2022;) it nonetheless remains the primary estimate of homelessness in the US.

The Strengths and Limitations of Point-in-time Data

PIT data is a particularly good means of monitoring trends and identifying service user needs (Shinn and Khadduuri, 2020), and as Hermans et al (2025, p.56) put it, PIT data can 'provide initial insights into the profile characteristics of the individuals counted.' However, *period-prevalence* measures are required to supplement *static* PIT measures to accurately estimate the number of people who experience homelessness over a period of time, in addition to understanding entry rates, duration, and exit rates; in other words, the *dynamics* of homelessness.

It is increasingly recognized that the experience of homelessness is a dynamic process and capturing the experience of homelessness at a point-in-time does not reveal the fluidity of the experiences of homelessness. Comparatively rare longitudinal data shows that most households who experience a spell in an emergency shelter will exit to housing and not return to EA (O'Donnell, 2020). Time frames are thus critically important in understanding homelessness (Shinn and Khadduri, 2020, pp.26-27). Put simply, many more households' experience homelessness over a year than are measured at a point-in-time, and the profile of those who have experienced EA use over a year is considerably different from the profile of those in EA at a point-in-time. This is because PIT data over-estimates the minority of those in EA who experience prolonged spells in EA, and under-estimates those

who have brief non-recurrent experiences of EA (See Lee et, 2021; Meyer et al, 2024; O'Sullivan et al, 2024 and Scutella and Wood, 2024 for recent overviews).

Understanding these dynamics of homelessness is crucial to intelligent policy design. As Pederson and colleagues (2025, p.4) have observed in relation to understanding trends in homelessness in the Nordic Countries, a dynamic 'approach enables policymakers to assess inflow, duration, and returns to homelessness, shifting the focus from reporting prevalence to evaluating system performance.'

Administrative Data and Typologies of Emergency Accommodation Use

Recent advances in utilizing and integrating existing administrative data on services for those experiencing homelessness have shown the potential to enhance our understanding of the dynamics of homelessness, in particular EA use (Culhane, 2016; Meyer et al, 2021; Roben and Hermans, 2024; Thomas and Mackie, 2024), in a way that PIT data cannot illuminate, albeit recognizing that such data has it owns limitations. These data limitations may result from the exclusion from administrative data of those not registered or in contact with services (Metraux et al, 2016; Thomas and Tweed, 2021; Robben et al, 2024), or when existing services have reached capacity and services can't be accessed (Treglia and Culhane, 2023). Nonetheless, as summarised by O'Donnell (2024, p.28) 'administrative data have a key advantage in terms of efficiency as a byproduct of the administration of the homelessness services system and the case management of people into and through the system. In tracking individuals over a period in which they receive homelessness services, administrative data also have the advantage of providing longitudinal data and therefore greater insights on the dynamics of homelessness.'

Building on Kuhn and Culhane's (1998; see also Culhane and Kuhn, 1998) influential original analysis of administrative data on EA or shelter service use patterns in New York and Philadelphia, a significant body of research into patterns of EA use utilising administrative data across a range of welfare regimes has resulted in a profound shift in how homelessness is understood and responded to. Analyses From Australia (Taylor & Johnson, 2019; Kavaarpuo et al, 2025), Canada (Aubry et al., 2013) Denmark (Benjaminsen and Andrade, 2015) and Dublin (Waldron et al, 2019; 2024) have shown similar patterns of EA use, albeit with some variation in the profiles of the shelter users. These broadly consistent results show that approximately 20 percent of shelter users (long-term and episodic users) occupy the majority of shelter bed nights over a period of time, but conversely, the majority of shelter users have once-off experiences of shelter use and occupy relatively few shelter bed-nights compared to the long-term and episodic shelter users. In the case of families, similar patterns are evident in smaller number of studies, but those families experiencing long-term stays in EA have a very different psycho-social profile than single long-term users (Culhane et al, 2007; Waldron et al, 2024).

The implications from these findings are that to expedite exiting long-term shelter users, singles and families, to housing *via* rapid-housing programmes such as Housing First and targeted allocations to families, alongside breaking the 'institutional circuit' (Hopper et al, 1997; Daly et al, 2018) of episodic users (whereby a small number of individuals make intensive use not only of homelessness services, but also health and criminal justice services), is not only cost-effective, but provides superior outcomes for EA users in terms of housing stability and well-being.

Others using similar administrative data has suggested modifications to the original three-fold typology (McAllister et al, 2010; McAllister et al, 2011; Bairéad and Norris, 2022; Robben and Hermans, 2025), but the parsimoniousness of the original typology has proven durable and effective for policy and practice in designing effective responses to reducing EA use. Researchers have also been able to link homelessness administrative data with other routinely collected administrative data, for example income, employment and education and individual vulnerability factors such mental ill-health, drug and alcohol use, and engagement with the criminal justice system, with Denmark being best example of linking administrative data in the European context (Benjaminsen, 2016).

Homelessness Research in Dublin: Pathway Accommodation and Support System

Ireland is comparatively unusual in a European context in have a national administrative management system for those adults and child dependents accessing EA, the *Pathway Accommodation and Support System* (PASS) (OECD, 2025). PASS, established in Dublin as a bed management and client support system in 2011 in the context of an evidence-based approach to homelessness policy-making (Downey, 2011), was rolled out nationally in 2013. Providers of services for

those experiencing homelessness receiving statutory funding under Section 10 of the *Housing Act 1988* are required to input data on their service users into PASS.

To-date, the PASS data has been used since 2014 to provide both national and regional PIT trends of the number and profile (gender, age, citizenship, household composition, household composition) of those adults and child dependents in EA on a monthly basis, as well as the EA providers (Monthly Reports published by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage since April 2014) and quarterly flow data on the number of households homeless prevented from entering EA, entries to EA, the duration of stays in EA and the number of exits from EA to various housing options and other non-housing exits (Quarterly Performance Reports published by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage since Q1 2014).[2] In addition, the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) have published detailed point-in-time and flow data on a monthly basis since 2017.

In comparative terms, using the widely adopted and accepted *European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion* (ETHOS) (see appendix 1) (Busch-Geertsema et al, 2024) as a framework, the PASS data provides information on category 2, 'people staying in a night shelter', and category 3, 'people in accommodation for the homeless'. As detailed below, it also captures a significant number of those in category 1, 'people living rough' as the majority of these 'living rough' or unsheltered, also access 'night shelters.' It does not however, for reasons explained in the next section, include ETHOS category 4, women accommodated in domestic violence accommodation services. Nor are 'people in accommodation for immigrants', ETHOS category 5 included which in the case of Dublin can be understood as those seeking international protection and are under the remit of the International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS).

In the case of Dublin, researchers have utilised the PASS data to-date to provide an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the dynamics of EA use drawing on the Kuhn and Culhane typology discussed above. Initially, Waldron et al (2019) explored the patterns of EA utilisation for *all adults* between 2012-2016. Both Parker (2021) and Waldron *et al* (2024) have explored the dynamics of *families* utilising EA in Dublin, in the case of Parker over a six-year period between 2011-2016, and for Waldron et al over a five-year period between 2012-2016. Finally, Bairéad (2022) and Bairéad and Norris (2022) explored the EA utilisation of *single adults* between 2016 and 2018.

In addition to this work exploring the patterns of EA use, the PASS data has been productively utilised to provide detailed accounts of EA use by those aged 18-24 in Dublin between 2016 – 2018 (Bairéad and Norris, 2020; Bairéad and Norris, 2024) and in 2023 (Maphosa and Mayock, 2025), in addition to a comprehensive range of analyses of family EA use in Dublin (see for example, Morrin, 2017; Morrin, and O'Donoghue Hynes, 2018; Morrin, 2019 a and b; Matthews, 2022, and Maphosa, 2024). These analyses of family EA use have identified lone-parent and migrant households as significantly overrepresented among families accessing EA (Morrin and O'Donoghue-Hynes, 2018), with Matthews (2022) observing that larger families faced greater barriers to exit, with the likelihood of securing housing diminishing as family size increased. More recently, Maphosa (2024) examined family presentations between 2020 and 2023 and found a marked decline in housing exits over time: while 53% of families who entered EA in 2019 exited to housing in the year of entry, this fell to 49% in 2020, 33% in 2021, and just 18% in both 2022 and 2023.

Summary

This study builds on this existing research covering the period 2017-2024 and explores both family and single person household use of EA in Dublin using administrative data from the PASS system. It provides a macro-level account of EA use in the Dublin region and provides context for more detailed and evocative ethnographic accounts of the experiences of specific populations (largely long-term and cyclical users) of EA users in Dublin (see for example, O'Carroll and Wainwright, 2019;, Lucey, 2023, 2025a, 2025b).

2 Further details and the various modifications to PASS are detailed in Baptista et al (2022).

3. Data Source, Inclusion Criteria and Data Limitations

This report draws on administrative data from the *Pathway Accommodation and Support System* (PASS), the centralised homeless information management system used by all 31 local authorities in Ireland. Managed by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE), PASS records detailed, real-time information on individuals and families accessing homeless services, including entry and exit dates for EA placements. Each household is assigned a unique identifier, enabling longitudinal tracking of service use. The dataset also includes demographic information, which is analysed to support a deeper understanding of the characteristics of single adults and families using EA in the Dublin region. The analysis covers an eight-year period from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2024 and includes all families and singles who entered EA for the first time during this timeframe in the Dublin region.

To ensure analytical consistency and meaningful longitudinal analysis, the study applied a minimum engagement period of two years for all included service users. This threshold was selected to provide sufficient time for observing service use, transitions, and outcomes, including both short-term and sustained patterns of EA use. It also mitigates limitations associated with very brief or incomplete service histories, which may not reflect the full scope of an individual's interaction with support services. By prioritizing data completeness and comparability, the study aimed to enhance the reliability and interpretability of findings while maintaining a robust sample size.

To operationalize this criterion, the dataset was **left- and right-censored**:

- **Left-censoring** is the removal from analysis of users whose observation period is unknown or falls outside the defined study window, to maintain data integrity. For this report, individuals with EA histories prior to 1st January 2017 were excluded from analysis.
- **Right-censoring** is the removal from analysis of users, due to the end of their observation period being unknown or insufficient for analysis. In this report individuals who entered EA after **31 December 2022** were excluded, ensuring that all included users had at least two years of potential follow-up time to observe EA use patterns and outcomes.

While this approach strengthens analytical depth, it also reduces the overall number of eligible users. This trade-off prioritises longitudinal completeness and comparability over maximum inclusion, resulting in a slightly smaller but more analytically robust cohort. A total of **10,052** single adults and **5,863** families met the inclusion criteria.

Cluster Analysis Approach

Building on Waldron et al. (2019), who applied k-means cluster analysis to identify usage patterns among adults accessing EA between 2012 and 2016 in Dublin, this report applies a similar methodology to a more comprehensive dataset covering the 2017–2024 period. The clustering model incorporated variables capturing both the intensity and pattern of service use, alongside key demographic indicators. These were:

- Total homeless nights
- Number of distinct homeless episodes
- Number of EA providers accessed
- Composite demographic profile (age, gender, household composition, citizenship and ethnicity)

These variables were selected based on established research indicating that duration, frequency, and mobility within the shelter system are critical indicators of service needs and risk of extended shelter use (Kuhn and Culhane, 1998; Cobb-Clark et al, 2016; Bairéad & Norris, 2022). Demographic characteristics including gender, age, household composition, citizenship and ethnicity were also included. This enabled a deeper understanding of the subpopulations within EA users and the extent to which service usage patterns correlate with demographic profiles (O'Donnell, 2024). All variables were standardized prior to clustering

to ensure comparability and prevent scale-related bias. This multivariate approach enabled a robust classification of users based on their engagement with EA over time.

Cluster Identification

The k-means analysis was conducted using the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS), with Z-scores computed for total EA nights and number of episodes to ensure equal weighting. The analysis categorises singles and families into three distinct clusters: short-term, cyclical, and long-term based on the duration and frequency of their accommodation stays. These categories conceptually align with Kuhn and Culhane's typology: Short-term corresponding to Transitional, Cyclical to Episodic, and Long-term to Chronic users. In brief:

- Short-term: Few episodes and low cumulative bed-nights.
- Cyclical: Multiple episodes with moderate cumulative stay.
- Long-term: One to three prolonged stays with high total bed-nights.

This typology enables a more nuanced understanding of how singles and families engage with the homelessness system, in particular EA, and the varying service demands they generate.

Defining Homeless Episodes

Following Kuhn and Culhane (1998), a homeless episode was defined as a continuous stay in EA. A new episode was recorded only if a break of 30 days or more occurred between placements. Stays separated by fewer than 30 days were treated as a single continuous episode.

Data Robustness

As noted above, the potential limitations of using administrative data such as PASS are that it does not capture those for various reasons do not utilising EA services and remain unsheltered, or that if there are insufficient beds in the EA system to meet demand, resulting in unsheltered or hidden homelessness. In the case of the PASS data, we can be reasonably confident that the majority of those experiencing homelessness and require EA in Dublin are included in the PASS data for the following reasons.

Firstly, a bi-annual street count has taken place in Dubin since 2007. The number of people recorded as unsheltered in the point-in-time count over the period 2017-2024 has fluctuated between a low of 83 adults and a high of 184. The one-night street count in Dublin did not take place in March 2020 as scheduled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in late November 2020, the one-night count was replaced with a week-long count, which is now repeated in spring and winter each year. On average, just over 500 unique unsheltered individuals were in contact with the Street Outreach teams each quarter between 2017-2024, and, on average, nearly 70 percent were also accessing EA each quarter.[3] Furthermore, the majority of those unsheltered in a particular count were not unsheltered in the previous count, with for example only 18 unique individuals unsheltered in both the Winter 2023 count and Spring 2023 count. These data confirm the fluidity between street-based settings and EA amongst the majority of those unsheltered, suggesting that a significant number who are recorded in the rough sleeper counts are also recorded in the PASS data.

Second, as demand for EA beds increased over the past eight years, the number of adults in Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA) in the Dublin region increased from 1,723 in January 2017 to 5,086 in December 2024, with the number of adults in Supported Temporary Accommodation (including Family Hubs) provided by both private and non-governmental bodies increasing from 1,587 to 2,234 over the same period. With the number of unsheltered remaining low and constant, and the numbers in PEA in particular growing by nearly 200 percent, it is likely that this increased supply of EA beds is meeting demand, and that there are few individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness due to lack of availability of EA beds.

Third, demand for social housing as measured by the annual *Social Housing Needs Ass*essments show a decline in the number of qualifying households in the four Dublin Local Authorities from 35,577 in 2016 to 24,598 in 2024.

3 Excluding unsheltered International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) users.

Although a crude measure of 'hidden homelessness', given the expansion in EA beds and the low number of unsheltered adults noted above, it does not suggest that there is a significant number of households who are experiencing 'hidden homelessness' due to their being unable to access EA beds.

Data Limitations

There are a number of limitations with the PASS administrative date. They include the following:

- **Service classification:** Changes in service classification may have affected episode counts. For instance, placements in Own Front Door (OFD) accommodation, now classified as transitional rather than emergency, may have created artificial breaks in service use, resulting in multiple episodes where one continuous stay might otherwise have been recorded.
- **Exclusion of Two EA Services:** Two EA services in Dublin run by a denominational not-for profit body, historically and contemporaneously have never sought State-funding for their services and hence are not included in the PASS data set. These two services, one for women and one for men have a joint capacity of approximately 150 beds.
- **Household transitions:** Analysis based on the head of household may obscure changes in household composition. For example, some users transitioned between single and family bookings, making it difficult to determine the precise duration of stay as a family unit.
- **Live system variability:** As PASS is a live system, the dataset extracted in 2025 may include entries not previously recorded during the reporting period or exclude families who did not progress to use the bed.
- **Exclusion of Refuges:** From 1 January 2015, accommodation or refuges for those escaping from gender-based violence (ETHOS category 4) which was funded via *Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988* – a total of 21 residential services with a bed capacity of approximately 250, with annual funding of just over €2.1m was transferred to the statutory Child and Family Agency (TUSLA), and those accessing these residential services have not been recorded in PASS a since that date. Service responses to homelessness and domestic violence have historically and contemporaneously been separate in the number of European Countries (Mayock et al, 2016).
- **Exclusion of Those Seeking International Protection:** As of the 16th of November 2025, there were 23,142 adults and 9,608 children in IPAS accommodation. As of October 2025, there were 613 adult males awaiting accommodation, as effective from December 2023, single male applicants for international protection are offered cash payments until accommodation can be sourced for them. Applicants for international protection are not eligible to access State funded EA.
- **Preventions:** Over the period 2017-2024, 5,389 single adults and 7,385 families or 12,774 households were assessed as homeless under Section 2 of the *Housing Act, 1988* by the Dublin Local Authorities, but were provided with housing options and successfully prevented from entering EA. Of the total number of households who were assessed as homeless (those prevented from entering EA and those who did enter EA) during this period, it may be that those who entered EA had a different demographic profile and housing histories than those who were prevented from entering EA.

On balance, given the relatively low-number of rough sleepers in Dublin and that the majority are also using EA, and acknowledging the limitations noted above, we can be reasonably confident that that over the period 2017-2024, there are no significant limitations to the PASS data in terms of the coverage of those experiencing homelessness and utilising EA services funded under Section 10 of the *Housing Act, 1988*. Of course, the PASS data is not a comprehensive measure of homelessness, rather it includes only those using State funded EA, but nonetheless provides detailed longitudinal data on those experiencing the most acute forms of housing exclusion in the Dublin region.

4. Overview of EA Use by Adult-only Households: Descriptive Statistics

To identify patterns of service use, k-means clustering was applied to data from the 10,052 qualifying single adults who utilised EA in Dublin between 2017 and 2024, resulting in a total of 4,203,807 bed-nights as shown in **Table 7**. Stays were highly skewed: the mean was 418 nights (SD 493), with a range from 1 to 2,866 nights, indicating a heterogeneous population comprising both brief users and a relatively small cohort with prolonged engagement. Most users stayed in EA for fewer than 1,000 nights, with a noticeable concentration at the lower end of the scale. However, a long tail extending toward the maximum of 2,866 nights indicates the presence of prolonged use of EA among a subset of the population.

Table 7: Overview of Homelessness Metric, Single Adults in EA 2017 - 2024

Metric	Value
Total users	10,052
Total homeless nights	4,203,807
Minimum nights (per person)	1
Maximum nights (per person)	2,866
Mean nights (per person)	418
Standard deviation	493

Service Use Patterns

Singles in EA in Dublin are dominated by short-term users, who accounted for 6,679 individuals, or 66% of the total 10,052 users as shown in **Table 8**. Long-term users comprised 2,270 individuals (23%), while the cyclical users were the smallest at 1,103 (11%). This distribution indicated that, by headcount, the system engaged primarily with short-term cases; however, a substantial minority of singles presented with sustained or recurring needs. Short-term users averaged 151 nights (range: 1-658), cyclical users 569 nights (range: 4-2,369), and long-term users 1,130 nights (range: 594-2,866). The high lower bound for long-term users (minimum 594 nights) underscores their entrenched use of EA, while the wide upper range for cyclical users signals substantial variability in cumulative service use driven by repeated returns.

Table 8: EA Cluster Sizes and Means - Single Adults 2017 - 2024

Metric	Short-term	Cyclical	Long-term	for all clusters
Sample size (n)	6,679	1,103	2,270	10,052
Percentage of users	66%	11%	23%	100%
Average no. of nights	151	569	1130	418
Minimum no. of nights	1	4	594	1
Maximum no. of nights	658	2,369	2,866	2,866
Average no. of episodes	1	6	2	2
Minimum no. of episodes	1	4	1	1
Maximum no. of episodes	3	19	5	19
User nights (sum)	1,009,632	628,140	2,566,035	4,203,807
Percentage of user nights	24%	15%	61%	100%
Ratio %nights/%users	0.36	1.4	2.7	1

EA usage patterns varied markedly: short-term users averaged one-episode, cyclical users six, and long-term users two. Applying these averages to cluster sizes yields roughly 6,679 episodes for short-term users, 6,618 for cyclical users, and 4,540 for long-term users - around 17,800 episodes in total. Although cyclical users represent only 11% of the population, they generated nearly as many episodes as the entire cluster of short-term users, highlighting significant operational churn from repeated assessments, entries, and exits. In contrast, long-term users accounted for fewer but substantially longer episodes, indicating sustained EA occupancy rather than frequent re-entry.

Bed-night utilization was heavily concentrated among long-term users, who accounted for 61% of all nights (2,566,035 of 4,203,807). Short-term users, despite comprising two-thirds of the qualifying population, accounted for only 24% (1,009,632 nights), while cyclical users accounted for the remaining 15% (628,140 nights).

Comparing each cluster's share of total bed-nights to its share of users produced a *resource intensity index* that highlights where demand is concentrated. Long-term users had a ratio of 2.7, meaning they consumed 2.7 times the bed-night share implied by their user share (61% of nights vs. 23% of users). Cyclical users had a ratio of 1.4 (15% vs. 11%), while short-term users were underrepresented at 0.36 (24% vs. 66%).

5. Demographic Analysis of Single Adults in EA, 2017 – 2024

This section examines the demographic composition of the identified clusters for single adults in the study over the period 2017 to 2024. Specifically, it explores the relationship between cluster groups and key demographic variables: age, gender, ethnicity and citizenship status and the data is set out in **Table 9**. The aim was to assess whether certain demographic groups were disproportionately represented within distinct EA patterns.

Age

The short-term cluster was predominantly working-age, with over half aged 25–44 and a notable youth (18-24) presence (17%). The cyclical cluster showed an even stronger concentration in the 25–44 age group (63%), with youth less represented (11%), indicating that repeated episodes were most common among adults in early to mid-career stages. The long-term cluster skewed older, with nearly equal shares of 25–44 and 45–64 age groups (each about 43%) and the highest proportion of individuals aged 65+ (3%), highlighting sustained EA use among older adults. Overall, short-term and cyclical EA use was more prevalent among younger and middle-aged adults, while long-term EA use disproportionately affected older individuals.

Gender

Gender patterns showed consistent male overrepresentation across all clusters, with notable variation in the female share. Women were relatively more concentrated in the short-term cluster, suggesting a tendency toward brief EA episodes. Most women in this group exited after a single episode, whereas men were more likely to experience recurrence. The cyclical cluster was the most male-dominated, aligning with its high-frequency episode profile, while the long-term cluster showed a slightly higher female proportion than cyclical, indicating that some women experience prolonged EA use. Overall, women were disproportionately represented in short-term pathways, while men accounted for a larger share of cyclical and long-term EA use.

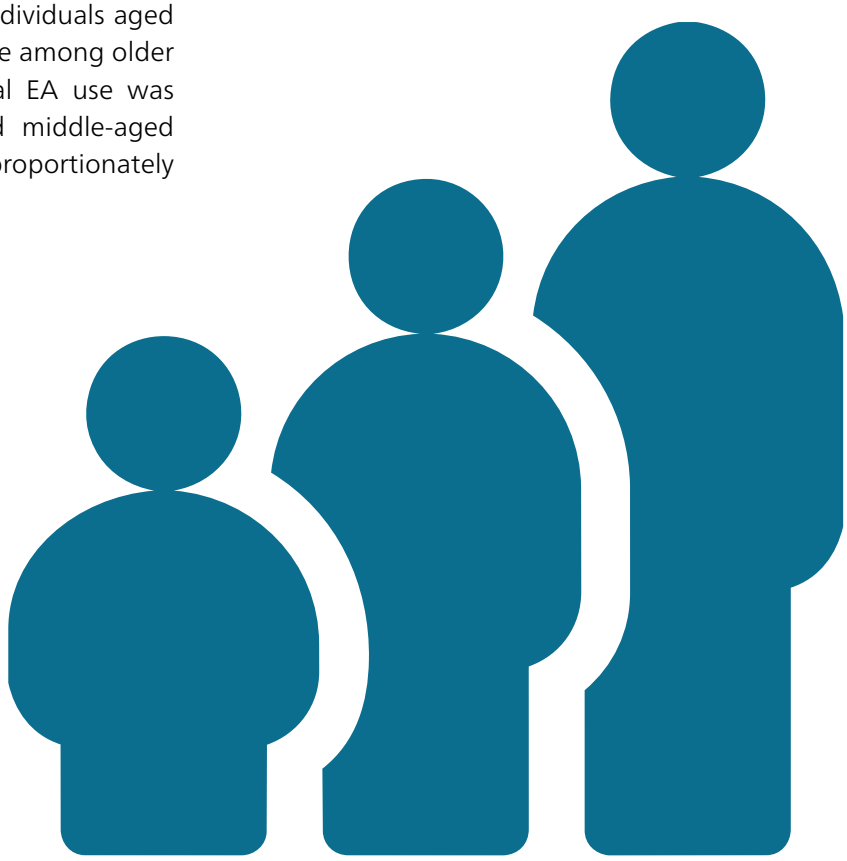


Table 9: EA Use by Single Adults and Demographic Variables

	Short-term		Cyclical		Long-term		for all clusters	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total users	6,679	66%	1,103	11%	2,270	23%	10,052	100%
Age								
18-24	1,130	17%	125	11%	241	11%	1,496	15%
25-44	3,417	51%	698	63%	966	43%	5,081	51%
45-64	1,857	28%	269	24%	985	43%	3,111	31%
65+	275	4%	11	1%	78	3%	364	4%
Gender								
Female	1,750	26%	160	15%	486	21%	2,396	24%
Male	4,929	74%	943	85%	1784	79%	7,656	76%
Citizenship								
Ireland	4,374	65%	793	72%	1272	56%	6,439	64%
EEA countries	1,239	19%	223	20%	512	23%	1,974	20%
Non-EEA countries	1,066	16%	87	8%	486	21%	1,639	16%
Unknown		0%		0%		0%		0%
Ethnicity								
Traveller - Irish	102	2%	15	1%	25	1%	142	1%
Traveller - Non-Irish	6	0.1%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	7	0.1%
White - Irish	2947	44%	660	60%	922	41%	4529	45%
Black - Irish	133	2%	10	1%	52	2%	195	2%
White - EU	870	13%	193	17%	321	14%	1384	14%
Black - EU	84	1%	8	1%	29	1%	121	1%
White - Non-EU	244	4%	19	2%	67	3%	330	3%
Black - Non-EU	675	10%	49	4%	303	13%	1027	10%
Asian/Chinese	56	1%	5	0%	16	1%	77	1%
Other	125	2%	6	1%	33	1%	164	2%
Unknown	1,437	22%	138	13%	501	22%	2,076	21%

Citizenship

Citizenship patterns varied across clusters, with short-term EA use predominantly experienced by Irish nationals, with smaller shares of EEA and non-EEA users. Cyclical EA use showed an even stronger concentration among Irish nationals, indicating that repeated episodes are more common within this group. In contrast, the long-term cluster presented the most diverse profile, with Irish nationals forming a smaller majority and EEA and non-EEA users comprising substantial shares. These patterns highlight that long-term EA use constitutes a larger proportion of experiences among migrant users, while cyclical patterns are concentrated among Irish nationals.

Ethnicity

Analysis of ethnicity showed significant disparities in both the composition of EA use clusters and the risk of sustained EA use. While White – Irish users formed the largest group overall (45%), their representation varied across clusters: they accounted for 60% of cyclical EA users, compared to 44% of short-term and 41% of long-term users. White - EU nationals, the second largest identifiable group (14%), were slightly over-represented in cyclical EA use (18%) and maintained a consistent share in long-term cases (14%). In contrast, Black - non-EU users, who comprised 10% of all users, were disproportionately represented in the long-term cluster (13% of long-term users) and minimally in cyclical EA use (4%). The Unknown ethnicity category, representing 21% of all clients, was concentrated in short-term EA users (22%) and least visible in cyclical (13%). The data gaps in the ethnicity data are the result of the variable being non-mandatory – meaning that EA users can choose not to identify their ethnicity whilst accessing EA.

6. Duration and Episodes of EA Use

This section analyses the relationship between length of stay and episode frequency in shaping EA usage among single adults in the Dublin region and the data is shown in **Table 10**. Duration and recurrence are widely recognized as indicators of case complexity: short-term EA use typically resolves rapidly, whereas repeated episodes or prolonged stays reflect heightened vulnerability and systemic barriers to exit. Understanding these dynamics is critical for designing interventions that interrupt progression from brief to entrenched EA use and for targeting supports.

Short-term

The short-term cohort (6,679 single adults) was heavily front-loaded, with the majority exiting within six months and progressively fewer remaining as duration increased. Approximately one-third persisted beyond six months, and a small minority remained homeless for more than a year, though none exceeded two years, consistent with the cluster definition. This pattern indicates that most short-term use of EA resolves relatively quickly; however, a meaningful subset experiences durations long enough to risk entrenchment if not addressed early.

Short-term EA use predominantly occurred as a single episode, but recurrence increased with longer stays. While most individuals in the shortest duration band exited after one episode, the proportion with two or more episodes rose steadily across higher duration bands, with two-episode patterns most common and three-episode cases peaking in the 12-18-month range before declining slightly. Notably, the longest observed short-term stays occurred among single-episode cases (up to 586 nights), exceeding those for two (538 nights) and three (493 nights) episodes. This suggests that extended short-term patterns are more often continuous rather than fragmented, even as recurrence becomes more likely at the longer end of the spectrum.

Cyclical

The cyclical cluster (1,103 single adults) exhibited a wide range of EA durations, reflecting episodic and unstable housing patterns. Most cases were concentrated within the first two years, but a pronounced long tail extended up to seven years. Nearly 70% (765 users) exited within 24 months, yet almost one-third (30.6% or 338 users) persisted beyond two years, indicating a subset for whom short-term interventions are insufficient. Tapering was observed beyond three years suggesting that cyclical EA use rarely reaches the extreme durations characteristic of long-term EA users.

Episodes in the cyclical cluster were characteristically recurrent and intensified with time. While four- and five-episode patterns (59.4%) were most common overall, a substantial proportion (over 40%) experienced six or more episodes, underscoring the volatility of this cohort. Early duration bands skewed toward fewer episodes, but by the third year the profile shifted decisively: cases with four episodes disappeared, and the distribution spread across five to ten or more episodes, with the latter representing approximately 13% in that band. This gradient indicates that longer cyclical trajectories are increasingly fragmented into multiple returns rather than stabilizing. The persistence of high-episode cases even at later stages highlights the need for sustained targeted interventions to disrupt repeated cycles of EA use.

Table 10: Patterns of EA Use for Single Adults

	Short-term		Cyclical		Long-term		for all clusters	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total users	6,679	66%	1,103	11%	2,270	23%	10,052	100%
EA nights								
1–100	3,662	55%	137	12%	0	0%	3799	37%
101–500	2,566	38%	415	38%	0	0%	2981	37%
501–1000	451	7%	370	34%	1098	48%	1919	17%
> 1000	0	0%	181	16%	1172	52%	1353	10%
EA episodes								
1	4,921	74%	-	0%	1212	53%	6133	61%
2	1,247	19%	-	0%	631	28%	1878	19%
3	511	8%	-	0%	340	15%	851	8%
4-5	-	0%	656	59%	87	4%	743	7%
6-10	-	0%	421	38%	-	0%	421	4%
11-20	-	0%	26	2%	-	0%	26	0%
Total	6679	66%	1103	11%	2270	23%	10052	100%

Long-term

The *long-term cluster* (2,270 single adults) showed a clear pattern of extended use of EA. Most users clustered between two and four years, with a pronounced peak at two to three years and a tapering tail beyond four years. Extremely long stays (≥6 years) were rare, yet the presence of individuals in the seven-to-eight-year range underscores the persistence of long-term EA use within this group. No cases fell below 18 months, consistent with the cluster definition. This profile highlights that while the majority remain in EA for multiple years, a small but significant subset experiences durations so prolonged that they signal entrenched barriers to exit and require intensive, sustained interventions.

Overall, the long-term cluster was predominantly a single episode (53.4%), followed by two episodes (27.8%) and three episodes (15%), with only a small fraction experiencing four or more episodes (3.9%). However, episode patterns varied with duration. Near the threshold (18–24 months), multiple episodes were common, with two episodes most frequent. Beyond two years, single-episode cases remained the largest category but declined steadily, while repeated episodes (four or more) became increasingly visible among the longest stays. This progression suggests that although most long-term patterns are continuous, a subset of users with extended spells exhibit highly fragmented patterns, signalling complex barriers to housing stability.

7. Singles Accommodation Usage by Accommodation Type

As noted earlier in the paper, between 2017 and 2024, 10,052 singles accessed EA during the study period, accumulating a total of 4,203,807 bed-nights. These nights were distributed between Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA) and NGO-operated Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA), with PEA accounting for 59% of all nights and STA for 41% as shown in **Table 11**. This distribution indicates the central role of PEA in meeting EA demand for single users throughout the period. Singles in the short-term cluster (24% of all nights) accounted for 1,009,632 bed-nights, with the majority (58%) spent in PEA. This indicates that even for shorter-duration cases, singles were more often placed in PEA than in STA. Cyclical singles (15% of all nights**)** recorded 628,140 nights, with majority also spent in PEA (57%) and STA provision (43%). Finally, long-term singles (61% of all nights) accounted for most of the accommodation use (2,566,035). PEA usage had the highest percentage in the long-term cluster at 60% of all nights.

Table 11: Singles EA Usage by Accommodation Type

Cluster	PEA	STA	Total
Short-term	585,520 (58%)	424,112 (42%)	1,009,632
Cyclical	359,800 (57%)	268,340 (43%)	628,140
Long-term	1,544,115 (60%)	1,021,920 (40%)	2,566,035
Total nights	**2,489,435 (59%)**	**1,714,372 (41%)**	**4,203,807**

8. Exits from EA – Housing and Non-Housing Exits for Singles

Housing Exits

Most successful housing exits for single adults occurred among the short-term cluster, which accounted for 2,733 individuals as shown in **Table 12**, underscoring that shorter stays in EA are strongly associated with positive housing outcomes. The long-term cluster followed with 850 housing exits, indicating that even prolonged engagement can lead to housing stability, while the cyclical cluster had the lowest success (231 exits), reflecting persistent challenges for those experiencing repeated EA use.

Among the 2,733 individuals in the short-term cluster who achieved housing, over half exited EA within six months (53%), and nearly four in five were housed within a year. By 18 months, 94% had secured housing, and none exceeded two years, demonstrating rapid resolution for most cases. Episodes of EA use were predominantly single (79%), though repeat episodes became more common as duration lengthened. For those housed within six months, 85% had a single episode of EA use, compared to 68% in the 12–18 months band. This trend suggests that while the short-term cluster is characterized by swift, single-episode exits, prolonged cases often involve multiple episodes.

Exits to housing for those in the cyclical cluster was markedly slower than for those in the short-term cluster. Among 231 individuals who exited to housing, only 26% exited within 12 months, and just over half (54%) were housed by two years. Nearly half (46%) required more than two years, with one in five exceeding three years, placing the median time-to-housing in the 18–24-month range. Repeat episodes were a defining feature. Two-thirds involved four or five episodes, and the prevalence of six or more episodes rose sharply with duration, from 18% among those housed within a year to 50% at 18–24 months. Beyond two years, this intensification persisted: among those exceeding three years, all had five or more episodes, and four-episode cases disappeared entirely.

Table 12: Exit Pathways for Singles

Cluster	with Housing Outcome	%	No housing Outcome exited EA	%	No housing Outcome still accessing EA	%	Service User Deceased in Reporting Period	%	Total
Short-term	2,733	41%	3,731	56%	133	2%	82	1%	6,679
Cyclical	231	21%	578	52%	269	24%	25	2%	1,103
Long-term	850	37%	321	14%	1,055	46%	44	2%	2,270
Total	**3,814**	**38%**	**4,630**	**46%**	**1,457**	**14%**	151	2%	**10,052**

Housing exits from EA for the long-term cluster was markedly protracted. Among 850 individuals who had a housing exit, fewer than 15% exited within two years, and the median time-to-housing fell in the 2–3-year band. Nearly half (43%) were housed between two and three years, and by three years, 58% had exited. Cumulatively, 79% were housed by four years and 94% by five years, underscoring the extended engagement required for this group. Unlike the cyclical pattern, long-term cases were dominated by single, continuous episodes: 53% had one episode, 29% had two, and only 3% had four or more. While single episodes remained the plurality across all duration bands, the share of three or more episodes rose over time, from 14% at two to three years to nearly 29% among those housed after five years. The small subset with multi-year pathways therefore faced more complex, repeat contacts.

Non-Housing Exits

Between 2017 and 2024, 4,630 single adults or 46% of the study population, exited EA without securing housing. Of these, 444 individuals (9.6%) returned to EA in 2025. While short-term exits accounted for the largest absolute number of re-entries to EA (197), their re-entry rate was low at 5.3%. In contrast, cyclical and long-term clusters had markedly higher re-entry rates of 29.4% and 24.0%, making them 4–6 times more likely to re-enter EA than short-term cases. The disproportionality was striking: cyclical cases represented just 12.5% of non-housing exits but 38.3% of returns, while long-term cases accounted for 6.9% of exits yet 17.3% of returns. These patterns indicate that unplanned exits among individuals with repeated episodes or entrenched barriers carry a significant risk of EA re-entry.

This can be illustrated looking at two complementary measures: (1) re-access rates by cluster and (2) a disproportionality index comparing each cluster's share of returns to its share of exits. Short-term cases were under-represented among returners (index 0.55), while cyclical and long-term clusters were strongly over-represented (indices 3.07 and 2.50). In practical terms, this means that although short-term exits drive volume, cyclical and long-term cohorts exert disproportionate impact on system churn. While many individuals exited EA without securing housing, a significant proportion did not exit at all. Understanding the characteristics and circumstances of those who remained in EA at the end of the study period is critical for assessing prolonged EA use and identifying barriers to resolution. The following section examines this group in detail, highlighting patterns of duration, service engagement, and associated risks.

Summary of Housing and Non-Housing Outcomes

The *short-term cluster* was characterised by high turnover, with largest share exiting without housing (56%) but also a substantial housing success rate (41%). Only 2% remained in EA, and 1% were deceased, indicating rapid movement through the system, either toward resolution or disengagement. The *cyclical cluster* showed the lowest housing success (21%) and a notable proportion still in services (24%). Over half (52%) exited without housing, reflecting recurring instability and repeated use of EA. The *long-term cluster* had a relatively strong housing outcome (37%), however nearly half (46%) remained in EA. Only 14% exited without housing, and 2% were deceased. Exits from EA *without a housing outcome* were even more concentrated among short-term users (81%), while cyclical users accounted for 13% and long-term just 7%.

9. Single Adults remaining in EA at End of Study Period

At 31 December 2024, 1,457 single adults (14.5%) were still in EA. These users was predominantly long-term (72%), with smaller shares from cyclical (19%) and short-term (9%) users. Stays were heavily skewed to multi-year durations, with 2–3 years alone accounting for 41%, followed by 3–4 years (18%) and 4–5 years (12%).

All short-term users (n=133) were under two years, concentrated around 12–18 months. Cyclical users (n=269) showed a bi-modal pattern: nearly half under two years, and just over half at two years or more (median: 2–3 years). This reflects cumulative cycling, with a moderate tail into multi-year stays. Long-term users (n=1,055) dominated: 94% had been in EA for ≥2 years, with almost half in the 2–3-year band.

Short-term users still in EA were few and confined to under two years, offering a narrow window for rapid resolution. Cyclical users showed a mixed profile, split between early-stage stays and a sizeable 2–3-year mass, while long-term users dominated multi-year durations.

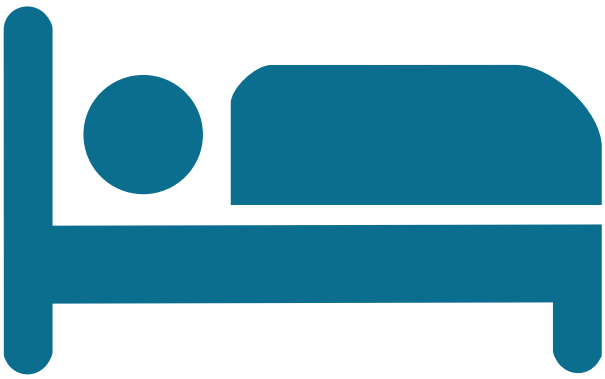
10. Summary of Singles Data

This analysis of 10,052 single adults in Dublin's EA system (2017–2024) showed that EA use among singles is shaped by distinct service use patterns that carry very different operational and policy implications. Although short-term cases comprised two-thirds of all users (66%), the cyclical (11%) and long-term (23%) cohorts disproportionately drove bed-night demand, churn, and backlog, and were associated with poorer exit pathways.

Short-term users averaged 151 nights and typically experienced one episode; cyclical users averaged 569 nights with 4–10+ episodes; long-term users averaged 1,130 nights, generally with one to two prolonged episodes. Whereas short-term EA use tends to be brief and continuous, cyclical EA use is fragmented and recurrent, and long-term EA use is prolonged and entrenched. These temporal patterns also shape outcomes: while 38% of all singles secured a housing outcome, 46% exited without one and 14% remained in EA at yearend, the latter concentrated overwhelmingly in Long-term (72.4%, of 1,457), with 2% deceased over the period.

Age gradients were pronounced: cyclical EA use was concentrated among 25–44, while long-term EA use disproportionately involved 45–64 (and a trailing share of 65+). Gender patterns showed male predominance across all clusters, especially cyclical (85% male), with women relatively more represented in short-term and more likely to resolve within one episode. Citizenship patterns showed non-EEA and EEA nationals comparatively more represented in long-term than in other clusters, while Irish nationals were overrepresented in cyclical. These associations, while not causal, point to differentiated risks and barriers: midlife men with repeated episodes, older adults with entrenched needs, and migrants facing challenges accessing mainstream housing pathways.

Among those exiting without a housing outcome (n=4,630), 9.6% reaccessed EA in 2025. Risk was sharply clustered: cyclical return rate 29.4% and long-term 24.0%, versus 5.3% for Short-term. Cyclical and long-term EA users are therefore 4.5–5.6 times more likely to return, and they are disproportionately represented among returners



11. Overview of EA Use by Families: Descriptive Statistics

This section focuses on the 5,863 new families who accessed EA for the first time as family units in the Dublin region and had equal opportunity of time of at least 2 years in EA. Descriptive statistics on these 5,863 families is shown in **Table 13.**

Table 13: Descriptive statistics of the number of nights stayed in EA by Families

Metric	n
Total Families	5,863
Total homeless nights	2,422,934
Min homeless nights	1
Max homeless nights	2,836
Mean homeless nights	413
Std. deviation	423

Service Use Patterns

A k-means cluster analysis was carried out on the 5,863 families to examine their patterns of service use, identifying three distinct clusters of family EA use: short-term, cyclical, and long-term as shown in **Table 14.** The short-term cluster, comprised 4,113 families (70%), typically characterized by brief stays in EA and consumed 773,353 nights (32%). The long-term cluster included 1,568 families (27%) and spent 1,509,352 nights (62%) reflecting a significant portion of families who experienced extended periods of EA use and sustained housing need. A smaller group of 182 families (3%) fell into the cyclical cluster, consuming 140,229 nights (6%) indicating repeated episodes of EA use. The clusters provide valuable insights into the varying needs and experiences of families using EA and recognizing these differences is essential for tailoring interventions, prioritising resources and designing more nuanced and effective policy responses.

Table 14: Homeless cluster sizes and means

Metric	Short-term	Cyclical	Long-term	for all clusters
Sample size (n)	4,113	182	1,568	5,863
Percentage of users	70%	3%	27%	100%
Average no. of nights	188	770	963	413
Minimum no. of nights	1	19	500	1
Maximum no. of nights	586	2,394	2,836	2,836
Average no. of episodes	1	5	1	1
Minimum no. of episodes	1	4	1	1
Maximum no. of episodes	3	15	3	15
User nights (sum)	773,353	140,229	1,509,352	2,422,934
Percentage of user nights	32%	6%	62%	100%
Ratio %nights/%users	0.5	1.9	2.3	1

12. Demographic Analysis of Families in EA, 2017 – 2024

This section examines the demographic composition of the identified clusters for families over the period 2017 to 2024. Specifically, it explored the relationship between the cluster groups and key demographic variables: the analysis covered age, gender, citizenship, ethnicity and household composition. The aim was to assess whether certain demographic groups were disproportionately represented within the three clusters.

Age Distribution

The majority of adults in families across the three clusters fell within the 25–44 age group, accounting for 65% of the total population as shown in **Table 15.** Adults in short-term families were predominantly younger, with 20% aged 18–24, while long-term families showed a higher proportion of older adults (24% aged 45–64). Cyclical families maintained a similar age profile to short-term families but with slightly fewer young adults.

Gender Distribution

Females made up 73% (4,297) of the adults in families. They dominated across all clusters, particularly among short-term families (76%) and long-term families (68%) as shown in **Table 15.** Cyclical families showed a more balanced gender distribution, with 59% female and 41% male, suggesting different dynamics in housing instability.

Table 15: EA Use by Families and Demographic Variables

	Short-term		Cyclical		Long-term		for all clusters		Notes
Total users	4,113	70%	182	3%	1,568	27%	5,863	100%	
Age									
18-24	837	20%	30	16%	183	12%	1,050	18%	
25-44	2,660	65%	130	71%	1,003	64%	3,793	65%	
45-64	595	14%	22	12%	372	24%	989	17%	
≥ 65	21	1%	0	0%	10	1%	31	1%	
Gender									
Female	3,118	76%	108	59%	1,071	68%	4,297	73%	
Male	995	24%	74	41%	497	32%	1,566	27%	
Citizenship									
Ireland	2,673	65%	148	81%	789	50%	3,610	62%	
EEA countries	749	18%	24	13%	421	27%	1194	20%	
Non-EEA countries	691	17%	10	5%	358	23%	1,059	18%	
Unknown	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	
Ethnicity									
Traveller - Irish	135	3%	14	8%	94	6%	243	4%	
Traveller - Non-Irish	8	0.2%	1	1%	14	1%	23	0%	
White - Irish	1923	47%	121	66%	466	30%	2510	43%	
Black - Irish	166	4%	2	1%	52	3%	220	4%	
White - EU	621	15%	21	12%	302	19%	944	16%	
Black - EU	59	1%		0%	31	2%	90	2%	
White - Non-EU	148	4%	3	2%	60	4%	211	4%	
Black - Non-EU	530	13%	10	5%	290	18%	830	14%	
Asian/Chinese	88	2%		0%	28	2%	116	2%	
Other	82	2%	1	1%	27	2%	110	2%	
Unknown	353	9%	9	5%	204	13%	566	10%	

Citizenship

Irish citizens represented the majority of adults in families in all clusters, especially among cyclical families (81%). However, adults in long-term families showed a more diverse citizenship profile, with 27% from EEA countries and 23% from non-EEA countries.

Ethnicity

Ethnic diversity was most pronounced among long-term families. While 43% of all adults in families identified as White Irish, long-term families included higher proportions of Black Non-EU (18%) and White EU (19%). Traveller families were also notably represented, especially in the cyclical group (8%).

Household Composition

Single-parent families were the most common household type (61%) while couples with children accounted for 39%. In the short-term cluster, single-parent families represented 65% indicating that they moved through the system relatively quickly. The dominance of the single-parent households was also seen in the cyclical cluster (65%), suggesting they were equally prone to repeat episodes of EA use. In contrast, long-term families showed a more balanced composition, with 49% being couples with children. This indicated that couples with children were proportionally more likely than single-parent families to become long-term users of EA.

Across all clusters, 89% of lone parents were female, which is consistent with broader trends in family homelessness. The cyclical group stood out with a significantly higher proportion of male lone parents (37%) compared to the short-term and long-term clusters (both at 10%).

The demographic analysis of families accessing EA between 2017 and 2024 revealed a complex and evolving profile. While short-term and cyclical families shared many characteristics, such as younger age, smaller household size, and predominance of female-headed households, long-term families presented with more entrenched challenges, including larger household sizes, greater ethnic diversity, and higher representation of non-Irish nationals. The overrepresentation of lone parents, particularly women, underscores the gendered nature of family EA use.

13. Duration and Episodes of EA Use by Families

This section examines the scale and intensity of EA use across the three identified clusters of families using EA in the Dublin region. Understanding the distribution of families across these clusters as well as the average duration and frequency of their EA use is essential to interpreting overall demand on EA services. Each cluster reflected a different pattern of engagement, defined by both the duration of stays and the number of EA episodes. Understanding the duration and episodic nature of family use of EA is critical to identifying the depth and complexity of housing need. As noted in the introduction, headline PIT figures focus primarily on the number of families accessing EA, analysis of the duration and episodes of EA use reveals that the length of stay and frequency of re-entry vary significantly across family groups.

The duration of the 5,863 families varied from very brief stays, the shortest lasting just one night whilst others remained for prolonged periods, with the longest extending to 2,836 nights (nearly eight years). The average stay was 413 nights, though this figure concealed significant variation. The data revealed a positively skewed distribution of homeless nights. While short-term families comprised 70% of all cases as shown in **Table 16,** they accounted for only 32% of total EA bed-nights. Conversely, just 30% of families (those in the cyclical and long-term clusters) were responsible for 68% of usage, with long-term families alone accounting for over 60% of all bed-nights.

Table 16: Relationship between Clusters and Patterns of EA use by Families

	Short-term		Cyclical		Long-term		for all clusters	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total users	4,113	70%	182	3%	1,568	27%	5,863	100%
Homeless nights								
1–100	1,698	41%	5	3%	0	0%	1,703	29%
101–500	2,172	53%	59	32%	1	0.1%	2,232	38%
501–1000	243	6%	63	35%	1,039	66%	1,345	23%
> 1000	0	0%	55	30%	528	34%	583	10%
Homeless episodes								
1	3,454	84%	0	0%	1,123	72%	4,577	78%
2	557	14%	0	0%	328	21%	885	15%
3	102	2%	0	0%	117	7%	219	4%
4-5	0	0%	126	69%	0	0%	126	2%
6-10	0	0%	49	27%	0	0%	49	1%
11-20	0	0%	7	4%	0	0%	7	0%

Short-term Families

The short-term families were the largest cluster, accounting for 4,113 or 70% of all families. The families were defined by low-duration, low-frequency service use. The average stay was 188 nights, with most leaving EA within the first year.

The minimum stay was 1 night and the maximum stay 586 nights. Analysis of the duration showed that the largest group of families (2,356, or 57% of the cluster) exited EA within six months. A further 1,005 families (24%) remained for between six and twelve months; 650 families (16%) stayed between twelve and eighteen months; and only 102 families (2%) remained for up just over 18 months. The longest stay was 586 days, confirming that many families in the short-term cluster exited EA relatively quickly, most within a year, with diminishing proportions as duration increased. The

short-term cluster was dominated by single episodes of EA use: 3,454 families (84%) experienced only one spell of EA. Repeat EA use was less common but notable: 557 families (14%) had two episodes, and 102 families (2%) experienced three episodes.

The interaction between duration and episodes revealed that among families who exited EA within six months, most (89%) did so after a single episode, although a minority returned for a second or third spell (11%). As the duration of EA use increased, the likelihood of multiple episodes also rose. For example, in the 6-12-month group, 22% had repeat episodes. Additionally, in the 12-18-month group, this proportion increased to 27%. By contrast, the 18-24-month group was entirely composed of single-episode families, suggesting that while longer stays were continuous, shorter stays often involved cycling in and out of EA.

Cyclical Families

Although the smallest group (182 or 3% of families), cyclical families were characterised by repeated returns to EA. On average they experienced five separate episodes, with a minimum of four and up to fifteen. Their average stay across episodes was 770 nights, far higher than the short-term group. Despite their small numbers, they contributed 6% of all user nights, highlighting the challenges of recurrence and instability.

Looking at the number of families and episodes, most families in the cyclical cluster experienced four episodes of EA use (85 families), with steadily fewer families at each higher episode count. Only a small number (13 families) experienced ten or more episodes. This suggests that while repeat EA use is characteristic of the cyclical group, very high numbers of episodes are relatively rare. The distribution shows a steep drop-off after the fourth episode, with most families clustering at the lower end of episode counts.

When examining the percentage share of families by duration of EA use, the pattern shifted toward medium-term stays. Families were most heavily concentrated in the 2–3-year range (22.5%) and the 3-4-year range (19.2%), followed by significant shares in 6-12 months (15.9%) and 12–18 months (13.7%). Very few families remained in EA after 5 years (less than 6% combined). This indicated that for cyclical cases, EA use was often prolonged over multiple years but without progressing into extremely long durations, pointing to repeated exits and returns rather than continuous extended stays.

Long-term Families

The long-term group made up over a quarter of families (1,568 families or 27%) and was defined by prolonged single episodes of EA use. The average duration was 963 nights, with no family in this group staying fewer than 500 nights. Although fewer than the short-term group, they dominated resource use, accounting for 62% of all user nights.

Most families in this cluster remained in EA for two to three years (757 families) or 18–24 months (402 families), with notable numbers extending into the 3-4-year (249 families) and 4-5-year (89 families) ranges. Almost all these families were concentrated in single episodes of EA use (71.6%), although a significant minority experienced two or three episodes. The long-term cluster was therefore characterised by long, sustained stays rather than repeated exits and returns, which was consistent with the definition of this cluster.

Examining the episodes of EA use by duration, shorter long-term durations (for example, 18-24 months and 2-3 years) had a higher share of families in a single episode, while longer durations (3+ years) showed a rising proportion of families with two or three episodes. For example, at 16–18 months, the majority of families were in their third episode (86%), whereas by 2–3 years, most were still in their first episode (77%). This showed that while the long-term cluster was defined by sustained EA use, some families within it experienced repeat breakdowns that extended their time in EA beyond two years.

Summary

Most families who entered EA between 2017 and 2024 exited quickly and did not return, with over three-quarters (78%) experiencing only a single short-term episode. In terms of duration, short-term families typically spent under 600 nights in EA before exiting, highlighting that most EA experiences were short. In contrast, long-term families faced entrenched stays beginning at 500 nights and stretching to over 2,800 nights, more than seven years, despite few episodes. The cyclical group started at four or more episodes ranging from a few weeks to over six years, reflecting instability and repeated breakdowns.

14. Accommodation Usage by Accommodation Type

Across the period reviewed (2017–2024), the 5,863 families recorded a total of 2,422,934 homeless nights in EA. Just over half of these nights (56%) were spent in Private Emergency Accommodation (PEA), compared with 44% in NGO-provided Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA) as shown in **Table 17**. Short-term families (32% of all nights) accounted for 773,353 nights, with the majority (58%) in PEA. Cyclical families (6% of all nights) accounted for 140,229 nights, split almost evenly between PEA (49%) and STA provision (51%). This closer balance may reflect how cyclical users move in and out of accommodation and across different service types depending on availability. Long-term families (62% of all nights) accounted for the majority of accommodation use at 1,509,352 nights. Although a greater share were housed in STAs (44%) compared to short-term families, PEA still dominated at 56%.

Table 17: Families EA Usage by Accommodation Type

Cluster	PEA	STA	Total
Short-term	(58%)	(42%)	773,353
Cyclical	(49%)	(51%)	140,229
Long-term	(56%)	(44%)	1,509,352
Total nights	**(59%)**	**(41%)**	**2,422,934**

The following section considers what outcomes families experienced on exiting EA accommodation by analysing housing outcomes.

15. Exits from EA – Housing and Non-Housing Exits

Housing Exits

Out of the 5,863 families included in patterns of EA usage, 4,479 (76%) ultimately exited to housing as shown in **Table 18.** The short-term cluster accounted for most of the housing exits, with the majority of families leaving within the first year and typically after a single episode. In contrast, the long-term cluster also produced nearly a quarter of housing exits (24%), but only after families spent sustained periods in EA, most commonly two to three years, and in some cases extending to five or six years and rarely experienced multiple episodes. The cyclical cluster, while smaller in scale, showed a unique pattern: housing outcomes (2%) were achieved despite multiple returns, with some families experiencing up to ten or more episodes before finally securing stability. For this group, the problem was not duration alone but the fragility of housing arrangements once families exited, leading to repeated breakdowns before a lasting solution was reached.

Table 18: Exit Pathways for Families

Cluster	with Housing Outcome	%	No housing Outcome exited EA & Sustained Exit - not returned since exit	%	No housing Outcome still accessing EA 31st Dec 2024		No housing Outcome Exited EA - back in EA 2025	%	Total
Short-term	3,303	80%	757	18%	17	0.4%	36	1%	4,113
Cyclical	92	51%	42	23%	31	17%	17	9%	182
Long-term	1,084	69%	94	6%	358	23%	32	2%	1,568
Total	**4,479**	**76%**	**893**	**15%**	**406**	7%	**85**	**14%**	**5,863**

Short-term cluster housing outcomes

The short-term cluster consisted of 4,113 families and majority (3,303 or 80%) secured a housing outcome in the study period. Over half of this group (1,796 families), did so within the first six months of entering EA. A further 855 families (26%) exited within 6–12 months, showing that over 80% of all housing exits in the short-term cluster occurred within the first year. Smaller but still notable numbers exited after longer stays: 562 families (17%) between 12 and 18 months, and just 90 families (3%) after 18–24 months. No families stayed in EA for two years in this cluster, underscoring that the short-term pathway is indeed time-limited and generally resolves within two years.

Cyclical Cluster Housing Outcomes

The cyclical cluster presented a very different housing outcome profile compared to the short-term families. Out of the 182 families in this group, over half (92 families, or 51%) eventually exited EA into housing. Families in the cyclical cluster had a minimum of four episodes before achieving a housing outcome. The housing outcomes were spread across the spectrum of durations: 46 families (50% of all housed in this cluster) exited within two years, while the other half remained in the system far longer. For example, 23 families secured housing only after two to three years, while others exited after three to four years (16 families), and a small number (7 families) only after more than four years in EA. Nearly half of the

housed cyclical families (43) had four episodes, but significant numbers exited after five (20 families), six (11 families), or even more than ten episodes (six families). The pattern reflected repeated breakdowns in housing solutions.

Long-term Cluster Housing Outcomes

The long-term cluster showed a distinct housing outcome profile from either the short-term or cyclical groups. Out of the 1,568 families in this cluster, 1,084 (over two-thirds) eventually exited to housing. Most families in this cluster exited only after long episodes of two years or more, with 521 families housed between two and three years, 145 families housed between three and four years, and smaller but notable numbers (66 families) exiting after four to six years. Even at shorter durations (18–24 months), 352 families achieved a housing outcome, showing that exits were possible earlier but often still after more than a year and a half in EA. Very few families exited in under 18 months, underlining how entrenched this group was compared to the short-term cluster. Episodes remained relatively low compared to the cyclical group, with the majority of families exiting after just one episode (783 families, 72% of all housed long-term families). A smaller proportion required two episodes (222 families, 21%) or three episodes (79 families, 7%) before securing housing. This indicates that the main barrier for this group was not cycling in and out of EA but rather sustained difficulty in exiting at all once they entered the system.

Taken together, these findings showed that while the majority of families do move on to housing, the pathways diverged sharply across clusters: quick exits for short-term families, entrenched delays for long-term families, and repeated instability for cyclical families.

Exits without Housing Outcomes

A total of 978 families exited EA without a housing outcome. Of these, 893 families sustained their exit and did not return, while 85 families re-entered EA in 2025. Short-term families accounted for the largest share of non-housing exits, with 793 families leaving EA without housing; notably, 757 of these exits were sustained, and only 36 families returned, resulting in a low re-access rate of 4.5%. In contrast, cyclical families had the highest instability, with 59 non-housing exits, of which 17 returned in 2025, equating to a re-access rate of 28.8%. Long-term families also demonstrated significant vulnerability, with 126 non-housing exits and 32 returns, a re-access rate of 25.4%. These patterns showed that while short-term families generally maintained stability even without housing, cyclical and long-term families faced considerable challenges in sustaining exits.

Short-term families accounted for most exits without housing (81.1%, 793 families), yet represented only 42.4% of returns in 2025, resulting in a disproportionality index of 0.52 (returns share divided by exit share). In contrast, cyclical families made up just 6% of non-housing exits (59 families) but contributed 20% of returns, yielding a disproportionality index of 3.32, the highest among clusters. Similarly, long-term families comprised 12.9% of exits (126 families) but 37.6% of returns, with an index of 2.92, indicating a strong overrepresentation in re-entry. These figures show that while short-term families rarely return after exiting without housing (re-access rate 4.5%), cyclical and long-term families face persistent instability, with re-access rates of 28.8% and 25.4% respectively. Cyclical families were more than three times as likely to return to EA relative to their share of exits, and long-term families nearly three times as likely.

Families Remaining in Emergency Accommodation

At the end of the reporting period, 406 families were still accessing EA. Long-term families accounted for most families remaining, representing 88% or 358 families, showing the entrenched nature of EA use for this cohort and the significant barriers they face in achieving housing stability. Cyclical families comprised 8% (31 families), reflecting ongoing instability and repeated engagement with EA, while short-term families represented only 4% (17 families), confirming that prolonged stays were rare for this cluster.

16. Summary of Families Data

Of the 5,863 families included in the study, 78% experienced only a single episode, and 58% exited EA within a year, confirming that most families resolve their homelessness relatively quickly. However, a significant minority, particularly those in the long-term (27%) and cyclical (3%) clusters, faced entrenched or recurring EA use. Long-term families alone accounted for 62% of all bed-nights, despite representing less than a third of families in the study period. Over the study period, families spent more than 2.4 million nights in EA, with a majority (56%) of these in PEA. Housing outcomes varied sharply across clusters. While 80% of short-term families secured housing, often within six months, only 51% of cyclical families and 69% of long-term families achieved exits, typically after multiple years in EA. Demographic analysis further highlights the complexity of family use of EA. Female-headed households made up 73% of all families, with 89% of lone parents being women. Migrant families, particularly those from EEA and non-EEA countries, were disproportionately represented in the long-term cluster.

17. Conclusion

Over the period 2017-2024, the number of households (single adult households and families) in Emergency Accommodation (EA) in the Dublin region at a point-in-time increased from an annual average of 3,061 in 2017 to 6,076 in 2024, nearly a 100% increase. Comparatively, the number of households in EA at a point-in-time is the most common and easily understood means of identifying trends in EA use and is often used as a proxy for measuring trends in homelessness. With the publication by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage of point-in-time data on EA use each month since mid-2014, it is also the most widely disseminated measure of EA use both nationally and in the Dublin region and often cited as the key indicator to assess the efficacy or otherwise of policies to reduce homelessness.

However, not only does this overall upward trend conceal significant temporal variations between singles and families as noted in this report, but more importantly, point-in-time measures of EA use do not capture the dynamics of EA. We use the term 'dynamics of EA use' to understand not only the number of households in EA at a point-in-time, but also the number of households who enter and exit EA, the duration of their stay in EA and the number of times (or episodes) they accessed EA.

Drawing on administrative data from the Pathway Accommodation and Support System (PASS) from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2024, on all families and singles who entered EA for the first time during this period in the Dublin region who had a minimum engagement period of two years, our analysis identifies a pattern of EA use that is shaped by duration, recurrence, and demographic characteristics.

Drawing on extensive international and Irish research, we identify three distinct patterns of EA use: a short-term cluster (70% of families and 66% of singles) who experienced few episodes and low cumulative bed-nights; a cyclical cluster (3% of families and 11% of singles) who experienced multiple episodes, but moderate cumulative bed-nights; and a long-term cluster (27% of families and 23% of singles) who experienced one to three prolonged stays with high number of total bed-nights.

Of the 5,863 families included in the study, 78% experienced a single episode of EA use, and 58% exited EA within a year, and of the 10,052 single adults included, 61% experienced a single episode of EA and 60% exited EA within a year. Of the total number of households that exited EA during the study period, 76% of families and 38% of single adults exited to social housing tenancies or supports. A further 17% of families and 46% of single adults exited EA without securing housing but did not return to EA during the study period.

However, a significant minority of families and singles, particularly and not surprisingly the long-term and cyclical EA users experienced entrenched or recurring EA use, with long-term families accounted for 62% of all EA bed-nights for families and long-term singles accounting for 61% of all EA bed-nights for singles over the study period.

Female-headed households made up 73% of all families, with 89% of lone parents being women. Long-term families were characterised by larger household sizes, greater ethnic diversity, and higher representation of non-Irish nationals than those families in the short-term and cyclical clusters. For singles, males predominated across all clusters, with citizenship patterns showing non-EEA and EEA nationals comparatively more represented amongst longterm EA users than in the other clusters.

As noted in the introduction to this report, this report provides an initial high level analysis of EA use in the Dublin region between 2017-2024, and in a series of subsequent reports, further nuanced analyses of this data will explore in greater detail the demographic profile of entries to, exits from, and duration in EA, in order to provide a robust evidence-base to inform policy and practice to reduce the use of EA in the context of the Dublin Region Homeless Action Plan (2025-2027).

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Appendix 1

ETHOS EUROPEAN TYPOLOGY OF HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING EXCLUSION

What is ETHOS?

ETHOS is the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion. It was developed by FEANTSA as a transnational framework definition for policy and practice purposes. It provides a shared language for transnational exchange. It does not attempt to harmonise national definitions of homelessness in Europe.

ETHOS classifies living situations that constitute homelessness or housing exclusion. ETHOS identifies 4 main categories of living situation: Rooflessness, Houselessness, Insecure Housing and Inadequate Housing. These conceptual categories are divided into 13 operational categories that can be used for different policy purposes, such as mapping the problem of homelessness, as well as developing, monitoring and evaluating policies.

Conceptual Category		OPERATIONAL CATEGORY		LIVING SITUATION		GENERIC DEFINITION
	ROOFLESS	1	People Living Rough	1.1	Public space or external space	Living in the streets or public spaces, without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters
		2	People in emergency accommodation	2.1	Night shelter	People with no usual place of residence who make use of overnight shelter, low threshold shelter
	HOUSELESS	3	People in accommodation for the homeless	3.1	Homeless hostel	
				3.2	Temporary accommodation	Where the period of stay is intended to be short term
				3.3	Transitional supported accommodation	
		4	People in Women's Shelter	4.1	Women's shelter accommodation	Women accommodated to experience of domestic violence and where the period of stay is intended to be short term
		5	People in accommodation for immigrants	5.1	Temporary accommodation/reception centres	Immigrants in reception or short term accommodation due to their immigrant status
				5.2	Migrant workers accommodation	
		6	People due to be released from institutions	6.1	Penal institutions	No housing available prior to release
				6.2	Medical institutions (*)	Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing
				6.3	Children's institutions/homes	No housing identified (e.g. by 18th birthday)
	INSECURE	7	People receiving longer-term support (due to homelessness)	7.1	Residential care for older homeless people	Long stay accommodation with care for formerly homeless people (normally more than one year)
				7.2	Supported accommodation for formerly homeless people	
		8	People living in insecure accommodation	8.1	Temporarily with family/friends	Living in conventional housing but not the usual place of residence due to lack of housing
				8.2	No legal (sub)tenancy	Occupation of dwelling with no legal tenancy illegal occupation of a dwelling
				8.3	Illegal occupation of land	Occupation of land with no legal rights
		9	People living under threat of eviction	9.1	Legal orders enforced (rented)	Where orders for eviction are operative
				9.2	Re-possession orders (owned)	Where mortgagee has legal order to re-possess
		10	People living under threat of violence	10.1	Police recorded incidents	Where police action is taken to ensure place of safety for victims of domestic violence
	INADEQUATE	11	People living in temporary/ non-conventional structures	11.1	Mobile homes	Not intended as place of usual residence
				11.2	Non-conventional building	Makeshift shelter, shack or shanty
				11.3	Temporary structure	Semi-permanent structure hut or cabin
		12	People living in unfit housing	12.1	Occupied dwellings unfit for habitation	Defined as unfit for habitation by national legislation or building regulations
		13	People living in extreme over-crowding	13.1	Highest national norm of overcrowding	Defined as exceeding national density standard for floor-space or usable rooms

Note: Short stay is defined as normally less than one year; Long stay in defined as more than one year.

(*) Includes drug rehabilitation institutions, psychiatric hospitals etc.

Feidhmeannacht um Dhaoine ar Easpa
Dídine Réigiún Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin Region Homeless Executive