

Families

REPORTED REASONS FOR FAMILY HOMELESSNESS IN THE DUBLIN REGION: JANUARY TO JUNE 2016

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Foreword

This report reviews administrative data to present the reasons for family homelessness for the first six months of 2016. Upon presentation to their local authority, families complete an initial assessment form. One of the questions asked is the reason for their presentation to homeless services. Unlike the support planning process which can explore in detail the often complex set of circumstances that led to homelessness, the initial assessment typically captures a single primary reason. The report demonstrates that family circumstance, such as relationship breakdown and overcrowding, was the most commonly reported cause of homelessness, closely followed by forced departure from a tenancy in private rented accommodation. However, the DRHE expect that factors relating to the private rented sector are likely to be understated during the period being reported on. Previous qualitative research¹ commissioned by the DRHE on family homelessness found that many families will have moved in with family or friends following a loss of private rented accommodation and that this move was unsustainable. Notwithstanding this limitation, this report provides valuable insight into the most common causes of family homelessness in the Dublin Region.

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1. S. Stamp (pending publication), The Experiences of Newly Homeless Families Accommodated by Dublin's Homeless Services in August 2015. Dublin Region Homeless Executive.

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1. Introduction

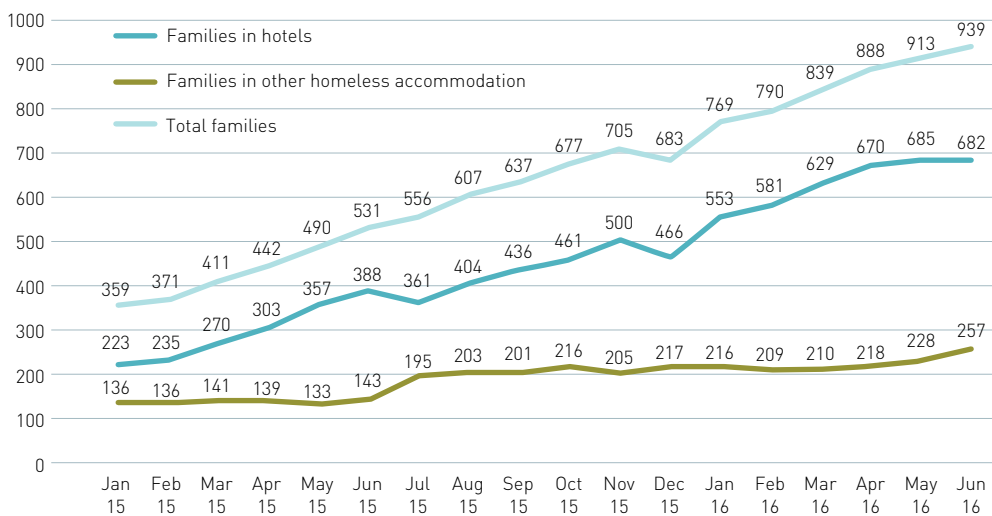
As detailed in this report, 502 new families accessed homeless accommodation services during the first six months of 2016. As can be seen in Table 1 below, the number of families presenting varies each month but January 2016 was the busiest month for presentations. We believe this is because a lot of families defer presentation over the Christmas period as in December 2015, 41 new families accessed services, a low number compared with previous months.

While 502 new families accessed emergency accommodation, a number of families also departed to take up tenancies during the same period. The net increase in families accessing emergency accommodation between January and June 2016 was 256 or 37%. The number of families increased from 683 in December 2015 to 939 in June 2016 as detailed in Figure 1 below.

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

New Families accessing homeless accommodation	
Jan-16	125
Feb-16	83
Mar-16	84
Apr-16	74
May-16	64
Jun-16	72
Total	502

Figure 1: Number of families in emergency accommodation in the Dublin Region each month



The monthly figures detailed here represent the number of families in emergency accommodation over a single week in the month.

2. Overview

In the first six months of 2016 a total of 502 new families were accommodated in emergency accommodation in the Dublin Region who had no active or previous PASS² record i.e. they were 'new' to homelessness. A review of the initial assessments conducted with families upon their presentation to homeless services reveals two primary reasons for homelessness; leaving private rented accommodation on foot of a Notice to Quit (NTQ) and leaving family or friend's accommodation due to relationship breakdown or overcrowding. A small number of families reported 'other' reasons for their presentation to homeless services.

2.1 Private Rented Sector

An analysis of these household's circumstances at presentation to Dublin's Pathway to Home services reveals that:

- 42% of families (n=190) stated that the primary reason for their homelessness related to a loss of or inability to secure private rented accommodation.

Further analysis of these household's circumstances at presentation to Dublin's Pathway to Home services confirms that:

- Notices to Quit were issued to 181 families;
- Two families left their accommodation as it was of poor quality or unsuitable to their needs;
- One family was unable to source private rented accommodation after their previous lease expired;
- One family had left a private rented property as they sourced an alternative but this fell through at the last minute;
- Three families, who were either new or returning to Dublin, could not afford private rented accommodation in the Dublin region;
- Two families had to leave the parental home as it was sold and could not source private rented accommodation.

2.2 Family Circumstance

There were a total of 255 families (55%) in this category, of which 55 families stated the primary reason for their presentation as homeless is that they were departing an overcrowded living situation while 181 stated that there was some element of relationship breakdown that triggered their rooflessness. General family circumstance (n=17) and family reunification (n=2) make up the remainder.

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

2.3 Other

Causation among the remaining 15 families (or 3%) breaks down as follows:

- Two families were evicted from social housing;
- Five families cited no income source as their reason for homelessness;
- Six families left properties due to being victims of anti-social behaviour;
- Two families left their properties voluntarily, i.e. without a valid NTQ.

There was insufficient information available on the remaining 42 families.

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

3. Reasons for Homelessness

Table 2: Reasons for homelessness reported by families in the Dublin Region, January to June 2016

	Jan '16	Feb '16	March '16	April '16	May '16	June '16	TOTAL
Private Rented Sector							
Notice to Quit							
- General	19	20	25	27	14	11	116
- Invalid/illegal	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
- Landlord/family use	4	1	1	-	-	2	8
- Property to be sold	14	3	1	2	3	4	27
- Landlord bankrupt/ receivership	1	-	1	3	1	-	6
- Tenant rent arrears	5	6	1	1	1	4	18
- Anti social behaviour	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
- Building work/repairs	-	-	2	1	-	-	3
Unsuitable accommodation	1	-	-	-	1	-	2
Expiry of lease	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Rented property fell through	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
New/return to Dublin unable to afford rent	-	-	2	1	-	-	3
Parental family home sold	-	-	1	1	-	-	2
TOTAL PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR	44 35%	31 39%	36 49%	36 56%	21 36%	22 37%	190 42%
Family Circumstance							
Overcrowding	14	8	9	2	12	10	55
Relationship breakdown - General	18	11	5	7	14	18	73
- Parent	40	12	8	9	5	7	81
- Partner	5	8	6	2	5	1	27
Family reunification	-	-	1	-	-	1	2
General family circumstance	-	5	6	5	-	1	17
TOTAL FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCE	77 62%	44 56%	35 48%	25 38%	36 62%	38 63%	255 55%
Other							
Evicted/surrendered social housing	-	-	1	1	-	-	2
Property repossessed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
No income source	-	1	1	3	-	-	5
Victim of anti social behaviour	3	2	-	-	1	-	6
Voluntarily left property	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
TOTAL OTHER	4 3%	4 5%	2 3%	4 6%	1 2%	- 0%	15 3%
SUBTOTAL	125 100%	79 100%	73 100%	65 100%	58 100%	60 100%	460 100%
Insufficient information ³	-	4	11	9	6	12	42
TOTAL	125	83	84	74	64	72	502

3. Insufficient information was not included in the calculation of the percentages presented in this report.

3. Reasons for Homelessness (cont.)

3.1 Private Rented Sector

For 42% (n=190) of the families, homelessness originated in the private rented sector, with various contributory factors briefly discussed below.

3.1.1 Notice to Quit (39.5%)

As detailed in Table 3 below, landlords issued 181 families with a NTQ. There was no detailed reason provided for the NTQ for 116 of these families. Based on the detail provided by the remaining families at their initial assessment, eight properties were being taken back by landlords for family use and 27 were to be sold, while six landlords had gone into receivership. A total of 18 families stated they were issued with a NTQ because of rent arrears, two were issued with a NTQ because of anti social behaviour and one was subject to an illegal eviction. In three cases families had to depart a property for repairs or renovations to take place.

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

Notice to Quit	TOTAL
General	116
Invalid/illegal	1
Landlord/family use	8
Property to be sold	27
Landlord bankrupt/ receivership	6
Tenant rent arrears	18
Anti social behaviour	2
Building work/repairs	3
TOTAL	181

3.1.2 Private Rented Sector - Other (2%)

There were a total of nine families in this category. One family stated that they had secured a property in the private rented sector but it fell through, difficulties finding another suitable property resulted in the family presenting to homeless services. One family could not source suitable private rented accommodation after

the expiry of their previous lease. Unfitness or unsuitability of the property for habitation (n=2) was also cited as a reason for having to vacate a rented property. An additional three families were either new or returning to Dublin and could not afford rent in the region. Two families had to leave the parental home as it was sold and could not source alternative private rented accommodation.

3.2 Family Circumstance

For most of the remainder (n=255 or 55%), homelessness had its origins in relationship breakdown, family conflict and/or lack of space within the family home.

3.2.1 Overcrowding (12%)

A total of 55 families stated their cause for presenting as homelessness as being the result of living in overcrowded accommodation.

3.2.2 Relationship breakdown (39.5%)

Of the 181 families that detailed relationship breakdowns, 81 were with parents, 27 with partners, while 73 families cited general relationship breakdown as the primary cause for presenting as homeless.

3.2.3 Family Circumstance - Other (4%)

There were a total of 19 families in this category of which two families stated that family reunification was the cause of their homelessness. In these instances, changes in household types (i.e. new family members joining them in Ireland) resulted in a different housing need and subsequently a need to present to homeless services when suitable accommodation could not be sourced. For the remaining 17 families, homelessness came about as a result of general family circumstance. No further information was included on the initial assessment form.

3.3 Other (3%)

Causation among the remaining 15 families breaks down as follows. Two families stated that they were evicted from social housing; the reasons for such are unknown. Six families left properties due to being victims of anti-social behaviour. For five families, no income source was cited as the main reason for homelessness. The remaining two families departed the private rented sector voluntarily i.e. without a valid NTQ upon presentation to homeless services.

3.4 Insufficient information

There was insufficient information available for 42 families.

Notes

