

# REPORTED REASONS FOR FAMILY HOMELESSNESS IN THE DUBLIN REGION: JANUARY TO JUNE 2017

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# Foreword

This report reviews administrative data to present the reasons for homelessness for families who newly presented to homeless services between January and June 2017. 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.

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# 1. Introduction

As detailed in this report, 450 new families accessed homeless accommodation services during the first six months of 2017. As can be seen in Table 1 below, the number of families presenting varies each month but January 2017 was the busiest month for presentations. We believe this is because a lot of families defer presentation over the Christmas period as in December 2016, 39 new families accessed services, a low number compared with previous months.

While 450 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 2017 was 87 or 8%. The number of families increased from 1,028 in December 2016 to 1,115 in June 2017 as detailed in Figure 1 below.

**Table 1: Number of new families accessing homeless accommodation, January to June 2017**

New Families accessing homeless accommodation	
Jan-17	87
Feb-17	62
Mar-17	77
Apr-17	67
May-17	79
Jun-17	78
Total	450

**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 2017 a total of 450 new families were accommodated in emergency accommodation in the Dublin Region who had no active or previous PASS<sup>1</sup> 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:

- 47% of families (n=199) 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 180 families;
- Four families left their accommodation as it was of poor quality or unsuitable to their needs;
- Two families were unable to source private rented accommodation after their previous lease expired;
- Eleven 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 207 families (49%) in this category, of which 40 families stated the primary reason for their presentation as homeless is that they were departing an overcrowded living situation while 132 stated that there was some element of relationship breakdown that triggered their rooflessness. General family circumstance (n=33) 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 4%) breaks down as follows:

- One family surrendered their local authority housing, the reason for such is unknown;
- Five families cited no income source as their reason for homelessness;
- Nine families left properties due to being victims of anti-social behaviour;

There was insufficient information available on the remaining 29 families.

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

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### 3. Reasons for Homelessness

**Table 2: Reasons for homelessness reported by families in the Dublin Region, January to June 2017**

	Jan '17	Feb '17	March '17	April '17	May '17	June '17	TOTAL
<b>Private Rented Sector</b>							
Notice to Quit							
- General	14	16	20	19	29	16	114
- Invalid/illegal	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
- Landlord/family use	2	-	-	1	1	1	5
- Property to be sold	5	1	7	5	-	7	25
- Landlord bankrupt/ receivership	-	-	2	-	2	-	4
- Tenant rent arrears	5	2	3	3	5	6	24
- Anti social behaviour	-	-	1	1	-	-	2
- Building work/repairs	-	1	-	1	1	1	4
Unsuitable accommodation	-	-	1	-	1	2	4
Expiry of lease	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
Rented property fell through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New/return to Dublin unable to afford rent	1	4	3	1	1	1	11
Parental family home sold	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
<b>TOTAL PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR</b>	<b>28</b> 34%	<b>27</b> 45%	<b>38</b> 54%	<b>32</b> 53%	<b>40</b> 54%	<b>34</b> 45%	<b>199</b> 47%
<b>Family Circumstance</b>							
Overcrowding	16	7	5	3	4	5	40
Relationship breakdown - General	5	4	7	10	8	8	42
- Parent	19	10	7	7	6	7	56
- Partner	5	4	5	4	8	8	34
Family reunification	1	-	-	-	-	1	2
General family circumstance	6	6	6	2	5	8	33
<b>TOTAL FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCE</b>	<b>52</b> 63%	<b>31</b> 52%	<b>30</b> 43%	<b>26</b> 43%	<b>31</b> 42%	<b>37</b> 49%	<b>207</b> 49%
<b>Other</b>							
Evicted/surrendered social housing	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Property repossessed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
No income source	-	-	1	1	1	2	5
Victim of anti social behaviour	2	1	1	1	2	2	9
Voluntarily left property	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL OTHER</b>	<b>2</b> 2%	<b>2</b> 3%	<b>2</b> 3%	<b>2</b> 3%	<b>3</b> 4%	<b>4</b> 5%	<b>15</b> 4%
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>421</b>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Insufficient information <sup>2</sup>	5	2	7	7	5	3	29
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>450</b>

2. 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 47% (n=199) of the families, homelessness originated in the private rented sector, with various contributory factors briefly discussed below.

#### 3.1.1 Notice to Quit (43%)

As detailed in Table 3 below, landlords issued 180 families with a NTQ. There was no detailed reason provided for the NTQ for 114 of these families. Based on the detail provided by the remaining families at their initial assessment, five properties were being taken back by landlords for family use and 25 were to be sold, while four landlords had gone into receivership. A total of 24 families stated they were issued with a NTQ because of rent arrears, two were issued with a NTQ because of anti social behaviour and two were subject to an illegal eviction.

**Table 3: Notice to Quit type reported by families new to homelessness in the Dublin Region, January to June 2017**

Notice to Quit	TOTAL
General	114
Invalid/illegal	2
Landlord/family use	5
Property to be sold	25
Landlord bankrupt/ receivership	4
Tenant rent arrears	24
Anti social behaviour	2
Building work/repairs	4
TOTAL	180

#### 3.1.2 Private Rented Sector - Other (4%)

There were a total of 19 families in this category. 11 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. Unfitness or unsuitability of the property for habitation (n=4) was also cited as a reason for having to vacate a rented property. The remaining two families were unable to source private rented accommodation after their previous lease expired.

### 3.2 Family Circumstance

For most of the remainder (n=207 or 49%), homelessness had its origins in relationship breakdown, family conflict and/or lack of space within the family home.

#### 3.2.1 Overcrowding (10%)

A total of 40 families stated their cause for presenting as homelessness as being the result of living in overcrowded accommodation.

#### 3.2.2 Relationship breakdown (31%)

Of the 132 families that detailed relationship breakdowns, 56 were with parents, 34 with partners, while 42 families cited general relationship breakdown as the primary cause for presenting as homeless.

#### 3.2.3 Family Circumstance - Other (8%)

There were a total of 35 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 33 families, homelessness came about as a result of general family circumstance. No further information was included on the initial assessment form.

### 3.3 Other (4%)

Causation among the remaining 15 families breaks down as follows. One family surrendered their local authority housing; the reason for such is unknown. For five families, no income source was cited as the main reason for homelessness. Nine families left properties due to being victims of anti-social behaviour.

### 3.4 Insufficient information

There was insufficient information available for 29 families.

Notes



