

Families

REPORTED REASONS FOR FAMILY HOMELESSNESS IN THE DUBLIN REGION: JULY TO DECEMBER 2017

January 2018

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1. Introduction

Five hundred and twenty six new families accessed homeless accommodation services between July and December 2017. A family was deemed new to homelessness if they had no previous emergency accommodation history as a family unit. As can be seen in Table 1 below, the number of families presenting varies each month with August 2017 being the highest at 102 and December the lowest at 63.

Table 1. Number of new families accessing homeless accommodation, July to December 2017

New Families accessing homeless accommodation	
July 2017	99
August 2017	102
September 2017	89
October 2017	88
November 2017	85
December 2017	63
Total	526

While 526 new families accessed emergency accommodation from July to December 2017, a number of families also departed to take up tenancies during the same period. The net increase in families accessing emergency accommodation between July and December 2017 was 6 or 1%. The number of families increased from 1,115 in June 2017 to 1,121 in December 2017 as detailed in Figure 1 below.

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



1.1 Report outline

This report reviews administrative data to detail the reasons for homelessness as reported by the 526 families who newly presented to homeless services from July to December 2017. Section two provides an overview of the findings according to the primary reasons for homelessness; departure from a tenancy in the private rented sector and family circumstance such as relationship breakdown and overcrowding. Section three provides a more detailed breakdown of such reasons both cumulatively and on a month by month basis.

2. Overview

From July to December 2017 a total of 526 new families were accommodated in emergency accommodation in the Dublin Region who had no active or previous PASS¹ record i.e. they were 'new' to homelessness. A review of the administrative data 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 homeless services reveals that for 49% (n=247) of the families the primary reason for 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 homeless services confirms that:

- Notices to Quit were issued to 233 families;
- Three 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;
- Eight 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 alternative private rented accommodation.

2.2 Family Circumstance

There were a total of 242 families (48%) in this category, of which 62 families stated the primary reason for their presentation as homeless is that they were departing an overcrowded living situation while 151 stated that there was some element of relationship breakdown that triggered their experience of homelessness. General family circumstance (n=22) and family reunification (n=7) 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:

- One family surrendered their local authority housing, the reasons for such is unknown;
- Seven families cited no income source as their reason for homelessness;
- Four families left properties due to being victims of anti-social behaviour;
- Three families left their properties voluntarily, i.e. without a valid NTQ.

There was insufficient information available on the remaining 22 families.

1. 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, July to December 2017

	Jul '17	Aug '17	Sep '17	Oct '17	Nov '17	Dec '17	TOTAL
Private Rented Sector							
Notice to Quit							
- General	28	32	33	19	25	14	151
- Invalid/illegal	-	-	1	1	-	1	3
- Landlord/family use	1	2	3	-	1	-	7
- Property to be sold	7	2	4	11	9	6	39
- Landlord bankrupt/ receivership	2	-	-	1	-	2	5
- Tenant rent arrears	2	4	2	3	2	5	18
- Anti social behaviour	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
- Building work/repairs	1	-	3	1	3	1	9
Unsuitable accommodation	1	-	2	-	-	-	3
Expiry of lease	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Rented property fell through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New/return to Dublin unable to afford rent	4	1	1	1	1	-	8
Parental family home sold	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
TOTAL PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR	47	42	49	38	41	30	247
	50%	42%	58%	45%	50%	50%	49%
Family Circumstance							
Overcrowding	11	12	10	12	14	3	62
Relationship breakdown - General	15	17	7	12	15	9	75
- Parent	8	15	8	12	8	8	59
- Partner	2	3	3	4	2	3	17
Family reunification	1	-	-	1	1	4	7
General family circumstance	5	7	4	5	-	1	22
TOTAL FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCE	42	54	32	46	40	28	242
	45%	55%	38%	54%	49%	47%	48%
Other							
Evicted/surrendered social housing	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Property repossessed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
No income source	2	1	1	1	-	2	7
Victim of anti social behaviour	2	2	-	-	-	-	4
Voluntarily left property	1	-	1	-	1	-	3
TOTAL OTHER	5	3	3	1	1	2	15
	5%	3%	4%	1%	1%	3%	3%
SUBTOTAL	94	99	84	85	82	60	504
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Insufficient information ²	5	3	5	3	3	3	22
TOTAL	99	102	89	88	85	63	526

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

3.1 Private Rented Sector

For 49% (n=247) of the families, homelessness originated in the private rented sector, with the various contributory factors briefly discussed below.

3.1.1 Notice to Quit (46%)

As detailed in Table 3 below, landlords issued 233 families with a NTQ. There was no detailed reason provided for the NTQ for 151 of these families. Based on the detail provided by the remaining families at their initial assessment, seven properties were being taken back by landlords for family use and 39 were to be sold, while five landlords had gone into receivership. A total of 18 families stated they were issued with a NTQ because of rent arrears, one issued with a NTQ because of anti social behaviour and three were subject to an illegal eviction or an invalid NTQ. In nine 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, July to December 2017

Notice to Quit	TOTAL
General	151
Invalid/illegal	3
Landlord/family use	7
Property to be sold	39
Landlord bankrupt/ receivership	5
Tenant rent arrears	18
Anti social behaviour	1
Building work/repairs	9
TOTAL	233

3.1.2 Private Rented Sector - Other (3%)

There were a total of 14 families in this category. Eight 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=3) was also cited as a reason for having to vacate a rented property. One family stated that they unable to source private rented accommodation after their previous lease expired.

3.2 Family Circumstance

For most of the remainder (n=242 or 48%), 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 62 families stated the cause of their homelessness was a result of living in overcrowded accommodation.

3.2.2 Relationship breakdown (30%)

Of the 151 families that detailed relationship breakdowns, 59 were with parents and 17 with partners while 75 families cited general relationship breakdown as the primary cause for presenting as homeless.

3. Reasons for Homelessness (cont.)

3.2.3 Family Circumstance - Other (6%)

There were a total of 31 families in this category of which seven 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 24 families, homelessness came about as a result of a change in family circumstance. No further information could be obtained from the detail provided 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 seven families, no income source was cited as the main reason for homelessness. Four families left properties due to being victims of anti-social behaviour. Three 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 on the reasons for homelessness for 22 families.

Notes

Notes

