



The DRHE has continually welcomed the national data released each month which has indicated a downward trend in the homeless numbers throughout the country to date in 2020. This particular SPC report focuses on the situation in the Dublin Region and shows that the measures that have been put in place over the past number of years, are beginning to show results.

We would like to point out that whilst these figures are welcome, they also come with a note of caution. We are entering the winter period and numbers amongst single adults are increasing again as the DRHE continues to source additional emergency accommodation, in line with the Cold Weather Strategy (CWS) 2020/2021, for singles due to an increase in demand and to ensure preparedness for the approaching winter.

This report concentrates on the data released from January to September inclusive.

The main points to note are:

- At the end of September 2020 there were **865** families in emergency accommodation. This figure has reduced significantly since January when there were **1,201** families in emergency accommodation. There was a small increase of 9 on the August 2020 figure.

Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20
1,201	1,178	1,103	974	893	871	862	856	865

- The number of children resident in emergency accommodation at the end of September was **2,008** which once again has shown a steady decrease since January 2020 when the figure was **2,678**. In September 2019 the figure was **2,872**.

Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20
2,678	2,669	2,491	2,232	2,065	1,979	2,017	2,023	2,008

- At the end of September, there were **278** families in hotel accommodation (down 370 from January 2020 when the figure was **648**). In March 2017 this figure was **871**.

Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20
648	623	575	514	413	354	334	302	278

Between March and June 2020, 85 families were moved from hotels into self-contained apartments that were sourced by the DRHE on short term (12 months) agreements. This type of accommodation, while temporary, represents much more suitable accommodation for the

families concerned and is considerably less expensive than the previous hotel facilities. It is intended to source more of these apartments. It should be noted that those families, now moved to such apartments, are still included in the emergency accommodation data.

- **519** families entered emergency accommodation for the first time between January and September 2020 with 71 presenting as homeless in September.

Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20
94	80	42	14	25	59	56	78	71

- In September, **135 families** were either prevented from entering emergency accommodation (59) or exited (76) into new tenancies.
- **135** single adults became homeless for the first time in September. To date for 2020 this figure is 1,255. There are currently 2,994 single adults in Emergency Accommodation.

Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20
215	160	108	99	123	105	176	134	135

- **57** single adults were prevented from entering emergency accommodation through the creation of a new tenancy in September and **89** single adults exited emergency accommodation to tenancies. Again, to date in 2020, **534** single adults were prevented from entering emergency accommodation with Homeless HAP and **666** single adults exited homelessness to tenancies.

Homeless HAP has continued to operate successfully with our Housing Support Officers and Place-finders assisting households to move out of emergency accommodation.

Place-finders and the Housing Support Officer team adapted quickly to the Covid-19 movement restrictions and have worked with Landlords to source lettings by:

1. Virtual Viewings
2. Staggered appointments for a smaller number of referrals

The level of Homeless HAP tenancies being sourced monthly has remained stable throughout the Covid-19 emergency despite revised working arrangements and a total of **246** Homeless HAP tenancies were sourced in September 2020.

Breakdown of family type and previous accommodation of those accessing HHAP in September.

- 32** Families leaving hotels - Private emergency accommodation.
- 48** Families leaving Supported emergency accommodation.
- 86** Families did not use emergency accommodation (Preventions).
- 16** Singles/ Couples leaving Private emergency accommodation.
- 31** Singles/ Couples leaving supported emergency accommodation.

33 Singles/Couples did not use emergency accommodation (Preventions).

While the reduction on numbers in emergency accommodation over the year to date is very welcome we fully accept that there are still far too many families in emergency accommodation including hotels and we are very conscious of the challenge that still exists in relation to homelessness in the Dublin area.

The improved situation in relation to homeless families is very welcome but the current situation in relation to single persons continues to be challenging and we need to source significant additional emergency accommodation to cater for an increasing demand and with an eye on the upcoming winter period.

We very much appreciate the support of Councillors so far on our task in sourcing urgent new emergency accommodation throughout Dublin City and Region and we do realise, that this support can be difficult in light of the strong opposition that almost inevitably arises from local residents and businesses to the implementation of such facilities.

We are asking that Councillors would continue to support our continuing tough task in sourcing and bringing into operation more necessary homeless facilities in the city and region. As outlined in the recent Cold Weather Strategy (CWS) the capacity for singles and couples will increase by approximately 300 permanent and 40 temporary beds.

Prevention of Homelessness in the Dublin Region

As outlined above, considerable work has been done year to date in sourcing Homeless HAP tenancies for both prevention and for exits from emergency accommodation

The DRHE is acutely aware of the pressures that are likely to impact on our services as a result of the lifting of the ban on the issuing of Notices of Terminations in the private rented sector. However, as the new Covid-19 restrictions are implemented, no notices of termination will become effective until 10 days post lockdown, the DRHE is actively enhancing our existing prevention and accommodation finding services. This plan includes working with Threshold to strengthen our Placefinders function and the employment of further Housing Support Officers who will work with single adults in homeless services with a view to assisting them to source a more permanent housing solution.

Housing First & Dublin Outreach

The Housing First Programme is delivered on behalf of the DRHE by the Peter McVerry Trust, which supports homeless individuals into permanent housing and provides them with wraparound tenancy and health supports in order to sustain their home. A total of **85** homeless individuals have been housed by the Housing First programme from January to September 2020. The current number of active Housing First tenancies in the Dublin region is **323** individuals in **295** properties and the total number of individuals housed since the commencement of the programme is **421**.

A Street Outreach Service, operated by Dublin Simon Community on behalf of the DRHE, assertively engages with people sleeping rough across the Dublin Region. This service operates 365 days a year from 7am - 1am Monday to Friday and 9am – 1am Saturday and Sunday. Outreach teams meet with

people sleeping rough, including people in tents, to support them into temporary accommodation. The Outreach Service works in close collaboration with Housing First. The team bring sandwiches and snacks along with clean clothes, hand sanitisers and face masks to anyone sleeping rough.

Cold Weather Strategy 2020/2021

The Cold Weather Strategy 2020/21 has been activated. The strategy ensures that a likely increase in demand for homeless services can be met and that appropriate contingency plans are in place for cold weather conditions. The complexity and uncertainty around Covid-19 will place a further challenge on homeless services this winter.

The strategy has a dual approach, expanding the current capacity to meet increased demand while also providing a targeted response for people who are rough sleeping and reluctant to engage with homeless services.

Summary

In conclusion, we would like to acknowledge the continued hard work of our colleagues in the DRHE, especially our staff on the frontline who are usually the first port of call for our customers. They provide vital support, advice and essential services to those experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless. They work face to face, on the streets and in the offices providing constant support.

We would also like to acknowledge, the four Dublin Local Authorities, all our partners in the charity and private sector, and all other stakeholders for their continued support and collaborative efforts on a variety of responses to prevent and alleviate homelessness. This year has been a challenging one for us all and while we are still in the midst of COVID19, we have all worked collaboratively to maintain all homeless services over the past number of months.

Finally, we continue to operate in a challenging landscape and with the approach of winter, this landscape, along with the COVID19 pandemic will prove even more challenging. We are confident that we can meet this challenge.

Eileen Gleeson
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