



## 1 Dublin Region Homeless Executive Update

This report sets out the data collated and analysed by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) from January 2019 to December 2019. The DRHE provides funding to 22 Non Profit Organisations for in excess of 109 homeless services across the Dublin region. In addition, the DRHE coordinates and funds the provision of private emergency accommodation for people experiencing homelessness. The DRHE works to move people through emergency accommodation, supported with health and support services, towards a sustained exit from homelessness. This work is carried out through three main areas of operation, Prevention, Protection and Progression.

The DRHE would like to thank all our partners and statutory agencies for their continued support and cooperation. We work closely with them on a daily basis and, in 2019, working together we added an additional 300+ permanent beds for singles persons and 23 family hub spaces.

## 2 Families accessing Emergency Accommodation (EA)

### 2.1 Family Presentations

A total of 1,031 families (or an average of 86 families per month) entered emergency accommodation for the first time between January and December 2019. This represents a decrease when compared with 2018 when the average monthly number of new family presentations was 93. The monthly breakdown for 2018 and 2019 is outlined in Table1 below.

Table 1.

| Month        | 2018         | 2019         |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| January      | 109          | 92           |
| February     | 102          | 102          |
| March        | 82           | 82           |
| April        | 90           | 94           |
| May          | 79           | 67           |
| June         | 92           | 71           |
| July         | 122          | 124          |
| August       | 113          | 103          |
| September    | 88           | 102          |
| October      | 89           | 85           |
| November     | 96           | 65           |
| December     | 50           | 44           |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1,112</b> | <b>1,031</b> |

While the number of families in need of emergency accommodation remains high, considerable progress has been made in relation to exits. From January 2019 to December 2019 a total of 1,137 families have exited emergency accommodation through the creation of new tenancies.

## 2.2 Families in Emergency Accommodation

In December there was 1,162 families in emergency accommodation across the Dublin region. Significant progress has also been made in reducing the number of families self-accommodating in hotels. In January 2019 there were 554 families self-accommodating and by December 2019 this figure has decreased to 424. There were 385 families being accommodated in family hub facilities across the region with these facilities offering better amenities to families until they can secure a longer term housing solution.

In addition, the DRHE has placed families and individuals in own door units. This type of accommodation allows families to live independently, while continuing to access housing advice and support. Although these families are not at risk of homelessness, they are receiving supports and DRHE staff continue to engage with them to support them into long term tenancies. There were 193 families in these units at the end of the year and indications are that this number will continue to decrease in 2020 as the families continue to move to long term housing,

## 2.3 Family Exits from Emergency Accommodation

In the context of the limited supply of social housing, work continues to exit people from homelessness. From January 2019 to December 2019, 1,137 **families** exited homelessness to tenancies, as detailed in Table 2. This figure has surpassed the total number of exits achieved in 2018, which was 780 families. Furthermore, in 2019 41% (468) of families exited emergency accommodation to HAP tenancies, with the remaining 59% (669) exited to Local Authority Housing. (in 2018 the situation was the opposite with 58% of families exited to HAP and 42% to Local Authority Housing).

**Table 2.**

| Timeframe    | Housing Assistance Payment | Local Authority/ Approved Housing Bodies / Long Term Accommodation / Housing Agency Acquisition | Total |
|--------------|----------------------------|---|-------|
| Jan - Dec 19 | 468                        | 669   | 1,137 |

While the January 2020 figure has increased to 1,205, this still represents the lowest figure since January 2019 (aside from December 2019). The main reason for the increase in Emergency Accommodation in January 2020 was due to the number of single people presenting. Indications are, on our analysis to date of February figures, new presentations are back in line with the usual spring trends.

### 3 Single Adults Prevention & Presentations

#### 3.1 Single Adults

In December there were 2,586 single adults in emergency accommodation in the Dublin region

#### 3.2 Presentations per month

Between January and December 2019 an average of 156 single adults entered emergency accommodation for the first time each month, a total of 1,870 individuals. The monthly breakdown is outlined in table 4 below.

Table 4.

| Month (2019) | Total Singles |
|--------------|---------------|
| January      | 172           |
| February     | 151           |
| March        | 147           |
| April        | 155           |
| May          | 151           |
| June         | 141           |
| July         | 213           |
| August       | 169           |
| September    | 138           |
| October      | 170           |
| Nov 2019     | 120           |
| December     | 143           |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1,870</b>  |

### 3.3 Single exits in 2019 by tenancy type

In the same period a total of 575 single adults exited emergency accommodation to tenancy. The monthly breakdown by tenancy type is outlined in Table 5 below:

**Table 5.**

| Month        | HAP        | LA         | LTA       | AHB       | Housing Agency Acquisition | PR        | RAS      | Total Households |
|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|-----------|----------|------------------|
| Jan-19       | 30         | 8          | 0         | 5         | 3                          | 6         | 0        | 52               |
| Feb-19       | 17         | 6          | 3         | 5         | 2                          | 3         | 0        | 36               |
| Mar-19       | 5          | 7          | 8         | 11        | 0                          | 2         | 0        | 33               |
| Apr-19       | 24         | 9          | 0         | 3         | 0                          | 2         | 0        | 39               |
| May-19       | 17         | 18         | 3         | 16        | 1                          | 2         | 5        | 58               |
| Jun-19       | 28         | 7          | 3         | 9         | 0                          | 0         | 0        | 47               |
| Jul-19       | 19         | 11         | 9         | 11        | 0                          | 0         | 2        | 52               |
| Aug-19       | 33         | 15         | 8         | 10        | 0                          | 1         | 1        | 68               |
| Sep-19       | 20         | 13         | 12        | 7         | 0                          | 1         | 0        | 53               |
| Oct-19       | 24         | 8          | 9         | 9         | 0                          | 0         | 0        | 50               |
| Nov-19       | 23         | 7          | 6         | 5         | 2                          | 1         | 0        | 44               |
| Dec-19       | 24         | 8          | 5         | 2         | 1                          | 3         | 0        | 43               |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>264</b> | <b>114</b> | <b>66</b> | <b>93</b> | <b>9</b>                   | <b>21</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>575</b>       |

In addition 729 adults were prevented from entering emergency accommodation through the creation of a new tenancy. The monthly breakdown outlined in Table 6 below shows Single Adult Preventions in 2019 (prevented from entering EA through the creation of a new tenancy)

**Table 6.**

| Month (2019) | Total Singles |
|--------------|---------------|
| January      | 55            |
| February     | 51            |
| March        | 63            |
| April        | 61            |
| May          | 60            |
| June         | 61            |
| July         | 69            |
| August       | 68            |
| September    | 54            |
| October      | 56            |
| November     | 61            |
| December     | 70            |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>729</b>    |

### **3.4 Capacity**

Emergency accommodation capacity has increased over the last year to meet rising demand, with an increase of 300+ permanent beds for singles. However at the same time, we continue to work hard on advancing 'housing-led' solutions that effectively end the experience of homelessness. In the face of increased demand for access to available emergency accommodation, the rate of provision of affordable housing options to persons experiencing homelessness particularly singles in Dublin remains insufficient.

Bed capacity and increases in demand for accommodation are consistently monitored by staff in the DRHE. At times full capacity is reached early in the night, but beds become available at later stages due to bookings not being utilised. Throughout the Christmas and New Year period of 2019 / 2020 any person that requested accommodation was placed and there was spare capacity every night. To put this into context, over the Christmas period:

- The highest number of 109 empty beds was on a night in December 2019
- There was an average of 53 empty beds each night in December 2019
- There was an average of 19 empty beds each night in November 2019
- On average throughout 2019, there were 9 empty beds each night during the year.

## 4. Housing First

The Dublin Region Housing First Service housed 123 homeless individuals in 2019, of which 90% have successfully retained housing. The number of individuals currently housed is 292 and the overall total since the service commenced is 366. The Housing First service is delivered by the Peter McVerry Trust, with targets to deliver 405 additional Housing First tenancies over the three-year period to June 2022. A steady supply of single person units with the appropriate wraparound supports will be critical to accelerate this goal.

| <b>Number of Unique Individuals Support in Housing First Tenancies</b> |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| <b>Tenancy</b>   | <b>Number of individuals</b> |
| First  | 280                          |
| Second   | 65                           |
| Third  | 16                           |
| Fourth   | 4                            |
| Fifth  | 1                            |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>366</b>                   |

A Street Outreach Service, operated by Dublin Simon Community, is assertively engaging with people sleeping rough across the Dublin region. This service operates 365 days a year from 7am Mon-Fri/9am Sat-Sun until 1am. The team of outreach workers meet daily with people sleeping rough, including people in tents, to support them into temporary homeless accommodation. This service works in close collaboration with the Housing First service.

The National Director of Housing First has been supporting the eight regions outside Dublin to deliver Housing First in line with the Housing First National Implementation Plan 2018 - 2021. Housing First services are now housing homeless individuals across the country. The University of Limerick has commenced a national evaluation of the Housing First programme and National Housing First Manual for Ireland is in development.

## **5. Rough Sleeper Count**

The DRHE has sought input from the stakeholders in homeless services via the Consultative Forum seeking advice on how fit for purpose the current Rough Sleeper methodology is to enable the Statutory Management Group fulfil its responsibilities.

## **6. Proposal to review Day Services & Food Access in Emergency Homeless Accommodation in the Dublin Region**

The Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) has commissioned an independent review of Section 10 state funded Day Services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the Dublin Region. Day services provide assistance (excluding accommodation) with everyday needs including food, health services, personal care, housing and welfare advice, and employment, training and life skills.

The terms of reference for the review are to;

- Describe the full range of services provided
- Describe service capacity, staffing and operational and administrative costs associated with the delivery of these services
- Compile available data on the level of usage of these services by people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and the characteristics of these users
- Identify potential gaps and or duplication in the provision of services
- Make recommendations to the DRHE based on the findings

An associated audit of food access for individuals & families in emergency accommodation, including structured meal provision, access to kitchen/cooking facilities and food storage will also be carried out.

A full report on the review will be presented at the May SPC

## **7. Report on the Joint Oireachtas in Housing, Planning & Local Governments recommendations in the area of Family & Child Homelessness**

The Joint Committee on Housing, Planning & Local Government, in November 2019, met to discuss the area of Family & Child Homelessness. Representatives from Focus Ireland, the Children's Rights Alliance, the Ombudsman for Children, and the Mercy Law Resource Centre addressed the Committee on this topic.

At the outset, the witnesses outlined the detrimental effects that stays in emergency accommodation can have on families and child development and spoke of the need to ensure that measures are put in place to limit these negative effects.

Several key concerns and issues emerged from the exchange between the witnesses and committee members including:

- a constitutional right to housing
- the need for support workers across all types of emergency accommodation
- legislation to consider the child's best interests
- legislation to place upper time limits on the amount of time a family can stay in emergency accommodation
- the ongoing practice of utilising one night only emergency accommodation
- the absence of an independent body to conduct regular inspections of homeless services
- variations in standards in Family Hubs

The committee made 14 recommendations, 5 of which the DRHE has a role to play regarding implementation.

- **Recommendation 6: The provision of one night only accommodation be ceased**

One Night Only contingency beds are provided by the DRHE to prevent rough sleeping, where on the basis of an eligibility or needs assessment of a Dublin Local Authority does not offer emergency placement.

The DRHE in the provision of contingency beds (One Night Only) aims to provide stability for a limited time for families to source alternative accommodation and or successfully apply for social housing.

In the Dublin region, on a given night (6/01/2020) **3%** of family bookings were for one week's duration or less (contingency beds referred to in this report as ONO).

Contingency beds are used:

- Where there is no legal right of residence in the state then restrictions to long-term bookings will apply. This **may entail week to week** bookings but a local authority is not going to indefinitely accommodate families in hotels where they are not eligible for social housing.
- If a family presents at night then a daily booking will continue until such time as an assessment of the circumstances under which the family became homeless.
- In cases of newly presenting EA families, some do not have PPS numbers as they have newly arrived in the country – they cannot pay hub accommodation charges so contingency beds are used until such time as a social support payment is established by Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection.
- Contingency beds are also used as a fall back when a family has been excluded from a premises and an alternative longer term placement cannot immediately be found. This is particularly the case for large family sizes of 7+.
- The use of contingency beds is to eliminate the need for any family (regardless of circumstances) to sleep rough.

The DRHE is conscious of increasing the hours of opening to 24 hours where possible and has already made significant progress in this regard.



- **Recommendation 9: Robust statutory minimum standards and criteria for Family Hubs be published and implemented**

The Dublin Region Homeless Executive is committed to ensuring that the highest standards in homeless service provision are offered to individuals and families who experience homelessness and has thus developed the National Quality Standards Framework for Homeless Services in Ireland. The DRHE is implementing the NQSF in the Dublin Region and are conducting inspections of Section 10 funded NGO's based on these NQSF. There is in place a system of inspections and review that applies to both Private Emergency Accommodation (under lease or contract) and Emergency Accommodation managed by NGO's. All service providers are required to ensure that buildings should be suitable for their stated purpose and comply with relevant and applicable housing standard legislation, fire safety regulations and health and safety legislation. Standards have improved significantly with the introduction of the Family Hubs and new singles accommodation.

- **Recommendation 10: Improved practices in data collection and the disaggregation of data concerning homelessness among families and children to be progressed**

The DRHE manages the National PASS (Pathway Accommodation and Support System). This system is currently being upgraded and will enable better functionality for research purposes.

- **Recommendation 11: The use of self- accommodation as a mechanism for sourcing emergency accommodation be ceased**

The DRHE implements a policy of moving families from self-accommodation to contracted accommodation /hubs when availability arises. Significant progress has also been made in reducing the number of families self-accommodating in hotels. In January 2019 there were 554 families self-accommodating and by December 2019 this figure has decreased to 424. Until there is sufficient supply of appropriate Emergency Accommodation for families, it will be necessary to continue to fund the use of self - accommodation.

- **Recommendation 14: a review of the length of time families are spending in emergency accommodation be undertaken and that appropriate supports to ensure that families are supported to exit emergency accommodation be put in place as soon as possible**

The DRHE constantly monitors the length of time families are spending in Emergency Accommodation and has Housing Support Officers in place since September 2019 (in the Dublin region) to advise and assist families to exit emergency accommodation.

Duration in emergency accommodation – all families on January 31<sup>st</sup> 2020 (not including families in OFD)

| <b>Duration in EA</b>   | <b>Total Families</b> | <b>Total Adults</b> | <b>Number of Children</b> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>24+ months</b>       | 177                   | 267                 | 439                       |
| <b>18-24months</b>      | 121                   | 167                 | 312                       |
| <b>12-18 months</b>     | 171                   | 250                 | 413                       |
| <b>6-12 months</b>      | 285                   | 415                 | 597                       |
| <b>6 months or less</b> | 402                   | 585                 | 778                       |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>1,156</b>          | <b>1,684</b>        | <b>2,539</b>              |

There were approximately 188 families residing in ‘Own Door’ accommodation across the Dublin region on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. Information to determine the length of stay of every family residing in ‘Own Door’ accommodation is not readily available

In conclusion, the DRHE, on behalf of the four Dublin Local Authorities is the lead agency with responsibility for responding to homelessness across the Dublin region. We operate in a challenging landscape and work closely with the four local authorities and all relevant stakeholders to respond to homelessness. Along with all our partners, we continue to deliver on the five Pillars of the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan and continually strive to tackle homelessness and bring forward innovative solutions to help the vulnerable members of our community. We have worked steadfastly to deliver a family hub programme and continue to believe that, in the absence of long term housing solutions, hub facilities are the most appropriate response to families experiencing homelessness.

The necessity to work collaboratively is recognised by all stakeholders and we will continue to work together to provide sustainable solutions to homelessness, driving a housing led approach while also providing the ancillary supports required to help people to exit homelessness.

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Director, Dublin Regional Homeless Executive

March 2020.

