

**Deloitte.**



# Understanding Homelessness

**Analyst Christmas Challenge  
2017 - 2021**



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# Executive Summary

Homelessness has become an epidemic in Ireland with nearly 10,000 men, women and children without a place to call their own. The statistics are increasing with people from all ages, genders and background finding themselves impacted by the blight of homelessness. Babies to OAPs, toddlers to middle-aged, teenagers to politicians have all been affected, proving that homelessness does not discriminate. Homelessness is not one predictable journey. It has become a part of Irish society and culture. It is part of our story.

# Figures on Homelessness in Ireland

This paper aims to offer an understanding into homelessness from a variety of perspectives. This document consists of information and experiences collated by Deloitte Ireland's Junior Analysts during their annual Analyst Christmas Challenge.

Each year, the Analyst Challenge focuses on raising funds for Irish charities working in a particular area, while also planning and hosting Christmas events for their service users. For the next five years (2017-2021), efforts will be focused on the current homelessness crisis in Ireland.

As a follow-up task, the Analysts have been asked to reflect on their experiences by documenting their own understanding and perspectives on the term 'homeless', with each year given a different aspect of homelessness to focus on. The timeline below outlines the sub-themes for each year:



Coverage of homelessness in Ireland has failed to focus on the person behind the figures or images. As media outlets fill our screens with rising statistics and pictures of people sleeping rough on the country's streets, this leads to people forgetting that there is a

person behind the report. The first chapter of the paper 'The Real Faces of Homelessness' aims to capture the real characteristics of the people in Ireland's homeless communities, including their background, talents and interests. By engaging with this content, we hope

readers will acknowledge that we share many characteristics and experiences with those who have been homeless or at risk of losing their home. It's important that to realise that we are not as far away from homelessness as we would like to think.

6906



The total number of people listed as homeless at the end of summer 2017

1 in 5



A report from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in August 2017 stated that 899 homeless persons were employed. This number accounts for 1 in 5 of the total number of homeless people in Ireland.

123



The latest Census indicated that 1,144 people were using temporary emergency accommodation and a further 123 people were sleeping rough in Ireland.

896



The number of families that were identified as homeless in July 2017. Among these families are 1,846 children.

## Figures on Homelessness in Ireland

# Deloitte Analyst Christmas Challenge 2017

Real Faces of Homelessness

## Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the real faces of homelessness in Ireland today.

The 1988 Housing Act defines a 'homeless individual' as 'somebody who has no reasonable accommodation to live in or lives in a hospital, institution or night shelter because of a lack of home.'

This definition is important to read and interrupt with diligence and perspective. Read at a glance, it can be all too easy to fail to acknowledge its nuances. The forefront of the definition, 'no reasonable accommodation to live in', ultimately outlines what homelessness appears to be for many fortunate onlookers. Unfortunately, it also encapsulates what homelessness means to many of those who have suffered its hardships. However, it is overwhelmingly important to take into consideration how the latter end of the definition influences the former. The final 3 words, 'lack of home', adds an unprecedented level of value and scope to this definition which, at a glance, can be overlooked.

As a society, we often tend to place a large emphasis on the former. We consider homelessness synonymous with a lack of material housing. We do this for good reason, because for many it is the most obvious demonstration of the definition in plain sight. However, to understand and ultimately combat this issue in its entirety, we must take into consideration all effected. We must consider all ends of the normal distribution. We must consider the full definition. We must act as if homelessness includes everyone without a house and without a home.

To do this, we have identified five key personas which we believe summarise and personify homelessness in Ireland today. We hope that these personas help you to recognise the depth and range of the issue in our present society, while also acting as a foundation for the journey ahead.



“Having a house does not mean you have a home.”

**John, 72**

Like many working in the construction industry, John enjoyed great success during the Celtic Tiger. In fact, one of his clients was a high-profile Irish celebrity. Building after building, contract after contract; there was no end to the work, or so it seemed.

In one fell swoop, the recession came to Ireland and the construction industry felt the squeeze. Many of his contracts were ended prematurely as the construction industry dried up. Not only did this affect John's economic situation, it also had an impact on his social life. A lack of demand for builders meant that John fell out of contact with his friends that he had been working with, many of whom departed Ireland with a view of starting a new life in Australia. Although John was tempted by the idea of relocating to another country, he was in a difficult situation as he was entering his early-sixties with a view to retiring.

Emigration was not a new concept to John. The youngest of six siblings, John's brothers and sisters moved to the United States when he was in his early teens and only beginning his training as an apprentice builder. He knew that his sons and daughters were dependent on him for the school runs every morning and afternoon during the weekdays. In 2011, their dependency on John ended as his children departed to far flung cities such as Dubai, Sydney and Wellington. “They certainly don't miss the traffic along the Grand Canal!” he said with a wry smile.

Although John has a house in Dublin, he does not have a home. He loves sport and would always take his sons to all his native County's GAA matches, a tradition which his father passed on to him during his youth. If the tickets sold out, he would spend the weekend watching all of the action at home. Christmas was his favourite time of year for watching sport with his family, from Manchester United in the Premier League to Munster in the Magners League.

Despite his family leaving, two of John's good friends remained in Ireland. They would often meet for a pint and a game of Bridge. They would also head to Lahinch in County Clare every May Bank Holiday, a tradition from when they were younger. No more than four years ago, however, one of John's friends passed away and another moved to live with his son in West Cork.

Nowadays, John has no one to go to or watch matches with, spending special occasions, such as Christmas or his birthday, alone. John has four walls, but no one to open the door to, share a joke with or to talk to when times are tough. He struggles to pass the time and often feels lonely. “Having spent over six decades surrounded by people on building sites or with family at home, it is remarkable how quickly your life can change,” he added.

“Not just single parents,  
whole families are out on  
Ireland’s streets.”

**Jayne, 35**

Up until six years ago, Jayne had lived in a rented, modest but cosy North Inner City apartment with her long term partner, Niall. Jayne was the main breadwinner, working as a Human Resources Administrator in an office in the city-centre, while Niall could only work part-time in a local delivery centre due to disability. Jayne was a keen amateur painter and loved to visit the galleries around Dublin in her free time.

Jayne unexpectedly fell pregnant and while the couple were delighted with the happy news, this was quickly pushed to the wayside. When their landlord found out that Jayne was pregnant, he suddenly decided to sell their beloved home. The couple were forced to move in with Jayne’s mother Mairéad, on what they had hoped would be a short term basis. Unfortunately, Niall realised that he could not cope with this new living situation, resulting in the couple deciding to end their relationship .

Jayne gave birth to twins. She knew that she would have to return to work to support her family sooner than she would have liked as she could only afford to take the statutory maternity leave. Jayne was grateful at this point that her family were living with Mairéad, as she very kindly offered to pick up the gaps in childcare when Jayne had to go to work.

The family were living on hand to mouth basis up until the twins were 18 months old, and Mairéad abruptly fell ill. Jayne was forced to take a period of leave from work in order to care for both her mother and her children. This was an incredibly stressful time for the entire family, not only due to their worry for Mairéad, but also due to the fact that they were truly surviving on the bread line. Sadly, Mairéad died after a tumultuous two months of illness. Jayne and her young family were utterly heartbroken. Jayne was an only child and had no other family support that she could call on to help her with any of the funeral costs.

Jayne hated to admit it but Mairéad’s death was also a logistical nightmare as she no longer could rely on the free childcare which Mairéad had previously provided. This made Jayne’s return to work increasingly difficult. In no time at all, she realised that she could not return to the job that she had enjoyed on a full time basis. The family quickly fell behind on rent due to the lack of affordable childcare and were shortly evicted by their landlord.

Jayne went through the unnecessarily arduous process of applying for housing support with the local authority. When they finally were approved for the Housing Assistance Payment, Jayne found that many landlords did not accept their applications as a result of this.

Thankfully, the family found assistance from a housing charity in the city centre and have been staying in temporary accommodation with a number of other families. This is by no means an ideal situation, however the family are grateful to at least have a roof over their heads. Jayne does not want her kids to miss out despite their current situation. She brings them to school every morning followed by soccer training in the evenings. She loves to see them running around and having fun but she is worried about the potential stigma her kids will face as they begin school this year, while still living without a ‘proper home’.

“Even with a full-time job, we are not as far away from homelessness as we would like to think.”

**Anna, 26 and Tom, 28**

Originally from West Cork, Tom had taken a gap-year after completing his training with the Irish emergency services when he met Anna in Riyadh in 2013. Anna was born in the Middle-East and moved to Saudi Arabia to pursue a career in business analytics. After falling head-over-heels in love with Anna, Tom decided to stay in Riyadh for a year before returning to Europe when Anna was offered a job in Leipzig, Germany

In early-2016, the young couple returned to Ireland following almost 4 years abroad when they both landed jobs in Dublin. Learning that she was two months pregnant, Anna took time away from work to concentrate on getting the house ready for their new arrival. When they notified their landlord that they were expecting a child, he increased the rent by a substantial figure due to “an extra person” being in the house.

Although Anna and Tom got in contact with housing support associations, local government officials and, finally, the Department of Housing, their case was not considered for review due to a loophole in housing legislation. “Why have a 4% increase cap per year if landlords have ways of getting around it?” Tom asked but received no response from the Minister of Housing. Within four weeks, the rent had increased to beyond their means and they had to leave with nowhere else to go.

Today, Anna, Tom and their 10 month old child are living in a homeless shelter in Dublin’s north inner city. Despite not having a home, Anna has tried to make a nursery for her child in their small room in the city centre. Meanwhile, Tom is determined to keep working and leaves for work every morning at 06:30. “I don’t want to stop working,” Tom explained. “I want to work for my family and for the people who are putting us up in the shelter.” Anna added that Tom

donates 10 euro every two weeks to the homeless shelter that they are currently residing in.

Although Tom has a close relationship with several of his colleagues, he has not disclosed to them that he is homeless. In fact, only one of Tom’s oldest friends knows that he is homeless. Anna explained that he is worried that his colleagues may view him differently if they found out. Conversely, Anna has informed many of her closest friends of her family’s situation. Anna added that the support she has received from her friends has been really touching: “Some of my friends are actively searching for suitable homes for us, while others just send a text every second day to check-in with us.”

Although they find themselves in an unwelcome situation, both are thankful for the support from charities involved with homelessness. “Look around today and we have a Christmas celebration; food for everyone and presents for the children,” Tom said. “I have never experienced so much kindness and we are aware that there are people a lot worse off than us,” Anna added.

Anna and Tom’s story show how unpredictable life can be; even when you think you have everything, it can be taken away in a matter of days or weeks when circumstances change. Furthermore, it also shows that those who are in full-time employment are vulnerable if their situations suddenly change. “If you compare another family’s situation to ours, the only difference is that they have a home and we do not,” Anna concluded.

“Being born into a disadvantaged area does impact your opportunities.”

**Damien, 19**

Ireland is touted on the International Stage as a land of equal opportunity, however many would say that Damien's experience highlights the contrary.

Damien grew up in a traditionally disadvantaged area of Dublin's North Inner City. Further education, a career outside of the surrounding locale was not often considered within the realms of possibility for people from this area. More often than not, substance abuse and criminality became normalised as a part of an individual's daily routine in these parts, making it more difficult to articulate a life outside of these social norms.

Sadly, Damien was no exception to this experience. His mother, Ivy, who had battled with addiction throughout his childhood passed away from complications related to substance abuse when Damien was just about to complete his Junior Certificate exams. Having no immediate family who were willing to support and act as his full time legal guardians, Damien became a ward of the State and was taken into care.

As Damien was already fifteen years old, it was a challenge to place him in a long-term family setting as most foster families have a preference for younger children. Initially, Damien spent a lot of time being ferried between different foster homes, before finally being made a long term resident at a group home for adolescents. While studying for his Leaving Certificate, Damien realised his passion for music and had considered applying to study music production at a local college. Yet again, however, Damien was faced with the challenges of an environment which was unable to support any of his long-term ambitions.

Once Damien turned eighteen, he was notified that he had 'aged out' of the foster care system. Though he was able to find a space for a short period in a supported living accommodation for those in transition, this was not a permanent solution in the pursuit of having his own home.

Since moving out of the supported living accommodation, Damien has spent a great deal of his time couch-surfing between different friends' houses. Once or twice he has had to sleep outside – he deemed this to be more preferable than many of the hostels which are often faced with substance abuse issues. However, Damien is worried about the incoming winter months and when his friends decide that couch-surfing situation is no longer sustainable.

## Conclusion

Take some time to reflect on the five personas. Think about all of the things you have in common with them: sport, love, family and travelling. It is crucial to remember that they are people like you and I who have fallen on hard times.

Statistics desensitise the topic of homelessness. The aim of these personas is to illustrate that there is a unique face behind the statistics and it's important to do everything we can to work with them and provide a hand up, not a hand out.

The people mentioned above and their narratives tell extraordinarily unique stories and show some of the distinctive manners in which this devastating state of living happens to members of our society. Yet, with that in mind, none seem too distant from our own stories.

We can all identify with a multitude of traits of each of the personas above. Those effected have families, passions and careers, just like us. Reflecting on that, are we as far from homelessness as we think? Alter a decision, remove a character from your story, minus a stroke of luck and how different could it be? When it comes down to it, what separates us? Is it as simple as a bit of luck?

While innately useful and informative, research and statistics can unhumanise a topic like this. We often view people as a number, knowing nothing of their background or circumstance. In tandem, we as a society can be all too quick to insinuate stereotypes and predefine ideologies on individuals within a current state. We often forget to scratch beneath the surface and look behind what is in front of us. The five personas above should act as a mechanism to combat this and illustrate the broad array of backgrounds that our homeless communities have.

What needs to be understood about homelessness is that while a lot of what we see in our immediate proximity can appear similar, no two pictures are ever painted the same. This issue knows no boundaries, no structure and no order and it does not discriminate. We hope that this document and the stories it provides will help readers to look beyond the term 'homeless' as just a word and shape their opinion to see the real faces of homelessness and, in doing so, address this problem together.

## Appendix

### Charities supported in 2017

#### Focus Ireland

Focus Ireland works with people who are homeless or at risk of losing their homes across Ireland. They are driven by the fundamental belief that homelessness is wrong. Wrong because it is a failure of society that creates victims out of ordinary people and robs them of their potential. Wrong because it can be prevented and solved but is allowed to continue, thereby undermining our society. Focus Ireland's strategy outlines that the real solutions to this crisis lie in preventing people from becoming homeless in the first place and ensuring that they are helped to stay in their home once they have found one. These are the two areas that will be central to their work in the coming years.

Find out more at:

<https://www.focusireland.ie/>

#### Dublin Simon Community

Dublin Simon Community provides accommodation and supportive services to individuals and couples over 18 years of age and families who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness in Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow, Meath, Cavan and Louth, enabling them to rebuild their lives and empowering them to secure a safe home of their own. They provide housing and support services at all stages of homelessness and enable people to move to a place they can call home. They strive to empower people to access, secure and retain a home of their own by reducing the reliance on short term emergency accommodation and provide permanent supported housing for people to sustain a home in their local community. Moving people into supported housing or independent housing produces life enhancing and life-saving results and is more cost-effective in the long run.

Find out more at:

<https://www.dubsimon.ie/>

#### Peter McVerry Trust

Established in 1983, Peter McVerry Trust is committed to reducing homelessness, the harm caused by substance misuse and social disadvantage.

They aim:

- To target those most marginalised in society and offer a safe and supportive environment through Peter McVerry Trust's service provision.
- To treat participants with warmth and respect and actively encourage them to be involved in all aspects of their own support plan.
- To offer a comprehensive prevention package of support to reduce the likelihood of homelessness to those leaving care, those leaving treatment, those leaving prison or other institutions and those whose accommodation is vulnerable.
- To offer a comprehensive package of support that will provide the best opportunities possible for them and assist them in planning a pathway out of homelessness or drug use, or if they continue to use drugs, to assist them towards some level of stabilisation in order to live a life of dignity, with respect and opportunity.
- To assist each person to re-establish himself or herself in the community and move towards greater independence.

Find out more at:

<https://www.pmvtrust.ie/>

### **ALONE**

ALONE is a national organisation that supports older people to age at home. They work with people over the age of 60 to provide and coordinate access to any services they need. ALONE creates unique solutions for each older person working in partnership with all services, friends and family, giving them options for the type of support that's best for them, regardless of their situation. Supported by volunteers, they offer a range of services including: Befriending, Housing with Support, Support Coordination, Technology, and Campaigns for Change.

Find out more at:

<http://alone.ie/>

### **Sophia Housing**

Sophia is a weaving of holistic support to enable people who are homeless to make positive differences in their lives by becoming more aware of their own strengths and potential. As well as providing accommodation, Sophia will also offer a safe place where one can seek wisdom of mind, heart, soul and spirit. Sophia is an environment that welcomes people who want to step back from the many pressures of their daily lives and environments. Homelessness can be a very stressful and chaotic time for an individual. Sophia aims to work with each service user at their own pace in order to prepare them for more long term accommodation. Sophia also provides service users with training and skill development to greater improve their independence.

Sophia has a number of various different projects around the country offering emergency, transitional, short term and long term accommodation, support and outreach to individuals and families.

Find out more at:

<https://www.sophia.ie>

# Deloitte Analyst Christmas Challenge 2018

## Routes to Homelessness

This year the Analyst 1 group worked with 5 incredible Irish charities supporting the homeless: the Alice Leahy Trust, Alone, Dublin Simon Community, Focus Ireland and Sophia Housing. Together they raised over €25,500 and put on a range of Christmas events for the residents of these charities. During this time the Analysts wrote personal reflections on their experiences of working with the charities and interacting with their volunteers and residents. Above are some quotes from the Analysts summarizing how this opened their eyes to, and even changed their view on, homelessness.

### Introduction

This chapter aims to highlight the many diverse routes to homelessness across Ireland today. There is no one size fits all story of homelessness and this chapter endeavours to discuss some primary contributing factors to homelessness, highlighting how easily individuals and families in Ireland can find themselves in this situation.

The myriad factors that can contribute to homelessness make solving the homelessness crisis in this country an increasingly complex issue. From our research and conversations with Alice Leahy, Catherine Cleary and the members and residents of the other four homeless charities we worked with (Alone, Dublin Simon Community, Focus Ireland, Alone and Sophie Housing) it became clear that there is no single solution to this issue. To paraphrase Alice Leahy, homeless people are people, not problems, and any solution to homelessness will have to take a holistic view of each individual as every case is unique and should be treated as such. What has become apparent is that the Irish public must strive to put humanity back at the core of treating homelessness.

As highlighted in the previous chapter, homelessness does not discriminate; due to an unexpected change in circumstances anyone could find themselves at risk of becoming homeless. This chapter will outline common routes to homelessness under two main categories: personal circumstances and policy shortcomings. However, this is by no means exhaustive as every person has a unique story that deserves to be listened to and respected.



## Figures on Homelessness in Ireland 2018

5999



The total number of adults listed as homeless in October 2018

18%



The percentage of people under the poverty line that are employed

132



The total number of people in temporary emergency accommodation in October 2018

1709



The total number of families listed as homeless in October 2018

## Insights from the Analysts

A key point taken from the week was the reality of the **various routes to homelessness** - it is not as one-dimensional as I had perceived. The reality is that **anyone**, due to circumstances, **can find themselves in a difficult position**.

There was one **father** that said he used to volunteer and help out in homeless charities like Sophia Housing, and now **finds himself on the other side**, this was really eye opening to me...

**Many of the people** was spoke to **did indeed have a house**; the residential home where our event was held. However, outside of that housing they may **not have had anyone there to support them**, or the means to **live independently**; whether that be for financial reasons, health reasons or any other reasons.

While with the Simon Community, I spoke to several **elderly people** who may not have been at particular risk of homelessness over the course of their lives, but rather became **vulnerable** as the **support systems** which they may have been surrounded with **disappeared as they got older**.

## Personal Circumstances

### Financial Uncertainty

Poverty and lack of sufficient financial support has resulted in many people becoming homeless across Ireland. Currently, there are over 750,000 people throughout the country living under the poverty line. This can often result in individuals and families being evicted from their homes due to a lack of financial means to pay rent on top of providing for themselves and their families. In fact, it is the impoverished families who rely on housing obtained from the private rent sector who are particularly vulnerable to homelessness, as exemplified by Focus Ireland's 2018 report which highlighted that 69% of homeless families got their previous 'stable' accommodation from a private tenancy. This route to homelessness has been exacerbated recently by soaring house and rent costs in Ireland. This chapter will discuss this further under the lack of affordable housing in the Irish market.

There are numerous factors that contribute to poverty such as insufficient income, unexpected expenses, unemployment and a lack of family or community support. Although loss of work and unemployment are major causes, 18% of those under the poverty line in Ireland are currently employed. This exemplifies how widespread poverty and lack of sufficient financial support are in Ireland today as the minimum wage and government supports fail to protect individuals and families from falling under the poverty line.

Another significant contribution to poverty in Ireland is the additional expenses associated with supporting a family. This is particularly prevalent in single parent households, who are three times more likely to be in poverty than two-parent households.

It is important to remember, that those in poverty, just as those experiencing homelessness, are not a single homogeneous group, but come from a variety of backgrounds and circumstances.

### Disability and Sickness

According to the 2016 census, among those surveyed as homeless in Ireland, 27% indicated that they had a disability. Currently, it is estimated that there are approximately 7,600 people with disabilities on the social housing waiting lists around the country. Disability not only makes the lives of those who are homeless more difficult but it adds an additional layer of complexity with regards to finding suitable accommodation that meets their needs.

Similarly, illness or injury can hinder individuals from being able to maintain a stable job or provide for themselves, which in turn greatly contributes to their risk of becoming homeless. When unexpected illness or injury occurs in someone's life this can cause them to heavily rely on the support of friends, family and the State. However, due to social isolation and inadequate funding to essential services, some people can simply fall through the cracks and quickly find themselves at risk of homelessness. For example, in the UK, almost 50% of homeless people have suffered a traumatic brain injury, with the majority of these injuries having occurred before they became homeless. While this type of injury is invisible, it can seriously impact how an individual navigates the world around them. In essence, this means that a road traffic accident or a sufficiently traumatic fall can lead to an individual becoming homeless if they do not have the financial or familial support to help them.

## Mental Health and Addiction

There is a strong interdependent relationship between homelessness, addiction, substance abuse, and the development and exacerbation of mental health problems. The use of alcohol and drugs can be prevalent amongst those experiencing homelessness as evidenced by the 'Dublin Simon's Health Snapshot for 2013' and the 'Homelessness and Mental Health Voices of Experience' reports. It is often a complicated mixture of addiction and mental illness that can lead to homelessness and conversely, homelessness can lead to the development of a drug habit or induce some form of mental illness.

People who suffer with a mental illness can find it hard to remain in employment, making it increasingly difficult to earn sufficient funds to sustain an independent lifestyle. Furthermore, a mental illness can lead to withdrawal from family and friends and other support groups, leaving many people isolated in times of trouble or crisis. When an individual finds themselves without the money to stay in private rental accommodation and feel that they cannot turn to a typical support network for help, they will often find themselves sleeping rough or trying to find shelter in emergency accommodation.

Many homeless people point to a trauma early in their lives as the root cause of their mental illness. Common examples of such traumas include physical, emotional or sexual abuse. However, the loss of a family member is another traumatic event that can push people into homelessness. The surviving family member may not only become depressed but the loss of an important supportive figure from their lives can leave them feeling alone, and the impact is even greater if the deceased family member provided substantial financial support. Aside from the damage that these traumatic events can inflict on the mental wellbeing of the person, they can also push someone towards the adoption of a drinking or drug habit to combat their negative feelings.

In some cases, substance abuse can be viewed as an attempt to self-medicate for a mental illness, alleviating pain and temporarily forgetting the reality of the current situation. Once a person becomes dependent on drugs or alcohol they can find themselves trapped in a downward spiral that culminates in homelessness and once they are on the streets the habit can become even more entrenched, causing them to stay homeless. A damning statistic from the Head of Research at the Dublin Homeless Region Executive states that of the 53 homeless people who died in 2014, 92% of their deaths were either directly or indirectly related to drugs or alcohol. Alcoholism is particularly

prevalent among young people who find themselves homeless. Many of them started drinking in their early teens and ended up dependent on alcohol.

Once a person becomes homeless they are also at risk of developing or exacerbating a problem with their mental health or addiction. Rough sleepers often speak of a profound sense of loneliness and abandonment. The feeling of being a stigmatised "outsider" is perpetuated by the unwillingness of the public to acknowledge them as they pass by. It is unsurprising therefore that depression is so prevalent among the homeless. Dublin Simon's Health Snapshot says that 71% of the people availing of its services had a diagnosed mental health difficulty.

Furthermore, when the above feelings are coupled with the highly stressful situations encountered in hostels or on the streets, the mental health of a homeless person can be damaged to an even greater extent. The experience of sharing a hostel room with three strangers can be extremely stressful as it is difficult to predict the behaviour of their roommates. Many homeless people often describe hearing others in distress which can also be an extremely unsettling experience. There are innumerable examples of rough sleepers being subjected to physical and verbal abuse on the streets. Given this environment it is no wonder that homeless people regularly experience anxiety and panic attacks.

## Relationships and Family Breakdown

Relationship and family breakdown can have a profound impact on the livelihoods of people. Domestic violence, spousal illness, divorce or loss of a companion can in many cases lead to homelessness. This type of homelessness ranges from the physical loss of housing, to a sense of homelessness due to loss of community or companionship.

Domestic violence and divorce are leading causes of homelessness in Ireland. The issue is prevalent, with as many as 1 in 4 cases of homelessness involving domestic violence in Ireland. Many victims of domestic violence who choose to leave their circumstances for safety are met with homelessness due to lack of emergency housing. Almost 30% of homeless families in emergency accommodation cite relationship breakdown as a contributing factor to their current circumstances. Cases of separation or divorce due to other causes can also have a major impact on the living circumstances of those involved, particularly those with children.

While there are some cases where loss of a spouse or partner can lead to physical homelessness, in many cases the loss of a companion or community can mean a sense of living without a home. According to Alone Ireland, 1 in 3 elderly people live alone and up to 9% are living with chronic loneliness. While these people are not conventionally viewed as homeless, the impact of loneliness and isolation can have similar effects to the loss of a physical home.

According to a report conducted by Trinity College's Children's Research Centre, a large number of those experiencing youth homelessness reported issues within the family such as arguments and serious conflict with parents, at times ending in violence. Additionally, conflict with a step-parent or with a new partner who joins the family is also being cited among young homeless people. Substance abuse on the part of the parent is also common among the homeless youth, with this being a source of tension within the home. This indicates the impact the family and upbringing can have in later life, highlighting that early intervention is a crucial aspect of tackling homelessness.

## Childhood Homelessness

As discussed, family and upbringing have an undeniable impact on individual's lives and futures. Studies indicate that, compared to domiciled youth, a large proportion of homeless youth come from homes where they have experienced or witnessed physical, sexual or emotional abuse. The link between youth homelessness and abuse is complex and has many strands. In some cases, the young individual may leave home because of an abusive situation, while in other cases the discovery of abuse within the home may result in familial breakdown and the young individual or child being taken into State care.

A significant proportion of those who experience abuse or neglect in the home are sent into State care. These young individuals often have a difficult time adjusting once they leave State care, with inadequate services and supports available in helping them to find accommodation and transition in financial independence. Similarly, those who leave care have to face independent adulthood at a much earlier age than their peers. This issue is further compounded by the lower level of educational attainment and career opportunities experienced by those who have been in State care. Additionally, multiple care placements can lead to an inconsistent and unstable upbringing experience for young people, leading to trust issues and difficulties in forming meaningful relationships with others.

We spoke to a woman who had recently moved into a new home in Bluebell with her two young kids having lived in Sophia Housing for four years. She said it had been difficult for her youngest to adapt because Sophia had become his home and it was all he ever knew. This demonstrates the profound effect homelessness can have on children. Worryingly, according to the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the rate of childhood homelessness in Ireland has risen by 287% in the space of three years and is currently the highest in Europe.

## Policy Shortcomings

### Lack of Affordable Housing

Lack of affordable housing has become an increasingly common route to homelessness in Ireland today. Funding by Local Authorities to build and purchase social housing has been reduced from 4,986 units in 2007, to just over 253 units in 2013. As of July 2018 there were 85,799 households on waiting lists for social housing. Furthermore, simply building more social housing is not sufficient. It is crucial that clusters of social housing units that are separated from greater society are not created as this in turn may lead to social isolation and perpetuate the cycle of homelessness as homeless individuals and families are further marginalised.

A "Rebuilding Ireland" strategy is being rolled out by the Irish Government over a six-year period from 2016 to 2021 which aims to address the shortage of housing units as well as preventing individuals and families currently living in social housing from becoming homeless again. The Irish Government have committed to building, acquiring, or leasing 41,000 new social houses by 2021. However, only a third of social housing units scheduled to be available by the end of 2017 by the Department of Housing have been completed.

Similarly, the Minister for Finance Paschal Donohue announced the availability of 6,000 affordable homes for couples earning up to €75,000, and an additional €121 million has been budgeted for the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP), which has been created to help individuals overcome homelessness. However, some critics highlight that there is still a considerable amount of "red tape in relation to approval, tendering, and procurement processes at State level".

## Systemic Failures

Beyond affordable housing, inadequate provision of services, such as health and addiction services, often leads to individuals becoming trapped in a cycle of homelessness. Furthermore, services that aim to assist homeless people often leave behind those who are most vulnerable and marginalised. In our meeting with Alice Leahy she recalled a man who frequented the Trust that had been in and out of prison for the past 20 years. She highlighted that there are little to no supports in place for individuals when they leave the prison system. People released from Irish prisons are, on average, less likely to be able to get a job or have access to education and healthcare services including vital rehabilitation services. Moreover, a prison sentence can result in a prisoner being removed from the Local Authority housing list, or the repossession of their Local Authority. Worryingly, studies show that some former inmates become re-offenders in order to re-enter the prison system where they are guaranteed a bed and food. From this it is clear systemic failures are negatively impacting these individuals and are contributing to the cycle of homelessness prevalent in Ireland today.

Similarly, domestic violence is a key example of a systemic failure that contributes to homelessness in Ireland. There is an apparent lack of appropriate government policies to protect the men, women and children who experience domestic violence. For example, the extensive documentation and evidence needed when applying for social housing support can compromise the safety, privacy and dignity of these individuals seeking such supports. Furthermore, the failure to involve domestic violence agencies in both regional and national committees leads to the implementation of policies that fail to tackle the root causes of this issue and in turn fail to successfully protect such individuals and families from homelessness.

Lack of government funding is a prevalent issue when it comes to homelessness in Ireland. Since 2008 the Irish government has significantly reduced healthcare funding and the impact of this is causing lasting damage to homeless people. A recent study cited that 82% of homeless people are smokers, 53% consider themselves heavy drinkers and 33% classified themselves as active drug users, for this it is undeniable that underfunding in healthcare and addiction services disproportionately affects homeless people. These barriers pose major challenges to the complex healthcare needs of the homeless population which simply aren't being addressed due to insufficient funding.

Lastly, homelessness can result in not being able to receive social welfare payments due to the lack of a permanent address as well as not being able to apply for jobs and avail of health care services. Although in these situations people who are homeless can avail of the Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) scheme, it comes at a price of proving they are homeless which can include showing receipts for one or more nights in emergency accommodation. As many homeless people don't use emergency accommodation due to personal issues such as safety, mental health, and addiction this policy further marginalises vulnerable people. From this it is apparent how people who find themselves homeless can get stuck in a vicious cycle as their dignity, identity and rights begin to disappear due to failing Irish policy.

## Conclusion

As illustrated, the routes to homelessness are varied and there is often more than one contributing factor to a person or family finding themselves at risk of homelessness. This makes the homelessness epidemic extremely complex and difficult to tackle as there is no simple blanket solution. It is clear that homelessness in Ireland should be dealt with at a human level, tackling the root causes and intervening early to help individuals and families who find themselves at risk.

A worrying trend is the increased financial vulnerability experienced by Irish individuals and families. This has undoubtedly been exacerbated by the increasing rent costs across Ireland. As highlighted, 69% of homeless families previously had private sector rented accommodation. From this it is undeniable that affordable rent and house prices, as well as a living wage and welfare support is necessary for these individuals and families to thrive.

Furthermore, our research demonstrates the cyclical nature of homelessness with childhood homelessness, disability, mental health issues and addiction being highlighted as common routes to homelessness in Ireland. From this it is clear that early intervention is key and that more needs to be done to support the vulnerable and marginalised in our society. Simply providing affordable social housing will not eradicate the problem, with investment in health, family and addiction services as well as the inclusion of domestic violence and homeless charities in policy decisions being vital to breaking the cycle.

In conclusion, the routes to homelessness are diverse and complex. It is vital that we remember that homeless people are not simply statistics but rather people who live varied and intricate lives. They are people, not problems, and this becomes apparent when one looks at the human side of homelessness in Ireland. We wish to thank the members and residents of the charities we worked with in compiling this chapter. In particular we would like to thank Alice Leahy and Catherine Cleary for meeting with us and giving us an insight into how the Alice Leahy Trust makes a tangible difference to the everyday lives of homeless people.

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## Appendix

### Charities supported in 2018

In 2018, as in 2017, the Analysts worked with Alone, Dublin Simon Community, Focus Ireland and Sophia Housing as well as the additional charity: the Alice Leahy Trust.

#### **Alice Leahy Trust**

The Alice Leahy Trust was founded in 1975 to provide medical aid and other services to people who are homeless. Aside from the medical services provided, the Trust gives out hundreds of outfits of clothing, contacting families and other authorities if needed, while also offering washing facilities at their premises. The majority of people who avail of their services are rough sleepers of all ages. Some mornings anywhere between 20 and 40 men and women coming from doorways, squats, parks, tents and Garda Stations will call into the Trust, located in the basement of the Men's Iveagh Hostel on Bride Road (Dublin 8). The Trust places a large emphasis on human contact and recognises the right of all people to be treated with dignity and respect. The Alice Leahy Trust also has committed itself to education and advocacy to create a greater understanding of the nature of homelessness.

Find out more at:

<https://aliceleahytrust.ie/>

# Deloitte Analyst Christmas Challenge 2019

The Impact of Living with Homelessness

## In what ways is one's life impacted while living with homelessness?

### Introduction

Today, homelessness affects over 10,000 people in Ireland, and the number of homeless families has increased by 300% since November 2014 (Focus Ireland, 2019). Unaccounted for in these figures are those in 'hidden' homelessness, which is defined as people who live temporarily with others but without guarantee of continued residency or immediate prospects for accessing permanent housing. The most vulnerable of this group are women and children staying in domestic violence refuges, those sleeping rough or living on friend's sofas, and those living in emergency accommodation.

Unfortunately, we tend to reduce those affected by homelessness to a series of numbers: what proportion of Ireland's population is homeless? How many people are sleeping rough in Dublin? How many social housing buildings are being constructed this year? As a result, we dehumanise those affected at the expense of empathy and understanding. It is only through a widespread deeper understanding of homelessness that we can engage in true design thinking and generate effective solutions.

As a result, this year's focus of the report aims to paint a more palpable picture of homelessness. Homelessness can affect anybody and everybody and manifests itself in many different ways. By amalgamating extensive primary research and conversations with representatives from the Alice Leahy Trust and Good Shepherd Cork, we identified six key issues. We looked at each issue through the experiences of different people, to represent the lasting impacts on those who have experienced homelessness.



### Addiction

Often, drugs and alcohol have no part to play in a person's path to homelessness and only becomes a factor once the person finds themselves without a home. Merchant's Quay Ireland (MQI) chief executive Tony Geoghegan said that while the traditional picture of adults living with homelessness was that the majority had serious mental-health and addiction issues, this is increasingly not the case. "Many coming into emergency accommodation have no history of drug or alcohol abuse, but because they are spending so long in totally unsuitable, hostel-type accommodation where there are drug users, some are getting involved in drugs." A recent report surveying 528 people living with homelessness found:

"12 years I am homeless. I was very bad on drugs. I was addicted to heroin and cocaine. And I got clean 12 years ago. Cause of that I wouldn't go around my family, I didn't want my family knowing I was on drugs and I wouldn't let them look at me the way I was, so I became homeless. And when I got clean I went back to my family. I was clean for 12 years. Then my father got dementia and got really sick so I was looking after him and the stress of that caused me to relapse but I am clean now, thank god, but I still can't get a place in a house."

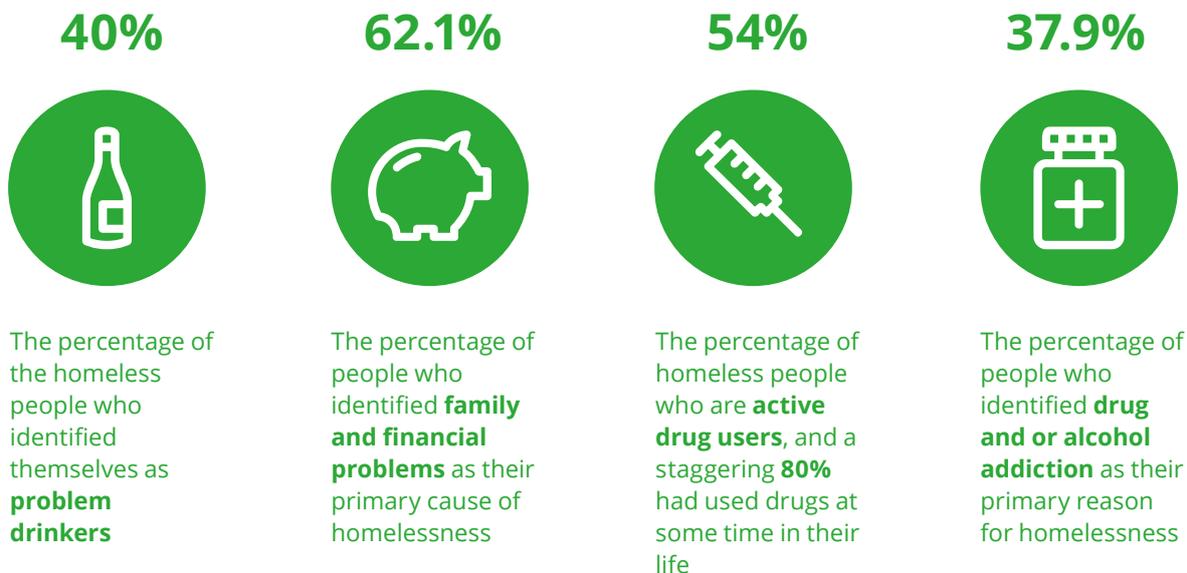


Figure 1: Addiction and homelessness statistics (O' Reilly F, 2015)

"I used to gamble, for fun, you know like an interest. If I lost £20, I would know that's too much gone, I am going. I'm after losing enough. I started to gamble out of control, whilst we were trying to save for a deposit on a house, me and my wife. Then breast cancer took her. The gambling spiralled. I was borrowing off Jack to pay Paul. As they say, when you drink, you'll only drink so much then fall down. Gambling, there is no stopping. It's a very lonely place. I had a notice of eviction and nowhere to live. I always perceived homelessness as the reason people started taking stuff, as in drugs or alcohol, because what you see and go through is surreal. You wouldn't believe."

Homelessness and addiction are inextricably linked, with one often leading to the other. Addiction to drugs, alcohol or even gambling can be a cold and lonely place. People can isolate themselves from their families due to shame around their illness and their circumstances thus cutting themselves off from really valuable support. This is described by John\* in the quote above in a recent Newstalk interview with Pat Kenny. John is a bright, personable young man, who unfortunately due to his struggles with his addiction, found himself with nowhere to live. John is not unique to those affected by homelessness.

It is apparent that while addiction may not always be the key driver of a person becoming homeless, it has a profound effect on the life of a homeless person.

*\*John is not his real name.*

## Mental Health

Poor mental health can be both a cause and a side effect of homelessness. As a cause of homelessness, many homeless people have been subjected to traumatic experiences in the past. This has a significant impact on the mental wellbeing of an individual, as noted in a report by Good Shepherd Cork (Crowley, 2019).

According to the Cork based charity, which focuses on women and children, approximately 8 out of every 10 clients have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual abuse.

Children who were exposed to these hostile environments often demonstrate more externalising and internalising behaviours when compared to children who have not experienced such situations. These behaviours include but are not limited to suicidal tendencies, depression, anxiety and increased aggression. As staff from Good Shepherd Cork note, "the more traumas they have experienced as a child, the greater the likelihood they will go on to suffer from mental health issues and addictions". (Crowley, 2019)

**Figure2: Domestic violence figures Good Shepherd Cork (Crowley, 2019)**

As a side effect, those affected find that their experience on the streets has had a direct impact on their psyche. Oftentimes, chronic loneliness is responsible for this. People affected by homelessness perceive themselves (and are perceived by some) as unwanted outsiders, believing that they are the sole cause of their current situation. As referenced above, this is not the case as there are often external factors such as domestic violence or sexual abuse which have impacted the individual. However, the feeling of guilt prevails. Representatives from Good Shepherd Cork believe that mental health services are not sufficiently funded in Ireland, which leads to a vicious cycle of mental health issues. One staff member at Good Shepherd Cork provided the following anecdote, demonstrating how one mental health issue can feed into another. It also demonstrates the lack of resources available to support people who are homeless and are experiencing mental health issues:

Another staff member described how people who are homeless can become trapped between a mental health hospital and Edel House, which provides accommodation and services for women and children and is run by Good Shepherd Cork, due to the lack of supported housing.

“I think you can speculate ... ‘I supported her a lot about her mental health this week’ – and put an x in that box, but somewhere you know that mental health issue is linked directly to that domestic abuse history. And her alcoholism, you tick that box as well and you know that they’re directly linked to her childhood and what happened. But whilst you’re supporting her there, you’re not actively focused on the real root of what’s happening. And I don’t know how you’re supposed to get that message across.”

“We’re not qualified around addiction, mental health, but we’ve lots and lots of experience of working with people who have these issues and domestic and physical and sexual violence. We just try to be there for them. They’re in control of their lives, we’re not... I think they should be brought into transitional housing where they’re helped adapt back into [society] ...where they don’t feel like they’re just dropped. And I know that they have the services of a mental health social worker and the services of a mental health nurse but a lot of our clients that come from hospitals, they wouldn’t last, they go back in. There are very few that we’d house unsupported. And there isn’t enough supported housing.”

### Discrimination

Discrimination is an aspect of homelessness that a lot of people may not hear much about. However, during the course of our research this has been identified as a very real problem that is experienced by people who are homeless. Members of the LGBTQ community face social stigma, and are often rejected by their own families. This adds to the challenges that are already faced by someone sleeping rough or availing of emergency accommodation. The man paraphrased above has been homeless for 12 years and is scared to avail of emergency accommodation for fear of homophobic discrimination and for his physical safety. He sleeps in an internet café where the owner is sympathetic to homeless people and lets them spend the night there for €10. The amendment of the constitution in

2015 to permit same-sex marriage was a life-changing day for a lot of people in this country. However, discrimination is still present in our society and commonly experienced by those seeking shelter in B&Bs and emergency accommodation. Alice Leahy, director of services at the Alice Leahy Trust, mentioned that it's something that they have zero tolerance for and they always have to be vigilant of.

Allison Aldred, CEO at Good Shepherd Cork, mentioned that racial and cultural discrimination is also something that is seen quite often in the homeless community. Families in the travelling community find it very difficult to secure private rented accommodation due to the anti-social reputation that is associated with their culture.

The second ever National Traveller Survey took place in 2017, producing some worrying figures:

“I’m scared to check into emergency accommodation. There is a gang mentality against homosexuals. It can get very violent and it’s not somewhere that I can feel safe.”

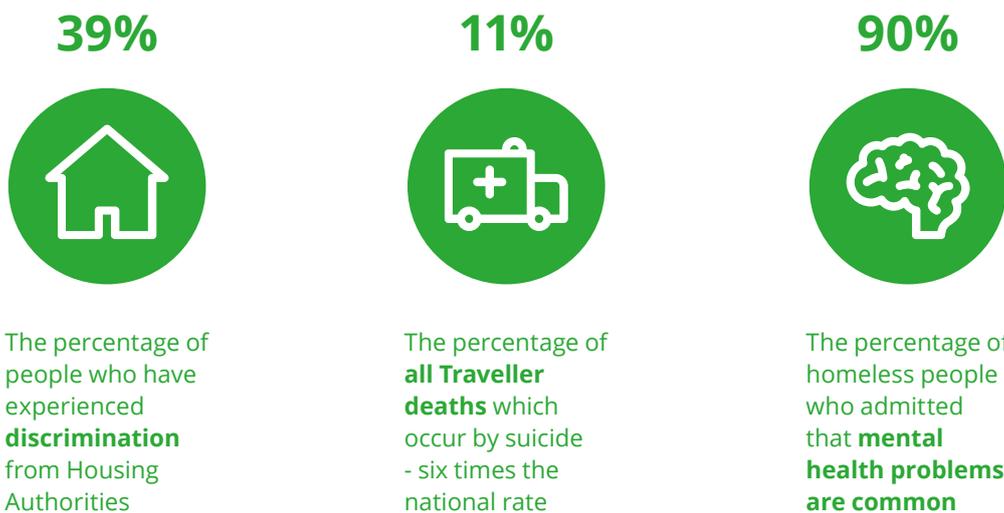


Figure 3: National traveller survey statistics (O'Mahony, 2017)

Racism, discrimination, and homelessness are all huge factors that affect the health and well-being of those within the travelling community. Allison also mentioned that those of other nationalities were often mistreated and discriminated against within the homeless community and by private landlords. "Being Black in the EU", a report published in 2018 by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, details the level of discrimination experienced by those of African descent living within the EU. (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2018)

14% of respondents said that private landlords refused to rent accommodation to them on the basis of their skin colour

**Figure 4: Being black in the EU**  
(European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2018)

This is particularly problematic, as compared to 70% of the general population of the EU, where only 15% of black people in the EU own their own property.

### Domestic Violence

Today, there are 2,619 women in emergency homeless accommodation in Ireland. Women constitute around 41% of homeless adults in Ireland, according to the latest official statistics. Not only is this significantly higher than the European averages of 20-33%, the official figures are also likely to represent a serious underestimation and do not include all women in housing crisis circumstances. Women are more likely to experience hidden homelessness in an effort to avoid entering into homelessness services, primarily due to the lack of female-appropriate services. Furthermore, Focus Ireland research has shown that domestic violence is a contributor to women's homelessness, yet women who are residing in emergency domestic violence refuges are not counted in the monthly homelessness figures. Nor are they published by Tusla. This disconnect between homelessness and domestic violence services means that women's housing needs do not take into account

the gendered causes of homelessness in many cases. Further research has shown that a high percentage of women in homeless services have experienced some form of violence or abuse at some point in their lives. Oftentimes, women who leave their homes because of violence are unable to find alternative accommodation, and can be forced to return to violent abusers. The woman quoted at the beginning of this section became homeless upon leaving her abusive husband and described her circumstances to RTÉ.

From the research, it became apparent that a co-ordinated response to homelessness needs to be instituted by service providers, so that they can be sensitive towards the gender differences inherent to the how people become homeless and the effects and experiences of homelessness itself. Countless women have reported dehumanising experiences, leaving them with feelings of powerlessness, alienation and being judged.

“The most severe thing he did to me was try to strangle me in the bath. He dragged me from the bottom floor to the top and put me in the bath and tried to strangle me.”

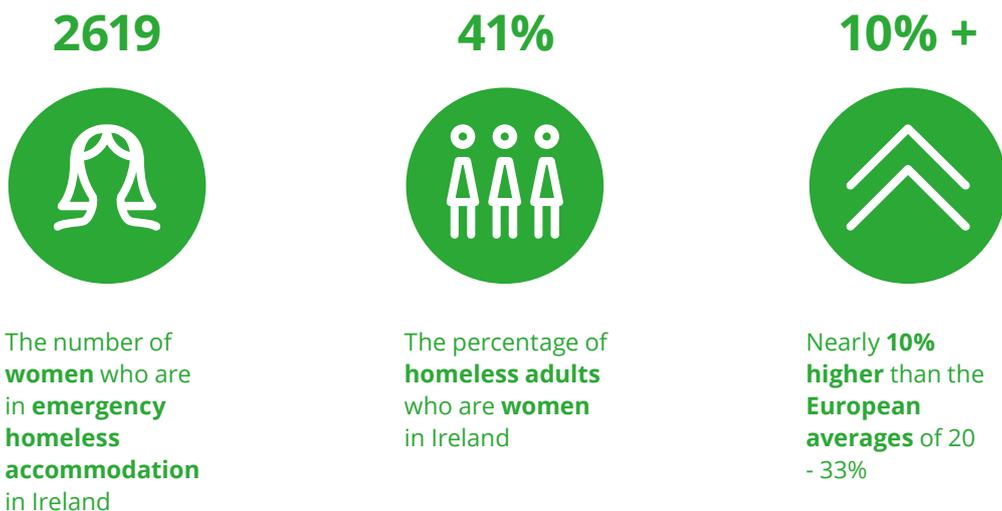


Figure 5: Women suffering from homelessness figures (Focus Ireland, 2019)

## Loneliness

The research conducted by this report uncovered loneliness as a poignant issue faced by the homeless community. While loneliness takes many shapes and forms, an often overlooked element is the impact of homelessness on children's social interactions. Unfortunately, it was found that homeless children often suffer from loneliness resulting in an adverse effect on their development and wellbeing (Ombudsman for Children, 2019).

Social interaction is cited as one of the most important factors for healthy human development, from young children to the elderly. Benefits include increased cognitive ability, mental health, communication skills, independence and physical health. Early social interaction is particularly conducive for a child's mental and physical development, as it can aid in developing strong language skills, creativity, empathy, communication and confidence. Playtime among children can help foster a wide range of skills, such as problem-solving, sharing, conflict resolution, creativity and empathy. In a nutshell, social interaction allows children to express themselves and find a sense of belonging in a safe space. A child therapist would say that "Adults Talk, Kids Play", as children may not be able to articulate their thoughts, feelings and experiences, but are able to express them through play. Importantly, social interaction with peers allows children to develop friendships, which contribute significantly to the development of social skills, such as being sensitive to others' viewpoints and learning social norms and behaviours (Sandfield Day Nursery, 2019).

While most of us may take children's playtime for granted, children without a stable living environment certainly do not. Even those fortunate enough to have found a hub to live in are unable to live healthy social lives. This year, when the Irish Ombudsman for Children's Office spoke with 80 children living in family hubs across the country; privacy, inability to have visitors, and feelings of shame and embarrassment surfaced as some of the concerns from affected children. During our own research, a charity worker in Good Shepherd Cork noted the stigma of homelessness among children and stated that it alienates children from their peers due to an overwhelming sense of shame, deterring them from having friends over for playdates. Even if a child wants to have visitors, they are sometimes prohibited from doing so. Rules at family hubs can be very strict which further exacerbates feelings of alienation, with visitors not allowed into rooms, children restricted from playing in hallways, and children not being allowed to be left unsupervised. It can also be hard for children without a stable living environment to properly socialise at school, due to feeling sick and tired as a result of improper living arrangements. Once left behind the development path, it can be difficult for children to catch up and they may forever struggle to find a true sense of belonging (Ombudsman for Children, 2019).

"I don't want my friends to see where I live."

## Security and Stability

People living on the streets face this lack of security and stability every day.

From speaking to Alice Leahy, Director of services at the Alice Leahy Trust, we learned that a lot of people who come out of prisons or detention facilities find it very hard to readjust, due to institutionalisation, and quite often end up homeless. This can lead to a “prison rules” environment in hostels and B&BS where people continue to act like they are in prison, exercising violence, selling and using drugs, and generally attempting to assert authority over other members of the homeless community. This causes issues, especially for families with young children, as it deters them from looking for help for fears of their own safety. The quote at the beginning of this section is paraphrased from an interview with a lady who was forced to live in emergency accommodation. She dropped her children to school in the morning, roamed the streets for the day, and after picking her children up from school they continued to roam the streets with a bag of blankets, clothes, and food provisions until it was time to go to bed again. Then they would return to their hotel room, enter quietly, and keep as low a profile as they could. Allison Aldred, CEO at Good Shepherd Cork, detailed to us what hostels and B&B's were like for families with young

children. We were made aware that it was more like a “B”, as breakfast was often not an option. Entire families were confined to a single room, with no space for anything other than sleeping. Families could stay for days, weeks, or even months, depending on the specifics of their own situation and often the terms of the accommodation, including restrictions on the length of their stay.

From reading “No Place like Home”, a report by the Ombudsman for Children’s Office 2019, we see the effects that the lack of a stable home has on children in families experiencing homelessness. The report begins with the eye-opening statement: “For over 3,700 children living in Ireland in 2019, there is no place called home”. The report goes on to detail, at a personal level, the experience of living in Family Hubs designed for families in these situations. Within the report, some parents express views that having a normal family life is next to impossible in these kind of facilities. Extra challenges were added to the already daunting task of being a parent. One mother stated that the only good aspect that she could think of is that her daughter is very young, so she might not remember it (Ombudsman for Children, 2019).

“After escaping an abusive relationship, my children and I lived in a hotel room. The people staying on one side of us were heroin addicts, and the people on the other side were alcoholics. We spent as much time as we could outside on the streets as we did not feel safe where we were staying.”

### Closing statement

For many people, homelessness can mean sleeping rough, living in hostels or sleeping in different types of emergency accommodation. However, the “homeless experience” is much more complex than their living circumstances. Homelessness can have an irreparable impact on one’s life, irrespective of their age, gender or nationality. The aspects of homelessness featured in this research highlights the importance of certain issues not normally discussed when considering homelessness, and does not by any means cover all endured by the homeless.

It is not only the lack of a home, but also the mental health issues, addiction, loneliness, lack of security and stability, discrimination and domestic violence that come hand in hand with homelessness, which affect men, women and children beyond their homelessness experience. We have heard snippets

from the lives of the people above, who have faced adversity in relation to substance abuse, gambling addiction, trauma, homophobia, domestic violence, humiliation and fearing for their life.

A gap in addressing these issues has been identified in the current system. It is only by shining a light on these ‘hidden’ issues faced by the homeless community that we can raise awareness and ultimately overcome the stigma. We must understand what it truly means to experience homelessness in order to effectively help people break out of the homeless cycle, help them to move on while coping with what they’ve endured, and ultimately strive to reduce homelessness in Ireland.

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## Appendix

### Charities supported in 2019

In 2018, as in 2017, the Analysts worked with Alone, Dublin Simon Community, Focus Ireland and Sophia Housing, the Alice Leahy Trust, as well as an additional charity to feed into the research behind this report, Good Shepherd Cork.

### Good Shepherd Cork

In 1972, Sr Colette Hickey of the Good Shepherd Sisters founded Edel House emergency accommodation for women and children in Cork city. After more than forty years of experience, their good work has extended from emergency accommodation to residential care for teenage girls, long-term supported housing, education and development and ongoing support and advocacy. Their vision is for a society where every woman and child enjoys a secure, safe and dignified home in a supportive environment, respectful of their rights.

Find out more at:

<http://www.goodshepherdcork.ie/>

This report contains personal reflections of those who have been involved in the challenge to date. Research and statistics quoted are referenced throughout, are publicly available and were not sourced/created solely for the purposes of this report. The personas introduced throughout this report are fictional, but are based in some cases on first hand interviews and testimony that were freely given with consent.

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