5.1 Introduction

While the Housing Act 1988 empowers local authorities to plan for and prioritise the needs of homeless people in their housing allocations, local authorities are also given an amount of flexibility as to how they might choose to address that housing need, Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988 states that:

“A housing authority may, subject to such regulations as may be made by the Minister under this section—
(a) make arrangements, including financial arrangements, with a body approved of by the Minister for the purposes of section 5 for the provision by that body of accommodation for a homeless person”

Section 5, referred to in the above section states that,

“A housing authority may, with the consent of the Minister and on such terms and conditions (including conditions requiring the giving of an undertaking) as they think fit, assist another housing authority (including the commissioners of a town) or a body approved of by the Minister for the purposes of this section in respect of the provision (whether by erection, purchase, improvement or conversion works) or management by the other authority or body of housing accommodation, or in respect of other matters in relation to housing, in one or more of the following ways:
(a) by a loan,
(b) by a periodic contribution to the funds of the other authority or body,
(c) by a guarantee of sums owed by the other authority or body in respect of borrowings,
(d) by a grant,
(e) by a subsidy towards, or the remission in whole or in part of, loan charges incurred by the other authority or body,
(f) by a contribution in kind (whether by way of materials or labour or any other service).”

In other words, the Act allows for local authorities to “subcontract” the role of housing people who are homeless to other agencies, including voluntary organisations/non-governmental organisations approved by the Minister to provide housing.

In addition, since the publication of the Integrated Strategy in 2000 and the more direct involvement of the (then) Health Boards60 and local authorities that followed, voluntary organisations have received much enhanced levels of funding to deliver these services.

If it was only for these two reasons alone, we feel it would be justified to examine the role that the voluntary housing sector plays in meeting the long-term housing needs of people who are homeless. However further to these reasons, in Chapter 6 of this report, it is noted that a proportion of homeless people interviewed express an unwillingness to take up allocations of local authority housing. In this section we examine the role that voluntary housing organisations can have to more fully realise the aspirations of the Housing Act, 1988.

5.1.1 Overview

The majority of housing units provided by voluntary organisations to people who are categorised as homeless are in the form of emergency61 and transitional62 housing. To a certain extent this is a truism, since those who move on to stable, long-term independent housing are normally no longer categorised as homeless63. However it is also the case that, overall, voluntary housing providers working with homeless people have concentrated on the most emergency, acute housing needs.

The reasons for this are complex. Two possible reasons are the present funding regime, which covers costs for short-term homeless services but rarely for long-term housing, and the willingness of voluntary organisations and the reluctance of other sectors to work with the groups in emergency need.

This section examines the different housing outcomes for people who are homeless under the following headings:

- Emergency accommodation
- Transitional accommodation
- Long-term accommodation (supported and independent)

The purpose of this chapter is not to evaluate the

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60 A reorganisation of the way in which health services are to be delivered has led to the replacement of the Health Board structure by a Health Service Executive, with regional offices.
61 Accommodation designed for short-term use for those in emergency housing need.
62 Generally accommodation designed for those coming from emergency accommodation, who require support and re-skilling over a set programme in order to live independently.
63 Except those housed in long-term supported accommodation, meaning accommodation designed for people to live long-term with some support either floating or on site, who are still considered homeless in most local authorities.
quality of voluntary housing provision to homeless people, but rather, to reflect on the system of provision as it presently pertains and to discuss whether this system is achieving the optimum outcomes in terms of the settlement of homeless people in long-term stable accommodation.

5.2 Methodology

In this section we depended on one-to-one interviews for data. More than 15 voluntary service providers were interviewed in the five main urban areas. A standardised list of questions was covered in each area. The focus groups, at end of the interviewing process, included voluntary service providers and housing associations. At the focus groups, the researchers presented a summary of findings and sought to test the accuracy of the overall conclusions.

5.3 Emergency Accommodation

Although designed for short-term use, homeless people are staying long-term in some emergency accommodation in each of the urban areas in Ireland. This is considered a problem by both statutory and voluntary organisations in these areas. However statutory and voluntary organisations in each of these urban areas consider that, in the main, there is a sufficiency of emergency accommodation bed spaces, although some emergency accommodation is of a very poor standard. Interviewees further note that there would certainly be a sufficiency of emergency beds available if some of those staying in emergency accommodation for long periods were moved to more appropriate accommodation.

Why are people staying long-term in emergency hostels and not moving on to other housing options? In other sections of this report, we consider factors such as the (lack of) availability of other more stable accommodation; the perspectives of the homeless person and the nature of their support needs; and the work of settlement support teams in moving people into more stable housing and maximising their independence. In this section we examine whether the nature of emergency accommodation is itself a factor in maintaining people in this accommodation.

Interviewees highlighted some elements of emergency accommodation in Ireland that may act to impede homeless people’s move-on to long-term accommodation. These include:

5.3.1 Some service providers accept it as their role to accommodate some homeless people long-term in their hostels

While nearly all voluntary emergency accommodation service providers, even ‘traditional’ providers, have recently introduced guidelines on the length of time a person can stay in their hostels, for example a maximum of three months, they tend to apply the rule on length of stay flexibly to those people who have stayed long-term in their shelters (perhaps before these rules were introduced) and those with psychiatric support needs. One service said that some long-term residents have “a right to die here”. Another noted that in 10 years of operating the service, none of the residents had moved on to independent living. The rationale for this approach was perhaps articulated by one service provider who stated that, “the service feels that these individuals have nowhere else to stay and anyhow they would not fit in anywhere else”.

5.3.2 Some hostels are so restrictive in terms of the length of time people can stay or the type of behaviour that people must follow, that people must move from place to place after a short time span has elapsed. Consequently the person’s social, psychological and support needs will not be addressed.

Some areas of lower population density, medium sized country towns for example, may have a hostel service available, but stays are often permitted for only very short periods or if the person observes very restrictive behaviour, such as no drink or drugs use. People tend to stay for very short periods but move from place to place. Thus cumulatively they may be staying in this form of emergency accommodation for very long periods, without their real needs being investigated and identified. The often cited “homeless circuit” whereby the person moves from hostel to hostel could be said to be facilitated by the way some hostels operate their policies and procedures.

5.3.3 The services working with the highest number of people with mental ill health are often the services operating on the lowest budgets and offering the most basic supports.

Hostels where people are staying long-term will honestly and regretfully identify themselves as ‘quasi- psychiatric units’. For example one service

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64 This can be a broad category considering that some psychiatric services in some of the areas studied view alcoholism as a psychiatric condition.
built on the lands of Limerick’s psychiatric hospital estimated that at least 50% of residents are former patients of the same psychiatric hospital. However these services where people stay for long periods or where people are restricted on behaviour are typically the ones operating on the thinnest budget. Some pride themselves on offering good ‘value for money’, in terms of cost per person per bed, to funders. This is especially true when one compares their cost to those of other more staff intensive services that focus on maximising people’s independence. International research (Culhane, 2000) finds that people homeless due to mental health or drugs/alcohol addiction tend to need higher support.

5.4 Transitional Accommodation

Transitional housing is designed to allow people who have been homeless to regain independent living skills and resettle in the community. The person/couple/family stays in a residential centre and follows the programme for a certain length of time, on average nine months to two years. From the perspective of the voluntary organisation providing the service, the ideal is that once people finish the programme, they obtain a local authority or other type of secure tenancy.

The majority of transitional accommodation is based in the Dublin region. “In the greater Dublin region there are 507 units of accommodation available for transitional housing - that is services that provide both accommodation and support” Feantsa (2005). There is also a substantial amount of transitional accommodation in Cork, Waterford and Limerick.

In this section we explore the extent to which transitional housing has achieved its objectives in Ireland and whether some features of transitional housing actually impede settlement.

First it must be acknowledged that transitional housing provision has had some success. Interviewees cited many examples of individuals worked with whose lives have been changed for the better by following the transitional housing programme.

However while there has been some progression from transitional housing, the services acknowledge difficulties in placing people into long-term stable housing after completion of the programme.

For example:

- The Focus Ireland transitional housing service in Limerick, which was designed as a short- to medium-term transitional service for seventeen adults, became long-term housing provision shortly after opening. Only now is it hoping to revert back to the original intention on opening more than seven years ago, of operating a transitional programme, with stays of 12-18 months.

- Sonas Housing, has reverted one of its transitional housing services, in Ranelagh, to “permanent” housing “because the move-on options for single women in this area are so difficult”.

- The Daughters of Charity “Rendu Apartments” in Dublin accept one-third of all applicants referred onto the programme (the programme is over-subscribed). Of those who enter the programme (every year about 20 people enter the programme), one third actually complete the programme in its entirety. Of those that complete the programme, a third of these moved on to local authority tenancies, one-ninth of those that actually entered the programme. The rest either find their own long term accommodation or revert back into the “homeless system” and emergency accommodation.

Regardless of these difficulties, the expansion of transitional housing in Ireland has been rapid and extensive. The Homeless Agency, in its most recent three-year plan, suggests that the number of units of transitional housing in Dublin should be managed (Homeless Agency, 2004).

Interviewees identified the following factors as challenges to operating a transitional programme focused on settling people into long-term stable accommodation and consequently some of the reasons why some people do not complete the programme or stay well beyond the programme completion date and why some services are not running at maximum capacity.

5.4.1 Preferred housing placement is not always immediately available at the end of the programme

For transitional housing services making placements into local authority housing, there is a constant risk of the service becoming blocked up. For example:
Chapter 5: Housing of people who are homeless in other forms of long-term accommodation: Voluntary Housing Provision

Focus Ireland in Waterford has negotiated with the City Council that when a household completes a transitional programme with Focus Ireland, they should be offered a place with the Council. However in recent years a house placement with the Council is not always immediately available. To ensure the service is not blocked up, tenants must stay in private rented accommodation before taking up a Council place. There can be a six-month delay until the council property is available.

Dublin Simon Community transitional housing follows an eighteen months programme. At the inception of the service in 2002, the Simon Community promised local authority accommodation to people entering the programme, although the Dublin local authorities never gave any formal undertaking to house the people who complete the programme. The supply of local authority accommodation did not materialise and residents were reluctant to move on to other housing options. In March 2005, 90% of residents had finished the 18 months transitional programme. Most had been there for more than two years. In the future, Dublin Simon Community will offer no promises to local authority accommodation on completion of the programme and will promote the private rented sector to new entrants.

5.4.2 Very high quality transitional housing means that people on some programmes are reluctant to accept lesser quality step-down accommodation.

Transitional housing we viewed is of a very high quality, in terms of space, fittings, security and location, compared to the majority of local authority and private rented accommodation that the person will be expected to move into on completion of the programme. Understandably most voluntary organisations seek to be the best social landlord possible, with staff on site to offer support. This can make referral onto other lower quality accommodation more difficult.

In Cork Simon for example, their policy is that they do not move people on into lesser quality accommodation. Some transitional accommodation they provide is of a high quality. Consequently since the inception of transitional housing two years ago, only one couple and one single person have moved into housing association accommodation and no person has moved into City Council accommodation. Residents are given long-term secure tenancies, with the expectation that if a reasonable offer is made the person should move on. Cork Simon feels that the offers of accommodation from the local authority have been of insufficient quality.

5.4.3 The demand for transitional housing reflects the demand for housing more broadly.

Service providers interviewed acknowledge that people staying in transitional housing do so for a variety of reasons, including that it is low cost for the tenant, accommodation is of good quality and safe, there is a management presence and because of the lack of options for vulnerable single people. Some transitional housing services for single people have long waiting lists, perhaps reflecting the shortage of supply of single person accommodation more generally. Many homeless people interviewed in our research consider transitional housing as “just another housing option”, albeit one that offers greater privacy, space and independence compared to emergency hostels.

On the other hand, transitional housing services for families have experienced a reduction in demand across the country. The Homeless Persons Unit based in Dublin identified 179 homeless families through the full year 2004, which is a 49% reduction over two years. One service provider in Dublin is moving away from family type accommodation and focusing on single adults instead. The availability of private rented accommodation for families means that they can avoid using transitional housing to get their housing needs met. In one service in the Mid West, eight additional family units of transitional housing built and completed in the last year have not been occupied and the managing voluntary organisation has yet to find a purpose for them.

Interviewees also add that homeless families tend to be more stable and have less support needs than single people and lone parents who are homeless. For these families, transitional housing is less appealing because of the amount of communal living required. On the other hand those homeless families that stay in the homeless system for a long time are viewed as very difficult to work with and are “not suitable for transitional housing” because of their high support needs and history of anti-social behaviour.

5.4.4 Those accommodated are typically those most motivated to change. Interviewees suggest that this can often translate in practice as those people who are the easiest to work with.
Voluntary organisations seek to ensure that they are the right support for the client. In one service, after a process of three interviews, the person is asked for their three goals for what they seek to do with the rest of their life. A license agreement (which does not create a contract between both parties) is then issued, with conditions the client must fulfil, including weekly meetings with their key worker and monthly reviews. The age group for entrants on the programme is set between the ages of 20 to 50. This narrowing of who is worked with has meant that those with active addictions or personality/behaviour problems are less commonly accommodated.

5.4.5 Intensity of key working/oversight is much greater in transitional housing compared to long-term housing, leading to more people caught infringing rules of the service and being asked to leave.

Many people who start transitional housing programmes do not complete them. Some leave because the service does not suit them. Others are asked to leave because they are "not participating or cooperating", they are contravening alcohol and drug use guidelines or not making appointments with key workers. One interviewee of an organisation providing long-term and transitional housing noted that, in long-term supported housing and independent accommodation, the resident needs to manage their addictions to the extent that he/she does not endanger their tenancy/relationship with their neighbours. For a person in transitional accommodation, because there is much more oversight, drug and alcohol use for example will be identified and sanctioned much more quickly. In long-term housing, although drug and alcohol use are not condoned, (drug use for example would be a clear breach of tenancy and illegal), interviewees suggest that it is more likely to remain hidden and therefore unsanctioned and the person more likely to continue in their home.

5.5 Long-term Accommodation (supported and independent)

"Long-term accommodation", as a classification of housing type, is theoretically the most straightforward. It can be understood as accommodation designed for people to occupy on a long-term basis.

Voluntary organisations in Ireland offer two types of long-term housing:

- "Supported housing" - accommodation with support on site for people who are judged not able to live independently in the community and
- "Independent housing" - housing allocated to people who are homeless, without support on site.

In this section we examine these housing types separately.

5.5.1 Supported Housing

Supported housing exists for families and individuals who, in addition to permanent, affordable housing, need access to supportive services in order to stay housed permanently. Supported housing is relatively resource intensive, especially when compared to "independent housing". For that reason, when available, it tends to be offered to those who are "chronically homeless" and/ or have a disabling condition such as a substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions.

(a) Cost effectiveness of Supported Housing

Research from the US finds that approximately 10 percent of their homeless population are so-called chronic homeless (HUD, 2005). Across England, average levels of repeat homelessness based on quarterly counts were 10% (DoE UK, 2004). Though a fraction of the overall homeless population, these long-term homeless people are estimated to account for approximately half of all the resources dedicated to meet the needs of the entire homeless population (Culhane et al, 2001). This is because they stay longer in the system and place greater demands on support services.

Although more resource intensive than independent housing, research from the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Mental Health Policy and Services Research in the US (Culhane et al, 2001) shows that it costs approximately the same amount to house someone in stable, supported housing as it does to keep that person homeless and stuck in the revolving door of high-cost crisis care and emergency housing. This is because people who are homeless long-term or repeatedly, place frequent, and often inefficient, demands on public systems, such as shelters, hospitals, treatment facilities, and prisons. The research tracked the cost of nearly 5,000 mentally ill people in New York City for two years while they were homeless and for two years after...
they were housed. They concluded that supportive and transitional housing created an average annual savings of $16,282 by reducing the use of public services: 72% of savings resulted from a decline in the use of public health services; 23% from a decline in shelter use; and 5% from reduced incarceration of the homeless mentally ill. This reduction in hospital, prison and shelter use nearly covered the cost of developing, operating and providing services in supportive housing. After deducting the public benefits, the average supported housing unit cost per person was only $995 per year.

Representatives of services providing supported housing in Ireland say that their services house a very high percentage of residents with mental health difficulties, addictions and/or learning difficulties. None the less, costs for supported housing are not excessive. In comparison budgets from one service in Galway estimate all associated costs at approximately 6,000 euro per head for three to four residents in a shared house with occasional visits from staff and volunteers. However costs are as high as 40,000 euro in one service in Dublin. There are possible economies of scale associated with supported housing but providers recommend that a balance be struck between getting a good return for staff costs and creating a domestic environment for residents.

Comparing the costs associated with supported housing, in Ireland, the average cost for someone with an intellectual disability in a psychiatric hospital was €123,000 in 2002 (Expenditure data - Department of Health; numbers in this setting, National Intellectual Disability Database, 2002). Unit cost averaged over all 17 prisons in Ireland was €84,750 per year in 2002. The average cost for someone in a welfare home in 2002 was €87,000. (Fitzgerald, 2004). The cost of a psychiatric care place in St. Brendan’s Hospital in 2002 was €119,843 per annum66.

(b) Supported housing offers another way of housing homeless people long term

In the opinion of some statutory and voluntary service providers interviewed, supported housing is preferable to independent housing because, compared to local authority housing for example, people in supported housing are offered licenses to stay rather than full scale tenancies. Thus if a person is causing difficulties in local authority housing and the local authority decides the person must be evicted, this can be a very long process compared to someone only offered a license to stay. Up to recently supported housing in Ireland was organised in a very similar style to emergency hostel accommodation, except that people could plan to stay in supported housing long-term. However, our research has found that the more institutionalised services have now in general changed to incorporate as much independent living as possible within the supported environment such that people living there permanently have some control over their lives. For example, residents now have their own keys to go in and out, are encouraged to do their own laundry and cooking, to clean their own rooms and to be involved in choosing colours and fixtures for them. Residents are also assisted and encouraged to manage their own medication.

In Ireland, supported housing is relatively less well developed as compared to other well-developed countries (FEANTSA, 1999). However, understanding of the concept and appreciation of its potential has recently become more widespread. Statutory and voluntary organisations questioning what to do with homeless people staying long-term or moving from emergency hostel to hostel, are looking again at supported housing as part of a possible answer.

5.5.2 Independent Housing

There were approximately 17,500 housing units provided by housing associations (voluntary housing providers) in Ireland at the end of 2004. Although not recorded under different housing types, the Irish Council for Social Housing estimates that of this total, approximately 6,000 housing units are for people with general needs (similar to local authority housing), 6,000 are designed for the elderly, 3,000 for people with a disability and 2,500 units provided by organisations working with the homeless. The 2,500 homeless units contain the full spectrum of housing types: emergency/ transitional/ long-term supported housing. Very few units provided by homeless organisations are long-term independent housing. Annually 600/700 new tenancies are made available as re-lets of existing independent stock.

In summary then, new independent housing provided by voluntary organisations in Ireland is generally one of two types:

- Large housing associations providing “general needs housing” and largely dependent on the local authorities for nominations. There are two large and a number of smaller housing associations in Ireland of this type.
Much smaller housing associations, often community based, working with a particular group of people, mostly the elderly or disabled. These smaller associations often work flexibly to create their own waiting lists, although the local authority may impose restrictions.

Reflecting the high demand for housing generally, for both these types of housing provided by voluntary organisations, we found that homeless people have difficulties in gaining access.

Notwithstanding this, interviewees viewed housing associations as offering a better move-on option to homeless people. They are viewed as having a greater care perspective and front line emphasis compared to local authorities and with better lead in time-frame to enable the homeless person to make the move.

The experience of providers interviewed is that people formerly homeless do not cause huge management problems and “homeless tenancies” are no more likely to fail than other tenancy types.

There was some difference of opinion of interviewees as to how housing associations, in the words of some statutory organisations, “cherry pick” their allocations, so that only the easiest people to work with are housed. Allocations by housing associations should be 25% nominations of local authority, 50%: general housing list, 25%: Housing Association’s own nominations. Some confusion is caused by the fact that some housing associations, when making allocations, will at times ask for double the number of people on the local authority’s housing waiting list than there are units available and then interview applicants to see which are the most suitable.

Housing associations say that in deciding on allocations, they look to the severity of the housing need as the main criteria, as well as the person’s history of rent arrears, involvement with anti-social behaviour in the past, medical and mobility issues and ability to settle. In practice for example, those who are presently sleeping rough will not be directly housed, although housing associations do house people who have slept rough in the past. While housing associations or the Irish Council for Social Housing do not measure the numbers of housing allocations to homeless people, Cluaid Housing Association, for example claim that the numbers of homeless people accommodated is approximately 10% of all allocations made and perhaps up to 20% in some housing schemes.

So, while the potential of housing associations to meet the housing and support needs of people who are homeless is not contested, the present small scale of the sector and its diverse nature has meant that relatively small numbers of allocations have been made to homeless people.

### 5.6 Conclusion

Although the Housing Act 1988 allows for voluntary organisations to meet the various types of housing needs of homeless people, up to very recently almost all voluntary homeless organisations provided emergency and transitional accommodation only. Despite this we did encounter a number of new, successful examples of voluntary organisations that directly provide long-term independent housing to homeless people. Some of the advantages of voluntary homeless organisations providing long-term housing include the widening of housing access options to homeless people and the voluntary organisation’s ability to manage the allocation process more closely, especially important when allocating long-term housing to vulnerable homeless persons.

However the overall voluntary homeless organisation’s contribution to long-term housing is small. For the six months of 2004, March to September, homeless developments were less than 2% of all Capital Assistant Scheme developments in monetary terms and only five homeless units out of 417 total units built during the period. The oft-cited problem of lack of move-on options for homeless people and the high levels of capital subsidies may point to a need for voluntary homeless organisations to take on more responsibilities in providing long-term housing themselves.

If voluntary homeless organisations are to play a bigger role, in our view, the current funding system must change. In Ireland the system of public subsidies for social housing is heavily weighted towards capital funding, covering almost 100% of the construction costs. There is no substantial mainstream current account funding to cover management and maintenance costs and support vulnerable individuals in their houses. “Section 10” funding and Health Service Executive grants are the only sources of funding to cover the extra support costs to house “chronic homeless people”. These tend to be available in emergency and transitional accommodation only, further reinforcing voluntary organisations provision of these types of housing.


**Chapter 6. Aspirations and experiences of people who are homeless**

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter is based on an analysis of results from interviews with homeless service users. The profile of interviewees is presented first. The chapter then discusses people’s experiences of applying for local authority accommodation and their actual housing outcomes.

### 6.2 Methodology

Interviews were conducted with 25 homeless people in Cork, Dublin, Dundalk and Galway. Contacts were facilitated by the Simon Communities in Cork, Dublin, Dundalk and Galway and by Sonas Housing in Dublin, but the people interviewed were not necessarily staying with these agencies. Five people were met in both Dundalk and Galway, four people were met in Cork and eleven people were met in Dublin. Except for two couples met in Dundalk and one couple met in Cork, the rest of the interviewees were either single people (15 people) or single parents (four people).

Interviews covered:
- The interviewees’ preferred housing outcomes for homeless people
- Their experiences when applying for long-term housing to the local authority
- The interviewees’ personal support needs, and
- When the homeless persons applied for long-term housing, the settlement support offered from the voluntary organisation identified to support them.

Of those interviewed:
- Two homeless persons were not on the local authority housing application list
- Seventeen homeless persons had applied for housing with the local authority but had not yet been housed by them
- Three persons had applied and were housed by the local authority
- Three persons were housed in another type of long-term housing

Below we discuss the experiences of the four sets of interviewees under separate headings. We also set out a number of case studies under each of the headings.

### 6.3 Homeless persons not on the local authority housing waiting list

One single man and one woman were met, who are presently not on the local authority housing waiting list. Both interviewees were staying in emergency accommodation.

The homeless woman had left local authority accommodation five weeks previous to our interview. She has four children, who are presently staying with their father. She gave up her local authority tenancy because she was "experiencing a lot of intimidation".

She is presently looking for a rented flat or house for her baby and herself. However the Homeless Persons Unit placed her in a hostel rather than the private rented sector. She says, “they told me that rent allowance was not possible to access because I gave up my home, I was not homeless enough to get rent allowance.” Her key worker says that she will talk with South Dublin County Council to check that all is in order before making an application for new housing with them. She is also considering applying to Dublin City Council. Her priority is “to get out of hostels”.

The single man interviewed has lived in local authority housing, prison and has been homeless at different times over the last seven years. In 1998 he was discharged from prison and stayed in the Iveagh Trust in Dublin. After what he says were constant visits to the then Dublin Corporation, unsuccessfully seeking accommodation, he and a number of colleagues conducted a peaceful sit-in protest at their offices. After this protest he was offered the opportunity to speak to the head of the Corporation’s homeless team and was given an undertaking that if he found an empty local authority flat suitable for occupation after repairs, he would be allocated it. He found such a flat and was allocated it soon after.

Six months after the flat was allocated to him he says that he had to attend hospital during which time the flat was squatted in, and when raided by the Gardaí, an ounce of heroin was found. His name was taken off the lease. During the period previous to this eviction he was reported for anti-social behaviour.

Subsequent to this he stayed in a flat with his girlfriend but when she left the Community Welfare Officer said that the flat was too expensive for one person. He moved to a cheaper flat but had a
dispute with the landlady and left.

He is trying to overcome a drug habit and previously was addicted to cocaine. He is taking methadone, but still uses heroin occasionally. He says there is no point in considering settlement options at present because he has a number of charges pending, which may result in imprisonment.

6.4 Persons who have applied for housing with the local authority but had not yet been housed by them

Seventeen of the 25 homeless people interviewed were currently applying to the local authority for housing. Of these, two of the homeless persons interviewed had “permanent residency agreements” with a voluntary housing provider, six were staying in transitional housing provided by a voluntary organization, two were staying in shared houses with support and the remaining seven persons were in emergency accommodation.

When asked as to their preferred housing outcome, of the seventeen people, six expressed a preference for a long-term tenancy with a voluntary housing provider, five expressed a preference for local authority housing, four expressed a preference for the private rented sector and two did not express a preference or expressed a preference for an area or housing type rather than tenure type.

Of the six people staying in transitional housing, four expressed a preference for a long-term tenancy with the voluntary organization with which they were presently housed. Of these, two are single parents and two are single people.

The two single parent interviewees who are seeking a long-term tenancy with a voluntary organization were both previously housed in local authority accommodation. One was housed in local authority accommodation in an inner city flats complex for three years. However the woman has a mixed race child and she said that the abuse she received forced her to leave. She is facing eviction from the voluntary housing provider because she is now two years over her transitional tenancy agreement. She wants to stay long-term in her present accommodation because her child is now settled, because racism is not as pronounced an issue there and because she has built up local ties and has a sense of security. She recently refused an offer of local authority accommodation because she was unhappy with the location, quality of accommodation and type of accommodation (a flats complex).

The other interviewee was evicted from local authority accommodation due to her then partner’s drug related anti-social behaviour. She described the eviction as being handled fairly. She is also seeking to stay in her present transitional housing tenancy. Both say they have a strong preference not to return to the private rented sector.

Tom is almost 55 years old, presently staying in transitional housing – in a well-maintained bed-sit of excellent quality. Rules of the service say that move-on is required after two years if the person feels ready to move, but the service provider doesn’t force anybody to move into accommodation of lesser quality. Nearly all local authority properties in this city are of lesser quality.

Tom says that depression and drinking are the two major issues for him. He receives support from a psychiatrist and psychologist in a day centre in the city and they in turn helped him get this place in transitional accommodation. He has been homeless on and off for 15 years, including three years in Dublin where he spent the “odd night in a hostel” but the majority of the time sleeping rough. He was also hospitalised on a number of occasions because of his excessive drinking. Consequently he has liver and heart problems. However he is off drink for more than a year.

He applied for local authority housing ten years ago, when he had a private rented flat in the city, after his marriage broke down. The local authority was in contact with him just two months before our interview, when they offered him a place in a local authority estate. He viewed the offer as unacceptable, “a very depressing place, particularly at night” and feels he would prefer to stay in a hostel than there. In his view “sober alcoholics” are choosy, difficult people.

His doctors gave him a letter saying that the property would not be suitable and he was advised not to take the property. This was his first refusal. However he is fearful that if he refuses a further two times, no matter how many doctors’ letters, he will be refused rent allowance.

He feels that it is ironic that he was only offered a local authority property when he is safe and comfortable in his present accommodation. He says he used to call into the council checking on his application every three months but they said at the time that he was too young to be eligible.

The two people who have a long-term voluntary housing tenancy who are seeking local authority housing gave a number of reasons for wishing to move on to local authority accommodation.

One said she would like the feeling of having “my house”, not something “given with the organisation’s
say so”. In the nine years with the voluntary organisation (in transitional and long-term accommodation) she has lived at four different houses within the complex. The interviewee described the housing complex as not the best permanent environment to bring up kids. When new residents arrive there are a lot of issues and their kids can have real behaviour issues and problems settling which is disruptive for family life. It’s like “living in a fish bowl.”

The other interviewee said that she would like a situation whereby the voluntary organisation “can’t threaten me with my tenancy all the time”. The client still believes she needs support with her tenancy but believes that the voluntary organisation is either unwilling or unable to provide it. The client is unhappy with the service charge levied and the quality of upkeep on the house. The client also cited the problem of violence within the complex.

Regarding the process of applying for local authority housing, both applicants are outspoken about the process. One claimed that she received no advice from the local authority. Rather she went to her local TD’s clinic and got some advice. He is taking the case up with the ombudsman. She found “the form very complicated, it’s like the [form for] the medical card. If you make one mistake you lose out.” The other interviewee found the local authority very dismissive as she believes “they have washed their hands of me because I won’t take the first offer they make to me”.

Another person interviewed in transitional accommodation, had been on the housing list for eight years, when he was offered a local authority place three months before our interview. He planned his move; fridge and washing machine were bought, but at the last minute he felt it was “too hectic” and he backed away. The interviewee suffers from chronic depression and he became fearful of living alone.

He has made two rejections of local authority housing and fears that if he rejects another offer from the local authority, he will be placed at the bottom of the housing waiting list. Private rented accommodation, in his view, is unacceptable because he is “getting on in age”. One of the options he is considering is taking up a placement with the local Mental Health association who may make a place available to him through their housing stock.

Of the four people who expressed a preference for the private rented sector accommodation above other tenure types, two were staying in emergency and two were in transitional accommodation.

The two people met who are in transitional housing are a couple. Their motivation for applying to the local authority for housing was that they were advised to do this by the social worker as they would be more likely to get their daughter back from care but that their actual preference is for the private rented sector.

One of the people in emergency accommodation presently looking for private rented accommodation says that he has applied for housing because this is a necessary step before rent allowance will be paid. A friend of his is leaving a flat and the landlady has promised the flat to him, although he’ll have to pay a “top-up” amount over the rent cap. He was offered an Older Person Dwelling by Dublin City Council previously but feels this is unacceptable as in his view he is not old enough (he is 58 years old) and the flats are too small. He was also offered transitional housing but feels he is too old to have to observe all the rules and regulations of a transition programme.

As stated previously, five interviewees who applied for local authority housing expressed a preference for this tenure type above other housing types. This is less than a third of all those people who had applied with the local authority (although note that this is too small a sample for any firm conclusions to be drawn). Of those met, two were staying in shared housing and three were in emergency accommodation.

One of those met in emergency accommodation is a single parent with 4 children, all of whom are in care. Her priority is to get her children back from care - she presently sees them every three months for two hours. She feels she is in a catch 22 situation: the social worker says she needs to have a stable long-term house with sufficient space before she will get her kids back. Dublin City Council says she needs to have her kids back before she will be allocated a tenancy that will accommodate all her children. The interviewee has been in hostels and rough sleeping for the last eight years. She was on drugs but has been “clean” for 10 months and is now on a methadone programme. She is HIV positive. She is looking for a one-bed unit as a compromise and hopes that she may be able to move on to something better. Her priority is to get out of the hostel where she is staying, which she feels has too much drug use. She “can’t stand all the rules, which are made with the staff in mind”.

She had a local authority flat three years ago but handed back the keys. She had rent arrears at the time. She reappeared two years ago with Dublin City Council and claims to have cleared her rent arrears too, but feels little progress is being made in her application.

A woman interviewed was homeless from age 18. She is now 28. She is presently in shared housing.
Chapter 6. Aspirations and experiences of people who are homeless

She has been “on and off homeless” between stays in the private rented sector. She applied for local authority housing at age 23 “to see what happened”. The typical wait for housing in her city is five years. However she is particular about the area she wishes to be housed in and may need to wait an extra six months to get the right place close to family and friends.

One man interviewed, presently in emergency accommodation, was three months homeless. He had committed a sexual offence against a minor and was the subject of some concern by the local authority and support agencies as to where he should be accommodated long-term.

6.5 Persons housed by the local authority

A couple and a single male were met. Their journeys to being housed by the local authority are set out here in two case studies.

Alan is a 50-year old divorcee with 4 children. He first became homeless seven years ago after his marriage breakdown. He spent a few years in different flats but eventually he says he “fell to pieces” through intense heroin use, during which time he stayed in a number of hostels. His addictions escalated during the period when he was staying in hostels.

Overall he says he did not have a great experience of private rented, the main difficulty being the necessity to share accommodation at the rent cap level. He says he is at an age at which he needs his own space. He was encouraged by the support agency when staying in emergency accommodation, to put his name on the local authority housing list. He got a place with the local authority through a nomination system, whereby the voluntary organisation working with homeless people nominates suitable people for the local authority to house. He got the place when the other person nominated into accommodation couldn’t sustain the tenancy. He is now employed, making money as a painter / decorator and is back in contact with his family. He now does not use drink or drugs - he does not consider cannabis as drug use.

The couple who were interviewed had been homeless for more than five years before being housed by the local authority. They turned down one offer of local authority accommodation as they considered the house to be located in an unsafe area, before being accommodated in their present house. A Simon Community support worker comes out once every two weeks to check that all is well with them.

6.6 Persons housed long-term by voluntary organisations

Finally, we met with a couple and two single people who were housed in long-term housing by voluntary organisations.

The couple first met and developed a relationship in an emergency hostel. They were barred from that service and went from a mobile home to the private rented sector and then re-engaged with the emergency hostel, where they were helped access other more suitable private rented accommodation. They were then offered Council accommodation and they occupied this housing for three years until they sought and received a transfer to Housing Association housing to facilitate access to play areas for their two children.

They received a high level of support when they first settled into independent accommodation, but now they receive very few visits. They have arranged it so that money for rent and utilities goes straight out of their social welfare payment. The voluntary organisation advocated on their behalf for all independent accommodation they accessed.

The single man met lives in accommodation provided directly by the voluntary homeless organisation. He was first homeless when 13 years old. He is now 43. He has been on and off homeless over this period, the longest period when not homeless was for two years. When homeless he didn’t like staying in hostels and often preferred to sleep rough. He has also spent time in prison and psychiatric institutions. He is not married but has five children with one woman.

He has shared local authority housing with a partner but the lease was not in his name. He did also apply for local authority housing himself. He had a pattern most days of going for a “penny dinner”, then calling into Dublin City Council offices to check on his application.

When he first moved into his present accommodation, which was advertised to all people staying in the voluntary organisation’s emergency accommodation, he had two care workers visiting...
him. "I had a visit from one of them at least once a day. I needed that support because sometimes I wondered 'is this too much for me?','are they going to take the apartment back off me?'. He is alcohol and drug free, which he puts down to the 12-step programme and recently made a short film called "Shelter in the Storm" that won prizes in a number of competitions.

The single woman interviewed lives in self-contained accommodation provided by the voluntary organisation. She was living in a communal women-only house for one year previous to her move into independent long-term accommodation. Her first incidence of homelessness was when a lease she was sharing with another girl broke down and she ended up sleeping on couches in other friends' flats. Her situation is complicated by the fact that she is quite frequently hospitalised because of a mental health problem.

Her contact with settlement services is low at the moment. She may meet them occasionally for lunch, or if there is a problem with the building she will call on them to help sort it out. She can also visit the communal house where she stayed previously and where she still has friends. A Community Psychiatric Nurse visits her once every four months. There is a type of routine that she follows when she feels mentally unwell and she knows what to do when presenting to casualty. She applied for housing with the local authority two years ago and is still on the local authority housing waiting list. If she were to be offered a place by the local authority she "would look into taking it up". It is an "extra option just in case."

### 6.7 Conclusion

The interviews conducted with homeless people suggest that some of the factors for homeless people who do not apply for housing with the local authority include:

- They are recently homeless
- Their previous local authority tenancy has not worked out
- They have prison or other charges pending
- They are deeply involved in an alcohol or drug addiction

Homeless people who have applied for local authority housing did so for a variety of reasons including:

- They wished to be housed in local authority housing
- They wished to be housed in private rented accommodation and need to have registered with the local authority before rent allowance could be administered to them
- They viewed applying to the local authority as a way of facilitating the return of their children
- They wished to move-on from institutional living
- They were advised to apply by the voluntary organisation where they were housed

While many representatives of voluntary organisations interviewed believed that local authority accommodation is the optimum outcome for people who are homeless, people who are homeless who were interviewed have a more ambivalent view. Only one-third of interviewees who had applied to the local authority for housing preferred local authority housing above the private rented sector or voluntary housing provision. Five of the 17 interviewees who had applied for local authority housing had actually rejected offers of local authority accommodation. Some of the stated reasons why local authority accommodation is not the preferred housing outcome for some people who are homeless, are:

- Housing areas that were offered are viewed as unsafe and poorly managed
- Older Person Dwellings (OPDs) offered were not viewed as suitable for active single men
- Local authorities tend not to offer larger housing units to single people with occasional access to children (for example parents of children who are separated or divorced), while the person seeks and in a number of cases prefers to hold out for this type of accommodation
- Local authority estates are viewed in some cases as experiencing endemic anti-social behaviour problems and offering limited support to people living in their estates.
Chapter 6. Aspirations and experiences of people who are homeless

- The move to independence is worrisome for some people who may wish to stay with the agency currently housing them, which they know and trust.

- Some local authority housing is located in outlying areas, (where transport is often poor), leading to intensified isolation.

It would be wrong to infer from this that homeless people are not interested in moving on from emergency accommodation. With the exception of three of the 25 people interviewed, all were either seeking to move on to or had already settled in long-term accommodation.

Part of the desire to move to more stable long-term accommodation is the perceived poor quality of emergency accommodation, which was frequently criticised in interviews. A more extensive study of the views of 65 homeless people in Dublin on their satisfaction with services by the Homeless Agency found,

Hostels came in for particular criticism when respondents were asked to describe the negative aspects of services for homeless people... Of particular concern were low levels of hygiene and ‘roughness’ and lack of security. Also highlighted were restrictive or ‘petty’ regulations and curfew restrictions. Homeless Agency (2000)
Chapter 7. Settlement process

7.1 Introduction

The Housing Act, 1988 makes no direct reference to the settlement of people who are homeless in the community. This is unsurprising, considering that, at the time, very few voluntary and statutory organisations saw their role as one of supporting people who were homeless in settling in the wider community and in maximising their potential for independence.

"Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy", reflecting concern about the “silting up” of homeless hostels, the lessons learnt from Europe on how to reduce the incidence of homelessness and the new priority among voluntary and statutory organisations for the achievement of measurable outcomes and the movement of people out of homelessness, did prioritise the settlement of people who are homeless in long-term stable accommodation. Reports at the time identified that accommodation intended for emergency use had become “silted-up” with more than “50% of all hostel beds continually occupied by long-term residents, many of whom could be housed in sheltered accommodation away from emergency cases.” (Connolly and Mulvee, 2000)

Typically there are two stages in settlement: pre-settlement and post-settlement. From the perspective of the organisation providing the settlement support, pre-settlement tends to include: assessment of the individual for settlement; advocacy with other support agencies such as local authority and welfare officers; links with counselling services; training in home management; form filing; and accompanying the individual to view properties.

Post-settlement, from the perspective of the organisation providing the service, tends to include: homemaking help, including assistance with shopping and budgeting; house repair and decoration; links made with local services and amenities; home visits; on-going information; advocacy; counselling; and training support.

Settlement work seeks to overcome financial mismanagement, feelings of isolation and difficulties in accessing supply of housing. Accessing housing in itself is rarely enough to achieve long-term settlement for someone who is “chronic homeless”.

In this chapter we reflect on the types of specific supports developed in recent years to aid the settlement of people into long-term stable accommodation.

7.2 Methodology

In compiling this section, in addition to our interviewing of the broad spectrum of representatives of voluntary and statutory organisations, we sought out interviews with settlement officers and managers of settlement services in the five main urban areas, with direct experience of settling homeless people.

Interviews with settlement officers/ managers followed a similar pattern as other interviews, but also covered the actions they undertake, successes and difficulties in their present role, their suggestions as to how the role should change in future and interaction if any that the teams have with local authorities, homeless forums and other agencies.

7.3 Approach and Agencies

Because half of all people using homeless emergency services at any one time in Ireland are chronic or repeat homeless people (Connolly and Mulvee, 2000), because those repeat homeless tend to need additional supports to live more independently and because failure to work with these homeless people leads to hostels “silting up”, settlement supports are often required to help support people move to more stable long-term accommodation and free up emergency hostel spaces. There are settlement teams/ officers in Cork, Dublin, Galway, Limerick, Waterford and Dundalk and a settlement team proposed for the Midlands, incorporating Longford, of the areas examined.

See Table 7.1. (page 61) Numbers of settlement services in five major urban areas.

Other disciplines available in some areas that are involved in settlement include: local authority tenancy liaison officers, Community Welfare Officers, Community Psychiatric Nurses and Public Health Nurses. Because their main remit is other than homeless people, they are not highlighted in this chapter as core services in the settlement of homeless people, although settlement officers must often coordinate these inputs.

In our questionnaire to local authorities we asked the question: “Excluding the example of Travellers, when you make housing allocations to people on your housing list, do you offer any support to the person allocated housing?” Seven out of the eight local
Chapter 7. Settlement process

authorities responding to our questionnaire (87.5%) stated that they do offer support in some cases to persons allocated housing. Examples of “support services” cited by the local authority include:

- Housing Officers and Outreach Workers.
- Housing Estate Liaison Officers and Social Workers.
- Housing Support Unit (one reference made).
- Homeless Resettlement Service.
- One respondent made reference to funding made available to Simon Outreach and Women’s Aid.
- One respondent in addition noted that support was offered to people suffering anti-social behaviour, through referrals to Public Health Nurse/ Counselling/ Domestic Violence Referrals and Moving-in assistance.

However, again because these are not core settlement services to homeless people, we do not include them in our analysis in this chapter.

Further to these, some voluntary organisations offer support in settlement. In the case of Threshold, for example, their placement services in Galway and Cork help people find accommodation. They also have lists of landlords that accept rent allowance. However, except for the “Access Housing Unit”, which supports people in the private rented sector, they differ from the settlement services discussed here, because they don’t have a facility to make home visits. These types of organisations are not included in this chapter.

Through discussion with providers of direct settlement services to homeless people, a number of challenges to the way in which settlement services are organised were identified. This is not surprising, considering that settlement services are relatively new in Ireland, (the earliest services date back to 1995 and most were set up post-Integrated Strategy, from 2000), and that many services are presently undergoing revision and change. The challenges identified in settling people who are homeless are:

7.3.1 Settlement services attaching to an organisation tend to work with people using a service in that organisation

We observed, in nearly all of the settlement services we studied, that the settlement workers typically concentrate their efforts on people staying in their own service’s emergency or transitional housing units. This limiting of people accessing the settlement service is unlikely, in our view, to lead to the identification of the homeless persons most likely to successfully settle.

7.3.2 The settlement worker role lacks definition

In part, the lack of standardisation of the role of settlement worker reflects the different interventions that different people require. However the meaning of “settlement” itself is either disputed or not fully understood. For example a minority of settlement teams consider that settlement includes “settlement” into emergency hostels - more commonly understood as outreach work. One national voluntary organisation offering “visitations” see their role as one of “getting in and get out, avoiding dependency.” Another voluntary organisation cites examples of persons placed in long-term accommodation offered continual settlement support for 15 to 20 years.

Also there is a large variation in case loads for settlement services, depending on the area and organisation. In some organisations and areas, a settlement worker may work with fewer than 10 people at any time, while in other places a caseload of more than 25 people is typical. While caseloads vary depending on the support needs of the individuals worked with, the wide discrepancies suggest that this is not the only factor and that organisational competence and guidance from funding organisations also affect caseloads.

7.3.3 Only in exceptional cases do settlement services have any influence on local authority housing allocations

Only in Galway and Dundalk, of the areas studied, did the settlement services have any discernible influence on allocations made by the local authority. In those areas, settlement services communicate with the local authority allocation department and have had a number of successes in placing people needing support into local authority housing. In some of these cases, the guarantee of support has given the local authority confidence in making the allocations, which they would not have made otherwise. Where local authorities do liaise on allocations with settlement officers, the settlement officers advise on the appropriateness of allocations and support individuals when placed. The reported

68 In Dundalk for example, the settlement service meets once a fortnight/ once a month with the Dundalk Town Council Housing Officer responsible for allocations.
experience in these areas is that a small investment at an early stage makes life easier for local authorities in the medium term.

Outside of Galway and Dundalk, even when the settlement service is provided by the same local authority, we found no evidence that the allocation sections were influenced by the settlement services in allocating housing quicker or to preferred areas because of the availability of settlement support.

Statistics on the numbers of people placed by the Dublin City Council Resettlement Service were made available to the researchers. An average of eight Resettlement Officers worked with 180 cases in 2004. The outcomes are outlined below, in Table 7.2. (page 63).

7.3.4 Examples of interagency collaboration between settlement agencies are few even though this is particularly critical for effective settlement.

As a matter of course, settlement teams need to work with housing providers, other support agencies and services in the community where people are to be settled. Often their main role is to draw together and co-ordinate all the available agencies. While interagency working is important for all services, to maximise efficiencies and achieve the best outcome for the homeless person, interagency working is perhaps most vital for settlement services.

However from our interviews we found that settlement services have yet to maximise all synergies and they are fragmented in their delivery. While there are some examples of interagency collaboration, a network for resettlement services in Dublin and some developing IT work for example, these are small in scale. Organisations do not systematically record the numbers of the people who have stayed/ been in contact with their organisation that have been housed in local authority/ voluntary housing/ private rented accommodation for example.

The present situation for settlement services is perhaps reflective of the fragmented homeless services in some of the areas studied. There are exceptions. Dundalk is an example of an area where agencies meet up separate to the Homeless Forum, and collaborate in order to provide effective resettlement services.

Table 7.1. Numbers of settlement services in five major urban areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cities</th>
<th>Number of Settlement Officers</th>
<th>Other Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>1 homeless officer in local authority, but settlement only one of duties. 6 other settlement officers attached to Cork Simon Community</td>
<td>Those Simon Community employees are working mainly with their own residents. Duties include supporting people in Simon Community transitional residences. Homeless Persons Unit ‘CWICs’ also offer unstructured low level support when issuing deposits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>Approximately 25 settlement officers and 3 managers operating in 3 settlement teams: Dublin City Council, Dublin Simon Community and Focus Ireland. Threshold Access Housing Unit a further settlement resource.</td>
<td>There are also various personnel working in accommodation based voluntary homeless service providers who are preparing people for settlement/ building up independent living skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>3 settlement officers with COPE and 2 settlement officers with Galway Simon Community.</td>
<td>Officers employed by both organisations often take on the duties of residential care workers and support people staying in their existing accommodation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>1 person in local authority, but duties include outreach work too. Plans by local authorities in City and County to employ Tenancy Sustainment Officer.</td>
<td>Personnel in various organisations work to settle people in the community but there are no additional staffing roles with a specific settlement focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterford</td>
<td>Focus Ireland has a small settlement team, working with their own residents and those in other services.</td>
<td>South East Simon Community has plans to develop their own tenancy sustainment pilot across the region, including in Waterford.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The terminology used is that used by the Dublin City Council Resettlement Team.*
Chapter 7. Settlement process

in structured gatherings at least once monthly to discuss individual cases rather than policies and procedures. Typically the Health Service Executive (HSE) representative, local authority and voluntary organisations are part of this meeting to review individual cases.

7.3.5 Settlement services can pay for themselves, through reduced use by homeless people of emergency services, but the funding regime in Ireland is unclear and offers little evidence of a government policy focused on settlement

From our examination of costs of services provided in Ireland, albeit a rather limited examination, we found that settlement support with independent accommodation can be much more cost efficient than transitional housing and inappropriate use of emergency housing, once organised efficiently. This is backed up by international research from two cities in Germany which finds that “normal housing” provided to homeless people is up to 50% cheaper than emergency accommodation (Busch-Geertsema and Ruhstrat, 1997, quoted in Harvey, 1999).

Under the existing funding regime, there is no obvious national current funding stream for settlement workers, even though their employment may prove to be cost effective in the medium- to long-term.

Another concern, in terms of value for money spent on homeless services, is that settlement workers operate widely varied caseloads and achieve different levels of outcomes but this does not appear to be taken into account when funding these services.

7.4 Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a very important factor in people becoming homeless. In Ireland there is an extensive network of refuges and support services for women who have experienced domestic violence and have left their home. Although not specifically named in the terms of reference for this research, the experience of people who are homeless through domestic violence, attempting to settle in long-term stable accommodation, is highlighted and examined separately because they tend to use different services and need different supports compared to the general homeless population.

We found through our interviews that nearly all refuges in Ireland operate with higher levels of under-occupation compared to homeless hostels. Managers of these refuges identify that for the majority of residents in refuges, domestic violence is only one of a number of issues which need to be addressed. In many cases there are difficulties such as addiction, mental health and abuse coupled with a housing issue. However the rationale for providing the accommodation is as a refuge from violence.

Refuges tend to work with what might be called the less chaotic end of the homeless spectrum. While they may work with women who have slept rough as part of their life history, this is rare and the majority of women are coming from their own long-term accommodation. Refuges do not permit alcohol use on the premises and often apply quite strict restrictions on behaviour.

The dynamic of domestic violence is such that many people staying in refuges will return to their original accommodation, with or without their partner present. Interviewees suggest that approximately 5% of users of the refuge move on to their own local authority accommodation, but that this can be a long process.

Also of note is that the profile of residents in refuges through any year can be up to 50% Travellers. This has implications for the type of follow-on housing options that can be accessed. For example there is some transitional housing for people experiencing domestic violence. However no Traveller women accessed the largest provider of this service in the first five years of setting up, although three have now accessed accommodation offered by this programme in the last year. For some Traveller women a move into transitional housing can be particularly difficult. According to one service provider interviewed, they “need to withstand pressure from the wider family group.”

Adapt Refuge in Limerick shared its statistics for number of people placed in long-term housing in 2003. Of the 108 households that went through the service (108 women and 225 children), five were placed in private rented housing, 10 returned to their family, 34 returned to the service and 14 are gone or missing. 41 households either went on to transitional housing or to another service.

70 Although a pilot project is being developed in Dublin with the Access Housing Unit, that may facilitate prison discharges to directly access the private rented sector.
7.5 Prison and Hospital Dischargees

The most common scenarios that present in relation to people who become homeless after leaving an institution are people discharged from prisons and hospitals. Although not explicitly named in the terms of reference of this research, the practice relating to prison and hospital discharges came up frequently during interviews and for that reason, is discussed here.

Regarding prison discharges, "Homelessness - an Integrated Strategy", contained the recommendation that,

Prison management and the probation and welfare service should, through sentence management and a pre-release review process, ensure that prisoners are released with appropriate accommodation being available for them. Where a situation does arise where a prisoner is being released but is without accommodation, prior arrangements should be made to ensure that appropriate emergency accommodation is available.

As there is some evidence that ex-offenders present themselves for emergency accommodation on their release from prison, the Probation and Welfare Service should examine the need for half-way and other sheltered accommodation for ex-offenders to ensure their re-integration into society.

Five years on from "Homelessness - an Integrated Strategy" interviewees identified that the first "settlement" option for person leaving prison persists in being, nearly always, an emergency hostel. There are no instances we encountered whereby people discharged from prisons or hospitals without a home were offered a place in long-term housing70 (thereby avoiding the homeless system) and we know of only one service operated by a voluntary organisation, which works with women leaving prison. In very many cases there appears to be no preparation for people when they move back into the community. In dispersal prisons people are often released without notice and with no possibility to find secure settled accommodation before discharge.

It was found additionally that, in all areas studied, when people are discharged from prison, if they do not give an address and instead admit to being homeless, they have their discharge delayed so that accommodation can be sourced. This means that many prisoners do not identify their homeless status and arrive in the homeless system without a plan or support71.

Regarding hospital discharges, the Government’s "Homeless Preventative Strategy" stated that:

"All psychiatric hospitals/units will have a formal and written Discharge Policy, which should conform with the Inspectorate of Mental Hospital’s Hospital & Service Checklist as a minimum standard. This policy will be communicated to all staff involved in the discharge of patients.”

We found that in many areas there is lack of knowledge about protocols, especially in general hospitals and “accommodation” invariably means hostels. The way in which mental health psychiatric services work to catchment areas means that homeless people often do not have a consistency of support and have to find new psychiatric and social work support when discharged.

Almost universally, hostels accept referrals from mental health hospitals. Many longer-term residents of homeless hostels are ex-dischargees and up to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of placement</th>
<th>Numbers Placed</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housed by Local Authority</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housed in Private Rented Sector</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placed in “Permanent supported”</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placed in Transitional supported</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placed in “Designated emergency resettlement supported”</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disengaged</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceased</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned Home</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing in emergency</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

71 For long-term prisoners this issue presents less and for sex-offenders, many of whom cannot return to their communities, they must have a verifiable address before being discharged. Sex-offenders remain difficult to house however, and interviewees recommend the introduction of national guidance and protocol that advises on and plans for the housing needs of sex-offenders leaving prisons.
Chapter 7. Settlement process

50% of people in some hostels have spent time with psychiatric services. On the other hand, there are many examples of ex-homeless people who we met who have diagnosed psychiatric problems and who are functioning in independent housing with support.

The principal example of the “settlement first” approach at work in the UK, is that followed in Glasgow, Scotland, which dates to the early 1980s.

The first step was the surveying of hostel residents. There were two main outcomes:

Most residents disliked hostel living, and
They believed that if they could get the accommodation, they could live independently.

Glasgow City Council began a programme of re-housing residents in its own accommodation. Support services were provided. Subsequent studies found that most homeless people settled successfully in their new accommodation. Some of the city's older hostels were closed down and a brake was put on new hostel development.


7.6 Conclusion

Settlement support work was never considered and legislated for in the Housing Act 1988. The discussion of settlement services shows the extent to which services to homeless people have developed independently of the Housing Act 1988.

Settlement services are still in their infancy and many homeless services in Ireland have a lower settlement focus compared to other European countries (Harvey, 1998). Some of the teething problems we identified include: no clear definition for the settlement officer role; failure of the settlement teams and the relevant local authority's housing allocation officers to work together; and a lack of an evaluation mechanism to assess and guide the existing settlement services.

Settlement has a preventative focus too but in our examination of services provided to people homeless because of domestic violence and those discharged from prisons and hospitals, we found that some of these people are homeless unnecessarily or their homeless spell is unnecessarily prolonged because the settlement services are not provided early enough.

For these and other reasons explained in the next chapter of the report, we conclude that the adoption of a “settlement first” approach to the housing of homeless people will deliver the best results. However we note that no representatives of any of the organisations we interviewed believed that all people presently using their services were ready for independent living and settlement.

That said, different support organisations put different emphases on maximising their service users’ independence and giving people options and support in trying to move on. Some organisations see it as their duty to try and enable and partner their clients in this process. Some other organisations accept the status quo. That is, some service providers offer hostels on a long-term basis to some people who are homeless. While these “chronic homeless” staying long-term in emergency accommodation are commonly identified as institutionalised and lacking the wherewithal to live more independently, organisations respond to this challenge differently and achieve different outcomes. These outcomes are largely dependent on the organisation's core philosophy and levels of funding they can or choose to access.
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8.1 General Conclusions

Homelessness in Ireland is a “revolving-door” crisis. Many people exit homelessness quickly, but many return and more individuals become homeless every day.

People who are homeless for the first time and experiencing a single crisis may need relatively simple remedies to exit homelessness, such as rental assistance, help in negotiating with a landlord, or referral to health and employment services. However, persons with repeated or long episodes of homelessness are likely to need considerably more support for longer periods of time.

Without long-term stable housing, our interviewees tell us, virtually no intervention works. Housing often needs to be accompanied by supportive services, at least in the short-term, but such support services without long-term stable housing cannot end homelessness.

Our research finds that even the most chronic homeless, most severely mentally ill people can be brought off the streets or moved out of emergency accommodation and can live stable lives, if they are supplied with appropriate housing with support. With the right support, even people with extensive histories of substance abuse have left emergency accommodation and obtained stable long-term housing. Furthermore, the evidence cited in this study not only shows that making these services available works to end homelessness, but also that, for homeless people with substance abuse and mental health histories, these service provisions are virtually cost-neutral.

"Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy" is based on the understanding that people who are homeless should be offered more appropriate housing options, instead of emergency accommodation only, from whichever type of provider. The Housing Act 1988, pre-dating the Integrated Strategy by twelve years, does not reflect a particular approach to addressing the needs of homeless people. Rather, it allows the local authorities considerable flexibility in meeting the housing needs of homeless people.

In order to assess the extent to which homeless people can access more stable long-term accommodation, in this research we individually examined each of the main types of long-term housing that homeless people tend to access: local authority housing, private rented housing and voluntary sector housing, to assess to what extent homeless people are accessing these housing types and to what extent the Housing Act 1988 and Integrated Strategy have enabled access.

Regarding local authority housing, of the areas we surveyed, we found that the greatest proportions of local authority allocations to homeless people have been housed by the Dublin local authorities and by Dundalk Town Council and very low but increasing proportions of homeless people have been housed by other local authorities outside Dublin. The wide divergence of proportions of allocations to homeless people found in different local authorities suggests that allocations policies are not directly related to national legislation but rather, are contingent on local practice, the availability of housing stock corresponding to demand and local “homeless champions” who are driving practice.

From the (limited) information available, local authorities do not appear to have increased their number of allocations of local authority housing to homeless people since the passing of the Integrated Strategy, although interviewees suggest that the quality of units offered for allocation to homeless people who are allocated housing does appear to have improved in some areas. The system of assessment and allocation remains very complex and in some areas, only the most committed and organised homeless people are successful. Our research also finds, definitively, that while the majority of homeless applicants for local authority housing are single people, this is not reflected proportionately in the type of housing allocations local authorities make to homeless people.

Another finding is that homeless people have been no more likely to be evicted compared to other tenants after the allocation of a local authority house and appear to manage just as well.

Our research finds that the private rented sector housing is the most common type of independent long-term accommodation accessed by homeless people, even though the Housing Act, 1988 and the Integrated Strategy make very little reference to the sector. Yet even in the private rented sector, similar issues are replicated, including a lack of supply of private sector housing that correspond to demand, especially for single persons. Further issues in the private rented sector are the difficulty in finding accommodation of reasonable quality at rent cap levels and the lack of settlement support available for people in the private rented sector.

Some voluntary housing is designated specifically for homeless people, but this designated

72 By “Homeless Champions”, we mean local authority representatives that are championing the issue of homelessness in their respective organisations and ensuring homeless households are prioritised in allocations.

73 The actual disproportion in local authority allocations is understated, considering that higher numbers of single homeless people using homeless services do not apply for local authority housing (see Williams 2002) compared to other household types and are thus not even considered for local authority housing.
accommodation is typically designed for short periods for people in emergency housing need. We found however that, in some services, some people are occupying this emergency accommodation for very long periods. For these individuals, who tend not to present management difficulties, emergency accommodation is effectively their long-term settlement option. We found that transitional accommodation, provided by voluntary organisations and designed to facilitate homeless people to live independently, also has people staying for very long periods. We found that after the transitional programme is complete, long-term housing placement is rarely immediately available; very high quality transitional housing means that people on some programmes are reluctant to accept lesser quality step-down accommodation; and for those with high support needs, the intensity of key working/oversight is much greater in transitional housing compared to long-term housing, leading to more people caught infringing rules of the service and being returned to emergency homeless hostels.

There is a growing voluntary housing movement designed for long-term use, but we found that only a very small proportion, as little as 5% of the total number of units managed by voluntary housing providers, is designed specifically for homeless people for long-term use. We found that general needs housing provided by voluntary housing providers experiences the same high level of demand and follows a similar allocation pattern to local authority housing. We conclude that there is considerable, as yet untapped, potential for voluntary organisations working with homeless people to extend provision of both independent and supported housing to homeless households, although we acknowledge that the funding system must change first if this is to be more fully realised.

From our examination of the settlement services operating in Ireland we found that the settlement officer role lacks definition and that there are few examples of interagency working between settlement teams and the allocations sections in each local authority. However we found that when effectively organised, settlement services pay for themselves by freeing up expensive emergency hostel beds and supporting people in less expensive long-term accommodation. Most homeless people in long-term housing, while requiring initial assistance, did not need significant help after three months, but some of those settled did need occasional, intensive intervention.

From our interviews with people who are homeless and with service providers, we find that settlement works in Ireland when homeless people are provided with normal, mainstream, inexpensive housing in non-stigmatised surroundings with support as needed. However while some voluntary and statutory homeless service providers interviewed stated that many homeless people were not ready or capable to live independently, 22 of the 25 people who are homeless who we interviewed for this research expressed a preference to move on to more long-term stable accommodation and an ability to manage their tenancy. This somewhat complex picture is further informed by the fact that less than a third of the homeless people we interviewed who were applying to the local authority to be housed by then preferred local authority accommodation above any other tenure type. Some local authority estates were viewed as unsafe and stigmatised and people had no local connections there. Two-thirds of interviewees expressed a preference for either voluntary housing provision or the private rented sector.

In summary our research finds that although there has been a greater articulation within voluntary and statutory organisations in recent years of the need to adopt a “settlement first” approach to the problem of homelessness, not least because it is the only means to reduce the numbers of people in emergency and transitional accommodation, the practice varies with local authority. Some local authority areas (Dundalk is the closest example in the areas we studied) adopt a “settlement first” approach, whereby homeless people are moved on as soon as possible to independent accommodation. Other local authority areas adopt a tiered model/“staircase of transition strategy” (Limerick is the closest example in the areas we studied) whereby homeless people are viewed as requiring a period of transition before being ready for independent living. Dublin appears to operate a mix of these. Other local authorities operate a mix of these strategies or have no clearly articulated strategy as to how to address homelessness in their areas.

Despite this, it would be unfair to say that local authorities have completely failed in their role to implement the Housing Act 1988. While the Act gave form to an official identification of the issue of homelessness, it was never intended to explicitly direct the manner by which homelessness should be solved. “Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy” went much further than the Act but it too failed to articulate and formulate one best practice approach to meeting the housing and support needs of
homeless people.

This type of clarity and direction is now being sought by the multiple agencies involved in addressing the apparently growing phenomenon of homelessness in Ireland today. Any new clear direction and strategy - we recommend one based on a “settlement first” approach - will need to be reflected by methods of financing that make long-term stable housing and settlement support the central vehicles for addressing homelessness and to widen voluntary effort away from their predominant emergency provision.

8.2 Recommendations

A. General

i. “Settlement First”

We recommend the adoption of a “Settlement First” approach by all Government Departments, local authorities, the Health Service Executive and voluntary organisations involved in the delivery of services to homeless people. We recommend that local Homeless Action Plans should also adopt the “Settlement First” approach and should set out how each of the agencies involved through the Homeless Forums will work together to achieve placement of a greater number of homeless people into long-term housing.

B. Implementation of the Act

ii. Homeless Definition

Government should formulate a definitive interpretation of the definition of homelessness in the Housing Act 1988, so that the same national understanding of what constitutes homelessness is applied and understood by all statutory and voluntary agencies. This would best be achieved through a national directive issued jointly by both the Departments of Health and Children and Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) or the “Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy” Interdepartmental Group, setting out, as a minimum, the service response that the common “homeless” scenarios outlined in our research should be entitled to receive.

As part of a definitive interpretation of the definition of homeless we also recommend that the eligibility for those counted as homeless be narrowed in some cases (we recommend that people housed long-term in “supported housing” should no longer be included in the Homeless Count) and widened in others (we recommend that DEHLG should give consideration to ensuring that the Homeless Counts include the “hidden homeless” and those staying in hospitals because they have no where else to stay).

iii. Homeless Count

In order to provide timely and useful information, we recommend that the process of counting homeless people should be conducted annually or on an ongoing basis. If this is felt to be difficult, in the short term, we recommend the count return to being every two years (as previously in 1991 and 1993) rather than every three years as presently.

We also recommend that all local authority areas follow the same methodologies in compiling their count and that DEHLG ask local authorities to detail and publish information on homeless household size, age, etc, to allow for homeless households’ housing needs to be more clearly identified. Finally, we recommend that any new agreed Count format should be the basis for a uniform Health Service Executive, Homeless Forum and Local Authority estimate of housing need and the planning of new services.

iv. Allocations

We recommend that DEHLG should require each local authority to make clear those groups that the local authority will house and those groups that the local authority will not house. For example, if people under 30 years of age or households with a history of anti-social behaviour are barred in practice from being allocated housing by a local authority or if a local connection is required before an application is accepted, this should be made known to all parties at the start of the process and publicly debated at a national and local level.

We also recommend early meeting and in-depth assessment by the local authority, once the homeless household’s local authority application has been accepted, such that the type of housing sought, the type of supports required and the length of time the household is likely to wait are identified at the start of the process.

Clarity and transparency can also be achieved by the incorporation of an appeal mechanism in the local authority housing application process so that excessive waits, misplaced applications, incorrect...
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criteria for rejection of applications, etc. can be investigated independently. This might be overseen by DEHLG, the Ombudsman’s Office or another independent agency.

Finally, in the context of voluntary organisations supporting the application of homeless service users, we recommend that voluntary organisations acknowledge that not all homeless service users want to apply for local authority housing, but that all homeless service users should be informed of their entitlement to apply and be given the option of support when making their application.

v. Links between Homeless Count and Housing Assessment

We recommend greater links be made between the Homeless Count and the local authority Assessment of Housing Need. We believe this can be achieved by incorporating into the existing Homeless Count detailed housing need assessments of those people recorded as homeless, or (in our view preferably) by completing a separate detailed housing assessment of the housing needs of people who are homeless counted in as homeless, to understand what their long-term housing requirements are, what additional support needs if any they have and what mainstream housing providers need to do to accommodate these housing needs.

C. Local Authority Housing

vi. Developing housing that reflects the household profile and expressed needs of homeless people

We recommend that local authorities develop and allocate sufficient single person type accommodation that, as a minimum, reflects the type of homeless households that apply for housing from them and that they allocate larger units to homeless single person households with access to children. We also recommend, in the development of new housing stock, local authorities address the present unattractiveness of their housing stock to some homeless people by incorporating features such as caretakers, a mix of unit sizes and a mix of tenure types in new developments.

vii. Local authority allocations to homeless service users based on consultation with homeless service providers

We recommend that a special allocation system be introduced in all larger local authorities, whereby an agreed minimum number of units of local authority accommodation are made available to homeless service users. Consultation between local authorities and homeless service providers can help local authorities know in advance the numbers of units of housing they will allocate and voluntary organisations can work with homeless service users to plan, prepare and support their settlement. This approach, rather than local authorities working off their housing and homeless lists exclusively, is preferable if “homeless service users” are to be housed, although this should not imply that local authorities no longer need to make allocations to homeless people from their general housing waiting lists.

viii. End the separation of homeless and allocation functions

We recommend that all local authorities partner their homeless and allocation functions. In smaller local authorities the homeless officer may also be a housing allocations officer; in larger local authorities the teams might work closely and share working arrangements. We recommend this because of the need, in our view, to develop a clearer link between the concerns raised in the Homeless Forums and outcomes, in terms of allocation of local authority housing.

D. Voluntary organisations

ix. Voluntary organisations facilitated to meet long-term housing needs

We recommend that all voluntary organisations working with homeless people adopt a “settlement first” approach, such that they facilitate the development of new long-term housing in the areas they work, particularly addressing the housing needs of single homeless people. To facilitate the development of this approach, DEHLG needs to address the funding mechanisms that support people in long-term voluntary housing. We recommend that DEHLG should consider raising the thresholds on smaller units of accommodation through the Capital Assistance Scheme, especially in urban areas like Dublin, thereby facilitating

76 We use the term “homeless service users” rather than “homeless people” because many homeless service users do not apply for local authority housing, while many people applying for local authority housing are not using homeless services. If the aim of government policy is to reduce the numbers of people using emergency accommodation, then in our view “homeless service users” should be the focus of settlement and allocations policies. Our research finds that for this group, following normal allocations procedures does not lead to their being allocated local authority housing.

77 Section 10 funding is made available for staff roles technically tied to the property but people in long-term accommodation may need only “floating support”. Also people placed in long-term accommodation are no longer homeless while Section 10 funding is exclusively for homeless people.
voluntary organisations attempting to develop self-contained accommodation for single homeless people.

We recommend, once DEHLG removes the barriers from making this happen, voluntary organisations should develop their long-term build strategies based on the homeless assessments and priorities identified in the homeless forums and not on the numbers registered for housing with the local authority.

We also recommend that DEHLG and the Irish Council for Social Housing facilitate voluntary housing providers to record on an annual basis the number of allocations of their housing that they make to homeless people.

Finally, we recommend that voluntary organisations providing long-term housing attempt as much as possible to break the linkage between the provision of housing and the acceptance of rules and strictures, so that a tenant, in order to remain in occupation of housing, need only adhere to the conditions of the lease - pay the rent, don’t damage the property, do not act anti-socially - and is not required to participate in treatment or activities.

x. The numbers of transitional housing units should be managed

Because of the present new realities in the private rented sector, where access for homeless people is somewhat easier and where security of tenure is improving, we believe that there may be a need to reassess the role of transitional housing. An adoption of the “settlement first” approach also has implications for transitional housing.

Our research has found that placements in the private rented sector with support can be as least as stable as those in transitional accommodation. In this changing housing environment, we recommend as a first step that a cost benefit analysis be conducted on the effectiveness of current transitional housing mechanisms. Dependent on the findings of this analysis we recommend that homeless service providers use the private rented sector with support as a transitional/ settlement option for homeless people instead of seeking to develop new transitional housing.

xi. Emergency housing supply should be re-examined.

Evidence from our research suggests that there is now a sufficiency of emergency accommodation in most urban areas in Ireland. If more long-term housing options are made available and settlement supports become more available and organised, such that long stay residents are moved out to more appropriate accommodation, then there is no reason in our view why some emergency housing should not be closed.

We recommend that the first steps in a process of disengagement from the provision of emergency housing in Dublin should start with some private emergency accommodation. However in the medium term, there may also be a need to look at the role and range of voluntary sector organisations involved in delivering emergency accommodation. While we acknowledge that it is politically difficult for statutory agencies at local level to remove or shift funding from well known voluntary service providers, even in the case of weak service delivery, we believe this issue may need to be faced in coming years, assuming the “settlement first” model is adopted by all agencies.

As part of this re-examination of the role of emergency housing, we recommend that, if more long-term housing options are made available and settlement supports become more available and organised, in the medium term voluntary organisations that provide emergency accommodation to homeless people should have the Section 10 payments of any residents who have stayed longer than 12 months in their emergency accommodation examined and possibly stopped and that a different funding mechanism and regulatory framework should be put in place instead.

We also recommend that some accommodation presently classified as emergency accommodation but housing homeless people for extended periods should be re-designated as long-term accommodation and thereby provide a long-term safe home for these residents. In our view this should only be done if standards of accommodation, privacy, independence and level of care match prescribed norms. In cases where standards do not match these norms then re-designation should be deferred until government funding is provided to improve living conditions in the re-designated properties and the work is carried out.

78 Such as nursing home payments for example, although we acknowledge that there is no obvious replacement for Section 10 funding in the short term.
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E. Private Rented Sector

xii. Special measures are developed to facilitate homeless people’s access to the private rented sector.

While raising the rent cap may offer some additional supply to rent supplement applicants, landlords who presently accept rent allowance claimants are likely to merely increase their level of rents and it is unlikely that many new entrants will enter the subsidised rental market. Instead of raising the rent cap for all rent supplement applicants, we recommend the following measures:

- That SWA Circular 06/03 is reinforced and applied more generously by Senior Community Welfare Officers so that it becomes common for homeless households to be positively discriminated in their move out of homelessness and into stable rented accommodation.
- Voluntary organisations are facilitated to engage with private landlords and lease properties from them and subsequently to a homeless household. Experience from the UK shows that this approach is the most successful in increasing supply (DETR, 1998).
- In the application of the Rental Assistance Scheme, voluntary organisations working with homeless people be contracted to manage some of the housing units that the local authority will be asked to manage.
- Statutory and voluntary homeless settlement officers are empowered to set up a tenancy. For example, if a settlement officer accompanying a homeless person finds a private rented accommodation, and it matches both their expectations, the CWOs should be instructed to issue payment rather than duplicating the work of the settlement officer and following their own assessment process.
- The model established by the Access Housing Unit, operated by Threshold in Dublin, be extended to other cities in Ireland, perhaps first to Cork or Galway on a pilot basis.
- We also recommend, as an option to voluntary organisations, that the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Department of Social and Family Affairs should consider allowing the current funding offered through Rent Allowance to be provided to voluntary sector service providers to facilitate them to borrow to build accommodation for people who are homeless.

xiii. There is an end to placements in very poor quality private rented accommodation

Very poor quality rented accommodation cannot be classed as a stable long-term housing option. We recommend the scaling up of local authority private rented sector inspections, particularly where CWOs restrict the relocation of tenants on the SWA scheme. We also recommend that CWOs refuse to deal with landlords not registered with the Private Residential Tenancies Board and do not refer homeless people to very poor quality private rented accommodation, no matter how difficult to place the CWO’s consider the person to be.

xiv. End rent allowance restrictions to those who refuse local authority accommodation

Official policy is that if a person is in rented accommodation funded through rent allowance and refuses two or more offers of local authority accommodation, they are no longer eligible for rent allowance. Persons in privately run emergency accommodation, in contrast, may make as many refusals of local authority accommodation as they like and still have access to emergency accommodation. We recommend that people staying in private rented accommodation should be considered as eligible for rent allowance even if they refuse a number of offers of local authority accommodation.

F. Settlement

xv. Interagency collaboration

While the Homeless Forums have been welcomed as a positive innovation in some areas, the Forums clearly cannot address all the elements associated with effective interagency collaboration. We recommend that, supplementary to the Homeless Forums, which are concentrating on strategy and funding, that another more operational level of coordination is developed in each local authority area, as required among homeless statutory and voluntary service providers. This delivery vehicle, perhaps called Homeless Settlement Forums, could include the relevant HSE director of services, voluntary homeless organisations, mental health services and a local authority housing officer and could meet monthly to arrange and review accommodation, care and support needs of individual cases, thereby overcoming the difficulty of co-ordination and cooperation.

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79 We do however believe that the reality of rents for different types of accommodation need to be reflected in rent caps. For example in Galway one-bed apartments are more expensive than three bed houses.

80 Often to facilitate their early discharge.

81 Presently being tested in the Irish Courts.
xvi. Prevention of homelessness for at risk groups

The three at risk groups we considered in this report are discharges from prison and hospitals and people experiencing domestic violence.

We recommend that models of good practice in the discharging of homeless people from hospitals and prisons should be developed by the Departments of Health and Children, Justice and Law Reform and Environment, Heritage and Local Government and that this be clearly communicated to all hospitals and prisons.

Part of that good practice should include an early flagging of homeless people with mental health problems, starting at the admission stage and monitored as care needs change. We also recommend that emergency accommodation should no longer be considered as appropriate accommodation into which people staying in a mental health unit are discharged.

More checks are also required on prisoners who claim to have homes into which they can be discharged but who are actually homeless. We recommend that the fact that someone is homeless should not delay their discharge from prisons but that private rented sector accommodation with support be provided for, to assist their transition from prisons.

Regarding people vulnerable to or victims of domestic violence, we note that there is scope in existing legislation for local authorities to take action to protect people experiencing violence in the home so that the victim of violence maintains the accommodation. We recommend that this could be done through either inserting into a tenancy agreement that domestic violence is grounds for eviction; or through interpreting the (Miscellaneous) Housing Act, 1997 (which covers anti-social behaviour of tenants in local authorities and other social housing providers) such that violent behaviour includes violence against the person on the tenancy and therefore gives grounds to local authorities for exclusion and eviction of the perpetrator.

xvii. DEHLG to monitor process of local authorities’ allocations to homeless people

We recommend that DEHLG develop new IT and a common data recording system that is adopted and followed by all local authorities. As part of this new data collected we recommend that DEHLG record the numbers of units of local authority housing allocated to all households and then a breakdown into housing types, including homeless households and that this is published in one of their Housing Statistics Bulletins annually.

G. Funding

xviii. Funding needs to facilitate homeless voluntary service providers make the transition and become providers of long-term housing

“Funding for services to homeless people is currently fragmented and uncoordinated. There are different application points, different procedures and different requirements in relation to monitoring and evaluation” (Homeless Agency, 2003). We recommend that the funding regime is organised so that support can be provided by organisations to enable homeless people maintain stable, independent and long-term housing. We recommend this be in the form of a mainstream current funding top-up to voluntary housing providers that provide long-term accommodation and support to vulnerable formerly homeless people. We also recommend that this funding top-up allows for the employment of floating support workers so that units of housing allocated can be spread out (particularly important in rural areas where clients may be spread out).

xix. Co-ordination of service delivery

Another major concern about the present funding regime is the lack of transparency and lack of reference to settlement outcomes. In the short-term, we recommend a review of the funding of homeless services, conducted independently of the review of “Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy”. Dependent on the findings of that review, we recommend that funding be re-organised through either (a) a central national fund, administered by a unit composed of membership from the DEHLG and DHC or (b) in the major urban areas, locally through one channel, (with some similarities to the Homeless Agency in Dublin), whereby the local authority and health service executive funding is administered together. This second suggestion could be piloted first in Cork and then applied to other areas if successful.

Both approaches are advantageous in that they facilitate evaluation of monies administered on the basis of value for money considerations and they make possible funding to voluntary organisations based on three year plans and measured settlement outcomes.

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82 Alternatively a measure could be adapted, such as that adapted in UK legislation through their Housing Act 1996, which provides for the repossession of Council (local authority) property in the event of domestic violence. The Act states that a Council may repossess a property if: “one partner has left because of violence or threats of violence by the other towards (i) that partner or (ii) a member of the family of that partner who was residing with that partner immediately before the partner left and the court is satisfied that the partner who has left is unlikely to return.”

83 If voluntary organisations were to be dependent on the differential rents to cover high support and maintenance costs they would be in financial trouble. One organisation providing long-term supported housing estimates that 13% of their income is from differential rents.
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Appendices

Appendix 1

Glossary of terms

Homeless Count
Local authorities make tri-annual assessments of the number of people homeless in their functional area and assess their need for housing. This is also known as the Homeless Count.

Differential Rent
Local authorities rents are known as “differential rents”. Rents are calculated according to the income of the household. Each local authority has its own scheme and the schemes can differ considerably from area to area.

Emergency housing
Accommodation provided by either private, statutory and voluntary agencies, primarily designed for short term use for those in emergency housing need but sometime used for longer periods.

Scheme of Lettings Priorities
The Local authorities' Schemes of Lettings Priorities are, in effect, local authorities’ statements setting out the order of priority in which households eligible for housing from the local authority will be offered this housing.

Move-on options
Move on options describe long-term secure housing options for people moving from emergency or transitional housing.

Rent cap
The rent cap refers to the maximum amount of rent that will be considered for accommodation by Community Welfare Officers under the Supplementary welfare Rent Allowance Scheme. Rent supplements are subject to ‘reasonable rents’, which are set by the individual health service executive areas.

Rent allowance/ Rent Supplement
Supplementary Welfare Allowance Rent supplement is an unemployment payment made to people in private rented accommodation through Community Welfare Officers. The purpose of the Scheme was to meet income maintenance needs and not long term housing needs, which remains Government Policy. However in practice the payment has become a key instrument in social housing, although this has happened in an altogether unplanned manner in the context of income support rather than housing policy.

Supported Housing
Supported housing is used in this report to describe a type of long term housing with support, either provided on site or in a floating format, generally provided by voluntary organisations.

Transitional Housing
Generally accommodation designed for those coming from emergency accommodation, who, it is thought, require support and re-skilling over a set programme in order to live independently.

Appendix 2

Relevant Sections of the 1988 Housing Act

Section 2.—A person shall be regarded by a housing authority as being homeless for the purposes of this Act if—

(a) there is no accommodation available which, in the opinion of the authority, he, together with any other person who normally resides with him or who might reasonably be expected to reside with him, can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of, or

(b) he is living in a hospital, county home, night shelter or other such institution, and is so living because he has no accommodation of the kind referred to in paragraph (a), and he is, in the opinion of the authority, unable to provide accommodation from his own resources.

Section 5.—(1) A housing authority may, with the consent of the Minister and on such terms and conditions (including conditions requiring the giving of an undertaking) as they think fit, assist another housing authority (including the commissioners of a town) or a body approved of by the Minister for the purposes of this section in respect of the provision (whether by erection, purchase, improvement or conversion works) or management by the other authority or body of housing accommodation, or in respect of other matters in relation to housing, in one or more of the following ways:

(a) by a loan,

(b) by a periodic contribution to the funds of the other authority or body,

(c) by a guarantee of sums owed by the other authority or body in respect of borrowings,

(d) by a grant,

(e) by a subsidy towards, or the remission in whole or in part of, loan charges incurred by the other authority or body,

(f) by a contribution in kind (whether by way
of materials or labour or any other service).

Section 8.—(1) A housing authority shall, within one year of the commencement of this section and thereafter at any time that appears to them expedient, and shall, as may, from time to time, be directed by the Minister, make as respects their functional area an estimate of—
   (a) the existing housing requirements, and
   (b) the prospective housing requirements over such period as the Minister may direct or, in the absence of such direction, as the authority see fit,
and shall cause a report thereon to be prepared and adopted by the authority.

(2) In making an estimate of housing requirements in accordance with subsection (1), a housing authority shall have regard to—
   (a) information (derived from any survey of all or a sample of the housing in the area or otherwise as the authority see fit) in relation to the housing conditions in the area, including the number of houses which are in any respect unfit or unsuitable for human habitation, are overcrowded, are shared involuntarily or are expected (through obsolescence, demolition or conversion to other uses) to be lost to the supply of housing over the period to which the estimate relates,
   (b) the extent to which there are persons who are homeless or living in temporary or movable accommodation,
   (c) expected changes in the size and structure of the population of the area,
   (d) the prospective housing requirements of persons residing outside the functional area of the authority to such extent (if any) as the authority consider appropriate,
   (e) such other information as the authority consider relevant, and
   (f) such other matters as the Minister may, from time to time, direct.

Section 9.—(1) A housing authority shall, within one year of the commencement of this section and thereafter not less frequently than every three years and as the Minister may, from time to time, direct, make, in accordance with this section, an assessment of the need for the provision by the authority of adequate and suitable housing accommodation for persons—
   (a) whom the authority have reason to believe require, or are likely to require, accommodation from the authority, and
   (b) who, in the opinion of the authority, are in need of such accommodation and are unable to provide it from their own resources.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1), a housing authority in making an assessment under this section shall have regard to the need for housing of persons who—
   (a) are homeless,
   (b) are persons to whom section 13 applies,
   (c) are living in accommodation that is unfit for human habitation or is materially unsuitable for their adequate housing,
   (d) are living in overcrowded accommodation,
   (e) are sharing accommodation with another person or persons and who, in the opinion of the housing authority, have a reasonable requirement for separate accommodation,
   (f) are young persons leaving institutional care or without family accommodation,
   (g) are in need of accommodation for medical or compassionate reasons,
   (h) are elderly,
   (i) are disabled or handicapped, or
   (j) are, in the opinion of the housing authority, not reasonably able to meet the cost of the accommodation which they are occupying or to obtain suitable alternative accommodation.

(3) In making an assessment under this section, a housing authority shall have regard to such directions as may, from time to time, be given by the Minister.

(4) Before making an assessment under this section, a housing authority shall give one month's notice of their intention to do so to—
   (a) any housing authority whose functional area adjoins the functional area of the authority giving the notice,
   (b) any health board established under the Health Act, 1970, whose functional area includes or adjoins the functional area of the authority giving the notice, and
   (c) such bodies as the authority see fit including voluntary or non-profit making organisations engaged in the provision of housing accommodation in the functional area of the authority or other organisations whose purposes include the provision of accommodation, shelter or welfare.

(5) Subject to this section, a housing authority may, to such extent (if any) as the authority consider appropriate, include in an assessment under this
section need arising from the requirements of persons who are residing outside the functional area of the authority.

(6) A housing authority shall submit an assessment under this section to the Minister on or before such date as he may, from time to time, direct.

Section 10.—(1) A housing authority may, subject to such regulations as may be made by the Minister under this section—

(a) make arrangements, including financial arrangements, with a body approved of by the Minister for the purposes of section 5 for the provision by that body of accommodation for a homeless person,

(b) provide a homeless person with such assistance, including financial assistance, as the authority consider appropriate,

or

(c) rent accommodation, arrange lodgings or contribute to the cost of such accommodation or lodgings for a homeless person.

(9) Where accommodation or lodgings are made available or assistance is provided to a person by virtue of subsection (1), such person shall not be precluded for that reason from being included in an assessment under section 9 or being accepted for inclusion in the next such assessment.

Section 11.—(1) A housing authority shall, in accordance with this section and within one year of its commencement, make a scheme determining the order of priority to be accorded in the letting of dwellings, provided by the authority under The Principal Act and of which they are the owner, to persons in need of accommodation—

(a) who are, in the opinion of the authority, unable to provide accommodation from their own resources, and

(b) whose need for accommodation—

(i) has been included in the most recent assessment made by the authority under section 9, or

(ii) has been accepted by the authority, after the making of that assessment, for inclusion in the next such assessment.

(2) A scheme under this section shall—

(a) provide that the housing authority may, from time to time, determine, as they see fit, to set aside for persons of such category or categories as the authority may decide, a particular number or proportion of the dwellings becoming available to the authority for letting;

(b) provide that the housing authority, in applying its terms to a person, may disregard the accommodation that person is occupying where the authority have reason to believe that he has deliberately or without good and sufficient reason done or failed to do anything (other than an action or omission in good faith) in consequence of which the accommodation he is so occupying is less suitable for his adequate housing than other accommodation which it would have been, or would be, reasonable for him to occupy; and

(c) make particular provision for persons in need of accommodation arising from an emergency.

(3) Where a housing authority consider that a particular dwelling available for letting should, for the time being, be included in the proportion or number of dwellings set aside for a particular category in accordance with subsection (2) (a), priority shall be accorded in the letting of that dwelling to persons of that category.

(4) A scheme made under this section may provide that the housing authority shall obtain and have regard to a report from a medical officer of health of the relevant health board established under the Health Act, 1970, in the making of lettings of dwellings where priority is claimed on grounds consisting of, or including, medical grounds.

(5) A housing authority may from time to time review a scheme made under this section and, as they see fit, make amendments to the scheme or make a new scheme.

(6) The making of a scheme under this section, the making of an amendment to any such scheme and the making of a determination in accordance with subsection (2) (a) shall be reserved functions.
Appendices

Appendix 3

One model of defining homelessness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCEPTUAL CATEGORY</th>
<th>OPERATIONAL CATEGORY</th>
<th>SUB CATEGORY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ROOFLESS</td>
<td>Living in a public</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Sleeping Rough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>space (no abode)</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Contacted by outreach services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stay in a night</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Low-threshold / direct access shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shelter and/or</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Arranged (e.g. low budget hotel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>forced to spend</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Short-stay hostel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>several hours a day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in a public space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOUSELESS</td>
<td>Homeless hostel /</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Short-stay homeless hostel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>temporary</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Temporary housing (no defined time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>accommodation</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Temporary housing (transitional defined)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Temporary housing (longer stay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women’s shelter /</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Shelter accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>refuge</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Supported accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Reception centres (asylum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for asylum seekers</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Repatriate accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and Immigrants</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Migrant workers hostels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Penal institutions (period defined nationally)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Release</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Institutions (care and hospital)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Supported accommodation (group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Supported accommodation (individual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Foyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(for homeless people)</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Teenage parent accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSECURE HOUSING</td>
<td>No tenancy</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Living temporarily with family or friends (not through choice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>(Housing / Social Service records)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Living in dwelling without a standard legal (sub)tenancy (excludes squatting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>Legal orders enforced (rented housing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>Re-possessions orders (owned housing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Living under threat of violence from partner or family (police recorded incidents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INADEQUATE HOUSING</td>
<td>Temporary structure</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>Mobile home / caravan (which is not holiday accommodation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>Illegal occupation of a site (e.g. Roma / Traveller / Gypsy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>Illegal occupation of a building (squatting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unfit Housing</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>Dwellings unfit for habitation under national legislation (occupied)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extreme Overcrowding</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>Highest national norm of overcrowding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 4

**Organisations that participated in the research**

- Bridgeland House
- Brother Stephen Russell House
- Cara Housing Association
- Cluid
- Community Welfare Officer, Dundalk
- Cope
- Cork City Council
- Cork Simon
- Cuan Lee Refuge
- CWO Homeless Persons Unit, Cork
- Dept of Environment, Heritage and Local Government
- Dublin City Council
- Dublin Simon Community
- Dundalk Simon Community
- Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council
- Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council
- Focus Ireland
- Galway City Council
- Galway Simon Community
- Health Services Executive, Eastern Region, Northern Area
- Health Services Executive, Mid-Western Area
- Health Services Executive, Midland Area
- Health Services Executive, North-Eastern Area
- Health Services Executive, Western Area
- Irish Council for Social Housing
- Limerick City Council
- Limerick Refuge
- Longford County Council
- Louth County Council
- Midlands Simon Community
- NOVAS
- Rendu Apartments, Daughters of Charity
- Senior Community Welfare Officer, HSE, Longford
- Sonas Housing Association
- South Dublin County Council
- South East Simon Community
- St Vincent de Paul
- St Vincent's Hostel, Cork
- Suaimhneas
- Threshold Access Housing Unit
- Threshold, Cork
- Threshold, Galway
- Waterford City Council
- Wicklow County Council

### Appendix 5

**Unit costs of care in public institutions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Cost of a prison place, 2002</strong></th>
<th>€</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit cost averaged over all 17 prisons</td>
<td>84,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin prisons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountjoy</td>
<td>95,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Patrick's Institution</td>
<td>85,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W heatfield</td>
<td>72,350</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Irish Prison Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Cost of psychiatric care place</strong></th>
<th>€</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cluain Mhuire</td>
<td>78,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vergemount</td>
<td>79,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elm Park</td>
<td>78,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>68,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. James</td>
<td>69,941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tallaght</td>
<td>94,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N aas</td>
<td>93,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jas. Connolly</td>
<td>63,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Brendan's</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119,843</td>
<td>119,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Ita's</td>
<td>73,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tallaght</td>
<td>94,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mater</td>
<td>66,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>88,126</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ERHA
Appendix 6

Summary of points system used in the allocation system for local authorities in the Scheme of Letting Priorities

This summarises the main categories and the points allocation system for four local authorities who use a points system as a basis for allocating housing (notwithstanding the priority categories and circumstances which can be used without reference to points). This has been simplified, and paraphrasing of categories has been undertaken in order to enable comparison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>South Dublin</th>
<th>Dun Laoghaire Rathdown</th>
<th>Wicklow</th>
<th>Dublin City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical issues</td>
<td>0-15</td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of amenities (e.g., washing, cooking, hot/cold water, toilet)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfit dwellings (e.g., closure or demolition orders)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfit dwellings and grossly overcrowded</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other unfit dwellings, including fixed, mobile or portable structures</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing facilities (private rented acc sharing kitchen, living room etc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcrowded conditions – simple overcrowding</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>20 max</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcrowded conditions – inadequacy of free air space/sex overcrowding</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross overcrowding</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross overcrowding and sex overcrowding / sex overcrowding&quot;&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcrowding - Secondary sex overcrowding&quot;&quot;&quot; which cannot be avoided (one bedroom and 2 bedrooms respectively)</td>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>3-6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court order for possession has been obtained</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period of time on waiting list/length of time as applicant/age</td>
<td>10-70</td>
<td>10&quot;&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>5-25</td>
<td>40 max</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent paying capacity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of persons in mobile homes/caravans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of applicants household</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons living/working within a 10k radius of letting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local preference – applicants residing in the area in which they are seeking accommodation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecurity of tenure or living under ‘tied’ tenure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicants sharing accommodation with a reasonable requirement for separate accommodation and not having being awarded points for ‘unfit dwelling’ or ‘overcrowding’ categories</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceptional compassionate or similar grounds</td>
<td>0-15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicants in private rented acc., where the net rent paid exceeds one quarter of gross income and not having being awarded points for ‘unfit dwelling’ or ‘overcrowding’ categories</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenants wishing to move to accommodation more suitable to their housing need</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

84 Sex overcrowding is deemed to exist when persons of ten years of age or more of opposite sexes and not being persons living together as husband or wife must sleep in the same room.
85 Secondary sex overcrowding is defined as sex overcrowding in another family as a result of the applicant's family being housed in the same dwelling.
86 10 points for each complete year on the housing waiting list.
87 Depends on the size of household.
Appendix 7

Copy of questionnaire circulated to local authorities

ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF

THE HOUSING ACT (1988)

AND

THE INTEGRATED STRATEGY (2000)

IN

MEETING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS
## Appendices

### SECTION A  Organisational / Respondent Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent’s Name:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Local Authority:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position within Local Authority:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Service in this Position:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SECTION B  Definition of Homelessness

In the opinion of your Local Authority which of the following categories are regarded as homeless? Please tick.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People sleeping rough</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims of fire/ flood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evicted private sector tenants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evicted local authority tenants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People discharged from hospital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People discharged from prison</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in a temporary hostel/ emergency accommodation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people leaving care at age 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in emergency accommodation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in transitional accommodation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims of domestic violence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In your Local Authority, what age are young single people accepted as homeless and placed on the local authority housing list? Years of Age

81.
SECTION C  Review of Local Authority Housing Allocations: 1998–2003

In summary, the following information is being sought in the table below:

The total number of households/people who were allocated housing by your Local Authority both directly and through Nominated Housing Bodies for each of the years 1998 to 2003.

The numbers of households/people experiencing homelessness who were allocated housing by your Local Authority both directly, and through Nominated Housing Bodies for each of the years 1998 to 2003.

Types of households allocated housing by the Local Authority for the years 1998 to 2003.

If available please provide recorded figures for each year under the following categories:
(if figures are unavailable for any part of the questionnaire, please indicate. It is understood for example that figures may not be available pre-2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total No. of Households</th>
<th>Numbers of different types of households housed/Allocated Housing</th>
<th>Total No. of Homeless Households Allocated Housing</th>
<th>Numbers of different types of homeless households housed/Allocated Housing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Single Person</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>One Parent Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECTION D  Present Homeless List

If recorded, please provide most current figures under the following categories:
If tallies of this nature are not conducted then please move on to Section E.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Households on Homeless List</th>
<th>Gender of Head of Household</th>
<th>Household Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

82.
### Section E  Review of Housing Needs Assessment 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>When did your Local Authority start the process of refining data for the 2002 Housing Needs Assessment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please give details about the stages within that process:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Were any Voluntary Organisations working or advocating on behalf of homeless people contacted before the count was completed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please give details:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Was the Health Board in your Area involved in the Assessment at any stage?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please give details about involvement:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>In the opinion of your Local Authority, have the assessments of homelessness provided an accurate reflection of the number of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>homeless in your area at any one time? In other words, does the assessment provide an accurate estimate, exaggerate or fail to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>capture all people homeless?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>What suggestions or changes would your Local Authority make to facilitate more accurate collection of data for the Needs Assessment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please Comment:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

83.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section F</th>
<th>Review of Allocation System and Lettings Priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Does your Local Authority set aside a specific number or proportions of units of local authority housing for any category of persons, including people who are homeless?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If yes, please give details: ______________________</td>
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<td></td>
<td>________________________________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>How are Local Representatives involved in the housing allocation process?</td>
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<td>________________________________________________</td>
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<td>c.</td>
<td>Section 8 of the 1988 Act specifies that housing authorities make an estimate of housing requirements for persons who are homeless after the assessment of homelessness has been carried out.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Section G  Priority of Housing by Local Authority

In practice which of the following categories (if any) are considered as priority cases for housing by the local authority?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People sleeping rough</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Victims of fire/flood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evicted private sector tenants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evicted local authority tenants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims of domestic violence</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>People discharged from hospital</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>People discharged from prison</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>People in a temporary hostel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Young people leaving care at age 18</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>People in emergency accommodation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in transitional accommodation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please answer the above question with reference to your scheme of lettings and please include a copy of same.

---

How many units and what types, if any, emergency, transitional or supported housing provision is provided by your local authority, to meet the short term housing needs of people who are homeless, (either directly by the local authority or contracted from another organisation)?

---

### SECTION H  Review of Length of Wait on Housing Waiting List.

Do you measure average length of waits for people on the housing waiting list?  
Yes     No

If possible to estimate, please give details of the average length of wait of new entrants on the housing waiting list for:

- Single persons  
- Couples  
- One Parent Families  
- Two Parent Families

If known, has average length of wait for housing increased/ decreased/ remained the same compared to four years ago, in 2000?

Please Tick  Increased     Decreased     Remained the same

If known what is the average wait for an applicant experiencing homelessness for local authority housing?

---

85.
SECTION I  Review of Support Services

Excluding the example of Travellers, when you make housing allocations to people on your housing lists, do you offer any support to the person allocated housing, including on a case by case basis?  Yes __   No __

If yes, please give examples:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Do you keep records on the numbers of tenancy agreements with people who are homeless that have failed?  Yes __   No __

If yes, how many tenancies to people who are homeless have been terminated on either side in the last 5 years, as an absolute number or as a proportion of lettings?

Please detail

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. Your reply will be most useful in completing this research and informing service development in the future. If you have further comments about the content of the research or in reply to some of the questions asked then please feel free to make your views known here.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Please return this questionnaire by 19th November to:

Tanya Lalor, TSA Consultancy, Unit C2 Bawnogue Enterprise Centre, Bawnogue Road, Dublin 22
Tel. 01 4577420   Fax: 01 4577415   Email: tanyalalor@tsa.ie