



Country Profile: IRELAND

Third Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe 2018



Homelessness Data and Policy

- In November 2017, **8,857** people were in state-managed emergency accommodation (including **1,530** families/**5,524** adults and **3,333** children).
- Between November 2014 and November 2017, there was a **145%** increase in the number of homeless people, a **286%** increase in the number of homeless families and an increase of **276%** in the number of homeless children.
- More than **one** homeless person in **three** is a **child**.
- Huge hike in spending on emergency measures: Dublin City Council spent **€39 million** on hotel nights for homeless people in 2016, while **€10.7 million** was spent on prevention and supported housing.
- Nationally coordinated strategy. In Ireland, despite the ambitious, concrete and measurable design of the national strategy to fight homelessness coupled with a strategy for building affordable housing, the results have not materialised. This is partly due to the property market situation in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis, when construction, particularly of social housing, was almost entirely halted. At the same time, emergency management of the homelessness crisis, which affects families with children in particular, spurred political decision-makers to take short-term initiatives such as the creation of family hubs. While improvements in accommodation for homeless families is always welcome, there has been criticism of the absence of long-term solutions and of a targeted strategy to get families out of homelessness in the long-term. Without these, the short-term interventions alone risk normalising what are very high numbers of homeless families.

Housing Exclusion

- Housing cost indicators (housing cost overburden, rent/mortgage arrears) are relatively low compared to other EU countries, but it may be due to bias in the data collection. Poor households in Ireland spend in average **31%** of their disposable income in housing costs (2016), compared to **42%** for all poor households in the EU.
- A **quarter** of poor households are financially **unable** to keep their home adequately warm.

- Age and nationality are two factors of housing exclusion: young people between 16-24 and non-EU citizens are far more likely to experience housing cost overburden and overcrowding than the rest of the population. For example, non-EU citizens (**13.5%**) are 6 times more likely to experience overcrowding than Irish citizens (**2.1%**).

Housing Rights

- One of the most recent decisions of the European Committee of Social Rights was the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) v. Ireland which became public on 23 October 2017. The decision found that Ireland had failed to take sufficient and timely measures to ensure the right to adequate housing for many families living in local authority housing across the country. The Committee found Ireland to be in violation of Article 16 of the Revised Social Charter, which protects the right of the family to social, legal and economic protection, including the provision of family housing. The NGOs behind the complaint held a joint press conference on 23 October 2017.

Quote from FEANTSA Director, Freek Spinnewijn

“Recent headlines were made when Taoiseach Leo Varadkar unhelpfully claimed that Ireland had low levels of homelessness compared to other countries. Homelessness is famously extremely difficult to compare across EU countries due to different data collection methods and so such claims are simply damaging to the many NGOs and associations working to end homelessness in Ireland. The rate at which homelessness has increased in Ireland, especially among families is extremely worrying. The lack of long-term solutions or targeted strategies to get homeless families out of long-term homelessness is very worrying. Without these, the short-term interventions risk normalising what are very high numbers of homeless families.”

If you would like to receive an embargoed version of the report before its publication on 21 March, please let us know at emma.nolan@feantsa.org