

Migrants'
experiences of
homelessness
in Dublin

Homeless in my new Home



Creating
homes
together

Immigrant Council
of Ireland

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The views expressed in this report are those of the publishers and do not necessarily represent the views of the Research Advisory Group members.

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About Dublin City Council

Dublin City Council is the democratically elected body that governs Dublin city, and is the largest local authority in Ireland. The Office of the Director of Community and Enterprise has responsibility for housing welfare, integration and migrant policy. The main responsibility of the Office of the Director of Community and Enterprise is to establish, support and facilitate the City Development Board with the implementation of the strategy for social, cultural and economic development of the city.



About Focus Ireland

Focus Ireland is a housing and homeless charity working to prevent people becoming, remaining or returning to homelessness through the provision of quality services, supported housing, research and advocacy. Founded in 1985 by Sr. Stanislaus Kennedy, Focus Ireland works with single adults, families and young people, believing everyone has a right to a place they can call home which is safe, secure, affordable and appropriate to their needs.



About the Immigrant Council of Ireland

The Immigrant Council of Ireland is a national, independent, non-governmental organisation that promotes the rights of migrants through information, legal advice and strategic litigation, advocacy, lobbying, research and publications as well as training work. The organisation was set up by Sr. Stanislaus Kennedy in 2001 in response to a need to support migrants coming to Ireland for purposes such as work, study, family reunification, self-employment or to visit.



About TSA Consultancy

TSA Consultancy is Ireland's leading third sector advisory, research and consultancy service. TSA draws together recognised expertise in strategic planning, sustainability and social enterprise development, social research, business planning, funding, management and evaluation. TSA provides strategic advice and research to the agencies whose role is to develop and build the third sector in Ireland. TSA is also committed to working with locally based community projects at every stage from idea to start-up and development.

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Tanya Lalor and Gerard Doyle

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Foreword

Many migrants come to Ireland to make a new home for themselves and their families, and this can be a positive experience for both the migrants and Irish communities. The current financial crisis means that many people are now finding it difficult to meet even their most basic needs, such as housing and food, and are living in severe destitution – some migrants are among this vulnerable group. The difficulty for some migrants to return to their country of origin, despite this destitution, is important to understand.

Focus Ireland and the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI) have jointly commissioned this important piece of research to document the homeless experiences of a small number of EU and non-EU migrants that are sleeping rough and accessing homeless accommodation and day services in Dublin. This study provides an insight into the personal stories and experiences of fifteen migrants experiencing homelessness, and identifies the barriers and blockages they face in accessing services, social welfare payments and accommodation.

The most common reason for coming to Ireland for the migrants interviewed was to look for work. The findings of this report demonstrate the central importance of employment and income - many of those interviewed lost their accommodation and subsequently became homeless due to a lack of work and money.

Although the experiences of these migrants have varied depending on their nationality and legal status, some common patterns emerge. Worryingly, most of the migrants have no source of income or social welfare supports, and have been homeless in Ireland for more than one year. Only one participant had previously experienced homelessness in their country of origin. This means that their *first* experience of homelessness was in Ireland.

The policy response in many countries, including Ireland, is to encourage migrants to return to their country of origin. This study clearly shows that some migrants have no desire or intention to return to their country of origin, as Ireland has become their home for a variety of reasons.

Appropriate policy responses are urgently needed to address the needs of migrants who are living in destitution and do not wish to leave Ireland. Some migrants are unlikely to become Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) compliant and are not entitled to social welfare payments – they are some of the most vulnerable and marginalised people in our society and must not be ignored.

This report makes a series of recommendations to address the many barriers migrants face in moving on from homelessness. Focus Ireland and the ICI believe that the lessons learned from this study and the stories told by the participants can make a real difference – both to migrants currently experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness in the future.

I would like to thank TSA Consultancy for producing this invaluable research, Dublin City Council for funding the study, the Advisory Group for their ongoing support and guidance, the peer researchers for conducting the interviews, and in

particular the migrants whose openness in sharing their experiences has given us a deeper understanding of the changing profile and experiences of homelessness in Dublin today.

Sr. Stanislaus Kennedy

Founder and Life President of Focus Ireland

Founder and Board Member of the Immigrant Council of Ireland

Executive Summary

1. Aim and objectives of study

This small-scale exploratory study has been commissioned by Focus Ireland and the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI), and was funded by Dublin City Council.

While a number of studies have been carried out in recent years in Ireland on the growing issue of migrant homelessness, there is limited research into individual subjective experiences. This study profiles a small number of migrants who are sleeping rough or accessing homeless accommodation and day services in Dublin, and documents their homeless experiences using the 'pathways approach' and case studies. The needs of homeless migrants in moving on from homelessness are examined, and the barriers they face in accessing services and adequate/sustainable housing are highlighted. The core research question for this study is:

What are the experiences of homeless migrants in Dublin, and what are the services gaps/limitations that they encounter?

In addressing this core question, the research attempts to:

1. Provide greater understanding of the homeless pathways of foreign nationals in order to identify the point at which intervention may assist in the prevention of homelessness.
2. Provide a profile of foreign nationals who are 'falling through' the range of emergency supports and services available in Dublin.
3. Develop an understanding of the various legal, structural and policy barriers that migrants face in moving on from homelessness in order to contribute to the Government's target of ending long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough.
4. Provide an evidence base for Focus Ireland and the ICI's strategies, actions and interventions in order to assist foreign nationals who are experiencing homelessness.
5. Identify appropriate policy and service delivery interventions to respond to the needs of foreign nationals who are experiencing homelessness.

2. Methodology

This qualitative research has been carried out using ethical and participatory research approaches. A variety of methodologies were used, including: a review of Irish literature and policy on migration and homelessness, consultations with statutory and voluntary homeless organisations and information services, in-depth interviews with homeless migrants in Dublin, and the analysis of interviews using 'grounded theory'.

This research sought to explore participants' own experiences and perspectives on their pathways into, through and out of homelessness. Case studies were developed in order to present the biographical stories of each participant on their homeless experiences.

Six peer researchers (i.e. people who shared the same nationality and cultural background as the participants) were recruited to interview the research participants in order to ensure that the participants were interviewed in their own language. The peer researchers were trained in qualitative research methods, interview skills, research ethics, homelessness in Ireland, and residency and legal status in Ireland.

Contact was made with twenty-one homeless and migrant organisations in Dublin as part of the recruitment process. In total, seventeen homeless people were interviewed, of which fifteen met the eligibility criteria of the research (i.e. from the selected nationalities, and sleeping rough or accessing homeless day/accommodation services). The countries of origin of the fifteen interviewees were: Poland (9 interviewees), Latvia (2), UK (1), Nigeria (1), Ivory Coast (1), and South Africa (1).

A research advisory group was established to advise on and oversee the research process. Members of this advisory group included: the two commissioning organisations, Dublin City Council, TSA Consultancy (who managed and completed the fieldwork for this study), the Dublin Region Homeless Executive, and representatives from various homeless service providers.

3. *Limitations of study*

This research is a small-scale qualitative study with a small number of research participants. While those interviewed may comprise a relatively significant proportion of homeless migrants in Dublin, the small participant numbers limit their capacity to be representative of the homeless migrant population.

Notwithstanding this limitation, the findings of this study provide an insight into the personal experiences and pathways of the homeless migrants interviewed, as well as the various barriers/blockages that they have experienced in accessing services, social welfare payments and accommodation.

4. *Migration and homelessness*

Although Irish demographic and migration trends are not exceptional in the EU, they do differ from the typical experience of other EU countries. In the context of this research, the most significant difference is the relatively high percentage of the total Irish population that is of foreign origin (of which most are nationals from other EU member states).

The focus of immigration policy in Ireland in the last decade has been on the asylum and work permit systems. In 2004 the Government decided to introduce

a form of regulation of EU immigration through a requirement that migrants demonstrate that they are 'habitually resident' in Ireland before they can access welfare services. There are five factors that determine whether a person is 'habitually resident' in Ireland:

1. Length and continuity of residence in Ireland or in any other particular country
2. Length and purpose of any absence from Ireland
3. Nature and pattern of employment
4. Applicant's main centre of interest
5. Future intentions of applicant

An additional provision, the 'right to reside' test, was introduced in 2009 – a person must have a 'right to reside' before it can be determined if they are habitually resident. The 'right to reside' clause and habitual residency are significant issues facing migrants who find themselves homeless or at risk of homelessness when they seek to access social welfare payments. The application of these rules is affected by the routes through which foreign nationals enter the State (e.g. as an undocumented migrant, asylum seeker, non-EU national with permission to remain etc.).

The residency situation and experiences of foreign nationals may have a significant impact on their reasons for entering homelessness and the prospects for exiting homelessness. A number of recent research studies in Ireland have evidenced the risk of homelessness for migrants, including *Away from home and homeless* (2006), *EU10 people using homeless services: Who are they?* (2008) and *Making a Home in Ireland* (2009).

The Dublin Region Homeless Executive (formerly the Homeless Agency) has conducted a number of surveys and counts in Dublin to enumerate the number of people sleeping rough and accessing homeless accommodation, day and information/advice services. The Rough Sleepers Count has measured substantive changes in the composition of those sleeping rough in Dublin, with an established foreign national population observed rough sleeping since November 2008. The total number of people sleeping rough in Dublin has fallen in recent years; however, both the proportion and actual number of foreign nationals sleeping rough has increased. Furthermore, *Counted In 2008* demonstrated a significant increase in the number of people of foreign nationality accessing homeless services in Dublin – 16% of all users (10% surveyed were EU citizens and 6% were non-EU citizens).

Despite the risk of destitution, poverty and homelessness in Ireland, many migrants are reluctant to return to their country of origin. The personal, economic and political circumstances in a migrant's country of origin must be considered when understanding why they choose not to return.

5. Findings of study

The main findings from the qualitative interviews with the research participants are summarised below:

Accommodation

Eleven interviewees were staying in emergency accommodation, and in most cases this was accessed through the night bus (which is now decommissioned). However, some people were staying in emergency accommodation provided directly through the New Communities Unit.

The remaining four interviewees were sleeping rough. Seven of those interviewed had previously slept rough, and a further three reported living in squats at various different times throughout their experience of homelessness.

Reasons for coming to Ireland

The most common reason given by participants for coming to Ireland was to look for work. Other reasons included: to seek asylum and flee political persecution, to be reunited with partners/family living in Ireland, and to start a new life (for example, following a bereavement or relationship breakdown in their own country).

Work experience in Ireland

All of the interviewees were unemployed at the time of interview, and eleven had previously worked in Ireland. Five participants had worked in jobs which were casual and paid 'cash in hand', and so they did not have any PRSI contributions in Ireland.

Source of income

One of the key barriers noted by those interviewed was the lack of income to support any form of accommodation. Four interviewees have secured social welfare payments but the remaining eleven receive no income. Their lack of income was a result of not having access to employment or any social welfare payments. These participants relied on support from family members/friends, occasional begging, and casual work.

Reasons for homelessness

The most frequent reason stated by interviewees for experiencing homelessness was a lack of work and money, leading to the loss of their accommodation (six interviewees). There were many different reasons identified for loss of employment. In most cases interviewees did not experience much difficulty in gaining employment, but as the economic downturn took effect in Ireland the sectors in which people were employed were particularly affected (e.g. construction).

The second most frequent reason cited was being asked to leave accommodation (either because of a lack of money, a breakdown in relationships, or due to alcohol/drug use).

Length of time homeless

Homelessness was a new experience for the majority of those interviewed; only two interviewees had prior experiences of homelessness in their country of origin. The majority of those interviewed have been homeless on a long-term basis: four interviewees have been homeless for less than one year; the

remaining eleven interviewees have been homeless for more than one year. No participants have been homeless for more than four years.

Most of the interviewees had been living in Ireland for at least one year before they became homeless.

Access to welfare supports

In most cases, once the interviewees became homeless, they remained homeless and did not report any periods where they moved out of homelessness. A key factor in the interviewees' experience of homelessness was whether they could access social and community welfare payments.

Only a minority of those interviewed were in receipt of social welfare or supplementary welfare payments at the time of interview. Four interviewees were in receipt of jobseeker's allowance, and a further four had previously been in receipt of social welfare payments.

Some of those who had no income at the time of interview had previously accessed payments in the past for short periods of time (until they were told that they were no longer eligible). These were mainly jobseeker's benefit payments.

Five interviewees have either not applied or pursued applications, as they feel that they will not be eligible for payment (e.g. if they have not worked in Ireland) or that they cannot meet the requirements.

Services accessed

The predominant services that were accessed by those interviewed were: food and day services for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness, emergency accommodation (through the night bus) and social welfare services. In the absence of any source of income, most of those interviewed relied significantly on homeless day services (which provided them with food, information, and shower/laundry facilities).

Access to rent allowance

Even in cases where interviewees had an entitlement to social welfare payments on the basis of their being habitually resident, there was a problem for some in accessing private sector rent allowance (supplementary welfare allowance) as they did not meet eligibility requirements. Three interviewees identified this as the reason for them becoming homeless.

Social networks and supports

The lack of a strong social network was identified by some interviewees as being a factor in becoming homeless.

The experience of homelessness for the research participants was compounded by weak social networks and supports. Most interviewees did not have a wide social circle or family to support them when they lost their accommodation or became homeless. In addition, the stigma and embarrassment of homelessness has led some participants to withdraw from contacts and networks that could support them, both in Ireland and their country of origin.

Language issues

Two interviewees reported language issues as being a direct cause of their homelessness, and many participants experienced difficulties in accessing services and payments due to language issues.

Coping mechanisms and alcohol/drug use

While alcohol was an identified factor in causing homelessness in some instances, most interviewees stated that alcohol/drug use was an effect of or coping mechanism for their experience of homelessness.

Training and education

Some interviewees were accessing or trying to access training and education services (mainly related to English language training), and a number of interviewees had either completed or were awaiting English language training. Just as language was a factor for some in becoming homeless, it was also identified as a factor by interviewees in moving out of homelessness.

Returning to country of origin

Returning to their country of origin was not regarded as a pathway out of homelessness for the majority of those interviewed. Only three interviewees stated that they may consider returning to their country of origin at some point in the future.

6. Discussion and conclusions

This research presents patterns and themes that have emerged in the experiences of those interviewed, many of which have been identified in previous exploratory research undertaken on migrant homelessness, which indicates that these are not isolated experiences.

The majority of those interviewed were long-term homeless, and of those who were long-term homeless for more than one year (eleven interviewees), nine were in receipt of no income and had not had income for the duration of their homelessness.

Only three interviewees expressed any intention of returning to their country of origin in the short or medium-term. Most felt that they could not return home, or for a variety of reasons had no home in their country of origin.

The majority of those interviewed viewed their potential pathways out of homelessness to be linked to employment and accommodation, just as their pathways into homelessness were predominantly linked to these issues. However, barriers exist in relation to these pathways out of homelessness.

A number of changes in homeless policy and service provision have occurred in Dublin during the completion of this research. The Charlemont Street emergency accommodation service, which allows homeless migrants to access accommodation on an ongoing basis without having to register with the free-phone service each night, addresses on a temporary basis some of the issues that were identified by those interviewed in this study.

Furthermore, there has been a recent shift in policy by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive away from one-night accommodation for people accessing emergency accommodation through the free-phone. Although persons who are experiencing homelessness and accessing emergency accommodation through the free-phone number will now be placed in temporary accommodation for an initial period of up to seven days, those who are *not* compliant with the HRC will only be provided with emergency accommodation on a one-night basis (and *may* be provided with temporary accommodation for up to seven nights).

The findings of this study highlight that access to income and long-term accommodation is a need that exists but remains largely unaddressed for homeless migrants. The degree of social exclusion that people face due to their limited eligibility for services, lack of social networks and isolation, lack of access to training and education, lack of English language skills, and lack of general familiarity with the system of social welfare compounds their experiences of homelessness and moving on from homelessness.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to study

This research project has been commissioned by Focus Ireland and the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI), and was funded by Dublin City Council. This study follows from a study conducted by the ICI and Focus Ireland in 2009 entitled *Making a Home in Ireland: Housing Experiences of Chinese, Indian, Lithuanian and Nigerian Migrants in Blanchardstown*, which examined the central role that appropriate housing plays in a migrant's ability to feel at home in Ireland. The connection between housing and integration is highlighted in the research findings, and this relationship is affected by policies on migration, legal status, social inclusion, poverty, discrimination, income and employment. The research also revealed the vulnerability of some migrants in Ireland to experiencing homelessness.

While a number of studies have been carried out in recent years in Ireland on the growing issue of migrant homelessness, there is limited evidence of individual subjective experiences. It is difficult to ensure that policy responses are appropriate if the actual 'lived' experiences and issues/barriers to accessing housing facing homeless foreign nationals are not documented.

Focus Ireland and the ICI commissioned this exploratory study to document the experiences of foreign nationals who are sleeping rough or accessing emergency homeless accommodation and day services in Dublin. The policy context for this work is the Government's commitment to end long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough.

1.2 Aim of study and research question

Focus Ireland and the ICI commissioned this study in order to answer the core research question:

What are the experiences of homeless migrants in Dublin, and what are the services gaps/limitations that they encounter?

In addressing this core question, the research attempts to:

1. Provide greater understanding of the homeless pathways of foreign nationals in order to identify the point at which intervention may assist in the prevention of homelessness.
2. Provide a profile of foreign nationals who are 'falling through' the range of emergency supports and services available in Dublin.
3. Develop an understanding of the various legal, structural and policy barriers that migrants face in moving on from homelessness in order to contribute to the Government's target of ending long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough.

4. Provide an evidence base for Focus Ireland and the ICI's strategies, actions and interventions in order to assist foreign nationals who are experiencing homelessness.
5. Identify appropriate policy and service delivery interventions to respond to the needs of foreign nationals who are experiencing homelessness.

The study attempts to profile a small number of migrants who are sleeping rough or accessing homeless services in Dublin, and to document their homeless experiences using the 'pathways approach' and case studies. In the research, the needs of homeless migrants in moving on from homelessness are examined; and the barriers they face in accessing services, as well as adequate and sustainable housing, are highlighted.

1.3 Methodology of research project

1.3.1 The pathways approach

The 'pathways approach' to homelessness research traces individuals' experiences into, through and out of homelessness. The approach offers a way of representing and reviewing the experience of different groups of homeless people by taking account of people's characteristics, life and homelessness experiences, and the wider influences on these. Doherty et al. (2002), cited in Pillinger (2007), describe the aim of this approach:

Pathways studies – a variant on the life course, longitudinal approach – through detailed biographical work attempt to chart the movement individuals and groups make into, through and out of homelessness with the explicit intention of identifying key 'tipping' points, conjunctions of events that signal major changes leading to an improvement or deterioration in life chances¹.

According to Pillinger, 'In the Irish context, it has been recognised that better recording of homeless people's biographies...[is] integral to the prevention of homelessness².

This research sought to explore interviewees' own experiences and perspectives on their pathways into, through and out of homelessness. Case studies were developed in order to present the biographical stories of each participant on their experiences into, through and (if applicable) out of homelessness.

1.3.2 Research Advisory Group

A Research Advisory Group was established to advise on the research process. Members of this group included the two commissioning organisations; the

¹ Doherty et al. (2002) cited in Pillinger, J. (2007): *Homeless Pathways: developing effective strategies to address pathways into, through and out of homelessness*. Dublin: Focus Ireland, p.9

² Pillinger, J. (2007): *Homeless Pathways: developing effective strategies to address pathways into, through and out of homelessness*. Dublin: Focus Ireland, p.9

fundlers of the study, Dublin City Council; the consultants who completed the fieldwork for this study; the Dublin Region Homeless Executive and representatives from various homeless service providers.

One of the key functions of the Research Advisory Group was to identify and agree the EU and non-EU nationalities to be examined in this study. The commissioning organisations and the consultants (TSA Consultancy) conducted a brief profile of foreign nationals accessing day and emergency homeless services in Dublin or sleeping rough. Based on this data and discussions with various homeless service providers in Dublin, the advisory group selected five nationalities and cultural backgrounds for this study.

The rationale for their selection was based on the prevalence of homeless people from these countries accessing homeless services, as well as the particular issues that they faced (e.g. legal status issues). The countries selected were: Poland, Latvia, UK, Nigeria, Romania (the Roma community), and it was agreed that other non-EU countries would be included on a case by case basis.

It was agreed by the advisory group that only persons from these countries who were sleeping rough or accessing emergency homeless accommodation/day services would be interviewed as part of the study. A minimum of 20 individuals from these countries were targeted for interviewing.

FEANTSA³ has developed a European typology of homelessness and housing exclusion (ETHOS) which classifies people who are homeless according to their living or 'home' situation. ETHOS has four main conceptual categories: *rooflessness*, *houselessness*, *insecure housing* and *inadequate housing* (see Appendix 1 for the full ETHOS typology). For the purposes of this study, the ETHOS living situations of people living rough (living situation 1.1), people in emergency accommodation (2.1) and people in a homeless hostel or temporary accommodation (3.1 and 3.2) were examined.

1.3.3 Peer researchers

In order to ensure that the research participants would be interviewed in their own language, it was decided that volunteer peer researchers – that is, people who shared the same nationality (and in the case of the Roma community, the same cultural background) as the participants – would act as the interviewers. This participatory research approach was an important methodological approach for this study.

The first stage in the fieldwork process was the recruitment and training of the peer researchers. The peer researchers were recruited through organisations that provide services to people experiencing homelessness and through individuals working in these organisations. The peer researchers had expertise in the areas of homeless service provision, advocacy and advisory services (including cultural mediation and translation services), counselling and advisory services, social work and social research. Two of the peer researchers were working in homeless services in Dublin at the time of the research.

³ FEANTSA is the European Federation of National Associations Working with the Homeless

Peer researchers were interviewed and recruited from the following countries: Poland (two researchers), Latvia (one researcher), Nigeria (one researcher), the UK (one researcher), and Romanian Roma (one researcher).

A training programme was designed and delivered over three half-days in the offices of Focus Ireland. The training programme included the following elements:

- Context and background to homelessness in Ireland
- An introduction to qualitative research methods, interviewing and ethics in research
- An introduction to residency and legal status in Ireland (this was delivered by the Immigrant Council of Ireland's information officer)
- Reviewing and testing the interview schedule and questionnaire

1.3.4 Recruitment and interview of homeless migrants

Contact was made with twenty-one homeless and migrant organisations in Dublin as part of the recruitment process. Information on the research and its objectives were circulated to various services, and posters were also drawn up (and translated into Polish) for services to display on their premises.

In total seventeen homeless people were interviewed, of whom fifteen met the eligibility criteria of the research (i.e. from the selected nationalities and sleeping rough or accessing homeless day/accommodation services). The countries of origin of the fifteen interviewees were: Poland (9 interviewees), Latvia (2), UK (1), Nigeria (1), Ivory Coast (1), and South Africa (1).

No Romanian Roma people were identified for participation in this research. While there was one individual who fitted the study criteria and was interested in being interviewed, he subsequently became unavailable for health reasons. Consultations with the Roma community and Pavee Point indicated that Romanian Roma people experiencing housing exclusion primarily stay in overcrowded accommodation provided by extended family members and those in their social networks, rather than use emergency homeless accommodation or sleep rough. For this reason, some individuals that were identified did not fit the criteria for this research.

The interview process included one meeting with research participants, which lasted approximately one hour. Information gathered in the interviews included profile data and biographical data, and the interviewees were asked to recount their experiences from arrival in Ireland to date. A copy of the interview schedule is included in Appendix 2.

Most of the interviews were conducted in the first language of the interviewee⁴ and were recorded, with the agreement of the interviewee. The peer researchers

⁴ Ten interviews were undertaken in Latvian and Polish. All other interviews were undertaken in English.

voluntarily translated the interviews into English (if required), which were then transcribed verbatim from the recordings.

Interviewees were offered a €20 voucher by way of contribution towards their expenses and time for taking part in the interview.

1.3.5 Wider consultations

As part of the study, homeless organisations in the voluntary and statutory sector were consulted about their experiences of working with migrants in Dublin who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

As mentioned above, during the recruitment process a total of twenty-one organisations were contacted to establish whether their customer base included homeless migrants from the study's selected nationalities, and if so, whether any of their service-users might be interested in taking part in the project.

A further nine organisations (statutory and voluntary homeless and information services) were consulted with regard to their specific experiences working with homeless migrants.

1.3.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations were a priority throughout the research process, which was informed by the following principles:

- Provision of clear information about the research
- Assurance of confidentiality
- Preventing disclosure of identities
- Voluntary participation
- Attaining informed consent
- Avoiding undue intrusion
- Ensuring no harm arises to those researched
- Ability to withdraw from the research process at any time
- Protecting the interests of research subjects

The data-gathering, analysis and reporting processes ensured confidentiality and anonymity to research participants and stakeholders consulted as part of the study. In order to ensure confidentiality, only the interviewers and research team had access to the audio files and transcripts. None of the recordings included the names of the individuals who were interviewed. All transcripts were encrypted (password protected).

1.3.7 Analysis of data

The analysis of the interview data was undertaken using the 'grounded theory' method of qualitative research.

'Grounded theory' is a qualitative research approach that was developed in the 1960s. It aims to generate theory that is 'grounded' in the data that is gathered and analysed in the research process. It has become the most widely used framework for analysing qualitative data⁵.

The research starts with the raising of generative questions which help to guide the research, but are not intended to be static or confining. As the researcher begins to gather data, core theoretical concepts are identified. Tentative linkages are developed between the theoretical core concepts and the data. The researcher then becomes engaged in verification and summary⁶.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), data collection, analysis, and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another in grounded theory⁷. The data collection and analysis process occur at the same time⁸.

The chronology of activities in grounded theory can involve the following:

- The researcher begins with a general research question.
- Relevant people are sampled.
- Relevant data is 'coded'. Coding involves reading and re-reading of transcripts and grouping data according to themes that emerge. Labels and names are given to parts that seem to be of significance and to be relevant to the areas under study.
- There is a constant movement backwards and forwards between the above stages.
- Categories are 'saturated' during the coding process, which means that the process continues until no new information or properties seem to emerge in the coding stage.

Once initial findings were identified in this research, a meeting was held with the peer researchers to generate feedback and discussion to test the validity and reliability of the analysis, and also to discuss as a group the research findings and themes.

1.3.8 Case studies

Brief case studies were developed based on each interviewee's experience. Any details that could identify or disclose the identity of the interviewee have been removed or changed. This included removing the identification of the country of origin in some cases, arising from the small number of people from certain countries in Ireland who are accessing homeless services.

⁵ Bryman. A. (2001): *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

⁶ Source: Research Methods Knowledge Base website:

<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/qualapp.php> (Accessed on 9th November 2011)

⁷ Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998): *12 Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. California: Sage

⁸ Bryman. A. (2001): *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

1.3.9 *Limitations of study*

Qualitative research provides many benefits when exploring complex issues such as homelessness. It provides a depth of understanding and insight which can be hard to achieve in quantitative research. Qualitative research establishes greater equality between the researcher and the research participants, and provides participants with the scope to discuss issues and themes relevant to their personal experiences. Quantitative research tends to be more prescriptive in its scope.

However, qualitative research often raises issues of representativeness. This research is a small-scale qualitative study with a small number of people. While those interviewed may comprise a relatively significant proportion of homeless migrants in Dublin, the small participant numbers limit their capacity to be representative of the population, not least because it is not a homogenous group.

Moreover, the data was collected through single in-depth interviews, each lasting approximately one hour in duration. This short timescale limits the capacity of the research to capture the full range of issues and experiences of the interviewees. Multiple interviews with each participant would have been preferable, particularly where sensitive issues can arise in a research context.

It is proposed that a larger-scale piece of research with a wider cohort including those at risk of homelessness, those currently homeless, and those who have moved out of homelessness would capture a broader range of experiences and would assist in identifying further interventions to establish pathways out of homelessness. Comparative analysis with interventions undertaken across other jurisdictions, including other EU countries, could also add to the body of knowledge on this issue.

For these reasons, the conclusions reached in this research do not purport to represent the full range of experiences of homeless migrants in Dublin. Nonetheless, they do provide insight into the personal experiences and pathways of individuals interviewed, and the research does identify themes and patterns that emerge in the process, many of which reflect previous studies on the issue.

2. Migration and Homelessness

2.1 Migration in the European Union

The right to free movement of workers is a fundamental principle of the EU, as enshrined in Article 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU and developed by secondary legislation and the Case Law of the Court of Justice. Many EU citizens have availed of their right to move freely between EU member states and are entitled to:

- Look for work in another EU country,
- Access employment without needing a work permit,
- Reside in the country for the purpose of work,
- Remain in the country even after employment has finished, and
- Equal access to employment, working conditions and all other social and tax advantages⁹.

A Eurostat publication on population and social conditions noted that on 1st January 2009, 6.4% of the total EU population of 31.9 million people were foreign nationals (i.e. persons who are not citizens of their country of residence) living on the territory of EU member states. More than one-third (i.e. 11.9 million) were citizens of another EU member state¹⁰.

Foreign nationals residing in Germany, Spain, the UK, France and Italy represented more than 75% of the total EU foreign population in 2009. The EU member state with the highest proportion of foreign nationals (43.5% of usually resident population) was Luxembourg. Other EU countries with 10% or more of their population being foreign nationals in 2009 included Latvia, Estonia, Cyprus, Spain, Ireland and Austria, as well as one of the EFTA (European Free Trade Association) countries, Switzerland.

With the exception of Luxembourg, Ireland, Belgium, Cyprus, Slovakia and Hungary, the majority of foreign nationals in 2009 were citizens of a non-EU country. In these six countries, most foreign nationals residing in these countries were from another EU member state. In Ireland in 2009, foreign nationals accounted for 11.3% of the total population - 8.2% were citizens of another EU member state and 3.1% were citizens from a non-EU country.

2.2 Irish migration trends

Trends in outward migration as a result of specific historical and economic issues are well documented in Ireland. The recently published *Census of Population*

⁹ Source: European Commission website
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=457&langId=en>

¹⁰ Vasileva, K. (2010): *Eurostat Statistics in Focus 45/2010: Population and Social Conditions*. European Union

2011 Preliminary Results summarises the changes in net outward migration during the last half-century.

The natural increase of the population has been steady in Ireland over the last fifty years; however, changes in net migration have affected overall population growth. Ireland experienced a period of strong outward migration during the 1950s, with net migration remaining negative throughout the 1960s. Although net inward migration occurred briefly for the first time in the 1970s, the trend reverted to net outward migration again in the 1980s.

The findings of the 1996 Census marked the beginning of a modern period of net immigration¹¹.

The turnaround began in the 1991–1996 inter-censal period, with small positive inflows leading up to the peak net inward migration period of 2002 to 2006 when derived net inward migration measured 191,000 for the four year period (or 47,800 on annual average basis). It has now fallen back again for this inter-censal period to 118,650 or an annual average of 23,730¹².

The preliminary results from Census 2011 show that Ireland experienced a return to outward migration in 2009 and 2010.

Although Ireland experienced a twelve-year period of inward migration, many of those migrating to Ireland were returning Irish citizens. Nearly 55% of estimated immigration in 1999 was Irish emigrants, compared to just over 20% in 2006¹³. It should be noted that outward Irish migration has also continued in the last decade. Based on EU figures, it is estimated that 10.5% (or 424,253) of all Irish nationals living in the EU in 2010 were residing in countries other than Ireland, compared to just 2.8% for Polish nationals.

Of those that stated their nationality in Census 2006, 419,733 (or 10.2%) were foreign citizens.

¹¹ Mac Einri, P. and White, A. (2008): 'Immigration into the Republic of Ireland: a bibliography of recent research.' Article in *Irish Geography*, Vol. 41, No. 2, p. 151-179. London: Routledge

¹² *Census of Population 2011 Preliminary Results* (2011). Dublin: Central Statistics Office, p. 13

¹³ Duffy, D. (2007): *The Housing Tenure of Immigrants in Ireland: Some Preliminary Analysis*. Working Paper No. 188, ESRI

Nationality	Count	% of total
Irish	3,706,683	88.8%
UK	112,548	2.7%
Rest of EU	163,227	3.9%
Rest of Europe	24,425	0.6%
Africa	35,326	0.8%
Asia	46,952	1.1%
America	21,124	0.5%
Other nationalities	16,131	0.4%
Not stated	45,597	1.1%
Total	4,172,013	100.0%

Edgar et al. in *Immigration and Homelessness in Europe* (2004) argue that there is a need for migration of workers across the EU as age structures in developed nations are becoming increasingly uneven and there is a need for labour as economies grow. Although Ireland has a much younger population than the EU average¹⁵, there was a requirement for migrant labour during the 'Celtic Tiger' years. Barrett et al. (2005) note that improvements in competitiveness in Ireland through migration during the period 1999–2003 led to increased output, employment and productivity. They found that GNP was between 2.8 and 3.0 percent higher than it would have been in the absence of immigration¹⁶.

Irish demographics and migration, while not exceptional in the EU, do differ from the typical experience of other EU-15¹⁷ countries. In the context of this research, the most significant difference is the relatively high percentage of the total population that is of foreign origin (of which most are nationals from other EU member states).

2.3 Immigration policy in Ireland

Irish immigration policy has been described as 'piecemeal'¹⁸. An impact analysis conducted by the Department of Justice states that the Aliens Act 1935 has been the foundation of immigration law in Ireland to date, and acknowledges that:

¹⁴ Source: Central Statistics Office (2007): *Census 2006 Principal Demographic Results*. Dublin: Stationery Office

¹⁵ In 2009 half of the population of the EU-27 countries were 40.6 years old or more. The Irish median age was the lowest at 33.9 years, in comparison with 43.7 years in Germany (country with the highest median age). [Source: Vasileva, K. (2010): *Eurostat Statistics in Focus 45/2010: Population and Social Conditions*. European Union]

¹⁶ Barrett, A., Bergin, A. and Duffy, D. (2005): *The labour market characteristics and labour market impacts of immigrants in Ireland*. Discussion Paper Series 1553, Germany: Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA)

¹⁷ EU-15 is made up of the six founding countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands); Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom (who joined in 1973); Greece (1981); Portugal and Spain (1986); and Austria, Finland and Sweden (1995).

¹⁸ International Organisation for Migration (2006): *Managing migration in Ireland: a social and economic analysis*. Dublin: National Economic and Social Council, p. 3

Recent legislation has gone some way towards modernising certain aspects of immigration law, but these have of necessity been stop-gap measures generally¹⁹.

The focus of immigration policy in Ireland in the last decade has been on the asylum and work permit systems. Increasing numbers of asylum seekers sought refuge in Ireland in the 1990s, and the country's growing economy attracted migrant labour. The Irish Government has been examining the legislative and policy framework governing immigration and residence in Ireland, including long-term residence. The draft Immigration, Residence and Protection Bills (2007, 2008 and 2010) did not include provisions in relation to Irish citizenship or naturalisation; however, the Government has indicated that a review of current citizenship and naturalisation provisions will be undertaken by the Office of the Minister for Integration. The draft legislation is currently pending at Committee Stage in the legislation process²⁰.

The Law Reform Commission has indicated that it will undertake a review of citizenship procedures during the Third Programme for Law Reform (2008–2014), which will focus on the extent to which Ireland's citizenship procedures are consistent with international law and best practice²¹.

The ad hoc development of Government policy in this area has resulted in the establishment of a number of voluntary migrant organisations in Ireland, such as: the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI), Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, New Communities Partnership, the Integration Centre, Irish Refugee Council, Crosscare Migrant Project, International Organisation for Migration (IOM Ireland), and AkiDWA (the African and Migrant Women Network and Africa Centre).

The largest group of migrants that have entered the State, other than returning Irish, is migrants from other EU member states (particularly since 2004). The 2006 Census showed that 66% of migrants resident in Ireland were from other EU countries.

With the accession of ten new member states into the EU in 2004, Ireland (along with Britain and Sweden) opened up its labour market to citizens. EU legislation governs the free movement of workers²², their access to social benefits²³ and their entitlement to the same social and tax advantages²⁴.

In 2004, the Government decided to introduce a form of regulation of EU immigration through a requirement that migrants demonstrate that they are

¹⁹ *Scheme of Immigration and Residence Bill: Screening Regulatory Impact Analysis*. Department of Justice, p. 1

²⁰ Cosgrave, C. (2011): *Living in Limbo: Migrants' Experiences of Applying for Naturalisation in Ireland*. Dublin: Immigrant Council of Ireland

²¹ Law Reform Commission (2007): *Third Programme of Law Reform 2008-2014*. LRC 86-2007. Dublin: Law Reform Commission

²² Directive 2004/38/EC transposed into Irish law through Statutory Instrument 656 of 2006.

²³ Regulation 883/2004

²⁴ Regulation 1612/68

'habitually resident' in Ireland before they can access welfare services. This policy is known as the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC).

2.3.1 Habitual Residence Condition and the 'Right to Reside'

When the Habitual Residence Condition was introduced in 2004, the Minister for Social Welfare outlined to the Dáil that the HRC was to 'safeguard our social welfare system from abuse'.

Section 246(4) of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005 incorporated into Irish law five factors that have been set down in judgments given by the European Court of Justice as relevant to determining whether a person is 'habitually resident' in Ireland (i.e. meeting the requirements of the Habitual Residence Condition). These five factors are:

1. Length and continuity of residence in Ireland or in any other particular country
2. Length and purpose of any absence from Ireland
3. Nature and pattern of employment
4. Applicant's main centre of interest
5. Future intentions of applicant

According to *Habitual Residence Condition – Guidelines for Deciding Officers on the determination of Habitual Residence* issued by the Department of Social Protection in June 2011, the term 'habitually resident' is not defined in Irish law but conveys a degree of permanence - i.e. that a person has been in Ireland for some time, from a date in the past, and is intending to stay for a period into the foreseeable future.

According to Section 246(1) of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005:

For the purpose of each provision of this Act specified in subsection (3), it shall be presumed, until the contrary is shown, that a person is not habitually resident in the State at the date of the making of the application concerned unless the person has been present in the State or any other part of the Common Travel Area for a continuous period of 2 years ending on that date.

However, according to *Habitual Residence Condition – Guidelines for Deciding Officers on the determination of Habitual Residence*:

A person does not necessarily satisfy the HRC merely because they have lived here for 2 years immediately preceding a claim. Also, a person is not necessarily disallowed on habitual residence grounds because they have NOT lived here for 2 years immediately preceding a claim. The HRC is a complex condition and the length and

continuity of residence in the State immediately prior to a claim is only ONE aspect of the condition²⁵.

The question of whether a person satisfies the requirement to be habitually resident in the State is one for determination by a statutorily appointed deciding officer or, in the case of Supplementary Welfare Allowance, a determining officer of the Health Service Executive who is duly authorised to determine entitlement.

The Habitual Residence Condition has gained significant media coverage recently as it has also impacted on the social welfare entitlements of a number of returning Irish-born migrants.

Where an applicant is not satisfied with the decision of a deciding officer s/he has the right of review and/or the right of appeal...An applicant can appeal a decision directly to the independent Social Welfare Appeals Office if s/he so wishes or to the Health Service Executive in the case of a Supplementary Welfare Allowance appeal. If the applicant seeks a review of the deciding officer's decision or the determination of a duly authorised officer of the Health Service Executive in addition to or as an alternative to an appeal, the deciding officer or determining officer should consider any new or additional evidence provided and decide whether a revised decision/determination in favour of the applicant is warranted²⁶.

An additional provision, the 'right to reside' test, was added in 2009. A person must have a 'right to reside' before it can be determined if they are habitually resident.

The 'right to reside' clause was introduced through Article 15 of the Social Welfare and Pensions (No. 2) Act 2009.

Residence, for the purpose of the habitual residence condition, means residence in accordance with a legal right to reside, not mere presence only. Subsection (5) explicitly states that a person who does not have a right to reside in the State cannot be habitually resident for social welfare purposes²⁷.

The introduction of the 'right to reside' test has led to a change in circumstances particularly for European Economic Area (EEA) nationals (other than UK and other EEA nationals coming from the UK under the common travel area agreement) seeking social welfare payments in Ireland.

Prior to the introduction of this clause, all EEA nationals could apply for social protection and be considered under the five factors of the HRC. However, the

²⁵ Department of Social Protection (2011): *Habitual Residence Condition – Guidelines for Deciding Officers on the determination of Habitual Residence*, Dublin: Department of Social Protection

²⁶ Department of Social Protection (2011): *Habitual Residence Condition - Guidelines for Deciding Officers on the determination of Habitual Residence*, Dublin: Department of Social Protection

²⁷ Department of Social Protection (2011): *Habitual Residence Condition - Guidelines for Deciding Officers on the determination of Habitual Residence*, Dublin: Department of Social Protection

current guidelines set out that there are circumstances where EEA nationals do not have a right to reside. These include:

1. Those who do not have sufficient means to support themselves, their spouse/civil partner and any dependents, **and**
2. Are not students (with comprehensive sickness insurance) enrolled in an educational establishment, **and**
3. Who
 - have not been employed or self-employed in Ireland, **or**
 - have been employed in Ireland for more than a year **and** are now unemployed but have not registered with the Department of Social Protection or FÁS as a jobseeker, **or**
 - have been employed in Ireland for less than a year and have been unemployed for more than 6 consecutive months, **or** who have not registered with the Department of Social Protection or FÁS as a jobseeker.

The European Commission issued a Reasoned Opinion to the UK Government in September 2011 regarding the application of their 'right to reside' test for certain social welfare payments under UK legislation. The UK Government has two months to inform the Commission of measures it has taken to ensure that its legislation complies with EU law, otherwise the Commission may refer this matter to the European Court of Justice. The Department of Social Protection in Ireland is aware of this matter and the Minister for Social Protection has stated that:

It has recently come to light that at European level there are different interpretations of these two legal instruments [Regulation 883/2004 and Directive 2004/38]. At the formal Council of Ministers for Employment and Social Affairs last June, no fewer than thirteen delegations expressed their view that more discussion was needed in this area, and called on all Member States and the Commission to continue to look into this area as a matter of priority, with a view to considering amendments to the current legislative framework, should these be deemed necessary²⁸.

2.3.2 Migrant access to social welfare

The 'right to reside' clause and habitual residency are significant issues facing migrants who find themselves homeless or at risk of homelessness when they seek to access social welfare payments. The application of these rules is affected by the routes through which foreign nationals enter the State.

Undocumented migrants

One of the most vulnerable groups of migrants is those living in Ireland without documentation. The Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, in a 2010 policy paper,

²⁸ Written Reply from the Minister for Social Protection to Parliamentary Question No. 177, Ref. No. 32011/11

estimates that there are 30,000 undocumented migrants in Ireland²⁹. The Immigrant Council of Ireland highlights that there are a number of reasons why people can become undocumented, including workplace exploitation, victims of domestic violence or trafficking, and failed asylum seekers who cannot be removed from the State, e.g. stateless persons³⁰. Many migrants will have entered the country legally but become undocumented. A Crosscare Migrant Project report (2009) highlighted that people can become undocumented due to structural issues within the immigration system itself³¹.

Edgar et al. (2004) highlight that homelessness among undocumented migrants can be hidden. This might be due to a lack of access to services and a reliance on the support of migrant communities and friends. For those who are undocumented, access to social welfare payments (other than an emergency needs payment from a Community Welfare Office) is not an option.

Asylum seekers

For those migrants that are in the asylum process, there is a 'direct provision' system where food, accommodation and a small stipend is provided. Asylum seekers in direct provision receive a weekly allowance of €19.10 and are not legally entitled to work. A recent Free Legal Advice Centre (FLAC) report (2009) has outlined many of the issues that arise from this system. One of the issues that is of particular relevance to this study is the 'house rules' that allow for the exclusion of residents. FLAC notes that this 'has resulted in a number of asylum seekers becoming homeless'³², and due to the Habitual Residence Condition they have no access to mainstream payments or services.

Leave to remain

Leave to remain is a specific type of permission to reside in Ireland. Usually it pertains to people who have been through the asylum process but have been found not to meet the criteria set out in the Geneva Convention; however, they have been able to show that there are humanitarian reasons why they should not be returned to their country of origin. A number of foreign nationals have also been granted leave to remain as parents of Irish citizen children. Department guidelines set out that a person granted leave to remain may be treated as habitually resident from that point and therefore, subject to meeting the other relevant qualifying criteria, may receive a social welfare payment.

However, recent leave to remain guidelines have set out that a person must not become a 'burden on the State'. Department guidelines in this area state that if a claim for a jobseeker's payment or basic supplementary welfare allowance is received from a person with such a conditional leave to remain, the deciding officer should contact the Department of Justice to ascertain if the person would invalidate their leave to remain by receiving such a payment.

²⁹ Migrants Rights Centre Ireland (2010): *Regularisation of undocumented migrants*. Policy Paper 2010. Dublin: Migrants Rights Centre Ireland

³⁰ <http://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/campaigns/undocumented-migrants> (Accessed on 9th November 2011)

³¹ Crosscare (2009): *Invisible Pathways: A critique of the Irish immigration system and how it can contribute to people becoming undocumented*. Dublin: Crosscare

³² FLAC (2009): *One Size Doesn't Fit All: A legal analysis of the direct provision and dispersal system 10 years on*. Dublin: FLAC, p. 93

Accessing social welfare payments can be seen to influence a leave to remain decision; in order to qualify, migrants need to prove that they can financially support themselves. Many migrants do not access welfare payments whilst waiting on a leave to remain decision.

Stamps

Permission to remain in Ireland for non-EU nationals is granted by the Department of Justice and Equality and consists of a stamp endorsed on a person's passport that allows extended periods of residence in Ireland. There are six stamps outlined in detail but only 1–4 are used by An Garda Síochána. These stamps are relevant to non-EU migrants coming to Ireland to work, study or to join family members already resident in Ireland. In most cases, those migrants who are legally here can be considered under the five Habitual Residence Condition factors.

2.4 Homeless policy in Ireland

2.4.1 Definition of homelessness

The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 provides the legal definition of homelessness in Ireland. A 'homeless person' is defined in the Act as a person who is regarded by a housing authority as being homeless within the meaning of Section 2 of the Housing Act of 1988. Under Section 2 a person is to be regarded as homeless 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.

In 2005, FEANTSA developed ETHOS as a means of improving the understanding and measurement of homelessness in Europe, and to provide a common 'language' for transnational exchange on homelessness. ETHOS is a 'home'-based definition that uses the physical, social and legal domains to create a broad typology of homelessness and housing exclusion. ETHOS classifies homeless people according to their living situation:

- Rooflessness – without a shelter of any kind, sleeping rough
- Houselessness – with a place to sleep but temporary, in institutions or shelter
- Living in insecure housing – threatened with severe exclusion due to insecure tenancies, eviction, domestic violence
- Living in inadequate housing – in caravans on illegal campsites, in unfit housing, in extreme overcrowding

Many NGOs that work with homeless people in Ireland believe that the ETHOS typology provides a more inclusive and broad definition of homelessness and housing exclusion. The Dublin Region Homeless Executive has adopted this typology as a way of understanding the continuum of housing need that helps ensure awareness of groups that might be at risk of homelessness, and uses ETHOS in parallel with the legal definition of homelessness to better understand housing exclusion as a dynamic that can lead to homelessness.

Under the 'Roofless' and 'Houseless' conceptual categories of ETHOS, those who are living rough and residing in emergency accommodation/hostels are identified (see Appendix 1 for the full ETHOS typology).

Conceptual Category	Operational Category		Living Situation		Generic Definition
ROOFLESS	1	People living rough	1.1	Public space or external space	Living in the streets or public spaces, without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters
	2	People in emergency accommodation	2.1	Night shelter	People with no usual place of residence who make use of overnight shelter, low threshold shelter
HOUSELESS	3	People in accommodation for the homeless	3.1 3.2	Homeless hostel Temporary accommodation	Where the period of stay is intended to be short-term

2.4.2 Government strategy to end homelessness

The Way Home: A National Strategy to Address Adult Homelessness 2008–2013 was launched in 2008 and states that:

From 2010, long-term homelessness (i.e. the occupation of emergency accommodation for longer than 6 months) and the need for people to sleep rough will be eliminated throughout Ireland. The risk of a person becoming homeless will be minimised through effective preventative policies and services. When it does occur homelessness will be short-term and people who are homeless will be assisted into appropriate long-term housing³³.

The Strategy has six aims, including: to eliminate the need to sleep rough, to eliminate long-term homelessness, and to reduce the length of time people spend being homeless. The Strategy acknowledges that significant progress has been made in recent years in reducing the incidence of rough sleeping in Ireland through the development of temporary accommodation targeting the specific needs of couples, street drinkers and drug users; however, 'vigilance is necessary to ensure that emergency and long-term responses to homelessness

³³ Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2008): *The Way Home: A Strategy to Address Adult Homelessness in Ireland 2008-2013*. Dublin: Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, p.7

are adequate to meet emerging needs and to ensure that no one needs to sleep rough³⁴.

The Strategy states that the elimination of long-term homelessness will be achieved through the adequate supply of long-term housing to address current and projected needs, adequate community support services for households at risk of homelessness, accessible mental health and addiction services, and effective interventions by homeless services. The Government also outlined its commitment to eliminate long-term homelessness by the end of 2010 in *Towards 2016: Ten-Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006–2015*.

As the Government did not meet its objective to end long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough by the end of 2010, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Focus Ireland and Threshold have called on the Government to set a new target date of 2013 to meet this objective. These three housing and homeless NGOs state that the delivery of housing will be crucial to the Government successfully meeting this target.

Pathway to Home (2009) sets out a comprehensive implementation plan to meet the target of ending long-term homelessness and the need to sleep rough, and to implement national homeless policy. The *Pathway to Home* model of homeless and housing support provision has three elements to its structure to ensure the sought-after customer outcome:

- Interventions and services that prevent homelessness
- Temporary accommodation and homeless services
- Housing with supports

The objectives of the *Pathway to Home* model are outlined below:

- Through the provision of effective early interventions and assistance that divert a person or household from homelessness, the *Pathway to Home* model will work to prevent homelessness (as set out in the ETHOS typology) from occurring.
- Where homelessness does occur, the *Pathway to Home* model will ensure a person's progression towards an exit from homelessness via temporary accommodation into a long-term housing option.
- Therein a person resides as a tenant with a tenancy agreement, either with visiting housing-related support services as required or on-site housing-related support services.
- The person is thereby supported and empowered to live independently and successfully as a full participant in the community and in society³⁵.

The implementation of the new model of service delivery under *Pathway to Home* involves a re-configuration of homeless services in Dublin. The model is

³⁴ Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2008): *The Way Home: A Strategy to Address Adult Homelessness in Ireland 2008-2013*. Dublin: Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, p.8

³⁵ Homeless Agency (2009): *Pathway to Home: On implementing the National Homeless Strategy, The Way Home 2008–2013 and realising the 2010 Vision of the Homeless Agency Partnership's action plan on homelessness in Dublin, A Key to the Door 2007–2010*. Dublin: Homeless Agency, p. 24

made up of a portfolio of housing and temporary accommodation types and services configured to ensure person-centred outcomes, including:

- A 24-hour free-phone homeless helpline providing information and advice to individuals and service providers, as well as (on an out-of-office-hours basis) initial contact and placement into temporary accommodation for persons experiencing homelessness.
- A Centralised Placement Service (CPS) operated by the Local Authority Housing Service, which manages, co-ordinates, and monitors access and take-up of all forms of temporary accommodation using a unified management system.
- Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA), which is a specialised form of accommodation for persons with needs requiring a specialist form of support.
- A Housing Support Service, which is an on-site housing support service that includes Visiting Housing Support Services.

One of the key priorities of *Pathway to Home* is to reduce the number of temporary emergency beds in Dublin in line with national and local government policy to provide for a significant increase in suitable long-term tenancies. On 31st March 2011 Cedar House, a fifty-bed emergency homeless shelter operated by the Salvation Army, officially closed. The Dublin Region Homeless Executive states that the level of capacity in all emergency accommodation services in Dublin is being monitored on a daily basis, and it has committed to ensuring that there is appropriate and suitable alternative accommodation in place before any facility (such as Cedar House) is decommissioned. However, it acknowledges that there have been delays in securing long-term tenancies as part of the *Pathway to Home* housing targets. The target to deliver 1,000 tenancies in 2009 and 1,200 in 2010 were not met – only 729 long-term tenancies in 2009 and 488 in 2010 were secured, representing a shortfall of 983 tenancies.

Another key objective of *Pathway to Home* is to provide 24-hour supported temporary accommodation for people who are experiencing homelessness, rather than emergency accommodation on a nightly basis. In September 2011, the Dublin Region Homeless Executive implemented changes in homeless service provision in Dublin to provide greater stability for individuals who are experiencing homelessness and are accessing temporary accommodation on a one-night-only basis. Persons who are experiencing homelessness and accessing emergency accommodation through the free-phone number will now be placed in temporary accommodation for an initial period of up to seven days and the provision of accommodation on a one-night only basis will be reduced. Those who are *not* compliant with the HRC will be provided with an emergency response/temporary accommodation on a one-night basis and *may* be provided with temporary accommodation for up to seven nights. They will be required to present to the New Communities Unit so that their eligibility for long-term accommodation options can be assessed.

This change [in homeless service provision] is being made to create greater capacity for key working and care planning, by way of reducing the experience of 'churning' and repeat placements into and between temporary accommodation

service providers. Individuals will be assessed and the most appropriate responses to his/her needs will be put in place³⁶.

2.5 Migrant homelessness in Dublin

'Immigrants' are not a homogenous group and their residency situation and experiences may have a significant impact on the reasons for entering homelessness and the prospects for exiting homelessness.

A number of research studies in Ireland have evidenced the risk of homelessness for migrants.

Research commissioned by the Homeless Agency, *Away From Home and Homeless: Quantification and profile of EU-10 Nationals using homeless services and recommendations to address their needs* (2006), found that a small but growing number of migrants from the new EU member states were experiencing homelessness in Dublin and availing of food and information services for the homeless. Many were homeless due to income and work-related issues, including exploitative work situations, poor information on work opportunities, and the high cost of living in Dublin. 96% of the 49 respondents stated that being unable to find employment, the loss of employment or a lack of money were the primary reasons for their homelessness. The study also found that the Habitual Residence Condition was causing hardship to a small number of people in Ireland from the EU-10 States. These difficulties were manifested in a number of people from these countries sleeping rough and using food centres.

The study *EU-10 people using homeless services: Who are they?* (2008) was also commissioned by the Homeless Agency and was completed by Merchants Quay Ireland. This study involved a count of EU-10 citizens using homeless services in Dublin over seven consecutive days in December 2006, and a survey of 170 EU-10 nationals accessing homeless services. The research found that a total of 283 people from the EU-10 countries were using homeless services (including food and day services) during the week of the count. Of the 170 survey respondents, 65% were Polish, 10% were Lithuanian and 9% were from the Czech Republic. The majority of respondents (83%) were male, and the majority of these were aged 26-39 years (55%).

The research examined the housing status, language skills, work status, service use and service needs of the respondents. O'Sullivan (2008) found that the housing status of those accessing services varied: 44% of the 170 people surveyed were considered homeless under the Housing Act 1988 legislative definition of homelessness. Using a broader definition of homelessness (i.e. ETHOS typology) that takes into account inappropriate and insecure accommodation, a total of 76% of the respondents could be defined as homeless.

³⁶ *Changes in homeless service provision in Dublin*. Notification by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive, 9th September 2011

13% of the respondents were in receipt of State benefits; however, 10% did not have any source of income. The Habitual Residence Condition was found to be a significant issue, with a 'pattern of rejection for state benefits' emerging³⁷. Other key issues identified in the study were the significant number of respondents working without a Personal Public Service Number (26%) and an overall lack of knowledge of the Irish welfare and taxation systems.

Focus Ireland and the ICI's study, *Making a Home in Ireland* (2009), recommended that no person should be denied access to emergency homeless services on the grounds of HRC non-compliance. Since February 2009 (on the initiative of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government), a special Cold Weather Shelter has opened during the winter months in Dublin to respond to the fact that a number of homeless people are either not availing of, or being turned away from, existing emergency shelters. During the periods the shelter has been open, the majority of service-users have been foreign nationals. The responses of statutory bodies and emergency accommodation providers to migrants who are presenting as homeless have developed over the last number of years, through changes in the Habitual Residence Condition rules, better understanding of these rules, and the decision of some services to provide accommodation for those who are not HRC compliant.

Poor housing quality and living conditions are also key determinants in a foreign national's experience in Ireland. Many migrants are living in privately rented accommodation, which can be overcrowded, tied to employment, lacking in space, inadequate (e.g. damp), and insecure. *Making a Home in Ireland* found that migrants living on rent allowance experienced significant problems in finding suitable and good quality accommodation. Legal status can also influence a migrant's access to good quality housing: being undocumented can mean that there is no possibility to complain about poor housing conditions. Threshold identified that, in 2006, 15% of its clients did not have English as their first language and that a substantial number had experienced problems with overcrowding and the non-return of rent deposits³⁸.

Edgar et al. (2004) found that throughout Europe, undocumented migrants form the majority of users of homeless services, of whom many only have access to emergency accommodation and basic support services and have poor access to integration/resettlement and supported housing.

The Homeless Agency recently commissioned O'Sullivan (2010) to conduct a scoping enquiry of migration and homelessness in the Dublin area, based on consultations with service providers (twenty interviews in total). This study focused on understanding the experience of homelessness among migrants by scoping the service use and access needs of homeless migrants, and identifying the resource needs of homeless services in Dublin.

The study found that services were beginning to see a range of emerging mental health and addiction issues that suggest that 'some migrants are beginning to

³⁷ O'Sullivan, K. (2008): 'EU-10 people using homeless services: Who are they?' Article in *CornerStone* magazine, Issue 34, April 2008. Dublin: Homeless Agency, p. 12

³⁸ Jordan, B. (2006): 'Mind Your Language!' Article in *CornerStone* magazine, Issue 27, June 2006. Dublin: Homeless Agency

display similar issues to the indigenous homeless population³⁹. This change in the range of issues that migrants are presenting with to homeless services could be connected to the hardship that some migrants are experiencing in Ireland.

Some of the barriers to service provision identified by those interviewed included: difficulties in identifying migrants' needs due to language barriers, and difficulties in accessing up-to-date, clear and consistent information about migrants' rights and entitlements. Some of the indirect barriers to migrants accessing homeless accommodation services included: difficulties in navigating the social welfare system, gaps in their employment records, communication difficulties with social welfare offices, delays in processing applications, and difficulties due to the irregular legal status of some migrants. The study concluded that the HRC-related conditions of access to homeless emergency accommodation services means that there is a particular group of vulnerable migrants who are experiencing hardship in Ireland and have no support options available to them.

2.5.1 Profile of homeless migrants in Dublin

It is important in the context of this study to understand the proportion and profile of migrants experiencing homelessness in Dublin.

We need to better understand the profile of people who remain sleeping rough, as there is an increase in the number of people from outside the EU. We need to ensure their needs are met⁴⁰.

This section of the report presents available data on homeless migrants in Dublin based on various surveys/counts and homeless organisation service-user data.

Counted In survey

The Homeless Agency conducted four surveys on the number of persons in contact with a homeless service and/or registered with a local authority in Dublin (*Counted In*) during one week in 1999, 2002, 2005 and 2008. Questions relating to country of birth and length of residency in Ireland were included in *Counted In* for the first time in 2002.

In 2002, 8% of single people in *Counted In* reported being born outside of Ireland. 66% of these reported being born in Britain, and 54% reported living in Ireland for more than three years. 13% of parents with children reported being born outside of Ireland (n=80) and 8% (n=10) of couple-only households were not born in Ireland⁴¹.

In *Counted In 2005*, 85 single people (8%) reported foreign citizenship (60 EU and 25 non-EU citizens). However, it should be noted that 24% of respondents did not answer this question. Out of 220 households with child dependants

³⁹ O'Sullivan, K. (2010): *Migration and Homelessness in Dublin: A scoping enquiry*. Dublin, Homeless Agency (unpublished)

⁴⁰ Cathal Morgan, Director of the Homeless Agency, *The Irish Times*, 15th December 2009

⁴¹ Williams, J. and Gorby, S. (2002): *Counted In 2002: The report of the assessment of homelessness in Dublin*. Dublin: Homeless Agency

surveyed, 2 households reported EU citizenship and 6 reported non-EU citizenship. Of the 95 couple-only households, 3 reported EU citizenship and 3 non-EU citizenship⁴².

In *Counted In 2008*, 16% of service-users accessing homeless services in Dublin were of foreign nationality. Of this percentage, the majority were EU citizens (10%), especially people from the UK, Poland and Romania. However, a large minority were non-EU citizens (6%). This count represented a significant increase in the number of people of foreign nationality accessing homeless services in Dublin.

Counted In 2008 also found that a total of 110 adults reported sleeping rough (i.e. 5% of the total homeless population surveyed). There was a notable increase in the number and proportion of foreign nationals who reported sleeping rough – from 9% in 2005 to 38% in 2008⁴³. *Counted In 2008* also found that 69% of EU migrants using homeless services were using accommodation services and 31% were using only food/day services (compared to 27% of EU-10 citizens using accommodation services in the Homeless Agency’s EU-10 study in 2006).

Rough sleepers count

While the total number of people sleeping rough in Dublin, as measured by the Rough Sleepers Count, has fallen in recent years, both the proportion and actual number of foreign nationals sleeping rough has increased.

Nationality	Nov-07	Apr-08	Nov-08	Apr-09	Nov-09	Nov -10	Apr-11
Total Irish	46	46	47	30	23	35	30
Total foreign nationals	7	6	21	36	24	17	14
Hungarian	2		1		2		1
Russian	1				4		
Mauritius	1				1		
Romanian	1		5	2	1		
Lithuanian	1			1	1		1
Latvian	1		3	5	1	2	2
Slovakian		2	1	2	1	1	
Turkish		1		1	1		1
Polish		3	8	19	7	6	6
English			1			2	2
Italian			1		1		

⁴² Homeless Agency (2005): *Counted In 2005: A periodic assessment from a week-long survey of people experiencing homelessness in Dublin*. Dublin: Homeless Agency

⁴³ Homeless Agency (2008): *Counted In 2008: A report on the extent of homelessness in Dublin*. Dublin: Homeless Agency

Spanish			1				
Swiss				1			
English born				1			
Indian				1			
Estonia				1			
German				1		1	
Kosovo				1			
Belarus					1		
Chinese					1		
Czech					1		
Bulgarian					1	1	
Chilean					1	1	
Guatemalan					1	1	
Irish-Italian					1		1
'Eastern European'				1		2	
Total Unknown	51	59	33	32	13	18	15
TOTAL	104	111	101	98	60	70	59

The total number of persons observed sleeping rough in Dublin in the Rough Sleepers Count fell from 104 in November 2007 to 59 in April 2011 (this count was conducted on the same night as Census 2011). Across the seven counts, the most frequently arising nationalities (other than Irish) were Polish, Latvian, Romanian, Slovakian, Hungarian, Russian and English.

There have been substantive changes in the composition of those sleeping rough in Dublin, with an established foreign national population observed rough sleeping since November 2008. The proportion of foreign nationals counted sleeping rough in Dublin increased from 6.7% in November 2007 to 40.0% in November 2009⁴⁴ (during the period when the economic crisis began in Ireland). The number and proportion of foreign nationals observed sleeping rough decreased to 14 individuals or 23.7% in the last count (April 2011).

Homeless organisations' service-user data

There are a range of homeless organisations in Dublin that provide day, food, advice/information and accommodation services to homeless migrants. Data on the number and nationality of service-users accessing some of these services is provided below.

⁴⁴ November 2009 was the first time in the Rough Sleepers Count that Fingal County Council, South Dublin County Council and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council were included in the count.

Extended Day Service:

Following the re-configuration of homeless services in Dublin, and in line with the *Pathway to Home* model, Focus Ireland and Merchants Quay Ireland opened the Extended Day Service in July 2010. This service provides quality and affordable meals, crisis support, and advice/information for people experiencing homelessness, from 4p.m. to 8.30p.m. in Dublin city centre.

Over 1,500 people accessed this service between July 2010 and the end of August 2011, and a significant number of service-users were foreign nationals. The majority of non-Irish service-users accessing this service are from the UK and other EU countries. Between July 2010 and August 2011, over 630 people received advice and information from the Extended Day Service.

The known country of origin (other than Ireland) of people presenting to this service during the month of November 2010 is provided below:

Nationality (non-Irish)	Nov 2010
Polish	51
UK	15
Latvia	11
Romania	6
Lithuania	3
Other EU ⁴⁵	7
African	7
Other Non-EU ⁴⁶	12
TOTAL	112

The majority of foreign nationals accessing this service in November 2010 were using the night bus service (45 individuals), staying in emergency accommodation (43), or sleeping rough (10).

Merchants Quay Ireland's New Communities Support Service

By 2010, more than one-third of all visits to Merchants Quay Ireland services were by foreign nationals living in Ireland (particularly Eastern Europeans). Merchants Quay Ireland's New Communities Support Service provides supports (e.g. advice and information, referral and advocacy services, employment support etc.) to foreign nationals who have become homeless in Ireland.

Between June 2010 and January 2011, the New Community Support Worker provided one-to-one support to 70 service-users. 41% of service-users were

⁴⁵ 'Other EU' includes those from Italy, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary.

⁴⁶ The following nationalities accounted for 10 of the 'Other Non-EU' category: Columbia (2 individuals); Kazakhstan (1); Russia (1); Morocco (1), Mauritius (1), New Zealand (1), United States (1), Mexico (1) and Iraq (1).

from Poland and 30% were from other European countries⁴⁷. The remainder were from other countries, such as Egypt, Japan, Chile and Albania.

Crosscare's Migrant Project and Housing/Welfare Service

Crosscare's Migrant Project provides information and advocacy services to foreign nationals, Irish emigrants and returning emigrants. In 2010, the service had 3,750 contacts with service-users.

The Housing and Welfare Service worked with over 3,500 people (or 4,500 interventions) in 2010, providing information and advocacy services. 56% of service-users were homeless or at risk of homelessness⁴⁸. In 2009 and 2010, the most frequent countries of origin of service-users (from outside of Ireland) who were homeless or at risk of homelessness were: Poland, Romania (many from the Roma community), Lithuania, Slovakia, UK/Northern Ireland and Latvia. The service has also noted that people from Mauritius are presenting, many of whom would have student visas and have fallen into difficulty in Ireland.

Cold Weather Service in Chester House

The cold weather service in Chester House was opened in November 2010 for six months in order to provide emergency accommodation for homeless people who were not availing of, or were being turned away from, existing emergency shelters.

The table below illustrates bed availability and use in Chester House from November 2010 to the end of February 2011, at which time the service changed to a 24-hour service with no referrals (i.e. figures for March and April 2011 on bed availability and use are not reported in the Chester Housing Closing Report).

Month	Beds Available	Beds Used	% Beds Used
November 2010	745	618	83%
December 2010	1,122	1,078	96%
January 2011	1,238	1,091	88%
February 2011	1,120	1,067	95%

70% (or 182 out of 260) of service-users in Chester House were foreign nationals and 98% of these were male. 41% of Irish service-users were female⁴⁹.

Nationality	Service-users	Male	Female
Irish	78 (30%)	46 (59%)	32 (41%)
Foreign national	182 (70%)	179 (98%)	3 (2%)
Total	260 (100%)	225 (87%)	35 (13%)

⁴⁷ Merchants Quay Ireland (2011): *Merchants Quay Ireland Annual Review 2010*. Dublin: Merchants Quay Ireland

⁴⁸ Crosscare (2011): *Crosscare Annual Review 2010*. Dublin: Crosscare

⁴⁹ Stanley, W. (2011): *Chester House Closing Report*. Dublin: Crosscare

Charlemont Street emergency hostel and outreach service

Crosscare Housing and Welfare Information initiated an outreach service into the De Paul Ireland emergency hostel in Charlemont Street at the start of August 2011. This outreach service was part of a project commissioned by Dublin City Council and operated from the start of August to the end of October 2011. The service was initially due to finish at the end of September but was extended for a further four weeks. The main objective of the initiative was to profile clients accessing the emergency hostel and to provide information and advocacy services to establish whether clients may have access to social welfare, housing and other supports.

Charlemont Street emergency hostel opens from 6p.m. to 9.30a.m. daily and has the capacity for fifty residents. Initially the Crosscare outreach service was available in Charlemont Street from 8a.m. to 10a.m. five days per week. Evening clinics commenced at the start of September to facilitate additional access to the service by clients.

During the three months that the outreach service was provided in Charlemont Street, 78 people accessed the service, representing 18 different nationalities. A detailed profiling exercise of 53 of these clients was conducted by Crosscare⁵⁰.

Table 2.6 Profiled clients by nationality (August-October 2011)	
Country of origin	Number
Poland	22
Lithuania	4
Romania	3
Slovakia	5
Mauritius	2
Latvia	3
Hungary	1
Slovenia	2
Portugal	1
Spain	1
Moldova	1
Czech Republic	4
Malaysia	1
USA	2
Mongolian	1
Malaysia	1
Total EU	45

⁵⁰ Crosscare (November 2011): *Crosscare Housing and Welfare Information summary report on service into De Paul Ireland, Charlemont Street*. Dublin: Crosscare

Total Non-EU	8
Total	53

The majority of these clients stated that they had no source of income and had been resident in Ireland for five or more years (22 out of the 53 clients).

2.6 Returning to country of origin

As noted in Section 2.2 above, Ireland is currently experiencing a population trend of outward migration. Although many short-term economic migrants who were residing in Ireland have returned to their countries of origin, mainly due to Ireland's economic downturn, there are many migrants who have chosen to remain in Ireland. Because many foreign nationals work in sectors of the economy that have been affected by severe job losses, it is likely that the consequences of the economic downturn will be particularly harsh on some groups of migrants, which will in turn affect their income and housing situations.

Jesuit Refugee Service Europe believes that as a result of the current financial crisis, many migrants may experience destitution, making it difficult for them to meet even the most basic needs such as housing and food⁵¹. For example, figures released for 2010 show that there were 365 homeless Irish people in London (or 5% of the total homeless figure of 7,500)⁵².

The response of many countries, including Ireland, is dominated by policies encouraging migrants to return to their country of origin. 548 destitute EU citizens were flown back to their country of origin by the Irish Government in 2010⁵³.

The reluctance of some migrants to return, despite the risk of destitution, poverty and homelessness, is important to understand in the context of this research.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in Ireland recently completed a study on the leading factors in voluntary return or remaining in Ireland for asylum seekers and irregular migrants, entitled *Where do I go from here?* (2011). The study concluded that:

The decision to stay in Ireland or return to a country of origin is a dynamic one, influenced by a mixed pallet of structural and personal factors and anchored in the transnational imaginaries of the people who need to make it⁵⁴.

The IOM's study identifies a range of reasons why asylum seekers and irregular migrants choose to stay in Ireland rather than return to their country of origin. A

⁵¹ Jesuit Refugee Service Europe (2007): *Report on Destitute Forced Migrants: We are dying silent*. Brussels: Jesuit Refugee Service Europe

⁵² *London's homeless Irish facing even tougher times*, Irish Independent, 29th September 2011

⁵³ FEANTSA press release: *FEANTSA asks for clearer rules on free movement*, 23rd May 2011

⁵⁴ Coakley, L. (2011): *Where do I go from here? The leading factors in voluntary return or remaining in Ireland*. Dublin: International Organisation for Migration, p. 6

lack of opportunity in their country of origin can act as a disincentive to return. Many asylum seekers come to Ireland due to difficulties arising from political activities in which they have been involved in their country of origin, or due to the persecution of the group to which they belong. Migrants can be apprehensive about their ability to successfully re-integrate into their old communities, or they may have lost their sense of connection with their country of origin. Many migrants also worry about their lack of financial success in Ireland and the perception of this by people in their country of origin.

Many aspects of life in Ireland are attractive and motivate people to stay in this country. Even people living in 'temporary' accommodation readily engage with the imaginaries of life in this country...People move out of a desire for a better life. Migrants...understand that in many respects, their likely quality of life will be higher in Ireland than in their country of origin⁵⁵.

Many homeless EU citizens may not wish to return to their country of origin, despite their difficult situation in Ireland.

Indeed, a significant proportion of people who were returned [to their country of origin] ended up in homelessness services with little prospect to quickly secure adequate and affordable housing⁵⁶.

It is clear that the personal, economic and political circumstances in a migrant's country of origin must be considered when understanding why they choose not to return to their country of origin despite experiencing homelessness, poverty and destitution in Ireland.

⁵⁵ Coakley, L. (2011): *Where do I go from here? The leading factors in voluntary return or remaining in Ireland*. Dublin: International Organisation for Migration, p. 11

⁵⁶ FEANTSA press release: *FEANTSA asks for clearer rules on free movement*, 23rd May 2011

3. Interviews with homeless migrants

3.1 Profile of those interviewed

3.1.1 Country of origin

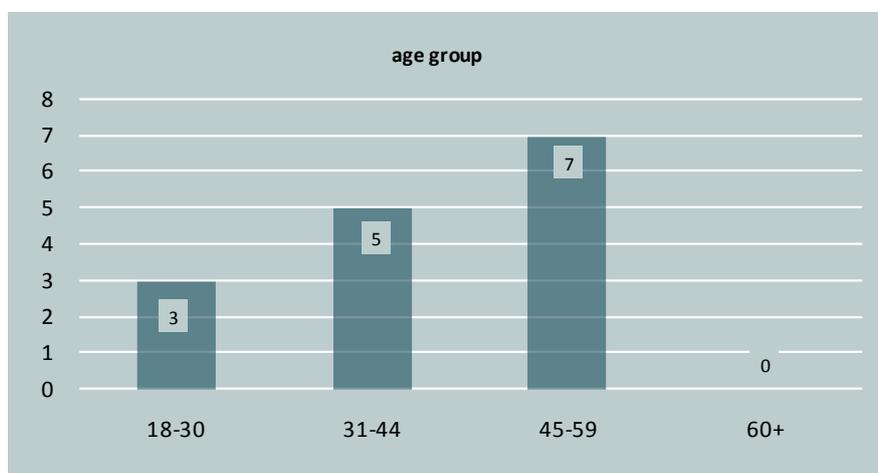
Fifteen interviews were undertaken with people from six countries that fitted the study criteria, as indicated in the table below. Fourteen of the interviewees were male and one was female.

Country	Numbers interviewed
Poland	9
Latvia	2
Nigeria	1
UK	1
Ivory Coast	1
South Africa	1
Total	15

The majority of those interviewed (twelve out of fifteen) were from EU countries, and all three non-EU participants were African.

3.1.2 Age

The research participants tended to have a relatively older age profile when compared to Ireland's indigenous homeless population. The most frequent age category (almost half of all those interviewed) was the 45-59 years age group (n=7), followed by the 31-44 years age group (n=5), and the 18-30 years age group (n=3). No participants were 60 years of age or older.



3.1.3 Length of time in Ireland

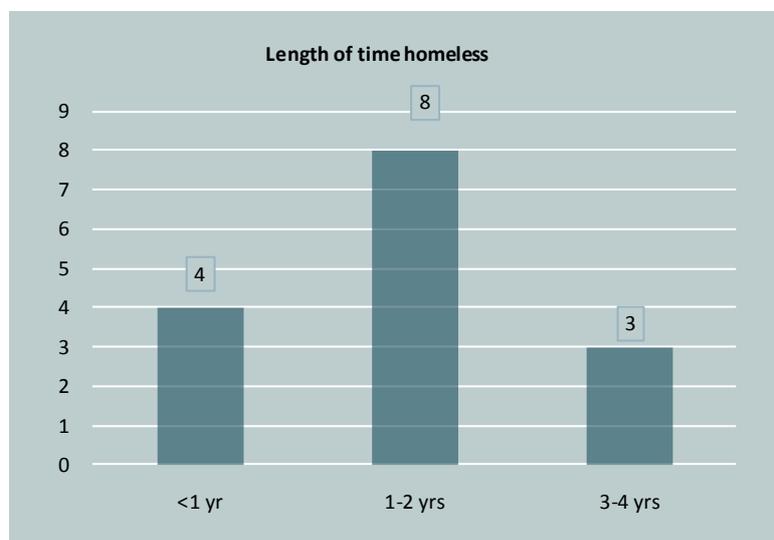
The length of time that interviewees had been living in Ireland varied. All had been living in the country for more than one year, and two-thirds (n=10) had been living in Ireland for three years or more. One research participant had been living in Ireland for fifteen years.



3.1.4 Length of time homeless

The majority of those interviewed had been homeless on a long-term basis. Just under one-third of the interviewees were homeless for less than one year (four interviewees). Of these four interviewees, two have been homeless for one month, one has been homeless for two months, and one for four months.

The remaining eleven interviewees had been homeless for more than one year. None of the participants had been homeless for more than four years.



Most of the interviewees had been living in Ireland for at least one year before they became homeless. One-third of the interviewees (n=5) became homeless soon after arriving into the country (for example, after a few months, and not having had stable or secure accommodation). All of these five interviewees were homeless for at least one year at the time of interview.

3.1.5 *Standard of education and skills*

In general, it was found that the interviewees were well educated and skilled. Thirteen of the fifteen interviewees had completed second level education. Two interviewees had completed third level education to degree level (one had attained the degree in his country of origin, the other from Trinity College Dublin). Others were generally skilled and experienced in crafts and trades.

Standard of English

The interviewees from the UK and African countries are all fluent in English and their interviews were conducted in English.

The level of proficiency in English of those interviewed from Poland and Latvia is hard to establish from the interview transcripts. Seven interviewees from Latvia and Poland described their English as 'good', 'OK', 'average' or 'conversational', and four reported significant difficulties with language. However, according to the peer researchers who conducted the interviews, people tended to overestimate their language abilities. It was the view of the peer researchers that the majority would have significant language difficulties, particularly in relation to written English and in undertaking tasks such as completing application forms.

A number of those interviewed were currently seeking, or had already participated in, English language classes.

3.1.6 *Services accessed*

The predominant services that were accessed by those interviewed were food and day services for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness, emergency accommodation (through the night bus) and social welfare services. The most frequent services accessed were: Merchants Quay Ireland, Focus Ireland's Coffee Shop/Extended Day Service, the New Communities Unit in Gardiner Street, Cappuchin Day Centre, night bus service, Trust, and The Light House on Pearse Street. Social welfare offices outside the city centre were also referred to by some interviewees.

Three of the interviewees with alcohol and/or drug problems had also accessed detox and rehabilitation programmes, and in one case, a methadone maintenance programme. In two cases, the programmes were not completed.

3.1.7 Accommodation

Most interviewees were staying in emergency accommodation, and in most cases this had been accessed through the night bus. However, some people were staying in emergency accommodation provided directly through the New Communities Unit, the community welfare service that operates from Gardiner Street.

3.1.8 Family profile

Thirteen of the fifteen interviewees lived alone. The only female interviewee resided with her husband and children in emergency accommodation. One other interviewee had a partner who they saw intermittently. Seven interviewees had experienced marriage breakdown prior to their arrival in Ireland, and in a small number of cases, relationships had broken down while living in Ireland (three interviewees).

Dependent children

The majority of those interviewed had dependent children (twelve interviewees), but most of their children were not living with them or residing in Ireland. Only four interviewees' children were living in Ireland, and in two instances, the children were living with the interviewees. In these two cases, the children were staying in emergency accommodation with their parents.

3.1.9 Reasons for coming to Ireland

The most common reason given by participants for coming to Ireland was to look for work, but usually there were a number of factors involved. Other reasons included: to seek asylum and flee political persecution, to be reunited with partners/family living in Ireland and to start a new life (e.g. following bereavement or a relationship breakdown in their own country).

I just wanted to leave my past behind and start afresh, to start a new life and to change something.

HENRYK⁵⁷, POLISH MAN

3.1.10 Employment experience

Although all of the interviewees were unemployed at the time of interview, eleven have previously worked in Ireland. However, their work patterns and employment experiences have been varied. Of these eleven interviewees, five primarily worked in jobs which were casual and paid 'cash in hand', and so they did not have any PRSI contributions in Ireland⁵⁸. Cash in hand work generally

⁵⁷ No real names are used in this report in order to protect the identity and anonymity of research participants.

⁵⁸ One of these five interviewees had also worked in the formal economy but his main employment was casual.

comprised short-term work in construction, cleaning or gardening-related work that was accessed through friends or contacts. Usually this kind of work lasted only a few days. In one case, an interviewee had been told by his employer that it was a formal job and that a legal contract would be given to him. However, no PRSI contributions were made in his name and the employer declared bankruptcy shortly after his employment started.

Four of the eleven had previously availed of jobseeker's payments, but at the time of interview had no income.

For those who had been employed in the formal economy, the most frequent type of work was in the construction sector (including forklift operator and carpenter). Other jobs included working in shops, warehouses, security, cleaning, transport and the IT sector. Two of the interviewees worked in supervisory and managerial positions prior to the loss of their employment.

3.1.11 First experiences in Ireland

On arrival to Ireland, most interviewees either stayed in private hostels or in apartments with friends or family members.

Only a small number of the interviewees were well prepared for life in Dublin in terms of having prior employment arranged and having sufficient money. Three participants stated that they came to Ireland with little or no money on arrival and had no work pre-arranged. However, two of these men were friends who came to Ireland around the same time and had supports available to them through existing contacts. Two interviewees had employment arranged in advance.

Those interviewees with no employment history in Ireland (four interviewees) had stayed with their partners and/or friends when they first arrived and eventually moved out for various reasons (e.g. relationship breakdown, being asked to leave accommodation).

3.1.12 Residence status in Ireland

Three of those interviewed had Stamp 4 residency (leave to remain). Of the remaining twelve, most do not know their formal residency status or whether they are habitually resident. There are a number of reasons for this: some have not made formal applications for social welfare payments (six interviewees); others have been refused and are in the process of appeal, and are unclear as to what this means in terms of their residency status.

3.1.13 Income

The majority of participants had no primary source of income at the time of interview. Of the fifteen people interviewed, four had secured social welfare payments and the remaining eleven received no income. For this group, sources of income have included occasional support from family members/friends or (in the case of two interviewees) occasional begging. Two men undertook casual work ('cash in hand') from time to time and one man collected scrap metal for recycling.

3.1.14 Summary

The table below provides a summary of the profile details for the fifteen homeless migrants interviewed as part of this study:

Table 3.2 Summary of research participants' profile details

	EU / Non-EU	Age	Time in Ireland	Time homeless	Educ. Attain.	Current accomm. status	English lang. skills	Drug / alcohol problems	Work history in Ireland	Income source	Dependents	Prev. exp. of homeless	Social support	Future plans
Aleksy ⁵⁹	EU	45-59 yrs	2-3 yrs	One month	Secondary	Emerg. hostel	Good	Yes – in recovery	Cash in hand	None	Children in home country	No	-	May leave
Feliks	EU	45-59 yrs	1-2 yrs	1-2 yrs	Secondary	Emerg. hostel	Poor	Alcohol problems	Cash in hand	None	Children in home country	No	Irish homeless friends	Stay in Ireland
Martyn	EU	45-59 yrs	7 years	Two months	Secondary	Sleeping rough	Poor	None	Yes	None	Children in home country	No	None	May leave
Oscar	EU	18-30 yrs	1-2 yrs	1-2 yrs	Did not complete secondary	Sleeping rough	Poor	Alcohol problems	None	None	Children in home country	No	Friend	Stay in Ireland
Henryk	EU	31-44 yrs	5-6 yrs	3-4 yrs	Did not complete secondary	Sleeping rough	Some English	Yes – in recovery	Cash in hand	None	No children	Yes	-	Stay in Ireland
Cyryl	EU	45-59 yrs	5-6 yrs	1-2 yrs	Secondary	Emerg. hostel	Poor	-	Yes	None – previously SW ⁶⁰	Children in home country	No	-	Stay in Ireland
George	Non-EU	31-44 yrs	1-2 yrs	1-2 yrs	Third level	Emerg. hostel	Fluent	None	None	Interim payment	Children in Ireland	No	Children in Ireland	Stay in Ireland
Ferdynand	EU	45-59 yrs	5-6 yrs	3-4 yrs	Secondary	Emerg. hostel	Some difficulties	None	Yes	None – previously SW	Children in home country	No	Friends	Stay in Ireland
Augustyn	EU	45-59 yrs	5-6 yrs	1-2 yrs	Secondary	Emerg. hostel	Poor	None	Yes	None – previously SW	No children	No	Friend	May leave
Simon	EU	31-44 yrs	3-4 yrs	1-2 yrs	Secondary	Emerg. hostel	Fluent	Yes	None	Social welfare	Child in Ireland	No	-	Stay in Ireland
Francis	Non-EU	31-44 yrs	10+ yrs	One month	Third level	Emerg. hostel	Fluent	None	Yes	Interim payment	Living with child	No	Child, friends	Stay in Ireland

⁵⁹ No real names are used in this report in order to protect the identity and anonymity of research participants.

⁶⁰ Social Welfare

	EU / Non-EU	Age	Time in Ireland	Time homeless	Educ. Attain.	Current accomm. status	English lang. skills	Drug / alcohol problems	Work history in Ireland	Income source	Dependents	Prev. exp. of homeless	Social support	Future plans
Monica	Non-EU	18-30 yrs	10+ yrs	Four months	Secondary	Emerg. hostel	Fluent	None	Yes	Social welfare	Living with children and husband	No	Husband, children, church	Stay in Ireland
Mihails	EU	18-30 yrs	1-2 yrs	1-2 yrs	Secondary	Sleeping rough	OK	-	None	None	No children	No	Irish and Latvian friends	Stay in Ireland
Rafal	EU	31-44 yrs	4-5 yrs	3-4 yrs	Secondary	Emerg. hostel	Some English	Alcohol problems	Yes	Social welfare	Children in home country	Yes	-	Stay in Ireland
Kacper	EU	31-44 yrs	1-2 yrs	1-2 yrs	Secondary	Emerg. hostel	Some difficulties	None	Cash in hand	None	Children in home country	No	Polish friends	Stay in Ireland

3.2 Pathways into homelessness

According to Pillinger (2005), it is important to consider homelessness in terms of the social processes that generate it. Otherwise, homelessness can be 'viewed as a marginal situation which affects a small number of people with complex personal problems'⁶¹. It is therefore important to consider structural factors, such as access to housing and employment, which can affect an individual's life chances. Individual characteristics such as age, gender and life experiences can also have an impact on individuals' homeless pathways.

One of the main structural factors identified in previous research as influencing homeless pathways is labour market marginalisation. In this research, a number of pathways into homelessness were identified by those interviewed.

The most frequent reason stated by interviewees for experiencing homelessness was a lack of work and money, leading to the loss of their accommodation. These two reasons were given by six people interviewed. The next most commonly cited reason was being asked to leave accommodation, which arose either because of a lack of money, a breakdown in relationships, or due to other factors such as alcohol/drug use.

3.2.1 Access to the labour market and loss of income

The most frequent pathway into homelessness identified by those interviewed was the loss of employment or difficulty in finding employment.

The loss of employment and subsequent loss of income led to the inability to support the costs of accommodation. One interviewee stated that the high cost of rent in Dublin and a relatively short period out of work could result in a person's accommodation being jeopardised:

It's enough if you're out of work for two months, rents are so expensive here.

CYRYL, POLISH MAN

There were many different reasons for loss of employment. In most cases, interviewees did not experience much difficulty in gaining employment, but as the economic downturn took effect in Ireland, the sectors in which people were employed were particularly affected (for example, the construction and transportation sectors).

Illness also arose in one instance: one interviewee's loss of employment was related to an accident outside of his work which incapacitated him for a period of time. While he has largely recovered from the accident, he remains unable to stand for long periods of time, which impacts on his ability to regain employment.

⁶¹ Pillinger, J. (2005): *Preventing Homelessness: A Comprehensive Strategy to Prevent Homelessness in Dublin, 2005-2010*. Dublin: Homeless Agency

In other cases, interviewees believed that they were disadvantaged in labour market terms because of a lack of awareness about requirements for working in Ireland. According to one man:

I didn't know where to go and what kind of documents I had to get sorted, for example if I wanted to work in construction I didn't know that I had to get a Safepass certification and also about all the different courses and certifications that you need to get in order to perform certain jobs...I think that's the main reason for my becoming homeless.

KACPER, POLISH MAN

While the lack of information was directly considered to be a factor leading to homelessness for Kacper, it was also a contributing factor in the loss of employment for others.

In Aleksy's experience, the employer went bankrupt a short number of weeks after Aleksy commenced work. The same employer had not paid him any wages, nor had he paid any employer PRSI contributions. This was not known to Aleksy at the time of employment. Aleksy lost his job in 2008, and only had recourse to low-paid 'cash in hand' work in the agricultural sector from that point onwards, until all work ended for him and he became homeless in 2011. Not having any PRSI contributions or record of work in Ireland limited his options and eligibility for social welfare payments, and he currently has no source of income.

Working 'cash in hand' was a common experience for interviewees: four of those interviewed had worked on this basis. One man had a number of short-term and casual jobs but their nature meant that he fell in and out of homelessness between jobs.

What probably happened was that I ended up on the streets and then I probably found a job and then I probably either lost that job and ended up on the streets - it's a bit of a vicious circle.

HENRYK, POLISH MAN

Henryk had previously experienced homelessness in Poland. Another Polish man, Rafal, also experienced homelessness in Poland prior to coming to Dublin. He was homeless in Dublin before securing employment, and squatted in a basement for a short period while he was working in a warehouse. Rafal states that he lost his employment due to his alcohol use. Both Henryk and Rafal moved out of homelessness on a short-term basis as they secured new employment, and usually stayed in private hostels in between homelessness. However, the short-term nature of their employment soon led to the loss of their accommodation and subsequent repeat homelessness. Both men have been homeless in Ireland for over three years.

3.2.2 Access to welfare supports

In most cases, once the interviewees became homeless, they remained homeless and did not report any periods where they moved out of homelessness. When they lost their employment, the loss of accommodation usually followed shortly afterwards. A key factor in the interviewees' experience of homelessness was whether they could access social and community welfare payments.

Loss of employment and welfare entitlements

Once those interviewed became unemployed, they soon fell into severe financial difficulty, the extent of which varied according to people's work history and residence status. Many interviewees had broken periods of employment.

So, like, I'd work six months, like I worked a year and six months and then I went on social welfare, then I went back to work and then the third time round when I was back working I broke my leg. It wasn't a continuous three years of employment.

FERDYNAND, POLISH MAN

Only a minority of those interviewed were in receipt of social welfare or supplementary welfare payments at the time of interview. Four interviewees were in receipt of jobseeker's allowance. Four other interviewees had previously been in receipt of social welfare payments which they described as a jobseeker's payment.

Some of those who had no income whatsoever at the time of interview had previously accessed payments for short periods of time, until they were told that they were no longer eligible. These were mainly jobseeker's benefit payments. One man says that his payment ended because he was told that he was not spending enough time looking for work in Ireland. He had not sought appeal or review of this decision as he was not aware that it was possible.

Another interviewee was told that he was fit for work, but he disputes this and contends that a previous accident limits his ability to stand for extended periods of time. He is currently receiving support to apply for social welfare, and is completing an application for the Habitual Residence Condition. He has been living in Ireland for five years.

A number of other interviewees have been refused jobseeker's allowance and other social welfare payments which would be subject to the Habitual Residence Condition, and have been told that the reason for this is that they have not lived in Ireland for two years. Two men are currently appealing this decision.

However, five interviewees have either not applied or not pursued applications, as they feel that they will not be eligible for payment (e.g. if they have not worked in Ireland before) or that they cannot meet the requirements.

How can I apply? I have not worked in Ireland so the answer is no.

MIHAILS, LATVIAN MAN

Feliks did apply for welfare payments, but his application was refused:

Yes I did, I did apply, and [they] offered me a ticket back to Poland so that was the help they were offering. And I asked them would they give me a once-off payment, exceptional needs payment, say, €100 for a bus ticket so I could go and look for a job but the answer was no. It was a very flat refusal and the only thing they were offering was a ticket back to Poland...nothing else, nothing at all.

FELIKS, POLISH MAN

When asked if he ever returned to clarify this position or appeal, Feliks confirmed that he had not:

No, only the one time I tried. What would be the point in going again?

FELIKS, POLISH MAN

A number of other interviewees stated that establishing their residency had been difficult, particularly if they had experienced homelessness.

I didn't meet the qualifying conditions to get the help that I needed which is kind of ridiculous because, you know, how can a homeless person meet any conditions? If you are homeless you can't meet any conditions that they require and you know you go through so much hassle.

KACPER, POLISH MAN

Other interviewees' applications for social welfare payments were affected by not having sufficient documentation: one man had lost his passport and other documentation; another had left his belongings with a friend for safe keeping and he was no longer in contact with the friend. Difficulties in keeping important documentation safe had an impact on experiences of homelessness.

Simon from the UK had to pursue his application for eight months before receiving payment, while Martyn from Poland received social welfare payments for approximately one year, after four attempts. He then returned home to Poland for a period of four months in order to seek work. On his return to Ireland, he was told that he had spent too long outside of the country and was no longer eligible for social welfare. As a result, he soon lost his accommodation and became homeless.

Access to rent allowance

Even in cases where interviewees had an entitlement to social welfare payments (such as jobseeker's allowance) on the basis of their being habitually resident, there was a problem for some in accessing private sector rent allowance (supplementary welfare allowance) because they did not meet eligibility requirements⁶². This arose because some interviewees shared accommodation and did not have a lease in their own name. Three of the fifteen people interviewed identified this as the reason for them becoming homeless:

The lease was never in my name; it was in one of my friends' names, so I never had the particulars in my name, so I could never apply for rent allowance or anything like that, so I have to wait six months before I can get that. I have to live here six months in emergency accommodation.

MONICA, AFRICAN WOMAN

Where people were previously living in rented accommodation, the lease was usually in the name of another tenant or their partner. There was also a lack of awareness of the qualifying conditions for rent allowance.

I don't really know how it works. They only told me you need to have a lease in your name and I didn't have a lease in my name because I just paid the rent.

MONICA, AFRICAN WOMAN

None of the interviewees had a lease agreement with a landlord that was in their name prior to becoming homeless: they either shared accommodation with others or stayed with their partners.

The three interviewees who could not access rent allowance because they had not lived in their own accommodation were hoping to gain access to rent support after completing the required six months in emergency accommodation. One interviewee made the point that this qualifying period is likely to be more expensive to the State than the cost of providing rental allowance for the same period.

⁶² From July 2009, a condition for rent supplement was introduced which required that, in order to qualify, a person must have been residing in private rented accommodation or accommodation for homeless persons or an institution (or any combination of these) for a period of 183 days within the preceding twelve months of the date of claim for rent supplement. A person may also qualify for rent supplement where an assessment of housing need has been carried out within the twelve months preceding the date of claim and the person is deemed by the relevant local authority to be eligible for and in need of social housing support.

3.2.3 *Addiction problems*

Addiction featured for a number of interviewees and was a direct factor leading to homelessness for two men. Simon’s drug use led to the breakdown of his relationship, which consequently led to his becoming homeless:

At first I was living with my girlfriend and when she found out about the heroin, I was back on the streets.

SIMON, UK

Addiction was identified by two men as a cause of homelessness. Rafal’s alcohol problems led to his loss of employment on a number of occasions, which resulted in him also losing his accommodation.

For some interviewees, an addiction to alcohol was stabilised by accessing detox/rehabilitation programmes, but for others the addiction developed in the course of homelessness as a coping mechanism.

3.2.4 *Breakdown in relationships*

George and Francis both experienced relationship breakdowns and moved out of their partner’s accommodation. In both cases the accommodation was not leased or rented in the interviewee’s name, so they could not access rental allowance to avail of other accommodation. Both interviewees were provided with stable accommodation directly through the New Communities Unit rather than the night bus. One interviewee was staying in accommodation with his daughter (who was in his care as a lone parent) in emergency accommodation for families.

For Mihail, homelessness arose as a result of being asked to leave the accommodation that he shared with his friend, Oscar⁶³, when Oscar’s partner asked him to leave. This led directly to both men becoming homeless. Both had been sleeping rough for over one year at the time of interview. Neither were in receipt of any social welfare payments and had no work experience in Ireland.

Although breakdown in relationships was not a primary cause of homelessness for the majority of those interviewed, a number of interviewees spoke of a breakdown in relationships in their home country, and in some cases this prompted a permanent move to Ireland.

Henryk, who had a previous experience of homelessness in Poland, viewed his homeless experience in Ireland as part of a process that started in Poland, and which was a result of a combination of factors, one of which was the breakdown in his relationship. He spoke about the reasons for becoming homeless:

⁶³ Oscar was also interviewed as part of this study.

I don't know because my head wasn't straight. I did things I shouldn't have. I became homeless because...well, I don't know. My girlfriend left me as well.

HENRYK, POLISH MAN

3.2.5 Contributing factors

Weak social capital and social networks

In most of the above cases, while the pathways into homelessness may have varied, they were compounded by weak social capital or social networks. Most interviewees did not have a wide social circle or family to support them when they lost their accommodation or became homeless.

Social capital represents the degree of connectedness in communities and the quality of social relations in a given population. According to Pillinger's research, *Homeless Pathways: developing effective strategies to address pathways into, through and out of homelessness* (2007), when people become homeless, they often do not become immediately visible to homeless services because they stay with family members or friends⁶⁴.

For homeless migrants interviewed in this study, support through social networks was available only to a minority, and often only for a short period of time. As a result, the homeless migrants interviewed generally became homeless within a relatively short period of time after falling into financial difficulty or losing their accommodation. The lack of a strong social network was identified by some to have been a factor in becoming homeless.

Although if I'd had friends here, things would have taken a different turn, I'm certain...it's just I had no friends.

CYRYL, POLISH MAN

When Martyn lost his employment and his social welfare payments ended, he stayed in his friend's rented accommodation. However, shortly afterwards, his friend returned to Poland and Martyn became homeless.

Some interviewees felt that there was a lack of social support from those in their country of origin as well as in Ireland, particularly when a relationship breakdown had preceded arrival to Ireland.

I'd have gone back home if I could, but my wife doesn't want that; I don't have anywhere to go back to.

CYRYL, POLISH MAN

⁶⁴ Pillinger, J. (2007): *Homeless Pathways: developing effective strategies to address pathways into, through and out of homelessness*. Dublin: Focus Ireland

In some instances, family members knew about interviewees' experiences of homelessness in Ireland and were in a position to provide some support. George received some short-term financial support from his brothers and sisters living abroad when he first became homeless, which delayed his pathway into homelessness and enabled him to stay in a private hostel.

Information and language issues

Two interviewees reported language issues as being a direct cause of their homelessness, and many more spoke about language difficulties. In terms of language, many of those interviewed experienced difficulties with language which exacerbated their difficulties in accessing services and payments.

Some people interviewed had experienced difficulties in employment – a number of people were not familiar with their rights and entitlements and were employed by people who had not paid any PRSI contributions, unbeknownst to them. Unfamiliarity with employment or social support/social welfare systems, as well as language difficulties, had an influencing role: many people interviewed were not fully aware of their residency status, and others were unsure about the social welfare payment that they had been in receipt of. Few people had made appeals against refusals for services because of language difficulties.

3.3 Experiences of homelessness - pathways through homelessness

Homelessness had been a new experience for the majority of those interviewed: only two interviewees had prior experiences of homelessness in their country of origin. The duration of homeless experiences varied amongst those interviewed: one interviewee was first homeless over four years ago, and the shortest experience of homelessness was one month.

The interviewees spoke of their experiences in accessing homeless services (both voluntary and State services), the barriers and enablers to accessing services and supports, and the effects of homelessness on them.

While the interviewees experienced similar pathways into homelessness in many ways, their experiences of homeless services and the impacts of homelessness on them varied. In this section, these different experiences are outlined.

3.3.1 Accommodation

This research focused on homeless migrants who were either staying in emergency homeless accommodation or sleeping rough in Dublin. Eleven of the fifteen interviewees (73%) were staying in emergency accommodation at the time of interview (including emergency bed and breakfast provision). Five of these interviewees were accessing emergency accommodation through the night bus. The remaining four (27%) were sleeping rough.

Seven of those interviewed had previously slept rough, and a further three people reported living in squats at different times throughout their experience of homelessness.

About half of those interviewed had experience of staying in several types of accommodation at different points in their homeless experiences: this included periods of staying in squats (3 interviewees), rough sleeping (7) and accessing emergency accommodation (11). Three men had previously moved out of homelessness temporarily when they gained some casual or short-term work. When they gained work, they stayed in private hostels in Dublin city. However, the work was short-term and was often 'cash in hand', and when it ended they soon became homeless again.

The night bus

The night bus service had been accessed by the majority of those interviewed at some point during their experience of homelessness. The night bus service, which enabled a homeless person to access emergency accommodation (hostel) for one night at a time, collected people in the late evening/night and brought them to the accommodation. Two interviewees had been sleeping rough prior to the availability of the night bus, and they viewed the service very positively. Since the completion of the fifteen migrant interviews for this study, the night bus service has been discontinued (on 19th September 2011). It is no longer required to transport people to their accommodation on a nightly basis due to changes in the provision of emergency homeless accommodation in Dublin by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (this is further discussed in Section 5.2 below).

The availability of the night bus for homeless migrants was a response to the accommodation needs of this group, who previously did not have access to emergency accommodation except on a once-off basis. However, some interviewees expressed a difficulty with the night bus whereby an individual could have been assigned a late time to meet the night bus and then had to vacate the accommodation by 8a.m. the following morning. Some interviewees stated that they preferred sleeping rough because they could have control over when and how they got to sleep.

Sometimes I use the night bus service. If they tell me, say, at 11.30 that I'm meant to wait somewhere and it's lashing then honestly I prefer to get a sleeping bag and just go to some quiet corner and put my head down there...because they can arrive at 11.30 or 1.30...and then they wake you up at 8 o'clock and you have to leave so in cases like that I just say no thanks.

FELIKS, POLISH MAN

Those who used the night bus identified the need for late night food services in order to avoid waiting in the cold until the bus arrived.

Sleeping rough

Cyryl had previously lived on the streets for over two years until he could avail of the night bus service. However, some interviewees chose to sleep rough because they could be more independent and choose what time to go to sleep.

They viewed sleeping rough as an alternative to the night bus service. Others were deterred from using hostels due to their fears of sharing accommodation with drug and alcohol users. However, sleeping on the streets also presented fears and difficulties for many people. In order to overcome his fears, Martyn tried to sleep during the day and to walk at night.

Another interviewee spoke about his experience of being attacked when he was sleeping rough:

I couldn't get a hostel about two weeks ago and I was asleep in a sleeping bag in the park and somebody robbed me and kicked me in the face and I got five stitches in my eye...I've had it twice; I got my eye split and I got my face dragged along the ground.

SIMON, UK

Other emergency accommodation

Five people interviewed were staying in emergency accommodation that was not accessed through the night bus. Three of these people had accessed the accommodation directly through the New Communities Unit in Gardiner Street. Two were accessing accommodation for families.

Francis was especially satisfied with the quality of the service and accommodation and the general safety of the area in which he was living, which was emergency accommodation for families in suburban Dublin sourced through the New Communities Unit. However, those staying in suburban areas of Dublin were less likely to access homeless services in the city centre and, as a result, tended to be less connected with a range of information and advocacy services.

3.3.2 Sources of income

One of the key barriers noted by those interviewed was the lack of income to support any form of accommodation. Eleven of the fifteen interviewees had no regular source of income whatsoever. Their lack of income was a result of not having access to employment, but also not having access to any social welfare payments. The remaining four interviewees were in receipt of jobseeker's allowance. One man was appealing a refusal for social welfare payments.

For those who had no social welfare payments, sources of income included some occasional support from friends. Some interviewees also undertook 'cash in hand' or casual work from time to time, although usually on a very short-term basis.

...dig something up or plant a tree, or if a fence is broken...so sometimes I will work the odd nixer, one to two days, that's it, but I keep looking for a job...I go from door to door and ask if people need anything done.

CYRYL, POLISH MAN

One man translated for acquaintances which occasionally provided him with a small income. Two people reported occasional begging on the streets as a source of income (either currently or in the past), and one man would collect scrap metal to generate some income.

3.3.3 Social networks and support

One man mentioned support and some occasional money that was given to him by his friends in employment:

I'd get money from friends, I have friends that have good jobs...and they'll give me money, say, for cigarettes.

FERDYNAND, POLISH MAN

However, the majority of those interviewed simply did not have support from friends. The impact of this was described by one interviewee who spoke about the day she had to leave her accommodation:

I wanted to die; yes, I felt like dying that day...because the people you think the most in your life, the people that [you] called your friends, you thought that they are going to be there for you.

MONICA, AFRICAN WOMAN

In some cases, support from friends and networks was lost as people returned home. In one case, the person on whom the man relied to help him with language skills as well as accommodation returned to his country of origin. For others, the stigma and embarrassment of homelessness has led to them withdrawing from contacts and networks that could support them:

I led a different life before to the way my life looks now, and I'm just a bit embarrassed about the way things turned out for me and the place where I am right now, and I lost everything, you know.

KACPER, POLISH MAN

Most interviewees spoke of support and information gained from other homeless people, particularly those of their own nationality. However, for those homeless living in accommodation in suburban areas of Dublin, there were very few social networks.

For all interviewees, there was little support from family and friends at home. There were a number of reasons for this: some family members were not aware of the interviewees' homelessness, nor had they the means to support them:

I wouldn't let them worry about my situation because my mum, you don't want her to worry that she can't lend a hand...especially after what's happened in Africa; they are trying to gather themselves as well, so to add my own stuff.

FRANCIS, AFRICAN MAN

One-third of interviewees (n=5) did not disclose to their family members the fact that they were homeless in Ireland.

I'm in a weird situation because...I'm really leading a double life because as far as they're concerned, they don't know what's happening, and I don't really want them to know.

SIMON, UK

Support needs

Interviewees spoke of how support needs that might ordinarily be offered from friends and family were provided by, or sought from, day services. In particular, a number of men spoke about the need to talk:

What is very important is just I can talk to people...even if we sleep on the street we do need somebody to talk to and at [service] they have very helpful staff who would always talk.

OSCAR, LATVIAN MAN

There are so many people that need help, they need to talk to a psychiatrist – no, a psychologist, to talk to a psychologist. Sometimes you need that. This is dramatic experience. It's life on the edge.

CYRYL, POLISH MAN

3.3.4 Experience of welfare services

While access to social welfare payments was a factor leading to homelessness, interviewees also spoke about their experiences and difficulties in accessing services while they were homeless. Kacper felt that meeting the criteria and conditions for social welfare payments and to establish residency was difficult to fulfil for a homeless person.

Francis experienced significant barriers in accessing social welfare and felt that the quality of advice and information he received was poor. He stated that he was provided with little information about how he could pursue his case as a homeless man:

No one was telling me anything, [or] giving any guidance. I thought it would have been a lot simpler [for them] to say 'OK, look, we can't really help, take this number, they are the people to help you.' But no.

FRANCIS, AFRICAN MAN

Francis found out about the homeless free-phone number through the internet. Once he had the information and accessed services in the city centre, things worked well for him:

Things went smoothly. So it is about knowing what to do [and] the information getting to me about what I needed to do.

FRANCIS, AFRICAN MAN

Similarly, George reported a positive experience with city centre welfare services:

They take time to listen to you if you have complaints and they see what they can do to sort it out for you.

GEORGE, AFRICAN MAN

However, for other interviewees, the experience was not as positive. Simon reported being pushed from 'pillar to post' and being sent to different offices. He believes that his perseverance was the reason that he eventually accessed welfare payments after eight months.

For about four months I was going down there every day.

SIMON, UK

Others felt that the standard response from social welfare services was repatriation:

The social welfare office, I mean, they don't even look at your entitlements; they don't check whether you're entitled to receive anything or not. I mean, straight away they offer you a ticket to Poland; that's the only way they want to help.

HENRYK, POLISH MAN

For Martyn, the language barrier represented a barrier to him in dealing with social welfare services. He felt that some staff in social welfare services were helpful in dealing with him, while others were not interested. He and two other interviewees had also lost documentation, which caused them further difficulties.

3.3.5 Services accessed

Day services

In the absence of sources of income, most of those interviewed relied significantly on homeless day services which provided them with food, information, and shower/laundry facilities. The services most frequently accessed were generally voluntary organisations rather than State services, in addition to accommodation sourced through the night bus.

Generally, those interviewed reported very positive experiences with information, food and day services, where many of their daily needs were fulfilled. These needs included: food, somewhere to stay during the day, someone to talk to, access to showers, support in preparing or appealing applications for social welfare and community welfare payments, English language classes and, in some cases, training.

Physical health needs

Health conditions that were reported by the interviewees included: Hepatitis C, heart problems, asthma, broken or injured limbs, and spinal problems. Others reported minor physical health issues, e.g. dental issues and hearing problems. Those interviewed reported having good access to healthcare within day services, facilitated by Safetynet (homeless medical services) and within mainstream hospital and emergency medical services. The majority of interviewees rated these services highly, both in terms of accessibility and the approach of the personnel.

3.3.6 The effects of homelessness and mental health needs

You are basically going from pillar to post, from one soup kitchen to the next...basically every day is the same...it's the same scenario every day and it just gets very tedious. And then its 4.50 and you call the night bus; then you have to wait for the night bus and so you just stroll around and it's all very depressing...some people start drinking; others manage to stay away from that.

FERDYNAND, POLISH MAN

When interviewees spoke about the impacts of homelessness, they spoke about stigma, shame, depression and stress.

It affects me in every way because when people ask me, old people that I used to work with, 'Where do you live? What do you do?' What do I tell them? What do I tell them? I feel too ashamed to say anything.

MONICA, AFRICAN WOMAN

Many interviewees spoke of depression, stress and negative feelings which were mainly viewed as an effect of homelessness and a lack of control over their lives.

It's more or less the same for me as it is for everybody else, in the sense that, for any other normal person, you know, there are days when you kind of feel blue; you feel down, but it's only normal.

FELIKS, POLISH MAN

For George, the impact of homelessness on his mental health had been more severe when he first became homeless:

I was not thinking normally because I didn't have the basic necessities which to move life on, so the manner of thought that comes to be is either to commit suicide or to die by any means because I was really helpless.

GEORGE, AFRICAN MAN

Monica reported significant stress, especially as she has a young family. She stated that her situation is made more difficult due to her husband's residency status (Stamp 3) which does not permit him to work⁶⁵. Her fears for her future and for her children's future gives rise to this stress and depression. She feels the need to be strong for her children, and yet she is not receiving any support or counselling for this.

[I feel] very depressed, very emotional, very depressed...Depressing, really; sometimes I cry myself to sleep...you know. We have to go on; we have to be strong for our kids. I don't want my daughter to wake up in the middle of the night and ask why am I crying...We have to be strong for our kids.

MONICA, AFRICAN WOMAN

Families in emergency accommodation were particularly isolated – children did not have access to social outlets or crèche facilities, and community supports such as community social workers were not available to advise or support vulnerable families. Moreover, the interviewees in emergency accommodation outside of the city centre were less likely to be linked in with homeless day, food and information services in the city centre.

⁶⁵ Stamp 3 is one of a number of immigration stamps (1-4) that are currently used by An Garda Síochána when registering foreign nationals. The general conditions of Stamp 3 provide that the holder is permitted to remain in Ireland on condition that the holder does not enter employment, does not engage in any business or profession and does not remain later than a specified date.

For those who were accessing city centre services, the need for counselling services was identified by Cyryl. The lack of social supports and social capital among homeless people emphasises the need for these services.

Coping mechanisms and alcohol/drug use

While alcohol was an identified factor in causing homelessness in some instances, it was spoken about more frequently by the interviewees as an effect of or coping mechanism for homelessness.

Five interviewees spoke of their addiction problems that pre-dated their experiences of homelessness. Two of these people were addressing their addiction problems and were in recovery. More spoke about how they and other homeless migrants used alcohol in order to cope with the effects of homelessness:

Sometimes I would even drink out of despair. I kept looking for work and I couldn't find anything...When you don't have work then you get depressed...At a certain stage, you just give up and start drinking. I even begged for money on the streets.

CYRYL, POLISH MAN

Depression, yes, sometimes, but it's more like, I wouldn't call it real depression; I don't go for support anywhere. I just think about it, listen to music and drink some alcohol and then everything is OK.

OSCAR, LATVIAN MAN

Two interviewees spoke of other homeless migrants' use of alcohol hand sanitizers as a source of alcohol, which had serious health impacts.

Occasional drug use was mentioned by one interviewee, and another was participating on a methadone maintenance programme. Two men had accessed detox services but did not complete the programmes.

Monica was part of a church congregation and her friends in Dublin as well as her faith helped her cope with homelessness. Francis spoke about his own way of dealing with depression arising from homelessness:

Basically when I feel that, I have my own way of dealing with it. Either I go out or I start to get some vitamins or I start to exercise a bit or walk a bit, so basically I do manage it.

FRANCIS, AFRICAN MAN

3.3.7 Service needs and gaps

Training and education

In a small number of cases, interviewees were accessing or trying to access training and education services. These were primarily related to English language training, which a number of interviewees had either completed or were awaiting. This training was mostly accessed through Merchants Quay Ireland. However, just as language was a factor for some in becoming homeless, it was also identified as a factor in moving out of homelessness:

If I knew English...it's the key to everything.

CYRYL, POLISH MAN

A small number of those interviewed were also accessing (or had accessed) other training programmes, including personal development, manual handling and Safepass training, and a small number were registered with FÁS. However, those interviewees registered with FÁS generally had good English language skills and therefore could participate in training programmes.

The point was made that many Polish people who are homeless in Ireland are highly skilled, but that their skills are not transferable due to a lack of certification or that their qualifications are not recognised in Ireland.

There is people that have several qualifications or professions under their belt but the problem is they don't have papers to certify it and that's a big problem here.

KACPER, POLISH MAN

Information needs

Availability of information was mentioned by interviewees as key in accessing a range of services.

There is one thing I discovered about Ireland: you must be highly informed; there are so many things around you, so many things close to you without you knowing.

GEORGE, AFRICAN MAN

Francis stated that there can be an overload of information; in his case, he found access to homeless services in the city centre, not through his local social welfare office, but online. He suggests more simplified information:

I think availability of information is very important. I think if there can be, for example, one leaflet that can give simple information.

FRANCIS, AFRICAN MAN

George made the point that verbal information is important, as well as written information for migrants:

Yeah, verbal information, it's very, very important because I happen to meet some of the people who are at the food centre as well from so many different countries – from China, from Philippines, from some other places...[I] have the advantage of having a good education and being able to read and pick up stuff; lots of people don't have that.

GEORGE, AFRICAN MAN

Finally, the need for quiet space was identified by a number of people interviewed. While some used the library during the day and others watched DVDs in Focus Ireland's Coffee Shop service, there was limited availability of quiet space:

You need a place where you can sit down and just study and not on the street, but just a quiet place where you can sit down and study in peace. You know, even a squat would do. Basically everything depends on that, on having a place of your own, like your own corner, you know, even any run-down old place would do.

KACPER, POLISH MAN

3.3.8 Homelessness, nationality and residency status

As stated above, limited access to social welfare services and emergency accommodation services was a significant barrier to providing routes out of homelessness. Some interviewees who were in emergency accommodation and were availing of social welfare payments felt that there was a pathway out of homelessness for them, as they were waiting for eligibility for rent supplement which would provide them and their families with stable accommodation.

A number of people felt that they were treated differently on account of being from a country other than Ireland. This was mainly related to being refused a social welfare payment, waiting a long time to receive a social welfare payment and feeling that their cases were not properly considered or assessed, the first response being the offer of a ticket home.

Some interviewees experienced tension between themselves and Irish homeless service-users, sometimes arising from miscommunication and language difficulties. Some interviewees expressed nervousness about their safety for this reason: eight interviewees had been attacked; however, the attacks were not always racially motivated.

Francis believed that gaining employment would be enhanced with Irish citizenship and this was a priority for him going forward.

I consider Ireland now kind of my country; that's why sometimes when things are refused or things do not work out because of my origin it's like it's not fair.

FRANCIS, AFRICAN MAN

While there were some instances and perceptions of racism amongst the Irish population, these were not widespread, and few people experienced overt racism. However, Monica recounted an experience she had on the day of the interview:

I was in town today; this one lady said today, 'You're not even supposed to be in Ireland'.

MONICA, AFRICAN WOMAN

Most of those with a residency status (and with Stamp 4⁶⁶ status) are hopeful of a pathway out of homelessness within the next six months, as they are accessing emergency accommodation until they can meet the criteria for accessing rent allowance.

However, one interviewee who has recently had a child cannot work at present, and her husband has Stamp 3 status, which does not enable him to work⁶⁷. She is therefore very uncertain of her future, which is causing her considerable stress:

In the circumstance we are now we don't know what lies ahead of us...the thing that we need now is we need accommodation, we need my husband to work. I need to go and earn what I can but I have never had these experiences in Ireland since my ten years that I lived here; I worked all my life.

MONICA, AFRICAN WOMAN

Others interviewed were unclear as to what their residency status was and how they might gain habitual residence status, or what their outlook is likely to be. Interviewees could be waiting a very long time for applications for payment or appeals: one individual was waiting eight months before he received any payment and another had to make the same application on four occasions.

⁶⁶ Stamp 4 is one of a number of immigration stamps (1-4) currently used by An Garda Síochána when registering foreign nationals. Stamp 4 provides permission to remain in Ireland (which can be until a specified date). For people with Stamp 4, no work permit or business permit is required.

⁶⁷ Stamp 3 is also one of the immigration stamps used by An Garda Síochána when registering foreign nationals. The general conditions of Stamp 3 provide that the holder is permitted to remain in Ireland on condition that the holder does not enter employment, does not engage in any business or profession and does not remain later than a specified date.

Factors impeding pathways out of homelessness are therefore closely linked to residency status and entitlements to housing, welfare and other services.

3.3.9 *Returning home*

Returning to their country of origin was not regarded as a pathway out of homelessness for the majority of those interviewed. Only a small minority of people (three interviewees) said that they may consider returning home at some point in the future. However, the majority of those interviewed had no intention of returning home. A number of reasons were identified for the interviewees' lack of desire to return home.

Why would I go back? Who would I go back to? Who would I go back to? Who would I go back to, I ask you? Definitely, I prefer to stay here.

FELIKS, POLISH MAN

The stigma of homelessness and not having work or money in Ireland was a concern expressed by some:

You can return to Poland when you've made money, you have career...but to go back to Poland with nothing? No, I don't think so. I don't want my daughters to know about all of this.

CYRYL, POLISH MAN

Kacper stated that as he had spent so many years away from Poland, both living in Ireland and other EU countries, he did not consider it his home any more:

No, never; I've no intention of going back. I've been living outside of the country for the last twelve years so to me Poland as my home doesn't really exist anymore. I mean, I still have some family there and I'll go back for holidays, but not to live.

KACPER, POLISH MAN

One interviewee's obligation to pay child maintenance in Poland meant that a debt had accumulated there in his name, and he feels that if he went home, the authorities 'would lock me up straight away'.

Other people interviewed felt that they could not return home for fear of political oppression and human rights abuses. George's parents had already been killed for political activism in his home country.

4. Case Studies

Brief case studies for each of the fifteen migrants interviewed as part of this study are presented below, and highlight their experiences of homelessness in Ireland, the services and support that they have accessed, and their future plans.

Aleksy

Aleksy is a Polish man in his fifties who has lived in Ireland for just under three years. He came to Ireland to look for work. Shortly before coming to live in Ireland, his marriage broke down and his father died.

Aleksy had arranged work in the transport sector prior to coming to Ireland, having applied for the job in Poland. However, the job was short-lived: a number of weeks after starting work, his employer closed down. He never received any payment, a contract of employment or any documentation, such as a P45, from his employer during or at the end of his employment.

Subsequent to this experience, he found casual work on a farm outside Dublin, where he was also provided with accommodation. When this work ended he travelled to Dublin city to look for work, and has been homeless for almost one month in Dublin.

He believes that he is regarded as a normal resident on account of living here for three years, but he is not sure whether this is consistent with being habitually resident in Ireland. He has not received any social welfare payments; the reason given was that he has no documentation to support his residency. At the time of interview he had lost his passport and other documentation and was applying for replacements. He has no source of income.

Aleksy has been staying in emergency accommodation which he accessed through the night bus, but when emergency accommodation is not available, he sleeps on the streets. Other services that he receives are food, day services and information services, such as those provided by Merchants Quay Ireland, Focus Ireland and Crosscare.

He considers himself to have an alcohol problem but says he was not drinking when he first came to Dublin. He feels that homeless people are very vulnerable to alcohol misuse, and recounts several instances where supports around rehabilitation and detox would have been welcome but were not available.

He has been offered a ticket to Poland or the United States, which he may consider taking. However, his stated preference is to remain in Ireland, and he hopes to get an offer of work. He is hopeful of his work prospects.

Feliks

Feliks is a Polish man in his early fifties who came to Ireland one and a half years ago to earn money. He had arranged a job in the catering industry prior to travelling to Ireland, organised with the help of a Polish friend who was already living in Ireland.

His employer provided him with accommodation but without any security or lease. The work was 'cash in hand' and less than one month after starting, he was let go.

He stayed for a short while with some Polish people, but did not get on with them and left voluntarily. Therefore, within a few weeks of arriving in Ireland, Feliks had become homeless and was sleeping on the streets. He has been homeless ever since. He either sleeps rough or has used the night bus service to access emergency accommodation.

Since losing his job, Feliks has only been able to find occasional casual work which is 'cash in hand'. His only source of income is money he earns from collecting scrap metal for recycling. He does not receive any social welfare or jobseeker's payments – when he enquired about payments, he was only offered a ticket home. He asked for an exceptional needs payment for bus transport to help look for work but this was refused. He did not return to the social and community welfare services again and did not further pursue any applications for payments or support.

The friend he had in Ireland before he moved has now returned to Poland, so most of his Irish-based friends are those he met after becoming homeless.

He has some ongoing osteopathic problems and other health problems arising from sleeping rough. He says that on a few occasions he has been attacked and stabbed on the streets. Now when he sleeps out, he sleeps on his own to avoid any trouble.

He believes that work is the single key factor that would end his homelessness, and feels that a lack of work combined with poor English language skills are the primary reasons for him becoming homeless. In spite of these difficulties, he does not wish to go home, and says that there is nothing for him in Poland. His family is aware of his situation, but he says that they are not in a position to help him.

Martyn

Martyn is a Polish man in his fifties who has been living in Ireland for seven years. He came to Ireland with his employers to carry out work on a construction contract. He worked in managerial and supervisory positions until he became jobless in April 2009 as a result of the economic downturn. His limited English skills also prevented him from gaining work.

When he first lost his job, he experienced difficulties getting social welfare payments because of language difficulties – he felt it difficult to explain his circumstances.

He reports different experiences with staff in social welfare services: some were helpful, he says, though others were not interested in hearing about his circumstances. After four attempts, he received his jobseeker's payment and supplementary welfare allowance (rent allowance) in 2010. However, he needed additional money to support his family in Poland, so in early 2011 he returned to Poland to look for work. After four months searching, and with no prospects on the horizon, he returned to Ireland in May. When he applied for social welfare payments, he was told that he had spent too long in Poland and was refused welfare.

He did not appeal this decision, nor did he further pursue the application because of his language difficulties. A friend who had previously helped him with translation in such situations had returned to Poland. Moreover, Martyn also lost some of his papers and documentation. He has no income at present.

After being refused social welfare payments in May 2011, he stayed with a Polish friend for a short while. However, once his friend returned to Poland, Martyn became homeless. Now he has no supports and no friends in Ireland. This has been his first experience of homelessness. His family in Poland are aware of his situation.

The services that he uses are food, information and day services, primarily those provided by Merchants Quay Ireland, Focus Ireland and the Capuchins. His primary concern is to get a job. However, he is very concerned about his safety: he does not use emergency accommodation because he is fearful of being attacked. He sleeps rough, but avoids sleeping at night-time. Instead he walks the streets at night and sleeps during the day, if possible. However, he has never been attacked.

In spite of submitting CVs to agencies, he has not received any responses. He says that if he does not get work soon, he will probably return to Poland.

Oscar

Oscar is a Latvian man in his twenties who has been living in Ireland for just over one and a half years. He came to Ireland with a friend, moving here from the UK. He came to live in Dublin as his girlfriend was living here.

He arrived with very little money. His family in Latvia paid for both his travel and his registration fee with an employment agency. When he first arrived, he stayed with his girlfriend in shared accommodation with several other people, but it was not viable for him to stay for more than one month. After he left his girlfriend's accommodation, he became homeless and started sleeping on the streets.

He is currently sleeping rough. This has been his first experience of homelessness. He used the night bus service on occasions, but during fine weather he preferred to sleep rough because he could have greater control of when he went to sleep for the night, whereas with the night bus, he may have had to wait until midnight or later to get a bed.

The services he accesses include food and day services, such those provided by Focus Ireland, Merchants Quay Ireland, Trust, and the Capuchins.

Occasionally he receives some money from friends in Ireland; other than this, he has no source of income as he does not receive any social welfare payments, nor has he applied for any such payment. He did, however, once look for a ticket back home to Latvia, but changed his mind and now prefers to stay in Ireland.

While his family are aware of his homeless situation in Ireland, he does not ask them for any support. His friend who arrived in Ireland around the same time as him is also homeless.

He is uncertain of his status in terms of habitual residence. He believes that he cannot apply for social welfare as he has not worked in Ireland at all.

He refers to his use of alcohol as a way of coping with homelessness, and admits that he occasionally takes drugs. He participated in an alcohol detox programme but he did not complete it.

His future plans are to participate in Safepass training. He is also awaiting court proceedings over an alleged theft of alcohol. He feels that the main obstacle to overcoming homelessness is his inability to access social welfare payments, which he feels would enable him to secure his own accommodation. He also sees the absence of work in Ireland as a key issue.

He does not plan to return to Latvia.

Henryk

Henryk is from Poland and is in his thirties. He has been living in Ireland for five years. When he first arrived in Ireland he had little information, a small amount of English, and no money.

Henryk had some prior experience of homelessness in Poland and says that things never really went well for him over there. When he arrived in Ireland he was pleased to have left Poland, as he wanted to start a new life here. When he first arrived he went to a number of different Irish cities and found short-term work and part-time work. All of the work that he did was 'cash in hand'.

Henryk believes that he became homeless for a combination of reasons, including a relationship breakdown in Poland. His family know of his experiences of homelessness in Poland and Ireland, but he has not asked them for help.

He has been mostly homeless since his arrival in Ireland, interspersed with some periods of accommodation (at times when he was in employment). However, these periods of work rarely lasted for more than a few months.

Henryk says that he has no intention of going back to Poland. He is currently undertaking a training course. His source of income is money from people on the streets.

He used to have problems with alcohol and drugs, but he says that this is no longer the case.

He says that he feels unsafe and in danger all the time, and that on one occasion someone tried to attack him with a bottle, but he managed to escape.

Cyryl

Cyryl is a Polish man in his fifties who has been living in Ireland for five years. He first came to Ireland in 2006 to try to make a living and to support his family after having separated from his wife.

He came to Ireland alone and had little information about the country before arriving, but he had enough money to live for one month. Shortly after arriving in Ireland, he found construction-related work through an employment agency; however, he lost this job after less than one year due to the recession.

One of the difficulties that Cyryl has in gaining employment is his poor English language skills. In addition to the absence of work, he feels that having no friends to rely on was a major factor leading to him becoming homeless.

He received social welfare payments (jobseeker's benefit) for eight months and was also provided with accommodation for a period of three months. When his social welfare payments ended after eight months, he says that he was told he did not have sufficient work history in Ireland and did not spend enough time looking for work here. He did not appeal the decision because he did not know that he could. At that time, the offer of support was limited to a ticket home.

When his payments ended, he became homeless. He was sleeping rough until the night bus service enabled him to access emergency accommodation. He also stayed in a squat for a short period of time. This is his first experience of homelessness, and his family are not aware that he is homeless in Ireland.

Cyryl describes the effects of homelessness as leading to depression and despair, which has sometimes led to him to drinking alcohol. He speaks of the need for homeless people to have access to counselling.

He has no regular source of income and occasionally earns money by doing odd jobs. For Cyryl, overcoming homelessness is linked to employment, which would enable him to access his own accommodation. He is registered with FÁS but is not accessing training at the moment. He is starting English classes soon.

He feels that he cannot return to Poland as he has no home there since his marriage breakdown, and he does not wish for his family to know that he has not been successful in Ireland. He also has debts in Poland for child support, and he believes that he would be pursued by the authorities if he returned.

George

George is an African man in his forties who has been living in Ireland for one and a half years. He came to Ireland to join his wife and family who had already been living here for several years. He was also fleeing political persecution in his own country. He came to Ireland with no resources and initially stayed with his wife and two children. He had not seen them for many years.

Shortly after arriving in Ireland, George and his wife separated, and this is what he believes to be the primary reason for his homelessness. It was his first experience of homelessness.

For a short period of time he stayed with a friend, and following this, some family members supported him to stay in a private hostel. After a couple of weeks, he accessed emergency accommodation through the New Communities Unit and he is now staying in this accommodation. He has been homeless for one year and five months.

He has applied for a range of payments including jobseeker's allowance, medical card and other supports, all of which were denied. The reason given was that he was not resident in Ireland for the last two years (i.e. it was assumed that he was not habitually resident). He has appealed this decision and is awaiting a response to his appeal. He is receiving a provisional payment from the New Communities Unit as well as emergency accommodation. He highly rates the services that he has received from the New Communities Unit in Gardiner Street.

George says that it was through luck that he found out about these services, and that information on services should be more widely available.

George has had health difficulties and became depressed as a result of being homeless, having no money and his marriage ending. Depression has been the greatest impact of homelessness for George, particularly when he first became homeless.

His priorities and primary needs are to secure his own accommodation (which will also enable his children to visit him) and employment. His primary barrier to overcoming homelessness is not having access to social welfare payments. He also had some health problems, but has accessed health services provided in homeless day services and in general hospitals. His ex-wife and children know about his current situation of homelessness.

George has no intention of returning to his country of origin for political reasons, and because his children are in Ireland and his foundations remain here.

Ferdynand

Ferdynand is a Polish man in his fifties who came to Ireland in 2006 to work. He also wanted to leave Poland as his marriage had ended.

After one month in Ireland Ferdynand gained work and continued working on and off for three years, primarily in the construction sector, until an accident prevented him from working further.

He initially received social welfare payments but after one and a half years, his payments were withdrawn. He says that the reason given was that he was fit for work, but he disputes this and says that his accident still affects his ability to work. When his payments stopped, he also lost the supported accommodation that he was living in and became homeless. He says that he was not given this decision in writing and was not told how he could have the case or decision reviewed or appealed.

At the time of interview he was using the night bus to access emergency accommodation. He is receiving support in his attempt to avail of social welfare payments (he is in the process of completing the Habitual Residence Condition application form). However, he is having difficulty providing evidence of his residency because of his experiences of homelessness.

Ferdynand's only source of income is from friends, particularly those who are working who sometimes give him money. He used to collect scrap metal.

He has no intention of returning to Poland as he feels that there is nothing for him there. His family are aware that he is homeless in Ireland, but he does not want his children to know.

He plans to participate in an English language course in the future. He also hopes to gain employment and has completed some training with FÁS.

Occasionally he has concerns over his safety; he has been assaulted in the past.

Augustyn

Augustyn is a Polish man in his fifties who has been living in Ireland for five years. He is currently homeless and living in emergency accommodation accessed through the night bus service.

He came to Ireland in 2006 to look for work after he had lost his job in Poland. He travelled with a friend and had €1,500. After two weeks in the country, he found work in security and was in the same position for over one year. This work was 'cash in hand' and he had no contract of employment.

When he first arrived in Ireland, he lived in a private hostel with his friend. Two months later, they stayed in a rented apartment and lived in that apartment for as long as they had money to pay the rent.

He became homeless when he had to move out of the rented apartment in 2008, after he lost his job. Initially Augustyn and his friend moved into a squat for around three months. Around this time he found work again and moved into a private hostel.

Since 2008 his jobs have generally been short-term, lasting no longer than a few months. Sometimes they have been casual or 'cash in hand' work. His accommodation has also been short-term, and he has moved between private hostels and squats.

This has been Augustyn's first experience of homelessness. He feels that the reasons that he became homeless were a lack of money to pay for rent and a lack of work to earn money.

Augustyn received jobseeker's benefits and some rent allowance for one year and three months. His jobseeker's benefit was stopped when he was told that he did not have sufficient PRSI contributions – he was attending full-time education at the time and attempted to maintain his social welfare payments, but was refused. At this point he became homeless.

He is planning to appeal this decision regarding social welfare payments with the support of a homeless organisation. He is also planning to return to full-time study with FÁS.

He has had no prior experience of homelessness. His family do not know that he is homeless in Ireland and he is reluctant to tell them, as he feels that they would encourage him to move home to Poland. At present, he does not want to return. However, if his current status does not change, he says that he will consider returning to Poland.

Simon

Simon is a young man in his thirties from the UK. He came to Ireland to be with his ex-partner and their child three years ago.

He first became homeless eight months after arriving in the country; his girlfriend asked him to leave her accommodation when he started taking drugs. The accommodation was in his girlfriend's name and his name was not on any lease. He has been homeless ever since.

Simon had previously used heroin in the UK. After he was asked to leave his girlfriend's accommodation, he stayed in private hostels in the city centre, but when his money ran out he started to stay in emergency hostels. He sees his heroin use as the main reason for his homelessness.

Since becoming homeless, one of his main difficulties has been in accessing social welfare (which took him eight months). He has recently received a medical card and is currently trying to access rent allowance.

Simon no longer takes heroin and is on a methadone programme at present. He waited a year for a place on this programme. He is also attending a full-time course.

Simon is staying in emergency accommodation which he accessed through the night bus. He is also getting support from organisations such as Focus Ireland and the Capuchins, and is currently accessing social welfare payments.

His family do not know that he has become homeless and it is something that he does not want them to know about. Simon has no intention of returning home as his child lives here. He also feels that he cannot go back to the UK as he had previously been involved in a gang, and believes that he would be drawn back into the gang against his will if he returned.

He has a number of employment skills and worked successfully in construction and cleaning services in the UK before coming to Ireland.

Francis

Francis is a 35-year-old African man. He has been living in Ireland since 1996, when he came to Ireland as an asylum seeker. He has 'Stamp 4' residency status.

After Francis lost his job in the IT sector, he stayed with his partner in her accommodation. However, the relationship broke down, and shortly afterwards he and his young daughter moved out of this accommodation and became homeless. They have been homeless for one month; they stay in emergency accommodation accessed through the New Communities Unit.

Francis believes that his main pathways into homelessness were the loss of his employment and the subsequent breakdown of his relationship.

When he lost his job and became homeless, Francis experienced difficulties in accessing social welfare and information about homeless services and entitlements. He feels that the social welfare office that he attended in Dublin did not provide him with any real guidance about what to do and where to go. He eventually came into contact with homeless services through his own internet search, rather than having been referred.

Once he had this information, he found it easier to access services. After coming into contact with the New Communities Unit in Gardiner Street, he was referred to the emergency accommodation in which he is currently staying.

He feels that his nationality was a factor in his being treated differently in the Dublin suburb that he used to live in. He plans to apply for Irish citizenship in the future.

His application for jobseeker's allowance is being processed. He is also liaising with a new social welfare office, as his area of residence has changed. He has been waiting for a response to his application for over five months. While he is awaiting a decision, he is receiving a weekly interim payment from Gardiner Street and child benefit for his daughter.

As a graduate, Francis is educated but finds it difficult to get work or even to get a response to job applications that he has made.

He hopes to get rent allowance, and that living in emergency accommodation for six months will enable him to meet criteria for this. Until he can get his own accommodation, it is difficult for his daughter to form bonds with other young people or to settle into school and other services.

This is his first experience of homelessness. His family are not aware of his situation, and many of his friends in Ireland are not aware that he is homeless. He does not have any intention to return to his country of origin, as he regards Ireland as his home.

Monica

Monica is a young African woman in her late twenties. She has lived in Ireland for over ten years. She is married with two young children. She came to Ireland in order to gain work and was originally resident on a work permit. She now has 'Stamp 4' residency status.

Monica was made redundant from her job in a shop at the end of 2010. As her husband does not have an entitlement to work in Ireland (he has Stamp 3 status), the family quickly fell into financial difficulty. Monica and her family lived in shared accommodation with friends, and were asked to leave a few months after Monica lost her job. She was not named on the lease of their accommodation.

She and her family became homeless when they left this accommodation (at the end of March 2011) and since then, they have been staying in emergency accommodation.

While Monica is in receipt of social welfare payments and child benefit, she is not in receipt of rent allowance and must stay in emergency accommodation for six months in order to qualify for this.

Monica feels that being made redundant from her job was the main reason that she became homeless. Her husband's residence status in Ireland does not allow him to work, so this makes the situation more difficult.

She recently gave birth and so will not be able to work for some time. This is her first experience of homelessness.

She notes that the services she has accessed have been very satisfactory, and the service received from Gardiner Street has been good. However, there are many services that she needs that may not be accessible to her, such as counselling support, information and advice, and social work support. She would also require support and advice for her husband to acquire Stamp 4 status so that he can work in Ireland.

Her supports come from her husband and from the church that she attends. Her family in Africa are aware of her circumstances but cannot afford to support her.

Mihails

Mihails is a Latvian man in his twenties. He has been living in Ireland for over one year.

He is currently sleeping rough, but has previously accessed emergency accommodation through the night bus service. He has no partner, children or dependents in either Latvia or Ireland.

When he came to Ireland he stayed with friends who were living here already. After two weeks he had to leave this accommodation, and since then he has been homeless.

He feels that homelessness has not had a major impact on him, and that it has not impacted on his use of alcohol, which has remained the same. He accesses the full range of day services provided by voluntary organisations, and particularly values the opportunity to share his concerns and talk to staff in these services.

His sources of income come from support from his Irish and Latvian friends. He has not applied for social welfare payments in Ireland as he has not worked here.

His family are aware that he is homeless in Dublin but they do not have the financial means to support him.

He plans to stay in Ireland in the future in order to make a life for himself and to find work. He may return to Latvia in the next two to three years depending on how things work out for him, but he has no wish to return at present.

He feels that the barrier that prevents him moving out of homelessness is his health, as he has a broken limb.

Rafał

Rafał is a Polish man in his thirties who has been living in Ireland for almost five years. When he first arrived in the country, he was relatively well prepared, financially.

He initially stayed in private hostels and then with other Polish men in an apartment, but was asked to leave on account of him drinking too much. He became homeless when his money ran out, which was approximately three months after arriving in Ireland.

When he first became homeless, he slept rough. He got work in a warehouse during this time, and for the first two weeks of his job he continued to sleep rough in a disused building. Once he was settled into his work and was receiving money, he moved into an apartment with others. However, he lost his job as a result of drinking and not arriving into work. This led to him losing his accommodation and he found himself sleeping rough again.

This was not Rafał's first experience of homelessness, having been previously homeless in Poland. He is currently staying in emergency accommodation.

Rafał has been assaulted twice while experiencing homelessness in Ireland, and was hospitalised on one occasion.

Rafał has worked in a wide range of jobs, mainly secured through an employment agency and which were generally short-term and low-paid. He got on well in all his jobs, but his drinking usually resulted in him losing his employment. As a result, he has fallen into homelessness.

He has participated in a number of residential and day programmes for alcohol addiction. After one programme, he abstained from alcohol for eight months. He says that his return to drinking occurred when he had nothing to do and was bored.

His application for jobseeker's benefit was unsuccessful, but he appealed this decision and was informed that his latest appeal has been successful. He says that he will shortly find out if his social welfare payments are to be provided on a short- or long-term basis.

Most of his family members have died, but he does have an ex-wife and children in Poland; however, he has no contact with them. Some of his extended family members are aware of his situation.

He plans to stay in Ireland. He has been offered a ticket back to Poland on numerous occasions but he has no interest in returning.

He is hopeful that he will get jobseeker's benefit. He hopes to participate in a programme to stop drinking, and to access language and technical training to improve his employment prospects.

Kacper

Kacper is a Polish man in his forties who came to Ireland approximately one and a half years ago in search of a job. He travelled alone, although he did know some Polish people in Ireland. Prior to living in Ireland, he had lived and worked in the UK.

When he first came to Ireland he stayed in a private hostel, then in a house with other Polish people. After two months his money ran out and he became homeless. He has been homeless for fifteen months, and is currently staying in emergency accommodation. He has never experienced homelessness before.

He believes that his reasons for becoming homeless were a general lack of information about living in Ireland and difficulties in gaining employment. He was not familiar with requirements for working here (e.g. needing a PPS number, Safepass and other certified training for work on construction sites). He has worked in jobs but all of these have been short-term and 'cash in hand'. Currently his only source of income is from the occasional 'cash in hand' job, e.g. washing windows. He also makes a small amount of money by translating English into Polish for some of his acquaintances.

Kacper feels that not having very good written English skills has impacted on his ability to apply for stable and regular employment, and he is planning to attend a course to improve his written English skills.

He has never applied for jobseeker's payments as he feels that he would not receive any assistance and that, as a homeless person, he would not be able to meet any of these payments' requirements or criteria.

He has spent many years outside of Poland and has no intention of returning home. His family do not know that he is homeless, nor does he want them to know.

Support needs that Kacper identified included having a place to leave his belongings and a quiet place where he can sit.

He is looking for work in different parts of Dublin city and is undertaking courses in the meantime. He has finished Safepass training and has registered with FÁS.

5. Discussion of findings

As this is a small-scale qualitative piece of exploratory research involving in-depth interviews with a relatively small number of individuals, it is important to note some limitations when discussing the findings. The population of homeless migrants in Dublin includes individuals from a range of backgrounds and different countries, and is not a homogenous group. The findings of this study therefore do not claim to be representative of all homeless migrants in Dublin.

Nonetheless, the research does present some patterns or themes that emerged in the experiences of those interviewed, and these merit consideration. Many of these themes arose in previous exploratory research undertaken on this issue⁶⁸, which indicates that these are not isolated experiences.

The majority of those interviewed in this research were long-term homeless, and of those who were long-term homeless for more than one year (eleven interviewees), nine were in receipt of no income and had not had income for the duration of their homelessness.

Moreover, of all those interviewed, only three expressed any intention of returning to their country of origin in the short- or medium-term. Of the remainder, most felt that they could not return home or, for a variety of reasons, had no home in their country of origin. This same finding has been identified in previous research, where the offer of a flight to their country of origin was not availed of, in spite of extreme hardship in Ireland.

The majority of people interviewed considered their potential pathways out of homelessness to be linked to employment and accommodation, just as their pathways into homelessness were predominantly linked to these issues. However, barriers exist in relation to these pathways out of homelessness.

5.1 Employment and training

The main reason for coming to Ireland for the majority of those interviewed was to seek employment, although many had limited English. Some of the interviewees gained work in sectors that have been particularly affected by the economic downturn (e.g. construction), and their age disadvantaged them in labour market terms (almost half were over 45 years old).

Those interviewed face significant and multiple barriers in addressing the core issues affecting them. Access to education and training is not a realistic option for those who have limited English. According to service providers consulted as part of this research, access to English language classes is limited, particularly English language skills for those with some knowledge, and participation on FÁS courses requires a competency in English that many homeless migrants do not have. There is also limited funding available for English language classes, and

⁶⁸ For example, Bergin, E. and Lalor, T. (2006): *Away from Home and Homeless: Quantification and Profile of EU-10 Nationals using homeless services and recommendations to address their needs*. Dublin: Homeless Agency

support for intermediate English classes is especially limited. Other training courses available are not tailored to the needs of homeless migrants and there are practical barriers that can undermine participation; for example, according to one service consulted, places on training courses are allocated to a named individual and are not transferable to other individuals.

While individual assessment for training is an important factor in allocating training places, closer collaboration between training providers, particularly community-based services such as the Local Employment Services (LES) and homeless day services, could enhance access to training by homeless migrants as well as enabling some transferability of places on courses where capacity arises.

Moreover, the period of time between registration and access to courses can be up to two months, and this can militate against participation and indicates a need for more responsive services for those homeless. On this basis, it would appear that the opportunities for up-skilling are not significant, which undermines access to the labour market. One voluntary organisation consulted made the point that, in its experience, training programmes have led to employment for homeless migrants in a number of instances in recent months.

This research also indicates that a significant issue for homeless migrants is a lack of structured activity and focus to their day. Access to training and labour market mechanisms (including work experience), and participation in community activities was identified as a key need amongst interviewees and service providers alike. This points to the need for policy measures and responses targeted at this group and their labour market requirements. This could be explored through collaboration between homeless services, training providers and community organisations to develop strategies for this group, as well as for the indigenous homeless population. This would need to be underpinned by policy commitments to support homeless migrants in this regard.

5.2 Accommodation and income

While most of those interviewed had accessed emergency accommodation, this was on a once-off basis (at the time of the interviews), repeated each night through access to the night bus. At a most simple level, homeless migrants therefore have limited access to supports offered by homeless accommodation services as well as other supports, such as places to put their belongings and a base from which to plan their future activities.

The Charlemont Street emergency accommodation service, which allows homeless migrants to access accommodation on an ongoing basis without having to register with the free-phone service each night, is a very positive move and addresses (on a temporary basis) some of the issues that were outlined by those interviewed. The capacity of this service was increased in September 2011 to provide 5 additional beds for persons who are not compliant with the HRC.

It is also important to note the recent shift in policy by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive away from one-night accommodation for people accessing

emergency accommodation through the free-phone, as discussed in Section 2.4.2 above. Persons who are experiencing homelessness and accessing emergency accommodation through the free-phone number will now be placed in temporary accommodation for an initial period of up to seven days and the provision of accommodation on a one-night-only basis will be reduced. However, those who are *not* compliant with the HRC will only be provided with emergency response/temporary accommodation on a one-night basis and *may* be provided with temporary accommodation for up to seven nights. They will be required to present to the New Communities Unit so that their eligibility for long-term accommodation options can be assessed.

Some of those interviewed were accessing ongoing emergency accommodation in the suburbs of Dublin, but they appeared to be isolated from supports, such as counselling and community-based social work, that may be available in the city centre. As family accommodation is located in the suburbs, it is important that community-based services ensure that those homeless within their communities are proactively targeted for supports.

Access to income and long-term accommodation is a need that exists and yet remains unaddressed. Most interviewees who had applied for social welfare payments were told that they were ineligible for means-tested payments. And while the majority of them were unaware of their residency status and whether the Habitual Residence Condition was a factor in their refusal, some had been informed that, because they did not have two years continuous residency in Ireland, they were not entitled to payments. Other interviewees stated that they were just offered a ticket back to their home country (repatriation) and did not pursue appeals or formal applications.

Lack of awareness and information about the complex social welfare system in Ireland also arose for many people who do not have full fluency and literacy in English. Even for those who do have fluency and literacy skills, the application of the social welfare and community welfare system in the suburbs of Dublin appeared to differ from that received in the city centre. This points to the need for continued support for advocacy and information services to assist people in making applications, appeals (particularly given the high rate of success with appeals⁶⁹), and in navigating the social and community welfare systems. 42% of appeals are ultimately granted and, according to FLAC, the high rate of successful appeals 'does not reflect very well on the standard of the initial decisions, though it probably reflects in some cases the difficulty the applicants had in filling in the forms in the first place'⁷⁰.

It could be argued that information and advocacy support could provide a saving to the State, as it may result in more comprehensive applications and may avert

⁶⁹ There has been a significant increase in the number of appeals received by the Social Welfare Appeals Office between 2007 (when the intake was 14,070) and 2010 (when the intake rose to 32,432). The Department estimates some 30,000 appeals will be lodged in 2011. 42% of appeals are ultimately granted, which is a very high rate of successful appeals. Source: *Dáil debates, Wednesday 30th March 2011* (Social Welfare Appeals). <http://www.kildarestreet.com/debates/?id=2011-03-30.292.0&s=speaker%3A5+section%3Adebates>. Accessed 9th November 2011

⁷⁰ Michael Farrell, Senior Solicitor, Free Legal Advice Centre: 'National Mechanisms for the Protection of Social Welfare Rights', Paper presented at *Law Society and Irish Human Rights Commission Annual Conference – Economy, Social and Cultural Rights: Making States Accountable, 21st November 2009*

cases going to appeal. At the time of completing this research, a profiling exercise of those staying in the Charlemont Street hostel was being undertaken, which gives an indication of how many people were not accessing or applying for welfare and State supports.

Service providers consulted as part of this research also commented on how there can be different interpretations or applications of criteria for accessing certain welfare payments, in particular the Habitual Residence Condition. They also make the point that they have experienced HRC applications being granted and then overturned in different social welfare offices, contrary to the 'once and done' policy implemented by the Department of Social Protection. This policy states that:

If a person has been found to satisfy the HRC on a different scheme (assuming the applicant is not exempted from HRC for the purpose of that scheme), then that decision will stand unless it is clear that it was an incorrect decision in the light of new evidence or that there has been a significant change of circumstances since it was given. Once and done therefore does not mean that only one decision is required – in fact for every claim made there must be a corresponding decision, but a previous decision on habitual residence should carry through to subsequent claims without the need to re-examine all the factors unless there was a significant change in circumstance since a new application was made⁷¹.

Moreover, a number of service providers and voluntary organisations pointed to an inconsistency in the application of the Habitual Residence Condition. They knew of cases where individuals who had been deemed habitually resident had their status changed after having left the country for less than one month.

5.3 Conclusion

Many of the issues and themes identified by the homeless migrants in this research are consistent with previous research on the subject. The pathways to homelessness for many interviewees were related to employment and income, which reflects previous research undertaken by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive, such as *Away from Home and Homeless* (2006). However, unlike previous research, almost three-quarters of those interviewed in this study had experienced homelessness on a long-term basis.

In general, the degree of social exclusion that people face because of their limited eligibility for services (including emergency accommodation), lack of social networks and isolation, lack of access to training and education, lack of English language skills, and lack of general familiarity with the system of social welfare compounds their current difficulties. The findings of this research show that many homeless migrants have no intention of returning to their country of

⁷¹ Department of Social Protection (2011): *Habitual Residence Condition: Guidelines for Deciding Officers on the determination of Habitual Residence*. Dublin: Department of Social Protection

origin in the foreseeable future, in spite of the issues and destitution that they face in Ireland.

A summary of the range of barriers that arise for homeless migrants is presented below:

Contextual barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline in employment • Emphasis on certification and qualifications in certain sectors • Lack of specific policies around (access to) targeted employment and training for homeless migrants, as well as the general homeless population
Institutional barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited support around access to entitlements • Eligibility limitations for social welfare • Conditions for accessing training programmes
Information barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness of entitlements or residency status • Literacy and language barriers to information on social welfare or training and education provision
Situational barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness as a barrier to participation
Personal barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age as a labour market barrier • Lack of social networks • Alcohol/addiction problems

6. Recommendations

This research has examined the experiences of a small group of homeless migrants in Dublin and the services gaps and limitations that they encounter. Many of the issues and themes identified by the research participants and presented in this study are consistent with previous research findings, such as *Away from home and homeless* (2009) and *Making a Home in Ireland* (2009).

Due to the small number of homeless migrants that were interviewed for this study, it is acknowledged that the findings are not representative of all homeless migrants in Dublin. Notwithstanding this limitation, the findings do provide an insight into the personal experiences and pathways of the fifteen individuals interviewed, as well as the various barriers and blockages that they have experienced in accessing services, social welfare payments and accommodation.

Fifteen recommendations have been developed from this research, based on the findings of this study, previous research conducted on migrant homelessness, and the experiences of homeless organisations that provide services to migrants. A monitoring and review group should be established to ensure that the recommendations adopted from this study are implemented.

Application of the Habitual Residence Condition

1. It is evident that a limited number of migrants currently residing in homeless accommodation are unlikely to become HRC compliant under current criteria and are not entitled to social welfare payments. Consideration should be given to appropriate policy responses to resolve this issue, including a supported programme of reconnection and reintegration to countries of origin. A considerable number of migrants who are not HRC compliant have an attachment to Ireland and have no desire to return to their country of origin. The Cross-Departmental Team on Homelessness, in consultation with homeless organisations, should develop appropriate policy responses to address these people's needs if they choose not to return to their country of origin and are living in destitution in Ireland.
2. There should be a more consistent approach across social welfare offices towards the interpretation and implementation of the HRC and the provision of information to homeless migrants.
3. Homeless organisations should compile case studies of their service-users' HRC and welfare application and appeal decisions in order to monitor consistency and quality of applications, appeals and decisions.
4. HRC decisions from the social welfare appeals office should be published to ensure that applicants can identify criteria they must meet and to ensure transparency, consistency and confidence in the process.

Emergency accommodation and advocacy/information services

5. In the case where an appeal for residency status is pending, homeless migrants should, at a minimum, continue to have access to temporary emergency accommodation.
6. In line with the Government's homeless strategy *The Way Home*, access to support for those living in emergency accommodation outside of Dublin city centre should be reviewed and monitored. This research indicates that those staying in emergency accommodation in the suburbs may not have access to a range of information and other family supports that are available in the city centre.
7. All homeless services should be able to provide a basic level of independent advocacy and information support to homeless migrants in their applications for social welfare and supplementary welfare allowance payments. An advice and advocacy support resource/expert with in-depth legal and social welfare knowledge should be available to advocates in homeless services.

Training for staff and migrants

8. All front-line and supervisory staff should receive inter-cultural and diversity training. This should be part of ongoing professional development. The Dublin Region Homeless Executive should manage the delivery of this training. State agencies and homeless organisations should undertake a whole organisation approach to inter-culturalism⁷².
9. Consideration should be given to the delivery of briefing/information sessions, specifically on the needs and entitlements of homeless migrants, on a joint basis by voluntary homeless services and the New Communities Unit. These briefing sessions could be provided to staff in social welfare offices outside of Dublin city to ensure that the expertise gained by examining the circumstances of homeless migrants in the city centre is shared and disseminated. This should be resourced by the Department of Social Protection.
10. The language needs of homeless migrants should be an integral part of their support plan. Access to English language and general training could be enhanced by greater co-ordination between State and community training services (e.g. Local Employment Services) and homeless service providers. Referral, assessment and access protocols should be developed to enable easier access to a wider range of training programmes for homeless migrants.
11. Homeless migrants need access to labour market opportunities. The Dublin Region Homeless Executive's Training, Education and Employment (TEE) Network should ensure that TEE initiatives are accessible to migrants who may have limited English language skills.

⁷² National Consultative Committee on Racism and Inter-culturalism '*Guidelines for developing a whole organisation approach to address racism and support inter-culturalism*'.

Monitoring and review

12. Representatives from homeless organisations working with migrants; the four Dublin local authorities; Dublin Region Homeless Executive; Department of Environment, Community and Local Government; and the Department of Social Protection should liaise on a formal basis to discuss the issues facing homeless migrants regarding their accommodation, social welfare entitlements and access to services, and lobby for and implement change accordingly.
13. Homeless service providers should be aware of the needs of homeless migrants, and adapt and develop their services to meet their changing needs.
14. The Dublin Region Homeless Executive should convene a group to monitor the scale and needs of homeless migrants in Dublin. This group should develop an implementation plan that is outcomes-based and accountable in order to meet the identified needs of homeless migrants.

Further research

15. Consideration should be given to further research with a wider cohort of migrants, including those at risk of homelessness, those currently homeless and those who have moved out of homelessness, to capture a broader range of experiences and to assist in identifying further interventions to establish pathways out of homelessness. Comparative analysis with interventions undertaken across other jurisdictions, e.g. other EU countries, would also add to the body of knowledge on this issue and help to inform practice in Ireland.

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Appendix 1: European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS)

Conceptual Category	Operational Category		Living Situation		Generic Definition
ROOFLESS	1	People Living Rough	1.1	Public space or external space	Living in the streets or public spaces, without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters
	2	People in emergency accommodation	2.1	Night shelter	People with no usual place of residence who make use of overnight shelter, low threshold shelter
HOUSELESS	3	People in accommodation for the homeless	3.1	Homeless hostel Temporary accommodation Transitional supported accommodation	Where the period of stay is intended to be short-term
			3.2		
			3.3		
	4	People in Women's Shelter	4.1	Women's shelter accommodation	Women accommodated due to experience of domestic violence and where the period of stay is intended to be short-term
	5	People in accommodation for immigrants	5.1	Temporary accommodation / reception centres Migrant workers accommodation	Immigrants in reception or short-term accommodation due to their immigrant status
			5.2		
	6	People due to be released from institutions	6.1	Penal institutions	No housing available prior to release Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing No housing identified (e.g. by 18 th birthday)
6.2			Medical institutions ⁷³		
6.3			Children's institutions / homes		
7	People receiving longer-term support (due to homelessness)	7.1	Residential care for older homeless people Supported accommodation (for formerly homeless people)	Long-stay accommodation with care for formerly homeless people (normally more than one year)	
		7.2			
INSECURE	8	People living in insecure accommodation	8.1	Temporarily with family/friends	Living in conventional housing but not the usual or place of residence due to lack of housing Occupation of dwelling with no legal tenancy; illegal occupation of a dwelling Occupation of land with no legal rights
			8.2	No legal (sub)tenancy	
			8.3	Illegal occupation of land	
	9	People living under threat of eviction	9.1	Legal orders enforced (rented)	Where orders for eviction are operative Where mortgagor has legal order to re-possess
			9.2	Repossession orders (owned)	
	10	People living under threat of violence	10.1	Police recorded incidents	Where police action is taken to ensure place of safety for victims of domestic violence

⁷³ Includes drug rehabilitation institutions, psychiatric hospitals etc.

Conceptual Category	Operational Category		Living Situation		Generic Definition
INADEQUATE	11	People living in temporary / non-conventional structures	11.1	Mobile homes	Not intended as place of usual residence Makeshift shelter, shack or shanty Semi-permanent structure, hut or cabin
			11.2	Non-conventional building	
			11.3	Temporary structure	
	12	People living in unfit housing	12.1	Occupied dwellings unfit for habitation	Defined as unfit for habitation by national legislation or building regulations
	13	People living in extreme overcrowding	13.1	Highest national norm of overcrowding	Defined as exceeding national density standard for floor-space or useable rooms

Appendix 2: Interview Schedule for Migrant Interviews

Introduction Guidelines

Thank you for meeting with us today. We are researchers working with Focus Ireland and the Immigrant Council of Ireland. We are completing research with people from countries outside Ireland who are homeless to gather information on their experiences.

We feel that your experience of homelessness in Dublin can help our understanding of the needs of migrants who are homeless in Dublin.

The information you give us will be very valuable and will help Focus Ireland and the Immigrant Council of Ireland to work and lobby for improved services for migrants.

The interview today should take about an hour to complete. During the interview we will discuss topics like your experience of homelessness in Ireland, your support needs, your experience of accessing services, and your future plans.

We will also ask you some background information, such as your age, your education to date, and your work history. This information will help us to build a profile of the people that we interview in this study.

We would ask you to be as open and honest as you can, but we also want to make sure that you are comfortable talking about certain topics. You can decide to end the interview at any time. You can also decide not to answer particular questions, and not to provide information on any topics if you do not want to.

Before we start we need your permission to record the interview. We like to record interviews to make sure that we are capturing what you say correctly. It is also very hard to write notes about what you are saying and to concentrate on what you are saying at the same time – this can lead to us missing something important that you have said. If you want to stop the recording at any time, please just let us know.

All of the information you give us today is confidential and only us and the research team will have access to it. The information you give us will be written up in a report. All real names and any other details that may identify you will be taken out of the report so that anyone reading it will not know who you are. The recording of the interview will be destroyed after the report has been written.

We would also like you to sign a consent form to say that you agree to take part in the research. The form explains that the information you give us is confidential. If you are happy to take part in the interview please sign your name. Once again we would like to thank you for giving us your time and agreeing to be part of this research, your contribution is much appreciated.

Are you happy with the above information? Are you happy that the interview proceeds with me at this time, or would you like another person to be present? Do you have any questions that you would like to ask at this stage?

Interviewer	Code	Location	Date
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1. Personal Details:

Gender Male Female

Date of Birth ___/___/___ Age _____

Where are you from?

Poland	<input type="checkbox"/>	UK	<input type="checkbox"/>
Latvia	<input type="checkbox"/>	Romanian Roma	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nigeria	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

What type of accommodation are you currently staying at?

Emergency hostel for homeless people	<input type="checkbox"/>	Squat/unauthorised occupation	<input type="checkbox"/>
B & B for homeless people	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refuge	<input type="checkbox"/>
With friends/relatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sleeping rough (streets/parks)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Which – if any - of the following services for homeless people have you used? (Tick all responses that apply)

Night bus service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency accommodation/hostel	<input type="checkbox"/>
Domestic violence refuge	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information/advice centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day centre for homeless people	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homeless Persons Unit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment and Placement Unit (since January 2011)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have a partner and/or dependent children? (specify)

Are they in Ireland with you? _____

Status in Ireland

Are you resident in Ireland? Yes No

If so, do you know what your resident status is? _____

Education history

Did you enrol in secondary school? Yes No

Did you complete secondary school? Yes No

At what age did you leave school? _____

Work history

Do you work now? Yes No

What type of work do you do now/when you last worked? _____

How would you describe your ethnic background:

What language(s) do you speak?

How well do you speak these languages (e.g. fluent, good, average, beginner)?

2. Themes and areas for discussion:

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE FIRST TIME YOU CAME TO IRELAND?

- When was this?
- What were your reasons for coming to Ireland?
- Did you come to Ireland alone or with others? If with others, who?
- How did you find it when you first arrived?
- Did you have enough money to live in Ireland when you first came?
- Had you already found a job in Ireland before you arrived?
- Did you live in other parts of Ireland other than Dublin?
- What was life like for you when you first came?

CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT WHERE YOU LIVED BEFORE YOU BECAME HOMELESS?

- Were you living in your own accommodation in Ireland before you became homeless?
- How long were you living there?
- Were you living alone or with others? If yes, who?
- Can you describe the accommodation and its quality?
- Did you have a lease with a landlord?

CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT WHEN YOU FIRST BECAME HOMELESS?

- When did you first become homeless?
- Can you describe the events that led up to you becoming homeless?
- What do you believe are the main reasons for you becoming homeless?
- Had you ever experienced homelessness before in your country of origin? If yes, can you tell us about prior experiences?
- Where did you go to for support when you first became homeless in Ireland and where did you stay?
- What services did you go to for information, social welfare, housing support, etc.?
- Did you experience any difficulties getting services or support? What types of difficulties were these?
- Did you find accommodation after this experience? If yes, can you tell us how this happened and how you became homeless again?

CURRENT EXPERIENCES AND SITUATION

- What is your situation at the moment?
- How long have you been homeless?
- What kinds of supports do you need?

- Is your family (e.g. partner, children, siblings, etc.) living with you? What are their support needs?
- What types of supports are you receiving (*for example, housing, information, social welfare, education/training, medical, other*)?
- Where are you getting these supports? What services/organisations do you go to?
- How did you hear about these supports and these organisations?
- Have you ever been refused a service?
- Can you tell us about when this happened, and what reasons you were given why?
- Has language ever been a barrier for you in getting support?
- Do you feel that you have ever been treated differently to others, because of your nationality, or cultural/ethnic background?
- Do you have any fears around your personal safety or the safety of your family/friends?
- Have you ever been threatened or attacked?

COPING SUPPORTS

- How do you cope with being homeless?
- Who do you turn to for support?
- Does your extended family know about your current situation? If no, why not?
- If yes, do they provide any support for you?
- Has your extended family or friends had similar experiences of homelessness in Ireland or elsewhere?
- Of the people that you came to Ireland with, have any of them experienced similar difficulties?
- How do you feel homelessness has impacted on you (*for example, confidence, relationships with other people, feelings of depression, use of alcohol, drugs, etc*)?

INCOME

- What are your sources of income?
- Have you applied for social welfare payments? If yes, can you tell us a bit about the experience? If no, can you tell us the reasons why?
- What was the outcome of your application?
- Have you ever been refused a social welfare payment?
- If refused, what reasons were you given for the refusal? (*for example, did the Habitual Residence Condition apply?*)
- Did you get a letter explaining the refusal?
- Were you aware that you could appeal the decision? If yes, did you appeal the decision and date you appealed decision?

HEALTH STATUS

- Can you tell me whether you have any physical health problems? (*for example, physical health issues such as dental problems, problems with joints and bones, headaches etc.*)
- Do you have any health conditions (*for example, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, asthma*)?
- If yes, do you go to a GP, hospital, clinic, homeless day services to get support around these?
- Have you ever had any difficulty accessing medical services?

- Do you suffer from depression or mental health problems (*for example, do you ever feel very fearful or very confused*)? If yes, where do you go to for support with these problems?
- Do you have any problems or difficulties with addiction, for example, alcohol, drug use or gambling? If yes, how long have you had these difficulties?
- Have you ever looked for support or received any help around these in Ireland?
- If yes, can you tell me about what happened?

FUTURE PLANS

- What are your future plans in relation to living in Ireland?
- What do you believe are the barriers to you overcoming homelessness? (*for example, availability of housing, quality of housing, finance to support housing, discrimination*).
- Is there anything that you would like to see changed about services?
- Have you ever been offered the opportunity to return to your country of origin (e.g. cost of travel home)?
- Where did this offer come from?
- Did you ever consider returning to your country of origin? Why/why not?

I would like to thank you again for taking part in this interview. I'd like to ask you if there is anything else that you would like to discuss that we have not covered in the interview?

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In order to protect the identity of research participants
the photograph in this document is of a volunteer.



Creating
homes
together



