

Access to autonomous housing for beneficiaries of international protection in Ireland

Keire Murphy and Amy Stapleton
European Migration Network Ireland



Who are we talking about?

- Beneficiaries of international protection (recognised refugees)

Arrived in
Ireland



Applied for
asylum
(asylum seeker)



Positive decision
(recognised
refugee)

- Entitlements
 - Same as Irish citizens
- Material reception conditions end on receipt of status
- IPAS policy:
 - Don't evict directly into homeless accommodation
 - Transfers to emergency accommodation after 12 months (single) or 24 months (families) with status

Who are we not talking about?

- Beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine
- International protection applicants (asylum seekers) (mostly)
- Resettled refugees

- EMN-level inform: published January 2024
- National report:
 - Desk research
 - Stakeholder interviews
 - Consultations
- 12 stakeholders interviewed
- Consultation with 20+ external stakeholders (departments, NGOs, local authorities, researchers)

What is autonomous housing?

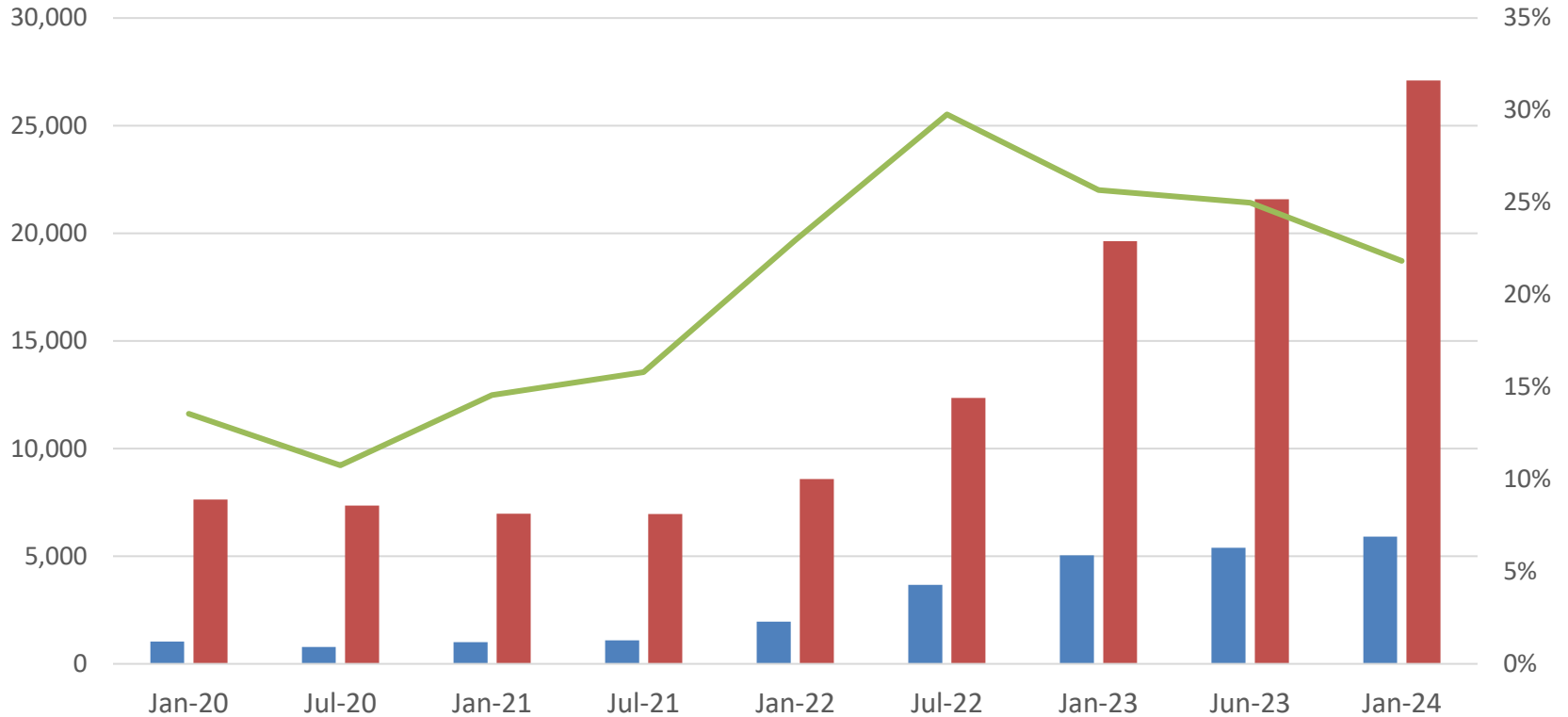
- Any housing solution outside of the reception system (IPAS)
- Social housing, state supported, completely private

- Outcomes
- Challenges/barriers
- Good practices
- Policy implications

Outcomes

How big is the problem?

Recognised refugees in IPAS accommodation, and % of total, 2020-2024



■ BIPs in IPAS accommodation

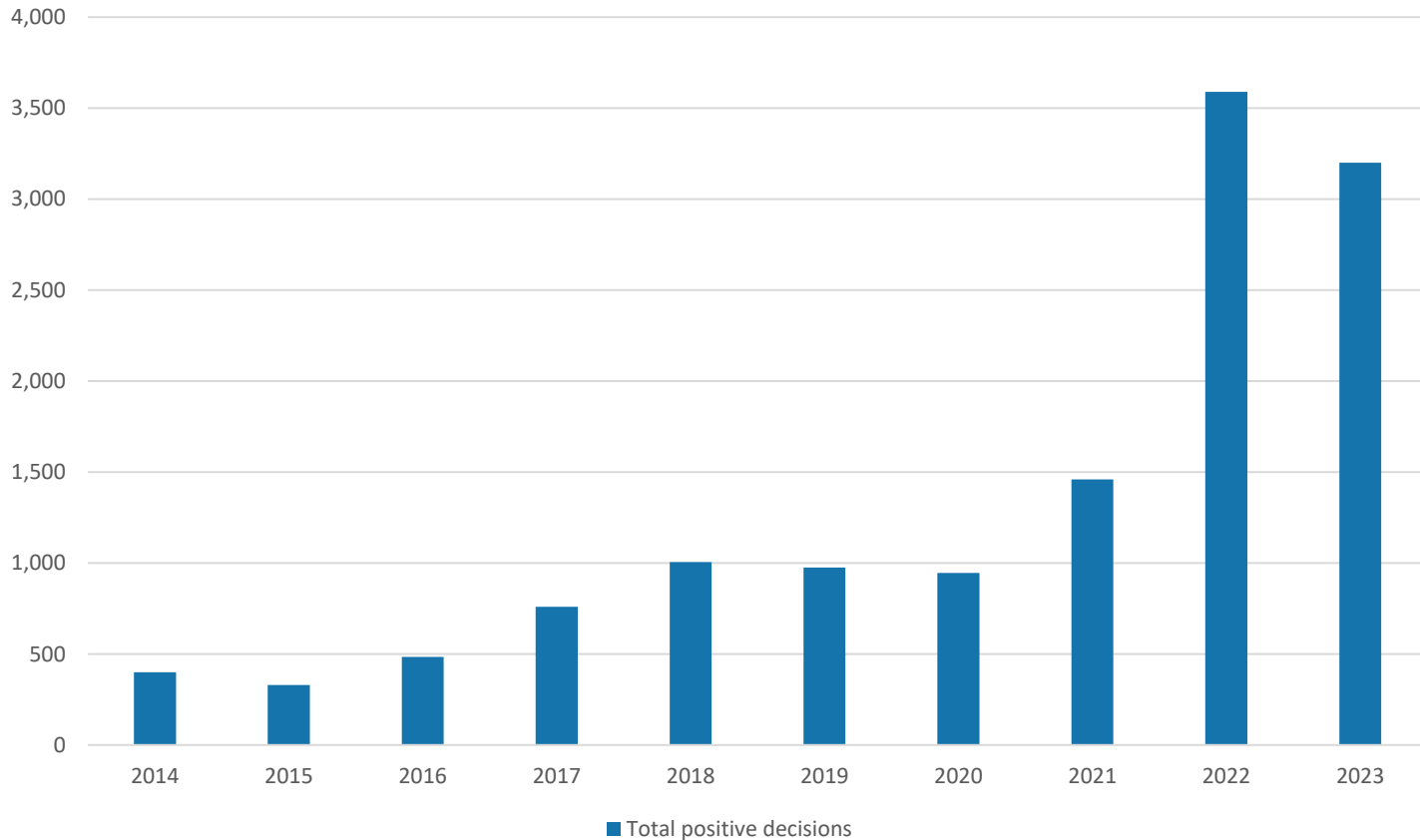
■ Total in IPAS accommodation

— % with status in IPAS accommodation

Source: Correspondence with DCEDIY, February 2024; DCEDIY (2024) 'IPAS Monthly Statistics January 2024'.

What is driving the increase?

First instance decisions on international protection applications 2014-2023



Source: Eurostat (2024) 'First-instance decisions on applications by citizenship, age and sex – Annual aggregated data', extracted 1 March 2024.



Funded by
the European Union



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice

www.emn.ie

[@EMNIreland](https://twitter.com/EMNIreland)

[in European Migration Network \(EMN\) Ireland](https://www.linkedin.com/company/european-migration-network-ireland)

Can recognised refugees access autonomous housing?

- Problem: no mechanism to track
- Significant challenges
 - Most NGOs: no meaningful access – housing market
 - Indicative of wider problem
 - Worse in recent years (since 2019)
- Some can exit:
 - 2,000 left IPAS in 2023
 - 14% in IPAS with status for over 2 years (Jan 2024)

Is housing adequate for those who have access?

- Mainstream mechanisms
 - Many inspected houses don't meet standards
- Stakeholders:
 - Poor housing outcomes: suitability, tenancy, quality
 - Vulnerable situations: sleeping on couches, homelessness accommodation

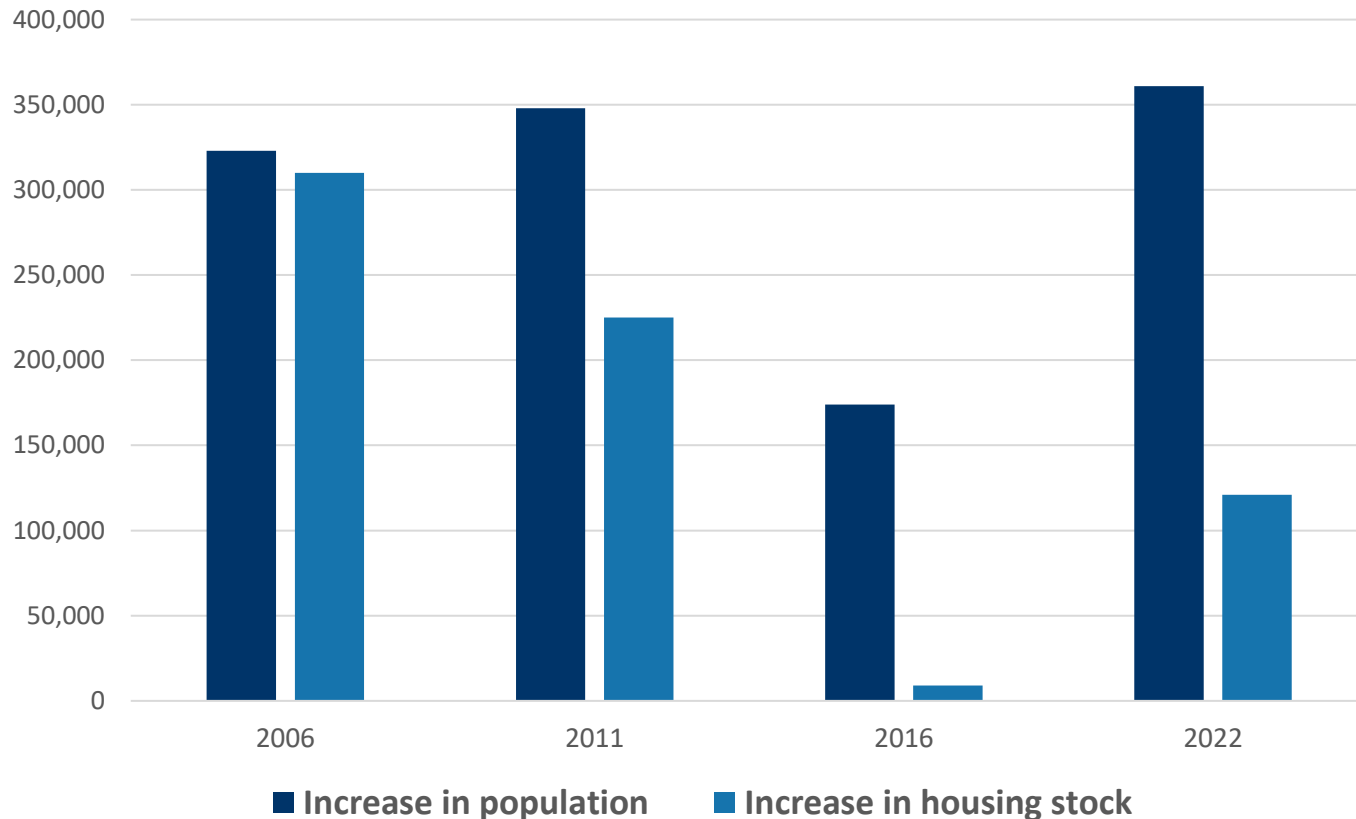
Challenges/barriers

Challenges/barriers

- Mainstream barriers
- Barriers specific to the group

1. Housing market

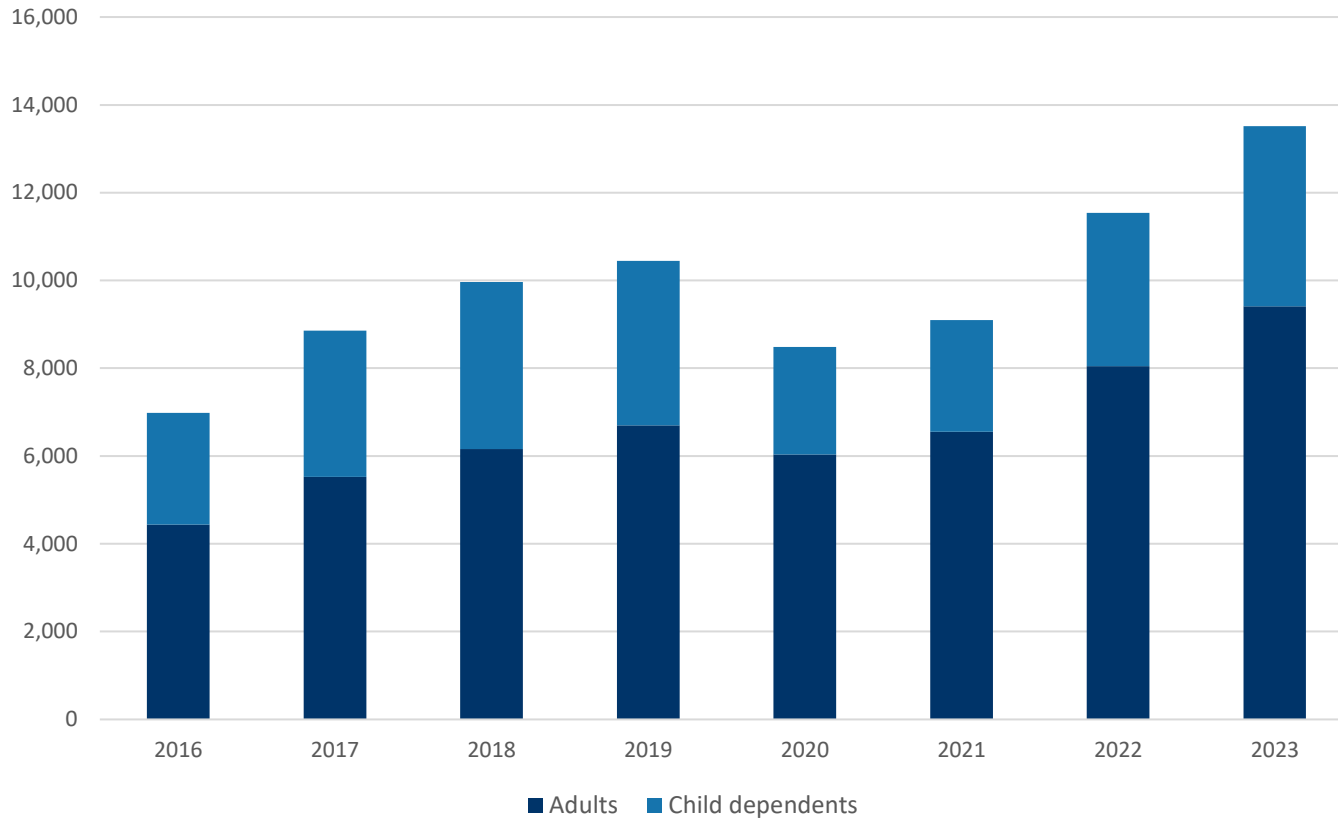
Change in population and housing stock from previous census period, 2006-2022



Source: Folan, D. (2022). Spending Review 2022. An Overview of the Housing Agency. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage vote Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. Government of Ireland.

1. Housing market

People accessing local government emergency homeless accommodation in Ireland, 2016-2023 NB: not all homelessness



Source: DHLGH, November Homeless reports 2016–2023.

1. Housing market

- Reliance on private sector for social housing
- High competition and additional disadvantages
 - Language barriers, lack of information, unusual documentation
 - Scope for discrimination, difficult to prove discrimination
- Supports more labour-intensive

2. Adequacy of support services

- Government services
 - HAP: availability within rental limits, need for top-up payments
 - Simon Communities December 2023:
 - 33 properties to rent within HAP limits across 16 urban, suburban and some rural areas analysed
 - 9 of 16 areas, no properties
 - RTB survey: 88% on rent support pay top-up
 - Entitled to Homeless HAP
 - Overburdened services (social housing, homeless)
 - Lack of translation services

2. Adequacy of support services

- NGO services
 - DCEDIY commissioned: Depaul/Peter McVerry Trust
 - Increased resources 2023 – 32 caseworkers, entire country
 - 185 people (112 households)/caseworker
 - Other NGO support services
 - Increase in numbers, little or no increase in resources
 - Geographic discrepancy

3. Administrative barriers

- Lack of knowledge/clarity re rights and entitlements
 - Questions on immigration history
 - Asked for documents they are exempt from providing
 - Local authorities: high turnover, recruitment challenges
- Local connection test
 - Only entitled to apply in one local authority
 - At discretion of local authority to assess for social housing
 - Many want to move: opportunities, connections
 - 2019 memo, but non-binding
 - Application to emergency homelessness accommodation

4. Coordination/collaboration between different actors

- IPAS/local authorities
 - Context: IPAS transfers
 - Often after transfer and refusal
 - Told by each that within remit of the other
- Different approaches by different local authorities
 - Application of local connection test
 - Social housing
 - Homelessness Accommodation
 - Approach to reunified families

5. Family reunification

- Raised repeatedly as a challenge
‘Families are inevitably arriving into homelessness’ (Irish Refugee Council interview)
- What are reunified families?
- No advance planning
 - Local authorities not officially informed
 - Can’t make PPSN appointments in advance
 - Can’t register on social housing lists in advance
 - No facility to mark on refugee’s social housing application
- Administrative barriers: not on social housing lists, can be reluctant to provide with emergency accommodation

6. International protection system

- Dispersal

‘Where people are located matters: you have to consider their future and opportunities’ (Local authority interviewee)

- Lack of long-term strategic planning on initial dispersal
 - Services, availability of housing
 - Employment or education opportunities
- Length of process: integration
- IPAs not included in housing targets
 - Different family compositions

Good practices

Good practices

- White Paper on Ending Direct Provision
 - Addresses several barriers related to:
 - Employment, social networks, English language, connections with government services, knowledge of the system
 - Integration from day one approach
 - Local authority integration teams
 - 4 permanent positions funded per local authority
 - Improved coordination
 - No formal role in accommodation – can support through guidance and improve integration outcomes
 - Transition services

Good practices

- Wraparound supports
 - On integration needs, education, healthcare, psychological supports...
 - Provision of transition services
 - E.g. Peter McVerry Trust/ Depaul
 - High-quality family hubs

- Wraparound supports
 - Resettled refugees model: potential to improve housing and integration outcomes
 - Multistakeholder approach
 - Positive aspects include:
caseworkers, early orientation and continued support (18 months), interpretation services, facilitating access to employment early on (first year).

Good practices

- Coordination
 - Multiagency/ multistakeholder approach
 - Can look holistically at the short-, medium- and long-term needs
 - Community response forums - Support a coordinated civil society and local governance response
 - Inter-departmental working groups
 - Cabinet Committee on Humanitarian Response to Ukraine - whole-of-government response to the arrival of BOTPs
 - Formal agreements and protocols to underpin collaboration – sustainability

Conclusion & Policy Implications

Conclusion

- Double challenge:
 - Mainstream
 - Developing capacity for inward migration
- Quick fixes and long-term approaches

- Wraparound supports
 - Resourcing
 - Ireland unusual in providing targeted supports largely through NGOs
 - European examples: individual integration plans, transitional housing in separate centres with extensive supports, training social workers to support recognised refugees

- Frontline staff
 - Capacity building
 - Communication and information provision
 - Sufficient resourcing
- Family reunification
 - Coordination, planning, communication

Questions?



www.emn.ie



[@EMNIreland](https://twitter.com/EMNIreland)



[European Migration Network \(EMN\) Ireland](https://www.linkedin.com/company/european-migration-network-ireland/)



Subscribe to our newsletter

Join the conversation: #EMNMigration #EMNIreland