Under The Radar

Unveiling Hidden Homelessness Across the Island of Ireland

Contents

Introduction

Homelessness is profoundly traumatic for the individual or family who experience it, and that trauma can have life changing consequences and in many cases it could be prevented.

While an individual crisis can lead to a person or family having to present to a Housing Authority, frontline experience and a growing body of international research tells us that the at the core of homelessness is the fundamental issue of access to secure, affordable housing.

In the absence of an appropriate level of supply of secure affordable homes, the homelessness crisis both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland is continuing to deepen. That requires us to think strategically about how we direct support and recourses to those experiencing homelessness.

Many people experiencing homelessness do not show up in official statistics. Often staying with friends or relatives, 'sofa surfing', living in severely overcrowded conditions, squatting, not connected to support services and not visible or 'hidden' from the systems designed to support them.

To deliver effective supports that can address homelessness, it is crucial to have a deeper understanding of its dynamic nature. This will help us prevent it before it happens or address it in its earlier stages. One critical aspect that we need to focus on is gaining a better understanding of 'hidden homelessness' including its nature and scale. With this knowledge, we can work to build systems of support that can more effectively tackle the homelessness crisis.

We strongly believe that the research poll we jointly commissioned from Ireland Thinks and Lucid Talks has shed light onto those hidden experiences of homelessness. While we welcome the important findings as outlined below, the report itself is not the solution but an important step on the journey to end homelessness. That understanding, we believe, has the potential to be built upon and deliver positive outcomes for those at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Background to the research

Introduction

The purpose of this piece of research is to understand the issue of hidden homelessness. We evaluate this through a set of polling questions aimed at breaking it down and measuring the scale of the problem. In this section we explain the background to the issue of hidden homelessness.

Pathways to homelessness

Individual, interpersonal and structural factors all play a role in driving homelessness. These are, firstly, structural factors, including existing housing market and labour market conditions; secondly, individual- level factors such as demographic characteristics (e.g. educational attainment) and personal vulnerabilities such as substance abuse can cause certain individuals to be more susceptible; and finally, interpersonal factors such as the exacerbating influence of relationship breakdown, or the (in)ability of one's family or wider social network to offer a safety net.

Between 2014 and 2020 the Northern Ireland Housing Executive & Department for Communities collected data on just over 110,000 reasons why people presented to the Executive asking for housing supports. Structural reasons were immediately apparent: 'Accomodation not reasonable' accounted for 22%, 'loss of rental accommodation' (14%) and 'mortgage default' (1%).

Interpersonal reasons were also clear: 'sharing disputes' (22%), 'marital breakdown' (9%), 'domestic violence' (5%), 'neighbour harassment' (8%), and 'intimidation' (3%).

In some sense, the pathway to homelessness can be seen as structural in either a direct or indirect manner. In the direct sense, one's inability to pay rent or a mortgage can force people directly into homelessness. This may be manifested by or reflected in the lack of available rental accommodation, etc.

Alternatively, this precarious situation leads to a variety of precarious options: relying on family or friends, or an alternative means of accommodation: sofa-surfing or spending nights at a café.

Younger people tend to be more likely to find themselves in these precarious situations. One study by Clarke (2016) identified that males, those with a disability, those with social services experiences, and non-nationals tended to be more likely to have experiences of 'sofa-surfing'.

These situations can lead to homelessness. In those cases interpersonal reasons may be cited.

Occasionally, of course, the interpersonal reason, such as 'marital breakdown', is the trigger which then may lead to homelessness due to a lack of available and affordable accommodation.

For a marital or relationship breakdown, one's inability to afford rent and live independently seems fundamental to the reason why people can become homelessness.

There is, therefore, a period of precarious living which can lead one to become 'officially' homeless. In this period one is relying on a range of uncertain and temporary living arrangements because a person has no accommodation of their own. Understanding this is critical to understanding the wider homelessness issue.

Defining hidden homelessness

The term 'hidden homelessness' is prominent in the academic literature on homelessness. In both jurisdictions it has attracted significant attention.

It can be defined by Gray and Hamilton (2020) as *"the people who may be considered homeless but whose situation is not 'visible' either on the streets or in official statistics."* Or by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive as including: *"people living in a range of circumstances, for example, households that may be staying with friends or sharing with family because they have no accommodation of their own. Those households may be unknown to the Housing Executive."* (NIHE, 2017)

The Northern Ireland Audit office refers to: *"people who could be considered homeless but are not visible*

on the streets or in official statistics, for example, households staying with friends or sharing with family members or squatting" (Northern Ireland Audit Office, 2017: 19). The Northern Ireland Homelessness Monitor includes *"households living in severely overcrowded conditions, squatters, people 'sofa-surfing' around friends' or relatives' houses, those involuntarily sharing with other households on a long-term basis, and people sleeping rough in hidden locations"* (Fitzpatrick et al., 2016: 1).

One strategy is to incorporate the ETHOS framework (Amore et al., 2011) incorporating the roofless (without any shelter, sleeping rough); houseless (with a temporary place to sleep, in emergency accommodation, institutions or shelters); living in insecure housing (due to insecure tenancies, under threat of eviction or violence); and living in inadequate housing (in caravans on illegal campsites, in unfit housing, in extreme overcrowding) – to draw on the definition by Hearne and McSweeney (2023).

Existing measurements of hidden homelessness

Firstly, there is the issue that it is difficult, as above, to draw a line demarking those who we might consider to be hidden homeless from those in less-than-ideal living arrangements. The large numbers of adults returning home after a period of renting is a particular case in point. The individual circumstances of those adults and their families will dictate whether that line has been crossed.

In practical terms, these individuals are also obscured by traditional methods of door-to-door surveying.
By conducting the survey online, and specifically via SMS mobile communications, we are likely to perform slightly better in reaching these individuals.

That all said, some would still argue that measuring *hidden* homelessness is inherently fraught. Shelter Scotland in its 2018 report argued: *'The very nature of hidden homelessness dictates that it is impossible to properly measure the scale of the problem.'*

Nevertheless, some have still attempted this. In the UK, Mack and Lansley (2012) estimated that 15%

of adults in the UK may have experienced 'hidden homelessness' at some time in their lives. Another study by Crisis found that of 437 single homeless people surveyed, 62% could be classified as being 'hidden' homeless. (Reeve, 2011). This in effect doubles the numbers of reported homeless.

In the broadest sense of household members who would prefer to live separately, 2019 figures (Fitzpatrick et al., 2019) estimate a figure of 3.74 million adults in England, which amounts to 8.4% of the population. In Scotland the figure was estimated at 10%.

Hearne & McSweeney (2023) estimated 23,881 individuals in situations of homelessness (consisting of rooflessness and houselessness) in Ireland. If the average household were 2 adults, this would amount to approximately 14,000 households.

The figure they report is double the number presented in current monthly statistics. They further estimate that 51,061 are in housing exclusion or in insecure and inadequate housing drawing on the ETHOS framework, and therefore arrive at a total of 74,942 individuals in homelessness and housing exclusion. As a share of the adult population, this is close to 2%.

A recent review of those in homeless emergency accommodation by the DRHE found that 43.5% (2,481) of households in emergency accommodation did not have an active social housing application on the 23rd November 2023. The Housing Needs Assessment reported 7,946 households as homeless. This means that not all situations in which people report to the council can be considered 'unhidden'.

In previous polling by Simon Communities of Ireland and carried out by Red C, 5% of the adult population described themselves as 'staying temporarily with another household, because they don't have a regular address of their own'. This could be seen as constituting a broad definition of hidden homelessness.

In our study we attempt to measure and understand the scale of the issue through a series of questions that aim to narrow down and more precisely understand the scale and nature of the issue.

Research findings

Research methodology

In this research we conducted two opinion polls — one in the Republic of Ireland and one in Northern Ireland. They were conducted by Ireland Thinks and LucidTalk, with sample sizes of 1,762 (margin of error 2.4%) and 1,050 (margin of error 3.1%) respectively. Both polls utilise propensity score matching and weighting in order to select and balance poll participants and therefore ensure we arrive at a representative panel. The following variables are used to ensure the polls are representative: Age, Gender, Social Class/ Occupational Grade, and Region. The fieldwork was conducted between from the 2nd to 13th of March, 2024.

Experiences of precarious situations

Our research asked a series of questions to attempt to understand the scale of hidden homelessness. Through a series of narrowing questions, we sought to ascertain the scale and character of the hidden homelessness issue.

The first question asks whether the respondent has any experience (either themselves or of close family) of being forced to stay temporarily somewhere because they did not have a regular address of their own. The

question lists a series of places asking respondents to select as many as are applicable for them. Table 1 presents the responses to this broad question for both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The largest category, of roughly a third of the population, know of someone who has stayed with family or friends. Similar figures are reported in both jurisdictions. Arguably this includes people living with their parents, the parents of adults living with them and any close family members connected to this arrangement. This skews slightly towards younger demographics. In the Republic of Ireland, we find 36% of those under 35 and 24% of those over 65 (40% and 16% in Northern Ireland). This apparently narrow difference is merely due to how this is measured.

This question asks people if they know someone who has experienced it. As such, the demographic analysis would not reflect exactly those experiencing it and not even those currently experiencing it. We should consider that in many cases a household incorporates different generations and the person accommodating the person experiencing homelessness is likely to be a member of an older generation.

That all said, we might expect social class to be a determinant here because of the way in which we might assume these experiences to be concentrated within class networks.

Class is measured differently by the two polling

Table 1 – Share of the population 'Have you personally, or do you know of close family, who have been forced to stay temporarily in any of the following situations because you/ they do not have a regular address of their own?'		Rep of Ireland	Northern Ireland
	Staying with family or friends	32%	31%
	Sleeping in a car or work van	7%	5%
	Staying in tents/ caravans etc	6%	3%
	Sleeping in a workplace	4%	2%
	Staying overnight in bus station, hospital waiting room, café.	4%	2%
	Squatting	3%	1%
	None of the above	61%	68%

Figure 1 – Social class and known experiences of staying with family and friends
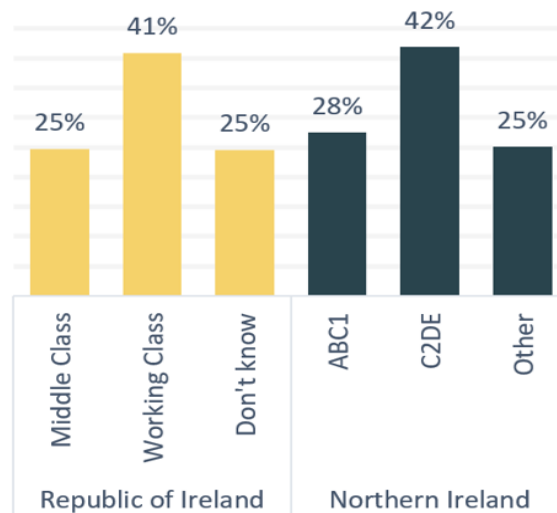
firms. (There is a large debate on class measurement which is beyond the scope of this report.) In the Republic it is self-defined and in Northern Ireland it is defined by the respondent's description of their occupation. While they are not exactly equivalent, the data reveals a consistent pattern whereby those that are working class/C2DE are far more likely to have experienced this.

We delve into the demography later when we narrow our focus onto those directly experiencing homelessness.

The next largest group reported sleeping in a car or work van, followed by staying in tents/caravans, in a workplace, overnight in a bus station and finally squatting. Across all of these items there is a very slightly higher percentage of people in the Republic of Ireland reporting these experiences.
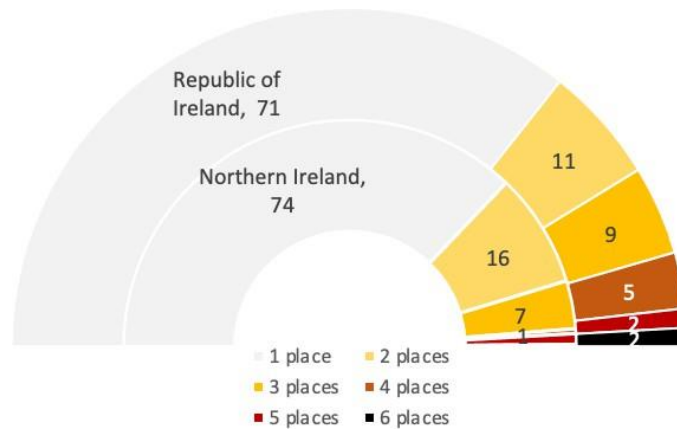
Respondents were allowed to select multiple options on this list. Some just selected 'Staying with family or friends', while some selected a couple of options (e.g. staying in a tent *and* sleeping in a workplace *and* staying with friends and family). This distinction, between those that selected a large number of situations, are of particular interesting as these people are experiencing more extreme forms of homelessness. Figure 1 shows the numbers of situations selected (e.g. if one selected staying in a car and staying at their workplace and no

other situations, then we would mark them down as 2). While the vast majority selected just one situation, significant numbers, particularly in the Republic of Ireland, selected a large number of situations – 9% selecting at least 4 situations. Perhaps this is a reflection of the homelessness crisis being more pronounced for a longer period of time and perhaps, therefore, those experiencing a level of homelessness have invariably exhausted their social capital or good will at some point, forcing them to expand the range of situations/places they have had to rely on.

Those that selected 'Staying with friends or family' were often likely to just select that one situation. On the other hand, those that selected any of the other situations (cars, tents workplaces etc.) tended to select a range of other situations. This perhaps reflects a difference in how precarious the circumstances are for certain individuals and their close family. Figure 3 describes this difference.

Among those that selected 'Staying with friends or family', they on average only selected 1.6 (1.4 in Northern Ireland) of the listed places in total. At the other end of the spectrum, those that selected 'squatting' tended to select close to three other experiences, and almost four in total (3.8 average). It suggests that there are two groups of people here – those that are predominantly staying with friends or family and that is the sum of their temporary living

Figure 2 – The number of situations experienced [those with experience or close family experience only] (e.g. if one selected staying in a car and staying at their workplace and no other situations, then we would mark them down as 2(%)

Republic of Ireland, 71
Northern Ireland, 74

11
9
16
5
7
1
2

1 place   2 places
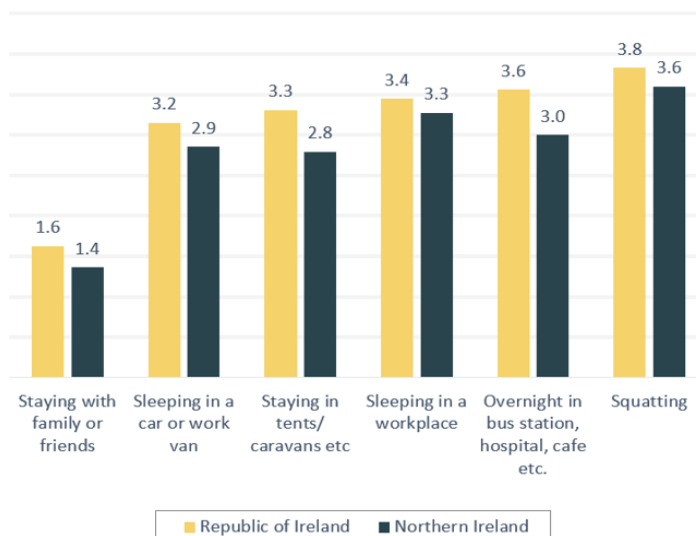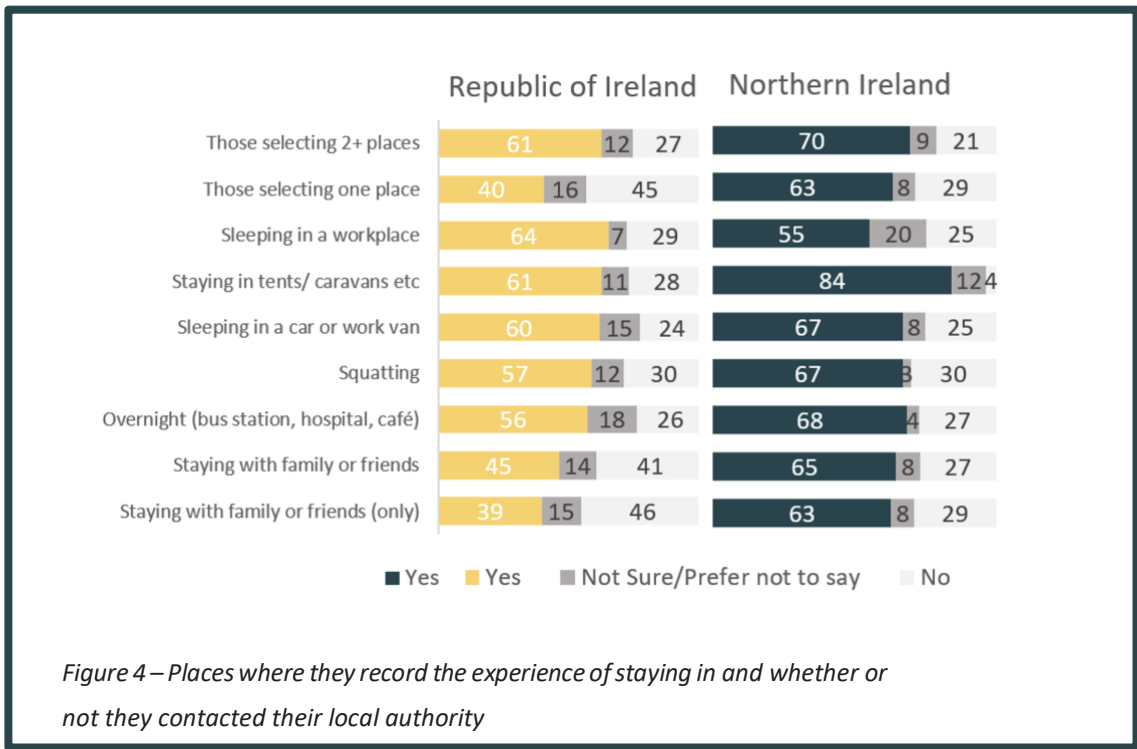3 places   4 places
5 places   6 places

arrangements, and those who have experienced or observed close family exhausting a wider range of places.

We can also check these results against whether they contacted services. One question asks: 'During the period you had the experience you have identified above, did you contact your local authority/the Northern Ireland Housing Executive seeking support?' Comparing these answers against the places they slept shows that those who selected 2 or more places were more likely to have contacted services.

What is noticeable is that there is a difference in the likelihood of contacting services between those in Northern Ireland and those in the Republic of Ireland when we break it down by the places that they stayed. It would appear that people in the Republic of Ireland are less likely to contact the authorities for a given level of the precariousness of their situation. One potential explanation is that there is a greater awareness of the severity of the shortage in the Republic and therefore they might recognise a more limited prospect of resolution. While we only have a limited number of open-endeds to

Figure 3 – Average number of places selected by place selected. E.g. on average, those that selected 'staying overnight..' selected three places that they had stayed

	Staying with family or friends	Sleeping in a car or work van	Staying in tents/ caravans etc	Sleeping in a workplace	Overnight in bus station, hospital, cafe etc.	Squatting
Republic of Ireland	1.6	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.8
Northern Ireland	1.4	2.9	2.8	3.3	3.0	3.6

Figure 4 – Places where they record the experience of staying in and whether or not they contacted their local authority

work with, some respondents in their open-ended text responses suggested that there would be little point or mentioned that they were a single male, indicating that they felt they had less chance of a positive outcome.

Duration of precarious experiences

To understand what we are examining it is important to understand whether these incidents were fleeting and incidental or whether they were persistent.

One question that we asked concerns the length of time people were living in these conditions: *'Thinking back to the experiences you indicated in the previous question, how long did/has this period last/lasted?'*

Figure 5a reports the distribution of these numbers for both the Republic of Ireland and for Northern Ireland. (Excluding those that don't know and those that state
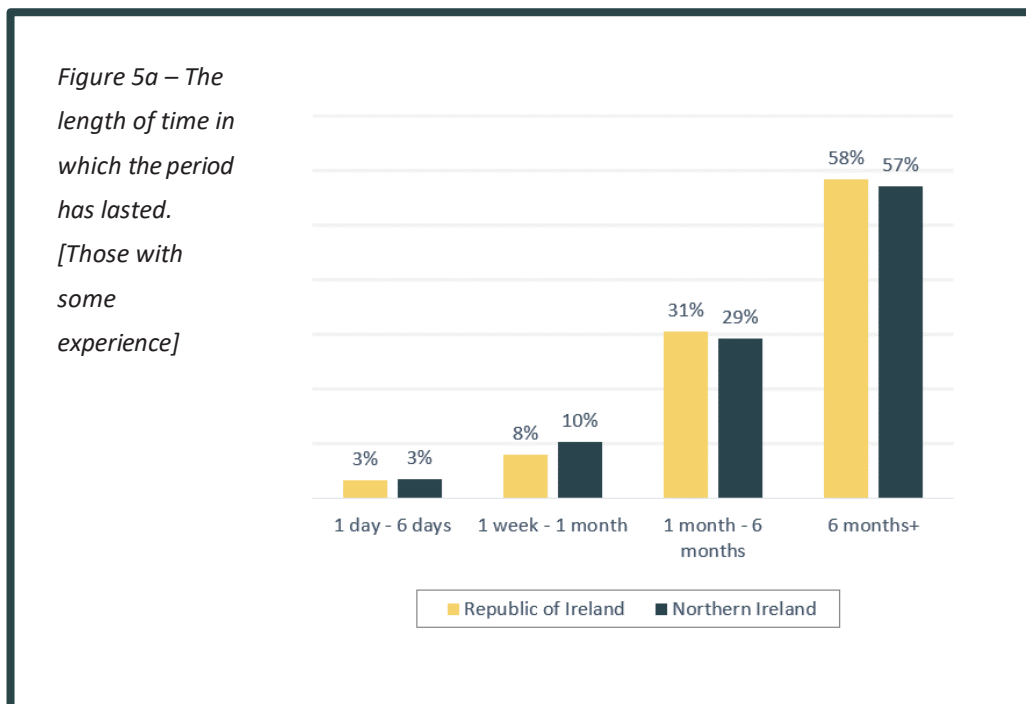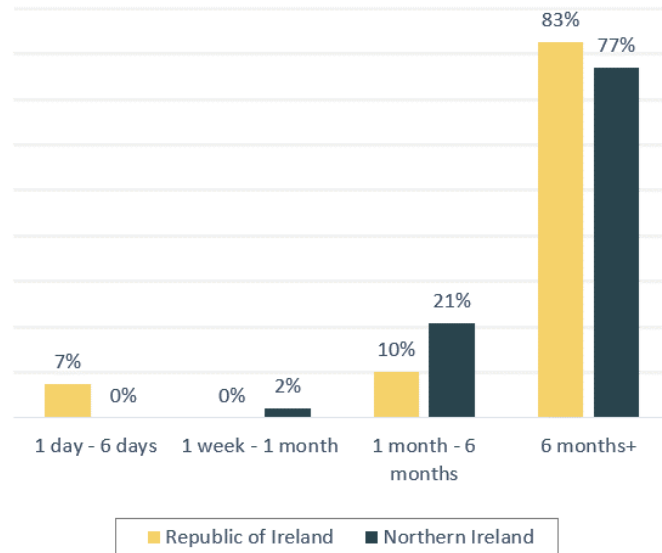

Figure 5a – The length of time in which the period has lasted. [Those with some experience]

Figure 5b – The length of time in which the period has lasted. [Those currently experiencing]

Chart data (Republic of Ireland / Northern Ireland):
- 1 day - 6 days: 7% / 0%
- 1 week - 1 month: 0% / 2%
- 1 month - 6 months: 10% / 21%
- 6 months+: 83% / 77%

Legend: ■ Republic of Ireland ■ Northern Ireland

in Q1 or Q2 that the event didn't relate to their own household).

The first thing to notice is that the incidents conveyed here are generally based on a longer period of time rather than something more temporary.

What Figures 5a and 5b show is that the duration of experiences skew heavily towards the longer, e.g. 6 months and longer. This shows that these experiences we are recording are not fleeting but consistent and substantial.

While Figure 5a depicts those who report any experience, Figure 5b reflects the distribution of the much smaller number of those who state they or their household are currently experiencing it, and excluding those waiting to move in to another property. This is, essentially, our hidden homeless category.

While the small sample size adds greater uncertainty to our estimates, it is still somewhat informative. There is a consistency here between Northern Ireland and the Republic that shows a further skew towards the longer 6+ months' timeframe — 20-25% higher in 5b (current hidden homeless) and 5a (broader category of those with some experience).

While it is not surprising that the Republic of Ireland data skews towards the longer time periods, it might be surprising how small the difference is between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland – especially where, as we have explained, there are differences in the severity of the hidden

homelessness (e.g. people selecting a larger number of situations in the Republic of Ireland data).

The next two charts compare the length of time versus the extent to which people have used the range of alternative places. It shows the association between the experiences of a range of situations and the length of time experiencing these situations.

In Figure 6a, in the case of the Republic of Ireland, where the experiences occur over a longer time period (e.g. 6+ months), the range of those situations changes. Among those in the Republic of Ireland those with experiences lasting 6+ months tend to have a slightly higher incidence of each situation compared to those for whom the experiences lasted between 1 month and 6 months. While the shorter categories (1 day to 6 days and 1 week to 1 month) are based on a much more limited sample, it is interesting to see the prominence of staying in a car/van and staying at a workplace among those for whom the period lasted less than one month compared to those for whom the period lasted much longer.

In Figure 6b we examine Northern Ireland. The relationship between length of time and the range of places stayed is a little bit weaker in the case of Northern Ireland. The dominance of those staying with friends and family is again more prevalent here, even among those who have experienced this for longer than 6 months.

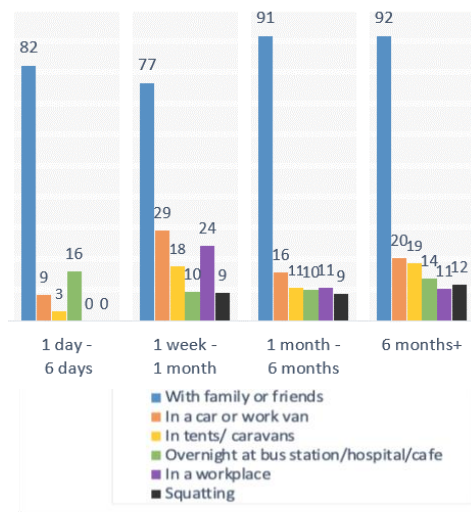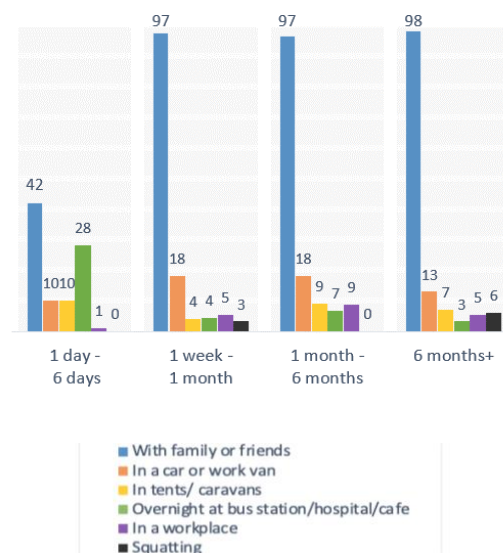*Figure 6a – Republic of Ireland length of time and places stayed:*

Figure 6b – Northern Ireland length of time and places stayed:

Hidden homelessness defined

We define the total hidden homelessness group here as those who have stated that they are currently experiencing it in their household and excluding those who state that they are temporarily waiting to move in to a new home.

In order to measure hidden homelessness, we utilize three questions. First, we ask about their experiences, above, of using alternative housing arrangements either for themselves or a close family member. This gives us a large group of people with some level of experience. Then, we narrow this down by asking when and for whom these incidences took place. Specifically, we asked those that identified an episode of homelessness to narrow down as to whether this event (or events) is something that is current or in the past and whether it applies to their household or the household of someone else they know (*'Thinking about the experience you have identified, which of the following applies or applied?'*). The aim here is to establish the share of people for whom this is currently happening within their household.

In the Republic of Ireland, 4.9% report that they are experiencing these forms of homelessness currently happening within their household. This includes those that are experiencing it directly and those that are living with someone who is experiencing it. This figure falls to 3.8% when we exclude those that are in a situation that they believe to be temporary. Of this group, 1.3% state that they have not contacted their local authority. Each of these numbers are of interest and can be used depending on the definitions that we use for homelessness and hidden homelessness. Given that the 1.3% is entirely unknown to the housing authorities is what we could definitively describe this group as experiencing hidden homelessness. It is worth noting that not everyone in that given household is experiencing this form of hidden homelessness themselves directly.

One other feature to highlight is that the percentages contacting their local authority is similar for this group. What is happening here is that while fewer people contacting their local authority for a given level of precarity in the Republic, there is a greater percentage of people in the Republic with an elevated level of precarity and this subgroup tends to be more likely to request services. As a result, the numbers balance out across jurisdictions and we have the same 57% of those we classify as experiencing hidden homelessness requesting services.

	% of Poll	National HH equivalent	Lower	Upper
I/my household is currently experiencing this	4.90%	91,140	72,392	109,888
Temporary situation while waiting to move into new home	1.10%	20,460	11,401	29,519
Homeless & hidden	3.80%	70,680	54,075	87,285
Did contact Local Authority	1.70%	31,620	20,393	42,847
Did not contact Local Authority	1.30%	24,180	14,342	34,018
Not said	0.80%	14,880	7,143	22,617

Table 2 – Estimating hidden homelessness in the Republic of Ireland

In Northern Ireland, 3.3% state that they are experiencing homelessness in their current household. Excluding the 0.3% who identify this as temporary, we arrive at a figure of 3.0% who state that they are experiencing homelessness in their household. Finally, 1.1% stated that they did not contact their local authority in relation to the issue.

Taking the most conservative approach here, we would exclude those that have contacted their local authority.

There are difficulties in trying to extrapolate the findings from these small percentages up to a national scale. As we delve deeper into the data we are relying on a very small number of respondents.

That all said, one consistency between this and earlier research on the topic is that the hidden homeless figure is similar to the numbers that present themselves to local authorities. Here, just over half report having contacted the relevant authority. Of course, a significant proportion of those that contact their local authority are not officially classified as homeless. Taking our numbers above, there are 1.86 million households in the Republic of Ireland. If 1.3% of these are experiencing hidden homelessness according

	% of Poll	National HH equivalent	Lower	Upper
I/my household is currently experiencing this	3.3%	25,344	17,046	33,642
Temporary situation while waiting to move into new home	0.3%	2,304	-	4,845
Homeless & hidden	3.0%	23,040	15,116	30,964
Did contact Local Authority	1.4%	10,752	5,294	16,210
Did not contact Local Authority	1.1%	8,448	3,603	13,293
Not said	0.6%	4,608	1,021	8,195

Table 3 – Estimating hidden homelessness in Northern Ireland

to our categorization this means that we should have a midpoint of 24,000 households experiencing hidden homelessness, and applying a 95% confidence interval, a range of between 14,000 and 34,000 households with a midpoint of 24,000. (The margin of error here on a 1.3% estimate with a sample size of 1,762 is 0.53%).

In Northern Ireland there are 768,000 households and

there we expect 8,500 households, with a range of between 3,500 and 13,500 (figures are rounded to the nearest 500 so as not to give a false impression of precision) that fall into this hidden homelessness category.

We know that some of those that did contact their local authority were not considered to be homeless as discussed in our introductory section. This means that our estimate is certainly on the conservative side.

Demographics of hidden homelessness

We can also examine hidden homelessness by examining the demographics of those who have experienced this in the past 12 months. This is something that is not possible when we later narrow this down to those currently experiencing this form of homelessness in their household.

Here we see that younger people tend to state that they have experienced this in their household. We also observe bigger differences between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, particularly when it comes to the youngest. This is perhaps a reflection of the greater incidence in the Republic of Ireland of younger people staying in tents, cars, workplaces, bus stations etc, which would therefore not involve older people to the same degree.

Personal experience of hidden homelessness is also much more likely among current renters and others – typically those living with parents/friends.

Figure 7 – The age distribution of those experiencing forms of hidden homelessness in their household in the past 12 months
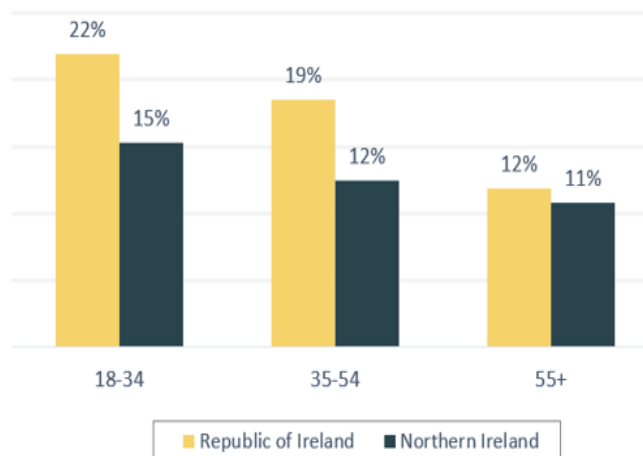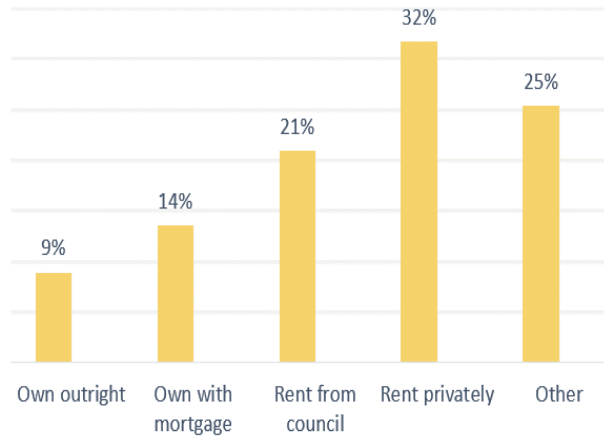
Figure 8 – The housing tenure of those experiencing forms of hidden homelessness in their household in the past 12 months.

Looking at this broken down by gender we observe a difference in the Republic of Ireland data with a 3% difference between males and females, where females responses dominate.

While we know that official homeless figures, counting those in emergency homeless accommodation show more men in homelessness, here we are observing hidden homelessness. Evidence suggests that women often only come into contact with homeless services once they have exhausted all alternative informal options and are more likely to experience hidden homelessness (Mayock and Brethren, 2021). An Irish study on women's journeys to homelessness, found that the majority of women had lived in accommodation provided by family or friends rather than by homeless service providers (Mayock and Sheridan, 2012).

Reasons for hidden homelessness

Figure 10 shows the most prominent reason cited by respondents for finding themselves in this situation. It shows the prominence of the loss of one's home in the private rental market (40% and 37%), followed by the temporary basis while waiting to move into a new home (19% and 14%, followed by other losses of income (14% and 16%), loss of employment (13% for both), then loss of one's mortgaged home (8% for both) and then finally exiting an institution (4% and 3%).

There seems to be little difference between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland in terms of the reasons given by those that find themselves in this situation. The poll in the Republic of Ireland included an open-ended option at the end. The largest share of

Figure 9 – Gender and those experiencing forms of hidden homelessness in their household in the past 12 months.
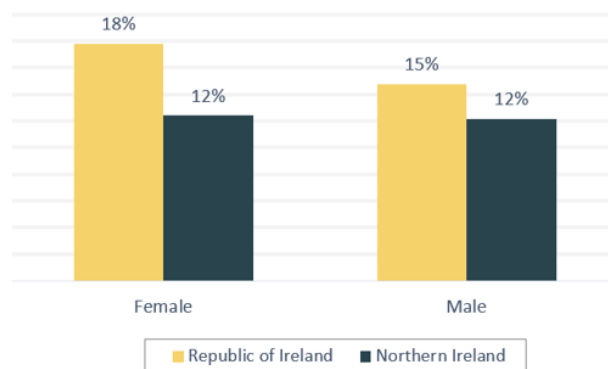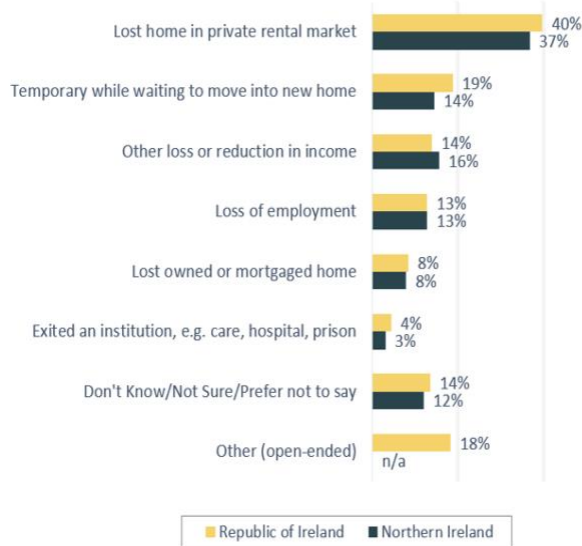
Figure 10 – Selected reasons given for the situation occurring.

those open-ended responses concerned relationship breakdown and family issues followed by assertions about affordability. Other issues raised include addiction and immigration/return migration.

We dug deeper into each of those who lost their home in the private rental market and those who lost a mortgaged or owned home.

Firstly, in the private rental market, in Figure 11, we can see the prominence in both jurisdictions of landlords evicting tenants because they were intending to sell the property or wanted it
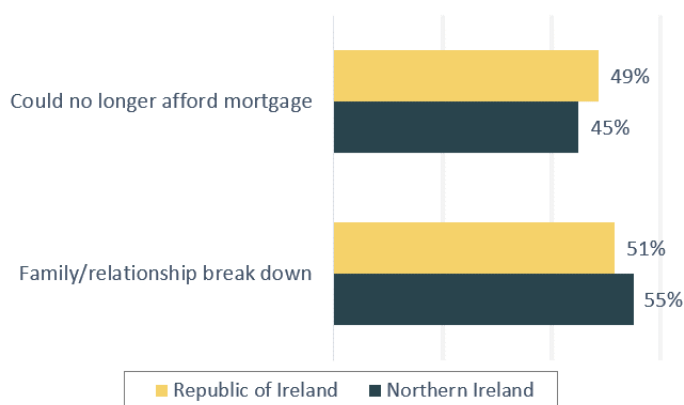
back. It is interesting that in the Republic of Ireland this is even stronger. While of course worth bearing in mind here that the figures here are based on a relatively small sample sizes, the differences between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland may reflect differences in the rental market between the two jurisdictions

In Figure 12 we look at this in terms of owners and mortgage holders. Here a different set of options are proffered. And here the differences between Northern Ireland and the Republic are much smaller, as might be expected.

Figure 11 – Selected reasons given for the situation occurring with regards to former renters

Figure 12 – Selected reasons given for the situation occurring with regards to owners and mortgage holders

Could no longer afford mortgage — Republic of Ireland 49%, Northern Ireland 45%

Family/relationship break down — Republic of Ireland 51%, Northern Ireland 55%

Legend: Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland

Conclusions

The report comprehensively details the pervasive yet under-recognised issue of hidden homelessness across the island of Ireland. It reveals the complexity and diversity of hidden homelessness, which often includes individuals who, despite lacking a permanent address, do not appear in conventional homeless statistics.

Some key conclusions from the report:

(1) *Prevalence and Demographics:* A significant proportion of the population experiences hidden homelessness, with younger individuals and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds being disproportionately affected. This is more pronounced in the Republic of Ireland. This reflects broader societal and economic structures that contribute to housing instability. Hidden homelessness also tends to be more female than male.

(2) *Underlying Causes:* The causes of hidden homelessness are multifaceted, involving personal, social and structural factors. Loss of housing due to financial instability, relationship breakdowns and inadequate social support networks are prevalent triggers. The loss of one's rental accommodation is the main driver. In the Republic of Ireland it is far more likely that this will occur due to the landlord selling the property rather than the affordability of rent. A general lack of available accommodation is more acute there.

(3) *Measurement Challenges:* There is some significant difficulty in accurately measuring hidden homelessness due to its invisibility in standard housing assessments and the transient nature of the living situations involved. The distinction between adults living at home with their parents and households which we would consider to be hidden homeless is a significant challenge here. We estimate that 14.3k to 34k households in the South and 3.6k to 13.3k households in the North are experiencing it.

(4) *Extreme Precariousness:* While there are many similarities in the experiences of hidden homelessness between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, there are also notable differences, such as the higher incidence of extreme temporary measures and evictions in the Republic, reflecting varying housing policies and economic conditions. More people in the South are resorting to cars, tents, workplaces, transport stations or squatting. Those that tended to reside in these places tended to reside in many of these places. The period has also been going on longer for these people.

(5) *Service Engagement:* Engagement with local authorities is uneven, with many individuals not seeking help. Just over half of those that we identify as hidden homeless do contact the authorities. This ratio corresponds with other research. It is also notable that in the Republic of Ireland a smaller percentage of those who are facing more precarious hidden homelessness (such as sleeping in cars etc) are contacting those services. ■

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