

SimonReads

Edition 2 | 2024

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Introduction

Wayne Stanley, Executive Director

Dear Supporter,

I would like to welcome you to the latest edition of our newsletter Simon Reads.

The mission of the Simon Communities of Ireland is to end homelessness. The overarching trend again this year has been the continued growth in the number of men, women and children in homelessness. If we are to achieve the effective ending of homelessness, we have to see that trend of growing homelessness reversed.

Achieving that requires commitment and optimism. With the ongoing increases, it is a concern that a sense of fatalism can creep in. It is not uncommon for me to be asked if the Simon Communities really believe we can turn the corner on homelessness.

The answer is yes we do! The reason is, we have seen it happen in the recent past. In the years to 2010, we saw significant progress and a reduction in homelessness. During the pandemic when we saw a commitment to preventing homelessness and supporting individuals and families to move on, we again saw the numbers in emergency accommodation fall.

Homelessness is solvable with the committed implementation of the right policies. This is always worth reiterating but particularly as we look forward to what will be a pivotal six months to come, with Budget 2025 to be delivered, a general election and the formation of a new Government with a new programme.

Housing and homelessness should and likely will be a central part of the discussion, debate and decision making in all that is to come. In that context, it is timely and instructive to look back at the policy work and developments of this year so far. Covered in these pages are discussions, submissions and developments that are making contributions big and small to finding our way to achieving the goal of ending homelessness.



We are particularly grateful to our colleagues who gave their time to participate in our #SimonTalks series and for the broader collaborations that are happening all the time to move us all forward.

In the context of what has happened this year and what is to come, it is perhaps timely in this newsletter to reflect on two of the contributions highlighted below. The first was the publication of the All-Ireland Hidden Homelessness survey. This report, funded by the Community Foundation Ireland and Community Foundation Northern Ireland, contributes to the understanding of the scale of the challenges in front of us. Without that insight, it is almost impossible to meet the challenge of addressing homelessness.

The other document is the Housing Commission report. The report, outlining a plan for a new trajectory for housing delivery, could prove to be a pivotally important document in fight against homelessness.

We would like to thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter and for your support in the fight to end homelessness.

Wayne Stanley
Executive Director

SCI Updates

#SimonTalks

The Simon Communities of Ireland host a monthly webinar as part of our **#SimonTalks** series. We have hosted seven **#SimonTalks** webinars so far in 2024 covering a wide range of topics relating to homelessness and the housing market.

All previous webinars are available to watch back on our [YouTube channel](#).

#SimonTalks will be returning in October 2024. To stay up to date with our webinars register to our mailing list [here](#), and keep an eye on our social media.



Prof. Conor O'Toole

Examining the Economic Outlook for Housing in 2023



**Anna Lilja
Flyverbom Nordgreen**

Home for All:
An Alliance Working to End Homelessness in Denmark



Dr. Paula Mayock

Women's Experiences of Homelessness



Dr. Michael Byrne

A Vision for Ireland's Private Rental Sector



Sean Mahon

Innovative Housing Solutions:
Can They Help Us Tackle Homelessness?



Prof. Michelle Norris

Joined Up Thinking:
Proposals on Social Housing Reform from the Housing Commission



Koen Hermans

Measuring Homelessness:
What the Belgian Experience Tells Us

SCI Updates

Locked Out Report

Locked Out of the Market is a quarterly snapshot study undertaken over three consecutive days that tracks the number of properties advertised to rent within Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) limits. Data for the report is gathered from Daft.ie in 16 areas across the country.

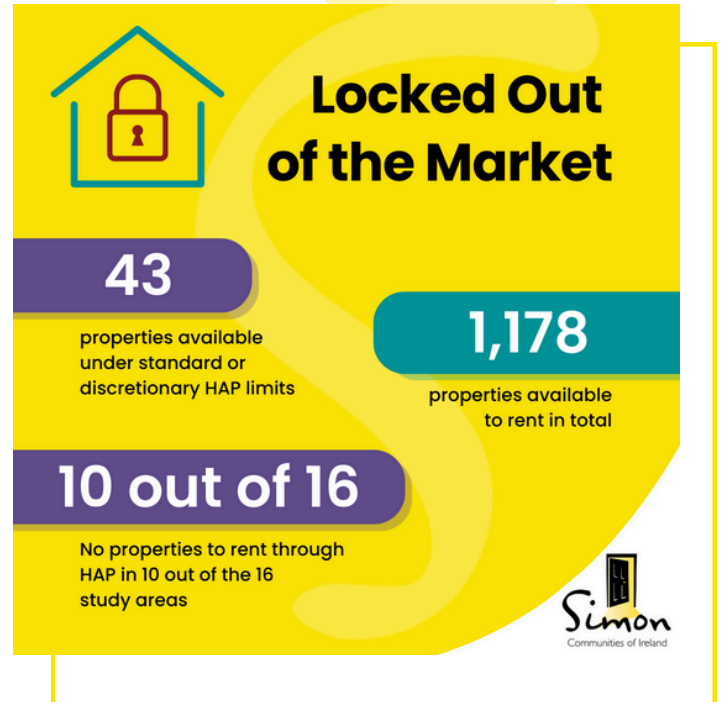
The purpose of the report is to reflect the experience of those who are reliant on HAP trying to find a home on the private rental market. So far this year, the Simon Communities of Ireland have published three reports:

[Locked Out of the Market December 2023](#)

[Locked Out of the Market March 2024](#)

[Locked Out of the Market June 2024](#)

Summary of Key Findings in latest report:



Simon Week

SIMON WEEK 2024
#EndingHomelessness

Simon
Communities of Ireland

September

Cork	23rd
Limerick	24th
Dublin	26th
Galway	27th

This year, Simon Communities of Ireland are hosting our most ambitious Simon Week to date!

From the 23rd - 27th of September we will be hosting events across Ireland to discuss various aspects of homelessness and how we can best tackle them from local and international perspectives.

Cork

Tackling Vacancy to Fight Homelessness: Local and European Responses

Limerick

Hidden Homelessness: How Do We Reach Those We Cannot See?

Dublin

Crisis Intervention: Effectively Supporting Those in Homelessness

Galway

Addressing Youth Homelessness: What Works

Simon Week 2024 is proudly supported by

CASH & CARRY KITCHENS

[Tickets are available here](#)

SCI Updates



A conference was held to launch the findings of the poll and explore the issue of Hidden Homelessness further.

We were delighted to be joined by experts in the field who represented a range of perspectives, such as:

Glen Bramley

Heriot-Watt University

Kevin Cunningham

Ireland Thinks

Jim Dennison

Simon Community Northern Ireland

Rebecca Hamilton

Simon Communities of Ireland

Mary Hayes

Dublin Region Homeless Executive

Grania Long

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Karen McAlister

Simon Community Northern Ireland

Freek Spinnewijn

FEANSTA

Wayne Stanley

Simon Communities of Ireland

Hidden Homelessness

This year the Simon Communities of Ireland and Simon Community Northern Ireland partnered to undertake a piece of research which shed light on the issue of Hidden Homelessness.

Together, we commissioned a poll which broke down the scale of the issue, exploring the demographics of those affected, the push factors, the different forms and the length of time people are stuck in hidden homelessness.

On the 16th of May, we launched our collaborative report titled *Under the Radar: Unveiling Hidden Homelessness Across the Island of Ireland*.

[Click here to read the full report](#)

Under the Radar: Unveiling Hidden Homelessness Across the Island of Ireland was proudly funded by

Community
Foundation
Ireland

The 
Community
Foundation
Northern Ireland

SCI Updates

Housing, Local Government & Heritage Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2024

The Simon Communities of Ireland attended the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage to discuss the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2024.

During our address to the Committee, we raised three critical points. The first was to emphasise to the committee that the proposed provisions within the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2024, particularly concerning the insertion of the habitual residence condition, warrant careful consideration due to their potential impact on homelessness and housing exclusion in Ireland and we would encourage a broader consultative process be undertaken by the department.

Secondly, while a stated aim of the proposed legislation is to establish consistency in how State entities assess access to social entitlements, the lack of statutory provisions regarding decision-making and appeals processes within the Heads of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2024 stands in contrast with such provisions outlined in the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005.

[Read our Submission](#)

Budgeting for Effective Solutions to Tackle Homelessness 2025

Simon Communities of Ireland's Pre-Budget Submission 2025 lays out a number of recommendations ahead of the upcoming budget.

In 2024, homelessness has continued to grow at an alarming rate, reaching record levels. This crisis is being driven by a chronic shortage of social housing, following years of undersupply, along with a private rental sector characterised by unaffordability and instability. An emergency response is needed to address the undersupply of housing, and only a radical strategic reset of housing policy will achieve this.

Finally, we would emphasise the experience of local authorities requiring eligibility to social housing to secure access to emergency accommodation, for which there is no legal basis. We strongly submitted to the committee that at a minimum there is a need to explicitly set out in the primary legislation that the habitual residence condition for the purpose of social housing does not affect and should not affect an individual or a household's eligibility for access to emergency accommodation.

[Click here to read the Joint Committee of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's report on the Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of the General Scheme of the Housing \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Bill, 2024](#)

The Simon Communities of Ireland welcome the report and the Committees' recommendations.



The Government needs to act now to turn the tide on homelessness. Budget 2025 must reflect the crisis we are in, ensuring that sufficient cross-departmental funding is in place to make a meaningful impact on homelessness.

[Read our Pre-Budget Submission](#)

Political Submissions

National Child Poverty Target to the Department of Social Protection

The submission outlines key recommendations which the Department of Social Protection should consider in relation to the national child poverty target.

[Available here](#)

Submission to IHREC on their Strategy Statement 2025-2027

The submission highlights the challenges faced by the homelessness sector and the people we support, and highlights the changes needed in order to protect the rights and equality of people experiencing homelessness.

[Available here](#)

Media Commission (Coimisiún na Meán) on their draft Online Safety Code

The submission focuses on areas which are particularly relevant to the Simon Communities of Ireland as providers of services to those experiencing homelessness. We raise our concern about hateful content that centres on homelessness and those who are seeking asylum in Ireland.

[Available here](#)

Submission to the DHLGH on their Strategy Statement 2024-2026

The submission outlines key recommendations which the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage should consider in their Strategy Statement 2024-2026.

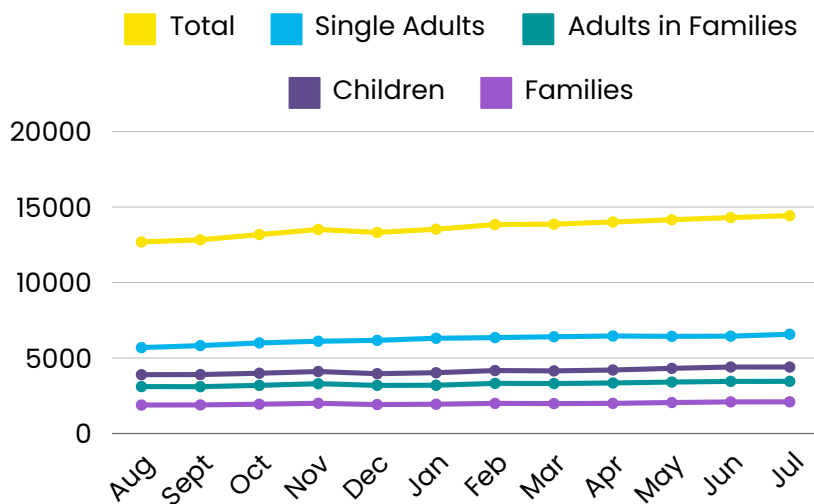
[Available here](#)

Electoral Commission on their Draft Research Programme 2024-2026

The submission highlights the growing homelessness crisis and the importance of prioritising research and action on increasing political participation and electoral turnout by people experiencing homelessness.

[Available here](#)

Homelessness In Numbers



Number of people in Emergency Accommodation in the last 12 months



We are seeing an increase in homelessness for the seventh consecutive month. In the face of this seemingly relentless growth, it is important that we do not lose sight of the fact that we can get ahead of this crisis.

The Simon Communities are working with colleagues across local authorities and government departments to prevent people from entering homelessness and support those who are experiencing homelessness to move on from it. In the first half of this year, seven households a day were supported out of homelessness.

There are solutions. We can see the impact they are having every day. If we can get more investment in infrastructure to deliver the homes that are needed, and the policy change to prevent homelessness, we can increase the number of people leaving homelessness, reduce the number of people coming in and finally get ahead of this crisis.

In that fight, the next six months will be critical. With the upcoming Budget and general election, there are opportunities to deliver the decisive action that can see strides taken to address the homelessness crisis.



Wayne Stanley,
Executive Director
on July 2024 Homeless Figures

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's Monthly Homelessness Report showed that the number of men, women, and children experiencing homelessness reached 14,429 in July 2024. This represents an increase of 126 people compared to June.

There were 2,096 families, and 4,401 children in emergency accommodation. Compared to the same period in 2023, these figures mark an increase of 257 (14%) and 572 (15%), respectively.

Though the number of young adults (age 18-24) in emergency accommodation has decreased from 1,1714 in June to 1,700 in July, there has still been an overall increase of 108 (6.7%) since the start of the year.

The number of single adults in emergency accommodation in July reached 6,573, an increase of 125 (1.9%) on the previous month.

Policy & Development

Housing Commission Report

The Housing Commission published their landmark report on the 22nd of May, containing 83 recommendations and calling for a 'radical strategic reset of housing policy.' The Commission estimated that as of the 2022 Census, there was a housing deficit of between 212,500 and 256,000 homes. The report calls for a long-term political commitment to treat housing as critical social and economic infrastructure.

The Simon Communities of Ireland commend the Housing Commission for the strength and depth of analysis of the problems in social housing delivery, and the joined-up thinking of the proposed solutions. The Simon Communities of Ireland hope to see these solutions implemented, particularly those relating to the delivery and funding of social and affordable housing.

The Housing Agency is currently carrying out an analysis of the report in terms of costings, timelines and prioritisation of the recommendations made. Once that work is complete the Minister will bring policy recommendations to Government.

[Click here to read the Housing Commission's Report](#)

Population Projections, The Flow of New Households and Structural Housing Demand

The ESRI published their long awaited report on structural housing demand on the 2nd of July.

The report provides estimates of structural housing demand at a regional level, relying on a number of assumptions relating to population growth, headship rates, and rates of obsolescence of the housing stock.

The report presents a range of scenarios for future structural housing demand.

Key findings:

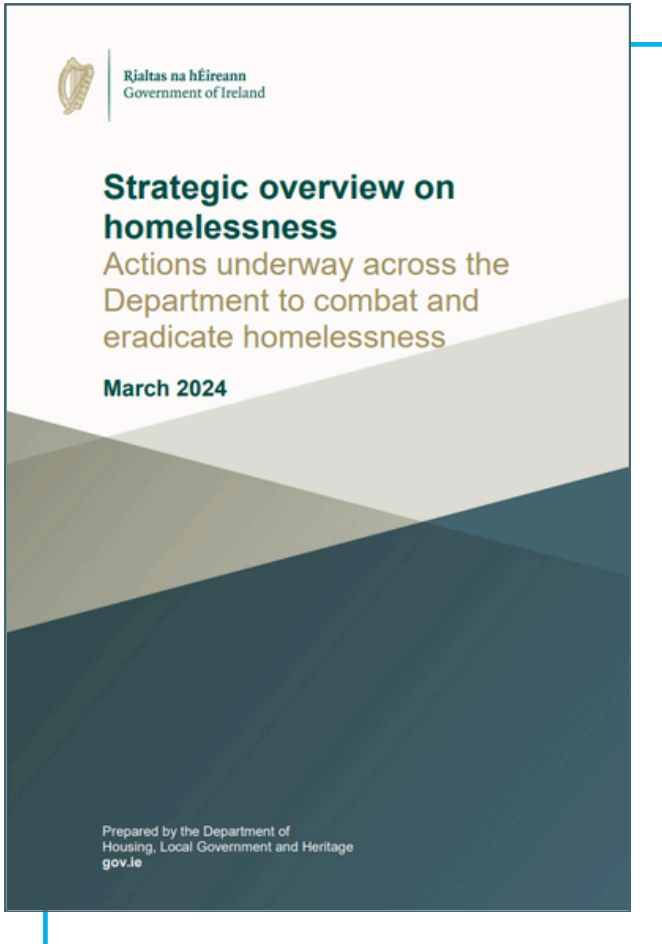
- Projects national population growth of 922,000 between 2022 and 2040, resulting in a total population of 6.106 million.
- This implies overall population growth of 1% on an annual average basis, which is high relative to other countries.

Key findings (cont):

- The Eastern and Midlands region is expected to experience relatively higher growth, concentrated in Dublin and Mid-East regions, while the Northern, Western and Southern regions are expected to experience relatively lower population growth.
- Taking the average over all 12 scenarios, national housing demand is estimated to be approximately 44,000 per annum from 2023-2030, and 39,700 from 2030-2040. These projections **do not** consider pent-up demand.
- The report found that at a local authority level, Kildare, Meath, Fingal, South Dublin, Dublin City, Galway City, Wicklow and Laois have lower levels of structural housing demand than population share.
- Longford, Cavan, Monaghan, Kilkenny, Cork City and Carlow have structural housing demand on par with the population share.
- The remainder of local authorities have higher levels of structural housing demand than population share.

[Click here to read The ESRI's Report](#)

Policy & Development



The Lisbon Declaration commits all signatories to working towards ending homelessness by 2030, so that:

- No one sleeps rough for lack of accessible, safe, and appropriate emergency accommodation.
- No one lives in emergency or transitional accommodation longer than is required for successful move-on to a permanent housing solution.
- No one is discharged from any institution (e.g. prison, hospital, care facility) without an offer of appropriate housing.
- Evictions should be prevented whenever possible and no one is evicted without assistance for an appropriate housing solution, when needed.
- No one is discriminated against due to their homelessness status.

The Lisbon Declaration further commits national, regional and local authorities to:

- Promote the prevention of homelessness, access to permanent housing and the provision of enabling support services to the homeless.
- Welcome the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the design and implementation of these policy measures.
- Support our policy measures with adequate funding and, when appropriate, make use of EU funding as a lever to improve the way we address homelessness.
- Share our good practices in combatting homelessness.

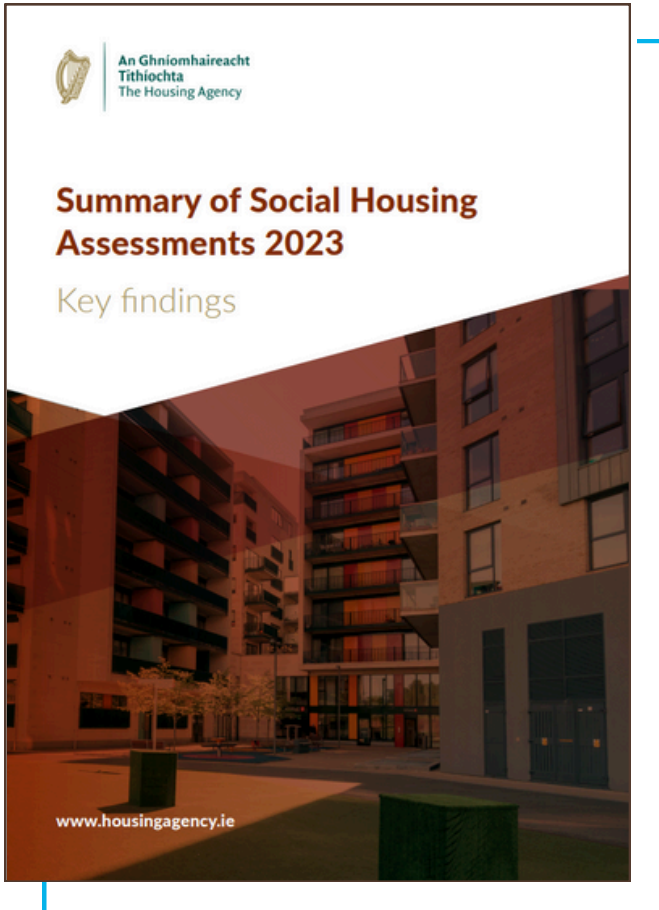
Homelessness Strategic Overview

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage published a report on the 26th of July which contains the actions and priorities underway across the Department to combat and eradicate homelessness. The report provides an overview of the Department's alignment with the main commitments made in the Lisbon Declaration.

Ireland, along with other EU countries signed the 'Lisbon Declaration on the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness'.

[Read the full report](#)

Policy & Development



- One-adult households remain the majority household grouping on the waiting list and grew proportionately from 56% of the total in 2022 to 57.4% in 2023.
- One parent family households continue to be the second highest household grouping, decreasing marginally from a proportion of 23.5% to 23.3% between 2022 and 2023.
- The number and proportion of households whose basis of need for social housing is homelessness increased from 11.6% in 2022 to 13.5% in 2023.
- The private rental sector remains the largest tenure type for households on the waiting list. However, this has been falling steadily since 2016 (from 67.4% to 40% in 2023).
- The proportion of households living with parents, relatives and friends has decreased from 37% in 2022 to 34.5%. Combined, these groups remain the second largest tenure type for households on the waiting list.
- In 2023, there were 1,261 households on the waiting list living in Direct Provision.
- In 2023, 512 households on the waiting list identified as Irish Travellers.
- There were less households on the waiting list for the a period of more than 7 years, with proportions declining from 22.3% in 2022 to 21.5% in 2023.
- More household were on the list for less than 2 years with these proportions increasing from 38.6% in 2022 to 40.3% in 2023.
- The proportion of households with a main applicant over 60 years of age remains unchanged from 2022 (11.9%). This proportion had previously been growing year on year (from 7.2% in 2016).
- The employment status of most qualified applicants remains unemployed, however this continues to fall (from 51.5% in 2022 to 49.4% in 2023) and the largest proportion of households continue to have an income source from social welfare only, although this is also falling (from 56.0% in 2022 to 53.3% in 2023).

Summary of Social Housing Assessments 2023

The Summary of Social Housing Assessments 2023 brings together information provided by local authorities on households in their functional area that are qualified for social housing support but whose social housing need is not currently being met.

Key Findings:

- The total number of qualified households was 58,824 at the end of 2023. This is an increase of 982 (1.7%) since 2022.
- 9 of the 31 local authorities recorded a decrease in numbers in 2023.

[Read the full report](#)

Policy & Development



Key Findings:

- Estimated 115,425 households have an 'ongoing need' for social housing at end-2023, comprising of 58,824 households on main social housing waiting lists, plus 56,601 active HAP tenancies.
- This was down from 116,886 households at end-2022 (-1.25%).
- Over the period, the number of eligible applicants on the social housing waiting lists increased by 982 (+1.7%) while the number of HAP tenancies reduced by 2,443 (-4.14%).
- On a national level, the PBO estimates that the state would need to increase its existing social housing stock by 56% to accommodate all households with an ongoing need.
- Estimated cost of €34.95 billion to build new, appropriate, permanent social housing for everyone with an ongoing need.
- Minimum 235,659 people (4.4% of the population) with ongoing need, including 92,116 children (6.6% of all children under 18 in Ireland).
- Children account for 39% of individuals with an ongoing need.
- Dublin City Council has the largest number of people with an ongoing need across the country, estimated at 44,195, including 14,603 children. This accounts for 47% of ongoing need in Dublin overall.
- The highest percentage of households with an ongoing need is in Galway City Council, at 11.8%, compared to a national average rate of 6.3%.
- 27.4% of those with an ongoing need are over the age of 50.

Social Housing – Ongoing Need 2023

The Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) published its second report on social housing 'ongoing need'. The report quantifies the number of households on social housing waiting lists plus households in receipt of HAP. This more fully captures the number of households with an existing need for long-term, secure, state-supported housing.

[Read the full report](#)

Policy & Development

DHLGH Social Housing Delivery

The Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage published Social and Affordable Housing Delivery for 2023.

- A total of 11,939 social homes were delivered through build, acquisition and leasing in 2023, 1,191 below targets.
- A total of 9,834 social homes were delivered through HAP and RAS, 234 homes above the target.
- 8,110 new build social homes were delivered in 2023, 990 homes below the target.
- 1,830 social homes were delivered through acquisitions, 330 above the target.
- 1,999 social homes were delivered through leasing, 531 homes below the target.

	2023 Target	2023 Delivery	Difference
Build	9,100	8,110	-990
Acquisition	1,500	1,830	+330
Leasing	2,530	1,999	-531
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>13,130</i>	<i>11,939</i>	<i>-1,191</i>
RAS	800	1,542	+742
HAP	8,800	8,292	-508
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>9,600</i>	<i>9,834</i>	<i>+234</i>
TOTAL	22,730	21,773	-957

[Read the report here](#)

Youth Homelessness Strategy 18-Month Progress Report

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage published the Youth Homelessness Strategy 18-Month Progress Report. SCI welcome this report and the progress that has been made in implementing the actions set out in the strategy.

Key Points of Progress:

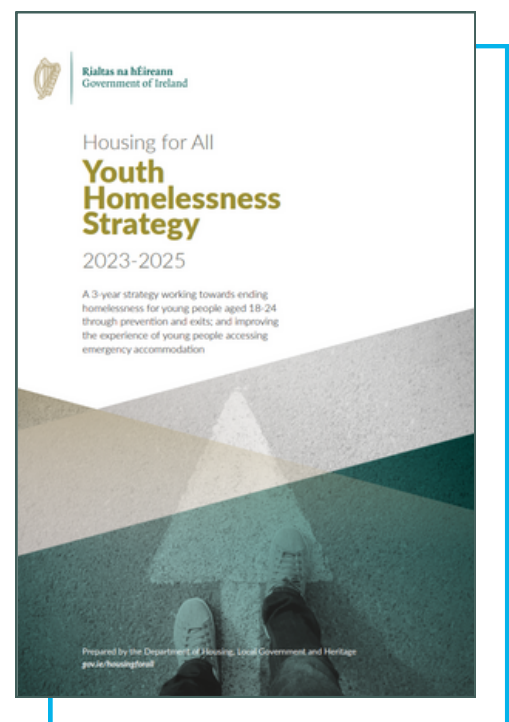
Three groups have been established under the strategy:

- Youth Homelessness Strategy Steering Group.
- Supported Housing for Youth (SHY) Oversight Group.
- Prevention and Early Intervention Subgroup.

Two consultation events were held in 2023:

- Consultation event to support the development of SHY
- Consultation event to explore the development of Action 101* and Action 112.**
- The SHY pilot project is due to commence in the coming months.

* Examine the establishment of a framework for specific assessments for young people presenting to services in order to identify supports required.
 ** Establish further dedicated emergency accommodation for young people that promotes an inclusive ethos.



[Read the report here](#)

Policy & Development



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Private Rental Sector Review



Prepared by the Department of
Housing, Local Government and Heritage
gov.ie/housing

Private Rental Sector Review

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage published a review of the private rental sector on the 16th of July, setting out:

- An overview of the rental market including the compositions of the market and trends in levels.
- Policy objectives.
- Considers a range of potential avenues for policy change to support these objectives.

The report identifies a number of sectoral policy objectives to support a well-functioning private rental market. These objectives are:

- Economic conditions which support investment in the private rental market.
- Security of tenure.
- Affordability.
- Ensuring standards for rental properties are appropriate.
- Ensuring appropriate and effective regulation to protect the rights of tenants and landlords.

The report sets out a series of potential avenues for policy change, including:

- Incentivising investment in the private rental sector.
- Supporting affordability.
- Reviewing rental regulation.
- Undertaking periodic critical review of the RTB.
- Ensuring appropriate rental standards.

[Read the report here](#)

EU Homelessness Count

In October, 15 cities across 10 EU countries will conduct a comprehensive homelessness count. Cork and Dublin are among the 15 cities.

[Further info here](#)



STADT
BOCHUM

European Homelessness Counts

Research & Reports

European Journal of Homelessness

The latest edition of the European Journal of Homelessness is now available, containing a range of articles which explore different aspects of homelessness, including social and healthcare services, Housing First, youth homelessness, migrant homelessness and homelessness data collection.

[Full report available here](#)



Opportunities and Challenges of Vacant Above the Shop Units for Residential Use

Dublin Simon Community published a report exploring the opportunities and challenges of vacant above the shop units for residential use. The report identifies available best practices, solutions and policy guidance, and assesses how lessons could be applied in a systematic approach to VATSUs for residential use for social housing in particular. The report includes five case studies which highlight successful conversions in different regions.

[Full report available here](#)

Home Truths: Adults Living with their Parents

Cork Simon Community published a report as part of their Home Truths series. The report examines the upward trend in younger single adults living with their parents, their lack of alternative independent housing and their risk of homelessness.

[Full report available here](#)

Deaths Among People Who Are Homeless

The Health Research Board published their 2020 report on deaths among people experiencing homelessness. The report uses coronial files to better understand premature death among people experiencing homelessness.

There were 121 premature deaths among people who were homeless in 2020, equivalent to 10 deaths per month. This is a 32% increase since 2019, when 92 deaths were recorded among people who were homeless.

A striking finding is that the median age of those who died was 41 years. This figure had a noted gender difference with the median age for women 36 years, compared to 42 years for men. In contrast, 82% of deaths in the general population of Ireland in 2020 were in the 65+ category.

Key Findings:

- 78.5% of deaths were among men.
- The median age of those who died was 41 years.
- 23 of those who died were rough sleepers.
- 91% of those who died had a history of substance misuse.
- There were 69 poisoning deaths (a death directly due to the toxic effects of one or more substances on the body).
- There were 52 non-poisoning deaths.

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