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The fight against homelessness and its links with anti-poverty policies in Ireland

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Summary

The definition of homelessness, and the framework for government action to tackle homelessness in Ireland, are set out in the Housing Act 1988. This legislation specifies that individuals or households are homeless if: (a) they have no accommodation that they can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of; or (b) they are living in an institution, hospital, or emergency accommodation for homeless people because they have no alternative accommodation

The latest data on homelessness indicate that 15,199 people were living in emergency accommodation and accommodation for the homeless in November 2024, and 134 individuals were sleeping rough in Dublin at this time. The number of people in the former category had increased by 185.5% since 2015. The number of rough sleepers also increased over this time, but less radically. Note that these data only cover those who are included in the statutory definition of homelessness and are eligible for support from local government. They exclude many others who would logically be regarded as homeless.

The strategy in place to tackle homelessness in Ireland is outlined in the current national housing policy statement – *Housing for All* – which covers 2021-2030. Ending homelessness by 2030 is the overriding objective of this policy and is linked to four subsidiary aims: (a) supporting the Lisbon Declaration on combatting homelessness; (b) expanding housing first provision; (c) supporting the healthcare needs of homeless people; and (d) preventing and addressing family, child and youth homelessness.

This report examines how the national housing policy statement aligns with the national anti-poverty strategy entitled the *Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025*, and with other relevant social policies (on affordable housing, housing allowances, social assistance, healthcare, and social services). This analysis highlights significant strengths in both homelessness and anti-poverty policies and some valuable implicit synergies between them. Furthermore, several additional reforms have been introduced since 2021 including the publication of a youth homelessness strategy and the introduction of new anti-poverty commitments following a review of the *Roadmap for Social Inclusion*. However, the explicit synergies between these policies are limited and relate primarily to affordable housing provision. The two policies therefore operate largely in parallel rather than in combination at national level and are implemented separately at local level.

Despite the strengths of policies to fight both homelessness and poverty, some weaknesses are evident in the responses to homelessness they propose, which reduce their effectiveness. There are also some gaps in the suite of policy responses to homelessness outlined across both policies, which undermine the comprehensiveness of the government's response. The key weaknesses in the housing-led responses to homelessness set out in *Housing for All* concern the disconnect between the scale and focus of the response and the size and character of the challenge. Plans for social housing provision are insufficiently ambitious and will not provide enough small dwellings and dwellings in cities to meet the specific needs of the majority of homeless people. A critical gap in the policy responses to homelessness in Ireland in recent years has been that the welcome and marked expansion of housing-led responses has not been matched by complementary action in other social policy fields.

To address these weaknesses and gaps, the report suggests that combatting homelessness and meeting the goals of the Lisbon Declaration should be included as an explicit objective of the *Roadmap for Social Inclusion*. To address this objective, the revised *Roadmap* should commit to the formulation of an updated homelessness-prevention strategy, the introduction of the reforms of anti-poverty policies and social service provision required to operationalise this strategy effectively, and measures to hold all relevant ministries and government agencies accountable for achieving all these objectives.

Introduction

European Union policy context

Homelessness is the **most extreme manifestation of poverty and social exclusion**. It has adverse impacts on people's physical and mental health, well-being, and life expectancy, as well as their access to employment and essential economic and social services. It is a complex and multidimensional issue with multiple causes, which include poverty and other personal vulnerabilities as well as structural drivers such as living in marginalised communities, lack of affordable housing and inadequate social support services.

At European Union (EU) level, homelessness is addressed by **Principle 19 of the European Pillar of Social Rights** on housing and assistance to the homeless. More specifically, Principle 19 states that:

- (a) access to social housing or housing assistance of good quality shall be provided to those in need;
- (b) vulnerable people have the right to appropriate assistance and protection against forced eviction; and
- (c) adequate shelter and services shall be provided to the homeless in order to promote their social inclusion.

The key deliverable of the [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#) in relation to Principle 19 was the establishment of the [European Platform on Combatting Homelessness](#) (hereafter: "the Platform"). The Platform was launched under the Portuguese Presidency in June 2021 by the [Lisbon Declaration](#), signed by all 27 EU Member States, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the EU advisory bodies, social partners and a number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Council of Europe Development Bank have subsequently joined the Platform.

The overall objective of the Platform is to "promote policies based on a person-centred, housing-led and integrated approach". It is pursued through **three work strands**:

- (a) the strengthening of evidence and monitoring on homelessness;
- (b) mutual learning activities for policy-makers and practitioners; and
- (c) the promotion of EU funding possibilities for inclusive policy measures.

All signatories of the Lisbon Declaration have committed to working towards the eradication of homelessness by 2030. In particular they have agreed on the following **objectives**:

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

Since its launch in 2021 the Platform has become a **reference initiative at EU level for policy-makers** by creating a dedicated, multi-level and multi-stakeholder community of practice against homelessness. By ensuring the commitment and engagement of all Member States and multiple

stakeholders, the Platform has succeeded in promoting the issue of homelessness up the political agenda, both at European and national levels, ensuring the required visibility and political support.

The **European Parliament** has been very supportive, including by promoting the creation of the Platform, *inter alia* through its “[Resolution of 24 November 2020 on tackling homelessness rates in the EU \(2020/2802\(RSP\)\)](#)” and its sponsoring of one of its flagship projects, the European Homelessness Count (see [here](#) and also [here](#)).

In its Opinion 2022/C 97/06 “[Eradicating Homelessness in the European Union: the local and regional perspective](#)”, adopted on 2 December 2021, the **European Committee of the Regions** welcomed the launch of the Platform and suggested four “important strands of action” for it: “facilitating transnational exchanges and mutual learning, promoting access to EU funding and financing opportunities, data collection and monitoring of policy progress, and identifying and helping to scale up promising innovations, such as Housing First”.

In its Opinion C/2024/1567 “[For an EU framework for national homeless strategies based on the principle of ‘Housing First’](#)”, adopted on 24 January 2023, the **European Economic and Social Committee** called for “*the development of an EU homelessness strategy in which the EPOCH (European Platform on Combatting Homelessness) is fully embedded, making it possible to include national policies to combat homelessness in the European Semester exercise*”. It also said that this strategy should be underpinned by a Council Recommendation on homelessness.

In the [Avilés Declaration](#) adopted on 13 September 2023 under the Spanish Presidency, Member States and civil society organisations invited the European Commission “*to continue in its supporting and promoting role, strengthening the work of the Platform in the context of the Action Plan to deliver on the European Pillar of Social Rights*”, and “*to ensure that the functioning of the Platform is included in the social, strategic agenda for the new European Commission*”.

On 8-9 February 2024, at the **Ministerial Meeting on Homelessness** organised by the Belgian Presidency, Member States agreed to call for greater political commitment, in the form of a proposal for a European recommendation, aimed at implementing an action plan to achieve the objective of eradicating homelessness by 2030, together with strong support for the Platform. Based on these conclusions, the [La Hulpe Declaration](#) of 16 April 2024 confirmed the importance of the Platform and the need for “continued action” to “eradicate homelessness and to promote a ‘housing first’ approach”.

The [Political Guidelines](#) of the new European Commission include the design of a first-ever **EU anti-poverty strategy**, designed to address the root causes of poverty, along with a new action plan on implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights. The guidelines also envisage a **European affordable housing plan** to address the housing crisis and the significant and growing investment gap in the area of social and affordable housing.

The Commission’s “**proposal for a joint employment report**” in 2025 (European Commission, 2024) notes that Member States should take action to “*support access to quality and affordable housing, social housing or housing assistance, where appropriate; address homelessness as the most extreme form of poverty; promote the renovation of residential and social housing and integrated social services*”.

Since the launch of the Platform, there has been an increasing body of research on national policies to combat homelessness and, in particular, on the housing component. However, little attention has

been given to the **links between policies aimed at combating homelessness and broader anti-poverty policies**.¹

It is with a view to filling this gap that the European Commission asked the European Social Policy Analysis Network to produce the present report, which analyses those links through the lens of anti-poverty policies.

Objectives of the report

This report on “The fight against homelessness and its links with anti-poverty policies in Ireland”

- (a) maps and discusses the extent and profile of homelessness in Ireland, based on the definition(s) of homelessness used in the country (Section 1);
- (b) presents the governance arrangements in place in the country regarding policies specifically aimed at preventing and fighting homelessness and policies aimed at preventing and fighting poverty more broadly (Section 2);
- (c) describes briefly the main elements of policies aimed at preventing and fighting homelessness in the country (Section 3);
- (d) analyses and assesses anti-poverty strategies and a selection of other key social policies relevant to the fight against homelessness (Section 4);
- (e) assesses the extent of synergies between policies specifically aimed at preventing and fighting homelessness and policies aimed at preventing and fighting poverty more broadly (Section 5);
- (f) presents the past, ongoing and planned reforms relevant to combating homelessness in the country (Section 6); and
- (g) provides suggestions for improving the links between homelessness and anti-poverty policies in Ireland (Section 7).

1. Nature and extent of homelessness

The main purpose of this section is to map and discuss the extent and profile of homelessness in Ireland based on the definition(s) of homelessness used in the country.

1.1 Definition(s) of homelessness

The statutory definition of homelessness, and the framework for government action to tackle homelessness in Ireland, are set out in the Housing Act 1988 (Government of Ireland, 1988). This legislation specifies that individuals or households shall be regarded as homeless if:

- (a) they have no accommodation that they can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of; or
- (b) they are living in an institution, hospital, or emergency accommodation for homeless people because they have no alternative accommodation.

This definition means that only those in categories 1, 2 and 3 of the ETHOS² Light definition of homelessness (respectively: people living rough; people in emergency accommodation; and people

¹ For the purpose of this Thematic Report, the term “policies” is used in an all-encompassing manner: it includes measures as well as strategies, plans and programmes.

² European typology of homelessness and housing exclusion.

living in accommodation for the homeless) are considered homeless by the Irish state (see Annex 2). This is significant because only those defined as homeless are included in Irish government data on homelessness and are eligible for government support for homeless people (although the scope of some homelessness policies is somewhat wider and some policies do address ETHOS Light categories 4, 5 and 6).

1.2 Extent and profile of homelessness

As explained in Section 1.1, the statutory definition of homelessness in Ireland includes people who are sleeping rough or living in emergency accommodation or in accommodation for the homeless (categories 1, 2 and 3 of the ETHOS Light definition). Robust, comprehensive data on homelessness are therefore only available for these categories (See Annexes 1 and 2).

Data on homeless people in category 1 (rough sleepers) are only available for Dublin city and county (i.e. Dublin city centre, and its inner and outer suburbs) and are collected from a bi-annual count conducted during a single week in the spring and winter. The count was last conducted in November 2024. It revealed that 134 individuals were sleeping rough at that time, which represented an increase of 6 (4.7%) since April 2024 and an increase of 16 (13.6%) since November 2023 (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2024b) (see Annex 3).

The housing ministry publishes monthly data on the number of homeless people in ETHOS Light categories 2 and 3, but these data do not differentiate between these two categories (see Annex 3). The latest date for which they are available is November 2024. At that time 15,199 people were living in emergency accommodation and accommodation for the homeless, of whom 10,541 were adults and 4,658 were children (aged under 18) (Department of Housing, 2024b). Although these data were compiled from a live database of users of emergency accommodation and are considered accurate, timely and comprehensive, they only include those living in accommodation funded by local authorities. Residents of shelters for victims of domestic violence are excluded because these are funded by the justice ministry. International protection applications who have not been provided with accommodation by the state are also not included, because they do not meet the residency requirements that are mandatory for access to emergency accommodation. As a result the housing ministry's homelessness data are largely, but not perfectly, comparable with ETHOS Light categories 2 and 3 (Bairéad and Norris, 2022).

A more detailed analysis of housing ministry data for November 2024 on homeless adults in ETHOS Light categories 2 and 3 reveals that 66% were in single-person households, 61% were male, 52% were Irish citizens, and 53% were aged 25-44. Homelessness (ETHOS Light categories 2 and 3) is was heavily concentrated in Dublin and its suburbs – 71% of homeless adults were resident in this part of Ireland. 66.6% of homeless adults were accommodated by private for-profit organisations. The vast majority of the remainder were accommodated in supported emergency accommodation – primarily hostels (which provide single bedrooms or beds in shared dormitory rooms, with communal eating facilities) provided by non-profit organisations. 2,168 households with children were also in ETHOS Light categories 2 and 3 in November 2024, of which 58% were single-parent families (Department of Housing, 2024b).

The number of homeless people in ETHOS Light categories 2 and 3 increased by 14% between November 2023 and November 2024 (Department of Housing, 2024b). This followed a short period of decline in 2020 and 2021 due to emergency housing support put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic, including a temporary ban on evictions from private rented accommodation and the leasing of additional dwellings from private landlords to enable homeless people to move from emergency accommodation (Baptista et al., 2022). However, the longer-term trend since 2010 has been one of radically increasing homelessness, to the extent that this period has been characterised as one of “hyper-homelessness” in Ireland (O’Sullivan, 2020). Between November 2015 and November 2024 the total number of people in ETHOS Light categories 2 and 3 increased by 185.5%. Although no similar concurrent increase occurred in the number in ETHOS Light category 1, 91 rough

sleepers were identified in Dublin in the winter 2015 count (Dublin Region Homeless Executive, 2016).

Analysis of the characteristics of people in ETHOS Light categories 2 and 3 reveals that certain groups are over-represented in homelessness compared with their prevalence in the Irish population at large, but trends in this regard have changed over time. Historically, single-person households accounted for the vast majority of homeless people in Ireland (O’Sullivan, 2020). This has changed over the last decade and families with children accounted for 23.8% of households in ETHOS Light categories 2 and 3 in November 2024 (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2024b). Single-parent families and Irish Traveller and Roma households with children were significantly over-represented among homeless people (Joyce, Norton and Norris, 2019; Russell et al., 2021). The age distribution of the homeless population has not changed significantly in recent years, nor has its geographical distribution; however a marked increase in the proportion of homeless people from migrant backgrounds has occurred. In April 2022 (the earliest date for which data are available) Irish citizens accounted for 64% of homeless adults in ETHOS Light categories 2 and 3, citizens of the UK and European Economic Area (EEA) countries accounted for 21%, and those of non-EEA countries accounted for 15% (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2022). The equivalent figures for November 2024 were (respectively) 52%, 22%, and 26% (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2024b).

Monthly data on the reasons for homelessness cited by those in ETHOS Light categories 2 and 3 on entry to emergency accommodation are also available, but only for the Dublin region. The most recent available data (for November 2024) reveal marked differences in this regard between families with children and single adults (Dublin Region Homeless Executive, 2024). Among the former the most common reasons for homelessness cited were eviction from a private rented tenancy (35%), leaving a domestic violence refuge (18%), family reunification (i.e. arrival of a migrant’s family from abroad) (12%), breakdown of a relationship with a parent (7%), and overcrowding (7%). The equivalent figures for homeless single adults were leaving direct provision (i.e. state accommodation for international protection applicants) (23%), breakdown of relationship with a parent (10%), eviction from a private rented tenancy (9%), breakdown of relationship with a partner (7%), and having newly arrived from abroad (7%).

In December 2023 the government decided that it would not be possible to provide state accommodation for all single, male applicants for international protection, as had previously been the norm. Instead it was decided that some of them would be offered additional cash payments until state accommodation was available. Since that time just under half of the single males who have applied for international protection have not been offered state accommodation. A total of 3,207 individuals were in this category in December 2024 (the latest date for which data are available) but no information is available on the proportion of these who are homeless. This group is not included in the housing ministry data on homeless people in ETHOS Light categories 1, 2 and 3 outlined above (Department of Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth, 2025).

The housing ministry’s homelessness data also do not include those living in shelters for victims of domestic violence, and no other data are available on those living in this form of accommodation. However, a review of the availability of these shelters in 2022 reported that they had space to accommodate 141 households (Tusla, 2022). The monthly data on the reasons for homelessness cited by families with children entering emergency accommodation in Dublin, mentioned above, indicated that leaving a domestic violence refuge was the second most common reason (Dublin Region Homeless Executive, 2024).

The historically high rates of homelessness in Ireland were reflected in the 2023 EU-SILC³ data, which showed that a larger proportion of the Irish population had experienced housing difficulties in their lifetime than the EU-27 average (7.2% in Ireland and 4.9% across the EU-27). Among the Irish population this share varied significantly depending on country of birth and current risk of poverty or social exclusion. Those born outside the EU-27 (13.5%) and those born in another EU-27 country (9.9%) were more likely to have experienced housing difficulties than those born in Ireland (6.0%). Furthermore, 12.8% of those currently at risk of poverty and or social exclusion (AROE) reported having experienced housing difficulties in their lifetime, compared with 5.8% of those not AROPE (Annex 4, Table A1). Despite this, the share of the Irish population who were still experiencing housing difficulties was lower than the EU-27 average (3.2% compared with 6.3%). However, a higher share the Irish AROPE population who had experienced housing difficulties at any stage in their lifetime were still experiencing them, compared with the EU-27 average (9.1% versus 8.5%). The opposite was the case among the non-AROE population in Ireland who had experienced housing difficulties at any stage in their lifetime (0.0% of whom were still experiencing housing difficulties, compared with the EU-27 average of 5.0%) (Annex 4, Table A5).

Among those who had experienced housing difficulties in their lifetime, 67.7% had stayed with relatives or friends as a temporary solution, compared with the EU-27 average of 76.2% (Annex 4, Table A2). 17.2% had stayed in emergency accommodation, with women more likely to have used it (22.2%) than men (9.9%) (Annex 4, Table A2). In 2023 only 8.2% of those who had experienced housing difficulties in Ireland cited financial reasons, compared with the EU-27 average of 25.9% (Annex 4, Table A3). The most commonly cited reasons for experiencing housing difficulties in Ireland were relationship or family-related reasons (34.2%) and there was a differential between men (27.5%) and women (38.8%) in this respect. Among those who had overcome housing difficulties experienced in their lifetime, 37.3% cited moving into social or subsidised private housing as the reason (EU-27 average: 20.4%), with 41.8% of women citing this compared with 30.8% of men (see Annex 4, Table A4). 15.2% of those who had overcome housing difficulties cited finding a job as the reason (EU-27 average: 26.5%); but among those there was a marked gender differential (men 25.8%, women 7.9%) (Annex 4, Table A4).

2. Governance arrangements in place regarding homelessness and anti-poverty policies

This section describes the governance arrangements in place regarding policies specifically aimed at preventing and fighting homelessness (Section 2.1) and policies aimed at preventing and fighting poverty more broadly (Section 2.2).

2.1 Strategies/policies for combatting homelessness

The Housing Act 1988 assigns primary responsibility for tackling homelessness to local government and empowers the 31 local authorities in Ireland (called city and county councils) to provide or fund the provision of emergency accommodation for homeless people – but notably does not oblige them to do so. As a result, homeless people in Ireland have no statutory right to government support for emergency accommodation. However, in practice almost all emergency accommodation for homeless people (as well as some healthcare and social care services for this population) is almost entirely funded by local government, with the accommodation provided by non-profit NGOs or private for-profit organisations (O’Sullivan, 2020; Baptista et al., 2022)

³ European Union statistics on income and living conditions.

The Child Care Act 1991 assigns responsibility for providing accommodation for people under 18 who are homeless, or in need of care, to the government's Child and Family Agency (called Tusla). It may also provide aftercare facilities for young people aged over 18.

In recent years the approach to devising and implementing policies to combat homelessness in Ireland has changed. In the past this was achieved primarily through dedicated national policies on homelessness. Action to combat homelessness is now integrated into a broader national housing policy statement, supported by more detailed national strategies to address specific aspects of homelessness as appropriate, and implemented via regional homelessness strategies devised by groups of local authorities responsible for the different regions of the country.

The current national housing policy statement – *Housing for All: A new housing plan for Ireland* – was published in 2021 and covers the period to 2030. Action to address homelessness is set out in Chapter Two of the statement, entitled: “Pathway to eradicating homelessness, increasing social housing delivery and supporting social inclusion” (Government of Ireland, 2021a).

A “whole of government” approach to formulating and implementing of *Housing for All* has been adopted. This means that, while the housing ministry has direct responsibility for these tasks, most other ministries and several central government agencies are also involved. A Programme Delivery Office has been established in the housing ministry to support the implementation of the policy statement. In addition its implementation is overseen by a sub-committee of the cabinet chaired by the Taoiseach (Prime Minister), and monitored by a unit located within the Department of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister's Office) and a committee of the heads of all the ministries involved this task (Government of Ireland, 2021a).

Local authorities are responsible for funding and overseeing the implementation of the national policy on homelessness within their geographical areas (these are called city and county councils). To ensure appropriate planning of this work, the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 requires local authorities to devise and regularly update a homelessness action plan in consultation with a homelessness forum, which includes representatives of providers of accommodation and other services for homeless people. These action plans are formulated collaboratively by groups of local authorities on a regional basis. The 2009 Act requires that they should include measures intended to: prevent and reduce the extent or duration of homelessness; provide services, including accommodation, to address the needs of homeless households; provide “tenancy sustainment” support to people who were formerly homeless; and ensure effective coordination to address homelessness in the geographical area concerned.

The following regional action plans are currently in operation:

- (a) Homeless-Action-Plan-2022-2024: a framework for Dublin (Dublin Region Homeless Executive, 2022)
- (b) Mid East Region Homeless Action Plan, 2024-2026 (Kildare County Council, Wicklow County Council and Meath County Council, 2023)
- (c) Mid West Region Homelessness Action Plan 2022-2025 (Limerick City and County Council and Clare County Council, 2021)
- (d) North West Homeless Action Plan 2023-2028 (Sligo County Council et al., 2022).
- (e) South-East Region Homeless Action Plan, 2023-2026 (Waterford City and County Council et al., 2023).

Arrangements for coordinating the implementation of homelessness policy are well-developed. Regional management groups and consultations bring together the local authorities and NGOs responsible for funding and delivering emergency and long-term accommodation for homeless people and relevant statutory social service providers – such as the Gardaí (police), child protection and health authorities, and the prison and probation service.

The territorial coverage, objectives and priorities of this housing policy statement are discussed in more detail in Section 3.

2.2 Anti-poverty strategies

Ireland adopted its first national anti-poverty strategy in 1997, and similar strategies have been published on a regular basis during the entire period since then. The current national anti-poverty strategy – *Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020- 2025: Ambition, Goals, Commitments* – was published in 2020 (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, 2020).

The anti-poverty strategy assigns responsibility for its implementation to national government and specifies that the social protection ministry will coordinate this. The Social Inclusion Roadmap Steering Group (SIRSG) was established to oversee implementation of the strategy's commitments. To ensure that the implementation of those commitments is prioritised by all responsible ministries, the SIRSG includes senior civil servants from all those ministries (designated as social inclusion responsibility officers), together with representatives of three NGOs that work on social inclusion issues. The SIRSG reports to the cabinet committee with responsibility for social policy, and to the parliamentary committee with responsibility for social protection.

No regional anti-poverty strategies are currently in place in Ireland.

Arrangements for coordinating the delivery of the anti-poverty strategy on the ground are less well-developed than those in place for homelessness and housing policy. This reflects the fact that many of the associated measures relate to reforming the social security benefits system, which is a nationwide system without regional variation and managed centrally by the social protection ministry and implemented by its local "Intreo"⁴ offices.

The territorial coverage, objectives and priorities of the national anti-poverty strategy are discussed in more detail in Section 4.1.

2.3 Governance-related links between the homelessness and anti-poverty strategies

There are governance-related links between the national policy on homelessness and the anti-poverty strategy. This is achieved by the presence of senior civil servants from the ministries responsible for each area (respectively the housing and social protection ministries) on both associated implementation oversight committees. However, these links are indirect and there are no direct arrangements for coordinating the implementation and review of the two policy areas.

3. Strategies aimed at combatting homelessness

This section focuses on the policy aimed at preventing and tackling homelessness that was selected in Section 2.1 for further analysis. It does not provide a full description of the policy and its measures, but rather some of its key features: its designation, timeframe and territorial coverage (Section 3.1), and its objectives and priorities (Section 3.2). A short description of the measures included in this policy, together with their alignment with and contribution to the Lisbon Declaration goals, is presented in Section 4: in Section 4.1 for those measures that are also included in the anti-poverty strategy discussed in that section, or in Section 4.2 for other measures within a set of five key social policies.

⁴ Intreo is the brand name for Ireland's Public Employment Service.

3.1 Designation, timeframe and territorial coverage

Housing for All: a new housing plan for Ireland is the national policy on homelessness and housing policy (Government of Ireland, 2021a). It was published in 2021 and covers the period to 2030.

3.2 Objectives and priorities

Homeless policy is outlined in Chapter Two of the *Housing for All* policy statement. This chapter also examines social housing delivery and supporting social inclusion and (as discussed in Section 4.2) these initiatives are also relevant to combatting homelessness.

The national policy on homelessness specifies that work towards ending homelessness by 2030 is the overriding objective (Government of Ireland, 2021a). This is linked to four subsidiary aims:

- (a) supporting the Lisbon Declaration on combatting homelessness;
- (b) expanding housing first provision;
- (c) supporting the healthcare needs of people who are homeless; and
- (d) preventing and addressing family, child and youth homelessness.

To achieve the objective and aims, 18 actions are proposed. These are:

- (a) actively participating through the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness to advance the Lisbon Declaration;
- (b) establishing a National Homeless Action Committee;
- (c) publishing a new housing first national implementation plan;
- (d) targeting 1,200 new housing first tenancies during 2022-2026;
- (e) underpinning housing first provision by the delivery of additional one-bed social housing homes;
- (f) providing capital funding to further develop supported emergency accommodation for families and individuals experiencing homelessness;
- (g) preparing and publishing guidelines with standards for the development and refurbishment of emergency accommodation;
- (h) issuing guidance to local authorities on their homeless action plans prepared under Section 37 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009;
- (i) supporting the Dublin Region Homeless Executive to pilot a scheme to convert emergency accommodation facilities owned by local authorities and approved housing bodies (AHBs) to own-door permanent social housing tenancies;
- (j) maintaining COVID-19 public health measures for people who are homeless, and consolidating improvements in healthcare delivery;
- (k) continuing to increase access to healthcare support and protection for homeless individuals, with an individual healthcare plan to be provided for all homeless individuals who need one, and improved access to mental health services;
- (l) finalising a model of healthcare for people experiencing homelessness, including a health/vulnerability assessment tool to assist in determining suitability for housing first and the level of support needed;
- (m) strengthening integrated care pathways for people who are homeless with chronic health needs, based on an “inclusion health” model, to achieve better health outcomes and to reduce the incidence of premature death;
- (n) expanding the case-management approach for homeless people living with drug or alcohol addiction and enhance treatment options;
- (o) developing a youth homelessness strategy;

- (p) enhancing family support and prevention and early intervention services for children and their families through a multi-agency and coordinated response, and disseminating innovative practice;
- (q) expanding street outreach services to engage with rough sleepers in key urban areas outside Dublin; and
- (r) identifying and providing enhanced tenancy-sustainment support to families experiencing long-term homelessness to help them exit homelessness and maintain their homes.

Each of these measures is linked to an implementation timeline, and an organisation responsible for leading this is identified (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2021). Quarterly reports on progress in implementing these measures are published by the housing ministry.

4. Combatting homelessness through anti-poverty strategies and other key social policies

This section focuses on the elements of the anti-poverty strategy identified in Section 2.2, and on the elements of a selection of five key social policies in place (if those elements are not also included in the strategy), that are relevant to combatting homelessness. The key social policies considered are those related to: affordable housing for low-income people (including social housing); housing allowances; minimum income / social assistance; access to healthcare services; and access to social services.

4.1 Anti-poverty strategy

The purpose of this section is to assess the extent to which the anti-poverty strategy identified in Section 2.2 is aligned with – and actually contributes to – the Lisbon Declaration goals, either explicitly or implicitly. It is not to describe this strategy as a whole.

4.1.1 Designation, timeframe and territorial coverage

The current anti-poverty strategy – *Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020- 2025* – was published in 2020 (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, 2020). It is a national strategy. There are currently no regional anti-poverty strategies in Ireland.

4.1.2 Objectives and priorities

The primary ambition of the anti-poverty strategy is to reduce consistent poverty to 2% or less and to make Ireland one of the most socially inclusive countries in the EU (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, 2020). To achieve this ambition, the strategy commits the government to achieving seven high-level goals. These focus on: (a) expanding employment opportunities; (b) supporting workers; (c) supporting older people; (d) supporting families and children; (e) supporting people with disabilities; (f) supporting communities; and (g) “core essentials” (including healthcare, housing, energy and food). The strategy includes 66 commitments to achieve these goals, with their achievement monitored against 22 targets. All these high-level goals are implicitly relevant to combatting homelessness. Goal 7 is explicitly relevant, and this is spelled out in the text of the strategy.

4.1.3 Alignment with and contribution to the Lisbon Declaration goals

This section assesses the extent to which the regulatory framework of the strategy is in line with and actually contributes to the goals set in the Lisbon Declaration. It also identifies possible gaps between the regulatory framework in place and actual implementation practices.

4.1.3.1 Preventing and reducing homelessness risks

Access to secure and affordable housing for low-income people

One of the goals of the anti-poverty strategy is to ensure that all people can live with confidence that they have access to good-quality healthcare, housing, energy and food (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, 2020, p. 18). However, the strategy does not include any new policy commitments to achieve this goal. It only commits the government to implementing the policies already proposed in the housing policy statement outlined in Section 3.

Access to social protection with a potential homelessness-reduction role

The anti-poverty strategy includes commitments to reduce the rate of both in-work poverty and child poverty by 2025. To achieve these commitments it promises to ensure workers are treated fairly and paid fairly, by addressing the false declaration of workers as self-employed for social insurance purposes (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, 2020, p. 18). It also commits to reforming the in-work social protection benefits paid by the state to low-paid workers in order to increase take-up and increase the attractiveness of paid employment for groups, such as lone parents, that currently have low labour market participation rates.

These measures are not directly relevant to combatting homeless, but have the potential to yield benefits for groups at higher risk of homelessness due to poverty and social exclusion. The 2022 mid-term review of the anti-poverty strategy revealed that significant progress had been made in achieving these objectives (Department of Social Protection, 2024).

4.1.3.2 Promoting targeted early intervention

This issue is only briefly (and indirectly) addressed in the sections of the anti-poverty strategy that discuss the groups who face additional barriers to accessing and taking up employment. Former prisoners are identified as one of these groups, as are some other marginalised groups at high risk of homelessness, including members of the Irish Traveller, Roma and some migrant communities. The strategy promises new further education and training services and a new employment services strategy that will improve support for these groups – including employment access support, employer recruitment incentives, and work placements (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, 2020, p. 27).

The mid-term review of the of the strategy revealed that significant progress had been made in achieving these objectives (Department of Social Protection, 2024). Most notably, three relevant strategies had been published on further and higher education (in 2020) (Solas, 2020), apprenticeships (2021) (Department of Further and Higher Education Research Innovation and Science, 2021) and employment activation (Government of Ireland, 2021b). All three are relevant to groups at high risk of homelessness, and the employment activation strategy includes measures that specifically target three populations in this category – disadvantaged young people, lone parents, and disadvantaged minority groups (including migrants) (Government of Ireland, 2021a).

4.1.3.3 Preventing and tackling eviction

The anti-poverty strategy acknowledges that access to affordable housing and security of tenure are key factors affecting a person's sense of well-being, and in providing the stability they require to complete education or training or to find and sustain employment (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, 2020, p. 68). It also notes the introduction of reforms to strengthen private renting tenants' security of tenure under the Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act 2019. However, the strategy does not commit the government to taking any further action in this regard (Department of Social Protection, 2022).

4.1.3.4 Fighting discrimination

The anti-poverty strategy does not contain a detailed discussion of discrimination. However, this issue is addressed indirectly through commitments to support marginalised and excluded groups. These include improving access to employment and education opportunities (see Section 4.1.3.2) and increasing sports participation among marginalised groups, such as ethnic minorities and people with disabilities (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, 2020). The commitments regarding sports are not directly relevant to homelessness. However, the mid-term review of the strategy concluded that significant progress had been made in their implementation (Department of Social Protection, 2024).

4.1.3.5 Promoting access to healthcare services

The anti-poverty strategy commits the government to formulating an inclusion health policy targeting socially excluded groups who experience extreme levels of health inequalities, with higher morbidity and mortality rates than the general population (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, 2020, p. 68). This policy will improve access to health services for these groups through coordinated and targeted actions. Homeless people are mentioned as a target of this policy, as are other groups at high risk of homelessness (e.g. people living with substance abuse, the Traveller and Roma communities, and those leaving institutions or prison).

The strategy also commits the government to expanding access to healthcare that is free at the point of use for the population at large, which may also benefit homeless people. These commitments include implementation of the “Slaintecare” plan, which is designed to reform the public hospital service and extend free dental care and free family doctor care to greater numbers of children (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, 2020).

At the time of writing the only progress made in the formation of the proposed inclusion health policy was the completion of a public consultation on its contents in November 2024 and a pilot project in Dublin (Department of Health, 2024). More progress has been made in expanding availability of healthcare that is free at the point of use: for instance, the expansion of family doctor care without fees to all children aged 12 or under commenced in 2020. This reform may benefit homeless families in employment.

4.1.3.6 Strengthening the role of social services

The issue is not discussed in detail in the anti-poverty strategy (Department of Social Protection, 2024).

4.1.3.7 Overall assessment towards the Lisbon Declaration goals

The anti-poverty strategy aligns broadly with the Lisbon Declaration goal of eradicating homelessness by 2030. However, the role of the strategy is to provide a broader framework aimed at reducing poverty and fostering social inclusion across various dimensions, such as employment, education, and healthcare (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, 2020, p. 9). The strategy is not a plan for eradicating homelessness; but monitoring of its implementation and outcomes indicates that it has been successful in achieving many of its broad aims, which is likely to have had implicit benefits for homeless households and those at risk of homelessness. The strategy includes limited commitments regarding housing, but Ireland has a dedicated housing ministry, which since 2016 has regularly published comprehensive policy statements on housing and homelessness. This omission is therefore not inherently problematic, because housing-led responses to homelessness are being addressed elsewhere (although, as discussed below, the scale of the response is inadequate for the scale of the problem). However, other ministries have not generally been pro-active in addressing the non-housing related drivers and implications of homelessness. This is exemplified by the omission from the anti-poverty strategy of measures to reduce the homelessness risks among people leaving state institutions (e.g. prisons and foster care) and the failure of the health ministry to complete the promised inclusion health policy.

4.2 Key social policies relevant to combatting homelessness

This section considers five key social policies that are relevant to the fight against homelessness. The policies analysed are those relating to: affordable housing for low-income people, including social housing (Section 4.2.1); housing allowances (Section 4.2.2); minimum income / social assistance (Section 4.2.3); access to healthcare services (Section 4.2.4); and access to social services (Section 4.2.5). The purpose of this section is to assess the extent to which each of these five policies is aligned with – and actually contributes to – the Lisbon Declaration goals, either explicitly or implicitly. It is not to describe these policies as a whole. Policies included in the anti-poverty strategy discussed in Section 4.1 are not considered.

4.2.1 Affordable housing for low-income people including social housing

This section briefly describes the provision of affordable housing for low-income people, including social housing services (Section 4.2.1.1), and assesses the extent to which it is in line with and contributes to the goals set in the Lisbon Declaration (Section 4.2.1.2).

4.2.1.1 Short description

10% of households in Ireland lived in social housing according to the 2022 census, and this is the primary form of state housing support for low-income households. In Ireland social housing refers to rented housing provided by local authorities and non-profit organisations called approved housing bodies (AHBs). Access is open to households that have low incomes (i.e. below a specified level, which varies regionally and according to household size), are in need of housing (have no other suitable or affordable housing or are homeless), and meet the right of residency qualifications (commonly termed the “habitual residency rule”). The capital costs of providing social housing are almost all funded by government grants and loans, and tenants have lifetime tenancies and pay rents that are linked progressively to incomes (lower-income tenants pay lower rents and vice versa) (Norris and Hayden, 2020).

After sharp cuts following the 2007-2008 financial crisis, Irish government spending on social housing provision has risen significantly in recent years. In 2021 it was estimated to be among the highest in the EU as a percentage of GDP (Housing Commission, 2024). The number of dwellings built, bought or leased for use as permanent social housing rose from 5,648 in 2016 to 11,938 in 2023. In the latter year, social housing accounted for 36.5% of total housing output (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, various years).

In addition to mainstream social housing provision, the government’s capital assistance scheme has funded AHBs to provide supported social housing for homeless people since the mid-1980s. In 2017 it was expanded to fund supported social housing for young people with complex needs leaving foster care or residential care on reaching adulthood (Palmer, Norris and Kelleher, 2022). This group are at high risk of homelessness. Furthermore, housing first accommodation (the vast majority of which is social housing) plays an increasingly important role in enabling exits from homelessness. This is a housing-led response to homelessness that supports people with a history of rough sleeping or long-term emergency accommodation use, and with complex support needs, to obtain permanent, secure accommodation and intensive supports to help them to maintain their tenancies. It was first introduced in Ireland in 2018, and the government is currently implementing its second housing first implementation plan, which covers the 2022-2026 period (Government of Ireland, 2022).

4.2.1.2 Alignment with and contribution to the Lisbon Declaration goals

The housing first programme has contributed significantly to achieving the Lisbon Declaration goals of minimising rough sleeping and long-term use of emergency accommodation. Under the first housing first implementation plan for 2018-2021 the number of tenancies created exceeded targets, they were effective in housing the priority population (on average, housing first clients had been

homeless for 9.6 years) and the tenancy-retention rate was 85% (which compares well with international norms) (Byrne et al., 2022). In November 2024, 1,048 formerly homeless people were in a housing first tenancy (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2024b). By the fourth quarter of 2020, 60 care-leavers were accommodated in the dedicated social housing scheme described above (Norris, Palmer and Kelleher, 2022). This helped to meet the Lisbon Declaration goal of ensuring that no one is discharged from a care facility without an offer of appropriate housing.

Increased output of mainstream social housing aligns directly with the Lisbon Declaration goals because it provides affordable and secure accommodation targeted at those who are homeless and at low-income households with a higher risk of homelessness. Social housing plays a key role in preventing homelessness and enabling exits from homelessness. In the third quarter of 2024, 1,247 adults were prevented from entering emergency accommodation through the provision of government housing support; notably, 43% of these secured social housing tenancies and 14% had their private rented dwelling purchased by the state under the “tenant in situ” scheme (which enables the state to purchase private rented dwellings when the landlord has issued eviction proceedings, and the tenant is at risk of homelessness as a result). In the same period 862 adults exited emergency accommodation with the help of government housing support, of whom 75% secured social housing tenancies (Department of Housing, 2024a).

4.2.2 Housing allowances

This section briefly describes the provision of housing allowances (Section 4.2.2.1) and assesses the extent to which it is in line with and contributes to the goals set in the Lisbon Declaration (Section 4.2.2.2).

4.2.2.1 Short description

In Ireland housing allowances are funded by central government but managed by the 31 local authorities countrywide. The main allowance (the housing assistance payment – HAP) is available only to low-income households living in private rented accommodation. It subsidises the cost of private rents, which varies geographically and according to household size. Claimants pay a contribution to their rent that is income-related and is calculated in the same way as the income-related rents used in the social housing sector.

The “Homeless HAP” programme provides higher levels of HAP payments (up to 50% above standard payment levels in the Dublin region and up to 35% above in other regions) and other support (e.g. help with downpayments) to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. Some local authorities in cities also provide a “place finder service” to enable Homeless HAP claimants find a dwelling to rent (Housing Commission, 2024).

4.2.2.2 Alignment with and contribution to the Lisbon Declaration goals

Provision of HAP aligns directly with the Lisbon Declaration goals because it provides access to affordable accommodation for homeless households, those at high risk of homelessness, and low-income households. By the fourth quarter of 2023 (the latest date for which data are available) 56,848 households were in receipt of HAP, of which 2,530 were in the Homeless HAP programme (Department of Housing, 2024a). In the fourth quarter of 2024, HAP-funded tenancies accounted for 709 (57%) of the 1,247 adults prevented from entering homelessness, and 212 (25%) of the 862 households that exited homelessness with the help of government housing support (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2024b).

Although security of tenure for private renting tenants in Ireland has been strengthened in recent years, HAP-subsidised private rental tenancies offer less security than mainstream social housing (Housing Commission, 2024). Evictions of private renting tenants are a significant contributor to homelessness, particularly among families (see Section 1.2). There is also some evidence that HAP

claimants are discriminated against by private landlords. Discrimination against housing allowance claimants is prohibited by the Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015, but a disproportionately high number of complaints of discrimination to the relevant authorities are made on these grounds (Hearne and Walsh, 2022).

A commission established by government to review Ireland's housing policy concluded in 2024 that HAP provided a vital, flexible, short-term form of housing support, but that the state relied too heavily on HAP to support those with long-term housing needs (Housing Commission, 2024). It argued that the private rented sector did not have the capacity to provide housing for all HAP claimants, and raised concerns about the negative distorting effects of HAP on the private rental market, particularly for those whose incomes were marginally too high to qualify for HAP. This is because HAP forms a floor under rents (i.e. no private landlord will charge a rent lower than that funded by HAP) and thereby keeps rent levels artificially high.

4.2.3 Minimum income/social assistance

This section briefly describes the provision of minimum income/social assistance support (Section 4.2.3.1) and assesses the extent to which it is in line with and contributes to the goals set in the Lisbon Declaration (Section 4.2.3.2).

4.2.3.1 Short description

In Ireland there is no rights-based minimum income scheme. Instead, minimum incomes are assured by means of three tiers of social security benefits, each with different qualification requirements. These are: social insurance benefits (access to which depends on social insurance payments); social assistance benefits (access depends on satisfying a means test); and supplementary allowances (discretionary minimum income, exceptional needs and rent subsidy payments available to those who do not qualify for, or are awaiting access to, the other benefits or require one-off emergency income support). The ministry responsible for social security (the Department of Social Protection) manages the funding and administration of these benefits at the national level. Access to most benefits, including the supplementary allowances, is managed by this ministry's network of Intreo offices.

4.2.3.2 Alignment with and contribution to the Lisbon Declaration goals

For most homeless people, the provision of social assistance payments aligns with the Lisbon Declaration's goal that no one is discriminated against due to their homeless status. Homeless Irish and UK citizens and citizens of other countries who meet the residency requirements for access to social security benefits in Ireland can access social assistance in the usual way. The social protection ministry has several dedicated offices in Dublin to help homeless people claim social security payments including supplementary allowances. Since 2019 the (government-owned) national postal service has provided a free "address point" service for homeless people that enables them to receive regular post at a local post office of their choice. They can thereby access essential services, including social security benefits, that may be difficult to access without an address.

A significant exception are single applicants for international protection who have not been provided accommodation by the state and are likely to be homeless (see Section 1.2). They are not eligible to use emergency accommodation for homeless people (but may use some social services for this group, see Section 4.2.5 below) and receive a weekly case payment which, at the time of writing, was just below half the supplementary allowance level.

4.2.4 Policies organising access to healthcare services

This section briefly describes policies organising access to healthcare services (Section 4.2.4.1) and assesses the extent to which they are in line with and contribute to the goals set in the Lisbon Declaration (Section 4.2.4.2).

4.2.4.1 Short description

Public healthcare services are funded by national government, managed by the health ministry (the Department of Health) but provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE). The HSE has responsibility for the healthcare needs of homeless people.

Homeless people have access to public health services in the same way as the general Irish population. The HSE also delivers some specialist health services, and in some cities NGOs are funded to provide some services (note that these services operate separately from housing first support). For instance, specialist homeless multidisciplinary teams work in two areas in inner-city Dublin. An NGO called Safetynet provides visiting medical services to homeless people in emergency accommodation centres, a drop-in medical clinic for homeless people, and a mobile clinic for rough sleepers in Dublin. The Dublin Simon Community NGO also runs an intermediate residential medical care unit that provides short-term care for homeless people.

The HSE published a hospital discharge protocol for Dublin in 2018 that is designed to ensure clear procedures are in place so that discharges of people experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness are planned with necessary support (Health Service Executive, 2024). This protocol involves the health services, local authority homelessness action teams, and NGOs.

4.2.4.2 Alignment with and contribution to the Lisbon Declaration goals

Provision of specialist healthcare services for homeless people in Ireland has significantly improved in recent years, but their provision is geographically uneven and largely concentrated in cities. Homeless people have the same rights to access mainstream healthcare as the general Irish population, but homeless people with complex health needs often find that accessing and navigating the variety of services that they need is challenging (Siersbaek et al., 2023).

The Dublin hospital discharge programme for homeless people is relevant to the Lisbon Declaration goal of ensuring that no one is discharged from any institution without an offer of appropriate housing. Evaluation of this protocol has highlighted its success and its positive impact on the quality of care for patients experiencing homelessness (Health Service Executive, 2024, p. 5). However, monthly data on single adult new entrants to emergency accommodation in the Dublin region in November 2024 revealed that 5% were leaving hospital or another venue for medical treatment (see Section 1.2) (Dublin Region Homeless Executive, 2024).

4.2.5 Policies organising social services

This section briefly describes policies organising social services (Section 4.2.5.1) and assesses the extent to which they are in line with and contribute to the goals set in the Lisbon Declaration (Section 4.2.5.2).

4.2.5.1 Short description

Three main types of social services are provided to homeless people. First, local authorities fund support services for homeless people in emergency accommodation (commonly known as “day services”) (Kelleher and Norris, 2020). They provide hot food, clothes, showers and key workers who support homeless people to access medical, addiction and accommodation services. These services are often also used by other marginalised groups who are not homeless and by international protection applicants. Comprehensive data on the use of day services are not available, but data on associated expenditure reveal that they are only provided in Dublin and the other main cities and, although expenditure has grown in recent years (by 31% in Dublin between 2022 and 2023), it is

small compared with total spending on emergency accommodation provision (2% of the total in Dublin in 2023) (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2023b). Second, the HSE also funds support services for formerly homeless people who have been provided with supported social housing by AHBs (the housing ministry's capital assistance scheme funds the provision of the dwellings) and some support for formerly homeless participants in the housing first programme (Housing Commission, 2024). Third, Tusla provides social work support for care-experienced young people accommodated in dedicated social housing by AHBs (see Section 4.2.1.1) and also an aftercare plan and associated aftercare support for young people who leave foster or residential care on reaching 18 (Palmer, Norris and Kelleher, 2022; Tusla, 2023).

4.2.5.2 Alignment with and contribution to the Lisbon Declaration goals

The social services described above are relevant to two Lisbon Declaration goals – that no one lives in emergency or transitional accommodation longer than is required, and that no one is discharged from any institution (e.g. prison, hospital, care facility) without an offer of appropriate housing.

However, the contribution that some of these services make to achieving these goals is not as strong as it might be. For instance, social work and accommodation services for young people leaving care at 18 have improved significantly in recent years (albeit from a low base) and most care-leavers receive aftercare support until age 21 or 23, if in full-time education (Tusla, 2023). However, monthly data on single adult new entrants to emergency accommodation in the Dublin region in November 2024 revealed that 4% were leaving care (Dublin Region Homeless Executive, 2024). Furthermore, although the relevant legislation (the Child Care (Amendment) Act 2015) places a legal duty on Tusla to provide all care-leavers eligible for an aftercare service with an assessment of need and an aftercare plan, it does not oblige it to provide them with accommodation (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2023a). The Housing Commission has raised concerns that underfunding by the HSE of support services for people leaving homelessness is impeding output of supported housing for this cohort under both the capital assistance scheme and the housing first programme (Housing Commission, 2024).

5. Overall policy integration regarding the fight against homelessness

This section analyses the extent to which the homelessness and anti-poverty policies considered in this report (in Sections 3 and 4, respectively) are coordinated and delivered in an integrated manner in Ireland. It also assesses the degree of synergies between them.

5.1 Coordination and delivery

As detailed in the preceding sections, Ireland currently has both a comprehensive national homelessness and housing policy and a comprehensive national social inclusion/anti-poverty strategy. These provide a national strategic framework for efforts to combat homelessness and poverty and are:

- (a) specified in significant detail;
- (b) underpinned by whole of government implementation arrangements overseen by senior civil servants from all the relevant ministries;
- (c) informed by detailed, evidence-based, regularly updated arrangements for monitoring performance and impact; and
- (d) supported by comprehensive and (currently) relatively well-funded policies regarding affordable housing, housing allowances, social assistance, healthcare, and social services.

As explained below, although there are several significant implicit synergies between the homelessness and anti-poverty policies, the explicit synergies are limited and relate primarily to social housing provision. They therefore operate largely in parallel rather than in combination at national level and are implemented separately at local level.

5.2 Synergies

5.2.1 Strengths

At national level the main explicit synergies between homelessness policy and the anti-poverty strategy (as set out in the *Roadmap for Social Inclusion*) relate to the provision of additional social housing, reform of housing allowances, and plans for more inclusive healthcare services (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, 2020).

However, there are also important implicit synergies, which relate to the significant overlap between the groups that face higher risks of both poverty and homelessness than the population at large. Thus the anti-poverty strategy contains actions to reduce healthcare and childcare costs and enable access to training, education and employment among groups such as lone parents, members of the Traveller and Roma communities, and migrants, which have significantly higher poverty and homelessness rates. These actions may help to reduce homelessness among these groups and help homeless people in these cohorts to exit homelessness.

5.2.2 Weaknesses and gaps

Despite the significant strengths of both housing/homelessness and anti-poverty policies, some weaknesses are evident in the responses to homelessness they propose, which reduces their effectiveness. In addition there are some gaps in the suite of policy responses to homelessness outlined across both policy areas. These gaps undermine the comprehensiveness of the Irish government's response to homelessness and could be addressed by strengthening the synergies between housing/homelessness and anti-poverty policy.

The key weaknesses in the housing-led responses set out in the national policy on homelessness (*Housing for All*) concern the disconnect between the size and character of the challenge and the scale and focus of the response (Government of Ireland, 2021a). Although this policy statement outlined plans for much higher levels of social housing output and associated public spending than had been the case in recent decades, the Housing Commission [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) concluded that even this was insufficient to meet affordable housing need and resolve homelessness in Ireland (Housing Commission, 2024). It recommended that the size of the social housing sector should be doubled. Meeting this target would require further significant increases in new social housing delivery.

The Housing Commission also highlighted a mismatch between the size and location of social rented dwellings and homeless households (Housing Commission, 2024). Although the vast majority of local authorities prioritised homeless households when allocating social housing, these households' chances of securing a tenancy depended on a suitable dwelling being available to let to them. Most homeless households were in cities, particularly in Dublin, and the commission highlighted a significant under-supply of new social housing in these locations relative to need. Most homeless households include only one person, but most existing social housing has two or three bedrooms and is suitable for letting to larger households. The national policy on homelessness is intended to increase output of small social housing units, but only 12.5% of the new social rented dwellings provided in 2021 contained one bedroom (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2021; Housing Commission, 2024). Sourcing appropriately sized accommodation has been found to be a significant challenge for implementing the housing first programme (Byrne et al., 2022).

A further critical gap in the policy responses to homelessness in Ireland in recent years is that the marked expansion of housing-led responses has not been matched by the complementary action in other social policy fields. The relatively narrow scope of policy responses to homelessness is exemplified by the fact that addressing this most acute manifestation of social exclusion is not an explicit goal of the anti-poverty strategy (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, 2020). Consequently few related measures directly related to combatting homelessness are included in it.

Matching housing-led responses to homelessness with complementary action in other social policy fields is particularly important for preventing and tackling homelessness. The analysis of the characteristics of the homeless population presented in Section 1.2 highlights several significant triggers of homelessness that could be addressed by revisions to anti-poverty policies and social service provision. These factors would be a logical focus for an updated homelessness-prevention strategy (to replace the last one published by the Irish government in 2002) under the auspices of the anti-poverty strategy (Department of Environment et al., 2002; Maher and Allen, 2014).

For instance, this analysis reveals that homelessness is highly geographically segregated in Ireland – it is heavily concentrated in cities and particularly in inner-city neighbourhoods. Strengthened neighbourhood regeneration and area-based anti-poverty programmes may therefore prevent homelessness in these neighbourhoods. For both single homeless adults and families with children, breakdown of a relationship with a parent (with whom they were presumably sharing accommodation) is a significant proximate trigger of homelessness. It may be possible to address this issue through targeted emergency supplementary allowance payments and family support.

Furthermore, the action (and inaction) of several different state organisations play a significant role in triggering homelessness, particularly among single adults. For example, leaving state-provided accommodation for former international protection applicants was the most common reason for homelessness cited by single adults who entered emergency accommodation in Dublin in November 2024. 23% of new single adult presentations to emergency accommodation were in this category and a further 10% of this cohort were leaving foster or residential care, hospital/treatment or prison (Dublin Region Homeless Executive, 2024). In addition, in December 2024 a total of 3,207 single males who had applied for international protection had not been offered state accommodation (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, 2025). Although not formally categorised as such, a significant proportion of these individuals were likely to be homeless. An updated homelessness-prevention strategy could usefully address these and other social policy and service-related drivers of homelessness.

6. Reforms since 2021

This section presents relevant reforms that have taken place since the signing of the Lisbon Declaration on the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness in 2021, as well as ongoing and planned reforms in Ireland and the extent to which they are likely to contribute to achieving the goals of the Lisbon Declaration.

6.1 Reforms since 2021

In 2022 a mid-term review of the anti-poverty strategy (*Roadmap for Social Inclusion*) was conducted (Department of Social Protection, 2024). As a result of this review 12 additional commitments were made, 17 existing commitments were updated, 2 new targets were set, and 7 existing targets were updated (see Section 4). Among these changes, the adoption of a new commitment to formulate an equality data strategy for the Irish public sector is relevant to the Lisbon Declaration goal of eliminating discrimination against homeless people. This data strategy would enable monitoring of public sector organisations' compliance with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act

2014. This legislation places a statutory obligation on all public sector organisations to put measures in place to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and treatment, and protect human rights, for both staff and service-users.

In addition, following the mid-term review the anti-poverty strategy targets for new social housing provision were significantly increased to reflect the higher targets included in the national policy on homelessness. This is likely to make a positive contribution to achieving the Lisbon Declaration goals.

The annual review of progress in implementing the anti-poverty strategy also highlights further reforms of healthcare services and policies that are relevant to the Lisbon Declaration:

- (a) publication of a national Traveller health action plan for 2022-2027;
- (b) provision of additional funding to maintain public health measures, improve healthcare services for people who are homeless introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, and improve addiction services for women, ethnic minorities and the LGBTI+ community; and
- (c) removal of all fees for patients in public hospitals (Department of Social Protection, 2024).

As detailed in Section 4.2.1.1, Ireland's second housing first implementation plan was published in 2022 (Government of Ireland, 2022). It covers 2022-2026 and consists of three major components: providing permanent, affordable housing; mobile case-management and treatment services (for mental health, physical health, and addiction); and a programme philosophy based on client choice and recovery.

In 2023 the government introduced the tenant in situ scheme which enables the state to purchase private rented dwellings when the landlord has issued eviction proceedings, and the tenant is at risk of homelessness as a result (see Section 4.2.1).

A youth homelessness strategy was also published in 2023, which covers 2023-2025 and targets young people aged 18-25 (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2023a). It has three primary strategic aims: (a) to prevent young people from entering homelessness; (b) to improve the experiences of young people in accessing emergency accommodation; and (c) to assist young people exiting homelessness. To achieve these aims, the strategy commits the government to 27 actions. These include: (a) housing rights information and awareness campaigns; (b) homelessness-prevention programmes; (c) strengthening support for young people leaving care, prison and experiencing family conflict and breakdown; (d) the provision of more dedicated emergency accommodation for homeless young people; and (e) the inclusion of young people's needs in the homelessness action plans produced by local authorities in different regions of the country (see Section 2.1).

Finally, a national strategic plan to improve the health of people experiencing homelessness was published in 2024 and covers 2024-2027 (Health Service Executive, 2024). It commits the HSE to 45 actions in the following areas:

- (a) homelessness-prevention and early intervention;
- (b) integrated care and case management;
- (c) pro-active outreach support;
- (d) housing first;
- (e) mental health and addiction support;
- (f) addressing the needs of specific populations;
- (g) research and data, service-user or peer engagement;
- (h) capacity-building; and
- (i) collaborative working with public health services.

6.2 Planned reforms

In 2024 a strategic review of the action underway across the housing ministry to combat and eradicate homelessness and its alignment with the Lisbon Declaration was conducted (Department of Housing, 2024). As a result of this review, the following key planned reforms were outlined:

- (a) mainstreaming the criminal justice homelessness service;
- (b) reviewing (and potentially reforming) local authority funding of emergency accommodation for homeless people;
- (c) strengthening homelessness-prevention interventions;
- (d) reviewing the legislative provisions relating to homelessness in the Housing Act 1988;
- (e) launching the supported housing for young people pilot programme, whereby 25 young people in emergency accommodation in Dublin will be moved into their own accommodation with wraparound support;
- (f) further strengthening security of tenure of private renting tenancies, by lengthening the notice periods landlords are required to give tenants when terminating a tenancy and the periods during which tenants can appeal against these terminations; and
- (g) reforms to HAP housing allowance for private renting tenants, including: reviewing eligibility to address inequities between recipient and non-recipient households; granting local authorities more discretion to increase HAP payments; introducing a payment plan option for tenants in default, with guarantees to landlords for up to 12 months; and expansion of the place finder service nationwide.

Following the last general election, the two parties that formed the new government in February 2025 negotiated a joint programme for government, setting out their policy priorities for their five-year term (Government of Ireland, 2025). Notably, this statement reconfirms the government's commitment to achieving the Lisbon Declaration goals and working towards ending homelessness by 2030. To achieve these objectives the programme for government commits it to take the following measures:

- (a) ensuring emergency accommodation is available to anyone in need, with additional support available for children experiencing homelessness;
- (b) adopting a cross-ministry approach to homelessness-prevention;
- (c) delivering 2,000 housing first tenancies to eliminate long-term homelessness;
- (d) requiring local authorities to prioritise leasing one-bedroom units to meet the needs of single households, and allocate social housing to families moving out of homelessness;
- (e) continuation of the tenant in situ programme;
- (f) implementation of the youth homelessness strategy; and
- (g) reform of 1988 Housing Act.

7. Improving the links between policies aimed at combating homelessness and anti-poverty policies

- (a) Combatting homelessness and meeting the goals of the Lisbon Declaration should be included as an explicit objective of the anti-poverty strategy (*Roadmap for Social Inclusion*). To address this objective, the revised strategy should commit the government to:
 - (i) formulating an updated homelessness-prevention strategy;
 - (ii) introducing the reforms of anti-poverty policies and social service provision required to operationalise this strategy effectively; and

- (iii) taking steps to hold all relevant ministries and government agencies accountable for achieving all homelessness-prevention strategy actions for which they are responsible.
- (b) The homelessness-prevention strategy should include commitments from the relevant service-providers that no one should be released from a state institution into homelessness, and should also include anti-poverty actions that could prevent homelessness including additional emergency payments and social service payments to overcrowded and multi-generational households and regeneration and spatial geographical anti-poverty programmes in neighbourhoods where levels of homelessness are particularly high.
- (c) The commitments to provide additional social housing included in the current iteration of the anti-poverty strategy should be revised to include explicit links to preventing and enabling exits from homelessness. This would require the inclusion of targets for the delivery of sufficient social housing in regions where homelessness is concentrated, and of dwellings of suitable size for occupation by the different types of households.

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Annex 1: FEANTSA ETHOS Light

Operational category		Living situation		Definition
1	People living rough	1	Public space / 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	Overnight shelters	People with no place of usual residence who move frequently between various types of accommodation
3	People living in accommodation for the homeless	3	Homeless hostels	Where the period of stay is time-limited and no long-term housing is provided
		4	Temporary accommodation	
		5	Transitional supported accommodation	
		6	Women's shelter or refuge accommodation	
4	People living in institutions	7	Healthcare institutions	Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing
		8	Penal institutions	No housing available prior to release
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing	9	Mobile homes	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence
		10	Non-conventional buildings	
		11	Temporary structures	
6	Homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to lack of housing)	12	Conventional housing, but not the person's usual place of residence	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence

Source: <https://www.feantsa.org/download/fea-002-18-update-ethos-light-0032417441788687419154.pdf>.

Annex 2: ETHOS Light categories defined as homeless in Ireland

ETHOS Light					Defined as homeless in your country? Yes or No (if the definition(s) in your country differ(s) slightly, please explain the difference(s))
Operational category		Living situation		Definition	
1	People living rough	1	Public space / external space	Living in the streets or public spaces without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters	Yes
2	People in emergency accommodation	2	Overnight shelters	People with no place of usual residence who move frequently between various types of accommodation	Yes
3	People living in accommodation for the homeless	3	Homeless hostels	Where the period of stay is time limited, and no long-term housing is provided	Yes in the case of categories 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5. Although people in category 3.6 are included within the statutory definition of homelessness they are not included in the official homelessness statistics.
		4	Temporary accommodation		
		5	Transitional supported accommodation		
		6	Women's shelter or refuge accommodation		
4	People living in institutions	7	Healthcare institutions	Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing	No
		8	Penal institutions	No housing available prior to release	No
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing	9	Mobile homes	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence	No
		10	Non-conventional building		No
		11	Temporary structures		No
6	Homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to lack of housing)	12	Conventional housing, but not the person's usual place of residence	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence	No

Annex 3: Latest available data on people experiencing homelessness in Ireland

Operational category		Living situation		Most recent number	Period covered (e.g. night of..., week of ...-..., year ...)	Source
1	People living rough	1	Public space / external space	134 in Dublin	Week of 4-10 November	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2024b)
2	People in emergency accommodation	2	Overnight shelters	No numbers – these are included in category 3.3 below		
3	People living in accommodation for the homeless	3	Homeless hostels	3+4+5 taken together. Total 15,199 individuals (including children).	November 2024	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2024b)
		4	Temporary accommodation			
		5	Transitional supported accommodation			
		6	Women's shelter or refuge accommodation	No numbers / excluded from count		
4	People living in institutions	7	Healthcare institutions	No numbers / excluded from count		
		8	Penal institutions	No numbers / excluded from count		
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing	9	Mobile homes	No numbers / excluded from count		
		10	Non-conventional building			
		11	Temporary structures			
6	Homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to lack of housing)	12	Conventional housing, but not the person's usual place of residence	No numbers / excluded from count		

Annex 4: Statistical annex (2023 EU-SILC module on housing difficulties)

The **EU-SILC** six-yearly module on the [inter-generational transmission of disadvantage and housing difficulties](#) collects information from the interviewees on the housing difficulties they may have experienced in their lifetime, including the reasons for those difficulties and how people managed to overcome them.

Housing difficulties are defined as situations where people had no place of their own (whether owned or rented) and were forced to stay with friends or family, use emergency or temporary accommodation, live in a place not intended as a permanent home, or sleep in a public space. Temporary displacement due to unforeseen events, such as natural disasters or emergencies, is not included among housing difficulties if people still had a permanent residence (owned or rented) to return to.

Table A1: Share of people having experienced housing difficulties in their lifetime by sex, current AROPE status and country of birth, %, 2023

	Total	Men	Women	AROPE	Not AROPE	Born in country	Born in another EU country	Born outside the EU
EU-27	4.9	4.9	4.8	8.5	3.9	4.1	7.3	11.3
Austria	5.6	6.2	5.1	13.1	4.1	4	7.3	14.9
Belgium	4.1	3.9	4.3	9.9	2.8	3.4	5.2	8.2
Bulgaria	1.5	1.6	1.4	3.1	0.9	1.5	:	4.9
Croatia	2.8	3.2	2.5	5.1	2.1	2.4	2.8	6.9
Cyprus	11.2	11.3	11.2	14.7	10.5	12.9	2.3	4.4
Czechia	3.6	3.5	3.7	8.3	2.9	3.5	3.7	8.7
Denmark	9.4	9.3	9.5	18.4	7.4	9.3	9	11.2
Estonia	5.5	5.8	5.3	8.1	4.6	5.1	3.5	8.2
Finland	10.8	11.2	10.3	17.5	9.4	10.6	15.5	12.9
France	9.1	9.2	8.9	17.1	7.1	8	10.4	17.5
Germany	4.7	4.7	4.6	8	3.8	4.1	5.5	7.8
Greece	1.9	2.1	1.7	3.3	1.4	1.3	5.2	10
Hungary	0.8	0.9	0.8	2.1	0.5	0.8	1.5	0
Ireland	7.2	6.2	8.2	12.8	5.8	6	9.9	13.5
Italy	1.2	1.3	1.2	2	1	0.8	2.6	5.9
Latvia	4.5	3.9	5	7.6	3.4	4.4	1.4	6.2
Lithuania	6.3	6.7	6.1	9.8	5	6.1	10.9	10.6
Luxembourg	6	6.1	5.9	13.5	4.1	4.9	4.9	12.1
Malta	3.5	3.5	3.6	5.5	3.1	2.5	6.4	6
Netherlands	7	6.6	7.4	13	5.9	5.8	14.6	14.4
Norway	7.2	7.2	7.1	16.5	5.3	5.7	6.4	17.5
Poland	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.9	0.6	0.8	0.8	2.3
Portugal	4	3.8	4.1	6.1	3.5	3.5	4.6	10.2
Romania	2.1	2	2.1	2.5	1.9	2.1	:	:
Slovakia	1.3	1.2	1.4	4.1	0.8	1.3	1.8	5.7
Slovenia	4.7	4.2	5.2	8.8	4	4.4	4.9	7.7
Spain	7.7	7.8	7.6	12.6	6.1	6	14.2	17.2
Sweden	9.1	9.5	8.6	16.8	7.4	7.8	11.7	14.1

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC (ilc_lvhd01 and ilc_lvhd03), 2023, data downloaded on 13 January 2025.

Table A2: Share of persons having experienced housing difficulties in their lifetime by sex and type of temporary solution/effect, %, 2023

		Stayed with relatives or friends	Stayed in emergency accommodation	Stayed in a place not intended as a permanent home	Slept outside (public space)
EU-27	Total	76.2	13.0	6.6	4.2
	Men	74.6	11.9	7.8	5.6
	Women	77.7	14.0	5.5	2.9
Austria	Total	67.0	19.4	7.1	6.5
	Men	66.8	15.2	8.4	9.6
	Women	67.3	24.0	5.6	3.1
Belgium	Total	65.3	24.5	6.2	4.0
	Men	64.3	21.2	9.2	5.3
	Women	66.2	27.4	3.6	2.8
Bulgaria	Total	78.8	2.6	17.7	0.9
	Men	76.3	3.5	20.2	0.0
	Women	81.4	1.7	15.1	1.8
Croatia	Total	58.4	32.4	7.8	1.3
	Men	57.8	33.1	7.1	2.1
	Women	59.1	31.8	8.5	0.6
Cyprus	Total	52.3	23.5	21.8	2.4
	Men	51.6	22.7	22.9	2.7
	Women	52.9	24.2	20.8	2.1
Czechia	Total	72.9	18.5	6.0	2.6
	Men	75.0	14.1	8.3	2.7
	Women	71.2	22.0	4.3	2.5
Denmark	Total	89.8	3.9	4.3	1.9
	Men	87.4	3.6	6.0	3.0
	Women	92.1	4.2	2.8	0.9
Estonia	Total	83.0	6.6	6.3	4.1
	Men	82.7	4.4	7.2	5.8
	Women	83.3	8.6	5.5	2.6
Finland	Total	84.8	6.8	7.2	1.2
	Men	81.8	7.7	8.2	2.3
	Women	88.1	5.7	6.2	0.0
France	Total	70.1	11.2	11.1	7.6
	Men	65.3	9.6	14.6	10.6
	Women	74.2	12.6	8.0	5.1
Germany	Total	67.5	24.2	5.2	3.1
	Men	67.8	22.8	6.0	3.4
	Women	67.2	25.6	4.4	2.9
Greece	Total	89.0	6.3	3.7	1.1
	Men	84.4	9.3	4.8	1.5
	Women	94.2	2.9	2.3	0.6
Hungary	Total	70.1	6.6	19.1	4.2
	Men	70.0	8.1	17.0	4.8
	Women	70.2	5.0	21.3	3.5

		Stayed with relatives or friends	Stayed in emergency accommodation	Stayed in a place not intended as a permanent home	Slept outside (public space)
Ireland	Total	67.7	17.2	8.8	6.3
	Men	70.5	9.9	9.7	9.9
	Women	65.8	22.2	8.2	3.7
Italy	Total	65.5	30.1	3.1	1.3
	Men	69.4	25.9	2.9	1.8
	Women	61.6	34.3	3.2	0.9
Latvia	Total	61.2	21.6	13.5	3.8
	Men	61.7	21.9	11.5	4.9
	Women	60.9	21.4	14.6	3.1
Lithuania	Total	86.0	8.1	5.6	0.4
	Men	88.1	6.3	5.6	0.1
	Women	84.3	9.5	5.7	0.6
Luxembourg	Total	84.9	6.8	3.5	4.8
	Men	83.1	7.3	4.1	5.4
	Women	86.7	6.3	2.8	4.2
Malta	Total	86.3	1.3	10.1	2.3
	Men	82.1	1.7	11.8	4.4
	Women	90.9	0.8	8.3	0.0
Netherlands	Total	78.8	10.9	6.9	3.3
	Men	75.4	12.6	6.8	5.2
	Women	81.8	9.4	7.0	1.7
Norway	Total	68.9	6.1	18.2	6.8
	Men	66.6	3.7	19.2	10.5
	Women	71.3	8.5	17.1	3.1
Poland	Total	78.3	15.7	3.5	2.5
	Men	81.1	7.8	6.8	4.4
	Women	76.7	20.2	1.7	1.5
Portugal	Total	80.4	6.0	6.5	7.0
	Men	74.9	6.6	6.2	12.3
	Women	85.0	5.5	6.8	2.7
Romania	Total	86.0	1.1	8.6	4.3
	Men	84.0	1.6	9.7	4.8
	Women	87.8	0.6	7.7	3.9
Slovakia	Total	81.1	9.3	9.1	0.5
	Men	80.2	6.5	12.1	1.1
	Women	81.8	11.6	6.6	0.0
Slovenia	Total	75.1	12.8	8.6	3.5
	Men	73.8	12.8	10.3	3.1
	Women	76.2	12.8	7.1	3.9
Spain	Total	91.7	3.9	2.1	2.3
	Men	91.0	3.7	2.0	3.2
	Women	92.4	4.0	2.2	1.4
Sweden	Total	85.2	5.5	5.0	4.4
	Men	81.7	5.2	6.8	6.3
	Women	89.0	5.9	3.0	2.2

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC (ilc_lvhd02), 2023, data downloaded on 13 January 2025.

Table A3: Share of persons having experienced housing difficulties in their lifetime by sex and reason, %, 2023

		Financial reasons	Relationship or family-related reasons	Health reasons	Lost job and/or no job found	End of rental contract	Uninhabitable accommodation	Leaving an institution after a long stay and no home to go to	Other reason
EU-27	Total	25.9	30.0	2.0	7.3	5.2	4.0	1.1	24.5
	Men	26.9	26.5	2.1	8.5	5.4	3.5	1.5	25.5
	Women	24.9	33.1	1.9	6.2	5.0	4.4	0.8	23.6
Austria	Total	12.1	44.3	0.6	2.4	5.8	0.0	0.5	34.2
	Men	15.5	40.9	1.2	3.2	5.2	0.0	0.7	33.4
	Women	8.4	48.2	0.0	1.6	6.5	0.0	0.2	35.1
Belgium	Total	14.7	45.4	1.7	1.8	4.3	8.1	1.3	22.6
	Men	18.8	46.0	1.5	2.3	4.5	7.5	0.5	18.9
	Women	11.2	44.9	1.8	1.4	4.1	8.6	2.0	25.9
Bulgaria	Total	27.7	18.3	0.2	6.2	11.2	13.2	0.9	22.3
	Men	28.5	15.6	0.0	7.8	13.8	11.3	0.7	22.4
	Women	26.9	21.0	0.4	4.6	8.5	15.2	1.2	22.2
Croatia	Total	6.9	23.5	0.7	5.5	1.9	8.9	1.1	51.4
	Men	5.1	25.3	0.5	6.3	0.8	12.4	1.7	47.8
	Women	8.6	21.8	0.9	4.8	2.9	5.6	0.6	54.8
Cyprus	Total	1.3	2.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.9	0.0	95.5
	Men	1.7	2.5	0.1	0.1	0.2	1.1	0.0	94.3
	Women	0.8	1.5	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	96.7
Czechia	Total	9.0	58.1	2.6	3.3	8.6	1.3	1.7	15.4
	Men	10.5	49.8	3.6	5.6	11.3	1.9	1.9	15.3
	Women	7.9	64.7	1.8	1.5	6.4	0.8	1.5	15.4
Denmark	Total	11.0	33.8	4.5	3.3	11.0	2.2	0.5	33.7
	Men	13.6	28.2	5.5	3.4	10.5	0.6	0.2	38.0
	Women	8.7	38.9	3.7	3.1	11.4	3.7	0.7	29.8

		Financial reasons	Relationship or family-related reasons	Health reasons	Lost job and/or no job found	End of rental contract	Uninhabitable accommodation	Leaving an institution after a long stay and no home to go to	Other reason
Estonia	Total	16.3	31.8	1.5	9.0	8.7	5.8	1.8	25.2
	Men	18.7	32.2	1.4	11.5	11.9	4.4	2.6	17.3
	Women	14.2	31.4	1.5	6.8	5.7	7.1	1.0	32.3
Finland	Total	10.0	21.1	1.7	3.4	10.8	2.8	0.4	49.8
	Men	8.9	18.7	2.2	4.2	9.6	3.0	0.7	52.6
	Women	11.3	23.7	1.1	2.5	12.2	2.5	0.0	46.7
France	Total	22.8	42.4	1.9	5.1	3.1	4.3	0.7	19.8
	Men	25.6	37.1	2.5	6.1	3.3	3.4	1.4	20.7
	Women	20.3	46.9	1.4	4.2	3.0	5.0	0.1	19.0
Germany	Total	13.0	23.2	2.4	3.2	7.3	4.4	2.7	43.8
	Men	14.3	20.8	2.1	3.9	9.0	3.2	3.3	43.5
	Women	11.8	25.5	2.8	2.5	5.7	5.6	2.1	44.0
Greece	Total	52.5	11.7	2.5	13.8	1.9	7.8	0.6	9.2
	Men	52.3	8.1	0.7	17.0	1.8	6.6	0.5	13.0
	Women	52.8	15.7	4.4	10.3	2.0	9.1	0.7	4.9
Hungary	Total	23.5	45.1	1.2	3.7	3.8	5.1	4.6	12.9
	Men	27.2	36.4	2.4	4.2	3.7	3.9	9.2	13.1
	Women	19.8	53.9	0.0	3.3	4.0	6.4	0.0	12.7
Ireland	Total	8.2	34.2	3.6	7.6	8.2	5.6	0.3	32.3
	Men	8.9	27.5	4.8	13.2	5.8	2.8	0.7	36.3
	Women	7.8	38.8	2.7	3.7	9.9	7.5	0.0	29.6
Italy	Total	27.9	21.8	3.3	11.4	9.5	10.1	2.0	14.2
	Men	25.5	19.0	3.7	15.1	8.3	11.0	0.8	16.5
	Women	30.2	24.5	2.9	7.7	10.8	9.1	3.1	11.8
Latvia	Total	12.9	42.7	0.7	4.0	14.9	5.6	1.8	17.4
	Men	10.5	38.5	0.7	4.9	19.1	4.9	2.4	18.9
	Women	14.4	45.3	0.7	3.4	12.3	6.0	1.5	16.5

		Financial reasons	Relationship or family-related reasons	Health reasons	Lost job and/or no job found	End of rental contract	Uninhabitable accommodation	Leaving an institution after a long stay and no home to go to	Other reason
Lithuania	Total	17.1	36.5	0.5	6.3	6.1	5.3	2.4	25.7
	Men	17.1	38.8	1.1	9.1	3.6	4.5	3.0	22.8
	Women	17.1	34.8	0.1	4.2	8.1	6.0	1.9	27.9
Luxembourg	Total	22.7	35.9	1.5	4.7	11.3	6.5	1.9	15.6
	Men	19.4	35.2	1.3	4.8	15.4	2.6	1.9	19.4
	Women	26.2	36.7	1.8	4.6	6.7	10.8	1.8	11.4
Malta	Total	16.1	35.0	2.2	0.3	6.2	4.4	3.4	32.5
	Men	18.7	29.2	4.1	0.5	7.2	2.7	2.6	34.8
	Women	13.2	41.1	0.2	0.0	5.0	6.2	4.2	30.1
Netherlands	Total	9.8	46.9	1.9	2.5	10.3	2.7	1.4	23.3
	Men	14.3	36.8	1.0	3.8	11.5	2.7	2.1	27.0
	Women	6.0	55.4	2.7	1.4	9.2	2.7	0.8	20.3
Norway	Total	24.1	26.0	7.8	4.5	10.8	3.1	0.3	23.4
	Men	26.8	21.8	9.1	3.7	10.3	2.8	0.6	24.9
	Women	21.3	30.3	6.5	5.2	11.4	3.4	0.0	21.8
Poland	Total	13.7	48.0	5.0	5.5	1.4	1.2	0.9	24.2
	Men	10.3	59.8	8.2	6.4	0.0	1.3	0.0	14.0
	Women	15.7	41.3	3.1	4.9	2.2	1.1	1.5	30.1
Portugal	Total	19.1	39.6	1.8	4.5	5.2	5.2	0.2	24.5
	Men	18.4	39.6	2.4	3.8	5.9	5.8	0.2	23.7
	Women	19.6	39.6	1.2	5.0	4.6	4.7	0.2	25.1
Romania	Total	33.5	31.5	0.7	2.6	0.4	11.5	2.1	17.6
	Men	39.0	34.3	0.8	0.0	0.9	13.3	2.9	8.8
	Women	28.7	29.0	0.5	4.9	0.0	10.0	1.4	25.5
Slovakia	Total	14.3	26.0	1.5	9.4	0.6	21.5	13.9	12.6
	Men	14.0	22.7	2.4	10.9	0.2	29.0	5.3	15.4
	Women	14.6	29.0	0.8	8.1	1.0	14.8	21.7	10.1

		Financial reasons	Relationship or family-related reasons	Health reasons	Lost job and/or no job found	End of rental contract	Uninhabitable accommodation	Leaving an institution after a long stay and no home to go to	Other reason
Slovenia	Total	24.9	49.6	1.8	3.8	5.2	13.6	1.0	0.0
	Men	23.7	47.7	2.8	5.4	5.8	13.6	1.0	0.0
	Women	25.8	51.1	1.0	2.5	4.8	13.7	1.0	0.0
Spain	Total	55.4	8.9	1.4	17.0	1.8	0.6	0.9	14.1
	Men	52.4	9.3	0.8	18.1	2.3	0.4	1.2	15.5
	Women	58.2	8.4	2.0	15.9	1.4	0.8	0.6	12.7
Sweden	Total	12.4	22.2	2.6	5.8	9.7	5.2	0.3	41.8
	Men	15.2	19.7	2.6	8.2	7.1	4.6	0.1	42.5
	Women	9.4	25.0	2.5	3.2	12.7	5.8	0.5	40.9

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC (ilc_lvhd05), 2023, data downloaded on 13 January 2025.

Table A4: Share of persons having overcome housing difficulties experienced in their lifetime by sex and reason, %, 2023

		Relationship or family- related reasons	Health reasons	Job found	Moved into social or subsidised private housing	Other reason
EU-27	Total	14.1	1.1	26.5	20.4	37.9
	Men	13.3	1.2	29.9	17.6	38.0
	Women	14.9	1.0	23.4	22.9	37.8
Austria	Total	39.3	0.5	14.7	20.0	25.5
	Men	41.7	0.5	13.0	19.3	25.4
	Women	36.6	0.5	16.5	20.7	25.7
Belgium	Total	29.8	2.3	7.2	35.4	25.3
	Men	29.2	0.8	11.0	36.5	22.4
	Women	30.3	3.6	3.9	34.4	27.8
Bulgaria	Total	18.2	0.2	21.4	6.5	53.7
	Men	12.0	0.0	26.0	2.1	59.9
	Women	24.4	0.5	16.7	11.0	47.4
Croatia	Total	17.7	0.1	13.8	12.9	55.5
	Men	17.2	0.2	15.5	9.1	58.1
	Women	18.2	0.0	12.1	16.5	53.2
Cyprus	Total	6.2	0.2	20.7	56.5	16.4
	Men	5.4	0.1	23.5	56.0	15.0
	Women	6.9	0.3	18.1	57.0	17.8
Czechia	Total	21.2	0.8	22.7	12.8	42.4
	Men	16.5	0.7	26.0	11.6	45.2
	Women	24.9	0.8	20.2	13.8	40.2
Denmark	Total	11.6	3.2	13.5	8.9	62.8
	Men	12.3	4.8	18.1	6.3	58.5
	Women	11.0	1.7	9.3	11.3	66.7
Estonia	Total	27.0	1.4	34.1	6.7	30.8
	Men	29.8	1.5	37.6	4.9	26.2
	Women	24.2	1.3	30.8	8.5	35.3
Finland	Total	9.1	1.9	16.6	16.5	55.9
	Men	12.0	2.7	18.7	15.7	50.9
	Women	6.0	1.1	14.4	17.4	61.1
France	Total	11.4	0.7	29.3	32.6	26.0
	Men	11.8	0.8	33.0	26.6	27.7
	Women	11.0	0.6	26.2	37.6	24.6
Germany	Total	9.0	1.0	12.4	16.4	61.2
	Men	8.3	0.9	14.7	16.0	60.1
	Women	9.8	1.1	10.0	16.7	62.3
Greece	Total	8.8	1.9	42.9	5.8	40.6
	Men	8.5	0.7	50.0	5.1	35.7
	Women	9.2	3.2	34.9	6.5	46.2

		Relationship or family- related reasons	Health reasons	Job found	Moved into social or subsidised private housing	Other reason
Hungary	Total	42.4	0.0	21.1	9.9	26.7
	Men	42.5	0.0	26.5	7.5	23.5
	Women	42.3	0.0	15.3	12.4	30.0
Ireland	Total	13.8	1.0	15.2	37.3	32.6
	Men	11.8	2.4	25.8	30.8	29.2
	Women	15.3	0.0	7.9	41.8	35.0
Italy	Total	15.2	2.8	35.1	16.0	31.0
	Men	5.7	3.0	40.4	19.0	31.9
	Women	24.7	2.5	29.8	12.9	30.0
Latvia	Total	32.9	0.6	16.9	18.7	30.9
	Men	28.2	1.3	16.0	22.0	32.6
	Women	35.8	0.2	17.4	16.8	29.9
Lithuania	Total	23.3	0.4	31.4	13.6	31.2
	Men	22.7	0.0	34.6	10.5	32.3
	Women	23.8	0.8	29.2	15.8	30.4
Luxembourg	Total	33.4	1.5	19.8	7.2	38.1
	Men	34.6	0.7	15.2	5.6	44.0
	Women	32.1	2.4	24.9	8.9	31.6
Malta	Total	29.1	2.2	17.7	8.9	42.1
	Men	23.5	4.1	27.7	4.7	40.0
	Women	34.9	0.2	7.3	13.2	44.4
Netherlands	Total	9.0	0.9	7.4	35.7	47.1
	Men	8.9	1.1	9.1	29.5	51.3
	Women	9.1	0.6	5.9	40.8	43.6
Norway	Total	23.2	2.2	21.5	16.6	36.5
	Men	23.0	3.2	26.7	13.5	33.6
	Women	23.5	1.1	16.4	19.7	39.3
Poland	Total	22.3	2.3	30.0	14.3	31.1
	Men	27.8	1.6	32.2	17.5	20.9
	Women	19.2	2.6	28.7	12.6	36.9
Portugal	Total	20.2	2.0	24.0	14.9	39.0
	Men	23.9	3.2	26.4	13.9	32.5
	Women	17.2	1.0	21.9	15.6	44.2
Romania	Total	17.6	0.4	23.1	37.4	21.4
	Men	12.2	0.0	29.6	35.0	23.2
	Women	22.3	0.8	17.5	39.4	19.9
Slovakia	Total	37.6	1.4	13.6	6.6	40.8
	Men	34.6	0.9	10.4	5.3	48.8
	Women	40.1	1.8	16.4	7.7	34.0
Slovenia	Total	33.0	1.4	17.1	11.5	37.0
	Men	33.6	2.6	12.9	10.8	40.1
	Women	32.6	0.5	20.3	12.1	34.5

		Relationship or family- related reasons	Health reasons	Job found	Moved into social or subsidised private housing	Other reason
Spain	Total	13.3	0.8	47.9	4.6	33.4
	Men	10.8	0.6	52.3	3.6	32.7
	Women	15.6	1.0	43.8	5.5	34.1
Sweden	Total	14.2	1.7	16.4	2.0	65.6
	Men	14.1	2.1	19.0	2.0	62.9
	Women	14.4	1.3	13.6	2.0	68.6

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC (ilc_lvhd06), 2023, data downloaded on 13 January 2025.

Table A5: People currently experiencing housing difficulties as a percentage of those having experienced them at any stage in their lifetime, by sex and current AROPE status, %, 2023

	Total	Men	Women	AROPE	Not AROPE
EU-27	6.3	7.2	5.5	8.5	5.0
Austria	0.4	0.7	0.0	1.0	0.0
Belgium	3.7	3.5	3.8	5.5	2.2
Bulgaria	8.7	8.9	8.5	12.7	2.9
Croatia	2.6	2.8	2.4	5.7	0.0
Cyprus	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0
Czechia	2.9	3.6	2.3	6.3	1.5
Denmark	2.4	2.2	2.5	4.5	1.2
Estonia	14.3	11.2	17.2	25.4	7.6
Finland	1.6	3.0	0.0	1.3	1.7
France	1.6	1.8	1.4	1.9	1.4
Germany	:	:	:	:	:
Greece	2.6	2.4	2.8	3.9	1.5
Hungary	3.2	1.7	4.7	3.4	2.9
Ireland	3.2	2.4	3.7	9.1	0.0
Italy	4.2	3.2	5.2	5.9	3.3
Latvia	4.7	3.8	5.3	6.5	3.3
Lithuania	6.9	11.3	3.5	11.8	3.2
Luxembourg	23.0	21.7	24.4	42.1	7.8
Malta	4.6	6.4	2.8	5.2	4.4
Netherlands	3.5	5.4	2.0	4.6	3.2
Norway	2.3	3.9	0.6	2.6	2.1
Poland	4.8	2.8	5.9	4.6	5.0
Portugal	4.3	5.2	3.6	5.0	4.0
Romania	6.3	7.4	5.3	5.9	6.5
Slovakia	5.7	8.8	3.0	5.0	6.3
Slovenia	5.6	7.3	4.3	8.0	4.7
Spain	19.5	21.3	17.7	23.2	16.9
Sweden	4.4	5.3	3.5	9.4	2.0

Note: For the share of persons having experienced housing difficulties in their lifetime, see Table A1.

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC (ilc_lvhd07), 2023, data downloaded on 13 January 2025.

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