

Dublin's Homeless Road

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Homelessness is a major issue in Ireland, being much more acute in Dublin's area.

There were 10,378 people homeless in the week of April 22nd-28th 2019 across Ireland. This figure includes adults and children. The number of homeless families has increased by 243% since April 2015. More than one in three people in emergency accommodation is a child. However, this number does not include 'hidden homelessness' which refers to people who are living in squats or 'sofa surfing' with friends. The national figure also does not include people who are sleeping rough.

In the past, most people using emergency accommodation were single adults. But in the last three years, there has been a rapid increase in the number of families becoming homeless, and in April 2019, there were 1,729 families accessing emergency accommodation. This includes 3,794 children.

The causes of homelessness are always complex. Broadly speaking, homelessness can be caused by 'structural factors' (like lack of affordable housing, unemployment, poverty, inadequate mental health services, etc) or 'personal factors' (like addictions, mental health issues, family breakdown etc). The current rise in family homelessness is driven primarily by structural economic factors.

According to Focus Ireland research and analysis, the overwhelming number of families becoming homeless had their last stable home in the private rented sector, and the crisis in this sector is the immediate cause of their homelessness – landlords selling up or being repossessed, shortage of properties to rent, scarcity of properties accepting rent supplement, and high rents.

Most of the families becoming homeless have never experienced homelessness before and never thought this could happen to them. Thousands more families are struggling on very low incomes or social welfare and many are falling into serious housing difficulties as rents continue to rise.

While the Government has introduced a range of policies to tackle homelessness, the growing number of people becoming homeless shows they are inadequate. Some of the

problems are long running – such as the decision to cut social housing spending by 72% between 2008 and 2012 (€1.38bn to €390m), but short term measures have not been tackled either.

The right to housing is recognized by the United Nations (Article 25 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and the UN has been active in highlighting homelessness as a violation of human rights.

1.2 Problem

Mr. Florin is a homeless person currently located in Dublin city (Mr. Florin is a real homeless person). He has recently noticed an important decrease on the money he is getting when asking for some spare change to people walking by.

Mr. Florin has tried many different things to increase his income without success, like staying in narrow streets so he is noticed, smiling to the people walking by or writing down his situation on board on his side.

This project aims to help Mr. Florin to increase his income, by analyzing which are the places more convenient for him to be and come up with a weekly route that would optimize his income.

1.3 Interest

Having a list of places and a route that would optimize any homeless' person income is very important to make their lives a little bit easier. Apart from that, one of the requirements is that every day the person has to move to a different place, because if the homeless person stays in the same area for many days, different people would start complaining (shop owners, residents, etc..).