

# **Day Services for People Who are Homeless in Dublin: A review commissioned by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE)**

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## ACRONYMS AND SPECIALIST TERMINOLOGY

DHPLG	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
DRHE	Dublin Region Homeless Executive
Dublin Region	Operational areas of Dublin City Council, South Dublin County Council, Fingal County Council and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council
HSE	Health Service Executive
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PEA	Private emergency accommodation

## INTRODUCTION

### INTRODUCTION

Day services provide a range of non-accommodation related support services for homeless people and for people at risk of homelessness. Most day services support homeless people in meeting their basic needs. They provide somewhere to spend time and socialise during the daytime, access to hot food, showers and laundry facilities. In addition, some day services provide additional supports to prevent homelessness or enable people exit homelessness such as structured housing and social welfare advice and support, and more specialist supports such as addiction, medical and mental health services.

This report reviews the design, delivery, operation and funding of day services for homeless people in the Dublin Region and examines their role within the wider framework of homeless services in the City and their contribution to achieving the aims of policy on national and regional policy on homelessness. All day services for homeless people in Dublin are provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the majority of these are funded entirely by charitable donations. While this report makes reference to the full range of these services, the focus of this review is primarily on day services which receive funding from the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE).

The research for this report was completed prior to the emergence of the Covid 19 pandemic and therefore the very significant implications which this pandemic has had for services for homeless people were not examined in this review. However, insofar as is possible the conclusions and recommendations in the final chapter do endeavour to take account of the implications of Covid 19 for day services for homeless people.

### AIMS

The research on day services in the Dublin region aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To describe the full range of day services provided by these government funded day services providers
- To describe the service capacity, staffing, operational and administrative costs associated with the delivery of these services
- To compile available data on the level of usage of these services by people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and the characteristics of these users
- To identify potential gaps and/ or duplication in the provision of services
- To make recommendations to the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) and the Health Service Executive (HSE) which fund the homeless day services examined in this report

## RESEARCH METHODS

The following mix of research methods were employed to operationalise this research. These were:

- A review of the policy and research on day services for homeless people including evaluations of these services and good practice guidance. Relevant publications from the Irish context were included but it is notable that very little research has been conducted on day services for homeless people in Ireland heretofore. As a result, this review focused primarily on relevant international research and policy.
- Data on government funding of funding of day services and of homeless services in the Dublin region was analysed. These were sourced from: published Department of Housing Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) data, day services providers' annual reports and information provided by the DRHE and day services providers.
- Individual interviews were conducted with representatives of the main day services currently funded by Dublin City Council and with the HSE and other relevant organisations.

Representatives from the following organisations were interviewed:

- Barka - three interviewees.
- Capuchin Day Centre – one interviewee.
- Focus Ireland – two interviewees.
- Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI) – one interviewee.
- Crosscare – one interviewee.
- A representative of Dublin Simon was also interviewed - this organisation is not categorised as a day services provider by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive but is a major provider of accommodation and outreach services for homeless people in Dublin.
- In addition, two representatives of statutory organisations were interviewed – one from the Health Service Executive and one from Dublin City Council.

These interviewees' opinions are anonymised in this most of report and interviewees are identified as interviewees one to eleven in the analysis which follows. A schedule of questions for these interviews is included in Appendix One.

## LIMITATIONS

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research. As explained above only providers of government funded day services were interviewed for this study. While this reflects the focus of this review on organisations in receipt of statutory funding, it is important to highlight that charitably funded day services which are also a major provider of day services were not examined in depth. In addition, no clients of homeless services were interviewed. The Covid 19 pandemic has had a major impact on the provision of services for homeless people, including day services, but the majority of the interviews for this study were carried out prior to the emergence of this virus.

## ORGANISATION OF THE REPORT

The remainder of this report is organised into five chapters. The next chapter examines the international research evidence regarding the design, delivery and impact of day services for homeless people. It identifies the key themes in this research and the lessons arising for the design and implementation of day services in Dublin. Chapter Two profiles the government organisations which provide day services for homeless people in Dublin, the specific services which they provide and the demographic characteristics and housing situations of their clients. This profile was compiled from information supplied to the authors by the DRHE and day services or collated from day services providers' annual reports or from interviews with the staff of these organisations. This chapter is deliberately descriptive and aims to clarify what day services do, and where they fit within the wider framework of services for homeless people in the Dublin Region. In contrast Chapters Three and Four are more analytical in focus. Drawing on the findings of the review of the research literature presented in Chapter One and on interviews with day services providers and staff of relevant government agencies, Chapter Three examines day service accessibility, service gaps and service duplication. Service planning and service provider collaboration are examined in Chapter Four. The conclusions to the report and associated recommendations are set out in Chapter Five.



## CHAPTER ONE INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE ON THE FOCUS AND IMPACT OF DAY SERVICES

### INTRODUCTION

Day services provide a range of non-accommodation related support services for homeless people and people at risk of homelessness. Although they are provided in the vast majority of European countries and also in North America, the scope of these services and what is defined as a day service varies internationally as do arrangements for their provision and funding (Edgar, Doherty and Mina-Coull, 1999; Crammond, Shewprasad and Boston, 2006).

In most countries, day services are provided by non-governmental organisations. They are generally based in a specific building or buildings and have an 'open door' access policy, meaning that clients do not have to meet any assessment criteria or have any specific characteristics in order to use the service (Fitzpatrick, Kemp and Klinker, 2000). The focus of day services ranges from covering basic needs such as providing homeless people with somewhere to spend time and socialise during the daytime, providing access to hot food, showers and laundry facilities, providing structured advice and support, and more specialist services such as addiction, medical and mental health services. The UK organisation Homeless Link, (2018: 4) points out that the term day service or day centre is 'is a catch-all term' and is sometimes 'loaded'. Consequently, some services prefer to use other terms such as 'drop-ins, resource centres, hubs or wellbeing centres'.

There is a broad consensus among researchers and policy makers that day services provide valuable supports for homeless people and people at risk of homelessness (Crammond, Shewprasad and Boston, 2006). However, the ethos and planning of day services and their co-ordination with government policy has attracted some criticism and, despite their ubiquity, day services have been subject to very little research in Ireland and to only limited research in other countries (Fitzpatrick, Kemp and Klinker, 2000).

This chapter reviews the international research on day services and identifies the key themes in this research and the lessons arising for the design and implementation of day services in Dublin.

### DAY SERVICES ROLES AND MODELS

Several authors have examined the role, focus and ethos of day services, and how this fits within the wider framework of services for homeless people. This research suggests that while the role and purpose of individual day services may vary, taken as a whole, these services fulfill a similar role within the framework of homeless services in the countries where they are provided.

A wide ranging review of the international research on best practice in day services conducted for the City of Toronto concluded that in almost every case day services aim to reduce the pressures on those who are homeless or vulnerably housed and thereby reduce the harm associated with their housing situation (Crammond, Shewprasad and Boston, 2006). In addition, some services also work to achieve one or both of the following additional goals:

- helping people to make changes in their lives including finding and maintaining housing and,

- preventing homelessness

The nature of the specific services provided by different day service organisations depends on the number of these goals which they are working to achieve. Table 1.1 below summarises the different types of services usually provided by day services. Day services providers which are concerned primarily with reducing pressures on those who are homeless or vulnerably housed usually provide services focused on meeting homeless people's immediate needs for hot food, health services and also for a place to shelter and socialise.

Services aimed at preventing homelessness may be involved in providing housing and social welfare specialist advice, engagement and support and enabling homeless people to access employment, training and education. While services which aim to enable homeless people to exit homelessness may also provide support to develop independent living skills such as budgeting and cooking. Of course, there is significant overlap between these objectives and many day services work to achieve more than one of them and thereby provide many of the services outlined in Table 1.1.

Models of day service provision and the ethos to which day services subscribe are the subject of much debate in the research literature. Bowpitt *et al* (2014) consider the place of day services on the spectrum of social care. They argue that these services fall somewhere between full residential care and occasional support and typically serve the full range of vulnerable adults including people with intellectual disabilities or mental health issues; older people who are infirm and those who are already homeless or are at risk of homelessness.

Watts, Fitzpatrick and Johnsen, (2018) analyse homeless services, including day services from a different perspective - the extent to which they actively intervene try to change clients' behaviour. They categorise day-centres and also soup runs and night shelters as low or non-interventionist services which generally adopt a non-judgemental approach with a view to facilitating and enabling changes in life circumstances of those who avail of such services. Waters (1992, cited in Homeless Link, 2010) distinguishes three broad models of day centre provision:

- First the 'spiritual/missionary' approach where day centres are places of containment and acceptance and the aim is to provide sanctuary, tolerance and places minimum expectations on people.
- Second is the 'social work' approach which aims to rehabilitate, change and challenge through professional support often delivered by key-workers.
- Third is the 'community work' model which aims to encourage personal change through skill development and work-related activities.

**Table 1.1 Services Typically Provided by Day Services for Homeless People Internationally**

Service Focus	Specific Services usually provided
Meeting immediate needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Providing a safe place for homeless and vulnerably housed people to spend the day</li> <li>▪ Providing basic services such as hot food, showers, telephone/internet access, a postal address</li> <li>▪ Providing an opportunity for social networking and companionship</li> <li>▪ Providing practical advice and support, including advice on housing access</li> </ul>
Provision of health and addiction services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Primary healthcare (dentist, podiatry, GP, and nurse)</li> <li>▪ Specialist mental health</li> <li>▪ Specialist substance use support services</li> </ul>
Provision of housing and social welfare specialist advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Housing access advice and tenancy sustainment</li> <li>▪ Advice in accessing social welfare benefits</li> <li>▪ Debt management advice</li> </ul>
Engagement and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reaching out to, and engaging, homeless and vulnerably housed people</li> <li>▪ Individual support and follow-up (sometimes referred to as case management)</li> <li>▪ Support groups and community building to encourage the formation of social networks and mutual aid among clients</li> </ul>
Support to access employment, training and education (ETE) opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Career advice</li> <li>▪ Jobsearch / CV writing</li> <li>▪ Formal education / training</li> <li>▪ Volunteer placements</li> </ul>
Support to access meaningful activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sports</li> <li>▪ Arts</li> <li>▪ Trips</li> </ul>
Support to develop independent living skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cooking</li> <li>▪ Money management</li> <li>▪ Managing a tenancy</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Crammond, Shewprasad and Boston (2006) and Homeless Link (2016).

## BENEFITS OF DAY SERVICES

The research evidence highlights several significant benefits of day services. Chief among these is the role which day services play in providing a first point of contact for many homeless people and also people at risk of homelessness. Day services can serve as an outreach tool to engage marginalised people who do not use other services for homeless people either because they are particularly marginalised and reluctant users of other services for homeless people or because their behaviour has caused them to be barred from other services (Crammond, Shewprasad and Boston, 2006).

The range of practical services provided by day services act as a 'hook' to engage homeless people and people and draw them into using services. Many people who are in, or on the margins of, homelessness may have had negative experiences with local government services or other housing services. Consequently, users of day services can be suspicious of mainstream services and day services can be the safety net for those who are not supported by any other service (Crammond, Shewprasad and Boston, 2006). As such day centres provide 'a sanctuary and last refuge' for highly marginalised groups that have been rejected by all other agencies and services (Bowpitt *et al.*, 2014: 1265).

The benefits of the practical services which day services provide, such as hot food, laundry, shower facilities, are also widely lauded in the research literature. For instance, Johnsen, Cloke and May (2005b) make the point that, by providing material resources, day centres minimise the need for homeless people to resort to 'survivalist crime'. Similarly, Jones and Pleace's (2005: 17) interviews with day service providers in the UK found that these basic services acted:

*'as a route by which homeless and daytime homeless people could be brought into a setting that could provide the opportunity to begin to think about change... a kind of 'bait' to encourage users to begin a process by which they could access the services necessary to begin to progress on from daytime homelessness'.*

However, it is generally considered that day centres provide much more than spaces of material resource and also operate as non-judgmental, caring and stigma-free environments. In addition, such centres offer a space of refuge from the threat of physical assault on the streets or in hostels and access to essential self-care facilities such as bathing and laundry (Johnsen, Cloke and May, 2005a).

Homeless Link, (2016: 3) also highlight that the fact that day services are generally provided by smaller, non-governmental organisations also has benefits. In their view it means they:

*'... offer flexible community responses that genuinely help homeless people, regardless of the funding environment. Often small organisations they are able to be deft of foot in the way they work with individuals; unrestrained by contracts they are able to offer help in innovative and inventive ways. Based in communities they are local. As services and the sector change, this will be increasingly important'.*

## CRITICISMS OF DAY SERVICES

Despite the widespread agreement regarding the benefits of day services, these services are not without their critics. Some of the concerns raised relate to issues which are challenges for all services for homeless people and particularly for non-governmental providers, others relate specifically to day services and their ethos, ways of working and the extent to which this corresponds with policy makers' priorities.

An example of the former category of criticism is raised by Johnsen, Cloke and May (2005a: 806) who argue that despite service providers' attempts to provide a therapeutic haven for clients, the reality is that day centres generally operate in 'survival mode' faced with the threat of underfunding and imminent closure and also have to manage unpredictable and challenging behavior from the often desperate people who attend. They suggest that hierarchies of stigma and other defensive behaviours imported from the streets can pervade day centres, despite the best efforts of service providers to manage these challenges. However, these experiences do not necessarily result in homeless people avoiding using day services presumably due to necessity or lack of choice (Cooper, 2001).

Some of the criticisms which are specific to day services suggest that they facilitate a 'containment' approach to homelessness by enabling the homeless population to be 'cleared' from the streets during the day (Johnsen, Cloke and May, 2005b; Crammond, Shewprasad and Boston, 2006). Other criticisms in this category relate to the ethos of day services, the range of supports they offer and their relevance to government policy priorities. In this vein, day services have attracted some criticism on the grounds that their activities can facilitate survival on the streets and thereby don't enable people to move out of rough sleeping, the ending of which is a key policy priority almost every country (Bowpitt *et al.*, 2014). For instance, Homeless Link, (2011: 2) states that: *'Day centres that only meet basic needs, such as food and clothing risk sustaining clients in an unsafe street lifestyle'*. Although it is important to clarify that this report suggests that day services which provide more comprehensive supports for homeless people are better placed to support their exit from homelessness. Other authors and service providers disagree with this criticism. Johnsen, Cloke and May (2005b) argue that day services, soup runs and other 'low threshold' easily accessible services provided badly needed 'spaces of care'. They also point out that if services such as soup runs and day services are not provided this will make it more difficult to make contact with homeless people who are distant from or have been barred from services.

Further research by Homeless Link (2017) suggests that many day centres have a large number of attendees who are vulnerably housed and therefore should be well placed to achieve the key government policy priority of preventing homelessness. However, they suggested that in fact many services had a narrow understanding of homelessness prevention as preventing eviction and placed less emphasis on the range of other supports and early intervention activities to prevent homelessness occurring in the first place. This report examined the approaches to prevention of homelessness identified in research and policies and on that basis, they devised a framework of prevention activities which could be carried out by day services. This is summarised in Table 1.2 below.

**Table 1.2 Framework of Homeless Prevention Activities for Day Services**

Category	Interventions
<b>Preventing upstream</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Influencing the legal framework and welfare system.</li> </ul>
<b>Early intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Providing opportunities for the general public to seek advice when needed and delivering targeted advice to at risk groups such as those leaving prison or the care system</li> <li>▪ Preventing the loss of a home – supporting those threatened directly with homelessness to avoid homelessness.</li> </ul>
<b>Helping someone out of homelessness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Working with those who have become homeless to end homelessness as quickly as possible and to prevent people becoming entrenched.</li> </ul>
<b>Helping someone to keep their home</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Delivering the support needed to avoid repeat homelessness with those who have experienced homelessness in the past or those who may be vulnerable to it.</li> </ul>

Source: Homeless Link (2017).

## DAY SERVICE DESIGN, PLANNING AND INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION

A common theme in the international research on day centres is the need to ensure that clients have access to a comprehensive range of support services in order to enable them find housing and maintain successful occupancy of this dwelling (Crammond, Shewprasad and Boston, 2006). The consensus view is that in addition to support with meeting basic personal care needs provided by almost all day services, clients also need access to outreach, engagement, individual support, group activities and housing support and the full suite of potential day centre activities outlined in Table 1.1 above. Without access to this comprehensive suite of supports, service users often receive multiple partial interventions that lead to unpredictable, repetitive journeys to different agencies (Crisis, 2005).

Although some very large day service providers may be in a position to provide the full suite of services required to provide clients with a comprehensive service, the consensus in the research literature is that inter-agency collaboration and planning is a more practicable route to providing a comprehensive service for clients in most cases. Homeless Link's (2017: 11) review of day services in Britain reports that: 'The majority of services feel that partnership work is one of the most important components of success. This takes the form both of partnerships with agencies across the local area and the use of day centres to provide hubs where a range of services can be accessed on site'. However, day centres do not always operate in a coordinated multi-agency way due to differences in ethos or funding streams or simply due to lack of time to attend strategic planning meetings (Homeless Link, 2011). Fowler *et al.*, 2019: 356) report that a 'one size fits all'

approach is often adopted in day services leaving gaps in service provision. Additionally, providers felt overwhelmed by demand, and consumers felt that their needs were not being met.

Although holding regular co-ordination meetings with other agencies are the most common way to address systemic issues of this nature, Fowler *et al.*, (2019) found that day service providers cited frequent meetings as a barrier to efficient practice because they reduce time available for frontline service provision. Thus, meetings to plan co-ordination with other agencies require focus and structure. Homeless Link (2017) suggests that multi agency collaboration among day services providers can be achieved most effectively through the establishment of hubs which make on-site services more accessible thereby promoting greater take-up. Hubs also encourage workers to share skills and improve working and information sharing ultimately making services more supportive, flexible and person-centred and responsive to need. Crisis (2005) recommend the appointment of 'service navigators' who would take responsibility for co-ordinating services for an individual across agencies, budgets and support packages ensuring inter-agency working and long-term monitoring.

A review of the research on day services carried out for the municipal government in Toronto concluded that successful day services co-ordination requires changes in the way agencies interact and share information resources and clients with each other (Crammond, Shewprasad and Boston, 2006). This report suggests that the following strategies can be used to improve co-ordination of day services:

- Case management and conferencing;
- Individual service planning;
- Assertive community treatment;
- Wrap-around service;
- Flexible funds for front-line workers and,
- Case and outcome monitoring.

The other day service co-ordination strategy which is commonly mentioned in the literature is service mapping. Homeless Link, (2016) recommends that services should evaluate where they fit within a network of local provision and map out all services operating locally with a view to establishing what they provide; their target group; their strategy; referral pathways; key contact person; information sharing protocols and other relevant information. Policy makers and funders should be included in this process.

## UNDER-SERVED POPULATIONS

As mentioned above the international research suggests that one of the key benefits of homeless day services is that they support groups which may not be engaged with, or whose needs may not be met by other health and social welfare services. However, the research also highlights groups which are likely to be under-served by homeless day services.

For instance, Homeless Link (undated) suggests that most day centres in the UK have a no-alcohol policy to reduce incidents in the centre, and to promote a healthy lifestyle for those attending. However, such policies can have unintended consequences. For example, drinkers

who feel judged will avoid the service while others may binge drink before arriving at the centre increasing the possibility of incidents or being barred from the centre. While bearing the safety and smooth running of such services in mind, approaches to meet the needs of this group are advocated by Homeless Link, (undated) such as training staff to work with this group along with providing satellite sessions from alcohol services; information about services elsewhere or allowing drinkers to leave their cans at reception to prevent bingeing and to minimise anxiety of those who are alcohol dependent.

Rising numbers of migrants who are homeless is a common area of concern in many countries. According to Mostowska, (2011: 27):

*‘Migrants may be among the most vulnerable actors in the housing market, and due to their economic position, and their social and language skills, they may be at greater risk of homelessness. In the case of migrants facing physical homelessness there may be problems accessing even basic help.’*

Training for day centre staff is advocated when dealing with migrants who may experience negative reactions from other service users. Access to translators and knowledge relating to different cultures is also seen as essential in this regard (Homeless Link, 2010).

Smith (2010) identifies homeless people who have secured housing as another group whose needs are under-served by day services. She argues that there is no reason why formerly homeless people should be forced to ‘move on’ from day services after they are housed and that to do so may result in a loss of contact with friends and support networks and access to the ‘safe haven’ which the day centre provided. Consequently, Smith (2010) argues that it is better to let ex-homeless people continue to use services rather than face isolation at home. Crammond, Shewprasad and Boston, (2006) echo this view and suggest that day services can provide useful supports for people who are housed but isolated and not well connected with services. There is some evidence that homeless people who have been housed but remain vulnerable and still require support can benefit from continuing to attend day services but the evidence in this regard is mixed. In a study of day services providing support to formerly homeless people in the UK, Crane *et al.*, (2005) found that access to day services could be useful if these clients receive help to sustain tenancies by skilled staff. However, this research suggests that long-term attendance at day services can create dependency and reinforce problematic behaviours among formerly homeless people and does not encourage independent living or building of community and social links. For these reasons, the authors advocate that day centres define their target clientele and the objectives of their work and recommend that sensitive diversion or move-on practices should be developed. However, they state that it is an issue that only a small proportion of day centres regularly assess the needs of people who are housed (Crane *et al*, 2005).

## DAY SERVICE EVALUATION, DATA COLLECTION AND OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT

Effective monitoring and service review and evaluation is widely considered to be important for improving the quality of services for homeless people (Pleace, 2013). However, researching day services is not without its challenges (Crammond, Shewprasad and Boston, 2006). This is



because the flexible and responsive nature of day services and the way in which they often evolve to fill gaps in other services means that identifying their aims and measuring progress in meeting these aims can be challenging. In addition, not all day services are comfortable with recording client data in case this undermines their ethos of open access.

However, Fowler *et al.*(2019) point out that collecting client information facilitates data analysis which can reveal patterns and trends along with evaluating the impact of services; responding to changing needs; responding to gaps in service provision; effectively bidding for funding and influence policy. Similarly Homeless Link (2011) emphasise the importance and benefit of recording relevant details about those who attend day services in order to inform evaluations of service outcomes and thereby do help clients progress towards independence. However, they caution that taking an outcomes approach shouldn't be about adding another piece of paperwork, but should be a continuous cycle of enquiry and service improvement based on factual information about what is being achieved.

## CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has examined the international research on the provision of homeless day services. Despite the fact that day services are provided widely in most European countries and in North America these services are not well researched. However, several significant, cross-cutting findings are evident among the research which has been conducted.

The research evidence highlights important benefits of day services. Most importantly they provide many of the vital basic services required by homeless people, they are the first point of contact with services for many homeless and marginalised people and thereby can serve as an outreach tool to engage with these people and prevent or address homelessness. However, in many countries, day services rely heavily on donations for funding and often struggle with underfunding and the threat of closure. Furthermore, day services which focus only on meeting clients' basic needs for food and clothing have been criticised for enabling clients to continue rough sleeping and day services in general have been criticised for failing to efficiently prevent homelessness or to move clients out of homelessness.

The international research on day services indicates that clients should have access to a comprehensive range of support services in order to enable them find housing and maintain successful occupancy of their new home including access to outreach, engagement, individual support, group activities and housing support as well as food and support for their basic self-care needs. Although some very large day service providers may be in a position to provide the full suite of services required, the consensus in the research literature is that inter-agency collaboration and planning for this is a more practicable solution in most cases. However, day centres do not always operate in a coordinated multi-agency way due to differences in ethos or funding streams or simply due to lack of time to attend strategic planning meetings.

## CHAPTER TWO PROFILE OF DAY SERVICES FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE IN DUBLIN

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter profiles the day services which are currently provided in the Dublin region in terms of their organisation and funding, clients they target and the services they provide. In common with the rest of this report its focus is primarily on those services which are funded by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive. However, in view of the large number of day services which are funded entirely by charitable donations, these services are also included in this analysis, but are not examined in depth.

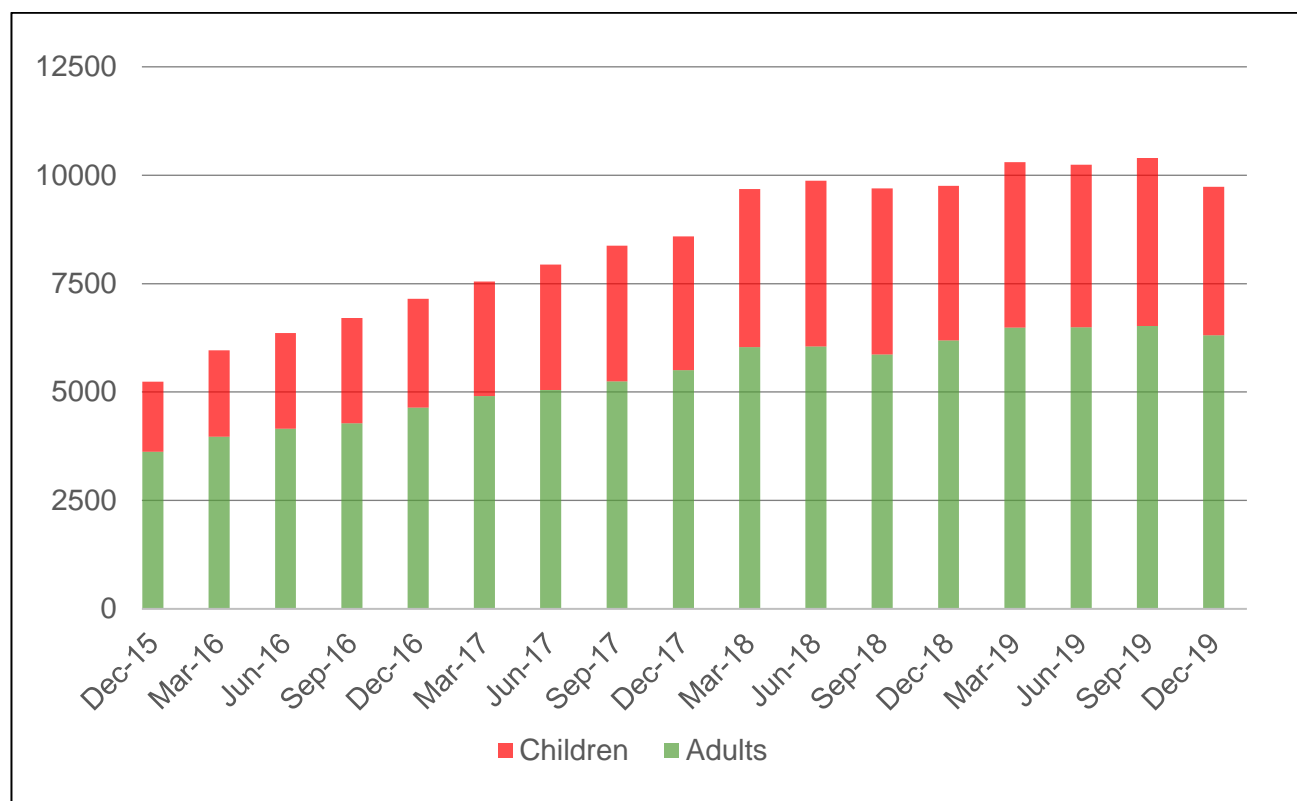
The chapter is organised into six further sections. The next one explains the context for the remainder of the discussion by examining trends in recent homelessness in the Dublin region and the policy response to these trends. The four sections which follow profile day providers in the Dublin region, the scope of the services which they provide, their clients and funding and staffing arrangements. The conclusions identify the strategic issues arising from this profiling exercise in terms of the design, targeting and delivery of day services for homeless people in Dublin.

### HOMELESSNESS LEVELS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The context in which day services for homeless people are provided has changed significantly over the last decade. This period has seen a marked increase in homelessness in Ireland in recent years and strong concentration of this larger homeless population in the Dublin region. Figure 2.1 demonstrates that the numbers of homeless people increased from 5,241 to 9,731 between December 2015 and December 2019. Throughout this period close to 70 per cent of the total homeless population in Ireland were resident in Dublin City and County.

Services for homeless people in the Dublin region, which includes the operational areas of Dublin City Council, South Dublin County Council, Fingal County Council and Dún Laoghaire- Rathdown County Councils, have also been significantly expanded and reformed over the last decade. These are managed on behalf of these four local authorities on a shared services basis by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive. The DRHE is responsible for devising an overarching homeless services strategy for the region, administering local government and Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) funding for these services and monitoring the use of this funding. Almost all homeless services are delivered by non-governmental organisations – either in the non-profit or the for-profit private sector.

**Figure 2.1 Number of Homeless People in Ireland – Adults and Children – Dec 2015 – Dec 2019**



Source: Department of Housing Planning and Local Government, (various years).

The current DRHE strategy for homeless services - the *Homeless Action Plan Framework for Dublin 2019 – 2021* – aims to prevent homelessness from occurring and, when it does, to move homeless people through emergency accommodation, supported with health and support services, towards a sustained exit from homelessness (Dublin Region Homeless Executive, 2019). In order to achieve these aims the *Homeless Action Plan* proposes a series of actions, which are organised around three themes: prevention, protection and progression. The key provisions of this strategy are summarised in Table 2.1.

The context in which day services are delivered has changed again following the emergence of the Covid 19 pandemic. The social distancing rules introduced to stem the spread of this disease had major implications for the 2,906 single adults in who were living in emergency accommodation for homeless people in Dublin when these rules were introduced at the end of March 2020 and also for people sleeping rough. To comply with the social distancing rules, most emergency hostels reduced their bed numbers to provide more space for clients and staff and three facilities were closed altogether in line with public health advice from the HSE. Approximately 450 new beds were sourced to replace this capacity and a further 670 beds, in hotels and one-bed apartments, were put in place to facilitate cocooning and isolation by both homeless singles and families.

A number of measures were introduced across emergency accommodation facilities. All one night only accommodation bookings were replaced with long-term bookings, to avert the need to rebook a bed

through the homeless freephone and to prevent movement between facilities. All facilities in the Dublin Region began to operate on a 24 hour basis with no requirement for clients to go outside during the day. The DRHE has also ensured that all facilities provide meals onsite for clients. Outreach teams meet with people sleeping rough throughout the day (7am – 1am Mon-Fri/ 9am – 1am weekends) to support them into this accommodation. The team bring sandwiches and snacks along with clean clothes, hand sanitizers and face masks for anyone sleeping rough. Demand for daytime food and other services has significantly reduced as a result of the measures introduced across emergency accommodation facilities, although the interviews with day service providers conducted for this report indicate that this decreased demand is not distributed evenly across the different service providers and demand has increased in some cases.

Although this reduction in demand for the kind of services provided by day services for homeless people is likely to rise again as the Covid 19 emergency abates, other developments may reduce demand again over the long term. Most notably, the Dublin Region Housing First Service, run by the Peter McVerry Trust is likely to reduce the need for day services. It which targets rough sleepers and long-term users of emergency accommodation with complex needs, moves them directly into permanent housing and delivers intensive housing and health supports into their home. The Housing First service is contracted to achieve a total of 630 Housing First tenancies by June 2022 and 325 individuals are currently housed at the time of writing.

**Table 2.1 Homeless Action Plan Framework for Dublin 2019 – 2021 - Key Themes and Actions**

Theme	Specific Objectives	Associated Actions
<b>Prevention - providing early intervention to people at risk of homelessness</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Direct intervention to prevent presenting families and single persons becoming homeless</li> <li>2. Enhanced statutory interventions and community infrastructures to reduce the risk homeless particularly among groups known to be vulnerable to homelessness</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Tenancy Sustainment</u>: The DRHE funds prevention services to avoid episodes of homelessness through support, advocacy and advice. These services include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ clinics across the Dublin region</li> <li>○ representation at cases before the Residential Tenancies Board,</li> <li>○ clinics in local authorities' housing allocations services</li> <li>○ mediation, drop-in advice services and engagement with Department of Social Protection, MABS, HSE, TUSLA as appropriate</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <u>Tenancy Creation</u>: Homeless Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is used to prevent homelessness occurring in the first instance. This scheme provides a security deposit and two months' rent in advance as well as an increase of up to 50% on HAP rates available to otherwise qualified applicants.</li> </ul>
<b>Protection for people experiencing homelessness through emergency accommodation provision and targeted support</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Providing adequate numbers of safe secure emergency accommodation beds to prevent people having to sleep rough</li> <li>2. A targeted approach and provision of accommodation and support to vulnerable groups</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The DRHE commits to provide sufficient emergency accommodation in STAs, Family Hubs and PEAs, in order to prevent and reduce the risk of rough sleeping. This is based on ongoing assessment of the scale and type of presenting need including for different vulnerable groups</li> <li>▪ The DRHE has Service Level Agreements (SLA) with non-governmental providers of Family Hub accommodation for homeless people to ensure that the same support and services are provided to all homeless families living in this form of accommodation</li> <li>▪ The Dublin Region Housing First Service targets rough sleepers and long-term users of accommodation; it provides them with permanent housing and intensive tenancy and health supports delivered principally in their home</li> </ul>
<b>Progression - Identifying and enabling pathways to long-term housing solutions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Housing solutions will come from the private rented and the social housing sectors</li> <li>2. A targeted approach and provision of long-term supported housing for the identified vulnerable groups</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Efforts to increase the stock of social housing available to let through leasing, rapid build, acquisitions, void management, Buy &amp; Renew schemes</li> <li>▪ Allocation of these dwellings to homeless people and other priority households</li> <li>▪ In addition to the existing allocations teams in the four Dublin authorities, the DRHE has recruited a team of staff to support rapid rehousing for families and individuals in self-accommodation and/or other forms of temporary accommodation</li> <li>▪ A Placefinder service helps source tenancies in the private rental sector for homeless people</li> </ul>

Source: Dublin Region Homeless Executive (2019).

## DAY SERVICES PROVIDERS

The number and characteristics of organisations involved in the provision of government funded day services has changed since 2014. However, at all times during this period these services have been provided by non-governmental organisations. Details of the organisations currently in receipt of funding from the Dublin Region Homeless Executive for the provision of day services in the Dublin region and the types of services which they provide are set out in Table 2.2. As this Table explains some of these organisations provide several separate day services, Crosscare provides two separate day services for instance and Focus Ireland provides three. So, the details of each of these separate services are all summarised Table 2.2.

As explained in the introduction to this report, services funded entirely by charitable donations are also very significant providers of day services in the Dublin region. The largest day services providers in this category are:

- St. Joseph's Penny Dinners – food service
- St Agatha's Food Centre – food service
- Missionaries of Charity – food service
- Guild of the Little Flower – food service
- Mendicity Institution: food service, employment and integration service, employment support and social enterprise.

## SCOPE OF DAY SERVICES

Table 2.2 also outlines the scope of day services in terms of the specific services which they provide to clients. It explains that the vast majority of day services provide hot food for clients. Additional services are also provided in every case, but the range of these services varies in terms of type, focus and objectives.

**Table 2.2 Organisations in Receipt of Government Funding for the Provision of Day Services for Homeless People in the Dublin Region, 2020**

Service	Focus	Main services provided
<b>Barka</b>	Floating migrant support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information advice and repatriation to home country</li> <li>Assistance with accessing emergency accommodation when required</li> <li>Key working and case management; and language and translation service</li> </ul>
<b>Capuchin Day Centre</b>	Homeless families and individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hot food and shower facilities</li> <li>Access to nursing staff, GP, dental and social work services, chiropody and optical screening clinics; haircuts; Cervical Smear Screening; COPD and Diabetic Clinic and AA meetings</li> <li>Distribution of essential items including baby food and nappies; new socks, underwear and clothes; hospital packs; tents; shoes and baby clothes; and Information and advice</li> </ul>
<b>Crosscare</b>	Housing and Welfare Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with/provide services to rough sleepers and those accessing night only hostels</li> <li>Information, advice and advocacy, mediation, dispute resolution key working case management brief interventions or housing/homeless support</li> <li>Provide support to access above and welfare and health care services</li> </ul>
	Refugee Information Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support to rough sleepers, those accessing night only hostels or private emergency accommodation</li> <li>Welfare, information, advice and advocacy, mediation, dispute resolution, key working case management, housing/homeless, support, language and translation services</li> <li>Provide support to access above and welfare and health care services</li> <li>Target group, Single Males and Females, couples, families</li> </ul>
<b>Focus Ireland</b>	Coffee Shop /Advice and Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target group is homeless people and people at risk of homelessness</li> <li>Provide hot food and engage with/provide services to rough sleepers, those accessing night only hostels or private emergency accommodation</li> <li>Services: information, advice and advocacy, mediation, dispute resolution, key working, case management, housing/homeless support, language and translation services</li> <li>Provide support to access above and welfare and health care services</li> </ul>
	Advice Tallaght	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with/provide services to rough sleepers, those accessing night only hostels or private emergency accommodation</li> <li>Information, advice and advocacy, mediation, dispute resolution, key working, case management, housing/homeless support, translation services.</li> <li>Provide support to access above and welfare and health care services</li> </ul>

Service	Focus	Main services provided
	Family Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Targets high-needs families with challenging behaviour, who struggle to maintain self-accommodation and families who, as of yet, are not accepted as homeless and who are availing of 'one night only' emergency accommodation</li> <li>▪ Supporting vulnerable families to exit homelessness by assessing their vulnerabilities and needs, case management and intensive family support</li> <li>▪ Providing a safe place in an optimum location for families to engage with targeted support services to assist them in exiting homelessness</li> <li>▪ Providing children with experienced child support workers who assess their needs and make interventions to assist them</li> <li>▪ Providing a safe space to deliver support to assist children and young people with homework, provide respite, support and activities</li> <li>▪ Providing high quality nutritional food to families as necessary and laundry facilities</li> </ul>
<b>Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI)</b>	Day Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support rough sleepers, those accessing night only hostels or private emergency accommodation</li> <li>▪ Provide hot food, information, advice and advocacy, mediation, dispute resolution key working case management brief interventions or housing/homeless support</li> <li>▪ Language and translation services</li> <li>▪ Provide support to access above and welfare and health care services and addiction services</li> <li>▪ Provide change of clothes, access to shower and changing facilities, basic toiletries</li> </ul>

Source: Information provided by Dublin City Council and taken from service level agreements and information provided by and annual reports of listed organisations.



An interviewee from the Capuchin day centre explained that ‘we are primarily a food centre’ but in addition to providing hot food at lunchtime:

*‘On a Monday we give out baby food and nappies, which is expensive if somebody’s on social welfare... On a Wednesday we give out a food parcel. We give out anything from a thousand to a thousand two hundred, a thousand three hundred food parcels, which would be bread, butter, milk, sugar, tea, cheese, cooked chicken breast, cooked ham, and then whatever else would come in .... We can do up to forty showers every morning, where if somebody wants a shower when they come in in the morning, they give their name and they’re called throughout the morning. And anybody who gets a shower gets brand new socks, brand new underwear, brand new T-shirt, and then second-hand clothes if they need it.... We have an art class on a Friday. We’d consider it a therapeutic art class, but they just consider it fun.... Yeah, and we have a choir, a singing group. ... we give out safety shoes or boots for workers.... We also provide training for forklift drivers if they’re—or a Safety Pass’.*

The day service at Merchants Quay Ireland also provides food but in the early evening and in addition to this an intensive, multi-faceted support service is provided for clients. An interviewee from this organisation explained that their service includes case management in relation to drugs, youth and mental health issues during the day and then an ‘extended day service’ in the evenings. The latter is intended to provide ‘safety, food and just engagement with clients that are either waiting to go into hostels or actually going back out to sleep on the streets.

Focus Ireland provides three separate day services as part of the wider suite of services which organisation provides to homeless people. It is one of the largest non-profit sector providers of services to homeless people in Dublin and one of the largest recipients of government funding for this purpose. In addition to three separate day services, in 2018 it received DRHE funding for the provision of homeless prevention, tenancy sustainment and resettlements supports, emergency accommodation and support for clients of other emergency accommodation providers and provision of long-term supported accommodation (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, various years).

Like other day services providers Focus Ireland provides food and laundry services to clients. In addition, its two longstanding day services in Temple Bar (a coffee shop) and Tallaght provide information, advice and advocacy, mediation, dispute resolution, key working, case management, housing/homeless support, language and translation services and support to access welfare and health care services. Focus Ireland has recently established a new day service which targets families with challenging behaviour who have had difficulties in maintaining tenancies and provides them with a comprehensive range of family and child welfare supports. The interviewees from Focus Ireland also mentioned that it was helpful that the day services’ staff can refer clients to other services provided by the agency such as child support, family support and housing support. These services work with families to enable them to secure and maintain social or private rented tenancies, access child development services and counselling. Day services clients are also referred to the Preparation for Education, Training and Employment (PETE) which provides literacy classes and life skill development and coaching for people who have been homeless and has recently opened a new family support centre.

The service provided by Barka contrasts with the other services examined in this report insofar as it is not provided from a particular building or permanent base. Rather Barka staff conduct outreach on the streets and also visit other day services such as Merchants Quay, Capuchin Day Centre, the Lighthouse to engage with homeless people from Eastern Europe. Their model of intervention focusses on peer support and is implemented by former Barka clients. These staff include Polish and Russian speakers and a lot of their work involves translating to enable their clients interact with other services. The interviews with Barka clarified that this organisation also supports these people with ‘bank accounts, contact with landlords, PPS, translating with institutions’. They also explained:

*‘... our main aim is to reach those who are in extreme life situations, on the streets and in hostels, people who have been in addictions for many years, drugs, alcohol, gambling, all sorts of addictions. And our main goal is to motivate them to change their lives, to awaken this commitment to change so that they want to change, do something with their lives’.*

This interviewee argued: *‘a change is often only possible when they leave Dublin because it’s here where they have, you know, the network of friends, so-called friends, but it’s friends to steal with, to drink with’.* They also pointed out that in their view, addiction counselling is only effective when conducted in one’s native language. On this basis Barka helps clients with the costs of repatriation to their home country, supports them on this journey and enables them access detox and rehab services when they arrive there.

The interviewee from Crosscare explained that the two day services which this organisation provides are also targeted at migrants. Crosscare’s housing and welfare service deals with people from all sorts of migrant background, including many people who are naturalised Irish citizens. This interview clarified that their service to these communities focusses on:

*‘.... the area of information and advocacy, but it’s in relation to in the main access to housing and homeless supports, to social protection, and kind of as a by-product health, health supports, and other bits and pieces like education and job activation, employment, stuff like that. But our main core business is welfare and housing and homelessness’.*

The refugee day service provided by Crosscare also deals with migrants, but its service focusses primarily on supporting people with asylum seeker and migrant issues including their right to live and work in Ireland, family reunification, travel documents and supports to integrate.

## DAY SERVICE CLIENTS

Data on the numbers of clients who have attend the different day services under examination here in recent years are available for some but not all of these services. The data which are available is set out in Tables 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 below. It is important to note that in most cases these data relate to the numbers of visits made by all clients to these services rather than to the number of individual clients who used these services – where these data refer to individual clients, they are referred to as ‘unique individuals’ in these Tables. Therefore it is important to note the particular meaning of the data presented in each Table- this is explained in the footnotes to each Table.

As explained in Table 2.2 above, all of the government funded day services in Dublin are formally focused on meeting the needs of rough sleepers and homeless people in one night only hostels and private emergency accommodation. Some of the services also target those at risk of homelessness and migrants and refugees in particular.

The interviews with day services providers explored the characteristics of their clients in depth. These interviews revealed that in many of the services a significant proportion of clients are not homeless but are insecurely or inadequately housed or cannot afford to meet their living costs. A representative from the Capuchin Day Centre explained:

*We would have some people who come in here who have accommodation, but if they buy food, they can't pay their mortgage and if they pay their mortgage they can't eat. And we would prefer them to pay the mortgage and hold onto the place they call home and come here for the help and food. And we can do that very discreetly with some people who wouldn't want—you know.*

**Table 2.3 Number and Characteristics of Users of Barka Provided Day Services, 2017-2019**

Year	Unique Individuals N	Of whom were supported to return to their country of origin N	Of Whom were homeless %
2019	446	77	65
2018	440	68	92
2017	196	88	Nav

Note: Nav means not available.

Source: Information provided by Barka Ireland.

**Table 2.4 Number of Client Visits to All Services at the Capuchin Day Centre, 2017-2018**

Service activity	2017 N	2018 N
Food service (including meals and food parcels)	377,671	381,294
Family Services (baby food, supplies)	15,850	27,586
Showers and personal hygiene products	10,400	10,400
Haircuts	Not recorded	360
Medical services (excluding confidential statistics).	7,687.	6,197
<b>Total client visits/ units of service (excluding confidential statistics).</b>	<b>411,598</b>	<b>425,837</b>

Source:

[https://www.capuchindaycentre.ie/Capuchin\\_Day\\_Centre\\_2013/Capuchin\\_Day\\_Centre\\_-\\_Services.html](https://www.capuchindaycentre.ie/Capuchin_Day_Centre_2013/Capuchin_Day_Centre_-_Services.html)

**Table 2.5 Number of Users of Focus Ireland Provided Day Services, 2019**

Service	Users N
<b>Coffee Shop, Temple Bar</b>	Open Access - 7,000 Advice and Information - 2,000
<b>Family Centre</b>	330 (children)*
<b>South Dublin Advice &amp; Info., Tallaght</b>	600

Note: \* these data are projected because the services has not yet operated for a full year.

Source: Data provided by Focus Ireland.

**Table 2.6 Number of Users of Merchants Quay Ireland Provided Day Services, 2017-2019**

Year	Unique Individuals N	Engagements N	Unique individuals Insecure/Inadequate housing N
<b>2019</b>	6,041	117,508	725
<b>2018</b>	6,050	95,595	726
<b>2017</b>	5,854	87,636	702

Note: Service Capacity per day (on average): 335 clients

Source: Information provided by Merchants Quay Ireland.

**Table 2.7 Number of Users of Crosscare Provided Day Services, 2019**

Year	Client Cases N	Interventions N	Household Impact N
<b>Refugee Service</b>	1,649	4,761	4,761
<b>Housing and Welfare Service</b>	1,570	4,198	3,290

Source: Information provided by Crosscare.

However, this interviewee estimated that of the approximately six hundred families registered to use the centre's services more than half are within the 'broad term of homeless', meaning that that they are living in private emergency accommodation such as hotels and bed and breakfasts. As explained in Table 2.6 above, 65% of the clients of Barka's day service were homeless in 2019 and the interviewee from this organisation estimated that all of the remainder are insecurely housed. The interviewee from Dublin Simon reported that this organisation deals primarily with 'entrenched' rough sleepers and our aim is 'to get them off the streets into accommodation'.

While the interviewee from Crosscare reported that the proportion of this day service's clients who are homeless has increased in recent years:

*'... it used to be ... a third were homeless, a third were at risk [of homelessness], and a third were housed. And now those numbers have increased significantly. We're looking at nearly fifty percent homeless, you know, you know, like twenty percent at risk, and then like thirty percent are housed... But in the last number of years the homeless population has been increasing quite significantly.'*

However, Interviewee Nine, a statutory sector representative argued that the significant use of day services by people who are not homeless raises questions about 'Do we require... the level of day services [which are currently provided]'. He suggested, clients who are not homeless don't necessarily need to avail of the services provided by these organisations, rather 'people go [to day services] for different reasons. They go to congregate. They go to hang around. They go for social. They go to sell drugs. They go to take drugs. And they could be living in a flat around the corner'.

The interviews conducted for the research revealed that in practice, for various reasons, day services tend to attract a specialist category of client. Interviewee Nine from a statutory organisation reported:

*... all the drug users attend, okay, because it's Merchants Quay. So, a lot of drug users... a lot of alcoholism, some crossover mental health, and they tend to congregate up there. And then you go up to Focus Ireland, which is kind of some families, middle-of-the-road type of stuff... You go across the road to the Capuchins [day centre], .... it would be a lot of families, a lot of migrants, a lot of people.... .*

The interviews with the day services providers broadly confirmed the veracity of this summary.

## FUNDING AND STAFFING OF DAY SERVICES

Statutory funding for homeless services, including day services, in Dublin is derived from two main sources:

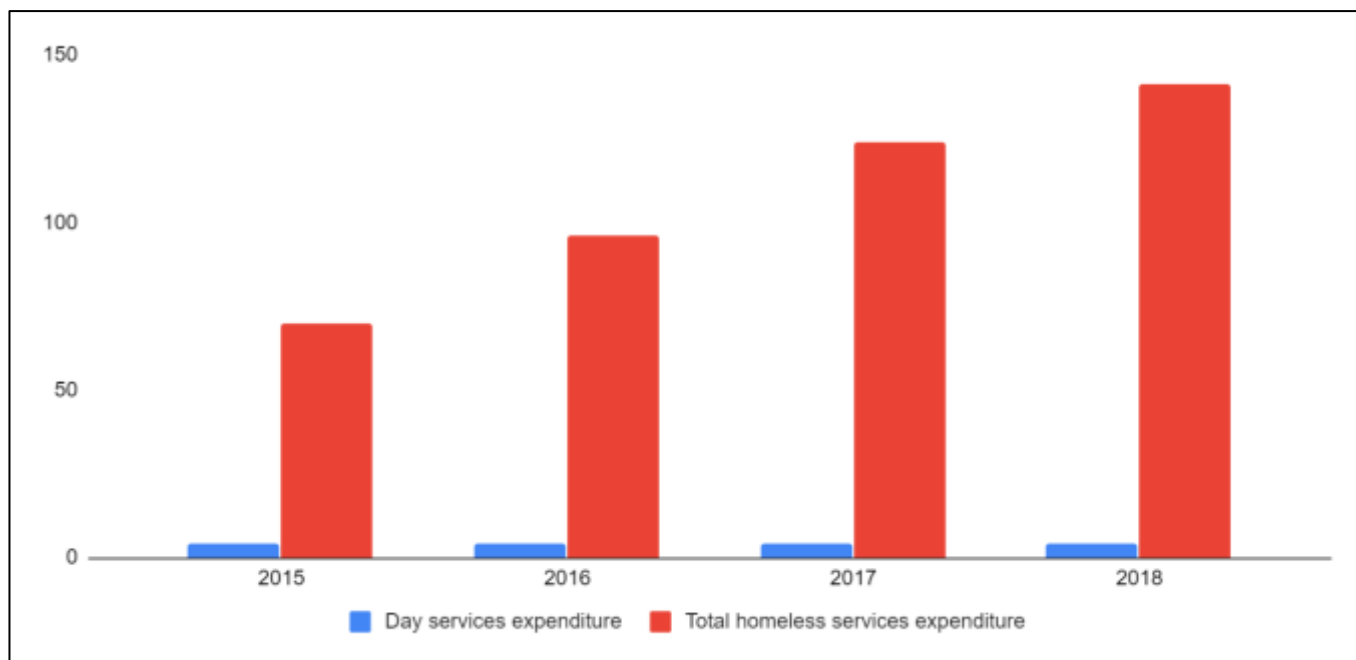
- Funding provided by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government under the terms of Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988 which is partially match funded by local authorities.
- Funding from the Health Service Executive.

Some other ministries, such as the Department of Justice, also fund organisations which provide homeless services. In addition, non-profit organisations contribute to funding the homeless services they provide through their own fundraising activity.

Between 2014 and 2018 a total of just over €17 million was spent on the provision of day services for homeless people in the Dublin region by central and local government and managed by the DRHE. Details of trends in this expenditure are set out in Figure 2.2. This demonstrates that spending on day services increased from €4.12 million in 2014 to €4.29 in 2018. However total public spending on homelessness in the Dublin region increased by significantly more in this

period and therefore the proportion of this which was devoted to day services declined from 5.9 to 4.0 per cent between 2014 and 2018. It is also important to acknowledge that spending on day services accounts for a relatively modest proportion of total spending on services for the homeless in Dublin.

**Figure 2.2 Government Expenditure on Day Services and on all Services for Homeless People in the Dublin Region, 2015-2018.**



Source: Department of Housing Planning and Local Government, (various years).

Note: details of information on the funding allocated to specific organisations are available here: <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/homelessness/other/homelessness-data>.

Data on the total funding provided by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive to each of the day service providers in the Dublin Region in 2019 are outlined in Appendix Two to this report. Data on the total expenditure on some (but not all) these services in this year are also set out in the same section.

Information on the numbers of staff (full time equivalents) employed to work in day services in Dublin is set out in Table 2.8 below. As this Table reveals the staffing numbers broadly reflect a) client numbers, b) the number of specialist services delivered by each day service and c) the extent of reliance on volunteers to deliver services, if any.

**Table 2.8 Number of Staff Employed in Day Centres in the Dublin Region**

Organisation	Focus	Staff
<b>Barka</b>	Floating migrant support	3
<b>Capuchin Day Centre</b>	Homeless families and individuals	20
<b>Crosscare</b>	Housing and Welfare Service	4 full time + part time staff equivalent to 1.80 FTE
	Refugee Information Service	4 full time + part time staff equivalent to 0.5 FTE
<b>Focus Ireland</b>	Coffee Shop Temple Bar – open access	21
	Coffee Shop Temple Bar - advice and Information	5.5
	South Dublin Advice Tallaght	5
	Family Centre	18.5 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI)</b>	Day Service	32.6 <sup>2</sup>

Note: <sup>1</sup> this service is not yet fully operational so these are projected staffing figures. <sup>2</sup>: data does not include administrative support and management provided by staff of other MQI services. FTE means full time equivalent.

Source: Data provided by day service providers.

## SERVICE ETHOS

The Interviews conducted with day services providers also examined the service ethos and revealed some significant inter-agency differences in this regard. The day service providers ethos fell broadly into two of the three categories described in Waters (1992, cited in Homeless Link, 2010) typology of models of day centre provision, which was outlined in the previous chapter.

Most day services employed what he calls the ‘social work’ approach which aims to rehabilitate, change and challenge through professional support often delivered by key-workers. This approach is evident in Interviewee Four’s summary of his organisation’s core ethos:

*So I know for [my organisation] it’s sustained exits [from homelessness] and prevention [of homelessness which is our focus]. So, we’re not interested in feeding the world. You know, it’s not— it’s not really about community integration. Like we have a limited amount of resources and we want to keep them focused on the people that actually need them. Other services might be more about community integration and social connection and bringing people who might be isolated together and that’s certainly—I’m not discounting that.*

An interviewee from other organisation which was smaller and more focussed on the provision of a smaller number of services saw its ethos differently. In this interviewee's words:

*Like we're not like any other homeless place you've probably interviewed. We're not here to solve the problem. We're here to respond to the needs of the people who are caught in the problem. That it's up to the state, and by the state I mean the whole of the country and every political party together, not fighting against each other—every political—have a duty to solve this problem, you know.... People's generosity is amazing to us, but it's a huge responsibility on us to be accountable, transparent. All our books are audited. Every penny that comes in is receipted. And we've a huge obligation—it's not our money, it's the people's money who give it, but it's also the people who come here, it's their money to receive. (Interviewee Five).*

This approach is akin to the 'spiritual/missionary' approach' identified by Waters (1992, cited in Homeless Link, 2010) whereby where day centres are places of containment and acceptance and the aim is to provide sanctuary, tolerance and places minimum expectations on people. In contrast, the third model identified by Waters - the 'community work' model which aims to encourage personal change through skill development and work-related activities – was not evident among the day services examined for this report.

## CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has profiled the organisations which receive funding from the Dublin Region Homeless Executive to provide day services for homeless people in Dublin, the types of services they provide and the characteristics of the clients they serve. It has revealed that these services are all provided by non-profit sector organisations but the size, structure and focus of these organisations varies significantly. Some, like Focus Ireland, are large, multi-faceted organisations which provide a large variety of services to homeless people. Others like the Capuchin Day Centre are primarily concerned with providing day services, while Barka is a small, single purpose organisation focussed solely on supporting migrants.

Almost all day services provide food for homeless people and help with meeting basic needs such as food, clothes and access to showers and laundry facilities. However the large day service organisations are more likely to provide additional services such as outreach, engagement, individual support, group activities and housing support which the review of the literature presented in Chapter Two suggests are key to preventing homelessness and enabling exit from homeless (Crammond, Shewprasad and Boston, 2006).

This profile raises a number of important strategic issues about the design, targeting and delivery of day services for homeless people in Dublin. Is there over-provision of some types of day services and under-provision of others?

- Is there over-provision of day services for some categories of clients while the needs of other client populations are under-served?
- Is a comprehensive suite of services being provided to day services' clients and is this appropriate to preventing homelessness and supporting exit from homelessness?

These issues are probed in more depth in the two chapters which follow.



## CHAPTER THREE SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY, GAPS AND DUPLICATION

### INTRODUCTION

Chapter One explained that one of the defining features and key benefits of day services is their ease of accessibility to clients and therefore their ability to engage with people who are at risk of or new to homelessness or are excluded from access to other homeless services. This chapter considers these service accessibility issues in relation to day services in Dublin. The associated issue of how day services engage clients and encourage them to avail of the supports they provide and those provided by other organisations is then examined. The role which the provision of basic services, particularly hot food provision, plays in this work is a particular focus of this analysis.

This chapter then examines the issue of gaps in services and service duplication. The former is considered from two perspectives – categories of homeless people whose needs are not currently met by day services in Dublin and types of services which are not currently provided as part of day services. The issue of duplication of work carried out by day services is considered from the perspective of overlap between the government funded day services which are the focus of this report and overlap between this category of services and day services which are charitably funded.

### SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY

As mentioned in Chapter Two, day services for homeless people are commonly categorised as ‘low threshold’ meaning that they are effectively open to all comers, clients do not have to meet any assessment criteria or have any specific characteristics in order to use the service and clients face no or very low barriers to entry (Fitzpatrick, Kemp and Klinker, 2000). An associated feature is the informal nature of these services which, don’t generally require appointments, for instance, rather clients just ‘drop in whenever they like (Bowpitt *et al.*, 2014).

The day service providers interviewed for this research all felt accessibility and informality is a vital feature of the service because of the particular characteristics of their clients. In this vein, one day service provider make the point that ‘a lot of people would associate their trauma, you know, their—so they have a trauma, whatever is going on, and then there were all these authorities that let them down. So bringing them into very formal settings isn’t—they won’t go’ (Interviewee Two). This view was echoed by a colleague from another day service who reported *‘I think anything that’s formal, seems authoritarian’ to clients and, as a result, ‘if we take any of our customers coming in, we would try and engage with them at even a very informal level, you know, on their sort of first visit and in ongoing visits in trying to meet them where they’re at’ (Interviewee Four)*. Interviewee Nine from the statutory sector agreed with this analysis and on this basis emphasised the need to take ‘away the barriers’ which undermine clients’ ability to access day services and other supports for homeless people.

However, Interviewee Nine also raised concerns that not all of the services provided by day services organisations are equally easily accessible: *‘I know it’s an open door policy, you can go in and get food, but is it an open door policy to see housing advisors? ... if that is the case that*

*you have to have an appointment to see a housing advisor*. This view was confirmed by the interviews with day services providers conducted for this study which indicate that while food services are generally completely accessible to any clients (who arrive at lunchtime or dinnertime in the evening) other support services are often (but not in every case) provided on an appointments basis. As is discussed below, appointments are particularly likely to be required for medical services. For services dealing with migrants face-to-face translation services were also not available every day, although these were supplemented by telephone provided translation which were usually available every day.

Interviewee Nine argued that requiring appointments to access day services ‘kind of negates the purpose’ in terms of providing services which are accessible to homeless people. This is because many homeless people’s lives are disorganised at a minimum or chaotic in many cases. According to Interviewee Nine *‘So, you’ll have a lot of addiction, a lot of mental health, a lot of different socioeconomic problems [among the homeless population]. People find it very difficult to keep appointments. Understandably so’*. This point was echoed by Interviewee Ten (also from a statutory organisation) who argued:

*‘... if you’re struggling to find somewhere to live, if you’re, you know, at risk of homelessness, if you’re in homelessness, if you’re living in a hostel, if you’re living in a tent, those type of things [keeping an appointment to access services] are far beyond the reach of our service users. So... the solution to that is you take away the barriers. So if the barriers are that I’m having an appointment-based service that I’m being well-paid for by the state, it doesn’t really cut the mustard, you know’*.

On this basis he argued that one of the first questions which should be asked of any review of day services provision is whether it is an appointments-based service or is a walk-in drop-in service?

## SERVICE DUPLICATION

### EXTENT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF SERVICE DUPLICATION

Table 3.1 below compares the specific services for homeless people provided by government funded day services in Dublin to those provided by their counterparts in other countries which were identified in the literature review presented in Chapter One. It reveals that most of the services provided by DRHE funded day services are focused on enabling clients to meet their basic needs for access to food, shelter and showers, provision of housing and social welfare specialist advice and engagement and support.

However, the day services providers interviewed argued that that this duplication did not generally mean that there is over provision of day services. This view reflected the very significant increase in the homeless population in Dublin in recent years highlighted in the preceding chapter.

**Table 3.1 Duplication and Gaps in Day Services for Homeless People in the Dublin Region**

Service Focus	Service Provider							
	Baraka	Capuchin Day Centre	Crosscare (Housing and Welfare Service)	Crosscare (Refugee Information Service)	Focus Ireland (Coffee Shop)	Focus Ireland (South Dublin Advice)	Focus Ireland Family Service	Merchants Quay Ireland
Meeting immediate needs		X			X		X	X
Provide health and addiction services		X						X
Provision of housing and social welfare specialist advice	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Engagement and support	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support to access employment, training and education (ETE) opportunities			X	X	X	X	X	
Support to access meaningful activities							X	X
Support to develop independent living skills					X		X	

Source: Crammond, Shewprasad and Boston (2006) and Homeless Link (2016) and information provided by the DRHE and DRHE funded day services providers in Dublin.

On this basis interviewees argued convincingly that the need for day services has grown in line with the expanding homeless population but that funding has not increased in parallel (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2). For instance, Interviewee Three made the point that: *‘I understand there’s constraints, there’s constraints on funding, but we’re facing increasing numbers. We’re trying to do more, we are... Yeah, it’s been a tough few years in the sector’*. In addition, interviewees emphasised that day centres tend to cater for groups of clients with different characteristics (see: Chapter Two). Therefore, if a day service was to be closed, the needs of the client group for which this service had catered might remain unmet. In this vein, a representative of one day service suggested:

*‘So, I think we’re not replicating. I think that’s the important thing. Like I’m not an expert in migrants, but I know Crosscare are.... And all the other agencies have—there are people that like particular agencies. So, for us we see clients, but that doesn’t mean that they’d go over to the Capuchins or they’d go to Focus Café. Like they’re still people at the end of the day and if they prefer how they’re treated in one agency, they’ll stay there, you know’ (Interviewee Two).*

Almost all of those interviewed for this research agreed that there is currently significant over provision of food services for homeless people in Dublin, however. For instance, one interviewee

from a statutory organisation suggested: *'From a food point of view you'll never ever, ever go hungry in Dublin. It's impossible'* (Interviewee Ten). One day service manager suggested *'I think the food services I think we'd all put up our hand and go, 'We know there are clients going around them all [ie. all meals provided by day services]' and that's why we moved ours [to a different time of day] to try and meet the clients' needs'* (Interviewee Two). A colleague from another day service agreed that *'There is a lot of food. Oh, I don't think there's a need for additional food'*. (Interviewee Three).

As explained in the section which follows, the DRHE funded day service providers interviewed argued that excess provision of food is primarily a result of the increase in the number of voluntary groups running soup runs and providing sandwiches for homeless people on the street. The representatives of the DRHE funded day services argued convincingly that it would not be appropriate for their organisations to stop providing food services because food provision is a vital 'hook' which enables them to engage with clients and encourage clients to avail of the other support services they provide. This point was raised by one service provider who reflected that while advice and information is the main focus of their service, food provision encourages clients to avail of these supports:

*'You know, if someone is coming in, they might feel, you know, kind of on the surface they are looking for someone to chat with, a cup of tea, a bit of social kind of connection. They might need a little bit of good nutrition, but ultimately what they need is advice in a way of getting out of the situation that they're in. so that to us would be the most crucial aspect of the support (Interviewee Four).*

Interviews from two other day services reflected that the informal nature of chats during meals or over a cup of tea are very useful for connecting with clients:

*'The small meetings over the coffee, and chats are very, very important because it's much better than filling the forms and so on, because the persons are getting open—openly saying about their stories. So, when we meet them, they say that's the short story, but when you sit—because sometimes we meet three days before they go back, so we have a load of time to talk'* (Interviewee Seven).

*'So, I think that - I think for me people really need to understand that that cup of tea is key. I know I hear 'catering costs' all the time, and I get that, but I think that's— The big thing is let's not forget that a cup of tea gets people into the door'* (Interviewee Three).

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## DUPLICATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND CHARITABLY FUNDED DAY SERVICES

A very commonly raised concern among the representatives of non-profit sector day services and of statutory services who were interviewed is the extent of overlaps between the government funded day services and charitably funded services. However, their concerns in this regard were not related to the long established, charitably funded day services which operate from various premises around Dublin city centre (see Chapter Two). Rather they were concerned about the on street provision of food to homeless people by the informal and entirely volunteer led services which have emerged in Dublin in recent years.

The sheer volume of informal volunteer led services which have emerged in Dublin in recent years and the associated difficulties in co-ordinating them was a concern for many interviewees. Interviewee Nine from a statutory organisation summarised this situation as follows:

*'I think at the last count there was twenty-seven voluntary groups [providing soup runs in Dublin]. So it's a very, very difficult one for the Council to manage, you know... They're very well-meaning people and I get where they're coming from. That needs to be coordinated. But, you know, they coordinate it as best they can... out on a Thursday night, you're out on a Friday night. But there's a bit of argument goes on between them as well... I think at one stage there was like three of them on O'Connell Street and two on the other side and then one down at Arnott's, one at the Spire, one up on Westmoreland Street, one—where was the other one? There's another one there somewhere else. Middle Abbey Street. So, there's like seven or eight. And then Upper Grafton Street there's another one.'*

He questioned the need for volunteer-led on-street food services: *'If those soup runs weren't there, there's plenty of places that are open to feed people. So, do you know what I'm saying?'*

Other interviewees raised concerns in relation to the informal nature of these services and their ability to deal with the complexity of many homeless people's problems and challenges. For instance, an interviewee from a statutory service raised concerns as to whether volunteers have the training to: *'to deal with someone who has maybe got, you know, drug—like just different needs. You know, whether they're—are they Garda vetted? Are they TCI trained?'* (Interviewee Ten)

However, several day service representative suggested that competing, volunteer-led services were undermining the effectiveness of some of the established government funded homeless services. For instance Interviewee One suggested:

*'... there's a lot of people setting up their own soup runs off their own back, which is really, really good and their intentions are really there, but when there's so many people out on the street, clients get confused as to who is who. But you imagine a rough sleeper having that many people come around to you per night. It can be quite challenging. And not everyone is trained or skilled in the same way. So, you know, for our team most of us are social workers or have psychology or social care, do you know what I mean. So, everyone means well, and I really do get that, but there's a huge overlap'* (Interviewee One).

This same interviewee argued that some of the volunteer led on street food services were opposed to the government funded framework of homeless services provision and for her organisation managing the relationship with these volunteer led services *'as well can be quite difficult, you know'*. Another interviewee raised concerns that the provision of food on street was encouraging homeless people to congregate on street, which sometimes is associated with anti-social behavior. For this reason this interview reported that the day service he managed had strict controls on clients taking food out of their building in case this led to complaints from neighbours (Interviewee Five).

### UNDERPROVIDED SERVICES

The comparison of the day services provided in Dublin with those provided in other countries which was set out in Table 3.1 points to under provision of some categories of day services for homeless people in Dublin. In particular, only a small number of day services provide health and addiction services on site (although all do refer clients to these services) and there also appears to be under provision of dedicated supports to enable clients exit homelessness.

The national and international research on homeless people demonstrates that their health is generally much poorer than the general population. People who are homeless have higher rates of chronic diseases such as heart disease, asthma, stroke, epilepsy, mental health issues such as depression, anxiety injuries and intoxication and lower life expectancy than others (O'Carroll and Wainwright, 2019). Among the DRHE funded day services examined here Merchants Quay Ireland has the most comprehensive health and addiction treatment services on site. These services include: a needle exchange, a GP, general and mental health nursing teams and chiropody on some days. The Capuchin Day Centre also provides a large number of health services on site, including access to a nurse employed by the Centre on six days per week and other medical services which are provided by volunteers but on a less regular basis and are accessible by appointment. The latter includes: a dentist, optician, audiologist and a physiotherapist. The Capuchin Day Centre also avails of services provided by the Mater Hospital and a doctor's clinic for homeless people three times a week. Details of the usage of these services in 2017 and 2018 is set out in Table 3.2. The doctor's clinic is provided by a non-governmental organisation called Safetynet and funded by the Health Service Executive. One of the other homeless service providers interviewed for this study praised the efficiency, professionalism and flexibility of the medical services provided by Safetynet. In her view *'Safetynet are phenomenal' (Interviewee One)*. However, she also explained the enormous challenges of getting homeless people to engage with health services:

*'I think health is the Number 1 priority for anyone who's homeless. Do you know what I mean? But it's really difficult because sometimes when they're so chaotic in their rough sleeping or they may have mental health or drug issues, it's really hard to get them to follow-up appointments.'*

The extensive research on health services usage by homeless people confirms that chaotic lifestyles are a significant barrier to take up, but it also identifies numerous additional barriers including: shame, fear, lack of trust, long distances, psychological inability, financial reasons, language barriers, lack of disease awareness other priorities such as searching for somewhere to stay, and worry about belongings while absent or an inpatient (Kaduszkiewicz et al., 2017). O'Carroll and Wainwright's (2019) recent research on entrenched homeless people's health service utilisation in Dublin also reports frustration among health service providers about lack of or uneven engagement by homeless users of their services, who they often deem them to be "inappropriate attendees" who waste the time and resources of pressured staff who are not resourced to deal with the specific needs of this group.

**Table 3.2 Number of Client Visits to Health and Social Care Services at the Capuchin Day Centre, 2017-2018**

Service	2017	2018
Doctor/ nurse	5,278	4,108
Dental Clinic	1,000	619
Cervical screening	Confidential statistics	Confidential statistics
Chiropodist	1,100	1,150
Optical screening	300	330
Facilitation of COPD and diabetes clinics (run by the Mater Hospital)	Confidential statistics	Confidential statistics
Facilitation of three AA meetings per week	Confidential statistics	Confidential statistics
<b>Total client visits/ units of service (excluding confidential statistics).</b>	<b>7,687.</b>	<b>6,197</b>

Source:

[https://www.capuchindaycentre.ie/Capuchin\\_Day\\_Centre\\_2013/Capuchin\\_Day\\_Centre\\_-\\_Services.html](https://www.capuchindaycentre.ie/Capuchin_Day_Centre_2013/Capuchin_Day_Centre_-_Services.html)

To overcome all of these problems, in addition to mobile health services for rough sleepers, they identify a need to provide specialized primary and secondary health care for homeless people which is open for long hours and operates without the need for appointments and adopts a flexible approach to treatment and places to rest and sleep. Day centres would clearly provide a logical location for the provision of a service of this type.

In addition to health services, the service gaps which were most commonly mentioned by the day service providers interviewed for this study are: specialist professional support for very complex cases and prevention of homelessness. In relation to the latter, one manager of a large service which provides addiction support and homeless services reflected that clients with multiple problems were presenting with increasing frequency:

*'I think things are changing in terms of what's required. I think the populations have changed.... We very rarely see people, to be fair, that have purely addiction issues, because they tend—even in our rehab and detox they tend to be homeless and addiction' (Interviewee Three).*

A colleague from a large homeless services provider agreed, and described the challenges which these complex cases create for day services:

*'But we have like the—like drug addiction issues are really affecting. you know, they're affecting us in a big way, and they affect every aspect of the service. So, we have, you know, in—and I'm sure all other day services have the same issues. We've a risk of people overdosing in the toilets. We've had to invest in, you know, but we're—so if you take, you know, advice and information, the staff going in there, they are also dealing with something, a drug addiction issue that they haven't got this training or the expertise in, that if you had access to a team—Equally the mental*

*health supports. So you could have someone presenting with the homeless issue but also just suffers from a psychosis and that's very connected to why they might be struggling with the homeless issue...But we're not specialist mental health— We're not medical. We're not—so having that guidance and having the link-ins and kind of having the resources to be able to put it all together and be able to support someone properly' (Interviewee Five).*

However, interviewees had different views on the nature of professional services required to fill this gap. Several day services managers mentioned the need for more case workers to address this service gap. Others mentioned the need for more mental health workers. An interviewee from the HSE and from another day service provider agreed that there is a need to support more complex cases but they suggested that this need would be met more effectively by employing multi-disciplinary teams of social care and health professionals who would work both within and between services. A day service provider expressed the following opinion:

*'I don't think one agency needs to own it. But practically, I don't know, it may work. I think that would be the magic wand. I think our staff are doing the very best that they can, but the problem is big and really, really complex' (Interviewee Five).*

Another interviewee suggested that teams of this type could improve the impact of day services on the prevention of homelessness. He pointed to cases where people with mental health problems lost tenancies due to their inability to manage their medication which he suggested could have been prevented by early intervention by a multi-disciplinary team (interviewee Four).

Interviewee Eleven was one of the day service providers who identified the task of preventing homelessness as a critical need to which day services could make a bigger contribution. In her view:

*'... they [day services] need dedicated resources for prevention. You know, so Dublin City Council has had a team of three, now has a team of one. You know, the other local authorities they have inward clinics provided by Focus Ireland or Dublin Simon, but they've nobody that we can really pin down in the local authority that is responsible for, you know, trying to really act on prevention. So that would be an area that we would see a gap'.*

Interviewee Four agreed with this analysis. He suggested that *'... the prevention piece is probably under-resourced and not as recognised as it could be'* on the grounds that:

*'... like there's a number of people who are at risk of... losing their tenancies and/or they're at very vulnerable stages in their sort of tenancy with landlords.... they haven't even hit our doors yet. But we're kind of very consciously aware that they exist, and the DRHE they are supporting and they have their own team as well that are helping to support people but we actually think the numbers of presenting families are showing that there's still an increase in the numbers coming into homelessness'.*



Furthermore, the following more specific service gaps were raised by several interviewees:

- Laundry services and showers particularly for rough sleepers.
- Veterinary services because as one of the day services staff interviewed pointed out: 'Entrenched rough sleepers tend to always have pets'.
- Needle exchange services – these are easily accessible during the week but can be very busy at weekends, which suggests that additional services need to be provided at these times.
- Lockers in which personal items can be stored.

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## UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

As mentioned in Chapter One the international research identifies migrants as a group which are commonly under-served by day services and the day services providers who were interviewed for this project confirmed that this is also the case in Dublin (Mostowska, 2011). One service flagged that increasing numbers of migrants were rough sleeping. This was evident in the soup run they provide:

*'We are seeing a lot more people with different backgrounds, different languages, ethnicity, race. So that's something we come across. Like when we're translating key sentences that we will ask people on a night, like, you know, 'do they know where this is?' and we're getting it translated into Romanian and stuff' (Interviewee One).*

Notably migrants are also identified as being at high risk of homelessness and a priority for homeless prevention activities in the *Homelessness Action Plan Framework for Dublin, 2019–2021*. It flags 'increasing inward migration to the region' as a significant new challenge for the DRHE, particularly where migrants 'experiencing homelessness and accessing emergency accommodation are found to have no eligibility for social housing and/or social protection supports'(Dublin Region Homeless Executive, 2019: 20). Migrants from outside the EU and migrants from EU member states who have not worked in Ireland for the required period are ineligible for these supports (Anderson, 2015).

Several of the day service providers interviewed for study also suggested that single women are currently under-served by day services. Notably this group was not highlighted in the international literature on this issue but female victims of domestic violence are identified as a priority group in the Dublin Region Homeless Executive's (2019) current *Homeless Action Plan*. One of the day services providers had established a new women's project because they noticed a marked increase in single women, some of them pregnant, presenting to their emergency accommodation service: *'Like when they come into our service, they have their own needs, but predominantly the male needs are addressed and she's either verbally abused to get out of the place and whatever' (Interviewee Three)*. In this case this organisation now runs events and provides services intended to attract more women to attend their service such as hairdressing, yoga and wellbeing. The manager of this service reported: *'I would love to be funded for a case worker for women specifically'*. She argued that women who are victims of domestic violence and victims of trafficking are reluctant to use existing day services *'because women are saying because of our trauma we should be looking at services that are separate in terms of day services, a safe space' (Interviewee Three)*.

Mothers and children living in private emergency accommodation (PEA) such as hotels and B&Bs were also identified as another group whose needs are under-served by existing day services. One interview pointed out that day services provide a vital support for this group because:

*'.. they're out [of their accommodation] at 9 in the morning and not let back in sometimes till 7 in the evening. And if you're a girl with a buggy and two kids, you've a long day ahead of you walking around town... you can't afford to go into McDonald's or a coffee shop or a sweet shop every day. And what do you do, you know? It's a nightmare..... Or a lot of the mothers who have to travel because of children in hotels to school' (Interviewee Five).*

This interviewee described how his day service had tried to make their service more attractive for families to use by for instance having suitable seating areas for families at mealtimes, a children's play area and birthday parties. Interviewee Eleven agreed that families in PEA require more support. She acknowledged that the:

*'The DRHE have responded to that and they have set up the family support—you know, they have a family support group, but—you know, a section of people who are working in that area. But that would be one of the areas where I'd see, you know, it needs to be more focused, there needs to be more resources given to it'.*

It is also important to acknowledge that, in response to the Covid 19 pandemic, private emergency providers have been contracted by the DRHE to provide all day accommodation and food services to the homeless families they accommodate (see Chapter One).

Finally, one of the day service providers interviewed mentioned that people who identify as LGBT+ are under-served by day services. The day service where she works has started reaching out to LGBT+ advocacy groups in an effort to increase their understanding of this issue and explore the potential for joint working. She explained:

*'it is about safety for that cohort. And even—I was just saying like homelessness is very alpha male and for anybody either transitioning—that's the other thing is transgender people—you know, there are a lot—we don't have very many. We're starting to see one or two people come through and that's why we're kind of reaching out, going, well, look it, we need to have the better understanding' (Interviewee Three).*

## CONCLUSIONS

This chapter examined the accessibility of DRHE funded day services for homeless people in Dublin to clients and potential clients and assessed the extent of service duplication and gaps in terms of services which are not provided but required and categories of homeless people whose needs are not currently met by these services.

The analysis presented here indicates that the aspects of day services which are concerned with enabling homeless people cover their basic needs, such as the provision of food, shelter and showers, are easily accessible to homeless clients. Both the international research which was summarised in the preceding chapter and the views of day services providers in Dublin which were outlined in this chapter, indicates that in addition to the inherent value of these basic

services their ease of accessibility plays an important role in engaging homeless clients and encouraging them to use the other support services provided by day services. According to the day services providers interviewed, food services play a particularly important role in attracting homeless people into day services.

The majority of DRHE funded day services are focus on: enabling clients to meet their basic needs for access to food, shelter and showers; provision of housing and social welfare specialist advice; and engagement and support. Therefore, there is significant duplication of services, but this does not mean that there is over provision of these services. There has been a very significant increase in the homeless population in Dublin in recent years, which suggests that the need for day services has increased but there has been only a marginal increase in DRHE funding for day services. In addition, different day services tend to cater for distinct groups of clients, therefore closing a day service might mean that the needs of one or more group of homeless are not catered for.

The only day service area in which there appears to be significant over provision in Dublin currently is food services. This is due primarily to the increase in the on-street provision of food to homeless people by the informal and entirely volunteer led services which have emerged in Dublin in recent years. Although there is no doubt that the volunteers who provide these services do so with the best possible intentions to help homeless people, there is little evidence that these additional food services are required. In addition, the providers of DRHE funded day services who were interviewed for this research argued convincingly that on-street provision of food to homeless services undermine the effectiveness of some of the established government funded homeless services by reducing their ability to engage effectively with clients and to refer them on to the wider suite of support services these day services can provide.

The chapter also examined gaps in services and populations which are underserved by day services currently. The analysis presented here suggests migrants, women and LGBT people may be currently underserved by day services. Furthermore, only a small number of day services provide health and addiction services on site (although all do refer clients to these services) and there also appears to be under provision of dedicated supports to enable clients exit homelessness. The day services providers interviewed for this study also identified a need to provide supports for clients with multiple and complex needs. However, there was little consensus regarding the specific nature of the supports which should be provided. Some interviewees suggested that more case workers should be employed to address this service gap. Others mentioned the need for more mental health workers or multi-disciplinary teams of social care and health professionals who would work both within and between services.

## CHAPTER FOUR STRATEGIC PLANNING OF DAY SERVICES

### INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter assessed the extent of duplication and gaps in the day services for homeless people in the Dublin Region in terms of types of services which are under provided and categories of clients whose needs are not currently met by day services. This analysis revealed that although there is significant service duplication, but not necessarily service over provision because the numbers of homeless people and therefore the scale of the need for day services has expanded significantly in recent years. A greater concern is under provision of some services, particularly health and social care services, and also intensive supports to enable homeless people exit homelessness. This is problematic because the international research on day services indicates that unless homeless people are provided with a comprehensive suite of services they tend to receive multiple, partial interventions from different agencies or may not receive some services at all because they find it impossible to identify and negotiate access to all of the services they require (Crisis, 2005). This means they have an unsatisfactory service which doesn't meet their needs and most importantly impedes their chances of escaping homelessness (Crammond, Shewprasad and Boston, 2006). In addition, Chapter Three identified some specific groups of homeless people whose needs are not currently being served effectively by day services.

This Chapter considers how these shortcomings in day services can be addressed most effectively. The analysis of these issues which is presented here focusses on the two principal strategies for ensuring day services deliver a comprehensive service to clients which were identified in the review of the international research literature presented in Chapter One. These are: collaboration between services such as partnership working, referral arrangements and service mapping and more formalised and overarching strategic review and planning of services (Homeless Link, 2017). Barriers to effective strategic planning of day services in the Dublin region are also considered in this chapter.

### COLLABORATION BETWEEN DAY SERVICES

The day services providers interviewed for this research had mixed opinions about the extent and effectiveness of collaboration between their services and also between day services and other services for homeless people. Some argued that relationships, collaboration and networking between day services and other homeless services was very strong, others held the opposite view.

For instance, Interviewee Two reported that her organisation has a:

*'... we have close working relationships with those that are in the homeless network. We've close working relationships with the hospitals. We have close working relationships with other day centres.... say our expertise isn't necessarily migrants, so we'd talk to Crosscare. And then we have a map of services that we engage with the client, so they at least know where they're going for appointments and things, the courts, Tusla. So, we can't do it on our own and we have to engage with everybody' (Interviewee Two).*

This view was echoed by colleagues from two another day services who reported:

*‘So, twice a week, usually twice a week we go to Capuchin, sometimes more often, to Mendicity, Lighthouse, and so on, and sometimes they call us.... The cooperation is very good with the day services. We feel welcomed, you know. They are very flexible, the staff, in facilitating the appointments and allowing us to use their facilities’ (Interviewee Seven).*

*‘So I suppose because of all of the contacts we’ve made in the delivery of the training, we would get a lot of referrals in, and equally we would refer out. So we would have decent links beyond it.... so hosting clinics here is an excellent way to have a really, you know, backward and forward kind of referral mechanisms and work very well in partnership’ (Interviewee Eleven).*

However, these views were contradicted by another interviewee from the NGO sector who argued:

*‘Personally, I feel like there’s not much communication between all services. There is a lot with us because we’re the outreach team. So, in terms of, you know, we would always be signposting, directing people to the Capuchin or the Mendicity. The Mendicity have translators in there, which is really useful..... I just think it could be all streamlined, do you know what I mean?’ (Interviewee One).*

These differing views reflected the fact that collaborations were largely (but not entirely) built on personal relationships with other day services providers and personal networks within the homeless sector rather than formal partnership working or shared services agreements or referral agreements. This informal approach undoubtedly worked well on many, perhaps on most occasions, but Interviewee One described it as rather *ad hoc*:

*‘It’s on a need-to-know basis rather than, you know, it’s just like, oh, this is the situation I’m faced with, I know who I have to contact.... you know, over time you’re building up these contacts, but I don’t know is there any way we can all get together and discuss services and—We share the contacts. And we’d always say it to the person, like, you know, I’m going to share the contact with the team. They’re quite happy for it... So yeah. Yeah, everyone, the minute someone gets a number, someone gets a key contact, it goes around the team and is saved in our work mobile phones’.*

Several day services providers cited instances where gaps in collaboration also arose due to the severing of personal relationships between individual staff in different services. The primary cause of this issue according to interviewees was changes in personnel when individuals moved jobs or took maternity leave. The review of the research literature set out in Chapter One identified pressure of work as the main barrier to inter-day service collaboration (Homeless Link, 2011). This view was echoed by Interviewee Four mentioned that day services staff operate in context of enormous pressures and lack of networking is primarily due to the fact that people:

*‘... are just too busy. They’re busy firefighting within their own services... And the same is going on, I’d say, across the board. And even at director level we have so much—there’s so much firefighting going on with all services. Incidents happening. Coronavirus. Like there’s no time to stand still’.*

Some more formalised day services networking arrangements do exist however, and these were praised by the day services providers interviewed. For instance, the Homeless Network of NGO sector homeless services providers were positively assessed by Interviewees Two and Four. Interviewee Eleven expressed the view that the Homeless Network Prevention Subgroup works effectively in enabling the day service providers who are involved to co-ordinate ‘You know, so by virtue of us all being in a room we get a better sense of what everybody’s doing and we are better able to refer and to understand what’s there’. In addition, Interviewee One praised the case conference type meetings that are held every week by Merchants Quay Ireland to deal with the needs of challenging clients who might be attending several services. These meetings are attended by day services, the Social Inclusion Team from St James’ Hospital and the Peter McVerry Trust which is responsible for the Housing First service in Dublin. According to this interviewee:

*‘... It’s mainly about individuals, but it’s a really good opportunity to learn about their services, do you know what I mean. So you might see someone there that you haven’t seen in a couple of weeks or maybe that you’ve never seen and it’s kind of good to ‘oh, where are you from?’ Or it’s really good for links because then you’ve created another contact that you may need to link in with... ‘*

Interviewee Two described how her service was developing ‘in reach’ arrangements with other day services and homeless services more generally, whereby her service would ‘in reach’ to provide specialist addiction supports for other services’ clients.

There was significant support among the day services providers interviewed for this research for further strengthening of these collaboration arrangements and the international research summarised in Chapter One suggests this would have significant benefits. For instance, Interviewee Four said *‘I am a very strong advocate for collaboration’* and suggested that this view was shared by other day services providers. He suggested comprehensive mapping of day services would help to improve service collaboration.

As mentioned in Chapter One the UK Homeless Link (2016) recommends a similar exercise whereby day services evaluate where they fit within a network of local provision and map out all services operating locally with a view to establishing what they provide; their target group; their strategy; referral pathways; key contact person; information sharing protocols and other relevant information. Interviewee Eleven suggested that more co-ordination meetings would be beneficial:

*‘You know, so those—I know people are saying, ‘Not more meetings,’ but I think they’re useful to break down barriers between organisations, you know, if used well. Like not meetings for the sake of meetings, where people splurge information at you and you sit there, but really productive-type stuff where you’re looking at where the gaps and the problems are and you’re proposing solutions and you’re looking for people to be in decision-making roles, that have capacity to, you know, to either say, ‘That’s rubbish... or... that’s a good idea, let’s see what we can do with it’.*

Interviewee One suggested that a homeless service manual would help to improve service collaboration, she admitted: *'I know there is a lot out there, but I don't know how up-to-date some of them would be... Does every day service know what the next day service does? I'm not sure they do, to be honest'*.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING OF DAY SERVICES

### THE NEED FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING OF DAY SERVICES

Despite the mainly positive view of the extent of collaboration amongst day services providers and between day services and other services for homeless people there was also a strong consensus among interviewees that there is a need for better strategic planning of day services provision. For instance interviewee two said: *'I think we could be a bit more joined up in terms of looking at what are the needs and maybe agreeing who does what or who specialises or is there something that we're missing to, say, support Housing First in Dublin and outside Dublin, you know?'*

This consensus reflected a widespread view that day services had expanded on an *ad hoc* basis in response to the marked increase in homelessness, rather in a planned or thought out way. The following quotation from an interview with a representative of a statutory organisation illustrates this point:

*'Yeah, I think if I'm honest about it, as I said, because of emergency stuff, I don't think that the planning went into it from a strategic point of view at the start in relation to, okay, well, we'll strategically put one there, one there, one there, one there. So, as I said, a lot of it was to do with services springing up because they felt there was a need there' (Interviewee Nine).*

Interviewees also mentioned that the collaboration and networking between NGOs which provide day services impacts on the design of existing services in an *ad hoc* fashion. Consequently, there is a need to devise an overarching strategic plan for day services which clarifies their role within the wider framework of services for homeless people in Dublin and their contribution to achieving the strategic goals for homeless services provision in this region as set out in the current *The Homelessness Action Plan Framework for Dublin, 2019–2021* (Dublin Region Homeless Executive, 2019).

Among some of the day services staff interviewed there was concern that the decision to commission this research suggests unfairly that the NGO sector providers have not to strategically managed day services provision themselves even though their responsibility is for providing services not oversight of the sector. Interviewee Ten (from a statutory organisation) agreed. He emphasised that the strategic planning of day services is the responsibility of the Dublin Region Homeless Executive and he argued that it hasn't lived up to this responsibility. Day services are not mentioned in the *Homelessness Action Plan Framework for Dublin, 2019–2021* for instance (Dublin Region Homeless Executive, 2019). Some of the DRHE funded day services providers interviewed also raised concerns that this research and efforts to strengthen the strategic planning of day services more would be done without consulting day service providers. The latter point was emphasised by Interviewee Eleven:

*'But anyway, the point is I think we need to like together collectively work out how we can fit with the plan rather than it being imposed, rather than us giving out about it. You know, them coming to us with nearly a complete document, going, 'Here's how you'll fit,' and us commenting on it and saying, 'Well, what about this and what about this and what about this?' and then you get a version back that, you know, didn't really take into account what you said, or, you know, you thought you made some excellent points and they came back in some draft and then in the final draft they're gone and you're, you know, disappointed'.*

The fact that day services draw on multiple funding streams – principally the DRHE but also the HSE and other government departments, was also raised as a concern by some because of the day services providers interviewed. They were specifically concerned about the potential that the planning exercise would be primarily 'a cost-saving exercise' (in the words of Interviewee Three) or focus on the reallocation of funding responsibility between statutory agencies rather than on ensuring the services received adequate funding.

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## FOCUS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING OF DAY SERVICES

The day services providers and representatives of statutory agencies interviewed for this study were also asked about the particular aspects of day services provision. They identified four priority topics on which this planning exercise should focus, several of which reflect the priorities identified in the review of the international research on good practice in this area set out in Chapter One.

Firstly, interviewees raised the need to consider the strategic focus of day services in more depth in terms of the client group they serve, the suite of interventions they offer and the objectives of these (as mentioned in Chapter One Crane *et al.*'s (2005) research proffers the same conclusion). For instance, one day service staff member suggested:

*'I think we need to look at the whole thing, what are we providing. And also what I think is needed is what's the intervention? In any of the services what's the exit plan out of homelessness? So are serving people who are just suffering from poverty and have homes and they're living somewhere and they're actually in stable accommodation? Are they the customers going to a lot of the day services, or are they actually at risk of homelessness and they need the advice and information, they need an engagement and a case management approach?'*(Interviewee Four).

Interviewee Nine (from a statutory organisation) argued that in view of the large number of day services users who are not homeless (albeit may be in insecure or inadequate housing) there is a need to consider whether the current scale of day service provision is required. Interviewee Ten (also from a statutory organisation) made the same point but in this case his rationale for reviewing the scale of day services was the impact of the Housing First programme in moving homeless people into long term housing and also the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic has on the need for day services. Interviewee ten also argued *'We need to think about the contribution day services can make to achieving each of the three Ps'* (a reference to three themes of prevention, protection and progression which are core to the Dublin Region Homeless Executive's (2019) in *Homeless Action Plan Framework for Dublin 2019 – 2021*). He argued that the contribution which day services make to protecting homeless people is unarguable but their contribution to



preventing homelessness and enabling homeless people to progress out of homelessness is less clear and in order to enable them do so the scope of some day services (in terms of the number of different services provided) may need to be expanded.

Secondly, interviewees argued that strategic planning is necessary to identify groups whose needs are currently unserved by day services and ensure their needs are met. The issue of groups whose needs are currently not been met by day services were examined in detail in the preceding chapter. They include: migrants, women and children and LGBT people.

Thirdly, several interviewees raised concerns about the spatial distribution of day services in Dublin and particularly about the heavy concentration of services in the inner city. In the view of some interviewees the strong spatial concentration creates problems of anti-social behavior and on occasion criminal behavior, such as drug dealing in the vicinity of these services. This was in turn identified as a driver of opposition to homeless service provision by residents and community groups. Reflecting on these concerns, one statutory service representative suggested:

*'If you were going to do it again, if it was me and I was managing it—and I'm sure the DCC will say the same—you would strategically place them, you know, in different places so as the need is best being met. One in each quarter of Dublin City Centre, let's say, you know, one in the Southwest Inner City, one in the South Inner City, one in the Northeast Inner City, and one in the Northwest Inner City' (Interviewee Nine).*

A related point raised by several interviewees concerns the size of day services in terms the physical size of the individual buildings from which they operate and the number of clients they service rather than the size of day service provider organisations. One interview suggested:

*'So ideal world, how would you do it? I would reduce the size of some of them... . Like the one in Focus Ireland up in Temple Bar, that's small enough, you know....,I would have them, as I said to you, in different—like I'd have them broken up into different pieces in different parts of the city' (Interviewee Nine).*

However, this interviewee acknowledged that opposition from residents, community groups and politicians to the establishment of new homeless services would make this policy difficult to operationalise. Thus, he admitted: *'You will struggle to get something opened, though, you know, in a different part of the city. Yeah, you will struggle, you know, you really would'.*

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## BARRIERS TO SERVICE COLLABORATION AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

It is important to acknowledge however that there are significant practical barriers to the effective strategic planning of day services for homeless people and to strengthening collaboration between these services. These practical barriers are the primary reason why strategic planning of these services is not better developed currently.

The first and most important of these barriers is the complexity of the arrangements for service delivery in terms of the reliance on a large number of non-governmental organisations, some of which are state funded, while others rely entirely on donations. While these arrangements have important benefit because NGOs may be able to provide more specialist services than

government organisations and to adapt to changing needs and circumstances more quickly, they raise very significant challenges for service planning and co-ordination. Allen *et al.*, (2020: 153) book *Ending Homelessness: the Contrasting Experiences of Denmark, Finland and Ireland* argued that in the Irish case: *'Being dependent on a disparate range of providers, often with little in common with one another and seeking to develop services via funding protocols limits the ability of policy makers to develop coherent strategies'*. This point was echoed by an interviewee from a statutory agency who suggested that the strategic management of day services provision is complicated by the fact that these services are provided by different organisations with *'five different CEOs and five different models [of service provision] .... So there's loads of different pieces. So what I'm saying is somebody needs to manage it. It's not enough to just give them the money and say, 'Go ahead and do it' (Interviewee Nine).*

The second barrier to the strategic planning of day services provision relates to the collation of data on these services to enable service monitoring, review and evaluation which is necessary to inform strategic planning. While all of the day services supported the need for better strategic management of these services, they pointed out that the open access nature of day services and the transitory population which they serve creates particular practical challenges for collating data on clients. Furthermore, some of service providers argued that client monitoring conflicts with their ethos and also their emphasis on informality in interacting with clients (see Chapter Three). One day services provider summarised these concerns as follows:

*'We don't ask questions. The only registration we do is every child that comes in for dinner there's a form that they must be with a guardian or an adult and that person has to sign them in and say who they are. But that's data protection. That's all kept on record confidential. and then for the baby food and nappies they must on the first day they come produce the baby's birth cert plus ID that they are the actual parent.... We try to get first names of people as we're going around because it's great to be able to address somebody by their name. Or what's even better is if you're downtown and you see them, you can stop and talk to them as a friend rather than I'm better than you because I gave you your dinner today, you know.... So we try to gather as little information as we can. So just the first name and surname, date of birth, for GDPR purposes. So that's it. We don't need anything more from them' (Interviewee Five).*

A colleague from another day service said *'I have no problem reporting anything'* to the Dublin Region Homeless Executive but pointed out *'We're not your standard homeless accommodation and their KPIs [key performance indicators] are—we don't fit into that box' (Interviewee Three).* As mentioned in Chapter One the international research on day services for homeless people confirms that collating data on these services, evaluating them and in particular measuring their impact is generally very challenging. So this is a problem which is not confined to Dublin (Crammond, Shewprasad and Boston, 2006).

## CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has examined the strategic planning of day services for homeless people and the extent of duplication of services provided by organisations. In relation to the latter it has identified relatively little duplication of services between government funded day services and between these services and the long-established, formalised charitably *funded* day services which were

described in Chapter Two. The service duplication which does exist between these categories of service providers is largely justifiable on two grounds. Firstly, on the grounds of the scale of needs which have been increased radically in recent years in line with the homeless population. Secondly it can be justified on strategic grounds - the analysis presented here has identified some duplication and therefore over provision in food service provision but this can be justified because food is a vital hook which enable these services to attract in and engage with homeless people. However, the chapter also identified significant overlap between food services provided by the government funded day services and the informal and entirely volunteer led services which have emerged in Dublin in recent years. This is more problematic because over availability of food from informal volunteer led groups, can undermine the ability of established day services to engage with homeless clients.

Despite evidence of good collaboration amongst day services and between day services and homeless services, the analysis presented identified a need for better strategic planning of day services provision. This is because have they expanded on an *ad hoc* basis in response to the marked increase in homelessness rather in a planned or thought out way. Strategic planning of day services should focus on:

- the strategic focus of day services
- necessary to identify groups whose needs are currently unserved by day services and also services which are required and not currently provided as part of day services.
- the location of day services in the Dublin region and
- size of day services in terms of the physical size of the individual buildings or centres and the number of clients they service.

## CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSIONS

### INTRODUCTION

This final chapter sets out this review of day services in the Dublin region. These findings relate to the role and importance of day services within the wider framework of homeless service provision and the strengths and weaknesses of current arrangements for day services provision. The latter focuses on the comprehensiveness of services, service overlaps and gaps and service accessibility. External factors which impact on the need for and the effectiveness of day services are also considered. These include: the changing context in view of the Covid 19 pandemic and the policy response to homelessness and the impact of other services for homeless people.

The second part of the chapter sets out a series of recommendations intended to address shortcomings in and thereby strengthen day services provision in Dublin. These are addressed to the organisations responsible for the strategic planning, commissioning and funding of day services for homeless people in services in Dublin primarily, namely the Dublin Region Homeless Executive and the HSE. However, some of these recommendations are also relevant to the other government agencies which are responsible for supporting some of the sections of the population which are overrepresented in homelessness.

### FINDINGS

The review of the international research on day services presented in this report suggests that they provide vital supports which enable homeless people meet their basic needs for access to hot food, clean clothes and showers. In addition, day services have the potential to make an important contribution to preventing homelessness and enabling homeless people to exit homeless. The support with meeting basic needs, particularly for food, which they provide acts as a 'hook' to encourage homeless people to engage with services and this initial engagement can be used to encourage them to access other supports they need, including medical treatment and the supports which may help them exit homelessness (Crammond, Shewprasad and Boston, 2006). Therefore day services can play a particularly valuable role in engaging very marginalised homeless people who are not in touch with or even excluded from other support services and agencies (Bowpitt *et al.*, 2014).

Almost all of the day services currently provided in the Dublin region enable homeless people meet their basic needs for access to hot food, clean clothes and showers. The evidence presented in this report suggests that DRHE day services providers they are both efficient and effective in delivering these services and thereby enabling homeless people meet these basic needs. These basic support services are easily accessible to homeless people which is vital for their effectiveness in engaging very marginalised or hard to reach homeless people. Although there is significant overlap between the food and basic needs services provided by different day services providers, there is no evidence of over provision of these basic services by DRHE funded day services.

However, recent years have seen a dramatic expansion of on-street provision of food to homeless people by groups of volunteers who are unconnected to any of the DRHE funded day

services providers examined in this report or to the long-established, entirely charitably funded day services which provide indoor dining facilities for homeless people in various parts of the inner-city. While there is no doubt that the volunteers who devote their spare time to providing these food services are motivated by the best of intentions, there is evidence that they are unintentionally undermining the effectiveness of mainstream day services, by reducing the necessity for homeless people to use day services' hot food provision. As mentioned above the hot food provision is a vital 'hook' which enables day services to engage with homeless people and encourage them to avail of the other services they provide. In addition, homeless people can find engaging with so many different service providers challenging and may not be clear about which food service is provided by an established homeless services provider which can enable them to access the other services and supports they need and which food service is being provided by a volunteer who may not be networked into other services. This issue should therefore be addressed by the DRHE in partnership with other relevant statutory organisations which are responsible for the regulation of food service provision including the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) and the HSE.

The evidence presented in this report suggests that some of other support services required by homeless people, including health and addiction services and the intensive supports which some require to enable them exit homelessness, are under provided by day services in Dublin currently. In particular, there are insufficient numbers of comprehensive day services – which provide the full suite of services required by homeless clients including: outreach, engagement, individual support, medical and addiction treatment, group activities and housing support. Services of this type are important because homeless people often find it very difficult to negotiate their way through services. Without access to this comprehensive suite of supports, service users often receive multiple partial interventions that lead to unpredictable, repetitive and also ineffective journeys to different agencies (Crisis, 2005). Therefore, addressing these gaps in day services should be a key priority for the DRHE.

These gaps in services have arisen for understandable reasons. Many day services were established by non-governmental organisations as an emergency response to acute need among homeless people and the particular services provided and clients targeted reflects the varied ethos and focus of the different NGOs which provide day services. However, these gaps in service also reflect the lack of clarity about day services' place in the framework of homeless services in Dublin and of an overarching vision of the contribution they should make to achieving policy makers' priorities for homeless services and how they should be funded. Day services are not mentioned in the Dublin Region Homeless Executive's (2019) *Homelessness Action Plan Framework for Dublin, 2019–2021* for instance. The DRHE has often provided funding to get these services started (including services which do not fall within its core remit of supporting accommodation provision), but funding streams for some services have not been regularised over the long term and taken over by the responsible ministries and government agencies.

The ongoing need for day services provision, the types of day services required and the clients which they should target should be kept under ongoing review by the DRHE and addressed in its future action plans. This is because the context in which day services are delivered are changing and are likely to continue to do so in view of the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on homeless

service delivery and the implementation of the Housing First programme on the numbers of people experiencing homelessness.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

### Recommendation 1: Clarify the Place of Day Services in The Homelessness Action Plan Framework for Dublin, 2019–2021

- The DRHE should clarify its vision of day services' role in homeless service provision in Dublin.
- To this end the DRHE should review its current *Homeless Action Plan Framework for Dublin* with a view to identifying where day services fit in this framework and in particular:
  - their role in relation to the three themes which are core to this strategy – prevention, protection and progression, and
  - the demographic and housing characteristics of clients who require the support of day services.
- Existing day services providers and homeless service providers more broadly should be consulted about this exercise.

### Recommendation 2: Clarify Responsibility for Funding Day Services

- As part of the process of clarifying its vision for day services' role in homeless services, the DRHE should consult with other government organisations which also have responsibility for funding these services, notably the HSE and seek to clarify the distribution of funding responsibility between these organisations.

### Recommendation 3: Comprehensive, Accessible Day Service Hubs.

- When these issues are clarified, the DRHE and the HSE should arrange to tender for the day services required to implement this strategy and provide the comprehensive day services required to fill the gaps in the day services currently provided to homeless people in Dublin.
- To ensure that the comprehensive day services required are delivered, this exercise should seek to commission day services hubs, dispersed across appropriate locations across Dublin which would provide the full spectrum of day services to clients, including:
  - Meeting immediate needs for food, showers and clean clothes
  - Provision of health and addiction services
  - Provision of housing and social welfare specialist advice
  - Engagement, support and case management
  - Support to access employment, training and education (ETE) opportunities
  - Support to access meaningful activities and develop independent living skills.
- These day services hubs should be delivered by a single agency, several individual agencies or a consortium or consortia of agencies.
- The tender should specify that elements of day services should be as accessible as possible to clients and the use of appointments to gain access should be minimised.

#### Recommendation 4: Ongoing Consideration of the Role of Day Services.

- The context in which day services are delivered was changing radically when this report was being drafted as a result of the public health responses to the Covid 19 pandemic. In addition the implementation of the Housing First programme will also change the context within which day services are implemented. Therefore, there will be a need to review the place of day services in the wider framework of homeless service on an ongoing basis and day services should be included in future DRHE action plans to address homelessness in the Dublin region.

#### Recommendation 5: On-street Food Service Provision by Volunteers

- The DRHE should work with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland and HSE which are responsible for regulating food service provision to devise a strategy to manage the growth in on-street provision of food to homeless people by volunteers. This strategy should focus on ensuring that homeless people's food needs are met primarily by DRHE and established charitably funded services day services which provide appropriate indoor dining facilities and hot food.

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## APPENDIX ONE: SCHEDULE OF QUESTIONS FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF PROVIDERS OF DAY SERVICES FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

- Description of the range of services provided:
  - identify linkages between services; service networks;
  - identify similarities in service provision;
  - identify overlaps in service provision and explore of service gaps.
- Describe collaboration between the DRHE and funded organisations?
  - identify the strengths and weaknesses of this relationship?
  - Does it provided tailored services, flexibility and responsiveness to evolving needs?
- Is service delivery in funded organisations aligned with DRHE strategy?
- How have services evolved over time? Have services improved or disimproved?
- In light of insufficient resources and/or growing demand have alternative service models been developed and/or funded?
- Is there a range of flexibly tailored services?
- Do funded organisations provide physical and/or mental health services for people who are homeless?
  - Is this an effective or efficient strategy to target the complex health and social care needs of people who are homeless?
  - Has consideration been given to an alternative model of health and social care for this group?
- Are services meeting the needs of those who are most in need? Which groups are most in need? How are these groups or individuals targeted and how is service provision evaluated?
- To what extent do users avail of one or more services in the Dublin Region? If so why is this the case? Is this an effective or efficient use of resources?
- Are there social, institutional or psychological barriers which prevent homeless people from accessing services that they require?
- Is there a data collection system that tracks service users over time and across different data systems which can match performance against service records?
- How are funded services evaluated? Are services cost effective? Are services efficient?
- Is the policy framework and service provision oriented towards those who are already homeless or is there an emphasis on prevention?

## APPENDIX TWO: FUNDING OF DAY SERVICES FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

Organisation	Specific Day service (if relevant)	DRHE Approved Funding (2019) €	Total expenditure (2019) €
<b>Barka</b>		167,320	155,768 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Crosscare</b>	Housing and Welfare Service	274,980	274,980
	Refugee Information Service	202,792	367,638
<b>Capuchin Day Centre</b>		348,656	4,000,000 (approx.)
<b>Focus Ireland</b>	Family Centre	Not funded in 2019	1,099,580 <sup>2</sup>
	Coffee Shop Open Access	685,000	1,769,697 <sup>2</sup>
	Coffee Shop Advice and Information	249,396	372,819 <sup>2</sup>
	South Dublin Advice and Info	163,380	345,435 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Merchants Quay Ireland<sup>2</sup></b>	Day service	1,100,000	1,878,514

Note: <sup>1</sup>data relate to staffing costs only. <sup>2</sup>: data relate to operational and administrative costs only in 2019.

Source: Information provided by the DRHE and by day services providers.

