

Study charts young people's journey into homelessness

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New research from TCD's Children's Research Centre provides an in-depth understanding of the process of youth homelessness. *Young People's Homeless and Housing Pathways: Key Findings from a 6-year Qualitative Longitudinal Study*, charts the journeys' into, through and out of homelessness of 40 children and young people in Dublin city.

Funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Dublin Region Homeless Authority, the TCD study involved three phases of data collection over a 6-year period with homeless children and [young people](#) in the city. The report is authored by Dr Paula Mayock, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work and Social Policy & Children's Research Centre, TCD and Dr Mary-Louise Corr, Lecturer, Edinburgh Napier University.

This period of contact and engagement provided a unique opportunity to gain insight into the processes that steered participants 'journeys' into, through and out of homelessness, as well as their perspectives on their homeless and housing situations over that time, according to Dr Paula Mayock, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work and Social Policy & Children's Research Centre, TCD.

The first phase of the study involved 40 participants aged 14-22. Thirty of these participants were re-interviewed a year later and 28 were re-interviewed five years later. At this phase, all participants had made the transition to adulthood. 15 had successfully exited homelessness while 13 had remained homeless.

The study identified a number of underlying factors among the 15 participants who had successfully exited homelessness by the third phase, including early intervention, access to stable housing and fluid systems of intervention.

Speaking at the launch Dr Mayock, commented: "The findings of this

study demonstrate that the homelessness of many young people can be resolved if they receive the necessary services and supports. Access to stable housing at the earliest possible juncture is critical and this must be accompanied by appropriate supports if returns to homelessness are to be avoided."

"The findings also clearly document the negative consequences of lengthy periods of unresolved homelessness and signal particular challenges in this regard for young men. One of the clearest messages arising from the research is the need for more fluid systems of intervention to meet the needs of young people aged 18-25 years who are [homeless](#) or at risk of homelessness."

The study was welcomed by Minister for Children & Youth Affairs Frances Fitzgerald. It was launched in conjunction with a review of the implementation of [youth homelessness](#) strategy entitled *Every Child a Home*, carried out by the Centre for Effective Services. Both reports identify the need for early interventions and the importance of timely assessments and the provision of adequate services.

Speaking about the two reports, the Minister commented: "The launch of these reports provides us with a platform to examine how we dealt with youth homelessness, what we did right, where we erred and what direction we should now take."

More information: [socialwork-socialpolicy.tcd.ie ...
php/homelessness2013](http://socialwork-socialpolicy.tcd.ie/.../php/homelessness2013)

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