



# Easing the Pressure

## **How Cork Simon's Social Rentals Model of Housing Can Help Address the Housing Crisis in Cork**



Believe in People

October 2015

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## Abstract

**Objective:** To assess outcomes as of August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 for the 19 people housed through Cork Simon’s Social Rentals (CSSR) model of housing since its inception in December 2012.

**Method:** Data was collected from Cork Simon Housing Support Team’s records for tenants of CSSR programme. This data was analysed using SPSS.

**Result:** 89% of people were still housed come August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 (63% of people were housed continuously and 26% experienced a break in their housing and were housed again by August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015) while 11% were back in emergency accommodation come August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. Among those that were housed continuously, 75% required a lower level of support come August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 compared to their move-in level of support. Through the model, 10 beds were freed-up across homeless emergency and housing services in Cork city.

**Conclusion:** CSSR model of housing is working. A high proportion of people - the majority of whom had high support needs at move-in - remained housed. Support requirements decreased for the majority during their tenancies with CSSR. In addition, CSSR model is addressing barriers experienced by people who are homeless in accessing the competitive private rented market, such as employment and accommodation references, and most critically the Rent Supplement cap. At a time when the number of people with no choice but to sleep rough is increasing significantly, CSSR model is freeing up urgently needed emergency beds. However, housing supply and finances are critical to the continuation of CSSR.

## Introduction

Ireland is in the midst of a housing and homeless crisis. According to the Department of the Environment’s most recent figures, we now have 3,258 individuals, 620 families and 1,318 children homeless and this figure does not include people sleeping in cars, surviving in squats and tents and people who are precariously staying with friends. At Cork Simon we have seen a seven-fold increase in the number of people we have supported sleeping rough in the city in the last 3 years. Emergency shelters are not just full, but overflowing. Promised building of new social housing cannot come on stream fast enough to address the current crisis leaving the private rental market as the only option for the majority. With decreasing supply there is fierce competition for housing in the private rental market and people who are homeless are among those that fare the worse in this competitive market. There are mounting calls for the situation to be declared ‘a national emergency’. Innovative ways of supporting people to move out of homelessness are needed. Cork Simon’s Social Rentals (CSSR) approach to housing has been in place since 2012. This report is an assessment of the outcomes of that approach to date.

## Context

### Cork Simon’s Social Rentals model

Cork Simon Community’s Social Rentals (CSSR) housing model emerged towards the end of 2012 in response to a looming housing and homeless crisis. Emergency shelters in the city were full and overcrowded, the number of people sleeping rough and surviving in squats was on the rise. Our Soup Run was supporting more and more people in private rented housing – people who had little left for food after struggling to meet rising rents in an effort to hold on to their homes. On the housing front, reduced investment in social housing meant it could not meet growing needs causing an increased reliance on the private rental market - but supply of rental properties was falling, while rents were rising rapidly. With increasing competition in the private rental market and rent supplement caps falling far short of rental asking prices, people working to exit homelessness were virtually excluded from the private rental market. They were finding themselves stuck in emergency accommodation or with no option but to sleep rough or survive in squats.

Cork Simon’s Social Rentals model was part of a range of measures we introduced in 2012 in response to the emerging crisis. At that time we increased capacity at our emergency shelter by 10%, brought five additional high support beds on stream and in partnership with three other homeless organisations in the city, formed the Cork Rentals and Housing Support Partnership – a social rentals initiative aimed at tackling the emerging housing and homeless crisis. Cork Simon continues to operate its social rentals model through the Cork Rentals and Housing Partnership and also independently.

Based on a Housing First<sup>1</sup> approach the model aims to tackle homelessness by addressing many of the barriers people face in accessing the private rented market. The model is simple: Cork Simon leases properties directly from the private rental sector and sub-lets them to people who are homeless at rates within the Rent Supplement cap where necessary. Using its own resources, Cork Simon funds the difference between the tenants’ Rent Supplement Cap and the market rent. Cork Simon also maintains the property.

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<sup>1</sup> Housing First is a housing model developed by Dr. Sam Tsemberis in New York City in the 1990’s for people who are homeless. It aims to provide access to permanent housing without preconditions, along with supports to sustain that housing and improve health and well-being.

As an approved<sup>2</sup> Housing First programme, people are housed without pre-conditions and a range of visiting supports appropriate to each person’s requirements are provided for as long as needed.

Between 2012 and 2015, Cork Simon leased 13 properties from seven landlords and in turn rented them to 19 adults, two of whom had five children between them living with them. Nine of these properties have been leased by Cork Simon through the Cork Rentals and Housing Support Partnership programme and a further four properties have been leased independently by Cork Simon.

## Housing First

Housing First is an evidence based approach to ending homelessness developed in the 1990s by Dr. Sam Tsemberis, founder of Pathways to Housing USA. It is based on the simple idea of providing immediate access to permanent, independent housing and then providing supports and services to suit each individual as needed.

The Housing First model differs significantly from the traditional staircase model which is based on the idea of progressing people who are homeless through a series of residential services and addressing the issues that gave rise to, or emerged from, their homelessness before they can access independent housing.

The underlying principle of Housing First is that people are better able to move forward with their lives if they are first housed.

The Housing First model has been widely and successfully implemented across America and in 2014 the Canadian government became the first to adopt the model as their national policy to end homelessness. Ireland’s homeless policy has also adopted a Housing First or Housing Led approach<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Dr. Sam Tsemberis, the founder of Housing First, visited Cork Simon Community in July 2015 and approved our programme as in-keeping with Housing First philosophy and practice.

<sup>3</sup> Department of the Taoiseach (2011) Programme for Government and Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (2013) Homelessness Policy Statement

## Homelessness in Cork 2012 - 2015

CSSR housing model emerged in 2012 in response to the rapid increase in the number of people becoming homeless and the increasing difficulty faced by people trying to move on from homelessness in accessing the private rental market.

Cork Simon supported 1,026 people in 2012. That year saw the biggest increase in Cork in over 4 years in the number of people sleeping rough; emergency shelters in the city were full every night and Cork Simon’s Outreach Team met 161 different people sleeping rough that year – a four-fold increase compared to 2011 when 38 people were recorded as sleeping rough.<sup>4</sup>

Since 2012 the situation has continued to worsen. The following year, 2013<sup>5</sup>, Cork Simon supported 1,187 people and in 2014<sup>6</sup>, 1,314 people – an increase of 28% compared to 2012. The rise in homelessness is seen most acutely in the continued increase in rough sleeping. Cork Simon’s Outreach Team supported 174 people sleeping rough in 2013. This figure rose to 284 in 2014. During the first eight months of 2015 (January to August)<sup>7</sup> alone, our Outreach Team have met 253 people sleeping rough – 89% of the total number of people that slept rough throughout all of 2014.

In addition to the rise in the number of people sleeping rough, our Day Service has also seen a significant increase in the number of people they support who are surviving in squats or staying with friends – people one step away from emergency shelters or the street. In the eight months to the end of August 2015, a total of 74 people surviving in squats were supported at the Day Service – 101% of the total number supported in all of 2014. During the same period the Day Centre supported 151 people who had no choice but to stay with friends – 103% of the total number supported in all of 2014.

Through our Soup Run we see another cohort of people on the very edge of homelessness. Last year, 2014, some 947 people used the Soup Run – the highest number since our records began. Up to 40% of people coming to the Soup Run are living in private rented accommodation - by the time rent and bills are paid, there is often no money for food – these people are struggling to hold on to their homes and are often just one step away from homelessness.

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<sup>4</sup> Cork Simon Community (2013) Keeping Count 2012: A profile of people using Cork Simon services in 2012

<sup>5</sup> Cork Simon Community (2014) Keeping Count 2013: A profile of people using Cork Simon services in 2013

<sup>6</sup> Cork Simon Community (2015) Keeping Count 2014: A profile of people using Cork Simon services in 2014

<sup>7</sup> Cork Simon Community (2015) Rough Sleeping Update 2015 – End of August

## Lack of Housing

A significant issue contributing to the increasing numbers of people becoming homeless, is the severe shortage of appropriate, long-term, affordable housing. The two main exits out of homelessness have traditionally been social housing and the private rented sector. However with significant decline in the building and acquisition of social housing units and soaring social housing waiting lists, the private rental sector is the only housing option for many. But with declining supply, ever increasing rents and the inadequacy of rent supplement to meet these high rents, this option is now also closed off to many, especially to people trying to move on from homelessness who face extra barriers.

### Lack of Housing - Social Housing

Following the most recent downturn, social housing provision declined from 7,000 units nationally in 2008 to 750 units in 2013<sup>8</sup> and central funding for social housing reduced from €1.7 billion in 2008 to €579 million in 2013<sup>9</sup>. Locally, funding allocated to the Social Housing Investment Programme for Cork city reduced from €54 million in 2009 to €5 million in 2011<sup>10</sup>.

With limited social housing supply come long social housing waiting lists and Cork city has one of the largest housing waiting lists per head of population<sup>11</sup>. Nationally social housing waiting lists exceed 90,000 and in December 2014, the social housing waiting list for Cork city hit a record high of 8,618 applicants – an increase of 10% from 12 months previous.<sup>12</sup> The minimum estimated waiting time for one-bed social housing in Cork city, depending on area, is between three and five years<sup>13</sup>. Over 500 people are waiting more than seven years<sup>14</sup>.

Recent promised investment by Government in social housing<sup>15</sup> is welcomed, however the allocation to Cork City Council of €124 million is expected to meet only 21% of housing needs in the city<sup>16</sup>, will

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<sup>8</sup> Hearne, R. 2014. <https://irelandafternama.wordpress.com/2014/10/08/the-housing-crisis-some-radical-solutions-for-the-coming-budget/#more-5395>.

<sup>9</sup> Simon Community. 2014. Submission to inform the preparation of a Social Housing Strategy from the Simon Communities in Ireland.

<sup>10</sup> Cork Healthy Cities. 2014. Cork City Profile.

<sup>11</sup> Holland, K. 2014. The Irish Times: 5,000 new homes a year needed to meet demand. 26 May 2014.

<sup>12</sup> Baker, N. 2014. Irish Examiner: Steep rise in social housing waiting list. 22 December 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Cork Planning Authorities. 2013. Revised Draft Joint Housing Strategy

<sup>14</sup> Cork City Council. Average minimum waiting times by area for housing.

[http://www.corkcity.ie/services/housingcommunity/housingallocation/Average\\_Waiting\\_Times.pdf](http://www.corkcity.ie/services/housingcommunity/housingallocation/Average_Waiting_Times.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government’s Social Housing Strategy 2020 outlines the planned delivery of 35,000 new social housing units by 2020.

<sup>16</sup> Buttimer, J. 2015. <http://jerrybuttimer.ie/category/cork-city/carrigaline/douglas/page/2/>



take up to five years to realise and there are questions as to whether resources are available to deliver this<sup>17</sup>.

### Lack of Housing - Private Rental Market

With limited social housing stock and ever increasing numbers on social housing waiting lists, the private rental market is the only option for many. However in recent years, demand for private rented accommodation has increased significantly, fuelled by the decline in social housing output along with population and demographic changes, low rates of mortgage lending and an increase in house prices. According to the last census, households living in private rented accommodation increased from 22% in 2006 to 29% in 2011<sup>18</sup>. In particular, the proportion of single-person and lone-parent households that are renting has increased significantly.<sup>19</sup> This places significant demand on one-bed properties, which the majority of people working to leave homelessness seek to rent.

At the same time as demand for rental property is increasing, the supply of these properties is continuously decreasing, driving up rents. According to Daft's latest report, rent supply is now at its lowest point in almost 10 years<sup>20</sup>. Giving some insight into this, a report on residential sales in the first half of 2015 by Sherry FitzGerald found that 35% of sales during that period were by investors but only 18% of purchasers during the same period were investors, highlighting the depletion in rental properties<sup>21</sup>.

The continuing increase in demand for rental properties and fall in supply is leading to soaring rents. Analysis of Daft's Quarter 1 reports for the last three years show average rental asking prices for a one bed in Cork city rose from €598 in 2013 to €644 in 2014 and to €705 in 2015 - a total increase of 18% over three years with the latter report stating, "Cork City remains the most expensive city to rent in outside the capital."<sup>22</sup> If lucky enough to secure private rented accommodation, tenants are then often vulnerable to both scheduled and unscheduled rent increases.

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<sup>17</sup> English, E. 2015. Irish Examiner. Cork City Council: We lack resources for social housing targets. 16 April 2015.

<sup>18</sup> Central Statistics Office. 2012 Profile 4 The roof over our Heads.

<sup>19</sup> National Economic and Social Council. 2014. Homeownership and Rental: What Road is Ireland on? Executive Summary.

<sup>20</sup> Daft.ie. 2015. <https://www.daft.ie/news/2015/daft-rental-report-q1-2015.daft>

<sup>21</sup> Kennedy, E & O'Mahony, C. 2015. Sunday Business Post: A Perfect Storm The Housing Fiasco. 23 August 2015.

<sup>22</sup> Daft.ie. 2015. <https://www.daft.ie/report/q1-2015-daft-rental-report.pdf>

## Rent Supplement is not enough

The rent supplement<sup>23</sup> cap for a single person in Cork City is currently €485. However, as can be seen from the rental asking prices for a one bed in Cork city, rent supplement falls far short. A Simon survey to be published in early October 2015 on the gap between Rent Supplement and rental asking prices found that only 7% of properties to rent nationwide over three days at the end of August 2015 were within Rent Supplement limits. In Cork City only three properties fell within Rent Supplement limits<sup>24</sup>. Any properties that are available are generally of poor quality.

Despite this, and following a review of rent supplement, the Department of Social Protection announced in March 2015 that rent supplement limits will remain at their current 2013 level arguing that an increase may push rents higher.

In addition to rent supplement not meeting market rents, administration associated with the scheme is often a deterrent to landlords, as is the delay in payments with rent supplement paid in arrears, not in advance.

## Additional barriers faced by people who are homeless

When accessing a competitive private rented sector, people who are homeless are particularly vulnerable and face additional barriers.

While landlords can no longer directly discriminate against people in receipt of rent supplement via search functions on property rental websites<sup>25</sup>, they can and do filter in a similar way by requesting work references. 95% of Cork Simon residents of working age are long-term unemployed<sup>26</sup> thus putting them to the bottom of these landlords’ lists.

In addition to work references, many people who are homeless do not have up to date accommodation references. People who are homeless have often experienced long and complex

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<sup>23</sup> Rent Supplement is designed to provide short-term assistance with accommodation costs for eligible people living in private rented accommodation who are unable to meet these costs themselves and who do not have any alternative accommodation.

<sup>24</sup> Simon Communities in Ireland. 2015. Locked Out of the Market 2: The Gap between Rent Supplement / HAP Limits and Market Rents.

<sup>25</sup> In February 2015 Daft.ie removed their Rent Allowance Filter search function from their website following a request from the Department of Justice.

<sup>26</sup> Cork Simon Community. 2012. Working It Out: A report on the barriers to employment faced by people who are homeless.

pathways into homelessness peppered with broken accommodation, time spent in care, in prison, in treatment centres, hospitals and homeless shelters<sup>27</sup> and they lack accommodation references covering any significant stretch of time.

In terms of searching for accommodation, a significant percentage of people who are homeless are hindered by low levels of literacy, including IT literacy. A skills survey of Cork Simon residents found 35% of those surveyed indicated low literacy and 1 in 10 indicated functional illiteracy. IT literacy was particularly low - 58% of those surveyed had never used, or were not confident using, a computer.

The same research highlighted the stigma that surrounds homelessness - 65% of those surveyed believed people would not employ someone who is or has been homeless. No doubt ‘employ’ could be replaced with ‘rent to’ with comparable result. Whether prejudice is perceived or actual, stigma has been found to affect a person’s sense of worth and their confidence to engage in the competitive arena of accessing private rental accommodation<sup>28</sup>.

## A note on Government Policy

Ireland’s homeless policy has adopted a Housing First or Housing Led approach. This is outlined in the Programme for Government 2011 and the Homelessness Policy Statement 2013. This approach is reliant on the availability of housing. It depends on the private rental sector as is made evident in *The Way Home: A Strategy to Address Adult Homelessness in Ireland 2008–2013* and the Housing Policy Statement 2011. Most recently, the Government’s Implementation Plan on the State’s Response to Homelessness May 2014 to December 2016 committed to establishing a Social Housing Rental Service in Dublin on a pilot basis by the end of 2014, and to review outcomes with a view to establishing similar initiatives in other major urban centres.

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<sup>27</sup> Cork Simon Community. 2013. *How Did I Get Here?*

<sup>28</sup> Watts, B. 2013. *European Journal of Homelessness*. Vol 7, No 1. Rights, Needs and Stigma: A comparison of homelessness policy in Scotland and Ireland.

## Research Summary

CSSR model of housing is in operation since December 2012. This review looks at the outcomes of the model as of August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015.

Between December 2012 and June 2015 inclusive, 13 properties were leased from seven landlords and in turn rented to 19 adults and five children. Depending on their move-in date, people’s outcomes were assessed between one and 31 months after move-in - on average 16 months after move in.

CSSR model follows a Housing First<sup>29</sup> approach and this is reflected in people’s accommodation immediately prior to CSSR and also their high support needs at the time of move-in. Over half of the people housed through CSSR came from challenging and vulnerable circumstances – either emergency accommodation, prison or sleeping rough. 68% were categorised as having high support needs at the time of move-in. Alcohol, drugs and mental health were the most common support needs, followed by over a quarter of people needing support with financial skills and independent living skills. In all, 89% of people had two or more support needs.

It’s clear from the high proportion of people that remained housed that the model is working; as of August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, 89% of people were still housed. The remaining 11% were back in emergency accommodation. We also see that the model is working for people with complex needs; among those who had high support needs at move in, 85% remained housed and among the people who came from high support housing, which provides intensive round-the-clock care, 80% remained housed.

63% of people were housed continuously through one tenancy or two consecutive tenancies. A fifth of people experienced the latter – that is, they moved once in order to remain housed, indicating the flexibility of the model in supporting people to stay housed.

A quarter of people experienced a break in their housing and were housed again by August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, highlighting how permanent, independent housing may not work immediately for everyone but each

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<sup>29</sup> Housing First is a housing model developed by Dr. Sam Tsemberis in New York City in the 1990’s for people who are homeless, in particular people who are homeless and have high support needs. It aims to provide access to permanent housing without preconditions, along with supports to sustain that housing and improve health and well-being. It differs from the traditional staircase model of housing which is based on the idea of progressing people who are homeless through a series of residential services and addressing the issues that gave rise to or emerged from their homelessness before they can access independent housing.

experience of housing builds skill and understanding and brings people a step closer to achieving a sustainable tenancy.

People were housed continuously for 326 days, on average. Broken down by years, 63% were housed continuously for less than a year, 37% for over one year and 11% for over two years. The reasons for tenancies ending were about half and half, personal and property related.

When housing retention rates are explored in accordance with people’s last accommodation immediately prior to being housed, we see that CSSR works across the board, despite severe challenges in people’s lives as indicated by their previous accommodation. Almost a third of people were in emergency accommodation and another 10% were sleeping rough immediately prior to CSSR. Among this vulnerable group, 87% remained housed. Evidence<sup>30</sup> has shown the link between time spent in prison and an increased risk of homelessness. Of the 16% who were housed immediately upon release from prison, all remained housed. Almost a third were in high support housing immediately prior to CSSR – shared housing providing intensive, round-the-clock care for people with the most challenging and complex needs. 80% of people from this group remained housed.

The older the person the more likely they appear to remain housed, but with 83% of the youngest age cohort (27 – 34 years) remaining housed, age does not appear to be a barrier to staying housed. The lower a person’s support needs at the time of move-in, the greater the likelihood of them remaining housed. However with 85% of people with high support needs remaining housed, high support needs are also not a barrier to remaining housed.

In fact we find that stable, independent housing appears to have a direct impact on lowering the level of people’s support needs. By August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, 75% of people who were housed continuously required a lower level of support compared to move-in. Even among those who experienced a break in their housing and were housed again by August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 and those who did not remain housed come August 1<sup>st</sup>, 60% and 50% respectively required lower levels of support come the end of their tenancies.

During the 32 month timeframe, CSSR programme eased the mounting pressure for accommodation for people who are homeless by freeing-up 10 beds across homeless emergency and supported accommodation, equivalent to 811 bed-nights

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<sup>30</sup> Council for Research and Development. 2013. *Prison and Homelessness: From a Cell to the Street*.

# Research Findings

## (i) Main Findings

### Timeframe

Cork Simon’s Social Rentals (CSSR) programme was established in December 2012. Tenants moved in between December 2012 and June 2015. This review assesses their housing and support outcomes on August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 – 32 months after CSSR’s model began.

### The numbers

During the 32 month time frame of December 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 to August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 inclusive:

- 19 adults and five children were housed through CSSR.
- 13 properties were leased from private landlords / estate agents and sub-let to people who were homeless.
- The properties were leased from seven private landlords / estate agents.

### On August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015:

- 17 adults and five children were housed through CSSR.
- 7 properties were leased from private landlords / estate agents and sub-let to people who were homeless.
- The properties were leased from four private landlords / estate agents.

## The People

Between December 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 and August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 inclusive, a total of 19 people were housed through CSSR.

The majority were men, of mean age 38 years. The majority had high support needs at move-in. The most common support needs related to alcohol, drugs and mental health. The majority came from either emergency accommodation or housing with support – mostly high support housing.

### Gender

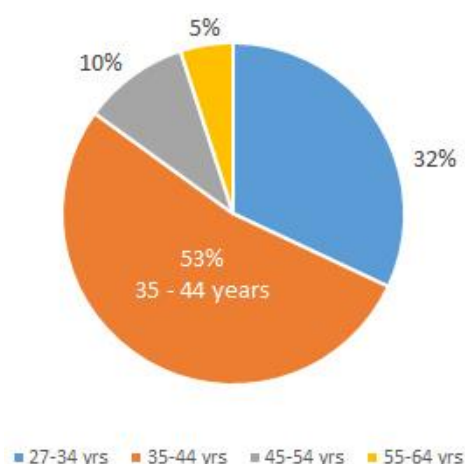
69% (n.13) were men and 31% (n.6) were women.

### Children

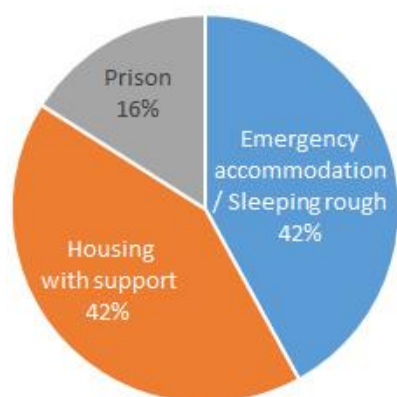
11% (n.2) had children living with them. Five children in all ranging in age from four to 12 years.

### Age

People’s ages ranged from 27 years to 59 years. The mean age was 38 years.



## Housing immediately prior to CSSR



Immediately prior to being housed through CSSR, **42% (n.8) were either in emergency accommodation or sleeping rough:**

- 32% (n.6) came from emergency accommodation
- 10% (n.2) were sleeping rough

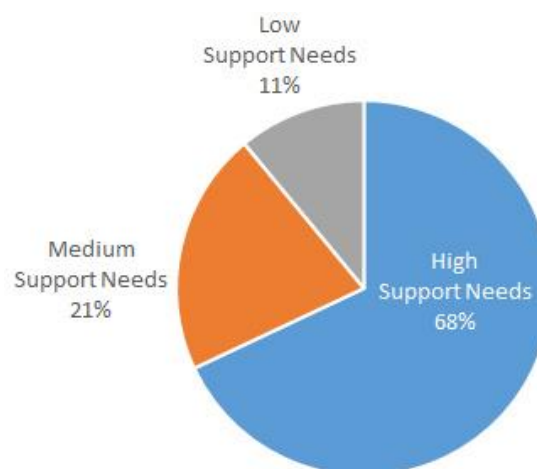
**42% (n.8) were in housing with varying levels of support:**

- 26% (n.5) came from Cork Simon High Support Housing – shared housing with intensive round-the-clock care.
- 10% (n.2) were previously living in Cork Rentals and Housing Support accommodation where the lease holder was not Cork Simon<sup>31</sup> – independent housing with visiting support.
- 5% (n.1) were previously in Supported Temporary Housing – shared housing with low-to-medium levels of onsite support.

**16% (n.3) were housed directly on release from prison** – the alternative would in many cases have been rough sleeping or emergency accommodation.

<sup>31</sup> Cork Rentals and Housing Support Partnership is a social rentals housing initiative developed by

## Support Needs at move-in



Cork Simon’s Housing Support Team define high, medium and low support needs based on the amount of contact they determine each person will need to ensure they are safe and have all the necessary supports to maintain their tenancies, manage their health, their finances, their relationships etc.

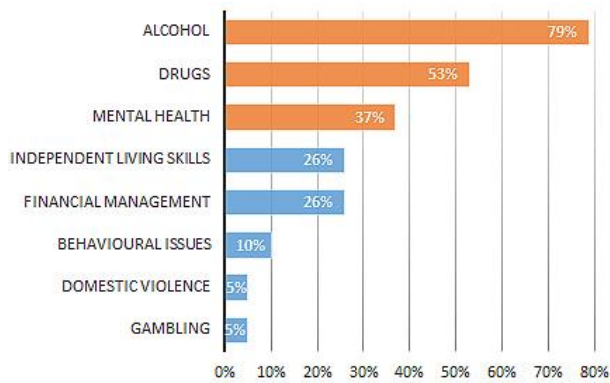
People with high support needs generally require a minimum of one house visit, one phone call and one ‘external meeting’ (a meeting in a location other than in their housing) per week, along with one health and safety visit per month. People with low support needs generally require a quarterly house visit, quarterly ‘external meeting’ and a monthly phone call. People with medium support needs fall between the requirements of high and low support.

### Variety of support needs

Alcohol, Drugs and Mental Health were the top three support needs at move in.

89% (n.17) had two or more support needs at move-in.

Cork Simon and three other homeless organisations in Cork city in 2012.



## Housing Continuity

63% (n.12) of people were housed continuously.

- 42% (n.8) were housed continuously with one tenancy.
- 21% (n.4) were housed continuously with two consecutive tenancies. (Their move from one accommodation to the next was seamless; they did not experience a night out of housing.)

## Moving In

19 people moved into their homes between December 2012 and June 2015.

In December 2012, the first two CSSR tenants moved to their new home. Seven people moved during 2013, five during 2014 and five people moved during the first half of 2015.



26% (n.5) experienced a break in their housing and were housed again by August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015.

- The shortest break in housing was 28 days; the longest was 647 days; the average was 378 days.

11% (n.2) of people’s tenancies ended and they were in emergency accommodation come August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015.

- People were housed for 390 days on average before their tenancy ended - one person was housed for 206 days (with two tenancies) and the other for 574 days.
- Tenancies ended on average 177 days before August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 – one tenancy ended 81 days ago and the other ended 273 days ago.

With this review assessing outcomes as of August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, people are assessed between one and 31 months after move-in – on average of 16 months after move-in.

## Housing Outcome

As of August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, 89% of people accommodated through CSSR remained housed.



### Housing Continuity among those that Remained Housed

Among the 17 people that remained housed - 71% (n.12/17) were housed continuously.

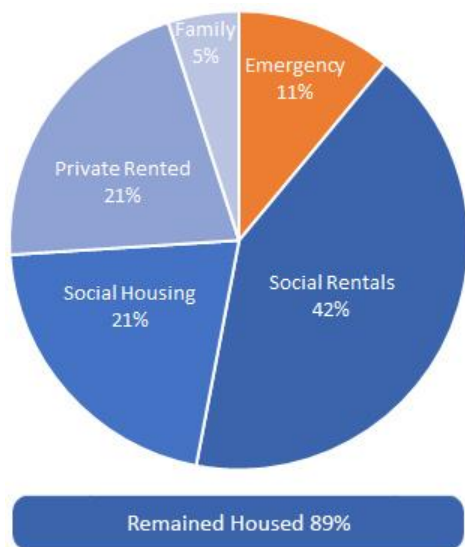
- 47% (n.8) were housed continuously with one tenancy.
- 24% (n.4) were housed continuously with two consecutive tenancies.

- 21% (n.4) were in Social Housing (3 in Cork Simon flats and 1 in a Galtan flat<sup>32</sup>)
- 21% (n.4) were in private rented housing (1 with visiting support, 3 no longer needing support)
- 5% (n.1) had returned to family

Tenancies had broken down for the remaining 11% (n.2) and they were both in emergency accommodation.

### Where are they now?

As of August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 42% were still housed through CSSR.

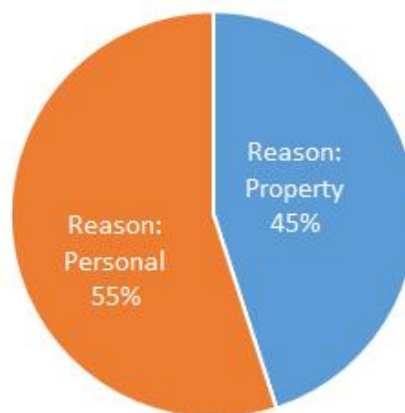


Among the 89% that remained housed:

- 42% (n.8) were housed in Social Rentals accommodation (7 properties accommodating 6 individuals and 1 couple)

### End of Tenancy

Reasons for tenancies ending:



Four people (36%) moved in order to remain housed. (They experienced two consecutive tenancies).

- Three out of these four moves related to the property and one related to personal matters.

<sup>32</sup> Independent Housing Association working closely with Cork Simon

Five peoples’ tenancies ended (26%) and they were housed again by August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015.

- In one case, the ending of the tenancy related to the property and in the remaining four cases, it related to personal matters.

Two peoples’ tenancies ended (11%) and they were not re-housed by August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015.

- In one case, the ending of the tenancy related to the property and in the other it related to personal matters.

Among this combined group of 11 people, tenancies ended due to property reasons in 45% (n.5) of cases and due to personal reasons in 55% (n.6) of cases.

The most common property reason was a health and safety risk at the property, followed by the sale of the property and the lease not being renewed.

## Length of Time Housed

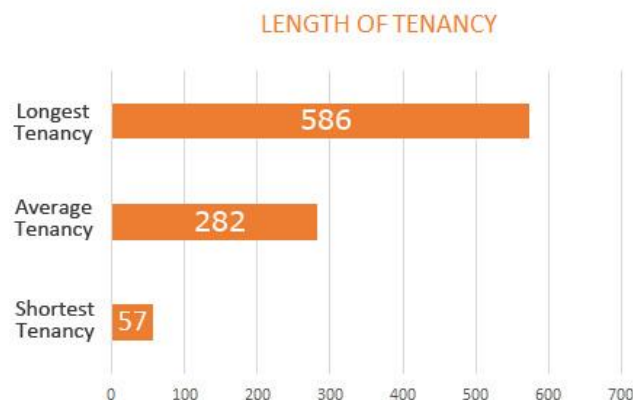
- 63% (n.12) have been housed continuously (one tenancy) for less than 1 year.
- 37% (n.7) have been housed continuously (one tenancy or two consecutive tenancies) for over 1 year.
- 11% (n.2) have been housed continuously (one tenancy or two consecutive tenancies) for over 2 years.



The person housed for the longest time (two consecutive tenancies) was housed for 761 days.

The people (n.2) housed for the shortest time were housed for 45 days (they are still housed).

The average (mean) length of time people were housed (either one tenancy or two consecutive tenancies) was 326 days.



The longest first tenancy was 586 days. The shortest was 57 days and the average (mean) length of first tenancy was 282 days.

## Who Remained Housed?

### 42% came from emergency accommodation or were sleeping rough:

Rough sleeping is the most extreme form of homelessness and surviving in emergency accommodation can have a detrimental affect on people’s mental health and independent living skills. Among this vulnerable group of people, **87% remained housed**, indicating that with the right housing and visiting supports tailored to each person’s needs, immediate prior experience of rough sleeping or emergency shelter stays is not a barrier to retaining housing.

### 16% came from prison:

Increasing evidence demonstrates the link between time spent in prison and an increased risk of becoming homeless.<sup>33</sup> **100% of people who were housed immediately upon prison release remained housed.**

### 42% came from housing with support:

**87%** of people from this group **remained housed.**

Within this group the majority (32%) came from High Support Housing. This form of shared housing provides intense, round-the-clock care and is designed for people with the most challenging and complex needs, often related to physical and mental health and addiction. **80% of people housed through CSSR who came directly from High Support Housing remained housed**, indicating that people can and do learn to manage their health and related needs and can move on from High Support Housing. There is currently a shortage of places in high-support housing; people

moving from high support to more permanent housing has the effect of freeing up places which has a further knock-on effect of freeing up emergency beds.

Accommodation immediately prior to CSSR	Remained Housed 1st August 2015
Emergency accommodation / rough sleeping 42% (n.8)	87% (n.7)
Emergency accomm. 32% (n.6)	83% (n.5)
Rough sleeping 10% (n.2)	100% (n.2)
Housing with Support 42% (n.8)	87% (n.7)
High Support Housing 32% (n.5)	80% (n.4)
Cork Rentals 10% (n.2)	100% (n.2)
Supported Tenancy Housing 1% (n.1)	100% (n.1)
Prison 16% (n.3)	100% (n.3)

### Age Group

People’s ages ranged from 27 years to 59 years. The older the person, the greater the likelihood of them remaining housed. But this review demonstrates that age does not appear to be a barrier to housing with 83% of the youngest age group remaining housed.

Age Group	Remained Housed 1st August 2015
27-34 years (32% n.6)	83% (n.5)
35-44 years (53% n.10)	90% (n.9)
45-54 years (10% n.2)	100% (n.2)
55-64 years (5% n.1)	100% (n.1)

<sup>33</sup> Council for Research and Development. 2013. *Prison and Homelessness: From a Cell to the Street.*

### Support Needs

Just under a third of people had low or medium support needs at move-in. 100% of people in these categories remained housed.

Over two thirds of people had high support needs at move-in. 85% remained housed indicating that with the right housing and visiting support tailored to each person’s needs high support needs are not a barrier to independent housing.

Support Needs at Move-in	Remained Housed 1st August 2015
Low Support (11% n.2)	100% (n.2)
Medium Support (21% n.4)	100% (n.2)
High Support (68% n.13)	85% (n.11)

- 33% (n.4) moved from a high to a low support level
- 33% (n.4) moved from a medium to a low support level
- No one required a higher level of support.
- 25% (n.3) of people’s support needs remained the same.
  - 17% (n.2) remained low
  - 8% (n.1) remained high. This person was housed for less than 6 months (173 days) come August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015.

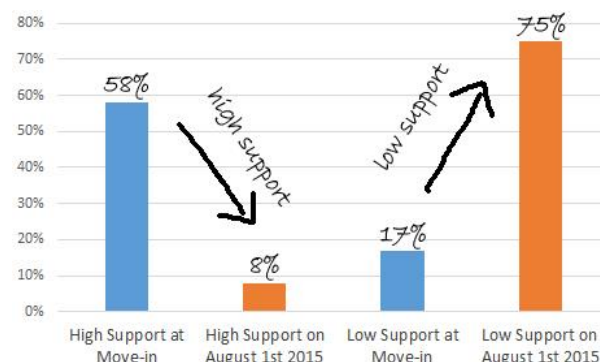
### Change in Support Needs by Housing Outcome

#### Continuous Housing

63% (n.12) of people remained housed continuously. At move-in 58% required a high level of support, 25% a medium level and 17% a low level. Their support needs were re-assessed on August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015.

- 75% (n.9) of people who remained housed continuously required a lower level of support come August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015.
  - 8% (n.1) moved from a high to a medium support level

Fall in level of support required among people housed continuously:



58% of people who remained housed continuously required a high level of support on move-in, whereas by August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 only 8% were required a high support.

Conversely, only 17% required low support on move-in and come August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, 75% were required low support.

#### Break in Housing

26% (n.5) of people experienced a break in their housing and were housed again by August

1<sup>st</sup> 2015. The average length of time that people in this group were not in permanent housing was 378 days. Therefore the change in these people’s support needs is assessed from the beginning to the end of their CSSR tenancy. At move-in 80% of people in this group required a high level of support and 20% required a medium level of support.

- At move out, 60% (n.3) of people required a lower level of support.
  - 20% (n.1) moved from a high to a medium support level
  - 20% (n.1) moved from a high to a low support level
  - 20% (n.1) moved from a medium to a low support level
- No one required a higher level of support.
- 40% (n.2) of people’s support needs remained the same. Both these people remained at a high level of support.

end of their CSSR tenancies or come August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 were as follows:

- At the end of their CSSR tenancies, 69% (n.13) of people required a lower level of support.
  - 11% (n.2) moved from a high to a medium support level
  - 32% (n.6) moved from a high to a low support level
  - 26% (n.5) moved from a medium to a low support level
- 5% (n.1) required a higher level of support. This person moved from a high to higher level of support.
- 26% (n.5) of people’s support needs remained the same.
  - 16% (n.3) remained high
  - 10% (n.2) remained low

### Did Not Remain Housed

Tenancies broke down for 11% (n.2) of people and they were back in emergency accommodation as of August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. The change in these people’s support needs is assessed from the beginning to the end of their CSSR tenancy. At move-in, 50% required a high level of support and 50% required a low level of support.

- At move out, 50% (n.1) required a lower level of support and 50% (n1) required a higher level of support.

### Change in support need during CSSR tenancies

With the three above categories combined, changes in people’s support needs come the

## Freeing up beds

Over the 32 month timeframe of the review (December 2012 to August 2015) 10 beds were made available to people who are homeless in Cork through CSSR.

- Four emergency accommodation beds were freed-up. (Six people originally came from emergency accommodation. One person had returned to emergency accommodation come August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. Another person, originally from High Support Housing, was in emergency accommodation come August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015.)
- Five high support beds were freed-up.
- One bed in supported tenancy housing was made available.

Freeing up the five high support beds and the supported tenancy housing bed would have in turn had the knock-on effect of freeing up six emergency shelter beds. In total, 10 emergency shelter beds would ultimately have been made available.

## Research Findings

### (ii) Housing Outcomes – Further Breakdown

#### Housed Continuously – 1 tenancy

42% (n.8) of people remained housed continuously at the same address.

- Children: 1 person (representing 12.5%) had 3 children living with them.
- Gender: 62% men / 38% women.
- Age: Between 27 and 59 years with a mean age of 37 years.
- Previous accommodation:
  - High Support Housing 50%
  - Emergency accommodation 25%
  - Cork Rentals 25%
- Areas of support:
  - Alcohol use 62.5%
  - Mental Health 50%
  - Independent Living Skills 37.5%
  - Financial Skills 37.5%
  - Drug use 12.5%
  - Behavioural Issues 12.5%
- Support Need at Move-In:
  - High 50%
  - Medium 25%
  - Low 25%
- Support Need as of August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015:
  - High 25%

- Medium 25%
- Low 50%

- 62.5% required a lower level of support come August 1<sup>st</sup>
- Current Housing:
  - CSSR 100%
- Length of tenancy
  - Shortest 173 days
  - Average 305 days
  - Longest 586 days

#### Housed Continuously – 1 tenancy or 2 consecutive tenancies

21% (n.4) of people were housed continuously through one tenancy or two consecutive tenancies.

- Children: nobody in this group had children living with them.
- Gender: 75% men / 25% women
- Age: Between 31 and 40 years with a mean age of 36 years
- Previous accommodation:
  - Rough Sleeping 50%
  - Prison 25%
  - Supported Temporary Accommodation 25%
- Areas of support:
  - Alcohol use 100%
  - Drug use 100%
  - Mental Health 25%
  - Financial Skills 37.5%

- Support Need at Move-In:
  - High 75%
  - Medium 25%
  - Low 0%
- Support Need as of August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015:
  - High 0%
  - Medium 25%
  - Low 75%
- 100% required a lower level of support as of 2015 August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015
- Current Housing:
  - Cork Simon Flat 75%
  - Galtan Flat 25%
- Length of time housed:
  - Shortest 143 days
  - Average 453 days
  - Longest 761 days
- Reasons for moves:
  - Property related 75% (Health and safety was the reason in two cases and in the third case the property was sold).
  - Person related 25% (a move to more suitable housing to accommodate access to child).

them.

- Gender: 67% men / 33% women
- Age: Between 27 and 59 years with a mean age of 37 years
- Previous accommodation:
  - Housing with Support 58%
    - High Support Housing 33%
    - Cork Rentals 17%
    - Supported Temporary Accommodation 8%
  - Emergency and Rough Sleeping 34%
    - Emergency 17%
    - Rough sleeping 17%
  - Prison 8%
- Areas of support:
  - Alcohol use 75%
  - Drug use 42%
  - Mental Health 42%
  - Financial Skills 33%
  - Independent Living Skills 25%
  - Behavioural Issues 8%

- Support Need at Move-In:
  - High 58%
  - Medium 25%
  - Low 17%
- Support Need as of August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015:
  - High 8%
  - Medium 17%
  - Low 75%

## Housed Continuously Combined – 1 tenancy or 2 consecutive

63% (n.12) of people were housed continuously through either one tenancy or two consecutive tenancies.

- Children: 1 person, (representing 12.5%), had 3 children living with

- 75% required a lower level of support come August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015
- Current Housing:
  - CSSR 67%
  - Cork Simon Flats 25%
  - Galtan Flat 8%

- Length of time housed:



- Shortest 143 days
- Average 381 days
- Longest 761 days
- Reasons for moves:
  - Property related 75% (Health and safety was the reason in two cases and in the third case the property was sold).
  - Person related 25% (a move to more suitable housing to accommodate access to child).
- Domestic Violence 20%
- Support Need at move-in:
  - High 80%
  - Medium 20%
  - Low 0%
- Support Need at move-out:
  - High 20%
  - Medium 20%
  - Low 40%

### Experienced a break in housing and housed again by August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015

26% (n.5) of people experienced a break in housing and were housed again come August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015.

- Children: 1 person (representing 12.5%) had 2 children living with them.
- Gender: 80% men / 20% women
- Age: Between 29 and 41 years with a mean age of 35 years
- Previous accommodation:
  - Emergency Accommodation 60%
  - Prison 40%
- Areas of support:
  - Alcohol use 80%
  - Drug use 80%
  - Independent Living Skills 40%
  - Mental Health 20%
  - Financial Skills 20%
  - Behavioural Issues 20%
- 60% required a lower level of support at the end of their CSSR tenancy.
- Current Housing:
  - Private Rented 80% (one with visiting support, three without)
  - Family 20%
- Length of first tenancy:
  - Shortest 57 days
  - Average 201 days
  - Longest 307 days
- Reasons for moves:
  - Property related 25% (in this case the lease was not renewed).
  - Person related 75% (one person moved to family, one person commenced a prison sentence and one person was asked to leave the property).

## Experienced a break in housing and not housed again by August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015

11% (n.2) of people experienced a break in housing and were not housed again come August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015.

- Children: 0%
- Gender: 50% men / 50% women
- Age: Between 31 and 36 years with a mean age of 33.5 years
- Previous accommodation:
  - Emergency Accommodation 50%
  - High Support Housing 50%
- Areas of support:
  - Alcohol use 100%
  - Drug use 50%
  - Mental Health 20%
- Support Need at Move-In:
  - High 100%
  - Medium 0%
  - Low 0%
- Support Need as move-out
  - High 50%
  - Medium 50%
  - Low 0%
- 50% required a lower level of support at the end of their CSSR tenancy.
- Current Housing:
  - Emergency Accommodation 100%
- Length of first tenancy:
  - Shortest 180 days
  - Average 377 days
  - Longest 574 days
- Reasons for moves:
  - Property related 50% (in this case the lease was sold).
  - Person related 50% (in this case the person needed different supports).

## Research Findings

### (iii) Assessment 12 months After Move-In

19 CSSR tenants moved in between December 2012 and June 2015.

11 of these tenants moved in before August 1<sup>st</sup> 2014. Focusing on these tenants only, a group is formed whereby outcomes can be assessed 12 months after move-in.

### The People

The profile of the 11 people in this group was broadly in line with the main group bar age and support needs. The mean age was 8 years younger than the main group. Support needs were higher at move-in among the group of 11 with 100% needing medium or high support compared to 89% for the main group. Alcohol and drugs were the top two support needs among both groups but where mental health was the next support need among the main group, it proved to be financial skills and independent living skills, followed by mental health, for the group of 11 people.

#### Gender:

64% (n.7) were men / 36% (n.4) were women.

#### Children:

Two people (18%) had five children between them living with them. The children ranged in age from four to 12 years.

#### Age:

Ages ranged from 29 to 48 years.  
The mean age was 30 years.

#### Housing immediately prior to CSSR:

55% (n.6) were in emergency accommodation  
18% (n.2) were in housing with support:

- 9% in supported temporary accommodation
- 9% in high support housing

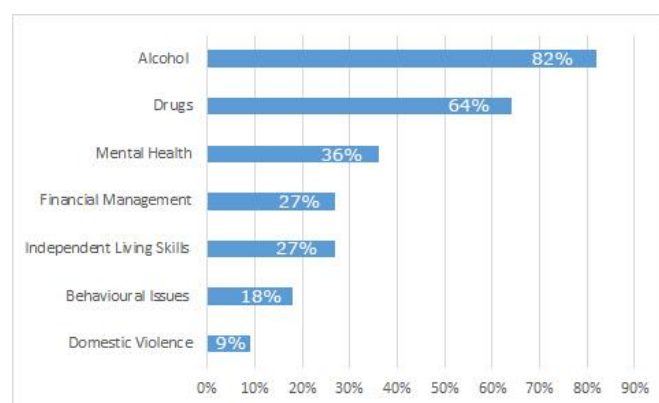
27% (n.3) were in prison

#### Support needs at move-in

73% (n 8) had high support needs  
27% (n.3) had medium support needs  
0% had low support needs

#### Variety of support needs

Alcohol, Drugs followed jointly by Financial Skills and Independent Living Skills were the top support needs.



91% (n. 11) of people had two or more support needs at move-in.

### Housing Outcomes

12 months after move-in, 73% (n.8) remained housed.

- 55% (n.6) were housed continuously in one tenancy.
- 18% (n.2) experienced a break in their housing and were housed again within the 12 month period.

27% (n.3) were no longer housed. Their tenancy had broken down and all three were in emergency accommodation 12 months later.

## Length of tenancy

Within the 12 month period, the longest tenancy was held for 365 days, the shortest first tenancy was 57 days and the average length of first tenancy was 271 days.

Housing with Support 18% (n.2)	50% (n.1)
High Support Housing 9% (n.1)	0% (n.1)
Supported Tenancy Accommodation 9% (n.1)	100% (n.1)
Prison 27% (n.3)	100% (n.3)

## Where were they 12 months after move-in?

- 61% (n.6) were in their original CSSR accommodation
- 8% (n.1) were in Private Rented without support
- 8% (n.1) were with family
- 27% (n.3) were no longer housed. All three were in emergency accommodation.

## Who Remained Housed

Of the three people that did not remain housed, two were in emergency accommodation and one was in high support housing immediately prior to CSSR.

Accommodation immediately prior to CSSR	Remained Housed 12 months after CSSR move-in
Emergency accommodation 55% (n.6)	67% (n.4)

## Change in support needs

### Housed continuously

Among those that were housed continuously, 50% (n.3) required a high level of support at move-in and 50% (n.3) required a medium level of support.

12 months later, 100% (n.6) required a lower level of support.

- 33% (n.2) moved from a high to a medium support level
- 67% (n.4) moved from a medium to a low support level

### Experienced a break in housing

Among those that experienced a break in their housing and were housed again within the 12 month period, 50% (n.1) required a high level of support at move-in and 50% (n.1) required a low level of support.

12 months later, 50% (n.1) required a lower level of support – they moved from a high to a low level and 50% (n.1) required the same level of support – they remained at a high level.

### Did not remain housed

Among those that did not remain housed 12 months later, 100% (n.3) required a high level of support at move-in.

12 months later, 33% (n.1) required a lower level of support – they moved from a high to a medium level; 33% required a higher level of support – they moved from a high to a higher level and 33% (n.1) required the same level of support – they remained at a high level.

### Combined

With the three above categories combined:

73% (n.8) required a lower level of support come the end of their CSSR tenancy.

- 9% (n.1) moved from a high to a medium support level
- 27% (n.3) moved from a high to a low support level
- 36% (n.4) moved from a medium to a low support level

18% (n.2) of people’s support needs remained the same. Both these people’s support needs remained high.

9% (n.1) required a higher level of support. This person’s support needs moved from high to higher.

## Conclusion

With limited social housing stock and historically high social housing waiting lists, the private rental market is often the only option for people working to move out of homelessness. This reliance on the private rental sector comes at a time when the number of properties available to rent is steadily declining, rents are rising rapidly and rent supplement is wholly inadequate. In this environment, Cork Simon’s social rentals model of housing is working on a number of levels to support people to move out of homelessness.

The model overcomes barriers to housing experienced by people who are homeless in the competitive private rental market such as work and employment references, and crucially at present, the barrier created by the inadequacy of rent supplement. The model also offers tenants rent certainty in a volatile rental market where rent increases can be steep and unexpected and can push people into, or return them to, homelessness.

We see from the high proportion of people - 89% - that have remained housed that the model is working, and is working for people from challenging and vulnerable background and also for people with complex needs - people who would traditionally have been classed as difficult-to-house. In fact the model appears to have a positive impact on people’s wellbeing as seen from the decrease in the level of support required. The inbuilt flexibility of the model is supporting people to remain housed and is offering tenants security, as seen from the 21% of people who were facilitated in moving in order to remain housed. The model is offering an accessible and workable route out of homelessness, without preconditions, to people from a range of backgrounds.

In addition to addressing barriers to accessing the private rental market, at a time when the number of people with no choice but to sleeping rough is increasing significantly, the model is freeing up urgently needed emergency beds.

Cork Simon’s social rentals model of housing is working, but the ever decreasing supply of rental property and the costs incurred through the model are challenges to its future.

