

FOCUS

Ireland

Family Homelessness in Dublin: Results from Repeated Point-in- Time Telephone Surveys

Dr Sarah Sheridan, Research
Officer, Focus Ireland

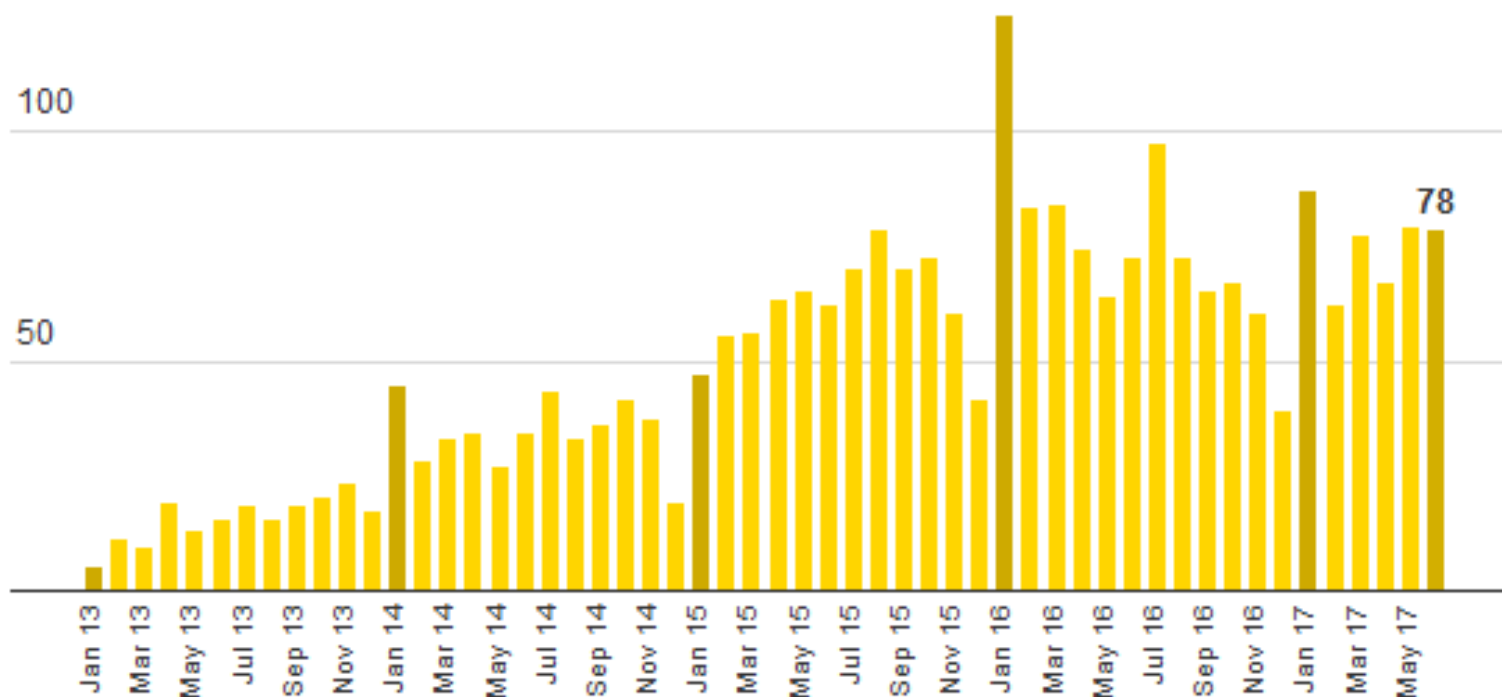
Presentation

- Family homelessness in Ireland
- Current data: what we know & rationale for current study
- Methodology of current study
- Limitations
- Findings:
 - Conclusion and the importance of basing policy and service planning on research evidence.

Family Homelessness in Ireland

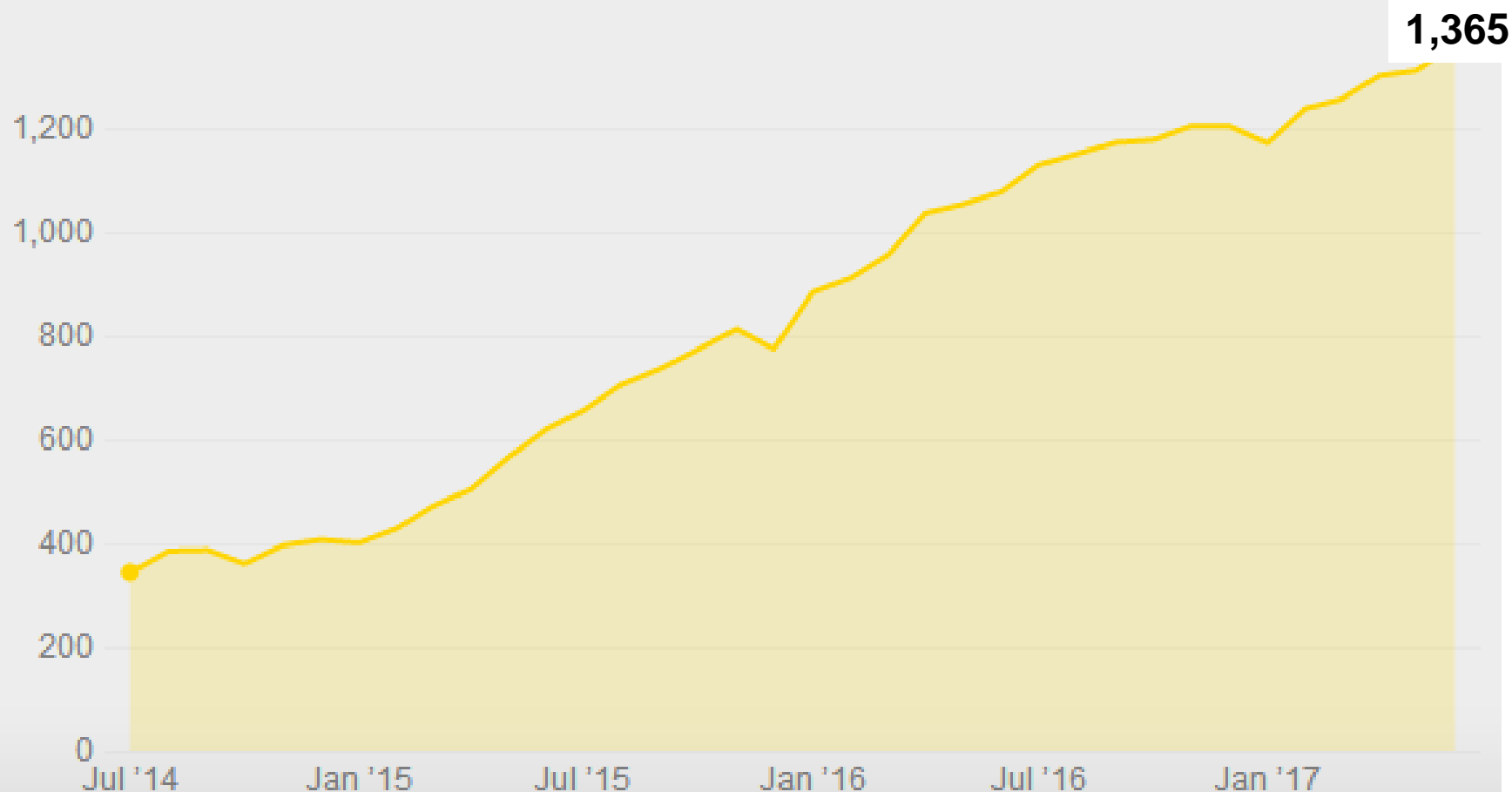
- Numbers of families in emergency accommodation have increased by almost 297% since July 2014.
- 84% of all families in Dublin region (May 2017).
- 64% of Dublin families living in commercial hotels or B&Bs.
- Recent expansion of Family 'Hubs' (congregate emergency settings).

Number of families becoming newly homeless in Dublin Region each month



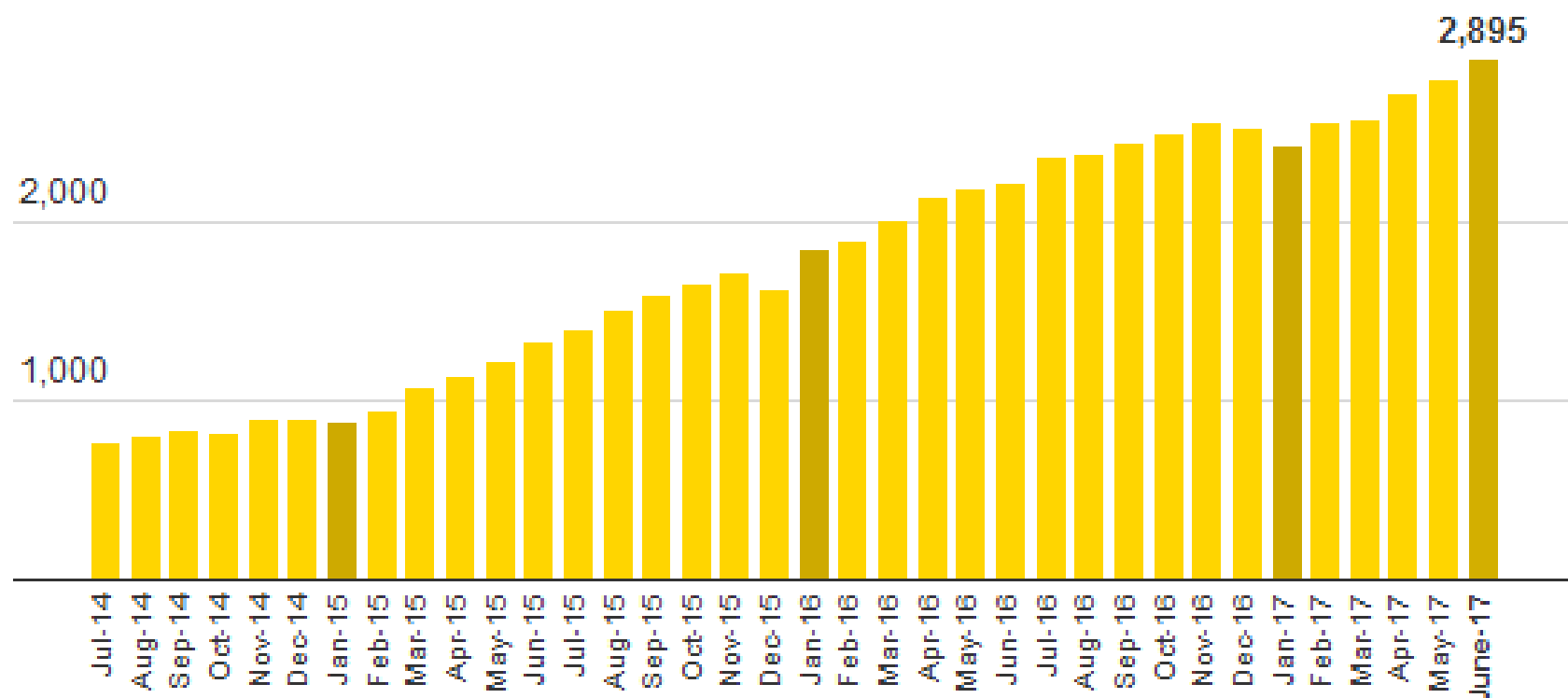
Source: Focus Ireland • Created with Datawrapper

Number of Families Homeless Monthly (National)



Number of People Homeless in Ireland

Total Adults Children



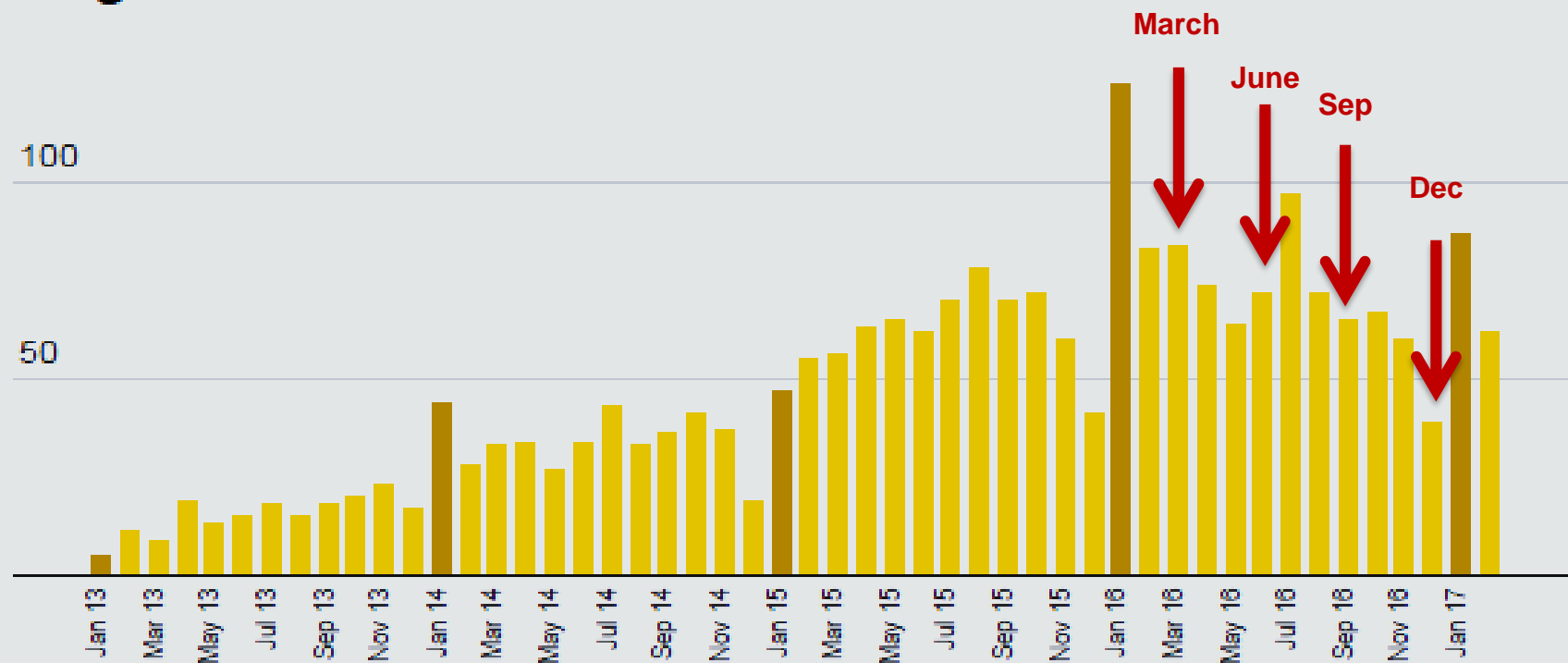
Source: Department of Housing Planning Community and Local Government • Created with Datawrapper

Existing Data on Family Homelessness in Dublin:

- Existing quantitative data:
 - Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government Stats
 - Dublin Region Homeless Executive (infographs and quarterly financial reports)
 - Limited evidence being published from large-scale public data sets.
- Small (but growing) body of published research on family homelessness in Ireland (Walsh and Harvey, 2015; Share and Hennessey, 2017).
- Focus Ireland principle service working with families in Dublin region
- Urgent gaps in knowledge:
 - Timely analysis of the causes of homelessness
 - Capturing trends over time
 - Demographic profile of families

Quarterly Telephone Survey Data

Number of families becoming newly homeless in Dublin Region each month



Methodology

- 3-page telephone survey
- Focus of survey instrument:
 - Last 4 accommodations and self-reported reasons for leaving
 - Demographic profile
 - Service use
- High ethical standards adhered to at all times
- Duration of survey: 5-10 minutes
- Descriptive data analysis
- Refining of instrument over time

Telephone Survey with Families - December 2016

SECTION I: Accommodations Prior to Homelessness

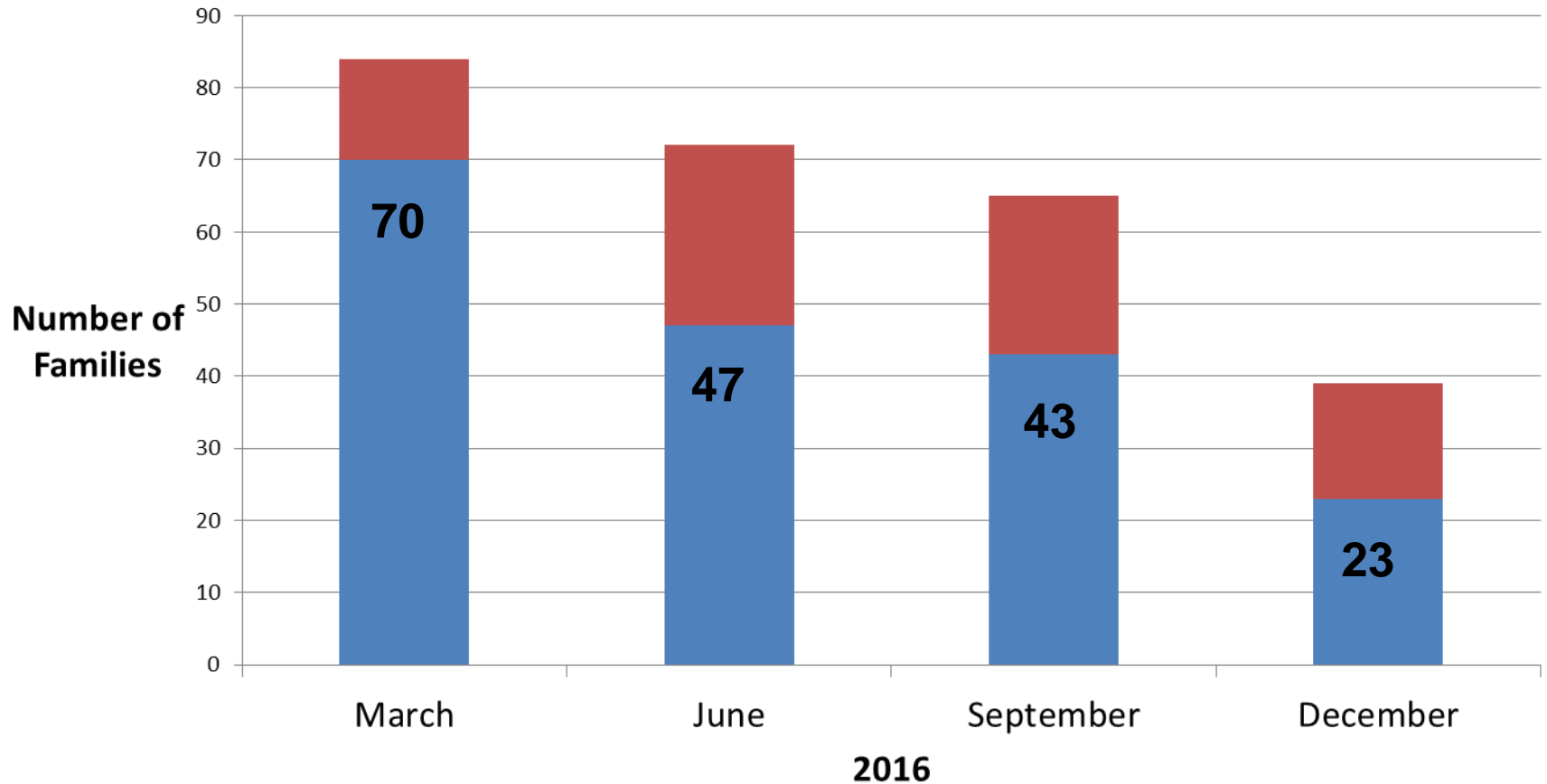
Q1	What type of accommodation are you currently residing in? (✓)	Hotel / Emergency Accommodation (✓)	With Friends/Family (✓)	Moving between Accommodations (✓)	Have Experienced Homelessness (include details on tenure type and, where appropriate, tenancy scheme, HAP, RS, etc.)													
Q2	Please describe your previous 4 accommodations BEFORE you entered emergency accommodation (note: No.4 relates to accommodation IMMEDIATELY BEFORE entering Hotel/B&B accommodation)																	
	Tenure Type	Duration of Stay	Primary Reason for Leaving	If you were in PRS:														
				a) were you in receipt of rent supplement? (Y/N)	b) did you receive a RS supplement increase from social welfare?													
1																		
2																		
3																		
4																		
Q3	How long would you say it has been since you last had a 'stable' accommodation?	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>< 1 month</td> <td>1-6 months</td> <td>7 months – 1 year</td> <td>1-2 years</td> <td>3+ years</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>					< 1 month	1-6 months	7 months – 1 year	1-2 years	3+ years	N/A						
< 1 month	1-6 months	7 months – 1 year	1-2 years	3+ years	N/A													
Q4	In what area/location was your last stable home? (please specify):																	

Limitations

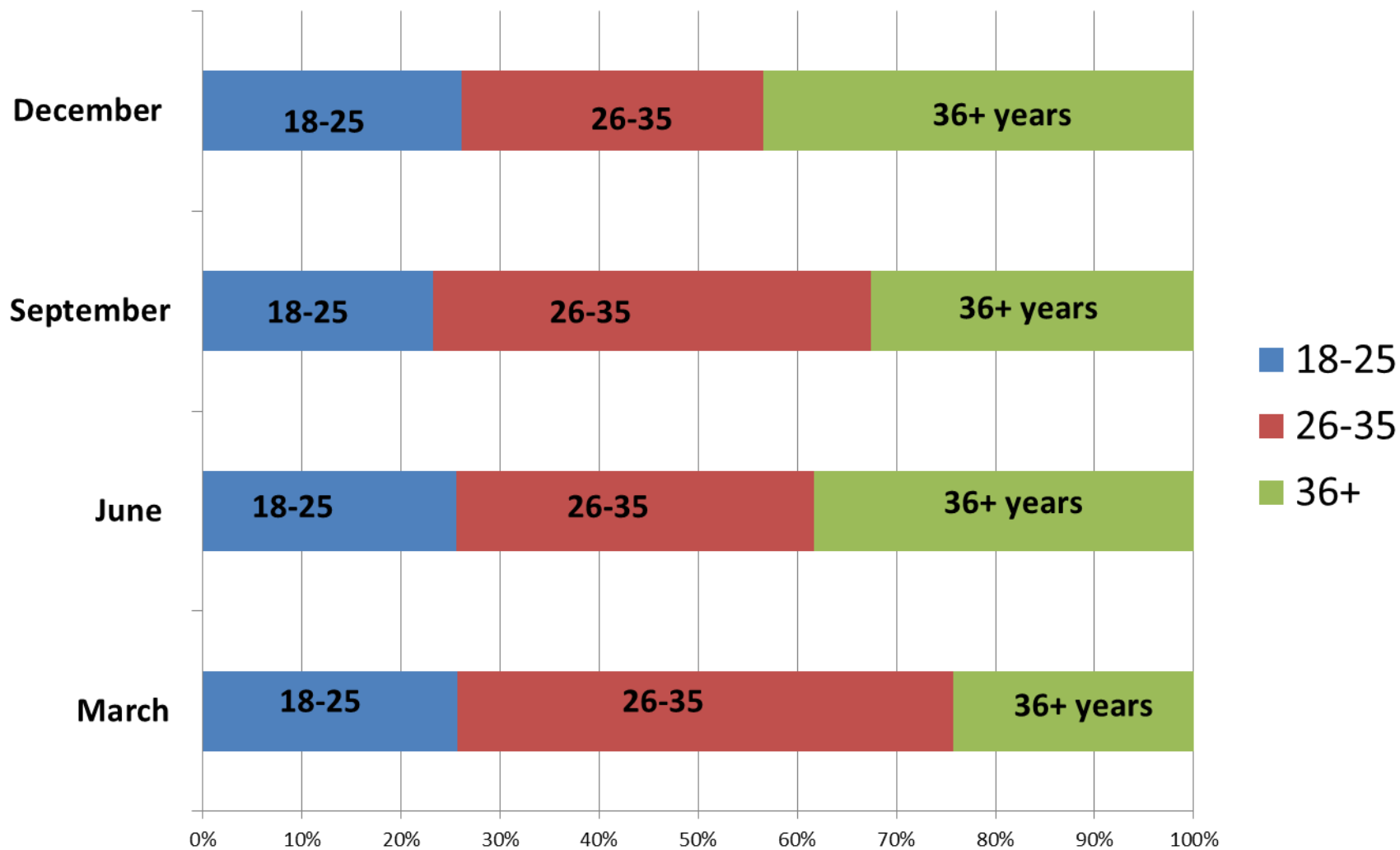
- Incomplete sample
 - Every three months
 - Crude interpretation of housing histories and triggers to homelessness
-
- Not claiming to be a comprehensive / complete analysis.
 - However, it does indicate key trends and demographic profiles which are disproportionately represented and change over time.
 - Regular publishing and sharing of evidence in order to advance broader knowledge on family homelessness.

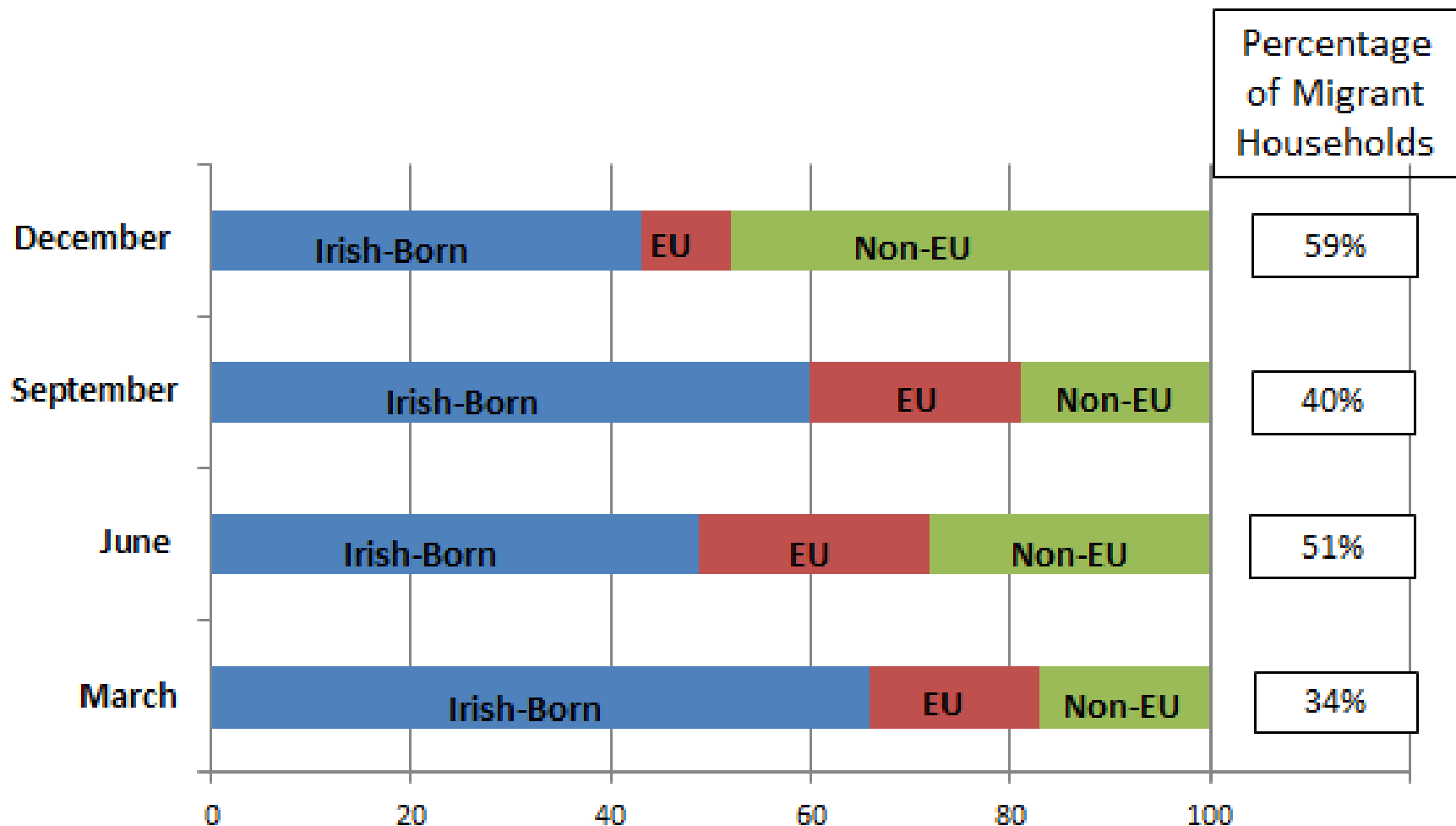
Survey Data

Sample (N=183)



Age Breakdown in Years





No. of Respondents with Histories of Direct Provision: 19

One-parent families

	March	June	September	December
Percentage of sample	67%	51%	65%	65%

No. of Children	March	June	September	December
1	27 (39%)	16 (34%)	16 (37%)	11 (48%)
2	21 (30%)	15 (32%)	14 (32%)	3 (13%)
3	20 (14%)	5 (11%)	7 (16%)	4 (17%)
4	9 (13%)	4 (8%)	4 (9%)	3 (13%)
5+	3 (4%)	7 (15%)	2 (6%)	2 (9%)
TOTAL Children	150	112	93	51
+ Pregnant	N/A	7	4	1

Employment Status

	March	June	September	December
Unemployed	84%	85%	79%	84%
Part-time employment	7%	4%	14%	16%
Full-time employment	3%	4%	5%	0%
Student (full or part-time)	4%	4%	2%	0%
Training / CE Scheme	2%	3%	0%	0%

Housing History

Q. “Would you describe this as the first time you have experienced homelessness?”

	March	June	Sep	Dec	AVERAGE
YES	66%	77%	75%	68%	72%

Last Stable Accommodation

Tenure	Total Number of Families	Percentage across 4 waves of data collection
Private Rented Accommodation	126 (101 of these or 80% on RS)	69%
Family Home	26	14%
Housing instability	17	9%
LA / AHB	6	3.2%
New to the country	5	2.7%
Own home	2	-
Halting Site	1	-
TOTAL	183	

Commonly-Reported Reasons for Leaving Last Stable Accommodation

Reasons Cited		No of Families	% across 4 surveys (N=183)
Property removed from market (34%)	Landlord selling	42	23%
	Landlord moving in or giving to family member	15	8%
	Bank repossession (of landlord)	6	3%
PRS-related issues (23%)	Rent increase	10	5%
	Rent arrears	8	4%
	Insecure tenancies	6	3%
	Landlord renovating property	4	2%
	Issues with payment of Rental Subsidies	4	2%
	Issued notice of termination	4	2%
Other:	Substandard property	3	1.6%
	Domestic violence	16	9%
	Family conflict	14	8%
	Overcrowding	11	6%
	Anti-social behaviour	7	2%
	Relationship breakdown	5	3%

Accommodation Trajectories

Accommodation Trajectories

1. Stable Housing History
2. Precarious Housing History
3. Unstable / Chaotic Housing History
4. Youth Pathways to Homelessness

Accommodation Trajectories

1. Stable housing history (n=92, 50% of total)

- First experience of homelessness
- Lengthy and stable tenancies in PRS
- Some stayed temporarily with friends/family before presenting as homeless
- Triggers to homelessness:
 - Landlord selling
 - Landlord decisions
 - Rental increases



2. Precarious housing history (n=38, 21%)

- Broadly stable housing histories in PRS with some degree of housing problems in the past
- Experiences of substandard / insecure tenancies in PRS.
- Reliance on informal arrangements for longer periods (several months or longer)
- Triggers to homelessness:
 - Landlord leaving market
 - Affordability/financial issues
 - Personal crises
 - ~~Larger families~~



3. Unstable/ chaotic housing history (n=20, 11%)

- No experience of living in independent tenancies
- Transience
- Extensive hidden homelessness
(Sometimes for years)
- Histories of homelessness

Triggers to Homelessness

- Family conflict and overcrowding
- Personal crises
- Difficulties accessing PRS tenancies



4. Youth pathways to homelessness (n=30, 16%)



- Under the age of 25 (many under 21).
- No experience of living independently
- Triggers to Homelessness:
 - New family formation
 - Overcrowding & family conflict
 - Difficulties accessing private rented sector
 - Affordability problems

Help-seeking across the samples

Q. Did you contact any support service *before* you presented as homeless?
(Percentage)

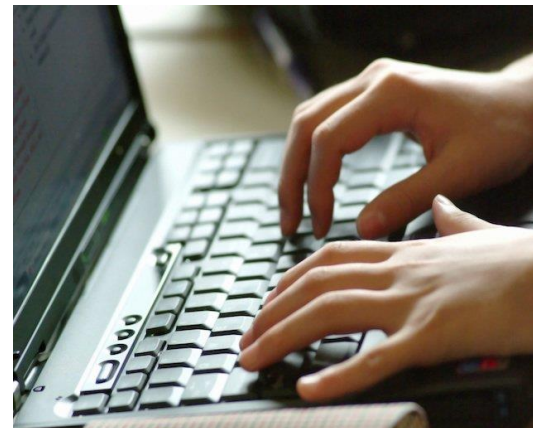
	March	June	September	December
YES	81%	72%	63%	50%

Agencies approached:

- Local Authority (most common)
- Voluntary organisations

Finding out information:

- Informal networks (i.e. word of mouth)
- Website searching / Google
- Local representatives (TDs / Local councillors)



December: Divergences in Data

- Some divergences emerging in comparison to other months...
- Fewer PRS-reported issues.
- Unstable housing histories; prolonged hidden homelessness.
- Triggers included:
 - Family conflict
 - Overcrowding
 - Few housing options (i.e. priced out of PRS).
- High proportion of Non-EU migrants; young parents & those over the age of 36...

Conclusion

■ Demographic profile evidences those most at-risk

- ❑ Joblessness and homelessness
- ❑ One-parent households → single parents
- ❑ Young parents
- ❑ Migrant parents

■ Housing Histories:

- ❑ Problems of affordability, supply and tenancy sustainment in the private rented sector
- ❑ Over half demonstrate very stable housing histories
- ❑ Degree of marginalisation from housing market and lack of affordable housing options

→ Evidence highlights that these families do not need therapeutic interventions; but rather, subsidised housing with security of tenure.

■ Looking to 2017 and beyond:

- ❑ Importance of building an evidence base
- ❑ Housing as key solution; not emergency facilities with therapeutic support.