

Sick and Tired of Homelessness

Health Profile of People Using Cork Simon Services

31 August – 06 September 2009

Cork Simon Community
September 2009



1. Introduction

Cork Simon Community works with some of the most vulnerable and excluded people in Cork. Forty-four people stay every night at the *Emergency Shelter* – people who are sick, isolated and in need of high levels of care and support. In early September 2009, up to half of all people staying at the Cork Simon *Emergency Shelter* every night were long term residents – staying at the Shelter for six months or longer¹ because they had nowhere else to go.

A further forty-four people live in five high-support houses – termed high-support because people living there have a complex range of needs that require round-the-clock care. A further twenty-seven people are supported in returning to independent-living in Cork Simon flats throughout the city – people who have survived homelessness and are on track to rebuilding their lives. That's 115 beds every night.

Cork Simon also supports people living in private rented accommodation, in city and county council houses and in accommodation provided by various housing associations; supporting people to keep their tenancies and to begin leaving homelessness behind them. For some – particularly those with complex health conditions and addictions, it can be a long journey.

People are turned away from the Cork Simon *Emergency Shelter* every night simply because it's full. During the second quarter of 2009 (April to June), an average of eight people per night were being turned away from the Shelter². A Cork Simon *Outreach Team*

works closely with people who have to sleep rough or live in appalling conditions in squats, making sure people can take that first step to finally getting the right help and support they need to begin their journey. The Cork Simon *Soup Run* is on the streets every night of the year with hot, nourishing food, blankets, and a friendly ear, providing a vital link to the *Outreach Team*. The *Soup Run* and *Outreach Team* are often the first contact people have with services for people who are homeless.

A Cork Simon *Youth Homeless Drugs Prevention Project (YHDPP)* is a key resource for young adults who are at risk of becoming, or who have already become, homeless. Almost one fifth of people using Cork Simon services in 2008 were in the 18 to 26 year old age group³. The *YHDPP* works with this age group - young people that have little or no direction in their lives, have poor relations with their families and have little experience to call on.

The complexity of homelessness cannot be underestimated. There is no one cause and no one solution. What works for one person, is most likely to be completely inappropriate for another. While the availability of good quality accommodation is crucial in addressing homelessness, the appropriateness of that accommodation - and the supports that go with it, are equally important. Complex needs – mental health, physical health, addictions, education, living skills, coping skills, building social networks, must all be addressed if people are to have a chance of succeeding in leaving homelessness behind them.

¹ Government strategy on homelessness, *The Way Home*, defines long term homelessness as stays of six months or more in emergency accommodation

² Profile of Projects & Services Qtr 2 2009, Cork Simon Community

³ Profile of Projects & Services 2008, Cork Simon Community

This *Health Audit* was conducted among all people using Cork Simon services during the first week of September 2009⁴ in order to build a picture of some of those needs and to highlight the complex nature of homelessness among people using those services. *Sick and Tired of Homelessness* records diagnosed mental and physical health conditions, alcohol and drug use, behaviour and referrals to the *Adult Homeless Multi Disciplinary Team*⁵ (AHMDT). The findings serve as a reminder of the challenges that need to be addressed if two of the government's key commitments in their homelessness strategy, *The Way Home*, are to be met: Ending Rough Sleeping by 2010 and Ending Long Term Homelessness by 2010.⁶

⁴ Monday 31 August to Sunday 06 September 2009

⁵ The AHMDT consists of a GP, Public Health Nurse, Community Psychiatric Nurse, Consultant Psychiatrist and Clinical Psychologist

⁶ *The Way Home - A Strategy to Address Adult Homelessness in Ireland 2008 - 2013*

2. Summary of Findings

2.1 All Cork Simon Services

One hundred and eighty-three different people used Cork Simon services during the week of the Health Audit. 86% were male. 12% were 26 years or younger. Sixteen people were recorded as sleeping rough – six of them were consistent rough sleepers. The Soup Run met an average of twenty-one people per night.

Fifty-five people stayed at the Emergency Shelter – twenty of them were long-term residents. An average of seven people per night were turned away from the Shelter because it was full.

One hundred and twenty-three people either stayed in or were supported by Cork Simon Housing Projects. Forty-three people were living in high-support accommodation, a further thirty-eight people were living in Cork Simon / Galtan⁷ flats, twenty-one people were living in private rented accommodation and seven people were in Cork City or Cork County Council accommodation. A further thirteen people were living in 'other' accommodation – prison, squat, friends, sheltered housing, etc.

The Outreach Team supported seventeen people and the Youth Homeless Drugs Prevention Project supported eleven people.

2.1.1 Social Welfare Supports

87% had a medical card – a figure indicating the low level of income of people using Cork Simon services.⁸

⁷ Independent Housing Association working closely with Cork Simon

⁸ Maximum weekly income limit of €184 gross per week for single person living alone – Citizens Information

63% were in receipt of a Department of Social & Family Affairs disability payment. These high figures indicate the serious nature of the ill health among people using Cork Simon services.⁹

2.1.2 Physical and Mental Health

48% had a diagnosed physical health condition. A further 14% had symptoms suggesting a physical health condition, but at the time of the Health Audit had not been diagnosed.

58% had a diagnosed mental health condition. A further 8% displayed symptoms suggesting a mental health condition, but at the time of the Health Audit had not been diagnosed.

77% had a diagnosed physical or mental health condition.

37% displayed aggressive or challenging behaviour or engaged in self-harm.

2.1.3 Alcohol and Drug Use

82% of people used alcohol – 46% of which were described as 'heavy users'.

39% used drugs – 39% of which were described as 'heavy users'. 49% of people using drugs used cannabis, 42% used heroin, 21% used Benzodiazepine¹⁰

⁹ To qualify for a Department of Social & Family Affairs Disability Payment applicants must satisfy a means test, have an injury, disease or physical or mental disability that has continued or may be expected to continue for at least one year, and be *substantially restricted* in undertaking work that would otherwise be suitable for an applicant's age, experience and qualifications – Citizens Information

¹⁰ A prescription drug used for treating anxiety, insomnia, seizures, alcohol withdrawal, etc.

and 21% used other prescription¹¹ drugs.

36% used both alcohol and drugs – 37% of which were described as ‘heavy users’ of both.

52% had a diagnosed mental health condition *and* used alcohol and / or drugs.

2.1.4 Referrals to the Adult Homeless Multi Disciplinary Team (AHMDT)

38% were referred to the Adult Homeless Multi Disciplinary Team (AHMDT). There were 196 referrals.

22% of people were referred to the GP, 20% were referred to the Consultant Psychiatrist, 15% were referred to the Public Health Nurse, 13% were referred to the Community Psychiatric Nurse and 12% were referred to the Clinical Psychologist.

2.2 Emergency Shelter

Fifty-five people stayed at the Emergency Shelter. 93% were male. 21% were in the 18-26 year old age group.

69% had a medical card. 36% were in receipt of a Department of Social & Family Affairs disability payment.

38% had a diagnosed physical health condition. 36% had a diagnosed mental health condition.

¹¹ Benzodiazepine and other prescription drugs are normally acquired on the black market and not necessarily prescribed by a doctor.

78% used alcohol – 65% of which were described as heavy users.

44% used drugs, 75% of which were described as heavy users.

25% used both drugs and alcohol – 64% of which were described as heavy users of both.

56% had a diagnosed mental health problem and used alcohol and / or drugs.

35% displayed aggressive or challenging behaviour or engaged in self-harm.

2.3 High-Support Residential

Forty-three people stayed in high-support accommodation. 84% were male.

100% had a medical card. 77% were in receipt of a Department of Social & Family Affairs disability payment.

86% had a diagnosed physical health condition.

79% had a diagnosed mental health condition.

98% had a diagnosed physical *or* mental health condition.

67% had a diagnosed physical *and* mental health condition.

86% used alcohol – 59% of which were described as heavy users.

47% used drugs – 15% of which were described as heavy users.

74% had a diagnosed mental health condition *and* used alcohol and / or drugs.

63% displayed aggressive or challenging behaviour or engaged in self-harm.

2.4 Housing Plus

The team supported seventy-nine people, 48% of which were staying in Cork Simon / Galtan flats. 84% were male.

95% had a medical card. 76% were in receipt of a Department of Social & Family Affairs disability payment.

35% had a diagnosed physical health condition.

67% had a diagnosed mental health condition.

84% had a diagnosed physical *or* mental health condition.

81% used alcohol – 27% of which were described as heavy users.

32% used drugs – 20% of which were described as heavy users.

53% had a diagnosed mental health condition *and* used alcohol and / or drugs.

22% displayed aggressive or challenging behaviour or engaged in self-harm.

55% had a diagnosed physical health condition.

55% had a diagnosed mental health condition.

90% used alcohol – 65% of which were described as heavy users.

55% used drugs – 40% of which were described as heavy users.

55% had a diagnosed mental health condition and used alcohol and / or drugs, 36% of which were described as heavy users of both.

60% displayed aggressive or challenging behaviour or engaged in self-harm.

2.5 Long Term Homelessness¹²

Twenty people were long term residents at the Emergency Shelter – staying at the Shelter for six months or longer. All were male.

80% had a medical card. 60% were in receipt of a Department of Social & Family Affairs disability payment.

85% had a diagnosed physical or mental health condition.

¹² Government strategy on homelessness, *The Way Home*, defines long term homelessness as stays of six months or more in emergency accommodation

3. Sick and Tired of Homelessness

Homelessness makes you sick. During the course of one week in early September over half of all people using Cork Simon services had a diagnosed mental health condition. Almost half had a diagnosed physical health condition. Over a third were described as 'heavy users' of alcohol and one in six were described as 'heavy users' of drugs. One in five had both a diagnosed mental health condition *and* were 'heavy users' of alcohol or drugs. A third of people displayed aggressive or challenging behaviour and one in twenty engaged in self-harm.

Not only do people have debilitating illnesses and conditions, the majority of people are on low-incomes as indicated by the high percentage of people in possession of a medical card. The high prevalence of people in receipt of a Department of Social & Family Affairs disability payment indicates the difficulties people have in finding employment – one of the criteria in qualifying for this payment is that people must be '*substantially restricted in undertaking work*'.

In summary, people using Cork Simon services are very sick – often with dual physical *and* mental health conditions. Add to this the poverty, the exclusion from the jobs market, the crippling affects of heavy alcohol and drug use and the demands of aggressive and challenging behaviour, and a clearer picture emerges of the complexity of people's needs. This Health Audit doesn't explore to any great extent people's education needs. Nor does it take account of people's personal histories or their connection or otherwise with family, their social networks or other needs. But even with these insights missing, the challenges in meeting government commitments to end rough sleeping and long-term homelessness by 2010 are clear.

Over one third of people staying at the Emergency Shelter during the week of the Health Audit were, by the Government's own definition, long term homeless. This group of twenty people had the highest levels of 'heavy' alcohol and / or drug use. The rates of both diagnosed mental health conditions *and* heavy drug and / or alcohol use combined were comparable to residents in high-support accommodation, as were rates of aggressive or challenging behaviour. An analysis of the thirty-five shorter-term residents at the Emergency Shelter reveals much lower rates of physical and mental health conditions, of heavy alcohol or drug use and of aggressive or challenging behaviour. The twenty people defined as long term homeless, had the most complex set of needs.

Sixteen people were recorded as sleeping rough – six people were consistent rough sleepers. All of them had a diagnosed physical or mental health condition. This group had the next highest rates of heavy alcohol or drug use. Among people using drugs, this was the only group where heroin was the primary drug used¹³. This group also had the highest rate of polydrug use and the highest rate of both alcohol *and* drug use.

All residents in Cork Simon's high-support houses had medical cards. They had the highest percentage of people in receipt of a Department of Social & Family Affairs disability payment. They had the highest rates of diagnosed physical or mental health conditions – or both. While rates of alcohol use were high, half were described as 'heavy users' – lower than the Emergency Shelter residents. Drug use was much lower than that reported

¹³ Cannabis was reported as the primary drug used among residents of Emergency Shelter and Housing Projects.

among Shelter residents, with a small minority described as heavy users. The rates of aggressive or challenging behaviour and self-harm were highest among this group. There appeared to be a stronger link between behaviour and mental health than with alcohol.

The people supported by Cork Simon's Housing Plus team had less complex needs. While rates of diagnosed mental health conditions were high at almost two thirds, this group had the lowest rate of diagnosed physical health conditions, the lowest rate of heavy alcohol use (one in five) and the lowest rate of heavy drug use (one in twenty). Interestingly, the majority of people *not using* alcohol or drugs were staying in Cork Simon / Galtan Flats. There were no heavy users of drugs in Cork Simon / Galtan flats and just one in five were heavy users of alcohol. People described as heavy users of drugs were living in private rented accommodation, local authority housing or 'other' accommodation. While people supported by the Housing Plus team had the lowest rate of people in receipt of a Department of Social & Family Affairs disability payment, the rates were still high at three quarters. All but four people had a medical card.

The key role of the Adult Homeless Multi-Disciplinary Team (AHMDT) cannot be underestimated. The team holds clinics three days per week at Cork Simon's *Anderson's Quay* complex. During the week of the Health Audit almost two fifths of all people using Cork Simon services were referred to the AHMDT. There were almost 200 referrals. While this high number of referrals is not surprising given the findings of this Health Audit, they serve as another strong indicator of the clear link between health and homelessness.

The scope of this Health Audit is clearly limited. While it offers a strong indication of the complex needs of people using Cork Simon services, it

doesn't offer an insight into the severity of those needs. The high rates of aggressive and challenging behaviour offers a clue that there may be chronic cases in the Emergency Shelter and in the high-support houses.

The measurement of alcohol and drug use is basic, but again offers a strong indication that there are chronic cases of substance addiction. The high rates of a combination of diagnosed mental health conditions and heavy drug and / or alcohol use suggests high rates of dual diagnosis.¹⁴

There is a clear link between mental health and homelessness. The diagnosed physical health conditions recorded is indicative of the lifestyle of being homeless – circulatory, respiratory and orthopaedic conditions being the most prominent.

The link between homelessness and alcohol and / or drug use is also clear. There were more than twice as many heavy users of alcohol as there were heavy users of drugs. While cannabis was the drug used most (one in five), heroin was a close second (one in six). Heroin was used most among people described as heavy drug users.

Poverty and exclusion from the jobs market was the most common link of all. Even people in low to medium support accommodation had high rates of low income and disability.

¹⁴ Dual Diagnosis is the term used when a person suffers from both a substance addiction problem and another mental health issue such as depression or an anxiety disorder. Most mental health services and addiction treatment centres in Ireland are currently not organised to treat such people holistically. - Dual Diagnosis Ireland.

Poverty, disability, poor physical and mental health, alcohol and drug use, and aggressive or challenging behaviour were at their highest rates among people defined as long term homeless, among people sleeping rough and among people living in high support houses. Complex needs require high-support care. While forty-three people were benefiting from that high-support care, a further twenty people were not, and a further sixteen people had difficulty getting the most basic care and accommodation. Meeting their long-term care and accommodation needs is the immediate challenge if the government's commitments of ending rough sleeping and long-term homelessness by 2010 are to be met.

4. Findings in Detail

4.1 All Cork Simon Services

183 different people used Cork Simon services throughout the week:

- The Emergency Shelter accommodated 55 people
- Housing Projects accommodated / supported 123 people
- The Outreach Team supported 17 people
- The Youth Homeless Drugs Prevention Project supported 11 people
- 9% (*n. 17*) of people used a combination of two Cork Simon projects
- 2% (*n. 3*) of people used a combination of three Cork Simon projects

Throughout the period of the Health Audit:

- An average of 21 people per night used the Soup Run;
- An average of 7 people per night were turned away from the Emergency Shelter because it was full; and
- 16 people were recorded as sleeping rough on at least one night throughout the week.
- 36% (*n. 20*) of people staying at the Emergency Shelter were long-term residents as per Government definition of long-term homelessness (six months or more in emergency accommodation).

4.1.1 Profile

- 86% (*n. 155*) were male, 14% (*n. 25*) were female.
- The average age was 43.2 years – the youngest was 18 years, the eldest was 69 years.
- 12% (*n. 22*) were 18-26 years old
- 14% (*n. 26*) were 27-34 years old

- 24% (*n. 44*) were 35-44 years old
- 28% (*n. 51*) were 45-54 years old
- 16% (*n. 30*) were 55-64 years old
- 5% (*n. 9*) were 65-69 years old.
- 80% (*n. 147*) were from Ireland
- 10% (*n. 19*) were from UK
- 8% (*n. 14*) were from an EU12 country.

4.1.2 Accommodation

- 33% (*n. 61*) either stayed at the Emergency Shelter or were sleeping rough
- 23% (*n. 43*) were living in one of Cork Simon's five high-support houses
- 21% (*n. 38*) were living in Cork Simon / Galtan independent-living flats
- 11% (*n. 21*) were living in Private Rented accommodation
- 4% (*n. 7*) were living in Cork City / County Council accommodation
- 7% (*n. 13*) were in 'Other' accommodation (squat, prison, friends, Housing Association, etc.)

4.1.3 Social Welfare Supports

87% (*n. 159*) of all people using Cork Simon Services had a Medical Card:

- 69% (*n. 38*) of people staying in the Emergency Shelter
- 98% (*n. 121*) of people staying in / supported by Housing Projects
- 47% (*n. 8*) of people supported by Outreach Team
- 91% (*n. 10*) of people supported by YHPPP

63% (*n. 115*) of all people using Cork Simon Services were in receipt of a Department of Social & Family Affairs disability payment:

- 36% (*n. 20*) of people staying at the Emergency Shelter
- 78% (*n. 96*) of people staying in / supported by Housing Projects
- 24% (*n. 4*) of people supported by the Outreach Team
- 36% (*n. 4*) of people supported by YHDPP

4.1.4 Physical Health

48% (*n. 88*) of all people using Cork Simon Services had at least one diagnosed physical health condition:

- 38% (*n. 21*) of people staying at the Emergency Shelter
- 54% (*n. 65*) of people staying in / supported by Housing projects
- 59% (*n. 10*) of people supported by the Outreach Team
- 36% (*n. 4*) of people supported by YHDPP

A further 14% (*n.25*) had symptoms suggesting a physical health condition that, at the time of the Health Audit, had yet to be diagnosed.

22% (*n. 40*) of all people using Cork Simon Services had at least two diagnosed physical health conditions, 7% (*n. 12*) had at least three, and 2% (*n. 3*) had at least four diagnosed physical health conditions

Among the 88 people with one or more diagnosed physical health conditions:

- 34% (*n. 30*) had conditions relating to blood / blood circulation (Hypertension, Cholesterol, Diabetes, etc.)
- 32% (*n. 28*) had respiratory related conditions (Asthma, COPD, etc.)
- 24% (*n. 21*) had orthopaedic related conditions (broken limbs, dislocated joints, fractures, etc.)

- 15% (*n. 13*) had gastro-intestinal related conditions (stomach ulcer, gastroenteritis, etc.)
- 13% (*n. 11*) had mobility related conditions
- 10% (*n. 9*) had cardio-vascular related conditions.
- 9% (*n. 8*) had conditions related to brain injuries (seizures, etc.)

4.1.5 Mental Health

58% (*n. 103*) of all people using Cork Simon Services had at least one diagnosed mental health condition:

- 36% (*n. 20*) of people staying at the Emergency Shelter
- 73% (*n. 88*) of people staying in / supported by Housing Projects
- 35% (*n. 6*) of people supported by the Outreach Team
- 64% (*n. 7*) of people supported by YHDPP

A further 8% (*n. 14*) displayed behaviour suggesting a mental health condition, but hadn't been diagnosed at the time of the health audit.

4.1.6 Alcohol Use

82% (*n. 150*) of all people using Cork Simon Services used alcohol:

- 78% (*n. 43*) of people staying at the Emergency Shelter
- 84% (*n. 103*) of people staying in / supported by Housing Projects
- 82% (*n. 14*) of people supported by the Outreach Team
- 73% (*n. 8*) of people supported by YHDPP

Of the 150 people using alcohol:

- 46% (*n. 69*) were heavy users
- 34% (*n. 51*) were moderate users
- 20% (*n. 30*) were light users

65% (n. 28) of alcohol users staying at the Emergency Shelter were 'Heavy Users'

40% (n. 41) of alcohol users staying in / supported by Housing Projects were 'Heavy Users'

50% (n. 7) of alcohol users supported by the Outreach Team were Heavy Users

50% (n. 4) of alcohol users supported by YHDPP were Heavy Users

The majority of Heavy Users – 77% (n. 53), drank a combination of alcohol types (spirits, cider, wine, beer, etc.)

The majority of Light Users – 77% (n. 23), drank one type of alcohol – mostly beer or cider.

4.1.7 Drug Use

39% (n. 72) of all people using Cork Simon Services used drugs

- 44% (n. 24) of people staying at the Emergency Shelter
- 37% (n. 46) of people staying in / supported by Housing Projects
- 53% (n. 9) of people supported by the Outreach Team
- 91% (n. 10) supported by YHDPP

Of the 72 people using drugs:

- 39% (n. 28) were Heavy Users
- 39% (n. 28) were Light Users
- 22% (n. 16) were Moderate Users

75% (n. 18) of drug users staying at the Emergency Shelter were Heavy Users

20% (n. 9) of drug users staying in / supported by Housing Projects were Heavy Users

78% (n. 7) of drug users supported by Outreach were Heavy Users

80% (n. 10) of drug users supported by YHDPP were Heavy Users

67% (n. 42) of people using drugs used one type of drug

- 32% (n. 23) used 2 types of drugs or more
- 11% (n. 8) used three types of drugs or more
- 3% (n. 2) used four drug types or more

49% (n. 35) of people using drugs used cannabis

- 42% (n. 30) used heroin
- 21% (n. 15) used Benzodiazepine
- 21% (n. 15) used prescription drugs

64% (n. 18) of Heavy drug users used heroin

- 46% (n. 13) used Benzodiazepine
- 39% (n. 11) used Cannabis
- 18% (n. 5) used a combination of all three
- A further 7% (n. 2) used a combination of Benzodiazepine, cannabis & cocaine

4.1.8 Drug And Alcohol Use

36% (n. 65) of all people using Cork Simon Services used both Drugs *and* Alcohol.

- 37% (n. 13) were Heavy alcohol users AND Heavy drug users

4.1.9 Mental Health And Drug / Alcohol Use

52% (n. 96) of all people using Cork Simon Services had a diagnosed mental health condition *and* used either alcohol and / or drugs:

- 35% (n. 19) of people staying at the Emergency Shelter
- 63% (n. 78) of people staying in / supported by Housing Projects

- 35% (*n.* 6) of people supported by the Outreach Team
- 64% (*n.* 7) of people supported by YHDPP

51% (*n.* 93) of all people using Cork Simon Services had a diagnosed mental health condition *and* used alcohol – 45% (*n.* 42) of which were Heavy alcohol users.

25% (*n.* 46) of all people using Cork Simon Services had a diagnosed mental health condition *and* used drugs – 35% (*n.* 16) of which were Heavy drug users.

23% (*n.* 43) of all people using Cork Simon Services had a diagnosed mental health condition *and* used both alcohol and drugs – 20% (*n.* 9) of which were Heavy users of both drugs *and* alcohol.

- 30% (*n.* 13) were in high-support projects
- 30% (*n.* 13) were either staying at the Emergency Shelter or sleeping rough

4.1.10 Behaviour

37% (*n.* 67) of all people using Cork Simon Services displayed aggressive or challenging behaviour, or engaged in self-harm.

- 45% (*n.* 30) displayed aggressive behaviour
- 42% (*n.* 28) displayed challenging behaviour
- 13% (*n.* 9) engaged in self-harm.

For those displaying aggressive behaviour there was a stronger link with mental health and alcohol use than with drugs. 67% (*n.* 20) of this group were Heavy users of alcohol, while 33% (*n.* 10) were heavy users of drugs. 27% (*n.* 8) were Heavy users of both drugs and alcohol, while 40% (*n.* 12) didn't use drugs at all. 63% (*n.* 19) had a diagnosed mental health condition.

For those displaying challenging behaviour, the link with mental health was stronger, but the links with alcohol and drugs were less clear. 50% (*n.* 14) didn't use drugs at all, 21% (*n.* 6) didn't use alcohol or drugs and just 21% (*n.* 6) were heavy users of alcohol. 86% (*n.* 24) had a diagnosed mental health condition.

For those engaging in self-harm, the links with alcohol and mental health were clearer: 67% (*n.* 6) were heavy users of alcohol, while 56% (*n.* 5) didn't use drugs at all. 100% (*n.* 9) had a diagnosed mental health condition.

Of those displaying aggressive behaviour:

- 50% (*n.* 15) were in the Emergency Shelter or Sleeping Rough
- 37% (*n.* 11) were in High-Support accommodation
- 63% (*n.* 19) had a diagnosed mental health condition.

Of those displaying challenging behaviour:

- 50% (*n.* 14) were in High-Support accommodation
- 39% (*n.* 11) were in low / medium support accommodation
- 11% (*n.* 3) were in the Emergency Shelter or Sleeping Rough
- 86% (*n.* 24) had a diagnosed mental health condition

Of those engaging in Self Harm:

- 56% (*n.* 5) were in the Emergency Shelter or Sleeping Rough
- 22% (*n.* 2) were in High Support accommodation
- 22% (*n.* 2) were in low / medium support accommodation
- All nine people had a diagnosed mental health condition.

4.1.11 Referrals to Adult Homeless Multi-Disciplinary Team

The Adult Homeless Multi-Disciplinary Team is made up of a GP, Public Health Nurse, Community Psychiatric Nurse, Consultant Psychiatrist and Clinical Psychologist. The number of referrals to the team during the week of the Health Audit was recorded.

196 referrals to the team were made on behalf of 38% (n. 70) of all people using Cork Simon services.

22% (n. 40) of people using Cork Simon services were referred to the GP 54

times – 28% of referrals

20% (n. 37) were referred to the Consultant Psychiatrist 40 times – 20% of referrals

15% (n. 27) were referred to the PHN 44 times – 22% of referrals

13% (n. 23) were referred to the CPN 30 times – 15% of referrals

12% (n. 22) of people were referred to the Clinical Psychologist 24 times – 14% of referrals

Of the 70 people referred to the AHMDT: 27% (n. 19) were referred to both the PHN & GP

30% (n. 21) were referred to the CPN and the Consultant Psychiatrist and / or Clinical Psychologist

34% (n. 24) were staying in High-Support Residential

26% (n. 18) were staying in Cork Simon / Galtan Flats

20% (n. 14) of people referred were staying at the Shelter

7% (n. 5) were sleeping rough

7% (n. 5) were in Private Rented accommodation

4% (n. 3) were staying in 'Other' accommodation

1% (n. 1) was staying in Cork City / Council accommodation

4.1.12 Education Needs

25% (n. 46) require at least some assistance in accessing further education:

- 13% (n. 24) require literacy / numeracy classes
- 3% (n. 6) are undertaking further study but require assistance in completing those studies
- 5% (n. 9) require Further Education course
- 2% (n. 3) require English Language classes
- 2% (n. 4) would benefit from activity groups

4.2 Long Term Homelessness

The Government's strategy on homelessness, *The Way Home* defines long-term homelessness as someone in emergency accommodation for six months or more. One of the six key strategic aims in *The Way Home* is the elimination of long-term homelessness by 2010.

Throughout the week of the Health Audit, 36% (*n.* 20) of residents at the Emergency Shelter were long term homeless as per Government definition. People who are long term homeless could occupy up to 45% of beds each night at the Emergency Shelter.

4.2.1 Profile

Of the 20 people who were long term homeless at the Emergency Shelter:

- 100% (*n.* 20) were male
- 70% (*n.* 14) were from Ireland, 15% (*n.* 3) from UK and 15% (*n.* 3) from an EU12 country
- Their average age was 42.7 years – the youngest was 22 years old, the eldest was 64 years old:
 - 5% (*n.* 1) was 21-26 years old
 - 15% (*n.* 3) were 27 to 34 years old
 - 30% (*n.* 6) were 35-44 years old
 - 40% (*n.* 8) were 45-54 years old
 - 10% (*n.* 2) were 55-64 years old.

4.2.2 Social Welfare Supports

- 80% (*n.* 16) had a Medical Card

- 60% (*n.* 12) were receiving a Department of Social Welfare Disability / Invalidity payment
- 20% (*n.* 4) did not have a medical card nor were in receipt of a Disability / Invalidity payment.

4.2.3 Physical / mental Health

- 85% (*n.* 17) had a diagnosed physical or mental health condition
 - 55% (*n.* 11) had at least one diagnosed physical health condition
 - 55% (*n.* 11) had a diagnosed mental health condition
 - 25% (*n.* 5) had diagnosed physical *and* mental health conditions.

4.2.4 Alcohol & Drug Use

- 90% (*n.* 18) used alcohol:
 - 65% (*n.* 13) were Heavy Users
- 55% (*n.* 11) used drugs
 - 40% (*n.* 8) were Heavy Users
 - 38% (*n.* 8) used cannabis
 - 33% (*n.* 7) used heroin
 - 24% (*n.* 5) used Benzodiazepines
 - 5% (*n.* 1) used prescription drugs
 - 30% (*n.* 6) used a combination of two or more drugs
- 50% (*n.* 10) used both alcohol *and* drugs
 - 25% (*n.* 5) were Heavy Users of both alcohol *and* drugs

4.2.5 Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol Use

- 55% (n. 11) had a diagnosed mental health condition *and* used alcohol and / or drugs
 - 64% (n. 7) were Heavy Users of alcohol
 - 64% (n. 7) were Heavy Users of drugs
 - 36% (n. 4) were Heavy Users of both Drugs *and* alcohol

4.2.6 Behaviour

- 60% (n. 12) displayed aggressive behaviour, challenging behaviour or engaged in self-harm
- 35% (n. 7) displayed aggressive behaviour
 - 71% (n. 5) had a diagnosed mental health condition
 - 86% (n. 6) used alcohol – 57% (n. 4) were Heavy Users
 - 57% (n. 4) used drugs – all four were Heavy Users
- 15% (n. 3) engaged in self-harm
 - One person had at least one diagnosed physical health condition
 - All three had a diagnosed mental health condition
 - All three were Heavy users of alcohol
 - One person used drugs – a Light User
- 10% (n. 2) displayed challenging behaviour
 - One person had at least one diagnosed physical health condition
 - One person had a diagnosed mental health condition

- Both people used alcohol – one was a Heavy User
- One person used drugs – a Heavy User

4.2.7 Health Referrals

- There were 21 referrals to the AHMDT:
 - 11 referrals to the Public Health Nurse
 - 7 referrals to the GP
 - 2 referrals to the psychiatrist
 - 1 referral to the Community Psychiatric Nurse
 - 1 referral to the psychologist
- 3 people were referred for counselling
- There were 2 admissions to Accident & Emergency and one referral to Hospital Outpatients

4.2.8 Education Needs

- 3 people required English Language classes
- 3 people required Literacy Classes

4.3 Rough Sleeping

16 people were recorded as sleeping rough for at least one night during the week that the Health Audit was conducted - 38% (n. 6) were consistent rough sleepers.

4.3.1 Profile

15 males, one female.

Their average age was 33.6 years – the youngest was 20 years old, the eldest was 55 years old:

- 6% (n. 1) were 18-21 years old
- 25% (n. 4) were 22-26 years old
- 25% (n. 4) were 27-34 years old
- 25% (n. 4) were 35-44 years old
- 13% (n. 2) were 45-54 years old
- 6% (n. 1) were 55-64 years old.

56% (n. 9) were from Ireland
25% (n. 4) were from UK
13% (n. 2) were from an EU12 country

4.3.2 Social Welfare Supports

50% (n. 8) had a medical card
31% (n. 5) were in receipt of a Department of Social Welfare Disability / Invalidation payment

4.3.3 Projects Used

69% (n. 11) stayed at the Emergency Shelter
94% (n. 15) were supported by the Outreach Team
12.5% (n. 2) were supported by YHDPP
69% (n. 11) used two or more Cork Simon projects

4.3.4 Physical / Mental Health

63% (n. 10) had a diagnosed physical and / or mental health condition

56% (n. 11) had a diagnosed physical health condition

- 55% (n. 6) had respiratory conditions
- 55% (n. 6) had orthopaedic, hepatic or gastro-intestinal conditions.

44% (n. 7) had a diagnosed mental health condition

- 86% (n. 6) were diagnosed with depression

31% (n. 5) had a diagnosed physical & mental health condition

4.3.5 Alcohol / Drug Use

81% (n. 13) used alcohol

- 62% (n. 8) of which were Heavy Users

56% (n. 9) used drugs

- 67% (n. 6) of which were Heavy Users

89% (n. 8) of people using drugs used cannabis

- 68% (n. 6) used heroin
- 23% (n. 5) used Benzodiazepine
- 14% (n. 3) used prescription drugs or amphetamines
- 78% (n. 7) used a combination of 2 or more drugs, most commonly a combination of heroin, benzodiazepine and cannabis – 45% (n. 4)

50% (n. 8) used both alcohol *and* drugs

- 50% (n. 4) of which were Heavy Users of both alcohol and drugs

4.3.6 Mental Health and Alcohol / Drug use

44% (n.7) of people sleeping rough had a diagnosed mental health condition and used alcohol and / or drugs

- 57% (n. 4) were Heavy Users of alcohol
- 71% (n. 5) were Heavy Users of drugs
- 43% (n. 3) were Heavy Users of both Alcohol *and* drugs

Five people used alcohol – two people were Heavy Users of alcohol

Three people used drugs – one person was a Heavy User of drugs: Heroin, cannabis, benzodiazepine & amphetamines.

Two people used both alcohol and drugs – one person was a Heavy User of both.

Two people had a diagnosed mental health condition and used alcohol – one person was a Heavy User of alcohol.

4.3.7 Behaviour

50% (n.8) displayed aggressive behaviour, challenging behaviour or engaged in self-harm

- 63% (n. 5) displayed aggressive behaviour
- 25% (n. 2) displayed challenging behaviour
- 13% (n. 1) engaged in self-harm
- 50% (n. 4) had a diagnosed mental health condition

4.3.8 Consistent Rough Sleeping

Six of the sixteen people recorded as sleeping rough were consistent rough sleepers – five males and one female.

The youngest was 23 years old; the eldest was 55 years old.

Two people had a medical card and two people were in receipt of a Department of Social Welfare Disability / Invalidity payment.

Two people had diagnosed physical health conditions

Two people had diagnosed mental health conditions

4.4 Emergency Shelter

55 people stayed at the Emergency Shelter.

4.4.1 Profile

93% (n. 51) males, 7% (n. 4) females.

Their average age was 38.9 years – the youngest was 18 years, the eldest was 64 years.

- 6% (n. 3) were 18- 21 years
- 15% (n. 8) were 22-26 years
- 13% (n. 7) were 27-34 years
- 29% (n. 16) were 35-44 years
- 29% (n. 16) were 45-54 years
- 9% (n. 9) were 55-64 years

64% (n. 35) were from Ireland
24% (n. 13) were from an EU 12 country
9% (n. 5) were from UK
4% (n. 2) were from non-EU countries

4.4.2 Social Welfare Supports

69% (n. 38) had a medical card
36% (n. 20) were in receipt of a Department of Social Welfare Disability / Invalidity payment

4.4.3 Physical / Mental Health

38% (n. 21) had a diagnosed physical health condition

- 29% (n. 6) had respiratory conditions
- 29% (n. 6) had circulatory conditions
- 24% (n. 5) had gastro-intestinal conditions
- 19% (n. 5) had orthopaedic conditions
- 14% (n. 3) had soft tissue injuries

- 14% (n. 3) had muscle related conditions
- 24% (n. 5) had hepatic, brain or renal related conditions
- 57% (n. 12) had two or more diagnosed physical health conditions

36% (n. 20) had a diagnosed mental health condition

- 65% (n. 13) had depression
- 40% (n. 8) suffered from anxiety
- 15% (n. 3) were bi-polar
- Other mental health conditions in smaller numbers included schizophrenia, psychotic disorder and ADHD
- 55% (n. 11) had two or more diagnosed mental health conditions

18% (n. 10) had a diagnosed physical and mental health condition

4.4.4 Alcohol / Drug Use

78% (n. 43) used alcohol

- 65% (n. 28) were Heavy Users
- 14% (n. 6) were Medium users
- 21% (n. 9) were Light Users

44% (n. 24) used drugs

- 75% (n. 18) were Heavy Users
- 8% (n. 2) were Medium Users
- 17% (n. 4) were Light Users
- 67% (n. 16) used cannabis
- 50% (n. 12) used heroin
- 46% (n. 11) used Benzodiazepine
- 25% (n. 6) used either cocaine, codeine, prescription drugs or amphetamines

25% (n. 14) used both alcohol and drugs

- 64% (n. 9) were Heavy Users of both alcohol *and* drugs

4.4.5 Mental Health & Drugs / Alcohol Use

18% (*n.* 10) needed English Language classes

56% (*n.* 31) had a diagnosed mental health condition and used alcohol and / or drugs

18% (*n.* 10) required Literacy & Numeracy classes

- 61% (*n.* 19) were Heavy Users of alcohol
- 58% (*n.* 18) were Heavy Users of drugs
- 32% (*n.* 10) were Heavy Users of alcohol *and* drugs

4.4.6 Behaviour

35% (*n.* 19) displayed aggressive behaviour, challenging behaviour or engaged in self-harm.

- 68% (*n.* 13) displayed aggressive behaviour
- 11% (*n.* 2) displayed challenging behaviour
- 21% (*n.* 4) engaged in self-harm

69% (*n.* 9) of those displaying aggressive behaviour were Heavy Users of alcohol.

- 62% (*n.* 8) were Heavy Users of drugs.
- 54% (*n.* 9) had a diagnosed mental health condition.
- 54% (*n.* 7) had a diagnosed mental health condition and used alcohol and / or drugs:
 - 86% (*n.* 6) were Heavy Users of drugs
 - 57% (*n.* 4) were Heavy Users of alcohol
 - 57% (*n.* 4) were Heavy Users of both alcohol and drugs

4.4.7 Education Needs

The education of 29% (*n.* 16) of residents were identified:

4.5 High Support Houses

43 people were staying in High-Support Houses during the week of the Health Audit

4.5.1 Profile

84% (n. 36) males, 16% (n. 7) females.

Their average age was 48.8 years – the youngest was 23 years, the eldest was 69 years.

- 7% (n. 3) were 22- 26 years
- 7% (n. 3) were 27-34 years
- 23% (n. 10) were 35-44 years
- 26% (n. 11) were 45-54 years
- 23% (n. 10) were 55-64 years
- 14% (n. 6) were 65+ years

4.5.2 Social Welfare Supports

100% (n.43) had a medical card
77% (n. 33) were in receipt of a Department of Social Welfare Disability / Invalidity payment

4.5.3 Physical / Mental Health

86% (n. 33) had a diagnosed physical health condition

- 32% (n. 12) had respiratory conditions
- 30% (n. 11) had circulatory conditions
- 24% (n. 9) had orthopaedic conditions
- 22% (n. 8) had gastro-intestinal conditions
- 19% (n. 7) had cardiovascular conditions
- 19% (n. 7) had mobility related conditions
- 14% (n. 5) had brain injury
- 11% (n. 4) had renal / urinary / hepatic related conditions

- 19% (n. 7) had ophthalmic / dietary / pancreatic related conditions
- 62% (n. 23) had two or more diagnosed physical health conditions
- 22% (n. 8) had three or more diagnosed physical health conditions

79% (n.34) had a diagnosed mental health condition

- 41% (n. 14) had depression
- 21% (n. 7) had schizophrenia
- 18% (n. 6) were bi-polar
- 12% (n. 4) suffered from anxiety
- Other mental health conditions in smaller numbers included psychotic disorder, OCD and dementia
- 47% (n. 16) had two or more diagnosed mental health conditions

67% (n. 29) had a diagnosed physical and mental health condition

4.5.4 Alcohol / Drug Use

86% (n. 37) used alcohol

- 59% (n. 22) were Heavy Users
- 22% (n. 8) were Medium users
- 19% (n. 7) were Light Users

47% (n. 20) used drugs

- 55% (n. 11) were Light Users
- 30% (n. 6) were Medium Users
- 15% (n. 3) were Heavy Users
 - 40% (n. 8) used prescription drugs
 - 35% (n. 7) used cannabis
 - 20% (n. 4) used heroin
 - 10% (n. 2) used Benzodiazepine

- 42% (*n.* 18) used both alcohol and drugs
- 11% (*n.* 2) were Heavy Users of both alcohol *and* drugs

4.5.5 Mental Health & Drugs / Alcohol Use

74% (*n.* 32) had a diagnosed mental health condition and used alcohol and / or drugs

- 53% (*n.* 17) were Heavy Users of alcohol
- 6% (*n.* 2) were Heavy Users of drugs
- 6% (*n.* 2) were Heavy Users of alcohol *and* drugs

4.5.6 Behaviour

63% (*n.* 27) displayed aggressive behaviour, challenging behaviour or engaged in self-harm.

- 52% (*n.* 14) displayed challenging behaviour
- 41% (*n.* 11) displayed aggressive behaviour
- 7% (*n.* 2) engaged in self-harm

74% (*n.* 20) of those displaying aggressive or challenging behaviour had a diagnosed mental health condition.

44% (*n.* 12) were Heavy Users of alcohol

4.5.7 Education Needs

The education needs of 49% (*n.* 21) of residents were identified:

- 33% (*n.* 14) required Literacy & Numeracy classes
- 5% (*n.* 2) required further education / access courses
- 9% (*n.* 4) would benefit from activity groups

4.6 Housing Plus

The Housing Plus team supported 79 people during the week of the Health Audit.

4.6.1 Accommodation

48% (*n. 38*) were staying in a Cork Simon / Galtan flat

27% (*n. 21*) were staying in private rented accommodation

9% (*n. 7*) were staying in Cork City / Council accommodation

16% (*n. 13*) were staying in 'Other' accommodation – prison, friends, squat, sheltered housing, etc.

4.6.2 Profile

84% (*n. 66*) males, 16% (*n. 13*) females.

Their average age was 44.4 years – the youngest was 18 years, the eldest was 66 years.

- 4% (*n. 3*) were 18- 21 years
- 4% (*n. 3*) were 22- 26 years
- 18% (*n. 14*) were 27-34 years
- 20% (*n. 16*) were 35-44 years
- 30% (*n. 24*) were 45-54 years
- 19% (*n. 15*) were 55-64 years
- 4% (*n. 3*) were 65+ years

4.6.3 Social Welfare Supports

95% (*n. 75*) had a medical card

76% (*n. 60*) were in receipt of a Department of Social Welfare Disability / Invalidity payment

4.6.4 Physical / Mental Health

35% (*n. 28*) had a diagnosed physical health condition

- 46% (*n. 13*) had circulatory conditions
- 29% (*n. 8*) had respiratory conditions
- 25% (*n. 7*) had orthopaedic conditions
- 14% (*n. 4*) had two or more diagnosed physical health conditions

67% (*n.50*) had a diagnosed mental health condition

- 48% (*n.24*) had depression
- 22% (*n. 11*) had schizophrenia
- 14% (*n. 7*) suffered from paranoia
- 6% (*n. 3*) were bi-polar
- Other mental health conditions in smaller numbers included psychotic disorder, OCD dementia and anxiety
- 30% (*n. 15*) had two or more diagnosed mental health conditions

18% (*n. 14*) had a diagnosed physical and mental health condition

4.6.5 Alcohol / Drug Use

81% (n. 64) used alcohol

- 53% (n. 34) were Medium Users
- 27% (n. 17) were Heavy users
- 20% (n. 13) were Light Users

32% (n. 25) used drugs

- 52% (n. 13) were Light Users
- 28% (n. 7) were Medium Users
- 20% (n. 5) were Heavy Users
 - 48% (n. 12) used heroin
 - 32% (n. 8) used cannabis
 - 20% (n. 5) used prescription drugs

30% (n. 24) used both alcohol and drugs

- None were Heavy Users of both alcohol and drugs

4.6.6 Mental Health & Drugs / Alcohol Use

53% (n. 42) had a diagnosed mental health condition and used alcohol and / or drugs

- 40% (n. 17) were Heavy Users of alcohol
- 12% (n. 5) were Heavy Users of drugs

4.6.7 Behaviour

22% (n. 17) displayed aggressive behaviour, challenging behaviour or engaged in self-harm.

- 65% (n. 11) displayed challenging behaviour

- 24% (n. 4) displayed aggressive behaviour
- 12% (n. 2) engaged in self-harm

94% (n. 16) of those displaying aggressive or challenging behaviour had a diagnosed mental health condition.

19% (n. 3) were Heavy Users of alcohol

6% (n. 1) were Heavy Users of drugs

4.6.8 Education Needs

The education needs of 23% (n. 18) of people supported by Housing Plus were identified:

- 10% (n. 8) required access to a further education course
- 6% (n. 6) required assistance completing college courses
- 5% (n. 4) would benefit from activity groups