



‘No Child Shall Suffer’

***There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than
the way in which it treats its children.***

Nelson Mandela, Former President of South Africa

CONTENTS

	Page
• Who we are	3
• Forewords	4 & 5
• About these Stories	6
• Photos from Tenement Dublin	7
• National and International Obligations, Children's Rights: Ireland, Europe and the World	12
• Our Stories	25
Story 1. A Family in Crisis? Who can see? Who can help?	26
Story 2. Not all lockdowns are Equal	32
Story 3. Early Risers, But Still not Enough for Rent	34
Story 4. Complex families, Complex conditions	37
Story 5. Homelessness: Punished for Complaining?	40
Story 6. Poor Health, Poor Housing	43
Story 7. Violence and Status Uncertainty	45
Story 8. Food in a Foreign Land	49
Story 9. A Mother's Resilience	52
Story 10. A Community Under Pressure	57
Story 11. Afterschool: Taken Away?	61
Story 12. Too Many Struggles for One Child?	63
Story 13. Generational Impact?	65
Story 14. Under Siege, No Place to Live or Work	67
• Where are we now?	69
• Appendix One: Convention on the Rights of the Child	70
• Appendix Two: EU Child Guarantee	73
• Appendix Three: Dublin City Community Co-op Members	75

A person's a person, no matter how small

Dr. Seuss, Children's Author & Educator

Who we are

The Dublin City Community Co-operative Society Limited ('the Co-op') was established in November 2014.

The Co-op is an alliance of thirteen grassroots Dublin inner city community development organisations that came together to ensure the continued provision of community development, social, economic and cultural services within Dublin's inner city communities.

All thirteen Co-op members work in the most disadvantaged areas of the inner city of Dublin including parts of Dublin 1, 3, 7, 8 as well as disadvantaged city areas of Dublin 2 and 4.

Our website can be found at **www.dublincitycommunityco-op.ie**

and our YouTube Channel at **Dublin City Community Co-op - YouTube**

Dublin City Community Co-op is a registered charity, registered charity number 20107079, and we are located at Unit 1 Killarney Court, Buckingham Street, Dublin 1

Additional information on the Co-op and our members is provided in Appendix Three.

FOREWORD

Dublin City Community Co-op and its 13 member organisations are all active on the ground working to build stronger and more inclusive communities in Dublin's inner city and to combat poverty and social exclusion. As well as developing practical projects to support those in vulnerable situations the Co-op works to ensure that the voices and experience of those who are marginalised and excluded are heard and to support them in advocating for policies which will ensure a fairer and more inclusive society.

One of the most pressing issues addressed by Co-op members is the shocking and persistent levels of child and family poverty and social exclusion. The extent of this issue has become even more evident during the Covid-19 epidemic. This crisis has underscored

the deep-seated inequalities that persist in our society and has highlighted the importance of putting children at the heart of building a fairer and more inclusive and sustainable society as we emerge from the pandemic. However, if as a society we are finally to face up to the challenge of ensuring that we cherish all our children equally, then we must start by listening to the experience of children and their families experiencing poverty and social exclusion and those working with them on the ground. The fourteen stories in this publication do just that. They are pen pictures of the lived experience of some of the most vulnerable children and families in the communities in which Co-op members work. We hope that in publishing these powerful stories we will increase public and political awareness of the need to intensify all our efforts to support children in vulnerable situations and to end child poverty and social exclusion.

The publication of these stories comes at a very timely moment. In March 2021 the Council of the European Union adopted the European Child Guarantee under which Member States are now committed to prevent and combat social exclusion by guaranteeing the access of children in need to effective and free access to early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities, at least one healthy meal each school day and healthcare and to effective access to healthy nutrition and adequate housing. Member States now have to prepare action plans to implement this guarantee and in doing so to consult widely with relevant stakeholders, including those children and families at risk of poverty and social exclusion. All the issues covered by the Child Guarantee are issues highlighted in these stories. Thus, we hope that, as well as raising awareness generally of the urgency of addressing child poverty and social exclusion, these stories will contribute in a very practical way to the development of Ireland's action plan to implement the Child Guarantee and thus to the elimination of child poverty and social exclusion.



Hugh Frazer

Chairperson

Dublin City Community Co-op

December 2021

FOREWORD

Over 100 years ago, in January 1919 the first Dáil declared that ***“we desire our country to be ruled in accordance with the principles of Liberty, Equality, and Justice for all,”*** and that no child in Ireland would go hungry, be denied shelter, or lack the means to gain an education.

How are we doing in 2021, 102 years later? Are there children in Ireland who are hungry, lack shelter, or do not have the means for a proper education? As the stories outlined in this document highlight, there are.

The fourteen true-life stories published herein highlight the modern day experience of poverty and its impact on children in the inner city of Dublin. The decision to compile these stories grew out of a recognition that the experience of those who are most vulnerable in our society is often hidden, and that many in our communities are being left behind, especially vulnerable children. We hope that by publishing their stories they will be given a voice in a society where they are often silenced.

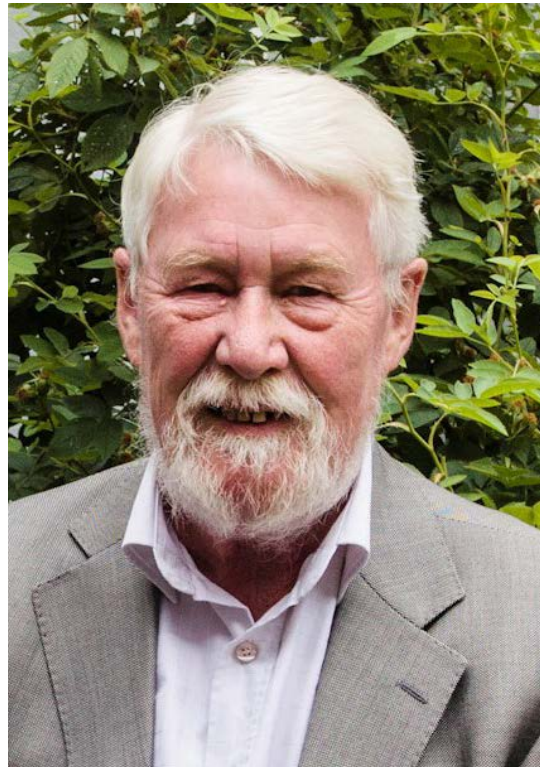
This is not a research study, but a pen picture of the lived experiences of some of the most vulnerable in our society. All fourteen stories reflect the real and contemporary experiences of children and families in the communities that we work with. The names of individuals and any identifying details have been changed to protect the children, the families and the communities they come from.

All the experiences documented are genuine, and are happening in contemporary Dublin city, just over 100 years after the first Dáil of 1919 made its laudable and progressive declaration regarding the country's children.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank most sincerely Deirdre Mc Carthy, the lead author on the No Child Shall Suffer project. It is a testament to her professionalism and approach that Co-op member organisations were willing to share and agree to have published such personal stories. In addition, our thanks and appreciation go to Noel Wardick, CEO, Dublin City Community Co-op, who has overseen the project from start to finish.

I know I speak for my colleague David Little, fellow member of the Co-op's Advocacy-for-Change subcommittee, when I say it has been a privilege and honour to be involved in this initiative.

While Ireland has made significant progress since our independence our 14 stories prove beyond doubt that we still have a long way to go.



Seanie Lambe

Chairperson

Advocacy-for-Change subcommittee

Dublin City Community Co-op

December 2021

About these Stories

Over 100 years ago, in January 1919 the first Dáil declared that ***we desire our country to be ruled in accordance with the principles of Liberty, Equality, and Justice for all***, and that no child in Ireland would go hungry, be denied shelter, or lack the means to gain an education.

It shall be the first duty of the Government of the Republic to make provision for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of children, to secure that no child shall suffer hunger or cold from lack of food, clothing, or shelter, but that all shall be provided with the means and facilities requisite for their proper education and training as Citizens of a Free and Gaelic Ireland.¹

How are we doing in 2021, 102 years later? Are there children in Ireland who are hungry, lack shelter, or do not have the means for a proper education? As the stories outlined below highlight, there are.

The most vulnerable children in our society are at risk, at risk of extreme disadvantage and exclusion. They do not have the same opportunities as their peers and many will carry the disadvantage that they experience as children throughout their lives. These children are disadvantaged through no fault of their own, but because they were born into families and communities that are excluded, marginalised, or experiencing high levels of personal, social and economic stress caused by a range of factors.

The fourteen true-life stories published in this document highlight the modern day experience of poverty and its impact on children in the inner city of Dublin. The decision to compile these stories grew out of a recognition that the experience of those who are most vulnerable in our society is often hidden, and that many in our communities are being left behind, in particular vulnerable children. We hope that by publishing their stories they will be given a voice in a society where they are often silenced.

This is not a research study, but a pen picture of the lived experiences of some of the most vulnerable in our society. All fourteen stories reflect the real and contemporary experiences of children and families in the communities that we work with. The names of individuals and any identifying details have been changed to protect the children, the families and the communities they come from. Protecting the identity of the individuals is obviously important, but we also want to protect their communities from further stigmatisation.

All of the experiences documented are genuine, and are happening in contemporary Dublin city, just over 100 years after the first Dáil of 1919 made the declaration that no child in Ireland would go hungry, be denied shelter, or lack the means to gain an education.

¹ Dáil Éireann debate – Tuesday, 21 Jan 1919 Vol. F No. 1. <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1919-01-21/15/>

PHOTOS FROM TENEMENT DUBLIN



Faithful Place off Lower Tyrone Street, 1913²

Lower Tyrone Street is now Railway Street in Dublin 1. It was famously part of the old 'Monto' area of Dublin in the early part of the 19th century and home to Dublin-born labourers, and women and children, most of whom lived in extreme poverty. *Three of our Co-op member organisations, ICON, LYCS and CASPr, work closely with the communities that live in and around Railway Street today.*



A tenement room on Francis Street in 1913 (RSAI, SS, N0.56³)

Francis Street was and remains in the heart of the Liberties in Dublin 8. *Three of our Co-op member organisations, SWICN, SICCD and Robert Emmet CDP, work closely with the communities that live in and around the Liberties today.*

² http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/exhibition/dublin/emigration_migration.html

³ http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/exhibition/dublin/poverty_health/D_Blackpitts7.010.html



Church Street Tenement RSAI: DDC 47⁴

Three of our Co-op member organisations, NWICN, An Siol and ICE are based near this area in Dublin 7, and two work closely with the communities that live in and around the Church Street and the markets area.



Dublin Ireland, Children at Henrietta Street, July 1909⁵

One of the Co-op member organisations, Daughters of Charity Community Services, is based on Henrietta Street today.

⁴ http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/exhibition/dublin/poverty_health/ChurchSt_7.047.html

⁵ <https://www.pinterest.ie/pin/508977195360811023/>



Blackpitts in the Coombe in 1913, (RSAI, Darkest Dublin Collection)⁶

Three of our Co-op member organisations, SWICN, SICCD and Robert Emmet CDP work closely with the communities that live in and around the Coombe today.



Upper Buckingham Street, Dublin in the 19th century⁷

Three Co-op member organisations, ICON, LYCS and CASPr work closely with the communities that live in and around Buckingham Street today. The Co-op's office and staff are based on Buckingham Street.

⁶ http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/exhibition/dublin/poverty_health/D_Blackpitts7.010.html

⁷ <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/society/upper-buckingham-street-dublin-ireland-speculative-landowners-multi-tenanted-tenements>



Tenements in Michael's Lane. Turn-of-the-century Dublin was notorious for its overcrowded and unsanitary tenements, which bred infectious disease⁸.

This area is near Christchurch in Dublin 2. Three of our Co-op member organisations, SICCD, SWICN and Robert Emmet CDP work closely with the communities that live in and around the Christchurch area today.



**A group of mostly barefoot children stand with a woman in Summerhill, near Gardiner Street in Dublin, ca 1913
Photo courtesy of RSAI; North Inner City Folklore Project⁹**

Three of our Co-op member organisations, ICON, LYCS and CASPr work closely with the communities that live in and around Summerhill today. The Co-op's office and staff are based on Buckingham Street, a stone's throw from Summerhill

⁸ <http://www.historyireland.com/20th-century-contemporary-history/ireland-at-the-turn-of-the-century/>

⁹ Dublin 100 Years Ago: Death, Disease And Overcrowding by Catríona Crowe on Nov 29th, 2013 - <http://www.frg.ie/local-history/dublin-100-years-ago-death-disease-and-overcrowding/>



St. Mark's Court, off Mark's Lane, off Mark Street.

St. Marks Court was located just off Pearse Street in Dublin 2.¹⁰

Co-op member organisations New Communities Partnership (NCP) and Inner City Enterprise (ICE) work across the entire inner city including the south east inner city area. Co-op staff also carry out work in the south east inner city.



Slums, Benburb Street area of Dublin. Dublin slums controlled by the municipal authority, the Dublin Corporation.¹¹

Three of our Co-op member organisations, NWICN, An Siol and ICE are based near this area in Dublin 7, and work closely with the communities that live in and around the Benburb Street area.

¹⁰ <https://www.pinterest.ie/pin/415457134358010608/>

¹¹ <https://comeheretome.com/2013/08/28/an-unflattering-account-of-benburb-street-1837/>



Henrietta Street area of Dublin 1913.¹²

One of our Co-op member organisations, Daughters of Charity Community Services, has been based on Henrietta Street for nearly 100 years. Three other Co-op member organisations, An Siol CDP, NWICN and NCP are all relatively close by.

National and International Obligations

In reflecting on the lives of the children and families featured in the fourteen stories it is important to note Ireland's national and international obligations regarding the care and protection of children.

What have we, in Ireland, said about the care and protection of children?

In Ireland's Past: High Ideals and Aspirations

In 1919 the 1st Dail of the Irish Republic aspired to ensure that children would be cared for and protected, that they would not be hungry, cold, lack the clothing that they need or the shelter of a home, and that they would have the right and means to participate in education. This statement reflected a radical idea that the new republic would be judged by its ability to do right by its children.¹³

As noted earlier, on its opening day in 1919, the first *Dáil* of the Irish Republic made several commitments to the children of Ireland. In simple terms the *Dáil* stated that:

- *All children should have access to adequate food.* In a modern progressive society that means access to good quality food, hot meals, nutritious food and culturally appropriate food where required.
- *All children should have shelter.* In a modern progressive society that does not mean that a child should just be dry from the rain, but requires that they have a home that is warm, safe, has adequate services such as heat, sewage and water, space to play and learn and security of tenure for their future, as well as being culturally appropriate where required.
- *All children should have the means and facilities for their education,* including access to free education and all the supports that are required to ensure that children, regardless of their means and abilities, can access education. In a modern and progressive Ireland this must include access to the necessary IT equipment and broadband/Wi-Fi to allow for home schooling and study in times of crisis (and-non crisis) such as that experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

¹² Dublin Down Memory Lane Facebook

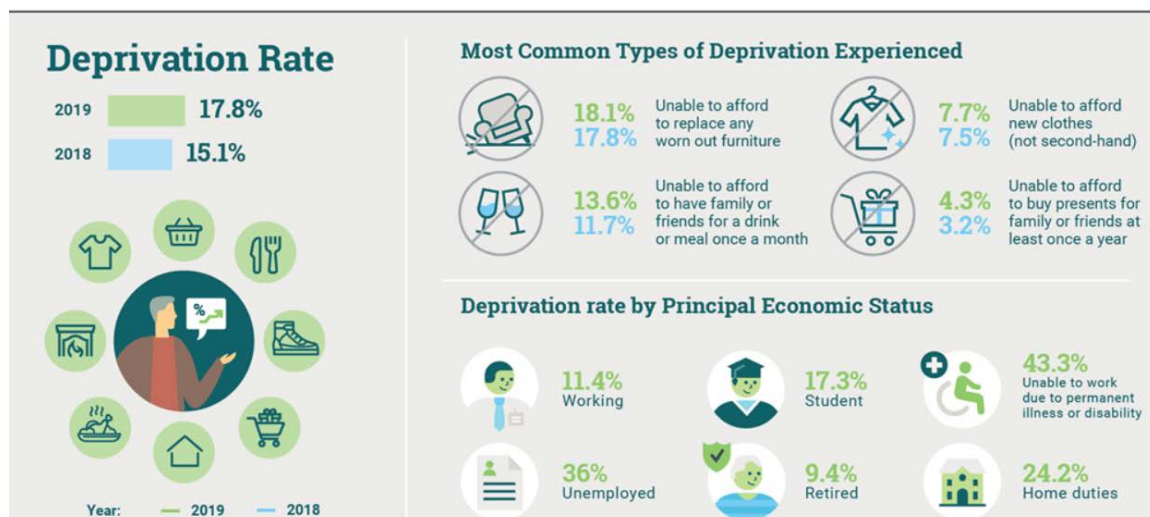
¹³ <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/no-child-2020-the-project-and-its-five-policies-1.3762585>

- Although not specifically stated in the declaration of the first *Dáil*, additional commitments to health and the right to participation are inferred, in that in a modern society it is understood *means and facilities for their education*, includes good health and the right to participate, as follows:
 - A child's access to good health, which must be supported by access to a healthy diet, lifestyle and healthcare, including mental healthcare.
 - A child's right to their own participation in society, and the right not to be excluded based on their socio/economic class, ethnicity, ability, gender, sexual orientation, politics, religion or any other basis.

In Ireland: Present

So, how have we fared 102 years on?

Ireland's most disadvantaged children have not fared well. In 2019/2020 indications are that poverty has increased from 2018, levels rather than decreased. Covid 19, which struck in 2020, is also likely to have further increased poverty for many children in 2020/2021.



The Central Statistics Office of Ireland's most recent figures, released on the 2nd of September 2020, indicate that:¹⁵

- The enforced deprivation rate¹⁶ increased to 17.8% in 2019, up from 15.1% in 2018.
- The largest year-on-year increase in the enforced deprivation rate was among those living in rented accommodation, rising from 27.4% in 2018 to 34.4% in 2019. Therefore, *over one third of those in the private rented sector live in poverty*. Our stories below highlight these issues for those families.
- The highest enforced deprivation rates were among persons living in households with one adult and one or more children aged under 18 (45.4%), and those not at work due to permanent illness or disability (43.3%).

The above statistics do not consider the impact Covid-19 has had on children and in particular on children that were already disadvantaged prior to the Covid-19 crisis. In September 2020 the St Vincent DePaul estimated that over one in five children are experiencing enforced deprivation, which means going without basics like nutritious food, adequate heating or suitable clothing.¹⁷



A homeless mother feeding her children on a Dublin street in 2019¹⁸.

Our stories were developed both prior to Covid-19 and the introduction of measures to tackle the public health emergency and during the Covid-19 pandemic, between March 2019 and May 2021.

15 Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC): Enforced Deprivation 2019. <https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2020press-releases/pressstatementsurveyonincomeandlivingconditionssilcenforceddeprivation2019/>

16 Enforced deprivation is defined as not being able to afford to buy two or more of these 11 basic deprivation indicators:

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Two pairs of strong shoes | • Fuel to keep the home adequately warm |
| • A warm waterproof overcoat | • Presents for family or friends at least once a year |
| • New (not second-hand) clothes | • Replacement for worn out furniture |
| • A meal with meat, chicken, fish (or vegetarian equivalent) every second day | • Drinks or a meal for family or friends once a month |
| • A roast joint or its equivalent once a week | • A morning, afternoon or evening of entertainment once a fortnight |
| • Home heating during the last year | |

17 <https://www.svp.ie/csoreport092020>

18 <https://theliberal.ie/welcome-to-ireland-2019-image-goes-viral-of-homeless-mother-feeding-her-children-on-the-street>

Scene of homeless children eating on the streets is unacceptable¹⁹

18 Oct 2019 RTE Claire Byrne Live

On Wednesday night, my colleague Joe Duffy and journalist Freya McClements launched their new book in Eason's on O'Connell Street in Dublin. At the launch, we heard about the importance of remembering the subjects of their book, the children who were murdered during the Troubles. I left the launch at about 8.30pm and made my way up to the Spire and crossed O'Connell Street. As I reached North Earl Street, the sound of dance music from a speaker and the bright lights of the city made for an almost festive vibe.

I saw a little girl, no older than five or six, still in her school uniform, dancing her heart out to the music. It was a heart warming scene, given that I had only just been reminded at the book launch about the Dublin bombings of 1974, very close to where this little girl was now dancing with abandon. But something about the scene I was looking at was wrong. The dancing girl was not the only very young child on the street. There were many. One of our group asked me if a movie scene was being recorded in front of us. I began to process what we were seeing. The dancing girl was putting in her time while she waited in a queue. Other little children held their mothers' hand or gripped the handle of a buggy as they waited. One family in the queue had a buggy packed with bags of what looked like clothes and blankets. Yet another child tore at a cardboard box and placed the pieces carefully on the ground in a doorway. The queue of people, young, innocent children, were waiting for volunteers on Talbot Street to give them food.

I briefly caught the eye of the little boy who was busy breaking up a box and placing it on the ground while his mother tried to keep another younger child who was running around in the dark under control. The little boy was small and kneeling on the ground as he went about his job. I don't know if he was putting the cardboard down to have his meal on it or whether that was going to be his bed for the night. He had a wary and weary look about his eyes. Tired and disillusioned, the face of innocence lost.



The following day, a shocking photograph appeared in some newspapers, showing a boy eating his dinner on the street off a piece of cardboard.

The 1916 Proclamation vowed to cherish all of the children of Ireland equally. 103 years later and we have, in the main, become numb to the horror of homelessness and most people accept it as somehow normal. This can't ever become acceptable and if it has, we need to shake ourselves out of the stupor and see it for what it is. No child in a prosperous country like this one should have to live this way.

Prior to Covid-19 it was a fact that in Ireland many children remained without secure or suitable accommodation, while others did not have access to good quality health care, or access to education that suited their needs and abilities and, at times, a small number of children, did not have access to adequate or appropriate food.

¹⁹ Only part of the article has been reproduced. <https://www.rte.ie/news/analysis-and-comment/2019/1018/1084265-claire-byrne-homelessness/>

Covid-19, and the measures taken to tackle the public health emergency, have made the situation worse for vulnerable children. All around the world vulnerable children have experienced a dis-improvement in their situation (from pre Covid-19), including in Ireland. This has manifested in higher levels of child poverty and inequality; increased learning loss, school disengagement and educational disadvantage; higher levels of family stress; an increased risk of maltreatment/violence at home; poorer nutrition; less access to extra-curricular activities; limited access to the justice and care systems; a greater need for mental health supports, and critically, a greater overall need for support but less support available for vulnerable children in community/school/from adults.²⁰

In light of the CSO report on Enforced Deprivation the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVP) has called for urgent action by the Government to prevent more children falling deeper into poverty and a rise in homelessness. While Covid-19 remains a major challenge, these issues must be top of the national agenda as the Dáil resumes from summer recess says SVP. The CSO data shows almost 900,000 people were going without basics prior to the pandemic – an increase of over 140,000 from the previous year.²¹

The radical non-pharmaceutical measures²² which were introduced to mitigate the effects of the pandemic, in particular the closures of schools/creches/colleges, shops and services, caused their own crises.

The most misleading cliché about the coronavirus is that it treats us all the same. It doesn't, neither medically nor economically, socially or psychologically. In particular, Covid-19 exacerbates pre-existing conditions of inequality wherever it arrives.²³

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic will have significant short and long term effects on us all but they have the potential to result in more negative impacts on the most disadvantaged children in our communities.

While Ireland introduced practical steps to protect some of the most vulnerable, such as preventing evictions, introducing specific social welfare payments, and making changes to homeless services, the fact remains that those who are disadvantaged are the most fundamentally impacted upon. In simple terms, if you have little space of your own, how do you cope when you must confine your movement to this space? Where do your children play if you do not have a garden or a safe, outdoor space nearby? Where do your children play if you are homeless? This was always a difficulty but now with playgrounds closed and people's movement limited where do they go? What happens to families who were relying on extended families to cope with washing, cooking or a safe place to relax? What happens if you were already educationally disadvantaged? What if you have additional learning needs?²⁴

²⁰ <http://www.oecd.org/social/family/child-well-being/>

²¹ <https://www.svp.ie/csoreport092020>

²² Non-pharmaceutical measures in this context are the measures that governments have taken to reduce the spread of COVID-19 including, restricting travel, cocooning of older people, advice re social distancing and handwashing and the closure of schools/creches/colleges, businesses and services.

²³ <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2020-04-11/coronavirus-this-pandemic-will-lead-to-social-revolutions>

²⁴ *The Impact of COVID-19 on the Most Disadvantaged in Our Communities.* <http://dublincitycommunityCo-op.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Co-op-Paper-The-Impact-of-COVID-19-FINAL-May-2020pdf.pdf>

The EU Alliance for Investing in Children, which brings together over 20 European networks, noted in its *Joint Statement on Protecting Children and their Families during and after the Covid-19 crisis*.²⁵

As Covid-19 continues to spread across Europe, it is bringing havoc and devastation to people's lives, exposing weaknesses of European healthcare systems, and intensifying social inequalities. Although children are considered as a low-risk group, they will be hit hard by this public health crisis. The widening of already existing inequalities means that those who need most support – such as access to adequate healthcare and education – are not receiving it and will struggle most to deal with the catastrophic economic consequences of the pandemic.

In 2018, 23 million children were growing up at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU. This number was already unacceptably high for one of the wealthiest regions of the world. Alarming, this number is now expected to increase considerably in the coming year(s) as the economic consequences of Covid-19 in Europe take their toll. Various global and European bodies already estimate that the impact of the current pandemic on the European economy will be much more devastating than that of the 2008 recession.

It is therefore more important than ever to put children at the heart of the EU's crisis de-escalation measures and recovery strategy. An overarching social and sustainable Europe 2030 Strategy, an ambitious EU long term budget and a holistic Council Recommendation on the Child Guarantee are needed to support the EU's most vulnerable, including children and their parents in the long run.

Specific concerns for disadvantaged children as a result of Covid-19 and a series of mitigation measures were outlined in a paper written by Dublin City Community Co-op²⁶, and they include:

Loss of education for children: School closures shifted education from the classroom to the home, and the burden of education fell largely on parents. Parents and children struggled with home schooling/school at home, but disadvantaged children suffered the most. How do educationally disadvantaged parents support their children's education when the children are not in school?

Loss of social supports for children: Schools provide children with essential social support as well as educational support. Social support includes combating isolation by being with peers, providing structure and routine to the day as well as having adults from outside of the home who are constantly monitoring their health and wellbeing. For many children school was their only structure, and it was lost for extended periods of time. Children also lost access to youth services, after-school clubs, childcare services and sports and arts activities. All such services are critical for children's ongoing development and welfare but they are particularly so for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

²⁵ <http://www.alliance4investinginchildren.eu/joint-statement-on-protecting-children-and-their-families-during-and-after-the-covid19-crisis/>

²⁶ *The Impact of COVID-19 on the Most Disadvantaged in Our Communities* <http://dublincitycommunityCo-op.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Co-op-Paper-The-Impact-of-COVID-19-FINAL-May-2020pdf.pdf>

Children living in poverty and/or disadvantaged communities: Covid-19 led to family's food bills increasing as there were more people at home for longer periods of time. For many families food poverty was a reality before Covid-19. Many children in DEIS²⁷ schools or after-school projects receive additional food in those settings. This free and nutritious food source was interrupted. Consequently, there were real concerns that disadvantaged children were not being fully nourished. Schools and community groups, including Co-op member organisations, provided free food alternatives to these children.

Children living in poor quality accommodation were in those homes for longer periods of time, with little else to do and nowhere to go. Inner city homes are more likely to be small with little or no outdoor space.

The historic physical neglect of more disadvantaged communities in terms of the provision of quality outdoor space for recreational use has fundamentally exacerbated the stress and tension created during Covid-19. The inner city has significantly less green open spaces than other parts of Dublin. These difficulties are often exacerbated by drug dealing, life-threatening drug-related intimidation and anti-social behaviour in the limited public and green spaces available.

Children at Risk: Children living in homes where there has been or there exists the potential for violence is an ongoing concern. These homes are likely to be experiencing additional stress with everyone at home with little or no outlets to ease in-house tensions. There were/are serious concerns that women and children, who are vulnerable to the violence of someone who also lives in the home, are at increased serious risk. These women and children are getting less time outside of the home.

There are concerns about the mental health of children and young people out of school and out of their structured social circle for considerable periods of time.

If there was ever a time or reason for an increased investment in health, education, social welfare, employment supports, and accommodation now is the time. Covid-19 has exposed deep inequalities in our society that have left many communities extremely vulnerable and even more marginalised than heretofore.

In planning for the post Covid-19 recovery, we must, first and foremost, consider the needs of the most vulnerable in our society. First, basic needs must be addressed, such as the need to survive, and build from there to develop a resilient and strong society. As the UN paper on the impact of Covid-19 on children²⁸ noted:

Children are not the face of this pandemic. But they risk being among its biggest victims. While they have thankfully been largely spared from the direct health effects of Covid-19 - at least to date – the crisis is having a profound effect on their wellbeing.

All children, of all ages, and in all countries, are being affected, in particular by the socio-economic impacts and, in some cases, by mitigation measures that may inadvertently do more harm than good. This is a universal crisis and, for some children, the impact will be lifelong. Moreover, the harmful effects of this pandemic will not be distributed equally. They are expected to be most damaging for children in the poorest countries, and in the poorest neighbourhoods, and for those in already disadvantaged or vulnerable situations.

27 DEIS. Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools. DEIS schools are schools that are designated as dealing with disadvantaged children.

The Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools Plan 2017 contains a set of objectives and actions to support children who are at greatest risk of educational disadvantage. <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/DEIS-Delivering-Equality-of-Opportunity-in-Schools/>

28 Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on children 15 APRIL 2020. <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/policy-brief-impact-covid-19-children>

National Policy

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020 is Ireland's national policy for children and young people. Despite being now out of date, this remains the most recent national policy in Ireland for children and young people. The Minister for Children, Roderic O'Gorman, has confirmed that a new children and young person's policy framework will not be developed until 2022.

Mr O'Gorman said: "Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures – The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020 concluded at the end of 2020. Progression of a new framework has been delayed until 2022.

"This decision has been made in light of Covid-19, and two significant initiatives the department will progress in 2021 – implementation of the EU Child Guarantee and development of Ireland's reporting to the United Nations Children's Rights Convention. It is envisaged that both of these initiatives, and the impacts of the pandemic, will inform the priorities to be addressed in the successor to Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures."

He said the decision was taken in agreement with the National Advisory Council for Children and Young People.²⁹

The Vision Statement of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020* is:

For Ireland to be one of the best small countries in the world in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realise their maximum potential now and in the future.³⁰

The policy framework identified six key priority areas:

- Better support for parents and families
- Focus more on children's early years
- Work together to protect young people at risk
- Enhance job opportunities for young people
- Tackle child poverty
- Promoting positive influences for childhood
- Improving childhood health and wellbeing

The policy aims for five key outcomes for children and young people, that they:

1. Are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing
2. Are achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development
3. Are safe and protected from harm
4. Have economic security and opportunity
5. Are connected, respected and contributing to their world

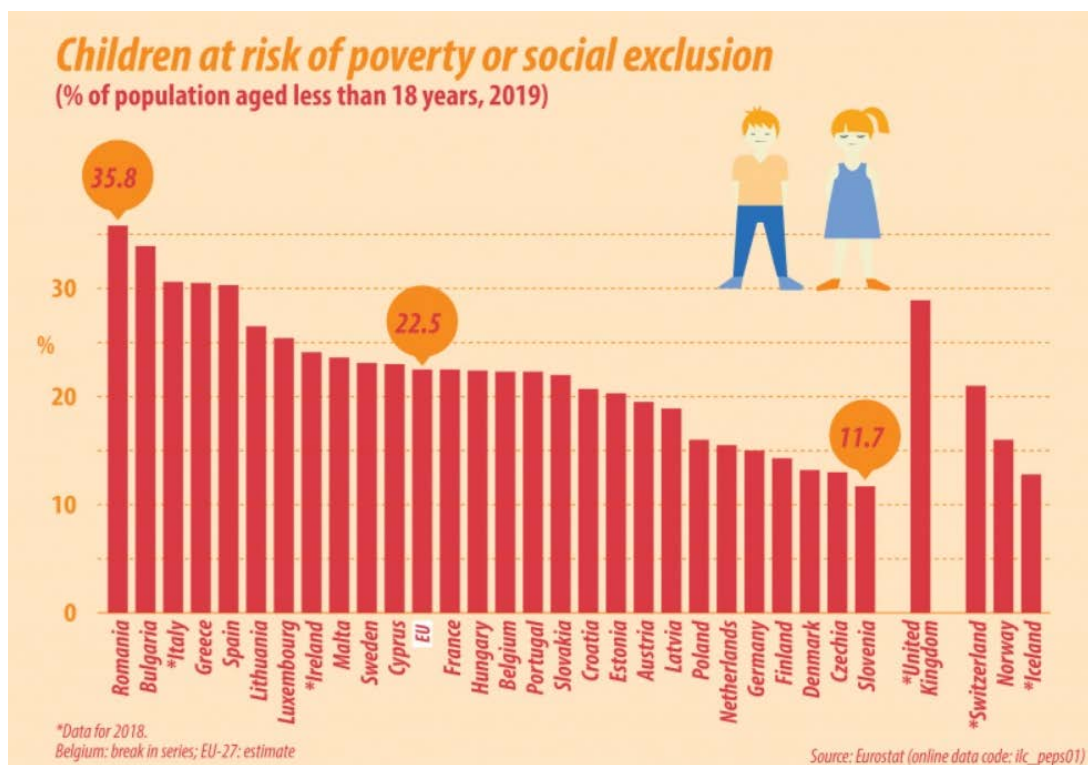
²⁹ <https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-40289528.html>

³⁰ <https://assets.gov.ie/23796/961bbf5d975f4c88adc01a6fc5b4a7c4.pdf>

Europe

Child poverty is unacceptably high in Europe, particularly when you consider Europe is one of the world's wealthiest regions. Almost every fourth child in the European Union is at risk of poverty or social exclusion.³¹

Child deprivation in EU member states, 2019³²



³¹ Eurostat estimate for 2019 is 22.5% of population below age of 18 at risk of poverty or social exclusion in EU28.

³² [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Children_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion#:~:text=types%20of%20households-,Key%20findings,aged%2065%20years%20and%20over\).](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Children_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion#:~:text=types%20of%20households-,Key%20findings,aged%2065%20years%20and%20over).)

EU Child Guarantee

With a view to ensuring that every child in Europe at risk of poverty or social exclusion has access to the most basic of rights like healthcare and education³³

President of Commission, Ursula von der Leyen announcing the creation of a European Child Guarantee 26th March 2021

On Monday the 14th of June 2021 the EU adopted a recommendation to establish an EU Child Guarantee.

The aim of the recommendation is to prevent and combat social exclusion of children by guaranteeing access of children in need to a set of key services, thereby also helping to uphold the rights of the child by combating child poverty and fostering equal opportunities.

In particular, it is recommended that member states guarantee effective and free access to early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities, at least one healthy meal each school day and healthcare as well as effective access to healthy nutrition and adequate housing.

The 27 EU Members should also nominate a national child guarantee coordinator and submit to the Commission, within nine months of the adoption of the recommendation, an action plan covering the period until 2030 to implement this recommendation.

Ana Mendes Godinho - Minister of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security of Portugal stated:

“This is a victory not only for the Portuguese Presidency. It is a victory especially for the 18 million children in the European Union at risk of poverty or social exclusion. It is a victory to guarantee education, childcare, good quality healthcare and decent housing for all children in Europe”.³⁴

This announcement on 14th June 2021 followed on from a *Proposal for a Council Recommendation establishing the European Child Guarantee*³⁵ and an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child which were announced on the 24th of March 2021.

The aims of the EU Child Guarantee are to prevent and combat social exclusion amongst children, and the proposal aims to support Member States in their efforts to guarantee access to quality key services for children in need.³⁶

³³ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/70a1395d-9041-11eb-b85c-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

³⁴ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/epsco/2021/06/14-15/>

³⁵ Child guarantee for vulnerable children - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission (europa.eu)

³⁶ Proposal for a Council Recommendation establishing the European Child Guarantee

The EU *Child Guarantee* will focus on how to improve the lives of vulnerable groups of children who have been identified as having urgent and acute needs. The four vulnerable groups identified are:



37

In the core recommendations of the EU *Child Guarantee* Member States are required to:

- A. Guarantee for children in need effective and free access to early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities, at least one healthy meal each school day and healthcare;
- B. Guarantee for children in need effective access to healthy nutrition and adequate housing.

CORE RECOMMENDATIONS



38

The *Child Guarantee* will offer countries guidance on developing integrated strategies to tackle child poverty and promote children's well-being. The aim is to promote access to quality services and to ensure the active participation of children.

What will a *Child Guarantee* help achieve?

- It will give political visibility to child poverty in Europe and put pressure on national governments to prioritise policy and legislation reforms and public spending.
- It will help EU Member States improve the services and support to children and families in vulnerable situations. It is not expected to be a one-size-fits all. Rather Member States will use funding according to where they need it most.
- It will bring more transparency to what is spent on children. It will get us closer to tracking public budgets both at EU and national level and should shed light on what investment is needed to get better outcomes for children.

37 https://www.eurochild.org/policy/library-details/article/child-guarantee-an-eu-that-helps-fight-child-poverty/?no_cache=1

38 Proposal for a Council Recommendation establishing the European Child Guarantee
https://www.eurochild.org/policy/library-details/article/child-guarantee-an-eu-that-helps-fight-child-poverty/?no_cache=1

To support every child in need, I will create the European Child Guarantee, picking up on the idea proposed by the European Parliament

- President of Commission, Ursula von der Leyen 2019 ³⁹

President of the EU Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, has followed through on her commitment to create the European Child Guarantee. The Child Guarantee will be an essential tool for arguing for stronger policies in key areas affecting children living in poverty. The next challenge will be to ensure that Ireland develops a meaningful and well-funded action plan for its implementation.

³⁹ <https://human-synthesis.ghost.io/2019/12/02/political-guidelines-for-the-next-european-commission-2019-2024/>

The World: The Convention on the Rights of the Child

In 1989, world leaders made a historic commitment to the world's children by adopting the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. The Convention explains who children are, their rights, and the responsibilities of governments to the children in their jurisdictions.

The convention notes that all the rights outlined are connected, they are all equally important and they cannot be taken away from children.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history. Ireland ratified the treaty in 1992.

The convention is long, it has 54 articles (separate points). The full list can be found in Appendix One but it covers the following themes:

- **Survival:** Survival includes basic health and healthcare, disease prevention and control, nutrition, water supply, sanitation and environmental health.
- **Development:** Development includes early learning and stimulation, education, leisure and cultural activities, and parental guidance and care.
- **Protection:** Protection involves safeguarding children from risks to their mental, physical and emotional well-being, including emergency situations, conflict with the law, violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect and discrimination.
- **Participation:** Participation promotes the empowerment and capacity of children to be involved in the decisions and actions that affect them. This includes civil rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression, of conscience and religions, association and peaceful assembly.

In Ireland, the EU and internationally strong unequivocal commitments have been made to children, to protect their basic needs, but also to provide for a full and meaningful life. These commitments must be honoured.

It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men

Frederick Douglass, abolitionist and statesman⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Frederick Douglass (February 1818 – February 20, 1895) was an American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman. After escaping from slavery in Maryland, he became a national leader of the abolitionist movement in Massachusetts and New York, gaining note for his oratory and incisive antislavery writings. He visited Ireland 175 years ago, in 1845, to promote a movement dedicated to the abolition of slavery . <https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2020/0926/1167628-175th-anniversary-of-anti-slavery-leaders-irish-visit/>

Our Stories

The following stories are an account of the experiences of children and their families that the Co-op and our member organisations have encountered in their work. They highlight the experience of poverty and its impact on children in the inner city of Dublin.

The stories have taken place both pre-Covid-19 and during Covid-19.

This is not a research study. It is a pen picture of the lived experiences of some of the most vulnerable in our society. These are all real stories of the genuine experiences of children and families in the communities that we work with.

All names and identifying details have been changed to protect the children, the families and the communities that they come from. Protecting the identity of the individuals was the primary consideration. However, we also wish to protect the specific communities the children and their families reside in from further stigmatisation, so exact locations are not referred to. Though we can state that all families and children reside somewhere in the inner-city area of Dublin (north and south of the River Liffey).

All the experiences outlined in Our Stories are genuine, authentic and contemporary. They either took place or continue to take place in Dublin city between 2019 and 2021.

The Stories:

	<i>Page</i>
1. <i>A Family in Crisis? Who can see? Who can help?</i>	26
2. <i>Not all lockdowns are Equal</i>	32
3. <i>Early Risers, But Still not Enough for Rent</i>	34
4. <i>Complex families, Complex conditions</i>	37
5. <i>Homelessness: Punished for Complaining?</i>	40
6. <i>Poor Health, Poor Housing</i>	43
7. <i>Violence and Status Uncertainty</i>	45
8. <i>Food in a Foreign Land</i>	49
9. <i>A Mother's Resilience</i>	52
10. <i>A Community Under Pressure</i>	57
11. <i>Afterschool: Taken Away?</i>	61
12. <i>Too Many Struggles for One Child?</i>	63
13. <i>Generational Impact?</i>	65
14. <i>Under Siege, No Place to Live or Work</i>	67

Story 1: A Family in Crisis? Who can see? Who can help?

One of the Co-op's member organisations that provides an after-school service is working with the O'Brien family; the family are in crisis. Mum Lisa is not coping and her three young children Lee (10), Adam (9) and Millie (7) are very vulnerable. Covid-19 has just made their vulnerable situation worse.

Two years ago, prior to Covid-19, the after-school project had serious concerns for the children in the O'Brien family. Lisa and Dad William had separated, and Dad had taken to sleeping rough near the family's home. Lisa was very stressed. The children were at risk and possibly neglected.

The O'Brien's were already vulnerable, already on the edge. They are living in the private rented sector, in accommodation that is in very poor condition. Mum and Dad had little formal education and are barely literate, with almost no history of employment. Mum is also ashamed of her circumstances; she has a great sense of shame and also fear which is preventing her from seeking the help that she needs.

Lisa (Mum) is not recognising the issues for the children. I'd say she would have before. She is a very good mother, and they are very well-behaved children, but children know instinctively that things aren't going well, they will protect their mother, and she tries to protect them. But they are being exposed to the consequences of the poor conditions and their Mum's inability to cope.⁴¹

Lee, Adam and Millie have been attending the services of the Co-op member organisation since starting school. They are beautiful children, who despite the O'Brien's struggles and obvious poverty, had previously been well cared for. They have no behavioural problems, but the after-school project began observing that the children were coming to the service dirty, tired, hungry and stressed.

During the early days of their parents' separation, the children had to walk past their father as he slept in the laneway near their home. Dad sometimes drunkenly approached the children, telling them he loves them when they were walking home from school. The whole situation was extremely distressing for Lee, Adam and Millie.

The children's home was described as horrendous, damp, in a very poor state of repair, chaotic and without enough food.

They are in private rented; it is riddled with damp. Lisa is paying more rent on top of what HAP gives her, she pays an extra €300 (on top of her HAP42 payment). The place is walking with damp; you can smell the poverty.

⁴¹ Text in italics and blue colour across all stories are direct quotes from Co-op member organisations and Co-op staff who are working with the respective family/individual.

⁴² Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) <http://hap.ie/>



Examples of private rented accommodation in Dublin's inner City⁴³ (not the home of the family in this story)

In this case Mum could no longer cope. Mum had been getting support from the after-school project but additional intervention was needed. There was a need to challenge Mum in relation to her children's needs and care. Lee, Adam and Millie were not being cared for properly and this was visible for all to see. Mum's stress was extreme, and her behaviour was erratic. She was scared, angry, hurt and in crisis. She was in rent arrears, owed money on the ESB and was not managing her money to the point that there was no food being bought.

Lisa (Mum), she is a dote normally, she loves her children, but the pressure has got to her now. William (Dad) was a chronic alcoholic. The situation that has now emerged has been building up over the years. Over the years things have happened for Lisa, he has progressively got worse. Over the last year he has been living up the lane. The kids are coming out and seeing their Daddy up there. All that stress in her life, trying to mind her kids. Is it any wonder she is where she is?

As with many of these cases, Mum was taking all the responsibilities of the family, without the resources that she needed. It was a cycle; Dad drinks, things get bad in the home, there is aggression, stress, and family breakdown, then the drinking stops for a while and some order is restored, but it is only temporary. But it appears that Dad maybe out of the family home for good.

The after-school project staff tried to engage with Mum. They visited the home when one of the children had asked for help.

And when I tell you they literally had not got a drop of milk in the house. And the conditions. The state of the flat. I said why aren't the kids at school? Lisa (Mum) said we have nothing to eat. I said get the kids ready for school, and we bought a whole load of groceries for them. The kids had their breakfast, and I said to her you need to link back in, you need help... the condition of the house is absolutely horrendous. There are clothes everywhere. It is as chaotic as her mind is at the moment.

⁴³ Photos: Jim Berkeley

The after-school project staff linked with other services that work with the O'Brien family and tried to get Mum to engage with voluntary services in the community, including family support services. They supported her to get some financial help and support from the St Vincent de Paul and advocated for her in relation to her accommodation situation. She is desperate for better accommodation, but given the current housing crisis, her chances of getting social housing quickly are not good.

After a positive start, where Mum was co-operating and engaging with this assistance, she then rejected the support on offer.

The after-school project was very concerned about the children. They do not have access to the home on an ongoing basis, (only when Mum asks for help or invites them in). They were worried about what happens to the children when help has been refused.

Importantly, the after-school project is not funded for this work, but they continue to do it to support vulnerable children. The after-school project is part of the support structure for the O'Brien children, providing them with valuable respite, structure, care and importantly a watchful eye.

They can go to school in the morning, cause Lisa (Mum) brings them, and we have them in the afternoon, so they have that structure and stability. They have that support for their education, they are going to school, and they are doing their homework. And, the after-school project is not just about homework, it is about all the other developmental activities. We collect them from school, they get their lunch from us, they do their homework with us and then we do creative activities. They get other opportunities too for developmental work.

The after-school project felt that as Mum was not coping, and as she had refused voluntary support services combined with their significant concerns about the welfare of the children, they were mandated⁴⁴ to make a child protection and welfare report to the Tusla, the Child and Family Agency.

Family support is voluntary engagement so if a family do not want to engage they cannot be forced to, but when a mandated report has been made engagement with Tulsa is not voluntary; the parent(s)/guardians are required to engage. The after-school project felt that they had to shift from voluntary to non-voluntary engagements.

The three O'Brien children are living in poverty, they are isolated and living in very poor conditions. Within the family there is addiction and conflict. Mum and Dad are unable to help with their education, nor do they have the skills and understanding to navigate 'the system' to properly support their own children. Mum is a very disadvantaged woman who has been left behind with all of life's burdens on her shoulders. She needs counselling; she has experienced trauma in her life, and she is ashamed; she doesn't have anybody to help her outside of these services.

We tried to engage Lisa (Mum) with the adult programmes, and she came one morning and then didn't come back and one of the reasons she didn't come back is because she doesn't feel equal and that breaks your heart. Her own disowned her, she feels shame. It is like 1950s Ireland.

⁴⁴ As a mandated person, under the legislation you are required to report any knowledge, belief, or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, to the Authorised Person within Tusla. Definition of Harm: The threshold of harm for each category of abuse at which mandated persons have a legal obligation to report concerns is outlined at this link. <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/mandated-persons/what-are-the-thresholds-for-making-a-mandated-report/#:~:text=First%20Act%202015,The%20threshold%20of%20harm%2C%20at%20which%20you%20must%20report%20to,have%20been%20or%20are%20being>

The support that these children, and many others like them get from the after-school project, includes all the intangible bits such as care, love, kindness, knowledge, just being there, a constant positive force in their lives, looking out for what is happening to children and their families.

As a result of the report to Tulsa the O'Brien children, Lee, Adam and Millie have been an active child protection case for the past two years and are on the *Child Protection Notification System*. Active in this instance means that there is a child protection plan in place because it has been decided that the children are currently at risk of significant harm and need support to be safe and well.⁴⁵ However, Covid-19 has negatively impacted on this family's progression to stability.

Due to Covid-19 Lee, Adam and Millie have lost out greatly on their education. Mum does not really understand, nor was she able to cope with remote learning. Mum refused the offer of tablets/laptops as the family have no internet access. Mum told the school that all work for the children was to be in paper form only. The school regularly delivered hard copies of work to the home for the children. Fortunately, Lee and Adam are extremely bright and did complete most of the work. But Millie (7), the youngest child, has additional special needs so her learning literally stopped.

Lee, Adam and Millie also became more isolated from their peers as they didn't engage in any on-line interactions, nor could they see their friends face to face. They were also spending their lockdown in a dirty, damp, chaotic flat.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also meant that a *Child Protection Case Conference*, was delayed. It had been due to take place in January 2021. This has impacted on the care plan of the children. As of May 2021, all of the organisations, including the school and after-school project, and social work team are back working directly with the family, but how can anyone really know what it was like for Lee, Adam and Millie over the last year? How long will their lives be affected by being out of school, isolated in a chaotic home and the delayed care planning? The impact is likely to follow these children into their adult lives, and possibly beyond to the next generation.

45 https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Parent_leaflet_-_Final.pdf

A Modern Day Crisis? Housing & Accommodation

Almost 150 years ago in the 1870/80s Michael Davitt, Charles Stewart Parnell, Fanny and Anna Stewart Parnell and others, founded and led the Irish Land League. The core work of the Land League was to fight for the Three Fs, Fair Rent, Fixity of Tenure and Free Sale. The key work of the Land League was challenging unjustly excessive rent, termed at the time *Rack Rent*⁴⁶ and insecurity of tenure. An objective of the League was to defend vulnerable tenants, whose legal position was weak and who were threatened with eviction.

It is a simple fact that 150 years later, one of the most critical social issues in Ireland remains access to good quality, affordable, stable and suitable homes for individuals and families, particularly those with low and moderate incomes. The need for *Fair Rent* and *Fixity of Tenure*, (which means that a tenant cannot be evicted if they had paid their rent) remain issues in Ireland today.

The Land League campaigns of two centuries ago grew partly out of the understanding that without an adequate home an individual or family cannot live or thrive and that poor quality or insecure accommodation affects health and wellbeing, access to employment and education and, can have a long-term impact on physical and emotional wellbeing.

Prior to Covid-19, one doctor from a children's hospital had raised concerns about homeless accommodation having infection control issues. Dr Muldoon from Temple Street Children's University Hospital noted in 2019 that infection control in family hubs was "a real issue" with viruses constantly passing around, a prescient comment prior to the outbreak of Covid-19. Dr Muldoon was speaking in the context of concerns about the long-term impact on children who do not have safe and secure homes.

⁴⁶ Historically, rack-rent has often been a term of protest used to denote an unjustly excessive rent (the word "rack" evoking the medieval torture device), usually one paid by a tenant farmer. The two conceptions of rack-rent both apply when excessive rent is obtained by threat of eviction resulting in uncompensated dispossession of improvements the tenant himself has made. I.e., by charging rack-rent, the landowner unjustly uses his power over the land to effectively confiscate wages, in addition to merely charging the tenant interest and depreciation on the capital improvements which the landlord himself has made to the land. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rack-rent>

Children discharged from Temple Street into homelessness number 842⁴⁷

Ombudsman warns of toll on health as Varadkar accused of normalising problem

The Ombudsman for Children has said he was “shocked, but unfortunately not surprised” by figures showing that almost 850 children treated in a Dublin hospital’s emergency department last year were discharged to homelessness. Dr Niall Muldoon said he had long been highlighting “my concern and outrage” at the rising number of children in homeless accommodation. “I have warned that there will be a significant long-term impact on both the physical and mental health of the children involved,” he said.

Temple Street Children’s University Hospital said it saw 842 children up to the age of 16 who were discharged with “no fixed address” last year, compared with 651 in 2017 – an increase of 29 per cent. Emergency department staff looked after homeless children with cystic fibrosis, neurological disorders, severe autism and significant developmental delays, as well as accidental injuries during the year, the hospital said.

Dr Muldoon said his office was currently undertaking a consultation with children and young people living in family hubs, asking them about their experiences.

“The outcome of this consultation will be published in the coming months but it is clear that homelessness and living in an unstable environment is having an extremely negative impact on many young people,” he said. “Cases of autism, developmental delays, emotional attachment issues, self-harm and accidental injury have all been reported to us. We are talking directly to children as young as five years of age and they are able to tell us the impact that living in one room with their whole family is having on them.”

The Co-op and its member organisations are working with individuals and families who are struggling with serious accommodation issues. Here are some of their stories.

⁴⁷ Historically, rack-rent has often been a term of protest used to denote an unjustly excessive rent (the word “rack” evoking the medieval torture device), usually one paid by a tenant farmer. The two conceptions of rack-rent both apply when excessive rent is obtained by threat of eviction resulting in uncompensated dispossession of improvements the tenant himself has made. I.e., by charging rack-rent, the landowner unjustly uses his power over the land to effectively confiscate wages, in addition to merely charging the tenant interest and depreciation on the capital improvements which the landlord himself has made to the land. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rack-rent>

STORY 2: NOT ALL LOCKDOWNS ARE EQUAL

The Carroll's, who are a family of four, Mum Louise, Dad Eric and their two children Sally who is 8 and Rian who is 5, contacted a Co-op member organisation at the beginning of the first Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020. The family were living in one room in privately run, homeless emergency accommodation.

In this particular accommodation no onsite cooking facilities were available to the family and no meals were provided by the service. In March 2020 what had been a difficult situation pre Covid-19 became significantly worse. Places where the family would usually go for food had closed due to Level 5 restrictions. This included both community and charity providers and restaurants/fast food outlets. The Carroll's did have access to a microwave, which they had smuggled into the accommodation and hidden in the bedroom as it was against the rules of the accommodation service to have any cooking facilities in the room. The family explained that they feared getting kicked out of the emergency accommodation if caught with the microwave, but that this was the only way to provide themselves with hot food. The Carroll's do not have an extended family locally as they are not originally from Dublin.

So, in 2020, in Dublin, a family of four with two young children, were struggling to get enough food to eat or have the space or facilities to prepare food. While Mum, Dad, Sally (8) and Rian (5) did have a roof over their heads, minimal as it was, they were a family of four living and sleeping in one room with insecure and uncertain access to food.

The Co-op member organisation's initial support centred around providing the Carroll family with food, taking into account their lack of access to food storage and cooking facilities. They provided Mum, Dad, Sally and Rian with food over the course of a month. The family then reported that the accommodation provider had started serving hot meals at the premises, which were being delivered by an NGO⁴⁸.

The Co-op's member organisation also provided activity packs to the two young children Sally and Rian, who could not attend school and were stuck in one small room for most of the day and night.

Mum talked with the Co-op member organisation about the impact the lockdown, and the confined space the family were living in, was having on her children. Mum felt that her children were really struggling emotionally and that their mental health was suffering.

She (Mum) just said they were so sad. They had nowhere to play properly, nowhere to run about, nowhere to mess about without being told to be quiet or being fearful of breaking some rule or other. Two little kids just sad, it is devastating for a mother.

Following these conversations with Mum, the Co-op's member organisation arranged for play therapy for Sally and Rian. Due to Covid-19 restrictions the play therapy had to be provided online. This raised another issue. The Carroll's did not have access to a laptop where the children could access the online sessions. The Co-op member organisation organised the provision of a laptop to the family so they could access weekly play therapy sessions with the children. The aim was to support Sally and Rian, as well as their Mum and Dad, to try and prevent the children's mental health and emotional stability from further deteriorating.

To initiate everything a staff member visited the emergency accommodation and set up the laptop to make sure Mum and Dad could use it, and ensure they had access to the apps that they needed, including Zoom. Shortly after receiving the laptop for play therapy the Mum and Dad also started to use it to do Sally and Rian's school work with them, which had also to be done from 'home' during Lockdown even when the home was one small room in a former hotel.

⁴⁸ Non Governmental Organisation

The Carroll family, who were already struggling with homelessness and living in one room, were fundamentally and negatively impacted by the Covid-19 restrictions. Due to lockdown, they were further confined to their one room, with nowhere to go but empty streets and parks. As their emergency accommodation was in the inner city, even parks within the 2 and then 5 km limit were scarce. Locked down in one room, endless radio and TV chat shows discussing how to have fun in suburban back gardens, learning to bake sourdough at home the importance of social distancing and isolating were distant unattainable luxuries. The Carroll's literally lost secure access to food, hot food in particular. They had to watch their children deteriorate to such an extent they required therapy, and were forced to conduct Sally and Rian's education in the one small room that they also slept in, lived in and ate in.

The already existing fears and anxieties Mum Louise and Dad Eric had for their children Sally and Rian because of their homelessness were magnified manifold as they watched their very young children struggle with their mental and emotional health during extended periods of Covid-19 lockdowns. Without the support they received from the Co-op member organisation and others, the Carroll's would have struggled to have access to sufficient and nutritious food in the early weeks of lockdown, would have been unable to provide extra supports to their children, or manage their children's home schooling and education.

Not all lockdowns are equal.

STORY 3: EARLY RISERS; BUT NOT ENOUGH FOR RENT

The inner city of Dublin is now an extremely expensive place to live if you must rent in the private sector.

Dublin is fifth most expensive place for renters in Europe

Dublin is the fifth most expensive city in which to rent a home in Europe this year, having experienced an increase of €119 per month in 2020, according to global mobility expert ECA International. The average rental cost of a three-bedroom home in central Dublin is now €3,713 per month.⁴⁹

What do families do? How can they afford those rents? Below is one of those family's experiences.

The Doyle family, who live in the inner city, are dealing with exorbitant rents by having four generations of the family living in one two-bedroomed artisan cottage. The cottage is 67msq, which is tiny. It has two small bedrooms, a living room, and a small kitchen and shower room. There is no hall so to get to each room you walk through the living room, which is the centre of the home. There is also no outdoor space. The house has no front yard or garden, the front door opens onto the street, while the back yard is very small, not even large enough for a sufficient washing line. The house is over 100 years old and has very little storage.

Living in the cottage is Mary, who is a great-grandmother, her daughter Sarah, herself a grandmother, Sarah's two adult children, Debbie and Sean, and Debbie's two young children, Cian and Leah. Mary owns the house. A total of four adults (one in late teens) and two children across four generations.

Cian and Leah, the two young children are 3 and 6, and they are living with their mother (Debbie), uncle (Sean), nana (Sarah) and great nana (Mary). Their dad also stays over but cannot live there as there is literally no space.

This family are the working poor, but in another era or time they would be almost middle class. They pay towards the cost of living in the house, give rent to the grandmother, but they cannot save enough to move out or find somewhere else.

So, in one small artisan cottage in the inner city there are six people living (with a seventh staying regularly) in a tiny space. Mary, who is in her late 70s shares a bedroom with her daughter Sarah, herself a woman in her 50s. Sean, who in his late teens, shares the other bedroom with his nephew Cian who is 3. Debbie sleeps on the sofa in the living room, with her young daughter Leah who is 6, and occasionally her partner.

The Doyle's are an economically active family. All of those of working age, Sarah, Debbie and Sean, are working full time, (Mary is retired). But because they cannot find affordable private accommodation or access public housing, they are in very challenging living conditions. The different members of the Doyle family cannot afford anywhere else to live as they cannot afford to rent in the private rented sector.

⁴⁹ Only part of the article has been reproduced. Irish Times Colin Gleeson Apr 14, 2021, www.irishtimes.com/business/commercial-property/dublin-is-fifth-most-expensive-place-for-renters-in-europe-1.4536325?mode=amp

The cottage is immaculate, but it is chaotic. There is nowhere to store anything, and with so many people residing in the one tiny space there are issues with condensation and ventilation, noise and space. There is also a lot of 'stuff' as would be expected with six people's belongings all crammed into the one limited space. Buggies are kept outside on the street, and there are boxes of possessions everywhere.

No one has any privacy. Mary, an older woman must share her bedroom with her middle-aged daughter. Sean, a young adult, must share his room with a young child, and Debbie and her daughter Leah have no private space at all. Debbie must get up and fold up their sofa bed when anyone in the house needs to use the kitchen or living room. They are also disturbed if anyone needs the bathroom or is up late. Bear in mind, Leah is only 6. It also means that the living area is not free for the rest of the family in the evening.

Debbie, along with her two children, has been approved for homeless HAP⁵⁰, but she has been unable to find anywhere to live. Although Debbie is working, she is still entitled to homeless HAP due to the severe overcrowding. Debbie has chosen to stay in the very overcrowded situation, with the support of her family, rather than move to emergency accommodation (e.g. hotel room), which would be her only other option. But everyone's health is being affected.

The conditions in the home are affecting the mental health of the entire Doyle family. The living situation is causing enormous stress for all involved, including the children. Mary and Sarah are both on sleeping tablets. Sean who is in college and working, has no place to study. He is displaying signs of severe stress. He cannot have anyone over to visit. The children, Cian and Leah, have nowhere to play, or space to call their own.

Leah can't have friends over for a play date. There is nowhere to play but on the street. This is socially acceptable, but not suitable in winter, so Leah can't interact with friends after school.

There are also significant issues emerging in relation to Cian. Cian is showing signs of being on the autism spectrum but there are questions as to whether that is the case, or whether it is the consequences of living with such severe overcrowding. Leah is also displaying some concerning signs of anxiety.

The stress on Debbie is intense. She tries to keep Cian and Leah out as much as she can to relieve the pressure at home, but there is only so much time she can spend out of the home with small children. Covid-19 has reduced these options even further.

The younger Doyle family want to stay in the city. Leah is in school and Debbie works in a crèche in the local area. Debbie is open to living anywhere in the inner city, she just needs somewhere that would take homeless HAP. Homeless HAP is a higher payment than HAP, it is also a better payment for landlords. Debbie has been trying to get two bedroomed accommodation for €1,800 per month, but she hasn't been able to find anything.

⁵⁰ Homeless HAP As part of the range of actions, Government is taking, the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive (DRHE) is operating a specific HAP scheme in the Dublin region for homeless households. This Homeless HAP scheme provides additional financial and related supports to tenants and landlords, along with all of the benefits of the national HAP scheme.

- Local authority must have determined that the household is homeless and has no alternative accommodation options.
- Local authority must have determined that the household needs additional supports to find and secure appropriate rent accommodation.

Debbie has been receiving advocacy and support from one of the Co-op member organisations, including letters of recommendation as well as information in relation to her housing rights. Support in accessing assessments for her children has also been provided. Debbie has requested, under the early intervention act, an assessment of need for Cian. Services that Cian may require cannot be accessed until an assessment of need has been carried out. Due to a shortage of Public Health Nurses in Debbie's/Cian's area, initial delays in Cian's development were missed and Debbie is now very concerned that the housing conditions are further affecting Cian and Leah.

Debbie is active in her local community, Cian and Leah are using community services and involved in an active community social life, but their developmental milestones are being affected by their living conditions.

It seems Cian has developmental delays, but medical professionals are not sure, because the living conditions could be a factor in causing the delays. To be told that the living conditions may have caused Cian to behave in an autistic manner, is one of the things that makes Debbie really guilty, because she can't get her own home.

Debbie feels that if her housing situation was resolved she would have greater clarity in relation to Cian's needs.

Cian continues to make no progress because he is so stressed by his living conditions.

A safe, suitable home is the basis for wellbeing, without it, everyone suffers.

STORY 4: COMPLEX FAMILIES, COMPLEX CONDITIONS

This is the story of the Walsh family, who are a family of nine living in one small local authority flat in the inner city. This flat has two bedrooms and is in an old complex which has a history of both maintenance issues and anti-social activity in the immediate area.

There are five adults and four children under the age of 12 in the flat. Living in the home are Joan and John, who are in their 50s and are the parents and grandparents of the family. Their two adult children Emer and Amy, who are in their 20s and their two young children Liam and Owen, who are 9 and 11. Emer, the older daughter, also has two of her own children living in the flat with her, Billy (3) and Zac (4). Emer's partner, Sam also lives most of the time in the flat.

Joan and John share one bedroom with their two younger children, Liam and Owen. That is, four of them in one small bedroom, and the boys are growing up, they are getting bigger. The situation which is already not suitable is becoming increasingly unmanageable. Emer and Amy share the other bedroom along with Emer's two children Billy and Zac. Emer's partner, Sam sleeps in the living room.

Apart from the gross overcrowding that the Walsh's are experiencing, the flat is also in terrible condition. The fixtures and fittings are in a poor state of repair as is the décor. There are significant levels of moisture in the flat, partly due to so many people living in such a small space. They have made numerous complaints about the conditions to the local authority.

It is the worst I have ever seen. There is mould, serious mould everywhere. It smells horrendous. They (DCC) come out and cover up the mould with paint. They were constantly coming out to paint, but just three weeks later it was coming out again. It's on tiles, you can't keep wallpaper up. It comes back. It is on ceiling walls, tiles.

Most of it is due to the fact that there are too many people living there, breathing in the room.

The council has provided a dehumidifier, which sits in the narrow hallway, taking up valuable space in this tiny home, and has had very little impact.

When you go into the room, there are boxes everywhere where they are trying to put clothes and toys. The school bags are full of mould, the socks have mould. And they have to have a window open, even in real cold weather. ... They have to wash their clothes in the flat, washing for nine people, so they are drying clothes in the flat. There is nowhere else to put them.

Apart from the overcrowding and poor conditions in the home there are also significant health and interpersonal issues in the household, with some history of addiction in older members of the Walsh family.

The older two children, Liam and Owen have additional needs. Liam is on the autism spectrum, and Owen has learning difficulties, and both attend special schools. Liam and Owen need space to decompress when they are stressed, but they do not have this. They are also more likely to get anxious and upset living in such stressful conditions. This has led to some behavioural problems as the boys try and deal with their own frustrations in a home where everyone is stressed and frustrated. This became significantly worse when schools were closed as result of Covid-19. School was a respite for these boys and their family alike, a respite that was taken away, and neither of the boys fully understands why.

There are also serious tensions in the home due to the overcrowding, but also due to the history and consequences of family problems. Therefore, interpersonal relationships are also under pressure.

All four children, Liam, Owen, Billy and Zac, have breathing problems because of asthma, which is exacerbated by the mould in the home.

They are constantly up and down to hospital about their breathing, and they have letters from doctors about their breathing problems.

Emer, who is the mother of the two younger children Billy and Zac, is trying to get alternative accommodation for her own family. Emer and her partner Sam work full time but cannot afford rent in the private rented sector. Emer has qualified for HAP⁵¹ but cannot get anywhere to house her family. Emer would like to stay local as the children are in local schools/crèches. Emer does not live in a 'fancy' neighbourhood but as it is in the inner city it is expensive to rent privately.

Emer is very worried about her two young boys, Billy and Zac as well as her young brothers Liam and Owen and feels that all of their health and educational needs are being damaged due their housing situation. But, where is she to go? If Emer leaves the flat, she will be homeless. The situation in the flat is so bad, it may drive her out which would make herself, her partner and the two young boys, Billy and Zac, homeless.

The conditions, both physical and interpersonal, in the Walsh home are damaging all the children. The four young children are stressed, and they are unwell. The children's education is being fundamentally affected. Homework is an issue as there is no space to do it. During Covid-19 there was literally nowhere for the older boys, Liam and Owen, to do any school work. Liam and Owen's Dad John is particularly worried that they are falling further behind and that the rhythm of education that took years to build in his children, who already have additional needs, will be broken permanently.

Liam and Owen also have no physical space to decompress from emotional stress. There is a playground and outdoor space in the complex but

There is a lot of drug dealing going on in the complex, so it is not really safe.

The Co-op member organisation involved with this family is advocating for them as they are struggling to present and articulate their own needs.

I would love to get someone high up in DCC to go into the flat, to see it, you can send all the photos and documents that you like, but to walk in there and to feel ill, to get the smell, that what's you need to do.

51 <http://hap.ie/> Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Scheme. HAP is a form of social housing support provided by all local authorities. Under HAP, local authorities can provide housing assistance to households with a long-term housing need, including many long-term Rent Supplement recipients.

The Walsh's are experiencing poverty, health issues, dealing with disabled children, historic addiction and the interpersonal consequence of that addiction, and severe overcrowding.

The children in the flat, Liam, Owen, Billy and Zac, have no safe indoor space to live in and no safe outdoorspace to play in. It is a devastating scenario for the Walsh family and their children. When Covid-19 hit, the situation was exacerbated. This Walsh's were literally trapped in a tiny space with ongoing family tensions, disabled children with high needs and nowhere safe to go, even for an hour to two to relax, to get a break from the stress and conditions.

The Walsh family has no garden to play in, no leafy suburb to walk in, minimal skills to support their struggling children, and nowhere safe and secure to be in as a family.

The entire Walsh, five adults and four young children, is under severe stress. Four young boys, Liam, Owen, Billy and Zac, have experienced and continue to experience daily trauma, stress and anxiety because of the conditions of the home they are forced to live in.

Safety and security don't just happen, they are the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in our society, a life free of violence and fear.

Nelson Mandela, Former President of South Africa

Story 5: Homelessness; Punished for Complaining?

This is the experience of one homeless family, Ann Quinn and her children, Jane, 17 and Olivia 13. Jane is studying for state exams. This family of three have been living in various locations in the inner city of Dublin since 2019. Prior to Covid-19 the family, despite reports from the Department of the Environment that this would not happen, were being accommodated on a nightly basis, and approached one of the Co-op member organisations for support in accessing more stable homeless accommodation (if that is not an oxymoron, 'stable' homeless accommodation, then what is?!!).

Night by night is essentially when you only have accommodation on a nightly basis, you have to leave your accommodation in the morning, so you have to check out of your accommodation in the morning, you are out of accommodation during the day and you have to take all your stuff with you and you don't get accommodation until later on that night.

Some families when they enter homelessness, are put on night by night initially.

I think it is some kind of way to see if a family is really homeless... You even had cases of mothers coming straight from hospital with new born babies that were put on nights by nights. This doesn't happen anymore due to people challenging it, but it did happen.

The Quinn family are not new to homelessness. They have been homeless for over two years, but they perceive that they are on night-by-night provision, due to conflict with some homeless accommodation providers. The providers have termed the conflict 'anti-social' behaviour, but this requires closer examination, as well as an examination of what is meant by 'anti-social,' behaviour.

Ann has raised issues with the accommodation that has been provided to her and her daughters, as well as incidents that have happened in those settings. Has Ann been punished for speaking up?

Many of the services providing accommodation for homeless families were previously hotels. These services are often still being run and managed by the staff that were involved in the tourist and hospitality sector. The staff have no training whatsoever in social care and have no experience of dealing with the complex needs of a homeless family.

In the NGO⁵² services you have trained staff, social care workers, project workers, who are trained, you have mixed staff who know how to work with families who have varying degrees of social need. A lot of the private providers are hotels. They have been transformed into family hubs but they have retained the old tourist sector staff. Those staff, who are used to dealing with a certain cohort of people now find themselves in a position where they are dealing with people who have a wider variety of social needs. Families that are in crisis, even being homeless in itself is a crisis. It is a very tense environment, and we are putting a number of families in together; it is powder keg.

Properly trained staff would assist in ensuring that situations do not escalate over minor issues and deal professionally and competently with issues that are out of a family's control.

A lot of what would be facilitated in a family household is being defined as anti-social in family hubs and hotels... In one hotel a women who went downstairs to wash clothes and left her child in the room was threatened that she would have to leave because she left her child alone.

⁵² Non-Governmental Organisations, such as Focus Ireland, and Peter McVerry.

Ann, along with her children Jane and Olivia, had accommodation cancelled by private providers on at least two occasions immediately after she raised serious issues with the accommodation that was being provided.

In the first case, Ann and her daughters were in a family hub, where there were lots of families and individuals housed together. One evening, Ann's younger daughter Olivia was in a communal area when a man, also staying there (but as a single adult) engaged the young girl showing her pornographic material. Ann complained and called the Gardai. The incident was a clear child protection issue, where one of her daughters, who was 13, was interacted with inappropriately. The incident has become a Garda matter. The child and family are the injured party. Immediately after the complaint, Ann and her daughters Jane and Olivia were moved, but not for their safety.

Ann feels that because she raised the grievance and called the police she was removed and moved to a different accommodation.

And many homeless families are worried.

There are some concerns that night by nights is used as punishments, a lot of families would feel that if they bring any complaints, they might get put on nights. Some people are fearful of saying anything for fear of losing their placement.

In another placement, Ann was forced to call the Garda again. One of the staff members at the hotel appeared to be intoxicated and made inappropriate remarks and approaches to Ann. The Gardai who attended the incident assured her that she was the injured party and there should be no effect on her accommodation. But Ann and her two daughters were moved again.

It looked like the bed seemed to be cancelled in line with complaints in those instances. Beds can be cancelled suddenly. We have had cases where a family leave to bring children to school can come back to find their bags packed to be told they cannot come back and to get in touch with DCC⁵³ or the DRHE⁵⁴. The service (accommodation provider) itself has autonomy to end a bed.

Ann was told that she lost placements due to anti-social behaviour. But what does that mean? What is the definition of anti-social behaviour? Ann feels that her family lost placements because she made valid complaints about the service that had been provided.

Some homeless hubs are large and can accommodate over 100 people in residence. The families and individuals who are in the hubs are homeless, by definition they are in crisis. Some have other issues to deal with also. Hubs would have many people with additional needs and difficulties. This may increase issues and incidents of anti-social behaviour, but such behaviour is not just a challenge for staff it is also a troubling, upsetting and negative experience for all the other residents. Ann experienced other residents anti-social behaviour, but, when she raised questions, she was told that it was her own behaviour that was determined to be anti-social.

The unilateral power of the homeless providers is a significant issue. Service providers have a licence agreement with Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE) to provide accommodation services to homeless families. They are paid to provide these services. The DRHE itself has policies governing best practices. The question remains does the DRHE not have responsibility to oversee the services that they fund to ensure that these policies are being adhered to?

53 DCC Dublin City Council

54 DRHE Dublin Region Homeless Executive

Often when a family or advocate ring the DRHE to raise an issue, or highlight that there has just been a no notice bed cancellation, they are told that the service provider has a right to do that and the family are referred back to the service provider. But, should this be the case? There is a formal complaints system, which is not being used correctly or overseen by DRHE who are paying for the service.

Families, like Ann's, who are in crisis, are entitled to due process, and for clear and monitored procedures to be followed. Once an individual or family enters homelessness they are immediately vulnerable, at risk and exposed. They require additional protections and supports to vindicate their rights and entitlements.

So, for Ann and her daughters Jane and Olivia, what has been the impact of being homeless and constantly on the move.

At the moment they have no stability. Jane is at a critical point in her education, how will this impact on her future? Jane is so stressed that she cannot sleep. Her life is filled with worry and grief. She is grieving for a future that she feels is being taken from her because she cannot focus or do well in her exams when she does not have a safe and secure place to live and study. At the moment, all this family want is more stable homeless accommodation, so little to ask for.

As of early 2021 Ann, Jane and Olivia are still in homeless accommodation.

Story 6: Poor Health, Poor Housing

This is the story of O'Connor family who are living in very overcrowded conditions with their extended family. They are living in a small three bedroomed local authority house. Some members of the family also have significant health problems.

They are a good family but they are under terrible pressure. There are issues with poor health, and mental health issues, but they are dealing with terrible overcrowding.

The O'Connor children Joe 8, Jack Jr 10 and Eva 14 and their mother Jenny, are living in a house with four others.

On average there are eight people living in the home, including the three young children. Jenny's partner, the children's father Jack was also in the house, but he has moved out due to the overcrowding and tensions. Jack is still involved with his family.

Also in the house are Jenny's brothers Bryan and Dylan, and her mother and father, Liam and Sally. Three generations in the one small three bedroomed home.

Liam, the grandfather of the family, has serious health problems. Due to his health problems the main communal room of the house is used primarily for his care and there is a medical bed in the room 24/7. Because of his medical condition he has some mental health issues which can involve some aggressive outbursts. His mental health difficulties are due to his poor physical health. Sally, his wife, is his full-time carer.

Jenny's brother Dylan, who is 24, is in and out of the home, due to his own addiction problems. This has led him to have convictions, time in prison, time in rehabilitation and time out of the home due to overwhelming tensions.

There are also significant concerns about Jenny's younger brother Bryan who is 18, who appears to be depressed. He can be aggressive at home but has not been involved in crime, so he is not involved in any services. He is currently out of school and not in training or work and will not engage in any services. He is terribly angry and distressed, which is causing further tension in the home.

The two women in the home, Jenny and her mother Sally, are the carers for their family and are both under severe pressure. Sally is caring for her husband and Jenny is trying to care for and manage her children and their needs, she also tries to support her mother in her caring role. The mother/daughter interpersonal relationship is under pressure due to the pressure that these women are under. Although there are tensions between the women, they support one another in their caring roles. They would benefit from living separately but close to one another.

There are three men in the home, Liam, Bryan and Dylan, with mental health issues; Dylan in and out of the home with addiction problems, Liam with mental health problems stemming from physical health problems, and Bryan who is frustrated and angry.

Jenny's children also have some health problems. Eva, who is 14 often refuses to go to school and has been recently diagnosed with ADHD. The Co-op member organisation involved with this family linked Eva into supports for ADHD and Jenny feels that when Eva was availing of these supports, *the child blossomed*. But the supports stopped when Covid-19 hit. Joe and Jack Jr are now also developing behavioural issues, which Jenny's feels are due to the stressful conditions at home. How could they not be upset and stressed?

The children in this house Eva, Joe and Jack Jr, are living with this changing and stressful dynamic. However, they have nowhere else to go. Although Jenny works she is poorly paid and cannot afford rent in the private market. She is on the Dublin City Council waiting list, but there is no sign of her getting accommodated.

Covid-19 has made everything worse. Lockdown has meant that the family are at home, trapped in this stressful situation even more. The children, Eva, Jack Jr and Joe, were missing the respite that attending school offered them. At home they have little space for school work, play or to even to let off any steam.

Due to the overcrowding and the serious health issues, there are significant tensions within the home which has meant that Jenny feels she needs to leave as soon as possible. She is very distressed, and concerned about her family, and her three young children. She feels that the situation is getting so stressful that it is impacting on her children's educational and emotional wellbeing. It is a powder keg. Jenny was seriously considering leaving the home and making herself and her children homeless as things in the family home were so tense and overcrowded. However, this is a route Jenny does not want to take. Jenny, Eva, Joe and Jack Jr are literally stuck with nowhere else to go.

We have tried to link with the Jenny and help the children into services. Trying to get them all support, all the support they need, but without accommodation very little can change.

The Co-op member organisation who works with the O'Connor family has supported Jenny with budget management, youth services and applications for housing and employment, but

It all comes back to overcrowding, lack of opportunity and poverty. Intergenerational poverty, things were going OK until there was a crisis. They don't have the resources when there is a crisis. Although there are social services around they are hard for some people to engage with. The health service is linking with Liam now, when he is in crisis. Bryan has fallen out of education, but he is not in real trouble yet so it is very difficult to get him to engage.

The solution would be a local authority home in the local community, where Jenny can raise her family and support her mother, but there is very little local authority accommodation in the community and almost nowhere for her and her three children to go.

A safe and secure home is the basis for a happy family life. Without it the O'Connor family is suffering badly and the three children, Eva, Joe and Jack Jr, remain at real risk of experiencing long term negative consequences that will impact their entire lives as a result.

Alone, Abroad and Vulnerable

There are many Irish families and children who are vulnerable and in need in the inner city of Dublin. Many of these families have extended family support and/or some roots in their community, which can mean they have an element of support, local knowledge and language skills. However, it must be acknowledged that some remain very vulnerable and isolated. There is also a cohort of very vulnerable children, who are in families that are alone, abroad and vulnerable, meaning that they are new to Ireland. The children may have been born in Ireland, but their parents are often new to the country and may not have the extended network of family, friends and knowledge to cope when under pressure. Some very vulnerable children are non-Irish and/or Minority Ethnic Community (MEC) children who are contending with a range of issues (often with the addition of racism) with even less resources than their Irish peers. Below are some of their stories.

Story 7: Violence and Status Uncertainty

This is the experience of a migrant family with young children. Delbee is a migrant woman who is living with her two young sons, Batu 6 and Jargal 3, in Dublin's inner city. The boys were born in Ireland and have never been to their mother's homeland. This story shows the varied complex problems that a vulnerable family can experience.

Delbee has been in Ireland for 10 years, living in a violent relationship and rearing her two young children. Delbee had little income of her own and was unclear about her legal situation in Ireland. She was also living in overcrowded accommodation where space in the apartment had been sublet, so there were non-family members also living in her home.

Prior to Covid-19 things started to change for the family after Delbee suffered a horrific assault at the hands of her partner. Because of the assault Delbee had to spend many weeks in hospital recovering, so little Batu and Jargal were placed in foster care. Delbee's world was turned upside down. She was almost killed, and her children were taken away from her. While Delbee was seeking support in the aftermath of her assault her visa ran out, and as a result she was temporarily in Ireland illegally. Delbee no longer had an adequate income as the family no longer had the father's income. Delbee had no money, a vulnerable legal status and was living in overcrowded accommodation.

She was very vulnerable because of the visa issue, and she was afraid of engaging with services because she was afraid that her visa situation would come to light.

Delbee had experienced horrendous domestic violence over many years, some of which was perpetrated in front of her children. In the beginning she was unaware that she could get support for the abuse that she was experiencing, and she had been fearful to look for support due to her visa status.

She did have to learn that she was entitled to support, that the violence was not acceptable, and that there are supports. This was a big thing for her.

Her abuser, her husband, has since received a long prison sentence for his crimes.

The Gardai involved in her case really did extraordinary work to ensure he was sentenced for that length of time.

Man jailed for ‘horrificing’ knife attack on his ex-wife⁵⁵

A court heard the woman would have “drowned in her own blood” without immediate medical intervention. A man has been jailed for eight-and-a-half years for a “horrificing” knife attack on his former wife. He stabbed his then-wife four times inflicting two serious wounds, one breaking her sternum and another potentially fatal wound that caused her chest cavity to fill with blood. Following the attack, he told her that she should not tell the gardaí what had happened.

She had managed to get out of the apartment before collapsing on the street outside. He, who himself was hospitalised overnight after being found collapsed in the city centre with a “near lethal” blood alcohol level, handed himself into gardaí the following day, telling detectives he had “done something bad”. The woman was brought to the Mater Hospital where she underwent surgery. She remained in hospital and in step-down care for two months recovering from her injuries.

Judge Nolan imposed an eight-and-a-half-year sentence.

Delbee’s own community played a vital role in her life, particularly after the last assault. Though she had no family in Ireland, her friends visited her daily in hospital, bringing her cooked meals, sending her cards and gifts, and calling her and checking up on her constantly. It was powerful how Delbee’s community came to her aide when she needed them.

Despite the horror of the experience, Delbee’s family story is also positive. A range of statutory, community and voluntary agencies came together to support the family and attempt to repair some of the damage that was done to the Delbee and her two children, Batu and Jargal.

The Co-op member organisation that was working with Delbee, supported her with her accommodation issues, her legal status, and her children. In particular, they supported Batu and Jargal to deal with the trauma they had experienced so young in their lives, in particular the witnessing of the vicious assault on their mother by their father and their subsequent placement into temporary care.

The legal status situation: in the aftermath of her assault Delbee and her family’s legal status in Ireland became more complicated. Delbee had been on a Stamp Four Visa⁵⁶, which had expired. The Co-op member organisation assisting Delbee supported her to engage with her consulate. It was felt that it would not be safe for her to return to her own country, particularly prior to her husband’s court case.

⁵⁵ Stamp 4 indicates permission to stay in Ireland for a specified period, subject to conditions. Stamp 4 is reckonable as residence when applying for citizenship by naturalisation. Summary of conditions; You can take up employment and are not required to hold an Employment Permit; You can work in a profession, subject to conditions of the relevant professional or other bodies; You can establish and operate a business; You may access state funds and services as determined by Government departments or agencies; If you wish to stay in Ireland past the expiry date of your immigration permission, you must apply to renew your permission and registration before they expire. <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/registration-stamps>

⁵⁶ Stamp 4 indicates permission to stay in Ireland for a specified period, subject to conditions. Stamp 4 is reckonable as residence when applying for citizenship by naturalisation. Summary of conditions; You can take up employment and are not required to hold an Employment Permit; You can work in a profession, subject to conditions of the relevant professional or other bodies; You can establish and operate a business; You may access state funds and services as determined by Government departments or agencies; If you wish to stay in Ireland past the expiry date of your immigration permission, you must apply to renew your permission and registration before they expire. <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/registration-stamps>

She wouldn't have been protected, by law or society, domestic violence does not appear to be well criminalised there.

The home situation: The family were in a two bedroomed apartment where bedrooms were being sublet, as Delbee could not afford the rent. This had also been the case prior to the assault. Delbee and her children were sleeping in the sitting room.

The other tenants often worked night shifts, they were coming in and out at all different times of the day and would be cooking and waking up the kids, so it was not suitable at all.

The family couldn't afford private rented accommodation on their own, so they had sublet the apartment for many years. Delbee felt the landlord was aware of the subletting, and had turned a blind eye, but he said he was not and that Delbee had to get rid of the tenants. The Co-op member organisation involved in the case assisted Delbee in getting help from Vincent de Paul who provided Delbee with significant support. The subletting tenants left and Delbee and her two young sons Batu and Jargal are now living in the apartment alone.

Vincent de Paul had been paying her rent for the last few months.

This was not viable in the long term, so the Co-op member organisation supported Delbee to get a housing assistance payment, which was difficult as she did not fit all the criteria.

The children, Batu (6) and Jargal (3): the Co-op member organisation who was working with the family particularly focused on supporting Batu and Jargal. The children were accepted into the Co-op member organisation's early years' service and were also provided with play therapy. They also supported Delbee to get Batu into a primary school in the local community.

The two children were really badly affected. Especially Batu. He would shout out in childcare and when the garda visited (the crèche) and were showing them the Garda car, he reacted very badly. So, we referred him to play therapy. They witnessed the violence against their mother on an ongoing basis and they were present the day of the last violent attack. Play therapy was great for them.

The children's experience in foster care was positive and they had a supportive relationship with the foster care parents. Delbee, however, found the experience of her children being taken into foster care very traumatic. She did not fully understand at the time that it was temporary until she recovered from her injuries and could care for them again.

And now: the family's physical health is good, and their mental health is the best it has been. The family is safe. Delbee attended counselling. Batu and Jargal had play therapy and did a *ready steady school programme*⁵⁷ and they are getting on well.

The play therapy really, really helped. They are very, very chatty now.

Responding to Delbee's situation required a multi-agency approach to deal with all the issues affecting the family. Social Workers, the Vincent De Paul, a domestic violence refuge, One Family⁵⁸, the Consulate of Delbee's home country, Free Legal Aid, the hospital, An Garda Síochána and a solicitor (who provided support pro-bono), and the Co-op member organisation that was at the core of the multi-agency group.

Delbee's world was turned upside down, she came in and she had no visa, there was domestic violence, the children were taken away from her and she was in very overcrowded accommodation... She wouldn't have managed, the multi-agency approach is always the best way, but often agencies don't communicate, or they duplicate work. In this case, each agency worked and communicated really well. We did a kind of Meitheal⁵⁹ thing here. There is no meitheal process for adults, but we did meet up, to support her and the children. We created that good communication, and we were lucky that everyone worked really well. Delbee is such a special individual, everyone was touched by her story. Her resilience was just unbelievable. She was very humble and grateful for every bit of help she got. She felt empowered when he was charged. It was important that he got a custodial sentence.

Delbee is now in employment, supporting her two young sons in primary school, and she has been reunited with her older son, Saran. When Delbee left her own country, she had to leave Saran behind to be cared for by her family. Saran was her son from a previous relationship. After the jailing of her violent husband, Delbee was reunited with Saran who she had not seen in 10 years. Saran is now living with his mother and two younger brothers, working part time in Ireland and studying.

58 One Family work with lone parent families. <https://onefamily.ie/>

59 Meitheal is a Tusla-led Early Intervention Practice Model designed to ensure that the strengths and needs of children and their families are effectively identified, understood and responded to in a timely way so that children and families get the help and support needed to improve children's outcomes and realise their rights. It is an early intervention, multi-agency (when necessary) response, tailored to the needs of the individual child or young person. Meitheal is voluntary and can only be undertaken when the parent/carer provides their written consent. Meitheal is used in partnership with parents to help them share their own knowledge, expertise and concerns about their child and to hear the views of practitioners working with them. The ultimate goal is to enable parents and practitioners to work together to achieve a better life for the child. https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Master_Meitheal_Toolkit.pdf

Story 8: Food in a Foreign Land

One Co-op member organisation describes the unique and remarkably simple but life changing support that they were able to offer to families that were living in homeless provision in their catchment area prior to Covid-19. It was the opportunity to cook food for their own families, a simple but important power that most of us have, the ability to nourish our own children.

These families were living in privately run emergency homeless accommodation, which usually entails a family of three or four individuals sharing one room. In this accommodation food is provided and there are no kitchen or cooking facilities in the bedrooms. There is access to two microwaves in the dining area which residents could use.

Prior to the Covid-19, several emergency accommodations only provided breakfast and families had to be out of the accommodation during the day. Since the Covid-19 restrictions, accommodation must be provided to residents with three meals a day. In the facility referred to meals are always provided to families. These meals are prepared by the accommodation provider and families had to eat what was provided. Families got no choice in relation to the food that was on offer.

The families who were using the services of the Co-op member organisation were from non-Irish communities and had specific tastes and requirements in relation to the food that they wanted to eat. Due to living in emergency accommodation they could not cook the food that they would like to feed to their children. Parents could not teach their culture and nourish their children with food that they felt was culturally appropriate.

The families also felt that the food that they received in the emergency accommodation was not of good quality. It was often processed/pre-prepared food such as burgers or sausages and chips. Apart from noting the poor nutritional quality of the food it also has no reference to their culture and normal diet.

As a result, many of the families struggled with the food that they were getting.

There are a number of Muslim families and they can't eat the non halal food so they can't eat dinner. You know they might have breakfast, but they can't have dinners there.

Another issue was that the emergency accommodation provider served dinner at 4:30 pm. This is too early for many families (some have children at post primary school who are not even home at this time) and they are left with no food for the rest of the evening. Also, when Muslim families are observing Ramadan, this is wholly unsuitable as for large parts of the year it is still daylight at 4.30 pm. During Ramadan Muslims can only eat after sunset.

This Co-op member organisation supporting these families has HACCP⁶⁰ standard kitchen facilities and the space was free in the mornings. The member organisation offered this space and the cooking facilities to the families who were living in the private emergency accommodation to cook food of their choice there.

Immediately after the offer was made the families came and they cooked. They batch cooked for a few days and then brought the food back home with them. All the families who attended had children who they wanted to feed good quality, nutritious, culturally appropriate food. Over an 18-month period, six families availed of the kitchen facilities, with three families in attendance every day.

⁶⁰ HACCP (Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point) refers to procedures you must put in place to ensure the food you produce is safe. These procedures make up your food safety management system based on the [principles of HACCP](https://www.fsai.ie/food_businesses/haccp/haccp.html). Your food safety management system allows you to identify and control any hazards that could pose a danger to the preparation of safe food. It helps you to: identify what can go wrong; plan to prevent it; make sure you are doing it. HACCP is a legal requirement. https://www.fsai.ie/food_businesses/haccp/haccp.html

The families rotated to use the space with two people coming each day, which is what the space would allow. The Co-op member organisation worked out the timetable with the families, where bigger families who needed more time were given more time. The kitchen is well stocked with pots and pans

But some brought their own pressure cookers and things like that, and they brought big trolleys with them. The families cook from 10 to 12:30 every day and the place smelled wonderful!

Irish families who were resident in the homeless accommodation provider often had support from their own families outside of the accommodation. Many got family support for meals and additional food, as well as having somewhere to go, to relax, to escape the homeless accommodation for a while. But the non-Irish families did not have that extra support, so there is

A different environment for the non-Irish families.

All the non Irish families were homeless, but they were not asylum seekers, so they were either working, seeking employment and/or on a social welfare payment.

The cooking facilities support offered by the Co-op member organisation helped in many ways.

Food is a basic need. And you have to be able to provide food that is your own understanding of what you should be eating. The cultural aspect of food is important. Obviously if you're fasting, if you're going through Ramadan, then kids can't eat and then you have to break the fast, and you have the traditions and cultural practices that go with that.

Providing the space for people to cook, allowed the Co-op member organisation develop trusting relationships and connections with families and offer them further support.

One family who used this service was the Bennani family. The Bennani family are a single parent family, with mum Aleah, and her daughters Salma who is 14 and Samira who is 10. Aleah used the Co-op member organisation's facilities to cook for her family and both Salma and Samira also received family support offered by the Co-op member organisation.

The Bennani family of three lived in homeless accommodation in one room, an adult woman, a teenage girl, and a child. They had very different needs, and no one had any privacy.

The Bennani family were quite isolated. Mum Aleah had little knowledge about services that were available to herself or her daughters, such as medical support and the Co-op member organisation was concerned that the girls were very secluded and lonely. Aleah was fearful of allowing the children to mix very much outside of school.

The Co-op member organisation felt that Salma and Samira could be supported if they could join organised youth activities. Staff used their relationship with Aleah, which developed while she did her cooking, to try and support her and the children to meet people, and particularly for the girls to meet young people their own age. Salma also needed to see a dentist. Aleah was unaware that this service was available to her for free. The Co-op member organisation was able to advise her of these supports.

The staff at the Co-op member organisation also organised a volunteer, who attended once a week after the cooking, to teach English to Aleah.

The English teacher also taught English to another women, Yasmine. Yasmine had an extremely ill child, who needed constant care, as a result Yasmine had no time for herself and she had almost no English when she started the cooking. When she had finished using the cooking facilities, Yasmine was able to communicate in English!

Offering cooking facilities provided the opportunity to offer other supports and provide information about available services to Aleah and her two daughters Salam and Samira as well as to Yasmine. The provision of the cooking facilities and the building of relationships through regular interaction in a relaxed and trusting environment provided the opportunity to further help the mothers support and provide for their children.

The food is the way into other supports. The food offers them a way to survive, we then use it to develop a valuable link.

STORY 9: A MOTHER'S RESILIENCE

Prior to Covid-19 the Co-op was working with the Lakatos family who were reasonably new to Ireland. The family was made up of Mum Maria and Dad Lucas, and two young children, a boy Sami, 9 years of age and baby girl Florence. Lucas had spent a long period of time in hospital due to serious health problems which hit him soon after arriving in Ireland. His mobility has been affected and he needs accessible accommodation. He was a long-term patient in an acute hospital in Dublin. Maria and her two children, Sami and Florence were living in emergency homeless accommodation.

The Lakatos come from an extremely marginalised community. Sami, who was 9, spoke English and was attending primary school. However, his parents had extremely limited English and were not literate in their own first language. As a result Sami often translated for his mother which meant he was aware of all the family's struggles and private issues.

Mum Maria and her two children were living in a city centre hotel which provided emergency homeless accommodation. Lucas was in a suburban hospital which could not release him into the family's accommodation as he could not cope with his health needs. Maria was working and seeking to support herself and her young family.

Lucas was going quite crazy. As you can imagine, he was very isolated. His understanding of the social welfare system was extremely limited, the benefits, what work means in Ireland, the tax system and all that. He didn't understand a lot of things.

The Co-op provided support to this family, through Maria, trying to support her to access employment and to understand the social welfare and support systems that were available to her family.

The Lakatos' also struggled with some cultural issues. For example, there was a need to get childcare for baby Florence when Maria started to work part time. Lucas was fearful and hesitant.

Lucas had heard of children being taken into care, his English was very limited, and he only understood childcare as children being taken into care. So, he was terrified and against it. It taught me, as someone supporting the family, to be as clear as possible when explaining supports.

The Lakatos family needed one of them to be in the labour market and paying PRSI (as well as other taxes) to secure their right to be added to a council housing waiting list. Unfortunately, as soon as the family had arrived in Ireland Lucas became ill and was unable to work. He never had the opportunity to find employment.

Lucas was hospitalized after his arrival in Ireland. So, the family was in a situation where they needed somebody in the family to work otherwise they would have been completely isolated and there was no chance for them. The situation was Maria obviously needed to work. The Co-op managed to get her a job in the hotel business. (prior to Covid-19) working in accommodation, as a housekeeper. She commuted a very long distance every day she worked. She worked part time because she was the only active parent in the family.

Maria and her two young children, Sami and Florence, lived in the city centre while Lucas was in hospital in the suburbs. Sami went to school near the hospital and Maria worked in another outer Dublin suburb in a different direction. Therefore, on days when she was working, she had multiple long journeys to make to get to work.

On the days when she was working, Maria had to get up at five o'clock to get the kids ready. She brought them to the hospital suburb where Lucas is, which is not in the city centre. She then travelled back to the city centre to get another bus to another outer suburb to where her job is located. When she needed to be at work for nine o'clock, she had done a solid three hours traveling on public transport after preparing the kids and all that sort of stuff, just to get to work.

Sami goes to school near the hospital. On the days when Maria is not working, she goes out to the hospital, drops Sami to school and spends most of the day in and around the hospital with her husband or in and around the city centre.

Maria tried really hard for her family.

Her own formal education was non-existent. She didn't read or write, and she had very limited English.

She couldn't attend classes because on the days when she was not working she cared for her children and husband.

Sami, who was only 9 years old, was carrying a lot of the emotional weight of the family. He is a confident young boy, but his own future is being damaged by what is happening to his family. Due to the long distances that must be travelled and

the circumstances that his family were in Sami was not even attending school regularly.

Often Maria had appointments in the city centre and it was difficult for her to make those appointments and also get Sami to school in the suburbs.

The Lakatos family come from a very educationally marginalised community with little understanding or experience of formal education. As such they were unable to support their son, or even prioritise his education.

The fact is that Sami was quite isolated in the situation, he could not make friends. He didn't have a place to invite friends to. He went to school and he spent a number of hours with his classmates, but then he was away from that school because the family life revolves around the hospital, and their own accommodation centre. He was more mature than he should be down to life experience, he cared for his little sister and listened to his mother, he minded her in his own way.

There were also health concerns for both Sami and baby Florence. Apart from being isolated they were also overweight. Maria could not cook for them where they lived, and they relied on cheap fast food due to their own poverty and lack of access to cooking facilities. Maria was worried that baby Florence was getting constipated from the poor food. One week she bought medication which cost her €25. Maria lived on €250 a week so the medication cost her 10% of her weekly income.

Maria enjoyed her work. She welcomed the break that it gave her from her day-to-day demands but she was not a permanent staff member of the hotel. She temporarily lost her employment in January 2020 as the hotel was undergoing refurbishment, and then, due to Covid-19, her job evaporated as the hotel closed. Maria managed to get a new job working in the services industry where her previous experience in the hotel helped secure her new employment.

Before Covid-19 the Co-op supported Maria to apply for Family Income Supplement because she was working more than 20 hours per week. The Co-op also supported Maria to apply for Supplementary Welfare Allowance.

All these applications require paperwork, such as letters, payslips, bank account details and bank statements. Maria needed support with all this as she is not literate and cannot speak English. These are the daily difficulties faced by people who are educationally and socially disadvantaged as they try to navigate various social welfare and support systems, systems that people who are educationally and socially disadvantaged require the most.

There were papers missing. Okay, we remedy that, and we went back. Then we waited for about two hours to see somebody at the hatch, and we leave the missing documents with the social welfare officer. I therefore think the matter is closed that she's going to be put onto payments. But, no, no, no, the documents were sent to the place where she lives, so she needs to make another appointment.

Appointments had to be made in person which meant that Maria had to come to the social welfare office twice to be seen once.

It was also exceedingly difficult for Maria, who was homeless, to open a bank account, who needed it for receipt of her wages.

You need an address that you can prove that you have correspondence coming to. And that's incredibly hard for people in homeless accommodation. If it wasn't for the social worker in the hospital where Lucas is, and her incredible advocacy work and our work, I think it would have been almost impossible to open a bank account. It took so long that Maria worked for eight weeks without getting paid. It's incredible and I cannot stress this enough, she lives in poverty and she worked for eight weeks without payment because she could not get a bank account.

Maria worked so hard to get a small amount of money, to supplement her income and to get the family on the housing list, to improve her family's situation. All the time she was caring for her children Sami and baby Florence and also visiting and caring for her husband in hospital every day that she is not working.

Maria comes from a traditional community. Dad Lucas was wary of her working, getting support from outsiders or using childcare. Considerable effort was invested in supporting Maria to manage her interpersonal relationship with Luca in order to get her to where she is, to ensure that she was 'allowed' to do everything necessary to support her family. It was an additional pressure on Maria as woman and mother, that a man would not necessarily face, and such gender issues can add to the difficulty of these situations.

She tells me that they even had arguments (herself and her husband). He'd say no, you're not going to work today, because you need to bring me something. She says no, I need to go to work because otherwise I'm gonna lose my job then what's gonna happen? It is a very patriarchal community which brings another level of complexity, another dimension.

Women from this community are often the ones who engage with the State's systems to support their families much more than men. They meet with State services in relation to education and health, to access food and accommodation.

They tend to learn and understand and be a part of the system much faster. And the men can often remain more isolated from the system.

Maria was completely alone apart for the support from the Co-op and hospital social workers.

She doesn't have any family support whatsoever. Maria needs to do everything in the family. She needs to be a husband and a mother and the wife and this is probably why Sami is more grown up. Life is very hard for Maria and try as she might, the life chances of her children Sami and baby Florence continue to be limited.

During 2020 Tulsa opened (and then closed) a Meitheal⁶¹ intervention process for the Lakatos family and they were moved to emergency accommodation closer to where Dad Lucas is in hospital. By July 2021 however, there is no sign of suitable accommodation for them, a place where Lucas could come home from hospital and live.

Maria is amazing, she works for weeks for no money, she travels for hours, she is alone, she is very vulnerable but strong for her children.

There is real concern for Sami and baby Florence's future, will anything change? Or will they remain in poverty for their whole lives?

⁶¹ Meitheal is a Tulsa-led Early Intervention Practice Model designed to ensure that the strengths and needs of children and their families are effectively identified, understood and responded to in a timely way so that children and families get the help and support needed to improve children's outcomes and realise their rights. It is an early intervention, multi-agency (when necessary) response, tailored to the needs of the individual child or young person. Meitheal is voluntary and can only be undertaken when the parent/carer provides their written consent. Meitheal is used in partnership with parents to help them share their own knowledge, expertise and concerns about their child and to hear the views of practitioners working with them. The ultimate goal is to enable parents and practitioners to work together to achieve a better life for the child. https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Master_Meitheal_Toolkit.pdf

Early Years, After School & Youth Work

Vital Support for Children, Young People and Communities

Several Co-op member organisations provide early years, afterschool services and/or youth work supports for young people and children in the communities where they work. While the secondary benefits of these services are the provision of childcare for working parents and/or parents in education/training, the primary role of community-based early years, afterschool services and youth services is to provide educational and social support to children, families, and communities.

Many of the children and young people who attend these services are well supported in their home and communities. Many do well in school and have good social connections, but a significant cohort are vulnerable. These children and young people experience a range of issues such as poverty, social isolation and a lack of quality supports at home. They have often witnessed violence or addiction or are living with family mental health issues. Even for the many who live in caring, supportive homes, the communities they live in are under constant pressure from a range of social issues, such as addiction, poverty and crime, which fundamentally impact on the development, wellbeing, mental health and future prospects of these children and young people.

The services provided by Co-op member organisations include education, family support, food and critically, a safe and supportive environment for children and young people to play, develop, connect and learn. They also provide children and young people with the skills that can hopefully support them in breaking the cycle of poverty, marginalisation and disadvantage.

Covid-19 lockdowns have highlighted the enormous loss these services were to vulnerable children and young people and indirectly to their extended families. Such children often do not have the safety net that children and young people from more affluent backgrounds take for granted.

Children who attend early years and afterschool services get a nutritious meal (several provide hot meals) and all of the children and young people who attend such services enter a supportive, caring and professionally controlled environment. With Covid-19 lockdowns, many children and young people who were at risk of abuse and/or neglect but who were visible and supported by schools, creches, afterschools and youth projects, became invisible to these services and were left alone to fend within whatever family situation that they face every day.

Co-op member organisations that provide these services describe their experiences working with vulnerable children, young people and families.

Story 10: A Community Under Pressure

One of the Co-op member organisations provides afterschool services to children who are living in a specific small community in the inner city. For many years this community has been badly affected by poverty, disadvantage, dereliction, addiction, and criminality. When the afterschool was established, it was aimed at those who were most in need. In particular children who had been identified by local primary schools as struggling due to circumstances at home and/or in their community were prioritised. As time went on the afterschool service has taken on more and more children as it became increasingly evident that the need in the local community that they serve was great. The afterschool service, like others in the area, has a waiting list of children who want to attend. That being said

We hold places for children who are at risk, they are a priority for us. And the school would identify someone, and we would provide a place, those at risk don't go on a waiting list.

The afterschool service offers a hot nutritious meal, homework support, cooking and activities, including swimming. The service also organises educational trips, when they can find places that are free, as their funding is very limited. The children are collected from school and taken to the afterschool service every school day. The service is centrally based in the local community. There is no charge to parents, but during the summer programme parents are asked to provide a small contribution, which is mainly used to cover transport costs.

All the children that go to this afterschool service are affected by issues in the community where they live, such as open drug dealing and drug use, criminality and intimidation, and general dereliction. More than half of the children also face serious issues within their own homes; here are some of their stories.

Gillian, who is 9 years old, is often hungry. There is rarely nutritious food in her home. Her mother is in a lot of debt and therefore food is often not purchased. Gillian does not know if there will be food in the home when she wakes up. She also doesn't know if her father will be in the home when she wakes up. Gillian will always find a nutritious meal at the afterschool service and without it her nutritional intake would be seriously compromised. In the beginning Gillian would take more than her share, fearful there would not be enough, but now she knows that she will not be left hungry.

Mum to Gillian is after getting herself into a lot of debt to cover Christmas, communions, confirmations, school, but she would also get a lot of support from social services, like the welfare. But she doesn't know how to manage her money, with everything and she uses a money lender a lot. She is getting further and further into debt.

Sam very rarely gets home cooked food. When he first began attending the afterschool service he would not eat any fresh fruit or vegetables. Sam refused to eat anything that was not fast food. However, Sam loves cooking which he learned in the afterschool service as they not only provide hot meals they also teach the children how to cook. Sam now eats all the food offered and has learned to cook a selection of meals. Sam has asked his mum to buy fish and eggs so he can cook at home. Sam is 11 years old.

They get chipper food, fast food is food, as far as they understand. We have had children who came here, and wouldn't touch the healthy food. Their bags are full of sweets and no water. After learning to cook and experiencing more food they will eat a wider range at home.

The children like traditional meals! Ham and cabbage is a big favourite. They won't eat the veggies initially. They have very poor diets at home. They seem to just eat deep fat fryer food or food from the chipper.

Senan, who is 12 years old, has witnessed violence in his home on an ongoing basis. His father, who is now in prison, had badly beaten and terrorised his mother while he was in the home. Senan finds the afterschool service a safe place to relax. His younger brother comes too. They don't talk about what happened at home but everyone in their community knows and Senan knows they all talk about it. Sometimes Senan feels they are laughing at him.

Alex is related to several people involved in organised crime. One of his siblings died violently. Another sibling is in prison. Alex and his family are experiencing grief and stress, all of which make Alex very anxious. Alex enjoys the afterschool service because for a while every day he doesn't feel like he has to act like a hard man. Alex is 10 years of age.

One of the most important features of the afterschool service is that it provides the space for children to be children. In this community there is a street code where even young children feel they have to always present as strong and 'hard'. The children feel they must be fearless and willing to fight if they are offended or attacked in any way, real or perceived.

The children, because of where they live, they have to put up a front. Like, no one can mess with me, and they put up a big guard. Even with the Guards they put up this front. It often goes to violence because no one can say anything about me. So, it is hard for them. Hard on them where they live.

Daniel and his siblings live with his Nanny. Daniel's dad is in prison and his Mum has lost custody of her children due to her own addiction issues. Daniel's Nanny loves them but she doesn't really understand young children, and her son, Daniel's dad, intimidates her. Daniel's Mum lives in the same small area but he is not allowed to talk to her and his Nanny says terrible things about her at home. Daniel is sad a lot of the time at home. However, in the afterschool service, he feels like he can have fun. Daniel is 11 years of age.

So many families struggling with problems all together that it is the issue. The community is left with no spare resilience.

If it's not alcohol then it's drugs, then its poverty, then its debt then it's the money lenders. Money lending is a big issue.

Evie lives in a loving home with her mother and two sisters, but her mother is very seriously in debt. They have very little money and struggle to make ends meet. Even though still a child Evie is always conscious of money and of what she doesn't have (and what other children do have). Evie takes on a lot for a young child as one of her sisters has a serious illness and as a result Evie can be responsible for a lot in the home. Evie is 9 years of age and just needs a break sometimes. The afterschool service provides this break.

The afterschool service is for primary school children but Lizzy, Johnny and Laura who attend are in first year in post primary school and still go most days. All three are 12 years of age. The three children found moving to post primary school difficult and their own parents do not really understand post primary education. Lizzy, Johnny and Laura went to post primary schools outside their own area.

They want to come here next year but their age is a problem and we won't get funding for them.

These children need ongoing support, but the question is where will it come from?

Johnny is attending a middle-class school. Johnny struggled in ways he found difficult to articulate but largely because he felt like an imposter. Johnny attends a school that is far removed from the community where he lives and where the other children in the school have no idea what life is like in his community.

They (the school) didn't know about the support we gave him. They weren't supportive of him in the beginning as they didn't know what was going on for the child. They didn't find out at the start so there was no support.

It is hard for a working-class kid to go to such a middle-class school. He feels every bit of his identity is different and he found it hard at the start. He told us he hates that school. He said they don't talk to me. They feel like little aliens in those schools.

Post primary school and the transition involved put a lot of pressure on Lizzy, Johnny and Laura who were already three children struggling. They have no support in their homes. They are only 12 years old and suddenly they found themselves in a new environment without their friends with them. They felt alone, scared and isolated. They also struggled with schoolwork and were getting no support or help at home. This was mainly because their parents didn't know how to help and the children don't know how to ask. At the same time, schools often do not understand the child's struggles and the complexities and difficulties of their home environment. The afterschool service has always worked closely with schools to provide support and advocacy for children especially regarding the transition from primary to post primary school. The afterschool service's role in this regard is required as it is not being done by the family or extended family and without the afterschool service the children would have no-one advocating on their behalf.

Parents would say that if it was not for the project things would be very bad. There are so many things to look at, there is attendance at school and homework.

All the children in the afterschool service stories above, are experiencing complex problems and all live in the same small community. A community that is constantly under such pressure often does not have the resilience to cope thereby further exacerbating the vulnerabilities of already vulnerable children. Each one of these are children need that extra support with education, with social skills and with dealing with the issues that they experience.

Often their innocence is gone.

Without this project some of the children we are talking about would not be in school, they would be selling drugs. The project supports them.

When the children attend the afterschool service they get structure, care, support and most importantly, a place to be children.

They know they have security. They know they have comfort and they know that the door will never be closed on them. They are here when they are not at school. They are here for the summer project. They know that this gives them security. Without projects like ourselves we know that these children and families don't have that extra support.

The children who attend the afterschool service are aware of everything that goes on in their community. They are not protected from the trauma, pain, suffering, anger, hostility and hurt that goes on all around them.

The afterschool service is a safe place. It is the children's sanctuary. It is their little oasis where they can be children and where they are protected. It is a precious space.

Story 11: Afterschool; Taken Away?

Another Co-op member organisation (different to Story 10) provides an afterschool service in various locations in the inner city. Up until 2019 parents did not have to pay for their children to attend the afterschool. The children attending the afterschool service all attend DEIS⁶² primary schools in the inner city and are mainly from first to sixth class. The afterschool service provides a hot meal every day, the staff do homework with the children and then there is creative time which includes, art, drama and free play. The children's basic needs are provided for with a hot meal and a safe place, along with a child centred developmental programme.

Afterschool services were set up initially to offer support to disadvantaged children. In the beginning children were identified by the schools as needing additional support for a range of reasons. Children were coming from homes where the parents were less likely to be working. These families did not need childcare to enable a parent to work. Rather, what was required was additional social and/or educational support. These children needed to have somewhere safe to go to after school. Then, as the afterschool services were developed, more working parents wanted to send their children, because they needed childcare while they worked. So, it became a mixed service with both high need, vulnerable children and those who had less need for social and educational support but were from families with more childcare needs.

The afterschool services implemented by Co-op member organisations work closely with the local schools and they also liaise and support one another, in particularly around the needs of vulnerable children.

Since 2019, as a requirement from the funders (State agencies) afterschool services now have to charge fees. Parents who are on social welfare are now paying between €5 and €25 per week, per child, depending on their social welfare rate/payment.

Now there are children, who are often the most vulnerable, who no longer attend. Their parents can't/do not want to pay and/or don't recognise the value the afterschool gives their children.

The parents that need it the most, the ones that are lost, and are struggling with addiction, they don't want to pay for our service. So, they are just taking their children out, and then you are kinda worried about what the kids are doing when they get home. You don't know what they are up to, you don't know if they are getting fed.

As a result of changes in the fees system the children that we are most concerned about are no longer attending. And where are those children now?

William no longer comes to the afterschool service, he is 8 years of age. The afterschool service is worried about William because he was always hungry. There were genuine fears he was not getting enough nutritious food at home.

Chicken nuggets, chips and loads of cereal, that's what he gets.

Sally, who is 9 years of age, no longer comes to the afterschool service. Sally has a younger brother Luke who is 8 years of age. Luke used to attend the afterschool service too. Sally and Luke's parents are struggling with addiction and there are concerns for their welfare in the home. These concerns have been reported to Tulsa.

⁶² DEIS schools are schools that are designated as dealing with disadvantaged children. The Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools Plan 2017 contains a set of objectives & actions to support children who are at greatest risk of educational disadvantage. <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/DEIS-Delivering-Equality-of-Opportunity-in-Schools/>

One evening before they stopped attending they were forgotten about and left beyond two hours after the afterschool had ended. Till 8 in the evening... Parents then showed up under the influence, and you are struggling because you can't hand the children over to them... if you come to me and you are off your face drunk I have to contact someone else (one of the other contacts for the child(ren)) and if they don't or can't come I have to contact the Garda.

Children who live such experiences are significantly impacted upon.

Sally was quiet, in herself, sometimes she doesn't even eat. I've seen Luke take his lunch and just pour it into his bag..they don't know what they are going home to face. When they come in they are pale, they are not washed, they are not themselves.

Gillian is homeless, living in a family hub nearby. Gillian doesn't tell anyone, she is completely ashamed, but everyone knows. The children know because they see Gillian going into the hotel as it is in their community. Gillian is one of the 15% of children who was attending the afterschool who are homeless. But she no longer attends, her mother won't pay. Now Gillian sits in the hotel room with nothing to do, alone, rather than getting a meal with structured activities and support provided for her and her friends. Gillian is 12 years of age. She is so worried about going into secondary school and still being homeless that she feels sick inside, but Gillian says nothing to her mother as she knows her mother is already very upset and stressed. Gillian used to talk to the worker in the afterschool service but she can't do that anymore.

Michael who is 11, struggles to control his emotions. He is quick to anger and sadness. The afterschool service feels he may have ADHD but he has not been diagnosed. Michael's mum will not entertain any ideas that her son has a difficulty. She is also quick to anger. Michael no longer attends the afterschool service and he is now playing out on the street with older boys instead. Michael is very naïve and vulnerable to exploitation and the afterschool service staff are worried about what he might get involved in.

Several parents are not able to pay afterschool service fees while some will not prioritize this expenditure.

They got the service so long for free they don't want to pay.

Afterschool services have also struggled with the requirement of getting PPSN⁶³ details from parents. There are parents who are fearful of giving this information, in particular those who are not Irish.

The children who are no longer attend their local afterschool services are the most vulnerable. These children have lost an important support that supplied structure, a hot meal and a safe place where they could do their homework. It provided a secure, relaxed and fun environment for them to be in until the evening. It provided care, developmental work and also a watchful eye over vulnerable children. The afterschool services could and did refer children to other services such as Tusla if they were at risk. Afterschool services were often the first to spot child protection issues. Who is doing this work with these children now? Who is providing the watchful eye?

63 Personal Public Service Number (PPSN) Your PPSN is a unique reference number that is needed for all dealings with public service agencies, including Revenue. <https://www.revenue.ie/en/jobs-and-pensions/personal-public-service-number/index.aspx>, and required by funders for early years services.

Story 12: Too Many Struggles for One Child?

One community crèche that works with children in the community is alarmed at the number of children in their care who require additional support for autism spectrum disorders. In one year alone they had three very young children diagnosed as autistic. All three children are living in homeless accommodation and are from non-Irish families.

These children are from families that are already experiencing all the disadvantages of being homeless, being from Minority Ethnic Communities, and now they also have to contend with a disability diagnosis. They are somehow expected to manage all this with their limited resources. Many of the families also experience racism as a common occurrence.

The non-Irish children are very vulnerable

Sol Ibrahim lives with his 5 year old son Ali in emergency accommodation. They are in one room and the quality of the accommodation is very poor. Ali attended the crèche from the age of two. The crèche became concerned about his development and interaction with other children and staff early on. Dad Sol was also worried. At times Ali can get very distressed and can spend hours crying and screaming with almost nothing able to console him.

Sol is parenting alone and is struggling but he loves his young son. Sol is doing his best to provide everything Ali needs within his very limited resources. Sol has no family in Ireland and Ali's mother is no longer with the family.

I don't know how they live. It can be overwhelming when a child is severely autistic. They are totally isolated.

Sol is often alone dealing with his Ali's distress, and he is aware that other residents where he lives are annoyed about the noise and don't understand why Ali cries so much. The crèche helped to get Ali assessed and helped Sol access supports but even that was very difficult. Because the family are living in emergency accommodation, they could not get support in their home. As a result, Ali was getting some of his professional support in a local public playground.

Was Ali and his Dad Sol not entitled to something better than that?

The crèche, along with other organisations involved with the family, paid for private speech and language and play therapy. Ali came on tremendously. Without these organisations they would not get the supports and would have no chance to come on and develop.

Ali is missing out on supports because he is homeless. Dad Sol does not have other family around to help him, and even if he did, they could not come into the accommodation because it is against the rules. How many hurdles should one Dad and his young son have to face?

The Umar's are a family with three young children. Their second child, a 3 year old boy, Mobo, has been diagnosed as autistic. The Umar's are homeless and live in a homeless hub. The family have just had another baby, and this new baby child also has some health issues. Joy Umar, the children's mother, is depressed. Mum Joy is finding it very difficult to accept that Mobo has any difficulties and has now had a further blow upon learning that her very new baby may have a significant disability. Joy is very distressed about everything and is struggling to cope. Nassim, the children's father, explained:

Where they are from, in their culture to have a child who is not well in that way, they don't recognize them. They feel shame, as the culture where they come from can often shun families with children with those disabilities.

The Umar's did not recognise Mobo's difficulties, nor could they pay for an assessment. The community crèche fund raised for money to get the assessment done after talking to Mobo's parents about their concerns.

After the assessment was completed and the family got a diagnosis there was another whole set of challenges to be faced to access the resources that they require to support Mobo.

Even if Mobo's family gets support, even if they get 20 hours tuition⁶⁴, they cannot take that tuition, unless it is done through our crèche or building, because they don't have the space in their hotel room, how would they do it? It's a mine field.

The crèche works with those children who have additional needs on a one-to-one basis using the *Access and Inclusion Model* AIMS model⁶⁵. The AIMS model provides specific supports to ensure that children with disabilities can access the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme.⁶⁶ AIMS provides additional funds to a service provider to hire additional staff who can do one to one work with the child.

This is scary stuff, in all the years I have never seen so much diagnosis. I haven't a clue why! It's all across and it's in different cultures. At this point everybody is clutching at straws. Apart from the fact that we have seen so much of an increase of homelessness, the other issue is that there are children in that system, and they have special needs.

Ali and Mobo are two young children who are very developmentally delayed. Without the support the crèche offers their life chances were getting more and more damaged, damage they would carry with them for the rest of their lives. And, the crèche is full, there is a waiting list.

What about all the others not in services?

Families as described in our story above are already struggling with a range of issues including isolation, homelessness, dealing with applications in relation to their legal status in Ireland, addiction, mental health issues, racism and poverty.

The parents simply need help to navigate the system to get the supports that they need for their child (ren). When that help does not materialise what then?

⁶⁴ Some children get allocated additional tuition hours to support them, this is usually delivered in a child's home.

⁶⁵ <https://aim.gov.ie/>

⁶⁶ The Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE) programme is a universal two-year pre-school programme available to all children within the eligible age range.

It provides children with their first formal experience of early learning prior to commencing primary school. The programme is provided for three hours per day, five days per week over 38 weeks per year and the programme year runs from September to June each year.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2459ee-early-childhood-care-and-education-programme-ecce/>

Story 13: Generational Impact?

One of the Co-op member organisations runs a youth service in an inner-city area. Children and young people from this community, which has a long history of poverty and addiction, attend for a wide variety of activities and interventions. The service provides developmental youth activities for children, and young men and women in the community, including vibrant work with young people from minority ethnic communities. Several of the young people are vulnerable and very much in need of a trusted adult in their lives.

Mikey is one of the vulnerable young people who attends the youth service. Mikey, who is 15 years of age, has been attending the youth service since he was 7 years of age. Mikey attended even before the service were supposed to take him because he was so vulnerable and his needs so great. The youth service would not refuse him. As a young boy Mikey was very much at risk. His family were known to Tulsa and social work services were involved in his life. Mikey had already been referred as a child at risk.

When Mikey started attending the youth service he was very withdrawn. He had almost no confidence. Mikey wouldn't try anything new as he was so concerned with failing. He often stood just outside the group, watching but not participating.

Not surprising really, Mikey's parents, who love him dearly, struggled to cope. Both have a long history of addiction. At times they could be found nearby passed out on public streets, affected by drug use. Mikey's parents themselves came from families with a history of addiction and poverty, and their own parents struggled to cope. They are a family who have lots of love for their children, but few skills and almost no resilience. They are dealing with generations of neglect, poverty and trauma.

When Mikey was 10 years old his parents separated. Both were trying to cope with their own mental health and addiction issues. Mikey stayed with his Mum but remained very close to his Dad. His Dad loved him but struggled to provide a solid structure and support for him due to his own vulnerability. A number of Mikey's siblings went to live with their grandmother who was able to provide more structure for them, but Mikey wanted to stay with his mother.

For Mikey, in 2020, a difficult life got worse.

Early in 2020 Mikey and his Mum were homeless. They managed to get housed, but not in their own community. Mikey and his Mum were grateful for their new home but what support they previously had locally was now further removed. Mikey was further from the school and the youth service that were key links for stability and structure in his chaotic life. The family were also further from their own social network of friends and extended family.

Then, just as Covid-19 hit Ireland, Mikey's Dad died. Mikey's dad was a young man but years of addiction had taken their toll and when another illness struck his body could not cope.

When his Dad died, Mikey's pitiful inheritance left for him was his Dad's clothes and 'money for runners'. Mikey never got the money for the runners.

Before Covid-19 and the death of his Dad Mikey regularly engaged in the youth service and somewhat erratically attended school. During lockdown when school and youth work went online, Mikey disappeared. Lost to both. Mikey's day consisted of staying in bed, playing *Call of Duty*⁶⁷.

Mikey did not engage with any online schooling. Reason one, he didn't have a computer. Reason two, when one was provided to him he struggled to login. Reason three, he had no support at home, no assistance to get online, to help with dealing with all his school's requirements, so Mikey just disengaged. Mikey literally did not have the social, emotional, or educational skills to engage and very little support to do so.

67 A video game, based on being a first person shooter.

As the lockdown went on Mikey also lost touch with his close friends. He was living further away and not supposed to leave his 2 km and then 5 km area. Mikey was in a new area, grieving the recent loss of his Dad, with school and social supports only available online. Mikey became more and more isolated.

During this time, the youth service became so concerned about him they called out to Mikey's home to try to get him to link back in, to get him to go for a walk, just to even see him, to see if he was OK. When the youth service staff arrived, they found Mikey had been living in a house where the main front window had been smashed months earlier and remained unrepaired.

Now that the school and the youth programme are back open, physically, Mikey has started to reengage. Mikey's attendance at school has actually improved, possibly because it's an escape from home but when he returned to the youth programme the staff have found him to be extremely withdrawn. Mikey is physically hiding under his hood. His social skills have regressed, and the confidence that he had developed has waned. He also appears to have several health issues, including a skin condition, and very possibly malnutrition. Mikey's clothes are old, many of them his Dad's clothes, although a family support worker has bought him some new clothes and shoes. Mikey says he doesn't care but he does.

Most worrying is Mikey's mental health. It has become clear that Mikey is depressed and has suicidal ideation. The youth programme feel Mikey is at very high risk of self-harm. He needs mental health intervention urgently. An appointment with CAMHS⁶⁸ (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) was arranged for him but his Mum did not follow through. No one is sure why she did not as Mum is aware of the risk of suicide as it has affected her family before, but her own mental health is also not stable. Mikey's mother has been accessing services her whole life, sometimes not successfully, which means she might not trust services, or she may fear that Mikey will be taken from her. In many respects Mikey is all she has, and she loves him dearly.

Mikey is smart, interested in technology, funny, and well liked by his peers, but Mikey is also sad, anxious and unwell. He doesn't have the emotional language to articulate how he is feeling, or explain his needs. Mikey often comes across as sullen, distant or slightly aggressive, and the older he gets the less he will be recognised as the lost child he is.

During the various Covid-19 lockdowns, when youth workers were only able to see the young people online, it was almost impossible to assess their wellbeing. Since returning to face-to-face work, this one small youth service is aware of two young people self-harming and two who have attempted suicide.

These young men and women need timely access to mental health services, urgently. These young people are not well served by an appointment and wait system. When they acknowledge they need the help (or when it is recognised by others) they are already in crisis.

Mental health services should be there for children like Mikey, now, when they need them, without delay. How can he wait? Why is it ok that he has to wait?

⁶⁸ <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/camhs/>

Story 14: Under Siege, No Place to Live or Work

Community services, including creches and afterschool services, are provided in a range of buildings and spaces in Dublin's inner city. Some are beautiful and purpose built, others are not ideal, but organisations do their best. However, what goes on beyond the door of the organisation is critical. One organisation describes how they provide services to young children, teenagers and adults, while finding themselves almost under siege due to anti-social problems on the street where they are based.

The Co-op member organisation's main premises are based on a small inner city street, a street which has been marred by poverty, violence and crime for generations. There are famed stories from this part of the community, but the reality for the children and families who live there, and use the local services, is both stark and shockingly common place.

This is one of the biggest drug selling areas. It's a very small street, but there is dealing (drugs) all the time. Basically, it's a shop, no, an industry of drug supply. And it's open all the time. There's no end of the supply.

The Co-op member organisation based on this street has children attending for a crèche, young people at youth and education services, families coming and going, older people and adults getting adult education, all of whom, have to walk past and run the gauntlet of dealers and/or users on the street. As do the staff of the organisation virtually every day they work. It can be scary and intimidating.

With the drug users

Their behaviour can be chaotic.

With the dealers their

Behaviour is less chaotic, but they're on edge and you don't know whether they're armed.

For the local community this is their only way of getting access to local services that they and their children need.

Siobhan, a community activist of two decades standing and a respected staff member, describes a frightening and shocking incident that occurred on the street where their premises is located

As our children were leaving the crèche a gunshot was heard. It appears a gun was fired on the street (at a time when many of our children were on the street). The incident took place over a matter of minutes but could have resulted in a child being killed or seriously injured.

We have children under the age of five coming into our crèche every day. We have parents who are worn out from dealers asking if they want to buy tablets as they bring their small child into our crèche at 8.45 am every morning. Do the people living on this street and our participants, who are making efforts to affect positive change in their lives, not deserve the benefit of adequate policing? Or are they to normalise this level of anti-social behaviour and accept it as part of everyday living now?⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Part of a letter sent by the organisation to the Garda re the shooting incident.

In this small part of the community there are a range of issues at play. There is a sense that

There is a policy of containment, (which at official level is denied)

and that once the drug dealing doesn't leave this small area then it is allowed. The result of this, whether it is containment or not, is that the street is rife with drug dealers, their customers, intimidation, violence and the threat of violence.

A street in the capital city of Ireland where open drug dealing takes place daily has all but become normalised. Children and families living in the area have become so attuned to the behaviour on the street that they hardly seem aware of how far removed from normality such behaviour should be.

Elaine, another staff member working at the service, has noted that

the anxiety level amongst the young people who use our service has increased. Those young people, they're the most affected by the dealing outside our centre because they're the ones who have deliberately decided to do something different for themselves and not get involved in the drug dealing industry

People who do not live or work in these communities ask, why does it happen? Why does the local community allow it? Why don't they complain? Report it to An Garda Síochána? Well, that is all much easier said than done. The main reason the local community do not complain or challenge the dealing and the dealers directly is intimidation. Local people must live on the street and conduct their lives in the area 24/7. They have nowhere else to go, nowhere to escape to. Unlike An Garda Síochána and many staff, local people do not get to go home to the suburbs after making a complaint or when someone gets arrested as a result of their complaint. The people living on this street or in close proximity to it experience constant danger and/or the threat of danger. Even if they know the dealers, even if they grew up with them, the dealers scare them. Locals do not have to be regularly told or warned not to complain or talk to Garda, they just know. Its subtle, its embedded in the local culture. The most deeply ingrained local understanding is that whatever you do you do not become

*A rat*⁷⁰

and if you do provide information to the relevant authorities and this information becomes known then your life and that of your loved ones will be at risk.

David, a staff member working in a community development organisation based in the area asks a pertinent question

Why should residents in an inner city area of Ireland's capital city have to live with open drug dealing on their streets, why should they be forced to endure such brazen and flagrant criminal activity taking place in broad daylight as they try to go about their normal law abiding lives? We all know such behaviour would not be tolerated or permitted by An Garda Síochána and/or by other statutory agencies in more affluent areas. Running the gauntlet of drug dealing and drug use isn't something the residents of Foxrock or Blackrock or Killiney have to put up with so why should we?

⁷⁰ A Rat is Dublin slang for someone who provides An Garda Síochána information that leads to an arrest of another person and/or causes them difficulties with the law.

Where are we now?

2020 and 2021 have been strange and difficult years for everyone but vulnerable children have been particularly exposed and endangered by the extraordinary crisis that unfolded.

Tens of thousands of children across Ireland were vulnerable and disadvantaged before Covid-19 but their vulnerability and hardship worsened as a direct result of the pandemic. Children have missed out on education, social supports, access to safe and significant adults, nutritious food, play, sports and, at times, safe care.

These stories, covering a time period pre-Covid-19 (2018, 2019/early 2020) and during Covid-19 (2020/2021) highlight the true lived experiences of real children and their families in Dublin's inner city in 21st century Ireland, children and families that Dublin City Community Co-op and our members know well and whom we support and engage with directly.

The great shame of the way Ireland dealt with the last recession, the one that unfolded after the banking crash of 2008, is that children paid the heaviest price. A key question for the new coalition Government is whether we intend to do this again. This week (July 10th 2020), a survey of more than 700 second-level teachers by researchers at Trinity College Dublin found that students in disadvantaged secondary schools are three times more likely to have disengaged from their teachers during the lockdown. The picture is unlikely to be any brighter for children at primary school. It is clear that already the pandemic is exacerbating the existing problems of inequality.

Child poverty on this scale is disastrous, both for the individuals who suffer it and for society. Particularly in the early years, time is precious. Children who start to fall behind can be drawn into a vicious circle of alienation, low expectations and discouragement. The stress and stigma of poverty affect emotional and psychological development. The damage already done to vulnerable children during the lockdown is serious enough. But without rigorous and urgent attention to the further consequences of the recession, much of it will become permanent.

This harm is preventable. Children slipped off the agenda in the last economic crisis. Their welfare can and should be a priority for the new government. The new Minister for Children Roderic O'Gorman must be a relentless advocate for the creation of an immediate plan of action, but he should not be a lone voice. Child poverty must be seen for what it is: a threat to the health of the nation.⁷¹

102 years after our first Dail convened, children in Ireland still go hungry, lack appropriate accommodation, do not have the means to gain a good education and experience daily poverty. This is not an opinion. Our 14 Stories prove it is fact.

We should not be afraid of our new post-Covid-19 world. For vulnerable children though we should be afraid. Afraid that nothing will change.

⁷¹ The Irish Times view: impact of coronavirus on lives of children. Least visible group in our society must not be left behind again. <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/editorial/the-irish-times-view-impact-of-coronavirus-on-lives-of-children-1.4301461?mode=amp> Only part of the article has been reproduced.

Appendix One: Convention on the Rights of the Child

- 1. Definition of a child:** A child is any person under the age of 18.
- 2. No discrimination:** All children have all these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what they think, what they look like, if they are a boy or girl, if they have a disability, if they are rich or poor, and no matter who their parents or families are or what their parents or families believe or do. No child should be treated unfairly for any reason.
- 3. Best interests of the child:** When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children. Governments should make sure children are protected and looked after by their parents, or by other people when this is needed. Governments should make sure that people and places responsible for looking after children are doing a good job.
- 4. Making rights real:** Governments must do all they can to make sure that every child in their countries can enjoy all the rights in this Convention.
- 5. Family guidance as children develop:** Governments should let families and communities guide their children so that, as they grow up, they learn to use their rights in the best way. The more children grow, the less guidance they will need.
- 6. Life survival and development:** Every child has the right to be alive. Governments must make sure that children survive and develop in the best possible way.
- 7. Name and nationality:** Children must be registered when they are born and given a name which is officially recognized by the government. Children must have a nationality (belong to a country). Whenever possible, children should know their parents and be looked after by them.
- 8. Identity:** Children have the right to their own identity – an official record of who they are which includes their name, nationality and family relations. No one should take this away from them, but if this happens, governments must help children to quickly get their identity back.
- 9. Keeping families together:** Children should not be separated from their parents unless they are not being properly looked after – for example, if a parent hurts or does not take care of a child. Children whose parents don't live together should stay in contact with both parents unless this might harm the child.
- 10. Contact with parents across countries:** If a child lives in a different country than their parents, governments must let the child and parents travel so that they can stay in contact and be together.
- 11. Protection from kidnapping:** Governments must stop children being taken out of the country when this is against the law – for example, being kidnapped by someone or held abroad by a parent when the other parent does not agree.
- 12. Respect for children's views.** Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children seriously.
- 13. Sharing thoughts freely.** Children have the right to share freely with others what they learn, think and feel, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms other people.
- 14. Freedom of thought and religion.** Children can choose their own thoughts, opinions and religion, but this should not stop other people from enjoying their rights. Parents can guide children so that as they grow up, they learn to properly use this right.
- 15. Setting up or joining groups.** Children can join or set up groups or organisations, and they can meet with others, as long as this does not harm other people.
- 16. Protection of privacy.** Every child has the right to privacy. The law must protect children's privacy, family, home, communications and reputation (or good name) from any attack.
- 17. Access to information.** Children have the right to get information from the Internet, radio, television, newspapers, books and other sources. Adults should make sure the information they are getting is not harmful. Governments should encourage the media to share information from lots of different sources, in languages that all children can understand.

18. Responsibility of parents. Parents are the main people responsible for bringing up a child. When the child does not have any parents, another adult will have this responsibility and they are called a “guardian”. Parents and guardians should always consider what is best for that child. Governments should help them. Where a child has both parents, both of them should be responsible for bringing up the child.

19. Protection from violence. Governments must protect children from violence, abuse and being neglected by anyone who looks after them.

20. Children without families. Every child who cannot be looked after by their own family has the right to be looked after properly by people who respect the child’s religion, culture, language and other aspects of their life.

21. Children who are adopted: When children are adopted, the most important thing is to do what is best for them. If a child cannot be properly looked after in their own country – for example by living with another family – then they might be adopted in another country.

22. Refugee children. Children who move from their home country to another country as refugees (because it was not safe for them to stay there) should get help and protection and have the same rights as children born in that country.

23. Children with disabilities. Every child with a disability should enjoy the best possible life in society. Governments should remove all obstacles for children with disabilities to become independent and to participate actively in the community.

24. Health, water, food, environment. Children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a clean and safe environment to live in. All adults and children should have information about how to stay safe and healthy.

25. Review of a child’s placement. Every child who has been placed somewhere away from home - for their care, protection or health – should have their situation checked regularly to see if everything is going well and if this is still the best place for the child to be.

26. Social and economic help. Governments should provide money or other support to help children from poor families.

27. Food, clothing, a safe home. Children have the right to food, clothing and a safe place to live so they can develop in the best possible way. The government should help families and children who cannot afford this.

28. Access to education. Every child has the right to an education. Primary education should be free. Secondary and higher education should be available to every child. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible. Discipline in schools should respect children’s rights and never use violence.

29. Aims of education. Children’s education should help them fully develop their personalities, talents and abilities. It should teach them to understand their own rights, and to respect other people’s rights, cultures and differences. It should help them to live peacefully and protect the environment.

30. Minority culture, language and religion. Children have the right to use their own language, culture and religion - even if these are not shared by most people in the country where they live.

31. Rest, play, culture, arts. Every child has the right to rest, relax, play and to take part in cultural and creative activities.

32. Protection from harmful work. Children have the right to be protected from doing work that is dangerous or bad for their education, health or development. If children work, they have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

33. Protection from harmful drugs. Governments must protect children from taking, making, carrying or selling harmful drugs.

34. Protection from sexual abuse. The government should protect children from sexual exploitation (being taken advantage of) and sexual abuse, including by people forcing children to have sex for money, or making sexual pictures or films of them.

35. Prevention of sale and trafficking. Governments must make sure that children are not kidnapped or sold, or taken to other countries or places to be exploited (taken advantage of).

36. Protection from exploitation. Children have the right to be protected from all other kinds of exploitation (being taken advantage of), even if these are not specifically mentioned in this Convention.

37. Children in detention. Children who are accused of breaking the law should not be killed, tortured, treated cruelly, put in prison forever, or put in prison with adults. Prison should always be the last choice and only for the shortest possible time. Children in prison should have legal help and be able to stay in contact with their family.

38. Protection in war. Children have the right to be protected during war. No child under 15 can join the army or take part in war.

39. Recovery and reintegration. Children have the right to get help if they have been hurt, neglected, treated badly or affected by war, so they can get back their health and dignity.

40. Children who break the law. Children accused of breaking the law have the right to legal help and fair treatment. There should be lots of solutions to help these children become good members of their communities. Prison should only be the last choice.

41. Best law for children applies. If the laws of a country protect children's rights better than this Convention, then those laws should be used.

42. Everyone must know children's rights. Governments should actively tell children and adults about this Convention so that everyone knows about children's rights.

43 to 54. How the Convention works. These articles explain how governments, the United Nations – including the Committee on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF - and other organisations work to make sure all children enjoy all their rights.

Appendix Two: EU Child Guarantee⁷²

On the 14th of June, the Council of the EU adopted a recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee. The aim of the recommendation is to prevent and combat social exclusion of children in need by guaranteeing access to a set of key services, thereby also helping to uphold the rights of the child by combating child poverty and fostering equal opportunities.

In particular, it is recommended that member states guarantee effective and free access to early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities, at least one healthy meal each school day and healthcare, as well as effective access to healthy nutrition and adequate housing.

Our children are our future. The European Pillar of Social Rights action plan has set an ambitious target of reducing by five million by 2030 the number of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, and this was reinforced at the Porto Social Summit. The European Child Guarantee is a major step forward towards this goal. We need concerted action to make sure we tackle disadvantage and exclusion during our children's early years, to guarantee a brighter future for their adult life.

Ana Mendes Godinho, Minister of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security of Portugal (during Portuguese Presidency of EU)

Nearly 18 million children are at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU and the Covid-19 crisis is expected to exacerbate existing inequalities.

The EU Child Guarantee recommendation sets out a number of proposed measures for member states, such as:

- building a policy framework to address social exclusion of children
- identifying and addressing financial and non-financial barriers to participation in early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities
- providing at least one healthy meal each school day
- ensuring provision of educational materials, including digital educational tools, books, uniforms and any required clothing
- providing transport to early childhood education and care and education establishments
- ensuring equal and inclusive access to school-based activities, including participation in school trips and sport, leisure and cultural activities
- implementing accessible health promotion and disease prevention programmes targeting children in need and their families
- providing for priority and timely access to social housing or housing assistance for children in need and their families

Background and next steps

The European Child Guarantee is the first EU-level policy instrument which aims to address disadvantage and exclusion in childhood, which often lead to disadvantage in adult life. The Child Guarantee puts into practice Principle 11 of the European Pillar of Social Rights, on childcare and support for children. The Pillar is the EU's strategy to build a fair and inclusive social Europe.

⁷² <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/06/14/access-to-key-services-for-children-in-need-council-agrees-european-child-guarantee/>

The Child Guarantee recommendation stipulates that member states should nominate a national Child Guarantee Coordinator to coordinate and submit to the Commission, within nine months of the adoption of the recommendation, an action plan covering the period until 2030. Member states should report to the Commission on the progress in implementing this recommendation every two years.

The European Commission is tasked with reviewing the progress made and reporting to the Council five years after the adoption of the recommendation.

- Council Recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee, 14 June 2021
- Child guarantee for vulnerable children (European Commission)

Appendix Three: Dublin City Community Co-op

The Dublin Inner City Community Co-operative Society Limited ('the Co-op') was legally established in November 2014. We are an alliance of 13 grassroots Dublin inner city based community development organisations that came together to ensure the development and delivery of social, economic and cultural services continues within our communities.

The Co-op and its 13 member organisations are partially funded by the national Social Inclusion & Community Activation (SICAP) Programme and operate in the most disadvantaged areas of the inner city. The Co-op's members are operational in all of or parts of Dublin 1,3,7,8 as well as disadvantaged city areas in Dublin 2 and 4.

The Co-op receives funding through the SICAP Programme⁷³ and the Co-op also manages the Inner City Community Support Programme (ICCSP) funded by the Department of Rural & Community Development and Dublin City Council (DCC). ICCSP is additional to and complementary to the work of SICAP.

The Co-op also implements a Roma Employment & Training Project, A Strength-in-Diversity Migrant Inclusion Project and a Healthy Communities Project.

⁷³ The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2023 is a national programme which provides funding to tackle poverty and social exclusion through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. Administered by Pobal and funded through the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD), it also receives funding from the European Social Fund. The programme is managed at local level by Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) and actions are delivered by Programme Implementers (PIs). The Co-op is one of those Programme Implementers. The programme is implemented in the Dublin inner city area by the Co-op and its 13 member organisations.

North West Inner City Network

117-118 North King Street, Dublin 7, Ireland.

NWICN is a member-based community organisation comprised of community and voluntary organisations located in the north-west inner city. It conducts door-to-door consultations on a quarterly basis to identify the issues faced by residents living in the local authority flat complexes to ascertain the issues that they are encountering. The NWICN provides a range of supports to member groups, such as men's groups. It provides a range of educational and training programmes for all age groups.

An Siol CDP

19 Manor Street, Dublin, Ireland.

An Siol CDP delivers services and provides support to meet the needs of the residents of North West Inner City. For over 25 years it has been providing homework clubs, one to one tuition, early literacy supports and educational supports to children with special educational needs; meals and mini bus service, activities and a friendship service to senior citizens; advocacy for local residents and supports to tenants and residents groups; a free and confidential Welfare to Work Information Service.

Daughters of Charity Community Services

8/9 Henrietta Street, Dublin1, Ireland.

DoCCS are a community based organisation providing a range of educational, training and social care services for children, young people and adults in Dublin's North West Inner City area. They strengthen communities by encouraging individuals and families most marginalised to reach their full potential.

New Communities Partnership

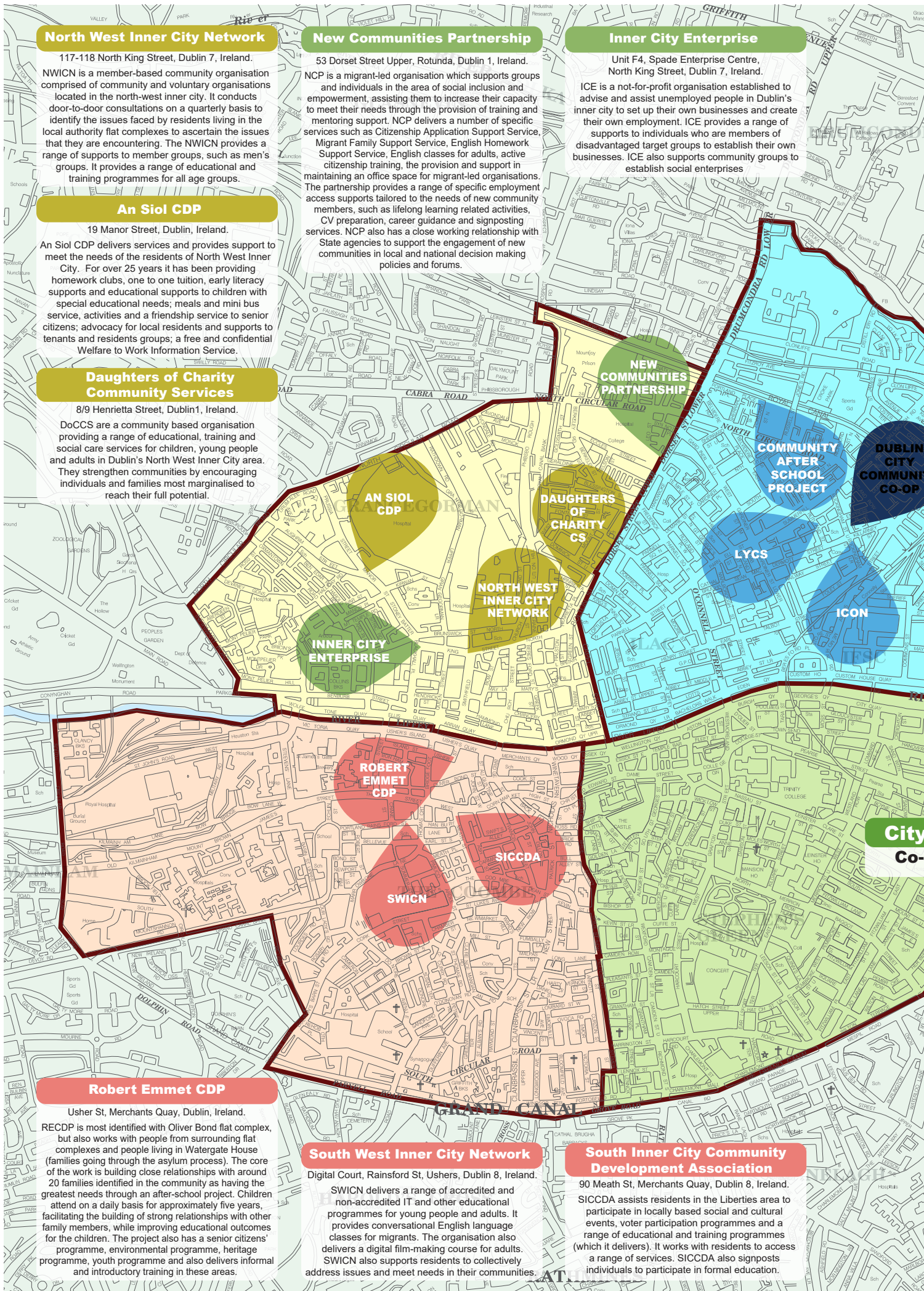
53 Dorset Street Upper, Rotunda, Dublin 1, Ireland.

NCP is a migrant-led organisation which supports groups and individuals in the area of social inclusion and empowerment, assisting them to increase their capacity to meet their needs through the provision of training and mentoring support. NCP delivers a number of specific services such as Citizenship Application Support Service, Migrant Family Support Service, English Homework Support Service, English classes for adults, active citizenship training, the provision and support in maintaining an office space for migrant-led organisations. The partnership provides a range of specific employment access supports tailored to the needs of new community members, such as lifelong learning related activities, CV preparation, career guidance and signposting services. NCP also has a close working relationship with State agencies to support the engagement of new communities in local and national decision making policies and forums.

Inner City Enterprise

Unit F4, Spade Enterprise Centre, North King Street, Dublin 7, Ireland.

ICE is a not-for-profit organisation established to advise and assist unemployed people in Dublin's inner city to set up their own businesses and create their own employment. ICE provides a range of supports to individuals who are members of disadvantaged target groups to establish their own businesses. ICE also supports community groups to establish social enterprises



Robert Emmet CDP

Usher St, Merchants Quay, Dublin, Ireland.

RECDP is most identified with Oliver Bond flat complex, but also works with people from surrounding flat complexes and people living in Watergate House (families going through the asylum process). The core of the work is building close relationships with around 20 families identified in the community as having the greatest needs through an after-school project. Children attend on a daily basis for approximately five years, facilitating the building of strong relationships with other family members, while improving educational outcomes for the children. The project also has a senior citizens' programme, environmental programme, heritage programme, youth programme and also delivers informal and introductory training in these areas.

South West Inner City Network

Digital Court, Rainsford St, Ushers, Dublin 8, Ireland.

SWICN delivers a range of accredited and non-accredited IT and other educational programmes for young people and adults. It provides conversational English language classes for migrants. The organisation also delivers a digital film-making course for adults. SWICN also supports residents to collectively address issues and meet needs in their communities.

South Inner City Community Development Association

90 Meath St, Merchants Quay, Dublin 8, Ireland.

SICCDA assists residents in the Liberties area to participate in locally based social and cultural events, voter participation programmes and a range of educational and training programmes (which it delivers). It works with residents to access a range of services. SICCD also signposts individuals to participate in formal education.

Community After Schools Project

1, Portland Square, Campbells Row,
Ballybough, Dublin 1, Ireland.

CASPr combines the delivery of after-school, homework-club and crèche activities for children with the provision of education and training for parents. The project aims to solve child poverty issues within the north inner city. The theme of the CASPr's work is to counter educational disadvantage in order to support children to remain in school, and adults to enter or re-enter training and employment, particularly those who have left school early, including long-term unemployed adults, lone parents and people recovering from addiction problems.

Lourdes Youth and Community Services

Rutland Street Lower, Mountjoy, Dublin, Ireland.

LYCS is a community development organisation which provides accredited and non-accredited training, educational and social programmes for local children, young people and adults each week in the north-east inner city. It operates the following programmes of work: childcare, youth work, Community Training Centre for early school leavers, adult education, development education and employment.

Dublin City Community CO-OP

Unit 1 Killarney Court, Buckingham St, Dublin 1, Ireland.

We are an alliance of 13 grassroots, Dublin inner city, community development organisations which have come together to ensure the much needed development and delivery of social, economic and cultural services continues within our communities. All 13 Coop members are partially funded by the national Social Inclusion Community Activation (SICAP) Programme and operate in the most disadvantaged areas of the inner city. The Coop's members are operational in all of or parts of Dublin 1,3,7,8 as well as disadvantaged city areas in Dublin 2 and 4.

Inner City Organisations Network

22 Buckingham Street Lower,
Mountjoy, Dublin 1, Ireland.

ICON is a forum of community and voluntary organisations and individuals living and working in the north-east inner city. ICON seeks to ensure the community has an active role in local developments and access to support, training, education and employment. The broad functions of ICON include campaigning and lobbying around issues identified within the community; encouraging local policy-making through debate and discussion forums; promoting a partnership approach and providing a catalyst to initiate relevant service responses.

North Wall CDP

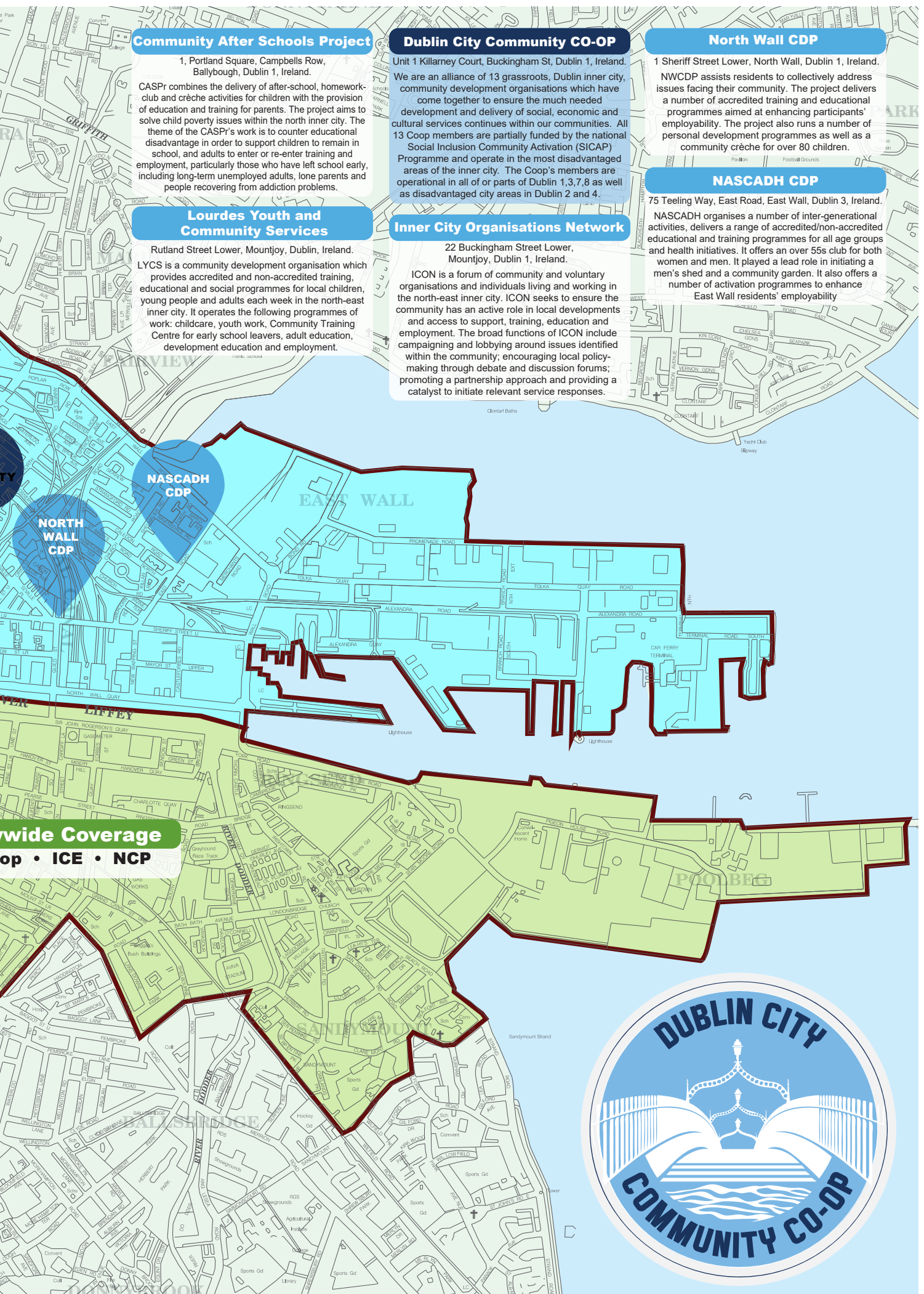
1 Sheriff Street Lower, North Wall, Dublin 1, Ireland.

NWCDP assists residents to collectively address issues facing their community. The project delivers a number of accredited training and educational programmes aimed at enhancing participants' employability. The project also runs a number of personal development programmes as well as a community crèche for over 80 children.

NASCADH CDP

75 Teeling Way, East Road, East Wall, Dublin 3, Ireland.

NASCADH organises a number of inter-generational activities, delivers a range of accredited/non-accredited educational and training programmes for all age groups and health initiatives. It offers an over 55s club for both women and men. It played a lead role in initiating a men's shed and a community garden. It also offers a number of activation programmes to enhance East Wall residents' employability



Wide Coverage
op • ICE • NCP



The Co-op Members are:⁷⁴



LYCS

Lourdes Youth and Community Services (LYCS) is an integrated community development organisation based in Dublin's North East inner city. Through its four programmes, LYCS works with approximately 250 children, young people and adults every week, in the areas of education and training, social, cultural and recreational activity.



SICCDA

Founded in 1982, South Inner City Community Development Association (SICCDA) is a community development organisation based in The Liberties in Dublin's South Inner City. SICCDA, working with a board made up of local residents, along with volunteers from the local community, is committed to and actively involved in tackling the social, educational, health, economic, and environmental problems facing the community.



North West Inner City Network

The North West Inner City Network (NWICN) is an independent member-based forum of Community and Voluntary Groups in the North West Inner City of Dublin. Established in 1997 by a group of local community activists, people living and working in the area, the Network seeks to ensure that the community has an active say in how their community is developed. It has a particular remit in relation to social inclusion.



South West Inner City Network (SWICN)

South West Inner City Network (SWICN) is a community organization, providing a wide range of services for adults and young people living in Dublin 8.



New Communities Partnership (NCP)

New Communities Partnership (NCP) is an independent national network of 175 immigrant led groups comprising of 65 nationalities with offices in Dublin's inner city and Cork with outreach to other cities.



Inner City Organisations Network (ICON)

ICON has its roots in over twenty years of community organisation in the north east inner city. It was formed to bring together all the local projects to fight against increasing local disadvantage and long-term unemployment and to make sure that local voices were heard.

⁷⁴ See map on previous page



Daughters of Charity Community Services

Daughters of Charity Community Services is a community based organisation providing a range of educational, training and social care services for children, young people and adults in Dublin's North Inner City.



Inner City Enterprise (ICE)

Inner City Enterprise (ICE) is a not-for-profit charity established to advise and assist unemployed people in Dublin's inner city to set up their own businesses or create their own self-employment.



North Wall CDP

The North Wall Community Development Project (CDP) is a not-for-profit community development organisation based in Lower Sheriff Street and Seville Place, Dublin 1.



Robert Emmet CDP

The Robert Emmet Community Development Project works in Dublin's South West Inner City. It is a grassroots organisation with a small local independent board of directors. There are 3 members of staff and over 20 volunteers.



C.A.S.Pr

Community After Schools Project (CASPr) provides educational services and childcare in the North East Inner City, to enable people to escape poverty and access employment. The project's childcare services aim to provide a fun, safe learning environment for children.



An Siol

An Siol CDP is a Community Development Project that has been based in the Stoneybatter area for over 10 years.



Nascadh

NASCADH is a Community Development Project operating in the East Wall area of Dublin's inner city.



www.dublincitycommunityco-op.ie

Dublin City Community Co-op is a registered charity, registered charity number 20107079, and we are located at Unit 1 Killarney Court, Buckingham Street, Dublin 1