

February
2005

ISSN: 1649-4954

Housing and Accommodation

CORI JUSTICE COMMISSION

Policy Briefing

Ireland urgently needs a comprehensive, integrated national housing policy. The need for such a policy is crystal clear given the challenges currently being faced in the provision of accommodation. While private housing output is one of the highest in the EU, Ireland's social housing output is one of the lowest. Waiting lists persist while a quarter of all new houses built are second (i.e. holiday) homes. Even more significantly Ireland's population, which reached the four million mark in the past year is set to exceed five million within the next fifteen years.

The past year has seen a major positive development with the publication by the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) of its major study on housing entitled *Housing in Ireland; Performance and Policy*. This report highlights the importance of social housing and advocates a target of 200,000 social housing units to be reached by 2012. This would increase the present supply (127,000 units) by 73,000 over an eight year period.

This NESC recommendation is strongly supported by CORI Justice Commission.

Increased social housing provision is essential if Ireland is to have a viable future. The current pace at which this increase is being provided is completely inadequate. Voluntary/non-profit and co-op housing associations are managing 16,500 units at present and have a major contribution to make to achieving the NESC target. Local authorities, however, have the primary responsibility to ensure that all people have access to appropriate accommodation.

But resources are required. NESC estimates that, given the present level of capital expenditure, an additional investment per annum of €500m to €600m would be required to meet the target by 2012. Provision for this increased expenditure should be made in Government's planning for each of the years ahead.

This should be seen as a good investment, not as another 'cost' to the Exchequer. It would go

some way towards addressing Ireland's current infrastructure deficit.

This increased expenditure could be part-funded by ensuring that people purchasing second homes should have to pay the full infrastructural costs (e.g. roads, water, sewage, electricity), much of which is currently borne by society through the Exchequer.

Vulnerable groups are of particular concern in developing housing policy. Many such groups (people with disabilities, Travellers, homeless people as well as some older people and some rural dwellers), have a high risk of being in poverty and are doubly-disadvantaged by their lack of appropriate accommodation. Housing policy needs to be integrated with other social and care supports to enable vulnerable people to live independent lives.

For the first time in its history Ireland has sufficient resources to ensure that everyone here has appropriate accommodation. All it requires is political will.

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Inside this issue:

NESC report on housing in Ireland	2	Children and housing	5
Waiting lists and population growth	3	Disability and housing	6
House completions and housing stock	4	Policy recommendations	7
Poverty and housing status	5	Homelessness	8

Policy Briefing is a regular publication issued by the CORI Justice Office. It addresses a wide range of current policy issues from the perspective of those who are poor and/or socially excluded. Comments, observations and suggestions on this briefing are welcome.

NESC report on housing in Ireland

At the end of 2004 the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) published a major report on housing. Entitled *Housing in Ireland: Performance and Policy* the report spans over 230 pages and provides guidelines for the future direction of policy in this area.

In particular, the report makes important suggestions for policy initiatives focused on social housing (see below).

Overall, NESC concluded that it was particularly concerned about two issues. These are:

- the quality of the neighbourhoods, villages, towns and cities being constructed in Ireland
- and the provision of social and affordable housing

They also stress that adequately addressing these two issues will not be easy and that “the magnitude and significance of this challenge needs to be recognised”.

In reviewing the current situation of the Irish housing system the Council pinpointed three anxieties. These are:

Stability: the stability of the housing sector in the next few years will be important. This sector is now a major employer in the economy and the projected declines in the number of house completions in the coming years needs to be managed. Simultaneously, the ongoing existence of unmet need for social housing threatens to produce instability.

Inequality: the housing sector has generated inequality through being unable to meet the housing needs of many of those on low incomes and a number of other social groups. Furthermore, recent changes in property prices has been the source of very significant changes in the distribution of wealth and income in Irish society.

Sustainability: the study also identified concerns about the patterns of settlement, neighbourhood design and

density in the Irish housing system. NESC found that a strong case can be made that we are storing up significant social, environmental, budgetary and economic problems for the years to come.

Taking these three issues together NESC concluded that “the Irish housing system has been dynamic, but unbalanced”.

Overall, the report identifies four key policy challenges:

- To achieve high quality, sustainable, development in both urban and rural areas
- To provide an effective range of supports to those households that fall below the affordability threshold
- To assist the market to continue to provide a high level of supply
- To ensure a tax and subsidy regime that supports these goals

Emphasising the importance of social housing

A central conclusion of the NESC housing report is that the supply of social housing will have to rise dramatically if the needs of Irish society are to be addressed in the years ahead. The main recommendation of the council on the issue of social housing calls on Government to:

Create an expanded and more flexible stock of social housing - adding in the order of 73,000 permanent social housing units to bring the stock to 200,000 dwellings by 2012 - in a manner that is

consistent with other public investment needs and sound public finances (p221).

The year 2012 was chosen as it will mark the year when the next National Development Plan concludes. The figure of 200,000 social housing units has been calculated based on the projected increases in the Irish population over that period and in the context of limited responses to existing social housing needs (e.g. homelessness, community based accommodation for disabled and elderly persons).

The scale of the challenge facing Irish society can be gauged from the fact that at the end of 2004 the total stock of social housing (including units managed by both local authorities and the voluntary and cooperative housing sector) stood at about 127,000.

NESC concluded that to achieve the target of 200,000 units over the eight year period between 2005 and 2012, an annual increase of in excess of 9,000 units is necessary.

The NESC study notes that an estimated capital investment of €1.4bn a year would be required to achieve a net increase of 73,000 units by 2012. Given the present level of capital expenditure this would mean an additional investment per annum of the scale of €500m to €600m on what is already projected.

CORI Justice Commission believes that reaching the NESC target for social housing in 2012 is essential if Ireland is to achieve the goal of ensuring that everyone in the country has appropriate accommodation.

Table 1: The Role of Social Housing in Ireland 2012

	2012
Total no. of dwellings (000s)	1,653
Social housing as a % of total	12.0
Number of social housing units (000s)	200.0
Population of Ireland (000s)	4,505
Social housing units per thousand	44.4

Source: Data are based on NESC projection (see report p152-153) and CSO (2004:26) projections for 2011 (assumption M1F1)

Waiting lists: how many people and for how long?

The most recent assessment of local authority waiting lists occurred on the 28th of March 2002 and was reported in the September 2002 *Housing Statistics Bulletin* from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. It found that there was a total of 48,413 households on local-authority housing waiting lists. This figure represents a growth rate of 76.5 per cent since 1996, and indicates that across Ireland about 130,000 people are in need of accommodation.

A closer examination of the 48,413 households on the waiting lists is presented in table 2 below. It shows that the largest category of households on the lists are those labelled as being not able to meet costs of existing accommodation. This group accounts for 44 per cent of the waiting list or 21,452 households. The *Housing Statistics Bulletin* further indicates that since an

earlier assessment in 1999 this group has grown from a situation where it accounted for 34 per cent of the list.

This growth can be directly related to the excessive house price and rent increases over recent years. A comparison with the 1999 figures also reveals that all but two of the categories experienced a growth in the number of households on the waiting lists. These are “existing accommodation unfit” and “elderly persons”.

Analysis of the 2002 figures also reveals that 32 per cent (15,522) of all those households on the waiting lists consist of single-person households. Single-parent households, consisting of one adult and one child, make up a further 29 per cent (14,039) of the waiting list.

When the 48,413 households are classified by the length of time they have spent on the waiting list the figures reveal that 25 per cent of all house-

holds have been waiting for more than three years. A further 14 per cent are on the list for between 2-3 years while 22 per cent are waiting for between 1-2 years. The remaining 38 per cent have been waiting for less than a year (including those classified as first time).

An update on these waiting list figures is due during 2005 and it is expected that they will show some decrease. However, in the context of such large waiting lists more progress needs to be made. Achieving that progress requires a greater commitment to providing social housing. Implementing NESC’s social housing recommendation (see page 2) will significantly address this problem and move Ireland closer to achieving CORI Justice Commissions core policy objective of ensuring that appropriate accommodation is available for all.

Table 2: Breakdown of the Local Authority Housing Waiting List, 2002

Category	%	Category	%
Unable to meet costs of current	44.31	Homeless	5.10
Existing accom. overcrowded	17.58	Elderly persons	4.14
Involuntary sharing	9.13	Travellers	3.27
Existing accom unfit	8.40	Disabled/handicapped	0.87
Medical/compassionate grounds	7.02	Total no. of households	48,413

Source: Calculated from Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, *Housing Statistics Bulletin*, September 2002:59

Population growth and housing needs

Recently the Central Statistics Office (CSO) published a report on expected population trends for Ireland. Entitled *Population and Labour Force Projections, 2006-2036* the detail of the report is relevant to our assessments of future housing needs.

As table 3 shows the CSO forecast that Ireland’s population will climb from approximately 4 million people today to 5 million people by 2121 and on to 5.8 million people in 2036. In simple terms, this implies that our population will increase by almost 2 million people

in just 34 years (2002-2036).

There are major implications for housing and accommodation policy as a result of these projections. Accommodation will have to be provided for these extra people, many of whom the CSO project will be migrants coming to live and work in Ireland (at 38,000 per year for the next decade). Privately owned accommodation will play a major part in providing these accommodation places but so too will social housing and these projections further underscore the critical need to increase this stock.

Table 3: Irish Population, 2001-2036

Year	Population
2002	3,917,000
2006	4,168,000
2011	4,505,000
2016	4,854,000
2021	5,140,000
2026	5,399,000
2031	5,613,000
2036	5,820,000

Source: CSO population data (2004:26,32)

Housing completions

The latest figures for house completions derive from 2003. In that year there was a record increase in total house completions of over 19% producing 68,819 new homes. However, in spite of the significant growth in the number of houses, the experience of the private and public sectors are very different.

In 2003 the vast majority of new houses (91 per cent) were built by the private sector. Local authorities built 4,516 new homes in 2003, an increase of 113 since 2002. While this increase is welcome, the rate of increase has slowed dramatically over recent years and a larger rate of growth must be achieved in the years to come if commitments given by Government in the National Development Plan are to be met.

In spite of the significant growth in the number of houses the experience of the private and public sectors are very different

The figures for 2003 do reveal a continued growth in voluntary/non-profit and co-op housing. These organisations built 1,617 houses during that year. They now account for over one third of all publicly assisted housing completions. Currently they are managing a stock of over 16,500 dwellings. This trend is very welcome and underscores the growing role this sector is playing. CORI Justice Commission believes this sector has a major contribution to make in addressing the current housing crisis and that government must give further assistance to facilitating its continued growth.

More households were joining the waiting list each year than there were houses being made available

Further figures from 2003 show the inadequacy of local authorities' response. At a time of such need, the total number of local authority completions plus acquisitions (456 houses) remains low at 4,972. In fact this figures marks a decrease from the 2002 and 2001 total figures (of 5,073 and 5,022 respectively). The fact that these figures report a decrease is a major disappointment. However current indications for 2004 suggest that the total figure will climb again to approximately 6,363 units. In spite of this, more households were joining the waiting list each year than there were houses being made available. Clearly additional government investment in social housing is urgently required.

Report on housing stock

A special report from the CSO in 2004 reviewed households in Ireland assessing levels of rents, mortgages and ownership patterns. Table 4 presents results from that survey which tell us the structure of home tenure patterns across the 1.38 million households that are in Ireland

The proportion of owner occupiers remains high at 72.3 per cent and that figure becomes even higher if you include those in the process of acquiring their homes from local authorities. Some 44,220 households (3.2 per cent) are in this category. In all just over 220,000 households (16.1 per cent) rent their homes.

Table 4: Profile of Ireland Households, 2003

Household type	%
Owner occupied	72.3
Acquiring from local authority	3.2
Rented	16.1
Others	1.3
Not stated	7.2
Total	100.0
Total number of households	1,381,900

Rent supplement

There have been substantial changes to the rent supplement programme over the past year. Following on the furore caused by the changes introduced as part of Budget 2004, Government has now taken a number of initiatives to address the concerns raised by CORI Justice Commission and others at that time. The work done by the Social Partnership Working Group on this issue has been crucial in this regard.

Some of the most contentious initiatives, such as the imposition of a six-month rule, have been replaced by more user-friendly procedures.

Of greater importance, however, is the recognition by Government that the rent supplement programme, originally designed as an emergency intervention, had expanded into a housing payment for a great many people who had spent several years in receipt of rent supplement. The introduction of the new Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) is a welcome move in the right direction.

The dilemma facing Government was whether to invest in 'bricks and mortar subsidies' to provide more social accommodation, or to use personal rent subsidies for accommodating low-income households. This is a dilemma being faced by many EU countries. The Irish Government's decision to develop RAS and provide the first allocation of funding is welcomed by CORI Justice Commission.

Poverty and housing status

The first results of a new pan-European survey on income and living conditions was published in late January 2005. It found that Ireland had experienced a sustained increase in the number of those classified as living in poverty. In 2003, the year for which latest figures are available, some 22.7 per cent of all those living in Ireland were at risk of poverty. This figure has increased from just less than 20 per cent in 1998.

The link between low income and housing status was best illustrated in the results of the 1999-2000 *Household Budget Survey*. They revealed that when all the state's households are classified by tenure (ownership/rent status) those households who rented from local authorities had the lowest income. These households recorded an average disposable income

of €306.85 per week. This income level was 44.4% below the national average of €551.60.

Another study published in November 2002 by Dublin City Council provided a very informative report profiling its tenants. The report entitled *Profile of Households Accommodated by Dublin City Council* presented an insight into the socio-demographic, income and spatial patterns of 24,073 households and 67,960 individuals during 2001. The survey's findings are quiet stark.

Using an updated 50% of median income poverty line for 2001, the report found that 62.5% of all households accommodated by Dublin City Council were in poverty. This figure is enormous when compared to the corresponding figure for the overall population in 2000. When income levels were assessed by person, the report

concluded that 60.7% of all those living in Dublin City Council accommodation were at risk of poverty. This figure is three times the equivalent percentage in the national population for 2000.

The poverty status of children living in City Council accommodation is particularly startling. Of the 25,050 children living in these households, 65.9% were living in households at risk of poverty. This equates to approximately 16,500 children. Again when a comparison is made between this situation and the national picture the extent of the poverty recorded becomes more visible. In 1998, 26% of Ireland's children lived in households with income below the poverty line. Therefore child poverty among the population housed by Dublin City Council runs at 2.5 times the national level.

Fuel poverty

Increasingly, assessments of poverty in Ireland have attempted to broaden our understanding of those who experience it. In particular, a greater focus is being placed on measuring deprivation. Although there is currently limited data available, one area that has received recent attention is deprivation of heat in the home often labelled as fuel poverty.

A study by Jonathan Healy of the Combat Poverty Agency found that 227,000 homes in Ireland experience fuel poverty. This equates to approximately 17.5 per cent of the total housing stock.

The risk of being in fuel poverty was found to be highest among social welfare recipients, lone parents, local authority tenants, households with children and among the elderly. The repercussions of not having enough heat in the home can be severe for many and in particular for the elderly. The report suggests that the presence of fuel poverty could be a factor in as many as 2,000 winter deaths each year.

Addressing this issue, like all issues associated with poverty and deprivation, requires a multi-faceted approach. Clearly, living on a low income is a major factor and underscores the need to continue to increase the income levels of those dependent on state pensions, unemployment benefit or living on the minimum wage. A further policy is to target households that require assistance in becoming more energy efficient. In particular many older local authority houses need to be upgraded.

Children and housing

Living in housing that is overcrowded, damp, in disrepair or in a poor neighbourhood can be damaging to people of all ages. However, its impact on children's welfare tends to be very significant.

A study produced for the Children's Research Centre at Trinity College Dublin by Simon Brooke found that between 1991 and 2002 the numbers of children living in these conditions doubled. According to the report entitled *Housing Problems and Irish Children* there are now 50,000 children living in such conditions. The report found that there is a concentration of these problems among children in one-parent families and among those living in rented accommodation. In response to this problem the report suggested that local authorities need to create a specific fund to provide regular maintenance of their dwellings. Furthermore the report called for the current minimum standards set for the private rented sector to be raised and that these be enforced by local authorities. Finally the report suggested that the National Children's Strategy be revised to include housing as a "basic need".

CORI Justice Commission welcomes the recommendations of this report. As we have previously highlighted Ireland has a serious problem with child poverty (1 in every 4 children live in households at risk of poverty). Continually research has pointed out that low income and low accommodation standards are associated with poor health levels and poor future educational and life opportunities. More resources need to be allocated to this area.

Disability and housing

As we have highlighted over the last number of *Policy Briefings* people with disabilities in Ireland have very high risks of being in poverty, experience sustained difficulty in securing work and are a group with a high exposure to social exclusion.

The most recent data on the number of people with a disability in Ireland was produced by the CSO as part of their *Quarterly National Household Survey* in the first quarter of 2004. These results were published in December 2004.

They found that almost 11 per cent of all adults in Ireland had a long standing health problem or disability. This equates to 298,300 people.

Housing issues are very important for

“a particular gap is the lack of a strategic framework to support the provision of tailored housing and housing supports for people with disabilities” NESC (2004)

those with a disability. CORI Justice Commission welcomes the recognition by NESC in its recent review of housing policy that “a particular gap is the

lack of a strategic framework to support the provision of tailored housing and housing supports for people with disabilities” (2004:157). In the past we have given attention to the severe dif-

iculties many people with disabilities have in securing assistance from their local authorities to cope with the costs of adjusting their residences to ensure access and continued use.

Surely this is the most basic of social inclusion policies and the long waiting lists that exist need to be addressed urgently.

Traveller accommodation

Results from the most recent Census of Population show that in 2002 there were 23,700 members of the Travelling community in Ireland. The 2003 Annual Count of Travellers found there were 6,799 Traveller families in the State. As a minority group, Travellers have been very exposed to social exclusion and in particular have experienced continued problems with the provision of accommodation.

Responding to the recent report of The National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (published in January 2005) the Minister of State for

Housing, Noel Ahern, admitted that the pace at which Traveller accommodation is provided is too slow. A similar view was expressed by the Council of Europe in May 2004.

Since 1998 all Local Authorities have been required to provide multi-annual Traveller accommodation plans. Traveller organisations have reported that between 2000 and 2003 no Local Authority delivered on its plan in full and that approximately one-third of the accommodation envisaged in these plans was delivered. However, some progress has been made and should be acknowledged. Since 1999 a total of

1,369 Traveller families have been accommodated and the number of families living on the roadside has decreased by one-third from 1,200 to 800. The increase in the Traveller accommodation budget by €5m to €45m is also welcome.

CORI Justice Commission welcomes the new report and the progress made over recent years. However there remains much more to be achieved. We regret that the committee failed to agree to the establishment of a Traveller accommodation agency as recommended by the Task Force in its original report in 1995.

Oireachtas committee report

During 2003 CORI Justice Commission made a submission to the All-Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution. Subsequently, an oral presentation of our submission was made. In making the submission CORI Justice Commission approached the issue from: (i) a social justice perspective drawn from the Catholic Social Thought tradition; (ii) a rights-based perspective believing that every person has a range of human rights that incorporates civil, political, economic,

cultural and social rights; and (iii) with a special concern for the issue of social housing, the lack of which is now reaching crisis proportions in Ireland.

In April 2004 the Committee published its report and provided a set of wide ranging suggestions to the government on how to handle issues concerning private property. As part of that process the Committee singled out CORI Justice Commission for its clarity in presenting the level of social housing need and complemented the Commission for the energy with which

it formulated solutions.

The Commission believes that it is essential that ongoing policy making in this area be informed by the latest information available on the scale of the accommodation problem faced by this country. Publications such as this *Policy Briefing* play a part in informing all interested parties of that information and thereby fuel a necessary debate on this issue.

A full copy of our submission and of the All-Party report may be found on our website www.cori.ie/justice

Main Policy Recommendations on Accommodation

CORE POLICY OBJECTIVE

To ensure that adequate accommodation is available for all people and to develop an equitable system for allocating resources within the housing sector

- Articulate an integrated and comprehensive national housing policy capable of meeting the needs of all people in Ireland as the population of the State is set to expand dramatically in the years immediately ahead.
- Adopt the recommendations of the NESC on the future provision of social housing (i.e. increase the stock by 73,000 units to reach a target of 200,000 units by 2012) and take the necessary steps to ensure this target is reached within the recommended timeframe.
- Develop and support policies focused on mixed housing, mixed communities, choice of tenure, and mix of different-sized housing units.
- Recognise affordable housing as a separate category aimed at a particular income group.
- Set up an independent national agency to oversee and implement a national policy on homelessness.
- Provide sufficient resources to eliminate homelessness by 2007.
- Continue to increase the budget allocation for local authority, co-op and voluntary/non-profit housing.
- Meet the commitment in the NDP to an annual output of 10,200 units of social housing.
- Ensure that 20 per cent of building land is allocated for social housing.
- Provide new resources for the security and management of local authority housing.
- Actively implement and enforce the legislation on the private rented sector of housing.
- Ensure that nobody remains dependent on rent supplement for more than 18 months. To this end ensure prompt delivery and adequate resourcing of the new Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS).
- Provide the resources required to ensure implementation of the Travellers' Accommodation programme.
- Give priority to tackling ongoing issues concerning accommodation for refugees and asylum-seekers.
- Introduce a policy where people purchasing second houses (holiday homes) should pay the full infrastructural costs of these homes.
- Integrate housing policy with other social and care supports to enable vulnerable people (e.g. disability, elderly, homeless) to live independent lives.
- Ensure that sufficient funds are made available to reduce the waiting lists for the disabled persons housing grant.

Housing: a case for change

Professor PJ Drudy of the Department of Economics at Trinity College Dublin recently presented a very interesting assessment of the Irish housing system. Speaking to a lecture hosted by the Urban Institute Ireland he stated that Ireland now faced "a serious housing crisis" and that that crisis is evident in three ways:

- overpriced private housing
- high priced rents in the private sector
- and a serious shortage of public/social housing

In response to this crisis Professor Drudy outlined three key principals which should guide our way forward. There are:

- Housing, like food, water, health services and education, is a fundamental right in any society. Everyone should have a right to housing appropriate to needs
- Housing should not be treated as a commodity for trading and wealth creation
- Government policies in relation to land ownership, planning, taxation, conveyancing and financing should be redirected to treat housing as a social benefit and a key element in community development, rather than as a commodity for trading or wealth generation.

Second homes: a problem?

While addressing Ireland's housing problem, the National Development Plan Mid-Term Review (2003) pointed out the growing problem of second homes. It established that a quarter of all houses built in 2003 were second (holiday) houses and will have nobody living in them for about nine months of the year.

What is often overlooked when this is being discussed is that the infrastructure to support these houses is substantially subsidised by the tax-payer. Roads, water, sewage and electricity infrastructure are just part of this subsidy which goes, by definition, to those who are already better off as they can afford these second homes in the first place. In addition, the authors of the review point out that the huge growth in demand for second houses is eating up resources and militating against balanced regional development. Consequently, they recommend that people purchasing second houses should have to pay the full infrastructural costs, much of which is currently borne by society through the Exchequer. CORI Justice Commission supports this recommendation. In the context of the housing problems outlined earlier there seems something perverse in the fact that the taxpayer is providing substantial subsidies to the owners of these unoccupied houses while so many people don't have adequate accommodation.

Homelessness

Analysis of the information on housing needs enables us to extract information on the homeless - people who are most urgently in need of accommodation. The most recent official data, from March 2002, show that the level of homelessness has risen from 2,501 in 1996 to 5,234 in 1999 and to 5,581 in 2002. Since 1996 the number homeless has increased by 123 per cent. The 5,581 homeless persons comprise 4,176 adults and 1,405 children.

When assessed by household, the homeless figures equal 3,773 households of whom 2,853 are one-person households and 920 are homeless households of more than one person (couples or families). These figures include those who have nowhere to sleep at night, along with those sleeping in hostels and other Health Board accommodation. Geographically, the

homeless are primarily concentrated in Dublin where 4,060 people are homeless comprising of 2,920 adults and 1,140 children.

Other estimates of the extent of homelessness put the numbers at a much higher level. *Focus Ireland* has suggested that in recent years the number of homeless had risen to 6,000. They also noted that homeless people were now remaining homeless for longer than was the case previously. This they concluded is due to the lack of suitable emergency accommodation. Consequently homeless people are spending longer periods of time in unsuitable accommodation like B&Bs. In their annual report for 2002 *Focus Ireland* reported that the average length of time spent in emergency B&B accommodation had increased from 20 days in 1993 to a current average of 18 months. Another organisa-

tion working with the homeless, *Simon*, indicated that the number of families in Dublin who are homeless had increased by over 20 per cent since 1999 to a level of 640 families in 2004. Similarly the number of children homeless in Dublin increased 15 per cent to a total of 1,140. They also reported that each night in Dublin 237 people are forced to sleep rough.

The association between homelessness and mental health problems has received added attention during the last year. A study at the Mater Hospital in Dublin found that one-third of all referrals for psychiatric assessment from its A&E department are homeless people. In all it is estimated that about 40 per cent of Ireland's homeless have mental health difficulties. These facts underscore the vulnerability of the homeless and the need for ever greater efforts to solve this problem.

Other Justice Commission Publications



The following documents are available for purchase from the Justice Commission Office:

- **Analysis and Critique of Budget 2005 - December 2004**
- **A Fairer Tax System for a Fairer Ireland - October 2004**
- **Policy Briefing on Taxation - 0 D**
- **Priorities for Fairness** (Justice Commission's annual socio-economic report) - **\$S UO**
- **Policy Briefing on Work, Unemployment and Job Creation -) HEUXDU**

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CORI Justice Commission publishes regular briefings on a wide range of public policy issues. The Justice Commission's core areas of work are: public policy; spirituality; enabling and empowering; advocacy and communication. CORI Justice Commission has been a recognised social partner within the Community and Voluntary Sector Pillar of social partnership since 1996.

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