

R073: Identifying predictors and consequences of homelessness in Northern Ireland using linked homelessness, social services and health administrative data – QUB

People who experience homelessness are at greater risk of death, hospital admission related to substance misuse, and poor mental and physical health. Analysis of anonymised data (without personal details) recorded by public authorities can provide information that could lead to action to prevent homelessness or to improve services for people experiencing homelessness.

The Department for Communities in Northern Ireland reported 4,306 households applying to be considered homeless between January and March 2021, 2,717 of which were accepted as homeless (or threatened with homelessness), in priority need and unintentionally homeless. The most common reason for homelessness (27%) was “accommodation not reasonable”; for three quarters of these, the underlying reason was physical health, disability or mental health. Eighteen people were observed to be sleeping rough in Northern Ireland’s most recent survey in autumn 2020

Aim: The aim of the project is to understand the causes and consequences of homelessness in Northern Ireland.

Research Questions:

- i) What leads to people becoming homeless?*
- ii) What are the health consequences of experiencing homelessness?*

Objectives

1. To measure the incidence, prevalence and duration of homelessness over time and place, overall, and in subgroup analysis by the reason for homelessness.
2. To describe the characteristics of people who have been homeless, overall, and in subgroup analysis by the reason for homelessness, compared to the Northern Ireland population.
3. To investigate the risk factors for becoming homeless, based on personal characteristics, the time period, geographical factors, health-related factors, and social factors (e.g. being a looked-after child).
4. To investigate the association between homelessness and health and social outcomes, including physical and mental health, and the use of health and social care services.