

MID-WESTERN HEALTH BOARD
&
LIMERICK SOCIAL SERVICE CENTRE

ON MY OWN



REPORT ON
YOUTH HOMELESSNESS
IN
LIMERICK CITY

MARCH, 1990.

QHH : QLR

C. Keane, Project Social Worker - Limerick Social Service Centre.

G. Crowley, Senior Social Worker - Mid-Western Health Board.

PLEASE RETURN TO
LIBRARY AND INFORMATION UNIT
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

This book is due for return before the last date shown below.

--	--	--



CONTENTS

PREFACE

Acknowledgements

"A Young Homeless Person Speaks"

000778

Structure of Report

Summary of Report

INTRODUCTION

<u>Section 1</u>	Youth Homelessness in Limerick: The Background	10
<u>Section 2</u>	Adolescence and Youth Homelessness	17
<u>Section 3</u>	Findings of Action Research Project (Direct work with homeless young people over 12 month period, January-December, 1989)	19
<u>Section 4</u>	Demographic Data from Survey of Young People found to be homeless in Limerick during May, 1989.	30
<u>Section 5</u>	Analysis of nature of demand made on emergency facility for homeless girls. January - December 1989.	51
<u>Section 6</u>	Conclusions and Recommendations.	57
BIBLIOGRAPHY		68
APPENDICES 1 to 4		70

PREFACE

by
Mr. M.J. Duffy, Programme Manager, Mid-Western Health Board
&
Fr. J. O'Shea, Director, Limerick Social Service Centre.

The vulnerability of young people, and the difficulties which some families experience in catering for their teenage children, are clearly outlined in this report.

Previous national research on youth homelessness which made reference to Limerick City caused considerable concern among Voluntary and Statutory Agencies involved with young people and their families.

This Report clearly identifies the nature and extent of the problem in the Limerick Community, drawing together the views of the Agencies involved with young people, outlining the experiences and issues which arise for professionals in attempting to respond to homeless young people and most graphically describing the circumstances in which our most vulnerable children find themselves.

The timing of the Report is particularly appropriate with the recent enactment of the Housing Act, 1988, and the Child Care Bill, 1988, at Committee stage in the Dail.

We must be very concerned at the central findings of this Report, i.e. that 57 young people needed the service of the Social Worker in 1989, and that 33 young people were admitted to the newly developed Rosemount Night Shelter in the same year.

The Survey in May 1989 revealed that at any one time there are approximately 25 homeless young people, of whom 72% are male and 28% are female.

The Report highlights the grave lack of services for homeless youth, in particular, for homeless boys. Building on a comprehensive understanding of the nature of homelessness, a series of recommendations is made regarding how we must respond to the needs of a significant number of families and young people. Those proposals must be taken seriously if we are to grapple with the problems associated with homelessness. In particular, there is a need for urgent provision of accommodation for homeless boys in Limerick City.

The Report is an expression of the close working relationship between the voluntary and statutory agencies in the Mid-West and provides us with an invaluable base on which both the voluntary and statutory bodies can build a comprehensive and effective response. Such a response must ensure that, irrespective of social class, every young person will have the opportunity to be cherished with dignity and compassion as a human right.

M.J. Duffy
Fr. J. O'Shea
MARCH, 1990.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge the help of:-

Mr. D. Devitt, Principal Officer, Department of Health.

Ms. Augusta McCabe, Social Work Advisor, Department of Health.

Mr. M.J. Duffy, Programme Manager, Mid-Western Health Board.

Dr. J. Kiely, Director of Community Care, Mid-Western Health Board.

Ms. M. Hurley, Staff Officer, Mid-Western Health Board.

Fr. J. O'Shea, Director, Limerick Social Service Centre.

Mr. J. Reville, Administrator, Limerick Social Service Centre.

Mr. R. Gilligan, Department of Social Studies, Trinity College, Dublin.

Ms. M. Gallagher, Social Research Department, University of Limerick.

Special Thanks to:-

Ms. G. Holliday, Ms. G. Ryan & Ms. R. Sparling, Mid-Western Health Board who typed this report.

Ms. D. Lynch, Limerick Social Service Centre who typed the Survey Questionnaire.

Mr. C. Sheridan, Community Worker, Mid-Western Health Board, who helped with the survey.

Funding for this report was provided through the Department of Health from the Department of Education's Youth Affairs Section.

We commend the work being carried out by the following:

Sr. Bernadette, Sr. Alexandra and Sr. Celestine, Good Shepherd
Hostel, Clare Street, Limerick.

and .

Br. Luke Polden, Brother Stephen Russell Home, Mulgrave
Street, Limerick.

Grateful thanks to all those agencies and schools who made
available their time and information.

The Young People for whom this report is really written are
especially acknowledged.

Carmel Keane, Project Social Worker
Gerard Crowley, Senior Social Worker

. MARCH, 1990.

A YOUNG HOMELESS PERSON SPEAKS

I am sixteen years of age. I am from Limerick. I left home because my father and mother drank too much and they used to do nothing but fight. This used to happen nearly all the time. I never had freedom. The freedom I had was to the shop and back. I was just getting tired of it all. All I wanted was just to get away. It was terrible and it upset me. All I could do was lock myself in my bedroom and cry my eyes out.

When I left home I felt depressed, confused and suicidal. I wanted to kill myself. I never wanted to talk to anyone because I felt that nobody would understand me. I never wanted to see my family. I hated them all.

Then I started going up home and I tried to make it up with my father but he just wouldn't listen to me. I was in the night-shelter for six weeks. During this time I went home and came back a few times. Then I moved to the flats. On odd times I would get depressed and all I wanted to do was kill myself or kill someone else. I want to be left alone when I get depressed. Other than that I am happy because I am working and I am happy with my job.

My situation with my family isn't too bad. I am getting on with my mother and sisters. I go to visit them every now and then but my father just won't talk to me or listen to me. I really do dislike my father.

My future plans are to settle down in my own flat and to make myself happy.

* "Flats" refers to hostel accommodation.

STRUCTURE OF REPORT

In the introductory section the genesis of this report is explained. The emergence of the report in the context of social policy is also discussed.

Section 1 of the report examines Youth Homelessness in the context of the social conditions which prevail in Limerick City. A profile of existing agencies is also given.

Section 2 explores the Nature of Adolescence and Youth Homelessness.

Section 3 documents research findings from Action Research undertaken in the period January - December 1989 by the Social Worker supporting homeless young people in Limerick City. This offers a "broad brush" view of the complexity and scale of the problems posed by Youth Homelessness.

Section 4 presents information obtained as a result of the survey on Youth Homelessness.

Section 5 gives an analysis of the nature of demand made on a newly developed emergency facility for girls out-of-home (Rosemount).

Section 6 makes recommendations for the development of a more comprehensive service for this group on the basis of findings and conclusions from the project.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

INTRODUCTION

In January, 1989, the Mid-Western Health Board funded the employment of a social work post to be based at Limerick Social Service Centre to work on a project aimed at establishing the nature and extent of Youth Homelessness in Limerick City and the provision of a counselling and information service to such young people.

Method of Research

Three major pieces of research were undertaken as part of this project;

1. Action Research - Direct Social Work involvement with young people 'out of home'.
2. Survey - A survey of young people out of home was carried out in May 1989 to establish the number of such young people in a given period in time.
3. Analysis of Nature of Demand on Emergency Facility for Homeless Girls over 12 month period January - December, 1989.

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. Findings From Action Research Project.
 - Out of a total of 57 referrals made between January, 1989 and December, 1989 there was extensive involvement with 33 homeless young people aged 16 - 18 years.
 - The project found that the number of young people physically homeless, in the sense of 'sleeping rough', was small, but that there is a large number of young people with no regular base, drifting from one insecure situation to another.
 - There was considerably more contact with homeless girls than boys. This is directly linked to the fact that a residential service was available for homeless girls based at 60 Clare Street. The limited contact with homeless boys was largely related to the grave lack of suitable residential facilities in the city for boys.
 - A significant number of young people with whom there was contact came from low-income families. However, homelessness was not found to be exclusively a problem of lower socio-economic groups. Relationship difficulties with parents in any socio-economic group was seen to be a contributory factor.

- Of the young people with whom there was contact, certain groups were significantly represented:-

- . children who had been sexually or physically abused,
- . children who had suffered emotional deprivation,
- . children who had been poor attenders in school,
- . children who had been in alternative care to their family homes and who experienced a crisis of identity in adolescence.

- Homelessness was not seen as an issue of itself, but rather a symptom of the difficulties which are affecting the young person.

- Direct involvement with young people 'out of home' revealed that where the individual was out of home for any length of time, he/she became involved in crime, drugs, alcohol, substance abuse and exploitative relationships. Girls, in particular were seen to almost invariably become involved in successive exploitative sexual relationships.

2. Findings of Survey of Young People Out of Home.
(Survey Month - May 1989).

- 90 individuals were contacted through schools, training workshops, youth workers, child care workers, social workers, probation officers, Gardai, Hostels, Housing Authorities, Religious, and Community Welfare Officers.

- 25 young people were found to be homeless in May - 18 males and 7 females.

- 59 young people were reported to have been homeless in the previous year - 40 males and 19 females.

- 28 young people were reported as at-risk of becoming homeless in the following year, 19 males and 9 females.

- Of those homeless in May, 1989, 9 (36%) were aged 15 years, 5 (20%) were aged 14, a further 5 (20%) were aged 16 years and a final 6 (24%) were aged 17 years or more.

- Of those homeless in May, 1989 12 (48%) were in insecure accommodation with non-relatives ('dossing'); 5 (20%) were in bedsits or flats; 3 (12%) were sleeping rough; 3 (12%) were in an emergency shelter; 1 (4%) was in secure accommodation with relatives and 1 (4%) was said to be intermittent between non-relatives and relatives.

- A clear link was established between youth homelessness and marital/parental problems. This was stated to be the reason for homelessness in 49% of reported cases.
 - The vast majority of young people who were reported homeless were also out of school i.e. 22 out of the total figure of 25.
 - A large number of homeless young people were also found to be involved with the Criminal Justice System. 10 out of those homeless in May had been convicted of an offence. 13 were known to Limerick Probation Service.
 - Emergency accommodation for boys was highlighted as the most urgent need in Limerick.
 - Young people aged 14 - 16 years were identified as those most at risk.
3. Findings From Analysis of Nature of Demand on Emergency Facility for Homeless Women and Girls (Rosemount Night Shelter, 60 Clare Street).
- The total number accommodated in the Night Shelter between January, 1989 and December, 1989 was 63 persons.
 - These women and girls stayed for a total number of 469 'bednights'.
 - The majority of these 'bednights' catered for teenagers, eighteen years and under - 362.
 - Many of these young people had no place to go by day and hence on 286 occasions young people stayed both day and night.
 - At least six girls stayed in the night shelter for up to/over three weeks. This usually occurred where the girls could not return home due to risk of physical or sexual abuse and where there was no alternative resource to which to refer them.
 - The same number approximately were re-admitted on a number of occasions as a result of various crises.
 - In the vast majority of cases the physical problem of being 'out-of-home' was simply the symptom of underlying problems, such as physical or sexual abuse, as well as emotional rejection by parents and families often unable to cope with their adolescent child.
 - Many of the girls, especially those who stayed in the night shelter for a number of weeks or those who were repeatedly re-admitted presented serious personal problems such as identity and self-image problems, behavioural problems, difficulties relating to other people, and problems with school.

ISSUES ARISING FROM RESEARCH:

- Findings from the various pieces of research carried out as part of this study highlight the need for a range of services to address the often complex needs of homeless young people. A holistic approach which addresses the physical problem of homelessness, as well as the resultant emotional issues for each young person is seen as necessary in order to grapple with the growing problem of Youth Homelessness in our Community. Thus co-operation between mainstream Health Services, Youth Services, Residential Services, Counselling Services, Education and Training Services is seen as vital.

- The Research highlights a number of shortfalls in present service provision to this client group in the Mid-Western Region. These are outlined below;

1. Lack of Residential Services for homeless boys in Limerick.

While acknowledgement is given to the present provision of emergency accommodation to a small number of boys in Brother Stephen Russell Hostel, this is identified as unsuitable given the differing needs of homeless boys to homeless men and an alternative service is urgently called for. The almost total lack of long-term residential accommodation is also highlighted by the research.

2. Residential Services for Girls.

The Night Shelter and the newly opened Hostel at 60 Clare Street has been shown to have impacted significantly on the problem of homelessness among teenage girls in Limerick. However in order to provide such a vital service increased funding to recruit further staff needs to be directed towards this unit.

3. Financial problems and Homelessness.

This study illustrates the fact that young people aged 16 - 18 years presently lack a specified statutory right to an income from the state. Thus when young people become homeless at this age, they may find themselves becoming involved in theft in order to survive on the streets. This commences the cycle of further problems which homelessness may precipitate, such as petty crime eventually leading to more serious crime.

4. Lack of Information.

An issue which emerges from this study is the lack of information available to young homeless people regarding services. The profiles provided demonstrate the tendency on the part of young people out-of-home to keep to themselves rather than seek help from established agencies. Frequently this is because they do not know where to go.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

This report makes the following recommendations:

- Urgent Provision of a range of accommodation for Homeless Boys i.e.

(a) An Emergency Shelter for approximately 3-4 homeless boys.

(b) A Hostel for a small number of boys who require semi-supervised and supported accommodation.

(c) A specialised facility for boys who present with disturbed or difficult behaviour to an extent that they cannot be catered for within existing residential centres.

- Specialist Social Worker for Homeless Youth

In order to continue to provide

(a) Information

(b) Support

(c) Counselling

- Upgrading of Rosemount Hostel

In order to operate to full capacity, the recruitment of a professionally qualified Child Care Worker is a pressing need.

- Development of a Specialist Fostering Service For Adolescents

Provision for some homeless or troubled adolescents could be provided by a specialist fostering service in the Mid-Western Region.

- After-Care Accommodation for Young People leaving Care

e.g. Sheltered Housing Schemes.

- The establishment of the necessary arrangements to provide for the income support needs of homeless young people.

- Specific provision for the educational and training needs of homeless young people.

- The establishment of adequately staffed family support and youth services at community level.

INTRODUCTION

GENESIS OF REPORT.

In January, 1989, the Mid-Western Health Board funded the creation of a Social Worker Post based at Limerick Social Service Centre to work on a pilot project aimed at

- (a) establishing the nature and extent of homelessness among young people in Limerick City, and
- (b) the provision of a counselling and advice service to such young people in association with the agencies already involved.

DEFINITION OF 'YOUTH HOMELESSNESS'.

A broad based definition was used to include young people aged 18 years and under, who were said to be in one of the following categories:

- Sleeping Rough
- Staying Temporarily with relatives
- Staying Temporarily with non-relatives (known as "dossing")
- Staying in an emergency shelter

In interpreting these categories the emphasis was on the 'insecurity' of the arrangement and it being experienced as 'unsatisfactory' by the young person as well as by parents and agencies involved.

For the purpose of the Study, Age 18 was taken as the upper age limit in light of pending Child Care Legislation which would have the effect of raising the age of Health Board responsibility for children from 16 to 18 years (Child Care Bill, 1988).

SOCIAL POLICY CONTEXT.

1987 was designated 'International Year of Shelter for the Homeless' by the United Nations to help governments and people throughout the world become more aware of the basic need and right of all citizens for shelter.

In Ireland, this prompted a number of research projects to establish the scale of the problem of homelessness in our cities:-

1. A group of social workers with the Eastern Health Board carried out a survey to establish the extent and nature of homelessness among children and young people aged 18 and under in Dublin (Eastern Health Board 1987). They used secondary sources to gain the information being sought, i.e. agencies thought to have contact with young people out-of-home. They received information on 406 young people who were homeless.
2. A nationwide survey of young people out-of-home was carried out by a group of interested organisations and individuals called 'Streetwise' (Streetwise 1987). Dublin was excluded from this survey and funding was made available through Combat Poverty. Streetwise found that cities such as Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford had significant problems of youth homelessness. Limerick City was cited as having 30 young people who were homeless and 19 who were said to be 'at-risk' of becoming homeless. The survey highlighted the grave lack of accommodation available to such young people in the city and the report recommended the provision of a range of accommodation for homeless boys and girls. It suggested that "this accommodation should be of a high quality, easily accessible, staffed by trained personnel with clear links with the community based services and with the young people's families". The Report also stated that at the time of issue "Limerick City had no emergency accommodation for boys or girls".

It is against this background of research that the initiative for this Report emerged. The Report also comes at a time of considerable legal change.

The Housing Act 1988 provides significant new powers to enable housing authorities to secure accommodation suitable to the needs of homeless persons. For the purposes of the Act a person is regarded as homeless if:-

- (a) "there is no accommodation he can reasonably occupy".
- (b) "he is living in a hospital, county home, night shelter or other such institution and is so living because he has no accommodation of the kind referred to in paragraph (a) and he is in the opinion of the local authority unable to provide accommodation from his own resources (Housing Act, 1988, Section 2).

However, those aged 18 and under who are homeless are excluded from this provision.

As mentioned above, the enactment of the proposed Child Care Bill 1988, which is currently before the Houses of the Oireachtas, would have the effect of raising the age of Health Board responsibility from 16 to 18 years. This clearly will have major resource implications for Health Boards which are already stretched in terms of meeting existing statutory requirements.

In a proposed Amendment to Section V of the Bill specific reference is made to young people who are homeless; it states;

"Where it appears to a Health Board that a child in its area is homeless, the Board shall enquire into the child's circumstances and if the Board is satisfied that -

(1) there is no accommodation available to him which he can reasonably occupy, and

(2) he is unable to provide or arrange accommodation for himself,

then, unless the child is received into the care of the Board under the provisions of this Act, the Board shall take such steps as are reasonable to make accommodation available for him".

At the present time, Health Boards hold responsibility for children up to the age of 16 years who are in 'need of care and protection'. Thus young people aged 16-18 years fall between the net of both provisions, at immeasurable cost, in particular to those who are "out-of-home".

Clearly, Health Boards must anticipate the need for the development of a range of services for such young people. It is hoped that this report will influence and contribute to the establishment of the necessary and very desirable services in the Mid-Western Health Board Region.

SECTION 1 YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN LIMERICK - THE BACKGROUND

1. SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN LIMERICK CITY.

What perhaps distinguishes Limerick City from other Irish cities is the fact that Local Authority Housing accounts for 30% of total housing stock (1981 Census), exceeding all other cities in the Republic, - Galway 13.3%, Dublin 18.7%, Cork 22% and Waterford 25%. This has been said "to reflect a number of factors - demographic, economic, an older industrial centre, more tenement housing replaced by new local authority housing in the 1930's and 1950's, etc" (Thompson 1988).

The population of Limerick City according to Census figures for 1986 was 56,000, having dropped considerably since the previous Census taken in 1981 when the figure stood at 60,700, the fall in population being largely due to unemployment and emigration. Between 1981 and 1986 the major concentration of unemployment (44.0%) in the Mid-West Region was in Limerick City and the major source of emigration from the Region (7,000 persons) was from Limerick City (Limerick Corporation 1986).

The area designated by the Combat Poverty Agency for the P.A.U.L. Project (People Against Unemployed in Limerick) comprises most of the Corporation Housing Stock in the city i.e. it has a minimum of 52% Corporation Housing and in some areas the proportion is up to 95% (Appendix 1A). This leads to a concentration of the poor in such areas.

Appendix 1B - shows that unemployment as recorded by the Census of 1986 ranged up to nearly 60% of the workforce in parts of the area.

Appendix 1C - shows that amongst the young adult population of the area concerned i.e. those aged 25-29, a very high proportion ceased full-time education at primary level. (Application form for Pilot Project to Combat Poverty Agency, July 1989).

Data from the survey of young people out-of-home in May 1989 clearly illustrates the correlation between social needs (factors such as family difficulties, marital problems, unemployment, poor education) and homelessness. (Section 4, Tables 8-12).

2. GROUNDS FOR CONCERN REGARDING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS: EARLIER EVIDENCE

In 1984 a group of people involved with 'At-Risk' young people in Limerick documented their concerns about the increased incidence of young people 'Sleeping Rough' (Hanna et al, 1984).

Their report stated;

"From our observations and enquiries we have ascertained that there exists in this city a core group of children sleeping rough, 50 is a minimal figure".

They concluded that,

"One cannot but be alarmed at the picture that emerges".

Three years later, as already mentioned, Limerick City was included in national research on homeless youth and was found to have a significant problem. (Streetwise, 1987)

In 'Youth and Justice' (Burke et al, 1981) the 16-17 year old delinquent boy is described broadly in the following terms;-

"He would seem to come from a large family living in the poorer sections of a town or city. His father's occupation is either an unskilled or semi-skilled job and his mother may work part-time or may not work at all. His intelligence is below average and hence his educational attainment is poor. He probably finds it difficult to keep up with an ordinary class and so he is an habitual truant from school..... He commits his crime as a member of a group rather than alone. He seems to be generally handicapped all around".

In this report we demonstrate that homeless young people emerge from similar circumstances and experience the same difficulties of adjustment as the delinquent child.

The links between socially disadvantaged areas and poor school attainment has also been demonstrated by a research project carried out in the Mid-Western Region ("Cherished Equally?" - O'Connor et al, 1988).

O'Connor found that there

"were significant area differences in the rates of psychological adjustment among the children studied" (sample included 1361 children aged 6-12 years from primary schools in Limerick City and Co. Clare).

It further stated that

"Over a quarter of the children from schools in one part of the city (a disadvantaged area) were suffering from disturbance, compared to the overall rate of 11%"

The report also highlighted the fact that the level of services was inadequate particularly in relation to psychological problems and it recommended that a Child Guidance Service be established in the Mid-West, the aim being to provide a comprehensive, integrated service for children. The researchers suggested that there should be a holistic approach, so that children's problems are not dealt with in isolation, but assessed in the context of family, social and school environment. A Child Guidance Service therefore should consist of an inter-disciplinary team of professionals; Doctors, Psychologists and Social Workers.

The young people who featured in the survey of May, 1989 were persons who would have benefitted from such a service.

3. EXTENT OF EXISTING SERVICES

Agencies presently providing shelter for homeless people in Limerick City are:-

(a) ADAPT HOUSE:

A refuge for women and children who are victims of violence. It caters for 8 families and occasionally accommodates single girls who are homeless. It is grant aided by the Mid-Western Health Board. The Health Board also provide a professionally qualified social worker. The refuge has a full-time Administrator, House Mother and Caretaker. At present ADAPT is in the process of developing sheltered flats.

(b) BROTHER STEPHEN RUSSELL HOME:

A hostel for homeless men, many of whom have alcohol problems. It caters for 26 men and since early 1989, by arrangement with the Mid-Western Health Board, it provides emergency accommodation for a small number of boys aged 18 and under, who are homeless. This arrangement to provide emergency accommodation for young boys is acknowledged by both parties to be unsatisfactory and is seen as a short-term response. The hostel is run by the Alexian Brothers and is grant-aided by the Mid-Western Health Board.

(c) ROSEMOUNT NIGHT SHELTER:

A unit for homeless women and girls. It caters for 3-4 persons and is in operation since late 1988. It is managed by the Good Shepherd Sisters in conjunction with the Mid-Western Health Board. Two sisters take responsibility for night shifts from 9.00p.m. - 10.00a.m. Social Work support is provided by the Project Social Worker for youth homeless. Since its opening the unit has operated almost to full capacity. Increasingly, the unit has accommodated young homeless girls. It does not see itself as simply a shelter but also provides a broad based support and counselling service.

A detailed analysis of the Nature of Demand made on the unit between January and December 1989 is provided in Section 5.

(d) ROSEMOUNT HOSTEL:

In July 1989, in response to an increasing number of teenage girls using Rosemount Night Shelter, who for various reasons were unable to return home, the Good Shepherd Sisters opened a 6 bed hostel on the same premises to accommodate this client group. It is a sheltered facility and its aim is to enable girls to move onto independent living after a period of 3-6 months.

During this time the girls are encouraged to secure work, manage their money, time, and self-care. On admission, the girls are required to participate in a contract which sets out the grounds for admission and the areas of their lives which they need to focus on. They are required also to pay rent and incomes may be subsidised by the Supplementary Welfare Service. The hostel is run by one sister who also does night duty in the shelter. Due to limitations of staffing the hostel is not operating to full capacity. To date 4 girls have been accommodated in Rosemount Hostel. 1 Girl was accommodated for 8 months, 2 girls for 4 months and a fourth girl was accommodated for 1 month which is ongoing. Further reference is made to the hostel in Section 3 as the provision of social work support to the hostel constituted a significant part of the project on youth homelessness.

The development of these two services i.e. Rosemount Night Shelter and Rosemount Hostel have proved to be a significant resource to many young girls. They are good examples of voluntary/statutory co-operation in both service development and service delivery. The continued development of this service will be determined to a large extent by the capacity of the Mid-Western Health Board to financially resource the service.

(e) C.U.R.A.

Provides accommodation and counselling for young single girls who are pregnant. A small percentage of people who approach C.U.R.A. would be homeless. Accommodation is provided locally in a pre-natal and post-natal home.

(f) RESIDENTIAL CARE SERVICE:

The Mid-Western Health Board in association with the Mercy Sisters and the Good Shepherd Sisters operate 5 residential care units in Limerick City. Increasingly, the admissions to these facilities are in respect of older children and a number of these have experienced homelessness.

(g) FOSTER CARE SERVICE:

In any year, in this Region, there will be approximately 500 children in the care of the Mid-Western Health Board for some period of time. Approximately 350 (70%) are cared for in foster homes. This compares favourably with the national average of 55% of children in-care being in foster homes.

Despite a relatively recently developed fostering service, social workers in the Mid-West are finding it difficult to place the older and more difficult child in foster care. The international research on foster care for adolescents and particularly troubled adolescents indicates that adequate care can best be provided for such adolescents in specialised professional foster families which are highly resourced. Such a service does not exist at present in the Mid-West. A development in this field has recently commenced in the Eastern Health Board. This is an area which has enormous potential for the Mid-West.

(h) YOUTH WORK: S.O.R.- SOUTHILL OUTREACH PROJECT:

Limerick Youth Service provide a community based Youth Resource Centre in the Southill area of Limerick. This service is funded by the Health Board and it has identified a significant group of young people of various ages in the Southill area, who are falling between the net of existing youth services. A range of problems was identified in association with this group - homelessness, unemployment, substance abuse, alcohol abuse, criminal activity, violence and other anti-social behaviour. They were said to be 'unattached' and both 'at risk' to themselves and a threat to the wider community.

The Report of the National Youth Policy Committee defined the 'unattached' as usually taken to mean young people "at risk" through being detached (physically and emotionally) from family, school, concerned adults, youth work provision or even young people'. (P.275 of Final Report 1984).

Concern over this group of young people led to the formation of 'Southill Outreach Project' representative of Limerick Youth Service, Limerick Probation and Welfare Service, the Gardai, Southill Development Co-Op., Southill House, the Mid-Western Health Board Social Work Department, Limerick Youth Encounter Project, Limerick Social Service Centre and Schools in the area.

The aim of the project is to employ a group of 'Outreach' workers to work with this group of 'unattached' youth. The project would involve working at street level in order to identify such young people, to build up links with them and to try and encourage their involvement in more worthwhile activities. A submission for funding has been made to the Interdepartmental Committee for Disadvantaged Youth through Limerick Probation and Welfare Service.

Similar projects are in operation in Dublin and Galway. 'Focus Point' in Dublin has operated an outreach service since September, 1985, with a team of 2 full-time workers who are linked to the advice and information services also offered. Between September, 1985, and September, 1986, they met 211 persons under the age of 20 through their project. 13 of this number were under 14 and 20 were under 16. (Mulkeen and Sheridan, 1987).

Galway Social Service Council similarly employs a group of outreach workers who work at street level and who also attend the Juvenile Court in order to identify young people who might be unattached and thus lacking any support in their lives. Individual work is then carried out to establish the reason for their alienation and to work with them towards re-integration in the community and participation in schemes specifically geared towards their requirements.

Such projects, as well as tackling problems as they present, are also preventative. A project of this nature seems vital to the Southill area and a similar proposal is being planned for the Moyross Area.

(i) CONCLUSION

It is significant that the Rosemount Hostel in Clare Street providing a service for girls, is the only form of accommodation in the City which caters specifically for the young homeless; there is no counterpart for boys.

A number of Voluntary Organisations are in contact with young people in the city such as Limerick Youth Service; St. Martin's Training Centre; Southill Resource Centre; the Samaritans; Rape Crisis Centre; the Probation & Welfare Service; the Health Board. Those organisations liaise closely with the Gardai, Social Workers and Community Welfare Officers, etc. These agencies occasionally encounter homeless young people. Some offer advice and financial help. Others liaise with families or act as referral agents.

However, since none of these agencies except the Health Board have as their primary responsibility the provision of comprehensive services, homeless young people tend to get passed on from one agency to another.

When the work on this project began the researcher found recurring themes of concern among agencies involved with young people in Limerick City. There was a deep concern for vulnerable young people who were seen as ill equipped and poorly resourced to cope with a rapidly changing and increasingly complex and demanding society. However, this was matched by a feeling that the development of services, specifically targeted at such vulnerable youth, should not fuel a labelling and marginalising process but should have the continuous objective of re-integration and normalisation.

The belief that families and communities must be resourced to enhance their capacity to care for their young was a regularly expressed belief, which appears to spring from our culture and is the core of the challenge facing our society.

As a society, we respond to this social problem with
"little enthusiasm and less money" (McVerry 1987)

Perhaps one reason for this is that we tend to look at homelessness in stereotyped terms of people 'sleeping rough'. In reality it is a much more complex problem and the first step in responding to the needs of vulnerable young people is to open our minds to a broader understanding of the nature of homelessness.

SECTION 2

ADOLESCENCE AND YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

1. 'LEAVING HOME'

"Adolescence, - the not quite stage, not quite a child, not quite sure of himself". (Mussen, Colger and Kagan 1984)

"Leaving home and making our own way in life is a process that is common to us all; that balancing of dependence and independence, until suddenly we feel ourselves to be far enough away and we are gone. For many of us, home supports that process and does not budge under the impact of our energies, as we take our first steps and then finally move away. Many families have successfully coped with this developmental period in the lives of their young people, yet even in the best of them the balance between remaining together as a family and supporting this transition can be hard to maintain, without the pain and turmoil of leaving, spilling over into division and premature separation". (O'Mahony 1988)

It is socially acceptable to move away from home to take up a job or to pursue further studies. It is perhaps less socially acceptable to leave home if these are not options. For many young people, in particular those who grow up in socially disadvantaged areas, they may not have access to jobs or to further study. Many of them have dropped out of school either because they have not academically achieved or because school holds no relevance for them.

2. THREATS TO NORMAL PROCESS OF 'LEAVING HOME'

The desire to leave home and establish an identity separate to their parents is however no less for disadvantaged adolescents than for their more fortunate peers. Often the young person leaves home as a result of a hasty decision in response to some crisis. Little thought is given to where they will go and what they will do next. He/she may be attracted to a street culture which seems exciting; all too often the reality is that the young person finds him/herself with no place to go and with no money and as a result is left feeling isolated, lonely and depressed.

Some young people leave home because they feel trapped or unwanted in a family situation which may be unsupportive, abusive, conflict ridden, overcrowded, or under financial stress. Other young people are thrown out of home because of what parents see as bad behaviour/failure to get employment/failure to contribute financially.

"However what is not clearly stressed is the fact that homelessness is a serious problem not because of the circumstances the individual is leaving behind, but because there are no structures in society that will allow to those young people leaving home their basic human rights to shelter and independent living, regardless of their reasons for leaving". (O'Mahony 1988)

Young people may initially remain away from home for a short period. However, if a further crisis occurs in the family, this may prompt leaving again. Thus the cycle of homelessness continues.

As mentioned earlier, Limerick City does not have suitable emergency accommodation for homeless boys which would link them to such services. The advantage of tackling the problem of homelessness earlier is thus not an option.

3. CONSEQUENCES OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Hanna et al (1984), in their report to the Mid-Western Health Board, state that homeless young people "have fallen through the net of concern and support, they are without parental interest; are non-school attenders or early school leavers, most would be involved in some form of substance abuse, alcohol, tablets, glue and petty crime".

Homelessness can thus commence a chain of other damaging experiences for the young person. The plight of the young person is further exasperated by the fact that if he/she is aged 16-18 years he/she does not have a statutory right to an income from the state. Thus he/she may be forced into committing petty crime. Young people out of home tend to move frequently from place to place mainly because they have no choice. Thus, they may spend a few nights with a friend, another short time with someone else, a few nights on the street and, if they are lucky, a few nights in a hostel. It becomes extremely difficult for community leaders or professionals to intervene in order to assess and resolve their problems.

When they do try to intervene, the experience is generally one of young people shying away from what they see as an adult world and a system that does not care. It can thus take a considerable length of time to build up a relationship with such young people.

These factors can make research into Youth Homelessness difficult, especially in terms of getting a comprehensive view of the total population of homeless young people.

SECTION 3

FINDINGS OF ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT (Direct work with homeless young people over 12 month period, January - December, 1989).

1. INTRODUCTION

In January 1989, the project social worker began to provide an information, support and counselling service to homeless young people in Limerick City operating from Limerick Social Service Centre.

It was decided to focus on those aged 16 - 18 years. It was anticipated that this would complement the statutory work of Health Board Social Workers who have responsibility for children up to the age of 16 years.

Out of a total of 57 referrals of homeless 16 - 18 year olds made between January, 1989 and December, 1989, there has been extensive involvement in 33 cases. (Appendix 2 gives further details). There are approximately 12 young people who came to the attention of the social worker for homeless youth at the beginning of the project, with whom work is still being carried out. In other cases the work has been of a more short-term nature.

On the basis of direct contact with such young people, it would appear that the number of young people who are homeless in Limerick City, in the literal sense of the word, i.e. 'without a roof' is small: However there is quite a high number who have no regular base, and who drift from one insecure situation to another. Findings from the Survey carried out in May 1989 bear this out. (Section 4, Table 3)

At the beginning of the project, referrals were slow, but gradually as agencies became aware of the project, referrals became more frequent. The issue rapidly became one of setting limits so as to avoid being overwhelmed by demand.

The experience has been one of more direct involvement with girls than with boys. This is largely because of the state of resources. The fact that there is an emergency shelter for homeless girls in the City has meant that there has been a large number of referrals from this source. As will be seen later, the admission rate to Rosemount Night Shelter has increased considerably since January 1989. (Section 5)

By contrast, only a handful of homeless boys have stayed in Brother Stephen Russell Home since January 1989. It would appear that both voluntary and statutory bodies are reluctant to refer boys to the home because it is a hostel set up to cater for homeless men and is not geared to the particular needs of boys.

A significant number of young people with whom there has been contact have come from low-income families. However, homelessness has not been found to be exclusively a problem of lower socio-economic groups. Relationship difficulties with parents in all socio-economic groups have been seen to be contributory factors. Survey findings support this. (Section 4, Table 8). Mental Health and alcohol problems in the family are also seen to be contributory factors.

Of the young people with whom there has been contact, certain groups have been significantly prominent:-

1. Children who have been sexually or physically abused,
2. Children who have suffered emotional deprivation,
3. Children who have been poor attenders and achievers in school,
4. Children who have been fostered or adopted and experience a crisis of identity in adolescence.

There have been a small number of young people who have had experience of being in residential care. However, this group did not feature as frequently as is reported in other research reports. (Streetwise 1987 and E.H.B. 1987)

2. NATURE OF ACTION RESEARCH

Carrying out action research with homeless young people leads one to the view that

"homelessness is not an issue of itself. It is rather a symptom of the difficulties which are affecting the young person" (O'Connor 1987).

Any effort to deal with the issue of homelessness must be directed towards looking at the real personal needs of the individual and the issues that affect their lives.

Social Work with such young people therefore involves not only attempting to alleviate the physical problem of homelessness but also attempting to resolve the emotional and family difficulties that may exist.

The first step in the helping process is assessment. This involves establishing the reasons for homelessness, the length of time out of home, and the degree of risk attached. Details of personal and family history must also be obtained. In order to carry out a full assessment, the young person, the family and other interested parties, must be seen. The experience has been that this process is slow, often taking a number of weeks to complete. Adolescents can be resentful of any attempt to intervene in their lives. They fail to keep appointments in order to avoid important and painful issues. This resentment can begin to subside when there is experience of warmth, friendliness and a non-judgemental attitude on the part of the Social Worker.

The importance of allowing sufficient time to carry out a full assessment cannot be overstated. A significant number of girls who have stayed in Rosemount Night Shelter had been sexually abused. However, very often this information is not disclosed until the issue of leaving arises. There is considerable inhibition about telling anybody of their experiences unless a relationship of trust has been established.

Assessment is a continuous process and is carried out in conjunction with individual advice and counselling. This is usually "task-orientated and directed towards the individuals self discovery rather than a grown-up imposition of advice". (Morris 1980) It aims to support the young person to face problems and to share feelings.

An integral part of the work is practical support. This involves addressing problems of accommodation, lack of money and unemployment. Facilitating return home is the preferred intervention but where this is inappropriate e.g. in cases of physical or sexual abuse, the task may be to look for alternative accommodation. Unfortunately, the lack of resources for young people out of home, in particular for boys, makes this aspect of the work very difficult. The reality is that one might be involved in supporting a young person to move to a flat when one has serious reservations about their ability to cope, not only personally but also financially.

Young people aged 16 - 18 years presently have no automatic right to a statutory income from the State. They may occasionally be paid an allowance through the Supplementary Welfare Scheme of the Health Boards if they are 'out of home'. However, the Community Welfare Officer must be satisfied before granting a supplement that it would be unreasonable to expect the applicant to return home. The role of the social worker for the homeless has involved considerable negotiation on behalf of young people for financial assistance. The difficulty arises in establishing a case that is 'reasonable'.

Attempting to tackle problems of unemployment among homeless young people is a very difficult task given the economic climate, not only of Limerick but also of the Country generally. A proportion of homeless young people, with whom there has been contact, have successfully taken up placements in Limerick Youth Service. However, there remains a number of young people 'out of home' who would appear to be beyond the reach of existing training and employment services.

3. LIAISON ROLE WITH AGENCIES

One of the aims of the project is to offer support to agencies already providing services to homeless young people, in particular, those providing shelter.

Since the beginning of the project there has been daily contact with both Rosemount Night Shelter and Rosemount Hostel at 60 Clare Street, the purpose of which has been two-fold:- Firstly, to share in the control of admissions to both units, and secondly, to offer support to staff. At any one time there could be six young people resident between both units.

"The numerous conflict situations arising within relatively unselected groups result in exacting and exhausting experiences" (Morris 1980). There have been instances of overdoses, deliberate self-harm, fights, drunken behaviour and verbal abuse. On the other hand, there have been examples of young girls gaining in self-control, self-confidence and succeeding in finding work through the supportive relationships offered by the staff. The value of social work support is in linking girls to other services and in trying to establish communication with families. It is thus a vital back-up service. The job of the social worker also involves arranging case reviews, for example, in relation to admissions to Rosemount Hostel. The Contract signed on admission (already referred to in Section 1) has been found to be a very useful tool in terms of reviewing each girl's progress to date and addressing problem areas which need to be worked on in the following weeks. Generally, reviews are held monthly.

In conjunction with this work, there has also been frequent contact with the Brother Stephen Russell Home particularly when the emergency facility for homeless boys has been used.

Arising from working closely with staff in both services, there is a major concern about the lack of available resources in order to address the needs of homeless young people more comprehensively and more appropriately. The staff of Brother Stephen Russell Home are acutely aware of the fact that it is not geared to meet the needs of young people. Rosemount Hostel, due to limits on staffing levels, is precluded from extending its service to a larger number of adolescent girls out-of-home. While the hostel could accommodate six girls, it has to date only been able to offer a service to half that number.

4. PROFILES OF HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE

The following profiles represent various types of young people with whom the project social worker has had contact. Their case histories have been modified for reasons of confidentiality. The profiles illustrate certain issues that are identified as causing homelessness among young people, for example, family problems, experience of being sexually or physically abused, and the experience of being in care.

1. JOHN'S STORY.

John is 15 and is from Limerick City. He was brought up by his father as his parents split up when John was seven. His mother has been in England for a number of years.

John's father has been drinking heavily for the past few months. John is afraid of him when he is drinking. The school reported that John stayed with friends on a number of occasions rather than go home. The people he stayed with contacted the Health Board about his care.

The Project Social Worker arranged to meet John's father. His response was that John had a home if he wanted to use it. John eventually agreed to return home. The situation is an at-risk one but securing alternative care for John was not possible. Because of his age, John is too old for foster care and is not seen as a priority in terms of residential care provision.

2. JAMES' STORY.

James is 17. He is from a large family. He recently moved into a bedsit. His weekly income is £30. His rent is £14 per week. He has failed to pay his rent for three weeks running and his landlord is threatening to evict him. James is terrified that he will be chucked out onto the street. He knows what this is like. He was on the streets for 14 weeks. He ran away from home because his step-father used 'to kick him around the place'. He did not know where to go. He had no money. He began robbing for food. He slept in a building site. He was eventually picked up by the Guards for stealing. The Guards referred him to the Health Board. The case was allocated to the Project Social Worker.

With support, he secured a job in Limerick Youth Service and from there he looked for a flat. However as stated he is now running into problems. Negotiation with the Community Welfare Officer has led to payment of a rent allowance. This will enable James to stay where he is and prevent him from becoming homeless again.

3. MARY'S STORY.

Mary is 16. She is from County Clare. She came to Limerick looking for a job. She thought this would be easy but realised when she got to the city how hard it was. She was staying with a friend whom she knew when she was in care. She spent 10 years of her life in a Children's Home along with two younger brothers. Her mother had psychiatric problems and was unable to cope. As she had no money her friend told her to leave. Mary did not know what to do. Eventually she went to the Guards. They referred her to Rosemount Night Shelter. She was admitted in mid-July. From there, she secured a place in the Youth Service. She is doing reasonably well, but her attendance is erratic and occasionally she loses her temper. From the Night Shelter she was transferred to the new medium term hostel. One of Mary's problems is in not taking responsibility for her own decisions and actions. When she was in care, very often decisions were made on her behalf. She felt protected and supported but since she left care she feels isolated. Placement in the new hostel has enabled Mary to take more self-responsibility in a 'safe' environment. It is probably the most appropriate place for her to be in right now.

4. SARAH'S STORY.

Sarah is 17. She is from Limerick City. She came to the attention of the Project Social Worker through a community care Social Worker. Sarah had run away from home and had been staying with various friends. The Social Worker was concerned for her safety.

Sarah ran away from home because her parents, as she put it, "chastised her whenever she went out with her boyfriend". Her father, in particular, would lose his temper with her. On a few occasions he told her to "get out", but her mother always intervened to stop her. On this occasion, she left of her own accord. When she left she did not have any plans but ended up going to stay with two friends who stay in bedsits. When first seen she had no job, no money and did not want any contact with home.

The Project Social Worker brought her home in an attempt to reconcile both parties but her parents did not want the situation discussed. As far as they were concerned "they had five other children to worry about".

Sarah then moved in with her boyfriend. He is 24 and has his own accommodation. He is unemployed and has a prison record. Sarah depends on him for money; however his money does not go very far between them. Although Sarah has never said so, it is suspected that at times he mistreats her. On one visit to see her, Sarah had two black eyes. Her story was that "she bumped into a door".

Attempts to get her to hold down a job failed. As a result, Sarah spends most of her day in her boyfriend's flat smoking or drinking to alleviate boredom.

5. JOAN'S STORY.

Joan is aged 17. She is from North Tipperary. She recently phoned the Mid-Western Health Board stating that she 'had to get out of home'. She did not say why over the phone, but she was advised to see a Social Worker. She went to her local Social Worker who later transferred the case to the Project Social Worker because Joan was over the age of Health Board responsibility. In a lengthy initial interview, Joan disclosed that she had been sexually abused.

She was reticent to say who abused her. She eventually stated it was a member of her extended family. After further meetings she disclosed that her uncle had assaulted her two years ago.

During these meetings, Joan's distress was obvious. At times she would break down and cry. She revealed that her immediate family did not want to know. She felt she needed to get out. Contact was made with the family but, as Joan had said, they did not want to know.

Finally, it was decided that perhaps Joan should leave the family home. The Project Social Worker's role involved accompanying her to see various flats and negotiating money on her behalf as well as to offer emotional support. Joan is working as a waitress but regrets she did not stay on in school longer.

6. MARK'S STORY.

Mark is 16 and is from Limerick. He is on probation for breaking and entering. He has an older brother who is also on probation. He is out of home for four weeks. At present Mark is staying in a Corporation House with a number of other boys of a similar age. Mark is deeply into glue sniffing and drinking cider. He used to attend a special school as he has learning difficulties, but he has dropped out.

Attempts by his Probation Officer to work with him have been hampered by Mark's failure to keep appointments when he is on a bout of drinking or glue sniffing. When he has been visited unexpectedly, his attitude is confrontational and threatening.

Because he is 'homeless' he was referred to the Project Social Worker. However, there was little that could be done. He would not go to the Brother Stephen Russell Hostel and, even if he did, this would be on an overnight basis.

The reality is that there is no accommodation suitable for Mark in Limerick. His behaviour had become unmanageable for his parents who have four other sons.

Ideally, he needs placement in a hostel for a number of months in order to stabilize his behaviour as preliminary to any therapeutic intervention.

SPECIFIC FEATURES OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

At the start of the project a most disturbing feature of the lives of such young people was the manner in which they were passed from one agency to another in an unplanned and ultimately ineffective manner. For example, no single agency took responsibility for the provision of accommodation. The counselling and support services specifically geared towards their needs is now offered on a pilot-scheme basis.

The foregoing profiles also demonstrate that where a young person is homeless for any length of time, he/she becomes involved in crime, drugs, alcohol and substance abuse including exploitative relationships. The corollary also applies. Girls, in particular, were seen to almost invariably become involved in successive exploitative sexual relationships. Other surveys have shown that this is the road to prostitution. There is no evidence forthcoming from this research study of teenage prostitution in Limerick. However, many of the factors leading to such a development do exist. It is apparent that in nearly all cases, the young people have emotional and behavioural problems, often in the extreme as the last profile indicates.

5. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE ACTION RESEARCH

(A) Lack of accommodation for homeless boys

A major difficulty in trying to help older boys who are homeless has been of securing placements.

There is a chronic lack of services for this client group in Limerick City.

Firstly, there is no emergency accommodation suitable to the needs of older boys with behavioural problems.

A comment made in the survey in relation to Brother Stephen Russell Home was as follows:

"This hostel is not the proper environment for young people, especially those of a nervous disposition, who are easily impressionable and maybe led astray. The main problem we are facing is in having young and older age groups mixed under the same roof which is neither wise nor practical".

Secondly, there is no medium-term hostel provision for boys similar to that provided for girls at 60 Clare Street.

Thirdly, there is insufficient long-term residential provision for older boys who present difficult behaviour.

Another comment made in the survey was that

"the only route for many adolescent boys to alternative care is in fact through crime and court committal".

Survey findings clearly show that there is a greater number of homeless boys than girls in Limerick (Section 4, Table 3). We have seen that there is residential provision for homeless girls.

The lack of suitable provision for boys means that they are receiving considerably less service.

(b)Housing

Since the Housing Act, 1988 became law, the local authorities are empowered to provide housing for homeless young people over the age of 18. In Limerick, a number of one-bedroomed houses have been allocated to both young men and women who state they are 'homeless'.

This has been the subject of representation to the Housing Department by local Social Workers, Probation Officers and Youth Workers in the Southill area. These representations have stressed the need for comprehensive assessment and follow-up by Welfare Staff.

Many of the young people reported homeless in the survey were said to be 'dossing' with friends. The sixth profile is an example.

For reasons of confidentiality, respondents to the survey were reluctant to give further details but there are clear indications that many youngsters, male and female under 18, are 'dossing' with single parents. This situation is of serious concern for many reasons. As one respondent to the survey said

".....has a few friends who are single mothers and who have their own houses. She is easily influenced. She sees their position as desirable. It could be an easy option to go to stay with them".

As well as perhaps encouraging younger teenagers to leave home, the children of these families are likely to be put at-risk, for instance, if glue sniffing is taking place.

(c)Difficulty of engaging families

The experience has been and the profiles clearly indicate that by the time young people find themselves homeless their families have often abdicated responsibility and are resistant to any social work involvement aimed at reconciliation.

Adolescence is a stage of change and of potential crisis. The average family has the resources to manage or survive such crisis. Some families however may not have the resources to deal adequately with their adolescent children. They may respond with conflict, rejection and despair. Very often, this is because they themselves are under stress, economically, emotionally and physically. Thus, they may not have the capacity to deal with the added strains of teenage pregnancy and rebellion. There is an urgent need for a range of family support services which might prevent problems such as youth homelessness. This is discussed further in Section 6.

(d) Concern over lack of supervision for young people on temporary release from detention

It would appear that there is a significant number of young people in Limerick, boys in particular, who become homeless at weekends due to temporary release from detention. One homeless young person, reported in the survey was described as

"a typical example of what happens in a number of cases where a young person is sentenced to a special school and is left out for weekends without any provision for supervision, i.e. left to his own devices. The young person doesn't bother to go back until the Guards re-arrest him".

(e) Concern over lack of income for 16 - 18 year olds

As mentioned earlier, young people in this age group do not have an automatic right to Social Welfare Assistance but where they are 'out of home' consideration may be given to the payment of Supplementary Welfare Benefit. A considerable amount of time has involved advocacy on behalf of young people out of home for same. Clearer guidelines need to be established for Community Welfare Officers, particularly if their powers remain discretionary. Indeed, other reports have recommended legislative change which would place a duty on the Department of Social Welfare to financially assist this age group irrespective of circumstances. Generally, Community Welfare Officers are willing to financially assist but, because their powers are discretionary, this may not always be the case.

(f) Lack of information

An issue which has emerged at two levels is

- (a) the lack of information available to homeless young people regarding services, and
- (b) the lack of information available to agencies, schools in particular, in relation to services.

The profiles demonstrate the tendency on the part of young people out of home to keep to themselves rather than seek help from established agencies.

The poor response from schools to the survey is perhaps an indication of their lack of knowledge and awareness of youth homelessness as an issue. In terms of prevention, schools could have a major role in identifying signs that might eventually lead to homelessness.

A comment made in the survey regarding the role of schools was:

"There needs to be a facility to pick up children who are showing early indications of difficulties (e.g. disrupting class, mitching) - there needs to be a response from schools in terms of providing for children with special needs".

This lack of information points to an over-riding need for co-operation of services.

Specific recommendations are made in relation to these issues in Section 6.

SECTION 4

Demographic Data from Survey of Young People found to be homeless in Limerick during May 1989.

1. INTRODUCTION

A survey was undertaken in May 1989 in order to gain more information on the needs and backgrounds of homeless young people.

The purpose of the survey were:-

1. To establish how many young people aged 18 and under were homeless during a given month i.e. May 1989, and how many were homeless in the previous year, and to identify those likely to become homeless in the future.
2. To establish for each young person:
Name, Age, Gender, Home Address and Present Location.
3. To examine the types of homelessness experienced and the factors which contribute to homelessness.
4. To review present services available to this target group.
5. To identify the gaps in the present services.

Because of the mobility of young homeless people and their reluctance to be identified as homeless, it was decided to contact secondary sources, rather than young people themselves for information.

Secondary sources included:-

Schools, Community Training Workshops, Youth Workers, Child Care Workers, Social Workers, Probation Workers, Community Welfare Officers, Gardai, Religious, Hostels and Housing Authorities.

In total, 90 individuals were contacted.

2. THE SURVEY

There were two parts to the survey:

Part 1 - General Questionnaire

Aimed to establish the views of agencies about the problem of homelessness among young people in Limerick City. It also aimed to establish the extent of the problem as experienced in the year prior to the survey and as estimated in the future. Names of young people were requested in order to avoid duplication.

Part 2 - Questionnaire on any Young Person known to be homeless.

Agencies were asked to complete this section only if they were in contact with a homeless young person at the time of the survey i.e. during the month of May, 1989. Information was asked on the name, age, gender, family background and personal history of each young person.

Participants were informed that personal information on young people would be regarded in the strictest confidence. (See Appendix 3 -Copy of Part 1 and Part 2, plus letters sent to various agencies).

Questionnaires were distributed by post. Personal contact/informal interviews were carried out with those whom the researcher considered likely to have the most relevant information. The questionnaires were sent at the end of April and asked to be returned by mid June. A number of questionnaires were not returned immediately. Follow up was done in most cases by phone and in some cases by personal collection.

RESPONSE

90 individuals were contacted, representing 22 agencies plus all Primary and Secondary Schools in the City.

Of the 90 General Questionnaires distributed, 61 were returned. However, only 31 (50%) were fully completed. In order to ensure accuracy, it was decided to base the analysis on these 31.

Of the Questionnaires on young persons, 27 Questionnaires on specific case of homelessness were returned. There was overlap in two instances, so 25 was taken as the final figure relating to homelessness in May, 1989.

In the main, schools responded that they had little or no experience or contact with homeless young people. The greatest number of young people reported homeless was by the Probation Service.

Limerick Youth Service, Limerick Youth Encounter Project, Rosemount Night Shelter and Health Board Social Workers were also significant sources of information (see Table 17 for further details).

No response was received from 7 people. Some of these said they would send on questionnaires but these never arrived despite a number of reminders. It is a source of disappointment and concern that a small number of agencies who would appear to have a central role in relation to the issue of Youth Homelessness and Services for Young People failed to respond.

DATA ANALYSIS

The assistance of a researcher from the Social Research Department of University of Limerick was engaged to code and computer analyse the results of the survey. The findings of the survey are based on 31 fully completed General Questionnaires, and on 25 fully completed Questionnaires on Young People.

SHREDDING

It was decided that in order to ensure complete confidentiality, records of personal information on young people would be shredded on completion of the report.

SEASONAL CHANGES

The survey was carried out in the month of May, 1989. The results of the survey may not represent the extent of homelessness among young people at other times of the year.

3. INFORMATION ON YOUNG PEOPLE (including Tables 1 to 16)

In total, information was received on 112 young people aged 18 years or under who were homeless or likely to become homeless (overlap is eliminated). This figure when broken down includes:

A. YOUNG PEOPLE HOMELESS IN MAY, 1989

Males	18 (72%)
Females	7 (28%)
<hr/>	
Total	25

B. YOUNG PEOPLE HOMELESS IN PREVIOUS YEAR

Males	40 (67.8%)
Females	19 (32.2%)
<hr/>	
Total	59

C. YOUNG PEOPLE LIKELY TO BECOME HOMELESS IN THE NEXT YEAR

Males	19 (67.9%)
Females	9 (32.1%)
<hr/>	
Total	28

Information in relation to young people 'homeless in the previous year' is accurate within the limits of respondents' memory and records of contact with homeless young people.

Any figure pertaining to those 'likely to become homeless' must be seen as an estimate. (See Appendix 4).

Questionnaires completed on young people homeless at the time of the survey (total number - 25) yield more accurate information.

Findings are as follows:

TABLE 1 - AGE OF YOUNG PERSON

AGE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
14	5	20.0
15	9	36.0
16	5	20.0
17	3	12.0
18	3	12.0
Total	25	100.0

TABLE 2 - DISTRIBUTION OF MALES AND FEMALES BY AGE

AGE	MALES		FEMALES	
	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
14	5	20.0	-	-
15	8	32.0	1	4.0
16	2	8.0	3	12.0
17	-	-	3	12.0
18	3	12.0	-	-
Total	18	72.0	7	28.0

Comment

In the two younger age groups, there are more males than females. This trend changes in the 16 year old age group where the number of females is greater. Streetwise also found that females tended to be older than males: 56.6% of females were 17 or 18 years, compared to 52.9% of males. (Streetwise, 1987)

TABLE 3 - LOCATION ON CONTACT

LOCATION	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
1.Sleeping Rough	3	-	3	12.0
2.Insecure Accommm.- Relatives	-	1	1	4.0
3.Insecure Accommm.- Non-Relatives	10	2	12	48.0
4.Emergency Shelter	-	3	3	12.0
5.Other	4	1	5	20.0
6.Intermittent between	1	-	1	4.0
Total	18	7	25	100.0

Footnote

5. 'Other' includes: Psychiatric Hospital 1
Bedsitter 2
Flat 1
Digs 1

Comment

The most significant feature of this Table is that the highest percentage of young people reported homeless were said to be in 'insecure accommodation with non-relatives'. This was also more common among boys than girls. The phenomenon of staying with non-relatives is largely associated with homeless boys who stay with single people aged 19 and over who are housed in their own right by the Corporation. (See Table 4 - these houses are generally known as 'bungalows' and apply specifically to the Southill area of the City). The most notable difference between the sexes is shown in category 1 - 'Sleeping Rough'. No girls were reported to be sleeping rough. This is probably related to the fact that there is a shelter for homeless girls but there is no counterpart for homeless boys. It may also be because girls would rather stay with relatives or friends rather than sleep rough.

TABLE 4 - COMMENTS ON SUITABILITY OF LOCATION

	Number	Percentage
No comment	4	16.0
Unsuitable due to overcrowding	1	4.0
Unsuitable due to glue sniffing	2	8.0
Unsuitable - bungalow with other youngsters	1	4.0
Unsuitable - bungalow with unmarried mother	7	28.0
Unsuitable - sleeping rough	2	8.0
Unsuitable - will only be kept a few days	1	4.0
Poor Accommodation - bedsit	2	8.0
* Not designed for homeless young people	1	4.0
Living with boyfriend - no family support	1	4.0
Not suitable for long-term (digs)	1	4.0
No contact with responsible adult	1	4.0
In suitable hostel	1	4.0
Total	25	100.0

Footnote

* Hostel for Battered Women

Comment

This Table indicates that location on contact was said to be unsuitable in all but one case where the young person was staying in a Girls' Hostel.

TABLE 5 - LENGTH OF HOMELESSNESS

	Number	Percentage
Less than 1 month	7	31.8
1 month	1	4.5
2 months	2	9.2
3 months	3	13.6
4 months	2	9.2
5 months	1	4.5
6 months	1	4.5
7 months	1	4.5
10 months	1	4.5
12 months	1	4.5
In and out of home repeatedly	2	9.2
Total	22	100.0

Non-respondents excluded.

The majority of young people were homeless for less than 4 months.

TABLE 6 - TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION PRIOR TO HOMELESSNESS

	Number	Percentage
Parents' Homes	19	76.0
Rented House	2	8.0
* Institution	3	12.0
Hostel	1	4.0
Total	25	100.0

Footnote

* Of those in institutional accommodation, two were in residential care with a Health Board and one had been in care with the Department of Justice. The latter had spent one month in Limerick Jail and 3 weeks in St. Michael's Centre, Dublin.

TABLE 7 - FIRST TIME HOMELESS

	Number	Percentage
Don't know	1	4.2
Yes	8	33.3
No	15	62.5
Total	24	100.0

Non respondents excluded.

Comment

This Table indicates that fifteen of those reported homeless at the time of the survey had previously been homeless. Three were reported as permanently homeless.

TABLE 8 - REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS

	Number	Percentage
Solvent Abuse	1	4.0
Difficulty with parents	10	40.0
Violence in Family	3	12.0
Peer Group Influence	1	4.0
Change in marital relationship	4	16.0
Abscondee from custody	1	4.0
Left residential care	2	8.0
Pregnancy	1	4.0
Dispute with neighbours	1	4.0
Overcrowding in home	1	4.0
Total	25	100.0

TABLE 9 - PARENTAL STATUS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

	Number	Percentage
Married	11	45.8
Widowed	1	4.2
Divorced/Separated	5	20.8
Deserted	1	4.2
Single	3	12.5
Other	3	12.5
Total	24	100.0

Non respondents excluded.

Comment

Table 8 and Table 9 indicate that there is a clear link between youth homelessness and marital/parental problems. The Eastern Health Board Report found that child-parent problems plus a lack of parental control were major contributory factors to homelessness of young people (E.H.B. 1987). The 'Streetwise Project' also found this phenomenon (Streetwise 1987).

When parents split up, one or other spouse has to find alternative accommodation. The young person may have to choose where he then lives, whether he remains in the family home or goes with the spouse who is leaving. Generally, young people stay in the family home. However, when the remaining spouse finds a new partner, this may cause more problems for the young person. It becomes difficult to trust the new relationship: resentment, anger and other feelings come out. If the new partner has a different approach to discipline, this in particular, may cause problems; it may even lead to the young person leaving.

As one probation officer put it in response to the survey "Andy lives with his Mum and her co-habitee. He has feelings about his father he hasn't expressed. He leaves home regularly for about a week. He is into glue sniffing. He recently spent three weeks in St. Michael's Assessment Centre".

TABLE 10 - EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF FATHERS

	Number	Percentage
Unemployed	8	42.0
Factory Work	2	10.5
Cleaner	1	5.3
Industry	1	5.3
Scrap Merchant	1	5.3
Abroad	1	5.3
Security	2	10.5
Builder	1	5.3
Not known	2	10.5
Total	19	100.0

Non respondents excluded.

This Table indicates that 42.0% of young people reported homeless in May had fathers who were unemployed.

TABLE 11 - EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF MOTHERS

	Number	Percentage
Unemployed	1	5.9
Housewife	9	52.8
Factory Work	2	11.8
Cleaning	2	11.8
Abroad	1	5.9
Not known	2	11.8
Total	17	100.0

Non respondents and those for whom the question was not applicable are excluded.

TABLE 12 - WHETHER THE YOUNG PERSON IS CURRENTLY ATTENDING SCHOOL

	Number	Percentage
Yes	2	8.3
No	22	91.7
Total	24	100.0

Non respondents excluded.

Comment

This Table clearly indicates that the vast majority of young people who are homeless are also out of school. Given that this research refers to those aged 18 and under, the question must be asked "what is the response of schools to this phenomenon"?

TABLE 13 - WHETHER THE YOUNG PERSON HAS ANY TRAINING EXPERIENCE

	Number	Percentage
Training not completed	2	9.5
Trainee Painter	1	4.8
Community Workshop	4	19.0
Fas Scheme	1	4.8
Vocational Preparation Year	2	9.5
Rehabilitation Programme	1	4.8
Sheltered Employment	1	4.8
Youth Service	1	4.8
None	8	38.0
Total	21	100.0

Non respondents excluded.

TABLE 14 - WHETHER THE YOUNG PERSON HAS ANY EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

	Number	Percentage
No details given	1	4.8
Painter	1	4.8
Selling Coal	3	14.3
Dog Track	1	4.8
Shop Work	2	9.5
Odd Jobs	1	4.8
Factory Work	1	4.7
None	11	52.3
Total	21	100.0

Non respondents excluded.

Comment

Tables 13 and 14 indicate that 38% of homeless young people have no training experience and 52% have no employment experience.

If one relates this is to the fact that 92% are not attending school, then the overall picture is one of no placement, consequently, nothing to do. The problems which this leads to is indicated by the high rates of being in "trouble with the law" which follows in Table 15 and 16.

TABLE 15 - EXPERIENCE OF BEING IN CARE OR CUSTODY

A. Whether the young person has ever been in Care

	Number	Percentage
1. Residential Care with a Health Board	4	19.0
2. Residential Care with Department of Justice	2	9.6
3. Never been in care	15	71.4
Total	21	100.0

Non respondents excluded.

Footnote

1. The longest period in care with a Health Board was three years. (These young people were not from the Mid-Western Health Board Area).
2. Residential Care with the Department of Justice effectively involved three weeks in St. Michael's Assessment Centre.

B. Whether the young person has ever been in Custody

	Number	Percentage
* Yes	6	28.6
No	15	71.4
Total	21	100.0

Non respondents excluded.

Footnote

* Of those who had been in custody, one had been in custody for two years but absconded, one had been in custody for three months and four had been in custody for less than one month.

TABLE 16 - TROUBLE WITH THE LAW

A. Whether the young person has ever been convicted of an offence

	Number	Percentage
Yes	10	45.5
No	10	45.5
No, but received a caution	1	4.5
Charged	1	4.5
Total	22	100.0

Non respondents excluded.

B. If yes, whether this was prior to:

	Number	Percentage
Becoming homeless	1	9.1
While homeless	5	45.4
Both	2	18.2
Difficult to say	1	9.1
Unknown	2	18.2
Total	11	100.0

Non respondents excluded.

C. Whether the young person is awaiting a Court Hearing

	Number	Percentage
Not known	1	4.7
Yes	14	66.7
No	6	28.6
Total	21	100.0

Non respondents excluded.

4 - INFORMATION FROM AGENCIES (including Tables 17 to 25)

TABLE 17 - SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON HOMELESS PEOPLE

	Number	Percentage
Community Welfare Officers, M.W.H.B.	4	12.9
Social Workers (Community Care)	6	19.3
* Social Workers (Specialist)	5	16.1
Parish Worker	1	3.2
Guidance Counsellor	1	3.2
School Principal	2	6.5
Community Worker	1	3.2
Youth Worker	2	6.5
Youth Resource Centre	1	3.2
Community Training Workshop	1	3.2
Probation and Welfare Officer	3	9.7
Voluntary Organisations	2	6.5
Hostels	2	6.5
Total	31	100.0

Footnote

* Specialist Social Workers attached to the following organisations - Adapt House, Cura, Limerick Corporation, Limerick County Council, St. Augustine's Special School, Limerick Social Service Centre.

TABLE 18 - TYPE OF SERVICE PROVIDED (First mentioned)

	Number	Percentage
Temporary/Emergency Accommodation	8	25.9
Referral	4	12.9
Counselling/Advice	4	12.9
Finance/Food/Clothing	2	6.5
Residential Foster Care (if under 16)	2	6.5
Contact relevant people	1	3.2
Family Work	1	3.2
Indirect provision	1	3.2
Alternative Care (pre/post natal care)	1	3.2
* Consider application for accommodation	1	3.2
None	6	19.3
Total	31	100.0

Footnote

* Applies to Travellers only.

TABLE 19 - WHETHER THE RESPONDENTS CONSIDER THESE SERVICES TO BE ADEQUATE

	Number	Percentage
No, no suitable emergency provision for boys	6	19.3
No, lack of information on available services	2	6.5
No, range of accommodation needed	2	6.5
No, need for counselling service	2	6.5
No, only emergency solutions available	2	6.5
No, no further comment	6	19.3
No, unable to comment	6	19.4
Yes, not big problem - children return home	1	3.2
* Yes, with increased power since 1988 Housing Act	1	3.2
Yes, at the moment but envisage need for more staff	1	3.2
Yes, no further comment	1	3.2
Don't know	1	3.2
Total	31	100.0

Footnote

* Applies to Corporation Social Worker.

Comment

The above clearly indicates concern over the lack of suitable emergency provision for homeless boys in the City. As mentioned earlier, the 'Streetwise Project' highlighted this need in Limerick also i.e.

Not suitable = 84%

TABLE 20 - WHAT AGENCIES FEEL ARE THE NEEDS OF HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE

	Number	Percentage
Accommodation with support services	18	18.8
Information (re: services available)	3	3.1
Finance	7	7.4
Emergency accommodation	7	7.4
Counselling/Advice	18	18.8
Clothes/Food (Material Aid)	6	6.3
Employment	8	8.4
Protection	4	4.2
Training	2	2.1
Special Housing	3	3.1
School Counsellor	1	1.0
Specialised services for difficult children	1	1.0
Self Development	2	2.1
Spiritual Formation	1	1.0
Education appropriate to needs	3	3.1
Drop-In Centre	1	1.0
Medical Service	1	1.0
Therapeutic Unit for behaviourally disturbed	2	2.1
Family Work	2	2.1
Care/Love	1	1.0
New Experiences	1	1.0
Organised activities	1	1.0
Outreach workers	1	1.0
Specialist Social Worker	1	1.0
The belief in a future	1	1.0
Total	96	100.0

Non respondents excluded.

TABLE 21 - WHAT AGENCIES FEEL IS NEEDED FOR A MORE COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE.

	Number	Percentage
Emergency accommodation for boys	7	26.0
Information Service	1	3.7
Co-Operation between agencies	3	11.1
Co-Ordinating person/group	4	14.8
One body with specific responsibilities	4	14.8
Legislation specifying where responsibilities lie	3	11.1
Hostel for boys	1	3.7
Outreach workers	1	3.7
Unit for difficult adolescents	1	3.7
Group Homes	1	3.7
Less Red Tape	1	3.7
Total	27	100.0

Non respondents excluded.

TABLE 22 - AGENCY ROLE IN MAKING THIS POSSIBLE

	Number	Percentage
Financial help for shelter/clothing	1	3.8
Document to highlight the problem	4	15.6
Referral/Advice	1	3.8
If made aware of problem - could plan involvement	2	7.8
Provide necessary facilities	2	7.8
Fund Services	4	15.6
Provide Support	1	3.8
Accept responsibility in conjunction with other agencies	4	15.6
Not possible in mainstream education	1	3.8
Tracing history in dealing with travellers	1	3.8
Short-term accommodation	1	3.8
Develop Policy	2	7.8
None	2	7.8
Total	26	100.0

Non respondents excluded.

TABLE 23 - LIMITATIONS/OBSTACLES TO PROVIDING A COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE

	Number	Percentage
Lack of suitable accommodation	4	14.3
Lack of resources	2	7.1
Lack of personnel	4	14.3
None	2	7.1
Lack of funding/finance	5	17.9
Lack of clarity of goals	3	10.7
Lack of information	1	3.6
Not applicable	3	10.7
Agency has limited powers	1	3.6
Age limit for tenancy of house	1	3.6
Lack of expertise/specially trained staff	2	7.1
Total	28	100.0

Non respondents excluded.

This Table indicates that agencies view lack of funding as a major problem in providing a comprehensive service to homeless young people.

TABLE 24 - AGE GROUP IDENTIFIED AS MOST AT-RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

Age Group	Number	Percentage
14 - 16	14	51.9
16 - 18	9	33.3
12 - 16	1	3.7
14 - 18	2	7.4
Don't know	1	3.7
Total	27	100.0

It is clear from this table that young people aged 14 - 16 are identified as most at-risk of homelessness. This finding should be taken into consideration in the planning of future services.

TABLE 25 - THE STEPS RESPONDENTS FEEL SHOULD BE TAKEN TO PREVENT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS.

	Number	Percentage
Better State Services	2	7.7
Emergency Unit for boys	2	7.7
Permanent Social Work Service	2	7.7
Family Support Services	6	23.1
Better liaison between agencies and schools	4	15.4
Sheltered housing	2	7.7
Early detection of children at-risk	4	15.4
Counselling (Specialised)	2	7.7
Halting site for travellers	1	3.8
Give hope to parents	1	3.8
Total	26	100.0

Non respondents excluded.

Other Steps Mentioned:

Hostel with backup services
Financial Assistance
Programmes for substance abusers
Parenting Programmes
Drop-In Facilities

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS - IN RELATION TO YOUNG HOMELESS PEOPLE

1. Total Number of cases - i.e.

25 - Homeless in May, 1989
59 - Homeless in the previous year
28 - Likely to become homeless in the next year

2. Of those homeless in May, 9 (36%) were aged 15 years, 5 (20%) were aged 14, a further 5 (20%) were aged 16 years and the final 6 (24%) were aged 17 years or more. (Table 1)
3. Of those homeless in May, 18 (72%) were male and 7 (28%) were female. (Table 2)
4. Homeless Females tended to be older than males. (Table 2)
5. Of those homeless in May, 12 (48%) were in insecure accommodation with non-relatives, 5 (20%) were in bedsits or flats, 3 (12%) were sleeping rough, 3 (12%) were in an emergency shelter, 1 (4%) was in insecure accommodation with relatives and 1 (4%) was said to be intermittent between non-relatives and relatives. (Table 3)
6. Males were more likely than females to be 'sleeping rough' or to be staying in insecure accommodation known as 'dossing'. (Table 3)
7. The length of time out of home ranged from less than one month to 12 months. 15 (62.5%) of those out of home in May were homeless previously. 3 were said to be permanently homeless. (Table 5 & 7)
8. The main reason for homelessness was said to be due to 'difficulties with parents' (49%). (Table 8)
9. 22 (92%) of the young people were reported as being out of school. 8 (38%) were reported as having no training; 11 (52%) were reported as having no employment experience. (Table 12, 13, 14)
- 10.4 (19%) of those homeless in May had been in care with a Health Board. 2 had been in care under the Department of Justice. 6 had been in custody. (Table 15)
- 11.10 out of those homeless in May had been convicted of an offence. (Table 16)

6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS IN RELATION TO AGENCIES

1. Sources of Information

The principal sources of information were: Social Workers, Probation and Welfare Officers, Community Welfare Officer, Youth Workers, Training Centres and Hostels. (Table 17)

The overall response from schools was very low.

The highest number of homeless young people were reported by the Probation Service. 13 of the 25 young people reported homeless in May, 1989 were known to the Probation Service.

2. Services Needed

A range of services was identified as needed to tackle the problem of youth homelessness in Limerick. Emergency provision for boys was identified as the most urgent need. A co-ordinating person/group was also identified as an important need. (Table 21)

3. Age Group identified as most at-risk

Young people aged 14 - 16 years were identified as those most at risk. (Table 24)

SECTION 5 - ANALYSIS OF NATURE OF DEMAND
MADE ON AN EMERGENCY FACILITY (ROSEMOUNT NIGHT SHELTER)
60 CLARE STREET FOR GIRLS AGED 18 AND UNDER.

January 1989 - December 1989

<u>Date</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Reason for Admission</u>	<u>Length of Stay/ No. of Nights</u>	<u>Came From</u>
JANUARY				
14/1/89	18	Stranded Overnight	1	Tipperary
15/1/89	18	Came to Limerick to visit friend - stranded overnight	1	Dublin
19/1/89	18	Put out of home by brother	2	Limerick
19/1/89	15	Ran away from home	7	Co. Limerick
25/1/89	15	Step-father beat her up	3	Limerick
26/1/89	16 & 18	Two sisters out of home due to family difficulties	2	Limerick
FEBRUARY				
14/2/89	15	Re-Admitted (Run-Away)	4	Limerick
23/2/89	18	Out of work - looking for a job	1	Limerick

MARCH

<u>Date</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Reason for Referral</u>	<u>Length of Stay/ No. of Nights</u>	<u>Came From</u>
1/3/89	18	Disagreement with boy- friend who had drink problems	1	Limerick
7/3/89	17	Put out of home by father	14	Limerick
17/3/89	13	Expelled from School and ran away	2	Galway
17/3/89	17	Expelled from School and ran away	2	Galway
26/3/89	18	Stranded overnight	2	Tipperary
27/3/89	15	Re-admission (Run-Away)	16	Limerick

APRIL

4/4/89	18	Found wandering the streets by Gardai	1	Cork
12/4/89	18	Row at home - sexual abuse in past	1	Limerick
14/4/89	17	Re-Admission (put out of home)	88	Limerick

MAY

4/5/89	17	Put out of home	12	Limerick
10/5/89	18	Between Flats	8	Limerick

JUNE

13/6/89	17	Disagreement with family	41	Tipperary
18/6/89	18	No place to stay	1	Limerick
22/6/89	17	Disagreement with family	33	Co. Clare
30/6/89	17	Discharged from Residential Care	17	Tipperary

JULY

<u>Date</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Reason for Referral</u>	<u>Length of Stay/ No. of Nights</u>	<u>Came From</u>
5/7/89	17	Put out of home by father	40	Limerick
20/7/89	18	Missed bus to Cork	1	Cork
21/7/89	16	Needed overnight accommodation	1	Limerick

AUGUST

14/8/89	17	No place to stay	1	Dublin
24/8/89	15	No place to stay	1	Limerick

SEPTEMBER

12/9/89	18	Family Problems	1	Co. Limerick
20/9/89	14	- Sisters	1	Drogheda
20/9/89	14	Ran away from home	1	Drogheda
21/9/89	17	Ran away from home (Foster Parents)	4	Clare
25/9/89	18	Threatened by boyfriend	1	Limerick
27/9/89	18	Came to visit relations Limerick and got into trouble	1	Tipperary

OCTOBER

10/10/89	18	Unmarried mother - tried to get in contact with father of child (came with child 8 months)	1	Dublin
11/10/89	15	Ran away from home	33	Co. Limerick
14/10/89	17	Threatened by boyfriend	2	Limerick

NOVEMBER

3/11/89	18	Disagreement with sister in the sharing of a flat	5	Limerick
10/11/89	18	Disagreement with father	2	Limerick

DECEMBER

<u>Date</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Reason for Referral</u>	<u>Length of Stay/ No. of Nights</u>	<u>Came From</u>
19/12/89	18	Re-admission	2	Limerick
19/12/89	17	Re-admission	4	Tipperary

- The total number of teenagers aged 18 and under accommodated was - 39 (Re-Admissions counted once).
- The total number of women plus teenagers was - 63
- Teenagers occupied 362 bednights.
- Women plus teenagers occupied 469 bednights.
- Many of the teenage girls had no place to go by day and hence on 286 occasions these young people stayed day and night.
- At least six teenage girls stayed in the night shelter for up to or over three weeks.

ISSUES WHICH EMERGE

1. Cases from outside Mid-West

A significant number of teenagers came to the shelter from outside the Mid-Western Health Board jurisdiction having run away from home. The response to this type of case was to immediately link the girls with either their family or an appropriate agency in their area of origin. In all cases it was possible to return them to their own area. This prevented at least some girls from becoming involved in a delinquent sub-culture within the city.

2. Length of Stay

For many girls one or two nights were all that was offered and the girls were able to move on, either to a flat/bedsit or to stay with a friend.

However, very often the length of stay had to be extended. This tended to happen when the relationship with the family had almost irretrievably broken down and the girl had serious personal problems.

Very significant problems were experienced in coping with some of these girls, even girls as young as 14. Present staffing levels do not facilitate the accommodation of such girls.

The extreme vulnerability of some of these girls was expressed clearly by the number of re-admissions. At least eight girls have been re-admitted on repeated occasions.

3. After-Care

As well as those who are re-admitted a number of girls, having secured accommodation, returned to the shelter for emotional support.

4. Day-Care

Given that the Unit is a night shelter this posed problems for those girls who had no day placement, or school/work. A daily issue for the staff is whether to discharge this type of girl onto the street during the day with no money and nowhere to go. At times, when there has been such cases the Sisters have been flexible and have permitted the girl to stay in the Unit during the day. However, this was not possible when there was up to three such cases.

5. Sources of Referral

The main sources of referrals to the night shelter were social workers. The Gardai also played a significant role in referring teenage girls to the Unit. However, many girls heard about the shelter from their peers.

When the shelter opened, it was decided not to initially publicise its service. Despite this, it has been used almost to full capacity. One could speculate that in the event of its existence being advertised widely the number of referrals would be much larger.

All of the indicators are that the service is a valuable but limited one. The Unit is seen as a solid foundation on which to develop a more comprehensive service.

SECTION 6
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

How does it feel

To be without a home

Like a complete unknown

Like a rolling stone?

(Bob Dylan)

1. **CONCLUSIONS** - This study has identified needs in relation to youth homelessness in Limerick City at two levels.

At the first level, a range of services is required to meet the particular needs of any young person who is homeless or is at high risk of becoming so. It has become clear that homelessness can only be tackled adequately by a broadly based approach in which homelessness is seen as a symptom of serious problems in the wider world of the child or young person and their family. It is also clear that services must respond to needs as they emerge before a situation deteriorates to the point of a young person literally sleeping rough. Homelessness cannot be seen merely as 'rooflessness'. Homelessness is being without a sense of 'home' - a safe and friendly haven from the world -, being without a feeling of being welcome, wanted, accepted and cared for, even in a minimal way 'at home'. Home was once defined as 'the place where they can't turn you away'. Unfortunately many homeless youngsters lack this sense of a guaranteed and secure base.

At the second level, the study has confirmed that inter-agency collaboration, co-operation and communication are absolutely essential if the multi-faceted needs of homeless young people are to be met effectively. What is required is the imaginative linking of the efforts of agencies in the public and voluntary sectors. Appropriate mechanisms must evolve to promote inter-agency service planning, service review, and service delivery.

2. Recommendations - Some General Considerations

The following series of recommendations aim to reduce the problem of youth homelessness, both by preventing its initial occurrence and by minimising its duration where it does occur. In this way the costs of homelessness can be reduced for the young people, for their families and for the community.

In the case of young people out of home, the aim of services should be to achieve the young person's return home, or, where necessary, placement in appropriate alternative care or accommodation. In this context it is worth stressing that placement of impressionable young people in adult accommodation is highly inappropriate and may lead to all kinds of unsavoury influences being exerted on relatively innocent youngsters. It is disturbing that the lack of facilities requires that boys be placed in adult hostels in Limerick at present.

In helping young people who are out of home, it is essential that the response is prompt, authoritative and well resourced. The youngsters' problems will be greatly aggravated by delayed or 'pseudo' responses. In the absence of necessary resources, there may be a temptation for professionals or agencies to seek nominal solutions to particular problems by going through the motions of making what is fairly obviously an untenable placement. They may for instance use a setting unequipped to respond to the needs of the given youngster, or they may arrange the young person's return home to a family situation which remains fundamentally unstable and unable to hold the youngster as at the onset of the problem.

In the case of young people on the brink of leaving home, youth services and family support services should be geared to the early identification of such problems and to the negotiation of constructive packages of help to youngsters and their families aimed at pre-empting a youngster's unplanned departure. This preventive and cost effective strategy obviously can only succeed if the necessary manpower for these services is put in place at community level.

Homelessness, actual or threatened, raises questions about the meaning, purpose and stability of the youngster's daily lifestyle. The 'street' has a magical appeal for homeless youngsters who typically feel worthless and alienated. Through crime, drugs, prostitution or other illicit activity, homeless youngsters may think they can find a status and sense of belonging on the 'street' which they yearned for and missed in their previous relationships with adults. Thus, loneliness is a problem which services must address in seeking to wean a young person away from the draw of the 'street'.

Homeless youngsters need more than accommodation. They need help in making the transition to the adult world of work and social relationships. They will need to be re-integrated into education or training services so that they may enhance their otherwise abysmal employment prospects. The risk of unemployment is much higher among such young people, who lack any educational or training qualifications.

3. DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 INFORMATION, SUPPORT, COUNSELLING.

It is necessary to continue and develop the information, support and counselling service initiated by this project. This can only be done if the existing social work post is resourced on a permanent basis. In reality, a number of such posts are necessary as a single-handed Social Worker has inevitably only been able to offer a very restricted outreach service to desperately needy youngsters. The service presently being provided can only be seen as the beginning of a response to the problems of youth homelessness in Limerick. The limits of one worker has been at the expense of adequate outreach to young people out of home. The project is fully aware that there are a number of homeless young people, in particular boys, whose needs have not been met. In recommending this development it is fully acknowledged that existing services are actively involved in providing information and support, for example Limerick Youth Service. Without such a development, overstretched mainstream services are unlikely to be able to furnish the specialist knowledge and the undivided and sustained attention which the complex problems associated with youth homelessness demands.

It is the recommendation of this Report that serious consideration be given to personnel being employed by the Health Board in order to ensure security of employment and support from colleagues. However, experience would suggest that there are considerable advantages to seconding personnel to a voluntary agency, such as Limerick Social Service Centre, which location facilitates easy accessibility by young people.

3.2. The Urgent Provision of a range of accommodation for homeless boys and girls.

This Report has indicated gaps and shortcomings in accommodation available to homeless young people in Limerick City. In particular it highlights the grave position in relation to boys for whom there is currently no specific provision. A number of initiatives are recommended below, three to meet the needs of boys, one to upgrade existing provision for girls, one concerning the development of foster family care for both boys and girls, and one in relation to the specific needs of youngsters 'graduating' out of the care system who lack a viable home to which to return.

(a) Emergency Accommodation for Homeless Boys

As this Report has indicated there is no suitable emergency accommodation for homeless boys in Limerick City at the present time.

We have shown that homelessness is greater among boys than girls, (Table 2) yet there are no suitable facilities for homeless boys.

This Report strongly recommends that resources be put in place to establish an emergency night shelter specifically for homeless boys, geared towards addressing their particular problems and needs.

A short-term emergency facility would be best modelled on Rosemount Night Shelter for girls. It should provide 3 - 4 places. Experience would suggest that a Unit of this nature is more manageable if operated on a small and closely controlled scale.

Consideration should be given towards a central location within the city.

Table 21 shows the wide support there is among agencies for such a facility in Limerick.

(b) Hostel for homeless boys

Evidence of Need

If an emergency night shelter for boys is to be developed in Limerick, it is likely that a number of boys using the shelter will be unable to return home on a full-time basis as was found in the case of Rosemount Night Shelter for girls and therefore will require longer term accommodation.

- A group of boys aged 14 - 18 years are already identifiable in Schools and Training Centres as needing alternative care to home on an on-going basis. Most of these boys have experienced temporary homelessness due to some crisis in their family.

- At the present time such boys are not being placed in Childrens Homes and it is their age rather than their behaviour which is the prohibitive factor. (The practice tends to be that scarce resources are used for younger children). Given this situation strong feelings have been expressed, regarding the urgent need for the provision of a hostel in association with the establishment of a night shelter in Limerick to cater for this gap in services.
- A hostel would offer a number of boys the opportunity to be supported and supervised. Table 24 clearly shows that young people aged 14 - 16 years are the age group most at-risk of homelessness.
- It is the recommendation of this Report that, if we are to address the problem of youth homelessness and its consequences, services should be put in place at an early stage in order to prevent further problems. The sad reality is that many teenage boys who become homeless eventually become involved in anti-social activities such as drug abuse, solvent abuse and crime, meriting placement on probation or indeed placement in detention.

In hindsight, many agencies have expressed feelings that if hostel provision had been available in Limerick to some of our older teenagers presently before the courts, this scenario may have been avoided.

Aim of Hostel Provision

The aim of hostel provision should be:

"to help each boy face up to the realities of his situation, to confront him with the type of behaviour that he manifests, pointing out how this might cause difficulties for him as it may prove unacceptable to the vast majority of the community in which he lives, yet showing him alternative forms of behaviour that are acceptable". (Adams 1980). In conjunction with this role a hostel should aim towards independent living.

Age Group/Number of Places

- A hostel facility for boys in Limerick should focus on the 14 -18 year old age group.
- It should offer long-term accommodation i.e. from 6 months to 2 years depending on individual circumstances, to a core group of 6 - 8 boys.

Location/Staffing

- A central location is seen as necessary in order to maximise on existing resources such as Limerick Youth Service and Limerick Youth Encounter Project. Similar to the experience of Rosemount, it is the view of this report that a requirement of admission should be that each boy has a day-placement i.e. school/work.
- There should be at least four staff plus a co-ordinator. An equal ratio of male and female staff should pertain in order to foster positive relationships with adults of both genders.

Role of Family

- Where possible families should be involved at the early stage of admission, at reviews and at discharge stage. Parents should be actively involved in the decision making process regarding their child given that they may not have the capacity or the resources to care for their adolescent children themselves.
- Each boy should be encouraged to maintain contact with home where this is possible. Regular home visits should be facilitated by staff.

Support Services

- The role of support services is vital in terms of monitoring and controlling admissions, liaison with residents and in providing specialist help in relation to personal or family problems. It is essential that the Health Board would allocate at least one Social Worker on a full-time basis to such a hostel and allocate on a part-time basis, the services of a Psychologist.

(c) Specialist Residential Centre for Disturbed Adolescent Boys

A formal proposal for the development of a Specialised Centre of this nature in Limerick was submitted to the Department of Health by the Mid-Western Health Board in August, 1989, following an earlier meeting of Residential Staff, Youth Workers, Probation Officers and the Religious Orders. A number of factors led to this proposal:

Traditionally, the Mid-Western Health Board Social Work Department has depended on Residential Centres outside the area to provide for adolescents who come into its care. The proposal stated that

" in excess of twenty adolescent boys from the Mid-West are in care in centres in Dublin, Cork, Clonmel and Galway".

However, it also pointed out that such places are no longer available,

"most child care centres are now tending to limit admissions to children from their own areas and to children who can attend school. And some centres, while theoretically catering for older teenagers, in practice will not accept referrals, particularly of adolescent boys over thirteen on the basis that the boys won't benefit from the programmes offered and that the staff and other resources are not sufficient to meet the boys needs". (Mid-Western Health Board - August 1989).

This means that "places are not available to those who need them most and that the most damaged and damaging or troubled and troublesome are not provided with the care which they need". (Lefroy 1987). Homeless adolescent boys, as this Report has shown, are very often left to their own devices. As one respondent to the survey said

"in most cases of homelessness, no agency is working with the young person - the agencies that are working with young people have little or nothing to offer".

The proposal recommended that in order to cater for adolescent boys who present behaviour difficulties, a Specialised Residential Centre needs to be established in the Limerick Region. It recommended that there should be one-to-one staffing and trained personnel with a range of back-up services i.e. social work, psychological, psychiatric, school liaison.

The Proposal recommended that the maximum number of places should be eight and should operate in conjunction with other residential services for boys. The proposal stressed that the emphasis should be on 'care' rather than 'security'. Provision would need to be made for schooling and training possibly 'in situ'.

This Report also recommends that if such services are to be developed in the Mid-Western Region, consideration should be given to the concept of exchanging staff between the various Units in order to maximise resources and sustain good practice.

Masud Hoghogh states that:

"Staff dealing with disturbed adolescents should be placed within a larger set of facilities with whom they can exchange staff. An important aspect of this is that unless the staff are part of a bigger pool from which they are drawn and to which they are periodically returned, they are likely to develop practices and relationships which are of dubious benefit to the children". (Hoghogh 1978)

3.2 Upgrading of "Rosemount Hostel" for Adolescent Girls

Although the Hostel has impacted significantly and positively on the Mid-Western Health Boards capacity to care for teenage girls needing specialised care, additional staff resources are needed and, in particular, a professionally qualified Child Care Worker is a pressing requirement if the Unit is to operate to full capacity.

3.3 Proposal for the Development of a Specialist Fostering Service for Adolescents

Provision for some homeless or troubled adolescents could be provided by a specialist fostering service. This has worked successfully in other countries for example, Avon Social Service in England operate a 'Teencare Fostering Scheme' which provides foster homes for hard to place teenagers aged 11 - 17 years. It operates on the principle of including people in decision making about themselves. Thus, young people are obliged to sign a contract on admission to the Scheme. This sets out the issues that need to be addressed throughout the placement. The notion of 'Contract Fostering' was devised by the Kent Family Placement Scheme in 1975 and would appear to work for a number of adolescents who would otherwise be in a residential facility. As mentioned previously, the Eastern Health Board, through its Fostering Resource Group, is presently developing a professional foster care service for adolescents along these lines. As in England, foster parents will receive a realistic weekly allowance of approximately £100 and will undergo training in order to deal with the specific problems of the young people placed with them.

A similar scheme could be developed in the Mid-Western Health Board Area. At the present time, placement in Foster Care for adolescents is generally not an option. The development of such a service would involve a significant resource allocation.

3.4 After Care Accommodation and Support for Young People Leaving Care

An area of particular concern arising from other Reports (Streetwise and E.H.B. 1987) is the discharge of children from care (Residential/Fostercare). We have no evidence of this being a major problem for children leaving the Health Boards care in the Mid-Western Region, however serious concern has been expressed about young people leaving the Juvenile Justice System.

In so far as possible residential and fostering services in the Mid-Western Region do try to plan for children leaving care. The issue is rather one of lack of resources, for example the absence of sheltered housing schemes which, while enabling young people to live independently, offer support from supervisory staff. This is an issue which could be explored between Limerick Corporation and the Mid-Western Health Board.

"The process of leaving care is for many one of emotional and physical upheaval, often mirroring some of their movements while in care and accompanied by the experience of living in inadequate and insecure accommodation. Homelessness is too often a consequence of that scenario. Many such young people find themselves out on the streets within a year of leaving care due to rent arrears, trouble with housing managers or just sheer inability to cope". (O'Mahony 1988)

This could be avoided if young people were enabled through sheltered housing schemes to adjust gradually to the demands of independent living.

3.5 The establishment of the necessary arrangements to provide for the income support needs of homeless young people

The powers available under Supplementary Welfare legislation to assist those aged 16 and over who are homeless must be used to the full. This has been the recommendation of the National Youth Policy Committee (Final Report 1984), the O'Sullivan Report (1980) as well as the Eastern Health Board Report on Homelessness (1987) and National Streetwise Report (1987). However, their recommendations have not been acted on. Justin O'Brien suggests that "the failure of the State to address the needs of youth homelessness represents its failure to give priority to socially disadvantaged young people". (O'Brien 1988)

3.6 Specific provision for the education and training needs of homeless young people

The relevant authorities should co-operate in a review of existing statutory provisions in terms of their responsiveness to the needs of homeless youngsters. In planning for the future, the adaptation of existing provisions may be sufficient in some instances, in others specific initiatives dedicated to high risk youngsters may be required. Difficult personal or social problems should not presumably disqualify a youngster from entitlement to a reasonable range of appropriate educational and training opportunities which may be critical to his or her rehabilitation. At the present time considerable strain is placed on existing special schools, such as Limerick Youth Encounter Project, in terms of meeting the demand for places.

3.7 The establishment of adequately staffed family support and youth services at community level

"The function of family support services is to help and support parents in providing good care for their children, especially those parents who are experiencing particular difficulties in doing so. In a society like our own, where the normal course is for children to grow up in families into which they are born, the greatest good that we can confer on all our children is to enable their parents to care for them appropriately and without undue intervention by the State or other agencies into their lives". (Task Force 1980)

Homelessness amongst young people is a symptom of some families' inability to cope with their teenage children. There is an urgent need for support services directed to vulnerable families. Only locally based family support services such as parenting programmes, support groups for parents, etc., can identify emerging problems and respond at an early enough point to prevent problems developing into fresh cases of youth homelessness.

Family Support Services as well as Youth Services are also essential in securing the return home of a youngster who may have slipped through the net. Thus, by helping keep youngsters at home or re-integrating them successfully into home, these community services can be cost effective in reducing the human and financial toll of youth homelessness.

3.8 Recommendations for mobilising structures to ensure an effective response to each homeless young person

All relevant agencies should prioritise youth homelessness in order to give effect to this recommendation, agencies should develop an agency policy statement in relation to the needs of the young homeless, allocate responsibility for youth homeless services to a named function within the organisation, and, where relevant, introduce a budget heading for services to the young homeless.

- A City Youth Homelessness Co-Ordinating Committee should be instituted in Limerick.

This inter-agency committee could serve as a mechanism for the exchange of information, the monitoring of trends, the formulation of plans and the review of their implementation.

- Data Collection Systems should be instituted in relation to this area of need. This would permit trends to be monitored and services to be modified accordingly.

4. GENERAL

"Many of the young people who are homeless or in need of care and accommodation are at an age when most young people are living with or expected to live with their families, therefore they have had extra difficulties, insecurities and disruptions in their relationships and development. This may be reflected in their behaviour and ability to develop satisfactory relationships. If their adjustments and behaviour at this age were satisfactory, they would rarely come to the notice of providers of special services. These providers of services, cannot therefore expect them to be submissive, responsible, and mature".(Lefroy)

Future developments for homeless and vulnerable young people should be planned, resourced and managed by a co-operative endeavour involving in particular the following agencies:

Mid-Western Health Board
Probation and Welfare Service
Limerick Corporation
Limerick Youth Service
Religious Orders
Limerick Social Service Centre

It is hoped that this report will stimulate a discussion within and between agencies on how we can best respond to the needs of vulnerable and homeless young people in Limerick.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, D (1980) "Hostel provision for Adolescent Boys" in Walton R. Elliot, E. Residential Care Pergamon Press.

Burke, H. Carney, C. Cooke, G. (1981) Youth and Justice - (Young Offenders in Ireland) Turroe Press.

Eastern Health Board, Social Work Group for Homeless.
(1987) A Report on Homelessness among young people in Dublin
Unpublished Report.

Focus Point (1988) Settling in the City (The development of an Integrated Strategy for Housing and Settling Homeless People in Dublin).

Hanna, J. et al (1984) Observations and Comments on Significant Factors Affecting 10 - 16 Year Olds in Limerick City. Unpublished Report.

Hoghugh, M. (1978) Troubled and Troublesome - Coping with Severely Disturbed Children. Burnett Books Ltd.

Kennedy Report. Report on Reformatory and Industrial Schools System.
Dublin Stationery Office.

Lefroy, L. (1987) Forms of Care for Young People Out-of-Home - in Residential Care.
Paper prepared for Unicef/Focus Point Seminar.

Limerick Corporation (1986) Economic Blackspots in Limerick.
Unpublished Paper.

Mid-Western Health Board (Aug.1989) - A Proposal by the Social Work Department.

Development of A Specialised Residential Centre for Adolescent Boys in Limerick. Unpublished Paper.

McVerry, Fr. P (1987) in 'Preface' Streetwise National Coalition. A National Survey of Young People Out of Home in Ireland.

Morris, B. (1980) "Residential Work with Adolescent Girls" in Walton R. Elliot, D. Residential Care Pergamon Press.

Mulkeen, M. Sheridan, S (1987) Youth Work Response to Young People Out of Home. Unpublished Paper.

Mussen, P.H. Cager, J.J. Kagan, J.K. (1984) Child Development and Personality.

National Youth Policy Committee (1984) Final Report. Government Publications offices.

O'Brien, J. (1988) "Youth Homelessness" in Blackwell, J. Kennedy, S. Focus on Homelessness - A New Look at Housing Policy. Columba Press.

O'Connor, D. (1987) Homeless Young People. A Role for Youth Work and Other Services. Unpublished Paper.

O'Connor, J. Ruddle, H. O'Gallagher, M. (1988) Cherished Equally?
(Educational and Behaviourial Adjustment of Children, A Study of Primary Schools in the Mid-West Region).

O'Mahony, B. (1988) A Capital Offence - The Plight of the Young Single Homeless in London. Routledge/Barnardos.

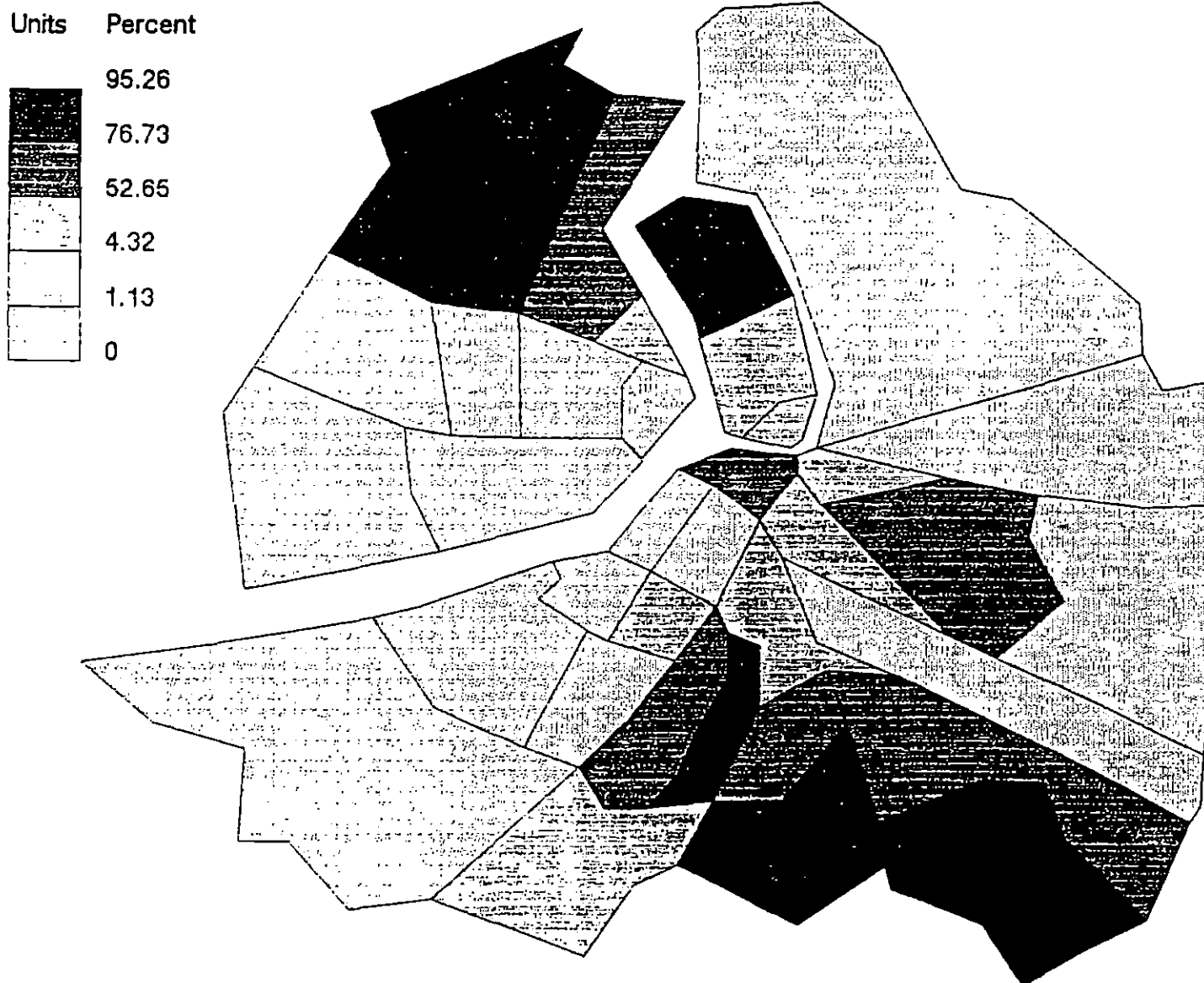
O'Sullivan Report (1980) Report on the Development of Youth Services. Dublin Stationery Office.

Task Force on Child Care Services (1980) Final Report. Government Publications Office.

Thompson, B. (1988) in 'Chapter 1, Project Background' Farrell, N. Homelessness in Galway.

Thorpe, D. (1977) "Face to Face Work with Adolescents" in Social Work Today magazine. Volume 8. No. 26.

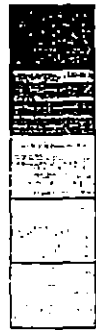
Fig 1. % Corporation Houses



(EXPRESSION : ((CORPOHS>TOT_LA81)))

Fig.4 Unemployed 1986

Units Percent



56.93
40.93
29.01
19.68
9.78
4.92

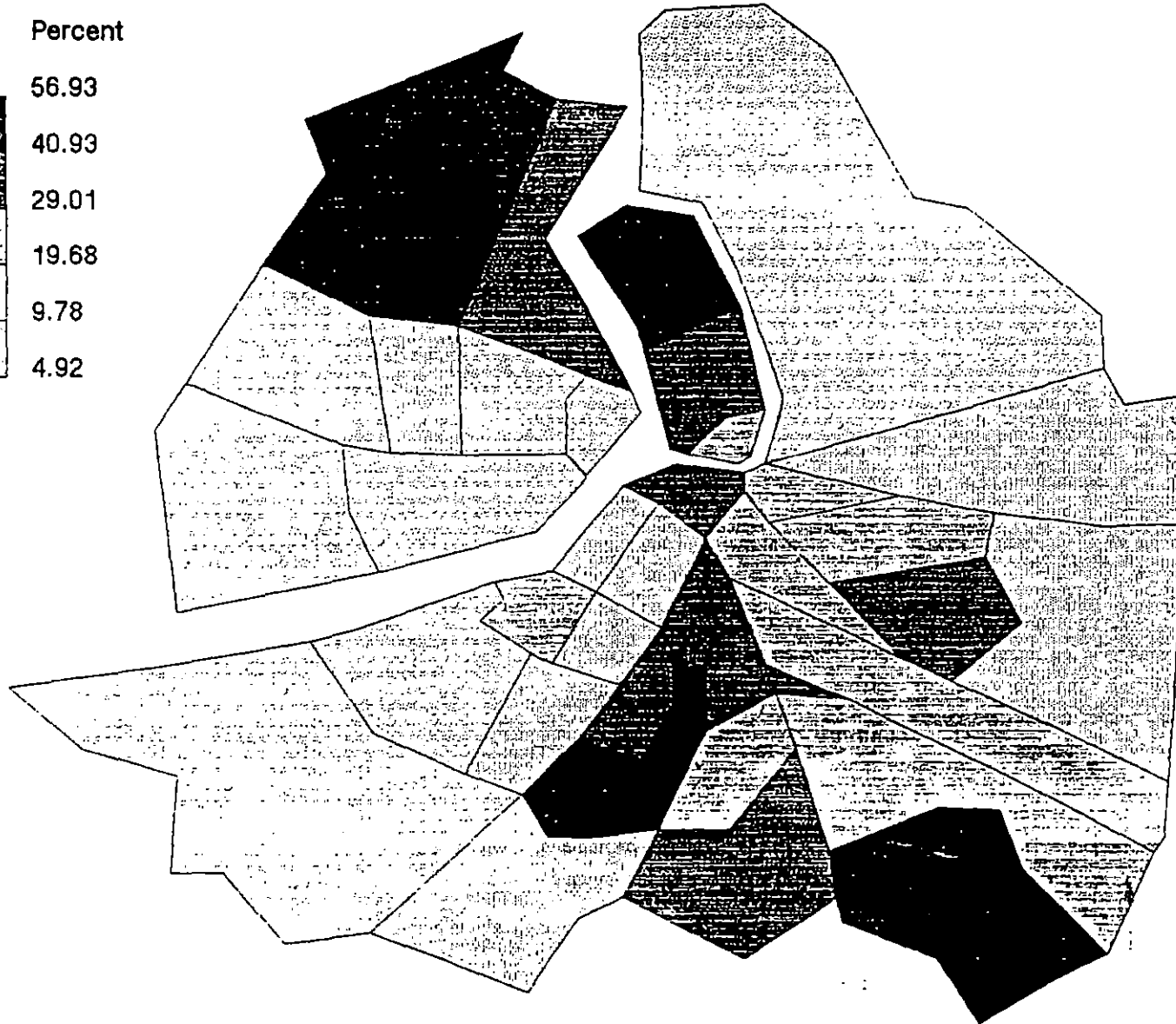
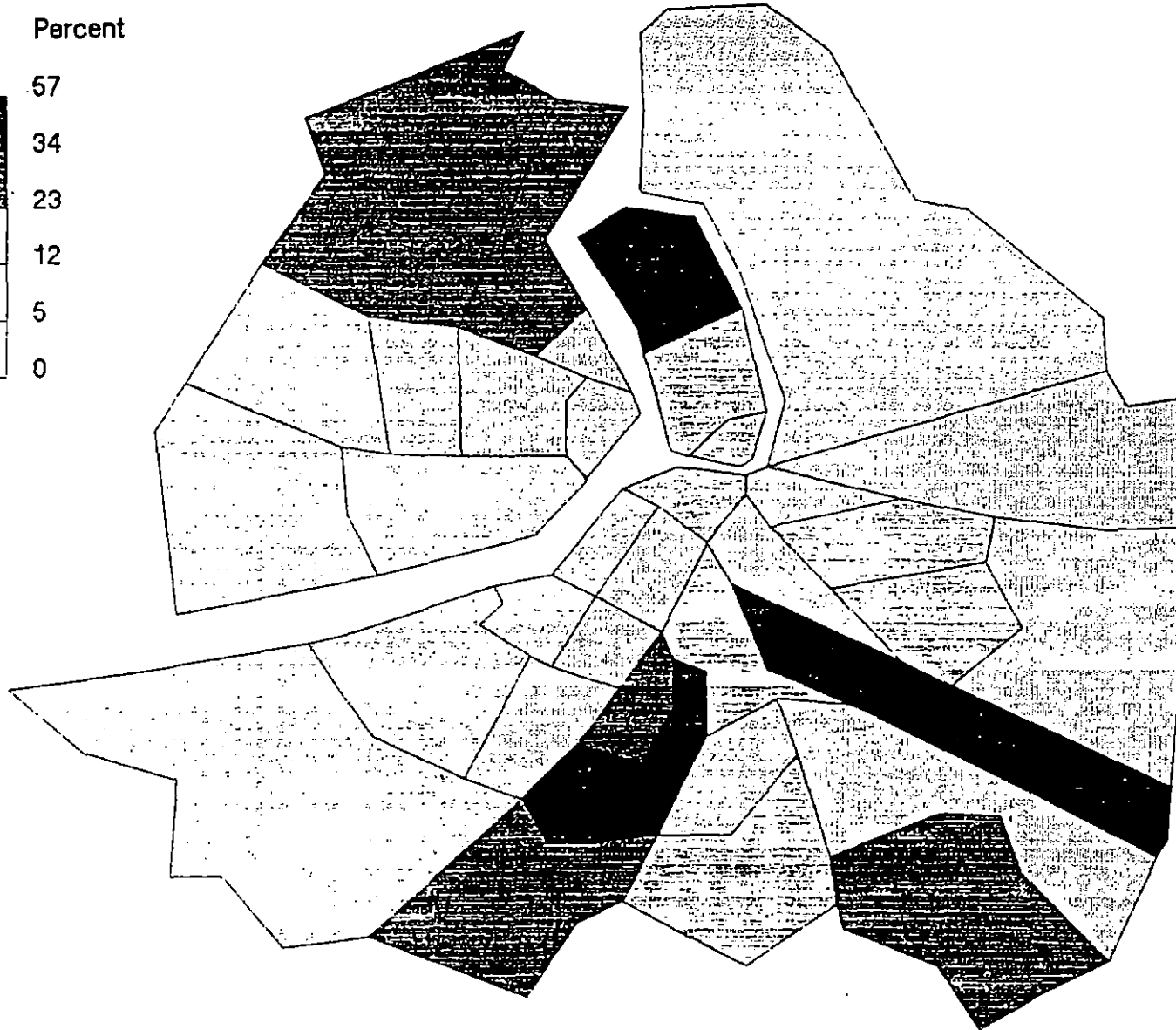
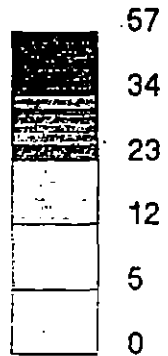


Fig.5 Aged 25 – 29 With Primary Education

Units Percent



(EXPRESSION : ((MAPFILE»PRIM_29)))

APPENDIX 2 RECORD OF REFERRALS TO SOCIAL WORKER FOR YOUTH HOMELESSNESS.

JANUARY 1989 - DECEMBER 1989

DATE	SOURCE OF REFERRAL	NATURE OF REFERRAL	RESPONSE
<u>January</u>			
16/1/89	St. Martin's Training Centre	Concern re. 16 year old girl out-of-home	No intervention - problem resolved itself
19/1/89	Health Board Social Worker	Request for counselling in relation to 17 year old girl out-of-home	No intervention Child admitted to Residential Care
19/1/89	Youth Leader	Concern re. 17 year old boy out-of-home	Child also on Probation therefore no intervention
30/1/89	St. Joseph's Hospital	Concern. re. 2 boys aged 18 & 19 - in hospital, but if discharged in need of support.	No intervention Referral inappropriate
<u>February</u>			
6/2/89	Youth Encounter Project	17 year old boy homeless short term accommodation requested	Placement arranged in Stephen Russell Home but not taken up
14/2/89	Health Board Social Worker	14 year old girl, homeless having run away. Concern for her safety	Admitted to Rosemount Night Shelter (File opened)
14/2/89	Youth Leader	13 year old boy, homeless.	Suggested Stephen Russell - not taken up
22/2/89	Samaritans	15 year old boy - request for emergency accomm.	Suggest Stephen Russell - not taken up

March

2/3/89	Youth Encounter Project	5 names of young people reported homeless	No intervention
7/3/89	School	17 year old girl put out of home by Father	Admitted to Rosemount Night Shelter (File opened)- Subsequently transferred to Rosemount Hostel.
14/3/89	Regional Hospital	16 year old girl - no place to go on discharge from hospital	Interviewed, referred to appropriate body
17/3/89	Rosemount	2 girls aged 13 & 16 self-referred to hostel. Ran away from home, not from Limerick.	Interviewed,- referred to appropriate Health Board
23/3/89	Rosemount	21 year old married girl. Husband in prison, no place to stay.	File opened

April

1/4/89	Youth Service	17 year old boy previously homeless, now in flat but finding it difficult to meet expenses.	File opened -Rent Allow. arranged through C.W.O.
3/4/89	Self-Referral	23 year old single mother homeless	Referred to Adapt House
12/4/89	Rosemount	18 year old girl, row at home.	File opened
14/4/89	Gardai	17 year old girl	File opened
18/4/89	Parish Worker	11 year old girl, run away.	Referred to Health Board Social Worker

May

22/5/89	Youth Encounter Project	14 year old boy, sleeping rough,	No intervention went to England
22/5/89	Youth Encounter Project	15 year old boy, request for supportive accomm.	No Resources no involvement
26/5/89	Probation Officer	17 year old boy sleeping rough, emergency accomm. requested.	Arranged admission to Stephen Russell Home -not taken up
30/5/89	Youth Leader	3 boys aged 17. Request for emergency accomm.	Arranged admission to Stephen Russell Home -not taken up
30/5/89	Probation Officer	5 young people reported homeless for recording purposes	No intervention

June

1/6/89	Parish Worker	2 17 year old boys out of home	Admission overnight to Stephen Russell Home
13/6/89	Self Referral	17 year old girl from another H.B. area - homeless.	Admitted to Rosemount Night Shelter File opened.
22/6/89	C.U.R.A.	16 year old girl run away from home	Admitted to Rosemount Night Shelter File opened subsequently transferred to Rosemount Hostel

July

3/7/89	Self Referral	21 year old girl requesting accomm.	Referred to Adapt House
3/7/89	Health Board Social Worker	17 year old girl from another Health Board Area	Admitted to Rosemount Night Shelter File opened subsequently transferred to Rosemount Hostel
3/7/89	Parish Worker	14 year old boy abandoned by parents	Temporary accommodation arranged with relatives. Not very suitable but only option.
5/7/89	Health Board Social Worker	17 year old girl urgent admission to Rosemount sought Family difficulties	Admission accepted - File opened
24/7/89	Youth Service	2 sisters aged 17 & 18 - homeless as a result of row at home	Financial assistance arranged

August

2/8/89	Health Board Social Worker	Request for overnight accommodation in Rosemount	Accepted
--------	----------------------------	--	----------

September

14/9/89	Self-Referral	16 year old girl left home sexual abuse	File opened
19/9/89	Health Board Social Worker	17 year old - run away. Request for emergency accomm.	Admitted to Rosemount Night Shelter File opened
19/9/89	Anonymous Call	17 year old boy homeless	Not enough information No intervention

25/9/89	Health Board Social Worker	Request for counselling - 2 sisters aged 17 & 18 discharged from Residential Care.	File opened
<u>October</u>			
13/10/89	Referred by school	17 year old girl experience of being in Residential Care Finding it difficult to manage in flat	Admitted to Rosemount Night Shelter -subsequently taken up by Residential Services.
<u>November</u>			
13/11/89	Limerick Youth Service	17 year old girl ran away from home	Admitted to Rosemount Shelter -subsequently returned home
21/11/89	Health Board Social Worker	17 year old leaving Residential Care. Request for long-term accommodation.	Admitted to Rosemount Hostel
<u>December</u>			
11/12/89	Self Referral	18 year old girl row at home, ran away.	Admitted to Rosemount Night Shelter

APPENDIX NO. 3.

RETURN DATE - 9TH JUNE 1989

SURVEY OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS
IN LIMERICK

For Office
Use only

ALL INFORMATION IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL:

Part 2: - QUESTIONNAIRE ON YOUNG PEOPLE:

1	2	3	4

A separate questionnaire must be completed for each homeless young person under 18 with whom you have contact over the month of May 1989.

1

Section 1:

Respondent's Job Title:

--

Section 2:

- Q1. Name of Young Person
- Q2. Male Female
- Q3. Age of young person:

--

8	9

Section 3: NATURE OF HOMELESSNESS:

- Q5. Is this young person currently: Please tick one of the following -
 - (a) Sleeping rough
 - (b) Staying temporarily with relatives
 - (c) Staying temporarily with non-relatives
 - (d) Staying in an emergency shelter
 - (e) Other (please specify)

--

Q6. Please make comments on suitability of young persons' present accomodation:

11		13

Q7. How long has this young person been homeless? (months)

14 15

Q8. What type of accomodation was this young person living in prior to becoming homeless?

- 1. Parents House
- 2. Rented House
- 3. Caravan/Mobile
- 4. Institution
- 5. Bedsitter/flat
- 6. Other

16

Q9. Is this the first time the young person has been homeless Yes/No
If No, how many times has he/she been homeless in the last six months

17 19

Q10. What was the initial or principal reason for homelessness?

20 22

Q11. What other factors do you feel contributed?

23 25

Section 4: FAMILY BACKGROUND

Q12. Which of the below refers to the young person's parental status?

- 1. Married
- 2. Widowed
- 3. Divorced/Separated
- 4. Deserted
- 5. Single
- 6. Other (Please specify)

26

Q13. (a) How many siblings in the family
(b) Number of siblings living at home

27 30

Q19

(A) Has this young person ever been in Care?

Please tick which applies:

- (a) Foster Care
- (b) Residential Care with a Health Board
- (c) Residential Care with Department of Justice
- (d) Never been in Care

 75

(B) Length of time in Care if known (Number of years)

.....

.....

76	77

(C) Has this young person ever been in Custody?

Yes/No

If Yes, (No. of Months)

.....

78	80	

Q20.

(a) Has this young person ever been convicted of an offence?

Yes/No

1	2	3	4	5

(b) If yes, was this prior to -

Becoming homeless

While Homeless

 6

 7

Q21. Is this young person presently awaiting a court hearing?

Yes/No.

 8

TO BE RETURNED WITHIN 2 WEEKS - IF POSSIBLE:

SURVEY OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS
IN LIMERICK CITY

ALL INFORMATION IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Part 1. GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTERED TO AGENCIES:

Please answer the following questions.

Q1. What is your job title?

1

5

Q2. Is homelessness among young people a concern of your agency?

6

7	8
---	---

Q3. What service if any, does your agency provide for young people who are homeless? Please give details

9	10	11
---	----	----

Q4. Do you feel these services are adequate? Please specify

12	13
----	----

Q5. What is your involvement with young people who are homeless?

14	15
----	----

For Office
Use Only

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

Q9. What do you feel is your agency's role in developing a comprehensive service for homeless young people?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

58	59	60

Q10. What obstacles/limitations if any, are facing your agency in providing a comprehensive service to young people who are homeless?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

61		63

Q11. Can you give details of names, ages, last known addresses and whereabouts (if known) of homeless young people with whom your agency has come in contact over the last year.

Name Age Last Known Address Present Whereabouts

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

64			
	2		

Q12. How many young people with whom you are in contact are in your opinion likely to become homeless in the next year.

Name	Age	Circumstances
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

34

69

Q13. From your experience what age group are more likely to become homeless - Please tick one of the following:

- Under 12's
- 12 - 14 year olds
- 14 - 16 year olds
- 16 - 18 year olds

70

Q14. In your opinion what are the main factors that contribute to youth homelessness in Limerick City. Please give details:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

71 73

Q15. What steps do you feel should be taken in Limerick to prevent young people becoming homeless?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

74 76

LIMERICK SOCIAL SERVICE COUNCIL

Henry Street, Limerick.
Tel: 061 - 314111/ 314213

Dear

I am a Social Worker employed by Limerick Social Service Centre in association with the Mid-Western Health Board. I have been commissioned to undertake a study to examine the extent and nature of homelessness among young people under the age of 18 in Limerick City.

I am writing to ask your agency's co-operation in taking part in a survey on 'Youth Homelessness', which will be carried out over the month of May 1989.

There are two parts to the survey;

Part 1. - A general questionnaire which aims to examine trends in Youth Homelessness and to offer agencies an opportunity to outline their views on this problem. This should be returned within 2 weeks.

And

Part 2. - A questionnaire to be completed on each individual young person who is homeless with whom you have contact over the month of May. Return date - 9th June 1989.


I realise that you have a heavy work load but it is envisaged that the results of the study will help the future planning and development of a comprehensive service for young homeless people in Limerick City.

Confidentiality:

I would like to reassure you that all personal information on young people will be treated in the strictest confidence. The name of each young person is asked in order to prevent duplication. However, if this or any other part of the questionnaires present difficulties please contact me. On receipt of questionnaires all information will be coded and questionnaires will be immediately shredded.

I would ask that all completed questionnaires be returned to me at the above address. Extra questionnaires are available if needed.

Thanking you for your co-operation in this matter.


Carmel Keane,
SOCIAL WORKER.

LIMERICK SOCIAL SERVICE COUNCIL

Henry Street, Limerick.
Tel: 061 - 314111/314213

Dear Principal,

I am a Social Worker employed by Limerick Social Service Centre in association with the Mid-Western Health Board. I have been commissioned to undertake a survey to examine the extent and nature of homelessness among children and young people under the age of 18 in Limerick City. Agencies involved with young people and schools are being surveyed.

I am writing to ask your school's co-operation in taking part in a survey over the month of May 1989.

There are two parts to the survey:

Part 1: A general questionnaire which aims to examine trends (White Questionnaire) in homelessness among young people in Limerick. It also offers you an opportunity to outline your experience (if any) of this problem. To be returned within two weeks.

And

Part 2: A questionnaire which need only be completed if you become (Pink Questionnaire) aware of a pupil in your school who is homeless (temporary/continuously) during the month of May. Return date 9/6/89

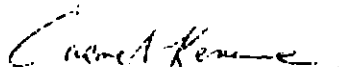
I realise that you have a heavy workload and in some instances Part 2 of the survey may not relate to your experience but it is envisaged that the results of the survey will help the future planning and development of a comprehensive service for young people in Limerick City.

Confidentiality:

I would like to reassure you that all personal information on young people will be treated in the strictest confidence. The name of each young person is asked in order to prevent duplication. However, if this or any other part of the questionnaires present difficulties please contact me. On receipt of questionnaires all information will be coded and questionnaires will be immediately shredded.

I would ask that all completed questionnaires be returned to me at the above address. Extra questionnaires are available if needed.

Thanking you for your co-operation in this matter.



Carmel Kesne,
SOCIAL WORKER.

APPENDIX 4

(A) AGE OF YOUNG PERSON LIKELY TO BECOME HOMELESS IN NEXT YEAR

<u>Age</u>	<u>Number</u>
10 years	1
11 years	4
12 years	4
13 years	5
14 years	1
15 years	9
16 years	5
17 years	2
18 years	2
Total	33

Non-respondents and those for whom the question was not applicable are excluded.

(B) CIRCUMSTANCES OF PERSON WHO IS LIKELY TO BECOME HOMELESS IN THE NEXT YEAR

<u>Place</u>	<u>Number</u>
Substance Abuse	6
In Prison	1
Family Breakdown	3
Abusive Parent/Alcohol	3
Discipline Problem/Arguing with parents	2
Depressed Parent	1
Depressed Child	3
Home Circumstances	3
Personal and Family Troubles	1
Trouble with the Law	1
Absconded from Institution Pattern	3
Parents won't take child back after eviction	1
Aggressive behaviour	1
Has slept out a few times	1
Contacted childline	2
Absent from school a lot	3
Handicapped child	1
Total	36

Non-respondents and those for whom the question was not applicable are excluded.

QHH: QLR