INSIGHTS
CIB SOCIAL POLICY SERIES

Citizens Information Board
information · advice · advocacy

A Home for All

A CIB view on the issues facing Non-EU clients of Citizens Information Services accessing housing in Ireland

Insights 2026

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

About CIB and 'Insights'

The Citizens Information Board (CIB) is a statutory body that supports the provision of information, advice and advocacy on a broad range of public and social services.

CIB funds and supports the following services:

- Eight regional Citizens Information Service (CIS) companies – which run Citizens Information Centres (CICs) nationwide;
- A national Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS);
- Eight regional Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) companies – which operate through a network of local offices and a MABS national helpline;
- National Traveller MABS and MABS Support;
- The National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS);
- The Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS) and the Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters (RISLI).

CIB also provides the Citizens Information website www.citizensinformation.ie.

CIB's legislative mandate includes providing information on the effectiveness of current social policy and services and highlighting issues of concern to service users.

In this context, 'Insights' draws on evidence from our funded services regarding matters of concern raised by individuals seeking their assistance.

In gathering, analysing and presenting this evidence, CIB hopes to make a constructive contribution to Government policymaking and to the provision of accessible public services that meet people's complex and ever-changing needs.

Researched by Morley Economic Consulting
for the Citizens Information Board

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Executive Summary

In this report, we look at the experience of non-EU migrants in Ireland in accessing housing and make recommendations for how to improve their experience. While we acknowledge that housing is one of the key needs for all clients accessing CIS, this report focuses on the experiences of non-EU clients who accessed CIS over the period 2022 – 2024.

We look at the key issues regarding:

- Accessing local authority and social housing
- Finding private rented accommodation
- Homelessness and emergency accommodation
- Additional barriers as a non-EU migrant.

The overall effect of issues and barriers is that non-EU nationals are at a greater risk of instability and homelessness than Irish and EU citizens. For a more cohesive society, housing must be placed at the centre of Ireland's migration integration agenda.

To achieve a better experience for non-EU migrants, we propose:

- Introducing housing application support
- Introducing co-ordinated wraparound supports
- Developing move-on pathways for Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs)
- Improving data and policy integration

Ireland continues to experience high levels of inward migration. From April 2024 to April 2025, more than 100,000 people immigrated to Ireland, over half of whom were citizens of non-EU countries.

Despite their significant presence, non-EU nationals remain among the most vulnerable within the housing system. While previous integration strategies addressed employment, education, and civic participation, housing policy has largely been omitted. This leaves a critical gap in national integration frameworks.

In this report, we use data from Citizens Information Services (CIS) as follows:

- Caller/Query data – anonymised quantitative data that is collected by CIS staff on the queries, callers seek information, advice, assistance and advocacy on
- Social Policy Returns (SPRs) refer to additional qualitative anonymised data recorded by CIS staff when dealing with a query.

Non-EU migrants over-represented in housing need

Data from the Department of Housing and independent organisations shows that migrants **are** heavily over-represented in both the private rented sector and in emergency accommodation.

In August 2025, 29% of adults in emergency accommodation were non-EU nationals, an increase of one-third over the previous 12 months. This highlights how non-EU migrants are being impacted by the continuing shortage of affordable homes.

In the query data, non-EU nationals accounted for 14% of all CIS clients (where country of origin was recorded) and 15% of housing-related queries. This is a figure that rose by 67% over the three-year period from 2022-2024. Non-EU countries are defined as all countries outside of the EU, UK, and Ireland. EU countries include – Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic (Czechia), Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. UK is grouped with EU/Irish clients.

In the SPRs, a similar trend was observed. Housing-related policy issues concerning non-EU clients almost doubled over the study period, in contrast to a 1% decrease for EU/Irish clients.

This evidence from the query data and the SPRs shows:

- The scale of the housing need for information, advice, assistance, and advocacy
- The distinctive barriers experienced by non-EU nationals, compared to other groups.

Issues accessing local authority and social housing

Local authority and social housing issues made up just over 70% of all housing queries raised by non-EU clients compared to 47% for EU and Ireland (excl. the UK). Many faced difficulties:

- Navigating online portals
- Supplying required documentation
- Understanding official communications due to limited English proficiency or digital literacy

The transition to online housing and Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) applications has further increased these difficulties. One-in-five HAP-related policy issues raised by non-EU nationals referenced problems with online systems – more than double the rate for EU/Irish clients. For those lacking digital access, delays often stretched well beyond the statutory 12-week decision timeframe for processing of applications. CIB's Digital Help Service supports people to access online government platforms, which is helping assist clients with these types of online access issues.

Delays can lead to further vulnerability. Among non-EU applicants experiencing extended waiting periods, 23% were either homeless or at risk of homelessness, compared with 17% of EU/Irish clients.

Finding private rented accommodation

Reflecting national trends, non-EU nationals are disproportionately reliant on the private rented sector compared to EU and Irish citizens. This leaves them particularly vulnerable to:

- Rent inflation
- Tenancy termination
- Limited availability of affordable accommodation

Queries from non-EU clients about private renting generated one-fifth of the housing SPRs (102) between 2022 and 2024. The common theme was finding accommodation. This was typically linked to:

- Tenancy terminations
- Landlord disputes
- Rent increases

There was an increase in the demand for support in finding accommodation from non-EU clients compared to EU/Irish clients. This reflects both the structural constraints of Ireland's rental market – rising rents, limited supply, and high competition – and the additional disadvantage faced by migrants lacking social networks or facing discrimination.

Many non-EU clients reported rent hikes or eviction notices, coupled with the challenge of securing new accommodation within HAP limits. The SPRs provided by CIS information providers often record clients as "distressed, "frustrated", and "desperate", for example, 21% of the 102 SPRs on Renting a Home and Non-EU nationals did so.

Homelessness and emergency accommodation

Homelessness emerged as a growing concern for all CIS clients.

One in five of all housing-related social policy issues were to do with homelessness or the threat of it, with non-EU nationals representing 23% of these cases. Between 2022 and 2024, homelessness social policy issues for non-EU clients doubled compared with a 14% increase among EU/Irish/UK clients.

The data suggest a link between homelessness and the barriers identified in social housing and rental processes. Long waiting lists and rejected applications frequently leave migrants dependent on temporary or emergency accommodation. However, capacity constraints and inconsistent local provision mean that many are turned away or placed in unsuitable facilities.

Furthermore, the data also captured the challenges for people granted international protection, but who had to remain in International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) centres due to the absence of affordable alternatives. These individuals, technically eligible for private housing, face the risk of moving directly from Direct Provision to homelessness. More recently, residents of IPAS centres who have legal status have been notified by IPAS of the need to leave as they no longer have entitlement to stay there, see more at www.irishtimes.com.

Overall trends and policy considerations

Across all categories in the data, non-EU nationals experience the same systematic barriers as the wider population – lengthy wait lists, unaffordable rents, and supply shortages. Furthermore, they face additional barriers, including:

- Limited English proficiency and digital literacy, (becoming more relevant following the shift to online systems)
- Lack of social or family networks to assist with housing searches
- Discrimination or bias within renting sector
- Reduced familiarity with Irish administrative systems

The overall effect is that non-EU nationals are at a greater risk of instability and homelessness, undermining broader integration outcomes. The findings underline the need for housing to be placed at the centre of Ireland's migration integration agenda.

While large-scale national investment is required to address supply shortages, several practical measures could significantly improve outcomes for non-EU residents in the short-term.

We suggest to:

i. **Focus on housing application support:** Provide resources for "digital help" or "housing navigator" services to guide applicants with limited English and digital skills through online systems such as Revenue Online or HAP portals. CIB is currently supporting a Digital Help Service in 40 CIS, which supports clients to access online government platforms, e.g. Revenue Online, My Welfare, My Gov ID. This service has received very positive feedback from users to date and increased provision of this type of support is important e.g. through local authorities as well as through CIS. CIB has also recently introduced AskCI - a chatbot available on askcitizensinformation.ie, which uses AI to answer clients' questions and provide Plain English answers. Questions can be asked in over 50 different languages with answers provided in these languages. This technology is supporting clients with limited English in accessing their entitlements.

ii. **Introduce co-ordinated wraparound supports:** Strengthen collaboration between IPAS, local authorities, CIS and migrant support organisations to provide translation, documentation, and application assistance. This would promote fairer access to housing support and reduce administrative delays.

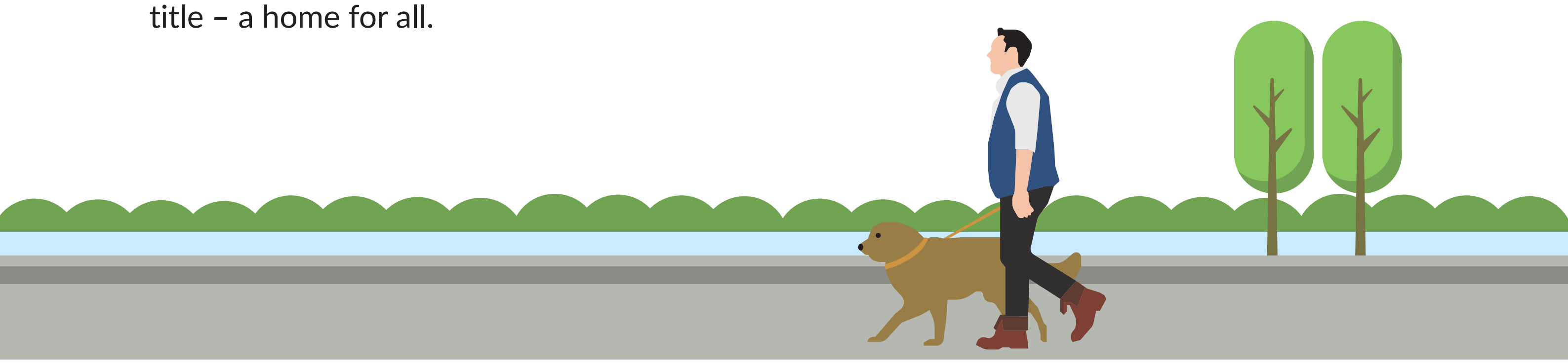
iii. **Develop move-on pathways for Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs):** Establish structured transition routes from Direct Provision into social housing or Homeless HAP. This would ensure that those granted refugee status are not forced into homelessness due to market barriers.

iv. **Improve data and policy integration:** Improve data collection on migrants' housing experiences to inform targeted policy design and ensure that housing considerations are included in future integration strategies.

Ireland's non-EU population plays an increasingly important role in the social and economic fabric of the country, yet their housing experiences reveal **systemic inequities** that hinder integration.

The evidence presented in this report demonstrates that non-EU nationals face not only the general pressures of the Irish housing crisis but also additional structural, linguistic, and digital barriers that heighten their vulnerability.

By recognising housing as a cornerstone of integration policy and implementing practical, inclusive supports, Ireland can move closer to achieving the goal expressed in the report's title – a home for all.



1. Context

Context

April 2025 marked the fourth successive 12-month period where over 100,000 people immigrated to Ireland (Population and Migration Estimates, April 2025, CSO). Of those, 25% were returning Irish citizens, 24% were other EU or UK citizens, and 51% were citizens of other countries.

With the emergence of such trends, strategies to promote inclusion and integration become ever more important. The Government's Migrant Integration Strategy (2017-2021) was intended to foster inclusion across all areas of Irish life. In areas such as employment and education, using indicators such as employment rate, to look at the differences between migrants and the Irish-born population, ESRI found that the level of integration amongst migrants is generally good, relative to Irish nationals, notwithstanding continuing challenges around discrimination and English language skills (McGinnity, F., Sprong, S., Quinn, E., Laurence, J., Murphy, K. and Curristan, S. (2023). Monitoring Report on Integration 2022, ESRI and Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth).

A notable exclusion from the strategy, however, was policy intervention on housing and homelessness. National data capturing the experience of migrants in the Irish housing system is limited. Research though has highlighted explicit vulnerabilities of migrants in accessing social housing and affordable private rented accommodation, with the situation particularly challenging for non-EU nationals. Migrants are more likely to be over-represented in the private rented sector and therefore more susceptible to the vulnerabilities associated with such tenure such as finding suitable and affordable accommodation and living in overcrowded accommodation – an issue particularly prevalent for non-EU nationals (Origin and integration: housing and family among migrants in the 2016 Irish Census. ESRI (2022)).

Similarly, Citizens Information Board (CIB) research from 2021 found that not all categories of migrants are equally vulnerable, with non-EU migrants one of the most vulnerable cohorts within the housing system and therefore at greatest risk of homelessness. Meeting the Information Needs of Migrants in Vulnerable Situations: A Citizens Information Perspective (2021). Citizens Information Board Social Policy Series.

Monthly homelessness statistics showed that 29% of all adults living in emergency accommodation in August 2025 were non-EEA nationals (EEA is EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway). This cohort also made up one-third of adults in emergency accommodation in Dublin alone (Monthly Homelessness Report August 2025, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage). This data reflected a 32% increase in non-EEA nationals living in emergency accommodation in Ireland since August 2024, compared to the increase among EEA nationals of 2% and Irish nationals of 6%. While non-EEA nationals represent only around 6% of Ireland's total population, their over-representation in homelessness data highlights the disproportionate impact of the housing crisis on migrant communities.

This growth aligns with the wider patterns observed by Focus Ireland (Insights-Vol-3-No-1-Family-Homelessness-in-Dublin-2022-and-2023-–-Report.pdf), the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) (Grotti, R., Russell, E., Fahey, É. and Bertrand, M. (2018). Discrimination and Inequality in Housing in Ireland. Research Series, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and Economic & Social Research Institute), and the Housing Agency (Housing Challenges and Needs of Migrants in Ireland.pdf). They report an escalating risk of homelessness among migrants and Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIP) due to barriers in accessing social housing, language and administrative difficulties, and limited availability of affordable private rented accommodation.

The challenges faced by non-EU nationals and migrants more generally in Ireland's housing market have been significantly compounded by multiple challenges in the sector over the past 15 years. There is an estimated housing deficit of 230,000 homes nationally (Report of The Housing Commission, 2024, Prepared by The Housing Commission) with just 30,330 new housing completions in 2024, a 7% decrease on 2023 levels. However, this increased by 20% in 2025, with 36,284 new dwelling completions recorded (New Dwelling Completions Q4 2024, CSO; New Dwelling Completions Q4 2025 - Central Statistics Office). Some 7,900 new-build social homes were delivered in 2024 (Social and Affordable Housing Delivery Statistics, Quarter 4 2024, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage). Meanwhile the social housing waiting list, including those in receipt of Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) was in the region of 225,000 individuals or over 113,000 households (Ongoing Need 2024 – The True Demand for Social Housing).

The impact on individuals and families from these considerable strains within the Irish housing sector is illustrated in this report through feedback from Citizens Information Services (CIS). While we acknowledge that housing, and in particular, access to social and private rented accommodation are some of the key reasons why all clients have been accessing CIS for information and assistance, this report focuses on the experiences of non-EU migrants who have accessed CIS over the period 2022 – 2024.

The research highlights the barriers that impact non-EU nationals and their ability to integrate fully into life in Ireland and underscores the importance of ensuring that policy responses address the intersection between migration status and housing precarity.

2. Data Overview

Data Overview

Methodology

This report draws on a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative evidence gathered by CIS. The quantitative strand consists of analysis of query data from 2022 to 2024, which captures the volume and type of housing-related issues raised by clients across Ireland. The qualitative strand is derived from social policy feedback (Social Policy Returns) submitted by CIS information providers, which provides insights into clients' experiences and the barriers affecting their ability to secure housing.

A thematic review of the social policy data was undertaken. This involved identifying key words and phrases in the narratives provided by information providers, disaggregating issues into themes such as "Language Difficulty", "Long Wait Time", or "Finding Accommodation". This process allowed for a deeper understanding of the barriers faced by non-EU nationals, beyond the initial classification in the database.

The analysis focuses on the experiences of non-EU clients, while making comparative reference to Irish and EU clients where appropriate. Non-EU countries are defined as all countries outside of the EU, UK, and Ireland. EU countries include – Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic (Czechia), Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. It is important to emphasise that across all three cohorts – Irish, EU, and non-EU nationals – the same broad issues recur in relation to accessing social housing or private rented accommodation and rental supports. However, the data indicates that non-EU clients encounter these challenges combined with additional layers of complexity.

By combining statistical trends with case-based evidence, the methodology enables a fuller understanding of both the scale and nature of housing access issues for non-EU nationals. The methodological approach ensures that the report remains grounded in robust data while also reflecting the human experience behind the numbers.

2.1 Query data and summary statistics

The CIS data shows particularly strong growth and prevalence in housing queries raised by non-EU clients, compared to EU/Irish clients, pointing to distinctive barriers faced by this group. The identified barriers are not unique to this group – issues such as long waiting times, difficulties securing affordable accommodation, and the risk of homelessness, affect all groups – but they are often compounded by factors more acutely experienced by non-EU nationals. These include language barriers, limited familiarity with the Irish housing system and digital application processes, as well as cultural or social factors.

Over the study period (2022 – 2024), CIS dealt with over 2.3 million queries from clients, with just over 246,000 queries relating to Housing (Citizens Information Services (CISs) Data - Annual Statistical Summary 2022 - 2024). Of those who provided their country of origin (Country of Origin was recorded for 62% of callers to CIS), non-EU nationals made up 14% of all queries brought to CIS and accounted for 15% of all Housing queries – a figure that rose by 67% over the three year period. The volume of all queries brought by this group increased by 33% over the study period.

In recent years there has been a notable rise in the number of Ukrainian nationals (non-EU nationals) seeking advice from CIS. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, large numbers of Ukrainians began arriving in Ireland under the EU's Temporary Protection Directive. By the end of 2022 there were 67,500 Ukrainians in Ireland, and 109,500 by the end of 2024. Arrivals from Ukraine in Ireland Series 8, CSO and Arrivals from Ukraine in Ireland Series 14, CSO. In 2023, CIS responded to 886 queries from Ukrainians on housing issues alone. This increased to just over 1,000 queries in 2024 and represents 10% of Housing queries received from non-EU clients in the year. Note: the results presented in this report are based on 2022 - 2024 CIS data and include Ukrainian nationals as non-EU nationals. The inclusion of this cohort does not significantly distort the overall results.

Table 1: Top ten Non-EU countries (excluding Ireland, UK and EU) of origin of clients with housing queries, 2022 - 2024

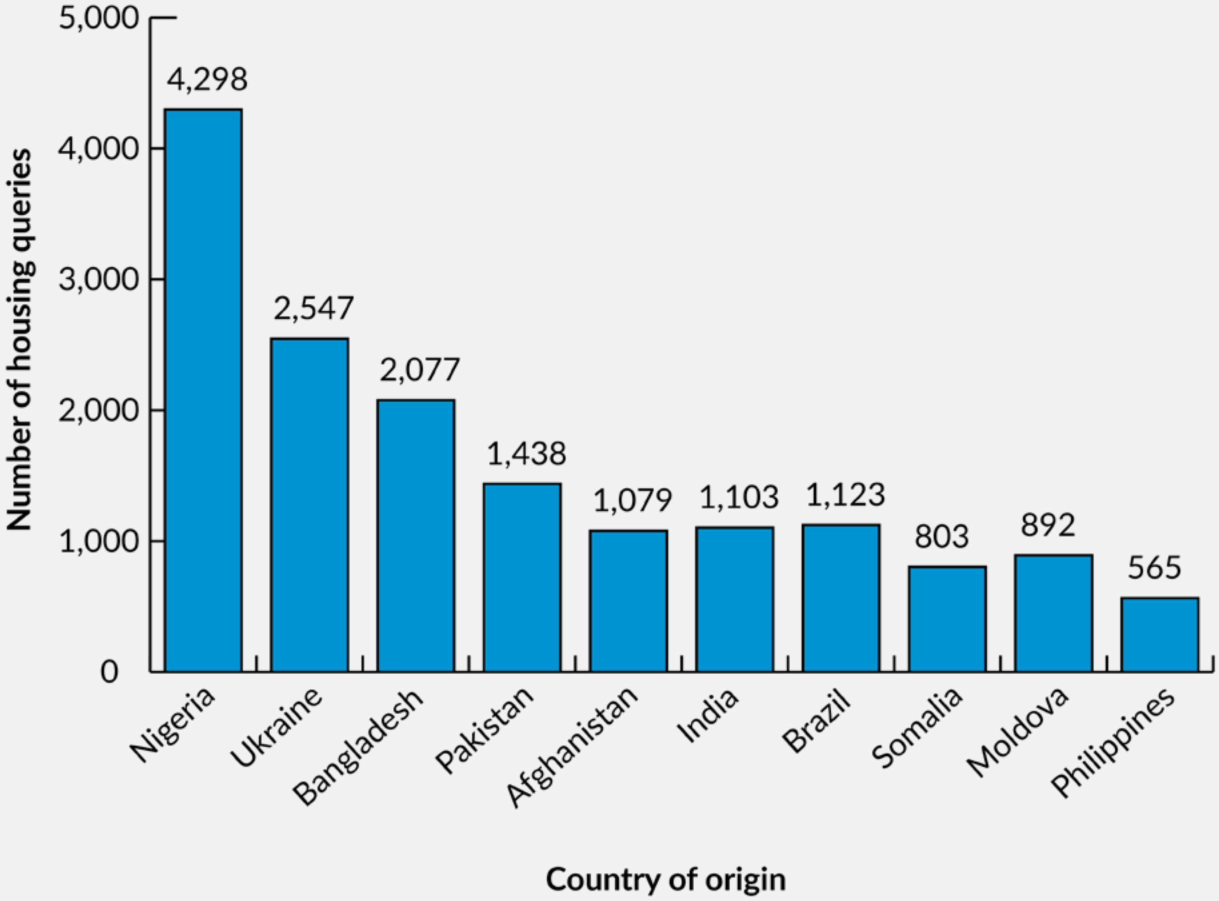


Table 2 illustrates that the top five query categories account for 80% of all queries made by non-EU nationals over the period. Housing, while accounting for just 11% of the overall queries made recorded the strongest growth between 2022 and 2024 (+67%), especially when compared to CIS clients from Ireland and EU countries (+5% and +4% respectively). The largest growth category for non-EU nationals was recorded under 'Money & Tax'.

The significant growth in housing queries from non-EU nationals was driven by queries relating to Local Authority and Social Housing (+75%) and Renting a Home (Private Rented Accommodation (PRA) (+47%). Meanwhile, there was a decline in queries from Irish clients on Local Authority and Social Housing of 7% and a small increase from EU clients of 9%. Regarding queries on Renting a Home, there was a drop of 25% in queries from Irish clients, and a drop of 13% for EU clients.

Homelessness queries also registered significant growth amongst non-EU nationals. Between 2022 and 2024, the number of non-EU nationals (number of callers) seeking advice on homelessness rose by 71% (from 283 to 484), compared to a 3% decline amongst other clients (from 1,433 to 1,386).

Table 2: CIS query breakdown for non-EU nationals, 2022 - 2024

	2022	**2023**	**2024**	**Total**
Total Queries	**60,918**	**72,490**	**81,055**	**214,463**
Social Welfare	16,877	23,848	27,209	67,934
Moving Country	20,562	17,059	18,151	55,772
Housing	5,756	8,138	9,637	23,531
Health	3,221	4,152	5,045	12,418
Money & Tax	2,552	4,428	4,762	11,742
Other	11,950	14,865	16,251	43,066
Housing	**5,756**	**8,138**	**9,637**	**23,531**
Local Authority & Social Housing	3,909	5,571	6,850	16,330
Renting a Home	853	1,226	1,253	3,332
Homelessness	312	383	530	1,225
Other	682	958	1,004	2,644

Source: CIS data for 2022 - 2024.

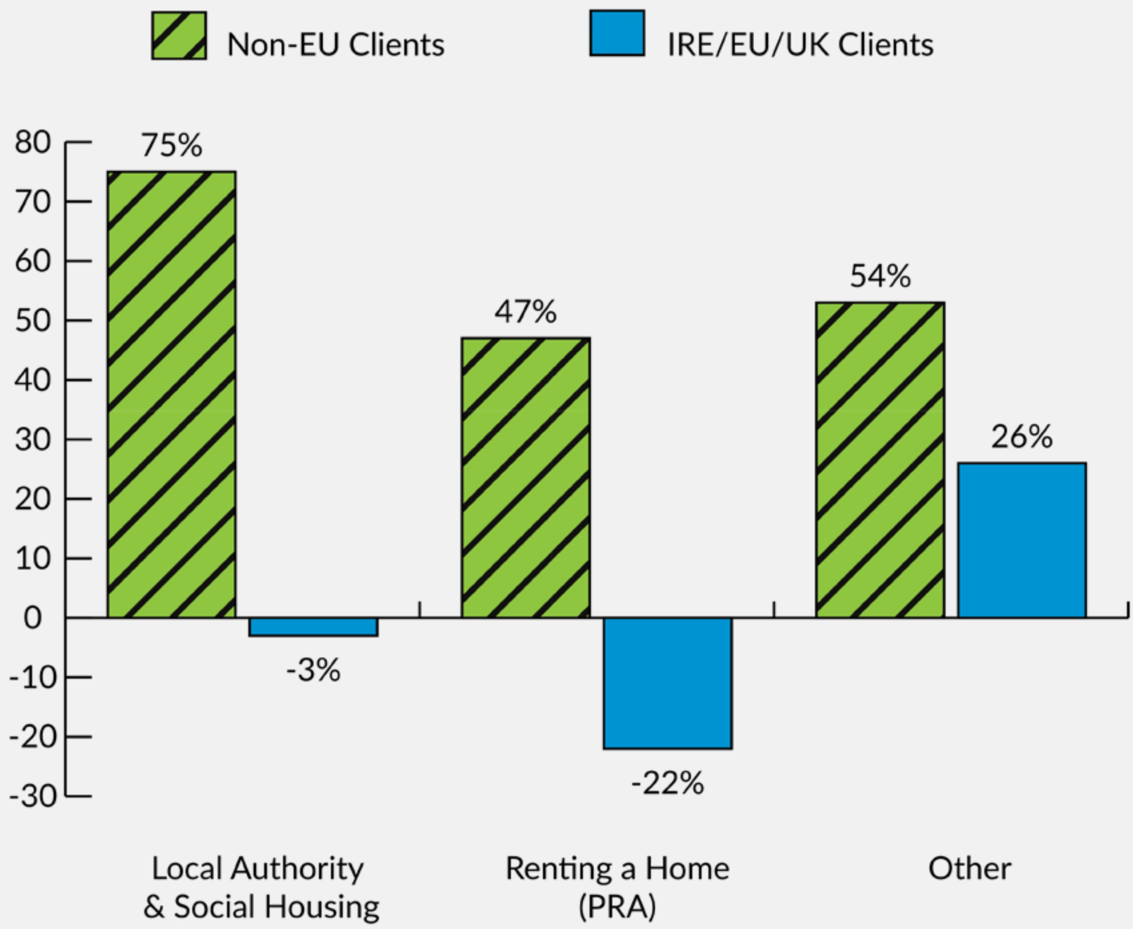
Note 1: Total Queries 'Other' includes – 'Employment', 'Travel & Recreation', 'Local', 'Education & Training', 'Birth, Family and Relationships', 'Justice', 'Consumer Affairs', 'Government in Ireland', 'Death & Bereavement', 'Environment', 'Covid-19'.

Note 2: Housing 'Other' includes – 'Housing Grants & Schemes', 'Buying/Owning a Home', 'Home Energy Grants (SEAI)', 'Emergency Accommodation', 'Losing your Home', 'Planning Permission', 'Equality/Housing Discrimination', 'Building or Altering a Home', 'Management Companies (Apartment Blocks)'.

A breakdown of housing queries by group is provided below which identifies the key issues for non-EU nationals under the two main sub-headings (i) Local Authority and Social Housing and (ii) Renting a Home.

One-fifth of the overall Local Authority and Social Housing queries were made by non-EU clients (where country of origin was recorded (62%)). Local Authority and Social Housing queries accounted for approximately 69% of all housing queries made by non-EU clients whereas it was lower for EU/Irish clients at 47%. Other housing queries, such as housing grants and schemes, and home energy grants accounted for a higher proportion (31%) of housing queries for Irish clients, who are more likely to have housing stability as owner-occupiers. In contrast, only 3% of housing queries from non-EU clients were on housing grants and schemes/home energy grants.

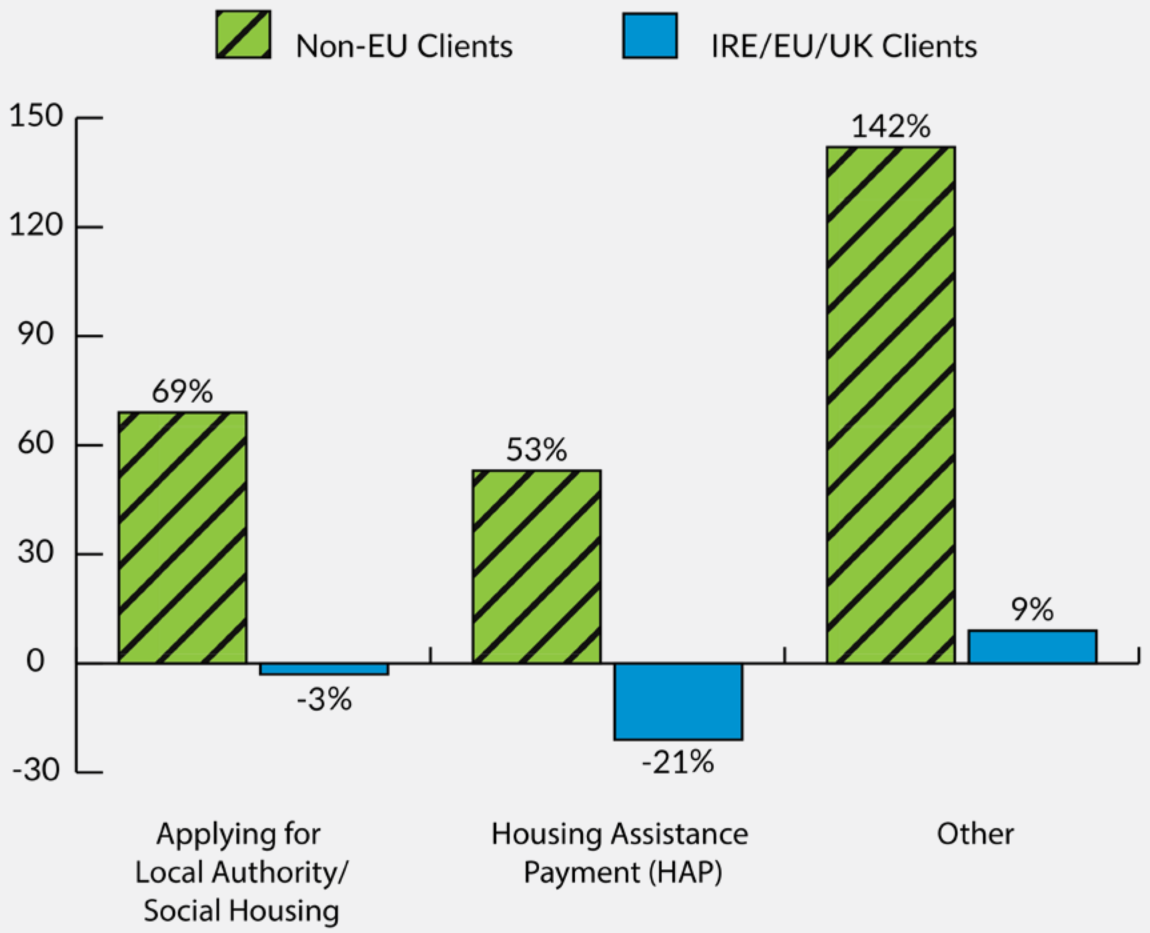
Figure 1: Main Housing Queries, by cohort, 2022 - 2024, percentage growth



Source: CIS data for 2022 - 2024.

Since 2022, there has been significant growth in queries from non-EU clients about the application process for Local Authority / Social Housing and HAP. These two sub-categories account for 80% of the Local Authority and Social Housing queries received annually.

Figure 2: Local Authority & Social Housing query categories, by cohort, 2022 - 2024, percentage growth

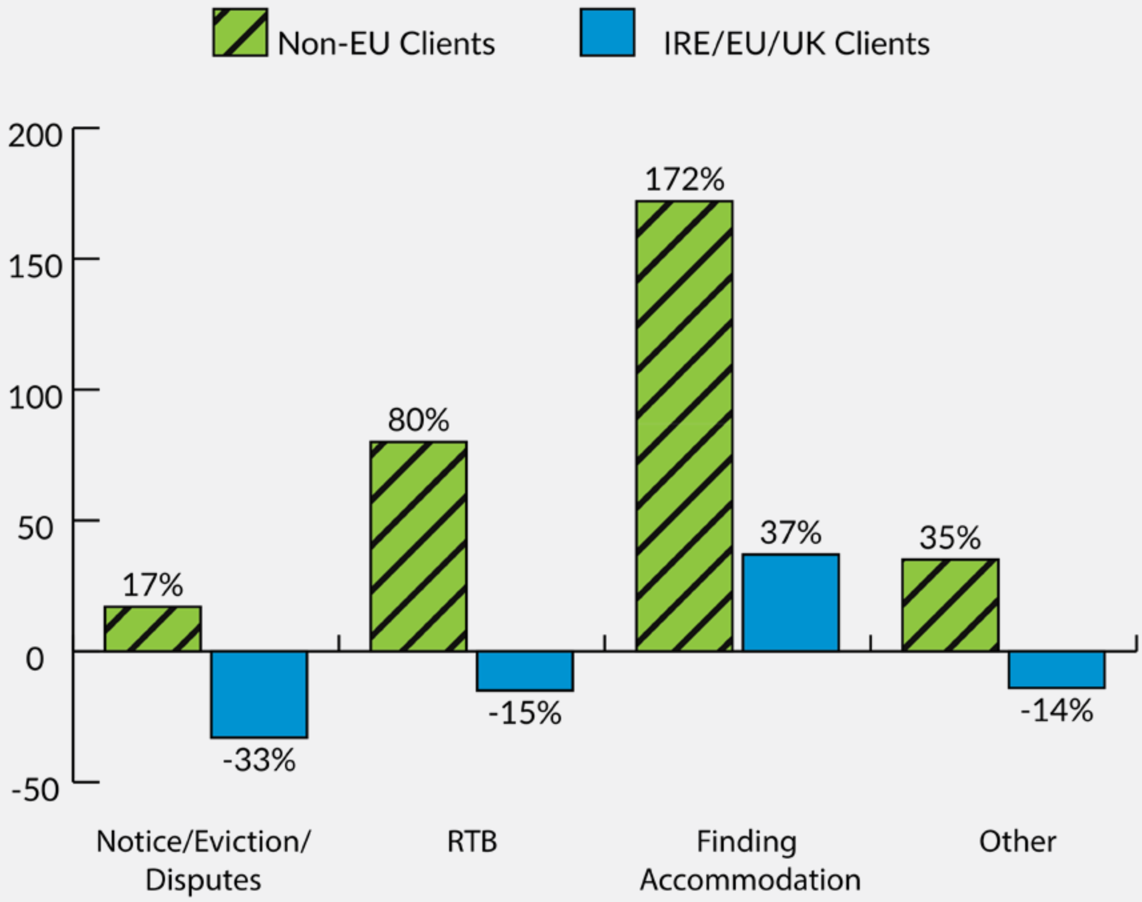


Source: CIS data for 2022 - 2024.

Renting a Home

Of the queries to CIS on renting a home, 84% came from Irish/EU clients, and 15% from non-EU clients. Queries relating to evictions and disputes, tenancy terminations, the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), and finding accommodation were the main issues for non-EU clients seeking support about renting. The growth in these queries, albeit from a low base, contrasts with the growth recorded among EU/Irish Clients.

Figure 3: Main Renting a Home (PRA) queries, by cohort, 2022 – 2024, percentage growth



The main queries from Irish/EU clients relating to Renting a Home were Notice/Eviction/ Disputes which saw a fall of 34% between 2022 and 2024, RTB, which fell by 17% and Landlords Rights and Obligations, which fell by 26%.

2.2 Social policy data and summary statistics

CIS submitted 4,034 social policy returns overall on housing between 2022 and 2024, of which there were 2,653 SPRs where country of origin was recorded. The proportion of social policy returns raised for non-EU clients increased in each of the three years and stood at 24% in 2024 (compared to 14% in 2022).

Table 3: Housing Social Policy Returns, by cohort, and growth rate, 2022 - 2024

	2022	2023	2024	% growth 2022 - 2024
Total	**771**	**1,019**	**863**	**+12%**
Non-EU clients	105	174	204	+94%
EU/Irish clients	666	845	659	-1%

Source: CIS data for 2022 - 2024.

Housing social policy returns for non-EU clients increased by 94% between 2022 and 2024 and compares to a drop of 1% for EU/Irish clients. Mirroring the CIS query dataset outlined above, these findings point towards a growing demand for support and advice amongst non-EU nationals on their rights and obligations in the Irish housing market.

Key issues emerging from the social policy returns and queries data, which inform the remainder of this report, include:

- **Applying for Local Authority / Social Housing:** The main social policy issue raised by non-EU clients related to the application process. This and the long wait times for decisions accounted for three-quarters of the policy issues under this heading.
- **Housing Assistance Payment (HAP):** Similarly, the application process accounted for half of the HAP policy issues generated for non-EU clients, followed by issues related to finding accommodation. Combined, these two issues accounted for the majority of the HAP related issues generated.
- **Finding Accommodation:** Whether it was social housing or private renting, finding accommodation was important for non-EU nationals during the study period and accounted for over half of the policy issues relating to tenancy terminations and landlord disputes.

The ESRI noted in a 2022 report that migrants are disproportionately affected by weak security of tenure and rising rents. Securing social housing or private rented accommodation were the main issues for non-EU nationals seeking support from CIS on housing matters.

Across the various headings, two key themes emerge from the data:

i. Non-EU nationals appear to encounter difficulties with applying for and accessing social housing and the HAP payment over and above their EU/Irish counterparts

ii. Finding Accommodation is as an issue for all three cohorts – Irish, EU and non-EU nationals - with non-EU nationals facing particular challenges.

The factors influencing these trends are explored further in Section 3.

3. Social Policy Feedback

Social Policy Feedback

3.1 Local Authority / Social Housing & Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)

This section provides insight into the challenges faced by non-EU clients in applying for social housing and HAP, and the impact the administration of social housing supports has on their housing security and mental health.

The Social Policy Returns (SPRs) data recorded for non-EU clients facing difficulties applying for social housing are not dissimilar to those for EU/Irish clients. See table 4 for breakdown of housing sub-categories for non-EU and Irish/EU clients:

Table 4: Social Policy Returns on Local Authority/Social Housing sub-categories for Non-EU, and Irish/EU clients, 2022, and 2024

Local Authority and Social Housing Sub-categories	Non-EU (2022)	Non-EU (2024)	Irish/EU (2022)	Irish/EU (2024)
Applying for LA/Social Housing	33	53	168	133
HAP	22	36	130	97
Other (including standards/ repairs, LA transfers, choice-based lettings, differential rent, medical priority, and waiting lists)	6	20	90	110
Total	**61**	**109**	**388**	**340**

In 2024, concerns to do with the application process made up approximately 50% of the local authority/social housing issues raised for both groups. Reflecting the query data in section 2, the rate of growth over the study period has been higher for non-EU clients reflecting the higher number of migrants now living in Ireland and the support they require in navigating the Irish housing system.

The main issue for non-EU clients seeking support with the digital aspect of the application process was accessing and navigating online applications on governmental websites, e.g. Revenue Online. A lack of knowledge about making applications online combined with inadequate English language skills led to unnecessary delays in accessing social housing. Examples included:

- a client who was informed after eight weeks that they needed to submit a Statement of Liability from Revenue despite not knowing how to access Revenue Online,
- a client who was anxious because they could not comprehend the instructions given by their local authority on how to access Revenue Online.

An online HAP application portal was introduced in March 2024 with the stated aim of streamlining the application process and reducing approval times. Although paper application forms are still available through local authorities, the shift to an online system placed greater demands on applicants because of challenges with digital literacy and proficiency in the English language. A fifth of the HAP application SPRs raised for non-EU nationals referenced the impact this was having on clients with limited online access and English proficiency. This compares to 8% for EU/Irish nationals.

Once an application for social housing is made, the Local Authority has 12 weeks to assess and decide whether the applicant qualifies or not. This may be extended if additional information is required (Applying for Social Housing, Citizens Information (accurate 10 June 2025)). According to CIS data, applicants can be left waiting far longer than the allotted 12-week period. While this may be due to increasing demand and backlog in processing applications, there were examples of clients waiting 16 to 20 weeks for a decision. Added to this, people can only apply for HAP after they have been added to the local authority's housing list, and after they have found suitable private rented accommodation (as the landlord's details are required on the application form).

It is not only non-EU clients who are being impacted by long wait times in securing social housing or HAP support. The prevalence of SPRs linked to wait times is broadly one-third for both groups, however non-EU clients are more likely to be unfamiliar with the Irish housing system and so may find it more challenging to navigate. Of the SPRs relating to long wait times in the social housing process, some 23% of non-EU clients were either living in emergency accommodation or at threat of becoming homeless. This compares to 17% of EU/Irish clients. The threat of homelessness for all cohorts is explored further in Section 3.3.

Case Study 1: Overcoming barriers in the social housing application process

A non-EU client with very little English, unable to read or write, and in poor health sought help from a Citizens Information Centre (CIC) after receiving a termination notice from her landlord. The client and her family had been renting for many years under Rent Supplement. She could not find anywhere else for her family to move to and was very worried about having to enter homeless accommodation, especially due to her health conditions.

The client had believed that her family was on the housing list for many years. However, when CIC contacted the county council to find out her position on the list, the Council stated that her application had been closed for over a year, due to not returning some information that had been requested. The council advised that the client would have to submit a new application. CIC assisted the client to complete the application form. CIC also requested a copy of her old application file, through the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), to find out the full circumstances in relation to how and why it was closed.

As part of her new application, the client was asked to provide an additional list of documentation/information due to her atypical family type which CIC assisted in obtaining. The client's application was approved but only from the current date. Then CIC, with the help of a translator, also discussed the documents which had been released under FOI in relation to her old application.

CIC then wrote to the council, setting out the client's specific circumstances and the difficulties that she had faced when dealing with them in relation to the application. CIC requested that they could add the time she had previously spent on the list to her current social housing application. The council agreed to do this. The client now has the chance to express interest in council homes that are advertised each week under the Choice Based Lettings scheme and as she now has 16 years on the list, the Council have advised that she is likely to be offered a house very soon.

3.2 Renting a home

Over the study period, 102 (21%) of the housing SPRs recorded for non-EU nationals related to Renting a Home (Private Rental Accommodation). Echoing the findings set out in Section 3.1, finding accommodation is the number one issue for non-EU clients and linked to the second most common issue of notices, evictions and disputes. Together these two areas account for 53 SPRs - 52% of the private renting SPRs for non-EU clients and compares to 40% for their EU/Irish counterparts. For non-EU clients, this equates to 53 of 102 SPRs relating to privately renting a home, and 135 of 339 for EU/Irish clients.

There are clear deficiencies in the supply and affordability of homes in the private rented sector and while the challenge of finding accommodation is not solely one for non-EU clients, CIS data indicates an increase in the demand for support from non-EU clients with this issue, e.g. a 47% increase in queries between 2023 and 2024, compared to a 3% drop for EU/Irish clients. This finding resonates with other research which highlights the importance of network-based support when navigating the Irish rental market – typically not available to migrants who do not have a network of friends or family when they first arrive. Lima, V. (2025). Housing Challenges and Needs of Migrants in Ireland. DCU and The Housing Agency.

For these clients, the data tell a story similar to that faced by many in the private rented sector:

- Clients being issued valid notices of termination and unable to find alternative accommodation
- Clients receiving rent review increases of between €50 and €1,000 per month (according to the SPRs recorded for non-EU clients) and being unable to find any other affordable housing
- Clients in receipt of rent assistance, such as HAP, but unable to find accommodation within the permitted rent limits
- Clients living in overcrowded, or otherwise unsuitable/unsafe accommodation because no affordable alternatives are available in their area.

Information providers recorded one-fifth of their non-EU clients - for example, in relation to 21% of the 102 SPRs on Renting a Home - as feeling “distressed”, “frustrated”, “depressed”, “worried”, “fearful”, and “desperate” at the prospect of being unable to house themselves and their families.

Periodic ESRI monitoring reports on integration underline that non-EU nationals are far more likely to rely on the private rented sector than Irish or EU nationals, a pattern strongly linked to higher housing costs and weaker security of tenure. Census 2022 showed that of the 16,000 new households renting from a private landlord in 2021, 49% were non-EU nationals, compared to 38% EU nationals, and 17% of Irish nationals. This over-representation means non-EU nationals are disproportionately exposed to the volatility of market rents, tenancy terminations, and access to affordable, secure housing – themes mirrored in this report.

Case Study 2: Seeking support to prevent homelessness

A non-EU national, who has lived in Ireland at his current address with his spouse and two children for 13 years, received a notice of termination from his landlord. He works full time, and his spouse, who is ill with epilepsy, works part time. The client, who is a HAP recipient, could not find anywhere else to live and was extremely stressed at the thought of being made homeless.

The client, who struggles with reading and writing needed CIS help to research the possibility of the Tenant in Situ Scheme – where the council would buy the property from the landlord and the client and his family remain in their home as social housing tenants. The CIS liaised with the landlord and the county council on behalf of the client and assisted them with compiling all supporting documentation for their application.

3.3 Homelessness

Given the over-reliance on the private rented sector, and the barriers to social housing and HAP supports outlined above, non-EU nationals are at a particular risk of homelessness. Of the 2,653 housing SPRs created between 2022 and 2024 where country of origin was recorded, 19% related to issues of homelessness, and emergency accommodation. This includes sub-categories of homelessness, emergency accommodation, losing your home, as well as private rental/local authority and social housing' notice/evictions/disputes. N=502. Of that, 23% were non-EU clients. The number of SPRs on homelessness for non-EU clients doubled between 2022 and 2024 (SPRs for homelessness, emergency accommodation, and losing your home.). By comparison, for EU/Irish nationals there was an increase of 14%.

For all groups, where homelessness, or the threat of homelessness was identified, and where further detail (additional classification was provided in 42% of homelessness Social Policy Returns) was captured by information providers, around 60% were linked to the application for local authority/social housing and HAP. In these cases, the long wait times on decisions being made, and the length of the housing list more generally, were the main areas of concern. These are issues that impact non-EU and EU/Irish clients in broadly similar ways.

There were differences in the data in terms of the relationship between tenancy termination, finding accommodation and homelessness for non-EU clients compared to their EU/Irish counterparts. One-quarter of the non-EU clients at threat of becoming or currently experiencing homelessness were facing a tenancy termination and/or were struggling to find accommodation compared to 17% of EU/Irish clients. This links back to the discussion in section 3.2 on the dependence of non-EU migrants on the private rented sector and the associated vulnerabilities to tenancy security and affordability.

Examples include:

- One client and their adult son, both in employment, who were struggling to find alternative accommodation after receiving a termination notice from their landlord and were considering returning to their country of origin where they would not find as good a job, but they would be able to find a home.
- Another client and their partner, both of whom had good jobs were living with their two children in a friend's spare bedroom because they could not find anywhere to live.

The issue of homelessness is compounded further by an apparent shortage of emergency accommodation. Of the 672 queries about emergency accommodation from all groups, there were 32 SPRs. While this number is low, numerous information staff note cases where there is "no emergency accommodation available", "no homelessness/emergency supports on offer in the immediate term", or "homelessness supports, and emergency accommodation are very limited or non-existent."

One non-EU client and their three children were left without accommodation for a night as the council had no accommodation available. A comparable situation arose for another client and their four children, who had to immediately leave their accommodation, but the council could not provide emergency accommodation. Where emergency accommodation could be sourced the conditions appeared far from ideal irrespective of nationality. Examples for non-EU clients include – a family placed in emergency accommodation 28km away from their community; and a family of four children allocated one room and sharing facilities with 20 other families.

A cohort of non-EU international protection applications are also being forced into homelessness because of the lack of affordable options for people to move out of IPAS accommodation. The ESRI established that as of January 2024, almost 6,000 people granted the status of international protection, had been left in International Protection Accommodation (IPAS). The report found that the barriers that led to this outcome are not specific to this group but instead are mainstream issues, including:

- Severe shortages in the supply of social housing and affordable rented accommodation
- Inadequate rental supports, such as HAP
- A lack of resources and high staff turnover among frontline workers in public services
- A lack of communication between different agencies or departments

These barriers are highlighted in the experiences of those CIS clients who were granted status, but who continued living in IPAS or emergency accommodation because they could not find affordable accommodation. More recently, residents of IPAS centres who have legal status have been notified by IPAS of the need to leave as they no longer have entitlement to stay there, see more at www.irishtimes.com. Examples included:

- One client who was living in Direct Provision with their four children. Despite being granted residence permission three years previously, they had not been able to move into private rented accommodation. The client received approval for Homeless HAP with a limit of €1,950. They had a good work reference, and character reference but they felt there was no chance of their family getting accommodation because most of the landlords/agents do not respond. The client attended one viewing with hundreds of other families and even if they were offered the property, they would have had to pay €850 per month ‘top-up’ on their HAP rent.
- A client was granted refugee status and was working full-time. They were told they must leave Direct Provision to make room for new applicants, but they could not find anywhere to rent. They faced going from Direct Provision to emergency accommodation due to the shortage of affordable rental properties.

The threat of homelessness for non-EU nationals is reflected in national statistics too, where migrants are disproportionally represented. Since April 2022, the proportion of non-EEA (EEA is EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) adults living in emergency accommodation has increased from 15% to 29% - a 14pp increase. Other Department data shows that Leaving Direct Provision (13%) was the third most common reason for those newly entering emergency accommodation in early 2025, behind relationship breakdowns (24%) and tenancy terminations (21%). By comparison, the proportion of EEA/UK people in emergency accommodation has remained unchanged at 20% and the proportion of Irish people has declined 13pp to 51%. (Month Homelessness Report April 2022, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Monthly Homelessness Report August 2025, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage).

Case Study 3: Navigating Homelessness Services after leaving IPAS Accommodation

A refugee with very little English went to a Citizens Information Centre (CIC) looking for help to find rented accommodation. He was working full-time for a company based in Dublin and had been living in IPAS accommodation in Dublin. Issues arose when IPAS transferred him to a hotel located in the countryside in another part of Ireland. From there it took him four and a half hours to travel to his job in Dublin.

Given the remote location of the new accommodation, coupled with the fact that he could not drive, as well as his lack of English, the client's chances of finding another job were very limited. The client felt that they were forced to make a decision - either stay in the new accommodation, which would mean losing his livelihood; or keep his job but give up his new accommodation. He decided on the second option.

As he was deemed to have given up IPAS accommodation, the county council would not allow him access to emergency accommodation in Dublin. When he went to CIC for help, he was visibly distressed and exhausted. He explained, with the help of one of the volunteer translators, that he had been sleeping on a friend's kitchen floor in a small one-bedroom flat. He explained that he had been trying to look for his own rented accommodation, and that his friend had been successful in finding accommodation under Homeless HAP.

He informed the CIC that the county council, whose list he was on, had not approved him for Homeless HAP, only regular HAP. Because there was no rented accommodation available within the regular HAP limits in the area, the client was looking for help to contact the council to get approval for Homeless HAP.

CIC contacted the council on his behalf and were advised that he would need to send in an application by email, but that it was unlikely to be accepted because it would be deemed that he had made himself homeless. With the help of a translator, CIC helped the client to gather the relevant documentation and then sent the request in to the council's Homeless Unit on the client's behalf.

After no initial response, CIC followed up with the Homeless Unit numerous times on the client's behalf over the following three months. More information and documentation was requested and CIC, again with the help of a translator, gathered this information from the client and forwarded it to the Homeless Unit on his behalf.

Even after sending all the requested information, the Homeless Unit informed CIC that they would need to ring the client to ask him some more questions before they could make a decision. CIC outlined that, due to the client's lack of English, he could not communicate over the phone without the help of a translator, and that was why they were helping him with the application. Eventually the client received approval for Homeless HAP.

4. Conclusion and policy considerations

Conclusion and policy considerations

The number of non-EU nationals seeking a new life or a place of refuge in Ireland has risen substantially in recent years. While the government is working to provide fundamental policy interventions at a national level to ensure there is an adequate stock of housing, attainable changes at a local level will help migrants to access homes and housing supports and improve overall integration into Irish society.

This report complements existing research on the topic of integration by highlighting the lived experience of migrants who face high levels of vulnerability in the Irish housing market. The evidence shows that housing must be a priority for migrant integration policy.

Addressing the broader challenges in the Irish housing market will also benefit non-EU migrants, who are disproportionately represented in private rented accommodation and in emergency accommodation, while increasing the provision of social housing will act to provide a more stable and secure form of tenancy.

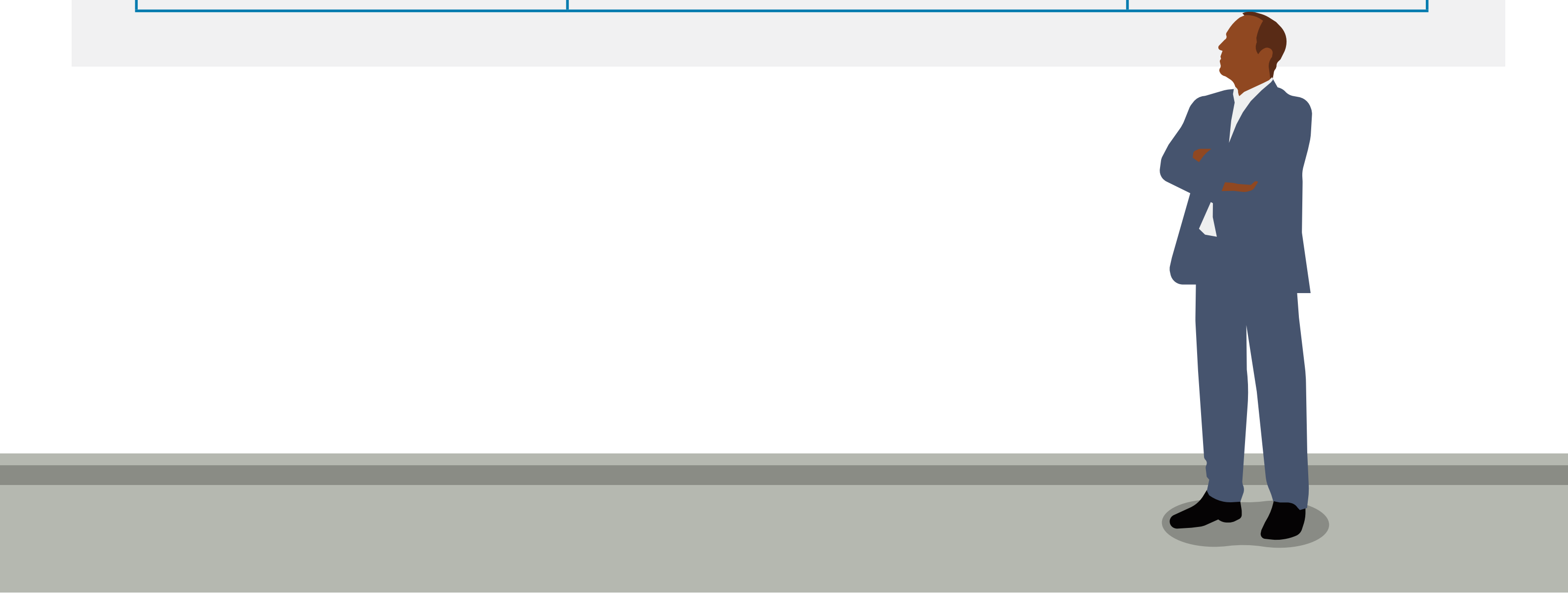
Data from frontline CIB-funded services indicates that, compared to EU/Irish clients, non-EU clients are facing greater and growing challenges regarding access to social housing, rental supports, and private rented accommodation. The report shows that these individuals have sought support from CIS in growing numbers in recent years and face a greater risk of homelessness.

Policy Considerations

A number of policy considerations emerge from this analysis.

Policy Change	Reason and example	Responsible
1. Focus on housing application support such as “digital help” or “housing navigator” service. Equality of access to information is a critical enabler of integration and therefore, a “digital help service” or “housing application navigator”, are important supports in providing clearer and more coherent instructions on how to access application forms and documentation for people with basic English language and digital literacy needs.	Understanding of the English language and digital literacy are two of the main barriers for non-EU nationals applying for social housing and rental support. Of note here as well, is CIB's recently introduced AskCI - a chatbot available on askcitizensinformation.ie, which uses AI to answer clients' questions and provide Plain English answers. Questions can be asked in over 50 different languages with answers provided in these languages. This technology is supporting clients with limited English in accessing their entitlements. Further support could follow the model of CIB’s Digital Help Service which has been rolled out across 40 CIS to date. The Digital Help Service supports people access online government platforms including: • Revenue Online • My Welfare • My Gov ID • National Driving License Service	• CIS • Local authorities
2. Introduce co-ordinated wraparound supports. This could include supports for: • Digital literacy • Using online portals • Translation of applications and documents	This would reduce the burden on new arrivals of navigating the housing system. Non-EU nationals are over-represented in private rented accommodation, and are disproportionately affected by the risks associated with, for example, the loss of a tenancy or rent increases. These factors leave them more vulnerable to the Irish housing system and becoming homeless.	Formalised co-ordination between agencies: • IPAS • Local authorities • CIS • Migrant organisations

Policy Change	Reason and example	Responsible
3. Develop move-on pathways for Beneficiaries of International Protection (BIPs) exiting IPAS accommodation: The pathways would ease access to: • Private housing • Social housing • Homeless HAP	The lack of affordable private rented accommodation is also preventing some non-EU clients from leaving Direct Provision forcing them into emergency accommodation. There is evidence that they are more likely to require support of a different order or scale compared to EU/Irish nationals, because of their dependence on private rented accommodation.	• IPAS • Local authorities • Landlord groups • Housing Agency
4. Improve data and policy integration This involves strengthening the capacity of frontline and emergency accommodation services by: • Undertaking an assessment of emergency accommodation capacity, suitability, and proximity to existing community networks • Including migrant demand projections in national and local capacity planning	These actions will help agencies and departments to provide for current and plan for future pressures on housing, emergency accommodation, and frontline support services. These actions will benefit all users, not just non-EU nationals.	• Local authorities • Department of Housing • Government agencies • Emergency accommodations providers



Appendix 1: Query Data Overview

Table 1: Main Housing queries, by cohort, 2022 - 2024, percentage growth

Housing Query	Non-EU Clients 2022	IRE/ EU/UK Clients 2022	Non-EU Clients 2023	IRE/ EU/UK Clients 2023	Non-EU Clients 2024	IRE/ EU/UK Clients 2024	Non-EU Clients 2022 - 2024 Growth	IRE/ EU/UK Clients 2022 - 2024 Growth
Local Authority & Social Housing	3,909 68%	21,564 49%	5,571 68%	22,064 47%	6,843 71%	20,918 46%	75% ▲	-3% ▼
Renting a Home (PRA)	853 15%	6,668 15%	1,226 15%	6,318 13%	1,250 13%	5,229 11%	47% ▲	-22% ▼
Other	994 17%	15,736 36%	1,341 16%	18,608 40%	1,524 16%	19,789 43%	53% ▲	26% ▲
Total	**5,756 100%**	**43,968 100%**	**8,138 100%**	**46,990 100%**	**9,617 100%**	**45,936 100%**	N/A	N/A

Source: CIS data 2022 – 2024.

Table 2: Main Local Authority & Social Housing queries, by cohort, 2022 - 2024, percentage growth

Local Authority & Social Housing	Non-EU Clients 2022	IRE/ EU/UK Clients 2022	Non-EU Clients 2023	IRE/ EU/UK Clients 2023	Non-EU Clients 2024	IRE/ EU/UK Clients 2024	Non-EU Clients 2022 - 2024 Growth	IRE/ EU/UK Clients 2022 - 2024 Growth
Applying for Local Authority / Social Housing	2,276 58%	10,578 49%	3,082 55%	10,829 49%	3,837 56%	10,238 49%	69% ▲	-3% ▼
Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)	1,052 27%	6,114 28%	1,452 26%	5,540 25%	1,602 23%	4,817 23%	52% ▲	-21% ▼
Other	581 15%	4,872 23%	1,037 19%	5,695 26%	1,404 21%	5,863 28%	142% ▲	20% ▲
Total	**3,909 100%**	**21,564 100%**	**5,571 100%**	**22,064 100%**	**6,843 100%**	**20,918 100%**	N/A	N/A

Source: CIS data 2022 – 2024.

Table 3: Main Renting a Home (PRA) queries, by cohort, 2022 – 2024, percentage growth

Renting a Home (PRA)	Non-EU Clients 2022	IRE/ EU/UK Clients 2022	Non-EU Clients 2023	IRE/ EU/UK Clients 2023	Non-EU Clients 2024	IRE/ EU/UK Clients 2024	Non-EU Clients 2022 - 2024 Growth	IRE/ EU/UK Clients 2022 - 2024 Growth
Notice/Eviction/ Disputes	248 29%	1,807 27%	317 26%	1,535 24%	290 24%	1,209 19%	17% ▲	-33% ▼
RTB (Residential Tenancies Board)	106 12%	1,104 17%	163 13%	1,144 18%	191 16%	939 15%	80% ▲	-15% ▼
Finding Accommodation	72 8%	133 2%	133 11%	193 3%	196 16%	182 3%	172% ▲	37% ▲
Other	427 50%	3,595 54%	623 50%	3,457 55%	573 47%	2,899 46%	34% ▲	-19% ▼
Total	**853 100%**	**6,639 100%**	**1,226 100%**	**6,329 100%**	**1,250 102%**	**5,229 83 %**	**N/A**	**N/A**

Source: CIS data 2022 – 2024.

citizensinformationboard.ie
Telephone: (01) 605 9000
Email: info@ciboard.ie

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland