

RENTING IN IRELAND

The Housing Crisis from the Perspective of International Students



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About ICOS

The Irish Council for International Students (ICOS) is an independent advocacy organisation whose mission is to protect and enhance the rights of international students in Ireland while championing their contribution in the places they study and the communities in which they live.

ICOS has 27 institutional members, including all of the universities and technological universities in the Republic of Ireland, and many independent third level colleges. Our membership also includes the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), and we have a Student Advisory Group to help support and inform our work.

ICOS' values include consultation, collaboration, learning, and accountability, and our goals are to influence policy and standards in international education; build the capacity of our members; empower international students to pursue their rights; and support and showcase the important contribution of international education to international development.

The Authors

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Foreword

The Irish Council for International Students (ICOS) would like to thank the 512 international students who took part in our survey. I would also like to acknowledge the work of Brian Hearne, ICOS Policy and Communications Manager, for conducting this research and compiling the report and also to Rodrigo Domingues for his work. ICOS looks forward to engaging with public representatives and stakeholders on the recommendations.

The student housing crisis in Ireland is a consequence of the wider housing crisis. ICOS has witnessed another difficult year for international student renters who have struggled to find accommodation, fallen victim to scams, or been forced to live in sub-standard and often overcrowded properties. The issue of predators seeking sex in exchange for rent is alarming, and urgent legislative action is needed to address this.

The findings of this report provide clear evidence of the difficulties students encountered in the rental market in Ireland. ICOS has outlined our recommendations to help address the housing crisis and protect renters. While the shortage of student accommodation is part of the broader housing crisis, and also requires targeted solutions.

Ireland is an outstanding study destination, with colleges that go above and beyond to support students and provide an excellent student experience. However, the lack of affordable housing for students demands urgent action if Ireland is to maintain its strong reputation abroad. We also need to see the regulations governing the private rental market enforced, and a scaling up of purpose-built student accommodation, including a National Student Accommodation Strategy that ensures students studying here have access to safe, affordable housing. If Ireland is to remain an attractive study destination, the Government needs to act now to implement the recommendations outlined in this report.

Laura Harmon
Executive Director

Irish Council for International Students





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Background

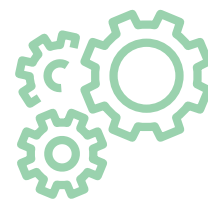
The housing crisis continues to be the most pressing social challenge facing Ireland. Chronic undersupply and soaring rental costs in the housing market have left renters struggling to secure affordable, accessible, and adequate accommodation. Among the renters disproportionately affected by the crisis are international students.

As Ireland seeks to position itself as a global destination for education, research, and innovation, the ability to attract and retain international students is critical to the country's economic growth and development. However, the housing crisis poses significant barriers to this ambition. International student renters are often faced with a myriad of challenges, including limited access to affordable housing, vulnerability to exploitation, overcrowding, scams, and the stress of navigating an unfamiliar rental market. These issues not only impact their academic performance, quality of life, and well-being, but also threaten Ireland's reputation as a global destination for education.

This report builds on previous research conducted by ICOS on housing in the context of international students. It examines the effects of the housing crisis on students, and explores the challenges that they face in the rental market. Finally, it offers recommendations for policymakers to consider in order to help create a better rental market for international students, and renters in general.

Methodology

ICOS carried out this research using an anonymous online survey that was conducted between 19 September 2024 and 6 October 2024. The survey consisted of a mixture of multiple choice, dichotomous (yes/no), and open-ended questions, designed to capture quantitative and qualitative data on international students' experience of renting in Ireland. ICOS shared the survey across social media, with higher education institutions, English language schools, and organisations and community groups that were identified as working with international students. The survey was available in 3 languages (English, Spanish, and Portuguese) aimed at increasing participation in the research.





Key Findings

61%



of respondents who said they were working reported that half of their monthly salary goes towards paying their rent; 1 in 5 respondents who worked said that they spend 70% of their income on paying rent

5%

of female respondents said they had either received an offer to rent a room in Ireland in exchange for sex, or had seen a room that was being advertised in exchange for sex



More than

1 in 10

of respondents said that they had been a victim of an accommodation scam while in Ireland. With only 14% of respondents who said they were a victim of an accommodation scam reporting the incident



More than half (54%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their student experience has suffered due to the housing crisis in Ireland



41%

of respondents said that their education has suffered due to the housing crisis in Ireland



56%

of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their student experience has suffered due to the housing crisis in Ireland



3 out of 4

English language students and a third of students studying in higher education share a room with at least 1 other person



14%

of respondents said the accommodation they were offered meant they were expected to share a room – and sleep in the same bed – with a stranger

- More than a third of respondents reported that their accommodation did not have a dryer
- 12% of respondents did not have access to a cooker
- One in ten respondents said that their accommodation did not have heating
- 38% of respondents do not have a lease agreement for their accommodation



Less than a quarter of respondents said they were aware of their rights as renters





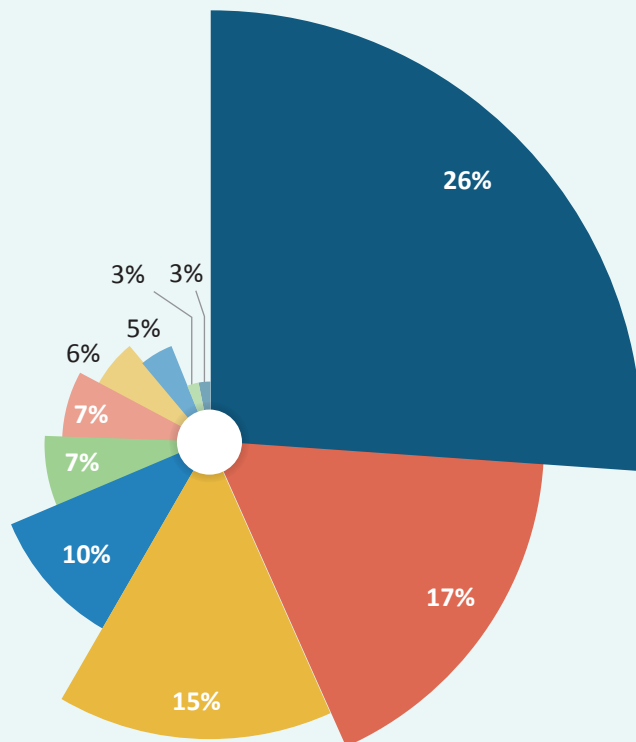
Participant Profile

A total of 512 people took part in ICOS' survey. Participants in the survey were made up of a diverse range of nationalities across 64 countries. Half of respondents reported studying at an English language school, 46% said they were studying in higher education, and 4% did not say. In terms of gender, 61% of respondents said they were female, while 38% indicated that they were male. There were 3 respondents who identified themselves as non-binary and 3 who preferred not to provide their gender.





1. What is your nationality?

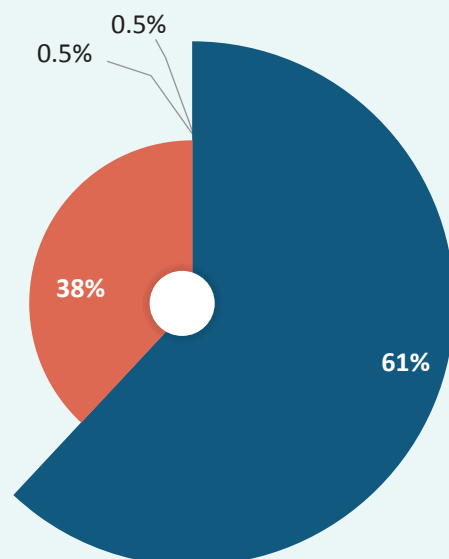
- 512 participants
- 64 nationalities
- Top 10 nationalities accounted for 68% of participants
- 79% of participants were from non-European Economic Area (EEA) countries

| | |
|---|--|
|  Brazil |  Costa Rica |
|  India |  France |
|  Mexico |  Argentina |
|  Germany |  Bolivia |
|  Chile |  Malaysia |



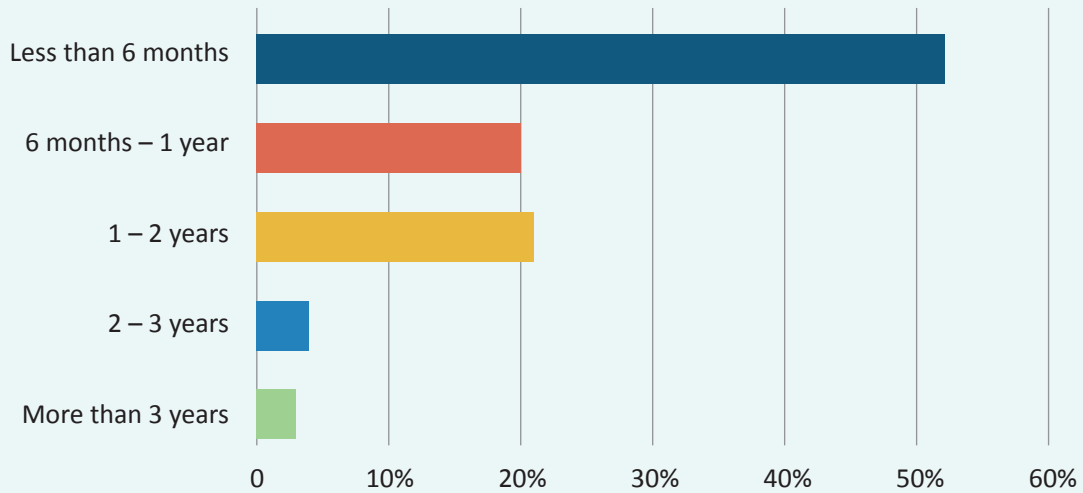
2. What is your gender?

| |
|--|
|  Female |
|  Male |
|  Non-Binary |
|  Rather not say |

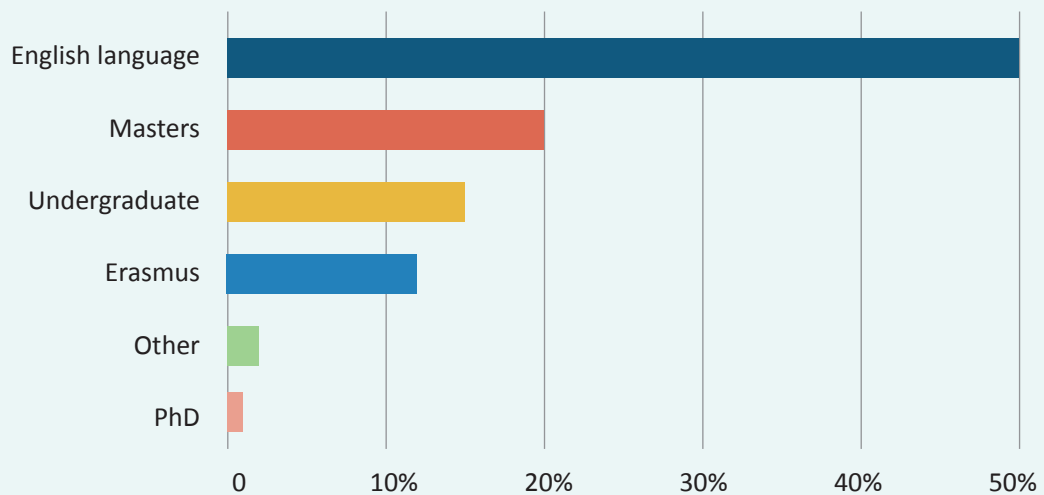




3. How long have you been living in Ireland?



4. What course are you enrolled in?



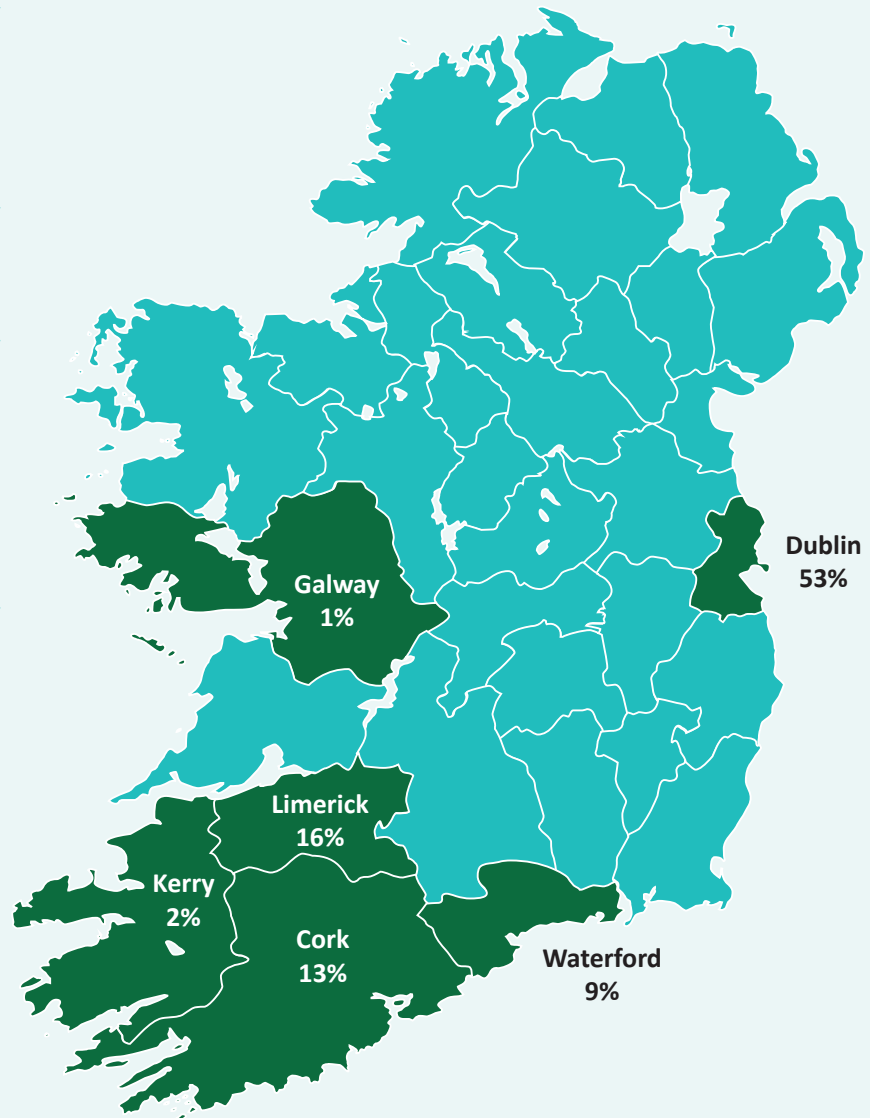


5. What is the name of the city / town / area where you live?

→ 94% of respondents lived in 6 counties [Dublin, Limerick, Cork, Waterford, Kerry, Galway]

→ 53% of respondents said they were living in Dublin

→ 69% of English language student respondents were based in Dublin compared with 37% of respondents studying in higher education

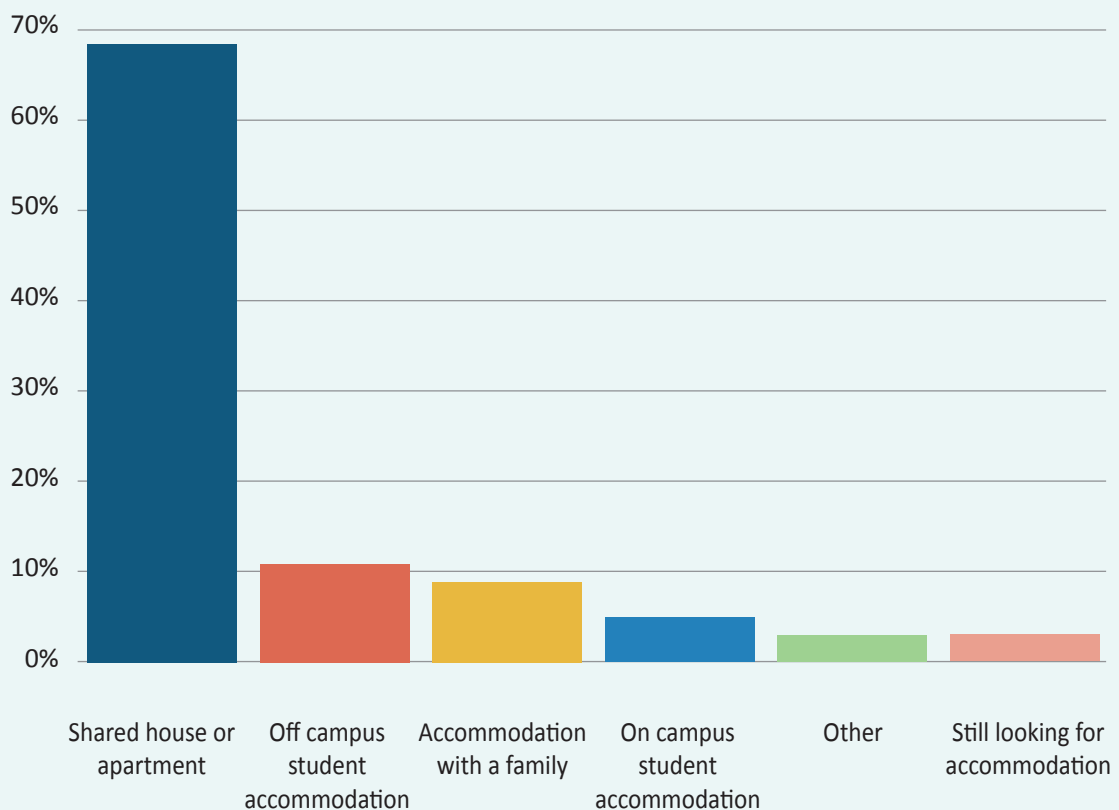




Accommodation

6. What sort of accommodation are you living in?

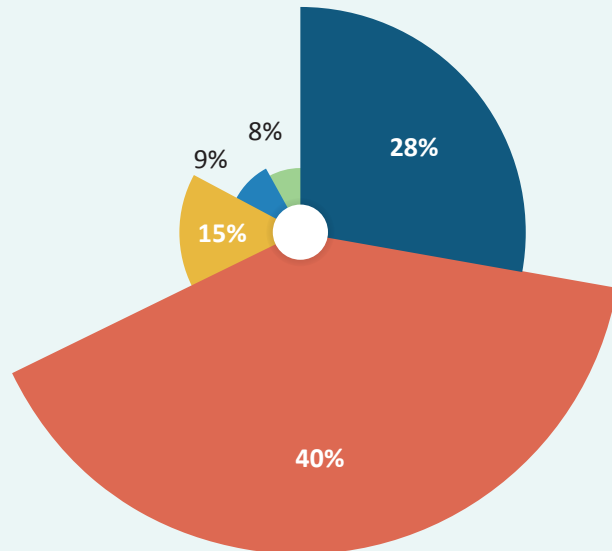
- 69% of respondents reported living in a shared house or apartment
- 11% of respondents said they were living in off campus student accommodation
- 10% of respondents studying in higher education (undergraduate, masters, PhD, and Erasmus) said they were living on campus
- 9% said they were living in accommodation with a family
- Respondents who said they had not found a place to live said that they were staying with friends, in hostels, or hotels. One German Erasmus student reported living in his car for 4 weeks





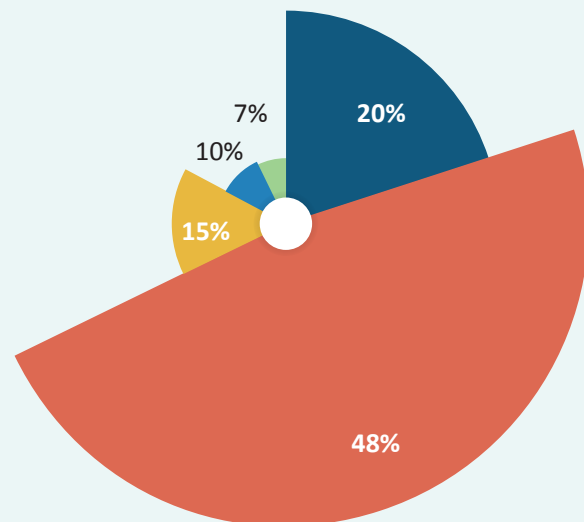
7. How long did it take you to find accommodation (in days)?

- 28% of respondents said they found accommodation within 14 days
- 68% said that they found accommodation within 42 days
- 15% of respondents found accommodation between 43 – 70 days
- 9% of respondents found accommodation between 71 – 100 days
- 8% said that it took them in excess of 100 days to find accommodation in Ireland



8. How far is your accommodation from your place of study (in km)?

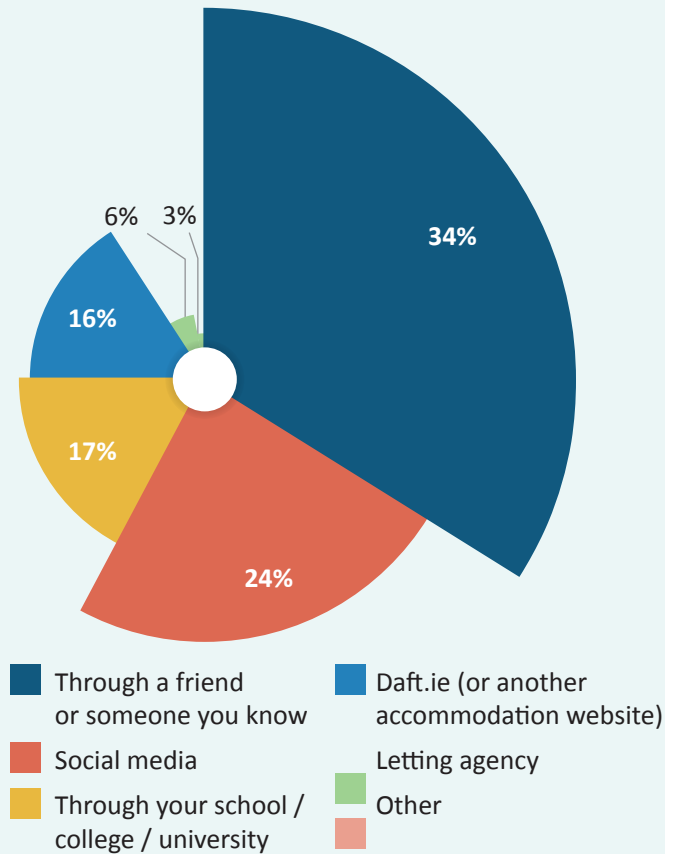
- 20% of respondents live within 1km of their place of study
- 48% of respondents live between 1-5 km from where they study
- 15% live between 5-10 km from where they study
- 10% of respondents said they live between 10 -15km from their school or college
- 7% said they live more than 15km from where their school or college





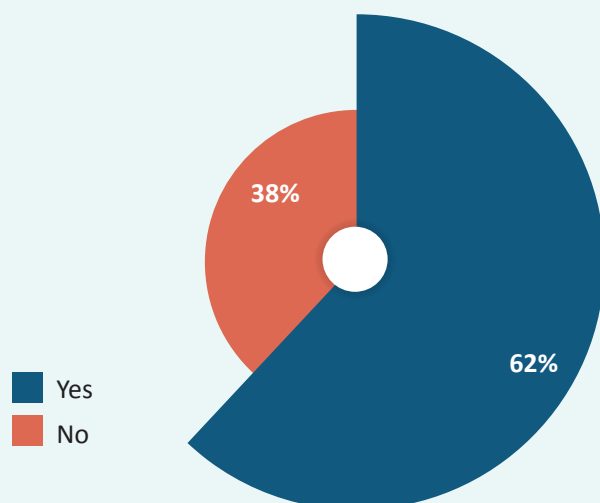
9. How did you find your accommodation?

- 34% of respondents said that they found accommodation through a friend or someone they know
- Just under a quarter of respondents (24%) said they found their accommodation on social media
- 17% of respondents reported finding their accommodation on Daft.ie or another similar website
- 16% of respondents reported finding their accommodation through their school or college
- 6% of respondents said they found their accommodation through a letting agency
- 3% responded 'Other' with some reporting that they had not yet found accommodation



10. Have you signed a contract or lease agreement for your accommodation?

- 38% of respondents did not have a lease agreement for their accommodation
- 62% reported having a lease agreement
- 44% of English language student respondents said they did not have a lease compared with 31% of respondents studying in higher education





11. Does your accommodation have the following: Hot water, heating, a cooker, a washing machine, a dryer?

| Appliances / Services | Yes | No |
|-----------------------|-----|------------|
| Hot water | 97% | 3% |
| Heating | 88% | 12% |
| A cooker | 89% | 11% |
| A washing machine | 95% | 5% |
| A dryer | 65% | 35% |

12. How many people do you live with?

- Only 1% (5) of respondents said they live alone
- 38% of respondents live in accommodation with between 1-3 people
- 40% of respondents said they live with between 4-6 people
- 21% of respondents lived with 7 or more people. With 8% of respondents saying they live with 10 or more people

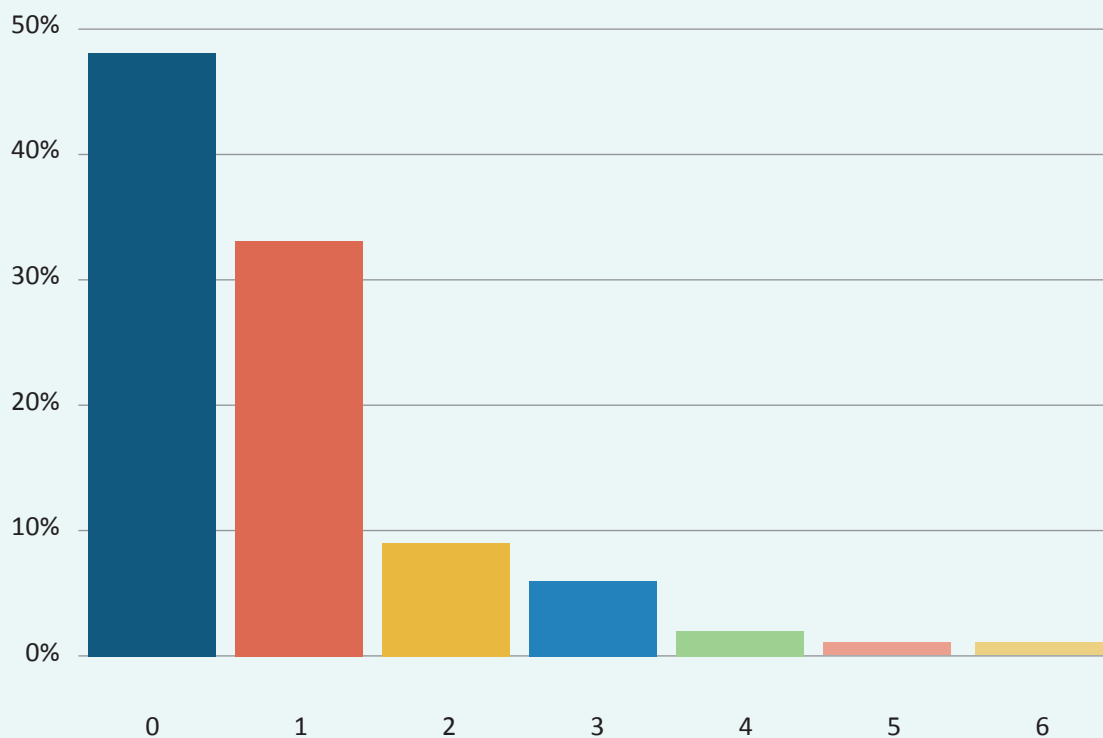
13. How many bedrooms are in your house / apartment?

- 54% of respondents reported living in a house or apartment with 1-3 bedrooms
- 46% said they live in accommodation with between 4-6 bedrooms
- 15% of respondents said their home had more than 6 bedrooms



14. How many people do you share a bedroom with?

- 48% of respondents said that they had their own bedroom compared with 52% of respondents who reported sharing a room with someone
- 19% of respondents saying they share a room with 2 people or more
- 1 in 10 respondents said they were sharing a room with 3 or more people
- 3 out of 4 English language students and a third of students studying in higher education share a room with at least 1 other person
- 31% of English language students and 7% of students studying in higher education (undergraduate, masters, PhD students) share a room with 2 or more people





15. Do you share a bed with someone you did not know before you moved in?

→ 14% of respondents said that they shared a bed with someone that they did not know before moving into their accommodation

Examples of feedback from respondents:

A female student from Brazil studying English commented: *'It's unpleasant to share a bed with someone you don't know.'*

Another female Brazilian student said: *'Since I arrived in Cork, I've lived in many different houses, like a student house where I shared a tiny bedroom with two other people paying excessive rent. I also lived in a house where the landlord lived. One of the rentals was through Hostpower, and without a doubt, this experience was terrible because the landlord monitored our steps, and there were set times to use the kitchen, plus a timed schedule for the shower. I even had to share a bed with two people at different times, whom I had never met before, until after a year and a half, I finally got my own room. We went through many emotional ups and downs with accommodations here, many of them overpriced and in poor condition.'*

A male Costa Rican English language student said: *'In my first accommodation, I had to share a room with someone I didn't know.'*

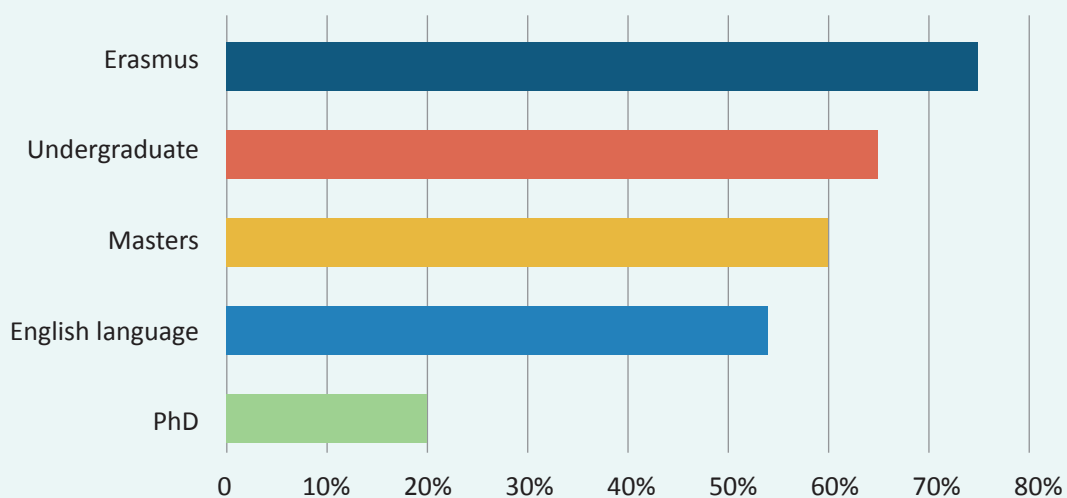
A Mexican student studying in higher education reported: *'I share a bed with someone that I met here in Ireland.'*

A female student from Paraguay said: *'When I first arrived, I shared with a guy, now I share with a woman.'*



16. Are you satisfied with your accommodation?

- Overall, 55% of respondents said that they were satisfied with their accommodation
- 54% of English language students were satisfied with their accommodation
- 65% of postgraduate masters respondents and 20% of PhD respondents said they were satisfied with their accommodation, while the highest rates of satisfaction were amongst Erasmus students (75%)



17. Why are you not satisfied?

Sample of responses from respondents who provided feedback:

A female Mexican student said: *'I share the house with a lot of people and I share the bed with a friend.'*

A female English language student from Paraguay described her experience of renting in Ireland: *'The building where I live has water leaking in it and humidity, and nothing gets repaired. We have no heating or dryer. We also realised 2 months ago that the lead tenant was scamming us by charging an extra €150 per month each.'*

A German Erasmus reported that they have been living in a car for 4 weeks: *'Currently in the car (in total it will be for 4 weeks) but after those 4 weeks i have an accommodation.'*



A female student from Mozambique: *'Because there was no hot water for showers.'*

A female Costa Rican student living in Limerick said: *'The rent is excessively high and the owner of the property has no respect for privacy and we have to pay to have access to keys to our bedrooms.'*

A French Erasmus student reported: *'The owner (who has a studio in the house) asked after 5 days if I wanted to have sex with him. The house is mouldy, old and messy. My bedroom is tiny and things need to be fixed. There is just one bathroom with toilet inside for 7 people. The kitchen is also way too small for 7. It is cold in the house. The owner doesn't like to spend money to repair or renew.'*

An Indian student living in Limerick said: *'The area and house is really nice but the rent I'm paying is way too much, but had no choice given it is extremely difficult to find student accommodation and people are just exploiting the situation and charging whatever they like, as there is no regulation on rentals.'*

Another Indian student said: *'The heating doesn't work. Even after multiple calls to the property manager the issue hasn't been solved. The apartment is not well maintained and the rent is high compared to other places.'*

An English language student from Colombia said: *'I have to share a bathroom with 5 people. There is no central heater, they provided us [with a] small heater instead.'*

An English language student from Honduras wrote: *'The rent is very high and with so many people living in the house the situation is difficult, but this is the norm in Dublin.'*

A Costa Rican English language student living in Ireland less than 6 months said: *'We pay so much money for such bad conditions, only 1 bathroom, I'm sharing a bed and room with a stranger so there is no privacy, it's difficult to sleep and relax because everyone comes and goes at different times, the situation is really sad. I feel like the government discriminates against us as we can only work part-time and in jobs that the locals would never do. We work hard and try to do everything legally but seem to get the worst treatment.'*

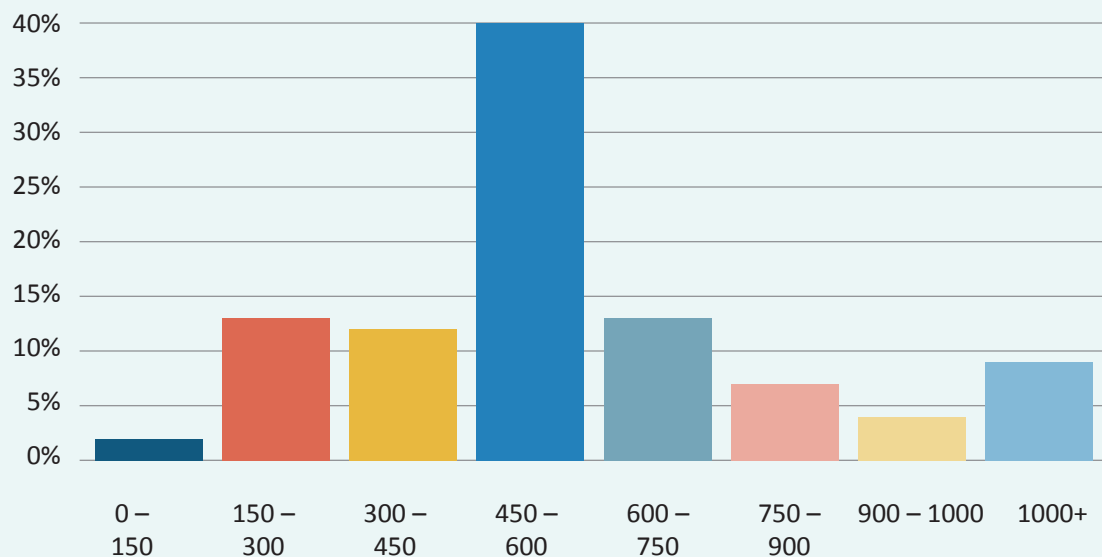
A male English language student from Mexico reported: *'I think it's an abuse putting lots of beds into small bedrooms and charging a fortune to take advantage of us.'*



Rent & Deposit

18. How much was the deposit to secure your accommodation?¹

- 68% of respondents said they paid a deposit of up to €600
- 13% reported paid between €600 - €750 for their reposit
- 7% of respondents said they had to provide €750 - €900 to secure accommodation
- 13% of respondents reported paying more than €900 as a deposit

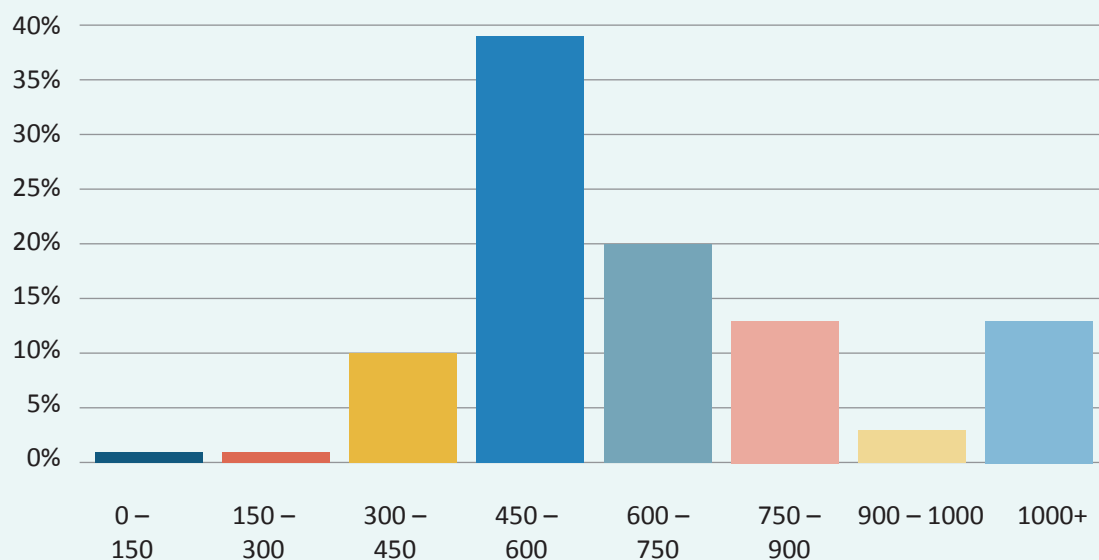


1. Participants were asked to write the amount that they pay towards the overall monthly rent and deposit, for example, the overall monthly rent in a shared property is €3000 and each person has to pay a €600 security deposit, and pay €600 per month in rent.



19. How much is your rent per month?²

- 51% of respondents reported paying up to €600 per month for their accommodation
- 20% said they were paying between €600 - €750 per month
- 13% of respondents said they paid between €750 - €900 per month in rent
- 3% of respondents reported paying more than €900 - €1000 in rent each month
- 13% said they paid more than €1000 in rent per month



20. How much do you pay in bills per month?

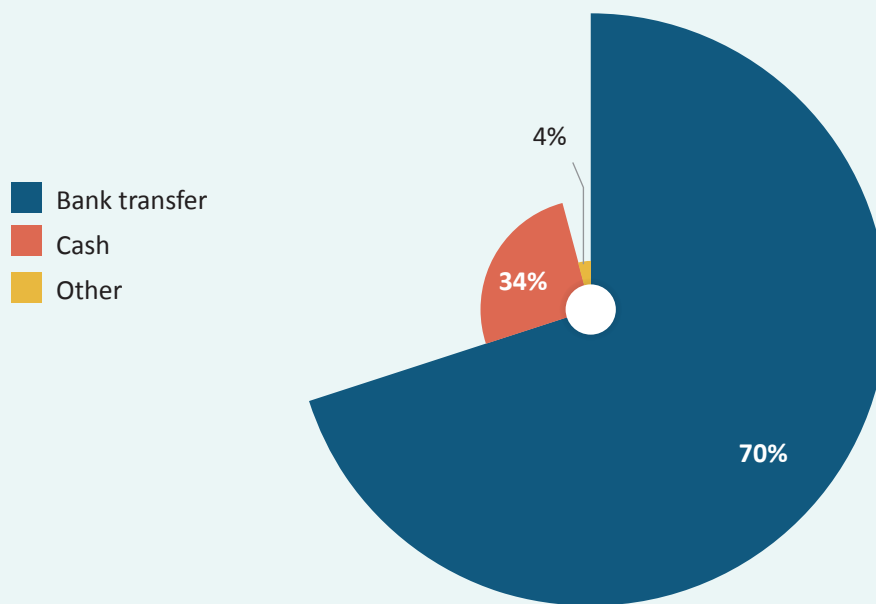
- A quarter of respondents reported that bills were included in their rent. With 92% saying they paid up to €150 per month in bills
- 7% of respondents said they did not pay bills

2. Participants were asked to write the amount that they pay towards the overall monthly rent and deposit, for example, the overall monthly rent in a shared property is €3000 and each person has to pay a €600 security deposit, and pay €600 per month in rent.



21. How do you pay your rent?

- 70% of respondents said that they paid their rent via bank transfer
- 26% said they paid their rent in cash
- 4% of respondents chose 'Other' with some giving details on how they pay rent. For example, paying through Revolut or credit / debit card. There were 2 respondents who said their rent was covered by their work as child carers





Fraud



22. Have you been a victim of an accommodation scam while in Ireland?

→ 11% of respondents said that they had been a victim of an accommodation scam while in Ireland

23. Did you report the scam?

→ 14% of respondents who said that they were a victim of an accommodation scam reported the incident

24. Were you happy with the outcome?

→ Only 7 responses were received for this question, with 3 respondents saying they were satisfied with the outcome, and 4 reporting that they were not

Examples of feedback from respondents:

Another female Brazilian respondent reported: *'The landlady didn't want to return my deposit, I had to contact the RTB which took almost 3 months to get my money back.'*

An Argentinean student also provided his experience of reporting scams online: *'The majority of scams happen on Facebook and on websites like Daft.ie, I've reported scams in the past on both platforms, but I haven't seen any improvement on these pages.'*

A female Mexican English language student said: *'They didn't do anything, and just said it wasn't their problem.'*



25. Why did you not report it?

- The most common reasons why people who fell victim to an accommodation scam did not report the incident was because they did not know how, or did not believe anything would be done about it. Other reasons reported include: realising the scam before transferring money, and being afraid of the consequences

Examples of feedback from respondents:

A Mexican student said: 'I was afraid of suffering some reprisal from my former landlord.'

A student from Turkey studying in Galway wrote: 'I don't trust the Gardai to find the scammer.'

An Erasmus student from France said: 'I noticed it was a scam, so I didn't transfer money. Also, I didn't know how/where to report.'

A male Indian student who reported a scam online commented: 'There are too many scams going on and I reported one issue on Daft.ie and it took them a month to delist the property and start the investigation. This is a serious issue if it takes 1 month to delist a reported issue. Not sure how will this safeguard people then from falling victims to scammers.'



25. Why did you not report it?

Another Indian student studying a masters said: *'Because the landlord told me that we'll give me back my money. I haven't went to the gardai and that landlord was also had a conversation with college international student unions. My student union told me he'll give back the deposit so I was waiting but haven't got anything yet.'*

A female undergraduate student from Canada wrote: *'I did not realize that I could report it to the Gardai.'*

One student from Botswana wrote: *'I did not know where to begin.'*

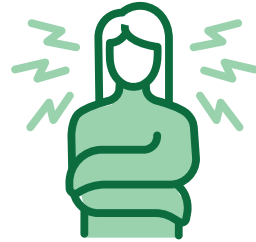
A student from Honduras said he was scammed for arriving to Ireland.

A female English language student from Venezuela said: *'[I didn't report the scam] because I was new in the country and I didn't know who to contact.'*

A French Erasmus student wrote: *'I came to an agreement with the scammer and only lost €100.'*



Sex for Rent



26. Has someone ever offered to rent you a room in Ireland in exchange for sex, or have you ever seen a room that was being advertised in exchange for sex?

- 5% (14) of female respondents said they had either received an offer to rent a room in Ireland in exchange for sex, or had seen a room that was being advertised in exchange for sex. With 6% of respondents indicated that they were 'unsure'
- Out of the respondents who replied 'yes' to this question, 14 were female and 8 were male



27. Where did you see the room advertisement?

- Of the 21 people who provided information on where they saw a room being advertised in exchange for sex, 81% (17) said they saw the advertisement on social media, and 4 (19%) said they saw the ad on a housing website

Examples of feedback from respondents:

One female student from Mexico provided details of her experience of being made a proposal of sex in exchange for rent: *'I posted on social media that I was looking for a room to rent and received 2 responses from men saying they had a room to rent and asking me what I could offer in exchange, one of them directly said that I could sleep with him, he then sent some obscene images.'*

Another female Mexican student said: *'I have heard of other experiences, not mine, about people that want to exchange accommodation for sex.'*

One Brazilian male wrote: *'A guy on Facebook offered a room in exchange for sex.'*

A female Brazilian English language student reported: *'A close friend experienced this [sex for rent], in order to have a place to live, she had to accept an abusive relationship.'*

A Brazilian female wrote that she saw an ad online: *'Some man was offering a room for a woman to be a maid and for sex.'*

A male student from Guatemala reported his experience: *'When I went to view a room, the landlord started to speak to me in a sexual tone and mentioned that there were 'other ways' of paying the rent.'*

A female undergraduate from Germany said: *'[I have seen] numerous ads on accommodation websites, platforms, and Facebook groups.'*

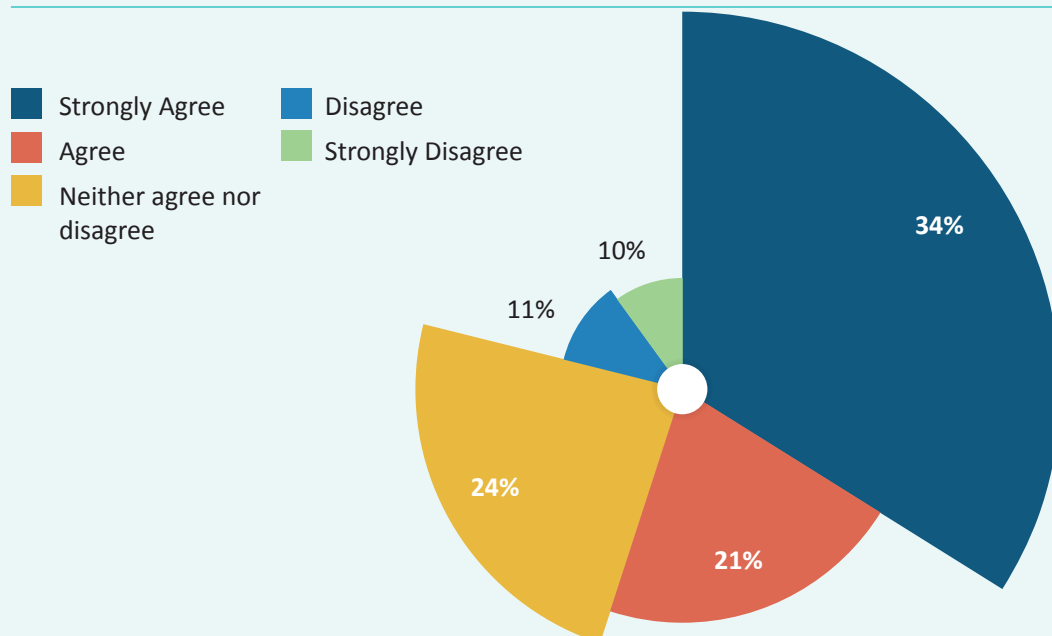


Mental Health



28. Has your mental health suffered because of the housing crisis in Ireland?

- More than half (54%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their mental health has been impacted as a result of the housing crisis in Ireland
- When compared, 57% of English language students and 51% of students studying in higher education reported that their mental health had suffered
- The research found no significant difference between male and female respondents in relation to their mental health





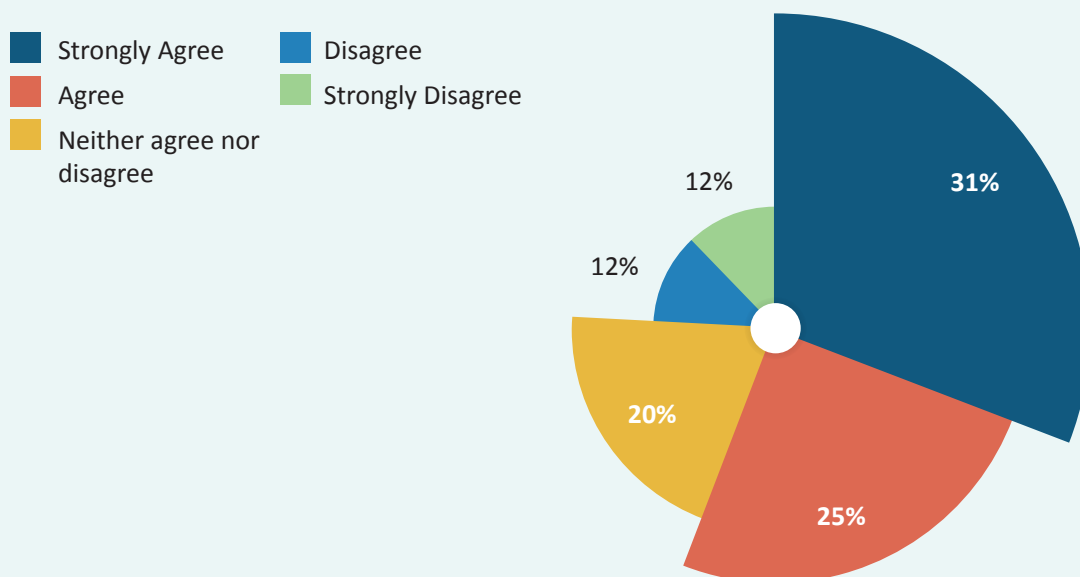
Student Experience

29. Has your student experience suffered because of the housing crisis in Ireland?

→ 56% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their student experience has suffered due to the housing crisis in Ireland

→ The findings reveal that 62% of English language students said their student experience had been affected by the accommodation housing crisis compared with 49% of students studying in higher education

→ The research found no significant difference between male and female respondents in relation to their student experience

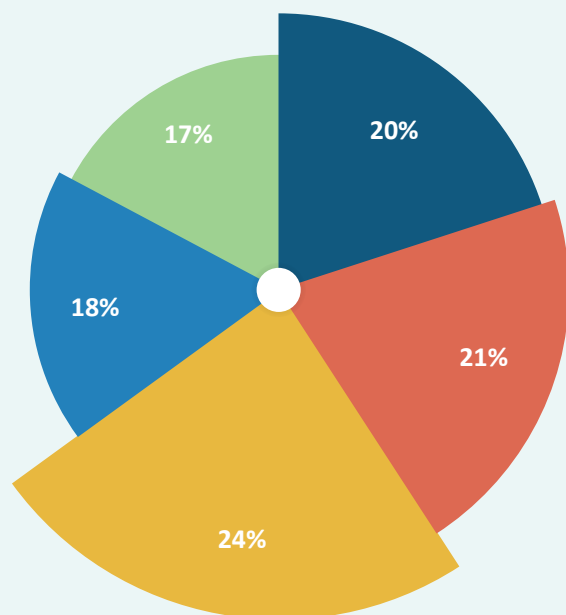
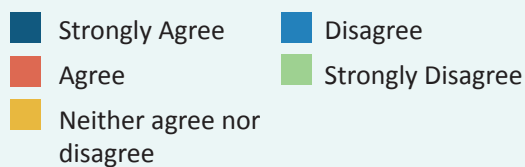




Education

30. Has your education health suffered because of the housing crisis in Ireland?

- 41% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their education has suffered due to the housing crisis in Ireland
- However, when comparing responses to this question by enrolment, the research found that 51% of English language students said their education had been affected compared with 30% of students studying in higher education
- 46% of male respondents reported that their education has suffered compared with 38% of female respondents

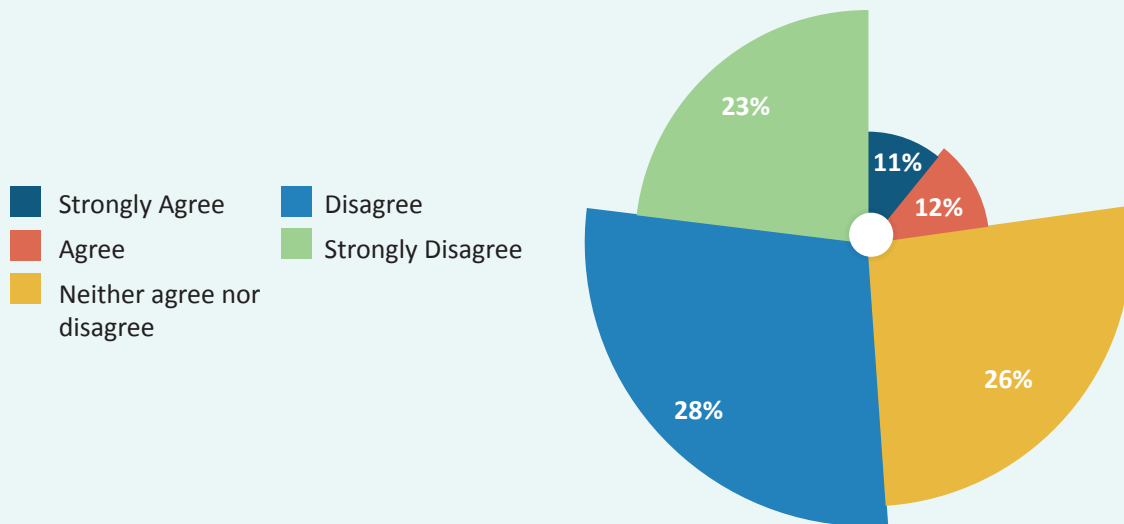




Renters' Rights

31. Are you aware of your rights as a renter in Ireland?

- Less than a quarter (23%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were aware of their rights as renters
- 26% of respondents answered 'neither agree nor disagree'
- 51% said they were unaware of their rights as renters in Ireland





Final Comment

Examples of feedback from respondents:

A Brazilian English language student said: *'The landlords are not being monitored and inspected and so they are providing moldy, old and overcrowded houses. It is truly absurd the way we are treated in this country in this aspect that is part of the basic needs of any human being.'*

A female English language student from Chile wrote: *'Considering that housing is so expensive compared to what we earn working 20 hours per week, half of my salary goes to paying the rent, and even though I share a room with my sister, it's still very expensive.'*

An Indian male student said: *'I would like to know my rights as a renter in Ireland as I am an international student.'*

One English language student from Colombia said: *'The housing issues in Ireland is an enormous problem for public health. There is overcrowding, and a burden on public services.'*

A male student from Bolivia said: *'The landlords take advantage of international students, they pack bunkbeds into small apartments and charge us a fortune.'*

One female Brazilian English language student said: *'The least that a person expects when they arrive here is to have a decent place to sleep and privacy, but in Ireland that's impossible. Is this what a first world country looks like? My experience here has been badly affected by the housing situation.'*

A female Mexican wrote: *'I wish there was an organisation that could help us when we have problems with accommodation, nobody seems to regulate houses to ensure they are in good condition.'*

Another Brazilian student said: *'The rent prices here are unrealistic considering we can only work 20 hours a week by law.'*

A student from Botswana said: *'Accommodation in Ireland is stressing so much it's a contributing factor to mental health.'*

A female student from Poland commented: *'What's the point of being aware of the rights if it's really a choice to accept whatever is given or be homeless.'*



Discussion of Findings

Of the international students who took part in this research, 69% said that they were renting in a shared house or apartment in the private rental market, with just 10% of respondents studying in higher education reporting that they were living on campus. This shows that most international students rely on the private rental market, and highlights the lack of available purpose built student accommodation (PBSA) for those studying in higher education.

Scarcity of supply in the Irish rental market leaves international students with few options when it comes to finding a place to live. The shortage of housing has also driven rents upwards which severely limits the type and quality of accommodation that international students can reasonably expect to afford. A common feature of the private rental market for international students is to room share with one or multiple people, often in cramped, overcrowded settings, with little privacy. The research found that over half of respondents said they share a room with at least one other person, with one in five sharing with two or more people, and 14% saying they shared a bed with someone who was unknown to them before moving in. Another common aspect of the rental market for international student renters is its informality, with 58% of respondents saying they found their accommodation through a friend, someone they know, or through social media.

Furthermore, the research reveals that 61% of international students who reported working said that half of their monthly salary goes towards paying their rent, with one in five saying they spend 70% of their income on rent. These findings show that the cost of renting is a significant financial burden for many international students, in particular, students from outside the EEA given that they are only typically permitted to work 20 hours per week. It is ICOS' view that the working hours for non-EEA international students should be increased from 20 hours to 30 hours per week to mitigate against the cost of living in Ireland and ease the pressure on non-EEA students.

Despite the number of inspections of private properties increasing significantly in recent years, ICOS observes that there were many reports of breaches of the minimum standards as set out in the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019. For example, 12% of respondents reported not having heating, while one in ten did not have access to cooking facilities, and 38% said they do not have a lease agreement. This would suggest that the regulations are not being enforced by Local Authorities. It is also worth noting that less than a quarter of international students reported being unaware of their rights as tenants.

Since 2023, ICOS has collaborated with Threshold and the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) to highlight fraud in the rental market and raise awareness among international students on how to avoid being scammed. Sadly, more than one in ten respondents said they fell victim to fraudsters in the rental market, with only 14% saying they reported the incident to the Gardai. It is clear that more needs to be done to protect international students, and other renters, from being scammed.

ICOS is deeply concerned to see that the exploitative practice of 'sex for rent' continues to prevail. All of the respondents who said they either received an offer to rent a room in exchange for sex or encountered an advertisement promoting such an arrangement were non-native English-speakers, and the majority (68%) were female. Despite several commitments from Government over the last

3. The number of inspections by Local Authorities increased from 20,240 in 2020 to 63,567 in 2023, source: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/da3fe-private-housing-market-statistics/>



number of years to introduce legislation to criminalise this abhorrent behaviour, no action has been taken, permitting a legal loophole to perpetuate and allowing predators to operate with impunity. Additionally, the research highlights that most 'sex for rent' advertisements were encountered on social media, where oversight and regulation remain minimal. Once again, ICOS calls on the Government to urgently introduce legislation to criminalise landlords and individuals who attempt to exploit vulnerable renters through 'sex for rent' propositions. The research also highlights the broader consequences of the housing crisis on international students' lives, with 54% of respondents saying their mental health had been affected, 41% reporting that their education had suffered, and 56% agreeing that their experience of studying in Ireland had been impacted.

The housing crisis in Ireland has had profound effects on international students, who face significant barriers in securing affordable and decent accommodation. High rents, limited availability, vulnerability to exploitation, and the stress of navigating a complex and competitive housing market have made their experiences in Ireland increasingly challenging. These issues not only hinder their academic performance and well-being but also threaten Ireland's reputation as a leading destination for international education. ICOS has been highlighting these issues for several years; yet, little has been done to resolve them.



Recommendations

Many of the following recommendations are proposals that ICOS has made in previous research on student housing. Unfortunately, little or no progress has been made on their implementation. However, ICOS is committed to working with the new Government, the higher education sector, Threshold, and other key stakeholders working in the housing and education sectors to assist with the implementation of these recommendations. ICOS believes that through their implementation, Ireland can work towards alleviating the housing crisis and ensuring that international students, and other renters, are protected.

ICOS proposes the following recommendations:

1. Urgently pass legislation to clamp down on predators seeking sex in lieu of rent;
2. Publish a new National Student Accommodation Strategy and establish a steering group to oversee its implementation;
3. Rapidly scale up building of affordable housing and ringfence capital investment to enable higher education institutions to build affordable Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA);
4. Enhance regulation and oversight of the private rental market by ensuring enforcement of breaches under the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019;
5. Establish a NCT style inspection of rental properties to ensure that minimum standards are met;⁴
6. Introduce a Deposit Protection Scheme using a custodial model;⁵
7. Increase the rights of people who are renting a sublet room;
8. Provide funding to ICOS and other stakeholders to raise awareness of housing rights and how to avoid accommodation scams with promotional material in different languages;
9. Introduce basic legislative rights for students living in a 'rent a room scheme' property / digs accommodation;
10. Increase working hours for holders of a Stamp 2 visa from 20 hours to 30 hours per week.

4. This is a proposal by the housing charity Threshold, under which landlords would be required to provide a certificate to the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), every four years, to demonstrate that their property meets minimum standards.

5. This is another proposal by the housing charity Threshold where a landlord is required to lodge a deposit with a registered tenancy deposit scheme.



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