

300 in emergency accommodation stay

COUNCIL REVEAL FIGURES FOR HOMELESS

DUNDALK Town Council paid for almost 300 people to be housed in emergency accommodation, including B&Bs and guesthouses, in the last year, it emerged this week. A total of 204 adults and 62 children had to be housed in temporary or 'emergency' accommodation in the Dundalk area after presenting to the local authority as homeless.

Housing officer Jim Byrne told the Argus that this resulted in the council paying for 1,600 bed nights for individuals and families who became homeless.

'In some circumstances families had to be put up in B&Bs for a week or more because of fires at their homes, but generally people would stay no longer than two to three nights in emergency accommodation as we would look to get them into one of the council houses as soon as one became available.'

The local authority are able to recoup 90% of the monies paid out for temporary accommodation.

The figures came to light on Monday after the Government announced plans to rent hundreds of private homes across the country in an effort to ensure people did not have to live long term in emergency accommodation.

The plan was welcomed by homelessness charities including Dundalk Simon Community, which in the last month provided emergency accommodation for 32 people.

Dundalk Simon Community manager Niall Mulligan explained that there are 25 people currently living in the Simon house in Barrack Street, and an additional seven are being accommodated at the night shelter in Griffith Place/Church Street.

'The aim is to ensure that people do not live in emergency accommodation for more than six months, so it's a step in the right direction.'

He admitted that it had not yet emerged whether some of the private rented houses would be made available for homeless people in Dundalk.

'There would be issues as to whether supported housing is going to be made available under this scheme,' said Niall, adding that this type of specialised accommodation would be needed for people who are not able to live independently.