



EUROPEAN SOCIAL POLICY NETWORK (ESPN)

# National strategies to fight homelessness and housing exclusion

## Malta

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National strategies to fight  
homelessness and housing  
exclusion**

**Malta**

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## Summary

Malta does not have a formal definition of homelessness and housing exclusion. Nor does it have a specific strategy formally addressing these two issues. Reference to these two terms is contained in the 'National strategic policy for poverty reduction and for social inclusion 2014-2024', but even in that document the main emphasis is on how Malta should address social housing and improve the quality of life in social housing through various measures.

Homelessness is interpreted very narrowly to refer to living rough, and official statistics presented in parliament in 2018 only covered the incidence of homelessness in this form, as reported to the police. Despite the lack of a formal strategy, and the very narrow definition of homelessness in the only set of formal data available, services addressing homelessness in its various forms do exist. These are primarily provided through institutions in which the state has a presence, often quite a substantial one. In effect, the two main institutions that provide shelter and programmes for the reintroduction of individuals into society after experiencing homelessness are Fondazzjoni Dar il-Hena and YMCA. Another very small institution provides shelter services in Gozo.

Fondazzjoni Dar il-Hena is a tripartite foundation jointly run by the state with Caritas Malta and the Alfred Mizzi Foundation, whilst YMCA is a private non-government organisation (NGO) that receives state support. Fondazzjoni Dar il-Hena runs two short-term shelters and one long-term one, whilst YMCA runs a long-term shelter. Both run programmes to assist clients to return to normal lives. The managers of Fondazzjoni Dar il-Hena and of YMCA suggest that any incidents of people currently living rough are merely the result of 'ignorance' of existing services. There are no hard data or studies to prove the effectiveness of services, except the fact that living rough in Malta is actually very rare.

In parallel to these activities, Malta has an extensive programme of social housing run through the Housing Authority, which also assumes responsibility for providing housing in cases of an emergency such as the sudden collapse of a building.

The main problem the Housing Authority faces results from the fact that, despite the legal possibility of evaluating whether persons allotted social housing continue to qualify, such evaluations are never undertaken. Politicians are currently suggesting that this needs to change, but whether this will actually happen is uncertain. The Authority therefore has to constantly seek funds to increase its stock in order to satisfy new demand.

At present the housing situation is going through unprecedented difficulties. Rents have been recently liberalised and new social trends (more separations and divorces, a larger number of single persons seeking to establish their own households, but especially the sudden population explosion brought about by economic immigration) are pushing up both rents and property prices, without a concomitant comparable increase in wages and salaries.

For a number of years during this decade no new investment in social housing was made. Although social housing is not, strictly speaking, the main instrument to address homelessness, it is an important tool to alleviate those cases covered by a wider definition of the term, in other words one that is not restricted to 'rooflessness'.

Building new apartments and houses, however, is not enough to deal with the emerging trends. There needs to be an agreed definition of homelessness, and the development of a long-term integrated policy. To support this policy, administrative instruments that facilitate access to services through a one-stop shop are necessary. In line with what the YMCA and the Fondazzjoni Dar il-Hena are doing, both the policy and the strategy would need to ensure that the services provided did not simply serve to satisfy people's desire to have their own residence (in a country where 80% are home-owners), but also enabled people to be self-sufficient by opting for a sustainable life-style. Operators in the field insist that ad hoc training services in citizenship and social skills are therefore a necessary ingredient for the eventual success of any initiative in this sphere.

## 1 The nature and extent of homelessness and housing exclusion

Official documents in Malta do address homelessness and housing exclusion, but there is no official definition of the terms, nor is there a specific official strategy on homelessness. The working definition of homelessness in official documents covers only persons living rough.

In actual fact, living on the street in Malta was unknown until very recently, when occasionally episodes of persons spending the night asleep on pavements, though rare, started to be reported.<sup>1</sup> As can be seen from Table 1, official figures tabled in parliament in October 2018<sup>2</sup> showed that only 27 people<sup>3</sup> had been found sleeping rough between January 2013 and August 2018.

**Table 1: Cases of persons living rough reported to the police in Malta, January 2013-August 2018**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Up to August 2018	Total
<b>Number of cases</b>	1	3	1	8	6	6	25
<b>Number of persons</b>	1	3	1	10	6	6	27

Source: Parliamentary Question No 6885 (Malta Parliament, 2018).

When published, these figures were however decried by persons involved in providing shelter for homeless persons in Malta. During a seminar on homelessness in Malta, a spokeswoman for Caritas Malta emphasised that these data reflected only cases reported to the police. In fact, at only two shelters, namely 'Dar Papa Frangisku' and 'Dar Maria Dolores', which Caritas runs in collaboration with the state and with the Alfred Mizzi Foundation, an average of 23 people are hosted every day. In addition, YMCA director Anthony Camilleri claims that the data presented in parliament excluded cases of people hosted at shelters or other institutions; persons who live in inadequate housing, on beaches or in cars; and people squatting in abandoned places, wearing the best clothes they can find in donation piles in order to look 'normal'. To support this, it was reported that between January and June 2019, 191 homeless cases were referred to the YMCA, and the NGO provided a total of 4,480 bed-nights.<sup>4</sup>

As such, it is very clear that the data presented in parliament cover only the first of the ETHOS<sup>5</sup> Light categories. Accordingly, it is only this narrow working definition that is used in Table A1 in Annex A, although, as will be shown later, services for other categories do exist and are very active.

Despite this *prima facie* narrow definition of homelessness, Malta has effectively invested, and continues to invest, heavily to assist the homeless and to provide social housing both through the state institutions and through private initiatives. As such, there do exist services that address homelessness and housing exclusion. This investment covers the remaining five of the ETHOS Light categories (numbers 2 to 6) listed in Table A1.

Despite this continuous investment, problems persist, and indeed appear to be on the increase.

<sup>1</sup> See, as examples: Inews (2016), Xarabank (undated) and Grech (2018).

<sup>2</sup> Parliamentary Question No 6885 (Malta Parliament, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> This total does not take into account the possibility of overlaps between the people identified from one year to another. This is the way in which the data were presented to parliament. Only in 2016 did the number of cases differ from the number of persons. It is very likely that one or more reports acted upon by the police during that year covered more than one person. There is no way this can be verified.

<sup>4</sup> Carabott (2018).

<sup>5</sup> European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion.

Providing even approximate numbers for homeless people in each of the ETHOS categories is extremely difficult for a number of reasons. As has already been indicated, in the first place, fundamental issues of formal definitions arise; and secondly and most importantly, figures are not available. At a recent seminar on homelessness in Malta it was stated that:

*A substantial proportion of the homeless population is not accessible to researchers. Most are invisible...unseen...sometimes also by choice, most often due to embarrassment, stigma or unwanted social control. Those sleeping rough, those living in unstable housing arrangements, those living in vehicles, those doubled up with friends and family are excluded from being counted. Going round knocking on doors to count people does not work with persons that have no doors....*

*Those hosted at shelters or other institutions, those living in inadequate housing, on beaches, in cars and squatting in abandoned places, were not included in the data. (Cutajar, 2018<sup>6</sup>)*

This very same problem had been noted as far back as 2006 by Cyrus Vakili-Zad, who had a special research interest in homelessness in Malta (Vakili-Zad, 2006). The most recent estimate, made in an online article, suggests that there are about 300 homeless persons in Malta, and that 'we should start to talk about them' (Cilia, 2019). But in the article there is no indication of the empirical sources on which these figures, even as rough estimates, are based.

Given these difficulties, it is even more difficult to suggest a detailed profile of homeless persons in Malta.<sup>7</sup> As already explained, on the one hand the close-knit Maltese communities 'hide' people who are suffering from homelessness or housing exclusion; and, on the other, it is extremely difficult to reliably estimate the number of people who are actually living under some kind of a roof, but in conditions that do not respect their human dignity.

And yet the general impression, based also on the direct experience of persons working in this sector, is that the numbers of homeless people are increasing. This is also being recognised by politicians. Public discourse on the subject is becoming increasingly loud.<sup>8</sup> The major cause of the increase is being attributed to the sudden rise in the cost of property, both in sale prices and also in the high rents that are being asked by property owners following the recent liberalisation of the rental market (previously rents had been static since World War II). These increases in demand for rented properties are in turn the result of a number of social factors, which can be summarised as follows.

- i. Changes in family structure: large extended families living in the same household are now a thing of the past, replaced by nuclear families, each requiring a separate home.
- ii. The loosening of family ties has resulted in more cases of separation and in more divorces, and therefore in a substantial increase in the demand for separate housing units.
- iii. More young people now leave their family of origin when still single, with the result that more units are now in demand by this population segment than ever before.
- iv. The increase in the population, particularly as a result of net economic migration, has, in the very short term, created an enormous shift in the demand for additional housing. There are two types of immigrants. A first group is composed of people who are employed in high-earning jobs, often above Maltese average salaries. The second group of migrants is composed of people employed in lower-paying jobs. These migrants are ready to share housing, with at times as many as 10 persons in a single apartment, to reduce the cost of renting. The demand created by these two distinct groups of migrants is edging out Maltese people seeking rented accommodation. In

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<sup>6</sup> Paper read at a seminar on homelessness on 8 February 2019, together with personal communication by the paper's author.

<sup>7</sup> The Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity has recently commissioned a study by the Faculty of Well-being to study these issues and the possibility of building a profile of homeless people in Malta. The working definition used in this (ongoing) study covers people living rough and those living, against their will, in places not considered to be normal places of residence. Even so, the methodology adopted is primarily qualitative and the numbers that will eventually emerge from this study will probably be more like reasonable estimates than definitive figures.

<sup>8</sup> See footnote 1 and what the leaders of the two main parties had to say in TVM (2018); also Diacono (2017).



different ways, their presence has exacerbated demand and substantially increased both rents and property prices.

- v. The elderly are living longer; more of them are also trying to continue living in the community, and therefore not releasing their property to be occupied by younger generations.

Table A2 in the Annex presents the latest data available, mostly collected specifically for this report from the managers of the institutions providing homelessness services. They should be interpreted in the context of the limited availability of reliable data.

## 2 Relevant strategies and policies tackling homelessness and housing exclusion

As already explained above, Malta does *not* have a strategic plan specifically addressed at homelessness and housing exclusion. However, Malta has traditionally invested, and continues to invest, heavily in areas that indirectly address problems associated with homelessness and housing exclusion, through policies on social housing.<sup>9</sup> Malta's 'National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion 2014-2024' (Malta Government, 2014b) actually carries a specific section under the heading of homelessness, which states:

In order to address homelessness and housing exclusion, as well as promote more affordable and adequate housing, this strategic policy proposes the following priorities to:

- Increase and upgrade existing social housing units and making them more energy efficient;
- Undertake a holistic regeneration of urban areas through embellishment and the restoration of vacant housing units;
- Promote housing policies that encourage neighbourhood mix that take into account ageing, socio-economic, and inter-cultural dimensions;
- Develop proactive spatial analysis as part of an integrated social investment planning; and
- Reassess and reevaluate present subsidy schemes and considering the introduction of a housing benefit scheme for the most vulnerable.<sup>10</sup>

It is quite obvious that in the minds of the drafters of this section, homelessness and housing exclusion were being understood in the widest of terms: the priorities listed clearly point to the need to improve the quality of social housing and essentially to improve the social and environmental conditions of people living there. In effect, the schemes provided by the Housing Authority are those listed below (Malta Government, 2019b).

- i. Adaptation works in dwellings occupied by tenants and owners.
- ii. Grant to assist owners in the construction and/or completion or rehabilitation of their first home.
- iii. Home assist scheme BOV.
- iv. Housing benefit.
- v. Installation of lifts in government-owned residential blocks/entrances.
- vi. Redemption of ground rent.
- vii. Restoration of empty residences (*restawr ta' djar battala*).

<sup>9</sup> The need to ensure 'social mix' is an essential dimension of the way the Housing Authority implements its policies, as can be seen from its annual reports.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p 83.

- viii. Scheme for persons with disability.
- ix. Become the owner of your home (*sir sid darek*).
- x. Scheme rent to help (*skema nikru biex nassistu*).
- xi. Subsidy on adaptation works related to dangerous structures in private dwellings held on lease or emphyteusis.<sup>11</sup>

Specifically under social housing, the following two schemes are listed.

- i. Alternative accommodation (intended for people who want to apply for social accommodation).
- ii. Property exchange (intended for people who want to change their current social accommodation in view of new circumstances that make it inadequate).<sup>12</sup>

Although the above suggests that the Housing Authority does not involve itself directly in homelessness, defined in a very narrow sense, it is the Authority that actually assumes responsibility for offering accommodation to people who suddenly find themselves without a roof because of some accident, such as the collapse of a building.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, it should be noted that the government is directly involved in the provision of temporary shelters: it is one of the three partners running Fondazzjoni Dar il-Hena and pays in full the salaries of the employees running the three homes of the foundation. In respect of the YMCA, the government pays fixed rates, on the basis of an ad hoc contract, worked out on the basis of the number of people provided with shelter by this NGO.

Funding for social housing in Malta has traditionally been consistent and extensive, except for a short period in 2012-2016 when very little new investment in this sector was made. In view of the current pressure, however, huge investments are being made in this sector at present.<sup>14</sup> It should be remembered that in Malta the sector is fundamentally hamstrung by the fact that, although it is legally possible to do so, no revision of eligibility is made once social housing is allocated; and allocated houses or apartments are inherited by the next of kin even though these might not be eligible themselves. This effectively means that the stock of social housing requires continuous investment. Politicians are now saying that this needs to change for future allocations; but past allocations will not be reviewed.<sup>15</sup>

EU funds have also been used for this purpose. Tables A3 and A4 in the Annex respectively present details of: a) European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funds used to regenerate a depressed area in Valletta, Malta's capital city; and b) ERDF funds to be used by the Housing Authority to regenerate social housing areas. It does not appear that any European Social Fund (ESF) or Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) moneys have been used by Malta in areas related to housing and/or homelessness or housing exclusion.

In summary, it can be stated that Malta's investment in this sector has been, and currently remains, quite significant. The use of EU funds is primarily being directed to regenerate areas rather than alleviate pockets of homelessness and housing exclusion. There is no empirical

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> This was the case on 24 April 2019 when a block next to a construction site collapsed. The residents were given alternative accommodation by the contractors, but the Housing Authority had already committed to provide alternative accommodation itself. See news item: <http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2019-04-25/local-news/Watch-Guardamangia-collapse-families-given-alternative-accommodation-by-contractor-6736207185>.

<sup>14</sup> The pressures are the result of the increased rents that result from higher demand, generated particularly by immigrants who come to Malta in large numbers in search of work. New investments such as this were announced: 'NDSF & Housing Authority sign MoU to invest €50 million for New Social Housing Project'. See <https://iip.gov.mt/2019/02/08/ndsf-housing-authority-sign-mou-to-invest-e50-million-for-new-social-housing-project/>. See also the latest announcement in this regard Micallef, K. The Times, May 6, 2019. 'Half the waiting list for social housing to be tackled: Social housing units project to be doubled to 1,000'. <https://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20190506/local/half-the-waiting-list-for-social-housing-to-be-tackled.709219>.

<sup>15</sup> Sansone & Azzopardi (2019).

study of the effectiveness of these programmes. The claims of the chairman of the Housing Authority indirectly refer to their effectiveness in the Authority's annual report for 2018, which has just been circulated.<sup>16</sup>

But the major issue remains whether politicians really mean it when they say that evaluations of entitlements will be periodically introduced, so that more of the existing stock of social housing can be made available to meet demand.

In these projects, and in the schemes managed by the Housing Authority described above, housing cost overburden, overcrowding, and severe housing deprivation are systematically used as indicators of when to intervene. On the other hand, arrears of mortgage or rent payments are often the cause of rooflessness, brought about at times by eviction, and constitute the main rationale for direct intervention by the Authority to provide social housing.

### **3 Analysis of the current patterns of service provision and challenges in implementing Malta's responses to homelessness and housing exclusion**

There have been no important direct innovations by the state in the provision of services specifically targeted at homelessness, understood in its narrow sense, in Malta over the last five years. The main types of support services provided in Malta for people to permanently stay out of homelessness are the schemes managed by the Housing Authority discussed earlier. Although the Authority does not have, as a rule, a huge stock of housing available to meet emergency needs, a working stock of housing to meet unforeseen circumstances does exist. Together with that, the shelters provided by YMCA and the Fondazzjoni Dar it-Tama provide for emergency cases on a day-to-day basis. As already indicated the state is heavily involved in both these institutions. In the case of YMCA, the state subsidises it through payments worked out on the basis of the number persons given shelter. In the case of the Fondazzjoni Dar it-Tama, the state is a member of the foundation and pays all the salaries of the foundation's staff. As already indicated, both institutions provide extended programmes to assist their clients to move out of homelessness.

The YMCA (Malta) Homeless Project has been operating since 1995, with the following objectives:

- i. providing residential accommodation at the 'Dar Niki Cassar' shelter, and aid to people with psycho-social difficulties, with a special focus on individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness;
- ii. collaborating with local and foreign agencies and stakeholders such as FEANTSA<sup>17</sup> in order to fight against homelessness and rooflessness;
- iii. seeking funding opportunities and possibilities that would allow homeless individuals to benefit from psycho-social educational projects;
- iv. informing the professionals in the social field about cheaper housing opportunities and work vacancies that could be beneficial for homeless and vulnerable clients;
- v. fighting against poverty in the community, through volunteers supporting field cases referred to YMCA Valletta;
- vi. fighting against hunger by donating food to individuals and families in need, through food schemes;
- vii. fighting against the lack of education, by creating educational opportunities for young and vulnerable homeless people;

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<sup>16</sup> See report by Housing Authority chairman Robert Ducker in Malta Government (2019c), pp. 5-6.

<sup>17</sup> Fédération Européenne des Associations Nationales Travaillant avec les Sans-Abri (European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless).

- viii. fighting for dignity of living, through furniture and clothing support; and
- ix. informing the public through the social media and homelessness campaigns, and the publication of regular statistical and research data.

Dar Niki Cassar is able to accommodate a maximum of 30 people per day. Residents follow a programme, extending over 18 months, that takes them through seven developmental stages. A full description of these stages is available in Annex C.

In 2017, YMCA Malta accommodated an average of 22 persons per month, with a total of 8,283 bed-nights. In 2018 the average monthly number of clients was 24, and the total number of bed-nights covered went up to 8,959. Full details of the services provided by YMCA, together with a set of statistical tables and figures, are provided in Annex B.

Fondazzjoni Dar il-Hena runs three shelters in Malta, including two 24-hour emergency shelters (Dar Papa Franġisku for males, Dar Maria Dolores for females). It also runs 'Reach', which people from the other two shelters can move to in order to follow an 8-month assisted programme readying them for reinsertion into society. At Dar Papa Franġisku, the foundation also offers a free drop-in midday meal to whoever goes there, including people who do not use its night shelter facilities. The foundation was set up and is run jointly by the state, Caritas Malta, and the Alfred Mizzi Foundation. In 2018, Papa Franġisku (which has 22 beds) provided shelter to 298 males, 80% of whom were non-Maltese, whilst Dar Maria Dolores (which has 8 beds) offered shelter to 85 females, of whom 20% were non-Maltese. At Reach, the foundation has a facility of 26 beds. In 2018 it provided its services to 36 individuals, some of whom were families.

More details on the numbers and profiles of persons hosted by Fondazzjoni Dar il-Hena are given in Annex C.

In these ways, NGOs, the state and the private sector contribute significantly to efforts to provide the homeless with shelter and with programmes that are intended to reintroduce them into society as full and active members. In view of the small size of Malta, and the fact that the people involved in this sector know each other and participate in the same networks, co-ordination is not difficult, and is practised on a day-to-day basis.

Funding for the above projects is not restricted to government-provided finance. Crowd funding to finance specific projects is not uncommon. The Alfred Mizzi Group provides all the food requirements of the Fondazzjoni Dar il-Hena, whilst the general public regularly contributes, on a voluntary and spontaneous basis, as is common in all sectors of welfare in Malta (especially in respect of homes looking after children). Although money matters do constitute an issue for the managers of these services, qualitative research shows that this is never the major concern.

The existing services are quite effective in preventing HHE and in rehousing people who seek help. The only hard evidence for this is that, contrary to the situation in other countries, one seldom sees people living rough in Malta; and also the claim, repeatedly made by those managing the shelters to the present writer, that it is extremely rare that their shelters are full to capacity. One of the main aspects of this sector in Malta is the non-existence of outreach programmes. As a result, individuals have to ask for help in order to receive it. In contrast, if a person does not ask for help, and is not noticed as one who needs assistance, they may be overlooked. This is particularly serious at present in view of the increasing problems arising out of the rapid increase in rents referred to earlier. It is being reported that the number of people who cannot afford these higher rents is on the increase; and that many are seeking unorthodox solutions that are difficult to quantify and do not automatically come to the notice of service providers. Such solutions would include:

- i. living in one's car
- ii. living in a garage; and
- iii. living with in-laws, against one's wishes, simply because renting is not affordable.

Increasingly the incidence of these types of 'arrangements' is being noted, reported in the press, and becoming the subject of demands for more resources to be directed to the housing

sector, so that the needs of these people can be addressed. The fact that no outreach system exists – that is, one consisting of people whose task is to walk the streets and seek those in the above conditions, either directly or through contacts – suggests that there are inefficiencies that need to be addressed in Malta’s policy on homelessness. This service could start to be provided if community social workers, on the model used in Israel, were to be trained for this purpose.<sup>18</sup>

As such, the main weakness of the current situation in Malta in respect of homelessness and housing exclusion are as follows.

- i. The lag in investment in social housing during the 2013-2017 legislature, which has necessitated a more than proportional investment in the current legislature.
- ii. The fact that the entitlement to social housing is never reviewed, and people allocated social housing continue to live in it indefinitely, and for successive generations.
- iii. The sudden rise in rents, not accompanied by a parallel increase in state pensions and salaries, which is making it impossible for a number of people to be able to afford them. In this context, it is sometimes argued that the huge number of immigrants are keeping salaries down, leaving Maltese workers unable to afford to pay their rent on the basis of current wages and salaries; and that nor can Maltese workers take up a second job, because employers find it cheaper to employ an immigrant at lower rates.
- iv. The lack of a unified definition of homelessness. Operators in the field float between a very narrow working definition that essentially means rooflessness (living rough) to a broader one that includes some, but never all, of the ETHOS categories.
- v. The lack of a clear holistic strategy, formally defined and legally enacted, as a consequence of (iv) above.

The above five aspects of the emerging situation are not easy to address together. The problems arising from the lack of a unified and consistently applied definition would not take too long to address, except that operators in the field are very cautious about extending the definition beyond rooflessness, because of the known habits of the Maltese to misreport their real situation in order to benefit from welfare provisions.<sup>19</sup>

The availability of a stock of social housing that could be allocated to deserving cases might be possible if politicians in future follow up on what they are currently saying in this regard and regular evaluations are introduced. Given that social housing is often used as a bait for voting and political support, it is not easy to envisage how successful this could be in the coming years.

A number of suggestions that, taken together, could reduce the different types of homelessness are as follows.

- i. In view of the fact that services are currently somewhat scattered, a one-stop shop providing integrated care would be greatly beneficial. Those in need would thus not have to hop from one place to another to get all the assistance they need to move out of homelessness on a permanent basis.
- ii. An outreach system would allow people who really need help to be identified and assisted as early as possible, thus avoiding the risk of cyclical homelessness resulting from solutions being offered that are only partial and not early enough.

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<sup>18</sup> The reference here is to the role of a special group of social workers in Israel, known as community social workers, whose task is community-building. This concept could be extended in Malta’s case to develop an outreach programme that would actively seek out people who need help and who are not seeking it themselves – either because they are not aware it exists, or simply because they are somehow hindered, psychologically or otherwise, in doing so.

<sup>19</sup> The frequent experience of the Housing Authority inspectors is difficult to ignore. One concrete example (drawing on personal communication with the Housing Authority chief executive) is of a family who claimed they were living in substandard conditions in a boat house: on different occasions when inspectors went to check, they never found anybody at the address given. Benefit fraud is a long-standing issue in Malta: see e.g. Malta Government (2014c), Cristina (2015) and Spiteri Paris (2017). The last two works include a very wide range of sources in their bibliography on the existence of benefit fraud in Malta.

- iii. Sustained energy should be put into the current drive to build adequate housing units that are affordable for average-income families and first-time renters, in order to meet the demand for social housing.
- iv. A review of the current income disparity that property price inflation and the import of cheap labour has caused. Malta's economy cannot be deemed successful if it remains reliant on cheap labour. Maltese people are not taking particular jobs, because they cannot afford to sustain their family on the low income associated with them, and therefore they prefer using political networks to secure a job in the public sector. In the meantime, economic sectors such as hospitality boast ever-increasing profits because of the low wages they are paying to immigrants.

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## Annex A

**Table A1: ETHOS Light categories defined as homeless in Malta**

	Operational category		Living situation	Definition	Defined as homeless in Malta
1	People living rough	1	Public space/ external space	Living on the streets or in public spaces without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters	YES
2	People in emergency accommodation	2	Overnight shelters	People with no place of usual residence who move frequently between various types of accommodation	NO
3	People living in accommodation for the homeless	3	Homelessness hostels	Where the period of stay is time-limited and no long-term housing is provided	NO
		4	Temporary accommodation		NO
		5	Transitional supported accommodation		NO
		6	Women's shelter or refuge accommodation		NO
4	People living in institutions	7	Healthcare institutions	Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing	NO
		8	Penal institutions	No housing available prior to release	NO
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing	9	Mobile homes	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence	NO
		10	Non-conventional buildings		NO
		11	Temporary structures		NO
6	Homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to lack of housing)	12	Conventional housing, but not the person's usual place of residence	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence	NO

**Table A2: Latest available data on the number of homeless people in Malta**

	Operational category		Living situation	Most recent number	Period covered	Source
1	People living rough	1	Public space/ external space	27	2013 till August 2018	<a href="#">Malta Parliament (2018)</a>
2	People in emergency accommodation	2	Overnight Shelters	<b>Foundation Dar il-Hena.</b> <sup>20</sup> <b>Males:</b> Papa Frangisku: Capacity 22 beds. 85 individuals in 2018. <b>Females:</b> Dar Maria Dolores: 8 beds capacity: currently 2 persons [maximum stay: 6 weeks] In Gozo, emergency shelter is provided at Dar Emmaus. <sup>21</sup>	2018	Personal interview with Ian Galea, Director of Foundation Dar il-Hena
3	People living in accommodation for the homeless	3	Homelessness hostels	<b>YMCA</b> <sup>22</sup> Dar Niki Cassar 24 persons on average; capacity 30. At times it went up to 36 including children [maximum stay: 18 months].	2018	Personal interview with Anthony Camilleri, YMCA CEO
		4	Temporary accommodation	<b>Foundation: Dar il-Hena.</b> 'Reach' in San Ġwann (maximum 8 months). Capacity 26. Currently 13 persons.	2018	Personal interview with Ian Galea, Director of Foundation Dar il-Hena
		5	Transitional supported accommodation			
		6	Women's shelter or refuge accommodation	<i>See category 2 above</i>	<i>See category 2 above</i>	<i>See category 2 above</i>
4	People living in institutions	7	Healthcare institutions	NA		
		8	Penal institutions	NA		
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing	9	Mobile homes	NA		
		10	Non-conventional buildings	NA		
		11	Temporary structures	NA		
6	Homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to lack of housing)	12	Conventional housing, but not the person's usual place of residence	NA		

<sup>20</sup> Fondazzjoni Dar il-Hena is a tripartite private foundation, set up and jointly run by Caritas Malta, the state and the Alfred Mizzi Foundation. For further details, please refer to Annex A.

<sup>21</sup> Dar Emmaus, run by Fondazzjoni Kenn u Hena, welcomes people who are homeless or who need to stay away from home due to domestic violence or some other reason. People in such situations are referred to seek shelter at Dar Emmaus by a social worker. Residents can stay at Dar Emmaus for up to 10 days. No details on patronage are available.

<sup>22</sup> The YMCA Homeless Project has been operating since 1995 and one of its sub-programmes involves providing residential accommodation at its shelter 'Dar Niki Cassar' while offering aid to people with psycho-social difficulties, with a special focus on people who are experiencing homelessness. Residents follow a care programme composed of the seven stages. See Annex B for details.

**Table A3: ERDF funds to be used to regenerate a depressed area in Valletta, Malta's capital city**

<b>Project ref. no</b>	ERDF.06.9996
<b>Priority axis</b>	PA6
<b>Name of beneficiaries</b>	Ministry for Tourism
<b>Ministry (for public sector organisations)</b>	Ministry for Tourism
<b>Name of operation</b>	Regeneration of Lower Valletta
<b>Project description</b>	This project will carry out a set of integrated actions as follows: Action A – The improvement of the urban environment, the revitalisation of cities and the preservation of cultural heritage; Action B – Social housing and community needs; Action C – Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises; and Action D – Action for the vulnerable.
<b>Postcode</b>	VLT 1116
<b>Category of intervention</b>	054. Housing infrastructure.
	074. Development and promotion of tourism assets in SMEs
	077. Development and promotion of cultural and creative services in or for SMEs
	094. Protection, development and promotion of public cultural and heritage assets
	101. Cross financing under the ERDF (support to ESF type actions necessary for the satisfactory implementation of the ERDF part of the operation and directly linked to it)
<b>Year of allocation</b>	2018
<b>Operation start date</b>	1 January 2015
<b>Operation end date</b>	30-Jun-23
<b>Amounts committed*** €</b>	€ 24,022,125
<b>Total amounts paid by end of operation €</b>	n/a
<b>Co-financing rate [ERDF]**</b>	80%

Source: European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020: List of Operations approved under Operational Programme I (see: [https://eufunds.gov.mt/en/Operational%20Programmes/Programming%20Period%202014%20-%202020/Operational%20Programme%201/Documents/Approved%20Projects%202019/ERDF%20OPI%20%20ONLINE%20LIST\\_30th%20January%20%202019.xlsx](https://eufunds.gov.mt/en/Operational%20Programmes/Programming%20Period%202014%20-%202020/Operational%20Programme%201/Documents/Approved%20Projects%202019/ERDF%20OPI%20%20ONLINE%20LIST_30th%20January%20%202019.xlsx)).

**Table A4: ERDF funds to be used by the Housing Authority to regenerate social housing areas**

<b>Project ref. no.</b>	ERDF.08.043
<b>Priority axis</b>	PA 8
<b>Name of beneficiaries</b>	Housing Authority
<b>Ministry</b> (for public sector organisations)	Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity
<b>Name of operation</b>	Regeneration of Social Housing Areas
<b>Project description</b>	The Housing Authority aims to increase the baseline for accessibility and to improve the state of living in social housing blocks and estates. The main infrastructure will consist in the retrofitting of energy-efficient lifts to increase vertical mobility. In conjunction with the alterations for the lift, the common parts will be refurbished and embellished to ensure a safer environment and an improved standard of living. The holistic aim of the project shall be achieved through the urban improvement of open spaces between estates which will contribute to the community regeneration of deprived families.
<b>Postcode</b>	FRN 1060
<b>Category of intervention</b>	054. Housing infrastructure.
<b>Year of allocation</b>	2017
<b>Operation start date</b>	01-Jan-16
<b>Operation end date</b>	31-Dec-22
<b>Amounts committed*** €</b>	€ 9,866,920
<b>Total amounts paid by end of operation €</b>	n/a
<b>Co-financing rate [ERDF] **</b>	80%

Source: European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020: List of Operations approved under Operational Programme I (see: [https://eufunds.gov.mt/en/Operational%20Programmes/Programming%20Period%202014%20-%202020/Operational%20Programme%201/Documents/Approved%20Projects%202019/ERDF%20OPI%20%20ONLINE%20LIST\\_30th%20January%20%202019.xlsx](https://eufunds.gov.mt/en/Operational%20Programmes/Programming%20Period%202014%20-%202020/Operational%20Programme%201/Documents/Approved%20Projects%202019/ERDF%20OPI%20%20ONLINE%20LIST_30th%20January%20%202019.xlsx)).

## **Annex B: YMCA Malta<sup>23</sup>**

The **YMCA (Malta) Homeless Project** has been operating since 1995:

- a) providing residential accommodation at 'Dar Niki Cassar' and aid to people with psycho-social difficulties, with a special focus on people who are experiencing homelessness;
- b) collaborating with local and foreign agencies and stakeholders such as FEANTSA in order to fight against homelessness and rooflessness;
- c) seeking funding opportunities and possibilities that allow homeless individuals to benefit from psycho-social educational projects;
- d) informing the professionals in the social field about cheaper housing opportunities and work vacancies that could be beneficial for homeless and vulnerable clients;
- e) fighting against poverty in the community, through its volunteers supporting field cases referred to YMCA Valletta;
- f) fighting against hunger, by donating food to individuals and families in need through our food schemes;
- g) fighting against the lack of education, by creating educational opportunities for young and vulnerable homeless people;
- h) fighting for dignity of living through furniture and clothing support; and
- i) informing the public through social media and YMCA homeless campaigns, and the publication of regular statistical and research data.

### **Residential Statistical Report**

#### **'Dar Niki Cassar' residential facility for homeless individuals, families and children.**

YMCA's shelter 'Dar Niki Cassar', a residential facility for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, is able to accommodate 30 individuals maximum per day.

The programme followed by residents at Dar Niki Cassar includes seven stages:

##### ***Stage 1 - First impression***

After a referral of an individual to YMCA, the individual undergoes a process of an intake interview during the admission process whereby important documents are gathered. YMCA assigns a key worker who conducts an induction/information session requesting the collection of important documents such as the police conduct, history of employment, medical records and housing documents. The induction/information session serves to clarify rules, regulations and structure, deals with misconceptions, queries that the client might have and emergency issues that require attention. Thereafter, the key worker prepares the YMCA life-skills inventory and a report, which is the basis of the initial assessment.

The YMCA life-skills inventory deals with a stratum of categories which includes money management, food management, personal appearance and hygiene, housekeeping, housing, transportation, educational planning, job seeking, job maintenance, emergency and safety skills, knowledge of community resources, interpersonal skills, legal skills, pregnancy prevention, parenting and childcare.

During this stage, an admission form, accommodation agreement and declaration of consent are filled out with the resident. These documents collect relevant information on the client such as personal information, employment, physical health, mental health, past addictions, criminal records, agencies involved, brief family history and current situation.

##### ***Stage 2 - Familiarity***

Throughout this stage, the resident is supported by the key worker to attend a medical appointment at Gżira Health Centre for a medical check-up and dental appointment at the

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<sup>23</sup> Source: Personal communication: Mr Andrew Camilleri, CEO, YMCA, Malta.

latter premises to determine whether a referral to Mater Dei Hospital for dental appointment is required. Thereafter clients are asked to go to Jobs Plus to register for employment and to acquire social benefits. The key worker fills out the YMCA psycho-social assessment report which defines whether the client is in need of support through a psychotherapeutic session.

The first case review with the client, key worker, head of home and social worker involved is held and the initial care plan is issued. At this stage, a performance review on the client's behaviour is also done by the head of home.

Residents are financially assessed and a contribution agreement is drawn up between the head of home and the resident. In 2017, the contribution schemes were updated and reissued to take into consideration the financial situation of the client.

### ***Stage 3 - Familiarity***

At this stage, the psycho-social support and key workings sessions focus on health, and the life-skills session on personal appearance and hygiene. Employment sessions on job seeking and job maintenance are the main focus of the key workers.

Key working sessions are held weekly by each key worker and a report is written and included in the daily handover report. The key worker is also responsible for issuing a monthly report and monthly case review report on the assigned clients.

### ***Stage 4 - Individuality***

Apart from continuous key working sessions, case reviews, life-skills and monthly reports, at this stage, the focus is on employment and an individualised care plan. In the case of families, an individualised family programme is set in place.

At this stage, residents must be employed, or priority is given to getting them employed. This will give the resident the ability to start saving up for rent or other expenses. Employment gives the residents a sense of pride, identity and personal achievement. It enables them to socialise, build contacts and find support apart from providing them with money to explore their interests and become independent.

### ***Stage 5 - Emerging issues and action***

At this stage, the individualised plan of the client is revised to identify goals which they might be struggling with and the key working sessions are focused on targeting these emerging specific needs. The life-skills are focused more on independent living, housing and renting skills. Various topics are evaluated with the client such as housing applications, finding property, renting skills and sharing of apartments.

### ***Stage 6 - Progression***

Pregnancy prevention, parenting and childcare are the focus of the life-skills identified and worked upon throughout this stage.

### ***Stage 7 - Transformation and moving on***

At this stage the disengagement process is initiated; thereafter a termination and after-care programme are followed.

What follows is a detailed breakdown of the accommodation and service given regularly by YMCA in 2018. Due to the lack of a service agreement with the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity, as a result of which social workers with the Foundation for Social Welfare Services were given a direct order to refrain from sending cases to YMCA, it should be noted that most of the cases received were either 'unofficial' or self-referrals.

**Table B1: YMCA client profile for 2018**

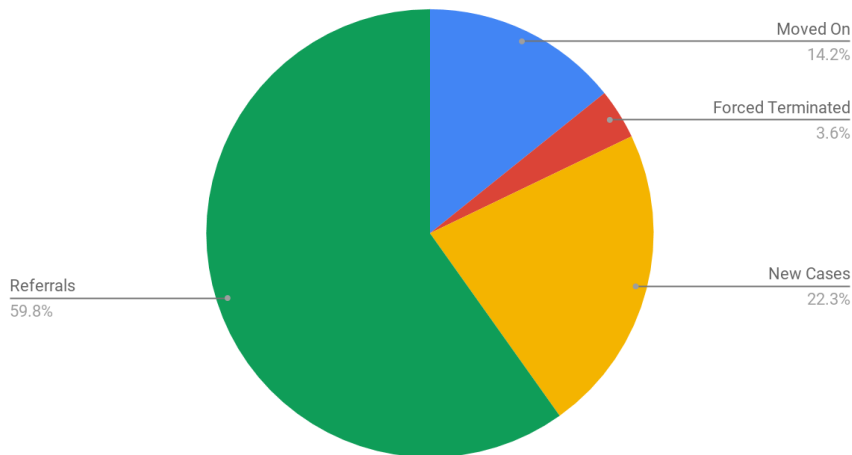
	Clients at beginning of month	Moved on	Terminated	New	Clients at end of month	Bed nights	No of referrals
January	25	7	4	18	24	760	34
February	24	9	2	12	24	714	31
March	24	5	2	8	25	806	21
April	25	13	1	14	22	720	37
May	22	11	0	15	26	744	39
June	26	11	3	11	23	735	28
July	23	6	1	11	27	775	34
August	27	6	3	7	25	806	37
September	25	6	2	6	23	720	21
October	23	4	3	13	25	729	33
November	25	12	2	9	20	675	43
December	20	4	1	24	30	775	37
<b>Total 2018</b>	<b>Average = 24</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>Average = 25</b>	<b>8,959</b>	<b>395</b>
Totals 2017	Average = 22	75	9	196	Average = 22	8,283	399

In 2018, YMCA received 395 individual referrals of cases of homelessness, compared with 399 in 2017. This meant that YMCA provided a total of 8,959 bed-nights throughout 2018, compared with 8,283 in 2017. The shelter accommodated an average of 25 residents daily, compared with 22 in 2017.

Out of 395 individual cases referred to YMCA in 2018, 147 were accepted; out of those 24 did not materialise, mostly because the person found an alternative place to stay. There was an increase in the number of cases where individuals moved on successfully, from 75 to 94. The details are presented in Figure B1.

**Figure B1: YMCA movements of clients: 2018**

January - December 2018



As can be seen from Figure B2, in 2017, the proportion of cases that did not materialise was very high – there were 106 individual cases, compared with 24 in 2018. 'Forced termination', due to lack of adherence to the care programme and residential structure, mostly cases of drug abuse, resulted in 24 cases being terminated.

**Figure B2: YMCA movements of clients: 2017**

January - March 2017

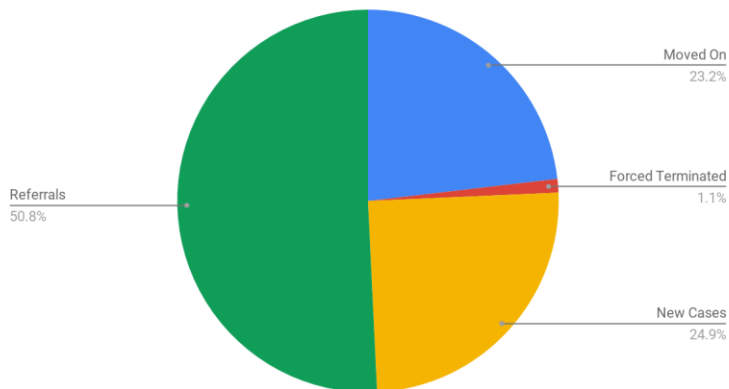


Figure B3 shows that whilst in 2017 YMCA provided an average of 690 bed-nights per month, in 2018 it provided an average of 747.

The bed-night comparison between 2017 and 2018 shows that since August 2018 demand has fallen, unlike in 2017.



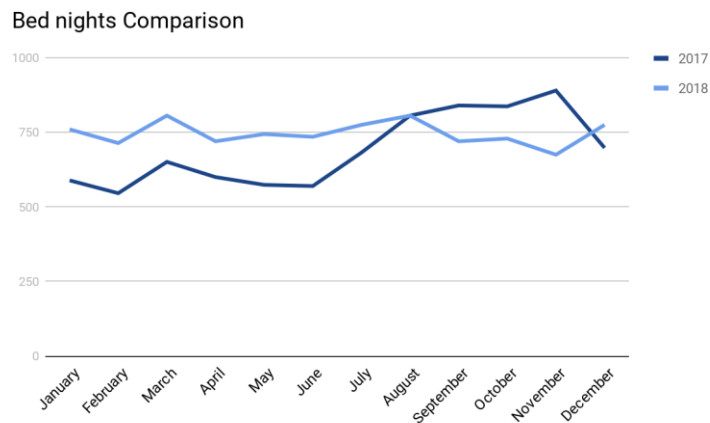
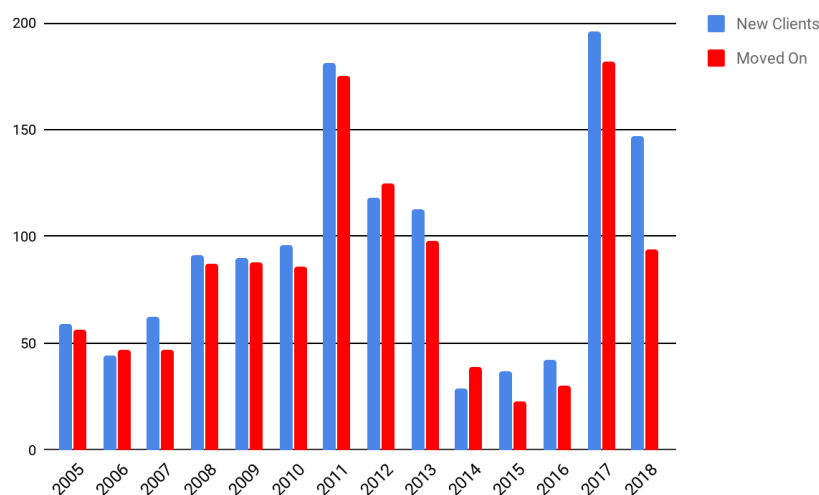
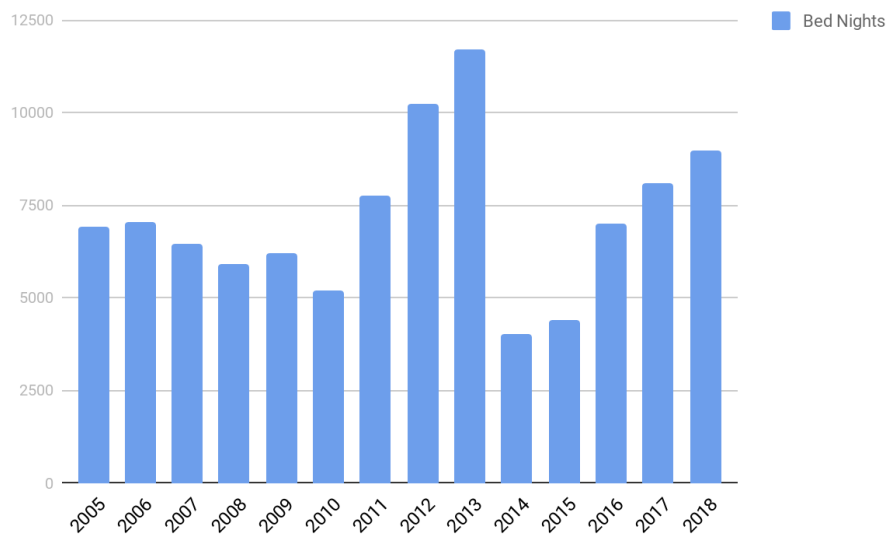
**Figure B3: YMCA bed-night comparison between 2017 and 2018**

Figure B4 also confirms the drop in the number of referrals due to an official agreement between services, which hindered the referral process; at the same time there was a fall in the number of clients moved on, due to increases in rents in Malta.

**Figure B4: YMCA clients' movements 2005-2018**

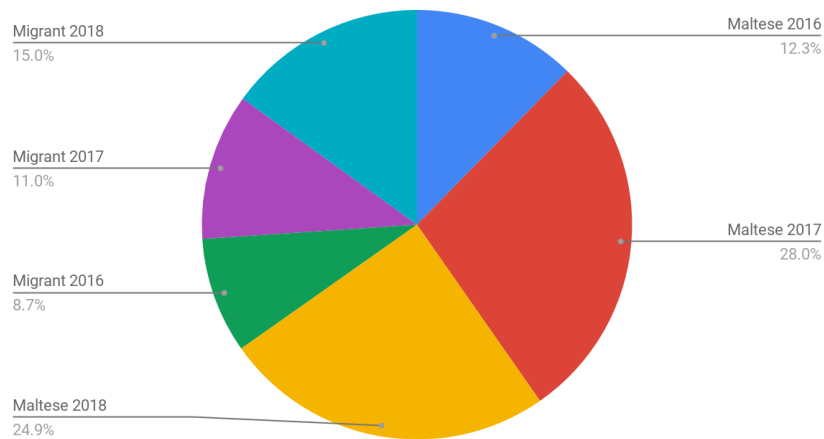
As can be seen from Figure B5, between 2005 and 2018 YMCA has provided a total of 99,842 bed night services.

**Figure B5: YMCA: No of bed-nights 2005-2018**

As can be seen from Figure B6, YMCA caters not only for local homeless people but also works in the field of refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers. In 2016, 96 cases were Maltese 68 cases were from migrant countries. In 2017, Maltese cases increased to 218 and another 86 cases were migrants. In 2018, migrant cases increased to 117 and Maltese cases fell to 194.

**Figure B6: YMCA clients' profile by nationality group**

## Maltese / Migrants



**Figure B7: YMCA clients' profile by age group**

## Age Bracket 2018

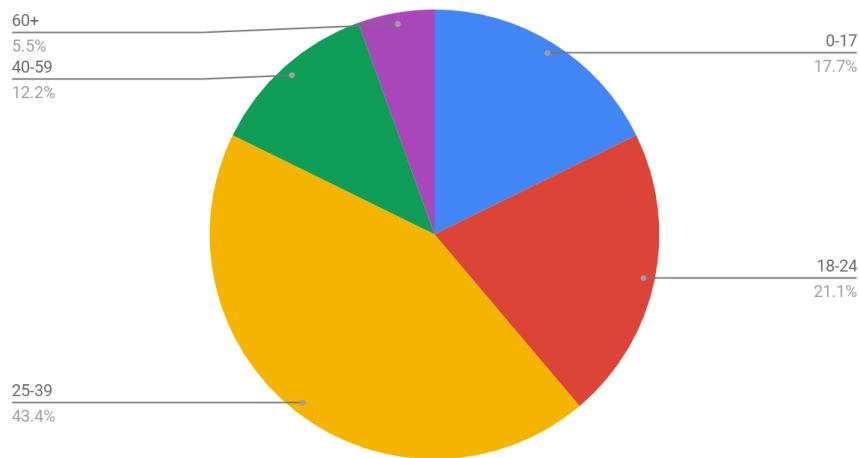


Figure B7 shows that, in 2018, the highest number of referrals were aged 25-39 (142 cases), followed by 69 aged 18-24, 58 aged under 18, 40 aged 40-59 and 18 aged 60+.

Similar to past years, referred cases, which were not assessed and seen by YMCA team were incomplete and could not be included in the age groups.

The most commonly occurring reasons for referral in 2016 were 'rooflessness' and 'financial issues'. Moreover, the reasons 'human trafficking' and 'sexual abuse' had one referral each, whereas 'house under construction' had no referrals at all. In 2017 most reasons for referral were 'family issues', with 'housing problems', 'financial issues' and 'immigration' following closely. There was also a notable increase in the number of referrals due to 'domestic violence' and 'termination from previous shelter'.

In 2017 the YMCA team carried out an average of 75 interventions per month, ranging from case reviews, care plans, individual meetings, key working sessions, psycho-therapeutic sessions, spiritual support, liaison with other professionals, and child support. In 2018, the average number of interventions per month rose to 95.

## Annex C: Fondazzjoni Dar il-Hena<sup>24</sup>

This foundation runs three houses, two 24-hour emergency shelters (Dar Papa Franġisku for males and Dar Maria Dolores for females), and 'Reach' where persons who qualify for an 8-month assisted programme from the other two shelters can move into to follow a pre-society re-insertion programme. At Dar Papa Franġisku, the Foundation provides a free drop-in midday meal to whoever goes there, including persons who do not use its night shelter facilities. The foundation was set up and is run by *Caritas Malta, Government, Alfred Mizzi Foundation*

**Table C1: Client Profile of Fondazzjoni Dar il-Hena Short Term Residences: 2018**

*Maximum duration 6 weeks*

<b>Males: Dar Papa Franġisku</b>		<b>Females: Dar Mara Dolores</b>	
Beds	22	Beds	8
Current occupancy*	13	Current occupancy*	2
<b>Nationality split:</b>		<b>Nationality split:</b>	
Maltese	20%	Maltese	80%
Non-Maltese	80%	Non-Maltese	20%
<b>Individuals benefiting from the service:</b>		<b>Individuals benefiting from the service:</b>	
2018	298 individuals	2018	85 individuals

\* First week of May 2019

<sup>24</sup> Source: Personal communication: Mr Ian Galea, Director of Homes, *Fondazzjoni Dar il-Hena*.

### Table C2: Client Profile of Fondazzjoni Dar il-Hena Long Term Residences: 2018 'Reach'

*Males and Females (families accepted)*

*\*Maximum duration: 8-month programme*

'Reach'	
No of beds	26
Current occupancy**	13
<b>Nationality split:</b>	
Maltese	50%
Non-Maltese	50%
<b>Individuals benefiting from the service</b>	
2018	36

*\* If a family presents itself at either Papa Franġisku or Dar Maria Dolores, males and females are initially kept separate, but the process to move on to Reach is expedited.*

*\*\* First week of May 2019*

