



**A RED NETWORK ARTICLE
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THE REALITY OF LIVING IN EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION IN IRELAND

An interview with one of the many recently homeless people, following the eviction ban lifting

Red Network spoke to one of the latest victims of the neoliberal approach to public housing who has now been through eviction, through no fault of their own, and finds themselves facing emergency accommodation and all the uncertainty that such a scenario brings to their life.

So, you've been evicted and had to go into emergency accommodation (EA). What are your first impressions?

I was very worried, having never faced anything like this before there was fear of where I would end up. What would it be like? What would the people there be like? To what extent would what you hear and read about EA actually be true?

Do you feel that you, and what is left of my belongings, will be able to remain safe?

To start with the building itself is very old, it was clearly the house of someone with money at some point. It does need renovations, basically it is somewhere to put your head and a place to get 3 meals a day, complete with a curfew at Midnight.

Who are the people in EA and do you think it's more wide ranging than people think?

To some extent it confirms what is said constantly in the media about people in EA, poverty is the key factor. Flowing from that, addiction and health related problems which destabilise people's lives which leads in the end to EA. It is now becoming clear that more and more people like myself are ending up in EA. Nevertheless, the media persists with its demeaning portrayal of the homeless as it is a handy divide and rule tactic that takes the focus off the failed policies of successive neoliberal government and the seemingly never ending greed and cruelty of so many landlords.

How long do you think you'll have to stay in EA?

I have no idea. Only a key worker from Dublin City Council or an Approved Housing Body could answer that with any degree of certainty.

Why couldn't you find anywhere to rent? Do you think we need rent reductions?

Landlords will not take HAP or Homeless HAP(HHAP) as it is nowhere near market rates, which are extortionate and beyond the reach of anyone on the average wage, never mind minimum wage or a social welfare support.

Rent reductions are needed as a bare minimum response to the crisis we are in. Real and meaningful rent controls, as they exist on the continent, would be far more effective.

You are a community sector worker, what do you think it says about this government that you have nowhere to call home?

We have a government made up of individuals with vested interests because many of them are landlords themselves. They act in the interests of landlords, vulture funds and REITs rather than the best interests of citizens. Myself and many others are not their concern, unless profit can be made from us and always at our misery.

It is so blatant; they don't even attempt to hide who they truly represent and seek to look after. Their fanatical belief in “the market” solving everything has led to disaster for the many and a fortune made for the few, off the backs of the working-class.

What do you think about the government’s decision to end the eviction ban?

It was going to be lifted once COVID eased, thanks to behind the scenes lobbying on behalf of landlords who lobbied the government continuously to do so.

The right of Landlords to evict people was reasserted with a vengeance. We got a small glimpse of it during the pandemic with the evictions that happened.

Warnings were issued, and ignored, another sign of whose side the Government are on.

What do you think the solutions are?

- 1) Reinstate the eviction ban.
- 2) Build more public housing on public land.
- 3) Speed up the buying of houses under the Tenant in Situ scheme.
- 4) Compulsory purchase buildings where the owner refuses to engage with the Local Authority when tenants are threatened with eviction.
- 5) Restore full tenant rights to licensees (tenants) who come under the rent a room scheme.
- 6) Protest, Protest and continue to protest, there is no change without it.
- 7) Vote out this landlord govt. when the elections come around in 2024 & 2025. Elect Socialists

The RED Network (incorporating Rebel Telly) are a network of radical socialists within the political party People Before Profit, a 32-county people power movement on the island of Ireland.

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