



'There's No Place Like Home'

- SWAMH Mental Health Social Work and Housing in Ireland**

25/11/2022

Respondents experience practicing Social Work

ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

1-3 years

8.85%

10

4-5 years

6.19%

7

6-10 years

18.58%

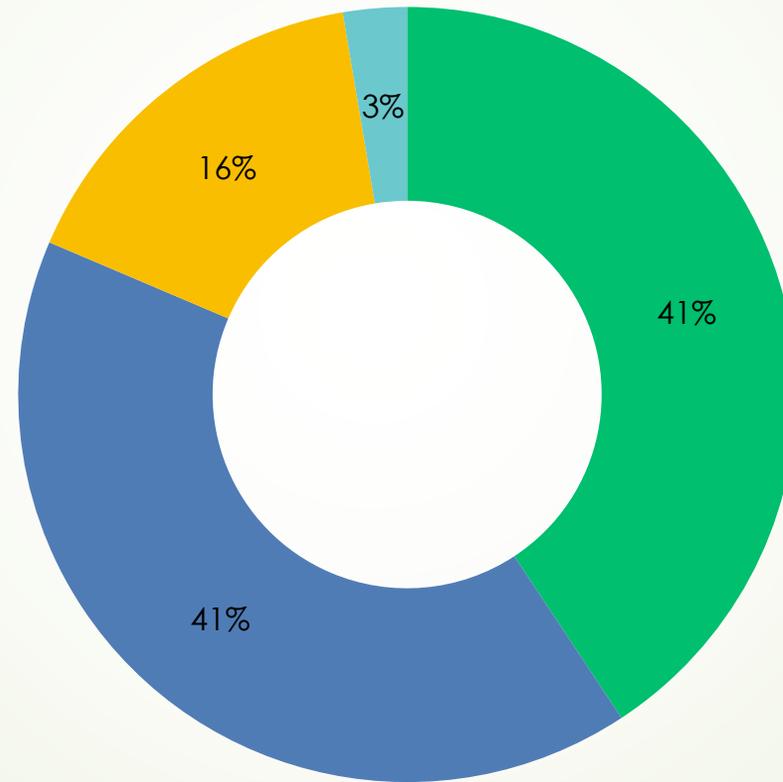
21

10 years +

66.37%

75

113 Mental Health Social Workers Participated in the Survey



■ PQSW

■ Senior SW

■ SW team leader

■ Principal SW

➤ 113 Respondents answer;

- **Over half of their clients (Avg.52%) had housing needs**
- **Average of 24% of their clients are registered as homeless**
- **Average 58% of clients are registered on the local authority housing waiting list**
- **In relation to the housing information and legislation outlined in the Social Work Qualifying programme – 52 were Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 35 were Dissatisfied, and 15 were very Dissatisfied.**

➤ 113 Respondents answer;

- **47 Strongly agree & 44 agree that Housing related work makes up a large part of my weekly work**
- **53 Disagree and 27 Strongly disagree that the Information on local authority homeless services and procedures are clear, transparent and accessible**
- **52.21% of respondents replied NO to Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) information being clear and easy to follow**
- **89 (78.76%) respondents said NO to HAP rates/levels meet the needs of the client**

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Adult Community Mental Health	54.87%	62
Inpatient only	14.16%	16
Other	14.16%	16
Rehabilitation and recovery team	7.08%	8
Homeless mental health team	3.54%	4
Psychiatry of Later Life	2.65%	3
Mental Health ID	2.65%	3
Team Leader not attached to a team	0.88%	1
Principal not attached to a team	0%	0
TOTAL		113



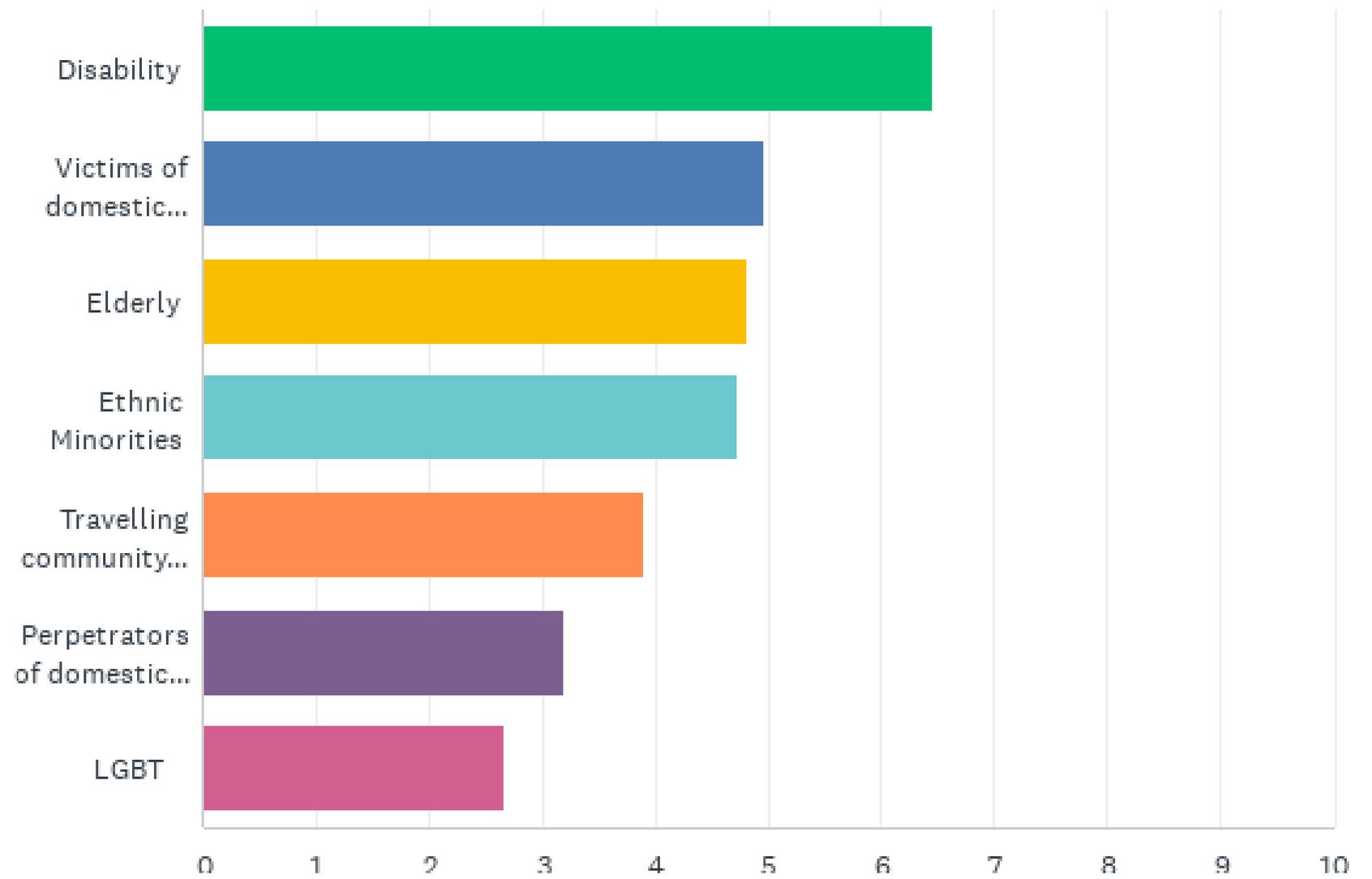
What type of team are you on?

Answered: 113 Skipped: 0

	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	SCORE
18-34	31.86% 36	32.74% 37	19.47% 22	15.93% 18	113	2.81
35-49	44.25% 50	38.05% 43	16.81% 19	0.88% 1	113	3.26
50-65	14.16% 16	21.24% 24	61.06% 69	3.54% 4	113	2.46
66+	9.73% 11	7.96% 9	2.65% 3	79.65% 90	113	1.48

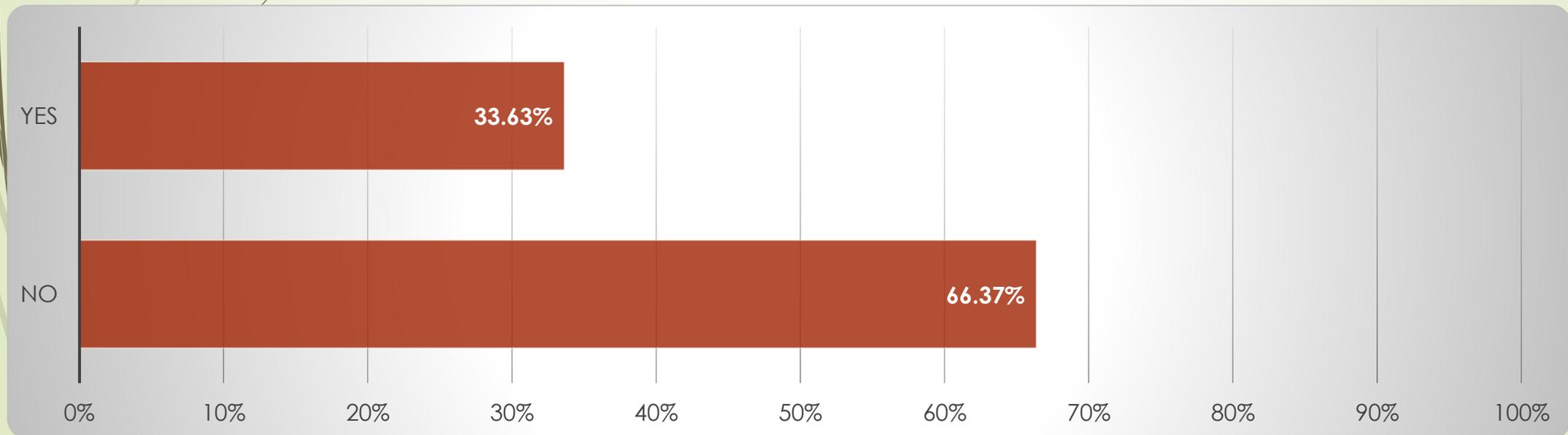
Please place in rank order the age groups with whom you work?

Answered: 113 Skipped: 0



Q35: The housing crisis in Ireland is recognised as having a national impact, which in turn can impact staffing levels and service provision. Have you personally had difficulty accessing housing?

Answered: 113 Skipped: 0



Implications for staffing and future social work practitioners

- ▶ 33.63% of respondents noted that they had been personally affected by the crisis.
- ▶ Vast majority of respondents were in social work practice for at least six years, and therefore likely to be at a higher point on their potential pay scales.
- ▶ The 30% of income housing affordability standard is a generally accepted measure.
- ▶ Based on this sample, the national average spent on rent/mortgage after tax was 36%. This rises in urban areas: Dublin 49.35%, Cork 39%, Galway 38%.



Recommendations

- SWAMH calls for a **substantive right to housing** to be enshrined within the Irish Constitution.
- SWAMH advocates for a **greater supply of social housing and supported accommodation**. Due to multiple factors, our clients are disproportionately impacted by income poverty and current housing policy does not adequately meet their needs. Furthermore, higher HAP rates are not necessarily the solution. This report highlights the need for a stronger focus on the provision of social housing.
- SWAMH endorses, in policy and in practice, that the measurement of housing need is extended to include the operational categories of homelessness and housing exclusion as outlined by **ETHOS (European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion)**.
- SWAMH advocates that adult mental health social workers take a lead role in ensuring that an **accurate record** is kept regarding where patients are being discharged to, as per the Code of Practice on Admission, Transfer and Discharge to and from an Approved Centre, No 44.1.3 (Mental Health Commission, 2009). SWAMH also recommends that this record include information on whether discharge has been delayed or prevented due to a lack of housing.



Recommendations

- SWAMH advocates for stronger interagency collaboration and a **simplification of the housing application process**. 74% of respondents reported that contact and procedures and processes with city or county council providers were inconsistent and difficult to navigate. 93% of respondents felt that their clients would not be able to access supports independently. Government, approved housing bodies and councils need to significantly address the issue of transparency and access to housing services. **A clear, transparent, and accessible system for accessing supports** is required.
- SWAMH encourages our colleagues to ensure an ongoing focus on **tenancy sustainment work** within their responses to housing-based referrals. 73.45% of respondents highlighted the importance of tenancy sustainment work in assisting clients out of homelessness.
- SWAMH recommends that **social work education in Ireland**, particularly in relation to mental health social work modules, **focus on housing policy, legislation and practical application** as outlined within this report. Equally, SWAMH advocates that those already in practice partake in CPD and training opportunities that focus on current housing policy, legislation, and housing-based referrals.
- SWAMH recommends that **further research** regarding this issue be completed. This report was intended to be a starting point in terms of data collection regarding current practices by adult mental health social workers engaged with clients with a broad range of housing needs.