

# Record number of rough sleepers in the capital

THE number of people sleeping rough in Dublin has reached record levels.

A city centre headcount by the Dublin Simon Community on Tuesday morning found 168 people sleeping outside in doorways, shop fronts, streets and parks.

The figure does not include another 60 people on a floor in the Merchant's Quay Night Café or unknown numbers trying to bed down in Phoenix Park.

The charity counted a 32% rise in rough sleepers last year even though 195 new emergency beds have been provided in the capital since homeless man Jonathan Corrie was found dead near Leinster House in December 2014.

Dublin Simon Community said the number of people it sees with no roof over their head has esca-

## Irish Daily Mail Reporter

lated from 80 in August last year to 106 a year later, and is averaging 150 this month.

The charity's chief executive Sam McGuinness said the visible scale of homelessness was shocking. 'With emergency beds across the city operating at full capacity each night, rapid housing and support for individuals is urgently needed to get people off the streets to safety and to tackle the bottleneck in emergency accommodation,' he said. 'People have become trapped in the revolving door of homelessness and the short-term measure of emergency accommodation has become long term.'

Mr McGuinness backed Housing Minister Simon Coveney's efforts

but urged him to publish specifics on how more accommodation will be provided.

He said official figures from the Department of the Environment in the past year showed a 29% increase in the number of adults and 39% rise in children accessing emergency accommodation.

Dublin Simon also revealed that 70% of people entering its detox programme had been homeless for more than six months and half had been homeless for more than two years.

Waiting time for a bed in the detox unit went from 27 days in 2014 to 31 days last year due to limited accommodation.

The charity said only one in every ten people completing a detox moved to housing.

Comment - Page 14

# Dr Mark Dooley



## MORAL MATTERS

# The simple look that can save the life of a stranger

**L**OOK at me, I am the man standing beside you on the street. I look different to you, but inside we are pretty much the same. I also have my problems, my sorrows and joys.

Look at me, I am the child toying on the grass. I am only learning how to live, how to grow up and be like you. Whenever I annoy you, please remember you were like me once.

Look at me, I am the granny strolling to the shops.

It is my daily outing, my break from the silence of an empty house. They have all gone now, so will you help me pass an hour or two?

Look at me, I am the young man plugged in and zoned out. I live in a world where I feel so alone, where my voice is rarely heard.

I plug in to get away from it all. Will you help me by listening to my story?

Look at me as I lie here on the road. They call me 'homeless', but I was not always so.

I was just like you before my life fell apart. And now, like Him, I have nowhere to lay my head.

Look at me, I am the mother of four young children.

Each day, I fret about their future, about making ends meet, about being a good parent. Please don't judge me for I am doing my best.

Look at me, I am the person standing behind you in the queue.

Fate has joined us together for a few minutes. Why stare at your phone when I am here? I really could do with a chat.

Look at me, I am the stranger you have never seen before. I have just moved into the area and am finding it difficult to adapt.

I would love to share a cup of tea with you.

Look at me, the person who looks just like you. On the outside, it appears that I have it all. Inside, I am like a frightened child because my life is full of suffering. I put the best side out but I have never felt worse.

Look at me, I am the teenage boy causing all the trouble.

They say I am no good, but, deep down, there is goodness in me. My anger is a cry of pain, a scream for help, a need simply to be noticed.

Look at me, I am the person who irritates you.

I know you dislike me, but what have I done wrong? Like you, I have problems and life is not always easy. The way I act is a cover for my fear.

Look at me, I am the young girl who walks home from school all alone. I look sad because I am being bullied.

Please don't mistake my sadness for a 'mood'. Look at me, I am the person who cleans the office after everyone has gone. People hardly ever talk to me, hardly ever notice me. Will you?

Look at me, I am the rich man who has made it to the top. I can have what I want whenever I want it, and yet I have never been unhappier. I would give it all away for one moment of love.

Look at me, I do not share your beliefs. I believe in different gods and have different political ideals. We may never agree on the big things, but we still belong to the same human family. We are still the children of Creation.

Look at me, I am the person weeping as you pass. Tragedy has struck my family and my world is falling apart. I could do with a kind word.

Look at me, I am sick and have lost all hope.

Like you, I was young and healthy once. I ask you for nothing except a little time. Look at me as we walk by each other. I am not a threat but simply out to clear my head. Please don't look through me. All I want is a smile.

Look at me, I am your partner of 50 years.

We have been through so much together and you are my whole life. Let us look at each other with love until we are summoned to the soil.

Look at me, I am your child. I know you are busy and that you have a lot on your mind.

But, someday, I shall grow up and make my own way. Please play with me before it is too late.

Look at me, I am housebound. They take care of my needs, but I yearn for something in short supply.

I long for some company - for someone not to do things with, but simply to be with me.

**L**OOK at me, I am he whose life has been ruined by addiction. I made some wrong choices, but, then again, who hasn't? I am broken and wounded, but doing my best to heal what is left of me. Will you give me another chance?

Look at me, I am like the repentant thief begging for mercy. I have made some terrible mistakes but I long to change. I am so sorry. Will you forgive me?

Look at me, I bear the wounds of my struggles, of my torment and despair. Life has not been easy but I am still here. I am still here because you noticed me, because when I fell, you picked me up and when they fled, you stayed behind.

You saved me because, when you looked at me, you saw a person.

mark.dooley@daily@mail.ie



THE WEDDING SHOW JOURNAL *live!*

ALTERNATIVE WEDDING VILLAGE

GET 100s OF QUIRKY WEDDING IDEAS!

DUBLIN

CITYWEST CONVENTION CENTRE

24TH & 25TH SEPT

MEDIA PARTNERS

Dublin's 98FM EVOKE.ie Irish Daily Mail

SAVE 25% with Online Tickets  
Book at [WeddingJournalOnline.Com](http://WeddingJournalOnline.Com)