



**Threshold's quarterly  
impact report:  
Q3 2023**

# Threshold's Quarterly Impact Report

## - Q3 2023

Founded in 1978, Threshold has been working and campaigning across Ireland for 45 years to keep people in their homes, to prevent homelessness, and to secure a right to housing.

This is what makes Threshold unique. No other organisation tackles homelessness like Threshold: by advocating for housing rights, providing tailored advice and representation to tenants and keeping people in their homes.

This report looks back on the home-saving impact Threshold achieved in the third quarter of 2023, July to September.

### Making the difference - Threshold's impact

In the third quarter of 2023, our dedicated and expert team of frontline advisors:



supported **8,948** households - **11,045** adults and **7,255** children



prevented **906** households from entering homelessness - **1,333** adults and **939** children



answered **10,162** calls



answered **693** evening calls



attended **161** video consultations



responded to **1,706** webchats



completed **42,386** home-saving and practical actions



received **45,079** emails

# We stop homelessness - Threshold

In Quarter 3 of 2023, Threshold advisors intervened to keep **906** households in their homes or supported them to secure alternative housing and prevented them from entering homelessness. In all, **1,333** adults and **939** children were assisted. Given the consistent increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness each month, Threshold's Tenancy Protection Service and home-saving interventions are an essential prevention service.

Of the new households who contacted Threshold in Q3 2023, **5,318** were at risk of homelessness. As in previous quarters, most of these renters were at risk of homelessness because their landlord wished to sell the home. Where possible, Threshold assists these households to remain in their home or secure an alternative home. However, with fewer properties available to rent, and a landlord within their rights to evict for the purposes of sale, this is an increasingly challenging task.

# Some of the people Threshold assisted in Q3 2023

In this edition, you will read about the struggles faced by those living in homes that are not up to standard.

It is common for clients to report signs of extensive damage from dampness and mould in the home, that their homes have inadequate ventilation, are poorly insulated making them expensive to heat and despite the house coming with 'all mod cons', these can often be faulty or not working at all.

Below are some examples of the minimum standards that a tenant, or anyone, can expect in their home:

- the interior and the exterior must be maintained in a proper state of structural repair
- toilet and shower facilities have to be in a good working order, safe and properly insulated
- there must be proper heating facilities
- rooms must have adequate ventilation
- other examples include adequate facilities to store rubbish, as well as adequate heating and gas, oil, and electricity installations.

A breach of these standards is significant as housing is one of the key social determinants of health. Every aspect of the home, from comfort levels and sanitation to its structural condition, has an impact on our physical health, mental health and general wellbeing; in the immediate and long-term. Poor conditions can both cause and exacerbate health problems. Threshold advisors are available however to assist renters to make sure repairs are done in the home as well as protect them from any potential negative consequences.

The experiences of Threshold's clients, some of which are set out in this report, highlights that the current system for ensuring that rental homes meet the minimum standards is ineffective. For this reason, Threshold proposes a new system, an NCT-style system for housing. Such a reform would contribute to addressing one of the major challenges facing many tenants in the private rental sector.

The introduction of an NCT-style system would place the burden of proof for compliance with minimum standards on the landlord. A landlord would be required to provide a certificate of fitness to the Residential Tenancies Board on registering a tenancy and would be required to submit a new one every four years.

The NCT system will, after initial setup, become a cost-saving measure. It will result in a reduction in cases pertaining to standards being brought to the Residential Tenancies Board which will free up valuable resources. It will facilitate more targeted inspections of privately rented properties by the Local Authorities. It will also provide inspectors with more time to work with those landlords whose properties do not meet the standards and hopefully see them brought up to standard.



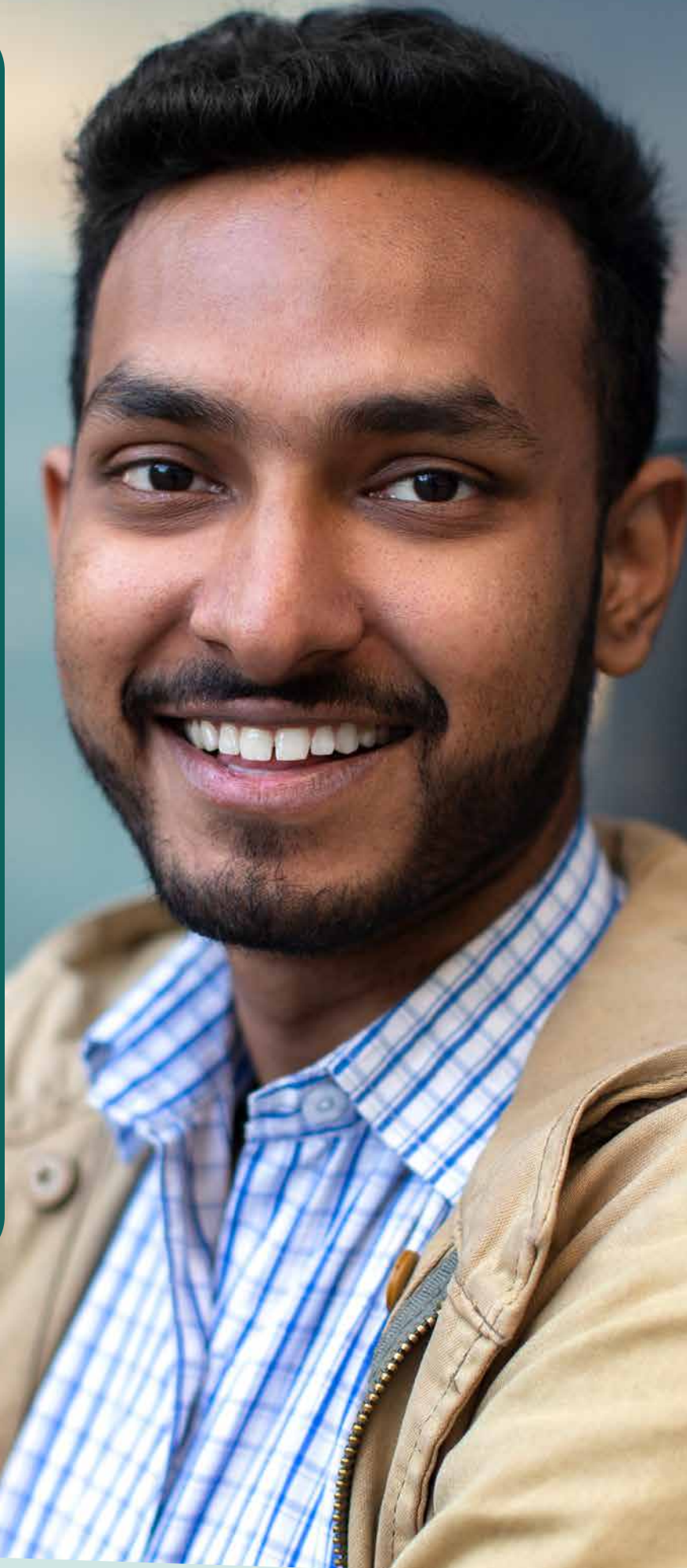
## **Paresh**

*Paresh contacted Threshold when he received a Notice of Termination from his landlord. Paresh and his family have been living in their home in rural Ireland for some years and had a few ongoing problems with the property. In particular, the heating was not working. Paresh and his family had no heating for the entire winter of 2022. The cold negatively impacted the health of Paresh and his children, who suffer from asthma and eczema.*

*Paresh contacted a plumber who recommended that the boiler be replaced. Unfortunately for Paresh, the landlord refused to replace the boiler saying it was too expensive.*

*Paresh felt he had no choice but to make a complaint to his Local Authority and the house was inspected. The landlord was sent an Improvement Notice which stated that the heating, among other issues, had to be fixed. Paresh hoped this would be readily resolved as it was perfectly reasonable for them to expect a working heating system for the home they were renting.*

*A few days after the landlord received the Improvement Notice, he issued a Notice of Termination to the family. The reason cited in the Notice of Termination was that the property was no longer suitable for the family despite the family living in the property for four years. The case is currently ongoing. A Threshold advisor will work with Paresh and his family to have the repairs made and keep them in the home.*







## **Dervla**

*Dervla and her three children have been living in their home for nearly a decade.*

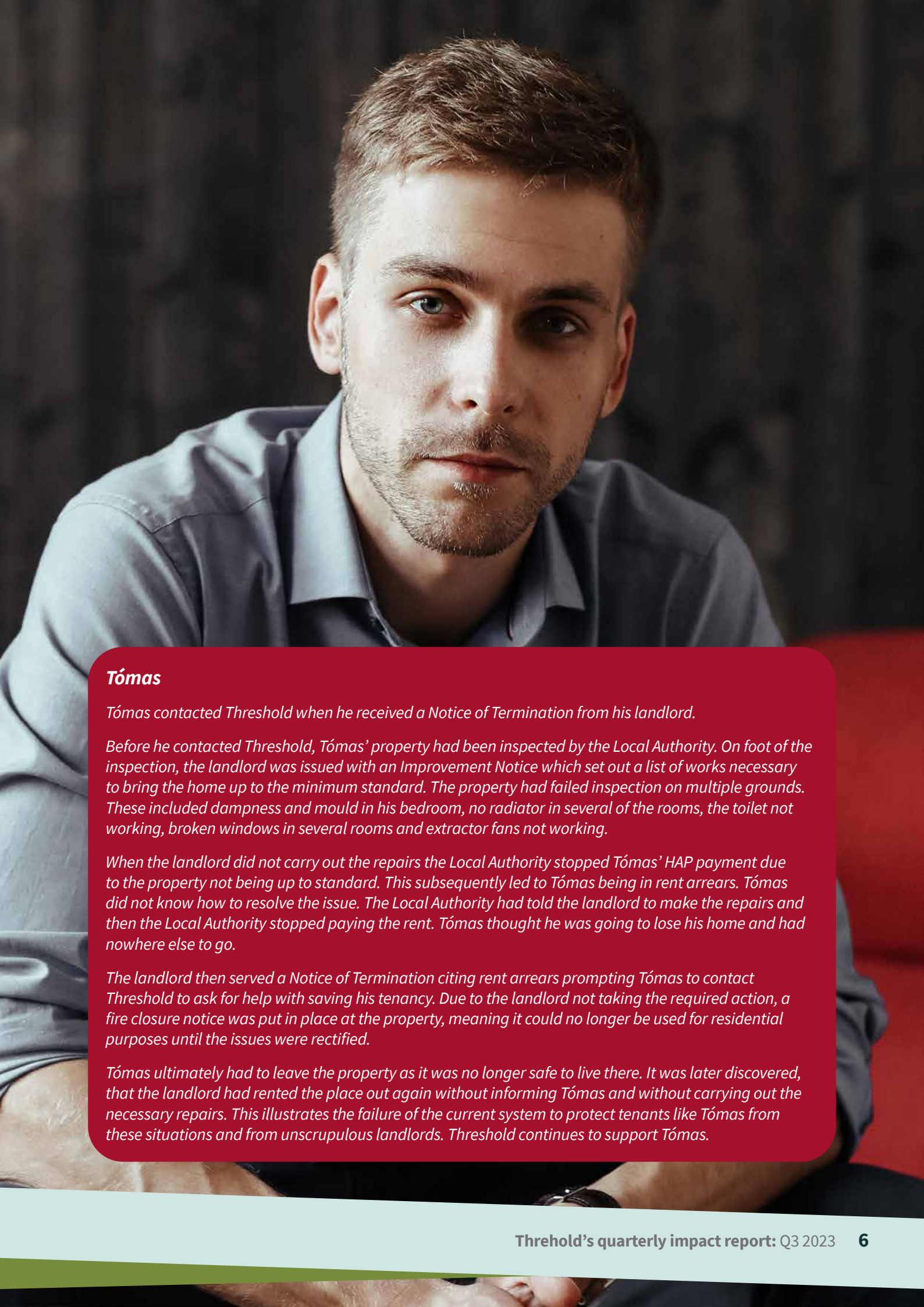
*There are ongoing issues with damp and mould in Dervla's home. She reported these issues multiple times to the letting agent, but no action had been taken.*

*Dervla finally made a complaint to the Local Authority and there was an inspection of the property. The inspector found that the dampness in the property appeared to affect the electrics and posed a fire hazard. On foot of this, there was an inspection by the letting agent and Dervla was promised that somebody would be out to repair the issues. There was no follow up contact.*

*Her Threshold advisor suggested that Dervla contact the Local Authority for a copy of a report and to send a follow-up email to the agent. The Threshold advisor also talked Dervla through the process of taking a case to the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), as this was a breach of landlord obligations.*

*The advisor represented Dervla at the RTB hearing. The RTB Adjudicator awarded Dervla a significant amount of compensation for the landlord's failure to address the damp and allowing a serious fire hazard to exist in the home. The landlord appealed the decision and the Tribunal also found in Dervla's favour.*

*Unfortunately, the landlord has not complied with the RTB's order. Dervla has been forced to go once more to the RTB, this time to ask them to enforce the order to have the landlord pay the compensation. Threshold will stick with her all the way.*



## **Tómas**

*Tómas contacted Threshold when he received a Notice of Termination from his landlord.*

*Before he contacted Threshold, Tómas' property had been inspected by the Local Authority. On foot of the inspection, the landlord was issued with an Improvement Notice which set out a list of works necessary to bring the home up to the minimum standard. The property had failed inspection on multiple grounds. These included dampness and mould in his bedroom, no radiator in several of the rooms, the toilet not working, broken windows in several rooms and extractor fans not working.*

*When the landlord did not carry out the repairs the Local Authority stopped Tómas' HAP payment due to the property not being up to standard. This subsequently led to Tómas being in rent arrears. Tómas did not know how to resolve the issue. The Local Authority had told the landlord to make the repairs and then the Local Authority stopped paying the rent. Tómas thought he was going to lose his home and had nowhere else to go.*

*The landlord then served a Notice of Termination citing rent arrears prompting Tómas to contact Threshold to ask for help with saving his tenancy. Due to the landlord not taking the required action, a fire closure notice was put in place at the property, meaning it could no longer be used for residential purposes until the issues were rectified.*

*Tómas ultimately had to leave the property as it was no longer safe to live there. It was later discovered, that the landlord had rented the place out again without informing Tómas and without carrying out the necessary repairs. This illustrates the failure of the current system to protect tenants like Tómas from these situations and from unscrupulous landlords. Threshold continues to support Tómas.*

# Establishing an NCT for housing

Threshold is continuing its campaign for the introduction of an NCT for Housing. An NCT for Housing would place the burden of establishing compliance with the minimum standards regulations on the landlord; whereby landlords have an inspection of their property carried out by a registered professional every four years. The landlord would be required to submit this to the RTB as part of the registration process.

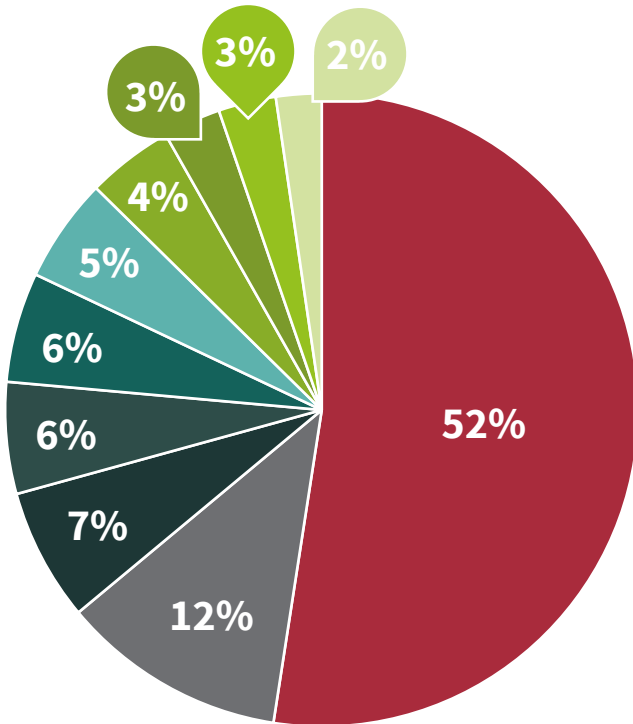
Under this proposal tenants and prospective tenants would be able to search the database to view certificates which have been submitted in respect of a particular property. This will allow tenants to see whether a property that they are interested in meets the required standards. Accordingly, people like Tómas, Dervla and Paresh would not find themselves living in, and paying rent for, homes that are dangerous, cold and damaging to their health and that of their families.

Failure to provide a certificate as part of the registration process would be a breach of the RTB registration requirements, which would be subject to investigation by the RTB. This is necessary for cases where the landlord has not registered the property in the first instance and where the property does not meet the standards. It is also required in cases whereby the property has been allowed to fall below the standards between inspections.

This proposal for an NCT for Housing will in time bring rental properties up to standard and, in the long term, will lead to rental properties becoming healthier homes.



# Top 10 queries Q3 2023

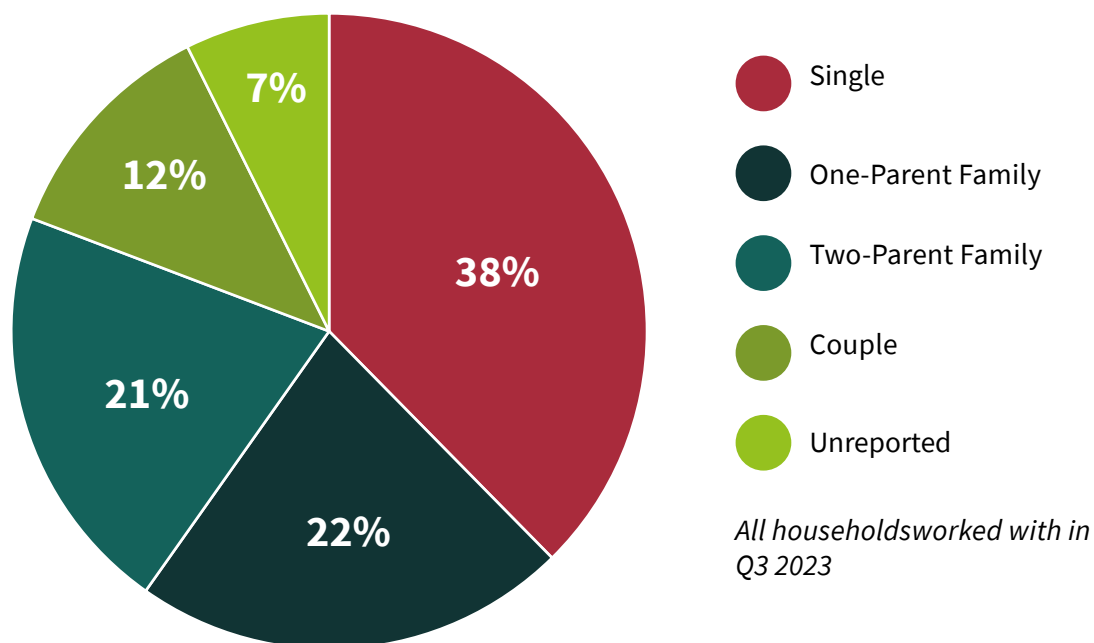


- Tenancy Termination
- General Termination Enquiry
- Standards/Repairs
- Advice on Lease
- Rent Review/Rent Increase
- Deposit Retention
- General Rent Query
- Accessing Social Housing
- Landlord/Agent Breach
- Rent Arrears

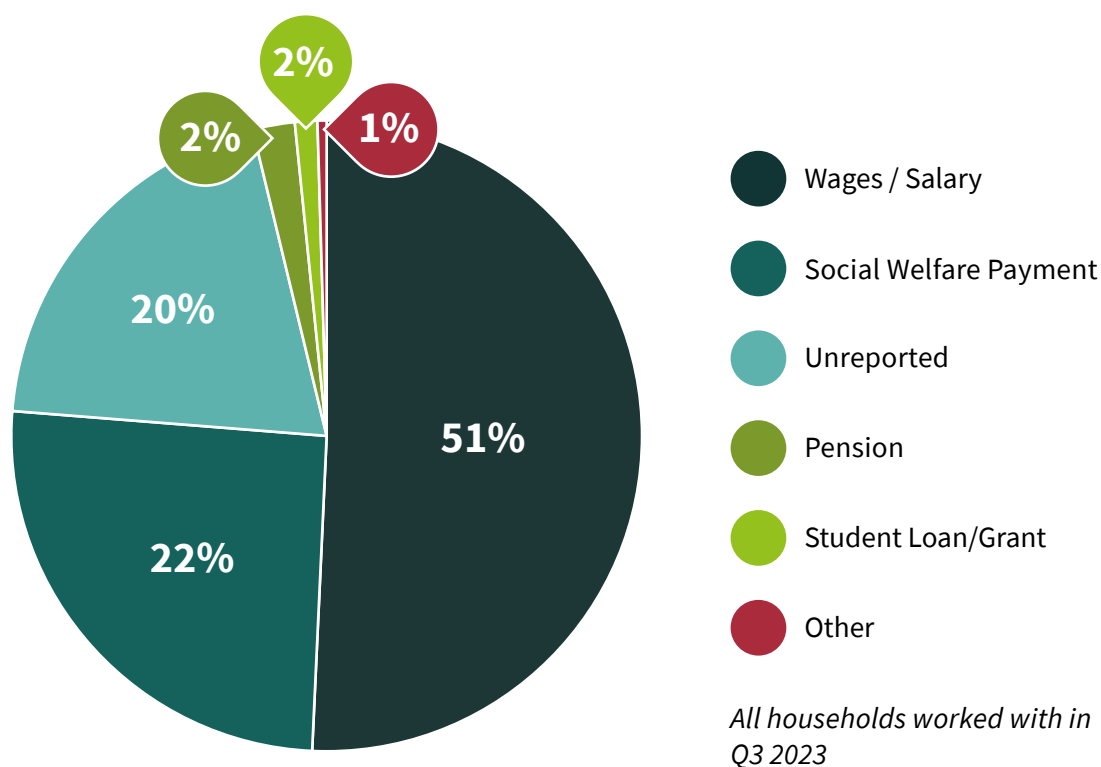
% are of new cases worked in Q3 2023

# Who Threshold helped in Q3 2023

## Household Composition

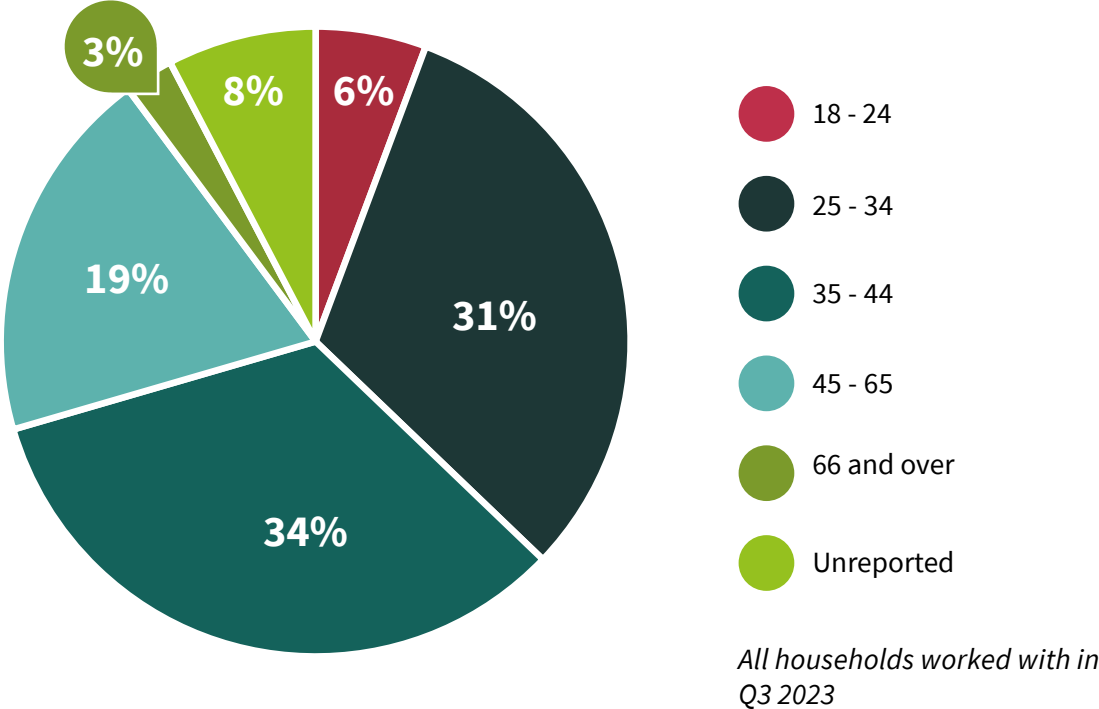


## Main Source of Income



# Who Threshold helped in Q3 2023

## Age Range of Households





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☎ National Freephone Helpline:  
1800 454 454  
9am to 9pm Monday to Friday

✉ [advice@threshold.ie](mailto:advice@threshold.ie)

f ThresholdIRE

🐦 ThresholdIRE

📷 Threshold\_housing

in Threshold\_housing

[www.threshold.ie](http://www.threshold.ie)

Revenue (Charities Unit) (CHY): 6279  
Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) : 200110301

National Office & Eastern Region Office  
First Floor 25-28 Strand Street Great, Dublin 1, D01 XP04

Southern Regional Office  
22 South Mall, Cork, T12 C2YN

Western Regional Office  
5 Prospect Hill, Galway, H91 HC1H



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



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