Dublin Ireland, 842 children were discharged with no fixed address, typically into emergency accommodation in 2018. This compares with 651 children in 2017, a 29% increase. Children born into homelessness are more likely to have low birth weights and are at greater risk of death. The aim of this study was to compare a random cohort of children presenting to the ED and compare differences between children living in homelessness and those at risk of homelessness to those living in stable accommodation across a variety of parameters.

Methods A self-administered parental questionnaire was handed to parents checking in to the ED in TSCUH over a 2-week period. An information sheet was also given to parents to explain the purpose of the research. Results were analysed using Microsoft excel.

Results 120 (n=120) questionnaires were filled out by a random selection of parents over the initial study period. Age range was 1 month to 15 years. Number of General Practice (GP) attendances ranged between 0 and 6 in past 6 months, ED ranged between 0 and 12.

50% (n=60) owned their own homes. 96% (n=115) were fully vaccinated. 89% (n=106) thought their child had a nutritionally complete diet. However 24% (n=29) thought their living situation did not enable the parent to adequately prepare/cook meals for their child.

18% (n=22) lived in homelessness/emergency accommodation or with family. In this group 27% (n=6) vs 19% (n=17) had fast-food/ready-meals twice or more per week. Parents thought their accommodation had a negative effect on their child’s health in 19% (n=4) vs 6% (n=6) in this group. Making and maintaining friends was thought to be affected by accommodation in 20% (n=4) vs 7% (n=7). The effect on ability to exercise/play of living situation was 36% (n=8) vs 12% (n=12).

Conclusion The above data clearly demonstrates parental perspectives on the impact of homelessness on children. This compares the perspectives of parents living in different types of accommodation and demonstrates the detrimental effects homelessness can have on children’s health and well-being.