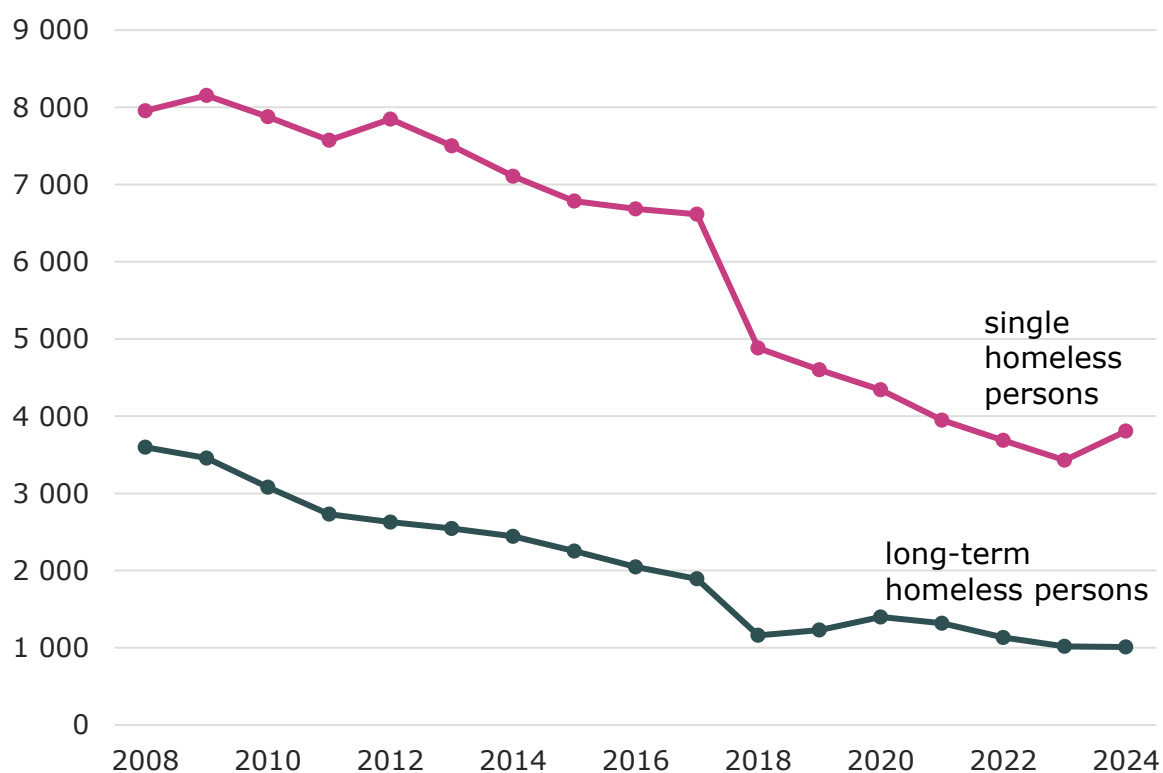


Report 2/2025

# Homeless people 2024



**Development of homelessness in Finland from 1986 to 2024.**

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## **Report 2/2025: Homeless people 2024**

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# 1 Collecting data on homelessness

In autumn 2024, the Housing Finance and Development Centre (Ara) sent a homelessness survey to 293 municipalities in mainland Finland. Respondents were asked to report the number of homeless people in the municipality on the date of review (15 November 2024).

238 municipalities responded to the survey. The response rate was 81%.

- According to the responses, there were homeless people in 87 municipalities.
- 151 municipalities reported that they did not have homeless people.
- 55 municipalities did not respond to the survey.

A large proportion of the municipalities that did not respond were small municipalities where there are presumably no homeless people. See Appendix 1 for municipality-specific information plus a list of the municipalities without homeless persons as well as the municipalities that did not respond to the survey.

Municipalities collected homelessness data from one or more sources: social services registers, housing applicant registers of municipal rental housing companies, and service providers' customer registers. Some municipalities use Kela's Social Assistance Register or the Digital and/or Population Data Services Agency's Population Information Register to obtain and verify homelessness data.

## 1.1 Interpretation of results

Despite its apparent accuracy, the data on the number of homeless persons presented in the report is indicative, as the municipalities' methods of gathering information and assessment criteria differ from each other. In addition, the data presented by one municipality in different years may also vary in terms of accuracy.

For example, in 2024, the City of Tampere counted the homeless in closer cooperation with the Pirkanmaa wellbeing services county, which may partially explain why the number of homeless people in the statistics is higher than before. That said, the increased homelessness in Tampere cannot be explained by more comprehensive information sources alone.

The group of respondents may also vary from year to year, as not all municipalities may respond to the homelessness survey every year. For instance, Rovaniemi and Seinäjoki did not respond to the 2023 survey, but reported a total number of 130 homeless people in the area in the 2024 survey. In all likelihood, there were homeless people in both municipalities in 2023 even though the figures for 2023 are missing from the report.

For more information on the limitations of the material and the interpretation of the information contained in the report, see Chapter 6.

## 1.2 Definition of homelessness

The definition of homelessness used in Ara's homelessness survey follows the ETHOS Light classification (*European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion*) which is commonly used in the EU.

A person is considered **homeless**, if they do not have their own home (rented or owned residence) and who, due to the lack of a dwelling, live in one of the following:

1. outdoors, in stairwells or in overnight shelters
2. in dormitories or accommodation establishments
3. in welfare home type housing units, rehabilitation units, hospitals or other institutions
4. temporarily with friends and relatives.

A person is considered **long-term homeless**, if they have been homeless for at least one year or repeatedly homeless within the last three years. In addition, they have either a social or health problem that makes it difficult to find housing or their homelessness has been prolonged due to a lack of functional housing solutions or support services. In cases of long-term homelessness, the emphasis is on the need for assistance and treatment – the length of time is of secondary importance.

Definitions of homelessness are described in more detail in Appendix 3.

## 2 Homelessness started to increase in 2024

Based on the data reported by the municipalities that responded to the survey, there were a total of 3,806 alone-living homeless people in Finland (situation on 15 November 2024). Of them, 1,010 were long-term homeless. There were 110 homeless families. Compared to the previous year, there were 377 more homeless people living alone (Table 1).

**Table 1.**

Homelessness in 2024 and the change compared to 2023.

Form of homelessness	2024	Change
Homeless - living alone	3806	377
Long-term homeless*	1010	-8
Homeless families*	110	-13

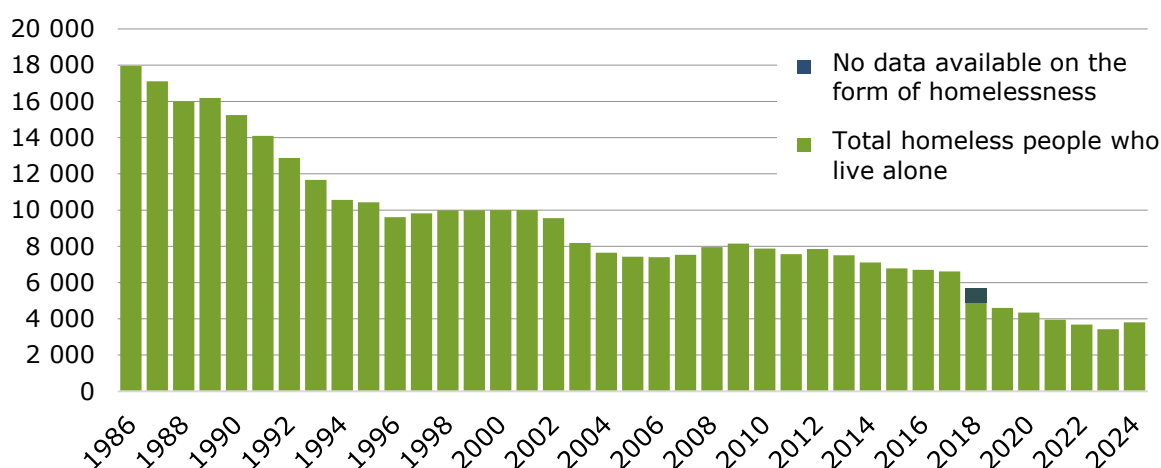
\* The number of long-term homeless people is included in the number of homeless people living alone. Homeless families include families with children and childless couples.

This is the first time since 2012 when, based on the information submitted in the homelessness survey, the number of homeless people has increased from the previous year (Figure 1).

As the main reason for this, the majority of the municipalities with increased homelessness quoted the lack of small and affordable homes, reduced Kela benefits as well as high housing costs and other costs of living. An increase in payment defaults and rent arrears makes it even harder to get a home. Smaller municipalities also reported a lack of affordable housing, with many municipalities explaining that there were no or not enough homes within Kela's limits available.

See Appendix 4 for selected views of cities regarding the homelessness situation and the measures taken by municipalities and wellbeing services counties to influence the situation.

**Figure 1.** Homelessness in Finland 1986-2024.

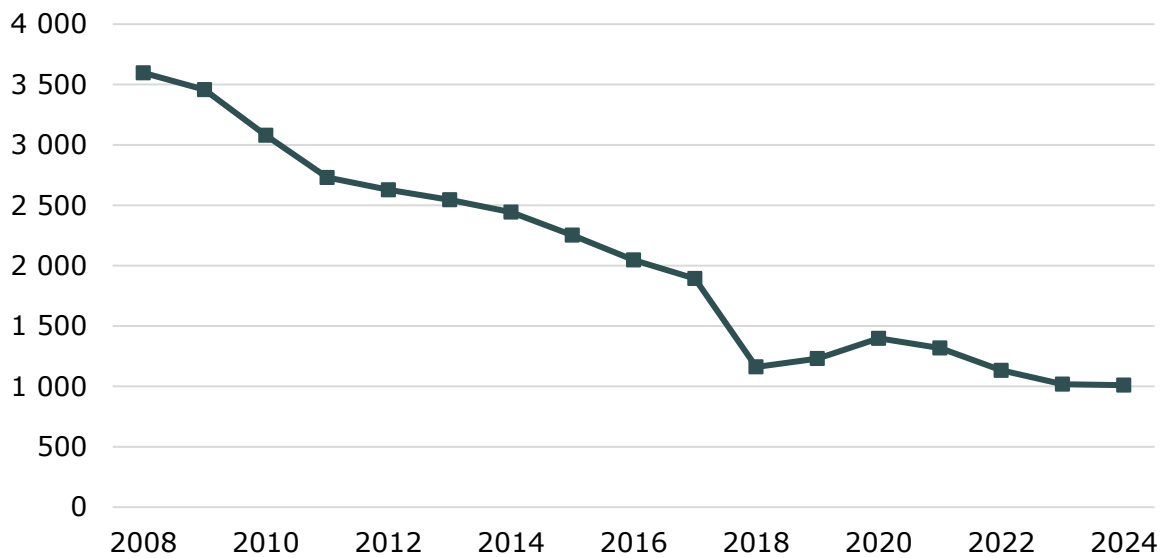


Homelessness in Finland has decreased by about 80% since 1986, when the first survey on homelessness was conducted (Figure 1). Helsinki specified its statistical method in 2018, which is why the figures are not fully comparable to previous years. For more information on the change, see Chapter 6.

### Long-term homelessness in Finland

Information on long-term homelessness has been collected from municipalities since 2008. Recognising long-term homelessness requires more consideration than recognising homelessness. For example, reasons leading to homelessness and the residence history of the homeless person over a longer period of time must be examined. As a result, not all municipalities are able to provide reliable estimates of long-term homelessness. The figures describing long-term homelessness should therefore be taken with a grain of salt. The actual number may be somewhat higher.

**Figure 2.** Long-term homelessness in Finland 2008–2024.

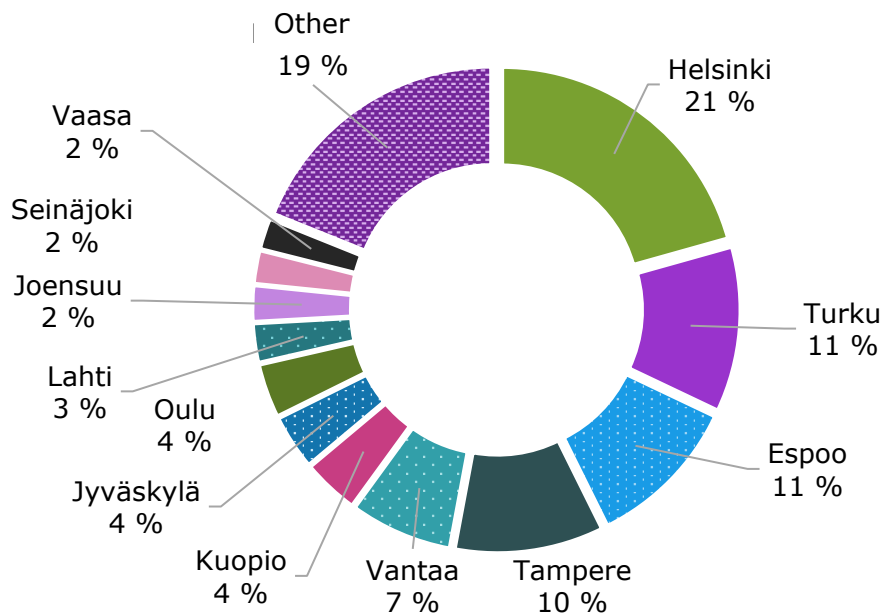


Based on the data reported by municipalities, long-term homelessness decreased by about 70% between 2008 and 2024 (Figure 2). The number of the long-term homeless remained at the same level as the year before. Out of all the homeless living alone, the long-term homeless made up approximately 27%.

### 3 Homelessness has increased in large cities

Homelessness is concentrated in large cities. Out of homeless people living alone, 20% were in Helsinki. After Helsinki, Turku, Espoo and Tampere had the highest percentage of homeless people. Together, these four cities encompass more than half of the country's homeless. However, the number of homeless people does not fully correspond with the populations of municipalities. For example, the number of homeless people in Joensuu, Seinäjoki and Vaasa was more than double compared to Pori, which has a larger population (Figure 3).

**Figure 3.** Cities with the highest number of homeless people in 2024.



### 1.3 Homelessness in relation to the population of the region

When looking at the number of homeless people in relation to the population in the region, the highest proportions of homeless people were in

- Turku (2.3 homeless persons per 1,000 residents)
- Vaasa (1.7)
- Tampere (1.6)

The proportions include homeless people living alone as well as homeless families and couples.

### 1.4 Development of homelessness in cities

The most homeless people were in the nine major cities plus Joensuu, Seinäjoki and Vaasa. Compared with the year before, homelessness increased in all of them barring Espoo, Vantaa and Oulu.

The greatest increase in homelessness occurred in Tampere, with 117 homeless people more than in 2023. In the other cities on the table, the average increase was 20–50.



For more detailed information on all municipalities that responded to the survey, see Appendix 1.

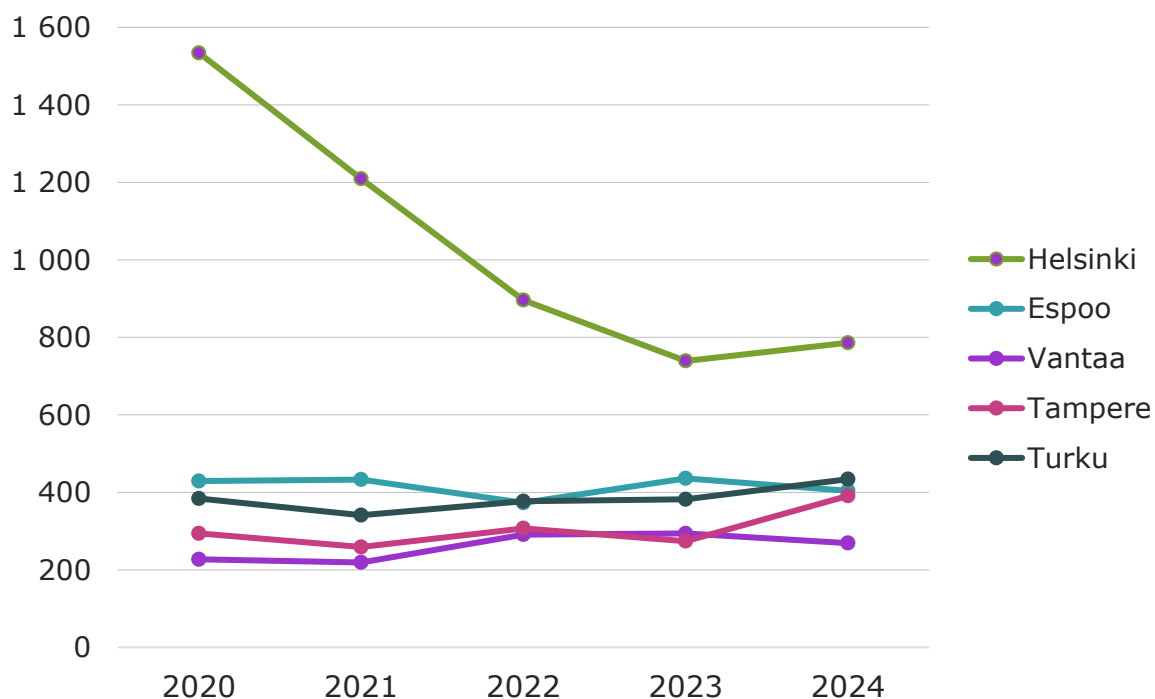
**Table 2.** Cities with the highest number of homeless people in 2024 and the change from 2023.

Town/city	Homeless - living alone	Change
Helsinki	786	47
Turku	434	52
Espoo	404	-32
Tampere	391	117
Vantaa	269	-25
Kuopio	148	7
Oulu	142	-1
Jyväskylä	144	26
Lahti	103	13
Joensuu	95	10
Seinäjoki	88	not known
Vaasa	82	27

Previously, Helsinki was the only major city where homelessness had systematically declined in the last few years. Now, homelessness in Helsinki also started to slightly increase.

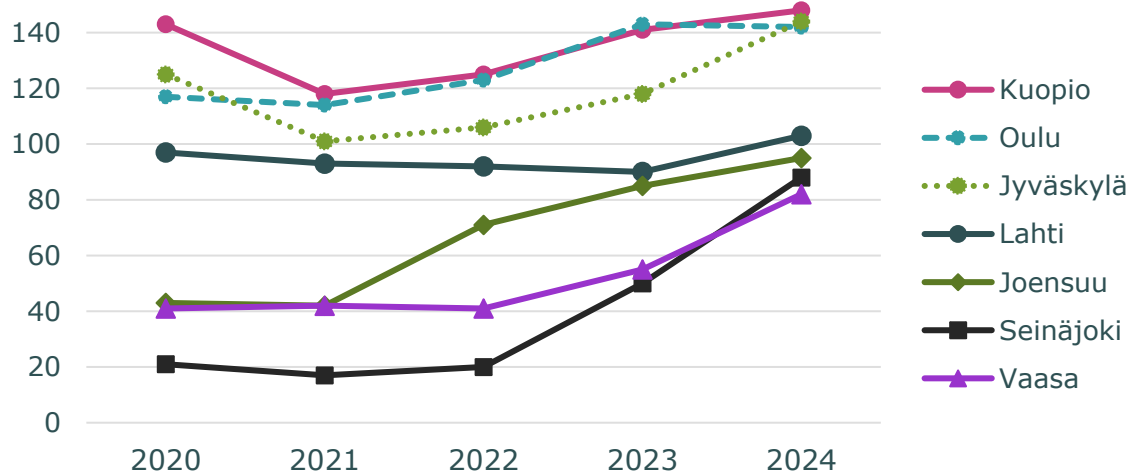
**Figure 4.**

Cities with the highest number of homeless people in 2020–2024.



**Figure 5.**

The development in other cities with the highest number of homeless people in 2024.



## 1.5 Development of long-term homelessness in large cities

Long-term homelessness is still focused in the largest cities. Changes in the number of the long-term homeless varied. The biggest change occurred in Tampere, where the number of long-term homeless more than doubled from the previous year (Table 3).

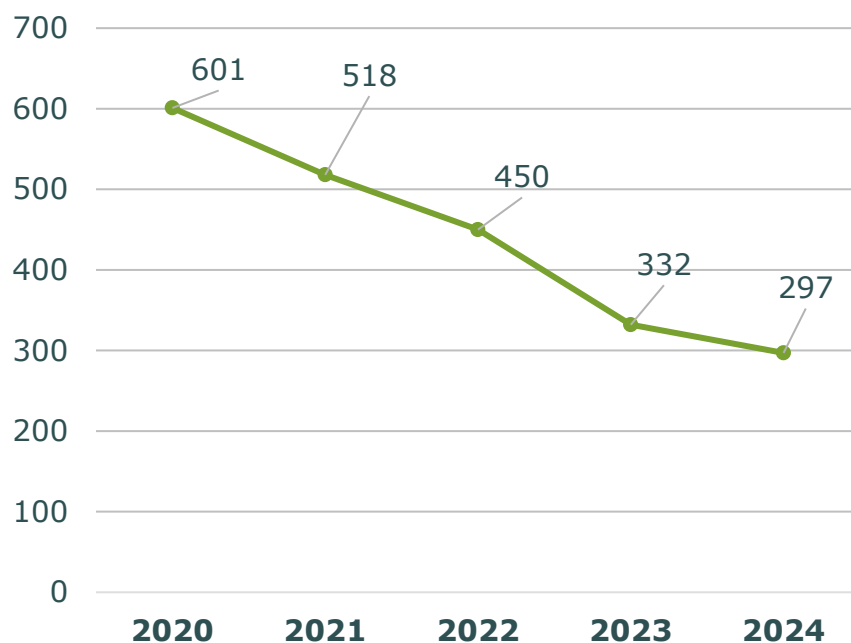
**Table 3.** Cities with the highest number of long-term homeless people in 2024 and the change from 2023.

Town/city	Long-term homeless	Change
Helsinki	297	-35
Espoo	110	6
Tampere	92	59
Kuopio	83	10
Turku	67	-19
Oulu	63	-1
Jyväskylä	56	16
Vantaa	38	-26
Lahti	20	-7

Of the large cities, long-term homelessness between 2020 and 2024 declined most in Helsinki. Elsewhere, the change has been variable (Figures 6 & 7).

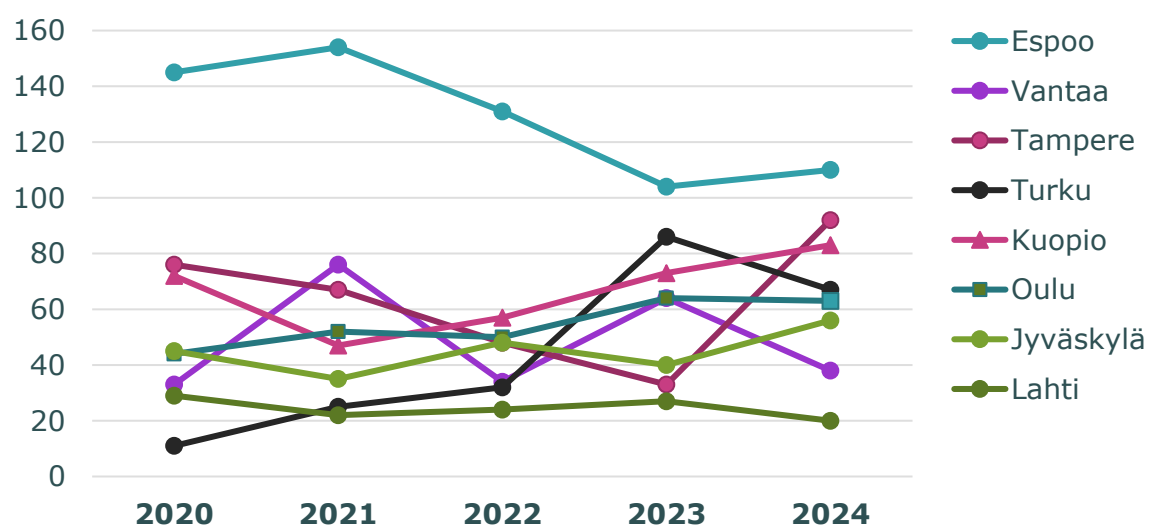
**Figure 6.**

Long-term homelessness in Helsinki 2020–2024.



**Figure 7.**

The development in other cities with the highest number of long-term homeless people in 2024.



## 1.6 Development of homeless families with children

Espoo, Helsinki and Vaasa had the highest number of homeless families with children. The number of homeless families with children in Vaasa even exceeded that of Turku and Tampere. Quantitatively, however, the number of homeless families with children in said cities was lower than in 2023, with the exception of Tampere (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Cities with the highest number of homeless families with children and the change from 2023 (in brackets).

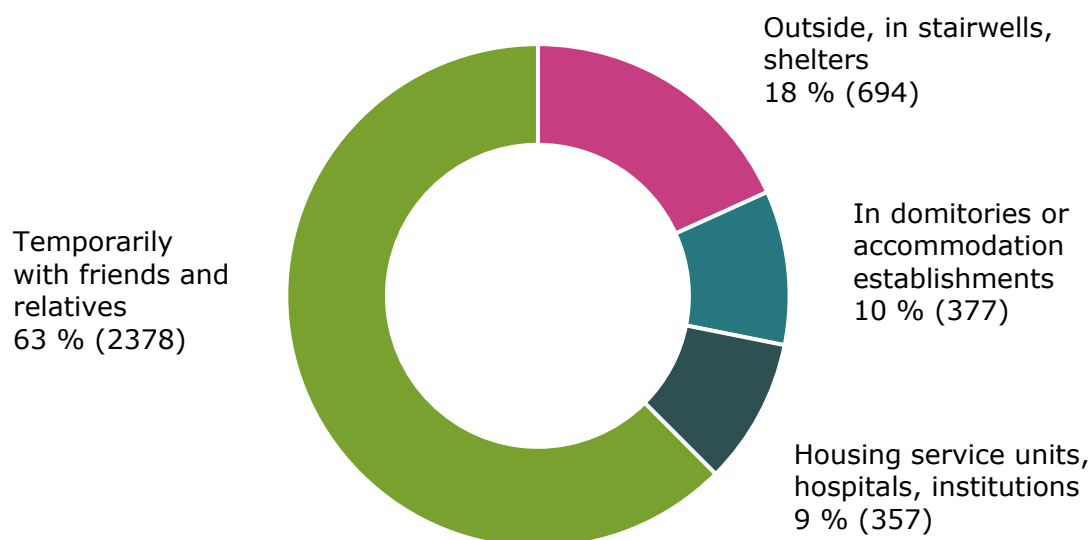
Municipality	Homeless families with children	Families with children
<b>Espoo</b>	12 (-12)	24 (-21)
<b>Helsinki</b>	10 (-22)	23 (-42)
<b>Vaasa</b>	9 (-4)	20 (-3)
<b>Turku</b>	7 (-4)	11 (-10)
<b>Tampere</b>	6 (1)	8 (4)

Not all municipalities, including Vantaa, are able to provide information regarding homeless families. This makes it difficult to estimate how commonplace the homelessness of families with children is on a national scale or how many children are affected by homelessness.

## 4 Most homeless people are staying temporarily with friends or relatives

Approximately two thirds of homeless people living alone (2,378 people) stay temporarily with friends or relatives (Figure 8).

**Figure 8.** Forms of homelessness in 2024.



The number of people temporarily staying with friends and relatives increased from the previous year. There were 239 people more than in 2023. Staying outdoors, in stairways, shelters and similar also increased by roughly the same amount compared to the previous year. On the other hand, the number of residents in dormitories or accommodation establishments and the number of residents in institutional units decreased from the previous year (Table 5).

Not all municipalities are able to provide information on homeless people in "Dormitories or accommodation establishments" and "Housing services units, hospitals, institutions".

**Table 5.** Forms of homelessness in 2024 and the change compared to 2023.

Form of homelessness	Volume	Change
Temporarily with friends or relatives	2378	239
Outside, in stairwells, shelters etc.	694	230
In dormitories or accommodation establishments	377	-37
Housing service units, hospitals, institutions	357	-55

Among long-term homeless people, staying outdoors, in staircases and overnight shelters was more common than among all homeless people living alone, while staying with friends and relatives was less common (Table 6).

**Table 6.** Forms of homelessness amongst those living alone and long-term homeless people in 2024.

Form of homelessness	Out of homeless living alone (%)	Out of long-term homeless (%)
Temporarily with friends or relatives	62	52
Outside, in stairwells, shelters etc.	18	21
In dormitories or accommodation establishments	10	15
Housing service units, hospitals, institutions	9	12

## 1.7 Number of people living outdoors has increased

An alarming change taking place in all of the major cities except Lahti is the increasing number of homeless people living outside, in staircases,

shelters, etc. In Helsinki, there were nearly 100 more of them compared to the previous year. The number of people living outdoors or in staircases or shelters is also significantly high in Joensuu and Rovaniemi. Table 7 shows the cities with the highest number of homeless people living outdoors in 2024.

In terms of other forms of homelessness, the changes vary. When interpreting these figures, it should also be kept in mind that not all municipalities have reliable information on homeless people living in dormitories or accommodation establishments, or homeless people in care home-type housing service units, rehabilitation units, hospitals or other institutions.

**Table 7.** Cities with the highest number of homeless people living outdoors, in staircases, shelters, etc., and other forms of homelessness in 2024. The change from 2023 is indicated inside the brackets.

Municipality	Outside, in stairwells, shelters etc.	Temporarily with relatives and friends	In dormitories or accommodation establishments	Housing service units, hospitals, institutions
Helsinki	200 (98)	244 (42)	185 (-40)	157 (-53)
Tampere	75 (37)	293 (63)	5 (3)	18 (14)
Vantaa	73 (27)	172 (-35)	24 (-17)	0 (0)
Oulu	62 (7)	80 (-8)	not known	not known
Joensuu	48* (46)	30 (26)	7 (unknown)	10 (13)
Espoo	44 (5)	267 (-47)	67 (15)	26 (-5)
Turku	42 (16)	309 (34)	26 (1)	57 (1)
Jyväskylä	22 (4)	120 (28)	2 (1)	0 (-7)
Lahti	19 (-1)	55 (4)	26 (12)	3 (-2)
Rovaniemi	18 (unknown)	16 (unknown)	2 (unknown)	6 (unknown)
Kuopio	17 (6)	131 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
<b>Whole country</b>	<b>694 (230)</b>	<b>2378 (239)</b>	<b>377 (-37)</b>	<b>357 (-55)</b>

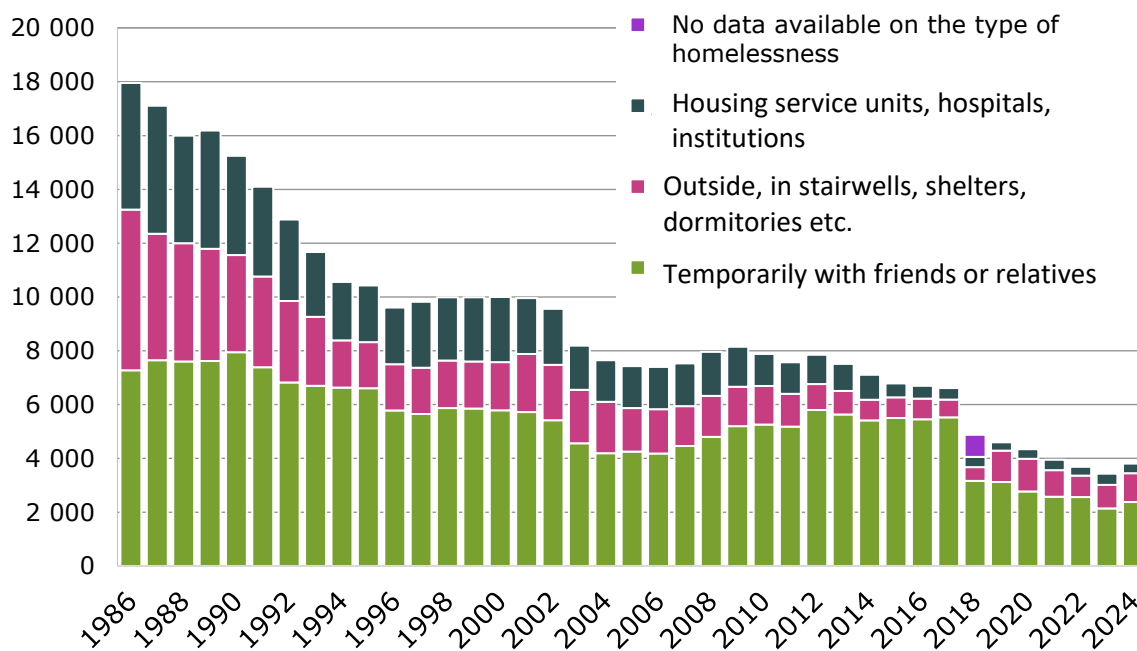
\* In Joensuu, the number of people living outdoors includes 18 homeless people whose location is unknown



Figure 9 below combines the categories "Outdoors, in staircases, shelters, etc." and "Dormitories or accommodation establishments". In many countries, only homeless people in these categories count as homeless.

In Finland, the share of the above-mentioned categories of the homeless has decreased significantly since 1986, but between 2023 and 2024, the number increased by nearly 200 from 878 to 1,071 homeless people. Compared to 2023, the number of those staying temporarily with friends or relatives also increased by more than 200 from 2,139 to 2,378 homeless people.

**Figure 9.** Development of different forms of homelessness 1986–2024.



## 5 Number of homeless immigrants decreased

The number of homeless women and young people under the age of 25 increased from the previous year. The number of homeless women increased by 72 and the number of homeless young people increased by 25. The number of homeless men, on the other hand, increased by more than 300 from the year before. Women make up 22% and young people make up 15% (Table 8) of the homeless.

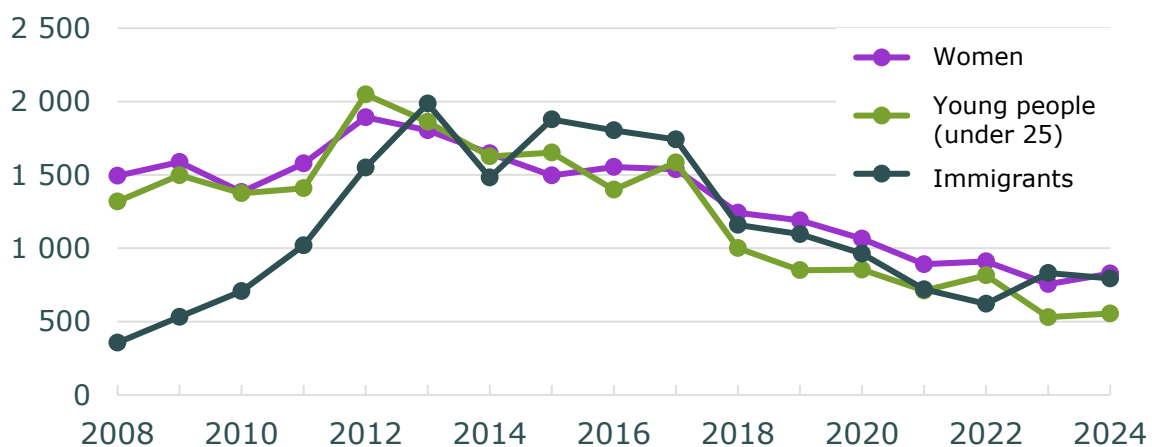
There were 794 homeless immigrants, which is 37 fewer than in 2023. They make up 21% of the homeless.

**Table 8.** Homeless women, men, young people and immigrants in 2024 and the change from the previous year.

The homeless	Volume	Change	Share of all homeless people living alone
Women	827	72	22 %
Men	2979	<b>305</b>	78 %
Young people (under 25-year-olds)	555	25	15 %
Immigrants	794	<b>-37</b>	21 %

\* The numbers of young people and immigrants overlap and are included in the numbers of women and men.

**Figure 10.** Homeless women, young people and immigrants 2008–2024.



## 6 Limitations and benefits of the survey

The data collected provide a point-form picture of homelessness on one day. For example, homeless people who have found a place to stay on the day before the date are not included in the data, even if they had been homeless for the whole of the previous year. Despite its limitations, the cross-sectional method is also used elsewhere in Europe to monitor homelessness.

The information on the number of homeless people presented in the report is indicative, as the municipalities' information acquisition methods and assessment criteria differ from each other. In addition, the information presented by the same municipality in different years may vary in terms of accuracy. Not all municipalities respond to the homelessness survey every year, which is why the group of respondents may vary from year to year.

It should also be noted that the City of Helsinki changed the way homelessness is recorded in 2018, which significantly changed the number of homeless people in Helsinki. As the number of homeless people in Helsinki is a significant part of the homeless in the whole country, the figures for the number of homeless people in the whole country are not fully comparable to those prior to 2018.

Despite the limitations of the data, it is worth monitoring trends and major changes in homelessness over the long term. The information provides a good basis for monitoring the municipality's homelessness work and planning services and housing offering.

Many of the municipalities that responded to Ara's homelessness survey use the data they have collected in the preparation of housing policy programmes, and some municipalities collect homelessness data for their own use at a more detailed level than Ara requests in the annual homelessness survey.

## **1.8 Homelessness data collected through surveys since 1986**

The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland Ara has collected information from municipalities on homelessness since 1986. Information on long-term homelessness has been collected since 2008. The information published by Ara does not have the status of Official Statistics of Finland (OSF), and the collection of homelessness data is not regulated at the legislative level. The collection of homelessness data is based on the municipalities volunteering the information.

Finland differs from other Nordic countries in the form of recording homelessness data where the statistics on homelessness are based on the utilisation of register data. In 2023, Statistics Finland examined the possibility of carrying out a homelessness survey on the basis of register data.

## Appendix 1.

### Data on homelessness by municipality

#### Homeless people living alone by category on 15 November 2024

Municipality	Total number of people living alone	Long-term homeless	Women	Young people	Immigrants
Helsinki	786	297	228	71	259
Turku	434	67	100	96	137
Espoo	404	110	71	81	125
Tampere	391	92	86	68	69
Vantaa	269	38	77	18	97
Kuopio	148	83	27	15	5
Jyväskylä	144	56	28	26	14
Oulu	142	63	19	29	9
Lahti	103	20	13	13	11
Joensuu	95	9	12	14	8
Seinäjoki	88	0	0	0	0
Vaasa	82	6	25	21	22
Pori	47	16	6	15	1
Rovaniemi	42	0	11	12	4
Hyvinkää	37	1	12	6	1
Salo	37	3	1	1	0
Kotka	36	16	9	6	2
Riihimäki	34	3	10	7	1
Kirkkonummi	29	5	7	0	5
Forssa	25	9	3	2	1
Hämeenlinna	25	0	0	0	0
Jakobstad	21	7	3	7	5
Porvoo	21	0	5	5	0

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Total number of people living alone</b>	<b>Long-term homeless</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Young people</b>	<b>Immigrants</b>
Kouvola	18	17	4	0	0
Kajaani	17	10	3	2	0
Kangasala	16	1	2	5	0
Kerava	15	3	6	1	3
Savonlinna	15	9	0	2	0
Kaarina	13	2	5	3	4
Rauma	13	1	0	0	0
Vihti	13	13	1	1	0
Sastamala	12	0	0	0	0
Kokkola	11	6	5	5	0
Ylivieska	11	0	0	0	0
Kitee	10	1	0	0	6
Inari	9	1	3	1	0
Järvenpää	9	5	2	0	0
Siilinjärvi	9	0	4	6	1
Tornio	9	0	3	0	0
Tuusula	9	2	2	2	0
Ylöjärvi	8	3	1	0	0
Suonenjoki	7	0	3	1	0
Jämsä	6	4	2	2	0
Liminka	6	3	1	0	0
Loviisa	6	0	0	0	0
Muhos	6	1	1	0	0
Nurmijärvi	6	0	1	0	0
Valkeakoski	6	2	0	0	0
Enontekiö	5	5	1	1	0
Heinola	5	0	1	1	1
Kempele	5	0	0	0	0
Kärsämäki	5	0	1	0	0
Liperi	5	0	0	0	0

Municipality	Total number of people living alone	Long-term homeless	Women	Young people	Immigrants
Toivakka	5	0	1	0	0
Ulvila	5	0	2	1	0
Laitila	4	1	1	0	3
Lieto	4	1	3	1	0
Mynämäki	4	4	0	0	0
Hattula	3	0	0	2	0
Janakkala	3	0	8	2	0
Kangasniemi	3	3	0	0	0
Mäntsälä	3	0	3	1	0
Nivala	3	0	1	1	0
Pirkkala	3	0	0	0	0
Punkalaidun	3	0	0	0	0
Pyhtää	3	0	1	0	0
Varkaus	3	0	0	0	0
Haapajärvi	2	0	0	0	0
Hanko	2	2	0	0	0
Harjavalta	2	0	0	0	0
Ikaalinen	2	0	0	0	0
Imatra	2	0	0	0	0
Kauhajoki	2	0	0	0	0
Kauniainen	2	0	0	0	0
Lapua	2	0	1	0	0
Nurmes	2	2	0	0	0
Orimattila	2	0	0	1	0
Petäjävesi	2	2	0	0	0
Pudasjärvi	2	1	0	0	0
Halsua	1	1	0	0	0
Kurikka	1	0	0	0	0
Kuusamo	1	1	0	0	0
Ranua	1	1	0	0	0

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Total number of people living alone</b>	<b>Long-term homeless</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Young people</b>	<b>Immigrants</b>
Sievi	1	0	0	0	0
Suomussalmi	1	0	1	0	0
Tyrnävä	1	0	0	0	0
Utajärvi	1	1	0	0	0
<b>Whole country</b>	<b>3806</b>	<b>1010</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>794</b>



## Municipalities with no homeless people on 15 November 2024

- Alajärvi
- Alavieska
- Alavus
- Asikkala
- Askola
- Aura
- Enonkoski
- Eura
- Eurajoki
- Evijärvi
- Haapavesi
- Hailuoto
- Hamina
- Hankasalmi
- Hartola
- Hausjärvi
- Heinävesi
- Humppila
- Hyrynsalmi
- Hämeenkyrö
- Ii
- Iitti
- Ilmajoki
- Ilomantsi
- Inkoo
- Isojoki
- Isokyrö
- Joroinen
- Juuka
- Juupajoki
- Juva
- Jämijärvi
- Kaavi
- Kalajoki
- Kankaanpää
- Kannus
- Karstula
- Karvia
- Kaskinen
- Kauhava
- Kaustinen
- Keitele
- Keminmaa
- Kihniö
- Kittilä
- Kiuruvesi
- Kivijärvi
- Kokemäki
- Kolari
- Konnevesi
- Kontiolahti
- Korsnäs
- Koski
- Kruunupyy
- Kuortane
- Kyyjärvi
- Kärkölä
- Laihia
- Lapinjärvi
- Lapinlahti
- Lappajärvi
- Lappeenranta
- Laukaa
- Lemi
- Lempäälä
- Leppävirta
- Lestijärvi
- Loimaa
- Lumijoki
- Luoto
- Maalahti
- Marttila
- Masku
- Merikarvia
- Miehikkälä
- Multia
- Mustasaari
- Mänttä-Vilppula
- Mäntyharju
- Naantali
- Nokia
- Nousiainen
- Närpiö
- Oripää
- Orivesi
- Outokumpu
- Padasjoki
- Paimio
- Paltamo
- Parikkala
- Parkano
- Pedersöre municipality
- Pelkosenniemi
- Pello
- Perho
- Pertunmaa
- Pieksämäki
- Pielavesi
- Pihtipudas
- Polvijärvi
- Pomarkku
- Posio
- Puolanka
- Puumala
- Pyhäjoki
- Pälkäne
- Pöytyä
- Raasepori
- Rantasalmi
- Rautalampi
- Rautavaara
- Rautjärvi
- Reisjärvi
- Ristijärvi
- Ruokolahti
- Ruovesi
- Rusko
- Rääkkylä
- Saarijärvi
- Salla
- Sauvo
- Savukoski
- Siikainen
- Siikajoki
- Siikalatva
- Simo
- Sodankylä
- Soini
- Somero
- Sonkajärvi
- Sotkamo
- Sulkava
- Säkö

- |               |                 |              |
|---------------|-----------------|--------------|
| • Taipalsaari | • Toholampi     | • Viitasaari |
| • Taivalkoski | • Urjala        | • Vimpeli    |
| • Tervo       | • Utsjoki       | • Virolahti  |
| • Tervola     | • Uusikaarlepyy | • Virrat     |
| • Teuva       | • Veteli        | • Ylitornio  |
| • Tohmajärvi  | • Vieremä       | • Ähtäri     |

## **Municipalities which did not respond to the homelessness survey**

- |                      |             |                |
|----------------------|-------------|----------------|
| • Akaa               | • Kuhmoinen | • Pyhäranta    |
| • Hirvensalmi        | • Kustavi   | • Raahe        |
| • Hollola            | • Lieksa    | • Raisio       |
| • Huittinen          | • Lohja     | • Savitaipale  |
| • Iisalmi            | • Loppi     | • Sipoo        |
| • Jokioinen          | • Luhanka   | • Siuntio      |
| • Jomala             | • Luumäki   | • Sysmä        |
| • Joutsa             | • Merijärvi | • Taivassalo   |
| • Kannonkoski        | • Mikkeli   | • Tammela      |
| • Karijoki           | • Muonio    | • Tuusniemi    |
| • Karkkila           | • Muurame   | • Uurainen     |
| • Kemi               | • Myrskylä  | • Uusikaupunki |
| • Kemijärvi          | • Nakkila   | • Vaala        |
| • Kemiönsaari        | • Oulainen  | • Vehmaa       |
| • Keuruu             | • Parainen  | • Vesanto      |
| • Kinnula            | • Pornainen | • Vesilahti    |
| • Kristiinankaupunki | • Pukkila   | • Vöyri        |
| • Kuhmo              | • Pyhäjärvi | • Ypäjä        |
|                      | • Pyhäntä   | • Äänekoski    |

## Homeless families and couples on 15 November 2024

Municipality	Families	Families with children	Couples	Families and couples, total (number)
Espoo	12	24	3	15
Helsinki	10	23	0	10
Vaasa	9	20	4	13
Turku	7	11	9	16
Tampere	6	8	2	8
Joensuu	5	6	2	7
Hyvinkää	3	3	2	5
Kerava	2	2	0	2
Kuopio	1	1	2	3
Oulu	1	2	0	1
Seinäjoki	1	not known	1	2
Salo	1	not known	2	3
Kotka	1	2	0	1
Riihimäki	1	2	0	1
Jakobstad	1	2	1	2
Kouvola	1	1	0	1
Järvenpää	1	1	0	1
Nurmijärvi	1	1	0	1
Valkeakoski	1	1	0	1
Toivakka	1	1	0	1
Laitila	1	1	0	1
Lieto	1	1	0	1
Hattula	1	1	0	1
<b>Whole country</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>110</b>

## Appendix 2. Homelessness 1986–2023

Year	Outdoors, in temporary shelters and dormitories etc.	Institutional units	Temporarily with friends and relatives	Total homeless people who live alone	Homeless families
1,986	5,970	4,712	7,276	17,958	1,876
1987	4,700	4,760	7,650	17,110	1,370
1988	4,400	4,000	7,600	16,000	1,200
1989	4,170	4,400	7,620	16,190	870
1990	3,610	3,690	7,950	15,250	800
1991	3,370	3,340	7,390	14,100	700
1992	3,030	3,030	6,820	12,880	570
1993	2,560	2,410	6,700	11,670	250
1994	1,760	2,170	6,630	10,560	380
1995	1,710	2,110	6,610	10,430	560
1996	1,720	2,110	5,780	9,610	360
1997	1,720	2,450	5,650	9,820	600
1998	1,770	2,350	5,870	9,990	820
1999	1,750	2,390	5,850	9,990	780
2000	1,790	2,420	5,790	10,000	780
2001	2,160	2,080	5,720	10,000	780
2002	2,060	2,080	5,420	9,560	770
2003	1,990	1,640	4,560	8,190	420
2004	1,910	1,550	4,190	7,650	360
2005	1,620	1,560	4,250	7,430	360
2006	1,650	1,570	4,180	7,400	300
2007	1,480	1,590	4,460	7,530	300
2008	1,520	1,640	4,800	7,960	300
2009	1,460	1,490	5,200	8,150	320
2010	1,430	1,190	5,260	7,880	350
2011	1,221	1,171	5,180	7,572	420
2012	965	1,087	5,800	7,852	446
2013	880	1,000	5,630	7,510	420
2014	764	929	5,414	7,107	427
2015	766	516	5,503	6,785	424
2016	765	480	5,455	6,700	325
2017	659	428	5,528	6,615	214
2018*	512	378	3,165	4,882	264
2019	1,168	312	3,120	4,600	264
2020	1,210	358	2,773	4,341	201
2021	989	386	2573	3948	165
2022	794	328	2564	3686	155
2023	878	412	2139	3429	123
<b>2024</b>	<b>1071</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>2378</b>	<b>3806</b>	<b>110</b>

\*) No data available on the form of homelessness: 822. In 2018, the City of Helsinki specified its methods of collecting homelessness statistics, which reduced homelessness in Helsinki. Due to this change, the numbers are not comparable to previous years.

## Appendix 3. Definition of homelessness

### Definition of homelessness

A person is considered homeless, if they do not have their own home (rented or owned residence) and if they live:

- outside, in stairways or temporary shelters,
- in dormitories or hostels,
- in welfare home-type housing units, rehabilitation units, hospitals or other institutions, or
- temporarily with friends or relatives due to lack of housing.

### Definition of long-term homelessness

Long-term homelessness refers to a homeless person who has a significant social or a health problem, such as debt, substance abuse or mental health problems, and whose homelessness has been prolonged or is in danger of being prolonged due to a lack of conventional housing solutions and appropriate support services. Homelessness is considered long-term if it has lasted for at least one year or if the individual has repeatedly experienced homelessness over the last three years.

In cases of long-term homelessness, the emphasis is on the need for assistance and treatment – the length of time is of secondary importance.

#### Category:

#### **Outside, in stairways, temporary shelters, etc.**

This category is used for those without a permanent residence who live in and move between different temporary shelters and locations.

#### Category:

#### **In dormitories or accommodation establishments due to lack of housing**

This category includes persons residing, e.g. in a dormitory-type accommodation or an accommodation establishment, typically subject to a social services payment commitment.

**Category:****In welfare home-type housing units, rehabilitation units, hospitals or other institutions due to lack of housing**

This category comprises people who reside, for example, in the substance treatment service's rehabilitative units, various institutional treatment units, sheltered homes, etc. This list does not include separate dwellings that are covered by housing services. In these dwellings, even temporary residents are not considered to be homeless.

In welfare home units, a person is not considered homeless if they

- are there permanently for treatment purposes and are not seeking other housing solutions, or
- have signed a rental agreement with the welfare home or other type of institutional housing unit in which they reside. Individuals in welfare home units are considered to be homeless if they have a rental housing application which is currently active.

**Category:****Temporarily with friends or relatives due to lack of housing**

The category comprises those who, according to assessments or municipal data, are living temporarily at, or moving between, the homes of friends or relatives due to lacking a permanent residence. The category does not include young people who live with their parents.

- It is expected that the category **temporarily with friends or relatives** includes the largest number of people whose housing can be arranged through the general distribution of housing from a standard rental housing stock.
- In the **temporarily with friends or relatives category**, *long-term homelessness should primarily be based on social service customership*, whereby the need for services can determine whether the long-term homelessness criteria are met.
- Another 'strong indication' of long-term homelessness can also be deduced from examining the individual's housing and homelessness record over time.
- Service providers' customer data can also provide information about long-term homeless people who receive a pension and therefore do

not use the city's social welfare office. These may also include young people with substance abuse and mental health problems.

The percentages of **women, young people (below 25 years) and those with an immigrant background** who live alone will be surveyed. Those with an immigrant background includes all homeless who live alone, who are not Finnish citizens or whose mother tongue is other than Finnish or Swedish. Immigration-related information can be obtained from the population register by searching under mother tongue and place of birth.

**Category:**

**Families or couples living apart from each other or in temporary housing due to lack of housing**

This category is comprised of families and couples that are living apart from each other or in temporary housing because they do not have a shared home. They may therefore be in hostels or hotels or staying with friends or relatives. The homeless families category includes families living in emergency and temporary shelters and in crisis homes. *The* number of children belonging to a family will also be included in the data. In addition, for the homeless families category, the percentage of families with an immigrant background will be included in the data.

## **Appendix 4.**

# **Measures taken by cities and estimates of the development of homelessness**

Municipalities were asked about the homelessness measures they are taking as well as their estimates regarding the reasons of the decrease or increase of homelessness. Below is a list of direct quotes from the essential answers received from Espoo, Helsinki, Jyväskylä, Kuopio, Lahti, Oulu, Tampere, Turku and Vaasa.

### **Espoo**

"Homelessness has reduced in Espoo. However, the actual nature of homelessness/homelessness situation is not certain. In Espoo, there is a good supply of rental housing. Housing advice, which started in Espoo in 2023, has been a great help, especially to applicants from an immigrant background.

Approximately 300 new rental apartments have been completed for Espoon Asunnot. The wellbeing services county provides housing services, such as supported housing, for homeless people living alone or homeless families as well as home-based services for persons at the risk of homelessness or facing other challenges regarding successful living. The measures taken to prevent homeless include social work and social guidance."

### **Helsinki**

"The effectiveness of the Helsinki Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division's temporary housing model for families with children has been increased. In accordance with the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division's SHL 21 1 mom, the calculation includes urgently housed families with children. The Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division provides housing for families with children on the basis of daily pricing or short-term rental agreements depending on the situation and needs. During the temporary housing, the customers receive social work and social guidance directly at



home. Following the temporary housing, the model provides families with children with better access to housing subject to a non-fixed-term rental agreement. The further housing models have been developed.

During 1 January–31 October 2024, the municipality of Helsinki (981) and the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division (385) have provided housing for a total of 1,366 people living alone. For the municipality of Helsinki, the figure is greater than the year before as the criteria of resident selection have changed. During the period, the municipality of Helsinki has provided housing for 251 families and the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division has provided housing for 59 families with children.

Helsinki has provided a wide range of housing advice services pertaining to eviction prevention and the ability of homeless people to find housing. The number of customer contacts by 2024 Q3 (17,637) is significantly higher compared to the 2023 Q3 figure (9,814). The housing search workshops had 277 customers. In terms of housing advice, a new housing search service has been created for homeless customers to help homeless people without any other special support service needs or who are not subject to adult social work services. The service has been successful in acquiring 88 homes for the homeless, also reducing the number of homeless people in Helsinki. There have been 267 homes secured for customers at the risk of homelessness. The measures to prevent homelessness also include the housing advice service operating in the urban environment sector. In addition, cooperation projects related to eviction and collection processes have been developed together with the City of Helsinki.”

## **Jyväskylä**

“The increase in homelessness is around 18%, presumably the result of the recent social security cuts, rise in unemployment and rapid increase in the costs of living. According to the National Enforcement Authority Finland, the number of evictions in Jyväskylä has also increased by approximately 20% from the previous year, which also seems to reflect directly in the increase in homelessness.

The growing housing and financial challenges are also evident in the number of customers using housing advice, which is approximately a

third higher compared to last year. It has been noticeable that the residents' situation may change very suddenly, which is visible in the need for services and their timely allocation. Housing advice reaches many customers only when their living situation is already at a severe risk and the services provided by housing advice are no longer useful for the customer's situation, in which case the customer is redirected to other services, i.e. the social services provided by the wellbeing services county. The objective is to develop the operations in order to allocate the service in a timely manner when housing is put at risk, for example, due to arrears of rent. Because the customers' situations and the challenges they face are multifaceted, often the customer may temporarily need a stronger parallel service while the issues are being solved. At the moment, the resources of housing advice are primarily tailored to a one-time advice service and longer-term advice is in principle not possible with the current resources."

"The City of Jyväskylä has developed its housing advice services in a multichannel way. Jyväskylä is participating in the national programme launched in early 2024 to remove long-term homelessness. In autumn 2024, a network was put together to prevent evictions, which will launch eviction prevention pilots during 2025."

## **Kuopio**

"The supply of free, affordable housing does not meet the demand. There is not enough housing for everyone. Demand for affordable, small homes has increased as a consequence of the support cuts. The level of Kela's rent standards is too low and the absence of individual consideration affects the situation.

Housing advice in Kuopio is provided by the City of Kuopio. The city promotes the production of affordable housing, and each new state-subsidised rental housing project is also required to include small homes (with a rent level within the income support limits)."

## **Lahti**

"In terms of this sampling, long-term homelessness appears to remain fairly stable. However, in the last few years, growth has been visible in

other customer groups. It would appear that the cuts made in social security as well as the general increase in prices are visible in the customer groups living in various sheltered housing units or temporarily with relatives and friends.

The housing advice of the City of Lahti has continued to operate effectively. At least based on the first 8-month sampling, the number of evictions carried out in Lahti has decreased, although the cuts in housing and income support may not necessarily show in the eviction statistics as of yet. Indeed, the fear is that the number of evictions will start to rise. Cooperation with the local rental housing company has been deepened."

## **Oulu**

"There is no material change in the homelessness situation. As housing is found for those lacking housing, new homeless people emerge. Although investments have been made in prevention, the task is increasingly challenging in the prevailing social situation despite some minor victories (such as reducing the number of evictions).

The long-term land use policy creates the preconditions for a successful land and housing policy, such as preventing homelessness as well as affordable house prices and rents. A sufficient supply of plots enables the production of affordable ARA housing for all Oulu residents. The measures to invest in preventing homelessness include housing advice and the activities of the intermediate housing rental unit."

## **Rovaniemi**

"In Rovaniemi, the number of homeless people has varied greatly from year to year and it cannot be reliably established that homelessness has either increased or decreased. Regardless, many actors who come face-to-face with homelessness refer to reasons such as high rents, competitive rental markets resulting from, for example, phenomena arising from the tourist industry (short-term lets and the number of seasonal workers requiring housing) as well as the reduced solvency of people. People who have defaulted payments find it hard to find housing, in addition to which rent increases may raise the rent above the reasonable level specified by Kela."

## Tampere

"The increase in homelessness can be partly explained by more comprehensive information sources, although the increase of information sources alone is not enough to explain the increase in homelessness. Cuts to social benefits have made the situation even harder for people already in a vulnerable situation due to social, financial or health factors, which has also reflected in the homelessness trend. Proportionately, most significant are the restrictions made to the discretionary powers related to income support, which, based on the the homelessness calculation, have in the case of some customers directly led to homelessness.

The number of people at risk of poverty has grown, which to some degree means that more and more people seeking housing are looking for rental accommodation that is as cheap as possible. Overall, the availability of rental accommodation within the housing cost limits of income support is meagre.

Demand has increased for the wellbeing services county's social services and psychiatric services. According to demographic studies, substance use has increased in Tampere along with referrals to substitution treatment and outpatient drug treatment. On a national scale, the availability of psychiatric services in Tampere is very poor. In addition to that, the residents of Tampere do not always get access to social services when they need them. Based on the report drawn up in conjunction with the homelessness calculation, people living in particularly difficult circumstances found it hard to get access to the social services and health services that they need.

In 2024, Tampere has increased the availability of housing advice by doubling the housing advice resource from two employees to four employees. What is more, Tampere has procured housing advice services from organisations for individuals for whom the official service system does not appear as available.

The City of Tampere has transferred a total of three plots of land where the specified condition for transferring the land is to allocate individual apartments to Tampere residents who lack housing. In connection with the completion of the two latest sites, a cooperation process was established between the municipality's housing advice service, the

wellbeing services county's social services and the landlords (Y-säätiö and Tampereen vuokratalosäätiö)

With the partnership model, Tampere has been working in closer cooperation with the other members of the City Group as well as other rental housing suppliers. The model ensures, e.g. that the changes to the town plan applicable to the complementary building of the areas managed by the rental housing companies belonging to the City Group progress and that the number of housing produced by these companies is monitored. As part of the partnership model, Tampere, together with the Pirkanmaa wellbeing services county, rental housing providers, service producers and organisations, has developed a model to secure housing. Even though government parties did not want to include affordable housing production goals in the MAL agreement, the Tampere City Region municipalities retained the affordable housing production goals in accordance with the urban construction plan for the region's municipalities subject to a mutual agreement and the production of the region's municipalities is monitored.

The Pirkanmaa wellbeing services county has strengthened its own housing advice resource allocation and made housing advice services a permanent fixture of the services pursuant to the Social Welfare Act. In addition, Pirha has completed a service network plan for people undergoing rehabilitation for substance abuse or mental health issues and the homeless, which sets the targets and measures to meet the targets by 2035. Furthermore, in 2024, the wellbeing services county made plans to increase the housing on-call capacity as well as the number of services aimed at the homeless. However, they will not be implemented until next year. The Hervanta housing on-call and sheltered housing unit has been functionally developed into a Housing First unit.

The Pirkanmaa wellbeing services county and the City of Tampere have drawn up a land transfer model, in accordance with which Tampere will transfer plots of land for the use of the wellbeing services county. The Pirkanmaa service network, land use and planning interface work group started its operations in August 2024. The aim of the work group is to ensure that the municipalities will through planning make sure that land is allocated for housing for special groups, for example."

## Turku

"The opinion is that there have been no major changes in the number of homeless people. In Turku, the social services for homeless people still belong to the mental health and substance abuse services. Cooperation with landlords still happens, but the scarcity of affordable housing is visible in social services. Compared to the previous years, it takes longer to find housing. Termination of the project by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to reduce homelessness and, for example, social security cuts are evident in the increasing number of basic public services customers ending up homeless, with a failure to secure housing for them.

The general rise in living costs as well as the housing benefit cuts, for example, currently pose new challenges to the living conditions of the municipality's residents. It has also increased the risk of homelessness for new kinds of customer groups. Lowering the ceiling for Kela's acceptable living costs forces people to move into cheaper housing but, at the same time, there is barely any housing meeting the rent criteria available in the municipality."

"Last year, out of the projects proposed for the City of Turku's urban research programme, funding was granted to the 'Asunnottomuuden polut Turun seudulla – murroksista kohti sosiaalista, terveydellistä, taloudellista ja teknologista kestävyyttä' (Paths of homelessness in the Turku Region – from changes to social, health, financial and technological sustainability) study for 2024–2025. Said research project takes a look at the prevention and causes of homelessness as well as ways to influence them from a multidisciplinary point of view. The subject matter is particularly topical considering that the responsibility for arranging health services shifted from municipalities to the wellbeing services county at the start of 2023. However, municipalities are still responsible for preventive services, such as housing advice, and structural housing policy measures, of which the supply of affordable rental housing is essential for influencing homelessness. With the ongoing changes, maintaining contact between the different actors and construction are important.

On the initiative of mayor Arve and deputy mayor Muukkonen, Turku is establishing a local, cross-sectoral, multi-actor working group to prevent and reduce homelessness. The working group is starting its operations now in December.

The Turku city government made a decision on the construction of an operating model to reduce segregation and its effects. One of the five points of view on segregation is a city-level housing policy of opportunities, which is entirely the responsibility of the urban environment services entity. Homelessness is one of the themes of the housing policy entity.

The goal of Turku City is to offer housing advice to all resident groups regardless of the form of housing or housing management basis. Housing advice is procured as a service from the service provider Sosiaalisäätiö Ote sr. Ote foundation's five housing advisers are a significant addition to the housing advice offering, and the service provider is also committed to developing the service. Housing advice is a free service available to all Turku residents. In Turku, e.g. TVT Asunnot Oy and Student Village Foundation of Turku (TYS) also offer housing advice to their own tenants. Housing advisers can provide significant practical information on the reasons of homelessness, and they are tackled with the ways described above."

## **Vaasa**

"This year, the number of homeless people has increased by 45%. On average, the number is roughly 80% higher than in 2019–2022. The trend is extremely concerning.

There are many reasons behind increasing homelessness, especially rising housing and living costs as well as rent increases simultaneously with the implemented housing benefit cuts and the tightening of the housing costs of income support. In the last few years, Vaasa has been especially characterised by exceptionally strong immigration and increasing numbers of students, which has led to a noticeable lack of small and affordable rental housing. Despite the lack of rental housing, there are no non-subsidised apartment block projects under way in the city. Neither is there any normal ARA rental housing production. There are approximately 100 new student flats under construction. However, the number is inadequate for the demand.

A new phenomenon is student homelessness. In Vaasa, there is an estimated shortage of 400–500 student flats, and the situation next autumn is predicted to become worse.

Out of the medium-sized cities, Vaasa has the largest immigrant population. In the last few years, immigrants have made up approximately 25–30% of the homeless people living alone in Vaasa. In 2024, the share is estimated to be 27%. The significant immigrant population is additional grounds for specific investments made in housing for the homeless and to prevent homelessness.

The housing advisers of the City of Vaasa are continuously finding housing for people who are homeless or at a risk of becoming homeless. Cooperation with the extensive service network linked to housing advice is close. Preventive work is conducted and also tailored to different target groups, such as young people, those with an immigrant background and the elderly.

In autumn 2024, housing advice in collaboration with Ara organised an event for the local homelessness network. The main goal of the event was to devise measures to prevent and combat homelessness. As there is a great shortage of rental housing and as there are barely any available affordable rental dwellings fitting within Kela's housing benefit limits, developing temporary housing became one of the main goals. The largest city-owned rental housing company, KOy Pikipruukki, has been tasked with providing temporary housing. The adult social work of the wellbeing services county would be responsible for resident services together with Vaasa City's housing advisers. The arrangement would be in line with the Housing First principle. The core group of the Vaasa homelessness network promotes the cause.

A material flaw in the local services for the homeless is that there is no wellbeing services county day centre in the central area of the Ostrobothnia wellbeing services county, to which Vaasa belongs. In the Vaasa region of the wellbeing services county, emergency housing can be provided for one night at a time.

In Vaasa, there are 22 housing options for people in substance abuse or mental health rehabilitation. The precondition for supportive housing is committing to the required services, i.e. it is not a case of a Housing First approach. There is a queue for supportive housing, and the queue is long enough to necessitate more housing. In the wellbeing services county in Vaasa, there is a housing services unit with 9 places for adults who abuse substances on a regular basis, who consequently find independent living



highly challenging and who need a lot of support and guidance to cope with daily life. Third-sector actors have open groups, for example, for patients in psychiatric rehabilitation and people with an immigrant background.”