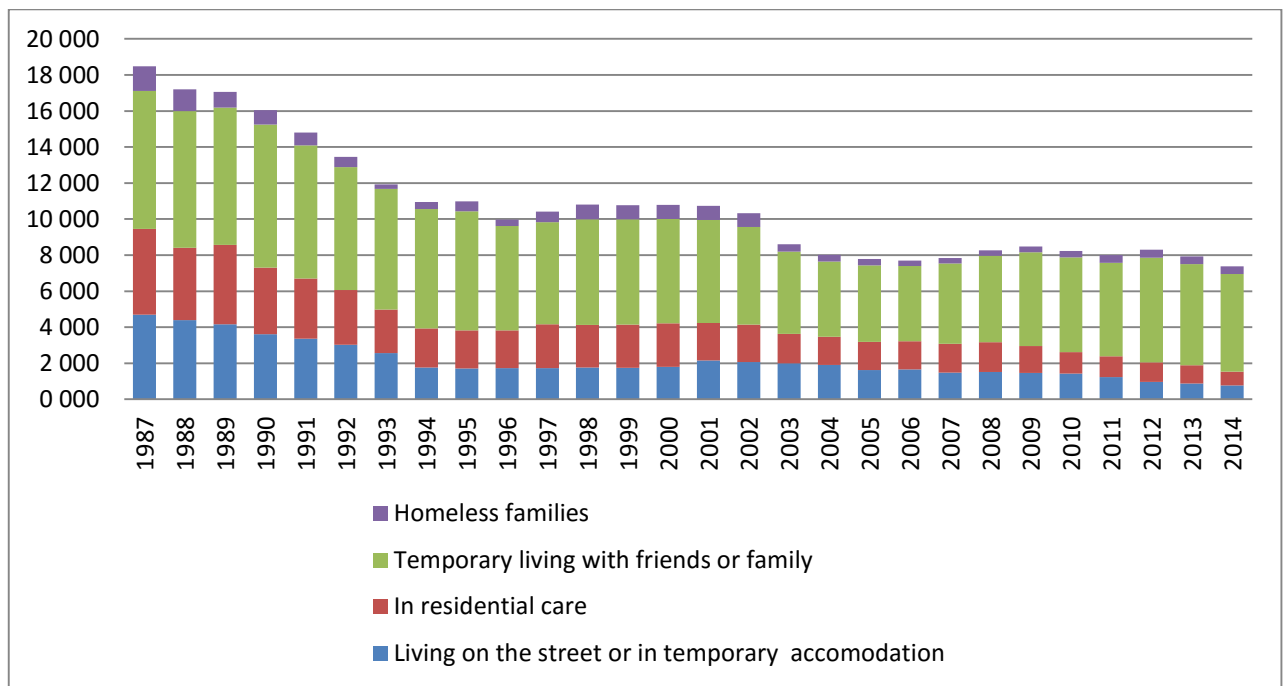


Report 1/2015

# Homelessness in Finland 2014

29/01/2015



Graph 1. The number of homeless people for the period 1987–2014

*Housing market survey prepared by ARA — the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland, on the basis of data regarding homelessness in the year 2014. The survey was completed by 282 cities and municipalities in mainland Finland, with a response rate of 92.8%. The report addresses developments in homelessness by making comparisons with the previous year. The cut-off point for this statistical comparison was the 15th of November 2014. Furthermore, 11 cities were examined in more detail. These cities are participating in an ongoing programme aimed at reducing the number of long-term homeless people. (PAAVO II project). Location-specific data on homelessness can be found in the appendices to this report.*

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## **1 Homelessness in Finland in 2014**

According to the housing market survey conducted by ARA at the end of 2014, there were a total of 8,316 homeless people living in Finland. Of these people, 7,107 live alone and 427 are members of a family, in which there are a total of 742 adults and 467 children. Overall, there was a fall in the number of homeless people from the previous year (-368). The number of homeless people living alone fell by 354 persons, but there were 10 more homeless families than in the previous year. (cf. Table 1)

Homelessness was a factor in 122 cities and municipalities in mainland Finland in 2014. The corresponding figure for 2013 was 116. In relation to the overall population, the highest level of homelessness was in the Greater Helsinki region. In terms of the number of homeless people per one thousand inhabitants in Helsinki, there were 5.6, in Espoo 2.4 and in Vantaa 2.6. There were also a lot of homeless people in relation to the overall populations of Riihimäki (1.8), Kotka (1.5), and Raisio (1.5).

## **2 There was a fall in the number of homeless people in Helsinki and Lahti**

The number of homeless people in Helsinki fell by a total of 600 persons in 2014. This was mirrored in Lahti, where there were 45 fewer homeless people than in 2013. Vantaa saw an overall rise in the number of homeless people despite a fall in the amount of long-term homeless. Espoo also experienced a rise in homelessness across the board. There was a slight rise in the number of homeless people in Turku. On the whole, homelessness in Tampere increased, but there was a down-turn in the number of long-term homeless people. The total number of homeless people also increased in Oulu. The number of homeless people in living in Joensuu remained close to that in 2013. There were rises in homelessness in Jyväskylä, Kuopio, and Pori. (cf. Table 2)

## **3 Long-term homelessness in 2014<sup>1</sup>**

As of November 2014, the total number of long-term homeless people in Finland was 2,443 persons. This constitutes a 4% fall from the previous year (approx. -100 persons). In Helsinki, the number of long-term homeless people fell by 195 persons; in other words a fall of almost 25% in comparison with 2013. This fall was mirrored in Vantaa (-16 persons). In contrast, the number of long-term homeless people in Espoo rose by 80 persons. Overall, there was a total of approx. 1,650 long-term homeless people living in the Greater Helsinki region as of November 2014. This represents 67% of the total for the whole of Finland.

In total, long-term homelessness decreased in the PAAVO cities and municipalities (-114 persons). In addition to Helsinki and Vantaa, Tampere and Lahti also experienced a fall in the number of long-term homeless people.

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<sup>1</sup> A person is defined as being long-term homeless if they have continued to remain without a fixed abode or have been placed under threat of an extended period without a fixed abode as a result of social or health-related factors for more than one year OR they have repeatedly experienced homelessness over the course of a three-year period.

Table 1. The number of homeless people by group 2014.

Finland	2014		Annual change (No. Of persons)		Annual change (%)	
	Living alone	Long-term homeless living alone	Living alone	Long-term homeless living alone	Living alone	Long-term homeless living alone
On the street, in doorways, emergency shelter etc.	362	176	30	30	9,0 %	20,5 %
In private or residential housing	402	175	-145	-53	-26,5 %	-23,2 %
Living in an institution/home	774	473	-45	-58	-5,5 %	-10,9 %
Released prisoner (homeless)	155	69	-23	1	-13,0 %	1,5 %
Temporarily living with friends or family	5 414	1 550	-212	-22	-3,8 %	-1,4 %
<b>IN FINLAND, total</b>	<b>7 107</b>	<b>2 443</b>	<b>-394</b>	<b>-102</b>	<b>-5,3 %</b>	<b>-4,0 %</b>
Homeless woman	1 647	458	-157	-76	-8,7 %	-14,2 %
Under-25s (male and female)	1626	409	-234	-111	-12,7 %	-21,3 %
Immigrants	1 482	504	-504	-144	-25,4 %	-22,2 %
<b>Homeless families</b>	427		10		2,4 %	
Families with children	467		-8		-1,7 %	
Immigrant families	226		-28		-11,0 %	
Immigrant families with children	323		-23		-6,6 %	
<b>Housed by the city or municipality</b>						
Living alone	2 748	867	-318	-203	-10,4 %	-19,0 %
Families	379		-50		-11,7 %	
Families with children	472		-98		-17,2 %	

Conversely, the rise in the number of long-term homeless in Espoo was mirrored in Turku, Jyväskylä, Kuopio, and in Pori. The situation remained approximately the same as last year in both Joensuu and Oulu. (cf. Table 2)

There was a fall (-140 persons) in the number of young homeless people (Under 25s) in Helsinki. In the PAAVO cities and municipalities, the number of young long-term homeless people fell by a total of 30% (i.e. -349 persons) from 2013. There were 413 female long-term homeless people, which constitutes a 28% fall from 2013. In terms of the number of immigrants who are also long-term homeless people, there was a total of 495 persons in the Greater Helsinki region in 2014. This constitutes a 24% fall from the previous year.

Table 2. Cities with the highest rates of homelessness 2014

City or municipality	Number of homeless people (15 November 2014)				Change in the period 2013-2014 (no. of persons)			
	Total number of homeless people	Living alone Long-term homeless	under 25 years of age	Homeless families	Total number of homeless people	Living alone Long-term homeless	under 25 years of age	Homeless families
Helsinki	3,500	1,220	700	280	-600	-195	-400	-20
Espoo	633	303	159	43	70	80	9	2
Vantaa	544	134	135	24	22	-16	20	-9
Turku	234	160	12	0	13	11	-11	0
Tampere	245	46	66	4	70	-26	44	-3
Jyväskylä	163	51	50	7	22	18	10	2
Lahti	72	32	23	0	-45	-25	-11	0
Kuopio	126	36	26	0	24	23	11	-1
Joensuu	86	23	22	4	-2	2	2	2
Pori	91	47	11	2	6	15	-2	1
Oulu	83	26	26	2	40	-1	20	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,777</b>	<b>2,078</b>	<b>1,230</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>-380</b>	<b>-114</b>	<b>-308</b>	<b>-24</b>
<b>Finland (total)</b>	<b>7,107</b>	<b>2,443</b>	<b>1,626</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>-394</b>	<b>-102</b>	<b>-234</b>	<b>10</b>

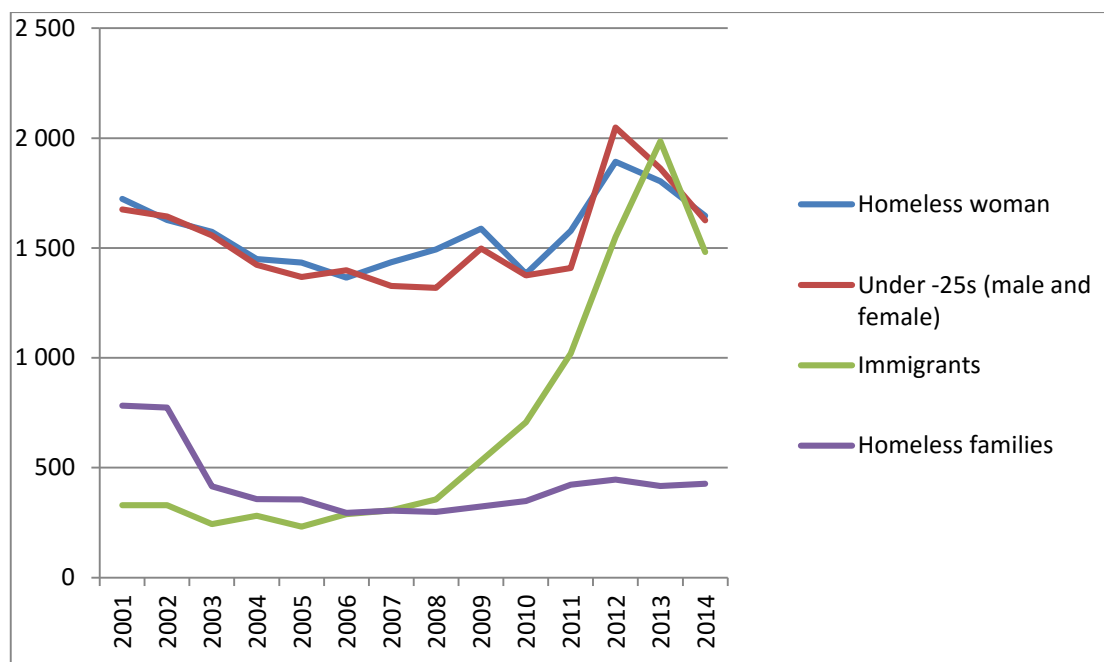
Table 2 includes all of the cities and municipalities participating in the PAAVO I and II programmes (Programmes aimed at reducing long-term homelessness): the so-called **PAAVO cities**. PAAVO cities accounted for 81% of the total homelessness in Finland in 2014. In addition to the PAAVO cities, Kouvola (100 persons), Kotka (83 persons), and Kirkkonummi (55 persons) also had relatively high levels of homelessness (cf. Appendix 1.).

#### 4 A fall in the number of homeless immigrants

In stark contrast to the consistent rise since 2010, 2014 saw a 25% fall in the number of homeless immigrants. There was also a fall in the number of homeless immigrant families; to around 53% of the total number of homeless families.

In terms of young people, around 23% of all homeless people were under 25 years old in 2014. The proportion of homeless women and girls was almost the same. In comparison to 2013, the proportion of Under 25s fell by almost 14% and females by approx. 9%. The number of young and female homeless people has remained almost identical for ten years (Graph 2).

The largest group of homeless people consist of those **temporarily living with friends or family**. In 2014, 76% of homeless people living alone and 63% of long-term homeless people belonged in this group (cf. Table 2).



Graph 2. Homelessness by group 2001–2014.

## 5 Programmes designed to reduce long-term homelessness

The aim of the PAAVO 1 programme, which ran from 2008 to 2011, was to half the number of long-term homeless people in terms of the amount in housing. The programme sought to develop 1,250 new assisted living residences for the long-term homeless. The cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Tampere, Turku, Lahti, Jyväskylä, Kuopio, Joensuu, and Oulu took part in the programme.

The aim of the follow-up PAAVO II programme (2012-2015) is to eliminate long-term homelessness in its entirety. The same cities are involved in the programme as in the previous iteration. The city of Pori joined the programme in 2013. The investment and support services required to implement the programme have been provided in cooperation between the Ministry for Social Affairs and Health, RAY - the Finnish Slot Machine Association, and ARA.

Table 3. Accommodation funded by ARA in cities having signed the letter of intent 2008–2014\*

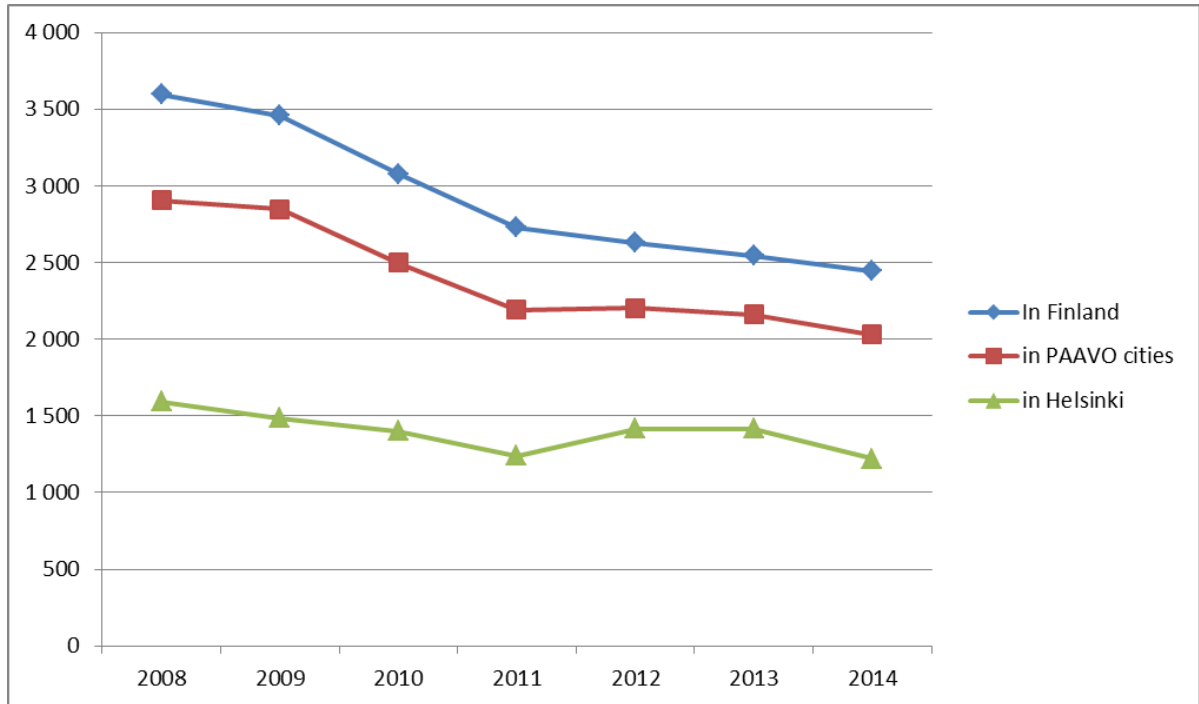
City	New services	Base-level improvement/ project	Total
Espoo	166	125	291
Helsinki	307	433	740
Joensuu	48		48
Jyväskylä		38	38
Kuopio	105	10	115
Lahti	98		98
Oulu	24		24
Tampere	169	49	218
Turku	60		60
Vantaa	76		76
Pori	16		16
<b>Combined total</b>	1069	655	1724

\*Including projects receiving external funding. Some sites are still under construction. In addition to funding from ARA, some sites have been funded by RAY (Finland's Slot Machine Association). The latter are housing for the long-term homeless in Helsinki (19) and Espoo (18).

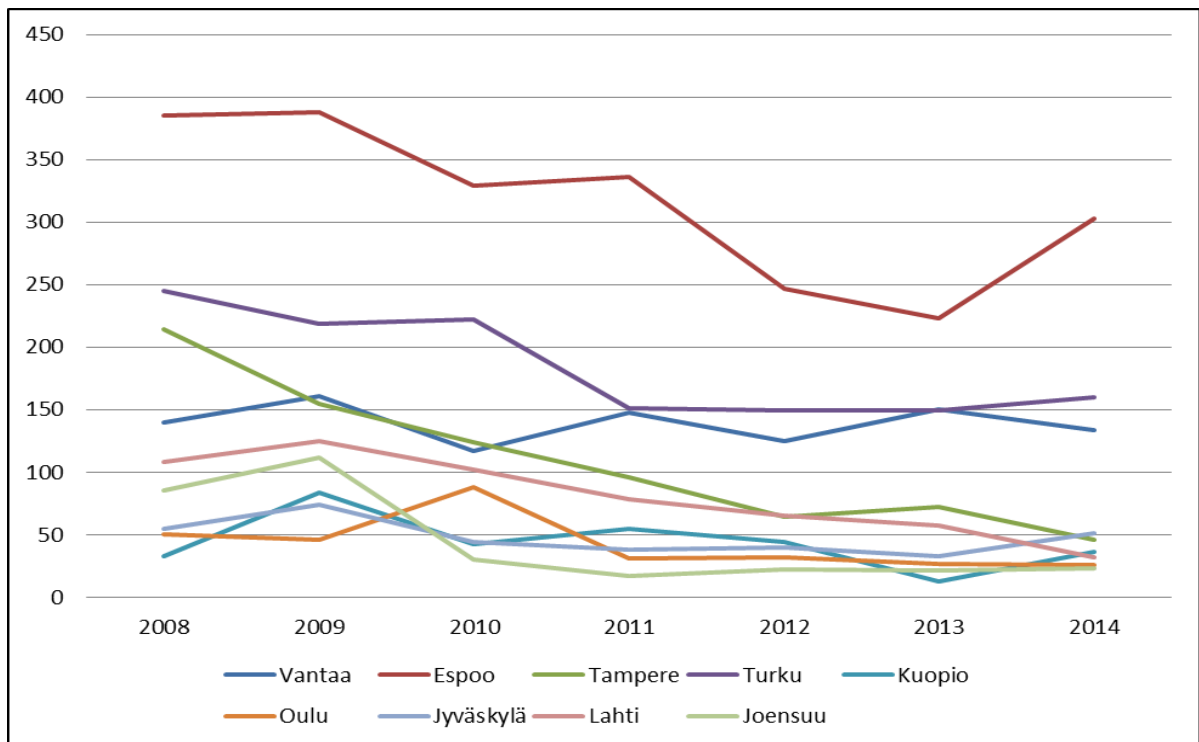
Table 3 shows the proportion of ARA funded housing projects in cities having signed the letter of intent pertaining to the total elimination of long-term homelessness for the years 2008–2014. To-date, these cities have received approx<sup>2</sup> EUR 67.6 million in funding from ARA. This funding is intended for the development of 1,724 places of residence, through construction, renovation, or procurement. The pre-defined targets for the number of residences was already exceeded during PAAVO I, but neither the halving or total elimination of long-term homelessness has come to fruition. The level of interest in building housing intended to reduce long-term homelessness has fallen in recent years.

The level of long-term homelessness was determined on the basis of ARA's housing market survey from the year 2008. Graphs 3 and 4 demonstrate developments in long-term homelessness across the whole of Finland and in PAAVO cities, respectively. The number of long-term homeless people has fallen across the whole of Finland during this period by more than 1,000 persons (-32%). For their part, the fall in PAAVO cities was 30%. In Helsinki the fall was 23%, Vantaa 4%, and Espoo 21%. The following cities have succeeded in halving long-term homelessness: Tampere (-79%), Joensuu (-73%), and Lahti (-70%). The only city in which long-term homelessness has risen during the PAAVO programmes is Kuopio (+9%).

<sup>2</sup> The figure includes the funding to be allocated to housing once the final funding decision has been made for the project. Financial assistance relating to other spaces in residential buildings has not been included. An estimate of the amount of funding sought has been used for the projects in the preparation phase.



Graph 3. Long-term homelessness in Finland as a whole in comparison with PAAVO cities and Helsinki during 2008–2011.



Graph 4. Long-term homelessness in PAAVO cities during 2008–2014.

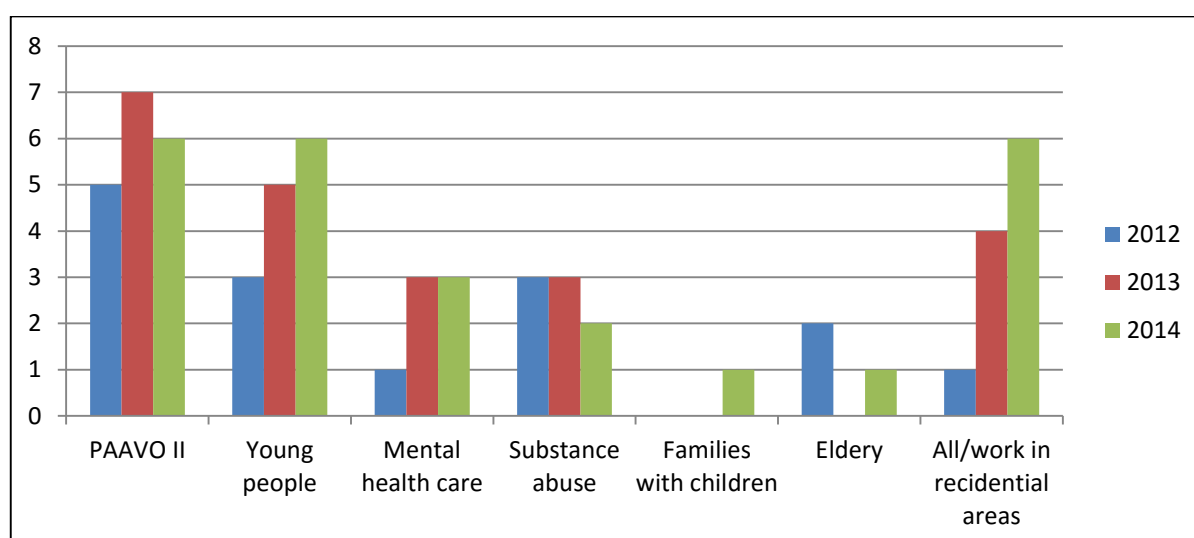


## 6 More funds for housing advisory services

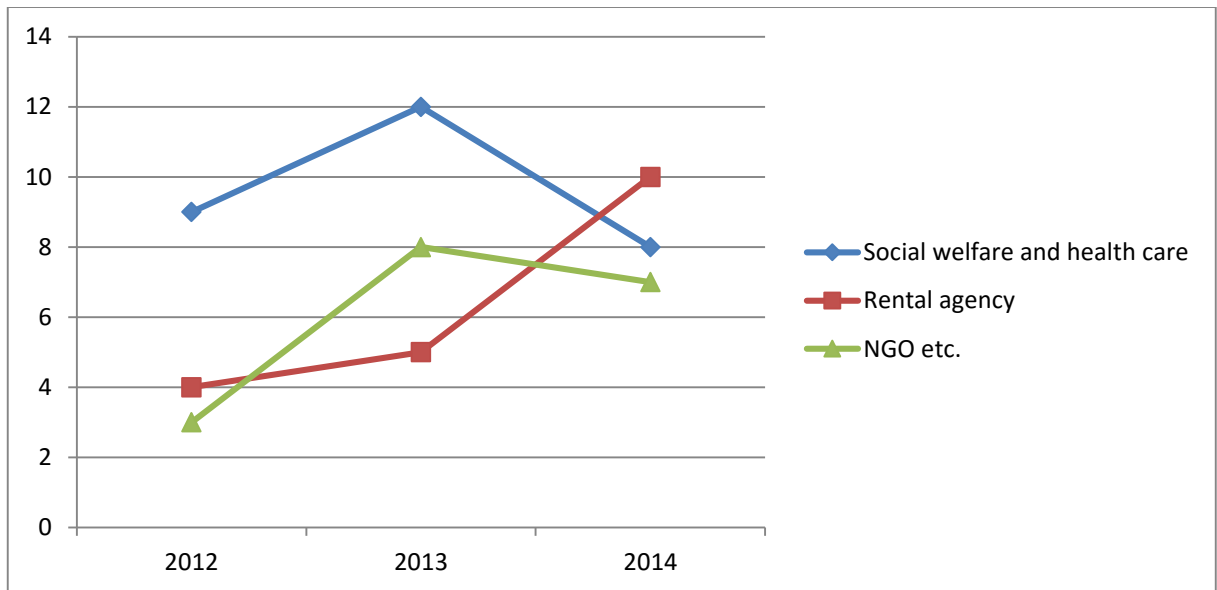
According to the government's housing policy action plan for 2012–2015, housing advisory services are to be consolidated through a EUR 0.6 million annual state subsidy. This subsidy represents 20% of the total costs. A further EUR 0.9 million in funding was awarded as part of the parliamentary budget for 2015, with funding totalling up to 35%. There is still room for improvement in housing advisory services, which must be consolidated during 2015–2017. The aim is to have permanent services.

The aim of financial support in this area is to proactively prevent and solve problems associated with housing and homelessness. Such measures can help through rent subsidies and eliminating or alleviating problems associated with housing costs.

Cities, NGOs, and other associations that implement or instigate housing advisory services are eligible for this funding. In addition to awarding funding in this area, ARA also coordinates and monitors the operations of the relevant parties. Housing advisory services have been implemented in 30 cities and municipalities around Finland during the period 2012–2014, and funding has been used to hire 50 housing advisers.



Graph 5. Groups receiving housing assistance



Graph 6. Recipients of housing assistance

## Appendices

- Appendix 1 Cities and homelessness in 2014 (in order of most to least)
- Appendix 2 Cities and homelessness in 2014 (by region)