

Report 2021

Homelessness in Finland 2020

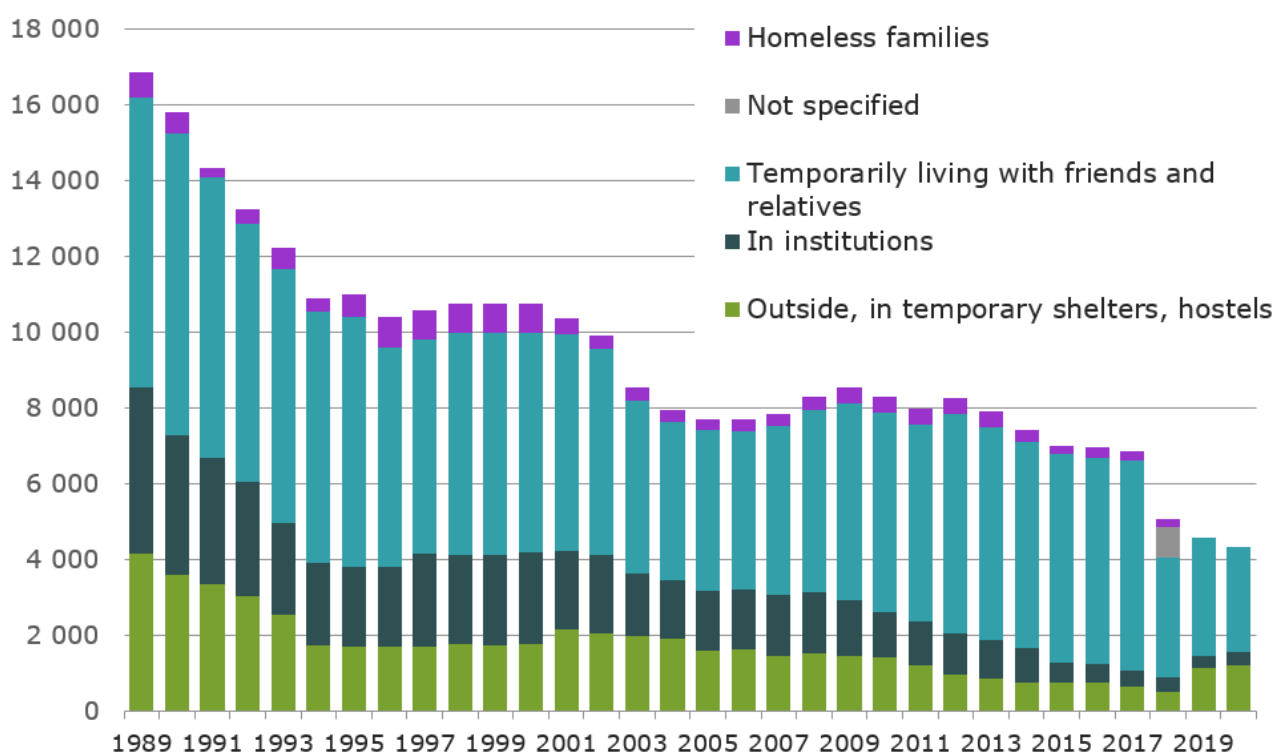


Figure 1. Homelessness in Finland 1989–2020.

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Report 2021: Homelessness in Finland 2020

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The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA)

1 Summary

- In 2020, there were a total of 4,341 homeless people living alone. The number decreased by 259 people compared to 2019. Homelessness has decreased continuously since 2013.
- The number of people who were classified as long-term homeless was 1,054. The number increased by 93 people from the previous year. Long-term homelessness has been measured since 2008, and this was the first time the number has grown. One out of four homeless people are experiencing long-term homelessness.
- Half of all homeless people live in the Greater Helsinki area, and more than three quarters live in the 10 largest cities.
- In the last two years, the number of homeless people staying outdoors, in temporary shelters and hostels has been more than 1,200, while the number remained below 800 between 2014 and 2018.
- The number of homeless women, immigrants and families decreased compared to 2019. One in four homeless people is a woman.
- The homelessness of young people under the age of 25 remained at the same level as the previous year.
- The homelessness of single people has decreased continuously for eight years in a row.
- Long-term homelessness has decreased since 2008, with the exception of 2020.

2 Information in the report and interpretation of the results

In autumn 2020, the Housing Finance and Development Centre (ARA) sent a homelessness survey to all 294 municipalities in mainland Finland.

The survey was completed by 223 cities and municipalities, and its response rate was 76%. There were homeless people in 100 municipalities. Information for each municipality can be found in Appendix 1.

The cross-section time of the survey is 15 November 2020. Municipalities collected data from social welfare and housing service registers and from the housing applicant registers of municipal rental housing companies. Some municipalities use Kela's Social Assistance Register or the Digital and Population Data Services Agency's Population Information Register to obtain and verify homelessness data.

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, and the data presented by one municipality in different years may also vary in terms of its accuracy.

3 Homelessness in Finland continues to decrease

In November 2020, there were 4,341 homeless people living alone in Finland. This was 259 less than in 2019.

The number of people who were classified as long-term homeless was 1,054. Their number increased by 93 compared to the previous year.

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.

The number of homeless families and couples was 201, which is 63 less than in 2019 (Table 2).

4 Homelessness is concentrated in large cities

Table 1. Homelessness in large cities in 2020.

City	Total number of homeless people	Homeless people, change from 2019	Long-term homeless 2020	Long-term homeless, change from 2019	Under 25 years of age 2020	Under 25 years of age, change from 2019
Helsinki	1 534	-144	257	-68	239	-26
Espoo	429	-28	145	-24	93	7
Vantaa	227	-45	33	19	46	18
Turku	384	-49	11	-9	107	11
Tampere	294	-29	76	47	66	-6
Jyväskylä	125	-31	45	-1	41	4
Oulu	117	-10	44	2	29	-6
Kuopio	143	19	72	0	37	9
Lahti	97	81	29	29	28	26
Pori	53	-2	13	0	7	-9
Joensuu	43	-8	17	7	19	-3
Total	3 446	-246	742	2	712	25
Finland total	4 341	-259	1 054	93	854	4

The number of homeless people living alone in Greater Helsinki has decreased by 217 since 2019. The number fell by 144 in Helsinki. Homelessness increased in Lahti and Kuopio but decreased in other large cities (Table 1).

Long-term homelessness decreased in Helsinki, Espoo and Turku. Instead, long-term homelessness in Vantaa, Tampere and Lahti increased from the previous year.

The highest relative number of homeless people is in Helsinki, where there are 2.8 homeless people per 1,000 residents. The ratio is 2.2 in Turku and 1.8 in Espoo (Appendix 1).

Table 2. Homelessness of families in large cities 2020.

City	Homeless families 2020 (incl. child-free couples)	Change from 2019
Helsinki	122	-8
Espoo	27	-27
Vantaa	0	-8
Turku	13	-11
Tampere	7	-1
Jyväskylä	0	-1
Oulu	2	-1
Kuopio	1	0
Lahti	1	1
Pori	1	1
Joensuu	1	0
Total	175	-55
Finland total	201	-63

5 Types of Homelessness

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of the homeless people living alone were temporarily staying with friends or relatives. The number decreased by 347 from the previous year (Table 3).

There were 721 people living outside and in stairways and overnight shelters. There were 489 homeless people living in dormitories or hostels. Over the past two years, the number of people in these two categories of homelessness has grown to more than 1,200, compared with less than 800 in 2014 to 2018. The number of people living in institutional units also increased by 46 to a total of 358.

Taulukko 3. Types of homelessness by group in 2020.

Types of homelessness	Living alone	Share of homeless	Long-term homeless	Share of homeless*
Temporarily living with friends and relatives	2 773	64 %	522	50 %
Outside, in stairwells, in temporary shelters, etc.	721	17 %	186	18 %
In dormitories or hostels	489	11 %	195	18 %
In institutions	358	8 %	151	14 %
Total	4 341	100 %	1 054	100 %

6 No change in homelessness among young people

The number of homeless women decreased by 125 in comparison to 2019. The number of homeless women is 1,065 and they amount to approximately 25% of homeless people. There were 3,276 homeless men, which is 134 fewer than in the previous year.

In 2019, there were 850 homeless young people under 25 years of age in Finland. The number of young people amounted to 20% of all homeless people. There was no change in the homelessness of young people compared to the previous year, but compared to 2015, the homelessness of young people has been halved.

There were 963 homeless immigrants. The number decreased by 133 people in comparison to 2019. The number of homeless immigrants compared to 2015 has also been halved.

Table 4. Homelessness by group in 2020.

Group	Living alone	% of homeless people	Long-term homeless	% of homeless people
Homeless women	1 065	25 %	189	18 %
Homeless men	3 276	75 %	865	82 %
Young people (under 25 years)	854	20 %	149	14 %
Immigrants	963	22 %	147	14 %

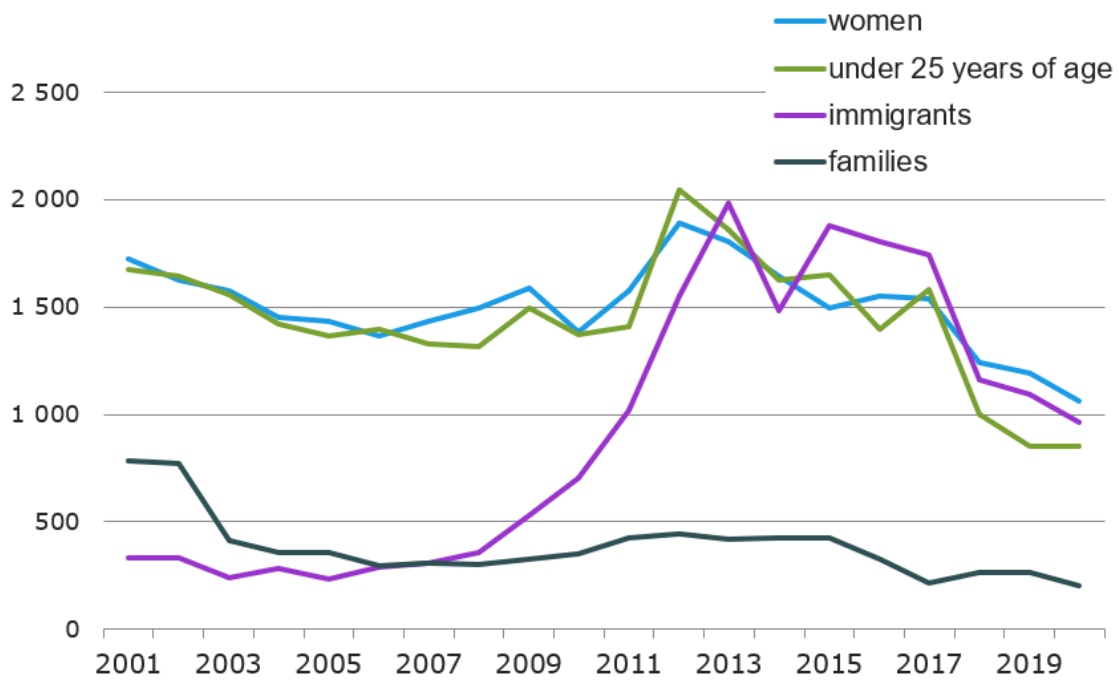


Figure 2. Homelessness by group in 2001-2020.

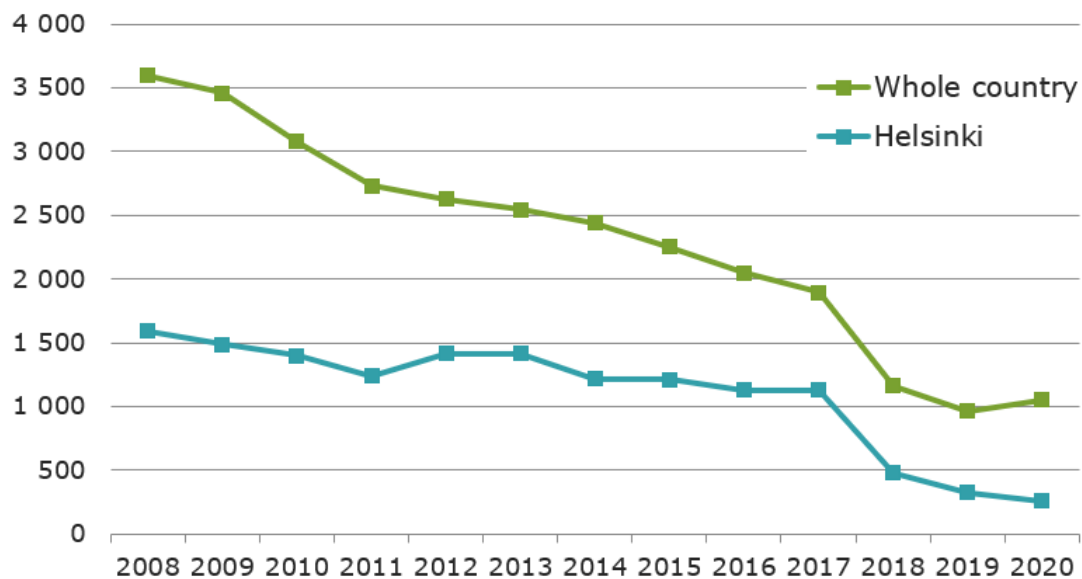


Figure 3. Long-term homelessness in Helsinki and Finland 2008–2020.

7 Continued policy to decrease homelessness

According to statistics compiled by ARA, homelessness among people living alone has decreased continuously for eight consecutive years. Long-term homelessness has decreased since 2008, with the exception of 2020.

The long-term decline in homelessness has brought international attention to Finland and highlighted it as a model country for the treatment of homelessness. The success is underpinned by long-term work around homelessness that has carried over government terms. The state has supported the reduction of homelessness with programmes to reduce long-term homelessness (PAAVO 2008–2015) and the prevention of homelessness (AUNE 2016–2019). One important aspect has been ARA's investment grants that have been used to build 2,200 apartments for long-term homeless people, as well as housing advice services coordinated by ARA and related grants.

The Programme of Sanna Marin's Government (2019–) includes the

elimination of homelessness by 2027. The reduction of homelessness has also been taken into account in the new MAL agreement (agreements on land use, housing and transport) between the municipalities and the state in the Helsinki region (2020–2031), where one aim is to halve homelessness by 2023.

In order to halve homelessness by 2023, the Ministry of the Environment has launched a three-year cooperation programme with the largest urban regions, service providers and organisations. The municipalities involved in the programme have been able to apply for discretionary government transfers for the development of social and health care services that reduce homelessness. In accordance with the Government Programme, the regulation of housing advisory services is also being prepared and statistics processes for homelessness are being developed.

Appendix 1. Homelessness by municipality in...

Homeless people living alone by group 2020

Municipality	Total number of people living alone	Long-term homeless	Women	Young	Immigrants
Helsinki	1534	257	498	239	518
Espoo	429	145	98	93	158
Turku	384	11	82	107	130
Tampere	294	76	49	66	44
Vantaa	227	33	83	46	29
Kuopio	143	72	25	37	11
Jyväskylä	125	45	22	41	7
Oulu	117	44	12	29	3
Lahti	97	29	17	28	16
Nokia	63	59	30	3	0
Pori	53	13	14	7	4
Joensuu	43	17	4	19	0
Mikkeli	42	5	5	2	1
Vaasa	41	8	8	5	13
Järvenpää	40	14	7	5	0
Kerava	37	15	8	8	5
Kouvola	34	32	2	2	0
Lohja	30	17	3	5	0
Lappeenranta	26	9	2	1	0
Kokkola	24	0	4	1	0
Salo	24	9	2	4	0
Forssa	21	13	5	10	0
Laukaa	21	4	2	10	0
Seinäjoki	21	9	3	5	2
Kirkkonummi	20	4	6	0	0
Loviisa	20	0	5	0	0
Raahe	19	0	0	7	0
Riihimäki	18	7	2	1	0
Hyvinkää	16	9	5	4	1
Rauma	15	0	2	3	0
Tornio	15	5	3	6	0
Kajaani	14	0	2	3	0

Municipality	Total number of people living alone	Long-term homeless	Women	Young	Immigrants
Uusikaupunki	14	0	0	0	8
Mäntsälä	13	13	3	3	1
Jämsä	12	4	3	5	0
Kotka	12	0	4	3	0
Raisio	12	2	0	0	3
Vihti	12	2	2	2	0
Ylöjärvi	12	1	1	4	0
Nurmijärvi	11	1	3	3	0
Tuusula	11	0	1	3	1
Naantali	10	4	1	2	0
Raasepori	10	3	2	2	1
Kangasala	9	4	1	1	0
Pudasjärvi	9	2	1	0	0
Hamina	8	1	1	2	0
Heinola	8	0	0	1	0
Pirkkala	8	0	1	0	1
Hollola	7	7	3	2	1
Lempäälä	7	0	2	3	0
Inari	6	0	1	0	0
Kurikka	6	3	2	1	0
Suonenjoki	6	0	3	2	0
Hausjärvi	5	0	1	1	0
Huittinen	5	0	1	2	0
Iitti	5	1	1	2	0
Kaarina	5	5	3	0	1
Kemi	5	3	3	1	0
Kontiolahti	5	0	1	0	0
Paimio	5	3	1	0	0
Sipoo	5	1	1	0	0
Taivassalo	5	0	0	0	3
Äänekoski	5	0	1	0	0
Karkkila	4	2	0	0	0
Muurame	4	3	0	2	0
Orimattila	4	4	1	0	0
Puolanka	4	4	1	0	0
Siikalatva	4	0	1	0	0
Valkeakoski	4	1	0	2	0
Asikkala	3	3	0	2	0
Eura	3	3	0	1	0
Hankasalmi	3	3	1	0	0
Ikaalinen	3	1	0	0	0

Municipality	Total number of people living alone	Long-term homeless	Women	Young	Immigrants
Lapua	3	0	0	0	0
Nakkila	3	0	1	1	0
Saarijärvi	3	3	0	0	0
Tyrnävä	3	1	0	0	0
Hanko	2	0	0	0	0
Harjavalta	2	0	0	0	0
Hattula	2	0	0	0	0
Kauhajoki	2	0	0	0	0
Kempele	2	0	0	0	0
Kitee	2	0	0	0	0
Lieksa	2	2	0	0	0
Liperi	2	0	0	1	0
Outokumpu	2	2	0	0	0
Pälkäne	2	0	0	1	0
Suomussalmi	2	0	0	2	0
Säkylä	2	0	0	0	1
Tuusniemi	2	1	0	0	0
Askola	1	0	1	0	0
Honkajoki	1	0	1	0	0
Iisalmi	1	0	0	0	0
Kankaanpää	1	0	0	0	0
Kuusamo	1	0	0	0	0
Ulvila	1	0	0	0	0
Ähtäri	1	0	0	0	0
Alajärvi	0	0	0	0	0
Whole country	4341	1054	1065	854	963

Homeless families and couples 2020

Municipality	Families	Families with children	Couples	Families and couples, total
Helsinki	72	127	50	122
Espoo	19	52	8	27
Turku	11	20	2	13
Tampere	6	5	1	7

Municipality	Families	Families with children	Couples	Families and couples, total
Vantaa	0	0	0	0
Kuopio	0	0	1	1
Jyväskylä	0	0	0	0
Oulu	2	6	0	2
Lahti	1	2	0	1
Nokia	0	0	0	0
Pori	0	0	1	1
Joensuu	1	1	0	1
Mikkeli	0	0	0	0
Vaasa	1	1	1	2
Järvenpää	0	0	2	2
Kerava	0	0	0	0
Kouvola	0	0	0	0
Lohja	0	0	0	0
Lappeenranta	0	0	0	0
Kokkola	0	0	1	1
Salo	0	0	0	0
Forssa	0	0	0	0
Laukaa	0	0	0	0
Seinäjoki	0	0	0	0
Kirkkonummi	0	0	1	1
Loviisa	0	0	0	0
Raahe	0	0	0	0
Riihimäki	0	0	0	0
Hyvinkää	0	0	0	0
Rauma	0	0	0	0
Tornio	0	0	0	0
Kajaani	0	0	0	0
Uusikaupunki	0	0	0	0
Mäntsälä	0	0	0	0
Jämsä	0	0	0	0
Kotka	0	0	0	0
Raisio	0	0	0	0
Vihti	0	0	0	0
Ylöjärvi	0	0	0	0

Municipality	Families	Families with children	Couples	Families and couples, total
Nurmijärvi	1	1	1	2
Tuusula	0	0	0	0
Naantali	0	0	0	0
Raasepori	0	0	0	0
Kangasala	0	0	0	0
Pudasjärvi	0	0	0	0
Hamina	0	0	0	0
Heinola	0	0	0	0
Pirkkala	0	0	2	2
Hollola	0	0	0	0
Lempäälä	1	1	0	1
Inari	0	0	0	0
Kurikka	0	0	0	0
Suonenjoki	1	1	0	1
Hausjärvi	0	0	0	0
Huittinen	0	0	0	0
Iitti	0	0	0	0
Kaarina	0	0	0	0
Kemi	0	0	5	5
Kontiolahti	0	0	0	0
Paimio	1	3	0	1
Sipoo	2	3	0	2
Taivassalo	0	0	0	0
Äänekoski	0	0	0	0
Karkkila	0	0	0	0
Muurame	0	0	0	0
Orimattila	0	0	0	0
Puolanka	0	0	2	2
Siikalatva	0	0	0	0
Valkeakoski	0	0	0	0
Asikkala	0	0	0	0
Eura	0	0	0	0
Hankasalmi	0	0	0	0
Ikaalinen	0	0	0	0
Lapua	0	0	0	0

Municipality	Families	Families with children	Couples	Families and couples, total
Nakkila	0	0	0	0
Saarijärvi	0	0	0	0
Tyrnävä	0	0	0	0
Hanko	0	0	0	0
Harjavalta	0	0	0	0
Hattula	0	0	0	0
Kauhajoki	0	0	0	0
Kempele	0	0	0	0
Kitee	0	0	0	0
Lieksa	0	0	0	0
Liperi	1	1	0	1
Outokumpu	0	0	0	0
Pälkäne	0	0	0	0
Suomussalmi	0	0	0	0
Säkylä	0	0	0	0
Tuusniemi	1	3	0	1
Askola	0	0	0	0
Honkajoki	0	0	0	0
Iisalmi	0	0	0	0
Kankaanpää	0	0	0	0
Kuusamo	0	0	1	1
Ulvila	0	0	0	0
Ähtäri	0	0	0	0
Alajärvi	0	0	1	1
Whole country	121	227	80	201

Total of homeless people 2020

Municipality	Total	Homeless people per 1000 residents
Helsinki	1856	2,82
Espoo	523	1,79

Municipality	Total	Homeless people per 1000 residents
Turku	420	2,16
Tampere	309	1,28
Vantaa	227	0,96
Kuopio	145	1,21
Jyväskylä	125	0,87
Oulu	126	0,61
Lahti	100	0,83
Nokia	63	1,83
Pori	55	0,66
Joensuu	45	0,58
Mikkeli	42	0,80
Vaasa	45	0,66
Järvenpää	44	0,99
Kerava	37	1,00
Kouvola	34	0,42
Lohja	30	0,65
Lappeenranta	26	0,36
Kokkola	26	0,54
Salo	24	0,47
Forssa	21	1,25
Laukaa	21	1,12
Seinäjoki	21	0,33
Kirkkonummi	22	0,55
Loviisa	20	1,36
Raahe	19	0,78
Riihimäki	18	0,63
Hyvinkää	16	0,34
Rauma	15	0,38
Tornio	15	0,70
Kajaani	14	0,38
Uusikaupunki	14	0,91
Mäntsälä	13	0,63
Jämsä	12	0,60
Kotka	12	0,23
Raisio	12	0,49
Vihti	12	0,41

Municipality	Total	Homeless people per 1000 residents
Ylöjärvi	12	0,36
Nurmijärvi	15	0,34
Tuusula	11	0,28
Naantali	10	0,52
Raasepori	10	0,36
Kangasala	9	0,28
Pudasjärvi	9	1,16
Hamina	8	0,40
Heinola	8	0,43
Pirkkala	12	0,61
Hollola	7	0,30
Lempäälä	10	0,42
Inari	6	0,88
Kurikka	6	0,29
Suonenjoki	8	1,15
Hausjärvi	5	0,61
Huittinen	5	0,50
Iitti	5	0,76
Kaarina	5	0,14
Kemi	15	0,73
Kontiolahti	5	0,34
Paimio	9	0,82
Sipoo	10	0,46
Taivassalo	5	3,05
Äänekoski	5	0,27
Karkkila	4	0,46
Muurame	4	0,39
Orimattila	4	0,25
Puolanka	8	3,19
Siikalatva	4	0,77
Valkeakoski	4	0,19
Asikkala	3	0,37
Eura	3	0,26
Hankasalmi	3	0,63
Ikaalinen	3	0,44
Lapua	3	0,21

Municipality	Total	Homeless people per 1000 residents
Nakkila	3	0,57
Saarijärvi	3	0,33
Tyrnävä	3	0,46
Hanko	2	0,25
Harjavalta	2	0,29
Hattula	2	0,21
Kauhajoki	2	0,15
Kempele	2	0,11
Kitee	2	0,20
Lieksa	2	0,19
Liperi	4	0,33
Outokumpu	2	0,30
Pälkäne	2	0,31
Suomussalmi	2	0,26
Säkylä	2	0,30
Tuusniemi	8	3,29
Askola	1	0,20
Honkajoki	1	0,63
Iisalmi	1	0,05
Kankaanpää	1	0,09
Kuusamo	3	0,20
Ulvila	1	0,08
Ähtäri	1	0,18
Alajärvi	2	0,21
Whole country	4886	0,88

Appendix 2: Definitions of Homelessness

Homeless people are defined as people who do not have a home (rented or owner-occupied) and who live:

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

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.

The category **outside, in stairwells or temporary shelters etc.** is used for those without a permanent residence who live in and move between different temporary shelters and locations.

People who reside in, for example, dormitory-type housing or in hostels with the help of daily social assistance vouchers belong in the category in **dormitories or hostels due to the lack of own home.**

The category **in welfare home-type housing units, rehabilitation units, hospitals or other institutions due to the lack of own home** comprises people who reside in, for example, 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. A person who temporarily lives in this kind of apartment is not considered homeless.

In welfare home units, individuals are 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.

The category **temporarily with friends or relatives** due to the lack of own home is for those individuals who, according to assessments or municipal data, are living temporarily at, or moving between, the homes of relatives and acquaintances due to not having their own home. 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.

Data about the homeless who live alone is subdivided into **women, young people (under 25 years), and those from an immigrant background**. 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.

The category of **families and couples living apart from each other or in temporary housing due to the lack of own home** refers to 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 staying in hostels or hotels or staying with relatives or friends. 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 share of families from an immigrant background will be included in the data.

Appendix 3: Data behind the charts

Figure 1.

Year	Outside, in temporary shelters, hostels	In institutions	Temporarily living with friends and relatives	Homeless families	Not specified
1989	4 170	4 400	7 620	870	
1990	3 610	3 690	7 950	800	
1991	3 370	3 340	7 390	700	
1992	3 030	3 030	6 820	570	
1993	2 560	2 410	6 700	250	
1994	1 760	2 170	6 630	380	
1995	1 710	2 110	6 610	560	
1996	1 720	2 110	5 780	360	
1997	1 720	2 450	5 650	600	
1998	1 770	2 350	5 870	820	
1999	1 750	2 390	5 850	780	
2000	1 790	2 420	5 790	780	
2001	2 160	2 080	5 720	780	
2002	2 060	2 080	5 420	770	
2003	1 990	1 640	4 560	420	
2004	1 910	1 550	4 190	360	
2005	1 620	1 560	4 250	360	
2006	1 650	1 570	4 180	300	
2007	1 480	1 590	4 460	300	
2008	1 520	1 640	4 800	300	
2009	1 460	1 490	5 200	320	
2010	1 430	1 190	5 260	350	
2011	1 221	1 171	5 180	420	
2012	965	1 087	5 800	446	
2013	880	1 000	5 630	420	
2014	764	929	5 414	427	
2015	766	516	5 503	424	
2016	765	480	5 455	325	
2017	659	428	5 528	214	
2018	512	378	3 165	264	822
2019	1 168	312	3 120	264	
2020	1210	358	2773	201	

Figure 2. Homelessness by group in 2001–2020.

Year	Women	Under 25 of age	Immigrant	Families
2001	1 723	1 675	330	782
2002	1 628	1 644	330	774
2003	1 574	1 558	243	415
2004	1 450	1 424	282	357
2005	1 434	1 368	232	355
2006	1 365	1 399	289	295
2007	1 435	1 328	306	305
2008	1 494	1 319	356	299
2009	1 588	1 498	532	324
2010	1 383	1 375	707	349
2011	1 578	1 409	1 020	423
2012	1 893	2 049	1 550	446
2013	1 804	1 862	1 986	417
2014	1 647	1 626	1 482	427
2015	1 496	1 652	1 878	424
2016	1 554	1 399	1 804	325
2017	1 538	1 585	1 742	214
2018	1 242	1 001	1 159	264
2019	1 190	850	1 096	264
2020	1065	854	963	201

Figure 3. Long-term homelessness in Helsinki and Finland 2008–2020.

Year	Whole country	Helsinki
2008	3597	1591
2009	3457	1485
2010	3079	1400
2011	2730	1240
2012	2628	1415
2013	2545	1415
2014	2443	1220
2015	2252	1210
2016	2047	1130
2017	1893	1130
2018	1161	481
2019	961	325
2020	1054	257

