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Measurement of Homelessness at European Union Level

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The European Commission - Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG, Unit Inclusion, Social Policy Aspects of Migration, Streamlining of Social Policies commissioned the University of Dundee, with the assistance of GISS e.V., Germany and Resource Information Service, UK, to conduct the study "Measurement of Homelessness at European Union Level"

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Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

Homelessness and housing deprivation exist in all European countries and yet there are few official statistics on homelessness, and those that do exist are rarely comparable between different countries. The lack of clear data on the extent of homelessness makes an understanding of its nature, causes and the effective action needed to tackle it all the more difficult. The research and evidence presented in this report therefore aims to identify current methodologies and practices in different European countries that measure the extent and nature of homelessness. The research was undertaken in the context of the EU social inclusion and other strategies, and the development of National Action Plans and commonly agreed and defined indicators.

Commissioned by DG Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission in December 2005, this research builds upon the recommendations of the study carried out in 2003 by the French statistical institute (INSEE) on behalf of EUROSTAT. The report made an important contribution towards developing statistical capacity by highlighting various obstacles to a pan-European comparison, discussing definitions of homelessness and reviewing systems for data collection.

This study, however, adopts more of a technical approach, and aims to identify methods and practices to develop the information base required for measuring homelessness and housing deprivation. With a particular focus on using information from providers of services to homeless people, the main tasks of this report can be summarised as being to develop procedures and methodologies to:

- define living situations and homelessness in order to select the target population for data collection
- classify organisations providing services to the defined population of homeless people and develop a directory or database of such services
- collect and aggregate data about homeless people from the client record systems managed by service provider organisations listed in the directory
- undertake sample surveys amongst users of services to help understand homelessness.

The project brief also required the report to reflect on the type and use of statistics and indicators that could be drawn from such data collection. In effect then, this report examines what to measure in terms of definitions of homelessness and then how to measure homelessness from data about clients of services for homeless people and from surveys. The findings from this report have the potential to have a radical impact on improving the measurement of homelessness, policy development, service provision and most importantly, the lives of homeless people and those at risk of homelessness.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Each chapter of this report focuses on a particular aspect of measurement and includes a range of specific proposals. However, in summarising the methodology by which information collected by service providers on their homeless clients can be captured for analysis, the report makes a number of overall recommendations for national (or – where appropriate – regional) authorities to improve their capacity for data collection:

1. Prepare a national Homelessness Monitoring Information Strategy developed in consultation with all relevant Ministries and stakeholders.
2. Identify (or establish) a co-ordinating mechanism or agency for homelessness data collection.
3. Adopt the harmonised definition of living situations and homelessness from this report as a basic framework for data collection.
4. Adopt the set of standard core variables from this report and their definition as a basic set of variables to be employed in data collection.
5. Adopt a national definition of services for homelessness.
6. Establish and maintain a directory/database of services for homeless people.
7. Ensure that funding for homeless service providers requires the provision of basic anonymised data on clients and provide funding to facilitate this as necessary.
8. Establish a strategy for collection of data from service provider client registration systems.
9. Ensure added value of data collection for the services and homeless people.

The report also makes a number of overall recommendations for the European Commission for action at EU level:

1. Require Member States to develop in the framework of the streamlined EU strategy for social protection and social inclusion national strategies to combat homelessness.
2. Require Member States to identify progress reached with the development of national strategies and whether this incorporates a homelessness monitoring information strategy.
3. Monitor progress of Member States towards continuous client recording systems.
4. Encourage national statistics offices to adopt the harmonised definition of homelessness for data collection while recognising that alternative definitions may be used for policy purposes.
5. Encourage national statistics offices to play a coordination role in the collection of data on homelessness for use in EU level initiatives
6. Reduce the obstacles to achieving homeless information monitoring (e.g. through the use of funding under FP7, structural funds and European research programme).

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted by a team from three organisations with extensive experience in homelessness research and creating and maintaining large databases relevant to this field: Joint Centre for Scottish Housing Research (JCSHR) in Scotland, Resource Information Service (RIS) in London and the Association for Innovative Social Research and Social Planning (GISS), in Bremen, Germany. The project was managed and guided by a steering group that represented a range of European organisations involved in developing statistics and homelessness.

The research involved commissioning papers from experts on homelessness from eight countries with different welfare regimes and federal/centralised political systems (Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden) to provide information about methodologies of data collection and the creation of directories of organisations and client record databases. This evidence base was added to by data gathered from literature and contacts in a number of other EU and non-EU countries.

Questionnaires were also sent to service provider organisations to obtain additional information in different countries across the EU. These were supplemented with telephone interviews where required.

Extensive use and reference was also made to recommendations at EU-level (especially literature on indicators for social inclusion), the 2003 INSEE/EUROSTAT study, reviews of statistics on homelessness produced by the European Observatory on Homelessness of FEANTSA, and the UNECE/EUROSTAT recommendations developed for the 2010 censuses of population and housing.

WHAT TO MEASURE

Context of data collection

Chapter 2 of the report describes the need for data collection to increase our understanding of the causes and nature of homelessness, and develop strategies to tackle homelessness in Europe. This examination shows the diversity and changing nature of approaches to tackling homelessness and a clear need for strategies to be evidence based using well-defined, agreed definitions of homelessness. The legislative basis and governance of data collection on homelessness is currently only weakly developed in most countries, often with no overall strategy or clear responsibility for this.

The report also identifies three main sources of data that have been used for collection:

- Survey methods, including street counts of homeless people sleeping rough, surveys of those in overnight emergency shelters, or surveys of local authorities to estimate numbers of homeless people in contact with services.
- Registration or administrative records that are used by a number of countries to collate statistics on the number and profile of homeless people. These include official national returns, official registers of service providers, and NGO client record systems – the latter is the subject of more detailed investigation for this report.
- General population and census data that can be used to gather some information about some categories of homelessness (those living in institutional situations, with family or friends, in accommodation for homeless people, and those in overcrowded or unfit or unconventional living conditions).

The report then presents an overview of data collection in the Member States and describes the systems employed in the main study countries. In terms of client recording by service providers, this is common in many countries, but that data is not often captured systematically for measurement purposes. This data is particularly useful for information on the profile of homelessness.

It is possible to develop reliable statistics on homelessness to monitor or guide particular policy purposes, but the search for a single figure or indicator may have limited value. The evidence suggests that both survey and registration methods are required.

Definitions of living situations and homelessness

Fundamental to initiatives that aim to measure homelessness is establishing a clear working definition of homelessness. Chapter 3 of this report firstly examines definitions of living situations of all people to then distinguish those types which are relevant to people facing housing exclusion and homelessness. Clearly for example, those people having their usual residence in adequate, conventional dwellings are not homeless.

The approach by CNIS/INSEE identifies 13 main accommodation types based on physical type of habitat and status or type of occupancy. The UNECE/EUROSTAT report in 2006 considers the relationship between population and living quarters and recommends a three-fold definition of living quarters: occupied conventional dwellings, other housing units and collective living quarters.

This report then examines the legal basis for residential habitation of a structure or building which can be reduced to four main dimensions: physical (involving the physical space to be occupied and different housing types), occupancy (which concerns the household that has rights to occupy), time (the period of occupancy which may be temporary or permanent), and legal (the legal conditions and rights to occupancy, ownership or tenure).

The proposed typology then harmonises the above approaches and elements into a summary definition of living situations adapted from the 2006 UNECE/EUROSTAT report:

- housing units:
  a. occupied conventional dwellings
  b. non-conventional housing units (eg mobile units and those not designed for habitation)
- collective living quarters:
  a. institutional (eg penal, health and religious)
  b. non-institutional (eg hotels and hostels)
- other living situations: in public/external spaces

Having proposed a typology of living situations, the report then uses this as a framework to develop a harmonised definition of homelessness, together with drawing on various recent approaches to defining homelessness at European level. All these approaches face language issues and the cultural and policy contexts in different countries. Both the EUROSTAT Expert Group and INSEE/ EUROSTAT study definitions are outlined before considering FEANTSA's ETHOS broad typology of homelessness and housing exclusion. This sees three main domains that constitute having a home: physical (involving a decent dwelling), social (being able to maintain privacy and enjoy social relations) and legal (having exclusive possession, security of occupation and legal title).

The report also uses the UNECE/EUROSTAT Conference of European Statisticians (CES) recommendations on population and censuses. This includes definitions of usual place of residence where households are to be counted and two main categories of homelessness: primary (or rooflessness) and secondary. Finally non-European approaches in Australia, Canada and USA to defining homelessness are examined.

The resulting proposed operational definition of homelessness below aims to be appropriate for measurement of homelessness across Europe and can be used for various purposes including policy development, service planning and prevention of homelessness. The proposal is pragmatic to enable a feasible staged approach to building measurement capacity.

Operational Category		Living Situation		Definition
1	People Living Rough	1	Public space / external space	Living in the streets or public spaces without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters
2	People in emergency accommodation	2	Overnight Shelters	People with no place of usual residence who move frequently between various types of accommodation
3	People living in accommodation for the homeless	3 4 5 6	Homeless Hostels Temporary Accommodation Transitional Supported Accommodation Women's shelter or refuge accommodation	 Where the period of stay is less than one year
4	People living in institutions	7 8	Health care institutions Penal institutions	Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing No housing available prior to release
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing	9 10 11	Mobile homes Non-conventional building Temporary structure	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence
6	Homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to lack of housing)	12	Conventional housing, but not the person's usual place of residence	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence

Classification of organisations providing services to homeless people

Having developed a proposed classification of living situations and homelessness, Chapter 4 of the report then goes on to link this to a typology of services for homeless people as these services, especially accommodation services, are key sources of data on categories of homeless people and living situations identified.

The report explores different classifications of services that have been developed in some countries for a variety of purposes eg collating directories and databases, carrying out surveys or for administrative, legal or regulatory purposes. A broad range of types of services emerges:

- Accommodation for homeless people (eg. emergency shelters, temporary hostels, supported or transitional housing)
- Non-residential services for homeless people (eg. outreach services, day centres, advice services, food providers etc.)
- Accommodation for other client groups that may be used by homeless people (eg. hotels, bed and breakfast, specialist support and residential care services for people with alcohol, drug or mental health problems)
- Mainstream services for the general population that may be used by homeless people (eg. advice services, municipal services, health and social care services)
- Specialist support services for other client groups that may be used by homeless people (eg. psychiatric counselling services, drug detoxification facilities)

In developing a classification, national authorities are likely to need to focus on services specifically for homeless people, and accommodation in particular will be at the core of services to be included. The report maps accommodation services to the classification of living situations outlined earlier. It identifies three main relevant living situations:

- people in emergency accommodation
- people in hostels or other accommodation with intended length of stay of less than one year
- people in domestic violence crisis shelters.

There are inevitably boundary issues in some countries between emergency, transitional and permanent supported accommodation. Access and referral, support, length of stay and other criteria are identified as useful for classification and delineation purposes.

Non-residential services like advice centres, outreach teams and day centres also need to be included in classifications as accommodation services are not in touch with some categories of homeless people (eg those sleeping rough or staying with friends and families). However, with non-residential services, there is a particular problem with the risk of double counting those people who use more than one or multiple services.

Including mainstream and specialist services may be necessary although there are inevitably problems in distinguishing those clients who are homeless and those who are not.

Finally, there will always be those homeless people who are not in contact with services at all and the only robust way of obtaining statistical information is via surveys and street counts.

HOW TO MEASURE

Having defined *what* to measure, the third part of this report addresses the question 'How to measure' homelessness.

Methods to maintain a directory/database of services for homeless people

Once a classification of organisations that provide services to homeless people is established, it is possible to use this as a basis for building a directory or database and collecting information about these services who in turn can provide data about their clients or be sources of data for surveys. Chapter 5 examines the approa

ches taken to create and maintain directories or databases of service provider organisations and the type of information collected about the organisations.

Having comprehensive, up to date information about service provision for homeless people is vital for this and also includes of itself base line capacity data about numbers of bedspaces for people in emergency and other accommodation. The danger of the "service provider paradox" should be noted however, whereby those countries that have a lot of service provision for homeless people may appear to have higher numbers of homeless people due to the fact that services exist and homeless clients can be more readily counted.

Research for this report found a variety of databases/directories of homelessness services across the EU. These have been developed for a variety of different purposes, some for carrying out surveys, some were registers of state funded services, and many were referral directories. Some were published

by national or regional government, some were published by municipalities, but most were published by NGOs. There were some examples of databases with national coverage of services, but most covered major cities and smaller geographical areas. The coverage of different types of services and levels of details varied – some were comprehensive in terms of coverage and provided detailed information about each service, some were more simple listings of services. Overall, the availability of such resources demonstrates the feasibility of establishing further directories and databases in the future, and there is already substantial expertise in this area.

The report outlined a procedure for developing directories/databases of services. Central to this is a minimum recommended set of "level 1" or core data to ensure standard, good quality data which covers organisation details, clients served and services provided. Of lower priority, level 2 and 3 data were also classified - including further details about services provided and information for further analysis of service provision (eg funding, quality and outcomes). Good quality data and regular updating is crucial.

The proposed procedure aims to help the successful establishment of directories/databases of services. It covers management, IT and implementation issues, including sample estimated costs. It shows that it is possible to maintain a database with relatively minimal costs given the benefits of being able to measure homelessness, and to provide invaluable information to help homeless people get the services they need.

Overall, clear benefits and multiple uses of databases of services for homeless people were identified. Making the directory/database publicly available can be invaluable for referral purpose and can have a direct benefit in getting homeless people the help they need. In most countries, existing datasets already go some way towards providing details of many organisations who can become data providers. It is helpful to use, where possible, any existing sources of data and to take a staged approach (ie prioritising developing databases for capital and other major cities and conurbations) towards developing national datasets which require more significant resources.

Client registers and recording systems

Service providers hold valuable information on the numbers and characteristics of homeless people they serve in client recording systems or databases, and this report examines in detail in Chapter 6 the nature of such systems. Information provided in the commissioned papers is analysed and supplemented by information from direct interviews with agencies with experience in developing client record systems, the authors' own experience in developing and managing similar databases, and information from agencies operating in Belgium, Ireland and the UK. This review found a variety of systems that have been developed over time for different purposes and using different computer technology, but all providing a wealth of data about homeless people.

Appropriate methodologies are proposed for national authorities to aggregate or collate data from the registers held by such organisations, including an examination of the development, management, IT and resource issues. Such issues include the requirement for clear responsibility for developing the systems and the services covered by them. A number of options for software system development are outlined, each with different levels of ease of implementation and costs. Required functionality of systems is examined, including the need for the ability to export data and carry out data analysis and reports. All systems identified conformed to national data protection requirements which are vitally important for the protection of sensitive data about clients. Maintaining the quality of the data about clients is also essential.

Finally, implementation of client record systems is also examined, including costs, and the necessary stages of planning in consultation with service providers, system development, and then ongoing management the system, monitoring of usage, data cleansing and providing reports on data.

Standard register variables

From reviewing existing client record systems in Chapter 7, this report goes on to propose a set of variables that can be extracted from systems to describe in a standard way the scale and profile of the homeless people using those services. Harmonising definitions of key variables is necessary if they are to be used for comparative purposes at national and EU-level. These standard variables can also be used, where appropriate, for gathering comparable information from surveys and other methodologies.

It is recommended that a minimum core data set should comprise initially of a relatively restricted, but none the less, rich set of variables which should be collected across Europe using the same definitions and which would provide a sound basis for information about the profile of homeless people. These core variables were selected because of their importance and usefulness in data terms, relative ease of definition, extent to which they are already in use, and ease of implementation and collection. In summary, this core data set would provide information about basic demographic characteristics (age and gender), nationality and migration background (country of birth), composition of homeless households, accommodation situation (immediately before service period and at time of data collection), duration of (current) homelessness and the reasons for (last) homelessness.

The report then goes on to propose a number of non-core variables where consensus in terms of definition is more difficult and which can therefore be considered optional for initial inclusion in client register systems. They cover economic characteristics, educational characteristics and support needs/problems. Where possible, these non-core variables followed recommendations for the census 2010 for their definition of data items.

Finally, data collected on provision of services and outcomes was examined but not included as minimum standard recommended variables at this stage as they are the most difficult to harmonise, despite the importance for both service providers, funders and policy makers.

Surveys

The report considers in Chapter 8 the issues to be addressed in order to conduct surveys of users of homeless services. Over the past 10-15 years there have been many such surveys carried and recent examples illustrate both the range of recent survey activity across Europe and the different methodologies employed. The report examines both surveys directly carried out of homeless people, including street counts of people sleeping rough, and surveys collecting data from organisations providing services to homeless people.

Advantages of surveys as a measurement method are that they encourage common definitions of homelessness and there already exists a substantial body of good practice, including sample and questionnaire design, statistical analysis of results, weightings and fieldwork methodology. However, a number of disadvantages are identified, for example, all surveys need to consider how to minimise the impact of double counting, especially when collecting information from service providers. The cost of carrying out robust surveys may also prohibit them from being carried out frequently enough to provide the necessary data over time. Similarly, needing skilled personnel to carry out surveys with the target population and time and resources required from service providers can both be problematic.

Some methodological issues involved around measuring homelessness from surveys are also explored. These include the need for a comprehensive directory of services and representative sample, choosing between a cheaper option of a survey of service providers or a more expensive direct survey of homeless people, and a time frame and use of unique identifiers to help minimise double counting. The use of standard core variables is also vital for comparability over time with repeat surveys and between different surveys.

Finally, although the thrust of this report considers the effectiveness of client register systems as a main method of ongoing data collection from homelessness services and to play a key role in data collation, there is no doubt that surveys can play a useful role in measurement. Indeed they are an essential part of strategy, especially in the short to medium term, and can be used in combination with other administration and registration data, and general population and census data.

Methodologies for national authorities to collect data

Chapter 9 uses information from earlier in the report to summarise the governance, methodological and technical issues to be addressed by national (or – where appropriate – regional) authorities. Reliable information is the basis for development, implementation and monitoring of homelessness policies and decision-making. To ensure that data collection is done effectively, therefore, national authorities need to address this by developing homelessness strategies at the national level. In this way homelessness strategies inform the collection of the data and ensure that policies are evidence based. However, this report highlights that only a minority of Member States currently have a clearly established responsibility for the collection of data on homelessness or for the preparation of homeless strategies.

As part of their overall strategy on homelessness, this report recommends that national authorities develop a specific homelessness monitoring information strategy to ensure that data is collected and processes established to do this. At the core of the information strategy should be the approach to capture the information garnered from homeless service providers. Sufficient funding for data collection is an important issue. National authorities need to assess the costs for each stage of the implementation, both for government and for service providers, of the development of systems and ongoing annual revenue costs. These costs should be set against the substantial direct and indirect benefits of monitoring information on homelessness.

The report suggests that an efficient strategy of implementation may, in some countries, involve the phased introduction of data collection commencing with the major conurbations or regions and building to a national system.

Statistics and indicators

In Chapter 10, the report reflects upon the nature and use of statistics and indicators that can be derived from the collation and aggregation of continuously recorded data on the users of homeless accommodation services. It examines the broad methodological framework to the development of indicators agreed by the Indicators Sub-Group of the EU Social Protection Committee and criteria for the selection of individual indicators.

The report also examines in more detail a variety of measurement issues. Firstly, three distinct measures of homelessness can be described:

- Point in time homelessness refers to the number of people or households who are homeless at any one time (this is sometimes referred to as the stock figure).

- Prevalence refers to the number of people who have been homeless at some point during a particular time period ('period prevalence'). A unique identifier is required to estimate the prevalence rate – i.e. the number of people who have been homeless rather than the number of recorded episodes of homelessness. By their nature, prevalence rates will be higher than point in time figures.
- The flow of homelessness refers to the people who have entered the homeless service, or ceased to receive the service, during a given time period – the inflow and the outflow respectively.

The three types of measure are useful for different policy purposes: for example, the point in time figure is useful for emergency hostel provision, prevalence data is useful for estimating the need for support services, and flow information can help evaluate preventative strategies.

Other issues identified concern whether the "unit of measurement" relates to homeless individuals or households of individuals, couples and families, and at what point measurement takes place i.e. point of entry to service, and preferably the time and nature of exit from the service too.

The report also considers a number of issues relating to supply and user statistics. Using data on the accommodation included in a directory of services for homeless people (subject to it being comprehensive and up to date) can give two measures of supply: data on the total number of bedspaces and the average prevalence occupancy rate. Registers that use unique identifiers for clients can also identify the number of repeat episodes of service use in any given time period. If data on both date of entry and exit from services is recorded, it may be possible to calculate the number of people using the services or occupancy level at a given date as well as the flow or turnover of people through the service. It is also then possible to calculate the average duration of time spent in the accommodation.

The report presents a simplified model of the homelessness system in order to identify the ways in which the flows of people in the system can be measured. By doing so, three main system indicators can be identified: number of people in the system, flow of people through the system and the duration of their stay in the system.

Finally, the report notes that using client register systems to continually record core variables about homeless people can provide profile and trend data on their characteristics over time (eg in terms of age, gender, nationality, household type, previous accommodation and reasons for homelessness). This data can then be used for detailed tabulation to produce statistics for various purposes.

CONCLUSION

Without good data, tackling homelessness effectively becomes much more difficult. By examining in depth the methodologies and practices for developing the information basis for measuring homelessness, this report aims to encourage national authorities to take substantial steps to improve data collection across the EU. It is necessary to ensure that any action taken is embedded in a strategy on homelessness which in turn includes a specific strategy on monitoring homelessness information.

This report outlines a number of practical steps that should be taken in terms of defining homelessness, developing a comprehensive database of up to date information about services for homeless people, developing further client recording systems used by services and ensuring the aggregation of minimum standard data from these and surveys of homeless people. These should be part of an overall information monitoring strategy that includes other data collection methods too. By being better able to measure homelessness, there is the potential to use this information to dramatically improve the quality of life of hundreds of thousands of some of the most excluded, vulnerable people across the EU.

Abbreviations

AG STADO	Arbeitsgemeinschaft Dokumentation und Statistik (Working Group on Documentation and Statistics)
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health & Welfare
AMI	International Medical Assistance (Portugal)
ASCII	American Standard Code for Information Interchange
AUDA	Accueil d'Urgence pour Demandeurs d'Asile (emergency shelters for asylum seekers)
B&B	Bed and Breakfast
BAG W	Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe e.V. (National Coalition of Services Working with the Homeless, Germany)
BAWO	Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe (National Coalition of Services Working with the Homeless, Austria)
CADA	Centre d'Accueil pour Demandeurs d'Asile (hostel for asylum seekers)
CAVA	Centres d'Adaptation à la Vie Active (centres for adaptation to active life)
CAW	Centra Algemeen Welzijnswerk (Centres for General Welfare ; Flanders, Belgium)
CAPI	Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing
CBS	Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (Dutch National Statistical Office)
CD	Compact Disk
CEFR	Comité d'Entraide aux Français Rapatriés (helps repatriated French people)
CES	Conference of European Statisticians
CHR	Centre for Housing research (St Andrews, Scotland)
CHRS	Centres d'Hébergement et de Réinsertion Sociale (Centres for Accommodation and Social Reintegration)
CHU	Centre d'Hébergement d'Urgence (Emergency Shelter)
CMS	Common Monitoring System (Scotland)
CNIL	Commission Nationale Informatique et Libertés (National Commission on Data Protection and Privacy)
CNIS	Conseil National de l'Information Statistique (National Council for Statistical Information)
CPH	Centre Provisoire d'Hébergement (temporary hostel intended for refugees)
CNRS	Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique
CRS	Client Record System
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Governmenrt (UK)
DG	Directorate General (of EU Commission)
DGAS	Direction Générale des Affaires Sociales (General Directorate of Social Affairs)
DPM	Direction de la Population et des Migrations (Directorate for Population and Migrations)
DRASS	Direction Régionale des Affaires Sanitaires et Sociales (Regional Directorate of Health and Social Affairs)
DRASSIF	The DRASS for the Ile-de-France region (the region that includes the municipalities of Paris and its suburbs plus other municipalities)

DREES	DREES: (previously SESI): Direction de la Recherche, des Études, de l'Évaluation et des Statistiques (Directorate for Research, Studies, Evaluation, and Statistics, the statistical services of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs)
ES	Etablissements Sociaux (social establishments, France)
ESF	European Social Fund
ETHOS	European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion
EK	Client registration system of Naděje (Czech Republic)
EU	European Union
EUROSTAT	Statistical Office of the European Communities
FEANTSA	European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless
FINESS	National database of establishments in the health and welfare sectors (France)
FIO.psd	Federazione Degli Organismi per le persone senza dimora
FNARS	Fédération nationale des associations d'accueil et de réinsertion sociale
GISS	Gesellschaft für Innovative Sozialforschung und Sozialplanung (Association for Innovative Social Research and Social Planning, Germany)
HIFIS	Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (Canada)
HMIS	Homeless Monitoring Information System (USA)
HMO	Houses in Multiple Occupation
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development (USA)
ICH	Interagency Council on the Homeless (USA)
INED	Institut national des études démographiques (French National Institute of Demographic Studies)
INE	Instituto Nacional de Estadística (Spanish Statistical Institute)
INS	National statistics institutes
INSEE	Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (French Statistical Institute)
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISG	Indicators Sub-Group
ISS	Institute for Social Security (Portugal)
ISTAT	Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (Italian Statistical Institute)
IT	Information Technology
JCSHR	Joint Centre for Scottish Housing Research
LDS NRW	Landesamt für Datenverarbeitung und Statistik (Regional Office of Statistics in NRW)
LOLF	Loi Organique relative aux Lois de Finances (organic law relative to public finance bills)
MIPES	Mission d'Information sur la Pauvreté et l'Exclusion Sociale en Ile-de-France (information mission on poverty and social exclusion in the Ile-de-France region)
MOSLA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Czech Republic)
NAPs/Incl	National Action Plans Against Poverty and Social Exclusion
NBHW	National Board of Health and Welfare (Sweden)

NDCA	National Data Collection Agency (Australia)
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NHF	National Housing Federation (UK)
NHI	National Homelessness Initiative (Canada)
NHS	National Homelessness Strategy
NPV	NewPeopleVision (Czech Republic)
NRW	Land of North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany)
NSPDC	National Statistical Programme for Data Collection (Hungary)
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, now DCLG (UK)
OMC	Open Method of Co-ordination
OSAP	National Statistical Data Acquisition Program (Hungary)
RIS	Resource Information Service (London)
RSI	Rough Sleepers Initiative
RSL	Registered Social Landlords
SAAP	Supported Acommodation Assistance Programme (Australia)
SAW	Steunpunt Algemeen Welzijnswerk (Association of CAWs; Belgium, Dutch speaking regions)
SMART	SAAP Management & Recording Tool (Australia)
SGB II	Sozialgesetzbuch II (Social Code, Second Book)
SQL	Structured Query Language
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UK	United Kingdom
XML	Extensible Markup Language

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PART A

CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

Chapter 1
Purpose and Methodology

1.1 The Purpose of the Study

Homelessness and housing deprivation are perhaps the most extreme examples of poverty and social exclusion in society today. However, so far, there are few official statistics on homelessness and housing deprivation, and these are rarely comparable between countries. A report carried out in 2003 by the French statistical institute (INSEE) on behalf of Eurostat highlights the various obstacles to a pan-European comparison, discusses the definition(s) of homelessness and housing deprivation and reviews systems for data collection (Brousse, 2004). It concludes with a series of concrete recommend-dations. The INSEE report can be seen as a first step towards making an important contribution to the progress of efforts to gauge the scale and extent of homelessness and housing deprivation in a European context.

This study, commissioned by DG Employment and Social Affairs in December 2005, builds upon the recommendations stemming from the INSEE/EUROSTAT report in order to develop some concrete steps towards statistical capacity building for the purpose of measuring the extent and nature of housing deprivation and homelessness in the Member States. As such, the study is of a technical nature and is aimed at identifying methodologies and practices for the development of the information basis required for the measurement of homelessness and housing exclusion by utilising information from service providers.

The study is tasked to develop methodologies and practices for building the statistical capacity of EU member states to measure homelessness and housing exclusion. In particular the brief for the study requires the report to:

1. develop (a procedure to establish) a comprehensive harmonized classification/nomenclature for housing situations (including homelessness) and related statistics, on the basis of which the target population for data collection would be selected;
2. develop (a procedure to establish) a classification/nomenclature of organisations and bodies providing services to the target population;
3. propose appropriate methodologies for national authorities to create and maintain (i.e., regularly update) a directory of such organisations and bodies, who could become data providers;
4. propose a limited set of standard register variables for use by such organisations (e.g., daily number of applications received, daily number of persons accommodated, possibly by gender, age group, and family status: alone, in a couple, w/o children);
5. propose methodologies for national authorities to undertake collection of aggregate data from these registers;
6. propose methodologies to undertake sample surveys amongst users of such organisations and bodies so as to allow a better understanding of the phenomenon;
7. reflect on the type and use of statistics and indicators that could be drawn from such data collections.

In essence the research follows the logic of the recommendations of the EUROSTAT/INSEE study to propose methodologies to improve the capacity of member states to collect information on homelessness and housing exclusion by three main actions. First, the study aims to propose a harmonised nomenclature or definition of living situations and homelessness. Second, the study proposes a methodology to create and maintain a database of service provider organisations relevant to homelessness (including a typology of services). Third, the study aims to propose a methodology for national authorities to collect information from the client record systems managed by service provider organisations. In some countries with a strong federal structure regional authorities are the appropriate actors, so the term "national authority" should be understood as the appropriate authority in the national context throughout the report.

1.2 Methodology

The study was conducted by a team of people with extensive experience in the field of homelessness and with experience in creating and maintaining large databases that have relevance to this field. This team was drawn from three organisations - the Joint Centre for Scottish Housing Research (JCSHR) in Scotland, Resource Information Service (RIS) in London and the Association for Innovative Social Research and Social Planning (GISS), in Bremen, Germany.

The JCSHR (University of Dundee) was the lead contractor for the study. In addition to managing the European Observatory on Homelessness the JCSHR has experience, since 1990, in creating and developing extensive databases for the UK Government (the Department of Communities and Local Government, the Housing Corporation and the Scottish Executive). The Centre is now one of the foremost depositories for data on social housing and supported accommodation in England and Scotland and presently employs 34 staff in the management of these datasets. The Centre manages three main datasets. *CORE* (COntinuous REcording) is a system developed jointly by the National Housing Federation (NHF) and the Housing Corporation to record information on both Registered Social Landlords (RSL) lettings and sales in England. Around 800 housing associations and local authorities provide information on around 350,000 social housing lettings a year. CORE data forms an invaluable source of information on a range of issues related to social housing lets and purchases including data relating to household characteristics, income, economic status, ethnicity, primary reason for housing, source of referral and previous tenure of occupant. See the CORE web-site for more information (www.core.ac.uk). The Centre also manages a similar dataset (known as *SCORE*) on behalf of the Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland (details can be found at www.scoreonline.org.uk). The third main dataset relates to the Supporting People programme whose goal is to provide vulnerable people with high-quality housing and support to improve their quality of life and eventually lead to independence. This programme is directed by the DCLG with the assistance of 150 Commissioning Bodies. The *Supporting People Client Record* Office has been established for the purpose of managing the client information database. Details of the database can be found at www.spclientrecord.org.uk.

Resource Information Service (RIS) is the leading provider in the UK of directories, websites and information systems that help homeless people and others in need. Established as a charity in 1986, it specialises in researching and publishing high quality information that helps agencies deliver better services. It currently employs a staff team of 28 people who are responsible for work on homelessness-related projects with funding from central government (DCLG), charitable trusts and companies. It also receives contracts from local authorities and other public bodies.

RIS manages databases on clients as well as on service provider organisations. The main client record database, known as Link, is a secure, web-based client recording system which organisations use to

input and monitor details of homeless clients and the work done with them. A similar system has been developed in Ireland. The Homeless London website (www.homelesslondon.org.uk) gives comprehensive coverage of all homelessness and related services in London and was the prototype of Homeless UK which provides information on hostels, advice and support services. It has details of around 8,000 specialist and generalist services. Homeless London also includes an online vacancy system for the city's 50 direct access emergency hostels. Similar systems are operational in Edinburgh and Dublin. UK Advice Finder is the largest database of helping services in the UK with details of 14,000 agencies. Refuges Online, used by refuges and the national domestic violence helpline, has comprehensive details of 450 refuges, two thirds of whom display vacancy information on the system.

GISS (Gesellschaft für Innovative Sozialforschung und Sozialplanung), was founded in 1989 as an independent registered non-profit association with the purpose of research, counselling and evaluation in the field of housing and social policy. As such it is financed exclusively by research contracts with public and voluntary agencies including Ministries of the Federal Government and the Federal States, the German Ministry of Science and the European Commission. Most of the funded projects have concentrated on chances of socially and economically deprived groups of integration into and participation in society and especially in the housing market. GISS has conducted a number of extensive research projects linked to data collection systems on homelessness. This includes research in different German *Länder* (Hamburg, Lower Saxony, North-Rhine Westphalia, Saxony Anhalt, Schleswig Holstein). Between 2002 and 2005 GISS was involved in an extensive research network on "Homelessness and support for households in urgent need of housing" funded by the German Ministry of Education and Science. This involved a nation-wide survey on support in housing (covering more than 670 service providers for the homeless; for this purpose a comprehensive list of service providers all over Germany was created) and another large survey on prevention of homelessness (covering 3,630 prevention cases in 44 selected cities all over Germany). GISS was also involved in the development of an integrative and continuous information system on homelessness and the prevention of homelessness in North-Rhine Westphalia. The regional Ministry of Social Affairs has commissioned GISS with a feasibility study for a combination of existing data collection systems of municipalities, NGO service providers for the homeless and other bodies, as the regional Housing Fund in North Rhine- Westphalia. After completing this task GISS has been commissioned with the development of an integrated data collection and reporting system for North-Rhine Westphalia.

GISS has been partner to several European research projects and networks funded by the European Commission, like EUROHOME (Emergency and Transitory Housing for Homeless People: Needs and Best Practice), IMPACT (The Housing Dimensions of Welfare Reform) and the European Observatory on Homelessness. On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Transport, Housing and Regional Planning GISS has conducted a project on transfer of models of good practice/good policies for combating homelessness in other EU-countries to Germany.

Thus, the authors of the study combine extensive knowledge on homelessness in the European Union and elsewhere with experience of homelessness and housing research in general and, more specifically, of data collection, client recording systems and databases of service providers.

The project was managed by a Steering Group, representing key stakeholders interested in this issue, which met on five occasions to consider progress at key stages in the project. The role of the Steering committee was to guide the research together with partner organisations. The five people selected represent a wide range of organisations involved in developing statistics on homelessness: Freek Spinnewijn is Director of the European NGO (FEANTSA – European federation of national organisations working with the homeless) and has worked on the Eurostat Homelessness Taskforce, the evaluation of the INSEE Report and the development/monitoring of homeless service provider data collection systems in Europe, Martti Lujanen (Director-General for Housing, Ministry of Environment

Finland) has extensive knowledge and expertise of comparable housing and housing exclusion statistics at European level (through the Informal meeting of housing ministers which publishes an Annual update of housing statistics in the EU) and at International level through the UN-ECE and various other bodies, Bernard Lacharme (Secretary General of the Haut Comité pour le Logement des Personnes Défavorisées) monitors homeless and housing policies for the French Government through regular reports, research and evaluations, Harry Bierings has national and international expertise (participation in the Eurostat taskforce on homelessness) as a statistician on housing and homelessness issues and Javier Ramos (University of Barcelona, Spain) is currently policy advisor to the European Parliament President and has extensive research experience in the field of social exclusion and poverty.

The detailed information used to inform the key tasks of identifying existing methodologies of data collection, the creation of directories of organizations and client record databases by service providers was drawn from papers commissioned from a range of countries. These were chosen to provide a cross-country comparison focusing on countries representing the different welfare regimes and political systems (federal/centralised structures) of the EU-25. Countries were also selected in a manner that did not supplicate existing research knowledge (from the INSEE/EUROSTAT study or the European Observatory on Homelessness). Comparison was undertaken among two specific groups of countries. First, among core countries which have experience or practice relevant to specific issues in the research tasks; detailed reports were prepared on these initiatives. Second, in countries where specific issues have been identified or initial steps taken to develop a methodology for data collection, position papers were commissioned. Together these two sets of papers provided an understanding of the scientific, technical and management issues involved in data collection and measurement. In each of these countries, papers were commissioned from well known experts on homelessness (see Appendix 1.1 for the details of the authors of these papers). Detailed papers were commissioned in six countries – the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. Position papers were commissioned from Portugal and Hungary. Executive summaries of these papers are found in Appendix 1.2. The national reports of the correspondents of the European Observatory on Homelessness were used to supplement these papers, providing detailed information on data collection in each EU member state (see the FEANTSA web-site – www.feantsa.org/research). Detailed information on data collection systems in other countries (e.g. the UK and Ireland) was drawn from the authors' own experience and organisations.

For a number of further countries (EU member states as well as other countries like Norway, Australia, Canada and the United States) information was collected from literature and contact persons in those countries. Questionnaires were distributed to service provider organizations, in the membership of FEANTSA primarily, to obtain additional information on the structure and management of organizational databases and of client record systems that they manage. These were supplemented with telephone interviews where required.

Extensive use was also made of communications and recommendations at EU-level, especially the publications on indicators for social inclusion, the study on the production of data on homelessness and housing deprivation in the European Union (Brousse, 2004), the reviews of statistics on homelessness in Europe produced by the European Observatory on Homelessness and published by FEANTSA and of the UNECE/EUROSTAT recommendations developed for the 2010 censuses of population and housing (UNECE/EUROSTAT, 2006).

1.3 Social Inclusion and Homelessness

This research is undertaken in the context of the EU social inclusion strategy which was launched by the European Council of Lisbon in 2000, to improve the fight against poverty and social exclusion of the member states through trans-national exchanges and mutual learning. Within this framework, common objectives were agreed on by all EU countries to stimulate coordinated national policy developments in this area. Progress towards reaching these common objectives has been monitored through regular reporting on national policies in the National Action Plans on social inclusion (NAPsIncl). These common objectives included promoting access to housing and preventing homelessness, and indeed homelessness has emerged as one of the societal problems outlined in the NAPsIncl, and national policies have been developed over the last few years to tackle this problem.

The EU social inclusion strategy has now been merged with two other separate strategies on pensions and health care to form a single strategy on social protection and social inclusion. In March 2006, the European Council adopted the new framework for the social protection and social inclusion process. In this revised framework, three new social inclusion common objectives were adopted including "ensuring access for all to the resources, rights and services needed for participation in society, preventing and addressing exclusion, and fighting all forms of discrimination leading to exclusion."

In the context of the open method of coordination, the 2002 - 2006 Community Action Programme has contributed to supporting cooperation between different stakeholders, including decision-makers, NGOs and researchers to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of policies to combat social exclusion, including homelessness, by:

1. Improving the understanding of homelessness through research commissioned on themes such as access to housing for immigrants and ethnic minorities, and through the European Observatory on Homelessness of FEANTSA
2. Organising trans-national exchanges on homeless policies which are implemented through peer reviews (UK 2004, Denmark 2005, Norway 2006), and promoting mutual learning between national administrations, between homeless service providers, between cities and other organisations active in the fight against homelessness
3. Developing the capacity of actors to address homelessness effectively, and to promote innovative approaches through the funding of European networks like FEANTSA.

Following the adoption by the Council of the Commission's Communication on the streamlining of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, the first round of streamlined strategies for the period 2006-2008 were submitted to the Commission in the form of National Reports on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion in September 2006. As part of the social inclusion process, the Member States are developing common EU indicators in order to monitor progress towards the social inclusion objectives. A first set of commonly agreed and defined indicators on social inclusion was adopted by the Laeken Council in December 2001 (this list is commonly referred to as the "Laeken list"). No proposals for housing indicators were put forward, but there was agreement on the following common approach: "NAPsIncl should contain quantitative information covering three issues: (1) decent housing, (2) housing costs, (3) homelessness and other precarious housing conditions." A revised list of indicators was adopted by the Social Protection Committee in July 2006 – these largely draw from the existing set of Laeken indicators although they include clear reference to a housing indicator which is "to be developed". The measurement of the phenomenon of homelessness is the purpose of this specific study which contributes to the debate on the development of appropriate indicators on homelessness and housing exclusion.

1.4 Structure of the Report

The report is structured in four main parts. The context of the research is described in this part (Part A) of the report. Chapter 2 sets the scene for the study by describing the need for data collection in the context of our understanding of the causes and nature of homelessness. The chapter also provides an overview of data collection in the member states and describes the systems employed in the six main study countries. Part B of the report considers 'What to Measure'. Chapters in this part of the report propose a definition of living situations and of homelessness and suggest a typology of service provider organisations. These chapters address tasks 1 and 2 of the study brief.

Part C of the report addresses the question 'How to measure' homelessness. Chapter 5 examines the approaches taken to create and maintain directories or databases of service provider organisations and the type of information collected about the organisations. On this basis it makes recommendations for both the methodology to develop and manage organisational databases and for the type of information that these databases should contain. Chapter 6 examines the nature of client record systems run by service provider organisations. This allows an understanding of the development, management and information systems issues involved in establishing and running databases on the clients of accommodation service providers in an efficient and sustainable manner. Chapter 7 uses the information provided in existing client record systems to propose a set or standard register variables that can be extracted to describe the scale and profile of the homeless people using those services. Chapter 8 considers the issues to be addressed in order to conduct surveys of the users or clients of homeless accommodation services. This part of the report addresses tasks 3, 4 and 5 of the study brief.

Part D of the report considers the role to be played by national authorities in data collection on homelessness and the methodology to improve capacity in that regard. Chapter 9 utilises the information from Part C in order to summarise the governance, methodological and technical issues to be addressed. Chapter 10 reflects upon the nature and use of statistics and indicators that can be derived from the collation and aggregation of continuously recorded data on the users of homeless accommodation services.

Chapter 2

Understanding homelessness and the context of data collection

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets the context for the study by describing briefly the causes of homelessness, the changing strategies to tackling homelessness in Europe and by providing an overview of the data collection methods across Europe. The chapter then proceeds to describe, in greater detail, the nature of data collection in the six main study countries.

The following section briefly summarises those aspects of the research literature explaining the causes of homelessness that are relevant to, and can inform, our consideration of the approaches to data collection. This understanding emphasises the fact that explanations involve structural, institutional, relationship and personal factors as underlying causes of homelessness. This confirms the idea that homelessness as a process and as a multidimensional phenomenon is a fundamental paradigm of social exclusion. The process or pathways model of homelessness is a key concept affecting the approach to data collection and the understanding of the purpose of data collection for policy development and evaluation. This understanding also influences the very definition of homelessness on which data collection depends and highlights the difficulty of distinguishing different living situations where people are threatened with homeless or are perceived to be visibly homeless. Hence, if the processes or trajectories of homelessness are to be understood and policies of prevention and re-integration are to be informed by reliable evidence, there is a need for different measures of homelessness. These different measures will, normally, require different sources of information (e.g. surveys, register data and administrative data).

There is a diversity of approaches to tackling homelessness across Europe and these have been changing markedly in recent years. The third section of the chapter considers the strategies taken to deal with homelessness and highlights the governance issues involved. In particular it is emphasised that, while some counties still do not have well developed national strategies to tackle homelessness, most countries have been developing policies in a more integrated fashion in recent years aiming to prevent as well as alleviate homelessness. There is recognition that such strategies need to be evidence based and hence require reliable information that is regularly collected. These homelessness strategies also recognise the housing and social policy dimensions involved and increasingly involve a wide range of government departments and agencies. Such inter-agency approaches involve improved co-ordination of action which in turn rely on agreed definitions of homelessness and common understanding of the nature and scale of the problem.

The chapter describes two main approaches to data collection on homelessness in Europe and reflects upon the value and possible role of census and household surveys. These two man approaches demonstrate that different sources of information all have value including surveys, administrative data and register based information and that information from service providers is an important resource that is currently under-utilised in most countries. These issues are then exemplified in the final main section of the chapter which describes data collection approaches in the six study countries (France, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Sweden, Germany and Spain).

2.2 Causes and Explanations of Homelessness

There is a voluminous literature on the nature and causes of homelessness stretching over many years. It is beyond the scope of this study to review that research. The intention of this section is to stress that the understanding of homelessness in both academic research and in policy has been shifting over time and that this has influenced the definition of homelessness which in turn has implications for the manner in which homelessness is measured. The relevant aspects to highlight here relate to the understanding of homelessness as a housing issue or a social issue, the shift to more structural explanations of homelessness and the recognition of the need to understand the dynamic aspects of the process leading to homelessness.

In the debate on the definition of homelessness reference is made to a housing dimension, the lack of accommodation, and also to a social dimension or the absence of social relations or ties which in turn reveal situations of social exclusion or marginalization (Tosi and Torri, 2005). A third dynamic relates homelessness to the manifestation of social marginalization as an aspect of extreme poverty. In the UK homelessness is defined according to legislation. The 1977 Act marked the shift from a welfare approach targeted on individuals who were disengaged from society to a more structural, housing market approach (Smith, 2004; Jacobs et al., in Hutson and Clapham, 1999, 11-28). Responsibility for homeless people (within the meaning of the Act) was then transferred from local authority social services to housing departments. According to Tosi (2003), one specific characteristic of the Italian situation is that the issue of *senza dimora* is equated with that of extreme poverty, such that it is not always clear from official documents, like the NAPs/Incl, whether groups classed as *senza dimora* and *povertà estrema* are identical or overlapping. In France, informed by the work of the National Council for Statistical Information (*Conseil National de l'Information Statistique* - CNIS), a body that combines government departments, NGOs, and researchers, most statistics-based research has regarded the sans-domicile as people in a specific point-in-time situation within a continuum of housing situations (Marpsat, 2004).

The idea that poverty needs to be understood as a process and as a multidimensional phenomenon is a fundamental point of the paradigm of social exclusion (Mingione 1996, Paugam 1996, Castel 1995, Donzelot 1991). The idea of the process character of poverty has strongly influenced research on homelessness (Tosi and Torri, 2005). "Homelessness is a situation that can last a variable length of time, with frequent movements in and out" (Brousse, 2004). The distinction between "persistent", "recurrent" and "temporary" homelessness is a reflection of the need to understand the dynamic and process aspects of homelessness.

In recent years qualitative research has endeavoured to understand the nature of the pathways into and out of homelessness (Anderson and Tulloch, 2000; Edgar and Meert, 2006; MacKemzie and Chamberlain 2003). Equally, policies aimed at the prevention of homelessness have begun to promote research into the factors associated with repeat episodes of homelessness and on the longitudinal analysis of homelessness; though such research is limited in scale and of very recent origin (Stax, 2004; Pickering et al, 2003). Both strands of research have introduced new insights into the major causes of homelessness linked to structural factors, institutional factors, relationship factors and personal factors.

For example, structural changes in the housing market, associated with de-regulation policies (of the 1980s and 1990s) and with governance reforms, have led to significant barriers of access to affordable rented housing for poorer and vulnerable households (Edgar, Doherty and Meert, 2004). This change has been associated, for example, in many countries with a demonstrable rise in evictions as a pathway to homelessness. Repeat episodes of homelessness have also been associated with institutional factors associated with de-institutionalisation processes and with weak inter-agency working linked to institutional release protocols for, among others, young people leaving care and offenders leaving prison (Edgar et al, 2002; Dyb, 2005). Relationship breakdown and domestic violence have

long been understood as a major pathway into homelessness and, among women, for patterns of repeat homelessness (Malos and Hague, 1997). While research has moved our understanding from explanations based on individual pathology towards more structurally based explanations, it remains the case that factors associated with personal vulnerabilities present different and distinct pathways into homelessness. Research has described, on the one hand, differences in pathways into homelessness for young people compared to older people (Anderson and Tulloch, 2003; Crane and Warnes, 2002). On the other hand research has, more recently, considered the health needs of people (and dual diagnosis) as an explanation of the barriers to routes out of homelessness (see WHO, 2005 for a review).

This brief overview is presented here in order to highlight the need for different measures of homelessness if the process or trajectories of homelessness are to be understood and policies of prevention are to be allied to policies of alleviation and reintegration. At the very least it is important to develop measures that provide not just the count of the number and profile of homeless people (the stock figure) but also the flow of people through services (the flow figure) and the prevalence of homelessness over time for different geographies and communities (see also Fitzpatrick et al, 2000; Edgar et al, 2002). These issues are considered in detail in Chapter 10 of this report. Equally, if homeless strategies, programs and services are to be effective then monitoring indicators require outcome as well as output measures. This insight predicates a requirement for registration as well as survey methodologies of data collection and for the need to capture and collate information from different sources in a more comparable manner through the use of more harmonised definitions and concepts.

2.3 Strategies to Tackle Homelessness in Europe

There is a diversity of approaches to tackling homelessness across Europe and approaches have been changing markedly in recent years (Avramov, 1999; Vranken 1999). This is not the place to discuss the nature of these approaches or the factors that have led to the emergence of more integrated approaches developing. For our purposes it is sufficient to emphasise the recognition that homeless strategies should be evidence based. This requires a clear and consensual definition of homelessness among policy makers and a robust method of data collection based on that understanding. However, there is no correct single definition of homelessness or single count of the phenomenon that will be an accurate reflection of reality. Rather, different counts will be required for different policy purposes. Hence the definition adopted and the numbers counted as homeless will be a reflection of the policy context and policy purpose in which they are employed.

The difficulty of defining homelessness impacts on the ability of governments to adequately and appropriately respond to homelessness. The purpose of collecting data on homelessness should be to provide the information necessary to improve the provision of services in order to prevent and alleviate homelessness. The information collected on homeless people should be adequate to inform national and local governments who, in the framework of the EU Social Inclusion Strategy, should be developing strategies to:

- prevent homelessness;
- tackle the causes of homelessness;
- reduce the level of homelessness;
- reduce the negative effects on homeless people and their families
- ensure that formerly homeless people can sustain permanent independent housing..

To implement policy objectives that aim to prevent homelessness and reduce its impact on vulnerable households requires information that reflects the reality of the process of homelessness and housing exclusion. Thus hidden homelessness should be visible to policy makers and service providers. This means having an understanding and measurement of homelessness which includes the situation of

people who live in insecure housing, are forced to move constantly between inadequate housing situations and those who are forced to live in housing which is unfit for habitation by commonly accepted norms. If policy intends to ensure that no person should have to sleep rough then information is needed to monitor the number of rough sleepers, the number of clients of homeless services and the number of accommodation places available. Where policies aim to ensure that fewer people should become homeless, information is needed to monitor accurately the total number of homeless households, the number living in temporary or insecure / inadequate housing and the number who are potentially homeless or are threatened with homelessness. If the policy objective is to prevent homelessness then it is important also to have information on the number of people vulnerable to eviction and the number of people about to leave an institution who do not have a home. The prevention of homelessness also requires the provision of sustainable permanent accommodation for formerly homeless people. This requires information on the number of homeless people who gain access to supported accommodation.

This simple policy typology provides clues about the information needs for policy making (James, 1998). Simple counts of the homeless are useful for understanding the needs for emergency services. Demographic profile information is also useful since the needs of families, single adults and young people differ. More complex information is needed for responsive transitional policies designed to assist homeless people to exit from homelessness. Estimates of annual prevalence (the number of unduplicated cases of homelessness in a year) can help to determine the numbers of individuals and families requiring transitional services in a given period. The information requirements for preventative services are more complex. Prevention requires knowledge of the characteristics and needs of the at-risk population who are, by definition, either institutionalised or housed at any given time.

The locus of responsibility for homeless policies, programmes and strategies differs between member states. Furthermore, the relationship between homeless policies and housing policies on the one hand and social welfare or support policies on the other hand also varies across Europe. Hence national, regional and local administrations all have a role to play in both the collection of data and in the use of that data to monitor or guide policy action. While policies, in some countries, are determined at national level, the responsibility for their implementation lies at the local level.

The Esping-Anderson typology of European welfare regimes (Esping-Anderson, 1990) does not provide a robust framework to explain the differences in policy approach across the new enlarged Europe in relation to homelessness. However, from a data collection perspective it is important to bear in mind that different policy contexts will affect the measurement of homelessness in a number of ways. The extent to which homelessness is perceived as a housing problem or a social problem has an impact. Equally, the impetus to develop integrated strategies to deal with homelessness at national and local level may be, in part, a reflection of the welfare regime context to the extent that the role of the state and of civil society impact on policy development and service provision. However, our evidence also indicates that countries that share similarities in welfare policies, according to the Esping-Anderson typology, can have very different approaches to homelessness (see for example the proceedings of the Nordic network of homelessness research) as well as to data collection (Sahlin, 2004).

An important step in assessing the extent to which the local housing market is meeting the requirements of ‘mainstream’ households is to look at their current living arrangements. Hence, for housing planning purposes assessments of housing need examine the characteristics, physical condition and location of property in which mainstream households reside. Equally, in order to assess the requirements of vulnerable households with specific or specialist needs (e.g. community care needs) and households excluded from mainstream housing, it is also necessary to examine their current living arrangements. An important aspect of this process is to compile a profile of the population (of different client groups) between institutional situations, specialist accommodation, mainstream

housing, temporary and emergency accommodation. This requires that housing policy makers work alongside social work, justiciary and health professionals to achieve a common understanding of the current living arrangements of the target groups.

2.4 Approaches to Data Collection on Homelessness in Europe

The legislative basis and governance of data collection on homelessness is only weakly developed in most countries. As a result responsibility for data collection on homelessness is often not clearly defined or coordinated. This section describes a broad overview of approaches to data collection on homelessness. Broadly two main measures are described using survey methods and register based approaches. The section concludes by considering the use of census and household surveys and the implications these have for measuring homelessness in countries that use population registers rather than traditional enumeration methods. Thus three main sources of information can be identified; from surveys of homeless people, collation of information from service providers and administrative records, and surveys of the general population.

2.4.1 Use of Survey Methods

Two distinct forms of survey are evident. First, there are surveys of homeless people; second, there are surveys of local authorities or service providers.

Most commonly, surveys of homeless people are employed to make a point-in-time estimate of the number of people sleeping in a public place or in an overnight emergency shelter. A distinction can be made between surveys, which rely on statistical methods to estimate the size of the homeless population from a sample survey, and counts which aim to count all people sleeping in a public place (or in temporary accommodation for the homeless) on a given night. Different approaches can be identified across Europe.

Surveys can also be employed to quantify different aspects of homelessness including, for example, the number of people living temporarily with family and friends. Such methods are less common and are not generally employed as a part of the data collection approaches to estimate the scale of homelessness on a regular basis. However, there are numerous examples ad hoc research based surveys at a local level on specific aspects of the homeless population.

Table 2.1 Survey Based Methods of Data Collection

Surveys	Examples	Agency
National counts of people sleeping rough or in overnight hostels	Italy (2000) France (2001) Spain (2004) Portugal (2005)	Social Exclusion Commission INSEE INE Institute for Social Security
Capital city or municipal counts of people sleeping rough or in overnight hostels (1)	Dublin England Netherlands Portugal (Lisbon; 2004)	Homeless Agency DCLG Homeless Monitor City of Lisbon
National counts using a survey of local authorities	Finland Ireland Sweden	National Housing Fund Ministry of the Environment National Board of Health and Welfare
Regional Counts using a survey of local authorities	North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany) Saxony (Germany)	Office of Statistics Regional Ministry of Social Affairs

Note (1) Conducted as part of official data collection

Surveys of homeless people

France (2001), Italy (2000) and Spain (2004) have undertaken national surveys of people sleeping in public places. These surveys and their methodology are described in detail elsewhere (Marpsat, 2003; Tosi, 2003 and Cabrera, 2003). A number of issues are highlighted here. First, the surveys in France and Spain were conducted by the national statistics offices while in Italy the Commission for Social Exclusion was responsible for commissioning the survey. Secondly, INSEE developed a detailed methodology for weighting the sample population in order to make an estimate of the total homeless population. Third, the Italian survey followed an earlier study but adopted a different methodology making it difficult to compare the results while the French and Spanish surveys were one-off studies and there are no plans to repeat them at this time (latest information from France at the time of writing: there are plans for a new homelessness survey in France around 2011 – 2012). The Portuguese Institute of Social Security (now Institute for Solidarity and Social Security) conducted a nation-wide rough sleepers count in October 2005. However, the number of rough sleepers found in the night of the count (under extremely bad weather conditions) in the whole country (less than 500) was lower than the number of rough sleepers counted a year before in a rough sleepers survey in Lisbon alone.

In some countries municipal authorities have employed point in time counts of people sleeping rough in the capital city where most homelessness is concentrated. These are generally conducted, or are funded, by the municipal authority and tend to be ad hoc or irregular surveys making it difficult to develop trend analysis.

A group of countries can be identified where service providers, either on their own initiative or in concert with the local authority, have established procedures for conducting regular counts of rough sleepers in the major cities. These tend to be countries where policy issues on homelessness have become more important in recent years (e.g. Czech, Hungary and Poland) or countries where NGOs create umbrella organisations to fill the gap in public policy intervention (e.g. Austria, Greece). Thus, in the Czech Republic counts have been recently undertaken in Prague (2005) and Brno (2006). In Hungary counts have been conducted in Budapest and Debrecen. In Poland the Pomeranian Forum of service providers has established a detailed procedure for measuring the homeless population which has been repeated. Due to a lack of official action in Austria social workers and researchers operating through the umbrella of BAWO have conducted surveys in Vienna, Linz and Graz since the mid 1990s (Schoibl, 2003). More recently, the Klimaka organisation has commissioned a survey in Greece as part of a process of creating a forum of NGOs on homelessness. Although there is evidence that these surveys are being conducted on a more regular basis sometimes with support from public authorities (e.g. Czech Republic and Hungary), they have not been undertaken in a manner that allows a robust method of trend analysis to be employed from the findings.

In the UK, figures for rough sleeping are provided separately for England, Scotland, Wales and N.Ireland. In England, the Department of Communities and Local Government (formerly the ODPM) publishes a national figure of people sleeping rough annually, based on a combination of street counts and estimates to establish the position against the 1998 baseline (of 1,850 people sleeping rough – the first detailed estimate of rough sleeping in England). Rough Sleeping counts are conducted by local authorities in partnership with local homeless agencies. Street counts provide a snap-shot of the number of people sleeping rough in a given geographical area on a single night. The most recent data (2005) indicates that 106 local authorities (of 354) undertook a street count. Where no recent counts have taken place local authorities must submit an estimate. Any estimates of more than 10 rough sleepers provided by local authorities (in their annual Housing Investment Programme statistical returns) should be validated by a count. Local authorities where there is a known rough sleeping problem are encouraged to undertake street counts at appropriate intervals, depending on the size of the counted local rough sleeping population in areas with: (a) 20 or more rough sleepers; at least two

street counts a year; (b) between 10 and 19; at least one street count a year; (c) under 10; local authorities report estimates through housing statistical returns.

Surveys of local authorities

Some countries make regular or periodic counts of the number of homeless people based on surveys of local authorities counting the number of people in contact with services in a defined period who were known to be homeless. Where these figures are based on estimates made by local authorities their reliability can be questioned (O'Sullivan, 2003). If the definition of homelessness in such surveys changes then it is difficult to compare trends over time (Sahlin, 2003). These surveys generally employ definitions of homelessness that are broader than surveys of rough sleepers and emergency hostel clients.

In the East German *Bundesland* of Saxony (4.3 million inhabitants) the Ministry of Social Affairs asks all counties and cities of Saxony about the number of homeless people and those who are threatened by homelessness at the end of each year (stock data for 31.12.). For the question of definition the questionnaire refers to regulations for municipalities how to deal with "roofless" persons ("*Obdachlose*"). The definition includes not only all those homeless persons who are without any shelter, but also those who were provided with temporary accommodation by the municipalities. Included in the definition (but covered separately) are also those who are imminently threatened by loss of permanent or temporary accommodation and persons in completely inadequate accommodation not fit for habitation. So called "persons without a settled way of life" ("*Nichtsesshafte*") are explicitly ruled out from the definition. One of the questions makes clear that hostels, shelters, supported housing, municipal temporary accommodation, hotels and rented apartments used for temporary accommodation for homeless people are covered by the annual survey and the people accommodated there (for less than two years) are to be defined as homeless. Saxony is the only East German *Bundesland* which provides such data on an annual basis.

Germany's most densely populated *Bundesland* North Rhine-Westphalia (18.1 million inhabitants) conducts an annual one-day stock count carried through by all municipalities on behalf of the office of statistics in that state (*Landesamt für Datenverarbeitung und Statistik NRW; LDS*). The count covers all homeless people provided with temporary accommodation by measures of public order laws (police laws) by 30th of June each year. This survey has been carried out since 1965, based on mainly the same definitions. The legal basis is a circular by the Regional Ministry of the Interior in North Rhine-Westphalia from 1973, amended in 1977.

Ireland conducts a tri-ennial estimate based on a survey of local authorities. In Sweden the NHBW has conducted national surveys of local authorities and other organizations in contact with homeless people, though on a less regular basis (the most recent being in 2005, see section 2.5.3 below). In Finland, the National Housing Fund has conducted an annual housing market survey (in November) since 1986. The data is collected by survey from each municipal authority and records the number of homeless people in contact with services in the week prior to the survey. Estimations are possible especially for the number of persons living temporarily with relatives or friends. This group has turned out to be the largest subgroup of homeless people quantified by the Housing Market Survey and there remains some uncertainty about the reliability of the local estimates. However, the approach has led to acceptance of an agreed definition of homelessness for many years, the continuity in operation has allowed trends to be monitored and the output has been used to guide and influence the development of homelessness policies. The instructions for defining the homeless population in the survey are summarised in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Housing Market Survey instructions for defining homeless population, Finland

Single homeless persons	Living outdoors, staircases, night shelters etc	Includes persons without permanent accommodation who live in various types of temporary shelters and places not meant for habitation and who go around from one such place to another.
	Living in other shelters or hostels for homeless people	Includes persons in shelters and hostels for homeless people and in boarding houses. Usually a daily fee is paid by the social welfare authorities for these clients.
	Living in care homes or other housing units, rehabilitation homes or hospitals due to lack of housing	Includes persons who live in housing units or homes for substance abusers, or in various types of care home or homes for receiving institutional care, where a person stays due to a lack of housing. Units for supported housing, where a person is supposed to live for a longer period, are not counted.
	Prisoners soon to be released who have no housing	Includes prisoners for whom no housing and supported housing has been arranged
	Living temporarily with relatives or friends	Includes persons who, according to the municipality's information or estimate, are living temporarily with relatives or friends due to a lack of housing or who move around between relatives and friends. This item does not include young people living in their childhood home
Homeless families	Families and couples who have split up or are living in temporary housing	Includes families forced to live apart because of lack of housing, or in temporary accommodation, such as a boarding house, or temporarily with friends or relatives. Homeless families also include mothers in temporary mother-and-child homes or families in crises homes without a home of their own.

2.4.2 Use of Register Methods

Registration or administrative records are employed in a number of countries to collate statistics on the number and profile of homeless people. These can take a number of different forms. They are often recent in origin and there is evidence of changes in systems to take advantage of improvements in database technology. Three main approaches are identified here and selected examples are used to illustrate them.

Table 2.3 Register Based Methods of Data Collection

Register Method	Examples	Responsibility
Official national returns from local authorities and/or service providers (of clients)	Denmark (since 1999) England	Social Appeals Board DCLG
Official registers of service provision	Czech Republic Hungary	MOSLA Central Statistical Office
NGO client record systems	Netherlands Germany – AG STADO Czech Republic Portugal	SAD, Federatie Opvang BAGW SAD, Nadeje AMI

Official National Returns

In Denmark, (since 1999) statistics have been collected on enrolments and discharges from homeless hostels covered by § 94 in the Law on Social Service. Client based information is managed using a central personal register number and is entered into a computer programme which has been developed for this purpose and distributed to all the hostels from the National Social Appeals Board.

In England, statistics related to homelessness presentations and actions are collected quarterly through the P1E form (which achieves a 95% return rate from local authorities). The form collects data relating to decisions on homelessness applications, acceptances by priority need category, reason for loss of settled home, referrals, immediate action, age of applicant, households provided with temporary accommodation and households leaving temporary accommodation by final outcome and elapsed length of stay. In England, register data is also held for people who access (over 30,000) services that receive funding through the Supporting People Programme which includes homeless services. The client record system records standard information about clients starting to receive services. Data is entered using a free web-based software system and is recorded and updated. The data is processed by the central Client Record Office and passed on to the relevant funding Authority (of which there are 150 in England) and the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

Official Registers of Service Providers

National authorities in some countries maintain official catalogues of organisations who are allowed to provide services to homeless people under specific legislation or who are funded by public agencies to provide services. These registers can include information on the capacity provided (number of beds or accommodation) and the occupancy achieved over the funding period. For example, in Hungary, social services provide data for two official information collection systems: the National Statistical Data Acquisition Program (OSAP), and the Public Administration Offices overseeing the registration of services. Within the OSAP framework, all service providers are required to fill in an electronic questionnaire and submit data to the *Central Statistical Office*; where it is used to compile the *Statistical Yearbook on Social Affairs.* The data collected are aimed at taking stock (they reflect conditions and capacities), and are mainly focused on the service providers; data on clients are very limited. Similar official registers are maintained in other new member states (e.g. Czech Republic, Latvia).

NGO Client Record Systems

Countries where the national or regional authorities use client registration data from service providers either to estimate the scale of homelessness or to monitor the profile of service users are rare in Europe although they have been developed for some time elsewhere (e.g. the USA and Canada). In only two countries (Netherlands and Germany) has the national authority funded computer databases to collect and aggregate statistics from client registration systems. Systems with partial geographic coverage have been funded by official bodies in two countries (London and Dublin). These are described in detail in chapter 5.

In some countries, especially smaller countries or those with a limited scale of service provision, the data provided by national NGOs collated from their local projects and offices can provide the main source of information on the scale and profile of homelessness. For example, in the Czech Republic two separate systems are in operation by organisations which operate across the country. The Naděje organisation client registration (EK) is based on a combination of an electronic card and a central database. The NewPeopleVision (NPV) computer program is used by members of the SAD. The data in both systems is collected continually, on a daily basis, separately for each facility. In Portugal, the

International Medical Assistance (AMI) has local services located in the main cities throughout the country which provide support to homeless people. The information on service users is collected through a common computerised form. All the local services use the same database programme which has been specifically adapted to their needs. The headquarters is responsible for co-ordination and for the overall statistical production of data. However, only limited data is statistically analysed and released at a central level.

2.4.3 General Population and Household Surveys, Census Data

National censuses and household surveys can be used as a source of information for some categories of homelessness. They can provide information on the those parts of the population who live in institutional situations, those who live temporarily with family or friends or in accommodation provided for the homeless, those living in overcrowded conditions or in unfit or non-conventional dwellings.

A distinction needs to be made between countries that employ a register based population census and those that adopt a survey based (decennial) census. In several countries (e.g. Denmark, Finland, Netherlands) the traditional census questionnaire survey has been replaced by registers as the sources of population and housing censuses. The existence of a Central Population Register (CPR) with a unique national identification number and a dwelling register with a unique identification key is used to establish a link between dwellings and persons in register based countries. Germany and Sweden plan to move fully to register based censuses and some countries have, or plan to adopt, a mix of traditional censuses and registers (including Austria, Belgium, Latvia, Slovenia). France has adopted a 'rolling' census (INED, 2006). The remaining countries retain traditional questionnaire based surveys.

In theory it ought to be possible to count the number of people living in different types of institution and people with no usual place of residence from central population registers. In Finland, the Population Register is fully integrated to the postal system (and other national registers). This means that changes in postal address are automatically recorded. Further, every person must be registered to receive benefits and public health services. As a test for this study, the Finnish Register was interrogated in November 2006 and indicated a total of 26,519 people with no usual place of residence. Of this number are a group of people whose location is unknown (Group 903, 8,424 people). This will include people who have moved abroad or who have 'vanished into thin air'. This leaves a total of 16,674 persons who lack permanent housing (Group 901). However, that figure is almost double the number counted in the annual Housing Fund Survey as homeless. While the Housing Fund survey may be understood to under-estimate the number of people living with family and friends, further research would be needed to reconcile the two sets of figures. For other countries using register based systems it seems to be rather more difficult to provide counts of people not residing in conventional dwellings. This clearly is an issue beyond the scope of this study but is one that merits further investigation.

Countries utilizing traditional questionnaire based surveys can provide information on inadequate and non-conventional housing. However, they could also adopt an enumeration process to include homeless people; the Australian Census provides information in this way. France and Lithuania are examples of countries, in Europe, where census surveys are used to count people sleeping rough.

Population censuses are now undertaken annually in France (since January 2004). The census counts homeless people living in hostels in the same manner as it counts all other "communities". Night shelters are a separate category and so should allow a count of this part of the roofless population. However, long-stay homeless accommodation is lumped together with other forms of long-stay community accommodation like old people's homes. For rough sleepers, collaboration with voluntary groups (including FNARS) and close involvement by local councils and survey enumerators have

helped reduce the risks of multiple counting and omissions. Also, the roofless population (rough sleepers) in municipalities of under 10,000 people are surveyed in the same year as the rest of the town's population (i.e. once every 5 years). For municipalities with populations of 10,000 and over, approximately 8% of the municipality's homes are surveyed each year, and the roofless are surveyed every 5 years over the entire municipal area. The homeless are enumerated as a matter of principle: the homeless are French citizens like any other and must also be counted (all those that can be interviewed personally fill in the same census form as the rest of the population).

In Lithuania the 2001 Population and Housing Census is the single data source on the number of people living in a public space. Information about rough sleepers included gender, nationality, age, education. No more information about roofless was produced after 2001.

2.5 Data Collection in Selected Study Countries

This section provides a more detailed description of data collection on homelessness in selected countries in order to illustrate the nature of official statistics on homelessness and to provide a framework to understand the contribution that client registration data from service providers could make in informing official statistics.

2.5.1 France

Unlike the United Kingdom, France has no statutory definition of homelessness. However, an "official" definition is used for the statistics published by the National Institute of Demographic Studies (INED) and the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE).

The definition of *sans domicile* corresponds to a variety of housing situations that are part of a more general classification in which all housing situations, be they cases of "housing hardship" or not, are classified along four dimensions: housing type, occupancy status, housing quality and amenities, and, finally, security/insecurity over time. *Sans domicile* denotes people whose housing situation is defined in terms of the first two dimensions (housing type and occupancy status), as people living in a place unfit for human habitation or in accommodation run by services for the homeless. This definition is based solely on the housing situation (exclusive of other aspects such as mental health, social network). "Housing situation" does not include the social aspects of housing, at least not those that lead to considering as homeless those persons who are victims of domestic violence. This classification and the *sans-domicile* definition were elaborated in the early 1990s by an ad hoc working group of the National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS), a body that brings together producers and users of French public statistics (government departments, NGOs, trade unions, researchers, etc.). The establishment of the "homeless-ness" group (in 1993) was itself the response to a demand that emanated notably from the NGOs.

Responsibility for accommodating adult homeless persons lies with central government, though municipalities or groups of municipalities may also subsidize hostels. In metropolitan France there are more than 36,000 municipalities, 96 departments, and 22 regions. Hence the difficulty of listing the accommodation services that may be funded by municipalities (or by NGOs only), in addition to those funded by the state. The public system of statistics in France relies heavily on statistical surveys, though the use of data from registers has been increasing of late. Increasing the use of registration data, or improving the coverage of such data, must overcome specific barriers.

Accommodation services and other services for the homeless are funded from different sources. Hence data gathered by statutory agencies, or by shelters on their behalf, are organized according to the

origin of the funding. This means that observation systems for people in homeless shelters often only have partial coverage. Shelters receiving national funding are covered but not those funded by local authority social assistance. This would require a clear understanding of the accommodation services defined as homeless services; for example, are *centre maternel* (which receive funding from the *aide sociale à l'enfence*) to be regarded as homeless accommodation services?

The notion of personal data is broadly defined in France. The *Commission Nationale Informatique et Libertés* (CNIL, National Commission on Data Protection and Privacy), is the agency which, according to the EU data protection directive (95/46/EC), guarantees that personal data will not be misused. To collect personal data emanating from the various services situated in a department, the movement of this data must be authorized by the CNIL. To identify information about the same individual an identifier is necessary. The CNIL prefers the use of *ad hoc* identifiers. Hence the situation differs from that in some other European countries, such as Denmark, where use of the national identity number, though regulated, is easier and better accepted. Thus if coordination of data recording from accommodation services ensured that they constructed similar data files then a 'simplified norm' could be devised to streamline the notification process.

ES Survey by the Ministry of Social Affairs

The *Etablissements Sociaux* (social establishments; ES) survey includes facilities adults *en difficulté sociale (*experiencing socio-economic problems). The last ES survey took place in 2004/2005 conducted by the statistical services of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs now known as the DREES. The sampling frame uses the FINESS database but consulted municipal services to include shelters and hostels that are not in FINESS. An effort was also made to include other types of accommodation not found in the FINESS database such as the beds funded through the ALT grant (often hotel rooms or shared flats), the *maisons-relais* and the establishments funded by the large cities. The questionnaire includes data about the existence of other services offered to the users of accommodation services (including the 115 hotline), but does not address directly to these services other than accommodation.

The 2004 survey gives a description of the people accommodated by emergency services on the night of 8-9 January 2005. This description comprises the following elements: sex, age, family type, general characteristics, housing problems, and type of accommodation most frequent in the last 6 months. For longer-term institutions, the data concerning users are in part flow figures (the users that exited the institution in 2004), and in part stock figures (the users present on 15 December 2004). For long-term accommodation, data refers to users present on 15 December 2004 and includes sex, year of birth, family type, socio-occupational category, employment situation, main resources, present and previous forms of accommodation, nationality, legal (immigration) status, nature of health insurance. For those who exited the institution in 2004 the destination is also detailed. Data are not collected for users of services other than accommodation.

National survey of users of shelters and hot meal distribution (2001)

In 2001, the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) conducted a national survey of users of shelters and hot meal distributions. The methodology of this survey is described in detail elsewhere (Brousse et al, 2006; Brousse et al, 2002; Ardilly and Le Blanc, 2001).

Among service users, the homeless population was defined as persons who had spent the night preceding the interview in accommodation provided by NGOs or other service providers, or in a place not intended for habitation such as a public space. Accommodation included the *centres maternels*, or

mother and child refuges. The geographical field is 80 metropolitan centres with 20,000 inhabitants and over. The persons interviewed were French speakers. However, the estimates of numbers of users and of homeless people are for all users whatever their language and are for metropolitan France as a whole. 4,109 persons were surveyed and the final sample contained 4,014 questionnaires. The questionnaire contains over 900 variables covering a range of issues: demographic characteristics, qualifications and training, employment, current living conditions, past living conditions including main place of residence and main employment situation in each of the last 12 months, sources of income, use of services, housing search, health, social relationships, family history.

In collaboration with INSEE, INED conducted a small survey of homeless people in 2002 (in Paris, Nice and Nantes) to interview people contacted by outreach services and who were not likely to make frequent use of shelters and meal distributions. It concluded that with the exception of those who had moved onto the streets only a few days before, few people never used these services at all.

Census and other surveys by the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies

Population censuses are now undertaken annually in France (since January 2004; INED, 2006). The census counts homeless people living in hostels in the same manner as it counts all other "communities". Night shelters are a separate category and so should allow a count of this part of the roofless population. For rough sleepers, collaboration with voluntary groups (including FNARS) and close involvement by local councils and survey enumerators have helped reduce the risks of multiple counting and omissions. Also, the roofless population (rough sleepers) in municipalities of under 10,000 people are surveyed in the same year as the rest of the town's population (i.e. once every 5 years). For municipalities with populations of 10,000 and over, approximately 8% of the municipality's homes are surveyed each year, and the roofless are surveyed every 5 years over the entire municipal area.

However, while the most detailed data on *housing type* are to be found in the Census it is important to have a clear understanding of limitations involved in using the categories employed. For example, people are classified as living in hotels if the hotel is their permanent dwelling; people who spend only part of the month in a hotel (and the rest of it, for example, in a shelter) are not counted. Collective accommodation is not examined in detail, and is broken down into broad categories in which long-term residential facilities for the homeless, for example, are not distinguished. The Census also gives *occupancy status* but it is not possible to distinguish people living in a flat provided by a homeless NGO from other tenants. People living with family and friends "not through choice" cannot be identified.

In the new Census, an enumeration of rough sleepers took place over two days in January 2006 (the next is in January 2011). The enumeration of rough sleepers is the responsibility of each municipality, which can lead to a degree of heterogeneity. INSEE issues guidelines to the municipalities and trains the enumerators. The guidelines included a recommendation to seek collaboration with the NGOs providing for the homeless. When this collaboration occurred it was judged to be of good quality. An assessment of this enumeration of rough sleepers is in progress and should lead to improved coverage in 2011.

Collective housing is grouped in seven categories. Long-stay shelters and hostels are listed in category 1, together with other long-stay institutions such as old people's homes. Emergency shelters, if collective, are listed separately in category 6. Persons using accommodation for homeless people that takes the form of hotel rooms or flats are enumerated with other people who have their permanent residence in hotels (if this is the case) or with people living in conventional housing, without any mention of their being housed by, say, a CHRS. A proportion of those collective residences are enumerated every year; after 5 years all have been enumerated. A working group is currently looking into the differences between the hostels and shelters surveyed by the Census, those surveyed by the ES survey, and those in the DGAS statistics.

The Housing Survey and the 1999 Family Survey (now known as the "Study of Family History survey", *enquête sur l'histoire familiale*), have been used to study marginal housing. The Family survey is conducted on a sub-sample of the Census and at the same time (it is an addition to the questionnaire). The INSEE Housing Survey (sample of 40,000 - 45,000 persons) yields large amounts of data on the dwellings and characteristics of households. The difficulty with the Housing Survey is that, despite its size, marginal situations are few in number and are thus difficult to study in detail.

Statistical recording by the DGAS (and DPM)

The available data, along with the terms employed to describe the various types of accommodation, depend as much on the source and mode of funding (which budget heading and, since the LOLF law, which action of a programme) as on the facilities that these services offer to users in terms of the accommodation's physical aspect (dormitory, single or shared room, independent or shared apartment, hotel), occupancy status (integrating the temporal aspects of insecurity), conditions of access (with or without selection at entry) and of renewal (automatic or not), and living conditions and support (possibility of staying or not during the day; with social support or not).

The DGAS keeps statistical records of the number of beds that it funds either wholly or partially. The same is true of the DPM (*Direction de la Population et des Migrations*, Directorate for Population and Migrations) that keeps statistics of hostels for asylum seekers and refugees. Two types of situation are not covered by these statistics:

1. number of beds that are directly funded (without help from central government) by municipalities or by certain voluntary associations;
2. accommodation provided under *Aide sociale à l'enfance* (local government-run social assistance for children) such as mother and child refuges or a proportion of the hotel rooms for disadvantaged families, which is the responsibility of the departments. The corresponding beds do not appear in the statistics of the DGAS (although the mother and child hostels are in the FINESS database and are surveyed by the ES survey).

In addition, some emergency shelters, even though they receive state subsidies, are not included in the data since they do not have to be authorized by the prefect and can thus be omitted from the DDASS list.

The number of beds with state funding is published in a list of indicators elaborated by the DGAS and the DPM, which is updated every three months (see Table 2.4). Besides the two types of beds listed earlier as not captured by these indicators (those funded wholly by municipalities or by voluntary associations; those funded by departments), there is another restriction: only permanent places are considered. This excludes a number of shelters and hostels, among them large establishments such as the *Mie de Pain* in Paris, which are open for only part of the year, and all the beds of the winter emergency plan (beds only available in winter, some of them only during periods of extreme cold). These winter beds are counted separately.

A system for gathering information supplied by the CHRS is being introduced, in collaboration with the FNARS. It will collect annual aggregate data, without eliminating the double counts when a person stays in several hostels (i.e. stays are counted, not persons). The indicators include the types of accommodation found in the CHRS (collective accommodation or self-contained flats, "emergency" hostel or accommodation with support), the population accommodated on 31 December, the financial elements, the staff, and various performance indicators such as exit outcomes in terms of housing and employment and the average duration of stay. They must be returned in Excel file format. This system represents the first step towards the harmonization of the CHRS activity reports, under the terms of the LOLF.

TABLE 2.4 FRANCE: Data from DGAS/DPM Capacities available 2005 (places)

Regions	CHU	Hotels	CHRS and CEFR (excl. CAVA)	Move-on houses	CADA	CPH	AUDA	CHU for asylum seekers	Hotel places for asylum seekers	Total capacity
ALSACE	707		763	48	843	95	25	1 337	122	**3 940**
AQUITAINE	151	43	1 040	112	627	60		30	278	**2 341**
AUVERGNE	78	27	328	40	337		30		105	**945**
BASSE-NORMANDIE	192	120	420	20	449				201	**1 402**
BOURGOGNE	100		927	107	876	53		273	33	**2 369**
BRETAGNE	14	17	1 028	133	763	59		488	138	**2 640**
CENTRE	350	314	907	32	1 138	90	100	766	371	**4 068**
CHAMPAGNE-ARDENNE	118		824	74	515		135		177	**1 843**
CORSE	11		95							**106**
FRANCHE-COMTE	175	44	482	51	525	66		660		**2 003**
HAUTE-NORMANDIE		66	1 565	50	861		180	547	280	**3 549**
ILE-DE FRANCE	4 790	6 953	7 085	478	2 737	76	40		3 701	**25 860**
LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON	347	24	786	74	511	30		238	80	**2 090**
LIMOUSIN		6	191	44	199				37	**477**
LORRAINE	176	123	1 705	95	780		35	1 011	209	**4 134**
MIDI-PYRENEES	173	27	1 004	40	741	161		198	348	**2 692**
NORD-PAS-DE-CALAIS	2 393	138	2 290	114	347	42	45		547	**5 916**
PAYS-DE-LA-LOIRE	120	20	1 372	108	1 050	40		221	239	**3 170**
PICARDIE	267	15	855	170	761	60	135	161	196	**2 620**
POITOU-CHARENTES	187	40	813	81	348			56	138	**1 663**
PROVENCE-ALPES-COTE-D'AZUR	932	29	2 823	122	1 142	56	40	353	509	**6 006**
RHONE-ALPES	875	578	3 087	255	1 920	135	435		3 031	**10 316**
TOTAL	**12 212**	**8 626**	**30 603**	**2 262**	**17 470**	**1 023**	**1 200**	**6 339**	**10 740**	**91 675**

Table 2.5 FRANCE: Main Statistical Sources of data according to the CUHP[1] Classification

	Interviews of service providers, use of service files (record-based data) or administrative data	Interviews of homeless people	Interviews of the general population
Point-in-time data (or very short period), including with retrospective questions	*NATIONAL* : - the ES (Etablissements sociaux) survey "on a given night" of the users of emergency and CHRS shelters. Conducted by the Department of social affairs every second year until 1997, then conducted in 2004 and every fourth year from then on. - DGAS/DPM data on capacities and number of beds occupied at the end of each term.	*LOCAL* : - INED 1995 survey in Paris (users of shelters and food distributions, aged 18 or over) - INED 1998 survey in Paris and nearest suburbs (users of shelters, food distributions and day centres, aged 16 to 24) - INED 2002 survey in Paris, Nantes and Nice (homeless people contacted by outreach services) - DRASSIF survey (1998, 1999, 2000) in emergency shelters - DRASSIF, FNARS, MIPES survey (2003, 2004) in CHRS and emergency shelters *NATIONAL* : - INSEE 2001 survey in cities of 20,000 inhabitants or more (users of shelters, food distributions and day centres aged 18 or over) - FNARS 2001 survey on its clients	*NATIONAL* : - On previous homeless episodes: a question in a CREDOC survey; some questions in the INSEE Health survey; and in the next Housing Survey (2006) - On the housing of family or friends: questions in the 1996 and 2002 Housing Surveys
Longitudinal data (collected about the same persons over a long period)	*LOCAL :* - the database of the Paris SAMU Social (a telephone service which attributes shelter beds) - the databases of accommodation services put together at a regional or departmental level (e.g. the ORSAS database)		

[1] Constructing Understandings of Homeless Populations, a research network financed by the European Commission and co-ordinated by INED

2.5.2 Germany

There is no official definition of *homelessness* in Germany, but there is a wide-spread consensus among experts and officials in Germany that homeless people are those who are excluded from a tenancy with a regular rent contract (or home ownership) and need institutional support to get access to regular housing. As early as 1996 standardised statistics on cases in urgent need of housing were officially requested by the then federal government and a corresponding feasibility study was commissioned. This was published in 1998 with concrete proposals (König 1998). One of the findings of the feasibility study was that it was relatively unproblematic to record the number of homeless people provided with institutional accommodation (hostels, shelters, temporary accommodation) and cases at risk of homelessness via actions for eviction due to rent arrears, and the only time-consuming factor was the initial processing of the data set. The feasibility study also established that corresponding data protection regulations would need to be drawn up for a recurrent and regular survey. However, eight years after the publication of the feasibility study, the project has not yet been implemented, even for this subpopulation of homeless people and people at risk of homelessness.

Only a handful of individual federal states (Saxony, Saarland and the city-state of Berlin) have up to now set up statistics that measure the extent of manifest and impending homelessness, and in 2000 a pilot survey (implementation test) was conducted by the statistical office of NRW (see Busch-Geertsema 2004 for details of these regional activities).

In 1999 BAG W set up AG STADO 72.[2] Its aim was to develop a documentation instrument that could be used to record the need for help, the progress of help and the results of the help for homeless people and offenders and that enables national homelessness statistics to be compiled in the long term. The aim of this was to improve the planning and guidance of help to the homeless and enable the development of more in-depth research questions. The following organisations have been members of AG STADO 72 since its foundation in 1999:

- Arbeiterwohlfahrt-Bundesverband e. V. (Federal Workers' Welfare Association)
- Deutscher Caritasverband e. V. (German Caritas Association)
- Diakonisches Werk der EKD e. V. (Diaconic Service of the Evangelical Church of Germany)
- Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband-Gesamtverband e. V. (Association for Independent Voluntary Welfare Organisations)
- Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Straffälligenhilfe e. V. (National Alliance for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders)
- Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe e. V. (National Alliance of Service Providers for the Homeless)

The documentation instrument developed by AG STADO (hereafter referred to as the basic data set) refers to homeless *people* who are receiving support in the welfare system under sections 67ff. of the Law for Social Assistance. It consists of a data set, currently made up of 29 variables, a specialist data set for help to the homeless (17 additional variables) and a specialist data set for the care and resettlement of offenders (9 additional variables). Thus, a total of 55 variables were developed, of which 18 are marked as the core data set. This can function as a basic standard for financing agencies.[3] The

[2] AG STADO: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Statistik und Dokumentation auf Bundesebene für die Hilfen in besonderen Lebenslagen nach § 72 BSHG und vergleichbare Hilfearten (National alliance for statistics and documentation for help for people in special life situations as per section 72 of the Law on Social Welfare and comparable forms of help). Supplementary note: the provisions of the old section 72 of the law have been incorporated in ss.67ff Law for Social Assistance since 01.01.2005. AG STADO 72 was recently renamed into AG STADO.

[3] A list of variables can be found in Appendix 2.1

basic data set enables flow statistics since data for many variables are requested at the start and end of the period of help. AG STADO has developed a manual to provide better orientation for the participating institutions, which includes a definition of the variables with their variants (BAG W 2002).

A conscious decision was made within AG STADO to give the participating institutions the freedom to choose which software they work with, and a technical interface in ASCII format was developed. Furthermore, AG STADO awards a quality test seal for two years at a time when the software test procedure is passed. Currently six products from different software companies have the AG STADO test seal.

In October 2002 the BAG W committee on documentation and statistics developed specifications for a software application of this type that is intended to provide a basic orientation for those social services providing help to the homeless and offenders who are interested in the basic data set:

- Specifications regarding products
- Specifications regarding database structure
- Specifications regarding statistical functionality
- Specifications regarding modularity
- Specifications regarding user-friendliness.

Also, AG STADO has developed an aggregation tool that can be made available to the software companies or interested institutions. Using funds provided by the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, the central associations of private welfare service providers and the Förderverein der Wohnungslosenhilfe e. V.[4] conducted a project between 2001 and 2003 that enables client-related data of homeless people with special social difficulties to be aggregated at a national with the intention of forming the basis for annual statistical reports of BAG W. The national aggregation is conducted on behalf of AG STADO by the GSDA (Gesellschaft für Standard-Dokumentation und Auswertung[5]). The BAG W statistical report in 2005 is based on data from a total of 42 central offices with a total of 70-80 organisations who are participating in ongoing data collection (BAG W 2005).

The entire survey, therefore, is merely a spot test. The data from a total of 16,817 homeless men and women were analysed for the 2003 BAG W statistical report (BAG W 2005). This means that the numbers and profiles of the homeless people recorded in this way are not representative since participation in the national survey is voluntary and does not conform to the representative criteria of quantitative research. However, it is not the aim of the documentation to record the number of homeless people in Germany, but rather their *profiles* in order to map the target group and their needs in terms of help.

Statistics on the extent of homelessness have been compiled in NRW (population 18 million) since 1965. The regional statutory basis which still underlies the compilation is the “Homelessness Survey” decree by the NRW Ministry of the Interior of 1973, amended in 1977. The data are compiled by the local authorities within the federal state (LDS NRW 2005). These statistics record the following homeless groups:

- People without accommodation
- People who are imminently about to lose their homes
- People in extremely inadequate accommodation
- if these people are not able to find accommodation on their own.
- People provided with temporary accommodation by municipalities using legal measures under the laws on security and order.

4 Association for the Promotion of Help to the Homeless

5 Association for Standard Documentation and Analysis

However, the figures do not include people of no fixed abode and people who "do not display any signs of seeking a fixed abode in future"[6] (LDS NRW 2005: 5). It is likely that not even all homeless people covered by the definition are recorded in the same way as the definition refers to *accommodation by local authorities using legal measures under the laws on security and order*, whereas some local authorities regard forms of accommodation in, for example, commercial lodgings (hotels and hostels) as a *social welfare benefit* (MAGS NRW 1992). The most recent homelessness figures from these statistics are provided by the point-in-time survey of 30th June 2005, according to which 16,856 people in NRW were provided with temporary accommodation under these legal measures (LDS NRW 2006).

A total of four questionnaires were developed in the course of the "Integrated reporting on cases in urgent need of housing in North Rhine-Westphalia" project (commissioned by the Ministry of Generations, Family, Women and Integration): Provision of help to the homeless as per sections 67/68 of the Law for Social Assistance, assignments under laws on security and order, prevention of homelessness and cases closed (preventative cases closed).[7] The aim of this reporting is to "combine the different local data for an integrated reporting on cases in urgent need of housing in North Rhine-Westphalia more closely with one another and to harmonise key factors of statistical recording in order to achieve an improved data set and correspondingly better foundations for systematic political and administrative action in terms of help for cases in urgent need of housing" (Busch-Geertsema/Ruhstrat 2005).

As of 2007, the aim is for as many local authorities as possible (on a voluntary basis) and all NGO service providers who are funded by the two regional associations in NRW[8] to complete the questionnaires. A first survey in 2006 is conceived as a test phase and the new documentation will be rolled out as a standard commencing in 2007. These new integrated statistics on cases in urgent need of housing in NRW will not *replace* the regional homelessness statistics, but rather they will *complement* them. Also, in the area of prevention in NRW, which is mainly concerned with the threat of homelessness due to rent arrears, data on the rate of actions for eviction and prevention cases per 10,000 inhabitants are currently being collated by the Institute for Housing Promotion, which collects these data (by survey) directly from the housing companies. For the implementation and operationalisation of the new documentation, two project groups were established in 2005/2006. One issue decided at one of these meetings was to considerably reduce the number of variables to be collated by the NGO service providers (eleven to six). This reduction of variables also made the data more compatible with those of AG STADO (point-in-time and flow statistics).

2.5.3 Sweden

Swedish housing policy used to be characterized by state involvement in both production and allocation of housing. However, during the 1990's there has been a decentralization of responsibility for housing issues, including the problem of homelessness, from the state to the local level. The municipalities have a relatively high degree of autonomy, even though the state regulates which tasks are to be handled and implemented by the municipalities. This change in housing policy has been described as a dramatic policy turn (Lindbom 2001, Sahlin 1996, 2004). The changes in housing policy during the 1990 have resulted in a transfer of responsibility, from the central state and the municipal housing companies

6 The term "of no fixed abode" ("nichtsesshaft") was excised from social welfare acts in Germany many years ago and should therefore no longer be used due to the associated stigmatisation of a group of the homeless as "compulsively itinerant".

7 Because of legal changes introducing new administrative responsibilities for the prevention of homelessness it was not possible in 2006 to test the data collection for people threatened with homelessness and for actions taken in order to prevent homelessness.

8 The Westfalen-Lippe regional association and Rhineland regional association are the two regional financing agencies of social welfare in NRW.

to the local social authorities. As a result of these changes in housing policy homelessness came to be perceived *not* as a housing policy issue, but as an entirely social policy issue. Nowadays homeless people are seen as "incapable of independent living" (Sahlin 1996), which in turn legitimizes the idea of special housing units for the homeless. Since then, their needs for treatment and support have been highlighted rather than their housing needs.

The government commissioned the NBHW (National Board of Health and Welfare) to develop methods to counteract homelessness during the period of 2002-2004. Thus, the national authority with the responsibility to collect data on the homeless from service provider organizations is the NBHW. The aim of the commission was:

i) To develop methods to take long-term measures against the problem of homelessness.
ii) To stimulate local measures to prevent homelessness.
iii) To develop methods for local mapping of homelessness.
iv) To encourage and support measures taken locally to prevent evictions.
v) To contribute to the long-term development of methods and knowledge within social work.
vi) To support local social work with a clear users' perspective and involvement (www.sos.se).

The NBHW was commissioned by the government to conduct the national survey, compile the data material, analyze it and publish a report about the findings. The time coverage is one week in April 2005 (25th April to 1st May). The survey conducted by the NBHW in 2005 was the third national mapping of the *extent* and *character* of homelessness in Sweden.[9] The next mapping is to be conducted in 2007. The NBHW was granted €128,755 for this purpose.

A pilot project (in one municipality) tested the definition of homelessness, the survey coverage (organizations and local authorities to be included) and survey questions. The pilot results were considered when creating the complete questionnaire. The NBHW staff working to complete the questionnaire includes statisticians, staff experienced in creating questionnaires, as well as legal representatives.

The definition of homelessness employed in the national surveys conducted by the HBHW has changed in each of the three national surveys. This section describes the definition used in the most recent survey conducted in 2005. This survey adopted a broader definition and, as a result, many more institutions and organizations were asked to supply information. The new definition consists of a description of four different situations:

> *Situation 1*: A person who is staying at an emergency shelter or is sleeping rough.
>
> *Situation 2*: A person who is admitted to or enrolled at prison, treatment centre (for offenders, addicts etc), supported housing units run by the social services, the county council or private caregivers. Further, situation 2 covers persons staying at a home for care and housing (HVB-hem) or at an institution run by the national board for institutional care (SiS). A person is said to be in situation 2 if he/she is to be discharged within three months after the one-week-period of the mapping and has not got any housing arrangements made before discharge.
>
> *Situation 3*: A person who is admitted to or enrolled at supported housing units run by the social services, the county council or private caregivers. Further, situation 3 covers persons staying at a home for care and housing (HVB-hem) or at an institution run by the national board for institutional care (SiS). A person is said to be in situation 3 if he/she is *not* to be discharged within three months after the one-week-period of the mapping, but has not got any arrangements made concerning housing at a future possible prospect of discharge.

[9] Mappings of the extent of homelessness with a national coverage have been conducted in 1993, 1999 and 2005 (NBHW 2006).

> *Situation 4*: A person who is staying temporarily, and without a lease, with friends, acquaintances, family or relatives. Persons who have second hand leases or lodging agreements, if these are temporary (for no longer than three months).

One reason for this much broader definition (compared to that used in 1999) was the desire to underline that homelessness refers to a situation, not a person. "Homeless" was not to be regarded as an identity. This responded to criticism of the definition employed previously (Sahlin 1996, Thörn 2004, Löfstrand 2005). The major change in the definition was the incorporation of "situation 3". This was introduced to count persons who did not have a set date for discharge.

As a result of this change in definition, the number of homeless people has risen dramatically since 1999 (from 8440 to 17800). The change in the definition (including situation 3) meant that, in 2005, all individuals staying temporarily in apartments with "special contracts" should be counted as homeless.

This change in definition reflects an important shift in perception of the nature of homelessness. The NBHW questions "the fact that homelessness too often is regarded solely as a socio-political problem and to a too small extent as a problem related to housing policy" (ibid: 14).

Local authorities and organizations that might come in contact with homeless persons (NBHW 2006: 22) received the questionnaire including: probation authorities, correctional treatment facilities, prisons, local authorities, women's shelters, clinics for treatment of addicts, psychiatric clinics, emergency wards and mobile outreach teams. A wide range of different non-governmental organizations were also included.[10] Before distributing the questionnaire, the NBHW compiled a register of organizations which included 38 different types of local authorities, organizations, treatment centres, special housing units and networks. The questionnaire was sent to a total of 3,746 respondent organisations (NBHW 2006: 22). It is not possible to assess how comprehensive or representative this sample was and the register is not an official document accessible for the general public. In total, information was returned for 17, 834 homeless individuals.

In order to avoid double counting, respondents were asked to state the personal identification number (*personnummer*) of the individual homeless person. It consists of the year of birth, the month of birth, the day of birth as well as four numbers unique for that specific individual. If the respondent does not have any information about the personal identification number then a special code (*UNO-code*) consisting of the initials, the year of birth and the day of birth are recorded. When two different organisations gave information about the same homeless individual, a checklist of priority ranking of the respondent organisations was consulted to determine which response to record.

When using this method to collect data on the homeless, there will inevitably be some homeless persons whom the mapping does not cover. This is due to the fact that some homeless people do not have and do not want contact with local authorities and organizations. Some of the homeless that were approached about taking part in the questionnaire refused to participate and some staff working with the homeless did not want to provide information about their clients. The response rate varied markedly between different types of respondents. Social authorities, parole offices, custodies had the highest response rates. Non-governmental organizations, however, had the lowest response rate. The NBHW state that they wish to establish a positive dialogue with the NGO's before the next mapping (in 2007) in order to improve the method of inquiry as well as the response rate among this specific category of respondents. The response rate in general was lower due to some imperfections in the register of organizations.

[10] In 2005 as many as around 900 non-governmental organizations received the questionnaire, compared to 200 in 1999 (NBHW 2006:22).

Problems that have been discussed in connection to the latest mapping in 2005 include the time span covered (i.e. one week). This means that only persons who are actually homeless during this specific week of the year should be counted. The time span covered influences the results on the *extent* as well as the *character* of homelessness.

Figure 2.1 Variables used in the NBHW Survey, 2005

Data on the background of the homeless individual.

- Age
- Gender.
- The municipality where the homeless individual lives or stays temporarily.
- If the homeless individual is single or is cohabiting.
- If the homeless individual is a parent to a child below the age of 18 years.
- The country of origin.
- If any of the homeless individual's parents are born outside of Sweden.
- Duration of homelessness.
- First time of experiencing homelessness.
- The housing situation of the homeless individual.
- Employment situation.
- Type of income.
- Type of problem that result in a need for social assistance, treatment, care or support.
- Type of drug used.

Data on an individual level regarding the situation during the past year.

- Contact with the social services.
- Voluntary assistance concerning housing.
- Voluntary treatment concerning addiction.
- Voluntary treatment of mental problems.
- Voluntary treatment of somatic problems.
- Other voluntary support received by the homeless individual.
- Types of non-voluntary assistance, treatment or care.

Complementary data

- Reason for homelessness (according to the respondent).
- Information on whether the homeless individual him-/herself did partake in filling out the answers in the questionnaire.

Source: NBHW 2006, appendix 1.

The government stated that the results from the mapping conducted in 2005 should be *comparable to the results from the earlier mapping* conducted in 1999 (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs 2005). However, the change in definition and in the number and type of organizations included in 2005 has meant that the results from the two mappings (1999 and 2005) are not easy to compare. The report includes a chapter (*The problem of homelessness has changed since 1999)* based on a comparison on some of the data from 1999 and 2005. The comparison only includes data on persons if they also fit the definition of homeless used in 1999 and data reported from organizations and authorities is used only if the same organizations reported data in 1999 (NBHW 2006:26). Results from the comparison shows that the total number of homeless increased, the number of homeless women increased and the number of homeless using shelters for temporary accommodation also increased. The number of homeless staying temporarily with friends and relatives has increased a great deal, while the number of homeless staying temporarily in institutions, as well as homeless with mental problems and problems of addiction, have decreased (NBHW 2006: 82).

The brief for the study also required that one *should be able to conclude the extent of homeless families with children* from the mapping (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs 2005). To gain knowledge about homeless children, respondents were asked to state the number of children (under the age of 18 years) of each homeless person and if the parent was actually living together with his or her child. However, these variables recorded a very high level of missing cases hence "it is not possible to (estimate) the extent of homelessness among families with children and their situation in a satisfactory manner" (NBHW 2006: 72). The choice to widen the definition to include situation 3 (see above) was made in order to include all apartments with "special contracts" (Sahlin 1996) for which families with children are prioritised. However, officials in the municipalities did not always record people living in apartments with "special contracts" as homeless which was the intention of NBHW resulting in an underestimate of families in this situation of homelessness. Taken together the issues raised means that it is not possible to gather accurate information about the extent of homelessness in Sweden using the current definition and mode of procedure for collecting the data. It is evident that the results pointing at around 17,800 homeless in Sweden in the year of 2005 is an estimate and the actual extent of homelessness is most likely higher.

2.5.4 Czech Republic

The depiction of the homelessness phenomenon and the search for typology and a suitable definition has been the focus of action by social service providers for several years. These efforts resulted in the formulation of one of the activities of the "Strategy for Social Inclusion of Homeless People in the Czech Republic" project, which is being implemented by a group of NGO's; the project is funded from the ESF. Following an introductory seminar, a working group was formed which was also joined by employees of the state administration. Its goal is to create a definition and typology of homelessness in accordance with the European project ETHOS. This definition can then become the basis for a methodology that could be used by the authorities to collect data from service providers. For the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), the most important operational categories are 1 – 4.

Figure 2.2 Strategy for Social Inclusion of Homeless People in the Czech Republic research project

The Strategy for Social Inclusion of Homeless People in the Czech Republic is a joint project of SAD (Association of Hostels) and partners: Naděje, Armáda spásy (The Salvation Army), Slezská diakonie (Silesian Diaconia) and Diecézní charita Brno (The Diocesan Caritas – Brno). It was submitted as an application for funding from the ESF in March 2005; its implementation began in October 2005 and its conclusion is planned for September 2007. In terms of this report, the following objectives of the project are relevant:

1. Typology and definition: a working group was formed of professionals from the area of social work, research and public administration. This group has defined its rules of cooperation and communication and set assignments. So far, there are no specific outputs. The working group focuses mainly on categories 1-4 and 6, which are the most problematic. The definitions of all sub-categories should clearly define the entire scope of the issue so that there are no overlaps but, at the same time, all the known forms of homelessness are covered.
2. Database of social service providers: A working group has retrieved lists of social service providers from the Internet and from regional address lists; it also approached SAD members and filled in newly acquired information. Data about organisations with no electronic contact remain incomplete.
3. Research of health care: A working group prepared and sent out a questionnaire to the hostels in the Czech Republic; returned questionnaires were analysed. A new series of questionnaires was sent out to emergency medical services and the receipt of returned questionnaires for analysis has been concluded.

The issue of homelessness is described in the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion for 2004-2006. The terms "homeless" and "homelessness" have not been defined anywhere and different people understand them differently. The Social Services Act uses two terms for homeless people (*"persons without shelter"* and *"persons in an unfavourable social situation connected with loss of accommodation"*) but does not clarify their definition.

There is no national system of registration and data collection on homelessness in the Czech Republic. Neither is there a strategy for dealing with the issue of homelessness. Current legislation allows for data collection but does not put any authority under obligation to collect data about the number of homeless people. Equally, no system of registration and data collection about the number of homeless people is currently in preparation and there are no plans to prepare such a system in the future. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) is responsible for the strategy of social services and social support, while housing support and development come under the authority of the Ministry for Regional Development.[11] Recent legislation on social services charges the municipalities with certain duties for the provision and co-ordination of social services and in the provision of plans for the development of social services.[12]

From January 2007 legislation on data protection is amended to allow sensitive personal information to be processed "if it is data defined by a special law as necessary for the implementation of... *social services*, social care, *help in material need* and social and legal protection of children (section 9)." This will facilitate the conditions necessary for the creation of a database of homeless people.

As there is no national system of registration and data collection on homelessness, MOLSA acquires information about the number of homeless people from several sources. The most complete source is information provided by NGO's in their grant applications (projects for the social integration of homeless people are subsidised from the state budget by MOLSA). In addition to the planned budget, the application form also includes detailed information about the type and range of services provided, classification according to the typology of social services and further details about the service provided. The form also contains detailed information about the number of clients served (for walk-in services such as day centres), about the number of beds and their usage (for accommodation facilities) and about the number of contacts and interventions (for emergency help and street work) quoting the numbers for the last two years and a prediction for the following year.

Another source of information is the overall data summary from those providers of social services who are associated under an umbrella organisation of the association of hostels (SAD, see www.azylovedomy.cz). This information is less exhaustive, since it only reflects the activities of member hostels. However, it is an important supplementary reference file. In addition, the MOLSA Statistical Yearbook also deals with the capacity of social services and their regional distribution but this is not an assemblage of data on the numbers of homeless people.

Since 2006, MOLSA has been implementing a system of unified monitoring of persons during a given period of time and in selected facilities that receive financial support from the ESF.[13] A new information

[11] Act on the Establishment of Ministries and Other Central Bodies of State Administration in the Czech Republic No. 2/1969 of Czech Law, amended 61 times by 31 December 2005.

[12] Act No. 108/2005 on social services, section 92-95. This act becomes effective on 1 January 2007.

[13] MOLSA estimates the number of homeless people utilising social accommodation services by their capacity utilisation (a total of 50 accommodation facilities). In the course of the counting (using the "stock" method), 1,403 utilised beds were recorded on 10 February 2006 and 1,326 utilised beds on 10 May 2006 from the total number of 1,658 beds in the whole of the Czech Republic. This monitoring only includes hostels for individuals, it does not include low-threshold night shelters for individuals or hostels for mothers (fathers) with children.

database (launched in July 2006) focuses on the collection and distribution of data from facilities providing social services for this target group. The establishment and utilisation of this system will only provide for the collection of data about the number of users of selected social services and does not include any personal profile data. Without processing personal data or using a personal identifier, it is not possible to measure the prevalence or demographic structure of the surveyed population. The objective of this new system is to provide an overview of the utilisation of accommodation capacity in the hostels at the national level and in individual regions. Thus, it does not deal with determining the number of homeless people at the national or regional level or with their individual characteristics; it only deals with a technical determination of social service capacity utilisation.

Since this data has only been collected for a short period of time, the information value is not yet sufficiently indicative. The data collection serves primarily for the MOLSA's evaluation of the accessibility of the social service network for the given target group. The data is also distributed to social service providers and to regions to aid them in their decision-making about the need for specific social services in the region. The validity of this data is verified through consultation with the providers themselves and through inspections carried out in the individual facilities. MOLSA has no plans to implement a unified compulsory monitoring system.

Each citizen of the Czech Republic must be registered at some address of permanent residence and hence they can be counted and included in the population census even in their absence. Homeless people are also registered at an address; therefore it is not possible to identify anyone as homeless during a census. The census report states:[14]

> *"Homeless people" are a problematic group of citizens. The term "homeless" has not been clearly defined. Generally the term is understood as people without a home, without family support and without a permanent place of rest. The term "homeless" does not occur in official documents; in legislation it is only applied to persons without citizenship. That in itself clearly demonstrates the questionable nature of the term "homeless person".*

The data published by the Czech Statistical Office provides detailed and accurate information about persons (or households) whose accommodation, according to ETHOS is described as inadequate,. It has also partial information about the number of persons living in a sub-tenancy; and about people living in accommodation for immigrants. However, the Czech Statistical Office does not have information on the number of homeless people sleeping rough or in hostel accommodation as there is no national nomenclature, definition or typology.

Some information is available on homelessness at the regional level. The Capital City of Prague forms one of the regions[15] in the Czech Republic. An analysis of homelessness (Hradecký et al, 2003) commissioned by the city authorities was compiled in joint co-operation by the providers of social services. Among other things, this analysis proposed two projects with the objective of homelessness measurement in the capital city. The first proposal was to carry out a one-time count of homeless people during the winter period; its purpose being to gain information about the number of obviously homeless people staying within the municipal area of Prague during winter (ETHOS operational categories 1-4). The other proposal was to establish an integrated register of statistical data. The aim of this project was to compile periodic reviews containing information about the changes in the target group of clients and in the volume of provided social services. Information acquired in this way would also be used for the best possible adjustment of social services.

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[14] see www.czso.cz, section 4127-04, Population according to type of housing – Introduction

[15] The Czech Republic is divided into 14 self-governing regions (NUTS 3), Prague is unique in being a single municipality at the same time.

The first of the projects was carried out in February 2004 throughout the entire municipal area[16], based on a field count executed through observation. The counting of homeless people in Prague focused primarily on the target group who survive on the streets (people living rough) and people using specific social services, namely day centres, overnight shelters and homeless hostels. The municipal area was divided into zones for the purposes of the count. At the same time, providers of social services recorded the number of persons staying in overnight shelters, homeless hostels and day centres. Further information was acquired from Prague prisons and hospitals. The methodology proved demanding in terms of the number of people involved and in terms of organisation. It was used as a one-time event to demonstrate the necessity of social services; the project implementation has fulfilled its objective.[17] A repeat is not expected.

As yet it has not been possible to implement the second project for the establishment of an integrated register of statistical data. There are no other regional systems in place; the regions do not know the number of homeless people within their area, they can only have information provided by the providers of social services. However, from January 2007, the Social Services Act charges regions with the duty to compile a medium-term plan for the development of social services and to monitor and evaluate its implementation.

2.5.5 Netherlands

To date, there is no official definition of 'homeless' used by government or by other agencies in the Netherlands. However, in 2002 the national government established a research scheme known as the Homelessness Monitoring System (*Monitor Maatschappelijke Opvang*, or MMO) to try to arrive at a standardised set of definitions and operationalisation criteria. This has proven to be no simple undertaking, not least because the terms already in use conceal a vast array of implications and ideological views. In the Netherlands, the main area of dispute for a long time involved the use of two Dutch terms: *dakloos* (equivalent to the English 'homeless') and *thuisloos* (equivalent to 'houseless').

The term *thuisloos* was the most common designation in the Netherlands for many years, because the social psychological approach formed the dominant paradigm, with its focus on the individual who lacks a dwelling, a home, relationships, work, capabilities or other resources (Wolf, 2002[18]). In the past five years, a distinction is increasingly made between *feitelijk daklozen* (roofless people) and *residentieel daklozen* (residential homeless). The distinction was first applied in a large-scale study of vulnerable people in The Hague (Wolf et al., 2002[19]); that study also distinguished a third group of *marginaal gehuisvesten* ('marginally housed people').

The concepts and definitions of *feitelijk daklozen* and *residentieel daklozen* are now being increasingly employed by both local and national authorities. They were also used in the government Homelessness Action Plan 2006-2013, described below. Several local estimates of homeless populations have also been made on the basis of these definitions. The definitions of the three groups are as follow (Wolf et al., 2002):

16 For more information, see: Hradecký et al 2004

17 The total number of homeless people registered during the census reached 3 096 persons, of which 2 662 were men (86%) and 434 women (14%), including 14% under 25, 73% between 25 and 60, 8.5% over 60, for 4.5% it was not possible to estimate their age. 23% people were in residential facilities, 13% in day centres, 3% in other institutions, 10% on public transport; 51% of the homeless people were found outdoors. (Hradecký et al 2004)

18 Wolf, J. (2002) Een kwestie van uitburgering. Amsterdam: SWP.

19 Wolf et al (2002)

Roofless people. Defined in general terms, these are people who basically have nowhere to spend the night but on the streets, or in brief stays in low-threshold shelters or with relatives, friends or acquaintances.

An operational definition exists for the category of roofless people, and it is also suitable for screening respondents in survey sampling. Roofless people are defined as individuals who had no permanent accommodation during the month preceding the interview and who had had to sleep at least one night in one of the following circumstances:

- Out of doors, either in open air or in covered public spaces such as doorways, cycle sheds, railway stations, shopping centres or cars
- Indoors in transient accommodations run by the homeless sector, including emergency shelters
- Indoors in the homes of friends, acquaintances or relatives, without knowing where they could sleep the following night.

Residential homeless people: People who are registered as residents of homeless facilities, such as generic or specialist hostels.

Marginally housed people: These are vulnerable people who have a rent contract or mortgage in their name for a dwelling, residential unit or room officially designated for permanent residential purposes, and who run a private household there. The accommodation must be suitable for operating a private household or have facilities that enable them to care for themselves and any dependants. The category of marginally housed also includes people who reside more or less permanently with relatives and form part of the household. The definition distinguishes individuals with some form of stable housing from those who are roofless, as well as from people in residential homeless or health care facilities, prisons and other institutions.

In the Netherlands, Regas and Clever are the two client record systems in nationwide use by the homeless and women's refuge services. Both systems are used primarily by residential facilities for homeless people (ETHOS category 3), and to a lesser extent by day and night shelters (ETHOS category 2). They are also used by refuges serving women who have fled violence or abuse (ETHOS category 4).

Both record systems are still in the throes of development. Countrywide implementation of the systems, standardisation of working procedures, exchange of data to create a national database, and quality enhancement measures pertaining to the use of the systems are major objectives for the years to come. The ultimate aim of both registration systems is to create profiles of populations of homeless people and of women contacting refuges throughout the Netherlands, and to gauge the extent to which they take up the services such facilities offer. The client record systems now in widespread use do not cover all service providers in the homeless and women's refuge sectors. The lowest-threshold facilities, in particular, keep few if any records.

Several cities now work with a system of centralised access to shelter and support services (CTMO), otherwise known as local single entry points. Utrecht, The Hague and Rotterdam already have CTMOs in operation, and the Amsterdam CTMO will begin work in January 2007. Potential clients apply to a central registration point in the city, where they undergo screening. A special screening form has been developed. It records demographic data and a range of other information to better clarify a particular client's situation. New requirements for clients, such as having geographical ties to the city or region where services are applied for, may oblige the facilities (in particular the low-threshold ones) to record at least primary characteristics in the future. The CTMO screening is followed by a placement

recommendation. After a client has been assigned to a facility, some of the data collected by the CTMOs are transferred into Regas or Clever. The CTMOs also keep their own records.

The Dutch government and the four largest cities (Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht) presented a plan in February 2006 entitled Homelessness Action Plan for 2006-2013[20]. The plan is intended to reach out to the roofless people living in those cities (now estimated at over 10,000) and provide them with individual service pathways and sources of income, health care and employment. In the coming years, the CTMO data will play an important part in monitoring the policies implemented under the action plan. The plan has two central premises:

- a client-centred approach using individually planned service pathways and client managers ('personal lifeguards') assigned to all clients
- 100% watertight collaboration between all the parties and agencies involved, structured both at the administrative level (local authorities as policy coordinators) and at the operational level (field managers commissioned by the local authorities).

Requirements will be imposed on the agencies with respect to the adherence to and progress of their clients' individual service pathways.

The Homelessness Action Plan will be overseen by a nationwide monitoring system, which will initially use the following five sets of indicators:

1. Evictions
   a. Number of evictions by social housing associations in proportion to the total number of housing association dwellings in each of 43 regions known as *centrumgemeenten.* Target of 30% fewer evictions in 2008 as compared to 2005.
   b. Number of evicted persons who apply to homeless services within one month of eviction (and were homeless in the interim). Target reduction of 30% in 2008 over 2005.

2. Prisoners
   a. Number of ex-offenders belonging to the target client group who apply to homeless services within one month of prison release (and were homeless in the interim). Target reduction to almost nil in 2013.

3. Hospital patients
   a. Number of ex-patients belonging to the target group who apply to homeless services within one month of leaving a residential care facility (and were homeless in the interim)

4. Assessment and outcomes
   a. Number of homeless people who have undergone initial assessment interviews and received individual pathway plans
   b. Number of homeless people in the final stage of care pathways who have been provided wherever possible with (1) stable housing (target of 60% having stable housing by 1 January 2010), (2) regular income, (3) health care insurance, (4) stable service contacts, (5) some form of stable daily activities or employment

[20] *Plan van aanpak maatschappelijke opvang* (Homelessness Action Plan), The Hague, 7 February 2006, http://www.minvws.nl/images/dmo-2658121b1_tcm19-101331.pdf.

5. Nuisance
    a. Numbers of reported offences and instances of nuisance. Target reduction to 75% of current levels in a 7-year period.

Data for the indicators will be obtained from housing association records, from a reporting form (to be designed) on the preparation and monitoring of pathway plans, and particularly from records kept by the single local entry points for homeless services (CTMOs). The data will be collected by the local authorities. The Trimbos Institute (Netherlands Institute of Mental Health and Addiction) will incorporate it into the Homelessness Monitoring System (MMO) and report regularly to the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS).

2.5.6 Spain

In Spain, homelessness is not tackled consistently, and coordination is poor. A lack of coordination among and between centres for homeless people and service providers makes it impossible to collect reliable and regular information. The four sources of statistical information described below are the only ones currently available for the measurement of homelessness in Spain. They vary significantly in the time-span covered, in their main targets and in their geographical scope.

The Social Services Clients Information (SIUSS)

SIUSS was implemented in 1984 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Autonomous Communities, based on a 'social record' devoted to increasing the knowledge about clients' characteristics and profiles, evaluating the system and facilitating planning.

SIUSS is a powerful tool for social workers but is less useful as a statistical source. One handicap is the focus on households or 'family units', which makes it difficult to properly assess homelessness among single people. The other problem is that SIUSS is not systematically employed by all regions. A complex process needs to be completed in order for the Ministry (which is in charge of the statistical analysis) to collect the information needed. There is no on-line database. Consequently, records are not traceable in real time.

Data collection on homelessness through the internet

The second National Action Plan for Social Inclusion for Spain, set an objective to improve the knowledge of social exclusion. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs developed a project to obtain, regularly and periodically, online data coming from the service network for the homeless in Spain. This would make it possible to know the scale of homelessness, socio-demographic profiles, current demands, and existing facilities and services, as well as trends. The proposal also intended to improve the coordination between centres, promote communication, and make the data available to all stakeholders.

During 2004, the Ministry explored the possibility of conducting this on-line data collection, in order to generate a system of indicators on homelessness in Spain, which could be updated monthly.[21] The survey tried to describe the daily life of homeless people through obtaining information on where and how they met their basic needs, where they ate, and where they spent the day and the night. This was

[21] CABRERA et al. (2004)

in response to the aim to develop and implement a procedure for the regular collection of reliable data to track changes in homelessness in Spain, including changes in the demand and supply of services.

The methodology used was primarily quantitative, based on the existing data on centres, services and programmes for homeless people. The organisations' databases were analysed and the organisations were requested to supply information on their services. The project was updated by means of a computer-assisted telephone interview survey (CATI) to check and update information on the services held in the database. This was the first time that a national telephone survey of social centres for homeless people had been conducted. The CATI and internet questionnaires were organised in six main parts:

- structure and geographic distribution of the services
- the numbers for which each centre could cater (capacity)
- the number of sheltered homeless individuals
- employment activities and services offered
- human resources
- problems and difficulties faced.

A classification of centres was developed with eight categories including accommodation, meals and day-centre activities. An additional distinction was introduced between those accommodation services which used standard housing and those that provided more traditional shelter (i.e. a shared/ collective facility. The eight categories of service specified in the typology are summarised in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3 Typology of Services for the Homeless in Spain

1. Accommodation in flats or houses for small numbers of people.
2. Shared accommodation in large facilities or houses that shelter a relatively large numbers of people (only for those who stay overnight).
3. Shared accommodation in shelters with soup kitchen facilities: in principle, food is only available for the centre's clients, without free access from outside.
4. Shared accommodation with shelters and day-centre. As above, but including all the centre accommodation facilities plus a day-centre for those who stay overnight.
5. Shared lodging, with soup kitchen and day-centre (remaining open during the day).
6. Soup kitchen supplying breakfast, lunch or supper. As well as being shelters, are also open to people who do not sleep there (in this case, two different records were completed, one for the soup kitchen and another for lodging, since they are independent services and do not necessarily share the same clients).
7. Soup kitchen and day-centre. These centres also have a day-centre, meaning that people who attend the dining-room are also present during the day.
8. Day-centre.

The main conclusion is that this survey has much potential. The data successfully obtained during six months recommends an on-line data collection system. However, problems were experienced in developing the system including a lack of IT knowledge by staff in service organisations, a shortage of qualified technical staff and poor coordination between the organisations and the staff managing the database. A final evaluation demonstrated the need to simplify the questionnaire and reduce the number of questions, if people are to complete it within ten minutes. It would be advisable to offer a more rapid download of results to the information suppliers, so that they could see the advantages of participating. To develop this type of data collection, it would probably be necessary to provide vocational training in technology and provide more equipment for the centres.

The National Institute of Statistics Surveys (Instituto Nacional de Estatistica, INE)

In December of 2005, the Spanish Institute of Statistics published the results of the first nation-wide survey carried out by the Spanish Administration on a representative sample of the homeless in Spain. The survey methodology followed closely that developed by INSEE in France (see 2.5.1). The management and execution of this study was under the Spanish Institute of Statistics, although, in the case of the Basque Region, the fieldwork and the design of the sample for this area fell to the Basque Institute of Statistics (EUSTTA). The definition adopted for the survey included both roofless and houseless people. However, since fieldwork was not done directly in the street, those people who literally sleep in the street, that is, outdoors, are not included unless they went to a food hall during the period under study.

The first stage of the survey was aimed at generating a national directory of centres that served the homeless in Spain. The Survey of Centres (in May 2004) generated a national directory of centres, based on information provided by the Regional Social Services Offices. According to this first survey, there were 410 centres which offered housing of some type, with a total of 12,139 places, most of them in the classification of shelters.

The Homeless Survey, in December 2005, included people attending shelters, soup kitchens and day-centres. Although the principal aim of the survey by the Spanish Institute of Statistics was not to reach an estimation of the number of homeless in Spain, the study did present some figures on the number of these people, generated from the information facilitated by the centres, offering a total number of some 18,500 Homeless on 5th November, 2003, which is the date of reference adopted by the survey of Centres.

The Spanish Red Cross' Database (AIS)

In 2004, the Social Services Database (AIS) was set up to organise and systematise the large quantity of data managed by the Spanish Red Cross's social programmes, projects and activities in all the Spanish territory (more than 800 local offices).

This database offers two ways of accounting for homeless people. Firstly, all clients in services that are classified as homeless are all counted as homeless, despite the fact that they may be in transitional accommodation with support, such as shelters, reception centres, or protected accommodation. Secondly, only those clients who do not have a current domicile registered in the AIS are counted.

Using AIS, people can easily be tracked through time and space by their personal historical record. Duplications of resources, as in the case of the same assistance provided twice or more to the same client, are expected to disappear or diminish dramatically. Coding ensures the confidentiality of personal data. The Spanish Red Cross detects an increasing problem due to the arrival of a new group of homeless people mainly from Sub-Saharan Africa. As illegal immigrants, they live in the most vulnerable situations. An increasing number become homeless. However their lack of documents and continual mobility make it almost impossible to assess their numbers and characteristics.

2.6 Conclusions

Explanations of the causes and nature of homelessness have shifted in recent years to adopt a more structural analysis recognising that, as with poverty, homelessness needs to be understood as a process and as a multidimensional phenomenon. This has resulted in a paradigm shift in the policy perception of homelessness and in strategies to tackle it in a number of countries. It has also resulted

in a convergence in policy in as much as there is a common understanding of the need to treat both the housing and the social dimensions of homelessness. This chapter has cited evidence in several countries where the definition of homelessness has changed in this manner with resulting changes in the approach adopted to the measurement of homelessness.

There is a growing recognition in all countries that strategies to deal with homelessness should be evidence based and that it is important to monitor the impact of policies since the profile and nature of homelessness can change even if there is no change in absolute numbers. This recognition, combined with a shift towards policies of prevention, has important implications for the approach adopted to the measurement of homelessness. First, it stresses the need for a common (national) definition to allow co-ordination of policies between departments of government. Second, it emphasises that measures of homelessness require information to allow stock and prevalence measures to be developed. Third, it indicates the need for different tools and methods of data collection to co-exist. Both survey and registration methods are required. This suggests that, while it is possible to develop reliable statistics on homelessness to monitor or guide particular policy purposes, the search for a single figure or Indicator may have limited value.

The chapter has confirmed the nature and use of survey, registration and administrative approaches to data collection that are already in use across Europe and indicates that all three are often employed in a number of countries. However, the evidence also points to significant weaknesses in the governance of data collection. This is manifest in the fact that there is often no clear responsibility or that there is no common or agreed strategy to underpin the collection and coordination of the diverse information sources employed. It is also evident in the fact that, while service providers rely upon public funding, the information they collect is often not monitored or managed in a manner that allows for the systematic collation by public authorities at regional or national level to monitor the impact of that investment. Finally the evidence confirms that information may often be available at sub-national levels (e.g. key regions or conurbations). This analysis indicates the need to consider the governance of data collection as well as the geographical coverage in the national context.

The Eurostat / INSEE study, whose recommendations formed the basis for this study (Brousse, 2004), recommended the inclusion of retrospective modules in census and household surveys. This chapter has suggested that more use could be made of census data especially in countries that adopt a central population register or rolling census approach. However, that requires further research. Moreover, the census tends to treat the homeless as a residual category (of people with no usual residence). Hence it remains important to prioritise comprehensive data collection on homeless people.

Our brief overview of data collection systems indicates that client recording data collected by service providers is common in many countries. Our evidence suggests that the information is not systematically captured and used in official statistics in most countries. Furthermore this source provides a potentially important information base for both the scale and the profile of homelessness. The following chapters will examine the potential of this source of information in detail.

PART B

WHAT TO MEASURE

Chapter 3

Definition of Living Situations and Homelessness

3.1 Introduction

It is impossible to enumerate homelessness if it is not defined. It is equally impossible to compare 'levels' of homelessness unless there is a common definition and sub-definitions to allow for national and regional population differences. Homelessness can be defined narrowly to include only people without a roof over their heads or it can be defined more broadly. As policies focus more on prevention then broader definitions that include risk of homelessness become more appropriate. In this context, it has been argued that the continuing use of narrow definitions in many countries makes it impossible for those countries to develop programs and policies that acknowledge the range of different groups, the pathways and trajectories into and out of homelessness, and the need to foster independence (Greenhalgh et al, 2004).

This chapter draws upon the assumption that homeless people should not be relegated to the status of a statistical ghetto (Clanché, 1998), in order to develop a harmonised definition of homelessness that is embedded within a typology of living situations. This approach underlies the intention provided in the research brief to propose a classification or nomenclature of living situations that can be utilised to inform an operational definition of homelessness. The identification and classification of living situations proceeds from a conceptual understanding to an operational definition aiming to provide generic categories that are applicable across the member states. This classification is used to inform the understanding of the accommodation components of homelessness and housing exclusion that are relevant to an accommodation based data collection methodology. In developing this typology the chapter seeks to ensure compatibility with the UNECE/EUROSTAT recommendations for census surveys.

The meaning of homelessness and housing exclusion is examined through a review of the literature in Europe and elsewhere in order to assess both the conceptual and operational aspects of the phenomenon. This analysis reflects the existence of distinct components or dimensions to homelessness and housing exclusion. This discussion of the definition of homelessness and housing exclusion also informs the understanding of the approach to the measurement of homelessness and to the nature of relevant indicators as well as the potential of diverse sources of information.

These typologies and definitions of living situations and of homelessness provide the framework for the following chapters which classify services for the homeless and propose methodologies by which information can be obtained from these services in order to enhance the capacity of national authorities to monitor the scale and nature of homelessness.

3.2 Typology of Living Situations

It has been argued that any definition of homelessness and housing exclusion (or deprivation) should avoid the stigmatisaton of the homeless or, as the CNIS study describes it (CNIS, 1996), the creation of a statistical ghetto. For this reason both the EUROSTAT/INSEE study (Brousse, 2004) and the FEANTSA definition of homelessness and housing exclusion (Edgar and Meert, 2004) begin from a

definition of home and identify the living situations which can be understood to represent a lack of a home or housing exclusion. The brief for this study recognises that logic and requires discussion of a procedure 'to establish a comprehensive harmonised classification for housing situations (including homelessness)'. This section reviews the approaches adopted in Europe to develop a typology of living situations. It identifies the conceptual principles by which a harmonised operational definition could be developed. Finally, it proposes the adaptation of the UNECE/EUROSTAT recommendations developed for the Census 2010 to suggest a typology that is appropriate for the purposes of measuring homelessness and which is compatible with census information.

3.2.1 Existing Nomenclature of Housing Situations

The Approach by CNIS / INSEE

The INSEE report (Brousse, 2004), quoting from Clanchė (1998), identifies a classification of accommodation types (see Table 3.1). Clanché (1998) uses two dimensions - physical type of habitat and the status or type of occupancy - to derive a simplified classification of housing conditions (see Figure 3.1). This model is elaborated to identify thirteen accommodation types (see Table 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Simplified Classification of Housing Conditions

			Type of habitat									
			Individual housing				Public or private places not designed for habitation		Room or dormitory in communal facility		Hotel room, guesthouse, B&B	
	Legal status	*stability*	*comfort*									
			+ +	+	-	- -	-	- -	+	-	+	-
Status of occupancy	School boarders, soldiers, prisoners, those in hospital	+ + / - -	//	//	//	//	//				//	
	Accommodated by an institution *(except in boarding schools, barracks, prisons, hospitals)*	+ + / - -				//	//					
	Tenant	+ + / - -					//		//			
	Occupant without contract	+ + / - -							//		//	
	Being accommodated for free	+ + / - -							//		//	
	Staying with private individual	+ + / - -							//		//	
	Sub-tenant	+ + / - -							//		//	
	Owner-occupier	+ + / - -							//		//	

situations likely to be considered as homelessness

situations bordering on homelessness

borderline situations that are difficult to define

// uncommon situations

Source: Brousse, 2004

Table 3.1 Classification of Accommodation Types – CNIS

	Accommodation Type		Description
1	Single Family House	1	On a farm
		2	Not on a farm
2	Accommodation in a building of multiple occupancy	1	In a building less than 5 housing units
		2	In a building 5-9 housing units
		3	In a building 10 or more housing units
3	Accommodation in a building used for more than housing		Warden's lodge in a factory; sports arena, staff house in a school, station or hospital
4	Hotel Room	1	Tourist hotel
		2	Furnished hotel
5	Separate room with its own entrance		Maid's room, converted garage or garden room, room attached to an ordinary house but separate from it
6	Hostel or shelter	1	Accommodation in a hostel (independent living, communal management) or social residence
		2	Communal hostel (communal life) on a permanent basis (e.g. hostel for disabled or dependent people)
		3	Temporary accommodation centre open all year
		4	Seasonal accommodation centre
7	Other communal household	1	Healthcare facility, hospital
		2	Prison
		3	Military Barracks
		4	Religious community or congregation
		5	School boarding facility, university hall of residence
8	Mobile accommodation that is actually moving (travellers, sailors, etc.)		Mobile caravan, mobile barge, motor caravan, motor home
9	Temporary private dwelling (or dwelling designed to be temporary)	1	Fixed caravan or barge (not likely to move in current state), site hut
		2	Mobile home, Portakabin, that cannot move on its own, single household
		3	Mobile home, Portakabin, communal (several households)
10	Private makeshift accommodation where one can leave one's belongings (accommodation only for the person or the household to which he belongs)	1	Cellar, car park, attic, cabin (or any more or less enclosed, brick-built place)
		2	Car, railway carriage, boat (but not a barge cabin or caravan)
		3	Factory, office, warehouse, farm building or disused service machinery room
		4	Ruin, construction site, cave, tent (non-enclosed place)
11	Communal makeshift accommodation where one can leave one's belongings (accommodation is shared with other households)	1	Cellar, car park, attic, cabin
		2	Car, railway carriage, boat
		3	Factory, office, warehouse, farm building or disused service machinery room
		4	Ruin, construction site, cave, tent
12	Makeshift accommodation where one cannot leave one's belongings	1	Cellar, car park, attic, cabin
		2	Car, railway carriage, boat
		3	Communal areas of a building (corridor, stairwell, landing)
		4	Factory, office, warehouse, farm building or disused service machinery room
		5	Factories, offices, warehouses, farm buildings service machinery rooms used during the day
		6	Ruin, construction site, cave, tent
13	Use of public places	1	Underground, station, corridors of a shopping centre, public building
		2	Street, bridge, park, railway track

Source : Extract from: CLANCHÉ F., 1998, "Le classement des situations de logement: les sans-domicile dans les nomenclatures générales. Note méthodologique", Société contemporaine, n°30, pp. 181-196. Adapted linguistically

The UNECE/ EUROSTAT Recommendations

The UNECE/EUROSTAT report (2006) considers the relationship between population and living quarters which it defines as "those housing types which are the usual residences of one or more persons" (para 590). The concept of living quarters is qualified by the definitions of the main categories into which living quarters are divided. The report recommends a simple three-fold definition of conventional dwellings, other housing units and collective living quarters as follows:

(1.0) Occupied conventional dwellings

(2.0) Other housing units
- (2.1) Mobile units
- (2.2) Semi-permanent units
- (2.3) Other units designed for habitation
- (2.4) Other units not designed for habitation

(3.0) Collective living quarters
- (3.1) Hotels, rooming houses and other lodging houses
- (3.2) Institutions
- (3.3) Camps

The detail of this definition is drawn upon in the following section.

3.2.2 Deriving the principles for a typology of living situations

In most countries the legal basis for habitation of a structure or building for residential purposes can be reduced to four main concepts (see Table 3.2) which underpin a residential contract.

Table 3.2 Dimensions of a Residential Contract

Physical dimension	The physical space to be occupied
Occupancy dimension	The household with rights of occupancy
Time dimension	The period of occupancy
Legal dimension	The legal conditions of occupancy, ownership or contract (either through ownership or a tenancy / lease)

Each of these concepts can be used to identify the dimensions that are relevant to specify a classification or typology of living situations. The intention of specifying these legal principles is to provide a conceptual framework for the systematic development of an operational typology of living situations. These principles provide a robust conceptual model since they relate to the right to housing and to legal and constitutional procedures in the member states.

The operational development of categories derived from these principles draws upon definitions currently in use in Europe in order to allow a more harmonised set of categories and definitions to be developed. Recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing made in a report jointly prepared by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) at the Conference of European Statisticians (UNECE/ EUROSTAT, 2006) is used as the basis for identifying the harmonised operational definition of categories identified in our typology. This source is important since the definitions agreed in that report

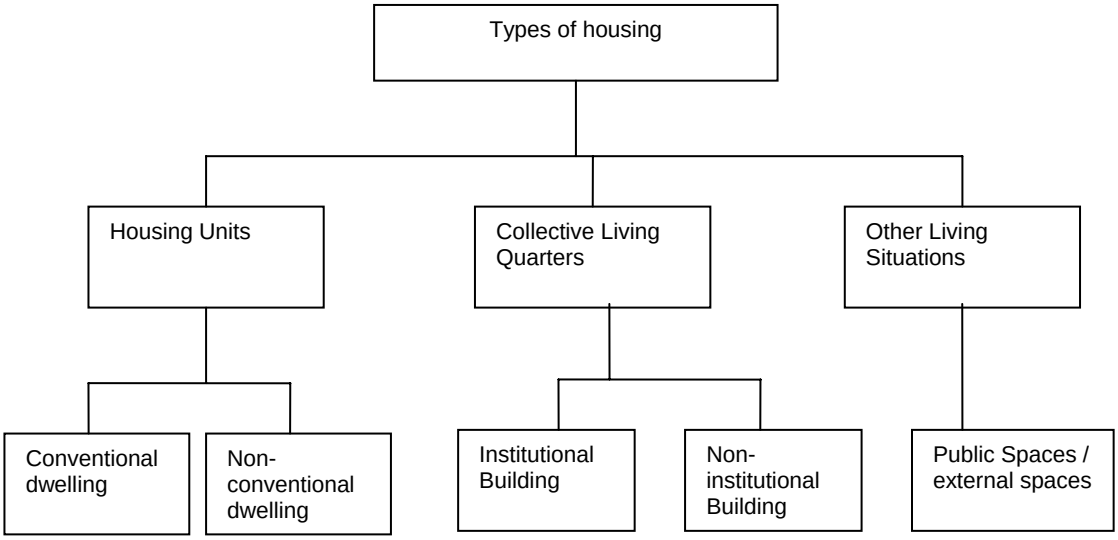
will form the basis of Census data collection across Europe. Hence the typology of living conditions identified here is consistent with these commonly agreed operational definitions.

1 Physical dimension

In order to establish ownership of a residential property or the right to occupy under a lease or tenancy agreement, it is necessary to establish the physical space referred to in the legal title or contract.

The UNECE/EUROSTAT report (2006) makes a distinction between conventional dwellings, collective living quarters and other housing units or non-conventional dwellings (p. 23). We would make a distinction here in the category of collective living situations between institutional buildings and non-institutional buildings. We make this distinction since institutions are understood to be distinct legal bodies providing services and accommodation for a defined group of persons. Although this is not strictly a physical principle it determines the nature of the physical form of institutional accommodation which can therefore be distinguished from non-institutional forms (such as hotels and hostels). We would add public spaces as a living place to capture the reality of people who live rough in such spaces. Figure 3.2, which is adapted from the UNECE/EUROSTAT report (2006; Chart 4) summarises this approach.

Figure 3.2 Types of Housing Unit and Living Situation



Source: Adapted from UNECE/EUROSTAT (2005) Chart 4, p 123

Applying this concept to a classification of living situations it is possible to identify a range of physical situations in which people live (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 Physical Dwellings Forms

Housing Type	Categories of Housing Form	Description of Housing Types	
Housing Units	Conventional dwelling	1	Permanent stationary structure (meant for habitation)
	Non-conventional dwelling (structure not meant for habitation)	2	Moveable structures (boat, caravan)
		3	Non-standard buildings (temporary or semi-permanent units)
		4	Makeshift structures, shelters and huts
		5	Permanent standard buildings whose function is not intended for habitation (shops, offices, industrial, transport)
		6	Derelict (structurally unsound) buildings or buildings classed as unfit for habitation
Collective Living Quarters	Institutional building (meant for habitation)	7	Penal and correctional institutions
		8	Hospital and health care institutions
		9	Religious establishments
		10	Employment (army / police barracks, nursing or prison staff residences)
		11	Educational (boarding schools, university halls of residence)
	Non-institutional building	12	Hotel accommodation or guest house (including bed and breakfast)
		13	Hostels
		14	Social Welfare Accommodation
		15	Workers dormitories
	Camps	16	Refugee camps, Workers camps, Military camps
Public Living Situations	Public Spaces / External Spaces	17	Communal areas of public buildings or spaces
		18	External public spaces

According to the UNECE/EUROSTAT recommendations (2006; p126) conventional dwellings are structurally separate and independent premises which are designed for permanent human habitation at a fixed location and are used wholly for residential purposes. The report defines the meaning of separate and independent.

However, some housing units do not come within the category of conventional dwellings either because they are mobile, semi-permanent or improvised or are not designed for human habitation but which are used as the usual residence of one of more persons (UNECE/EUROSTAT, 2006). Grouped under the category of other housing units these non-conventional dwellings include mobile dwellings (including boats), temporary structures, makeshift shelters and premises not designed or intended for habitation (see Figure 3.3). To these definitions we could also add, for the purposes of a comprehensive typology of living situations, dwellings that are defined as structurally unsound or unfit for habitation which are used as a place of usual residence.

Figure 3.3 Definitions of Non-Conventional Dwellings

(a) transported (such as a tent) or which is a moving unit (such as a ship, yacht, boat, barge or caravan) and which is designed for human habitation and is occupied at the time of the census, that is, it is somebody's usual residence. Nomad camps should be included in this category. Passenger quarters in means of transport such as passenger ships, railroad cars and aircraft should not be considered as other housing units and the persons who happen to be travelling in them at the time of the census should not be counted as living in these vehicles, ships or aircraft.

(b) A semi-permanent housing unit is an independent structure such as a hut or a cabin which has been constructed with locally available crude materials such as wooden planks, sun-dried bricks, straw or any similar vegetable materials for the purpose of habitation by one private household and which is used as the usual residence of at least one person at the time of the census. Such units may be expected to last for only a limited time, although occasionally they may last for longer periods.

(c) Other housing units designed for habitation comprise independent, makeshift shelters or structures such as shacks and shanties, which have been built of waste materials, which are used as the usual residence of at least one person at the time of the census.

(d) Other housing units not designed for habitation comprise premises in permanent or semi-permanent buildings such as stables, barns, mills, garages, warehouses, offices, etc. which have not been built, rebuilt, converted or arranged for human habitation but are, nevertheless, used by one or more private households as their usual residence at the time of the census. This category also includes natural shelters such as caves, which are used by one or more private households as their usual residence at the time of the census.

Source: UNECE/Eurostat (2005) p127

2 Occupancy Dimension

In order to establish a tenancy, or lease, of a residential property it is necessary to establish in law the right of (exclusive) possession of all or part of the property and to establish the right to occupancy of that space. Using this dimension it is possible to establish distinct living situations where people are able to exercise exclusive possession (or sole occupancy) and those where they are not.

To operationalise this concept, it is necessary to define a 'household' – that is to say the unit or group of people who have the right to exercise that possession. Dwelling characteristics refer to the physical attributes of a set of living quarters, whereas household characteristics pertain to the person or the group of persons (other than temporary or foreign residents) who occupy a dwelling. Census definitions across Europe make a distinction between a private household population and an institutional population and are reasonably consistent in defining a household.

The UNECE/EUROSTAT report (2006) identifies two definitions of a private household - the house-keeping definition and the household-dwelling definition (see Figure 3.4). However, in view of international comparability the report recommends that countries that use the 'housekeeping unit' concept, if possible, make an estimate of the number of private households according to the 'household-dwelling' concept, and break this number down by household size.

Figure 3.4 Definition of a Private Household

1. A private household is either:

   (a) A one-person household, that is a person who lives alone in a separate housing unit or who occupies, as a lodger, a separate room (or rooms) of a housing unit but does not join with any of the other occupants of the housing unit to form part of a multi-person household as defined below; or

   (b) A multi-person household, that is a group of two or more persons who combine to occupy the whole or part of a housing unit and to provide themselves with food and possibly other essentials for living. Members of the group may pool their incomes to a greater or lesser extent.

This concept of a private household is known as the house-keeping concept.

Some countries may be unable to collect data on common housekeeping of household members, for example when their census is register-based. Many of these countries use a different concept of the private household, namely, the household-dwelling concept. The household-dwelling concept considers all persons living in a housing unit to be members of the same household, such that there is one household per occupied housing unit. In the household-dwelling concept, then, the number of occupied housing units and the number of households occupying them is equal, and the locations of the housing units and households are identical.

Source: UNECE/EUROSTAT, 2006

A private household (comprising one or more people) may therefore occupy a housing unit on the basis of sole occupancy or of shared occupancy. A dwelling in sole occupancy is unproblematic to define under normal circumstances. Dwellings in shared occupancy are more diverse in nature. These can include dwellings where more than one household occupy or share space but not house-keeping. Dwellings in multiple occupation are, in some countries, registered under law if they are rented by landlords (e.g. see Houses in Multiple Occupation legislation in the UK).

The UNECE/EUROSTAT report (2006) defines an institutional household to comprise persons whose need for shelter and subsistence are provided by an institution (being a defined legal body). Institutional accommodation usually has common facilities shared by occupants (baths, lounges, eating facilities). Furthermore, sleeping facilities are often in the form of dormitories or are situations where, in law, the individual can not exercise exclusive possession. The report defines seven categories of institutional household (see Figure 3.5). Although hotels, lodging houses and similar forms of accommodation are defined in the UNECE/EUROSTAT report (2006; p126) as collective living quarters, people living there are regarded as private households since they have a usually resident address for census purposes at another location.

For the purposes of this report and the objective to derive a harmonised typology of living situations, it is necessary to elaborate the definition given in Figure 3.5 (see Table 3.4).

Figure 3.5 Categories of Institutional Household

(1.0) Residences for students;
(2.0) Hospitals, convalescent homes, establishments for the disabled, psychiatric institutions, old people's homes and nursing homes;
(3.0) Assisted living facilities and welfare institutions including those for the homeless;
(4.0) Military barracks;
(5.0) Correctional and penal institutions;
(6.0) Religious institutions; and
(7.0) Worker dormitories.

Source: UNECE/Eurostat Report, 2006

Table 3.4 Elaborated Definition of Collective Living Quarters

Housing Unit	Generic Housing Form	Housing Category		Accommodation Types	
Collective Living Quarters	Institutional building (meant for habitation)	7	Penal and correctional institutions	7.1 7.2 7.3	Prisons Young offenders institutions Bail hostels / Remand
		8	Hospital and health care institutions	8.1 8.2 8.3 8.4	General hospitals Psychiatric and other hospitals and related institutions Treatment / rehabilitation institutions for people with a disability Nursing homes and residential care homes for older people
		9	Religious establishments	9.1	Accommodation establishments for personnel of religious bodies (lay and ordained)
		10	Employment Related Establishments	10.1 10.2 10.3 10.4	Military barracks Police barracks Nurses Residences Prison officers residences
		11	Educational Establishments	11.1 11.2	Boarding Schools University Residences
	Non-institutional building	12	Hotel accommodation or guest house (including bed and breakfast)	12.1 12.2	Commercial Hotels Boarding Houses, lodging houses and rooming houses (including Youth hostels)
		13	Hostels	13.1 13.2 13.3	Overnight and emergency accommodation Short stay hostels for homeless people (or social residence) Temporary accommodation
		14	Social Welfare Accommodation	14.1 14.2 14.3	Supported Accommodation (or assisted living) Sheltered Housing for vulnerable groups Establishments for children and minors
		15	Workers dormitories	15.1 15.2	Migrant Workers hostels Workers hostels
	Camps	16	Workers and Emergency temporary camps	16.1 16.2 16.3	Refugee camps and emergency camps Camps for workers (agriculture, construction etc) Military camps (temporary)

3 Time Dimension

Households who own their own property have rights of occupancy in perpetuity unless those rights are ceded to a mortgage company for the period of the loan arrangements (during which time the property can be re-possessed by the mortgage company in the event of failure to re-pay the loan). This assumes that the heritable rights extend to the land as well as the dwelling.

A key legal concept that defines a tenancy or lease of a residential property is the period intended for occupancy. Since a lease is a legal contract between two parties it requires to indicate whether the tenant, as one party to the contract, has the right of occupancy for a defined period or for his/her lifetime and whether any rights of succession may resolve to immediate family members who reside with him/her. These rights may be stated within the contract or may be subsumed within housing or other legislation pertaining in that country.

Situations occur where no lease is provided and hence no time period is identified, leaving the occupant in a situation of insecurity of occupancy. This can occur in different situations (which are sometimes culturally determined). First, some people occupy housing that is related to their job (sometimes called 'tied housing'; e.g. in the UK). Their occupancy may be part of the financial remuneration of their employment (i.e. they live rent free) or rent may be paid but not under a tenancy contract. In either case the occupancy is dependent upon their employment status and will cease when they lose that employment or have to retire. Second, there are situations where people occupy accommodation under conditions linked to their need for support. This is sometimes called a secondary housing market (e.g. in Sweden). People in this situation may be provided either with no contractual lease or with an occupancy agreement where security of tenure is tied to the support conditions. This is a very common situation where support with housing is provided to re-settle or re-integrate homeless people. For example, research in the UK suggests that 80% of occupants of such housing have no statutory tenancy agreement (Edgar et al, 2001; Doling et al, 2003). Sahlin (2001) describes a similar situation in Sweden. Third, in some countries, an initial temporary or fixed term contract can be continued when the initial term or period ends on a basis linked to the notice of eviction period (e.g. one month). For example, in Scotland a short assured tenancy can be offered for a period of six months and continued on a monthly basis thereafter under a legal term known as 'tacit relocation'. Fourth, situations arise where an occupant of a dwelling has no formal tenancy. This is common where part or all of a building is sub-let by a tenant or where immigrants and other vulnerable groups are exploited in the housing market. It also occurs where people occupy property owned by other family members or where people occupy accommodation on a 'grace and favour' basis.

The time dimension can then be defined in relation to three main operational situations where the property is understood in the legal context of occupancy (see below) to be:

- Intended for permanent occupancy
- Intended for temporary occupancy
- No specified time period to occupancy

4 Legal Dimension

The fourth concept is the existence of a legal title of ownership or legal contract between two parties (the landlord and the tenant) specifying the contract terms of the lease. Where no formal legal contract exists there may yet be a legal right of occupancy, in many countries, under constitutional law, case law or common law. The specific form of legal contract varies between countries in terms of the rights of the landlord and tenant and these may be prescribed by housing and related property law as well as by case law. For example minimum periods of occupancy may be prescribed in law as well as rights to sub-let or rights of succession to the property. These specific factors do not concern us here and the principles of legal contract can be derived in broad terms to allow for a generic classification of living situations.

Hence there appear to be the following operational living situations derived from this legal principle:

- Title of ownership and right to occupy
- Legal tenancy to occupy specifying the place, the period, the rent and the conditions of tenure
- Common law tenancy / right to occupy (where no written contract exists but occupant has rights under the constitution, legislation or case law of the country)
- Legal right to occupy under a non-tenancy contract (e.g. employer owned housing, hotels)
- No legal right to occupy (in contract law, constitutional or common law).

These legal principles allow the identification of a range of types of ownership or tenure. The UNECE/ EUROSTAT report provides a classification of types of ownership (UNECE/EUROSTAT, 2006; p134). That classification appears to be incomplete for the purposes of this research. However, since it is a classification that has been recommended for use at European level it has been adapted here in a manner that allows the primary tenure categories to be retained. Ownership status categories 2.1, 4.1 and 4.2 are added for our purposes for clarity and completeness (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.5 Classification of dwellings by type of ownership

Tenure		Ownership Status	
1	Owner-occupied dwellings	1.1	Owned outright
		1.2	Owned with a mortgage
2	Co-operative Dwellings	2.1	Co-ownership
		2.2.	Tenant Co-operatives
3	Rented Dwellings	3.1	Private Ownership
		3.2	Owned by the local or central government and/or by non-profit organisations
		3.3	Mixed ownership (part rent / part owned)
4	Other types of ownership	4.1	Employer of household
		4.2	Family or friend of household

Source: Adapted from UNECE/EUROSTAT (2006)

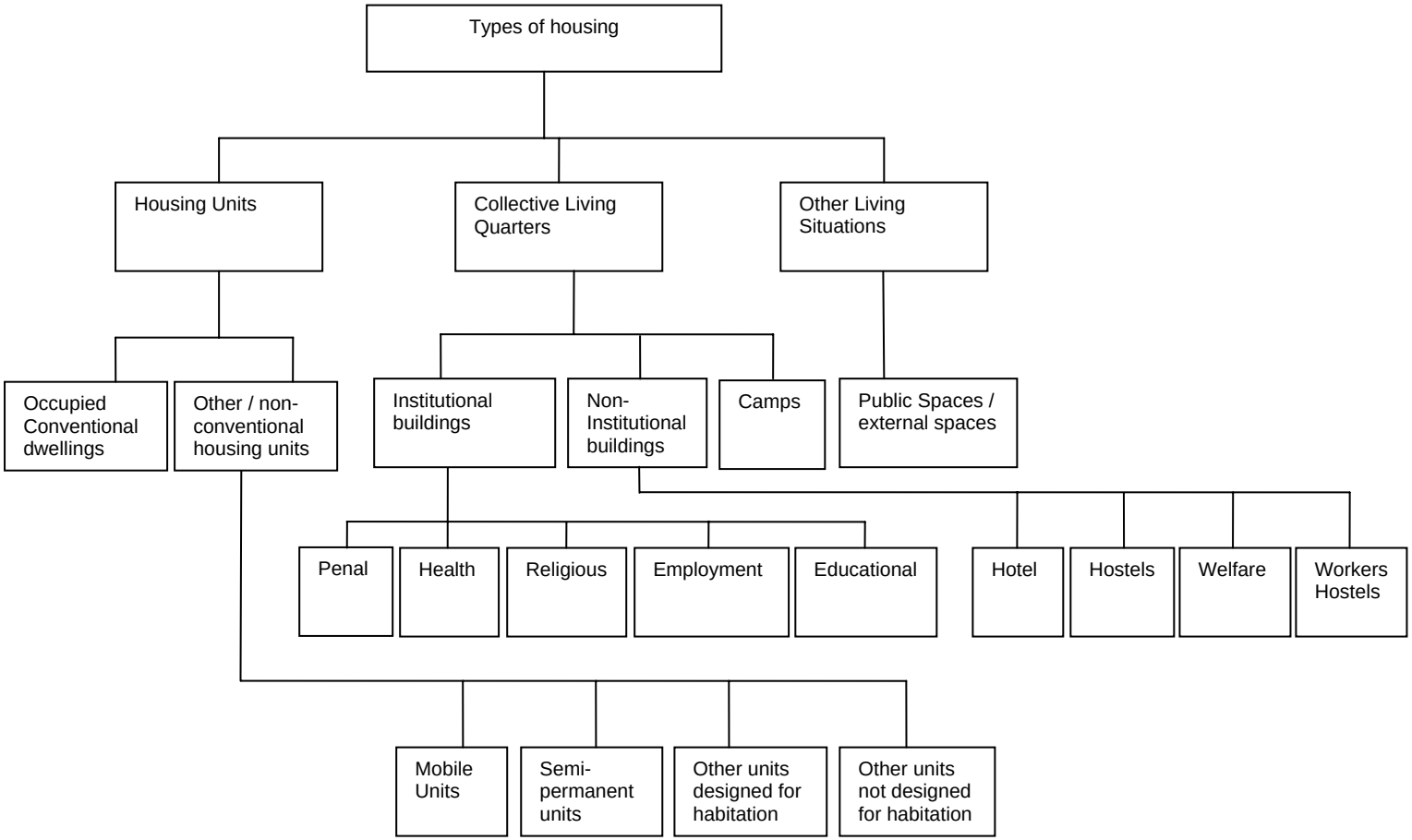
3.2.3 Using these Principles to Derive a Harmonised Nomenclature of Living Situations

In order to derive a harmonised typology of living situations that can be employed at national level in a consistent manner across Europe it is important to adhere to two main conditions:

1. the typology should be derived from clearly articulated and robust conceptual principles;
2. the operational categories employed in the typology must be consistent with definitions already in use in the member states.

The conceptual principles described above provide a basis for developing the typology. The operational categories can be derived from the UNECE/EUROSTAT definition of living quarters. The proposed typology is summarised in Figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6 Summary Definition of Living Situations



Source: Adapted from UNECE/EUROSTAT 2006

3.3 Defining Homelessness

In this section we examine alternative definitions of homelessness both in European literature and elsewhere. The purpose of this examination is not to establish a 'best' or 'consensual' definition. Rather, the aim is to examine the conceptual and operational basis and principles underlying the definitions.

There are linguistic and cultural difficulties in deriving a European definition of homelessness resulting, in part, from the fact that a number of languages either do not have a term or word to describe the situation or employ terms that have subtly different meanings from that understood in other cultures or languages.

While, in the Anglophone cultures, homelessness is understood to encompass situations both of actual rooflessness (i.e. living rough) as well as houselessness (i.e. being without a dwelling), it also embraces more nuanced understanding of the meaning of 'home' (Somerville and Springings, 2005). In cultures which do not have a single term to describe the phenomenon terms such as housing deprivation, marginalisation and no abode are in common usage. Marpsat (2003) argues that simply translating the terms used in each language uniformly by the expression homeless evades the question of what this construct actually signifies. Furthermore, she points out that 'not all countries really have an equivalent or even approximate concept to that of hidden homelessness, and the extended concept of homelessness is formed in those countries along different rationales that are tied to how the central concept itself is formed' (Marpsat, 2003; p1). In the context of the European social exclusion strategy it is evident that policy perspectives have moved towards a discussion of groups who are vulnerable in the housing market and whose vulnerability leaves them either in a situation of housing exclusion (including visible homelessness) or at risk of becoming homeless. For this reason as well as for epistemological reasons it is necessary, initially at least, to refer to a broad understanding of homelessness and housing exclusion.

3.3.1 European Approaches

This section considers approaches adopted to define homelessness at European level which attempt to provide some harmonisation of concepts and terminology. The definition of homelessness at member state level is not considered here.

The EUROSTAT Expert Group on Homelessness Statistics

At the 31st meeting of the Statistical Programming Committee (November 1998) the mandate for a working group on Income, Poverty and Social Exclusion statistics was approved (Doc CPS 98/31/2). This mandate recognised that the ECHP survey should be complemented by other sources or surveys to avoid the exclusion of relevant sub-populations such as the homeless. For this reason the Expert Group (Statistics on Homelessness) was established in December 2001.

The Working Group mandate included the need to develop a definition of homelessness. The Working group recognised the need to reflect the multi-dimensional nature of homelessness by including key elements of occupancy or ownership, type of accommodation and duration. It also recognised that more than one definition may be required in recognition of different measurement objectives. This would include (1) a 'book-keeping' type of definition referring to elements of the population not covered by traditional household surveys, and (2) a definition relating to persons in precarious housing situations (DOC E2/IPSE/39; pp9-10).

The definition of homelessness proposed a draft definition of homelessness for statistical purposes (see Figure 3.7; DOC E2/IPSE/39; p17). The definition should be interpreted using standard definitions such as the Census definition of accommodation (op cit p18).

Figure 3.7 EUROSTAT Expert Group Statistics on Homelessness: Definition

Part 1.

A homeless person is someone who does not have access to accommodation which they can reasonably occupy, whether this accommodation is legally their own property or whether the property is rented; provided by institutions; provided by employers; or occupied rent-free under some contractual or other arrangement.

Part 2.

In consequence they are obliged to sleep either:

(a) outdoors;
(b) in buildings which do not meet commonly agreed criteria for human habitation (eg. privacy; hygiene; space);
(c) in night-time emergency hostel accommodation provided by public sector or charitable organisations;
(d) in longer-stay hostels provided by public sector or charitable organisations (eg. non-emergency centres, refuges for battered women, deportation centres for asylum seekers and illegal immigrants);
(e) in Bed & Breakfast accommodation
(f) in other short-stay accommodation (duration less than 1 month);
(g) in the homes of friends or relatives;
(h) in registered squats;

During discussions the Expert Group considered (DOC. E2/SEP/EG-H/09; p6) that a person could be considered to be at risk of homelessness if:

(a) they do currently have regular access to accommodation which they perceive to be their own, whether this accommodation is legally their own property or whether the accommodation is rented; provided by institutions; provided by employers; or occupied rent-free under some contractual or other legal arrangement or to which they do not have any legal entitlement – but there are grounds to expect this access to terminate in the foreseeable future, and

(b) after such termination they will not have regular access to alternative accommodation, and

(c) they will therefore be obliged either to sleep outdoors or in buildings which do not meet commonly agreed criteria for human habitation or in an emergency shelter which is operated for that purpose.

EUROSTAT commissioned INSEE to review approaches taken to data collection on homelessness in selected countries in Europe. Among other issues this report also proposed a definition of homelessness.

The INSEE / Eurostat Study

The classification of homelessness proposed by the INSEE / Eurostat report (Brousse, 2004) builds upon that developed by the "homelessness task force" of the French National Council for Statistical Information (Clanché 1998). On this basis homelessness is defined (Brousse, 2004; p47) as the convergence of four subsets:

1) sleeping in a place not meant to be lived in;

2) being accommodated by a public body or a non-governmental organisation, without a rental contract:

- in a dormitory, room or studio in a communal facility;
- in a hotel or boarding with a family (including Bed & Breakfast);
- in a separate housing unit;

3) staying temporarily with friends or relatives because one has no home of one's own;

4) staying temporarily in a hotel or boarding with a family (including Bed & Breakfast).

According to the author this definition includes those living in long-term temporary accommodation but does not cover all unsatisfactory forms of housing situation, excluding in particular the fact of living in inadequate housing or being at risk of losing one's home.

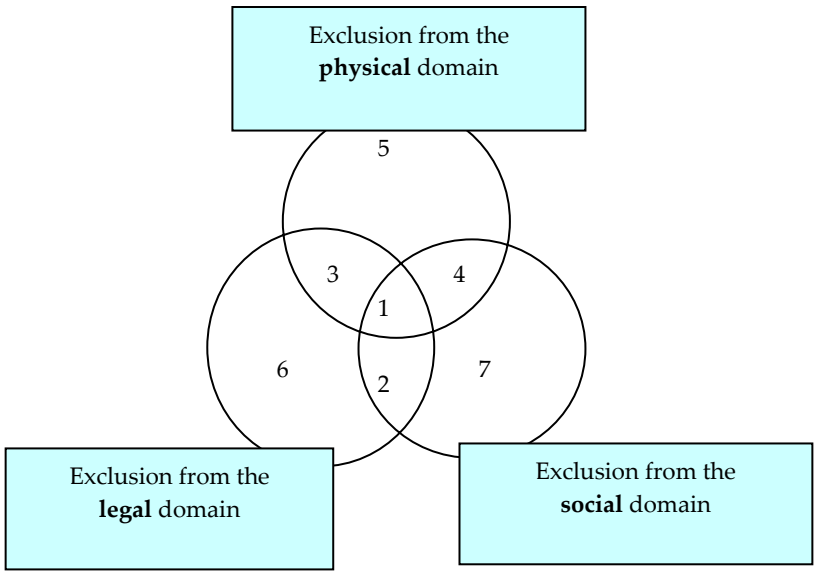
The FEANTSA Approach

In order to define homelessness in an operational way, the Feantsa approach identifies three domains which constitute a home, the absence of which can be taken to delineate homelessness. Having a home can be understood as: having a decent dwelling (or space) adequate to meet the needs of the person and his/her family (*physical domain*); being able to maintain privacy and enjoy social relations (*social domain*) and having exclusive possession, security of occupation and legal title (*legal domain*).

These three domains of homelessness (see Figure 3.8) visualises seven theoretical types of homelessness and housing exclusion (see Table 3.6), varying between rough sleeping on the one side and living within a decent and legally occupied dwelling without safety (e.g. women who experience domestic abuse) on the other side. These are explained in the Third Review of Homeless Statistics (Edgar et al, 2004) and form the basis of the ETHOS typology of homelessness (see Table 3.7).

Using this conceptual understanding of homelessness, FEANTSA adopted a conceptual definition of homelessness and housing exclusion outlined in Table 3.7. This conception of homelessness is still being discussed within the European Observatory on Homelessness (EOH) and the FEANTSA Data Collection Working Group in order to confirm the nature of living situations and the differences in nomenclature and understanding between countries so that the operational categories can be more generic definitions that will allow application to different national contexts.

Figure 3.8 The Domains of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion



The FEANTSA ETHOS typology includes homelessness and housing exclusion. Hence homelessness is defined primarily as the roofless and houseless concepts which are operationally defined in seven main categories. However, the definition recognises that legislation in some countries identifies some situations of insecure housing (e.g. illegal occupation of land) and situations of inadequate housing (e.g. occupying mobile homes)as homeless. The documentation also recognises that in a number of countries, for policy purposes, people leaving institutions within a defined period and people with enforced eviction orders are regarded as homeless even though they are no ex post homeless. Finally, the explanation of the operational categories recognises the difficulty of treating as homeless people living in supported housing for homeless people for more than a transitional period (Edgar and Meert, 2005).

Table 3.6 Seven theoretical domains of homelessness

		Conceptual Category	Physical Domain	Legal Domain	Social Domain
Homelessness	*1*	Rooflessness	No dwelling (roof)	No legal title to a space for exclusive possession	No private and safe personal space for social relations
	2	Houselessness	Has a place to live, fit for habitation	No legal title to a space for exclusive possession	No private and safe personal space for social relations
Housing exclusion	3	Insecure and Inadequate housing	Has a place to live (not secure and unfit for habitation)	No security of tenure	Has space for social relations
	4	Inadequate housing and social isolation within a legally occupied dwelling	Inadequate dwelling (unfit for habitation)	Has legal title and/or security of tenure	No private and safe personal space for social relations
	5	Inadequate housing (secure tenure)	Inadequate dwelling (dwelling unfit for habitation)	Has legal title and/or security of tenure	Has space for social relations
	6	Insecure housing (adequate housing)	Has a place to live	No security of tenure	Has space for social relations
	7	Social isolation within a secure and adequate context	Has a place to live	Has legal title and/or security of tenure	No private and safe personal space for social relations

Table 3.7 ETHOS - European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion

Conceptual Category		Operational Category		Generic Definition
ROOFLESS	1	People Living Rough	1.1	Rough Sleeping (no access to 24-hour accommodation) / No abode
	2	People staying in a night shelter	2.1	Overnight shelter
HOUSELESS	3	People in accommodation for the homeless	3.1 3.2	Homeless hostel Temporary Accommodation
	4	People in Women's Shelter	4.1	Women's shelter accommodation
	5	People in accommodation for immigrants	5.1 5.2	Temporary accommodation / reception centres (asylum) Migrant workers accommodation
	6	People due to be released from institutions	6.1 6.2	Penal institutions Medical institutions
	7	People receiving support (due to homelessness)	7.1 7.2 7.3 7.4	Residential care for homeless people Supported accommodation Transitional accommodation with support Accommodation with support
INSECURE	8	People living in insecure accommodation	8.1 8.2 8.3 8.4	Temporarily with family/friends No legal (sub)tenancy Illegal occupation of building Illegal occupation of land
	9	People living under threat of eviction	9.1 9.2	Legal orders enforced (rented) Re-possession orders (owned)
	10	People living under threat of violence	10.1	Police recorded incidents of domestic violence
INADEQUATE	11	People living in temporary / non-standard structures	11.1 11.2 11.3	Mobile home / caravan Non-standard building Temporary structure
	12	People living in unfit housing	12.1	Unfit for habitation (under national legislation; occupied)
	13	People living in extreme overcrowding	13.1	Highest national norm of overcrowding

Using this conceptual approach FEANTSA are reviewing the definition in order to develop generic definitions of the main categories and to revise and simplify the operational categories while providing a basis for national nomenclature to be developed within this conceptual model.

While ETHOS develops a conceptual model of homelessness from which is derived an operational definition, for the purposes of this report it is important to ensure that such an operational definition is compatible with census nomenclature and definitions. The following section presents the census approach and the final section of the chapter uses this understanding to propose a harmonised definition of homelessness that can be used to guide monitoring and measurement activities.

The UNECE / EUROSTAT Conference of European Statisticians (CES) Recommendations

A recent report making recommendations regarding population and household censuses in Europe, in common with the approach taken in countries such as Australia and Canada, suggests that 'homelessness is essentially a cultural definition based on concepts such as "adequate housing",

"minimum community housing standard" or "security of tenure" which can be perceived in different ways by different communities' (UNECE/EUROSTAT, 2006; p.103).

Since the purpose of that report is to make recommendations regarding census enumeration, it is concerned to identify and define the usual place of residence where households are to be counted. Hence the definition provided in relation to the homeless is for people who do not have a 'usual place of residence'. The general rule governing usual residence is that a person's place of usual residence is that at which he/she spends most of his/her daily night-rest (UNECE/EUROSTAT, 2006; para 160). The report recognises that, for most persons, the application of this rule will not give rise to difficulty but identifies people living in institutions and homeless people where the rule requires to be defined.

For the purpose of census enumeration, the report defines housing arrangements where a person is a usual resident at the time of the census' to cover all persons who are usual residents in different types of living quarters, or who do not have a usual residence and stay temporarily in living quarters, or are roofless persons sleeping rough or in emergency shelters when the census was taken (para 615). The report recommends the following classification by housing arrangement:

(1.0) Occupants (that is persons with a usual residence) living in a conventional dwelling
(2.0) Occupants (that is persons with a usual residence) living in an other housing unit – hut, cabin, shack, caravan, houseboat, or a barn, mill, cave or other shelter used for human habitation at the time of the census
(3.0) Occupants (that is persons with a usual residence) living in a collective living quarter – a hotel, institution, camp, etc.
(4.0) Persons who are not usual residents in any living quarter category, such as homeless or other people moving between temporary accommodation.

Applying the Census rule of no usual place of residence to persons in institutional households (e.g. 'assisted living facilities and welfare institutions including those for the homeless') then the institution should be taken as the usual place of residence for persons who 'at the time of the census have spent, or are likely to spend, twelve months or more in the relevant institution' (para 160(d) – see Appendix 3.1).

Applying the Census rule of no usual place of residence, for persons not in private or institutional households, the two situations that can be considered as homelessness involve:

1. People who do not have a usual place of residence that can be defined as living quarters.
2. People who occupy living quarters which do not constitute their usual place of residence.

The report makes reference to homeless people in a number of contexts and these are summarised in Appendix 3.1. The main definition elaborated in the report recognises two categories of homelessness which it defines as:

(1.0) Primary homelessness (or rooflessness). This category includes persons living in the streets without a shelter that would fall within the scope of living quarters.
(2.0) Secondary homelessness. This category may include persons with no place of usual residence who move frequently between various types of accommodation (including dwellings, shelters, institutions for the homeless or other living quarters). This category includes persons living in private dwellings but reporting "no usual address" on their census form.

This definition presupposes that there are strategies in place to identify 'living quarters' that can be properly identified as shelters. Living quarters are those housing types, which are the usual residence of one or more persons. The concept of living quarters is qualified by the definitions of the main

categories into which living quarters are divided (see section 3.2.2). In the context of defining homelessness, the report recognises that 'for certain policy purposes, some persons living in institutions may be considered homeless persons' (p103).

This definition is elaborated in the report (para 606) to include people who, because of the lack of housing, have no other option than to sleep:

(a) Rough or in buildings which were not designed for human habitation;
(b) In emergency centres, or night shelters,
(c) In emergency accommodation in hotels, guest houses or bed and breakfast;
(d) In hospitals due to a lack of decent shelter; or
(e) In accommodation temporarily provided by friends or relatives because of the lack of a permanent place to stay.

The report also considers whether persons with foreign nationality should be included in the total resident population. In this context, persons who may be illegal, irregular or undocumented migrants should be included in the resident population and should follow the same rules of usual residence as for other persons (para 172). Asylum-seekers and persons who have applied for or been granted refugee status should be included in the resident population if the duration of stay is, or is expected to be, at least twelve months (para 173).

3.3.2 Non- European Approaches

Three countries are included here – Australia, Canada and the USA – to give a comparison to the European perspectives in defining homelessness and housing exclusion.

Australia

The Australian Census 2001 derives a definition of homelessness based on a cultural definition which contends that homelessness and 'inadequate housing' are socially constructed, cultural concepts that only make sense in a particular community at a given historical period (Chamberlain and McKenzie, 2003). Cultural standards are not usually stated in official documents, but are embedded in the housing practices of a society. This led to the identification of 'primary', 'secondary' and 'tertiary' homelessness.
Primary homelessness accords with the common sense assumption that homelessness is the same as 'rooflessness'. It includes all people without conventional accommodation, such as people living on the streets, sleeping in parks, squatting in derelict buildings, or using cars or railway carriages for temporary shelter. Primary homelessness is operationalised using the census category 'improvised homes, tents and sleepers out'.

Secondary homelessness includes people who move frequently from one form of temporary shelter to another. On census night, it includes all people staying in emergency or transitional accommodation (provided under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Act 1994). The starting point for identifying this group is the census category 'hostels for the homeless, night shelters and refuges'. Secondary homelessness also includes people residing temporarily with other households because they have no accommodation of their own. They report 'no usual address' on their census form. Secondary homelessness also includes people staying in boarding houses on a short-term basis, operationally defined as 12 weeks or less.

Tertiary homelessness refers to people who live in boarding houses on a medium to long-term basis, operationally defined as 13 weeks or longer. Residents of private boarding houses do not have a

separate bedroom and living room; they do not have kitchen and bathroom facilities of their own; their accommodation is not self-contained; and they do not have security of tenure provided by a lease. They are homeless because their accommodation situation is below the minimum community standard.

In another policy context the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Act 1994 defines a 'homeless' person as follows:

> For the purposes of this Act, a person is homeless if, and only if, he or she has inadequate access to safe and secure housing. (Section 4)

The Act goes on to define 'inadequate access to safe and secure housing' to be:

> For the purposes of this Act, a person is taken to have inadequate access to safe and secure housing if the only housing to which the person has access:
>
> a. damages, or is likely to damage, the person's health; or
> b. threatens the person's safety; or
> c. marginalises the person through failing to provide access to:
> 1. adequate personal amenities; or
> 2. the economic and social supports that a home normally affords; or
> 3. places the person in circumstances which threaten or adversely affect the adequacy, safety, security and affordability of that housing.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW, 1999) pointed to five situations on which definitions of homelessness tend to focus. These are:

- currently living on the street;
- living in crisis or refuge accommodation;
- living in temporary arrangements without security of tenure (e.g. moving between the residences of friends or relatives, living in squats, caravans or improvised dwellings, or living in boarding houses);
- living in unsafe family circumstances (e.g. families in which child abuse or domestic violence is a threat or has occurred);
- living on very low incomes and facing extraordinary expenses or personal crisis.

Hence most definitions employed in Australia allow for considerations of 'safety' and 'security' as well as the need for basic shelter. According to Chamberlain (2003), the three-tiered model identified above is a cultural definition based on 'minimum community standards' of housing. Thus, anyone living below what is accepted as a minimum standard can be classified as 'homeless'. This accords with a relative poverty analogy of homelessness.

Canada

In December 1999, the Government of Canada announced the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) to help ensure community access to services, supports, and programs aimed at alleviating and preventing homelessness in all provinces and territories across Canada. The NHI aimed to achieve three key outcomes by 2006 one of which was to increase knowledge and understanding of homelessness at the local, regional, and national levels through data collection, research, and the review and assessment of the effectiveness of interventions and by supporting the dissemination and sharing of this information. The Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) initiative was established to address the knowledge gaps that prevent an accurate understanding of homelessness. Its activities enable homeless service providers to organize and share data through the support of

an electronic data management system. The HIFIS Initiative relies on a national team structure equipped for coordinating regional and local implementation plans, pursuing data sharing agreements, and providing tools and training. It is administered by the Strategic Research, Analysis and HIFIS Development Directorate of the National Secretariat on Homelessness (NSH).

Since 2001 the HIFIS Initiative has taken a lead role in establishing a nation-wide network of data sharing partnerships amongst stakeholders, including service providers, researchers and all levels of government. As a result, a national database is being developed to help characterize homeless service providers and key demographics of the homeless population accessing services. The guiding principle of the HIFIS Initiative is to respond to the technological and informational needs of homeless service providers in order to establish a resource of key demographic data on service access in a comparable and consistent manner across the country. The specific operation of the HIFIS initiative is discussed in more detail in chapter 5 and compared to relevant European systems.

So far as the definitional issues are concerned the HIFIS initiative focuses on those individuals who are most in need: *those who possess no permanent form of housing and who reside either on the street or in temporary or emergency shelters*. The definition should target anyone who is *either literally homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless*. In this context a person is considered to be literally homeless if they meet any one of the following criteria:

1. they stay overnight in a shelter designated for homeless people, runaways, or neglected or abused women;
2. they stay at least one night in a house, apartment or room paid for with municipal, provincial or federal emergency housing funds;
3. they stay overnight in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., a vacant building, a public or commercial facility, a city park, a car or on the street);
4. they have a regular place to stay that is not their own (e.g., people who trade sexual favours for shelter or spend one night in a hotel or hospital); or
5. they use a soup kitchen or emergency food bank for the homeless population.

The term ‘imminent risk of becoming homeless’ is ambiguously defined in the literature describing the Canadian approach. The definition of literally homeless includes both accommodation and non-accommodation services.

The United States of America

The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, passed by the Congress in 1987, is the principal federal legislation designed to assist homeless people. The McKinney Act’s programs award grants to communities for activities that provide homeless individuals and families with emergency food and shelter, transitional housing, and supportive services. The US definition of homelessness is provided by this legislation, for the purposes of identifying persons who are eligible for HUD McKinney-Vento funded services, to be

“the term “homeless” or “homeless individual” or “homeless person” includes:

(1) an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence; and

(2) an individual who has a primary night-time residence that is
   (A) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);

(B) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
(C) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings".

However, separate definitions exist in relation to the functions of the Education Department and to Veterans services. The definition used by the U.S. Department of Education, which was adopted as part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 expands eligibility to families lacking fixed, regular, or otherwise adequate housing, even if they are not yet living on the street or in a shelter.

The McKinney-Vento Act defines "homeless children and youth" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence. The term includes

- Children and youth who are:
  - sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as *doubled-up*);
  - living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
  - living in emergency or transitional shelters;
  - abandoned in hospitals; or
  - awaiting foster care placement;
- Children and youth who have a primary night-time residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, sub-standard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

The current debate in Congress, in connection with the re-authorisation of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act, is whether to expand the McKinney definition to that used by the Department of Education by including a definition of "person at imminent risk of homelessness" that would include persons in doubled up arrangements; persons living in motels and hotels; persons exiting jails, prisons, juvenile justice systems, child welfare systems, mental health and developmental disability facilities, residential addiction treatment programs, and hospitals without an immediate living arrangement; and persons facing immediate eviction or foreclosure.

3.3.3 Proposed Approach to an Operational Definition for the Measurement of Homelessness at EU level

Our review of the literature emphasises that homelessness is influenced by the cultural context as well as by the policy context in which it is employed. The housing dimension of homelessness is perceived according to the interaction of housing market structure and housing policy and relies upon an understanding of concepts such as security of tenure and housing standards. The social welfare dimension of homelessness is perceived in relation to access to social protection and health provision which determines those groups who are perceived as vulnerable in the housing market. The definition of homelessness is also determined according to the policy purpose for which it is employed (see Chapter 2). Hence strategies focused on prevention will include situations of threatened with homelessness.

The purpose of this section is to propose an operational definition of homelessness that is appropriate to the measurement of homelessness across Europe.

The sections above have described the definitions of homelessness proposed by EUROSTAT, FEANTSA and the UNECE/EUROSTAT Census recommendations (as well as definitions employed outside Europe). While these definitions have similarities there are differences both in the operational categories they encompass and in the definition of those categories. The conceptualisation of homelessness in terms of the three physical, legal and social domains provides a conceptual model which could be used to develop different operational models of homelessness for various purposes such as policy development, service planning, prevention of homelessness or (in this case) for measurement. The typology of living situations presented above (see Table 3.3 and Figure 3.6) provides a framework in which the conceptual definition of homelessness can be made operational in a simplified typology of homeless categories classified by living situation. Table 3.8 summarises the classification of homelessness by living situation.

Table 3.8 Comparison of Living Situations and Homeless Definition

Living Situation			Homeless Category
Housing Units	Conventional Dwellings		Living temporarily with family and friends because of a lack of a home Living in temporary accommodation awaiting re-housing due to homelessness Dwellings not fit for habitation
	Non-conventional Dwellings	Mobile Units	No permanent site or mooring
		Semi-permanent Units	Not fit for habitation
		Other units designed for habitation	Dwellings not fit for habitation
		Other units not designed for habitation	Buildings not meant to be lived in
Collective Living Quarters	Institutional Buildings	Penal	Release within defined period with no home available
		Health	People living in hospitals or institutions because of a lack of suitable housing
	Non-institutional Buildings	Hotel	Hotels, B & B, pensions or similar paid for by public body or NGO due to homeless emergency
		Hostels	Emergency hostels (homeless, refuge for domestic violence) Temporary or longer stay hostels for the homeless
		Welfare	Temporary accommodation with support for homeless people
		Workers Hostels	Migrant workers hostels Immigrant reception centres
Other Living Situations	Public Spaces and External Spaces	Public spaces / external spaces	Living rough, outdoors or in a place not meant for habitation

Table 3.8 confirms that people may be regarded as homeless in a range of living situations within seven broad categories:

A. People living in conventional dwellings:
   a. With family or friends due to a lack of housing
   b. Temporarily housed by public body or NGO awaiting re-housing

B. People living in non-conventional dwellings:
   a. Living in units not meant or designed for (permanent) habitation

C. People living in institutional buildings:
   a. Because of a lack of suitable permanent housing (and/or support)

D. People living in non-institutional buildings:
   a. Provided (or paid for) by public bodies or NGOs due to their emergency situation of homelessness
   b. Provided (or paid for) by public bodies or NGOs for people who are awaiting re-housing

E. People living in other situations:
   a. People living in public spaces or external spaces.

It is then possible to draw upon the typology of living situations and the conceptual domains of homelessness using a pragmatic response, to enable a staged approach to measurement, to produce the recommended harmonised definition of homelessness, summarised in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9 Harmonised Definition of Homelessness Relevant to this Study

Operational Category		Living Situation		Definition
1	People Living Rough	1	Public space / external space	Living in the streets or public spaces without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters
2	People in emergency accommodation	2	Overnight Shelters	People with no place of usual residence who move frequently between various types of accommodation
3	People living in accommodation for the homeless	3 4 5 6	Homeless Hostels Temporary Accommodation Transitional Supported Accommodation Women's shelter or refuge accommodation	Where the period of stay is less than one year [22]
4	People living in institutions	7 8	Health care institutions Penal institutions	Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing No housing available prior to release
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing	9 10 11	Mobile homes Non-conventional building Temporary structure	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence
6	Homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to lack of housing)	12	Conventional housing, but not the person's usual place of residence	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence

[22] The period of one year is chosen to allow consistency with UNECE/EUROSTAT Census recommendations

There are a number of issues related to selecting and prioritising initial homeless categories from Table 3.8 for the measurement of homelessness to arrive at the operational categories defined in Table 3.9. These are summarised below.

A. Conventional dwellings

Living temporarily with family and friends because of a lack of a home

This is included as category 6 in Table 3.9, although people living temporarily with family and friends are often hidden from normal statistical survey methods and may only be visible through administrative data arising, for example, from applications for social services or social housing, or from client register data from non-residential services where double counting of clients is much more likely than for client register data from accommodation services.

Living in temporary accommodation awaiting re-housing due to homelessness

This recognises the situation where public authorities use conventional dwellings to house people temporarily while they await re-housing and is included in category 3 in Table 3.9.

Dwellings not fit for habitation

This is not included in the harmonised definition since the definition of not fit for habitation varies according to quality or adequacy standards and national context in different EU countries. At the present time a number of EU member states do not have statutory definitions of fitness for habitation.

B. Non-conventional dwellings

The category of non-conventional dwellings is problematic in creating a harmonised nomenclature. This is the result of diversity across Europe in relation to habitation such as caravans, holiday or seasonal homes, makeshift or temporary structures, shanty dwellings and garden allotments and huts. Thus, for example, people in mobile homes that have no permanent site or mooring are defined as homeless in legislation in Ireland and the UK while in Denmark it is illegal to occupy holiday homes on a permanent basis. In the EU-10 it is necessary to distinguish between people sleeping rough and people who live in garden allotments or huts on a long-term basis. While some of these categories may be counted in census or household surveys, the resolution for the purposes of measuring homelessness on a harmonised basis needs to be taken in relation to pragmatic issues of statistical methods. So in terms of the following non-conventional dwelling homeless categories:

Mobile units with no permanent site or mooring

Included under category 5 where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence

Semi-permanent and other (non-conventional) housing units

Included under category 5 where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence.

C. Institutional buildings

People released from penal or health institutions

These are included in category 4 in the harmonised definition where release is within a defined period with no home available. However, this institutional category highlights the issue of the boundary between actual homelessness and the situation of threatened with homelessness. Thus people in

prison without a home to go to are not actually homeless until the date of their release. While for policy purposes it may be important to know this number to plan services, for statistical purposes it is (strictu sensu) the ex-post situation that can be counted as homeless. While people in hospitals and health care institutions may be regarded as homeless in the strict sense if they remain there due to a lack of housing, there are difficulties in identifying these situations due to differences in medical diagnosis and welfare or housing assessment. The importance of these categories in homeless prevention strategies (see chapter 2) suggests a pragmatic reason for their inclusion in a harmonised definition even though they are difficult to count at the present time in many countries.

D. Non-institutional buildings

Hotels, B & B, pensions or similar paid for by public body or NGO due to homeless emergency

This category recognises the situation where public authorities use such buildings either where hostel provision is not appropriate (e.g. for families with young children) or where there is a lack of emergency hostel accommodation available. This is included in Category 2 in Table 3.9.

Emergency hostels and temporary or longer stay hostels for the homeless

These situations are included under categories 2 and 3 (where the period of stay is less than one year). It should be noted that the nature of provision of accommodation services for the homeless, ranging from emergency to temporary or transitional accommodation, is a complex and changing pattern of provision. Hence chapter 4 considers the definition of a typology of services including accommodation based services in order to elaborate this broad definition. However, the ETHOS definition highlights the fact that women fleeing domestic violence find refuge in emergency or temporary accommodation which may, in some countries, be funded separately from homeless accommodation or where (in some countries) the provider agencies do not regard this as homeless provision. However, the lack of specialist accommodation, in most countries, results in many women in this situation relying upon homeless hostels. Hence women's shelters are included under category 3 of the harmonised definition in order to confirm the measurement basis to allow an assessment of need in this important policy area.

Welfare – temporary accommodation with support for homeless people

A range of forms of temporary or transitional accommodation for vulnerable groups are provided or funded by welfare agencies to prevent homelessness or to re-integrate homeless people. The nature of these services is elaborated in Chapter 4 and methods of counting them are described in Chapter 5. These situations are included under category 3 where the period of stay is less than one year.

Migrant workers hostels and immigrant reception centres

This homeless category is not included as a separate category of homelessness in the harmonised definition. Migration into Europe and within Europe (principally from the EU-10) is an important policy area that impacts on homeless services. The lack of suitable immigrant or asylum reception provision, in some countries, results in both documented and undocumented immigrants using homeless hostels or sleeping rough. Based on the review of definitions above, it is only the ETHOS definition that explicitly includes this group of people in the definition of homelessness. In this report we have adapted the UNECE/EUROSTAT definition of living quarters to include (among other things) the category of workers hostels. However, for the purposes of devising a harmonised definition appropriate to the measurement of homelessness, it is reasonable to assume that migrants living in immigrant reception centres will be counted by the appropriate responsible agency. Immigrants in other situations will be counted as homeless on the same basis as other citizens. However, in order to monitor the impact of migration on homelessness it will be important to include an appropriate variable in client registration systems.

E. Other living situations

Living rough, outdoors or in a place not meant for habitation
This living situation is included under category 1.

Chapter 4 defines a typology of service provision for homeless people. This provides a basis for examining the registration systems for clients of those services. That approach identifies which of these categories are relevant to the collection of data from service providers client registers.

3.4 Conclusions

The definition of living situations proposed in this chapter is deliberately broad and is intended to ensure compatibility with Census and Household Survey definitions (see Table 3.3 and Figure 3.6). Apart from people living rough and people living temporarily with family and friends, homeless people are mainly found to be living in collective living quarters. For that reason the collective living category is elaborated in the chapter (Table 3.4). However, the forms of provision of accommodation for homeless people are diverse across Europe and made more so by the diversity of approaches taken to link support services with housing. Thus there is no common or equivalised definition of a homeless hostel. Furthermore the approach to provision of temporary accommodation differs between countries and is changing within countries as policies develop towards the provision of support in housing and towards 'housing first' approaches. The terminology used to describe this diversity of hostels, temporary accommodation, transitional accommodation and supported accommodation in part reflects historical phases of policy development and in part reflects real differences in provision. It should be possible therefore to map national categories of accommodation provision unto a common template based on key principles underlying the structure of housing and support situations that exist. For example, these may be principles of access (direct access / referral), legal (tenancy rights), occupancy (intended length of stay), management (staffing). Hence the harmonised nomenclature of living situations needs to be further developed by linking it to a typology of service or support provision. This is the subject of Chapter 4.

The typology of living situations also helps to inform the discussion of the definition of homelessness. Clearly a robust and harmonised definition of homelessness, which recognises different living situations, is a necessary pre-cursor to any methodology of data collection. Our review of definitions considered approaches developed at a European level and those developed elsewhere in order to consider the conceptual approaches and the operational definitions employed. Our consideration of the nature of homelessness in Chapter 2 is also relevant since it emphasises that homelessness is a dynamic process in which an understanding of the pathways into and out of homelessness is a necessary basis for policy development. Clearly the definition that is employed has to be fit for the policy purpose which it is intended to inform. If policy needs revolve around planning provision to meet the need for emergency accommodation then an understanding of rough sleeping may be an adequate statistic to compile. However, if policy is aimed at reintegration or at the prevention of homelessness then a broader definition of homelessness is necessary. The definition proposed above (Table 3.9), while it recognises the commonality between definitions, is not an attempt to derive a consensual definition but rather aims to provide a definition that is based on robust conceptual framework and is consistent with other major data collection sources at national level. While all of the categories identified in this proposed definition can potentially be enumerated by the censuses in each country, the utilisation of service provider registration systems to collate information on a more regular basis can only provide information for a sub-set of this definition. These issues will be considered in depth in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4

Classification of organisations providing services to homeless people

4.1 Introduction

In the last chapter we considered a classification of living situations and of homelessness. The main method of data collection for some of the categories of homeless people identified will be from service providers. There is a wide range of organisations offering services to homeless people, from accommodation projects such as emergency nightshelters and hostels and also non-residential services such as day centres, soup kitchens, advice centres and outreach teams. In order to collect data from services for the measurement of homelessness, it is necessary to classify which types of services need to be considered.

The aim of this chapter is to consider ways in which national authorities might classify the services provided to homeless people in their country in a way which maps on to the classification of living situations developed in Chapter 3. We firstly consider some different typologies of services for homeless people used in different countries across Europe and then propose a broad typology that can be used across different countries to classify these services. The underlying purpose of such a classification is considered, and a broad typology for services is discussed. We then go on to look at specific issues with mapping diverse service types to the classification of living situations and what data needs to be collected about services in order to carry out this classification.

We also propose a procedure for national authorities to carry out a classification of homelessness organisations to help identify relevant services that can provide data to help measure homelessness. In implementing this process, there will be some difficulties experienced in most national contexts in classifying services in a harmonised manner. Possible approaches to resolving some of the problems are examined.

4.2 Purpose of this procedure and related issues

The underlying purpose of developing the procedure for classification of homelessness services outlined in this report is primarily statistical. There are other potential methods and purposes for classifying homelessness services that can be and are used. These include for policy development, funding, administration, access and referral as well as for statistical purposes. However for the purposes of this report, we are considering a classification that will work well for data collection and statistical purposes.

The potential data collection and statistical benefits of having a classification system for homelessness services are threefold:

To provide information on the stock of accommodation services for homeless people, which may be a useful proxy to measure levels of homelessness. Although this leads to higher figures for homelessness in countries with higher levels of service provision, for many categories of homeless people, they are defined by their living situation (eg. staying in an emergency shelter) and stock levels can be assessed through estimation from supply data.

To enable representative statistical surveys of homelessness services to be conducted, either of service providers (for example to estimate flow figures) or for surveys of homeless people themselves (as carried out by INSEE in France in 2001). Having a definitive classification of homelessness services and an accompanying comprehensive directory/database of services, representative samples can be created.

To aid in identifying homeless people from census and population registers by providing a database of addresses of accommodation services used to accommodate homeless people.

In terms of the classification of homelessness outlined in table 3.9 (page 58), this classification of service providers will be of use in providing statistical information about the levels of homelessness amongst rough sleepers and those staying in shelters, hostels and refuges. It is of less use in identifying other categories of homelessness, such as people staying with friends and family.

4.3 Broad typology of services

In examining the range of services provided to homeless people across the European Community, a broad typology of services emerges:

Accommodation for homeless people –
- *eg. emergency shelters, temporary hostels, supported or transitional housing*

Non-residential services for homeless people –
- *eg. outreach services, day centres, advice services etc.*

Accommodation for other client groups that may be used by homeless people.
- *eg. hotels, bed and breakfast, specialist support and residential care services for people with alcohol, drug or mental health services*

Mainstream services for the general population that may be used by homeless people.
- *eg. advice services, municipal services, health and social care services*

Specialist support services for other client groups that may be used by homeless people.
- *eg. psychiatric counselling services, drug detoxification facilities.*

These services may be provided by a wide range of service providers including the public or state sector (at a national, regional or local level), NGOs and the private sector. Funding for services may be provided by state, private or charitable sources, or a combination of these sources.

Given the wide diversity of types and different levels of provision or services for homeless people between different countries, it is not possible to provide a general typology of services that can be used without difficulty in every country. Instead we propose a methodology for identifying those services that may be classified as homeless services in order to contribute to a statistical understanding of the levels of homelessness. This procedure builds upon that outlined by FEANTSA in their fourth annual review of statistics on homelessness in Europe (Edgar et al, 2005).

It should also be noted that homelessness services are not a static phenomenon, but subject to ongoing growth and development. This process has been characterised as a move from a 'police' to a 'treatment' to a 'social' model of service delivery (Edgar et al, 1999).

"Services for homeless people reflect, to some degree, the differences in the welfare regimes in which they are embedded. This, in itself, is not sufficient to explain the development and innovation in service provision, nor does it help to understand the convergence we can perceive in recent innovation in the approach and purpose of services to alleviate and prevent homelessness. … This development is

evident in a shift from emergency services focused on street homelessness to services aimed at re-settlement and prevention and targeted on an individual basis or on groups of homeless people with specific support needs. That shift is also evident in an increasing diversity in the actors involved and in the roles they perform in service provision."[23]

Therefore there will be a need within each national context to keep the definition of homelessness services under review, in order to reflect the changing patterns of provision in practice. An example of the need for this is illustrated by the situation in Hungary, where the range of homelessness services are laid down in the Social Act, but new types of services, often provided by NGOs have developed outside this legislative framework.

"Dispatcher centres" and "Crisis cars" can be mentioned as good examples here. These services play a very important role for example in the homeless care in Budapest, in the coordination of the care services. Without these we only could talk about distinct service providers and could not mention a coordinated system of care services. Their closing down would remarkably impair the effectiveness and level of subsidized services. Still, these services are unknown and not controlled by legislation and are excluded from guaranteed normative subsidization. It will be soon clear that this does not under any circumstances constitute a disadvantage, it is only mentioned to demonstrate that there are important homeless care services existing also outside the range of legislation.[24]

4.4 Sample classifications

Although there is at present no authoritative classification of homelessness services in any country, it is informative to look briefly at some sample classifications that have been developed in some countries. These classifications have been developed for different purposes, in some cases for the purpose of collating directories and databases, in others for administrative or for legal or regulatory purposes.

4.4.1 Spain

In 2001, Caritas and University of Camillas in Madrid developed a classification of homelessness services for a directory of services they produced. Services were classified according to 24 types of central service and then also by distinct services provided of which there were 40 types.

Table 4.1 Spanish classification

Central service types		
Reception/refuge		Emergency night shelter
Emergency social service		Support apartments/flats
Basic service		Occupational workshop
Street service		Professional workshop
Day Centre		Work resettlement
Meal service		Resettlement company
Clothing store		Mental health
Hostel		Alcohol Detox services
Temporary refuge/reception centre		Gambling services
Resettlement centre		Co-ordinating project
Permanent lodgings		Other centres and services

[23] Edgar et al 2003

[24] Hungary country paper, summary in Appendix 1.2

As can be seen from the above list, it includes both accommodation and non-residential services, and also includes services for other client groups that may overlap with the homeless population (eg. alcohol detox, mental health and gambling services)

4.4.2 UK

In the UK, Resource Information Service have been publishing directories and databases of homelessness services for over 20 years. They have evolved a classification of homelessness services that they use in their Homeless UK website and their range of homelessness directories for major cities in the UK.[25]

Table 4.2 UK classification

Type of service	Main sub-type	Detailed sub-type
Accommodation	Emergency	Direct Access
		Nightstop
		Rolling shelter
		Winter Shelter
	Second stage	Low support
		Medium support
		High support
		Foyer
		Housing scheme
	Specialist	Alcohol and drugs
		Ex-offenders
		Leaving care
		Mental health
		Single parents
		Working people
Non-residential	Advice and information	
	Counselling	
	Day centre	
	Employment and training	
	Floating support	
	Health care	
	Helpline	
	Homeless advice	
	Housing advice	
	Housing Department	
	Practical help	
	Second tier and campaigning	
	Social Services/Social Work Department	

This classification has been developed primarily for purposes of access and referral, and again, not all services classified under this classification are exclusively used by homeless people. It also excludes some specialist provision for particular client groups such as homeless families accepted as homeless by local authorities which are outside the scope of their directories.

[25] www.homelessuk.org and London Hostels Directory, RIS, 2006

4.4.3 France

In France there is a wide range of different types of accommodation for homeless people including emergency, short stay and temporary housing. Emergency accommodation centres can be in dormitory type structures but can also include rooms in hotels that associations rent and make available to homeless families. In winter, a specific programme of winter hostels supplements the all-year round supply of shelters. The table below summarises the classification:[26]

Table 4.3 France classification of accommodation services

D'hébergement D'urgence (Emergency Accommodation Centres) (CHU)	The law does not state the meaning of 'hebergement d'urgence' except that the facilities must offer 'conditions of hygiene and comfort respecting human dignity'. Three elements distinguish it from other types of accommodation: the short duration of stay, the method of admitting the public and the status of its users. The duration of the stay can be between one night and seven nights, possibly extended to 14 nights.
Services d'Accès Direct (Low Threshold / Direct Access Shelters)	These are emergency centres for homeless people.
Les Hôtels Meublés (Furnished Hotels)	These accommodate urgently roofless families for whom accommodation in collective structures or dormitories are not adapted.
L'Hôtel Social (Social Hotel)	Dispersed accommodation, is one of the modalities of the emergency accommodation centres (CHU). They accept homeless individuals or families for one night or for a few months. They differentiate themselves from the CHU by the fact that they offer private space for each family or individual (bedrooms instead of dormitories), and provide sanitary facilities and private kitchens or shared with only a few families.
Les CHRS or Centres d'Hébergement et de Réinsertion Sociale (Social Reinsertion Accommodation Centres)	90% of these are managed by associations and 10% by local collectives (CCAS). The facilities are of the collective type and the users contribute to the costs of the accommodation and the assistance provided in proportion to their means. The length of stay in a CHRS is limited by the law to a period of 6 months renewable if necessary. The difficulty of finding an independent solution often necessitates a prolongation of the stay in the accommodation centres. The social assistance is provided by a multidisciplinary team, social workers, psychologists, and institutional partners. Although the CHRS are designed to accept all people in difficulty, some specialise in receiving a specific sub-group.
Les Logements ALT: Housing financed by the ALT (Financial Help for Temporary Accommodation)	These are housing units dispersed amongst the private and public housing stock, managed by associations or local collectives. They receive financial aid to provide housing units to the public in difficulty. The people received are those in the process of reinsertion, most of which are families. The length of stay is limited by the guidelines to 1 year, renewable, but this duration is seldom respected because of the difficulties in finding another type of accommodation. The association can ask the family to make a financial contribution towards the cost of the accommodation. The families do not have a tenancy agreement since the housing is under the name of the association
Les Résidences Sociales (Social Residences)	This is collective accommodation of the hostel type (i.e. individual furnished bedrooms or apartments with collective services and common spaces such as dining room, laundry, meeting room). They are for the most part the property of controlled rent organisations (HLM). The management is undertaken by the associations who have a rental contract with the HLM. Access to this housing is means tested. The individuals or families have residential status and pay rent. They sign a lease which, like all tenancy agreements, is monthly and renewable. However, the duration of occupation of tenants in social residences cannot exceed 2 years in principle. Associations do not always enforce this rule because of the difficulty of finding normal housing.

[26] Edgar et al (2005)

Note that this classification appears to be driven more by funding and administrative factors than by criteria about access, length of stay or purpose of accommodation. There is therefore some apparent operational overlap in terms of service provision between the categories.

4.4.4 Hungary

In Hungary[27] the range of homeless care services is laid down in legislation (the Social Act 1993) which breaks homelessness services into the following categories:

Table 4.4 Hungarian Social Act classification of homelessness services

Primary supply	Catering	
	Social street work	
Special provisions	Institution providing nursing and care	Homeless hostel
	Rehabilitation facility	Institution for the rehabilitation of the homeless
	Institutions providing temporary shelter	Night shelter
		Temporary hostel for the homeless
	Institution providing daytime service	Daytime centre

In addition to this classification which has been established for legal and regulatory purposes, there are also additional services that exist outside the scope of the legislation, such as Dispatcher centres and Crisis cars.

4.4.5 Conclusions

As can be seen from the above classifications, each driven by different needs (access and referral, administrative, regulatory), there are some levels of similarity, and many areas of difference.

There is a clear distinction in most countries between accommodation services and non-residential services, and within each of these, there is a similar pattern of provision. However the individual country differences are not insignificant.

4.5 Non-residential services

In most countries, in addition to accommodation services such as hostels and emergency shelters, there is also a range of non-residential services providing day-time shelter, practical services, advice or support to homeless people. In addition there are normally a number of state or municipal services that either provide specific services to homeless people or whilst for the wider resident population are also used by homeless people. There are also specialist support services for people with alcohol, drug or mental health problems that may be disproportionately accessed by homeless people.

[27] See country paper on Hungary, Summary in Appendix 1.2

For some categories of homelessness, such as people sleeping rough, or those staying with friends and families (ie. those groups not staying in homelessness accommodation), the only service providers with any contact with these people will be non-residential services such as advice centres, outreach teams and day centres. These services are therefore of interest for our purposes and should be classified.

However there are some issues we need to consider when collecting data about clients of these services. Firstly, service providers need to be able to identify which of their clients are homeless, and be aware of their current living situation. If this is possible, then we can identify those clients that are also in contact with accommodation services and reduce the impact of double-counting. Use of the core register variables in Chapter 7 will assist with this process.

A second issue to consider is that service providers are unlikely to be in contact with the entire population of homeless people not staying in homelessness accommodation. Not all rough sleepers engage with outreach teams, day centres and advice services, and not all people staying with friends and family due to a lack of suitable alternative accommodation approach advice services or municipal services for help and assistance. It will therefore be hard to make estimates of stock, flow and prevalence of these categories of homeless people from data collection from service providers, however useful information on profiles

We therefore will wish to include within our classification of services, both advice and support services for people in housing need, and services aimed at or predominantly used by people sleeping rough. Although some rough sleepers will be using emergency nightshelters on any particular night, others will not. The only robust ways to obtain direct statistical information on this population is via street counts (which are sporadically carried out across Europe, and normally infrequent and confined to urban areas) or by surveys of service providers working with rough sleepers or with their service users themselves.

These services include the following service types:

- Advice services
- Outreach or street services
- Day centres
- Free or cheap food providers - eg. soup runs
- Other practical services (luggage stores, laundry and washing facilities)
- Health care services for this client group.

Note that surveys from service providers covering rough sleepers are inevitably going to include a higher degree of double-counting, as rough sleepers are more likely to be in contact with multiple non-residential services than accommodation services for any given time period used as a sample frame. Consideration would have to be given to how to structure surveys to minimise this effect.

Finally, we should note that, there are some people who sleep rough who are not in contact with homelessness services, or even choose not to engage with homelessness services:

"Long waiting lists, disciplinary treatment of users and growing selectivity and related eligibility constraints also explain why some homeless people finally decide to reject emergency services and to spend most of their time in public spaces." [28]

[28] Meert et al 2005

4.6 Accommodation services

There is a wide variety of accommodation services within most member states, and no country even has a clear definition of a homeless hostel. In their 3rd review of homelessness statistics (Edgar et al, 2004), the authors commented that:

"Differences in nomenclature for accommodation with similar functions (eg. emergency, transition, resettlement makes comparison between countries difficult)".[29]

However, in most countries, it is possible to determine three broad categories of accommodation for homeless people:

- Emergency accommodation
- Temporary or transitional hostel accommodation
- Supported or resettlement accommodation

What may prove harder is classifying individual services or service types into one of the above three categories in a comparable manner. Given this difficulty, we do not believe that a more granulated classification is achievable. Fortunately, for the purposes of measuring homelessness it is not necessary.

4.7 Mapping to classification of living situations and homelessness

In the FEANTSA Annual Review of Statistics on Homelessness in Europe[30], the authors elaborate a conceptual method of mapping a nomenclature of homeless accommodation services onto the ETHOS typology with considerations of the situation in each member state for each category of homelessness. This section takes this approach as a starting point and then builds on this method, to outline some operational guidelines for dealing with some of the problematic issues raised, and applying it to the classification developed in the last chapter.

The main problematic issues encountered in classifying accommodation services according to who they house is summarized in the following quotes from the FEANTSA report:

"in a number of countries, it is difficult to distinguish between overnight hostels and accommodation with more transitional functions. Often the same accommodation is used for emergency night shelter and for generalist homeless accommodation (categories 2 and 3 in the ETHOS typology)." [31]

"Finally, there are difficulties in identifying supported accommodation provided for homeless people from that provided for other vulnerable groups either because the funding and management arrangements do not separately distinguish the homeless from other vulnerable families or because the data is not collected in relation to client groups." [32]

The criteria that are of most for determining whether a service or type of service falls into one or another of the above three broad categories include access criteria (direct access by homeless people,

[29] Edgar et al 2004

[30] Edgar et al 2005

[31] Edgar et al 2005

[32] Edgar et al 2005

or referral from an agency), length of stay (overnight, short stay or long stay) and the purpose of the accommodation. These can be summarised in the following table:

Table 4.5 Criteria for defining homeless accommodation forms

Access criteria	Direct Referral	In person From agency or statutory body
Period of stay	Overnight Short (not defined) Short (defined) Longer-term	Normally not 24 hour stay While awaiting assessment/rehousing Period linked to training, support or move-on Linked to resettlement support, rehabilitation
Purpose / Intention	Emergency Interim Transitional Specialist	Crisis Assessment for support or re-housing Receiving support or training Resettlement, rehabilitation or refuge

By using a combination of these criteria, it is possible to create a broad typology of homelessness services. However it is still hard in some individual cases to classify services into these service types for statistical purposes.

"It is difficult even to separately identify data for emergency hostels from general homeless (short stay) hostels in most countries. …In some countries there is a clear separation between emergency provision and other forms of hostel (for reception, assessment, transitional living or temporary accommodation), while in other countries there is more of a continuum of provision."[33]

However, we believe that by considering some additional criteria, it should be possible to classify homelessness accommodation services into one of four types to map onto the homelessness population as follows:

[33] Edgar et al 2005

Table 4.6 Mapping accommodation services to classification of living situations

Living situation		Access	Intended length of stay	Purpose	Other criteria
Homeless	2 People in emergency accommodation	Direct access or by referral	Overnight or for a few nights	To provide a bed for a homeless person or family Main purpose is accommodation, but other services such as practical assistance or low level support may also be offered.	Low threshold Do not always require ID Often free to use Often maintain a day-time curfew Often no formal legal tenancy More likely to be shared sleeping accommodation Access is normally on day of referral
	3 People living in accommodation for the homeless	Direct access or by referral	Short – medium stay (up to 12 months)	To provide accommodation to homeless people who meet defined criteria, such as a need for support or access as part of a planned programme. The accommodation is intended to be short stay, although some people may be long-term residents through lack of alternatives Support provision is variable but normally intended to be assistance with rehousing or move-on to supported housing	Prime purpose of service is to provide accommodation rather than support – however many residents will have support needs, and support may be provided. Often have restrictions on resident access (night-time curfews) or visitors policies. May operate waiting lists, or have a referral process that takes several days
	4 People in Crisis Shelters for Domestic Violence	Direct access or by referral	Short stay, but can include crisis stays of very short duration	Accommodation is specifically for women and children experiencing domestic violence or abuse.	Accommodation normally for both women and children. May be either crisis/emergency or longer term – or even provided via floating support.
Not homeless	People receiving support (due to homelessness)	Normally by referral	Long stay, and in some cases permanent	The accommodation is either targeted at a specific client group with specialist support needs or if for homeless people is intended to offer long-term accommodation.	Care or support plans are normally compulsory. Access is normally via a referral process that takes several days or weeks. Residents normally have tenancy agreements and have 24 hour access to the accommodation Sharing of sleeping accommodation is rare Levels of staff cover depend upon levels of support provided.

4.7.1 Notes to Table 4.6

1. Further sub-classification

Although it is possible to break down accommodation for the homeless into distinct sub-categories (as in the country examples quoted earlier), for measurement purposes it is not necessary to consider these different sub-divisions, which are intended partly to capture the range of services on offer in different countries.

2. Access and referral

Note that in earlier classifications, there was more of an emphasis on direct referral by homeless people as a key criteria for differentiating an emergency nightshelter from other forms of short-stay hostel. However in recent years, in the UK for example, access to emergency services in London has been restricted to outreach teams. Therefore care needs to be taken when using this criteria to identify low threshold emergency homelessness services.

3. Length of stay

Note that the length of stay that should be considered when classifying services is the intended length of stay rather than the actual average length of stay. This is because in many accommodation services in different countries, whilst the accommodation is intended to be for a short-duration, in practice stays are often extended. As this is often for reasons such as an inadequate supply of move-on accommodation or inability of the homeless people to cope if moved to another form of accommodation, we believe they should still be considered as short-stay accommodation, as that is still the intended purpose of the service.

"However, if he or she needs to stay in this kind of housing longer that is necessary, due the lack of other options, the lack of ordinary independent housing or supported housing, a person is considered to be homeless - or houseless."
(Finland)

Short-medium stay - less than 12 months

Also, although in many European countries, short-stay hostels normally have a maximum stay of around 6 months, for the purposes of this classification, we consider that 12 months should be the threshold for inclusion as a homelessness service, rather than as longer-term supported housing. The reason for this is to enable a correlation with the census definition of "usual place of residence" considered in chapter 3.

Note that if the only distinction between temporary hostels and supported accommodation is length of stay – because in that country, support is provided in all forms of hostel accommodation (as in the UK for example), then an intended or actual length of stay of 12 months or less forms the critical divide for inclusion. For this typology we are not as interested in the funding, legislative or administrative arrangements that underlie the service provision as in establishing a common framework that is compatible with the classification of living situations and homelessness and also with census classifications.

4. Other criteria

Note that not all accommodation services will exhibit all of the above criteria for their sub-type. However they are included as guides to aid classification into the relevant sub-type.

5. Overall

Essentially the purpose of the above classification is to enable national authorities to place accommodation services within four broad statistical categories. In some cases it may be necessary for weightings to be applied to services to assign proportions of their total capacity to different categories. In order for this to happen, additional data about these services will need to be collected.

4.8 Data to be collected

In order to compile a database or directory of homelessness services, we have seen that national authorities will need to consider a range of criteria about those services in order to be able to accurately classify them even into the very broad typology suggested.

But in order to be able to make meaningful use of this classification for the original purposes of enhancing statistical information about homeless people, additional data will need to be collected about service providers. A full list of the suggested dataset is given in chapter 5.

The main reason for this additional data, particularly that relating to client group, geographical catchment area and service capacity is to enable data collection from client registers of service providers and/or construction of representative samples for surveys either of service providers or of homeless people. (See Chapter 8 for a fuller discussion of this issue). We also propose that if the directory or database is to be used for access and referral or for policy purposes, then additional levels of data will need to be collected about services.

4.9 Classification and boundary issues

We are not suggesting that the classification of accommodation services for homeless people is going to be an easy task in all countries. In each country there are likely to be some types of service that are hard to classify. We have provided guidance as to other criteria that can be used to help with this classification. It may still prove hard to classify some services, either because they display characteristics of multiple types or because they provide a continuum of services

"In some countries there is a clear separation between emergency provision and other forms of hostel (for reception, assessment, transitional living or temporary accommodation), while in other countries there is more of a continuum of provision."[34]

"The main tendency followed by services for the no abode in recent years has been to differentiate between emergency and transitional accommodation services. While this distinction is quite clear at a theoretical level, in practice the borderline between the two dimensions is much more blurred."
(Italy)

4.10 Varying levels of service provision across Europe

Total levels of service provision for homeless people across Europe vary considerably. This may be for various reasons connected with the overall type and level of welfare provision, economic factors or levels of homelessness.

[34] Edgar et al 2005

For some countries, either those with a sophisticated level of homelessness service provision, or those with a relatively low level of provision, the classification process may be harder. In some countries, quite distinct service types will need to be clustered together to enable comparison. In other countries with very few services, they may cut across the typology given above or even need to be weighted into multiple classifications.

4.11 Specialist homelessness services, other types of services and mainstream services

As well as the above typology which attempts to map specialist homelessness service providers to the classification of living situations in chapter 3, we also need to consider whether or not to include other services within the typology of services used by homeless people. These are typically services that are aimed at other client groups or the general population, but are also used by homeless people, either because they are disproportionately represented within the target client group of the relevant service or because there is no specialist provision of this type specifically for homeless people.

The precise situation will vary from country to country, but is mainly of relevance for inclusion of other accommodation services which may be heavily used by homeless people (eg. bed and breakfast hotels or private hostels) in some national contexts, or where there are very few services for people sleeping rough, but a significant rough sleeping problem.

4.12 Implementing the procedure for classification of homelessness services

The aim of this procedure is to enable national authorities to develop a classification for measurement purposes that enables better comparison between different national contexts. The danger here is that most national authorities will tend to use existing legislative, funding or administrative classifications that are more likely to be particular to their country situation.

In order to obtain an accurate classification it will be important to capture the full range of homeless service provision, normally by involvement of NGOs, and then to classify by the operational characteristics suggested above. It is essential for comparison between countries that services are classified according to the services that they provide, rather than the funding, legal or administrative frameworks that support them.

In order to achieve this, the starting point will be developing a database or directory of homelessness services. The following chapter focuses on this issue.

4.13 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined a broad typology for homelessness services, enabling them to be mapped to the classification of living situations and typology of homelessness developed in the previous chapter.

Some existing classifications used in different countries have been shown to illustrate how the purpose for which a classification is developed affects the classification itself. Nevertheless there are some key points of similarity between these sample classifications.

The need for a classification to cover both non-residential and accommodation-based services has been established, as some groups of homeless people are not in contact with accommodation services and can be measured via contact with other services – although care has to be taken in this area to

minimise double-counting and in assessing the proportion of the total homeless population that is in contact with non-residential services.

Accommodation services have been mapped to the classification of homelessness developed in the previous chapter. Factors relating to access and referral, support services and length of stay are the key criteria used in this mapping, although other criteria that may help in classification have also been provided.

The great variety of service provision across Europe prevents the creation of a more detailed classification, but this is not essential for the purposes of measuring homelessness. However implementing this broad classification needs to be done on the basis of services provided, rather than on a funding, legislative or administrative basis if services are to accurately and comparably mapped to the typology of homelessness and classification of living situations.

PART C

HOW TO MEASURE IT

Chapter 5

Methods to maintain a database of services for homeless people

5.1 Introduction

A key element of research carried out to measure homelessness has been to gather data on services for homeless people. As these services are in contact with or indeed house homeless people, they can provide crucial statistics about their numbers and characteristics, and also provide access to clients for researchers to include in surveys. To collect data on services for the measurement of homelessness, it is necessary to classify which types of services need to be considered and Chapter 4 outlined issues involved and a procedure to do this. A database then needs to be developed to hold relevant information about them so that standard variables of data can then be gathered from their client registers or via surveys.

This chapter reviews examples of existing databases and directories of homelessness services that have been set up for research and other purposes in different EU countries. Appropriate methodologies are proposed for national authorities to create and maintain a database or directory of such organisations, including an examination of the data items needed, and management, IT and resource issues.

If data from services is used to measure homelessness, it is important to note that in countries where more services for homeless people are provided, there may appear to be higher numbers of homeless people in statistics, partly or mainly due to the fact that services exist and clients can be counted. Where few or no services exist, gathering data in this way can result in only very low numbers of homeless people being identified, even though significant numbers of homeless people may still exist, but who are not counted because provision is so sparse or non-existent. This method, therefore, can make countries that have developed homelessness services appear as if they have higher numbers of homeless people than other countries where little or no provision exists.

A further issue to consider is that even if homelessness services exist, some homeless people, especially those who are roofless, may not be in contact with services at all (although outreach and some other services do aim to contact people sleeping rough).

In addition to measuring homelessness, there are other reasons why data on services is of fundamental importance. Without good information about the full range of available services, it is much more difficult to make appropriate referrals or ensure that homeless people get the help they need. The following activities are also all more problematic without good information about homelessness services:

- Policy making and planning of services to help homeless people
- Identifying gaps in service provision, avoiding duplication of services and having to “reinvent the wheel”
- Funding decisions about service provision
- Promoting good practice
- Benchmarking and improving quality
- Networking and liaison amongst service providers.

Therefore, in addition to devising a database of services for measurement purposes, considering the other functions for which the data can used can be cost-effective and have far-reaching benefits for different audiences and ultimately homeless people themselves.

5.2 Background

Since the 1990s, there have been various attempts in some EU countries to carry out reliable quantitative studies of homelessness that have involved the development of a database of service providers. In France, for example, Quaglia and Vivier (2006) describe the several quantitative surveys initiated by INED using a methodology developed by surveys in the United States from the mid 1980s onwards. These used an indirect sampling framework involving the agencies that provide services to homeless people. The main problems encountered in these studies were how to deal with multi-users of services and the exclusion of homeless people who are not in contact with/do not use services.

In France more recently, Marpsat and Firdion (2000) conducted several local surveys among users of soup kitchens and day centres, as well as shelters. This helped ensure the inclusion of people living on the streets, people staying with friends or relatives, and those in their own lodging but using a soup kitchen. This methodology was also used in 2001 by the INSEE study on a national level in France and adapted for surveys of drug users (InVS-INED, 2002 and 2004). All these studies demonstrated the importance of classifying which services are to be included based on particular definitions of homelessness and living situations.

The first step in the design of these surveys has been to build a complete list of relevant services to provide a sampling frame. In doing this, there are often some existing sources of information about services eg listings or directories of services for referrals, and funding/registration databases of services. However, as these are devised for different purposes, it was necessary to take into account complexities around issues such as incomplete coverage of services, differences in the way that organisations providing multiple services are listed (eg a single entry for an agency covering all services provided versus individual entries for each service), and different types of addresses and contact details (eg those for referrals or administrative/head office).

This task of compiling a list of services also needed to take into account the frequent changes to services and NGOs, and proper updating of the sample frame was vital to reflect current service provision and the whole range of services provided. As different services serve different clients in terms of age, gender etc, it is necessary to ensure that different services/client groups can be properly represented in the sample.

A telephone survey of these services was then conducted to adjust the data to the survey needs and to collect data for selection and estimation purposes. A questionnaire was drawn up and a database created in order to gather and hold details, including:

- Exact address of service
- Type of service provided (eg emergency shelter, longer stay hostel, food distribution) and the way it works
- Client group(s) served
- Size of the service
- Number of services provided per week and numbers and types of client groups using services
- Opening hours

This telephone survey also had the function of providing first contact with heads of services, during which the research was introduced and explained – a very crucial step in ensuring collaboration and participation of services.

Once this sampling frame or database of services was created, services were stratified. In the INED surveys, services were stratified by type of service and category of client group served to take account of those that served specific client groups (eg lone women, young people etc). The services were also sampled according to the number of services (beds, meals etc) they provided per week. As the INSEE survey in 2001 had a national remit, services were also stratified according to the geographical location of services.

Quaglia and Vivier note that some of the data collected from services about their activities is sensitive, especially numbers of service users. This is because data about how many people use services is often directly related to the funding the services receive - very often the more people seen means the more funding they get. Despite reassuring services of the confidentiality and specific use of this information, there was evidence that these financial issues often encouraged services to over-estimate the numbers of users reported.

Overall, the quality of the information about services for the database and sampling frame was of great importance requiring particular care and attention to the drawing up of the list of services and questions for the telephone survey for additional information. Therefore compiling, checking and updating database records requires designated resources to be done properly.

5.3 Databases/directories and core data about services

It is vital to establish efficient collection, storage, retrieval and updating of information about homelessness services for a database/directory to then be used to gather good data for the measurement of homelessness. The terms “database” and “directory” are often used interchangeably and overlap with each other. However, the term “database” usually refers to a collection of data that is stored, organised and retrieved electronically. Some databases of services are not publicly available (ie they are only used for research or funding purposes), but the data they contain may also be made available for users on CD-ROM, online via the Internet or indeed in printed directories.

The term “directory” in this context usually refers to a printed publication which contains listings of addresses, contact details and other information about organisations or individuals for referral purposes. In practice, published directories are usually produced from a database of information, although the size, scope and level of detail can vary greatly. Some directories are little more than simple listings in reports or leaflets. Others may be significant volumes of data about organisations with sophisticated indexing etc.

For the purposes of this report, the term database/directory is used unless it is necessary to specify one or the other.

By reviewing recent literature on surveys of homelessness and gathering information about homelessness services, it is possible to identify the 3 key issues that need to be addressed to develop quality databases/directories of services:

5.3.1 Need, purpose and audience

Being more specific about the need and purpose of developing a database or directory of services to enable the measurement of homelessness can underpin a range of other considerations. Different needs and variations in purpose are likely to affect fundamental issues such as which services to include, what data about services will be gathered and updated and how, and what information about clients will then be gathered and how (eg through amalgamation of data from client registers, a one-off or ongoing series of surveys, from ongoing client recording systems etc). Similarly it is important to clarify not only the direct users of the data and the database (eg the researchers), but also the end users of the research output. In addition to national, regional or local authorities, users may, for example, include policy makers and planners, and service providers themselves.

Considerations of need, purpose and audience are also relevant when examining whether any other existing databases or directories of services can be used as these usually underpin the types of agencies included, level of detail, compilation techniques, updating and accuracy of information.

To ensure that the data is as useful as possible and that the staff time and funding required to develop a database is of maximum benefit, it is important to consider the various other possible uses that the data can have. Although in practice, this sometimes entails conflicting requirements, it is none the less desirable to meet as many of these multiple needs as possible, despite inevitable limitations in scope and work involved. As well as measuring homelessness, the data collected can be invaluable for referrals and the other purposes outlines in 4.1 Whilst making the data as publicly accessible as possible can undoubtedly have significant benefits, the quality of the data (eg level of detail about each agency to ensure appropriate referrals, frequency of updating etc) must be considered to ensure that homeless people and those working with them have reliable data.

5.3.2 Scope

5.3.2.1 Types of services

Once the purpose and audience have been clarified, the scope of the database/directory needs to be decided in terms of inclusion of different types of services. This should relate to the definition of homelessness and living situations used, and a classification of services that highlights those that exist and are necessary for inclusion. Accommodation services as outlined in Table 4.7 should included (ie night shelters and short-medium term hostels for homeless people, shelters for women escaping domestic violence) and services in contact with people sleeping rough or in structures not designed for habitation, and people living temporarily with family or friends due to lack of housing.

If the database is also to be made available for referral and other purposes, it may be necessary to include a broader range of services that could result in such a resource including specialist and non-specialist services for homeless people, people with housing-related problems and those at risk of homelessness.

5.3.2.2 Information about organisations or services

Decisions need to be made about how to delineate and describe services if an organisation runs a number of different services (eg an organisation may provide a hostel, day centre and outreach service all from the same premises). For databases/directories that are for counting homeless people, the number of entries such an organisation has may depend on whether client information is recorded separately for each service. For directories for referral purposes, this may be decided in terms of type of

service and referral points of access with separate entries for each service as appropriate rather than one general entry.

5.3.2.3 Geographical coverage

The database/directory being compiled may need to be a local, regional or national resource. Even if devising a database/directory for just a particular local area or city, some out of area local, regional or national agencies may need to be included in the database as they may still provide services to local people. Obviously a national resource, even in smaller sized countries, can be a major undertaking requiring significant funding. One way of moving towards developing a national resource may be to take a staged approach, starting with a major or capital city, and then aiming to build up coverage of additional areas and regions over time. However, if this type of approach is to be adopted, it is best spelt out at an early stage.

5.3.2.4 Referrals

Another issue to consider in terms of scope is inclusion criteria based on who make referrals to services, and to hostels in particular as they can have more complex referral processes. The nature of referrals to hostels can indicate the type of provision it is (eg nightshelters or direct access hostels are usually directly accessible by referrals from individuals themselves, whilst some other hostels for homeless people may have restricted referrals from one or more agencies only).

Details about referrals are especially important in assessing the usefulness of any existing resources when establishing a new database, and also if the data is to be made available to advisors and the public. Some services that are not publicly accessible (eg requiring referrals from named agencies only or operate on an outreach only basis) are reluctant to have their details published for fear of inappropriate referrals. However, making these details available can actually prevent some inappropriate referrals in situations where agencies or individuals find out about the existence of a service but may not know who can and cannot access the service or make referrals.

5.3.3 Data about services

As well as the database's scope in terms of services to be included, the nature of the data about services needs to be established. Based on recent research, classifications of services and the survey findings outlined later in this chapter, minimum recommended core data about services (Level 1 data) to help measure homelessness is proposed below and outlined in Table 5.1. Further optional data (Levels 2 and 3) may be collated depending on the need, purpose and audience of the database.

Overall, the greater the level of detail researched means:

- greater volatility of the information with detailed data more subject to change
- more of a burden in terms of time and resources for service providers to give the information (often meaning lower response rates)
- more time and resources needed to research and update the information required.

5.3.3.1 Level 1 Data

These core data items would provide a sound set of information about services that could then be used to measure homelessness and gather information on an ongoing basis or via surveys about numbers and characteristics of homeless people. Data covers:

- basic organisational details (contact details and location)
- client group(s) served
- services provided.

These data items are required for contacting services, helping check coverage of different types of services for different client groups (eg emergency versus longer term accommodation), for sampling purposes, and contacting services for details of clients served.

By collecting contact details specifically for referrals (some services have an administration or head office address rather than that of the service itself or referral address), Level 1 data can also be made publicly available online or in printed directory format and thus play a vital role in providing better access to services for homeless people. It should be noted that some services have confidential addresses and some are telephone only services that do not have a public address.

If including the name of a contact person, it should be made clear what the individual is responsible for (eg whether they are the contact person for updating details only, the manager, or responsible for initial contact/referrals). This information is also often volatile and there are data protection issues around keeping names of individuals. (For referral purposes, it is often advisable to exclude name of contact person).

Whilst not necessarily appropriate for making publicly available due to its sensitivity, collecting data about current average occupancy levels for accommodation services (taking into account seasonal variations) can enable comparison with total number of bedspaces to give useful overall information about point in time total numbers of homeless people living in hostels and other relevant accommodation services. Similarly, average number of services provided per week and/or numbers and types of client groups using services can give useful total numbers of homeless people using non-residential services.

5.3.3.2 Level 2 Data

To enhance efficient referrals still further and to help homeless people access the most appropriate services, more detailed information can be gathered about Level 1 data (eg about client groups and restrictions, referral procedures, and support provided). Additional information as outlined in Table 5.1 can also be collected.

5.3.3.3 Level 3 Data

A final category of data which goes beyond the direct scope of measuring homelessness or making referrals is background details about service providers that can be used to analyse service provision and help develop good practice. This sort of data is often the most difficult to research in terms response rates and willingness of providers to give details of such sensitive data. Whilst it is recommended to make as much information about services as widely available as possible, it is useful to distinguish between published and non-published details about services and it is not necessary for this sort of data about individual services to be made publicly available.

Table 5.1 Suggested data about services to be included in databases/directories

LEVEL 1 DATA	
Organisational details	
Name of organisation/service	Those organisations that have multiple services may need differentiating and separate entries.
Contact address and details (telephone, fax, email, website)	May be admin or head office address rather than service itself. Some addresses are confidential and some services are telephone only.
Referral address and details (telephone, fax, email).	If different from above. NB this data is required if details are to be made published for referral purposes
Geographical location of service	Town, city, municipality, region or other relevant geographical area.
Type of organisation	Specialist homeless or non-specialist service, and whether municipal, NGO, private etc.
Client details	
Target and client group	Including age, gender etc, and any restrictions.
Area served	Some services, especially hostels and day centres, may not restrict provision of services to a particular area. Different organisations may also serve a variety of different but overlapping areas (eg those based on geography, municipal boundaries or the remit of funding bodies).
Service details	
Purpose/intention of service	eg emergency, interim, transitional or specialist accommodation, day centre, outreach service etc based on classification of services used
Access criteria	eg directly in person or agency referral, appointment or drop-in etc.
Period of stay	Intended maximum length of stay for accommodation services.
Support provided	This may be a freetext description and/or may involve a system of codings to designate various support provided.
Opening hours/staff cover	Opening hours for non-residential services, staff cover for accommodation.
Style of accommodation	Eg numbers of dormitories, shared or single rooms, or flats.
Number of bedspaces	Total number
Resident access to accommodation	Eg curfews or if residents have to be out during the day.
Occupancy levels or usage	Average occupancy levels for accommodation services, number of services provided per week and/or numbers and types of client groups using services
LEVEL 2 DATA	
Further details about accommodation	eg frequency of vacancies, facilities (eg catering arrangements), house rules (eg access to the accommodation, whether visitors are allowed)
Cost or charges for services	May be complicated for accommodation services due to different funding regimes
Disabled access and access to interpreters	Access for people with disabilities and those with language needs
Transport to the service	Details of how to get to services with an office address by public transport
Staffing	Numbers of paid staff and volunteers
LEVEL 3 DATA	
Information for further analysis of service provision for homeless people	For example: ▪ funding sources and costs ▪ staffing details, training and qualifications ▪ quality and benchmarking of services ▪ outcomes

5.4 Research on Databases and Directories of Services

Databases or directories of homelessness services can vary widely in terms of purpose, audience, scope etc, ranging from databases of services set up solely for surveys of homelessness, to publicly available directories principally for referral purposes. It can, however, often be difficult to find out about the existence of such databases and directories. The Eurostat report (Brousse, 2004) gives some examples of directories of homelessness services, but apart from this, there has been relatively little information in one place about these various resources in different EU countries.

To gain information about databases/directories, a survey was carried out to gather details about existing examples of national, regional and local databases/directories of services for homeless people in the EU.

Earlier in this chapter, the various types of services for homeless people were examined. For this research, a broad definition of "homeless services" was used to include both data on services that specialise in serving homeless people, to those which may include services for homeless people as part of their overall service, to those that offer help to the general public or other specific client group (including those who are homeless). Some databases/directories are not specifically about homeless services at all but have a much broader coverage of services for many different client groups too.

5.4.1 Methodology

The following four main methods were used to gather information:

1 Desk research

By looking at FEANTSA reports and other written material, existing information was gathered about any examples of sources of data on homelessness services in EU countries.

2 FEANTSA members mailing

To reach a wide audience of homeless agencies across Europe, an initial request for information about databases and directories of homelessness services was also sent out by FEANTSA to about 120 member agencies. This asked for details of:

- Name of the directory or database (and publisher's contact details)
- Services covered and not covered by the directory
- Geographical area covered
- Date researched and/or published
- How disseminated, managed and updated
- For databases: main purpose, variables and method of aggregating/analysing data
- Plans for future development
- Sample copies, sample pages/records, or links to any online resources

Additional questions were also included about client record systems (see Chapter 5).

Whilst there was a poor response rate to this request for information (only 6 full replies were received relating to databases/directories), it did provide some useful information, including contacts for the more in-depth survey below.

3 Email/telephone survey

To provide more in-depth information and a current snapshot of the extent to which different EU countries have developed databases and directories of services, a questionnaire/ interview pro forma was drawn up. This included questions covering:

- Examples of databases/directories (national, regional or local) of services for homeless people (if none exist, reasons for this, including barriers and any future plans for producing new resources)
- Purpose and audience/users
- Format (databases, online and printed formats)
- Scope (eg geographical coverage, types of agencies included and level of detail)
- Usability and quality
- Methodologies for data collection and issues involved
- IT issues
- Updating data issues
- Access to data and distribution
- Resource requirements, costs and funding issues

See Appendix 5.1 for the full schedule of questions.

All EU countries apart from 5 were included in the survey, ensuring representation of different geographical locations within the EU (eg North/South), different sizes (geographical area and population), and length of EU membership. Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Slovakia were excluded on the grounds of small population, little homelessness and/or very few homelessness services existing. The survey was not sent to countries where country or position papers had been commissioned for this research project as the brief for these papers already included the need for data on databases/ directories of services.

A list of key contacts for each country was drawn up based on contacts with FEANTSA and the European Observatory (see list of contacts compiled in Appendix 5.2). The schedule of questions was then sent by email and information gathered by a mixture of written and/or telephone responses.

4 Country and position papers

Once papers from the 8 countries were received and responses about databases/directories reviewed, any necessary follow-up questions were submitted to writers of the country and position papers for further details or clarification. Summaries of the information about databases/directories were compiled from the information provided. Information for Ireland and UK was researched directly by Resource Information Service.

5.5 Findings

5.5.1 Overall findings

The survey found numerous examples of databases and directories of services for homeless people in different EU countries. Summary findings are given below and full findings for each country surveyed are given in Appendix 5.3.

The level of detail supplied in individual survey responses varied in relation to the extent to which resources were available in a particular country and individual respondents' level of direct knowledge of resources concerned. As respondents were often not directly involved in researching or compiling the databases/directories identified, it proved difficult to obtain much information about compilation methods, or IT and resources required. Time and resource constraints limited the amount of additional follow-up research that could be done. However, where possible, agreement was sought with survey respondents to be an initial contact and provide signposting to anyone seeking further details about databases/directories in that country in the future.

Nearly all countries surveyed had at least one example of a national, regional or local database/ directory and some countries had numerous examples. Most directories covered specific local or regional areas, but some countries had national databases/directories of services for homeless people. Several countries have national databases of particular types of services (usually hostels).

There was evidence of a growth in the development of databases/directories of homelessness services, as most were recent resources that had been published over the past 5 years. A few databases/ directories, however, have existed and been updated for a number of years (eg those in Denmark, France, Italy and the UK).

The national and sometimes regional context of countries appeared to play a role in determining the extent to which databases/directories exist. Relevant factors included:

- Size of country (population and geography)
- National/federal system of government
- Extent and nature of government responsibilities for homelessness policy and strategy
- Funding regimes
- Length of EU membership
- Extent of the problem of homelessness
- Extent of development of homelessness services by municipalities and NGOs
- Extent of co-ordination and co-operation within the homelessness sector at national, regional or local level.

5.5.2 Purpose

The survey found that there were databases/directories that had one or more of the following three main functions:

5.5.2.1 Surveys of homelessness

Various databases of homeless services have been devised for research or data collection exercises on homeless people and/or services. Some have also been published in online or printed format to be

publicly accessible. Some were created several years ago with national coverage like BAWO's survey in 1998 of homelessness and homeless services in Austria (also published in printed directory format but not updated since) or the INSEE database of services devised for the national survey of homelessness carried out in France in 2001.

Others are more recent, eg the research carried out in 2005 by the Institute for Social Security in Portugal or the first national survey of homelessness in Luxembourg in 2006. In Spain in 2004, the Ministry of Labour and Social affairs developed a database of services for a national survey of homeless services and homeless people.

As well as national databases, some have regional coverage like the database of NGO service providers that has been used and developed over the years for research in North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany.

5.5.2.2 Funding registers

There are a number of databases that have been established, often by national authorities, for registration purposes and/or administering funding to services. Provision of information about services (and sometimes clients) are often a condition of receipt of funding, although not all types of provision may receive funding and so may be excluded from being listed in the database. Examples include:

- In France, the FINESS database is maintained by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and it includes accommodation services that receive state funding.
- In the Czech Republic, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) gathers information from NGOs via their grant applications for funding.
- The NIFSP database contains information about registered providers of social services in Hungary.
- The Department for Communities and Local Government in the UK has a database of all housing related support services funded under the government's Supporting People programme.
- The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs in Slovenia maintains a short list of services and programmes that they fund.

Some databases like the Social Appeals Board register in Denmark cover a particular type of service - in this instance the database covers all the hostels that receive state funding.

5.5.2.3 Referral tools

Most databases or directories of services had been compiled for agencies/individuals to make referrals and access services. These have been published with national, regional/county or city coverage.

Despite the size of the task and the often large number of services involved, some substantial national databases have recently been developed and published online or on CD-ROM. For example, Homeless UK and the Supporting People Directory for England give details of thousands of hostels, supported accommodation and non-residential services for homeless people and others needing housing-related support. In Finland, the Stakes website of services for homeless and other groups of people is being added to over time. And in Poland in 2004/05, the Klon/Jawor Association established a national online database of NGOs (again, not just those that provide services for homeless people).

Two national databases that were published for referrals were also published for membership purposes by membership organisations: FIOpsd in Italy and FNARS in France.

Some databases/directories were published for regions:

- SAW's database of Centres for General Welfare in Belgium
- ORS printed and online format a database/directory for Ile-de-France
- The directory of homelessness services for North Yorkshire in England
- The directory of homelessness services for the Pomeranian Region in Poland.

The survey found that various databases had been developed for capital cities:

- Vienna's Fonds Soziales Wien is an online overview of services
- BRW has published a directory for Brussels
- The homelessness directory for Dublin which is also available online
- Hungary Dispetcher Service in Budapest
- Homeless London is an online database of homelessness services in London
- Paris has also a service directory

By covering the largest cities, usually with the greatest population and number of services for homeless people, such resources, particularly in smaller countries take a significant step towards national coverage of homelessness services, particularly if combined with databases/directories of services that may exist for other cities. Such directories of other cities included ones for the City of Gothenburg in Sweden and Milan in Italy. Evidence was also found of listings of services on municipality websites eg the basic listings of services on such websites in Estonia.

5.5.3 Publishers

Databases/directories were produced by 3 main types of agency at national, regional or local level:

- National or regional government
- Municipalities
- National and local NGOs, including membership organisations

The majority of databases/directories were published by NGOs, but sometimes on behalf of or with funding from national, regional or local government.

Table 5.2 summarises examples identified databases/directories by publisher for each E15 and E10 surveyed.

Table 5.2 Summary of examples of databases/directories by country and publisher

		PUBLISHER		
E15 COUNTRY	DATABASE / DIRECTORY	National or Regional Government	NGO, Research and/or Membership Organisation	Municipality
Austria	BAWO national directory		√	
	Fonds Soziales Wien online directory			√
Belgium	BRW directory for Brussels		√	
	SAW national database of Centres for General Welfare		√	
Denmark	Social Appeals Board national hostels database	√		
Finland	Stakes national database of helping agencies	√		
France	FINESS national database of social and health facilities	√		
	SOS Femmes national directory of help for women		√	
	FNARS national database		√	
	Ile-de-France region directory	√		
	Guide Solidarité Paris directory			√
Germany	BAGW's Wo und Wie national directory		√	
	North Rhine-Westphalia regional survey	√		
Greece	None			
Irish Republic	Dublin directory			√
	Cork directory			√
Italy	FIO.SPD national membership database		√	
	Milan directory		√	
Luxembourg	National homelessness survey	√		
Netherlands	Federatie Opvang national database		√	
	Trimbos Instituut national directory		√	
Portugal	IIS national survey	√		
Spain	Caritas Española national database		√	
	INE national survey	√		
Sweden	Stockholm database of housing units			√
	Gothenburg database of housing units			√
UK	Supporting People online directory for England	√		
	Homeless UK national online directory		√	
	North East Accommodation and Information Database		√	
	1-to-1 Sheffield online directory		√	
	Coventry City Council online directory			√
	RIS local, regional and national homelessness directories and online databases		√	
E10 COUNTRY				
Czech Republic	MOSLA national database of NGOs	√		
	SAD national database		√	
Estonia	Municipality online lists			√
Hungary	NIFSP national register of social services	√		
	NSPDC national database of social services	√		
	Shelter Foundation directory for Budapest		√	
Poland	Klon/Jawor Association national database of NGOs		√	
	PFWB directory for Pomeranian region		√	
Slovenia	Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs national list of funded services	√		

5.5.4 Users

The databases/directories identified in the survey often had a target audience of one or more of the following types of user:

- National and local government
- Researchers
- Policy makers and planners
- Agencies and advisors in contact with homeless people
- The public/homeless people themselves

Some databases (especially the ones for funding/research purposes) were devised for internal use only and were not publicly accessible.

5.5.5 Geographical coverage

Some countries had developed national databases/directories of services for homeless people (with varying degrees of comprehensiveness): Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Poland, Spain and the UK. Some other countries (eg Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Sweden) had national databases of particular types of services (such as hostels or NGOs generally). Most of the databases/directories had local or regional coverage of services – see *4.6.2* above for a summary of examples of those that have been developed for referrals purposes.

5.5.6 Coverage of services

As seen above, some databases/directories not only included services specifically for homeless people but also covered a much broader range of services such as NGOs in general (eg Klon/Jawor database in Poland or the FINESS database in France). The extent to which services for homeless people could be easily identified separately varied.

Overall, services included in databases/directories could be differentiated according to whether they were:

- specialist services specifically for homeless people
- agencies for the general public that include a specialist service to homeless people as part of their overall service (eg running targeted advice sessions)
- non-specialist services ie services provided by agencies to the general public (or other client groups) that homeless people may use too
- residential or non-residential services
- state-run, municipal/local authority services, NGOs or private companies.

Databases/directories varied in comprehensiveness. Whilst good coverage is important, inclusion of services usually appeared to be optional, apart from those funding-related databases where inclusion was a compulsory part of the funding/registration process. Some directories, particularly those established for referral purposes, also excluded those services which had narrow referral criteria and were not directly accessible by individuals/agencies (or that wanted tight control of their referrals and limited dissemination of information about their provision).

5.5.7 Level of detail

Whilst the detailed contents of some databases/directories were directly viewable during the course of this survey to allow an assessment of the different levels of detail available, it was not always possible to see all the specific fields of data researched. However, it was found that the amount of detailed data recorded about each service varied widely, ranging from name and address listings with basic information (eg the Ile-de-France directory), to detailed qualitative directory entries (eg Homeless UK). Common details were:

Name of service

Some databases/directories gave details for each and every service provided by organisations, whilst others only gave more general details of organisations that provided one or more services.

Address and contact details (telephone, fax, email and website)

Databases/directories usually gave contact details for all agencies, although sometimes some addresses were not included as they were confidential or telephone only services. Most addresses were given for referrals and many were specifically for where the service itself was located. Others were head office, administration or other office addresses. Some databases/directories also gave a named individual as a contact person.

Service provided

Some databases/directories (eg Ile-de-France) gave brief summary information in the form of grids or simple check boxes to indicate types of service/organisation. Others provided free text fields of very detailed information about services. The most usual details about service provided included:

- Target and client group (including any stipulations around age, gender etc). Level of detail varied from simple tick box or one word/line description to more qualitative information about client groups and restrictions.
- Geographical location and area served (but the latter was not always explicitly stipulated).
- For accommodation services: number of beds
- Type of organisation (specialist homeless/non-specialist, municipal, NGO etc). This was either explicit in an entry or implicit by grouping similar services together.

Capacity of services, particularly non-residential services (eg average number of clients seen per day/week) was rarely given.

In some databases/directories (eg the UK), more data was given to describe accommodation than non-residential services, the former often needing more detailed information in order to describe facilities, referrals procedures etc.

5.5.8 Format

Data sets were produced in a variety of formats:

- Offline databases

  Some were available for internal use only for research (eg the database developed for the Luxembourg survey of homelessness) or funding purposes. Others were available on CD-ROM (eg the Caritas and University of Comillas database in Spain).

- Online databases and lists on websites

  These included fully searchable online databases (such as Homeless UK, Poland's Klon/Jawor database or the City of Gothenburg internet-based directory). Some agencies published on their website a pdf version of a printed directory which provides full information but cannot be searched or displayed in any other way than the full document (eg La Città Dimenticata directory for Milan)

- Printed directories

  eg France's Guide Solidarité Paris or Germany's national Wo und Wie directory. Some directories took the form of more simple listings, leaflets and/or maps (eg Dublin's CentreCare map of key city centre services).

Some databases were published in both printed directory and online format (eg Homeless Agency's homeless directory for Dublin) for use by agencies and individuals. Resources can also be made available directly to homeless people themselves in touch screen street kiosks (eg Homeless London).

5.5.9 Methodologies for data collection

Whilst the survey did not provide detailed data about the various methodologies, it was clear that data about services for databases/directories was collected via a variety of means, from direct data collection from the services concerned to compulsory/funding driven information or via grant applications. The most common method of collecting data was by paper questionnaires (sent by post or email), and/or by telephone, sometimes by visits in person. Writing of entries and editorial control was therefore usually carried out by the directory compilers rather than agencies themselves. The Klon/Jawor Association's online database of NGOs in Poland and the UK Refuges Online system were the only examples of databases that were available online and had functionality that allowed services to enter/update their own details directly onto the system.

5.5.10 IT issues

The survey produced little detailed information about the IT issues involved when developing and maintaining the identified databases/directories. It transpired that gathering this type of information would best involve a separate exercise contacting those with IT knowledge who were directly involved in setting up systems. Instead, general IT issues and a draft minimum specification for developing databases/directories are examined later in this chapter.

5.5.11 Updating data and dissemination

Some databases/directories were updated annually with online systems allowing updated information to be added on an ongoing basis. Some resources were updated regularly as a result of funding arrangements. There was evidence, however, of a number of databases/directories that had been produced but not updated (eg BAWO's directory in Austria or BRW's directory for Brussels).

Online information and some printed directories were free of charge which can help promote access and usage. Others directories were charged for, often to contribute to costs of production/distribution.

5.5.12 Resource requirements, costs and funding issues

This data about databases/directories was the hardest of all to research in the survey, so costs are examined in more detail later in this chapter.

5.6 Procedure for creating and maintaining a database/directory of homeless services

The findings above show various good examples of local and regional databases/directories and some national datasets of homelessness services that have been established. From these examples, a flexible framework can be drawn up for national authorities to create and maintain a database/directory of services.

Firstly, though, it is useful to consider who is likely to be best placed to carry out such a project, especially if developing a national resource. It is possible for a public authority to carry out such a project directly. Certainly, establishing a national resource is likely to be severely hampered without the backing of government and non-governmental support at a national level, especially financial backing given the scale of such a project. However, national public authorities or statistical offices may not be in the best position to carry out the work directly themselves given the knowledge of the service provision sector and the IT and research skills involved. In some cases, research institutes, consultancies or NGOs may therefore be usefully commissioned to develop a database of services for homeless people.

The methodology below outlines 7 main stages/issues for implementation and compilation of a database/directory of services that can be used to gather data on homelessness.

5.6.1 Assess other databases/directories

As developing a comprehensive, quality national database/directory of homelessness services is a major undertaking, avoiding “re-inventing the wheel” is essential. It is useful to assess whether any other databases/directories and data models exist for homelessness services. If some data already exists, it may be possible to re-use or incorporate it into a new system, although there are various issues that may need to be addressed around the compatibility of different data models and data systems.

It can also be useful to consider devising a staged approach to developing a national resource, focusing first on developing resources for capital or other key cities where most homelessness services tend to exist. Once this is accomplished, a data model can then be used for expanding coverage of the database, but this needs to be planned in collaboration with other key agencies to minimise the likelihood of other less compatible systems being developed in the meantime.

To do this assessment, the following sorts of organisations should be contacted:

- National and regional government and funding bodies
- Any national NGOs that have membership and/or co-ordination functions (both homelessness NGOs, those working in related sectors, and agencies supporting NGOs generally)
- Research organisations that may have carried out work in the homelessness/social care sectors
- Regional and local municipalities
- Local NGOs and large providers of services in key cities conurbations/areas where homelessness is likely to be more prevalent
- Agencies/initial contacts from this research (see Appendix 5.2)

It can also be useful to search the Internet for agencies that may have produced databases/directories (useful search terms may include “directories”, “services”, “homeless people”, “hostels”, “day centres” and “advice”).

If information about the existence of such databases/directories is gathered as a result of assessing their availability and contents, it may be useful to maintain and make available a central list of any available databases/directories in each country as this information can help researchers and agencies (see for example the list of such resources in the UK on Homeless Pages http://www.homelesspages.org.uk/rescs/resources.asp?rtid=4).

The scope and quality of any current examples of databases/directories can then be assessed in terms of:

- Purpose and audience
- Geographical scope
- Classification of types of services
- Comprehensiveness in terms of relevant coverage (eg specialist and non-specialist, residential and non-residential etc)
- Level of relevant details about services and fields of data
- Quality of data and usability
- Method of research and frequency of updating
- Availability
- Whether data can be re-used if required

Especially if little currently exists in a particular country or area, it may be helpful to explore what resources exist in other similar or neighbouring countries. The survey results give such information and the survey contacts in Appendix 5.2 may be able to further signpost to appropriate agencies that can give details about how particular resources have been established and lessons learned. It is also possible to contact the NGO Resource Information Service (RIS) in the UK for initial advice and information (www.ris.org.uk). RIS specialises in developing databases, directories and websites of services for homeless people and others in need.

5.6.2 Requirements and specification

A list of project requirements can be drawn up to describe in overall terms what the project will be and a specification document developed to describe how the requirements will be implemented. In addition to covering the issues above (ie purpose, scope, coverage, data to be collected etc) and staffing needs (including project management, IT, research and administrative skills), project requirements should also address:

5.6.2.1 Methodology for data collection

This can be direct data collection by postal questionnaire or telephone surveys; emailed, faxed or online forms; or in some cases may include visits by researchers to gather data. An easy to complete questionnaire/interview schedule needs to be devised in collaboration with designing the data and field structure for the database.

Writing of entries and editorial control is usually carried out by the directory compilers rather than agencies themselves. However, the increased use of the Internet may permit in the future more scope for completion of forms by services directly into an online database. This method however, does require good internet access amongst service providers, additional set up costs and some data cleansing and editing of inputted material.

5.6.2.2 IT issues

The following need to be considered:

- Hardware and IT infrastructure

  To establish a database to be used internally within an organisation, it may be possible to use just one up-to-date computer, although it is likely that an agency setting up the database will have a computer network. This would enable the database to be used by more than one person in the agency at a time. In this case, general network and IT support would be needed to carry out tasks such as security measures, virus checking and backup routines.

  If the database is to be made available online, then additional infrastructure will be required such as a webserver, a fast secure internet connection, and additional firewall and other security measures.

- Software

  It is possible to use existing, commonly used database packages for a project of this nature. Rather than commissioning a bespoke database system, an existing package is likely to have the benefits of compatibility with other systems, reduced development and maintenance costs and ease of use. If the database were also to be made available online, then different software would probably need to be used for the database. In addition, programming software would also be needed for development of the web pages which could involve the use of free software.

- Staffing

  IT staff with good database skills would be needed for both project set up and ongoing support. Network administration skills may already be in place for other IT activities of an organisation setting up such a database.

- Database design

  This needs to address data structure, and tables and fields of data required. Database structure involves specifying one-to-one and one-to-many relationships between main tables and coding and other information tables. Fields may consist of free text, numerical data or calendar date. Some tables and fields will need to be devised for data directly about services whilst other tables and fields will need to set up for administration purposes (eg date record last updated, whether agency has returned update form or not). These will need to be designed in relation to the questionnaire and research process that compiles information about agencies.

- Data input

  The data will need to be input quickly and efficiently into the database and an easy-to-use input screen is particularly important for large datasets.

- Information retrieval and searching

  A specification will be required for how data that has been input into the database is retrieved. In addition to a free text search, other queries and searches need defining to allow specific subsets of data to be retrieved according to different fields of data and other criteria.

- Data output

  The database will need to be able to produce reports and printouts of one or more entries which can be selected and ordered according to various fields and criteria. It may be useful to produce a report format for update forms with present current details held for existing entries and giving service space to amend details as necessary on the forms.

- Other formats

  Finally, if the data is also to be published in other formats, then data feeds need to be created to either desk top publishing or a directory production system for page layout, indexing, and creation of other book contents. Similarly, a specification will need to be devised if the data is to be published online (including for example, searching, record display pages etc).

5.6.2.3 Updating data

Information about services goes out-of-date over time and it is vital to be sure that data is as up-to-date and accurate as possible. There are various examples of databases/directories that have been set up but not updated, wasting the significant time and resources involved in establishing the resource. Therefore plans for updating data need to be specified right at the start of the project and funding set aside accordingly.

To ensure the accuracy of the data about service providers, it is necessary to stipulate how it will be updated regularly and with sufficient frequency to take account of the changeable nature of service details. How the data is used, level of detail held and the susceptibility of services to change in particular areas will all affect the frequency of updating required. However, it is recommended that a dataset of services is updated at least bi-annually but preferably annually (especially if the data is also used for referral purposes). Updating existing entries also needs to be accompanied by pro-active coverage checking for any new services or any missing services not previously included.

In addition to regular updates of all data, it is desirable to consider being able to update and make available information on an ongoing basis too eg if in the interim a new service opens or an existing agency makes major changes to its service.

It is also necessary to take into account response rates for updating activities. Updating by phone can be more efficient in terms of response rate, but is more labour intensive and still takes time to contact busy staff at all agencies to ensure the 100% response rate required for comprehensive coverage. In practice, updating details can be a relatively simple administrative task, although some information/ research skills are still needed to ensure the overall quality of the data and review issues from time to time such as data structure, fields and coding requirements etc.

For analysis purposes, it is advisable to consider regularly saving separate copies of the database, probably on an annual database after all data has been updated. This will enable changes to the nature and extent of service provision to be tracked which is key to understanding the context of homeless-ness and indeed the measurement process itself. Trends in service provision and interpreting how this may affect numbers the figures for numbers of homeless people can then be better understood.

5.6.2.4 Access to the data and format

If the data on the database is to be made publicly available, then the format needs to be considered. There is often still a need for printed directories despite the increasing use of computer-held information and the Internet. Paper directories have certain advantages over online information (for example, pages of printed text are easier to read off-screen, printed directories are often easier to use with clients, access to good IT is not needed, and directories are more portable). Providing online access to the database, however, also has a number of advantages (eg quicker and easier searching, better access to larger datasets than in printed format, better access to updated data as details of services change, and links to further information and other resources). Some databases of services are made available in both printed and online format.

5.6.3 Resources, budget and funding

Based on the above, it is possible to estimate the human resource implications of adopting the recommended approaches to develop a database/directory from scratch. Table 4.10 shows estimates of costs based on a small, medium or large project involving researching 50, 500 or 2,500 services respectively. These estimates are divided into initial one-off set-up costs in year 1 and ongoing costs. Estimations are based on the following overall assumptions:

- Level 1 data collected
- Method of research and updating involves sending out questionnaires and update forms
- Annual update of data
- Trained, experienced IT and information/research staff work on the project

Once a database/directory has been established, ongoing costs will be significantly less than those in the first year of such a project as they will only involve costs for updating data and minimal database maintenance and support costs.

As shown in Table 5.3, to set up a small database and research details of 50 services, it would take an estimated 4-5 weeks work (24 days), and need up to about 2 weeks of staff time (7 days) annually to keep the data up to data and maintain the database.

For a medium sized database of 500 services, set up costs in terms of staff time would be about 4 months full time work (79 days), and about 5 weeks of staff time annually (27 days) to keep the data up to data and maintain the database.

For a large database of 2,500 services, set up costs would involve an estimated 56 weeks of staff time (282 days) – or, for example, 3 staff working full time for 4 months. Approximately 5 months of staff time (94 days) would be needed annually to keep the data up to data and maintain the database.

To develop a large national dataset involves economies of scale over developing smaller datasets as some of the set up costs are the same irrespective of the size of the dataset. However, a national dataset is likely to involve more substantial costs and a funding commitment which would require the backing of national government if not, central funding itself. Other sources of funding for databases/ directories may also include funding from municipalities, corporative sponsorship etc.

Table 5.3 Estimated costs of developing and maintaining a database/directory of services for homeless people

	SIZE OF DATABASE (no. of services)		
	SMALL (50)	MEDIUM (500)	LARGE (2,500)
One-off development items (year 1)	No. of staff days	No. of staff days	No. of staff days
Project specification and management	5	7	9
Database development:			
Fields, data structure and codings	4	6	8
Reports and queries	2	3	4
Data entry and input screens	1	2	3
Research process update forms	1	3	4
Research of services:			
Compile listing of agencies	2	8	15
Devise questionnaire/schedule	2	2	2
Entry writing and coding protocols	1	1	1
Gathering data (email/postal mailing, phone chasing)	2	15	60
Inputting details of services	4	35	180
TOTAL	24	79	282

Annual ongoing costs			
IT support	2	2	2
Update of service details:			
Update form design	1	1	1
Gathering data (email/postal mailing, phone chasing)	2	10	25
Inputting details of services	1	12	60
Coverage check for new services	0.5	1	3
Writing new entries	0.5	1	3
TOTAL	7	27	94

IT assumptions:

- Internally accessible database only
- Non-bespoke database software to be used
- IT infrastructure (computers, network) already in place
- General IT support (eg backups, updating software, security and virus checking) also in place

Research assumptions:

- Core data set and types of agencies to be included are broadly the same for each size of project
- Some data on addresses of existing services already exists
- 30 minutes to write and code a new entry, 10 minutes to update an existing entry
- Telephone, postage and other office costs not included

It is also possible to estimate costs of making the database available in printed and online formats for referral and other purposes. Table 5.4 shows the estimated costs of setting up and publishing online basic, searchable, versions of small, medium and large databases of services for homeless people. In summary, it is estimated that this would cost between 4-7 weeks of IT staff time (18-36 days) depending on the size of the database, with annual staff support costs of only about 2 days, and plus a few additional costs eg website hosting charges.

Table 5.4 Estimated costs of publishing online a database of services for homeless people

	SIZE OF DATABASE (no. of services)		
	SMALL (50)	MEDIUM (500)	LARGE (2,500)
One-off development items (year 1)	No. of staff days	No. of staff days	No. of staff days
Project specification and management	5	7	9
Data update routine	1	1	1
Search page	2	3	4
Results page	1	1	1
Entry page	1	1	1
Additional referral contact details and data cleansing for referral purposes	0.5	3	10
Help/info pages	1	1	1
Writing text for pages	2	2	2
Testing and bug fixing	2	3	4
Implementation of design	3	3	3
TOTAL	18.5	25	36
Annual ongoing costs			
IT support and management of site	2	2	2
TOTAL	2	2	2

Assumptions:

- Simple web page design (design costs not included)
- Simple search functionality (text, service, client group, geographical area)
- IT infrastructure already in place (including webserver, secure fast connection to Internet, additional security eg firewall)
- Website hosting costs not included

Table 5.5 shows the estimated costs of publishing small, medium and large databases of services for homeless people in a simple printed directory format. In summary, it is estimated that this would cost between 3-9 weeks work (13-44 days) in staff time, depending on the number of services to be included and plus a few additional costs eg printing costs.

Table 5.5 Estimated costs of publishing a printed directory version of a database of services for homeless people

	SIZE OF DATABASE (no. of services)		
	SMALL (50)	MEDIUM (500)	LARGE (2,500)
One-off development items (year 1)	No. of staff days	No. of staff days	No. of staff days
Specification and management	5	7	9
Additional referral contact details and data cleansing for referral purposes	0.5	3	10
Reports for page layout	2	2	2
Index set up	1	1.5	2
Editing, proofing	1	4	10
Introduction and cover text	2	2	2
Book production (indexing, chapters)	1	3	6
Production of pre-press optimised pdfs for printers	1	2	3
TOTAL	13.5	24.5	44
Repeat edition costs			
Editing, proofing	1	3	8
Introduction and cover text	1	1	1
Book production (indexing, chapters)	1	2	4
Production of pre-press optimised pdfs for printers	1	2	3
TOTAL	4	8	16

Assumptions:

- Basic page layout and design
- Chapters and indexing carried out automatically using codings
- Book production and pdf software already installed
- Printing costs not included - dependent on size of directory and print run
- Distribution and marketing costs not included
- Income from directory sales can contribute significantly to costs

Making the database available in printed directory or online format can produce sales/subscription income for the project. This can be a cost effective way of making the data available for referrals and other purposes. If a charge is made for a directory version, then sales income can cover most costs of book production, printing and distribution. Once the first edition of a printed directory has been published, then producing updated editions is a less time-consuming task in subsequent years as the structure, entries and other information in the directory already exist and only need to be modified rather than devised and written from scratch. Research and book production costs of a second edition may be around 15-20% less than for a first edition.

Publishing the data online does not necessary involve setting up an entirely new website with its own URL, hosting charges etc. A more cost effective way is to make the information available as a feature

on another existing website. It would then be necessary to consider whether any additional functionality (eg feedback, background information, uploaded documents etc) is required in addition to basic search and display functionality.

5.6.4 Project initiation and timetable

Once the requirements and specification have been drawn up and funding secured, a timetable for the project needs to outline key tasks and milestones. The project can then go ahead and follow the stages below, some of which can run concurrently:

- Design data structure
- Specify codings and fields in terms of length and whether free text or not
- Research and build database of contacts for researching services and for inputting service details
- Devise research tools (eg questionnaires, telephone interview schedules)
- Carry out research (eg mailings of questionnaires) and chase non-respondents
- Write and edit entries about services

If the database is also to be made available in printed directory or online format, then the following main additional tasks also need to be carried out:

- Build and test website
- Build book production database or use desk top publishing to create a printed directory
- Decide price if data to be sold and made publicly available
- Send directory to printers
- Launch directory and/or website
- Marketing and distribution

Depending on the scale of the project, format and staffing available, it would usually take a minimum of 3 months to develop a database and collate and input data about services. If the data is to be made available in printed format, then about another 2 months (making a total of 5 months) would be required for developing book production systems, book production itself and printing. If the data is to be made available online, a total timescale of around 6-8 months would be required to design, build and test a basic but searchable online database of services.

5.6.5 Utilisation/dissemination

Once the database has been built, information about services researched and entries written, the data can be utilised for gathering data about clients or carrying out surveys. It is also possible to provide useful information about overall numbers of homeless people using services by directly analysing the database of services. Working out point in time average numbers of homeless people using services can be done by relating total number of bedspaces and occupancy levels for hostels (taking into account seasonal variations) and overall numbers of services provided/clients seen per week can give useful point in time estimates of total numbers of homeless people using non-residential services.

If the database is to be made publicly available in printed or online format, these resources will need to be marketed and distributed.

5.6.6 Updating data

Updating the database is vital and should be done as per the methods and frequency outlined in the specification. This will involve updating existing details of services and coverage checking for any missing or new agencies for the dataset. Updating will both need to be done to take account of ongoing changes to data, but also a regular update of the entire data set should be carried out, ideally on an annual or at least bi-annual basis.

5.6.7 Evaluation

It is useful to review or evaluate from time to time the coverage and data collected about services. This is especially important if the database/directory is to be made publicly available and used for referral purposes. Regular evaluations with users can help ensure that the resource meets its purpose and gain feedback that can be used to make improvements to the data. Evaluations can assess coverage of services and can be useful in identifying any gaps or missing services, as well providing valuable information about extent of usage, how helpful and effective the database/directory is in helping homelessness services and homeless people themselves.

5.7 Conclusion

Establishing databases of homelessness services can form a fundamental part of the methodology for gathering data about homeless people for the measurement of homelessness. A variety of databases/ directories of homeless services currently exist in different EU countries and these demonstrate the feasibility of setting up such resources. They have been established for different purposes: some have been developed specifically for carrying out surveys of homelessness, whilst others are registers of funded or member organisations, referral directories, or databases of services that are part of client recording systems. This chapter has shown some of the clear benefits and multiple uses of databases of services for homeless people. In most countries, these datasets already go some way towards providing details of many organisations who can become data providers. It is of considerable benefit to use, where possible, any existing sources of data and taking a staged approach (ie prioritising developing databases for capital and other major cities and conurbations) towards developing national datasets which require more significant resources.

This chapter has also outlined a procedure for national authorities to create a database of services for homeless people. Whilst national public authorities will be required to at least back, if not contribute significant funding to, the development of a national resource, they may not wish to carry out the task directly themselves. Instead, they may wish to commission an agency (whether a research institute/ consultancy, NGO or similar organisation) that has the necessary direct knowledge of homelessness provision, and required IT and research skills.

A key element of the procedure includes specifying the types of services to be covered as outlined in Chapter 4. It is possible to focus initially on establishing a database of key data providers such as services for people sleeping rough and accommodation services (night shelters, emergency accommodation and short term hostels) for homeless people and women escaping domestic violence.

A core set of data to be researched about services has been proposed. Gathering such details for research and sampling purposes enables efficient contact with agencies, and an assessment of relevant target groups served, services provided and scope for providing data about clients to help

measure homelessness. Good quality data is vital and it needs to be comprehensive. It is also vital that data is updated regularly to ensure its usefulness and maximise its practical benefit.

Estimating costs of establishing different sized databases of services for homeless people shows the relative affordability and cost effectiveness of doing this. These guidelines outline the processes and stages involved and show that particularly after initial set up costs, it is possible to maintain a database with relatively minimal costs given the benefits of being able to measure homelessness. Such a database can be even more cost effective if it is made available for referral and other purposes to benefit service providers and homeless people themselves. Following these guidelines can help the successful establishment of a database of services for homeless people that will then underpin gathering standard variables of data from surveys and the client registers of service providers.

Chapter 6

Client register and recording data systems

6.1 Introduction

Service providers hold information on their clients or service users in client recording systems or databases. These systems have been developed over time for different purposes and using different computer technology. Some client registers have been developed from existing paper based systems while others have been developed as computer based databases. These factors have influenced the approach to the development of the registers, the information they hold and the database technology used to drive them.

In focusing on these systems we do not fully follow the recommendations of the INSEE/EUROSTAT report which were focussing predominantly on survey methods. One of the problems of such methods is, that they can turn out rather expensive and cannot be applied continuously as the examples from surveys carried through by INSEE (France) and INE (Spain) have shown. On the other hand the recent trends in developing client register and recording data systems is rapid and they are becoming increasingly prevalent in recent years. This trend will continue and will provide the most fruitful way of collecting data from service providers in the future.

The main purpose of this chapter is to identify methodologies by which national authorities can undertake the collection of aggregate data from these client register databases. In order to identify these methodologies the chapter reviews examples of existing client register systems to identify the approaches adopted to their development and the management, staffing and funding issues associated with their maintenance. Appropriate methodologies are proposed for national authorities to aggregate or collate data from the registers held by such organisations, including an examination of the management, IT and resource issues. The data items that can be collected from client register systems are considered in Chapter 7.

The chapter is based on the information provided in the six detailed country papers. This is supplemented by information derived from direct interview with agencies with experience in developing client record systems and from the authors' own experience in developing and managing similar databases. This supplementary information is drawn from agencies operating in Belgium, Ireland and the UK.

This chapter is primarily concerned with the management issues involved in national authorities collating data from client register systems. However, issues of data quality are important aspects that affect the reliability and confidence that users can have in the data. Hence issues of quality assurance and the specification of minimum standards for software and database technology are important considerations that require more detailed consideration. This is increasingly important as database technology moves to web based interchange formats.

6.2 Service Providers and Data Collection

NGO service providers for the homeless are organised in different ways on the regional and national level and this has – at least in some countries - an important impact on the availability of harmonised

client register systems. For national organisations with local branches it might be much easier to standardize the details and methods of client registration than for organisations on the regional and national level which are based on membership of relatively or completely independent local entities or which function as an umbrella organisation. For example all Salvation Army services in the Netherlands use the *Clever* system for registering client data (see below) and very similar systems are also in use of Salvation Army services in some other European countries. Another example is the *AIS* clients register system of the Red Cross in Spain, although this system covers a whole range of client groups and still is in the process of implementation. On the other hand Caritas and Diaconia services in several countries have not (or not yet) introduced their own system, but often leave it to their local member organisations, to decide which kind of client register system is preferred and implemented.

Although it would appear more difficult for umbrella organisations with independent members to achieve a consensus on a harmonised approach to data collection there are examples showing that this can be achieved successfully. *Federatie Opvang* in the Netherlands is such an example. *AG STADO* in Germany which was initiated by the umbrella organisation *BAG W* aiming at a harmonisation of variables used in different commercial software-systems is another example. However, the German example also shows that it is rather difficult to get a more comprehensive coverage of data of all services when data collection on the national level is organised on a purely voluntary basis. But the example of a pilot project in North Rhine-Westphalia (the German regional state with the highest population number, 18.1 million) shows that if an obligation of regular data reporting is introduced (by funding authorities) this is much easier to implement on the basis of already harmonised variables that are relatively easy to extract from different software systems in use. A further example of introduction of a harmonised system of client data registration initiated by a regional association of NGO service providers is the *Tellus* – system developed by *Steuntpunt Algemeen Welszijnswerk* (the association of Centres for General Welfare in Flanders and Dutch speaking Brussels). All these examples will be presented in detail in the next section of this chapter.

Client data is collected for different purposes. It depends on the individual systems if their main focus is on facilitating social work with clients and referrals to other services, if they aim primarily to document the process of support and service provision, of if they primarily are constructed to provide information for funding authorities, the public and (sometimes) scientific research. Some – but not all - of the systems are constructed to serve all purposes at the same time. In some cases the requirements by funding authorities have been the driving force for implementing standardized client registration systems. An example is the register system of users of services funded under the Supporting People programme in England. Here the registration system is directly financed by the state and carried out by a research institute (for further details see below).

In the following sections a number of client register systems are described in greater detail before we analyse some of the common features of these systems, such as management and funding, technical details and quality of the data, data extraction and data protection.

6.3 Client Registration Systems

The client registration systems presented below are almost all systems of NGO service providers. It should not be forgotten in this context that, in several countries, public agencies do also collect data using electronic record systems from services or local authorities (e.g. in Scotland, France or in Denmark). Examples are provided in chapter 2.

The following information is mainly taken from solicited country papers, but also from other literature, interviews and personal knowledge of authors writing this report.

6.3.1 Regas and Clever client record systems in the Netherlands

Background

Under the Social Welfare Act (1994) in the Netherlands, local authorities that receive central government allocations earmarked for homeless services and women's refuge services must ensure that the agencies funded with that money keep records of the services they render and furnish that data to the appropriate authorities. A statutory registration scheme introduced in 2005 has formalised the submission of this data.

The two nationally used sources in the Netherlands are the client record systems Regas (from the Dutch Federation of Shelters, *Federatie Opvang*) and Clever (from the Salvation Army, which is also affiliated with the Federation of Shelters).

Regas was originally developed by *H&B Informatie Systemen* in The Hague for social work and victim support. On the initiative of the Federation of Shelters, Regas was converted for use by homeless and women's refuge services. It succeeded a system called Klimop (introduced in the mid-1990s) and avoids duplication by using a unique identifier for every person registered in the system. Regas is now used in the homeless sector as well as the women's refuge and social work sectors. To ensure that Regas would be as responsive as possible to the needs and demands of service providers, pilot consultations were conducted in 2002. Regas distinguishes between management documents (data on particular agencies) and service provision documents (data on particular clients).

Clever *(Cliënt en Verrichtingen,* or 'client and services') was developed by *Ordina* in Nieuwegein, commissioned by the Salvation Army. It is used by all Salvation Army centres (including those outside the shelter sector, such as youth services and probation and aftercare) and several services outside the Salvation Army. Individually registered clients can be aggregated in terms of local chapters or of fields of activity, including the homeless and women's services. Clever was introduced in 2001 as a client monitoring system to record client data, service pathways, client indicators and other relevant data for each client. The capacity of the Salvation Army services makes up almost one quarter of the total capacity of facilities affiliated with the Federation of Shelters.

In 2006 there were 50 agencies in the Netherlands working with Regas and 25 working with Clever.

What the systems do

Both Regas and Clever are systems designed to keep track of contacts with clients. Both systems record as clients all people who apply to the agencies, including any accompanying children and partners, and also including any people that are immediately referred on.

The client record systems have several different aims:

- Administrative aims: numbers of clients accepted, nature of services delivered, duration of the services and discharge data.
- Financial accounting to funders (local authorities and care administration offices)
- Internal quality assurance in relation to working procedures
- Monitoring the progress of working procedures within an agency or facility (recording client development in terms of indicators such as agreed behaviour, achieved aims and progression to other services)

- Supplying indicators needed for national and local government policy (e.g. national urban policy, national public mental health plan for the four largest Dutch cities, national registration scheme for homeless and women's refuge services)
- Research and monitoring.

Data collection

Client data are collected by the staff members of the agencies. Most data is entered directly via input screens. Sometimes it is first recorded on written forms and then entered into the computer at a central input section within the agency.

Regas encrypts the data in order to keep records of unique persons. A unique code is created using each client's surname, initial, gender and date of birth. The encryption is based on the trusted third party (TTP) principle and yields a nationally unique number. The client data are anonymised during the scrambling and encryption process using a special algorithm that assigns the client a non-traceable unique key. This enables de-duplication of the data at the national level while safeguarding clients' privacy. The data document itself is then encrypted and protected with a password to prevent access by unauthorised parties.

Clever does not use encryption. Duplicate entries are checked by searching on the first three letters of the surname, gender and birth date. Double counting cannot be ruled out in Clever.

Use of the data

Both Regas and Clever are able to produce the following standard reports:

- List of clients currently being served
- Lists of new clients and departing clients
- Room and bed occupancy
- Occupancy rate for a particular period
- Transfers and referrals of clients between service providers
- Caseloads, numbers of clients per staff member per week
- Verification of departure based on maximum days of stay
- New client applications, including the type of referring party and/or the last place of abode, if applicable
- Number of problem assessments in relation to the number of applications
- Number of offers of services in relation to the number of problem assessments
- Clients categorised according to gender, age or nationality
- Services rendered
- Activities per client

According to a recent survey among service providers users of Clever are particularly likely to draw up standard reports; users of the Regas system make less use of those possibilities.

In future the data of both client record systems will be exported to a nationwide database. The creation of a national database was still in pilot stage in 2006. Steps have been taken to increase the compatibility of both systems and to develop the data logistics that will enable service providers to supply their data to the national database.

Data protection

Regas uses its anonymisation module and has been approved by the Dutch Data Protection Authority (CBP) for the collection of the client data. Clever plans to use special software in future to ensure that data are sufficiently protected when provided for national analysis.

IT, data inputting and quality

Staff members have been trained to use the client record systems, and detailed manuals are available for both Regas and Clever. Training is an ongoing process, and both the Federation of Shelters and the head office of the Salvation Army provide regular courses for the users. The software suppliers offer courses for application managers and system managers working in the agencies. In particular, the export of the agency data to the national database requires specific knowledge.

National-level data collection for Regas and Clever is performed by data managers at the respective headquarters of the organisations (Federation of Shelters and Salvation Army).

The service providers have framework contracts with the software suppliers and can consult their technical helpdesks. The Federation of Shelters operates its own task-specific helpdesk to facilitate and support the agencies in non-technical issues. It also provides technical and task-specific support on site via a 'prepaid card' system. Agencies have formed Regas users' groups that meet regularly and inform one another about the progress and difficulties of implementing and working with the record system. An online information exchange forum is also active. Many smaller agencies do not have trained ICT workers on their staffs; larger agencies employ data managers and ICT experts.

Special software has been developed by the Dutch firm Co-maker to feed the data from the agencies to the central database. This decentralised application verifies all the transferred data to ensure that it is complete and valid. The application is not part of Regas. The agencies supply data quarterly via fast internet connections.

Before each dataset is sent on to Federatie Opvang's nationwide database, the Co-maker software processes and screens it as follows:

- Verification of codings, e.g. correct genders
- Verification that all required fields have been completed, e.g. agency numbers
- Verification of referential integrity, e.g. ensuring that a client's initial date of registration is not before their date of birth, or that a service is not recorded as having been provided to a client who is not defined in the dataset
- Conversion of each client's data into a unique, anonymous code to safeguard privacy
- Encryption of the data to make it unreadable to unauthorised parties
- Production of an output document that can be processed into the nationwide database.

All identified errors are recorded in a log file to enable the agency to correct them and re-enter the corrected dataset into the export module. The local datasets are subjected to similar verification procedures as they are read into the nationwide database. The local verification procedures will minimise the chances of input errors in the national database. Some errors are conceivable if agencies send client data that fall outside the registration time frame of the national database.

6.3.2 Dublin Link Client Recording System in Ireland

Background

The Homeless Agency Dublin Link system is a web-based, inter-agency, continuous client recording system for the homelessness sector in Dublin, Ireland. In operation since 2001, the overall aim of Dublin Link is to help organisations deliver a more effective service to people in need. It enables organisations to input and monitor client details, work done with clients and key outcomes achieved, and to track clients between services.

Over 50 different services across Dublin use the Link system. Most of the emergency hostels use Link, as well as some transitional housing and long term supported housing projects. Some key advice, outreach and other non-residential services also use Link. Over the past 5 years, staff in these services has added details of more than 5,300 single homeless clients to the system.

The Homeless Agency was established to tackle homelessness as part of the Irish Government's strategy on homelessness. It is responsible for the management, coordination and improvement of services to people who are homeless in the capital. In response to a government report in 2000 that focused on the need to develop a more coherent and integrated delivery of services to homeless people, the Homeless Agency has published two 3-year action plans to tackle homelessness in Dublin. Based on the development of an integrated homelessness strategy for the capital, one of the major action points was to develop a system to keep track of clients using services and record interventions. As a result Homeless Agency established the Link system.

The Homeless Agency commissioned the Link system from Resource Information Service (RIS), a NGO in the UK who have developed versions for many different agencies.

A 2002 evaluation of the Dublin Link system showed that there was strong support, among both managers and project workers, for the guiding principles of the LINK system, particularly with regard to sharing information and generally avoiding duplication among agencies. Over two thirds of respondents thought LINK has the potential to improve homelessness services in Dublin.

The Homeless Agency have also been working with some organisations within Dublin who have developed their own in-house client recording system. Client data is now imported to Link from these systems. User Interface improvements and new features are currently being developed on Link.

What the system does

Link is an adaptable system that can be customised over time to meet organisations' client and management information needs. It provides instant real-time information on clients (and actions and outcomes). It helps agencies provide a better, more targeted service to clients by sharing information across projects and between organisations. It has reporting and data download capabilities that can produce statistics on the numbers and characteristics of homeless people.

Data collection

The Homeless Agency, with the assistance of the Link users, has just undergone a review of the data that Link collects. This has involved a streamlining of the existing Link client variables and action lists that are used to capture data. This will enable the Link to provide concise statistics to both the Homeless Agency and Homeless Service Providers in the future.

Use of the data

Homeless Agency uses Link to provide information on overall numbers of homeless people in Dublin at its meetings with the sector. The streamlining exercise mentioned above will also enable more use of statistics in the future. The system is also, of course, used by individual agencies in their daily work with clients.

Data protection

Link complies with Irish data protection and freedom of information legislation. It uses high levels of security similar to those used by online banks and financial services. Clients are asked to give verbal and written consent to information being collected and stored on the system. Clients' names are entered on the system and a unique identification number is automatically given when a new client record is entered.

It is possible to set up Link so that no names of individual clients need to be entered and the system gives each client a code to keep their details anonymous on the system. For example, Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation uses a version of Link for their work with this feature to record their work with women who are escaping domestic violence.

IT, data inputting and quality

As Link is an online system available over the Internet, users do not need any special software, just a good Internet connection. Link is easy to use (just basic keyboard skills are required) and the Homeless Agency provides initial training to ensure that staff can use the system well.

As Link in Dublin is an inter-agency system, data is automatically shared and aggregated across different services. Use of Link by agencies is made compulsory as part of their funding and service level agreements. Resources are needed to check for consistency and quality of data inputted and to remove the inevitable duplication of some client records. The way the Link system is set up helps with the accuracy of some data (e.g. by making some fields compulsory).

Costs

The Link software that Homeless Agency commissioned is based on a core system, which can to a certain extent be customised to meet the needs of individual organisations.

The costs can be broken down into 3 main elements:

1. Initial system development design and programming

The initial costs of developing the Link client recording system on which the Dublin Link system was based are estimated at having taken about 2 person years of development time. These staff needed IT, management and information skills. Work involved drawing up requirements and consultancy with prospective users, specification, system build and programming, testing, and training users of the first system.

For new Link systems, customers receive the benefits and ongoing developments of this core system by payment of a one-off licence fee of between € 6,000 and € 16,000, depending on the size of system.

2. Customisation costs

Once the initial system was developed, Homeless Agency (and other organisations) were able to commission a customised version of the main system. This involved one-off development costs for system build and implementation (over a period of around 6 months). Approximate costs in person days were as follows:

- IT development (80 days)
  This included producing specification and consultancy on legal issues, system build, devising client and action variables with users, pilot project and testing.
- Data requirements and working with users (50 days - ie 2 days a week for 6 months)
  This included promoting the system to prospective users and training and support, and coordinating training and roll out to projects.

Since 2001, the Link software has evolved and developed, and new customers typically require significantly less new development, averaging about 10 person days.

3. Ongoing annual running and support costs.

Once the system is set up, there are annual costs to keep the system in Dublin running. These cover:

- IT support and hosting (12 days per year plus charge for hosting the site)
- Ongoing management of system and data (part time)
  This includes user support, liaison with developers, administration of the system and drawing out statistics. Staff time for this is difficult to estimate as it varies over time but it involves a part time post

There may be additional IT development costs depending on any new developments required to the system.

6.3.3 United Kingdom: Link, CHAIN and Supported People Client Record System

Link

The main elements of the Link system were described in detail above under the Dublin Link system.

Link is currently used by hundreds of services provided by 75 homelessness organisations in the UK and Dublin. In total, the Link systems have details of over 50,000 clients. Some versions of Link are used by multiple agencies - eg Dublin, and CHAIN (see below) and the OSW[35] systems in London - whilst others are used by individual agencies just for their own clients.[36]

CHAIN in London

The Department for Communities and Local Government in England funds a version of Link called CHAIN. 133 services in London provided by 42 different agencies use CHAIN to record the numbers,

[35] OSW stands for "Off the Streets and into Work", a London-based charity aiming to help homeless people move towards employability and inclusion in the labour market.

[36] For more information about Link contact: Jane Finucane or Thomas Mucha, Resource Information Service, Bramah House, 65-71 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3XF, England, Tel: + 44 20 7939 0651; E-mail: jane.finucane@ris.org.uk. More information and an online-demonstration is also available at http://www.ris.org.uk/index.asp?sid=52&mid=5 and http://www.ris.org.uk/downloads/linkflyer.pdf

details and all the work done with all rough sleepers and the wider street population (ie drinkers, drug users, sex workers and vulnerable people due to old age or disability). In mid-2006 CHAIN had details of around 14,300 single clients. The system is jointly run by Broadway www.broadwaylondon.org (data management) and Resource Information Service (hosting and technical development). In terms of a comparison of CHAIN and Dublin Link (see above):

- CHAIN is central government funded and all relevant agencies have always had to use the system as a requirement for funding
- CHAIN is just used for rough sleepers and the wider street population (not homeless people in general)
- CHAIN is bigger in terms of number of services using the system and numbers of clients, and consequently receives more funding and has higher levels of staffing to run the system.

Common Monitoring System (Scotland)

The CMS database in Scotland is a development of the RSI (Rough Sleeping Initiative) database, commissioned by the Scottish Executive in 2000. Its original purpose was to monitor the prevalence of, and reasons for, rough sleeping in Scotland throughout the duration of the initiative. The database is currently installed in around 65 RSI funded projects in Scotland. In addition, a number of Local Authorities have installed tailored versions of the system in operation. The database is written in Microsoft Access, and has a 'front end - back end' configuration making it suitable for use over local area networks (LANs). Since its inception, the database has undergone radical changes with a view to improving 'user friendliness' and functionality, and it is now viewed as a tool which can be used over the whole area of homelessness. Specifically, an 'outcomes' module has been developed to monitor attainment under 9 headings including accommodation, training/employment and health issues. The system provides information at the project level, the local authority level and the national level. Regular reports are available from the web-site (http://www.ghn.org.uk/stats.html).

Supporting People Client Record System (England)

Background

The Supporting People Programme was launched on 1 April 2003 and the Client Record system began at the same time to monitor new clients in England who start to receive funding through this Programme.

The Client Record system was developed for the Department for Communities and Local Government, DCLG, (formerly the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) to record standard information about clients starting to receive services through the Supporting People Programme in England. The data collection, processing and preliminary statistical analysis is carried out by the Client Record Office at the Centre for Housing Research (CHR) based at the University of St Andrews.

Data gathered through the Client Record Form provide information about access to Supporting People services in England. The data is processed by the Client Record Office and passed on to the relevant funding Authority (of which there are 150 in England) and the DCLG. The DCLG uses the data to report nationally on access to Supporting People services including homeless services (e.g. direct access hostels, foyers, supported housing, re-settlement transitional housing).

A form is completed by the service provider for each new client who starts to receive a Supporting People funded service (see copy in *Appendix 6.1)*. There are over 30,000 services that receive funding through the Supporting People Programme and there are approximately 200,000 new clients recorded through the Client Record system each year (over half presenting as homeless).

Data collection

Information can be submitted on paper, or electronically through the following methods: by exporting data from providers' own in-house information systems, using free software supplied on CD or using a web entry system.

Submission of data is a condition of the funding award and the systems developed for data entry are available free to service providers. These have been developed by CHR as an integral part of the Supporting People Programme.

What the system does

The Client Record system provides quarterly tabular summary reports and datasets to each of the 150 funding Authorities and the DCLG. A short key findings document is produced each quarter and an annual report. Similarly at a provider level there are features included in the software on CD and the web entry system to allow the generation of summary reports and extraction of data for providers' own use.

All of the reports created by CHR are distributed directly to contacts at these establishments but are also available from the website at www.spclientrecord.org.uk.

Use of data

This information is used to monitor fair access to Supporting People services for those who are eligible, and to examine whether the range of support needs in their local area is being met. It is also used by Administering Authorities working together to coordinate services regionally.

Data Protection

The Client Record Form does not identify individual clients through the use of name or date of birth. Instead a code is used by the service provider submitting the form. Since April 2006, the National Insurance Number has been added to the form, following permission for its use from the Department of Works and Pensions. This will not be linked to any system that will allow identification of who individual clients are. Rather it will be used at an anonymous level to highlight patterns of movement between services.

IT, data inputting and quality

The web entry system requires only an internet connection. The free software available on CD is an MS Access application and comes with its own runtime version of MS Access, so all that is required is a way of sending the data by attaching the exported text file to an email or copying onto a disk/CD and posting it.

Validation modules are built into both of these data entry options. When information is received by the Client Record Office, it is imported or entered onto the system and additional cross-checks are built to

ensure further validation of the data submitted. Any missing information or discrepancies are queried by staff at the Client Record Office by contacting the relevant submitter to resolve this.

Costs

There are no costs to service providers who submit electronically. Those who submit on paper are expected to bear the cost of postage.

Those who receive data from the Supporting People Client Record Office do so as part of the contractual agreement, so there are no additional costs.

The collection of data is undertaken by service providers under their service level agreement contract so it is not possible to disaggregate those costs. The analysis is undertaken by a team at the SP client office at the University of St Andrews where 11 staff are employed (see table 6.2).[37]

6.3.4 Germany

Background

In 1999 the National Association of Service Providers for the Homeless in Germany (*Bundesarbeits-gemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe*, BAG W) set up a national alliance for statistics and service documentation for homeless people and offenders, called AG STADO 72 (72 stands for the relevant section of the Act on Social Assistance at that time. Since 1.1.2005 the legal basis has changed and AG STADO 72 was recently renamed into AG STADO). All national welfare agencies, BAG W and the national association of service providers for offenders are members of AG STADO.

Its aim was to develop a documentation instrument that could be used to record the need for support, the progress of support provision and the results of the support for homeless people and offenders and thereby enable national homelessness statistics on the profile of those target groups to be compiled in the long term. The aim of this was to improve the planning and guidance of support to the homeless and enable the development of more in-depth research questions.

As service providers in Germany work with different software systems from different commercial software developers it was not the aim to develop a national software, but to find an agreement on a basic set of variables and of documentation standards which should be followed by all service providers working in the field and which should also be part of the software systems offered to them. The participating institutions have the freedom to choose which software they work with, and a technical interface in ASCII format was developed to facilitate the extraction of aggregate data. Furthermore, AG STADO awards a quality test seal for two years at a time when the software test procedure is passed. In 2006 six products from different software companies had the AG STADO test seal, according to BAG W. Furthermore a single institution has input the basic data set into its own software

The documentation instrument developed by AG STADO (hereafter referred to as the basic data set) refers to homeless *people* who are receiving support in the welfare system under sections 67ff. of the Law for Social Assistance (*SGB II*). Service providers in this field are almost exclusively non governmental organisations. The documentation instrument consists of a data set, made up of 29

[37] For more information about the Client Record system in England, contact: Sheena Macdonald, CHR – SP Client Record Office, The Observatory, University of St Andrews, Buchanan Gardens, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9LZ, UK. Tel: +44-(0)1334 461765, E-mail: sphelp@st-andrews.ac.uk, Website: www.spclientrecord.org.uk

variables, a specialist data set for help to the homeless (17 additional variables) and a specialist data set for the care and resettlement of offenders (9 additional variables). Thus, a total of 55 variables were developed, of which 18 are marked as the core data set. This can function as a basic standard for financing agencies. [38] The basic data set enables flow statistics since data for many variables are requested at the start and end of the period of help. AG STADO has developed a manual to provide better orientation for the participating institutions, which includes a definition of the variables with their variants.

What the system does

The implementation of a basic dataset has created the basis for a national analysis of aggregate data from different software systems. Client data are collected individually by the different services. Systems which are approved by the test seal can provide an aggregate data set of all clients who are receiving support at any point of the year or of those who have received support during the year for analysis on the national level.

There is no unique identifier so that double counting of the same clients in different services is not excluded. If a client does not appear in the same software system after 60 days he or she should automatically be defined as not receiving support from this service any more. If he or she reappears then the case is taken up as a repeat case, so that the same people are not counted twice in the same services.

Data collection

Data are collected by staff of the different services at the start of service provision and at the end. Continuous up-dating of important process data is possible with most software systems, but the basic data set only refers to variables reporting the situation at the beginning and the end of support provision.

AG STADO has developed an aggregation tool that can be made available to the software companies or interested institutions. Using funds provided by the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, the central associations of private welfare service providers and the *Förderverein der Wohnungslosenhilfe e. V*.[39] conducted a project between 2001 and 2003 that enables client-related data of homeless people with special social difficulties to be aggregated at a national level with the intention of forming the basis for annual statistical reports of BAG W. The national aggregation is conducted on behalf of AG STADO by the GSDA (*Gesellschaft für Standard-Dokumentation und Auswertung*[40]).

Use of the data

The data of the individual services are used for different purposes, for annual reports, for reports to funding authorities and – dependent on the software in use – for structuring and accompanying the support process.

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[38] We are referring at this point to the basic data set which is currently in use. From 2007 a slightly changed version will be implemented with 52 variables. In our overview on the variables (next chapter) we will refer to the new definition of variables.

[39] Association for the Promotion of Help to the Homeless

[40] Association for Standard Documentation and Analysis

On the national level the data are used to produce statistical reports on the profile of service users in Germany. As a consequence, BAG W was able once again to present a detailed statistical report in 2005 (for 2003, for the first time since 1998) which is based on data from a total of 42 central offices with a total of 70-80 organisations These organisations are participating in ongoing data collation and it is hoped that the number of participants will increase during the next years. Since participation in the national survey is voluntary and only a relatively small proportion of services have sent data for national analysis, the survey is not representative. The data from a total of 16,817 homeless men and women were analysed for the 2003 BAG W statistical report. However, it is not the aim of the documentation to record the number of homeless people in Germany, but rather their *profiles* in order to map the target group and their needs in terms of help.

On the other hand, data from the documentation system can also be used for quantitative assessments, as the example of North Rhine-Westphalia shows, where recording of some basic data of NGO service providers has been made obligatory by funding authorities and where such data are planned to be combined with data from local authorities about homeless people provided with temporary accommodation to produce a stock based count every year (see Gerull 2006).

Data protection

Data protection is an important issue in Germany. Only completely anonymised and aggregated data are extracted and brought together for analysis on the national level.

IT, data inputting and quality

Usually the data are collected and put into the system by staff members of the homeless service providers. Practices differ with the different types of software used. Generally software suppliers offer training and support for the users of their systems. The requirements for data transfer on the national level are discussed in special conferences of AG STADO with software suppliers and service providers. The aggregation tool developed for extracting data for the national database also includes elements of verification of the data supplied from service providers.

6.3.5 Belgium

Background

In Flanders the care for homeless people is integrated in Centres for General Welfare (*Centra Algemeen Welzijnswerk, CAW*). The CAW are 'umbrella'-organisations' for about 370 services among which are 95 centres for residential care of homeless persons and 45 organisations that offer protected accommodation to homeless people. Their total capacity is (approximately) 2,600 beds in reception centres or dwellings in supported accommodation. It is a legal obligation that these CAW provide the Flemish Government with information on their clients.

CAW developed a client register system called "Tellus" in 2000/2001 and tested it in 2002. Since 2003 this system has been in use in all 27 CAW which are located in Flanders and the Brussels Capital Region. The database was developed in MS Access 2000 by *Steunpunt Algemeen Welszijnswerk* (the association of Centres for General Welfare in Flanders and Dutch speaking Brussels)

What the system does

The system provides a systematic and standardized overview of clients, problems and care that covers all services of the 'General Welfare Work'. A selection of data items is used to inform the Government about the profile of service users.

Data collection

The program runs locally (no online system), there is continuous input of data from service clients. Each year in December the data are collected for Flanders. The program has an export-tool that creates a coded table.

Use of the data

The system can provide detailed reports for specific work areas, such as homelessness and can be used for agencies/individuals to access services and make referrals. It also provides information for scientific research and for the public (website, press releases etc.). Reports are made for Flanders, but also at lower levels (regions, cities, target groups etc.). The fixed output (yearbook, lists and reports) is available online at www.steunpunt.be .

IT, data inputting and quality

The users of the program do not need any knowledge of Access because switchboards are used to lead the input and other functions. Most of the information is entered using drop down menus or "listboxes". The service workers usually only have to click predefined (radio) buttons for choosing the appropriate item from a list. After the input of data, each user can retrieve automatic generated reports including cross tabulations of more than one variable.

The organization which developed the system mentions the following quality standards as most important for producing and maintaining the database:

- Based on needs of users and relevant to all groups experiencing disadvantage
- Accuracy and frequency of updating
- Comprehensiveness of coverage of different types of agencies
- Comprehensiveness of details about each agency
- Written using simple and consistent language
- Ease of use and good designed
- Details supplied and checked by agencies themselves
- Good editing, checking and proofing procedures followed
- Use of trained and experienced staff
- Regularly evaluated by users and feedback used to make improvements

All CAW report to their head association (response 100 %), the input is controlled by SAW and feedback is provided to CAW of the output. There is a permanent helpdesk and handbooks available.

Costs

There are no costs to end-users for using the system. Staff needed for data input and management depends on the scale of each CAW. At SAW two fulltime staff members are responsible for information/research, development and maintenance of IT and for data management. In 2000/2001 one

full time employee was funded in a project to develop the database (subsidized by the Ministry of the Flemish Community). A web-based application will be developed in 2007.

6.3.6 Czech Republic

Background

In the Czech Republic providers of social services basically use two different systems of data collection. One of them is the NewPeopleVision (NPV)[41] program, developed in 2004 and used by some members of the association of hostels (SAD).[42] The NPV program is based on special software, requiring the use of PCs in the homeless hostels. The fact that especially smaller homeless hostels do not have access to the Internet or have insufficient IT equipment limits the use of this system. At the moment it is not clear how many social service providers use NPV and to what extent.

The other system is the Client Registration (EK) system used by Naděje, a national charity in the Czech Republic which also runs a number of homeless shelters.[43].The EK system is based on a combination of an electronic card and a central database. The electronic card has been developing since 2004. It was preceded by a physical, manually filled-in card that was introduced in 1991, right at the start of the organisation's operation. Since 1997, information from the paper cards has been transferred into a database. It is hoped that at least all Naděje centres in Prague will soon be linked to one central database, so that transcription of information from the cards will no longer be necessary.

Both systems were developed independently and are based on the needs of the providers of social services. The reason for data collection in both systems is, above all, the need for specific social work with each individual. Another reason is the need to have conclusive data for publication in annual reports, for media interviews, for influencing local and regional policies and, of course, for grant applications. Territorial coverage is always on a local scale, depending on the area of operation.

In theory, both systems could cover social services (at least the accommodation type) for the entire country. But for a number of reasons (under-financing of social services, modest IT equipment and problems with data protection) aggregation on the national level has not yet been achieved.

What the system does

Both systems focus on the specific individual and their data as well as the services provided. The software allows for sorting by means of filters of different data items and for print-outs of various types (e.g. lists of clients of a certain age, coming from a certain region, users of services during a given period).

Data collection

The data in both systems is collected continually, on a daily basis, separately for each facility. In hostels, the data shows the number and characteristics of people who stayed overnight, in day centres it gives an overview of persons who asked for help during the opening hours. The basic statistical unit is one person (not a household).

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41 see: http://handyprojects.com .

42 see: www.azylovedomy.cz .

43 see: www.nadeje.cz .

Use of the data

All users of both systems use the results in their annual reports and in grant applications filed with local, regional and national authorities. Some results are used in contacts with the media. The analyses of results are used by all users for the planning and development of their own services.

Few results are used for research. The problem particularly lies in the fragmented nature of data collection, as there is no central database or at least a place where the data could be collected and worked with in a serious and conceptual manner.

Both systems have significant information value for the monitoring of quantitative trends and for analysing the profile of homeless people; this would require the adoption of the system by all service providers and the establishment of a central database.. One essential unsolved problem is the use of the birth number as identifier. After 1 January 2007, the amended Protection of Personal Data Act will allow for better utilisation of statistics from all service providers, while usage was until 2006 limited by the former version of this Act to the local environment and specific organisations.

It is planned that EK will in future allow for identification through a special code, which will remove potential conflict with the Protection of Personal Data Act. The code will then be included on all written documents and will also be used for aggregation of data on local or regional level.

Another obstacle for the aggregation of data from several services is the use of different operating systems which create compatibility problems.

Data protection

By law, the provider of services is responsible for the protection of personal information, which is also required by the Quality Standards for Social Services that are being progressively implemented, this process starting in 2002. From 1 January 2007, the Quality Standards for Social Services will be binding for all providers of social services.

The Protection of Personal Data Act made it difficult until the end of the year 2006 to process any personal data, because it only allowed such processing with the express consent of the concerned subject – a physical person. On the other hand, every person could, at any given time, express their objection against the processing of their personal data, with immediate effect. The register could therefore never be complete and its information value would depend on the willingness of homeless people. This problem was eliminated by the amendment of this act,[44] effective from 1 January 2007, which states: "*Sensitive information can be processed only if it is data defined by a special law as necessary for the implementation of... social services, social care, help in material need and social and legal protection of children (section 9)*." It is hoped that the conditions for the creation of a database of homeless people are improved after 1 January 2007.

IT, data inputting and quality

The person responsible for the process of data collection is always the manager; the validity of the data depends on the sense of responsibility of the social workers, on the willingness of clients to share personal data and on internal auditing.

[44] Act No. 109/2006 of the Czech Law which amends certain laws in connection with the passing of the Social Services Act.

6. 4 Overview of the Systems Reviewed

This brief review of client record systems in operation in different countries illustrates the range of issues to be considered by national authorities in developing methodologies to collate or aggregate statistics on homelessness using these registers. This section outlines the lessons learnt from these systems that can inform the proposed methodology for national authorities.

Responsibility for developing the system

The role of the relevant national authority in developing systems differs largely in relation to the extent to which participation in the system is made compulsory.

In the UK, where participation is compulsory, the development of systems (LINK, CHAIN and Supporting People) has been funded by the relevant central government ministry. This has meant that key issues of data definition and data protection can be determined at national level. However, this approach needs to be considered in conjunction with the needs of the participating agencies that need to be consulted during the system development. It is also less flexible in allowing systems of data capture to be incorporated into the agencies own needs for management and planning information. Ireland has also taken this route to commissioning and providing to providers a single client registration system and funding the maintenance and data analysis of the system.

In Germany, where participation is voluntary, the approach has been to establish compliance standards for software houses for data extract formats and to determine the definition of the specialist data set. AG STADO has also developed an aggregation tool provided to software companies and institutions. The Ministry then funded the first annual analysis of this aggregate data.

In the Netherlands, the approach has been make participation compulsory under a statutory registration scheme but to establish a methodology to assemble a national database using the existing systems. In the Czech Republic existing systems have been developed and tested voluntarily by the NGO sector in the absence of state involvement. A similar approach could be taken to harmonise these systems to facilitate a national database and data export procedure but this has not yet been implemented.

In the Flemish speaking region of Belgium the Ministry subsidized the development costs of a system developed and implemented by the umbrella NGO (SAW). The program was developed in consultation with the member organisations.

Services covered by the systems

Table 6.1 illustrates that client record systems cover different services. Two systems have been developed specifically to capture information from outreach work with people sleeping rough. Not all the systems include overnight or direct access low-threshold shelters. This may in part be related to funding issues and also to problems of data capture and duplication of data that need to be resolved to collect accurate profile information on this category of service user. However, the fact that some systems collect this data illustrates that it is possible to resolve these issues. Only the Dutch systems, the UK supporting people record system, and the UK LINK system collect information from women's refuge shelters for domestic violence. This again is an issue of funding and policy rather than of the logistics of data capture. While additional factors need to be considered in relation to data privacy and access (see below), there are no distinct technical issues to prevent application of client record systems to this category of service user.

Software system development

Two distinct approaches can be identified in the development of software systems for such registers of client information.

First, data is extracted from commercial systems that have been developed and are commercially sold for social service case management or housing management. This is the case in the German approach and also formed the basis of the original inception of the Dutch Regas system (when it succeeded the Klimop system which had been developed in-house by Federatie Opvang). These systems allow the client information to be extracted for analysis either through the use of an extract program or by access to a specific module within the program.

Second, there are systems developed specifically for the purpose of data capture of client information or for client monitoring purposes. These include systems developed in-house by NGOs (e.g. SAW and Nadeje), those commissioned and paid for by Government (e.g. Supporting People), and those commissioned by NGOs from software houses.

The UK Supporting People, Belgian SAW system and Czech Nadeje system are examples of systems that tend to utilise widely supported SQL database software such as Access. They facilitate local input with validation routines to check data quality at the input level and involve central database transfer through a variety of export facilities. Export can be by paper, disk, email and, more recently, can be undertaken directly using web-based input.

Systems commissioned from software houses or other agencies to facilitate client monitoring. are exemplified by the Dutch Clever system and the UK and Dublin LINK systems. They are characterised by being be-spoke systems that allow add-on modules to meet the user's requirements. They allow a range of reporting features to meet the management needs of the agency. These systems are purchased, have an annual licence fee and are updated by the supplier.

Table 6.1 Services Covered by Client Record Systems

	Operational Category		Living Situation	Neth Clever	Neth Regas	Czech	Dublin Link	UK Link	UK Chain	UK SPCRS	UK CMS	Belgium SAW	Germany STADO
1	People Living Rough	1	Public space / external space				X		X		X		
2	People in emergency accommodation	2	Overnight Shelters	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
3	People living in accommodation for the homeless	3	Homeless Hostels	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
		4	Temporary Accommodation	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
		5	Transitional Supported Accommodation	X	X		X	X		X		X	X
4	People in Crisis Shelters for Domestic Violence	6	Women's shelter or refuge accommodation	X	X			X		X			

Functionality

Programs need to be ensure that ease of data entry does not compromise data quality. The systems reviewed are either windows based or Html based interfaces that utilise drop-down menus and radio buttons allowing pre-coded data entry. Secondly, programs can enhance data quality by allowing for data validation and error reporting at the data entry stage. Error reports identify specific data input errors, missing values, values out of range or inconsistencies when comparing different data items and hence direct data editing. Many of the programs examined also allow a second level of validation at the point of data export when staff at the central data processing centre can resolve data issues with the inputting agency staff. All the programs allow some measure of report creation either through standard tables or more flexible user generated reports. This feature is important to the service provider but also ensures that if reports are routinely used that data quality is enhanced. Finally, programs provide facilities to export data in agreed formats. This facility also generally needs to log the export of files to ensure that duplicate files are not exported to the central processing agency.

Data Protection

While all the systems conformed to national data protection requirements the approach to this varied. The German system is the most rigid in allowing only aggregated data to be exported for analysis at national level. This greatly inhibits the analysis and use of the data. All other systems allow for individual level records to be analysed by the use of anonymised data routines. The Dutch Regas system employs both anonymisation and encryption methods to safeguard individual data. The Northern Ireland Women's Aid Link that allocates a unique one-way code for each inidivual also uses encryption. The identifying information is not ever stored in this system. Other systems employ different forms of anonymisation procedures. Unique identifiers can be generated by the system, or by the creation of a unique number (based on some combination of surname, initial, gender and date of birth). None of the systems reviewed here used the national identity number of insurance number as the unique identifier though this approach is employed (e.g. in Denmark). Since 2006 the UK Supporting People system uses the national insurance number to allow tracking of patterns of movement between services and safeguards are in place to prevent identification of individuals within the system.

All in all it can be summarised that although there is a robust data protection framework across Europe, this doesn't present an insurmountable barrier to information sharing.

Data Quality Assurance

Data collected in this manner is often unfairly criticised because of a suspicion that the use of a large number of people entering data will lead to inaccuracy and unreliable information. Data quality and integrity can be assured by a variety of approaches as evidenced in the systems reviewed.

First, the software program itself can ensure a level of accuracy and consistency in data recording. This can occur at different stages. At the data input stage error prompts during data entry, validation algorithms and automatic error reporting prior to data posting or export can eliminate missing data or invalid entries. The program can also require certain key fields to be complete prior to data export. At this stage the issue is to balance ease of data entry with robust checks of key fields. Programs also provide context sensitive help systems.

Second, where data is exported to a central processing unit more robust validation algorithms can be employed. This requires a relatively high level of staff resources to check and reconcile errors with the

supplying agency. For example, the UK Supporting People system processes data at St Andrews University where four staff are employed as Data Quality Assessors whose job it is to carry out such checks and data cleaning. The Broadway data management team has similar responsibilities for the CHAIN system in London.

Third, data monitoring and trend analysis can also assist in reporting back to the users who are inputting the data. Thus regular reporting on fields that are incomplete or inaccurately recorded, as well as statistical analysis and comparative analysis can be used to improve performance.

Fourth, direct contact with agency staff is essential. The monitoring approach described above is usually combined with staff training, manuals of guidance, newsletters and user groups. Most systems also provide help-desks to resolve specific issues. Web-based systems supplement these approaches with on-line help systems.

Data Export

The systems reviewed demonstrate a wide range of approaches to exporting the data to the central processing unit. Paper based return (with central data processing) is accommodated in the Czech and the UK systems though this is increasingly uncommon and the most time-consuming and costly approach. Electronic data transfer should be a standard approach for new or updated systems since the widespread accessibility of computer resources and technology ensure this is the most cost effective route. Electronic data transfer can be accommodated by several routes but again the review suggests that web-based systems using standard XML protocols are now commonly employed in new or updated systems. This approach has the benefit that software does not need to be installed in data providers systems since on-line data entry is the basis of data collection.

Standard data interchange formats (using ASCII, XML or approved formats) ensure that electronic data can be received and processed with minimal effort. However, the review suggests the requirement to employ dedicated staff to receive and check electronic data prior to processing and analysis.

Data Analysis

Using individual records rather than pre-aggregated data allows the most flexible approach to data analysis at national level as only individual records allow cross-tabulation across any of the variables collected. This needs to be combined with an appropriate geography for analysis (linked to census and/or administrative geographies).

Availability and Reporting of Results

The frequency of reporting (at national level) as well the format of reports and levels of analysis are all country or system specific. Although this is generally driven by the funding agency requirements, data providers are often consulted and reports tailored to their needs. This again helps to ensure that data is recorded in a timely and accurate manner. Most systems provide internet access to the data reporting systems and provide a combination of text based reports and spreadsheet tables suitable for downloading. None of the systems reviewed allowed users to create and generate their own analyses on-line though this is technically possible and is utilised in some Census and National Statistics Office official data sites.

Implementation

Review of the approaches adopted in different countries indicates a number of stages or phases in the implementation of client record systems. This phasing is to be regarded as critical to the successful development of such systems

- Phase 1 Planning

  This phase involves consultation with service providers. This may include a survey of the specific client record and management software systems in use. It will also involve consultation with key agencies in relation to the data items and data definitions to be employed. This issue is discussed more fully in chapter 6. This phase will also require the decision on the management structures to be adopted to maintain the systems and appointment of the national co-ordination team to undertake the development and implementation. Countries with a federal structure of governance will require this stage (or a pre-planning stage) to include consultation between national and regional ministries.

- Phase 2 Development

  This involves the development of software systems and / or the specification of standard data interchange formats. This will also involve piloting and testing systems. At this stage the preparation of detailed documentation of all software programs as well as the manuals of guidance and training materials is prepared and tested.

- Phase 3 Implementation

  This involves pre-launch training and publicity. This will often require to be regionally organised and may even need to be targeted separately at different types of provider agency (e.g. homeless agencies and domestic violence refuge shelters).

- Phase 4 Management and Updating

  Management, monitoring and performance review structures are required to ensure the system is properly and efficiently administered and meets the specified terms of reference.

Finances, resources and budgeting

The cost of implementing data collection from client register systems involves consideration of two distinct issues – the overall implementation of the approach and the creation of the software or data collection and aggregation system.

Each of the four phases of implementation described above has an associated cost. It is difficult to provide specific costs for each phase since this will in part depend upon the number of service providers in each country and the degree of co-ordination required between central government and regional or local authorities. It also depends whether the national authority intends to carry out the implementation or to out-source the tasks. The latter approach is to be recommended.

The development of software to allow for the national database or data analysis also depends upon the approach adopted in each country. The following section endeavours to establish the time-costs (in person days or full-time-equivalent staff) for three different options using the specific countries involved to obtain an estimate of the time involved in each stage of the work.

Option 1 Using Existing Software Systems and Data Extract Protocols Germany

In Germany an aggregation tool had to be developed to extract aggregated data from a number of different software systems which were already in use among NGO service providers for the homeless. The development of this tool was commissioned from an institute and has cost appr. 50,000 €. Annual adjustments of the software have to be financed separately. Every year the recent version of the aggregation software tool is sent to service providers who participate in the national data collection. In 2004 about 120 services have received the extraction software and 56 aggregated data sets were to be processed and brought together into a national data base. This annual process costs about 5,000 to 7,000 € depending on the number of service providers participating. As an increased participation is the aim the annual costs will rise substantially in future.

These costs do not include the costs of personnel at BAG W committed to manage the data collection, coordinate the discussions and decisions about necessary changes regarding the basic set of variables and other aspects of data collection and do the data analysis. At least a continuous part time if not a full time staff post is needed to manage the data collection on the national level.

By comparing these costs with those of other countries it should be noted that the client registration software and connected services have to be bought by service providers directly from different commercial software-houses (and costs covered to different extent by local and regional authorities) and that the national aggregation is done on a voluntary bases only covering a relatively small fraction of all service providers in Germany.

Option 2 Developing CRS Capture Software UK / England

The Supporting People Client Record System was based upon a client record form specified by the ODPM (now the Department of Communities and Local Government) following consultation with local authorities and service providers.

The Joint Centre for Scottish Housing Research (now the Centre for Housing Research) was contracted to develop, test and implement a software program based on Access and then to maintain the database, analyse the data and produce regular tables and to maintain a web-site for the system.

The system was developed over a six month period and has been maintained since 2003. The database includes a register of service providers from whom the data is collected (currently around 30,000 services). Data is provided directly to around 140 local authority subscribers. Approximately 200,000 new clients are recorded through the system each year of whom 54 % are homeless (using the harmonised definition). The staff costs for the system are summarised in table 6.2. Additional IT equipment and office costs were also incurred.

Table 6.2 Costs for the Development of a CRS Data Collection System

Development Phase (1)		*FTE STAFF*
Director	Oversight of project	30 days
Project manager	Implementation of project	40 days
Project Officer	Implementation and research	100 days
IT Programming	Software development, pilot and testing	100 days
Research Assistant	Assistance on users needs and related tasks	60 days
IT assistant	Programming, guidance manuals etc	40 days
Annual Maintenance Costs		
Management	Project manager and assistant project manager	1
Research, Data analysis and publications	Research Assistant	1
IT maintenance and web-site	IT Programmer	1
Data Quality Assurance	Data Quality Assessors	4
Data Processing	Data Processors including electronic and on-line data systems	4

Note (1) Since this was a short term contract all staff were employed on a part-time basis or full-time staff were allocated for the defined periods. Hence the time is expressed in days employed on this contract.

Option 3 Adapting an existing system (LINK) Ireland

The initial costs of developing the Link client recording system on which the Dublin Link system was based are estimated at having taken about two person years of development time. These staff needed IT, management and information skills. Work involved drawing up requirements and consultancy with prospective users, specification, system build and programming, testing, and training users of the first system. These costs having been incurred can be defrayed against new applications of the system.

The costs for creating the Dublin LINK can be broken down into 3 main elements:

1. Initial system development design and programming

   Adaptation and development of the core LINK system provided for a payment of a one-off licence fee of between €6,000 and €16,000 depending on the size of system.

2. Customisation costs

   Once the initial system was developed, Homeless Agency (and other organisations) was able to commission a customised version of the main system. This involved one-off development costs for system build and implementation (over a period of around 6 months). It also involved working with users to promote the system and train and support staff.

   Since 2001, the Link software has evolved and developed, and new customers typically require significantly less new development, averaging about 10 person days.

3. Ongoing annual running and support costs.

   Once the system is set up, there are annual costs to keep the system running. There may be additional IT development costs depending on any new developments required to the system.

Table 6.3 Costs for Development and Annual Maintenance of Dublin Link System

Development Costs		
IT development	producing specification and consultancy on legal issues, system build, devising client and action variables with users, pilot project and testing.	80 days
Data requirements	promoting the system to prospective users and training and support, and coordinating training and roll out to projects.	50 days
Annual Running Costs		
IT support and hosting	Charge for hosting the site plus annual support	12 days
Management of System and Data	This includes user support, liaison with developers, administration of the system and drawing out statistics.	110 days

6.5 Conclusions

This brief review of a range of client registration systems demonstrates that the stage of development and the approaches taken are different in each country. This makes it difficult to be prescriptive in terms of recommending a specific methodology or good practice to implementing a system to aggregate data from client registration databases. However, the stages required to establish systems where they do not already exist have been identified. Further, different approaches to developing systems have been identified and costs for each estimated. This can be used to provide a guide to determine an appropriate approach in each member state by the relevant ministry or national authority.

This overview highlights a number of issues that need to be addressed in the process of collecting information from service provider client registers. First, there is a range of 'Governance issues' relating to the determination of responsibility for homeless monitoring information, consultation with service providers, finance and regulation. Second, there is a set of management issues related to the coordination of data collection, implementation, ongoing development, data cleaning and support to users. Third, there are issues related to the needs of service providers and the need to ensure the value and use of the data to their business planning and management. Fourth, there are a set of technical issues related to IT development, maintenance, data analysis and reporting. This may also require decisions by the national authority to improve the infrastructure of NGOs in relation to their computing equipment, internet connection and training of staff. In this connection it is recommended that there are distinct benefits and cost savings to be achieved by using web-based data returns for new systems. Finally, and not least, there is a significant issue related to the service user in ensuring the highest levels of data protection are adhered to. This is especially important, for example, in relation to the anonymity of women in shelters for people escaping domestic violence.

In a number of countries data of NGO-service providers have to be combined with data from municipalities providing accommodation services for homeless people (as for example in Germany or in Belgium). In these cases it is necessary to make the data compatible with each other to reach a more comprehensive picture about the quantity and the profile of the homeless population. At the same time it might be more difficult to prevent double counting, if data from different client registration systems are combined.

Geographical coverage of a number of systems presented above is restricted to a part of the national territory (Dublin Link does only cover services in the capital of Ireland, CHAIN focuses on rough

sleepers in London, Supported People data are collected for England only, the Tellus registration system is restricted to the Dutch speaking community of Belgium. The geographical distribution of the two systems in the Czech Republic was still evaluated at the time of writing). What would be needed in these cases would either be steps towards full coverage of all services for the homeless in the respective country or a method for estimating the quantity of clients in the rest of the country.

The systems reviewed in this chapter all involve services that receive funding from the state. However, services which do not receive state funding, or are provided with only very limited resources, will probably be more reluctant to provide data on their clients and these clients might potentially be excluded from national data collection based on services for the homeless which receive appropriate funding.

Different software systems for registering client data use different variables. If a variety of client register systems are used by services for the homeless it takes time and resources to harmonise the variables and make systems compatible at least to an extent that allows the extraction of a basic set of data variables. The examples from Germany and the Netherlands show how this can be done, but they also prove that the harmonisation of data is not easy to achieve and can take a lot of time and a considerable amount of money and staff resources.

If services are not provided exclusively to homeless people (but for a wider range of clients) it is necessary to isolate the data of homeless clients from those of other clients. For this purpose clear information is needed in order to distinguish those clients who are homeless from those who are not.

A specific problem is the high turnover of clients in short term and low threshold services. Often there is not enough time and staff available to collect data from people who might only stay one or two nights, some of these services will also have a principle of anonymity to provide services for people who have no legal papers or feel deterred by the administrative procedures of other services. Data requirements could be reduced for this type of services in order to get at least a minimum of information about turnover and occupation rates. Examples from a number of systems used in practice show, that it is indeed possible to get reliable data from low threshold services as well.

The problem of double counting exists, particularly where no unique client identifiers are used. In chapter 8 we explain, how this is dealt with in surveys, the most common approach being to reduce the time frame for counting homeless people to one single day or night. For prevalence data and flow data it is almost impossible to exclude double counting of the same persons without unique client identifiers. Such identifiers are recommended in this chapter and a number of techniques are presented these identifiers can be anonymised and protected, so that data extraction is made compatible with data protection rules and with justified interests of service users that their personal data are not misused.

From some countries problems regarding the differences between various IT systems used by different service providers are reported. This is predominantly the case, where client registration software has to be installed on computers of service providers and is a minor problem, where online systems are operating. However, the precondition for the latter is a fast and secure internet connection. Rapid progress has been achieved in recent years in many European countries with efforts to make such access to the internet possible and achievable at low prices. Where problems are caused by insufficient funding the necessary resources have to be made available by funding authorities. National governments as well as authorities on the EU-level might need to provide support where structural and technical problems still exist.

Lack of continuity of staff and a lack of training is another serious issue which has to be dealt with in order to secure reliable data. As we have seen, good client registration systems do not require a lot of

specialised knowledge, but there is a need for proper training and (on-line) support for those working with data registration systems. The costs of such support have to be taken in account and covered by authorities funding the services.

Measurement issues like the type of measurement (stock, flow and prevalence), the unit of measurement (households and/or individuals) and the point of measurement (entry data, exit data, stock data for a given day) are important issues, which are dealt with in greater detail in chapter 10.

Chapter 7

Standard register variables on homelessness

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to propose a "limited set of standard register variables" for use by organisations providing services to the homeless. This is necessary if national authorities want to aggregate data from such registers in a consistent and comprehensive manner and is a necessary pre-condition if data is to be compared within or between countries.

Chapter 6 reviews the nature of service provider registers and concludes that registers from accommodation based services are appropriate for collecting aggregate statistics on some of the most important subgroups of the homeless.

The chapter reviews relevant literature and documentary sources in order to identify the types of data items collected. This review also considers the issues involved in register based data systems such as the recording point (entry, exit), procedures for updating information and the unit of measurement (the individual or household).

Using this broad typology of data items a review of existing register based systems and survey approaches is assessed in order to identify the extent to which such data items are collected.

The chapter then proceed to consider the nature and definition of these data items using a selection of registers and surveys for which such detailed information is available. This provides a more detailed understanding of the different approaches to data definition and recording which is used to inform the recommendations for the adoption of standard variables. For example, if different definitions are employed the question to be answered is whether a harmonised definition can be recommended or whether existing definitions can be nested into a generic definition.

Since client registers already exist in some countries and are in use for both administrative, business planning and policy purposes it is unrealistic to assume that national authorities can unilaterally impose a harmonised definition upon NGOs. Adoption of standard variables should recognise the information needs of the provider organisation and allow for extraction of data at no additional cost to the agency. For this reason the chapter concludes by making recommendations for a short set of core variables and a recommended set of non-core variables. The core variables should allow for harmonised definitions and for providing basic information on the profiles of homeless people all over Europe.

7.2 Overview of Variables on Homelessness

The intention of the brief for this research is to propose variables to be used in national client registration systems so that there might be the potential for a set of "standard" variables in order to increase the comparability of data from such systems on the EU-level. However, the specific choice of variable depends in part upon the use to be made of the statistics and in part upon the nature of the registers from which the data is to be collected. The analysis made here refers mainly to accommodation based register systems for the reasons outlined in Chapter 6.

Data Recording

While surveys of the homeless usually document the current status of the person, client register systems can contain data on the situation at start of service provision and at the end and may even allow for updating of the information (e.g. in relation to assessment of needs and provision of services). For the purpose of providing profiles of homeless people on a consistent basis it is proposed that data is collated from the entry information on the system. For stock based counts it might be necessary to update some of the information for the date of counting (e.g. current accommodation situation, current duration of homelessness).

In most existing surveys data are collected for individual persons (in some only for the adult persons receiving support, in others also for every child living with an adult person). Although some surveys collect data on the level of the household, for the purposes of this research it is recommended that data is collected on an individual level but make it possible to identify members of the same family / household.

Data Items

The EUROSTAT Expert Group Statistics on Homelessness, when considering the methodology for a census survey of homelessness proposed the following variables (using the individual respondent as the unit of measurement):

1. Personal data: age, gender, marital status, children, ethnic origin.
2. Income data: employment, property, social transfers.
3. Other Data: activity status, educational attainment, perceived health status, perceived exposure to crime, perceived access to other services.
4. Primary cause of homelessness: choice, unable to pay market rent, destruction of accommodation, other.

However, this proposal related to census survey method of data collection rather than register based information systems. Although these proposals are made in the minutes of the Expert Group they are not elaborated upon in the subsequent INSEE study.

Our review of existing national recording systems (e.g. the USA, Canada and Australia) and of the NGO register based documentation systems in use among FEANTSA member organisations provides a basis to summarise the type of data items employed.

Focusing on service user information we can distinguish broadly the variables used in different surveys and client register systems into the following subgroups:

- *Clients profile Data*
  - demographic characteristics age, gender and marital status
  - nationality/migration background
  - household/family characteristics
  - economic characteristics
  - educational characteristics
  - housing characteristics

- *Clients Assessment information*
  - reasons for becoming homeless
  - support needs / problems

- *Provision of services and outcomes*
  - services used
  - outcome.

Our analysis of existing client register systems will follow this distinction and describe in greater detail which variables are used in different systems and how they are defined.

7.3 Data Items Recorded in Large Countries outside the EU

This section provides a brief summary review of national data collection systems in the USA, Canada and Australia. The purpose is not to explain the functioning of these systems but rather to identify the data items employed in each system.

USA

The Congress of the USA requires the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to collect data on the extent of homelessness in America as well as the effectiveness of the McKinney homeless assistance programs, which have existed for fifteen years, in addressing this condition. Every jurisdiction that receives funding from HUD programs is required to submit a comprehensive housing strategy that includes a section dealing with homeless needs describing the nature and extent of homelessness, including rural homelessness, providing an estimate of the special needs of various categories of persons who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. This should include a description of the strategy for (a) helping low-income families avoid becoming homeless; (b) addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons (including a brief inventory of facilities and services that meet such needs within that jurisdiction); and (c) helping homeless persons make the transition to permanent housing and independent living. (Section 105(a)(2), Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (42 U. S. C. 12701 et seq.).

These legislative requirements clearly determine the nature and form of information required in order to prepare and monitor the homeless strategy. The aim is to develop an unduplicated count of homeless people, and an analysis of their patterns of use of assistance (HUD McKinney homeless assistance as well as other assistance both targeted and not targeted to homeless people), including how they enter and exit the homeless assistance system and the effectiveness of assistance.

In the HUD Appropriations Act (1999), Congress had directed HUD to collect, at a minimum, the following data:

- the unduplicated count of clients served;
- client characteristics (e.g. age, race, disability status),
- units [days] and type of housing received (shelter, transitional, permanent);
- services rendered;
- outcome information (e.g. housing stability, income, and health status).

In 2001 the Senate (Report 106-410) directed HUD to build on its earlier preliminary work with communities with an advanced Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and continue assessing data from these communities in order to document the change in demographics of homeless-ness, demand for homeless assistance, to identify patterns in utilization of assistance, and to demonstrate the effectiveness of assistance. In addition, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act directs the Interagency Council on the Homeless (ICH) to undertake a number of tasks on interagency

coordination, evaluation, and reporting that mandate the collection and dissemination of information on homeless individuals and their needs.

Following a Congressional direction on improving homeless data collection and analysis at the local and national levels and specific statutorily based programme and planning requirements for addressing homeless needs, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued notice in 2003 to implement a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). An HMIS is a computerized data collection application designed to capture client-level information over time on the characteristics and service needs of homeless persons.

In the mid-1990s, HUD supported a comprehensive planning effort to develop comprehensive intake and assessment software. While the Automated National Client-specific Homeless services Recording (ANCHoR) software, developed as a result of that initiative, did not meet expectations, much was learned from that effort. The HMIS software that has developed from this experience combines a number of functionalities to enhance individual service provider operations and to link providers together into a broader data-sharing system. All these functionalities, summarised in table 7.1, provide local providers and agencies with the ability to generate reports on their internal operations as well as reports for external funding agencies.

Table 7.1 HMIS Functionalities

Data Items	Description
Client Profile	Client demographic data obtained at intake and exit.
Client Assessment: Information	Clients' needs and goals, as well as case management or treatment plans.
Service Outcomes	Client-level data on services provided, progress, outcomes, and follow-up.
Information and Referral/Resource Directories	Timely data on the network of available services within the Continuum to determine eligibility and provide referrals. Some systems provide documentation and tracking of a referral from one provider to the next and messaging capability.
Operations	Operational functionality that permits staff to manage day-to-day activities, including bed availability, and incident reporting.
Accounting	Traditional accounting tools and special components to record service activity/expenditures against specific grants. Some systems have donor and fundraising elements.

Guidelines and justifications for data to be collected by HMIS were outlined in 2003 within the Proposed Notice on data and technical standards. The data elements identified were classed as universal, program-level, or elective. Elective data elements were those not specified as universal or program-level. Guidelines for maintaining the privacy of protected personal information, electronic records, and data exports were also documented in the Proposed Notice. The need for special provisions in domestic violence shelters was acknowledged. The draft of data and technical standards was primarily guided by the results of advisory meetings that HUD held with a group of stakeholders and experts. This group included representatives from communities already using HMIS systems, advocacy organizations, technical assistance providers, homelessness researchers, and federal agencies that collect data on vulnerable populations. The Final Notice describing the data and technical standards was published in spring 2004.

HUD has proposed that certain universal elements be collected by all agencies serving homeless persons to obtain an unduplicated count of homeless persons. There are fifteen in total:

(1) name; (2) Social Security Number; (3) date of birth; (4) ethnicity and race; (5) gender; (6) veteran status; (7) residence prior to program entry; (8) zip code of last permanent address; (9) date person left last permanent address; (10) program entry date; and (11) program exit date. The last four are computer-generated: (12) unique person identifier; (13) program identification number; (14) program event number; and (15) household identification number.

Program-level data elements help in assessments of the client's needs as a basic element in their provision of service. Their collection may be required to fulfil annual reporting requirements to HUD. Sixteen program-level data elements have been identified. They require manual data entry, and describe personal client characteristics, such as income, benefits, physical and mental health status, education, employment, among others.

Canada

In December 1999, the Government of Canada announced the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI). The Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) Initiative is one of several NHI programs. It is administered by the Strategic Research, Analysis and HIFIS Development Directorate of the NSH. The HIFIS Initiative was established to address the knowledge gaps that prevent an accurate understanding of homelessness. Its activities enable homeless service providers to organize and share data through the support of an electronic data management system.

The primary tool of the HIFIS Initiative is the HIFIS software application. The HIFIS software prototype was first developed in 1999 by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) through consultations with service providers, researchers and government. The HIFIS software is an electronic data management tool for homeless service providers.

HIFIS is now in its third version and provides a user-friendly, robust software application with a report-building tool, a training component and the support of a national help line. Further developments of the HIFIS software are being pursued in cooperation with the National Reference Group and partnering stakeholders. Service providers who choose to use HIFIS software take on an important responsibility in maintaining electronic client records. HIFIS users need to be informed about the latest developments in HIFIS software, the maintenance of client privacy, and the assurance of local electronic data security. The extent of data recorded depends on the local policies of the service provider. The HIFIS software can be easily customized to collect specialized data beyond its standard data fields.

HIFS software has a data export function. Service providers generate export files for sharing data with Community Coordinators and the HIFIS Initiative team. Only non-identifying data fields are exported. Records belonging to a single client and/or family are assigned a unique identifier based on name, date of birth and gender. These unique identifiers cannot be reverse-engineered to reveal identities. Exported data is added to the national HIFIS database only after a Data Sharing Agreement is signed by the service provider, any intermediate parties, and the NHI.

The HIFIS Initiative collects shelter-use data from shelters and communities through the signing of Data Sharing Protocols and Community Coordinator Agreements, respectively. Communities are able to use this data in a number of ways, such as developing Homelessness Report Cards to increase the public's understanding of homelessness. So while a community can collect hundreds of fields of data, at the national level only 10 fields are collected. They are:

- Shelter HIFIS ID
- Shelter Name
- Bed Count
- Overflow Bed Count
- Shelter Type / Purpose
- Unique Client Identifier
- Date of Birth
- Gender
- Book-In Date
- Book-Out Date

However, the data export files contain additional information on client profiles such as country of origin, citizenship, health, immediate reason for service, factor to client's homelessness, source of income, type of last long term housing etc.

Australia

In Australia, the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) represents the joint coordination of the Commonwealth and the States and Territories to fund local service agencies that address homelessness. More recently, it has been operating under the influence of the Commonwealth's National Homelessness Strategy. The SAAP agreements operate on five-year cycles and incorporate explicit planning, monitoring, and evaluation components within each term. To support all these components of SAAP activities, the National Data Collection Agency (NDCA) was established.

The NDCA oversees the development and implementation of the SAAP Management and Reporting Tool (SMART), specifically developed to support the information needs and reporting requirements of SAAP-funded service providers. Many tools and services have been developed by the NDCA to promote and support agency use of SMART, including a comprehensive communication strategy, software training programs, a user's SAAP data Hotline, and extensive reference materials. These activities both encourage and simplify the use of SMART, while moving towards improving the quality and management of the data collection.

SMART was developed by the NDCA in consultation with the non-government homelessness-relevant sector that expressed an interest in its potential. SMART is a combination of a case-work recording tool and data-collection instrument. It is capable of recording a wide range of information about clients which is not required for SAAP data collection activities. SMART has a built-in downloadable program that transfers only those data needed for the SAAP NDCA. Every quarter, agencies are required to submit electronic SMART data to the NDCA on a disc. The software and NCDA use of SMART-originating data maintain client confidentiality. Individual client data are assigned an alpha-numeric code based on the client's name and gender. Once the data is received by the NCDA, the alpha-numeric code is combined with the individual's birth date to form a unique identifier that is used by the NCDA. Australian privacy laws and NDCA policies ensure that if data is released to qualifying recipients, it is always in a non-identifying format. SMART also has report-building capabilities. SMART users can generate different types of reports to meet their own internal requirements. SMART facilitates the maintenance of a much larger pool of information for client management, planning, reporting, accounting statements, and other specific needs. Since its first development in late 1998, several versions of the SMART software have been released. Version 4 was released in July 2003. Each version was progressively refined, and new features were added to increase efficiency and add functionality. Problem areas continue to be re-worked – such as re-defining criteria or parameters, separating out possible responses for added clarification, and extensive testing of revisions.

Figure 7.1 Data Collected using SMART

Data collected using SMART:

- agency data: id number, support period, consent obtained (yes or no), alpha code
- client's year of birth
- source of referral
- person(s) receiving assistance (with or without children)
- gender of client; client's country of birth; Aboriginal status
- language of client; how well the client speaks English; client's cultural identity
- labour force status before and after support period
- main income source before and after support period
- student status before and after support period
- reasons for seeking assistance; main reason for seeking assistance
- current period of homelessness; location prior to current period of homelessness
- type of accommodation immediately before and after support period
- whom the client was living with before and after support period
- client's involvement with any legal order or processes before or after support
- if a support plan is in place by the end of the support period
- the extent of achievement of the client's management goals by end of support period
- if SAAP accommodation was provided
- support provided to client
- if client have/has child/children presently on this form for this support period
- data regarding children: number of, country of birth, number of homes child/children has/have lived in past year; gender; type of support (if any)

7.4 Service user variables adopted in existing client register systems and in recent surveys on homeless people

This section examines the nature of the variables collected in NGO client register systems in Europe. The section begins with a review of the variables in registers drawn from a questionnaire survey of NGOs. This provides a framework for the examination of the definition and types of information collected using information from detailed description of systems employed in seven countries in Europe and national systems outside Europe. This analysis is then used to identify a small set of core variables related to the broad typology of data items identified above.

7.4.1 Overview of variables collected in European NGO client registers

A questionnaire distributed to European NGO members of Feantsa (180 member organisations) elicited usable responses from 30 organisations in 17 countries. Two-thirds of these organisations send the information to government agencies or departments. Table 6.2 contains the summary of the data items collected in these systems in relation to the three broad categories of data items defined above.

These broad categories of information were employed in a questionnaire survey to FEANTSA member organisations to endeavour to identify the nature of the information contained in register documentation systems. Almost all the systems collected profile data and information on reasons for homelessness. Collection of information on support needs and support received depended upon the type of organisation and the nature of the services offered. Half of the survey respondents indicated that additional information was collected – especially in relation to benefits received, educational attainment or employment situation.

This general overview shows that client information is available at many organisations, but it is clear that the definitions of variables might differ considerably and that service providers included in the survey cover very different proportions of homeless clients and geographical regions. To get a more detailed overview on variables used we have to focus on a selected set of client register systems and homeless surveys for which recent and detailed information is available. This will be done in the following section.

Table 7.2 Summary of Questions in Client Registers - survey of Feantsa members

Variables used	Profile [44]	Reasons	Support needs	Support services	Other (specify)
National Methodology Centre Hungary	√	√	√	√	income, benefits,, social network, job career, housing career
Barka Foundation Poland	√	√	√	√	educational level, work qualifications
Santa Casa Misericordia do Lisboa	√	√	√	√	
Budapest Social Centre and its institutions	√	√			√
Wallich Clifford Wales	√		√	√	
Y-Foundation Finland					
Arrels Fundacio Spain	√			√	Previous living situations
Pomeranian Forum Poland	√	√	√	√	
Shelter Cymru Wales	√	√		√	√
Jesuit Refugee Service - Portugal[45]	Social Aid Office Questionnaire				√
S.A.D. Czech Republic	√	√	√	√	space for notes of the social worker
Kofoedsskolle - Denmark	√			√	Education, unemployment, social support
St Mungos	√	√	√	√	educational history, benefits, disabled, history of offending
Zebra Foundation Russia	√	√	√		
Armada Spasy Czech Republic	√	√	√	√	√
Association Rauxa Spain	√	√			
Latvian Network of homeless organisations	√	√	√	√	
Santa casa de misericordia do Porto	√	√	√	√	√

[44] Individual characteristics - Age, gender, marital status, nationality

[45] Contact (when there is one); Date of entry into Portugal; Legal status; Type of legal document; Family support in Portugal and in the country of origin; Knowledge of Portuguese language; Education; Professional training; Job experience in Portugal and in the country of origin; Employment, and others

7.4.2 Clients profile variables

This section examines the nature of the information collected in each of the main areas. The intention is to identify the specific data items under each of the three broad areas and the specific definitions of data items used.

The description is based on reports commissioned in a number of countries which provide detailed descriptions of the client registers or surveys in use. In countries with many such systems the major representative systems are covered. Included here are client registration systems in the Netherlands (Regas and Clever), in the UK (Supporting People and Chain in London), in Germany (common data set for service providers)[46] and Czech Republic (NewPeopleVision and EK) and surveys carried out in Portugal (Rough Sleeper Survey 2005), Spain (INE survey 2005) and Sweden (NBHW survey 2005). As a comparator the UNECE report recommendations for Census definitions are used where appropriate. Similarly, the variables used in the HMIS system in the USA , the HIFIS system in Canada[47] and the SMART system in Australia are referred to where this can provide an understanding of the issues to be considered in deriving harmonised data definitions.

Earlier we already mentioned that unique identifiers are needed to be able to fully exploit the wealth of possible combinations and cross-tabulations of the variables presented below and to prevent double counting and overlapping of data of the same persons. As we have seen most data collection systems work with some kind of identifiers and systems are available to use these without violating data protection rules.

7.4.2.1 Demographic characteristics age, gender and marital status

The basic demographic characteristics collected in all systems are gender and age. Usually it is recommended to record the birth date while the use of age groups in published data may vary greatly, especially concerning young people because different age groups are relevant in different national contexts. Furthermore the date of birth can be used to calculate the age of the person at any time, not only at time of entry. Mostly the date of birth is also used for creating a unique identifier. CES recommendations for the 2010 censuses of Population and Housing also suggest recording the date of birth.

Marital status is also among the variables most often documented, but there are some differences concerning new forms of civil partnerships (esp. of same-sex couples) and consensual unions.[48] With the increase of unmarried couples the information value of this variable might be increasingly questioned. Swedish authorities did not ask about marital status in their last homelessness survey, in Germany this variable is included among the basic set of variables of the client register systems, but not in the (future) annual survey on the number of homeless persons in North Rhine-Westphalia.

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[46] Note that the agreed basic data set for client register systems for the homeless in Germany comprises much more variables than those which are planned to be included in an annual survey on the quantitative extent of homelessness in North Rhine-Westphalia.. While the basic data set comprises (in the version which will be used from 2007 onwards) 42 different variables, the survey will only collect information on five variables: Sex, age, nationality, household structure and accommodation situation. In addition information on household structure and accommodation situation has to be updated for the survey (only available in the basic data set as “start” and “end” variable). In our review we refer to the complete basic data set variables.

[47] Included are not only those variables of the HIFIS system which are collected on the national level, but all variables included in the HIFIS Data Export Files.

[48] The Spanish INE-survey from 2005 uses a mix of legal and de facto marital status categories (including “*consensual union*” and adding to “*divorced*” the two categories “*legally separated*” and “*de facto separated*”).

None of the national client registration systems in America (HMIS), Canada (HIFIS) and Australia (SMART) asks questions on marital status.

CES recommendations for the 2010 censuses of Population and Housing include information on marital status as core topic. Optionally a response category "*person living in a register/legal partnership*" can be added to the classic categories "*never married*", "*married*", "*widowed and not remarried*", and " *divorced and not remarried*".[49] As a non-core topic information on "*de facto marital status*" is mentioned by the recommendations, but it is noted that such information can also be derived from information on topics related to household and family characteristics of persons.

7.4.2.2 Nationality / Migration background

Obviously the questions concerning nationality and migration background are seen as very sensitive at least in some European countries and treated very differently. In some registration systems nationality is not asked,[50] but the place of birth or the country of origin and vice versa. Some registration systems and surveys contain additional variables informing about a possible migration background (Sweden: Any of parents born outside Sweden?; Germany: direct question on migration background, the systems in the UK include detailed information on ethnic origin). In some of the registration systems there is also a question on the residence status / immigration status.[51]

The American HMIS system does not ask questions on nationality but on ethnicity and race (the latter with a comprehensive list). The Canadian HIFIS Data export files and the Australian SMART reporting tool contain no question on nationality but there is an "*aboriginal indicator*" and a variable on country of origin.

The CES recommendations for the 2010 censuses of Population and Housing foresee "*country/place of birth*" and "*country of citizenship*" as core topics. Other core topics to measure international migration are "*ever resided abroad and year of arrival in the country*" and "*previous place of residence and date of arrival in the current place*". Among the non-core topics mentioned by the recommendations are "*persons with foreign/national background*" (defined as persons whose parents were borne outside the country) and "*country of birth of parents*". "*Ethnicity*" is also mentioned as a non-core topic and there is a special remark on the problematic sides of such a variable (p. 90): "*Ethno-cultural characteristics have generally a subjective dimension, they can be politically sensitive and population groups are often small. The free and open declaration of the respondents is therefore of essential importance. Members of certain minority groups may be particularly vulnerable to discrimination on the grounds of ethnic group or religion. Special care, therefore, may be required in census procedures and outputs relating to ethnic group and religion in order to demonstrate to respondents that appropriate data protection and disclosure control measures are in place."*

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[49] As applied in the Spanish INE survey the CES recommendations also mention the option to add the category of "*legally separated*" for those countries where such a legal status exists.

[50] For example in the Regas and Clever systems in the Netherlands and in the Swedish survey on homelessness, but data on nationality are documented in most client register systems and surveys, e.g. in Germany (client register system), in Czech Republic (NewPeopleVision and EK), the CHAIN database in London and in the INE-survey in Spain. The data registration for clients of Supporting People in England doesn't include information on nationality, country of origin or place of birth, but on ethnic origin.

[51] In Spain information on ethnic origin is not collected and in France strong data protection rules apply if information on ethnicity is collected.

7.4.2.3 Household and family characteristics

A number of register systems and surveys include a variable on household structure or the living situation of persons receiving services. The Dutch system comes very close to the system recommended for census purposes (distinction into private and institutional households and "others, homeless/roofless").

In several systems it is documented, if the person lives

- alone without child(ren)
- alone with a child/children
- in a couple without child(ren)
- in a couple with a child/children

This is also the case for the Dutch system as differentiation of private households (adding "with others (flatmates)" as fifth category). Sometimes information on sex of the persons living alone with or without children is also provided (single men, single women, single father, single mother).

Some registers and surveys have a separate variable with information on children not living with the homeless person.

In the US HMIS System a household identifier number is provided for all members of the same household[52] but data are collected for each individual member separately (including the children). The Canadian HIFIS Data export files contain a family identifier and a variable indicating the family type (single, family, single mother) and type of family member. SMART in Australia reports if client has a child or children presently on his form for the current support period and whom the client was living with before and after the support period.

The CES recommendations for the 2010 censuses of Population and Housing do not suggest household structures for "*primary homeless persons*" (rough sleepers) and "*institutional households*". Household structures are generally only applied for private households using the concept of "*place of usual residence*". But in the recommendations it is also mentioned (in para. 487) that "*there are some persons comprising households who do not live in private or institutional households*". Obviously at least the "*secondary homeless*"[53] may also have a household structure. Using the "*housekeeping concept*" a similar differentiation can be drawn as for private households at least for people living in temporary accommodation for the homeless (but this is not explicitly mentioned by the CES recommendations). For private households the core topic recommended by the CES is "r*elationships between household members*". Out of these data derived core topics can be created for "*type of private household*"[54] and for "*type of family nucleus"*[55] as well as for "*household status*"[56] and "*family status*".[57]

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[52] A household is defined in the HMIS system as follows: "*A household is a group of persons who together apply for and / or receive a specific homeless assistance service*".

[53] Definition (see para 489 of the recommendations): "*This category may include persons with no place of usual residence who move frequently between various types of accommodations (including dwellings, shelters, institutions for the homeless or other living quarters). This category includes persons living in private dwellings but reporting 'no usual address' on their census form*."

[54] Such as non family households, one-family households and two or more family households.

[55] Such as husband wife family, cohabiting couple, lone father, lone mother, reconstituted family

[56] Such as person in a private household and persons not in a private household. Persons in private households can be further differentiated into those living in a nuclear family household and those living in other private households (the latter differentiated in living alone, living with relatives and living with non-relatives). Persons in a nuclear family household can

7.4.2.4 Economic characteristics

Variables used in existing register systems and surveys of homeless persons for documenting their economic characteristics (or their daily pursuit) differ considerably. Main variables in this context are occupation (or daily pursuits) including information on unemployment, source/type of income and amount of income.

Most systems inform us if the person is in paid employment or not. But further differentiations of both situations differ considerably. Information on the type and scope of paid employment (regular or subsidised and if subsidised further information on type of subsidized employment; full time or part time; duration of employment etc.) are collected in different ways. Some register data also contain information on participation in voluntary work. Attendance in school or training might be mentioned as further specification for not working (as well as retirement, invalidity, illness or care of dependant persons). If persons are unemployed/looking for employment further questions might be asked about the duration of unemployment, registration with employment centres, factors hampering take-up of employment etc.

Source / type of income are asked in some of the client registers and surveys.[58] Either the question relates directly to the main source of income or multiple answers are possible and there is an additional question on the main type of income. Possible answers also depend on the different national types of transfer incomes (including different types of social security payments, pensions and basic income schemes, different types of grants for students etc.). Among the possible answers should also be informal sources of income like friends and relatives, alms etc.

Net monthly income of the person is documented by some of the registers and surveys.[59] Questions normally relate to the preceding month or the month preceding start / end of service provision. It should be noted that questions on amount of income are very sensitive.

In the US HMIS System questions on source and amount of income are of particular importance.[60] Several questions are asked about the exact monthly amount of income from working and from various other sources and on receipt of various types of cash benefits. There are also questions on employment (y/n). For those employed additional questions are asked on the amount of hours worked the preceding week and whether it was permanent, temporary or seasonal work. Those not employed are asked whether they are currently looking for work. No further specifications are required. The

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be differentiated in husband, wife, male partner in consensual union, female partner in a consensual union, lone father, lone mother, child under 25 years of age, son/daughter aged 25 or older and other persons not member of the nuclear family, but in a nuclear family household.

57 Such as partner, lone parent, child (further differentiation similar to that of persons in a nuclear family household, but with further information if child is of both partners or one partner only)

58 Not included in future annual survey on homelessness in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany (but in core data set for client register systems in Germany), nor in the registration systems from the UK. Included in the other client register systems under review and in homelessness surveys in Sweden, Portugal, and Spain.

59 Included in surveys in Portugal and Spain, but not in Sweden. Also not included in Clever client registration system in the Netherlands and in the UK systems under review.

60 The rationale for detailed information on income data is given as follows: "*Income and sources of income are important for determining service needs of people at the time of program entry, determining whether they are accessing all income sources for which they are eligible, assessing their degree of vulnerability to chronic homelessness, and describing the characteristics of the homeless population. Capturing the amount of cash income from various sources will help to: Assure all income sources are counted in the calculation of total income; enable program staff to take into account the composition of income in determining needs; determine if people are receiving the mainstream program benefits to which they may be entitled; help clients apply for benefits assistance; and allow analysis of changes in the composition of income between entry and exit from program*." (DHUD 2003, p. 43/44)

Canadian HIFIS Data export files contain a variable on source of income (10 items listed) but not on amount of income. The main source of income is registered by the Australian SMART system for the day immediately before the support period and the day following the end of the support period (list of 17 items). In addition data on labour force status and student status before and after support period are collected.

CES census recommendations advise first to determine the activity status (core topic: current activity status) to distinguish between economically active (either employed or unemployed) and not economically active persons (students, pension or capital income recipients, homemakers, others). "*Providers of unpaid services, volunteers*" are mentioned as non-core topic for additional information. Among the core topics for describing the jobs of economically active persons are "*occupation*" (in accordance with International Standard Classification of Occupations), "*industry (branch of economic activity)*", and "*status in employment*". Among the non-core topics are listed among others: "*duration of unemployment*", "*main source of livelihood*",[61] and "*income*".[62]

7.4.2.5 Educational characteristics

The highest educational attainment is asked for by several client register systems and homeless surveys.[63] In some surveys additional items are included to document if those persons without educational attainment can read and write and some systems collect additional information on vocational training and qualifications.

The HMIS system in the US asks for current school attendance, whether the person has received any vocational training or apprenticeship certificates and for the highest level of school completed (including a special question on various university degrees for those with high school diploma or GED).The Canadian HIFIS system does not include a variable on education, nor does the Australian SMART system (except student status before and after support period).

CES census recommendations advise to compile data on educational attainment (core topic) in accordance with the latest revision of International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).[64] "*Educational qualifications*" are mentioned as a non-core topic which may also be recorded in addition. Other non-core topics relevant in our context are "*school attendance*" and "*literacy*".

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[61] For census purposes it is recommended to distinguish the main sources of lifelihood as follows: Employment (wage employment or self-employment), property and other investments, pensions of all types, other transfers, loans or reduction of savings / realisation of capital, dependent (mainly supported by another person or persons) , and other sources. The item "other transfers" is further subdivided into sickness and maternity allowances, unemployment benefits and relief, scholarship and other benefits and assistance than those mentioned already.

[62] For census purposes it is recommended to collect information on the individual and for the household of which he/she is a member. The time span for which information on income is collected is suggested with "*the preceding twelve months or past year*". It is probably unrealistic to expect such information from homeless persons.

[63] Not included in the planned annual survey of homelessness in North Rhine-Westphalia (but in the German client registration systems), the register systems in the UK and in the survey on homelessness in Sweden, but included in the client register systems in the Netherlands and in Czech Republic, the rough sleepers survey in Portugal, and the INE survey in Spain.

[64] OECD: Education at a Glance, 2004. ISCED levels are defined as follows: level 1: Primary (first stage of basic education); level 2: Lower secondary (second stage of basic education); level 3. (Upper) secondary; level 4: Post Secondary non-tertiary education; level 5. First stage of tertiary education; level 6: Second Stage of Tertiary Education. CES further recommends that persons, who have received no formal schooling, should also be identified and that special attention needs to be paid to persons who received their education under a different or foreign systems.

7.4.2.6 Housing characteristics

Surveys and client register systems differ considerably in extent and differentiation of information concerning the current or previous housing situation of clients/respondents. The German basic data set for electronic client registration systems and the client record system for Supporting People in England ask for the type of accommodation occupied by the client immediately prior to receiving the support service. Surveys or registration systems focusing on rough sleepers ask for the last settled place or previous housing situation before sleeping rough and the current sleeping facility (see Chain in London, rough sleeper survey in Portugal, but also the INE survey in Spain).

The American HMIS register includes a question on residence the night before program entry, in the Canadian HIFIS system clients are asked about the type of their last long term housing.[65] The Australian SMART data collection system registers data on the type of accommodation immediately before and after support period (with a list of ten different types of accommodation and an additional question on the type of tenure) and the location of clients last settled home before the current period of homelessness.

The recommended differentiation of types of housing for the 2010 Census has been discussed in detail in chapter three of this report. CES recommendations refer to the following types of housing

- conventional dwellings
- other housing units
  - mobile housing units such as tents and caravans
  - semi-permanent housing units such as huts or cabins
  - other housing units designed for habitation such as shacks or shanties
  - other housing units not designed for habitation such as stables, barns, mills, garages, warehouses, offices etc.
- collective living quarters
  - hotels, rooming houses and other lodging houses
  - institutions and
  - camps

To be “homeless with no place of usual residence” is mentioned as fourth category of housing types in the recommendations, but homeless people with no place of usual residence can of course at the time of registration or of a survey make (temporary) use of one of the housing type mentioned before. For homeless people different types of facilities to sleep at (because of a lack of housing) are mentioned by the CES 2010 report: (para. 606). Homeless people can sleep for example

- rough or in buildings which were not designed for human habitation;
- in emergency centres, or night shelters
- in emergency accommodation in hotels, guest houses or bed and breakfast
- in hospitals due to lack of decent shelter; or
- in accommodation temporarily provided by friends or relatives because of the lack of a permanent place to stay.

[65] Long term is defined in an example as the most recent stable housing type -generally a stay of 3 or more months - within the last year. Possible answers include not only „l*iving in my own house or apartment*“ and “l*iving in my families house or apartment*”, but also rooming house, hostel, hotel, hospital (medical or psychiatric), jail and other.

7.4.3 Clients Assessment information

The assessment of clients support needs, of reasons for homelessness and of problems and skills of homeless people covered by register systems and surveys shows a great variety of variables and data items documented. There are systems in which a classification under different client groups is the only relevant information (Supporting People in England), others (like Chain in London) which inform about specific problems by using a "*lifestyle and support needs form*" with some basic information on addiction (alcohol, drugs), health (metal/physical), learning difficulties, sex working and the institutional history (stay in armed forces, care and prison), and systems which have much more detailed information on different types of problems. One of the most extended register systems of our review in this respect is the Regas system used by Federatie Obvang members in the Netherlands.

Several systems distinguish between important immediate causes for homelessness and underlying support needs, between "*primary*" and "*secondary*" client groups or between *"main reason for need of shelter*" and "*contributing factors*" The latter is the case for the Canadian HIFIS system. In Australia the "*presenting reasons for seeking assistance*" are recorded by SMART with a large list of items classified into five main categories (interpersonal relationships, financial, accommodation, health and other reasons). An additional question records the "*main presenting reason for seeking assistance*". The American HMIS system records data on disability, general health status (five scales from excellent to poor), pregnancy status, HIV/AIDS status, behavioural health status (including questions on alcohol, drug and psychiatric problems and respective treatment in the past) and on experience of domestic violence and participation in military service (several question on veteran status).

While some of the systems explicitly emphasise that the problems recorded are self-assessed by the clients (using questions like "*do you feel that you have a problem with alcohol"*), others make clear that the definition of problems and support needs is a result of assessment of service personnel. Sometimes there are further specifications, e.g. if mental problems were assessed by social workers or by health professionals (Chain, London; HIFIS Canada).

7.4.4 Provision of services and outcomes

Some registration systems have a detailed documentation of "*service use history*" (e.g. Regas in the Netherlands, records types of services utilised in 12 months prior to service now being offered), some just document referral agencies and services provided after the registration of the client and others do not record any details on services delivered.

The American HMIS data include recorded information on each service provided or referred to using a large manual of standardized terminology for human services. A large list of support measures is also provided by the Australian SMART system and for each support type it is recorded if a need for such service was identified by service workers, and if support was provided by the service agency or if referral was arranged.

In client register systems indicators about outcomes can be the variables which are measured at the end of service provision (compared with what was recorded at the beginning), questions on discharge status, destination and referrals at end of service as well as data from follow-up questions after program exit. The German basic set of variables includes "end variables" for source of income, own banc account, employment, accommodation, social ties, visits to doctor in preceding six months and for possession of a health insurance card. A question on destination at end of service is also included in HIFIS, HMIS and SMART. In Australia information is also recorded on the existence of a support plan by the end of the support period and on the extent of achievement of the client's management goals by

the end of the support period. Follow-up interviews which are obligatory in the USA for some service programs for the homeless include questions on income and sources, non-cash-benefits, education, employment, and change of household composition.

The current trend in many countries towards outcome measurement to evaluate the effectiveness of services in alleviating homelessness and in order to get better information on the pathways of homeless people out of the homeless system, suggests that the request for outcome data will be growing in future. It might therefore be appropriate to include further core variables in this area, but at present this approach still has to be developed further on the local, regional and national level.

7.5 Recommendations on set of variables for EU measurement of homelessness

Our overview has shown that harmonisation of the definition of most variables is necessary if they shall be used for comparative purposes on EU-level. A core data set should only comprise a very restricted number of variables which should be collected all over Europe using the same definitions and which should provide the basis for information about the profile of homeless people in Europe.

This core data set should inform about basic demographic characteristic (age and gender), about nationality and migration background (country of birth), composition of homeless households, their accommodation situation (immediately before service period and at time of data collection), the duration of (current) homelessness and the reasons for (last) homelessness. A list of those variables and data items recommended as core variables is presented in table 7.2.

Reasons for selecting those variables as core variables are their importance for providing information about the profiles of the homeless population, but also their availability in (most) existing registration system and that it is relatively easy to harmonise the definition of these items for European data collection purposes. However not all of the items are recorded by all existing systems and there will still be a need for change of definitions on the national level in a number of cases.

The number and type of variables selected as core variables will always be controversial. There are reasons for keeping the number of items as low as possible to facilitate the implementation of a European wide data collection and to reduce the obstacles regarding data protection and availability of data at the national level. On the other hand there will always be a discussion on the need for further information and for enlarging the scope of profile variables needed for comparative analysis and for understanding the changing profile of homeless people, their background, service needs, causes of homelessness etc.

Therefore a second set of non-core variables is recommended. The collection of such information (for example on support needs) using the same definitions across Europe would also be highly welcome. However, for some variables it will take time to harmonise definitions and to reach a European wide consensus and information on some of the items is less common in existing client registration systems or it is more controversial whether such information is really needed. The collection of non-core items should therefore be optional for national authorities but the list is included to provide guidance for those that decide to include them in their data collection systems.

While the set of harmonised variables is predominantly thought to be covering users of accommodation based services it should also be usable by other types of services (advice centres, day centres etc.). It therefore includes in some areas options that seem irrelevant for our context (e.g. covering the option “not homeless” under current accommodation; but some people might be clients of services for the

homeless without being homeless at the moment, and services might be directed at prevention of homelessness and/or on securing the sustainability of re-housing).

Table 7.3 Proposed Core Variables

Variable	CORE
Demographic Characteristics: Age and Gender	
Age	Date of birth
Gender	Male/Female
Nationality / Migration background	
Nationality	Country of citizenship
Country of birth	Country of birth
Household / family characteristics	
Household structure/ living situation	Alone living without child(ren), alone living together with child(ren), couple living without child(ren), couple living together with child(ren) Other type of household
Housing characteristics	
Previous accommodation, night before entering service and current accommodation situation (at date of counting)	Living Rough (public space / external space) In emergency accommodation (overnight shelters) In accommodation for the homeless (homeless hostels, temporary accommodation, transitional supported accommodation) Living in crisis shelter for domestic violence Living in institutions (health care, prison) Living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing (mobile homes, non-standard building, temporary structure) Sharing with friends or relatives (due to homelessness) Homeless and living in other types of accommodation Not homeless
Duration of (current) homelessness	Less than 2 months; 2 to under 6 months; 6 months to under 1 year ; 1 to under 3 years,; 3 to under 5 years; 5 years and longer
Reasons for Homelessness	
Reason(s) for last period of homelessness as defined by the homeless person (several answers possible)	Landlord Action (eviction) / Mortgage repossession End of contract / unfit housing / lack of housing Relationship breakdown / family conflict / death Loss of job / unemployment Violence Personal (support needs / addiction / health) Financial (debt) Discharge from institution / armed forces Immigration Force majeur (fire, flood etc). Other reasons

Table 7.3 presents the variables which we recommend to use as harmonised non-core variables in data register systems and surveys on the national level. Of course more variables can be collected and are currently collected by different data register systems, but it would be helpful for any trans-national

comparisons to harmonise at least the definition of those listed here and to be able to provide comparable data on client's profiles for this set of non-core variables in the medium term.

The proposed non-core variables comprise data on main activity and source of income, on highest educational attainment, and the main areas of support needs, which would also provide some additional information on contributing factors to the reasons of homelessness reported as core topic. Where it was feasible recommendations for the census 2010 were followed for the definition of data items. However, for information on income we choose to use a simplified variant of items which are collected by some of the data register systems, equally for the questions on main activity and on support needs.

The list does not include information on outcomes and service use, although such information is highly valuable. Because of the variety of support systems and client registration approaches it is rather difficult to define harmonised procedures to collect such information. For systems which are recording information at service entry and at exit of service a general recommendation would be to make it possible to compare the situation before and after service for a number of variables.

Table 7.4 Proposed Non-Core Variables

Variable	NON-CORE
Economic characteristics	
Main activity	Paid employment (non subsidised), Subsidised employment, sheltered employment Voluntary work, School or training Unemployed (but able to work) Retired Long-term sick/disable
Source / type of income (several answers possible)	Income from paid employment Pension for old aged or severely handicapped Income from minimum subsistence scheme Other types of welfare benefits Educational grants Income from begging, sex working Other types of income No income at all Indication of main income source
Educational characteristics	
Highest educational attainment	Highest Educational attainment (coded to ISCED level)
Support needs/Problems	
Physical health	Disability (y/n) Other physical health problems (y/n)
Mental health	Mental problems (no, suspected, diagnosed)
Addiction	Alcohol (no, suspected, diagnosed) Drugs (no, suspected, diagnosed) Other substances / gambling etc. (no, suspected, diagnosed)
Financial	Debts? (y/n)
Occupation	Lack of occupation/training (y/n)
Safety / violence	Experience of domestic abuse (y/n)

7.6 Conclusions

This chapter has reviewed variables which are part of a number of existing client record systems in Europe, Australia, Canada and the USA and those used in recent surveys carried through in several EU countries. A core data set is proposed with a restricted number of variables which should be collected all over Europe using the same definitions and which should provide the basis for information about the profile of homeless people in Europe.

This core data set should inform about

- basic demographic characteristic (age and gender),
- about nationality and migration background (country of birth),
- composition of homeless households,
- their accommodation situation (immediately before service period and at time of data collection),
- the duration of (current) homelessness and
- the reasons for (last) homelessness.

A list of those variables and data items recommended as core variables is presented in table 7.3. Reasons for selecting those variables as core variables are their importance for providing information about the profiles of the homeless population, but also their availability in (most) existing registration system (which usually collect much more data than these) and that it is relatively easy to harmonise the definition of these items for European data collection purposes. However not all of the items are recorded by all existing systems and there will still be a need for change of definitions on the national level in a number of cases.

Such a restricted list of core variables increases the feasibility of data harmonisation. While developed mainly for accommodation based services the variables can also be used as a core data set for client registration at non residential services for the homeless. For some of the variables there might be more missing data as for others, although systems to improve and ensure data quality can have a substantial effect on the number of non responses and missing data (see chapter 6 for examples). Even without full coverage of the homeless population a set of harmonised core variables would enhance the understanding of homelessness and of the changing profile of the homeless population.

A second set of non-core variables is also recommended. The collection of such information (for example on support needs) using the same definitions across Europe would also be highly welcome. However, for some variables it will take time to harmonise definitions and to reach a European wide consensus. Furthermore information on some of the items is less common in existing client registration systems or it is more controversial whether such information is really needed. The collection of non-core items should therefore be optional for national authorities.

Table 7.3 presents the variables which we recommend to use as harmonised non-core variables in data register systems and surveys on the national level.

The proposed non-core variables comprise data on

- main activity,
- source of income,
- highest educational attainment, and
- the main areas of support needs.

The latter would also provide some additional information on contributing factors to the reasons of homelessness reported as core topic.

Both lists do not include information on outcomes and service use, although such information is highly valuable and increasingly asked for to evaluate the effectiveness of services in alleviating homelessness. However for the time being it is rather difficult to define harmonised procedures to collect such information because of the variety of support systems and client registration approaches. For systems which are recording information at service entry and at exit of service a general recommendation would be to make it possible to compare the situation before and after service for a number of variables. It might be necessary and feasible in the medium term to include variables on outcomes in the list of core variables.

Chapter 8

Surveys of homeless people using services

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have considered how data can be collected from service providers by taking advantage of the development across Europe of computerised client registers amongst homeless service providers. Collating standardised register variables from service provider client register systems can give excellent information about both the numbers and profiles of the homeless population, and has the potential to provide the best quality data. However, as chapter 6 showed, although there has been considerable development of client register systems across Europe in the last few years, their use is not universal, and no country yet has a system that covers the entire service provider population. In these cases, it can be beneficial (or may even be essential) to collect information about the homeless population via survey methodologies. This can either replace or supplement the collection of collated client information from client register systems.

In this chapter we firstly examine some of the historic and current attempts to use survey methods across Europe to collect information about and measure the homeless population. Then we look at the various survey methodologies that can be employed, and consider their strengths and weaknesses. And from this we make some recommendations about how to employ these methodologies in the context of this research.

8.2 Surveys of homeless people using services across Europe

Over the past 10 - 15 years there have been many surveys carried out of the homeless population in different countries. This brief section outlines some of the surveys that have been conducted. This list is not an exhaustive one, but one that illustrates both the range of recent survey activity across Europe and the different methodologies employed.

For a more comprehensive guide to past and current activity in this area, the INSEE report for EUROSTAT (Brousse, 2004) contained a detailed survey of over 50 different data collection systems across Europe, including many with survey-based methodology. It is outside the scope of this report (and unnecessary) to re-examine these systems.

Instead, this section of the report highlights one or two of the most significant surveys of homeless people in different countries and some more recent developments that were not covered in the INSEE report. Each of the country reports in this chapter are based on the country papers commissioned specifically for this report and quote from them extensively. Executive summaries of the country papers are provided as Appendix 1.2.

France[66]

"In 2001, the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) conducted a national survey of users of shelters and hot meal distributions. Among service users, the homeless population was defined as persons who had spent the night preceding the interview in accommodation provided by NGOs or other service providers, or in a place not intended for habitation such as a public space. Accommodation here included the centres maternels, or mother and child refuges; this was not the case in the INED survey, which explains the higher proportion of homeless women in the INSEE survey. The geographical field was that of urban centres with 20,000 inhabitants and over. The persons interviewed were French speakers; however, the estimates of numbers of users and of homeless people are for all users whatever their language and are for metropolitan France as a whole.

Sampling was in three stages: first the population centres, then the service site-days, then the services (a night, a meal) in each service-site (by selecting the individuals using them, since the set of weights provides results pertaining to individuals, not to services).

This survey was conducted in early 2001 in 80 metropolitan areas with a population of 20,000 or more. The data collection took place between 15 January and 12 February, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Monday 22 January. 4,109 persons were surveyed by a total of over 300 interviewers. The final sample contained 4,014 questionnaires. Each interview lasted on average around one hour.

A list of the sites of the shelters and hot meal distributions was prepared one year before the survey and updated just before the survey started. This list was drawn up in the 80 urban centres selected but also in 80 smaller centres with between 5,000 and 20,000 inhabitants. 2,700 service sites were thus listed and responded to a telephone survey. The telephone survey showed one third to be out-of-field, because they provided neither beds nor hot meals. A sample frame of 1,464 service sites was thus obtained in the 80 selected population centres with 20,000 inhabitants or more.

The sampling of services (that is, the sampling of the individuals receiving them, in a selected service site, on a given day) was done on the basis of a list when one existed (for example, a list of beds) or according to the position of the individual in the queue waiting to reach the table where meals were being distributed, etc.

To weight the data, it was necessary to know how the respondent had used the different services (beds, hot meals) in the week before the survey. These questions were thus part of the questionnaire. The “weight sharing” method (see diagram below or Ardilly and Le Blanc, 2001) was used to establish several sets of weights. One set corresponds to an “average day” in the reference period (that is, the data collection period, from 15 January to 12 February 2001) and another to an “average week”.

The first INED survey (1995) over-sampled meal distributions and emergency shelters so that the sample would contain a larger number of people sleeping in the street or in emergency shelters. This was not done in the INSEE survey for which the total sample was much larger.

This kind of methodology is applicable in any other city or country where such services are operated. An extension could be to consider certain public spaces (railway stations, for example) as “service sites” and sample them accordingly (with the added difficulty of determining how many homeless people are in the place considered, since it is not always easy to distinguish the homeless from other people)."

66 Services for the homeless in France: Description, official statistics, client recording of information, M. Marpsat, INED, commissioned for this study, 2006

Spain

In Spain there has been an exercise over the past few years to build up a picture of the numbers and profiles of homeless people. This included the compilation of a database of services by Caritas and the University of Comillas in Madrid, questionnaires to every service for homeless people in 2003/4 and then a major survey of homeless people in December 2005 conducted by INE (National Statistical Office) under a model closely based on that used by INED in France.

Although the main aim of the 2003/4 survey of questionnaires to service providers was to build up a picture of the network of services for homeless people, rather than to estimate the number or socio-demographic composition, it did enable an estimate of the numbers of people using services. However substantial estimation was required to extrapolate from the survey findings, especially from the numbers of users of soup kitchens and similar facilities.

The 2005 survey carried out by INE was a major representative survey of homeless people themselves. Sample frames were designed according to the French model, and included users of shelters and soup kitchens across urban areas in Spain. A lengthy questionnaire (123 questions) included a range of questions about client profiles and accommodation histories as well as a number of subjective questions. There were particular challenges around finding suitable interviewers as "For example, some of INE's professional interviewers did not seem adequately qualified to inspire empathy and confidence in their interviewees"[67]. In addition there were also problems with language skills to interview those who did not speak Spanish, Catalan, Gallego or Euskera.

A two stage sampling process (as in France) was used to select services to include in the survey and the number clients to include from each survey sites. Responses were then weighted by reference to the "probability that the service could have been chosen" and according to the relative use of the facilities during the previous week.

From the survey a national estimate of homelessness was possible. However it was noted that the methodology excluded localities of less than 20,000 inhabitants to reduce fieldwork costs (thus excluding rural homelessness). And as field work was not carried out on the street, it also only included those rough sleepers who had visited a soup-kitchen in the reference period.

"The INE Survey 2005 was a landmark within Spanish research on excluded groups. Nevertheless, unless interest in the generation of social inclusion indicators can be firmly supported by supra-national organisations, it is unlikely that this investigation by INE could become a regular collection of statistical data on homelessness."[68]

Hungary

In Hungary, the government specifies the subject of the National Statistical Programme for Data Collection (NSPDC) each year by decree. Data collected from this exercise can deal with homeless care. Questionnaires are distributed to institutions, and as well as information on the services provided and their capacity, the questionnaire contains questions about client numbers during the year, and profile data on age and gender of those clients. From this exercise, which all service providers are obliged to complete, collated data is published by the HCSO in a Social Statistical Yearbook providing stock-type data about services and clients. However this data collection exercise only covers the care

[67] Spain country paper, P. Cabrera & G. Malgesini, commissioned for this study, 2006

services described in legislation, whereas there are a number of services that exist outside the framework of the social care legislation, and thus a comprehensive picture of the range of services (and thus of client numbers) is not provided.

Portugal[69]

"Developments in data collection have been identified in the last 2 years, namely by the launching of the first national survey of rough sleeping. On the night of the 12th October 2005, a survey was launched in all 'heads of municipalities' of inland Portugal, aimed at identifying and characterising 'all the people who were sleeping rough, in the city head of the municipality in inland Portugal, during a fixed period of time.'

The definition used (people with no abode) comprised all situations of people who were found sleeping:

- On the street, in a space used by other people (e.g. public gardens)
- On a public space used by other people (airport, train stations)
- On a public space in areas not commonly used by other people (specific areas in airports and train stations where some privacy was achieved).

A structured questionnaire was prepared, comprising several groups of questions organised by individual demographic data, school and professional histories, economic situation, health condition, family and community relationships, housing situation and history, problems leading to absence of housing, institutional experiences, and satisfaction with one's life.

A wide range of contacts and meetings was held in the months preceding the survey in order to encourage the Social Security Services around the country and other institutions working with homeless people to collaborate by completing the questionnaires.

The Regional Social Security Services coordinated the local teams, which were formed by workers from local social services, municipalities, NGOs, and volunteers who were working directly with homeless people. Training was provided by the Institute for Social Security (ISS) central services, then replicated at the local level by the person responsible for the operation at the Regional Social Security Services. The information was analysed by the ISS co-ordinating team."

Sweden[70]

National surveys to count and estimate homelessness in Sweden have been carried out by the National Board of Health and Welfare (NBHW) in 1993, 1999 and 2005. Different definitions of homelessness and methodology were used on each occasion, reducing the ability to directly compare the results of the exercises.

The 2005 NBHW survey consisted of a questionnaire distributed to organisations that might come in contact with homeless people. These included social services, the probation authorities, correctional treatment facilities, prisons, women's shelters, clinics for treatment of addicts, psychiatric clinics, emergency wards, mobile outreach teams and many NGOs. There will inevitably be some homeless people, unknown to the responding organisations, who the survey does not cover. Some homeless

69 Portugal position paper, I Baptista, CESIS, commissioned for this study, 2006

70 Sweden country paper, C. Löfstrand, Göteborg University, commissioned for this study, 2006

people refused to take part in the survey, and some staff did not want to provide information about the homeless frequenting their localities.

The response rate varied markedly between different types of respondents. Social authorities had the highest response rates, NGOs the lowest. Participation was voluntary, i.e. respondents were not obliged to provide the NBHW with data on homeless individuals. But the validity of the data provided by the responding organisations is difficult to judge, since the NBHW does not have (or ask for) information about the respondents' own systems for recording information about their clients. It might also be that there are organisations which have regular contact with homeless people but did not respond.

Different religious groups, reception centers for asylum seekers and police authorities were discussed as possible recipients of the questionnaire, but in the end did not receive it. Also, the period covered (one-week) influences the results on the extent as well as the character of homelessness. Taking all this into consideration, it appears to be impossible to gather reliable information about the extent of homelessness in Sweden using the current definition and mode of procedure for data collection. The results indicate around 17,800 homeless in Sweden in 2005, but this is probably an under-estimate. The overall quality of data is probably relatively good, especially in comparison with earlier surveys (NBHW 1993, 1999), even though the new and broader definition of homelessness used in the latest survey has not yet found support among all responding organisations.

8.3 Survey methodologies

There are two broad survey methodologies that we will be considering in this section. These are as follows:

- Direct surveys of homeless people
- Collection of data from organisations providing services to homeless people

Within each of these methodologies, there are a variety of approaches. Some of the relevant aspects of each will be examined.

8.3.1 Direct surveys of homeless people

The French and Spanish surveys mentioned above are the two most significant examples of major direct surveys of homeless people in Europe. They use sample surveys and employ a clear statistical basis and established methodologies for designing, conducting and evaluating the surveys. The examples of prior surveys in the USA, France and Spain can be used as a basis for further work.

One specialised form of direct survey is a street count of people sleeping rough. These have been carried out in many countries across Europe, normally in major cities or urban areas with a high level of rough sleeping. There are established methodologies for carrying out such surveys, such as that developed in the UK under the various Rough Sleepers Initiatives from 1991 – 2003 (see Randall and Brown, 2003; Vranken, 2004 for a review).

8.3.2 Collection of data from organisations providing services to homeless people

Some surveys highlighted above, such as the NBHW surveys in Sweden, or the NSPDC surveys of providers in Hungary are based on data collection from service providers about the clients of their

services over a period of time (in some cases as much as a year). There is also a French example, the ES survey (on Etablissements Sociaux). Whilst these surveys can provide useful information about the capacity and performance of individual service providers, it is rarely possible to collate the information from multiple service providers for measurement purposes without far more detailed information about the patterns of homelessness in that country, such as the levels of newly homeless people, the length of stay in services, the extent of multiple stays in different accommodation services and the levels of move-on to permanent or settled accommodation.

Other surveys of service providers, especially of accommodation providers, address these issues of double counting by reducing the time-frame to a single night. Such point in time (snapshot) surveys can produce interesting data, but the level of data that can be collected is normally limited. In the UK, Resource Information Service have for, example, carried out regular point-in-time surveys of direct access emergency hostels in London to profile their population by age, gender, support needs and immigration status. This has been used to identify the number of hostel residents in London that had slept rough prior to hostel admission (1997), or the use of homelessness services by refugees and asylum seekers (1999 and 2003)

Such surveys do have clear limitations. They are reliant on the knowledge of the managers of the services about their clients. Where a service does not have an effective client recording system, such knowledge may be limited. This is especially true in low threshold emergency services or non-residential services where little data may be collected from users. There may also be a tendency for service managers to shape their answers to reflect their personal views on the needs of their service. For example, in France, INED found that collecting data on the occupancy levels of centres was problematic as their funding was directly linked to the level of their activity (Quaglia & Vivier, 2006). And probably as a result of these limitations, such surveys may be criticised by other bodies as not providing direct information, but only indirect data shaped by the perceptions of service managers.

Another limitation of such surveys is that it is rarely possible to cross-tabulate results between different service providers as results are normally already collated at the service level And finally, collecting information about homeless people from service providers via surveys places an additional burden on service providers that are not typically well-resourced organisations. Unlike collating data from client registers, the service providers that participate in surveys gain no direct benefit from participation, whereas with client registers, they have the resulting client records to inform their day-to-day work..

8.4 Advantages of survey methods of data collection

Collecting data via surveys does have some clear advantages. As the INSEE/EUROSTAT report identified, direct surveys of homeless people have the potential benefit that they encourage the emergence of common definitions. We have considered this for the emergent development of client register systems, and identified a set of core variables in chapter 7 that are needed for collating and comparing data from different systems. Direct surveys can also be based on household surveys, which are well established and "already fairly well harmonised and would thus make international comparison easier" (INSEE, 2003)

There is already a substantial international body of good statistical practice in direct surveys that can be exploited. Such issues as sample design, questionnaire design, statistical analysis of results, weightings and fieldwork methodology have already been addressed, both in related fields and also in homelessness (eg, in France and Spain). National statistical offices are likely to be familiar with such techniques and methodologies and comfortable with their use.

If comprehensive and detailed directories and databases of homelessness services are collected, to the standards outlined in chapter 5, then mechanisms will already exist for collecting information from service providers about service information. Extending this methodology to collect information about clients may be relatively affordable and achievable. However there remain questions about the quality of such data.

8.5 Disadvantages of survey methods of data collection

There are a number of specific disadvantages of collecting information via surveys in comparison to client recording systems. Some of these are considered below, along with some consideration of how these disadvantages may be mitigated.

8.5.1 Double counting

All surveys, whether of service providers or directly from individuals, need to be able to consider how to minimise the impact of double counting. This is especially relevant to collecting information from service providers. Without unique client identifiers, it is not possible to estimate the number of homeless people that use multiple services in a given time frame, unless the time period selected is short as to make double-counting almost impossible. For this reason, many surveys of accommodation providers concentrate on a single night, as homeless people cannot occupy more than one bed per night. For annual capacity surveys of homeless people, some methods need to be established to account for the likely levels of multiple service use over time. And for low threshold services such as emergency shelters, day centres or soup kitchens/emergency food services, it is often not possible for service providers to distinguish between new and repeat users of their services to come up with a unique number. In Hungary for example, the annual survey of service providers by NSPDC counts stays at emergency hostels rather than individuals.

Reducing the time frame for the data collection survey reduces the impact of double counting, however it can distort the profile of the homeless population measured, as the probability of people with infrequent or new incidences of homelessness being selected in the sample is lower than the longer-term homeless. Account also needs to be made for possible seasonal factors, by repeating surveys at different times of the year. For example in the UK, the regular street counts in central London since 1991 were carried out twice per year to try and measure the different levels of rough sleeping in summer and winter.

For direct surveys of homeless people, double counting can be reduced by asking questions about identity or other filtering questions designed to ensure that the same individual is not interviewed multiple times in the same survey.

8.5.2 Cost

Experiences in France and Spain with major sample surveys involving interviews of up to an hour duration with several thousand interviewees show that it is an expensive task. In addition to the costs of administering the survey, the costs of recruiting and training interviewers is considerable. In Spain, INE found for example, that their usual cohort of interviewers were unsuitable for interviewing homeless people, and that new interviewers required about 2 days specific training before interviewing.

The considerable effort involved and cost of such major surveys means that such surveys are not generally repeated frequently. In France the last survey was in 2001. In Sweden, the major NBHW

mapping homelessness exercises were carried out in 1993, 1999 and 2005. And in Ireland, the mapping of homelessness is a triennial exercise. In Spain, the major survey was carried out in late 2005.

Repeating surveys at intervals of several years separation can lead to problems in comparing between surveys, even those carried out by the same organisation in the same country. For example, in Sweden, varying definitions of the homeless population to be measured and different priorities for the national government led to difficulties in directly comparing the results of surveys.

8.5.3 Service provider paradox

Surveys based on information from service providers lead to another example of the service provider paradox, in that higher levels of homelessness are likely to be recorded in countries and areas with higher levels of service provision.

For direct surveys of homeless people, it is possible to reduce the impact of this effect by careful consideration of the locations where homeless people can be interviewed. For example, street counts can cover an entire city in a more or less exhaustive manner, depending on the methodology used and the willingness or ability of survey staff to contact hard to find rough sleepers inside buildings, care parks cars and similar situations. However where sample surveys are designed, the sampling frame needs to have reference to the entire population, which will tend to have be defined as those in contact with services if data is to be extrapolated from the sample to make estimates for the entire homeless population. For example, the major surveys in both Spain and France concentrated their efforts on interviewing users of homelessness services.

8.5.4 Data collection about homeless people not in contact with services

When designing surveys of homeless people, especially those sleeping rough or staying with friends and family, consideration needs to be given to how to contact those homeless people who are not in contact with homelessness services. Are there other locations where these people can be contacted? Are there other services that these people tend to use that can be used as survey sites? Note that surveys will need to be designed to include filtering questions to distinguish homeless people from people in other living situations (the use of the core variables from chapter 7 can achieve this). And such surveys will tend to be of more use in profiling the homeless population rather than counting it, as estimates would need to be made of the proportion of homeless people that could be contacted in this manner – extrapolating to the entire population of homeless people from a sample would be problematic.

8.6 Data collection from hard to measure groups

One particular problem with surveys of homeless people is that they form an inherently hard to measure population, in that they are often difficult to reach, and standard methods of data collection and fieldwork need to be amended in order to address these specific issues. (Quaglia and Viview, 2006). For example, INE in Spain found that they needed to recruit interviewers from social workers with experience of working with this client group rather than using their normal cohort of interviewers.

Both INED in France and INE in Spain found that to get such surveys to work effectively, they required the cooperation of many different services. Establishing relationships with service providers was essential to their success. Whether surveys are carried out via direct interviews with homeless people

or by data collection from service providers, the support and cooperation of service providers for the research is an essential pre-condition for success.

A subsection of the homeless population that cannot easily be measured from contact with service providers is people staying with family and friends because they have no other suitable housing. It may be possible to use survey-based methodologies to capture information about the demographic and needs profiles of this group. For measurement purposes, the difficulty is establishing the sample frame, but use of census data or population registers (where they exist) may provide some reference point for extrapolation.

8.7 Methodology for measuring homelessness from surveys

This section of the report does not outline a full methodology for designing a survey of homeless people. There are multiple examples of homelessness surveys across Europe and the INSEE report for EUROSTAT covered this issue in some depth. Survey methodologies for direct surveys in particular are well established and outside the scope of this report. Rather this section highlights some of the issues involved, especially those that are pertinent to enabling comparison with the data collected through client register systems.

8.7.1 Directory or database of services

In order to conduct any major survey of homeless people, whether indirectly from service providers or directly from homeless people themselves, a comprehensive directory or database of services is needed. This either forms the basis for the survey directly, or enables the construction of a representative sample frame of service providers.

Such a directory or database of services is also needed for the collation of data from client registers to be used for the measurement of homelessness. This issue is the subject of chapter 5 of this report.

8.7.2 Choice of survey methodology

In most cases, surveys of service providers rather than direct surveys of homeless people are cheaper and easier to organise. Embarking on a survey of the scale of the INED survey in France in 2001 with over 4,000 interviews of an hour's duration is a major exercise, probably beyond the resources of all but national statistical offices.

Collection of data from service providers can produce some valuable information that can supplement that provided by client registers or other methods. However the limitations of this approach, covered above remain. Nevertheless, careful consideration of the sample design, timeframe, variables and identifiers can all improve the quality of the resulting data.

8.7.3 Sample design

In order to construct a representative sample that can be used as a basis for measurement purposes rather than simply providing profile or trend information, care needs to be taken in designing the sample frame. This will require a comprehensive directory or database of services in order to identify the entire population of services. These databases will need to be researched to the level described in chapter 5 in order to be able to weight the samples according to service type, client group served and capacity.

The examples of the French and Spanish surveys also show that achieving a representative sample for geographical purposes is also important, and results may need to be weighted to take account of these and other factors.

8.7.4 Time frame

The survey time frame needs to be carefully considered. A long time frame will lead to higher levels of double counting, even within individual services. A short time frame can have an impact on the profiles of the homeless population measured, as it can over-represent the longer-term homeless population. In addition, a shorter time frame may increase the cost of the survey, as the volume of data to be collected in a short period may involve the recruitment of additional staff (for interviewing or data collection from service providers) for the short survey period.

8.7.5 Use of unique identifiers

Although sample design and time frame selection can minimise the risk of double counting, consideration should be given to the inclusion of unique client identifiers in any survey of homeless people. Where client identifiers are used in client register systems, the inclusion of the same identifiers in surveys can enable comparison and de-duplication between surveys and client registers. Adding client identifiers to direct surveys is not a major task, although it may have an impact on non-response rates from potential interviewees. For surveys of service providers it is a harder task, as they need to provide client by client data rather than collated summary data. However inclusion of unique client identifiers can not only deal with the issue of double counting, but also and permit cross-tabulation of results between service providers.

8.7.6 Core variables

Whichever survey method is chosen, for data to be comparable between surveys, or with data from client register systems, whether within one country or between countries, core variables with an agreed common definition need to be collected. Chapter 7 outlined the set of core variables we are recommending for this purpose.

Clearly it is possible, especially with direct surveys of homeless people to collect far more data. Indeed, the INE survey in Spain, contained questions designed to collect a total of 123 variables, including a range of subjective areas. However the core variables from Chapter 7 provide the basis for comparison between surveys and should be included.

8.8 Conclusions

In this chapter we have considered how surveys of homeless people - whether by direct survey, or indirectly from service providers - can be used to aid in the measurement of homelessness. Although the main thrust of this report considers the most effective method of data collection from homelessness services in the long term to be via collation of results from client register systems as described in chapter 6, there is no doubt that surveys can play a useful role, and may indeed be essential in the short to medium term. The INSEE/EUROSTAT report recommended that such surveys be the main method of data collection, and this view still has some merit. However there a number of disadvantages of survey methods of data collection – most notably cost – that need to be carefully considered.

PART D

ROLE OF NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

Chapter 9

Methodologies for National Authorities to Collect Data

9.1 Introduction

The background to this research is that there is currently a lack of credible information or reliable methodologies to determine the size and scope of the homeless population on a national basis across Europe. In addition, there is limited national information in many countries on the total number of shelters, as well as the nature of these shelters (e.g. emergency, transitional, domestic violence shelters) and their users, even in countries with well developed homeless information systems. Within the overall aim to improve the capacity of national authorities to collect data on homelessness, the objective of this study is to propose methodologies by which national authorities can collate and aggregate statistics (at national and/ or regional level) on homelessness using the information held by homeless service providers. In Chapters 4 and 5 we identified that client registration data is best captured from accommodation service providers. While data can be captured from outreach services (examples of this are cited in chapter 6), unduplicated data from other non-accommodation based services is more difficult to achieve.

Chapters 4 to 7 have examined aspects of the steps that are required to achieve consistent trend data on the users of homeless services. This follows the logic of the recommendations of the EUROSTAT / INSEE study. This approach requires that national authorities have information on the service providers (chapters 4 and 5) and the client record systems they are using (chapter 6) and have an understanding of the standard variables required (chapter 7). Once this information is in place, and is regularly maintained, then the logic of the EUROSTAT/INSEE recommendations is that regular surveys of users of homeless services can be undertaken using these databases as sampling frames (chapter 8).

This chapter uses the information provided in the previous chapters to identify the issues to be considered by national authorities in implementing this approach to data collection.

9.2 The Governance of Data Collection on Homelessness

This section considers the role of national authorities, and the responsibility for action, in the collection of data on homelessness.

Information is the basis for the development, implementation and monitoring of homelessness policies. Hence reliable information on homelessness is required at all levels of decision-making – for the development of strategic action, for organisational management and for project evaluation. Discussion of responsibility for action on data collection on homelessness thus needs to be considered in the context of the development and implementation of homelessness strategies at the national level. The collection of data on homelessness is most effective when it is developed as a component part of an integrated strategy to tackle or prevent homelessness. In this way the homeless strategy informs the collection of the data and ensures that policies are evidence based.

The current underpinnings of the European debate on homelessness strategies highlight the need:

- To develop national strategic policies on homelessness that involve all relevant stakeholders including all relevant Ministries;
- To identify mechanisms for local delivery of policy;
- To have clear responsibility for co-ordination and implementation;
- For clear targets and mechanisms for measuring outcomes against a baseline of reliable information;
- For evidence based policies.

At national (or regional) level different ministries of government have a role to play both in the development and implementation of homelessness strategies and in the collection of the data required to monitor progress. For example, the Justice Ministry will normally be involved in data on prison release and on eviction orders; the Health Department on institutional discharge information; the Social Affairs Ministry on service provision including homeless facilities and support services; and the Environment or Housing ministries for information on temporary accommodation. Responsibilities of government departments do, of course, vary between countries. In some the Ministries of Social Affairs are responsible for temporary accommodation as well as supported housing, some countries do not have a Ministry of Housing, and in some the departments have merged (like Health and Social Affairs, or Social Affairs and Housing). Equally some countries have created arms-length or executive agencies of government to carry out specific tasks related to social inclusion, housing or communities.

A key principle therefore of state involvement in data collection is that it should be embedded in the framework of the (national) homelessness strategy. However, only a minority of member states have a clearly established responsibility for the collection of data on homelessness or for the preparation of homeless strategies (Edgar and Meert, 2003). In some countries no responsibility exists for data collection on homelessness. In other countries several ministries have an involvement in homelessness strategies so consultation and coordination is needed to develop the information strategy. In countries with a federal or devolved structure of government, (vertical) co-ordination is necessary to enable national figures to be derived from regional databases. In all these situations it is necessary to establish co-ordinating responsibility for action in this domain.

Where responsibility for the delivery of homelessness strategies is devolved to regional or local authorities then central government has a role in improving the capacity and competence of those authorities in managing the collection of information on homelessness. For example, the recent Peer Review of the Norwegian national strategy to prevent homelessness identifies that a co-ordinating agency (the Housing Bank) has been given responsibility for the co-ordination, implementation and promotion of the strategy (Edgar, 2006). One aspect of this role includes the provision of competence grants to municipalities and the organisation of regional and local networks and forums to improve the capacity of municipal authorities in delivering the strategy.

In a few countries national or regional statistical offices have been involved in the collection of data on homelessness (e.g. France, Spain and Germany). While it is not necessary in any case that the production of such data is organised and carried through by national statistical offices directly, and while it is essential that intensive cooperation with experts in service provision for the homeless and with other experts in this field is procured, national statistical offices should be involved in compiling and reporting the national data for the European level. They should have responsibility to secure the quality and reliability of national data and should be involved in strategies to improve the comparability of homelessness data between member states.

Our review confirms that in many countries (e.g. Czech Republic, Hungary, the Netherlands and the UK) NGOs providing services to homeless people are required to register those services with the state in order to qualify for public funding. Hence information on services is available. However, only a minority of countries specify the requirement to provide information on their clients in a particular format or on a regular or continuous basis (see for example the supporting people client record system in England; chapter 2).

It has been argued that the homelessness strategy requires to develop a homelessness monitoring information strategy. This is considered more fully in section 9.4. In relation to the governance of homelessness strategies it is relevant at this point to stress the need for the strategy to incorporate specific mechanisms for monitoring progress. Different approaches are possible for this purpose. For example, the Scottish Executive has established a Homelessness Monitoring Group consisting of all relevant stakeholders who meet on a regular (quarterly) basis and whose role is to examine all sources of information on the implementation of the strategy. Given the diversity of information sources that may be available, research may be needed at national level to establish the nature and use of information and how different sources can be combined or utilised in a compatible manner. This should be part of the development of the homelessness strategy. For example, the Norwegian Peer Review describes that the responsible Ministry (in collaboration with five other Ministries involved) funded homelessness surveys and has also promoted the development of a specific information system (Bokart) implemented by the Housing Bank. Such an approach can also be achieved incrementally. In this report we have described the initiative of the central government in the Netherlands in collaboration with the major cities (see chapter 2, description of the CTIMO) in which five key indicators have been identified and appropriate information sources specified for that purpose among the participating authorities.

The review in earlier chapters has illustrated that, even for a limited data collection exercise involving a small number of service providers, finance can be a significant factor. The national authority needs to assess the costs for each stage of the implementation both for government and for the service providers. These costs need to be budgeted over the time-scale of the implementation of the strategy as well as the ongoing annual revenue costs. While adequate funding is necessary to ensure the successful implementation of the information strategy the costs should be set against the direct and indirect benefits of monitoring information on homelessness.

Each stage of implementation involves distinct costs that can be identified and budgeted. The creation of the database of providers involves a survey of providers using the methodology detailed in chapter 5 and summarised below. The implementation of client registration systems and / or data extraction procedures involves costs in relation to development of systems, implementation, maintenance and updating (detailed in Chapter 6).

It is difficult to compare costs between countries and there is no direct scalability (either according to population or number of providers). Canada (population 33 million) and Australia (population 20 million) both spend around €1.3 million per annum while the annual running costs of the Supporting People client record system for England (population 52 million) costs around €1million. Data collection involves a level of fixed costs, irrespective of the scale of the problem, and revenue costs that vary relative to the number of organisations involved and the number of homeless clients for whom data is to be processed.

9.3 The Management of Data Collection

Before discussing the specific issues to be considered in developing a strategy for data collection on homelessness it is evident, both from our review of the survey countries and from the diversity that

exists within countries, that some key principles in the management of data collection on homelessness can be described which should underpin the process. This section considers the decisions needed in this regard.

9.3.1 Consultation and review mechanisms

Successful implementation and maintenance of data collection systems require mechanisms of consultation and review involving all relevant stakeholders. The appropriate stakeholders need to be identified in each country but will include both service providers and all the key ministries of government as well as representatives of regional and municipal government. Experience in the countries reviewed here, as well as the non-European countries, suggests that systems have failed even where consultation has been carried out. Robust consultation at the planning stage as well as a planned commitment to review the systems within a short period of their implementation is essential.

9.3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The issues involved in data collection and analysis from client register databases are described in detail in Chapter 6. A number of decisions are needed with regard to the management of data collection. National collation of client record data from many suppliers, and regular reporting at the relevant geographies, requires a range of skills and a team approach. These skills include project management, user training and consultation, database management, data quality assurance, programming and data analysis. While different approaches are evident in different countries it is necessary to have a dedicated team for this project whether this is provided in-house or is out-sourced. The team should be responsible for all aspects of the process not simply data processing or analysis.

Examples of management structures for data collection employed in Canada (the National Homeless Initiative) and the UK (Supporting People Client Record System) are summarised in Appendix 9.1.

9.3.3 National standards

In all countries national standards exist for data protection. International standards also exist for database management systems, for example, in relation to the management of external data and the use of structured query languages (SQL)[71]. These standards should apply equally to information from service providers and they need to be specified for national compliance prior to data collection.

Some countries have also adopted national standards in relation to the use of harmonised definitions of variables to be employed in surveys (e.g. household type, ethnicity, nationality). In some countries national standards have been adopted for the definition of housing related variables (e.g. the UK National Register of Social Housing, NROSH, standards; http://www.nrosh.co.uk) which will affect service providers who work with social landlords. Equally, the data definitions for core and non-core variables for homelessness should be established and agreed with all participants. Examples of these are provided in chapter 7.

[71] SO/IEC 9075-9:2003: Information technology -- Database languages -- SQL -- Management of External Data (SQL/MED)

9.3.4 Data Collection Principles

The evidence presented in earlier chapters clearly indicates that systems that are made a mandatory requirement of funding are more successful than systems based on voluntary participation.

Intuitively (and evidentially) data collection is best achieved where the person entering the data can understand a direct payoff to him/herself, to the client or to the organisation. Hence data extracted from systems linked to casework management and/or organisational management are more likely to return good quality information. Further, software systems should incorporate reporting functions that facilitate organisational management information as well as data collection. Client record data can be used at different levels of analysis – at the project level, the organisational level and policy level (in relation to different administrative geographies). This understanding should drive the design of the software systems and form a basis for the development brief.

It is self-evident that database management systems should be developed in the context of a clear policy on client confidentiality that is easy to understand, explain and apply. That policy needs to be reviewed on a regular basis.

9.4 Proposed Methodology

Our review of data collection strategies on homelessness in non-European countries suggests that they have been implemented within a framework of a national strategy on homelessness. This may be a strategy specifically designed to finance homelessness programmes (as in the case of the USA) or supported accommodation (as in Australia), or in the context of a strategy for communities (as in Canada). Equally, the evidence from Europe indicates that it is countries with more developed strategies, or priority for homelessness, that have more developed systems of data collection. However, only a few European countries collect data from service providers or aggregate that data to a national level.

The brief for this study aims to improve the capacity of national authorities to collect homelessness information; however, it is our assumption that the approaches outlined in summary in this chapter can also be implemented at a regional level (e.g. in federal countries or countries where homelessness policy has been largely decentralised to the regional level). This is important since some regions of federal countries are populous. Especially in these situations, we suggest that an efficient strategy of implementation may, in some countries, involve the phased introduction of data collection commencing with the major conurbations or regions and building to a national system.

9.4.1 Homelessness Monitoring Information Strategy

The development of strategies to alleviate or prevent homelessness requires evidence based policies and a mechanism to monitor the outcomes of policy over time. A component therefore of any homelessness strategy should be an information strategy to establish the process by which the variety of information needs is to be met over the time-period of the strategy.

Chapter 2 identified that there are different information needs for different policy purposes. Chapter 3 identified the need to develop empirically applicable typologies that are based on an understanding of the dynamics of homelessness. This is necessary if the relationship between point prevalence and annual prevalence information is to be understood. Ideally the information strategy should review the sources of information available in relation to the different categories of the homeless population as well as the at-risk populations (e.g. the institutionalised and the insecurely or inadequately housed).

The information strategy should review all sources of information available on homelessness in the country. This should involve a review of administrative sources as well as survey sources. This review would consider the nature and reliability of the information in relation to the definition of homelessness employed for the strategy. However, at the core of the information strategy should be the approach to capture the information garnered from homeless service providers. This could be understood to involve more than simply information management. Depending upon the nature and capacity of the homeless sector this could require a response to "the technological and informational needs of homeless service providers by equipping them with a (software) system that serves their daily operational needs while enabling them to share information and engage with partners" (National Homeless Initiative, Canada, 2003). Where the capacity of service providers is already well developed the response may require a more modest approach to data capture.

The homelessness monitoring strategy should contain decisions related to the approach to be adopted to information in different component areas.

The definition of homelessness should be clearly elaborated. This may involve a broader definition where the focus of policy is aimed at prevention since, in that situation, populations at risk of homelessness will be included. In relation to data collection the harmonised definition of living situations and of homelessness set out in chapter 3 should form the core definition.

Decision is also required on the services to be included in the data collection from service providers. The core services identified in chapter 4 form the basis for data collection using client registers. The information strategy should also determine the approach and responsibility for the development and maintenance of the database of service providers (see Chapter 5).

Decision is also needed about what information is essential for monitoring purposes. The core variables listed in chapter 7 will probably be the essential information necessary. It is important to confirm the definition of these variables to ensure consistency in data collection between geographical areas and over time. Clarity is needed on the type of data required for monitoring. The distinction between stock, flow and prevalence data has been described (see Chapter 2) and we will return to it in chapter 10. Recording data in client registers on exit from the service as well as on entry is necessary if stock and flow information is required.

While it should be an aspiration to achieve national level data this will not always be possible or cost efficient. Phased geographical implementation may be required. Hence prioritisation of geographical coverage is a key planning decision in the implementation of data collection from service providers. In these situations it is recommended that the register of service providers should still be developed to cover the whole country. This will allow estimations to be made using supply side analysis. This will facilitate phased introduction and could allow estimates of homelessness for sub-national regions to be estimated at a national level.

The EUROSTAT/INSEE report recommended that "retrospective modules on homelessness could be introduced cheaply and easily into general surveys that are already being harmonised, such as the workforce survey or the household budgets survey, and, if possible, into a section on housing conditions" (Brousse, 2004; p100). This recommendation should be adopted in the development of survey questionnaires. Our brief overview of data collection approaches (chapter 2) identified that little use is made of the Census, in EU countries, to measure homelessness. Since Censuses are the most exhaustive source of information available to statistics institutes they could therefore be a useful complement to other approaches including client register systems. The Eurostat/Insee report recommended the need for further study on this aspect especially since it has been successfully employed in other countries; most notable Australia (Brousse, 2004; p101). The information monitoring

strategy should consider these sources of information and the need for research to complement client register data.

The information strategy should also consider the value and use that can be made of administrative data. For example, court records on eviction orders, prison records on release dates or hospital records on discharge all have relevance to aspects of the definition of homelessness identified in chapter 3. In particular, we have identified the importance of the institutional population in relation to policies of the prevention of homelessness (see chapters 2 and 3). In the heath sector the turnover of people is itself a key performance indicator and 'bed blockages' (due in part to a lack of housing and/or support in the community) are an expensive and inefficient use of resources. In the prison sector homelessness among former prisoners is well known and is a factor in recidivism (Seymour and Costello, 2005; Dyb, 2005). Hence the importance of retaining this category in the definition of homelessness even though there are difficulties of measurement. That is why these groups are included in the proposed harmonised definition of homelessness (Table 3.9). The subject of this research is users of homeless services. However, the information strategy needs to consider approaches to measurement for these groups.

The core harmonised definition, recommended in chapter 3, includes homeless populations who are not captured in service provider data (e.g. people sleeping rough, people staying temporarily with family and friends). We have cited research by INSEE in France which suggests that most rough sleepers have contact with accommodation or food distribution services. We have also cited examples of the use of databases for outreach services that have been successfully employed, at least in the major conurbations in some countries, to capture information on this group. Decision is needed whether such an approach may be appropriate in the national context, at least for the major conurbations. The importance of obtaining baseline information against which to measure change has been identified in the Social Inclusion Peer Review process (Vranken, 2004). This may involve a one-off survey of rough sleeping. Methodologies for rough sleeping counts are well developed and the UK baseline methodology is described in the Peer Review synthesis report (Vranken, 2004). It is also necessary to consider whether baseline information can be derived about people staying with family and friends using either census or survey methods. This may require specific research in each country since this category of homeless people can represent a significant proportion of total homelessness. We mentioned earlier that research is merited to establish whether central population registers can be used to derive figures on this segment of the population or to provide a sampling frame for research (see the Finnish example in Chapter 2).

It is evident that homelessness is one aspect providing an evaluation of the efficiency of the way the housing market operates. Assessments of housing need are a key component of planning in a number of EU countries. For example, we have cited (in Chapter 2) the case of Ireland where homeless surveys form a key part of the triennial housing needs survey. Equally, under social inclusion programmes, the provision of support to vulnerable people in order to enable them to live independently in the community also involves the use of information on clients to monitor and plan services. For example, we have cited the supporting people client record system in England (Chapter 6). The homelessness monitoring information strategy should ensure compatibility and co-ordination with these related planning mechanisms.

The homelessness monitoring information strategy should then, at its core, identify the stages and procedures to implement the management of databases on service providers and client register data. The following sections summarise the procedures recommended in this study for this purpose.

9.4.2 Database(s) of Services

This section summarises the main elements of the proposed methodology, as outlined in Chapter 5, by which national (or regional) authorities may develop databases of organisations providing services for homeless people.

The initial planning stage of establishing a database of services for homeless services should be based on a clear, specified definition of living situations and homelessness. Then a classification of homelessness organisations should be used so that the scope of coverage of different types of agencies can be specified. As a minimum, this should include emergency accommodation and other temporary accommodation for homeless people and crisis shelters for domestic violence.

A vital early stage in developing a database should be to establish whether any other initial local or regional databases exist for homeless people so that if some data already exists, this may be used if possible. Planning should also involve specifying requirements for the database in terms of format and purpose. To maximise the benefits and cost effectiveness of a database of services, it is strongly recommended that the database is made available in printed or online format for referral and other purposes to be of direct help to service providers and homeless people. A specification for the database will also need to include an outline of the data model with details of the data to be included in the database about each service. Minimum core data should cover key organisation details, client group and services provided. How this data will be researched and kept up to date should also be decided. Then an IT specification for the database itself can be devised. Finally, in terms of planning, the specification can be costed and a proper budget and timetable for implementation drawn up.

Once the planning stage is completed, then the development phase of the methodology can begin. This will involve database development according to the specification. At the same time, gathering data from service providers is another significant task and key stage in the methodology, followed by writing and editing entries for each service. A searchable website interface will also need to be built and/or a printed directory produced if the database is also to be made available to service providers and the public.

After the database is established and data researched, there will need to be database management and updating activities to maintain the system and data. It is vital to update the data regularly to ensure good quality information and comprehensiveness. This should usually be done by checking existing data with the providers themselves, making amendments and ensuring new services are added. Similarly, some ongoing IT support should be provided to maintain and develop the database as some changes to the system are likely to be required over time. Finally, reviews and evaluations with users are essential to ensure that the database and data continues to be of high quality and resources invested are of maximum benefit. In the light of reviews and evaluation, the usefulness, functioning and scope of the database can be maintained and improved where necessary.

9.4.3 Database(s) of Clients

This section summarises the proposed methodology by which national (or regional) authorities may collect data on homelessness from client registration systems held by service providers.

Experience in several countries (e.g. Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland and the UK) highlights the importance of phasing-in the systems of data collection over a relevant time-scale. Chapter 6 identified four phases of implementation where client record systems were to be introduced de novo.

Once the survey of service providers has been completed the nature and type of software systems in use to collect client data will be known. The survey should also have established the coverage of the core and non-core variables in each system and their data definition formats. The survey should also have established whether each project or shelter managed by the service provider organisations collect client information and in what format.

All data entry should occur electronically at the project level and paper based systems involving central data processing avoided. Information technology costs are low enough to ensure that this is the most cost efficient approach. Decision is required on the strategy to collate data from the existing systems and/or how to collect data where electronic data capture systems are not already in use. The approach to data extraction needs to guarantee basic levels of data quality. Where data provision is a requirement of service funding then service level contracts need to specify software standards for the core variables at least.

Database modules centrally developed and freely distributed have proved to be a reliable and cost effective approach that provides the national authority with control in relation to database development, updating and consistency. Be-spoke software systems can be developed with data entry checks, data validation routines and error reporting to minimise missing data and ensure consistency and accuracy of data to defined performance criteria. Such modules can be populated from existing software systems or allow for direct data entry. They can provide basic data checks prior to the export of data to the national data collection agency. This approach can also accommodate on-line data entry or other means of electronic data transfer (e.g. email file transfer).

Alternatively, data extract protocols and format specification can be provided as a basic registration requirement for software companies whose software is used by organisations where data returns are a requirement of registration or funding. However, it is more difficult to develop data extract modules for pre-existing systems that guarantee similar levels of performance in relation to data quality.

This software development stage must be undertaken in close consultation with NGOs and other stakeholders. It should also involve the pilot testing of the desired data extract method(s) with a representative sample of service providers. Ideally this pilot test should include documentation, training and guidance manuals.

Data quality assurance should be the central principle of the development of the strategy of data collection. The software program can be built to validate basic levels of data recording and entry and to provide context sensitive help. Quality checks can also be managed through error reporting routines and data analysis monitoring. However, data quality also relies upon adequate training of staff and in-house management of data entry by the service provider as well as the use of help-desk and data quality checking by the national data collection agency. These ongoing tasks need to be adequately budgeted.

Decisions are also needed at the planning stages in relation to data protection and client confidentiality. Two levels of action are needed in this regard. The first relates to organisational management systems standards to ensure that protocols exist to inform clients of their rights in relation to confidentiality and data protection. The second relates to the use of individual level data and the aggregation and analysis of that data. In order to eliminate double-counting as well as to allow for analysis of stock, prevalence, flow and duration data and to facilitate data quality checking, it is necessary to provide a unique identifier for each individual for whom data is recorded. Unique identifiers can be provided in a manner that allows for data sharing between the service provider and the national data collection agency while ensuring the anonymity of the individual. This is achieved in existing systems both through the manner in which the identifier is created as well as, in some systems, by the use of encryption methods.

9.5 Conclusions

This chapter has summarised the methodology by which information collected by service providers on their homeless clients can be captured for analysis by national authorities. This approach forms one part of the information requirements to monitor homeless which should form part of the homeless monitoring information strategy that underpins a national strategy to combat or prevent homelessness.

Recommendations to national level

Based on the methodologies proposed, it is possible to identify a number of recommendations for national authorities in order to improve their capacity for data collection on homelessness using information from service providers.

1. Preparation of a national Homelessness Monitoring Information Strategy developed in consultation with all relevant Ministries and stakeholders.
2. Identify (or establish) a co-ordinating mechanism or agency for data collection on homelessness.
3. Adopt the harmonised definition of living situations and homelessness as a basic framework for data collection.
4. Adopt the set of standard core variables and their definition as a basic set of variables to be employed in data collection.
5. Adopt a national definition of services for homelessness.
6. Establish and maintain a directory of services.
7. Ensure that funding for homeless service providers requires the provision of basic (anonymised) data on clients and provide funding to facilitate this as necessary.
8. Establish a strategy for collection of data from service provider client registration systems.
9. Ensure added value of data collection for the services and homeless people.

Recommendations to EU level

Under the streamlined social protection and social inclusion strategy to combat poverty and social exclusion, the Commission can monitor progress of member states in relation to the capacity of national authorities to monitor the effectiveness of policies to combat homelessness.

1. Require Member States to develop in the framework of the streamlined EU strategy for social protection and social inclusion national strategies to combat homelessness
2. Require member States to identify progress reached with the development of national strategies and whether this incorporates a homelessness monitoring information strategy.
3. Monitor progress of Member States towards continuous client recording systems.
4. Encourage national statistics offices to adopt the harmonised definition of homelessness for data collection purposes while recognising that alternative definitions may be used for policy purposes.
5. Encourage national statistics offices to play a coordination role in the collection of data on homelessness
6. Reduce the obstacles to achieving homeless information monitoring (e.g. through the use of funding under FP7, structural funds and European research programme).

Chapter 10

Statistics and Indicators on Homelessness

10.1 Introduction

The research brief tasks the study to reflect upon the type and use of statistics and indicators that could be drawn from service provider data. This chapter addresses that task.

Following the adoption by the Council of the Commission's Communication on the streamlining of the Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC) on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, the first round of streamlined strategies for the period 2006-2008 were submitted to the Commission in the form of National Reports on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion in September 2006.

In the context of the streamlined Social Protection and Social Inclusion agenda, indicators will be used to monitor the overarching objectives which will draw on the analysis presented in the common overview of the National reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion and in "part 1" of the supporting document to the Joint SPSI report.[72]

The Indicators Sub-Group (ISG) has agreed on a broad common methodological framework for the development of the overarching portfolio, and the review and development of the three strand indicators lists. This framework builds on the methodological principles agreed for the Laeken portfolio. However, it departs from the original framework in two ways: the choice of indicators is not limited to outcome indicators in order to better reflect the action and impact of policies; and some flexibility is introduced as how strictly the criteria are applied, notably allowing for the inclusion in the list of "commonly agreed national indicators" based on commonly agreed definitions and assumptions.

According to the proposal for a portfolio of overarching indicators adopted by the Social Protection Committee, the selection of individual indicators should, in principle, be guided by the following minimum set of methodological criteria:

(a) An indicator should capture the essence of the problem and have a clear and accepted normative interpretation
(b) An indicator should be robust and statistically validated
(c) An indicator should provide a sufficient level of cross countries comparability, as far as practicable with the use of internationally applied definitions and data collection standards
(d) An indicator should be built on available underlying data, and be timely and susceptible to revision
(e) An indicator should be responsive to policy interventions but not subject to manipulation.

However, indicators to be used for monitoring the social inclusion strand of the Social Protection and Social Inclusion Strategy largely draw from the existing set of "Laeken indicators" in its present form. Also the methodological framework that was originally used to set up the list is maintained in its essence. That is, it is proposed to maintain the distinction between primary and secondary indicators.

[72] "Proposal for a portfolio of overarching indicators and for the streamlined Social Inclusion, Pensions, and Health portfolios", Version adopted 22 May 2006 Social Protection Committee.

Also the methodological framework that was originally used to set up the list is maintained in its essence. That is, it is proposed to maintain the distinction between primary and secondary indicators.

Within the context of the new streamlined social inclusion objectives Member States have to report (on the basis of national sources) on homelessness, housing costs and decent housing. This chapter describes the use that can be made of statistics from service providers in order to report on the nature and scale of homelessness.

In answer to the question 'What are statistical indicators?', West (1999) makes the following distinction - "statistics unlike indicators are purely descriptive; so, for example, the total number of trainees enrolled on a programme is an example of a statistic. Indicators on the other hand are generally conceptualised as having some reference point". Thus, by virtue of having a common reference point an indicator can assist with making a range of different sorts of comparisons. On the other hand work on the concept of an indicator, undertaken by van den Berghe (1997) among others, distinguishes between four types – descriptive indicators, management and policy indicators, performance indicators and quality indicators (a subset of performance indicators). Indicators that are linked to the achievement of particular goals or objectives can be seen as a special category of performance indicators. For the purposes of this study we will refer generically to statistics recognizing that these provide indicators for different purposes by reference to either organizational level or population level reference points.

10.2 Measurement Issues

The measurement of homelessness and housing exclusion can be undertaken using a range of methodologies and measurement standards. The choice of approach in part depends upon the policy purpose for which the data is to be used. For example, the choice of variables, the geographical coverage and the frequency of data collection as well as the accuracy required of the data may be different depending on whether the information is required to evaluate service level agreements for funding purposes or to predict levels of demand for housing, or for homeless strategy development or monitoring. However, as stressed in earlier sections the specification of a single indicator (e.g. based on a stock count of people sleeping rough) is unlikely to address the complexity of policy requirements to provide evidence based strategies or evaluation of policy initiatives.

10.2.1 Type of measurement

Two distinct measures of homelessness can be described (Fitzpatrick et al, 2000):

- The point in time prevalence homelessness refers to the number of people or households who are homeless at any point in time (this is sometimes referred to as the stock figure).
- The prevalence refers to the number of people who have been homeless at some point during a particular time period ('period prevalence').

In relation to services for the homeless it is also possible to describe a third type of measure:

- The flow of homelessness refers to the people who have entered the homeless service, or ceased to receive the service, during a given time period – the inflow and the outflow respectively.

A unique identifier is required to estimate the prevalence rate – i.e. the number of people who have been homeless rather than the number of recorded episodes of homelessness. The stock figure will be lower than the prevalence rate. It has been identified (James, 1998) that the three types of measure are

useful for different policy purposes. The stock figure is useful for emergency hostel provision, prevalence data for estimating the need for support service and flow information to evaluate preventative strategies.

10.2.2 Unit of measurement

This refers to the population element to be counted. While, in most countries, the majority of homeless people are single persons, homeless couples and families with children are an important component of the population. Thus, a basic decision is needed whether the unit of measurement is to be the individual or the household. This issue is particularly important in some countries (e.g. the INSEE data indicates a significant proportion of families in homeless accommodation of different types) and for some types of provision (e.g. relation to shelters for women escaping domestic violence). It may be necessary to ensure that there is an individual identifier as well as a household identifier. Indeed good practice would suggest that both identifiers should be employed.

10.2.3 Point of Measurement

Measurement can occur at the point of entry to the service and also the time of exit from the service. Clearly both are required to allow the duration of time in the service to be calculated. Where profile information is collected then some variables may have changed since the time of entry to the service (e.g. employment status, immigration status, support needs). Furthermore, the exit information may have additional variable(s) in relation to outcomes - e.g. reason for leaving the service or location on departure (e.g. temporary housing, permanent housing, other service).

10.3 Supply and User Statistics

Considering the accommodation service sector it is possible to identify available statistics based on the supply of services and on the users of the services. This section considers these two types of statistic.

10.3.1 Directory of Accommodation Services

The creation of databases or directories of services is described in Chapter 5. That chapter identifies three levels of data to be collected in relation to services. On that basis it is possible to identify two key measures of supply:

- The number of bed spaces.
- The average prevalence occupancy rate.

These two measures already allow some estimation of homelessness to be calculated. For example, “it should be possible to estimate the number of homeless people making use of hostels and night shelters. This would involve counting the number of bed spaces available to homeless people in hostels and night shelters and then either counting the number of users on any given night, or ascertaining the average occupancy rate for each establishment” (Fitzpatrick et al 2000).

Since some night shelters are only provided over the winter period rather than all year round, this seasonality in the number of bed spaces means that attempts to estimate the stock of people living in hostels and night shelters should be undertaken at a minimum of two points during the year, at least once during the winter and once during the summer (Burrows, 2000). This approach would then allow

estimates to be weighted or adjusted for seasonal factors. The timing of surveys of rough sleepers or of users of shelter services should ideally coincide with these time-scales.

Provided the data are collected on a consistent basis (and hence assuming that the margin of error is the same from one period to the next), they can provide reasonably reliable information on changes over time.

It is pertinent at this stage to refer to well-known caveats in relation to the use of supply statistics. First, we have cited research evidence to suggest that rates of use of services for the homeless are generally high and that a high proportion of people sleeping rough will have accessed a shelter service within the past week (see INSEE, 2005). However, specific and important groups may use homeless accommodation services infrequently (e.g. young people, people in rural areas where services are less accessible). Second, it is necessary to recognise the "service-provision paradox" (Avramov, 1999). Hence homelessness (measured on the basis of supply statistics) will appear to be highest in areas where service provision is greatest. In this context a low level of users may simply reflect a weak policy response to the problem. Thirdly, we assume here that variation in the use of the shelter system can signal changes in the size and needs of the homeless population, as well as changes in the capacity of the shelter system. Hence, it is assumed that shelters operating continuously at high occupancy levels reflect a high level of need. However, this can in part be a reflection the boundary issue by which services are defined as appropriate in the typology used as a basis for measurement. It may also reflect regulations of access to services (see chapter 4) and differences in the nature of shelter spaces.

It is tempting to suggest that the number of shelter beds in a community could be used as a proxy indicator of the overall scale of homelessness, if a correlation between shelter beds and actual homeless can be determined by a baseline survey. However, for the reasons given above this is not a simple matter and further research would be needed to provide confidence that, in a given region or country, occupancy of shelter beds can provide a genuinely useful proxy measure of the overall level of homelessness.

10.3.2 Client Registers

The information collected by service client registers is described in chapter 6, while chapter 7 recommends the variables that could be collected to provide a basic or consistent dataset on service users. On the assumption that a unique identifier is created for each individual (and/or household) then it is possible to count the number of people using the service at any point in time or over a period rather than the number of presentations to the service. If a unique identifier is available then it is also possible to identify the number of *repeat* episodes of service use in a given time period.

The system also records the date of entry to the service. If the date of entry to the service and the date of exit are both known then it may be possible to calculate the number of people using the service at a given date (the stock figure) as well as the flow of people through the service over a given time period. This requires a baseline figure to be established. It is also, then, possible to calculate the average *duration* of time spent in the accommodation during the survey period.

These data elements also allow three key measures to be determined:

- The occupancy level;
- The turnover;
- The average duration.

The relationship between the number of available bed spaces and the flow or prevalence rate figure is also a useful statistic. The use of these indicators is discussed in the next section.

The collation of information from services assumes that the services for which data is aggregated are similar types of service (see chapter 4) where the nature of access and intended length of stay is comparable. Hence the typology of overnight, transitional and temporary accommodation needs to be determined and agreed prior to data collection and analysis.

10.4 Measuring Change in the Homelessness System

Chapter 2 provides a brief review of the explanations of the causes and nature of homelessness. That review stressed the importance of understanding the dynamic process of homelessness and the pathways into and out of homelessness. This approach is important both from the perspective of policy evaluation and also from the perspective of data collection. Chapter 3 examines the typologies of living situations and definitions of homelessness and proposes a harmonised definition of homelessness drawing on a conceptual understanding of living situations. From that harmonised definition the remainder of this study has focussed on the homeless accommodation sector. Chapters 5 and 6 examine the information that is provided by databases of service provision and by client record registration systems maintained by service providers. These chapters identify that there is a wide range of information available from these sources. Chapter 7 proposed a set of core register variables that can be derived from client registers.

Drawing upon this understanding this section describes a simplified model of the homelessness system in order to identify the ways in which the flows of people and households in the system can be measured. Figure 10.1 (using the harmonised definition provided in chapter 3) crudely defines the homeless sector to consist of three main elements: people sleeping rough, people utilising homelessness accommodation services, people staying temporarily with family and friends. The pathways into homelessness are described in Chapter 2 in relation to structural factors (e.g. eviction), institutional factors (e.g. release or discharge), relationship factors (e.g. domestic violence) and personal factors (e.g. addiction, mental health). The pathways out of the homeless sector include access to long-term supported accommodation, admission to an institution and access to permanent housing. Figure 10.1 is also intended to indicate that homeless people may chose not to approach services and that some users of services move to other forms of homelessness (sleeping rough, back to family and friends) and will become repeat users of services. Finally the figure also defines outputs as planned outputs from the service (whether achieved by the service provider or the service user). It is recognised that homeless people may die before or during the re-housing process and that this is identified as a significant issue in some research (Benjaminsen, 2006; Crane and Warnes, 2003).

Three main types of indicator, related to input to homelessness, system indicators and output indicators, can then be specified. Chapter 2 describes the fact that many countries are developing preventative strategies to tackle homelessness and identifies (input) indicators used to measure progress in relation to such policies (e.g. the Netherlands and Norway measure the number of evictions and people released from prison to temporary accommodation). As the simplified model suggests, system indicators essentially relate to the number of people or households in the accommodation service sector and the time spent in the system. These two key indicators allow a range of measures to be developed in relation to the functioning of the homeless accommodation service sector (these are developed below). Output indicators relate to the outcomes achieved in relation to the number of people or households that are able to access supported or permanent housing. For the sake of completeness, it is also necessary to measure the number of people who leave homeless accommodation to be admitted to an institution (either prison, hospital or drug / alcohol treatment institution). The

difference between the number leaving accommodation services and those entering one of these living situations represents those people who move back into more chronic homeless situations (i.e. sleeping rough or moving around between family and friends).

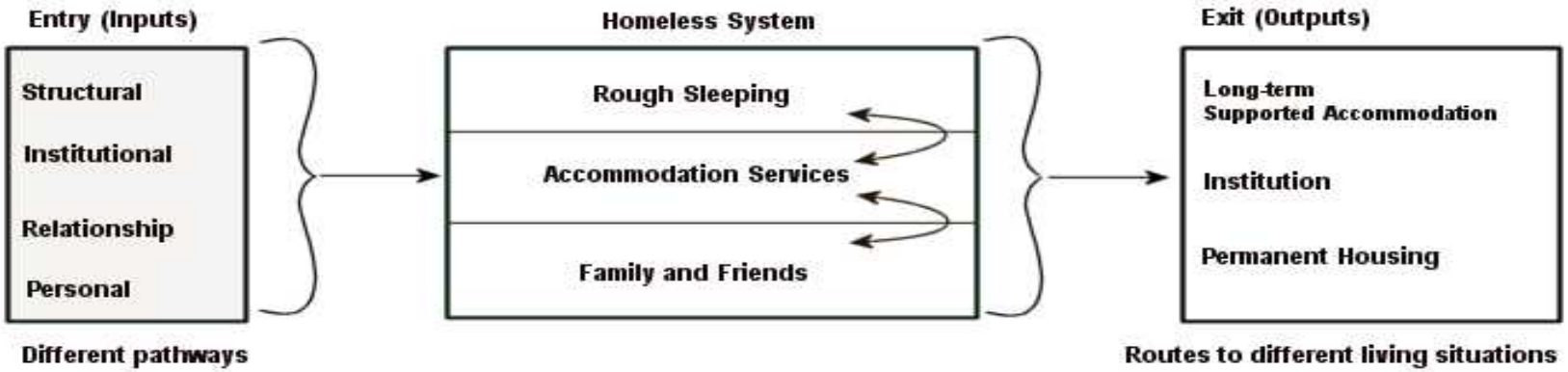
Establishing this simple model allows the discussion of measures related to stock, flow and prevalence to be related to statistical measures and indicators. It also highlights the fact that the measures thus developed require to be interpreted in relation to externality factors (i.e. factors extraneous to the homeless service sector that affect inputs and outputs and hence influence the operation or effectiveness of the system as well as the number of people utilising the sector).

This approach to describing the homeless system identifies three main system indicators – the number of people in the system, the flow of people through the system and the duration of their stay in the system. Consideration of the operation of the provision of accommodation services for homeless people then allows the identification of three measures – the occupancy level of the accommodation (measure of the percentage of bed spaces occupied on an average night), the flow or turnover (the number of people using the service over a given time period) and the duration of stay in the service.

These three measures will be influenced by external factors (input and output factors) and internal factors (the rules, regulations and procedures affecting the operation of the service). The input factors will relate to the overall level of homelessness which can increase, remain static or decrease. The output factors will relate to the supply of move-on accommodation. In the short run we can expect this accommodation supply to be static since increases in provision will not respond quickly to changes in need (or demand). Hence the measures and the relationship between them require interpretation. Taking an analogy with a bath, the rate of flow of water into the bath will influence the level of water in the bath depending on the flow of water out of the plug. If people are able to leave homeless services into (ideally) permanent housing (with or without support) then the level in the system (occupancy) can cope with changes in demand. However, blockages in the output supply of accommodation will lead inevitably to increased levels of occupancy in the service sector, to longer duration of stay in the system for individual households and, in most cases, people moving back into other forms of homelessness (sleeping rough or with family and friends) leading, in turn, to more repeat presentations to the homeless service. Hence, a static occupancy level with high rates of turnover and short duration of stay could (in most circumstances) be indicative of an efficient system where homeless people being appropriately re-housed. Situations where occupancy levels are operating at maximum capacity, where turnover is low and where average duration of stay is long or lengthening compared to previous periods, may be indicative of difficulties in the system. All such situations need to be interpreted in the light of factors such as the rules and regulations governing access to homeless services, and to factors affecting access to appropriate move-on accommodation and permanent housing.

However, the measures can provide information on the process factors affecting homelessness (i.e. the factors affecting both the change in the level of people in the system and the outcomes from the homeless sector). Figure 10.2 attempts to model the changes in the homeless system measured by the three indicators of occupancy, turnover and duration.

Figure 10.1 Homelessness System: a simplified model



INPUT INDICATORS

- NUMBER OF PEOPLE THREATENED WITH EVICTION (WHO ARE TO BE RE-HOUSED)
- NUMBER OF PEOPLE LEAVING INSTITUTIONS (INTO ARRANGED TEMPORARY, SUPPORTED OR PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION)

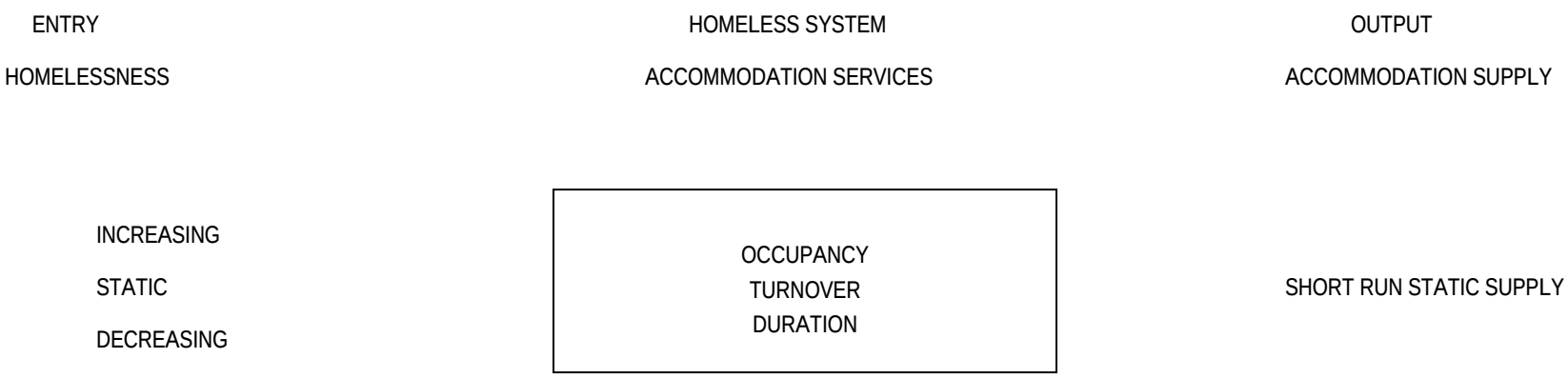
SYSTEM INDICATORS

- NUMBER OF PEOPLE / HOUSEHOLDS IN THE SYSTEM
- TIME SPENT IN THE SYSTEM
- FLOW OF PEOPLE THROUGH THE SYSTEM IN A GIVEN TIME PERIOD

OUTPUT INDICATORS

- NUMBER OF PEOPLE / HOUSEHOLDS RE-HOUSED IN LONG-TERM SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION
- NUMBER OF PEOPLE / HOUSEHOLDS MOVING INTO INSTITUTIONS
- NUMBER OF PEOPLE / HOUSEHOLDS RE-HOUSED IN PERMANENT HOUSING

Figure 10.2 Accommodation services: client record indicators



POSSIBLE SCENARIOS

OUTPUT TO INPUT	OCCUPANCY	TURNOVER	DURATION (1)	IMPLICATION
OUTPUT = INPUT	STATIC	HIGH	SHORT / AVERAGE	DATA NEEDS TO BE INTERPRETED IN THE CONTEXT OF SERVICE STRUCTURES AND NATIONAL SITUATION – SEE TEXT FOR DISCUSSION
OUTPUT > INPUT	FALL	HIGH	SHORT	
OUTPUT < INPUT	MAXIMUM (95%+)	LOW	LONG	

Note: 1: Measured as duration in accommodation services.

10.5 Profile and Trend Statistics

The description of client register systems in chapter 6 identifies the nature and type of variables held in the databases and makes recommendations for the standard register variables that should be sought. Since client register data is continuously recorded it is possible to use the information to describe the profile characteristics of the population using these services as well as the changes in the characteristics of homeless people over time. However, this will be influenced by the nature of the services involved and the client group they aim to serve.

Standard Register Variables

- Age
- Gender
- Nationality
- Household Type
- Previous accommodation
- Reason for homelessness

These core variables allow a range of detailed tabulations and cross-tabulations to be derived. The dataset, collated from individual service client registers, will also contain service information from the service database including, for example, the service category and the location of the service. Hence statistics based on different administrative geographies can be calculated. An example of the nature of such statistics is provided in Table 7.1 which is drawn from the Supporting People client record system in England and illustrates the type of information possible. The client record form from which this information is drawn is included in Appendix 6.1.

Table 10.1 Example of Statistics Drawn from a Client Record System: Homeless People in the Supporting People CRS (April 2005 – March 2006)

	Single home-less with support		Young people at risk		Women at risk of domestic violence		Homeless families with support		Rough Sleeper		
Government Office Region	Tot.	%	Tot.	%	Tot.	%	Tot.	%	Tot.	%	TOTAL
North East	2924	50.1	974	16.7	1244	21.3	556	9.5	140	2.4	5838
Yorkshire & the Humber	6822	52.3	1914	14.7	2299	17.6	1728	13.3	269	2.1	13032
East Midlands	5045	45.6	1282	11.6	2357	21.3	1729	15.6	641	5.8	11054
East of England	5911	53.7	955	8.7	1907	17.3	1712	15.6	518	4.7	11003
London	7232	44.3	2278	14.0	2132	13.1	2923	17.9	1745	10.7	16310
South East	6766	51.2	1995	15.1	2322	17.6	1290	9.8	830	6.3	13203
South West	4812	44.0	1528	14.0	1957	17.9	1068	9.8	1559	14.3	10924
West Midlands	6616	51.4	1438	11.2	3320	25.8	1178	9.2	313	2.4	12865
North West	10328	48.1	3923	18.3	2849	13.3	3650	17.0	724	3.4	21474
England Total	56456	48.9	16032	13.9	20387	17.7	15834	13.7	6739	5.8	115448

Source: Supporting People Client Record Annual Report 2005/2006 (http://www.spclientrecord.org.uk/)
Note: These are groups defined as priority homeless in UK legislation

10.5 Conclusions

Our reflection on the nature of information contained in the client record systems we have examined indicates clearly that a wide range of statistics can be derived from even the core variables that allows a statistical description of the nature and profile of homelessness in the country. This analysis can also be enhanced by use of the indicator of service type and of location allowing dis-aggregation of data or cross-tabulations by services and by different administrative geographies. The benefit of client record information is that, being a continuous recording of information, different types of measure can be derived relating to the stock, flow and prevalence of homelessness. It also allows for trends to be examined and comparisons of change to be measured at national and sub-national level. If comprehensive and detailed directories and databases of homelessness services are collected, to the standards outlined in Chapter 5, then both supply and user statistics can be developed and combined.

We have presented here a structure in which the use of the data can inform our understanding of both the changing nature of homelessness and the changes occurring in the homeless system. Even here, we argue, the use of simple indicators needs to be interpreted with knowledge of the services and the external factors involved. However, this illustrates that both organisational level and population level comparators can be employed to develop indicators to inform policy.

Chapter 11

Conclusions and Recommendations

11.1 Setting the Research Findings in Context

The research was undertaken in the context of the EU social inclusion strategy and the development of National Action Plans. Within this framework, common objectives were agreed by all EU countries which included promoting access to housing and preventing homelessness. Although national policies have been developing (in many countries) in recent years to tackle homelessness, few countries have developed national strategies to alleviate and prevent homelessness. It is in this context that the relative lack of official statistics on homelessness needs to be understood. This lack of data on the extent of homelessness makes an understanding of its nature, causes and effective action needed to tackle it all the more difficult. The data which does exist does not allow for analysis of trends over time or for comparison of regions or countries in a consistent manner.

Commissioned by DG Employment and Social Affairs in December 2005, this research builds upon the recommendations of the study carried out in 2003 by the French statistical institute (INSEE) on behalf of Eurostat. On that basis the report has examined the extent to which information from service providers on their homeless clients can be captured and used for policy purposes. The research and evidence presented in this report has identified current methodologies and practices in different European countries that measure the extent and nature of homelessness from client register data. This has demonstrated that there is a wealth of information available from this source and that tested methods have been in operation over some years that are both feasible to implement and are cost effective and affordable. This is especially the case since the information produced is necessary for organizational management and planning as well providing an information base for policy analysis.

However, if information on homelessness is to allow comparison between administrative geographies or to allow analysis relevant to policy evaluation then there has to be consistency in the definition of homelessness for different policy purposes and a common understanding between different agencies if integrated strategies are to be effective. One of the tasks of the research therefore was to define living situations and homelessness in order to select the target population for data collection. The research presented a harmonised definition of homelessness in the framework of a classification of living situations that is consistent with the terminology recommended for the 2010 Census (see chapter 3; pp 66-67). This task highlighted the need to use different sources of information including administrative data and survey data in addition to client record information. It also identified that more research is needed to enhance the use of census and general population surveys especially in countries where population registers are employed. It is in this context that the research recommends that homeless monitoring information strategies should form a key aspect of national homeless strategies.

A key task of the research was to establish procedures by which client record systems can be established (where they do not already exist) and to extract information from them suitable for policy analysis. One step in this approach is the need to classify organisations providing services to the defined population of homeless people and then to develop a directory or database of such services. The methods recommended in this report would allow important supply side data to be derived including baseline capacity information.

The report reviewed existing client record systems and establishes the procedures that are necessary to develop and maintain them. Importantly, this review identifies the wide array of information that is captured in existing systems and proposes standard register variables that would allow more consistent comparative information to be obtained. Although there are issues to be addressed in relation to data management, quality assurance and data protection, these issues are resolved or can be resolved in the systems reviewed. Furthermore, the review identifies for both the development of organisational databases and client register systems typical costs associated with development and maintenance of the systems which are reasonable and affordable.

The project brief also required the report to reflect on the type and use of statistics and indicators that could be drawn from such data collection. Although the report addresses the brief by commenting upon the information available in client register systems, it is important to set this in the wider context of the development of indicators on homelessness and housing exclusion. Three important issues are made to underpin the discussion of the use of client register data.

First, is the issue of the search for a single indicator of homelessness. The report argues that different measures are needed for different policy purposes. Even on a harmonised definition of homelessness, data is either not available or is not consistently or regularly collected for key categories of homelessness (e.g. rough sleepers and people staying with family and friends temporarily). Second, point-in-time counts reflect one dimension of homelessness and for many policy purposes it is necessary to have prevalence or flow data. However, it would be possible to combine a point in time count of rough sleepers with an extract from client register systems to provide a more complete (though still partial) picture. Thirdly, homeless strategies are geared to prevention as well as alleviation and re-integration. Hence, to guide and evaluate such policies, it is necessary to have information on categories of people at risk of homelessness but who are not de facto homeless from a statistical perspective at the time of a point-in-time count. For example, in a number of countries specific measures are employed for people due to be released from prison who have no identified home and for people due to be evicted. Equally, good practice suggests that assessments of housing need should incorporate indicators of homelessness that reflect the process factors of the housing market system as well as the support needs of vulnerable groups.

Given this understanding, client register information provides a valuable and rich data source that can considerably enhance the capacity of national authorities to understand homelessness and to develop evidence-based policies. The report suggests that the information can be used to derive supply measures and user statistics. A range of indicators on occupancy, duration and turnover allow an understanding of change in the homeless system that can be used to gauge the scale and nature of homelessness and to monitor the impact of policy. Evidence is given of the nature and type of statistics that can be provided for different administrative geographies reflecting variables of discrimination (age, gender and nationality).

National (and regional/local) authorities should develop homeless strategies which can also form the basic framework for data collection. Information strategies are needed to ensure that information which is collected is relevant to the objectives in each country. The strategic objectives to tackling homelessness will differ between countries depending upon a variety of factors as, for example, the nature of the housing market, social protection and social service structures, the levels of immigration experiences and the legislative basis for tackling homelessness.

11.2 The Policy Context and Understanding Homelessness

Explanations of the causes and nature of homelessness have shifted in recent years to adopt a more structural analysis recognising that, as with poverty, homelessness needs to be understood as a process and as a multidimensional phenomenon. This has resulted in a paradigm shift in the policy perception of homelessness and in strategies to tackle it in a number of countries. It has also resulted in a convergence in policy in as much as there is a common understanding of the need to treat both the housing and the social dimensions of homelessness. The study shows evidence from several countries that the definition of homelessness has changed in this manner with resulting changes in the approach adopted to the measurement of homelessness.

There is a growing recognition in all countries that strategies to deal with homelessness should be evidence based and that it is important to monitor the impact of policies since the profile and nature of homelessness can change even if there is no change in absolute numbers. This recognition, combined with a shift towards policies of prevention, has important implications for the approach adopted to the measurement of homelessness. First, it stresses the need for a common (national) definition to allow co-ordination of policies between departments of government. Second, it emphasises that measures of homelessness require information to allow stock and prevalence measures to be developed. Third, it indicates the need for different tools and methods of data collection to co-exist. Both survey and registration methods are required. This suggests that, while it is possible to develop reliable statistics on homelessness to monitor or guide particular policy purposes, the search for a single figure or indicator may have limited value.

The study has confirmed the nature and use of survey, registration and administrative approaches to data collection that are already in use across Europe and indicates that all three are often employed in a number of countries. However, the evidence also points to significant weaknesses in the governance of data collection. This is manifest in the fact that there is often no clear responsibility or that there is no common or agreed strategy to underpin the collection and coordination of the diverse information sources employed. It is also evident in the fact that, while service providers rely upon public funding, the information they collect is not monitored or managed in a manner that allows for the systematic collation by public authorities at regional or national level to monitor the impact of that investment. Finally the evidence confirms that information may often be available at sub-national levels (e.g. key regions or conurbations). This analysis indicates the need to consider the governance of data collection as well as the geographical coverage in the national context.

The Eurostat/INSEE study whose recommendations formed the basis for this study, recommended the inclusion of retrospective modules in census and household surveys. In this study it was also suggested that more use could be made of census data especially in countries that adopt a central population register or rolling census approach. However, that requires further research. More over, the census tends to treat the homeless as a residual category (of people with no usual residence). Hence it remains important to prioritise comprehensive data collection on homeless people.

Our brief overview of data collection systems indicates that client recording data collected by service providers is common in many countries. Our evidence suggests that the information is not systematically captured and used in official statistics in most countries. Furthermore this source provides a potentially important information base for both the scale and the profile of homelessness.

It is on this basis that the report recommends that national authorities develop Homelessness Monitoring Information Strategies as an integral part of national homelessness strategies and that the European Union monitors progress in this regard. Given the novelty of this approach in Europe it would

be helpful to provide seminars on this structured around EU programmes of trans-national exchange and mutual learning.

11.3. Definition of Living Situations and Homelessness

The basis of reliable data collection lies in a robust conceptual definition of homelessness that does not stigmatise the homeless or relegate them to a 'statistical ghetto'. It is for this reason that the INSEE/ EUROSTAT study recommended developing a definition of homelessness within the framework of a typology of living situations.

The definition of living situations proposed in this study is deliberately broad and is intended to ensure compatibility with Census and Household Survey definitions. The recommendations proposed by the UNECE/EUROSTAT report for the 2010 census are adapted in this report to form the basis of the living situations relevant to homelessness and housing exclusion. At the most basic level this includes:

- HOUSING UNITS:
  A. OCCUPIED CONVENTIONAL DWELLINGS
  B. NON-CONVENTIONAL HOUSING UNITS (E.G. MOBILE UNITS AND THOSE NOT DESIGNED FOR HABITATION)
- COLLECTIVE LIVING QUARTERS:
  A. INSTITUTIONAL (E.G. PENAL, HEALTH)
  B. NON-INSTITUTIONAL (E.G. HOTELS AND HOSTELS)
- OTHER LIVING SITUATIONS: IN PUBLIC / EXTERNAL SPACES

Apart from people living rough and people living temporarily with family and friends, homeless people are mainly found to be living in collective living quarters. For that reason the collective living category is elaborated in the study.

The typology of living situations also helps to inform the discussion of the definition of homelessness. Clearly a robust and harmonised definition of homelessness, which recognises different living situations, is a necessary pre-cursor to any methodology of data collection. Our review examined definitions developed at a European level and those developed elsewhere in order to consider the conceptual approaches and the operational definitions employed. Our consideration of the nature of homelessness is also relevant since it emphasises that homelessness is a dynamic process in which an understanding of the pathways into and out of homelessness is a necessary basis for policy development. Clearly the definition that is employed has to be fit for the policy purpose which it is intended to inform. If policy needs revolve around planning provision to meet the need for emergency accommodation then an understanding of rough sleeping may be an adequate statistic to compile. However, if policy is aimed at reintegration or at the prevention of homelessness then a broader definition of homelessness is necessary. Hence strategies focused on prevention will include situations of threatened with homelessness.

The definition proposed in this study, while it recognises the commonality between definitions is not an attempt to derive a consensual definition but rather aims to provide a definition that is based on a robust conceptual framework and is consistent with other major data collection sources at national level.

The conceptualisation of homelessness in terms of the three physical, legal and social domains provides a conceptual model which could be used to develop different operational models for various purposes such as policy development, service planning, prevention of homelessness or (in this case) for measurement.

People may be regarded as homeless in a range of living situations within seven broad categories:

A. People living in conventional dwellings:
   a. With family or friends due to a lack of housing
   b. Temporarily housed by public body or NGO awaiting re-housing

B. People living in non-conventional dwellings:
   a. Living in units not meant or designed for (permanent) habitation

C. People living in institutional buildings:
   a. Because of a lack of suitable permanent housing (and/or support)

D. People living in non-institutional buildings:
   a. Provided (or paid for) by public bodies or NGOs due to their emergency situation of homelessness
   b. Provided (or paid for) by public bodies or NGOs for people who are awaiting re-housing

E. People living in other situations:
   a. People living in public spaces or external spaces.

This understanding is used to derive a harmonised definition that could be applied across Europe subject to the caveats outlined below.

Harmonised Definition of Homelessness Relevant to this Study (see table 3.9)

Operational Category		Living Situation		Definition
1	People Living Rough	1	Public space / external space	Living in the streets or public spaces without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters
2	People in emergency accommodation	2	Overnight Shelters	People with no place of usual residence who move frequently between various types of accommodation
3	People living in accommodation for the homeless	3 4 5 6	Homeless Hostels Temporary Accommodation Transitional Supported Accommodation Women's shelter or refuge accommodation	Where the period of stay is less than one year [73]
4	People living in institutions	7 8	Health care institutions Penal institutions	Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing No housing available prior to release
5	People living in non-conventional dwellings due to lack of housing	9 10 11	Mobile homes Non-standard building Temporary structure	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence
6	Homeless people living temporarily in conventional housing with family and friends (due to lack of housing)	12	Conventional housing, but not the person's usual place of residence	Where the accommodation is used due to a lack of housing and is not the person's usual place of residence

However, the forms of provision of accommodation for homeless people are diverse across Europe and made more so by the diversity of approaches taken to link support services with housing. Thus there is

[73] The period of one year is chosen to allow consistency with UNECE/EUROSTAT Census recommendations

no common or equivalised definition of a homeless hostel. Furthermore the approach to provision of temporary accommodation differs between countries and is changing within countries as policies develop towards the provision of support in housing and towards 'housing first' approaches. The terminology used to describe this diversity of hostels, temporary accommodation, transitional accommodation and supported accommodation in part reflects historical phases of policy development and in part reflects real differences in provision. It should be possible therefore to map national categories of accommodation provision unto a common template based on key principles underlying the structure of housing and support situations that exist. Hence the harmonised nomenclature of living situations is further developed in the report by linking it to a typology of service or support provision.

11.4 Classification of Organisations Providing Services to the Homeless

Having developed a proposed classification of living situations and homelessness, Chapter 4 of the report then goes on to link this to a typology of services for homeless people as these services, especially accommodation services, are key sources of data on categories of homeless people and living situations identified.

The report explores different classifications of services that have been developed in some countries for a variety of purposes (e.g. collating directories and databases, carrying out surveys or for administrative, legal or regulatory purposes). A broad range of types of homeless services emerges:

- Accommodation for homeless people (e.g. emergency shelters, temporary hostels, supported or transitional housing)
- Non-residential services for homeless people (e.g. outreach services, day centres, advice services, food providers etc.)
- Accommodation for other client groups that may be used by homeless people (e.g. hotels, bed and breakfast, specialist support and residential care services for people with alcohol, drug or mental health problems)
- Mainstream services for the general population that may be used by homeless people (e.g. advice services, municipal services, health and social care services)
- Specialist support services for other client groups that may be used by homeless people (e.g. psychiatric counselling services, drug detoxification facilities)

It is residential services that form the basis of the system of client record systems for homeless people and hence the report maps these in more detail. Non-residential services like advice centres, outreach teams and day centres also need to be included in classifications as accommodation services are not in touch with some categories of homeless people (e.g. those sleeping rough or staying with friends and families). However, with non-residential services, there is a particular problem with the risk of double counting those people who use more than one or multiple services. However, the report does provide examples of outreach services successfully using client recording database systems in conjunction with residential services.

The report maps accommodation services to the classification of living situations outlined earlier. It identifies three main relevant living situations:

- people in emergency accommodation
- people in hostels or other accommodation with intended length of stay of less than one year
- people in domestic violence crisis shelters.

There are inevitably boundary issues in some countries between emergency, transitional and permanent supported accommodation. The report uses key domains such as access and referral criteria, purpose of (support) provision and length of stay to suggest the mechanism by which distinct forms of residential services can be mapped at national level and to determine which services are included for measurement purposes. Quality of provision is not included as a criterion for classification of residential services since this is a complex issue involving normative and relative tenets.

11.5 Directories and Core Data about Services

Once a classification of organisations that provide services to homeless people is established, it is possible to use this as a basis for building a directory or database holding information about these services. The study examines the approaches taken to create and maintain directories or databases of service provider organisations and the type of information collected about the organisations. It identifies that there is already considerable experience across Europe in developing databases of services, it establishes a simple but clear set of procedures to develop and maintain such a database and provides estimated costs for doing that. The evidence indicates that the costs involved are relatively minimal compared to the benefits to be gained for data collection as well as for clients of services.

Having comprehensive, up to date information about service provision for homeless people is vital for this and also has the benefit of providing base-line capacity data about numbers of bed-spaces for people in emergency and other accommodation. The danger of the “service provider paradox” should be noted however, whereby those countries that have a lot of service provision for homeless people may appear to have higher numbers of homeless people due to the fact that services exist and homeless clients can be more readily counted.

Research for this report found a variety of databases/directories of homelessness services across the EU. These have been developed for a variety of different purposes, some for carrying out surveys, some were registers of state funded services, and many were referral directories. Some were published by national or regional government or by municipalities, but most were published by NGOs. There were some examples of databases with national coverage of services, but most covered major cities and smaller geographical areas. The coverage of different types of services and levels of details varied – some were comprehensive in terms of coverage and provided detailed information about each service, some were more simple listings of services. Overall, the availability of such resources demonstrates the feasibility of establishing further directories and databases in the future, and indicates that there is already substantial expertise in this area.

The report outlined a procedure for developing directories/databases of services and makes recommendations regarding the type of information that should be contained in the databases to allow for the extraction of supply side information and to provide a base for developing procedures to introduce client registers and extract relevant information from them.

A core set of data to be researched about services is proposed. Three levels of data are identified; level 1 data relates to the organizational details, clients served and services provided; level 2 data relates to information to assist referrals; level 3 data relates to evaluation or good practice linked to service standards. Gathering such details for research and sampling purposes enables efficient contact with agencies, and an assessment of relevant target groups served, services provided and scope for providing data about clients to help measure homelessness. Good quality data is vital and it needs to be comprehensive. It is also vital that data is updated regularly to ensure its usefulness and maximise its practical benefit.

The proposed procedure to allow the successful establishment of directories/databases of services covers issues related to management, information technology and implementation. In most countries, existing datasets already go some way towards providing details of many organisations who can become data providers. It is helpful to use, where possible, any existing sources of data and to take a staged approach (i.e. prioritising developing databases for capital and other major cities and conurbations) towards developing national datasets which require more significant resources.

Based on the research evidence in the report and the authors' own experience the human resource implications of developing a database, including the core information recommended above, are estimated. Development costs are estimated separately from ongoing annual maintenance costs. For a medium size database of 500 services it is estimated that the development time will involve 80 staff days and annual maintenance time of 27 staff days. For a large database of 2,500 services this would, it is estimated, rise to 280 staff days for development and 94 staff days for annual maintenance.

These estimates of costs of establishing different sized databases of services for homeless people shows that this is relatively affordable and can be cost effective. Such databases provide invaluable information about the extent and nature of service provision for homeless people that is vital for a full understanding of the context of homelessness and measures taken to tackle the problem. Our review of the databases already in use identified clear benefits and multiple uses of databases of services for homeless people. Making the directory/database publicly available can be invaluable for referral purposes and can have a direct benefit in getting homeless people the help they need.

These guidelines outline the processes and stages involved and show that, particularly after initial set up costs, it is possible to maintain a database with relatively minimal costs given the benefits of being able to measure homelessness. Following these guidelines can help the successful establishment of a database of services for homeless people that will then underpin gathering standard variables of data from surveys and the client registers of service providers.

11. 6 Register and Recording Data Systems

The research reviewed a range of well-developed client registration systems across nine different countries providing a wealth of information on an ongoing basis about homeless people. Client recording systems have a range of significant benefits for clients, service providers and government. Systems help clients because they do not need to repeatedly give all their details to different service providers and they help them to receive a more efficient service from agencies. These systems allow service providers to record the needs of their clients and interventions, and run reports to make case management and identification of outcomes easier. The ability to share data within and between agencies helps staff to provide a more efficient, effective service. The data from systems also help government agencies to measure homlessness, monitor service provision and plan for future strategy and services.

The research demonstrates that the stage of development of client registration systems and the approaches taken are different in each country. This makes it difficult to be prescriptive in terms of recommending a specific methodology or good practice to implementing a system to aggregate data from client registration databases. However, the stages required to establish systems where they do not already exist have been identified. Further, different approaches to developing systems have been identified and costs for each approach established on the basis of those real life examples. This can be used to provide a guide to determine an appropriate approach in each member state by the relevant ministry or national authority.

This overview highlights a number of issues that need to be addressed in the process of collecting information from service provider client registers. First, there is a range of 'governance issues' relating to the determination of responsibility for homeless monitoring information, consultation with service providers, finance and regulation. Second, there is a set of management issues related to the coordination of data collection, implementation, ongoing development, data cleaning and support to users. Third, there are issues related to the needs of service providers and the need to ensure the value and use of the data to their business planning and management. Fourth, there are a set of technical issues related to IT development, maintenance, data analysis and reporting. This may also require decisions by the national authority to improve the infrastructure of NGOs in relation to their computing equipment, internet connection and training of staff. In this connection it is recommended that there are distinct benefits and cost savings to be achieved by using web-based data returns for new systems. Finally, and not least, there is a significant issue related to the service user in ensuring adherence to the highest levels of data protection.

A distinct set of governance issues are identified in the report. Importantly the question arises, how is the development and implementation of client register systems and the subsequent data analysis to be managed? This will vary according to the existing situation where some countries already have well established systems in place among many service providers. However, citing examples in England, Canada and the USA, the report recommends that national authorities' approach to this should be to establish or contract specific units to manage the system.

Given the diversity of experience across Europe, it is difficult to prescribe a specific procedure that will be appropriate in all countries. However, the report describes four alternative approaches that are in evidence. First, there are countries (e.g. Germany) which have developed data extract modules or protocols with existing software suppliers used by homeless service providers. In this approach the bulk of the costs lie with the NGO who has to purchase and annually licence commercial software and participation is voluntary and limited in scale. Second, there are countries (e.g. England) that have developed specific client register software systems and supplied these to service providers. In this approach the main costs are borne by the national authority and participation is a mandatory part of state funding and thus involves complete coverage. Third, is the approach taken to adapt existing client record systems in use elsewhere, for example, the system commissioned by the Homeless Agency for homeless services in Dublin using as a basis a system originally developed for London (the Homeless Agency was established as part of the government strategy on homelessness in Ireland to manage and coordinate homeless services in the Dublin region). Fourth, is the situation in countries where umbrella bodies have commissioned and developed systems for use by their member organisations (e.g. Netherlands). Here too the state has been instrumental in financing the systems in operation in order to ensure almost total coverage. Each approach involves different costs in development and annual maintenance. These need to be offset against the reliability and value of the data derived by that approach. The costs involved also, of course, relate to the scale of the services covered.

The option of preparing data extract protocols (developed in Germany) is the cheapest for the national agency but involves currently a very limited number of service providers (around 80 at the time of writing). The national client record system (in England) is the most expensive option but includes non-homeless supported accommodation services and involves around 30,000 services. The option developed in Ireland is perhaps a more realistic option for small to medium sized countries where the approach to implementation is to be phased in over some time.

The second governance issue relates to the intended geographical coverage of the systems and the approach to phasing in the implementation of new systems. Geographical coverage of a number of systems presented in the report is restricted to a part of the national territory. For example, Dublin Link covers services in the capital city, CHAIN focuses on rough sleepers in London, Supported People data

are collected for England only, and the Tellus registration system is restricted to the Dutch speaking community of Belgium. The geographical distribution of the two systems in the Czech Republic was still being evaluated at the time of writing. Until full national coverage is achieved the methods of reporting information or of estimating the quantity of clients in the rest of the country (e.g. using the database of service providers) would be necessary.

The third governance issue relates to the inclusion of state provided or funded services and non-state services. In this context there is a situation in some countries where the data of NGO-service providers has to be combined with data from municipalities providing accommodation services for homeless people (as for example in Germany or in Belgium). In these cases it is necessary to make the data compatible with each other to reach a more comprehensive picture about the quantity and the profile of the homeless population and to prevent double counting. The systems reviewed in this report all involve services that receive funding from the state. However, the national authority has to consider how to involve services which do not receive state funding, or are provided with only very limited resources.

A range of technical issues are addressed in the report and we review how these have been tackled in existing systems. Perhaps the most critical aspect of the success of a system in collecting client record data is the approach taken to guarantee data quality. Different approaches to data quality assurance are in evidence and there is established good practice in this respect. The software is critical to data quality. The ease of use of data entry menus is of course essential but needs to be combined with appropriate validation routines and error checks. Systems design should be robust enough to identify hard and soft errors. Some systems include passport controls that prevent the database being closed if key variables are missing or inaccurately entered. The agency responsible for data entry, cleaning and analysis needs to develop data quality assurance procedures and structures involving all staff. This will involve regular management monitoring procedures and reporting. Finally, training of staff in the provider agencies is essential and can be achieved using traditional training as well as e-learning techniques.

Technical problems related to the use of different or incompatible operating systems are reported in some countries but are relatively minor and can be overcome. The main concern occurs when client registration software is installed on service provider computers that may have a variety of operating systems. The increasing use of online systems will reduce the significance of this issue. However, the precondition for this is a fast and secure internet connection. Rapid progress has been achieved in recent years in many European countries with efforts to make such access to the internet possible and achievable at low prices. Where problems are caused by insufficient funding the necessary resources have to be made available by funding authorities. National governments as well as authorities on the EU-level might need to provide support where structural and technical problems still exist.

The problem of double counting exists, particularly where unique client identifiers are not used. In chapter 8 we explain how this is dealt with in surveys; the most common approach being to reduce the time frame for counting homeless people to one single day or night. For prevalence data and flow data it is almost impossible to exclude double counting of the same persons without unique client identifiers. Such identifiers are recommended in this report and a number of techniques are presented how these identifiers can be anonymised and protected, so that data extraction is made compatible with data protection rules and with justified interests of service users that their personal data are not misused.

If services are not provided exclusively to homeless people (but for a wider range of clients) it is necessary to isolate the data of homeless clients from those of other clients. For this purpose clear information is needed in order to distinguish those clients who are homeless from those who are not.

Finally, we identify a range of management issues related to the development and implementation and extraction of data from client record systems. Although it is acceptable for different software systems for registering client data to use different variables, it is important that the core variables are consistently defined. If a variety of client register systems are used by services for the homeless it takes time and resources to harmonise the variables and make systems compatible at least to an extent that allows the extraction of a basic set of data variables. The examples from Germany and the Netherlands show how this can be done, but they also prove that the harmonisation of data takes time to achieve as well as financial and staff resources.

A specific concern to be addressed is the extent to which data can be captured in accommodation services such as emergency or low threshold hostels. These services are normally characterised by a process of direct access rather than referral and by a high turnover of clients. They are often also characterised by serving a client group with more difficult problems (e.g. drug or alcohol dependency or illegal immigrants with language problems). Often there is not enough time and staff available to collect data from people who might only stay one or two nights. Some of these services will also have a principle of anonymity to provide services for people who have no legal papers or feel deterred by the administrative procedures of other services. Data requirements could be reduced for this type of services in order to get at least a minimum of information about turnover and occupation rates. Examples from a number of systems used in practice show, that it is indeed possible to get reliable data from low threshold services as well as outreach services.

The lack of continuity of staff and a lack of training is another management issue which has to be dealt with in order to secure reliable data. As we have seen, good client registration systems do not require a lot of specialised knowledge, but there is a need for proper training and (on-line) support for those working with data registration systems. The costs of such support have to be taken in account and covered by authorities funding the services.

11.7 Standard Register Variables

The study reviewed the variables which are employed in a number of existing client record systems in Europe, Australia, Canada and the USA and those used in recent surveys carried through in several EU countries. A core data set has been proposed with a restricted number of variables which should be collected all over Europe using the same definitions and which should provide the basis for information about the profile of homeless people in Europe.

This core data set should inform about

- basic demographic characteristic (age and gender),
- about nationality and migration background (country of birth),
- composition of homeless households,
- their accommodation situation (immediately before service period and at time of data collection),
- the duration of (current) homelessness and
- the reasons for (last) homelessness.

A list of those variables and data items recommended as core variables is presented in table 7.2 of this report. Reasons for selecting those variables as core variables are their importance for providing information about the profiles of the homeless population, but also their availability in (most) existing registration systems (which usually collect much more data than these). A key criteria for their selection is that it is relatively easy to harmonise the definition of these items for European data collection

purposes. However not all of the items are recorded by all existing systems and there will still be a need for change of definitions on the national level in a number of cases.

Such a restricted list of core variables increases the feasibility of data harmonisation. While developed mainly for accommodation based services, the variables can also be used as a core data set for client registration at non-residential services for the homeless and can also guide the definition of variables employed in surveys. For some of the variables there might be more missing data than for others, although systems to improve and ensure data quality can have a substantial effect on the number of non-responses and missing data (see chapter 6 for examples). Even without full coverage of the homeless population, a set of harmonised core variables would enhance the understanding of homelessness and of the changing profile of the homeless population.

A second set of non-core variables is also recommended. The collection of such information (for example on support needs) using the same definitions across Europe would also be important to add value to existing data sets and to allow more comparative analysis to be undertaken. However, for some variables it will take time to harmonise definitions and to reach a European wide consensus. Furthermore information on some of the items is less common in existing client registration systems or it is more controversial whether such information is really needed. The collection of non-core items should therefore be optional for national authorities. Table 7.3 of this report presents the variables which we recommend to use as harmonised non-core variables in data register systems and surveys on the national level.

The proposed non-core variables comprise data on

- main activity,
- source of income,
- highest educational attainment, and
- the main areas of support needs.

The latter would also provide some additional information on contributing factors to the reasons of homelessness reported as a core topic.

Both lists do not include information on outcomes and service use, although such information is highly valuable and increasingly required to evaluate the effectiveness of services in alleviating homelessness. However for the time being it is rather difficult to define harmonised procedures to collect such information because of the variety of support systems and client registration approaches. For systems which are recording information at service entry and at exit of service a general recommendation would be to make it possible to compare the situation before and after service for a number of variables. It might be necessary and feasible in the medium term to include variables on outcomes in the list of core variables. This aspect of outcome management is an area that merits specific research.

11.8 Surveys of People Using Services

The report also considers the issues to be addressed in order to conduct surveys of users of homeless services. Over the past 10-15 years there have been many such surveys carried out and recent examples illustrate both the range of recent survey activity across Europe and the different methodologies employed. The report examines both surveys directly carried out of homeless people, including street counts of people sleeping rough, and surveys collecting data from organisations providing services to homeless people.

Advantages of surveys as a measurement method are that they encourage common definitions of homelessness and there already exists a substantial body of good practice, including sample and questionnaire design, statistical analysis of results, weightings and fieldwork methodology. However, a number of disadvantages are identified. For example, all surveys need to consider how to minimise the impact of double counting, especially when collecting information from service providers. Sample surveys face the problem of multiplicity of service use, and corrective weightings must be implied. Similarly, needing skilled personnel to carry out surveys with the target population and time and resources required from service providers can both be problematic.

However the main disadvantage of survey methods lies in their cost. This has meant that surveys are valuable point-in-time counts but are not repeated on a regular basis. This leads to a rapid redundancy of the data and does not provide the necessary basis for analysing trends over time.

Some methodological issues involved in the measurement of homelessness using surveys are also explored. These include the need for a comprehensive directory of services and representative sample, choosing between a cheaper option of a survey of service providers or a more expensive direct survey of homeless people, and a time frame and use of unique identifiers to help minimise double counting. The use of standard core variables is also vital for comparability over time with repeat surveys and between different surveys.

Finally, although the thrust of this report considers the effectiveness of client register systems as a main method of ongoing data collection from homelessness services and to play a key role in data collation, there is no doubt that surveys can play a useful role in measurement. Indeed they are an essential part of a homeless information strategy, especially in the short to medium term, and can be used in combination with other administration and registration data, and general population and census data.

11.9 Statistics and Indicators on Homelessness Using Client Registers

The last Chapter of the report reflects upon the nature and use of statistics and indicators that can be derived from the collation and aggregation of continuously recorded data on the users of homeless accommodation services.

The use that can be made of client register data needs to be discussed in the context of the understanding of homelessness and the policy purposes for which it is to be used. Homelessness can be described using three distinct measures: point-in-time, prevalence and flow. The three types of measure are useful for different policy purposes: for example, the point in time figure is useful for emergency hostel provision, prevalence data is useful for estimating the need for support services, and flow information can help evaluate preventative strategies. Client register data can, if appropriately designed, provide all three measures.

The report recommends a harmonised definition of homelessness and it is clear that client record data relates only to some of those categories. Other sources of information are required to get information on the number of people sleeping rough or staying temporarily with family and friends. While the former is often a relatively small figure, survey information in many countries suggests that people staying with family and friends may account for two-fifths of the total homeless population. However, given the recommendations made here for the adoption of standard register variables then client register data, measured over time (the prevalence figure), can at least provide information on the extent to which service users have been sleeping rough and/or living with family and friends.

The important issue to stress here, though, is that even using this harmonised definition, it is unlikely that any country will be able to develop a single reliable indicator on homelessness. Rather an understanding of homelessness in relation to different categories and policy responses is the best that can be achieved.

Although client register data is partial it does provide important information for policy purposes. Firstly, it can provide both supply and user statistics. Secondly, the continuous recording approach allows analysis of trends. Thirdly, given the use of appropriate service identifiers, it can allow analysis for different administrative geographies. Finally, if the standard register variables are adopted then it is possible to provide profile analysis and also to allow analysis using equality criteria (e.g. age, gender and nationality).

The report considers a number of issues relating to supply and user statistics. Using data on the accommodation included in a directory of services for homeless people (subject to it being comprehensive and up to date) can give two measures of supply: data on the total number of bed-spaces and the average prevalence occupancy rate. Registers which use unique identifiers for clients can also identify the number of repeat episodes of service use in any given time period. If data on both date of entry and exit from services is recorded, it may be possible to calculate the number of people using the services or occupancy level at a given date as well as the flow or turnover of people through the service. It is also then possible to calculate the average duration of time spent in the accommodation.

The report presents a simplified model of the homelessness system in order to identify the ways in which the flows of people in the accommodation service sector can be measured to provide inference about the operation of external forces (affecting input and outputs). By doing so, three main system indicators can be identified: number of people in the system, flow of people through the system and the duration of their stay in the system.

Finally, the report notes that using client register systems to continually record core variables about homeless people can provide profile and trend data on their characteristics over time (e.g. in terms of age, gender, nationality, household type, previous accommodation and reasons for homelessness). This data can then be used for detailed tabulation to produce statistics for various purposes at different administrative geographies.

11.10 Final conclusion and recommendations

The study presents the methodology by which information collected by service providers on their homeless clients can be captured for analysis by national authorities. Reliable information is the basis for development, implementation and monitoring of homelessness policies and decision-making. To ensure that data collection is done effectively, therefore, national authorities need to address this by developing homelessness strategies at the national level. In this way homelessness strategies inform the collection of the data and ensure that policies are evidence based. However, this report highlights that only a minority of Member States currently have a clearly established responsibility for the collection of data on homelessness or for the preparation of homeless strategies.

As part of their overall strategy on homelessness, this report recommends that national authorities develop a specific homelessness monitoring information strategy to ensure that data is collected and processes established to do this. At the core of the information strategy should be the approach to capture the information garnered from homeless service providers. Sufficient funding for data collection is an important issue. National authorities need to assess the costs for each stage of the implementation, both for government and for service providers, of the development of systems and ongoing

annual revenue costs. These costs should be set against the substantial direct and indirect benefits of monitoring information on homelessness.

Without good data, tackling homelessness effectively becomes much more difficult. By examining in depth the methodologies and practices for developing the information basis for measuring homelessness, this report aims to encourage national authorities to take substantial steps to improve data collection across the EU. It is necessary to ensure that any action taken is embedded in a strategy on homelessness which in turn includes a specific strategy on monitoring homelessness information.

This report outlines a number of practical steps that should be taken in terms of defining homelessness, developing a comprehensive database of up to date information about services for homeless people, developing further client recording systems used by services and ensuring the aggregation of minimum standard data from these and surveys of homeless people. These should be part of an overall information monitoring strategy that includes other data collection methods too. By being better able to measure homelessness, there is the potential to use this information to dramatically improve the quality of life of hundreds of thousands of some of the most excluded, vulnerable people across the EU.

Recommendations to national level

Based on the methodologies proposed, it is possible to identify a number of recommendations for national authorities in order to improve their capacity for data collection on homelessness using information from service providers.

1. Preparation of a national Homelessness Monitoring Information Strategy developed in consultation with all relevant Ministries and stakeholders.
2. Identify (or establish) a co-ordinating mechanism or agency for data collection on homelessness.
3. Adopt the harmonised definition of living situations and homelessness as a basic framework for data collection.
4. Adopt the set of standard core variables and their definition as a basic set of variables to be employed in data collection.
5. Adopt a national definition of services for homelessness.
6. Establish and maintain a directory of services.
7. Ensure that funding for homeless service providers requires the provision of basic (anonymised) data on clients and provide funding to facilitate this as necessary.
8. Establish a strategy for collection of data from service provider client registration systems.
9. Ensure added value of data collection for the services and homeless people.

Recommendations to EU level

Under the streamlined social protection and social inclusion strategy to combat poverty and social exclusion, the Commission can monitor progress of member states in relation to the capacity of national authorities to monitor the effectiveness of policies to combat homelessness.

10. Require Member States to develop in the framework of the streamlined EU strategy for social protection and social inclusion national strategies to combat homelessness

11. Require member States to identify progress reached with the development of national strategies and whether this incorporates a homelessness monitoring information strategy.
12. Monitor progress of Member States towards continuous client recording systems.
13. Encourage national statistics offices to adopt the harmonised definition of homelessness for data collection purposes while recognising that alternative definitions may be used for policy purposes.
14. Encourage national statistics offices to play a coordination role in the collection of data on homelessness
15. Reduce the obstacles to achieving homeless information monitoring (e.g. through the use of funding under FP7, structural funds and European research programme).

APPENDIX

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Appendix 1.2 Summaries of Commissioned Papers

Czech Republic

Ilja Hradecký
Nadeje

Introduction

The aim and subject of this report is to describe the attitude of the public authorities to data collection on the scope of homelessness, the types of organisations providing services for homeless people and the systems used by the service providers for the registration of homeless people. The report is based on the study of professional literature, the Law Digest of the Czech Republic, other information from official sources and relevant websites. Some important details were consulted at state administration bodies. The information is complemented by the experiences of social service providers and with findings from personal work experience.

Definition of Homelessness in the Czech Republic

The types of homelessness and suitable definitions is something the providers of social services have been dealing with for several years. These efforts resulted in one of the activities of the *Strategy for Social Inclusion of Homeless People in the Czech Republic*; the project is funded from the European Social Fund (ESF) and the State budget. Its goal is to create a definition and typology of homelessness in accordance with the European project ETHOS. For the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), the four main ETHOS operational categories are 1 – 4.

The issue of homelessness is described in the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion for 2004-6. The terms 'homeless' and 'homelessness' have not been defined anywhere and different people understand them differently. When talking about homeless people in regular communication, the general public, as well as social service providers and some researchers use the word '*bezdomovec'*. This term, however, is understood by the general public mainly as meaning 'rough sleeper'. People often do not distinguish between homeless persons and beggars, who may not be homeless. The word '*bezdomovec'* thus becomes a term for an unkempt person. Such misconceptions give rise to aggressive attitudes among the public. The new Act on Social Services calls homeless people '*osoba bez přístřeší*' ('person without refuge' or 'person without shelter' in English), but there is no exact definition. In future it can bring misunderstandings or reduce the target group to 'roofless' people (rough sleepers) only.

Data collection

There is no national system of registration and data collection concerning the number of homeless people. Neither is there a strategy for dealing with the issue of homelessness in the Czech Republic. The government is responsible for keeping track of all homelessness. MOLSA is generally responsible for the strategy of social services and social support, while housing support and development come under the authority of the Ministry for Regional Development. Current legislation does not put any authority under obligation to collect data about the number of homeless people, and there is no common basis for data collection. The Protection of Personal Data Act determines the rules for the processing of personal data, but no system of registration and data collection about the number of homeless people is currently in preparation and there are no plans to prepare such a system.

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

As there is no national system of registration and data collection concerning the number of homeless people, MOLSA acquires information about numbers from several sources. The most complete source is information provided by NGOs in their grant applications. Besides the planned budget, the application form also includes detailed information about the type and range of services provided, classification according to the type of social services and further details about the service provided. The form also contains detailed information about the number of clients served, the number of beds and their usage, and the number of contacts and interventions (for emergency help and street work), quoting the numbers for the last 2 years and a prediction for the next year.

Another source of information for MOLSA is the overall data summary from those providers of social services who are associated under the umbrella organisation Sdružení azylových domů (SAD – Association of the Hostels), as published in that organisation's annual report. Another set of information is the MOLSA Statistical Yearbook, but that only deals with the capacity of social services and their regional distribution. Research reports and final reports from realised projects also provide information.

Since 2006, MOLSA has been implementing a unified system of monitoring of people during a given period of time and in selected facilities that receive financial support from the ESF. A new information database is launched every month, focusing on the collection and distribution of data from facilities providing social services for this group. The establishment and utilisation of this system will only provide for the collection of data about the users of selected social services.

Czech Statistical Office

The Czech Statistical Office (CZO) is a state body that carries out periodical population and housing censuses. During the last census[1], it differentiated, according to the manner of accommodation, between people living:

- in apartments
- in institutions
- elsewhere (i.e. not in apartments or institutions).

This last group includes people who live at their workplace but also people who have their permanent address registered in a house in which they have not been present, possibly for several years, and a different family is already registered as permanent residents in the given apartment. It also includes people living in weekend houses/cottages, in non-standard structures not intended for accommodation, and in mobile homes.

Each citizen of the Czech Republic must be registered at some address for permanent residence; they can be counted and included in the population census even in their absence. Each homeless person is registered at some address, so it is not possible to identify anyone as homeless during a census.

It is obvious from the data published by the Czech Statistical Office, and confirmed through consultations with a qualified specialist, that this office has detailed and accurate information about individuals or households whose accommodation, according to ETHOS 2006, is qualified as inadequate, i.e. belongs in operational categories 11, 12 and 13. It also has partial information about category 8 (the number of persons living as sub-tenants) and about people living in accommodation

[1] The last census occurred on the 1.3.2001, for more information, see www.czso.cz

for immigrants (category 5 or 5.1). The CSO does not know the number of homeless people in categories 1-4, as there is no national classification. The CSO has counted persons primarily in the place of their permanent residence. When persons were counted outside their registered permanent residence, they were, during the processing, included in the place of their permanent residence. The homeless that have their permanent residence in a specific flat (for example at their parents' or family's place and so on) were counted despite not being present. As the CSO does not recognise the category of the homeless, it cannot determine who of the counted persons is homeless and, therefore, is unable to estimate their numbers.

Regional systems

The capital city, Prague, forms one of the regions in the Czech Republic. The city authorities have been addressing the problem of homelessness for several years, with fluctuating intensity. An analysis published in May 2003, which had been commissioned by the city authorities, was compiled in co-operation with the providers of social services. It proposed two projects to measure the levels of homelessness in the city.

The first proposal was to carry out a one-time count of homeless people during the winter period, in order to gain information about the number of obviously homeless people staying within the municipal area of Prague during winter (ETHOS categories 1-4). The other proposal was to establish an integrated register of statistical data.

The first project took place in February 2004 throughout the entire municipal area[2], based on a direct count by observation. The count of homeless people in Prague focused primarily on the target group whose living conditions correspond with the ETHOS 'roofless' and 'houseless' categories, the target group being people living rough and people using day centres, overnight shelters and homeless hostels.

Simple criteria were used for the record: gender and age (three categories based on estimation and judgement). The methodology proved demanding in terms of the number of people involved and in terms of organisation. It was used as a one-time event to demonstrate the necessity of social services. The project fulfilled its objective, and no repeat is expected.

As yet it has not been possible to implement the second project, to establish an integrated register of statistical data.

A similar methodology was used by the City of Brno authorities for a homeless census in the second largest city in the Czech Republic. The aim of the census was, just as two years before in Prague, to arrive at an estimation, as accurate as possible, of the number of homeless people within the city's territory; the target group was also defined in a similar way. The survey in Brno was extended to include homeless people living in commercial hostels.

There are no other regional systems in place; the regions do not know the number of homeless people within their area, and can only obtain information provided by the providers of social services. From 1 January 2007, the Social Services Act charges regions with the duty to compile a medium-term plan for the development of social services and to monitor and evaluate its implementation.

Providers of services for the homeless

Information about the providers of services for the homeless is scattered, and there is no integrated database. This is because of the poorly co-ordinated jurisdictions of central government institutions concerning homelessness. At least six government ministries are responsible for different aspects, and the regions and municipalities also carry some responsibilities. The government does not have

[2] For more information, see: I. Hradecký & col.: Homeless Census Prague 2004, final report, Prague 2004

any integrated policy or database concerning homelessness; its main issues concern the provision of social services and accommodation. Social services targeting homeless people have been continuously developing since 1990, but there is no available social housing or otherwise supported or protected housing to move on to after leaving hostel accommodation. Services other than social services are neither jointly monitored nor coordinated at the national or regional level.

Social services

MOLSA is responsible, among other things, for issues of social policy, social care and care for citizens who need special assistance. The ministry is well informed about the providers of social services. The Social Services Act anticipates the establishment of an compulsory register of providers, which would reflect an accurate and constantly updated situation. The Social Services Act anticipates the registration of all providers of social services in a special register, which will also include information about the number of users. The audit will be carried out by a new institute for the inspection of social services, and the data will also be used for the drafting of future policies.

Based on the principle of subsidiarity, municipalities and regions are responsible for securing social services. An information system that will enable rapid location of suitable social service facilities for a given target group should be appropriate.

In future, an increasingly important role will be played by the regional methodologists for social inclusion, who are already active at all regional offices under guidance from MOLSA. The reform of public administration, particularly the abolition of district authorities, brought changes in the jurisdiction of departments working with groups of people at risk of social exclusion. In municipalities with wider responsibilities, a new position was created, of social inclusion coordinator.

Organisations from both private and public sectors provide social services. Public organisations are set up by municipalities and regions, but social services can also by provided by regions, municipalities and associations of municipalities as well as by state organisations. Among the private organisations are civic associations (societies) and charitable organisations, usually run by churches (ecclesiastical legal entities). A unique form is the so-called ‘public improvement societies’ which are regarded as NGOs and can be founded by public administration bodies (municipalities and regions) or by private bodies, including non-profit as well as commercial entities or individuals (they can be under the full control of these founders). Social services for homeless people gradually came into existence in the 1990s, mainly through civic initiatives. Besides services for drug addicts, social services for homeless people are the only ones dominated by private entities.

Housing

The Ministry for Regional Development is legally responsible for housing policy, for the development of housing stock and for providing rented housing. In its *Programme of Construction of Supported Housing for 2005-200*6 it provides subsidies to municipalities for providing apartments for medically or socially disadvantaged people. The municipalities can also use these to help homeless people. It is not possible to determine what proportions of supported apartments are used by formerly homeless people, as there is no definition of this social group.

Other services

An important role is also played by employment offices. They provide job offers and facilitate employment for unemployed homeless people using several active employment policies.

Children's homes fall under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, while infant institutions (for children under 3) come under the Ministry of Healthcare. Abandoned children or children removed from their families by a court order move from an infant institution to a children's home; some may stay in a reform school. Being discharged from a children's institution is one of the causes of homelessness,[3] especially with young people (the number of children in institutional care is particularly high in the Czech Republic.[4]). It's a relict of former communist system "institutional care". For illustration an example:

> *The deputy ombudsman was dealing with a case at the beginning of 2006, where an infant was taken away from a mother five days after birth, although she breastfed the child. The reason was that during the visit of a social worker in the family, while the mother was still in hospital with the child, there apartment was not heated and there was no warm water. The last time the social worker visited the mother before that was four months before the birth. The deputy ombudsman concludes that clients are scared of social workers and do not see them as partners but as inspectors.*[5]

The Ministry of Healthcare is also responsible for public health protection, including health care for homeless people, and the diagnosis and treatment of illnesses. Research by the Institute of Health Policy and Economics (IHPE) has documented a more frequent occurrence of chronic diseases, a higher prevalence of infectious diseases including TB, and more frequent problems of mental health than in the general public.

The Ministry of Justice also plays an important role in the issue of homelessness, as it is responsible for the Prison Service. Some prisons have a pre-release department where prisoners should be prepared for discharge, but only a small fraction of prisoners actually pass through it. Prison social workers often know which of the released prisoners have no place to return to, but they are only able to recommend them to a homeless hostel.

The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for public order and other issues of internal order and security, but also for permitting the residence of foreigners and the status of refugees. This ministry has its own database of facilities for the accommodation of asylum seekers and refugees.

Systems of data collection used by service providers

For the providers of social services, there are two main systems of data collection. One is the NewPeopleVision (NPV)[6] programme, used by some members of the SAD[7]; the other is the Client Registration (EK) system used by Naděje[8]. Provision is always local. The data in both systems is collected daily, separately for each facility. In hostels, the data shows the number and category of

[3] According to information acquired in October 2006, 1208 persons should leave children's institutions after coming of age (18) in the next 12 months. Of this group, 382 cannot return to their own families; for the rest, steps are being taken to establish contact with the original or extended families. There is no systematic prevention of homelessness; individual cases are addressed on an ad hoc basis. Besides halfway houses, people may be moved on to hostels, social flats (in co-operation with municipal authorities) or to a form of protected housing within the children's homes. At the moment, there are 44 under-age mothers and 18 under-age pregnant girls living in children's institutions. There is also no system of protection for these cases; ad hoc solutions include, besides the aforementioned possibilities, the families of the children's fathers or hostels for mothers with children. (This information was acquired directly from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.)

[4] In the Czech Republic there are about 20 000 children under 18 living in children homes, i.e. 200 children per 100 000 of citizens. (Hospodářské noviny 21 October 2004).

[5] Vendula Křížová: Z porodnice rovnou do ústavu, in Hospodářské noviny 6. května 2006.

[6] see: http://handyprojects.com.

[7] see: www.azylovedomy.cz.

[8] see: www.nadeje.cz.

individuals who stayed overnight; in day centres it gives an overview of individuals who asked for help during the opening hours (the basic statistical unit is one person).

Program NewPeopleVision (NPV)

The program is based on special software, requiring the use of PCs in the homeless hostels. The fact that smaller homeless hostels, in particular, do not have access to the Internet or have insufficient IT equipment limits the use of this system. Usage is therefore limited to a local area and to specific organisations. NPV was introduced in 2004 and is continually updated. The program focuses on an individual and their details, as well as the services provided. Filters allow for the compilation of client lists sorted by surname, first name, identifier (birth number), age, gender, particular health condition (including any handicap) or permanent address. The software also allows for print-outs of various types, e.g. lists of clients of a certain age, coming from a certain region, users of services during a given period etc.

Client registration in Naděje (EK)

The Client Registration (EK) is based on a combination of an electronic card and a central database. The electronic card has been developing since 2004. It was preceded by a physical, manually filled-in card that was introduced in 1991; from 1997, information is transferred from the paper cards onto a database. The EK system is currently going through a finalising process that should link all the Prague centres to the central database so that the manual transcription of information from the cards can be wound down and stopped. The EK also focuses on the specific person and their personal data, as well as the service provided. The software allows for sorting by means of filters for all data items including combinations of them and allows for print-outs of various types, e.g. lists of clients of a certain age, coming from a certain region, users of services during a given period etc. It is possible to compile print-outs for various periods of time, setting specific parameters.

Monitoring and evaluation of results

All users of both systems use the results in their annual reports and in grant applications filed with local, regional and national authorities. Some results are used in contacts with the media. The analyses of results are used by all users for planning and developing their own services. Few results are used for research; the main problem is the fragmented nature of data collection, as there is no central database or even location where the data could be collected and analysed. Homelessness has also not been a topic of interest to researchers or public administration, but both systems do have significant information value for monitoring trends and for analysing the profile of homeless people. This would require the adoption of the system by all service providers and the establishment of a central database.

Both systems are easily transferable into other EU countries. They are not subject to national particularities, with the minor exception of compulsory permanent address entry (this part could easily be amended for other language versions, and other national particularities could be incorporated in the system).

Conclusion

Homelessness is becoming a serious problem for Czech society, especially in its chronic form. Some municipalities have even tried to remove social services, in order to push homeless people out to other locations, possibly uninhabited ones, even forcibly. MOLSA in particular is beginning to focus

on determining both the qualitative and quantitative scope of homelessness, especially in the ‘roofless’ and ‘houseless’ categories. The approved Social Services Act and the related changes in other laws, which take effect from January 2007, offer a favourable environment for getting acquainted with the issue and for the provision of social services itself. The national register of social services and its regional sections can become an effective tool for planning and developing social services and for the evaluation of the entire system's effectiveness. One issue still to be dealt with is the unification or compatibility of client registration and its distribution to all social service providers. That will help to set up a system, which will make it possible to survey the number of homeless people according to some ETHOS categories at any specific time.

France

Maryse Marpsat, INED (French National Institute for Demography)[1]
Definition of homelessness in France

Unlike the United Kingdom, France has no statutory definition of homelessness. However, an 'official' definition is used for the statistics published by the National Institute of Demographic Studies (INED) and the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE). Access to social housing is independent of this definition.

The definition of *sans domicile* corresponds to a variety of housing situations that are part of a more general classification in which all housing situations, be they cases of 'housing hardship' or not, are classified by four criteria:

- housing type
- occupancy status
- housing quality and amenities
- security/insecurity over time.

Sans domicile denotes people whose housing situation is defined in terms of the first two categories (housing type and occupancy status) as people living in a place unfit for human habitation or in accommodation run by services for homeless people.

This classification and the *sans domicile* definition were elaborated in the early 1990s by an *ad hoc* working group of the National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS), a body that brings together producers and users of French public statistics (government departments, NGOs, trade unions, researchers, etc). The setting-up of the 'homelessness' group in 1993 was in response to a demand that originated from the NGOs.

The full report also remarks on various items of the ETHOS classification, in particular the use of police-recorded incidents to measure domestic violence towards women.

Homeless service providers

Since the 1980s, several initiatives to help homeless people have been launched by charity organisations (for example, the creation of the *Restaurants du Coeur* in 1985 by the French comedian Coluche received much publicity). In 1993, the *SAMU Social* (Paris social ambulance) was created to provide both an outreach service and a free telephone helpline for the homeless, known by its number as '*le 115*'. Other outreach services followed, supplying those who do not use regular services (plus some who do) with food, basic health care and in some cases transport to the shelters. The 115 is now the general number of the free helpline for the homeless, both in Paris (the Samu Social) and in the provinces. (The FNARS, the National Federation of Social Reintegration Associations, is in charge of the Observatory of the 115 in the provinces, while data from the Paris 115 are analysed by the

[1] The views expressed in this report are those of the author and not those of INED or any other organisation. The author wrote the report as an associate researcher to INED. She is now working at the INSEE.

Observatoire du Samu Social de Paris. The FNARS will now also be in charge of the National Observatory of the emergency number 115, with the collaboration of the *Samu Social de Paris*, while all data from the *Samu Social de Paris* including outreach services will still be analysed by the *Observatoire du Samu Social*) A single centre in each department informs those in need, particularly about shelter vacancies in the area.

The *centres d'accueil de jour* (day shelters) offer a wide range of everyday services, such as laundry facilities, lockers, administrative addresses (for making benefit applications, for example), showers, snacks, as well as cultural activities. These also provide access to health-care professionals and social workers. Some of these centres accept only women or young people. The *vestiaires* distribute free clothing and the food distributions provide free or inexpensive hot and cold meals, either at fixed sites or in the street (food vans). Other services provide health care.

The activity of the accommodation services has grown steadily over recent years, especially in the provision of 'emergency' beds. Each year, the Ministry of Social Affairs funds a programme, initially entitled *pauvreté précarité* (poverty precariousness) and later *plan urgence hiver* (winter emergency plan). While the funding is mostly public, the services are delivered mainly by NGOs.

Asylum seekers are supposed to be accommodated in special hostels, the CADA (*centres d'accueil pour demandeurs d'asile,* hostels for asylum seekers), but in the early 2000s a shortage of beds in these centres led the NGOs to house families of asylum seekers (together with some other homeless persons) in low-cost hotel accommodation.

Emergency shelters are usually characterised by short duration stays and basic types of help. The winter plans are intended to increase the supply of emergency beds during periods of very cold weather.

Long-stay hostels usually take the form of *Centres d'Hébergement et de Réinsertion Sociale* (Centres for Accommodation and Social Reintegration, or CHRS; for more details on the system of accommodation, see box in the full report). In these services (rooms in a collective facility but also self-contained flats or hotel rooms), accommodated people also receive resettlement support. Residents can stay for up to several months, occasionally for years. Staff are better qualified and funding is stable (renewed annually). However, a proportion of CHRS beds are now used for 'emergency' situations.

The report gives several examples of directories of services. At the local level, the municipality of Paris produces a guidebook intended for use by the homeless and persons with socio-economic difficulties, and the Regional Observatory of Health (ORS) of the Ile-de-France region (the region that includes Paris and its suburbs) maintains a list to help social workers find accommodation and other services for the homeless. At the national level, FNARS (the National Federation of Social Reintegration Associations) has in the past produced a directory of its member agencies, which it plans to update in the coming months. The FINESS (*fichier d'identification national des établissements sanitaires et sociaux*, a national database of establishments in the health and welfare sectors) database is a national database of establishments in the health and welfare sectors and is maintained by the Ministry of Welfare/Social Affairs. Part of the FINESS database concerns state-funded accommodation services.

These lists are established for purposes other than data collection (the guidebooks of local authorities are intended for social workers or for the homeless themselves, and do not always list long-stay accommodation services to which access is indirect). The lists also record data for just one segment of the services (the FINESS database, which is more complete on accommodation services that receive permanent state funding). The sampling frame of the ES (*Etablissements sociaux*, establishments in the health and welfare sector) survey (conducted by the DREES, the statistical services of the Ministry of Welfare/Social Affairs) and the database of collective accommodation in the Census (maintained by INSEE, the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies) aim at a more complete coverage, but rely on information supplied by a large number of individual municipalities and NGOs. An

INSEE/DREES working group was set up in 2006 to exchange information on those two databases, and particularly on the 'emergency' accommodation services.

Approaches to the collection of homelessness statistics

There are several main producers of official statistics on homelessness. INSEE conducted the 2001 survey on users of food distribution and accommodation services (SD2001), but is also in charge of the Census and the Housing Survey. The General Directorate of Social Affairs (DGAS), together with the Directorate of Populations and Migrations (DPM), (both parts of the Ministry of Welfare/Social Affairs), publish data about state-funded accommodation services, including services for the homeless, for asylum seekers and for refugees. The statistical services of DREES maintain the FINESS directory and conduct the ES survey of establishments for persons experiencing socio-economic difficulties (and also for disabled people).

The Ministry of Housing (more precisely the DGUHC) (*Direction Générale de l'Urbanisme, de l'Habitat et de la Construction*) also holds data on longer-term forms of accommodation, such as the *résidences sociales*.

The DGAS/DPM data give the number of available beds and are updated every 3 months. The coverage of these data is limited, however, since they omit a number of the shelters (usually 'emergency' shelters) that are not funded by central government, but by NGOs or municipalities only, for example, or that only receive subsidies.

A new system for gathering information on CHRS accommodation is currently being implemented, in collaboration with the FNARS. It will collect aggregate data annually, which will not eliminate the double counts when a person stays in several hostels (i.e. the stays are counted and not the persons). The indicators include the types of accommodation to be found in the CHRS (collective accommodation or self-contained flats, 'emergency' hostel or with support, etc.), the number of persons accommodated on 31 December, the financial elements, staff, and various performance indicators such as the housing and employment solutions available to leavers, the average duration of stays, etc. These indicators must be communicated in Excel file format. This system represents the first step towards harmonisation of the CHRS activity reports, within the terms of the LOLF[2]. (*Loi Organique relative aux lois de Finances*)

Data from the DGAS/DPM are exhaustive, though on a reduced field.

The ES survey was conducted every other year until 1997, but is now conducted every 4 years. The persons interviewed are the service providers. Up to 1997, the survey was exhaustive as regards establishments (general data about all establishments were collected every other year), but data were collected on the homeless users only once every 4 years (one year the users of the establishments for disadvantaged and homeless persons, 2 years later the users of the institutions for disabled persons). The 2004 survey is exhaustive as regards establishments but the data about users are collected on a nationally representative sample of establishments. However, this sample is not representative at the regional and departmental levels. In the selected institutions, all users are surveyed.

Until 1997, the survey did not collect any data on the users of emergency shelters. This changed with the 2004 survey, which describes all people accommodated by emergency services on the night of 8/9 January 2005. This description lists gender, age, family type, general characteristics, housing problems, and the type of accommodation most often used in the previous 6 months. For the other, longer-term, institutions, the user data comprise flow figures (the users that exited the institution in 2004) and stock

[2] LOLF, or *Loi organique relative aux lois de finances* (1 August 2001; entering into force on 1 January 2006), requires that objectives be presented together with indicators for their evaluation. In the 2006 finance bill, the indicators relating to the 'policies for social inclusion' programme (*politiques en faveur de l'inclusion sociale*, programme no. 177) include the number of persons accommodated through the 115, the average cost of a bed in a CHRS, and the number of persons exiting a CHRS into conventional housing.

figures (the users present on 15 December 2004). Data are not collected for users of services other than accommodation.

For long-term accommodation, the data collected refer to the users present on 15 December 2004. They include gender, year of birth, family type, socio-occupational category, employment situation, main resources, current and previous forms of accommodation, nationality, legal status (asylum seeker, failed asylum seeker, refugee…), and health insurance cover. For those who left the institution in 2004, the destination is recorded along with data on gender, year of birth, dates of entry and exit, occupation and family type, and main resources used. The limitations of this survey are the small number of variables collected and the fact that it is not representative at local level. Its advantage is its regularity (every 4 years). However, the emergency shelters are again poorly covered.

The SD2001 survey by INSEE is a nationally representative sample survey of the users of food distribution and accommodation services. Rough sleepers are covered by the survey through their use of food distribution services and also because a large proportion of them use emergency shelters for at least a few days in the winter. The coverage of this survey has been studied by INED.

The SD2001 survey has a very detailed questionnaire and permits in-depth analyses that shed light on the life histories of homeless people and on their living conditions and use of services. Its limitations are that it is representative only at the national level (for the Paris region only), and that it is infrequent (a new survey is planned for 2011). For the intervening period, the Census (which is now a continuous survey) gives estimates of the homeless in collective accommodation and of rough sleepers.

Approaches to service provider client record systems

Client record systems can differ greatly from one service to another. Those services with 'unconditional access' may record only the numbers of persons present each day (some emergency shelters) or not even that (day centres with a large throughput that can only record users of a particular service provided in the centre, such as access to a social worker). Asking users for information, especially identification information to avoid double-counts, could compromise unconditional access and deter people who might be in illegal situations (not in possession of valid residence permits for example), thus preventing them from seeking help.

In the long-stay CHRS facilities, for example, recording client information is easier, but there is not always a computer-assisted system. However, some are using software applications for this purpose.

Information systems that allow files to be merged over a geographical area (such as a department or a region) exist in a few cases but they encounter many difficulties. It seems that the human factor is particularly important. This data gathering is facilitated if the following two conditions are satisfied:

- low turnover of staff who are 'leaders' in this operation and of those who collect the data; development of links between service providers, and between them and the DDASS (*Direction Départementale des Affaires Sanitaires et Sociales*, Departmental Directorate of Health and Social Affairs), or DRASS (*Direction Régionale des Affaires Sanitaires et Sociales*, Regional Directorate of Health and Social Affairs)
- sufficient time spent explaining the use of the software at the beginning of the operation, and making it user-friendly.

The full report gives a few examples of the ways client information is recorded in the most advanced cases. The *SAMU Social de Paris* (its free telephone helpline service, the Paris 115) maintains a data file of its users (without double counting), based upon the 4D application (for any information about the

4D application see http://www.4d.com/). ORSAS-Lorraine (*Observatoire régional de la Santé et des Affaires Sociales de Lorraine,* Regional Observatory of Health and Social Affairs of the Lorraine region)) maintained a system for the CHRS in the Lorraine region from 1995 to 2005, using an identifier for each person accommodated, but some CHRS stopped participating because they felt it made their workload too heavy. France-Terre d'Asile (not strictly in the homeless field, since it runs hostels for asylum seekers) has developed a similar application, Asylweb. The CHRS in the Poitou-Charentes region also use a system comparable to that of ORSAS-Lorraine, called Ophelia[3]. Finally, three departments from the Rhône-Alpes region are developing a system that will record accommodation demand and supply using a broad definition of accommodation, including specialist accommodation for asylum seekers (CADA), migrant workers (FTM) and mother-and-child refuges (*centres maternels*).

It seems that emergency shelters, whether or not they are CHRS, and particularly those where access is unconditional and that handle large flows of people over a short period of time, would have many difficulties implementing such a system. With more resources and, in particular, with better training of the people in charge of the system, some (and possibly many) CHRS could improve their record keeping, especially as the reports they are required to submit to their funding agencies will become harmonised in future to come in line with the DGAS initiative and the requirements of the LOLF. It remains to be seen (in the light of the difficulties encountered by ORSAS, for example, a case that INED has studied in detail) whether pooling these data before aggregating the results, at least at the departmental or regional level, and dealing with double-counting, is a realistic objective, unless large amounts of resources are allocated in terms of equipment, training, time and networking. The failure of the ANCHOR system shows that the necessary conditions are not always met. (ANCHOR is a North American example of use of a general client record system that gave interesting results at the local level but whose generalisation ran into opposition from providers.) The ORSAS-Lorraine and the ANCHOR examples have been studied at greater length in (Frechon, Marpsat, 2004), which also gives some details about other homeless management information systems (HMIS, to use the American term).

The various problems posed by client recording of information can be summarised as follows:

- Collecting aggregate data at the national level This is already done by the DGAS for the CHRS, i.e. accommodation services, mostly long-stay, with permanent public funding, and for the beds provided under the winter emergency plan. But data are not collected for services that are not state-funded. In future, data collection from CHRS should be done according to a set of guidelines, with adoption of a standard report format (the FNARS is working with the DGAS on this project). These data relate to people at a specific point in time, or to stays (no identifier is currently used at national level to ensure a person is only counted once, even if they made several stays in the same year).
- Collecting individual data at the service provider's level A strict compliance with the law would require notifying the national data protection agency (CNIL) and possibly asking it to give an authorisation or at least issue an opinion, depending on the type of data collected. A 'simplified notification' procedure could be developed if the data collected were everywhere of the same kind. Data collection is very difficult in the 'emergency shelters' because of the high number of entries on any given day.
- Collecting data at the individual level, for a group of services, or a geographical area, including nationally In addition to compliance with CNIL rules, there are ethical and technical issues. If the data refer to persons and not only to stays, use of an identifier is necessary. A system of national identity numbers operates in France, but some people (for example, illegal migrants who have never been affiliated to the social security system) do not have a number. Besides, use of the

[3] Use of the Progedis software by other service providers has been noted by the FNARS.

national identity number is discouraged by the CNIL, so a specific identifier may have to be devised. However, use of identifiers is not always well accepted in France, and submitting the homeless to something that is rejected by the rest of the population raises an ethical issue. If the geographical area concerned is very large, the task of dealing with double counts and errors may present serious technical difficulties.

According to the persons interviewed for this report, in addition to the need for computers, software, staff training and for time to be allotted to the task of recording data, there is also an important human factor. It is necessary to maintain staff motivation by letting them see the outcome of their work, by organising networks between the various service providers and between service providers and the data collection agency. These relationships are bound to suffer when, as is often the case, staff turnover is high.

Germany

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Introduction

The remit was to portray the national and regional endeavours to compile official statistics on homelessness in Germany. In consultation with the client, this paper presents and analyses exclusively the new integrated statistics on cases in urgent need of housing for North Rhine-Westphalia (hereafter referred to as NRW). In 2006, the statistics, developed by GISS e. V.[1], will be used for the first time to collate aggregate data on the extent of homelessness using standardised criteria in this federal state.

Statistics on homelessness in Germany

There is no official definition of *homelessness* in Germany. The only definition that is nationally recognised and used by many local and national authorities and other institutions and projects is that of the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe e. V.[2] (hereafter referred to as BAG W): *'Homeless are those who do not possess a rent contract for housing. (…)*' (BAG W 2006a). In the following, the BAG W describes the groups of persons covered by this definition. Thus, in contrast to the definition of a *European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS)*, the concept of homelessness used by BAG W refers mainly to the lack of any tenancy agreement for living space. Although they are covered by the BAG W definition, only some local authorities in Germany extend help to the homeless, to women in women's refuges and to safe houses. As a basic principle, asylum seekers and refugees who are in the country without legal residence status or with only limited or temporary leave to remain are not recorded as *homeless* in Germany.

The BAG W definition itself only describes people acutely affected by homelessness. However, those target groups which are threatened by homelessness under the ETHOS definition, such as households with an eviction order or people at risk of violence, are partially covered by a different definition, *cases in urgent need of housing*:

'Cases in urgent need of housing (...) exist when people

- *are immediately threatened by homelessness or*
- *are currently homeless or*
- *are living in unacceptable housing conditions for any other reasons. (…)'*

(Koch et al. 1987)

This definition (laid out in more detail by Koch et al. 1987) has been extended and modified on several occasions over recent decades. The integrated reporting on cases in urgent need of housing for NRW described in this paper is also based on a modified definition.

As early as 1996, standardised statistics on cases in urgent need of housing were officially requested by the then federal government. A corresponding feasibility study was commissioned, and concrete proposals published in 1998 (König 1998). However, 8 years after its publication, the project has not

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1 GISS: Gesellschaft für innovative Sozialforschung und Sozialplanung (Association for Innovative Social Research and Social Planning, Bremen/Germany)

2 National Alliance of Service Providers for the Homeless

been implemented, even for this subgroup of homeless people and people at risk of homelessness. Only a handful of individual federal states (Saxony, Saarland and the city-state of Berlin) have to date set up statistics that measure the extent of actual and impending homelessness (see Busch-Geertsema 2004 for details of these regional activities).

In 1999 BAG W set up AG STADO 72[3]. Its aim was to develop a documentation tool that could be used to record the need for help, the progress of help and the results of the help for homeless people and offenders and that enables national homelessness statistics to be compiled in the long term (BAG W 2006b). This tool refers to homeless *people* who are receiving support in the welfare system under sections 67ff. of the Law for Social Assistance. It consists of a data set, currently made up of 29 variables, a specialist data set for help to the homeless (17 additional variables) and a specialist data set for the care and resettlement of offenders (nine variables). Thus, a total of 55 variables were developed, of which 18 are marked as the core data set. The basic data set enables flow statistics, since data for many variables are requested at the start and end of the period of help. This voluntary (and therefore non-representative) survey doesn't try to record the number of homeless people in Germany, but rather their *profiles.*

AG STADO 72 has also developed an aggregation tool that can be made available to the software companies or interested institutions. With funds, it was possible to conduct a project between 2001 and 2003 that enables client-related data of homeless people with special social difficulties to be aggregated nationally, with the intention of forming the basis for annual statistical reports of BAG W. As a consequence, BAG W was again able to present a detailed statistical report in 2005, based on 2003 data from 42 central offices with a total of 70-80 organisations (BAG W 2005: 6). Further, some 70-80 organisations (mainly the same as in 2003) are participating in ongoing data collation (interview with Schröder on 10th April 2006)[4].

Framework for integrated reporting on cases in urgent need of housing in NRW from 2006

Statistics on the extent of homelessness have been compiled in NRW since 1965. Data are compiled by the local authorities within the federal state (LDS NRW 2005: 5).

These statistics record the following homeless groups:

- people without accommodation
- people who are about to lose their homes very soon
- people in inadequate accommodation
- people who are not able to find accommodation on their own
- people housed by municipalities using legal measures under the laws on security and order.

However, the figures do not include people of no fixed abode and people who 'do not display any signs of seeking a fixed abode in future' (LDS NRW 2005: 5). Also, re-settlers in such accommodation are excluded from the figures.

The 'homelessness reporting' questionnaire collates the following data in the scope of the regional homeless statistics in NRW:

- number of people and households in accommodation
- type of accommodation
- reason for homelessness

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[3] AG STADO 72: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Statistik und Dokumentation auf Bundesebene für die Hilfen in besonderen Lebenslagen nach § 72 BSHG und vergleichbare Hilfearten (National alliance for statistics and documentation for help for people in special life situations as per section 72 of the Law on Social Welfare [since 2005: section 67 ff.] and comparable forms of help).

[4] Dr. Helmut Schröder is subject specialist for documentation and statistics at the BAG W

- duration of accommodation
- number of homeless accommodations.

Four new questionnaires were developed in the course of the *Integrated reporting on cases in urgent need of housing in North Rhine-Westphalia* project. This was commissioned by the Ministry of Generations, Family, Women and Integration of the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia in cooperation with the regional working group of public and private welfare in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), and conducted by GISS e. V.:

1 Provision of help to the homeless as per sections 67/68 of the Law for Social Assistance
2 Assignments under laws on security and order
3 Prevention of homelessness
4 Cases closed (preventative cases closed).

5 The completion of questionnaires 3 and 4 is currently suspended due to the fact that a new legal regulation on the assumption of rent arrears after 1st April 2006 means that there would be little point in conducting a survey at present. Among other things, different departments than previously are responsible for the assumption of debts in the form of rent arrears, and even this is regulated in a standard manner. (Interview with Busch-Geertsema on 29th March 2006)[5] Both forms for recording prevention cases are nonetheless presented in this paper, as it is anticipated that the survey will begin later.

The aim of the new reporting is to 'combine the different local data for an integrated reporting on cases in urgent need of housing in North Rhine-Westphalia more closely with one another and to harmonise key factors of statistical recording. This should achieve an improved data set and correspondingly better foundations for systematic political and administrative action in terms of help for cases in urgent need of housing' (Busch-Geertsema/Ruhstrat 2005: 3). As of the 30th of June 2006, the aim is for as many local authorities as possible (on a voluntary basis) and all NGO service providers who are funded by the two regional associations in NRW to complete the questionnaires. These new integrated statistics on cases in urgent need of housing in NRW will *complement,* not *replace,* the regional homelessness statistics.

In an initial step, the planned documentation was based on the most recent definition of the 'case in urgent need of housing' as this was developed in the scope of the 'homelessness and support for people in urgent need of housing' research network in 2005.

This includes the following cases in urgent need of housing:

A currently homeless
B immediately threatened by homelessness
C living in unacceptable housing conditions
D immigrants currently affected by homelessness in special accommodation.

(For details, see Busch-Geertsema/Ruhstrat 2005: 13 ff.)

Even if the definition of cases in urgent need of housing described above is used in the 'integrated statistics on cases in urgent need of housing in NRW', it should be regarded as an idealised construct for the actual survey. Thus, data cannot be compiled for all the groups of people in the definition. Incidentally, this poses a fundamental problem for all comparable attempts to set up statistics on cases in urgent need of housing at regional level in Germany.

[5] Dr. Volker Busch-Geertsema is senior researcher with GISS e. V.

Questionnaires for integrated reporting on cases in urgent need of housing in NRW from 2006

General statistical characteristics

Conditions set down by existing statistics for surveying people and households currently affected by homelessness meant that the only possible survey form for this target group was a point-in-time survey on the 30th June of a given year (interview with Busch-Geertsema on 9th March 2006). In order to avoid doubling the burden on the projects as far as possible, the variables and their variants in questionnaire 1 for the recording of clients of help to the homeless are based on the AG STADO 72 data set. However, this deals not with a point-in-time survey, but rather with running statistics that in many cases, such as the income or housing situation, are *recorded at the beginning and at the end of the period of support*. The adaptation nonetheless represents a reduction in the required input for the projects involved in both surveys, since they can use some of the data already collated.

The documentation instruments were initially conceived by GISS e. V. as written questionnaires that contain detailed explanations on the reverse. Each centre that is involved in the project thus currently uses its own existing software. However, in a second phase it is conceivable that the questionnaires will be transferred to an electronic data form and an interface for existing client programs created. The first collation of data for 2006 is declared to be a test survey, meaning that no statement can be made concerning the use and distribution of the results. (Interview with Busch-Geertsema on 29th March 2006)

Questionnaire 1: Provision of help to the homeless as per sections 67/68 of the Law for Social Assistance

This is a point-in-time survey of the NGO service providers for help to the homeless in NRW who offer ambulant or stationary assistance in accordance with the statutory guidelines of sections 67 ff. of the Law for Social Assistance. The following variables were collated in the questionnaire: age, nationality, household structure, and housing situation.

Two populations are recorded (each divided by gender): first the *total* number of clients, and a subgroup is recorded in a second column. These people must be *homeless* (no dwelling secured by a tenancy agreement) and *not* accommodated via assignments under laws on security and order.[6] The variables refer to the defined key date of 30th June. Thus the *current* status is recorded. The survey is intended to be conducted on a recurring basis every year. Thus the number of 'pending' people on 30th June of each year should be entered (p*ending* means that in the course of the month of June - that is, in the 30 days preceding the point in time - an advice-related contact occurred). Double-counting cannot be completely excluded because some homeless people use several services in parallel, at least in the ambulant area (e.g. advice agencies). According to GISS e. V. (interview with Busch-Geertsema on 9th March 2006), allowance can be made for this since a whole range of homeless people are not caught by the recording process, such as those who sleep rough and do not make use of any institutional help, or people who are temporarily living with friends and relatives without any regulated tenancy agreement.

Questionnaire 2: Assignments under laws on security and order

Accommodation as a result of assignments of the homeless and other measures under laws on security and order are recorded by point-in-time survey on 30th of June of the year.[7] The increase and decrease per households and people is also counted, i.e. the fluctuation in the period of the last 12 months up to the key date (1st July of the previous year to 30th June of the current year). This questionnaire is completed on a voluntary basis by the local authorities in NRW.

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6 People who are accommodated under provisions of police laws are recorded via form 2

7 These forms of accommodation are generally local authority accommodation, but confiscation of dwellings is also included here.

This questionnaire records both *households* and *people*. In the case of the *households*, the total number of households, the household structure and the household size are recorded. Thus, children under 18 living in the household are also counted. In the case of *people*, the total number of people and the number of children under 18 and the age and nationality of the adults is recorded. In the case of nationality, both German/non-German is asked as in form 1, plus the possibility of a migration background. The questionnaire essentially collates the data of people and households who have already been recorded via the regional homelessness statistics, meaning that the definition of homelessness from there also applies. Additional characteristics are also recorded, such as nationality and age, so that differentiated conclusions about people housed in this manner can be drawn.

Questionnaire 3: Prevention of homelessness

The reporting of measures to prevent homelessness covers all cases that have become known between 1st January and 31st December of the year due to the threat of imminent homelessness. Thus all people and households for whom the loss of their existing home is imminent, for example due to rent arrears or escalated social conflicts or other pressing reasons, should be recorded. This is thus group B of cases in urgent need of housing, who are immediately threatened by homelessness. The reporting is to be done by the local authorities.

Initially the form records the total number of affected households, then differentiated into:

- extra-judicial cases concerning tenancy law
- other extrajudicial homelessness prevention cases
- reported actions for eviction
- reported dates for scheduled forcible evictions.

In the second part of the prevention form, all cases with whom actual contact could be made in the course of the year and where advice was given are documented. This is thus a subgroup of the households recorded in the first part. A differentiation between households and people is made.

For households, the total number and the following variables are recorded:

- household structure on becoming known
- reason for threat
- repeat problems in the past 2 years.

For individual people, the total number is recorded and, separately, the number of children under 18 affected, and the variables:

- age of the adults on notification
- gender of the adults
- nationality of the adults.

Questionnaire 4: Cases closed (homelessness prevention cases closed)

In the cases closed, the completed prevention cases are documented in an aggregated manner. These statistics should be collected every year by the local authorities on a recurrent basis each year for the course of a calendar year – 1st January to 31st December. All that should be counted are cases closed in the recorded time period (by *households*), whose whereabouts are known. Closed cases whose whereabouts is *not* known when the case is closed are not recorded.

The following is recorded:

- those households which were able to retain the dwelling by means of assumption of debts in the form of rent arrears
- those households which were able to help themselves
- those households which moved to another dwelling

- those households which have been accommodated as homeless
- those households which are homeless and have been accommodated in another way or not at all
- other.

The statutory basis on which rent arrears were assumed, in what form (loan or grant) and the amount of the arrears assumed (in Euros) were also recorded. This records all cases in which rent arrears were assumed (also in part) in order to retain the dwelling.

Conclusion

In Germany there are currently no standardised statistics for measuring manifest and impending homelessness, although experts and people working at the grass roots have been demanding this for many years. The documentation tool developed by AG STADO 72 is not used across the board in Germany, with the result that no representative national data can be collated. On the other hand, after the first point-in-time survey on 30th June 2006, the integrated statistics on cases in urgent need of housing in NRW will be the first in Germany to use *standardised criteria* to collate data on the extent of cases in urgent need of housing for a territorial state.

Thus, it is assumed that all homeless people and households in institutional accommodation can be recorded via the new documentation. Some groups, such as non-accommodated homeless people and people in unacceptable housing, will continue to be hidden. However, as this will remain constant in the statistics over the long-term, the data taken as a whole will at least enable conclusions to be drawn regarding trends: an increase or decrease in the number of homeless people and households in NRW can thus be recorded accurately. It is regrettable that the recording of prevention cases is suspended at the present time.

These two tools for prevention therefore go much further than all previous regional attempts to record cases where the loss of housing is imminent. Similar to cases of actual homelessness, it is also true here that not all cases can be recorded (e.g. non-reported eviction orders due to disturbance of the peace in a house). However, in these cases the new statistics also provide the opportunity to document tendencies and differences regarding the scope of prevention cases over several years.

The integrated reporting in NRW is thus a first step towards the comprehensive collation of data on cases in urgent need of housing. In a second step, the questionnaires may be transferred to an electronic form and an interface for the existing client programmes created. The activities undertaken in the run-up to the test survey in 2006 demonstrate that a project of this type can in fact be implemented if the political and administrative will is there. Although BAG W fears that demands at the level of national politics may recede if statistics are set up at regional level, hope prevails that this might send a signal to the German federal government to resume the project of 'nationwide statistics on cases in urgent need of housing' and, in doing so, to benefit from past and future experience in NRW (interview with Schröder on 10th April 2006). The next steps now must be to find a solution for collating data on prevention cases, and successfully complete the test phase in 2006. The results must be published and discussed beyond NRW – both in terms of a potential systematic approach to helping cases in urgent need of housing in NRW and also in the context of the demand for national statistics on urgent housing cases, which remains necessary.

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Hungary[1]

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Introduction

The aim of this study is to provide a comprehensive review and analysis of the data collection and statistical system regarding homeless care services and homeless people in Hungary[2]. The study describes the current official registration and data submission process for the providers of care services for homeless people in Hungary. It also provides the background to its legal regulation, the latest attempts to change it, and the current debates on the issue. The study describes the aim, current shortcomings and problems of the data submission system. It describes the regular unofficial data collection system regarding the services and their providers, highlighting points of practical significance.

The study reviews the operation and the serious shortages in the official data collection scheme regarding clients of the providers of services for homeless people, possible reasons for this, and different points of view on its shortcomings. In relation to client data registration and processing, it assesses the current unofficial client data collection scheme and its condition. The report recommends possible directions for further development of the current system of data submission.

Political, legal, regulatory, organisational and financing environment

To understand the Hungarian system, we first summarise its political, legal, regulatory, organisational and financing features. Hungary only became a democracy in 1990, before which financial resources were integrated into the central state budget and their redistribution occurred through a central plan. An extensive data collection and compilation mechanism concentrated more on the distribution of the central plan than on collecting data about actual needs.

After 1990, the scale of transfer of local resources to the central budget decreased, duties and responsibilities were decentralised to the local level, and the central plan directive system was cancelled. Homes were not built any more by the state itself, the so-called social housing allocation system, the waiting list of homeless people was abandoned, and the data-collection system relating to them was also discontinued.

The first post-1990 homeless care services were largely established by the non-government organisations (Shelter Foundation, Red Cross). The operation of these organisations was not yet regulated by specific pieces of legislation, and they were financed through central government and/or municipal tenders and subsidies. The Social Act, as implemented in 1993, contains a framework description for some type of the homeless care services existing at that time (night shelter, temporary hostel), but no detailed legislation was yet laid down, and financing was still based on subsidies through tenders.

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1 Project VT/2005/024: Measurement of Homelessness at EU level. JCSHR University of Dundee.
The whole study is on: http://bmszki.hu/file/english/english11/datacollection-final.doc

2 Our study, as it will be apparent later deals with the data collection system on homelessness in its narrower meaning, complying with the Hungarian official interpretation of the term. Therefore, mechanisms of the (occasional) data collection on *homel*essness will not be discussed here.

Since then, substantial changes have occurred in the legal, regulatory, organisational and financing environments, and it will be shown later how they are linked with homelessness and data submission. The several dozen amendments made to the Social Act between 1993 and 2006, as well as the related central legislative instruments, give a detailed description of:

- the different types and forms of care services for homeless people;
- the detailed contents of the individual forms of services, as well as the necessary personal qualifications, material, objective and operational requirements;
- duties assigned to municipalities to set up and operate different forms of service, depending on the scale of the local population of homeless people;
- the requirement of the homeless care service providers defined in legislation (operated by the local municipality or civil organisations) to apply for permits for their operation from the decentralised government authorities (Social and Child Protection Administration - SCPA). Once they comply with the legal requirements, the authority permits their operation, so making them automatically eligible for state subsidy,
- the normative state subsidy to partially (!) cover the expenses of some of the mandatory duties of municipalities (which include the services to be offered). The "normative state subsidy" is a guaranteed and uniform sum of support per bed in a homeless hostel, or per person in a soup-kitchen. The amounts of the normative subsidies are declared in the state budget law.

In addition to the above, some homeless care services and service providers operate types of services not prescribed under relevant legislation or they are not able (or willing) to comply with the requirements of the relevant pieces of legislation. These service providers do not have official permission, and do not receive normative state subsidy (but they are eligible to receive support through tenders).

If we understand the mode of operation as well as the goals of the regulatory and financing system, our questions can be answered as to why the data submission subsystems of the homeless care services have (or have not) been developed until recently in Hungary.

Official typology of homeless care services

The Social Act includes and controls the following homeless care services: catering, social street work, homeless hostels, night shelters, day centres. The official registration covers the services under legal regulation, but there are also other very important services for the homeless which are not defined by legislation (dispatcher services, crisis cars, medical services), but which strategic and political decision-making would also need information about too.

General classification of homeless services

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">Services covering homeless people[3]</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">Social services covering homeless people[4]</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">Homeless services[5]</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Homeless services covered by the Social Act[6]</td><td>Homeless services not covered by the Social Act</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Registered and receiving normative support</td><td>Not receiving normative support, applying for subsidies from special funds, financing from donations</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

The system of official registration of homeless care services

In order to operate social services for homeless people in Hungary, as defined under legislation, providers must obtain official permission. Detailed rules for applying are laid down in legislation[7]. Providers must apply for permission to offer homeless care services either to the notary of the local municipality or to the Social and Child Protection Administration (SCPA). After the decision is made, the notary or the SCPA sends a copy of the official permission to the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO). The HCSO registers all decisions received and provides a yearly compilation which is published in the Social Statistics Yearbook (in paper copy and electronic version on CDs). The HCSO also forwards the decisions received to the Ministry of Social Affairs, which forwards them to the National Institute for Family and Social Policy (NIFSP), where they are compiled in a database. The database is published yearly on the NIFSP website, where it is publicly accessible. Information contained in the database is compiled occasionally, mainly to facilitate policy-making by the ministry.

A major problem of the database is that it contains 'flow type' data and, because of inadequacies in the starting data set, it cannot be used to produce exact 'stock type' reports. In other words, it shows only the services which received permission in the given year, and is not able to show, for example, how many services are operated on 31st December. Moreover, issued permits do not show whether the given service is actually operating.

[3] include any kind of service directed at the general public, including the homeless, e.g., restaurant, pub, transportation company, public lavatory, etc.

[4] include any kind of social service regulated or not regulated by the Social Act that provides service to the general public, including the homeless, e.g. Employment Centre, Addiction Treatment Centre, Child and Family Care Centre, etc.

[5] social services that provide for homeless people, as defined in the Social Act.

[6] Services that are named, listed and defined in the Social Act, as described above.

[7] Government Decree No. 188/1999. (XII. 16.) on the official permission of operation of social facilities offering personal service and village catering services and on the permission of social ventures

Imperfections and problems of the current data collection system

The common handling and coordination of the two current official statistical data collection systems (one based on the registration of official permits and the other based on the Statistical Office system which produces flow and stock types of data) has not yet been solved, in spite of continuous attempts. Therefore no clear, accurate and reliable summaries can be made, even regarding the number of different types of care services currently offered. Both systems provide little information that can be used during strategic planning. Compilations of the official data collection only reach the care services described in central legislation, which means they do not give a comprehensive picture of the range of services (for example, all services outside this range of care, which are financed as projects through tenders, are excluded from the data collection).

Compilations of the official data collection do not even indicate whether the municipalities, which are obliged to operate some services, are actually establishing and operating those services themselves or are contracting NGOs to do so, or even whether such services have legal permission or have not. This also prevents the basic carrying out of monitoring of compliance with legal obligations. Similarly, the current data submission system makes compilation practically impossible, even on the extent of resources which central government provides for the establishment and daily operation of specific types of care services through guaranteed state subsidy, other state budgetary estimates, budget estimates supervised and distributed by ministries through tenders as well as through other funds, and the collation of other funding such as those provided by local governments, sponsors and other supporters etc. This financial monitoring and tracing is the main obstacle to strategic planning today.

Official system of client data collection

Care services regulated by the Social Act must be officially permitted either by the local notary or Social and Child Protection Administration. The authorities issuing the permit are obliged to check the operation of the permitted care services once a year, to see whether or not they comply with relevant legislation. These controls also include control of the presence and use of mandatory documentation.

In accordance with Act XLVI 1993, the government specifies the subject of the National Statistical Programme for Data Collection (NSPDC) each year. Data collected in the framework of the NSPDC can provide information on homeless care services as well[8]. In the NSPDC system all service providers have the obligation to timely report the retrospective, summarized data by filling in the uniform electronic questionnaire and to forward it to the HCSO. The HCSO collates these data (or rather a part of the data) and publishes them in the already mentioned Social Statistical Yearbook. These data can be considered as official stock-type data showing the state of play, actual staff and capacity and presenting some features of the services provided as well as some of the characteristics of the clients using the services.

Operators are not required to submit data which are not included in the NSPDC system. There are no provisions making the addition, further use or forwarding of the client registration data mandatory for the operators. In addition to the few client data, no other data on the clients are subject to systematic aggregation or further processing.

Regulations regarding the acquisition and management of personal data are very strict in Hungary. The basic principle is that data may only be registered with the approval of the person in question and for a

[8] Contents of the specific NSPDC questionnaires are: Data on capacity: Permitted capacity on 31st December of the current year, Capacity in operation on 31st December of the current year. Data on clients: Number of clients on 31st December of the previous year, Clients left service during the current year, New clients registered during the current year, Number of clients served on 31st December of the current year, Clients by age and gender (31st December).

particular purpose. All citizens have the right to access data stored about themselves. Personal data stored in separate databases may only be accessed in certain cases. All social services providers must draw up a Data Protection Code in accordance with legal requirements.

A summary of data collection system is given on the last page of this report.

Possible reasons of lacking collection of client data

When the Hungarian economy was decentralised after 1990, national strategic planning practically disappeared for social policy and social care, including homeless care services. With the absence of strategic planning, detailed and extensive data collection is not required.

However, the planned system before 1990 did not rely upon real needs but was directed more towards the distribution of central decisions and goals. This is why the traditions, tools, institutions, administrative procedures and data submission related to actual need are incomplete. At the same time, there is considerable traditional distrust: central (national) bodies do not trust their local counterparts, and local administrations and service providers do not trust central government bodies. This considerably hinders the establishment of new data submission procedures and the registration and forwarding of accurate data.

Further circumstances, such as confidentiality rules on privacy, hinder the forwarding of any client data. Legislation on privacy policy also gives the framework for data which might be recorded, but the forwarding of already recorded data in an aggregated form does not constitute a legal problem if it is for a given reason.

A further problem is the lack of financial resources in the past 10-15 years, which has resulted in the evolution of different 'fire fighting' and short-term 'survival' techniques in both central government bodies and local service providers. This did not support either long-term or medium-term planning, and it also delays data registration and aggregation, as well as the establishment of institutions running these activities which require financial resources and additional capacity.

Effects of the accession to the European Union

Hungary's accession to the European Union on 1 May 2004 introduced huge challenges to the country. Major challenges included:

- providing a comprehensive, transparent and demonstrative picture of the situation in the country, and of the public and main socio-economic processes;
- providing a problem-oriented picture of the state of society and of the main processes in it, according to EU priorities;
- based on these analyses, defining medium and long-term goals, writing programmes to achieve these goals, defining actions and groups of actions, and starting strategic planning.

These challenges are subject to periodic monitoring to review their realisation, effects, effectiveness and results of actions taken.

Hungary's accession has generated new needs regarding data collection, data submission, central aggregation and data processing. The pressure to perform strategic planning and to create programmes (mainly when it became clear that considerable resources might arrive in Hungary from the EU only if good programmes are available) made the central national bodies more 'hungry for information'. It became clear that information available until now is insufficient in the new situation.

Effects of the transformation of the current legal and financing system of the services

In parallel, but independently of the challenges constituted by accession to the EU, the need to revise the current legal and financing system of the social services was put on the agenda. This, as will be demonstrated later, also influences the question of data collection. Points of the revision important for our study are:

- the replacement of the previous uniform and guaranteed (normative) state financing of the services by a so-called 'capacity regulation', where it is individually decided for which services the state engages in support contracts;
- the replacement of the financing of types of services by 'task financing', where the amount of subsidy is connected to the measurable volume of work.

Intensive debates have been taking place on these changes; data registration and submission are just part of the debate. In order to be able to make the changes to implement the 'capacity regulation' and to finance the task (which service provider, where and for how much capacity will get state support):

- more accurate and up-to-date information is needed in relation to current capacities;
- more accurate and reliable information is needed on client turnover and use of capacity;
- a solution has to be found making 'double counting' impossible (where one person makes use of services at more than one location on one day):
- in order to avoid the latter 'multiple using of services', the national collation of client data and related services has been proposed ('conflicting data');
- in order to make the measuring and tracing of actual services provided by operators possible, the registration and aggregated submission of data on the types of services and the related amount of working time by clients to the institution supervised by the Ministry of Social Affairs has been proposed.

In response to this, the following main criticisms relevant to this study have been formulated:

- It is not appropriate to link the volume of necessary service capacity to the number of permanent residents of a centre for homeless people.
- Service performance shall not be measured by the number of clients and of hours worked, as indicators on the quality of service as well as on results do not exist.
- There is a lack of regulation which would improve quality of service and effective care as well as their measurement.
- The proposed system for detailed registration, aggregation, submission and revision of the data is too expensive. This would remove considerable resources from the effective care service, making their financing impossible.
- It is not in the interest of clients to have their data forwarded, and there is no control of what will happen to their data later.
- The proposed data collection system can be deceived easily, which might motivate service operators to avoid compliance with legislation.
- A separate problem is that the proposal suggested that, in order to prevent multiple using of services, social care providers would only be allowed to offer their services to people having their permanent residence in a given centre/facility. This would make the use of these services impossible for homeless people or others who were not resident there.

From the proposals and the criticisms given in response to them, it can clearly be seen that proposals emphasize the control functions of the data registration and submission process as well as the more rational use of central resources, which could not be accepted by the service providers. The distrust of the service operators is only magnified by that of the decision-makers. Because of the ongoing debates, the original proposals could only be partially implemented.

Conclusions and some recommendations on the recently applied data collection system

The main contradiction is that even though the official data collection system in Hungary is operating in a well-regulated way, it does not meet its own standards: the current official data collection system does not even provide reliable and up-to-date information on the number and capacity of the subsidized services. This makes coordination between the stock and flow type data submissions the first priority. The current official data collection methods do not provide information to be analysed reliably on the financial resources provided by the state, municipality and other sources to be used to provide certain services for the care of homeless people. With better coordination of official data collection, the problem could be solved.

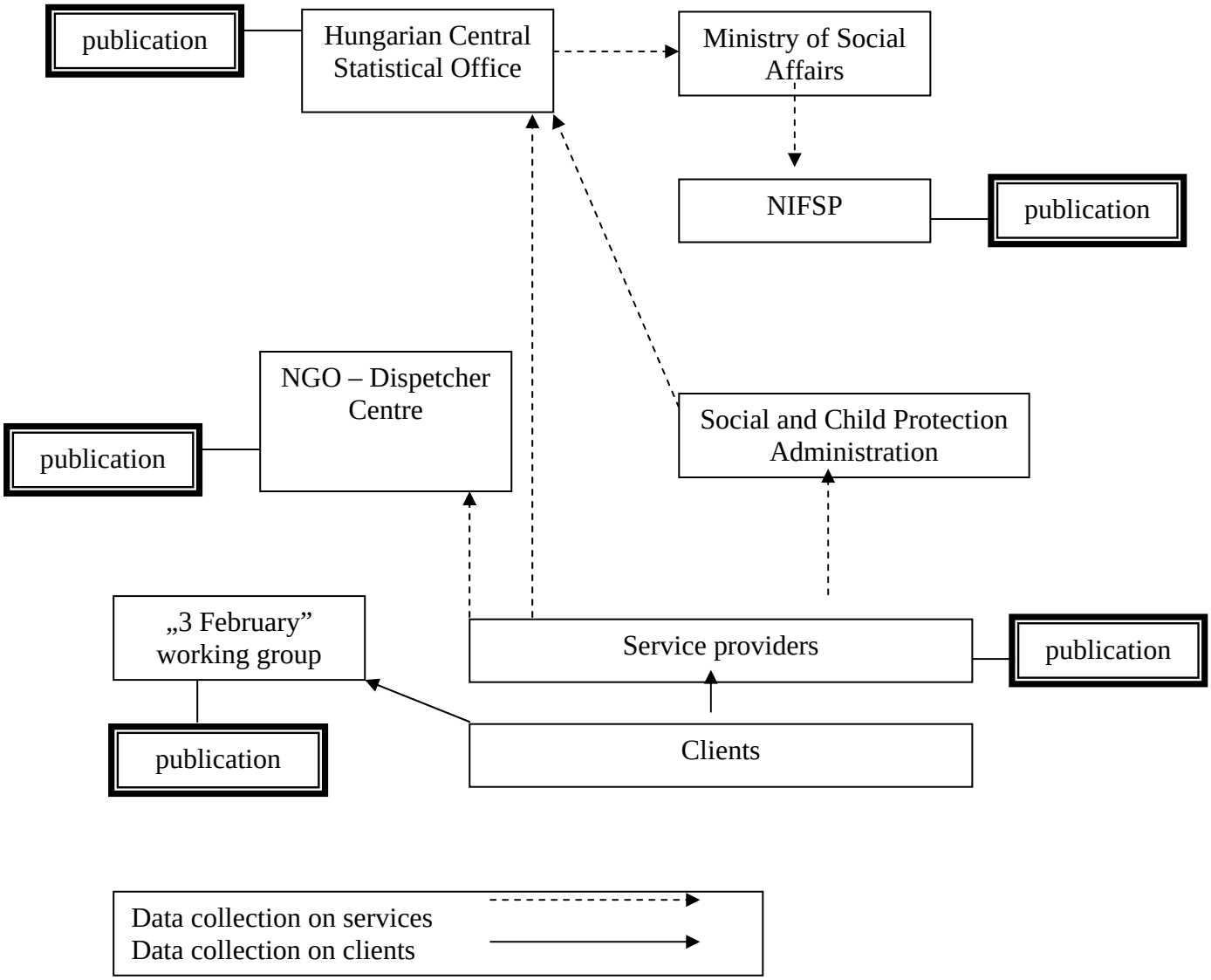
It is clear that an adequate data collection system has not yet been developed in Hungary. Our main suggestion is that a national strategy on homelessness should be implemented, relying on real needs and facts, with performance monitored periodically. Restructuring the current system should aim to do that. Taking into consideration present conditions in Hungary, the system of data collection can only be further improved if the providers of care services for homeless people play an active role in defining the strategy and monitoring it.

The following recommendations are suggested:

- To collect data on service providers and clients which is not currently defined under legislation;
- To collect and analyse the anonymous client data on a broader scale;
- To include the anonymous client data related to financial support and use of services;
- To harmonise and probably collectively analyse the data collection systems of the care for homeless people with other services such as healthcare, medical care, employment, child protection, residential etc.[9]

[9] Author: Péter Győri, Phd. of Sociology, Deputy Director of Budapest Social Methodology Centre and its Institutions (BSMC), Head of Menhely Alapítvány (Shelter Foundation), gyori_peter@yahoo.com

Summary scheme of the data collection systems on Hungarian homeless care services



Netherlands

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Introduction

This paper reports on Regas and Clever, the two client record systems in nationwide use by homeless people and women's refuge services in the Netherlands. Both systems are used primarily by residential facilities for homeless people (ETHOS category 3), and to a lesser extent by day and night shelters (category 2). They are also used by refuges serving women who have fled violence or abuse (category 4).

Both record systems are still in process of development. National implementation of the systems, standardisation of working procedures, exchange of data to create a national database, and quality enhancement to the use of the systems are major objectives for future years. The ultimate aim of both registration systems is to create profiles of populations of homeless people and of women contacting refuges throughout the Netherlands, and to gauge the extent to which they take up the services available.

Current client record systems do not cover all service providers in the homeless and women's refuge sectors. The lowest-threshold facilities, in particular, keep few if any records.

Several large Dutch cities, including Utrecht, The Hague and Rotterdam, now work with a system of centralised access to shelter and support services (CTMO). Potential clients apply to a central registration point in the city, where they are screened. A special screening (assessment) form has been developed, which records demographic data and a range of other information to clarify a client's situation. New requirements for clients, such as having geographical ties to the city or region where services are applied for, may require the centres (in particular the low-threshold ones) to record at least primary characteristics in future. The screening is followed by a placement recommendation. After a client has been assigned to a facility, some of the data collected by the CTMOs are transferred into Regas or Clever. The CTMOs also maintain their own records.

The CTMO data will play an important part in monitoring the policies implemented under the Homelessness Action Plan launched in February 2006 by the national government and the four largest cities. The Plan has two main premises:

- a client-centred approach using individually planned service pathways and client managers ('personal lifeguards') assigned to all clients
- watertight collaboration between all the parties and agencies involved, structured both at the administrative level (local authorities as policy coordinators) and at the operational level (field managers commissioned by the local authorities).

The Homelessness Action Plan will be monitored by a national-level monitoring system. Requirements will be imposed on the agencies on adherence to and progress of their clients' individual service pathways.

In addition to national and local client record systems, surveys are carried out periodically that focus on homeless people and on women using refuges. Examples are size estimates of the populations of rough sleepers and people depending on night shelters (ETHOS categories 1 and 2) and counts of people living in homeless accommodation (category 3) in Leiden[1], Utrecht[2], The Hague[3] and Alkmaar[4].

The estimates (using capture-recapture methods) and the tallies are kept on data collection using purpose-designed recording sheets. This enables the counting of all people who meet pre-set criteria and detects any duplication. The following information is recorded on the sheets: initials (first letter of given name and first letter of surname), birth date, gender, and the day(s) the person is present in the facility in question. The estimates take place in low-threshold facilities and are usually conducted over a 2-week period. Tallies are also made in residential facilities (specialist hostels, 24-hour residential facilities etc), based on each centres' own client record systems.

In addition to making size estimates or counting the numbers of clients being served, these studies also create profiles of client populations. In the women's refuge sector, a large study on supply and demand was conducted very recently (Wolf, J., Jonker, I., Nicholas, S., Meertens, V., Pas te S. , 2006: maat en baat van de vrouwenopvang. Onderzoek naar vraag en aanbod. Amsterdam: SWP), in which 250 women were interviewed (it did not draw on client record data.

Neither local-level client record systems nor the surveys and other studies are considered here.

Approach to data collection

Two client record systems are used nationwide in the Netherlands:

- Regas (from the Dutch Federation of Shelters, Federatie Opvang)
- Clever (from the Salvation Army, which is also affiliated with the Federation of Shelters).

Regas was originally developed by H&B Informatie Systemen in The Hague for social work and victim support. On the initiative of the Federation of Shelters, Regas was converted for use by homeless and women's refuge services. It succeeded a system called Klimop (introduced in the mid-1990s). The major drawback to Klimop was that it did not allow for the registration of individual people, thus resulting in many duplications. Regas is now used in various sectors, including the homeless, women's refuge and social work sectors. To ensure that Regas would be as responsive as possible to the needs and demands of service providers, pilot consultations were conducted in 2002. Regas distinguishes between management documents (data on particular agencies) and service provision documents (data on particular clients).

Clever *(Cliënt en Verrichtingen,* or 'client and services') was developed by Ordina in Nieuwegein, commissioned by the Salvation Army. It is used by all Salvation Army centres (including those outside the shelter sector, such as youth services and probation and aftercare) and several services outside the

[1] Hulsbosch, L, Nicholas, S. & Wolf, J. Dakloos in Leiden. Onderzoek naar omvang en kenmerken van de daklozenpopulatie. Utrecht: Trimbos instituut, 2005.

[2] Hulsbosch, L., Nicholas, S. & Wolf, J. Omvang van de daklozenpopulatie in de stad Utrecht. Resultaten van een omvangschatting in het voorjaar van 2005. Utrecht: Trimbos instituut, 2005.

[3] Reinking, D., Nicholas, S., Leiden, I. Van, Bakel, H.van, Zwikker, M. & Wolf, J. Daklozen in Den Haag: onderzoek naar omvang en kenmerken daklozenpopulatie. Utrecht: Trimbos instituut, 2001.

[4] Hulsbosch, L., Nicholas, S. , Smit, F. & Wolf, J. Dakloos in Alkmaar: onderzoek naar omvang en kenmerken van de daklozenpopulatie. Utrecht: Trimbos instituut, 2003

Salvation Army. Individually registered clients can be aggregated according to local area or fields of activity, including the homeless and women's services. Clever was introduced in 2001 as a client monitoring system to record client data, service pathways, client indicators and other relevant data for each client. The capacity of the Salvation Army services makes up almost one quarter of the total capacity of facilities affiliated with the Federation of Shelters.

The client record systems have several aims:

- administrative aims: numbers of clients accepted, nature of services delivered, duration of the services, discharge data etc
- financial accounting to funders (local authorities and care administration offices)
- internal quality assurance in relation to working procedures
- monitoring the progress of working procedures within an agency or facility (recording client development in terms of indicators such as agreed behaviour, achieved aims and progression to other services)
- supplying indicators needed for national and local government policy (e.g. national urban policy, national public mental health plan for the four largest Dutch cities, national registration scheme for homeless people and women's refuge services)
- research and monitoring.

Both record systems receive their data at agency level and are to be linked by a database. The amount of client capacity (the number of clients a centre can accommodate)) 'covered' by each system varies at both local and national levels. Some client capacity also exists for which little or no registration takes place. That especially applies to service providers not affiliated with the Federation of Shelters and to facilities run by private initiatives. In addition, as mentioned above, the very low-threshold facilities, mainly frequented by roofless people and rough sleepers, also keep few records.

Although Clever was developed by the Salvation Army, it is not used solely by Salvation Army centres. A number of other larger and smaller agencies affiliated with the Federation of Shelters have also opted for Clever as their client record system, e.g. non–Salvation Army agencies in Amsterdam and Utrecht.

At the time of writing (August 2006), 50 agencies work with Regas and 25 (including 13 non-Salvation Army agencies) use Clever.

Client data is continuously fed into both systems. Data input begins as soon as a client applies. If a client is not accepted (for example because of aggressive behaviour, severe addiction problems or acute psychiatric problems), input is discontinued after entering the reason for not providing services. If a client is accepted, more data is added in the course of their stay in the centre.

To create a national database, the Federation of Shelters agencies working with Regas will send a data file to the federation every quarter. It will then process the data from the different agencies to build the database (see also Technical and IT Issues below). The data from the Salvation Army centres are currently supplied periodically to its central headquarters in Almere. In the near future, the Salvation Army will also send a data file to the Federation of Shelters.

Data are exported from both Regas and Clever to the national database; this operation is now in a pilot stage (see also the Prismant pilot scheme). The process will be as follows:

1. A dataset will be produced from an agency's record system (Regas or Clever), containing data over a specific period.

2. This dataset will be anonymised, encoded and relayed to Federatie Opvang, using software designed by Co-maker (see later).
3. Federatie Opvang will decode the dataset and enter the data into a nationwide database.
4. Once a year, Federatie Opvang will produce a dataset over the preceding year and send it to Prismant.
5. Prismant will add data from certain other agencies not affiliated with Federatie Opvang and then relay the complete dataset to the Trimbos Institute for systematic analyses.

Data items/elements

Both Regas and Clever are designed to keep track of contacts with clients. Both systems record as clients all people who apply to the agencies, including any accompanying children and partners, and also any people that are immediately referred on.

Regas encodes the data in order to keep records of each person. A unique code is created using each client's surname, initial, gender and date of birth. The coding is based on the trusted third party (TTP) principle and yields a nationally unique number. The client data are anonymised during the scrambling and coding process, using a special algorithm that assigns the client a non-traceable unique key. This enables deduplication of the data at the national level, while safeguarding clients' privacy. The data document itself is then encoded and protected with a password to prevent access by unauthorised parties.

Clever does not use coding. Duplicate entries are checked by searching on the first three letters of the surname, gender and birth date. (Note that double counting cannot be ruled out in Clever.)

Both recording systems contain more than 100 questions. In Clever, the exact number of questions and variables is difficult to determine, because different Salvation Army centres can decide for themselves what questions to ask beyond a set of required items. Regas includes the indicators contained in the national homeless dataset established by the Federation of Shelters, partly in consultation with the shelter and support agencies. The recently introduced statutory registration scheme (see below) is based on this system. The dataset is composed of client data, data on agencies and facilities, and itemisation of each client's problem areas and of the services delivered.

Regas and Clever are matched to each other as much as possible. A working group from the Federation of Shelters and the Salvation Army is now adapting the basic Clever dataset to comply with the new national statutory registration requirements applying to shelter and support agencies. It is unclear how long it will take before the two systems are fully compatible.

The basis for record-keeping in the sectors in question is the statutory registration scheme for homeless and women's refuge services introduced in 2005.[5] It itemises the data that service providers are required to report to the local authorities charged with coordinating these services in their regions *(centrumgemeenten,* or 'central local authorities').

[5] Regeling van de Minister van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport d.d. 11 januari 2005, nr GVM 2546377, houdende regels omtrent het registreren van de werkzaamheden van instellingen in de maatschappelijke opvang en vrouwenopvang, alsmede de aanwijzing van de instelling waaraan de geregistreerde gegevens worden verstrekt (Ministerial Order no. GVM 2546377 of 11 January 2005 by the Netherlands Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport containing regulations for registering the activities of agencies for shelter, support and women's refuge, as well as the designation of the central body to which the recorded data will be reported).

Under the Social Welfare Act (1994) in the Netherlands, local authorities that receive central government allocations earmarked for homeless services and women's refuge services must ensure that the agencies funded with that money keep records of the services they render, and furnish that data to the appropriate authorities. The statutory registration scheme has now formalised the submission of this data. The agencies themselves determine what percentage of their funding they spend on record-keeping; no nationwide criteria are in place. Federatie Opvang supports agencies in implementing the client record systems, and the national Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) occasionally allocates additional funding for improving the quality of registration.

The national database (see the Prismant pilot below) to be created by linking up this data will be used as input for the Dutch Homelessness Monitoring System (MMO, operated by the Trimbos Institute in Utrecht).

The national statutory registration scheme is a growth model. At present, not all agencies are able to provide data on all the required items. The scheme includes the following main groupings:

- demographic data (gender, birth date, place of residence, civil status, residence status, educational attainment, daily pursuits, source of income and extent of debts, housing and living situation)
- data on the client's circumstances (problems, including mental health conditions and addiction, quality of life, service needs, service use, mental health needs assessment)
- client turnover data (source of application, date of registration, assessment of problem areas, reasons for not making problem assessment, referral after denial of services, care aims, services delivered, type, number and duration of services rendered, results, achievement of care aims, date of termination, referral after discharge).

In addition to those client data, agencies are also required to report the following data on their service provision. Not all such information can be obtained via the registration scheme; some of it will be gathered in periodic surveys.

- capacity
- organisational structure
- staff
- safety and quality
- occupancy rate
- numbers of client contacts.

In addition to data on shelter, support and women's refuge services, the central local authorities are also required to collect data from addiction services under the statutory registration scheme for addiction policy. In future, the data from both schemes will be submitted by the central local authorities to a national data collection centre (Prismant), where they will be linked together to obtain a national overview.

A separate list of the variables and their categories in the Regas and Clever systems is available. The reference frame for this description of the client record systems is the statutory registration scheme outlined above, with its three sections: demographic data, data on client circumstances, and client turnover data.

Data processing and quality issues

An ongoing inter-departmental policy study (IBO) on homeless services and women's refuge services noted in its 2005 progress report[6] that the progress of the registration scheme was lagging behind expectations. Efforts to improve the information provision are being undertaken in 2006. The purpose of the scheme is to gain more reliable insights into the problems of the targeted groups and into the results and effectiveness of the sectors in question.

The Federation of Shelters drew up an action plan in 2005 to accelerate Regas implementation.[7] The objective was to have every homeless and women's refuge agency keeping records by 2007 in a way that ensures the export of reliable, valid data, thus enabling high-quality analyses by the Homelessness Monitoring System. If that aim is achieved, reliable nationwide figures can be produced using the Regas system by 2008.

The action plan distinguishes between implementation of the technical infrastructure (hardware, software and network connections) and implementation of reliable, complete data entry. The action plan specifies what steps are needed to fully implement the client record systems and improve the quality of the recorded data. The most important steps are:

- Adapting Regas and Clever to improve the exchange of data with the nationwide database.
- Facilitating agencies in implementing their client record systems, by strengthening and expanding the technical infrastructure, drawing up a standard implementation plan, creating a list of 'dos' and 'don'ts' for achieving the desired culture shift within the agencies in terms of record-keeping, and promoting economies of scale and regional cooperation with respect to client data registration.
- Staff development relating to ICT through courses provided by the suppliers of Regas and Clever and through creation of users' groups from agency staffs. The users' groups will meet periodically and discuss practical problems. The software suppliers operate telephone helpdesks to answer technical questions.
- Staff development in relation to the record system implementation through in-service training sessions and through consultations between agency managers and policy officers. The purpose is to help the agencies optimise the use of the recorded client data in their own policy processes.
- Task-specific helpdesk and on-site support in the agencies provided by Federatie Opvang.

To assess the current status of the implementation process, the Federation of Shelters recently surveyed its members. Of the 90 member agencies, 65 responded (73% of the members, representing 71% of the service capacity associated with the Federation of Shelters). Of the 65 responding agencies, 39 reported that they were carrying out an implementation plan, and 20 that they lacked such a plan. Most agencies with a plan had been developing the system for some time, and more than half of these had completed implementation or were in the final stages.

Pilot Prismant

Beyond Federatie Opvang's plans to accelerate implementation, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) commissioned the Prismant consultancy agency to begin a pilot project in 2006 (in collaboration with several local authorities and service providers, Federatie Opvang, the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) and the Trimbos Institute). It will be aimed at achieving standardisation of the data definitions in the client record systems and setting in motion the data logistics that will enable service providers to supply their data to the national database. The pilot project

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6 Ministerie van VWS. Voortgangsrapportage IBO Maatschappelijke opvang 2005, kenmerk DLB-2646505. Kamerstuk 29325, nr. 7, Den Haag, December 2005.

7 *Projectplan: Implementatie Cliëntregistratie in de Maatschappelijke Opvang en Vrouwenopvang* (Project plan for the implementation of client record systems in the homeless and women's refuge sectors), Federatie Opvang (Dutch Federation of Shelters), Amersfoort, May 2005.

began by identifying obstacles to fulfilling the requirements set by the registration scheme. It was found that the agencies could not yet supply any data from their client record systems because the systems were still being developed or implemented. In the autumn of 2006, a pilot scheme involving seven local authorities and 14 agencies (including both Regas and Clever users) will be launched to start building the nationwide database. The database will form the basis for analyses made by the Trimbos Institute for the national Homelessness Monitoring System. The aim of the pilot scheme is to ensure that the data to be collected in 2007 will be reliable enough to enable well-founded policy conclusions.

Technical/ IT issues

Software

The service providers have framework contracts with the software suppliers and can consult their technical helpdesks. The Federation of Shelters operates its own task-specific helpdesk to facilitate and support the agencies in non-technical issues. It also provides technical and task-specific support on site via a 'prepaid card' system. Agencies have formed Regas users' groups that meet regularly and inform one another about the progress and difficulties of implementing and working with the record system. An online information exchange forum is also active. Many smaller agencies do not have trained ICT workers on their staffs, while larger agencies employ data managers and ICT experts.

Special software has been developed by the Dutch firm Co-maker to feed the data from the agencies to the central database. This decentralised application verifies all the transferred data to ensure that it is complete and valid (the application is not part of Regas). The agencies supply data quarterly via fast internet connections.

Before each dataset is sent on to Federatie Opvang's nationwide database, the Co-maker software processes and screens it as follows:

- verification of codings, e.g. correct genders
- verification that all required fields have been completed, e.g. agency numbers
- verification of referential integrity, e.g. ensuring that a client's initial date of registration is not before their date of birth, or that a service is not recorded as having been provided to a client who is not defined in the dataset
- conversion of each client's data into a unique, anonymous code to safeguard privacy
- encoding the data to make it unreadable to unauthorised parties
- production of an output document that can be processed into the nationwide database.

Hardware requirements

All identified errors are recorded in a log file to enable the agency to correct them and re-enter the corrected dataset into the export module. The local datasets are subjected to similar verification procedures when they are read into the nationwide database. The local verification procedures will minimise the chances of input errors in the national database. Some errors are conceivable if agencies send client data that fall outside the registration time-frame of the national database. In the Prismant pilot, the Co-maker software is also used.

The agencies need modern computer networks (infrastructure, fast connections etc) in order to work with Regas and Clever and exchange data with the Federation of Shelters. How well Regas performs is partly dependent on the hardware and the operating system used. The soft ware supplier H&B recommends the following minimum system requirements.

Operating system

Microsoft Windows 98 SE, fully updated

Microsoft Windows ME, fully updated
Microsoft Windows NT4, service pack 6a (or higher)
Microsoft Windows 2000 Professional, service pack 1 (or higher)
Microsoft XP Professional or Home Edition.

Hardware
Processor: Pentium 233 or higher
Internal memory: 128 Mb minimum
Free hard disk space: 100 Mb
Screen resolution: 800 x 600 (preferably 1024 x 768)
Internet Explorer: version 5.5 or higher

The Dutch homeless and women's refuge sectors include some agencies with two work stations and others with more than 100. The experience of the Federation of Shelters shows that the average cost of implementing the client record system runs between €3000 and €5000 per work station. Often these costs are not separately funded. In 2002, the Health Ministry allocated €250 per work station. The shelter and support agencies affiliated with the federation have about 1000 work stations. The federation estimates that 30% to 40% of these are no longer suitable for working with Regas. In the next 3 years, the ministerial budget will be reserving a total of €1000 per work station to support their adaptation for this purpose.

Data extract formats
Both Regas and Clever are able to produce the following standard reports:

- list of clients currently being served
- lists of new clients and departing clients
- room and bed occupancy
- occupancy rate for a particular period
- transfers and referrals of clients between service providers
- caseloads, numbers of clients per staff member per week
- verification of departure based on maximum days of stay
- new client applications, including the type of referring party and/or the last place of abode, if applicable
- number of problem assessments in relation to the number of applications
- number of offers of services in relation to the number of problem assessments
- clients categorised according to gender, age or nationality
- services rendered
- activities per client.

The survey of Federation of Shelters members referred to above indicated that users of Clever are particularly likely to draw up standard reports; users of Regas make less use of those possibilities.

Management issues

Client data are collected by agency staff. Most data is entered directly via input screens. Sometimes it is first recorded on written forms and then entered into the computer at a central input section within the agency.

Staff have been trained to use the client record systems, and detailed manuals are available for both Regas and Clever. Training is an ongoing process, and both the Federation of Shelters and the head office of the Salvation Army provide regular courses. The software suppliers offer courses for application managers and system managers working in the agencies. Export of the agency data to the national database requires specific knowledge. National-level data collection for Regas and Clever is performed by data managers at the Federation of Shelters and Salvation Army headquarters respectively.

As noted above, the statutory registration scheme for the homeless and women's refuge services constitutes the guiding framework for data collection by the agencies. Regas uses its anonymisation module and has been approved by the Dutch Data Protection Authority (CBP) for the collection of the client data.

Monitoring and evaluation issues

The Regas and Clever client record systems are still under development, and some service providers do not yet have record systems that are fully implemented and operational. Those agencies that do already fully record their client data using one of the two systems now make use of the collected data for purposes such as management reports and annual reports.

No national database is yet available in the Netherlands but, once it is functional, it will be used for analyses in support of the Dutch Homelessness Monitoring System.

Portugal

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The measurement of homelessness in Portugal is a recent concern and will be a challenging task for years to come. The dispersed nature of local support organisations (the main and almost unique source of statistics until now) and the lack of state involvement (though it has recently becoming more engaged) will shape the evolution of the measuring homelessness.

There is no official definition of homelessness in Portugal. However, until now, homelessness has been understood in its stricter sense, i.e. relating exclusively to categories 1, 2 and 3 of the ETHOS classification.

In the last 2 years, however, reference has been made to other ETHOS categories, both by NGOs working in the field and by governmental bodies (the Institute for Social Security/Ministry for Labour and Social Solidarity), acknowledging the importance of a wider range of definitions.

There are no official national statistics on homelessness in Portugal. The only available official statistics (collected through the National Institute of Statistics) relate to FEANTSA's ETHOS category 11 (people living in temporary/non-standard structures). However, it should be noted that this group of people is not considered homeless in Portugal.

On the other hand, there have been a growing number of surveys on the 'roofless' population, carried out by institutions working with this population. These surveys have mainly addressed the characteristics of the users (gender, age, professional situation, education level, place of birth, etc.) and their purpose is essentially for the internal use of each service provider, aimed at the management of service provision. Each organisation decides on the methodology to be used; the quality of information produced varies greatly. The way in which these services are organised, their respective objectives and strategies are also diverse.

There is neither a regional nor a local system for the collection of data. Six years ago, an attempt was made in the city of Oporto to introduce a local system to collect institutional data on the homeless population but it never came to light.

Developments in data collection have been identified in the last 2 years, namely by the launching of the first national survey of rough sleeping. On the night of the 12th October 2005, a survey was launched in all 'heads of municipalities' of inland Portugal, aimed at identifying and characterising *'all the people who were sleeping rough, in the city head of the municipality in inland Portugal, during a fixed period of time.'*[1]

The definition used (people with no abode (*sem-tecto)*) comprised all situations of people who were found sleeping:

[1] Castro, Gil et al, (2005) *Os Sem-Tecto: realidades (in)visíveis*, Lisboa: ISS.

- 'On the street, in a space used by other people (e.g. public gardens)
- On a public space used by other people (airport, train stations)
- On a public space in areas not commonly used by other people (specific areas in airports and train stations where some privacy was achieved).' [2]

A structured questionnaire was prepared, comprising several groups of questions organised by individual demographic data, school and professional histories, economic situation, health condition, family and community relationships, housing situation and history, problems leading to absence of housing, institutional experiences, and satisfaction with one's life.

A wide range of contacts and meetings was held in the months preceding the survey in order to encourage the Social Security Services around the country and other institutions working with homeless people to collaborate by completing the questionnaires.

The Regional Social Security Services coordinated the local teams, which were formed by workers from local social services, municipalities, NGOs, and volunteers who were working directly with homeless people. Training was provided by the Institute for Social Security (ISS) central services, then replicated at the local level by the person responsible for the operation at the Regional Social Security Services. A total of 524 questionnaires were assembled, and 467 validated. The information was analysed by the ISS co-ordinating team.

According to the co-ordinators of the survey the process went normally, in spite of unusually bad weather conditions, which strongly limited access to the homeless population. In fact, the total number of identified cases in 2005 is well below the estimates made by the ISS in 2004, according to information collected all over the national territory, through public institutions working in the area of social action.

The results show a persistent profile of the homeless population, which reiterates some previous research findings: male, Portuguese national, age 35-60, low level of education, single, no children and no contacts with relatives, overnights in the city centre, previous experiences of institutionalisation and affected by psychiatric problems. However, some subgroups clearly show the presence of individuals with higher levels of education than the typical homeless profile, who are suddenly affected by labour market instability (namely the rising unemployment in recent years).

At the same time, the characteristics and trajectories of the population surveyed showed the persistence of structural problems in the functioning of Portuguese society. This includes the precariousness of the labour market (instability of jobs, lack of social protection, informal market hindrances, low salaries); deficits in social care (the social insertion income, which is the Guaranteed Minimum Income in Portugal) does not reach many of this population given legislative prerogatives such as compulsory enrolment in the Employment Centre of the person's area of residence; the delay between the date of receiving the financial benefit of the ISS and the insertion programme (the beneficiaries are entitled to a basic support income, but their access to a minimum income depends on their willingness to follow an insertion programme aiming at their economic and social autonomy which was prepared, discussed and agreed with them); the lack of adequate medical care (several individuals were found with deep physical and mental problems who receive no medical support).

[2] Castro, Gil et al, (2005) *Os Sem-Tecto: realidades (in)visíveis*, Lisboa: ISS.

Moreover, the results presented show the frailty of institutional support, particularly that of public organisations with responsibilities in this domain; the basic character of the support given, and the negative perception the individuals have of the support they are receiving.

The report's recommendations have been presented to the Directive Committee of the ISS. They stress several aspects, namely data collection and the importance of creating mechanisms for the collection and analysis of information at national level, as well as creating tools for the recording of information in cooperation with relevant stakeholders. Another recommendation affecting data collection concerns the reinforcement of the link with the Local Social Networks, where information and resources can be more easily shared. The fact that Social Security Services all over the country are at last putting in place a national computer system for the collection and sharing of information on clients may be an opportunity, mainly because social security services are, together with municipalities, one of the major partners of the Local Social Networks. These also involve NGOs and other local services.

Another ISS initiative is to obtain a 'national diagnosis of the situation of homeless people and of the institutional support available until December 2004' (NAP/incl objective 3)[3] was the inquiry launched in 2005 and addressed to all service providers. The study, *Social responses /services and methodologies for the support of the homeless population,* aimed at 'identifying and characterising services working in the field with the homeless population in order to identify methodologies and intervention strategies developed'.[4]

Two questionnaires were prepared by ISS central services, one addressed at those services directly supporting homeless people and another for those services not specifically addressing this population but which occasionally support the homeless within their range of community support services.

The study's main conclusions, based on the 70 questionnaires received, may be summarised as follows:

- Among the 70 services, 38 directly and specifically provide support services to the homeless population, whereas 32 services only occasionally provide support to the homeless.
- Almost 3 in every 4 services are developed within the institutional context of a Private Institution for Social Solidarity (IPSS).
- Most responding services are located in the coastal areas of Portugal and concentrated in the main urban centres (Coimbra, Lisboa, Porto and Faro). (Nevertheless, we wish to point out that the number of services responding to the questionnaire in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area (9) is far below the number of existing services (more than 30)).
- The most common type of support provided by the responding services is the distribution of food and clothes, and access to laundry and to hygiene care. Psycho-social support is the second most referred type of available support
- Social workers are the professionals most commonly employed by these services, and psychologists and volunteers are also widely present, specifically targeting the homeless population.

[3] NAP/incl 2003-2005.

[4] Castro, Gil et al (2005) Caracterização das respostas sociais e serviços dirigidos aos sem-abrigo, Lisboa: ISS

- Most services report some kind of cooperation with other local services, usually on an informal basis (3 in every 4). This cooperation is usually triggered by the need to solve specific problems.
- The creation of shared and complementary activities, the opportunity to find responses, and the sharing of experiences are the main advantages identified in partnership work; the main constraints are the lack of human resources, the search of protagonism (individual organisations tend to seek that their work is valued over the others so that they become well known and more influencing) and the lack of communication between partners.
- The services also identify the main areas where there are fewer responses available and less support for the homeless population in mental health, unemployment, housing and addictions.
- Thus, the main intervention priorities, according to the respondents, should be: professional training and insertion (especially into the labour market), mental health services, supported accommodation, temporary accommodation centres and occupational centres.

At the local level, it is important to refer to the rough sleepers count launched by the Lisbon municipality in November 2004, aiming at 'measuring and characterising the universe of the street population in the city of Lisbon'.[5] The study used the concept of 'street population', defined as the 'the set of people who, having no alternative, use public space as their living space, be that in a circumstantial (meaning caused by specific circumstances), an emergent or a permanent way'.[6]

The survey identified 931 'street people'; 432 individuals were directly contacted on the streets and 499 in night shelters. A former survey commissioned by the Lisbon municipality in 2000 had identified around 1300 homeless people in the city; more than half were living in shelters and the rest were sleeping rough;

The results available only relate to the 432 individuals contacted on the street; no information is given regarding those people staying in night shelters. Most individuals are male (331, representing 77% of the total), 31% are between 25 and 34, followed by age group 35-44 and 45-54 (each representing 21% of the total). Most of the individuals are Portuguese nationals (73%). Among the foreign people contacted (104 individuals), the largest group is formed by Ukrainian nationals (28%), followed by nationals from Angola and Cape Verde (13% and 10% respectively).

One *'freguesia'* (the smallest administrative territorial unit in Portugal) concentrates 15% of the total people contacted by the teams (66 individuals). The second highest figures are around 5% (in two other *freguesias*).

The main problems identified in the study are drug addiction, alcoholism and prostitution.

Finally, here are some comments on data collection by organisations working in the field. The only relevant available information refers to the data collected by the national organisation International Medical Assistance (AMI). AMI has 10 local services located in main cities throughout the country, which provide support to homeless and other disadvantaged people.

All local services have access to the same database programme, which has been specifically adapted to their needs. However, the system is not directly linked to the central office. The

[5] CML (2004) Estudo sobre a População de Rua da Cidade de Lisboa. Lisboa: NID-CML Plano Lx.

[6] CML (2004) Estudo sobre a População de Rua da Cidade de Lisboa. Lisboa: NID-CML Plano Lx.

information is directly collected at a local level, and entered into the local system. That information is then collected by the person responsible for maintaining the computer database at each local office. Thus there is no system available on line to every local service, which seems to be their next objective. They share information on users by contacting directly their colleagues and asking them to send information which has been collected by the same collecting instrument throughout the country.

Only the central office, in Lisbon, has access to all the information collected in the local offices. The information is introduced in AMI's internal system, and the central coordination is responsible for the overall statistical production of data. Given the extent of the information collected, only some data is statistically analysed and released at central level. There is a regular joint evaluation of the information collected by both the central unit and the local services, in order to decide on the importance of introducing new indicators and adapt the existing collecting tools. The release of statistical information is also adapted according to the emergence of relevant information in one year, e.g. given the sharp increase of immigrants, largely from Eastern Europe, to the services in 2003, there was a need to include further indicators in order to understand the situation better.

Spain

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Introduction

Three factors on social data collection should be taken into account in Spain: the wide dispersion of data originating from the social, education and health services; the data protection legislation: and the use of indirect sources to measure and analyse social grouping and homelessness.

In Spain, homelessness is not tackled consistently, and coordination is poor. A lack of coordination among and between centres for homeless people and service providers makes it impossible to collect reliable and regular information.

The four sources of statistical information described below are the only ones currently available for the measurement of homelessness in Spain. They vary significantly in the timespan covered, in their main targets and in their geographical scope.

The Social Services Clients Information (SIUSS)

SIUSS was implemented in 1984 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Autonomous Communities[1], based on a 'social record' devoted to increasing the knowledge about clients' characteristics and profiles, evaluating the system and facilitating planning.

To achieve these goals, the SIUSS is intended to:

- facilitate daily administration
- standardise the many systems managed by social workers
- constitute an instrument to evaluate the work of the professionals
- systematise the information, demands and resources available
- construct a reliable information source for decision-making
- help with planning, evaluating and administering advice for homeless people
- allow information transfer and coordination among the different administrative systems.

Data for statistical use should be retrievable by using pre-set questions, using standard formulae. Thus, while SIUSS is a powerful tool for social workers it is less useful as a statistical source. One handicap is the focus on households or 'family units', which makes it difficult to properly assess homelessness among single people. The other problem is that SIUSS is not systematically employed by all regions. A complex process needs to be completed in order for the Ministry (which is in charge of the statistical analysis) to collect the information needed. There is no on-line database. Consequently, records are not traceable in real time.

[1] Spain's 50 provinces are grouped into 17 Autonomous Communities or regions.

Data collection on homelessness through the internet

During 2004, a survey was implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to explore the possibilities of carrying out on-line data collection, in order to generate a system of indicators on homelessness in Spain, which could be updated monthly.[2]

Considering that the great majority of the centres, such as shelters and soup-kitchens, are privately managed (86%), and that three-quarters of them belong to the Catholic Church, the reports of religious organisations are a good source of information. The most important among these is Caritas.

The local studies and the 5-year national survey of centres, conducted by Caritas, show some basic socio-demographic profiles of the homeless population. At the beginning of 2004, these profiles were as follows: 5% women, average age 40, 60% unmarried (30% separated or divorced), 23% alcoholic, 20% drug-dependent, 12% with severe mental illness. The most striking change over recent years is the increasing presence of immigrants, mainly from outside the EU, including refugees and asylum seekers. They constituted 40-50% of the clients of facilities and services for the homeless. This figure is confirmed by INE's survey of all homeless people.

According to the Spanish second National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, one objective was 'the improvement of the knowledge of social exclusion', so the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs developed a pioneering project to obtain, regularly and periodically, online data coming from the service network for the homeless in Spain. This would make it possible to know the scale of homelessness, socio-demographic profiles, current demands, and existing facilities and services, as well as trends. The proposal also intended to improve the poor coordination between centres, promote communication, and make the data available to all stakeholders.

The survey tried to describe the daily life of homeless people through obtaining information on where and how they met their basic needs, where they ate, and where they spent the day and the night. This was in response to the following general mission:
'to develop and to put into operation a procedure that allowed the regular collection of data and provided trustworthy information on some variables and basic magnitudes in order to observe changes in homelessness in Spain, including changes in demand and supply of services.'

The methodology used was primarily quantitative, based on the existing data on centres, services and programmes for homeless people. The databases were analysed thoroughly and the organisations contacted in order to inform them about the project's objectives, and to ask for their collaboration in supplying information. The project was updated by means of a computer-assisted telephone interview survey (CATI) which was used to check information contained in the regristries of the initial database, updating telephone and address data and contact names to whom electronic mail should be directed. It was the first time that a national telephone survey of social centres for homeless people had been conducted.

The CATI and internet questionnaires were organised in six main parts:

- structure and geographic distribution of the homeless people and their management
- the numbers for which each centre could cater (capacity)

[2] CABRERA, P.J. et al. (2004) Estudio para el desarrollo y aplicación de un procedimiento orientado a facilitar la recolección de datos on-line y la generación de indicadores en materia de personas excluidas sinhogar. Informe para la Dirección General de Servicios Sociales del Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales (UNPUBLISHED).

- the number of sheltered homeless individuals
- employment re-insertion activities
- human resources
- problems and difficulties faced.

A classification of centres was developed, with eight categories including accommodation, meals and day-centre activities. An additional distinction was introduced between those accommodation services which used standard housing and those that provided more traditional shelter (i.e. a shared/ collective facility):

1. Accommodation in flats or houses for small numbers of people.
2. Shared accommodation in large facilities or houses that shelter a relatively large number of people (only for those who stay overnight).
3. Shared accommodation in shelters with soup kitchen facilities: in principle, food is only available for the centre's clients, without free access from outside.
4. Shared accommodation with shelters and day-centre.
5. Shared lodging, with soup kitchen and day-centre (remaining open during the day).
6. Soup kitchen supplying breakfast, lunch or supper. These centres are shelters that are also open to people who do not sleep there. In this case, the interviewee had to complete two different questionnaires, one for the soup kitchen and another for lodging, since they are independent services and do not necessarily share the same clients).
7. Soup kitchen and day-centre. These centres also have a day-centre, meaning that people who attend the dining-room are also present during the day.
8. Day-centre. The clients are not the same, and the services are independent.

The bulk of the questionnaire was common to all eight categories, but a section was also assigned to each. A website was set up, and the questionnaires loaded, where it can be completed on-line by groups working with homeless people.

The main conclusion is that this survey has much potential. The data successfully obtained during 6 months recommends an on-line data collection system. However, problems were experienced related to lack of IT knowledge by many staff in the centres, by resources being too scattered, shortage of computing equipment and poor coordination between organisations and operators.

A final evaluation demonstrated the need to simplify the questionnaire and reduce the number of questions, if people are to complete it within 10 minutes. It would be advisable to offer a more rapid download of results to the information suppliers, so that they could see the advantages of participating. To develop this type of data collection, it would probably be necessary to provide vocational training in technology and provide more equipment for the centres.

The National Institute of Statistics Surveys

In December 2005, the INE (National Institute of Statistics) website published the results of the first nationwide survey of a representative sample of the homeless population in Spain.

The Survey of Centres (in May 2004) was intended to generate a national directory of centres, based on information provided by the Regional Social Services Offices, and by the database devised years earlier by a study undertaken by Caritas-Comillas University. The resulting directory comprises 752

registration centres, belonging to both public and private organisations and spread throughout the nation.

A questionnaire was mailed to every centre, in order to obtain a more detailed and accurate picture of the facilities and resources managed during winter 2002/3. It received an 88% response rate, and the results were published in May 2004. According to INE, 410 centres offered lodging of different types, with a total of 12,139 places in November 2003; most were concentrated in urban areas (68.2% in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants). They were mostly shelters or other sorts of shared lodging (10,073 places), which helped to perpetuate a model based on an 'assisted home'. There were also 1,580 boarding housing (flats). However, the Bed & Breakfast model has not been much developed, representing barely 4% of total lodging capacity.

The Homeless Survey, in December 2005, included people attending shelters, soup kitchens and day-centres. For the first time, the authorities (INE and the Basque Institute of Statistics) asked homeless individuals about their personal circumstances, their life history and their social difficulties. The two institutions conducted the same questionnaire on the same dates. In order to standardise procedures, representatives of different ministries (Ministries of Social Affairs and Labor, and Health and Consumption), civil society (Entorno Foundation) and academic experts joined INE in several working sessions.

INE's experts accepted the inclusion of many personal questions, as well as sections aimed at generating social indicators, adapted to the problem of homelessness and arranged to provide comparable data for the Spanish population in general. The fieldwork presented challenges, which demanded some flexibility. For example, some of INE's professional interviewers did not seem adequately qualified to inspire empathy and confidence in their interviewees, and several other languages were required to interview people who did not speak Spanish, Catalan, Gallego or Euskera. For these reasons, it was decided to employ social workers.

The final questionnaire was published as a 20-page booklet, containing 123 questions in 13 sections. After the identification data, several questions related to:

- socio-demographic characteristics of the interviewee (e.g. gender, age, birthplace, nationality);
- use of different facilities (e.g. shelters, soup-kitchen);
- Shelter facilities usually used;
- number of people by room, accessibility, level of equipment;
- accommodation history;
- relation with the labor market and labor experience;
- economic situation (e.g. income level, sources);
- education and training levels;
- psychological and physical health;
- experience of consumption and abuse of toxic substances (e.g. alcohol or drugs);
- family details (marriage, number of children, abandonment, separation)
- use of the public network of social services (not only of programmes specifically addressed to homeless persons);
- Some final questions were included, in order to assess individuals' experience with the law, police, imprisonment.

The INE Survey 2005 was a landmark within Spanish research on excluded groups. Nevertheless, unless interest in the generation of social inclusion indicators can be firmly supported by the EU, it is

unlikely that this investigation by INE would become a regular collection of statistical data on homelessness.

Moreover, the detailed data generated by the survey has not been sufficiently evaluated yet, and only a specialised public can access and interpret the abundance of data tables that is now available on INE's website., However, the data collected from the Basque Country are available at http://www.eustat.es.

The Spanish Red Cross' Database (AIS)

In 2004, the Social Services Database (AIS) was set up to organise and systematise the large quantity of data managed by the Spanish Red Cross's social programmes, projects and activities in all the Spanish territory (more than 800 local offices). AIS aims to:

- help to develop an integrated focus on social inclusion
- concentrate all the information and analysis in individulas experiencing poverty or social exclusion, and not in the project or the programme (as it was usually done before)
- prioritise SRC's performance in relation to the prevention of homelessness. The 'early alert system' offers an important and quick input to assess emergency-need criteria.

Using AIS, people can easily be tracked through time and space by their personal historical record. Duplications of resources, as in the case of the same assistance provided twice or more to the same client, are expected to disappear or diminish dramatically. Coding ensures the confidentiality of personal data.

This database offers two ways of accounting for homeless people. Firstly, all clients taking part in the projects classified as homeless are counted as such, despite the fact that they may be in transitional accommodation with support, such as shelters, reception centres, or protected accommodation. This corresponds to the 'houseless' category (as defined by ETHOS). Secondly, only those clients who do not have a current domicile registered in the AIS are counted. These persons appear under the ETHOS category of 'roofless'.

SRC detects an increasing problem due to the arrival of a new group of homeless people, many from Sub-Saharan Africa. As illegal immigrants, they live in the most risky situations. Some are returned to their countries, while others move on to *alleged* relatives or friends. An increasing number become homeless, their journeys beginning in Africa and ending under a bridge or in a park, surviving as rough sleepers in Madrid, Barcelona and other Spanish cities. Their lack of documents and continual mobility make it almost impossible to assess their numbers and characteristics.

Conclusions

The four sources described are incompatible and it is not anticipated that a standard method can be developed in the near future. A continuous source of nationwide information, with clear criteria, is still needed in order to assess homelessness in Spain. Such information should be constantly updated, as homeless people are a very mobile group, with changing profiles. On-line data collection was tested as the best option for continuously collecting information, as done by the 2004 ministry survey and the SRC's AIS. INE's questionnaire and the methodology carried out in 2005 demonstrate good practice, to be taken into consideration for further development. In fact, the Survey of Centres may soon be repeated, allowing progress to be assessed.

Vocational training and investment in ITC are necessary steps to improve the systems' performance as suppliers of information. Sharing data extraction results and, as in the case of SRCs AIS, allowing staff to produce their own reports, will encourage the participation and involvement of non-profit organisations.

Periodic evaluation of the system's adjustment and adequacy to all clients' needs could be crucial to generating debates among the organisations and to commit them to adapt to the changing circumstances of social exclusion. A standard and continuous procedure should be developed to update and classify all organisations involved in providing services, and to retrieve the best practices from these four sources of information. This will be useful for researchers, policymakers and non-profit organisations.

A greater political effort is needed to overcome the poor coordination between state, regional and local levels (as well as to bring together the means of social care and the statistical sources of the various Autonomous Communities).

Each homeless person and family must be a priority target for research, taking into account the many categories of homelessness currently existing in Spain.

Sweden

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Introduction

National surveys to count and estimate homelessness in Sweden have been carried out by the National Board of Health and Welfare (NBHW) in 1993, 1999 and 2005. The NBHW also surveyed all special housing facilities for the homeless in 1993, jointly with the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (NBHBP).

The struggle to define homelessness

The most recent national survey of homelessness was made official on 31st January 2006. During a press conference, the Ministers for Public Health and Social Services and for Sustainable Development commented on the survey and its results. Also present was a representative of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in the city of Gothenburg, the second biggest city in Sweden: he is responsible for homelessness policies in Gothenburg. The local system for alternative housing in Gothenburg has been portrayed as a success story by local politicians and officials in Gothenburg, as well as by the NBHW (Löfstrand 2005). Except for the local system of alternative housing, there are also at least 2000 apartments with 'special contracts' in Gothenburg: these are rented by the social authorities or the municipality and sublet to homeless clients. In a recent announcement to the press the SDP representative criticised the NBHW for choosing to count clients with 'special contracts' as homeless which 'causes …great confusion … and is misleading' (Social Democratic Party 16.2.2006).

The survey results showed that there are about 2600 homeless people in Gothenburg (NBHW 2006). This led the SDP in Gothenburg to urge the NBHW to change the definition of homelessness (Social Democratic Party 2.3.2006). According to officials in Gothenburg, only 50-60 homeless people sleep rough in the city, with perhaps another 200 only sleeping rough sometimes. A municipality well known in the country for its measures to combat homelessness risks loosing face when results show it has more homeless people in relation to its housed inhabitants than any other municipality in the country.

The debate on numbers illustrates the struggle among different players on how to define homelessness; there is not *one* accepted definition, but several in use in different time periods and contexts. The NBHW takes an active part in the debate, and the definitions used by the NBHW serve as guidelines for the municipalities (Gerdner & Blid 2002, Löfstrand 2005, Löfstrand & Nordfeldt, in prep).

Homelessness as a problem related to the housing market

In 1993 the NBHW used the following definition:

> 'The homeless are persons who lack regular housing (owned or rented) and who do not lodge with somebody on a permanent basis and are referred to temporary housing or are sleeping rough.
>
> Accordingly, persons living in institutions or in shelters and who, when discharged (into the community), do not have access to regular housing, are counted as homeless.
>
> Persons temporarily staying with friends or relatives are also counted as homeless.

> However, persons who sublet an apartment, or lodge with a relative or next of kin, are not counted as homeless. (NBHW 1993: 11).

The definition was chosen rather hastily because NBHW was pressured into getting the survey done quickly and it was already established in the capital region (NBHW 1994: 30). The survey showed that there were 9903 homeless people in Sweden in 1993. In autumn of that year, the NBHW conducted another survey with the NBHBP (NBHW 1994) to count the different forms of special housing units for homeless people. About 8400 beds for homeless in special housing units and other accommodation facilities were counted. This indicates there was a shortage of special housing units for the homeless in the early 1990s.

The recommendations of the NBHW and the NBHBP largely related to the *regular housing market*. In the early 1990s, many local housing authorities allocating apartments for rent were closed down. Landlords became free to choose their tenants. This new way to allocate apartments for rent required careful monitoring and possibly action. The importance of meeting the need for *regular* housing was stressed. The social services' measures to counteract homelessness were to be studied and methods developed. Measures to help households which are in debt to gain access to decent housing and to avoid eviction were to be taken. Municipal and private housing companies were urged to act to improve the situation for households with 'a weak connection' to the regular housing market (NBHW 1994: 13-15).

Homelessness as a problem related to addiction and mental illness

In the 1999 survey, the definition used was similar to the one used in 1993:

> 'The homeless are people who lack regular housing (owned or rented) and who do not lodge with somebody on a permanent basis and are referred to temporary housing, or are sleeping rough.'

A few restrictions in the 1999 definition were introduced later (highlighted below):

> 'Persons admitted to prison or an institution run by the social services, the National Board of Institutional Care (SiS) or hospital are to be counted *if he/she is to be discharged within 3 months after the week when the survey is conducted*.
>
> People are also classified as homeless if they are temporarily staying with acquaintances, *if he/she due to homelessness have been in contract with the local authority or organisation that supplies information to the NBHW during the week of the survey*.' (NBHW 2000: 20)

A comparison of the 1993 and 1999 surveys shows a decrease in homelessness, from 9903 in 1993 to 8440 in 1999. At the end of the 1990s, a new perspective focused solely on the individual. The aim of the 1999 survey was to count only those among the homeless 'who do *not* receive the help that they need to prepare themselves for their own independent living' (ibid: 19), thus excluding people temporarily staying in special housing units for the homeless. The NBHW stated that the homeless are 'people who as a result of an addiction or mental problems have a hard time in coping with the kind of living arrangements that are available' (ibid: 25). Further, they argue that in Sweden poverty in not a cause of homelessness and that 'lack of housing is most often not the main problem of the homeless' (ibid: 12)

At the end of the 1990s, the NBHW recommended that local housing 'staircases' were to be developed and specialist staff employed. Local housing staircases had been introduced in Gothenburg in the early '90s and this model was reproduced and adapted to other municipalities throughout the country (Sahlin 1998, Löfstrand 2005). It is intended to train homeless individuals to make them 'capable of independent living', by pursuing a 'housing career' within the system of the staircase – ideally by beginning at emergency shelters and ending with a conventional apartment with normal occupancy terms (Sahlin 1998, Löfstrand & Thörn 2003).

The most recent mapping of homelessness

In the 2005 survey, a broader definition was adopted and many more organisations were requested to supply information about homelessness. The new definition includes four situations.

> *1.* A person who is staying at an emergency shelter or is sleeping rough.
>
> *2.* A person who is admitted to or enrolled at prison, treatment centre (for offenders, addicts etc), supported housing units run by the social services, the county council or private care providers. Further, situation 2 covers persons staying at a home for care and housing (HVB-hem) or at an institution run by the national board for institutional care (SiS). A person is said to be in situation 2 if he/she is to be discharged within 3 months after the one week period of the survey and has no housing arrangements in place before discharge.
>
> *3.* A person who is admitted to or enrolled at supported housing units run by the social services, the county council or private care providers. Further, situation 3 covers persons staying at a home for care and housing (HVB-hem) or at an institution run by the national board for institutional care (SiS). A person is said to be in situation 3 if he/she is *not* to be discharged within 3 months after the one week period of the survey but has not got any arrangements made concerning housing at a future possible prospect of discharge.
>
> 4. A person who is staying temporarily and without a lease, with friends, acquaintances, family or relatives, or who has a second-hand lease or lodging agreement, provided these are temporary (and for no longer than 3 months).

The broadening of the definition might partly be understood as a result of the heavy criticism from the research community (f.x. Sahlin 1996, Thörn 2004, Löfstrand 2005). Results from the 2005 survey showed a dramatic rise in the number of homeless people, from 8440 to 17,800. All individuals with 'special contracts' (Sahlin 1996) (see below) should have counted as homeless, but were not (NBHW 2006: 9). The survey showed there were 1700 individuals with special contracts in the country. However, according to one report, there were 2000 such contracts in Gothenburg alone (Löfstrand 2005: 341ff.). The great under-estimation is partly due to unwillingness on behalf of local players to report this category as homeless. The reaction to the latest survey (see above) is also evidence of this.

Among the most important alterations is a change in the way the NBHW understands, writes and talks about homelessness. In 2006, it stressed that homelessness *is* to be regarded as a problem in itself and state that 'lack of housing means, regardless of other possible problems, a great insecurity and has a negative influence on the prospect of having a good life'. The NBHW questions 'the fact that homelessness too often is regarded solely as a socio-political problem and to a too small extent as a problem related to housing policy' (NBHW 2006: 14).

The great increase in homelessness between 1999 and 2005 is also a result of local homelessness policies. Traditionally, local policies targeted homeless addicts. Special housing units were established for this group to get access to housing on the regular housing market. But there were new groups continuously appearing as homeless. Homeless families (most often single mothers with children) are prioritised in local assignment groups and for the 'special contracts' administered by the social services. They have priority over other homeless people, while homeless addicts, most often men, are excluded not only from the regular housing market, but also from the special housing sector administered by the social services. *It is this relatively small group (homeless addicts excluded from all other places and often sleeping rough) that local politicians and officials want to count as homeless*.

Over time, the attention of politicians and social workers has been drawn to the groups that do not seem to 'fit' the local system to counteract homelessness (the housing staircases); they are talked about as 'the most vulnerable' and are often exposed by the local news media. Demands for quick solutions are voiced and the group in question becomes a new target group for new special housing units and local projects to counteract homelessness. Contrary to other homeless people, families are regarded as needing regular housing, but are not accepted as tenants on the regular housing market, often due to

their poor economy, debts and/or previous evictions. Therefore the social services have to arrange access to apartments with special contracts. And so the special housing sector grows. It becomes a self-generating system and its very existence seems to justify the exclusionary actions of landlords in the regular housing market. Landlords argue that the housing need of the homeless is the responsibility of the social services and turn down applications for housing from homeless persons (Löfstrand 2005).

Organisations providing services for homeless people

Many types of organisation provide services for homeless people. *The local social authorities* grant social assistance to homeless people, for both living expenses and temporary accommodation. They function as gatekeepers to the special housing sector (Löfstrand 2005), because they grant access to the special housing units. All social welfare offices received a questionnaire from the NBHW in 2005; 99% returned it (NBHW 2006: 29). They also function as landlords to some of their own homeless clients, having special contracts. The *special housing units* are run by municipalities, NGOs and by private companies. Only very few special housing units received the questionnaire from the NBHW, probably because of an assumption that all homeless people staying in these units are *also* known by the social authorities, who pay for the accommodation. However, this is not necessarily always the case.

Private and municipally owned treatment centres received the questionnaire and a large share responded (NBHW 2006: 29). Not all of their clients lack housing, but should be counted as homeless if they do not have access to regular housing in case of discharge, even if there is no set date for discharge at the time. It might be the case that staff still only perceives a person as homeless if he/she lacks access to regular housing in direct connection with discharge. Thus a more limited category than intended by the NBHW is counted as homeless.

Non-governmental organisations, often Christian-based, provide a wide array of services for the homeless, including temporary accommodation in special housing units, medical treatment, dental care and food. Only in Gothenburg do they provide special contracts. *Women's shelters* provide temporary shelter for women and children seeking temporary refuge. In addition, some *private companies* provide housing for the homeless. In the last few years, when there was a great shortage of special housing units, the private sector has provided temporary accommodation for the homeless. Some specialise in 'reference housing', ideally providing the individual with the necessary references for getting access to the apartments at the top of the staircase, before re-entering the regular housing market. Other private sector players own campsites or real estate (in the second case sub-letting apartments or rooms). There are also prisons, psychiatric clinics, youth centres and other kinds of publicly-owned and financed organisations that come in contact with, and hence provide, services to homeless people every now and then, even if they do not have *homeless* inhabitants as their main target group.

The Swedish data collection system

The government commissioned the NBHW to develop methods to counteract homelessness during the period 2002-4. In 2005, NBHW was commissioned to continue its work for 2005-7. Both commissions aimed to 'develop effective methods to provide long-term solutions to the problem associated with homelessness' (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs 2005). The authority was granted 9 940 000 SEK (1 066 520 EURO) in total, of which 1 200 000 SEK (128 755 EURO) was to be used for conducting the national inventory of the extent and character of homelessness in Sweden in 2005.

The results from the 2005 survey should be comparable to those from 1999 but, due to the broader definition used in 2005 and an increase in the responding organisations and authorities, direct comparison is impossible. However, there is a significant increase in the number of homeless people (NBHW 2006: 82). It should also be possible to calculate the extent of homeless families with children

from the survey. Respondents were asked to state the number of children of each homeless person and if the parent was actually living with the child. However, much information received by the NBHW concerning homeless families is unreliable. If officials in the municipalities can be persuaded to accept people living in apartments with special contracts as homeless (as intended by NBHW), many more families would be included in the official statistics on homelessness.

Method, data, and quality

A questionnaire was distributed to organisations that might come in contact with homeless people. These included social services, the probation authorities, correctional treatment facilities, prisons, women's shelters, clinics for treatment of addicts, psychiatric clinics, emergency wards, mobile outreach teams and many NGOs. The register of addresses from responding organisations includes 38 different types of organisations and 3,746 respondents (NBHW 2006: 22). There will inevitably be some homeless people, unknown to the responding organisations, who the survey does not cover. Some homeless people refused to take part in the survey, and some staff did not want to provide information about the homeless frequenting their localities. Out of nearly 3,800 respondents, 1,115 stated that they had no knowledge of any homeless individuals (ibid: 24).

The response rate varied markedly between different types of respondents. Social authorities had the highest response rates, NGOs the lowest. Participation was voluntary, i.e. respondents were not obliged to provide the NBHW with data on homeless individuals. Data reported as an obligation would probably be flawed in many more ways than data reported voluntary. But the validity of the data provided by the responding organisations is difficult to judge, since the NBHW does not have (or ask for) information about the respondents' own systems for recording information about their clients. It might also be that there are organisations which have regular contact with homeless people but did not respond.

Different religious groups, reception centers for asylum seekers and police authorities were discussed as possible recipients of the questionnaire, but in the end did not receive it. Also, the period covered (one-week) influences the results on the extent as well as the character of homelessness (ibid: 23). Taking all this into consideration, it appears to be impossible to gather reliable information about the extent of homelessness in Sweden using the current definition and mode of procedure for data collection. The results indicate around 17,800 homeless in Sweden in 2005, but this is probably an under-estimate. The overall quality of data is probably relatively good, especially in comparison with earlier surveys (NBHW 1993, 1999), even though the new and broader definition of homelessness used in the latest survey has not yet found support among all responding organisations.

Accessibility of the data

The data on homeless individuals is *not* publicly accessible. According to the principal rule of the Swedish Official Secrets Act, only statisticians at NBHW have access to this data. Exceptions to the rule are possible for research purposes, providing an individual's right to anonymity is protected. Researchers who wish to use the data are requested to give detailed information in a formal application, a description of the way the data is going to be used, as well as signing a form stating that they will not use the material for other than research purposes. Further, the research plan must be formally approved by one of the special regional review boards scrutinising the ethical considerations stated in the research plan and considering other possible ethical problems.[1] Data can be handed out only if without detriment to the individual concerned. It is important to bear in mind that the purpose of data collection on homelessness is *not* so as to a have a database ready for research purposes.[2] Requests from

[1] Personal communication with Theofania Lazaridis, by phone 4.4.2006.
[2] Personal communication with Anna Qvarlander, by phone 4.4.2006.

officials in the municipalities to have access to the data are met through production of tables and other compilations showing aggregated data for the municipality.

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Appendix 2.1 Variables in German AG STADO client register system

Variable name	Variable description	Data set*	CDS**
V1	Age	**BDS**	yes
V2	Sex	**BDS**	yes
V3	Nationality	**BDS**	yes
V4	Immigration	**BDS**	
V5	Immigration status	**BDS**	
V6	Educational qualification held	**BDS**	yes
V7	Currently in formal education	**BDS**	
V8A	Highest educational qualification achieved – start	**BDS**	yes
V8E	Highest educational qualification achieved – end	**BDS**	yes
V9	Marital status	**BDS**	yes
V10	Household structure	**BDS**	
V11A	Income situation – start	**BDS**	yes
V11E	Income situation – end	**BDS**	yes
V12A	Net income in € – start	**BDS**	
V12E	Net income in € – end	**BDS**	
V13A	Bank account – start	**BDS**	
V13E	Bank account – end	**BDS**	
V14	Debts	**BDS**	
V15	Number of creditors	**BDS**	
V16	Amount of total outstanding debts	**BDS**	
V17	Vocational training	**BDS**	yes
V18A	Vocational qualification – start	**BDS**	
V18E	Vocational qualification – end	**BDS**	
V19A	Employment (gainful) – start	**BDS**	yes
V19E	Employment (gainful) – end	**BDS**	yes
V20	Duration of employment	**BDS**	yes
V21	Limitation on employment	**BDS**	
V22	Scope of employment	**BDS**	
V23	Social security status of employment	**BDS**	
V24	Short-time employment or casual work	**BDS**	
V25	No gainful employment (due to…)	**BDS**	
V26	Duration of unemployment	**BDS**	

Variable name	Variable description	Data set*	CDS**
V27	Factors hindering placement	**BDS**	
V28A	Accommodation situation – start	**BDS**	yes
V28E	Accommodation situation – end	**BDS**	yes
V29	Case in urgent need of housing	**BDS**	
V30	Form of accommodation	**BDS**	
V31	Reason for most recent loss of housing	SDS-H	
V32	Trigger for most recent loss of housing	SDS-H	
V33	Region of most recent loss of housing	SDS-H	yes
V34	Loss of institutional accommodation	SDS-H	
V35	Duration of current homelessness	SDS-H	yes
V36	Desired accommodation	SDS-H	
V37A	Social relationships – start	**BDS**	
V37E	Social relationships – end	**BDS**	
V38	Partnership	SDS-H	
V39	Migration	**BDS**	
V40A	Health – start	**BDS**	
V40E	Health – end	**BDS**	
V41A	Acute illness – start	**BDS**	
V41E	Acute illness – end	**BDS**	
V42	Chronic illness	**BDS**	
V43	Stays in hospital	**BDS**	
V44	Disability	**BDS**	
V45	Severe disability	**BDS**	
V46	Severely disabled pass	**BDS**	
V47	Contact made – condition/instruction	SDS-O	
V48	Contact made through…	SDS-O	
V49A	Problem areas (client's perspective) – start	SDS-O	
V49E	Problem areas (client's perspective) – end	SDS-O	
V50	Custody periods	SDS-O	
V51	Judicial constraints/ limitations	SDS-O	
V52	Form of custody at start of care	SDS-O	
V53	Income situation in custody	SDS-O	
V 54	**Not currently used**		
V55	Type of termination	**BDS**	yes

Special variables (not counted in the overviews at the beginning)

betdau	Duration of care***	Calculation variable	**BDS**	yes
betbeg	Date of the start of the pendency	Recorded by user	**BDS**	
betend	Date of the end of the pendency	Recorded by user	**BDS**	

Key:

* BDS = basic data set (joint, highlighted)
SDS-H = specialist data set for help to the homeless
SDS-O = specialist data set for the care and resettlement of offenders
CDS = core data set of (regional) financing agencies

** The penultimate two columns indicate the data sets of the help to the homeless (H) or care and resettlement of offenders (O).

*** The variable “betdau” (duration of support) represents the duration of a pending period and is not recorded by the user, but instead should be calculated and read out by each software program (…)

Appendix 3.1

References to Homelessness or to concepts used in the definition of homelessness in the UNECE / EUROSTAT conference of European Statisticians
(note: paragraph numbers refer to those in the document).

Place of usual residence (core topic)

160. The general rule governing usual residence is that a person's place of usual residence is that at which he/she spends most of his/her daily night-rest. For most persons the application of this rule will not give rise to any major difficulty. However, problems may be encountered in a number of special cases. The recommended conventional treatment of these cases is as follows:

d. The institution should be taken as the place of usual residence of all inmates who at the time of the census have spent, or are likely to spend, twelve months or more in the relevant institution. Examples of inmates of institutions include patients in hospitals or hospices, old persons in nursing homes or convalescent homes, prisoners and those in juvenile detention centres;

g. The place of enumeration should be taken as the place of usual residence of homeless or roofless persons, nomads, vagrants and persons with no concept of usual residence;

477. An institutional household comprises persons whose need for shelter and subsistence are being provided by an institution. *An institution is understood to be a legal body for the purpose of long-term inhabitation and provision of services to a group of persons. Institutions usually have common facilities shared by the occupants (baths, lounges, eating facilities, dormitories and so forth).* The great majority of institutional households fall under the following categories:

(1.0) Residences for students;
(2.0) Hospitals, convalescent homes, establishments for the disabled, psychiatric institutions, old people's homes and nursing homes;
(3.0) Assisted living facilities and welfare institutions including those for the homeless;
(4.0) Military barracks;
(5.0) Correctional and penal institutions;
(6.0) Religious institutions; and
(7.0) Worker dormitories.

The homeless with no place of usual residence

489. For persons not in private or institutional households, the following two categories or degrees of homelessness can be considered:

(1.0) Primary homelessness (or rooflessness). This category includes persons living in the streets without a shelter that would fall within the scope of living quarters (see paragraphs
(2.0) Secondary homelessness. This category may include persons with no place of usual residence who move frequently between various types of accommodations (including dwellings, shelters, institutions for the homeless or other living quarters). This category includes persons living in private dwellings but reporting “no usual address” on their census form.

Homelessness

606. A homeless person can be broadly defined as a person who, because of the lack of housing, has no other option than to sleep:

(a) Rough or in buildings which were not designed for human habitation;
(b) In emergency centres, or night shelters,
(c) In emergency accommodation in hotels, guest houses or bed and breakfast;
(d) In hospitals due to a lack of decent shelter; or
(e) In accommodation temporarily provided by friends or relatives because of the lack of a permanent place to stay.

Housing arrangements (core topic)

615. Housing arrangements cover the whole population and is defined as the type of housing where a person is a usual resident at the time of the census – This covers all persons who are usual residents in different types of living quarters, or who do not have a usual residence and stay temporarily in living quarters, or are roofless persons sleeping rough or in emergency shelters when the census was taken.

617. The following classification by housing arrangement is recommended:

(1.0) Occupants (that is persons with a usual residence) living in a conventional dwelling
(2.0) Occupants (that is persons with a usual residence) living in an other housing unit – hut, cabin, shack, caravan, houseboat, or a barn, mill, cave or other shelter used for human habitation at the time of the census
(3.0) Occupants (that is persons with a usual residence) living in a collective living quarter – a hotel, institution, camp, etc.
(4.0) Persons who are not usual residents in any living quarter category, such as homeless or other people moving between temporary accommodation.

Appendix 5.1 Questionnaire/Schedule for Survey of Databases/Directories of Services for Homeless People

Resource Information Service

MEASUREMENT OF HOMELESSNESS AT EU LEVEL

JCSHR, RIS, GISS, FEANTSA

Survey of Providers of Databases/Directories of Organisations and Services

The questions for this survey/interview schedule are designed to help gather existing examples of national, regional and local databases and directories of services for homeless people in different EU countries.

Once these examples have been identified, we will write a report to help identify appropriate methodologies for national authorities to create and maintain (ie regularly update) national databases/ directories of agencies providing help to homeless people.

1. What databases/directories (national, regional or local) of services for homeless people currently exist in your country?

Please give details:

Name of database/directory:

Publisher: (ie organisation responsible for publishing (details of their web address, email, postal address, phone number, contact person preferably one who can speak English with personal email and phone number).

Date of publication:

1a. If there are currently none, why is this?

What barriers are there to producing these resources?
Are there any future plans for producing new resources?

2. Purpose of any existing databases/directories

eg:

- For agencies/individuals to access services and make referrals
- Information gathered for funding purposes
- Information gathered as a result of a research project

3. Who are the intended users of the data?

eg:

- National and local government
- Policy makers and planners
- Advisors

- The public/homeless people themselves
- Researchers

4. What is the scope of the existing databases/directories?
eg:

- Geographical coverage: eg local directories for a local government areas, cities, regions or national information sources.
- Types of agencies included and excluded eg:
  specialist (homelessness) and non-specialist (including those that focus on prevention)
  residential and non-residential
  state-run, municipal/local authority, independent charity or private company
- Level of details included about each agency

5. What format are the databases/directories?

- Database: if so, what is the technical specification
- Online: searchable websites, lists, pdfs
- Printed directories in paper form: books, leaflets or maps

6. What searching, indexing and classification features do the databases/directories have?

7. What quality standards if any have been followed/are important in producing the directories/databases?
eg:

- Based on needs of users and relevant to all groups experiencing disadvantage
- Accuracy and frequency of updating
- Comprehensiveness of coverage of different types of agencies
- Comprehensiveness of details about each agency
- Avoidance of duplication of other information sources where possible
- Written using simple and consistent language
- Ease of use and good designed
- Details supplied and checked by agencies themselves
- Good editing, checking and proofing procedures followed
- Use of trained and experienced staff
- Regularly evaluated by users and feedback used to make improvements

8. How has the data been collected and what are the issues involved in different methods?
Methods ranging from direct data collection from the services concerned, to reliance on third party information, and which of the following techniques:

- paper questionnaires
- telephone interviews
- regulatory inspection
- funding contracts
- emailed or online forms
- visits by researchers

The issues relating to methods used eg:

- Accuracy and detail obtainable via different methodologies.
- Response rates: Inclusion of services in directories may be optional or compulsory.

- Editorial control of information: services enter their own data directory or staff employed to research, compile and write entries.

9. What are the IT issues involved?
- Database systems
- Online systems
- Technical standards
- Is data exchange and collation of local or regional data into national directories possible. If so, how is this done?

10. What is the frequency of updating the data and how is updating done?
Frequency:
Methods: (eg done online or by sending out paper update forms)

11. How are the databases/directories disseminated, distributed or accessed?
Is there a cost to end users or are they free of charge?
How are they marketed/distributed?

12. What are the levels of staffing required to produce the databases/directories?
Staffing and skills required for both setting them up and then maintaining/keeping them up to date:
- Information/research staff
- IT staff
- Management staff

13. How much do they cost to develop and maintain and where does the funding come from?
- Costs in terms of staff time
- Technical resource costs

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME!

Appendix 5.2 Survey Respondents and Research Papers

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Appendix 5.3 Database and Directory Survey Results by Country

AUSTRIA

In Austria, there is little up to date information available about services for homeless people. Knowledge about homelessness services still relies on numbers provided by a survey of homelessness and homeless services that was carried out in 1998 by BAWO (the national association of service providers for homeless people) who also published a directory of homeless support services in that year ("Einrichtungen des Wohnungslosenhilfe in Österreich"). This directory included details of 272 services (101 social consulting and 171 supported housing services with a potential to house 7,328 men and women) with information about target group and standard of provision.

Since then, BAWO has also undertaken a survey of services for homeless people in the city of Graz in 2003. The report of the survey (available at www.bawo.at) identified the types of services provided by complex pattern of agencies including those funded by the city municipality, those that are part of the Catholic Church and some that are independent NGOs funded by regional and local authorities. The survey also examined issues such as standards of services provided and qualifications of staff.

In Vienna an organisation called Fonds Soziales Wien provides most of the services for homeless people in the capital. They produce an online overview of services http://www.fsw.at/_doc/Rat_und_Hilfe/broschueren_fsw_060825.pdf. The county of Upper Austria has also developing social planning in co-operation with the regional services for homeless people which area listed online (www.sozialplattform.at). Providers of services for homeless people in Salzburg have also undertaken an annual survey since 1994 of homeless clients in contact with the services in the city.

BELGIUM

There are various databases and directories of services for homeless people in Belgium produced by NGOs, federal and regional governments.

Steunpunt Algemeen Welzjinswerk is the NGO that supports 27 Centres for General Welfare in Flanders and Dutch speaking Brussels (www.steunpunt.be). It has developed an Access database of services for homeless people offered by the Centres for General Welfare (CAW) in Flanders and Brussels. In Flanders, services for homeless people are integrated into CAW which are umbrella organizations for about 370 services (including 95 residential care centres for homeless people and 45 organisations that offer supported accommodation to homeless people. The database is for agencies and individuals and can be searched by region and local service. Entries give contact details and data on number of staff, number of clients etc.

Residential care for homeless people in Belgium is also offered by the Public Centres for General Welfare (OCMW/CPAS) that exist in each community. In larger cities and towns there is co-operation between CAWs and OCMWs. Information on the OCMW/CPAS can be found at www.vvsg.be

There are also two directories of services for Brussels: IRISNET and Le secteur bruxellois de l'aide aux sans-abri au-delà des frontières linguistiques. This latter directory was published in 2002 by BRW. http://www.cmdc.irisnet.be/docs/thuislozengids_1/tlzstart.htm
The directory contains details of 37 accommodation and 30 ambulatory services. Fields of data include contact person, how to access service, opening hours, facilities, charges, staffing and whether the service is approved.

AMA also publish a directory of services for Wallonia.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Information about the providers of services for the homeless in the Czech Republic is scattered, and there is no central integrated database or directory. This is mainly because of the poor co-ordination of central government institutions concerning homelessness. At least six government ministries are responsible for dealing with various aspects of this issue. In addition, the regions and municipalities also carry some of the responsibilities.

Some data about services for homeless people is, however, gathered by The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA). MOLSA acquires information about NGOs from their grant applications (projects for the social integration of homeless people receive state funding via MOLSA). Besides the planned budget, the application form also includes detailed information about the type and range of services provided, classified according to the official typology of social services. The form also gives detailed information for accommodation about the number of beds and their usage, and for walk-in services and day centres, details about the number of clients served are provided.

MOLSA also has access to the overall data summary from those providers of social services who are members of the umbrella organisation SAD (Sdružení Azylových Domů), as published in their organisation's annual report. This information is less exhaustive, since it only reflects the activities of member hostels, but it does provide important supplementary reference information. Another source of information is the MOLSA Statistical Yearbook, but this only deals with the capacity of social services and their regional distribution.

Being responsible for issues including social policy, social care and care for citizens who need special assistance, MOSLA has information about the providers of social services who receive state funding through it. The Act on Social Services (which becomes effective on 1 January 2007) anticipates the establishment of an obligatory register of providers which would reflect an accurate and constantly updated situation. The introduction of this register will therefore remove the inaccuracies currently present in the MOLSA Statistical Yearbook (inaccuracies that arise from the absence of typology of social services, which is defined in this Act).

The Act on Social Services defines four types of services:

1. Low threshold day centres that provide walk-in or outreach services for people without shelter.
2. Overnight shelters that provide walk-in services to people without shelter.
3. Homeless hostels that provide temporary accommodation services for people in an unfavourable social situation resulting in a loss of accommodation.

4. Halfway houses that usually provide residential services for young people under 26 years of age who leave educational institutions for institutional or compulsory care after coming of age), or for people from other institutions for children and youth, and for people released from prisons or compulsory treatment. The manner of providing social services in these facilities is adjusted to the specific needs of these people.

Another government department, The Ministry of the Interior, is responsible for public order and other issues of internal order and security, and permitting residence of foreigners refugee status. This Ministry has its own database of facilities for the accommodation of asylum seekers and refugees.

DENMARK

There are is no single national source of information about services for homeless people in Denmark, nor any significant regional or local databases or directories of residential and non-residential services. However, there is a well-developed system for gathering data about the clients of hostels for homeless people.

For a number of years, the Social Appeals Board in Denmark has held a register of the main source of provision of hostel beds for homeless people. The Social Appeals Board was set up as a government agency under the Ministry of Social Affairs and is an independent administrative authority with judicial powers. These emergency and short term hostels are provided under §94 of the Law on Social Service. The register is used to collate information about the characteristics of the homeless people who stay at these §94 hostels, and since 1st January 1999, statistics have been collected about admissions, discharges and other information about clients.

§94 hostels include those run by counties and municipalities and those private hostels which are run by an agreement with the counties under the rules of state reimbursement of funding. A small number of private overnight shelters and day-time-only facilities are excluded. The latest figures from 2004 give a total of 66 hostels under §94 with a total of 2,540 beds.

The database of §94 hostels is not publicly available, although as part of the statistics published by the Social Appeals Board, a list of all hostels included is given in summary figures on gender and age of clients for each individual hostel.

Once every three months managers of the §94 hostels send statistics to the counties, who then send the information on to the Social Appeals Board, which carries out annual statistical analysis on the numbers of users and their characteristics, regional distribution, length of stay, status upon discharge etc. This data about clients is used for administrative purposes, eg to monitor the use of provision and provide a general picture of the demand and supply of hostel services. Municipal social workers and other staff do not have access to the information on users.

Municipal supported accommodation under §91 (intermediate) and §92 (longer term) are also not covered under §94 as they are not emergency provision. No data collecting exercises are carried out despite the growth in this type of provision.

Women's crisis centres are covered separately under §93a rather than under §94, and a similar database and data collecting exercise is carried out for this type of provision.

For further information about the National Social Appeals Board, contact:
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ESTONIA

Local information about homelessness services in Estonia is mainly available via the websites of municipalities, and there is no national database or directory of services for homeless people.

Legislation in Estonia gives the responsibility to offer services for homeless people to local social departments of city/town municipalities. Each local municipality has a website and the law requires that municipalities list online the services provided.

The problem of homelessness in Estonia only really exists in bigger cities and towns - in the capital city Tallinn, and Narva, Pärnu and Tartu. Agencies estimate the total number of homeless people in Estonia is about 3,000. As this is a relatively small number, a need to develop homeless databases has not been identified.

In Tallinn, there are 8 social departments who pay social benefits to all people in need (including homeless people as well as other people living in the municipality area).
Services like shelters for homeless people, rehabilitation services for excluded people (homeless people, those released from prison, the poor, and people who need any extra help with food, clothing or somewhere to live) and supported social housing is offered by NGOs as well as by municipalities. The Social Welfare and Health Care Department of Tallinn is the coordinating body of services. Data about users of services is gathered by this institution and by the organisations offering the services.

There are 4 nightshelters in Tallinn with more than 250 beds, and two rehabilitation centres for homeless people and those released from prison (with a total of 122 beds).
Tallinna Hoolekande Keskus in Suur-Sõjamäe 6a (www.thk.ee) offers complex social and rehabilitation services not only for homeless people but all others in need – services are free for clients, including social counselling, food aid, clothing, over 50 places in night shelter accommodation. Between 2000-2005, these services were used by nearly 2,000 different clients.

There are also nightshelters in Narva, Pärnu and Tartu. Most other towns do not have special services and institutions for homeless people because of the small extent of homelessness. In rural areas, homelessness is managed by local people themselves (so called “community control” where families can support each other if there is the need).

FINLAND

There are various sources of information about services for homeless people in Finland, but no special nationwide directory with comprehensive coverage. National, regional and local directories overlap with each other in terms of coverage of services:

1) The Neuvoa antavat database

As part of the website of Neuvoa antavat (Development of Alcohol and Drugs Intervention), the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (Stakes) keeps a database of care services for substance abusers (http://neuvoa-antavat.stakes.fi/EN/index.htm). The database is meant primarily for professionals to help them to find services for their clients. A large proportion of services for homeless people are included in the database - although the range of services in the database is much wider. It currently has around 400 entries across the country, but even so, it does not contain details of all services or those for homeless people in Finland. Services provided by NGOs are more comprehensively included than services which are provided by municipalities. More comprehensive coverage will be developed over time. Providers themselves send the information about their services by filling in a form. Whilst the searching function on the website is limited, the services have, however, been classified by type and location (region or municipality).

2) Municipality websites

Municipalities in Finland are responsible for providing care and services for homeless people and other people in need. They have their own local directories, usually published on their websites, of the services which they provide themselves or commission from NGOs. These websites list the departments of social welfare's services for substance abusers, mental health patients etc, and services for homeless people are included. The websites are for the local public to help them find the services they need.

Helsinki City has on its website a special directory of services for homeless people: http://www.hel.fi/wps/portal/Sosiaalivirasto/Artikkeli?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/fi/Sosiaalivirasto/Aikuisten+palvelut/Asunnottomien+palvelut. This is one of the few directories in Finland specifically of services for homeless people.

3) NGO websites

All the NGOs which provide services for homeless people, substance abusers and mental health patients publish directories of their own services on their websites for professionals and clients themselves to use.

- The Finnish Blue Band has a national database of services which are provided by its member organisations (a large number of organisations), including homelessness and housing services (http://www.sininauhaliitto.fi/jasenjarjestot/?session=83423689).

- A-Clinic Foundation has its own national database of services: (http://www.a-klinikka.fi/hoitopalvelut/index.html)

4) Regional government

Regional governments have their own administrative directories as they give licences to service providers and supervise the services. These are administrative databases only and are not available online.

FRANCE

There are several national and local directories of homelessness services in France (see the country paper for France for further details about the range of services that exist for homeless people). These directories have been developed for the use of clients, social workers and volunteers and are available online and/or in printed format. There is also a database called FINESS which is a national directory of facilities in the social and health fields.

Directories usually cover a wide variety of services and are maintained either by NGOs (eg FNARS, SOS Femmes Accueil), by public agencies (eg the Ile-de-France Regional Observatory of Health) or by local authorities and their social services (eg the Mairie de Paris and the CASVP, centre d'action sociale de la Ville de Paris).

The use of such directories for measuring homelessness can be, however, problematic. When using some of these publications to compile a list of services for its homeless surveys (ie its sampling frame), the INED discovered that this was not so easy as these directories are for helping people in difficulty and social workers, and are not necessarily suitable for research needs. For example, addresses of some shelters, hostels and other accommodation services were not always given as they are not directly accessible.

The following details cover some examples of national and local databases/directories in France.

1. National databases and directories

FNARS directory

FNARS (the French federation of the associations for social reinsertion) regularly updates a database and produces a printed directory of its members who are a large proportion of the NGOs providing services to homeless people. The last version of the directory from 2000-2001 is out of print but included 980 associations or organisations, and 2,800 centres or services. Another edition is planned.

SOS Femmes Accueil directory

Last updated in 2004-2005 , this is a national online directory of services that can provide help for women (http://www.sosfemmes.com/ressources/contacts_chrs.htm). It comprises details of 1,130 services (not just those for women but couples and women with children), and is searchable by Département. Details collected are name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and a short description of services. See the full country paper for France for sample entries.

The FINESS database

FINESS (Fichier national des Etablissements Sanitaires et Sociaux) is a national directory of facilities in the social and health fields (including hospitals, hostels, and training facilities for nurses or social workers). It is maintained by the statistical services of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (the DREES) and updated by the local (regional and departmental levels) Directions of Family Affairs (DRASS and DDASS). It is used mostly for administrative and statistical purposes, and it can be used as a sampling frame.

Accommodation services receiving long term funding from the State are in FINESS. Those who do not receive such funding, may also be in FINESS but the coverage is less good. For example, among the accommodation services for the homeless, emergency shelters that only depend on NGO funding, or on local municipality funding, or on State funding but not on a regular basis, would not necessarily all be listed. The CHRS, (and the CADA and CPH for asylum seekers and refugees), whose funding comes from the central state on a regular basis, are, however, quite well covered. Other services for the homeless, such as food or clothes distributions, are not in FINESS.

FINESS uses a national classification of services in these fields and each service listed has a unique 9-digit identifier. Accommodation services for the homeless are listed under the "accueil, hébergement, assistance et réadaptation pour les adultes et familles en difficulté" category, and mother and child hostels are in the "accueil, hébergement, assistance et réadaptation pour la protection de l'enfance" category. The detailed classification can be seen in Appendix 4 of the country paper. Relevant categories include: mother and child facilities (category 4501/166), accommodation and reinsertion centres (4601/214), and other accommodation services for deprived people (4601/219). There are also categories for refugees and for specialist accommodation (eg for treatment of drug or alcohol addictions). FINESS can also be used as a sample frame for surveys (the ES survey used a sample frame, a part of which is based on FINESS).

The database gives no information on the people served, for example, on the people accommodated by a hostel. However, the address, telephone fax number and capacity (by sex), together with various legal and financial details are given. See the full country paper for France for sample entries from the Internet version. FINESS can also be accessed on the Internet at http://finess.sante.gouv.fr/finess/

2 Local directories

Guide des lieux d'accueil pour personnes en difficulté

This directory is maintained by the ORS (Regional Observatory of Health) of the Ile-de-France region and is available online: http://www.ors-idf.org/accueil-personnes-difficulte.asp. A printed version is also available. This directory was first developed some 15 years ago in order to help social workers, particularly those who only occasionally need to find a bed for a homeless person. Whilst access to hostels is usually through the 115 service or after an assessment for longer term accommodation, the aim of the directory is also to list the shelters that are not given in the FINESS database, especially those which are financed through (non permanent) subsidies of the State or only by the municipalities or associations. However the directory is not completely comprehensive as some NGOs do not wish to be listed because they want to keep complete control of access to their hostels.

The person in charge of the directory updates it by surveying the 8 DDASS of the Ile-de-France region, and the 8 Conseils Généraux (councils of the departments), and has built a network of NGOs that give information about new services and closures. See the full country paper for France for sample entries.

The Guide Solidarité Paris 2006

This guidebook maintained by the Mairie de Paris is mainly for homeless or deprived people themselves, but is also used by social workers. The information can also be found on the Mairie de Paris website www.paris.fr. Services are listed under the following sections: Orientation,

Accommodation, Food, Reinsertion, Health care, and Everyday life (free/cheap showers, toilets, clothes, transportation, sport and culture, health care for pets, and burials). For each entry, the following details are given: address, telephone number and nearest Metro, opening times, services offered, target group, and cost. See the full country paper for France for sample entries from the Internet version.

GERMANY

There is no fully comprehensive national source of information about homelessness services in Germany. However, an updated edition of a national directory of services called “Wo und Wie” has recently been published by the national NGO BAWG (www.bawg.de). The purpose of the directory is principally for referrals and its coverage is mainly services provided by NGOs, most of which provide advice and for which there is good coverage. Some accommodation and outreach services are included, including those that provide specialist support, but coverage is patchy as it is not possible to make referrals directly to many of these types of services. Similarly, most of the temporary accommodation provided by Municipalities is not included.

Entries for services in the directory are listed under each of the 16 regions of Germany, with a town/city index. Fields of data for each service are:

- Address and contact details
- Staff
- Location
- Opening hours
- Target group
- Referral/admission criteria
- Services offered
- Other

There are no plans at a national level for developing a resource with more comprehensive coverage and the national government defers strategic and policy responsibilities to the regions.

There are currently no major online local or regional directories of services in Germany, although some of the larger cities in the country may have some leaflets with details of local services.

Research carried out for many years in the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) has involved compiling a database of details of all NGO service providers to enable surveys of the extent of homelessness. The database of NGOs (not municipality services) has been researched using address lists from the two regional funding organisations in NRW. Data on homelessness is then compiled by local authorities sending services questionnaires to the NGOs to gather information about homeless people served.

GREECE

In Greece there are no national or local directories of services for homeless people. As there is no national action plan for tackling homelessness, every organisation works in its own way, with its own

philosophy, methods, etc. Moreover, as there is no serious interagency work, it is difficult to have a clear idea of what, for example, the Municipality of Athens is doing. There are no plans at present to develop such resources in the future.

HUNGARY

In Hungary, there are governmental and non-official statistical systems for collecting data about services for homeless people.

1. Official statistics and data

There are two official statistical data collection systems: the database for the registration of social services and the NSPDC system.

Registration of social services

Legislation in Hungary outlines various types of homeless care services and provides a system of official registration. In addition to registered services, there are also other homeless care services that are not prescribed by law, many of which are unable (or unwilling) to comply with the requirements of the relevant pieces of legislation. These service providers do not have official permission to operate and do not receive normal state funding (but are eligible to receive support through tenders).

The Social Act includes and controls a wide range of residential and non-residential homeless care services, including food, street services, night shelters, hostels, institutions providing nursing and care, and day services (see the position paper for Hungary for full list). In order to provide these services as part of social services as defined by the legislation, organisations must apply for official permission according to detailed rules. The Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO) registers all decisions on organisations granted permission and provides a yearly list which is published in the Social Statistics Yearbook (in paper copy and electronic version on CD-ROM).

The National Institute for Family and Social Policy (NIFSP) also uses the data on these decisions to update a database on an ongoing basis. The publication of this data is mandatory and the Institute publishes it annually on its publicly accessible website. The database currently accessible contains the following data from 2004, split by child protection and social services, by settlement and listed in alphabetical order:

- Settlement – street name and number
- Description – name, address and type of provider
- Type of service
- Type of decision
- Start of operation
- Area of competence
- Decision effective
- Capacity
- Other

Information contained in the database is compiled occasionally, mainly to help the Ministry make decisions. One of the major problems of the database is that it contains “flow type” data and because of inadequacies in the initial dataset, it can not be used to produce exact “stock type” reports. In other words, it shows only the process and the services which received permission in the given year, and is not able to show, for example, how many services are in operation on a given date. Moreover, issued permissions does not necessarily mean that the service is actually offered.

However, the database can provide data on the numbers of specific types of registered services and permitted capacity (eg how many beds), and broken down by: settlement, type of settlement, county, region and type of provider (municipality, church, civil, for profit organisations).

2. National Statistical Programme for Data Collection (NSPDC)

Each year the government specifies the subject of the National Statistical Programme for Data Collection (NSPDC). Whilst one part of the data collected is unchanged each year, the rest of the data collected changes on a yearly basis. Data collected can include information on homeless care services.

The HCSO collates data from service providers submitted by electronic questionnaire and publishes some of it in the Social Statistical Yearbook. This data can be seen as official stock-type data showing the current state provision, staffing, capacity and services provided, as well as some details of the characteristics of clients using the services.

The aggregated NSPDC data can give information on flow and stock of services based on the number of permitted types of services operated in the country (on 31st December), permitted capacity (eg number of beds) and can be broken down as above. Data can also be given on the individual conditions of service providers, funding of provision and the numbers of clients by age and gender.

Whilst the official data collection system is operating in Hungary in a well-regulated way, it does not provide reliable and up-to-date information on the number and capacity of the registered services. The merging, common handling and coordination of the current two official statistical data collection systems has not yet been solved despite various attempts. Therefore no clear, accurate and reliable summaries can be made even regarding the number of different types of care services currently offered in the country. Restructuring the current system would help resolve this, especially if linked with a strategy to tackle homelessness, involvement of homeless care service providers, collection of data on clients, and harmonisation of systems with those for other client groups.

2. Other data collection systems on homeless care services

In Budapest, coordination of care services for homeless people is carried out by the Dispetcher Service of the Shelter Foundation (Menhely Alapítvány): www.menhely.hu/. This organisation provides a 24-hour information and emergency telephone and continuously collects information about more than 150 institutions that deal with the provision of homeless care services in Budapest. The information is updated daily and contributes to the care service offered by the Dispetcher Service itself, but is also used by other care service providers, by organisations in contact with, or offering services to homeless people (such as family support centres, the police, hospitals etc), and sometimes also by the city municipality or the press.

The Dispetcher Service of the Shelter Foundation publishes the information in a monthly information booklet for service providers and other subscribers in Budapest. This contains useful and detailed practical information for both providers offering care services and clients.

The information booklet includes up to date details of homeless care services and other social services offered to non-homeless people:

- Residential services (shelters, “heated street”, temporary hostels, rehabilitation facilities, homes of the homeless, crisis hostels, mothers’ homes, family hostels, and children’s hostels
- Healthcare services offered to homeless people (consultation rooms, mobile healthcare units, sick-wards, crisis and convalescent units)
- Daytime care services (day centres, costumer services and information offices, legal assistance, public baths, communal kitchens, food distribution, clothing distribution, leisure activities/clubs
- Street services (street catering service, care services offered on the street)
- Family support and children’s welfare services
- Workers’ hostels
- Youth services
- General support and mental health service call centres

The following details are given for each service:

- Name of the service provider and of the care service, address, name of manager, telephone and fax numbers, email address
- Capacity (for men, women and couples)
- Opening hours
- Requirements for using the facility (eg health certificates, income etc.)
- Services offered (bathing, laundry, catering, locker, cultural and healthcare services offered, number of employees on duty etc.)

The Shelter Foundation also publishes an annual booklet containing all homeless care services and other services offered to homeless people, including those from the whole area of the country. This booklet was first published last year with the contributions of the regional Dispetcher Centres.

In addition to the above, the Dispetcher Service in Budapest collects information on vacancies from all the nightshelters.

These data collection systems are up-to-date, service oriented and play an important role in managing and coordinating services. Regular exchange of information is very important even though services operate in a complex environment with different interests. The continuous data collection and publication is partly subsidised by the Municipality in Budapest, and partly by the Ministry for Social Affairs through tenders (although, data collection is continued even if these resources are not available).

IRISH REPUBLIC

There is no national database/directory of homelessness services for Ireland. However, there are resources for Dublin and Cork, the two largest cities in Ireland. The government and the national homelessness strategy do not indicate any current plans to develop a national resource, and action is initiated at a local level to tackle homelessness in Ireland.

Dublin

Dublin Homelessness Directory and Homeless Dublin

The Dublin Homelessness Directory and Homeless Dublin websites are the most extensive single sources of information about homelessness and related services in Ireland. They are available in both printed (http://www.homelessagency.ie/downloads/publications/56.pdf) and online format (www.homelessdublin.org).

First published in 2000 by Homeless Agency (www.homelessagency.ie), the directory is the main source of information about homelessness services across Dublin. Homeless Agency commissioned Resource Information Service (RIS) to produce the directory adapting data models, research methods and publishing systems used by RIS in the UK (see UK findings). A fourth edition of the directory was published in autumn 2006.

Information from the directory about 18 key homeless services in Dublin city centre is also made available on the CentreCare map (available from CentreCare's and Homeless Agency's websites): http://www.centrecare.ie/maps/default.asp

The Dublin Homelessness Directory is mainly for agencies to make referrals, although some clients access the information by using the directory themselves when in contact with agencies. The Homeless Dublin website and CentreCare map are open access to the public and aim to assist people get the help they need. The directory is also used by national and local government, researchers and academic libraries.

The Dublin Homelessness Directory/Homeless Dublin website covers Dublin City and 3 adjacent local authority areas and includes residential and non-residential services:

- Emergency hostels and longer term housing projects for homeless people and others in need of supported accommodation, mostly voluntary sector-run. It includes domestic violence refuges and provision for those with support needs (eg care leavers, ex-offenders or single parents).
- Specialist homelessness services (day centres, advice, settlement and street services), and non-specialist services (alcohol, drugs, mental health, training, advice and support services) provided by NGOs and local authorities.

A full A4 page entry in the directory gives information for each hostel/accommodation project covering contact details, target group, referral procedure, policies, vacancies and length of stay, facilities and support services. Shorter entries for non-residential services that cover contact details, target group, area served, service offered, how to contact, languages, disabled access, public transport, and type of organisation.

The information for the directory and website are held in custom built databases for hostels and non-residential services. Data is provided by services for first time using questionnaires, with follow-up telephone interviews to gain information from those who do not return questionnaires in the first instance. Updating existing entries is done every 1-2 years by update forms that are sent/emailed to agencies. These give agencies the current entry about their service and a space for them to amend or add any information that has changed since the last update.

The directory is free of charge to service providers and researchers to ensure maximum distribution, and the website is also free and open access.

The Streets: A Guide to the HPU and Homeless Services

Published in December 2005 by the Health Service Executive, this publication has guidance on how to access the Homeless Persons Unit and other key services in Dublin. It includes a listing of names and address of hostels and other helping services, but gives details of fewer services and less detailed information about each service than the directory: http://www.homelessagency.ie/downloads/publications/92.pdf. Copies were sent to all homeless service providers and further copies are available on request.

Cork

Cork City Council has commissioned RIS to produce a printed and online directory with comprehensive details of all services for homeless people in Cork. This was published in October 2006 and is similar to the Dublin directory and website.

ITALY

There is no national database of services in Italy for homeless people. Definitions of homelessness and patterns of provision vary widely in different areas of the country. There are currently no plans or directive from central government that would involve developing such a resource. FIOpsd (the Italian federation of organisations working with homeless people) has a national database of (mainly NGO) member organisations.

There are, however, databases/directories of services in particular areas and various cities. The details below are about directories of services in Milan.

The specialist database/directory of homelessness services in Milan is called La Città Dimenticata (the Forgotten City) which maps different private and public services for homeless people. There is also a directory of helping services published online in pdf format by the Municipality of Milan (www.comune.milano.it) which includes services across a wide range of client groups, not just for homeless people.

La Città Dimenticata is an annual printed publication published since 1999 by Caritas Ambrosiana and the information is available on pdf on the website of Caritas Ambrosiana (www.caritas.it), although it is currently being updated.

The main aim of the publication is to collect in one place details of the services in Milan for homeless people and those for all the people in situations of difficulty. It is intended to by used by private and public organisations and services, particularly those working in Milan itself and the surrounding area.

The database/directory includes all the private associations and bodies providing services for homeless people who want their details to be published. Services include public institutions (especially those provided by the Municipality of Milan) and other private bodies that deal with homeless people and other categories (old people, prisoners, minors and young people, drug and alcohol addicts, disabled people, abused women, families, immigrants, gypsies, people with mental problems, persons with HIV related problems, women victims of the traffic of prostitution).

For each record, the following information is given:

- Name of organisation
- Address, phone and fax numbers, and email
- Local administrative zone within the Municipality of Milan
- Deanery and the parish of reference
- Contact person normally responsible for the service
- Opening times
- Notes describing the service provided
- How to get access.

The guide consists of two main sections. The first section gives details of services for homeless people and those in conditions of extreme poverty and exclusion: the services are divided in categories in terms of provision: health assistance, legal assistance, listening centres, day centres, left luggage services, public showers, services providing clothes, canteens, night shelters (from the emergency to long term shelters), outreach services and some specific services for homeless people in the Municipality of Milan.

The second section gives services on the basis of the categories of users (old people, prisoners, minors and younger people, drug and alcohol addicts, disabled people, abused women, families, immigrant, gypsies, people with mental problems, persons with HIV and HIV correlated problems, women victims of the traffic of prostitution).

Details about any new services and changes to existing services come to attention through the daily work of the organisation. Details of existing services are updated for new editions of the directory by telephone by volunteer social workers, who also update a database which is used not only for the directory, but also for more complete directories and guides used internally at the service. There are three volunteer social work staff and other volunteers coordinated by a manager.

Staff are available for updating details once a week to keep the data updated for internal use and also output once a year into the directory. The publication can be bought for €1 and there are plans to make the information available as an online edition on the website of Caritas Ambrosiana.

LUXEMBOURG

At the present time, there is no database or directory of services for homeless people in Luxembourg. However, the Government in Luxembourg is currently considering a report of the first

national survey of homelessness carried out in 2006. Using questionnaires with service users, the survey has tried to count the homeless population by collecting data about the numbers of service users and their main characteristics.

A working group of Government and NGO representatives was established for this survey. It used and adapted the first two conceptual categories of the ETHOS definition (ie the Roofless and Houseless categories) to select relevant service providers to be included in the survey.

In total, the survey involved about 40 agencies in Luxembourg. It included the specialist services for homeless people (eg the 2 permanent night shelters and a winter shelter that is in the process of becoming open throughout the year, and 2 day centers). The survey also gathered information about people living in other types of accommodation including second stage, shared supported accommodation, and also some supported accommodation for people with mental health or drug problems.

One part of the survey aimed to establish an inventory of data collection systems used by the NGOs involved into the survey (which variables and which software are currently used to manage the data about their clients), with the aim of proposing an overall data collection system.

As yet, it is not known whether there will be a follow-up to this project. This will become clearer after the Government publishes the report of the survey in summer 2006.

For further information about the survey, contact Roland Maas - Centre d'Etudes de Populations, de Pauvreté et de Politiques Socio-Economiques. roland.maas@ceps.lu

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NETHERLANDS

There are two national sources of information about services for homeless people in the Netherlands.

Federatie Opvang (The Dutch Federation of Shelters) publishes an online database of services for homeless people on their website (www.opvang.nl). Accessible to members, the information covers a range of services provided by 95 organisations, most of which receive government funding and some of which (eg Salvation Army) provide multiple services. Services are divided into 9 main types, including nightshelters, short stay and longer stay hostels, day services and medical care services.

In 2004, the Trimbos Institute (the national knowledge institute for mental health care, addiction care and social work - www.trimbos.nl) published a printed guide giving contact addressed for organisations that provide mental health services, addiction care and services for people living on the streets. The directory included details of accommodation and day services.

POLAND

There are several databases in Poland that have been set up so that agencies and individuals can make referrals and access services and that homeless service providers can contact each other. The

databases are also used by national and local government, and sometimes used by researchers. There is also information gathered as a result of a research project (the Klon/Jawor database).

1. National databases

National Database of Organisations and Institutions Working with Homeless People

In 2004/05, Klon/Jawor Association (the non-governmental organisation that supports the Polish voluntary sector) established a national online database of Polish NGOs http://bazy.ngo.pl/search/english.asp

This database only includes non-governmental organisations (and not public sector institutions). It also covers a wide range of different services for many different client groups, not just those for homeless people. It also only gives overall information about organisations and not data about individual services.

Searching using the term "Homeless assistance, includes homeless shelters" produces a list of 517 organisations. For each organisation, there are details of name, address, office hours, bank account, fields of work, history, mission, activities, and access for disabled people. Organisations submit their own data to the website on an ongoing basis and IT staff maintain the database and website.

Further details from Stowarzyszenie Klon/Jawor
Tel (0-22) 828 91 28. Email: bazy@portal.ngo.pl

Information on Homelessness Services in Poland

This online database (http://www.bratalbert.cp.win.pl/informator/) was set up in 2002/2003. It gives information about different kind of services (shelter, food, clothes etc), address, contact details and standard of service provided. Information about shelters and hostels also include staffing, how many people they can accommodate, services and facilities provided, standard of the building etc.

Information/research staff researched the directory by using paper questionnaires. There is good coverage of services although last updating was done about 2 years ago and there are a lot of gaps in the data as there has been no updating since.

Further details from Towarzystwo Pomocy im. Św. Brata Alberta
Tel (071) 341-04-19. Email: tpba@bratalbert.org.pl

Information about organisations supporting homeless people

This is a free paper directory and database set up in December 2005. It gives information about different kind of services (shelter, food, cloths etc).

Beside information about organisation or institution responsible, address, contact etc. there is information about standard of the services. Information about shelters and hostels have also information about staff, how many people they could take, services inside, standard of the building etc.

There is good coverage of services and information/research staff update the directory annually by sending paper questionnaires to Regional Social Policy Centres.

Further details from Caritas Diecezji Kieleckiej
Tel. 41/3446728, 3445282 bezdomni@caritas.pl
Email: caritaskie@kielce.opoka.org.pl or kielce@caritas.pl

Regional directories

An example of a regional directory in Poland is the Directory of Homelessness Services in the Pomeranian Region. The latest version of this paper directory and database was published in December 2005 and can also be viewed online at http://www.pfwb.org.pl/main.php?id=5

The directory has wide coverage of services with information about services including shelters, food, clothing etc. For each organisation, details include address and contact details and there is a lot of information about the standard of services provided. Information about shelters and hostels have also information about staff, how many people they can take, services provided, standard of the building etc.

Information/research staff send paper questionnaires directly to the organisations. Telephone interviews are done to chase organisations that do not return questionnaires of if the data provided is unclear.

Further details from Peter Olech at Pomeranian Forum in Aid of Getting Out of Homelessness
Tel: 058 341 17 20. Email: p.olech@pfwb.org.pl; www.pfwb.org.pl

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PORTUGAL

There are no directories or databases of services for homeless people in Portugal, nor any precise figures on the numbers of accommodation based services in the country. In Lisbon, however, there are more than 30 services for homeless people and a number of recent surveys have been carried out by services working with this population. In 2005, the Institute for Social Security (ISS) carried out a national study with service providers to assess social responses/services and methodologies for the support of the homeless population. This involved identifying and contacting over 200 services, both those specifically for homeless people and those whilst not specifically for homeless people, see homeless people within their range of community support services.

SLOVENIA

There is no comprehensive database/directory of services for homeless people in Slovenia. The following summarises four current initiatives that collect data on services in the country.

1. The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs has a short list of services and programmes for homeless people that they fund, which is complied on a yearly basis. There are currently 12 associations/programmes financed by them that are concerned with homeless people, including 5

homeless shelters, a street journal for homeless people, and various other kinds of help and advice. This list includes information on the name of the service, address, programme of the service provider (for example distribution of food) and the name of the director. However the list does not include programmes and services for homeless people that are not financed by the Ministry.

2. There is also a database on services and programmes provided by the Centres for Social Work. This data is gathered by the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia. The database has quite detailed and comprehensive information on the services provided and number of users, etc. However, homeless people are not distinguished as a specific group, and there are only two shelters for homeless people (in Ljubljana and Maribor) that are under the Centres for Social Work's programmes.

3. Since 2005, the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia has also started gathering information on NGOs that are either funded by the Ministry or the municipalities. It is a list of NGOs, along with details of their programmes, target groups, time-period of the programme and number of users. However, this list also does not distinguish the services that deal with homeless people.

4. The Ministry for Internal Affairs has a database of all associations and foundations registered. However the database is not specific enough to be able to distinguish between the services for homeless people and others categories of clients.

Overall, the gathering of data about services is still at a very basic stage in Slovenia. Only since 2005 has there been attempts to develop a more comprehensive list of organisations, but detailed information is not available. This situation is partly due to the very diverse nature of NGOs and funding from different sources (the Ministry or local authorities), which makes gathering information harder. In addition, the organisations themselves seem not to have an interest in more detailed information gathering (due to privacy/confidentiality issues, and the lack of funding and personnel to carry out the necessary tasks).

SPAIN

Gathering national information about homelessness services across Spain is a particularly difficult task because of a process of decentralization and regionalisation in recent years. Although this has had benefits in terms of planning and control at a local level, it has meant diverse development of different services depending on regional and local policies. The more autonomous regions have become more responsible for establishing their own social policies and services, and managing information and databases as well.

Despite these difficulties, an initiative by Caritas Espanola and University of Comillas in Madrid in 2001 researched a database called Centros de Atencion a Personas sin Hogar. This database of around 650 services was made available on CD-ROM. Fields of data for each services included:

- Name of centre
- Name of organisation
- Address, contact details, and contact person
- Location

- Type of centre or service (24 different types given as yes/no options)
- Service provided (40 different types given as yes/no options)
- Number of beds and meals provided
- Target group (gender, age, couples, children, maximum and minimum age, and priority groups eg women escaping domestic violence, homeless families)
- Opening hours

The database can be searched by name of service, location (city, province or region), service (refuge, accommodation, food or clothes) and target group.

This data was later used by a major survey of homelessness in Spain that was carried out in 2004 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The first stage in this research prior to gathering information about homeless people was developing a national database of resource centres for homeless people. This was done by using information from Social Services departments and the Caritas and University of Comillas database. As a result, a database of 752 services run by public sector and private organisations was established. A questionnaire was then sent to centres for the homeless on the database to gather more details about the facilities and services provided. This survey provided information for the first time about services specifically for homeless people. The results published by the INE (National Institute of Statistics) showed, for example, that 410 centres offered accommodation in shelters, other collective lodgings or transitional housing (flats). 387 services offered meals (77% of which also offered accommodation). The survey also gathered details of staffing and funding levels.

This data about services was then used for a follow-up survey in December 2005 to gather information about homeless people, their circumstances and characteristics. Homelessness services were sampled in a similar way to French surveys of homelessness taking into account their size/number of services provided, and geographical location.

Although not specifically just for homeless people, there are two major data collection systems in Spain that gather information from local services:

The Social Services Client Information (Sistema de Infomación de Usarios de Servicios Sociales or SIUSS) was originally set up in 1984 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Autonomous Communities. This database of client records is used by social workers, although not systematically across all areas of Spain.

In 2004, the Spanish Red Cross (SRC) set up a Social Services Database (AIS) that organises the large quantity of data about clients from all the SRC' s social programmes, projects and activities carried out in more than 800 local offices. The system is used to produce statistical data on the clients seen by these local services, including homeless people.

SWEDEN

There are no databases or directories of homelessness services on a national or a regional level in Sweden. The city of Gothenburg and the city of Stockholm municipalities maintain directories on special housing units for homeless clients. These are available online. Several municipalities give details of the homeless services available locally on the official website of the city and/or the local social authorities. For example, the City of Stockholm's website has a link to a description of social

services provided, including special housing units for the homeless that are run by the municipality. The homeless services provided by NGOs are, however, not included. But because of a roof-above-ones-head policy in Stockholm, NGOs that run emergency shelters gives figures on an ongoing basis to the municipality about the number of homeless people staying temporarily in emergency accommodation.

A couple of years ago the City of Gothenburg created an internet-based directory of housing for homeless people with social, medical and/or physical problems. The directory – Boendeportalen (www.boendeportalen.goteborg.se) – includes a web-based database listing with all the special housing units for homeless people available in the municipality, both municipally owned units and units run by the NGOs. Information about the number of beds/rooms available is included. The information on the site is available to the general public, though the database was created as a tool for social workers employed by the municipality trying to find temporary accommodation for their homeless clients. The database also depends on the personnel at the many different special housing units to continually (every day or maybe several times a day if needed) update the information about the number of beds/rooms/apartments available.

This system also includes a tool for mapping the need for housing among people with social or medical problems (called Boinvent 1), including homeless people who are temporarily staying in low budget hotels and hostels that are not run by the municipality or NGOs. The website also has a tool for mapping the need for housing among people with physical problems (called Boinvent 2). These two sets of data are not publicly available, although some results are available on the website. These tools include only homeless people who have other problems – apart from their lack of housing – ie those with social, medical and/or physical needs which entitle them to assistance from the local social authorities.

UK

A variety of national, regional and local databases and directories of services for homeless people exist in the UK. Recent major changes in legislation and funding arrangements for supported accommodation services for homeless and other groups of people have had a major impact on homelessness strategy and the provision of services. In turn, these have resulted in improved data about homelessness services.

The Homelessness Acts in 2002 placed obligations on local authorities to devise a strategy to tackle homelessness. This included reviewing the numbers of homeless people and the extent of services provided. The Acts also placed duties on local authorities to provide advice and information to all homeless people, signposting and referrals to appropriate services, which in turn entails a need for data about services.

The government's Supporting People programme brought together in 2003 a number of different funding streams for housing-related support for many client groups into a single budget managed at a local level by local authorities (see www.spkweb.org.uk for further details).

1. National Databases and Directories

Two major new online databases have recently been launched in the UK: one for housing-related support services in England, and the other for homelessness and related services across the UK. Both initiatives have been funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

Supporting People Directory of Services

Launched in 2005, this online directory (www.spdirectory.org.uk) provides information on housing-related support services across England that are funded by the government's Supporting People programme via local authorities. It is compiled by bringing together information from the 150 local authorities. Supporting People also operates in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but as yet, no overall database or directory of services is publicly available in these areas.

The Supporting People Directory of Services is run by DCLG. It aims to help people find suitable support services for individuals who need help, their relatives or friends, or agencies that work with clients who need housing-related support.

As well as homeless people, Supporting People-funded services are for many other client groups, including people with learning or physical disabilities, older people, ex-offenders, and people with alcohol, drug or mental health problems. Four main types of services are included, including hostels and supported accommodation, and "floating" support that provides home visits from a support worker. Most non-residential services (eg day centres, specialist advice services, outreach services, soup runs, etc) are not included as they are beyond the scope of the Supporting People programme.

The directory provides information about 6,000 services and it enables users to search by target group, type of support and geographical area.

In terms of coverage, most emergency hostels and supported accommodation projects for homeless people receive Supporting People funding and thus are in the directory. There are, however, a few voluntary organisations and church groups that provide night shelter accommodation which is not funded by Supporting People.

Specific types of services for homeless people included in the directory are:

- Homeless hostels, B&B or other temporary accommodation
- Supported housing (shared or self contained)
- Women's refuges
- Teenage parent accommodation
- Foyers (accommodation with training/education for young people)
- Supported lodgings (accommodation and support in someone else's home)

In addition to contact details for each service listed, the directory provides summary information, mostly from pre-set options about waiting list, size of service, referral routes, length of stay, client group and people not supported, support provided, facilities for disabled people, and optional information about distance to local shops and transport.

Data about all clients of Supporting People funded services is also collected – see Chapter 5 for further details.

Homeless UK

Also launched in 2005, Homeless UK (www.homelessuk.org) is a UK-wide online database of services for people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or have housing problems. Homeless UK provides detailed information about over 8,000 specialist services and non-specialist services that provide support across a broad range of homelessness-related issues. Sub-sets of Homeless UK data are also published in local directories (see below) and national directories of particular types of services (emergency hostels and day centres).

Homeless UK is funded by DCLG and has been developed by the NGO Resource Information Service (RIS) who specialise in researching and publishing local and national directories and databases about services for homeless people and others in need.

Whilst the Supporting People directory covers more services for client groups other than homeless people, Homeless UK includes non-residential services for homeless people that are not funded by Supporting People. It also gives more detailed information about each service than the Supporting People directory.

The main purpose of Homeless UK is to help improve referrals and access to services, but it helps provide a picture of supply of current services for planning of future services and is used for research purposes. It is mainly for agencies and advisors in contact with homeless people, although also available to members of the public. Policy makers and planners, researchers and students are also the intended audience.

Residential services covered, most of which are run by NGOs rather than local authorities, include:

- Emergency hostels (full coverage across UK of over 300 hostels)
- Longer term hostels for homeless people (currently 734 in England, research currently in progress)
- Some specialist supported accommodation (for ex-offenders, alcohol, drugs, mental health – incomplete coverage)

Privately run bed and breakfast hotels are excluded as are most women's refuges. (A separate national database and directory of refuge services for women escaping domestic violence called UK Refuges Online is run by the Women's Aid Federations and Refuge. Also developed by RIS for the domestic violence sector, this is not an open access site and only used by registered domestic violence agencies to view refuge details and see current vacancies.)

Non-residential services specifically for homeless people on Homeless UK include day centres, local authority Housing Departments, advice and practical help services. (Non-residential services for the general public and other client groups include Citizens Advice Bureaux, Jobcentres, Social Services, and key alcohol, drugs and mental health services.)

Detailed information is provided for each service in mostly free text fields, including contact details, who services are for, who can make referrals, how to contact, opening hours, and support provided. For hostels, Homeless UK also includes information such as frequency of vacancies, length of stay, facilities, catering, whether people have to share a room, and move-on accommodation and policies

on issues like whether visitors are allowed. Shorter entries for non-residential services include area served, languages spoken by staff, disabled access, public transport and type of organisation.

Users can search Homeless UK by type of service, client group and geographical area. They can also carried out more complex accommodation searches using additional criteria.

Homeless UK data has been built up over a number of years starting with a database and directory of hostels in London, followed by hostels in other areas, a national database of emergency hostels, and data about non-residential services for homeless people.

Data about services is researched directly from providers themselves by mailing by post (and increasingly, by email) questionnaires. Telephone interviews are done with agencies that do not return questionnaires or where data is insufficiently completed. Staff then write entries about services following standard writing and coding protocols.

Information about each service is updated at least every 12 months. The database produces update forms so that details about existing entries can be sent by post or faxed to agencies.

In addition to the main Homeless UK public website, there are local customised websites for London (www.homelesslondon.org), Edinburgh (www.homelessedinburgh.org) and Dublin (see also information about Ireland). As well as website format, Homeless London is also available for homeless people and the public to use on touch screen and street kiosk facilities. A Homeless Northern Ireland (www.homelessni.org) site with full coverage of homelessness services will be launched in autumn 2006. This is funded by the Big Lottery Fund.

Additional funding is needed to complete research of hostels in Scotland and Wales as there are currently no national databases or directories for these countries that are publicly accessible.

Homeless UK has been achieved by using custom built databases for hostels and non-residential services. Information about services from these databases is then fed to the Homeless UK website or other online system or to a book production database system using Access if producing a printed directory with a subset of the Homeless UK data. This puts the information into a standard page format, carries out page numbering, indexing and other book production systems.

In addition to the above, the umbrella bodies for homelessness services in the UK (Homeless Link, Scottish Council for Single Homeless and Council for the Homeless Northern Ireland) have membership databases but these are not fully comprehensive and are not publicly available.

2 Regional and Local Databases and Directories

North East Accommodation and Information Database

There is currently one regional database of homelessness services for England. In 2005, the 3 NGOs Centrepoint, Shelter North East Housing Aid Centre and HANE launched a database of accommodation and support services for homeless and badly housed in the North East region of England. The database is for staff working in agencies helping homeless and badly housed people.

Available free of charge on CD-ROM and launched online in 2006 (www.neaid.org.uk), the database includes a broad range of types of accommodation and non-residential services:

- Emergency hostels
- Women's refuges
- Housing associations
- Letting agents
- Private landlords
- Floating support
- Furniture and rent deposit schemes
- Advice and advocacy services

For each service, contact details and basic fields of information are given. Accommodation details, include a field with a brief description of the project (number of beds, staff cover, how referrals may be made. There are also fields for maximum and minimum age, gender, whether the scheme will accept those on welfare benefits, and costs. For non-residential services, opening times are also given.

Searching is done by selecting one of the types of service and then narrowing the search if required by selecting area, gender, age or support needs.

Local Homelessness Directories

There are various local databases/directories of homelessness services in the UK, most of which are listed on the Homeless Pages website (www.homelesspages.org.uk). In printed and/online format, they vary in their coverage and amount of detail about each service given. Some of the more substantial databases/directories are:

- RIS local homelessness directories

RIS has published directories for 14 areas, including cities (eg Birmingham and Manchester) and counties (eg North Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire). Mostly published in partnership with local authorities, these directories are for principally for advisors. The directories are researched in a similar way, follow the same coverage, and use the same data models, IT systems and quality standards as Homeless UK. Some directories are used for research purposes from time to time. Some local authorities make the directories available free of charge to ensure maximum distribution. For others, there is a charge which contributes to the budget for research, book production and printing costs.

- 1-to-1 Sheffield www.1-to-1-sheffield.org.uk/Index.htm

Published by the NGO Voluntary Action Sheffield, this website includes detailed information about a wide range of accommodation and support services, including housing associations and tenancy support. The system also allows registered agencies to shared confidential client information to enable monitoring of patterns of usage and changes in the overall homeless vulnerable population in Sheffield.

- Newcastle Homelessness Forum www.newcastle.gov.uk/nhf.nsf/a/nhf_home

Focusing mainly on accommodation, this website provides detailed information about 29 hostels and supported accommodation projects. It includes video pictures of hostel facilities and downloadable referral forms.

- Coventry City Council

This is an online directory of homelessness services produced by the City Council for the local authority area. Although the level of detail about each service is relatively basic, it does include details about and 12 hostels and supported accommodation projects and around 30 advice services and helplines. The website address is:
www.coventry.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/housing/homelessness/homelessness-directory/

In addition to these homelessness directories, there are various other non-homelessness directories in related areas. In most areas there are local directories of NGOs and voluntary groups produced by Councils for Voluntary Service. Services for homeless people may be included amongst a wide range of other services and groups.

Appendix 6.1 - Client Record Form – Supporting People

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Client Record Form 2006/07 – SUPPORTING PEOPLE

Leave blank

For HA/LA supported housing only - Owning HA/LA Name .....

HA/LA CORE Code | Management Group Code | Scheme code

PROVIDER AND SERVICE DETAILS

National Client Record Provider ID
(a 5 digit ID allocated by JCSHR)

National Provider ID
(an 8 digit ID allocated by the ODPM)

1. Who is the service provider?

Organisation Name .....

Service Name .....

SP Service ID

SP Administering Authority
(eg Buckinghamshire)

2. Type of service ✓ one only

Supported housing	1	Floating support	13
Residential care home	6	Outreach service	14
Adult placement	7	Resettlement service	15
Supported lodgings	8	*do not complete for:*	
Women's refuge	9	Very sheltered housing	2
Foyer	10	Sheltered housing with warden	3
Teenage parent accom	11	Almshouse	4
Direct access	12	Peripatetic warden	5
		Leasehold scheme	16

3. Start date of client support service (e.g. 12/04/06) — Day | Month | Year

Client/Tenant code

CLIENT DETAILS

✓ if Interview Refused (Q4 – 6)

4. CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS. Enter age, sex, economic status of the client. Enter details of other members of the household who receive services under the same support plan.

	Age	Sex M/F	Relationship to Client	Economic status
Client				
Person 2				
Person 3				
Person 4				
Person 5				
Person 6				

Relationship to Client P=Partner C=Child X=Other

Economic status

Full-time work (24 hours or more per week)	1
Part-time work (less than 24 hours per week)	2
Govt training/New Deal	3
Job seeker	4
Retired	5
Not seeking work	6
Full-time student	7
Unable to work because of long term sickness or disability	8
Child under 16	9
Other adult	0

5. National Insurance Number of Client

Client's National Insurance number (e.g. AB 12 34 56 C)

Client does not know ☐

Client refuses ☐

6. Ethnic origin of client as defined by client ✓ one only

a. White	British 1	Irish 2	Other 3		
b. Mixed	White & Black Caribbean 4	White & Black African 5	White & Asian 6	Other 7	
c. Asian or Asian British	Indian 8	Pakistani 9	Bangladeshi 10	Other 11	
d. Black or Black British	Caribbean 12	African 13	Other 14		
e. Chinese or other ethnic group	Chinese 15	Other ethnic group 16			
f. Refused	17				

7. Client group by which the client is defined

✓ one only (Primary) ✓ not more than three (Secondary)

Primary		Secondary	
Older people with support needs	1	Older people with support needs	1
Older people mental health	2	Older people mental health	2
Frail elderly	3	Frail elderly	3
Mental health problems	4	Mental health problems	4
Learning disabilities	5	Learning disabilities	5
Physical or sensory disability	6	Physical or sensory disability	6
Single homeless with support needs	7	Single homeless with support needs	7
Alcohol problems	8	Alcohol problems	8
Drug problems	9	Drug problems	9
Offenders or at risk of offending	10	Offenders or at risk of offending	10
Mentally disordered offenders	11	Mentally disordered offenders	11
Young people at risk	12	Young people at risk	12
Young people leaving care	13	Young people leaving care	13
Women at risk of domestic violence	14	Women at risk of domestic violence	14
People with HIV/AIDS	15	People with HIV/AIDS	15
Homeless families with support needs	16	Homeless families with support needs	16
Refugees	17	Refugees	17
Teenage parents	18	Teenage parents	18
Rough sleeper	19	Rough sleeper	19
Traveller	20	Traveller	20
Generic	21	Complex needs	21

8a. Has the client been accepted as requiring services under the following statutory frameworks (respond to each question)

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Care Management (Social Services)	1	2	3
Care Programme Approach (CPA)	1	2	3
Probation service or Youth Offending Teams	1	2	3
Drug Interventions Programme (DIP)	1	2	3
Statutorily homeless & owed a main homelessness duty	1	2	3

8b. Has the client been assessed as a higher risk under the following (please respond to each question)

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Care Programme Approach (enhanced)	1	2	3
Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements	1	2	3

8c. Is the client currently subject to requirements under an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO)?

Yes	No	Don't Know
1	2	3

9. Source of referral ✓ one only

Nominated by local housing auth	1	Nominated under MoveUK	8
LA housing department (referral)	2	Client applied for internal transfer	9
Social services	3	Moving from another RSL	10
Probation service/prison	4	Health service/GP	11
Community Mental Health Team	5	Youth Offending Team	12
Voluntary agency	6	Police	13
Self referral/Direct application	7	Other	14

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CONTINUES OVERLEAF – PLEASE TURN OVER

10. Type of referral (see below for definitions) ✓ one only

a. Host ☐ 1 Host

b. Non-Host ☐ 2 Multi-lateral ☐ 3 Spot Purchase ☐ 4 Structured ☐ 5 Open Access

11a. Type of accommodation occupied by the client immediately prior to receiving the support service? ✓ one only

Local authority general needs tenancy	1	Hospital	10
Housing association general needs tenancy	2	Prison	11
		Approved probation hostel	12
Private sector tenancy	3	Children's home/foster care	13
Tied housing or rented with job	4	Bed and breakfast	14
Owner occupation	5	Short life housing	15
Supported housing	6	Living with family	16
Direct access hostel	7	Living with friends	17
Women's refuge	21	Mobile Home/Caravan	23
Foyer	22	Any other temp accom	18
Housing for older people	8	Rough sleeping	19
Residential care home	9	Other	20

11b. Please ✓ if the client continues to live in this accommodation ☐

11c. Location of accommodation specified in Q11a

Name of local housing authority	ONS LA code	Post code

Refer to Appendix 3 of the Guidance manual for ONS LA codes
Only complete the post code where accommodation was not temporary

If postcode not known or accommodation was temporary, please tick. ☐

Host Referrals ONLY, Answer Q12

(Non-host referrals go to Q13)

12a. How long has the client been living in the Administering Authority area where the service is provided?

☐ years ☐ months ☐ days

12b. If the client has been living in that area for less than 6 months, where did they live before?

Name of local housing authority	ONS LA code

Refer to Appendix 3 of the Guidance manual for ONS LA codes

And how long did the client live there?

☐ years ☐ months ☐ days

Non-host Referrals ONLY, Answer Q13

13. How long did the client live in the local housing authority area recorded at Q11c?

☐ years ☐ months ☐ days

Completed Forms

Answer all questions as fully as possible.

Always complete the client/tenant code on every form. This will ensure that you can identify the form from your own records if the Client Record Office needs to contact you with queries.

Returning Client Record Forms to Client Record Office

- Please send Client Record Forms for **new** clients to the Client Record Office at the end of the month in which they **begin** the support service.
- Complete a Client Record Form Batch Header (can be downloaded from www.spclientrecord.org.uk) for **each** month of record forms submitted, and provide full contact details of the most appropriate person in your organisation to respond to queries about the forms.

Q10 Type of Referral - HOST AND NON-HOST: A Quick Guide

Tick one box only

HOST

A referral to a Supporting People service is defined as **host** when the client was living in the Administering Authority area where the service is located immediately prior to receiving the service. For the purposes of the Client Record Form, "immediately prior" refers only to the night before the client started to receive the service. Please note this question is not about "local connections".

NON-HOST

A referral is defined as one of the **non-host** types when the client was living outside the Administering Authority area where the service is located immediately prior to receiving the service. You should choose the most appropriate non-host category as follows:

Multi-lateral – a referral made through a protocol between two or more Administering Authorities and where the referral comes from within this group of authorities.

Spot purchase – the new client's place in the service has been purchased by an Administering Authority other than the one in which the service is located.

Structured – a referral made by a statutory agency where the client was living in a different Administering Authority to the one in which the service is located immediately prior to receiving the service.

Open Access – a self-referral, or referral by a voluntary agency or non-statutory agency to a service located in a different Administering Authority to that in which the client was living immediately prior to receiving that service.

Please consult the Client Record Guidance Manual for further explanation and examples, or contact the Helpdesk on 01334 461765 if you are still unsure.

Appendix 7.1 Variables used in Service Provider Registers: Results of Survey of Feantsa member organisations

Variables used	Individual characteristics (age, gender, ethnic origin, marital status	Reasons for homelessness	Support needs	Support services	Other (specify)
National Methodology Centre Hungary	√	√	√	√	√ income, eligibility for benefits, on-going-procedures, social network, job carrier, housing carrier
Barka Foundation Poland	√	√	√	√	√ educational level, work qualifications
Santa Casa Misericordia do Lisboa	√	√	√	√	
Budapest Social Centre and its institutions	√	√			√
Wallich Clifford Wales	√		√	√	
Y-Foundation Finland[1]					
Arrels Fundacio Spain	√			√	√ Previous situations
Pomeranian Forum Poland	√	√	√	√	

[1] See specific definition of variables in the national report on homelessness in Finland

Shelter Cymru Wales[2]	√	√		√	√
Homeless Link UK (umbrella organisation)[3]					√ see footnote Exercise is currently being undertaken for the first time – will soon be annual
Jesuit Refugee Service - Portugal[4]		Variables present in other questionnaire (Social Aid Office)			√
S.A.D. Czech Republic	√	√	√	√	√ each client has his/her own card in the computer – also space for notes of the social worker
Kofoedsskolle - Denmark	√			√	√ Education, spell of unemployment, social support
St Mungos[5]	√	√	√	√	√ educational history, benefits clients are on, disabled, history of offending
	√	√	√		

[2] See statistic sheet attached to questionnaire – includes all but "support needs" which will soon be included

[3] Proportion of male to female clients, age of clients, ethnic background and whether they are refugees or asylum seekers and we also ask if they provide any specialist services to particular groups

[4] Contact (when there is one); Date of entry into Portugal; Legal status; Type of legal document; Family support in Portugal and in the country of origin; Knowledge of Portuguese language; Education; Professional training; Job experience in Portugal and in the country of origin; Employment, and others

[5] depends of type of project – but all variables above are used

Zebra Foundation Russia					
Armada Spasy Czech Republic[6]	√	√	√	√	√
Association Rauxa Spain	√	√all men are alcoholic. This is their reason for being homeless (!)			
Latvian Network of homeless organisations	√	√	√	√	
Santa casa de misericordia do Porto	√	√	√	√	√
Caritas Lithuania			√	√	
Obcianske zdruzenie Pokoj a Dobro	√				
Simon Communities[7]	√	√	√	√	
The Connection at St Martins	√	√	√		
	√ gender, age	√ reasons for first visit			√ Housing conditions

[6] The database can filter a search to include age, gender, ethnic origin, marital status, education, reason for coming to the hostel, reason for leaving, support service received, specific health problem, financial contributions (accommodation charges and savings). The search can also include the place of permanent address – information used when seeking funding from regional and local authorities.

[7] See annex of Simon Communities questionnaire with variables used

VVY - Finland					(where a person lives)
Scottish Council of Social Housing	√ covered by Rough Sleepers Initiative stats and official stats	√ covered by Rough Sleepers Initiative stats and official stats		√ covered by RSI stats	
Swedish Homeless Network[8]	√	√	√	√	
Carrefour - Switzerland			√		Ad hoc basis according to the needs of the organisation
Tallnna Hoolekande Keskus	√	√	√	√	
Missionen Blandt Hjemlose – Denmark	√	√			
FNARS – France (example of CHRS[9])	√ age, sex, marital status, nationality, **not** ethnic origin	√	√	√	√ [10]

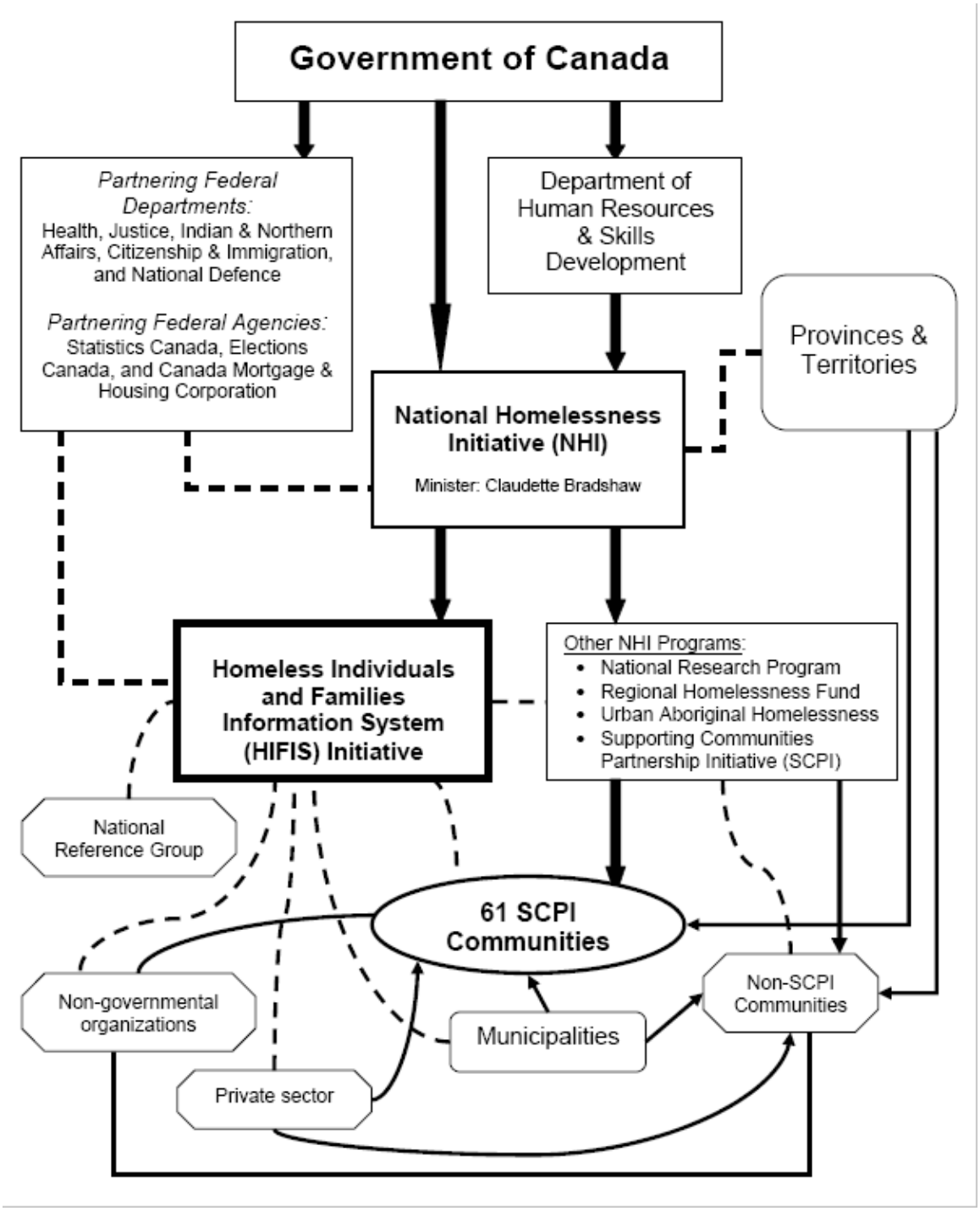
[8] These variables will be used in the data collection which they are currently setting up

[9] Centre d'Hébergement et de Réinsertion Sociale

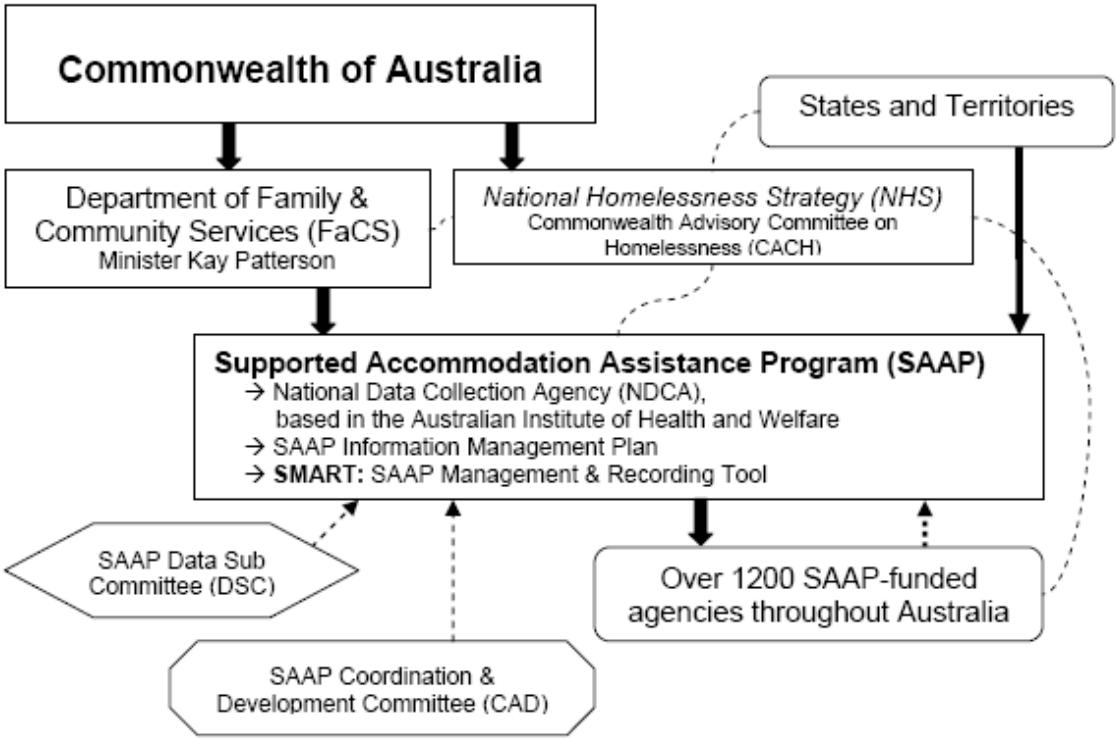
[10] Professional background/ administrative situation/ local authority, county, region, country of origin/identity papers/social protection/housing situation before entering service/other social services concerned/previous address/place for historique
Other socio-professional records/ institutional, family, educational background/ disability/health background/list of stays in services

Appendix 9.1
Management Structures Employed in Homeless Monitoring Information Systems in Canada, Australia and the USA

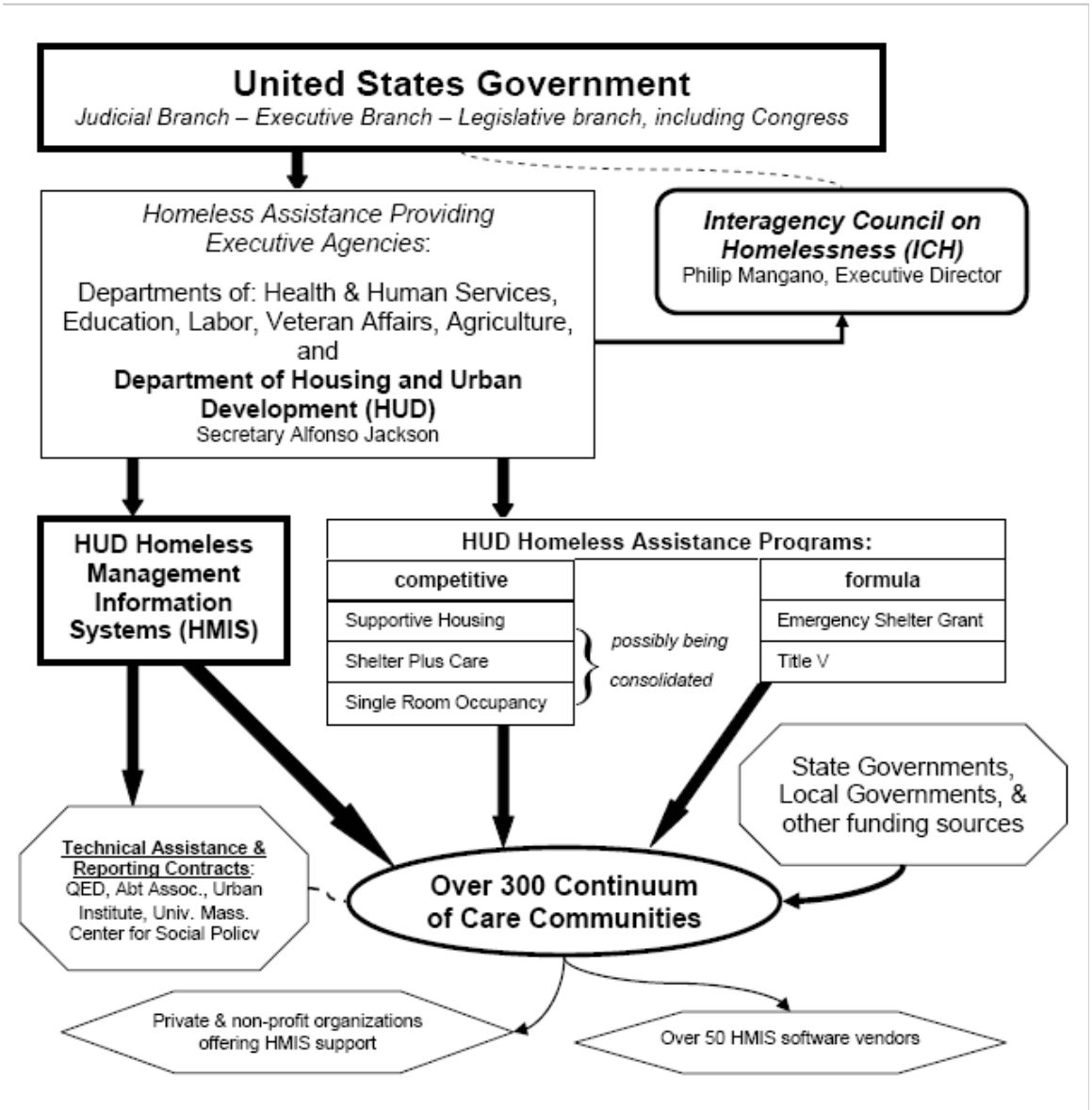
(Source: National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) , website http://www.homelessness.gc.ca)



Schematic representation of HIFIS Initiative partnerships and relational structures. Dashed lines indicate information channels, while solid lines indicate both information and funding channels.



The organizational position of the Commonwealth of Australia's Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) and its data-related activities. Dashed lines indicate information channels, while solid lines indicate both information and funding channels.



The organizational position of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and its Continuum of Care data-related activities. Dashed lines indicate information channels, while solid lines indicate both information and funding channels.