

Report 2020

# Homelessness in Finland 2019

17.2.2020

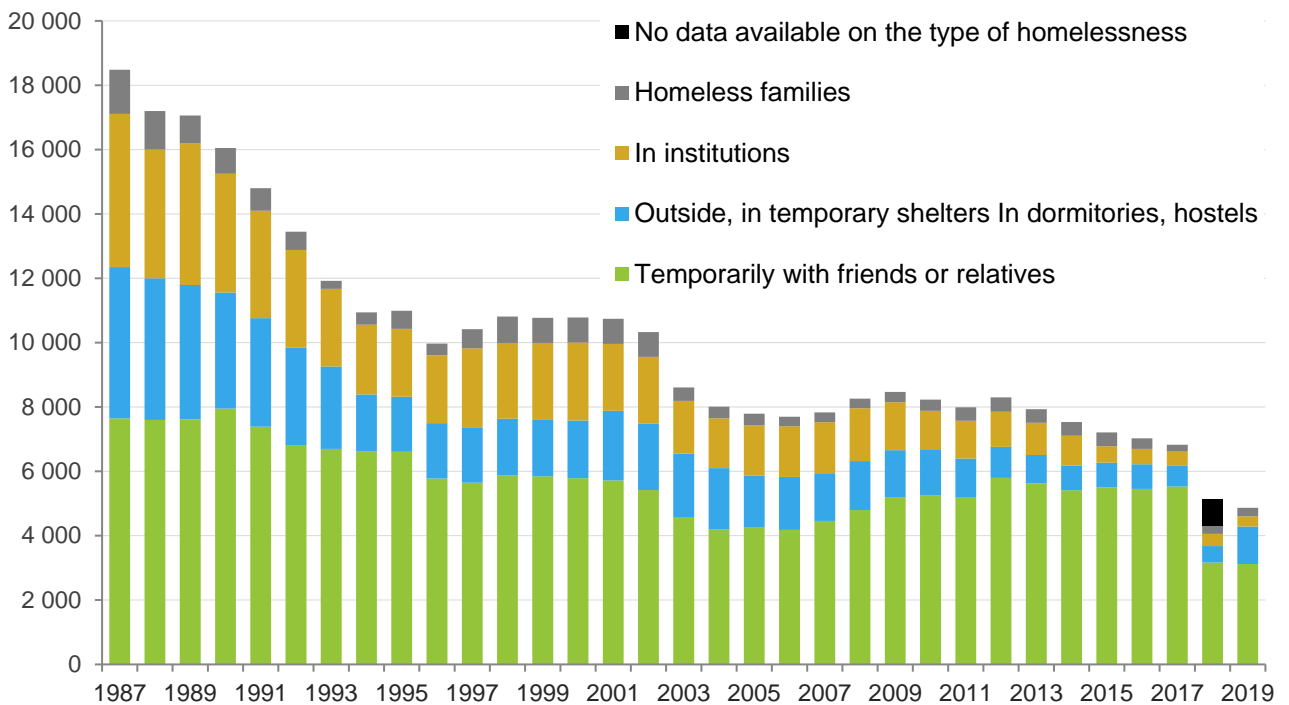


Figure 1. Homelessness in Finland 1987-2019.

## Contents

1	Homelessness in Finland continues to decrease .....	3
1.1	Homelessness is concentrated in large cities .....	3
1.2	Types of homelessness by group .....	4
1.3	The proportion of homeless women is increasing .....	4
2	Definitions of homelessness.....	6
	<b>Appendix 1. Homelessness by municipality in 2019 .....</b>	<b>8</b>

### Inquiries:

Hannu Ahola,  
Housing Market Specialist  
[firstname.lastname@ara.fi](mailto:firstname.lastname@ara.fi)

## ARA'S REPORT 2020: HOMELESSNESS IN FINLAND 2019

The report contains key statistics on homelessness in Finland in 2019. The information is based on ARA's homelessness survey, which was answered by 229 of the 295 municipalities in mainland Finland. The report examines the types of homelessness and groups of homeless people separately.

Appendix 1 to the report includes municipal homelessness statistics from 2019.

**The Housing Finance and Development Centre of  
Finland (ARA)**

Dnro: ARA-08.02.00-2020-3

# 1 HOMELESSNESS IN FINLAND CONTINUES TO DECREASE

At the end of 2019, there were 4,600 homeless living alone in Finland, which is 280 less than in 2018. Homelessness decreased for the seventh consecutive year (Table 1 and Figure 2).

For the first time, the numbers of young people under 25 years of age and the long-term homeless fell to less than 1,000. In 2010, there were still over 3,000 long-term homeless people (Figure 3). There were 264 homeless families and couples.

## 1.1 Homelessness is concentrated in large cities

Table 1. Homelessness in large cities in 2019

	Number of homeless people (15/11/2019)				Change in the period 2018-2019 (no. of people)			
	<i>Living alone</i>			Homeless families*	<i>Living alone</i>			Homeless families*
Total number of homeless people	Long-term homeless	Under 25 years of age	Total number of homeless people		Long-term homeless	Under 25 years of age		
Helsinki	1678	325	265	130	-140	-156	-44	-4
Espoo	457	169	86	54	-90	11	-41	15
Vantaa	272	14	28	8	44	-18	-4	-8
Turku	433	20	96	24	-42	-3	-30	13
Tampere	323	29	72	8	93	-34	43	-4
Jyväskylä	156	46	37	1	-46	7	-35	0
Oulu	127	42	35	3	35	20	14	3
Kuopio	124	72	28	1	0	8	-3	0
Lahti	16	0	2	0	4	-7	1	-2
Pori	55	13	16	0	-27	-9	7	0
Joensuu	51	10	22	1	-5	-6	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,692</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>-174</b>	<b>-187</b>	<b>-89</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Finland (total)</b>	<b>4,600</b>	<b>961</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>-282</b>	<b>-200</b>	<b>-151</b>	<b>0</b>

\*) incl. families with minors and couples without children.

Compared to 2018, homelessness decreased most in Helsinki, Turku and Jyväskylä. In Vantaa and Tampere, the homelessness of people living alone increased, but long-term homelessness decreased. In Oulu, homelessness increased among people living alone, the long-term homeless and young people. Long-term homelessness also increased in Espoo, Jyväskylä and Kuopio (Table 1).

In proportion to the population, the highest proportion of homeless people is in Helsinki: There are 2.6 homeless people

per 1,000 residents. Next are Turku (2.2), Espoo (1.6) and Tampere (1.4). Helsinki accounts for 36 % of the homeless in Finland and 52% of the Helsinki metropolitan area.

There were homeless people in 97 municipalities. 229 municipalities responded to the ARA survey, with a response rate of 78%. No responses were received from municipalities with low homelessness levels in previous surveys. Information on homelessness in each of the municipalities can be found in Appendix 1.

## 1.2 Types of homelessness by group

Two-thirds (3,120 people) of the homeless living alone were temporarily staying with friends or relatives. Approximately 19% of the long-term homeless are in this group.

740 homeless lived outside, in stairwells and temporary shelters. There were 430 homeless people living in dormitories and hostels. A total of 310 homeless people stayed in institutional units. On average, one in four people in these groups is classified as long-term homeless (Table 2).

Table 2. Types of homelessness by group in 2019.

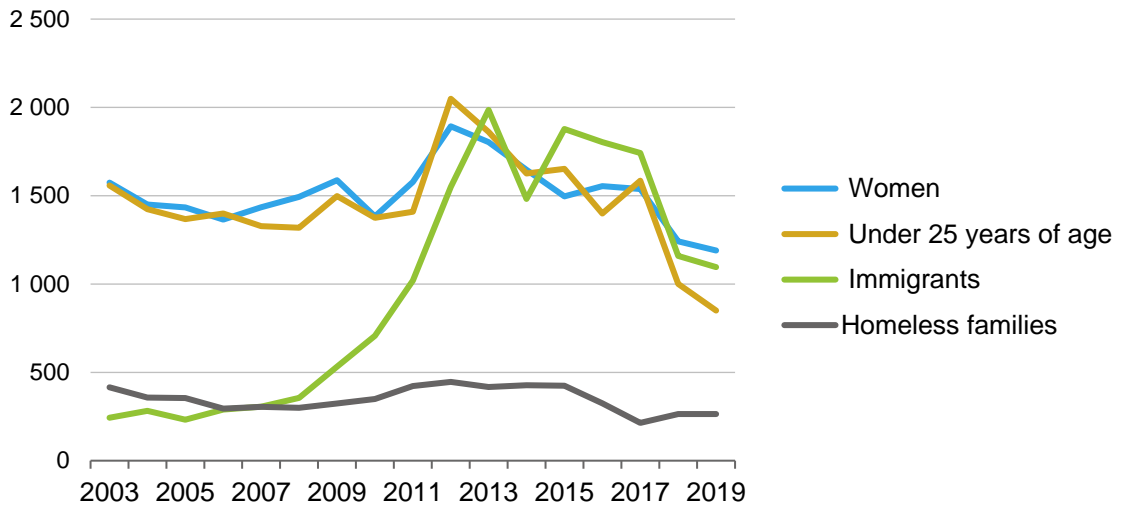
Types of homelessness by group	Living alone	Share of homeless	Long-term homeless	Share of homeless*
Temporarily with friends or relatives	3,120	68 %	584	19 %
Outside, in stairwells, in temporary shelters, etc.	739	16 %	177	24 %
In dormitories or hostels	429	9 %	120	28 %
Institutional units	312	7 %	80	26 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,600</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>961</b>	<b>21 %</b>
Homeless women	1,190	26 %	215	18 %
Young people (under 25 years)	850	18 %	111	13 %
Immigrants	1,096	24 %	172	16 %

\*) Percentage of long-term homeless people in this group

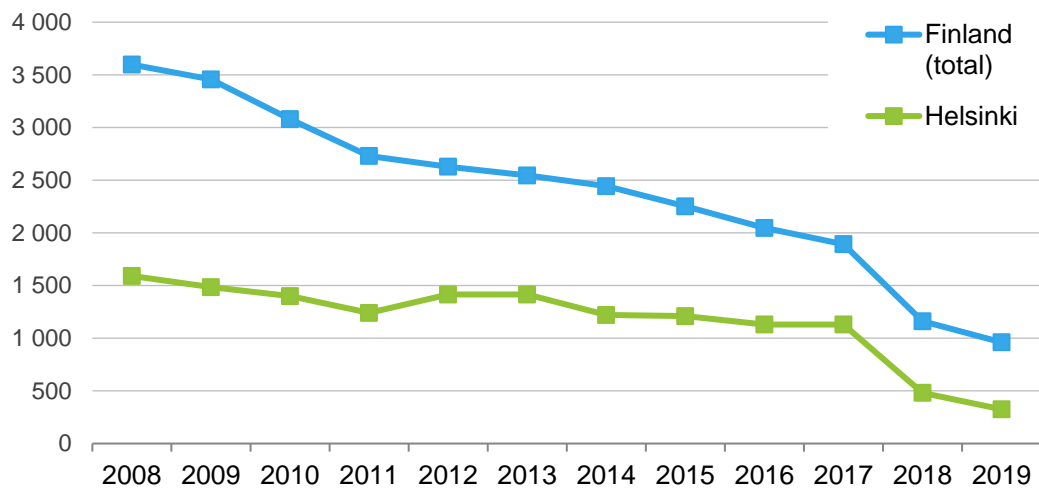
## 1.3 The proportion of homeless women is increasing

There were 1,190 homeless women, which is 50 fewer than in 2018. Although the number of homeless women has decreased in recent years, the proportion of homeless women has increased from 17% in the 2000s to over 26% in 2019.

1,100 homeless people came from an immigrant background. That is 60 people less than the previous year. About a quarter of homeless living alone and homeless families were from an immigrant background. In reality, the figures are likely to be somewhat higher, since not all municipalities distinguish homeless people from an immigrant background from other homeless people.



**Figure 2.** Homelessness by group in 2003-2019.



**Figure 3.** Long-term homelessness in Finland 2008–2019.

## 2 DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS

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

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

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

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

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

The category **in welfare home-type housing units, rehabilitation units, hospitals or other institutions due to the lack of own home** comprises people who reside in, for example, substance treatment service's rehabilitative units, various institutional treatment units, sheltered homes etc. This list does not include separate dwellings that are covered by housing services. A person who temporarily lives in this kind of apartment is not considered homeless.

In welfare home units, individuals *are not considered homeless* if they

- are there permanently for treatment purposes and are not seeking other housing solutions, or
- have signed a rental agreement with the welfare home or other type of institutional housing unit in which they reside.

Individuals in welfare home units are *considered to be homeless* if they have a rental housing application which is currently active.

The category **temporarily with friends or relatives due to the lack of own home** is for those individuals who, according to assessments or municipal data, are living temporarily at, or moving between, the homes of relatives and

acquaintances due to not having their own home. The category does not include young people who live with their parents.

- It is expected that the category **temporarily with friends or relatives** includes the largest number of people whose housing can be arranged through the general distribution of housing from a standard rental housing stock.
- In the **temporarily with friends or relatives category**, *long-term homelessness should primarily be based on social service customership*, whereby the need for services can determine whether the long-term homelessness criteria are met.
- Another 'strong indication' of long-term homelessness can also be deduced from examining the individual's housing and homelessness record over time.
- Service providers' customer data can also provide information about long-term homeless people who receive a pension and therefore do not use the city's social welfare office. These may also include young people with substance abuse and mental health problems.

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

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

## APPENDIX 1. HOMELESSNESS BY MUNICIPALITY IN 2019

Municipality	Living alone	Long-term homeless	Women	Young people	Immigrants	Families	Families with children	Couples	Families and couples total
Helsinki	1,678	325	559	265	602	70	141	60	130
Espoo	457	169	102	86	145	48	83	6	54
Turku	433	20	91	96	98	11	14	13	24
Tampere	323	29	76	72	48	7	9	1	8
Vantaa	272	14	106	28	107	3	0	5	8
Jyväskylä	156	46	34	37	17	1	4	0	1
Oulu	127	42	15	35	8	1	7	2	3
Kuopio	124	72	23	28	3	0	0	1	1
Kerava	71	0	14	9	6	0	0	0	0
Raisio	61	0	10	6	4	0	0	0	0
Pori	55	13	13	16	5	0	0	0	0
Joensuu	51	10	13	22	4	0	0	1	1
Lohja	49	41	5	17	1	0	0	0	0
Järvenpää	47	17	8	9	2	1	3	1	2
Hyvinkää	45	11	7	2	4	0	0	0	0
Nurmijärvi	45	0	15	18	0	6	0	0	6
Mikkeli	44	3	11	8	0	2	0	0	2
Porvoo	34	29	3	5	0	0	0	2	2
Salo	32	15	8	4	10	0	0	0	0
Vaasa	31	8	6	4	11	3	3	1	4
Riihimäki	26	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	0
Lappeenranta	25	16	3	8	0	0	0	0	0
Kaarina	18	3	3	3	0	1	1	1	2
Raahe	18	7	2	5	0	0	0	1	1
Uusikaupunki	18	2	1	3	12	0	0	0	0
Rauma	17	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Kotka	16	2	1	2	0	0	0	3	3
Lahti	16	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	0
Seinäjoki	16	6	4	3	1	0	0	0	0
Kirkkonummi	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vihti	12	9	2	4	0	1	1	0	1
Kouvola	11	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Hämeenlinna	10	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
Savonlinna	10	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Taivassalo	10	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	1
Tornio	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tuusula	10	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kokkola	9	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Lempäälä	9	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Mäntsälä	9	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Siilinjärvi	9	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Pudasjärvi	8	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Saarijärvi	8	7	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Valkeakoski	8	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	0
Kajaani	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Kurikka	7	5	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Naantali	7	3	1	3	0	0	0	0	0
Hollola	6	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0



Municipality	Living alone	Long-term homeless	Women	Young people	Immigrants	Families	Families with children	Couples	Families and couples total
Imatra	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Laukaa	6	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0
Heinola	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Iisalmi	5	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Inari	5	0	2	0	0	2	3	1	3
Karkkila	5	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ylöjärvi	5	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Eura	4	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Kangasniemi	4	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1
Kauniainen	4	0	1	0	3	0	0	2	2
Kemi	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Muurame	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eurajoki	3	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Kankaanpää	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Konnevesi	3	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Kontiolahti	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Orivesi	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pieksämäki	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sastamala	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Äänekoski	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Hausjärvi	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Ii	2	1	0	0	0	1	4	1	2
Ikaalinen	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jämsä	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Keuruu	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Kitee	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Muhos	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Nakkila	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Närpes	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Raasepori	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1
Rovaniemi	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tyrnävä	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hyrynsalmi	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Juuka	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kaavi	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Liminka	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Liperi	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Mynämäki	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nivala	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Polvijärvi	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rääkkylä	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Somero	1	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Sotkamo	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Suomussalmi	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tohmajärvi	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ulvila	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Utajärvi	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Finland (total)</b>	<b>4,600</b>	<b>961</b>	<b>1,190</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>1,096</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>264</b>