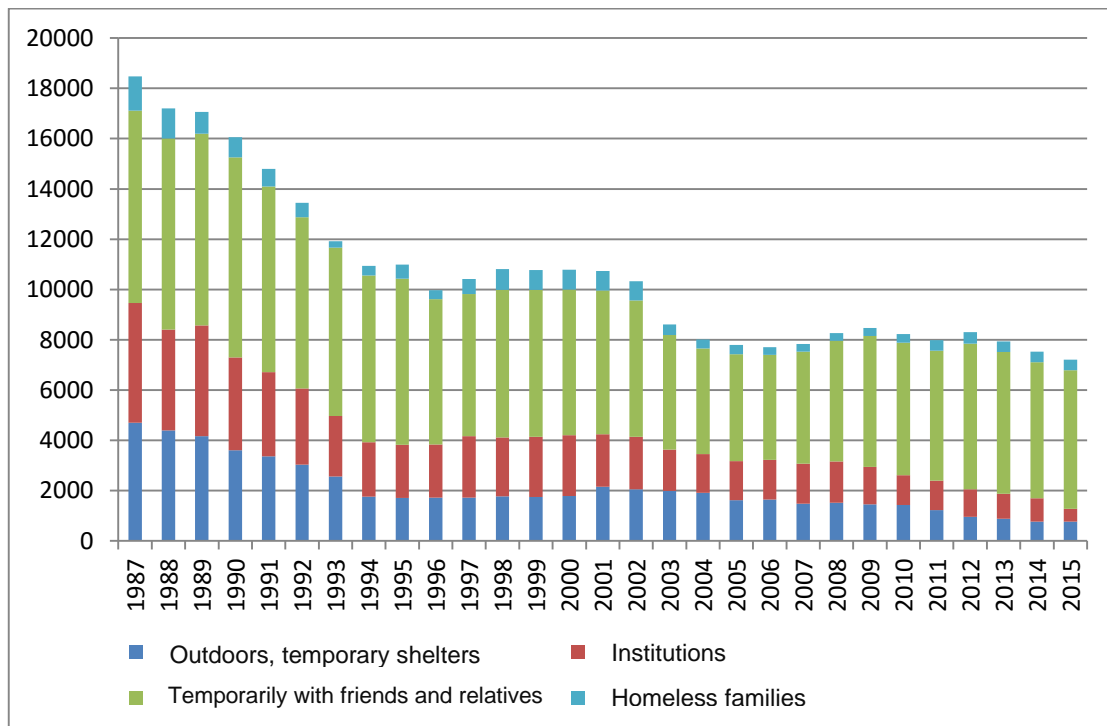


Report 2/ 2016

Homelessness in 2015

10 February 2016



Graph 1. Number of homeless 1987 - 2015

The data on homelessness is based on the housing market survey prepared by ARA — the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland, in 2015. The survey was completed by 281 cities and municipalities in mainland Finland, and its response rate was 93.4 %. The report addresses developments in homelessness by making comparisons with figures from the previous year. The cut-off point for this statistical comparison was 15 November 2015. Additionally 11 cities, which participated in the Finnish National Programmes to Reduce Long-Term Homelessness (PAAVO I and PAAVO II) were examined in more detail. Municipality-specific data on homelessness can be found in the appendices to this report.

Homelessness in Finland in 2015

According to the housing market survey, at the end of 2015 there were 6,785 homeless persons, who lived alone, and 424 homeless families. There were a total of 7,898 homeless individuals. The number of homeless, who lived alone, decreased from the previous year by 322 individuals and the number of long-term homeless by 191 individuals. The number of homeless families remained approximately the same. (Table 1.)

In 2015, there were homeless people in 114 municipalities in mainland Finland. In relation to the municipalities' populations, Uusimaa had the largest number of homeless residents. In Helsinki, there were 6.9 homeless people per one thousand inhabitants, in Espoo the number was 2.5 and in Vantaa 2.4. There were also a large number of homeless people in relation to the overall populations in Inkoo (4.0), Riihimäki (2.1), Turku (1.8), and Kotka (1.8).

Homelessness grew in Helsinki and Turku

In 2015, the number of homeless decreased in many of Finland's largest cities both among those who lived alone and among young people. However, in Helsinki, homelessness rose among those who lived alone by 50 persons and among young people under the age of 25 by 120 persons. (Table 1.)¹

Table 1. Number of homeless people by group.

According to the City of Helsinki, the growth in homelessness is due to a migration into Helsinki, which has resulted in a more stringent situation on the housing market, *"The situation has grown more difficult especially for people who live alone, as the rents for small residences have continues to rise and thus the rents are too high for those who need housing. Homelessness among immigrants has also risen, and their status on the housing market is challenging. The share of homeless immigrants will rise in Helsinki over the coming year (2016), as asylum-seekers are granted residence permits, and they move to Helsinki in search of work and to be near their friends and acquaintances. It has become increasingly difficult to carry out the Kitka homelessness evaluation in Helsinki, as these days not all groups seek help from social services or apply for rental housing owned by the city. This means that they are not accounted for in any official registries or listings. In Helsinki, homelessness is not dominated by long-term homelessness. The majority of Helsinki's homeless live for varied periods of time with relatives or friends. Taking into account eh aforementioned aspects, assessment of homelessness in Helsinki has become more difficult."*

All in all, figures on homelessness emphasise the importance of the Greater Helsinki Region as two thirds of Finland's homeless are residents of Helsinki, Espoo or Vantaa. The number of homeless people, who live alone, and especially the number of young homeless people also grew substantially in Turku. According to the city, the rise can be explained by a change is the way statistics are kept.

¹ In 2015, enquiries were not made on prisoners freed from incarceration because of problems in access this information. The numbers from this group are divided among the other categories, so the change of statistical method should not influence the overall number.

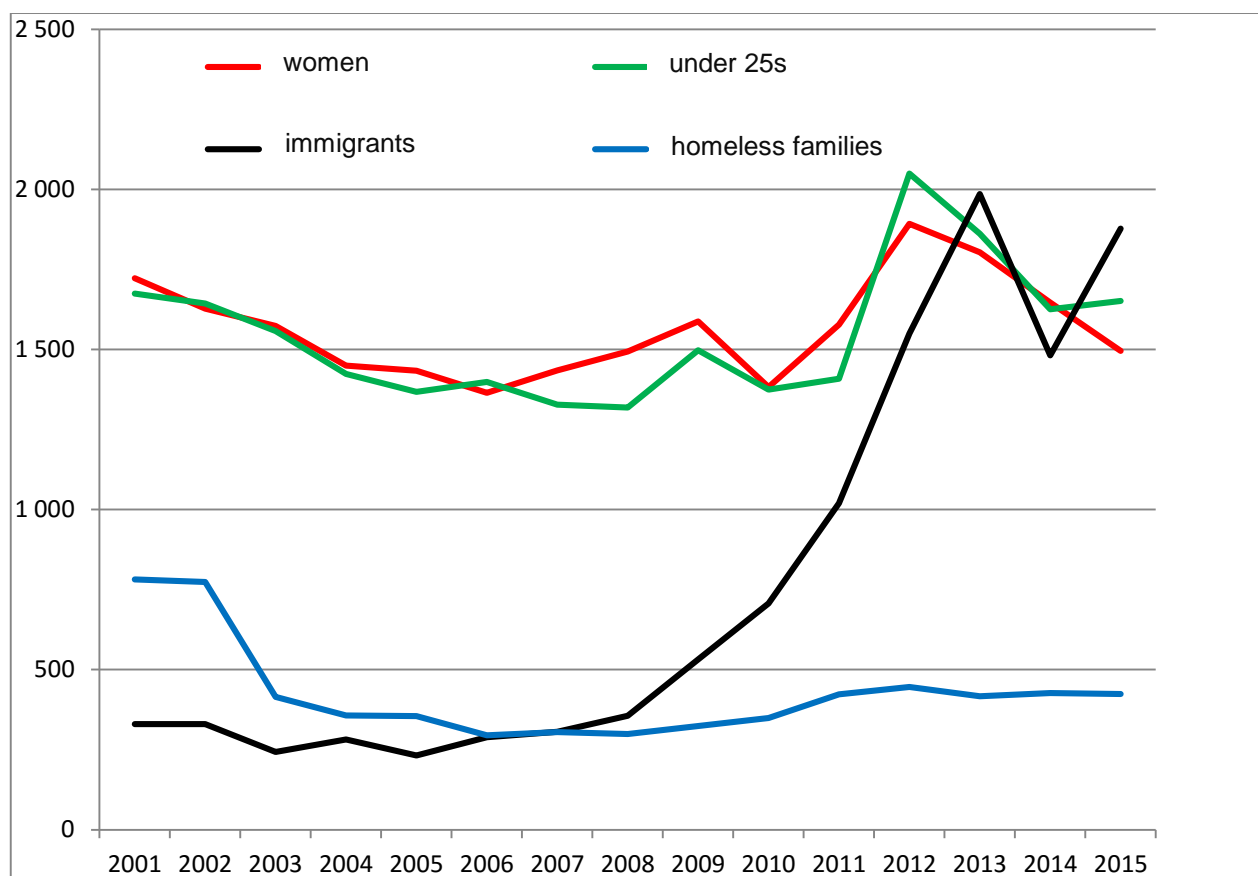
Entire country	2015		Change from the previous year (number of people)	
	Homeless people, who live alone	Share of these people who are long-term homeless	Homeless people, who live alone	Share of these people who are long-term homeless
Outdoors, stairwells, emergency shelters, etc.	411	197	49	21
Shelters, accommodation establishment	355	162	-47	-13
Different types of institutions	516	239	-258	-234
Prisoners released from incarceration	-	-	-	-
Temporarily living with relatives etc.	5,5,03	1,654	89	104
Entire country, TOTAL	6,785	2,252	-322	-191
Homeless women	1,496	422	-151	-36
Young people under the age of 25	1,652	382	26	-27
Immigrants	1,878	617	396	113
Homeless families	424		-3	
Number of children in these families	437		-30	
Immigrant families	225		-1	
Number of children in immigrant families	278		-45	

Homelessness among immigrants on the rise

The largest group of homeless people consists of those *temporarily living with friends or family*. This group also makes up a larger share of homeless people than it did the previous year. In 2015, 81% of homeless people who lived alone and 73 % of long-term homeless people belonged in this group. However, the share of people who lived outdoors, in stairwells, in emergency shelters or similar grew the most from the previous year (14%) (Table 1.).

In 2015, nearly one fourth of homeless people, who lived alone, were under the age of 25. Women accounted for one fifth of all homeless persons. In comparison to 2014, the share of under 25s now rose by two per cent and the share of women fell by approximately 9%. The downward trend in homelessness among women continued in 2015. (Graph 2.)

Homelessness among immigrants returned to its growth path after a brief drop in 2014. 27 per cent of homeless people, who lived alone, were immigrants, and compared to the previous year their number grew substantially by nearly 400 individuals and 27 per cent. However, the number of homeless immigrant families remained the same (Table 1.). In 2015, there were a total of 424 homeless families, which was the same as in 2014. Of these families, over half (54%) were immigrants. There were a total of 437 children in these immigrant families.



Graph 2. Homelessness by group 2001 - 2015

Long-term homelessness in 2015²

In November 2015, there were 2,252 long-term homeless individuals in the entire country. This means that long-term homelessness decreased by just under two hundred people from the previous year (8%). Their number decreased by ten in Helsinki, nine in Vantaa and by an astounding 58 persons in Espoo. In November 2015, there were 1,580 long-term homeless people living in the Greater Helsinki region's three largest municipalities. This represents 70 % of the total for the whole of Finland.

The number of long-term homeless immigrants rose substantially (22%). Now, more than one fourth of all long-term homeless people have an immigrant background. The share of women and under 25s among the long-term homeless remained at the same level as in previous years.

Long-term homelessness fell by 130 people in the municipalities that participated in the Finnish National Programmes to Reduce Long-Term Homelessness (PAAVO I and PAAVO II). The number fell in all PAAVO municipalities with the exception of Tampere and Kuopio, in both of which the number grew by nine people. The most significant relative decrease happened in Jyväskylä (35%) (Table 2.).

Table 2. Homelessness in the largest municipalities in 2015

² A person is defined as being long-term homeless, if they have continued to remain without fixed housing or have been placed under threat of an extended period without fixed housing as a result of social or health-related factors for more than one year OR they have repeatedly experienced homelessness over the course of a three-year period.

Municipality	Homeless people 15.11.2015				Change 2015-2014, (number of people)			
	Homeless people total	Long-term homeless people	Under the age of 25	Homeless families	Homeless people total	Long-term homeless people	Under the age of 25	Homeless families
Helsinki	3 550	1 210	820	280	50	-10	120	0
Espoo	546	245	136	51	-87	-58	-23	8
Vantaa	447	125	110	26	-97	-9	-25	2
Turku	330	124	75	4	96	-36	63	4
Tampere	218	55	51	10	-27	9	-15	6
Jyväskylä	115	33	40	2	-48	-18	-10	-5
Lahti	69	31	23	5	-3	-1	19	5
Kuopio	103	45	17	1	-23	9	-9	1
Joensuu	73	22	20	3	-13	-1	-2	-1
Pori**	72	42	7	1	-19	-5	-4	-1
Oulu	59	16	1	0	-24	-10	-25	-2
PAAVO in total	5 582	1 948	1300	383	-195	-130	89	17
Entire country*	6 785	2 252	1 652	424	-322	-191	45	-3

Programmes designed to reduce long-term homelessness

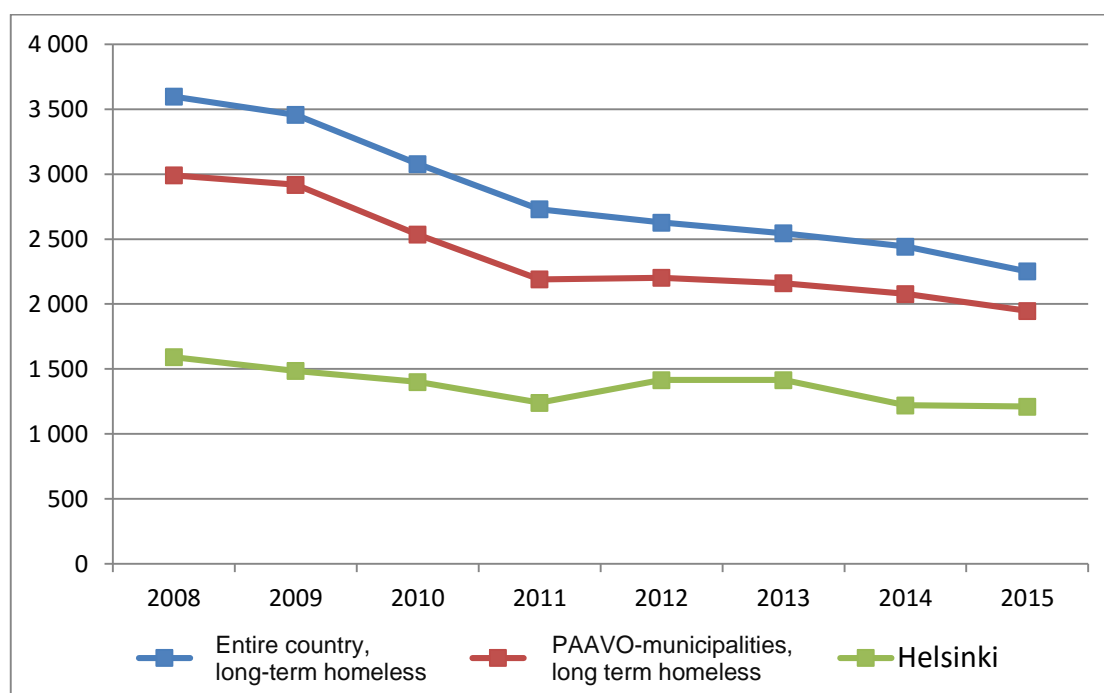
The aim of the PAAVO I programme, which ran from 2008 to 2011, was to half the number of long-term homeless people relative to the amount in housing. The programme sought to develop 1,250 new assisted living residences for the long-term homeless. The cities of **Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Tampere, Turku,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

The aim of follow-up programme PAAVO II (2012-2015) was to eliminate long-term homelessness in its entirety. The programme participants included the aforementioned cities as well as **Pori**, which joined in 2013. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Finnish Slot Machine Association and ARA were responsible for arranging the investments and support services necessary for the realisation of the programme.

Table 3. Housing funded by ARA in municipalities that signed the letter of intent 2008-2015

Municipality	Construction of new buildings	Renovation and procurement	Total
Espoo	166	125	291
Helsinki	307	433	740
Joensuu	48		48
Jyväskylä		38	38
Kuopio	144	10	154
Lahti	98		98
Oulu	24		24
Tampere	196	106	302
Turku	60		60
Vantaa	76		76
Pori	33		33
PAAVO in total	1,152	712	1,864

Table 3 shows the share of ARA funded housing projects of all housing intended for the elimination of long-term homelessness in cities that have signed the letter of intent for 2008-2015. In 2008-2015, the cities that signed the letter of intent received approximately³ EUR 73.6 million in investment funding from ARA for the construction, renovation or procurement of 1,864 residences.



Graph 3. Long-term homelessness in PAAVO municipalities 2008-2015

³ This figure includes the funding that will be allocated to housing once the final funding decision has been made for the project. Financial assistance relating to other spaces in residential buildings has not been included. An estimate on the amount of funding sought has been used for projects that are in their preparatory phase.

The level of long-term homelessness has been determined on the basis of ARA's housing market surveys which have been carried out since 2008. Graphs 3 and 4 demonstrate developments in long-term homelessness across the whole of Finland and in PAAVO municipalities, respectively. The number of long-term homeless people has fallen across the whole of Finland during this programme period by nearly 1,345 individuals (37%). The decrease in the PAAVO municipalities has been 35 %. In Helsinki the number of long-term homeless decreased by 24 %, in Vantaa by 11 %, and in Espoo by 36 %. The following Paavo participants have been successful in halving their number of homeless residents: Tampere (74 %), Joensuu (74 %), Lahti (71 %), Oulu (68 %) and Pori (51 %). The only city in which long-term homelessness has risen during the PAAVO programmes is Kuopio (36 %).

Fight against homelessness to continue

The Finnish National Programmes to Reduce Long-Term Homelessness (PAAVO 2008 - 2015) have come to an end. According to an international researcher evaluation of the programme, comprehensive work to fight homelessness has produced indisputable results ([The Finnish Homelessness Strategy](#)).

Despite the success of the PAAVO programmes, the fight against homelessness must continue especially with regard to improving the early identification and prevention of homelessness. Preparatory work for the programme of measures for the prevention of homelessness (AUNE) has begun and the programme will be launched in spring 2016.

The aim of the AUNE programme will be to link work in the fight against homelessness more extensively to work for the prevention of social exclusion. In practice, this means that the aim is to better identify the paths that lead to homelessness and the cut these off at as early a point as possible and to prevent repeated homelessness.

The AUNE programme strives to e.g. develop strengthen housing advice activities, which has resulted in positive experiences in the prevention of homelessness. Each year, ARA awards housing advice subsidies, as well as coordinates and monitors advice activities. Municipalities, associations and organisations that are launching these activities can apply for the subsidy. In 2016, a EUR 0.9 million subsidy authorisation was allocated in the Government Budget for housing advice, and the funding percentage was set at a maximum of 35%. Different parties applied for EUR 1,055,000 in funding, and it was granted to 25 projects around Finland.

ARA also coordinates the Municipal Strategies to Prevent Homelessness - Early Intervention, Social Inclusion and Supported Housing project, in which Vantaa, Espoo, Tampere, Kuopio, Jyväskylä and Lahti took part. The project is related to the AUNE programme and is funded by the European Social Fund. The purpose of the project is to create urban strategies for prevention of homelessness.

Table 4. Development of long-term homelessness in PAAVO municipalities 2008-2015

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Change in %
PAAVO municipalities	2,991	2,919	2,535	2,190	2,203	2160	2,078	1,948	-35 %
Helsinki	1,591	1,485	1,400	1,240	1,415	1,415	1,220	1,210	-24 %
Vantaa	140	161	117	148	125	150	134	125	-11 %
Espoo	385	388	329	336	247	223	303	245	-36 %
Tampere	214	155	124	96	64	72	46	55	-74 %
Turku	245	219	222	151	149	149	160	124	-49 %
Kuopio	33	84	42	55	44	13	36	45	36 %
Oulu	50	46	88	31	32	27	26	16	-68 %
Jyväskylä	55	74	44	38	40	33	51	33	-40 %
Lahti	108	125	102	78	65	57	32	31	-71 %
Pori	85	70	37	43	42	32	47	42	-51 %
Joensuu	85	112	30	17	22	21	23	22	-74 %
Finland (total)	3,597	3,457	3,079	2,730	2,628	2,545	2,443	2,252	-37 %