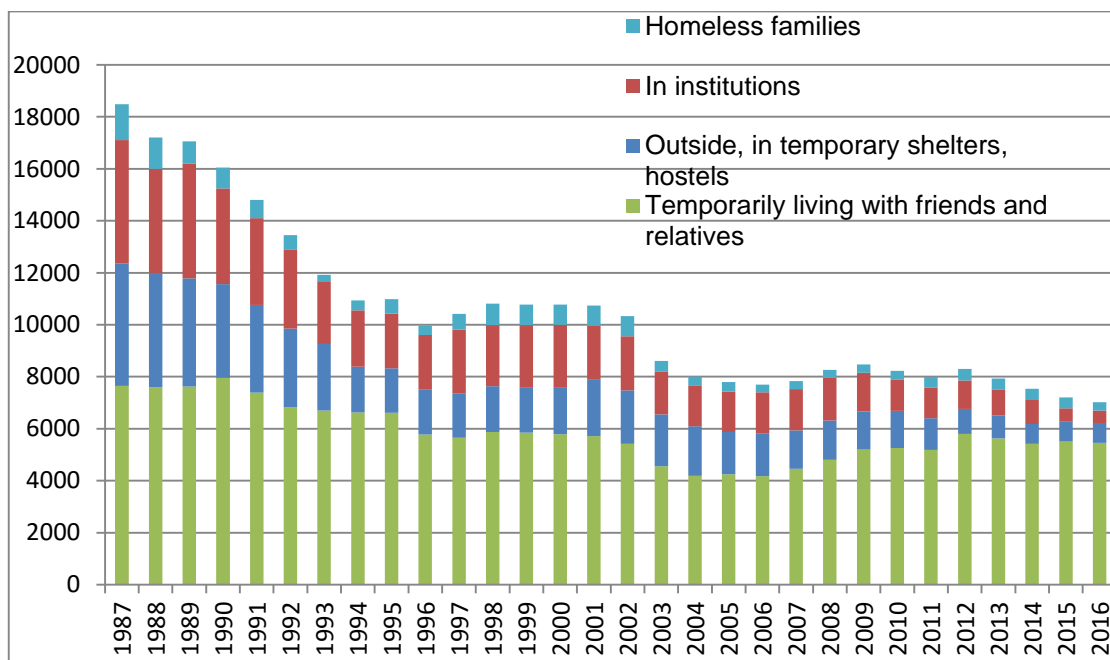


Report 1/2017

Homelessness in 2016

13/02/2017



Graph 1. Number of homeless 1987 - 2016

The data on homelessness is based on the housing market survey prepared by ARA — the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland, in 2016. The survey was completed by 278 cities and municipalities in mainland Finland, and its response rate was 93.6 %. The report addresses developments in homelessness by making comparisons with figures from the previous year. The cut-off point for this statistical comparison was 15/11/2016. Municipality-specific data on homelessness can be found in the appendices to this report.

Homelessness in Finland in 2016

At the end of 2016, there were 6,700 homeless people living alone in Finland. The number of long-term homeless people was 2,050. The number of homeless people decreased by around 100 from the previous year, while the number of long-term homeless people fell by 200. There were 325 homeless families, while there had been 420 of them a year ago. When including families, homelessness fell by 455 people during the year (Table 1 and Appendix 1).

Table 1. Homelessness in large cities in 2016

Municipality	Number of homeless people (15/11/2016)				Change in the period 2016-2015 (no. of persons)			
	Living alone	Long-term	under 25 years of age	Families	Living alone	Long-term	under 25 years of age	Families
Helsinki	3,500	1,130	700	200	-50	-80	-120	-89
Espoo	570	199	144	39	24	-46	8	-12
Vantaa	284	37	78	15	-163	-88	-32	-11
Turku	335	102	70	0	5	-22	-5	-4
Tampere	225	52	62	16	7	-3	11	6
Jyväskylä	128	49	25	4	13	16	-15	2
Kuopio	110	45	18	4	7	0	1	3
Lahti	51	22	25	1	-18	-9	2	-4
Joensuu	40	12	13	4	-33	-10	-7	1
Pori	66	38	5	1	-6	-4	-2	0
Oulu	38	18	3	1	-21	2	2	1
Total	5,347	1,704	1,143	285	-235	-244	-157	-98
Finland (total)*	6,700	2,050	1,400	325	-100	-200	-250	-100

Homelessness decreased in the Greater Helsinki Region

According a survey by ARA, there was homelessness in **114** municipalities in mainland Finland in 2016. In relation to the municipalities' populations, Uusimaa had the largest number of homeless residents. In Helsinki, there were 5.6 homeless people per 1,000 inhabitants (Appendix 1). Over half of the homeless people in Finland live in Helsinki.

In Helsinki the number of homeless people living alone fell by 50 people and the number of long-term homeless people by 80 people. There were slightly more homeless people living alone in Espoo compared to the previous year; however, the number of long-term homeless people fell by nearly 50 people. The number of homeless people decreased most in Vantaa, but the numbers are not fully comparable with the rates from 2015 due to statistical calculation differences.

Homelessness decreased in Joensuu, Lahti and Oulu. In Jyväskylä, the number of both homeless people living alone as well as long-term homeless people grew. (Table 1.) This growth was mirrored in Vantaa (+20 persons). In other large cities, there were little changes within the year.

Homelessness decreased among young people and immigrants, but increased among women

The largest group of homeless people consist of those *temporarily living with friends or family*. This group amounted to 82% of the homeless people living alone. The number of people who lived *outdoors, in stairwells, in emergency shelters or similar* was 430. Their share increased for the third year in a row. In this group, the share of long-term homeless people was the largest at 43%. The number of those living in *dormitories, accommodation facilities and different institutions* fell to below 800 persons. By contrast, nearly 3,000 homeless people lived in these forms of accommodation at the beginning of the 2000s.

Table 2. Different forms of homelessness 2010-2016.

Whole country	2016		Change year-on-year (people)	
	Single homeless	of which long-term homeless	Single homeless	of which long-term homeless
Outside, in staircases, shelters etc	425	184	14	-13
In hostels, boarding houses	331	125	-24	-37
In housing service units, hospitals or other institutions	473	184	-43	-55
Temporarily with friends or relatives	5 455	1 554	-48	-100
Whole country	6 684	2 047	-101	-205
Homeless women	1 554	426	58	31
young people under 25-year	1 399	293	-253	-87
immigrants	1 803	526	-75	-39
Homeless families	325		-99	
families with children	316		-121	
immigrant families	210		-15	
with children	193		-85	

The number of homeless young people under the age of 25 also fell by a total of 250 in the whole of Finland. Nearly half of this change is a result of the improved situation in Helsinki. Homelessness among women grew by 60 persons. Similarly, long-term homelessness increased among women while decreasing among young people.

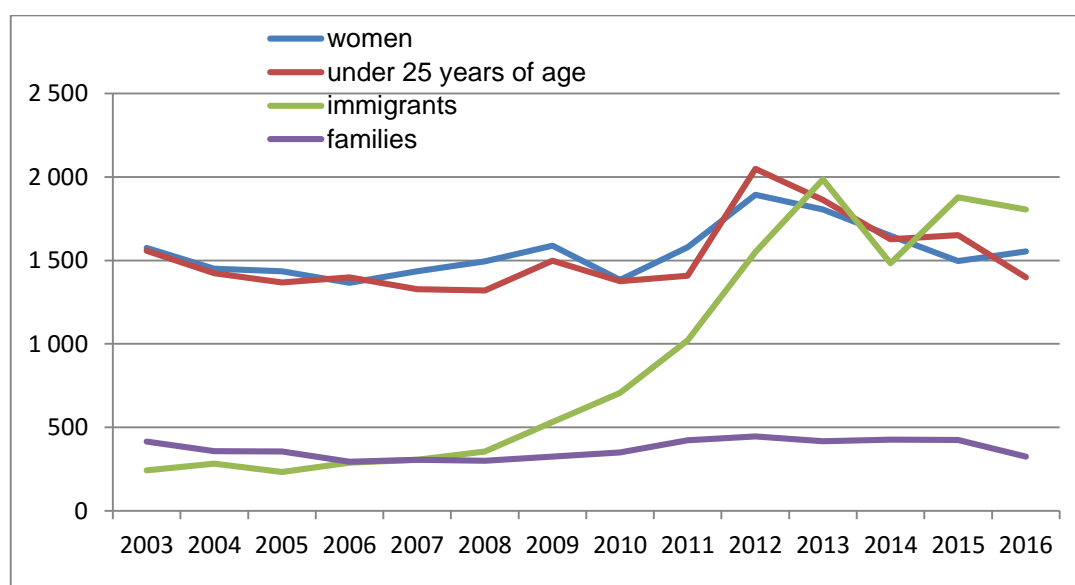
In 2016, one in four homeless people in Finland had an immigrant background. Three out of four were in Helsinki. In Helsinki, the number of homeless people with immigrant background decreased by 100 persons compared to 2015. The number was decreased by 60 persons in the entire country.

For the first time, the housing market survey of 2016 included homelessness of Finland's Roma population. According to the survey, there were 70 Roma people and 10 Roma families were homeless. However, this finding cannot be considered very reliable, as some locations, such as Helsinki, do not compile statistics on homelessness among the Roma population.

Why was there no increase in homelessness among immigrants?

There was a sharp increase in the number of asylum seekers in the autumn of 2015. At the beginning of 2016, there were 212 reception centres in Finland where 30,000 asylum-seeking immigrants were accommodated. In 2016, 7,700 people were granted asylum; in addition, residence permits were granted on the basis of family ties for 1,200 persons. While this exceeded the rates of the previous year by over 6,000 persons, it was clearly less than the estimated number of around 15,000.¹ The number was affected by the increasingly tight criteria of the Finnish Immigration Service and a notable fall in the number of asylum seekers in 2016.

Graph 2. Homelessness in different groups 2003-2016



As previously assumed, immigrants granted asylum move to Helsinki and other large cities, which increases the demand for ARA housing as well as homelessness. According to data gathered by ARA from the cities, immigrants have been moving to large cities to some extent, but the impact of this to the housing market has been fairly insignificant. The increase in non-subsidised rented dwellings in large cities during 2016 has played a part in this.

¹ PTT's regional estimate of the housing market 2016 (14 January 2016)

As is apparent in the comments by Finnish municipalities (pages 5-6), immigrants granted a residence permit mostly acquire housing from the non-subsidised market. On the other hand, it has also been observed that living together with friends and relatives might be becoming more commonplace, even though this was not apparent in the homelessness statistics. Those who have received a negative decision on their residence application but remain in the country also fall outside the statistics. Indeed, it is possible that this kind of a cross-sectional survey will fail to recognise the full picture of homelessness among immigrants, or that this will only become visible after a delay, in a few years' time.

Comments by cities and towns on the effects of immigrants on the situation on the housing market in the municipality:

Helsinki:

"There is no increase in the demand for ARA housing. We have been following the share of applicants granted a permanent or fixed-term residence permit among all applicants, and there has been no change in it during this year. In our view, the asylum seekers in Helsinki have found housing from the open market or are residing with relatives or friends (possibly as subtenants). Between 1 January and 30 November 2016, we have had a total of 1,004 asylum seekers or others under international protection, 92 of whom have moved here from another municipality (9%). Therefore, the majority of the people have moved straight from reception centres to Helsinki. In 2015, one fourth of 633 people moved from another municipality to Helsinki. There has been a slight increase in shared accommodations. During this year, 27% lived with friends and relatives, while their share was 23% in 2015."

Espoo:

"Asylum seekers granted a residence permit have not significantly increased the demand for ARA housing. Among private lessors, only Sato has appeared as a significant service provider for this customer segment. The majority of those granted a residence permit have found housing on the open market either independently or with the help of the reception centre. Among the new recipients of a residence permit, around 50% have come from the reception centres located in other municipalities, or from other municipalities. As a large city in the Greater Helsinki Region, Espoo is a clear destination for relocation. Few move away from Espoo, and those who do tend to relocate to Helsinki or Vantaa. There is a slight increase in living with friends and relatives, mostly due to the fact that the majority have already lived in private accommodation at the reception stage. After getting a residence permit, most continue living in the private accommodation. Shared housing has become slightly more common as the reception centres are currently more likely to guide their customers without families to find shared accommodation due to the poor availability of small residences."

Turku:

"The number of applicants has increased to an extent. We have also received applications from the reception centres in other municipalities. We have noticed that some live in shared accommodations and that some undocumented immigrants have remained in the residences."

Lahti:

"The effect of asylum seekers granted a residence permit on the housing market in Lahti has been less significant than expected. This is despite the fact that, nearly 400 immigrants granted a residence permit have moved to Lahti during 2016, 200 of them household units, which is a notable number on a national comparison. The majority of them, 80%, have moved here from other municipalities, as there have been few decisions made at the residence centres in Lahti thus far. Most of the immigrants, 80%, have independently sought residences at the free housing market. This development has been promoted by the good situation with rental housing in Lahti as well as related online marketing. It is not common to live with relatives and friends yet, but we expect this to become more commonplace as the number of those who receive a negative decision increases."

Jyväskylä:

"The situation of people granted a residence permit (around 200) has hardly affected the demand for ARA's rental housing, the open market is working well. There seems to be a tendency to move from Jyväskylä to the bigger cities in Southern Finland. There have been some occasional requests for moving in with friends or relatives, and there has been a slight increase in this."

Kuopio

"Asylum seekers have slightly affected the rental housing market. There is no significant increase in demand. A fairly large share of the applicants has found housing on the open market and only few reside in the flats of the city's housing company. Housing applicants have come to Kuopio from at least Siilinjärvi, where there was a large reception centre. A few people with a positive residence permit have relocated to Kuopio from other municipalities, e.g. the western coast of Finland, but this number is very small. We do not have the exact numbers of quota refugees. Kuopio receives 65 of them annually. The number of those placed in a municipality as part of the asylum procedure is currently 26, while those who have independently moved to Kuopio amount to 22. Nine dwellings are currently rented to those placed in a municipality."

Oulu:

"Providing refugees with dwellings has only slightly increased the demand for ARA housing. There is no further knowledge of the mobility of refugees from other municipalities to Oulu and vice versa. The phenomena of shared housing and living with friends and relatives have come up particularly outside the controlled housing provided by the city. As Oulu adopted a sub-leasing model, the city is more prepared to react in case the number of refugees in need of housing will grow in the future. In addition to the around 30 ARA accommodations rented for refugees, the city has also rented around 30 more privately owned flats to refugees in accordance with the model."

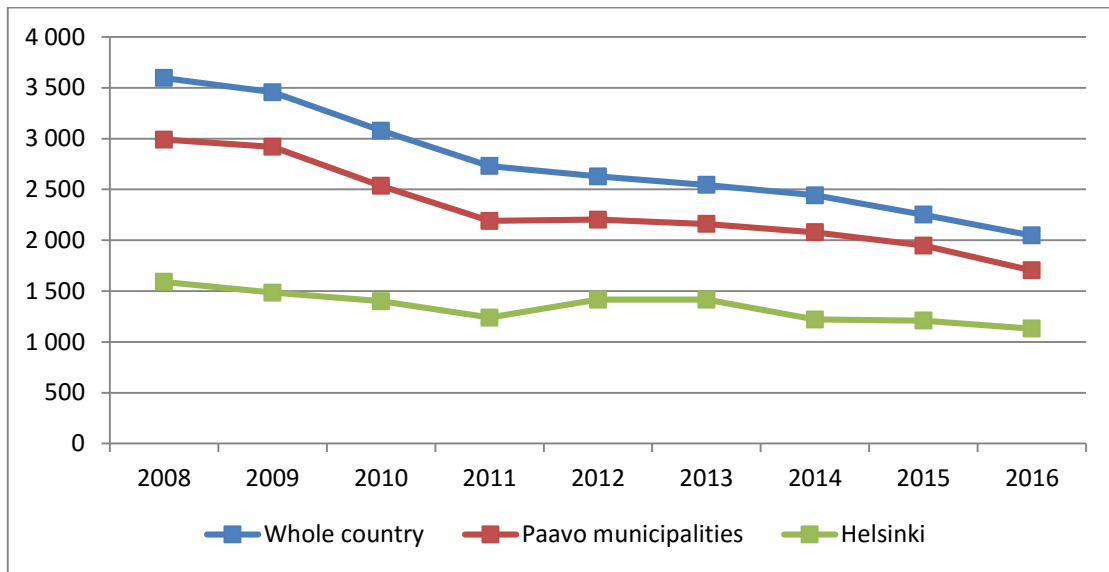
Fight against homelessness is focused on prevention

After the completion of the Finnish National Programmes to Reduce Long-Term Homelessness (PAAVO 2008–2015), the fight against homelessness has focused on early recognition and prevention of homelessness. The purpose of the **Programme of measures for the prevention of homelessness** (AUNE) is to link the work against homelessness as part of the prevention of social exclusion. Repeated homelessness can be prevented more effectively when we recognise the paths that lead to it in time.

Developing and strengthening housing advice activities is an important part of the AUNE programme. Housing advice activities have proven to be an effective means for preventing 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 2017, 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 1.2 million in funding, and it was granted to over 30 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 project involves creating urban strategies for prevention of homelessness.

Graph 3. Long-term homelessness in PAAVO municipalities 2008-2016



Appendices

Appendix 1 Municipalities and homelessness in 2016 (by region)