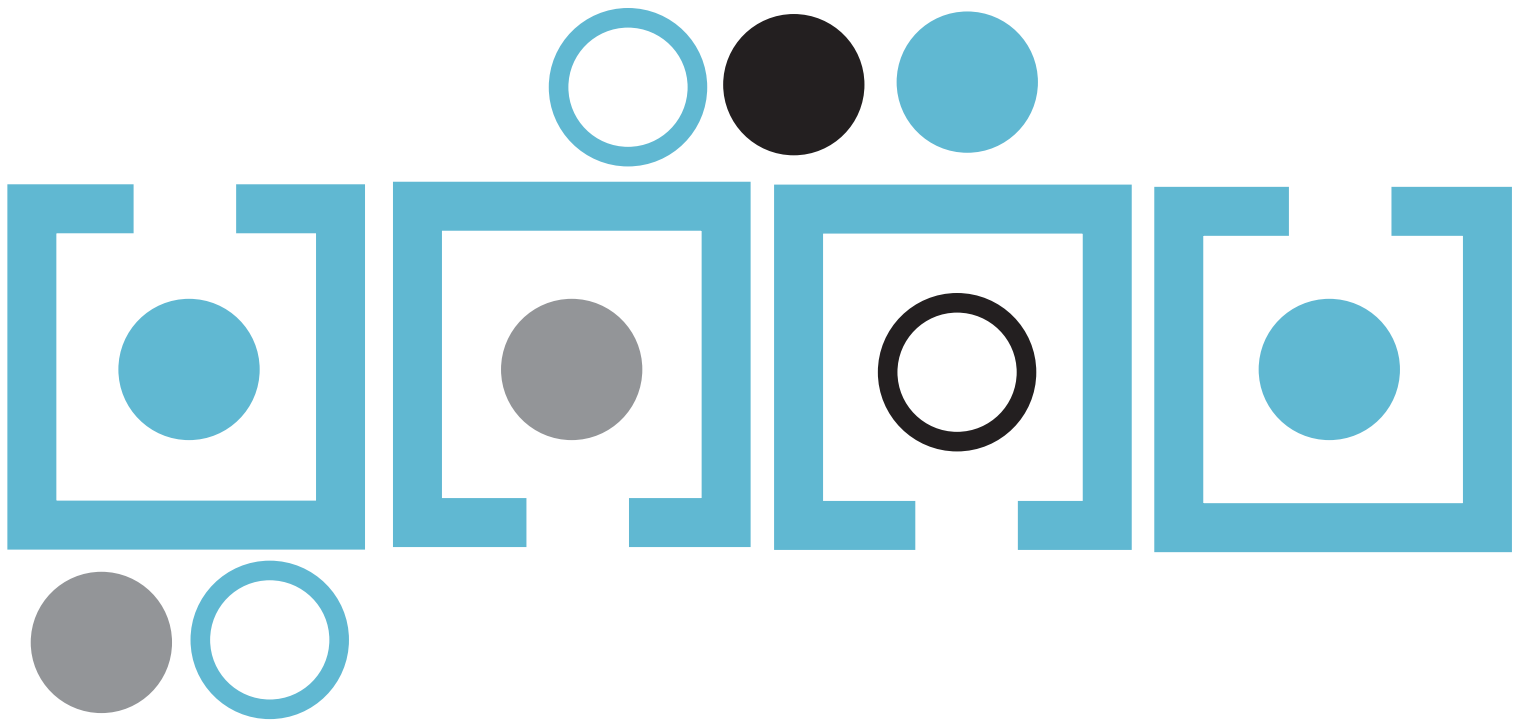


Plan for continuous monitoring of the extent and character of homelessness

– a strategy for disseminating knowledge and information



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Foreword

Since 2002, the National Board of Health and Welfare has been commissioned by the government to obtain knowledge about the extent of homelessness and to develop methods for counteracting homelessness using surveys and supporting local development projects.

In February 2007, the government presented for the first time a national strategy for counteracting homelessness, called *Homelessness – multiple faces, multiple responsibilities*.

The National Board of Health and Welfare was given the commission by the government to lead and coordinate a national work to counteract homelessness and exclusion from the housing market. The work is to be carried out in consultation with the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, the Swedish Enforcement Authority, the Swedish Prison and Probation Service and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. Together, these entities make up the national steering group for the homelessness strategy. An external reference group is also affiliated with the assignment. Among others, user organisations are included in this group.

As part of the homelessness strategy, the government has commissioned the National Board of Health and Welfare to present a proposal for a plan on how the extent and character of homelessness can be monitored continuously. Particular attention is to be paid to the situation of children and young people.

Below, a proposal is presented for how homelessness in Sweden can be systematically monitored over time. The aim of continuously monitoring homelessness is to create the conditions necessary for carrying out an effective work for combating homelessness, and to design measures in order to support homeless people. A monitoring system on a continuous basis also makes it possible to assess the effects of measures that have been taken.

The plan was written by the National Board of Health and Welfare's special adviser, *Ann Jönsson*. The project manager for the entire homelessness strategy is special adviser *Annika Remaeus* of the National Board of Health and Welfare. The representatives from the national steering group and reference group should be thanked for contributing valuable knowledge from their various perspectives. A special thanks also to researchers *Marie Nordfeldt* and *Anne-Lie Vainik* at Ersta Sköndal University College, who compiled the information on municipal homelessness mappings.

Lars-Erik Holm
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Summary

In order to work effectively to combat homelessness and to design measures in order to support homeless people, it is necessary to have knowledge about the extent and character of homelessness. Knowledge about the development of homelessness over time is also needed to be able to assess the effect of measures taken. A number of authorities publish statistics and reports that provide valuable information about the extent of homelessness in specific groups. Among these are the statistics from the Swedish Prison and Probation Service on the housing situation of those facing probation from correctional institutions, as well as the DOK report from the National Board of Institutional Care (SiS) on the living situation of clients enrolled in a treatment centre in accordance with the Care of Alcoholics and Drug Abusers Act (LVM) [1]. Several authorities are currently in the process of developing statistics on homelessness. A number of municipalities are also conducting their own homelessness mappings. However, none of the sources available today give a complete picture of the homelessness situation in Sweden. National surveys and mappings have to be conducted to obtain this knowledge.

To be able to monitor homelessness over time, it is essential that the same definition of homelessness is used in the various surveys. It is recommended to use the definition presented in the 2005 mapping by the National Board of Health and Welfare [2]. The definition describes four different homelessness situations which clearly show the complexity of the problem. The plan regarding the continuous monitoring of homelessness includes a recommendation that national mappings of homelessness should be conducted every five years. The municipalities should be responsible for collecting information within their geographic area. In this way, the knowledge and commitment that already exists in the municipalities regarding homelessness can be better utilised.

The National Board of Health and Welfare should be responsible for supporting the municipalities in the collection of information by creating a manual on how the survey should be conducted, as well as a questionnaire.

The aim of the manual and the questionnaire is to make sure that the material is uniform and comparable throughout the country. The recommendations by MPHASIS¹ should serve as the foundation for the design of the questionnaire. The manual and the questionnaire should be designed in such way that they clearly demonstrate the importance of mapping homelessness among families with children.

The National Board of Health and Welfare should be responsible for compiling and presenting the material collected from the municipalities. The

¹ MPHASIS stands for Mutual Progress on Homelessness through Advancing and Strengthening Information Systems. The project is financed by the European Commission, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

2005 national survey had a response rate of almost 100 per cent, implying that there is great interest in obtaining a national picture of the extent and character of homelessness. With the manual and the questionnaire, the National Board of Health and Welfare seeks to support the ambitions that are already apparent today in the municipalities with regard to monitoring homelessness.

The work in designing a manual and a questionnaire will be conducted in collaboration with the municipalities.

There are several reasons for using a relatively long interval of time between mappings – five years, according to the proposal. This interval enables potential changes in the extent and character of homelessness to be seen. In that way, the workload and the need for resources are reasonable for everyone involved in the survey.

In arguing for long time intervals between mappings, the integrity issue is a vital aspect. To define oneself as being homeless is difficult for many people, and can cause a person to feel very exposed. Surveys carried out more frequently would probably be perceived as offensive by those who are most concerned by the questioning.

The ongoing work within numerous authorities to develop statistics on the housing situation for specific groups of people should be continued.

The statistics on housing support measures granted in accordance with the Social Services Act, regarding adults with substance abuse problems as well as other adults, need to be developed to make clear the extent to which the measures taken are emergency assistance (shelters, hotels, emergency housing, short-term homes), “intermediate solutions” (lodging homes, supported transitional accommodation) or more long-term solutions (for example, social contracts).

The development of these statistics should take place in collaboration between the National Board of Health and Welfare and the municipalities.

Background

In recent years, three national homelessness mappings have been conducted in Sweden – in 1993 [3], 1999 [4] and 2005. On each occasion questionnaires were sent to sources assumed to come into contact with homeless people. The sources included both authorities as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs). It is not possible to make a direct comparison between the three mappings as not only did the definition of homelessness vary across the three surveys, but the number of sources increased in the latest survey. For this reason, the National Board of Health and Welfare has emphasised a very careful interpretation of the figures presented below.

The 2005 mapping, which was conducted during one week in April, showed that approximately 17,800 persons were homeless in Sweden. A comparison with the mapping conducted in 1999 revealed that homelessness had increased by 2,000–3,000 persons. The number of homeless women and those born in foreign countries had also increased. A greater proportion of people who were homeless in 2005 lived in shelters or other emergency accommodations compared with those who were homeless in 1999. However, comparisons with earlier mappings must be carried out carefully.

In addition to the mappings mentioned, recent research has contributed significantly to an increase in knowledge about the character of homelessness and the complexity of the problem. In February 2007, the government decided on a strategy for counteracting homelessness and exclusion from the housing market [5]. The strategy comprises the period 2007–2009.

Four objectives have been pointed out:

1. Everyone shall be guaranteed a roof over his/her head and be offered further co-ordinated action based on the needs of the individual.
2. There shall be a reduction in the number of women and men who are in prison or at a treatment unit, or have supported accommodation and who do not have any housing before being discharged or released.
3. Entry into the ordinary housing market shall be facilitated for women and men who are in temporary and transitional, supported accommodation, provided by the social services or others.
4. The number of evictions shall decrease and no children shall be evicted.

The National Board of Health and Welfare has been commissioned by the government to work together with the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, the Swedish Enforcement Authority and the Swedish Prison and Probation Service to co-ordinate the implementing of the strategy. Representatives from the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL/SALAR), the county administrative boards and other authorities and organisations were also given an opportunity to contribute to this pro-

ject. A reference group with representatives from authorities, county administrative boards and other organisations, including NGOs and user organisations, has been appointed to participate. The objectives described in the strategy will be the starting point for the joint work. This will also be linked to local development ventures operated with financial support of the National Board of Health and Welfare, with the aim to counteract homelessness. This work involves both supporting new local development ventures and developing and disseminating information in areas of urgent need.

In connection with the homelessness strategy, the government has also given a number of special commissions:

- The Swedish Enforcement Authority is to develop its statistics on the number of evictions.
- The National Board of Health and Welfare is to create guidelines for supporting the municipalities and other stakeholders in their work with preventing evictions [6], with special attention to be given to families with children.
- The National Board of Health and Welfare is to work with the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning to study the development of the so-called secondary housing market, and to make a research review on different housing solutions for homeless people.

The National Board of Health and Welfare is to present a proposal for how the development of homelessness and exclusion from the housing market can be continuously monitored. The work is to be carried out in consultation with the other authorities mentioned above. Particular attention is to be paid to the situation of children and youths.

The final report concerning the entire commission is to be submitted to the government no later than 1 July 2010.

The commission

In the homelessness strategy, the government has pointed out that it is of great importance to monitor the development of homelessness over time. Therefore, the National Board of Health and Welfare has been commissioned to “submit a proposal in collaboration with affected authorities for how the development can be continuously monitored.

The proposal will make clear how the extent and character of homelessness are to be surveyed so as to enable comparisons with earlier mappings.

Mappings should include information on the situation of children and youths, both regarding children who have parents who are homeless and youths who, for various reasons, have run away from or been kicked out of their home or another residence.

The work should be co-ordinated with the commissions given to the National Board of Health and Welfare and the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning in their respective budget documents of 2007, regarding a plan for surveying the secondary housing market in Sweden, as well as the commission to the Swedish Enforcement Authority to develop statistics on evictions.” (S2006/1119/ST).

Method

The task of writing a proposal for a plan for monitoring homelessness and exclusion from the housing market over time involves a number of questions.

- How is homelessness to be defined?
- What sources can be used to be able to monitor the development of homelessness over time?
- What methods are being applied today to collect information that can be used to survey homelessness?
- At what intervals are statistics relevant for homelessness surveys presented?
- What core variables should be included in surveys of homelessness?
- How can various types of housing support measures be categorised?
- Are there any homelessness situations that are not covered by the existing source material?

In order to be able to monitor the development of homelessness and make comparisons with earlier surveys, it is of utmost importance that the same definition of homelessness is to be used over time. As has already been pointed out, it is very difficult to compare the results from the three Swedish national surveys, because the definition of homelessness varied among the different surveys. For example, a broader definition of homelessness was used in the 2005 survey than in the survey from 1999. Presented below is the definition of “homelessness” from the National Board of Health and Welfare’s most recent survey. The definition is compared with the classification used by FEANTSA². There is also a description of what is meant by “homeless” in the municipal surveys conducted in recent years.

A number of authorities have compiled relevant statistics which can be used to monitor the development of homelessness and illuminate the situation regarding specific groups in vulnerable housing situations. Examples of such sources of knowledge are: the Swedish Enforcement Authority’s statistics on eviction, statistics on the housing situation of those facing probation from an institution presented by the Swedish Prison and Probation Service, and the DOK report³ from the National Board of Institutional Care (SiS) on the living situation of people enrolled in a treatment institution in accordance with the LVM act. As part of the work on the proposal for the plan for a continuous monitoring, a review of the various sources that can be used to

² FEANTSA – Fédération Européenne d'Associations Nationales Travaillant avec les Sans-Abri – a European federation of NGOs working with the homeless.

³ The DOK report describes the background, current living situation and the need for assistance for people enrolled in an SiS treatment unit according to the LVM act. The report is presented once a year.

monitor the development of homelessness over time was conducted. The review also involved finding out how often statistics and reports etc are presented.

Once the information was compiled, an assessment was made regarding to which extent these components can be used together to reflect the homelessness situation in Sweden. One question in this context is: which situations are not covered by the available material? And, also: what is needed to be able to monitor homelessness over time in Sweden?

Definition of homelessness

In many contexts the term “homelessness” is associated with people who literally lack a roof over their head, such as “rough sleepers” or people who live in shelters. However, in the most recent national survey of homelessness from 2005, and in earlier surveys as well, a broader circle of people were described as homeless.

A central conclusion of the 2005 survey is that there is no “typical homeless person”. Homelessness does not describe a person; rather, it describes the situation in which a person finds him or herself for a shorter or longer period of time.

Four homelessness situations were defined in the 2005 mapping:

Situation 1. This is the most vulnerable group of homeless people, consisting of approximately 3,600 persons. Approximately 900 of them were sleeping rough at the time of the survey. Approximately 2,700 persons lived in shelters or other emergency accommodation, hotels, campsites or hostels.

Situation 2. Approximately 2,000 persons found themselves in situation 2. They were to be discharged, within the next three months, from correctional facilities, treatment institutions or supported accommodation. They were without having any housing arranged before their discharge, release or move.

Situation 3. This group of approximately 6,400 persons had insecure housing solutions with a risk for future homelessness. They were staying in treatment institutions or in some form of supported accommodation. Their discharge was not planned in the next three months, but no housing was arranged for future discharge or release.

Situation 4. Approximately 4,700 persons were in this situation. They were living with relatives or friends/acquaintances, or had subletting contracts shorter than three months. They had applied to the social services or another organisation for assistance in solving their housing situation.

The European federation working with the homeless, FEANTSA, has formulated a definition for homelessness. The aim is to enable comparisons between situations in different countries. This classification is called ETHOS (European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion). FEANTSA defines homelessness as follows:

- *Rooflessness* (without a shelter of any kind, sleeping rough).
- *Houselessness* (with a place to sleep, but temporary, in institutions or shelters).
- Living in *insecure housing* (threatened with severe exclusion due to insecure tenancies, eviction, domestic violence).

- Living in *inadequate housing* (in caravans on illegal campsites, in unfit housing, in extreme overcrowding).

The definition used by The National Board of Health and Welfare is in complete congruence with the first two categories in ETHOS: “Rooflessness” and “houselessness”. The third category, “living in insecure housing”, is included to a certain extent. However, people in risk of eviction are not included. ETHOS contains an additional category that is not included in the definition used by The National Board of Health and Welfare: “living in inadequate housing” (living in a hut, accommodation without sanitary facilities, accommodation which has been condemned according to national legislation, living in caravans or campsites not intended for year-round living, crowded housing).

Homelessness among children and youths

According to the commission from the government, special attention is to be paid to children and youths in the plan to continuously monitor homelessness. This applies to children and youths whose parents are homeless, as well as to youths who, for various reasons, have run away from or have been kicked out of their home or another residence.

The 2005 national survey showed that 30 per cent of those who were reported as homeless were also parents to children under 18 years of age. A larger proportion of women than men were reported being parents. It was also twice as common for mothers to be living with their children.

Data from homelessness surveys carried out by the municipalities shows that several of the municipalities ask questions about the number of children in homeless families [7]. Today, there are no figures to show on a national level how many children are living without a secure, functional home because they have run away from or have been kicked out of their home. In 2003, the Stockholm City Mission obtained funding from the Swedish Inheritance Fund for a project on homeless children. The aim of the project was to survey homeless youths to find out how they viewed their situation, what kind of assistance they were seeking and to develop methods for working with children and youths at risk. The survey presented in 2004 [8] showed that the group of homeless youths consisted of people of widely varying backgrounds and situations. What they had in common was the lack of a safe and secure home. Youths without a secure and functional home lead very vulnerable lives. For example, they risk developing problems with substance abuse, crime and having generally worse living conditions than their peers [9]. Within the extent of their work to counteract homelessness, the three big cities in Sweden (Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö) conducted surveys on the youths who periodically or always live outside of their homes because of severe problems in their families.

Save the Children has taken the initiative to conduct a national survey of children who have run away from or been kicked out of their homes. The survey is being carried out in collaboration with the Stockholm University Department of Social Work, and is due to be presented in the spring of 2009.

MPHASIS – European collaboration for surveying homelessness

Sweden participates as a partner in MPHASIS, an EU collaboration between approximately 20 countries, with the aim of finding methods to be able to monitor the development of homelessness in Europe and to compare the homelessness situations among the different countries. Increased knowledge can contribute to a reduction of homelessness and to improve supportive measures for homeless people. In order to do this, it is important to collect information. MPHASIS will help to ensure that the policy regarding homelessness to a greater extent will be based on knowledge.

The MPHASIS project supports data collection on various levels. It applies to national surveys, the use of existing registers and other sources of information, as well as various client registration systems and information on service providers. In monitoring homelessness, it is of great importance that a common definition of homelessness is used in the different countries.

Core variables

In order to be able to compare the homelessness situation in the European countries there must be a consensus on which variables should be used in the survey. MPHASIS has recommended “core variables” that should be included when mapping homelessness. MPHASIS recommends the following core variables:

- Age and gender
- Nationality and country of birth
- Household structure
- Living situation immediately preceding the need for supportive measures and at the time of the survey
- The length of the most recent period of homelessness and the current housing situation
- The cause of the most recent period of homelessness

The 2005 Swedish mapping contained questions on age and gender, country of birth, household structure, living situation at the time of the survey, length of the most recent period of homelessness and the cause of the most recent period of homelessness. However, no question about nationality was included.

MPHASIS also proposes variables that are non-core variables which may be assumed to define the individual’s problems and need for support. The non-core variables are:

- Primary occupation

- Source of income
- Highest level of education
- Most urgent need for support

Sources of information

A number of authorities in Sweden compile statistics and other information that provides knowledge about homelessness, both regarding the extent of homelessness and the situation of specific groups. A number of municipalities also conduct their own surveys. These sources are presented below, along with the intervals for the presentation of their different material. Mentioned below, is also to which degree the extent of homelessness is visible in the sources of information.

National Board of Health and Welfare

Once a year, the National Board of Health and Welfare presents statistics on the care, nursing and treatment provided by the municipalities for the target groups *adults with substance abuse problems* and *other adults*, within the individual and family counselling of the Social Services in Sweden. These statistics form part of the Official Statistics of Sweden.

The report addresses a number of measures carried out at some point during the year, and the number of people receiving social service assistance on 1 November.

Assistance regarding housing refers to measures according to chap. 4 §1 SoL [10] and includes a number of different forms of supported accommodation.

In these statistics, *adults with substance abuse problems* means people aged 21 years or older and who, as of 1 November, are the subject of some action occasioned by their abuse of alcohol, drugs, pharmaceutical preparations or solvents.

Just over 5,700 of these people received assistance with regard to housing as of 1 November 2007. Approximately 23 per cent were women [11].

The target group *other adults* is defined as people 21 years of age or older receiving assistance for reasons other than the abuse of alcohol, narcotics, medicine, solvents or any combination thereof. For example, these are people who receive assistance due to gambling abuse, because they are victims of violence, because they are in need of support in their capacity as parents or because of domestic abuse. As of 1 November 2007, just over 7,500 people in this group obtained assistance regarding housing. Thus, approximately 13,200 people received assistance regarding housing from the Social Services in the year 2007. These statistics provide information about a relatively large group of people in various types of homelessness situations and who have received assistance and support from the Social Services to solve their housing situation. However, it cannot be deduced from the statistics how the assistance is distributed over various forms of housing solutions. Therefore, it is not clear how many people received emergency accommodation, for example in shelters, how many were granted various types of sup-

ported accommodation or how many received more long-term solutions, for example social contracts.

National Board of Housing, Building and Planning

Once a year, the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning conducts a housing market survey (BME). The aim is to contribute to the continuous monitoring of the development on the housing market and to follow trends in future development. This material makes it possible to analyse regional patterns and differences between various types of municipalities.

The housing market survey is sent out at the beginning of every year to all municipalities in the country, and a summary report is published later the same year.

The report reflects the municipalities' assessment of the current status of the housing market and the extent and direction of house building. The anticipated increase of special residences as well as the housing planning in the municipalities is illuminated, as are also their measures for specific groups.

The secondary housing market

The "secondary housing market" refers to the different housing solutions used in the municipalities for people who, for various reasons, are not accepted as rental tenants on the ordinary housing market. It involves housing solutions with some form of special contract, normally a subletting contract, where housing is also connected with supervision and/or special terms and conditions [12].

The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning and the National Board of Health and Welfare were both commissioned in 2007 to present a joint proposal for how the extent and development of the secondary housing market in Sweden can be continuously monitored. Surveying the secondary housing market is related to the third objective of the government's homelessness strategy:

The entry into the ordinary housing market shall be facilitated for women and men who are in temporary and transitional, supported accommodation, provided by the social services or others.

In the autumn of 2007, the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning started discussions with the county administrative boards about the option of including questions about the secondary housing market on the 2008 housing market survey, BME 2008. As a result of this dialogue, these questions were included. The 2008 housing market survey was thus supplemented with questions addressing the extent to which the municipalities provide flats rented on special terms and conditions.

The results of the BME 2008 show that seven out of 10 municipalities have sublet apartments available for homeless people, where the housing is connected with supervision and/or special terms and conditions or rules [13]. The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning estimates that over 11,000 apartments were rented in this manner in 2007. Thus, the BME

material provides information about a significant group that can be considered homeless.

Fewer than 1,100 households, or one in 10 households on the secondary housing market, were able to take over their sublet contracts in 2007. Fewer than 500 households, or approximately one in 20 households on the secondary housing market, moved instead to a home of their own.

A review of the BME material reveals that the secondary housing market exists in all regions and types of municipalities, but also that these flats are found primarily in big cities.

There is no clear connection between these types of housing solutions and a general lack of housing. With regard to the number of homeless people, there are more of these apartments in municipalities with a balanced housing market or a housing surplus. One explanation for this may be that municipalities with a lack of housing are more likely to be referred to more acute measures.

The material also shows that a somewhat larger proportion of households outside the big city regions and other larger cities, as well in municipalities where homelessness is less widespread, found housing on the ordinary housing market.

The BME survey will be supplemented by follow-up interviews from the National Board of Health and Welfare, with a selection of municipalities, in order to provide a more in-depth analysis.

The survey together with the interviews shows the current extent of the secondary housing market. As this was the first time these questions were posed, there are no earlier results with which to make a comparison. After some years with continuous surveying, it will be possible to analyse the development on a national level and on various types of municipal housing markets.

In order to obtain knowledge about the development of the secondary housing market over time, the survey and the supplemental interviews will be conducted every three years from now on.

The Swedish Enforcement Authority

Connected to the national homelessness strategy, the Swedish Enforcement Authority has been commissioned to develop and improve its statistics on eviction. In the commission it is stated that special attention should be paid to the situation of children. The improved statistics make it possible to monitor eviction applications as well as enforced evictions at municipal level, according to variables such as gender, type of household (single, married, partnership) and the number of children affected by the eviction. These statistics are extracted on a monthly basis.

Swedish Prison and Probation Service

The Swedish Prison and Probation Service draw increased attention to the housing situation arising from individuals being released on probation from correctional facilities. Ascertaining future housing will be an important part of the individual plans of the inmates. The Swedish Prison and Probation

Service compile statistics from the correctional facilities on a monthly basis. This material shows how many inmates are discharged into various housing options. The statistics compilation can be used as a meaningful tool for follow-up and planning. Additionally, a mapping is made each year of the housing situation of the clients under non-custodial care.

The National Board of Institutional Care

The National Board of Institutional Care (SiS) uses the DOK evaluation and documentation system to gain knowledge about various aspects of the living situation of clients in the LVM treatment institutions of the SiS. The clients are interviewed on admission to the treatment institution, on release and as a follow-up. The interview gives the client an opportunity to influence the institutional care system, to provide his or her own perspective of the situation and to talk about what kinds of support he or she would like to receive.

The report contains information about the clients' gender, age, reason for treatment, living conditions and primary form of housing over the past 30 days. Education, primary occupation, crime, physical and mental health are also reported. A summary of the results of the interviews are presented yearly in the DOK report.

People under care at LVM institutions are among the most vulnerable people in society, perhaps even the most vulnerable among substance abusers. Only one in two has a home of his or her own [14]. Being entirely without housing is most common among the people youngest of age (ages 18–29), of which 18 per cent are without housing – compared with 13–15 per cent of other age groups.

The Lantmäteriet and the Swedish Tax Agency

In 2011, a European census will be carried out. In Sweden, the census will be conducted through an excerpt from the current population register, which will also be supplemented with a new register of apartments. In 2006, the Swedish Parliament came to a decision regarding a new register of apartments act. The aim of the register is to enable Statistics Sweden (SCB) to extract statistics on population size, households and housing in a simpler and more inexpensive manner than before.

The Lantmäteriet has been given the commission by the government to collect information from property owners throughout the country. The data collection will be carried out during 2007–2009. The municipalities will then keep the register up to date.

The register of apartments will include both permanent housing as well as holiday homes. It will be possible to distinguish between apartments inhabited by nationally registered people and those not inhabited by nationally registered people. A differentiation will also be made among various types of special residences (student residences, residences for the elderly, residences for people with disabilities).

Hotels, hostels, correctional institutions and huts are not considered residences and, therefore, will not be included in the register of apartments.

The register of apartments will be able to provide knowledge about certain aspects of a person's housing situation, for instance crowded housing. However, it is not possible to learn about the extent of homelessness from this register. It is likely that a remaining group of "others" will be noted, consisting of people who are not nationally registered as living in an apartment. This group consists in part of those without housing, but it will be very difficult to determine the size of this group from the information in the register. Nor does the register provide any information about people who are in insecure housing situations, for example those facing discharge from a correctional facility or treatment institution, or those living without a tenancy agreement with relatives or friends or acquaintances.

The register of apartments will, however, contain information about some special housing solutions for homeless people.

Municipal homelessness surveys

The municipalities in Sweden are in various ways collecting material on homelessness which could serve as valuable sources of knowledge. In connection with the housing market survey of 2007 which has already been mentioned above [15], the municipalities were asked whether they conduct their own homelessness mappings. Of the 290 municipalities in Sweden, 129 responded "yes" to this question. Based on this relatively large proportion, it was therefore of interest to analyse how the mappings were conducted – which methods were used, how homelessness was defined as well as what criteria were used in the surveys. The 129 municipalities answering "yes" were then asked to describe their methods and to report how they defined homelessness. The Ersta Sköndal University College was assigned by the National Board of Health and Welfare to compile the responses received.

All letters, reports and questionnaires were analysed. In the end, the material came from 59 responding municipalities. The analysis was conducted based on the core variables recommended by MPHASIS [16]. The variables defined by MPHASIS as "non-core variables" were also sought.

The material received was sorted in relation to the municipality size, the political leadership of the municipal executive board, as well as the number of people assumed to be homeless, according to the 2005 homelessness national survey. The material was divided into four groups:

- Municipalities indicating that they survey homelessness, entirely or in part.
- Municipalities responding that they have knowledge about the homelessness situation without conducting regular surveys with a clear method or measurement period.
- Municipalities responding that they do not conduct surveys.
- Municipalities for which it is difficult to determine how and whether they have conducted surveys. Some municipalities report that they conducted surveys before 2005.

The compilation shows that 22 municipalities, that is, only 17 per cent of the 129 expected answers, clearly indicated that they conduct homelessness mappings. The report thus establishes that there is not sufficient material to draw any conclusions. 19 municipalities state that they have knowledge about the homelessness situation without needing to conduct regular surveys. Nine municipalities state clearly that they do not conduct surveys. In the case of the nine municipalities which stated that they do not conduct surveys, it is difficult to determine whether they have in fact conducted a survey since 2005.

Of the 22 municipalities responding that they survey homelessness, eight indicated that they use the definition of homelessness recommended by the National Board of Health and Welfare. Three other municipalities used this definition, but also with other definitions added. In the material, there are also municipalities that used their own definitions. Of the 22 municipalities conducting surveys, 19 use information from Social Services (informants). In many cases, some type of questionnaire or form is used.

The municipalities conducting surveys have widely varying measurement periods.

The MPHASIS report mentioned above was the starting point for the compilation of the Swedish municipal surveys. The core variables recommended in the report were asked for in the study of the Swedish surveys. The material reveals that these variables are used, albeit in varying degrees, in the municipal surveys. According to research [17], homelessness policy in the municipalities has traditionally focused on people with substance abuse problems. This material confirms this as well. According to the MPHASIS report, it should be the homeless people themselves who answer what they regard as the cause of homelessness. After the review of the surveys it was established that not one municipality has posed this question to any of the homeless people. On the other hand almost all informants who answered the questionnaires or shared information from their personal knowledge (a total of 17 people in the compilation) had a very clear idea about what was the cause of certain persons being homeless.

In descending order of frequency, the most common causes of homelessness, according to the informants, are substance abuse, mental illness, debts or rental debts. The compilation also shows that people with addiction problems and mental illness are in greatest need of assistance.

It is also noted that, in the surveys conducted by the municipalities, none of the homeless people were asked about their level of education. One reflection regarding this fact is that the traditional definition of "the homeless" leads to a lack of interest in seeing the strengths of the individual, for example his or her level of education, as an opportunity to escape homelessness. The priority becomes focusing on a persons difficulties rather than looking at the individual strengths.

Surveys of homelessness in the three big cities

The compilation gives a special account of how the three big cities – Malmö, Gothenburg and Stockholm – conduct their surveys. This has been done to make possible differences visible.

Malmö

The City of Malmö has been carrying out surveys once a year since the 1990s. Informants from the social services fill in forms about all the homeless people with whom they are in contact. The city office then compiles the material for the entire city. Subletting in the various parts of the city is presented in a special report.

The City of Malmö expressed a desire to be able to modernise its surveys using a soft ware programme in order to improve the quality of the information.

The definition of homelessness used in Malmö is recommended by the National Board of Health and Welfare. The following core variables are used:

- gender,
- type of household (children 0–18 years of age in the household),
- citizenship,
- age structure,
- current housing situation at the time of the survey, including rough sleeping,
- main problems,
- primary cause of homelessness (according to informants),
- provision,
- homelessness in different parts of the city.

Gothenburg

Surveys have been conducted in the City of Gothenburg twice a year since 2003. The inventory is primarily conducted by the social worker who has knowledge about the housing situation for each individual. In addition, the homeless people who do not have any contact with Social Services are surveyed. This takes place through outreach work conducted by the city in collaboration with an NGO.

The inventory is aimed at households that for social or medical reasons have a housing need which is considered to be unfulfilled, and where assistance to solve the housing problems is required.

Included in the inventory are also households living in hotels and in accommodations not subject to formal arrangements with the city authorities.

The survey also includes people considered to have “inadequate housing” or people in need of other housing support. People in households with subletting contracts via the municipality are not included in the survey. These contracts are normally long-term and will be transferred to the tenants after approximately 18 months.

The following core variables are included in the Gothenburg inventory:

- type of household (children and adults),
- gender,
- homelessness in different parts of the city,

- current housing situation at the time of the survey,
- age structure,
- health and illness,
- debts,
- income/provision,
- ethnic background and current citizenship,
- recommended housing solution.

Separate reports are made on the housing of households with children.

Stockholm

The City of Stockholm has been conducting homelessness mappings every two years since 2004. Earlier mappings have also been conducted, for example both 1996 and 1999.

Municipal and county entities, as well as NGOs, fill out a questionnaire.

The definition of a “homeless” person is somebody who lacks his or her own housing or rented housing, who does not live at a fixed address and who has been referred to temporary housing alternatives or is sleeping rough. People living in institutions or shelters without housing arranged before facing discharge are also considered homeless, as well as people living temporarily with friends or acquaintances.

The mapping in Stockholm includes homeless people over the age of 20 who are registered for current assistance from social services, the county council’s addiction services entities, NGOs with financial support from the city or private care providers commissioned by the city.

The city distinguishes between homeless adults and homeless families with children. The following groups, however, are *not* included in the Stockholm mapping:

- people with subletting contracts or living with relatives,
- homeless children under the age of 20,
- people currently receiving assistance in other municipalities but who are staying or alternatively living in institutions in the city of Stockholm.

The following core variables are, among others, used in the material:

- gender,
- age structure,
- homelessness in different parts of the city,
- people who, at some time during the past six months, were registered with Social Services in the city.

Groups at risk of exclusion from the housing market

Monitoring the development of homelessness involves observing tendencies in society and following the situation of groups who are at risk of exclusion from the housing market. Discrimination on the housing market is an impor-

tant aspect in this context. The sources listed below provide information about the vulnerability of specific groups with regard to the housing market.

The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning: the living situation of refugees

It is well known that immigrants have on average a less desirable status on the housing and job markets than people born in Sweden, although these differences vary significantly among different groups of immigrants. In particular, certain groups of refugee immigrants have a weaker connection to the housing market and their living situation is characterised by segregation and a greater degree of homelessness than people born in Sweden.

Within the framework of the homelessness strategy, the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning is currently working to create a research review and a report on the housing situation for refugees. The review will study both the refugee establishment on the housing market and the degree of homelessness among refugees compared with people born in Sweden and other immigrant groups. The analysis will be conducted based on national statistics and local case studies. The statistics used come from Statistics Sweden and the National Board of Health and Welfare.

The Equality Ombudsman in Sweden: discrimination on the housing market

Discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion or other belief, or disability, is against the law [18].

Since the Discrimination Act regarding services, for example housing, came into force in 2003, approximately 40 reports have been filed regarding discrimination on the housing market due to disability. In 2006, approximately 60 cases of discrimination on the housing market were reported due to ethnicity.

City of Stockholm: young adults living in shelters

Since 2004, the number of young adults (up to 25 years of age) living in shelters in Stockholm has increased [19]. Since March 2008, the social welfare administration in Stockholm, with funding from the county council, has been carrying out a project with the aim of studying why the number of young adults staying in shelters is increasing, and suggesting assistance more appropriate for these people. The project used reports from shelters to survey all young adults in the City of Stockholm who were staying in shelters for one night or more during the above period.

The report stated that it is difficult to give an answer to why the number of young adults in shelters is increasing based on the studied group. Substance abuse, mental illness and crime are present in this group. These are traditional problems among homeless people and are not, per se, new variables that can explain the increase in the number of homeless young adults. According to the report, it is possible that part of the increase can be explained by the fact that half of the young adults who were living in shelters

at the time of the project were born in another country. The majority of the older homeless people in the shelters were born and grown up in Sweden. One possible explanation for the increasing number of young adults in shelters in Stockholm may be that young adults born outside of Sweden have a weaker social network and therefore more quickly face social exclusion.

Compilation of sources of information and stakeholders

The table below shows a compilation of sources for monitoring homelessness, stakeholders, and time intervals for presentation of material.

Source	Stakeholder/authority	Interval for presentation	Specific groups presented
Official Statistics of Sweden	National Board of Health and Welfare	Statistics are presented once a year.	Adults with substance abuse problems, as well as other adults, who have been granted housing assistance in accordance with the Social Services Act (SoL).
The Housing Market Survey (BME)	The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning in collaboration with the county administrative boards and the National Board of Health and Welfare.	The report based on the BME is presented every year. Every three years, the results of the survey along with the follow-up interviews on the secondary housing market are reported.	Households with subletting contracts associated with supervision/special terms and conditions.
Statistics on the number of eviction applications and enforced evictions.	Swedish Enforcement Authority (KFM)	Statistics are extracted monthly.	Statistics are presented by municipality, gender and type of household (single, married, children affected by eviction).
Statistics on the living situation of inmates in correctional facilities.	Swedish Prison and Probation Service.	Statistics are extracted monthly.	Inmates in correctional facilities facing probation.
The DOK report	The National Board of Institutional Care (SiS)	The report is published once a year.	Clients under the care of SiS treatment facilities according to the LVM act.
The register of apartments and the register of population.	Lantmäteriet, The Swedish Tax Agency, Statistics Sweden (SCB) and the municipalities.	Data collection for the register of apartments is being conducted under the period 2007–2009. Then the municipalities will be responsible for keeping the register up to date.	The register of apartments does not report on groups in various situations of homelessness.

The compilation below presents sources of knowledge and stakeholders/authorities related to the four situations of homelessness. It should be noted that these sources only cover the situations in question to a certain extent.

Homelessness situation	Source	Stakeholder/Authority
Situation 1: People sleeping rough, living in shelters, emergency accommodations, women's refuges, hotels or camp sites.	Official Statistics of Sweden	The National Board of Health and Welfare
	Municipal homelessness surveys	Municipalities
Situation 2: People to be discharged within three months from correctional facilities or institutions without having arranged housing.	Statistics on the housing situation of inmates at correctional facilities facing probation	Swedish Prison and Probation Service
	The DOK report	The National Board of Institutional Care (SiS)
	Municipal homelessness surveys	Municipalities
Situation 3: People in insecure housing situations, treatment institutions, HVB et cetera. Discharge/release is not planned within the next three months. No housing has been arranged before discharge/release.	Officiella Statistics of Sweden	The National Board of Health and Welfare
	Monitoring of the secondary housing market.	The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning together with the National Board of Health and Welfare.
	Municipal surveys, to some extent.	Municipalities
Situation 4: People living without a tenancy agreement with friends and acquaintances or having a subletting contract for less than three months.	Municipal surveys.	Municipalities

Assessment by the National Board of Health and Welfare

The value of continuously conducting national homelessness surveys has been discussed, especially at the time such surveys have been carried out. During the 2005 mapping some critical opinions were heard, in particular from NGOs expressing concerns that such a survey would risk stigmatising people already living in vulnerable social situations. The critics also considered that the resources set aside for surveying should instead be used to take measures against the problem of homelessness.

Still, authorities and NGOs agree to that knowledge about the extent and character of homeless is needed. This was clearly expressed when Sweden arranged an MPHASIS expert meeting on 28 November 2008. The aim of the meeting was to discuss how to monitor homelessness continuously.

However, continuously surveying homelessness has no value in itself. NGOs in particular point out that there must be a clear recipient of the knowledge generated by the homelessness surveys. The aim of collecting the material must also be clearly described.

In order to work effectively to combat homelessness and to design supportive measures for homeless people the society needs to have knowledge about the extent and character of homelessness. In order to be able to assess the effect of various measures, it is also needed to monitor the development of homelessness over time.

A review of the national homelessness surveys conducted in Sweden – in 1993, 1999 and 2005 – shows that it is not possible to compare the outcomes of these surveys, because the definition of “homelessness” varied among the three surveys. In order to monitor the development of homelessness continuously, the same definition of homelessness must be used for all surveys conducted. The definition used in the 2005 survey is recommended since it clearly points out the complexity of the homelessness issue. Homelessness according to this definition does not describe a person, but rather a number of situations in which a person may find him or herself for shorter or longer periods of time. The four situations of homelessness used in the National Board of Health and Welfare 2005 survey also coincide to a great extent with the definition of homelessness (ETHOS) recommended by FEANTSA.

A number of authorities are currently compiling statistics and other material to provide valuable information about the housing situation of specific groups. The Official Statistics of Sweden reports on housing assistance for people with substance abuse problems and other adults. The Swedish Prison and Probation Service keep statistics about the housing situation of inmates facing probation. The DOK report from SiS provides knowledge about the housing situation for clients enrolled in LVM institutions. Statistics from the Swedish Enforcement Authority show eviction applications and enforced

evictions in relation to municipality, gender, type of household and children concerned by eviction.

A number of municipalities conduct their own homelessness surveys.

Reports to the Equality Ombudsman also provide information about how specific groups risk exclusion from the housing market.

NGOs also possess valuable knowledge. Since these organisations are in close contact with homeless individuals they are able to notice tendencies early on, both in terms of the living situation of target groups and changes within these groups. However, no systematic compilation of these observations is being performed today.

Each of these different sources provides valuable knowledge about homelessness and exclusion from the housing market. However, a review of the available material shows that it is very difficult to obtain a complete picture of homelessness in Sweden simply by compiling information from these sources. Too much is missing, because certain homelessness situations are not reported at all.

The question is then whether regular, national surveys would be recommended in order to continuously monitor homelessness. National surveys have many advantages:

- National surveys give a joint picture of the homelessness situation in Sweden.
- National surveys also make it possible to observe changes in the character of homelessness.
- Knowledge drawn from national surveys is important for making decisions regarding the combating of homelessness.
- National surveys make it possible to compare the homelessness situation in various municipalities and to point out successful practice.
- Continuous national surveys also make it possible to evaluate the effects of the measures taken.

There are also disadvantages in carrying out national surveys:

- National surveys are resource demanding, both in terms of finances and staff. It has been pointed out that such surveys risk taking resources away from the measures necessary for counteracting homelessness.
- By allowing a national authority to take responsibility for the surveys, one declines to take benefit by the commitment to the homelessness issue that already exists within the municipalities.

Proposal

There is no authority in Sweden today with an overarching responsibility for the homelessness issue. This question concerns many policy areas and stakeholders. Nor is there any system in place today for monitoring the development of homelessness on a national level. Therefore, it is the opinion of the National Board of Health and Welfare that surveys on a national level will be needed in the future. However, these surveys should be organised so that the municipalities are responsible for collecting the material within their

geographic area. The existing knowledge about and commitment to the homelessness issue in the municipalities can therefore be utilised.

The National Board of Health and Welfare should be responsible for supporting the municipalities in collecting the information by creating a manual for how the survey should be conducted as well as a questionnaire. The aim of the manual and the questionnaire is to ensure that the material collected is uniform and comparable among various parts of the country. The questionnaire should contain the core variables recommended by MPHASIS, as well as the additional variables indicated to show individual needs for support. The manual and the questionnaire should be designed to make clear the importance of surveying homelessness among families with children.

The National Board of Health and Welfare should be responsible for compiling the material collected by the municipalities.

The 2005 national survey had a response rate of almost 100 per cent, implying that there is great interest in obtaining a picture of the extent and character of homelessness on a national level. By creating a manual and a questionnaire, the National Board of Health and Welfare would like to support the ambitions already apparent in municipalities regarding monitoring homelessness. This work will be conducted in close collaboration with the municipalities.

One question often raised is how often homelessness surveys should be conducted. The National Board of Health and Welfare recommends that such surveys take place every five years. Relatively long intervals of time between surveys provide an opportunity to discover potential changes in the extent and character of homelessness. Also, the workload and the resources needed for the municipalities as well as the National Board of Health and Welfare will be more reasonable.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, having fairly long time intervals between surveys relates to important integrity aspects. For many people, defining oneself as being homeless is difficult and this can cause feelings of exposure. Frequently occurring mappings with little time in between would most probably be perceived as offensive by those who are most concerned.

The compilation of material collected from the municipalities should in the future provide the basis for the continuous task of monitoring the development of homelessness. In addition, it is essential to increase knowledge about the homelessness situation of specific groups. The work aimed at developing statistics that is being conducted by several authorities will be of great importance. Improved statistics will also be vital in following up on implemented measures.

Statistics on housing assistance for people with substance abuse problems and other adults, which makes up part of the Official Statistics of Sweden, need to be developed in order to clearly show the extent to which individuals are receiving emergency or long-term forms of support. This would provide essential information about the homelessness situation in these groups. The presentation of the statistics must be made more specific, so that it is clear whether individuals have been granted emergency assistance (shelters, hotels, emergency housing, short-term homes), "intermediate solutions" (lodging homes, supported transitional accommodation) or more long-term solutions (for example, social contracts).

This development of statistics should take place in close collaboration between the National Board of Health and Welfare and the municipalities.

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