

# Measuring homelessness in Denmark

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## National homelessness counts

- First national homelessness count in week 6, 2007
- Since then homelessness count every second year, same week
- Same methodology as in Sweden and Norway
- The results are used for general monitoring of homelessness and for policy development on both national and local level

## Overall methodology

### Extended service based count

Not only homeless service but also a wide range of other welfare services: Homeless shelters, street outreach teams, psychiatric treatment facilities, addiction centres, municipal social centres, jobcentres, emergency departments, counseling services, etc.

Two-page individual questionnaire (paper or electronic version) for each homeless person that these services are in contact with or otherwise know is homeless during week 6.

Unique identifiers: "Personal numbers" (Central Person Register identification number) and initials, birthdates – crucial to control for "double counts"

# Definition of homelessness in national homelessness count

Conceptual definition:

As homeless are regarded people who do not have their own dwelling or room (owned or rented), but who stay in temporary housing arrangements, or stay temporarily and without a contract with family, friends or acquaintances. As homeless are also regarded people without a place to stay on the following night.

## Operational definition

Category	
1	Stay overnight in the street, a stairway, a shed or the like
2	Stay overnight in an emergency night shelter
3	Stay overnight in a homeless shelter
4	Stay in a hotel due to homelessness
5	Stay temporarily and without a contract at family, friends or acquaintances
6	Stay in temporary transitional housing without a permanent contract
7	Release from prison within a month without a housing solution
8	Discharge from hospital or treatment facility within a month without a housing solution
9	Other

## Exceptions to the definition

Excluded from the definition:

Young people who want to leave their family home to live alone

Students who are moving to another town to study and who is in need of housing

People who are temporary houseless e.g. due to a fire

People in particular forms of temporary accommodation (section 107 accommodation, Law of social services)

Women in crisis centers due to domestic violence problems

## Information in the individual questionnaire

Basic demographics (gender, age, children, nationality)

Income source

Health – mental illness, physical illness, substance abuse problems

Previous military service abroad

Reasons for homelessness

Use of other services

## Who provides information on the sofa surfers?

A wide range of services and agencies outside the 'homeless sector'.

Municipal job centres are in regular contact with recipient of social assistance benefits or other temporary transfer benefits

Municipal social centres are often in contact with individuals with social support needs – e.g due to mental illness, addiction problems and family problems

Treatment facilities – eg. Psychiatric services and addiction treatment centers

# Who amongst the homeless are not captured by the count?

Homeless people who are not in contact with welfare services:

Homeless people with only few other social problems besides being homeless

Homeless people with complex problems who have 'fallen out' of the welfare system (although many of them are probably recorded by street outreach teams or in emergency night shelters).

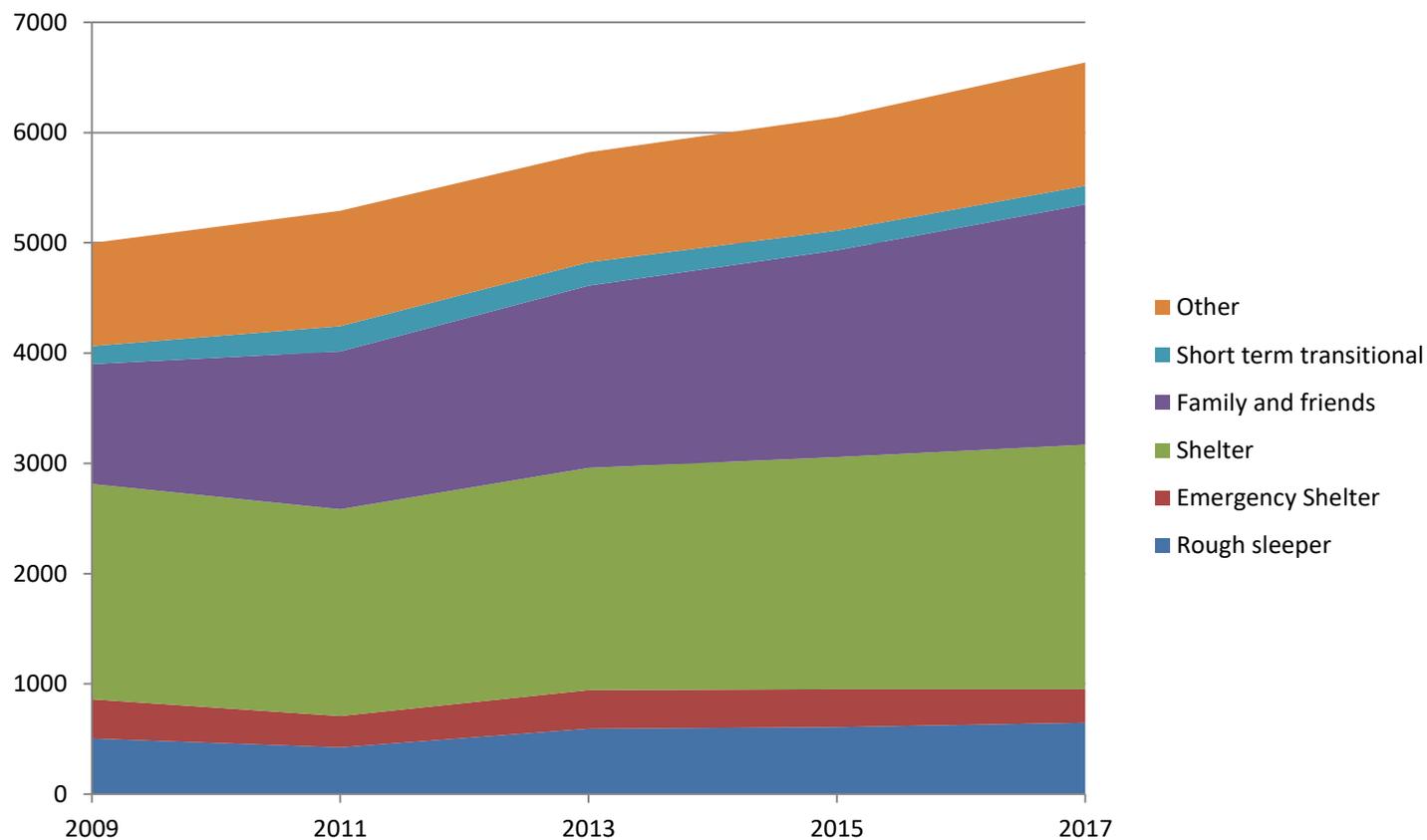
## Other challenges

Defining what is 'temporary' if you live with close relatives

Measuring family/child homelessness – discrepancy between number of adult homelessness people with daily care of children, and the number of childrens questionnaires

Young people who move their adress from their parents place to a friends place to receive higher social assistance or student benefits

# Homelessness in Denmark 2009-2017, National counts



# Is the methodology transferable to other countries?

## Requirements:

That an extended service based count can be conducted across a wide range of welfare services

That services are allowed to report individual data on users to the counting agency and that they are willing to do so

That a system of unique identifiers can be applied