

# Quality standards in social services from the perspective of services working with homeless people in Lithuania

2011, Vilnius

## 1. Organisation and funding of homeless services

Objective: this section aims at understanding the organisation of the provision of homeless services in a given country

### 1.1. Legislation

*-Is there any legislation or policy in your country which focuses specifically on homeless services provision?*

Lithuania does not have a single strategy to address the problems faced by homeless people. The provision of social housing to individual social groups is regulated by individual pieces of legislation.

Lithuania has not adopted a formal legal definition of homelessness which, according to the ETHOS typology, is identified as people without shelter: people living rough. There are no criteria under which persons would be ascribed to this category.

The category of homeless people includes those individuals who are provided night shelter for a period of up to six months. According to the ETHOS typology, homeless people are those who are in accommodation for the homeless (homeless hostel, temporary accommodation).

Services for homeless people are regulated under the legislation which regulated social services for people at social risk.

### 1.2. Typology and organisation of services

*-Does a typology of homeless or social services exist in your country? In your organisation? If yes, please describe in detail.*

Law on Social Services<sup>1</sup> provides such typology of social services:

1. General social services;
2. Specialized social services;

#### **General social services:**

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<sup>1</sup> Law on Social Services: [http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc\\_l?p\\_id=270342](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=270342)

1. General social services are provided for person (family), whose ability to self-care for their (family's) life and participation in public life can be developed or covered by the individual help, without the constant help of special services.
2. General social services include information, counselling, mediation, advocacy, sociocultural services, transport organization, catering, supply of necessary clothing, footwear and other services.

**Specialized social services:**

1. Specialized social services are provided for person (family), whose ability to self-care for their (family's) life and participation in public life cannot be developed or covered by the general social services.
2. Specialized social services include:
  1. Social assistance;
  2. Social care;
3. Social assistance is a set of services ensuring complex assistance, which does not require constant care of professionals, provided for person (family).
4. Social assistance includes social assistance at home, social skills training and support, temporary accommodation, and other services.
5. Social care is a set of services ensuring complex assistance, requiring constant care of professionals, provided for person (family).
6. Social care differs in length: day care, short and long term care.

**Aid money**

1. In some cases (determined local authorities) aid money can be paid to person (family) or foster family, when children get care in foster families or when it is more effective to organize general social services or social assistance for person (family) by paying this money.
2. Payment of aid money is regulated by the Government or by the legislation regulating payment for the social services.

In our organization (Vilnius archdiocese Caritas) there is slightly difference between social services for homeless people receiving temporary accommodation in the shelter and services for those you get other services in our centre for homeless (e.g. visiting day centre, getting social and/or psychological consultation etc.).

*-Does a register of homeless services exist? If yes, please give us relevant links to websites and directories.*

Since there are no specific services for homeless people, there is no individual register of homeless services. In Lithuania data about services, which are provided also for homeless people, are mainly available from these following sources:

1. The annual statistical report on social services.

Each institution providing social services fills out relevant reports of the services it provides on the annual basis at the municipality. For the purpose of homelessness and housing exclusion typology, the most useful form of report is *Report of Ambulatory Social Service Institution*<sup>2</sup>. The report provides the following data:

- the number of used places in a temporary night shelter institution at the end of the year;
- residents of a temporary night shelter institution by gender and age,
- the number of night shelter places provided to residents per year,
- the number of people staying in a temporary night shelter institution by periods and reasons.

Every year, each of the 60 municipalities operating in Lithuania collect reports from the bodies providing ambulatory social services, analyse them and submit a consolidated report to the Statistics Department which summarises information on the national scale and presents it by counties and municipalities<sup>3</sup>.

In state's audit report on provision of social services<sup>4</sup> is observed: As in the report forms and in the explanatory notes there are not clearly regulated what data has to be given, there is a risk that local authorities and institutions providing social services complete the report on different content of information.

*-Describe briefly how the provision of homeless services is organised in your country.*

In Lithuania, the competence in the area of housing has been divided horizontally among 7 ministries: technical and physical housing fund management is carried out by the Ministry of Environment; financing of housing programmes is managed by the Ministry of Finance; reimbursement of heating, cold and hot water expenses for low-income families is arranged by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour; energy-related issues are handled by the Ministry of Energy; agricultural matters are addressed by the Ministry of Agriculture; registration of real estate is carried out by the Ministry of Justice; regional development policy is developed and implemented by the Ministry of the Interior which also ensures co-ordination of state and municipal interests.

The responsibility for the development and implementation of the Programme of Social Housing Development Fund, the purpose of which is to increase the social housing fund of municipalities in order to rent housing to low-income persons (families) entitled to social housing lies with the Ministry of Environment. As mentioned before, the Ministry takes part in development of state construction and housing policy.

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<sup>2</sup> Report of Ambulatory Social Service Institution:

[http://www.stat.gov.lt/uploads/StFormos/Sveikata/SOC04\\_met.pdf?PHPSESSID=.](http://www.stat.gov.lt/uploads/StFormos/Sveikata/SOC04_met.pdf?PHPSESSID=)

<sup>3</sup> Questionnaire to the Member States on homelessness and housing exclusion, SPC/0903/2 REV1

<sup>4</sup> State's Audit Report on Provision of Social Services: [www.vkontrole.lt/failas\\_senas.aspx?id=3042](http://www.vkontrole.lt/failas_senas.aspx?id=3042)

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour addresses the issue of homelessness by implementing the state policy of social services.

Municipalities own social housing units and they have the function of granting social housing to people. In addition, municipalities are responsible for ensuring provision of social services to the residents based in their territories. Depending on the need, municipalities organise the following social services: provision of information, counselling, intermediation and representation (preparation of documents, employment, primary health care, etc.), catering, provision of necessary clothing and footwear, transportation, personal hygiene, care and other general services. Such persons are also offered special social services: social care (development and sustaining of social skills, temporary night shelter, intensive crisis management assistance), and short-term social attendance. The measures applied to homeless people on a local level are included in municipal social service plans.

A major part of these services, general services in particular, are rendered by non-governmental organisations. Municipalities co-operate with NGOs with a view to ensuring social assistance to people without housing.

Municipalities perform the main function of management of provision of social housing. Municipality is also responsible for provision of social services for homeless people. Big part of social services is provided by NGOs that are partly funded from municipal budget<sup>5</sup>.

### **1.3. Funding**

*-What are the main mechanisms in place for funding homeless services provided for the not-for profit organisations in your country (public procurement, grants, agreements with NGOs, donations etc)?*

In state's audit report on provision of social services<sup>6</sup> is observed:

There is no regulation about specific minimum level of municipal budget that must be provided for the necessary social services. So there is a risk that local authorities may not provide or provide not adequate municipal budget for necessary social services. When municipality due to lack of financial recourses prioritizes provision of social services equal access of social services in different municipalities may be differentiate.

There is no mechanism in place to ensure funds will be allocated to all necessary social services. It should be noted that Act of Budget Structure<sup>7</sup> covers funding only for subordinate budget institutions and other entities engaged in public administration.

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<sup>5</sup> Questionnaire to the Member States on homelessness and housing exclusion, SPC/0903/2 REV1

<sup>6</sup> State's Audit Report on Provision of Social Services: [www.vkontrolė.lt/failas\\_senas.aspx?id=3042](http://www.vkontrolė.lt/failas_senas.aspx?id=3042)

<sup>7</sup> Act of Budget Structure: [http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc\\_l?p\\_id=311544](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=311544)

Social services are financed from State's and municipal budgets, financial resources of institutions providing social services, The European Union funds, foreigner funds, support (for the victims), personal (family) paying for the social services and other resources<sup>8</sup>.

Vilnius archdiocese Caritas Night shelter gets main funding from The European Structural fund. Municipal funding depending on different year is either very minimal or there is no funding at all.

## **2. Policy and legal framework regarding quality in homeless services**

### **2.1. Quality provisions**

*-Is there any legislation or policy framework in place defining quality standards or principles in homeless services in your country? (if yes, give a brief description of it and provide us with links to relevant laws or materials)*

At the national level provision of social care (assistance) to individuals (including homeless people), its principles and characteristics are legally regulated. There are mandatory quality requirements for social care (assistance) provided by social care institutions.

Social care institutions (including night shelter for homeless people) have legally regulated hygiene norms and requirements that must be followed.

Social services provided to homeless people, like all residents of Lithuania who are provided social services, comply with the same quality standards which have been approved by respective legislation. The control over the compliance with the applicable standards of social care is exercised by the Social Service Monitoring Department under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour<sup>9</sup>.

*-If yes, are these quality standards or quality principles?*

The order of minister of Ministry of Social Security and Labour on Description of norms of the social care<sup>10</sup> identifies the following standards and principles of social care:

1. Security of personal rights;
2. Participation and cooperation;
3. Choice and goal-oriented social care;
4. Personal self-development and social integration;
5. Nondiscrimination.

<sup>8</sup> State's Audit Report on Provision of Social Services: [www.vkontrole.lt/failas\\_senas.aspx?id=3042](http://www.vkontrole.lt/failas_senas.aspx?id=3042)

<sup>9</sup> The order of minister of Ministry of Social Security and Labour on Description of norms of the social care : <http://tar.tic.lt/Default.aspx?id=2&item=results&aktoid=6A2B8AF4-2A7D-43C2-BD9E-46C1D5EE2AC4>

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

*-Is it compulsory or voluntary?*

The Department of Supervision of Social Services<sup>11</sup> is responsible for assessment, control and supervision of social services provided at the state and local self-governance levels and budget for special subsidies for local budgets.

This department controls quality of social services provided for homeless people by Vilnius city shelter which is funded from the state budget. Vilnius archdiocese Caritas Night shelter is not funded from state budget so the quality of social services is not controlled by this department.

*-Is there a quality framework for social services in general relevant to the homeless sector? Are you in your work affected by quality provisions regarding healthcare services or employment services?*

As previously mentioned, homeless people are not a separate group of beneficiaries of social services, and there is no system of social services specifically for homeless people. Quality of social services for homeless people is controlled as much as the quality of social services is controlled in general.

In state's audit report on provision of social services<sup>12</sup> is observed: "The Law of Social Services<sup>13</sup> notes that the municipality has control over the quality of the general social services and the social care provided in its territory. But there is no methodology which outlines how municipality should do so developed; there is no general procedure to be followed in the municipality to control quality of social services. As the municipality follows its own procedures it is possible that it may evaluate the quality of social services differently: the same social service of same quality in one municipality may be evaluated as of good quality as in other one it may be considered to be of poor quality. "

In work we, Vilnius archdiocese Caritas night shelter, we are effected regarding provision of healthcare provision because we are not providing these services. Requirements for employment of target group are mainly controlled within the framework of various project under which we are funded at the time. For the projects funded by the European Social Fund employment is one of key criterion.

## **2.2. Dimensions of quality**

*- What definition of quality is used in your country?*

There was no definition of quality found.

<sup>11</sup> The Department of Supervision of Social Services: <http://www.sppd.lt/en/>

<sup>12</sup> State's Audit Report on Provision of Social Services: [www.vkontrole.lt/failas\\_senas.aspx?id=3042](http://www.vkontrole.lt/failas_senas.aspx?id=3042)

<sup>13</sup> The Law of Social Services: [http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc\\_l?p\\_id=270342](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=270342)

*- What are the criteria of quality in a homeless service in your country? (i.e. user's participation, training, funding)*

The order of minister of Ministry of Social Security and Labour on Description of norms of the social care<sup>14</sup> identifies the following criteria of social care (which is provided for also for homeless people in the night shelters):

- I. Appointment of the service, planning and accommodation of the person
- II. Organization of person's social integration
- III. Security of personal rights
- IV. Environment and accommodation (ensuring safe environment that meets personal needs)
- V. Personnel (adequate number of personnel according the number of clients; qualification of personnel; effective interagency cooperation)
- VI. Management and administration (environment promoting constant improvement personnel's qualification; Possibility for the clients to express their opinion, complains and wishes regarding the services they get etc.)

*-At what level are the quality standards being developed in your country? (national, regional, local, at the level of your own organisation or a federation of organisations)?*

Quality standards are being developed at the national level.

### **2.3. Conditionality of funding**

*-Do funding bodies require minimum standards in homeless services, with strict reporting on meeting these standards? If yes, do funding bodies provide adequate funding to meet these standards?*

Governmental organizations funded from state's budget are controlled strictly.

Whereas nongovernmental organizations mostly funded from other recourses are controlled not so strictly.

Organizations which provide nourishment for homeless people are controlled most strictly, because they have to comply with the hygienic requirements. And this is controlled despite the source of funding.

## **3. Quality in the context of the specificities of homeless services**

### **3.1. Transitional character of homeless services**

*- In your country, is there a different way of measuring quality in homeless services because of their short-term and emergency nature?*

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<sup>14</sup> The order of minister of Ministry of Social Security and Labour on Description of norms of the social care : <http://tar.tic.lt/Default.aspx?id=2&item=results&aktoid=6A2B8AF4-2A7D-43C2-BD9E-46C1D5EE2AC4>

No, in the only order of minister of Ministry of Social Security and Labour on Description of norms of the social care<sup>15</sup> services for homeless people are not differentiated.

### **3.3. Users' Participation**

*- Has your organisation developed specific methods to ensure effective participation of the users in spite of the unfavourable context of the often emergency character of the homeless services?*

So far, the participation of users is quite poor: users have possibility to make remarks (they can leave them in a special box); there are researches on users' opinion about social service quality carried out; soon there will be possibility for users of our shelter to evaluate services they've received after case work with them is finished (there will possibility to do it also anonymously).

However, we noticed that it is quite difficult to find a method that would help to find out what users do really think about services they've received. As very often their opinion is influenced by many factors.

## **4. Implementation of quality provisions in homeless services**

### **4.1. Governance**

*- Who is responsible for implementing minimum standards in homeless services in your country? (homeless services' providers, funding bodies of the homeless services, local authorities etc.)*

#### **Control of social services**

The Law of Social Services<sup>16</sup> notes that the municipality has control over the quality of the general social services and the social care provided in its territory. But as mentioned before, there is no methodology which outlines how municipality should do so developed; there is no general procedure to be followed in the municipality to control quality of social services.

The Department of Supervision of Social Services<sup>17</sup> is responsible for assessment, control and supervision of social services provided at the state and local self-governance levels and budget for special subsidies for local budgets.

### **4.2. Methods**

*- Do homeless service providers in your country create and implement their own quality provisions without involving any external bodies?*

<sup>15</sup> The order of minister of Ministry of Social Security and Labour on Description of norms of the social care : <http://tar.tic.lt/Default.aspx?id=2&item=results&aktoid=6A2B8AF4-2A7D-43C2-BD9E-46C1D5EE2AC4>

<sup>16</sup> The Law of Social Services: [http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc\\_l?p\\_id=270342](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=270342)

<sup>17</sup> The Department of Supervision of Social Services: <http://www.sppd.lt/en/>

State institutions are controlled by the responsible authorities. Non-governmental organizations that provide services for homeless are also regulated by the relevant authorities (for example, charity canteens should comply with the standards of hygiene etc.). But for us are unknown any quality provisions created and implemented by organizations providing social services for homeless people.

-Are quality standards regularly reviewed in your country to adapt to changes in service provision?

Since the order of minister of Ministry of Social Security and Labour on Description of norms of the social <sup>18</sup>care was released in 2007 it has not been modified.

### **4.3. Staff training**

*-Are there budgets available to regularly train homeless service staff to adapt to emerging trends and needs?*

Public organizations have usually have budget for staff training.

Non-governmental organizations usually have no fixed budget for staff training; it is organized when there are any resources for it (usually within the framework of different projects).

*-Are there any training schemes to help homeless service staff to implement quality standards in their homeless services?*

Currently no continuous and well-targeted system exists for public awareness raising, training and education for housing sector parties. These measures are implemented fragmentarily, using external technical assistance resources.

## **5. Evaluation of the existing quality provisions**

### **5.1. Organisation of homeless services**

*-In your opinion, is the legislation regarding the organisation of homeless services in your country appropriate?*

Although there are social services quality criteria, but they are not controlled. In addition, there are no clear methods to measure these criteria. Currently, non-governmental organizations that provide social care services (including the night shelters) are asked only quantitative

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<sup>18</sup> The order of minister of Ministry of Social Security and Labour on Description of norms of the social care : <http://tar.tic.lt/Default.aspx?id=2&item=results&aktoid=6A2B8AF4-2A7D-43C2-BD9E-46C1D5EE2AC4>

information about the services provided (how many annual recipients were, how many services were provided, etc.).