



FEANTSA

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

FEANTSA questionnaire

February 2011

Quality in homeless services

FEANTSA members have decided to focus on the theme of quality in homeless services in 2010-2011. Service providers play a key role, in creating genuine pathways out of homelessness by developing high quality services which meet the needs of service users. Introducing quality schemes in services is perceived as the principle way to achieve this goal. FEANTSA has already issued a policy statement ([June 2009](#)) on quality standards in social services as well as a Magazine on the standardisation debate ([August 2009](#)). In order to benefit further from expertise across countries on this theme, FEANTSA members wish to carry out a general stocktaking across Europe on definitions, legislation, standards, methods of measuring and implementing quality in homeless services.

EU context

The European Union has always been active in the area of services (financial, commercial, etc), aiming to create an open European market of services with no borders. Recently, *social* services have also been discussed, mainly in relation to the impact of EU legislation (public procurement and competition rules) on these services and also in the framework of EU social policy debates (social protection, social inclusion, active inclusion). These debates are increasingly focusing on approaches to guarantee **quality** in these services for service users. Quality standards in social services are emerging in different countries through a bottom-up approach very much linked to the local context. However, the EU is extending its role in this area by facilitating exchanges and developing toolkits to support the development of quality management at local level.



FEANTSA stocktaking - Guidelines for filling out the questionnaire

AC members are asked to draft a national report for their country, based on responses to the questions outlined in this questionnaire. AC members are asked to consult with all FEANTSA member organisations in their country in the preparation of the reports; a copy of the questionnaire will be circulated to all FEANTSA members. A European report on quality in homeless services will be prepared in the summer 2011 on the basis of the responses received.

- Reports should be 10-15 pages in length, written in either English or French and they should be submitted to the office by 1st of June 2011
- The questionnaire is comprised of 6 sections; the first 4 sections contain factual questions asking you to give an overview of a situation in your country. The 5th section consists of questions of opinion which ask for your assessment of the situation described in the previous, factual parts. The last section looks at the role of the EU
- In order to complete the information provided in the report, feel free to attach to the report any relevant documents or links to materials, laws, examples etc.
- Please read all the questions first, before starting to fill out the questionnaire,

For all questions, please contact Karolina Krzystek at Karolina.krzystek@feantsa.org or +32 534 05 23.

Overview of the themes covered by the questionnaire:

- 1. Organisation and funding of homeless services**
 - 1.1. Legislation
 - 1.2. Typology of services
 - 1.3. Funding

- 2. Quality schemes in homeless services**
 - 2.1. Quality provisions
 - 2.2. Dimensions of quality
 - 2.3. Conditionality of funding

- 3. Specificities of homeless services**
 - 3.1. Transitional character
 - 3.2. Diversity
 - 3.3. Users' participation

- 4. Implementation of quality in homeless services**
 - 4.1. Governance
 - 4.2. Method
 - 4.3. Staff training

- 5. Evaluation**
 - 5.1. Organisation and funding of homeless services
 - 5.2. Quality schemes in homeless services
 - 5.3. Specificities of homeless services
 - 5.4. Implementation of quality in homeless services

- 6. The role of the European Union**
 - 6.1. European quality framework
 - 6.2. Impact of EU legislation



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?

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.

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

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

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)?

2. Policy and legal framework regarding quality in homeless services

Objective: this section aims at gathering information on existing provisions on quality and their nature and scope.

2.1. Quality provisions

-Is there any legislation or policy framework in place defining quality standards or principles¹ in homeless services in your country? (if yes, give a brief description of it and provide us with links to relevant laws or materials)

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

-Is it compulsory or voluntary?

-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?

¹ A **standard** should be understood as “an established norm or requirement formally defining uniform criteria, methods, processes and practices”, and a **principle** represents a set of values that inspire rules of organisation and a code of conduct



2.2. Dimensions of quality

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

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?*

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

Objective: This section seeks to highlight some specificities of homeless services which should be taken into account when discussing and developing quality standards and measurement tools.

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?*
- *Consultation of service users is an element of quality of the service – do emergency/transitional services in your country have specific methods for this?*

3.2. Diversity

- *People who are homeless have multiple needs so services need to have room for creativity and flexibility in finding solutions – do the quality provisions in your work address this diversity?*

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?*

4. Implementation of quality provisions in homeless services

Objective: this section seeks to identify how the quality provisions are implemented in countries concerned

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.)*
- *Is the correct implementation of the quality provisions monitored? If yes, who is in charge of monitoring? Through which channels is it performed (i.e. activity reports, outcomes measurement, quality certification system etc.)?*



4.2. Methods

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

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

4.3. Staff training

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

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

5. Evaluation of the existing quality provisions

Objective: this section seeks to identify how the homeless services' providers assess the quality provision and their implementation and how they define the needs in the area against the background of the factual analysis above

5.1. Organisation of homeless services

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

-If not, would you recommend new or amended legislation on homeless services? Please describe how.

5.2. Quality provisions

-Do you consider the existing quality provisions to be adequate to with the reality of homeless services in your country?

-If not, would you recommend new or amended legislation on quality in homeless services? Please describe how the legislation could be amended and what should the standards or the principles be.

-Do you consider the capacity of your organisation to comply with the quality requirements sufficient? If not, what are the needs to be met?

5.3. Specificities of the homeless services

--Is standardisation of quality in homeless services a positive phenomenon, or do you think that (over-)standardisation can detrimentally affect small homeless services providers?

-In your opinion, should there be a two-tier standards system (minimum/maximum) for homeless services to preserve flexibility when necessary (i.e. providing low-threshold services in extreme weather conditions)?

-One of the criteria of quality in the provision of the homeless services is ensuring effective participation of the service users. Do you find ensuring effective participation of the users in the homeless services challenging? Is this a criterion difficult to meet in your opinion?

5.4. Implementation of quality

-Do you think that the quality standards are correctly implemented in the homeless services in your country?

*-In your opinion, what are key principles to consider when implementing quality in homeless services?
(transparency, support, user participation, continuous review, understanding of the homeless sector, bottom-up
approach, etc.)*

6. The role of the European Union

Objective: This section seeks to identify the perceptions of how the EU legislation is affecting the provision of homeless services. In the second place, it looks at what the role of the European Union should be in defining the common quality criteria.

6.1. Impact of EU legislation

-Have you encountered situations where EU rules have had a direct positive or negative impact on the functioning of services in your country?

-Are you aware of EU legislation on public procurement and state aid?

-When another EU national uses a homeless service in your country, do you encounter problems with regarding to his/her entitlement to receive services?

6.2. Quality framework

-Do you think it would be useful to have a European framework of quality in homeless (emergency) services?

-Do you see a role for FEANTSA in supporting the development of quality in homeless services? (for instance by developing a set of quality principles in homeless services)



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- providing analysis and policy advice on employment, social solidarity and gender equality policy areas;
- monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies in employment, social solidarity and gender equality policy areas;
- promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities; and
- relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large.

For more information see:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html

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