HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING EXCLUSION

IMPACT, PROFILE AND REQUIREMENTS IN THE BASEL REGION (SWITZERLAND)

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Abstract

There are few empirical findings on the extent and structure of homelessness and housing exclusion in Switzerland. In this study, the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS) was applied to Switzerland for the first time, using the example of the Basel region. The quantity, quality and dynamics of the topic were measured. Methodologically, the study followed a mixed method approach: (1) interviews with users in 12 service providers for homeless people; (2) ethnographic methods in four of these institutions over several months; (3) semi-structured interviews with experts; and (4) evaluation of the institutions’ statistics. Based on the survey, by the cut-off date the study had identified around 100 roofless and houseless people in Basel at the time of the survey. Of the 469 respondents, a total of 206 fall into the categories of rooflessness, houselessness, insecure or inadequate housing. The dynamic analysis shows that around 77% (362 respondents) of all 469 people had experienced rooflessness, houselessness, inadequate or insecure housing at least once in their lives. There are also a high number of service users from Central and Eastern European countries and a rather low number who are asylum seekers. Recommendations include changes in the practice of allocating places in emergency shelters/night shelters, developing a Housing-First strategy and developing strategies based on the close relationship between homelessness and lack of social housing.

Keywords

homelessness | housing exclusion | poverty

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Abbreviations

ETHOS European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion
FEANTSA European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (European umbrella organisation of NGOs for homeless people)
GISS Society for Innovative Social Research and Social Planning e. V. Bremen
PoLG BW Police Act Baden-Württemberg
SEM State Secretariat for Migration
Summary

In the city of Basel, currently no survey on the topic of homelessness exists that describes the extent and structure of this social problem. This study arose from the great need for more facts identified by the Christoph Merian Foundation which supports numerous projects in the field of poverty alleviation in the city of Basel. In addition, in both politics and society, as well as in the professional community and the administration, it can be observed that the discussion about homelessness is in many respects normative and not sufficiently fact based. The aim of the authors of this study was to enrich this debate with scientific arguments and data. It is central here to expand the widespread understanding of homelessness by linking it with problems of precarious and inadequate living conditions - just as the ETHOS typology of FEANTSA, the European umbrella organisation of NGOs working with the homeless, suggests is necessary. It is precisely in the interaction between the 13 housing situations outlined in the typology and their dynamic changes at the level of those affected that the authors of this study identify one of the central challenges for a social policy in Switzerland aimed at combating and eliminating homelessness and housing exclusion.

The study included (1) a written and face-to-face questionnaire with people in 12 aid institutions (main survey on March, 21st 2018); (2) a night census in public space in selected areas of Basel (during the night of March 21st to 22nd 2018); (3) participative, life-world-oriented observations in the facilities of selected service providers (from October 2017 to March 2018); (4) structured interviews with experts from relevant institutions in the Basel region; and (5) a context and environment analysis.

The following Table 1, which takes up the systematics of the ETHOS typology, summarises the results for the city of Basel. Although informative findings can be derived from the survey in 12 institutions, generalisations and projections are limited. The significance of the results obtained from the survey on rooflessness, homelessness and precarious housing situations varies depending on the ETHOS category examined.

Regarding the night census, on the night of March 21st/22nd 2018 almost 50 people slept outside in Basel (e.g. on the street, in the park) or spent the night in semi-public buildings (airport, railway station). At the same time, 50 people were accommodated in a night shelter (48 people slept in the city’s night shelters and two people slept in a religious building). In total, an estimated 100 people were roofless in Basel in the sense of the ETHOS typology (categories 1 & 2).

The data on the number of people living in accommodation for the homeless, i.e. in emergency social welfare housing, in institutions for people in need of housing and housing assistance, in accommodation for asylum seekers and in hostels and low-cost bed-and-breakfast accommodation vary. Although there are no comprehensive official statistics on the part of welfare assistance in the Basel-Stadt canton, the number of people claiming for such temporary accommodation is estimated at 200, with 103 adults and 97 children living in emergency residences owned by the Basel-Stadt canton.

It is almost impossible to determine the number of people who are living in institutions providing longer-term support (and receiving housing assistance), as the relevant institutions do not keep statistics on clients who approach the institution due to a lack of housing. In the survey, 37 people stated that they were living in such an institution. The offers of the Basel-based Salvation Army and a housing project run by a foundation (target group: drug abusers) provide 113 residential places. Such a discrepancy between the people identified in the survey and the number of places generally occupied implies that only a small proportion of people in supported residential housing also visit the institutions included in the survey.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing situation according to ETHOS typology</th>
<th>Survey 2018</th>
<th>Supplementary information, statistics</th>
<th>Projections / Estimations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roofless</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People sleeping rough (e.g. street, park)</td>
<td>27 people</td>
<td>27 people (night census; overlap with survey approx. ¼, i.e. 7 people)</td>
<td>Approx. 47 people; much higher numbers rather unlikely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in emergency accommodation (night shelter)</td>
<td>28 people</td>
<td>48 people in the night shelter (official statistics, 21/3/18)</td>
<td>50 people; higher numbers rather unlikely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Houseless</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in transitional housing (emergency housing owned by the Basel-Stadt canton)</td>
<td>12 people</td>
<td>103 adults and 97 children live in emergency housing (official statistics, 9/2018)</td>
<td>200 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in longer-term housing and housing assistance (e.g. Salvation Army, Foundation for drug users)</td>
<td>37 people</td>
<td>Total number does not include: Salvation Army: 84 people ELIM-Foundation: 29 people (2018)</td>
<td>Results difficult to classify; minimum: 113 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation for asylum seekers (e.g. Centre Basel, collective accommodation)</td>
<td>14 people</td>
<td>Basel centre for asylum seekers: 177 people (official statistics, 21/3/18); 170 asylum seekers and provisionally admitted people in collective accommodation (official statistics 2017)</td>
<td>Results of surveys and official figures difficult to classify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who are released from institutions (prison, psychiatric units) and are homeless</td>
<td>5 people in the survey suffering housing loss due to imprisonment</td>
<td>Total number does not exist; 767 people released from prison (official statistics, 2017)</td>
<td>At least 5 people; survey results difficult to classify; larger dark field is suspected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostels (e.g. hotel, bed-and-breakfast accommodation)</td>
<td>5 people</td>
<td>Total number does not exist</td>
<td>Min. 5 people; results difficult to classify; larger dark field is suspected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insecure housing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment without contract</td>
<td>12 people</td>
<td>Total number does not exist; estimated 4,000 undocumented people in Basel (B.S.S., 2015)</td>
<td>Min. 12 people; larger dark field is suspected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People living temporarily with relatives, friends</td>
<td>64 people</td>
<td>Total number does not exist</td>
<td>Min. 64 people; larger dark field is suspected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inadequate housing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People living temporarily in non-conventional structures (tent, caravan)</td>
<td>5 people</td>
<td>Total number does not exist</td>
<td>Min. 5 people; larger dark field is suspected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is easier to determine the number of people staying in accommodation for asylum seekers. On March 21st, 177 people were accommodated in the Basel centre for asylum seekers. These people still have no right of citizenship and are not entitled to social housing. In addition, and according to social welfare statistics from 2017, a total of 170 of the 457 asylum seekers and temporarily admitted refugees receiving social welfare were accommodated in collective accommodation, which is counted as being homeless according to the ETHOS typology. In the survey, just 14 people were asylum seekers.

With regard to people who are homeless when they are released from institutions like penal centres, the survey carried out on prisons provides partial information. In the interview, five people stated that they had lost their homes due to their imprisonment and were currently homeless after release. The fact that the question of housing arises for significantly more prisoners becomes clear from the number of 767 people who were released from prison in 2017 in the current figures from the Office of Corrections in Basel-Stadt. It is not possible to quantify exactly how many people find themselves in a precarious housing situation at the time of their release and how many are de facto without housing. Many factors suggest that the loss of housing is highly relevant for people who have been imprisoned for a long time.

It cannot be clearly stated how many people are accommodated in a hostel due to a lack of housing, but which is still affordable for those affected. The fact that five interviewees find themselves in such a housing situation suggests little relevance, but a significantly larger dark field is presumed.

As far as insecure housing is concerned, it is not possible to define the number of people who move into an apartment without a tenancy agreement, nor is it clear how many people necessarily spend the night with friends or relatives. The survey results indicate that insecure housing is widespread in the city of Basel. Of the people interviewed, 64 do not have their own apartment and manage their housing exclusion by temporarily staying with others. The fact that these people visit service providers for the homeless, e.g. street kitchens, shows their precarious status, as well as the social and health situation of these people. Regarding the approx. 4000 undocumented people who are estimated to live in Basel and who rarely have a formal contract for housing, we assume that a far greater proportion of people in housing difficulties without a contract live with third parties, but these do not visit the 12 institutions examined.

It is also difficult to determine the number of people living in non-conventional structures and in this sense find themselves in inadequate housing. Generalising from the five people identified in the survey as the total number of those sleeping in a tent or on a campsite due to homelessness is not recommended due to an incalculable dark field.

Profile of the people concerned

The written survey provides important information on the profile of people affected by rooflessness, houselessness, insecure or inadequate housing. Result show that more men than women are in need of housing and visit the institutions for the homeless. Of the 206 people affected, 167 (81%) are male and 38 (19%) are female.

Within the age range of those affected, the group of 26 to 50-year-olds dominates, which is in line with many other international studies. At the same time, fewer younger and older people are among the roofless and houseless, and younger people are also under-represented in insecure and inadequate housing.

The results of the age structure and the unequal gender distribution are linked to the question of offers oriented to specific target groups, as well as to the question of whether the lower proportion of younger people and women in the institutions reflects the homelessness situation in the city of Basel or if there is a dark field.

The statistically significant differences in the distribution of age groups across the different categories of homelessness are noteworthy. Younger people cope with homelessness significantly more frequently
in their private lives: 53% of 18-25 year stay overnight with friends and relatives. With increasing age, the proportion of those staying with third parties decreases. Due to the small number of cases, the significance of the results is limited, but older people spend more nights sleeping rough than younger people.

Many foreign nationals are affected by rooflessness, houselessness, insecure or inadequate housing. Of those affected, 51% have foreign nationality and 45% are Swiss nationals. In relation to their ratio to the total population, which in the city of Basel amounts to a share of 36% in 2017, foreign nationals affected by homelessness are thus clearly overrepresented. In the group of non-Swiss citizens, we can observe a high proportion of people holding an Eastern European passport (31% of all foreign nationals).

Causes of housing exclusion

Many of those affected have multiple problems that explain their housing exclusion. It is rather rare for exceptional burdens from one dimension of life (work, family, health) to be decisive in the loss of a home and the path to homelessness.

Almost half of those surveyed who are currently homeless or who were homeless earlier in their lives cite financial problems as the cause of the loss of their home. For 55 people, mainly men, this financial poverty is coupled with the loss of their job. With financial poverty, the termination or the end of a rental contract becomes more probable. Health problems are the third most common, but rarely explain the loss of the apartment by themselves. Added to this are relationship problems.

The evaluations of the "open" answers in the questionnaire reveal further causes linked to people’s experiences as refugees, problems with residence status and after release from prison. The loss of a stable housing situation is only in very isolated cases a voluntary decision (three people). The fact that poverty processes in particular explain the loss of housing can be seen from the mention of financial problems and the loss of work, which from the point of view of those affected are often given in combination as causes. If health and family problems are added, the downward spiral for these people usually continues. The existing help system obviously reaches its limits in dealing with the multiple problems of these people.

Dynamic perspective

Of the respondents, 77%, i.e. 362 out of 469, are or have been roofless or houseless at least once in their lives, or are or have been in an insecure or inadequate housing situation according to the ETHOS typology. Some 180 people (including 31 women) have spent the night sleeping rough at some point in their lives due to a lack of housing. Men are also more likely than women to find themselves in precarious housing situations over the course of their lives. Of all 764 mentions by respondents, 617 came from men (81%).

Recommendations

The recommendations proposed in this study result from the findings of the quantitative survey, the life-world analysis, the expert interviews, the context and environment analyses, as well as a total of six workshops with representatives from service providers and invited experts. Due to the pilot character of the study, the recommendations are of a fundamental nature and do not address operational aspects. We felt it was fundamentally important to promote a strategic approach to the topic and to formulate initial measures on this basis.

The city of Basel has the opportunity to offer more secure structures to the most vulnerable among the homeless, and street homelessness / rough sleeping in the city of Basel can be ended (Recommendation 1). To this end, we propose a pilot project of an ‘emergency sleeping place with no conditions’ or a civil society alternative. There is also a need for more privacy for those who have no shelter; this includes clarifying the opening hours of services/institutions which offer places to rest in and the possibility of
storing personal belongings. About 100 people have to be taken into account here and this seems to us to be more than possible for the city of Basel.

We recommend countering homelessness through a Housing First strategy (Recommendation 2). Successes that have been researched and reported from other European countries, as well as from North America, underline the view that the acquisition of absent housing skills should not be defined as a prerequisite for obtaining housing. This needs some ‘translation’ to Basel and we see this as playing a role in combination with offers of supported housing, which have a demonstrated important role in the city of Basel.

Due to the precarious health conditions of homeless people there is an urgent need to improve health care and prevention (Recommendation 3). A help system consisting of medical and other professionals is outlined here.

The manageable number of roofless and houseless people in the city of Basel is contrasted by the much larger number of people who can slip into this situation (e.g. because they find themselves in a precarious housing situation). Recommendation 4 proposes a strengthening of the already existing housing pressure group and a fundamentally more open attitude towards experimental forms of housing.

From the point of view of those affected, homelessness can be combated above all by a regular income. We therefore propose enlarging the existing work possibilities (e.g. ‘mini-jobs’), but also linking the whole topic with the measures included within the framework of poverty reduction, as recommended, for example, by the National Programme against Poverty (Recommendation 5). The last two recommendations, Recommendations 6 and 7, also follow on from this idea. The census carried out in this study should become a permanent monitoring exercise (Recommendation 7). An observation that would further deepen the positive outcomes of the cooperation between the institutions/service providers involved in the study (including the neighbouring countries) (strengthening the network, Recommendation 6) and thus lead to a data situation that enables continuous adjustments through regular assessment.
1 Background

Homelessness is usually associated with an acute emergency. This is because being without a home falls short of the generally accepted minimum standard of living: in particular, a person’s needs for security and protection, recreation and intimacy cannot be met, or are only met to a limited extent. In addition, homeless people also suffer physical deprivations such as hunger and thirst. Homelessness is understood as both an involuntary exclusion and a voluntary withdrawal from society. In view of the magnitude of this social problem, it is surprising how little empirically proven knowledge about homelessness exists in Switzerland. The relationship of the development of social policy to fact-based studies is therefore also correspondingly thin. And even professional actors lack scientifically founded positions from which to argue against the widespread ideas and stereotypes that exist in society and politics.

These gaps were the starting point of the present study. In an approach conceived jointly with the professional community in the homeless sector in the city of Basel (Switzerland) and Lörrach (Germany), the number and circumstances of people affected by homelessness were recorded and analysed for the city of Basel. Scientific questions on this under-researched phenomenon in Switzerland weighed as much as implementation-oriented aspects. Accordingly, the study was designed to be process-oriented (see Figure 1) and also provided with its own funds on the part of the university. The Christoph Merian Foundation (CMS) was the main non-scientific funding partner; the social welfare office of the canton of Basel provided a smaller amount of funding. The institutions/service providers participated in the 24-month process at their own expense.

In order to meet the objective described above, i.e. develop a scientifically based situation analysis of people affected by homelessness, we decided to use the census as the basis for this report. On the one hand, there is currently no other similar data for Basel, and on the other hand, the census has produced objective data that can be used by the various actors to position themselves professionally. We also hope to be able to provide the professional community in particular with such a basis. And for the main funding partner, the Christoph Merian Foundation, we have provided an argument on which to base its own actions in relation to the purpose of the foundation (“alleviation of hardship and misfortune” and “promotion of the well-being of people” in the city of Basel, see CMS mission statement).

Figure 1: Study design
2 Methodology

In view of the different objectives of the study, we followed a mixed-methods approach:

- The quantitative survey ("census") was used to record the number of people affected by rooflessness, houselessness, insecure and inadequate housing and to describe their living situation. The survey is based on a combined approach consisting of:
  - a written survey of users of institutions/services for the homeless,
  - a night census in public spaces in selected areas of Basel,
  - analyses of statistics and other information from institutions/services for the homeless.

In a first step, a total of 12 relevant institutions in the city of Basel and the Basel region were identified. This selection was supported by experts from the city administration and NGOs in the field. The institutions and facilities are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Café ELIM - diaconal community work</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stadtarbeiterim.ch/index.php/cafe">www.stadtarbeiterim.ch/index.php/cafe</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frauenoase (emergency shelter for women)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.frauenoase.ch">www.frauenoase.ch</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gassenküche (street kitchen)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gassenkueche-basel.ch">www.gassenkueche-basel.ch</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact point Dreispitz (service for drug users)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.suchthilfe.ch/kontakt-und-anlaufstellen.html">www.suchthilfe.ch/kontakt-und-anlaufstellen.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact point Riehenring (service for drug users)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.suchthilfe.ch/kontakt-und-anlaufstellen.html">www.suchthilfe.ch/kontakt-und-anlaufstellen.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notschlafstelle (City of Basel night shelter)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sozialhilfe.bs.ch/nahwohnen/nachtschlafstellen.html">www.sozialhilfe.bs.ch/nahwohnen/nachtschlafstellen.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schwarzer Peter (streetwork project)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.schwarzerpeter.ch">www.schwarzerpeter.ch</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soup and Chill (street kitchen)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.soupandchill.com">www.soupandchill.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tageshaus für Obdachlose (day centre for the homeless)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stiftungsucht.ch/tageshaus-fuer-obdachlose">www.stiftungsucht.ch/tageshaus-fuer-obdachlose</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treffpunkt Glaibasel (day centre for marginalised people)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.treffpunktglaibasel.ch">www.treffpunktglaibasel.ch</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treffpunkt Gundeli (day centre for marginalised people)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.treffpunktgundeli.ch">www.treffpunktgundeli.ch</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop Jobshop (jobs on a daily basis)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stiftungsucht.ch/werkstatt-jobshop">www.stiftungsucht.ch/werkstatt-jobshop</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As users often visit several institutions, there was some risk of double counting in the survey. In order to avoid such double counting and the associated overestimation and its distortion of the structure of homelessness, the survey was conducted over one day, with the exception of the Schwarze Peter survey. At the beginning of each interview, the participants were asked whether they had already taken part in such a survey on that day or the day before at the Schwarze Peter facility.

To conduct the survey, 40 students from social work and related social science subjects (e.g. sociology) were employed as interviewers. They were prepared for the interviews and the interview setting. In institutions that were considered particularly challenging with regard to the survey, interviewers were chosen from among students who already knew the survey setting well (i.e. places, people, processes), e.g. due to a study internship.

The survey was conducted in close cooperation with all 12 institutions. In order to encourage the users of the services to participate, incentives such as meal vouchers, memory sticks and vouchers for the purchase of food from Caritas beider Basel were used. The survey was conducted on March 21st and on 20th plus 22nd in the Schwarzen Peter. On these two days, those users who had arranged a postal address with the Schwarzen Peter were asked to collect their mail. This ensured the largest possible number of users for this institution.
In addition to the survey in 12 institutions, a night census was carried out in selected areas of Basel. A comprehensive census of street homelessness in Basel was deliberately omitted. The empirical values (discussions with experts, own observations, preliminary studies) gave little reason to assume that the quantitative focus should be on rough sleeping/rooflessness. For the night census, ten survey areas were selected with the help of numerous experts:

- Claramatte (park)
- SBB site (main railway station)
- Horburg quarter (park)
- Euro Airport
- Lysbüchel (abandoned area)
- St. Johannspark (park) and the banks of the Rhine
- Matthäuskirchplatz (public place)
- Badischer Bahnhof (railway station)
- Erlenmatt (former brownfield area)
- Klybeck (harbour area)

The following report deliberately avoids mentioning a more precise localisation of the places where homeless people were found, above all out of consideration for those affected. To the best of our knowledge, such a census has not yet been carried out in Switzerland. In order to obtain a better overall picture of homelessness, the night census was carried out for the period of the main survey, i.e. on the night from March 21 to 22, 2018 in the period from 11 pm to 2 am with a total of 16 field observers. During this period, the field observers each visited the area assigned to them at least twice, working in pairs. The temperature that night was around freezing. The great challenge in identifying homeless people on the street became clear during the observation in the field. The counting is mainly based on pure observation, i.e. the previously trained observers analysed the situation using a catalogue of criteria, but did not address the person. In semi-private buildings (airport, railway station) it was almost impossible to identify homeless people just on the basis of the given situation. For this reason, the field observers there also spoke to the people. It turned out that some of the people addressed were in fact homeless, although they would not have been classified as homeless on the basis of pure observation.

- Ethnographic methods were used to identify needs from the point of view of people affected by rooflessness and houselessness: for about three months one member of the research team participated in the work of the teams in the institutions "Soup and Chill" (street kitchen), "Verein Gassenküche Basel" (street kitchen), "Treffpunkt Glaibasel" (day centre for marginalised people) as well as "Tageshaus für Obdachlose" (day centre for the homeless) and established contacts with the users. In the course of the process, they could increasingly leave to one side their role as a volunteer as they became known to the users, and thus the conversations could also take place spontaneously. The conversations were recorded in field diaries, partly in the form of memory records, partly as transcripts during the conversations. In addition, individual talks were recorded and are available as transcripts. These transcripts were the starting point for further discussions with the interviewees. Talks were held with a total of around 40 people in four institutions, and in-depth conversations with 12 people over several months.

- In order to deepen the understanding of needs and to specifically address the issues of ‘undocumented people’ in the city of Basel, ‘destitute migrant citizens’ from Central and Eastern Europe and ‘people with mental health issues’, 16 interviews were conducted with representatives of institutions. In addition to the service providers, the institutions interviewed also included day-care centres in the field of harm reduction and selected institutions from the field of supported living which are close to the topic of homelessness. In addition, an interview was conducted with experts in the field of homelessness from each of the neighbouring municipalities of Lörrach (Germany) and Saint-Louis (France). The following institutions were included in the interviews:
The interviews lasted about 45 minutes on average and were summarised. The interviews were based on a guideline with four thematic blocks: (1) questions about the mission, area of responsibility and self-image of the institution; (2) specific user groups as well as development in recent years; (3) housing situations and experiences in the search for accommodation of the clients or guests, with a special focus on the housing market and housing arrangements; and (4) need for action in the area of homelessness and specific project ideas.

Interviews were also carried out with the following bodies as part of the preliminary study:

- Contact point for undocumented people
  - www.sans-papiers.ch/index.php?id=105
- Planet 13 Internet Café
  - https://planet13.ch
- Interprofessional Trade Union of Workers
  - viavia.ch/iga
- Sozialhilfe Basel-Stadt (social welfare office, emergency and social housing)
  - www.sozialhilfe.bs.ch/notwohnen.html
- ‘Surprise’ street news magazine
  - www.surprise.ngo

• The analysis of the life situations of destitute mobile citizens from Central and Eastern Europe is being deepened in a separate project and is therefore still ongoing. In this study explorative interviews were conducted. The interviews were held over several weeks in various institutions. The focus was on people from Hungary. The interviews were conducted, recorded and transcribed in Hungarian. At the time of this report, descriptions of a total of six people were available.

• The ongoing analysis of the life situations of refugees in institutions for the homeless is based on interviews with people from Eritrea and Ethiopia. They were conducted in the Tigrinya and Amharic languages with the help of key interview questions. No transcripts were available at the time of this report.
3 Homelessness: Understanding and Typology

3.1 Homelessness is always related to housing situations

In the literature, the category of homelessness often includes people who live on the streets, in public places or without any accommodation that would be recognised as such. A person is also considered homeless if he or she is accommodated in emergency accommodation (emergency shelters) or stays overnight in low-threshold facilities (Drilling/Dittmann, in publication). In this study we take up this understanding of homelessness, but at the same time follow an expanded view of the issue, which includes problematic housing situations, and thus goes beyond the above-mentioned forms of homelessness. The European typology for homelessness and housing exclusion (ETHOS) was developed for this purpose by the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA 2018).

The ETHOS typology sets the absence of a home as a point of reference and expands the understanding by including additional forms of precarious accommodation. According to Edgar (2012), a home exists when:

1. there is legal title to it (legal sphere);
2. the person (and his/her family) can exercise exclusive rights of ownership and use (physical sphere); and
3. privacy and relationships can be maintained (social sphere).

Rooflessness in the sense of the ETHOS typology refers to the situations first described: when people live on the street, in public places or in accommodation not intended for residential purposes (according to Edgar 2012). Even those who sleep in emergency shelters in the city of Basel are considered roofless.

Houseless people, in the sense of the ETHOS typology, are people who live for a limited period in institutions for homeless people. By receiving an emergency apartment from the social welfare office in Basel, the three requirements for living in the sense supplied by Edgar are met directly. Nevertheless, we subsume emergency housing under the category of homelessness because the emergency housing is intended as temporary transitional housing for people affected by homelessness (see Chapter 8.2). In addition, women who have left their homes because of domestic violence and are accommodated in a shelter for the short to medium term are also counted as homeless. Refugees and other immigrants are also considered homeless if they are housed in facilities for refugees or guest workers. Furthermore, people who, due to a lack of accommodation, continue to remain voluntarily in prisons, medical facilities or youth centres are considered homeless.

In addition to the categories of "rooflessness" and "houselessness", the ETHOS typology integrates the categories of precarious housing, meaning insecure and inadequate housing. Insecure housing includes people who are unable to secure regular housing for themselves and therefore have to seek temporary shelter, e.g. with friends, acquaintances or relatives, or who have to live with their partner due to homelessness, or who are threatened with eviction.

Inadequate housing includes people living in dwellings that are not intended for conventional housing. This includes, for example, garages, cellars, or tents. In addition, accommodation belongs in the category of inadequate housing if it is inappropriate because it is about to be demolished, is overcrowded or is undersized.
3.2 ETHOS typology and the 13 different housing situations

The ETHOS typology differentiates between 13 different housing situations (see table on next page). This opens up exploration into the complexity of the phenomenon. The typology helps raise awareness, not only of the connection between homelessness and the housing situation, but also of the different and often hidden forms of precarious housing: especially involuntary overnight stays with friends or relatives. The typology is also open to the oscillating dynamics frequently observed in practice between different forms of homelessness. The use of the ETHOS typology offers a further advantage: internationally, the typology is increasingly being referred to when measuring housing shortages, which makes it possible to compare the extent and structure of homelessness.

On the other hand, the use of the typology is methodically challenging and there is also criticism of its content: the conceptual distinction between rooflessness and houselessness needs to be interpreted. Rooflessness in the German-speaking discourse may be equated with houselessness, understood as a special form of homelessness or set as a separate category (Ludwig-Meyerhofer 2008). Someone may well have shelter (e.g. with friends and acquaintances or in an institution), but not their own apartment: this person is considered "wohnungslos" (houseless), but not "obdachlos" (roofless). In this sense, homelessness can be understood as a generic term that includes rooflessness and houselessness.

Furthermore, there are difficulties in defining the categories used in the typology; for example, the difference between homeless people who sleep in sheds and people who live in insecure housing because they live in a garage. In addition, the boundaries of the transition from one form of housing to another can be fluid, as is the case with women who seek protection from domestic violence. They are considered homeless from the moment of entering the women’s shelter. However, when they return to their home, their residential status according to the ETHOS typology depends on whether they share the home with a person (e.g. partner) and whether they continue to be threatened by domestic violence or not. If women continue to be threatened after their return home, they belong in the category of insecure housing according to the ETHOS typology; if this is not the case, the person concerned is in the category of secure housing and thus falls outside the entire grid of the ETHOS typology. In addition, some categories, e.g. the category of accommodation in an asylum centre as a form of homelessness, are critically discussed in the international debate (Mouzourakis/Taylor 2016). Furthermore, the typology does not provide answers regarding responsibilities and regulations: neither the legal relevance or state responsibility are clarified by the existence of a described housing situation, nor does the typology provide answers to questions of social jurisdiction.

The decisive factor in our choice of the ETHOS typology is that it recognises the numerous precarious housing situations to which people can be exposed and from which arise serious and threatening burdens e.g. health impairment. These burdens justify the need for help and professional support, which are the starting points of this study.

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1 The English distinction between "rooflessness" and "houselessness" is somewhat more precise and both forms fall under the category of "homelessness", for which German offers two translations: "Wohnungslosigkeit" and "Obdachlosigkeit", which is conceptually confusing.
### Table 2: ETHOS - European typology of homelessness and housing exclusion (FEANTSA 2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Category</th>
<th>Operational Category</th>
<th>Living Situation</th>
<th>Generic Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>People living rough</td>
<td>Public space or external space</td>
<td>Living in the streets or public spaces, without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People in emergency</td>
<td>Night shelter</td>
<td>People with no usual place of residence who make use of overnight shelter, low threshold shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>accommodation for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the homeless</td>
<td>Homeless hostel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Temporary accommodation</td>
<td>Where the period of stay is intended to be short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Transitional supported accommodation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People in Women’s</td>
<td>Women’s shelter accommodation</td>
<td>Women accommodated to experience of domestic violence and where the period of stay is intended to be short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People in accommodation for immigrants</td>
<td>Temporary accommodation/reception centres</td>
<td>Immigrants in reception or short term accommodation due to their immigrant status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Migrant workers accommodation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People due to be released from institutions</td>
<td>Penal institutions</td>
<td>No housing available prior to release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medical institutions (*)</td>
<td>Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Children’s institutions/homes</td>
<td>No housing defined (e.g. by 18th birthday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People receiving longer-term support (due to homelessness)</td>
<td>Residential care for older homeless people</td>
<td>Long stay accommodation with care for formerly homeless people (normally more than one year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Supported accommodation for formerly homeless people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People living in insecure accommodation</td>
<td>Temporarily with family/friends</td>
<td>Living in conventional housing but not the usual place of residence due to lack of housing; occupation of dwelling with no legal tenure or illegal occupation of dwellings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No legal subtenancy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Illegal occupation of land</td>
<td>Occupation of land with no legal rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People living under threat of eviction</td>
<td>Legal orders enforced (rented)</td>
<td>Where orders for eviction are operative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Re-possession orders (owned)</td>
<td>Where mortgage has legal order to re-possess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People living under threat of violence</td>
<td>Police recorded incidents</td>
<td>Where police action is taken to ensure place of safety for victims of domestic violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People living in temporary/ non-conventional structures</td>
<td>Mobile homes</td>
<td>Not intended as place of usual residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-conventional building</td>
<td>Makeshift shelter, shack or shanty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Temporary structure</td>
<td>Semi-permanent structure hut or cabin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People living in unfit housing</td>
<td>Occupied dwellings unfit for habitation</td>
<td>Defined as unfit for habitation by national legislation or building regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Highest national norm of overcrowding</td>
<td>Defined as exceeding national density standard for floor-space or usable rooms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Short stay is defined as normally less than one year; Long stay is defined as more than one year.

(*) Includes drug rehabilitation institutions, psychiatric hospitals etc.
4 Homelessness and Housing Exclusion: the Census

4.1 Participation and response

The written questionnaire conducted in the 12 institutions met with great support. Of the 674 people who were eligible to participate, 469 were able to identify and evaluate housing situations. 178 people refused to participate. This corresponds to a response rate of 73.6%.

4.2 Structure

A total of 206 of the 469 people surveyed (43.9%) fell under the categories of rooflessness, houselessness, insecure or inadequate housing in the sense of the ETHOS typology on the day of the survey. Of these, 93 people (45.1%) stated that they have children themselves (whether they are also affected cannot be investigated further). Conversely, this means that for 263 people (53.5%) none of the ETHOS categories apply at the time of the survey. However, a large proportion of them, i.e. 165 of the 263 people (62.7%), belong to the group of people who have already experienced these situations: 77.2%, i.e. 362 of the 469 respondents, are currently or have been homeless at least once in their lives, or were in an insecure or inadequate housing situation.

To describe the current extent of homelessness and housing exclusion, we first turn to the group of 206 people who are currently (i.e. on the day of the survey) affected by homelessness and housing exclusion. When it comes to past experiences of homelessness and housing exclusion (see Chapter 5), we will again turn to all 469 respondents.

Table 4 shows the various housing situations according to the ETHOS typology. Those who find themselves in an insecure housing situation because they do not have a home or access to a home and therefore have to stay with third parties form the largest group with 31.1% of all 206 people. Some 18.0% of those currently affected live in an institution for people in need of housing. The third largest group consists of 28 people (13.6% of all respondents) who are currently living in emergency shelters. The emergency shelters are mainly the night shelters of the city of Basel (two people said they were staying overnight in a church or mosque). Twenty-seven respondents, i.e. 13.1% are currently roofless and staying overnight outside, so the fourth largest group is formed of rough sleepers.

The remaining housing situations are as follows: 14 respondents, i.e. 6.8%, do not have their own home because they are currently living in asylum accommodation. Twelve people (5.8%) are in an insecure housing situation because they do not have their own rental contract. Another 12 people (5.8%) live in an emergency apartment/flat arranged by the Basel social welfare office. There are also five people in an inadequate housing situation, as they live in a temporary and non-conventional structure, e.g. a caravan. In addition, those people who are accommodated in (cheap) bed-and-breakfasts or hotels (subsumed under ETHOS category 3, "Asylums and hostels") were considered: five people (2.4%) indicate that they live in bed-and-breakfast, hotel or guesthouse accommodation due to their homelessness.
Table 4: Housing situations according to ETHOS in Basel, total and grouped by gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing situation according to ETHOS typology</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Share (%)</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Share (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roofless</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People sleeping rough (e.g. street, park)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in emergency accommodation (night shelter)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houseless</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in transitional housing (emergency housing owned by the Basel-Stadt canton)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in longer-term housing and housing assistance</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation for asylum seekers</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostels, etc.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecure housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment without contract</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People living temporarily with relative/friends</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People living temporarily in non-conventional structures (tent, caravan)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless, I don't know where I'm staying.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One person did not identify their gender.
4.3 Gender

Of the 206 people affected, 167 (81%) are male and 38 (18.4%) are female. As far as gender distribution is concerned, there are clear differences in the profiles. Some 13.8% of men and 10.5% of women were sleeping rough. Twenty-four of the 167 men (13.8%) and only four women (10.5%) used the night shelters in Basel. Some 32.9% of men and 23.7% of women managed their housing exclusion by staying with a relative or friend. And 16.2% of men, but 26.3% of women, were housed in an institution for longer-term housing with or without support (mostly housing for special target groups such as people with addiction or with mental health issues). Of the 14 interviewees living in asylum accommodation, 13 were male. According to the State Secretariat for Migration, a total of 177 people were registered at the reception and procedure centre for asylum seekers in Basel (EVZ) on the day of the interview.

4.4 Age structure

Among the people affected by homelessness and housing exclusion, there are comparatively few younger and older people. Of the 206 people, 13 (6.3%) are aged 66 and over and 15 (7.3%) are aged 18-25. Most homeless people are in the middle age groups. Of the respondents, 47 people (22.8%) are aged between 26 and 35 years old and 66 people (32.0%) between 36 and 50 years old. A further 59 people (28.7%) are between 51 and 65 years old. A look at the different age groups reveals different living situations:

- Younger people tend to cope with homelessness privately, with 53.3% of 18-25 year olds spending the night with friends, acquaintances and relatives. With increasing age, the proportion of those who stay overnight with third parties decreases.
- Although the case numbers are low, it is striking that people in the older age groups are sleeping rough more nights than younger people.
- Older people also use night shelters more often than younger people.
- The middle age groups (26 to 50 year olds) are more likely than the older age groups to make use of the longer-term assisted housing facilities.
- Asylum seekers are significantly younger than those in the other categories of rooflessness, houselessness, insecure or inadequate housing.

4.5 Basel as the “centre of life”

Most people affected by homelessness and housing exclusion are living in the city of Basel. Some 74.7%, i.e. 154 of the 206 affected people describe Basel as their centre of life, 20.4%, i.e. 42 people live in a canton other than Basel-Stadt and nine people (4.4%) mainly live abroad; three people were staying in Basel because of a job. Of the 42 people who come from another canton, 31 live in the canton of Basel-Landschaft, six describe the canton of Aargau as their centre of life, the remaining five come from the cantons of Zurich, Solothurn and Ticino. According to the results, there is no clear argument for the thesis that many homeless people from other cantons and abroad use the city of Basel’s offers for homeless people.
4.6 Nationality

Just over half of the people affected by homelessness and housing exclusion have foreign nationality (50.5%). Nine people say they are stateless or refuse to state their nationality. Among the foreign nationals, 32 people (30.8%) come from the countries of Eastern Europe, most of whom have Slovak (8), Hungarian (7) and Romanian (7) nationality. There are 24 people from African countries. From this group, people with an Eritrean passport (10) form the largest subgroup. The majority of people from Western Europe have German nationality (10); 13 people come from Southern European countries (i.e. Italy, Spain, Portugal), of which seven people with an Italian passport represent the largest subgroup. Finally, 18 people are citizens of Asian countries, including Turkey and Russia; two people come from Central and North America. Overall, the great diversity of countries among the homeless is evident: they come from a total of 39 countries. The overwhelming majority, i.e. 94.2% of the foreign nationals concerned, are living in Switzerland. Some 83.3% of the foreign nationals who come from the EU declare the city of Basel to be their centre of life, while the figure for foreign nationals from outside the EU is significantly lower at 56.0%. A small proportion of foreign nationals have unrestricted right of residence in the form of a settlement permit C, with 29.6% of EU citizens and 16% of non-EU citizens stating that they hold such a permit. For the majority, i.e. 52% of non-EU citizens, the length of stay in Switzerland is clearly limited. Thirteen people stated that they held an F permit (provisionally admitted person, limited to one year), 13 people also held an N permit (asylum seeker, valid for half a year).

4.7 Duration of current homelessness

The interviewees are usually affected by homelessness and housing exclusion for a long period or are in one of the precarious housing situations examined for a long period:

- Sleeping rough lasts an average of 2.5 years for the 23 affected people who provide information. Of all those affected, 60.9% have been roofless for more than a year.
- Emergency accommodation, especially the night shelters, is visited for much shorter durations: the median length of stay is 0.5 years. But there are clear differences: 24% of the respondents have been using the night shelters for an average of one year already. A few claim to have used them even longer. The question arises as to why the night shelters are used for so long on average (other solutions may not be available).
- Housing situations in which people stay temporarily with other people and spend the night there also last for a long time. Some 55%, or 33 out of 60 people affected, have found themselves in these insecure housing conditions for more than a year. On average, people have been staying overnight with acquaintances, friends, relatives or their partner for 2.6 years because they do not have their own apartment.
- The 36 people who provided information about the longer-term housing facilities have on average already been using them for 1.6 years.
At this point it should be noted that the average duration of homelessness and the other precarious housing situations in our survey is higher because the present study is a so-called point-in-time count. In contrast to continuous censuses (e.g. surveys over the whole year), time-related censuses lead to an overestimation of long-term homelessness, since the probability of encountering people who have been affected by homelessness or housing exclusion for a longer period of time in the institutions investigated is greater than occurs with a cut-off date census.

4.8 Housing restrictions for roofless and houseless people

People sleeping rough are most affected by housing restrictions. These restrictions concern basic housing conditions. Of the 28 people who spent the night outside, 70% complained of cold and 44% of humidity. 56% of the people have no possibility (i.e. also not with acquaintances) to use a shower or bathtub, 42% have no access to electricity and 41% have no WC available. In contrast to those affected by rooflessness, people in the emergency shelters complain much less about a lack of and inadequate living standards. They more often criticize the existing conflicts with other people (36%). The same is true for people living in longer-term institutions, although this is not as pronounced (19%). Comparatively few people who find temporary shelter with acquaintances, friends and relatives point to problems. Only five people (11%) complain about cold at their place of accommodation. Very few people living in temporary non-conventional situations were interviewed, but those 5 people who live in caravans or other dwellings all complain about problems with cold.

4.9 Housing situation of people with a rental contract

Of the 469 respondents, 263 were neither roofless nor houseless nor in an insecure and inadequate housing situation at the time of the survey, with 251 people living in an apartment secured by a rental contract and 12 people owning their own apartment. However, a considerable proportion of people with their own tenancy agreement are not in a position to finance the apartment themselves. Some 58% of the 251 people with a tenancy agreement receive financial housing assistance from third parties, 97% of these from the state welfare office. This is to be seen as a clear indication that many users, despite a certain amount of security in the area of housing, are affected by poverty, find themselves in a precarious situation and are unable to finance their housing with their own financial means.

### Table 6: Financing of the apartment/flat for people with a tenancy agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Financing</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No external financing</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing, by</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete assumption of housing costs by social welfare office</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial assumption of housing costs by social welfare office</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary benefits (EL)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members, friends</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State contributions not known in detail</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions/Foundations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment benefit (Germany)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are people with their own rental contract for the apartment.

4.10 Limited quality of housing of social welfare recipients

In recent years, the media have often discussed the poor housing conditions of some welfare recipients (keyword: "Gammelhäuser"). Criticism has been levelled at properties that provide inadequate housing or rooms for welfare recipients. Their costs are often completely covered by social welfare funds. Above all, there is criticism that property owners are adjusting rents to the rising social welfare rates for housing due to inflation in the housing market. At the same time, however, the quality of housing is declining. At
this point it is important to mention that, according to the Basel-Stadt social welfare authorities, in more than 90% of the cases supported financially by social welfare, those receiving social welfare were already living in the apartment before they needed social welfare benefits in the form of (partial) assumption of the housing costs.

This survey provides an insight into the housing conditions of people who are unable to finance their own housing and are therefore dependent on social welfare. Table 7 shows how people assess their housing quality when their housing is partly or fully financed by the social welfare. For a better assessment of the results on housing quality, a comparison group is also listed. According to the ETHOS typology, this is made up of people who are currently affected by rooflessness, houselessness, inadequate or insecure housing.

Table 7: Problems with housing - people receiving social welfare compared to homeless people or people in an insecure or inadequate housing situation according to the ETHOS typology (multiple answers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>111 Beneficiaries of social welfare with rental agreement</th>
<th>206 people in a group of the ETHOS categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>number of mentions</td>
<td>% share of social welfare beneficiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood conflicts</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise outside</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defective heating</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mould</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No shower/bathtub</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No own WC</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcrowding</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No way to wash clothes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damp</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No electricity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total number of mentions</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It can be seen that the interviewees receiving social welfare also have restrictions in the area of housing that affect basic standards. Some 11% complain about cold in the apartment, 10% have a defective heating system, 5% have problems with damp in their apartment, 7% do not have their own shower or bathtub, 7% do not have their own toilet and 2% lack access to electricity. The absence of conflict-free housing affects a not inconsiderable proportion of those receiving social welfare. Nineteen percent complain about existing conflicts within the neighbourhood and again 13% perceive noise from the outside as a problem. The recipients of social welfare are subject to multiple burdens in the area of housing. The evaluations show that 26 people, i.e. 23% of the 111 people receiving social welfare support, perceive three or more housing deficiencies.

**Excursus 3: Sandra on the “cold fire”**

(59 years old, has been sleeping on the street for years, sometimes in an night shelter)

So when you’re out day and night for a long time: first you cool down, and then when you don’t have the possibility of going somewhere warm and balancing out again, then you cool down even more, and then it’s like burning. That’s worse than sunburn, because then you’re burnt through and through. It really goes through the body and through everything, including the organs, the muscles, the bones, everything. And you freeze and freeze and when you get the chance to get on a tram or sit somewhere in the station concourse or go somewhere in the meeting place and it’s nice and warm and you’re still sitting on the heating, you have weeks until you freeze just a little less - you freeze day and night, even at the greatest heat when you’re burned. You don’t notice anything burning outside. But if you then come into the warmth, then ... yes, sometimes you already have the feeling that it burns. And it takes a long time until you are cured of the cold fire or no longer suffer from it. And when that happens again, that you are again homeless outside and then in the winter time, when you are traumatized again, then - it becomes more and more violent. The burning, you are burned faster, so you are undercooled faster, burned faster, it takes longer until you are cured again when you have the opportunity.

Interviewer: ... How do you fall asleep at night in such a situation?

When it’s so cold, when you’re lying in your sleeping bag - earlier when I didn’t have such a good sleeping bag, or none at all - then you just don’t sleep from the cold until you get tired. But at the latest after half an hour you are up and ... you want to get up and your legs and everything is just swollen and you are numb ... and you can almost not get up, your hands hardly feel. But you have to get up. It is best to do this early in the morning and in a place where there are no people, otherwise they will think that there is someone who is up to something weird. That’s embarrassing.
5 Homelessness and Housing Exclusion in the Course of Life

5.1 Experience with homelessness

Homelessness and housing exclusion are not static conditions. Depending on how long the housing situation lasts, it can be chronic or episodic. The dynamic approach can show whether people who are exposed to precarious housing situations experience oscillating movements between different forms of insecure housing, inadequate housing, rooflessness and secure housing. In this study, we were able to answer these questions by asking the users in the institutions about their living situations over their lifetime.

Some 77.2%, i.e. 362 of all 469 users of the 12 institutions surveyed have at least once in their lives been or are (still) roofless or houseless or living in inadequate or insecure housing. That is more than three quarters of all users of the 12 institutions surveyed.

Many interviewees have experienced several different precarious housing situations in the course of their lives. On average, there are two different forms of homelessness and housing exclusion in the sense of the ETHOS typology for each person affected - this applies to both men and women. Of those affected, 29.8% even reported three or more situations: for example, in the past, they had slept rough and in the night shelter, and due to their homelessness they had also had to spend the night with acquaintances, friends or their partner. However, it is unclear how often and for how long they were exposed to these different housing situations. The people currently affected by homelessness and housing exclusion were even more frequently in different precarious housing situations.

Some 111 respondents, i.e. 53.9% of the 206 affected people, stated that overall they had experienced three or more homeless situations in the sense of the ETHOS typology.

A considerable proportion of users who have a proper tenancy agreement or their own house and are therefore currently in secure housing were previously affected by homelessness or housing exclusion. Some 165, i.e. 62.7% of the 263 people currently living in secure housing, stated that they had previously been homeless or lived in insecure or inadequate housing conditions. Their former precarious housing situation may have brought them into contact with the institutions which they are currently using.

Excursus 4: Markus

I meet Markus at the street kitchen. He is very reserved, but seeks conversation after a while and tells me that he does not yet know where he is sleeping tonight. He also had no money left, yesterday he gave his last cash to a colleague for the night shelter - he had a fever and therefore shouldn’t sleep outside. Markus has learned to cook, has worked in many well-known hotels and has got to know Switzerland in this way. Then came divorce, alimony, debt. He was very thrifty, but he had not managed; his boss noticed his increased unreliability. Since he lost his job, he has been living with friends, his luggage is distributed among them, sometimes he goes to the city night shelter, even though it is the least comfortable place for him. He’s registered with social welfare, waiting for success in finding a place to live. This waiting and searching has already been going on for a year. Markus takes it as it comes; he describes his daily routine as wandering between the institutions, the street kitchens and friends. He most misses the feeling of closing a door behind him and saying that this is his room and that no one can come in without his consent.
5.2 Frequent changes of living situations

The following (housing) situations are mentioned most frequently (see Table 8).

- The most common type of overnight stay due to homelessness and housing exclusion is with third parties. Some 61%, i.e. 222 of all 362 people affected, had had to live with relatives, friends or partner at least once in their life because they had no accommodation or no access to accommodation.
- The second most common form was rooflessness: of the 362 people, 50% experienced rough sleeping at some point in their lives.
- Of all those affected, 126 people, i.e. 35%, have spent at least one night in a night shelter.
- Longer-term facilities for people in need of housing were or are used by 79 people, which corresponds to 22% of the total number of people affected.
- Thirty-eight people (11% of all those affected) stated that they had to rely on transitional housing, i.e. an emergency home supplied by the social welfare department, in order to cope with their homelessness.
- Accommodation in a hostel, bed and breakfast or in a cheap hotel due to lack of housing was mentioned 46 times (13% of the total number of people affected).
- Inadequate housing in the form of temporary non-conventional structures (e.g. living in a camper van, tent) was mentioned 42 times (12% of the total number of people affected).

The survey of users in the 12 institutions indicates that men are more likely than women to find themselves in a precarious housing situation during their lifetime. Of all affected people, 80.9% are male, 18.8% are female. Accordingly, of all 764 mentions of rooflessness, houselessness, insecure or inadequate housing, 617 came from men. At 47.5 years of age, the women affected are on average 1.7 years older than the men.

Women spend more overnight stays with third parties due to a precarious housing situation than the men surveyed do, with 69.1%, i.e. 47 of all 145 women affected, referring to this form of insecure living with third parties, while 59.7% i.e. 175 of the 293 men affected refer to staying overnight with third parties. These results are a contrast to the lower proportion of women staying with third parties observed in the current housing survey.

As can also be seen from the survey of the current housing situation, men are more likely to find themselves in a situation where they have to sleep rough during their lifetime. At 50.9%, i.e. 149 of all 293 men affected, the proportion is five percentage points higher than for women, whose share is 45.6%, i.e. 31 of the 68 women affected.

Excursus 5: Anna

I meet 46-year-old Anna, who previously worked as a cleaner in southern Hungary, in the street kitchen. Anna lived in a small village near Pécs with her unemployed husband and six children. When Anna lost her job, the family had to live on welfare and child benefit. The contributions were so small that they couldn't make a living. After the social reform in Hungary in 2014, the Hungarian government halved social welfare payments and only one member per household is allowed to claim it. Child benefit has not been increased since 2006, which is why the financial relief for the family from child benefit has been significantly reduced. Because the whole family was in debt, Anna had to make a difficult decision about the future and move abroad to earn enough money to support her family. Anna now works as a cleaner for several private households in Basel. She lives in Lörrach in collective accommodation with many other people in order to reduce her expenses and to be able to transfer as much money as possible to her family.
Table 8: Experiences of homelessness and housing exclusion grouped by gender (multiple answers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing situation according to the ETHOS typology</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Share (%)</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rooflessness</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People sleeping rough (e.g. street, park)</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in emergency accommodation (night shelter)</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Houselessness</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in transitional housing (emergency housing owned by the Basel-Stadt canton)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in longer-term temporary housing and supported housing</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who have been released from institutions (prison, psychiatry)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation for asylum seekers</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostels (e.g. hotel, bed-and-breakfast accommodation)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insecure housing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People living temporarily with relatives, friends</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inadequate housing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People living temporarily in non-conventional structures (tent, caravan)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless, I don't know where I'm staying.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL MENTIONED</td>
<td>617</td>
<td></td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL PERSONS</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentages refer to the people affected (male, female, total), not to the number of mentions. One person with two mentions did not identify their gender. Forms of past and present rooflessness, houselessness, insecure and inadequate living are included.

5.3 Financial problems as a reason for the loss of one's home

The most frequent reason given for the loss of one's home is financial problems (154 mentions). The end or termination of the rental contract is cited as the reason for the loss of the apartment 104 times. Health problems are mentioned 99 times. Relationship problems are the cause of the loss of housing for 92 of those affected and 83 cite loss of employment (including bankruptcy after self-employment) as the cause.

The profile of the reasons why women lose their homes does not differ significantly from that of men. Financial problems are most frequently cited for both sexes, with men (44%) being more affected than women (37%). Women explain the loss of their home as being due to health problems slightly more
frequently than men (31% compared to 26%). Some 25% of men cite the loss of their job or bankruptcy as the reason for the loss of housing, while the figure for women is just 12%.

### Table 9: Reasons for the loss of housing (multiple answers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>All concerned</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial problems</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End/termination of rental agreement</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health issues</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship problems</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of job, bankruptcy</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons (flight, hospital/psychiatry/imprisonment)</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total affected</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentages refer to the total number of people affected (362) or to women (68) and men (293); two people who described themselves as homeless but did not state where they were staying were not taken into account; one person didn’t identify their gender.

### Excursus 6: Multiple critical positions as a reason for the loss of housing

Almost half (48%) of the people affected by housing loss state several reasons for the loss of housing. This is evidence of multi-problem situations on the part of those affected:
- 17% (61 people) cited three or more reasons that led to their homelessness and housing exclusion;
- 31% (111 people) cited two reasons;
- 43% (156 people) mentioned only one cause and 9% (34 people) gave no reason.

As far as the interplay of the reasons for the loss of housing is concerned, the following constellations emerge:
- 15% of those affected (55 people): financial problems and loss of job (or bankruptcy);
- 13% (47 respondents): financial and health problems;
- 12% (43 respondents): financial problems and end/termination of the rental contract;
- 9% (32 respondents): health and relationship problems.

Among the 156 people who cite a single reason for the loss of housing, financial problems stand out:
- 39 people (25%) mention financial problems;
- 32 people (21%) state the termination or the end of the rental contract;
- 25 people (16%) name relationship problems;
- 17 people (11%) mention health problems.

#### 5.4 Proposals to combat homelessness and housing exclusion

Below we focus on all 469 respondents. We assume that all respondents have had direct (as affected people) or indirect (as acquaintances of affected people) experiences with homelessness and housing exclusion. The proposals to combat homelessness and housing exclusion mention different directions and are detailed differently; for an overview they are categorized in Table 10.

As far as housing is concerned, the focus is on affordability: 142 respondents suggest lower rents to combat homelessness and housing exclusion. Some 68 people recommend more transitional housing and more and better emergency infrastructures (especially night shelters), and 44 people demanded more (affordable) living space and on five occasions the preservation of old or existing living space was demanded.
A wide range of proposals are aimed at improving existing housing assistance. In general, 64 proposals emphasise the strengthening and extension of existing services, and 26 people propose better financial support. In 20 cases improvements in the existing counselling services are suggested. Other proposals to combat homelessness and housing exclusion are of a structural and social policy nature. More political support and more support from public authorities, in particular social welfare, is often called for, with 64 mentions. The waiver of debts, or improved help in managing them is mentioned 46 times. Eight people call for easier allocation and regulation of residence permits to improve access to the housing market.

The proposals that demand a more societal response include above all more social acceptance of homeless people (63 mentions). Social structures are also addressed, such as improved integration into the labour market. However, the number of mentions is comparatively low, at 25, considering that 83 people surveyed previously saw job loss (including bankruptcy) as the cause of their own precarious housing situation. Only a few suggestions address the people themselves: 23 respondents point to the need for greater self-responsibility to combat homelessness. Thirteen people see no need for change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denominations</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% Share</th>
<th>% Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserve existing living space</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More concepts of alternative living / co-living</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More apartments / flats</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More transitional flats / emergency shelters</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower rents</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a specific facility</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More advisory services</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More financial support</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening/expanding existing services</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventing disadvantages of origin (nationality)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved integration into the labour market</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve social acceptance</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better residency permit</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolve debt collection and eviction</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More support from politicians and authorities</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More responsibility on the part of those affected</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No need for change</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>469</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6 Sleeping Rough: the Night Census

"Sleeping rough" falls under the category of rooflessness, meaning those who do not have their own home and therefore have to spend the night outdoors (category 1 of the ETHOS typology). The often-used term "living on the street" is misleading, because only rarely do these people actually spend the night on a street, rather they sleep in public places such as parks, where they can use a public toilet, warm up, wash themselves or use the protection available in the place e.g. against cold or attacks. Sleeping rough affects not only public spaces, but also semi-public or private areas with a public function, such as airports and railway stations or underground car parks.

The results of the night census carried out in Basel on the night of 21st to 22nd March between 11 pm and 2 am confirm the assessment that sleeping rough is not widespread. Overall, situations that indicate living on the street involving a total of 27 people were observed in all observation areas, e.g. because the person slept outside with a sleeping bag on a cardboard box. A large proportion, i.e. 22 of the people identified as homeless in this sense, were not actually outside, but in a building (e.g. airport, railway station).

On the same day, in the main survey carried out in the 12 institutions, 27 people also stated that they were sleeping outside. Although it is not possible to quantify exactly how many of the homeless people observed at night took part in the survey during the day, this proportion is estimated to be around one quarter. If the homeless people from the survey are added to those from the night census, excluding those who were already counted during the day in one of the facilities, the figure would appear to be 47 "rough sleepers" in Basel.
7 The Perspective of the Service Providers

In Basel, several institutions at different levels deal with people affected by homelessness and housing exclusion:

- The social welfare office of the city of Basel operates emergency housing (medium term), as well as a night shelter (short term) with separate areas for men and women.
- Day care facilities in the area of harm reduction offer accommodation, food donations, hygiene facilities and other support services.
- In the area of longer-term housing facilities, there are several institutions with a close relationship to homelessness.
- With regard to a broader understanding of housing assistance, the interest group “IG Wohnen” is a central institution providing social welfare and other institutions with services in the field of housing mediation and housing counselling.
- In addition, there are other bodies and institutions dealing with the issue of homelessness and housing exclusion, including counselling and social work support for specific target groups such as prisoners or victims of domestic violence.

7.1 Mission, offer and self-image

A large number of the representatives of the institutions interviewed regard the serving of food or offering the possibility to rest without the need to consume as the core of their own activity. In various institutions there is also deliberate talk of “guests” and it is emphasised that no pedagogical-therapeutic mission is pursued in order to give the “guests” a certain amount of time off. The focus here is on the possibility of access to a free (or cheap) meal, a meeting place where they can communicate with each other and, if necessary, a warm place where one can stay without having to consume anything. At the same time, people who present a further need for support are referred to other appropriate institutions. The range of food in the various facilities is more or less complemented by other offers such as shower and washing facilities, clothing for free or advice. In addition to this type of institution, in which food distribution is a central part, there are also institutions that focus more strongly on counselling, some of which also perform outreach work (see Table 11).

Several institutions in the field of day care services emerged as a reaction to the widespread unemployment in Basel in the 1970s or to the open drug scene in the 1980s and 1990s and were accordingly initially directed at people who were unemployed or experiencing addiction. The various institutions have gradually opened up over time to other target groups and today often include people experiencing poverty in general. Some of the institutions are generally open to anyone who wishes to take advantage of the service. As a rule, homelessness is only one of many issues.

On the one hand, the institutions in the area of day care services are regarded as providers in the area of harm reduction in accordance with the cantonal health strategy; on the other hand, many institutions generally describe themselves as low-threshold institutions. Various institutions consciously want to go beyond harm reduction in the narrower sense and are committed to further improving the situation of their target groups.

The representatives in the field of supported housing interviewed identify as the core of their activity the provision of housing for people who would otherwise not be accommodated anywhere due to an addiction problem or due to their mental health situation, at the same time as providing the necessary care and support so that critical life situations can be stabilised and areas for development created. An important point of reference is the promotion of housing skills. Accordingly, only people with a corresponding need for support will be admitted. The professionalisation in the field of supported housing that has taken place in recent years is reflected in the regulations and criteria that both the providers of supported
housing and their accepted clients have to comply with in order to guarantee financing by the public authorities. This financing is also linked to clear provisions on residency, which limits the circle of beneficiaries accordingly, with the exception of short-term bridging possibilities such as the Salvation Army.

While living in an institution involves relatively comprehensive care, supported living enables and requires more independence on the part of the people concerned.

7.2 Beneficiaries and target groups

In various interviews it was reported that the spectrum of people who use the day care facilities has widened over the years. In addition to homeless people and people with a background in substance abuse, nowadays many people affected by poverty also make use of these services. It has also been pointed out that today social decline can be a very rapid process, especially for people over 50 years of age who lose their jobs, because they can no longer find work (especially the low-skilled), or when several factors come into play, e.g. loss of work and breakdown of a relationship. An increase in the number of elderly people has been observed in various day care facilities, partly due to the ageing of the existing clientele.

In the context of people with a mental health disability, the interviewees pointed out from various sides the changes in the way psychiatry is now organised, in particular the shift towards ‘open psychiatry’. In day care facilities, people with a mental health disability seem to spend less time in inpatient facilities (university clinics) than before, so that they return more quickly to day care facilities and visit them regularly during a period under psychiatric care in order to maintain contact with their familiar surroundings. It has been reported on several occasions that people with a mental health disability who visit low-threshold facilities are often female.

Individuals with a mental health disability can present a challenge to day care facilities due to the already high occupancy rate: because their behaviour can be difficult to assess in some cases, because their behaviour can tend to be aggressive or because increased attention will generally be required. The increase in the number of people with a mental health disability in day care facilities is perceived as a challenge to which low-threshold facilities are adapting to some extent. For example, some institutions have strengthened their cooperation with specialists in the field of psychiatry or have specifically recruited staff with an appropriate professional background.
Excursus 7: Hospital/psychiatry interface

In the ETHOS typology, people are regarded as homeless if they are staying in inpatient facilities, e.g. hospital or psychiatric wards, because no solution has yet been found for them in the area of housing. Such statistics are usually not recorded, not even for Basel's hospitals. Nevertheless, homelessness is a relevant issue for hospitals, especially when patients who are already homeless are admitted to hospital. The University Hospital Basel (USB) is the largest health centre in northwestern Switzerland. The social service does not keep systematic case numbers on whether the person is affected by homelessness. However, a glance at the electronic documentation shows the importance of the issue. In 2017, for example, there were 21 notes stating that the patient was homeless, compared with 24 in 2016. If a homeless patient is already connected to an outpatient clinic, this can be used to refer him or her to the Salvation Army and other service providers; even if there is a support service, the referral to a suitable form of accommodation is usually made via these contacts.

University psychiatric clinics are repeatedly confronted with cases of impending or already existing homelessness, especially in connection with people suffering from addiction or acute psychosis. On the one hand, there are often oscillations in this area between supported housing, precarious forms of housing and psychiatric wards. On the other hand, it often happens that when people enter the clinic they are in the process of losing their apartment/flat, at which point, due to the length of the process before entering the clinic, it is often too late to prevent the loss of the accommodation. The search for a viable housing solution is therefore a frequent issue for social services on the relevant acute wards. In the case of homeless people, an attempt is usually made to place them in a sheltered or supported home after their discharge. If the person in question can be persuaded to accept this solution, this is generally successful. In some cases, however, there are also bottlenecks in finding suitable places and the search process takes longer. In certain cases it is possible to extend the stay in the clinic while waiting to find a follow-up solution. However, in cases in which a form of supported housing is rejected, it is not always possible to guarantee an immediate housing solution and the discharge then takes place, for example, to the night shelter or to a self-organised form of precarious housing.

Excursus 8: Church, police, campsite interface

Feedback from the religious communities shows that there are no official places for homeless people to sleep in churches and other religious communities, but occasionally a person can temporarily stay in one of the buildings as a result of housing shortages. The respondents pointed out that civil society is active and that the person or family affected by housing shortages is temporarily accommodated by members of the respective religious community.

The police, two local campsites and the plant nursery were involved in the extended research. Although they stated that they come into contact with homeless people in their work, they couldn’t provide any specific or meaningful figures.
Table 11: Overview of the services offered by the institutions interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Emergency accommodation</th>
<th>Supported housing</th>
<th>Day centre</th>
<th>Meals</th>
<th>Clothes</th>
<th>Medical care</th>
<th>Showers/washing</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Outreach work</th>
<th>Counselling</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social welfare office: emergency housing</td>
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<td>Café ELIM - Diocesan community work</td>
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<td>Salvation Army – supported housing</td>
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<td>Housing Aid Foundation</td>
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<td>Frauenoase (emergency shelter for women)</td>
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<td>Gassenküche (street kitchen)</td>
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<td>Planet 13 Internet Café</td>
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<td>Contact points (service for drug users)</td>
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<td>Schwarzer Peter (streetwork project)</td>
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<td>Soup and Chill (street kitchen)</td>
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<td>Tageshaus für Obdachlose (day centre for the homeless)</td>
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<td>Treffpunkt Glaiubel (day centre for marginalised people)</td>
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<td>Treffpunkt Gundeli (day centre for marginalised people)</td>
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<td>Contact point for undocumented people</td>
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<td>JuAr Jugendberatung (youth counseling service)</td>
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<td>UPK (social service, psychiatric clinic)</td>
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<td>Surprise – street news magazine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centre Communal d’Action Sociale Saint-Louis (F)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wohnunglosenhilfe Lörrach (Germany) (social welfare for the homeless, city administration)</td>
<td>x</td>
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</table>

Comments: In the case of supported living, day centres, food and shower facilities etc. are also included; however, this is only shown here if the offer is also directed at non-residents.
Another group that received special mention is destitute migrant Eastern and Central European citizens. These are people who are looking for a job in Switzerland or are temporarily employed in a precarious sector of work. On the one hand, there is the assessment that these people often have little chance of finding a job. On the other hand, there are also indications of job sectors in which employment is repeatedly found, such as trade fair construction sites.

In the interviews, the representatives of the institutions pointed out that destitute EU citizens could formally apply for emergency aid ("Nothilfe") and that this was being tried to circumvent the use of low-threshold facilities in order not to trigger the process of deportation associated with the use of emergency aid. Support for these people is therefore kept to a minimum in various institutions, partly because there are fears that otherwise capacity limits would be exceeded.

Excursus 9: Homeless Hungarian citizens in Basel - a contribution by Dr. Zsolt Temesvary

(In addition to the study and the data collected in it, an expert opinion was commissioned from Dr. Zsolt Temesvary regarding the life situations of destitute migrant citizens from Central and Eastern Europe.)

The people who are of interest here have mostly come to Switzerland because of the economic and social changes that have taken place in Hungary since the 1990s. Two groups have been identified:

- Professionals and skilled workers (e.g. painters, bricklayers, nurses and mechanics) with vocational training who had already secured their existence in Hungary, but came to Switzerland for better job opportunities. They had sometimes worked in Germany or Austria before and learned the German language sufficiently well to be able to take on individual work. They are currently exposed to extremely precarious working conditions in Switzerland.

- Homeless people, prostitutes and "tramps" fleeing poverty, poor livelihoods and social exclusion in Hungary. Although they have a Hungarian passport, many of them belong to the Hungarian minority in Romania, Ukraine or Slovakia. They sometimes came to Switzerland against their will or as a result of trafficking.

Although I was able to ask a dozen homeless Hungarians about their living conditions, none of them said that they came to Basel in a planned and goal-oriented way. Basel is a relatively small city and quite unknown in Hungary. When I spoke to homeless people who had planned to emigrate, they rather named Vienna or Munich as the destinations of their journey. In the interviews I conducted with Hungarian homeless people in Basel, everyone said that after several stopovers in Western Europe they actually just happened to land in Basel and stayed there because of the comparatively good conditions.

The journey from Hungary to Switzerland is easy. Homeless people never come by plane; they travel by train. There is a direct train from Budapest (Ostbahnhof) to Zurich HB; tickets can be bought for 100 euros. That is why many homeless people travel back to Hungary several times a year to see their children and families again and to take care of other matters.

The "push" and "pull" factors experienced by homeless people have very important influences on migration and movement. The homeless leave places where they are criminalised and disadvantaged, in favour of those places where the authorities are supportive, the police more tolerant and the social services more generous. Several stories confirm that homeless Hungarians consider Basel to be a good and friendly place where you can collect a lot of money by begging or busking, the soup kitchens provide free food and the police are tolerant. These are compelling pull factors in the face of large cities in other Western European countries where homelessness is more likely to be prosecuted and criminalised.
In the area of longer-term and supported housing, the target group is, as already mentioned, much more limited, as only people with a specific need for care or assistance are entitled to access this. In addition, there are clear requirements regarding the type of residence that might be financed by social welfare. Interviewees described how people who enter a supported housing facility are often affected by an eviction or some kind of mental health issue. The dissolution/divorce of an existing partnership which had prevented a further slide into a crisis until then can also play a role here. The presence of people who have been homeless for a while and then depend on supported housing after a certain age has
also been reported. Another group of people who often come into supported and long-term housing are young adults who leave a children’s home after reaching the age of 18. Furthermore, repeated transfers to supported housing can take place after stays in a psychiatric hospital. Here, too, the trend towards shorter stays under psychiatric care were partly addressed and it was pointed out that this development leads to the fact that certain people no longer have a clear enough diagnosis to be cared for in a psychiatric hospital, but are still too problematic for a supported housing environment.

Excursus 10: Release from prison

There are no statistics on the number of prisoners who lose their homes due to their imprisonment and have to find accommodation when released. Nevertheless, in the prisons and penal institutions of the city of Basel, housing is an important issue, especially in the preparation for release.

The threat of the loss of the apartment is already a threat during the detention phase. If the legal basis and requirements for social welfare support are met, social welfare payments can cover the housing costs for a maximum period of six months (in the case in the canton of Basel-Stadt). This thus follows the principle of the presumption of innocence of suspects. In these cases, if the detention lasts longer than six months, the apartment is usually lost (eviction). For most prisoners, this situation leads to the loss of their personal belongings, because these must be reduced to two to three cardboard boxes, since social welfare in Basel-Stadt no longer covers storage costs. In the case of longer prison sentences and inpatient measures pursuant to Art. 60, Art. 61, Art. 59 and Art. 64 of the Swiss Penal Code, most convicts lose their homes during the execution of sentences.

The provision of housing after serving a prison sentence proves to be a major hurdle. Many people released from prison are in debt and with their previous convictions (entry in the criminal record / gaps in their curriculum vitae), their chances of accessing housing on the open market in Basel are very low. It may be necessary for individuals to present a confirmation of a residential address for early release from detention. The probation service Basel-Stadt (Bewährungshilfe) supports the process of searching for an apartment within the framework of Art. 93 StGB (probation service) and social care according to Art. 96 StGB. But support in finding accommodation is limited despite the involvement of third parties (e.g. IG Wohnen). Cheap bed-and-breakfast accommodation or male/female dormitories then come into the frame as housing solutions, or the released former prisoners find a place in the supported housing sector. Although not even one tenth of prisoners are female, women also face the problem of finding a flat after serving their prison sentence.

Within the framework of the open and alternative penal system and its implementation measures, such as that offered in some prisons in Basel-Stadt penal centre through electronic monitoring, the independence of the people convicted under criminal law (including housing competences) can be maintained and promoted. These forms of enforcement create or maintain social contacts which can increase the chances of a future, adequate form of housing and this in turn can have a positive influence on the process of reintegration.

After release from prison, former prisoners do not always have access to secured tenancy housing, and they therefore have no other option than to stay with friends, acquaintances or relatives on their release. Moving to rural areas (e.g. Basel-Landschaft) does not necessarily improve their chances on the housing market, as the market supply of 1- and 2-bedroom flats financed by social welfare or self-financed is also low there. Since people with previous convictions have very few opportunities on the open housing market and are also given lower priority in the area of subsidised housing, in the opinion of the Basel-Stadt probation service it is worth considering the creation of a protected housing offer for those released from prison: secure housing can contribute to successful reintegration into society. If the needs of those released from prison are taken seriously, secure housing and adequate housing conditions are among their central concerns after serving a sentence, according to the experts of the Basel-Stadt probation service.

It is not possible to determine how many people have to give up their homes during their imprisonment and need a home after being released.
The situation is similar for asylum seekers: individuals from the group of undocumented homeless people may occasionally appear in certain day care facilities without access restrictions, but their status is not directly visible here either. If there is a need for specific support, the contact point for undocumented people is usually informed.

**Excursus 11: People in asylum procedures and undocumented people**

According to the ETHOS typology, people are counted as homeless if they are accommodated in asylum centres. For those who are in the asylum procedure, it is unclear whether their application to be accepted as a refugee will be approved, which host country is responsible or whether the applicants will have to return to their countries of origin. Obviously, these people don't have their own apartment.

Asylum seekers in Switzerland initially stay in so-called reception and procedure centres (ECCs). In the canton of Basel-Stadt there is a reception and procedure centre for the asylum region of North-western Switzerland - consisting of the SO, BS, BL and AG cantons. As far as the number of people in the ECC in Basel is concerned, the figures can fluctuate quite considerably within a few days. There is a high variance in occupancy throughout the year. According to information from the State Secretariat for Migration, 177 people were registered at the ECC Basel on March 21st, the day of the survey.

The cantons are responsible for accommodation and health care. In 2017, the social welfare statistics counted a total of 457 asylum cases in the canton of Basel-Stadt. 129 of the 223 asylum seekers and 41 of the 234 provisionally admitted people were then accommodated in collective accommodation (e.g. Siedlung Dreispitz). Six asylum seekers and 28 provisionally admitted people were accommodated in a supported accommodation run by an organisation other than the asylum department. According to information provided by the Basel-Stadt social welfare office, at the beginning of 2019 there were around 1,650 accepted refugees and temporarily admitted people (status B and F) living in the canton. Currently, 1,370 of them are supported and cared for by the social welfare department. Eight hundred are refugees with status B or F and 570 people are considered provisionally admitted (F).

The results of the survey on the causes of homelessness should be noted in this context. It also mentioned residency status and refugee status as causes of existing or previously experienced homelessness. People with this status are often not included in any official asylum procedure. Some of them live in Switzerland as undocumented people. Due to their illegal residence alone, these people often find themselves in insecure housing. The vast majority of undocumented people are also unlikely to have signed a lease because this would have criminal consequences for landlords. There is no exact figure about undocumented people collected by the State Secretariat for Migration and the B.S.S. According to the research unit “Volkswirtschaftliche Beratung AG”, 4,000 undocumented people live in Basel (SEM, B.S.S. 2015). This figure alone suggests that a significant number of people in Basel do not have an enforceable lease and are dependent on the good will of their landlord.

### 7.3 Housing situations and searching for housing

The representatives of service providers interviewed point to different forms of homelessness and housing exclusion in which the users of their facilities find themselves. The representatives report on people who stay with friends and acquaintances, on people who spend the night in a cellar, in a garage or a period of time in the night shelters or sleeping rough. In addition, there are also people who are accommodated in the psychiatric clinic and who spend the day in the day care facilities. The interviewees also point out that their users also include people who have their own home.
It has been reported several times that precarious forms of housing are caused, among other things, by people who refuse urgently needed help. It was also pointed out from various interviewees that the night shelters have a bad reputation and that some people prefer spending the night on the street rather than in the night shelter.

In almost all interviews, the search for a cheap apartment has been described as extremely difficult, and because of debt collection, and especially with existing rental debts, but also at the moment when one no longer appears to meet the standards of the landlords, there is apparently little chance of finding an apartment on the open housing market. This difficulty arises not only for people who have lost their homes or are threatened with losing them, but also for people in the field of sheltered and supported housing, when the time comes that a person could move on to other housing situations (i.e. because they don’t need supported housing any more) but no other housing is found. In these cases, providers of supported housing are faced with the choice of either evicting a person who has been supported so far with no follow-up solution, or of foregoing financing for the relevant cost unit.

In addition to the difficult circumstances on the open housing market, the so-called "Gammelhäuser" (mould, damp, etc.) were addressed. Here, furnished rooms are rented to social welfare recipients at the maximum rate, with people living in the smallest of rooms and in poor living conditions (e.g. defective heating). According to the interviewees, this living environment is not only characterised by poor hygiene conditions and a lack of privacy, but also by the mutual negative influence that addicts, for example, may exert on each other, and thus represents a ‘sham solution’ which may prevent entry into supported housing.

7.4 Need for action in the area of homelessness and housing exclusion

Mental health issues are a topic that has been addressed by the representatives of service providers several times. The interviews revealed a need for more outreach (social) work in public places in order to be able to deal with a deterioration in the health situation of homeless people at an early stage. Also in the field of psychiatric care, a strengthening of outreach work was called for, including relieving the burden on low-threshold facilities. It was also pointed out that even minor diseases can pose a challenge to people living on the street.

In the area of temporary housing, various interviewees pointed out that more interim solutions were needed. With regard to young adults, it was emphasised that further alternatives to the existing accommodation providing emergency beds would be desirable, as these are exposed to various negative influences. In addition, with regard to waiting lists in the area of supported housing, the question was raised as to whether additional places might be needed.

Another topic is low-threshold housing beyond institutional offers. With regard to the much-criticised "Gammelhäuser", it was suggested that the authorities should impose conditions on landlords in order to counteract the accumulation and consolidation of problem situations. Alternatively, simply furnished living spaces should be created which are also available to people who otherwise have little chance on the housing market. Creative and short-term interim uses were also proposed to accommodate homeless people. In addition, it was repeatedly stressed that more affordable housing should be offered, whether through conversions or targeted new construction. Access to housing for socially disadvantaged people could, for example, be facilitated by linking the promotion of cooperatives to certain quotas for socially disadvantaged people.

The prevention of housing losses was also addressed from various sides. Here, a general contact point for landlords was proposed, which would be available in case of difficulties in tenancies and would seek possible solutions, e.g. in the case of existing outstanding rent, as well as, if necessary, assuming rent guarantees within a certain framework. A more active offer of residential support in critical tenancies could also lead to an easing of the situation. Reference was also made to the welfare office in the city of Lörrach (Germany), which intervenes systematically and at an early stage in eviction actions and in
many cases can achieve the maintenance of the tenancy agreement, which could also be a model worth examining for Basel/Switzerland.

One topic that was addressed several times concerns the treatment of destitute citizens from EU countries and people from other cantons. On the one hand, the corresponding access criteria were understood, on the other hand, a more pragmatic way of dealing with them was desired. In the case of the neighbouring cantons, it was also stressed that they should participate more financially in various areas or create more offers of their own.

In addition, individual citations referred to the strengthening of outreach counselling in day care facilities, the expansion of residency opportunities and the expansion of low-threshold employment opportunities. Occasional warnings were also issued against ‘over care’ and it was emphasised that, when creating further offers, care should be taken to connect these to existing structures wherever possible.
8 Current Accommodation for Homeless People

8.1 Night shelter

In Basel, there is one night shelter for which the Canton of Basel-Stadt social welfare department is responsible. It is regarded as a central emergency shelter for people living rough. The facility can be used between 8 pm and 8 am (Sunday to 9 am), with admission between 8 pm and midnight. In the Social Report 2017 (Statistisches Amt Basel Stadt) the emergency shelter is described as follows:

"On the ground floor there is a lounge with a television which can be used until 1.00 am. In the women's department there is also a small lounge which can only be entered by women. On various floors there are three toilets and three washing facilities (shower, useable until 1.00 am). Guests can also wash their laundry (laundry room with two washing machines and two tumble dryers, usable until midnight). Each guest is allowed to bring one piece of luggage, valuables can be deposited overnight at the reception. Pets are not allowed. If necessary, the supervisors present can provide information on further offers of help, but no social work/social pedagogical advice or support is currently offered. Non-compliance with the house rules (e.g. violation of the strict ban on bringing in or consuming drugs and alcohol or of the general ban on smoking, sleeping in the areas for the opposite sex, violence and damage to property) can lead to expulsion and house bans, depending on the severity of the problem... It is possible to stay overnight in the emergency shelter against cash payment or presentation of a cost guarantee. People registered in the canton of Basel-Stadt pay CHF 7.50 per night. All other people usually pay CHF 40.00 per night." (Statistisches Amt Basel Stadt 2017, p. 26).

The social welfare department counts the numbers of users in the night shelter. The Statistical Office of the Canton prepares the data and has been keeping annual statistics since 2009. The statistics for the year 2017 show a total of 415 different people for the whole year who have visited the night shelter for different periods of time. The statistics on the number of nights spent in the shelter show that 53% of the 415 people visited the facility for one to seven nights, only a small proportion stayed longer: 9% spent 61 to 150 nights there; 8% stayed more than 150 nights in the night shelter.

In comparison to the survey of people conducted in the 12 institutions surveyed, the length of stay in the night shelter as reported in the 2017 annual statistics is shorter. In the survey, 28% of the 23 people who stay overnight stated that they stay there for three to 12 months (90 to 365 days); 24% have been visiting the shelter for more than a year. One explanation for the longer average duration compared to the annual statistics, as found in the written survey, could be that the interviewees assessed the housing situation as a whole and did not take into account, for example, short withdrawals from the night shelter. Another reason is related to the key date survey and the increased probability of meeting people who have been visiting the facility for some time.

In 2017, an average of 65% of all places available for women (12 beds) were occupied, while the occupancy rate for the 63 places for men was 57%. In the winter months, the occupancy rate is generally higher than in the summer months. The comparatively low occupancy rate can be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, it is seen as a sign of low levels of homelessness. On the other hand, the low utilisation is explained, among other things, by difficult access to the night shelter (e.g. because of the costs) and it can also be interpreted as an expression of the poor quality of the facility.
In a time comparison of the years 2009 to 2017, the occupancy rate for both women and men has a curvilinear pattern, and the increases and decreases in occupancy rates between men and women show certain opposing tendencies. Between 2009 and 2011, the occupancy rate for women was on average between 48% and 43% and then increased in 2012 to an average occupancy rate of 70% for the 12 places. By 2015, the occupancy rate had risen again to 82%. With average occupancy rates of 56% for 2016 and 65% for 2017, the shares have recently been significantly lower than in previous years.

In contrast to women, there was an increase in bed occupancy by men from 58% to 70% right at the beginning of the observation period. After that, the average annual occupancy rate of 63 places drops to 57% for 2011 and 56% for 2012. As with women, the occupancy rate rises to 75% in the following years, but only until 2014; after that, the average occupancy rate drops to 58% in 2017.

A look at the age structure for 2017 shows that 41- to 50-year-olds form the largest group among the users of the night shelter, with 24%. The second largest group is 31- to 40-year-olds. In 2017, their share was 22%. The third largest group is 51- to 60-year-olds with a share of 21%. This is followed by the age groups of 26- to 30-year-olds and young adults aged 18 to 25 years, 12 and 11% respectively of all overnight stays. Taken together, the 18- to 30-year-olds are the second largest group. People over 60 years are still rarely to be found in the night shelter, with 9.2%.
In comparison, the survey conducted in the 12 institutions shows a similar age structure: among the 23 people who stated that they stayed overnight in the night shelter, the focus of age was on the 30- and 36- to 50-year-olds respectively.

A look at the entire study period from 2009 to 2017 shows that the proportion of younger adults, i.e. 18- to 25-year-olds and 26- to 30-year-olds, but also the next higher age groups, i.e. 31- to 50-year-olds (at least since 2013), is tending to decline over time, while the group of older users is rising continuously. The sharpest increase is among the 51- to 60-year-olds: their share was 13% in 2009 and 21% in 2017. All in all, an ageing of the users of the Basel night shelter is discernible.

The number of people who visited the night shelter on 21st March 2018, i.e. on the night of the survey, was 48, seven of whom were female. In the survey itself, 23 people stated that they would stay overnight in the night shelter. Not even half of all people who visited the shelter used the daily offers of the 12 facilities examined on that day or did not take part in the survey. The occupancy rate of the night shelter on a comparatively cold night was 65% for men, and 58% of the two rooms available for women were occupied.

8.2 Emergency accommodation/housing

Emergency housing is one of the forms of support that ETHOS typology sees as transitional housing for homeless people. The emergency housing in the canton of Basel-Stadt is an emergency solution for people on social welfare (priority is given to families) that is initially limited to six months. The occupants are urged to search for a suitable apartment on the open housing market during this time. In the broader sense, apartments for particularly disadvantaged people or at least some of these apartments (in accordance with Art. 16 of the Housing Promotion Act) can be classified as emergency apartments.

According to ETHOS, people are considered houseless because they would be houseless without an emergency apartment. However, a rental contract limited to six months is concluded between the social welfare authorities and the people concerned, and the entitlement to claim such housing is re-examined when the rental contract expires. For these six months, people enjoy protection under tenancy law.

The consequences of rooflessness and houselessness are clearly cushioned by the emergency housing, because the affected people have not only a place to sleep, but an apartment at their disposal. It is not the “homeless” status that determines the possibility of obtaining an emergency home. Emergency housing is mainly provided to families (including single parents) affected by housing shortages (without housing or with a terminated tenancy with no subsequent solution, facing imminent eviction) with corresponding cantonal citizenship in Basel who are entitled to social welfare support. Single homeless people are given a lower priority. This group can use the night shelter if the one-bedroom flats provided are occupied. They will not get an apartment there, but only a place to sleep.

The emergency housing/accommodation consists of 49 three-bedroom apartments, 48 four-bedroom apartments, 33 two-bedroom apartments and 12 one-bedroom apartments (as of September 2018). The total number of residents is subject to certain fluctuations over the year, partly because the occupancy rates and composition of the household can change (e.g. when a family member moves out or family size increases through the birth of a child). According to information provided by the Basel-Stadt social welfare office, a total of 103 adults and 97 children were living in the emergency apartments in September 2018.

In the survey only 12 people live in the emergency accommodation. Only a small proportion of the people who live there are using the 12 institutions included in the survey. If the 200 people who move into
emergency housing are
taken into account for
overall statistics on
homelessness and
housing exclusion, the
profile for Basel
changes significantly,
as shown by the written
survey.

The five-year statistics
show a steady expan-
sion of emergency
housing in Basel-Stadt.
In 2013 there were 98
emergency flats, by the
end of 2017 156 emer-
gency flats were availa-
ble. Obviously, the so-
cial welfare system is
responding to an in-
creasing number of
families in need of housing. In combination with results from other statistics (e.g. increase in the family
rent contribution rate), more and more families are dependent on financial housing assistance. This aid
is an expression of increasing family poverty in the city of Basel, which is also evident in the increasing
number of families on social welfare.

The occupancy rate of the emergency apartments on offer is currently 92%. At year-end 2017, a total
of 13 emergency flats were vacant (five two-bedroom flats, six three-bedroom flats and two four-bed-
room flats). The observation that, despite expansion, the occupancy rate of emergency housing has
averaged over 90% since 2011 is a clear indication of existing demand. Only a small proportion of those
affected can leave the emergency housing quickly, as originally intended. In 2017, 28% of emergency
housing has been occupied by the same people for less than a year, and 51% of households have been
living in emergency housing for one to three years. Six percent of those affected have been living in the
same emergency apartment for more than ten years.

8.3 Transitional and longer-term housing: examples

It is proving difficult to record the existing offers of assistance for the homeless in the sector of supported
or non-supported transitional and longer-term housing. Many services for homeless people are inte-
grated into support that address health problems, in particular drug and alcohol abuse and mental or
physical illness. The social welfare office of the Canton of Basel-Stadt lists a total of 15 service providers
under the heading "accompanied and supported living for various target groups", some of which are
further differentiated and may, for example, include several residential buildings and projects. How many
cases of accompaniment or counselling in the field of outpatient and inpatient housing assistance have
to do with homelessness cannot be determined exactly on the basis of the individual annual reports of
the institutions.

In this section we would like to focus on the Diakonische Stadtarbeit Elim (ELIM Foundation for support
to substance abusers) and the Salvation Army, two larger institutions in Basel that offer supported hous-
ing (clients live on their own but supported by social workers) and apartments in the Foundation’s resi-
dential buildings. Its services are aimed at people with a mental health or addiction problem, as well as
at people at risk of homelessness. The majority of the people accommodated by ELIM and the Salvation
Army have multiple problems, which also make housing more difficult or restrict access to housing.
The Salvation Army in Basel offers 48 men and 36 women places in their own residential homes. In addition, there are 28 apartments for supported housing. A distinction is made between the WONACH and WOMIT projects. Both options have preventive aspects, because they work to preserve the housing by working on the multi-problem situations. The WONACH offer is aimed at people who have been able to rent their own living space and who require housing assistance; in the WOMIT offer, the Salvation Army has rented cheap living space and sublets the living space subject to conditions (e.g. care contract). While the people in the women's or men's shelter can be counted as homeless because they do not have their own tenancy agreement for an apartment in the regular housing market, the clients in supported housing situations in the sense of the definition are not homeless because they have either been able to rent their own living space or have signed a sub-tenancy agreement with the Salvation Army.

Care contracts are concluded with the in-house apartments supported by the Salvation Army; adherence to these contracts ensures that they live with the Salvation Army. The basic prerequisite for access to the women's and men's dormitory is a cost unit that provides the cost guarantee for accommodation and care.

There is no differentiation in the reasons why people are living in the supported housing offered by the foundation. This is shown by the internal statistics of the Salvation Army for supported housing: among the reasons for entering the 26 places currently provided for, basic mental health problems stand out (24 people). There are usually additional problems which illustrate the multi-problem situations of these people and which also make it much more difficult to live in or search for accommodation: 12 people are suffering from an addiction, 18 show "tendencies to self-neglect", six were threatened with a termination of their tenancy agreement, 15 were in a personal crisis before entering and ten were homeless before cooperating with the Salvation Army.

As far as the dynamics of housing entries and exits are concerned, the figures for the Salvation Army with eight entries and ten exits in 2017 show a relatively high permeability of around 35%. This is surprising, since for 2017 12 people have been in the Salvation Army's residential care for at least three years and seven people for at least two years.

ELIM has 66 residential places, of which 29 are apartments within the ELIM residential house, 14 of them with nursing care and 23 are supported housing solutions. The 29 residential places have been part of the inventory since the establishment of the institution. Most clients come from situations of actual or impending homelessness. Some of the clients have severe addiction problems and multi-problem situations. Eighteen withdrawals were registered in 2017, which indicates a certain permeability for 66 places. Eight people were able to return to their own home.

All places are usually occupied. If one adds up the number of people who receive support from ELIM (29) and the Salvation Army (84), there are 113 people who do not have their own housing in the ‘regular’ housing market, which is secured by a rental contract, and who are dependent on the institutions mentioned. In the sense of the ETHOS definition, they are to be regarded as homeless.

In the main survey of this study, 37 people stated that they live in a residential or homelesss assistance institution. Even if not all clients in the residential sector are in the institutions due to homelessness and may have their own flat outside the institutions, the actual number of homeless people in residential institutions is higher than the 37 people determined in the survey.
9 Context Analysis: Housing Market

9.1 Housing shortage in the Basel housing market

The Basel housing market has been under strain for some time. Rents are rising and affordable housing is becoming scarce, which in turn leads to more financial burdens, especially for lower-income households. As rents for low-income households rise, so do the risks of having to give up their homes, running into housing shortages or having to move away. Access to the scarce housing market is even more difficult if low incomes are accompanied by situations such as job losses, debt or health problems. It is known from research and practice that some ethnic groups are discriminated against in the housing market. Also in the written survey of this study, the loss of housing and the more difficult access to inexpensive living space were explained by the rise in rents, e.g. after renovation of the apartment or building.

One indicator of the lack of housing on the open housing market is the number of vacant dwellings, or the vacancy rate. Basel-Stadt is one of the cantons in Switzerland with the lowest number of vacant apartments in relation to the total housing stock. A look at the last two decades shows a significant decline in the canton’s vacancy rate as well as in the number of empty flats. Between 1998 and 2014, the vacancy rate fell from 1.5% to just 0.2%. Since then, the vacancy rate has risen to 0.7% (2018), but it is still well below 1%, which, according to the Federal Court in Lausanne, justifies the use of the term ‘housing shortage’ to describe the Basel housing market. Between 1998 and 2014, the number of empty dwellings fell from 1,578 to 245, and by 2018 it will stand at 782 empty dwellings again.

Excursus 12: Effects of the Basel housing market

The difficult situation of low-income households in the Basel housing market may be attributed to the following:

- the constantly high demand for residential space in Basel;
- the low level of state control over the price development, both with regard to sale and letting, as well as the (re)construction of residential space with subsequent new letting;
- the partial loss of affordable housing, e.g. due to earlier sales of municipally owned properties;
- the general increase in the cost of living, e.g. also for rent and ancillary costs.

Figure 6: Empty flats, Canton Basel-Stadt, 1998-2018

Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Canton of Basel-Stadt, 09.2.01; own presentation. The reference date is 1st June in each case. Only flats that are suitable for the actual housing market, i.e. not including empty flats intended for demolition or conversion.
9.2 Rises in rents

In most of the residential classes surveyed by size and age of the dwelling, rents have risen in the last decade. The strongest increases relate to one-bedroom apartments (+14.3% for the period 2008 and 2018). The increases are also striking for the two- and three-bedroom apartments: they show a 10.1% increase over the ten-year period mentioned. At the same time, real wages are stagnating in many economic sectors throughout Switzerland (with a slight increase in net wages) (Federal Statistical Office 2018). As a result, the equivalised disposable household income has changed only slightly. As a consequence, the financial burden of the cost of living is tending to increase. The nationwide study by Bochsler et al. (2015) shows that the financial burden of housing on those with lower incomes is particularly high and tends to increase over time. According to the study, 82% of the households of people affected by poverty were living in overly expensive housing in 2012, as housing costs account for more than 30% of gross income. In 2007, the figure for low-income households was just under 80% at too high a cost.

Another important indicator of the problem of affordable housing is the statistics on family rent contributions: housing cost subsidies, such as family rent contributions, are intended to help financially weaker households reduce the burden of their rent.

The time series shows a sharp increase in the number of households receiving family rent contributions.

Whereas in 2011 1,095 households received family rent contributions, by 2017 there were already 2,078 families. Accordingly, the proportion of households receiving such cantonal support has increased from 1.3% to 2.4%.

### Table 12: Rents for apartments Basel-Stadt 2008, 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flats</th>
<th>Rental prices in Swiss Francs (SFr)</th>
<th>Changes compared to 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-room</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-room</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-room</td>
<td>1,083</td>
<td>1,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-room</td>
<td>1,485</td>
<td>1,602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-room</td>
<td>2,089</td>
<td>2,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-room</td>
<td>2,480</td>
<td>2,705</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Office of the Canton Basel-City, t09.3.04; average February rent, own calculations.
9.3 Not every eviction is legally admissible

Conflicts between landlords or real estate management and tenants can be regarded as further indications of the tense housing situation. The tenants’ association in Basel, which advises its approximately 10,000 members on all matters relating to renting, is an important point of contact for this. Although the tenants’ association does not keep any corresponding statistics, according to their information older people have increasingly found themselves in housing difficulties in the last six to seven years; many of them come from the lower middle class or are affected by financial poverty. Often they have to turn to private retirement solutions to absorb such insecurities.

If the legal situation is clear within the framework of ordinary and extraordinary terminations, a tenant may be evicted from the rented property. The civil court is responsible for such a request for eviction. The statistics of the civil court for the last five years confirm a significant increase in requests for eviction. Between 2013 and 2015, the number of applications for evictions decreased from 290 to 247, but in the following years, i.e. 2016 and 2017, the figures of 301 and 305 applications were significantly higher than at the beginning of the observation period. However, the completed housing evictions ordered by the courts as a result of the applications are not in line with this trend: since 2014, such evictions have fallen significantly from 164 to 118. It seems that there are more applications on the part of landlords in Basel, which are then rejected in increasing numbers from a legal point of view. If one follows the figures of the local court, the tense housing market does not necessarily lead to a higher number of housing losses in the form of evictions.

According to the tenants’ association, many tenants, especially those affected by poverty, lack information on the existing legal situation in order to answer the question of how rent conflicts are regulated, such as, for example, the extension of the deadline for paying rent by 30 days in the event of late payment. Such information is provided through the free services of the Basel Arbitration Board for Rent Disputes (Schlichtungsstelle für Mietstreitigkeiten); the private tenants’ association can also provide free advice to those affected, provided they are looked after by organisations that are members of the tenants’ association.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Requests for evictions (Räumungsklagen, Ausweisungsbegehren)</th>
<th>Judicial eviction orders</th>
<th>Completed evictions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Reports Civil Court, 2013-2017

9.4 Measures taken by the Canton of Basel-Stadt to combat housing shortages

In order to guarantee housing for lower-income households and to secure access to housing for the homeless, the canton of Basel-Stadt is discussing various options and taking measures (cf. Regierungsrat des Kantons Basel-Stadt 2018). The object-related support promotes, for example, non-profit property developers in construction projects, i.e. by awarding comparatively cheap building land or by low-interest loans, so that low-priced housing is offered.
The canton of Basel-Stadt is pursuing the expansion of individual/subject oriented help (*Subjekthilfe*). This means that eligible people receive financial subsidies. In cooperation with the Basel-Stadt owned public real estate company (*Immobilien Basel-Stadt*), social welfare pursues the promotion of housing for particularly disadvantaged people on the housing market in accordance with § 16 of the Housing Promotion Act (WRFG). For people who are entitled to family housing rent subsidies contributions, social welfare or supplementary benefits to the ordinary pension (*AHV*) or invalidity pension (*IV*), and who cannot find a place to live despite these social benefits, the Basel-Stadt real estate company will provide affordable housing, if available.

These and other subsidies are undoubtedly important to prevent housing shortages and homelessness and to reduce the high rent burdens, especially for households affected by poverty. It is worth considering expanding aid and improving access to the housing market, such as expanding the stock of canton-owned dwellings by buying back or developing building land. However, people who have already become homeless benefit only marginally from these services because they do not have a low enough threshold. The subject-related assistance mentioned also entails risks, as shown by the example of "Gammelhäuser" or the tendency towards consolidation in the welfare system in the area of emergency housing.

Excursus 12: Improving the number of affordable housing units from an expert's point of view

In the study, a total of six workshops were conducted with professionals and other actors from the field of homelessness and housing exclusion. Proposals to improve access to the housing market included:

- Provide sufficient affordable housing;
- Abolish debt collection as a reason for refusal of subsidised housing;
- Access to living space created through:
  - Provision of municipal housing, expansion of property assistance;
  - Increased access to additional rent guarantees (e.g. guarantees by foundations);
  - Guaranteed payment of rent by social welfare office for clients experiencing debt collection;
  - Expansion of housing services and support in finding accommodation;
  - Accompaniment during apartment visits (process of search for accommodation).
- As solutions for connecting emergency housing to the social assistance system, professional support for people on social welfare assistance who receive emergency housing is not really successful;
- Assistance also if a change in entitlement happens, e.g. when the person is no longer entitled to social welfare, so that the person concerned does not become homeless;
- Strengthen cooperation between institutions;
- Professionalisation in the complex field of housing through appropriate further training (law, social work, knowledge of local assistance options).
10 Environmental Analysis: Neighbouring Cantons and Other Countries

10.1 Aargau Canton

In the canton of Aargau there are very few, if any, offers to alleviate homelessness. In the canton of Aargau, according to the cantonal law on social welfare and prevention, the municipalities themselves, or together with other municipalities, must create and operate emergency shelters for the homeless or assign this task to third parties. A survey conducted in 2017 shows that 24 of the 129 municipalities have one or more emergency housing units. There is still no cantonal or community-administered night shelter. As of September 1, 2019, a cantonal night shelter with a total of twelve beds is to go into operation in the city of Baden.

Other services for the homeless and those excluded from housing are also very few and far between; a few providers offer supported housing, such as HEKS (Swiss Church Aid), which rents apartments itself for the period of accompanied living and sublets them to the person concerned. An important contact point in the canton of Aargau is the Christian social welfare organisation HOPE, which provides accommodation for the homeless and also offers survival assistance (hygiene, washing clothes) as well as advice and support. The Aargau South Salvation Army maintains three emergency shelters (social studios) for a maximum of six homeless people, which can be used by those affected for a maximum period of three months. This accommodation is full throughout the year and there is a waiting list. In addition, the Salvation Army in Aargau maintains three places in the area of accompanied living and offers survival assistance in the form of food and clothing.

In our survey of 21st March 2018, six of the 206 people who are roofless, houseless or in precarious housing came from the canton of Aargau.

10.2 Canton Basel-Landschaft

Like Aargau, the Canton of Basel-Landschaft does not operate its own night shelters. The housing of the homeless falls within the statutory remit of the municipalities in accordance with the Social Act. One of the best known providers of housing is the Association for Social Psychiatry (Verein für Sozialpsychiatrie) with its day and care centres in the municipalities Frenkendorf (Sophie Blocher Haus), Reinach and Münchenstein. In addition there are offers of supported living. However, the services are not explicitly aimed at the homeless, but generally at people with a mental health disability.

In the municipalities there are isolated offers of support (e.g. by Caritas, HEKS), which are often directed generally at people affected by poverty. The Salvation Army has a shelter in Liestal (Die Brücke) with nine furnished single rooms for people who need temporary shelter in emergency situations. According to the Salvation Army, these people remain in the shelter for six to 18 months.

The fact that Basel-Stadt has an important supporting function for homeless people who come from Basel-Landschaft due to its different offers is also confirmed by the survey carried out in this study. Some 15%, i.e. 31 of the 206 people classified as homeless, have their main place of residence in the canton of Basel-Landschaft and use the services of the 12 facilities included in the survey in Basel-Stadt.

10.3 Lörrach (Germany)

The district of Lörrach, which borders the cantons of Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft and Aargau as well as Alsace (France) and extends into the northern Black Forest, had around 227,000 inhabitants at the
end of 2016 and a slightly higher population than the canton of Basel-Stadt (end of 2016: 193,021); however, with 282 inhabitants per km², the district of Lörrach has a significantly lower population density than the canton of Basel-Stadt (5,217 inhabitants per km²). The lower density is not insignificant in relation to this topic, because homelessness is more often observed in urban areas (cf. for Baden-Württemberg the study by Evers/Ruhstrat 2014).

For the description of homelessness in the district of Lörrach, data can be used which are mainly collected by the local offices providing assistance to the homeless. In its 2017 annual report, AGJ-Wohnungslosenhilfe (Professional Association for Prevention and Rehabilitation), which is responsible for the district of Lörrach, points to the continued high importance of homelessness in the district and refers to several observations. The number of overnight stays in the only emergency shelter (Erich-Reisch-Haus) in the district rose in the 10-year trend, although increases and decreases were observed during this period: as a result of the expansion to an all-year offer, the number of overnight stays initially rose sharply from 431 in 2008 to 2,105 in 2010; in subsequent years the number of overnight stays fell from 1,845 in 2011 to 1,020 in 2013; since then the trend has not been clearly defined and slight increases and slight decreases alternate in some cases every year (AGJ Wohnungslosenhilfe 2017). In 2017, the last observation year of the time series, 155 people used the emergency shelter and spent a total of 1,384 days there. Most of the users come from the urban areas of the district of Lörrach.

The number of people in the long-term housing and care services according to Chapter 8 of the Social Code Book XII has remained almost the same. In 2017 there were 141 people with 11,230 overnight stays, in 2016 144 people with 11,148 overnight stays made use of it. The proportion of women receiving housing assistance has risen from 13% to 20% since 2013 with the expansion of women's places.

The area of housing security is expanding in the district of Lörrach. In 2017, the housing protection office advised 343 households and more than 100 households were able to secure their existing housing or find an alternative housing.

In summary, the AGJ Wohnungslosenhilfe states in its annual report that homelessness, addiction and mental health issues have also taken on a central role in social work support in 2017 and that therefore even more close cooperation with the corresponding medical and (social) psychiatric specialist agencies is necessary.

Another data source for the description of homelessness is the study on the extent and structure of homelessness in Baden-Württemberg (GISS study) commissioned by the state of Baden-Württemberg and carried out so far by the Gesellschaft für innovative Sozialforschung und Sozialplanung (Office for Innovative Social Research and Social Planning). For the district of Lörrach, 524 people were registered as homeless in 2014, of whom 393 people were legally accommodated, which corresponds to 74.6% (Evers/Ruhstrat 2014: 132). Regulatory law involves the application of the Police Act of the State of Baden-Württemberg (PolG BW). The local police authority defends the involuntarily homeless against impending dangers (including those threatening public safety or order). As the local police authority, towns and municipalities must provide homeless people with accommodation if necessary (§§ 1.3 PolG BW; §§ 62 Para. 4, 66 Para. 2 and 68 Para. 1 PolG BW).

According to the GISS study, there were 2.4 homeless people per 1,000 inhabitants in the district of Lörrach in 2014 (Evers/Ruhstrat 2014: 35). In comparison, the number of homeless people in the federal state of Baden-Württemberg was lower, at 2.1 people per 1,000 inhabitants, and the proportion of those who were accommodated according to the law was also lower at 63% (ibid.: 11 ff.). Compared to the 35 administrative districts in Baden-Württemberg, Lörrach is in fourth place and thus has a disproportionately high proportion of homeless people.

A third data source for the description of homelessness in the district of Lörrach are the data provided by the Liga der freien Wohlfahrtspflege in Baden-Württemberg e.V. (League of Independent Welfare Workers in Baden-Württemberg) on women and men in need of housing who make use of assistance
pursuant to § 67 et seq. SGB XII (LIGA 2016). According to the study, the number of clients in the aforementioned support system increased annually between 2011 and 2016. While the number of clients in 2011 stood at 170, by 2016 there were already 213 people receiving assistance, of whom 20.7% were women (LIGA 2016: 16).

The increase in homelessness in the district of Lörrach is thus in line with the trend of most other rural and urban districts in Baden-Württemberg, which have also registered rising numbers of service users in recent years. Support to this increasing number of service users in the district of Lörrach is often provided in the form of emergency aid, including accommodation in mostly simple emergency beds. Following the results of the LIGA study, 37% of all those seeking help in the district received emergency support in 2016, 32% were accommodated in an apartment and 23% received a place in the specialist facilities according to §§ 67 ff. SGB XII (LIGA 2016: 22).

The number of homeless clients in the district of Lörrach is high in comparison with the rest of the country. It is ranked six out of 35 counties. This makes the district of Lörrach one of the districts with a comparatively high level of qualified aid according to SGB XII (LIGA 2016: 41).

The rate of individual housing used for homeless assistance in the district of Lörrach is close to the average for Baden-Württemberg. However, from the point of view of the expert homeless service providers in the district of Lörrach, it is increasingly difficult to acquire the appropriate housing for people in housing need on the local housing market.

In summary, the available data show a higher density of homelessness in comparison to the entire federal state of Baden-Württemberg and an increase in homelessness in the district of Lörrach over the last five or ten years. Whether homelessness in Basel is affected by this increase, for example by an increased use of the services in Basel, is not a question that can easily be answered empirically. The survey in the institutions shows a minimal influence. Two per cent, i.e. nine of the 469 people surveyed, live in Germany. One important reason why few people from the district of Lörrach make use of the services offered in Basel-Stadt could be the expansion of homeless assistance in the district of Lörrach observed in recent years.

10.4 Saint-Louis (France)

In Saint-Louis, the Communal Centre d'Action Sociale (CCAS) is responsible for the accommodation of homeless people. To this end, two institutions within the municipality are working together. Through the Saint-Vincent-de-Paul institution, eight beds are available for temporary accommodation. The institution Aléos also offers three places in supported housing. These 11 places are often used to capacity. If the demand for emergency accommodation exceeds the supply in the municipality, a coordinated transfer to the city of Mulhouse takes place. Homeless people can also call a central emergency number in Mulhouse if they need accommodation and are then placed accordingly.

According to the expert interviewed, the composition of people affected by homelessness in Saint-Louis has changed considerably in recent years. While there used to be a manageable number of homeless people, most of whom had been known to the authorities for some time, the range of people affected is now much wider. This is partly attributed to the fact that the labour market situation has become more difficult for job seekers in recent years. The high number of destitute migrants from other EU countries looking for a job in Saint-Louis who are often homeless, was also highlighted. These include an increasing number of families from Southern and Eastern Europe.

In order to prevent housing losses, the Centre Communal d’Action Sociale is closely involved in the process of eviction. The people concerned are summoned before the authorities and an attempt is made, for example, to draw up a repayment plan for any rent debts and to contact the property management in order to stop the eviction. With people who have been temporarily accommodated, the social welfare department also tries to find a new home, actively supporting, among other things, applications
for social housing. However, since there are many applications for social housing, it is often relatively
difficult to find a home, even if the application is supported by social welfare teams.

A special form of housing welfare, which exists in France and was also recommended by the specialist
for Saint-Louis interviewed, is the ‘système de bail glissant’. Under this system, a social institution rents
a certain quantity of (social) housing, which it sublets to people who cannot find their own housing on
the open housing market. There is close support provided by the social services in order to guide the
people step by step back to independent housing. If the rent can be paid independently, the people can
stay in the apartment and become renters themselves, in return the institution is given another apart-
ment.
11 Recommendations

Preliminary remarks

The recommendations proposed below interweave the results from the quantitative census, the life-world analysis, the interviews with representatives of the service providers and the context and environment analyses. Furthermore, the recommendations take into account important feedback from the workshops with the professionals working in support for the homeless and further invited experts in the field. They are thus empirical, theoretical and also practice-related. The formulation of action-relevant recommendations is particularly challenging at the present time for important reasons: because homelessness is a topic that has scarcely been researched in Switzerland to date, because politics and practice largely take place without a scientifically sound framework, and because the present study cannot find a comparable preliminary study against which it can sharpen its questions and answers.

Against this background, the research team decided to formulate just a few, rather more fundamental recommendations. These follow the theoretical considerations that homelessness is a particularly severe form of poverty because it is associated with the lack of legally protected access to housing, massive restrictions on the use of housing, and a lack of experience of privacy (Edgar 2012, FEANTSA 2018). People in such situations are particularly exposed to the dangers of isolation, physical deprivation and social exclusion.

Ensuring and improving basic living conditions is a prerequisite for a decent life (UNO 2016). We have therefore decided to structure the recommendations along a continuum of risk of being endangered (survival).

Recommendation 1: End rough sleeping in Basel

According to study results, around 50 people sleep rough in Basel, while another 50 sleep in night shelters. Our estimates do not show a significant number of unreported cases of sleeping and living rough. As a result of the discussions with those affected, we can confirm that Basel has no magnetic effect on homeless people from other regions, nor for people from the surrounding cantons nor for destitute people from Eastern and Central Europe. In view of this manageable number of people, the aim to overcome rooflessness and houselessness is justified, both structurally and individually, precisely because most of those affected have a strong desire for a permanent home. Because homelessness poses considerable, sometimes life-threatening risks, the primary goal must be to provide permanent shelter quickly and with the minimum of bureaucracy.

Measures:

1. **Change in the way the cantonal night shelter allocates beds or establish a civil society alternative.**

   In purely mathematical terms, Basel-Stadt has 75 beds for men and 28 beds for women in the cantonal night shelter. Further temporary overnight accommodation is provided by individual institutions. Basel-Stadt therefore already has the number of overnight beds it currently needs to end rough sleeping in the city. This places the focus of the discussion on the practice of allocating contracts and the conditions attached to them, as well as the acceptance of accommodation by potential users.

   An "unconditional night shelter" pilot project of at least two years is proposed:

   - **If the cantonal night shelter is the pilot project:** the previous "price" regulation principle (cost for social welfare recipients/costs for people registered in BS: CHF 7.50/all others: CHF 40) will be replaced by the principle of "need". As before, the need should be proven (1) by the social welfare office and (2) by the service providers, but now also (3) by the people themselves. Conditional emergency aid is replaced by unconditional emergency aid.
If the cantonal night shelter is not the pilot project, then there is a need to look for a new property (setting this up as a network, e.g. distributed across different locations, is not recommended due to the comparatively high administrative effort required). In the case of a new property, the idea would be expanded: the idea of a ‘house for the homeless’ (i.e. the homeless can stay there overnight and also be there during the day) is to be favoured above a shelter that is purely for the night. Number of rooms: min. 25; number of beds: min. 50, distributed in single and double rooms; one larger room with camp beds for emergencies; pets allowed; kitchen, washing facilities, etc. The house is managed according to the principles of ‘participation’, ‘empowerment’ and ‘self-responsibility’. All institutions working in the areas of rooflessness, houselessness, insecure and inadequate housing are entitled to allocate and form the sponsorship; instead of quotas and conditions, a website displays the number of free beds per night at current status. Professional social workers actively address the needs of the people in the house and work with them to change their situation; former homeless people should be able to work as volunteers (peer-to-peer).

Risk analysis:

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<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Solution strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts of laws with regard to equal treatment and eligibility.</td>
<td>Determination of demand replaces the regulatory principle of ‘price’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of requests exceeds the number of beds available.</td>
<td>Emergency scenario (e.g. mass dormitory); facilities provide temporary overnight accommodation as in the past; arrangements under sponsorship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>As a matter of principle, higher demand than originally calculated.</td>
<td>Decrease in dark field is in principle desirable, even if it pushes offers to capacity limits and makes adjustment to actual demand apparent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There are processes of displacement between groups.</td>
<td>Conflict resolution by professionals and peers (former homeless); social workers; cooperation with experts from other institutions (especially UPK).</td>
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<tr>
<td>People stay in the ‘house for the homeless’ for a very long time.</td>
<td>Broaden the range of sponsorship, in particular greater involvement of sponsors in housing projects; testing experimental housing (temporary housing modules, brownfield land/intermediate use).</td>
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<tr>
<td>The objectives of cantonal social welfare and the Christoph Merian Foundation CMS are in conflict.</td>
<td>The relationship must be clarified; CMS does not align its actions with the political guidelines, but is committed to its foundation purpose. This results in possibilities for the independent interpretation of ‘need’, ‘shelter’ and also the circle of users.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The risk of losing the existing daily structure increases with the ‘house for the homeless’.</td>
<td>The ‘house for the homeless’ will be looked after professionally.</td>
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Coordinating opening hours, rest areas and storage facilities from the perspective of the particularly vulnerable subgroup (roofless and houseless people).

The study shows that people affected by homelessness either find it very difficult to, or cannot satisfy their basic needs for protection, recreation and security. Due to the different opening hours of the facilities in Basel, people are forced to move around involuntarily. Homeless people have few choices; the decisions of the institutions (including closures) have a direct impact on their daily structure.

The institutions are currently positioning themselves in different and uncoordinated ways: for individual institutions, rough sleepers are an important target group (especially the day house for the homeless), and the range of basic services (washing, showers) is correspondingly extensive; however, the facility closes at certain times, which contradicts the long-term needs of the target group. Other institutions
orient their offers towards different groups that are affected by social marginalisation (e.g. Treffpunkt Glaibasel) or basically towards all people in need (e.g. Gassenküche). Closing times create pressure for the institutions to remain open, and it is difficult for homeless people to understand both the temporary nature of the services and the exclusivity of aid.

From the point of view of the approximately 100 homeless people, the institutions must better coordinate their services so that existing needs can be met. In addition to the already existing services (food, showers, washing machines), this also includes opportunities to rest and relax away from the daily routine in appropriately equipped surroundings (separate rooms with sofa/beds) and with professional help to work on changing their situation (if possible in a quiet and private space appropriate for counselling). Likewise, people without a home need places to store personal belongings and their everyday items (wardrobes, lockers). These offers should be free of charge and should not be affected by restricted opening and closing times.

Risk analysis:

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<tr>
<td>Due to limited subsidies or own funds, the institutions must close their offers for weeks at a time or during the holiday season.</td>
<td>Review subsidy practice/self-financing; review target group focus; coordinate with other institutions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There are no rooms for the additional services (e.g. relaxation room).</td>
<td>Check whether one of the institutions has the ‘best’ prerequisites for one or more offers; accordingly, relieve that institution of other tasks in favour of prioritised implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control/competition situations arise as to who may make use of resting rooms, lockers, etc.</td>
<td>Strengthen institutional arrangements through a common commitment to the target group; the study has shown that most of the homeless people living on the street are personally known to the institutions, which facilitates referral practice/authorisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The introduction of the ‘homeless’ category results in segmentation among users.</td>
<td>In fact, this segmentation already exists today (also among the users), it is now only made visible by the providers of services.</td>
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<td>Culture-sensitive, gender-specific needs are not sufficiently addressed, so ‘all’ are not reached.</td>
<td>Develop offers according to the needs of the target group.</td>
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Recommendation 2: Develop a Housing First strategy for Basel

Housing First is successfully implemented in many countries as part of the promotion of social health. The basic idea focuses on the positive effect of a stable housing situation: instead of going through different forms of accommodation, especially those linked to housing competence, abstinence, e.g. after addiction, and cooperation with state institutions, an apartment without such conditions is quickly found. Immediate occupation of an apartment reduces health burdens and provides immediate relief because basic needs such as relaxation, warmth and the desire for protection and safety are better satisfied; this also strengthens health. A permanent residence makes it easier to treat existing chronic and social diseases, and mobile medical, psychological and social services can also reach people better. Housing First's long-term objective is to release people participating in the programme into the 'open housing market' (non-subsidized solutions without social work support) after a phase of supported housing.

The system of supported housing/longer-term housing existing in Basel would be a starting point for deepening the Housing First approach. This would be a qualitative and quantitative extension of the existing offer.
Housing First would target with its variants (un/accompanied/supported housing) those people who are homeless (according to the study about 100 people), involuntarily living temporarily with others (according to the study 64 people, but a large dark field is suspected), homeless people who have been released from institutions (prisons, psychiatric facilities) (according to the study five people, also a larger dark field is suspected) as well as people who are accommodated in the already existing accommodation run by organisations providing assistance to the homeless, e.g. Salvation Army, ELIM, already 110 people (an exact figure is pending).

**Measures:**

3. **Enable housing, even with for people with low housing skills, and extend accompanied/supported housing, particularly low-threshold.**

- Expansion of places in supported housing in the city of Basel (exact number still to be determined), strengthening of low-threshold access to supported housing.
- Provision of a few dozen flats which are rented out to people who are unable to find adequate accommodation due, among other things, to limited housing skills, as part of a Housing First strategy. Supported living is actively offered, but its use is voluntary or only minimally necessary. On the one hand, the apartments can be procured within the framework of the Housing Promotion Act through real estate in Basel-Stadt and rented out via the social welfare office; on the other hand, the commitment of foundations, cooperatives and other civil society actors in this area is necessary until sufficient apartments are available in accordance with the Housing Promotion Act (based on the 2-year pilot project demanded by the initiative committee Right to Housing as a short-term transitional solution).
- Build a network with institutions that can support the integration into the open housing market (e.g. the rent guarantees of the Edith Maryon Foundation, IG Wohnen); this also includes establishing and expanding contacts with housing companies, property owners and investors.

**Risk analysis:**

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<tr>
<td>Institutions expect people to meet the prerequisites to be able to live in their own apartment with a companion.</td>
<td>Realize the idea of the Housing First with its low-threshold orientation; build a portfolio of housing forms to cover the different housing needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People refuse to be accompanied in their homes.</td>
<td>Build options: accompanied living in own apartment; accompanied living in a room in an institution; offer living with minimal accompaniment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in unaccompanied housing do not show (health) improvements.</td>
<td>Seek the conversation, change the form of living in favour of care/accomp- animent.</td>
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**Recommendation 3: Improve health care and prevention**

The present study points to gaps in the existing health care system. Disease and poor health related to homelessness and housing exclusion (around 40% of homeless people have accommodation affected by damp, cold, faulty heating and other deficiencies, or sleep outdoors) are not treated sufficiently well or are treated too late. Since a large proportion of the homeless do not take advantage of social welfare benefits, health services can only be used to a limited extent. The knowledge, for example, of limited medical care, i.e. reduced to emergency aid, additionally unsettles those affected and they often do not know under what conditions they can turn to doctors. For these people, outreach and low-threshold first aid is urgently needed, and it is necessary to provide medical treatment appropriate to their state of health. The affected people must also be informed that they can go to doctors without hesitation in the event of illness and pain.
The institutions involved in this study also repeatedly drew attention to the medical and social health of the people visiting them. The health perceptions of the various interviewees cover several dimensions, as understood by the WHO, which understands health to mean a state of physical, mental and social well-being.

In this regard, the respondents pointed to still underdeveloped cooperation within the institutions providing assistance to the homeless (e.g. with regard to experiences with pilot projects such as the medical consultation hours at the Glaibasel meeting point) and also between these institutions and other important specialist health services (especially doctors). Basically, every institution is currently developing its own health care and prevention projects or is abandoning them. In many cases, however, this means that assistance is provided spontaneously, selectively and occasionally from the personal network of employees.

Considering the background of the sometimes serious health conditions of the people in the institutions, this is a sub-optimal situation which requires a coordinated approach.

It is also important to take active action against the so-called "Gammelhäuser" conditions (mould, cold, etc.). Here the authorities must enforce certain requirements, for example with regard to occupancy and hygiene, in order to counteract the accumulation of health burdens in particular and the consolidation of problematic situations. This should be done in cooperation with the owners of the property so that living space is not lost, but adapted to meet living standards.

**Measures:**

4 *Development of a help system of experts.*

Development of a help system of specialists in psychiatry, psychology, medicine and social work. This help system has the task of being an information point for the institutions (including a telephone hotline) and of being regularly present at the institutions in order to be able to assess local situations (e.g. in the context of crisis interventions) or to plan relief options. Since a considerable number of the affected people make use of limited medical services (emergency care) or shy away from going to doctors and clinics, endangering their health as a result, a network of voluntary, trustworthy medical specialists (including dentists) is needed, who are known to all institutions and provide low-threshold assistance.

**Recommendation 4: Prevent slipping into homelessness - combat homelessness and housing exclusion**

In view of the low vacancy rate, there is a definite housing shortage in Basel. The cantonal housing development strategy reacts to the associated selectivity of the housing market with special promotion areas: the aim is to expand the supply of housing for particularly disadvantaged people in accordance with the socio-political strategy objective 2012-2016 and the Housing Promotion Act (§ 16 WRFG). A medium-term offer of cooperative living space is being developed and comprises around 700 apartments for housing cooperatives (northwest outskirts, former Felix Platter Hospital, Lysbüchel). However, only a small number of the target group described in this research will be able to benefit from this promotion strategy because, among other things, the rents for the apartments offered are not affordable for the homeless. In the case of housing promotion under § 16 WRFG, the acquisition of corresponding housing is again progressing very slowly (14 apartments in 2017). Thus, for the time being, involuntarily chosen accommodation with friends, acquaintances, relatives or partner remains an essential characteristic for the description of rooflessness, houselessness and inadequate and insecure accommodation in Basel.

The authors of the present study propose a preventive double strategy: (1) preventing housing losses and (2) rapidly increasing the supply of housing, especially for low-income and vulnerable groups.
Measures:

5. **Prevention of housing losses/strengthening of IG Wohnen (Interest Group).**

The IG Wohnen was founded for the purpose of promoting social housing for rent. The Association has an ideal profile to intervene with regard to disadvantaged groups on the housing market. In particular, its interface function in crisis situations between tenants and property management is relevant here and is explicitly included in the task portfolio of IG Wohnen. When considering how this interface between tenant and property administration can be improved in order to prevent housing losses, the Office for Housing Security in Lörrach could serve as a model. This organisation, for example, systematically intervenes in eviction cases and can often secure the continuance of the tenancy. A general contact point for landlords should be available in the event of difficulties in tenancies and possible solutions should be sought, for example in the case of existing rent receivables.

The portfolio of IG Wohnen also covers the topic of housing placement for people looking for any kind of housing. In view of the results of the present study, this could now also mean checking the habitability of the housing opportunities (especially regarding "Gammelhäuser").

6. **Promoting temporary, experimental living.**

Inclusion projects are currently being implemented in Europe in the area of housing, in which land is acquired with the help of lenders and built on jointly with homeless people. One such residential building or housing project aimed at social participation is the initiative Bauen Wohnen Arbeiten e.V. (Initiative Building, Housing, Working). (Initiative Bauen Wohnen Arbeiten e.V. 2018). Together with those affected, the initiative is implementing various housing projects in Cologne. These include the projects "Homeless People are Building for Homeless People" and "Neighbourhood Integration". The initiative offers step-by-step living services in the residential area, from construction vehicles and simple garden houses to permanent flats. The flexibility of the forms of housing offered appears justified, particularly in the light of current study results, according to which many people affected often have to make considerable adjustments in the event of long-term rooflessness, houselessness or precarious housing until they are able to live conventionally and independently without housing assistance. There are other examples within Europe that show that sustainable, needs-based quality housing is compatible with low construction and refurbishment costs (Dömer et al. 2016). Such projects take place under the concept of ‘experimental housing’, where experimental means that projects do not always have to meet current standards (e.g. for construction techniques), as they aim to explore new and innovative forms of housing. These include projects in the field of so-called ‘Tiny Houses’ and the construction of housing modules, such as those built for students or recognised refugees (e.g. container apartments on the Dreispitz area in Basel), in which inexpensive and space-saving living space is created within a short space of time. In order to meet the requirements of functional apartments in the low-price segment, living space is not always the measure of all things. Rather, it is about satisfying central basic needs such as security, protection from assault and privacy, but also about social needs for community. It must be clear that temporary accommodation is not a long-term solution – the goal remains the transition to a permanently stable housing situation.

**Recommendation 5: Link the fight against homelessness to poverty research**

The study has shown beyond doubt that the situation of homelessness is mostly to do with other impoverishment processes. Homelessness and housing exclusion are closely linked, in particular, to employment, finance and health conditions. It has also been shown that many people move dynamically into and out of homelessness. These multidimensional and dynamic findings are also known from international poverty research. Consequently, homelessness is to be understood as a particularly serious form of poverty and, accordingly, the measures must also be embedded in a poverty policy.

The National Programme against Poverty in Switzerland NAP (2014-2018) has provided various initiatives and support for cantons and municipalities to relieve poorer households in the area of housing.
These include offers of housing assistance for households affected by poverty and socially disadvantaged households. The working papers drawn up in connection with housing assistance for people experiencing poverty suggest that, in addition to the expansion of affordable housing, actions are required in prevention and professional crisis management, housing subsidies, networked action and strengthening housing skills through housing assistance (Federal Office for Social Insurance 2018).

If homelessness is an expression or result of complex impoverishment processes, poverty reduction and poverty prevention should be considered and organised along the multi-dimensionality and life-course specificity of poverty. Promising educational qualification and labour market integration programmes are examples of this. With regard to dealing with young low-skilled workers, the Swiss education system’s offer of school and vocational catch-up education "Attest Apprenticeship" and "ENTER" should be highlighted (Dittmann et al. 2016). As regards the further qualification of single parents, reference should be made to the "AMIE" offer. Supraregional offers must also be examined for their transferability (Dittmann et al. 2017). The "Jobtimal.ch" and "Teillohn-Modell" projects of the City of Berne are regarded as innovative, as are the projects that intensify interinstitutional cooperation between social welfare offices and regional employment centres and thus achieve added value, such as the "Pôle Insertion+" project in the Canton of Fribourg and the "Coaching for the Outsourced" project of the City of Zurich. Improved cooperation with industry, both as an employer and as a provider of training places, is also a promising approach to preventing and combating poverty, as demonstrated, for example, by the projects "Training Migrants in Wood Manufacturing" in the Canton of Berne and "Trade Bears Responsibility" in the municipality of Aarberg.

Measures:

Opening up initial scope for decision-making through mini-jobs.

A number of service providers involve the users in various activities (cooking plan, kitchen, service, etc.) for a small salary. This offer is used by many homeless people, sometimes long queues are formed when registering in the institutions and there is an oversupply of interested people. Other users of the facilities come to the institutions as sellers of the street news magazine Surprise, and still others work in the Jobshop workshop of the Foundation and come to the day house for the homeless at mealtimes. The ethnographic section of the study explained why this work is so appreciated: (1) the money earned is necessary for daily subsistence (incl. overnight stay); (2) by participating in the formal structure of the institution, one comes into contact with other people and the conversations are perceived as an opportunity to ‘escape’ one’s own world; (3) wherever it is possible, for example, to have a say in the menu and, for example, to prepare ‘one’s own’ dishes, the participants experience that they have competences that are valued; and (4) in principle, experiencing a role other than that of the affected, the poor, the dependent person, is positively valued. It must be examined which further integration offers within the ‘secondary labour market’ can be developed for these service users.

Developing offers together with those affected.

It has long been known in poverty research that the reintegration of people who are massively affected by exclusion only succeeds very selectively through the intermediaries of the welfare state. In particular, people who have few competences face the danger of becoming trapped in poverty. For many users of the institutions, this poverty situation has become consolidated over time. The facilities have one advantage: the user spends almost every day there. Access to them does not therefore have to be built up first. In this respect, it is possible and advisable for employees to actively approach the people in the facilities. A contact point could be created or an existing institution could be expanded into a contact point where ideas for activities and further integration and participation offers could be taken up from among the users. The form of collecting ideas and related activities can vary (active, one-time/several calls for ideas; continuous activity, etc.). A revolving fund providing risk capital would be suitable for the financial realisation of certain ideas.
Recommendation 6: Strengthen institutional cooperation

In connection with homelessness, the range of assistance currently available in Basel is not yet sufficiently geared to poverty reduction, which is particularly concerned with participation and integration into society. In current practice, a structurally designed and legitimate problem is revealed: since the majority of service providers have been defined by the satisfaction of basic needs (food, clothing, warmth and social contact) and, in particular, receive financial support from foundations or state institutions, the range of services is geared to these existential basic needs: it is about the number of plates filled, cups filled, the number of people warming up on the spot etc., but with less emphasis on advice, support and accompaniment. If, however, the focus is on survival assistance and there is no additional help for self-help, self-efficacy and autonomy of lifestyle, e.g. through appropriate counselling, support and guidance, strong dependencies arise in the help system of the affected people towards these institutions.

Measures:

Establishing of an interprofessional and cross-sectional working group on homelessness.

The existing assistance for the manageable number of homeless people should be expanded in the sense of more self-determination (rather than solidifying dependencies). To this end, the specialist institutions must regularly exchange views in their own committee, which deals with homelessness from a cross-sectional perspective (instead of from the point of view of health, work, etc.). Together, the institutions must formulate a professional perspective. Since homelessness is located in the Basel region, it would be beneficial to involve the institutions in Lörrach and Weil am Rhein (possibly also in St. Louis). This working group could then also develop measures to respond to homelessness and housing exclusion, and pilot projects could be jointly created and supported, and the recommendations formulated here could also be examined and, where appropriate, implemented.

Recommendation 7: Monitoring

Overall, it is difficult to determine the extent of homelessness and housing exclusion from the official statistics. The existing information bases are too incomplete and the dark field is too large. The survey carried out in this study shows clear possibilities for improvement compared with the existing, rudimentary reporting on homelessness, but also with the continuing limitations of monitoring. It becomes clear that the limits of counting homelessness do not lie in the low willingness of those affected to cooperate. The present study is essentially limited to the daily, written survey of affected people in 12 institutions. Against this backdrop, the results show a section of the reality of rooflessness, houselessness, insecure and inadequate housing. The results presented are supplemented and validated by the night census carried out and by the consultation and evaluation of further information (documents and statistics). This ultimately increases the range and generalisation of the results achieved.

Regular observation.

At the beginning of the report, reference was made to the deficit in reporting on homelessness. Reporting is essential for a sound assessment of homelessness and housing exclusion. For this reason, the authors recommend that the monitoring of homelessness and precarious housing be further developed conceptually on the basis of the experiences carried out in this study, in the sense of a differentiated, periodically repeated and at the same time meaningful reporting process.

The study suggests the development of a system of indicators to describe rooflessness, houselessness and precarious housing situations:

- Improve the activity reports of the institutions surveyed in order to differentiate users and survey their housing situation.
- The extension of existing social welfare statistics to include housing issues in which current and past experiences of homelessness and housing exclusion are collected.
The statistics of the emergency housing and the night shelter should be coordinated and adapted accordingly for the purpose of intercantonal and intermunicipal comparisons.

Statistics on housing assistance can be improved in the sense of an identification card for people who do not have their own home or who make use of the housing assistance services because they do not have a home.

Residential facilities, in particular psychiatric clinics and prisons, should record the housing situation of the clients before and after their stay in order to better document the problem of housing loss for these groups.

Further consideration should be given to whether questions of homelessness and housing exclusion can be integrated into existing and regularly surveyed population surveys (population survey, family survey, district survey), e.g. as modules. This can provide information on how many of these households have helped other people with their housing situation. It is also possible to determine whether the households surveyed were themselves affected by housing shortages in the past due to a lack of housing. Both these would at least partially illuminate the dark field, which is estimated to be high.
References


