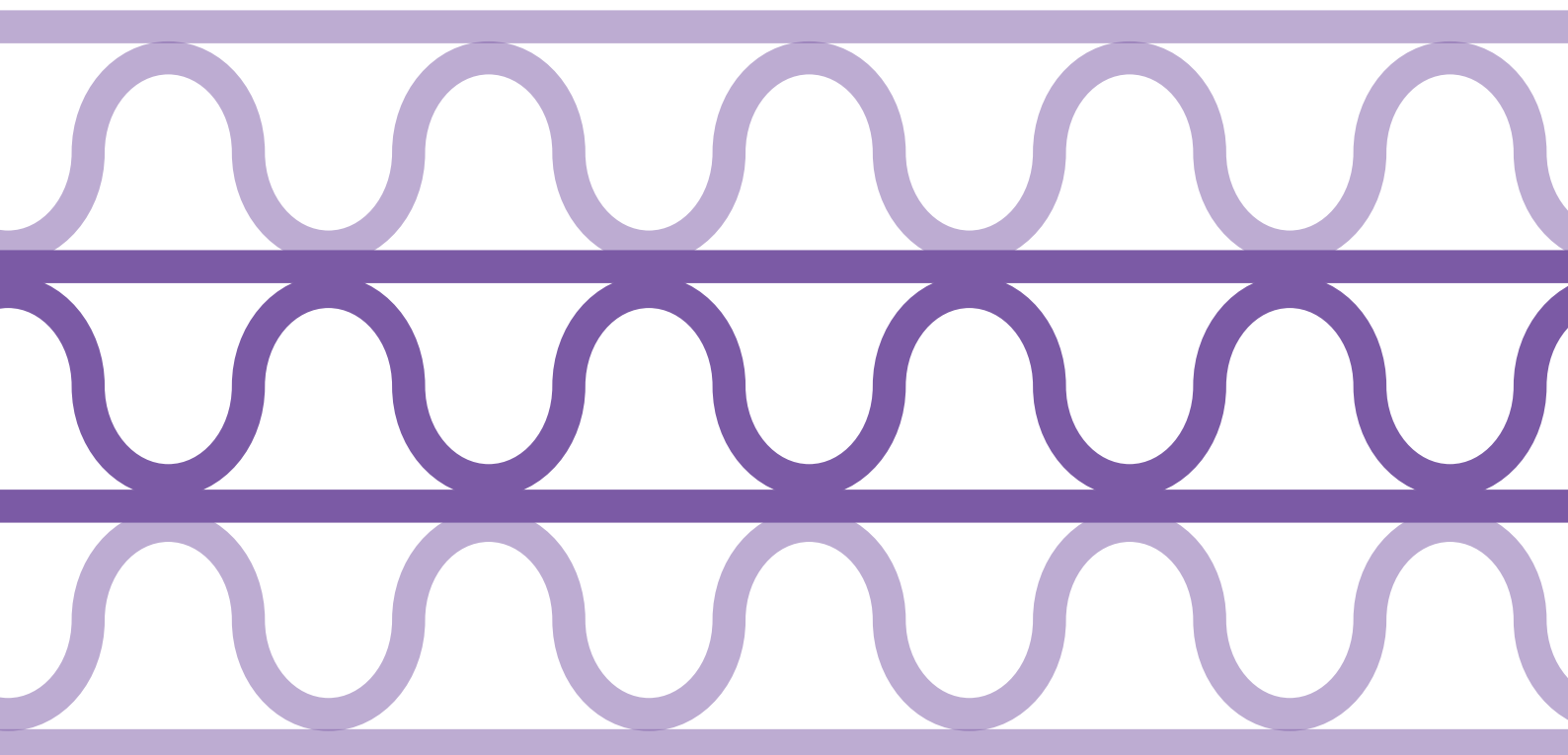


**Government measure
for the prevention of women's
homelessness and the introduction
of the gender perspective
in homeless services in Barcelona**

2020 - 2023



**Ajuntament
de Barcelona**

Deputy Mayor's Office
for Social Rights, Global Justice,
Feminism and LGBTI Affairs

Barcelona City Council

January 2020



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0. INTRODUCTION

The concept of the *feminisation of poverty* has been in use since the 1990s, warning of the increasing number of women in a situation of poverty around the world. But although women suffer poverty with greater intensity, the most visible forms of poverty and social exclusion in European cities feature men. If we look at the data collected by open-environment social intervention teams in the City of Barcelona, only 13% of the people sleeping on the city's streets are women.¹

As justified below, women's homelessness follows different patterns from that of men. It is characterised by the seriousness of the situation on the street –women who live and sleep on the street experience notably more serious psychological suffering, deteriorating health and insecurity than men– and by the invisibility of homelessness experienced behind closed doors that does not have a presence in public spaces. Most homeless women survive for a long time moving between various precarious residential solutions and staying in the home of third parties.

Breaking through this invisibility is the first strategic line of action of the four that make up this measure. In the street, in the facilities of the Municipal Care Programme for Homeless People and in the resources of the Homeless People Care Network (XAPSLL), women are in a minority, but as explained in the second epigraph of the measure, we know that women make up the majority of the people assisted by services that provide temporary accommodation outside the resources traditionally designed for homeless people.

The following lines present initiatives designed to reduce the flow of people experiencing the most serious situations of homelessness. Three lines that propose structural prevention initiatives, prevention geared towards groups that present a specially high risk and preventing people who have already been assisted by municipal services from returning to the streets or hidden homelessness.

This measure is the result of what was learnt during the three years of implementing Barcelona's 2016-2020 Plan to Combat Homelessness, and further explores the idea of creating services for homeless people that help to rebuild the lives of the people assisted in places that ensure privacy, safety and autonomy. In the last three years, the Municipal Care Programme for Homeless People has grown by more than three hundred places in facilities and temporary accommodation designed from this perspective. According to the XAPSLL data published in their 2019 report, the city already has a total of 2,170 residential and accommodation places for homeless and roofless, or street-homeless people, provided by third-sector organisations and the municipal administration.

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¹ According to the calculations of Barcelona City Council's Social Integration in Open Environments Service (SISMO), in the latest data from the Homeless People Care Network (15 May 2019) there were 1,027 people sleeping on the street on one particular night.

From the perspective of assistance, it also facilitates access to stable residential solutions and public housing for people assisted by the Municipal Care Programme for Homeless People. From the perspective of prevention, the policies arising from Barcelona's Right to Housing Plan form the main line of action carried out by Barcelona City Council for the prevention of homelessness. By the end of 2023, the City Council is expected to double the amount of affordable housing under municipal control, compared to 2015. It has also launched measures to correct the antisocial use of housing. The Disciplinary Unit is the main instrument for raising awareness and reporting bad practices, such as abusive rent rises, empty flats, the incorrect use of protected housing or mobbing. As a leader in housing policies, while always noting the joint responsibility of the other administrations and private stakeholders, Barcelona City Council is committed to the fight against residential exclusion.

As laid out in the text of this measure, the other big area that constitutes a mechanism for preventing women's homelessness is the fight against gender violence. During the last term of office, the resources allocated to the care services for gender violence victims were increased, rising from €4.9 million in 2015 to €12.3 in 2019, bringing the main assistance services under municipal control and valuing the Barcelona Circuit against gender violence. This increase in economic resources was used in actions such as bringing under municipal control the management of Information and Assistance Points for Women (PIAD) and the Assistance, Recuperation and Shelter Service (SARA), as well as the expansion of the teams of both services and PIAD's legal-advice service; doubling the number of shelter and accommodation places in municipal facilities, and defining the Strategic Plan against Sexism, among others.

This measure compiles a list of actions that provide continuity for these policy lines and aims to be the start of a process for including the gender perspective in a traditionally masculinised area, due to homeless women's invisibility in public spaces. The participation of the affected women, whether they are assisted by municipal services or not, will be a key factor for guiding the policies defined here and those that arise from the debate and participation forums.

1. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND CONTEXT

The right to housing, the mechanisms for ensuring this right and the functions of the services that assist excluded individuals and families feature in regulatory texts at all levels of government.

Furthermore, given the very close relationship between homeless women and gender violence, it is also necessary to mention current regulations on these matters.

Under Article 26, the **Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia** establishes that public authorities, through legislation, have to put into practice a system of measures that ensures access to decent housing. It is **Act 18/2007**, of 28 December, which regulates everyone's access to decent and suitable housing during the various stages of their lives. This Act provides for the creation of flats earmarked for social policies and measures that facilitate access to them for vulnerable groups. **Act 18/2007** defines the concept of *homeless* as a person or household with a manifest lack of decent, suitable housing, either because they have no home, live on the streets or in a place that is unsuitable for housing, according to the Act's provisions, and suffer effective social exclusion caused by social barriers or personal difficulties in living independently. People who have been subject to an eviction process resulting from a duly established impossibility of meeting their rental payments are also considered to be homeless.

Decree 75/2014, of 27 May, on the Right to Housing Plan, defines social-integration housing and stipulates that it is to be allocated to people with integration problems and to tenants of substandard and overcrowded dwellings. It also establishes that the groups requiring special attention are homeless people, women affected by and threatened with male violence, people with drug addictions, people with mental health problems, people receiving very low benefits, young people formerly in foster care and others in similar situations who need special care, protection or specialised support.

Act 24/2015 concerning energy poverty and housing emergencies, provides for obligatory rental social housing, in order to ensure housing in the case of evictions and dispossessions due to non-payment of rent when the property belongs to a large property owner; mediation mechanisms between banks and debtors; the administration's obligation to rehouse people; and mechanisms for forcing the transfer of empty housing owned by banking organisations and investment funds to the administrations. The new Decree-Law 17/2019, of 23 December, concerning urgent measures for improving access to housing, expands the concept of 'large owner' to natural persons who own more than fifteen dwellings, capital risk and asset-owner funds, the expansion of cases for offering social rental housing –now also for the expiry of rental contracts and for situations of squatting under certain requirements, and the lengthening of social rental contracts–: five years, if the owner is a natural person, and seven years if the owner is a legal person.

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Where individuals or families are homeless, **Act 12/2007, of 11 October, on social services**, states that the guarantee for meeting people's basic needs for subsistence and quality of life lies in a series of actions we call *social services*.

Public transfers for dealing with contingencies that can occur throughout life are regulated by **Act 13/2006**, of 27 July, on financial benefits. This act defines a situation of need as being any contingency taking place or appearing during the life of a person which prevents them from meeting essential expenses for personal maintenance or that of the people who make up their family unit or household. The emergency social economic benefits are aimed at covering basic needs such as food, clothing and housing.

European institutions have introduced policies for tackling homelessness in the **2020 Anti-Poverty Strategy**, under the European Commission Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs. The European Commission's *Social Investment Package*² calls on member states to combat housing exclusion through strategies based on prevention, by revising the regulatory frameworks behind evictions and dispossessions, and by applying housing-led strategies to homeless people. Europe thereby assumes that the cornerstone for coordinating care for homeless people rests on providing housing rather than social services.

Confirmation of the housing emergency currently experienced in many big European cities has aroused the interest of European institutions for policies that contain and prevent the loss of housing and reduce homelessness. On 16 January 2014, the European Parliament approved a resolution³ calling on the Commission to draw up an EU homelessness strategy (reiterating what had already been stated in the European Parliament resolution of 14 September 2011). The resolution also encourages member states to design their own strategies and reminds them of their responsibility for implementing policies that combat homelessness and provide care for homeless people.

In Spain, on 6 November 2015, the Council of Ministers approved the **2015-2020 Comprehensive National Strategy for Homeless People**.⁴ This strategy also focuses on providing stable housing for homeless people, but since its approval, no measures that implement the public policies noted in the text have appeared, nor has it been allocated a budget, which means it is reaching the end of its implementation period without having become anything more than a declaration of intentions.

The Government of Catalonia also initiated work on drafting and approving a **Comprehensive Strategy to Combat Homelessness in Catalonia**, through Government Agreement 161/2016, of 20 December. After various sessions of

² <http://www.easpd.eu/en/content/social-investment-package>.

³ European Parliament resolution, of 16 January 2014 on an EU homelessness strategy. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-7-2014-0043_ES.html

⁴ <https://www.mscbs.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/docs/ENIPSH.pdf>

preparatory work with local administrations, third-sector organisations and experts, the initiative began in 2020, although the strategy has still not been approved.

Therefore, in Barcelona, policies to combat homelessness are still exclusively in the hands of the municipal administration. The city has its Municipal Care Programme for Homeless People, which was launched in 2005 to give coherence to the first mechanisms created prior to that date. Collaboration between third-sector organisations and the City Council led to the creation of the Homeless People Care Network (XAPSSL), as part of the Citizens Agreement for an Inclusive Barcelona, also in 2005.

In 2015, the City Council and XAPSSL organisations approved **Barcelona's 2016-2020 Plan to Combat Homelessness**, which established a series of measures to improve and reinforce the city's actions with regard to care for homeless people, in a document agreed by all the stakeholders. It is organised into nine areas: protecting and recognising the rights of people living on the streets; preventing homelessness in processes of deinstitutionalisation; health and access to the healthcare system; reducing the number of people falling into situations of severe residential exclusion (preventative policies) and minimising the time that people spend living on the street (avoiding long-term homelessness); improving the model used for accommodation and access to housing; reducing the risk of homelessness linked to the administrative exclusion of immigrants; inclusion of a gender perspective in care policies for homeless people: generating knowledge for improving policies and transforming the social perception of homelessness; and joint responsibility and networking.

The seventh area of **Barcelona's 2015-2020 Plan to Combat Homelessness** provides for a series of actions for including the gender perspective in assistance for homeless people. In the last four years, the creation of new places in residential centres belonging to the Municipal Care Programme for Homeless People has been carried out, creating places that respect the intimacy and privacy of the people assisted as much as possible, making the time and conditions of their stay more flexible and facilitating personalised support, avoiding the standardised support that can be provided in the emergency accommodation facilities used in the past. In these new facilities, priority has been given to access for homeless women, heeding the contributions of the Municipal Council of Social Welfare's homelessness group and the women's groups in the facilities belonging to the same programme. However, there is a long way to go, and this measure aims to be an instrument for making substantial progress in this task.

Meanwhile, in 2016, Barcelona City Council approved the **2016-2024 Strategy to Combat the Feminisation of Poverty and Insecurity**, which promotes the cross-departmental introduction of the gender perspective in the city's anti-poverty policies. Although insecurity has always been linked to employment and having a job, these days we know that having paid employment does not

necessarily mean that a person is able to cover their basic needs or live self-sufficiently.⁵ Furthermore, there are other aspects of people's lives that are not related to the job market, but which also have a direct impact on the quality of their lives. The lack of opportunities, care work, the impossibility of enjoying more free time, discrimination, gender violence, etc. are all factors that directly affect women and which make it necessary to speak about the "feminisation of poverty". This strategy is part of the government measure "**Urgent Anti-Poverty Actions, for a Fairer, More Equitable Barcelona**".⁶ The main aim of this measure is to establish a road map that makes real equality between men and women possible, while investigating the feminisation of poverty.

The **2016-2024 Strategy to Combat the Feminisation of Poverty and Insecurity** is structured into three areas of intervention and 71 initiatives. The first area consists of data and information systems: in order to have exhaustive information about the phenomenon, it is essential to have data that quantifies it. The aim is to have data that make it possible to thoroughly understand the feminisation of poverty in a comprehensive way. Among other actions, there are plans to make it possible to break down all the surveys, investigations and compilations promoted by Barcelona City Council by gender. The second area concerns the job market, care work and use of time, and is based on evidence of the inequality suffered by women when entering the job market and the consequences of this throughout their lives. This area includes the presentation of strategies to combat structural gender inequalities that occur in the job market. The third area concerns human rights, and it therefore focuses on work of a structural nature, such as housing, the socio-political participation of women, health and basic social conditions.

This measure establishes Barcelona City Council's strategic lines with regard to the prevention of women's homelessness, in keeping with the initiatives developed as part of the **2016-2020 Plan to Combat Homelessness** and the **2016-2024 Strategy to Combat the Feminisation of Poverty and Insecurity**, the situation of the policies implemented by supramunicipal administrations and the current legal framework.

Given the strong links between women's homelessness and gender violence, which are explained below, this measure is also based on the recognition of gender violence as a violation of human rights, established in the **Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence**, better known as the Istanbul Convention, which was opened for signature in 2011 and signed by Spain. The convention was ratified in 2014.

⁵ M. CAMARASA, E. CRUSELLAS AND S. RUIZ (2017), "The fight against the feminisation of poverty and insecurity in the City of Barcelona", Department of Gender Mainstreaming - CIRD Barcelona City Council, *Barcelona Societat*, No. 21, Barcelona City Council.

⁶ <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/premsa/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Estratègia-contra-la-feminització-de-la-pobresa-DEF.pdf>

At a state level, we refer to **Framework Law 1/2004, of 28 December, concerning comprehensive protective measures against gender violence**, which regulates matters relating to the violence of men against women in couples. It was the first comprehensive law against gender violence to be passed in Europe. It was later modified to adapt it to the Istanbul Convention. The Act establishes preventative, educational, social, care, health and penal measures that involve various ministries: Education, Justice, Interior, Employment and Social Affairs, Health, Public Administrations and Economy.

With regard to Catalonia, **Act 5/2008, of 24 April, concerning the right of women to eradicate gender violence**, consecrates and ensures a set of rights to restore the life projects of women experiencing gender violence. The proposed measures include the search for and dissemination of knowledge, awareness-raising and training initiatives, the obligation of detection and the intervention of professionals, and protective measures to deal with sexual harassment and harassment due to gender in work and social environments.

At a municipal level, we highlight the **Government Measure presented in 2015**, which regulates all of the actions implemented during the 2015-2019 term of office. We should also highlight the **Government Measure “Gaining alliances: Barcelona, a city free of gender violence”**, presented to the Full Council Meeting of November 2019, which includes action 2.2.39 “Identifying the specific effects of gender violence on homeless women and defining the necessary improvements”

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2. ANALYSIS AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE MEASURE

In the last ten years, an increase in the number of people affected by homelessness has been recorded in Barcelona. Between 2008 and 2018, the number of people who were sleeping on the city's streets rose from 658, detected in the first count carried out in March 2008, to 1,027, quantified in the Homeless People Care Network (XAPSLL) report in 2019.

The data concerning people staying in Barcelona City Council residential facilities and flats and those of the XAPSLL's member organisations rose from 1,190 accommodated on the night count in 2008 to 2,171 accommodated on the night count in May 2019. Therefore, not only has the number of people living on the street increased, but so has the supply and demand for care resources for homeless and roofless people. While the population sleeping on the city's streets on a specific night has increased by 56%, the population assisted in XAPSLL residential centres, facilities and flats has increased by 82%.

Like practically all big European cities, in Barcelona, there has been a steady growth in the resources earmarked for the care of homeless and roofless (street homeless) people over the last twenty years. The increase in the numbers of places in facilities, the expansion of public and private services and innovation in social-intervention methodologies have developed in parallel with the rise in housing exclusion and the number of people who find themselves with no choice but to sleep on the streets.

Out of the total number of people sleeping on Barcelona's streets, the percentage of women has fluctuated between 11% and 15% over the last ten years. According to the 2008 report "Who is sleeping on Barcelona's streets"⁷, women make up 14.42% of the total. This proportion was 10.43% in 2014 and 13.05% in 2019. The generalised increase in the city's homeless population has meant that the total number of women has indeed risen.

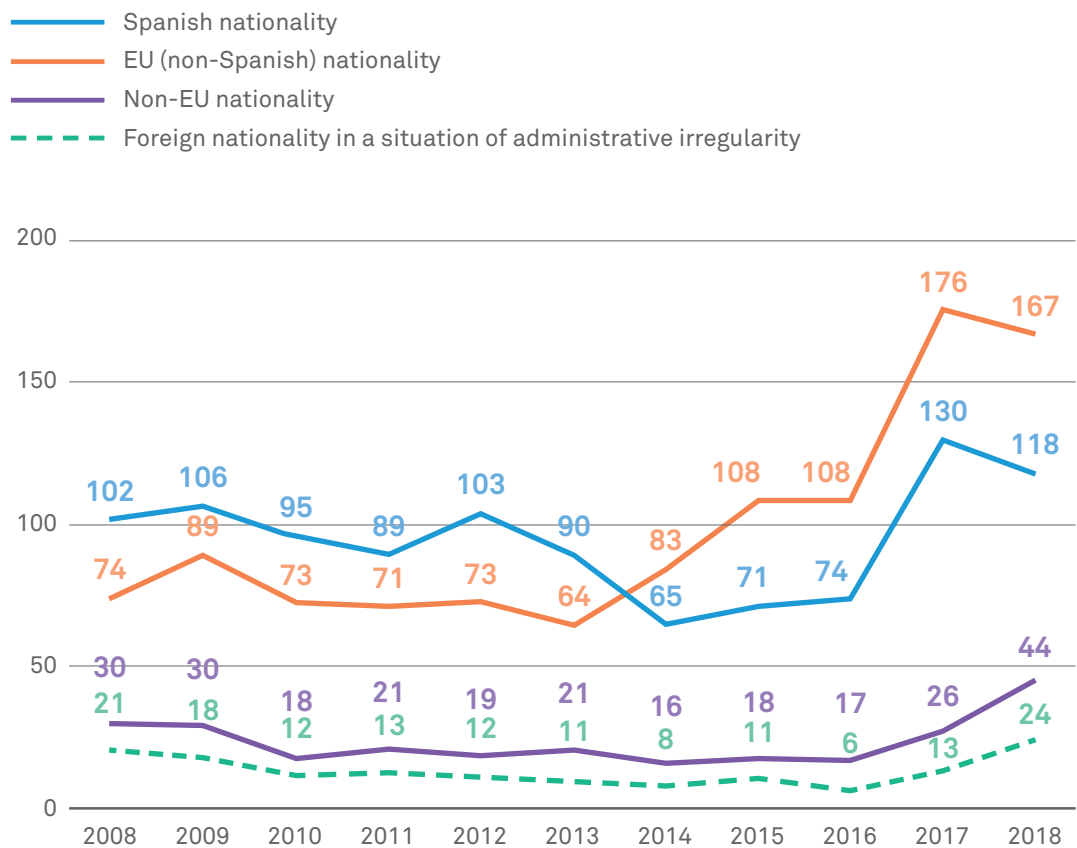
The XAPSLL's most recent diagnostic report on homelessness⁸ estimates that in May 2019, 1,027 people were sleeping on the street, 134 of whom were women. The "Who is sleeping on Barcelona's streets" report, which analyses the data from municipal open-environment assistance teams, showed that 329 of the 2,352 individuals found sleeping on the streets in 2018 were women. In absolute terms, while the services contacted 206 women in 2008, the number had risen to 329 by 2018. This growth has been progressive, but it has accelerated over the last few years, coinciding with the increase in rental prices for flats and rooms.

⁷ A. SALES (2019), *Who is sleeping on Barcelona's streets. Characteristics of the homeless populations in the city according to data from municipal public-space social intervention teams*, IERMB. Barcelona City Council.

⁸ A. DE INÉS, G. GUZMÁN, M. VERDAGUER AND M. CONTRERAS (2019), *Homelessness in Barcelona. Evolution and homeless young people*, XAPSLL, Barcelona City Council.

International mobility is also related to the increase in the number of women sleeping on the streets. Although there has been a certain increase in the number of Spanish women, it is the number of women from other EU countries that shows the highest increase, rising from 74 women detected in 2008 to 167 in 2018. During the same period, the number of Spanish women rose from 102 to 118 in 2018, while the number of non-EU foreign women rose from 30 to 44. Of the non-EU foreign women, 24 were in a situation of administrative irregularity.

Figure 1. Development of women detected sleeping on the streets, annually, by nationality, Barcelona, 2008-2018



Although the figures for women sleeping on the street are significantly lower than for men, this growth is very worrying for two reasons. Firstly, studies carried out all over Europe indicate that the physical deterioration and impact on mental health inherent in living on the street is harder on women than on men⁹. Secondly, the street is one of the harshest expressions of residential exclusion, but it is not the only one. Other situations, such as insecure housing or dependence on other people to avoid the streets¹⁰, are hidden from view, and the numbers of women in these situations are much higher.

2.1. Data on Women's Homelessness in Barcelona

When the phenomenon of homelessness is reduced to people sleeping on the street or those living in residential resources, the problem of homeless women becomes invisible¹¹. The registers of public social services and organisations respond to the logic of managing homelessness, traditionally considered to be the result of accumulating social problems and solely identified with sleeping on the street or using specialised facilities. To widen the focus and guide the analysis of residential exclusion, the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA in the French acronym) proposes the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS).

This classification features four categories of residential exclusion (roofless, houseless, insecure housing and inadequate housing) and thirteen operational categories¹²:

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⁹ P. MAYOCK, S. PARKER, S. SHERIDAN (2015), *Women, Homelessness and Service Provision*, Dublin, Simon Communities in Ireland.

¹⁰ A. SALES and L. GUIJARRO (2017), "Dones sense llar: la invisibilització de l'exclusió residencial femenina", *Barcelona Societat*, No. 21, Barcelona City Council.

¹¹ N. PLEACE (2016), "Exclusion by Definition: The Under-representation of Women in European Homelessness Statistics", a *Women's Homelessness in Europe* (p. 105-126), Palgrave Macmillan UK.

¹² K. AMORE, M. BAKER and P. HOWDEN-CHAPMAN (2011), *The ETHOS Definition and Classification of Homelessness: An Analysis*, Department of Public Health, University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand. *European Journal of Homelessness*, Volume 5, No. 2. (December 2011).

Table 1. ETHOS classification of residential-exclusion situations

Situation: Homeless

Conceptual category	Operative category	Type of accommodation
Roofless	1. People living rough	1.1. Public or external space
	2. People spending the night in shelters for homeless people	2.1. Night shelter
Homeless	3. People living in facilities for homeless people	3.1. Homes and hostels for homeless people 3.2. Temporary accommodation 3.3. Transitional supported accommodation
	4. People living in women's shelters	4.1. Shelters for women
	5. People living in residential facilities for immigrants	5.1. Reception centres or temporary accommodation 5.2. Accommodation for migrant workers
	6. People due to be released from institutions	6.1. Penal institutions 6.2. Medical institutions 6.3. Institutions for children and young people
	7. People receiving long-term support (due to homelessness)	7.1. Residencies for senior citizens who have experienced homelessness 7.2. Supported accommodation for formerly homeless people

Source: FEANTSA.

Situation: **Exclusion from housing**

Conceptual category	Operative category	Type of accommodation
Insecure housing	8. People living in insecure accommodation	8.1. With friends or relatives 8.2. Subletting 8.3. Squatting
	9. People living under threat of eviction	9.1. Under a process of eviction for non-payment of rent 9.2. Under a process of mortgage foreclosure
	10. People living under threat of violence	10.1. Households with a history of domestic violence or with incidents reported to the police
Inadequate housing	11. People living in “non-conventional” or temporary structures	11.1. “Mobile homes”, caravans 11.2. “Non-conventional” building 11.3. Temporary structures
	12. People living in unhealthy accommodation	12.1. Housing unfit for human habitation
	13. People living in overcrowded housing	13.1. People living in housing in shocking conditions

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Source: FEANTSA.

Although approaching homelessness from the perspective of the ETHOS classification helps us to understand the complexity of the phenomenon and the permeability between the various situations of residential exclusion, it is very difficult to organise the available data on the scope of the problem in accordance with this typology. The municipal services and social organisations that care for homeless and roofless people were created to offer support and accommodation to people already living on the street, as a response to extreme social-exclusion situations that were not covered by social protection systems. In recent years, the XAPSELL has tried to present the figures for homelessness in the City of Barcelona based on ETHOS, but the fragmentation and specialisation

of the organisations according to the population profile they assist means that the analysis reports published since 2011 have not been able to systemise the data from some of them for the majority of situations of insecure and unfit housing.

The data compiled annually from the city’s homeless centres and services show that the proportion of women out of the total number of people sleeping on the street last May was 13% (category 1, living rough or in public or exterior places); the proportion of women in primary homeless shelters was nearly 14% (category 2, spending the night in a shelter and/or obliged to spend the rest of the day in a public space); the proportion of women in residential or comprehensive centres was 26% (category 3, living in temporary homeless shelters); the proportion of women living in long-term accommodation for homeless people was 24% (category 7, living in accommodation with sustained support); the proportion of women in hostels paid for by the network’s services and organisations was 23.5% (category 8, living in insecure accommodation without paying rent).

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Table 2. Number of homeless people counted by the XASPLL in the City of Barcelona on 15 May 2019

	Total number	Number of men	Number of women	Number of minors (boys and girls)
People sleeping on the street (ETHOS category 1)	1,027	86.95%	13.05%	0.00%
Residents in a Primary Reception Centre (ETHOS category 2)	265	86.04%	13.96%	0.00%
Residents in residential or comprehensive centres (ETHOS category 3)	586	57.34%	26.11%	16.55%
Residents in long-term accommodation for homeless people (ETHOS category 7)	717	57.18%	24.13%	18.83%
People living in hotels or hostels paid for by social organisations and municipal services caring for homeless people (ETHOS category 8)	438	54.34%	23.52%	22.15%
TOTAL	3,448	61.05%	17.40%	9.54%

Source: Barcelona Homeless People Care Network.

The data agreed by the XAPSELL organisations does not include the number of people housed by organisations caring for women who have suffered gender violence or by specialised municipal services. Nor do they include data from services and organisations that offer temporary accommodation to migrants and people who have applied for international protection. The way in which social organisations and public services are grouped in order to analyse the social dynamics in which they intervene, reflects the tradition of considering homeless people as a group with their own homogeneous characteristics and needs. Providing knowledge and analysis capacity in order to explain that homelessness is a problem of access to housing that affects a highly diverse group of people with a wide variety of needs would help to develop services that focus on people and avoid reductionist solutions that expect the affected people to adapt to the services on offer.

The methodological difficulties for quantifying women's homelessness are not only due to a disconnection between the services that assist homeless women. With the available sources, it is very difficult to determine the number of women who live in sublet rooms, in overcrowded housing, in insecure housing, in the homes of relatives or friends, or in the homes of acquaintances.

Consequently, the XAPSELL has so far been unable to annually update the ETHOS categories 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11 and 13. It does so partially with category 8, as out of all the forms of insecure housing, it only compiles the number of people living in hostels paid for by organisations and services specialising in homeless people.

The various situations in which the City Council or civil-society organisations provide emergency or social support with accommodation are very difficult to count exhaustively and homogeneously, but there are some indicators that aggregate the various people assisted during various periods of time.

According to data from the Municipal Institute of Social Services (IMSS), from September 2018 to August 2019, 3,218 people received aid in the form of temporary accommodation in hostels and hotels. 72% of these people were women. These were the named beneficiaries of the aid, which in many cases also benefited the rest of their nuclear families. During this one-year period, there were a total of 9,500 beneficiaries.

The Care for Immigrants, Emigrants and Refugees Service (SAIER) housed 915 different individuals from February 2018 to December 2019. 52.5% of these people were women. They formed part of 385 nuclear families. In 64.4% of the cases, the application for accommodation aid was made by women.

The Care, Recovery and Shelter for Women Victims of Gender Violence Service housed 772 people in hostels and hotels from January to September 2019. Of these, 401 were the named beneficiaries of the aid and the rest were their dependent children and adolescents.

The data from Barcelona's Register of Officially Protected Housing (RHPO) also confirms the over-representation of women in the most economically vulnerable population groups. In 60% of the household units listed in the register with incomes of under 1.4 times the Catalan Adequate Income Index (IRSC), the named applicant is a woman. In the income segments immediately above this, the weight of women as named applicants goes down to 54%. This does not mean that these are household units without any men, but it is an indicator of the feminisation of the segments with fewer economic resources.

The same register also shows that the weight of households with single-mother families is also higher among household units with incomes of less than 1.4 times the IRSC. Single-mother households form 9% of the household units with the lowest levels of income listed in the RHPO. In the segments immediately above this, the proportion of single-mother households goes down to 3.6%.

Although this data is not easily comparable, we can affirm that in situations of residential exclusion that fall outside the traditional area of action of the homeless people care services, women are in the majority. Achieving homogeneous collection of data on people sheltered by the various services would make it possible to scale the need for accommodation resources and the various situations of residential exclusion that require stable housing solutions.

2.2. The invisibility of women's homelessness and its consequences

The lack of visibility of women's homelessness means that the design of care policies for homeless people continues to respond to the needs perceived by the services assisting these people, which are directed towards people who suffer the more visible forms of residential exclusion (i.e. those that are living on the street), and to the social demands that focus on situations that are more obvious to the general public. In reality, the stereotyped images of homelessness that have the greatest presence in the media, and which lead to the mobilisation of public and private resources, exclude homeless and roofless women who are not living on the street. Media coverage of the most explicit cases of social exclusion (motivated by compassion or the sensationalisation of poverty) plays a decisive role in making women's homelessness invisible.

The fact that women are under-represented among the most visible homeless people –i.e. those that live and sleep on the street– has meant that men have become the subject of the care and intervention of specialised organisations and services. The design of residential centres is usually androcentric and the specific needs of the female population are not taken into account in such important aspects as safety, intimacy, hygiene and privacy. When homelessness is considered to be a problem that mostly affects men, it is detrimental to the women who have to use those services, while also making the situation of homeless women who do not live on the street, but who suffer very serious forms of residential exclusion, invisible.



“Who decided that a man who sleeps on a park bench is more vulnerable than a woman who lives in the house of an acquaintance who abuses her every day that she doesn’t escape, because she doesn’t want to go back to sleeping on the street and being exposed to even worse forms of abuse?”

Carmen Belchí, Aires, Association for Residential and Social Inclusion. Madrid

In this regard, some of the policies developed in recent years have been aimed at people at risk of eviction or dispossession or who have effectively ended up suffering one of these loss-of-housing situations, while others have been aimed at assisting the growing number of homeless people in the city, i.e. those people who are already living on the street or applying to enter a primary reception facility. An increasingly relevant range of residential-exclusion situations are suffered by people who have a roof but who cannot claim to have a home. These people are often assisted by municipal social services or third-sector organisations, because they are in a very serious situation of poverty and insecurity but are still excluded from policies geared towards access to housing.

In policy planning, it is essential to take into consideration people (mostly women) who experience homelessness behind closed doors –in the homes of relatives, friends or acquaintances– in order to design policies that take into account the enormous permeability among the various forms of residential exclusion and which affect the structural causes that lead to an increase in the number of homeless people year after year. However, introducing the gender perspective into anti-homelessness policies makes it necessary to better understand the mechanisms that lead to a lot of homeless women not ending up on the street, despite experiencing situations of extreme vulnerability.



“A lot of women who come to the facility are in insecure housing, because of abuse from the people who are renting them rooms, who make them do housework or even ask them for sexual favours”.

Clara Naya, coordinator of Lola No Estás Sola [Lola you’re not alone] projects. Barcelona

The processes and trajectories that lead to serious residential-exclusion and homelessness situations function differently for men and women. Various investigations^{13, 14, 15} conclude that women go to social services for help only

¹³ P. MAYOCK, S. PARKER and S. SHERIDAN (2015), *Women, Homelessness and Service Provision*, Dublin, Simon Communities in Ireland.

¹⁴ A. SALES, J. URIBE and I. MARCO (2015), *Diagnosi 2015. La situació del sensellarisme a Barcelona: Evolució i polítiques d'intervenció*, Barcelona, Barcelona City Council, XAPSELL.

¹⁵ J. PASSARO (2014), *The unequal homeless: Men on the streets, women in their place*, Routledge.

when their supportive social networks have failed and they don't have any other alternatives. In the case of women with dependent children, the fear of losing custody, or of being monitored by social services, leads them to seek informal solutions. Turning to relatives, friends or acquaintances can be a protective factor when faced with living on the street, but these same informal relationship networks can place the women who are not excluded from housing in situations of abuse, exploitation, precariousness or insecurity for long periods of time, preventing them from rebuilding an independent life.



A service user in the centre recently stated: *“I live in the home of a man who offers me accommodation in a room in return for doing housework. Often, when he's in the shower, he calls me to give him relief”.*

Elena Sala, Centre Assís, care for homeless people. Barcelona

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The reasons why women and men respond differently in situations of vulnerability can be found in the fact that men dominate the places for homeless people and the fact that women living on the street are more vulnerable and are more exposed to violence and victimisation.

For women who have children, the shame associated with their “status” as homeless people leads them to seek alternative ways of living before turning to social services. From the perspective of patriarchal societies where the concept of “home” is attributed to the essential basis of social order, homeless women are seen as women who have been rejected by the traditional forms of family and domestic structures. Consequently, various studies conclude that women feel that they cannot meet the expectations and demands of society and, as a result, they experience a feeling of guilt and the fear of being labelled as failed women (and mothers).¹⁶



“There are women who have spent many years seeing their children at meeting points, and that makes their recovery processes very difficult and this should be approached in another way, because they are blamed here and they are not allowed to be mothers, because the system doesn't let them, and meanwhile, they can't get on with their lives and fully recover”.

Clara Naya, coordinator of Lola No Estás Sola [Lola you're not alone] projects. Barcelona

¹⁶ B. EDGAR and J. DOHERTY (2001), *Women and Homelessness in Europe: Pathways, Services and Experiences*, Bristol, Polity Press.

2.3. Gender violence and homelessness

It is internationally recognised that gender violence and women's homelessness are closely related.¹⁷ Empirical evidence shows us that experiences of abuse, domestic violence and gender violence are key triggering factors for women's homelessness. Meanwhile, the proportion of women who live, or have lived, on the street and have suffered some type of violence is very high, and that is shown by the data from studies on this type of relationship. For example, in a research project carried out in 2015 in Ireland, 92% of the women interviewed (all receiving assistance at resources for homeless people at that time) affirmed that they had suffered some form of physical violence or sexual abuse as adults, while 72% affirmed that they had suffered some form of violence or abuse as children.¹⁸ In a 2006 research project in the United Kingdom, 20% of the 134 women interviewed were in a situation of homelessness due to experiencing gender violence at the hands of a relative or someone close to them.¹⁹ In Sweden, all the investigations point to the fact that escaping from physical aggression perpetrated by their partners is the main reason for women experiencing homelessness.²⁰ In Barcelona, the XAPSELL's 2015 Diagnosis showed that many of the women interviewed needed to break away from their social networks and well-known places in order to escape a situation of gender violence. This means that they are left with a very weak social network and are immersed in a process of isolation which, in some cases, also leads to homelessness.²¹ Women who suffer gender violence at the hands of their relatives or partners often choose to leave home in order to overcome that situation. This means that they end up being doubly victimised, because in addition to suffering violence, they lose their homes, which is kept by the person responsible for the situation.

This is why some European countries, such as the United Kingdom, have recently started to introduce public policies aimed at tackling gender violence in the home and stopping the victims from ending up in the street or in other situations of homelessness. Also in the United Kingdom, a woman who is the victim of gender violence is legally declared to be homeless, a key factor for gaining priority access to social housing –although in spite of these measures, studies indicate that in the case of migrant women, the fear of losing residence

¹⁷ D. QUILGARS and N. PLEACE (2010), *Meeting the needs of households at risk of domestic violence in England: The role of accommodation and housing related support services*, Communities and Local Government.

¹⁸ P. MAYOCK, S. SHERIDAN and S. PARKER (2015), *Women, Homelessness and service provision*, Dublin, Simon Communities.

¹⁹ K. REEVE, R. GOUDIES and R. CASEY (2006), *Homeless Women: Still being Failed yet Striving to Survive* (London: CRISIS).

²⁰ I. SAHLIN (2004), "Central State and homelessness policies in Sweden: New ways of governing", *European Journal of Housing Policy*, 4(3).

²¹ A. SALES, J. URIBE and I. MARCO (2015), *Diagnosi 2015. La situació del sensellarisme a Barcelona: [The Situation of Homelessness in Barcelona:] Evolució i polítiques d'intervenció, [Evolution and Intervention Policies.]*, Barcelona, Barcelona City Council, XAPSELL.

permits obtained through marriage to a British citizen, means that they are still a highly vulnerable group–.

In spite of the introduction of some preventative measures in countries like the United Kingdom, the reality is that there are women who end up becoming homeless, and a large proportion of these women have suffered gender violence, either before becoming homeless or afterwards. However, services responding to women victims of gender violence and services for homeless people function independently from one another in most European countries.²² The services for women suffering situations of gender violence have a more generalised orientation, due to the cross-cutting nature and extension of the problem of violence, which affects women of all social classes and profiles. In this regard, the specific needs that women may have in certain situations of vulnerability, such as those suffering from severe exclusion, mental-health problems, addiction or other problems, are not always sufficiently taken into account by services or they lack tools for managing them. Linking care services for homeless people and care services for women more closely has made it possible for us to improve the way we deal with both problems, in terms of both prevention and care.

At the same time, including the gender perspective in order to evaluate the needs and life histories of homeless women in the facilities belonging to the homeless care network is essential for effectively helping to rebuild the lives of homeless women, for being able to offer adequate support to women suffering situations of violence or abuse and for ensuring that they do not feel excluded from facilities that are usually highly masculinised.²³

Studies carried out in various European and American cities show that the facilities caring for homeless people are not designed for women who have suffered gender violence and are experiencing some kind of trauma.²⁴ Consequently, women in this situation present a higher risk of getting trapped in the system.²⁵



“The fact that most hostel places are for men is a conditioning factor, because it makes it look like the majority of homeless people are men. This isn't true; women are more invisible. We end up living in a testosterone-driven world and men continually have to show that they are alpha males (homeless men).”

²² I. BAPTISTA (2010), “Women and Homelessness”, E. O’Sullivan, V. Busch- Geertsema, D. Quilgars and N. Pleace (ed.), *Homelessness Research in Europe*, p. 163-186 (Brussels: FEANTSA).

²³ D. QUILGARS and N. PLEACE (2010), *Meeting the needs of households at risk of domestic violence in England: The role of accommodation and housing-related support services*, Communities and Local Government.

²⁴ P. MAYOCK, S. PARKER and S. SHERIDAN (2015), *Women, Homelessness and Service Provision*, Dublin, Simon Communities in Ireland.

²⁵ P. MAYOCK, S. PARKER and S. SHERIDAN (2012), “Women’s Journeys to Homelessness: Key Findings from a Biographical Study of Homeless Women in Ireland”, *Women and Homelessness in Ireland*. Research paper 1, School of Social Work and Social Policy and Children’s Research Centre, Trinity College, Dublin.

[...] In this world, you cannot find friendship, you always have to protect yourself. Social services do not intervene in risk situations occurring inside a given organisation. Some guy can insult you in a hostel and call you a whore, and call you this or that...

It's good to be on your toes in this society, but when I go to a centre, I want to 'rest', i don't feel like 'struggling', 'fighting' or 'getting angry'."

Sara,²⁶ resident in the Nou Barris Preliminary Reception Centre. Barcelona

Once on the street, the violence, harassment and sexual pressure that women are subjected to continues. Data from the last National Institute of Statistics 2012 survey on homeless people indicate that 24.2% of women who live on the street have suffered some form of sexual aggression, compared to 1.5% of men. However the XAPSL's 2015 Diagnosis report indicates that the sexual pressure that women who live on the street are subjected to is very high, both physically and verbally, and a research study in England reveals that 58% of women who live on the street have been intimidated or threatened violently.²⁷

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"I slept on cardboard in the street while the others were inside tents. I was cold, I felt sick and those boys gave me a bit of food. One night, a boy that was there wanted to have sex with me. It was 12:30 am and he said he wanted sex. I told him to leave me alone, that I was ill and that the doctor had told me that I couldn't have sex with anyone, that no one should touch me.

I don't want to stay on the street. I can't sleep without a light. When I switch off the light, I think that I'm somewhere where they want to kill me. I'm in a bad way... when my mobile rings I think someone is calling me to say that I can't stay here any longer, that I have to go back to the street. I'm really scared about going back to the street.

Miriam,²⁸ currently living in a sublet room. Barcelona

Women who have lived on the street talk about situations of harassment that are more or less frequent and more or less intense, which explains why they often resort to group strategies that increase their sense of security, grouping together with other women or joining groups of men. Women residing in homeless care

²⁶ Her name has been changed to protect her privacy.

²⁷ "Homeless women are even more vulnerable than homeless men", published in *The Guardian* on 14 February 2017. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/housing-network/2017/feb/14/homelessness-women-disadvantaged-channel-4-councils>

²⁸ Her name has been changed to protect her privacy

facilities also frequently mention having been victims of sexual harassment and almost always state that they feel at risk.²⁹

Fear and a feeling of insecurity are determining factors for seeking alternatives when faced with having to sleep in public spaces or hostels and accepting spending the night in overcrowded rooms, in infra-housing or in housing where situations of abuse of women occur, which are totally hidden away and invisible.

There is no doubt that these experiences have a major impact on these women's physical and mental health, which in many cases leads to a reduction in their ability to trust others and leads to consequences that affect their self-esteem, their autonomy, their ability to carry out their lives and to maintain healthy relationships with other people. If we also add cases of drug or alcohol abuse, or some type of sex work in order to survive, this problem becomes even more serious.³⁰

The design of public policies must take into consideration that violence appears to be a major factor in the course of many homeless women's lives. Although homeless people, both men and women, experience situations of extreme poverty and great social vulnerability, the mere fact of being a woman means that women are subjected to sexual pressure, harassment and violence, which makes them twice as vulnerable.

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²⁹ A. SALES, J. URIBE and I. MARCO (2015), *Diagnosi 2015. La situació del sensellarisme a Barcelona: [The Situation of Homelessness in Barcelona:] Evolució i polítiques d'intervenció*, [Evolution and Intervention Policies.] Barcelona, Barcelona City Council, XAPSSL.

³⁰ N. PLEACE, J. BRETHERTON and P. MAYOCK (2016), "Long-term and recurrent homelessness: the role of gender-based violence", *European Journal of Homelessness*, 6 (1).

3. DEFINING OBJECTIVES: THE PREVENTATIVE FRAMEWORK

In light of the increased impact of residential exclusion and homelessness, the actions of social stakeholders –public administrations and organisations– can be carried out at three levels. At a preventative level, policies can be coordinated to prevent more and more people having to sleep on the street, in infra-housing, in friends' houses or in residential centres. At a care level, emergency accommodation and social support can be provided for people who are already suffering homelessness. And at a post-care level, after providing this support, residential, economic and emotional stability can be facilitated in order to prevent people who have spent time living on the street from having to go back there. Therefore, using a wide variety of methodologies, social organisations and public administrations can prevent, provide accommodation and give support, and stop people that have been assisted from becoming homeless again.

Traditionally, policies addressing the problem of homelessness have focused on the assistance level, responding to emergencies arising from the lack or loss of a dwelling. The idea that being homeless is a transitory phenomenon has led to responses being focused on resolving the lack of a roof where people can sleep safely or shelter from inclement weather conditions. From the 1980s, European cities started to open collective centres under the name of *hostels*, which offer temporary accommodation to homeless people (often for a few nights only). In the last twenty years, the increase in the impact of homelessness has shown that providing more places in residential centres does not put a stop to this growing problem. Nowadays, some European countries that are aware that homelessness is directly related to the lack of housing and that hostels do not reduce the number of homeless people, have started to convert them into social housing for homeless people. Finland is a good example.³¹ However, in most of Europe, although services have been substantially improved, public policies continue to focus on temporary accommodation for homeless people, in spite of the fact that subsequent access to housing is becoming increasingly complicated.

The creation of centres providing accommodation for people living on the street has been the main policy for combating homelessness. For many years, the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA, in the French acronym) has been warning of the risk involved in trying to solve homelessness by creating more hostels, to the point where they dedicated their 2019 Homelessness in Europe report to questioning the role of temporary emergency accommodation in the fight against residential exclusion.

Accommodating people in hostels does not guarantee subsequent access to decent housing, while promoting housing programmes for homeless people, despite being necessary for developing social assistance and ensuring people

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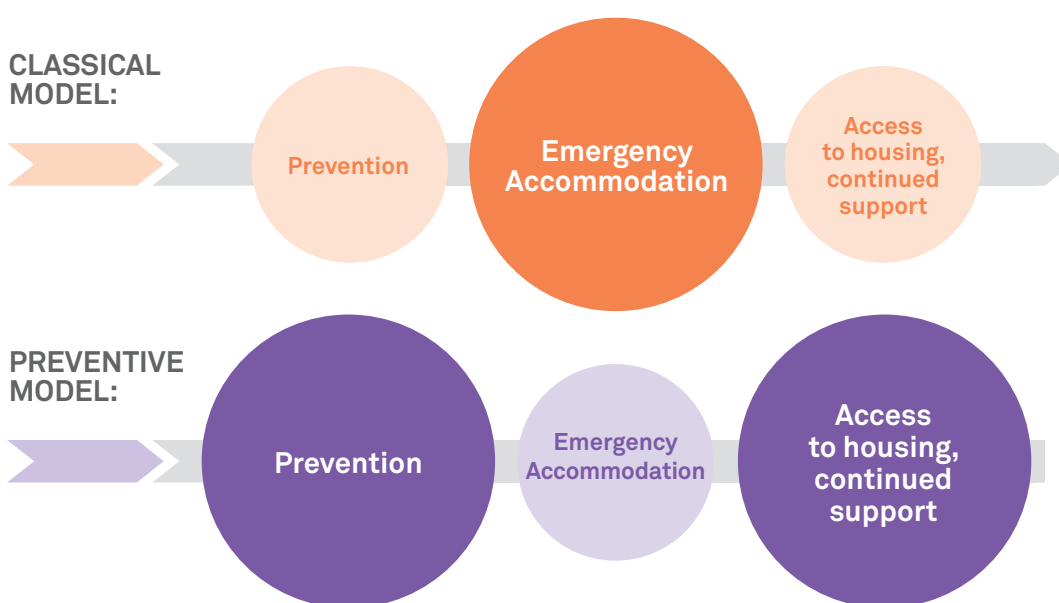
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³¹ Y-Foundation (2017), *A Home of Your Own*, Helsinki.

can rebuild their lives, improve their well-being and have a life project, does not stem the flow of people who, with a long history of social exclusion, end up living on the street in serious situations of precariousness and residential exclusion.

European cities are tackling the problem of homelessness with policies that focus on offering social care, forgetting about prevention and the assisted people's need for residential stability –a stability which is essential to preventing people who have lived on the street from becoming homeless again–. In order to effectively combat homelessness, it would be necessary to move towards public policies that focus on prevention and access to housing, where the goal is for the social care of homeless and roofless people to become less necessary.

Figure 2. Intervention models



Based on: GAETZ, S. and DEJ, E. (2017). *A new direction: A framework for homeless prevention*. Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.

Emergency shelter and temporary accommodation facilities for people living on the street, due to various forms of social exclusion, cannot disappear. Offering assistance to these people is a municipal responsibility in most EU countries. But greater and better care does not prevent the combined impact of an increasingly exclusive housing market and an increasingly insecure job market. Averting extreme poverty, and the flow of people ending up on the street, requires prevention.

In recent years, confirmation that the increase in resources allocated to care has risen in parallel with the increase in homelessness has led to the creation

of a prevention framework that defines three levels of action: preliminary prevention, secondary prevention and tertiary prevention.

- Primary prevention is aimed at the population as a whole and consists of reducing risks through structural policies that affect the housing market, the job market, social protection and income guarantee systems and migration policies.
- Secondary prevention focuses on risk groups that are liable to become homeless, such as women who have suffered or suffer gender violence, poor workers or families on low incomes. Through secondary prevention, we can identify these individuals and offer them support and social accommodation in residential centres, housing or other residential resources.
- Lastly, by means of tertiary prevention measures, we can ensure that people who have already escaped a situation of living on the street or being homeless do not return there, thereby reducing the number of homeless people going through the assistance system repeatedly.

Preventative policies are not the responsibility of a single administration. They require involvement and coordination at all levels of government. Primary prevention would require legal modifications in some areas of state policies, such as housing, the job market and migration control. Secondary prevention would require a commitment from the Government of Catalonia's administration to establish effective coordination mechanisms between social services and the child-protection system, healthcare services and the penal system, in order to prevent deinstitutionalisation processes among the vulnerable population leading to rough sleeping. Political commitment would also be needed in order to develop a guaranteed-income system that would better protect people who have not had a stable, continuous link to the job market and to reinforce the financial aid allocated to prevent the poorest people from losing their homes. The current Guaranteed Citizen Income (RGC) does not complement the income gained through employment, even where this is lower than the amount established for the benefit, nor is it compatible with finding and losing short-term, precarious employment or housing benefits.

The preventative framework guides the general objectives of the measure and groups the actions into four strategic lines. These general objectives are as follows:

- Having diagnostic tools to gauge the situation as regards women's homelessness in the city, which make it possible to improve care policies for homeless and roofless women, the coordination between various areas of the City Council and cooperation with other administrations in the development of preventative policies.

- Giving priority to ensuring that women at risk of residential exclusion receiving assistance from various municipal services do not end up living on the street.
- Improving care for the women who enter Barcelona's Municipal Care Programme for Homeless People, based on the contributions and participation of the women being assisted.
- Giving priority to housing stability for homeless women receiving assistance from municipal services.

4. STRATEGIC LINES AND ACTIONS



4.1. Strategic line 1 Breaking through the invisibility

Action 1.1. Improving the data collection of municipal services that work with women who are homeless or at risk of housing insecurity.

Producing a map of municipal services that work with women who are homeless or in a situation of residential exclusion, analysing the methodologies used for data collection by these services and creating an information-collection system that makes it possible to trace these people's history of residential exclusion, their perception of safety linked to their residential situation and their previous subjective experiences relating to various social-protection services and facilities.

It is necessary to ensure that the collected data can be broken down by gender and make it possible to identify key factors for including the gender perspective.

This systemisation of data must guide decision-making concerning public policies, and must serve to detect deficiencies in the coordination between the various administrations which put women at risk and mean they remain hidden due to a lack of empirical evidence.

Action 1.2. Promoting specific research on the relationship between these women and the Municipal Care Programme for Homeless People's services and with other municipal services.

A research project has begun that aims to reconstruct the history of homeless women's relationship with social-protection systems and with Barcelona City Council's services. The research process will include in-depth interviews with the Homeless People Care Network's service users, homeless women who are not service users and women in various situations of residential exclusion. Professionals from these services and social organisations will also be interviewed.

The research will be carried out from November 2019 to June 2020. The process of drafting the final report will include discussion sessions about the conclusions with the women participants and with professionals from the municipal services and the XAPSELL organisations.

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Action 1.3. Holding a participative session to debate and draft policy proposals.

At the end of 2020 there will be a working session with professionals from all the municipal services that work with women who are homeless or in a situation of residential vulnerability –social services, including centres and specialised facilities, care services for women who are victims of gender violence, care services for migrants–, third-sector organisations, researchers and experts from other cities.

The research carried out will be presented in this session, and the proposals presented by the groups of women receiving assistance in residential centres, day centres and other Municipal Care Programme for Homeless People services will be discussed during this session.

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4.2. Strategic line 2 Primary prevention: taking action on the structural causes of homelessness

Action 2.1. Promoting collaboration with the Generalitat of Catalonia to prevent women's homelessness.

Based on data generated by the municipal services that work with women in a situation of residential exclusion and social vulnerability, the analysis of this data and research on homeless women, a roadmap will be presented for cooperation with the Generalitat, detailing those supramunicipal policies that could make it less likely that women affected by exclusion factors would become homeless.

Barcelona City Council will continue to actively participate in the transfer of knowledge concerning care for homeless people, as part of the Comprehensive Strategy for Tackling Homelessness in Catalonia, which is pending approval.

Action 2.2. Promoting inter-administration collaboration with the General Administration of Spain in order to prevent women's homelessness.

The data generated by the municipal services that work with women in a situation of residential exclusion and social vulnerability must be used to evaluate the

impact of employment, migration, housing, equality and social protection policies on the lives of the people receiving assistance.

Barcelona City Council will transfer general knowledge to the Spanish Government based on this data, in order to influence the structural prevention policies that may be developed by the General Administration of Spain.

In this regard, Barcelona City Council will continue to ask the Spanish Government to implement changes to employment legislation in order to reverse the trend of insecurity accentuated by the last employment reform, and will insist on the need for regulating rental housing prices and demand that the Ministry of Equality include the problem of homeless women in its political agenda.

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4.3. Strategic line 3 Secondary prevention: preventing women in risk groups from becoming homeless

Action 3.1. Establishing early-detection mechanisms for services that work with vulnerable people.

A pilot project will be launched for the early detection of the risk of homelessness among women receiving assistance in centres belonging to the Municipal Institute of Social Services. After assessing the project and improving the analytical tools based on the assessment results, the experience will be transferred to other services that work with socially-vulnerable women, such as SARA and SAIER.

Action 3.2. Promoting cooperation between social services and care services for women victims of gender violence in other municipalities accountable to the Generalitat of Catalonia.

Given the significant mobility of women who are homeless and in situations of residential exclusion, as well as the frequent link with gender violence, cooperation projects and networking will be promoted between services from various municipalities.

Action 3.3. Promoting inter-administration coordination and actions aimed at avoiding women's homelessness in deinstitutionalisation processes.

The collaboration protocol established during the last term of office between the Generalitat of Catalonia's Directorate of Penal Services and the Municipal Institute of Social Services to prevent situations of homelessness resulting from prison release will be reviewed, in order to include the gender perspective and extend its scope.

The current care protocols will also be extended to hospitalised people at risk of homelessness in hospitals outside Barcelona. There are currently cooperation circuits between Hospital del mar, Hospital Clínic, Hospital de Sant Pau, Hospital de la Vall d'Hebron and the Barcelona Social Emergency Centre (CUESB). The application of these collaboration protocols will be evaluated and they will be adapted to situations of women's homelessness.

The services aimed at preventing homelessness among women suffering from addictions and mental health problems, such as the Ariadna project, will be reinforced.

Action 3.4. Expanding the accommodation programmes aimed at preventing women's homelessness used by services working with applicants for international protection and promoting coordination with the Spanish Government's Protection and Asylum Programme.

Coordination and information mechanisms will be promoted with the organisations responsible for managing the Spanish Protection and Asylum Programme, in order to detect homelessness risk situations caused by that programme's deficiencies in terms of ensuring basic needs, accommodation and housing.

Additionally, the places available in the Nausica programme, a municipal service that offers accommodation, maintenance and socio-employment support for asylum seekers and refugees who have not achieved an adequate level of self-sufficiency after leaving the state protection programme, will be increased from 90 to 150 during this municipal term of office. In the last four years, women have made up 40% of the total number of people receiving assistance and 16% of them were LGTBI women.

Action 3.5. Dealing with the problem of maternity in women who are homeless or at risk of residential exclusion.

The situation of women with dependent children will be specifically explored in order to detect problems and concerns about maternity in situations of

residential exclusion, with the aim of detecting barriers to accessing services – such as the fear of losing custody of their children– and defining improvements to be included in the process of accompanying and supporting these families and for the information and dissemination channels of social services.

The legal advice offered to foreign women will be reviewed, in order to ensure they have sufficient, appropriate information on their rights as mothers.

Action 3.6. Launching an advice campaign for especially vulnerable groups, in order to prevent them from losing their homes.

A proactive advice and information campaign will be carried out on the right to housing, aimed at especially vulnerable profiles: e.g. single-mother families (there is already an objective –the G4– of the Feminisation of Poverty Strategy along these lines), and elderly women or widows with old rental contracts, in order to prevent problems in the subrogation of the rental contract, exploring alliances with other services (such as PIAD, senior citizen centres, etc.), the housing sector (API), advocacy (ICAB) and community, social and neighbourhood environments.

Community networks will be promoted to foster neighbourhood logic in the transfer of information about flats or rooms for rent and other housing solutions for women who have experienced gender violence and are in a process of recovery.

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**4.4. Strategic line 4
Tertiary prevention: improving care and escaping from homelessness**

Action 4.1. Promoting the inclusion of the gender perspective in all Municipal Care Programme for Homeless People services.

Improved care avoids repeated homelessness. Changes to the services aimed at ensuring care from a gender perspective and facilitating emotional, housing and economic stability for the people receiving assistance improves the quality of people's lives and makes the recovery process more stable over time, with fewer cases of recidivism, and they have a positive impact on the person and on specialised and other services (health, justice, etc.).

To achieve these changes, a process has been proposed for transforming municipal resources so they include the gender perspective in a cross-cutting way, and adapt their period of temporary residence to the needs of the women concerned. The specific needs of lesbian and transsexual women will also be taken into account.

Preliminary Care Centres (CPA) will also be reorganised, so that women can have women-only areas, with the aim of offering them a safe place, away from the pressures they are subjected to on the street, in order to reduce their feelings of insecurity. Homeless and roofless women will also be given priority access to municipal residential centres that offer greater levels of privacy and intimacy.

The reorganisation of the Municipal Care Programme for Homeless People also involves prioritising access for women to accommodation resources that ensure privacy, intimacy and safety.

Action 4.2. Improving coordination between care services for women victims of gender violence and services for homeless people.

Fostering the role of SARA in the care of homeless women who have suffered violence, in order to facilitate their access to recovery services.

There will be cross training and experience exchange sessions for professionals working with homeless people and those working with women victims of gender violence.

Action 4.3. Offering training sessions for professionals from various services that have contact with homeless women on the gender perspective in this area, gender violence and trauma.

Venues for training and debate among professionals from Barcelona's Homeless People Care Network will be created in order to explore knowledge about women's homelessness and the specific reality of homeless women.

Action 4.4. Producing protocols for cases of gender violence in all facilities.

Action protocols to deal with cases of gender violence in residential and accommodation facilities for homeless people will be created, and the necessary actions will be carried out to ensure that these protocols are adapted to the reality of each centre and that service users and professionals are familiar with them. Preventative actions in the facilities will be defined in order to promote areas that are perceived to be safer.

Action protocols will also be drafted to deal with situations of gender violence in public housing and in emergency-committee flats. The Housing Discipline Unit's detection capacity will be reinforced.

Action 4.5. Women's groups will be created in all residential and day-care centres.

In accommodation and residential centres, the creation of women's groups which are differentiated from the mixed resident assemblies that most centres already have will be promoted.

Continuing with the work already initiated in some centres, these groups will be strengthened in all municipal centres, in order to generate areas of mutual support and empowerment, as well as for debate and actions that improve the lives of women residents.

Spaces will be created for systematically compiling the demands and needs of these women. These groups will be linked to other spaces and community initiatives, in order to promote the participation of women outside the environment of the facility.

Action 4.6. Ensuring that women have priority access to the "Home First" programme and promoting housing-led initiatives aimed at caring for homeless and roofless women.

Priority access to the "Home First" programme will be given to women living on the street; the programme will be expanded by 26 flats over the next two years.

Twenty flats from the public housing stock will be allocated for offering residential stability to homeless women, and priority access will be given to single-mother families in the 125 temporary accommodation facilities with social support that will become operational during the 2019-2023 term of office. This accommodation follows the model initiated with the facility on Carrer de Tànger, which has small apartments in a building with centralised social support that recently became operational, or the APROP model (Provisional Local Accommodation).

Support will also be provided for projects developed by third-sector organisations with a consolidated history of caring for homeless women. In this regard, Barcelona City Council has committed to providing economic support to the Rosario Endrinal Home for homeless women, which is being set up by the Assis Centre as part of its "Women with Homes" programme. It will provide the city with ten stable residential places for homeless women.

Action 4.7. Creating a pilot project for the care of homeless women in situations of hidden homelessness.

A social-support team will be set up for homeless women who live in the homes of relatives or acquaintances, placing special emphasis on single-mother nuclear families. In a similar way to the work carried out by open-environment social intervention teams, this operation will offer social support to people who are not connected to social services that are in a situation of hidden homelessness, in order to facilitate their access to the portfolio of services offered by social and health services, to public transfers such as the Guaranteed Citizens Income, or for help in processes for putting down roots and obtaining work and residency permits.

This pilot project should help to improve the work of municipal services with women who have dependent children and make progress in community work and the construction of support networks among women in a situation of social vulnerability and poverty.

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Government
measure for
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5. PLANNING AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES

Carrying out the actions planned in this measure will require the direct expenditure of around €600 a year between 2020 and 2023. Furthermore, there will be an investment of approximately €1.2 million in refurbishing existing municipal facilities, aimed at applying the improvements arising from the inclusion of the gender perspective.

The planned schedule for implementing the actions grouped along strategic lines is as follows:



Table 3. Planned schedule

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Strategic line 1				
Breaking through the invisibility				
Action 1.1. Improving the data collection of municipal services that work with women who are homeless or at risk of housing insecurity.	●			
Action 1.2. Promoting specific research on the relationship between these women and the Municipal Care Programme for Homeless People's services and with other municipal services.	●			
Action 1.3. Holding a participative session to debate and draft policy proposals	●			
	2020	2021	2022	2023
Strategic line 2				
Primary prevention: taking action on the structural causes of homelessness				
Action 2.1. Promoting collaboration with the Generalitat of Catalonia to prevent women's homelessness.	●	●	●	●
Action 2.2. Promoting inter-administration collaboration with the General Administration of Spain in order to prevent women's homelessness.	●	●	●	●

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Strategic line 3
Secondary prevention: preventing women in risk groups from becoming homeless

Action 3.1. Establishing early-detection mechanisms for services that work with vulnerable people.	●			
Action 3.2. Promoting inter-administration cooperation: social services and services working with women victims of violence from other municipalities.			●	●
Action 3.3. Promoting inter-administration coordination and actions aimed at avoiding women's homelessness in deinstitutionalisation processes.	●			
Action 3.4. Expanding the accommodation programmes aimed at preventing women's homelessness used by services working with applicants for international protection and promoting coordination with the Spanish Government's Protection and Asylum Programme.	●			
Action 3.5. Reviewing the information and dissemination channels of the services offered by Barcelona City Council, in order to minimise women's fear of losing the custody of their children when initiating a relationship with social services.	●		●	
Action 3.6. Launching an advice campaign for especially vulnerable groups, in order to prevent them from losing their homes.	●			

Strategic line 4
Tertiary prevention: improving care and escaping from homelessness

Action 4.1. Promoting the inclusion of the gender perspective in all Municipal Care Programme for Homeless People services.		●	●		
Action 4.2. Improving coordination between care services for women victims of gender violence and services for homeless people.		●	●		
Action 4.3. Offering training for professionals on working with homeless women, gender violence, trauma, etc.		●	●		
Action 4.4. Producing protocols for cases of gender violence in all facilities.		●			
Action 4.5. Promoting participation and creating spaces for women in residential and day-care centres.	●	●	●	●	
Action 4.6. Ensuring that women have priority access to the “Home First” programme and promoting housing-led initiatives aimed at caring for homeless and roofless women.		●	●	●	
Action 4.7. Creating a pilot project for the care of homeless women in situations of hidden homelessness.		●			

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This measure initiates a process of producing policy proposals for introducing the gender perspective in programmes and operations aimed at homeless people. Empirical evidence shows that most women suffering situations of homelessness remain in the shadows and are invisible. Furthermore, many of them suffer or have suffered gender violence, which means that these women are victimised twice, and this needs to be tackled with measures that make these women visible and provide them with avenues for rebuilding their lives.

It is necessary to monitor and evaluate the proposed actions in order to identify deficiencies and propose the inclusion of improvements into the measure's implementation process. In that regard:

1. The actions will be shared with the social stakeholders involved, XASPLL organisations, the Municipal Council of Social Welfare's homelessness group and women's groups formed in residential facilities and day-care centres, with the aim of defining the actions, detecting those that do not achieve their objectives and establishing improvement actions, all within a participative process where homeless women can make contributions.
2. In the session proposed for the end of 2020, there will be an evaluation of the actions implemented during this first year.
3. In 2023, there will be another evaluation session for the measure, using indicators that will make it possible to assess the improvements achieved and the measure's deficiencies.

The implementation of the measure's actions must be accompanied by a participative process where the homeless women concerned have spaces for debating and proposing improvements. Therefore, a women's group will be created in each facility, where a defined methodology for gathering their opinions and evaluations will be established beforehand.

An evaluation report will be published, stating the degree to which the actions were achieved and the evaluations of the stakeholders involved, in 2023.

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