

# Homelessness definition framework

## **Foreword on Jersey's definition framework of homelessness**

I am delighted that this crucial piece of work is my first publication as Minister for Housing and Communities.

Homelessness is not easy to define. It can be visible – those who are rough sleeping or staying on a friend's sofa. But it can be harder to see – those who are living in unsuitable or unsafe accommodation or those who are facing eviction.

Regardless of whether we see it or not, it does exist – in all its forms – in Jersey, with potentially devastating consequences for all those affected.

This definition framework will help make homelessness in Jersey more visible. It allows us to categorise homelessness so that our Housing Advice Service can target those who need support. It will also help Islanders understand if they are in a situation that requires intervention.

I met the Jersey Homelessness Cluster a matter of days after I was appointed as minister, and I spent my first few weeks in office visiting some of our emergency accommodation providers. They told me that a definition of homelessness was vital for us to better understand who needs help and how we can best give that help.

But working to tackle homelessness is also about recognising the impact that poor housing can have on health and education outcomes. As the Jersey Homelessness Strategy noted, we should aspire to live in a society where everyone has opportunities and can participate. Although I plan to place the definition in legislation, I want to avoid the inevitable delays this can create. I want us to start capturing the data that this definition will provide so we can move in the right direction.

In the meantime, I will continue to work with the Jersey Homelessness Cluster to better understand what government can do to tackle homelessness and its impact.

When I spoke to the author of the Jersey Homelessness Strategy, she said something that struck me: "Home is everything." That message still resonates with me – and I hope that this definition will, at last, bring a far greater public awareness. The definition framework will help to drive government strategy today and into the future, and will give our least visible people a voice in the Island we all recognise as home.

**Deputy David Warr, Minister for Housing and Communities  
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## 1. Introduction

1.1. The [Jersey Homelessness Strategy](#) includes an action to “understand and define homelessness by providing a statutory definition and clear messages to promote a shared understanding of the issue”.

1.2. The definition of homelessness set out in this document provides a common conceptual framework for homelessness in Jersey that will:

- a. Enable common data to be collected between organisations.
- b. Promote public awareness and understanding of homelessness in Jersey.
- c. Inform service delivery, and policy and funding decisions relating to homelessness.

1.3. This definition of homelessness was considered in two workshops of the [Jersey Homelessness Cluster](#) in December 2018 and November 2019, with a follow-up meeting in May 2021. Stakeholders favoured a four-tiered framework definition of homelessness, consistent with the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS) framework.

1.4. Whilst it is not proposed at this stage to place the definition of homelessness on a statutory footing, the publication of this framework will help to guide policy choices and service delivery and provide the basis for a statutory definition at a later stage.

## 2. Definition

2.1. Internationally, the definition of homelessness varies between jurisdictions. ETHOS, designed by FEANTSA – the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless – provides a common “language” for homelessness and is used for different purposes such as a framework for debate, for data collection and for policy and monitoring purposes. ETHOS attempts to cover all living situations that amount to homelessness:

- Rooflessness – without a shelter of any kind, sleeping rough.
- Houselessness – with a place to sleep but temporarily in institutions or shelters.
- Living in insecure housing – threatened with exclusion because of insecure tenancies, eviction, or domestic violence.
- Living in inadequate housing – in caravans or illegal campsites, in unfit housing or in extreme overcrowding.

2.2. The ETHOS typology that will be applied to Jersey is included at Appendix A. It will be used to define and categorise homelessness in Jersey. There are some minor additions to the ETHOS categorisation to reflect the local circumstances in which it will operate.

## Appendix 1 – European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion

Category		Operational Category	Living Situation	Generic Definition
	Roofless	1. People living rough	Public space or external space	Living in the streets or public spaces, without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters
	2. People in emergency accommodation	Night shelter	People with no usual place of residence who make use of overnight shelter, low threshold shelter	
Houseless	3. People in emergency accommodation providing a place to sleep	Sheltered accommodation Temporary accommodation Transitional supported accommodation	Where the period of stay is intended to be short-term	
	4. People in a women's shelter	Women's shelter accommodation	Women accommodated as a result of domestic violence and where the period of stay is intended to be short-term	
	5. People in accommodation for migrant workers	Temporary accommodation / reception centres Migrant workers' accommodation	People in reception or short-term accommodation due to their residential status	
	6. People due to be released from institutions	Penal institutions Medical institutions – includes drug rehabilitation institutions, psychiatric hospital etc. Care leavers	No housing available prior to release. Stay longer than needed due to lack of housing. No housing identified (e.g. by 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday)	

	7. People receiving long-term support due to homelessness	Residential care for older homeless persons  Supported accommodation for former homeless persons	Long-stay accommodation with care for formerly homeless people (normally more than one year)
Insecure	8. People living in insecure accommodation	Temporarily with family/friends  No legal tenancy  Illegal occupation of land  Non-qualified households	Living in conventional housing but not the usual place of residence due to lack of housing  Occupation of dwelling with no legal tenancy or illegal occupation of a dwelling  Occupation of land with no legal rights  Households with under five years' residency
	9. People living under threat of eviction	Legal Orders enforced (rented)  Re-possession orders (owned)	Where orders for eviction are operative  Where mortgage has legal order to re-possess
	10. People living under threat of violence	Police recorded incidents	Where police action is taken to ensure place of safety for victims of domestic violence
Inadequate	11. People living in temporary / non-conventional structures	Mobile homes  Non-conventional building  Temporary structure	Not intended as place of usual residence  Makeshift shelter, shack or shanty  Semi-permanent structure, hut or cabin
	12. People living in unfit housing	Occupied dwellings unfit for habitation	Defined as unfit for habitation by national legislation or building regulations
	13. People living in extreme over-crowding	Highest national norm of overcrowding	Defined as exceeding national density standard for floor-space or useable rooms