



Summary of key findings

Official statistical definition of homelessness (Table 1.ISL)

Homelessness is defined as someone who does not have access to traditional housing, does not have shelter usually in the same place and stays where possible every night, including in a shelter, a guest house or with other people. Those who come from temporary shelter, such as from prison or from drug treatment, have a history of multiple housing and social difficulties and do not have guaranteed shelter one to two months before they leave the other temporary housing, are included here.

Latest national estimates of homelessness (Table 2.ISL)

- 1 272 individuals, representing 0.34% of the total population (2021)
- 41% are women, 59% are men
- Point-in-time count, based on the Icelandic Population Census (2021)
- ETHOS Light groups included:
 - ETHOS 1: Living on the streets, in public spaces
 - ETHOS 2: Emergency accommodation (e.g., shelters)
 - ETHOS 3: Accommodation for the homeless (e.g., hostels and women's refuges)
 - ETHOS 4: People in institutions
 - ETHOS 5: People in non-conventional dwellings (e.g., caravans, cars or tents)
 - ETHOS 6: Living temporarily with others in conventional housing (e.g., sofa-surfing)

Legal framework to collect data on homelessness (Table 3.ISL)

There is no legal obligation to collect data on homelessness in Iceland.

National homelessness strategy (Table 4.ISL)

Iceland does not have a national homelessness strategy, but local strategies exist.

Approaches to collect data on homelessness (Table 5.ISL)

- Population census: Census of the population experiencing homelessness (Table 5.1.ISL).

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Table 1.ISL. Official statistical definition of homelessness

Homelessness	In 2005, Iceland's Ministry of Social Affairs defined homelessness as follows: "Homeless is someone who does not have access to traditional housing, does not have shelter usually in the same place and stays where possible every night, including in a shelter, a guest house or with other people. Those who come from temporary shelter, such as from prison or from drug treatment, have a history of multiple housing and social difficulties and do not have guaranteed shelter one to two months before they leave the other temporary housing, are included here."
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Table 2.ISL. Data on people experiencing homelessness

National data, presented according to [ETHOS Light Typology](#)

Headline estimate of homelessness (Individuals)	% of total population	ETHOS 1 People living rough	ETHOS 2 People in emergency accommodation	ETHOS 3 People in accommodation for the homeless	ETHOS 4 People living in institutions	ETHOS 5 People living in unconventional dwellings	ETHOS 6 People staying with family/friends
1 272 ^(a) 59% men 41% women	0.34%	194	Included in headline estimate but not specified	Included in headline estimate but not specified	Not included	Not included	Not included

Type of count: Point-in-time Flow

Year: 2021

Included in headline estimate: Children (<18)

Temporary accommodation for: Asylum seekers Refugees Victims of domestic violence

(a) The headline estimate includes 1 078 people who are experiencing secondary homelessness – that is they are persons who are frequently resettled or on a waiting list for social housing due to lack of housing.

Source: OECD Questionnaire on Affordable and Social Housing (QuASH), 2023; Statistics Iceland (2021), Population Census

Table 3.ISL. Legal framework to collect data on homelessness

Law that governs data collection on homelessness	None.
Legal obligations	None.

Table 4.ISL. National homelessness strategy

National homelessness strategy in place	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, but regional and/or local strategies exist <input type="checkbox"/> No
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Table 5.ISL. Approaches to collect data on homelessness

5.1.ISL. Iceland Population Census	
Description Census of the population experiencing homelessness through the national population census.	
Type of count generated <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Point-in-time <input type="checkbox"/> Flow (period)	Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none">Population census
Lead authority(ies) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Statistics Iceland	Source(s) of information <ul style="list-style-type: none">General population
Scope <ul style="list-style-type: none">National level	Depth of data <ul style="list-style-type: none">Data disaggregated by: sex, age, region of residence, and education level, among others.
Frequency <ul style="list-style-type: none">Every 10 years	
ETHOS Light groups included <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ETHOS 1: Living on the streets, in public spaces <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ETHOS 2: Emergency accommodation (e.g., shelters) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ETHOS 3: Accommodation for the homeless (e.g., hostels and women's refuges) <input type="checkbox"/> ETHOS 4: People in institutions <input type="checkbox"/> ETHOS 5: People in non-conventional dwellings (e.g., caravans, cars or tents) <input type="checkbox"/> ETHOS 6: Living temporarily with others in conventional housing (e.g., sofa-surfing) Note: Each ETHOS Light group includes one or more sub-categories of living situations. ETHOS Light groups are considered as "included" in the data collection approach if at least one of the sub-categories is counted.	
Notes Official report 2021.	