

CZECH NATIONAL REPORT 2011

Quality of Services

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1. Organisation and funding of homeless services

1.1. Legislation

In the Czech Republic, we can read the legislation for homeless people in two planes:

- a) the level of financial support - a homeless person can apply for financial benefits when he is in distress, he has little financial income and he cannot raise their financial income due to age, health status, etc. (Act No. 111/2006 Coll., on Help in Material Poverty). If a homeless person meets the conditions set by law, he can get a housing allowance each month (to purchase food, clothing, hygiene, etc.). If a citizen has a contractual relationship in addition to any home (apartment, hostel, shelter, etc.) he may be granted housing supplement, which is intended to cover the costs of their housing.
- b) the level of social services - there is Act No. 108/2006 on Social Services, which regulates the conditions for providing assistance and support through social services. Services for homeless people are contained in this Act. (see 1.2.)

1.2. Typology of services

The Czech Republic uses a typology of homelessness and housing exclusion ETHOS created by FEATSA organizations. In the Czech Republic under the project "Social Inclusion of Homeless in the Czech Republic, established national subcategories reflect the specific target groups belonging to the typology of the Czech Republic (see Annex 1 – only in Czech).

As mentioned in Section 1.1. b), the Czech Republic create legislative conditions for the provision of social services for homeless people. These services are integrated within social services as services that are preventive in nature (for clients and society). Homeless people can use the following social services:

- *Low-threshold day centres* – provide ambulatory or field services to homeless people.
- *Night Shelter* – ambulatory services for homeless people who want to make use of the hygiene facilities and stay overnight.
- *Shelter houses* – provide temporary residential services for persons in unfavourable social situation connected with the loss of housing.
- *Half-way houses* – provide residential services to people of generally up to 26 years of age who leave detention facilities or other institutions for children and young people having reached their majority. The services provided in these facilities are adjusted to the specific needs of these persons.
- *Crisis help* – is a field, ambulatory or residential service provided temporarily to persons whose health or life is in danger and are temporarily unable to resolve their difficult life situation without the assistance of another person.

- *Contact centres* – low threshold facilities providing ambulatory or possibly field services to persons at risk of substance dependence. The objective of the service is to decrease the social and health risks connected with substance abuse.
- *Social rehabilitation* – is a set of specific activities focused on achieving independence and self-reliance for people with physical disability through developing specific abilities and skills, reinforcing habits and training of practical activities necessary for independent ordinary life, using alternative methods of utilising the existing skills, potentials and competences. Social rehabilitation is provided in the form of a field or ambulatory service.
- *Field Programs*.

All social services, including services for homeless people are registered in a central register of social services. These services must comply with the law. This register is maintained in paper and electronic form. The electronic form register allows you to search various providers of social services according to set criteria, ie. and service providers for homeless people.

There is one more database of social prevention services, created by ministry of labour and social affairs - http://iregistr.mpsv.cz/socreg/vitejte.fw.do?SUBSESSION_ID=1304326749081_1

The organization S.A.D. (the National federation of shelters in the Czech Republic) on their website www.azylovedomy.cz publishes database of service providers for people at risk of social exclusion or socially excluded (homeless people).

There is one more information portal of social prevention services, created by ministry of labour and social affairs - <https://sluzbyprevence.mpsv.cz/>.

The founders of social services for homeless people in the Czech Republic are mainly municipalities, civic associations, Christian organizations, charitable organizations. A municipality, region and state map out the needs of homeless people, the impact of social changes, etc. Discussions are also carried out at these levels as well as decisions on promotion and creating various services. Municipalities are the most important at this point; it should be competent in dealing with homeless people.

1.3. Funding

The Czech Republic has implemented a system of multi-source financing of social services for homeless people. These resources include:

- State subsidies;
- Regional funding;
- Subsidies to municipalities;
- European Union Structural Funds;
- Foundation grant;
- Payment users (residential services);
- Gifts;
- Other sources of private providers.

The funds are redistributed to the application of individual service providers who must meet the necessary criteria. Financial resources of municipalities and counties are allocated to organizations under the necessity of the service. This necessity is usually expressed in binding documents, for example: the village community plan, strategic plan for regional development, etc. Subsidies may be granted for one year or more years. Long-term subsidies provide better conditions for continuous provision of the services. The system of financing social

services in the Czech Republic is not specifically declared, no concept, therefore the possibilities and conditions for financing change - this is for the service providers very unstable area.

2. Quality schemes in homeless services

2.1. Quality provisions

The Social Services Act defines the types of social services. The total number of 33 services of which 7 are intended for the homeless. These services for the homeless must meet all quality standards, which are given by the Social Services Act and its Decree No. 505/2006 Coll. in its Annex 2 (Social Services Act. –English version and Decree No. 505/2006 Coll. – only Czech version).

In the Czech Republic, There are “The Social Services quality standards”. These standards are set by law and are binding for all social services provided under this Act (registered social services). Implementation of social services without proper authorization within the meaning of the law and not respecting its conditions (quality standards) may be fined up to 250 thousand CZK.

Quality standards are mandatory for all organizations. This obligation is prescribed by the Social Services Act. Each provider must provide, in writing as well as publish their quality principles (code of conduct and principles). All employees of the provider must know and respect these principles.

The Social Services quality standards:

1. Objectives and methods of providing social services
2. Protection of Human Rights
3. Negotiations with applicant on social services
4. The contract for the provision of social services
5. Individual planning of the social service
6. Documentation of the provision of social services
7. Complaints about the quality or method of providing social services
8. Follow-provided social services to other available resources
9. Personnel and organizational arrangements of social services
10. Professional Staff Development.
11. Local time and availability of social services provided
12. Information on social service
13. The environment and conditions
14. Emergency and fallback situations
15. Improving the quality of social services

Quality standards do not solve the health care or employment services directly. Provider marginally addresses the health care or employment within the standard number 8 – “Follow-provided social services to other available resources”. Service providers for the homeless often meet this standard through cooperation with individual doctors or employers in their region. This cooperation is not mandatory - it is not required by law.

2.2. Dimensions of quality

At the beginning of the text of the Social Services Act in the basic principles is stated as follows: *"The extent and form of the assistance and the support provided through social services has to preserve human dignity of persons. The assistance shall be based on individually determined needs of persons and it has to have an active impact on persons, it has to support development of their independence, to motivate persons to carry out activities that would not lead to long-term preservation or deepening of their adverse social situation and to strengthen their social integration. Social services shall be provided in the interest of persons and in due quality, in manners always strictly ensuring compliance with human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons."* (§ 2, paragraph 2)

Social services providers shall (§ 88)

- a) arrange for available information on the type, place, aims, group of persons to whom social services are provided, capacity of social services provided and the manner of providing social services, in particular in a manner comprehensible to all persons,
- b) inform a person interested in social services about all duties ensuing for such person from the conclusion of a contract on provision of social services, about the manner of providing social services and payments for these services, in particular in a manner comprehensible to such person,
- c) when providing social services, create conditions enabling persons to whom social services are provided to execute their human and civil rights, and preventing conflicts of interests of these persons with interests of a social services provider,
- d) process internal rules focused on arranging for social services provided, including determination of rules for asserting justified interests of persons, in particular in a form comprehensible to all persons,
- e) process internal rules for filing and processing complains by persons to whom social services are provided concerning the level of service, in particular in a form comprehensible to all persons,
- f) plan the course of social services provision according to personal aims, needs and skills of persons to whom social services are provided, to keep written individual records on the course of social services provided and to assess the course of social services provision in the presence of such persons, where possible in view of their health condition and type of the social service provided, or in the presence of their statutory representatives,
- g) keep registry of applicants for social services with whom a provider was unable to conclude a contract on provision of social services on the grounds stipulated in § 91(3)(b),
- h) comply with social services quality standards,
- i) conclude a contract on provision of social services with a person, unless the reasons stipulated in § 91(3) so prevent."

Social prevention services (which include services to the homeless) are provided without charge to the client or only a partial payment, in case when an overnight stay is provided and meals. Each provider of social services must provide service under contract. The client has their rights and obligations in this contract. His primary

responsibility is to propose implementation of its "contract" - an objective which is achieved through services. The goal is always directed to social inclusion of the client. Each client has a worker assigned to this process.

Quality standards are part of the Social Services Act and are the same throughout the Czech Republic.

2.3. Conditionality of funding

In the Czech Republic, there is no direct link between the quality respect for standards and the financing of social services now (including services for the homeless). However, the Social Services Act gives state and regional authorities (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, regional offices), the possibility of penalizing providers who do not comply with the obligations. One of the penalties is a cancellation of service. Sometimes, a provider of grant requires completion of an audit service quality. This condition is not a normal part of the standard grant management.

3. Specificities of homeless services

3.1. Transitional character

Services for homeless people are various types (see 1.2.). Each service has a duty to assess the quality of its service and works on its improvement. Each service has its own unique system of providing services (including quality). Transience of services hasn't got an important role in quality measurement.

The duties in a variety of services for homeless people vary according the type of service (see 1.2.). The basis of this work is an interview with the client. There are workers who must meet the qualification requirements of the law. These workers use different working methods and interview techniques with a client situation. The basic principles are: unconditional acceptance, authenticity, empathy, and cooperation with client. In crisis situations, workers use the elements of crisis intervention or agreed procedures for handling crisis situations.

3.2. Diversity

Homeless people have different needs. Each service has clearly declared the area in which these services can offer support and assistance to the homeless. Each service must be aware of other related services and resources (other social services, employers, banks, educational institutions, health care, etc.). Services are trying to support clients to use commonly available resources and opportunities in society as common citizens. These areas are defined within the Social Services quality standards No. 8 - Follow-provided social services to other available resources and No. 10 - Professional Staff Development.

3.3. Users' participation

One of the fundamental principles of social services is the effective participation of the client to address their social situation. When a worker deals with clients, he strives to remain a client in an active role. Employee seeks to promote the client's autonomy and responsibility in resolving the situation. Each service has its own methodological procedures that are used throughout the use of the Service (negotiations with applicant on social services, a contract for services, implementation services, and termination of service). These processes regulate the criteria of quality standards.

4. Implementation of quality in homeless services

4.1. Governance

The Social Services Act stipulates that every registered provider of social services must comply with defined standards of quality social services. The service provider is directly responsible for implementing quality standards in practice. State, region or municipality may supervise the implementation of quality standards into practice.

Quality standards are mandatory in the Czech Republic. The Social Services Act also sets rules for the implementation of controls not only meeting standards, but also other providers of defined responsibilities. Monitoring is carried out under state control, called the inspection of social services. There are other models of control of social services (e.g. community planning, monitoring, community service monitoring of the founder, etc.). Each service must regularly evaluate and monitor their own quality of service within a standard No. 15 (e.g. customer complaints, customer satisfaction).

4.2. Method

Service providers create methodological procedures and internal rules within the standards of quality. These procedures meet the specific conditions of service. Provider may invite an independent expert to the processing methods. The service provider is responsible for creating rules for the provision of services and adherence to quality in practice.

Quality standards are defined to be independent of the changing social conditions and to change the system of providing services. However, the service provider must regularly monitor changes and evaluate their service, which must reflect the current situation (the changed needs of clients, candidates change the structure of the service, new social trends, outcomes of satisfaction with the service provided, etc.).

4.3. Staff training

Employees, who work in social services, must meet the conditions for the exercise of their profession by the law. The Social Services Act also establishes the conditions for compulsory education of these workers, which is set at the minimum limit of 24 hours per year. This training helps employees enhance their skills and helps to respond well to the changing needs of clients as well as to changes in trends in social services. Training usually takes the form of courses, seminars, workshops, internships, etc.

Implementation of quality system in practice has been supported by various forms of education for about 10 years. Service providers can choose the type of education that meet the needs of staff and services - for example: an independent quality inspector, or guide the implementation of quality practices, courses on specific topics of quality, systematic long-term courses and workshops to share good practice, etc. Lately, the service providers have been using more individual consultation with the inspectors of the quality or mutual discussions among themselves.

5. Evaluation

5.1. Organisation and funding of homeless services

Social Services Act gives the following structure of services for homeless people:

Social counselling:

- *Basic social counselling* provides clients with information to help solve their unfavourable social situations

- *Professional social counselling* focuses on the needs of specific social groups and is provided through specialised counselling centres (civil counselling, partnership and family counselling, counselling for people with disabilities, for victims of crime and victims of domestic violence etc.). It covers also social work with individuals whose way of life may lead to conflicts with society. Professional counselling includes also hiring of compensation aids.

Social care services

Social prevention services

- Residential services: *Shelter houses, Half-way houses*
- Ambulatory services: *Low-threshold day centres, Night Shelter,*
- Field services: *Crisis help, Contact centres, Social rehabilitation, Field Programs.*

The structure of social services in the Republic meets the needs of homeless people and their situations. However, there are systemic tools before and after the use of social services: as tools for prevention of loss of shelter or building support for clients who no longer need social services. Therefore, the homeless use social services at some time again.

5.2. Quality schemes in homeless services

The basic principle for the quality of social services under the Social Services Act is to protect human rights, individual approach to a man, preserving human dignity. The service must lead the homeless into independence. We consider these quality settings for the homeless as optimal.

Capacity organization S.A.D. for implementation of quality standards is sufficient. At this time, S.A.D. seeks to establish a system of the methodological support of its members in areas of implementation that providers themselves perceive as problematic.

5.3. Specificities of homeless services

Quality Standards lead the provider into a clear self-identification (formulation of our own goals, a sense of service, determining the target users). They contribute to a better awareness of the service. The standards also require a clear set of transparent internal processes within the service, such as negotiations with the candidate for service, planning and evaluation of services, etc. From this perspective, quality standards are perceived positively.

On the other hand, the implementation of quality standards often involves new investment costs and nearly always higher operating costs, particularly staff costs (wages), making the service more expensive. There is no transparent system for financing social services in the Czech Republic. Service providers are still uncertain whether they will have the necessary financial resources (especially non-governmental organizations).

Quality Standards have got own criteria. Most of the criteria require the providers to "have a written policy" for the area and "to follow it." Criteria of quality standards are divided into essential and others. This division of criteria evaluates the impact on service quality inspection (quality control is considered successful when the service gets from all the criteria of quality standards at least 50% of the points and each major criterion must obtain at least 2 points out of 3).

Client Cooperation is the prerequisite for quality social services. Services should support, encourage and strengthen the client to social inclusion and thus the independence of social services (cf. § 2, paragraph 2 of Act No. 108/2006 Coll.). Social services could only be restrictive practices without the cooperation of the client. The staff of the service must be able to work with the client's degree of willingness of cooperation.

5.4. Implementation of quality in homeless services

We can assess the correctness of the implementation of quality standards according to the methods used for inspection. Quality inspection is working on a methodology that is accessible on the website of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. Analysis of the results of inspections services for the homeless has not yet been processed. Some regions have analysis by social services on its website, typically identified weaknesses, methodological advice and recommendations of inspection services.

Basic principles of the process of implementing quality standards are as follows:

- The process must be planned and managed, may not be coincidental;
- Involvement of the entire work team (select appropriate tools for staff motivation, training, etc.);
- Involvement of the client (eg in the individual service plan)
- Repeating the process, ie. continuous updating of the internal rules of service under circumstances that may change (eg legislation, work team, founder, local conditions, etc.).

6. The role of the European Union

6.1. European quality framework

The positive impact of the EU for providers is primarily able to draw funds from the EU programs and funds that are aimed at promoting the quality of social services. The positive impact can be seen also in receipt of EU terminology services for the homeless.

EU legislation, which regulates state aid and public procurement is particularly important for distributors of European funds, ie. institutions such as the Council for Regional Development, the relevant ministries, etc.

In the Czech Republic, the client - a citizen of another EU member state - usually unable to reach the benefits in poverty, although the Act No. 111/2006 Coll. guarantees benefit to them. Competent authorities (usually local and regional authorities) do not provide benefits to foreigners because they consider this provision as "an unjustifiable burden on the state". These benefits - living allowance, housing supplement and immediate emergency aid - for domestic applicants from the ranks of homeless people are often the only available source of income.

6.2. Impact of EU legislation

The quality framework for services for homeless people can give more emphasis to the implementation of related systems (see also paragraph 5.1.). It may be one of the tools for lobbying the state institutions for multi-subsidy programs for such services. It can also bring foreign experience and sharing of best European practice in services for the homeless.

The defining of the principles of quality by Feantsa helps services for homeless people in those countries which do not have the quality of the services defined by law. We perceive the role of the organization Feantsa as indispensable in promoting the segment of services for homeless people to "target groups" of European support programs and projects.