

# Learnings from the Covid-19 Pandemic crisis on Homelessness Services: the case of Italy

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Crisis from the  
SARS-CoV-2 virus  
and coronavirus  
disease (COVID-19)

In Italy everything has begun on 11 of March 2021

**The National government appeal: #stayathome**

... It sounded as a «**paradox**» for 50,000 homeless people

Objective:  
To explore how  
homelessness  
services responded  
to COVID-19



- To identify immediate effects and challenges
- To retrace the times of pandemic
- To explore adopted short term solutions
- To analyze opportunities, tendencies and perspective of change

Report is available here [https://www.fiopsd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Instant\\_report\\_2020\\_short\\_version.pdf](https://www.fiopsd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Instant_report_2020_short_version.pdf)

# *Cities involved and topics*



**32 telephon and video interviewes to**

- Services coordinator
- Director/Management
- Social workers
- Civil servants

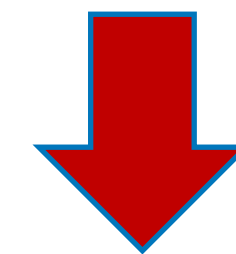
## **Topics**

- Pandemic crisis as “a lens”
- Emergently issues
- Reorganization of services
- Social workers and users
- Private and public collaboration

# EVIDENCES AND RESULTS

After the lockdown, two emergent consequences arised for homelessness services:

- To keep in safe accommodation homeless people
- To inform, raise awareness and to provide necessary PPE for street homelessness



**Coping strategy was adopted in the most part of services**

*Accommodation  
Vs.  
Covid Prevention*

- Low-threshold services, temporary accommodation and homeless hostels opening 24 H
- Public social services office, Job center, psychological support, ... were interrupted
- Intensification of food distribution and material distribution
- «Take away» in the soup kitchen
- Initial interruption of outreach work – retake again after a couple of weeks
- Housing First was the best option
- Supported housing, Rooms and Hotels for people with high risk of contagious

### **Critical issues:**

**Clear security protocol was missing for homelessness services**

**The loss of housing supply**

**The loss of collaboration with health local services**

*Restlessness and  
Insecurity:  
Keep calm!*

**Pressure factors:**

- Shortage of staff
- New volunteers: high motivation but without work experience
- Very busy working days
- Ambiguous emotion: anxiety vs. enthusiasm vs. heroism

**Working Adaptation and Critical issues:**

- Intensification of low profile activities for responding of basic needs
- Social distancing and efforts to maintain empty and relationship



*Resilient capacity to  
cope crisis  
Vs.  
Criminalization, fear  
and difficulties*

- Homeless people had difficulties to understand the gravity of the situation
- No immediate adaptation
- Slow resilience and changing lifestyle habits
- Attempts to promote positive relationship
- Forced “cohabitation”: conflict vs. solidarity
  
- Active involvement of homeless in services management

## *Learnings and expected future scenarios*

- "Territorial resilience"
- Re-think homelessness services
- Reorientation of services toward long term solutions
- Capability approach is crucial
- Reclassifying homeless as a public issue and promote socio-sanitary integration

Grazie