**Seminar 19: Impact of Data on Policy Design II (Room: 00.14)**
Chairs: **Matthias Drilling, Zsolt Temesvary, Jörg Dittmann, CH**

**Koen Hermans, Nana Mertens, BE: Impact Evaluation of the First Regional Point in Time Homelessness Counts in Belgium**

**(for Koen Herman's bio, please see first panel)**
Since 2020 research teams of LUCAS KU Leuven, University of Liege and UC Louvain intensively collaborated with local services and administrations to organise regional point in time counts on homelessness. Each year at least two regions in Flanders and in Wallonia participated. In 2022, after the second wave of these point in time counts, the research teams set up an impact evaluation to gather information on the impact of the counts and to identify the lessons learned after two succeeding years of organising local and regional point in time counts on homelessness. All regions who organised a point in time count in 2020 or 2021 contributed to this impact evaluation. First, the local public administrations and a selection of non-governmental services were asked to fill in an online survey (64 participants). Second, the local coordinators from each region were invited to participate in a focus group to discuss and deepen the results from the online survey (10 participants).

Results show mixed outcomes in the different regions. Firstly, to organise a count, it is important to include a wide variety of services and pre-existing collaborations between services. In cities and regions with stronger cooperation between public and non-public services, the organisation of the count went more efficiently. More services were reached and these services were more motivated to collect the data. In other words, a dense network of services contributes to the quality of the data. Secondly, participants pointed out that the count initiated and broadened the debate on homelessness. By identifying the number of homeless people and their profile characteristics, the population of homeless people becomes more visible on a regional level. The count provided objective figures on homelessness. These figures verified the 'subjective impressions' of the participants. Thirdly, the need for a long-term approach on homelessness was confirmed. The participants suggested that prevention of homelessness and housing-oriented solutions are essential. In other words, the counts also contribute to increasing the awareness that a switch from a crisis-oriented paradigm to a more structured housing-led approach is needed.

**Rob Anderson, UK: A Framework for Ending Rough Sleeping in England**

**Rob oversees the Centre for Homelessness Impact's work to support those working in homelessness across the UK to embed the use of evidence in their work to end homelessness faster. Rob joined CHI from HM Treasury, the UK's finance ministry, where he led spending national policy on homelessness, rough sleeping and private rented housing, and has worked in the non-profit sector tackling poverty and housing insecurity in London. Rob holds an Msc in Inequalities and Social Science from the London School of Economics, where he specialised in the role of housing in social disadvantage in the UK.**

The rough sleeping framework is the first of its kind in the United Kingdom (UK) to bring together local and central government and the non-profit sector to trailblaze a data-led approach to tracking progress towards ending rough sleeping at the local and national level in England.
The framework aligns national and local government for the first time towards a single measurable goal - that rough sleeping is prevented wherever possible, or is otherwise rare, brief and non-recurring everywhere in England. It also introduces a robust indicator set to allow progress towards this goal to be tracked at the local to national level.
The framework was collaboratively created by a group of 'early adopter' local authority areas from across England, including London and Greater Manchester, and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and

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convened by the Centre for Homelessness Impact. The framework has been adopted as the heart of the government's national Ending Rough Sleeping For Good Strategy and rolled out to all local areas in England in May 2023.

This innovative project is a significant step forward from the annual 'point in time' count which is currently the only comparable data across all areas in England. It should simplify and harmonise data collection and reporting and give practitioners and policymakers a common language and set of data, enabling us to learn faster and understand what working, where, and why. The framework links to the European Commission's goal to end homelessness in Europe by 2030 as it is the first time in the UK that a nationwide data-led definition of ending rough sleeping has been developed and introduced. It is an impactful example of evidence-led policy-making and collaboration between local government, non-profit organisations and national government.

Reactions by **Nicholas Pleace, UK**

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