

Finland

SOCIAL SERVICES INDEX

RECOMMENDATION

Effectively preventing the risks of poverty and social exclusion necessitates a substantial **increase basic benefits** for vulnerable persons and **link them with social services and social work** to effectively prevent the risk of poverty and social exclusion. By aligning these vital components, a more comprehensive safety net and holistic approach can be offered to those in need, ultimately promoting their social inclusion and wellbeing.

This would also help to reach families with children in need of support earlier than today.

SOCIAL SERVICES POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

[Social welfare and social services](#) in Finland are regulated by the [Social Welfare Act](#). The Social Welfare Act covers the range of social services that can be accessed in Finland, including:

- Social work and guidance
- Social rehabilitation
- Services to enhance clients' financial capabilities
- Family work
- Home services for families with children
- Home care
- Support services
- Housing services (temporary housing, supported housing, communal housing, and service housing with 24-hour assistance)

- Residential services
- Services to support mobility
- Substance abuse and addiction prevention
- Services for persons with substance abuse and addiction problems
- Mental health services
- Child guidance and family counselling
- Supervision of contact sessions between parents and children
- Time off for caregivers
- Services of school social workers

The counties are responsible for organising social services, which include services for people with disabilities, special care for people with intellectual disabilities, preventive social assistance, child protection, rehabilitative work activities, child custody-related tasks, and family support.

To simplify service categorisation, the services are often grouped according to the lifecycle model into services for families with children, services for adults, and services for older people, though they are based on the same legislation.

Services benefiting families with children include home services, family work, child guidance and family counselling.

Services for people with disabilities are usually provided through general health and social support services, but they are entitled to specialist services if general support cannot help them as they require.

For older people, social services include home care, informal care support, mobility support, and various housing services.

Main Agencies

The [Ministry of Social Affairs and Health](#) plays a central role in overseeing and shaping social welfare legislation. Since 1 January 2023, the responsibility for organising public healthcare and social welfare services, alongside emergency services, has been shifted from the municipalities to the counties, with the establishment of 21 county wellbeing service agencies across Finland, while the City of Helsinki will independently manage its health, social and emergency services. More specifically, emergency services include accident prevention, rescue operations, preparedness and civil defence (e.g. fire brigade, or ambulance services). These services cover all types of incidents, from daily ones to major disasters.

Most services provided by county agencies are public and funded through taxes. These services can be provided directly by county agencies or in collaboration with private service providers. Investments in this area are geared towards reducing the delays that emerged during the pandemic.

SOCIAL SERVICES INVESTMENT

Finland's total budget in 2020 was €57,6 billion. According to 2020 data, €22,1 billion is invested in healthcare and social welfare services, of which 42% (€9,3 billion) is invested in social welfare services.

SOCIAL SERVICES COVERAGE

Long-Term Care

Residential Care

Individuals older than 75, who have undergone assessments confirming their eligibility for residential care, encompassing institutional care, sheltered housing with 24-hour assistance, and regular sheltered housing, are categorised as follows:

- Non-urgent cases: 12% were without a place in residential care (but many receive home care);
- Urgent cases: 33% had been waiting for a place for over seven days (many of them were at hospital and unable to leave).

Institutional care is increasingly rare today. In 2022, the number of individuals aged 75 and older in institutional care was only 1,606. Sheltered housing options, including those with staff available only during daytime and those with 24-hour assistance, have largely supplanted institutional care. The key distinction between sheltered housing and institutional care is that sheltered housing is consistently structured around a rental agreement, owner-occupancy, or another form of tenure.

- Data from 2022 shows that in total, 35,142 people older than 75 were at sheltered housing, sheltered housing with 24-hour assistance or institutional

care. The number of publicly funded and privately funded places are not directly distinguished from each other in records, but it can be concluded that only a marginal part are privately financed.

Home Care

There is no data regarding the percentage of persons who have been assessed as having the right to access home care but have not yet accessed it.

Beneficiaries receiving homecare support receive, on average, 19 hours per month.

Support Services for People with Disabilities

Data from 2021 shows that 182,897 disability service decisions were made in Finland. This number reflects the total amount of different services granted in Finland, not the number of people receiving disability services, which is probably somewhat lower.

According to Finland's statistics on living conditions, 12.9% (approx. 580,000 people) of people aged 16 and over in households experience severe activity limitations. In addition, the [National FinSote Survey](#) reported that in 2020 13.1% of people aged 20 and above experienced disability.

However, according to statistics from Kela (Social Insurance Institution), the number of people receiving a disability allowance amounts to 145,635.

Minimum Income Schemes

According to 2020 data:

- 14% of the population (773,000 people) are at risk of poverty and social exclusion.
- 678,000 people, which corresponds to 12% of the population, 114,300 of whom are children, live in low-income households.

In 2021, 7.7% of the population (425,000 people) received social assistance. Of this number, 29% receive income support on average for more than ten months.

Social Assistance monthly average amounts in 2021 and number of households that received it during that year:

- Primary Social Assistance: €366 per month (in total 265,054 households)
- Supplementary Social Assistance: €215 per month (in total 64,961 households)
- Preventative Social Assistance: €274 per month (in total 35,249 households)

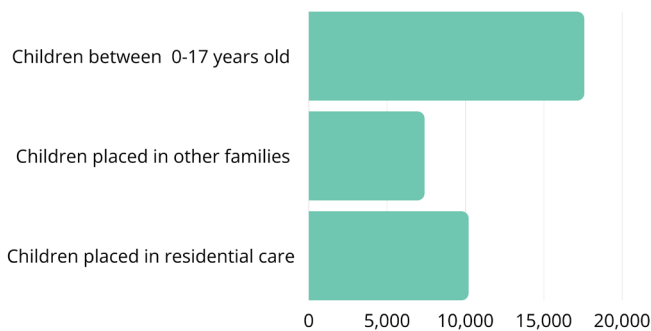
For example, for a one-person household with no income, in 2021, the benefits, which include Social Assistance and Housing Allowance, amounted to approximately 40% of the average household income of €2,968 per month when factoring in income taxes. It is important to note that no taxes are levied on social assistance and housing allowance.

Child Protection Services

In 2021, 17,582 children between 0-17 years old were placed in alternative care and were under the responsibility of public authorities. Of these children, 7,384 (42%) were placed with other families and 10,198 (58%) in residential care.

In Finland, a concerning issue is the increasing number of children, particularly teenagers, entering alternative care each year for the past three decades. This trend indicates that preventive services and other community-based support for children and families have not been effective, and there has been insufficient investment in these crucial services.

2022 Number of children placed in alternative care



Services for Homeless People

In 2022, there were 3,686 homeless persons in Finland, 262 fewer than in 2021. The number of long-term homeless people was 1,133, a decrease of 185. Of 3,686 homeless individuals, 70% were temporarily staying with friends or relatives, 17% were living in dormitories, hostels or other facilities, and 13% were living outdoors or in overnight shelters.

Services for Female Victims of Violence

The centres for female victims of domestic violence can be a room or an apartment in a shelter for one person or an adult with children.

In 2020, 2,573 women aged 18 to 64 were living in shelters. There are 230 family places for victims of domestic violence. This number is very small compared to the total number of women, which is 2,810,493.

Of adult clients in shelters, about 8% are men. There are no data regarding other types of services like therapy groups.

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