

Homeless UAC Task Force Terms of Reference

BACKGROUND

Since 2019, a significant number of UAC (27.3%) were homeless or living in informal/insecure housing such as in apartments with others or in squats and moving frequently between different types of accommodation. These UAC faced high and specific risks, including exploitation, violence, sexual abuse, serious medical conditions, trafficking and smuggling, and exposure to illegal networks. UAC, who were at that period in time also deprived from age-appropriate shelter due to state's limited capacity, often ended up in protective custody in local police stations or Pre- Removal Detention Centres, pending referral to an appropriate accommodation.

In 2020 and considering the high number of unaccompanied children being homeless or living in precarious conditions, and the wide range of intersectoral child protection risks at stake, an agreement was reached among CPsWG members on the need to establish a Homeless UAC Task Force for the response to the needs of UAC being homeless or living in precarious conditions.

DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness three-dimensional definition is used here¹:

- (a) The first dimension addresses the absence of a home – both the absence of the material aspect of minimally adequate housing and of the social aspect of a secure place to establish a family or social relationships and participate in community life;
- (b) The second dimension considers homelessness a form of systemic discrimination and social exclusion, recognizing that being deprived of a home gives rise to a social identity through which 'the homeless' constitutes a social group subject to discrimination and stigmatization;
- (c) The third dimension recognizes those who are homeless as rights-holders who are resilient in their struggle for survival and dignity. With a unique understanding of the systems that deny them their rights, homeless people must be recognized as central agents of the social transformation necessary for the realization of the right to adequate housing.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Homeless UAC Task Force provides technical and policy guidance at country level to ensure effective, coherent, and predictable interventions towards the response of the needs of UAC being homeless or living in precarious conditions in Greece. Recognising homelessness among unaccompanied children in urban areas in Greece, the overarching aims and objectives within the Terms of reference for the Homeless UAC Task Force are as follows:

- Improve services through sharing knowledge and exchange of best practises and lessons learned in urban interventions such as street work;
- Identify gaps in service provision and work to ensure these are addressed in accordance with the best interest of the children and in close collaboration with the National Emergency Response Mechanism for UAC in living precarious conditions (NERM);

¹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, A/HRC/31/54, 30 December 2015, p. 5-6, available at: https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/alldocs.aspx?doc_id=25820.

- Develop and regularly update a comprehensive Referral Pathway for homeless UAC with all necessary information for the services available in the urban context of Athens and Thessaloniki.
- Foster increased cooperation between different actors providing services to homeless UAC and competent authorities.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Homeless UAC Task Force is guided under the same guiding principles described in the ToR of the CPsWG².

GROUP MEMBERS

The Homeless UAC Task Force include representatives from the competent state authorities, international organisations and NGOs specialised in the provision of: i) street work services in urban settings and, ii) services for the protection of unaccompanied and/or separated children who are homeless or living in precarious conditions or have absconded from long term care arrangements.

Each member will have a genuine commitment to jointly work and improve services used by UAC in precarious conditions or homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Non-members

From time-to-time other representatives or organisations may be invited on an ad hoc basis to the Homeless UAC Task Force to present issues as per needs. Such organisation may be: • other public authorities • experts on the provision of services targeting homeless population • actors specialised on street work activities • any other actors interested (including those with experience in homelessness).

LINKAGE WITH OTHER NATIONAL COORDINATION STRUCTURES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Homeless UAC Task Force will be working under the auspices and guidance of the National CPsWG and will report back to the National CPsWG through its chair.

The Homeless UAC Task Force will collaborate, as and when needed, with other national Sub-Working Groups (i.e. national GBV Sub-Working Group, etc.) or coordination fora (i.e. NERM coordination meeting, etc.).

MEETINGS AND PERIODICITY

The Homeless UAC Task Force will convene in a hybrid format (virtually and in-person) and at least twice per year. Ad hoc meetings may be called as per needs or upon calls of the NERM and/or the national CPsWG at short notice in case of critical issues. Minutes of the meetings will be circulated among all members in a timely manner.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Homeless UAC Task Force should not serve as a forum for discussion of individual cases. No detailed documentation related to such cases should be shared within this forum or with others. Inter-agency coordination of cases shall take place through ad hoc case management mechanisms.

² National CPsWG, ToRs, March 2018, Athens. Available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/93805> (accessed: 01.09.2022)