

No. 3 - May 2022 #nobodysleepingonthestreet

# Living on the streets in Barcelona

ANALYSIS OF A HOMELESS CITY





Arrels Foundation is a charitable organisation providing a range of support services to homeless people in Barcelona since 1987. More than 3,000 people are provided annually with housing, basic needs, social services and guidance. About 300 volunteers and a hundred staff members, along with peer support workers, join forces everyday to make **#nobodysleepingonthestreet** happen.

### **We accompany**

guide and care for homeless people  
towards a more autonomous situation

### **We educate**

citizens about the poverty issue  
around us

### **We report**

unfair situations and propose solutions  
to the administrations and civil society

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Photography: Juan Lemus  
Data analysis: Gesop  
Maps: UXCity - Riccardo Palazzolo Henkes and Álvaro Cerezo  
Graphic design: [www.sherpa.agency](http://www.sherpa.agency)

Many thanks to all the rough sleepers who have participated in the Barcelona survey throughout the years. Thanks also to the volunteers who have made it possible.

To cite:  
ARRELS FUNDACIÓ (2022). *Living on the streets in Barcelona. Analysis of a homeless city*. Barcelona: Arrels Fundació  
(#nobodysleepingonthestreet report, no. 3)

With the collaboration of



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**#nobodysleepingonthestreet happen**





# Editorial

## Pressure and prioritize

Six years ago, we started going out into the street with hundreds of volunteers to speak with people who sleep rough and learn about their situation. The last time we went out was the night from the 10th to the 11th of June last year and we interviewed 289 participants. The answers we got confirmed a reality: **their situation is getting more worrying with time.**

We determined with our first census that living on the streets for 6 months gravely deteriorates someone's health. In our last census, we have also observed that **47% of people we interviewed have been homeless for more than 2 years.** That means homelessness on the streets in Barcelona is long-term.

46% of people explained they have suffered assaults, 15% said their basic needs are not covered and 38% didn't have a public health care card. On average, they have lived on the city's streets for 4 years and 8 months. Can you imagine that?

These are circumstances that gravely deteriorate someone's health and, as we always insist from experience, shorten someone's lifespan. In fact, 43% of the interviewees had some health problem and a similar number said to have had to go to an emergency hospital in the last months.

**All this data should enrage us because behind it there are people who suffer and structural causes that we should remedy.** The youngest person we interviewed, who was 18 years old, had stopped living in a child and youth protection centre to start living on the streets. The oldest person we interviewed, who was 77, had arrived in Barcelona a long time ago to look for a job but hadn't succeeded.

There is a simple solution: everyone should have a home and no one should lose their house. How do we make that possible? The administration has to prioritize the issue. Citizens, put pressure on the administration.



**Ferran Busquets,**  
director of Arrels Foundation

 @ferranb





# Methodology

The **report *Living on the streets in Barcelona. Analysis of a homeless city*** provides a look into people who live on the city streets drawing from the data we obtained in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2021. 2020 was the year of the Covid-19 pandemic and deserved a more specific research. This report’s principal source is the **census of people living on the streets** in Barcelona organized by Arrels Foundation during the before mentioned years. The main purpose of the report is to get in-depth knowledge on the difficulties of homelessness and, in particular, on those of rough sleepers. This knowledge is necessary to push for new social policies and useful resources that respond well to homeless people’s reality and focus on securing that no one sleeps on the streets.

The census we carry out in Barcelona is part of the [European End Street Homelessness Campaign](#) led by the British World Habitat organization. This campaign strives to make #nobodysleepingonthestreet a reality and 12 European countries participate in it. Arrels Foundation has been participating in the campaign since 2015 and takes it on in the city of Barcelona.

## Which data is analysed?

We analyse data from the censuses carried out in Barcelona from 2016 to get knowledge on the situation of rough sleepers in the street and their evolution.

### From 2016 to 2021...

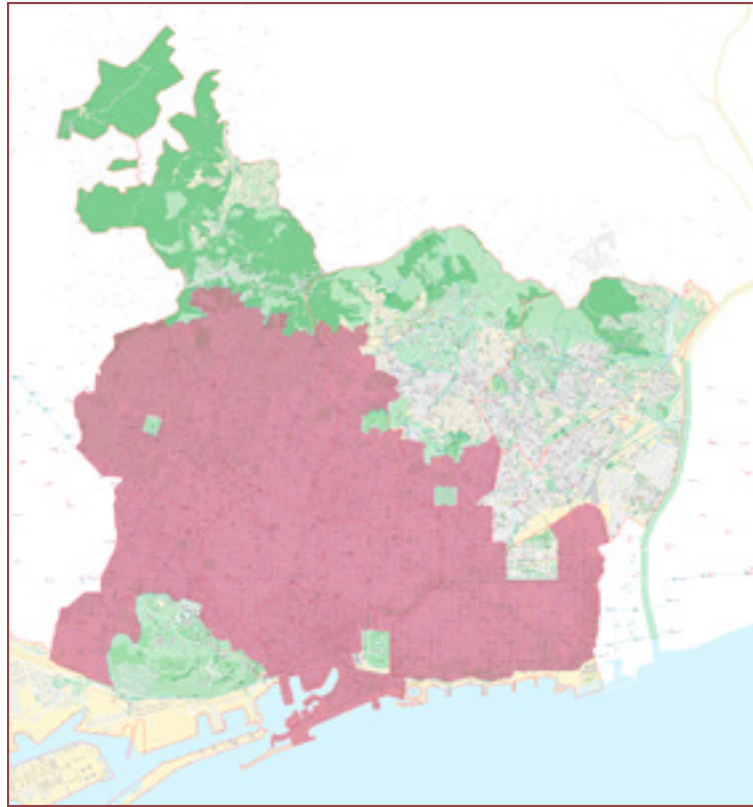
- 1,728 rough sleepers have answered the survey.
- More than 2,100 volunteers have collaborated and made it possible.

### Who completes the survey and who doesn’t?

During the census, we ask every person we see sleeping on the street —and also people that, because of their demeanour or appearance, make us certain that they’re about to end upon the streets— to complete the census. A lot of the people we reached explained their situation to us, but not every single one answered. The reasons behind this are diverse:

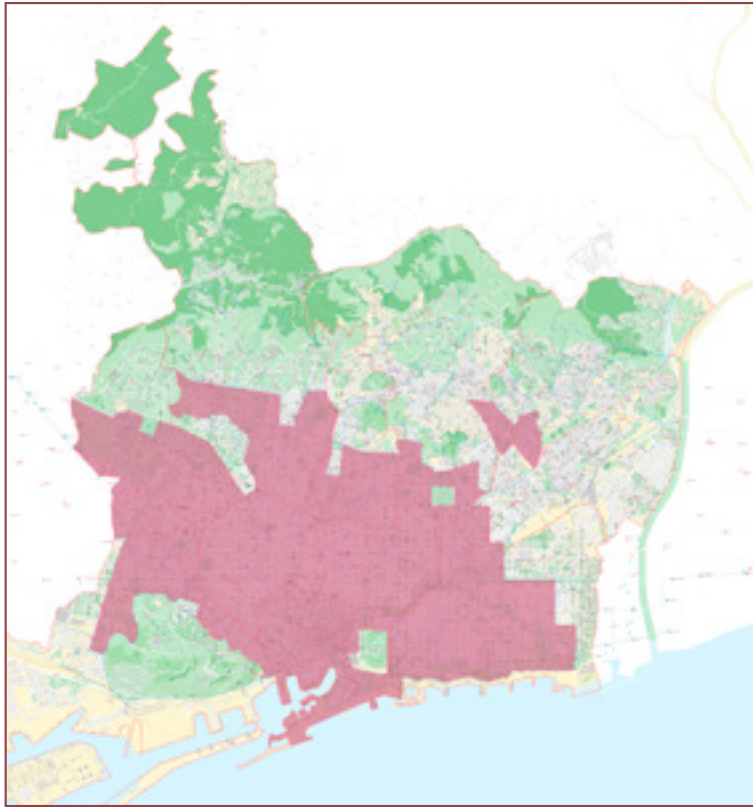
- There are people that we don’t wake up because they are in a deep sleep.
- There are people that cannot complete the survey because of a language barrier.
- There are people that refuse to answer.

 **We know that some of the people that don’t complete the survey have lived on the streets for a long time and their state is particularly vulnerable and deteriorated.** Because of this, the results of the census are more optimistic than what they would have been if we got their answers.



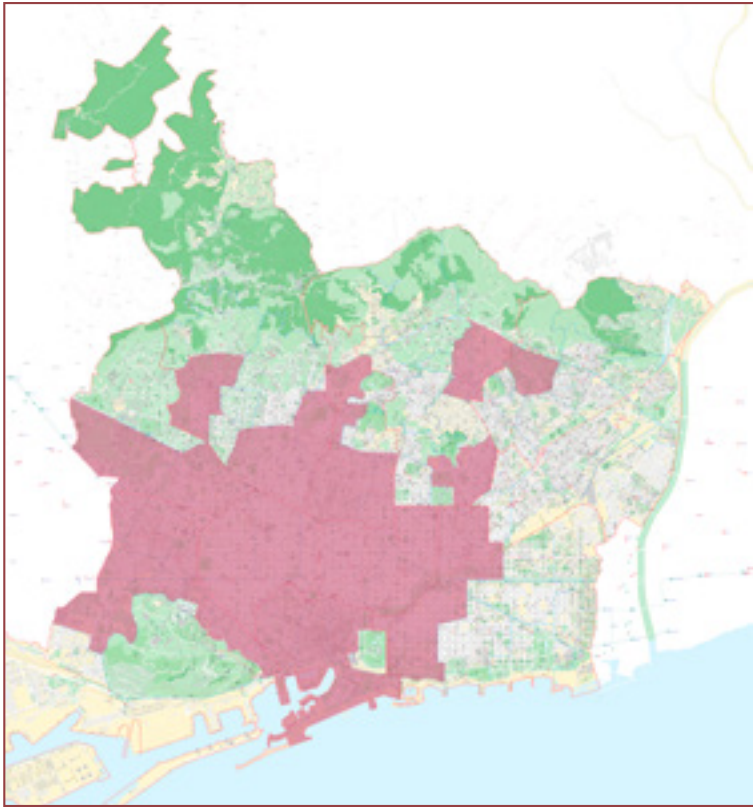
### 2016 census

**When:** Nights of May 30th and 31st and June 1st  
**Number of rough sleepers:** 348 interviewees and 624 located  
**Number of volunteers:** 284  
**Area covered:** 47% of Barcelona's municipal area, centred in the urban area.  
**Districts:** 43 neighbourhoods covering the Ciutat Vella, l'Eixample, Les Corts and Gràcia districts and some areas of Sants-Montjuïc, Sarrià-Sant Gervasi, Horta-Guinardó and Sant Martí.



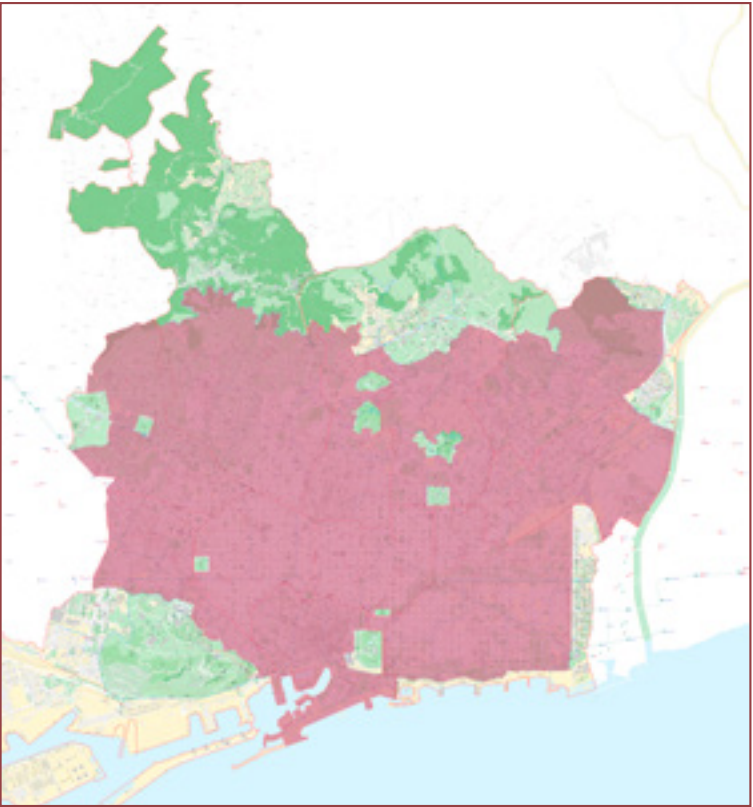
### 2017 census

**When:** Nights of June 6th, 7th and 8th  
**Number of rough sleepers:** 358 interviewees and 905 located  
**Number of volunteers:** 400  
**Area covered:** 35% of Barcelona's municipal area, centred in the urban area.  
**Districts:** 40 neighbourhoods covering the Ciutat Vella and l'Eixample districts and some areas of Sants-Montjuïc, Les Corts, Sarrià-Sant Gervasi, Gràcia, Horta-Guinardó, Nous Barris and Sant Martí.



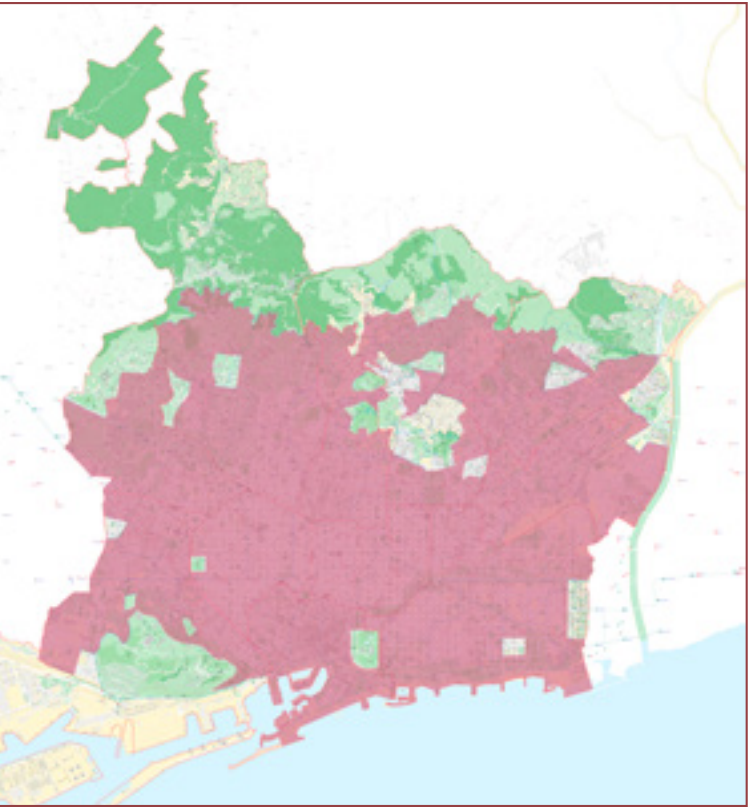
### 2018 census

**When:** Night of June 5th  
**Number of rough sleepers:** 315 interviewees. In the counting, carried out by the XAPSLLO Organization three weeks before, 956 people were located.  
**Number of volunteers:** 370  
**Area covered:** 33% of Barcelona's municipal area, centred in the urban area.  
**Districts:** 34 neighbourhoods covering the Ciutat Vella and l'Eixample districts and some areas of Sants-Montjuïc, Les Corts, Sarrià-Sant Gervasi, Gràcia, Horta-Guinardó, Nous Barris and Sant Martí.



### 2019 census

**When:** Night of June 12th  
**Number of rough sleepers:** 418 interviewees (347 during the night of the survey and 72 during the census at the Santa Anna Field Hospital). The night of the census, 1,195 people were located.  
**Number of volunteers:** More than 560 (549 the night of the survey and about 12 at the Santa Anna Field Hospital).  
**Area covered:** 60% of Barcelona's municipal area, centred in the urban area.  
**Districts:** 64 neighbourhoods covering the Ciutat Vella, l'Eixample and Gràcia districts and some areas of Sants-Montjuïc, Les Corts, Sarrià-Sant Gervasi, Horta-Guinardó, Nous Barris, Sant Andreu and Sant Martí.



### 2021 census

**When:** Night of June 10th  
**Number of rough sleepers:** 289 interviewees and 1,064 located.  
**Number of volunteers:** 530  
**Area covered:** 56% of Barcelona's municipal area, centred in the urban area.  
**Districts:** 63 neighbourhoods covering the Ciutat Vella, l'Eixample, Sants-Montjuïc, Les Corts, Gràcia and Sant Martí districts and some areas of Sarrià-Sant Gervasi, Horta-Guinardó, Nous Barris and Sant Andreu.



We complete our analysis...


- With **the voices of 4 professionals from Arrels Foundation**. We interviewed **Pablo Martínez-Alonso**, social educator from the first reception team; **Giorgio Ossola**, also from the first reception team and experience with living on the streets; **Laia Pérez**, a nurse in the Pere Barnés home, and **Jésica Giménez**, social worker in the person’s supporter team.
- With maps that help us envision the distribution and situation of people living on the streets in the different neighbourhoods of Barcelona<sup>1</sup>.
- With other data and information about the condition of people who live on the streets, some of it from other reports and some coming from Arrels’ direct care program.

<sup>1</sup> We have analyzed some of the questions from the 2021 census, keeping in mind the neighborhoods in which the people we interviewed live. Throughout the report, we graphically represented this analysis with maps that show the data of the neighborhoods where we have located and interviewed more people. We have selected these neighborhoods – twenty in total – based on a minimum threshold of having located a minimum of ten people, at least six of whom we’ve interviewed. In the majority of neighborhoods, the number of people found or interviewed exceeds the thresholds that we have established. The data used for the creation of the base maps come from Carto BCN.

Questions to know more!

What is a census?

A census is a tool used to obtain qualitative information about how people who participate live and what their situation is. Through a census we can get a lot of information like who lives on the streets in a community, since when, what their needs are, how their health is, whether they are getting social care and/or if they are in a vulnerable position.

Do you know the difference between a census and a count? [Check it here!](#) 

Which tool do we use?

The tool we used for the Barcelona censuses is a survey named ‘VI-SPADT’ (*Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool*). It focuses on calculating the vulnerability index of the homeless people who are interviewed. It is based on the Registry Week methodology, promoted by the North-American entity [Community Solutions](#). In Europe, the British entity [World Habitat](#) promotes it and adapts it to the context of every city where it is carried out. In addition, during the course of the census editions we have added some extra questions to know more information about the local reality in Barcelona (concerning aspects like the register of inhabitants, the public health care card and social welfare).

The survey contains about 40 questions that explore the following aspects: the person’s basic information, their homelessness record, the risks of living on the streets, their social relationships and daily activities, their wellbeing, their demographic information and any substantial local context information. Every question has a score associated to it, and the result of adding up all the questions’ scores is a number that represents the vulnerability index of the interviewee: low, moderate or high.

Download an example of the census survey! [PDF](#) 

Some other limitations

- All the answers that are gathered are based on the opinion and self-perception of the interviewees.
- The vulnerability index doesn’t consider enough the structural factors that result in inequality (things like gender, the interviewee’s country of origin or their administrative status) and that impact a person’s situation or the fact itself that they live on the street.



## Who organizes the census?

We at Arrels Foundation announce the census of people living on the streets since 2016. We do it as a part of the [European End Street Homelessness Campaign](#) with the support of the [World Habitat](#) organization. Other Catalan cities like Tarragona or Sant Adrià del Besòs have also joined the initiative and have conducted censuses about people living on the street. Moreover, in 2019 the Santa Anna Field Hospital in Barcelona, also conducted a census interviewing the homeless people they attend.

## What use does a census have?

It is essential to know the situation of homeless people to push for new social policies and useful resources that respond well to homeless people's reality and focus on securing that no one sleeps on the street. It also allows us to analyse changes that may happen among people who live on the street, in a sociodemographical level but also regarding their needs and vulnerability state or the effectiveness of social policies.





# The tip of the iceberg

## How many people live on the streets in Barcelona?



**More than 1,000 people sleep**  
on the streets in Barcelona



**At least 4,737 people**  
don't have a stable home

More than 1,000 residents of the city of Barcelona sleep on the streets. This is the third year in a row we have this number, even though the Covid-19 pandemic reduced the number of rough sleepers due to the decrease in mobility and the closing of borders. Not having a home is more than just sleeping on the streets and it includes people who sleep in informal settlements or in private or public accommodations. If we take all of this into account, the number of homeless people adds up to 4,737.





**At least 1,064 people sleep on the streets in Barcelona every night.** This is the number of people we spotted during the night of the 10th to the 11th of June, as part of the census of people who live on the streets that we carried out and in which 530 volunteers collaborated. We consider this figure as just the tip of the iceberg, since we know that there are people who hide in order to feel more secure and whom we cannot locate. Moreover, during the census we didn't go inside of parks, closed gardens or wooded areas, zones in which 105 people were spotted during a night count by the XAPSLL some days before, the 19th of May.

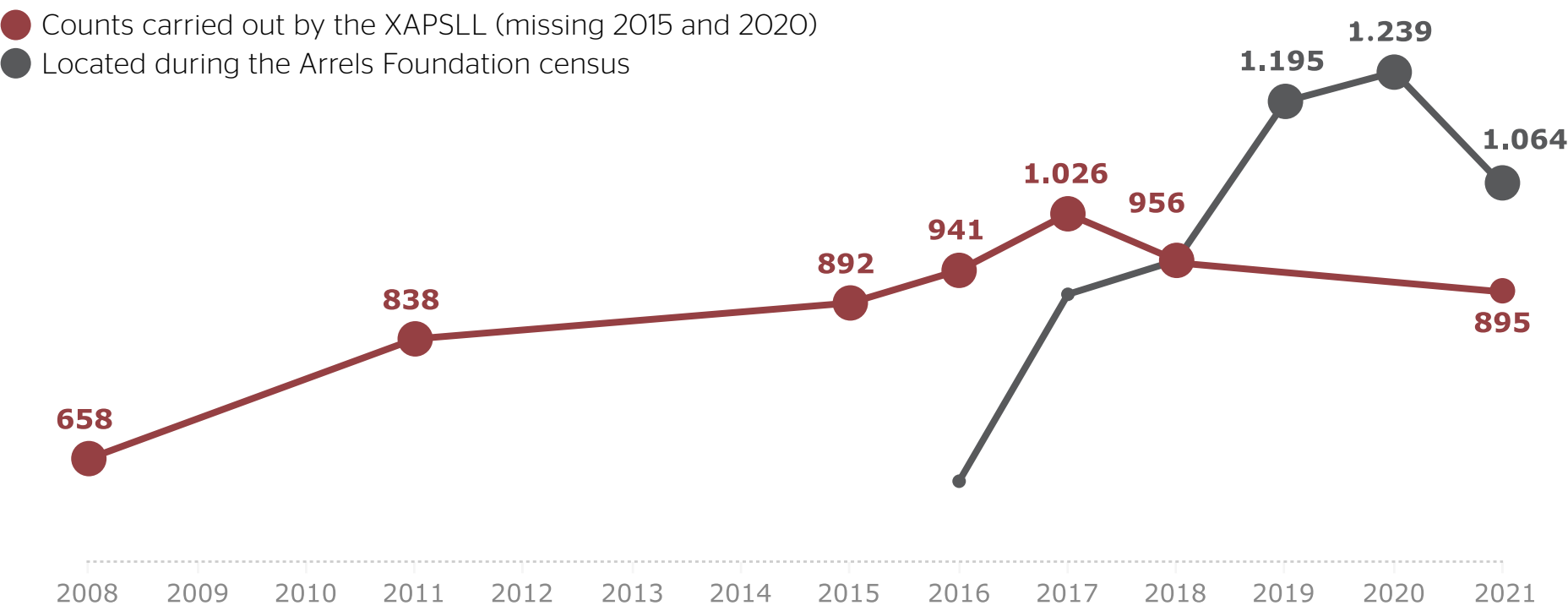
## How has the situation evolved?

In the census of June 12th, 2019, organized by Arrels two years ago, we located 1,195 people in the city of Barcelona. On May 15th, 2020, a year ago and in the middle of the Covid-19 lockdown, we located 1,239. The decrease of located people in 2021, we spotted 1,064, is due to a few reasons:

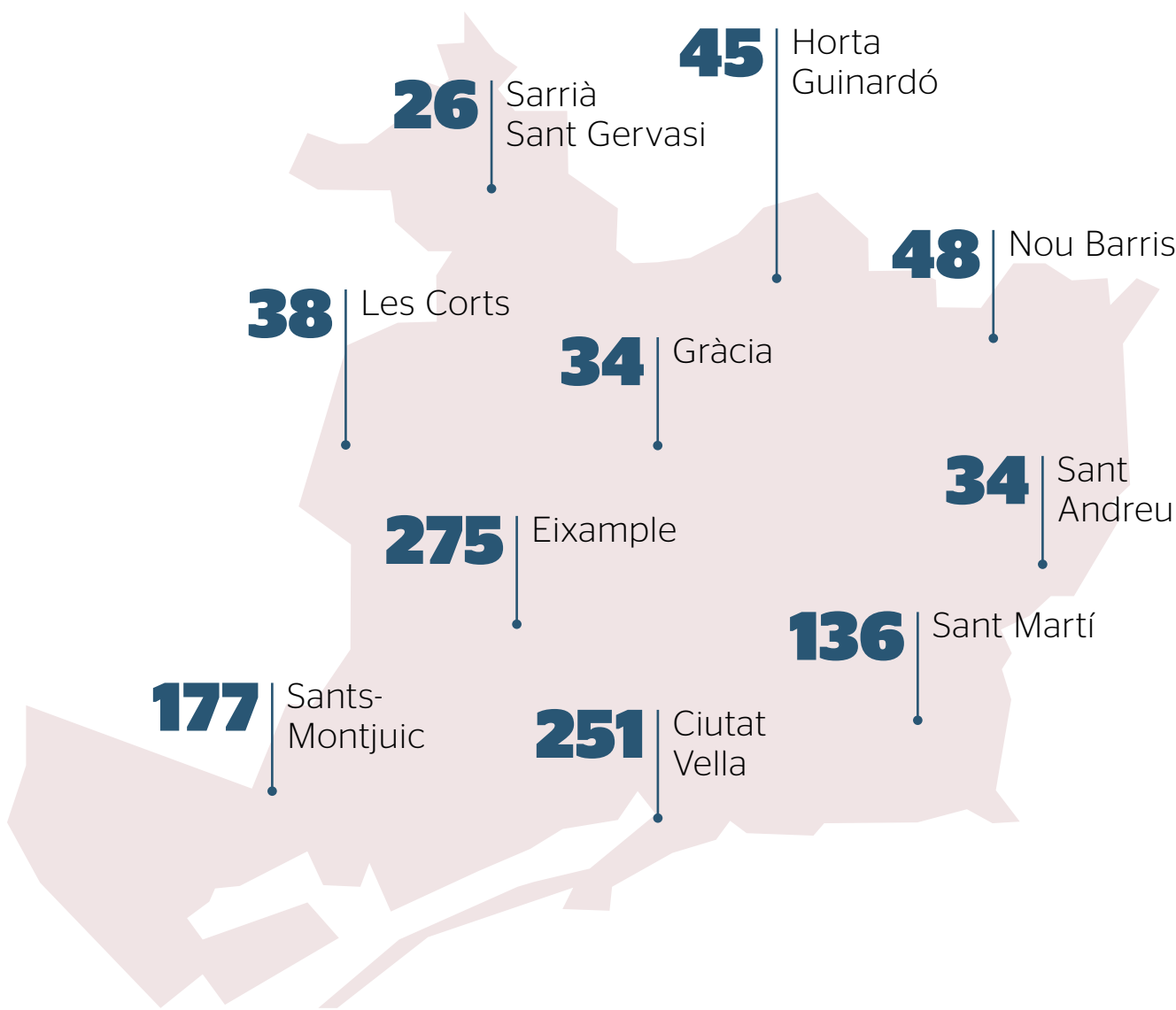
- on the one hand, **the alarm state due to the coronavirus pandemic reduced people's mobility and closed country borders,**
- and on the other hand, new stable places offering alternative housing to homeless women and to people who live on the street and have some sort of addiction have been created.

However, **the number of people who sleep rough hasn't gone below 1,000 in the last three years.** If we compare it to the 658 people who were located in the first count carried out in Barcelona in 2008, **this number has grown 62% in the last 13 years.**

Number of people who live on the streets in Barcelona (2008-2021)



Number of people who live on the streets in Barcelona per district





# 4,737 homeless people

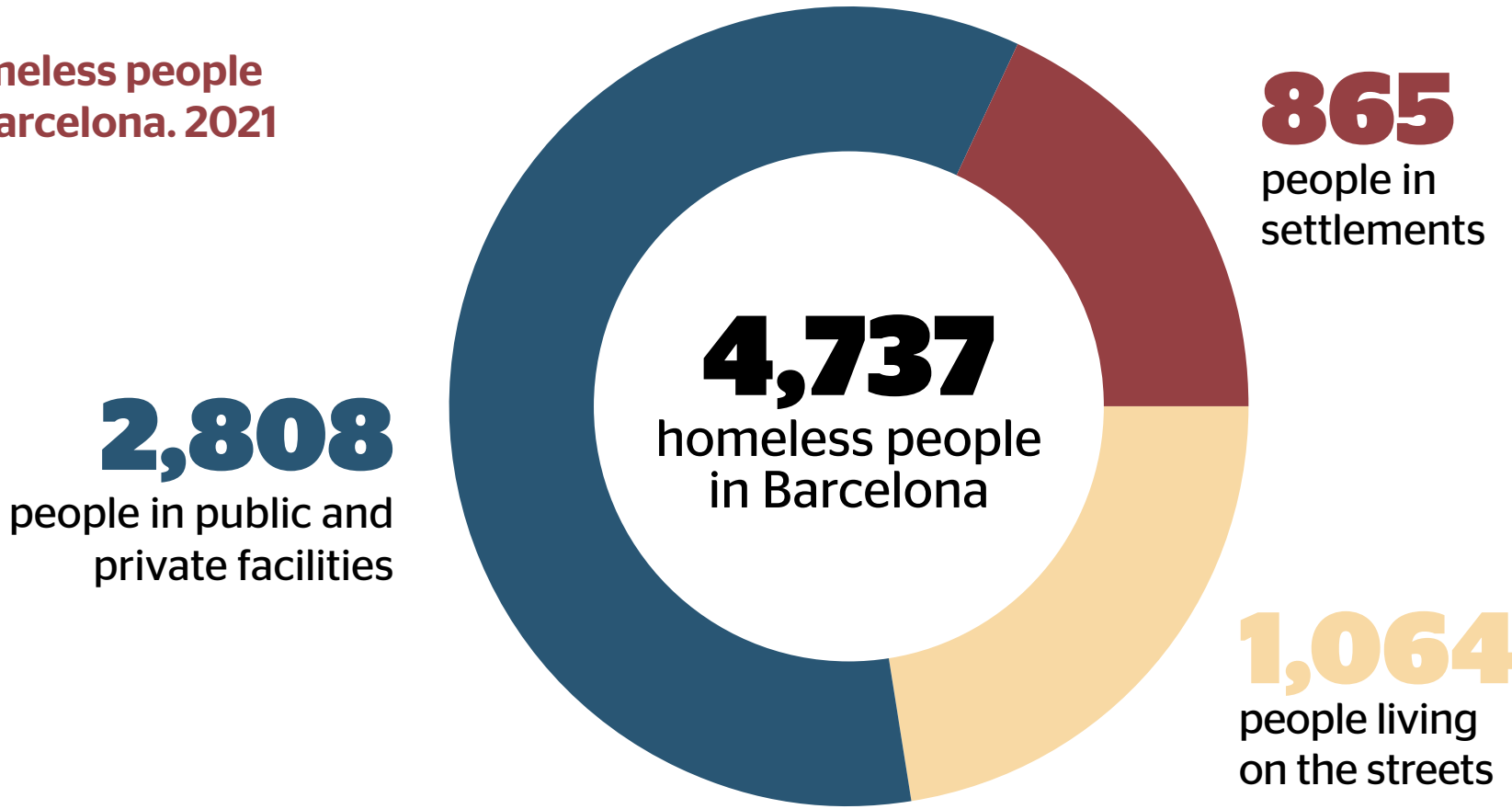
**Homelessness includes more realities than just people who live on the street.** There are some who sleep in shelters, overcrowded flats, settlements like abandoned plots, factories and venues, hostels or subleased rooms, temporary facilities like hospitals or prisons, shelters for women who are victims of gender violence or live with family or friends after an eviction.

**There are 2,808 people sleeping in the city’s public and private facilities.** Specifically, there are 1,106 people in private institutions and 1,702 in state-funded ones, according to data from the XAPSELL. Moreover, according to local data, **there are 865 underage and adult people living in informal settlements.** In conclusion, we can state that **in Barcelona there are at least 4,737 people without a home**, while last year 4,200 were counted.

## Where do they sleep?

Most of the people we interviewed usually sleep on the street. Some sleep on the floor, inside cars or in an ATM, but others try to find other volatile alternatives like an empty house which doesn’t belong to them, temporary subleased rooms, shacks, shelters for homeless people, supervised housing or penitentiary facilities.

Homeless people in Barcelona. 2021

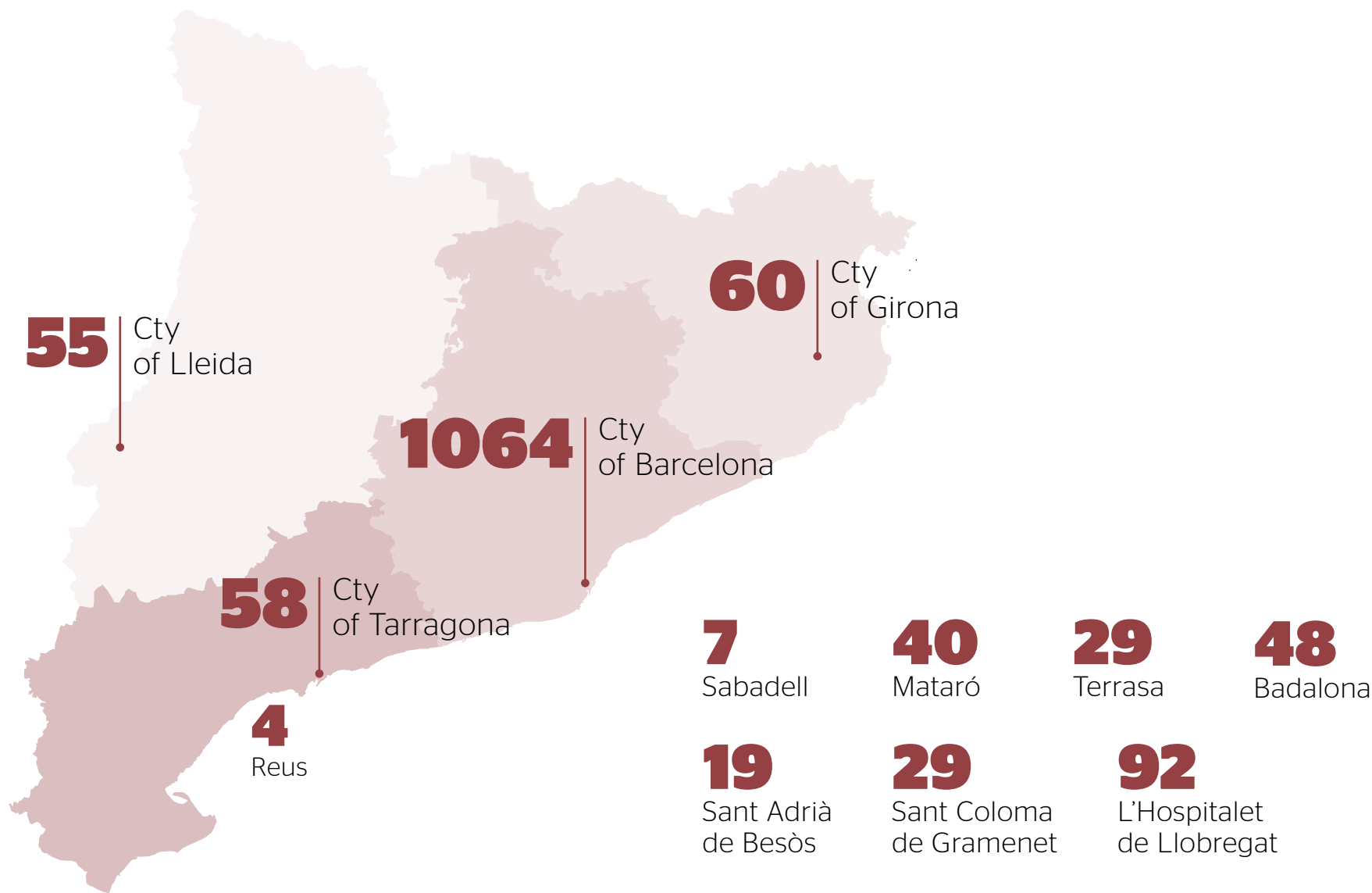


# And what about outside of Barcelona?

Despite the demand from specialized entities, there isn’t comprehensive or up-to-date data of the people living on the streets in Catalonia, Spain or Europe. In Catalonia, for the last few years there have been counts done in the cities of Barcelona, Tarragona, Girona, Lleida, L’Hospitalet de Llobregat, Badalona, Mataró, Terrassa, Santa Coloma de Gramenet, Sant Adrià de Besòs, Sabadell and Reus. **These 12 cities represent 44% of the Catalanian population and there have been 1,504 people located there.**

There should be counts made in the rest of Catalonia, taking into account that in 2015 the Parliament urged the Catalanian government to do counts every 2 years. Furthermore, in 2017 a comprehensive strategy against homelessness was pushed forward in collaboration with towns, agents and social entities. However, it is still pending on approval and execution. In January of 2022, social entities and spokespeople from an academic background presented a law proposal to cope with homelessness in the Parliament. This law proposal also included the need for counts and censuses.

People living on the street from local counts between 2016 and 2021





# Homelessness in Catalonia, Spain and the EU

Last publicly published data that shows numbers of homelessness in Catalonia are from 2016. The data shows that there are a total of 53,118 homeless people and that 10,000 of those live in a public space or outdoors, in a shelter or in temporary centres for homeless people. According to the estimate of the Assís Centre d’Acol·lida, Càritas Catalunya, the Community of Sant’Egidio, Sant Joan de Déu Serveis Socials and Arrels entities, who promoted the law proposal to cope with homelessness, right now there are 18,000 people in this situation, not 10,000.

The National Institute of Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadística or INE in Spanish) publishes every 2 years a survey about centres and care services for homeless people in the entirety of Spain. In 2020 these centres received an average of 17,772 people daily. This is 1.3% less than the number of people they received in 2018, but that doesn’t mean there are less homeless people now.

**There isn’t a joint policy to fight and prevent homelessness** in the entirety of Spain, but counts organized independently in different territories with different methods between 2009 and 2020 state that there are 5,385 people living on the street. Social entities estimate that the total number ranges between 30,000 and 40,000.

## A joint strategy is needed to fight homelessness

At present, there isn’t a joint strategy to fight homelessness in Spain because it hasn’t been implemented or funded. To face homelessness, both the state and regional administrations must have their action plans, which isn’t happening right now.

**There are about 70,000 people who sleep on the street in the European Union.** According to 2020 data from the European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA), this number has increased 70% in the last 10 years. This November, the European Parliament approved a ruling to end homelessness and fight housing exclusion until 2030 and urged all EU countries to decriminalize the situation of homeless people.

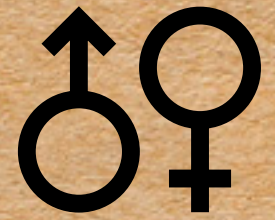
The Abbé Pierre’s Foundation and FEANTSA’s yearly Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe report remarks the fact that **using only 3% of the planned financial aid in the Post-Covid Recovery Plan, the EU and other Member States could give decent living conditions to every homeless person in Europe for a year.** They also bring attention to the fact that the condition of young people has deteriorated due to Covid because there are more people every day that cannot pay their rent. In February 2021, about 3 million people below the age of 25 were unemployed, which is 230,000 more than at the beginning of the pandemic.





# The face of homelessness

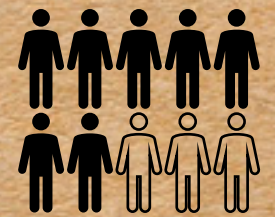
## Who lives on the streets in Barcelona?



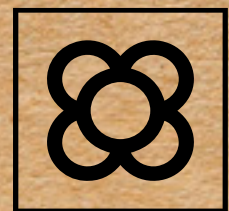
**91% men, 7% women  
and 2% others or no answer**



**Average of 43 years old**



**7 out of 10 are migrants**



**Average of 4 years and 8 months  
living on the streets**



**47% of people have been living on  
the streets for more than 2 years**

Behind every person living on the street there is a story of survival and vulnerability that tends to become long-term. In two years, the average of years a person lives on the street has changed from 3 and a half years to more than 4 and a half years. There are a lot of different causes that can make someone end up living on the street. Some are personal reasons, but there are also structural causes, since most of them don't have a job or any source of stable income that allows them to pay for a home. The circumstances are even worse for migrants.





On the night of the 10th of June of 2021, when we carried out the census, we located 1,064 people on the streets in Barcelona. **289 of them answered our questions.** With the last 5 censuses, we have more than 1,800 interviews. If we include the one in 2020, which was made during the alarm state and was more oriented towards the situation of homeless people during the Covid-19 pandemic, we have interviewed 2,100 people in the last six years.

## Who are they?

Between the 289 people we have interviewed in 2021, 91% are men, they are 43 years old on average, 41% are from a country outside the EU and they have lived on the street for 4 years and 8 months on average.

Behind all this data, there are people who suffer. Every single one of these people carry their own story, but they share a situation of social inequality and structural injustice. We want to show who all these people are and how have things changed in the last few years.



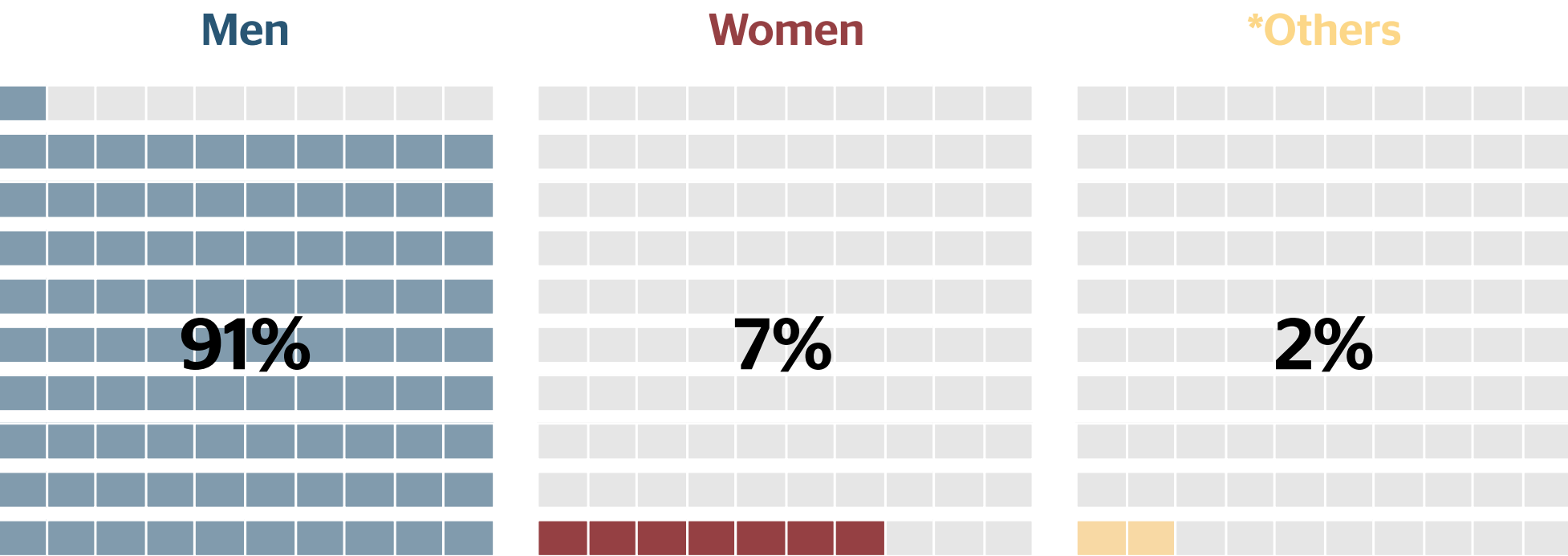
## A look into homelessness in women

91% of people who sleep on the street are men, 7% are women and 2% have other gender identities or did not answer the question.

**The number of homeless women has decreased.** In previous years, there were between 9% and 11% of interviewed women. However, this percentage varies depending on the place of origin: **between people born in Spain, the amount of women doubles** the ones born outside of the country.

**The creation of resources specifically for homeless women in the city** has influenced the decrease of homelessness in women. For example, the residential centre La Llabor opened in November of 2020. It's operated by Sant Joan de Déu social services and has 40 individual rooms exclusively for women. During 2021 La Violeta also opened, a resource that has 20 beds for homeless women managed by Assís Centre d'Acollida. There are other resources that offer basic services specific for women and have opened in recent years, like Lola no estàs sola or Metzineres.

### Gender identity of the people living on the streets in Barcelona (2021)



People who don't answer (a majority) or transgender people and people who have a different gender identity.



Títol de la gràfica: Gender identity of homeless people, by country of origin (2021)



**Catalonia/  
Spain**  
**Men:** 90%  
**Women:** 10%



**Other EU  
countries**  
**Men:** 92%  
**Women:** 6%  
**DK/NA:** 1%



**Countries  
outside the EU**  
**Men:** 94%  
**Women:** 6%

**The invisibility of women**

It's true that there are less homeless women than men, however usually women's situation tends to be worse. **In addition to all the dangers that every person living on the street is exposed to**, women are more vulnerable towards sexual assault and gender violence, and usually they don't have an income and are economically dependant. When a woman starts sleeping on the street, she has usually tried other options before, like overcrowded flats, empty houses, temporary shelters, hostels or the homes of family and friends. When she eventually ends up on the street, it's because she doesn't have any other option and her physical and psychological exhaustion is grave and very hard to undo.

As stated later in the report, **3 out of 10 women have said that they haven't received support from a social worker over the last 6 months**; 3 out of 10 have a liver, kidney, stomach or lung chronic illness, and 2 out of 10 ended up on the street after a traumatic experience, like being a victim of sexual, physical or psychological abuse.



*"When you're a woman living on the street and you have to sleep, you try to look like a man to be safer from aggressions. A lot of women cut their hair, tie it up or wear a hat. The women that I worked with have made a change that reflects in their personal care."*

**J sica Gim nez**, social worker of the person's supporter team

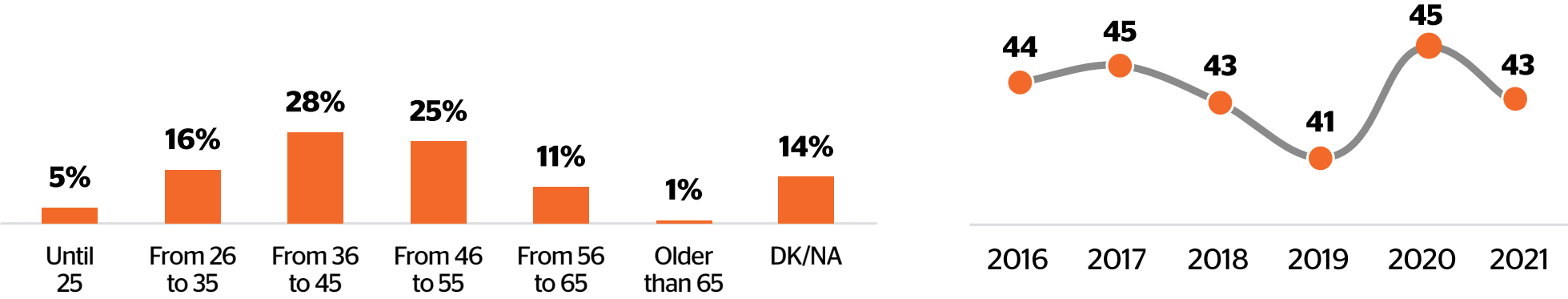


*"There should be a 24h emergency centre because there is gender and sexual violence. The situation seems to be getting better, the government is waking up. There are more resources for women and that's a good thing, but there shouldn't be a single homeless woman. There aren't enough resources."*

**Giorgio Ossola**, member of the first reception team and with experience living on the street

The people we have interviewed are between the ages of 18 and 77, most of them are men (91%) and **the age average is 43 years old** (44 in women). Some of them had been living on the street for a short period of time when we interviewed them, but others had been rough sleepers for more than 10 years. More than half of the interviewees are between 36 and 55 years old.

Age of the people living on the streets in Barcelona, range and average (2016-2021)



Age average of people living on the streets in Barcelona





### Who is the youngest person we interviewed?

The youngest person who answered the survey of the census on June 10th is an 18 year old teen from The Gambia that spoke English. He explained that he had to leave his country due to socio-economic reasons. He came to Barcelona a year ago to look for a job, but has stayed in a juvenile centre, doesn't have any income and when we interviewed him he had been living on the street for 2 months. During this time, he has used social services or help lines one time. He is a registered citizen and has a public health care card. In the six months previous to the survey, he had received care from a social worker once.

### Who is the oldest person we interviewed?

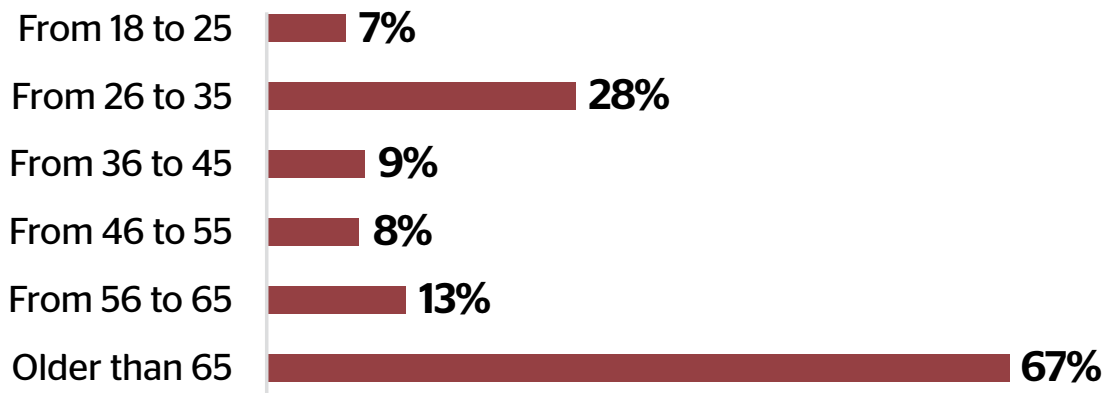
The oldest person we spoke with was a 77-year-old man from Morocco that spoke Spanish and has been living in Barcelona for 20 years. He told us that he left his country for socioeconomic reasons and he came here looking for a job. However, these days he doesn't have a regular source of income and gets money from begging on the street and selling junk. He isn't a registered citizen, doesn't have a public health care card, hasn't received support from any social worker in the last six months and doesn't want to get the Covid-19 vaccine. This man has been homeless for a year and in the last 6 months hasn't received medical care or used the social emergency servers.

## Why do they sleep on the street?

Homelessness has structural causes. Most people that live on the street don't have a job or a stable source of income. Furthermore, almost three out of four interviewees don't have any source of income and only one out of four said to receive money regularly, usually from social allowances or a pension.

There are some who become homeless after a traumatic experience, like suffering sexual, physical or psychological abuse. 14% of the interviewees stated to have ended up in the street for that reason, and so did 19% of women and 30% of people who are between 26 and 35 years old.

### Causes of homelessness: a traumatic experience, per age range (2021)



Homelessness can also be partially caused by a **broken or very toxic family or personal relationship**. This was the case for 34% of the interviewed people. There doesn't seem to be a great difference in this number due to gender, but 50% of Spanish people talk about this as a main reason for them ending up living on the street.

### The structural causes of homelessness

There are different structural causes that can make someone end up on the street. Most homeless people **don't have a job or stable source of income**. Apart from the occupational and economic reasons, there are elements within the social system that make their situation harder, like the **complicated bureaucratic procedures**, the slow answer from the institutions to their situation, the **Spanish Immigration Law** that obstructs the access of migrants to rights and allowances, or the **rising prices of housing**.



*"It's getting more difficult to find a job, and the jobs there are offer precarious conditions. Housing prices are also going up. This all reflects in the situation of people who end up on the street. A lot of people who receive an economic benefit aren't able to pay for a room because of the high rent prices. Sometimes landlords won't rent flats to them because they were homeless."*

**Pablo Martínez-Alonso**, social educator in the first reception team

It's more common for people above 45 years old to have some sort of regular income. There are differences in this, however, depending on the country of origin. While half of the Spanish people have income, only 15% of the people who come from another EU country and 11% of the people who come from outside the EU receive money. The most frequent way of getting sporadic money is begging in the street, about a third of interviewees said to have done it. The next most frequent way is selling junk (18%).



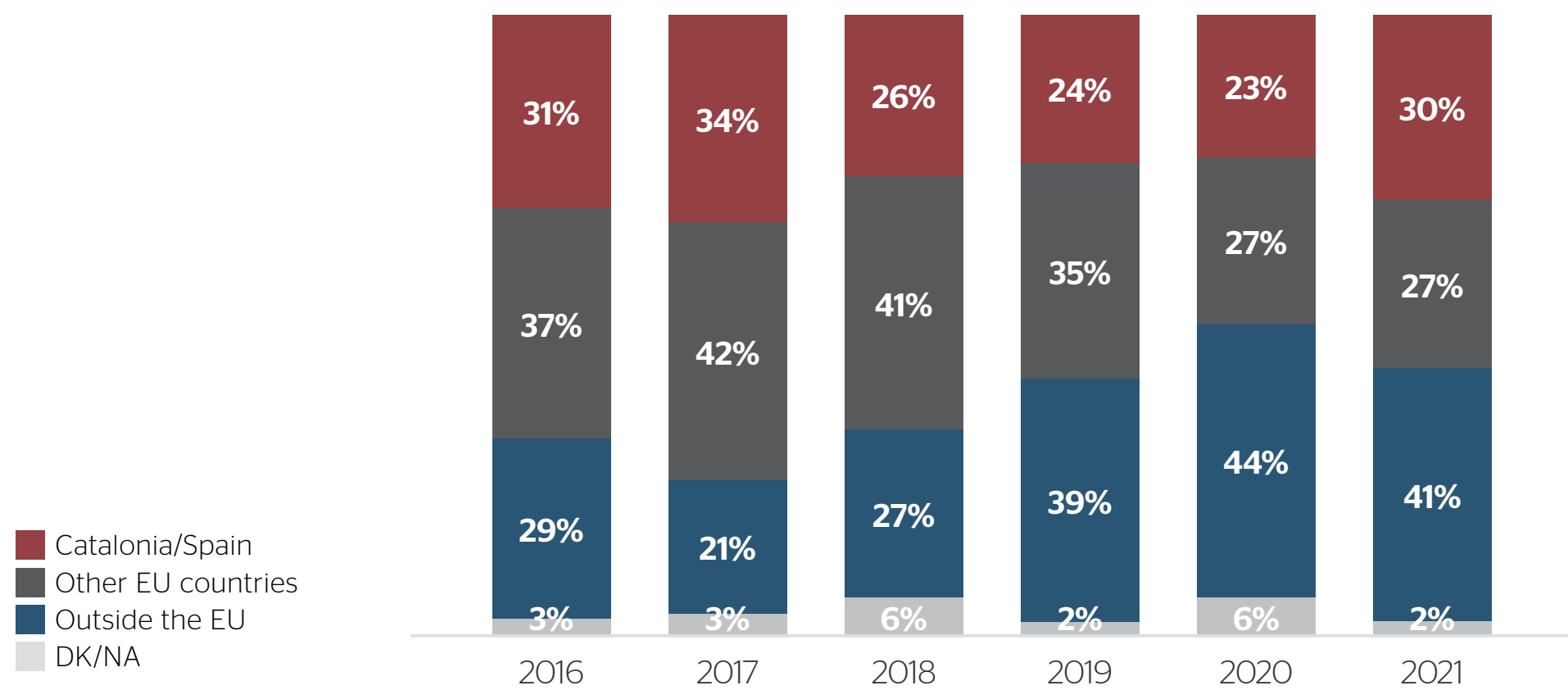
# 7 out of 10 homeless people were born in another country

Year after year, there are a lot more migrants than people born in Spain living on the street. 7 out of 10 rough sleepers were born outside of Spain, the 68%, to be exact. Conversely, if we look at the global population of Barcelona, only 29% of inhabitants are from other countries, according to data from the municipal records. **The over-representation of foreign people living on the street shows a structural factor of vulnerability and exclusion.** That's why we say that being a migrant is a risk factor.

In the last years, we observed a constant rise in the number of foreign homeless people. However, we have seen a change in this tendency in the censuses between 2019 and 2021, before and during the pandemic. There has been a rise in the number of locals who end up on the street, most likely because of the decrease of mobility and the closing of borders due to Covid-19.

This way, **the number of people born in Spain living on the street has gone up by six percentage points in two years** (from 24% to 30%), while the number of people born in another EU country has fallen by eight points (from 35% to 27%). The number of people from outside the EU has remained the same and it's still the majority (41%).

Country of origin of people who live on the streets in Barcelona (2016-2021)



## They come to Barcelona looking for a job

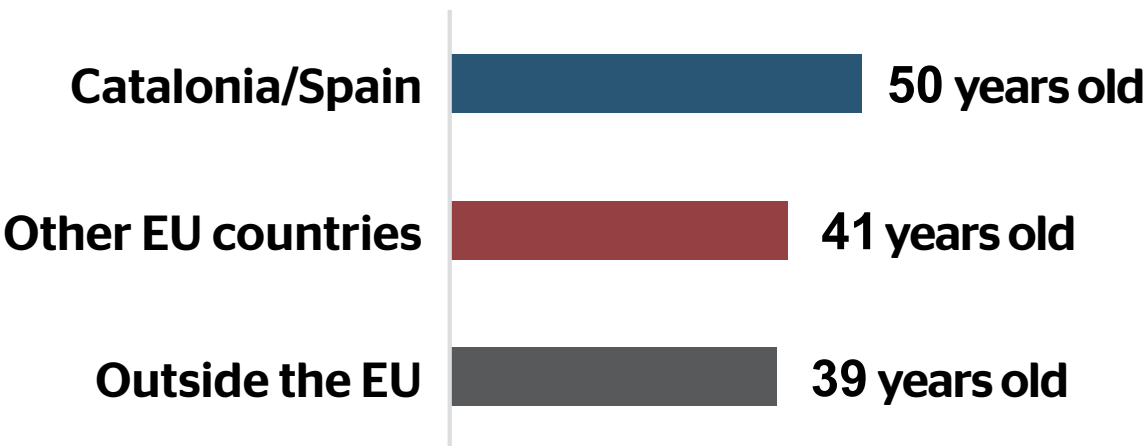
Homeless people who weren't born in Barcelona come to the city mainly, above any other motivations, to look for a job. **46% of the interviewed people cited that as their reason for coming.** On a much lower scale some mentioned better weather, seeking help, joining their family, asking for shelter, problems in their country or a distaste for it or just being passer-bys.

We interviewed people from 52 different countries. The most frequent country of origin is Spain, which encompasses a 30% of the people who live on the streets in Barcelona. This number has remained pretty stable, despite some oscillations. It is followed by Romania (13%), Morocco (8%) and Senegal (5%).

## People from outside the EU are younger

As previously stated, the age average of people living on the streets in Barcelona is 43 years old, but it varies depending on country of origin. The average of people born in Spain is 50 years old, while the one of people from other EU countries is 41 years old and the one from people outside the EU is 40.

Origin of people living on the streets in Barcelona, per age






# 47% of people have been living on the street for more than 2 years

The people who live on the streets in Barcelona have been in this situation for 4 years and 8 months on average. **Men’s average is higher (4 years and 9 months) than women’s (3 years and 4 months).** This figure has been reversed when comparing it with the data from 2019, in which men’s average was 3 years and 4 months and women’s was 3 years and 8 months.

When we sort people by country of origin, every group’s average years of living on the street has gone up. **Spanish people**, in addition to being older, **are the ones who have been homeless for longer, with an average of 5 years and 8 months.** People coming from another EU country have an average of 5 years and people from outside the EU, who are usually younger, have been in this situation for a shorter period of time, with an average of 3 years and 10 months.

One of the main differences from previous censuses is the rise in the number of people who have been living on the street for more than 2 years. From 2019 to 2021 **the number of people who have been living on the street for more than 2 years has gone up from 33% to 47%.** Conversely, the number of people who have been living on the street for less than 2 years has fallen from 63% to 48%.



*“You know something is wrong when there are more than 1,000 people sleeping on the streets in Barcelona and there are more people who have been living on the street for more than two years. Either people don’t know about this or don’t want to face the problem, because I think as a society we should take care of every single person, and it’s not happening.”*

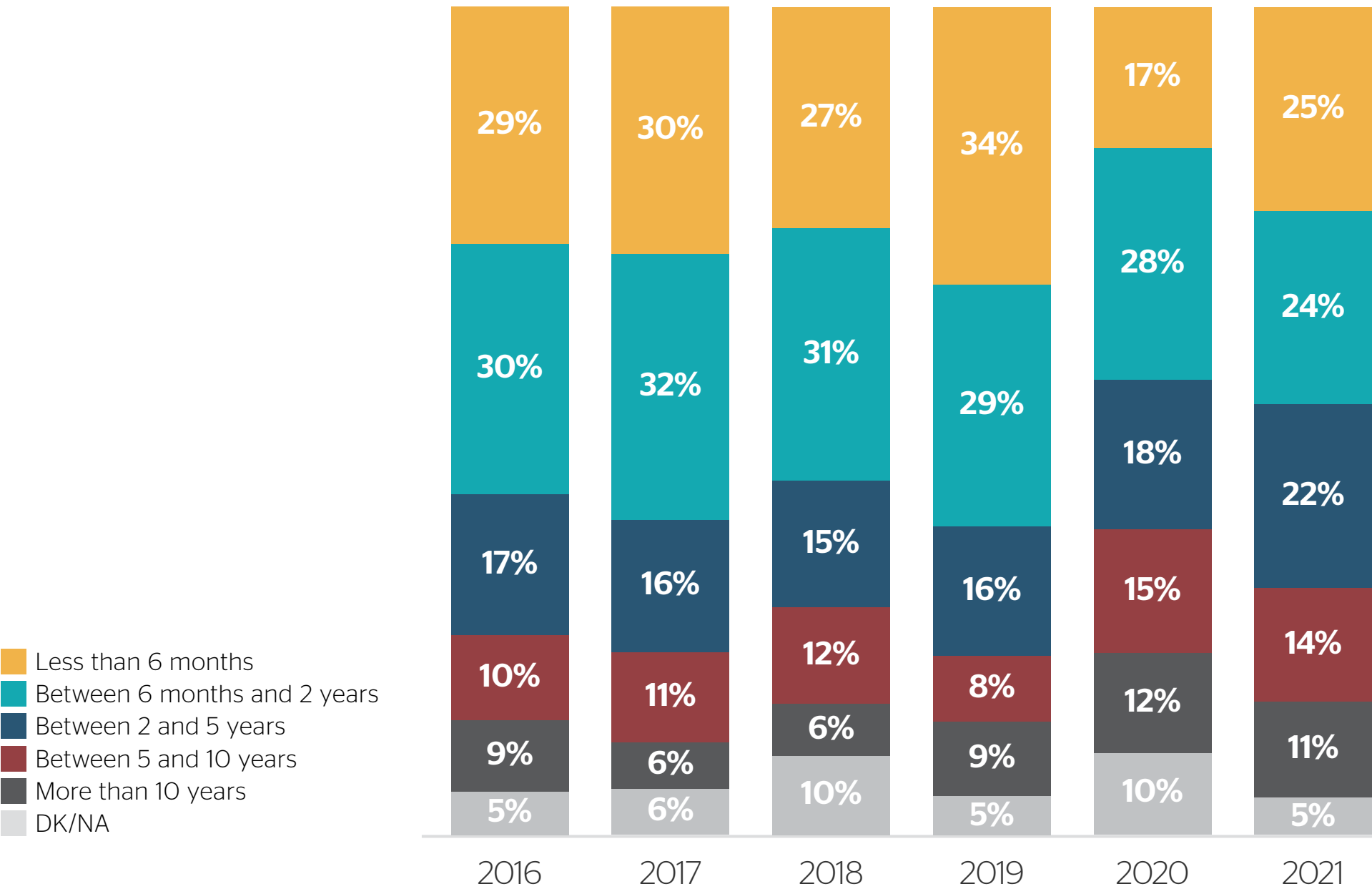
**Pablo Martínez-Alonso**, social educator in the first reception team

The more time someone lives on the street, the more vulnerable they become. We want to remark that an 11% of the interviewed people have been homeless for more than 10 years. This is the worst figure in the history of the census, which was usually between 5% and an 11%. The average period of time living on the street has gone up, but also **2 out of 10 interviewees have been living on the street for less than 6 months.**

## Infografia How much time on average have they been living on the street? (2021)

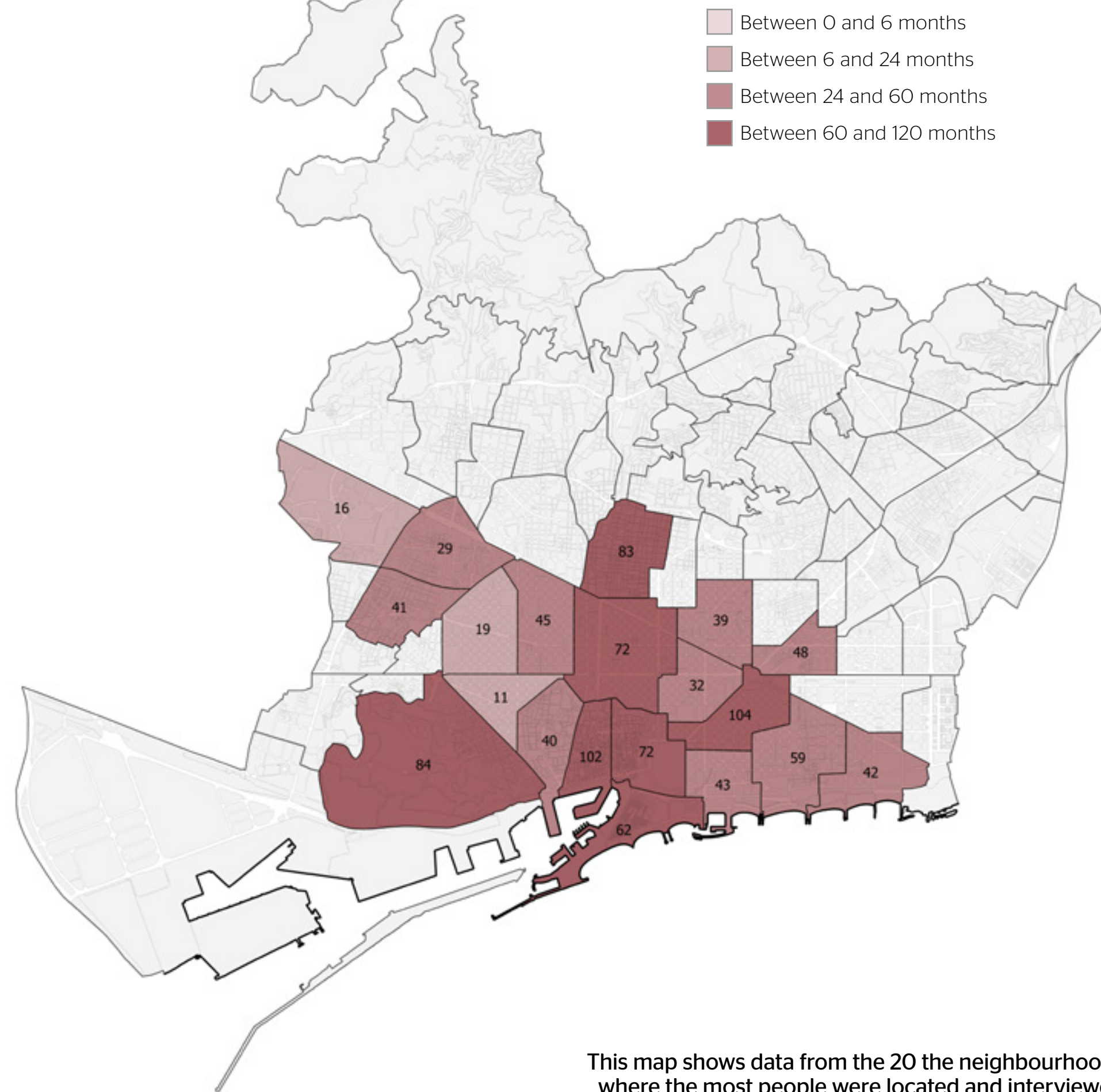


## For how long have they been sleeping on the street? (2016-2021)





### Time living on the street, average per neighbourhood (2021)



There are seven neighbourhoods in Barcelona where there is a high number of long-term rough sleepers that have been in this situation for an average of 5 years (ranked, El Parc and La Llacuna in Poblenou, El Barri Gòtic, Poble-sec, Vila de Gràcia, Sant Pere, Santa Caterina and La Ribera, La Dreta de l'Eixample and La Barceloneta).

### Living in Barcelona for more than 8 years on average

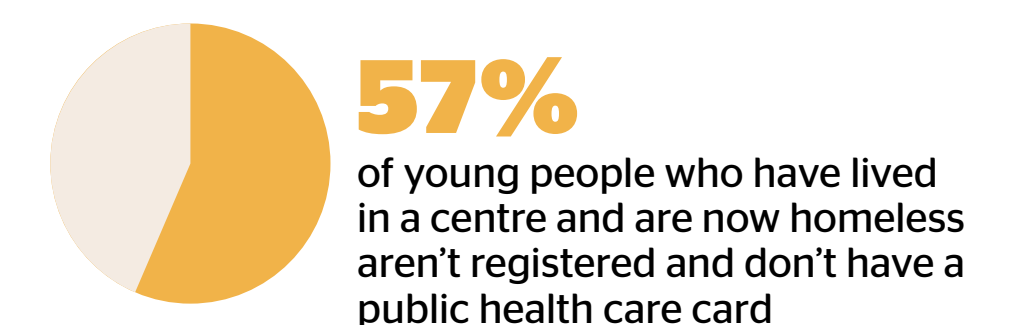
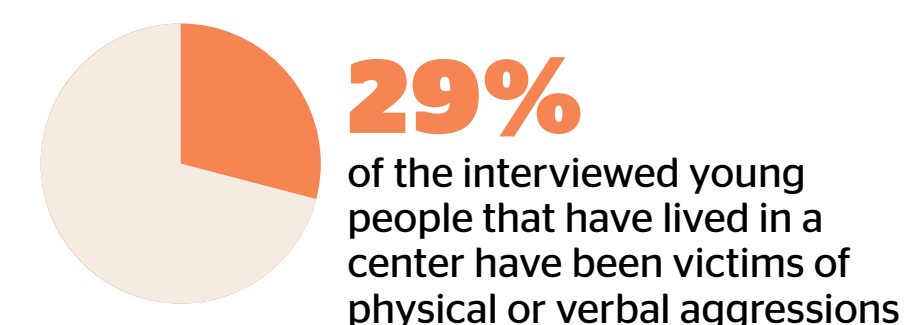
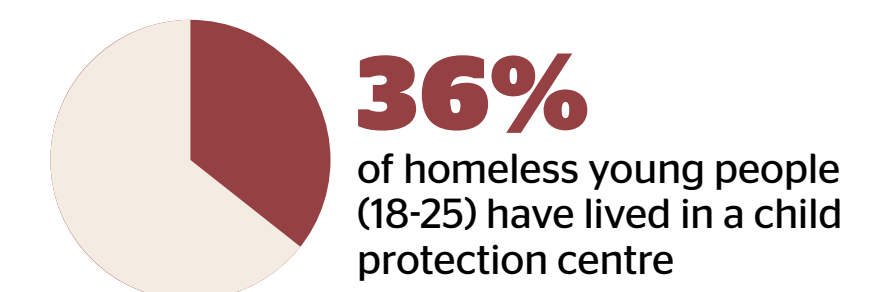
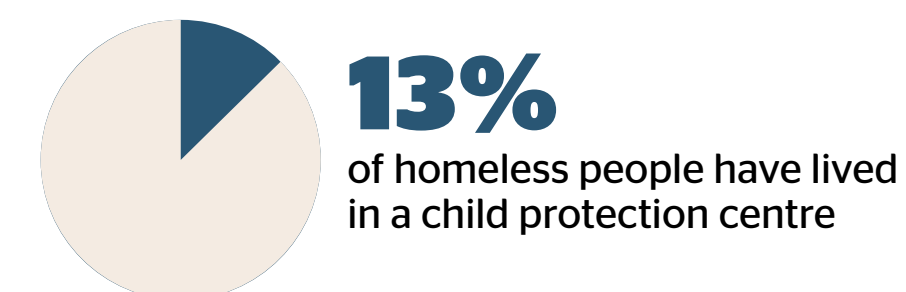
We asked the people we interviewed for how long they have been living in Barcelona, not necessarily on the street. On average, people who came from other towns have lived in the capital for 8 years and 5 months. We want to remark that 23% have been living here for more than 10 years and 15% since they were born.

## 36% of young people have lived in a child protection centre

13% of people living on the street have said they have lived in a child protection centre at some point in their lives. There are differences in the answer regarding age. Young people between 18 and 25 years old are the ones who have been in child protection centre more (36%). In second position there's the people between 25 and 35 (21%), and after that, the percentage falls progressively.

This data goes to show **that a lot of young people come from child and youth protection centres** and, when they become of age, end up homeless. This proves that the social protection system is flawed. **70% of the interviewed young people are from outside the EU and 30% from countries inside the EU** that are not Spain. On the night of the census, we didn't interview any young Spanish person.

### Who has lived in a child protection centre? (2021)







*"We have seen that most young people have recently arrived in the country or come from centres where they have been tutored, and have lost their support network. The network of a young person that has just arrived in Spain or that has been in a centre probably isn't as strong as the one of someone who has their family here. We have noticed that this network breaks and they find themselves alone and don't have any other resources. This is often combined with the fact that some young people arrive without any documentation and without knowing the language, and that makes it very difficult to give them support."*

**Pablo Martínez-Alonso**, social educator in the first reception team

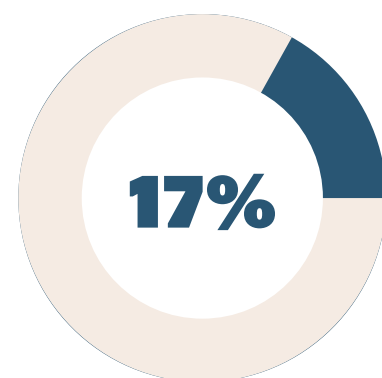
## Requests for asylum have tripled in six years

17% of the foreign interviewed people said to have sought asylum in Spain, which is almost triple the amount of 2016, when only 6% of the people living on the streets in Barcelona had done it.

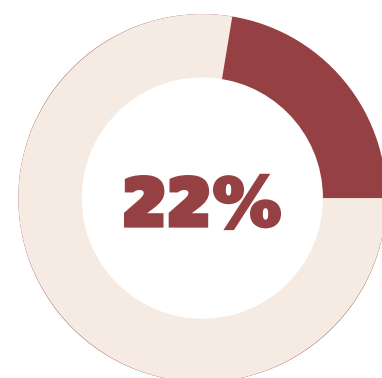
There are substantial differences within gender and country of origin. There are more women and more people from outside the EU that have requested asylum; to be precise, 25% of women vs 16% of men, and 22% of people from outside the EU vs 9% of people that come within the EU.

Moreover, 71% of people that have been living on the street for less than a month said that they have requested asylum. 15% of people who have lived on the street between 1 and 6 months also did. This happens because there are state programs of reception and temporary housing while waiting for an answer from the administration, but in most cases the granting of entry into the program is not immediate and can take up to months. Also, it may be the case that the applicant doesn't fulfil the requirements to enter the state program.

### Who has sought asylum in Spain? (2021)



of the foreign people who live on the street have requested asylum in Spain



of the people born outside the EU who live on the street have requested asylum in Spain





# Vulnerability

## How does homelessness affect a person?



7 out of 10 people who live on the street have a **moderate or high vulnerability index**



High vulnerability indexes surge **after six months of living on the street**



Almost half of people who live on the street have been **victims of physical and/or verbal aggressions**



27% of the people with a high vulnerability index have been **pressured or tricked** into doing something they didn't want to

The length of time a person remains on the street has a direct influence on their health and vulnerability index. The number of long-term homeless people is rising, so priority attention and resources adapted to their needs are urgently needed. After six months of living on the street, the number of people who have been victims of verbal and physical violence rises significantly, as well as the number of those who are pressured and manipulated into doing something they don't want to.





One main goal of the census is to find out the vulnerability index of people who live on the street. For that purpose, we use a survey model called ‘VI-SPDAT’, which determines the vulnerability index from the answers the interviewee gives to different questions. This methodology covers 17 factors divided in five sections, and takes into account aspects like age, time spent on the street, and other matters like social relationships, daily activities, risks and wellbeing, among others.

## 7 out of 10 people have moderate or high vulnerability index

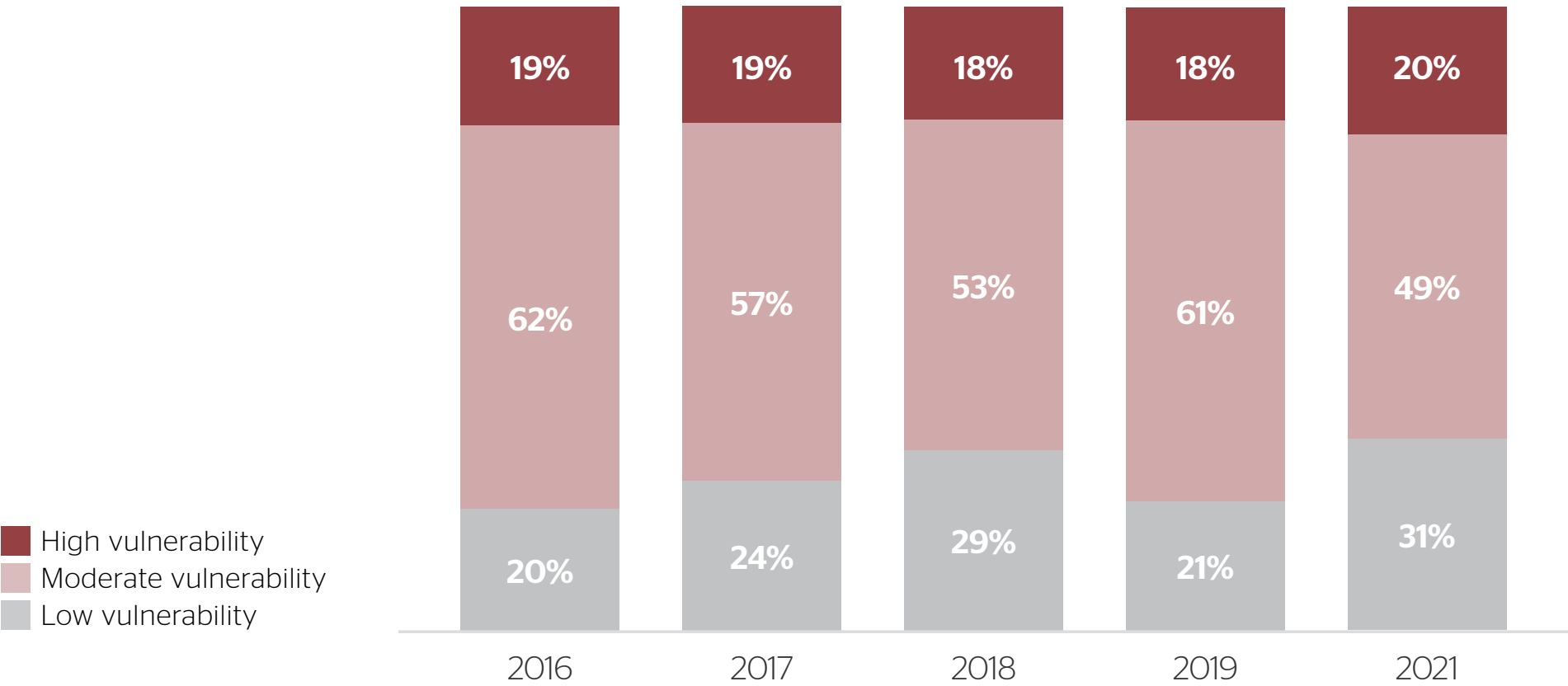
To figure out the vulnerability index of the people living on the street that we interview, we ask them if they have suffered aggressions or illnesses or have been to the hospital in the last few months, if they have struggled to keep a home or have any income and are able to cover all of their basic needs, among other questions. Through their replies, we know that 7 out of 10 people that live on the streets in Barcelona have a moderate or high vulnerability index.

Comparing these results to previous years, we have observed a tendency of the number of people with a high vulnerability index to rise, which is now the 20% of the interviewees. There is a gender difference: the percentage of women with a high vulnerability rate, which used to be higher than that of men, is now lower than the average.

This comes to show that, in general, **the number of long-term homeless people who need priority attention and flexible resources that adapt well to their different needs is rising**. However, a third of the people with the highest vulnerability index admitted to not having been helped by a social worker in the last six months before the census. This means that the resources that rough sleepers need are not reaching them, or they are not being informed of their existence.

On another note, **almost 50% of people have a moderate vulnerability index**, after the rise of this number in 2019, which arrived to 61%. Conversely, we find that a **31% of the interviewees have a low vulnerability index**, far above the 21% figure of 2019. About half of the people with a moderate or high vulnerability index also didn’t receive care from the social services in the six months prior to the census. That’s why all the necessary services and resources must be reinforced in order to avoid the aggravation of these people’s vulnerable situation.

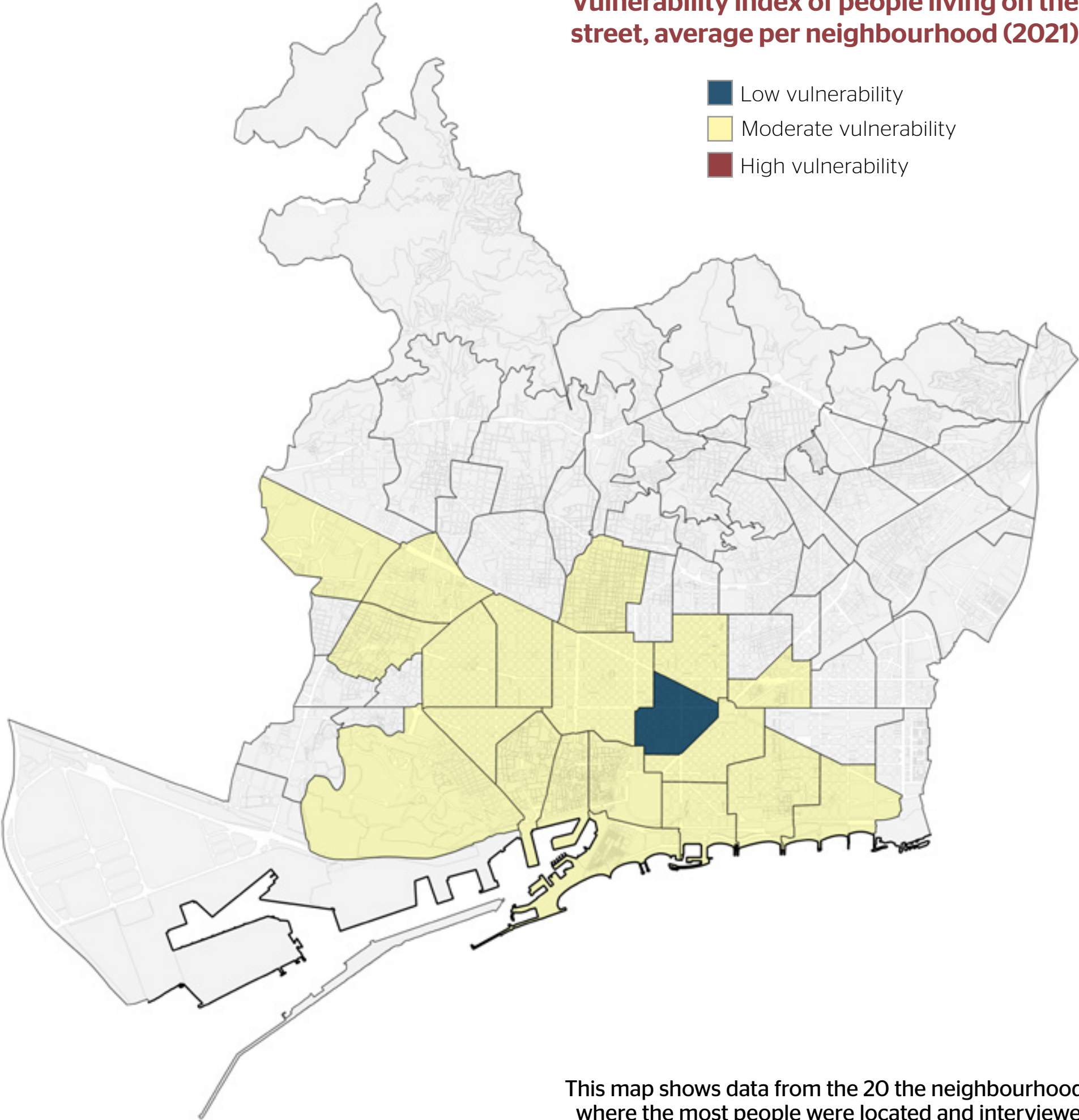
Vulnerability index of people living on the streets in Barcelona (2016-2021)





**Vulnerability index of people living on the street, average per neighbourhood (2021)**

- Low vulnerability
- Moderate vulnerability
- High vulnerability



This map shows data from the 20 the neighbourhoods where the most people were located and interviewed

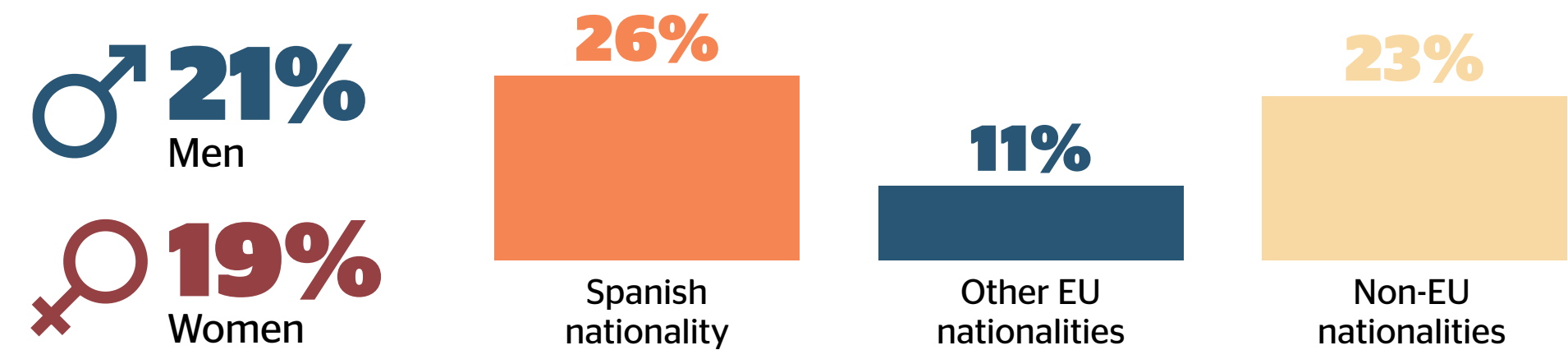


*“Living outdoors is a risk factor in itself. For example, not being able to maintain a good personal hygiene can lead to skin injuries and infection. Having a mental illness and struggling with addiction at the same time, which is a dual pathology, is a very high risk factor. There are also people who have fallen and have bone fractures or badly treated wounds. This can be worsened with the risk of adverse weather conditions. Even if we don’t live in a country with extreme weather, heat and cold waves can take a toll on people.”*

**Laia Pérez**, nurse in the Pere Barnés home

After six months of living on the street, the number of people with a moderate or high vulnerability risk rises. **There is a direct tie between living on the street longer and graver deterioration**, which means more health problems and a bigger risk of being a victim of physical or verbal aggressions, which are a part of a homeless person’s daily life.

**Who are the most vulnerable? (2021)**

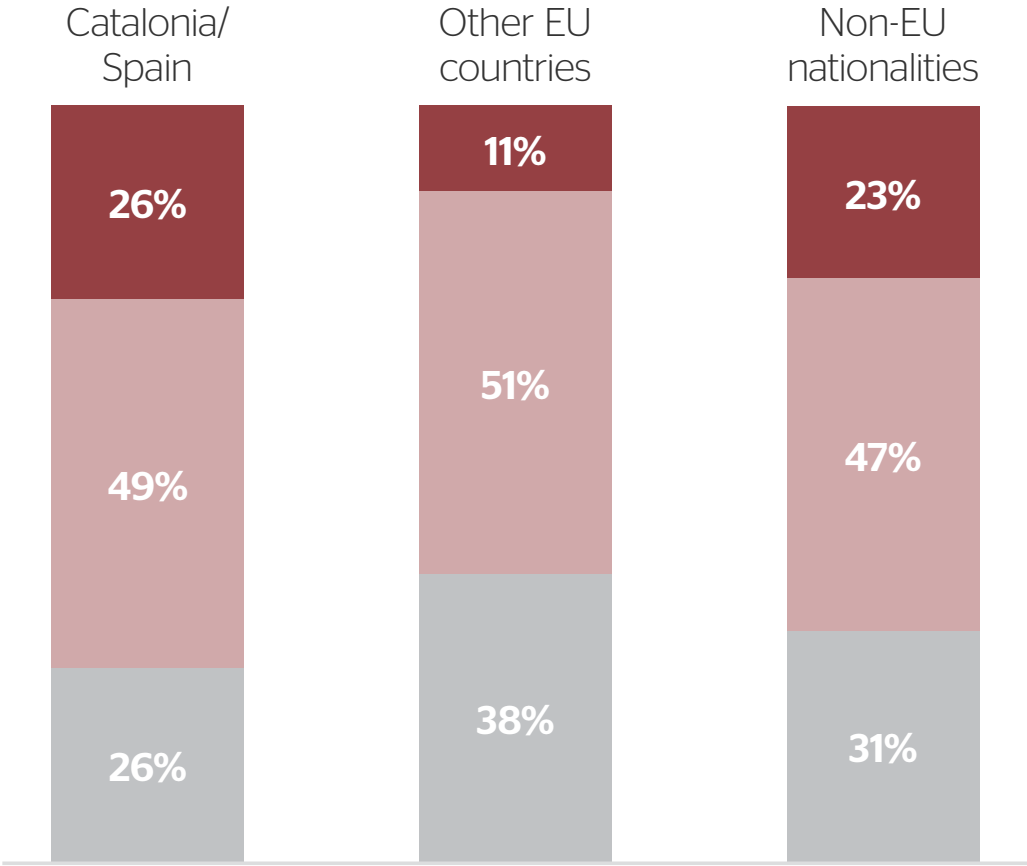


Almost half of the people who live on the streets in Barcelona have a moderate vulnerability index, according to the census index. This means that this is the predominant index in most neighbourhoods. The only exception is the neighbourhood of Fort Pienc, where rough sleepers have a low vulnerability index.



Vulnerability of people living on the streets in Barcelona, per nationality (2019-2021)

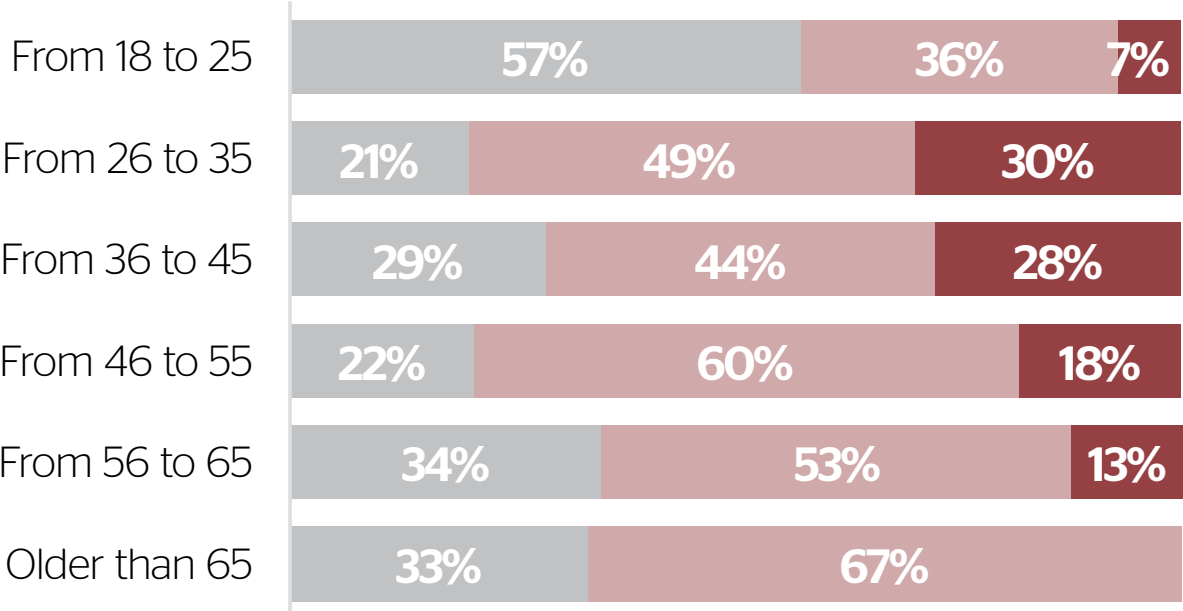
High vulnerability  
Moderate vulnerability  
Low vulnerability



If we look at the vulnerability index per age, **the ones that have the worst conditions are people between 26 and 46**. A third of the people in this age group have a high vulnerability index.

Vulnerabilitat de les persones que viuen al carrer a Barcelona, per franges d’edat (2021)

High vulnerability  
Moderate vulnerability  
Low vulnerability



The vulnerability index is probably higher

The vulnerability index is determined using the vulnerability survey ‘VI-SPDAT’ from information like age, the time the person has been on the street or the risks they have. However, the model doesn’t take into account some important aspects of a person that also affect the situation of a homeless person, like gender, when being a woman and living on the street is a double risk factor. It also doesn’t take into consideration the place of origin of the interviewee, when migrants with an irregular administrative situation have more difficulties accessing housing, a job or social protection services. Thus, the vulnerability index determines a figure that is probably higher in reality and doesn’t bring enough attention to the structural factors that cause inequality and social injustice, and therefore worsen the situation of people living on the street.

After six months of living on the street, vulnerability surges

When someone lives on the street for more than six months, the vulnerability index rises drastically. Between the people who have lived on the street for less than half a year, we didn’t find anyone with a high vulnerability index, but **between people living on the street for 6 to 12 months, 4 out of 10 people have a high vulnerability index**, and 3 out of 10 have a moderate one.

13% of people who have been living on the street for less than 6 months have a moderate vulnerability index. From six months above, the figure goes from 32% to 68%, which means it becomes even 5 times higher. **People with the most moderate vulnerability index are the ones who have been living on the street for between 3 and 5 years.**

The importance of initial care to reduce the vulnerability index

We say that from 6 months onward, the vulnerability index surges because the number of people who suffer physical and verbal aggressions, receive threats, have used violence towards someone else or themselves, and have been forced, tricked or pressured into doing something they didn’t want to do goes significantly up. All of this gravely deteriorates physical and mental health of people who live on the street. However, 4 out of 10 of the interviewees said to not have received help from any social worker during the six months prior to the census. For that reason, we insist that more initial care is needed in order to reduce the vulnerability index of homeless people.

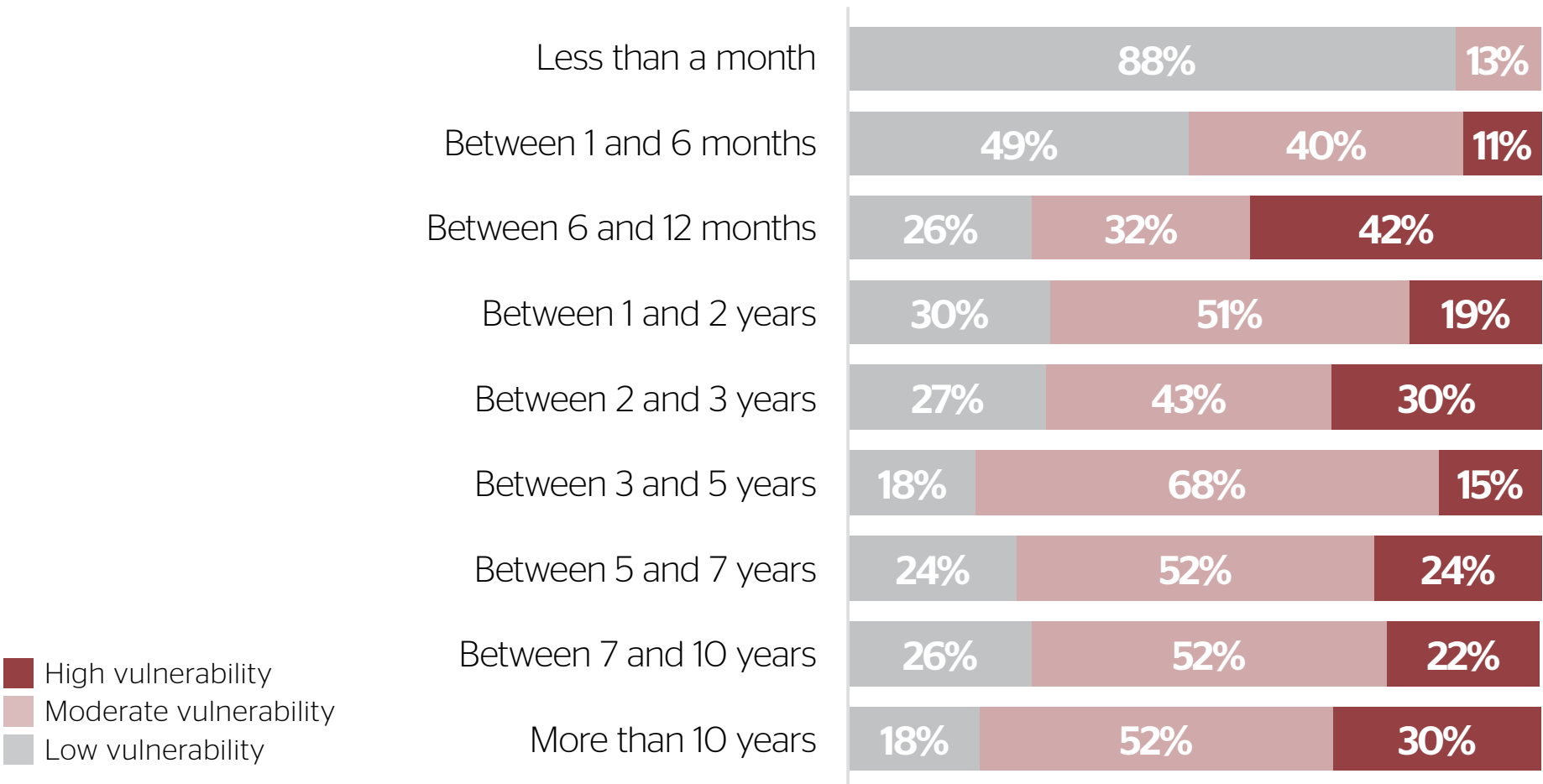




*"In six months, an addiction can gravely affect a person. If untreated, a mental illness can also resurge. Pharmacological treatments don't stay forever inside the body, and if the user stops taking the medicine the effects disappear over time. Within six months, a person's body understands that the medication is not being taken, and everything becomes imbalanced once again. It is also enough time for the person's relationships to break, and once that happens it becomes very difficult to reverse."*

**Laia Pérez**, nurse in the Pere Barnés home

**Vulnerability of people living on the streets in Barcelona, per time living on the street (2021)**



**Almost half of the people living on the street are victims of aggressions**

One of the main risks of living on the street is suffering both physical and verbal aggressions. This **violence towards homeless people has been escalating** and in the census of 2021 has reached the highest recorded figure of 46%. In other words, almost half of the interviewees have been the victim of a physical or verbal aggression just for living on the street.

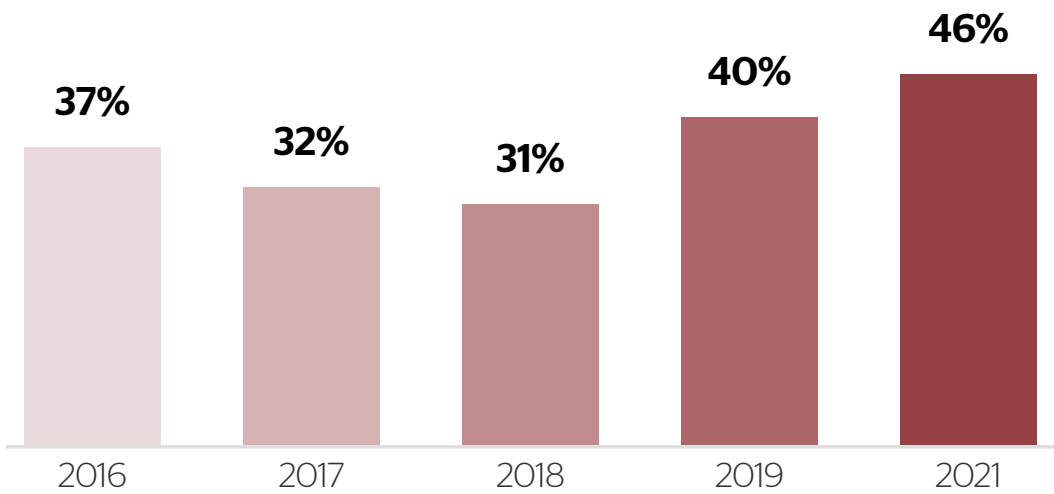
This figure could even be higher, because a lot of the people who live on the streets don't admit they have been victims of aggressions, whether because they don't want to talk about it or because they have normalized it and, if they haven't suffered a very violent act that has caused them to go to the hospital or be gravely injured, they don't see it as an aggression.

**Women are the most vulnerable**, because they are also exposed to gender violence. The percentage of women that have been victims of aggressions (48%) is two percentage points above average.

**People living on the streets in Barcelona who have been subjected to physical or verbal aggressions (2021)**



**People living on the streets in Barcelona who have been subjected to physical or verbal aggressions (2016-2021)**





**People living on the streets in Barcelona who have been subjected to physical or verbal aggressions per neighbourhood (2021)**

Legend:

- No one said to have suffered aggressions (0%)
- From 1% to 20%
- From 20% to 40%
- From 40% to 60%
- More than 60%

Neighborhood percentages (from top-left to bottom-right):

- 0%
- 43%
- 55%
- 55%
- 67%
- 36%
- 17%
- 33%
- 50%
- 63%
- 65%
- 53%
- 65%
- 73%
- 38%
- 33%
- 50%
- 33%
- 38%

This map shows data from the 20 the neighbourhood where the most people were located and interviewe

More than 70% of the people with whom we have spoken with in the neighbourhoods of Sant Pere, Santa Caterina and La Ribera have been subjected to aggressions. More than 60% in El Barri Gòtic, Sant Antoni, El Poble-Sec and La Nova Esquerra de l'Eixample have also been victims of it. However, in the neighbourhoods of La Maternitat and Sant Ramon no one reported an aggression and in La Dreta de l'Eixample only a 17% admitted it.



*"A lot of rough sleepers get beaten up. Not to steal from them. Just to hurt them, to hit them. Becasue what could you steal from someone who lives on the street? What do they hope to find? It's a daily struggle."*

**Giorgio Ossola**, member of the first reception team and with experience living on the street



*"This 46% is probably not even the real percentage, just the number of people who had the courage to say they were victims of an aggression. I believe the number is much higher than that, because they are very exposed on the street."*

### Laia Pérez, nurse in the Pere Barnés home



*“The people we know that are currently living in flats don’t usually say they have been abused, not to say there aren’t any cases, but it is much more frequent to hear of this kind of experiences from people living on the street. When you are already in a flat, it is customary to stay at home. There aren’t many aggression cases.”*

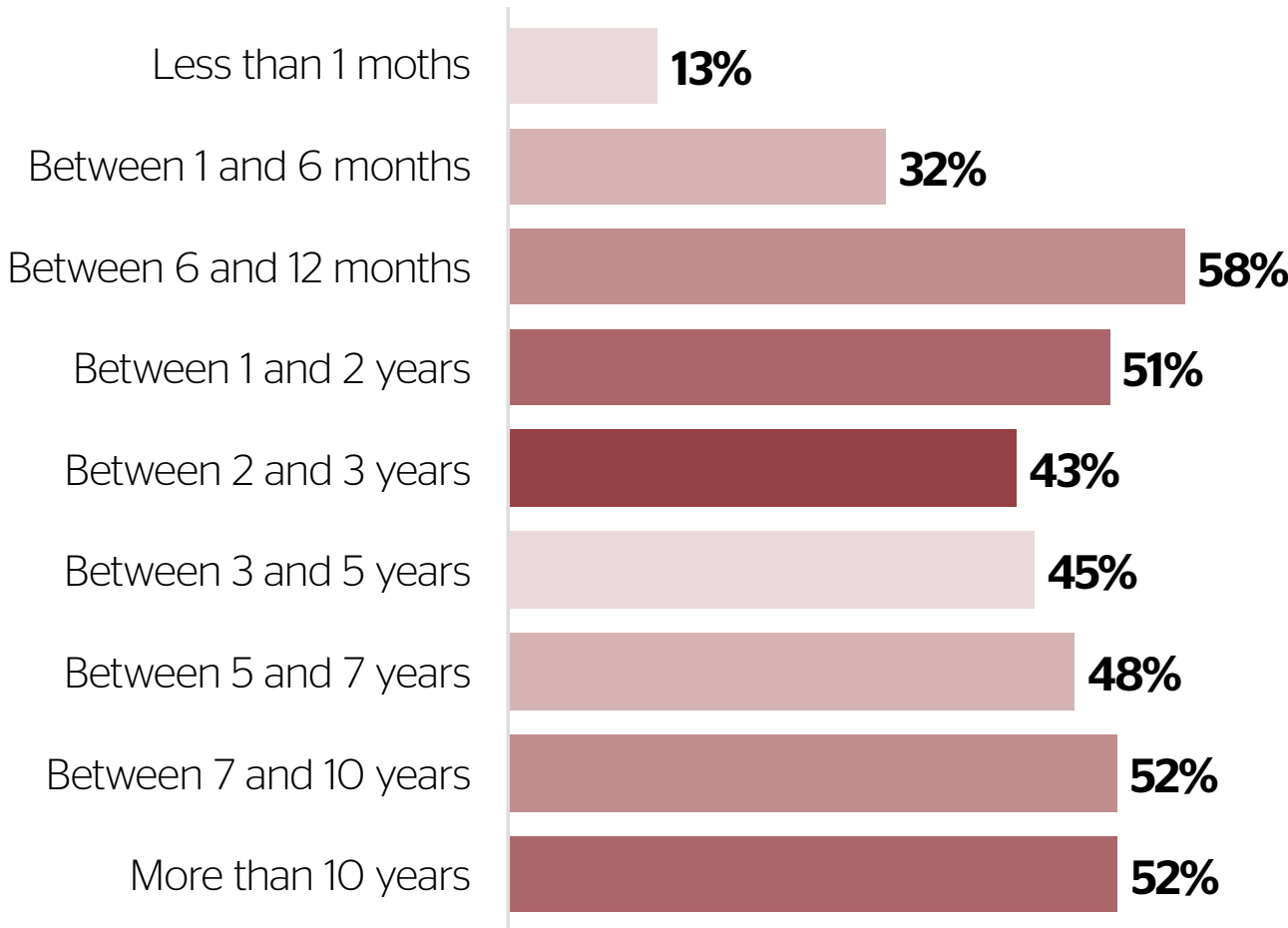
**Jésica Giménez**, social worker of the person's supporter team



# The longer on the street, the higher the risk of aggressions

**There is a direct tie between the time living on the street and being subjected to aggressions.** Thereby, 13% of people that have been living on the street for less than a year have been victims of a physical or verbal aggression. This figure goes up the longer they have spent living on the street. This way, 32% of the people who have lived between 1 and 6 months on the street have been assaulted, as well as 58% of the ones that have been rough sleepers for between 6 and 12 months.

People living on the streets in Barcelona who have been subjected to physical or verbal aggressions, per time living on the street (2021)



**People with a high vulnerability index are subjected to the most violence:** an 83%, compared to the 52% of people with a moderate index and an 11% with a low one. Since people from Spain and people from countries outside the EU are the ones with the highest vulnerability index, they are also the ones to suffer more aggressions. More than a 50% of them have been on the receiving end of violence.

## There are almost no reports of violence to the police

Most of the people who have been abused don't report it. That's because of several reasons: distrust in the system, fear of repercussion or, if they are someone with an irregular administrative situation, fear of being deported. Moreover, there are a lot of homeless people who have normalized these aggressions and don't know that they're a crime. During 2010, according to data from the Ministry of the Interior, only 10 aporophobia reports were filed in the whole country, 2 in Catalonia.



*"I believe that almost no one reports the aggressions. It may be because they don't have papers, or have some sort of dependence, but most people don't report them. It's just something that's not done. I was assaulted twice. Once in Estació del Nord and then in the Aquarium. I don't understand how someone can see a person sleeping on the floor and think about beating them up. The police don't receive any reports and that makes it seem like the problem doesn't exist. But it does, it happens every day."*

**Giorgio Ossola**, member of the first reception team and with experience living on the street

During the night of the census, 2 out of 10 people said that in the last year they have tried to hurt someone or themselves. This figure has been gradually going up in the last years. Men admitted to being violent two times more than women, a 22% versus a 10%.

Starting from six months living on the street, the numbers also start rising. **People living on the street for between 6 and 12 months**, which are the ones who receive more physical and verbal aggressions, **are also the ones that admit to having used violence the most** (37%), more than twice than the ones that have been rough sleepers for between 1 and 6 months (15%).

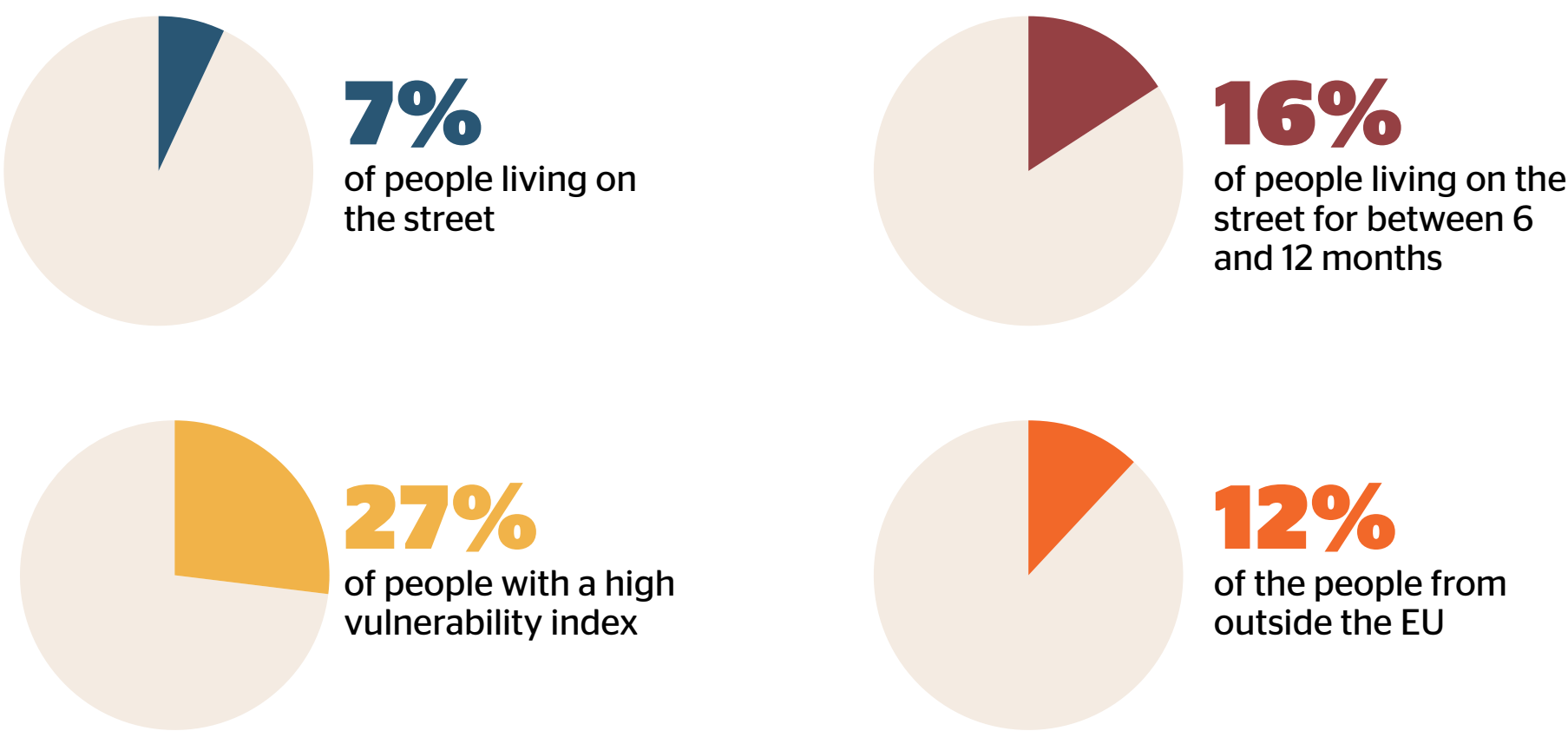


# The danger of deceit

Another one of the dangers of living on the street is being scammed or deceived. A 7% of the interviewees said to have been forced, tricked or pressured into doing something they didn't want to. This percentage is going up since the first census in 2016, and is higher amongst the people who have been homeless for more than 6 months.

Differing from past years, this time men have received this type of violence more frequently, concretely an 8% of them. The rate of deceived people worryingly reaches 27% amongst the ones with a high vulnerability index. 12% of the people who come from a country outside the EU have suffered this type of situation, more than twice the people with Spanish or EU nationalities.

People living on the streets in Barcelona that have been forced, tricked or pressured into doing things they didn't want to (2021)



10% of the people living on the street admit having engaged in behaviours that expose them to risk, like exchanging sex for money, dealing drugs, having sexual intercourse with strangers without protection and sharing needles. This figure is similar in all the previous censuses, in which it was between 8% and 9% of the interviewees. The most alarming fact is that **31% of the people with a high vulnerability index said to engage in risky behaviour.**

Besides that, a quarter part of the interviewees explaining that they have pending legal issues. It is the highest percentage we've had in all censuses, in which it oscillated between 18% and 20%. 33% of the people that have lived on the street for more than 10 years have them, and 59% of the people with a high vulnerability risk as well.

## Fined for living on the street

Apart from being subjected to risky situations, like being victims of aggressions or being tricked or deceived, people living on the street also receive sanctions for a number of reasons. Very often the primal cause of these fines comes from not having a home and could be avoided if the person had stable housing.

Most of the penalties are related to drinking on the street or relieving themselves in public spaces because they don't have a home or toilet facilities available. During the pandemic, there were people sanctioned for not being able to confine themselves at home. Moreover, homeless people are more exposed to violent and dangerous situations, which may get them involved in a misdemeanour or a juridical procedure, as the victim or the accused.

It is important to remark that there are homeless people that were fined during the pandemic for being on the street because they didn't have a place to stay; a 17%, according to data from the 'Living on the street during the pandemic' report (in Catalan), published by Arrels Foundation in October of 2021. To this day, in the cases in which Arrels mediated with the administration, no sanctions have been claimed.



# Health

## What are the physical and mental health risks of living on the street?



43% of the interviewees **have health problems**



26% of the people living on the street **have a liver, kidney, heart, stomach or lung chronic disease**



There has been an increase of the 18% in **homeless people with mental health issues**



40% of the people who live on the street **have visited an emergency hospital** in the last 6 months

Living on the street takes a big toll on physical and mental health. Consequently, the people who have been rough sleepers the longest are the ones who suffer the most illnesses, but at the same time these illnesses make it more difficult to access a home and make the person's situation harder to undo. From six months living on the street, health worsens. 43% of all the interviewed people said to have an organic, neurological or mental health problem. One of the most concerning data of the 2021 census is that the number of people with mental health issues doubles the number of 2019 and is four times the one of 2016.





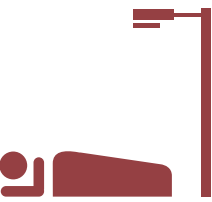
**Living on the street shortens a person’s life span and worsens physical and mental illnesses.** As previously stated, 7 out of 10 rough sleepers in Barcelona have a high or moderate vulnerability index, and most of them have been sleeping on the street for more than 6 months, when health exponentially deteriorates.

## Living on the street deteriorates health

Living on the street subjects people to risks all year round, and not only because of weather conditions like heat and cold waves. Being exposed to violence, having an addiction and the fact itself of not sleeping under a roof for a long time gravely affects the body and the mind.

As stated in the previous chapter, almost half of the interviewees have been victims of physical or verbal aggressions for sleeping rough. Moreover, 2 out of 10 people who live on the street have an addiction, a figure that doubles within people who have been living on the street for more than 10 years.

### Què fa que la salut de les persones es deteriori?



They have been living on the street for **4 years and 8 months** on average



**15%** of people don’t have their basic needs covered



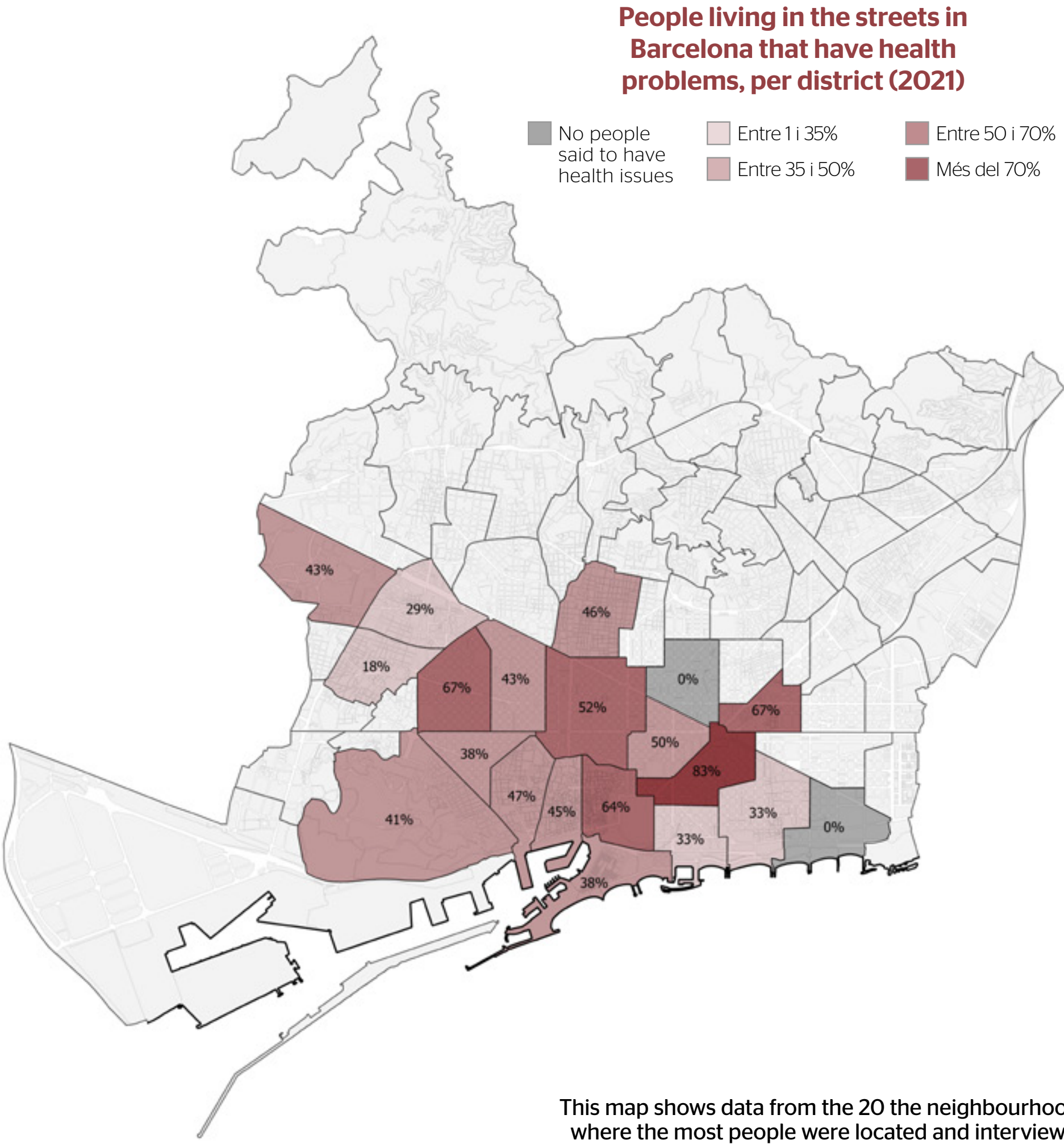
**46%** have been subject to aggressions



**38%** don’t have a public health care card



**13%** said to have experienced a traumatic event that made them end up on the street



43% of the interviewed people said to have an organic, neurological or mental health issue. More than 80% of the people in El Parc and La Llacuna del Poblenou districts have health problems.

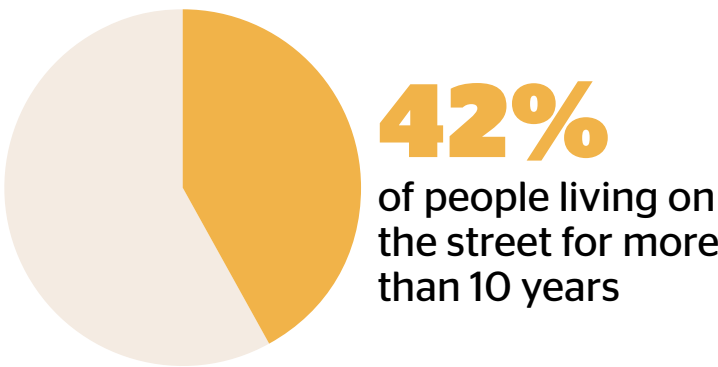
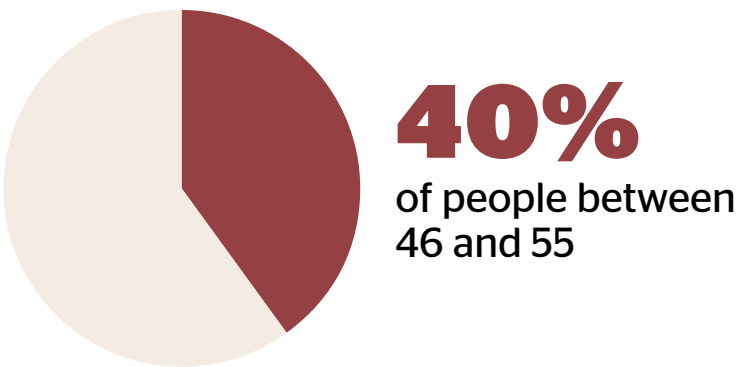
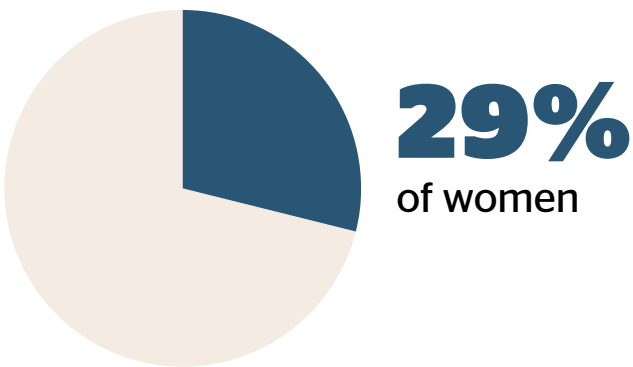


# A quarter of the people living on the street have a chronic disease

A lot of the people we interviewed said that they don't have a good health condition. To be precise, a quarter of the interviewees have a liver, kidney, heart, stomach or lung chronic disease. This **figure doubles within people with a high vulnerability index**. As a matter of gender, women's situation is worse than men's (29% versus 26%) and **people between 46 and 55 years old are the age group with the highest rate of chronic illnesses** (40%).

There's a direct tie between the length of time spent living on the street and physical chronic illnesses, to the point that **42% of the people who have been rough sleepers for more than 10 years suffer from them**.

People living on the street with liver, kidney, heart, stomach or lung diseases (2021)



# There are four times more homeless people with mental health problems than before

When talking about people's health, there is physical health, but also neurological and mental health. 18% of the interviewees said to have a mental or neurological illness that didn't allow them to live independently. That is twice the number of people in the 2019 census and four times the number in 2016. **58% of the people with a high vulnerability risk have a mental or neurological illness that prevents them from living an autonomous life**.

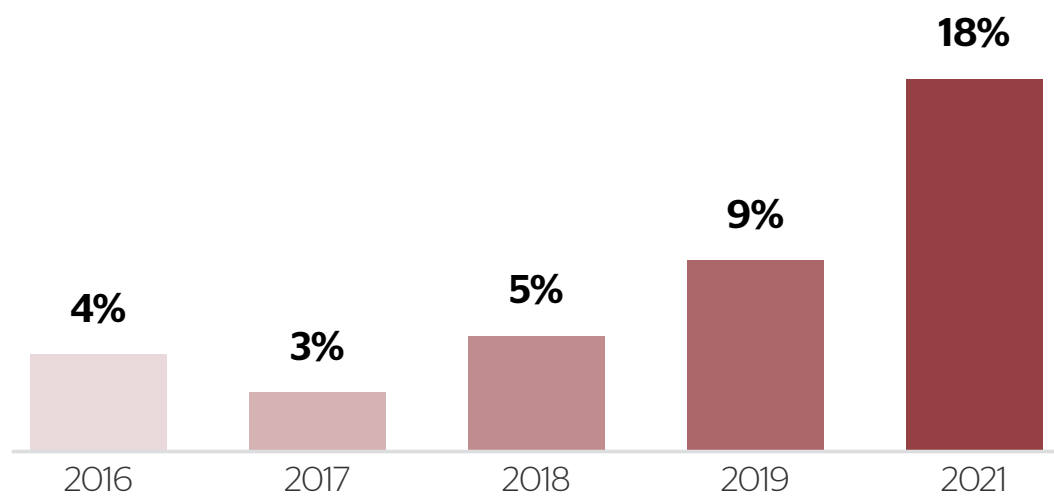
Almost **3 out of 10 homeless women said to have a mental health issue** and couldn't live an autonomous life. There is a similar number of people born in Spain (28%) with mental illness, which is way more than the number of people with mental illness among those who come from within the EU (9%) and from outside the EU (16%).

**When sorting by age, the biggest percentage of people with mental illness is among people between 26 and 55 years old.** While the youngest people, who are usually the ones that have spent less time living in the street, have a better mental health.

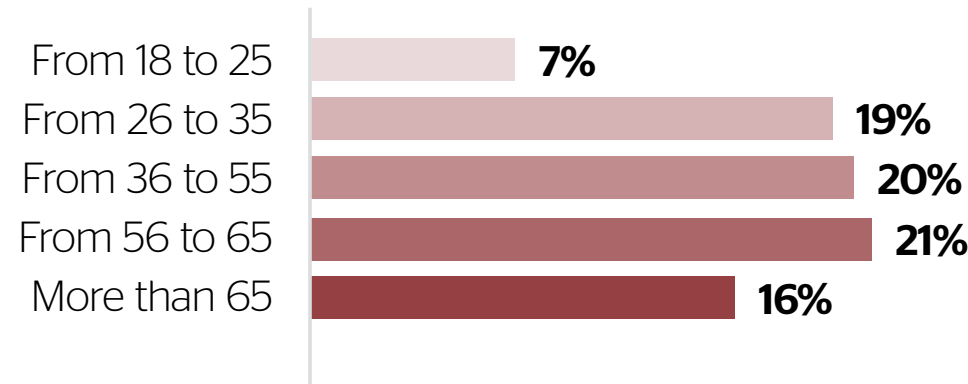
The highest percentage of people with mental illness when sorting them by time spent living in the street is among people who have been homeless for more than six months. 13% of people living in the street for between 1 and 6 months said to have a mental illness. This percentage goes up to 26% among people who have lived in the street for between 6 and 12 months. After that, the figure becomes oscillating, but **24% of people who have been living in the street for more than 10 years have mental health issues that make it difficult for them to live independently**.



People living on the streets in Barcelona with a mental or neurological illness that prevents them from living independently (2016-2021)



People living on the street in Barcelona with a mental or neurological illness that prevents them from living independently, per age (2021)





*“There has been a dramatic rise of people with anxiety or depression. We see more people with temperamental and mental health problems in our centre every day. Social, medical and mental health services are overwhelmed, and that’s going to cause a huge problem.”*

**Giorgio Ossola**, member of the first reception team and with experience living on the street

## 22% of rough sleepers have addictions

Sometimes, people become addicted to alcohol or other drugs as a consequence of living on the street, as a way to escape. Other times, however, being addicted to drugs is what caused a fracture in their environment and support net, forcing them to live on the street. It’s hard to know what came first in a person’s life, addiction or homelessness, but these two possibilities do coexist.

According to 22% of the interviewees (11% of which consume alcohol, 6% use drugs, and 5% do both) alcohol consumption, drug use, or both are often one of the causes of difficulties when trying to access housing or to have a permanent home.

While there aren’t many big differences between groups, it can be noticed that **a third of people between 36 and 45 years old have said that addiction makes it difficult for them to find housing or accessing a shelter for homeless people**. Similarly, 33% of people who have been living on the street for between 7 and 10 years and **39% of people living on the street for more than 10 years** pinpoint addiction to alcohol or drugs as a barrier to access housing.





### Do homeless people seek medical help?

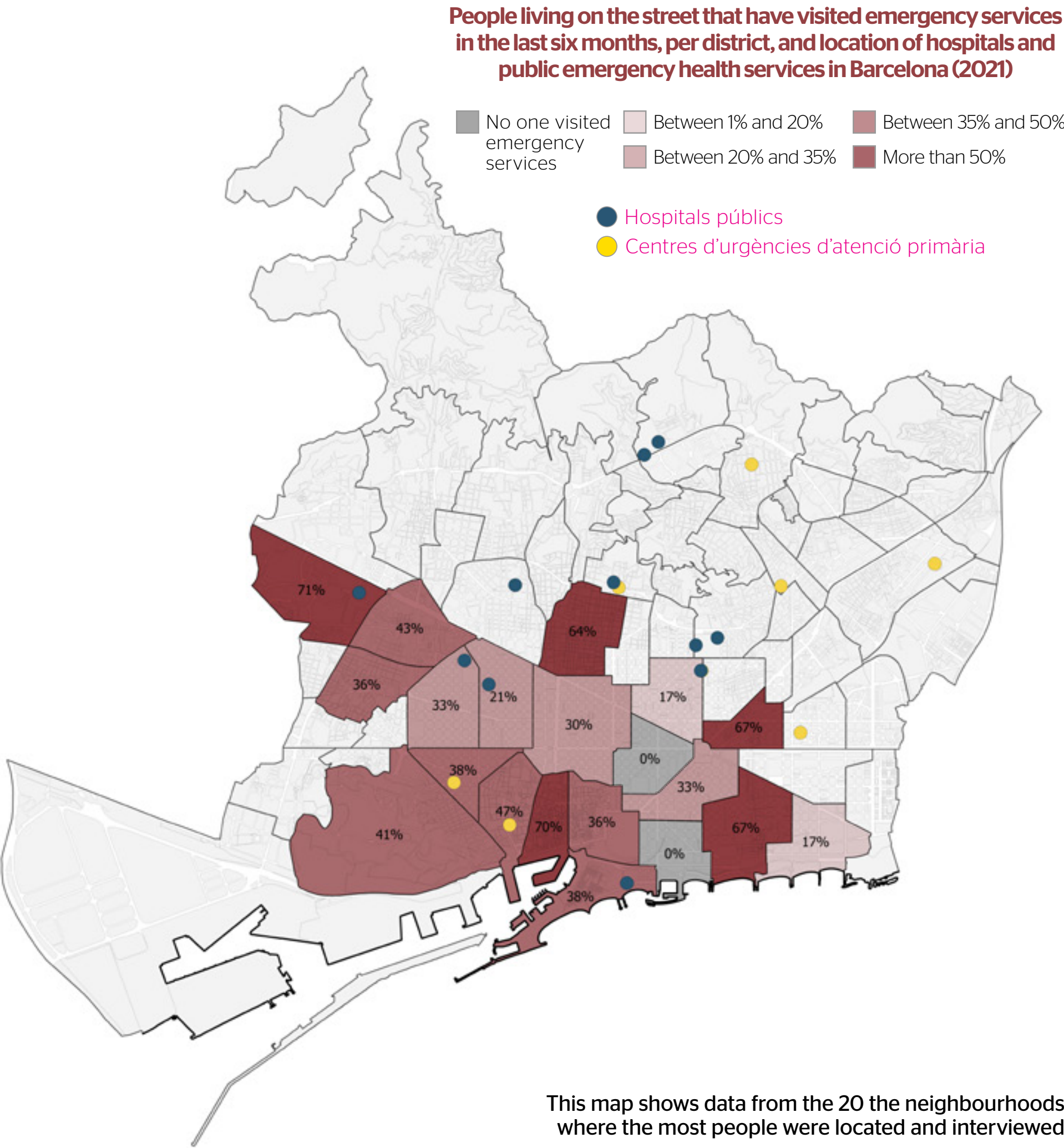
A third of the people living on the streets in Barcelona have admitted to finding it difficult to ask for help when they are ill or feel sick. Men (36%) find it more difficult than women (24%), and younger people (50%) more than the older (25%). People with a high vulnerability index, which are the ones that should receive the most medical help, find it the most difficult (61%).

In order to detect people who need medical care and try to give them the appropriate service, it is essential that administrations arrange more resources and more prevention tools. It is important to have street teams from different public organizations and social entities which go out and meet rough sleepers, analyse their needs and offer solutions.

## 4 out of 10 people who live on the street visited emergency medical services

For homeless people, it is very difficult to access continued medical care. 4 out of 10 (40%) of people living on the street that we interviewed visited emergency medical services or received hospital care within the six months before the census, which is similar to the percentage of previous years but seems to be rising. **About half of this 40% visited just once and the other half more than once.**

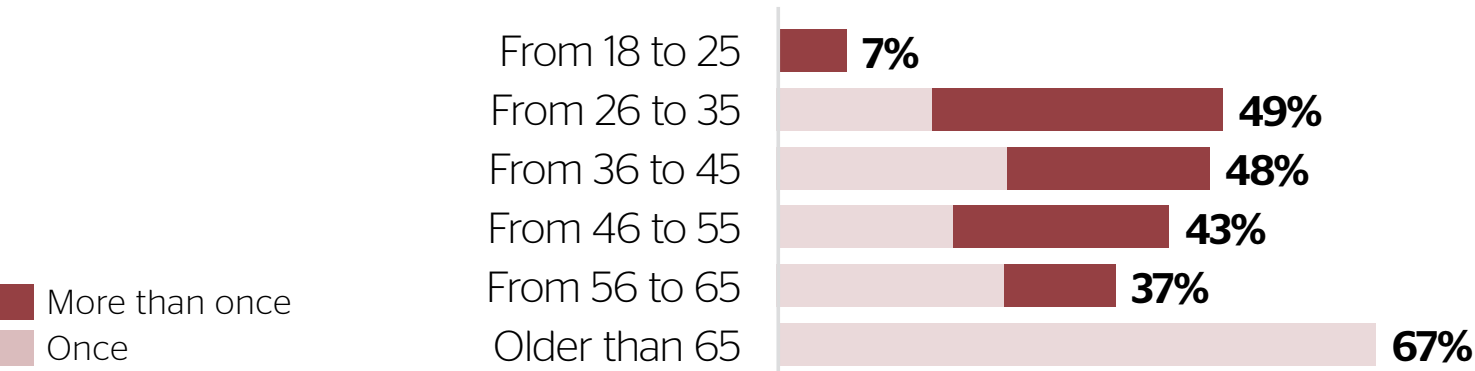
The age group that has visited the hospital less is young people between 18 and 25 (7%). From this age on, it becomes more frequent to go.



This map provides a look into the districts in Barcelona where we interviewed the most people and show differences in the use of emergency health services. In Barri Gòtic, La Maternitat and Sant Ramon more than 70% of the interviewees said to have visited emergency services in the last six months; and more than 60% in El Clot, Poble Nou and Vila de Gràcia.



Use of emergency health services, per age (2021)




**Men tend to visit hospitals more than women**, but the most remarkable gender differences are the fact that men are transported in an ambulance more frequently (24% of men versus a 10% of women), and are also hospitalized more (also a 24% versus a 10%).

They live on average 27 years less

On the 21st of October 2021, twenty entities and services organized a public event to remember homeless people who lost their lives during the twelve previous months. We said goodbye to 69 people (59 man and 10 women) that were living or had lived on the streets in Barcelona, 17 of which died on the street. The rest of them mostly passed in a hospital or a social health centre and had a frail health.

These people are 55 years old on average, while the life expectancy in Barcelona is 82. Living on the street shortens lives and violates many rights, like the right to medical care and the right to be remembered, since in many cases loneliness accompanies these people even after they're deceased. Every five days, a homeless person dies.




*“The system to get medical appointments isn’t adapted for homeless people. Nowadays, appointment reminders are sent through text messages or the healthcare app. How many people are there with a mobile phone and a stable connection to access the app and that know how to do it? Accurate monitoring of health can’t be done, so the person just visits emergency services when they are very ill. I would even say that, in most cases, they don’t visit emergency services because they feel bad, but because of symptoms related to withdrawal syndrome or intoxication, or because of bone fractures. And sometimes they don’t go by themselves, but are carried by health services after someone sees them falling, or in a fight, or in the ground with blood on them. It is then when they are sent to the emergency services.”*

**Laia Pérez**, nurse in the Pere Barnés home

*“A lot of people get ill because they live on the street. There are people that tell us after starting to live in a flat that they haven’t visited a doctor in all the time they have been homeless. Living on the street takes away your notion of time, you don’t know what day it is. It’s difficult to imagine a homeless person saying: “I’m going to ask for a doctor’s appointment, I have a sore throat”. Someone who has lived on the street for 10 years may not have visited a doctor on their own for 10 years. Maybe they have been to a doctor because they have fallen and an ambulance has had to carry them, or someone has called medical services. But usually they don’t go on their own.”*

**Jésica Giménez**, social worker in the person’s supporter team

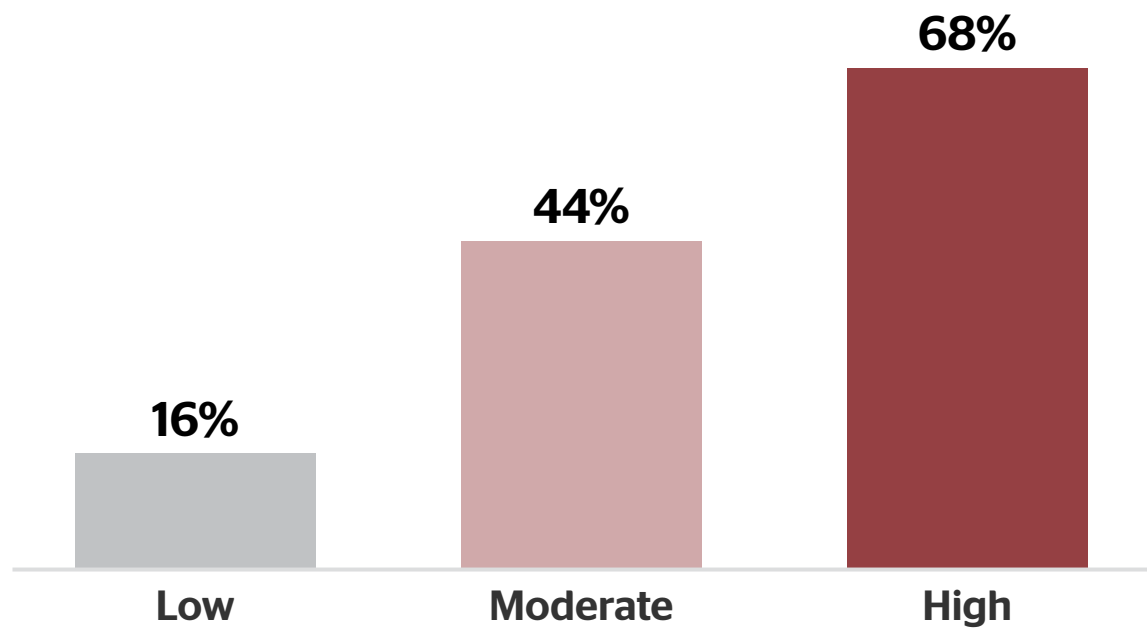


There’s a direct link between a high vulnerability index and having to receive medical care. In the last six months, **7 out of 10 people with a high vulnerability index had to receive emergency medical care** and 4 out of 10 had to be admitted into the hospital. As previously stated, most people with a high vulnerability index (61%) struggle with asking for help when they’re feeling ill. Often, that means that when medical services finally tend to them, their condition is critical and they need emergency treatment.

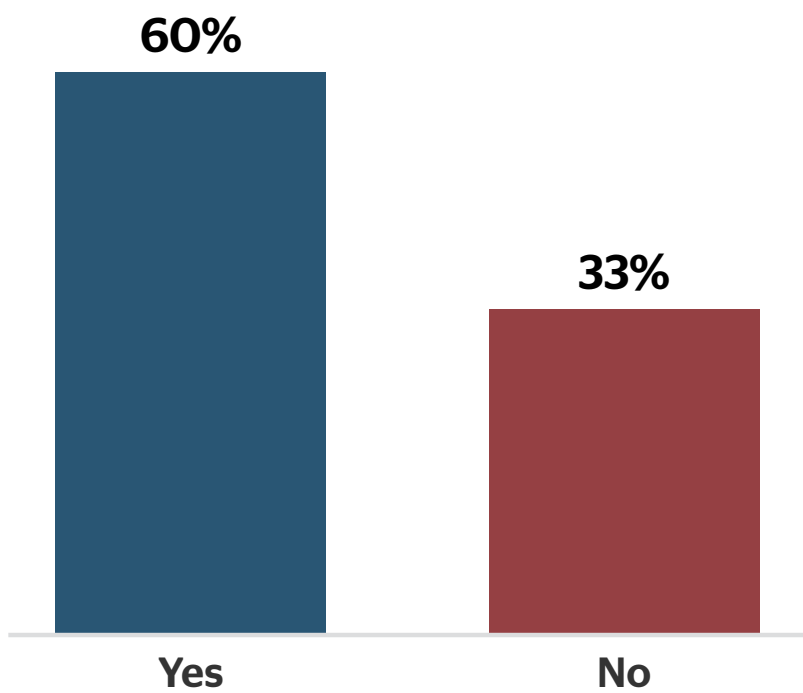
Homeless people with a chronic illness have had to visit emergency health services or have been admitted into a hospital twice the number of times than the rest of people. **60% of rough sleepers with a liver, kidney, heart, stomach or lung chronic illness have been to the emergency health services at least once** during the past six months, and 38% have had to be admitted into a hospital.



Use of emergency health services, per vulnerability index (2021)



Use of emergency medical services, per chronic liver, kidney, heart, stomach or lung illness (2021)




1 out of 5 homeless people struggle with taking medication

Checking the medication that a person living on the street must take is a difficult task for various reasons. It is hard to get them regular doctor’s appointments, a lot of people don’t have watches so they can’t know when to take medication, or they become disoriented, and sometimes a medication has side effects and they decide to stop taking it.

1 out of 5 interviewees said to not be taking any of the medication that was prescribed to them, making it difficult for them to recover and get cured. Men skip medication more often (21%) than women (14%) and 58% of the people with a high vulnerability risk don’t take it correctly.

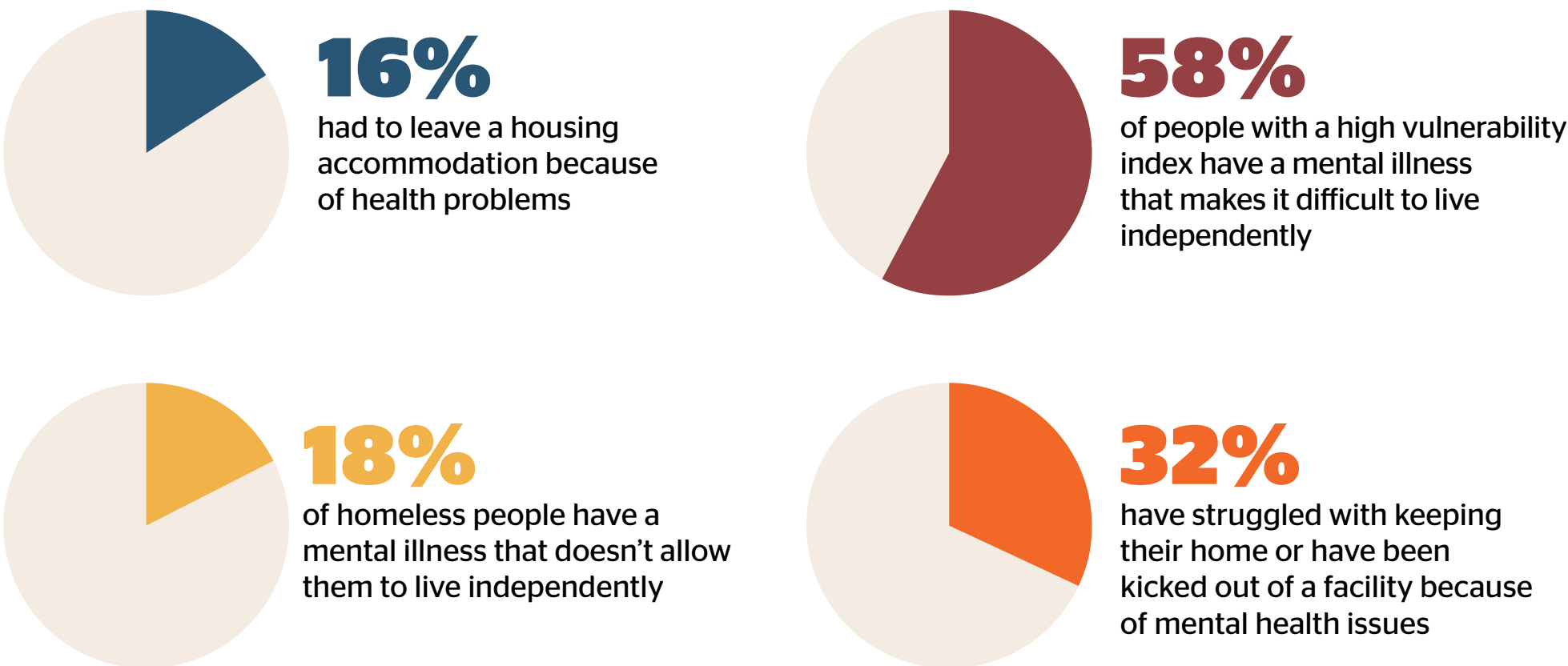
*“We have to stop blaming homeless people, because having an up-to-date medical prescription isn’t easy, as well as being able to go to a pharmacy and receive a medicine blister. There are pharmacies that don’t allow people that can’t care for their appearance or who look undesirable in.”*

**Laia Pérez**, nurse in the Pere Barnés home





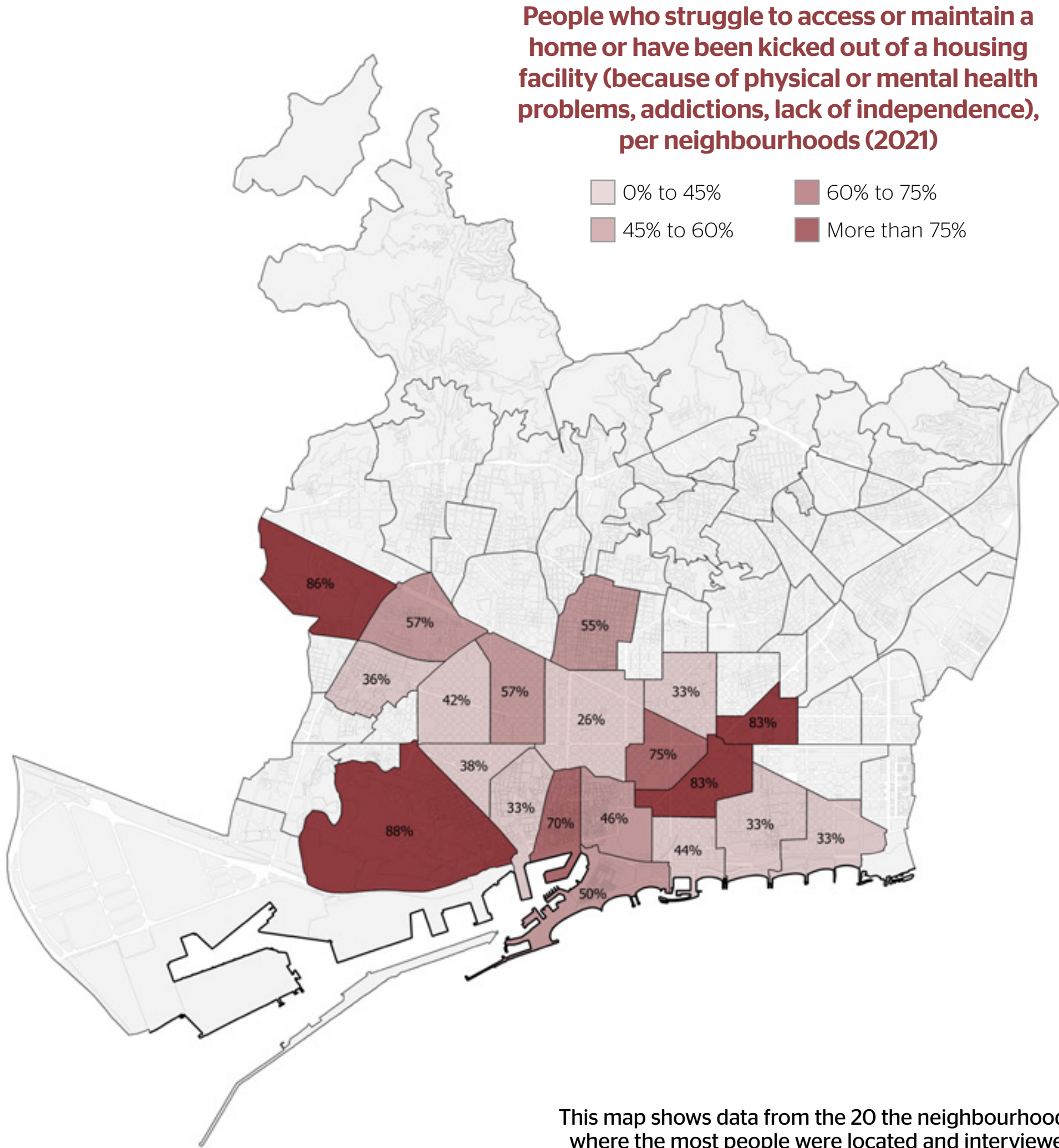
# Health status conditions access to housing



Even if it sounds contradictory, a frail health can be an obstacle when trying to access public or private resources for homeless people. Every day there are more people living on the streets in Barcelona that have had difficulties with finding housing or that have had to leave a house or a facility because of a health problem, whether physical, mental or drug related.

About a third of the interviewees said to have struggled with maintaining a home, or have been kicked out of a flat, shelter or housing program. That is almost **twice the figure of previous censuses, in which percentages went from 14% to 17%.**

Within this percentage, **9% struggled to maintain a home or were kicked out because of a mental health problem** or because they had a disability, and 10% struggled because of brain damage.



This map shows data from the 20 the neighbourhoods where the most people were located and interviewed

More than 80% of the people who were interviewed in the Poble-sec, la Maternitat I Sant Ramon, el Clot and el Parc I la Llacuna del Poblenou neighbourhoods struggle to access or maintain housing.

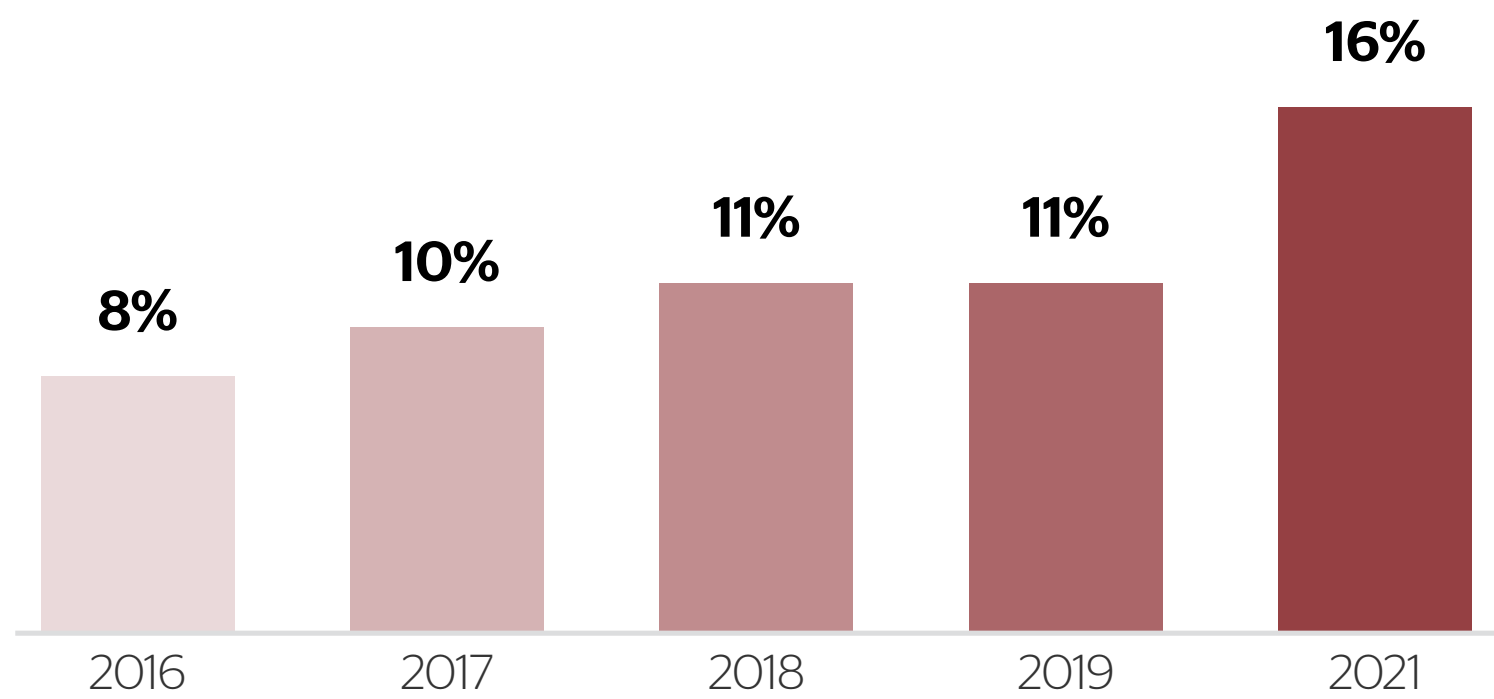


# 16% of homeless people have had to abandon a housing facility because of physical health problems

Suffering from a physical health problem becomes a barrier when accessing a housing facility. **16% of the people who live on the street have had to leave a flat, a shelter or any other place where they were living because of a physical health problem.** The number of people who have found themselves in this situation has increased compared to previous censuses. It has progressively increased from 8% to this year's 16%.

A third of the people who are between 26 and 35 years old have had to leave their housing facility because of a physical health problem. Once again, the situation gets even worse for people with a high vulnerability index: almost **4 out of 10 people with a high vulnerability index (39%) have had to leave the place they were staying in because of physical health problems.**

People living on the street that have had to leave a housing facility because of physical health problems (2016-2021)



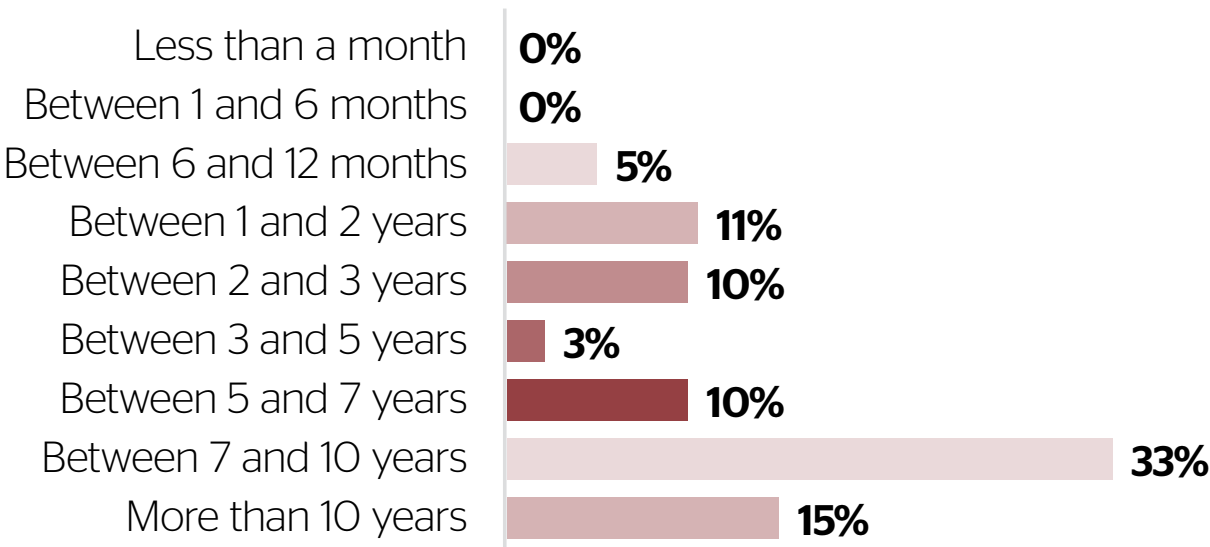
# There aren't enough housing facilities destined to disabled homeless people

9% of the interviewees said to have a disability that doesn't allow them to access a housing facility or makes it difficult for them to live autonomously; often they are wheelchair users or have a mobility problem. This is the highest percentage ever, which was between 6% and 8% in previous censuses.

This comes to show that most of the time **resources adapted to the needs of these people aren't offered, and their rights are once again violated.** They don't have a place to live with dignity and have a slimmer chance to access one. This is a problem that 14% of homeless women suffer, which is 5 percentage points over the average. The percentage of people born in Spain with this struggle is also 14%.

The biggest differences between groups are found when sorting people per time living on the street. The number of people that struggle to access a housing facility because of a disability starts going up when looking at people who have lived on the street for more than 6 months. A third of the people who have been living on the street for between 7 and 10 years are in this situation, which is the highest figure. The group in second place is people who have lived on the street for more than 10 years (15%).

People with a disability that limits their access to a housing facility or makes it difficult to live autonomously (2021)

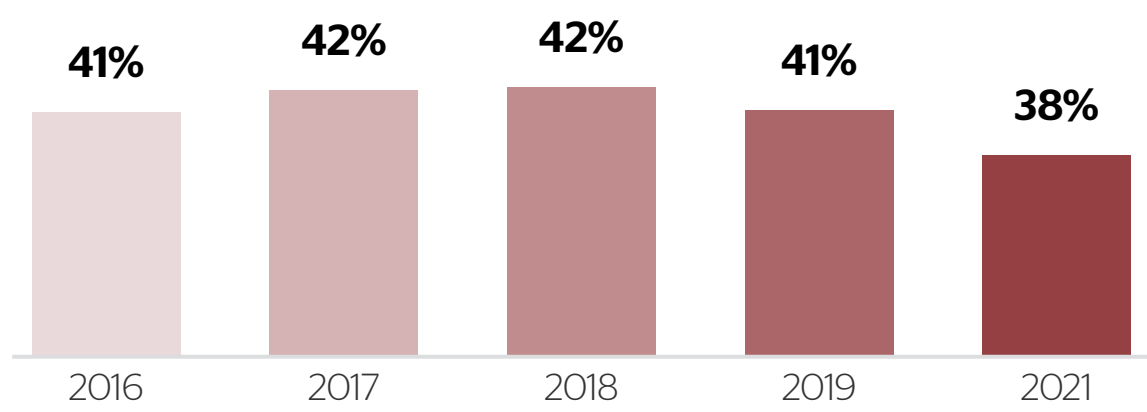




# 4 out of 10 homeless people don't have a public health care card

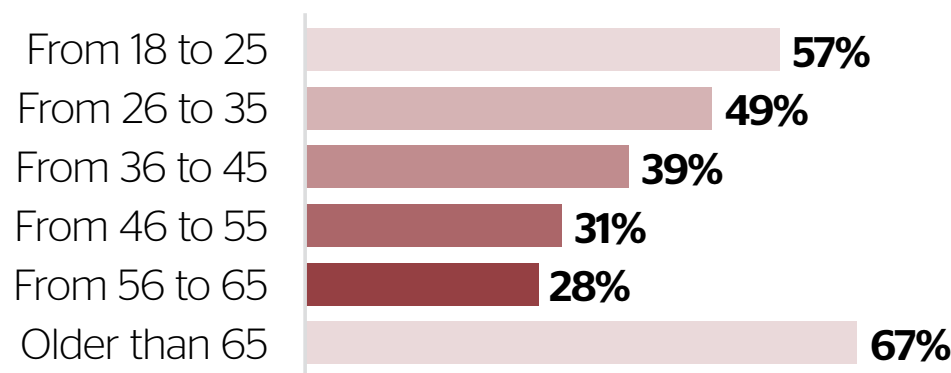
Having a public health care card makes resources and medical care accessible to homeless people. On the contrary, not having it almost always means that they only access medical care through emergency services, which means that there is no disease prevention or tracking. Despite this, **38% of the interviewees don't have a public health care card**, 55% do. In previous censuses, more than 40% of the interviewees didn't have a card, which means that the situation is a little bit better.

People living on the streets in Barcelona without a public health care card (2016-2021)



There aren't noticeable differences by gender, but there are some by age. **Most young people (57%) don't have a public health care card.** They are the age group that have received the least help from a social worker within the previous six months (79%).

People living on the streets in Barcelona without a public healthcare card, per age (2021)



People born overseas have the highest percentage of people without a public health care card: a 50% of people from other EU countries and a 42% of people from outside the EU. Conversely, most of the people born in Spain do have a card, only 27% don't have it.

### Having a public health care card doesn't mean going to the doctor

Having a public health care card doesn't influence the vulnerability index. In fact, it doesn't even mean that people with a card will visit medical services when they're ill, because a lot of the times they prioritize basic survival, living to see another day. A public health care can be, however, a step in the right direction, because having it can indicate that they care for themselves and are interested in being healthy, which can lead to them getting better and gaining self-esteem.

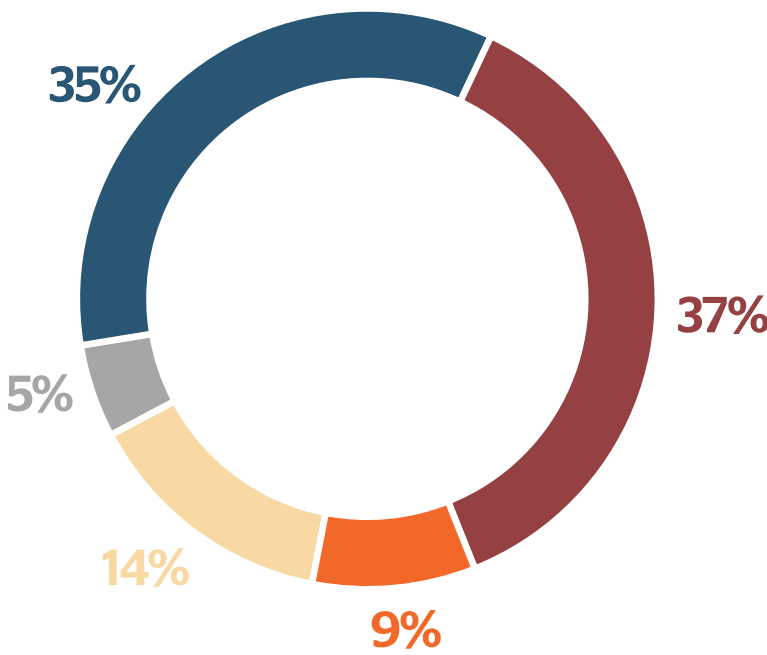
# A third of homeless people don't want to get the Covid vaccine

On the day of the census (June 10th, 2021), a third of the interviewed homeless people said to not wanting to receive the Covid-19 vaccine. Another third wanted to get the vaccine, but still hadn't. 14% had received two doses and 5% only one.

There are more women than men that don't want the vaccine (52% versus 36%). When talking about age groups, 43% of people below 26 and 50% of people between 56 and 65 prefer to not get the vaccine.

People living on the street that have received the Covid-19 vaccine (2021)

- Yes, full dose
- Yes, incomplete dose
- No, but want to
- Don't want to
- DK/NA





# Social support services

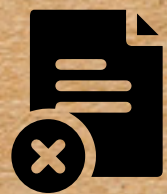
## What services are accessible and what is needed?



15% of homeless people **cannot cover their basic needs**



4 out of 10 homeless people **haven't received help from a social worker within the last 6 months**



47% of homeless people **aren't registered as citizens of Barcelona**



A lot of young people **aren't registered**

In order to better the situation of homeless people, social support services must be adapted to their needs. This means thinking in terms beyond just survival (do more than just give them food and hygiene) and assign everyone a social worker to tend to them and help them learn about what are their rights and what economic benefits they have access to, amongst other things. If these steps are not taken, the number of homeless people will not decrease, and it will become especially difficult to help long-term homeless people.

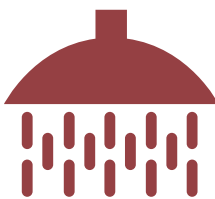




Do people living on the street get the social support they need? Who are the people that get the least support? In order to accurately manage resources, these questions must be answered. People with a high vulnerability risk are the ones that don't have their basic needs covered the most (22%), though they should receive priority support. Also, young people are the most neglected (79%), which shows that early and preventive support is very important. Moreover, most young people and people from a non-EU country haven't received help from a social worker within the last 6 months.



**More than 1,300 homeless people contacted Arrels during the pandemic** because they didn't know where to go for help



22% of people with a high vulnerability index **don't have their basic needs covered**



52% of people from a non-EU country **haven't received help from a social worker within the 6 months before the census**



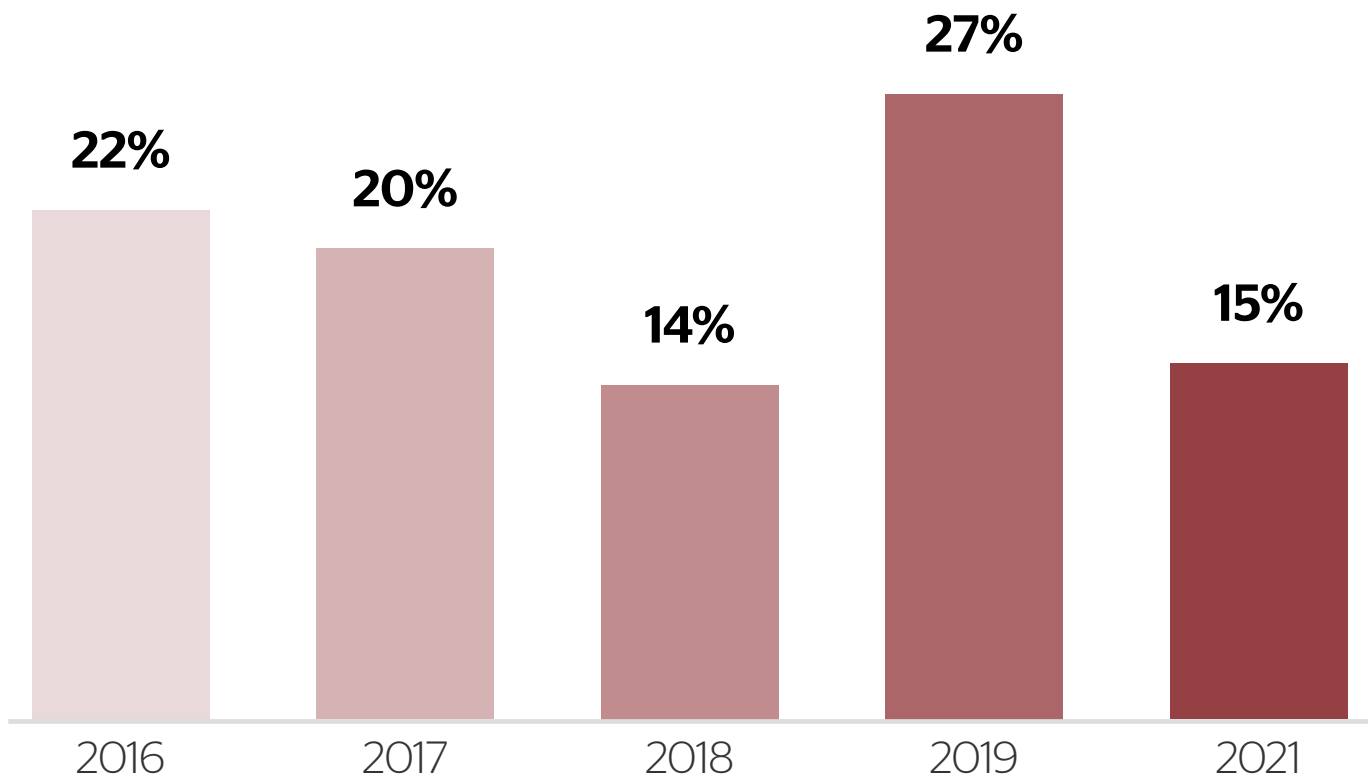
26% used **social emergency services or called a help line within the 6 months before the census**

## 2 out of 10 people with a high vulnerability index don't have their basic needs covered

When you live on the street, you spend most of the time trying to survive. The most important basic needs include personal hygiene, food and a place to store your stuff, among others. However, other basic needs like having a roof to feel protected under, knowing what the social and health resources where they can get help are, or being a registered citizen to access certain rights, are often forgotten.

**15% of the people living on the streets in Barcelona don't have their basic needs covered.** These needs include having a shower, changing clothes, having food (especially warm food) and having drinking water. This percentage goes up to 21% among young people (between 18 and 25) and to 25% among people who have been living on the street for less than a month, which can be attributed to the fact that they don't know the resources in the city they can go for help to survive.

People living on the street that don't have their basic needs covered (2016-2021)





It is important to notice **that 22% of the people with a high vulnerability index don't have their needs covered**, when they should be the ones who receive the most care. Often people who have been homeless for a long time have health problems that make it difficult for them to move or orient themselves through the city to arrive to places where they can get food, showers and rest. That is why **available resources should be adapted to people's needs**.

Moreover, during the state of alert during the Covid-19 pandemic, homeless people were locked out of the places they used to rest, like public libraries and public transport stations.

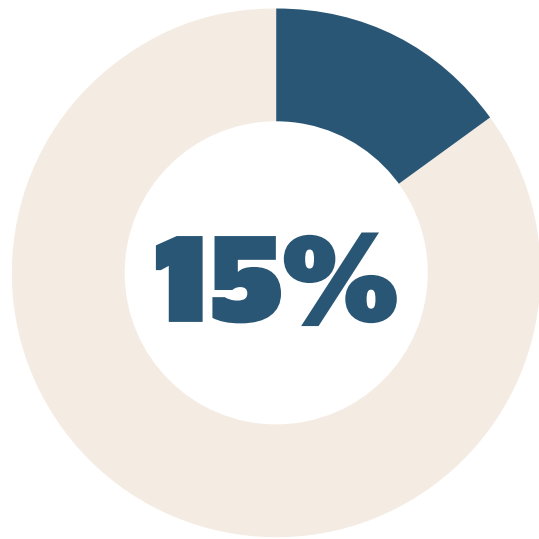


*“Because of the harsh situation homeless people live in, they normalized many situations that people who don't live on the street haven't normalized. A person in a stable home doesn't understand basic needs as just showering once a week or, during the pandemic, eating just a plate of warm food every month. However, homeless people view that as having their needs covered.”*

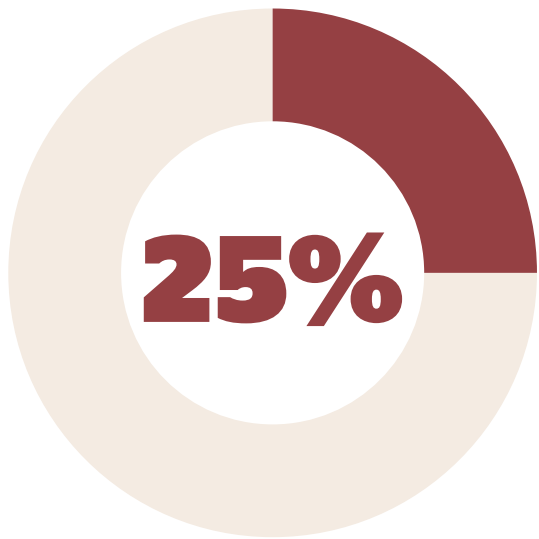
**Pablo Martínez-Alonso**, social educator in the first reception team

Even if most homeless people think that their basic needs are covered, it is important to notice that **it's impossible to know if they have adapted to survival mode**, and it's also hard to figure out who receives care from social services or any of the city's social entities.

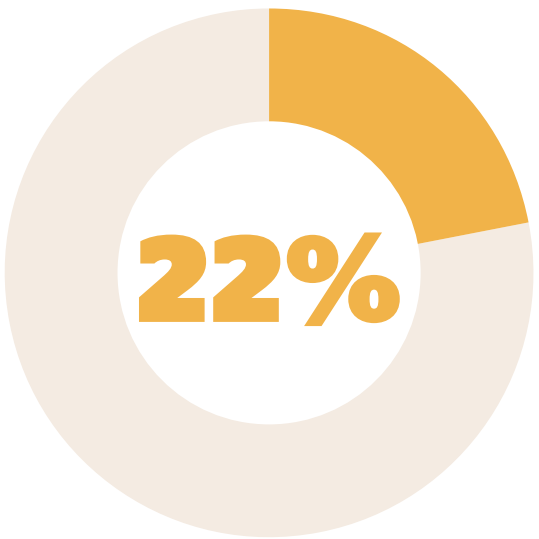
**People living on the streets in Barcelona that can't cover their basic needs (2021)**



of homeless people



of people living on the street for less than a month



of people with a high vulnerability index

**People born in Spain are the ones that don't have their basic needs covered the most** (19%). This figure almost doubles the percentage of people from another EU country (10%) and a little above people from a country outside the EU (17%) that don't have their needs covered. This aligns with the fact that homeless people born in Spain are the ones with the highest vulnerability risk and, on average, have lived on the street for the longest time (5 years and 8 months).

**Living or just surviving?**

Most people living on the streets in Barcelona believe that their basic needs are covered (80%). But the fact that they don't have a stable job, regular income or a home to live in leads to thinking that they have grown accustomed to just surviving one more day and, for that reason, they believe their daily needs are covered. The bar for their personal requirements is at a minimum level and they feel that their needs are covered when they can access food and hygiene services, but often they overlook their physical and mental health state, their access to health care services or lack thereof, their education, job, hobbies or family.





*“The change from living on the street to moving to a flat creates loneliness. It’s a different type of loneliness from the one you feel on the street. It’s a loneliness that kills. What do you miss? Everything, socializing with others, feeling a part of something. It’s a big change and you feel completely alone.”*

**Giorgio Ossola**, member of the first reception team and with experience living on the street

**Young people that were tutored come to the open centre because once they turn eighteen they find themselves living on the street. Moreover, people who have just been released from prison also come because they have no housing alternative.** And sometimes, people who need a shower because they have a job interview the day after also visit it.

88% of these people are men and 12% are women. They are 43 years old on average, but almost 1 out of 4 of them are between 50 and 64. 24% were born in Spain and the rest are from 79 different countries.

### How do plans for the future or leisure activities help?

More than half of the interviewees (56%) said that they make plans or do activities that they like and make them feel good, like reading, listening to music or travelling. Men do more activities and plan for the future more often than women, and young people do it more than middle-aged or old people. Since 2016, there are more people every time that want to do some kind of activity.

## 1,062 people received counselling at Arrels’ open centre

Since the beginning of the pandemic until the end of 2021, 1,062 people, 12 a week, **came to Arrels’ open centre to explain that they’d just started living on the street or that they were about to lose their home.** Every person has their own story, but they all have in common the fact that they don’t have a stable home and the threads that held them had broken or were about to.

Amongst the people who have received counselling at Arrels, there are some who have asked for help from the specific government services but haven’t received an answer fast enough or at all. There also are people that have started sleeping on the street and have acquired a tent to hide in the mountains, some that **destine all the money they have into paying nights in a hostel**, others that hide in the stairs of buildings, that sleep in a friend’s couch or that are so afraid that they spend their first night as rough sleepers walking without stopping.

### Demand for access to basic shower and clothing services, but also for social services and housing

Since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020 until the end of 2021, the majority of the people who receive help in the open centre have more than one need. Getting access to the shower (39%) and clothing (32%) services are the most demanded. Getting in contact with social services is the third most demanded need (25%), followed by people who ask for information about housing (18%) and for a cloakroom (18%) to keep their belongings and documents.

There are more people every time who need general guidance about the available resources in the city. In 2019, 11% of the people that were assisted in the open centre needed this guidance, and since the beginning of the pandemic the percentage has gone up to 17%. This way, the demand for services related to the structural causes of homelessness, like the access to a dignified job and to the social protection system, has increased. In 2019, 19% of the people asked how to contact social services that specialized in helping homeless people in Barcelona. Since the beginning of the pandemic, this percentage has gone up to 25%.

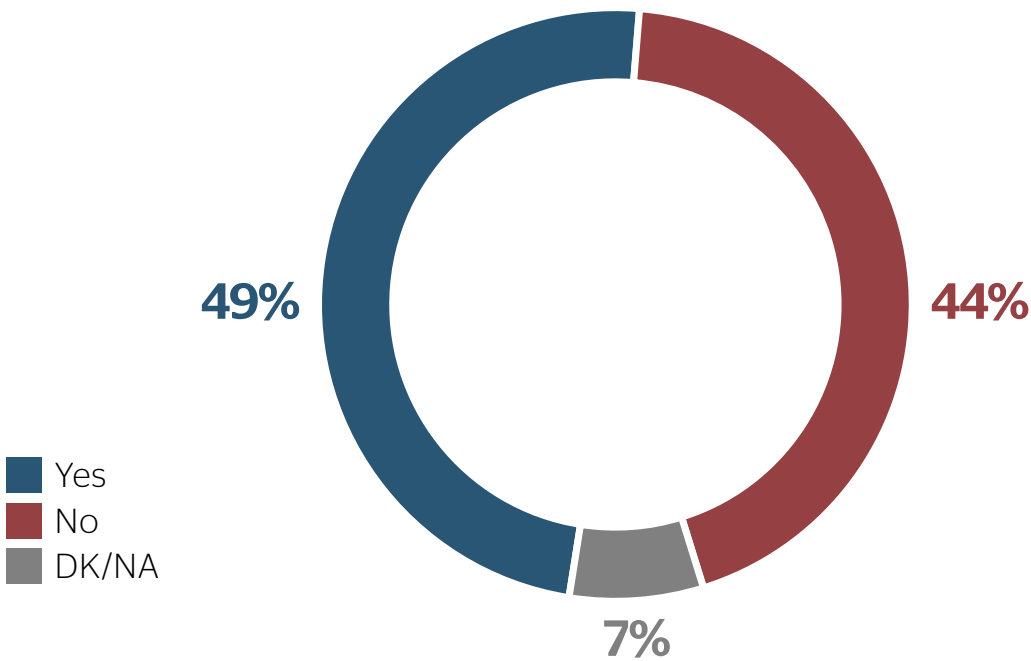


# 4 out of 10 homeless people don't receive social care

**44% of the interviewees said to not have received care from a social worker** during the six months prior to the night of the census, 49% have. The global percentage is similar to previous years, but there are some visible differences and tendencies when talking about gender, age and vulnerability index.

For the second year in a row, homeless women have been assisted by professionals more often than men. 29% of women say to not have received help from social services within the last six months, while 62% have. 46% of men say to not have received social care, 48% have.

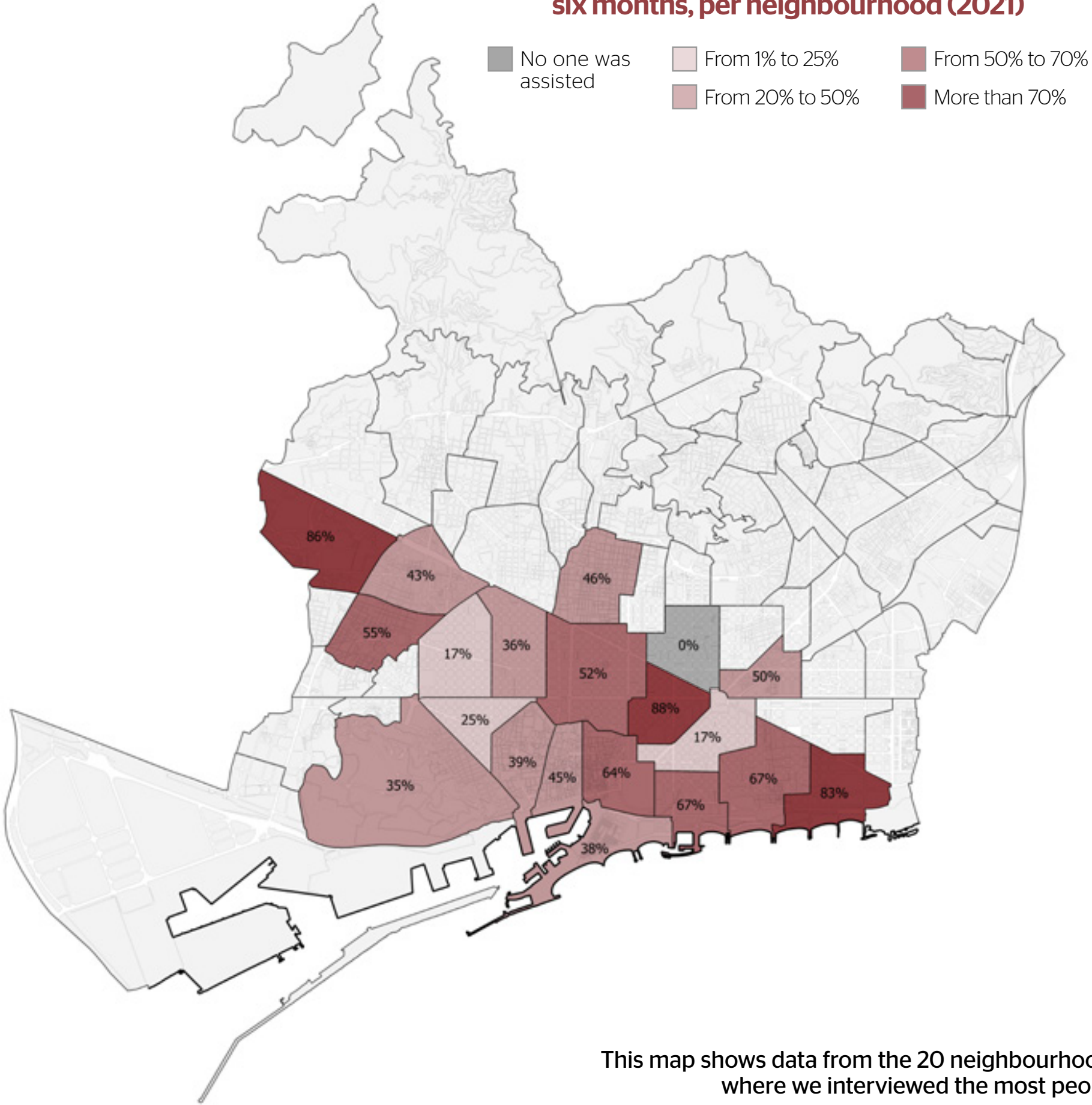
People living on the streets in Barcelona that have been assisted by a social worker within the last six months (2021)



People living on the streets in Barcelona that have not been assisted by a social worker within the last six months, per gender (2021)



People living on the streets in Barcelona that have not been assisted by a social worker within the last six months, per neighbourhood (2021)



This map shows data from the 20 neighbourhoods where we interviewed the most people

There is an imbalance between Barcelona's different neighbourhoods in whether people who live in them are receiving social care or not. In half of the neighbourhoods in this analysis more than half the people said to not have been assisted within the last six months, and more than 80% in the Fort Pienc, la Maternitat i Sant Ramon and Diagonal Mar i el Front Marítim del Poblenou neighbourhoods. Conversely, in the Sagrada Família neighbourhood every person we interviewed said to have been assisted by a social worker.





*“The problem doesn’t lie in the social workers themselves, but in the budgets directed to the issue, which are insufficient when facing a rising demand. Social services are overwhelmed.”*

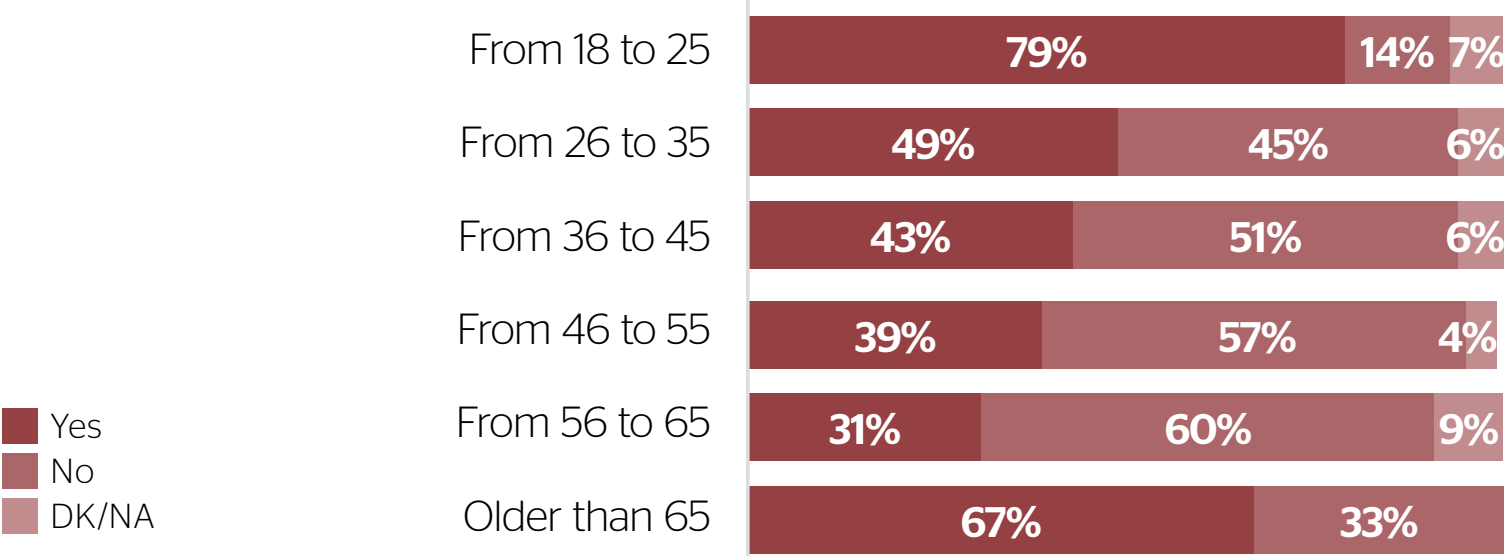
**Giorgio Ossola**, member of the first reception team and with experience living on the street

## Young people and people from a country outside the EU receive the least care

In every age group, there is a large percentage of people who don’t have access to social care, but young people are the ones who receive the least care. **79% of homeless people between 18 and 25 haven’t been assisted by social services**, and only 14% have. This tendency is closely related to the fact that young people are the ones who can cover their basic needs the least because they don’t know where to go. This is the case with many **young people who leave a child or youth centre when they turn 18 and have nowhere to stay**.

In the next age group, of people between 26 and 35, the percentage of people who have access to social care goes up to 45%, but there’s still 49% that haven’t been assisted by a social worker within the six months previous to the survey. As age goes up, the percentage of people with access to social services also rises, reaching the peak of 60% of people between 56 and 65 tended by a social worker.

People living on the streets in Barcelona that have not been assisted by a social worker within the last six months, per age (2021)

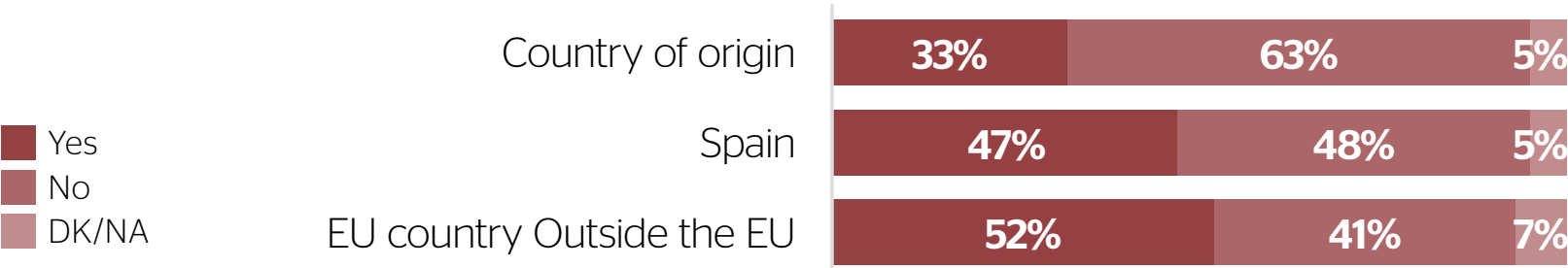


*“Social services don’t always have their focus on people in a long-term situation because they also assist people in a vulnerable state but that can still follow a work plan and specific conditions. This rules out a lot of long-term homeless people who are more difficult to monitor.”*

**Pablo Martinez-Alonso**, social educator in the first reception team

**52% of people born in a country outside the EU haven’t been assisted by a social worker** within the previous six months, while 41% have. They are the group in the worst situation, followed by the group of people from another EU country (47% haven’t received social care) and then the group of people born in Spain (33%).

People living on the streets in Barcelona that have been assisted by a social worker within the last six months, per country of origin (2021)



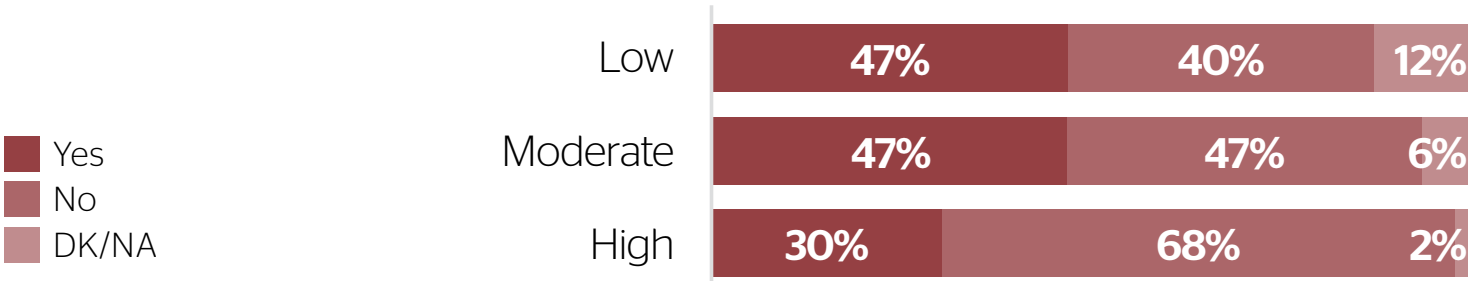


# 3 out of 10 people with a high vulnerability index haven't received social care

3 out of 10 people with a high vulnerability index haven't contacted a social worker within the six months previous to the survey. However, 68% have.

When talking about people with a low vulnerability index, the percentage of people who haven't received social care rises to 47%, and only 40% have.

People living on the streets in Barcelona that have been assisted by a social worker within the last six months, per vulnerability index (2021)



# 1 out of 4 homeless people has used the emergency social services

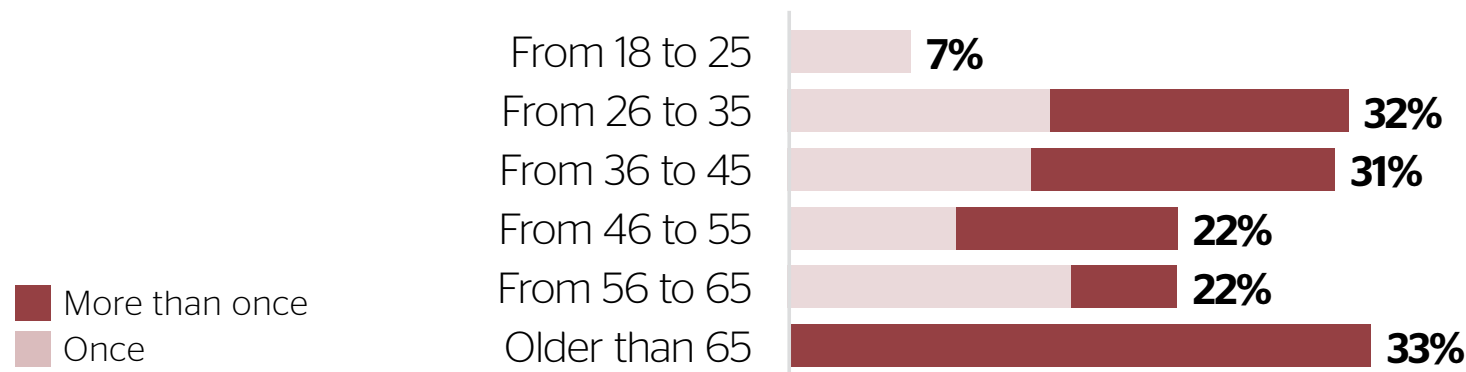
1 out of 4 homeless people (26%) has used the emergency social services or called a help line within the six months previous to the census. This includes services that help in matters of sexual abuse, gender violence and suicide prevention, and also emergency general health and sexual health services.

**The frequency in use of emergency services is rising.** It has gone from 15% in 2016 to 26% in 2021, which is the highest percentage compiled. 29% of women have used these services, which is a little above average. Young people between 18 and 25 are the ones who have used them the least and usually only one time, while **the age group that have used them the most are people** between 26 and 45, and they have also often used them more than once.

There is a direct link between a person's vulnerability index and their usage of emergency social services: the higher the vulnerability index, the more frequent their use of them. 15% of people

with a low vulnerability risk have used emergency social services within the last six months, while 24% of people with a moderate and **48% of people with a high vulnerability index** have used them.

Use of emergency social services, per age (2021)

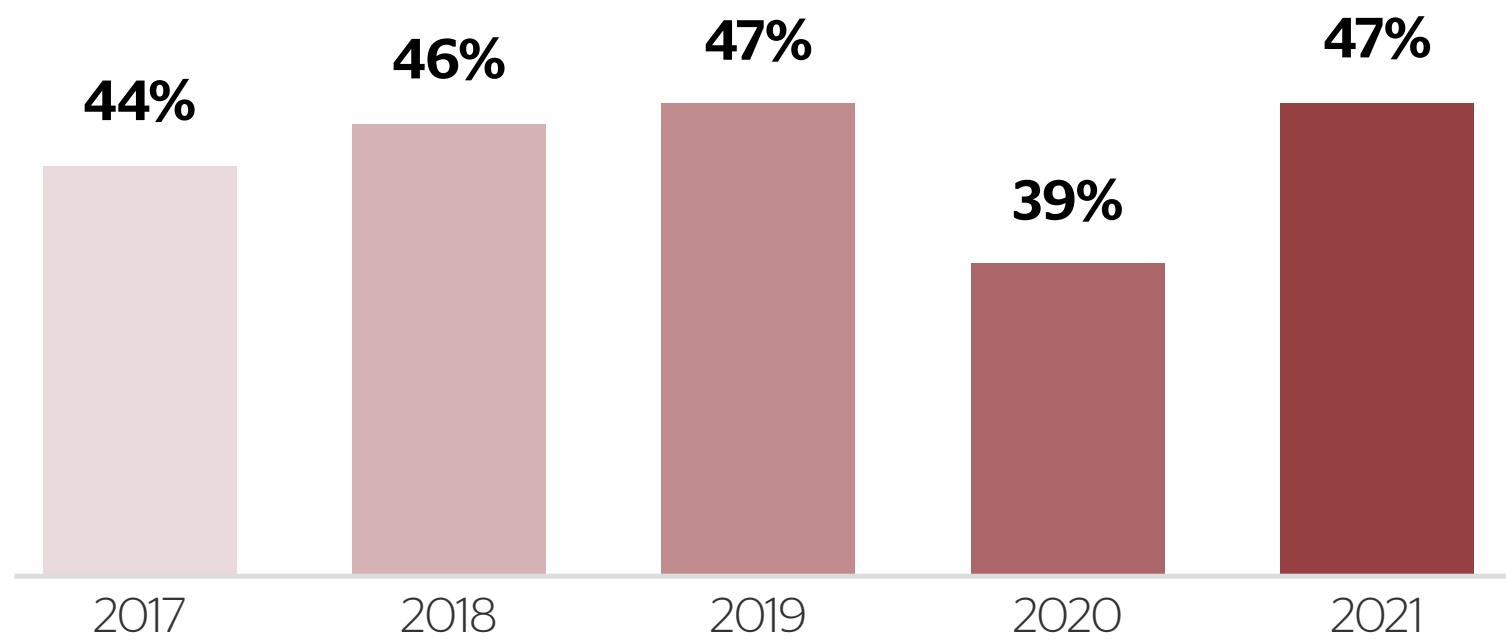


# Half of the people living on the streets in Barcelona aren't registered as citizens

**There are more homeless people that aren't registered as citizens (47%) than people who are (45%)** in Barcelona. These percentages are similar to the ones in previous censuses. There are a few reasons why homeless people might not be registered. These go from the difficulty of the required bureaucratic procedures and the previous necessary documentation, to the lack of knowledge that they might have about what it means to be registered, which leads to them prioritizing survival and leaving paperwork forgotten or disregarding it.



Evolution of the number of homeless people in Barcelona who aren't registered as citizens (2016-2021)

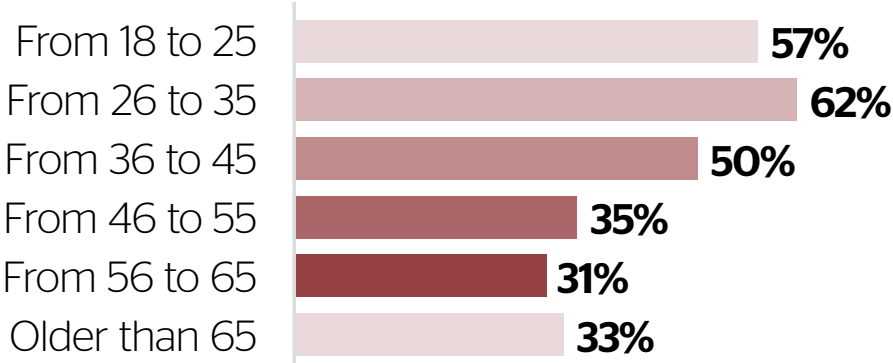


What does a homeless person have to do in order to get registered?

In order to get registered, an identification document or a copy of it is needed. However, that is often a hardship for homeless people since they don't own an ID, whether because it got stolen, lost or has expired. If someone doesn't have a permanent residence, they can give the name of a square, street, forest or other place they are staying in. The town's social services then verify this information on side. In Barcelona, a social services centre is assigned as an address to get notices when registering a person without a permanent residence. Every town in Catalonia must register by law all of its residents, regardless of whether they have a home. In reality, however, this is not accomplished.

There aren't relevant differences in the percentage of registered people per gender, but there are some when focusing on age group and country of origin. **Within people younger than 35, the percentage of people who aren't registered as citizens is about 60%.** Starting from 36, the percentage starts going down to right above 30%.

People living on the streets in Barcelona who aren't registered citizens, per age (2021)



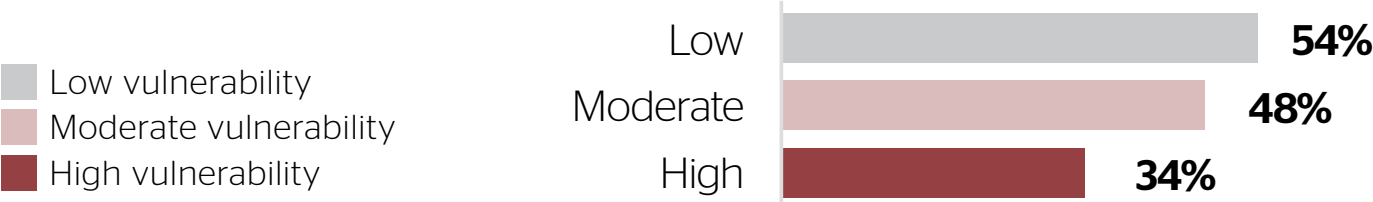
**People born outside Spain are the ones who are registered the least, 63% of people from another EU country** and 50% of people from outside the EU aren't registered, while 30% of people born in Spain aren't.

Administrative requirements leave out homeless foreign people

Only 27% of people from an EU country have the EU certificate, and 11% of people from outside the EU have a work and residence permit. The requirements needed in order to regulate the situation of migrants leaves out most homeless foreign people, and that excludes them from getting basic rights.

**Most people with a high vulnerability risk are registered citizens.** 34% of people with a high vulnerability aren't registered. The percentage rises up to 48% within people with a moderate vulnerability index and to 54% within people with a low one.

People living on the streets in Barcelona who aren't registered citizens, per vulnerability index (2021)





# From city to neighbourhoods

## Where do people on the streets in Barcelona live?



There isn't a direct correspondence between the **number of homeless people** in each district and the **resources** to help them available there

45  
anys

In the **Eixample** district there are more people who are older, with an **average of 45 years**



**More than half** of the people who live in the **Sant Martí** and **Sants-Montjuïc** districts are from outside the EU

80% of more than 1,000 rough sleepers in Barcelona live in the Ciutat Vella, Eixample, Sant Martí and Sants-Montjuïc districts. An analysis of the similarities and differences between these four areas, like the age or country of origin of the homeless people who live in each of them, has been conducted in order to take better action on a district level.

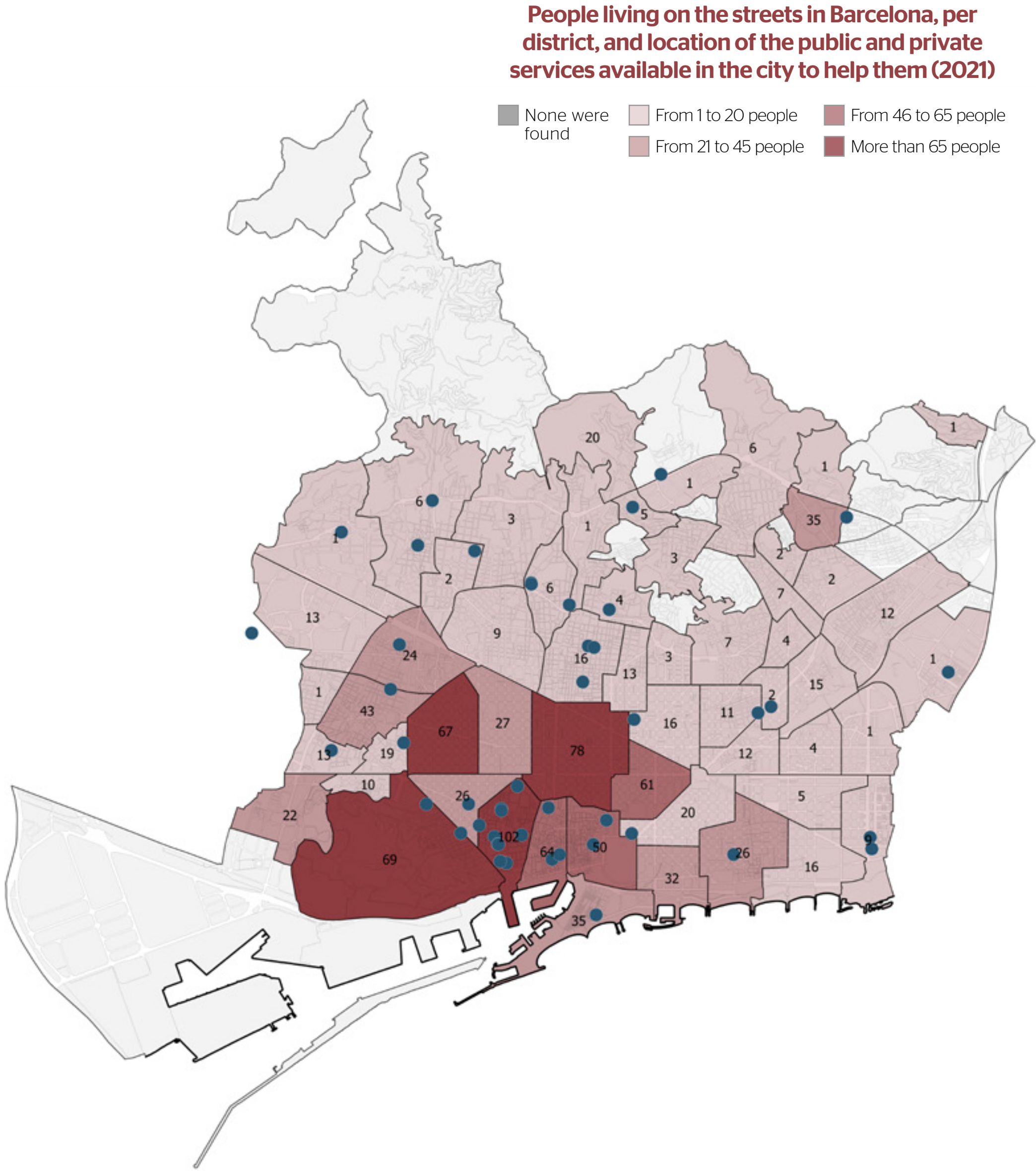




**Eixample and Ciutat Vella are the districts where there are the most homeless people** out of the 10 districts in Barcelona. **In Eixample there are 26% and in Ciutat Vella, 24%.** In third place there is the Sants-Monjuïc district (17%), and then the Sant Martí district (13%). For that reason, in this report these four areas are highlighted.

However, in the rest of the districts there also are homeless people: 5% in Nou Barris, 4% in Horta-Guinardó, 4% in Les Corts, 3% in Gràcia, 3% in Sant Andreu and 2% in Sarrià-Sant Gervasi.

**There isn't a direct correlation between the amount of homeless people in each district and the resources available in them.** For example, in the Eixample district, even though it's the district where we located the most people during the night of the census, there aren't almost any services in which homeless people can eat, shower or rest. In Sants-Montjuïc and Sant Martí there aren't many resources as well, while most of them are found in Ciutat Vella.





### Which are the neighbourhoods in Barcelona with the most rough sleepers?

Of the 1,064 people located during the night of the census (June 10th, 2021), 102 were in the Raval neighbourhood, in the Ciutat Vella district. It is the neighbourhood where there are the most homeless people. Then there's Dreta de l'Eixample (78 people, Eixample), Poble-sec (69 people, Sants-Montjuïc), La Nova Esquerra de l'Eixample (67 people, Eixample) and El Gòtic (64 people, Ciutat Vella).

### Which are the neighbourhoods in Barcelona with the least rough sleepers?

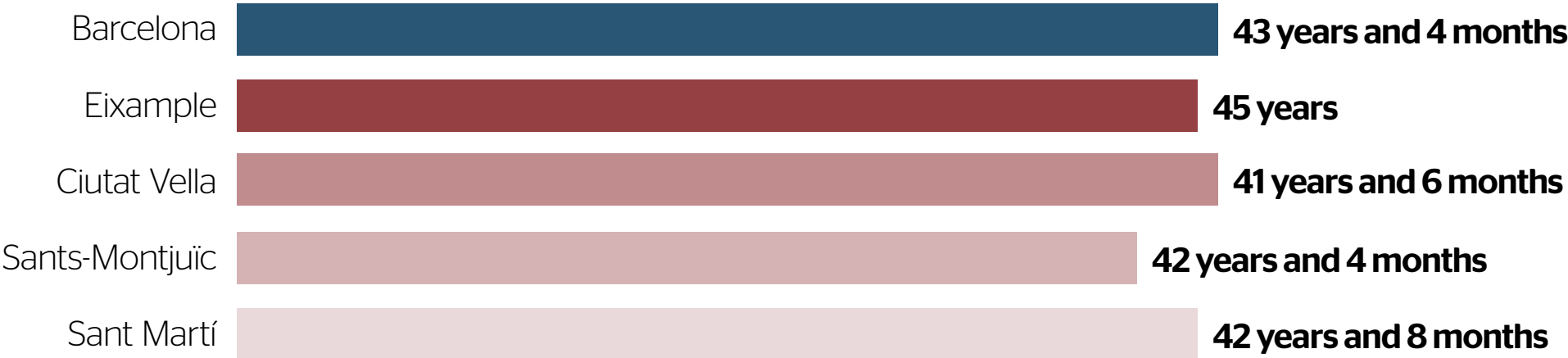
During the night of the census no people were located in the Can Baró neighbourhood, in the Horta-Guinardó district, and only one person was found in the Sants-Badal (Sants-Montjuïc), Pedralbes (Les Corts), Vallarica i els Penitents (Gràcia), La Vall d'Hebron (Horta-Guinardó), Canyelles (Nou Barris), Ciutat Meridiana (Nou Barris), Bon Pastor (Sant Adreu) and La Venarda i la Pau (Sant Martí).

## Eixample, the district with the oldest homeless people

Of the 1,064 people located the night of the census (10th of June 2021), 289 people answered our questions. According to the answers, **in Eixample there are more people that are older, with an average of 45 years**, compared to the other three districts, in which the average is between 41 and 42. The average age of people living on the streets in the city is 43 years old.

When comparing the results with the 2019 census, which followed the same methodology, it's noticeable that Eixample is still the district with the oldest homeless people. In 2019 the average of the district was 43, while in Sant Martí it was 38.

### Age on average of people living on the streets in Barcelona, in districts with the most people (2021)

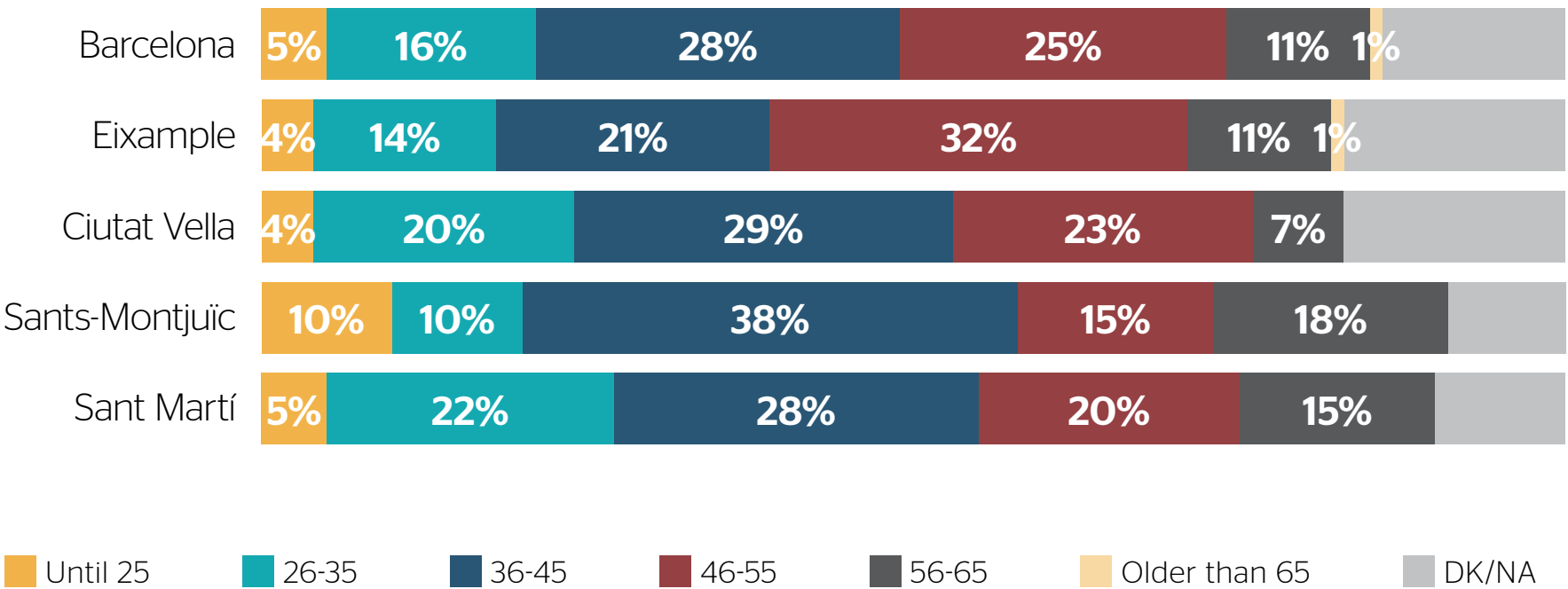


## In Ciutat Vella, Sant Martí and Sants-Montjuïc people are between 36 and 45 years old

**In Ciutat Vella, Sant Martí and Sants-Montjuïc the most numerous age group is people between 36 and 45.** In Eixample, the district with the oldest homeless people, about a third of the interviewees were between 46 and 55 years old, and it's also the place where there are the most people between 56 and 65.

Comparing the results with the 2019 census, the Eixample population remains the oldest, while in Sant Martí the number of younger people has risen, a third of the population being below 26 years old.

### People living on the street in Barcelona, per age group, in districts with the most people





# More people from outside the EU in Sant Martí and Sants-Montjuïc

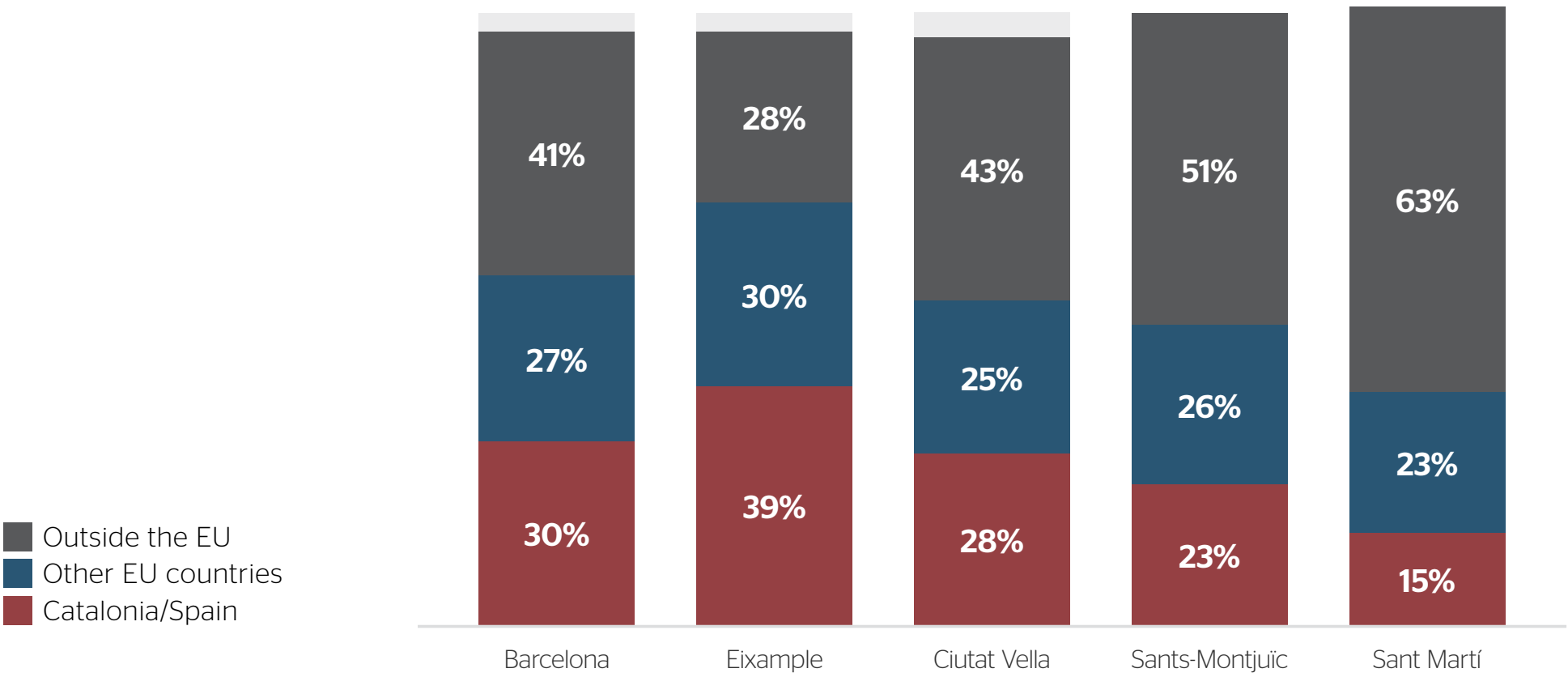
More than half of the homeless people living on the streets of Sant Martí and Sants-Montjuïc are from outside the EU, while in the previous census the percentages were 45% and 30% respectively.

In the Ciutat Vella district, 4 out of 10 people are also from outside the EU, which is a figure far above the 27% of the 2019 census, in which most people were from another EU country.

In Eixample, almost 4 out of 10 homeless people were born in Spain, and there's balance between people coming from another EU country and from outside the EU, with about a third forming each group. It's the district with the least differences in the number of homeless people per country of origin.

A reminder that in the whole city, 40% of rough sleepers come from outside the EU, 27% from another EU country and 30% were born in Spain.

People living on the streets in Barcelona, per country of origin, in districts with the most people (2021)

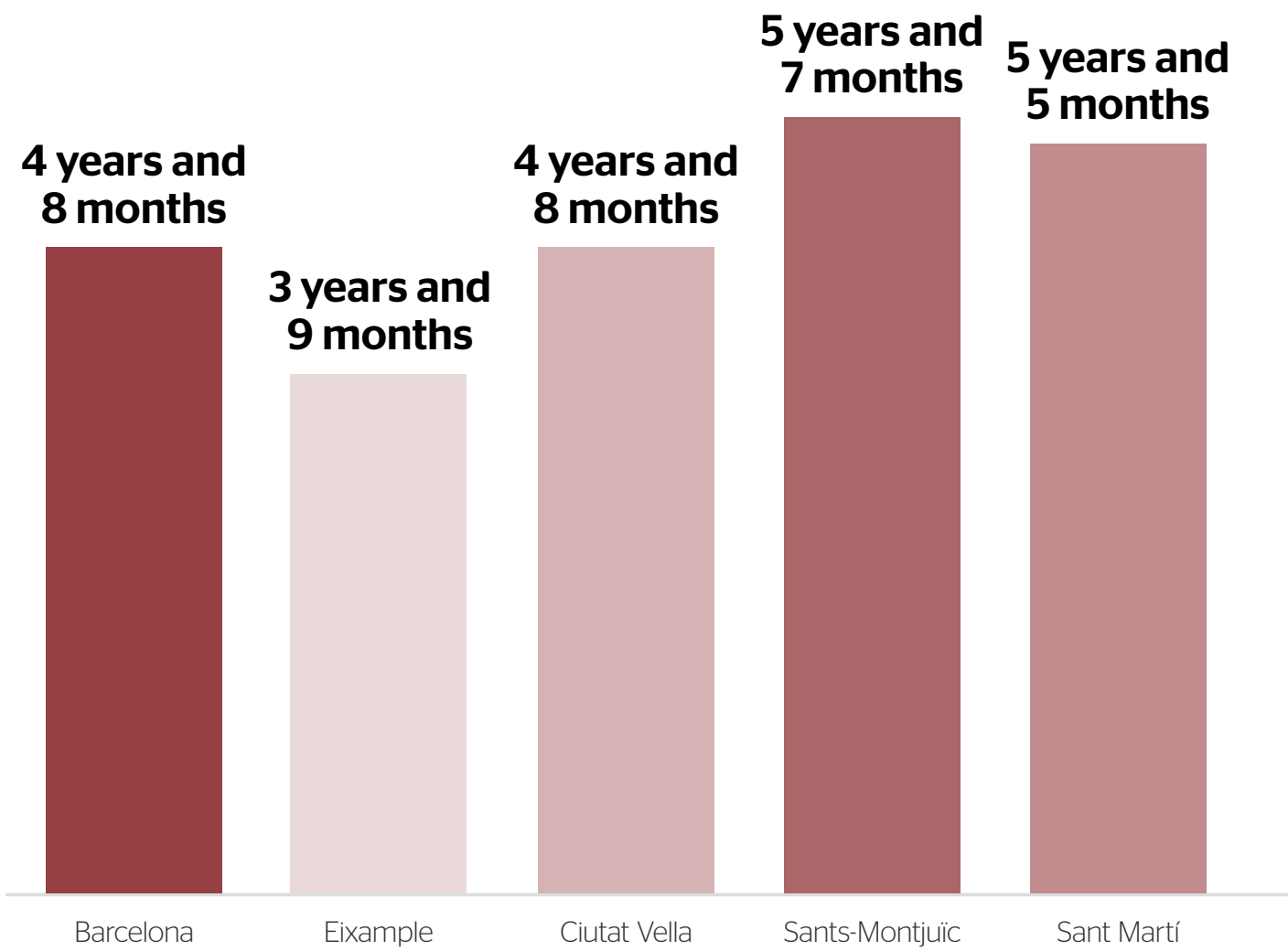


# The Sants-Montjuïc and Sant Martí districts have the longest average of time being homeless

People interviewed in the Sants-Montjuïc district have been homeless for more than 5 and a half years on average. That is the highest average of the four zones with the most people, followed closely by Sant Martí, and then by Sants-Montjuïc (4 and a half years) and Eixample (3 years and 9 months). The average of time spent living on the street in the whole city is 4 years and 8 months.

This year's result differs greatly from the previous census. In 2019, Sants-Montjuïc was the district with the highest average of time spent living on the street, which was almost 5 years, and in Ciutat Vella the average was below 3 and a half years.

Time spent living on the streets in Barcelona, in the districts where most people were located (2021)





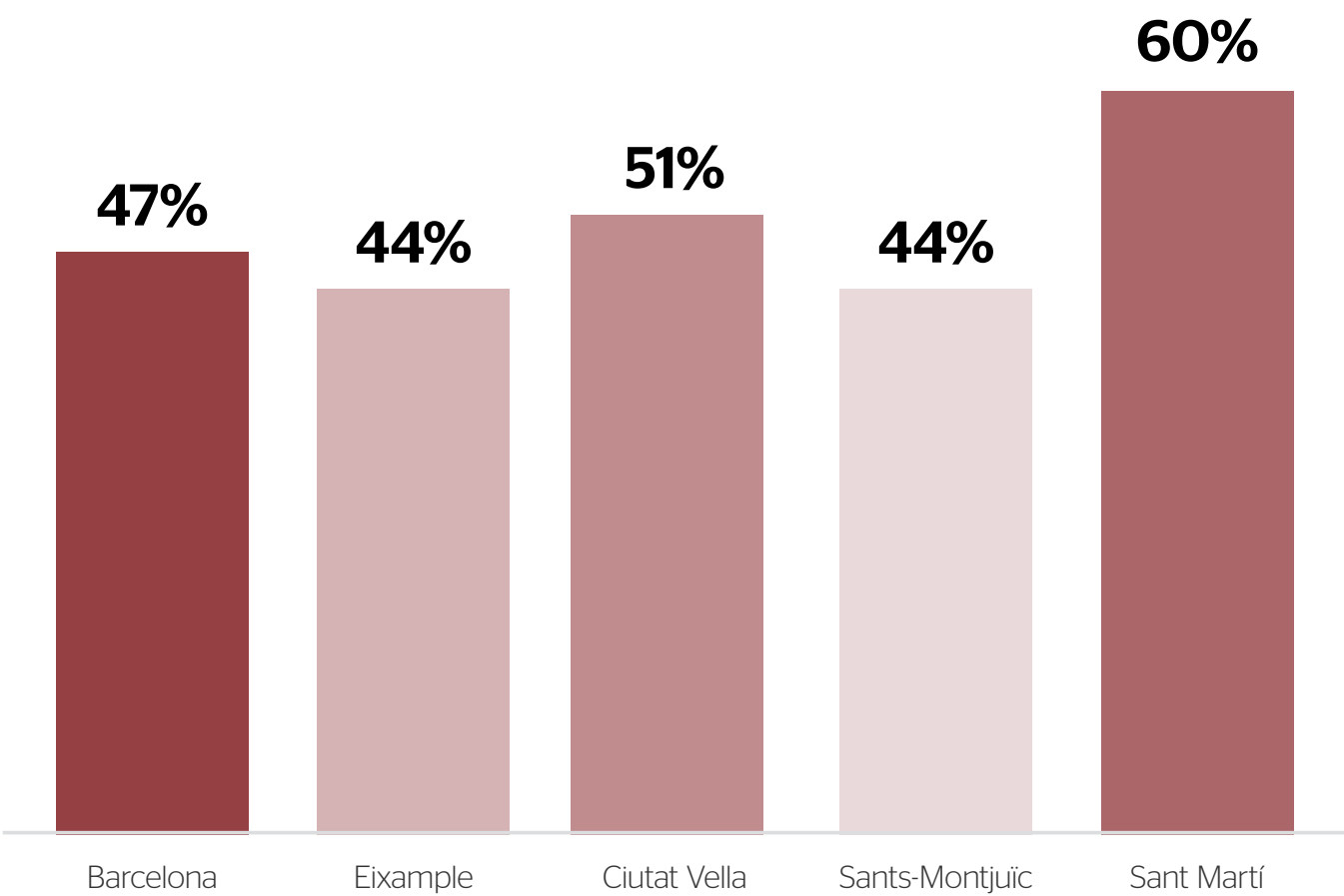
# 60% of people interviewed in Sant Martí have been homeless for more than 2 years

When a person has spent more than six months living on the street, their physical and mental health heavily deteriorate, and the danger of receiving violence and being subjected to scams and deception multiplies. When they have been living on the street for over 2 years, the situation becomes long-term and their vulnerability increases.

As previously stated, the number of people that have been homeless for more than 2 years has gone up. In 2021, they were 33% of the total interviewees, but in 2021 the percentage has risen to 47%.

Sant Martí is the district where there is the biggest percentage of people that have been homeless for more than 2 years, 60%. In Ciutat Vella, 51% of the interviewees are in this situation and in Eixample and Sants-Muntjuïc, 4 out of 10 people (44%).

People who have been homeless for more than 2 years, per districts (2021)

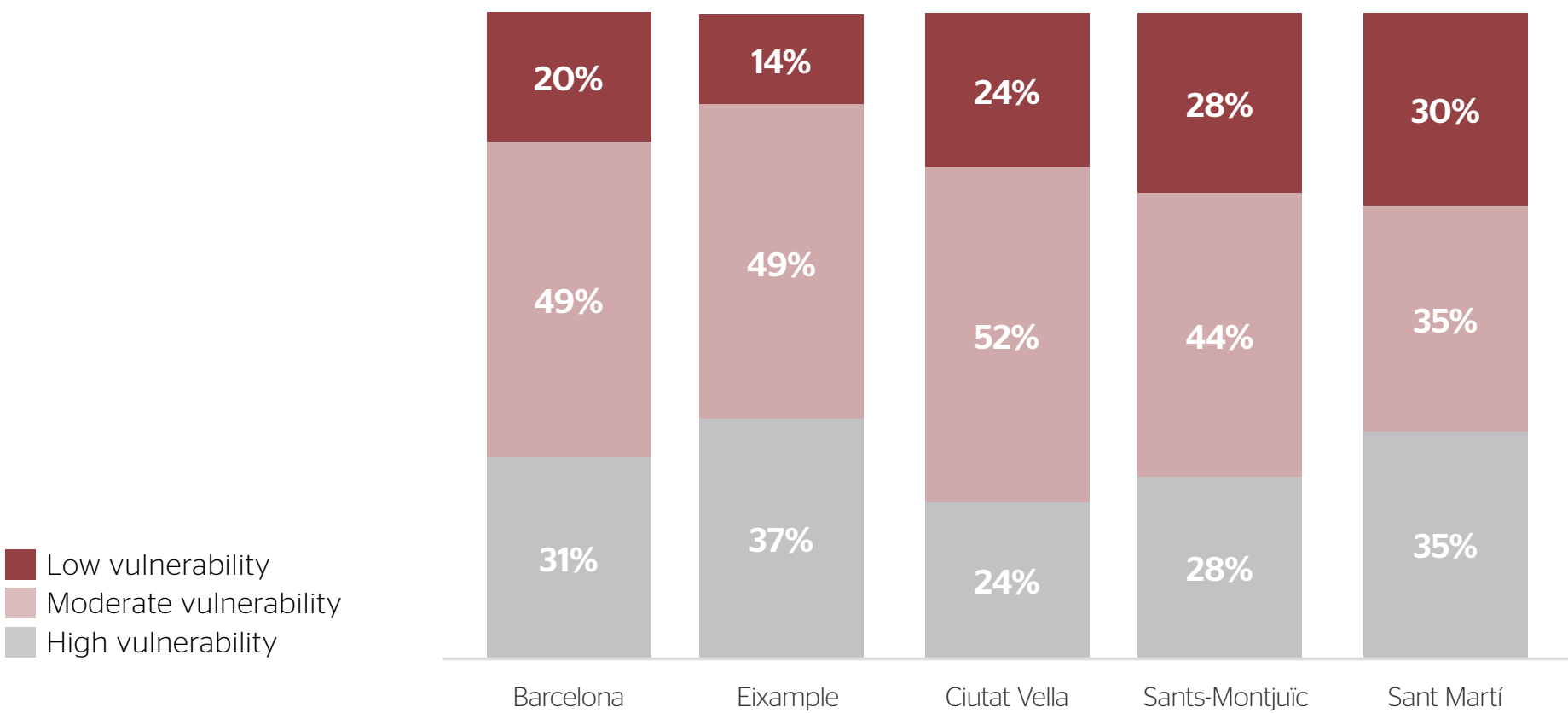


# Sant Martí and Sants-Montjuïc are the districts with the highest vulnerability index

As stated in chapter 3, when a person has been living on the street for more than 6 months, their vulnerability index skyrockets. When analysing the vulnerability index in the previously mentioned districts, it is shown that **in Sant Martí, there are 30% of homeless people with a high vulnerability index, which is 10 percentage points above average.** In Sants-Montjuïc there are 28% of people with a high vulnerability index, and in Ciutat Vella, 24%.

When adding up the high and moderate vulnerability indexes, these three districts are still the ones with the highest figures. Ciutat Vella has the biggest percentage (76%), which is also the district with the most public and private resources destined to homeless people, followed by Sant-Montjuïc (72%) and Sant Martí (65%).

People living on the streets in Barcelona, per vulnerability index, in the districts with the most people (2021)







## Proposals to make #nobodysleepingonthestreet happen

Homelessness is a complex issue with structural causes that must be addressed by all administrations together. Town halls, however, are an essential and basic piece to implement policies and destine resources to homeless care and prevention. There are at least 1,064 people living on the streets in Barcelona. It's the town in Catalonia with the biggest number of rough sleepers but also the one that offers more private and public options to them, even though they are insufficient. The answers given by homeless people can be a guide to create proposals to the city's government and political parties, which will also be useful to the rest of municipalities and regions of Catalonia.



## **IMMEDIATE ACTION**

# **TO EASE THE SITUATION**

### **1. Open small spaces in each town and municipality so that hundreds of people stop living on the street.**

The objective is to overcome the current model of overcrowded shelters with a waiting list, offer a safe place to spend the night and adapt to the needs of individuals (women and LGBTQ+ people, with pets, with addictions and / or mental health problems, etc). We propose small, nighttime accessible spaces, located throughout the territory. From Arrels, we have verified that it's a cheaper option that works.

### **2. Expand and strengthen street teams**

49% of the interviewees have received social care within the last 6 months, whether from social services or entities, and 44% haven't. People who have received less assistance are young people and people from countries outside the EU. We propose expanding the teams that visit people directly on the street to detect invisible cases, so that we can increase accompaniment and connect people with the services they need.

### **3. Open more daytime centres and care for their basic needs in every neighbourhood**

Homeless people spend a big part of their time fending for themselves to cover their basic needs —food, drinking water, showering or finding a place to rest. Often, they need to walk long distances from one resource to another. We meet more people every time who need general orientation about what resources exist, or who don't know where to ask for help and struggle with contacting social services. People must be assisted in every neighbourhood. There isn't a direct link between the existing resources and the distribution of homeless people. Some of the districts with the highest number of homeless people have very little resources —Eixample, Sant Martí or Sants-Montjuïc—, while most are based in Ciutat Vella.

### **4. Create medical teams that visit people on the street**

Living on the street worsens people's health and makes their lives shorter: 43% of the interviewees have a health condition and 26% have a chronic disease. 40% have had to rush to emergency health services within the last six months and 38% don't have a public health care card. Our proposal is creating medical teams with professionals that tend to people on the street, to help them regain their link to the health care system. Moreover, there are protocols needed in public hospitals so they don't discharge anyone without making sure they have a place to stay.

### **5. More coordination and training of the police forces**

The local police and the Mossos d'Esquadra should be better trained in the reality of the homeless and have information on all the existing resources in the municipalities to guide people. Common practices such as throwing away belongings or forcing the person to move from one place to another are a violation of rights. Greater coordination with social entities and services is necessary, since it is not a question of a police issue but of social care.

#### **An issue that goes beyond Barcelona**

It is necessary that from the local level all local members of the community who are homeless are looked after and that homelessness be considered as a situation to be dealt with urgently. The solution is not to refer people to nearby larger municipalities or provincial capitals because this disconnects them from their background and overloads other care systems. We urge municipalities to give an immediate response to people who start living on their streets.



# MEASURES TO END HOMELESSNESS

## 1. Prevention mechanisms to avoid anyone losing their home

There are at least 1,064 homeless people in Barcelona, and many others live in subleased flats or hostels, and suffer invisible evictions. The right to housing must be ensured over market laws so nobody loses their home. Until it is ensured, everyone should know where to go for help if they're about to lose their home and receive answers that avoid that from happening. Moreover, answers from the institutions should come faster.

## 2. Promote the right to housing as a starting point, beyond social services

Public housing in Barcelona does not exceed 2% and homeless people often find it difficult to access it. We ask for more facilities for homeless people to access public housing, as well as promoting public-private collaboration to expand the number of homes that follow the Housing First model. The look at access to housing must be transversal: a person cannot leave prison, receive a hospital discharge or leave the circuit of protection for children and youth to go to live on the streets.

## 3. Allow access to the Emergency Board

The regulations of the Emergency Board of Catalonia establish that all people who are in a situation of extraordinary vulnerability and imminent loss of housing, including people who live on the street, can access social rental housing. However, the Barcelona Social Emergency Board has its own regulations and therefore does not contemplate it. We propose modifying this so as not to leave out people who live in the open. Access to housing shouldn't be conditioned by lack of financial resources, the person's health and / or the consumption of narcotics.

## 4. Look beyond the thermometer

We propose to stop focusing efforts on the Fred Operation and winter and summer devices, change the perspective and go beyond temperature, focusing on providing stable housing and resources all over the city.

## 5. Simplify the procedures to obtain basic documentation

We propose simplifying the procedures so that homeless people can obtain basic documentation that allows them to access rights, like going to the doctor with the public health care card, looking for a job, or asking for social benefits. Every Catalan municipality must register every homeless person as a citizen.

## 6. A respectful coexistence ordinance

The current coexistence ordinance doesn't respect the rights of homeless people and criminalizes some of their actions. We propose improving it so the situation of homeless people isn't seen as a coexistence problem nor a reason for sanction.

**Read all our political proposals in detail!**

 <https://www.arrelsfundacio.org/en/our-proposal/>





**[www.arrelsfundacio.org](http://www.arrelsfundacio.org)**