



MPHASIS
Mutual Progress on Homelessness through
Advancing and Strengthening Information Systems

FINAL PROJECT CONFERENCE
NOVOTEL ATRIA CHARENTON PARIS
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WORKSHOPS
BRIEF FOR CHAIR AND RESPONDENT

Session 2
Client Recording Systems (Interpretation Fr/En/Sp)
Chair: Mark Clarjjs (Federatie Opvang, Netherlands)
Presenter of Recommendations: RIS, London – Matt Harrison
Reaction from: Carole Lardoux FNARS France

Focus:

The workshop will consider specifically

- 1. Establishing and Managing Client Record System*
- 2. Issues related to Data Extract / National Collation*

BACKGROUND

The Measuring Homelessness Report covered the development of client recording systems both at a service provider, regional and national level. The recommendations of that report were that such systems provided the best foundation for obtaining information about the numbers and profiles of homeless people.

The majority of homeless people are in contact with homelessness services, from emergency shelters, longer-term hostels and supported housing projects to non-residential services such as day centres, soup kitchens, outreach teams and advice services.

These services have an organizational need to collect data about their service users, in order to deliver more effective services to individuals (casework), to improve their services (learning) and to justify their funding from statutory services.

Experience in several countries shows that such systems can be used on a wider regional or national scale to collate data about the numbers and needs of homeless people. Examples of such systems have been found in many countries.

The Mphasis action research strand sought to investigate two methods of obtaining such data, either through establishing a client record system specifically designed for the purpose of collecting data from multiple services providers, or by examining one of the countries where national authorities specify standards for data extraction from diverse local systems.

For the development of a client record system, the Link software (developed by RIS) which has been used extensively in the UK and Ireland was adapted for use in two countries without such systems: Hungary and Sweden. There were technical and operational issues with these systems, but the pilot in Budapest indicated the potential for such a system to make a positive contribution.

For the data collection via collation of extracts from diverse systems, we commissioned research to look at the situation in France. This looked at the development and management of 3 different regional data collection systems and their wider implications.

KEY ISSUES / QUESTIONS

Client recording systems

1. Is the development of client recording systems progressing in all countries, or is there a clear need or benefit from the development of a common system that could be used in several countries?
2. Most new systems are online rather than based on local computers or client-server networks. What issues does this raise?
3. Is there a need for central strategic control and funding of such systems?

Operational and management issues

4. Can service providers collect data to the standards required for statistical purposes?
5. Is there a conflict between collecting data as part of service delivery and collecting data for regional/national/EU-wide statistics?
6. How do we deal with problems of incomplete data due to the proliferation of different systems with different levels of service coverage?

Data Protection

7. Does Data Protection legislation and culture present an insurmountable barrier to such systems? Would the processes put in place to secure data stand up to close scrutiny?

Matt Harrison
RIS (Homeless Link)