Housing First: A Case Study
Delivering the Right to Housing for Homeless People

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Overview

- Challenge: Chronic Homelessness
- Measure: Housing First
- Mapping
- Results
- Conclusions
- Resources
Challenge

• Chronic homelessness
  – Repeated or sustained homelessness associated with support needs (mental & physical health; addiction).
  – Extremely vulnerable people whose right to housing routinely denied
    • Traditional services (shelters & temporary accommodation) not very effective in ending homelessness
    • Poor health outcomes
    • Sustained & extreme social exclusion
    • Living conditions that violate basic human rights
  – Only Finland has effectively ended chronic homelessness, so challenge for all States
Housing First

• Housing First in a Nutshell
  – Evidence-based practice to end chronic homelessness
  – Starting point: right to housing
  – 2-part package
    • Rapid/immediate access to permanent housing
    • On-going, flexible, multidisciplinary support to the person

Source: At Home, Canada
First, Finland

Source: Housing First, Finland
Mapping

– HF adopted at scale
  • Basis of national policy: Finland, USA, Denmark
  • Experimentation followed by scale-up: Canada & France RCT

– HF introduced
  • Experimentation in view of scale up: Belgium, Spain, Czech Republic
  • Local implementation &/or mobilisation of stakeholders: Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Austria, Germany, UK, Netherlands...
Results

• HF ends chronic homelessness
  – Consistently high levels of housing retention
    • Canada: HF service users spent 73% of their time stably housed over two years, compared to 32% of those using conventional services (At Home/Chez Soi)
    • France: 85% HF service users still housed at 24 months

• HF works in a range of housing & welfare contexts
Results

• Positive social & health impacts
  – HF supports stabilisation & recovery
    • Canada: 68% HF participants “positive life course” compared to 28% in control group
    • France: HF participants reduced by 50% time spent in hospital over 24 months; all had improved access to rights, welfare & primary health services; all had renewed relations with family and friends; 20% in employment or training
  – No evidence that outcomes any worse than traditional services, despite fears
  – HF ends homelessness, doesn’t necessarily make people “healthy, wealthy & wise” (Sam Tsemberis)

• Cost effective
  – Finland: Estimated public savings of approx. €15,000 a year per homeless person housed
  – Canada: $10 invested in HF resulted in average savings of $9.60 for high needs and $3.42 for moderate needs participants
Conclusions

• HF is a rights-based intervention that ends chronic homelessness
• Permanent housing, complemented by the provision of services allows homeless people to
  – access & sustain housing
  – work towards recovery & inclusion
• HF should be a core element of strategies for the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing for all
• In the context of the 2030 Agenda & New Urban Agenda, States have committed to progressive reduction of homelessness. HF is a concrete step towards this goal
• The question is no longer whether HF works but whether & how it can be scaled up
• FEANTSA & the Housing First Europe Hub committed to supporting the scale-up of Housing First
Resources

– Housing First Europe Hub
  • Y Foundation & FEANTSA
  • [www.housingfirsteurope.eu](http://www.housingfirsteurope.eu)

– Housing First Europe Guide (EN, ES, SE, CZ, HU, DE, FR)

– A Home of Your Own
  • ysaatio.fi/the-book