Ending Homelessness:

A Handbook for Policy Makers

Ending Homelessness

Contents

Introduction

Aims of the handbook

This handbook is aimed at policy makers and others seeking to tackle homelessness in Europe. It sets out the need for ambitious strategies which aim to end homelessness. It details the priorities and essential components that such strategies should contain. More specifically, it presents a set of five goals that strategies to end homelessness must work towards achieving, and gives examples of approaches that have been used to make progress towards them:

1. No one sleeping rough
2. No one living in emergency accommodation for longer than is an 'emergency'
3. No one living in transitional accommodation longer than is required for successful move-on
4. No one leaving an institution without housing options
5. No young people becoming homeless as a result of the transition to independent living

Part one of the handbook sets out the context - demonstrating the shift in approach from managing to ending homelessness and outlining the EU context before explaining the five goals.

Part two demonstrates how progress can be made in addressing each of these goals within a strategic framework. It should be noted that the goals are closely related, and that in many instances practices described under the different goals may overlap. The examples outlined are not 'one size fits all' solutions to ending homelessness, but aim to illustrate that real progress can be made under ambitious, strategic approaches.

Part three highlights five different experiences from key actors who have been involved in developing national strategic approaches to homelessness.

Part four presents FEANTSA's toolkit for developing an integrated strategy to tackle homelessness. This toolkit sets out the 10 approaches that FEANTSA believes the most effective homelessness policies should include.

From managing to ending homelessness in Europe

Faced with the extreme poverty and social exclusion of people experiencing homelessness, a broad range of actors throughout Europe have developed responses to it. Often, such responses have been reactive and somewhat ad-hoc. They have sought to manage the problem rather than to resolve or end it. Thus, constellations of services have developed to cater for the immediate needs of homeless people - hostels to provide beds on a night-by-night basis, mechanisms for distributing food, healthcare in emergency departments. Such services do extremely valuable work and many go far beyond catering for the most basic needs of food and shelter to offer a broader range of support. These responses to the immediate problem of homelessness are undoubtedly effective in treating its severest symptoms and have an important role to play as short-term solutions. However, several decades after homelessness emerged as a large-scale problem in the EU, it is time to stop managing the problem and to strive to end homelessness.

Homelessness is a denial of fundamental human rights. Managing homelessness is also very costly to society. Both homelessness services and other services such as health services incur high costs coping with homelessness. In some cases, responses to homelessness have in fact become part of the problem. For example, hostels that were originally designed as temporary accommodation have become places where people stay long-term, serving to entrench homelessness. Hostels can fill up with longer-term service users and cease to fulfil their original function as temporary accommodation, meaning that more such accommodation has to be provided. Furthermore, there are often large gaps in service provision due to a lack of overall strategy. For example, there are people sleeping rough in Europe because existing emergency accommodation does not cater for their specific needs. While there will always be a need for emergency responses to homelessness, there is a clear urgency to move towards more strategic policies with a long-term view to ending homelessness. Continuing to manage the problem is neither sustainable nor acceptable in today's Europe. A growing number of policy-makers recognize this and are developing a long-term view and devising strategic approaches that move beyond reactive management of homelessness towards ending it. This means developing integrated, comprehensive, sustainable strategies that set targets based on the reality of homelessness and have as their ultimate goal its progressive elimination. FEANTSA has created a Toolkit[1] for developing an integrated homelessness strategy, which is included in part four of this handbook.

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1   http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/pg.asp?Page=1105

Ending homelessness is undoubtedly an ambitious and challenging task, yet many countries in Europe have already taken significant steps towards achieving it. This handbook draws on examples of approaches from across Europe that are rising to the challenge of ending homelessness. It aims to demonstrate how concrete progress can be made. In particular, it highlights the successes that can be achieved when countries put resources into developing integrated, co-ordinated strategies to tackle homelessness. A number of countries, including Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Finland, Portugal, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, France and Hungary have developed such strategies. These political and statutory commitments to tackling homelessness identify it as a specific policy area and set forward concrete steps to combat it. Such strategies are essential in order to end homelessness. Existing homelessness strategies are available to download from the FEANTSA 'strategies to combat homelessness' webpage.[2]

Examples of existing national homelessness strategies in Europe

Denmark
Denmark has had ambitious homelessness strategies in place since the 1990s, backed up by considerable budgets. For the period 2009-2012, 500 million Danish Kroner (approximately 67 million Euros) has been allocated to the strategy, which takes the 'Housing First' approach as a starting point. The key goals of the current strategy focus on tackling rough sleeping, finding alternatives to homeless hostels for young people, limiting stays in temporary accommodation and securing accommodation solutions for people leaving hospital or healthcare facilities.

Finland
Finland has implemented homeless strategies since 1987 and has achieved well-documented progress. The current strategy aims to halve the number of long-term homeless people by 2011 and eliminate long-term homelessness by 2015. A total of 100 million Euros has been allocated per year to the plan 2009-2011. A pioneer in 'Housing First' approaches, Finland has set the ambitious target of doing away with shelter accommodation completely, and replacing it with long-term housing solutions.

France
Housing and homelessness have been recognised as national priorities in France for the period 2008 – 2012. In November 2009, France put into place a comprehensive homelessness strategy. The main goals of this strategy are to reduce significantly the number of people on the street and to implement a more people-centred, individualised and rights-based public service for people experiencing homelessness and housing exclusion. A key element of the approach is the implementation of the enforceability of the right to housing, which acquired a legal basis in France in 2007. The strategy is underpinned by a 'Housing First' approach.

Ireland
Ireland has established an ambitious strategy for the period 2008 – 2013 called 'The Way Home'. This builds on progress made under a series of previous strategies. The strategy identifies six aims – the prevention of homelessness, the elimination of the need to sleep rough, the elimination of long-term homelessness, meeting long-term housing needs, ensuring effective services for homeless people and better co-ordinating funding arrangements.

Netherlands
The current national homelessness strategy in the Netherlands is focused on the well-identified homeless population of the four main cities. The first objective is to improve the situation of the initial target group identified as homeless. The second phase aims to prevent homelessness amongst a broader group of people identified as vulnerable and to provide suitable support interventions for these people. The aim is effectively to end homelessness by 2013. It is a well-funded strategy in which individualised and joined-up provision is a central element. Although the initial focus is on the four largest cities, other cities are also involved in the national approach.

Portugal
Portugal's 'National Strategy for the Integration of Homeless People – Prevention, Intervention and Follow-up' was announced in March 2009. It covers the period 2009-2015 and is the country's first national strategy on homelessness. Portugal is the first Southern European country to develop a homelessness strategy.

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2   http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/pg.asp?Page=1169

Sweden
Sweden has a twenty-year history of developing innovative national approaches to homelessness. The national strategy for the period 2007-2009 focuses on reducing evictions (and eliminating the eviction of children), facilitating entry into the mainstream housing market for people in housing ladders, training flats or other forms of accommodation provided by social services or other providers and decreasing the number of people discharged from prison, care, supported accommodation and treatment units without accommodation options. According to the strategy, everyone should be guaranteed a roof over their head and be offered further co-ordinated action based on their individual needs.

UK
Separate homelessness strategies exist in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland :

England
England has achieved significant reductions in homelessness, beginning with rough sleeping in the 1990s. In 1998, the government set out to reduce rough sleeping by two thirds. This was achieved and has been followed up with the current rough sleeping strategy (in place since 2008) which aims to eliminate rough sleeping by 2012. The implementation of the strategy is funded through a €230m homelessness grant for local authorities and voluntary organisations over three years. England also aims to halve the number of households living in temporary accommodation by 2010. The overall homelessness strategy focuses on preventing homelessness, 'providing support for vulnerable people', tackling the wider causes and symptoms of homelessness, helping more people move away from rough sleeping and providing more settled homes.

Scotland
Scotland's pioneering housing acts of 2001 and 2003 open up access to housing for homeless people. By 2012, all unintentionally homeless households will have a legal right to settled accommodation. A joint Scottish Government and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities working group, which has high-level political input, is taking this work forward. It first met in October 2009 and has a programme to look at developing a corporate approach to homelessness, prevention, access to housing (housing associations and the private rented sector) and investing in areas to meet the 2012 target.

Wales
In 2009, Wales introduced a ten-year homelessness plan, which identified six strategic aims. These aims are : preventing homelessness wherever possible; working across organisational and policy boundaries; placing the service user at the centre of service delivery; ensuring social inclusion and equality of access to services and making the best use of resources.

Northern Ireland
Northern Ireland's first homelessness strategy was published in 2002. The strategy's three-strand approach is geared towards preventing homelessness, helping people to escape homelessness and supporting people when they get a home.

Norway
The Norwegian strategy to combat homelessness was launched as a national strategy in 2004 under the title 'The Pathway to a Permanent Home'. The strategy set the following targets for the end of 2007: the number of eviction petitions shall be reduced by 50% and the number of evictions by 30%; no one shall have to spend time in temporary housing upon release from prison and no one shall have to seek temporary housing upon discharge from an institution. In addition, no one shall be offered overnight shelters without a quality agreement and no one will stay longer than three months in temporary housing. From 2009, Norway has been giving special attention to combating youth homelessness.

Hungary
Hungary's Ministry of Social Affairs established a national strategy in 2008. Hungary is the first central Eastern European country to have developed a national strategy. However, the strategy has not been finalised or implemented and its future looks somewhat uncertain in the current political context.

The EU Context

Through its work on social inclusion, the EU is an important arena in which cross-national exchange on homelessness strategies can take place, good practice can be shared, and progress can be monitored. The EU can act as an important source of political momentum to end homelessness. Ending homelessness is now firmly established on the EU agenda as a political priority. In 2009, the Joint Report of the European Commission and Council on Social Protection and Social Inclusion stated that 'sustained work is required to tackle homelessness as an extremely serious form of exclusion.' The 2010 Joint Report calls on member states to develop integrated policies to tackle homelessness.

In 2008, the European Parliament adopted a Written Declaration on Ending Street Homelessness.[3] The Declaration calls on the Council to agree on an EU-wide commitment to end street homelessness by 2015, calls on the Commission to provide annual updates on action taken and progress made in EU Member States towards ending homelessness and urges Member States to devise "winter emergency plans" as part of a wider homelessness strategy.

Five goals to end homelessness

FEANTSA considers the following goals essential elements of strategies to end homelessness:

- No one sleeping rough
- No one living in emergency accommodation for longer than is an 'emergency'
- No one living in transitional accommodation longer than is required for successful move-on
- No one leaving an institution without housing options
- No young people becoming homeless as a result of the transition to independent living

These goals relate to the aspects of homelessness which are best addressed by specific homelessness policies, rather than under other policy areas (such as housing, health or employment). They also relate to visible, reachable and quantifiable target populations; making them realistic and achievable, and facilitating the elaboration of evidence-based strategies. They are logical priorities in that they represent people who are either already using, or are could easily be reached by targeted homeless services and for whom specific interventions can be relatively easily developed. Furthermore, they represent groups that in many countries account for an overwhelming proportion of people understood to be homeless.

While these goals serve to focus homelessness strategies on pragmatic objectives, homelessness policies should also be framed by a broad, conceptual understanding of homelessness. In the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS),[4] FEANTSA has set out such a broad, integrated definition of homelessness and housing exclusion that includes people who are roofless, houseless and people who live in insecure and inadequate housing situations. The goals outlined here are what FEANTSA considers to be the essential elements of strategies to end homelessness. To be effective, such strategies must be adapted and extended to fit the realities of national and local contexts and backed up by systematic prevention through general housing, employment, health, education and other policies.

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3   http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/pg.asp?Page=963

4   http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/pg.asp?Page=484

Reaching the five goals: examples of effective approaches

Goal 1 : No one sleeping rough

Nobody should be forced to sleep on the streets because of lack of high-quality services adapted to his/her needs and aspirations. In today's Europe, it is unacceptable that people should have to jeopardise their safety, health and dignity by sleeping on the street. Many European countries are tackling rough sleeping in a concerted, ambitious way; some commitments have already achieved impressive progress, others have set ambitious targets for the future. All involve providing high quality, needs-adapted services that offer an alternative to rough sleeping.

Ambitious goals

A number of countries have set ambitious targets for eliminating rough sleeping, and achieved impressive and encouraging results. England provides one useful example. In 1998, the government set out to reduce rough sleeping by two thirds. This was achieved and has been followed up with the current rough sleeping strategy 'No-One Left Out'[5] (in place since 2008) which aims to eliminate rough sleeping by 2012. The focus is on ensuring that housing and other support services are available to remove the need for rough sleeping. The implementation of the strategy is funded through a €230m homelessness grant for local authorities and voluntary organisations over three years. A methodology for assessing levels of rough sleeping was established based on a one-night 'snapshot' count of people found 'bedded down'. This methodology has been used to track progress over time against the total of 1,850 found on counts in 1998. The National Rough Sleeping Estimate for 2009 showed a 75 per cent reduction in rough sleeping in England since 1998.

Adequate alternatives

Ending rough sleeping clearly calls for the provision of adequate alternatives for people facing homelessness. These alternatives include emergency accommodation and long-term housing options. Strategies or co-ordinated approaches to ending rough sleeping provide a framework and mechanisms for the provision of these services – identifying goals, responsibilities and resources. For example, Scotland and France have both introduced legislation on the right to housing. Under the Act of March 5, 2007, the enforceability of the right to housing acquired a legal basis in France. The law, known as the 'DALO' seeks to guarantee the right to housing to any person residing in a stable and regular fashion in France. The law recognises that people in emergency accommodation have the right to remain there until they are offered a place in permanent housing or other per-

manent accommodation appropriate to their situation. Under the law, emergency shelters can no longer put service users on the street in the morning without guaranteeing that they have a bed for the following night. Furthermore, everyone presenting at an emergency accommodation centre should be offered a long-term, adapted solution to their housing needs. Scotland's legislation means the local authority has the legal duty to ensure that homeless people are housed. By 2012, every unintentionally homeless person will have the right to settled accommodation. Those found to be 'intentionally' homeless will be entitled to temporary accommodation with a short, secure tenancy and support. After 12 months, the tenancy will be converted into a regular, permanent leasehold.

In contrast to ad-hoc approaches, strategic approaches involve all actors concerned in devising more coherent and integrated alternatives to rough sleeping. In Ireland, for example, a local homeless forum was established in each local authority area to produce a homelessness action plan. Each local action plan must contain measures to tackle and prevent rough sleeping where this is an issue and ensure an adequate supply of emergency accommodation and other interventions. Through work under the national approach, a need was identified for dedicated outreach services and homeless person centres in a number of local authority areas and funding was provided for this purpose. Emergency accommodation provision was stimulated in most urban areas and rough sleeping was significantly reduced. In 2008, a total of 110 adults reported that they were sleeping rough in Dublin compared with 185 for 2005. This represents a decrease of 41%.[6]

Adequate resources are clearly an important strand in effective approaches to tackling rough sleeping. In Ireland, the strategic approach was matched by significant increases in funding for homeless service provision. In 2007, just over €90m was spent on homeless services (€52.9m from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, €5.3m from Local Authorities and €32.6m from the Department of Health and Children / Health Service Executive). Between 2000 and 2007, €540 million of statutory funding was expended on homeless services, an average of over €67 million per annum, in comparison with just over €12 million in 1995. The number and range of services increased dramatically as a result. In the mid-1980s, just over fifty homeless projects existed nationally, the bulk in the form of temporary emergency accommodation, and staffed primarily by volunteers. By contrast, in 2004, 140 homeless projects were identified, operated by fifty-seven organisations with a staff of

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5   http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/roughsleepingstrategy

6   Homeless Agency (2008): *Counted In: A Report on the Extent of Homelessness in Dublin*
    http://www.homelessagency.ie/getdoc/10ba727c-4a3f-4450-9478-15c083b899de/Counted-In,-2008.aspx

800. Only a quarter was emergency-based, with nearly 50% transitional or permanent supported housing projects – meaning more scope for transition and fewer blockages in emergency accommodation.[7]

Needs-adapted services

A major cause of rough sleeping is the fact that much emergency or transitional accommodation is not adapted to the specific needs of certain groups that experience homelessness, in particular those with multiple and complex needs. Many approaches that have been successful in reducing rough sleeping have ensured that services designed for homeless people do not exclude those most in need of them. Ireland, for example, has been successful in reducing the incidence of rough sleeping through the development of temporary accommodation targeting the specific needs of couples, street drinkers and drug users who were previously excluded from shelter. Some rough sleepers may be excluded from services because of behaviour. Ireland's strategy provides guidance for local authorities on establishing whether rough sleepers are known to hostels or have been excluded from them, putting the responsibility on the local authority and the services to find a solution for these people.

Adapted provision has been developed for older people, people with mental and physical health problems, people with disabilities, people with pets and other groups. In Scotland, Glasgow's Hostel Reprovisioning Programme is a powerful example of the difference such needs-adapted provision can make. The city's three all-male homeless hostels where individuals had been placed with little or no support were closed and replaced by a range of new, smaller facilities designed to address individuals' specific needs. The result is a wide range of emergency and supported accommodation projects, able to cater for the needs of people living with addictions, mental health issues, learning disabilities, old age and alcohol-related brain damage. 620 beds are now provided in small scale units while 4100 households are supported by 24 floating support staff. In addition, the number of temporary flats in the city has trebled from 600 to 1,800. The programme had a specific budget of around £26 million (€29 million).

Undocumented migrants or people with irregular status can end up sleeping rough because they have difficulty accessing emergency accommodation due to their situation. The French national strategy re-enforces a humanitarian approach of unconditional shelter, stating that anybody should be able to access emergency shelter, and remain there until a more permanent solution can be found. Unconditional access shelters offer provision to people without the need to disclose personal details and information.

Joint working with drug and mental health services is a key aim of successful approaches to tackling rough sleeping, particularly for those with complex and multiple needs. Strategic approaches facilitate this type of joint working and the establishment of cross-cutting services. In some areas of England, such as Bristol, promising approaches have been developed such as joint outreach between outreach workers and drugs workers, nurses and mental health workers, and the piloting of 'wet' drop-in sessions. These are staffed by several agencies who engage with clients who may be excluded from other drop-ins and services due to consistent alcohol use.

Tailored case-management approaches to service provision, which are built around individual service users, can be extremely effective in tackling rough sleeping. For example, individual treatment using tailored, phased programmes and personal client managers that offer a joined-up approach covering accommodation, work and training, health, mental health and addiction needs form the basis of the current approach in the Netherlands. The focus is on seamless co-operation between actors to address the personal needs of the services user in a holistic fashion. In the four big cities and in other Dutch cities, the objectives and methods were presented in a so-called 'City Compass'. The Compass aims at an individualised assistance approach, for which interagency agreements are made to meet individual needs. The first phase of the strategy has been aimed at the 10,150 rough sleepers in the four main cities in the Netherlands and the second phase will include all 21,800 people who are registered as tenants with social relief institutions. Such holistic and service-user centred approaches make it more difficult for homeless people, including those with multiple and complex needs, to slip through the net.

Quality emergency accommodation

The basic quality of existing accommodation provision can be an obstacle that perpetuates rough sleeping. Lack of privacy, safety and security issues, poor levels of cleanliness and sanitation can prevent people using services. Successful approaches to ending homelessness recognise this and facilitate the development of good quality, needs-adapted services. One example of an innovative approach to addressing the issue of quality of night shelters is the use of quality agreements in service contracts, as in Norway. The national strategy includes the target that no one should be offered temporary accommodation without a quality agreement having been signed between the service provider and the municipality. Government has provided guidelines to local authorities on using such agreements to ensure adequate quality in the temporary accommodation provisions they use. The main elements of the quality agreement are to secure basic standards with respect to room equipment, cleaning, minimum staff levels and privacy and safety for the service user. Single

7   O'Sullivan, E (2008) 'Sustainable Solutions to Homelessness: the Irish Case' *European Journal of Homelessness,* Volume 2, pp. 205 – 235
     http://eohw.horus.be/code/EN/pg.asp?Page=1122

8   http://www.cih.org/training/placesofchange/

room provision has been introduced as standard. Staff skills are another important element of quality services. In England, the aspect of staff skills in homeless hostels has been addressed through the programme 'Leading Places of Change'.[8] This is a leadership programme for the homelessness sector. In June 2008, the first 120 graduates celebrated their success in gaining a new postgraduate-level qualification focused on running effective homelessness services.

The quality of services can be addressed through the participation of service users and the integration of the service-user perspective. This is increasingly recognised by strategic approaches to tackling homelessness. One example is the London-based homeless service provider, St Mungo's,[9] which has developed a service-user group called *Outside In*[10] which meets with directors and board members every six weeks to represent clients – putting forward their concerns and ideas and helping to set the agenda for future developments.

Ways into and out of homelessness services

Entry points where the need for assistance can be determined are extremely important for tackling rough sleeping. Drop-in and easy access services can provide a point of entry to homelessness services for people sleeping rough. Stockholm local authority has set up a homeless service centre that is open after working hours every day. The centre ensures that social services provide individual support to get people from a situation of rough sleeping into more permanent solutions. Approximately €200,000 has been allocated to this project (excluding office costs). Any person in need of a place to sleep can contact the centre to have their need for assistance determined, and in cases where a need is demonstrated, be assigned a place to sleep at one of the city's emergency shelters. The centre has replaced the unregulated system of direct intake, which did not facilitate follow up. The Homeless Services Centre is a part of the city's social service programme and is located at one of the city's shelters. The work at the centre is directed by a project leader and it is staffed by social workers.

Effective outreach services can provide an important first point of contact with services and facilitate moving on from rough sleeping. France's national strategy 2009 – 2012 places emphasis on the need for integrated area-based services for the reception and orientation of people facing homelessness in each department. This includes mobile teams, the emergency accommodation phone line, day centres and other services including accommodation. The aim is to co-ordinate better the supply and demand of services and accommodation and to ensure that people receive a needs-adapted follow-up that is as continuous

and effective as possible. The Secretary of State for Housing and Urban Development has earmarked a budget of 6 million Euros to fund this re-organisation towards a more strategic approach.

The provision of move-on accommodation with adequate support, as well as affordable housing, is central to ensuring that no one need sleep rough. Even when there is an adequate supply of emergency accommodation, it may become inaccessible to people in crisis if people stay there too long. The longer people spend sleeping rough, the more difficult it becomes for them to resettle. Thus, long-term solutions adapted to their needs should be available to people coming off the streets. For rough sleepers with light support needs, this may mean independent housing, while for those with higher support needs it may mean a more holistic approach with more support. This area is covered in more detail under goals 2 and 3, 'No one living in emergency accommodation for longer than is an 'emergency'' and 'No one living in transitional accommodation longer than is required for successful move-on'.

Targeted Prevention

General preventative measures are those taken to reduce the risk of homelessness and rough sleeping among the general population or large parts of the population e.g. through overall housing policy and welfare systems. Targeted prevention is focused on people at high potential risk of rough sleeping, such as those in crisis situations like eviction or relationship breakdown, those leaving institutions and those who have experienced rough sleeping and need support to avoid repeat episodes. Targeted prevention can be extremely effective in reducing rough sleeping, and is a key part of strategic approaches to tackling it.

In England, The Homelessness Act (2002) placed a statutory duty on local authorities to produce a strategy for preventing and alleviating homelessness in their areas, and substantial central government funding was provided to support local preventative activities. These preventative activities include delivering housing advice and providing rent deposit schemes to help households access rented tenancies. They also encompass family mediation and support for domestic violence victims. In addition, tenancy sustainment supports vulnerable tenants to retain their tenancies. Much of this support is financed through 'Supporting People',[11] a funding stream that provides housing-related support to more than a million vulnerable people each year, including tens of thousands of people at risk of homelessness or who have slept rough. These services are often provided on a 'floating' basis to people living in mainstream accommodation. Typically, help is provided with claiming benefits, budgeting, furnishing accommodation, accessing health and other services in addition to seeking 'purposeful activity'.

9   http://www.mungos.org/

10   http://www.mungos.org/about/clients/outside_in/

11   http://www.spkweb.org.uk/

Another part of the strategic approach in England is a Prevention Mapping Toolkit called PrOMPT[12] which has been developed to help local areas clearly identify routes into rough sleeping and better plan and commission services to prevent it. The mapping tool involves people who have direct experience of sleeping rough as experts in identifying pathways into rough sleeping and the points in the journey where more effective interventions would have helped.

Early intervention when households are at risk of eviction is a key part of many strategic approaches to tackling rough sleeping. The Netherlands' strategy set the goal of reducing by 30% the eviction rate between 2005 and 2008. In Amsterdam, 'Early Reach Out' services have been introduced. Eleven housing corporations agreed to inform service providers about possible evictions. Landlords report households with two months' rent arrears to the service providers. In response, a home visit is conducted by a social worker, in cooperation with a financial worker, to explore the social and financial situation and offer assistance, including debt regulation and support with money management. This outreach programme to prevent eviction has had a success rate of 80%. According to monitoring, 600 people were approached for help because of rent arrears and for 480 of them this intervention allowed them to stay in their home and avoid eviction. The outreach programme is funded by the local authority in cooperation with the social housing associations.

Goal 2 : No one living in emergency accommodation for longer than is an 'emergency' and Goal 3 : No one living in transitional accommodation longer than is required for successful move-on

As per FEANTSA's ETHOS[13] typology of homelessness and housing exclusion, emergency accommodation can be understood to mean overnight or very short-term shelters for people experiencing homelessness. A distinction should be drawn between emergency accommodation and transitional accommodation, which is geared towards allowing homeless people to recuperate sufficiently to move into more independent settings. Transitional accommodation aims to offer an intermediate step towards long-term housing and is designed for the short to medium-term. Unfortunately, both emergency and transitional accommodation can become more permanent than they should be. This leads people living long-term in inappropriate settings, rather than moving on from homelessness. This situation causes blockages in the system, meaning that others facing crisis or in need of transitional accommodation cannot access it. Long-term

occupation of these settings can also lead to homeless people becoming institutionalised, making it more difficult for them to move on. There is also increasing evidence that long-term occupation of emergency and transitional settings is very expensive compared to permanent housing options.

Limiting the length of stay in emergency accommodation

An increasing number of countries have committed themselves to reducing the time spent in emergency accommodation, recognizing that people experiencing homelessness should be moved towards long-term housing solutions. Ireland's strategy, for example, insists that no one should be in emergency accommodation for longer than 6 months, while Denmark's goal is a limit of 3-4 months in shelters, and Norway 3 months.

Housing First approaches

Phasing out shelters and replacing them with permanent housing units which facilitate independent, supported or supervised living is an innovative approach to ending long-term shelter use. It is based on the 'housing first' approach. Rather than moving homeless individuals through stages, whereby each stage is a move closer to stable housing (for example, rough sleeping to shelter, to transitional housing programme, to apartment), 'housing first' means people moving directly from rough sleeping or shelter use to permanent, independent housing. The approach is a firmly rights-based one and sees stable, private, decent housing as a prerequisite to addressing problems such as mental health or addiction issues.

Finland's homelessness strategy implements this approach. Under the Programme to Reduce Long-Term Homelessness in the Period 2008-2011, a total of 1250 homes, supported housing units and places of care will be allocated to long-term homeless people in 10 cities. Having identified that long-term homeless people were not benefiting from staged reintegration models, and that shelters were unsuitable bases for addressing their complex needs, Finland has embarked on a programme of transforming shelters into long-term supported housing units. Supported housing units offer a form of accommodation intended for long-term homeless people, where support is integrated. Residents have tenancies or care agreements. They are not expected to stay for a fixed term and move on to another housing stage. While active rehabilitation support is available in these contexts, there is no compulsion to participate in rehabilitation programmes. Nonetheless, evidence shows that rehabilitation in supported housing has a high take-up and success rate. In Finland, supported housing units are required to have one staff member with social service training per two residents. This is a much higher level of support than is available in hostels. The

12 http://www.homeless.org.uk/prompt
13 http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/pg.asp?Page=484

programme to reduce long-term homelessness is a broad-based partnership agreement, fifty percent funded by central government and fifty per cent by the municipalities. The government has provided a budget of €80 million to fund construction investments included in the programme, as well as the hiring of support personnel at a cost of €10.3 million. Moreover, the Finnish Slot Machine Association has provided €18 million for the basic renovation of shelters and their conversion into supported housing units.

France's homeless strategy 2009 - 2012 also integrates housing first principals. The strategy recognises that existing provision does not always meet quality standards, neither in terms of the physical environment nor in terms of social support and that shelters are not suited to the needs of service-users whose primary need is housing. Co-ordinated area-based mapping of housing and accommodation needs and provision are an important element of the strategy, and the approach aims to get people into housing adapted to their needs, including providing appropriate support and provisions to enable people to live independently.

Appropriate emergency accommodation

There is arguably always a need for emergency accommodation as a temporary response to crises. The Finnish example shows that abandoning shelters does not mean abandoning emergency services to provide for acute need. In Finland, homeless service centres are being developed to receive and assess homeless people before moving them on to supported, independent or supervised living. For example, The Hietaniemenkatu Centre in Helsinki offers 24/7 emergency accommodation free-of-charge. The unit runs a day centre operation offering meals and washing facilities and is staffed by health and social care professionals. Homeless people arriving at the centre have a situation review and, if required, a personal service plan is prepared for them, including a plan for a permanent housing solution and, as appropriate, care and support. No one stays in the centre on a long-term basis.

Emergency accommodation should respect the right to privacy, shelter and security. According to the French strategy, shelters will be transformed in order to facilitate this.

Sometimes private hotel or bed-and-breakfast accommodation is used to provide short-term dwellings for vulnerable people. Despite lacking any kind of security of tenure and being an expensive option, these frequently serve a role in overcoming temporary crises. Increasingly, approaches to tackling homelessness recognise that this is an inadequate option. A number of homelessness strategies have introduced guidance on the suitability of such accommodation for people experiencing homelessness, in particular by limiting the amount of time it can be used or defining it as unsuitable for certain groups. In the UK, bed-and-breakfast accommodation is not regarded as suitable for children, pregnant women, or homeless people in priority need. Ireland has committed to the elimination of the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families other than for emergencies and only for very short-term use of no more than one month.

Facilitating move-on

Supporting people in moving on is a key aspect of addressing long-term use of temporary accommodation. Settlement services to encourage transition from emergency shelters and tenancy support schemes that help people keep their accommodation when they move on from shelters can have a dramatic impact on success. France's national strategy states all people who need support to access or maintain permanent housing should receive it. It seeks to provide homeless service users with a consistent point of contact and sets out the need for improved social support for people moving towards or maintaining housing, including the establishment of national benchmarks in the development of targets and modalities for this social support, and the clarification of the roles of local actors.

Follow-up support services play a crucially important role in making sure that move-on from transitional contexts is successful and sustainable. Follow-up services can provide a huge range of input including housing advice and check-ups, support maintaining or developing skills for independent living, health services, resolution of tenancy issues, social activities employment and training assistance. Such services help to overcome adjustment difficulties that people who have experienced homelessness may have when moving on to more independent living. For example, in Norway, Bergen municipality has created follow-up services in every social security office, where teams of 2-4 employees carry out assistance for 12-20 people, providing individual, tailored input to help maintain a home and improve quality of life.

Priority areas in the Irish approach to eliminating homelessness include addressing long-term dependence on emergency and transitional homelessness services. There has been a re-orientation of investment to support significant increases in suitable accommodation as well as support for people leaving homelessness. 'Pathway to Home'[14] is a model of housing and support provision that has been developed to deliver more effective homeless services and better access to housing to help end long-term homelessness in Dublin. It involves both increased access to secure, quality and affordable housing and provision of support to access and maintain permanent housing. The model involves same-day initial assessment of a homeless person's needs and their placement into an appropriate form of temporary accommodation. During their residence in this accommodation, the person is allocated a key-worker to complete an assessment of

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14 http://www.homelessagency.ie/Homeless-Action-Plan-2007-2010/Pathway-to-Home-2009.aspx

their holistic needs and their housing options are examined and assessed by the local authority. A support plan is developed and move-on housing options agreed. Prior to an allocation being made to appropriate move-on housing, the required housing supports are confirmed and secured so that the person can make as seamless as possible a move from temporary accommodation into housing.

England's hostel capital improvement programme is a useful example of ensuring that transitional accommodation works to move people on from homelessness. It stipulates that hostels should be places from which people move on successfully and definitively. The £90 million (€100 million) 'Hostels Capital Improvement Programme' involves refurbishing and reconfiguring hostels to make them 'places of change'.[15] The programme was introduced on the back of evidence showing that too many people stay in the hostel system for too long and that poor physical conditions and services reinforce the cycle of homelessness. Many more people leave hostels for negative reasons - like eviction or abandonment - than for positive ones - like finding employment and a settled home. The aim of the programme is to improve outcomes for service users, increasing the number of people who move on positively. The programme supports innovation in hostels, day centres and other projects that provide training and work experience for people moving on from homelessness. 'Places of Change' provides single-room accommodation instead of dormitories and aims to integrate services including medical services, music, sport, training and education with a view to breaking the cycle of exclusion associated with long-term hostel use. Emphasis is placed on providing engaging services, motivated staff and welcoming buildings.

 An additional tool to facilitate move on in the English context is the Move-on Plans Protocol (MOPP).[16] MOPP has been developed to help local authorities and service providers increase rates of move-on from hostels and temporary accommodation, by analysing the extent of need and agreeing local actions through a partnership approach. The aim is to assist local authorities and service providers in addressing barriers to effective move on. The protocol covers: local partnerships; auditing move on; the development of a move-on action plan and analysis of progress and results.

Providing long-term housing options

Clearly, housing is central to ensuring that people can move on successfully from transitional contexts. In order for people to move on from homelessness there must be affordable, appropriate housing for them to move into. Access to public or social housing remains the key long-term solution to a situation of homelessness in Europe, although a number of countries have also enhanced use of the private rented sector so that it too can help to provide such accommodation.

Some European countries have developed homelessness strategies centred on housing policy. As previously mentioned, Scotland has introduced legislation to make public housing policy guarantee the right to a permanent home for all unintentionally homeless households by the end of 2012. Important housing measures include a legal duty on both local authorities and housing associations to give 'reasonable preference' to homeless households in the allocation of housing and a duty on housing associations to accept and house homeless households referred to them by local authorities unless they have a 'good reason' not to.

In France, the enforceable law on housing is supported by a system of housing allocation that prioritises vulnerable groups and specifically homeless people. Under the law, vulnerable people who are not housed can take their case to a mediation commission at local level. If this commission does not make an offer of housing on a recognized claim, the case can be taken to the courts. The new homelessness strategy sets out targets for better mapping of the supply and demand of housing and homeless services, including the development of information systems and improvements in the co-ordination of referral and admission processes that will facilitate access to long-term housing. It also lays out plans for further research into the barriers to accessing housing.

Providing housing for people who have been homeless is a key aim of numerous homelessness strategies. A key feature of the Finnish strategy is more effective use of land to enable the production of reasonably-priced rental housing in developing areas. The Danish national strategy involves commitments from the eight Danish cities most affected by homelessness to provide new housing for homeless persons. Various types of housing will be constructed in the municipalities, and in some cases this housing will be targeted to groups with special needs such as substance users or young people. A total of 373 residencies are being constructed.

Ireland's approach focuses on the provision of adequate mainstream housing in the private and social sectors as a key means of achieving the goals of preventing homelessness, ending long-term homelessness and eliminating the need to sleep rough. Local authorities are required to conduct a tri-annual assessment of housing need and on that basis produce a local social/affordable housing action plan, as well as the local homeless action plan. One of the central principles is that settlement in the community should be an overriding priority through the provision of long-term housing. Plans for the initiative 'Support

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15 http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/placeschange

16 http://www.homeless.org.uk/mopp

to Live Independently' (SLI) were presented in June 2009. It is a scheme to combine mainstream housing and floating housing support. The scheme has not yet been implemented but the approach involves the use of accommodation procured through a social housing leasing scheme, or available to local authorities in the form of affordable housing that is unsold or unlikely to be sold in the current market, along with availability of low- to moderate-level visiting support to help address the challenges of making the transition to independent living. The housing for the scheme will be under the control and management of the local authority or an appropriate service provider, such as a housing association, and they will facilitate the support. Tenancy arrangements will be broadly the same as in social housing generally. The scheme will be funded through cost savings on emergency and transitional accommodation.

In Hungary, the seriousness of the homelessness problem after the political transition led to the development of large numbers of homelessness institutions. A lack of social housing and other move-on options has caused a bottleneck situation in these institutions. In 2005, a programme of reintegration benefit for homeless people within supported housing was developed. It consists of a reintegration contribution to housing costs as well as funding for resettlement support workers. The programme aims to facilitate integration into mainstream housing by supporting the rent of private rented housing, pensions and workers' hostels. One of the major advantages of the programme is its cost-effectiveness: providing reintegration benefit for clients is much cheaper than the maintenance of places within the shelter system. In 2007-2008, the annual cost of normative support of one bed in a temporary hostel was 525,000 Hungarian forints (HUF) UF (€2,100), in 2009 it was 516,000 HUF (€2,060). The cost of supported housing for a year is approximately 350,000-380,000 HUF (€1,400-1,500). Thus, the supported housing scheme can be funded by 50%-70% of the state's normative support for a temporary hostel. Furthermore, the programme has provided opportunities to house homeless people in areas where there were no homeless institutions e.g. in small cities where it is not compulsory to provide such services.

Specific forms of supported housing

The creation of specific forms of supported permanent housing for homeless people has been developed in some contexts. 'Unusual housing for unusual lifestyles' is an approach that seeks to provide tailor-made housing to a hardcore of long-term homeless people with alternative lifestyles (usually linked to long periods of rough sleeping) that involve opposition to the rest of society. The approach originates from Denmark. It targets people who have not responded to conventional forms of support offered in mainstream homelessness services or conventional housing. The houses are small, non-conventional dwellings

often with communal rooms. Such housing is generally built in areas characterised by a high degree of tolerance; places where the residents can behave differently (in opposition to society, with multiple problems or challenging behaviour) without facing opposition. The dwellings are accompanied by social support. Schemes vary in size but are intended to be small-scale. Each scheme is supported by a social caretaker who provides individual support to tenants and helps resolve problems within the group. People living in this type of housing have conventional tenancy agreements, which are not conditional on participation in any reintegration programme. Residents are able to continue habits such as alcohol and drug use without compromising their tenancy.

Homeless people with a high level of need and complex problems may have particular difficulty moving on from transitional contexts. Access to specialised, long-term supported or supervised accommodation with appropriately trained staff provides a way out of hostel accommodation for those who may be unsuited to independent living. For example, homelessness strategies increasingly recognize the need for permanent options for people with long-term drug addiction and serious mental health issues, and strategic approaches facilitate better cross-sector approaches. A core part of the Dutch homelessness strategy is addressing the needs of people suffering from long-term drug addiction and serious psychiatric disturbance. It includes the provision of long-term accommodation for these people. The aim is to provide care and treatment within a facility for long-term accommodation, where the emphasis is on improving quality of life. Provision within long-term accommodation settings can include diagnosis and the establishment of a treatment plan, treatment of somatic, addiction, psychiatric and psychosocial problems, teaching of social skills, and the opportunity for a varied and purposeful daily occupation.

Goal 4 : No one leaving an institution without housing options

Nobody who is in an institution – be it a hospital, care or prison – should be discharged without sufficient support and adequate housing options. These people are often vulnerable and should be helped to avoid homelessness.

People leaving institutions constitute a significant proportion of the homeless population. For example, research in Norway in 2004 showed that 1/3 of prisoners did not have a home to go to on release. Furthermore, a survey in Glasgow in 1999 found that 44% of homeless people living in hostels or sleeping rough had been in prison at least once. People in institutions are also a relatively easy group to reach through targeted homelessness

policies. Introducing practices to ensure that they have housing options and an effective transition to services outside institutions represents a huge step towards ending homelessness. Preventing homelessness amongst this group also has broader benefits to society and can reduce the cost of homelessness. People in stable accommodation are less likely to be re-admitted to hospital, for example because their health needs and follow-up care can be better addressed. For ex-offenders, stable accommodation is increasingly recognised as a critical part of rehabilitation and key to preventing re-offending.

Recognising the vulnerability of people leaving institutions

Many countries have identified this group as a particular priority in homelessness policies. For example, Norway set a specific target that no one shall have to spend time in temporary accommodation on release from prison or an institution. Some have introduced legislation that prioritises these groups. For example, in working towards its 2012 target, Scotland expanded the 'priority need' category of homelessness to include a range of vulnerable groups including all those due to leave hospital, prison or the armed forces, all people aged 16 or 17, and people aged 18-20 who were looked after by social services when they left school. Legislation has introduced a similar expansion of the priority need category in England and Wales.

Denmark's homelessness strategy states that release from prison or discharge from courses of treatment or hospitals must presuppose that an accommodation solution is in place. Seven of the municipalities most affected by homelessness are working on the goal of ensuring that an accommodation solution is in place at the time of release or discharge. In all, the municipalities aim to reduce the number of citizens without an accommodation solution one month before leaving institutions by 65% - from 122 to 43 in the framework of the 2009-2012 strategy.

Targeted advice services

Homelessness and housing advice on entering, while staying in, and upon leaving institutions can avert homelessness. Many countries are increasingly aware of this in their homelessness policies. For example, the current Scottish homelessness strategy states that those responsible for prisoners, looked-after children, long-stay hospital patients and the armed forces should develop high-quality housing and homelessness advice services. There has also been a full evaluation of different models for offering housing advice in prisons undertaken by the Scottish Government.[17]

Drop-in or other external advice centres can provide back-up to internal advice systems, particularly when there are services dedicated to the particular needs of people leaving institutions.

Needs assessment

Assessment on admission to an institution can help resolve issues relating to housing benefit, surrendering or maintaining a tenancy, and debt. From April 2005, all local prisons in England have been required to carry out housing needs assessments for every new prisoner, including those serving short sentences. This assessment identifies those who require assistance closing down, sustaining, or transferring tenancies and housing benefits claims, and those who need help finding accommodation for discharge.

Ongoing support and follow-up

Ongoing support and follow-up care on an individual basis can have a huge impact on the likelihood of homelessness following discharge. For young people leaving care, the Scottish strategy states that the statutory obligation to provide aftercare should extend to all children who have spent 6 months or more in the care of the local authority between their twelfth birthday and school-leaving age.

Case-management approaches can be very effective in ensuring follow-up. In Sweden, the homelessness strategy has funded case managers to provide people with psychiatric disabilities with support and to coordinate action on their case. The role of the managers includes making sure that people with extensive psychiatric disabilities receive the care and support they need and ensuring that actions required are delivered in a co-ordinated fashion.

In England the 'Supporting People Programme' aims both to prevent problems that can lead to hospitalisation, institutional care or homelessness and to smooth the transition to independent living for those leaving an institutional environment.

Discharge Practices

The establishment of effective admission and discharge protocol and procedure is a key element in reducing homelessness amongst people leaving institutions. The formalisation and implementation of such protocols can have a major impact on the number of people leaving institutions with nowhere to go to.

The Dutch homelessness strategy proposes a range of specific measures relating to support upon release from detention. Detainees are linked up with a regular social worker 8 weeks prior to their release date (or upon commencement of detention if the term of detention is shorter than 6 months). The tasks of the social worker are screening, crisis intervention, material assistance, psychosocial support and transfer in four basic areas: identity papers, income, living accommodation and care. The social worker will work in consultation with the host municipality to ensure a smooth transition to aftercare.

17 http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/09/19833/41876

Protocols that ensure safe, timely discharge with appropriate follow-up can reduce rates of self-discharge from hospital, reduce the length of time people stay in hospital and reduce readmission rates. Protocols allow hospitals to establish a patient's housing status on admission, facilitate the sharing of information, ensure that existing accommodation is not lost and allow hospitals to work in partnership with key external agencies to secure accommodation. In England, The Department of Communities and Local Government, the Department of Health, Homeless Link (the membership organisation for frontline homelessness charities), and the London Network for Nurses and Midwives, developed a set of hospital admission- and discharge-protocol guidelines.[18] The purpose of the guidelines is to support hospitals, Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), local authorities and the voluntary sector to work in partnership and develop an effective admission and discharge protocol for people who are not living in settled accommodation, with the aim of no one being discharged to the streets or to temporary accommodation. Newcastle-Upon-Tyne[19] developed a discharge protocol in response to a situation where homeless people (an estimated 50 people a year) were arriving at the Housing Advice Centre (HAC) in the city without prior warning, having been discharged from hospital with the HAC as their discharge address. The protocol was established as part of a broader preventative framework. The initial stage of developing the protocol was to organise a workshop for everyone in the city whose work was affected by homeless people in hospital beds. A cross-sector working group to develop the protocol emerged from the workshop and a lead officer was identified. A protocol has now been established across acute medicine services, accident and emergency and mental health services. While the protocol has not eradicated all gaps in the system, it has established better joint working and a comprehensive fixed procedure.

Partnership working

Partnership working and multi-dimensional approaches are central to ensuring continuity of care between institutions and housing and homelessness services. This is an essential element of all strategic approaches. As part of the homelessness legislation, Scotland's health authorities must have a health and homelessness action plan which includes plans as to how they will ensure that people do not leave hospital to homelessness. In Norway, a national partnership agreement was entered into between the Association of Local and Regional Authorities, and the relevant ministries in order to prevent and combat homelessness amongst former prisoners. Partnerships have also been established at local level between municipalities and prisons. Model partnership agreements for this purpose were created, and from 2006 all municipalities have been expected to implement such an agreement. All prisoners released with follow-up

in Norway should now have a home to go to. Local authorities are asked to monitor the pathways of people leaving prison and to report on the extent of stays in temporary accommodation.

Targeted accommodation

Targeted accommodation provision aimed at people leaving institutions in housing need have been successful in some contexts. Such projects have been developed in response to the long waiting lists that recently released prisoners often face for social housing in Norway. Mehland Local Authority developed a holistic project where former prisoners build their own homes – thus developing skills as well as housing. Drug-related crime in the local area fell by 75% during the period of the project.

Specific transitional housing and phased release systems can provide a useful step between institutions and permanent accommodation. In Sweden, half-way houses which are controlled by the Prison and Probation service have been running since 2007 for people leaving prison. The half-way house is adapted to give inmates special support and supervision on release. During their stay, residents have to devote themselves to work or some other form of meaningful activity while building up their life and social network outside prison. The aim is to facilitate cooperation with the relevant authorities before release. Oslo municipality also developed a project called Fredensborgveien Residence Temporary Accommodation. It specifically targets prisoners who, while in prison, have shown little motivation to participate in programmes or to make plans for after their release and provides them with follow-up.

Goal 5 : No young people becoming homeless as a result of the transition to independent living

The transition to independent living is a time when people are vulnerable to becoming homeless. No young person should be made homeless because of a lack of first-time housing options, services or entitlement to benefits during the transition to independent living. More can be done to help young people to live independently and access suitable housing options and there are a variety of examples of how this can be achieved.

Recognising the vulnerability of young people

The specific vulnerability of young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness is recognised in many national strategic approaches to homelessness, and specific interventions have been made in this area. For example, as previously mentioned, people aged 16-17 are considered in priority need in the home-

18 http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/hospitaladmission

19 http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/wwwfileroot/nhf/HospitalDischargeProtocolfinalMay07updatedFeb09.pdf

less legislation in the UK, and special priority is accorded to young people leaving care.

Ireland has developed a specific youth homeless strategy,[20] which aims "to reduce and if possible eliminate youth homelessness through preventative strategies, and where a child becomes homeless to ensure that he/she benefits from a comprehensive range of services aimed at re-integrating him/her into his/her community as quickly as possible." The strategy is underpinned by the Child Care Act 1991, which places a legal obligation on each health board to promote the welfare of children in its area who are not receiving adequate care and attention. As part of this, each local health office should prepare a two-year strategic plan to address youth homelessness following consultation with their statutory and voluntary partners. Twelve objectives are set out in the areas of prevention, responsive services and planning and administrative supports.

England has developed a National Youth Homelessness Scheme[21] to help local authorities to provide effective services to prevent and address homelessness amongst young people aged 16 and over. It includes a knowledge base for local authorities and their partners in preventing and responding to youth homelessness. England has also developed a young runaway action plan[22] to identify and address the needs of children and young people up to the age of 18 who run away from home or care, or who feel they have had to leave. It focuses both on prevention and ensuring appropriate responses for young people who do run away.

Within its national strategy, the Danish approach recognises that young people who stay in care homes or shelters risk becoming caught in a long-term process of marginalisation. Therefore, one of the central goals of the strategy is to avoid this situation by ensuring that young people are offered alternatives that facilitate access to a home, education and work. The six municipalities who are focusing on youth homelessness in the framework of the strategy aim for a 75% reduction in the number of young people spending time in care homes or shelters between 2009 and 2012.

Early intervention
As with homelessness more broadly, early intervention at certain trigger points has been shown to be effective in preventing youth homelessness.

Targeted home- and housing education can be useful in preventing homelessness amongst young people. Scotland has introduced home and housing education in schools. Information services that address the specific needs of young people can also

be very valuable. The leavinghome.info website is an example of a targeted information project. It provides young people with accessible advice on their options and entitlements if they leave home, including what to do in an emergency.

Youth homelessness is often linked to family breakdown. Early intervention strategies can resolve issues before a crisis situation develops. In the UK, an increasing number of local authorities use mediation services as a homelessness prevention strategy. This is typically provided by third sector agencies and involves meeting with the young person and family members, working through issues and finding ways forward. Where it is possible, safe and appropriate, mediation can facilitate the young person staying in the family home. Mediation can also be useful after a young person has left home. By ensuring that family support continues, such mediation can help the young person to sustain a tenancy. The Irish Youth Homelessness Strategy also facilitates family support and other preventive services on a multi-agency basis. In particular, this incorporates a generic out of hours crisis intervention service and where necessary multi-disciplinary teams to target at-risk young people.

Young people leaving state care are especially vulnerable to homelessness. Aftercare is therefore an important intervention. The Irish Youth Homeless Strategy provides particular guidance to local health boards and their partners on devising comprehensive strategies for effective aftercare as part of two-year plans to address youth homelessness. The protocol for the aftercare strategy states that a designated person will be appointed to provide aftercare support for each young person leaving care.

Helping young people access appropriate housing
Young people may have particular difficulty accessing housing. Access to housing benefit, eligibility for social housing and age requirements in tenancy agreements can all present barriers.

The Finnish government's homelessness programme 2008-2011 includes the Young People's National Supported Housing Project, the aim of which is to build 600 rental flats and help 500 young people find their way to independent living through work and meaningful activity linked with housing. The programme highlights that young people under the age of 25 are at present the largest potential group of long-term homeless people. Statistics showed that there were 662 individual homeless young people in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area in 2009. Through cooperation between the various agencies it is intended to increase the number of projects devoted to subsidised housing for young people in the Metropolitan Area. New types of models of cooperation are being established to implement projects.

20 http://www.omc.gov.ie/viewtxt.asp?fn=%2Fdocuments%2FChild_Welfare_Protection%2Fyouthhomelessness.htm

21 http://www.communities.gov.uk/youthhomelessness/

22 http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=RUNAWAYS08

Rent deposit schemes can also help young people to access rental accommodation by guaranteeing their rental deposit. Such schemes operate across Scotland. They aim to: reduce the number of wrongly withheld deposits; speed up deposit returns; ensure funds are available at the end of the tenancy; and when there is a dispute, ensure that the amount returned is determined in a fair way.

Furnishing a new dwelling can pose particular problems for young people entering housing for the first time. In Scotland, the government carried out a five-year programme to introduce 1000 furnished tenancies per year. They have also used furniture-recycling initiatives to provide for tenants who need help furnishing their home, including young people. Scotland has developed a network of furniture initiatives. Fife council provides a furniture voucher scheme for new tenants, which is funded through their homelessness budget. The contract for the service is currently held by a local furniture project called Furniture Plus.[24] Fife Council staff assess the needs of their new tenants, and if they require furniture they are assigned a voucher up to £250 (€277) to spend at Furniture Plus.

Even if they can access housing, young people may not always be well positioned and prepared to live independently. In such cases, targeted accommodation adjusted to their specific needs can be an effective option. In England, the government has launched a supported lodgings[25] development scheme providing accommodation, advice and mediation services for young people who can no longer stay in the family home. Supported lodgings services provide a young person with a room of their own in a private home where they are a member of the household, but are not expected to become a member of the family. The householder, or host, provides a safe and supportive environment, working alongside professional services to help and support the young person in gaining skills for independent adult life.

Supporting young people to maintain housing

Either within supported housing, or on a floating basis, individual support seems to be an important strategy in helping young people to maintain tenancies. Follow-up, support and advice services tailored to the particular needs of young people can have a substantial impact.

For some young people, support to maintain housing is required on an intensive basis. In Tampere in Finland, The Titu Project provides very intensive supported housing to young homeless adults. The project comprises seven flats in one block, with an additional flat used for meetings and group work. Young homeless people living in the project have access to project employees from 8am to 8pm every day Monday to Saturday. They also have an on-call service on Sunday. Residents learn about healthy eating, domestic work, finding employment and managing finances. After 6-12 months young people can move onto a new apartment with a view to totally independent living. In Helsinki, the Vamos project uses a cooperation model to help young people secure and maintain rental flats. Young people are reached through outreach work. They are then helped to find a suitable rented flat. Housing counselling is provided and the Vamos worker is available to meet regularly (almost daily) with the young person. Two employees at a local health service are also available to give medical advice to the young people on the project on a drop-in basis. The project has been successful in preventing eviction and stabilising young people. Out of 198 youngsters involved in the project in one year, 10 have found a job, a rehabilitation activity or taken some kind of training course.

Opportunities to access training and employment are of particular importance to young people, and there are a range of examples of innovative approaches in this area. Meland municipality in Norway have developed a self-build project for young people, including those with substance abuse issues who have problems finding housing. Young people participate in the entire building process from planning, submitting applications, to construction. Participants gain specialist skills in building and are supported in setting up home for the first time.

In the Netherlands, the project 'Take Off Youth' is another example of holistic support that helps young people move on definitively from homelessness. This initiative was started by the national federation of shelter organisations (Federatie Opvang),[26] the national association of social housing and the homeless youth foundation (SZN). It is supported by the ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports. The idea is that housing corporations start small-scale housing projects for homeless youth in combination with a vocational training programme. The training can take place within the housing corporation or with one of their service providers. Shelter organisations are part of this project and offer coaching, support and counselling to the participating youths. The aim is for the young people to be able to live independently and have a qualification and job within two years.

24 http://www.furnitureplus.org.uk/

25 http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/makingadifference

26 http://www.opvang.nl/leo/layout/meer.asp?id=1&Reset=1

In the framework of its work within the national strategy on homelessness, the city of Rotterdam has launched a specific homeless youth strategy. The city began by carrying out research on the number and the profile of homeless youth in the city, as well as research on groups at risk of homelessness. They created a central intake office for youths who lack qualifications, income or housing and who need support and advice on housing, income, debts, education and vocational training. As part of their youth homelessness strategy, the city also decided in 2008 to create 50 places in supported housing projects for young homeless people with severe problems including addiction, psychiatric problems and learning disabilities and 125 places for young homeless people with lower support needs. In 2009 the city also committed to creating 300 places in so-called "Kamers Met Kansen"[28] or 'Rooms with Chances'-type housing. These are preventative housing projects for youth at risk of homelessness, young people who have dropped out of school and socially vulnerable youth. These housing projects often have a campus or student housing approach. Young people have their own room and share facilities. They are required to go to school or participate in a job training programme. Support is delivered on a one-on-one basis by counsellors and social workers. Nationally, twenty-seven housing projects with this approach have been realised and fifteen more are underway.

Experiences from developing national homelessness strategies : testimonies from people involved

The role of the Homelessness Task Force in developing Scotland's homelessness legislation

By Robert Aldridge, member of the Homelessness Task Force, Scotland

Scotland has adopted an ambitious strategy to combat homelessness, which will, by the end of the year 2012, give every unintentionally homeless person the right to settled accommodation. The local authority has the legal duty to ensure that homeless people are housed. The strategy was developed in response to the recommendations of the Homelessness Task Force, which was created in 1999, when the Scottish parliament was established. This multi-agency Task Force was chaired by the relevant Minister and its remit was: 'to review the causes and nature of homelessness in Scotland; to examine current practice in dealing with cases of homelessness; and to make recommendations as to how homelessness in Scotland can best be prevented and, where it does occur, be tackled effectively'.

The Task Force was a broad-based partnership and this was central to its success. It involved a wide range of stakeholders; the Minister, the Head of the housing division of the Ministry, a representative from the National Housing Agency, a Director of housing for a local authority, an elected local authority councillor, a representative from the Housing Associations Federation, three homelessness NGO representatives, a representative from the street newspaper, an academic researcher, a social services representative and a representative from the health sector.

The Task Force undertook its work in two stages, and at each stage its recommendations were matched by legislation. The first stage established quick improvements in two main areas :

- Giving a statutory duty to local authorities to draw up a homelessness strategy
- Giving all homeless applicants a basic set of rights (to temporary accommodation for 'a reasonable period.')

The second was more radical and focused on changing the culture towards tackling homelessness. It made recommendations concerning taking a holistic approach to homelessness and providing individually tailored solutions. It was backed up by 13 commissioned pieces of academic research based around two themes: understanding homelessness and what works. An initial piece of work drew together what we already knew from existing research to ensure that the commissioned research focused on new areas. Recommendations were made regarding welfare benefits, employability, and access to support and furniture, developing social networks and specific recommendations regarding health and substance use as well as housing.

In addition to the homelessness legislation – the right to settled accommodation for all unintentionally homeless people – health authorities were given a duty to draw up health and homelessness action plans and to report to the Health Minister on progress.

Crucially, there was support for the approach to homelessness from all the stakeholders. There was also strong political support, which has continued. Even with a change in government since the establishment of the task force, homelessness has remained one of 45 key national priorities.

It was vital that there was a realistic timescale of ten years to achieve the new framework, with regular reports back to Parliament on progress and a multi agency Homelessness Monitoring Group. Local authorities were set an interim target to assess progress towards the goal that all unintentionally homeless households will be able to access settled accommodation by 2012, and in 2009, 14 out of 32 local authorities had either met or exceeded this. The adequately-resourced and supported, ambitious and broad partnership-based Task Force ensured that the legislation was based on consensual and appropriate recommendations.

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Finland's 'Programme to Reduce Long-Term Homelessness' : the group of 'Wise People'

By Peter Fredriksson, Ministry of the Environment, Finland

In February 2008 the Finnish government approved a Programme to Reduce Long-Term Homelessness with the central objective of halving long-term homelessness over the period 2008 to 2011.

The programme is based on a report by a special working group involving key actors in the field, which was established by the Ministry of the Environment to design a programme of activities. This working group's work was informed by a report by a group of 'Wise People' appointed by the ministry. The establishment of this group was an innovative policy tool and their report contained the essential elements of the new strategy. This group's aim was to address the fact that, while homelessness in Finland had fallen dramatically in the past twenty years, long-term homelessness had not been reduced. It was apparent that strategies which had been successful in reducing homelessness overall had not addressed long-term homelessness and that new approaches were required to tackle this. The group of 'Wise People' comprised four experts whose professional experience was relevant to homelessness – the chief of the social services administration in Helsinki, the Archbishop of Helsinki, a former politician who is a well-known social activist and the director of the Y Foundation, a major housing provider for homeless people in Finland.

The programme represents a significant shift in Finland's approach to long-term homelessness by drawing on 'housing first' principles. It was the report of the 'Wise People' that initially recommended the use of the housing first principle as a new solution to long-term homelessness. People are classed as long-term homeless in Finland if their homelessness has lasted at least a year or they have been homeless several times in the past three years. Such individuals commonly suffer from serious social and health problems, particularly those relating to substance abuse and mental health, and are likely to need services and support if they are to be successfully housed. The predominant approach towards long-term homeless before this programme was based on the 'staircase model', where homeless people pass through a series of stages to reach permanent housing. According to this approach, the homeless person must become 'housing ready' by tackling social, health and other problems before moving into a permanent home. In contrast, provisions based on the 'housing first' principle view appropriate accommodation as the starting point and a prerequisite for solving other social and health problems.

The group of 'Wise People' also proposed an innovative and substantial funding programme, whereby public funding for staff was combined with funding for building accommodation. Under the programme, financial responsibility is shared between the state and the local authorities, with each generally contributing 50 per cent. The state set aside €80 million in structural investment for the programme and €10.3 million for the hire of support personnel. Furthermore, the Finnish Slot Machine Association contributed €18 million as financial assistance for basic renovations for shelters and for converting them into supported accommodation units. The funding programme raised expectations amongst the cities and created momentum for the new strategy. When the programme was implemented, it was done through letters of intent between the state authorities and the ten largest cities where there is a problem of homelessness. The new funding opportunities made sure that cities were engaged and fully on board from the beginning. The cities are now very ambitious and looking to maintain the results they have achieved so far.

In the case of the Finnish Programme to Reduce Long-Term Homelessness, the group of 'Wise People' acted as a catalyst and led to an ambitious new approach. Other important factors included a strong political commitment, which was backed up by financial resources. The monitoring and evaluation processes show that the strategy is performing and the Ministry is confident that it will meet its targets.

The development of the Portuguese national strategy : Opportunities in the framework of the EU's social inclusion process

By Teresa Caeiro, Responsible for Homelessness in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Portugal

Until the early 1990s there were no specific measures or policies addressing poverty in Portugal. Although vast reforms have taken place over the last decade in the fields of social security, health and education, little interest had been shown towards developing homelessness policies until the European Commission asked the Member States to make homelessness a priority and include specific measures in their National Action Plan (now National Strategic Plan). These plans are produced in the context of the 'EU Strategy on Social Protection and Social Inclusion', which provides a framework for national strategy development and policy coordination between EU countries on issues relating to poverty and social exclusion and has been in place since 2000. Increasing homelessness in cities like Lisbon and Porto, and the difficulty of gaining a clear understanding of the phenomena due to the different and uncoordinated approaches of the organisations working with homeless people, pointed to an urgent need to study this phenomenon and develop more targeted measures directed towards its prevention and eradication. These factors presented an opportunity for the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity to act more strategically on homeless. We were able to launch a process, which subsequently became a broad-based partnership involving all stakeholders and led to the national strategy for the period 2009-2015.

The first step was to understand the reality and the extent of the situation in Portugal. In 2004, a questionnaire was sent to all municipalities and local social services, collecting information about existing provision for people experiencing homelessness and housing exclusion. This was followed up by a more detailed study in 2005. One of the main conclusions of the research was that there was an urgent need to design a national strategy directed towards the prevention of homelessness, interventions to tackle homelessness and follow-up for people who experience homelessness. It was clear that all stakeholders from the private and public sector should be involved, as coordination of provision was lacking.

In March 2007, a meeting brought together representatives of public and private entities involved in homelessness. They agreed on the need to develop a national strategy and an operational group was formed to define homelessness and devise a strategy. The operational group contained a representative of each stakeholder body. This was really essential to the success of the process, as it ensured all partners were committed and felt involved. The strategy and definition were fully signed-up to by all stakeholders, which is critical as the final strategy is based around strategic goals and targets related to specific commitments from the different entities involved, as well as around common targets.

The implementation phase began in 2009. The initial stage involved the development of operational tools (e.g. a training manual for staff, information systems) and monitoring and evaluation instruments. There has also been a focus on dissemination and the continued involvement of stakeholders through regular meetings of the operational group with professionals and local council social networks, who are responsible for implementing the strategy at local level. Continued data collection focusing on the characterisation of homeless people's situations and provision is also a key element of the strategy. Early monitoring suggests that the active involvement of all stakeholders has been very important to the success of the strategy.

The trigger for the development of the strategy was undoubtedly the need to include measures for homelessness in the National Action Plan. This created an opportunity to get homelessness on the agenda, which we were able to capitalise on. There was clear recognition of the need for a concrete evidence base and this led to the national research and ultimately to the development of an ambitious, substantiated strategy. Opportunities for the Ministry's relevant policy makers to exchange information, experience and good practice at European level were also extremely important in helping to develop the strategy.

The development of the 'National Strategy Plan for Social Relief' in the Netherlands

By Walter Kamp, Municipality of Amsterdam, the Netherlands

In 2006 the four major cities of the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and The Hague, known as the 'G4') signed an agreement with the government on addressing homelessness in major cities. Under this agreement, the parties committed themselves to bringing homelessness to an end over a period of eight years.

The development of the programme has a long history, and the G4 municipalities and the government had worked together for years on determining effective ways to address homelessness. They had established that homelessness and the need for homeless services was disproportionately large in the four main cities. It was also apparent that the shelter facilities were full and crowded, with insufficient turnover and outflow. In addition, people who turned to shelters in the community were often facing serious problems on several fronts, including addiction and psychiatric problems. These people were in theory entitled to care, but care was not provided by the institutions responsible for such services.

All these elements resulted in a picture that belongs to the past: people who lived and narrowly survived on the street. They were addicted and unwell and were not receiving any structural help. It is a historical disgrace that this situation was allowed to persist for so long.

The core of the G4 approach consists of :

- A person-oriented approach managed by the municipality. All homeless persons are known to the municipality which is responsible for running the operation.
- An integral approach with an appropriate offer in five different areas - housing, health, mental health, income and daily occupation.
- Joint procurement systems. The cities supply effective identification and initiation of shelter and care, an adequate level of support provision, collective healthcare insurance and extensive debt-assistance projects; housing corporations provide adequate housing and care agencies are responsible for care in the volumes and specifications agreed with the city and the government.

There were a number of factors that played a role in the development of the strategy. The first was that homelessness was a strongly felt political priority, both at government level and at the level of the G4 cities. A number of key actors were, at times for personal reasons, very involved in the subject and gave the project direction. The strategy's financing was also a key element of its success. Not only were the municipalities accorded an extra budget, but a budget for joint procurement was also earmarked within the General Exceptional Medical Expenses Act (known by the initials AWBZ). An extra budget totalling €170,000,000 was allocated to the G4. These funds enabled the municipalities to procure many new facilities and services.

Four years after the strategy was launched, 10,000 homeless people have been brought into provision in the G4. The number of facilities has been extended, especially for the most serious category of clients. The number of people placed in care for home-less people has dropped by 30% (whereas the number of people placed in care outside the G4 is rising). There are scarcely any homeless people sleeping rough anymore. In addition, harassment and petty crime caused by homeless people has been reduced by more than half.

The G4 and the central government are currently engaged in consultation on the second phase of the strategy. Four years ago, the driving force was the righteous indignation that people were sleeping rough without the necessary care. The wish now is to guarantee the results of the strategy and to prevent a new generation of homeless people from emerging. In addition, the G4 realise that it is inadmissible to have people ostracised from society to such an extent that they end up on the street. The ultimate purpose must be that scarcely anyone ends up on the street.

The French experience of a national consensus conference on homelessness

By Hervé de Ruggiero, Director of FNARS (The National Federation of Reception and Social Rehabilitation Centres), France

The first consensus conference on Homelessness was held in Paris in November 2007. It was proposed by FNARS and was funded by the Ministry of Social Cohesion.

The consensus conference methodology aims to develop a collective understanding on a controversial issue, drawing on the contributions of experts and existing knowledge, but with the ultimate consensus being drawn up by an independent jury.

FNARS proposed the consensus conference in order to define a consensual basis for public policy on homelessness. The policy context was a widely-perceived lack of coherency, with political action on homelessness consisting of a plethora of plans, practices, actors and measures that did not facilitate coherent and responsive action to meet the needs of homeless people. Transposing the consensus conference methodology, which is a scientific methodology originating from the medical sector, was an opportunity for actors to take some distance from the issue, objectivise the challenges and develop an evidence-based approach. It was clear that more joined-up policy, based on a shared analysis of the current situation and the needs of homeless people was required. It was also clear that public policy on homelessness and housing exclusion needed to have an integrated and cross-governmental approach and be structured around consensual goals and actions, thorough evaluation and sustainable funding.

Housing and homelessness was big news in France in the two years preceding the consensus conference, and this was an important feature of the context for the consensus conference. During winter 2005-2006, Médecins du Monde handed out tents to homeless people. When they became permanent features local residents began protesting. This provoked action by the group Les Enfants de Don Quichotte, who pitched 200 red tents along the banks of the Saint Martin canal in Paris. There was a peak in public concern about homelessness, which in the run-up to the presidential elections helped bring about the bill establishing an enforceable Right to Housing in 2007. This moment in public opinion certainly raised the stakes for the consensus conference.

The methodology of the consensus conference involved an organisational committee comprising academics, the voluntary sector, and local and central government. They were responsible for planning the consensus conference – gathering evidence, selecting key questions, appointing experts and the jury that would produce the recommendations. In November 2007, 350 people took part in a public hearing where the jury and the public listened to, and questioned the experts.

During a two-day closed session after the hearing, the jury compiled a fifty-page report of recommendations. The report found that homelessness policy in France was fragmented and ineffective and that there was a need for strategic national co-ordination. It established the following broad recommendations:

1. Respect must be shown to homeless people
2. The diversity of situations of homeless people must be acknowledged
3. Policy interventions should be unified or integrated
4. The principal of 'unconditional' assistance or the requirement to help all those in need should be put into practice.
5. Policy instruments should be implemented at regional level, where a full range of services should be developed based on evaluation of need. Strategies must be evaluated and reviewed in view of objectives and means.

The consensus conference has certainly had an impact. It was an innovative and cross-cutting approach that united disparate actors and produced recommendations for the foundation of the coherent, strategic public policy that all stakeholders felt was needed. These recommendations were largely adopted by an MP, Etienne Pinte, appointed by the Prime Minister to 'establish a working method and timetable for setting the inter-ministerial policy'. Following his report, joint work has been undertaken between the State and other actors, which is largely based on the recommendations of the Consensus Conference. The recommendations and the follow-up work have led to the announcement by the Secretary of State for Housing and Urban Development to 20 proposals to establish a public accommodation service and access to housing for those most in need. In addition, the methodology will be taken up at European level to establish a basis for EU-level action on homelessness in December 2010.

FEANTSA toolkit for developing an integrated strategy to tackle homelessness

FEANTSA has promoted and facilitated transnational exchanges between homeless services across Europe for the last 20 years. Analysis and reviews of homeless policies in this framework have revealed that a variety of approaches exist to combating homelessness. Most countries have integrated several of the 10 approaches listed below. FEANTSA believes that the most effective homelessness policies should include all these 10 approaches, but a balance should be found in accordance with the political context in which the authorities developing and implementing the policy operates.

There is still much scope for improvement of homelessness policies, and FEANTSA believes that the following 10 approaches could be an interesting guide for policy makers, NGOs, and other stakeholders involved in the fight against homelessness.

Evidence-based approach

A good understanding of the problem of homelessness is key to developing effective policies. This can be done through:

- Monitoring and documentation of trends in homelessness and numbers of homeless people, and development of appropriate indicators
- Research and analysis on the causes of and solutions to homelessness should complement monitoring and documentation
- Regular revision of policies is necessary and most effective with a sound understanding of homelessness.

Comprehensive approach

A comprehensive approach to combating homelessness includes policies on emergency services and resettlement of people who are homeless, and on the prevention of homelessness:

- Emergency services are a crucial first step to prevent people from living on the street for long periods
- Integration should be the objective for all people who are homeless and should be adapted to the needs and potential or the individual person who is homeless
- Prevention – both targeted prevention (evictions, discharges from institutions) and systemic prevention (through general housing, education, and employment policies) are necessary.

Multi-dimensional approach

Homelessness is acknowledged to be a phenomenon requiring solutions based on multi-dimensional approaches including:

- Integrating housing, health, employment, education and training and other perspectives in a homeless strategy, since the routes in and out of homelessness can be very diverse

- Interagency working and general cooperation with other sectors as a vital component of every effective homeless strategy since homelessness cannot be tackled in a sustainable way by the homeless sector only
- Interdepartmental working between relevant housing, employment, health and other ministries is crucial for developing effective strategies to tackle homelessness, and to avoid negative repercussions of policies developed in different fields.

Rights-based approach

A rights-based approach to tackling homelessness promotes access to decent, stable housing as the indispensable precondition for the exercise of most of the other fundamental rights through:

- Use of international treaties on housing rights as a basis for developing a homeless strategy
- Focus on enforceable right to housing to ensure the effective exercise of the right to housing
- Acknowledgement of the interdependence of housing and other rights such as the right to live in dignity, the right to health.

Participatory approach

Homelessness is a field where cooperation with service providers is crucial given their expertise on how to tackle the problem, and entails participation in the following ways:

- Involvement of all stakeholders (namely service providers, service users and public authorities) in policy development and evaluation is important for pooling all expertise and capacity available aiming to tackling homelessness
- Involvement of all stakeholders in implementing policy through a coordinated effort is the best way to achieve the objectives of any homeless strategy
- Participation of people experiencing homelessness should be used for the improvement of service quality and policy-making. Appropriate consultation structures should be created to take real account of the experience of people who are homeless.

Statutory approach

A statutory approach aims to underpin homeless strategies with legislation through:

- A legal framework at national level/regional level, which allows for consistency and accountability in implementation of homeless policies
- Statutory aims and objectives serve to effectively monitor and evaluate policy progress.

Sustainable approach

Three elements create a genuinely sustainable approach to tackling homelessness leading to sustainable solutions:

- Adequate funding is crucial for any long-term strategy to tackle and end homelessness
- Political commitment at all levels (national, regional and local)
- Public support generated through information and awareness campaigns.

Needs-based approach

This approach is based on the principle that policies should be developed according to existing needs of the individual rather than structural needs of organisations:

- The needs of the individual are the starting point for policy development on the basis of regular needs surveys and by means of individualised integration plans
- Appropriate revision of homelessness policies and structures is necessary on a regular basis.

Pragmatic approach

A pragmatic approach consists of the following two elements:

- Realistic and achievable objectives are necessary and possible when adequate research is carried out to fully understand the nature and scope of homelessness, the needs of the people who are homeless, the evolution of the housing and labour market and all other related areas
- A clear and realistic time schedule with long-term targets as well as intermediate targets.

Bottom-up approach

A bottom-up approach is about developing policy responses to homelessness at local level (within a clear national or regional framework) based on two elements:

- Importance of local authorities for the implementation of homeless strategies through a shift towards greater involvement, more responsibility and more binding duties at local level
- Bringing service delivery closer to people who are homeless with local authorities in a strong position to coordinate partnerships between all relevant actors in the fight to end homelessness.

*For more information, do not hesitate to
contact the FEANTSA office:*

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