



feantsa cities
toolkit for ending homelessness



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Overview

European & International Context:

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), signed and endorsed by each EU Member State, has called for an end to poverty, specifically extreme poverty¹, and to guarantee access to adequate housing for all² by 2030. In a European context, homelessness is one of the most extreme forms of poverty we face.

In 2017 the European Commission and Member States proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), which includes the right to housing and shelter under Principle 19.³

The Urban Poverty Partnership (UPP) was established under the EU Urban Agenda in 2016 with the aim of empowering cities to combat urban poverty. The partnership selected homelessness as one of four priority areas requiring the attention of cities, reflecting the key role of cities in fighting and ending homelessness.

The partnership facilitates policy discussion between cities, national ministries, European Commission officials and civil society, culminating in an action plan published in early 2018.⁴ The UPP has called for an end to homelessness in Europe by 2030, linking closely with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

In addition to these policy developments at the International and European level, we have seen increases in homelessness across Europe, as reported in FEANTSA's 3rd Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe, which has predominantly affected cities. In the years ahead we need to equip cities with the supports and resources needed to reverse these develops and to ultimately reduce and end homelessness in Europe.

Aim of Toolkit:

While many policies affecting homelessness are developed at national, or as above international level, cities by their nature are in a unique position to coordinate an integrated response to homelessness. Cities and municipalities will be key drivers in developing local level policies that can i) deliver the right to housing and shelter under the EPSR, ii) end extreme poverty and provide adequate housing for all under the SDGs and iii) work towards ending homelessness by 2030, under the UPP, in addition to implementing national level policies.

This toolkit provides cities, local and municipal authorities with a framework to make a meaningful impact in the fight to reduce and end homelessness in Europe by 2030.

Method:

This toolkit explores the role of a city in combatting homelessness, as the first responder and as a human rights defender. The toolkit provides a working definition for what "ending homelessness" means in a practical sense and provides a series of policy initiatives cities should undertake to end homelessness around:

1. Better Data Collection
2. Increasing Access to Affordable Housing
3. Delivering Integrated Services
4. Investing in Prevention

¹<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-1-no-poverty.html>

²<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/>

³https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en

⁴http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/annex_1_eu_urban_agenda_upp_action_plan_171221_final.pdf

Role of a City:

Homelessness is the result of a range of social and economic policies and while these may be influenced by local, national or even international level policies, it is a problem that predominantly manifests itself in our cities.

If we are serious about combatting homelessness in a meaningful way, we need to view cities as key actors in developing and implementing policies tailored to their context. This also means empowering cities with the tools, knowledge and resources required to end homelessness. Cities understand the housing needs of its inhabitants more than any other policy maker.

The EU Urban Agenda and Urban Poverty Partnership have prioritised homelessness as a key issue for European cities. At the international level, the UN New Urban Agenda has also pushed homelessness and housing as a critical issue to address by 2030. The European Union Member States proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights in 2017, including a right to housing and shelter.

In the years ahead the spotlight will be on our cities to respond to these different policy initiatives and deliver practical solutions.

Cities as First Responders:

Although Cities don't always have competencies on welfare, housing or health policies, the reality is they are left to respond to the recent increases in homelessness seen across Europe. Cities understand the local actors and dynamics of homelessness in their city better than national policy makers and can leverage critical policy levers in their city to combat homelessness.

Supports and services vary in different cities and countries, depending on the competencies and decentralisation of policy making to the local level.

Irrespective of how services are designed and implemented, cities are in a unique position in the fight to end homelessness. In the years ahead, EU

Member States will have to face their obligations to end poverty by 2030, under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This is an ambitious goal, but cities should be crucial allies in the pursuit of ending homelessness.

Cities are critical to facilitating, funding or managing a range of services and supports critical to combatting homelessness such as emergency shelters, housing or wider social and health supports. This means they are in a privileged position to:

- Collect, or develop the means to collect, data on homelessness at the local level. This data is crucial to the development of appropriate strategies and services that are tailored to the profile of homelessness in each city and the needs of service users.
- Provide AAA housing that is i) affordable, ii) adequate and iii) accessible. Housing should be affordable, of good quality that doesn't harm the health of the occupants and be accessible for lower income households and those experiencing homelessness
- Ensure local integrated services. A city can ensure that the full range of services they manage, or fund, are coordinated effectively. Homelessness is complex, and while housing is a valuable tool to combat homelessness, cities must ensure relevant support services linked to education, health, employment, training and social and community integration are available.
- Develop and implement prevention strategies. Ending homelessness mandates an investment in prevention of homelessness in the first instance. Prevention strategies are not only cost effective, delivering savings to the city, but they are embedded in human rights approaches through recognising and vindicating the right to housing.

Cities as Human Rights Defenders:

Box 1: Right to Housing and Cities

Sub-national governments at all levels, are under a legal obligation to respect, protect, and fulfil international human rights, including the right to adequate housing for all people

Implementing the Right to Adequate Housing: A Guide (Local Governments and Civil Society.) United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing

At its core, homelessness is the infringement of basic human rights. As the ‘first responders’, cities should not view themselves exclusively as administrations providing supports and services. They should see themselves as playing a role in defending human rights, in this instance the right to housing.

Taking a human rights perspective to the functioning of a city provides a new impetus to provide housing for people experiencing homelessness. Providing housing isn’t simply a moral or ethical question but a legal necessity, to ensure that the basic human rights of citizens is protected .

Box 2: Housing in International Human Rights Law

“The right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions”

Article 11.1 of International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

The International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the European Pillar of Social Rights set out rights in relation to housing and homelessness. Recently the European Urban Agenda, a key driver of urban policy in the EU, has noted “the responsibility to respect, promote and protect human

rights, and this commitment is to be respected by all sub-national authorities.”⁵

The New Urban Agenda, at the UN level, also focuses on the local level. It commits not only national level policy makers, but cities at the local level to promote the development of local housing policies that i) vindicate the right to housing, ii) focus on the prevention of homelessness through combatting forced evictions and iii) foster integrated services linking social services to employment, healthcare, education and housing.

Box 3: European Pillar of Social Rights

Access to social housing or housing assistance of good quality shall be provided for those in need.

Vulnerable people have the right to appropriate assistance and protection against forced eviction.

Adequate shelter and services shall be provided to the homeless in order to promote their social inclusion

Principle 19 of the European Pillar of Social Rights

The reality on the ground is that it will fall to cities to not only provide services to end homelessness but to vindicate the human rights of its citizens. This reality has been recognised with the adoption of the New Urban Agenda, adapted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) which brings special attention to the role of cities in combatting homelessness.⁶

Rights in Action – The Homeless Bill of Rights

The Homeless Bill of Rights is a template document that provides a framework for a city to consider the rights of people who are homeless. Of course, the Bill of Rights is not a legally binding document, rather it is an opportunity for a city to recognise the rights of people experiencing homelessness, outlined in boxes 1–4, and to demonstrate their intent to vindicate such rights. The Homeless Bill of Rights has been led by

⁵Ibid.

⁶<https://unhabitat.org/housing-at-the-centre-of-the-new-urban-agenda/>

Barcelona and has been signed by Mostoles (Spain) and four Slovenian cities Murska Sobota, Slovenj Gradec, Maribor, and Kranj.

The Homeless Bill of Rights places the emphasis on supporting people to exit homelessness through housing solutions. Where housing cannot be provided immediately, homeless people should be provided with decent emergency accommodation. People who are homeless have the same rights to access and use public space as any other citizen and should not be discriminated against for their use of such spaces. The Bill of Rights outlines a number of other basic rights the city commits to which includes access to sanitary services, possession of a postal address and privacy.

The Bill of Rights is ultimately a framework which can be adapted to each city and local context to recognise and vindicate the human rights of those experiencing homelessness.

The Homeless Bill of Rights was co-developed by FEANTSA/Housing Rights Watch and Foundation Abbé Pierre. If you would like to learn more about the Homeless Bill of Rights you can visit its [website](#) or contact [Maria José Aldanas](#)⁷

Madrid has developed a comprehensive human rights action plan. The Madrid example covers 22 goals for human rights, of which goal 13 refers to housing.

If you'd like to learn more about Madrid's Human Rights Action Plan and their process you can check out this [resource](#).⁸

Box 4: Homelessness and Criminalization

S108: We commit ourselves to combating homelessness as well as to combating and eliminating its criminalization through dedicated policies and targeted active inclusion strategies, such as comprehensive, inclusive and sustainable housing first programmes

United Nations New Urban Agenda

Madrid 'Human Rights' Action Plan

Embedding Human Rights into homeless or housing policies can seem like a daunting task. The Madrid Human Rights Action Plan provides an overview for how this process can work. Through a combination of i) public consultations, ii) roundtables with NGOs and iii) coordinating across 9 city departments the city of

⁷<http://www.housingrightswatch.org/billofrights>

⁸<https://www.uclg-cisdp.org/sites/default/files/Strategic%20Plan%20Madrid%20Synthesis.pdf>

From Managing to Ending Homelessness:

The goal of any city's homeless policy shouldn't end with the provision of shelter and emergency accommodation. In the lead up to 2030, we need to shift the rhetoric from managing homelessness to ending homelessness outright. This is an ambitious target, that requires reflection about how services are developed and delivered and a broader consideration about what is the underlying objective of homeless services.

Setting a Goal:

Cities should aim to support people experiencing homelessness out of rough sleeping, shelter or emergency accommodation as quickly as possible while also implementing policies that prevent the occurrence of homelessness in the first place.

The end goal for any city's homeless strategy should be to end homelessness outright, unfortunately given recent trends we are moving further away from achieving this goal. The United Nations target of ending homelessness by 2030, supported by the European Urban Agenda, should provide a timeline to complete this goal.

Ending homelessness can seem like an overly ambitious goal but it is possible. Experiences from Finland, Norway and North America have demonstrated that investing in evidence-based practices to combat homelessness can lead to a reduction in homelessness and the ultimate eradication of homelessness.

In our Toolkit to Ending Homelessness⁹ FEANTSA outlined 5 goals in ending homelessness outlined below:

1. No one sleeping rough
2. No one living in emergency accommodation than longer than is an "emergency"

3. No one living in transitional accommodation longer than is required for a 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

Box 5: Functional Zero Homelessness v. Absolute Zero Homelessness

The overarching goal for cities should be to achieve absolute zero homelessness, but this is extremely difficult to achieve. Having absolutely zero experiences of homelessness is visionary but far from most cities' grasp.

Functional zero however aims to ensure there is enough appropriate and adequate housing and shelter services for anyone who needs them. Thereby making sure no one is forced to sleep rough and any time spent in a shelter is short and the person is re-housed quickly and successfully.

Functional zero should be every cities goal, while always striving towards absolute zero.

For more information on functional and absolute zero homelessness check out this research piece from the University of Calgary.¹⁰

Cities have more than a decade to develop and deliver strategies that can contribute to these goals in the fight to end homelessness by 2030.

Having any impact on homelessness and pursuing the 5 Goals of Ending Homelessness requires key actions around:

1. **Data collection** – ending homelessness requires access to data to understand the needs of people experiencing homelessness and to monitor progress towards its eradication.
2. **Affordable Housing Solutions** – ending rough sleeping and emergency accommodation requires

⁹<https://www.feantsa.org/en/toolkit/2010/10/12/toolkit-ending-homelessness-a-handbook-for-policy-makers>

¹⁰<https://www.policyschool.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Absolute-Zero-Turner-Albanese-Pakeman.pdf>

follow-on housing solutions and a place for people to move into.

3. **Integrated Services** – sustainable solutions to combat homelessness requires integrated services that allow people with experiences of homelessness to access a range of services and supports they need touching on employment, education, health, community integration etc.
4. **Prevention strategies** – ending homelessness is not just about moving people from shelters into housing, it is also about investing in policies that prevent the occurrence of homelessness in the first instance.

Ending homelessness doesn't mean re-inventing the wheel. Cities have a range of resources at their disposal, a key step in reducing homelessness is about harnessing existing resources and making better and more efficient use of existing services and systems.

The following sections outline key actions cities should take in the fight to end homelessness, complemented by examples of policies in action.

⁷<http://www.housingrightswatch.org/billofrights>

⁸<https://www.uclg-cisdp.org/sites/default/files/Strategic%20Plan%20Madrid%20Synthesis.pdf>

Better Data Collection:

Good data is a valuable investment as it provides essential information which should inform how a city designs services. It sets out issues related to i) causes of homelessness, ii) profiles of homelessness, iii) needs and required support services and iv) challenges to exiting homeless services.

Value of Data

At the local level data gives us important insights into the true nature of homelessness. Tackling and reducing homelessness requires targeted interventions. Good data collection can tell us what are the causes of homelessness – is it the result of unemployment, loss of incomes, debt, evictions, loss or death of a member of the household, family rejection, mental or physical health etc? Has the person been discharged from a state service such as an ex-prisoner, patient from a hospital or a young person who has aged out of state care? Are we dealing with families, migrants or young people?

All this information informs how we design services and implement wrap-around supports.

Data Sources

Any attempt to combat homelessness at the local level has to be accompanied by an efficient data collection mechanism. In the absence of data, it is impossible to know precisely what the true scale of homelessness is and to measure how effective policies are at meeting the needs of people experiencing homelessness. Cities should make use of three key data banks:

1. **Administrative Data** – Many cities already have the infrastructure in place to gather data on their homeless population. For example, cities should have access to “administrative data” collected by homeless shelters and emergency accommodation. Cities should aim to integrate the data being collected across all shelters, to ensure data is harmonised and

captures the profiles, needs and general trends of homelessness in the city.

2. **Point in Time (PiT) Data** – This is a form of data collection that is more burdensome. PiT counts generally occur across a city on one given night. Volunteers and service providers count those who present to homeless services and are sleeping rough on the streets. The aim here is to have a broader count than the admin data. The quality of the data can vary. Some cities choose only a quantitative data to have a homeless figure. Other cities, such as the World Habitat Campaign to End Street Homelessness, Box 6, conducts interviews to gather qualitative data and capture information around the gender, background, profile, educational background and other information that should shape how services are delivered.

3. **Researchers Data** – Researchers and academics, sometimes partnering with a city or homeless services, will conduct research on people experiencing homelessness. The research may be niche around a selective topic such as alcohol or drug addiction, trauma, abuse or violence, but the data is still beneficial and informative and should be considered by a city when designing a homeless strategy. Researchers’ data can also be beneficial in exposing gaps in existing data collection or highlighting issues and problems that the city had not identified or realised. For example, women, youth and LGBTIQ homelessness is generally hidden and excluded from data collection systems, researchers have done an excellent job in profiling the needs of different demographics of homelessness.

Box 6: Point in Time Counts

The key to running a point in time count is the preparation. It can be a lot of work. The World Habitat Ending Street Homelessness Campaign is a great resource on how to organise a count. You can use it for budgeting, mapping, working with volunteers and a range of other actions.

<https://www.world-habitat.org/our-programmes/homelessness/campaign-toolkit/>

Amsterdam City Study on Homelessness

The Court of Auditors in Amsterdam provides a framework for compiling data about homelessness in a given city. Through a combination of i) interviews with civil servants, advocates, NGOs, people with lived experiences of homelessness and service providers, ii) site visits to view services in operation, iii) group discussions with people experiencing homelessness and service providers, iv) surveys with health care professionals and v) analysing reports from service providers and policy documents from the city, the Court of Auditors in Amsterdam has published its report on homelessness in the city.

The extensive evaluation examines the increases of homelessness, the insufficient services available, waiting times to access services and the impact poor mental health or substance misuse on accessing services. The study can be accessed here.¹¹

Homeless Count Dublin

Data on people experiencing homelessness is collected by the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE). DRHE carries out a rough sleeping count every six months. The count enables DRHE to measure increases or decreases of rough sleeping in the city on a bi-annual basis. The count generally captures the number of people sleeping rough along with their age and gender. The rough sleeping count is considered a Point in Time count and is supported by the Pathway Accommodation and Support System (PASS) which is a system that provides real time data on the number of people experiencing homelessness presenting to services and where they are staying. The system allows the city, and service providers, to monitor the numbers of people presenting as homeless and how they are navigating the system. Additionally, the data allows DRHE to plan for future

services..

For more information on how Dublin City collects and manages its data you can visit its website.¹²

Athens' Street Count

Athens provides an excellent example of using data to drive policy. Historically Athens' did not have an official data collection strategy. In late 2017 the city coordinated a pilot count covering the city's Historical Centre (12 sectors), through collaboration of 6 partners (70 people split into 13 teams). The City undertook the general coordination and kept contact with the competent National Ministry, whereas count map, questionnaire and team shaping were the result of collaboration with all count partners. While the data was mainly quantitative, profile info was also collected which, among others, confirmed that many rough sleepers are substance users, who currently lack appropriate shelter services. Based on this data the City aims to secure funding for a new shelter/day care, with an appropriate number of places and open to substance users, which will be operational in 2019.

Box 7: Mapping a Street Count

Mapping: An important component of any count is the preparation and mapping the count, to ensure the greatest number of rough sleepers are captured. In France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania and Poland homeless service providers are relied upon to identify key parts of the city where rough sleeper are likely to be found such as train stations, parks or others area where people who are homeless congregate. In Lithuania service providers work with the local police force to map the count, as they both possess knowledge of where the homeless population can be found.

In Spain homeless surveys are conducted in any area with a population of more than 20,000 inhabitants, these are generally completed using surveys in shelters and homeless services. The homeless services also identify rough sleepers the cities should include in their surveys.

¹¹https://www.feantsa.org/download/wachten_op_opvang3930518612757212088.pdf

¹²<https://www.homelessdublin.ie/info/figures>

Increasing Access to Affordable Housing:

With housing costs rising faster than incomes in many cities, a key obstacle to ending homelessness is access to and availability of affordable housing.

The best way to prevent people becoming homeless is to ensure that everybody has access to affordable housing. A city's capacity to increase affordable housing can be dependent on its governance structure and the level of decentralization. Investing in large scale housing developments can be costly and take many years to come to fruition. There is great diversity across Europe when it comes to the extent and organisation of social housing, however cities that control large public housing stocks are few, but as highlighted below there are other options available that take advantage of existing resources by either repurposing existing assets or incentivizing the market to deliver affordable housing.

Box 8: Cost of Housing

Across Europe 24,409,732 or 11.1% of households spend more than 40% of their income on housing costs. While 36,944,460 or 16.8% of households are overcrowded and 10,945,645 or 4.8% of households face severe housing deprivation.¹³

Repurposing Existing Assets

Plenty of cities own public buildings that are no longer in use and falling into a state of disrepair. The changing nature of urban use and the habits of the population and the growth of 'shrinking cities' means that schools, hospitals and other public buildings are increasingly losing their target audience and are falling into disrepair or going unused. These 'leftover buildings' often require renovation to bring them back into use. Being unused, there is no individual or entity interested in refurbishing them unless they can expect a return on investment; if they do wish to buy and renovate them it will be for a profitable venture such as private housing. There are several ways cities

can get these buildings renovated and put back into use as affordable homes.

City Coordinated Renovations

The city can coordinate the renovation of a building it

Box 9: Importance of Housing

Finland is regarded as a best practice for combatting homelessness. A key component of the Finnish homeless strategy aims to take 500 people out of homeless shelters a year, and this has been achieved in part by investing in 3,500 flats to house people with supports for housing, advice and young people.

owns on the condition that the future tenants or owners, or even a local association, renovate it using their own means and that a set number of units are retained as affordable housing. This practice requires very few intermediaries, a high number of costs are cut. Those who took part in the renovation get housing, and the city gets a renovated building with earmarked affordable housing units included, at a low cost.

Modular Housing

Cities often have 'residual spaces' which have been left empty due to a lack of interest from developers. This can be for several reasons, perhaps the space is too small to build on or the space is not in a profitable or commercial area of interest to developers. This does not mean the space cannot be used. Spaces that would appear too small for regular housing can be used for modular or rapid-build housing, which is both quick and cheap to build. Several units stacked can create good living conditions in studio-sized apartments. Modular housing has the benefit of being a cheaper and quicker means than building regular housing. The experience of Dublin City Council's use of Modular Housing highlights how it can be used to house homeless families.

Community Land Trusts

Community Land Trusts (CLT), non-profit organizations that manage affordable housing on

¹³<https://www.feantsa.org/download/full-report-en1029873431323901915.pdf>

Box 10: Modular Housing in Dublin

Dublin City is using modular housing to deliver rapid build housing to address family homelessness. In 2017 22 high quality 3 bedroom rapid build homes were built in Ballymun, Dublin at a cost of EUR180,000 per house. Dublin City plans to develop over 500 rapid build homes in the coming years.

behalf of the community and tenants, are increasingly making use of vacant public lands. The CLT is an organization either which uses “emphyteutic” leases, leases that put an obligation on the tenant to improve the building, or buys public or private land at a very cheap price to build housing. With this type of cheap, very long-term lease, the CLT maintains land property and builds housing on the land that is sold at a very reduced priced. Since the CLT owns the land on which the building stands, it can impose low resale prices once the owner-occupier leaves, ensuring the housing remains affordable.

Legislation and Incentives

‘Use it or lose it’ policies and legislation can also be enacted at the local level, depending on the competencies of the city administration. Here the city enacts legislation that allows the city to take control of private buildings that have been left vacant and empty for a pre-defined period, such as offices or homes. This can be complemented by the use of other initiatives, such as taxes on empty buildings, to force the owner into bringing the real estate back into use.

Market-Based Approaches

Other than finding ways to produce housing themselves, cities can also intervene within normal real estate development to encourage private developers to invest some of their resources into affordable housing provision.

Affordable Housing Quotas and Incentives

Cities can introduce an affordable housing quota, meaning for example that for every 100 housing units a developer is obliged to include 20 units that are affordable or face a fine or levy. Or alternatively developers could avail of tax deductions for including affordable homes in their developments.

Rent Stabilization

Rent stabilization measure such as rent control or rent ceilings can also protect tenants from dramatic and unaffordable increases in their rent. These laws prevent rents from reaching certain levels. It can put ceilings on rents based on a city average or on a broader average (like a national average). It can also prevent rents from rising above certain rates during a tenancy.

Taxation on Luxury Builds

Box 11: Rent Control Mechanisms in Paris

In August 2015 the City of Paris enacted ‘La Loi Alur’ which imposes rent control measures in tense areas of the city, to prevent unaffordable increases in rent. The level of rent is determined by the type of housing, area of the city, prices in the district, year of construction and number of rooms.

A variety of taxation practices can deter the building of more high-end apartments in favour of affordable housing. Progressive taxes indexed on the rent or sale price could discourage developers from building luxury housing and invest more in building several affordable units rather than one large expensive housing unit.

Public Private Partnerships

Private developers may also be interested in public-private partnerships given the right incentives. Joint real estate development can be a good opportunity to impose affordable housing quota within a building project in exchange for financial commitments and will be cheaper than the city assuming affordable housing development by itself.

Develop Integrated Services for Interdependent Needs

In general homelessness is not the result of one single issue in isolation. It is a combination of complex and overlapping factors. Some are the cause homelessness while others are the consequences of experiencing homelessness.

Box 12: Support Services For Exiting Homelessness

Housing **Childcare** **Employment**
Education **Training** **Mental Health**
Alcohol Addiction **Primary Health** **Drug Addiction**
Family reunification **Legal assistance** **Tenancy Maintenance**
Budgeting/Financial Management

Box 12 outlines just some of the services that are important to support people in exiting homelessness. However, if each service is siloed within its own administrative and bureaucratic regimes and systems, it makes accessing the services for people experiencing homelessness more difficult. These services shouldn't operate in isolation because these underlining factors must be treated holistically. Combatting homelessness means addressing a set of interdependent needs, which requires integrated services.

Developing integrated services i) safeguards against the use of contradictory policies that perpetuate homelessness, ii) protects against overlapping and duplication of services and iii) highlights gaps in service provision.

Facilitating inter-institutional dialogue is important to ensure all actors fully understand the nature of homelessness and the inter-play between their support service and the other needs of the person they are supporting. For example, a housing program may mandate counselling for mental health or addiction to access housing, however the mental health or addiction services may require a postal

address to access their service. Without a postal address you cannot access the mental health or addiction service, meaning you cannot access housing. Connecting these services together allows them both to understand how they can work better together to ensure the best possible outcomes for their clients.

Box 13: Integrated Housing Strategies

Art 32: We commit ourselves to promoting the development of integrated and age- and gender responsive housing policies and approaches across all sectors, in particular the employment, education, health-care and social integration sectors, and at all levels of government – policies and approaches that incorporate the provision of adequate, affordable, accessible, resource efficient, safe, resilient, well-connected and well-located housing in order to promote their social inclusion.

New Urban Agenda

Integrated Strategies for Ending Homelessness:

In the 3rd Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe FEANTSA compiled a series of lesson's from existing integrated strategies to fight homelessness. These included;

1. Put people experiencing homelessness and their rights at the centre of any initiative. For example in Scotland and France the right to housing is enshrined in law.
2. Invest in Housing First as an evidence based practice and solution to homelessness,, which has been key to reducing homelessness in Finland and Norway. Housing First works as an excellent model for providing integrated services.
3. Ending homelessness is an investment which requires significant funds being allocated to a strategy to affect change. In Italy for example financing was sourced from European sources to fund homeless interventions while in Finland financing is split across several government

agencies. Coordinating financing across different budgets reflects the broad reach of savings which can be accrued over time in homelessness is reduced such as the justice, health, housing and welfare budgets.

4. A strategy has to be continuous and regularly updated. While Finland is the only EU country where homelessness is continuously decreasing it has been the result of a change of strategy over 20 years ago, that is continuously updated and amended to the current challenges. Over time needs and supports will change as will the means of how services work together.
5. Cities should be given a clear role in coordinating partnerships between the wide ranging stakeholders and actors to end homelessness. There needs to be multi-level governance which provides a clear role for cities. In Italy national policies and guidelines have been used to empower cities while in Wales local authorities have a legal obligation to prevent homelessness.

Collective Impact – A Framework for Integrated Services:

Collective Impact brings a group of relevant actors from different sectors working together to address a major challenge by developing and working towards a common goal that fundamentally changes outcomes for populations. It is the basis of the Canadian A Way Home model for eradicating youth homelessness.

Collective Impact is contingent on four preconditions:

1. **Influential Leaders** – Cities by their nature are influential. They usually have the authority to convene all relevant actors needed to develop integrated services and motivate organisations towards a shared goal or vision, such as ending homelessness. Cities can begin by bringing together support services including housing, employment, youth outreach, supports for survivors of violence against women and wider training and education services.
2. **A Sense of Urgency** – We have 12 years to end homelessness in the EU in a context where it is rising

in every EU country bar one. This requires an urgent and committed response by all relevant actors.

3. **Building Trust** – NGO's and cities share a common goal in wanting to improve the lives of people who experience homelessness. Through collective impact this overarching and shared goal is the foundation of trust between the actors.

4. **Adequate Resources** – Creating this positive change takes time and resources. Building integrated services means committing someone to oversee and drive the integration of services.

In designing integrated services, a city should bring all relevant state, semi-state and civil society actors together. This can include: the housing department, social affairs department, youth department, homeless NGOs, health services, mental health services, training authorities, women services, LGBTIQ support organisations, migrant and refugee organisations and housing authorities. Creating a common dialogue is important to ensure services are fully integrated.

The value of Collective Impact lies in enhancing mutually beneficial relationships between organisations.

Establishing a Collective Impact approach requires 5 key steps outlined below:

Common Agenda: Organisations can, and likely will, have varying milestones and goals, but the overall agenda and vision of the collective impact should be the same – to end homelessness. In the pursuit of that goal specific organisation can focus on improving skillsets, addressing trauma, treating addiction or providing supported housing, but all with the overarching aim of ending homelessness.

Shared Measurement: Ending homelessness requires a clear picture and understanding of what is happening. Sharing data between all services informs the city on what is and what is not working. If people aren't being moved out of shelter in an appropriate time, understand why

housing units aren't available. If people are no longer able to sustain their tenancies dig a little deeper and find out why. Do the training opportunities available match the skills being sought in the labour market? Are housing benefits made available by a housing or social department realistic to the rental market? Sharing data means understanding the entire picture.

Mutually Reinforcing Activities: The use of shared data benefits everyone and allows actors to share accountability and successes. Integrated services means the total needs of a person is understood and ensures that the activities of housing, social and medical professionals work collaboratively to address a single or multiple needs. .

Continuous Communication: Ensuring effective communication is key. Sharing updates and progress in a trusting and team environment is important. Sharing concerns, risks or failures is important. Failure should not be a negative, rather it shines a light on an issue with the system and together can be improved.

Backbone Support: For collective impact to function it needs a driver, an entity who is driving to create integrated services. This is not about taking credit, it is about facilitating the services coming together and sharing the success among all partners in promoting integrated approaches to combat homelessness. The city should play this role.

Collective Impact in Action: A Way Home Canada

A Way Home Canada has used the framework of collective impact to bring all relevant actors together to develop and deliver an integrated Housing First For

Youth Service.

Collective Impact was fundamental to ensure that each stakeholder understood their respective role in i) preventing youth homelessness while ii) supporting youth experiencing homelessness out of homelessness and iii) ultimately ensuring vulnerable youth don't become homeless again.

If you are interested in learning more about using Collective Impact as a means to developing integrated services in your city check out the toolkit developed by a [Way Home Canada](http://www.wayhome.ca).¹⁴

¹⁴<http://homelesshub.ca/toolkit/subchapter/youth-plan-collective-impact>

Investing in Prevention Strategies

This section explores why a city should develop and invest in prevention strategies with some case studies of effective models for preventing homelessness.

Why Prevention:

Ending homelessness is not only about transitioning rough sleepers, those using shelters and other homeless service users into housing, it means preventing people from becoming homeless in the first instance. Homelessness is a gross infringement of human rights and investing in prevention ensures a better vindication and protection of rights. People who experience homelessness are often in a crisis situation, and crisis situations are more complex and more expensive to address. Investing in prevention strategies and services is a far more cost-effective strategy for reducing homelessness.

Box 14: Support Services For Exiting Homelessness

The nature of homelessness means many people are at risk of poor physical or mental health. It is a stressful period of a person's life resulting in anxiety, depression and a series of other complex mental illnesses. These are exacerbated by poor physical health resulting from spending days on the street or nights in poor quality shelters. Many turn to drugs as a coping mechanism or to self-medicate. Homelessness triggers a survival mode instinct, the need to source shelter and food, meaning that health issues are not addressed until they reach crisis point, typically in hospitals and emergency rooms where the health problem is at an advanced stage.

Prevention in Health Care - Pathway

The linkages between experiencing homelessness and poor health are well established. Often we see a cycle between homeless and health services, outlined in Box 14.

Imagine a person experiencing homelessness has accessed emergency care. They have been in the hospital for a week and are being discharged. They are still ill, but not ill enough to occupy a hospital bed. Effectively the hospital is discharging an ill patient into homelessness, which will likely exacerbate their illness, prevents a full recovery and likely means they will return to the hospital soon. This presents a lot of practical difficulties for the now homeless patient. Maintaining a schedule for taking prescription drugs is difficult, they may not have access to refrigerators to regulate the temperature of certain medication, aside from the fact that the street and a shelter, no matter how high quality, is no place to recover from an illness.

Pathway, in the UK, represents an integrated approach between housing officials and medical professionals to prevent homelessness. Here are some of the key services provided:

-Acute Hospital Ward Round - GPs who specialize in homelessness meet with patients who are homeless in the wards and connect them with the housing office, or in some cases family, to help them secure housing ahead of their discharge from hospital.

-Homeless Nurses - Pathway recruits a homeless health nurse who supports and prepares patients for their discharge, understanding their current and future health needs and what housing they will need.

-Care Navigators - Provides people with lived experiences who have been through the Pathway model to act as a peer supporter and mentor to navigate homeless and hospital services and run follow-ups with discharged patients.

Pathway is also testing and evaluating a new post discharge support service, which ensures that patients discharged into the community are availing of the correct services and maintain the correct links.

If you are interested in learning more, Pathway has developed a series of training materials to assist hospital develop a similar model in their services.

Pathway can also provide a needs assessment to understand the local dynamic of how services are

operated and are delivered to give the best outcome for patients experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.

For more information on the wide range of resources and training they offer visit the Pathway website.¹⁵

Prevention in Judicial System – Criminal Sanctions Agency Finland

In general, prisoners leaving the justice system are at a heightened risk of becoming homeless. They have a poor awareness of their rights and the potential supports they can access. Prisoner homelessness is preventable. Prisoners are a population at risk of becoming homeless, who are known to the state and will be in a situation of housing transition on a pre-defined date in the future. The Criminal Sanctions Agency in Finland has established an education and awareness program within the justice system that aims to support ex-prisoners and prevent them from becoming homeless.

Prior to beginning the prison sentence, prisoners are contacted by the Agency to identify their housing situation for example if they have a lease, mortgage or own their home outright, and if and how this can be maintained during their sentence, to allow them to access housing once they are released. Prisoners also fill out a form and questionnaire which allows the agency to identify their needs and those most at risk of becoming homeless.

While serving their prison sentence prisoners can avail of a 5-day course which focuses on accessing housing, tenancy sustainment, budgeting, life skills and community integration. The course allows prisoners to have the tools to ensure they don't become homeless upon leaving the prison. Some cities offer housing to those that successfully participate and complete the course, to incentivise participation.

The Criminal Sanctions Agency does not own housing stock. Instead they build networks and collaborate with NGOs, Housing Agencies and cities to develop housing options and ensure the ex-prisoners have contacts with the relevant organizations. The Agency

has also set up working groups between these organisations to work to identify problems and challenges and develop joint solutions.

The Criminal Sanctions Agency is an excellent example of the homeless sector working with non-traditional allies and promoting an awareness of what homelessness is and how it can be combatted. As part of the project staff at the agency have been provided with study packs to better understand the housing needs and supports of people being released from the prison system.

As part of its work the Criminal Sanctions Agency has travelled throughout Finland to promote best practices for combatting homelessness among prisoners with cities. Research has shown that cities have typically discriminated against ex-prisoners in how they access a range of social services which contribute to the high numbers of homeless ex-prisoners.¹⁶

Prevention in Youth Care – Aftercare Service in Waterford, Ireland

Young people who are in the care of the state are a particularly vulnerable group who are at risk of becoming homeless. In many EU contexts when a young person in the care system turns 18 they effectively “age out” of state protection. Overnight the young person can lose access to housing, social benefits, their case worker and other supports. At the same time this is a group of people who typically lack the family or community support that a young person relies upon during their adolescence for support. Often such young people end up homeless. This is preventable.

In Waterford, Focus Ireland, a homeless NGO, operates a service that is geared to young people leaving state care. Tusla, the State Agency for Children and Family refer directly to the service and work in partnership with Focus Ireland. One of the key successes of the project is the relationship between the city and the NGO who work closely together to provide the flexibility required to meet the

¹⁵<https://www.pathway.org.uk/>

¹⁶https://www.feantsa.org/download/heidi_lind257412967893095954.pdf

changing housing needs of young people coming from the care system.

The aftercare project prevents homelessness by offering a range of services that are tailored to the individual young person's needs:

1. A Residential Aftercare Service: This is a Short Term/Transitional program and Focus Ireland provides an apartment to each young person for the duration of the program.
2. A Support and Settlement Service: Providing outreach support to young people who are living independently.
3. Housing First for Youth Service: Providing long term housing to young people with complex needs.

This aftercare services provides a range of activities that are aimed at preventing youth homelessness, and where it does occur help to quickly transition a young person out of homelessness, these include, but not limited, to:

- The provision of dedicated units of accommodation for young people in the city/region;
- The assessment of young people's needs and the creation of a support plan commensurate with these needs. The support plan is regularly updated as the young person's needs change;
- The provision of and facilitation to intensive support services to prepare young people to transition to independent living;
- Regular engagement with, and involvement of, young people who are either preparing to leave care and settle in the community, or are temporarily accommodated in emergency accommodation, in all assessments, planning, reviews and decision-making arrangements concerning their future re-housing;
- Preparing young people in a holistic manner in accordance with their needs and choices;

- Supporting young people in maintaining relationships with their carers and families and where possible in developing a network of community support.
- Ensuring young people have gained all the practical skills and knowledge required to manage their own home and lifestyle;
- Maximizing the education, training and employment outcomes of young people;
- Assessing each person's housing need and supporting them in finding and maintaining a home appropriate to their needs and capacity for independent living.
- Preparing the young people leaving care – an integral part of the service that will be planned for in collaboration with the relevant TUSLA staff and outside agencies where appropriate – adopting the case management inter-agency working model.¹⁷

Prevention of Evictions – Barcelona

As part of its goal to reduce homelessness and vindicate the right to housing, the City of Barcelona has developed and implemented a strategy to prevent evictions. Evictions, which result in a household becoming homeless, can be prevented. In Barcelona there is roughly 30 evictions a week, often affecting low income and vulnerable households. The City of Barcelona intervenes as the last resource to prevent a household from becoming homeless in cases where an eviction is imminent or underway and debt settlements and income continuance have not been explored. The City will intervene by:

- Mediating between the landlords and tenants or lenders and mortgagees
- Providing options to assume the existing debt and arrears that can allow the occupants to remain in place
- Arrange for legal aid
- Allocate alternative housing to households where the evictions are unavoidable.

¹⁷<https://www.feantsa.org/download/lisa-o-brien6268708767927568580.pdf>

The service is growing each year and increased its assistance from 679 families in 2014 to 1, 574 in 2016. The service is proving to be a success as demand has increased, while evictions have also begun to drop (by 8%) in 2016. Not only does the service provide much needed support to vulnerable households at risk of becoming homeless, but investing in prevention of evictions can prove to be a cost saving.

The Barcelona Service was selected as a best practice by URBACT in 2017.¹⁸

Box 15: Cost Savings for Prevention of Evictions

For each EUR1 invested in preventing evictions it saves EUR7 in costs to the city in temporary, emergency or rehabilitation accommodation resulting from the household becoming homeless

¹⁸<http://urbact.eu/intermediation-service-people-process-evictions-and-occupancies>

