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Housing First in Cities : Lyon Metropolis in France



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Seminar 20: Housing First in Cities (Room: TBD)

Chair: Mike Allen, IE

Four-year ethnographic survey (2017-2020)

Analysis of the process of dissemination and institutionalisation of Housing First in the Lyon metropolis, in relation to the strategy driven at national level and the networks promoting Housing First internationally.

Carried out among the actors involved in putting "Housing First" on the agenda and deploying it in the Lyon metropolis,

- # In the framework of a CIFRE (Industrial Convention for Training through Research), as a project manager at GIE La ville autrement,
- # We participated in the development of the local strategy for the deployment of Housing First and its implementation through experimental projects.
- # We worked with social landlords, accommodation and supported housing associations, the Metropolis of Lyon and the State services
- # This experience and our situational observations form the basis of the fieldwork.

The methodology combines

- # observational participation,
- # longitudinal monitoring of experimental projects,
- # fifty or so semi-structured qualitative interviews,
- # quantification of the forms of homelessness and institutional responses in this territory,
- # documentary analysis.

A new category of public action to investigate

The research covered the period 2017 – 2022 i.e. the duration of the first Five-Year Plan for Housing First launched in September 2017 by President Emmanuel Macron following his election

Housing First & Housing led approach is now guiding homelessness policies in France and Lyon.

Drawing on the theoretical framework of the sociology of public action and the sociology of innovation

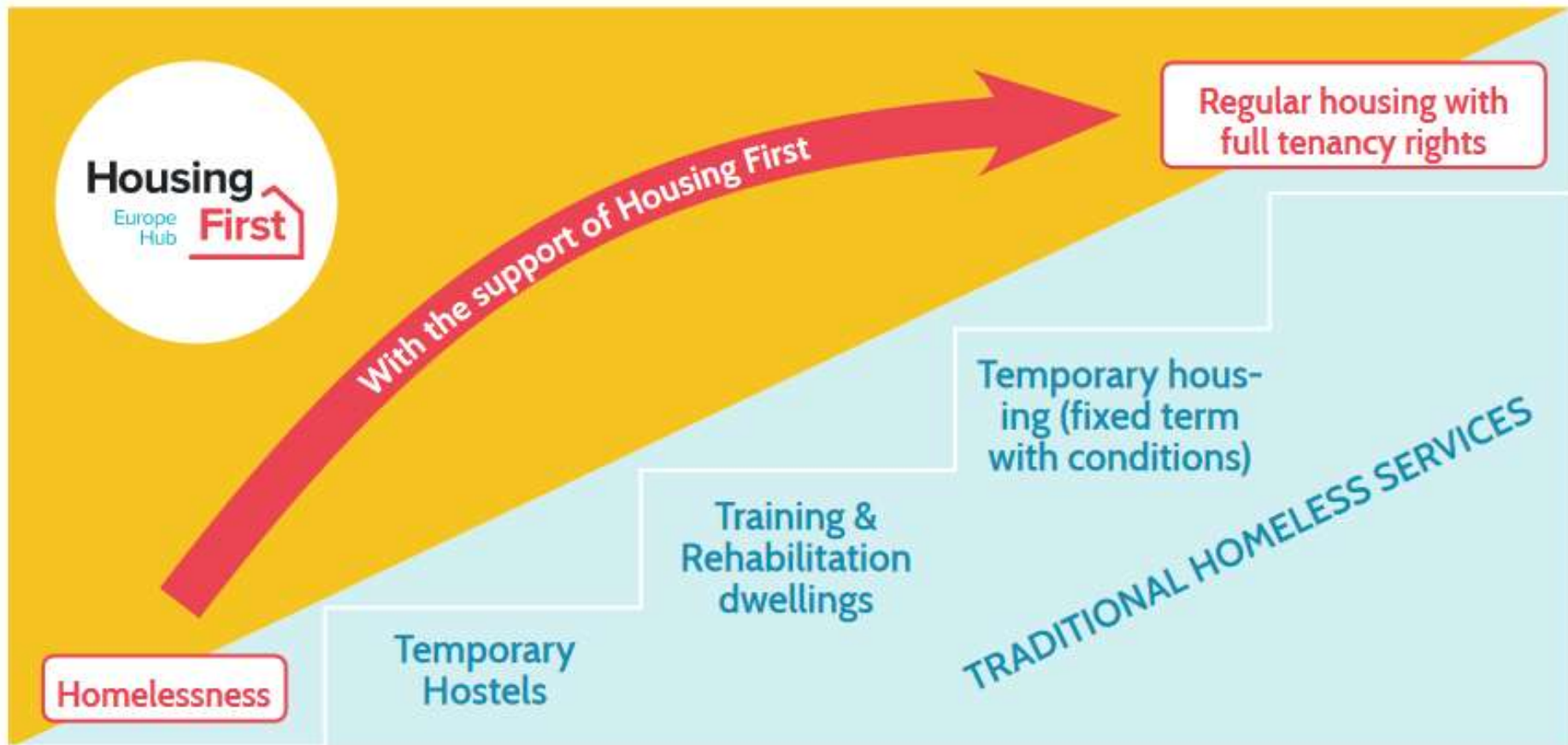
- # What is new about Housing First?
- # What can it change in homelessness policies and public device ?
- # How does it circulate and spread in the professional worlds involved in the homelessness system?
- # What does his diffusion change in the representations and practices of the actors (individual and collective) involved in the public homelessness system?
- # Is there an appropriation of the novelty of Housing First, i.e. a sustainable transformation of practices?

Housing First : an alternative route to ending homelessness

**A new doctrine based on a simple proposition :
provide stable housing to those who lack it and want
it**

- # Stable housing is a basis for getting out of a survival logic, for recovering, for getting back to a life project
- # People are accompanied on the basis of their choices and their projects. Housing is not conditional on adherence to social support or medical treatment.
- # Having a home does not solve the problems of poverty, illness, substance abuse, unemployment or social isolation, but it does put an end to homelessness
- # Homelessness is a transitory situation that can be drastically reduced and a preventable risk

A critique of the dominant system of care illustrated by the staircase model



skip the shelter

~~Prerequisites
and preconditions
on capacities~~



A process of institutional innovation by withdrawal

A collective dynamic of change driven by individuals and organisations who, on the strength of their belief in doing what they consider to be 'the right thing', seek to transform practices and institute new norms (Alter, 2010; Gaglio, 2011).

The novelty they seek to disseminate and institute, is not an ad-hoc creation. Housing First results from the assembly and recombination of pre-existing practices (psychiatric rehabilitation, supported housing, recovery, harm reduction, peer support,...)

The particularity of this innovation process is that it is not structured around the introduction of something new but around the withdrawal of temporary accommodation (Goulet & Vinck, 2022):

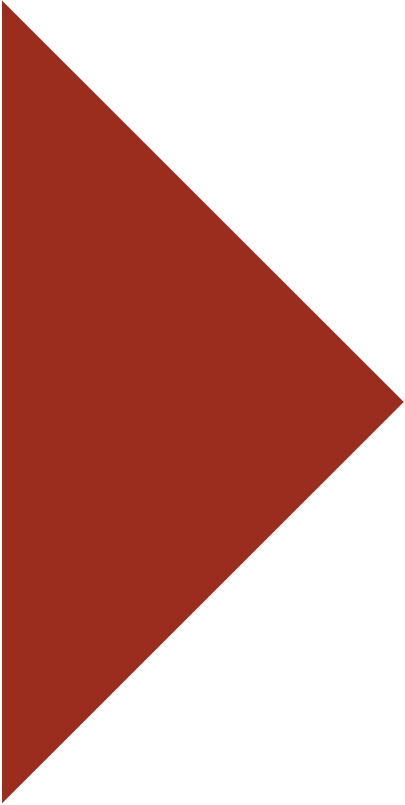
- # Governing this withdrawal implies a destabilisation of the dominant system of care based on accommodation and a reorientation of its trajectory (Joly, Barbier, & Turnheim, 2022)
- # it is not 'simply' a question of replacing one form of housing with another. The practices and professional cultures of housing, social support and care workers need to be transformed in depth, by reorganising working arrangements, institutional mandates and modes of cooperation.
- # Considering the specificity of the systemic change to be made, such a replacement implies making credible and necessary in the eyes of the actors the prospect of leaving accommodation and the concomitant deployment of operational alternatives via housing first

What progress has been made?

By the end of 2021, the dissemination of the Housing First is effective but the signs of successful appropriation are not present

- # Some thirty Housing First "pilot projects" launched and a strong partnership dynamic despite the limited additional resources allocated and the uncertainty about the sustainability of the initiatives
- # Housing First has gained legitimacy but it is not self-evident. Direct access to stable housing remains a marginal practice in the local support system. While there were at least 11,230 homeless households (21,790 people), Housing First concerns around 637 households (1,097 people).
- # Temporary accommodation remains the predominant response and this stock continues to increase. The promoters of the Housing First are confronted with the difficulty of changing scale.

Main lessons learned from implementation (1/2)



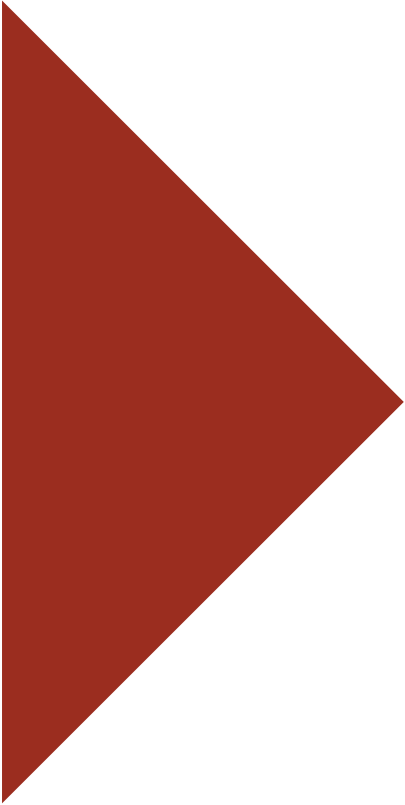
A large proportion of homeless people cannot be directly tenants of ordinary housing because of their administrative and financial situation (lack of residence permit, identity documents, resources) - rental intermediation is used to remove these obstacles.

Rental intermediation can also be used as a test (is it always housing first?).

The resources available to launch pilot projects are often insufficient and too precarious to meet the principles of Housing First with homeless people who have complex needs.

The supply of very affordable housing is limited. There is insufficient institutional support to mobilise sufficient affordable housing for people leaving accommodation and for those who could avoid entering housing through Housing First projects.

Main lessons learned from implementation (2/2)



There are no alternative housing options for homeless people who do not want to live in ordinary housing (there are not many of them, but support workers have no proposals for them).

There is too little inclusive housing for people supported in a Housing First project who cannot live on their own and they are no longer given priority when they are already housed.

There is no highly responsive partnership organisation to manage the few crisis situations in the blocks of flats where people have been housed. This runs the risk of allowing situations to deteriorate, weakening partnerships between associations and landlords and undermining the credibility of Housing First in the eyes of neighbours, social landlord staff and local politicians.

Hybridization and bifurcation in the Lyon metropolis

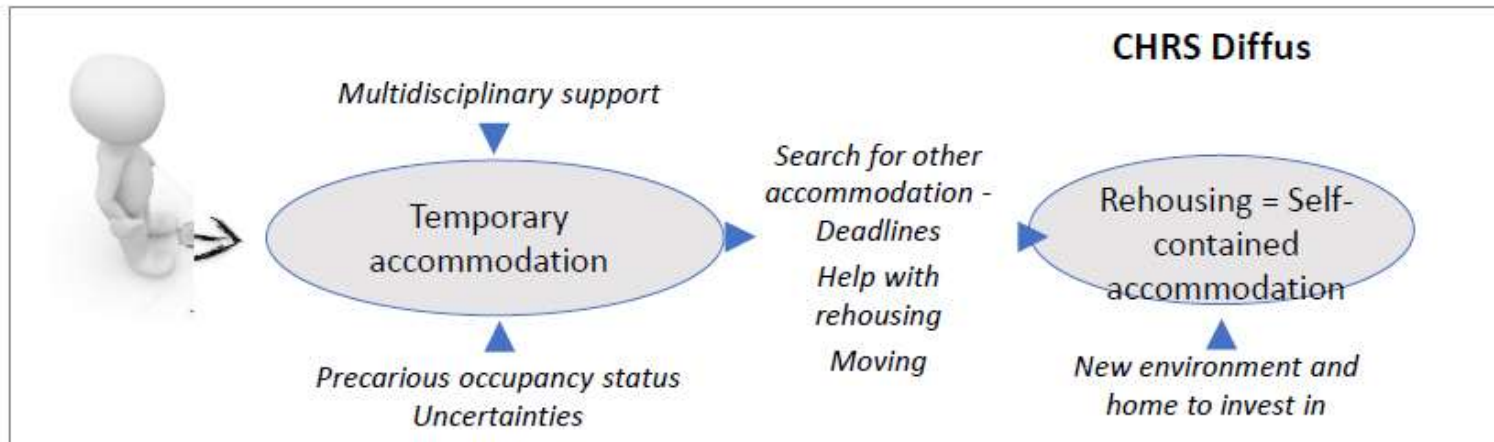
In reaction to an emerging failure, local adaptations transformed the initial proposal : “Reinventing accommodation in a more Housing First compatible approach”.

- # Using accommodation device to provide Housing First in affordable housing
- # Reinvest the registers of social emergency and precarious accommodation for those who do not have the right to stay
- # Develop inclusive supported housing and experiment with supporting homeless people in alternative housing
- # **Build a desirable imaginary around the reception of migrants and the end of homelessness with a new local "politics of hospitality".**

The successes and pitfalls encountered lead to the transformation of the Housing First doctrine in order to continue the collective action carried out in its name. The trajectory of institutional innovation continues.

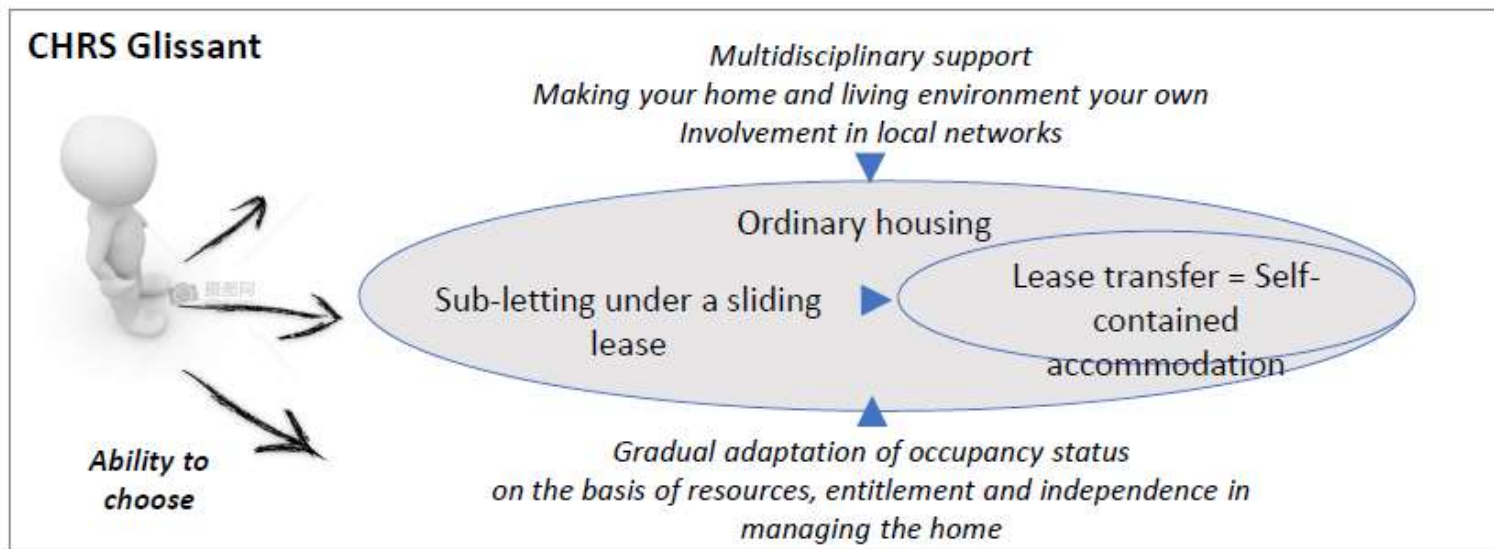


Hybridization : using accommodation device to provide Housing First in affordable housing



- 2019 / 2020 Experimentation on two CHRS

- 24 households supported (61 people)
 - # 3 now tenants
 - # 2 redirected
 - # 1 exit - exclusion
 - # 18 on temporary leases



- $\frac{1}{4}$ converted capacity (212 places)
 - # Partnership between association and social landlord (GIE LVA)
 - # Procedure used with 4 other lessors
 - # Planned extension to 2 other schemes

Breaking down the functions of the CHRS and linking it to ordinary housing

Accommodation with unconditional reception, rental intermediation, solvency, adapted rental management, multidisciplinary support



Reinvest the registers of social emergency and precarious accommodation for those who do not have the right to stay



The Metropole of Lyon has installed mobile mini-homes / "tiny houses" to house women with children under the age of 3 and for unaccompanied foreign minors (under the child protection scheme).

What's new?

- Independent accommodation rather than a hotel room
- Relationships between professionals and people receiving support
- No return to the street when a child reaches the age of 3 or when an unaccompanied minor turns 18
- Negotiation with the State to take over without moving / under the right to unconditional and continuous accommodation

& apply as much as possible the principles of Housing First in temporary accommodation facilities

Develop inclusive supported housing and experiment with supporting homeless people in alternative housing



Photo du site de Zone Libre

Free zone

Access to housing as a prerequisite for recovery

- Allowing 20 homeless people, refusing or being refused traditional accommodation solutions, to live in a chosen place, with the support of the collective and professional support supported.
- The inhabitants invest the place of life with their animals (when this is the case) and in the consideration of their addictions, if they have any.
- The team: peer workers, social workers, nurses, coordinator, professional integration counselor
The team, in conjunction with the partners, works with the people concerned to find the accommodation of their choice.