



Lyon Partnership Event Report - January 2026

Executive Summary	2
1. Housing First in Lyon	3
1.1 Political Leadership and Local Commitment	3
1.2 “Un Chez Soi d’Abord” in Lyon: Housing First in Practice	4
1.3 Housing Acquisition and Local Regulation	4
1.4 Site Visits	4
2. Systems Approach Housing First - Housing Partnerships and Housing Acquisition	4
3. Workshops - Session 1	5
3.1 Training and Post-Secondary Housing First	5
3. 2 Housing First for Youth (HF4Y)	6
3.3 Advocacy & Research - discussion on how to better organise the financing for housing for HF and homeless people	6
4. EU Context and Advocacy Opportunities - 2026 Planning	6
5. Systems Approach Housing First: making it work in practice	7
6. Local Authorities: Key partners to design and deliver systems Housing First	8
7. Workshop Session 2	9
7.1 Addressing the issue of the temporary accommodation sector in scaling Housing First	9
7.1 Migrants and Housing First	9
7.1 Housing Solutions for Housing First	9

Executive Summary



From 19 to 21 November 2025, the Housing First Europe Hub convened its partners in Lyon, co-hosted by the Métropole de Lyon and GIE-La Ville Autrement and Est Métropole Habitat, for a partnership event focused on strengthening the systems and partnerships needed to deliver Housing First at scale.

Building on the momentum of the Hub's 2024 Dublin conference, the Lyon event shifted attention from whether Housing First works to how it can be embedded across local systems, particularly through stronger collaboration with local authorities, housing providers, and national governments, and through more effective engagement at EU level.

A central focus of the event was Lyon's 10-year experience implementing a systems-wide Housing First approach. Through political leadership, coordination with social and private landlords, and innovative projects such as Un Chez Soi d'Abord and L'Autre Soie, Lyon provided a concrete

example of how Housing First can move beyond pilots and become a structural policy response to homelessness. Site visits and direct exchanges allowed participants to explore how these approaches operate in practice, including emergency coordination, housing acquisition, and long-term support.

Across plenary sessions and workshops, partners shared experiences on the most pressing challenge facing Housing First across Europe: access to housing. Discussions highlighted a growing consensus that successful Housing First systems require long-term housing partnerships, innovative acquisition models, dedicated allocations within social housing for Housing First, and the development of dedicated housing structures. At the same time, participants stressed that housing supply alone is insufficient without integrated support, prevention, and health system involvement.

The event also placed strong emphasis on the European policy context, particularly the EU's newly launched [Affordable Housing Plan](#), the upcoming EU Anti-Poverty Strategy, and the next Multiannual Financial Framework (2028–2035). Contributions from FEANTSA (Freek Spinnewijn), the DIHAL - the interministerial department for housing and homelessness (Raphael Bouloudnine), and local political leaders - Renaud Payre, Vice-President of the Métropole de Lyon - underlined both the opportunities and the risks: while homelessness and Housing First are increasingly recognised at EU level, there remains significant uncertainty about financing, implementation, and alignment with local realities. Furthermore, as the question of affordable housing becomes a more 'popular' topic, more actors have entered the field, which risks driving the discussions on housing for people in homelessness - and Housing First - towards the margins of the conversation. The need to better connect local authority leadership with EU-level policy and funding instruments was a recurring theme.

Interactive workshops provided space to explore key structural and emerging issues, including:

- Housing First for Youth, training needs and links to Erasmus+ projects
- Training and post-secondary Housing First programmes
- Advocacy and research; discussion on how to better organise the financing for housing for Housing First and homeless people
- The role of temporary accommodation in transitioning to Housing First systems
- Migrants and Housing First, eligibility barriers and trauma-informed support
- Practical housing solutions for Housing First

Overall, participants identified clear priorities for the coming years, including work on:

- housing access,
- training and capacity building,
- research and evidence,
- support for national Housing First networks,
- strategic engagement with EU institutions.

The event confirmed that advancing Housing First across Europe will depend not on isolated projects, but on strong partnerships, shared learning, and coordinated action across local, national and European levels.

Wednesday, 19 November 2025



1. Housing First in Lyon

1.1 Political Leadership and Local Commitment

The event opened in Lyon with a welcome address by Renaud Payre, Vice-President of the Métropole de Lyon in charge of Housing. He framed homelessness as a shared and urgent concern, noting that approximately 24,000 people are experiencing homelessness in the Lyon metropolitan area, based on the ETHOS typology.

Renaud Payre underlined the Métropole's strong commitment to Housing First as a guiding policy approach, stressing that Housing First cannot succeed without access to social housing and a clear break from traditional staircase models. He emphasised the importance of developing solutions for people with high and complex needs, while recognising the diversity of situations and levels of autonomy among people experiencing homelessness.

A recurring theme of his intervention was the need for European-level engagement. While acknowledging the strength of French practices, he argued that a stronger European housing and homelessness policy framework is essential to mobilise both social landlords and the private housing market. He also highlighted concerns about the future of European coordination platforms such as EPOCH (*a three-month extension of the programme has been approved, up to 31 March 2026*), and the lack of dedicated EU funding streams for homelessness.

1.2 “Un Chez Soi d’Abord” in Lyon: Housing First in Practice

The opening plenary continued with a presentation by Romain Walter, who introduced the “Un Chez Soi d’Abord” programme in Lyon. The programme forms part of France’s national Housing First strategy coordinated by the DIHAL, and targets people experiencing homelessness with high and complex support needs.

Initially launched in 2011 in 4 cities, the programme has since expanded to almost 40 sites across France, reflecting its growing institutionalisation as a national policy. Access to housing is unconditional, and the programme challenges traditional service models by prioritising immediate access to independent housing.

In Lyon, the programme operates through a mix of social and private housing, with approximately half of the dwellings sourced from each sector. Two main housing models were presented: a “classic” Housing First approach for adults aged 23 and over, and a Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) model designed to foster a greater sense of community.

A key feature of the Lyon model is the sliding lease mechanism, based on a tripartite agreement between the Un Chez Soi d’Abord, the landlord and the tenant. Housing and support teams work closely with tenants over time, acting as intermediaries with landlords and promoting long-term housing stability and autonomy. Participants also discussed challenges such as loneliness, the complexity of engaging people prior to housing, and the need to develop sustainable economic models to cover rent and living costs.

1.3 Housing Acquisition and Local Regulation

Renaud Payre also presented the role of the Métropole de Lyon in housing acquisition and regulation, including the legal right of first refusal on new private developments. While rising property prices increasingly limit the use of this tool, the system allows the Métropole to maintain oversight of housing developments and to engage social landlords strategically.

These regulatory tools were presented as part of a broader effort to ensure that Housing First is embedded within local housing governance, rather than operating as a standalone programme.

1.4 Site Visits

The first day concluded with site visits. Below you can find an extended list of services and organisations worth visiting in Lyon:

- Former au Logement d’abord - Training for Housing First - from introductory programmes for front line workers to University certificates
- Observing Homelessness (Maison de la Veille Sociale) - understanding local homelessness trends
- Les Pensions de famille, un offre originale de logements abordables I (Habitat et Humanisme) - a unique approach to communal living and HF
- Les Pensions de famille, un offre originale de logements abordables II (Fondation ARALIS) - a unique approach to communal living and HF
- La Cantina (Le MAS) - Day centre support for families
- La Base (Le MAS) - how to support migrants with a Housing First approach
- Le CoCon (FNDSA) - support for single mothers with a HF approach

- Zone Libre (Alynea - Samu Social 69) - How to house the “most marginalized” using Housing First principles
- La Maison (Maison de l’Hospitalité) - Resource center for people in precarious situations and citizen reception
- Le Château (Est Métropole Habitat) - Transitional urban planning at the service of hospitality

A more analytical overview of each can be found [here](#).

Thursday, 20 November 2025

2. Systems Approach Housing First - Housing Partnerships and Housing Acquisition

This session explored how different countries are working to secure sufficient housing to support Housing First and rapid rehousing at scale, drawing on experiences from Finland, The Netherlands and Scotland. Across contexts, the discussion highlighted the importance of shared understanding, strong leadership and cross-sector partnerships in enabling system-level change.

The Finnish experience illustrated the role of a dedicated housing acquisition structure operating within a national Housing First strategy. By separating housing provision from support services, this model has enabled large-scale housing construction and acquisition, while close coordination with cities, health services and national partners supports system-wide implementation. Reflections from this context underlined the importance of early investment in housing supply when scaling Housing First, alongside a pragmatic, problem-solving approach to partnership-building.

In The Netherlands, discussion focused on strengthening partnerships with national housing associations rather than establishing separate Housing First housing providers. This collaborative approach emphasises shared responsibility and joint investment, including the development of a foundation model dedicated to housing acquisition. Participants noted the value of using common frameworks and typologies, such as ETHOS, to build a shared understanding of homelessness among partners and decision-makers. Youth homelessness was identified as a key driver for expanding and adapting Housing First, reinforcing the need for flexible housing pathways and support models.

Contributions from Scotland highlighted prevention-oriented approaches and the integration of Housing First within wider care, health and homelessness systems. Participants described the impact of the broader housing crisis on implementation, alongside efforts to strengthen collaboration across sectors and improve system coordination. The discussion emphasised the importance of local authority leadership, the regional council of Fife was cited as a good example, as well as the need for cultural change within institutions, and the willingness of partners to address challenges collectively.

Across all contexts, participants stressed that effective housing partnerships require a shift in mindset, moving away from fragmented or control-oriented approaches towards trust-based collaboration. The discussion also highlighted the need to better integrate health services into Housing First systems, both to strengthen prevention and to explore opportunities for shared funding and investment. Flexibility in housing solutions—whether scattered or more concentrated—was seen as essential, alongside continued public engagement to challenge stigma and sustain political support.

3. Workshops - Session 1

3.1 Training and Post-Secondary Housing First

One of the parallel workshops focused on training and post-secondary education in Housing First, with contributions from partners in France, The Netherlands, Italy and Scotland. The discussion highlighted wide variation in training structures, alongside shared challenges related to quality, consistency and system change.

Nicolas Berut (Métropole de Lyon) from France presented a relatively institutionalised approach, including a university-level degree in Housing First aimed at social work students and professionals in continuous training. This was seen as a way to embed Housing First principles within professional education and respond to high staff turnover in social services.

In The Netherlands (Melanie Schmit - Housing First Netherlands), training initiatives were described as more targeted towards strategic leadership, policymakers and team leaders. While valuable, participants noted a need to strengthen understanding of Housing First at operational level, particularly among frontline workers. Concerns were raised about an emerging tendency to frame Housing First as a “housing-only” approach, which risks weakening the role of support and undermining outcomes.

The Italian (Giuseppe Dardes - Fio.PSD/Housing First Italia) experience highlighted both strengths and risks. Organisations such as fio.PSD play an important role in training and advising policymakers, but participants expressed concern about the misuse of the Housing First label by some organisations seeking funding without full adherence to the model. This reinforced the need for clearer quality standards and stronger links with local authorities and academia.

From Scotland, participants reported that Housing First training often takes place internally within organisations, with limited formal or accredited pathways. The absence of structured training for social workers was identified as a gap, given their central role in implementation.

Discussion also focused on the nature of support in Housing First, with contributors emphasising that support represents a cultural shift away from control-based models towards long-term, person-centred approaches. Examples from Dordrecht illustrated efforts to adapt Housing First practices within existing systems, including the use of mixed professional and volunteer support and individual support plans.

Finally, participants discussed tensions between temporary and permanent housing solutions. While short-term “waiting housing” was explored as a pragmatic response to housing shortages, concerns were raised about the risks of expanding temporary accommodation and the importance of prioritising pathways to permanent housing wherever possible.

3.2 Housing First for Youth (HF4Y)

This workshop explored the development of Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) and its growing recognition across Europe as an important extension of the Housing First approach. Participants discussed how HF4Y responds to the specific realities of young people experiencing homelessness, particularly those transitioning from childhood to adulthood, and the implications this has for housing pathways and support models.

A central discussion concerned whether HF4Y should be understood as part of Housing First or as a distinct framework. While some hesitation remains in certain contexts—often linked to limited expertise or the historical connection with the broader Housing First model—participants broadly agreed that the needs of young people require adapted approaches. Prevention was highlighted as a key component, including earlier interventions and stronger links with schools, childcare systems and youth services.

Young people face different support and housing trajectories compared with adults. The transition to adulthood is often characterised by instability and vulnerability, during a period of ongoing physical, cognitive and

emotional development. Many young people experiencing homelessness lack trusted adults or supportive networks, which makes rebuilding relationships and strengthening peer support particularly important. HF4Y programmes therefore often focus on developing independent living skills, rebuilding natural support networks and creating space for young people to express their aspirations and make meaningful choices.

Participants also highlighted the importance of offering flexible housing pathways. Rather than assuming that independent apartments are always the most suitable solution, a range of housing options may be needed, including transitional models that support gradual pathways to independence while maintaining the principle of stable housing.

The workshop also identified structural and financial challenges affecting HF4Y implementation. Funding responsibilities are often divided across sectors such as housing, health and child protection, creating fragmentation between emergency responses and longer-term support systems. Participants stressed the importance of prioritising youth homelessness within policy frameworks, including through stronger prevention measures and support for young people leaving state care.

Coordination across local, regional and national levels was also highlighted as a challenge. In this context, communities of practice were seen as valuable spaces for shared learning and capacity building among practitioners and policymakers.

Finally, participants reflected on the need to address stigma surrounding youth homelessness. Storytelling, empathy-based communication and the involvement of people with lived experience were identified as effective ways to challenge perceptions and improve services.

Looking ahead, participants emphasised the need for further European guidance on HF4Y, noting that existing international resources do not always reflect European policy and service contexts. Priorities include developing practical guidance on implementation, clarifying the relationship between youth-specific and adult Housing First programmes, and strengthening connections between housing and health systems in supporting young people's long-term wellbeing. The discussion will inform future work of the Housing First Europe Hub, including a dedicated focus on youth at the Housing First Europe Conference in Rotterdam in October 2026.

3.3 Advocacy & Research - discussion on how to better organise the financing for housing for HF and homeless people

This workshop focused on how to better organise and scale financing for housing within Housing First and homelessness responses, with particular attention to opportunities linked to the EU Affordable Housing Plan. Participants from a range of contexts—including Rotterdam, Paris, Helsinki, Austria, Norway, Sweden, Hungary, FEANTSA, Fondation pour le Logement (France), Scotland, the UK and Ireland—introduced their work and perspectives.

Discussion drew on a range of financing models and approaches, including examples such as the Y-Foundation, national and local initiatives, and large-scale housing acquisition programmes. Participants also discussed European funding opportunities, including forthcoming Horizon New European Bauhaus calls, and reflected on the role of European funding instruments and public banks, as well as the challenges of accessing and aligning EU-level funding with local Housing First delivery.

Participants explored the idea of developing an informal network of smaller localities (around 150,000 inhabitants or fewer) to address homelessness, highlighting that homelessness is not limited to large urban centres. Leuven was mentioned as a potential lead for this initiative.

Examples from the UK illustrated the use of philanthropic capital to develop housing stock for Housing First programmes in contexts with limited social housing and insufficient prioritisation in allocation systems. Simon Communities Scotland and Crisis were highlighted, with Crisis in the process of establishing a housing company separate from the charity, based on the Y-Foundation model, to acquire 1000 homes for Housing First over the next 10 years (Francesca Albanese - Crisis).

Additional challenges and policy ideas were also discussed. Fondation pour le Logement (France) proposed the idea of a tax on short-term rental platforms such as Airbnb to contribute to a European Housing Fund. Participants from Ireland (Emma Byrne - Focus Ireland) highlighted barriers to expanding organisational housing stock due to resistance to second-hand property acquisition, where first-time buyers are prioritised, leading organisations such as Focus Ireland to focus more on new housing development.

The exchange will inform a preparatory paper for the Housing First Europe Hub's 2026 Conference in Rotterdam, contributing to future advocacy and research priorities.

4. EU Context and Advocacy Opportunities - 2026 Planning



A dedicated plenary session examined the evolving EU policy landscape and its implications for Housing First, with a focus on how local, national and European levels can be better connected.

The discussion opened with reflections on the role of local authorities in shaping European housing policy. Drawing on initiatives such as the Mayors' Alliance on Housing, involving cities including Paris, Rome and Barcelona, the importance of amplifying local experience at EU level was emphasised. Particular attention was given to the need for a European housing policy that prioritises access to housing for the most vulnerable groups, including people experiencing homelessness. Several

policy needs were highlighted, including direct funding for social landlords and local authorities, stronger engagement from European public banks, and regulatory measures targeting short-term rental platforms. Proposals such as levying a small nightly charge on platforms like Airbnb were presented as potential tools to generate dedicated resources for social housing.

The session also explored key EU-level policy developments. The EU Affordable Housing Plan, launched in December 2025, was presented as a significant political signal that housing has become a priority for the European Commission. The plan is likely to serve as a strategic entry point for continued advocacy and engagement following its publication.

Further opportunities were identified in the forthcoming EU Anti-Poverty Strategy, where homelessness is expected to feature prominently, potentially alongside Housing First, as well as in the preparation of the next Multiannual Financial Framework (2028–2035). These processes were seen as critical for embedding Housing First within longer-term EU investment and policy frameworks, particularly in relation to preventing and ending homelessness.

Finally, the discussion highlighted the importance of national–EU coordination, including collaboration with initiatives such as EPOCH practice, and the role of training and mutual learning in supporting effective implementation. The session underlined both the opportunities and risks of EU-level engagement, and reaffirmed the strategic role of the Housing First Europe Hub in coordinating advocacy, supporting partners, and translating EU policy developments into practical impact at national and local levels.

5. Systems Approach Housing First: making it work in practice



This session examined how a systems-wide Housing First approach has been developed in Lyon, and how it connects to France’s national Housing First strategy. It combined local practice, housing production and national

coordination, illustrating how Housing First can move beyond individual projects and become embedded in public policy.

A central example was L'Autre Soie (Etienne Fabris - GIE - La Ville Autrement), launched in 2016 with EU funding under an Urban Innovation Action. Designed as an alternative to traditional emergency accommodation, the project aims to avoid isolating people experiencing homelessness from the wider city. Housing is integrated with social, cultural and public amenities, such as a restaurant, concert hall and public garden, intended to attract residents from across the city and promote social inclusion. This approach reflects a deliberate effort to counter segregation and situate Housing First within the everyday urban environment.

The Lyon experience was framed by two core principles of the French Housing First approach: the unconditional right of access to shelter and housing, and the continuity of support over time. Together, these principles reinforce Housing First as a long-term, housing-led response rather than a temporary solution.

The role of social landlords was highlighted as a key enabling factor. In Lyon, social housing providers (Est Métropole Habitat) manage large housing stocks and actively mobilise dwellings for Housing First programmes, including allocating a defined proportion of available housing to HF and optimising existing housing solutions alongside new production.

At the same time, Housing First in Lyon extends beyond the social housing sector. Private housing is also mobilised, supported by regulatory tools and rent control mechanisms, which are considered essential for maintaining affordability. The ability to combine European funding, local political leadership and a mix of social and private housing was presented as a strength of the Lyon model.

Overall, the session demonstrated how Housing First can be implemented through long-term political commitment, diversified housing solutions and strong multi-level coordination, offering transferable lessons for other European contexts seeking to move from pilot projects to system-wide approaches.

Friday, 21 November 2025

6. Local Authorities: Key partners to design and deliver systems Housing First

The final day opened with a panel examining the role of local authorities as system leaders in the design and delivery of Housing First. Examples from Scotland, the Netherlands and Finland illustrated how cities and regions are responding to homelessness through integrated, prevention-focused approaches within increasingly pressured housing systems.

In Scotland, discussion centred on a whole-systems approach developed with local authorities, including Fife. This model integrates homelessness and prevention services with health, substance use services, and data and evaluation functions, aiming to strengthen housing stability and reduce the burden on individuals to navigate complex systems alone. Growing pressure on temporary accommodation, particularly for families, reinforced the need for prevention and coordination. Practical measures include improved data collection on rough sleeping, task-focused working groups, and pilot initiatives such as community navigators and digital reporting tools. Research and evaluation were highlighted as drivers of cultural change, supported by shared risk-taking between partners.

From the Netherlands, examples from Rotterdam and Dordrecht showed how participation and flexibility are embedded within local Housing First approaches. Project O10 in Rotterdam, a Housing First for Youth initiative, focuses on preventing homelessness through rapid access to housing, flexible “breakthrough” budgets to address practical barriers, and the development of “warm networks” involving professionals, peers and volunteers. Research and evaluation are central to the model, with elements also being adapted for older populations. In Dordrecht, a pilot programme planned for 2026 aims to house 50 people, with participation identified as a core principle.

The panel also included insights from Helsinki, where the city plays a central role in Finland’s national programme to end homelessness. The programme prioritises prevention, particularly eviction reduction, and the renewal of Housing First practice, supported by strong collaboration with housing providers and research partners. Data and impact evaluation were highlighted as essential tools for informing policy and improving outcomes.

During the Q&A, participants reflected on effective engagement with local authorities, noting their complex internal structures, and stressing-out the importance of having small-scale experiments, rather than large reforms. Securing political commitment was discussed in terms of setting clear milestones, helping to build trust and sustain momentum over time.

7. Workshop Session 2

7.1 Addressing the issue of the temporary accommodation sector in scaling Housing First

This workshop examined how the temporary accommodation sector can be reconfigured to support the scaling of Housing First, using the Dundee case to explore both opportunities and risks.

In Dundee, from 2018, a shift towards Housing First was supported through a combination of philanthropic funding, local authority engagement and a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. An independent evaluation in 2022 informed the closure of a hostel and the reallocation of staff and resources into Housing First, enabling programme expansion and additional housing acquisition.

Participants highlighted the importance of carefully managed transitions, noting that while Housing First delivered strong outcomes for many, it is not sufficient for everyone. Risks such as “cocooning”, concentration of drug activity and social isolation were discussed, alongside the need to adapt housing environments and allocation practices without creating new forms of segregation.

The workshop also explored ways to reduce reliance on temporary accommodation, including “flipping” temporary units into permanent tenancies where appropriate. Strong interdisciplinary collaboration, evidence-based decision-making and attention to timing were identified as critical to avoiding system destabilisation. Across contexts, the lack of affordable housing was identified as the key structural barrier to scaling Housing First.

Useful resources:

- Everyone Home: <https://homelessnetwork.scot/everyone-home/>
- Heriot Watt/ iSphere evaluation of the pathfinder project: https://pure.hw.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/65371618/PathfinderEvaluation_FinalReport_Full.pdf
- Scottish Government Homelessness page: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/homelessness/>
- Cost-benefit analysis of housing support services: <https://www.ccpscotland.org/hseu-news/hseu-news-scotlands-housing-support-services-can-generate-at-least-4-85-worth-of-benefit-from-every-1-spent-on-delivery/>

7.2 Migrants and Housing First

One of the workshops focused on the growing challenges faced by Housing First programmes in supporting migrants experiencing homelessness. Participants discussed structural barriers to accessing services as well as the broader policy context shaping these challenges.

A key theme of the discussion was the increasing diversity of profiles within homelessness services. Participants highlighted that services are encountering a growing number of people with different legal statuses, migration histories and support needs. In many contexts, systems originally designed to address homelessness are now expected to respond simultaneously to housing shortages, migration pressures and complex social needs. This has created situations in which different systems are effectively competing for limited resources.

Participants also reflected on the emotional challenges faced by frontline workers. Supporting migrants who have experienced trauma, violence or difficult migration journeys can be particularly challenging when services are constrained by restrictive policies or limited housing availability. Staff may find themselves witnessing the distress caused by systemic barriers while having limited tools to address them.

The structure of migration systems was identified as another key challenge. In many countries, support for migrants and asylum seekers relies heavily on temporary solutions such as short-term accommodation or

time-limited programmes. Participants noted that these arrangements rarely create a sense of stability or hope, as people remain uncertain about their future and housing situation.

Participants emphasised that the number of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe is likely to increase in the coming years, placing further pressure on already strained housing and homelessness systems. While the homelessness sector cannot resolve the wider European housing crisis, it still has an important role to play in advocating for equitable access to housing, particularly for those with the greatest needs.

Several areas for action were discussed. Participants highlighted the importance of tackling stigma around migrants experiencing homelessness and strengthening advocacy for increased investment in social housing and stronger political commitment to housing solutions. Structural measures were also discussed, including increasing the supply of affordable housing, making vacant housing available for social use, and addressing the impact of short-term rentals on housing availability. The idea of ring-fencing a proportion of social housing for the most vulnerable groups was also mentioned.

Overall, the discussion highlighted the need for stronger links between homelessness services, migration systems and housing policies, as well as continued advocacy to ensure migrants experiencing homelessness have access to stable and dignified housing solutions.

7.3 Housing Solutions for Housing First

This workshop contributed to the Hub's ongoing work on a Housing for Housing First brief, building on the Unlocking Housing for Housing First report (2023). Participants discussed a range of housing solutions and policy levers used across Europe to secure housing for Housing First, drawing on practical examples and case studies. The discussion focused on how these approaches can be adapted and transferred across different national and local contexts to support the scaling of Housing First.

A central theme of the discussion was the balance between short-term and long-term housing solutions. While some contexts rely on the private rented sector supported by housing benefits as a rapid way to secure housing, participants highlighted the vulnerability of this approach to market fluctuations, rising rents and instability. In contrast, long-term investment in social housing was seen as a more sustainable solution, offering greater control over rent levels and allocation processes, although it requires significant time and public investment to scale.

Several concrete practices illustrated how this balance is managed in different contexts. In Utrecht, for example, strong regulatory frameworks ensure that a significant proportion of new developments (around 40%) is dedicated to social housing, supported by planning regulations and collaboration with housing corporations. At the same time, temporary housing units are used as a bridging solution, allowing individuals to access immediate housing before being rehoused into permanent dwellings. Other short-term approaches discussed included the temporary use or regularisation of vacant buildings, such as the managed use of squats in Lyon to stabilise housing situations and provide support while longer-term solutions are developed.

The discussion also highlighted the importance of governance and financing models. Examples from France and The Netherlands demonstrated how strong public or non-profit housing providers can play a key role in delivering housing at scale, supported by regulated rent systems and long-term financing mechanisms. In contrast, reliance on private developers or market-based approaches may limit accessibility if not carefully

regulated. Emerging financing tools such as social impact investment were discussed, with participants noting their potential for innovation or pilot projects, but also raising concerns about their limited scalability and the risk of substituting long-term public investment.

Allocation systems were identified as another critical factor influencing access to housing for Housing First. Practices vary widely across countries, ranging from ring-fenced allocations for people experiencing homelessness to integrated systems based on income and vulnerability criteria. Participants noted that without explicit prioritisation mechanisms, allocation processes may unintentionally favour households with fewer support needs, leaving those with complex needs behind. More tailored approaches, such as needs-based “matchmaking” between tenants and housing environments, were highlighted as promising practices to improve housing stability and integration.

Finally, the discussion underlined that housing supply alone is not sufficient to address homelessness. Effective strategies require the active alignment of housing policies, allocation systems and support services. While increasing the stock of affordable and social housing remains essential, participants emphasised that clear policy frameworks, strong partnerships and targeted allocation mechanisms are equally important to ensure that Housing First programmes can access and sustain appropriate housing solutions.

Conclusions and thanks

Thank you to all Housing First Europe Hub partners who attended and contributed to this partnership meeting. We look forward to continuing our work together - and to meeting at the Housing First Europe Hub conference in Rotterdam on 28-30 October 2026.

Please feel free to contact us at the Housing First Europe Hub with any questions or comments:

Samara Jones - Lead - samara.jones@housingfirsteurope.eu

Laura Fritz - Partnership & Projects Officer - laura.fritz@feantsa.org

Christianna Fontouli - Coordination and Communications Assistant - intern@housingfirsteurope.eu

Mercedes Hauviller - Finance and Admin - mercedes.hauviller@feantsa.org