

Cities implementing Housing First in Europe: Learning from Lyon

Background note

Lyon Metropole is a unique local authority in France, created on January 1, 2015 by the merger of the former urban community Grand Lyon and the Rhône department over the 59 municipalities in its territory, for a total of 1.3 million inhabitants. In the area of housing, they therefore combine human and urban competencies, meaning they can intervene across the entire chain (private, collective, social housing). The Metropole intervenes through the production and renewal of the housing supply, the improvement of the quality of existing housing, as well as working on social inclusion (social support, child protection, disabled and elderly people)

The state is responsible for emergency accommodations, while the Metropole manages social housing.

Through the House for Social Watch for the Rhône area (an Integrated Service for Reception and Orientation), the State, in collaboration with the Metropole (also the city of Lyon and the County) collects the accommodation request from people involuntarily deprived of a personal home. These people are then directed towards an accommodation offer available from one of the member structures of the group. Support is also provided for the transition from leaving the accommodation to social housing.

This structure also monitors at county level the demand and response for accommodation and housing for homeless people.

Data from 2019 shows that:

- 2,522 people / 1,539 households declared themselves homeless or housed under the “Winter Plan” and “emergency stops” (data collected via the social emergency number)
- 15,887 people / 7,080 households submitted an active demand to the House for Social Watch, were hosted or under tenant in insertion and housing services or in institutions without housing solution.

Housing is and will be a central theme for a booming territory like Lyon Metropole. The Metropole currently has 80,000 pending applications for social housing with only 15,000 housing units available. This phenomenon could be reinforcing as the Metropole continues to grow and expects +150,000 inhabitants by 2030.

The objective of the Metropole's housing policy is to provide tailor-made and diversified responses to the needs of each household: access to property, intermediate and social rental housing, specific housing linked to disability or aging, housing for young people, Travellers, etc.

There are 3 main objectives: development of an affordable housing supply based on a principle of social diversity; improving the quality of the existing stock and inclusion through housing.

Despite an ambitious housing production policy, the housing sector is in perpetual tension in the metropolitan area. This is why the Metropole responded to the Call for Expressions of Interest launched by the state in 2017 on the National Housing First policy. In 2018, Lyon Metropole was chosen as the area for accelerated implementation of Housing First.

This implementation is focused on 3 fundamental components:

- Development of the available housing offer for homeless people (especially for people in difficulty with the Special Housing Protocol Authority, IPHS)
- Development of pilot projects combining housing and support system and local relations (Social Engineering Coordination Body, ICIS).
Example: access to housing for young people, support towards housing for households close to employment, promoting the employment-housing link, alternatives to evictions, residential continuity, landmarks, etc.
- Establishing mechanism for the permanent improvement of Housing First: support the metamorphosis of cultures and professional practices for a better response to needs through training, partnership activities, evaluation (including user participation), knowledge sharing.

5-year goals:

- Divide the number of homeless people by 2
- Find housing solutions for young people leaving Child Social Assistance schemes
- Find housing solutions for people leaving institutions (prison, psychiatric hospital, etc.)
- Prevent evictions in situations where rents are too high or when mental health issues are involved or cause housing difficulties
- Create benchmarks to ensure the continuity of the follow-up of people leaving the street and fight against isolation

To ensure a successful transformation of practices according to the principles of Housing First, Lyon metropole's approach focuses on:

- Participatory approach: continuous involvement of relevant actors to implement the principles of HF and design their transformation strategy
- Financial innovation: cooperation with European banks and financial institutions to find new funds. Lyon Metropole is also considering the creation of a Social Impact Bond.
- Assessment: improvement of knowledge on homelessness and on the needs of the homeless to adequately adapt our strategy
- Training: creation of a specific Housing First diploma to have professionals capable of applying Housing First principles to their practices
- Exchange of good practices: improvement of knowledge on other European models, their means of financing and their experiments.



This event has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information, please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>