OECD Workshop on Homelessness
Preventing Homelessness and securing long-term housing solutions

29 November 2023

Background

Homelessness remains a pressing challenge in OECD and EU countries, with at least 2.2 million people considered homeless in official government statistics at last count. There is renewed momentum to improve measurement and methodological tools, and to develop public policies to prevent homelessness and create sustainable pathways out of homelessness.

The OECD Workshop on Homelessness provided an opportunity to share evidence and good practices from OECD and EU countries. Discussions focussed on two of the "building blocks" of the forthcoming OECD Toolkit to Combat Homelessness: preventing homelessness and securing long-term housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness, including housing-led and Housing First solutions.

The workshop was organised as part of the OECD Social Policy Division's ongoing work on homelessness, supported by the European Commission. In addition to the Toolkit, the OECD will deliver a **Monitoring Framework** and a series of **Country Notes** over the course of 2023-25. Together, this work will make a key contribution to the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness (EPOCH), whereby EU countries have committed to work towards ending homelessness by 2030.

Documentation

- Speaker profiles are available in the Who's Who.
- On the following pages, you can find a **replay** of each session, along with links to presenters' **slides**.
- For cross-country data on affordable and social housing and homelessness, please visit the OECD Affordable Housing Database, as well as related policy briefs and other key resources.

Contacts

- Willem.Adema@oecd.org
- Marissa.Plouin@oecd.org
- Ali.Bargu@oecd.org
- Alexandre.Lloyd@oecd.org

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Opening remarks

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- **Mark Pearson**, Deputy Director, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, OECD
- **Michele Calandrino**, Team Leader, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission

Working session on the draft OECD Toolkit to Combat Homelessness

Watch the replay

The OECD Secretariat presented the draft OECD Toolkit to Combat Homelessness. The Toolkit, structured around 9 building blocks, provides guidance to policy makers in national, regional, and local governments to prevent homelessness, support people who are experiencing homelessness, and provide sustainable pathways out of homelessness. The Toolkit outlines the latest evidence behind each building block and illustrates potential implementation strategies, drawing on good and promising international practices in OECD and EU countries. An open discussion followed the presentation, during which all workshop participants were invited to share feedback.

Moderator: **Patrick Bussière**, Chair of the OECD Working Party on Social Policy

Presentation by **Marissa Plouin**, Policy Analyst, and **Ali Bargu**, Policy Analyst, Social Policy Division, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, OECD | **Slides**

Discussants:

- **Maria Inês Amaro**, **Head of Department, Institute of Social Security (Portugal)**
- **Peter Mackie**, **Professor, School of Geography and Planning, Cardiff University (United Kingdom)**

Prioritising prevention | Round 1: Anticipating risky transitions

Watch the replay

One of the most effective ways to end homelessness is to *prevent* people from becoming homeless in the first place. Homelessness prevention policies were presented and discussed in three rounds.

Round one explored effective *upstream prevention* policies, which aim to identify and support individuals who may be at higher risk of homelessness (see (Fitzpatrick, Mackie and Wood, 2021[32])). This includes policies and programmes that provide targeted support to populations who are more at risk, such as youth experiencing family conflict or individuals leaving institutional settings (e.g., prisons, hospitals or youth care facilities/systems).

Moderator: **Ruth Owen**, Deputy Director, FEANTSA

- **Peter Mackie, Professor, School of Geography and Planning, Cardiff University (United Kingdom):** Upstream Cymru: a school-based screening tool to identify risk of homelessness amongst young people and families | **Slides**

- **Mike Allen, Director of Advocacy, Communication and Research at Focus Ireland (Ireland):** Preventing homelessness among youth leaving state care | **Slides**
- **Amanda Buchnea and Emily Kellway, A Way Home Canada (Canada):** Canada's Youth Homelessness Prevention Movement: Opportunities and Lessons Learned | **Slides**
- **Joanna Carey, Branch Manager, Department of Social Services (Australia):** Keeping Women Safe in their Homes to maintain housing for women who have been victims/survivors of domestic violence | **Slides**

Prioritising prevention | Round 2: Leveraging big data and predictive analytics to prevent homelessness

Watch the replay

Round two of the discussion on prevention focused on experiences using big data and predictive analytical tools to help predict who may be at high risk of becoming homelessness, and to leverage the results of such analyses to help public services better target outreach and support. This session explored the different sources of data and information, as well as potential criteria to identify at-risk individuals and the types of supports that can be provided.

Moderator: **Sarah Kups,** Senior Economist, Governance Indicators and Performance Division, OECD Public Governance Directorate

- **Till von Wachter, Professor of Economics, UCLA and Faculty Director, California Policy Lab UCLA (United States):** Predictive analytics to identify and treat people at highest risk of homelessness among users of public health care and other social safety net services | **Slides**
- **Natalia Merritt, Housing Advice Manager, Maidstone Borough Council (United Kingdom):** Using big data to identify households at risk of homelessness | **Slides**

Prioritising prevention | Round 3: Identifying and supporting people at risk of eviction

Watch the replay

Round three focused on *crisis prevention*, which aims to provide individualised support to people for whom homelessness is likely to occur within the foreseeable future, including people facing eviction. Support may include individual counselling or advice; one-time or time-limited financial support to help households cover housing costs; and/or mediation among landlords and tenants to avoid evictions. Such efforts became more prevalent in many OECD countries during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent the cost-of-living crisis, given the concerns around a possible surge in evictions as households struggled with mortgage repayments and high rental outlays as a result of the unprecedented economic shocks.

Moderator: **Willem Adema**, Senior Economist, Social Policy Division, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, OECD

- **Richard Cho, Senior Advisor for Housing and Services, Department of Housing and Urban Development (United States):** Impacts of multiple support programmes introduced during the COVID-19 public health emergency that reduced the incidence of housing loss and homelessness | **Slides**
- **Mirka Jarvinen, Project coordinator, ARA (Finland):** Preventing homelessness and evictions in Finland with housing advice | **Slides**
- **Verena Haberl, City of Vienna (Austria), with Anton Huber, Policy Officer, Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (Austria)**: Eviction prevention services | **Slides**

- **Pawel Jaskulski, Board Member of the St. Brother Albert's Aid Society in Gdansk (Poland):** Eviction prevention measures in Gdansk and other Polish cities, including the Centre for Training of Social Skills | **Slides**
- **Freek Spinnewijn, Director (FEANTSA)**

Expanding the supply of long-term housing solutions: Housing-led and Housing First solutions

Watch the replay

A shortage of housing options specifically designed for people experiencing homelessness hampers the ability for all levels of government to adequately respond to homelessness. This session explored how different levels of government are working to expand the housing supply for people experiencing homelessness.

Moderator: **Boris Cournède**, Acting Head of Division, Public Economics Division, Economics Department, OECD

- **André Riemer, Policy Officer, Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building (Germany):** Efforts to expand the affordable housing supply | **Slides**

- **Henrique Joaquim, Executive Director, National Strategy for People Experiencing Homelessness (ENIPSSA), Ministry of Labor, Solidarity and Social Security (Portugal):** Housing-led and Housing First initiatives in Portugal | **Slides**

- **Laure Billoret, Project Lead,** *Délégation interministérielle à l'hébergement et à l'accès au* logement **(France):** Transitioning from a shelter-based model to scale up Housing First | **Slides**

- **Stine Højland Pedersen, Special Consultant, Ministry of Social Affairs, Housing and the Elderly (Denmark)**: Shifting incentive structures to nudge municipalities to transition from shelter accommodation to Housing First | **Slides**

- **Karinna Soto, Executive Director,** *Juntos en la calle* **(Chile):** The potential to implement Housing First in Chile and emerging countries | **Slides**

Wrap up and closing discussion

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This final session provided a brief recap of the discussions during the day, and outlined the next steps in the OECD work on homelessness.

Monika Queisser, Senior Counsellor, OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs