

Embedding Support Where Life Happens: Aarhus' Innovative Housing Response

<u>Organisation(s):</u>	City of Aarhus	
<u>Country:</u>	Denmark	
<u>Contact:</u>	policy@esn-eu.org (we will function as an intermediary between you and interested organisations who want to learn more about the practice)	
<u>Theme:</u> Choose at least one option	☐ Ageing & Care ☐ Asylum & Migration ☐ Young People ☐ Support for Children & Families ☒ Community Care ☐ Integrated Care & Support ☐ Co-Production ☐ Disability ☒ Housing & Homelessness ☐ Artificial Intelligence ☐ Digitalisation ☐ Quality Care	☐ Labour Market Inclusion ☒ Social Inclusion ☐ Technology ☐ Workforce and Leadership ☐ Social Benefits ☐ EU Funding ☐ Social Services' Resilience ☐ Mental Health ☒ Person-Centred Care ☒ Research & Use of Evidence ☐ Management & Planning ☐ Other, please specify:
<u>Principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights:</u> <i>Which principles does your practice cover? Check the 20 principles here.</i>	☐ 1. Education, training, life-long learning ☐ 2. Gender equality ☒ 3. Equal opportunities ☒ 4. Active support to employment ☐ 5. Secure and adaptable employment ☐ 6. Fair Wages ☐ 7. Transparent employment conditions ☐ 8. Social dialogue ☐ 9. Work-life balance ☐ 10. Healthy, safe work environment	☐ 11. Childcare and child support ☐ 12. Social protection ☒ 12. Social protection ☒ 14. Minimum income ☐ 15. Old age income and pensions ☒ 16. Health care ☐ 17. Inclusion of people with disabilities ☐ 18. Long-term care ☒ 19. Housing and assistance to homeless ☒ 20. Access to essential services
<u>Current status of the practice:</u>	☐ Concept and Design Phase ☐ Testing or pilot phase ☐ Temporary practice that has terminated ☐ Temporary practice that is ongoing and has a termination date ☐ Established and ongoing practice ☒ Scaling Up and Transformation Phase ☒ Other (please specify): Since 2007, the City of Aarhus has worked systematically to reduce homelessness through a comprehensive Housing First approach integrating evidence-based methods, cross-sector collaboration, and strong partnerships with civil society. Our new initiative, <i>Gadens Kvarter</i> , represents a next step in bridging the gap between services and the most marginalised citizens by embedding support directly in the environments where people live, gather, and survive. This place-based model reflects a growing recognition that traditional service structures often fail to reach those in deepest need—and that innovation is required to bring support closer to people's lived realities.	

<u>Summary:</u> <i>Please summarise the practice in maximum 3 sentences. This will be the disclaimer of your project on our website. Example here.</i>	Aarhus' Housing First approach provides immediate access to ordinary, scattered housing alongside tailored social support to help people experiencing homelessness move towards stable and independent living. The model combines evidence-based methods, cross-sector collaboration and civil society partnerships, and is now being strengthened through Gadens Kvarter, a place-based initiative that embeds support in one of the city's most vulnerable neighbourhoods. Since 2019, homelessness in Aarhus has fallen by 26%, with particularly strong progress among young people.
<u>Context/ Social issues addressed</u> <i>Please explain the problem you attempt to solve with your practice.</i>	Homelessness and housing exclusion remain significant barriers to social inclusion in Aarhus, affecting people who may be rough sleeping, sofa surfing, living in shelters or staying in temporary accommodation. Many citizens experiencing homelessness also face complex social, health, employment or legal challenges, which fragmented services can struggle to address. The practice responds to this by treating stable housing as the foundation for addressing other needs, while bringing integrated support closer to people's everyday lives through collaboration between public services, health workers, legal advisers, employment support and civil society organisations.
<u>Objectives:</u> <i>Please provide a maximum of three objectives in bullet points.</i>	1. Reduce homelessness in Aarhus by ensuring that all citizens, regardless of the complexity of their situation, have a pathway into suitable housing and out of homelessness. 2. Support people to maintain stable housing through tailored, evidence-based social support and coordinated help with health, employment, education and community inclusion. 3. Strengthen proximity, presence and co-creation by embedding public services and civil society support in the places where the most marginalised citizens live, gather and seek help.
<u>Activities:</u> <i>Please describe the activities put in place to achieve the objectives (maximum 400 words).</i>	Since 2007, the City of Aarhus has implemented a comprehensive Housing First approach based on the principle that stable housing is the starting point for addressing other challenges. The approach provides immediate access to ordinary, scattered housing combined with tailored support delivered through Housing First Units using evidence-based methods, including Critical Time Intervention, Intensive Case Management and Modified Assertive Community Treatment. Support is adapted to each person's needs and may include help with education, employment, health, legal advice, daily living and community participation. The practice is built on strong collaboration across municipal services and civil society organisations, including actors representing current and former homeless people, the Red Cross, legal advisers and community-based organisations. Aarhus is now developing Gadens Kvarter in Sydhavnen, one of the city's most vulnerable neighbourhoods, to co-locate public services and civil society actors where people experiencing homelessness already gather and survive. This place-based model aims to make support more accessible, coherent and person-centred by combining Housing First principles with geographically anchored social work.

Outcomes: Please explain what the results were/are so far and how you evaluated this (i.e. statistics, a study, or feedback)	Aarhus has recorded a reduction in homelessness from 750 people in 2019 to 556 in 2024, representing a 26% decrease according to the National Census of Homelessness. Progress has been particularly strong among young people: the city aimed to halve youth homelessness among 18–24-year-olds from 172 in 2019 to 86 in 2024, and the latest figures show a 45% decrease. National evidence indicates that eight to nine out of ten people in Housing First programmes maintain their housing, and Aarhus’ own evaluations confirm this trend. As of 1 November 2025, 95.2% of Aarhus residents who had received Housing First support for at least one year had successfully maintained independent housing one year later. The project has been evaluated using internal quantitative data, formal surveys, and qualitative and quantitative information. Future evaluation will examine how the place-based, co-created and integrated support model contributes to meeting the needs of citizens experiencing homelessness.
Funding Source	EU Funds: ESF+ ☐ INTERREG ☐ ERDF ☐ ERASMUS ☐ RRF ☐ other ☐ ☒ National Government Funds ☐ Regional Government Funds ☒ Local Government Funds ☒ Private Sponsorship / Public-Private Partnership ☐ Financial contribution of People using Services ☐ Other, please define:
Links to supporting documents: e.g. project website or report of the practice, articles	Aarhus Kommune: English Oversigt over tilbud og indsatser til hjemløse og udsatte i Aarhus
Comments and tips i.e. for people willing to implement your Practice in their service	We are very clear that Aarhus has not found a final solution to homelessness. However, we have learned that strong political commitment is essential. One way to build awareness and support for the approach is to launch a pilot project focused on Housing First and tailored support for people experiencing homelessness. A pilot project can help demonstrate the positive outcomes of this approach and build momentum for wider implementation. We have also learned that support services need to be closer to where people actually are: in neighbourhoods, public spaces, and everyday community life. Start a dialogue with stakeholders about their shared responsibility for reducing homelessness. Meet regularly with community members and organisations that can contribute to positive changes and build strong partnerships with civil society organisations and local businesses.