

IAP - Odense

In Denmark, the government launched a national homeless strategy in 2009. Odense was one of the 8 cities selected to participate in the start-up. One of the focus areas was that work must be based on Housing First (HF) thinking, and Odense has been working from HF since 2009.

At the start of 2009, there were 4998 homeless people in Denmark and at the last count in 2019, there were 6431 homeless persons, a total increase of 29% over the last years in Denmark. In Odense, there were 208 homeless people in 2009, and at the last count in 2019 there were 125 homeless people, a total of 40% decrease in homelessness in Odense.

There are few rough sleepers in Odense 14 people (2019) and relatively few young homeless people, 9 citizens under 25 (2019). In Odense, 495 homeless people are housed

in their own housing during the period 2011-2017 and 87% still have their own housing. Based on evaluations of the efforts in Odense, HF thinking as well as the close cooperation with the housing associations is one of the major reasons why this has succeeded.

Main Challenges

- Maintaining focus on HF thinking, including focus on individually organized support in connection with own housing CTI / ICM.
- Preventing homelessness.
- Guaranteeing coherent HF approach in new employees and colleagues /stakeholders.
- Maintaining fidelity to HF based on the holistic thinking.

ULG Organisation

ROOF Coordinator: Tom Rønning
ULG Coordinator: Søren Jespersen
Communication manager: Nilsen Søndergaard
Project management: Tom Rønning



Name of Stakeholders

1. Brian Dybro
2. Henriette Graversen
3. Jacob Ludvigsen
4. Søren Jespersen
5. Tom Rønning
6. Heinz Wolf
7. Mette Guul
8. Kaj Skølstrup
9. Ole Holm
10. Peter Bøgholm
11. Søren Sørensen
12. Martin Strømkjær
13. Jacob Michaelson
14. Jens Pilholm
15. Erik Thomsen
16. Helle Jacobsen
17. Rene Larsen
18. Jan Pedersen
19. Tina Andersen
20. Jacob Knudsen
21. Anne Fuglsang
22. Jeanette Brigsted-Ruhe

Our experience in relation to the work with HF in Odense is that it is important that there is a broad ownership for the HF effort.

This gives a greater understanding of the different approach to the solution that HF is, and it also means that there is a significantly more inputs in relation to what can/ should be done. Furthermore, the wide circle of owners ensures that the homeless citizens do not become a ball between several different interests approaches to working with homeless people.

The group of persons that is listed as ULG members are persons, who in one or another way, either as politicians, NGO's, service provider, officials, landlords or keypersons in relation to life in the city streets, have an huge importance in implementing HF.

The ULG group will give the possibility that there can be made decisions and / or adjustments in relation to the effort.

There is different subgroups in relation to our ULG:

1. There is a group that looks at the specific work that has so far been done in relation to CTI.
2. There is a group looking at the possibilities in relation to HF in the future in Odense.
3. There is a group that ensures the implementation of the HF efforts in the future.

Work dynamics and methodology

In connection with the work with HF in Odense, a process has been started politically in the municipality, where the focus is on abolishing / reducing homelessness significantly. Therefore, throughout 2020, meetings have been held with all employees in the municipality and in various NGOs working with homelessness. There have also been meetings with representatives of the homeless.

These meetings have been held partly physically but also virtually. In total, between 100-150 people have been involved until now.

The collection for these meetings has been worked through and discussed at large meetings with all stakeholders in the first quarter of 2021.

The overall plan contains elements which are described in Odense's part of ROOF, and will finally be processed in various subgroups in the first half of 2021.

Our planned project ended up getting another primary focus, due to changed working conditions due to covid.

We expected that in February 2021 a national homeless count would be made, this has been made in February 2022, due to covid.

Also due to covid we had to postpone our SSA until the beginning of September 2021. Our SSA was a workshop with Focus on together to develop ideas for maintaining HF in Odense, and over 49 stakeholders (ULG) participated.

The Danish parliament also started a process from mid-2021, with a view to introducing new legislation in the homeless area.

A parliamentary agreement was reached at the end of 2021, which recognizes that there is a connection between social policy and housing policy and therefore the agreement focuses on:

- Development of more affordable housing.
- Rent subsidies to a greater extent for citizens, to get them out of homelessness.
- The starting point in the municipalities' work in relation to the homeless is Housing First.
- Greater municipal obligation to reduce homelessness.
- State aid from hostels will be converted to CTI / ICM / ACT support for the homeless.

There is a majority for the forthcoming law, and it is expected to be presented in the end of the summer of 2022, with the entry into force at the turn of the year 2022/2023.

This has of course also influenced the approach in the project.

Part 2 - Action Plan

In connection with the work with HF in Odense, a process has been started politically in the municipality, where the focus is on abolishing / reducing homelessness significantly. Therefore, throughout 2020, meetings have been held with all employees in the municipality and in various NGOs working with homelessness. There have also been meetings with representatives of the homeless.

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As it has already been mentioned, one of the preconditions for working with HF in Odense is that there is a broad ownership of HF. This has also been the starting point of SSA. Through the work with this IAP as well as the ongoing collaboration on HF, all participants had a common need and desire to further develop the work with HF in Odense.

Our SSA was that we held a joint event for ULGs etc. This meeting had the participation of Stakeholders, NGOs and municipal employees, and all participants had a touch with the work with the homeless.

Based on the many meetings we had through 2020, we selected a headline for the event

"Maintenance of the Housing First effort in Odense municipality"

We also took as our starting point the statements that had emerged at the previous meetings, and gathered them into 5 topics that we would like to have formed a starting point for idea generation.

The five topics were:

- Knowledge sharing
- New employees or managers
- Legislation
- Interfaces and distribution of roles
- Workflows

A report was prepared, *97 ideas for maintaining Housing First in Odense Municipality*, which describes the process as well as the findings that were made.



97 ideas.pdf

Subsequently, 5 actions have been selected to be worked on further.

Action	Intended results	Ressources/assets	Lead agency	Key Partners	Timescale
Homepage for Housing First	<p>Stakeholders who work with the social excluded in Odense get an overall place where they can get an overview of the efforts.</p> <p>Including in relation to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreements and workflows • Case descriptions • Annual wheels <p>Link to Strategy for the Inclusive and Housing First</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links to political annual follow-up on Strategy for the Inclusive City and Housing First • Q&A • Link to in-depth descriptions of Housing First and the methods at other places of knowledge (eg at the National Board of Health and Welfare and VIVE's reports,) • Contact information for people within knowledge on specific topics in the work with Housing First. 	covered within ordinary economics	Martin Holm Strømkjær	Stakeholders who work with the social excluded in Odense	implemente 2022
Action card about Housing First	Preparation of a physical action card, which briefly tells about Housing First in Odense and refers to the website for further knowledge and detailed contact information. It must be used both internally in the municipality, for partners and for citizens.	covered within ordinary economics	Martin Holm Strømkjær	Stakeholders who work with the social excluded in Odense and citizens in Odense	Starting medio 2022
Action	Intended results	Ressources/assets	Lead agency	Key Partners	Timescale
Experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The administration appoints experts in relation to Housing First in general and specifically in relation to specific topics. • The experts each have their own area of responsibility and 	covered within ordinary economics	Jakob G + Jane F	Stakeholders who work with the social excluded in Odense	Starting medio 2022

	<p>together have an overall joint responsibility for sharing knowledge across and being available in relation to inquiries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The experts are up to date on legislation and support the spread of new legislation or changes that have an impact on Housing First. • The experts must clarify and handle interfaces, role distribution and workflows. • The experts must be known by internal and external, and must work in close interaction with both operation and upwards. Contact info comes on the website for Housing First in Odense. • The experts are part of a network with a fixed meeting structure, which ensures the right follow-up across operations, legislation and necessary decisions. • There must be an expert for housing, support, benefit, treatment, youth, authority for service law adult, authority for service law youth (possibly additional). 				
Action	Intended results	Ressources/assets	Lead agency	Key Partners	Timescale
• Annual wheel	The annual cycle for Housing first is further developed so	covered within ordinary economics	Jakob G + Jane F	Stakeholders who work	2022

	<p>that it shows how we together each year find good common solutions, which we jointly adjust on an ongoing basis. Below are points for the year wheel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up to the Employment and Social Affairs Committee (Via an annual follow-up on Strategy for the Inclusive City and Housing First) • Housing First as a regular item at staff meetings - Housing First The ambassadors are responsible for setting the agenda. • Housing First meets in the expert network • Housing First meets between the experts and Housing First ambassadors • Inputs from partners (via, for example, street plan networks and when relevant via larger meetings / workshops) • Input from citizens (via citizen involvement - either via the municipality or partners). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme week about Housing First in Odense. An agreement below could e.g. be that actors undertake to collect and share cases / stories about the work with Housing First. 			with the social excluded in Odense as well as social excluded citizens in Odense, as well as politicians in the Employment and Social Affairs Committee	
Action	Intended results	Ressources/assets	Lead agency	Key Partners	Timescale
Housing First Ambassadors / Housing Agents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All departments that work with Housing First in Odense Municipality must have a Housing First ambassador / housing agent. • The ambassador is responsible for being updated about Housing First and actively supporting that the department works on the basis of Housing First. In 	covered within ordinary economics	Jakob G + Jane F	Stakeholders who work with the social excluded in Odense	Starting ultimo 2022

	<p>this context, the ambassador is responsible for putting Housing First on the agenda at staff meetings in accordance with the annual cycle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A housing agent is an employee in a department who is given special knowledge and a special responsibility in relation to the housing area. Including in relation to: • Disseminate and gather knowledge about housing search, including special rules for the vulnerable in the housing market, cooperation with housing companies / landlords. • Disseminate and gather knowledge about grant applications, establishment amounts, legislation, etc. • Disseminate and gather knowledge about housing support, §34 support and other financial assistance in one's own home. • Disseminate knowledge of the Housing Agency, applications and target group. • Disseminate and gather knowledge so that better advice can be given in relation to personal finances in connection with. housing. • Administrator for the department's access to the housing portal (login to the department) • The ambassadors / housing agents network with the experts 				
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It is expected that some actions will be started in 2022, some are implemented very quickly, and others are awaiting e.g. the final new national legislation in relation to the homeless, summer 2022.

As the efforts are primarily in areas where we are working already, finances have already been set aside. When the actions are to be implemented, it will primarily be a matter of re-prioritization of funds already allocated.

The expectation is that all actions can be implemented, the expected finances are available and there is political, managerial and stakeholder support for the upcoming actions.