



Belgium

Housing First Belgium

The Housing First Belgium programme is led at national level and involves the **five largest cities**. There were a total of **eight Housing First services** operating at the time of writing (2015) which were run by a combination of municipalities and NGOs. Housing First is targeted at long-term homeless people with an average of five years' experience of homelessness, all of whom have high support needs. The programme aims to support **150 people by June 2016**.

The eight services use ordinary rented apartments, relying on a mixture of social housing and private rented housing. There is some use of specialist, supported housing for a minority of Housing First service users.

The eight Housing First services deliver support in different ways. All eight Housing First services **use intensive case management**, organising access to required services as and when necessary. Each individual using a Housing First service has their own dedicated support worker, with each Housing First worker having a caseload (number of people they are supporting) of between six and eight Housing First service users.

Some of the Belgian Housing First services have a multidisciplinary team; others rely entirely on social workers acting as case managers. The largest team, in one of the eight services, comprises nurses, social workers, a psychologist, an employment specialist and a housing specialist; the smallest team, in another Housing First service, is made up of only social workers. Five of the eight Housing First services are described as being intensive case management, without a multidisciplinary team. The specific arrangements for each of the eight services are as follows:

- A team of social workers providing intensive case-management services (Antwerp)
- A housing coach and a psychologist providing case management (Ghent)
- A nurse, a social worker and a doctor (Brussels, service 1)
- Specialist social workers with expertise in mental health and harm reduction providing case management (Brussels, service 2)
- A housing specialist and a support worker providing case management (Hasselt)
- Nurses, social workers, an education specialist, a psychologist, an employment specialist and a housing specialist in a multidisciplinary team (Charleroi)
- Social workers and a housing specialist offering case management (Liège)
- Nurses, social workers, an education specialist and a psychologist in a multidisciplinary team (Namur)

The Belgian programme was experimental in 2015 and was being evaluated at the time of writing. There will be a report on the effectiveness of Housing First, which is likely to influence future policy. More information on Housing First Belgium is available at: <http://www.housingfirstbelgium.be/>.