An aerial photograph of a historic European city, likely Gdańsk, Poland, featuring a dense cluster of buildings with red-tiled roofs and a prominent church spire. A river flows through the foreground, with a large crowd of people gathered on a bridge or promenade. The sky is filled with dramatic, golden-hour clouds.

# Taking Housing First to scale

Matt Downie &  
Chris Hancock  
Crisis

FEANTSA Policy Conference  
18-19 May  
Gdańsk, Poland

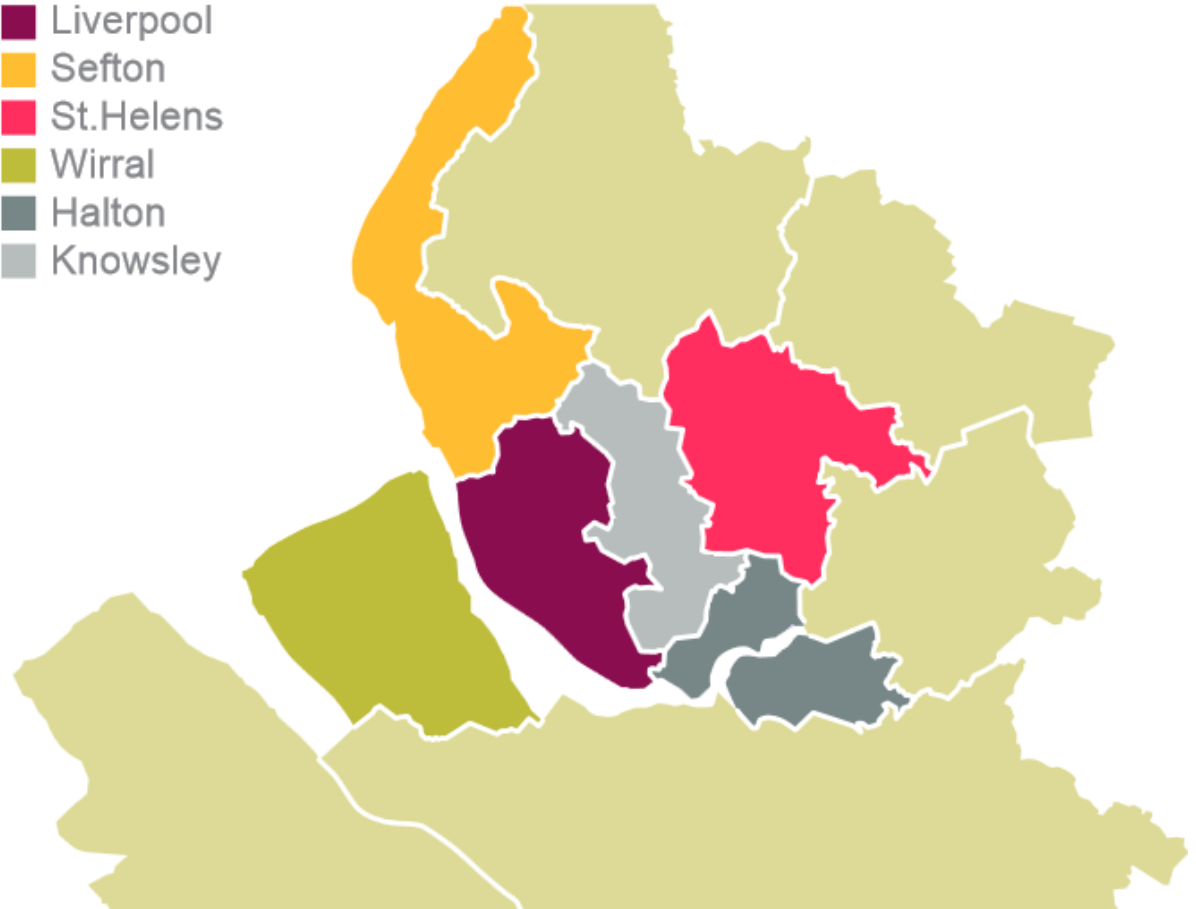
# The Liverpool City Region

Scale of Need and Supply

# Liverpool City Region



- Liverpool
- Sefton
- St. Helens
- Wirral
- Halton
- Knowsley



# Why Liverpool City Region?

- Good contacts and relationships locally
- Housing stock and affordability not prohibitive
- Mainstay – shared data systems
- The City Region devolution package
- Openness of local leaders and providers to Housing First
- Increasing need but not the scale or complexity of London
- Hasn't attempted any HF before
- A 'mid size' city that hopefully produces replicable lessons

Taking Housing First to Scale



- 140% increase in rough sleeping in from 2015 to 2016; 43 people
- $\frac{1}{2}$  of those rough sleeping were in the city;  $\frac{1}{4}$  in the Wirral
- In 2015/16, 5373 individuals were assessed and recorded on the Mainstay Database system
- 49% of the Liverpool city assessments led to a placement
- 1484 Commissioned (funded) support beds across the region (723 in the city)

- 3,245 people presenting as rough sleepers in the region since 2013
- Substantial 'churn' in the homelessness system: 379 people had 4 or more hostel placements in the past 4 years: some had as many as 10
- Many who present do not receive a service, so there is a risk that, if Housing First takes this cohort out of the system, it will simply fill up again
- Only 5% of those assessed were in independent accommodation immediately before – most are revolving around the system.
- There is a strong consensus that the current homelessness system is not working well: this is creating an appetite for change

# The Feasibility Study

## The Aim

- To develop a Housing First model which would sit within a wider housing-led approach to preventing and tackling homelessness
- To develop a model that will – over time – free up sufficient resources to pay for itself
- To co-produce this model with local authorities, front-line professionals and with homeless people themselves
- To work out how much it would cost to implement the model, how it might best be delivered across the region and develop a transition plan
- To design a process for all this that other cities can follow



2016

2017

December

February

March

April

May

June



Feasibility study period

Initial engagement

Launch event

Develop outline model

Consultation

Analyse Mainstay data

Policy analysis

Financial & commissioning analysis

Report & Toolkit

Dissemination & Development

Group/ sector	Number of people
Local authorities from each of the 6 areas	58
Homelessness support providers	52 from 34 organisations
Housing providers	28 from 10 organisations
Health service managers and clinicians	14
Projects supporting people with complex needs	9 from 3 projects
Criminal justice system professionals	9

## What we did

- Appointed a 'local' expert to lead on the ground, alongside a project board of local stakeholders
- Initial Engagement with local politicians, local government homelessness leads and key providers through 1-2-1 meetings in their areas
- Launch Event with speakers from successful Housing First projects across Europe to create enthusiasm, momentum and a sense this can be done!
- Detailed 1-2-1 meetings with local authorities in each area
- Focus groups with housing and support providers, health & criminal justice

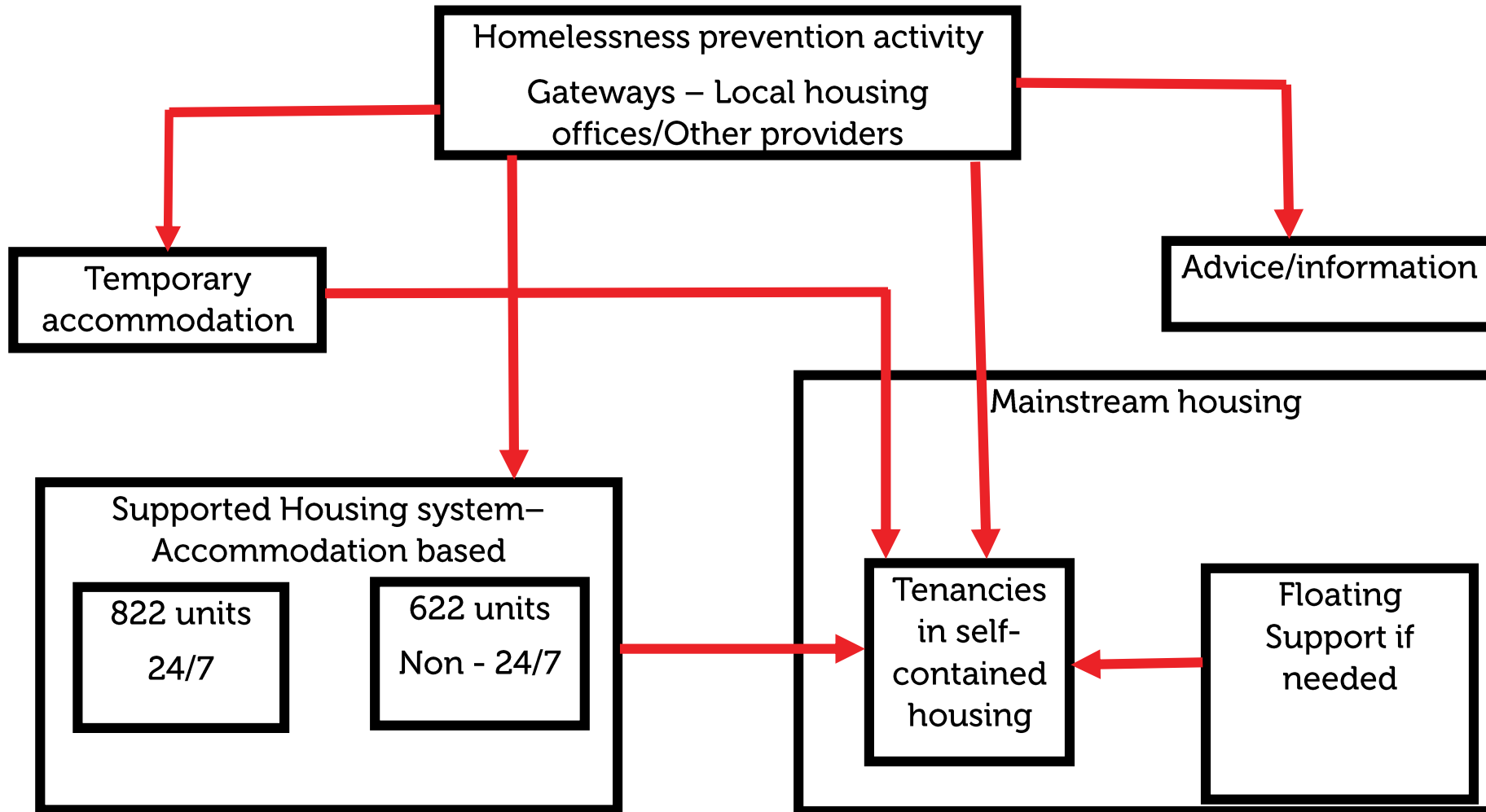
## People who know best

- We engaged, trained and worked with a group of peer researchers with lived experience of homelessness
- Between us, we interviewed 80 people in different settings: in hostels, day centres and on the streets
- We asked people about their experiences of homelessness, existing services and whether and how Housing First might work for them

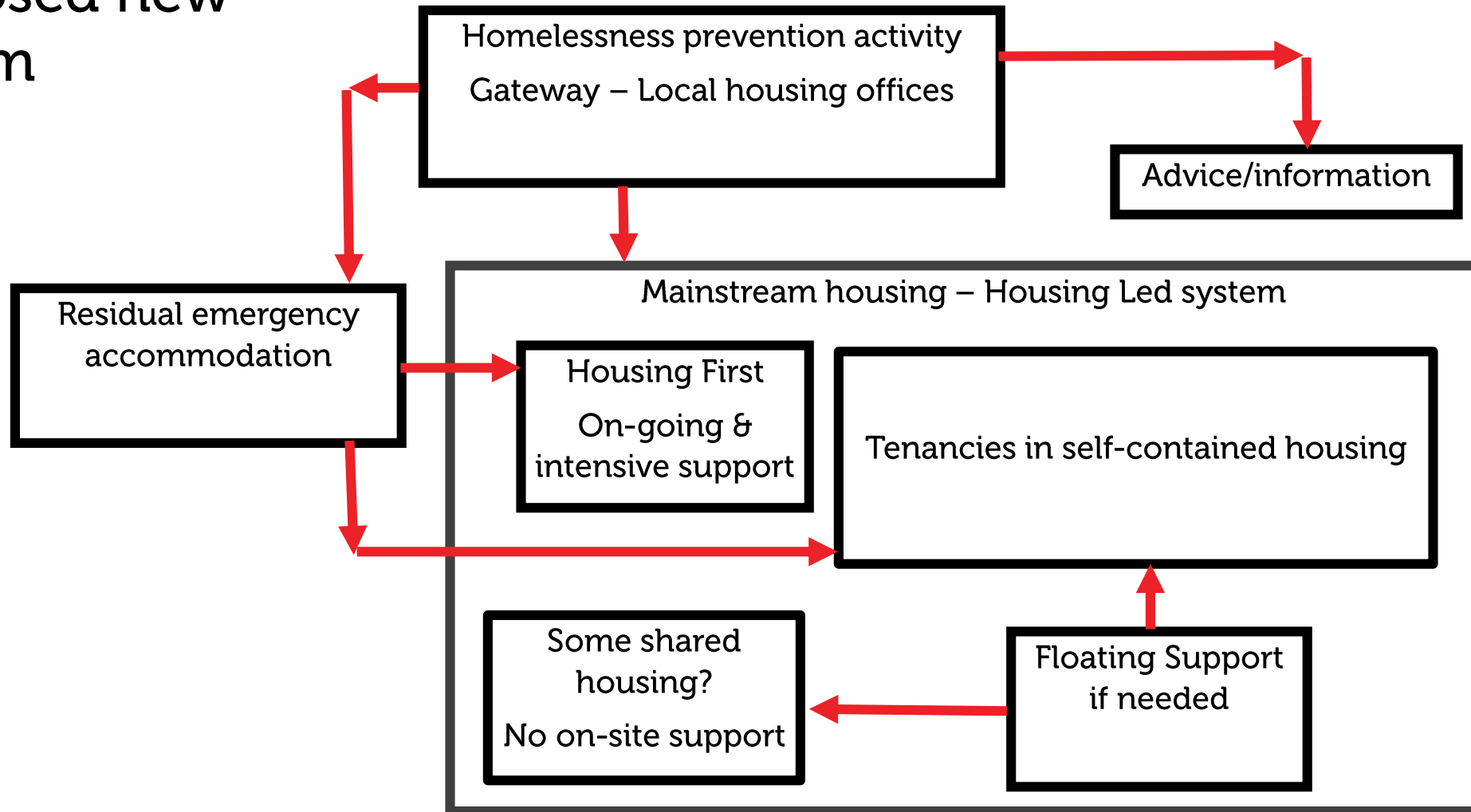


# The Model

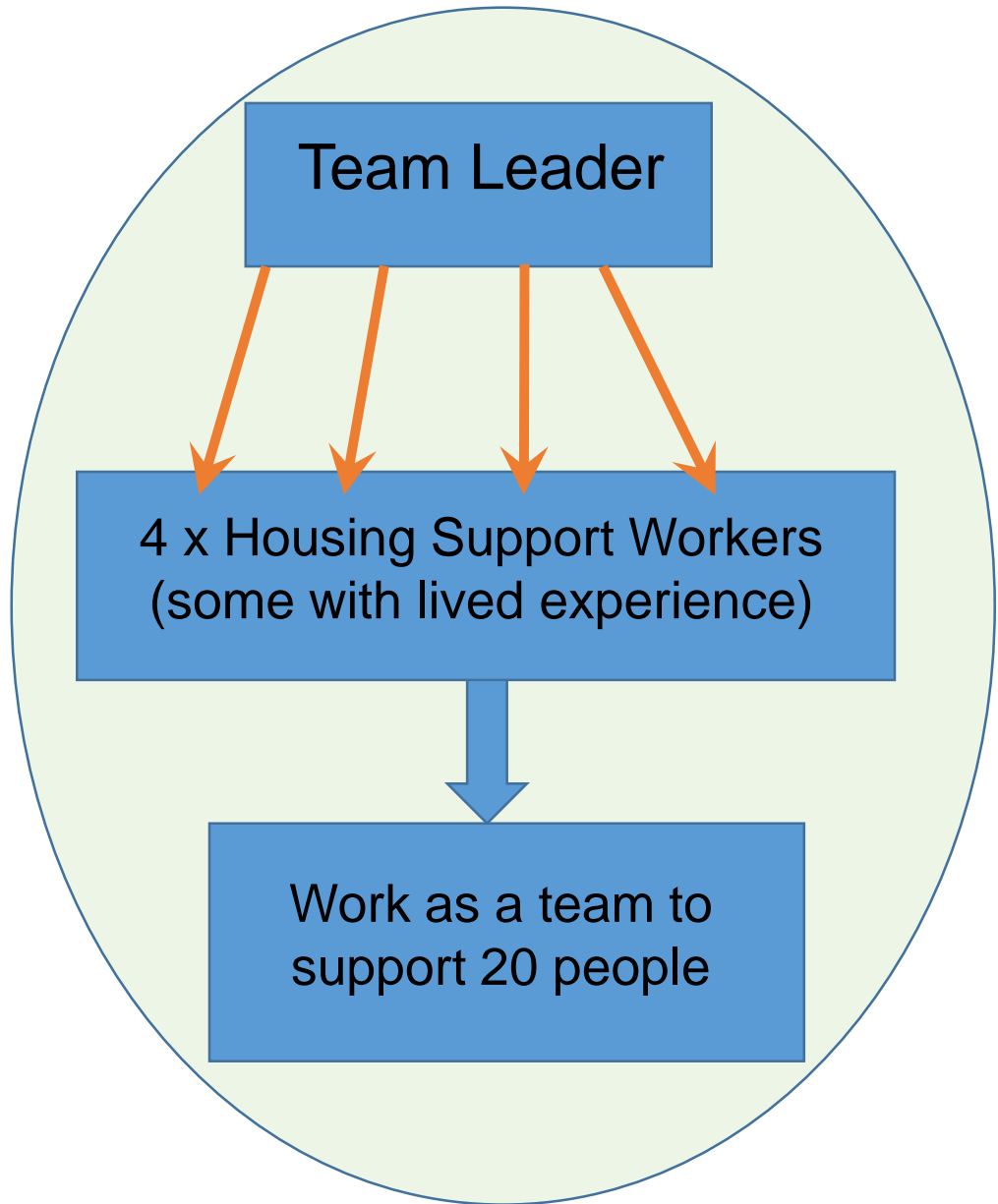
# Current system



# Proposed new system



Proposed Housing First team



Housing brokered by Housing Agency

Mental health worker for 2<sup>nd</sup> tier support

Wellbeing facilitator/ work and learning coach

24/7 on call service



## A New Housing Agency

- A not-for-profit lettings agency, offering a range of packages (from tenant finding to longer term leasing) to private sector and social landlords
- Provide a housing brokerage service for those wishing to access Housing First, but also for others unable to access rented housing on the market (disabled people, homeless families, etc.) – to widen benefits, spread risk, and maximise income
- The proposed model is an independent community interest company with a multi-agency board of trustees

# Challenges and Opportunities

# General challenges

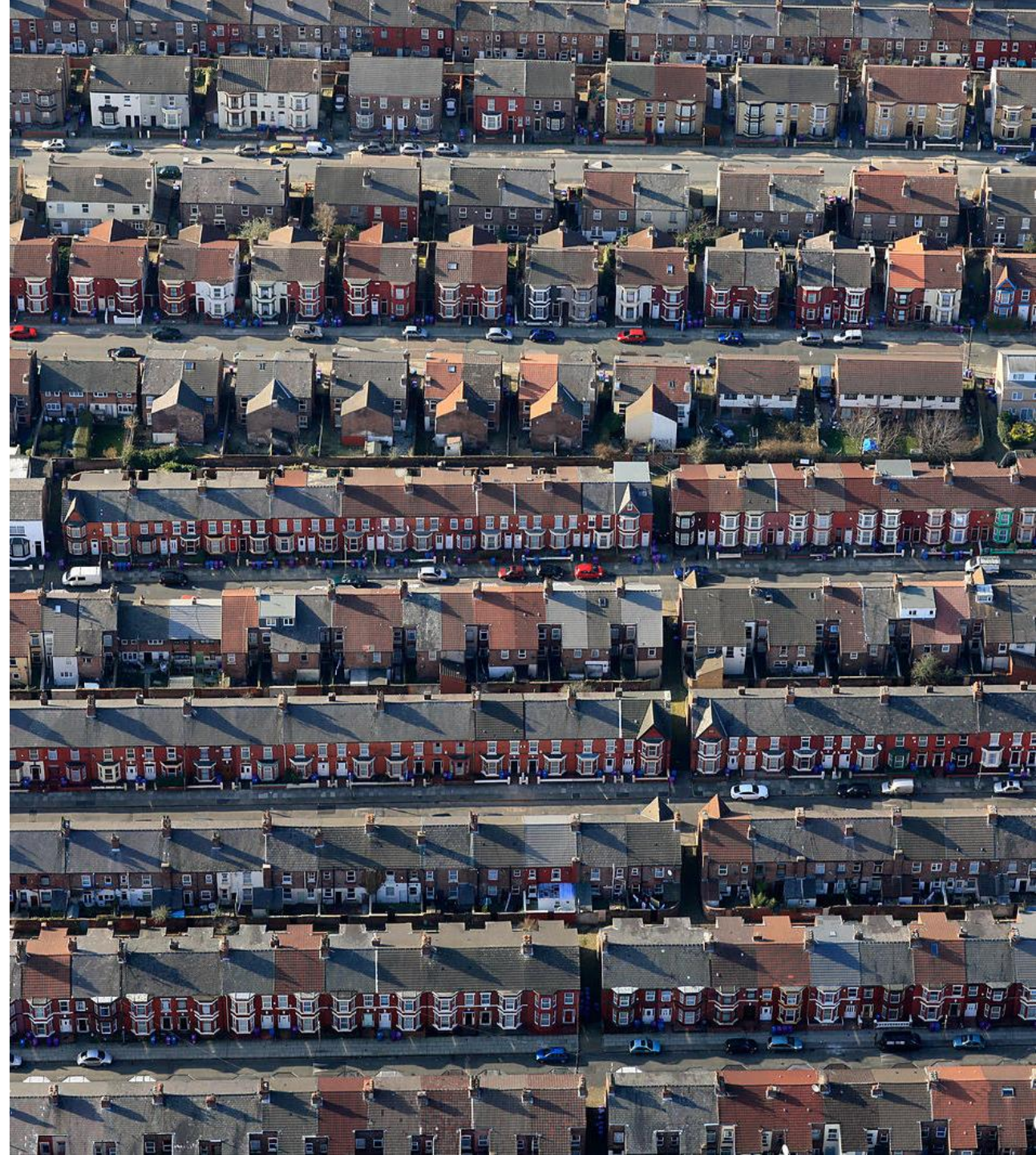
- Myths which exist about Housing First? 'We are already doing this!'
- Can we really work out who needs Housing First?
- Housing First or housing led? Or both?
- How to assess eligibility without applying condition?
- Local connections and migrant homelessness
- What do we mean by mental health support?
- Can a Golden Ticket approach work?



# Housing Supply

- Access not supply the challenge
- Property Conditions?
- Role of the Private Rented Sector?
- Who wants to manage these homes?
- How to create new and better supply?

Taking Housing First to Scale



# Funding

- A transitional approach – this is not an overnight solution and that isn't a bad thing.
- How can we bridge the financial gap between hostels and dispersed housing without losing the service and without organisations going out of business?
- Existing Contracts aren't working to the same timescales and all services aren't available everywhere
- Needs to be accompanied by a prevention and housing options approach
- Opportunity to be proactive and respond to pressures on your own teams (UK example of funding changes in 2019)

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## Political Support

- What's the motivation? Financial? Moral? Presentational? A competition of ambition?
- Expectation that this will immediately save money won't be met
- Leadership support is good but is it sufficient in large complex organisations?
- Queue Jumping
- Needs to be part of new political deal – the system has to change



- Next Steps

- Report published in June
- Toolkit for other cities tested and published in June
- Working with the new Mayor in the Liverpool City Region
- Supporting similar studies across the UK and Europe
- How can we help?

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Thank you



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