

## Seminar 13: Data Collection Methodologies III (Room: TBD) - Chair: Lars Benjaminsen, DK

**Nana Mertens, Evelien Demaerschalk, Koen Hermans, BE:** Second Round of Point-in-Time Homelessness Counts in Belgium

To provide local and regional governments with data and tools for their policy and approach to homelessness, LUCAS KU Leuven developed a methodology for conducting an extensive service-based homelessness count. This point-in-time count is a ten-month process and entails close collaboration with local services who have (in)direct contact with people experiencing homelessness. Between 2020 and 2023, a total of 14 point-in-time counts were conducted in various cities and regions across Flanders, along with 10 point-in-time counts in Wallonia.

In October 2023, the first reiterations of the extensive service-based counts were conducted in Flanders, specifically in the cities of Ghent and Leuven. We present the figures for both cities for the years 2020 and 2023, with a more detailed analysis of the main changes observed in both cities. Furthermore, we will outline the main lessons learned on the organization of the second count.



*Nana Mertens is a researcher at LUCAS, Center for Care Research and Consultancy, KU Leuven. She works on the research topics of care and support for vulnerable and underserved populations in society. In recent years, she has focused on the development and organization of local and regional homelessness counts in Belgium and Europe.*



*Evelien Demaerschalk is a researcher at LUCAS, Center for Care Research and Consultancy. Her work focusses on the care and support for vulnerable and underserved populations in society. Currently she is involved in the development and organization of local and regional homelessness counts in Belgium and Europe.*

*Koen Hermans, Belgium is Associate Professor of Social Work and Social Policy at the Centre for Sociological Research, KU Leuven. He is also project leader at LUCAS, Centre for Care Research and Consultancy. His research focuses on the care and support for vulnerable and underserved populations in society, such as homeless persons, persons with disability and youngsters with complex needs. He was the coordinator of the COST Action on 'Measuring homelessness in Europe' (2016-2020). In Belgium, he is responsible for the development and organization of local and regional homelessness counts.*

**Sarah Coupechoux, FR:** Data Collection Methods on Homelessness in France: A Comparative Analysis Between Two Different Methodologies

For years in France, associations and the research community have deplored the lack of reliable, up-to-date statistics on the issue of homelessness. The next survey on homelessness by Insee (the French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies) is scheduled for 2025. This third edition of the survey is eagerly awaited, to give a more accurate idea of the scale of the phenomenon at the national level, since the last one dates back to 2012, and the population concerned has at least doubled, according to figures from the Fondation Abbé Pierre. The survey will also provide data that will enable us to better understand the social trajectories and care pathways of individuals without a personal home. At the same time, to make up for the lack of figures needed to guide public authorities' action, France's major cities are implementing protocols to count the amount of homeless, starting with Paris, which launched the first one in 2017 and repeats it every year. These two methodologies for producing figures on the number of homeless and roofless people raise a series of questions that we propose to answer in this contribution: how are these surveys organized? What is their particularity in terms of knowledge production? What issues do they address beyond counting? What are their limits in terms of scope and temporality? How have they evolved over time to adapt to changes in the population concerned? What blind spots can be identified? How do they complement each other? Finally, how are they used by decision-makers?

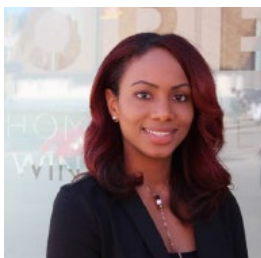
## Seminar 14: Housing Systems and Homelessness (Room: TBD) - Chair: Nóra Teller, HU

### Marie Cecile Kotyk, CA: Seeing in Colour: A Framework to Address Anti-Black Racism in Housing and Homelessness

This doctoral research focuses on raising awareness of the role systemic anti-Black racism plays in creating housing instability in Black communities and creating a framework to address anti-Black racism in the housing and homelessness sector. Utilizing a multi- method approach, including design science, Afrocentric, and autoethnographic research methodologies, this research conducts in- depth semi-structured interviews with eight Black individuals with lived/living experiences (BPWLE) in Calgary and nine Black key informants (KI) across Canada to better understand the impacts of systemic anti-Black racism. The interviews with BPWLE and KI highlighted the pervasiveness of anti-Black racism across sectors and the need for housing policies and practices to be grounded in equity and anti-oppression.

As a result of these interviews, a Black Housing Equity Framework (BHEF) was developed. The BHEF encompasses guiding principles aligned with the values and approaches of Black communities, as well as operational questions to guide policymakers, housing practitioners and other stakeholders in developing equitable policies and practices. The BHEF is a crucial step towards recognizing and addressing the systemic anti-Black racism and discrimination that Black communities face when accessing and maintaining housing.

Presentation Description: Utilizing a multi-method approach oriented on lived experience, the doctoral research will present the unique stories of Black Canadians with lived/living experiences of housing instability, homelessness, and racism to raise awareness of the intersections between race and housing. It will discuss the results of semi-structured interviews with Black key informants who are experts in addressing systemic anti-Black racism in their field. Additionally, the presentation will introduce the Black Housing Equity Framework, which is based on Afrocentric guiding principles and includes a Black equity assessment tool. The first of its kind in Canada, this framework can help policymakers and housing practitioners address systemic anti-Black racism in their policies and practices, thus promoting equitable housing options and outcomes for Black Canadians.



*Dr. Marie Cecile Kotyk is a social planner and housing practitioner with 15 years of experience in the public and non-profit sectors. She specializes in designing and managing community development projects and conducting research to address spatial justice and racial inequities in the built environment. Her passion for social justice and racial equity led her to pursue her doctoral studies in the Doctor of Design program at the University of Calgary's School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape Architecture. Her research led to the development of a Black Housing Equity Framework, the first of its kind in Canada. This framework is designed\_ to address systemic anti-Black racism and promote equitable housing policies and practices. Cecile's research has received national and international recognition, providing her with opportunities to present at conferences and educate practitioners on how to bring about*

*restorative justice in the planning and housing sectors. In 2023, she received the Alberta Human Rights and Multiculturalism scholarship at the doctoral level for her research.*

*Cecile is the founder and principal consultant at Kotyk Consulting, an assistant professor, and SAPL design justice research chair at the University of Calgary's School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture (SAPL).*

## Jan Weckwerth, DE: Precarious Housing as a Gateway into and out of Homelessness

The deregulation and commodification of the housing market in Germany has led to a substantial shortage of affordable housing. The drivers of this current housing crisis are already well-known factors such as the withdrawal of the state and the decline in social housing. Furthermore, real-estate companies have recently tapped into the low-price segment as a lucrative business model. These developments not only result in the gentrification of previously lower-income neighborhoods, they also cause an increasing competition at the bottom end of the housing market and, thus, to further displacement processes of the – from a (socio-)economic perspective – most 'unattractive' groups of tenants into the most precarious housing situations or even into homelessness.

Such devastating consequences of housing policy affect not only metropolitan areas, but also smaller cities. In the case of the medium-sized German university town of Göttingen, these are particularly evident in three run-down and deprived 'sink estates' in which poor and marginalized people are spatially concentrated.

This study explores the reproduction mechanisms of the precarious housing status in relation to homelessness on the basis of semi-structured interviews with experts from the city administration and local assistance systems as well as with (former) residents who (mostly) have experienced homelessness. A multidimensional and multifaceted "denigration of place" (Wacquant/Slater/Borges Pereira 2014) on the part of various actors and institutions is revealed. These properties function as a gateway into and out of homelessness: they are often the last step before homelessness and usually the first – and only – option after a period of homelessness. This further leads to dependency on the rental situation and undermines individual resistance and collective organization. People can hardly escape from this environment and are ultimately kept in precarious living conditions.



*Jan Weckwerth is a postdoctoral scholar at the Georg-August-University Göttingen, Germany. He received his Ph.D. from the Alpen-Adria-University of Klagenfurt, Austria. His research interests include social inequality, in particular class and lifestyle analyses, as well as urban sociology, housing and homelessness, the sociology of professions, and the sociology of culture and film.*

## Seminar 15: Migration and Homelessness II (Room: TBD) - Chair: Eoin O'Sullivan, IE

**Raluca Cosmina Budian, Susanna Salvador, Ignasi Marti Lanuza, ES:** Understanding Migrant Homelessness: Pathways Approach and Barriers to Housing Access in Spain

In Spain, social policies often prioritize housing, employment, and social services over homelessness (Rodríguez Cabrero & Marbán Gallego, 2020), yet homelessness persists, with marginalized individuals suffering worldwide (Pophaim & Peacock, 2021).

This study delves into the intricate journeys of migrants experiencing homelessness in Spain, offering a comprehensive analysis of their pathways into, through, and out of homelessness.

Recognizing the challenges in studying the trajectories of migrant homelessness, our research is driven by a focused exploration of the pathways approach and the barriers confronting migrants seeking to transition out of homelessness in Spain. Drawing on our analysis of 33 life-stories of individuals in Barcelona, Madrid and Lleida, we uncover a complex interplay of intersectionality between access to housing, barriers, and migrant status within the framework of the pathways approach (Clapham, 2005; Navarro Lashayas, 2016). Simultaneously, we employ a phenomenological method to gain profound insights into the subjective experiences of homelessness and the meanings participants attach to these experiences (Bernard et al., 2017; Creswell, 2007).

Our findings challenge conventional wisdom by revealing that the challenges faced by homeless migrants are not solely a consequence of their undocumented status; rather, they emerge through nuanced interactions of class dynamics, racialization, and immigration status. These dynamics establish conditions that heighten vulnerability and barriers to securing stable housing, often triggered by life events such as job loss.

Navigating through homelessness involves negotiating multifaceted trajectories influenced by structural realities, leading to either downward spirals or integrative passages (Chamberlain & Johnson, 2018). While some individuals transition out of homelessness through supportive networks and stable housing, others face bureaucratic impediments and societal barriers.

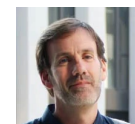
This research advances our understanding of migrant homelessness outcomes, emphasizing the need for comprehensive and preventive strategies in Spain. By recognizing the multifaceted of homelessness, it is important to maintain a perspective on proactive strategies for homelessness prevention (Mackie's, 2023).



*Raluca Cosmina Budian: Postdoctoral Researcher at the Esade Institute for Social Innovation and a member of the Institute's Decent Housing Observatory.*



*Susanna Salvador: Project Coordinator and Associate Director of the Decent Housing Observatory of Esade's Institute for Social Innovation.*



*Ignasi Marti Lanuza: Professor in the Department of Social Sciences, Director of the Institute for Social Innovation and Director of the Decent Housing Observatory at Esade.*

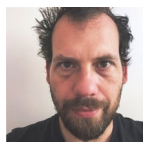


**Bruno Meeus and Elisabeth Mareels, NL/BE:** Homelessness, precarious citizenship, and practices of 'forced inhabitation' in Cureghem, Brussels

In this contribution, we report on ethnographic research we conducted in the marginalized neighbourhood Cureghem in Brussels. For the study, we talked to, among others, a dozen people with precarious citizenship who live in the neighbourhood for short or longer periods of time. In the contribution we explain:

- Which conditions underlie the situation in which people have to develop 'forced inhabitation practices'. Forced because the neighbourhood is a last refuge (Agier 2013) for these people who experience diverse forms of discrimination and illegalisation. Inhabitation practices because the neighbourhood offers not only forms of shelter but also the possibilities for livelihood creation (Boano & Astolfo 2020; Clapham 2023);
- That in the recent decades and as a result of a particular politics of 'world-building' (Zigon 2017), various actors have built and maintained a socio-material infrastructure in the neighbourhood to facilitate these practices of inhabitation;
- That the contemporary neighbourhood thereby emerges as a polycentric set of humanitarian, charitable, kinship, ethnicity, commercial and various other micro-regimes that provide limited groups of people in a specific situation of homelessness with (temporary) access to shelter, income, social relations and more;
- That the people we spoke with help reproduce these micro-regimes but also tactically adapt and repurpose them themselves.

The fieldwork in Cureghem was part of an international comparative research project on arrival infrastructure for migrant newcomers (AIMEC).



*Bruno Meeus (Utrecht University of Applied Sciences) is a senior lecturer in ecosocial work, strives for social and ecological justice in a diverse society, and researches the housing and living environments of people in precarious situations. He obtained his PhD as an urban geographer in 2011 and then worked with social professionals, anthropologists and architects within smaller and larger research projects (Steunpunt Wonen, H2020 ReROOT, AIMEC). Based on his own ethnographic research in Brussels (Innoviris), he developed in recent years a framework for analysing the arrival infrastructure for newcomers.*



*Eli Mareels is an anthropologist (PhD) and did research within the recent Brazilian diasporic and Pentecostal field between Brazil and Belgium (2007-15). She worked at DoucheFLUX, a Brussels' day centre for homeless persons (2016-22). Since 2022, she has been teaching at Odisee University of Applied Sciences (social work department) and took up research again for the AIMEC project which looked at the various ways in which migrants build a livelihood through arrival infrastructures in Cureghem (Brussels). Currently, she is part of the ATLAS research project about access to housing and social infrastructure for people with precarious residence status in Brussels.*

## Seminar 16: Service Design (Room: TBD) - Chair: Mike Allen, IE

**Valeria Ruiz and Alicia García Rodríguez-Marín, ES:** The Early Care Approach. An Assessment of Deinstitutionalisation of Homelessness

Right to Housing is an innovative program that began its development in Spain in 2022 with a clear objective of transforming the homelessness support system. One of its main lines of action is "Early Attention" aimed at preventing the institutionalization of individuals with a brief history of homelessness by offering housing solutions from an autonomy-focused approach.

To measure the project's impact, an evaluation was conducted with two equivalent groups: 221 individuals in the experimental group (EG) and 108 in the control group (CG). From the interim results obtained multiple insights have been derived. The impact of the first 7 months of support shows a clear increase in key aspects such as autonomy, decision-making capacity, self-esteem, and motivation for change. Improvement in emotional well-being and quality of life has emerged as pivotal factors for life stability.

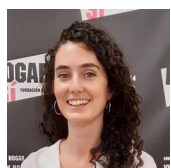
Overall, a highly positive impact has been noted on the digital divide, prospects for the future and social capital, with substantial evidence indicating enhancements in social relationships, community integration and a sense of belonging within the neighbourhood.

Regarding major impact indicators: in employment terms, 40.1% of the EG have undergone job interviews in the last 3 months compared to 26.7% of the CG and the percentage of employed individuals in EG has doubled since the outset. Concerning housing, 54% of participants in the EG have found a housing solution with program support and 43% consider it probable or highly probable to find or remain autonomously housed in their current accommodation.

In conclusion, the program has achieved a 24.5% rate of autonomous exits within 7 months with an expected extra 29% increase over the next 3 months. This signifies that in just 10 months of support more than half of the individuals who started the program will be out of homelessness.



*Valeria Ruiz, evaluation specialist for HOGAR SÍ projects for more than two years in the Digitalisation and Strengthening unit and participant in several research projects on homelessness and Sociologist from the University of Granada and Master in Applied Sociology from the University of Malaga.*



*Alicia García, graduate in Political Science from the Complutense University of Madrid and a masters degree in International Relations from the University of Sussex. She has developed her professional career in the field of human rights with various groups (whistleblowers, migrants, and people in situation of homeless). For the past two years, she has been part of the international advocacy team at HOGAR SÍ, working on the development of the Derechos a la Vivienda and Hay Futuro Innovation Projects, initiatives aimed at deinstitutionalization and homelessness eradication.*

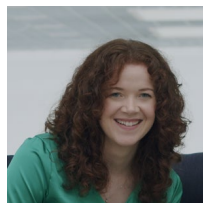
**Branagh O'Shaughnessy and Paula Mayock, IE:** Recovery from Homelessness and Substance Use Disorder: A Qualitative Examination

**Background:** The complex relationship between homelessness and substance use disorder (SUD) and the recovery journey out of homelessness and SUD are only partially captured in existing research. Research in this area is dominated by quantitative methods which do not capture how individuals navigate homelessness and treatment services in their efforts to overcome adversity and embark on recovery. Through the lens of complex recovery, this research aimed to examine 60 homelessness service users' conceptions of recovery and their personal recovery journeys.

**Method:** Semi-structured interviews were carried out with participants in three service contexts in Ireland: emergency accommodation (n = 25), transitional housing (n = 15), and housing with supports (n = 20). Interview transcripts were coded and analysed thematically. All participants had lifetime SUD and experiences of homelessness.

**Results:** Themes generated from the data include: Recovery signifiers and supports; A broken homelessness service

system; Centrality of personal relationships; and Housing as a shot at life. Recovery signifiers included self-discovery and being free of dependency. Treatment experiences were diverse, the success of which depended on the approach employed and it's fit with the individual. The homelessness service system was often described as fragmented, although some felt lucky to have supportive case managers. Family reconnection was often a recovery goal, especially reconnection with children. Contrasting experiences of housed versus unhoused participants indicated that home was a safe haven for recovery and reconnection. Relying on hostels was risky for recovery and also for personal safety. Discussion: Findings support a holistic conceptualisation of recovery in the context of homelessness and SUD. They also support person-centred programmes that prioritise housing and supportive relationships as facilitators of the recovery process. At policy level, a fusion of housing-led, community-based approaches and person-centred programmes can comprehensively address the overlapping challenges of homelessness and SUD.



*Dr. Branagh O'Shaughnessy is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin. Her research focuses on the psychological well-being of adults experiencing homelessness and mental health issues, with particular interest in empowering community-based programmes.*



*Dr. Paula Mayock is an Associate Professor at the School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin. Her research focuses primarily on the lives and experiences of marginalised youth and adult populations, covering areas such as homelessness, drug use and drug problems. Paula is the author of numerous articles, book chapters and research reports and is an Associate Editor to the international journal "Addiction".*

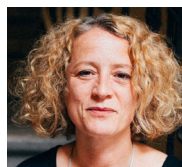
## Seminar 17: Youth Homelessness I (Room: TBD) - Chair: Masa Filipovic Hrast, SI

**Eszter Somogyi, Nóra Katona, Vera Horváth, HU:** What Were the Outcomes of the Housing Led Programs for Young Homeless People in Hungary?

The paper examines the results of the ESF-funded ("Housing First" - actually housing led) projects for young clients in Hungary. A total of 17 projects were implemented between 2018 and 2022, of which nine were included in the original program outcome evaluation in 2021. Of the 187 clients, 24 were under 2

5 years old at the time of entry into the programme. Due to the small sample size, the analysis uses mainly qualitative methods. In the original research, case manager social workers were interviewed using a questionnaire about the clients' condition at the time of entry and exit point of the program. These databases and interview descriptions will be used to further analyse the group of young people.

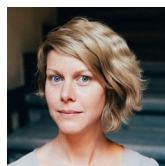
The project implementers generally classified young people as belonging to the higher risk group, both because they are more likely to use drugs in the case of addiction and because they are more mobile and therefore they are less likely to stay in the program. At the same time, the call made it compulsory to involve 1-7 young people, depending on the amount of the grant. The young people included in the programme came from a wide range of living situations (street, inadequate/makeshift housing, couch-surfing and insecure housing) and had very different social, family backgrounds and mental health conditions. Some were still living with their parents, others fell into the category of multi-generational homelessness, some still had supportive family backgrounds, and others had no family at all or were in toxic and abusive relationships. Another group of young people already had children of their own, and/or partners. Mental illness and alcohol and substance abuse were also common, and the experience of childhood trauma was common to all clients. The paper examines the outcomes of the projects for different groups of young people, and classifies which characteristics of the clients and the projects may have led to positive outcomes in terms of increasing the chances of leaving homelessness in the long term, and which key characteristics of the projects were bottlenecks to more positive outcomes.



*Eszter Somogyi (MA in Sociology) works at Metropolitan Research Institute, a Hungarian think-tank, has more than twenty years of experience in research and policy consultancy related to urban regeneration, housing policy and complex policy making targeting vulnerable people. She took part in several research and consultation activities targeted to the most marginalized social groups, such as homeless people and Roma communities. Her expertise also includes national and local strategy development aiming to secure affordable housing and linking housing policies with employment and education policies.*



*Nóra Katona (MA in Sociology and MSc in Survey Statistics) is a researcher at Metropolitan Research Institute, based in Budapest. She has three years of experience in social research related to homelessness, marginalized groups, Roma communities and social inequalities among young people in urban settings. She also has experience with both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, data analysis and policy evaluation.*



*Vera Horváth (MA in International Relations, PhD student in Sociology) has worked at Metropolitan Research Institute and From Streets to Homes! Association. She has extensive experience in policy analysis, social research, and qualitative methods, which covers research and policy advisory regarding vulnerable populations. She contributed to the evaluation of Hungary's ESF funded "Housing First" programmes.*



## **Nia Ffion Rees, UK: "It started at home": A Critical Examination of Family Mediation as an Intervention to Prevent Youth Homelessness**

This paper is part of a wider study which critically examines a highly dominant, yet under-researched approach to the prevention of youth homelessness – mediation, a political priority in Wales and the global north. Dominant service responses have received limited academic scrutiny within international literatures. This study begins to address this fundamental gap by critically examining mediation as an approach to youth homelessness prevention. Mediation services seek to support young people and their families to bridge differences that risk unplanned exits from the home. Fundamental to the approach is the maintenance/re-establishment of ties with family, ultimately aiming to prevent homelessness.

This paper draws upon findings from participatory research undertaken in the case study country of Wales, addressing this fundamental gap in understanding. It focuses upon in-depth biographical interviews and an innovative network activity with young people at risk of homelessness, who have experienced family mediation. Semi-structured interviews with mediation workers also drawn upon in order to comprehend the inner workings and complexities of mediation. Focusing upon themes of conflict, care, networks and home, this paper offers a rare critique of the merging homelessness prevention paradigm - challenging the conceptualisation of prevention by considering the importance of the extent to which interventions enable ontological security and the feeling of 'home'. In addition to offering insights into the way in which relationships, connections and network interactions are re-established through the processes of mediation for young people at risk of homelessness. It fills a gap in research within housing and youth studies by critiquing this intervention, innovatively drawing upon these concepts. By critiquing the dominant intervention mechanism of mediation, this research has direct implications for service provisions in Wales and internationally.



*Nia Ffion Rees' areas of interest broadly lie within housing insecurity, homelessness, youth studies and inequality. Her PhD examines the dominant responses to tackling youth homelessness – mediation, aiming to offer a rare critique of this intervention mechanism. Nia has undertaken research at a global level, including exploring the housing pathways of young people, Peru; informal trade and child labour, Tanzania. As Research Consultant for The Wallich and Policy and Research Manager for Llamau, Nia has undertaken research which has impacted on service provision for homelessness young people in Wales. Nia appreciates the contributions of service users and peer researchers and aims to ensure their voices are heard through participatory research. Nia is an active member of the Housing Studies Association, UK; Royal Geographical Society with IBG, UK; and works closely with End Youth Homelessness Cymru, Wales; and the Youth Experiential Learning Simulation Wales, in collaboration with BakerMcKenzie, USA.*

## Seminar 18: Reflections on Housing First (Room: TBD) - Chair: Freek Spinnewijn, BE

**Ides Nicaise, Eveline Teppers, Luigi Leonori, BE:** Person First: Towards Person-Centered and Integrated Services for Homeless People with Mental Health Issues

Staff of services for homeless people from 9 European countries participated in this learning network funded by Erasmus+ (2022-2024) upon invitation by SMES Europe (a network specialised in mental health services for homeless people). The project focussed on a person-centered approach and integration of services with maximum 'ownership' by users. HIVA (KU Leuven) provided scientific support. Building on the well-known Housing First alternative, Person First can be seen as a complement with a strong emphasis on 'human investment'.

In addition to an exploratory survey of 65 services, four study visits took place (Riga, Ljubljana, Helsinki and Athens), alternating with thematic webinars for a wider audience. The final report (publication date: July 2024) can be used for training and professional development.

Some key lessons can be summarized as follows:

- shelters will continue to play a role, but need to undergo a 'quality boost': smaller scale, person-centered, connected with a comprehensive support network and helping users in drawing up an individual integration plan. The duration of residence should be 'as long as necessary, but as short as possible'.
- homeless services should operate in integrated networks around four clusters (emergency support and social assistance; physical and mental health care; housing; and rehabilitation through flexible types of work, including peer work, peer mentoring and advocacy work.
- given the high incidence of mental health issues among homeless people, all professionals working in such services should have a basic training in trauma-informed care.

The report includes a set of policy recommendations at EU, national / regional and local level.



*Prof. em. Ides Nicaise has a background in economics. He is a senior research manager at HIVA (Research Institute for Work and Society), a multidisciplinary research institute of the University of Leuven (Flemish Louvain). He specialised in social policy, more precisely the relationships between education, labour market policy and social inclusion (in rich as well as developing countries). He led the Belgian team of the European Social Policy Network until 2019 and currently participates in the coordination team of the Social Situation Monitor for DG EMPL of the European Commission. He also works occasionally as a consultant for the OECD and international NGOs.*

*Besides his professional activities, he is chair of ATD-Fourth World Flanders, the Flemish branch of an international solidarity movement between and with people experiencing poverty, and of the Belgian Combat Poverty Service, a centre created by law as an interface between the government, other stakeholders and grassroots organisations of people experiencing poverty.*

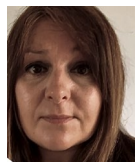
**Nicholas Pleace, Joanne Bretherton and Deborah Quilgars, UK:** The Lived Experience of Housing First: Qualitative Research in the UK

This paper draws on a series of five research projects evaluating programmes and projects working within the Housing First model, across the UK, over the period 2010 to 2023. Drawing on the results of over 150 semi-structured interviews, using a common methodology, the paper focuses on the experiences, perceptions and opinions of people who were using Housing First to find a lasting exit from homelessness. The paper draws on this qualitative data to highlight a number of issues with the current debates and assumptions about Housing First in the UK and beyond. Talking with people with lived experience highlighted a generally very high degree of positivity about the support offered by Housing First services. These findings were in contrast to some statistical monitoring of Housing First outcomes, which has highlighted some variable performance from Housing First in delivering improvements in social inclusion, addiction and

mental and physical health, while still recording high rates of housing sustainment. However, the interviews also raised important questions about the quality of the lives experienced by people who had found housing stability through Housing First once they had exited homelessness. These questions arose in the context of deep and sustained governmental retrenchment from welfare spending, public health and social housing in the UK and centred on the ultimate viability of Housing First within the public service deserts that have been created across the UK since 2010. The paper also considers the wider implications of the findings in relation to the practicality and viability of Housing First across the highly variegated social protection and housing systems that exist at pan-EU level, also discussing possible implications for the European Platform to Combat Homelessness.



*Nicholas Pleace is a Professor of Social Policy in the School for Business and Society, University of York and Director of the Centre for Housing Policy. He is a member of the European Observatory of Homelessness which operates under the auspices of FEANTSA.*



*Dr Joanne Bretherton is an Associate Professor in Social and Criminal Justice in the School for Business and Society, University of York and a Senior Research Fellow in the Centre for Housing Policy. She is a co-investigator in the Vulnerability & Policing Futures Research Centre.*



*Deborah Quilgars is a Senior Research Fellow in the School for Business and Society, University of York and in the Centre for Housing Policy. Deborah is also a member of the NIHR School for Social Care Research.*