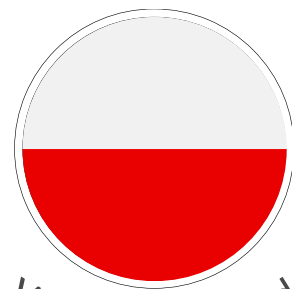


BRIEF 14

THE AMBIVALENCE PROGRAMME

Housing First Poland Foundation HFPP
and Municipality of Warsaw
Warsaw, Poland

ID CARD



Warsaw, Poland

PROJECT TITLE.

The Ambivalence Programme

MAIN OBJECTIVE.

To provide support in line with Housing First values to individuals transitioning from long-term homelessness to municipal housing, focusing on mental health challenges, housing retention, and overall well-being.

TARGET AUDIENCE.

Individuals with experience of long-term homelessness and mental health crises who have accessed municipal housing or decided to apply for it.

IN NUMBERS.

2021

launch of the Ambivalence Programme by Housing First Poland Foundation for 5 participants

€262

per month: **average cost** of the Ambivalence Programme per participant in 2023

66

individuals supported by the Ambivalence service since its introduction by the Municipality of Warsaw.

SUMMARY.

The Ambivalence Programme supports individuals transitioning from long term homelessness to stable housing, addressing both psychological and housing retention challenges. It employs a mobile outreach team of mental health professionals and removes barriers in access to health and housing services available in the community. Funded by regional and EU grants, the programme adapts Housing First Model to local challenges in Poland ensuring that core Housing First values are met.

CONTACT.



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Project description

Empowering Transitions through Intensive and Personalised Support

The Ambivalence Programme provides intensive support for individuals transitioning from long-term homelessness to municipal housing, addressing both their housing needs and mental health challenges. It includes a mobile outreach team of psychologists, trauma specialists, and motivational interviewers, helping participants navigate the complex emotions linked to their new situation. This includes managing ambivalence towards their new role as tenants.

From Pilot to Policy in Advancing Housing First in Warsaw

First tested in Poland's 2019–2023 Housing First pilot, this service has been run by the Housing First Poland Foundation (HFPF) since 2021 as the Ambivalence Programme. In 2023, it was integrated into Warsaw's local legislation to support long-term and at-risk homeless individuals. Today, it reaches 55 people: 40 via the Municipality of Warsaw, 15 via HFPF. Grounded in Housing First principles, it offers secure tenancies and person-centred support, using public housing and NGO partnerships to provide real alternatives to traditional shelters and abstinence-based systems.

A Scalable and Sustainable Model

The Ambivalence Programme of HFPF is funded through local and regional grants, European funding, and private contributions. As an NGO-led initiative, it faces funding sustainability challenges—particularly for specialised mental health services, which are in high demand in Poland. Municipal and regional bodies occasionally finance the programme via tenders. Despite these challenges, its alignment with Housing First values and integration into municipal policy make it a strong model for future replication.

TIMELINE

2021

Launch of The Ambivalence Program of Housing First Poland Foundation.

2023

Official recognition of the Ambivalence Programme as a Housing First service by the Municipality of Warsaw.

2023-2024

Public procurements for the service by the Municipality of Warsaw and expansion from 20 to 40 Participants.

2024-2027

Ambivalence Program of HFPF becomes part of the SOLACE-CEE Partnership cofunded by the European Commission.

Inspiration note

Addressing Homelessness and Mental Health Crises

The Ambivalence Programme offers a compelling model for addressing the intersection of homelessness and mental health crises, particularly in regions with limited resources. It blends the principles of Housing First with a locally adapted approach, ensuring that housing as a right, self-determination, and recovery are central to its design. By addressing psychological needs alongside housing, the programme ensures participants not only gain housing but are equipped to maintain it successfully.

Adaptability and Flexibility in Local Contexts

A key strength of the programme is its adaptability. While it adheres to Housing First principles, it remains flexible in how these are implemented within the Polish context. This adaptability has been crucial in overcoming challenges such as limited affordable housing and mental health service access. The integration of municipal housing enables scalability, reducing the burden on NGOs to secure housing, which is often in short supply. By using available resources efficiently, the programme's implementation is more sustainable, paving the way for future expansion in similar settings.

A Tool for Preventing Returns to Homelessness

The Ambivalence Programme is an innovative initiative that complements municipal housing access policies by supporting long-term housing retention and preventing returns to homelessness. Acknowledging the complexity of homelessness, the programme fully recognises the ongoing challenges individuals face when transitioning from life on the streets to stable housing. By providing motivational support to help participants manage the psychological impacts of homelessness, it addresses these difficulties holistically, helping tenants sustain their housing while also reassuring social landlords, strengthening trust in the long-term viability of housing solutions.



Saoirse Browne
EPOCH Practice officer, FEANTSA, Ireland

The Ambivalence Project highlights the principle of 'housing first, but not housing only.' For some, the shift from homelessness to stable housing brings new challenges—developing the skills to sustain a tenancy and adapting to a different daily rhythm. By offering tailored, ongoing support, the Ambivalence Project reinforces the core values of Housing First, ensuring that the transition does not simply interrupt homelessness but provides the foundation to end it permanently.