

Nordic Web Conference on Homelessness

– a conference held on behalf of the Nordic Council of Ministers

‘Social support and housing for people experiencing homelessness’ is the theme for this conference, which is held on behalf of the Nordic Council of Ministers and targets all the Nordic countries.

The web conference will convey knowledge, experiences and solutions to support decision makers and practitioners in the Nordic countries in their continued efforts to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness by offering effective interventions.

The Danish National Board of Social Services is organizing the conference under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Interior on the occasion of Denmark’s chairmanship of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The conference is held in collaboration with Nordic research and practice experts in the field of homelessness and offers an interesting and varied programme, which will contribute to mutual learning.

We look forward to learning more about homelessness, in Nordic community!

The conference will be held online on **26 November 2020**.

Conference programme

(Danish time/CET)

12.00am-12.15pm **Conference opening**

12.15pm-12.35pm **Homelessness in Nordic Countries – New Report from the Nordic Welfare Centre**
On behalf of the Nordic Welfare Centre, researcher and senior lecturer at the School of Social Work, Lund University, Marcus Knutagård presents a research summary on homelessness in the Nordic countries, which will be published this autumn.

Over the past three decades, the Nordic countries have had concurrent difficulties in dealing with homelessness issues, which in part involve and are due to problems in the housing market. Marcus Knutagård presents and reflects on the solutions which have proven effective in combating homelessness in a Nordic context. These involve the construction of adequate and accessible housing, long-term government strategies for housing policy and combating homelessness, a differentiated access system, which targets different groups with homelessness problems, as well as social support methods, which are scientifically based.

12.35pm-12.45pm Break

12.45pm-1.30pm **Parallel sessions part 1**

1.30pm-1.45pm Break

1.45pm-2.30pm **Parallel sessions part 2**

2.30pm-2.40pm Break

2.40pm-3.10pm **Housing individuals with complex needs in urban areas**
by Mathias Estensen, Team leader, Flexbo, Oslo Municipality, Norway

Mathias Estesen provides an insight into a specific intervention in Oslo: mobile follow-up of people with substance abuse disorder, severe mental illness and a history of violent behaviour who are housed in scattered municipality flats in Oslo City. How can City and State cooperate on providing a meaningful life for a marginalized group who struggle with long term residence skills, while maintaining safety for neighbours? One solution is risk assessment and recovery through cultivating people's resources, as practiced by Flexbo team in close cooperation with the district psychiatric outpatient clinic.

3.10pm-3.20pm Break

3.20pm-3.50pm **Entering the Housing First engine room**
by Lars Benjaminsen, senior researcher at VIVE & SAND – The Danish National Organization for Homeless People, Denmark

Rolling out Housing First in practice in municipal welfare systems requires that several conditions are fulfilled. SAND – The Danish National Organization for Homeless People – and Lars Benjaminsen from VIVE – The Danish Centre for Social Science Research – discuss the possibilities and barriers for providing homeless people with long-term housing and support solutions. What does it take to provide homeless people with housing and support? What happens when local welfare systems succeed and where do they sometimes fail?

3.50pm-4.00pm **End of the conference**

Parallel sessions

You are invited to participate in two out of seven parallel sessions at the web conference. The sessions will take place simultaneously twice. You may choose freely among the sessions. Please register your choices when registering for the conference.

Session 1: Housing First 2.0

by Juha Kaakinen, Chief Executive of Y-Foundation, Finland

Since implementing its own systemic Housing First policy in 2008, Finland has witnessed a steady decrease in homelessness. The present Finnish Government aims to halve remaining homelessness numbers by 2023 and to end homelessness completely by 2027. This session describes the key elements of the Finnish Housing First approach and the results of Change Laboratory, a collaborative process building on the experiences of the last ten years of Housing First practice, which has produced a plan on how the current homelessness service system could evolve towards Housing First 2.0.

Session 2: Services for homeless persons in small populations. Experience from Iceland

by Heiða Björg Hilmisdóttir, Chairman of the Committee of Welfare & Hrafnhildur Ólöf Ólafsdóttir, Head of Services for Homeless Persons, Iceland

Although services for homeless persons have a long history in Iceland, evidence-based practices have only been introduced in recent years. In this session, Heiða Björg Hilmisdóttir and Hrafnhildur Ólöf Ólafsdóttir will describe the obstacles which Iceland has faced as well as the country's progress and current situation. They will specifically talk about how and if population size and sparsely populated areas affect the appearance of homelessness and how these conditions enhance or limit the delivery of services for homeless persons. The session will encourage discussion and exchange of experiences and ideas.

Session 3: Dealing with homelessness In the welfare state: from politics to practice

by Petter Dahle, professional counselor in NAPHA – National Competence Center for Mental Health Work, Norway

Over the last five years, Norway has implemented two national strategies to strengthen its work on fighting homelessness: "Welfare for housing and support services" and "The escalation plan for the field of drugs and addiction". Key goals for both strategies are to reduce the numbers of homeless people and to create a more humane policy, increased dignity for those affected, recovery-oriented services and better quality of life. More knowledge-based services and increased user involvement are said to be key ingredients to achieve the goals and desired improvements.

Session 4: Without a home, but not homeless – between the Convention on the Rights of the Child and emergency assistance

by Marcus Knutagård, researcher and senior lecturer at the School of Social Work, Lund University & Tove Samzelius, thematic adviser for Save the Children and doctoral student at Malmö University, Sweden

The number of homeless people has increased in Sweden. More and more families with children are turning to the social services for help but are referred to temporary and short-term emergency assistance. The reason for this is that they are defined as structurally homeless and are consequently not considered to be part of the target group for social services. Based on on-going and up-to-date research, we highlight examples of how different municipalities handle this problem. Furthermore, we highlight the consequences for children's health, well-being and life chances. We also discuss the shortcomings which we see in the Swedish system and what needs to be changed in order for children to be insured the right to a safe home in the future.



Session 5: Research into homelessness can lead to constructive political change. Experiences from Greenland

by Steven Arnfjord, Head of Social Science at Ilisimatusarfik (University of Greenland) & Mille Schiermacher, project consultant at Kofoed's School, Greenland

During the last 20 years, homelessness in Greenland has become an evident social problem. This session will provide an insight into the research on homelessness in Greenland, which reveals the importance of cooperating with the third sector, and how social problems in a Greenlandic context often travel across borders.

Steven Arnfjord and Mille Schiermacher will lead a discussion on what happens when minority problems have to be understood as majority problems. They will also show how a recurrent focus on core welfare issues in an Arctic and West-Nordic setting can slowly alter public and political opinion on homelessness, ultimately resulting in small but important constructive changes.

Session 6: Cooperation and organization in the housing sector

by Jacob Michaelsen, Director at Funen's Social Housing Company & Tom Rønning, Housing strategy Consultant in Odense Municipality, Denmark

In Odense, homelessness has been reduced by 40% during the last 10 years. Nearly 500 citizens experiencing homelessness have obtained their own housing during these 10 years, and 87% have kept their places of residence.

The various studies on working with citizens experiencing homelessness in Odense have pointed out that the close cooperation between the housing organizations and the municipality of Odense is an essential element in the change that has been created in Odense.

The session will present and discuss this cooperation, both in relation to the allocation of housing and, not least, in relation to the maintenance of housing and the prevention of homelessness.

Session 7: A range of methods supporting Housing First in Copenhagen

by The Homeless Unit & Hybelinstitutionen in the City of Copenhagen, Denmark

In the City of Copenhagen, a range of support methods may be used when different target groups are offered housing support. The Homeless Unit offers both mono and interdisciplinary methods of support, including CTI, ICM and ACT – and now also a modified version of the ACT method. The methods are adapted to the different needs of the individual citizen. But the overall approach is the same whether it is a person living in long-term homelessness or a young person in transition from child placement to adulthood who needs support: to support the individual in her or his own recovery process from the perspective that everyone must be able to live a dignified, meaningful and independent everyday life.

The session will reflect on the methods of social support for different target groups.



Information

Time

Thursday 26 November 2020 at 12.00am to 4.00pm (Danish time/CET).

Place

The conference will be held online, and participation is free.

Everybody who has registered for the conference will be able to participate via links, which will be sent by e-mail.

Participants

The conference will be particularly relevant for politicians and national, regional and municipal administrative managers as well as NGOs, social service providers and persons who work in the field of homelessness or who are otherwise interested in the topic.

Conference registration

Please register via the following link: www.socialstyrelsen.dk/nordisk-konference-hjemloshed.

Registration must be made by 25 November 2020 at 12.00am (Danish time/CET).

Practical information

Participants will receive further practical information on the conference prior to the events.

Any questions?

Please write to cuv-konference@socialstyrelsen.dk

