

## HC3.2. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR COMBATING HOMELESSNESS

### Definitions and methodology

This indicator presents an overview of strategies and major legislation tackling homelessness at the national and regional level, as reported by OECD, key partner and EU countries responding to the 2021 and 2019 OECD Questionnaire on Social and Affordable Housing (QuASH), and other sources. Homelessness strategies are defined as policy documents setting out targets and actions to tackle homelessness, requiring links across policy sectors.

Further discussion of homelessness can be found in the OECD Policy Brief, Better data and policies to fight homelessness in the OECD, available [online](#) (and in [French](#)).

### Key findings

#### ***Fewer than half of countries have an active national strategy to combat homelessness, while some have regional and/or local strategies in place***

According to the OECD Questionnaire on Affordable and Social Housing, 21 of 45 countries report having an active homelessness strategy in place: Canada, Chile, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, and the United States (Table HC3.2.1). The United Kingdom has separate homelessness strategies across the constituent countries of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In a number of countries, homelessness strategies ran through 2020; due to COVID-19, the updating of such strategies was likely postponed as policy makers focused on implementing on-the-ground solutions to support the homeless population during the pandemic (see Table HC3.2.2).

Due to the distribution of competences across levels of government, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Iceland and Sweden have regional and/or local homeless strategies in place. Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus<sup>1</sup>, Hungary, Italy, Korea, Latvia, Malta, Mexico, Romania, the Russian

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This document, as well as any data and any map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

*Footnote by Turkey:* The information in this document with reference to “Cyprus” relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognizes the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of the United Nations, Turkey shall preserve its position concerning the “Cyprus issue”;

*Footnote by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Commission:* The Republic of Cyprus is recognized by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Turkey. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

Federation, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey did not report to have any homelessness strategies in place.

***Many governments introduced emergency support for the homeless in response to the COVID-19 pandemic***

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 21 countries reported introducing emergency support for the homeless. These include Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States (Table HC3.2.2).

Types of emergency support varied considerably, ranging from, *inter alia*, additional funding (to service providers or to individuals); expanded shelter and accommodation for the homeless; adapted shelter provisions (including longer opening hours; adjusted capacity levels; additional services; etc.); expanded service provision to the homeless; the establishment of quarantine facilities; and the provision of advice.

Table HC3.2.1. National and regional strategies for combating homelessness

		Homelessness strategy	
	Year	National level	Regional/local level
Australia	2018-19	There is no official homelessness strategy, but the <i>National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NAHA)</i> requires state and territory governments to have a publicly available housing and homelessness strategy in place.	State and territory governments are required to have a publicly available housing and homelessness strategy in place. They are responsible for determining where services are located, which service providers are contracted, and the amount of funding each service provider receives. Examples of such strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australian Capital Territory (ACT) – <a href="#">ACT Housing Strategy</a>;</li> <li>• New South Wales (NSW) – <a href="#">Future Directions for Social Housing in NSW, NSW Homelessness Strategy 2018-23</a>;</li> <li>• Northern Territory (NT) – <a href="#">NT Homelessness Strategy 2018-23</a>;</li> <li>• Victoria – <a href="#">Homes for Victorians</a>, <a href="#">Victoria's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan</a>, <a href="#">A Better Place – Victoria Homelessness 2020 Strategy</a>;</li> <li>• Queensland – <a href="#">Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-27, Partnering for impact to reduce homelessness in Queensland</a>;</li> <li>• South Australia – <a href="#">Our Housing Future 2020-30</a>;</li> <li>• Tasmania – <a href="#">Tasmania's Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-23, Affordable Housing Action Plan 2019-23</a>;</li> <li>• Western Australia (WA) – <a href="#">All Paths Lead to Home: Western Australia's 10-year Strategy on Homelessness 2020-30</a>.</li> </ul>
Austria		There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level. The Rental Act provides that in the case of an initiated court procedure, the municipality has to be informed in order to have the opportunity to provide advice to tenants.	There are integrated strategies at regional/provincial level (e.g. Oberösterreich: <i>Verordnung über die Ziele der Sozialplanung für wohnungslose und von Wohnungslosigkeit bedrohte Menschen sowie Maßnahmen des Landes</i> ; <i>Kundmachungsorgan LGBl. Nr. 7/2009</i> ), and at local level (e.g. Vienna's Housing First Initiative; strategies in Upper Austria and Vorarlberg). Some housing providers provide advice in case of rent arrears.
Belgium		There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level.	<a href="#">Integrated Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Homelessness 2020-24</a> (Flanders). This plan, which has been developed up in coordination with actors in housing and welfare, outlines actions relating to four strategic objectives: eviction prevention, homelessness prevention among young adults, addressing chronic homelessness, and an integrated homelessness policy. The primary actions relating to housing policy involve supporting housing actors and expanding the supply of affordable and quality housing. The primary actions relating to welfare policy focus on (preventive) housing guidance and intersectoral cooperation.

Brazil		There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level, but the <i>National Survey on the Homeless Population in Brazil (2007-2008)</i> helped to identify characteristics of homelessness, and extend access for homeless people to social support (e.g. <i>Bolsa Familia</i> and welfare benefit for the elderly and disabled).	
Bulgaria		There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level. Homelessness is addressed as part of the <a href="#">National Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy 2030</a> .	
Canada	2019	<i>Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy</i> is a community-based programme that provides direct financial support to Designated Communities (urban centres), as well as Indigenous and rural and remote communities across Canada to support their efforts in addressing homelessness. Following a comprehensive community planning process, communities determine their own needs/priorities, and fund innovative projects. <i>Reaching Home</i> came into effect in April 2019, replacing the previous <i>Homelessness Partnering Strategy</i> . <i>Reaching Home</i> supports the goals of Canada's first-ever National Housing Strategy – a 10-year, CAN 55-billion plan to lift thousands of Canadians out of housing need. <i>Reaching Home</i> aims to support the most vulnerable Canadians in maintaining safe, stable and affordable housing and to reduce chronic homelessness nationally by 50% by 2027-28.	Many provinces and territories, as well as municipalities across Canada have developed their own strategic plans to reduce and/or end homelessness. The objectives of these plans vary from one jurisdiction to another.
Chile	2018-22	The <i>Barrios Calle Cero</i> policy aims to reduce street homelessness in Chile. The Plan promotes a set of actions at the neighbourhood and community levels. For the development of the Plan, a permanent task force has been formed with members of the National Street Office of the Ministry of Social Development and Family, representatives of Civil Society, the Academy and experts of the International Community. Actions includes (1) identifying neighbourhoods and priority areas, (2) designing and implementing a baseline to monitor and compare results, (3) developing innovative strategies to overcome street homelessness in targeted neighbourhoods, and (4) evaluating results.	..
Colombia	2018	There is a national guideline, <a href="#">Public Social Policy for Street Dwellers</a> .	..
Costa Rica	2016-2026	The strategy name is <a href="#">Public Policy for the Comprehensive Care of People in Neglect Condition and Homeless, 2016-2026</a> . Its main objective is to generate appropriate, systemic and sustainable government and non-government actions for the prevention, care and protection of homeless and people living in neglect conditions within the framework of human rights. It includes three main axes: prevention and care, institutional strengthening, and rights to improve quality of life.	..
Croatia		There is no specific homelessness strategy in Croatia. Homelessness is tackled within the <a href="#">Strategy for the fight against poverty 2014-2020</a> .	..
Cyprus		There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	There is no reported homelessness strategy at regional/local level
Czech Republic	2015-2020	The <i>National Strategy on Prevention and Fight against Homelessness in the Czech Republic to 2020</i> was adopted in 2013. The strategy was developed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs together with an Expert Group on Tackling Homelessness. In addition, the Ministry of Regional Development is preparing the <i>Concept of Affordable Housing and the Affordable Housing Act</i> . The Department of Social Inclusion of this Ministry also helps local administration in the process of social integration of people at risk of social exclusion. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is leading the "Social Housing" project, with the aim of introducing and developing the social housing system in the Czech Republic and providing appropriate support.	There are no regional homelessness strategies, but some municipalities have their own strategies to tackle homelessness (e.g. the city of Prague).

Denmark	2018-21	With the <a href="#">2018-2021 Action Plan Against Homelessness</a> , the national government allocated DKK 154 million (approximately EUR 20.5 million) to ten initiatives to combat homelessness. Among other things, the initiatives must contribute to the spread of the Housing First-approach in general, and to the development and testing of a new Housing First-approach towards young people in particular. Furthermore, over DKK 70 million (approximately EUR 9.5 million) were dedicated to investment funds, which are intended to support the local authorities in investing in more pre-emptive, comprehensive and coherent social services for homeless people. In addition, means were allocated towards the formation of national guidelines on the subject of combating homelessness.	..
Estonia		There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	With the Social Welfare Act (2016) the state delegates the task of assisting those in need to the local municipalities. Local municipalities are obliged to provide housing for persons or families who are themselves unable and incapable to provide it for them or their families. Persons who have gotten into a socially helpless situation due to loss or lack of means of subsistence will be provided inevitable social assistance (food, clothing and, if necessary, shelter). Also all other social benefits and services that the local municipalities offer are also available for the homeless.
Finland	2020-2022	With the <i>Homelessness Cooperation Program 2020–2022</i> , the government aims to halve homelessness by 2023. The Ministry of the Environment has launched a three-year homelessness programme with major urban areas, service providers and organisations. The objectives of the programme are to: increase the supply of affordable and state-supported housing for the homeless; strengthen homelessness work in basic municipal services; improve access to housing counselling; and establish co-operation between those working in the field of homelessness, especially at the municipal and regional level	Municipalities have operational responsibility while regional/state authorities act as supervising bodies
France	2018-2022	France launched the Five-year Plan to Implement Housing First and Combat Homelessness in 2018-2022. The plan is structured around five priorities: i) produce and mobilise more affordable housing that is adapted to the needs of the homeless and people with poor housing conditions; ii) promote and accelerate access to housing and facilitate residential mobility among disadvantaged populations; iii) better support homeless populations and help them stay sheltered; iv) prevent interruptions in housing trajectories and ensure that emergency shelters can provide immediate and unconditional support; and v) mobilise territorial actors to put into place Housing First principles.	A number of sub-national governments have developed homelessness strategies.
Germany		There is no federal strategy on homelessness. <i>Länder</i> (regions) and municipalities are responsible for providing accommodation and care for homeless persons.	There are strategies in place at the level of the regional states. North-Rhine Westphalia for instance has a regional action plan on homelessness. It aims to develop innovative approaches and support municipalities to tackle homelessness. The focus is the prevention of homelessness and access to housing.
Greece		The <i>National Strategy for Homeless People</i> has been drafted and announced, but not yet approved.	..
Hungary		There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	There is no reported homelessness strategy at regional/local level
Iceland		There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	Regional homelessness strategies have been developed.

Ireland	2016-2021	<p>The Programme for Government, "Our Shared Future," commits to reducing and preventing homelessness and provides detail on how the Government will approach this challenge. One key issue to resolve homelessness is to increase the supply of housing, particularly for those on the lowest incomes. To this end, the Programme for Government commits to the increased supply of public, social and affordable homes. In particular, it will increase the social housing stock by more than 50,000 with an emphasis on new builds. Overall, the Programme aims to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase funding and work with stakeholders, caseworkers and homeless people on a suite of measures to help rough sleepers into sustainable accommodation.</li> <li>• Continue to expand the Housing First approach with a focus on the construction and acquisition of one-bed homes and the provision of relevant supporting services.</li> <li>• Ensure the HSE provides a dedicated funding line and resources to deliver the necessary health and mental health supports required to assist homeless people with complex needs.</li> <li>• Ensure Rent Supplement and Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) levels are adequate to support vulnerable households while we increase the supply of social housing.</li> <li>• Move away from dormitory-style accommodation on a long-term basis and aim to provide suitable tenancies.</li> <li>• Ensure that aftercare and transition plans and protocols are developed for vulnerable homeless people or those at risk of homelessness leaving hospital, State care, foster care, prison or other State settings.</li> <li>• Develop a National Youth Homelessness Strategy.</li> <li>• Continue the Housing Agency's Acquisition Fund to purchase vacant stock from financial institutions.</li> <li>• Increase funding for drug free hostels.</li> <li>• Continue to fund the Mortgage Arrears Resolution Service, Abhaile.</li> </ul>	The Dublin Region has a Homeless Action Plan, 2019-2021
Israel		The strategy is determined by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Social Services.	There is no reported homelessness strategy at regional/local level
Italy		Homelessness is addressed in the <i>Guidelines for Tackling Severe Adult Marginality in Italy</i> .	
Japan		The central government is responsible for establishing the <i>Law on Special Measure for Self-Sufficiency Support for the Homeless</i> and <i>Basic policy for Self-Sufficiency Support for the Homeless</i> . This includes providing food, clothing and shelter for a certain period of time to those who have concerns about their residence.	The local governments are responsible for establishing plans implementing the <i>Basic policy for Self-Sufficiency Support for the Homeless</i>
Korea		There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	There is no reported homelessness strategy at regional/local level
Latvia		There is no homelessness strategy in Latvia; services are provided within the social policies framework ( <i>Social Services and Social Assistance Law</i> ).	Each local government can determine different levels and types of support for homeless people.
Lithuania		There is not yet a specific national strategy regarding homelessness and housing exclusion in Lithuania. However, homeless people have the right to housing as all other persons who meet statutory requirements. However, not all homeless people implement their rights and not always accept the proposed help. Some NGOs such as Lithuania CARITAS provide the opportunity to attend day-centres for homeless people where they can find shelter during the day, as well as special common lodging-houses for homeless people in some municipalities where they can spend one or more nights.	...

Luxembourg	2013-2020	The Government has adopted for 2013-2020 a National Strategy Plan Against Homelessness and Housing Exclusion ( <a href="#">Stratégie nationale contre le sans-abrisme et l'exclusion liée au logement 2013-2020</a> ). Four main objectives are defined within this national strategy: i) Provide private-use, stable and appropriate dwellings to long-term / chronically homeless people, people living in precarious or inappropriate housing, and people leaving institutions; ii) React quickly and adequately to emergency situations; iii) Prevent homelessness; and iv) Consolidate the existing solutions and reinforce governance. A set of actions was defined for each of the four objectives.	..
Mexico		There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	There is no reported homelessness strategy at regional/local level
Malta		There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	There is no reported homelessness strategy at regional/local level
The Netherlands	2019-2021	There is a national programme that aims to reduce homelessness among youth (aged 18-27) ( <a href="#">Actieprogramma Dak- en thuisloze jongeren 2019-2021</a> ), as well as a strategic policy agenda established by governmental and non-governmental parties to deal with homelessness ( <a href="#">Meerjarenagenda beschermd wonen en maatschappelijke opvang</a> ).	..
New Zealand	2020-2023	The <a href="#">Aotearoa Homelessness Action Plan</a> was published in February 2020 to deliver on the Government's vision that homelessness is prevented where possible, or is rare, brief and non-recurring. The action plan sets out a balanced and comprehensive package of actions to address homelessness with an increased focus on prevention, alongside supply, support and system enablers.	Some local authorities have developed (or are in the process of developing) local homelessness strategies; for example, <a href="#">Te Mahana Homelessness Strategy in Wellington</a> .
Norway	2014-2020	<a href="#">Housing for Welfare</a> is Norway's National strategy for housing and support services (2014-2020). The strategy is a cooperation between five ministries and a series of directorates, that outlines the goals of the shared work to help disadvantaged citizens in the housing market. The starting point is that everyone should live safely and well. The strategy describes national goals and prioritised focus areas, and the responsibilities and tasks in the housing and support services. Additionally it provides an overview of central government grants and lending schemes.	All municipalities have a responsibility to assist the disadvantaged in the housing market. Around 50 municipalities with major social housing challenges have entered into long-term and committed cooperation with the Norwegian State Housing Bank. The purpose of the cooperation is to support a comprehensive and locally adjusted policy that ensures that more people will receive the assistance they need.
Poland		The overarching approach to support as well as the different types of assistance to the homeless are specified in the Act of 12 March 2004 on social assistance. The Ministry of Family and Social Policy defined the main principles and recommended courses of action in the scope of counteracting homelessness in the Regulation of 27 April 2018 on minimum standards for accommodation facilities, shelters for the homeless, shelters for the homeless with care services and heating facilities, as well as in the ministerial programme <a href="#">To overcome homelessness. Support programme for homeless people</a> . Final work is underway to adopt a new <i>National Programme Against Poverty and Social Exclusion</i> , which includes a priority to counteract homelessness and housing exclusion.	Regional ( <i>voivodeship</i> ) governments develop, update and implement of regional strategies for social policy as an integral part of the regional development strategy, including in particular the programmes for: counteracting social exclusion, social assistance, prevention and solving of alcohol problems, cooperation with non-governmental organisations.  The commune's ( <i>gmina</i> ) required tasks shall include development and implementation of the communal strategy for solving social problems with particular emphasis on social assistance programmes, prevention and solving alcohol and other problems, which aim at integration of persons and families from particularly sensitive risk groups.

Portugal	2017-2023	The <a href="#">National Strategy for the Integration of Homeless People 2017-2023</a> includes three main areas of intervention: i) promote knowledge, information, awareness raising and education regarding homelessness; ii) strengthen intervention aiming at promoting the integration of homeless persons; and iii) strengthen coordination, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. It was approved by Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 107/2017 of July 25 and 2/2020 of January 21.	Municipal governments, regional governments and NGOs are present in the Planning and Intervention for Homeless People Centers (NPISA), with respect to homeless interventions at local level.
Romania		There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level, but homelessness is addressed in the draft <i>National Strategy on Housing</i> , the <i>National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion</i> , and the <i>National Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma Ethnic Citizens</i> .	
Russian Federation		There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	There is no reported homelessness strategy at regional/local level
Slovak Republic		Actions to address homelessness are underpinned by the <i>National Framework Strategy for Promoting Social Inclusion and Combating Poverty</i> .	Some regional units have incorporated the issue of homelessness in their strategic documents. Also some towns have their own homelessness strategies, for example Bratislava, <i>The Concept of helping homeless people</i> , Trnava etc.
Slovenia		There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level. The <a href="#">Resolution on the national social assistance programme 2013-2020</a> is the most important for all assistance programmes, for people who need help and who are not covered by public services.	There is no reported homelessness strategy at regional/local level
Spain	2015-2020	The <i>Comprehensive National Strategy for Homeless People 2015-2020</i> . The strategy has 5 strategic objectives and 13 strategic lines.	
Sweden		There is no up-to-date national strategy. The previous strategy was <i>Homelessness, Multiple Faces, Multiple Responsibilities – A Strategy to Combat Homelessness and Exclusion from the Housing Market, 2007-2009</i> .	There are strategies and action plans against homelessness at local level, in the largest cities.
Switzerland		There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	..
Turkey		There is no reported homelessness strategy at national level	There is no reported homelessness strategy at regional/local level
United Kingdom	2018	<p>The four countries of the United Kingdom have adopted different laws and strategies to tackle homelessness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In <b>England</b>, the cross-government <a href="#">Rough Sleeping Strategy</a>, published in August 2018, sets out a GBP 100 million package to help people who sleep rough and put in place the structures that will end rough sleeping. The Government has committed to ending rough sleeping within this parliament and in 2021 is providing over GBP 700 million to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. In December 2018, the Government published the <a href="#">Rough Sleeping Strategy delivery plan</a>, which provided information on how to deliver the commitments outlined in the strategy, give an update on current progress in meeting those commitments and provide information on next steps. The Government will be setting out an updated approach to ending rough sleeping and other issues in due course.</li> <li>• <b>Northern Ireland</b> had a <a href="#">homelessness strategy</a> in place for 2012-2017</li> <li>• In 2018, <b>Scotland</b> developed, <a href="#">Ending Homelessness Together: High Level Action Plan</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>England:</b> At municipal level, the Homelessness Act 2002 requires each local authority to review homelessness in its area and to develop a new homelessness strategy every five years. Housing authorities can conduct homelessness reviews and publish homelessness strategies more frequently if circumstances in the district change. Chapter 2 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance provides guidance on housing authorities' duties to carry out a homelessness review and to formulate and publish a strategy based on the results of that review. In conducting a review of homelessness and to formulate a new strategy, housing authorities will need to take into account the additional duties introduced through the 2017 Homelessness Reduction Act. The main objective of municipal homelessness strategies is to set out how an area will support homeless</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Wales</b> developed a <a href="#">Strategy for Preventing and Ending Homelessness</a> in 2019, aiming to re-shape services towards a rapid re-housing approach and long-term housing-led solutions (away from the provision of emergency, temporary and hostel services).</li> </ul>	individuals in their locality through partnership working and the delivery of key services.
United States	<a href="#">The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness</a> is the principal entity responsible for drafting the national-level strategy to address homelessness.	Most states and many cities, counties, and some collections of regional governments have their own specific strategies.

Source: OECD Questionnaire on Affordable and Social Housing, 2019, 2016; OECD (2015); FEANTSA Country Profiles <http://www.feantsa.org/en/resources/resources-database>; Baptista and Marlier (2019), Fighting Homelessness and Housing Exclusion in Europe: A Study of National Policies, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8243&furtherPubs=yes>; Cortizo, R. (2019), "National Survey on the Homeless Population in Brazil: Giving a Face to Homelessness and Formulating Strategies and Policies to Address Homelessness", [www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/07/CORTIZO\\_Roberta\\_Presentation.pdf](http://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/07/CORTIZO_Roberta_Presentation.pdf).

**Table HC3.2.2. Emergency support measures to support the homeless and prevent homelessness, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic**

Country	Name of measure	Type of support	Description
Australia	Coronavirus Supplement	Funding to individuals	As of the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2020-21, the Australian Government's support under the COVID-19 Response Package since the onset of the pandemic includes around AUD 251 billion in direct economic measures. Further details can be found at <a href="http://www.budget.gov.au">www.budget.gov.au</a> . This includes a temporary Coronavirus Supplement of an initial rate of AUD 550 per fortnight for certain income support payments to help those affected by the pandemic, including those experiencing homelessness where eligible.
	Housing rough sleepers	Support for housing and services	A number of state and territory governments are supporting homeless people to secure long-term housing as well as support services
Austria	<i>Ausweitung bestehender Leistungen</i> (Expansion of existing measures)	Expanded shelter/accommodation offer; expanded support services and advice.	Municipalities and NGOs increased the number of emergency shelters for the homeless, intensified advice and service.
	Prevention adaption of tenancy regulation ( <i>Prävention durch Mietrechtliche Erleichterungen</i> )		The most import measures were those preventing new homelessness via the forbearance of COVID-related rent areas; the extension of short-term rent contracts; postponement of evictions.
Canada	Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy	Funding to providers	In the context of the pandemic, the Government of Canada has invested over CAD 400 million in additional funding under Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy to support the homeless-serving sector's response to COVID-19, as well as efforts to prevent inflows into homelessness in 2020-2021.
Chile	Covid-19 Street Protection Plan ( <i>Plan Protege Calle Covid-19</i> )	Funding, expanded shelter/accommodation; expanded support services.	Development of an adapted strategy to support the homeless during the COVID-19 pandemic, including inter alia, the doubling of the resources allocated to the <i>Plan Invierno Calle</i> (Winter Plan); territorial adjustments to local strategies; reducing the number of places per shelter in the context of social distancing requirements; installing more square meters per facility, adapting opening hours; creating new services, providing 24/7 service in all accommodations; limiting the time needed to set up shelters; and a significant expansion of homeless shelter beds in the winter.
Costa Rica	Protocol for the coordination of actions of the SNGR in the attention of the population living on the streets due to COVID-19 emergencies ( <i>Protocolo para la coordinación de acciones del SNGR en la atención de la población en situación de calle por emergencia de COVID-19</i> )	Expanded shelter/accommodation; advice	Orientation to assure the wellbeing of homeless people and reduce the possible spread areas on which this population may be exposed due to their conditions and means of living, in three main areas: prevention, intervention and social inclusion, in order to prevent and contain the spread of the coronavirus, including providing them temporary shelters.
Czech Republic	Emergency Immediate Assistance Benefit (COVID-19) ( <i>Dávka mimořádné okamžité pomoci - MOP COVID-19</i> )	Funding to individuals	People in financial need due to the Covid-19 pandemic could apply for a one-time immediate assistance benefit (COVID-19).
	Resolution No. 108/2020 Coll. ( <i>Usnesení č. 108/2020 Sb.</i> )	Longer hours at shelters	Resolution No. 108/2020 Coll. opened up most night shelters for 24/7 service.
Denmark	Extra capacity at emergency shelters	Funding to providers	During the height of the two "waves" in the spring of 2020 and again in the winter 2020/2021, the government together with the Parliament provided extra funds to civil society aimed at securing more housing opportunities spaces for homeless, especially for

	<i>(Udvidet kapacitet af nødherberger)</i>		homeless in need of isolation.
	Partnership for marginalised adults <i>(Partnerskab for udsatte voksne)</i>	Partnerships to address social isolation	Partnership with civil society organizations, KL (Local Government Denmark) and Danish Regions aimed at addressing both local and national problems quickly and discuss initiatives to combat loneliness amongst marginalized adults during the pandemic.
Germany	Vaccination <i>(Schutzimpfung)</i>	Priority for vaccination	Homeless individuals determined to be a priority group to receive vaccination.
	Testing <i>(Testung)</i>	Priority for COVID testing	Homeless people are included as a priority group in the German testing strategy
	Mask provision <i>(Schutzmasken)</i>	Provision of masks	2 million masks have been provided to organisations and institutions supporting homeless people
Greece	Temporary accommodation structures for the homeless and other vulnerable groups <i>(Προσωρινές δομές φιλοξενίας αστέγων και άλλων ευάλωτων ομάδων)</i>	Expanded shelter/accommodation offer	Construction of temporary shelters for homeless
Ireland	Additional accommodation to allow for the isolation of confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19	Expanded shelter/accommodation offer	Local authorities nationally worked to put in place additional accommodation to allow for the isolation of confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19. Significant additional accommodation (over 1000 additional beds) has also been put in place to support the appropriate levels of social distancing in emergency accommodation. This additional accommodation has allowed for decongestion of existing facilities, where necessary. The actions being taken are informed by the guidance developed by the HSE, which the local authorities have circulated to their NGO service delivery partners.
Israel		Longer hours at shelters; establishment of quarantine facilities	An isolation department was opened especially for the homeless. Shelters opened 24/7, instead of only evenings/nights.
Netherlands	Guidelines for homeless people <i>(Richtlijn voor dak- en thuisloze mensen)</i>	Guidelines for service providers	Developed official guidelines for municipalities and shelter providers on how to deal with certain situations during the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions.
New Zealand	COVID-19 Response Motels	Expanded shelter/accommodation.	During COVID-19 lockdown, the urgent priority was finding accommodation for people sleeping rough or in unsuitable accommodation with shared facilities including where overcrowding caused further stress. The focus was on supporting Iwi, Māori organisations and providers to meet immediate housing and support needs. Providers noted very few people sleeping rough during the lockdown as a result of this collective effort.
	Rapid Rehousing	Support for housing and services	Rapid Rehousing is an intervention to support individuals, families and whānau to quickly exit homelessness, return to permanent housing in the community and maintain their tenancies to avoid a return to homelessness.
Poland	Temporary housing accommodation <i>(Tymczasowe kontenery mieszkalne)</i>	Establishment of quarantine facilities	Due to the fact that people in crisis of homelessness are exposed to a high risk of infection with SARS-CoV-2 virus, the Ministry of Family and Social Policy recommended to local government authorities to subject each homeless person staying in public space to seclusion for a few days before admission to a shelter in order, to confirm the health condition of such person. Then, the provision of the Act of 12 March 2004 on social assistance applies, according to which in a crisis situation occurring on a mass scale, temporary shelter may be granted without the applicable standards and in a different form than specified in this Act. Most often, this seclusion takes place in temporary housing containers or other places designated by the municipality.
Portugal	Emergency Centres <i>(Centros de Emergência)</i>	Expanded shelter/accommodation	Emergency accommodation centres with all measures to prevent and respond to Covid-19
Slovak Republic	Social services measures targeted at homeless people <i>(Opatrenia v rámci sociálnych služieb zamerané na ľudí)</i>	Expanded shelter/accommodation services; funding to	Extension of the provision of social services in the dormitory for 24 hours also with an increase in the contribution to this service provided by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Slovak Republic. Subsidy for humanitarian aid for the provision of

	<i>bez domova)</i>	providers; establishment of quarantine facilities.	accommodation for homeless people in the amount of up to EUR 30,000. Adoption of a measure (Government Regulation No. 220/2020), which imposed on local governments with a population of over 20,000 the obligation to establish quarantine facilities for homeless people.
Sweden	Grants for initiatives for the socially disadvantaged ( <i>Bidrag till insatser för socialt särskilt utsatta</i> )	Funding to providers	Government grants totalling SEK 48 million to 17 NGOs that work with people who are particularly vulnerable, including the homeless.
Turkey	Accommodation for Homeless Project ( <i>Evsizlere Konaklama Projesi</i> )	Expanded shelter/accommodation and health services.	Accommodation for Homeless Project is carried out in coordination with the local headquarters of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services in 81 provinces. Under the project launched in April 2020, authorities identified homeless people and made sure that they were placed in public guest houses. If this is not possible, homeless people would be accommodated at hotels or hostels or another venue. The homeless people staying in these places receive regular health check-ups and they are informed about the pandemic, how it transmits from person to person.
United Kingdom: England	Everyone In	Expanded shelter/accommodation and health services.	In response to the worsening pandemic, Government officials developed the 'Everyone In' initiative and worked with local authorities, hotels and others across the UK to ensure that rough sleepers – who often have severe underlying health conditions - would have the same chances as everybody else to self-isolate, in accordance with public health guidance. This work has not stopped and through Everyone In, by November we had supported around 33,000 people with nearly 10,000 in emergency accommodation and over 23,000 already moved on into longer-term accommodation.
	The Protect Programme	Funding to local authorities	The 'Protect Programme' was announced by the Prime Minister on 5 November to support the ongoing efforts to provide accommodation for rough sleepers during the pandemic. This programme was designed to help areas that need additional, targeted support most during that period of restrictions and throughout winter. All councils were asked to update their rough sleeping plans and to carry out a rapid assessment of need for everyone they accommodate and to consider time limited interventions for those new to rough sleeping. We have confirmed GBP 10 million funding for 19 areas publicly (this includes London as an area which covers various London boroughs, plus the Greater London Authority), under the government's 'Protect Programme'. On 8 January, we then announced further support, through 'Protect Plus' for people who sleep rough, in light of the new national lockdown and the increase in the rate of Covid infections. We have asked all local authorities to ensure that people sleeping are safely accommodated, and to actively use this opportunity to make sure that all rough sleepers are registered with a GP where they are not already and are factored into local area vaccination plans.
United States	Emergency Solutions Grants	Funding to providers; funding to individuals	In an economic relief package passed in March of 2020, the US Congress appropriated an additional USD 4 billion to the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) program. The ESG program provides grants to cities and states to operate temporary emergency shelters and the provide Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) vouchers, a short- to medium-term rental assistance program that gives subsidies to people experiencing homelessness to rent units the private market. ESG is an existing element of the federal government's homeless assistance system, the enacted budget in 2020 prior to the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic was USD 290 million.

Note: Measures here are those reported by countries in the 2021 OECD QuASH. Other measures may have been introduced in other countries.

Source: Country responses to 2021 OECD QuASH.

## ***Housing First strategies exist in an increasing number of OECD and EU countries***

There has been a general trend across some OECD and EU countries towards a Housing First approach to support individuals with high and complex needs. Housing First models aim to provide tailored, intensive support for homeless people with high and complex needs by placing them in *permanent, immediate housing* and enabling them to exercise control over their support services (Pleace, Baptista and Knutagård, 2019<sup>[25]</sup>). Housing First is distinct from previous models that made access to accommodation contingent on the completion of counselling or treatment programmes. A series of random control trials have shown that Housing First can produce greater housing retention among the chronically homeless compared to treatment-as-usual groups; there is less agreement about the implications of such approaches on health outcomes (O'Flaherty, 2019<sup>[24]</sup>).

Thirteen OECD countries report housing first strategies at the national level: Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal and the United States. In other countries, in the absence of a formal housing first strategy at national level, such approaches have been adopted in some regions and/or municipalities; this is the case in Australia, Austria, Germany, Iceland, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom (England). A housing first strategy is currently under consideration in Israel. Nevertheless, there is wide variation in the implementation of Housing First models (Pleace, Baptista and Knutagård, 2019<sup>[25]</sup>).

A selection of experiences with Housing First in OECD countries include:

- **Australia:** There are a number of Housing First programmes in Australia. Notable programmes include Common Ground, Street to Home and Way2Home. Many of these programmes are city-based. For example, a Way2Home service program was established in Sydney in 2010 to help people experiencing homelessness move into long-term housing. The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) reported that Housing First pilot programmes trialled in Australia have produced promising results. For example, AHURI cited an evaluation of the MISHA project by [Mission Australia](#) from 2010-2013 found that after two years 97% of clients were still living in secure housing and the associated cost savings to the state government equated to AUD 8,002 per person per year. A 2016 [AHURI report](#) claimed that Street to Home programmes across states are reasonably effective in enabling clients to access and sustain housing at a slightly higher than average cost for similar models. They are also moderately successful in facilitating non-housing outcomes. The report also suggested that the Way2Home program can bring about housing stability and facilitate improvements in non-shelter outcomes.
- **Canada:** Backed by a large body of empirical evidence, the Housing First approach was introduced into the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, the previous federal homelessness programme, in 2014. Under the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, the Housing First Investment targets required certain communities to invest a minimum amount in Housing First activities and focused eligibility for these investments on individuals who were chronically and episodically homeless. Communities indicated during the consultation process of 2017 that this restriction on how they could use their funding limited the flexibility to support other priority populations including youth and women fleeing violence. *Reaching Home* eliminates that restriction. Communities now have increased flexibility to invest in projects that contribute to their community-wide outcomes and reduce chronic homelessness by 50% by 2027-2028. While the Government continues to endorse Housing First as an effective tool for addressing chronic homelessness, *Reaching Home* gives communities the ability to invest in other local priorities.
- **Finland:** Finland is one of the few OECD countries in which homelessness has steadily declined in recent years. The government credits the longstanding "Housing First" strategy that brings together homelessness NGOs, the Y-Foundation, cities and the central government. From 2008, with the adaptation of the Housing First principles, Finland reports a breakthrough of early intervention in the prevention of long-term homelessness. The three principles of Housing First in Finland: i) there is an ethical duty to provide a decent standard of living and environment to homeless people; ii) both national legislation and international agreements require Finnish

public authorities to address the problem of homelessness; and iii) reducing homelessness is an economically rational endeavour, because it reduces social and health care costs.

- **Ireland:** Housing First enables people who may have been homeless and who have high levels of complex needs to obtain permanent secure accommodation with the provision of intensive supports to help them maintain their tenancies. The *Housing First National Implementation Plan* published in September 2018, is designed to provide this response, by delivering permanent housing solutions and associated supports for rough sleepers and long-term users of emergency accommodation. The plan contains targets for each local authority, with an overall national target of 663 tenancies to be delivered by 2021. The implementation of the Plan is a joint initiative of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Department of Health, the HSE and the local authorities. Contracts are now in place for the delivery of Housing First in all local authority regions. In line with the Housing First National Implementation Plan 2018 – 2021, the eight homeless regions outside Dublin are being supported by the local authorities, HSE and National Director of Housing First to roll out the programme nationwide. Housing First services are now active in all regions in the country.
- **Luxembourg:** Launched in October 2014, the [Housing First service of the National Committee for Social Defence](#) (*Comité National de Défense Sociale - CNDS*) is a pilot project providing long-term housing for chronically homeless people. The concept is based on the idea that a homeless people first and foremost need housing, and the other problems can be addressed later. The CNDS has 20 studios in the same building (“congregate housing”) and supports two beneficiaries in studios scattered throughout Luxembourg (“scattered housing”).
- **New Zealand:** [Housing First](#) is funded by the New Zealand Government through the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD funds providers to deliver Housing First services and pays rent subsidies for tenants. Private property owners, iwi, community housing providers and HNZ provide housing places. In some cases, local councils contribute funding and support, enhancing the services that providers can offer. Housing First launched in Auckland in March 2017, expanded to Christchurch, Tauranga, Hamilton and Rotorua in 2018-19 and has since expanded to Kaitaia, Whangārei, Hawkes Bay, Wellington, Nelson and Blenheim. Budget 2019 provided NZD 197 million to ensure that Housing First can continue to deliver services for over 2,700 people and whānau over the next few years.
- **Norway:** Beginning with the National Strategy to fight and prevent homelessness 2005-2007, Norway has had a [housing-led approach](#) to homelessness in several policy strategies. The current national strategy, *Housing for Welfare: National Strategy for Housing and Support Services, 2014-2020*, also promotes a comprehensive housing-led approach.
- **Poland:** Between July 2019 and December 2021, the St. Brother Albert's Aid Society is implementing a Housing First project, [Najpierw mieszkanie](#), under the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development POWER, Priority Axis: IV. Social innovations and transnational cooperation; Measure: 4.3 Transnational cooperation. The project is carried out in Warsaw, Wrocław and Gdańsk. The project adopts a new method of addressing homelessness, especially in helping people achieve independence and overcome difficulties. The development of programmes aimed at preventing homelessness based on the Housing First model is one of the priorities of the new *National Programme for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion*.
- **United Kingdom:** England launched a three-year, government-funded project (ending in 2022-23) which aims to help approximately 1000 people over the pilot and is currently being piloted in Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region and West Midlands (a total of 23 local authorities). There are also a number of smaller housing led approaches in regions and cities across the country financed and delivered through Local Government. Some of the housing led approaches have been funded through the National Government-led Rough Sleeping Initiative fund and the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme.

- **United States:** The Housing First model of service provision is widely used across the United States, and supported through national and local level policy. Individual programmes operate using different service models and organising philosophies.

## Data and comparability issues

This indicator provides an overview of existing major homelessness-specific policies in each country, as of 2021. Homelessness strategies differ significantly in terms of approaches, concrete initiatives undertaken, and level of funding. For a more detailed insight and on content, approaches and commitments of homelessness strategies across OECD, key partner and EU countries, please see the documents below.

### Sources and further reading

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