

## **Recommendations of the Deutscher Verein on a Housing First approach for emergency assistance with housing – concept and guide for implementation**

The opinion (DV 1/22) was adopted on 20 September 2022.

**Deutscher Verein für öffentliche und private Fürsorge e.V.  
(German Association for Public and Private Welfare) –  
the forum for the social sector since 1880.**

The German Association for Public and Private Welfare (Deutscher Verein für öffentliche und private Fürsorge e.V.) is the joint forum of municipalities and non-statutory social welfare organisations and their social services in Germany, the Länder (federal states) and academia in all fields of social work and social policy. Through its experience and expertise, it monitors and shapes policy and legislation in relation to children, young people and families, the social insurance system, social assistance, assistance for the elderly, care and rehabilitation, social volunteering, the planning and management of social work and social services as well as international and European social policy and social legislation.

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**Deutscher Verein**

für öffentliche und  
private Fürsorge e.V.

## **Content**

<b>Preliminary note</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>I. Concept and goal of Housing First</b>	<b>4</b>
The Housing First concept	4
Strategic embedding in the supply structures of emergency housing assistance	5
<b>II. Homeless and unsheltered people with complex problems as a target group</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>III. Technical requirements</b>	<b>7</b>
Standards of housing provision	7
Designing the assistance to accompany housing	8
<b>IV. Developing and providing individual living space</b>	<b>9</b>
Measures for housing acquisition and supply	9
Forming cooperation structures on the municipal level	10
<b>V. From temporary project to permanent service</b>	<b>10</b>
Financing the assistance to accompanied housing	10
Financing the housing acquisition	11

## Preliminary note

With the recommendations of Housing First, the German Association for Public and Private Welfare (Deutscher Verein für öffentliche und private Fürsorge e.V., hereinafter 'Deutscher Verein') is taking up a topic that is playing a more importance role also in Germany as a new approach to help in housing emergencies. In addition to relevant developments on municipal and state levels, Housing First is also gaining in importance where federal policy is concerned. This is especially true of the national action plan agreed in the coalition agreement of the current government coalition,<sup>1</sup> which aims to overcome homelessness by 2030 and highlights the Housing First approach in that respect.

In many ways, Housing First represents a further stage of the services of emergency housing assistance that especially focusses on the target group who previously remained particularly excluded from housing provision: homeless people/people without shelter eligible for support. First, it situates the disposal over one's own residence secured with a lease agreement at the beginning, not (as is normal in many cases) at the end of the aid process. In so doing, the concept particularly aims to normalise the living conditions as a basis for aid. Second, it prioritises control of the support process by the users. This means that Housing First is building on a development also taking place in other assistance-related fields: aid that is more strongly centred around people. And this requires a broadening of perspective in the attitudes of both those who provide services and those who fund them.

The concept thus contrasts with forms of a gradual integration of homeless people into housing, as can still be encountered in the form of 'tier systems'. This places special demands on the professional self-image of the employees providing emergency housing assistance, on the organisation of the assistance services, and on the configuration of the framework conditions for aid by the service sponsors. Particular emphasis is placed on continuing the Housing First services, which have previously been created in the form of projects, and the role of assistance pursuant to §§ 67 et seqq. SGB [Social Security Code] XII to finance Housing First as an additional service of emergency housing assistance.

With these recommendations, the Deutscher Verein wishes to present central aspects of the Housing First approach and experiences arising from previous practice, thus contributing to an effective implementation of the approach. To that end, relevant definitions and concepts from Housing First are shown and guidance is given on implementing the approach to overcoming homelessness and a lack of shelter. The recommendations aim to promote and support a transmission of the Housing First approach to additional municipalities to supplement existing supply structures of assistance in housing emergencies. The recommendations are addressed to municipalities, associations and providers of non-statutory social welfare, social service providers supporting homeless and unsheltered people, to stakeholders in the housing industry and their associations as well as responsible state and federal ministries.

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<sup>1</sup> Mehr Fortschritt wagen. Bündnis für Freiheit, Gerechtigkeit und Nachhaltigkeit. Coalition agreement 2021–25 between Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD), BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN and Freie Demokraten (FDP), Berlin 2021.

# I. Concept and goal of Housing First

## The Housing First concept

Starting from the core idea of a 'right to housing',<sup>2</sup> the Housing First concept designates the integration (directly, if possible) of homeless and unsheltered people with complex problems into permanent housing that is secured under a lease agreement – associated with the offer of aid to support that housing. To that end, the acceptance of assistance is voluntary and does not constitute a requirement for supply with housing. However, the assistance should be offered proactively and, if possible, comprehensively. The concept is essentially based on the fact that the first thing homeless and unsheltered people need is a stable housing situation. Moreover, existing needs for aid and support can be tackled only after that first need is met, since the safety and stability of having your own home provides the necessary foundation for the effectiveness of additional aid. Obviously, the first offers for support can and should be made as soon as a person is willing to participate in Housing First programmes.

The concept, developed in the USA<sup>3</sup> and implemented in a series of European countries,<sup>4</sup> is primarily directed at people with complex problem situations. After a loss of housing, they are provided with a home of their own that is secured under a lease agreement, which should help stabilise their living situation and offer the foundation for further assistance.

Eight basic principles<sup>5</sup> have been formulated to implement the concept:

- Housing as an unconditional 'basic right': a 'right to housing' is emphasised. Obtaining housing or staying in housing is not tied to further conditions, such as accepting additional aid.
- *Freedom of choice and self-determination*: The people using the services should be heard and their opinion respected. Homeless people are empowered to decide for themselves what their needs are and how they should be dealt with.
- *Separation of housing provision from the assistance that accompanies it*: It should be guaranteed that access to a housing offer and remaining in a home is not tied to any obligation to accept further assistance.
- *Focus on the healing and recovery process*: The main focus is holistically placed on the well-being of the people concerned. And physical and mental health, the social environment, and the degree of social inclusion are emphasised to that end.
- *Focus on minimising damage*: The basic idea is that ending a problematic use of drugs and alcohol, for example, is a complex process, so offers for overcom-

2 The 'right to housing' should be understood here and in the following as a 'basic social right' from which no individual claim to the provision of housing arises; rather, it emphasises the decoupling of housing-related assistance from other assistance.

3 See also: Tsemberis, p. (2010): Housing First. The Pathways Model. Minnesota, and: Pleace, N. (2016): Housing First Guide Europe (<https://housingfirsteurope.eu/publication/publication-housing-first-guide-europe/> – last accessed: 22 September 2022).

4 See also: Steffen, A.; Henke, J. (2018): Strategien sozialräumlicher Integration von Wohnungslosen. Eine Kurzepertise, FGW-Studie Integrierende Stadtentwicklung 05, Düsseldorf

5 Nicolas Pleace: Housing First Guide Europe. Translated and published by neunerhaus, Vienna ([www.neunerhaus.at](http://www.neunerhaus.at)) 2016, p. 28ff.

ing homelessness that require abstinence or rehab do not function well for many homeless people.

- *Active participation without coercion:* The support consists of actively demonstrating alternatives and contains no obligation to accept any welfare services. The support should therefore be appreciative, empowering, and encouraging and without penalties or the threat of penalties.
- *Assistance planning centred on people:* Users are encouraged and supported in making their self-determined life plan a reality. To that end, opportunities to make decisions play an important role – including opportunities to choose additional welfare services.
- *Flexible granting of assistance as long as it is needed:* Offers of support should be maintained as long as necessary. Individual needs for support can wax or wane, and Housing First must react flexibly to this.

With its focus on rapid, direct integration into individual housing, Housing First contrasts with the gradual integration into housing that can sometimes still be encountered in the assistance provided during housing emergencies in the form of ‘tier systems’. These mostly constitute a graduated system of assistance that must be undergone before a regular living arrangement can be implemented. In contrast, tenancies and offers of support are decoupled in the Housing First approach. People can move into their own home with no probation tied to gradually planned measures of assistance or willingness for abstinence, therapy, occupational integration, or other agreed assistance goals.

And herein lies the essential difference from other types of aid entailed in emergency housing assistance: In the Housing First concept, the structures follow the users’ needs and requirements. This rules out patronising attitudes and penalising elements in the assistance process. From the viewpoint of the Deutscher Verein, this places special demands on the financing to be created for the support service Housing First (see section V; From project to regular service).

### Strategic embedding in the supply structures of emergency housing assistance

In Germany, emergency housing assistance features different supply structures marked by a ‘turning from location-centred to person-centred assistance [...], away from “supported housing” to ‘personal assistance in housing’”<sup>6</sup>. This already marked a clear paradigm shift in the orientation of the assistance, which caused facilities for stationary assistance to be dismantled while ambulatory counselling centres were increasingly built and expanded (including spatially) and specialised counselling/ support centres to avoid loss of housing were expanded as well.<sup>7</sup>

6 Volker Busch-Geertsema: Housing First – innovativer Ansatz, gängige Praxis oder schöne Illusion? Part 2, in: wohnungslos, Aktuelles aus Theorie und Praxis zur Armut und Wohnungslosigkeit, Volumes 2–3, 2017; p. 76.

7 For a differentiation of the assistance landscape in Germany, see: Thomas Specht, Die institutionelle Struktur der Hilfen in Notfällen, in: Handbuch der Hilfen in Wohnungsnotfällen. Entwicklung lokaler Hilfesysteme und lebenslagenbezogener Hilfeansätze. Published by the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe e.V., Berlin 2017.

Direct placement in an individual home secured under a lease agreement, and permanent support, are part of the work of the ambulatory services involved in emergency housing assistance. In general, however, personal assistance in residences also offer important points of contact in the place where they are focussed on the homeless people's requests and need for assistance. In many services involving ambulant assisted housing, basic principles of voluntarily acceptance of the support are just as guaranteed as a strict decoupling of housing from personal assistance.

At the same time, it must also be noted that the paradigm of 'housing readiness' is encountered in the assistance, as is an orientation toward abstinence.<sup>8</sup> For example, the very names of 'training', 'transition', or 'accommodation' housing clearly reveal the transitory nature of many types of accommodations. And (compulsory) communal housing still makes up part of the service landscape. And wherever personal assistance in housing has been expanded, these frequently come at the end of an 'assistance chain', at least for some of the people affected by homelessness. Moreover, part of ambulant assisted housing is still found in sponsored housing ('Trägerwohnungen'), which is limited by the duration of the accompanying assistance.<sup>9</sup>

The Deutscher Verein recommends that Housing First be embedded in existing local support structures (or those still to be created) that include targeted access to affordable housing and ambulant counselling services just as much as preventive services to avoid the loss of housing. Previous practical experiences from existing Housing First projects and the approach's conceptual focus make clear that Housing First is no 'One Size Fits All' solution for everyone affected by homelessness. And Housing First cannot guarantee that all homeless people will be integrated into housing – other forms of supply and support will still be needed.

## **II. Homeless and unsheltered people with complex problems as a target group**

The target group of Housing First is people affected by homelessness and a lack of shelter for whom finding access to the housing market is difficult due to complex problems and the special need for assistance this entails. These are often people who remain in the support system for housing emergencies for a long time without a home of their own.

Overall, this group of people makes up only a small part of the homeless people living in the shelters and institutions of emergency housing assistance. But they claim a large portion of the shelter capacities available throughout the year,

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8 See also: Nagel, Stefan, Wohn(un)fähigkeit – ein Wiedergänger der Wohnungslosenhilfe, in: wohnungslos, Aktuelles aus Theorie und Praxis zur Armut und Wohnungslosigkeit, Volumes 3–4, 2015, p. 82–87.

9 The concept of 'housing readiness' is found not only in work concepts of the emergency housing assistance, but is also used – sometime as 'leasing readiness' – by leasing and municipal authorities. It can also cause the services and institutions of emergency housing assistance to deliberately (or unintentionally) choose the most suitable people to be placed in housing, which, in light of limited housing capacities, constitutes an additional barrier and can consequently establish a graduated 'assistance chain'.

unlike the vast majority of people who are homeless or unsheltered for only a short while.

As a rule, this group of people has a special or particularly high need for help and often has no or only very limited means of overcoming the sometimes already entrenched living situation on their own. These are mostly people with a fluctuating need for help, temporary interruptions of help – for example due to being overwhelmed by the help system – often lead to recurrent homelessness. The Deutscher Verein believes that this should be particularly observed during the conception of the assistance to support housing and in issues related to financing the support services.

Due to multiple problematic situations and the issues usually attributed to them, the people concerned are excluded from the housing market to an extraordinarily high degree. In contrast with exclusion from regular housing provision, Housing First represents the opportunity to be quickly and directly placed in one's own home, which is connected to personal assistance depending on need.<sup>10</sup>

### III. Technical requirements

#### Standards of housing provision

The Deutscher Verein recommends providing the target group of Housing First with housing secured under a lease agreement (in accordance with §§ 535 et seqq. of the German Civil Code (Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch, BGB)). Tenancies, such as those discussed in § 549 BGB, do not meet those conditions due to the restricted regulations to protect against termination they contain.<sup>11</sup> Housing First primarily focusses on the priority (and if possible, direct) integration of homeless people with mostly complex problems into individual housing that is self-contained and yet permanently available.<sup>12</sup> Studies of existing Housing First projects repeatedly show a high percentage of permanently secured living situations through this approach.

When homeless people are being integrated into the housing market, the Deutscher Verein recommends a decentral distribution of housing units to combat social and spatial segregation and a social stigma. This also applies to the individual housing to be developed and provided as part of Housing First. The Deutscher Verein believes action should be guided by the fundamental goal of permanent housing prospects in individual housing secured under a lease agreement. The avoidance of homelessness and lacking or insufficient supply must take priority.

10 See also the recommendation of the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe e. V., “Dauerhaftes und sicheres Wohnen in Mietwohnungen für Menschen mit besonders hohen Hilfebedarfen (High Need Clients)”, Berlin 2022.

11 If a commercial lease is entered into when housing is leased through private sponsors and sublet to homeless people, the provisions for residential tenancies pursuant to §§ 535 to 548 do not apply. Instead, the lessee's rights, particularly protection against termination, are limited pursuant to § 549(2)(3).

12 Volker Busch-Geertsema: Housing First – innovativer Ansatz, gängige Praxis oder schöne Illusion? Part 2, in: wohnungslos, Aktuelles aus Theorie und Praxis zur Armut und Wohnungslosigkeit, Volumes 2–3, 2017; p. 75.

## Designing the assistance to accompany housing

Housing First doesn't mean Housing Only. The central component of the support is the proactive offer of assistance to accompany the provided housing. The voluntary acceptance of this assistance constitutes an essential basic principle of the approach to support, such as a strict organisational separation of procuring and maintaining housing and the personal support offered in this individual living space.

In providing assistance to accompany housing, Housing First services mostly rely on the extensive expertise of personal assistance in residential living possessed by the ambulant services of emergency housing assistance. Experiences from existing projects demonstrate the significance of low-threshold social work in the process of contacting the users of the services and securing fundamental requirements for entering into tenancy agreements (such as guaranteeing rental payments).

Implementing the basic principles of Housing First places special demands on the professional design of the assistance and the personnel of the services. The change of perspective accompanying the concept creates specific demands on the professional attitude on the part of the service providers and their employees.<sup>13</sup>

Considering the target group of the approach – homeless people in challenging situations and special needs for support – the support services require a broader spectrum of assistance than in other settings. Methods such as motivational counselling, collecting and focussing resources, and solution-oriented consultation or psychologically supported assistance to meet the needs and required participation of the users of the services are required to an even higher degree.

For the assistance to accompany the housing, the Deutscher Verein recommends using multi-professional teams in which various professions, methodical approaches, abilities, and experiences complement each other. Besides the necessary specialists in social work, this includes psychologists and psychiatrists (who are used for needs assessment, psychological counselling, or crisis intervention, among other things), social care workers (for everyday support services that do not require qualifications as a social worker or psychologist), but also peers who bring their own perspectives and alternative relationships into the work of the team. Wherever using multi-professional teams is difficult or impossible – due to the size of the service, for example – the formation of appropriate networks is recommended.<sup>14</sup>

To that end, a qualification (regarding the necessary methods, for example) and the ensuring of a continual exchange of experiences within the support networks, between the various specialists, and with other services is of central importance.<sup>15</sup>

13 For the purposes of the international definition of social work by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), this includes complying with the political mandate of social work.

14 See also the recommendation of the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe e. V., “Dauerhaftes und sicheres Wohnen in Mietwohnungen für Menschen mit besonders hohen Hilfebedarfen (High Need Clients)”, Berlin 2022.

15 See also: Ingo Bullermann, Karen Holzinger und Corinna Müncho, Housing First for all: Wie können die Hilfen nach §§ 67, 68 SGB XII die Grundprinzipien von Housing First umsetzen? In: wohnungslos, Aktuelles aus Theorie und Praxis zur Armut und Wohnungslosigkeit, Volume 4, 2021.



## IV. Developing and providing individual living space

Developing and providing individual living space marks one of the central elements of Housing First while placing high demands on the aid programmes. This is true both in quantitative and in qualitative respects:

Quantitatively significant here is that, for the most part, the demand for affordable housing far surpasses the supply of such housing, above all in city regions.

Qualitatively significant are the specific access problems of homeless people to the housing markets – and this especially applies to homeless people with complex problems.

A purely quantitative expansion of the housing supply alone will not usually solve the access problem experienced by homeless people with complex problems. For the target group, the availability of adequate individual living space is not only a question of quantity, but one of distribution and access to those spaces.<sup>16</sup>

### Measures for housing acquisition and supply

Reference has already been made to supplying homeless and unsheltered people with permanent individual living space as a central element of the Housing First approach. This especially places the issue of procuring housing at the centre of the offer of assistance.

The Deutscher Verein therefore demands targeted measures that use all options available in housing stock, new housing, and refurbished housing for the target group of homeless people. To that end, services of Housing First can rely on the ambulant services' many years of experience, offers for assisting the homeless made by social service providers, and the supply structures already existing in this segment – such as subletting via social housing agencies with permanent subletting agreements or the purchase of residential units by private sponsors of assistance for the homeless as landlords.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time, the Deutscher Verein points out that the issue of procuring and providing individual living spaces for the target group of the Housing First approach cannot be implemented through welfare alone, but should be primarily approached as part of municipal public services – perhaps by procuring and using municipal occupancy rights and designing municipal funding programmes for housing.<sup>18</sup>

16 Volker Busch-Geertsema: Housing First – innovativer Ansatz, gängige Praxis oder schöne Illusion? Part 2, in: wohnungslos, Aktuelles aus Theorie und Praxis zur Armut und Wohnungslosigkeit, Volumes 2–3, 2017; p. 79.

17 See also the recommendation of the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe e. V., „Bezahlbaren Wohnraum schaffen, Wohnraum für wohnungslose Menschen akquirieren“, Berlin 2017.

18 Acquiring new occupancy rights or extending existing ones can be made more attractive for landlords by usefully connecting this with subsidies for improving the quality of life. If needed, it can be connected with temporary guarantees against rent default by the municipality to make it easier for private landlords with a small stock of housing in particular to provide that stock.

## Forming cooperation structures on the municipal level

The Deutscher Verein recommends forming cooperation structures on the municipal level and developing a master plan to procure and provide housing that will also be made available to the target group of the Housing First services. All local shareholders must be ready to collaborate to that end in order to live up to their social responsibility.<sup>19</sup> Suitable housing can be created and provided for the target group only through synergies and by bundling all shareholders of the local housing market.

This includes, first, agreements with housing companies on providing a certain number of housing units each year for the Housing First service and, second, binding arrangements on and the development of framework contracts with local sponsors of assistance for the homeless to provide living space to homeless people.<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, the Deutscher Verein recommends the joint design of targeted promotion of the Housing First services, thus motivating private homeowners as well to provide housing for homeless people. Experiences with existing Housing First projects indicate that the approach is well suited to bring private housing providers to offer living space for people in challenging living situations. Permanent and flexible support in particular will increase the chance for housing that is secured under the Housing First approach, including for people with multiple problems.

## V. From temporary project to permanent service

Existing evaluations of Housing First projects implemented in a series of municipalities point out the overall positive results of this aid programme – both in terms of providing housing to people who have been homeless a long time and of the sustainability of that provision.<sup>21</sup>

The German Association therefore recommends that the services, which are usually designed and implemented in the form of temporary projects, be made permanent as regular services. In the view of the German Association, the goal must be to transfer the services, which have so far been financed mostly from project funds of the municipalities or Länder, into regular funding secured by social law.

## Financing the assistance to accompanied housing

The Deutscher Verein believes assistance to accompany housing should be financed through the assistance pursuant to §§ 67 et seqq. SGB XII. The target

19 See also the Empfehlungen des Deutschen Vereins zur Weiterentwicklung der Kooperation der Akteure generationengerechten Wohnens (DV 24/14), adopted by the Praesidium of the Deutscher Verein on 16 March 2016.

20 Regarding the practice of the acquiring of housing by emergency housing assistance services, see, among others, the illustration by: Rosenke, Werena, Wohnen, in: Handbuch der Hilfen in Wohnungsnotfällen. Entwicklung lokaler Hilfesysteme und lebenslagenbezogener Hilfeansätze, Editing: Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe e. V., Berlin 2017; p. 151 ff.

21 See the evaluation of the model projects in Berlin, final report created by Dr Susanne Gerull, Alice Salomon Hochschule Berlin, December 2021.

group that receives housing from Housing First normally consists of people experiencing particular social difficulties. With the utilisation of the services and the needs assessment, the need for assistance to overcome special social difficulties described in §§ 67 et seqq. SGB XII will become known to the respective public entity of social assistance. When the responsible public entity becomes aware of the existing need, the assistance must be given directly and immediately (§ 18(1) SGB XII: principle of knowledge). The legal statute requires no additional personal prerequisites.<sup>22</sup>

Experiences from the work of existing Housing First projects, however, also show many obstacles in administrative practice. These include a lack of flexibility in planning assistance, bureaucratic obstacles in gaining consent for assistance, insufficient consideration of individual preferences in designing assistance, and a time limit for the provided support.

Due to the complexity of the need for assistance normally encountered with the target group of the Housing First approach, especially in people who have had no accommodations for a long time, support might be needed for a long time. As part of the Housing First approach, assistance to accompany housing should be offered permanently and proactively. The support services should continue to exist even if it is used temporarily or remains unused for a long time.

In implementing and stabilising Housing First, the Deutscher Verein advocates maintaining the offer of assistance to accompany housing as long as necessary to alleviate or overcome the difficulties or keep them from worsening.

The Deutscher Verein recommends, in addition to case-by-case financing of the assistance to accompanied housing, to agree on lump-sum financing bases that go beyond the assistance set forth in §§ 67 et seqq. SGB XII in order to guarantee low-threshold access to the services for the target group of Housing First. The Deutscher Verein believes such lump sum basic financing allows a flexible reaction to changing needs for assistance and intensity of demand from the users of the service and allows users to contribute to the design of the support process.<sup>23</sup>

### Financing the housing acquisition

In addition to ensuring housing assistance, the continuation of Housing First services also requires financial security for the procurement of individual housing for the users of the services, which is central to the assistance offered. Experiences with the implementation of Housing First projects have shown that various approaches to standardise the financing of the housing acquisition can be applied.

The assistance in overcoming special social difficulties as set forth in §§ 67 et seqq. SGB XII, specifically the provision of § 68(1) sentence 1 SGB XII in conjunction

22 In no case may the assistance be made contingent on a previous prediction regarding a possible or expected willingness to participate. Cooperation as part of the assistance in overcoming special social difficulties is constituted as soon as a person in special social difficulties feels their circumstances are burdensome and expresses this. See to that end the Empfehlungen des Deutschen Vereins für öffentliche und private Fürsorge e.V. zum Verständnis und zur Ausgestaltung der Mitwirkung in der Hilfe nach §§ 67 ff. SGB XII (Empfehlungen DV 3/18, adopted by the Präsidium of the Deutscher Verein on 11 September 2019).

23 Such lump sum basic financing beyond the assistance set forth in §§ 67 ff. SGB XII is already being practiced by many local and regional social welfare agencies in this jurisdiction.

with § 4(2) of the Regulation Implementing Assistance to Overcome Particular Social Difficulties (DVO to § 69 SGB XII) provides that, insofar as measures for counselling and personal support are required in accordance with paragraph 1 of DVO to § 69 SGB XII, the assistance also includes other services for maintaining and procuring housing in accordance with the third chapter of the twelfth book of the German Social Code, particularly in accordance with § 34 (what is meant here is the assumption of rental debts to secure the housing in accordance with § 36 SGB XII). This wording makes clear that additional assistance is possible.

The services for procuring housing in accordance with § 68(1) sentence 1 SGB XII in conjunction with § 4(2) DVO to § 69 SGB XII can also include the assumption of brokerage fees.<sup>24</sup> In principle, the assumption of such fees – especially for people with special barriers to placement in the housing market – is already possible pursuant to § 35(2) sentence 5 SGB XII<sup>25</sup> or § 22(6) SGB II.<sup>26</sup>

The expenses for procuring housing (including for ‘social brokers’) as already practiced by non-statutory social service providers can be financed by means of this provision. Insofar as the conditions are met on a case-by-case basis, which can normally be assumed for people experiencing particular social difficulties, there is a direct legal claim.

And here as well, the Deutscher Verein believes that, to guarantee low-threshold access to the services it is necessary to provide lump sum financing (via an appropriate lump sum budget for covering housing procurement costs), including for housing acquisition within the services, in addition to financing on a case-by-case basis.

Regarding the central role the municipalities play as part of local public services in procuring and providing individual living space for the target group of Housing First – as for homeless people in general – the Deutscher Verein recommends the creation of an appropriate municipal programme to procure housing that uses and combines various instruments for providing and financing housing units. This instrument ranges from the creation and targeted use of local occupancy rights, to contractual agreements with private housing companies and landlords, to the implementation of independent new construction projects to supply homeless and unsheltered people with housing.

24 Bieback in Grube/Wahrendorf/Flint, § 68 SGB XII, Sozialhilfe 7th Edition 2020, Marg. No. 21; also Strnischka in Oestreicher/Decker, SGB II/SGB XII, § 68 SGB XII Marg. No. 20, work status: 95th EL January 2022.

25 Berlitz in Bieritz-Harder/Conradis/Thie, § 35 Sozialgesetzbuch XII, 12th Edition 2020, Marg. No. 102.

26 Berlitz in Münder/Geiger, § 22 SGB II – Grundsicherung für Arbeitsuchende, 7th Edition 2021, Marg. No. 224.

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