

EaSI training modules: social housing and homelessness

Action Plan template

The Action Plan is working document that helps your city translate the learnings of the training into a realistic pathway for change in your social housing and/or homelessness policy or services. You will complete this document progressively across the programme, using it to structure your reflections, inputs from peers, potential solutions to your challenge, and the next steps in your local context. The focus of the programme is social and affordable housing, and homelessness – including prevention, access to housing, integrated support, and cross-departmental coordination, among others.

Throughout the programme, we recommend you follow these principles when drafting your Action Plan:

- **Progressive:** you do not need to fill everything at once. Start simple, iterate, and fill in the different sections over time, following the indications.
- **Concrete and realistic:** focus on one priority challenge and on actions that you can actually implement.
- **Contextual:** the plan should reflect your local governance, constraints, and opportunities – not a generic ‘best practice’.
- **Usable:** by the end of the programme, you should have a document you can take back to your city as the basis for implementation.
- **Living document:** you will be learning throughout the programme, and some things might change how you approach your challenge. You can always come back to what you wrote in previous sections and re-write to refine, strengthen or evolve it.

Action Plan structure

Phase	Section	Purpose
Diagnosis	A. Context and baseline	Where we are now (facts, policies, system context).
	B. Focus challenge	What exactly we want to address, for whom, and why now.
Solution design	C. How change will happen in your city	Your change pathway: impact → outcomes → outputs → interventions → assumptions
	D. Governance and stakeholders	Who must be involved, decision points, coordination, and roles.
Implementation roadmap	E. Actions and roadmap	Your priority actions, sequencing, first steps, and delivery plan.

	F. Resources, risks and monitoring	What you need, what could derail it, and how you track progress.
Final reflection	G. Reflection and support needs	What you learned, what remains open, and what support would help.

How to fill the Action Plan:

We propose that you draft the Action Plan in three big sequences. Each iteration should take 60-90 minutes and will benefit from joint work among the two programme participants.

Phase	When	What to do
1. Diagnosis	Before study visit 1	Draft the baseline and identify the challenge you want to address: Sections A–B. Keep it short. Aim for clarity, not completeness.
2. Solution design	After study visit 1 (policy transfer)	Define your options and choose one. Refine Sections C–D. Make assumptions and governance explicit. Draft actions.
3. Implementation roadmap	After study visit 2 (challenge-based)	Make it implementable: consolidate Section E and complete Section F. Define first steps, resources and monitoring.
4. Final reflection	Just before finalising the programme	Think about what you learned, what remains open, and what support would help. Section G.

Practical tips when writing the Action Plan:

- Write in plain language; make it easy and clear to read. Written clarity usually reflects conceptual clarity. Avoid long narratives.
- Be specific about ‘who does what’. If that is unclear, implementation will not go forward.
- When you are unsure about something, write the uncertainty as an assumption to test later.
- Keep data and evidence credible but light: a few data points will suffice; you don’t need a full report to make your case.

A. Context and baseline

Capture the minimum context needed for others to understand your city's situation and starting point.
Suggested length: 1-1.5 pages

Guiding questions:

- What are the key local trends and pressures linked to the topic (numbers + short explanation)? (E.g. housing affordability, supply of social housing, evictions, rough sleeping, use of shelters/temporary accommodation, bottlenecks in access, hidden homelessness, prevention measures.)
- What policies/services already exist, and what is currently working/not working? (E.g. homelessness prevention, Housing First, social housing allocation, emergency shelters, rent support, mediation, outreach.)
- What is the relevant governance setup (who leads, who delivers, what is outsourced/partnered)?

To fill in:

- *City context (short): Population, key characteristics relevant to social housing and homelessness (4-8 bullets)*
- *Current situation (baseline): 3-6 key facts or indicators, and what they mean*
- *Existing policies and services: Main programmes and initiatives already in place on social housing and homelessness (bullets). It doesn't need to be exhaustive; only the programmes relevant for the problem you want to address through your participation are needed.*
- *Governance: Who makes decisions; who delivers (departments, services); what is outsourced or partnered (NGOs)?*
- *What is already strong: 2-4 strengths of your current policies you can build on for this Action plan*
- *What is currently difficult: 2-4 issues or gaps that hinder your policies*

B. Focus challenge

Define one priority challenge the Action Plan aims to address. It needs to be specific enough to be actionable, but relevant enough to matter – but also realistic, so that it can actually be implementable. Suggested length: 1 page.

Guiding questions:

- What exact problem are you tackling? E.g. reducing evictions that result in homelessness; improving access to social housing for a specific group; reducing time in temporary accommodation.
- Who is most affected (target group), and where does the problem show up (in specific services, locations in the city, etc.)? E.g. young people, single-parent families, migrants, LGBTQ+ populations...
- What is the scope: what is inside and outside of this Action Plan?
- What would be different in 12-24 months if you succeed?

To fill in:

- *Challenge statement: in 2-3 sentences, write a clear problem statement, explaining what reality you want to change.*
- *Target group(s): who are you prioritizing and why?*
- *Scope: what policy areas and services fall within the scope of this Action Plan? Which ones are not?*
- *Main drivers: identify 3-5 root causes of the problem you want to address.*
- *Initial success definition: identify 3-5 outcomes you would like to see in 12-24 months.*

C. How change will happen

Describe your change pathway (Theory of Change; we will have a session about it): how the interventions proposed in this Action Plan are expected to lead to outcomes and change in your local context. Keep it practical. Suggested length: 1 page.

Guiding questions:

- What longer-term impact you want to contribute to? E.g. fewer people experiencing homelessness; faster access to social housing; wider access to social housing.
- What are the 3-5 key outcomes in 12-24 months?
- What outputs must be delivered to reach those outcomes?
- What types of interventions will produce those outputs?
- What assumptions must hold true? What external factors could affect results?
- What indicators will show you are on track?

To fill in:

- *Desired impact in 3-5 years time (1-2 sentences)*
- *Target outcomes in 12-24 months: 3-5 outcomes written as changes (not activities)*
- *Outputs (what will be produced/delivered): 4-8 tangible outputs (e.g. protocol, pilot, public service)*
- *Intervention types: what are you going to do to produce the outputs and achieve the outcomes? 3-6 intervention types (in bullets)*
- *Key assumptions: 3-6 assumptions to test*
- *External factors / risks: 3-6 factors outside your control that will affect your success*
- *Initial indicators: how will you know that you are on track to achieve your outcomes? Define 2-3 simple indicators per outcome.*

D. Governance and stakeholders

This section should clarify who decides, who delivers and how partners work together; make ownership and coordination needs explicit.

Guiding questions:

- Who is the politician that leads, sponsors or decides on the proposed intervention? Who is the technical /administrative lead?
- Which departments/services must be involved for each outcome?
- Which external partners are essential, and what is their role?
- What is the simplest governance model that can work in your institutional setting (avoid over-design)?
- How are you going to involve people with lived experience in the design, implementation and evaluation of your actions?

To fill in:

- *Political sponsor and technical lead: identify the person responsible to give the political green light, and the department/administrative body in charge of delivery.*
- *Core delivery group: identify the core 2-8 actors and roles (who does what)*
- *Key partners: external actors needed (role and why they matter)*
- *Decision points: list the 3-6 decisions needed to move forward (e.g. on budget, overall mandate, procurement, data sharing...), and who approves each.*
- *Coordination approach: how will you coordinate the different stakeholders and partners? (e.g. existing committee or working group, new arrangement, bilateral meetings, etc.*
- *Data and information needs (if relevant): what data sharing or evidence inputs are needed, and from whom?*
- *People with lived experience: provide an overview on how you are going to include affected populations in the design, implementation and evaluation of your actions.*

E. Actions and roadmap

Turn your Theory of Change into a small number of priority actions, sequenced over time. Focus on viable delivery in the first month. This is the core of your Action Plan – suggested length is 1-3 pages.

Guiding questions

- Looking at what you want to achieve (outcomes), which actions do you need to prioritise to deliver on this?
- What must happen first that is necessary for other actions to happen (dependencies)?
- What can you start within 100 days? What needs preparation?
- In your city, which specific department/unit/body owns or leads on each action, and what support from other departments is required?
- What quick wins can build momentum?

To fill in:

- *Priority actions (summary): list 4-8 actions (one line each).*
- *Actions table: for each action detail its objective, owner/lead, partners, timeline (start month, end month), previous actions required (if any), and expected outputs.*
- *First 100 days: 5-10 concrete steps you will take immediately after the programme.*
- *12-months roadmap: major milestones/actions/achievements by quarter (or months).*

F. Resources, risks and monitoring

Make the plan implementable: clarify what resources are needed, what could hinder delivery, and how you will track progress. Suggested length: 1-3 pages.

Guiding questions:

- What resources do you need (staff time, budget, expertise, partners)? What resources do you already have?
- What is missing, and how could you fill this gap (external funding, additional municipal budget, budget re-organisation...)?
- What are the top 5 risks for the proposed Action Plan (political, communication-wise, financial, legal, organisational...), and how do you mitigate them?
- How will you monitor progress in a simple way that allows you to track whether you are reaching your goals and support decision-making?

To fill in:

- *Resource snapshot: what is needed? People, budget, expertise, tools/data (bullets).*
- *Gaps and solutions: what resources are missing, and how will you address it?*
- *Risks and mitigations: top 5-8 risks with mitigation actions.*
- *Monitoring framework: simple table including outcomes -> indicators -> data source / means of verification*
- *Sustainability (optional): how do you plan to sustain or scale the proposed intervention(s) after the first cycle / iteration.*

G. Final reflection and support needs

Once the programme is completed, we ask you to capture the learnings, reflect on the journey, and think about what further support would make implementation possible. This will help Eurocities define the programme follow-up for next year.

Guiding questions:

- What have you learnt? What changed in your approach as a result of the programme?
- What remains unclear or risky and needs further work?
- What support would be most useful in the next 6-12 months? (e.g. peer mentoring, research support, stakeholder engagement event, data, funding...)

To fill in:

- *Key learning points: 3-6 bullets*
- *Open questions: 3-6 bullets*
- *Support needs: rank top 3 needs and explain briefly*
- *Transferability and peer value: what can you offer to other cities that want to tackle a similar challenge (1-3 bullets)*