

**THINK PIECE**

# From Shelter to Home, Part Two: A Pathway for Jersey

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**Companion paper**

*This is the second of two linked papers on Housing First and its relevance to Jersey. The companion paper, From Shelter to Home, Part One: The Housing First Evidence Base, sets out what Housing First is and what the international trial evidence shows. This paper assumes that evidence and asks the harder, local question: what would it take to implement Housing First in Jersey, and is Jersey currently able to do so?*

*The central question this paper addresses is: given the evidence from elsewhere and Jersey's own circumstances, should Jersey now begin the journey towards Housing First, and if so, how?*



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## Executive summary

Housing First deserves serious consideration in Jersey. It is not, however, a simple decision to adopt or reject. It is useful to keep three propositions distinct. The evidence that Housing First is effective elsewhere is strong (set out in the companion paper). Whether it could be successfully adapted to Jersey is plausible but requires careful analysis. Whether Jersey is currently ready to implement it has not yet been demonstrated. This paper argues that Jersey should now undertake the work necessary to determine whether, and under what conditions, Housing First could be implemented successfully here.

Housing First works best when housing, health, and social care services are adequately resourced and integrated, functioning together as a three-legged stool. In Jersey, however, each of these components is under pressure. Despite a substantial housing development programme, demand continues to exceed supply. In a September 2025 response to a written question in the States Assembly, former Housing Minister Sam Mézec reported that applicants in Band 1 of the Affordable Housing Gateway, the category for those in the most urgent housing need, had waited an average of 2.9 years for social housing over the preceding five years. Health and Care Services are also facing a widening structural deficit, creating additional challenges for the effective delivery of Housing First.

The complex needs team, whose development arose from an action identified in the 2020 homelessness strategy, has been established. Evidence given to the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel on 11 February 2026 suggests that a Complex Needs Team had been established within the Housing Advice Service. The Policy Principal for Strategic Housing and Regeneration stated that “our complex needs team sits with the offer that the Housing Advice Service provides”, and described its role in coordinating with health, justice, safeguarding and social care services through multi-agency arrangements. This statement provides confirmation that the Complex Needs Team was operational at the time of the hearing.

Essential to high-fidelity Housing First is a dedicated team meant to take responsibility for resolving housing issues for the island's most vulnerable residents, including those with overlapping needs such as mental health, addiction, and chronic homelessness.

Jersey has real foundations to build on: Andium Homes, the Housing Advice Service, the Partnership Pathway, and the Homelessness Cluster all provide a basis for a more ambitious model, and sustained outreach work has already reduced rough sleeping from up to 30 people a night to a handful.

This paper sets out the local evidence and constraints, the legal barriers, the financial questions Jersey's Ministers will reasonably ask, and a sequenced way forward: immediate practical steps, a carefully evaluated Plan-Do-Study-Act approach as opposed to a simple pilot, and a phased path towards legislative reform, including eventual reconsideration of the Control of Housing and Work (Jersey) Law 2012.



## Context

Jersey's quarterly homelessness data, collected systematically since 2023, confirms what frontline organisations have long observed: homelessness in the island is more prevalent, more complex, and less visible than headline figures suggest. The Government of Jersey's fourth-quarter 2025 report<sup>1</sup> recorded 267 Islanders as homeless in October to December, against 350 in the third quarter of 2025. Around 150 individuals and families were in temporary or emergency accommodation at some point across the year.

Official statistics capture only a portion of the problem. The Government adopted the ETHOS (European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion) framework definition in 2022, which recognises rooflessness, houselessness, insecure housing, and substandard housing as forms of homelessness. Measured against this definition, Jersey's homelessness count is almost certainly larger than quarterly reports reflect. Sofa surfers, people living in vehicles, and those in wholly unsuitable accommodation fall largely outside current data collection.

## The current picture

Low rough sleeping figures are not an accident. They are a direct consequence of sustained outreach work by the Jersey Homeless Outreach Group (JHOG) and the Shelter Trust. Prior to this work, up to 30 people a night were sleeping rough in and around St Helier. That figure has been reduced to a handful: a genuine and hard-won social policy success that deserves explicit recognition. The challenge now is to extend the same ambition to the wider, less visible population of people in insecure, temporary, or unsuitable accommodation.

The valuable work of Jersey's network of charities is acknowledged, including the Shelter Trust, Sanctuary Trust, Jersey Association for Youth and Friendship (JAYF), and FREEDA (formerly Women's Refuge), which provide emergency, temporary, and low-cost accommodation, outreach, and practical support for people experiencing homelessness.

For some, homelessness results from leaving unsafe homes, particularly for women and children experiencing domestic abuse. FREEDA's Safe House is the primary emergency refuge for these individuals. However, a shortage of suitable move-on accommodation means some survivors remain longer than intended, limiting availability for others in urgent need. FREEDA Chief Executive Officer Kate Wright states:

**Kate Wright, Chief Executive Officer, FREEDA**

*"Stable housing is one of the most powerful protective factors for survivors of domestic abuse. At Freeda, we see firsthand how delays in accessing safe, long-term homes can keep women and children in crisis for longer than necessary and potentially limit the availability of refuge spaces for others in urgent need. Any approach that strengthens pathways into secure, sustainable housing, alongside compassionate, person-centred support, has the potential to transform recovery and reduce long-term harm across our community."*



People experiencing mental ill health, substance dependencies, domestic abuse, family breakups, debt, long-term unemployment, or a combination of these issues need tailored support. Not all people who find themselves homeless fit this profile. In 2025, 27% of people supported by homeless organisations were in full- or part-time employment, with others in education, training, or retired. Sanctuary Trust reported 45% of residents were in work. Employment data from Q4 2025 adds further context: 63% of those recorded as homeless were out of work; only 26% were in full-time employment, and 5% part-time. The relationship between worklessness and housing instability runs both ways.

The profile of people experiencing homelessness in Jersey is shifting and is worth analysing. Women, historically representing around one in eight to ten homeless persons in Jersey, now account for closer to one in four. The number of young adults accessing homelessness services has risen sharply over the same period. Annual 2025 data confirm substance use as the primary recorded driver among men (14%), domestic abuse as the primary driver for women (26%), and difficulty managing independently as a significant factor for young people (9% of men and 15% of women). Both demographic trends post-date the COVID-19 pandemic, the social consequences of which continue to work through the community.

As Deputy Hilary Jeune, Chair of The Jersey Association of Youth and Friendship (JAYF), explains, “For young adults, however, the picture is often more complex than individual circumstances alone. Many young people in homelessness services are in employment, apprenticeships, education, or training, and may be paying their own rent without relying on Income Support. Despite this, they face significant barriers to securing and sustaining accommodation, including insecure or low-paid work, limited savings for deposits, a lack of guarantors, restricted access to social housing, and limited eligibility for housing-related financial support. Private landlords are often reluctant to rent to younger applicants, leaving many with few viable housing options when family homes are no longer available to them. As a result, homelessness among young adults is frequently driven as much by a shortage of accessible and affordable housing pathways as by personal or social vulnerabilities. The lowering of the housing gateway access to 18 years I welcomed, but we need to ensure that it works for everyone. These demographic shifts and structural pressures need to be reflected in service design and in how funding is allocated.”

One cause of homelessness that receives insufficient attention is the role of conduct. Being a poor neighbour or a difficult tenant is cited in a significant number of homelessness episodes in Jersey. It is easy to see this as a matter of personal responsibility, but a more nuanced approach reflects a gap in resettlement support. People who have experienced homelessness and been rehoused, particularly those with complex histories, often struggle to meet the expectations of sustained tenancy without continued, active, practical help. Without it, provisional tenancies fail, individuals cycle back into homelessness, and the argument that housing is too risky for certain groups gains undeserved credibility. Investing in resettlement support is central to whether Housing First works in practice in Jersey.



## Structural drivers of homelessness

In 2025, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons reported<sup>2</sup> that a quarter of prisoners in Jersey were released knowing they would be homeless. At the same time, nearly half of those leaving HMP La Moye went into temporary accommodation, such as shelters or guest houses, and as such automatically fell into a homeless category under the Government of Jersey's own ETHOS definition.

In October 2022, the then Housing Minister, former Deputy David Warr, secured the adoption by the Government of Jersey of the ETHOS framework definition of homelessness, developed by FEANTSA, the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless. This aligns with European best practice by recognising rooflessness, houselessness, insecure housing, and substandard housing. Under ETHOS, anyone placed in a shelter or temporary arrangement is, by the government's own classification, homeless. Yet official reporting counts prison leavers who are moved into guest houses or shelters as having “accommodation arranged,” recording it as a successful outcome and normalising what should be an exceptional, short-term crisis response.

When government institutions knowingly discharge prison leavers or care leavers into ETHOS-defined homelessness, this constitutes, at minimum, state-facilitated homelessness. This includes care leavers, who are raised by the state and, it could be argued, are owed a de facto parental duty, in which this ethical failure is even more pronounced. Official documents also link housing instability for prison leavers with increased reoffending risk, and for domestic abuse survivors with barriers to leaving abusive situations.

HMP La Moye knows from the first day of any sentence when a prisoner's earliest possible release date is. The actual release date may be after this date, as it is dependent on behaviour, progression, or risk assessment. Some prisoners are granted conditional early release, one factor of which is having a suitable address. This anticipated release date knowledge should trigger early work on housing status and fragility. No one should approach release without a housing plan already in active preparation.

Susie Richardson, former Prison Governor explains:

**Susie Richardson, former Prison Governor**

*“An evidence-based approach to resettling people coming out of prison is really important. This case study from Finland provides the opportunity not to experiment or rely on what might be more instinctive or populist approaches to reducing reoffending, but an opportunity to observe what is proven to have worked elsewhere, meaningfully decreasing the risk of reoffending and the factors that contribute to it, which is surely the most important outcome in keeping Jersey safe?”*

To align practice with principle, Jersey should adopt a firm policy of “no planned discharge into homelessness” for institutional leavers, with transparent exceptions only in genuine



emergencies. Outcome indicators should count only stable, long-term accommodation as success. Housing First provision and follow-on tenancies should become the default pathway from prison, care, or refuge.

## What Jersey already has

Some foundations for Housing First are already in place. Andium Homes<sup>3</sup>, the government-owned, not-for-profit social landlord, manages 5,000 properties and has a further 583 in the pipeline. The Housing Advice Service (HAS), which handled over 1,400 enquiries in the third quarter of 2025 alone, now offers a single point of access for people at risk of homelessness.

Andium Homes also offers the Partnership Pathway, a parallel route into affordable housing for islanders who cannot access the standard Affordable Housing Gateway due to complex needs, multi-agency involvement, or a history of offending. This pathway aims to build the skills, confidence, and support networks needed for a successful long-term tenancy, ensuring those most at risk of repeat homelessness or institutionalisation are not left unsupported.

Lindsay Wood, Chief Executive Officer of Andium Homes, notes:

***Lindsay Wood, Chief Executive Officer, Andium Homes***

*"We are very proud of the Partnership Pathway, which provides an important opportunity for people to transition from homelessness to sustaining a successful tenancy. Working together with other agencies, including charitable partners providing temporary accommodation and ongoing support, has led to many successful outcomes for residents."*

The critical questions are how many people the Partnership Pathway has successfully moved into sustained independent tenancies, and what the pathway does with its most complex cases, including people with histories of behaviour that put neighbours or tenants at risk. For these cases, it is necessary to build rigorous case management, honest risk protocols, and transparent evaluation from the outset.

The pathway provides a more intensive, two-year supported tenancy with structured reviews to monitor stability and risks. Under a high-fidelity Housing First model, reviews would be more frequent than six-monthly, particularly in the first twelve months when the risk of tenancy breakdown is highest. The current six-monthly cycle may be appropriate once a tenancy is stable, but it is not sufficient for the early stages. The scheme embeds partnership working into access to social housing. Referring agencies remain involved to identify risks early and coordinate support, while Andium's Tenancy Sustainment Team bridges the landlord and support services.

A structural weakness in the current system is the absence of formal coordination between social housing allocation and the third sector. Housing providers and support organisations operate in parallel rather than in integration, meaning that people can be housed without adequate support in place, or supported without a clear housing pathway secured. People should be helped to move through emergency and third-sector accommodation as swiftly



as is practically possible, rather than remaining there for long periods because the next step is unavailable or uncoordinated. Jersey's third sector does extraordinary work with limited resources. It should not be asked to function as medium- or long-term housing by default.

A recent development illustrates what formal coordination could look like in practice. JAYF has established a partnership pathway programme with Andium Homes for young people aged 18 to 25. Under this model, young people come to JAYF first, and when JAYF judges them ready, they are referred into Andium's pathway. JAYF continues to support them through the referral and application process and for the first two years of their tenancy once they have moved. This continuity matters in a practical sense as well as a supportive one: young people supported through JAYF remain entitled to income support, which they would not otherwise receive, and this entitlement is what makes the move to an Andium tenancy affordable given the higher rents involved. The programme is still being finalised, and JAYF has been awarded two years of funding from JCF to develop the model and collect data on outcomes. It is, at this stage, a pilot for a single cohort rather than evidence of system-wide integration, but it demonstrates the kind of coordinated, staged handover between the third sector and social housing that a broader Housing First model would need to replicate more widely.

Most social housing in Jersey is delivered by Andium Homes, which manages more than 4,900 properties, and by a small number of approved housing trusts whose allocations are coordinated through the Affordable Housing Gateway. Although several parishes continue to operate small housing schemes outside this framework, these represent only a minor proportion of the Island's overall social housing stock. Jersey's housing system is therefore largely, though not completely, integrated, and any Housing First model would benefit from the remaining parish-based provision being aligned with island-wide allocation and support arrangements.

## Applying the model to Jersey

The companion evidence paper sets out the seven principles of Housing First in their general form (reproduced at Appendix A). Housing First, as designed for larger jurisdictions, should be understood as a guide rather than a fixed prescription. Jersey has a particular history, scale, and set of circumstances that call for an adapted approach. One honest way of reflecting this is to frame the model as “Housing Options First”: a name that acknowledges both the primacy of housing and the reality that change, personal and structural alike, takes time and requires a range of responses. The core commitment remains that housing is the foundation, not a reward.

Two of the seven principles require particular thought in Jersey's specific legal and geographic context.

## The right to a home, and the Control of Housing and Work Law

Principle one holds that people have a right to a home, offered as quickly as possible based on suitability and stability rather than conditions or “readiness.” Applying this principle in Jersey reveals a fundamental tension with the island's Control of Housing and Work (Jersey) Law 2012, which divides residents into four tiers of housing entitlement: Entitled, Licensed, Entitled for Work, and Registered. Full access to the housing market is reserved for those with ten years' continuous residence or Licensed employment status. Individuals classified as “Registered,” who have lived in Jersey for fewer than five years and are not essential employees, are limited to a narrow segment of the rental market and cannot purchase property. This qualification system structurally limits the “right to a home” in the Housing First sense. Even with political will, residential status may legally prevent immediate housing for those experiencing homelessness.

Recent policy changes by Jersey's former Housing Minister, former Deputy Sam Mézec, such as lowering the social housing age threshold from 25 to 18, introducing a general needs band, and reducing the residency qualifying period from six months to three, are incremental steps toward greater inclusivity. However, they do not resolve the core issue: Jersey's housing law treats access to adequate housing as a privilege earned through residency duration and economic utility. A genuine Housing First approach in Jersey would require not only a significant expansion of affordable housing and coordinated support services, but also a willingness to consider the philosophical and legal foundations of the qualification system. As the Jersey Community Relations Trust has observed, this system creates a “two-tier” housing market with considerable potential for exploitation.

The Control of Housing and Work Law was designed to manage population growth and protect local employment, not to create barriers to adequate housing for vulnerable people already living in Jersey. The objectives of the current law warrant review, specifically to assess whether they could be achieved through a framework that separates labour market management from access to housing for those experiencing homelessness or at acute risk. This is a long-term legislative question, and the sequencing of that reform is addressed later in this paper.

## Choice and control on a small island

Principle four holds that people have choice and control over the type and location of their housing and the support they receive. In larger jurisdictions, difficult cases, such as housing sex offenders, can be managed through relocation, reducing community anxiety while preserving individual rights. This option is not available on a small island. Jersey must balance the spirit of individual choice with legitimate safeguarding concerns in a close-knit community. This will require careful, case-by-case risk management and close collaboration between housing, probation, and safeguarding services. The pure Housing First model, designed for larger contexts, does not fully account for this degree of island community



proximity, and any Jersey implementation will need its own risk protocols for this small number of complex cases.

## **Not a staffing model, a whole-system redesign**

It is tempting to frame the central operational question as: does Housing First require a different type of social worker with a much lower caseload? That framing understates what is being proposed. The stronger and more accurate question is whether Housing First requires a different way of organising services altogether. Housing First is not a staffing model; it is a whole-system redesign: the evidence set out in the companion paper indicates that Housing First is fundamentally a multidisciplinary, relationship-based model of care, not a housing programme with support added on. The justification for smaller caseloads is not that one role is different from another; it is that the intervention itself is different in kind.

This distinction has a practical consequence for how the model would sit within Jersey's regulatory framework. Support delivered to tenants in their own homes, where it amounts to personal support or care provided as part of a professional programme, is likely to meet the definition of a home care service under the [Regulation of Care \(Jersey\) Law 2014](#), the law under which the Health and Social Care Commission, operating as the [Jersey Care Commission](#), registers and inspects health and social care provision. It would be for the Commission itself to confirm whether a Housing First support service, as designed, falls within this definition and therefore requires registration; some professional support arrangements are excepted, and this cannot be settled definitively in advance of that discussion. If it does apply, providers and managers would need to register with the Commission, which may then impose conditions on the minimum numbers, qualifications and training of the workers delivering the service. Staffing levels for Housing First would therefore not simply be a matter of policy preference to be settled later; they would need to satisfy a statutory registration and inspection regime built around the nature of the service itself, which reinforces the case that this is a question of service design rather than establishment numbers.

Framed this way, the question for Ministers is not “why should one worker have eight clients rather than forty?” but “what type of service are we trying to create, and what staffing model does that require?” The second framing is both more accurate to the evidence and more likely to withstand scrutiny. A detailed staffing model and its costs are properly the subject of a business case once a decision is taken to proceed to a funded pilot; this paper sets out the scale and shape of that requirement, not a finished establishment.

## **Three structural constraints**

The key question for Jersey is not whether Housing First works in principle (that question is addressed in the companion paper), but whether the island can credibly resource the three-legged stool of housing, health, and social services that the model requires. Engagement



data show Adult Mental Health (17%) and the Alcohol and Drugs Service (13%) are among the most regularly accessed external services by people who find themselves homeless.

A further issue runs beneath all three legs: Jersey currently lacks the integrated cross-departmental cost data needed to model the full public-sector impact of adopting Housing First. The Jersey Homelessness Strategy 2020 identified this gap. International evidence<sup>12</sup> provides a strong prior expectation of net benefit. These figures cannot yet be mapped directly onto Jersey's cost base, because the data required to do so – cross-departmental expenditure on health, justice, social security, and temporary accommodation attributable to homelessness – are not collected in an integrated form. A Jersey-specific cost-benefit scoping study would need to be commissioned in parallel with any pilot programme (see Appendix D), designed to establish current cross-departmental costs, model projected benefits at pilot and programme scale, and provide a transparent evidence base for investment decisions. The pilot should be designed from the outset to generate the cost data this study will require.

## The housing leg

Andium Homes has delivered more than 1,400 new homes since 2014 and reports a further 583 homes under construction or planned. Despite this expansion, demand for affordable housing remains significant. In a September 2025 response to a written question in the States Assembly, former Housing Minister Sam Mézec reported that 649 households were registered with the Affordable Housing Gateway and stated that Band 1 applicants, those assessed as being homeless or at immediate risk of homelessness, waited an average of 2.9 years to be housed. However, more recent Gateway statistics suggest that waiting times vary considerably depending on circumstances and applicant type. The June 2026 Gateway report noted that many Band 1 applications relate to existing social housing tenants seeking transfers, including household downsizers, and stated that high-priority and homeless applicants are often offered accommodation within weeks. The same report recorded 696 active applicants on the Gateway, illustrating the continuing pressure on Jersey's affordable housing system.

The new Residential Tenancy (Jersey) Amendment Law 2025 introduces periodic tenancies as standard in the private rental sector, fairer grounds for possession, and controlled rent reviews. These measures may reduce eviction-driven homelessness over time, particularly for more stable tenants, but it is unclear what impact they will have on the hard-to-house and the most vulnerable. It is also unclear what impact the new law will have on rental supply and rent inflation. These new measures do not apply to houses in multiple occupation (lodging houses), so if supply in the private rented sector contracts and it becomes more difficult for the most vulnerable to secure a private tenancy, there is likely to be increased demand for lodging house accommodation, which in aggregate will be rental price inflationary.



Eligibility for social housing has been progressively widened, with the minimum age reduced to 18. These are meaningful reforms, but the fundamental supply-demand imbalance persists.

## The health and social services legs

The complex needs team, essential infrastructure for any Housing First model, is still being established, with current efforts focused on improving “collaboration with health, justice and social care services to deliver integrated housing and support.” Jersey Talking Therapies, the Alcohol and Drugs Service, and Adult Mental Health services are in place. The challenge in moving towards a Housing First model is to develop dedicated, intensive, low-caseload support as required by high-fidelity Housing First, understood as a whole-system redesign rather than a staffing adjustment (see above).

The HAS has expanded its capacity and now provides outreach, personalised housing plans, and coordinated interventions. The Homelessness Cluster brings together government agencies, charities, and social housing providers. Quarterly ministerial meetings with the Ministers for Health, Children and Families, Justice, and Social Security demonstrate cross-portfolio intent. However, emergency accommodation providers continue to function as medium- to long-term living arrangements: 45% of residents stay for up to six months, 12% for up to twelve months, and 19% for up to two years, indicating significant bottlenecks in move-on accommodation.

## A feasibility test

An incoming Housing Minister will reasonably ask: how many housing units would be needed, from where, over what period, and with what opportunity cost for others on the waiting list and what support workforce? These questions do not yet have final answers, but they can be scoped illustratively, and should be answered definitively before any funding decision, through the business case referred to above.

For an initial, high-fidelity pilot of around 10 to 15 households, drawn from the highest-need cohort (such as care leavers at acute risk, long-term rough sleepers, frequent users of emergency accommodation, and prison leavers):

- **Units required:** 10 to 15 self-contained tenancies. These would most credibly be drawn from a mix of Andium's existing turnover stock (avoiding a claim on the 583-home development pipeline earmarked for the general waiting list) and a small number of leased private tenancies, to avoid directly displacing Band 1 or Band 2 applicants.
- **Opportunity cost:** with 649 people on the Gateway and Band 1 waits already averaging 2.9 years, any unit drawn from the general pipeline has a real opportunity cost for other applicants. This is a legitimate objection and the reason the pilot should



rely on turnover stock and leased private tenancies rather than new-build allocation, at least until the pipeline has grown.

- **Timeframe:** a realistic set-up period of six to nine months to recruit and train a multidisciplinary team, agree referral criteria with the Homelessness Cluster, and identify the first properties, followed by an evaluated delivery period of at least eighteen to twenty-four months, matching the timescale over which the trial evidence in the companion paper shows housing stability outcomes emerging.
- **Support workforce:** a multidisciplinary team of the kind described in Appendix C, sized to keep caseloads below ten per worker, drawing on existing Adult Mental Health, Alcohol and Drugs Service and social work capacity supplemented by new, ring-fenced posts rather than relying solely on new recruitment into an already stretched system.

This is illustrative scoping, not a finished proposal. It is intended to give Ministers, Treasury and Scrutiny a concrete sense of scale before a business case is commissioned, not to substitute for one.

## The language of savings

The case for Housing First is often made using the language of “savings,” and this language needs care. The evidence set out in the companion paper shows that Housing First may reduce avoidable demand on emergency services, shelters, police, courts, prison, health, and social care. That is not always the same as cash-releasing savings. Some benefits are better described as cost avoidance (a cost that does not materialise but was never paid out in cash), reduced future demand, better outcomes, or improved use of public resources rather than money that can be returned to the general reserve or reallocated elsewhere in the current financial year. This distinction will matter to the relevant ministers, because a business case built on assumed cash-releasing savings that do not in fact materialise as freed-up budget will not survive scrutiny.

The UK Government's own cost-benefit analysis<sup>9</sup> of the Housing First pilots in Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, and the West Midlands found that for every £1.00 spent, just over £2.00 was saved through reduced use of emergency services, courts, and custody. Some of this is genuine cash-releasing savings, for example, reduced use of paid-for temporary accommodation. Much of it is cost avoidance spread across multiple budgets – health, justice, and social security – that individually may not see a reduced cash requirement, because demand simply does not materialise, rather than being actively removed from a budget. Jersey's Homelessness Strategy 2020 notes that homelessness increases costs for health care, criminal justice, and social security systems, and highlights the need for improved data collection, but the strategy and quarterly reports do not yet link cross-departmental cost data (see the cost-benefit scoping study proposed above and at Appendix D). International research indicates that Housing First is both more humane and more economical across the public sector, and Jersey is likely to see similar benefits, but a



Jersey-specific study is needed before that can be presented to Treasury as a costed business case rather than an expectation.

The Homelessness Partnership should be recognised for its progress and for defining success. Housing First offers a clear, evidence-based path toward the Partnership's goals of prevention, rapid rehousing, and coordinated multi-agency support. The aim is to provide a unifying approach for housing, health, justice, and voluntary-sector partners.

## Should Housing First be statutory?

### The case for

**Accountability and consistency.** A statutory framework would create enforceable duties that survive changes in government, ministers, and political priorities. Jersey's current approach depends heavily on ministerial goodwill and the informal coordination of the Homelessness Cluster. Crisis, the UK homelessness charity, has argued compellingly that Housing First requires both a universal statutory duty to provide housing and a statutory “duty to support” to protect the coordinated services element of the model. Without a statutory underpinning, there is no guarantee that the three legs of the stool will remain funded in proportion.

**International precedent supports statutory approaches.** Finland's success relied on constitutional guarantees of housing as a right, combined with sustained municipal investment and national coordination. Scotland abolished the priority need test in 2012, creating a statutory duty on local authorities to provide settled accommodation to anyone unintentionally homeless. Scotland has also invested £100 million in reforming the homelessness system, including expanding Housing First as part of a “rapid rehousing” default.

**Protection from political retreat.** Jersey's former Housing Minister stated that “legislation remains a long-term goal” but favoured a “phased approach” that strengthens operational practice first. While this is a reasonable position, it carries risks. Without statutory protection, homelessness services in Jersey remain discretionary. Moreover, the long-term sustainability of public services remains a recognised policy challenge. The Jersey Audit Office has noted that the need for a sustainable healthcare funding model has been recognised for more than a decade, while health expenditure reached £515.7 million in 2024, accounting for 29% of total government expenditure. In a context of growing demand for health and care services, and with many charities already operating at capacity, there is no legal mechanism to protect homelessness-related health and social care services from future reprioritisation of resources or spending reductions during periods of fiscal pressure.



**Driving system integration.** A well-designed statute could mandate the multi-agency coordination required by Housing First, formalising referral pathways from the General Hospital, Adult Mental Health, HMP La Moye, and Children's Social Care. It could require personalised housing and support plans as a legal entitlement.

## The case against

Making Housing First statutory in a context where none of the three legs is adequately funded would risk creating what amounts to an unfunded mandate: a legal obligation the government cannot fulfil.

Scotland's experience serves as both a model and a warning. Despite having a statutory framework since 2012, Scotland recorded 40,685 homelessness applications in 2023 to 2024 and a growing backlog of 31,870 open cases. Glasgow City Council was found in breach of its statutory duty for failing to provide suitably sized accommodation to a family, not through negligence, but because the required housing stock was unavailable (see Appendix B).

**Housing supply constraints.** Jersey's limited land mass and planning restrictions make rapid expansion of social housing more difficult than in larger jurisdictions. While Andium Homes' pipeline of 583 additional homes is significant, Band 1 wait times and the Shelter Trust's report that "the number of service users allocated accommodation with social housing providers remains extremely low" suggest that supply is not yet sufficient to support a statutory entitlement. High-fidelity Housing First requires access to independent, permanent accommodation.

**Health system under pressure.** The health system's structural deficit is not a temporary issue. With costs escalating faster than inflation and a widening future funding gap acknowledged in the government's own budget, dedicating the intensive, sustained clinical and mental health resources that Housing First requires would require ring-fenced funding that has not yet been identified. Introducing a statutory model before this capacity exists could divert resources from existing services and fail to achieve the intended outcomes.

**Risk of embedding immature approaches.** Jersey's understanding of its homelessness population is still developing; quarterly data collection began only in 2023, and the evidence base is still being established. Legislating a model before fully understanding the specific characteristics and service needs of Jersey's homeless population could result in approaches ill-suited to local conditions.

**Fidelity concerns.** Research consistently shows that Housing First services delivered with higher fidelity produce better outcomes, with 80 to 90% housing retention. In a small jurisdiction with limited specialist workforce capacity, there is a genuine risk that a statutory Housing First programme could be implemented at low fidelity, resulting in disappointing outcomes that undermine future support for the approach.



## Legislative sequencing

Rather than treating legislation as a single binary choice, it is more useful to distinguish three timeframes, so that the argument does not fall into the “too difficult” pile by being presented as all-or-nothing.

**Immediate, practical steps (0 to 12 months),** requiring no new legislation: adopt a firm policy commitment to Housing First as the strategic direction; adopt the “no planned discharge into homelessness” policy administratively; commission the cross-departmental cost-benefit scoping study; and begin the Plan-Do-Study-Act pilot described below.

**Medium-term policy development (1 to 3 years):** legislate a statutory definition of homelessness, the first recommendation of the Jersey Homelessness Strategy 2020 and still unimplemented; introduce a statutory duty to assess housing need; introduce a duty on public agencies to cooperate in referral and resettlement; and move third-sector funding to multi-year cycles.

**Longer-term legislative reform (3 years and beyond):** consider a full statutory entitlement to settled accommodation with support, once the housing, health, and social care legs are demonstrably resourced; and undertake the review of the Control of Housing and Work (Jersey) Law 2012 described above, to examine whether its objectives can be met through a framework that separates labour market management from housing access.

This sequencing keeps the long-term ambition (a statutory right, and reform of the Control of Housing and Work Law) clearly on the table, while making clear that nothing in the short term depends on resolving the hardest and most politically difficult questions first.

## A Plan-Do-Study-Act approach, not simply a pilot

The companion paper's discussion of Assertive Community Treatment shows that effective interventions cannot simply be transplanted from one system to another; outcomes depend on the existing service landscape, implementation fidelity, and local context. That is a strong conceptual argument for a carefully evaluated Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) approach in Jersey, rather than presenting this as a single one-off pilot that either succeeds or fails.

A PDSA approach treats implementation as a cycle of structured learning: Plan a defined, small-scale test with clear metrics; Do implement it, with fidelity to the core principles, for a defined period; Study the results against the metrics, including the cross-departmental cost data described above; and Act on what is learned, adapting the model, scaling it, or pausing it, before repeating the cycle at a larger scale. This suits Jersey's circumstances better than a conventional pilot, because it builds in adaptation and risk control from the outset, rather



than treating the initial test as a pass-or-fail judgement on the whole model. A fuller outline of what this would look like in practice is at Appendix D.

## Ministerial and political risk

Ministers rarely reject a proposal by saying it is “too difficult.” More often they, and the officials and Scrutiny Panels around them, ask a series of specific implementation questions. Anticipating and answering those questions in advance is what turns a policy aspiration into something a cautious minister can credibly endorse.

### ***Can this be delivered with existing resources?***

Not in full, and this paper does not claim otherwise. The immediate steps (policy commitment, the no-planned-discharge policy, the cost-benefit scoping study, and the initial PDSA test) can largely be delivered by redirecting existing capacity as suggested in the policy options below, and a modest, time-limited investment. Scaling beyond the initial test would require new, ring-fenced funding, most credibly identified once the scoping study quantifies current cross-departmental spend.

### ***How much organisational change is required?***

Meaningful, but incremental rather than a single reorganisation. It requires the Homelessness Cluster to move from informal coordination to a more formal referral and case-management structure, and to establish a small, dedicated multidisciplinary team; it does not require restructuring Health and Care Services, Social Security, or Andium Homes as organisations.

Formalising referral and case management does not mean routing every referral through the government's HAS. Third-sector organisations receive referrals from many sources, including self-referral, other charities, schools, health services and family, and that could continue. What needs to be formalised is the point at which someone is identified as being within scope of Housing First; from there, a shared case-management process brings the right agencies around one plan, regardless of how the person reached it.

The same logic applies to which organisations are expected to change. Jersey's third sector is not a single body that government funds or can restructure. Charities differ widely in size, governance and funding; for example, JAYF receives no core government funding, relying instead on grants such as those from Jersey Community Foundation and on independent fundraising. What could be asked of them is participation in a shared referral and case-management protocol, not a change to how they are funded or governed, which is the same basis on which Health and Care Services, Social Security and Andium Homes are expected to take part.

### ***Who would lead it?***

Housing First is, at heart, a housing issue, and the housing minister is the natural lead, working through the existing Homelessness Cluster and with clear, formal commitments



from the Ministers for Health, Social Security, Children and Families, and Justice. This is set out further in the policy options below.

### ***What evidence is there that it will work in Jersey?***

None yet, directly, and this paper does not overclaim that it does. The international evidence set out in the companion paper is strong for housing stability and encouraging but context-dependent for cost-effectiveness. The purpose of the PDSA approach is precisely to generate Jersey-specific evidence, at small scale and manageable risk, before any larger commitment is made.

### ***What are the risks?***

The principal risks are implementing at low fidelity and producing disappointing results that discredit the approach; committing statutory duties before the housing, health, and social care legs can support them; and drawing pilot properties from the general waiting list in a way that disadvantages other applicants. Each of these is addressed directly in this paper, through the feasibility test, the legislative sequencing, and the recommendation to source pilot properties from turnover stock and leased tenancies rather than the new-build pipeline.

### ***How do we manage the transition without disrupting existing services?***

By building on what already exists, the Partnership Pathway, the Housing Advice Service, and the Homelessness Cluster, rather than replacing them, and by keeping the initial test small enough that it does not draw materially on capacity needed for existing statutory and safeguarding duties.

## **Policy options**

### **Immediate practical steps (0 to 12 months)**

1. **Commit publicly to Housing First as Jersey's strategic direction.** Formally adopt Housing First (in its Jersey-adapted form) as the framework for addressing long-term and repeat homelessness, publish measurable targets, and commit to multi-year funding for the initial test phase.
2. **Commission a cross-departmental cost-benefit scoping study,** run in parallel with the PDSA pilot, to establish current cross-departmental costs and model potential benefits, distinguishing cash-releasing savings from cost avoidance (see above and Appendix D).
3. **Establish a small-scale, high-fidelity PDSA test,** along the lines set out in the feasibility test above: an initial caseload of fewer than ten households per worker, drawn from turnover stock and leased tenancies, with a defined eighteen-to-twenty-four-month evaluation period.
4. **Adopt a firm policy of no planned discharge into homelessness.** Prison, care, and refuge discharge into homelessness should be treated as a policy failure, not an



accepted outcome. Housing status assessment and active planning should begin from the first day of any institutional placement. Outcome indicators should count only stable, long-term accommodation as success.

5. **Formally embed homelessness in the Housing Minister's role.** Responsibility for homelessness in Jersey currently rests with the Minister for Housing, as a matter of administrative allocation and published strategy, not statutory duty. The Minister publishes the Jersey Homelessness Strategy, issues quarterly Homelessness in Jersey reports, oversees the Housing Advice Service, and convenes a quarterly cross-Ministerial forum with the Ministers for Health and Social Services, Children and Families, Justice and Home Affairs, and Social Security. In day-to-day terms this functions as a settled, formal arrangement, which is likely why it can read as already embedded. But none of it is underpinned by legislation. The former Housing Minister confirmed this directly in his January 2026 report to the States Assembly, R.3/2026; former Deputy Sam Mézec set out that legislation could establish clear duties to prevent and relieve homelessness but concluded that introducing it now may be premature. He favoured a phased approach instead and described statutory homelessness duties as a long-term goal of the Jersey Homelessness Strategy for a future government.

This distinction matters more for a Housing First pilot. A pilot of this kind depends on sustained multi-agency commitment: to the Homelessness Cluster, to referral pathways between the third sector and government, and to specific staffing and funding arrangements built up over more than one budget cycle. All of that currently rests on the priorities of whoever holds the Housing portfolio, rather than on a duty that would survive a change of Minister or a change of government. Embedding homelessness formally in law would give a Housing First pilot, and any programme that follows it, a durability that the current administrative arrangement does not provide.

6. **Require all public and publicly supported agencies to publish annually the number of people they have housed or supported into stable accommodation.**

Standardise and extend existing outcome reporting across all public and publicly supported agencies. Some of this reporting already exists: the Housing Advice Service and its partner charities publish quarterly accommodation outcomes, and Andium Homes reports annually on clients housed through the Partnership Pathway. Requiring all public and publicly supported agencies to publish annually, on a common basis, the number of people they have housed or supported into stable accommodation and what that has cost would convert existing reporting into the cross-departmental picture.

## Medium-term policy development (1 to 3 years)

1. **Legislate a statutory definition of homelessness.** This was the first recommendation of the Jersey Homelessness Strategy 2020 and remains unimplemented. It should be



the first legislative step, followed by a statutory duty to assess and a duty to cooperate across agencies.

**2. Work with Andium Homes to fund a proportion of properties for Housing First clients.**

This would formalise something that currently happens informally on a case-by-case basis. At the [quarterly public hearing on 18 December 2025](#), the former Minister for Housing described how, where “somebody's life circumstances are just so unique that just offering them the keys to a standard one bedroom flat in a block of flats might not be the answer for them”, Andium has kept an eye out for more suitable alternatives: “there are not many small one bedroom cottages around, for example, but every now and then that might be a lot more appropriate than a one bedroom flat in a block of flats.” As a result, Andium “dipped their toe in the water on that and acquired a few in the private market with the agreement of myself and the Minister for Social Security to make sure that was sustainable for them”, and, in the Minister's words, “it seems like it has been successful so far.” What this precedent shows is appetite and a working relationship between Andium and government: the acquisitions described are individual, agreed one at a time, with no standing budget or business plan line attached.

Sector partners delivering the current Partnership Pathway also need to be considered. Under the current arrangement, third-sector organisations that have housed people often continue to support clients once they move into an Andium tenancy. The financial burden and the financial benefit fall on different sides of the partnership. If this holds more widely, then improving access for Housing First clients depends as much on making the Partnership Pathway more robust, with clearer, more consistent acceptance criteria for complex cases and a funding arrangement that reflects who is actually bearing the cost of support, as it does on acquiring new or non-standard properties.

Some clients will need a property genuinely outside Andium's standard stock, in the way the December 2025 hearing describes. Others need only for Andium to allocate an existing, standard property to them, provided the support attached to that tenancy is properly funded and the pathway for approving complex cases is faster and more predictable than it currently is. Andium's strategic business plan and return-to-government expectations should therefore recognise two things as part of Jersey's social infrastructure: a funded proportion of properties, including non-standard ones where needed, and a Partnership Pathway whose acceptance criteria and cost-sharing arrangement with third-sector partners are made explicit.

**3. Establish a dedicated Housing First support team on a permanent footing,** commissioned through an existing agency under a multi-agency framework, with structured home-visiting capacity, shared caseload management below ten per worker, and accountability for sustaining tenancies, resourced as a whole-system redesign rather than an add-on staffing role (see above).

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4. **Move third-sector homelessness funding to a minimum three-year cycle.** Annual or short-term funding creates instability, limits workforce investment, and makes the continuity Housing First requires structurally impossible. Funding cycles should include negotiated cost-of-living uplifts.
5. **Embed prevention in policy.** Use early-warning data and referral patterns to trigger action before eviction or homelessness occurs. In cases of hospital discharge, prison release, domestic abuse, and children's services, housing must be addressed and secured early in every at-risk case.
6. **Build the specialist workforce before extending statutory obligations.** High-fidelity Housing First requires dedicated practitioners with small caseloads and long-term client relationships. Government-funded training programmes, recruitment plans, and workforce planning should be in place before any statutory entitlement is introduced.
7. **Invest in resettlement support as a core component of housing provision.** Preventing tenancy breakdown after housing is secured is as important as securing housing in the first place. The outreach programme of the Jersey Homeless Outreach Group (JHOG) and the Women Only Service of the Shelter Trust have made significant progress in sustaining tenancies, particularly in helping residents become good neighbours. This work should be funded as a core element of the model.
8. **Improve access to primary care services for homeless and socially excluded persons.** The primary care clinic at Aztec House functions as a gateway to wider change. A co-located model that brings together support services in a single accessible location would reduce the burden on people who are least equipped to navigate fragmented systems.

### Longer-term legislative reform (3 years and beyond)

1. **Consider a full statutory entitlement to settled accommodation with support,** once the housing, health, and social care legs are demonstrably resourced, informed by the evidence generated through the PDSA cycles.
2. **Commission a review of the Control of Housing and Work Law.** The government should examine whether the objectives of the residential qualification regime can be achieved through a framework that decouples labour market management from housing access, particularly for those experiencing homelessness or at acute risk.

## Conclusion

The three-legged stool metaphor accurately captures the fundamental challenge. Housing First is effective when housing, health, and social services are all appropriately funded and integrated. In Jersey today, each leg is under significant strain: the housing supply pipeline

is substantial, but wait times remain measured in years; health spending is escalating without a sustainable funding model and amid the added pressure of an ageing population; and the complex-needs infrastructure essential to Housing First is still being established.

Making Housing First statutory under current conditions would risk creating a legal right the government cannot fulfil, generating expectations without delivery. However, the opposite risk is also significant. Without statutory protection, the three legs can be quietly defunded, and Jersey's progress on homelessness can be reversed by political change or fiscal pressure.

The strongest policy position is to treat statutory Housing First as a destination requiring deliberate preparation, tested through a carefully evaluated Plan-Do-Study-Act approach rather than assumed on the strength of results from Finland or elsewhere. By international standards, homelessness in Jersey remains relatively small in scale, presenting a genuine opportunity for success. Housing First deserves serious consideration, and Jersey should now undertake the work necessary to determine whether, and under what conditions, it could be implemented successfully: piloting it at high fidelity, building the necessary infrastructure, and legislating in the sequence set out above, when it can credibly resource what the law requires.

There is one long-term structural question that any serious strategy must eventually confront: the relationship between the Control of Housing and Work Law, residency status, and housing access. The case for examining whether the objectives of the current law can be achieved through a framework that separates labour market management from access to housing is compelling and is the clearest long-term test of whether Jersey is prepared to follow the logic of Housing First through to its conclusion.

## Appendix A: the seven principles of Housing First

(Reproduced in full from the companion evidence paper for ease of reference.)

1. People have a right to a home.
2. Flexible support is provided for as long as it is needed.
3. Housing is not dependent on accessing support.
4. Individuals have choice and control.
5. An active engagement approach is used.
6. The service is based on people's strengths, goals, and ambitions.
7. A harm reduction approach is used.

## Appendix B: international comparisons

**Finland.** Constitutional guarantee of housing as a right; sustained national and municipal investment; long-term homelessness reduced by 68% between 2008 and 2022.

**Scotland.** Abolished the priority need test in 2012, creating a statutory duty on local authorities to provide settled accommodation to anyone unintentionally homeless. Invested £100 million in reforming the homelessness system, including expanding Housing First as part of a “rapid rehousing” default. Despite this, Scotland recorded 40,685 homelessness applications in 2023 to 2024 and a growing backlog of 31,870 open cases; Glasgow City Council was found in breach of its statutory duty for failing to provide suitably sized accommodation to a family, because the required housing stock was unavailable. This is the clearest available cautionary case study of statutory duties outrunning housing supply.

**Canada.** The At Home/Chez Soi multi-site randomised controlled trial provided some of the strongest experimental evidence for Housing First's housing stability outcomes and directly informed the Housing First Europe Hub's later work.

**England.** Housing First pilots in Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, and the West Midlands (2018–2023) returned just over £2.00 for every £1.00 spent, primarily through reduced use of emergency services, courts, and custody, with a mix of cash-releasing and cost-avoidance benefits.

## Appendix C: illustrative staffing and team model

This is illustrative only, intended to give a sense of scale for the feasibility test above. A full staffing model and its costs would be developed through a business case at the point a funded pilot is agreed.

| Role                                          | Indicative caseload / coverage         | Function                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Housing First Worker (lead)</b>            | Fewer than 10 clients per worker       | Coordinates the individual support plan; primary point of contact; long-term relationship holder |
| Mental health practitioner (sessional/shared) | Shared across the team's full caseload | Clinical input, crisis support, liaison with Adult Mental Health                                 |
| Substance-use specialist (shared)             | Shared across the team's full caseload | Harm reduction support, liaison with the Alcohol and Drugs Service                               |
| Social worker (shared)                        | Shared across the team's full caseload | Safeguarding, family and social care liaison                                                     |
| Housing/tenancy sustainment officer           | Shared across the team's full caseload | Liaison with Andium Homes, tenancy management, practical resettlement support                    |
| Welfare/benefits adviser (shared)             | Shared across the team's full caseload | Income maximisation, debt and benefits support                                                   |

## Appendix D: evaluation framework (Plan-Do-Study-Act)

**Plan.** Define the initial cohort (10 to 15 households), the housing sources (Andium turnover stock and leased private tenancies), the team (Appendix C), referral criteria agreed with the Homelessness Cluster, and the metrics to be tracked: housing retention, emergency department and hospital use, contact with police, courts and custody, engagement with mental health and substance-use services, and cross-departmental cost data.

**Do.** Implement for a defined period of eighteen to twenty-four months, with fidelity to the seven principles (Appendix A), and with the cross-departmental cost-benefit scoping study running in parallel to build Jersey's own cost base.

**Study.** Review outcomes against the metrics above at defined intervals, monthly in the first year given the higher risk of tenancy breakdown in this period, then quarterly, rather than the six-monthly cycle currently used for the Partnership Pathway. Distinguish cash-releasing savings from cost avoidance in reporting to Treasury.

**Act.** Use the findings to decide whether, and how, to scale the model, which legislative steps in the sequencing set out above to pursue next, and what adaptations (to team composition, referral criteria, or housing sourcing) are needed before a further cycle.

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## Biographical note

Jennifer Bridge MBE is a member of the Policy Centre Jersey's Management Committee and Lead Researcher. She is an accomplished Chair with extensive experience across the creative arts, third sector, and political spheres. Jennifer contributes regularly to public discourse through her columns and articles in local media, focusing on inclusion and open government. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she completed postgraduate studies in research methodologies, which has enhanced her evidence-based approach to public commentary.

Jennifer is a co-leader of Jersey repair café – a community group where volunteers fix broken items like clothes, electronics, and bikes for free, promoting sustainability and reducing waste.