

APPENDIX A

Ref No. PPSMHJ123

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Policies, Procedures and Services

Proposal name	Housing First		
Directorate	Customer Engagement		
Service	Housing Strategy		
Responsible Officer	Vicki Mann		
Proposal planning start	October 2022	Proposal start date (due or actual date)	January 2023

1	What is the purpose of the proposal?	Yes / No	New / revision
	Show which category the proposal is and whether it is new or a revision.		
	Policy	Yes	Revision / continuation
	Procedure	Yes	
	Guidance		
	Is this a service to customers/staff/public?		
	If yes, is it contracted or commissioned?	Yes	Revision / Extension
	Other - give details		
2	What is the business case for this proposal? Please provide the main purpose of the service, intended outcomes and reasons for change?		
	<p>Walsall MBC is procuring for the local delivery of the Navigator (Support Worker) as part of the Housing First pilot in the West Midlands Combined Authority.</p> <p>Along with Liverpool and Greater Manchester the West Midlands has received government funding to pilot the Housing First approach to supporting vulnerable homeless people with multiple and complex needs. The West Midlands allocation is providing funding for Housing First to continue to be delivered across the 7 West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) areas in 23/24, and Walsall Council has secured Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) grant to fund the service in 24/25.</p> <p>The pilots are one of a number of government policy commitments set out in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities 'Ending Rough Sleeping For Good' Strategy September 2022, with the <i>"end goal is for rough sleeping to be prevented wherever possible but when it does occur, it must be rare, brief and non-recurring."</i></p> <p>Housing First is a specific approach to ending homelessness for those with multiple and complex needs. It is aimed at people who are homeless/ at risk of being homeless, providing sustainable tenancies and providing choice-led support and access to services in order to sustain the</p>		

tenancy. The accommodation is not conditional upon the person accepting offers of support or presenting as 'housing-ready'. The support is separate to the accommodation and responsive to the needs of individuals.

Since late 2017 Walsall Council and the existing Provider has helped 103 individuals in the Housing First programme. With programme exits for a variety of reasons, and a significant number of planned graduations from the project, this number has reduced to **50** that are currently supported. It is expected that this number will continue to fall during the life of this contract, as there are more graduations or exits for other reasons. Therefore the Provider should plan to support 50 individuals at the start of the project, and a reducing number over the life of the contract. However the Provider also needs to allow for continuing contact from those individuals who have graduated from the whole programme, including existing graduations at the point of contract start date. The provider also needs to make allowances that a small proportion of those individuals who have previously graduated, or go on to graduate, may need to return into the full service at any time.

The service will:

1. Provide support to help Clients manage their own lives and their home to their full potential including dealing with benefits, budgeting and neighbour relations
2. Provide support to address drug and alcohol needs and access treatment where required
3. Develop and maintain relationships with Clients to enable person-centred support through regular contact including visits to their home and appropriate community settings.
4. Promote and encourage peer involvement within the Service
5. Liaise with other agencies to facilitate access to support including but not limited to Adult Social Care, Criminal Justice services, Physical and Mental Health services, employment and training agencies
6. Support Clients to access community resources
7. The Provider will facilitate access to a personalised fund of (residual funding to be confirmed by the Council), to meet the identified support needs of each client as well as encouraging positive engagement in the Service. The fund can provide for very personal items that will support engagement and meet a specific need / desire e.g. suit for an interview, cinema pass, MP3 player. Detailed records must be kept by the Provider of the expenditure.
8. The provider will facilitate access to a crisis fund (residual funding to be confirmed by the Council) to pay for damage, accommodation essentials, arrears or any other setbacks that occur. Again, detailed records must be kept by the provider of the expenditure.
9. The Provider shall work in partnership with other agencies to ensure that individuals receive a co-ordinated service. In particular the Provider shall work closely with Addiction Service (for outreach and substance misuse services), DWP, GP's, pharmacies, secondary health care provision, the voluntary sector, etc.).
10. Support needs to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year (this may be through an on-call system for evenings and weekends). This will also need to be available to those with accessible needs and a second language to ensure needs are met.
11. Once clients have become more independent the provider will reduce support hours but this will be with the option to re-introduce / increase hours to respond to any tenancy or support issues that arise during the contract period. The end goal is that clients will be able to 'graduate' from the service, either to full independence, or to another support service for less complex individuals
12. The Provider shall work with the local community, neighbours and landlords to manage relationships and support tenancy sustainment
13. The Services will be co-ordinated and tailored to the needs and preferences of Clients; this will include preparing the Client for transition to enable them to live independently

14. The Provider will work proactively to reduce barriers to access services and facilitate community cohesion, which may include (but not limited to) liaising with primary and secondary care, DWP, Jobcentre Plus, local community and relevant agencies.
15. The Provider will be expected to work in consultation with partners, clients, families and friends in the interests of the client
16. Staff will be trained in, and / or have an understanding of, Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) and the Housing First Model and be willing to undertake training and continued development, including PIE training and 12 months reflective practice
17. The Provider will work with other providers who have been commissioned across the West Midlands Combined Authority region to deliver Housings First to share learning, information and to encourage a culture of effective and positive partnership working for the best interest of the Service.
18. The Provider will co-operate with the national evaluation team, regional project board and WMCA to report outcomes, experience and learning from the Housing First Pilot – the aim of the evaluation is to “provide an evidence base on the impact, the costs and benefits of implementing Housing First in a UK context and to provide evidence on the delivery of Housing First.

NB: Housing First related support does not include personal care, however service providers should be able to signpost for anyone that requires personal care.

Service Outcomes/Outputs

The overall outcome of the service will be a reduction in rough sleeping across the WMCA area. In Walsall this will be evidenced through the following outcomes/outputs:

1. Individuals receiving Housing First support will continue to remain housed with no immediate threat of homelessness
2. Individuals receiving Housing First support will see an improvement in their health & wellbeing
3. Individuals receiving Housing First support will experience an increase in independence and where possible and appropriate individuals will graduate from the service
4. Individuals receiving Housing First support will feel empowered to engage with support services and their local community on a regular and consistent basis
5. Individuals receiving Housing First support will identify their employment and training needs and move towards sustainable employment or volunteering
6. Individuals receiving Housing First support will be supported to engage or re-engage in appropriate and supportive relationships with family and friends if appropriate
7. At the end of the Housing First pilot the aim is that majority of individuals supported will have graduated from the programme with individual exit plans, accepting that a minority will need to be redirected to appropriate services with an individual exit plan.

Graduations

The provider will be expected to graduate clients who no longer require intensive support to:

- Be able to manage independently, or ‘stepped down’ to other forms of low level support, including that provided by the Council’s Rough Sleeper team
- In all cases the clients should have the option of contacting the Housing First service at any time, and/or being reaccepted into the service in the event of crisis/need

Exit Strategy

	The Provider will need to work with the Council towards an exit strategy for the potential service close on 31 March 2025 when funding ends.		
3	Who is the proposal likely to affect?		
	People in Walsall	Yes / No	Detail
	All		<p>The model will provide a housing solution to the following groups; service users should have at least two of the following needs in addition to being homeless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrenched Rough Sleepers • Those affected by poor Mental Health • Those with a history of Offending • History of domestic abuse • Those who are serially excluded from services • Those with substance misuse <p>Although these are the main people groups the wrap-around support element will also address issues relating to physical health. For mental health needs this can be self-identified and does not need to meet a clinical threshold.</p>
	Specific group/s	Yes	
	Council employees		
	Other (identify)		
4	Please provide service data relating to this proposal on your customer's protected characteristics.		
<p>Age</p> <p>The 2021 census shows that Walsall has a population of 284,100 of which there are 51500 (18%) are young people aged 15-29.</p> <p>Aged 4-14 - 57,400 (20%) Aged 15-29 – 51,500 (18%) Aged 30-64 -125,900 (44%) Aged 65+ - 49,300 (17%)</p> <p>Most people sleeping rough on a single night in autumn (2021, in the UK) were aged over 26 years old.¹ Of the 50 people still in the programme, the age range is;</p> <p>20-29 Years=5 (10%) 30-39 Years=19 (38%) 40-49 Years=19 (38%) 50-60 Years=7 (14%)</p> <p>90% of rough sleepers involved in the programme are over 30.</p> <p>Disability</p>			

5 people within the programme have a physical disability. According to Shelter, 54% of people with a significant disability (1.8m adults) do not have a safe or secure home, compared with 30% of people without a disability.²

It is difficult to find data around rough sleepers and disability, however, homelessness legislation protects people with disabilities in that the Council must assess whether they are vulnerable and in priority need under the legislation (Section 189 of Housing Act 1996).

Race

Walsall's Homelessness review identified that Just over three-quarters (77%) of people accepted by the local authority as being owed the main housing (homelessness) duty, were of a white ethnic origin. The remaining one-quarter (23%), were from black or other minority ethnic origins. Compared to the overall population of Walsall, for which 81% are of a white ethnic origin and 19% are from black or other minority ethnic origins, the persons of the latter type of ethnic origin have a disproportionately higher likelihood of becoming homeless).

Persons of a white and Asian or Asian British ethnic origin being homeless have increased (by 10% and 36% respectively) during the past five years, where persons from black or black British, mixed, or other ethnic origin have reduced (by 17%, 18% and 100%) during the same time-period.

According to the government snapshot, in 2021, 72% of rough sleepers were UK nationals, which is consistent with the above figure for general homelessness.

Housing First Information at 30th September 2022, shows that of the 48 housed within the programme (previous rough sleepers), 90% were of White British ethnicity, while the remaining 10% were of black or other minority ethnic groups.

Religion or belief

There is a Gap in Service User data to which religion or belief people follow, this has been discussed with equalities and is ongoing.

Gender

According to the government snapshot, in 2021, nationally of the total rough sleepers identified, 24% were female and 76% Male.

Within the programme, as at 30th September 2022, 66% of the rough sleepers were male and 34% were female, which is higher than the national average in 2021.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Confirmation

We as a Council understand that language used in the Equality Act 2010 does not necessarily reflect contemporary community preferences and experience.

The homelessness review did not specifically review sexual orientation or gender Confirmation of homeless applicants. There is no reason to consider that this proposal would have a negative impact upon individuals with these protected characteristics.

However according to Stonewall, Almost one in five LGBT people (18 per cent) have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. This number increases to almost three in ten LGBT disabled people (28 per cent) compared to more than one in ten LGBT people who aren't disabled (11 per cent).³

One in four trans people (25 per cent) have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives, compared to one in six LGB people who aren't trans (16 per cent).³

Marriage, Civil Partnership, Sex, Pregnancy and Maternity

The Walsall Homelessness Review concluded that women are more likely to experience homelessness than men.

Applicant households consisting of a lone parent with dependent children, is the most common household formation, this is followed by one-person households, and then couples with children (a small number of other household formation also are recorded). It is worth noting that there are almost four-times more lone parent households with dependent children than there are couples with dependent children.

During 2016/17, 94.2% of lone parents with dependent children were female, and 5.7% were male lone parents with dependent children. 54.7% of one-person households were female, and 45.2% were male. This confirms that, in Walsall, women are more likely to experience homelessness than men.

Families expecting a child are protected by the homelessness legislation (Section 189 of Housing Act 1996.)

Services for the homeless are provided regardless of marital and partnership status. Single people and couples may not be protected by the homelessness legislation if they are found not to be vulnerable and in priority need. However if they fall into the group where they are classed as rough sleepers, this scheme would have a positive impact giving them support and a home.

1 [Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/research-data-and-analysis/publications/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2021)

2 [17.5 million people now impacted by the housing emergency - Shelter England](https://www.shelter.org.uk/press-releases/17-5-million-people-now-impacted-by-the-housing-emergency)

3. [lgbt in britain home and communities.pdf \(stonewall.org.uk\)](https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/lgbt-in-britain-home-and-communities.pdf)

5	Please provide details of all engagement and consultation undertaken for this proposal. (Please use a separate box for each engagement/consultation).		
	Individual consultations have taken place with service users, to ask, how they have found the existing service, good points, bad points and any recommendations		
6	Concise overview of all evidence, engagement and consultation		
Type of engagement/consultation	Individual Consultation	Date	13/10/22
Who attended/participated?	Previous rough sleepers, engaged and accommodated within the service		
Protected characteristics of participants	Various age groups and genders		
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felt like going around in circles, didn't know who to turn to until meeting Housing First • Positive impact on life, a permanent home, support to help budget and keep tenancy, which is now a lifetime tenancy. • More money to spend on nice things, as having support and a home has helped me to stay off drink / drugs. • Would not be able to cope without the support • Felt unsupported when my worker went on Maternity Leave until rough sleeper team intervened and got me a new housing first support worker • My life has improved since there has been a rough sleeper initiative • Realistically, there is nothing that can be done to improve the service, just to continue with the good work and support 		

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7	How may the proposal affect each protected characteristic or group? The effect may be positive, negative, neutral or not known. Give reasons and if action is needed.			
	Characteristic	Affect	Reason	Action needed Yes / No
	Age	positive	This service is available to rough sleepers irrespective of age.	N
	Disability	Positive	According to Shelter, 54% of people with a significant disability (1.8m adults) do not have a safe or secure home, compared with 30% of people without a disability. ² 5 (10%) People within the programme are being supported that have a disability.	N
	Gender Confirmation	Positive	According to Stonewall, 1 in 4 trans people are at risk of becoming homeless. This would have a positive impact, giving them a safe place	Y

			to stay. This information isn't currently collected and equalities are aware with ongoing talks.	
	Marriage and civil partnership	Positive	Services for the homeless are provided regardless of marital and partnership status. Single people and couples may not be protected by the homelessness legislation if they are found not to be vulnerable and in priority need. However if they fall into the group where they are classed as rough sleepers, this scheme would have a positive impact giving them support and a home.	N
	Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	Families expecting a child are protected by the homelessness legislation	N
	Race	Positive	<p>According to the government snapshot, in 2021, 72% of rough sleepers were UK nationals, which is consistent with the above figure for general homelessness.</p> <p>Housing First Information at 30th September 2022, shows that of the 48 housed within the programme (previous rough sleepers), 90% were of White British ethnicity, while the remaining 10% were of black or other minority ethnic groups.</p>	N
	Religion or belief	Positive	Gap in Service User information discussions with equalities ongoing	Y
	Sex	Positive	Women are more likely to experience homelessness than men.	N

	Sexual orientation	Positive	<p>Gap in Service User information discussions with equalities ongoing</p> <p>Almost one in five LGBT people (18 per cent) have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. This number increases to almost three in ten LGBT disabled people (28 per cent) compared to more than one in ten LGBT people who aren't disabled (11 per cent).³</p>	Y
8	Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative effect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details.			(Delete one) No
9	Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation feedback suggest you take?			
	A	No major change required, however collection of data for Gender Confirmation, religion and Belief and sexual orientation, if in agreement with Service Users.		
	B	Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality		
	C	Continue despite possible adverse impact		
	D	Stop and rethink your proposal		

Action and monitoring plan				
Action Date	Action	Responsibility	Outcome Date	Outcome
	<p>Carry out regular monitoring of servicers users – part of contract qtrly – Children’s/Customer Continue to collect equality data on protected characteristics of those young people who access service to help to inform the development of future services.</p> <p>Key Outcomes are achieved for service user:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals receiving Housing First support will continue to remain housed with no immediate threat of homelessness • Individuals receiving Housing First support will see an improvement in their health & wellbeing • Individuals receiving Housing First support will experience an increase in independence and where possible and appropriate individuals will graduate from the service • Individuals receiving Housing First support will feel empowered to engage with support services and their local community on a regular and consistent basis • Individuals receiving Housing First support will identify their employment and training needs and move towards sustainable employment or volunteering • Individuals receiving Housing First support will be supported to engage or re-engage in appropriate and supportive relationships with family and friends if appropriate • At the end of the Housing First pilot the aim is that majority of individuals supported will have graduated from the programme with individual exit plans, accepting that a minority will need to be redirected to appropriate services with an individual exit plan. 			

Update to EqIA	
Date	Detail

Contact us

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