

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

<b>Proposal name</b>	<b>Housing First Service</b>		
<b>Directorate</b>	Resources and Transformation		
<b>Service</b>	Money Home Job (MHJ)		
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Neil Hollyhead		
<b>Proposal planning start</b>	01/08/2018	<b>Proposal start date (due or actual date)</b>	01/01/2019

1	What is the purpose of the proposal?	Yes / No	New / revision
	Policy	Yes	New
	Procedure		
	Guidance		
	Is this a service to customers/staff/public?		
	If yes, is it contracted or commissioned?	Yes	New commissioned service
	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>Housing First is an approach of moving people experiencing homelessness, who are typically rough sleepers, into independent and permanent housing and then providing additional support and services as needed. Housing First is designed to provide open-ended support to rough sleepers who have high support needs. It uses an individual-led approach and the people using Housing First services exercise choice and have control over their own lives. Housing and support are also separated, i.e. getting access to housing and remaining in housing is not conditional on accepting support or interventions. Service users are also not expected to cease their drug or alcohol addictions in return for accessing or remaining in housing, although the support service will help them access addiction treatment if they choose to engage.</p> <p>People using Housing First services are much more likely to have mental health challenges, poor physical health, long-term limiting illness, addictions, physical disabilities and learning difficulties than the general population. They are often highly socially marginalised, stigmatised and lack social skills to engage in offers of support and community integration. They are likely to be economically inactive and to have histories of contact with the criminal justice system. Rates of problematic drug and alcohol use are also high.</p> <p>The seven core principles of Housing First are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) People have a right to a home</li> <li>2) Flexible support is provided for as long as it is needed</li> <li>3) Housing and support are separated</li> </ol>		



- 4) Individuals have choice and control
- 5) An active engagement approach is used
- 6) The service is based on people's strengths, goals and aspirations
- 7) A harm reduction approach is used.

The Housing First Service will contribute to the Council's priorities as follows:

Economic growth for all people, communities and businesses – homelessness and lack of access to settled and supported housing remains a key barrier to accessing employment, and so the proposed Service can help increase employment prospects

People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities – preventing homelessness and advice and support in maintaining a tenancy can promote independence and can improve mental and physical health and wellbeing

Communities are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion – ensuring that rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping have the right housing to meet their needs, and that they are able to remain in these homes, sustain tenancies and be part of their community

**3 Who is the proposal likely to affect?**

People in Walsall	Yes / No	Detail
All	Yes	Homelessness can happen to anyone, for example, as a result of fire, flood or natural disaster, job loss or financial difficulties or relationship breakdowns. <a href="#">The proposal will also affect those people who experience homelessness and can be rough sleepers.</a>
Specific group/s		
Council employees		
Other (identify)		

**4 Please provide service data relating to this proposal on your customer's protected characteristics.**

**Walsall Housing First pilot**

A full review of Homelessness Services was undertaken in 2017 and a new Walsall Homelessness Strategy 2018 to 2022 was agreed at Cabinet on 21 March 2018. The Homelessness Strategy contains a comprehensive action plan which has a number of key actions including 'the future commission of accommodation and support services for street homeless to be changed to a housing first led service'.

The extent of Homelessness is recorded at the most acute level by the number of people experiencing street homeless. This is monitored by a Rough Sleeper Count which is carried out on a single night in November each year. In Walsall this increased by two-thirds during 2011 to 2016, standing at 26 in November 2016, and then decreased slightly to 20 in November 2017. This year the Night Shelter opened on 13<sup>th</sup> October with an average of 12 rough sleepers presenting each evening.

The Council already has experience of successfully commissioning a locally funded Housing First pilot. In response to the increase in the levels of rough sleeping in Walsall, in November 2017 Money Home Job and Public Health commissioned a Housing First pilot with Accord and whg to provide 25 properties and support for some of our most entrenched rough sleepers. This self funded pilot was commissioned to avoid the entrenched rough sleepers who accessed the night shelter over the winter period having

to return to the streets when it closed on 4 April 2018. This is an 'early action' initiative which was taken by Walsall in advance of the MHCLG Housing First funding for the WMCA.

The Council's existing local Housing First pilot has been complemented by a range of other rough sleeper initiatives. In June 2018 MHJ and Public Health submitted a joint bid for Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding from the MHCLG for 2018-19 and 2019-20 for a range of services to support the Homelessness Strategy and in particular reduce rough sleeping. The bid was successful with £354,000 secured for 2018/19 and an indicative budget of £412,174 agreed for 2019/20.

**5 Please provide details of all engagement and consultation undertaken for this proposal. (Please use a separate box for each engagement/consultation).**

In December 2017 to February 2018, an external consultant was commissioned to deliver a Social Value report for the Night Shelter. This included interviews and case studies with service users some of whom were housed within Walsall's local Housing First pilot. In addition, there has been feedback on an ongoing basis from service users and providers.

There has been a variety of consultation as part of the development of the Homelessness Strategy which the Housing First Service initiative is a key component of:

- interviews were carried out with stakeholders from key council services such as Children's and Adults, housing and support providers, and the voluntary sector.
- a stakeholder questionnaire was sent to 90 individuals, with 20 fully completed responses received.
- the consultant spent a day interviewing 12 service users from our temporary accommodation and street homeless projects.
- a stakeholder workshop on 8th February 2018, which was attended by elected members, third sector, housing associations, key council services

**In 2017 Homeless Links annual report showed:**

**Trends in single homelessness**

- Approximately 200,000 single people experience homelessness in England each year.<sup>1</sup>
- An average of 77,000 single people are estimated to experience some form of homelessness on any one night.<sup>2</sup>
- Between April 2016 and March 2017, 19,460 people who made a homelessness application in England were found to not be in priority need by their Local Authority and the majority of them were likely to be single homeless people. This represents 17% of the total number of households making a homelessness application.
- In 2017, a total of 4,751 people were estimated to be sleeping rough in England on any given night, which represents an increase of 15% since 2016.

**Availability of homelessness services**

- There are currently 1,121 accommodation projects for single homeless people in England.
- A total of 196 day centres currently operate throughout England.
- Homeless England data identifies a reduction in both the number of accommodation projects (-5%) and the number of day centres (-8%) in the past year.
- The number of bed spaces has decreased by 3% in the past year, and now stands at

34,497 in total.

- 39% of the responding accommodation providers reported a decrease in funding, with 38% reporting no change in funding over the past 12 months. 15% reported an increase in funding.

#### **Delivery of services**

- Accommodation providers and day centres provide a wide variety of services to address individuals' needs, and respondents rarely reported that services are completely unavailable.

- People who are homeless face difficulties in accessing mental health services.

- Services provided in-house on an organisation's premises are less likely to have barriers to access than services provided via formal referral to external services.

#### **Outcomes, move on and service development**

- Among accommodation projects, the level of resident engagement is highest for money management activities and for meaningful activities such as sports or art groups.

- Accommodation providers were most likely to report homelessness prevention as their main outcome.

- 74% of accommodation providers continue to support individuals after they move on from their services.

- People accessing accommodation services face significant structural barriers to moving on. Lack of affordable accommodation is the main barrier.

Source: [https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Annual%20Review%202017\\_0.pdf](https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Annual%20Review%202017_0.pdf) (accessed 14/11/2018)

Nine Housing First services were evaluated in this observational study nationally . Data was collected from 60 service users using an anonymised outcomes form, equivalent to 42% of the 143 service users across the nine services. Twenty-three service users agreed to in-depth interviews. Focus groups were held with the staff teams in all nine services, and each service was also asked to complete a 'common point of comparison' questionnaire that explored service philosophy and operation.

- The research is based on 60 people who are homeless and have complex needs and who on average have been homeless for fourteen years.
- 78% of those people were housed as at December 2014
- 59 people had been successfully housed for one year or more by five of the Housing First services, equivalent to 74% of the current users of these five services.
- People also noted improved physical and mental health with 43% of users reporting very bad or bad physical health a year before using Housing First. This figure fell to 28% when people were asked about their current health.
- 25% of service users reported monthly or more regular contact with family prior to Housing First and this increased to 50% after being in the Housing First programme.

Source: <https://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/our-research/housing-first-in-england-evaluation-of-nine-services> (accessed 14/11/2018)

## **6 Concise overview of all evidence, engagement and consultation**

The views of service users and stakeholders gained during the Homelessness Strategy showed a range of opinions about the best way to support a person to recover from being homeless, and also how funding should be prioritised in the future.

An overwhelming number of stakeholders and service users believe the levels of homelessness have increased during the past five years. The large rise in the levels of rough sleeping reported for 2016, explains why most people had this view.

The majority service users and stakeholders agreed that social rented housing is the best housing option for people who are homeless.

Stakeholders and service users hold a similar view that personalised support to live independently is crucial to help people exit homelessness. However, stakeholders gave a lot more priority to resolving debts and nurturing talents, than compared to service users who considered these factors to be a much lower priority. Service users gave much more priority to the housing aspect of supporting people who had been homeless, compared to stakeholders, whom gave much equal priority to all the actors. This suggests that stakeholder awareness of what works in to prevent and relieve homelessness, differs somewhat from those who have had lived experience of homelessness.

Service users and stakeholder opinions differed how homelessness funding should be spent. More accommodation was the priority for service users, with preventing homelessness being least priority. Whereas for stakeholders, preventing homelessness was the most important consideration and more accommodation being the lowest priority. The conception of prevention is common throughout public policy, so this might explain why stakeholders viewed this as a higher priority. This suggests there is a need to inform potential service users of the benefits of preventing homelessness.

Homelessness acceptances in 2016/17 increased by 6% compared to levels in 2012/13. The overwhelming majority homeless applications (81%), resulted in the Walsall Council accepting the main homelessness (housing) duty. The number of people who are experiencing street homeless in the Walsall has increased by two-thirds during the past five years. The local levels of youth homelessness have risen by 47% since 2012/13. In Walsall, young black women with dependent children are disproportionately more likely to experience homelessness than older white single men. Increasing childhood poverty rates along with local higher than average rates of unemployment means it's reasonable to forecast further growth in the levels of homelessness.

**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	The under 35's are a group which are affected by a number of welfare reforms	N

			and receive reduced levels of benefit. They are therefore more likely to be affected by homelessness. The Homeless Reduction Act (2017) is set to improve outcomes for young single people.	
	Disability	Positive	28% of all customers in poverty have a disability (report commissioned JR Foundation 2016) <a href="https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/2016/august/half-people-poverty-are-disabled-or-live-disabled-person">https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/2016/august/half-people-poverty-are-disabled-or-live-disabled-person</a>	Y
	Gender reassignment	neutral	No information is available and so the impact is not currently known.	Y
	Marriage and civil partnership	neutral	No information specific data is available and so the impact is not currently known – The cohort of people from previous years have not been in a marriage or civil partnership and tend to be single.	Y
	Pregnancy and maternity	neutral	No information specific data is available and so the impact is not currently known. Where a	Y

			service user is pregnant consideration is given to the household.	
	Race	Positive	31% of children from Asian and Black backgrounds live in low income households compared to 11% of white households. Black ethnic groups make up 7% of the homeless but are only 2.4% of the resident population.	Y
	Religion or belief	neutral	No information specific data is available and so the impact is not currently known	Y
	Sex	Positive	Women are more likely to experience homelessness than men. However, the information from Nigh Shelter usage to date suggests there is a higher proportion of men (72%) accessing services.	Y
	Sexual orientation	neutral	No information specific data is available and so the impact is not currently known.	Y
<b>8</b>	<b>Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative effect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details.</b>			(Delete one) <b>No</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation feedback suggest you take?</b>			

	A	<b>No major change required</b>
	B	<b>Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality</b>
	C	<b>Continue despite possible adverse impact</b>
	D	<b>Stop and rethink your proposal</b>

<b>Action and monitoring plan</b>				
<b>Action Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Outcome Date</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
November 2018	Continue to collect equality data on protected	Neil Hollyhead	December 2019	Review equality data collated

<b>Update to EqIA</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Detail</b>
<a href="#">Use this section for updates following the commencement of your proposal.</a>	

**Contact us**

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