

Thursday 5th November- Housing First Principles Breakout session

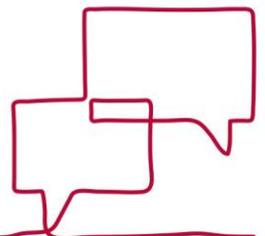
Small group breakout room session 1- shared group feedback

What Housing First means to you?

- Have done lots of different support roles and this feels very different, exciting, re-energised by Housing First.
- It feels very freeing to have a small caseload
- Loads- get to use my skills range to support people
- Very positive about it as a model
- Feeding off energy of Housing First and doing this differently
- Young people and model of HF support - principles are more directed at adult HF. Rock Trust in Edinburgh offer a HF approach for young people.
- Fundamental right to have a home
- Having the freedom to work flexibly
- Home is central to everything
- Help people entrenched in drug and alcohol support issues
- Person-centred approach, therefore we can achieve more.
- Our work is more flexible- not just Monday-Friday, 9-5pm hrs
- Multi-agency working
- Mainly that this offers choice and freedom with clients
- Covid-19 has meant other agencies are working more closely due to increase use of temporary accommodation, but there is resistance internally and externally at times and principles can dilute.
- Caseloads- Northern Ireland are 8 and England 5-6, fidelity assessment report from Depaul explored this

What does Housing First look like in practice?

- A challenge can be engaging other partners
- Have the best service, however without the support of others this can limit the effect of this
- It's inconsistent in practice across the UK
- It's a great practice, however there are challenges- prejudice and stigma against people
- Effect on staff wellbeing of working with challenging groups of people. Wellbeing is at the heart of all frontline workers
- Unconditional positive regard is difficult to maintain at times
- Excitement each day
- There are ups and downs, but the ups out way the downs
- Chaos at times with young people I am working with, used this session to share advice in our group



- Housing First gives me time to do my work and educate other people on this new work
- Gives people a place to be- so they have a foundation
- Refreshing, but have difficult days
- I housed someone after 7 yrs of living in a tent
- Even if you do well, if other agencies are sceptical then resistance can be challenging.
- Be at the client's pace, it takes longer however you have better outcomes in the end
- You encourage, but don't enforce changes

Other discussions

- One group used the time as a way of discussing other more general concerns. This gave people in the group the chance to share learning as a couple of people have newly come into HF roles during lockdown and others have been working in HF for 5 ½ yrs.

Small group breakout room session 2- shared group feedback

What are the main difficulties in carrying out Housing First work?

- Resistance on an organisational side
- Dilution of the principles
- Stigma and client judgement- how their previous behaviour impacts on their access to housing
- Pressure; it is choice based, however not choice led in practice due to limited accommodation offer
- Commissioned services not being understood by other providers
- Not enough social housing
- Practicalities- Covid-19 and people accessing/ opening bank accounts- delay and time
- Barriers with professionals and different agencies- need to have persistence and to get some stuff done
- Certain people being well known to services which puts barriers up for people and judgement on them
- Conditions of services to access them- Mental Health support and support they need to deal with past events/ trauma experienced
- Requirements on people to change
- Non-engagement and the time it can take. Having no judgement can be a challenge
- Inappropriate referrals- Housing First is specialised and therefore specialist, so we cannot take all referrals
- Inappropriate offer of tenancies and how we have had to bypass these- due to being in areas of anti-social behaviour, drug abuse. These just set people up to fail.
- Clients being in areas they know each other- makes it hard for them to change and break away. If they do, there is increased isolation
- Gender issues such as domestic abuse and how we offer choice
- Affordability- under 35yrs Housing Benefit allowance is limited. A lot of properties in Angus are two bed not 1 bed so these aren't affordable
- Covid-19 and people leaving the criminal justice system
- Rurality and working with Housing First- Angus
- Northern Ireland- single identity communities and how religious politics impacts
- Pathways to mental health services

How do you think we can overcome these?

- It's emotionally difficult, we need to have patience, resilience, clear boundaries and check in with others
- Need to have good supervisions, clinical supervisions, debriefs, reflective practice; to enable frontline staff to be in a better place to be able to deal with issues
- Need to understand issues- use a trauma informed approach
- As solutions to common issues, frontline staff feedback how they are addressing these via multi agency meetings/ approaches- flagging these to other agencies.

Useful links from the chat

[Building relationships with social landlords and increasing the housing portfolio for your HF service](#)

[Eligibility and referrals for Housing First](#)

[Homeless Link Housing First conference](#)

[Supporting women in Housing First -](#)

[Housing First in a Covid and Post Covid Wales](#)

[Frontline Network Funding Opportunities](#)

[Homeless Link Covid-19 Resources](#)