**A guide to Housing First for substance use professionals**

This briefing is an introduction to Housing First for substance use professionals, including those who work treatment, recovery and community-based services. For more detailed information visit <https://homeless.org.uk/areas-of-expertise/housing-first/>. For local information, please contact the Housing First service in your area (see below).

A picture containing shape

Description automatically generated

**5. Your local Housing First Service**

**3. Who it is for**

**2. Context**

**4. Housing First and your role**

**6. Supporting the approaches**

**1. What Housing First is**

**7. Next steps**

Housing First was designed for those with substance use issue and is a harm reduction model. In England, [71% of Housing First residents have drug dependency](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1102005/Housing_First_Evaluation_Third_process_report.pdf). International evidence shows 70% of Housing First residents reduced their drug use, with 89% reporting an improvement in their quality of life.

Unconditional access to permanent housing with open-ended specialist support. Housing First adheres to seven key [principles](https://homeless.org.uk/knowledge-hub/the-principles-of-housing-first/), watch [Michelle’s Story.](https://vimeo.com/684255605)

Housing First can support the substance use sector.

* Talk to colleagues about Housing First
* Look at Housing First resources
* Connect with your local Housing First team
* Build partnerships and joint working protocols with Housing First teams

For every [£1 spent on Housing First, £1.56 is saved](https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CSJ-Close-to-Home-2021.pdf), including to Drug and Alcohol services

Housing First ends homelessness for people experiencing multiple disadvantage and tenancy sustainment rates are between 70-90%

People facing multiple exclusion and disadvantage who experience a combination of issues. For many, their current circumstances are shaped by long-term experience of poverty, deprivation, trauma, abuse and neglect.

Housing First uses three key approaches:

1. [Trauma informed care](https://homeless.org.uk/areas-of-expertise/improving-homelessness-services/trauma-informed-car/)

2. [Strengths-Based practice](https://homeless.org.uk/areas-of-expertise/improving-homelessness-services/strengths-based-practice/#:~:text=It%20involves%20re%2Dframing%20the,organisations%20and%20those%20accessing%20them.)

3. [Harm reduction](https://homeless.org.uk/knowledge-hub/supporting-people-who-use-drugs/)

These structural inequalities intersect in different ways, manifesting in a combination of experiences including homelessness, substance misuse, domestic violence,

contact with the criminal

justice system and

mental ill health.

You can read the above resources and seek training to ensure consistency in support.

Substance Use teams have a vital role in supporting Housing First residents at different points in their journey. Key activities may include:

**TO BE COMPLETED BY HOUSING FIRST SERVICE**

Name of service: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lead Contact: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Capacity of service: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Providing flexible appointments and quick access to prescribing services
* Work alongside the Housing First team using Harm Reduction approaches and taking part in joint visits
* Attending multi-agency meetings and provide information and regular updates
* [Peer support opportunities](https://homelesslink-1b54.kxcdn.com/media/documents/Involving_people_with_lived_experience.pdf) for other clients you support to get involved with Housing First services.

Homeless Link 2022. All rights reserved.

Homeless Link is a charity no. 1089173 and a company no. 04313826

Referral information (if relevant):

­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Any other information:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_