

Greater Manchester Housing First Pilot

Introduction

How do we talk about and explain what the pilot is or isn't? The aim of this document is to guide how we all talk about the programme and includes how we talk to people who are on the programme, to our stakeholders across Greater Manchester and even how we describe the pilot to our colleagues in each of our organisations. It is important all staff talk about Housing First and the pilot consistently, **everyone** is an ambassador. Speaking effectively and knowledgeably about the programme builds our reputation across Greater Manchester and our reach and impact on how local homelessness services are delivered and commissioned.

Housing First Facts

Housing First is an evidence-based approach, which uses housing as a platform to enable individuals with multiple and complex needs to begin recovery and move away from homelessness.

The approach is based around seven key principles:

1. People have a right to a home
2. Flexible support is provided for as long as it is needed
3. Housing and support are separated
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.

Unlike other supported housing models, individuals do not need to prove they are ready for independent housing, or progress through a series of accommodation and treatment services.

There are no conditions placed on them, other than a willingness to maintain a tenancy agreement, and Housing First is designed to provide long-term, open-ended support for their on-going needs. Housing First uses a person centred and trauma informed approach to put a person's goals and aspirations at the core of the support provided.

Housing First is designed for a specific cohort of people, it isn't the solution for all forms of homelessness but it has proved internationally to be very effective for the cohort who have experienced multiple rounds of homelessness and who have complex needs and many barriers to accessing housing by other routes.

The Pilot Facts

The Greater Manchester Housing First (GMHF) pilot is one of 3 national pilots funded by the treasury through the Ministry of Homes, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG); the other 2 are in the Liverpool City Region and West Midlands Combined Authority areas. All 3 pilots are the first examples of 'at scale' delivery of Housing First in England. They are being undertaken to prove that the Housing First approach can work at scale in the English context and that it will deliver the high quality outcomes seen in other countries.

The 3 pilots will be evaluated by a consortium of research organisations, which will collect evidence on the performance of the pilots and their outcomes and will use the data gathered to produce a best practise approach to Housing First in England.

The GMHF pilot has been commissioned for three years by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) with the funding from MHCLG. Launched in April 2019 the GMHF pilot is targeting to rehouse 330 people, over the 3 years, who are homeless or at the risk of being homeless across all 10 Greater Manchester Boroughs.

GMHF is a partnership consisting of: Great Places Housing Group (the lead partner); alongside Riverside; Petrus/Regenda; Jigsaw Homes Group; Stockport Homes Group; Greater Manchester Mental Health, The Bond Board, Humankind, Community Led Initiatives, Early Break and MASH

The pilot is co-ordinated by a Central Team led by Programme Lead Emily Cole, supported by Project Manager Mike Hughes, Data Coordinator Charlotte Phillips, Quality and Assurance Manager Daniel Allman and the Housing First Administrator Maria Peavoy.

The pilot was organised into four zones by GMCA and the partnership set up with a lead delivery partner for each zone:

Zone	Local Authority	Lead Delivery Partner	Delivery Partners
A	Manchester	Riverside	MASH
B	Bolton, Bury and Rochdale	Petrus/Regenda	The Bond Board, Early Break
C	Oldham, Stockport and Tameside	Jigsaw	Stockport Homes, Community Led Initiatives CIC
D	Salford, Trafford and Wigan	Great Places	Humankind

Each Lead Delivery Partner has a Housing First team consisting of a Zone Lead, a Team Lead(s) and Housing First Workers (HFW's). Each Team Lead is responsible for 6-7 HFW's, importantly the caseloads of the HFW's is limited to 6-7 referred people to allow for high levels of bespoke support to be delivered.

Housing First targets people who are experiencing multiple needs and barriers that prevent them accessing the support offered by traditional models. The low case load ratio allows Housing First Workers (HFW's) to spend valuable hours engaging, building a relationship based on mutual trust with people who have often experienced complex trauma and have been failed by traditional non-person centred services. The people Housing First aims to help often distrust anyone seen as having authority or representing a statutory service and therefore building trust is critical to being able to deliver successful support.

In GMCA GMHF alongside the A Bed Every Night (ABEN) and the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) and other programmes are working across Greater Manchester, together to tackle chronic homelessness and barriers to accessing services.

The pilot is also designed to effect systems change across the Greater Manchester region, it will work on a test and learn principle with significant amounts of time and effort devoted to analysing performance, successes and failures and to improving processes, practises and policies from these experiences.

We will also undertake outreach and training with services and accommodation providers across GM to build their knowledge of the Housing First approach and to build the local capacity for a person centred, trauma informed approach to services.

In order to leverage this learning and to enable system change we will be utilising the following approach to the structure and actions of the pilot:

Greater Manchester Housing First	<p>Cross sectoral – it's just not about housing. This brings together health, people with lived experience and the community and voluntary sector</p> <p>Equitable - fundamental value of the partnership for the people receiving the service and for delivery partners with a cap on delivery and all frontline staff receiving the same salary</p> <p>Local capacity building – sharing of good practice and training; commissioning new delivery partners as the scale of activity increases.</p> <p>Co-produced – people with lived experience came together with all other sectors to design the model and develop it for</p>
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	GM. High Fidelity - means the service is provided in line with the HF core principles.
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Language

It is vitally important that we all speak about the pilot and its aims using the same language, this is to ensure we deliver consistent messages. We need to avoid using the deficit focussed language, which is often inherent in other services. With this in mind here we have put together some definitions and guidance on the best practice language to use when talking about the pilot or discussing people who we are working with.

Statements of intent

- Support is available for as **long as people need it** – not limited to three years.
- The pilot is proactive and solution focused, we will always look for creative solutions and be open to learning from others and our own experiences of delivering support.
- People supported by Housing First **should not** be referred to as **‘not being ready to be rehoused’** or **‘not housing ready’**. There is no requirement for someone to be ‘ready’ to take on a tenancy. If a person is not able to take on their own tenancy or understand a tenancy agreement then Housing First is not the correct pathway for them and other options need to be discussed with them and the panel/referring agency.
- **No-one is ‘too complex’ for Housing First.** There maybe other routes or services that would be more suitable for a person due to their current needs and it is fine to highlight how there would/could be better and more suitable pathways for a person in an alternative to Housing First, but not to exclude someone because they have too high a level of need or ‘complexity’.
- **Choice and control starts from the referral stage** - If a person doesn’t agree to come onto the programme then this should be raised with the referring panel. People should not be referred because other services don’t know what to do with them or because the referring service thinks it is what they should have or want.
- Housing First is not **the last resort / last chance saloon** for someone and anyone or any other service representative using this language should be challenged. HF is a pathway that works particularly well with individuals who have experienced multiple barriers and disadvantage to being rehoused.
- **Housing First relies on effective multi-agency working.** Housing First is a multi-agency intervention given the multiple and complex needs affecting

people on Housing First close working with partner agencies is essential in ensuring that all of these needs can be met. Partnership work is integral and Housing First acts as the co-ordinator of services to ensure the best possible outcomes for the people we support.

- Housing First takes people who have been excluded from other service provision and supports them to re-integrate into services and the community. Therefore People on Housing First should enjoy the same access to other support services as other people who finds themselves homeless or in need. Exclusion from other services (e.g. food banks, furniture provisions) on the ground that some one is on the programme should be challenged and if required escalated to your Team or Zone leads.
- As the **power of choice is with the person being rehoused**, people can choose where they want to live and each person will have access to a personalisation fund to help make their house a home and realise their goals.
- We work in partnership with the wider providers of homelessness services across Greater Manchester e.g. LAs, CVS, etc.
- We are providing a homelessness service in and for each of the 10 GM LA's that make up the GMCA.
- We will work to influence the agenda of GMCA and MHCLG in order to make sure that Housing First is seen as an embedded, perpetual service for addressing the needs of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.
- Housing First is not a 'panacea' this means that it does not offer a solution for everyone and can not solve homelessness alone. Housing First should form part of a wider strategic response to homelessness and offers one of many options being specifically targeted at people who have experienced multiple disadvantages due to their level of need.

Glossary

- The GMHF Pilot is a **PARTNERSHIP** not a consortium.
- Great Places are the **LEAD PARTNER** not the accountable body.
- Those who engage with the programme should be referred to as **PEOPLE** and not customers or service users or clients.
- People who have been helped into a property should be referred to as **RE-HOUSED** rather than housed.
- The Great Places team (led by Emily Cole) should be referred to as the **CENTRAL TEAM**.
- The other members of the partnership should be referred to as **DELIVERY PARTNERS**.

Talking about the GMHF Pilot



- Other terms of reference are **ZONES** for the groupings of authorities. The lead partner in each zone is called a **ZONE LEAD**.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where does Housing First get their properties from?

The properties for Greater Manchester Housing First come from a number of different sources. A majority of the properties are pledged to the pilot by housing associations across Greater Manchester that form the Greater Manchester Housing Providers Partnership but we are also working with landlords and letting agents in the private rented sector to ensure we have a good flow of properties across the region for the people we are working with.

What support does Housing First offer?

The pilot offers a person-centred support service, which puts the person in charge of their recovery. They have choice and control over their engagement with other services and we put their goals and aspirations at the centre of the support we offer them.

How is Housing First different from other services?

Housing First is aligned to 7 key principles one of which is that people have a right to housing and that people don't need to prove that they are ready to be rehoused or to meet conditions through temporary accommodation in order to access permanent housing. The aim is provide housing as the first step out of homelessness not the last.

What kind of tenancy do Housing First tenants have?

Housing First people are offered exactly the same tenancies as anyone else renting accommodation from a social or private sector landlord. There are not special tenancies and they become tenants of the properties they are moving into, the same tenancy rules apply to them as everyone else.

Does Housing First work?

Housing First is an internationally-renowned, evidence-based intervention, which uses housing as a platform to enable individuals with multiple and complex needs to begin recovery and move away from homelessness.

Unlike other supported housing models, individuals do not need to prove they are ready for independent housing, or progress through a series of accommodation and treatment 'steps'.

There are no conditions placed on them, other than a willingness to maintain a tenancy agreement, and Housing First is designed to provide long-term, open-ended support for their on-going needs. The evidence gained from Housing First projects both home and abroad in terms of tenancy sustainability is compelling. There is evidence that Housing First provides strong and consistent outcomes for tenancy sustainment for a cohort of individuals that have experienced chronic and repeated homelessness and experienced multiple disadvantages.

Rates of housing sustainment from 70 per cent to over 90 per cent have been achieved by various models of Housing First (Pleace and Quilgars, 2013).

High tenancy sustainment rates have also been achieved by Housing First projects in Europe.

The recent evaluation of nine English Housing First projects found that 74 per cent of current service users had been successfully housed for one year or more by five of the Housing First services (Pleace and Bretherton 2015).

What effect does Housing First have on housing waiting lists?

It doesn't have any effect on the waiting list as the people we are working with are not 'new' and would qualify as priority rehousing case. Many have been prevented from accessing accommodation due to structural barriers in the housing system. Housing First is therefore removing the barriers and allowing people to access the accommodation that is their right.

What if the Housing First tenancy isn't working?

There are no guarantees that any individual tenancy will succeed so if a Housing First tenancy is not working well, for whatever reason, we will endeavour to understand why the tenancy failed, to learn the lessons from that and to manage a move from the failing tenancy to a new one. This approach is informed by another of the housing first principles: Housing and support are separate, so support stays with the person regardless of their accommodation status.

What is Co-production?

Co-production is integral to the Housing First ethos and allows for people with lived experience of homelessness and its associated issues to shape and tailor the processes we use and services we offer. This allows us to evolve our services, utilising real life expertise to ensure our services are fit for purpose and remain relevant to the cohort we are working with.

What are the criteria for GMHF? / Who is eligible for GMHF?

People are referred on to the GM Housing First pilot via their Local Authority. The pilot has been set up to work with people who have experienced multiple barriers and exclusions that have prevented them from accessing accommodation and other services (e.g. drug and alcohol, mental health, etc.). In most cases the people being referred have been failed by other approaches to addressing their homelessness and other personal issues, there are no other criteria to being referred. In order to guide decisions on who would benefit the most from a Housing First referral we use the New Directions Team Assessment to understand people's needs and situation.

How do I refer someone to GMHF?

You can contact the local authority in your area who will recommend the best course of action, which could include Greater Manchester Housing First.

More information:

We have more information on our website and a twitter feed providing updates on the pilot:

- <https://www.gmhousingfirst.org.uk>

Talking about the GMHF Pilot



- <https://twitter.com/GMHousingFirst>