

Developing innovative new approaches to working with people with multiple needs, and putting people with lived experience at its heart.

At a Glance **November** 2016

The Manchester Housing First Pilot



Housing First is a radical evidence-based approach to supporting people who have long histories of recurring homelessness to secure and maintain their own good quality accommodation.

Following successful pilots around the world, Shelter with Inspiring Change Manchester (ICM) is delighted to be testing the model in the City of Manchester.

The model is founded on the principle that housing is a human right. Traditional stepped approaches initially offer night shelter and hostel beds to the most vulnerable homeless people and can often be conditional on clients accepting support or altering behaviours.

Housing First on the other hand has shown that, even for those with multiple and complex needs, long term tenancies

can be an option from the outset without linking them to abstinence or conditionality. Taking a person-centred approach, Housing First identifies and overcomes barriers to housing and helps its tenants make lasting and positive changes in their lives once they have the security of a home of their own.

International research indicates the success rate for traditional approaches is around 40%– success being where someone achieves and sustains a tenancy for a year or more. For Housing First schemes the success rate has been between 80 and 90%.

Launched in April, we have so far supported four clients to move into new properties. One of those clients, “Chris”, had been staying on relatives’ couches but was asked to leave because of his drug use. At this point Chris wasn’t engaging with drug services and was facing considerable difficulties with his mental health.

Chris told us about the difficulties he’d been facing as both result and cause of his homelessness. As part of the ▶

Housing First Core Principles

Shelter’s pilot will consider how Housing First, run true to core principles, works in a city like Manchester where we have high demand on social and private rented housing, and increasingly visible street homelessness.

- Principle 1: Housing is a human right
- Principle 2: Choice and Control for Service Users
- Principle 3: Separation of Housing and Treatment
- Principle 4: Recovery Orientation
- Principle 5: Harm Reduction
- Principle 6: Active Engagement without Coercion
- Principle 7: Flexible Support for as Long as is Required

You can read more about these principles on the Housing First Guide website by clicking here.

<http://www.housingfirstguide.eu/website/wp-content/uploads/2016/HFG/Chapter2.pdf>

▶ Housing First pilot, Chris received a personalised financial package to cover a deposit and rent in advance on a new property, and furniture and household goods to make that property a home. An ICM engagement worker met with Chris and established a positive relationship, eventually supporting him to access drug and mental health services.

Chris was also linked in with a peer mentor from Community Led Initiatives, whose mentors have lived experience of multiple and complex needs. The peer mentor struck up an immediate rapport with Chris, talks to him regularly, accompanies him to appointments and the two have recently begun a weekly routine of visiting a local gym and going swimming.

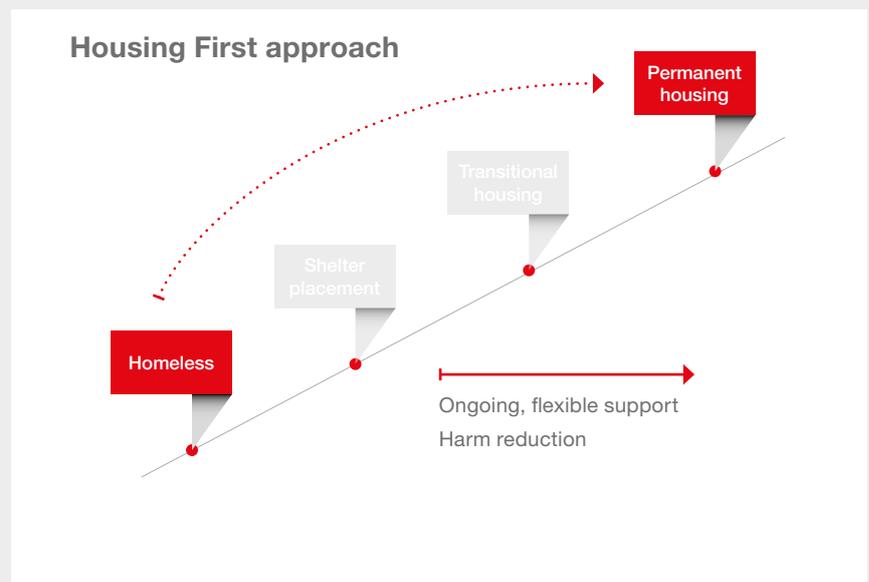
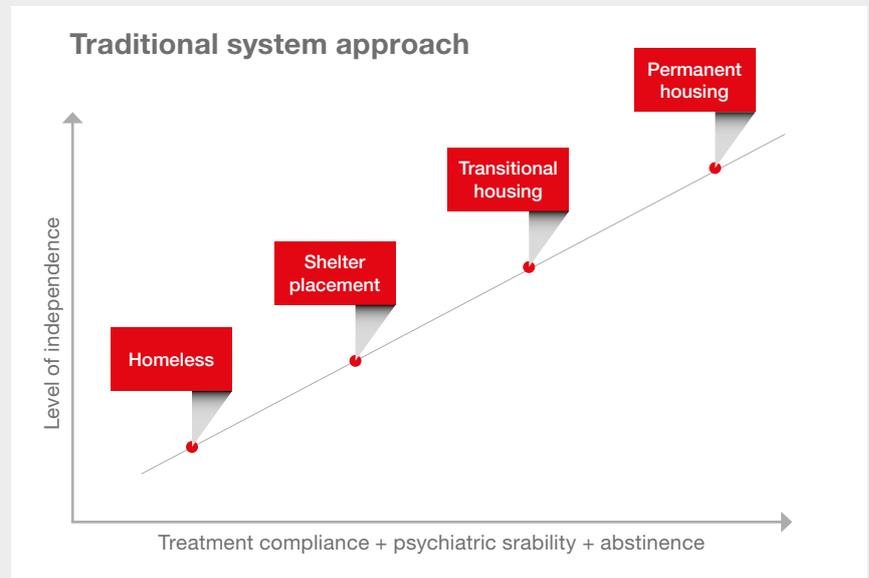
The adjustment to a more settled way of life has at times been challenging for Chris but ICM staff and volunteers have worked with him to help him settle in to his home and community. Chris is now regularly engaging with drug services and has begun seeing a counsellor.

Working with staff and volunteers who have lived experience has made a huge impact on Chris' recovery, he tells us that the mentor has been a really important factor for him – supporting him to get out of the house and do things he would not normally have done.

ICM engagement worker, Jason said *“Maintaining consistency and being non-judgemental has helped to build trust between myself and [Chris]. This means we can be open and honest with each other in the most challenging situations.”*

The Shelter/ICM pilot started in April and will run for 2 years. In that time we are hoping to help upward of 30 people access Housing First. All four people housed so far have been housed in the private rented sector. We have secured buy in from a number of Registered Providers and properties will be made available by local housing associations which will allow us to further test the model in social housing settings.

The Traditional 'Stepped Care' and the 'Housing First' approaches

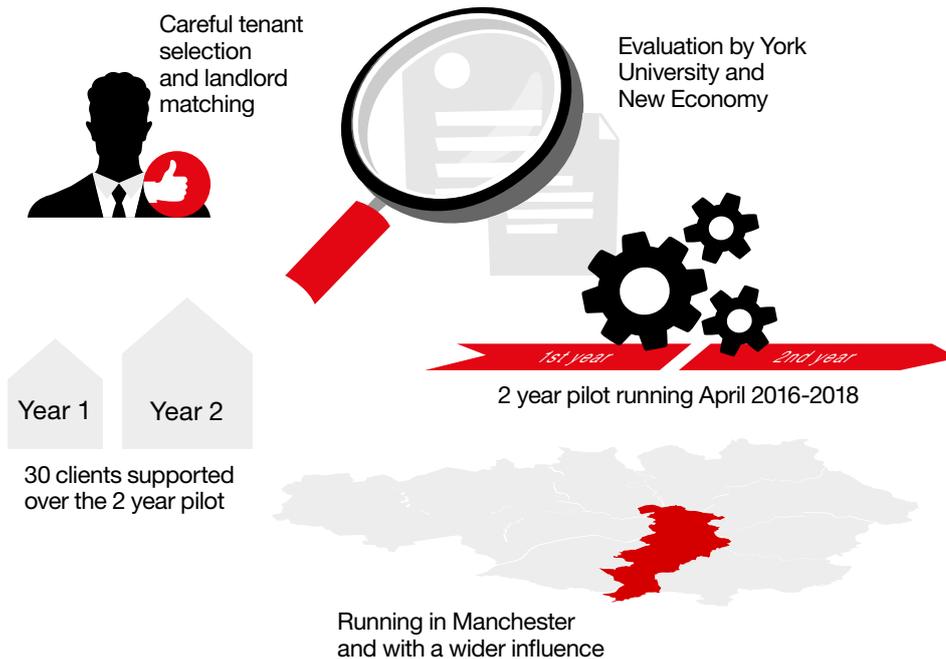


Credit: Sam Tsemberis



ICM engagement worker, Jason Broughton

Our Plans



Our pilot so far – Ben Godfrey, Housing First Development Officer

We currently have 4 tenants housed through Housing First. We're making sure that we're as attentive as possible to people in the settling in period and have arranged support meetings for tenants, bringing together key staff and setting specific goals so that everyone has a clear understanding about where they want things to go. There are also more people coming onto the programme and, at last week's panel, we approved a further 5 new clients for the scheme.

Evaluation

Evaluators from the University of York spent time with people from across the pilot, talking to staff and clients about their experiences of Housing First so far. This was so we build a comprehensive understanding about the programme

Landlords

We're gradually making inroads into the Private Rented Sector and are increasing the number of landlords and agents that we work with. We've had some really positive meetings with housing associations and social housing should start becoming available to Housing First clients over the next month and beyond.

Processes and protocol

Now that the project is almost 6 months in, we've reflected on what we've learned and are currently drafting new processes to make clearer how Housing First can work as part of ICM. These should be ready to be shared by the next monthly update.

And finally...

I was at a client's flat recently and was really touched by some little plastic flowers they had on their windowsill. It's easy to get sucked in to thinking about 'properties' and 'units' and 'accommodation' but it's actually the concept of 'home' that will make the biggest difference to our clients. Here's a photo in case you're into that sort of thing.



Peer Mentoring

'I didn't think he could do it...' says Wayne – one of the peer mentors working with a client on Housing First, 'I thought he'd sell the TV and I'd not see him again...'

Wayne has been working with the client for 3 months. Previously street homeless with convictions for drug offences, he has now been engaging with Inspiring Change Manchester (ICM) for around 10 months. He came to ICM with nowhere to live after running out of sofas to stay on, bereaved following the suicide of his sister and with problematic drug use beginning to attract the attention of dealers and the police.

Ben Godfrey, Housing First Development Officer and responsible for building our relationships with landlords, found him a place to rent and Wayne helped him move in; accessing white goods, furniture and equipment from retailers – and charities... including a new TV. Wayne said that he was apprehensive about giving him something new but, months later, the TV has pride of place in his new house.

We've learnt too. Our first 6 months have taught us about the value of a dedicated housing brokerage post. Ben has been matching tenants and landlords and making sure that both are part of the decision making process.

Also – we now know more than ever of the importance of a continued and wrap-around support and the immeasurable benefit of people developing real relationships with peers who, in turn, link them into what is happening in their locality.

The client, with Wayne's support, has already started talking about their experiences in Housing First and how it has made a difference. 'He can now see that there is a way out' said Wayne. Housing First has given him that perspective and a chance for a different future.

Robert, Housing First

I'm Robert and I've lived in Collyhurst, Manchester for pretty much my whole life. I was born here and I'm in my 40s now. I've not really moved around a lot and so I've seen Manchester throughout the years. I like change and I like to see places get better.

In terms of what's been happening for me, I'd been going through a rough time, for a long time. I'd been living in a hostel and needed help trying to get my own home. I applied for social housing, but I was put in the lowest band which made it impossible to find my own place. I was basically told that it could be many years before I was able to secure a property.

I had no options – I didn't have the means (money, references) to get a private rented tenancy and I was faced with a wait for social housing that might never end. Throughout all that time I'd been living in a hostel surrounded by people who just weren't ready for the change that I was. I spent four years living in that hostel.

After four years I came to Shelter and heard about Inspiring Change Manchester and their Housing First programme which I then became a part of.

Where I am now? I moved into my own place two months ago which is in a quiet street in South Manchester. I rent privately and the landlord leaves me alone. Ben Godfrey, from ICM, has helped me sort out the hot water because that was on the blink at first. Other than that things are great!



In terms of how I am now – things have really changed for me. The most important thing is that I am looking after myself... I'm not dependent on anyone. That means the most. My health is better as well. I'm diabetic and a good diet is really important for me. I now manage to look after my diet properly. When I was in the hostel I wasn't able to cook and clean – it was all shared spaces and poor facilities.

And where am I going? I'm taking it a day at a time at the moment and taking it in that I have my own space and no one can invade it. If there was one thing I could say about Housing First it would be that the people from it are there... They help you. They don't just keep you hanging on. They say they are going to help you and they do. It's good.

Robert has been working with the Inspiring Change Manchester programme since the beginning of 2015, and has been living in Housing First Accommodation since mid-Summer. He is currently in the process of being matched with a Peer Mentor.

Innovation Partnership Fund

Our programme's ambition is to work in partnership with communities, groups and organisations across Manchester because we know that they have the knowledge and experience to make a difference. Our Equalities and Inclusion working group has been co-producing a plan about how that might look and, working alongside external organisations and people with lived experience, have developed an 'Innovation Fund' which you can apply for.

The Innovation Fund will fund up to £500 to wholly or partly fund your organisation to do pieces of work that:

- Engage diverse groups, promoting and facilitating learning,
- Increase access for the most disenfranchised, and
- Address any identified issue causing people with Multiple and Complex Needs to disengage from services or their community.

For information on how to apply or if you just want to learn more about the fund you can read a blog by Amanda, GROW Trainee by clicking [here](#).



Hub address: Inspiring Change Manchester, 20 Swan Street, Swan Buildings (Ground Floor)*, Manchester, M4 5JW

Web: inspiringchangemanchester.shelter.org.uk
Telephone: 0344 515 1615

In partnership with:



Shelter