



**HOUSING FIRST WALES ACCREDITATION**  
**CONWY DENBIGHSHIRE HOUSING FIRST PROJECT**  
**ACTION PLAN FOLLOW-UP**  
**JANUARY 2021**

## INTRODUCTION

This action plan follow-up document should be read alongside the [final report](#) detailing the Housing First Wales Accreditation awarded to the Housing First projects operating in Conwy and Denbighshire. In that report, various actions for follow-up were determined. In most cases, these were to be followed up in a three- to six-month period. We have used the date the accreditation was officially awarded (20<sup>th</sup> August 2020) to calculate the timing to discuss this follow-up report with Susan Stevenson, manager of the projects.

It should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had considerable impact across the housing and homelessness sectors, will have changed the context here. Outstanding actions, or areas where there is still work to be done, will be followed up once the pandemic has become less severe. That said, the status of the actions here **does not** affect the accreditation awarded to the Conwy and Denbighshire projects, but are recommended by the Housing First Network as good practice. The accreditation itself will be revisited in the future according to the documented process that has been developed.

Questions should be sent to [HousingFirst@cymorthcymru.org.uk](mailto:HousingFirst@cymorthcymru.org.uk).

Action	Original outcome	Current situation	Notes and next steps
<p><b>Continue building relationships with landlords</b></p>	<p>Follow up in three months</p>	<p>Landlord forums have been delayed due to the pandemic. However, the team have developed new workshops and presentations that highlight principles for partners. As part of this, the team has created short videos clips of staff talking about how they implement the principles.</p> <p>The team has tried to organise a number of property allocation meetings with housing partners but due to late cancellations, they have all been postponed.</p> <p>Instead, when new presentations are complete, the team will invite each housing partner to a separate meeting to go over it and talk about property allocation numbers as they are low.</p>	<p>The team should continue to deliver presentations and make creative use of resources, like videos and online workshops. Sue to provide Housing First Co-ordinator with brief updates, particularly if/when the COVID situation becomes less difficult, and life returns to ‘normal’; it’ll be interesting to see how these relationships continue to develop in a different context.</p> <p><b>Action: Follow up in April</b></p>
<p><b>Develop PRS pathway</b></p>	<p>Follow up over summer (roughly three months after accreditation work)</p>	<p>Currently, the project has one client in leased accommodation; this route was taken so as not to place the person in temporary accommodation. It has also given the team a chance to engage with a PRS landlord and start building relationships.</p> <p>The landlord seems like a good partner, but the location of the property is not ideal for the client.</p> <p>There is potential for continuing to work with this landlord, even if this client will, ideally, move at some point soon.</p>	<p>When additional and appropriate opportunities to expand access to accommodation through the PRS arise, the team should take them.</p> <p><b>Action: Follow up in April</b></p>

Action	Original outcome	Current situation	Notes and next steps
<p><b>Work with LA and cabinet to influence local lettings policy</b></p>	<p>SS to update on developments</p>	<p>This piece of work was also about creating better links with the PRS, to improve access to housing for Housing First clients. The above action covers this for now, but this point can be explored further in future.</p>	<p>The note above regarding the PRS is relevant here, but it should also be noted that allocation policies are currently be in flux due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, there seems to be a serious lack of properties being made available for Housing First in this case. The team has spoken to contacts in Welsh Government about receiving some support here. This situation needs careful monitoring as time goes on.</p> <p><b>Action: Follow up in April</b></p>
<p><b>Devise exit strategy from current WG funding regime</b></p>	<p>SS to share strategy in June</p>	<p>This is currently on hold due to the team needing to understand how funding released during Welsh Government’s ‘Phase 2’ COVID response has impacted the relevant local authorities.</p>	<p>COVID and the new funding that was released as a result has, understandably, made this situation different. The projects in Conwy and Denbighshire have very recently been awarded their updated funding. The draft Welsh Government budget that was recently published includes an increase of £40million to the Homelessness Support Grant, which combined with Welsh Government’s increased focus on rapid rehousing, as recommended by the Homelessness Action Group, is very welcome. That said, changes to funding regimes means this situation needs monitoring - for example, if Housing First funding becomes part of the HSG.</p> <p><b>Action: Follow up in April</b></p>

Action	Original outcome	Current situation	Notes and next steps
<b>Develop clear HF policy to make clear commitments</b>	SS to share HF policy in May	<p>The team has signed off policies covering tobacco and naloxone, and their place and use within the Housing First projects. A pet policy - which would allow members of staff to bring animals to see clients, using them therapeutically - is in development.</p> <p>This approach of creating more specific, granular policies came about because it seemed that it would be difficult for local authorities to approve a document encompassing Housing First in its entirety. Additionally, these more specific policies might have benefits beyond the homelessness teams.</p>	<p>The team should continue to develop the policies they need to deliver Housing First effectively.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Follow up in April with a view to potentially sharing good practice</p>
<b>Lobby WG around longer-term funding, working with Cymorth when necessary</b>	Project staff to meet with Cymorth Cymru staff and discuss plan	Sue and the team have reported to Welsh Government via six-monthly reports, and continues to make the case for longer-term funding. Cymorth Cymru continue to represent support providers and lobby Welsh Government for appropriate funding when it comes to Housing First. The accreditation process itself makes clear the need for longer-term funding if projects are to align properly with the principles.	As discussed above, the draft budget published recently by Welsh Government includes a £40million increase to the Homelessness Support Grant. While funding regimes need monitoring, this is a very positive development going into 2021.
<b>Continue with landlord forums and presentation development and delivery</b>	SS to update on developments from forums when necessary, including after first meeting in April	As discussed above, these forums are currently delayed due to COVID-19, but the team is developing presentations that can be sent to landlords and can support online workshops.	See first action point.

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Take operational guidance to landlord forums and adapt the document where necessary based on landlord input	SS to update on guidance development and input from forum participants	As discussed above, these forums have been delayed. The team is hoping to make this happen in April 2021.	When forums begin again, it'll be interesting to see how the conversation develops. See first action point.
Put choice log into action, ensuring property choices are still recorded in property allocations list	Follow up on implementation in four weeks, and then after three months for a review of take-up	The various choices made by clients are now recorded in a single log, to ensure everything is captured and lessons are learned, but there isn't too much administrative workload.	The choice log is an excellent, thorough document.  <b>Action:</b> Follow up on use in April, with a view to sharing good practice
Request beat officer to attend operational task group meetings and continue to attend monthly police network meetings	Follow up in three months	Members of the team still attend monthly police meetings. Sometimes a one-sided story about clients seems to emerge, so the team are making sure they have input into such reports.  The operational task group is being reassessed and police will be involved at the appropriate time.	The interesting and concerning point about 'one-sided stories' notwithstanding, this attendance should continue - and members of the Housing First team should continue to advocate for clients and tenants.  <b>Action:</b> Follow up in April
Update support plans	SS to share updated support plans in April	Support plans have been updated, though it is not compulsory for clients to engage with them.	Completed action.

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Complete induction module for staff and have staff take the module; identify suitable counselling training for staff	Follow up in July	Module is still in development.  The team will be given their first clinical supervision sessions in December 2020.	<b>Action:</b> Follow up in April
Put monitoring sheet into action for clients who stay in B&B accommodation; continue work with Housing Officer Forum and delivering presentations to increase awareness as to why temporary accommodation is not ideal for HF	Follow up in three months	Currently, the Homelessness Prevention Team and Public Protection teams complete checks on providers accommodation standards. As things stand, this needs to continue as these agencies hold greater power to resolve issues and, for example, close B&Bs if needed.  As discussed above, the PRS can be used as an alternative to long-term use of temporary accommodation, which the team understands is not ideal for Housing First.	As long as HPT and PP checks are suitable, this seems like the right course. Conversations about temporary accommodation not being ideal as part of HF have already taken place, and the team fully understands this.  <b>Action:</b> SS to continue to work to reduce use of temporary accommodation; follow up in April  <b>Action:</b> SS to continue to work with the local authorities as they develop their phase 2 plans; follow up in April
Recruit part-time MH staff via secondment	SS to update when secondments are successful	This remains difficult. In part due to the pandemic, partners cannot provide the support needed to make this secondment.	<b>Action:</b> SS to continue to find ways of improving access to mental health support for staff and clients; follow up in April

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Lobby WG for additional funding for clinical support for staff	Project staff to meet with Cymorth Cymru staff and discuss roles	Underspent funds have been used to organise clinical support from an outside agency.	<p><b>Action:</b> SS to determine whether this is a sustainable funding model for the future; follow up in April</p> <p><b>Action:</b> SS to explore with local authorities whether the additional funding that has been announced by Welsh Government in the draft budget could cover things like clinical support</p>
Ensure staff are trained in reflective practice	Follow up in six months	The HPT run monthly sessions which Housing First staff are encouraged to attend. However, more work needs to be done in this area. The hope is that staff attending clinical supervision sessions, as discussed above, will work more reflectively as a result.	<p><b>Action:</b> SS to continue to find ways of building staff reflective skills, and encourage them to use these skills appropriately; follow up in April</p>
Have first operational task group meeting in April, and continue to monitor group, ensuring it is fit-for-purpose	Follow up in three months	Once again, the way this group works is being reassessed. In particular, the nature of funding from Welsh Government going forward will influence what needs to be put in place.	<p><b>Action:</b> Follow up in April</p>