



HOUSING FIRST WALES ACCREDITATION

SALVATION ARMY CARDIFF HOUSING FIRST PROJECT

ACTION PLAN FOLLOW-UP

JANUARY 2022

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 project run by the Salvation Army in Cardiff during the summer of 2021. In that report, various recommendations were made to the project. The Accreditation Panel awarded accreditation to the project on the basis that these recommendations would be carried out over a period of time.

In most cases, Alex Osmond, the Housing First and Lived Experience Manager at Cymorth Cymru, was due to assess progress roughly three to six month period; due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, a flexible approach was taken with these timescales. This follow-up report discusses each recommendation in turn, based on conversations with, and documentation provided by, Cath Docherty, Project Manager at the Cardiff service. 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.

Action	Original outcome	Current situation	Notes and next steps
1. Ensure that project documentation is up-to-date and reflects Housing First specifically when necessary	Follow up after several months; Salvation Army Cardiff HF Manager to share documentation	As the accreditation process was going on, various documentation was updated and refined - most significantly, an update to the service specification was developed.	While documentation should still be reviewed and kept up-to-date, for the purposes of this accreditation, this recommendation can be considered complete.
2. Continue to ensure that relationships between support provider and housing association representatives remain strong, and that lessons are learned from serious issues	Follow up after several months	Steering Group meetings involving the support provider and representatives from the various housing associations involved have resumed, and take place regularly. Relationships between housing association staff and frontline Housing First staff, in particular, are being substantially strengthened. Issues provide learning opportunities, as recommended. Recent instances of ASB, for example, have been at the centre of discussions between both 'sides' of the Housing First approach. That said, there have been no serious issues since the accreditation took place.	This is an ongoing piece of work, and Cymorth and the Salvation Army Cardiff can remain in touch about progress. The Housing First Manager at Salvation Army is also committed to using the recently developed 'lessons learned' document within the Steering Group context.
3. Ensure buy-in to, and understanding of, Housing First, is developed in partners but particularly Housing Associations. Work to make sure buy-in remains strong after serious issues	Follow up after several months	See recommendation 2, above.	

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4. Ensure that the role of housing officers, tenancy support officers, and support workers are clearly defined and all have strong relationships	Follow up after several months	In response to this recommendation, as well as the first one - which focused on documentation development - role guidance documentation has been further developed, to more clearly delineate the different roles involved in Housing First provision.	This is an ongoing piece of work, but can be considered complete for the sake of this accreditation.
5. Ensure that reasons for turning a potential client away at Steering Group level are documented, reviewed and robust	Follow up after several months	No clients have been turned away from the project since the accreditation process took place, as has been clearly recorded in the Steering Group minutes.	The Salvation Army Cardiff Housing First Manager remains committed to ensuring access to Housing First is there for those who need it, and clearly documenting this.
6. Continue to work to ensure that the transition between outreach staff and support workers is managed thoughtfully and carefully	Follow up after several months	The project now emphasises a 'whole team approach' to support. This allows clients to build strong relationships with staff, but also reduces stress on individual workers. This seems to have worked well, enabling clients to trust the team as a whole, as well as their assigned worker.	The 'whole team approach' might need to develop as time goes on, and the project management should be aware of this, but for the purposes of this accreditation, this recommendation can be considered complete.
7. Ensure that the active engagement approach is adequately documented, whether in the service specification or separate policies	Salvation Army Cardiff HF Manager to share documentation when completed	During the accreditation process, the project developed documentation focusing specifically on the active engagement and assertive outreach carried out by staff.	All documentation should be subject to ongoing assessment and review, and documentation focused on assertive outreach should be no different. However, for the purposes of this accreditation, this recommendation can be considered complete.

Action	Original outcome	Current situation	Notes and next steps
8. Reflect on religious language in Housing First documentation and consider how it might be interpreted by clients and other stakeholders, reinforcing messages of inclusivity where appropriate	Follow up after several months	<p>Changing the wider organisation's core language is beyond the scope of the accreditation process. However, the team has made an active commitment to ensure that <i>local</i> procedures and documentation specific to the Cardiff project contain no religious language, and that points of difference are identified.</p> <p>A wider EDI Action Plan has is also in development, which aims to foster inclusivity within the project, and to develop associated specialisms within the staff.</p>	<p>This is a vital ongoing recommendation and marking it 'complete' might be unwise. That said, it is clear that the project staff are committed to development here.</p> <p>The topic of active inclusivity should be kept at the forefront of the minds of the team, and there is a commitment to this too.</p>
9. Ensure that lessons learned from cuckooing and county lines incidents are disseminated among all stakeholders	Follow up after several months	<p>A document developed to explain the risks of cuckooing and county lines, particularly aimed at clients, has been shared with Steering Group members.</p> <p>A lessons learned 'crib sheet' is also in development.</p>	<p>Should more incidents occur, lessons should be shared with the appropriate people.</p> <p>Action: Salvation Army Cardiff HF Manager to finish crib sheet; follow up in 3 months</p>
10. Bolster references to protected characteristics and gender across documentation, particularly in relation to support, by listing them fully	Follow up after several months; Salvation Army Cardiff HF Manager to share documentation	As the accreditation process was taking place, documentation was changed to properly include the protected characteristics, and make clear their importance.	The protected characteristics should be considered during day-to-day practice. However, no evidence that this was not the case has been discovered. This recommendation focused on a documentation issue and as such, can be considered complete.

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11. Ensure the project protects its excellent diversionary activities, even in light of COVID	Follow up after several months	An 'activity cottage' has had development work completed. There is also a new activities board in the project foyer, which has enabled staff to more proactively share community based activities.	<p>This is an ongoing action that reflects the quality and strength of the project's work in this area, and the risks that the COVID pandemic has posed to such programmes.</p> <p>As such, there is room for a follow-up action here.</p> <p>Action: Alex to follow up in 3 months</p>
12. Salvation Army Cardiff should, when working with external partners, continue to make the case for Housing First, using evidence from the project and promoting the model, to ensure Housing First clients are prioritised for housing and support	Follow up after several months	<p>Members of the team have been attending cross-party parliamentary groups to emphasise the importance of the HF model in Wales. The Salvation Army Cardiff HF Manager has continued to attend the UK APPG to do the same.</p> <p>Additionally, good practice and development of the model has been apparent in the project's working with other HF providers - in this case, The Wallich - to share lessons learned about harm reduction as an aspect of Housing First.</p> <p>Key external partners continue to attend the Steering Group meetings, and the referral pathway is being developed.</p>	<p>Salvation Army Cardiff HF Manager and members of the team will continue to promote HF in the appropriate fora.</p> <p>Action: Alex to follow up in 3 months</p>

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<p>13. The project should resist when discussions, especially with commissioners, regress away from the Housing First principles, potentially because of COVID. Again, the case for Housing First must be made, and evidence from the project used to bolster use of the model</p>	<p>Follow up after several months</p>	<p>Many of the activities discussed as part of recommendation 12, above, support this recommendation.</p> <p>In terms of additional promotion of Housing First as a model, the Salvation Army Cardiff HF Manager and the team have been involved in the development of a Christmas campaign, focussing on a Housing First client and their story. This campaign will be promoted nationally across social media, and should help to reinforce understanding of the effectiveness of the HF model.</p> <p>It should also be noted that as current Chair of the Housing First Network, the Salvation Army Cardiff HF Manager, Cath Docherty, frequently engages with the Welsh Government agenda, and spearheads conversations crucial to the development of Housing First across Wales.</p>	<p>See recommendation 12, above.</p> <p>The project should continue to advocate the importance of maintaining fidelity to the model.</p>
<p>14. Continue to build and maintain excellent relationships with non-housing partners, encouraging strategic and systemic commitment to providing multi-agency support to Housing First clients</p>	<p>Follow up after several months</p>	<p>The project staff have continued to develop relationships with a range of stakeholders, as well as bolstering existing relationships.</p> <p>One example would be the engagement with the Blood Borne Virus Specialist team at the University Hospital of Wales, a member of which has recently attended project team meetings as well as Steering Group meetings.</p> <p>Similarly, a strong partnership has been developed with Dyfodol (substance misuse service) and local authority staff, with a view to providing a more joined-up and cohesive approach to identifying potential referrals; this also aligns with the idea of taking a more inclusive approach to assessment.</p>	<p>Given the nature of Housing First, and its reliance on organisations and agencies beyond housing, this recommendation could never be considered truly complete. That said, the commitment shown by the project team so far suggests that relationships will continue to strengthen, and new ones will continue to form.</p> <p>Action: Salvation Army Cardiff HF Manager to share relevant documentation and Christmas campaign materials with Alex</p>