



HOUSING FIRST WALES ACCREDITATION

HOUSING FIRST ANGLESEY, LED BY THE WALLICH

ACTION PLAN FOLLOW-UP

JANUARY 2023

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 Anglesey project, led by The Wallich, in July 2022. Within that final report, there were various recommendations made to the project and its partners. The Accreditation Panel awarded accreditation to the project on the basis that these recommendations would be carried out over a period of time.

This follow-up report revisits each recommendation, based on conversations with, and documentation provided by, Joanne Parry, Manager of The Wallich's team delivering the Housing First support.

Some clear next steps are identified below; beyond these, a comprehensive follow-up exercise will take place in three years. This will be a reflective exercise, undertaken by the project and its partners, facilitated by Cymorth Cymru. A subsequent re-accreditation process, signed off by the Housing First Network, will take place five years after the original accreditation.

Questions should be sent to HousingFirst@cymorthcymru.org.uk.

Action	Original outcome	Current situation	Notes and next steps
1. Continue to work to ensure that the quality of accommodation remains to an acceptable level.	Ongoing. Follow up after several months	The Wallich team is committed to maintaining acceptable standards of accommodation. They are continuing to work with Rent Smart Wales to ensure that a client is moving into a suitable and safe home.	This should continue to be a necessary ongoing recommendation due to the important nature of it. The reflective exercise a few years down the line will need to focus in this. However, it is also clear that the Wallich are committed to this recommendation and recognise it as something that should remain as ongoing. Managers should ensure that the team retain this commitment.
2. Work to improve PRS landlord relationships across the board, so potential issues are avoided.	Ongoing. Follow up after several months	The Wallich team currently hold a good relationship with local PRS and understand the importance of maintaining this. Staff from The Wallich have been attending landlord forums in order to keep positive relationships with PRS landlords and to avoid any significant issues.	The Wallich Housing First team will continue to work closely with PRS landlords.
3. Ensure that the absence of conditionality is codified at commissioning level, and that documentation is updated to reflect this while recognising within the documentation that PRS landlord relationships are crucial, and this absence of conditionality does not suggest tenancy issues will not arise and need management (even if no conditions, still need to be aware of tenancy issues and how to manage these). All must be aware of the importance of no conditions.	Ongoing. Follow up after several months. Critical recommendation.	Policies and procedures are being updated to reflect the continuing commitment to an absence of conditionality. Meetings with new starters will also include discussion about this concept, to further reinforce this commitment. The commissioning team have also emphasised the commitment to this particular aspect of the Housing First model, and have accepted that language in tendering documentation should reflect this.	The team will continue to build and reinforce commitment to this idea, and the commissioning staff will ensure future documentation linked to Housing First services properly reflects this.

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4. Continue to ensure that the project does not work with landlords not acting in accordance with Rent Smart Wales' legal requirements.	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	This issue was never a reflection of the work of The Wallich's Housing First team, but an issue that manifested occasionally in the local PRS. The team continue to ensure that all partner landlords are compliant with RSW. They would not accept tenancy contracts with any landlord that did not work in accordance to Rent Smart Wales, and therefore those properties would not be considered appropriate for clients.	To continue working with landlords who act in accordance to Rent Smart Wales.
5. Reflect on issues specific to delivering Housing First associated with rural/small town areas, and develop ongoing good practice guidance, informed by other resources where necessary.	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	The team at The Wallich have been reflecting on the ways in which clients within rural areas can be well supported - particularly when it comes to day-to-day support, and particularly in light of the pandemic and its aftermath.	Reflect on issues specific to delivering Housing First associated with rural/small town areas, and develop ongoing good practice guidance, informed by other resources where necessary.
6. Continue to reinforce understanding of Housing First across all stakeholders.	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	The project team continues to attend provider forum meetings. These tend to be well-attended, and doing this supports building of relationships with different stakeholders, as well as being an opportunity to reinforce Housing First principles. The forums tend to be made up of individuals from the local authority and harm reduction team members.	Continue to reinforce understanding of Housing First across all stakeholders.

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<p>7. Review documentation and ensure that project documentation is Housing First-specific and up to date.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Follow up after several months. Critical recommendation.</p>	<p>The project continues to update documentation to reflect fidelity to the Housing First principles, as well as implementing them in practice. The Wallich has recently set up a taskforce group including its various Housing First services, so that they are able to support one another in developing Housing First-relevant documentation.</p>	<p>Anglesey team continue to contribute to taskforce group, and to develop Housing First-specific documentation.</p>
<p>8. Continue to ensure that ‘most in need’ groups are targeted. Consider: those sleeping rough, accessing mental health/substance use treatment, use of temporary accommodation and/or tenancy failures. The Housing First glossary signed off by the Network (found at the end of accreditation reports [LINK: Cymorth Cymru :: Housing First]) contains a definition of Housing First’s target client group. It should be noted that the current, ongoing principle review will be changing principle three, which covers who Housing First is for. That said, the changes won’t change the concept of who can most benefit from the model.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Follow up after several months.</p>	<p>Targeting the ‘most in need’ groups is a key commitment within the Housing First service. The Wallich ensures that referrals go through a single point access route. When looking at referrals, staff work according to the specific criteria of a Housing First client. They consider various factors, from age to relationships to dependents, and more. This ensures the most suitable people are accessing the Housing First service.</p>	<p>It is clear that The Wallich team in Anglesey is committed to working with this recommendation and recognise it as an ongoing commitment.</p>

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<p>9. Ensure there are no time limits associated with support in this project. Housing First support is not time limited.</p>	<p>Some documentation referred to obsolete time limits, which were also discussed in different ways by members of the team. This recommendation was labelled critical to reflect the importance of this principle. Ongoing. Follow up after several months.</p>	<p>The Wallich team understood the importance of there being no time limits. However, staff also acknowledged that an older two-year limit for support might still appear in policy documents produced prior to the service being commissioned as Housing First according to principles endorsed by Welsh Government. Since being commissioned, and the establishment of the Housing Support Grant, there are no longer time limits to a person's support. This has been reinforced for all staff.</p>	<p>Continue to ensure there are no time limits on support, and that all team members understand the importance of this concept.</p>
<p>10. Active engagement and assertive outreach with clients not yet accommodated need to be more coherently documented, potentially in a specific outreach strategy with guidance for staff.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Follow up after several months.</p>	<p>The team in Anglesey is working on strategies to ensure active and assertive outreach is ongoing with clients. Documentation is still an ongoing piece of work. There are plans to set up a task force in early 2023 to work on this and other documentation. (This task force is referred to above.)</p>	<p>Continue to work with The Wallich's Housing First task force to develop appropriate documentation.</p>

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11. Ensure staff have the time they need to engage with and learn about clients, over a reasonable period of time, in the best possible way.	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	Staff having the time and capacity to interact with clients is considered an important aspect of The Wallich's service in Anglesey. Staff within the Housing First project have a small caseload to ensure staff welfare but also to ensure that staff can work and engage with the client as much as possible in order to meet their needs. The project's policy and procedure documents allow this to be possible.	Continue to ensure staff have the time to engage with clients, and to manage caseloads.
12. Continue to try and mitigate 'there-and-then' accommodation attitude on the part of clients by managing expectations as part of the active engagement and relationship-building process.	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	The project staff spoke of this in reference to clients having choice and control. Often, clients will have an idea about where they want to live and might expect accommodation more quickly than is feasible. It is also important to be realistic about people's expectations, and to strike a balance between the primacy of client choice and honesty about expectations. They do not expect people to take accommodation if they do not want to but it is also important to work with 'what is available'.	Continue to ensure that client expectations are managed, particularly as part of the active engagement process.
13. Going forward, approaches to outreach should adapt to new post-COVID context, which might involve less rough sleeping (the new version of the principles will make clear that this is the case).	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	The team has been adapting to the changes brought by the pandemic. There are more people in temporary accommodation prior to being housed within permanent accommodation.	Continue to ensure that outreach strategy and practice reflects post-COVID context.

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<p>14. Continue to ensure that staff understand the active engagement model, and fears around client non-engagement are discussed.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Follow up after several months.</p>	<p>There were lots of conversations within the team around engaging with clients but also accepting potential non-engagement as part of the model. There is an acceptance that, to an extent, some engagement is needed to ensure welfare of individuals. However, staff are aware that not all clients will want to engage all the time. Staff fears about disengagement have been alleviated when they understand expectations.</p>	<p>According to the management team, staff in Anglesey appear confident and understand the active engagement model, while learning to accept that clients disengaging at times is part of the Housing First journey.</p>
<p>15. Ensure contract-related outcomes do not conflict with client choice, and that the true Housing First measurement metric, tenancy sustainment, is seen as distinct from other 'positive by-products' - a reduction in substance use, for example. This recommendation accepts that these 'by-products' make tenancy maintenance more likely, and as such cannot be completely separated conceptually.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Follow up after several months. Critical recommendation.</p>	<p>Tenancy sustainment as the key aim of the Housing First model is recognised by The Wallich team in Anglesey. Client choice is integral to the project, but the team is also aware that certain positive outcomes of Housing First support can then positively impact tenancy sustainment over time.</p>	<p>Continue to ensure that contract-related outcomes do not conflict with client choice, and continue to ensure that the team understand tenancy sustainment as the key outcome of Housing First.</p>

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16. Build understanding that harm reduction is a vital part of Housing First.	Ongoing. Follow up after several months. Critical recommendation.	<p>The Wallich's team in Anglesey is continuing to work according to a harm reduction approach, seeing it as a core principle of Housing First. The project continues to have harm reduction meetings over Microsoft Teams.</p> <p>The team recently participated in harm reduction training from the Betsi Cadwaladr health board, including training on needles, as well as support provision from an unmarked van for clients also directed them to the unmarked van that would be available to clients for support. The staff also took part in naloxone training. The health board also showed the process of drug injection, so staff could begin to understand what drug users have to go through.</p>	The training and the regular harm reduction meetings that the project have reflects the commitment they have to harm reduction. The team should maintain this commitment.
17. Ensure that recommendations from the PIE feedback report are carried out.	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	The Anglesey team continues to work with Anthony Vaughan, The Wallich's Head of PIE Operations. Work with Anthony is ongoing and the team is due to meet with Anthony early in 2023, working together to develop PIE further.	The Anglesey team is keen to develop psychologically informed approaches further which shows their commitment to the recommendation. Once the team has met with Anthony, a conversation with Cymorth Cymru and the Housing First Network, to discuss associated potential good practice, would make sense.

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<p>18. Continue to ensure that staff are supported with vicarious trauma through regular reflective practice and psychological support when appropriate.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Follow up after several months. Critical recommendation.</p>	<p>The Anglesey team gave several examples to highlight the ways in which staff are supported with vicarious trauma. Reflective practice sessions are held on a regular basis by a member of staff within the Wallich Housing First team. As well as having structured reflective practice sessions, there is an emphasis on reflection within team meetings.</p> <p>If staff are suffering from vicarious trauma and are struggling with their mental health, then there is a counselling service available as well as ‘self-help tools’ available for staff to use.</p> <p>In order for staff to understand vicarious trauma themselves, the project have made training on vicarious trauma available for all staff should they wish to access it.</p>	<p>The examples that have been given by the Wallich show their commitment to supporting their staff and providing a regular space for reflective practice. This practice should continue, and other opportunities for reflection should be considered as they appear.</p>
<p>19. Continue to develop a gender-informed approach, and think of ways to actively include people experiencing less visible types of homelessness</p>	<p>Ongoing. Follow up after several months.</p>	<p>The team sees this recommendation as important and are committed to ensuring that their service remains inclusive. The project offers training for staff on working with people from the LGBTQ+ community. The ethos and values of the project are about being non-judgemental, and actively listening to people’s wishes.</p>	<p>The Wallich team in Anglesey has shown the ways in which they are committed to being an open and inclusive project for people from all backgrounds. This area will require consistent thought and commitment.</p>

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20. Continue to develop links with VAWDASV organisations	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	The project is continuing to develop their links with VAWDASV organisations and specialist organisations locally. so that clients can access these services, as and when they are needed Most recently, the project has worked with Gorwel and the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre.	The project will continue to develop their relationships with VAWDASV organisations.
21. Continue to ensure that management of project workload and capacity is done carefully.	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	During the time of the accreditation, the project was short-staffed and therefore staff had to have a slightly larger-than-normal caseload; but this was managed carefully. This has since been rectified with new staff members joining the project. Staff on the whole will have a caseload of 5-6 clients. It is important for the management team that caseload is managed carefully for the wellbeing of staff but also to ensure clients are getting the service they need/want.	The project will continue to ensure that workload is managed carefully.
22. Continue to develop relationships with external partners.	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	The project continues to meet with various partners/services and values developing positive relationships with external partners. This is particularly important in order for staff within the project and within external partners know each other and are aware of one another's roles. The project will also attend the vulnerable risk meetings with the police and has therefore developed important relationships with the police.	The project will continue to develop relationships with external partners.