



HOUSING FIRST WALES ACCREDITATION

HOUSING FIRST SWANSEA, LED BY THE WALLICH

ACTION PLAN FOLLOW-UP

JULY 2026

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 Swansea project led by The Wallich. The accreditation was officially awarded in April 2025, with the publication of the aforementioned final report, which made various recommendations to the support provider as well as partner organisations.

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, Karina Winter and Anna Hooper, current manager and previous manager of The Wallich's team delivering the Housing First support, respectively. Some clear next steps are identified below; beyond these, a follow-up reflective exercise will take place in three years, facilitated by Cymorth Cymru's Housing First team, but undertaken by staff at the Housing First service in Swansea. A subsequent re-accreditation process, focusing on major new developments within a service, is currently being planned and is likely to take place roughly six years after initial awarding.

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

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Actions	Original outcome	Current situation	Notes and next steps
1. Make documentation more HF-specific where appropriate. 2. Ensure existing documentation is fit for purpose and reviewed appropriately. 3. Ensure documentation considers both staff and clients as appropriate.	Follow up after several months.	As specified in the accreditation report, actions to amend documentation had already begun. Since then, specific documentation such as the 'working with substance users in community-based services' have amendments had made to ensure specific references to Housing First appear where appropriate. The '<i>Needle Stick Injury Procedure</i>' has been updated to better reflect the process for different circumstances. Regarding specific psychologically informed environments (PIE) documentation, The Wallich's PIE lead told us that PIE is incorporated across the organisation and applied with every person using their services. They have clarified that this means they are able to evidence that PIE is done in practice, and therefore, the documentation does not necessarily need to be Housing First specific. This is made clear in the relevant documents.	Documentation has been shared with us that provides useful information to partners and steering group members about the work that the Housing First project does in Swansea; as such, maintaining and monitoring this good practice should continue.

PRINCIPLE 1:

Actions	Original outcome	Current situation	Notes and next steps
4. Explore ways of sharing good practice and case studies, with the PRS (via the PRS access team where appropriate) and other stakeholders	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	Since the accreditation report, a presentation on the Swansea Housing First project has been completed, which has been shared with partners in different contexts. This presentation, and similar information-sharing material discussed throughout this document, highlights the recent changes to the Housing First principles used in Wales, and discusses how they will impact the practical day-to-day delivery of Housing First, by The Wallich as well as its partner organisations. Suggestions at steering group meetings were made regarding attending team meetings with partner agencies such as RSLs and local authority housing teams. This provides an opportunity for the Service Manager for Swansea Housing First to attend, alongside other Housing First colleagues, and present on their Housing First service. The presentation has also been shared internally with other teams in The Wallich such as the Rough Sleeper Intervention Team (RSIT). The team views knowledge of the principles on a wider scale as being crucial, as clients will interact with other support teams on their Housing First journey. There are further plans to share the presentation with the PRS team in order to build stronger, trusting relationships. Furthermore, the leasing scheme is due to start in the area shortly. The PRS team will manage this. The team hopes that the leasing scheme will help Housing First clients to access private rented accommodation more easily, expanding the pool of potential properties.	The team will share the presentation with the PRS team to educate those on the Housing First model, and how the principles have recently changed and what that means for them and their roles. The team understands the importance of continuing to develop relationships with the PRS, once the leasing scheme is up and running, to provide further housing opportunities for Housing First clients.

PRINCIPLE 2:

Actions	Original outcome	Current situation	Notes and next steps
5. Continue working to build buy-in to, and understanding of, the Housing First model in the local PRS, housing management partners, and other partner organisations - bolstering relationships along the way (CRITICAL). 6. Ensure that all stakeholders understand the importance of accommodation standards, and feel supported in raising issues with accommodation when necessary, as well as in encouraging clients to highlight issues to their support workers.	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	At the time of writing, the PRS team was moving offices, but the aim is to share the presentation discussed above to enhance their understanding of Housing First and the principles. The leasing scheme will aid strong relationships between teams as it provides greater opportunity for clients to access the private rented sector. The Housing First team continue to have positive relationships with Housing Officers, and therefore feel comfortable having conversations when concerns arise over ASB, standard of accommodation etc. An example was given of their working relationship with Caredig, who have been good at managing ongoing ASB concerns. Specific examples were discussed that highlight the strong relationship that exists between the Housing First team and the local authority, which enables temporary accommodation to be used with an element of choice in difficult situations – this is necessary because of housing supply issues. It is acknowledged by the team that the use of TA is not considered to be the ideal solution. However, the use of TA can be, in the judgement of the Swansea team, in the client's best interest at a specific time, from a harm reduction perspective. Client choice is always at the centre of the decisions made, demonstrating understanding of Housing First among the different partner teams. It is clear that clients have no issues in voicing their concerns to their support workers if there are issues particularly related to their property.	Solid plans appear to be in place to work with the PRS team to maintain and build upon an open and honest relationship.

PRINCIPLE 3:

Actions	Original outcome	Current situation	Notes and next steps
7. Continue to ensure that referral process is consistent and fair, while flexible and not over formalised. Decision-making processes should be captured to ensure knowledge is maintained around how and when decisions were made, and who made them. This knowledge will be vital to avoid single-point failure in the event of staff turnover and as processes change in accordance with developments at a national level. Client choice must also be at the centre of the decision. (CRITICAL).	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	It is clear that clients' choice and control is at the core of decisions made, even if there are setbacks during the person's journey. The referral process has always taken a fairly informal approach due to the large numbers of people requiring support. The project did not want to rely on a waiting list, particularly with slow turnover based on the commitment to unlimited support, as it was felt that this might run the risk of setting unrealistic expectations early on. The project also holds good relationships with the local authority Housing Options service. Regular meetings are held with the project to discuss potential referrals, priorities, and who may be suitable for Housing First. The service also works closely with the crisis / outreach teams to maintain contact with potential clients.	It is acknowledged that a section in the 'referral process' document should include a section that emphasises the importance of client choices, so clients can get a better understanding of the support model early on in their support. As such, this will be worked on over the coming months.

PRINCIPLE 4:

Actions	Original outcome	Current situation	Notes and next steps
8. Continue to ensure that clients understand their options when it comes to being accompanied to appointments.	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	Conversations have taken place with staff members regarding accompanying clients to appointments, as some staff have been reluctant to drive clients to appointments. After learning of this reluctance, the Service Manager promptly followed this up within the team meeting to highlight how staff members should evaluate whether it was right and safe to transport clients to an appointment. The safety and risk policies have been reiterated to staff to ease concerns, should there be any. It has been emphasised by the services' management that driving clients to appointments can lead to conversations that may be beneficial for both staff and client. This is often due to the fact that clients feel safer to talk in more of a relaxed setting. Some staff members would prefer to meet clients at appointments. The ultimate end goal for the project is to support a client to travel to appointments independently, but there is no rush to achieve this if a client is not ready. Both The Wallich's Area Manager and the Service Manager reiterated that dynamic risk assessments are already in place to ensure staff safety when it comes to travel. Therefore, if a client is presenting with threatening behaviour, then alternative arrangements would be made to ensure staff and client safety.	Documentation will be reviewed and updated to include more information about supporting clients to attend appointments.

PRINCIPLE 5:

Actions	Original outcome	Current situation	Notes and next steps
9. Continue to ensure that the RSIT continues to work in a trauma-informed way that aligns with HF. Ensure that this continues in the event of staffing changes (CRITICAL).	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	RSIT staff members access the same training as Housing First staff, including PIE training. Both teams work closely together and are in regular contact. All new members of staff have a comprehensive set of induction materials and training to work through as they begin their roles; as such, an understanding of the importance of teams working together, as well as what trauma-informed support looks like, is developed as early as possible.	The RSITs will be learning about Housing First in more detail from the Swansea team, as well as what is expected from them when working with a Housing First client, or a potential one. The presentation materials discussed elsewhere will continue to be delivered to appropriate colleagues and partners, ensuring stakeholders still understand Housing First even in the face of staff turnover. Continuing to do this will also provide 'refreshers' for more experienced members of staff.

PRINCIPLE 6:

Actions	Original outcome	Current situation	Notes and next steps
10. Continue to ensure that client choice when it comes to properties is respected, and at the core of moving into accommodation, without views being imposed on clients; at the same time, honest and transparent conversations about accommodation availability and potential local issues are required (CRITICAL).	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	Many Housing First clients want to live within Swansea town centre. This comes with potential concerns and issues, but client choice is always respected. Staff remain honest about what is available and affordable due to the current housing crisis, as well as likely timelines for moving (which are usually lengthy). Examples were provided of some clients who had to wait longer for properties that better matched their preferences – but they made that choice with clear information from their support workers. The Service Manager receives regular updates from staff about client preferences and where they would like to be, so this information can be promptly fed back to housing options. Temporary accommodation is sometimes the only option, particularly for some clients, for example if there are physical and/or mental health conditions. It is acknowledged that this is not the ideal situation, but is sometimes the only workable option, particularly in the short term. Again, the potential use of TA is discussed honestly with potential clients, clients, and partner organisations.	The commitment to respecting client choice will be maintained within the team and emphasised to partners. The team will also continue to have honest, transparent conversations with the varied stakeholders, including clients, through the history of the service.

PRINCIPLE 7:

Actions	Original outcome	Current situation	Notes and next steps
11. Review initial documentation for clients to ensure language is trauma-informed and takes a harm reduction approach - the 'what we expect from you' section in the core document in particular. 12. Amend the excellent substance use policy to not just apply organisation-wide, but to reflect Housing First as a distinct and unique model across the Swansea service, including partners. 13. Where possible and appropriate, managers and partners to make the case for the effectiveness of Buvidal, contributing to the current national evaluation.	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	Since the initial awarding, the substance use policy document has been updated to highlight the distinct nature of the Housing First model. The Service Manager has also communicated with the project's Harm Reduction Worker to devise ways of supporting the Welsh Government research into Buvidal and its effectiveness. The drug support service that works with the Swansea Housing First team is currently undergoing restructuring. However, support continues from harm reduction staff, who provide timely support and respond to urgent cases swiftly.	The Service Manager is currently in the process of updating additional policy documents to ensure the language used is trauma informed. This includes the initial documentation provided to Housing First clients. This work should ensure the language used is reflective of the harm reduction work that the project does so well. The Service Manager will also continue to work with partner individuals and organisations to develop contributions to the research into the Buvidal rollout in Wales.

PRINCIPLE 8:

Actions	Original outcome	Current situation	Notes and next steps
14. The team needs to undertake more reflective practice, enabled by managers (CRITICAL). 15. Ensure policies about reflection emphasise different forms it can take, to avoid staff perceiving their reflection to be 'wrong' or 'bad'.	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	The project has clearly taken into consideration the importance of making time for both formal and informal debriefs and reflection. Reflective practice sessions are held every eight weeks alongside fortnightly case reviews and team meetings. The value of discussing non-work topics has been recognised within the team, as people will often have things going on in their personal lives they might want to share (without ever being forced to do so). It is clear that staff in the project value time to reflect on work but also having that time to bond with their colleagues. As such, the Service Manager has incorporated work and non-work questions into the sessions, which has been welcomed by staff. This works for the team, as it provides space for reflecting on good practice/challenges within work whilst being able to bond further as a team, getting to know each other on a deeper level, which strengthens their relationships. Staff within the Housing First project have expressed a preference for reflective practice work to be done as a team, with managers present. Other forms of reflective practice are also offered, however. For example, the team have started looking at incident reports and providing a space to debrief after incidents. This is purposefully being made more of a formal process, rather than just a quick 'check-in'. What is more, the Area Manager for Swansea has sent over examples of new online resources that staff have access to on their online portal. These include several documents on reflective practice, and the importance of it within their job roles.	The reflective sessions will continue on the basis described, and can themselves be reflected on, and adapted according to the team's feedback. Use of the online materials will be monitored at an organisational level, and developed according to organisational needs.

PRINCIPLE 10:

Actions	Original outcome	Current situation	Notes and next steps
16. Continue to develop collaborative working relationships with other organisations and agencies, particularly when it comes to substance use (CRITICAL). 17. Continue to work on and build relationships with mental health partners, including the mental health outreach nurse; share lessons learned from developing relationships like this (CRITICAL). 18. Continue to look for ways to overcome issues with partner organisations and dual diagnosis (CRITICAL). 19. Collaborate with partner organisations to ensure that clients receive communications in a timely and empathetic manner.	Ongoing. Follow up after several months.	The team is proud of the collaborative work the organisation does in partnership with substance use agencies, as well as the relationships that have been developed. Partner organisations regularly attend steering group meetings and therefore have a strong understanding of the principles, and the most appropriate way to work with Housing First clients. The Wallich's team is also developing good relationships with the Blood Borne Virus (BBV) service available in Swansea. Both organisations are in the process of formalising these relationships, the hope being to be able to offer BBV screenings to any client at The Wallich who requests one. Partners from mental health services, including the outreach nurse, attend steering group meetings, ensuring they too have a solid understanding of Housing First as a model. They will also attend team meetings in order to have regular updates regarding clients. There is currently a specialist mental health nurse at the Community Drug and Alcohol Team (CDAT) which has not been an accessible option previously. Therefore, all clients accessing support at CDAT now have the option to access mental health support. This is especially important with lengthy waiting times for secondary mental health services in the area. Although the team have the support of the mental health nurse to advocate for clients accessing secondary mental health support, there are clear barriers here that are out of the project's control. It is clear that harm reduction measures have been put in place to provide as much support as possible.	The team should continue their excellent work in developing and maintaining strong relationships with their partner agencies, even when there are barriers. Once a more formalised relationship has been embedded with the BBV service, appropriate shared training would be a positive development, to ensure that all partners understand, to some extent, the work being done by the others. The steering groups will continue to involve partner organisations, building knowledge of the principles and including shared insights.

		Although there is a common challenge regarding 'dual diagnosis' and conflict between mental health and addiction support, the Housing First team are following a strong harm reduction approach to prevent this from becoming a major issue. However, they still acknowledge that this conflict has been an issue previously, with a lack of support to get an assessment for some clients. Their success is largely due to the excellent support from The Wallich's in-house mental health team and the advocacy she provides for her clients. She has also been critical in speaking up for the failures within the system that have prevented clients getting the urgent support that was necessary. The project is clear with partner agencies about the importance of timely communication when it comes to appointments. Although there was one occasion of a client missing an appointment due to lack of appropriate communication, this does not seem to be a regular concern or problem. The only appointments that the team do not have access to (subject to client consent) are hospital appointments, as letters are sent directly to the client. Clients and Housing First support workers will be reminded of upcoming substance use appointments and have regular communication via WhatsApp so if a support worker cannot be there for the appointment, someone else can step in to help.	
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