Crisis

Together we will end homelessness

Housing First Feasibility Study for the Liverpool City Region

Executive Summary

Imogen Blood, Ian Copeman, Mark Goldup,
Nicholas Pleace, Joanne Bretherton & Shelly Dulson,

HGO Consultancy Ltd
HSP Housing & Support Partnership
Imogen Blood & Associates
University of York
Housing First Europe Hub

Together
we will end
homelessness

Housing First Feasibility Study for the Liverpool City Region

Executive Summary

Imogen Blood, Ian Copeman, Mark Goldup,
Nicholas Pleace, Joanne Bretherton & Shelly Dulson,

HGO CONSULTANCY LTD

HSP HOUSING & SUPPORT PARTNERSHIP

Imogen Blood & Associates

University of York

Housing First Europe Hub

Foreword from Jon Sparkes

There is overwhelming international evidence that Housing First ends homelessness. Resettling someone quickly into a long term home with access to the flexible support services that gives them choice and control has shown significant improvements in health and wellbeing, and most importantly leads to people sustaining tenancies. At Crisis we are excited to be part of a project that looks at transforming Housing First in the UK to a default solution for addressing homelessness.

With funding from the Housing First Hub Europe and the Department for Communities and Local Government we have commissioned a feasibility study to look at how Housing First could be implemented at scale in the Liverpool City Region. Whilst highlighting the barriers and successes of the current system, the study has shown there is support for real systems change, to move the City Region to a 'housing led' approach where Housing First plays a central role.

This study was commissioned to ask how Housing First might be taken to scale in the Liverpool City Region, but actually goes much further to demonstrate how it can integrate as part of a wider system that prevents homelessness and also deals with it quickly and permanently when it occurs. This holistic approach has the potential to completely transform the prospects of homeless people today and in the future.

Crisis fully endorses the independent findings of this report and stands ready to assist decision makers and providers in making the proposals a reality. The study has attracted national and international attention and any implementation plan will have the good will and support of experts in Housing First from near and far. We hope this report not only shows the feasibility of how services in the Liverpool City Region can be redesigned to end homelessness but can be used as an exemplar to be adapted in other areas both within the UK and in other European cities.

The success of the project depends very much on political leadership and co-operation across the Liverpool City Region, as well as housing and homelessness sector reform. We do not underestimate the challenges faced to make this a reality. Let us be in no doubt however, that by putting the outcomes of homeless people at the forefront of difficult and complex decisions, the new Metro Mayor, the six Local Authorities, and all the housing support providers in the City Region have the opportunity to end rough sleeping and other forms of homelessness.

Jon Sparkes
Chief Executive, Crisis

Foreword from the peer researchers

We are a group of peer researchers who have personal experience of homelessness, we were invited to be part of this study to help gather information from people who are currently homeless. It was felt that we could better gather this information due to our ability to relate to those individuals because of our personal experiences.

Whilst our findings were mixed there were some recurring themes that came from the people we interviewed. Several of those we spoke to told us that they felt safer sleeping on the streets than in hostel accommodation. The reasons for this included issues around substance abuse, intimidation and impact on people's mental health. Others expressed that they were not given, or able to find the right information about services and when they did find them they were not always relevant or accessible, change included access to social housing.

Our interviews highlighted a lack of faith in the current system for addressing homelessness due to repeated failings and inconsistency.

Our research has led us to believe that the current system for tackling homelessness is not working for everyone. It is clear that the lack of permanent accommodation and appropriate support for people is preventing them from escaping the recurring cycle of homelessness. We believe, if implemented, the recommendations in this report provide viable and realistic alternatives to the current system that would eradicate homelessness quicker and more efficiently.

Dave, Mohamad, Richard and Rose
The Peer Research Team

Foreword from Housing First Europe Hub

The Housing First Europe Hub seeks to promote and support the scaling up of Housing First. This project is an excellent example of how Housing First can be a catalyst for bringing all relevant actors together to reconsider how homelessness can be better tackled, prevented and ended. The Housing First Europe Hub welcomes the work of all those involved in this study and we look forward to using the findings, both in terms of the suggestions and recommendations, and the inclusive methodology, with other partners in Europe. We are eager to follow the Liverpool City Region as it takes ambitious steps forward towards meeting the challenges of homelessness head on.

Juha Kaakinen, CEO, Y-Foundation
Freek Spinnewijn, Director, FEANTSA

Executive Summary

Background to the study

This study was commissioned by Crisis, with funding from the (UK Government) Department for Communities and Local Government and the Housing First Europe Hub. It was conducted by a consortium led by Imogen Blood & Associates and including Housing & Support Partnership, HGO Consultancy, and the Centre for Housing Policy (University of York).

The study aimed to test the feasibility of implementing Housing First at *scale* within the Liverpool City Region (LCR) by:

- Using a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data from LCR to develop, evaluate and propose a model for implementing Housing First at scale within the region;
- Assessing the financial and commissioning implications of making the transition to this model;
- Understanding the local and national policy changes needed to support this model;

The wider learning about the feasibility process itself, and lessons learned for implementing Housing First at scale in the UK and the rest of Europe will be presented in a separate toolkit.

Definitions and principles

Housing First is a system of support for homeless people with high and complex needs which is designed to deliver a sustainable exit from homelessness, improve health and well-being and enable social integration. Housing First uses ordinary housing, such as private rented or social rented flats and is designed to house formerly homeless people with high needs in their own, settled homes as *quickly as possible* and to provide the support they will need to sustain an exit from homelessness *in their own home.*

We are proposing a model in which Housing First is focused on those with high and complex needs, but within a **'housing-led'** system in which all those experiencing or threatened with homelessness are resettled as quickly as possible in their own tenancies, with support to be provided where needed. The whole system should work to the principles of Housing First: this will require significant cultural and system change. The principles are:

1. People have a right to a home
2. Flexible support is provided for as long as it is needed (in the case of those who are initially assessed as needing lower level floating support, this can be increased or extended where necessary)
3. Housing and support are separated
4. Individuals have choice and control
5. An active engagement approach is used
6. The service is based on people's strengths, goals and aspirations
7. A harm reduction approach is used

People have a right to a home

Flexible support is provided for as long as it is needed

Housing and support are separated

Individuals have choice and control

An active engagement approach is used

The service is based on people's strengths, goals and aspirations

A harm reduction approach is used

Our approach

The study ran from February to June 2017 and included the following activities:

- Qualitative research with:
  - 95 professionals from LCR (including local authority commissioners, housing and support providers, and health and criminal justice professionals);
  - 79 diverse people with lived experience (who were interviewed by a team of peer and professional researchers)
  - 8 commissioners, policy officers and operational managers from other parts of the UK
- Analysis of Mainstay data (referral and assessment gateway for commissioned homelessness services in LCR)
- A review of relevant local and national policies and research evidence
- Analysis of the potential costs and cashable savings/ efficiencies from the model.

Current commissioned provision for homeless people

Data from Mainstay identifies that there are 1,511 units of accommodation-based supported housing for people who are homeless across the LCR (2016/17):[1]

- 47% of the total number of units are located in Liverpool, with 25% in Wirral;

1. This includes provision for young people, but excludes family and refuge provision

- 1060 (70%) of the total number of units have 24-hour cover available; and
- 364 (24%) are designated provision for younger people.

The amount and type of commissioned supported housing and the extent to which this is integrated within a wider system of prevention, outreach and floating support varies significantly by local authority.

Demand for services

There is high demand and unmet need in relation to homelessness services, for example:

- In the two-year period from March 2015 to March 2017, 8,848 different clients were assessed by the Mainstay system across LCR.
- Of these, 5,296 (60%) people were placed in accommodation; 3552 (40%) were not.
- On average, 93 **new** rough sleepers are presenting for assessment across LCR each month.[2]

These figures will not include those who are hidden (e.g. 'sofa-surfing' or living as 'concealed households' within other households) and those with no recourse to public funds.

Homelessness assessments in Liverpool City Region

Source: MainStay database March 2015 to March 2017

Usage and outcomes from existing supported housing

The data from LCR suggests that the current supported accommodation system is supporting some people out of homelessness and into more settled housing; but that these constitute a minority:

- There is substantial 'churn' in the homelessness system: 379 people had four or more supported accommodation[3] placements in the past four years: some had as many as ten.
- At April 2017 there were 567 people in LCR living in 24 hour accommodation or supported by rough sleeper outreach services who had been registered on Mainstay for over 12 months.
- According to outcomes recorded on Mainstay, 38% of those individuals placed were supported to move to independent tenancies or long-term supported housing.
- A high degree of consensus that the current homelessness system is not working well, despite the best efforts of many individuals working in homelessness services;
- There are particular challenges within the hostel system for a number of sub-groups of homeless people, especially those with complex needs, but also those who are working, or trying to maintain relationships with a partner and/or children;
- There are a number of tensions at the boundaries between the homelessness system and other sectors, including housing, criminal justice (especially prisons), health and social care and benefits.

Thinking about how the homelessness system could be re-designed, there was generally a positive attitude towards the idea of a cross-LCR approach to homelessness: although some authorities were more cautious than others, pointing out that they would need to be very careful that a regional response worked for them locally.

Homeless people with complex needs

Both the qualitative and quantitative data suggest that there are increasing numbers of homeless people with 'complex needs' presenting and using services in LCR (i.e. problems related to more than one of: mental health, substance use, offending, learning or physical disability):

- There is evidence of high unmet need with nearly one in three of those with the highest complex needs not receiving or accepting an accommodation placement.
- There is evidence of high levels of multiple needs amongst the longer term service users.
- The intensive support provided by Waves of Hope[4] for people with complex needs appears to have relatively high success rates in relation to sustaining this group within accommodation, including their own tenancies.

Professionals and people with lived experience highlighted a number of ways in which current accommodation can be unsuitable for people with complex needs, including:

- The stress of living alongside the other residents;
- The rules and conditions of hostel living;
- The lack of stability and security within a short-stay hostel pathway; and
- The limited mental health, substance misuse and emotional and/or psychological support.

As a result of these challenges and barriers, people with complex needs are at high risk of frequent evictions from hostels, getting 'stuck' within the hostel system, or rejecting services altogether.

Developing Housing First as part of a solution to homelessness

People with lived experience of homelessness told us they thought that support to help people exit homelessness should include:

- Emotional support
- Peer support
- Independence
- Not being judged
- Opportunities for rehabilitation and longer term planning
- Structure and purpose
- A focus on social integration
- A swift and flexible response to people with addictions who are at the right stage in the cycle of motivation

By providing a stable independent tenancy (i.e. your own front door) and holistic personalised support, Housing First aligns well with this list of priorities. By dispersing people within

2. This is the monthly average (mean) of new clients assessed on Mainstay as rough sleepers since the records began. (We have made allowance in this for the phased introduction of Mainstay across LCR). This figure is based on the judgement of the person completing the Mainstay assessment. It is possible that the desire to receive priority for supported accommodation causes over-reporting of rough sleeping at this point.
3. Not all of these moves within supported accommodation are negative. Some moves are a result of being closer to employment or family or going down to a lower level of support.
4. Liverpool Waves of Hope is a £10 million Big Lottery funded project to support people with multiple needs.

5. http://www.home-eu.org/85-percent-homeless-persons-france-keep-home-two-years/
6. Goering, P. et al (2014) *National At Home/Chez Soi Final Report* Mental Health Commission of Canada
7. ARA http://www.ara.fi/en-US
8. Bretherton, J. and Pleace, N. (2015) *Housing First in England: An Evaluation of Nine Services* York: University of York/ Homeless Link

the community, it aims to (re-)integrate homeless people into 'normal' life. Most importantly, since it is not conditional on abstinence or receiving treatment, it treats homeless people like adult citizens with strengths, rights and responsibilities.

There is a convincing international evidence base supporting Housing First. For example:

- 85% of those accessing the French National Housing First pilot were still in their housing at the end of two years[5];
- In the Canadian national pilot, 62% of those in receipt of Housing First were housed, compared to just 6% of those who had received 'treatment as usual'[6];
- In Finland, where Housing First has been integrated within a wider strategy for the prevention of homelessness, rough sleeping has all but ended, and there has been a 23% drop in the total number of homeless people between 2012 and 2016[7];
- Outcomes from the UK pilots of Housing First show that alongside ending homelessness for tenants, there has been a 15% drop in reports of bad or very bad physical health, a 34% drop in reports of bad or very bad mental health and a 50% increase in regular contact with family since becoming a tenant[8].

Housing First as part of an integrated housing-led system reform strategy

It became clear during the course of the research that whilst Housing First will have clear benefits for some people experiencing homelessness in the LCR, what is equally as pressing is wider housing led system reform for the prevention of homelessness.

Without being integrated as a mainstream approach, funding will be precarious; for Housing First to be sustainable in the current financial climate, it needs to be done at a scale and in a way that enables the safe transfer of resources to it from current support commissioning.

Housing First is potentially an intensive, wrap-around, ongoing service designed specifically for people with high levels of complex needs who have experienced or are at risk of long term homelessness. If this service is to be done well and used in a cost effective way, it is important that it is targeted effectively at those who need it.

However, if Housing First is the *only* way to access affordable housing and good quality floating support reliably, there is a risk that it will become overloaded. This means that access to affordable housing and floating support need to be broadened to those whose needs are not so high, and there needs to be strong investment in prevention activity to slow down the rate of newly presenting people.

Although people with lower levels of needs may not need the same intensity of service, they will clearly also benefit from a service response which is based on the same principles of Housing First – i.e. a strengths-based, flexible service which promotes choice and control.

We have identified four key sub-groups of people in the current homelessness system and, in the full report, we present case studies of people who fit within each group:

1. People for whom the current provision is ineffective and results in long-term homelessness – this is where we have attempted to focus the target cohort for Housing First;
2. People who first come into contact with homelessness services after they have lost accommodation which could probably have been sustained had they accessed high quality and timely housing advice and advocacy;
3. People who are offered supported housing because this is seen as the only option- but who really do not need any additional support, they just need access to affordable housing. For some, this is due to restrictions in Property Pool Plus policies, for others it may be due to a lack of affordable, suitably sized and/or accessible housing. In the current system, there is a risk that this cohort will develop higher support needs the longer they stay homeless.
4. People who are largely similar to group three but who do have some need for support or assistance to secure and maintain independent accommodation, probably on a short-term basis to establish themselves in independent accommodation.

The diagrams on page 12 show the building blocks of an integrated homelessness strategy in which, we argue, Housing First should be a part:

Building blocks of an effective integrated homelessness strategy

Housing First

- The offer of intensive, ongoing support in own home
- See the vision below for further details

Floating Support

- Based on Housing First principles: strengths-based, choice & control, etc
- Lower intensity and probably time-limited but enough flexibility to personalise and respond to changing needs
- Good signposting and links with mentoring, ETE, etc.

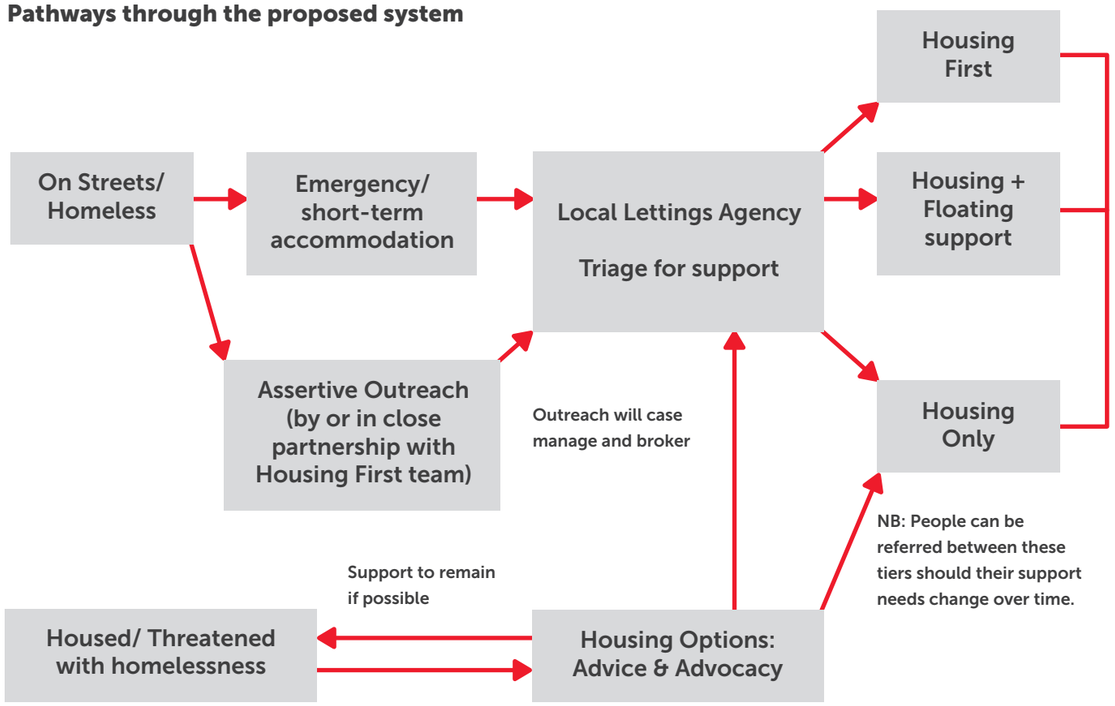
Access to Affordable Housing

- Review of mainstream allocations policies and systems
- Flexible, large scale local lettings agency which will:
  - Acquire (and where desired) manage social & private rented portfolio
  - Housing management in partnership with support providers
  - Opportunities for training, employment, volunteering to improve sub-standard properties

Housing Options Advice and Advocacy

- In line with the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act
- Case management approach: co-produced action plan (which might include mediation, debt/benefit advice, advocacy with landlords, lenders, utility suppliers, etc)
- Well-publicised and accessible
- Inclusive: available to all, regardless of local connection, priority need, intentionality

Pathways through the proposed system



NB: Housing First might involve specialist congregate but tenancy-based models delivered in partnership with NHS/ Adult Social Care/Criminal Justice where risks and needs are very high.

The vision for the Housing First service

The model subject to political decisions and further scoping, planning and debate will include the following elements:

Key outcome and performance indicator for the service: tenancy sustainment, with other indicators for individual's health and well-being and financial and social inclusion

At 'triage', those with the following characteristics would be recommended for Housing First:

- A significant history of homelessness/ unstable housing;
- A judgement that other service options would pose a risk to them or others;
- At least one of: substance use, mental/ physical health conditions, learning disability, offending;

Individual choice is a key factor here: people who are not yet ready to accept the offer will continue to be engaged: the offer will not be withdrawn, but neither will anyone be forced to accept it.

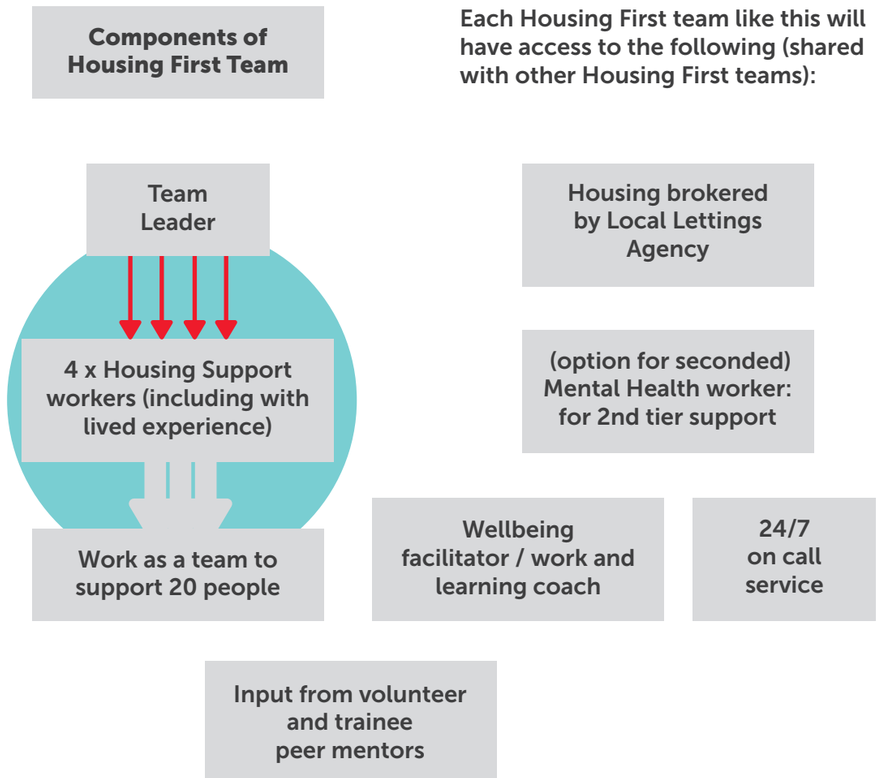
The success of the team to engage with this cohort and offer a holistic service in line with Housing First principles will depend on:

- A small team (of four supported by one team leader) covering a protected caseload (of up to 20 between them, built gradually and constantly reviewed as people's needs taper and potentially increase again during periods of crisis or relapse);
- An assertive outreach team, including peer mentors, who would continue to engage with people on the street and in accommodation on an on-

going basis to bring them into the Housing First system no matter how many times they do not engage with services
- A recruitment process that focuses on values, behaviours, attitudes and aptitudes and is open to people with lived experience and/or professional experience in other sectors;
- Significant investment in team learning & development and second tier mental health support to help the team implement psychologically informed approaches and basic 'talking therapies';
- Excellent management and clinical supervision to support the team to find the right balance between holding onto clients (rather than signposting them) and letting them go (i.e. promoting integration into mainstream services and community life);
- Strong partnerships with other statutory agencies, working alongside an asset-based community development approach which also identifies and builds on resources outside of 'services';
- Access to peer support and mentoring;

We anticipate that properties would be accessed either directly from social landlords or through a Local Lettings Agency, which could facilitate the supply of and manage private and social tenancies for the Housing First service, and for others in housing need, including homeless (or potentially homeless) people. There will ideally be a choice of property types and locations (including accessible properties, and options to share a tenancy for those who want this).

The proposed core team structure and linkages to other services is shown in the following diagram:



How Housing First will link to the wider housing-led system

Consistency, clear pathways and good communication between the Housing First service and the rest of this system will be key to the success of both. This should include:
- Consistent application of the Housing First principles throughout the system (ie. Housing Options/ outreach, emergency accommodation/ triage, Housing-Led, as well as Housing First);
- Workforce development to support this;
- A communications strategy to ensure there is multi-agency understanding about how the system works;
- Minimised and well-managed handovers throughout the system;
- Flexible commissioning of services (eg. including Housing-led floating support as well as Housing First);
- Flexible use of the local lettings agency model to supply housing where needed across the system.

Funding and commissioning

We have estimated demand for the Housing First service over the first 10 years of operation, allowing for existing and newly arising need (given the impact of increased investment in prevention) and for relatively small numbers of people exiting the service: 310 units would be required in 2018, reaching a peak of 555 in 2024, then gradually reducing to 480 in 2028.

The estimated cost of providing the model of Housing First we have proposed is **£12,607** per client per annum. This includes costs for a local lettings agency to source housing; second tier mental health support; and a 24/7 on-call service as well as the core support team.

The Housing First model could be commissioned across LCR in three different ways: i) with each local authority commissioning separately but to an agreed model; ii) by clusters of local authorities commissioning jointly; iii) or through a joint approach across all six authorities. We conclude that the third of these options – a regional joint commissioning approach – is most likely to achieve a consistent model which can:

- Flexibly manage variations in demand;
- Provide consistency across local authority areas;
- Provide a more coherent approach to securing engagement of partner organisations;
- Create opportunities for economies of scale and a cross-authority approach to local letting agency functions; and
- Allow for alignment with additional powers devolved to the LCR Combined Authority

However:

- There would need to be sufficient flexibility to allow for local contexts;
- This does not necessarily mean a single Housing First service or service provider, but rather that the authorities can determine jointly how the service will be delivered;
- This might include further personalisation of the model by including an element of personal budget;
- The commissioning resources required for this should not be underestimated, especially if Housing First is to be delivered as part of a wider homelessness strategy.
- One option would be to create a pan-LCR commissioning 'board' for homelessness prevention and services or use a pre-existing pan-LCR group for this purpose; possibly with one local authority taking responsibility for procurement on behalf of the group.

Developing Housing First 'at scale' will require: determined partnership working; the implementation of new models of service delivery and, crucially, a very real change in the *culture* of services if it is to succeed in creating a rights-based,

non-judgemental, strengths-based approach that emphasises citizenship and builds resilience.

This will require:

- Dialogue and partnership in design and delivery between commissioners, providers and people with lived experience, and between local authorities, health and criminal justice agencies: building a 'coalition of the willing' based on explicit, shared values;
- Cross-sector workforce development; and
- An innovative and flexible approach to contract monitoring.

Cost effectiveness and potential for cashable savings

Using Mainstay data, we identified the cohort of individuals in Liverpool City Region who met the criteria for a Housing First service and had presented four times or more for a Mainstay assessment. We excluded from the analysis those for whom we did not have sufficient evidence to track outcomes over time. Defining a 'successful outcome' as someone being supported into and sustaining an independent tenancy for 6 months and drawing on the 'success rate' identified in previous evaluations of Housing First, we were able to compare the likelihood of a person achieving this outcome within current services and within a Housing First model. We used research findings[9] which estimate the cost of this cohort's use of existing homelessness services (given that they tend to dip in and out of accommodation placements) and compared this with the estimated cost of the Housing First model we propose.

This analysis suggests that the Housing First model could be around three to five time more cost effective than current provision for this cohort. In other words, a successful outcome costs three to five times as much in current services than it would under Housing First for this cohort.

We ran two scenarios to look at the potential for cash savings for local authority-commissioned support in LCR:

- A conservative scenario, in which Housing First runs alongside reduced but still significant provision of supported housing, with estimated cost savings of £3.29m; and
- A more ambitious scenario, in which most 24/7 supported housing is replaced by Housing First, with estimated cost savings of £5m.

Implementation

The following table summarises the key tasks in each of the three phases, covering the next ten years. For each phase, we suggest the number of Housing First (H1st) units which would be commissioned and the equivalent number of supported housing (SH) which would need to be decommissioned to fund this. The column on the right shows per annum funding for Housing First units and the likely source of funding for these.

Since the costs for year 1 and 2 effectively represent double running costs whilst existing supported housing provision remains unchanged, alternative sources of funding would be required for this, to the amount of £0.63 million in Year 1 (50 service users) and £1.26 million in Year 2 (100 service users) based on £12,607 cost per service user per annum.

Phase/ Years	Key tasks	No of H1st units commissioned	No of SH decommissioned	Costs (p.a.)
Phase 1 Yr 1	• Extended brief for Housing Options • Establish Local Lettings Agency/ies • Cross-LCR commissioning/ governance arrangements • Develop detailed commissioning plan • Evaluate initial H1st use/ outcomes	50	Unchanged	£0.6m (Double running costs)
Yr 2		100	Unchanged	£1.26m (Double running costs)
Phase 2 Yrs 2-5	• Implement commissioning/ reconfiguration plan	↓ 400-519	↓ -287-373	£5.04m-£6.54m (funded by reduced SH)
Phase 3 Yrs 5-10	• Continue to implement commissioning/ reconfiguration plan	↓ 480	↓ -345	£6.05m (funded by reduced SH)

NB: The savings generated by reducing supported housing include the rental levels above LHA rate, assuming that these will no longer be picked up by HB from phase 2 onwards.

Policy Context

LCR homelessness strategies

The local authorities from the LCR have homelessness and other relevant strategies, which cover different timeframes and have differing emphases. However, they all - to varying degrees - create a supportive policy environment to establish and implement a Housing First model as part of a comprehensive approach to eradicating homelessness. Early prevention and intervention, and the need to improve access to mainstream housing are common themes within these strategies.

The Homelessness Reduction Act

The Act places homelessness prevention on a statutory footing, requiring local councils to undertake reasonable steps to ensure people at risk of homelessness are helped. The act also requires councils to do this regardless of an applicant's priority need status, local connection or intentionality.

This robust prevention approach is a critical part of any LCR system that includes Housing First. It is critical that the future need for rehousing is addressed by 'up-stream' prevention, and it is also important that all applications are assessed to establish whether the need for rehousing can be prevented, thereby freeing up resources for those in greatest need.

Benefit payments for rent in Supported Housing

Under the current Housing Benefit system, some forms of supported housing can charge an additional premium on rent to help cover operating costs which are higher than in general needs housing. Proposed reforms (currently predicted to be implemented from April 2019) would reduce the amount of rent which could be covered by Universal Credit in supported housing to the local housing allowance rate. The current plan is to reallocate the total gap in funding to local authorities, who will

9. Pleace and Culhane (2016) *Better than Cure? Testing the case for Enhancing Prevention of Single Homelessness in England,* Crisis

then have the power to 'top up' rents in supported housing.

This could act as a driver for the development of supported housing models, like Housing First, which use ordinary housing and do not meet operational costs by charging an enhanced rent. When local authorities receive the 'top-up' funding, they should also receive the additional rents currently being paid to houses in multiple occupation which have managed to classify themselves as 'exempt' from the Local Housing Allowance and could decide to re-direct this funding to Housing First, rather than re-invest it in non-commissioned and often poor quality 'supported housing'.

Housing First in Combined Authorities

Combined authorities (such as LCR) can provide a supportive context for Housing First due to:

- Their large populations which bring sufficient numbers of homeless people with high and complex needs to make a clear case for Housing First;
- The cost of developing and delivering Housing First can be shared, provided there is a clear benefit in homelessness prevention and reduction for each participating local authority;
- Implementing Housing First at this scale makes the transition more viable and less risky for providers;
- Sharing networks and access to housing supply, through a Local Lettings Agency model increases the possibility of finding suitable housing, particularly for those who want to move out of area or need a particular property type.

Conclusions

The wider system within which Housing First should be integrated needs to include:

- A consistent approach to accessing mainstream housing for those experiencing or threatened with homelessness: we suggest this might be through a local lettings approach, however, a wider review of allocations policies in the region will also be needed;
- Significant investment in prevention services, which meet the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act and are inclusive of all those experiencing or threatened with homelessness, regardless of legal status;
- Sustained or renewed investment in floating support services, which fit with the basic principles of Housing First in terms of ethos and approach;
- The development of clear pathways between the criminal justice system, NHS provision and the system for preventing and responding to homelessness.

In order to achieve the required change in systems and culture, detailed implementation planning needs to emerge from dialogue co-production and collective problem-solving involving:

- People with lived experience
- Local authority commissioners (including social care and housing strategy as well as homelessness and housing-related support officers);
- Providers of existing homelessness services, including staff as well as managers;
- Landlords – both registered providers and private sector landlords and the bodies that represent them;
- Health (including mental health and substance use) professionals, providers and commissioners; and
- Criminal justice professionals, including rehabilitation workers (Community Rehabilitation Companies and National Probation Service), prisons, police and courts.

The Housing First model needs to be accurately and fully costed, taking account of:

- A skilled, well trained and supported core staff team;
- A responsive and flexible on-call service;
- The costs of securing and managing housing used by Housing First service users;
- Access to 2nd tier mental health support; and
- Access to learning and work coaching.

The proposed Housing First model for the LCR is most like to be feasible if it is jointly commissioned by all six local authorities across the whole LCR. The evidence is that this:

- Would deliver a consistent, high quality and high fidelity Housing First approach which could still be 'tailored' to suit local requirements;
- Would require the provision of suitable housing to be managed across the LCR; this could be challenging but would provide consistent and rapid access to appropriate housing for all those who need it across the LCR, and would also provide economies of scale if using a local lettings agency model.
- Would provide a more consistent and coherent approach to securing the engagement of partner organisations, i.e. mental health services, drug/alcohol services, criminal justice agencies;
- Would require pan LCR governance arrangements but that also allow for local flexibility and responsiveness;

To implement and deliver the proposed Housing First model at scale across a large area such as the LCR will require a carefully planned and managed phased approach, as set out in the table / figure on page 17 above.

The study has been funded by Housing First Hub Europe and the UK's Department for Communities and Local Government. It does not represent the views of Government.

The researchers would like to thank those listed below for their invaluable input as members of the Steering Group for the study:
Freek Spinnewijn - FEANTSA
Juha Kaakinen – Y Foundation (Finland)
Liv Kristensen - Husbanken (Norway)
Mike Allen – Focus Ireland
Patrick McKay – Turning Point Scotland
Rick Henderson – Homeless Link
Peter Fredriksson – Finnish Government
Samara Jones – Housing First Europe Hub
Taina Hytönen – Housing First Europe Hub

The researchers would also like to thank those listed below for their invaluable input as members of the project board for the study:
Aydin Djemal – Wirral Ark
Andy Carberry – Regenda
Anne Doyle – Liverpool City Council
Cath McAndry – Riverside
Dalite Lucy – Knowsley Council
Darren Stockton – Big Life Company
David Carter – Whitechapel Centre
David Pugh – Liverpool YMCA
Gary Morris – Waves of Hope
Kevin Cairns – St Helens Council
Neil Woodhouse – Sefton Council
Patricia Preston – Halton Borough Council
Peter Jamieson – Department for Work and Pensions
Sheila Jacobs – Wirral Council

Thanks also to the following Local Authorities for their participation in this study:
Halton Borough Council
Knowsley Council
Liverpool City Council
Sefton Council
St Helens Council
Wirral Council

We would also like to thank the following organisations and groups for their participation in the study:
Aintree University Hospitals NHS Trust
Big Life Company
Big Society Capital
Brownlow Group Practice
Camden Council
Cheshire Police
City of Westminster Council
Crisis Skylight Merseyside
CRISS
Department for Work and Pensions
DISC
Excel Housing Solutions
Halton Borough Council
Halton Housing Trust
Inspiring Change Manchester
Interserve CRC
KHT
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
LHT
Light for Life
Liverpool CCG
Liverpool City Council
Liverpool Volunteer Street Outreach Teams
Liverpool YMCA
LMH
Local Government Association
Local Solutions
Magenta Living
One Vision Housing
Plus Dane
Public Services Lab
Regenda
Riverside
Sefton Council
SHAP
Shelter
South Liverpool Homes
St Helens Council
St Helens YMCA
St Mungo's
Transforming Choice
Waves of Hope
Whitechapel Centre
Wirral Ark
Wirral Council
Wirral YMCA
Your Housing

Crisis Head Office
66 Commercial Street
London E1 6LT
Tel: 0300 636 1967
Fax: 0300 636 2012
www.crisis.org.uk
Copyright Crisis 2017

ISBN 978-1-78519-040-7
Crisis UK (trading as Crisis).
Registered Charity Numbers: E&W1082947,
SC040094. Company Number: 4024938

Crisis

Together we will end homelessness