



Invitation to Tender – Feasibility study on a viable not for profit housing vehicle to deliver Housing First at scale in England

Summary

We require a contractor to produce a short piece of analysis detailing the feasibility of establishing a viable not for profit housing vehicle in England with the primary purpose of providing permanent accommodation for scaling up Housing First¹. More specifically the objectives are to:

- Examine the domestic viability of the Y Foundation and international examples that are successful in their context
- Develop a feasible operating model that is financially viable to deliver Housing First at scale within the English funding and welfare context or sets out steps that would make the model financially viable mechanisms such strategic partnerships
- Develop a viable operating model based on a values-led approach with people experiencing homelessness at the centre

We anticipate the work taking around three months to complete using mainly secondary data sources and a small number of key stakeholder interviews

About this project

To end homelessness there is an urgent need for more housing that provides people on low incomes with security, decent living conditions and affordable rents. The decline in availability of homes that are affordable to low income households has significantly contributed to the rise in homelessness and exponential use of temporary and emergency accommodation. Research for Crisis and the National Housing Federation has identified a need for an additional 90,000 homes each year for social rent to end homelessness and address wider housing needs.

However, there is acute shortage of overall housing supply in England and a significant shortfall of social housing built each year. The little social supply that does exist is often not accessible to people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Reduced supply and investment in stock has led to more risk averse letting practices which pose barriers for people experiencing homelessness who are perceived to be a greater 'risk' because of their, perceived or actual, support needs. Support models like Housing First - which has a considerable body of evidence demonstrating it can sustainably end the homelessness of people who've experienced trauma and with needs including mental health and substance misuse - cannot currently grow to meet demand because of the lack of accessible permanent social homes that are available to rent.

There are international examples of housing associations whose purpose, aim and business model is to house people experiencing homelessness quickly into their own permanent housing through

¹ Housing First is a model that places people in permanent accommodation first based on the ethos that a stable home is the foundation to then overcome other challenges. Results have shown that people are between 80 - 90 per cent more likely to still be in that accommodation after two years.

renovating, building and leasing properties at affordable rents. Two examples include the Y-Foundation in Finland and Provivienda in Spain. Both of these models began by focusing their supply on delivering homes specially for Housing First. In contrast, the UK model, places a lot of emphasis on managing temporary accommodation such as hostels and other supported housing. If there was a housing vehicle focused on providing permanent housing to people who would benefit from a Housing Led approach to end their homelessness, this would shift provision and resources to long term stable housing for people moving straight out of homelessness.

Research brief

We are looking for a contractor to undertake a short study which documents the international evidence and builds analysis and modelling on what a viable similar model would look like in the English context. This must consider the following elements:

- A specific focus on how the model would meet the needs of scaling up Housing First in England through acquisition, conversion and/or new build properties
- The economies of scale and location(s) to make the model viable and stages/steps to expand this over the long term
- The key partnerships involved in developing a model in an English context (including possible funders)
- A viable financial model that accounts for current lack of central government grant and capital funding for social housing whilst still meeting the social aims of ending homelessness – if this is not possible in the current context the steps that would make the model financially viable via mechanisms such as strategic partnerships
- How a housing model would interact with, and complement existing social housing allocations policies in England
- A focus on how a model would viably operate led by its values as it matures and expands
- Regional variations in how the model might operate

Suggested methodology

We envisage the successful contractor to use a mixed method approach which primarily draws on evidence (including telephone/online interviews, documentation and secondary analysis) from international examples that already operate a viable model in this space. Crisis can facilitate access to key stakeholders working in existing organisations to share knowledge and evidence on set up, operating and funding processes and long-term sustainability of the model.

In addition, we anticipate some analysis and modelling will be required to translate the evidence from international examples to a UK context drawing on secondary datasets and policy relating to social housing supply and asset management.

We would be interested in the successful contractor coming up with any further elements or approach to the work that comes within budget

Budget

The indicative budget for the project is £15k, if your submission has a budget that exceeds this amount please detail why extra funding is required.

Outputs

1. A written standalone report which sets out the analysis, methodology, findings and recommendations
2. The data tables and calculations underpinning the final model
3. Presentation and discussion of report findings

Timeline

Milestone/Output	Date
Deadline for proposal	6 th November 2020
Project start and inception meeting	3 rd December 2020
Update on analysis including interim findings	w/c 25 th January 2021
Draft report submitted	w/c 15 th March 2021
Presentation of findings	w/c 29 th March 2021

About Crisis

Crisis is the national charity for homeless people. We are committed to ending homelessness. Every day we see the devastating impact homelessness has on people's lives. Every year we work side by side with thousands of homeless people, to help them rebuild their lives and leave homelessness behind for good.

Through our pioneering research into the causes and consequences of homelessness and the solutions to it, we know what it will take to end it. Together with others who share our resolve, we bring our knowledge, experience and determination to campaign for the changes that will solve the homelessness crisis once and for all.

We bring together a unique volunteer effort each Christmas, to bring warmth, companionship and vital services to people at one of the hardest times of the year and offer a starting point out of homelessness.

We know that homelessness is not inevitable. We know that together we can end it.

Further Information

If you require further information, or wish to discuss details of the project prior to submission, please contact kate.farrell@crisis.org.uk or francesca.albanese@crisis.org.uk