

# All Party Parliamentary Group on Ending Homelessness



## Housing First enquiry session 3

### Meeting Minutes

8 December, 10-11.30am, Zoom

#### Attendees:

Neil Coyle MP, APPG Co-Chair  
Bob Blackman MP, APPG Co-Chair  
Lord Best  
Mick Whitley MP  
Jason McCartney MP  
Lord Young of Cookham  
Baroness Watkins of Tavistock  
Baroness Grender

#### Parliamentary staff:

Evie Lingwood, Office of Neil Coyle MP  
Katy Craven, Office of James Sunderland MP  
Millie Wright, Office of Thangam Debbonaire MP  
Henry Cavill, Office of Nickie Aiken MP  
Alex Miller, Office of Imran Ahmad Khan MP

#### Secretariat:

Emily Batchelor, Secretariat to APPG

#### Other:

Ruth Jacob, Crisis  
Jasmine Basran, Crisis  
Saskia Neibig, Crisis  
Disha Bhatt, Crisis  
Maeve McGoldrick, Crisis  
Matt Downie, Crisis  
Hazel Buontempo, Crisis  
Sarah Walters, Crisis  
Hugh Currie, St Mungo's  
Paul Anders, PHE  
Andrew Gray, Church of England  
Brooks Newmark  
Patrick Duce, World Habitat  
Celeste Sangster, World Habitat  
Kieron Lock, MyBnk  
Alexandra Williams, NRLA  
Theresa Nguyen, NHS  
Stephen Cutter, Release  
Robert Anderson, HM Treasury  
Neelam Sunder, WMCA  
Suzannah Young, NHF  
Chris Burgess, Porchlight  
Julie Levens, Big Help Project  
Lauren Fleckney, Safe Lives  
Georgina Hagan, Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office

#### Apologies:

Clive Lewis MP  
Fleur Anderson MP  
Kerry McCarthy MP  
Layla Moran MP  
Caroline Lucas MP  
Lord Foulkes  
Stephen Timms MP  
David Simmonds MP  
Marion Fellows MP  
Lord Puttnam  
Lord McNally  
Lord Hylton

#### Panellists:

Steve Rotherham, Mayor of Liverpool City Region  
Louisa Steele, Standing Together  
Rhiannon Barrow, Solace Women's Aid  
Samara Jones, Housing First Europe Hub  
Cath Docherty, Salvation Army  
Yvonne Connolly, Salvation Army  
Chris, direct experience of Housing First

Hannah Gousy, Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office  
Dr Janet Bowstead, RHUL  
Dr Nigel Hewett, Pathway  
Erin Mansell, Solace Women's Aid  
Ally Routledge, NHF  
Daniel Poursaeedi, Noah  
Emma Cookson, St Mungo's  
Michelle Langan, Papercup Project  
Neil Preddy  
Jennie Corbett, Homeless Link  
Neil MacDonald  
Alice Carver, Walnut Unlimited  
Tim Thomas, NRLA  
Anna Perkins, Porchlight  
Olivia Boland, BCHA  
Tim Sigsworth, Akt  
Eftychia Moustaka, Solace Women's Aid  
Hilarie Watchorn, Salvation Army  
Malcolm Page, Salvation Army  
Lorrita Johnson, Salvation Army  
Holly Tippett-Simpson, Salvation Army  
Jonathon Graham, Salvation Army  
Ewa Kapica, CSTM  
Matthew Wale  
Amanda Bloxsome, LCR  
Jayne Hendy, Porchlight  
Lara Alexander, Porchlight  
Lisa Rafferty, Homeless Link  
Lynne Sanders, Swansea Women's Aid  
Rhian Lewis  
Harriet Page, Dogs Trust  
Natalie Wong, Standing Together  
Cllr Kieron Wilson  
Andrea Gilbert, Labour's homelessness campaign  
Sabrina Islam, Solace Women's Aid  
Georgia Cowpe

<b>Welcome and apologies</b>	
Introductions	
Bob Blackman MP	<p>Bob Blackman MP (BB) opened the meeting by introducing himself, welcoming attendees and briefly outlining the event format. BB made short comments on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Progress made towards ending homelessness through the Government's 'Everyone In'</li> <li>- Providing Housing First (HF) and providing people with a roof over their head and a network of support</li> </ul> <p>BB introduced the first panellist Steve Rotherham (SR), Labour Mayor of the Liverpool City Region.</p>
Steve Rotherham, Labour Mayor of the Liverpool City Region.	<p>SR thanked Bob and outlined his thoughts on the HF pilot in his constituency, including comments on the following :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rise of homelessness in the region</li> <li>- HF providing a chance to move people into a property of their own and providing help for their problems</li> <li>- How HF tackles entrenched behaviour without tying it to the offer of accommodation</li> <li>- The excellent outcomes of HF projects. In this pilot, 88% of clients had sustained their tenancy and there had not been any evictions</li> <li>- How for many of the service users, this is the first time they can somewhere a home</li> <li>- That support workers were locally based and flexible which was of great benefit to the user</li> <li>- The importance of access to intensive support, including late at night and at weekends</li> <li>- How the HF provides goes far beyond the normal services</li> <li>- How HF necessitates a multi-disciplinary approach</li> <li>- Acknowledges the challenges and teething problems of the pilot</li> <li>- How the pilot has the benefit of learning from the experiences of Western Europe and Scandinavia</li> <li>- The process of having to convince the Government that the HF pilot has value</li> <li>- How SR is still convinced that HF is right way to go to permanently tackle rough sleeping</li> </ul>
Louisa Steele, Standing Together, Rhiannon Barrow, Solace Women's Aid	<p>BB introduced the next panellists, Louisa Steele (LS), Standing Together and Rhiannon Barrow (RB), Solace Women's Aid</p> <p>LS and RB outlined the work of Standing Together and Solace Women's Aid in Westminster, including describing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This Housing First project in Westminster is for survivors of gendered violence</li> <li>- It was commissioned by Westminster City Council and funded by MHCLG.</li> <li>- Housing is provided by Peabody, Southern, L&amp;Q, Women's Pioneer Housing and Octavia Housing.</li> <li>- Support delivered by specialist VAWG provider, Solace Women's Aid, with all support workers trained in VAWG. Support can be specialist, but also practical e.g. help with benefits, rent, bills, GPs</li> <li>- Support is long-term, holistic and delivered on a one-to-one basis</li> <li>- This support is tailored specifically to women experiencing multiple disadvantage</li> <li>- This project commenced service delivery in August 2019</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outcomes: 8 out of 9 women housed have maintained their tenancies. The first 2 women housed in Nov 2019 have now maintained their tenancy for over a year. 10 women have made VAWG disclosures and 2 have been accepted into college.</li> </ul> <p>LS and RB also outlined why Housing First can work well for women, including commenting on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experience of domestic abuse and violence is near-universal among women who become homeless.</li> <li>- Women experiencing long term homelessness have different needs to men – potentially higher needs.</li> <li>- Key considerations for providing Housing First for women include longer engagement, management DA/VAWG, supporting women, and providing secure and suitable housing.</li> <li>- Housing First gives women time and choice, allowing them to build trust with their workers</li> </ul> <p>LS and RB described some of the barriers to scaling up Housing First for women including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need for longer term funding, recovery services takes time</li> <li>- Women are often the hidden homelessness</li> <li>- A gender informed approach needs to be integrated into mixed/generic services</li> <li>- A need to think about the specific needs of women and target them deliberately – a one size fits all approach won't work for women</li> </ul>
<p>Samara Jones, Housing First Europe Hub</p>	<p>BB introduced the next panellist Samara Jones (SJ), Housing First Europe Hub.</p> <p>SJ outlined the work of Housing First Europe Hub, which is a network of over 20 organisations across Europe who are aiming to support the scaling up of HF. Housing First Europe Hub also develop and provide training and research to these organisations and work on advocacy.</p> <p>SJ made several comments on HF including on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When scaling up HF, the importance of having all parties across the spectrum committed and to really make an impact it must go beyond a project here and there</li> <li>- How the sector knows HF works, and that the undisputed leader of delivering HF is Finland</li> <li>- How different European countries are at different stages of progress, for example Eastern Europe has not taken on the scale of the UK, France and Spain</li> <li>- In Poland and the Czech Republic progress is limited by the problem of housing supply</li> <li>- The progress in France where successful projects lead to the national scale-up of HF and housing-led approaches. Here 24 cities joined the scaling-up project.</li> <li>- Highlighted the example of Lyon where there is a significant problem of homelessness, and how the pandemic and lockdown forced organisations to work together, they used the opportunity to commit to cutting homelessness in half in the next five years</li> <li>- Highlighted the example of Finland where success has been due to sustained investment in social housing and crucially allocating places to people sleeping rough. Importantly in Finland the principles of HF are all applied in all services, not just exclusively HF.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SJ said she was surprised that scaling-up in England hadn't happened yet as it has many of the ingredients necessary for success, and how England is looked to for certain areas of best practice, for example, trauma-informed care</li> <li>- England faces many of the challenges common across Europe: the lack of social or affordable housing, very short tenancies, lack of transition funding in place to spur the movement</li> <li>- England is in the position to be a leader with regards to HF and housing-led reforms, particularly with the opportunity of the pandemic</li> </ul>
<p>Cath Docherty and Yvonne Connolly, Salvation Army</p>	<p>BB introduced the next panellists Cath Docherty (CD) and Yvonne Connolly (YC) from Salvation Army.</p> <p>YC outlined how Salvation Army are long established providers of homelessness and housing services.</p> <p>CD outlined the background to the HF service in Wales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They were initially given funding from Welsh government to tackle rough sleepers in Cardiff as existing initiatives were not meeting those needs</li> <li>- The multi-disciplinary approach, where a steering group gave a platform to refer individuals and for staff to advocate on their behalf</li> <li>- With 20 individuals supported, 100% engaged with the harm reduction support, 100% feel more healthy physically, and 100% feel safer and more emotionally well and able to deal with emotions</li> <li>- Immensely proud of these results, particularly given that they had worked with some individuals on and off for a decade</li> </ul> <p>YC outlined some of the challenges of this project including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How success necessitates full commitment to the high fidelity model</li> <li>- Importance of a harm reduction approach underlining every support offered</li> <li>- The importance of training and the wellbeing of staff as critical to its delivery</li> <li>- How creativity is crucial to transition between models</li> <li>- How this model can and does make a difference</li> <li>- How the funding needs to be stable</li> <li>- The importance of managing professional relationships and partnerships</li> </ul>
<p>Chris, lived experience of Housing First</p>	<p>BB introduced the next panellist Chris (C), who has direct experience of Housing First, and his case worker Olivia Boland (OB), from BCHA.</p> <p>C described his life and own experiences of homelessness, spending many nights in shop doorways and around the city centre. C spent 15 years in and out of care growing up, ending up in prison. On his release C experienced no support – for example being handed a sleeping bag when he left.</p> <p>With the support of HF C has been sober since March 2020, for the first time since he was 9. C described how the caseworker said he just wanted</p>

	<p>C to feel safe, and C was able to experience hope for the first time in his life and that he felt he could be a productive member of society.</p> <p>OB described how C experienced a lot of discrimination and faced a lot of red tape. With HF C was not expected to jump through any hoops, but had in fact sustained the tenancy for 15 months so far. C said HF provided light at the very long tunnel and started to make him think that he could have an independent life away from injustice.</p>
<p>Bob Blackman MP</p> <p>Neil Coyle MP</p>	<p>BB thanked panellists and passed the chair over to NC for the Q&amp;A session.</p> <p>NC thanked panellists for their contributions, particularly C for sharing his personal testimony.</p> <p>NC made comments including on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The success of existing HF projects and the importance of commitment to the model and long-term sustainable funding.</li> </ul>
<p>Questions to the panel: 11:17am</p>	<p>1. Suzannah Young (SY), NHF</p> <p>SY described the NHF research on HF that found one of the biggest barriers to progress of HF is the short term nature of funding, and asked if there are other models around Europe which work?</p> <p>SJ pointed to the example of Finland where funding is not blocked out project by project, and the importance of long-term funding as the services are based on the needs of individuals will not change after 6 months, that funding should reflect this.</p> <p>Nigel Hewett (NH), Pathway highlighted a particular opportunity called additional rolls reimbursement scheme.</p> <p>2. Andrew Gray (AG), Church of England</p> <p>AG outlined how he was looking to organising a HF scheme with a pension organisation, and asked about specific funding arrangements.</p> <p>Amanda Bloxsome (AB), LCR said the pilot funding came directly from MHCLG. That they were moving onto a second phase of the pilot but had no evictions.</p> <p>3. Alexandra Williams (AW), NRLA</p> <p>AW asked about the role of private landlords, given the limited supply of social housing in England.</p> <p>AB said the Liverpool pilot relies on social housing. AB outlined how there was an ambition to work with private landlords in the future.</p> <p>SJ described social rent agencies across Europe, and how there can be an agreement with private landlords where they agree to take a bit less than the market rent but have the assurance of a longer tenancies. Often Government top-ups up the rent.</p> <p>4. Brooks Newmark (BN)</p> <p>BN asked about the Government's ambitious target to eradicate rough sleeping by 2024 and what the role of HF is in this.</p>

	<p>BB outlined how the ambitious is quite clear but his concerns around the new flow of rough sleepers. BB said the reality is that there needs to be accommodation, otherwise the Government will not achieve it. BB said he would say we need to be building 90-100,000 socially rented housing to catch up for the next few years.</p> <p>BB also outlined the importance of having support to lean on, and how every case of homelessness is unique.</p> <p>C said that educating landlords would be a great first step into their understanding of people experiencing homelessness and to help avoid stigma and discrimination.</p>
Neil Coyle MP	<p>NC thanked panellists, attendees and Secretariat.</p> <p>BB also thanked everyone who had contributed.</p>
Actions and deadlines	<p>Secretariat to send around minutes to attendees and both Chairs.</p>