

All Party Parliamentary Group on Ending Homelessness



Housing First enquiry session 2

Meeting Minutes

4 November, 2-3.30pm, Zoom

Attendees:

Neil Coyle MP, APPG Co-Chair
Bob Blackman MP, APPG Co-Chair
Ben Everitt MP
Lord Best
Mike Wood MP
Andrew Mitchell MP
Neale Hanvey MP
Bishop of Manchester

Parliamentary staff:

Graeme Smith, Office of Neil Coyle MP
Ellen Day, Office of Stephen Morgan MP
Jen Millar-Smith, Office of Henry Smith MP
Eleanor Goldberg, Office of Anne Marie Morris MP
Harriette Drew, Office of Barry Sheerman MP
Stuart Whittingham, Office of Mick Whitley MP

Secretariat:

Emily Batchelor, Secretariat to APPG

Other:

Ruth Jacob, Crisis
Jasmine Basran, Crisis
Saskia Neibig, Crisis
Jean Templeton, St Basils
Jon Moss
Lucy Croxton, NYAS
Jo Prestidge, Homeless Link
Jennie Corbett, Homeless Link
Suzannah Young, NHF
Vicky Ball, Phoenix Futures
Claire Dowan
Neil Preddy
Stephen Cutter, Release
Natalie Wong, Standing Together
Paul Prosser, Noah enterprise
Jamie Pope, NYAS
Jen Harrison, Changing Lives
Andrea Faulkner
Benn Kiley, a2dominion
Martin Simson, LCR
Clare Barber, LCR
Amanda Bloxsome, LCR
Matt Kidd, Greater Manchester Housing First
Brooks Newmark

Apologies:

Sarah Champion MP
Clive Lewis MP
Caroline Lucas MP
Baroness Walmsley
James Sunderland MP
Lord Young of Cookham
Rushanara Ali MP
Lord Foulkes
Ian Byrne MP
Stephen Timms MP
Heather Wheeler MP
Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top
Lord Puttnam
Lord McNally
Emma Lewell-Buck MP
Lord Judd

Panellists:

Andy Street, Mayor of West Midlands
Combined Authority
Dr Nigel Hewett, Medical Director, Pathway
James McDermott, Regional Director, Two Saints
Danielle, lived experience of HF
Anonymous, lived experience of HF

Billy Harding, Centrepoint
Patrick Duce, World Habitat
Thomas Gesmond, CHI
Edward Hodson, Coventry CAB
Cllr Kieron Wilson
Emily Cole, GM
Connie Muttock, Commonweal
Sam Dorney-Smith, QNI
Meera Chindooroy, NRLA
Yoric Irving-Clarke, CIH
Dr Katey Logan, GM
Ally Routledge, NHF
Dominique Cadiou, Aspire Oxford
Neelam Sunder, WMCA
Jessica Brown
Midori Hol, The Passage
Paul Reid, Aspire
Alison Adkins, Cherwell District Council
Nick Maguire, Soton
Sarah Rowe, Crisis/CSJ
Katie Earnshaw, Emmaus
Rachel Lane, SCT
Verna Coke, SCT
Naomi Darling, mybnk
Helen Carlin, Rowan Alba
Michelle Langam, Papercup Project
Signe Gosmann, Justlife
Christa Maciver, Justlife
Holly Tippett-Simpson, Salvation Army
Robin Tyne, Southwark Council
Hodan Elmi
Natalie Wong
Ollie Rackham
Robert White, Mayday Trust
Steven McIntyre, Stonewall Housing

Welcome and apologies	
Introductions	
Neil Coyle MP Bob Blackman MP	<p>Neil Coyle MP (NC) opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and briefly outlining the event format.</p> <p>Bob Blackman MP (BB) introduced himself and introduced the first panellist Andy Street, Conservative Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority (AS).</p>
Andy Street, Conservative Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority	<p>AS thanked Bob and outlined his comments on the HF pilot in his constituency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 299 in the pilot who are currently or previously housed - Further 137 waiting to be housed but are being supported - The most recent rough sleeping count in this area was 121 - These are some of the most vulnerable people with some of the most complex needs, those who had been long term sleeping rough - Unlike in Manchester and Liverpool, the pilot is local authority-led - All seven local authorities are utterly committed to the pilot - Stickability of HF – really encouraged by the numbers of people sticking to the programme, despite being tested by the pandemic - Importance of housing supply, success has been piecemeal and stop-start. Supply is the primary reason that they are behind their original target. For it to be sustainable on a national scale needs to fit in wider strategic approach - Need to consider where HF sits on a health and wellbeing approach – importance of this for the wrap-around support, need for it to sit alongside national approach - In terms of local barriers, they have come across reluctance of landlords to take on tenants, and the pace of getting the skilled workforce with the right ability to work intensively - In terms of lessons going forward, the whole question of certainty – is the funding of this going to be sustained or will it become local authority funding that will be drawn upon for various different services - Pilot ultimately been about the personal touch. It really comes home when he visits someone in a flat who would have no hope to have a flat before, using funds given by citizens to personalise their own place, increasing the stickability of the scheme - Pilot is working and is a breakthrough. As a country we must get behind it and roll it out
Questions to AS: 12:00	
	<p>1. BB</p> <p>BB thanked AS for his comments and asked what changes AS would make to the scheme as piloted to make it move forward.</p> <p>AS said the sustainability and reliability of the funding. He said it was clear that it would take years of commitment and wrap around support, which needs certainty of funding.</p> <p>2. BB</p> <p>BB asked AS about whether there had been any surprises during the pilot.</p>

	<p>AS said he was surprised about the stickability of the programme, with 84% people still in residence which was impressive.</p> <p>3. Andrew Mitchell (AM), MP for Sutton Coldfield</p> <p>AM said he had watched AS prioritise this issue, and the success had been driven by him personally.</p> <p>AS brought up the value of the money of the scheme, and that the cost of HF was roughly comparable when all of the other costs of the interventions are put together.</p> <p>BB said there is a cost involved but there is a larger cost of not doing anything, and a long term benefit of assisting people in this manner. BB said that every case of homelessness was unique and that HF enables that personalised support.</p> <p>AS brought up a comment in the chat that said the cost of not tackling an individual's rough sleeping is around £20,000-25,000 a year, and the current cost of a HF place is around £14,000 a year.</p> <p>4. NC read a question from Nick Maguire</p> <p>NC asked AS whether he had seen a problem with recruitment and retention of staff delivering HF.</p> <p>AS said yes, that this was one of the things which dictated how fast the HF could progress. AS said there had been brilliant examples of lifelong friendships.</p>
Nigel Hewett, Pathway	<p>BB introduced the next panellist Dr Nigel Hewett (NH), Medical Director at Pathway.</p> <p>NH outlined how he was a GP from Leicester, who set up a multi-disciplinary team to case manage complex patients experiencing homelessness. For the last ten years he had been Medical Director at Pathway. He is also Secretary for the Faculty for Homeless and Inclusion Health.</p> <p>His contribution included comments on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Despite much of the evidence for HF coming from the US and elsewhere in Europe, wider evidence endorses the key concept of HF of individual care, supported by a multiagency team - Expressed his enthusiasm for the concept of HF which is supported by evidence of what works - Outlined the importance of fidelity to the model and how HF is meant for those with high support needs, often have tri-morbidity – physical and mental ill-health and addiction - The two different models – intensive case management (most common in Europe) or assertive community treatment (most complex needs – takes care to the front door) - Original HF model of care had both models with flexibility to switch between them - The challenge of multi-disciplinary care is who pays – echoes of this already in the pilot. - Described nature of our siloed funding systems and high thresholds for care

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Described how HF clients will need a golden ticket, granting them enhanced access to health services. At the most basic level we know that the universal right to primary care can be difficult to make a reality even with assertive advocacy - Suggested the development of regional pooled NHS budgets of primary care networks and integrated care systems
<p>James McDermott, Two Saints</p>	<p>BB introduced the next panellist James McDermott (JMD), Regional Director at Two Saints.</p> <p>JMD described how Two Saints deliver services around the South coast, including Portsmouth, Hampshire, Berkshire, and that they've been running HF services since 2016.</p> <p>JMD outlined how their HF services came through lots of negotiations, pilots, little bits of grants etc. Two Saints have found a way to work with partners to keep these projects going.</p> <p>JMD emphasised the value of the home which provides security and protection for the client. JMD also outlined how HF differs from existing services which has a stepping process which is dependent on reducing drug or drink use, within the challenging environment of hostels or communal spaces.</p> <p>JMD outlined how the HF is not a silver bullet to end rough sleeping or homelessness but said to the clients using HF it was a silver bullet for them – this was the feedback he had received from clients.</p> <p>JMD emphasised the importance of partnerships, that Two Saints had worked closely with Homeless Link, large housing associations and the local authorities in each area. JMD said that the local authority must lead the way as he believed they were responsible for the people in the community.</p> <p>JMD said they had to do a lot of reassuring, but once one or two people are in the service, it is easier to increase the units with your partners as they can see the benefits.</p> <p>JMD said that the Covid-19 pandemic was a golden opportunity to bring people in somewhere and that HF has a part to play in this.</p> <p>JMD concluded by commenting on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JMD pointed to the evidence of HF working which is already out there with 90 HF services operating across England, as well as the pilots - JMD emphasised the importance of seeing this issue as a health issue, and how strategy needs to partner health, housing and homelessness - JMD read out a case study from a client who has been using Two Saints HF services for under a year, but who had been street homeless for 14 years prior to that. This client was attacked in the street and suffered some brain injuries, leading him to feel unsafe. Despite the pandemic this client was offered a flat which he 'fell in love with straight away.' Key was that this flat was already all set up. This client has help to manage his food shopping, bill paying, and he feels healthier, and has undergone dental surgery. He said he loves his bed, his flat, and no one bothers him, and he feels safe. He said it was one of the best things that has ever happened to him and he feels proud of himself and his home.

<p>Danielle, lived experience of Housing First in Greater Manchester</p>	<p>BB thanked JMD for his contribution, and introduced the next panellist Danielle (D), who has direct experience of Housing First in Manchester.</p> <p>D outlined her own experiences of HF and her life before her contact with HF services, which included a mis-diagnosis of a mental health condition and time in prison. A probation officer introduced her to HF.</p> <p>D said she was able to build a brilliant relationship with her HF caseworker, who she describes as the 'best person she'd ever met in her whole entire life.' D said she started volunteering with Matt (Kidd) on the lived experience panel, giving back to the HF service. Without the support of her caseworker D said she thinks she would be 'dead or in jail.' She is now training to be a paramedic, but can still access the support of her caseworker.</p> <p>D said because of Covid-19, 'now more than ever' people need the support of HF. With HF D said staff 'they don't judge you,' but 'let you do it in your own time.' D said 'you feel free to make your own choices, and have your own control'.</p>
<p>Anonymous, direct experience of Housing First in Liverpool City Region.</p>	<p>BB introduced the next panellist Anonymous (A) who has direct experience of Housing First in Liverpool, and his caseworker Martin (M).</p> <p>M outlined how Liverpool City Region has been working directly with people in HF services since summer 2019, and how it is a huge priority for the Metro Mayor and the local authorities in the region.</p> <p>M described how A had a history of homelessness and rough sleeping, and experienced the loss of his wife of many years in 2015. HF intensively supported A, building a reliable and secure relationship based on the idea that housing is a human right and not a reward for good behaviour. M said A's support was flexible and centred around A's needs.</p> <p>A had since moved into his own home, and looks forward to a brighter, better, stable future.</p> <p>A described how since meeting M everything has changed, and that he now has more confidence in himself, and can see the light at the end of the tunnel. A said his goal was stay away from the past.</p> <p>A said it was important that he got a choice in where he would live and that the HF said not let him down.</p> <p>M outlined how HF was making a huge amount of difference to lots of people in the Liverpool City Region, and how important it was to value HF staff with regards to training, pay and benefits.</p>
<p>Bob Blackman MP Neil Coyle MP</p>	<p>BB thanked panellists and passed the chair over to NC for the Q&A session.</p> <p>NC thanked panellists for their contributions, particularly those sharing personal testimonies.</p> <p>NC made comments including on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Importance of housing supply - Difficulties of providing wrap around support during lockdown - Importance of funding and sustainability of services - How this is a public health issue, and how often councils pick up the costs of failing to address it as a health issue

Questions to the panel: 54:00

1. Billy Harding (BH), Centrepont

BH asked the panel what the buy-in of HF has been amongst external partners, particularly housing providers, housing associations or local authorities? And whether there has been any resistance against the sort of flexibility HF services normally requires?

JMD said it is a mixed picture, a different experience with different local authorities. However JMD said there was some commonalities, including that the housing teams normally have experience of trying to accommodate rough sleepers repeatedly, so when they are approached with this new idea, the support may not be there. JMD emphasised how they do not give up, and normally once you have one tenancy secured, it becomes easier to secure support. JMD said that as Two Saints stick to the high fidelity model, this is reflected in their outcomes. JMD outlined how before they begin a project they bring together all of the partners to talk and ask questions about the project.

2. Cllr Kieron Wilson (KW)

KW said there is a problem with housing supply, and ask whether we need the equivalent national organisation as the Y foundation in Finland?

JMD outlined how this cohort is not a huge number, particularly in regards to rough sleepers, even in cities.

NH said that his experience demonstrates the benefits of local relationships and we are more likely to get success from this negotiated partnerships rather than a national scheme. NH said national leadership, steer and direction of funding is helpful but the service delivery needs to be all about the local relationships.

3. Robert White (RW), Mayday Trust

RW said that the conversations he has had with HF service users made clear that they don't want to be known by their deficits or problems, but they want to integrate with society. RW asked whether we are in danger of creating a race to the bottom, where people have to be the most entrenched to access this sort of housing?

JMD said HF is also a fantastic prevention tool, highlighting the work of Centrepont with care leavers and that a proportion of the traditional HF client base were care leavers. JMD said that the problem is that funding is piecemeal, and with more money you could look at a wider group, and use it as an early intervention tool.

NH said because of the supply not meeting demand, health and care services place high thresholds and barriers to care. NH said in an ideal world this would not be the case, but that HF is an intervention for those most damaged by our failure to support them. NH said to start there and then can roll it out for a wider group.

D agreed that it would be brilliant if HF was there to help everybody but this was unrealistic. D said HF can keep progressing and that she wanted its provision to be widespread in the future but there was need to concentrate on people who need it most right now and keep learning from the process.

4. NC read out a question for JMD

	<p>NC – ‘What impact has HF had on the availability of suitable properties for people through pre-existing homelessness schemes and has it opened up new housing?’</p> <p>JMD said each local authority is different but said he believed housing should be based on need, many HF clients had gone through the hostel or supported housing, but have found themselves in rough situations. JMD said they get the local authority to drive communications that it is based on need or risk.</p> <p>5. Lord Richard Best (RB)</p> <p>RB described the session as invigorating and inspiring. RB described how he is campaigning post-covid for a fund to buy properties and put them into social housing. RB outlined how buying now, switching tenure from the private rented sector directly to social housing, could provide more supply for schemes such as HF.</p> <p>NC briefly paused the Q&A session so Emily Batchelor (EB), Crisis and APPG Secretariat was able to take a photo of attendees.</p> <p>6. Lucy Croxton (LC), NYAS</p> <p>LC asked whether the panel had any information on the demographics of those helped by HF, with particular regard to care leavers.</p> <p>JMD said Homeless Link would be able to help LC with her question, but thought that the goal should be on prevention and making sure these individuals do not end up in the system later on in life.</p> <p>Jo Prestidge (JP), Homeless Link, said that Homeless Link are currently updating their survey information about the use of HF services across England. JP said on the whole HF involves adults but invited attendees to contact her for more information.</p> <p>7. Suzannah Young (SY), NHF</p> <p>SY asked about allocation policy, and whether allocations happened outside of agreed allocation nominations policies with local authorities.</p> <p>JMD said most of them are still operating within their own policy and many of their clients are in the system already and are already waiting for some supported housing. JMD said he would be an advocate of creating something separate, and a flexible model.</p> <p>Neelam Sunder (NS), WMCA said from the perspective of their pilot it was mixed picture but involved small numbers. NS said we have to bring housing providers with us, so they have confidence in the individuals and accommodating them.</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>