

A guide to Housing First for health professionals

This briefing is an introduction to Housing First for health professionals, including among else, GPs, dentists, occupational therapists, pharmacists, hospital and ambulance staff and palliative care teams. For more detailed information visit <https://www.housingagency.ie/housing-information/housing-first>. For local information, please contact the Housing First service in your area (see below).

7. Next steps

Housing First can support the health sector.

- Talk to colleagues about Housing First
- Look at Housing First resources
- Connect with your local Housing First team
- Build partnerships and joint working protocols with Housing First teams

1. What Housing First is

Unconditional access to permanent housing with wraparound health supports. Housing First adheres to seven key [principles](#), [watch video here to learn more](#).

Housing First is housing those with histories of long term homelessness and complex health needs, including physical health.

2. Context

According to the [National Housing First Implementation Evaluation](#), 70% of people have reported two or more physical health conditions and nearly 24% reported having at least 6 health conditions. 60% reported having received at least one head injury.

The mortality of people experiencing homelessness is very high, [42 years or younger for men and 36.5 years or younger](#).

3. Who it is for

People facing multiple exclusion and disadvantage who experience a combination of issues. For many, their current circumstances are shaped by long-term experience of poverty, deprivation, trauma and neglect.

These structural inequalities intersect in different ways, manifesting in a combination of experiences including homelessness, substance use, and mental ill health.

4. Housing First and your role

Health professionals have a vital role in supporting Housing First residents at different points in their journey. Key activities may include:

- Facilitating a referral for a health assessments and taking a flexible approach to the assessment and appointments
- Supporting residents to access mainstream health services
- Working closely with the Housing First team, sharing information and attending multi-agency meetings
- Offering vaccinations, screenings, and health education to promote long-term well-being

5. Your local Housing First Service

TO BE COMPLETED BY HOUSING FIRST SERVICE

Name of service: _____

Lead Contact: _____

Referral information (if relevant):

Any other information:

6. Supporting the approaches

Housing First uses three key approaches:

1. Trauma informed care (access training on HSELand [“Becoming Trauma Aware – An Introduction to Psychological Trauma”](#))
2. [Strengths based practice](#)
3. [Harm reduction](#)

You can read the above resources and seek training to ensure consistency in support.

