A guide to Housing First for substance use professionals

This briefing is an introduction to Housing First for substance use professionals, including those who work in addiction treatment, recovery and community-based services. For local information, please contact the Housing First service in your area (see below).

7. Next steps

Housing First can support the addiction 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 <u>principles</u>, watch video here to learn more.

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

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2. Context

Housing First is a harm reduction model. <u>Most of the Housing First clients (70%)</u> <u>have experienced problems related to</u> <u>their alcohol or other drug use</u>. International evidence shows 70% of Housing First residents reduced their drug use, with 89% reporting an improvement in their quality of life.

Housing First ends homelessness for people experiencing multiple disadvantage and tenancy sustainment rates are between 70-90%

6. Supporting the approaches

Housing First uses three key approaches: 1. Trauma informed care (access training on HSELand "<u>Becoming Trauma Aware – An</u> <u>Introduction to Psychological Trauma</u>"

- 2. Strengths based practice
- 3. Harm reduction

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

5. Your local Housing First Service

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TO BE COMPLETED BY HOUSING FIRST SERVICE

Name of service: _ Lead Contact: ____

Referral information (if relevant):

Any other information:

3. Who is it 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.

4. Housing First and your role

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

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

- Providing flexible appointments and quick access to prescribing services
- Work alongside the Housing First team using Harm Reduction approaches
- Attending multi-agency meetings and provide information and regular updates
- Providing addiction outreach and addiction counselling