

Housing First In Cambridge



Interim Report – June 2022

About this document

This is an interim report into the Housing First project as we have interpreted and implemented that initiative in Cambridge city. A fuller, independent, report will follow when the project has been running for sufficient time to allow a more detailed analysis.

This report:

- sets out the Housing First approach and says how it differs from other measures to deal with homelessness and rough sleeping;
- provides a short account of the development of the local project;
- details the type and number of homes procured for the scheme;
- summarises how the project has been funded, how it is staffed and managed;
- details the number of people assisted to date and the criteria used to select them;
- makes a preliminary assessment of how well the local scheme is working relative to other approaches;
- provides some anonymised case studies at [Appendix 3](#), and
- suggests some areas that might fruitfully be explored in the detailed independent review that will follow.

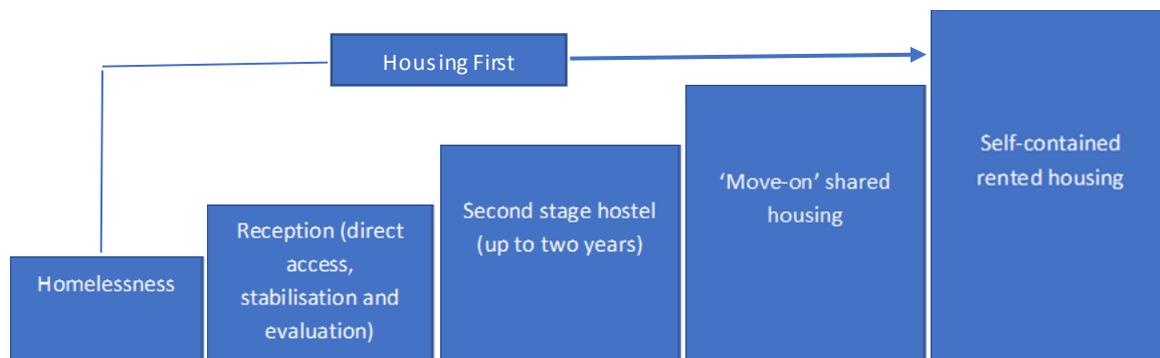
1. Introduction – what is Housing First?

Housing First (HF) is an approach to dealing with chronic and repeat homelessness first developed in North America in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The term was first used as far back as 1988, but the HF model, as recognised today, is usually traced back to the [Pathways Housing First](#) organisation, founded in New York in 1992. Since then HF has become an important element in the national homelessness strategies of Canada, Denmark, Finland and France. As of June 2020 thirteen nations had national HF programmes. In the UK each of the four devolved nations have piloted and evaluated HF approaches.

Most descriptions of HF contrast the HF approach with a linear or ‘staircase’ model which sees an independent tenancy coming at the end of a process where non-housing needs (for example substance abuse) are addressed first. HF turns that on its head: housing comes first; non-housing needs are addressed later – and then only on the initiative of the HF client, as and when they may feel ready. There is just one single condition that a HF client has to observe and that that they sign a tenancy agreement and abide by its conditions.

The ‘staircase’ model and HF are contrasted graphically in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Housing First contrasted with 'staircase' model



A further aspect of HF that sets it aside from other approaches to homelessness is its strong ideological underpinning, typified by the '[seven key principles](#)' set out by Housing First England. In summary these are:

1. People have a right to a home;
2. Flexible support is provided for as long as it is needed;
3. Housing and support are separated;
4. Individuals have choice and control;
5. An active engagement approach is used;
6. The service is based on people's strengths, goals and aspirations; and
7. A harm reduction approach is used.

One very important point to note is that, as applied so far in the UK, HF is not intended to be on offer to all or to even a significant proportion of any local street homeless population. The focus is on those with the most complex needs and particularly those who may have passed several times through the 'staircase' model. This is the group that the [Centre for Housing Policy](#) characterised as the "small, high need, high cost, group of homeless people whose needs are not being fully met by existing services". In a well-designed system, HF is therefore a part of an *integrated* homelessness service and any evaluation of the costs and value for money of HF needs to be seen in this light of the client group it caters to.

The local criteria for acceptance into HF can be found at [Appendix 1](#).

Given the complex needs of the prescribed HF group, it is not surprising that a further feature of the approach is the need for a far greater ratio of support workers to clients. In other rough sleeper services the support worker / client ratio is normally around one to 10 and the support is likely to be time-limited. HF prescribes a minimum ratio of one support

worker to every six clients. Moreover, with HF support begins before, and sometimes well-before, the client moves into accommodation, with ideally the same trusted support worker following the client from street to home. As is shown later in this report, this inevitably makes HF a far more expensive option than other approaches when considered on a cost per client basis. This calculation may not hold when considered globally, taking into account, for example, costs to social, health and criminal justice services, but to make this calculation is beyond the scope of this report.

In the interest of balance, a further preliminary point of note is that, while it is an important indicator of what HF is *not*, the 'staircase' model against which HF is usually contrasted is a simplification – some sources suggest an oversimplification – of much UK practice. Certainly in Cambridge we have always taken a pragmatic approach, allowing non-linear movement between the stages, including backwards movement. Moreover, in recent years we have developed other housing options not reflected in the standard model. This has permitted significant variation including hybrid schemes that cannot be badged as HF but equally do not fit into the linear model. This is an important point because to properly evaluate HF we need to be sure we are not measuring it against a control that does not fully take into account the reality of local practice. Proper detailed analysis will need to await the full independent report but this report will attempt some preliminary comparison between HF and another recent Cambridge initiative, modular homes.

2. Background: The Cambridge Housing First Programme

The drivers

While the City Council's interest in HF was first expressed as early as 2017, deliberations that would lead to the establishment of the local programme only began in earnest in late 2018, stimulated by an upsurge of interest in the claimed effectiveness of HF in reducing rough sleeping in other countries, particularly Finland.

At the same time the government's [rough sleeper strategy](#), published in August 2018, set an ambitious target to halve rough sleeping in the UK from its 2017 figure by 2022 and end it for good by 2027 (subsequently reprofiled to align with the end of the current parliament in 2024).

The rough sleeper strategy makes explicit reference to HF as one of a range of approaches, citing "international evidence [which] shows this could be a vital tool to meet the needs of people sleeping rough with complex needs". £28 million was set aside for three pilots in Manchester, Liverpool and the West Midlands, to be evaluated by Housing First England –

an agency set up by the homelessness charity Homeless Link. Housing First England also has a brief to guide and promote HF.

But driving local interest in HF above all else has been the clear fact that while existing services were of good quality, and have been effective in reducing the number of rough sleepers in Cambridge from its 2016 peak, those services did not seem to provide an effective solution for the “small, high need, high cost, group of homeless people” identified by the Centre for Housing Policy. The question we needed to ask was, could HF provide a better – and better value for money – approach to helping this group to come off and stay off the streets?

The project

Early in 2019 a core working group of officers from City and County Councils was set up, soon after to be supplemented by colleagues from local housing associations, providers of accommodation for rough sleepers and data and communication specialists. These discussions led to the development of an ambitious plan that envisaged 10 HF units being gained by March 2020 with a further 20 being procured over the following two years.

It was agreed that it would be necessary to appoint a project manager to deliver the programme, and that while this officer would be funded by the City Council the appointee would be managed by the County Council’s Counting Every Adult service (CEA) - a service with considerable experience in finding and managing ‘training flats’ for people with a similar profile to those likely to become HF clients. The project manager began work early in 2019 with an initial brief to:

- procure properties;
- agree a criteria for acceptance onto the scheme;
- agree with stakeholders and local homelessness organisations a referral pathway; and
- with others, map current and future need.

It was agreed that accommodation would be procured from three sources: City Homes (the brand of Cambridge City’s council housing service); housing associations with stock in Cambridge, and the private rented sector. Three types of scheme were proposed:

- **HF1.** HF1 would be self-contained units sourced either from City Homes or a housing association.
- **HF2.** HF2 was proposed as an innovative local variant based around three self-contained flats, two of which would be occupied by a HF client while the third (a one or two-bedroom flat) would be occupied on a service tenancy basis by a ‘custodian’ working five

hours a week. The custodian would not be a support worker but someone who would act as a 'good neighbour', keeping an eye on the welfare of the HF client while also looking out for the rest of the immediate community. These clusters would be gained from the Council's housing development programme and, as originally envisaged, would be purpose-built and interlinked with a communal space and a garden shared by all three households. The concept was later modified so that any three flats in close proximity might form the basis of a HF2 cluster.

It was agreed that at least five HF2 clusters would be created within the life of the Council's programme to build (at that time) 500 new council homes.

- **HF3.** HF3 was a speculative initiative intended to procure three-bedroom homes in the privately-rented sector for two single people meeting the HF criteria but expressing a preference to live together.

In the event, largely due to Covid, the project was severely delayed, especially in relation to the procurement programme. Properties gained, by type and date are shown in Section 3.

The Cambridge project in relation to 'pure' HF

An issue to confront at an early stage of this evaluation is to what extent the Cambridge HF project is genuinely 'Housing First' with respect to the model set out in Section 1 of this report.

Starting with HF3, it was acknowledged from the outset that this model was unlikely to pass the 'pure' HF test in that the accommodation would be shared. But HF3 could be seen to be a good fit in other respects: clients would need to meet the agreed profile to be admitted onto the programme; they would need to be prepared to participate in the pre-tenancy work of the HF team, and the support worker to client ratio would remain 1:6. Most important, it would be the choice of clients whether to share with another, and to choose who that person would be. In the event, however, no HF3 units were established, mainly because we pursued another similar initiative using homes taken from City Homes stock.

The HF3 shared accommodation concept was intended to be an inventive response to concerns raised in some early HF research highlighting clients' feelings of social isolation and the persistence of anti-social behaviour. The HF2 idea was similarly grounded in a concern to help prevent problems of this kind occurring. It was particularly hoped that having a resident 'good neighbour' would deal with an additional concern, based on local experience, that the home of the HF client might become a gathering point for friends and others still on the street, or worse, might be taken over by people with more malign intent such as drug dealers.

We did not therefore see HF2, as a model, as departing in any significant respect from the prescribed HF approach. However, it was acknowledged from the outset that offering secure (council) tenancies through City Homes for both HF1 and HF2 would raise difficulties, both in terms of fidelity to the HF model and the sustainability of supply of HF homes.

What difficulties did we perceive? Choice is a significant element within the ‘pure’ HF approach, with clients being able to choose, as far as possible, the home they wanted to live in. But choice will always be constrained by availability and it was understood from the start that in the absence of abundant supply (in large part consequent on the very tight local private-rented sector) offers would be limited to homes we could obtain from City Homes and local housing associations.

In the case of housing associations, their ability to issue assured shorthold tenancies is a great advantage, allowing a failed HF tenancy to be ended relatively quickly and a failing tenancy to be extended indefinitely on a short-term basis conditional on improvement. But in the case of City Homes HF tenancies we are constrained by legislation. We may offer a 12-month introductory tenancy that can be extended by a further six months, but if the tenancy continues beyond the introductory period it must by law become a secure tenancy - and likely a long-term, or even lifetime, tenancy under our present tenancy policy. Once a secure tenancy is gained this severely constrains our ability to deal with a failing HF let. It also means that homes earmarked for HF need constantly to be replaced, and while this may be fine for City Homes HF1 tenancies, for City Homes HF2 tenancies it means that once all HF2 properties become secure then this initiative comes to an end or we need to build further HF2 clusters.

Summing up, then, while there are areas in which our local programme departs from the ‘pure’ HF model, the divergence would not appear to be extreme. (This is not, however, a view shared by all HF support workers whose views can be read at [Appendix 2](#)).

3. HF Homes: Procurement

The following table sets out properties gained by landlord, HF type, first tenancy start date and present status.

Landlord	HF Type	Date of tenancy	Present status
CityHomes	HF1	24/02/2020	Occupied by original tenant
CityHomes	HF2	29/06/2020	Occupied by second tenant
CityHomes	HF2	29/06/2020	Occupied by second tenant

Landlord	HF Type	Date of tenancy	Present status
CityHomes	HF1	07/09/2020	Occupied by original tenant
Catalyst HA	HF1	16/10/2020	Occupied by original tenant
Hundred Houses HA	HF1	07/12/2020	Relinquished
CityHomes	HF1	21/12/2020	Occupied by original tenant
Clarion HA	HF1	22/12/2020	Occupied by original tenant
CityHomes	HF2	15/03/2021	Occupied by original tenant
CityHomes	HF2	05/04/2021	Occupied by original tenant
Catalyst HA	HF1	06/09/2021	Relinquished
Clarion HA ¹	HF1	18/10/2021	Occupied by original tenant
Metropolitan HA	HF1	06/12/2021	Occupied by original tenant
CityHomes	HF1	14/03/2022	Occupied by original tenant

As can be seen, eight of 14 HF homes have been offered up by City Homes, with local housing associations playing a relatively minor role. Four City Homes properties have since become secure tenancies.

4. HF Funding and staffing

Direct funding by the City Council for the HF programme in Cambridge has been fairly undemanding to date, consisting of £60,000 per annum to fund the project manager.

Modest direct spending by the City is mainly due to two successful bids into the government's rough sleeper initiative (RSI) fund, one by the City and the other by the County. Accordingly, in 2021-22 funding for the service in Cambridge City totalled £233,250 which was spent on staffing as follows:

Post	Hours per week
Project Manager	18.5
Team Leader	37
4 Enhanced navigators (support workers)	37 x 4
Business Support Officer	15
Specialist domestic abuse worker	7.4
Total hours per week	225.9

¹ Leased to Cyrenians

5. Preliminary findings

As mentioned, detailed analysis of the efficacy and value for money of HF will need to await the fuller, detailed analysis due to follow. However, certain observations can be made at this point which have value in themselves and which may also suggest lines of enquiry to be pursued further in the full review.

Officer perceptions

To help inform this interim report two sets of officers – those working directly to support HF clients and City Homes officers managing properties with HF tenants - were each asked to complete a short questionnaire. The following sets out some of the clearer themes emerging from that exercise.

HF Advanced Navigators (support workers)

- **Preparing for HF.** Some officers reported spending a significant proportion of their time each week working with clients not yet housed. One reported spending 15 hours a week, another a day each week and another a quarter of their time. Others reported spending only a few hours each week with clients waiting for housing. This variation may reflect that some officers may have most of their clients in accommodation. One officer reported that this “pre-tenancy and relationship-building phase [was] vital to the success of the next phase’.
- **Does HF achieve results?** All eight support workers asked whether HF achieved better results than other approaches known to them reported that it did, some saying so emphatically. Most mentioned a critical factor as being the time that could be taken to build a relationship of trust, possible due to the lower caseloads they carried. Others said that having no end date to the support offered is an important element. Officers’ responses to this key question are set out in full at [Appendix 2](#).
- **Is HF2 a benefit?** Of the three officers with experience of HF2 one felt the onsite officer helped ‘a little’ while the other two said there was no real benefit. One contributor said the presence of an onsite officer made his client feel ‘spied on’. However, another officer said: *“I feel that once the good neighbour had settled into their role and began to fully understand their role, they have been a very useful resource, particularly around safeguarding concerns”*.
- **HF on newbuild sites.** All six officers responding to this question felt that new build sites were unsuitable for HF properties. Officers supported this view with detailed responses which are set out in full at [Appendix 2](#).

- **Is the Cambridge scheme properly HF?** Four of five responding officers believed the Cambridge scheme was not true to HF practice. Their reasons are set out in full at [Appendix 2](#).
- **Housing officer support.** Four responding officers said the support they had received from the landlord's housing officer had been good, one saying 'very good'.

City Homes housing officers

- **Managing HF properties.** Officers with HF properties to manage agreed these tenancies were 'somewhat more difficult' to manage than comparable single occupant one-bedroom homes. One officer cited rent arrears. Another cited higher levels of anti-social behaviour by the tenant and their guests and a higher level of neighbour complaints, adding that a pair of tenants had moved out citing as a reason the behaviour of the HF tenant below them.
- **HF support worker assistance.** When seeking assistance with tenancy management issues, of three responding officers two found the HF support worker to be 'somewhat unhelpful' while the third found the worker to be neither helpful nor unhelpful.
- **Consultation.** Of two officers responding, neither felt they had been adequately consulted about the suitability of the letting before the HF tenancy was created, one saying consultation was extremely poor.

General observations and suggestions for further research

1. The role of HF in an integrated system

As has been detailed earlier in this report, the City's HF programme was first considered in 2017 and seriously developed and planned from 2019. A lot has changed in those years in terms of provision for local rough sleepers. Looking back on meeting notes from 2018 it is clear that without foresight of what was to come in terms of additional funding and housing provision it was thought that HF would need to carry a far heavier burden of 'alternative to hostel' rough sleeper accommodation than now appears necessary.

Changes that have occurred since the local HF programme was first conceived include:

- A major increase in central government funding as a result of the rough sleeper initiative and other funding streams as set out in Table 1 below. This funding has supported the creation of several new street support and tenancy sustainment posts.
- The joint funding by City and County Councils of a new 'Streets to Home' service locking almost £10 million (as set out in Table 2 below) over seven years into supporting

homeless adults, with a particular focus on helping rough sleepers to quickly leave the street. (This service began in April 2022).

- The creation of 22 modular homes providing self-contained, fully-equipped accommodation at affordable rents, with associated support funded from rental income.
- A successful bid for £1.7 million from the government’s rough sleeper accommodation programme (RSAP) to enable the purchase of 14 self-contained homes for rough sleepers with associated support.
- The ‘Everyone In’ initiative to keep rough sleepers safe during Covid. This allowed improved engagement with almost 250 people at risk of sleeping rough and confirmed the importance of intervening early to prevent homelessness. Many of those accommodated under Everyone In went on to gain stable housing.

Table 1: Government funding

Fund	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22
Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI)	£70,000	£94,000	£486,457	£778,745
PRS Access Fund	£15,306	£91,834	-	-
Rapid Rehousing Pathway		£144,737	-	-
Cold Weather	£18,700	£13,907	£77,358	-
Protect Plus	-	-	£5,000	-
Total	£104,006	£344,478	£568,815	£778,745

Table 2: Streets to Home funding

	Annual value (£)	Maximum contract value (£) @7 yrs
Cambridge City	371,364	2,599,548
County Council	973,969	6,817,783
Total	1,345,333	9,417,331

Reflecting further on our thinking at the time the HF project was first conceived, there is a suggestion that the contemporaneous heavy promotion of HF by academics, housing charities and practitioners may have encouraged a sense that HF might substitute for a more significant proportion of local hostel provision than now seems necessary, likely and perhaps desirable. Instead, the mounting evidence is that HF is most effective when used as one of several approaches within an integrated range of services. As one [University of York study](#) put it:

Housing First is highly effective in ending homelessness among people with high and complex needs, but it does not constitute a solution to single homelessness, or rough

sleeping, in itself. The international evidence shows that Housing First services need to be a part of an integrated homelessness strategy to be truly effective.²

We will come on in the final section of this review to consider the better integration of HF into the local service matrix.

2. The future scale of HF provision

It is beyond the scope of this report to say what might be the optimum number of local HF homes we should aim for, but with the increase in supply of alternative provision it is doubtful that the 30 units originally proposed are necessary. As much to the point, it is doubtful that that number can be achieved without increased input from housing association partners or a determined initiative to gain properties in the private-rented sector – a sector widely used in HF programmes elsewhere but currently absent in our own.

A further eight HF2 properties have been earmarked on new housing sites being developed by the Council but, as mentioned, there is some concern about HF on newbuild sites and also the viability of the HF2 concept, as we will go on to see.

As already noted, there are presently 14 housed HF clients, four in units which have become secure tenancies and are unable to be recycled. Agreeing a definitive number of units will be essential if we are to maintain the programme as doing so will determine the rate at which we need to bring on new supply.

A further and vitally-important consideration is that, according to HF principles, support remains offered indefinitely, so that if only a small number of people graduate out of the service, expansion of supply could mean a very long tail of people still receiving intensive support long after being housed. (Support is the single most expensive element of HF). Right now, with four enhanced navigators in the Cambridge team, there is capacity for up to 24 Cambridge clients to be supported, but taking into account that support begins before housing is available and continues afterwards, this does not translate into there being scope to maintain a stock of 24 properties.

We have noted that HF is by no means a cheap option. In crude terms, dividing gross spend by current clients, the cost per client per annum is more than £13,000. It has been noted that a good outcome as a result of HF is likely to save money downstream in health and criminal justice systems, but unless funding can be levered in from these services the burden of funding what could be very long-term support, and the burden of bringing in new clients, will need to be borne by the City and the County. The size and sustainability of the

² Using Housing First in Integrated Homelessness Strategies: A Review of the Evidence

current and any future programme is therefore a question that needs to be settled sooner rather than later.

3. HF2 and new build

It has already been noted that HF support workers and City Homes housing officers alike agree that new build sites are not suitable for HF clients. The [observations of support workers](#) are the more trenchantly expressed, and require some further substantiation, but both groups of officers agree that adding an HF presence to the mix as new communities seek to establish themselves can add discomfort and anxiety to what is an exciting but also often a fraught and sometimes challenging experience for allcomers, HF clients included.

Most, if not all, of the proposed HF element on new build sites will be HF2 – meaning that at least two HF clients will be housed on any site – and this has fuelled further officer concern. It has already been noted that some HF support workers are sceptical about the benefits of having a resident good neighbour, but City Homes officers' concerns are of a different kind, largely centred on the suitability of particular sites. The Ironworks site on Mill Road has been flagged as a site that may not be suitable for HF tenants, largely due to pre-existing street-based antisocial behaviour in the Mill Road area.

Looking now at HF2 in general, research for this report involved a discussion with one of the existing two HF2 'good neighbours' and that officer's manager. This raised the following issues for further consideration:

- The contracted time (five hours a week) allotted to the role was frequently exceeded.
- There are no clear boundaries to the good neighbour role and no obvious way that boundaries could be established. The good neighbour was frequently expected by HF tenants and neighbours alike, to act as the representative of, or spokesperson for, the Council.
- There was no agreed means to cover times when the good neighbour was at work in their main job, or on leave, or otherwise absent from the site.
- With up to eight good neighbours envisaged under the current programme, the burden of administration on the managing officer had not been taken sufficient account of. It was noted that even though their working hours were few, officers needed to be performance appraised, met with, have sick and holiday leave agreed and be trained in the same way as a full time staff member.

6. Summary

With the wealth of national and international evidence showing that Housing First can make a real difference to the lives of homeless people who have otherwise failed, and been failed, multiple times, it is essential for any local authority to have an HF element as part of an integrated homelessness service.

The question arises: Is the present HF scheme in Cambridge properly integrated into the network of services that exist within the city? This is something this initial review cannot definitively answer, but the research that has informed it has suggested the question needs to be explored. As we have seen, a decision was made early in the HF programme to have the new service attach itself managerially and operationally to the existing Counting Every Adult (CEA) programme established within Cambridgeshire County Council. There were sound reasons for this decision as the CEA has long experience of working with a similar client group to the HF group.

However, this operational distance from other City homelessness services may not always work to the service's advantage or to the advantage of those other services. While, as some of the case studies show, the HF service does work with other agencies, and sometimes works well with them, there are indications that this could be improved upon. One suggested area for further examination is whether there might be benefit achieved through an improved common assessment process for all high-needs rough sleepers leading to one of several accommodation options, of which HF would be one. Common assessment could still include a strong element of client choice, and could perhaps even improve on that area. Common assessment would have the potential to enable better service planning, better use of the expanded range of accommodation available for rough sleepers, and also help ensure that the Cambridge HF project is more accountable to the wider homelessness service than at present. It would also act as a valuable counterweight to a view evident across the HF movement, and deriving from its ideological underpinnings, that HF should only be judged on its own terms. It is important that the effectiveness of HF, as an expensive service, is assessed more objectively than this.

This leads to the suggestion – again to be explored further – that the Cambridge City element of HF might be brought into being directly managed within the City Council or incorporated within the Streets to Home service.

In closing, it is important to state that the local HF service impresses by the quality and dedication of the officers it employs. Proponents of HF may claim that the system functions as a whole and its various elements cannot be disaggregated. However, the commitment of HF support workers is surely of note, and this review is very happy so to note it, and give thanks to the officers involved.

Summary of recommendations for further examination

- Does Housing First (HF) provide a demonstrably better solution for long-term rough sleepers than other approaches.
- If HF can be shown to be more successful, can it be said what elements of the HF approach make the difference, and can these elements be duplicated in other non-HF services.
- Should an effort be made to gain a supply of HF homes from the private-rented sector.
- Does HF2 (as described in the report) make a measurably better impact on tenancy sustainment and, if not, should HF2 be continued.
- Should there be no further HF units on new-build sites.
- Should HF in Cambridge be better integrated into the local system, becoming one possible solution in a range of accommodation options accessed through a common assessment tool.
- Subject to agreement with County Council partners, should the Cambridge HF service be taken in-house by Cambridge City Council or alternatively be integrated into the Streets to Home service.

Appendix 1: Eligibility criteria and referral

Eligibility criteria

Adult /over the age of 18	<input type="checkbox"/>
Locally connected at the point of referral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a history of long-term rough sleeping/homelessness	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eligible for single persons rate of HB	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unable to navigate current homeless, housing pathways	<input type="checkbox"/>
Willingness to maintain a tenancy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has multiple needs and fall into 3 or more of the following categories:	
• Poor mental health	<input type="checkbox"/>
• A learning disability	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Problematic drug and/or alcohol use	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Poor physical health, including physical disability	<input type="checkbox"/>
• High rates of experience of contact with the criminal justice system	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Poor social supports i.e. lacks friendships, partner, contact with family	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Exhibits challenging behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Experience of Domestic Abuse (DA) / Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reason for referral Please use this space to evidence how the client meets the eligibility criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include housing history (minimum 5 years) as bullet points with dates • Show how all other pathways have been tried before and why these failed (if known) • Detail the person's multiple needs and how these impacted on previous accommodation 	

Appendix 2

HF Support worker responses

Does HF work?

- “YES. Success is measured on an individual level, not on a wider social measure of what society views to be success. The service is not time limited, which allows for mistakes, changes of mind and learning that is led by the individuals being supported. It’s not easy, Working alongside the HFEN and allowing open conversation around behaviour and support to effect change can be a rocky transition and takes time. It’s a hard process and managing a tenancy is harder than people initially think”.
- “Yes, the principle advantage is the trust that's built up over time to form a relationship that allows meaningful progress to be made in a client's life”.
- “Yes - strengths based approach where housing is separated from other services - positive engagement approach”.
- “Yes. A big advantage for me is no end date to the support offered and lower caseloads, meaning more scope to build trusting relationships and ultimately positives outcomes”.
- “Yes, because time is spent to build rapport and trust with a client. The relationship between worker and client is key to successful outcomes. The client knows that if the accommodation does not work for whatever reason they will not lose their worker. Instead their worker will support them to find alternative accommodation that better meets their needs. This is unique to HF. With traditional services if a client loses accommodation then they lose their worker and start again”.
- “Yes, with the consistent asset support has had a positive effect on our clients. I have seen a marked improvement with their stability, engagement, recovery, Mental health and their own self-worth as well. Coming from Street Outreach I have at one time or another been involved with most clients support and have seen some of these clients continually go round the homeless path way, only being able to remain in the hostel environment for a few weeks at a time before falling out and becoming street homeless again. This continuous loop that many of our homeless community fall into is so detrimental to their mental health and their self-worth. Clients that I have met on the street that have been so chaotic and trapped in that cycle that I would have not envisioned to be able to have and maintain a tenancy are now in established tenancy, through the support that HF provides”.

- “HF is not the magic wand, the process is hard and managing a tenancy is hard. It requires a person to want to manage the tenancy and for this to be of value to them. The lack of time frame and working from rough sleeping through to the meaningful activity / improving social assets is unique, more than just tenancy sustainment”.
- “Having worked in Hostels for 7 years prior to working for HF it was clearly evident that the Hostel System of reward for good behaviour does not work. Hostels are set up to focus on an individual’s weaknesses and not their strengths and can be punitive in their approach. HF benefits include a bespoke wraparound support package co-produced with the client utilising a strength-based approach. Support for as long as the individual requires it with no end date. Working to reduce/minimise harm from substance misuse and associated behaviour is far better than expecting a multi disadvantaged complex needs vulnerable adult to stop using substances in order to receive support and housing”.

HF on newbuild sites

- “In my experience, people have judged our clients on appearance. When you are housing vulnerable or chaotic people in areas where people have paid hundreds of thousands of pounds for their house, they seem to think they have a right to judge whom their neighbours should be. This is a really negative way for our clients to begin their tenancy”.
- “My personal view is that when a new community is establishing itself it is much harder for our clients to blend in. Residents living in these developments often have not experienced living around people from a working class background or grown up on estates where there are individuals who are known to be problematic. Many residents are young couples or families who are moving into their starter homes having rented and have a high expectation of their environment and the behaviour of their neighbours. Having said that I worked with a client who was in Anstey Way and then asked to move as it didn't suit his needs. We moved him to an established community in Fen Ditton and due to his problematic behaviour and impact on neighbours due to his drinking that did not work either. He relinquished his tenancy and after 4 failed tenancies through CEA and HF and a failed attempt to move him out of county he is back living in the woods which is his choice. I mention this as HF clearly doesn't work for everyone who experience multiple disadvantage. Although they do not have to address their addiction issues unless they want to if these issues lead to ASB then eventually this will lead to loss of accommodation, as it would in hotels and supported living - it's just this process usually takes a lot longer. The other issue we have learnt from HF2 is that putting two clients in close proximity with each other invariably means they know each other and

very quickly will associate with each other on some level. This might be borrowing money and alcohol, buying drugs (although no hard evidence of this) and having other members of the streetlife community visiting and adding to the mix. I think if the council insist on continuing to use new builds such as Timberworks they should just have one client with a worker visiting them, and no good neighbour. As the number of clients of HF2 and good neighbours has been so low 7 (5 in Wilson Court, 2 in Ventress Close), 2 good neighbours it is hard to draw conclusions but overall I think the additional cost of employing a good neighbour and putting clients together is questionable”.

- “There is a largely misconception regarding the type of people we support with the general public and unfortunately have a strong unconscious and more unfortunately conscious bias towards our client group. Especially around MH and recovery. Placing one of our clients in a new build with a new unestablished community can make them very visible to others tenants and home owners in that new build. This can easily become a scapegoat for any ASB or other negative experiences within the new build. I am currently dealing with this exact issue with one of my clients and it is having a negative impact on my client regardless of the massive improvements this client has achieved. Is continually making and progressing forward maintaining their tenancy above HF expectation and joint services as well. This could potentially risk their tenancy or risk them going backwards in their journey towards a better life. Placing clients in more establish communities that are not the majority are first time professional home owners, but a more diverse community that has established council and social association would make our clients less visible, would have a much higher chance of being accepted and taken in by the community. which can only have a positive impact for our clients”.
- “I think maybe one person in a site that is new build, if they want it and all the difficulties have been explained. HF modelling, TRUE pure HF modelling, the location and style of the accommodation is chosen by the person being supported. We are meant to go with what the person being supported wants, not focused on where there is availability at the time it comes up. This is back to front. Ventress in particular shows how the people coming through may also have issues that are not always indefinable at Home-Link application process”.
- “The dynamics of a new build are very different to that of an established property. Some residents have high expectations and may be in their first tenancy paying premium rent for their property and feel and do not make our clients feel welcome. Our clients can often be singled out and have in cases felt bullied by other residents. The HF2 Model does not give freedom of choice when looking for a mutually suitable property which is not true to HF Principles”.

Is the Cambridge scheme properly HF?

- “I think HF1 is faithful as worker's caseload has been limited to 6-7 clients which allows the time to build up a relationship, keep going back when clients miss appointments, and time to do meaningful activities such as attend football matches, visit family, go fishing. Although HF2 has its merits I don't think it is less faithful to principles. The original model of having two clients living next to each other and a good neighbour living next door with a shared living space has been watered down for pragmatic reasons. From everything I have read and speaking to workers during training from other HF services in the UK clients placed in dispersed tenancies has the highest chance of succeeding as they can make a conscious effort to break links with previous associates and the problems they bring”.
- I strongly believe that any deviation from the HF principles and the framework that is proven to have the highest positive impact, is not effective. This has been made evident when other local authorities have taken part HF principles and added on their own spin, has not worked. Also my clients have voiced their negative experiences and the negative impact of two clients being placed close together. Cambridge city is a very small city with lots of very small tight knit communities within it, this is no different for the homeless community. Placing two known people together with complex needs would likely impact their progression especially with recovery, harm minimisation and ASB, if one falls off the wagon then the other is likely to as well. Also they become a much more visible target for county lines who actively target our clients and will continuously attempt to gain access and control their tenancy, for their own gains. I think there is a lot of confusion with what a "good neighbour" role actually is both from the clients and other professional services and what their role and what service they provide”.
- “Picking cases up from CEA is not true HF. HF staff are meant to create a trusted relationship with a person and do the pre-tenancy work. Picking cases up from previous failed attempts of other services does not mean HF is going to work. HF has to have the buy in from the person being supported. It has to be explained properly and the principles stuck to. Even then it does not always mean a person will end up in a tenancy, the process may make a person realise that in fact they value where they are (BH at TVP) and that are not ready for a tenancy, or that they are placed back in Willow Walk from a tenancy because the person's behaviour has not changed and is not congruent with what they are saying they want. Insuring people do not return to RS is imperative and HF CB have insured that”.
- “Not if our clients are being placed into HF2, Clients should source their homes through choice based lettings”.

Appendix 3: Case studies

Case Study 1: “Charles”

Charles is a 55-year-old gentleman who has lived in Cambridge all his life. He grew up near the Abbey Pool and had a happy childhood spent swimming and playing football all the time.

He went to Netherhall school and after school worked for many years as a long distance removal driver helping people to relocate to Europe.

Charles has been married twice and it was while with his 2nd wife that he developed a Heroin addiction. Charles has a 13-year-old son who now lives with his sister-in-law.

Charles says he has been in and out of hostels for about 20 years. About 15 years ago Charles suffered a serious head injury due to an unprovoked attack which has left him with PTSD. Charles struggles to trust people and avoids going out or being in crowds.

Last year while Charles was rough sleeping and begging he developed a leg infection due to his IV drug use. After 5 weeks in Addenbrookes he was discharged into temporary accommodation and picked up by the Housing First team as long term rough sleeper.

Charles was referred to Housing First through the Street Outreach Team who had got to know Charles while he was rough sleeping. Charles was on his own and did not associate with other members of the street life community unless to score drugs. He was very reluctant to accept help but eventually he did. During this the Street Outreach Team encouraged him to get scripted and were then involved in facilitating the hospital admission.

A Housing First Enhanced Navigator introduced himself to Charles after he had been discharged from hospital into temporary accommodation. The Navigator explained that Housing First may be a service suitable for someone of Charles's experience and background and suggested meeting once a week for a chat. Charles was hesitant at first to meet and initially was often out or did not answer his door. Over six months Charles and the Navigator got to know each other, and the Navigator supported him with getting his flat furnished from Emmaus and other grants as well as applying for a bus pass and helping Charles to budget.

When a Housing First property became available the Navigator presented Charles's case to the Senior Officer Review Panel (SORP) to be considered for a flat in a new development

with a neighbourhood support person living close by. At the same time Charles's Housing Officer wrote to him explaining that a decision had been made that he was not in priority need and therefore would lose his temporary accommodation at the end of March. Luckily for Charles the SORP accepted his application and Charles moved into his new flat at the beginning of April 2021.

The Navigator supported Charles to move all his belongings to his new home and clean the temporary accommodation he was staying in. Once in his new home Charles was supported to make a claim to pay for his rent through Universal Credit and get set up for all his utilities. Once settled Charles expressed an interest in addressing a long standing debt with a housing association. His Navigator contacted CAB and over the next few weeks helped Charles apply for credit scores and get statements to see if was eligible for a Debt Relief Order to clear his debt. Charles has very poor budgeting skills and was unable to evidence exactly what his money was being spent on so eventually the CAB were unable to continue with the process.

Charles said nearly losing his leg was a wake-up call and he was determined to stay clean. Charles has had one relapse since but continues to work hard to maintain his tenancy. He says he loves the peace and quiet of where he is living and has plans to write a children's book. Charles's dad lives nearby and is poor health. Charles has reconnected with him and visits and helps him most days.

Charles is a sports fanatic and watches football, golf, tennis, cycling, snooker and horse racing whenever it is on. Charles and his Navigator have been to see Cambridge Utd play at home and have met to play golf and pool on several occasions.

During a recent conversation between Charles and Jayne from SUN Network Charles said the following:

When you go to the doctors or any organisation you have to go through your history all over again.

They said I was 'Intentionally homeless! They are quick to stick that label on you.

People are all different, they are all moving around the various provisions and hostels, trying to find the right person to support them, someone you connect with and can work with you. Not everyone is going to get on with everyone.

What stresses me out most about going through a hard patch is the worry of whether I might be tempted to self-medicate.

Having one person that helps me with housing and connects me to other organisations is perfect. I can't put it into words how good they are. I also talk to them after I have a wobble which is helpful.

Ten months on Charles continues to maintain his tenancy and still meets regularly with his Navigator. Following a misunderstanding with his script a few months ago Charles made the decision to come off Methadone completely against the advice of his Drug Worker. His Navigator supported Charles during the next 6-8 weeks with food parcels and other support as he rarely felt well enough to leave his flat. Charles has now come through this and is very proud to be substance free. He was suffering from knee pain following the leg operation but has now been prescribed pain relief and states he is feeling the best he has in a long time. Charles will continue to experience challenges but with a stable home he is now much better equipped to face these head on.

Case Study 2: "Peter"

Peter is a 43-year-old client who has struggled with alcohol and substance misuse since he was a teenager. Peter is currently scripted for methadone and alcohol dependent. He is motivated to become clean of methadone and alcohol and is starting with alcohol. He is going through the process of getting a residential detox and rehab and has kept drink diaries and reduced his alcohol intake to about 20 units a day. Once dry Peter would then like to gradually come off the methadone. Peter smokes cannabis daily which he does not wish to quit.

Peter became involved in drugs as a teenager after he was asked to leave the family home aged 12. He moved in with a friend whose family was involved in dealing and other criminality and became involved himself. During time spent in a young offender's unit following sentencing for involvement in drug dealing Peter experienced abuse and this trauma led to his own drug use escalating into using heroin. Peter states he has PTSD, OCD, depression, and anxiety and believes that cannabis helps with these conditions.

Peter was married in his 20's and ran a gardening and cleaning business with his wife, which also employed staff. Peter states this was a good time in his life, and he was able to get a house with his wife and have a daughter with her. When she left him, he lost the house and then experienced about 20 years of rough sleeping and staying in accommodation provided for rough sleepers, such as Jimmy's, The Victoria Project and 451 Newmarket Road. However, he would always lose his bed as he found the rules difficult to abide by and finds being around others from the street life community problematic.

Peter previously had a tenancy through a housing association, which he lost during his last time in prison. People he met in prison moved in and took it over while he was still in prison and he run up rent arrears of £3125 during this time, mainly because Housing Benefit hadn't been applied for.

In the summer of 2021 Peter was rough sleeping on the outskirts of Cambridge. Street Outreach made referrals to 451 and Housing First. He secured a place at 451 and a Housing First Enhanced Navigator started working with him in September. Peter lost his bed at 451 in December and was transferred to Master's House (Covid-19 accommodation) where the Navigator continued to visit him. When that closed, he moved to Jimmy's and the Navigator met him there until a suitable tenancy became available. Peter moved into a Housing First tenancy on 18 October 2021. The property is owned by Chorus Homes and the tenancy is managed by Cyrenians.

Peter states that because of his traumatic experiences as a teenager he struggles to trust men and prefers to work with women. However, over time we got to know each other, and he has learnt to trust that I have his best interests at heart.

Since moving in Peter has settled well and states that he loves his new home. Peter meets a Cyrenians worker every two weeks who supports him to manage the bills. His Navigator meets Peter at least once a week. During this time he has supported him to furnish his flat and he keeps it very clean and tidy. Peter struggles with his feelings and benefits from being listened to, sometimes he prefers to do this at the local café.

Peter has two good friends which he sees most days and spends a lot of time with them fishing on the river. Both friends have had similar backgrounds and they support each other, while avoiding old associates from the street life community.

Peter continues to face challenges and often feels targeted by the neighbours who see him as 'different'. Peter is now enjoying cooking and eating well and because of being in settled accommodation his drinking and drug use has reduced. Peter is optimistic about his future and has ambitions to reconnect with his daughter once he is sober and clean and is interested in joining the Housing First fishing group.

Case Study 3: "Ron"

Ron is a 56-year-old multi-disadvantaged vulnerable adult with a 40-year history of substance misuse and homelessness. Ron was placed into care at an early age. Ron was

subsequently sexually abused whilst being in care. Ron started abusing substances and alcohol to block out early childhood trauma. In his mid-teens Ron was using Heroin, was alcohol dependent, rough sleeping and had served time in custody. Ron has been in a relationship and has children however he has had no contact with them for over 20 years. Ron also struggles with his sexual identity and says this had a profound effect when trying to form relationships with either sex.

Ron has unsuccessfully accessed all the Homeless Accommodation Hostels in Cambridge before having his own tenancy, unfortunately due to Ron's vulnerability his flat was taken over by drug dealers and he was forced to abandon his home. Ron was then found to be intentionally homeless and returned to a street-based lifestyle and rough sleeping. This continued lifestyle has ultimately taken its toll on Ron's health and in 2018 he was given a life expectancy of 10 years due to Pulmonary Hypertension.

Ron began accessing rough sleeper accommodation and in 2017 returned to Willow Walk Hostel, however behavioural issues and addiction resulted in Ron being evicted in 2021. Ron was then referred to Temporary Accommodation and later referred to Housing First. Initial pre tenancy engagement started, and Ron appeared very eager to access accommodation through Housing First. Ron was invited to view a property which he accepted in September 2021.

Initially Ron's tenancy started well, and he appeared to have a good relationship with his neighbours and Ron continued to engage well with Housing First. Ron mentioned he was struggling with loneliness and was encouraged to attend meaningful activities and although he genuinely seemed interested his addiction came first. Ron started to invite members of the street life community back to his home to relieve his boredom and feeling of isolation, within a few weeks Ron was struggling to turn people away from his home. Ron's neighbours started to report incidents of anti-social behaviour and drug dealing from his home, a known sex worker was also frequenting his home and reports of prostitution had been reported to his landlord and the Police.

Ron denied all allegations against him and tried to counter complain that his neighbours had it in for him from the start and they had conspired to get him evicted. Eventually Ron was informed he would be facing eviction if the behaviour continued however, he failed to make any changes. Ron's landlord informed Housing First that he would now be facing eviction. Ron decided to relinquish his tenancy and was referred to rough sleeper accommodation.

Housing First contacted Crossways the winter provision for rough sleepers, who agreed to offer Ron a temporary bed. This was on the understanding that the bed was temporary until more permanent supported accommodation could be found. Ron's indicated that ideally, he

would like to return to Willow Walk. Ron's Navigator was able to arrange this, and Ron eventually moved from Crossways to Willow Walk.

Ron's landlord commended the Housing First team on how they had handled the situation and have since offered another property for another client. Although the placement failed on this occasion it was a good learning exercise for the team, demonstrating that a client needs to be at a stage where they are genuinely ready and willing to take on the responsibility of a tenancy and make the necessary changes to make this a success. Ron has also had time to reflect that although it was what he thought he wanted he was not ready for his own place yet but might be in the future. He has acknowledged his vulnerability from others who impacted on his tenancy and the need for future accommodation options to take this in to account.

Case Study 4: "Sam"

Sam is a 42-year-old multi-disadvantaged vulnerable adult, with a 10-year history of substance misuse and homelessness in Cambridge. Sam suffers with a genetic condition where he gets kidney stones and was prescribed opiate based painkillers as a teen. Sam became addicted to these and when his GP stopped his medication, he sought an alternative which was heroin. Sam is also alcohol dependant. Sam has a son whom he has no contact with which is quite traumatic for him to think about. One of the side effects of the opiate addiction is that while using this drug Sam does not think about this situation that causes him so much emotional distress.

Sam has unsuccessfully accessed most of the Homeless Accommodation Hostels in Cambridge and spent a long period of time sofa surfing at a good friend of his. He had never maintained hostel supported accommodation as he did not 'engage' with the support that was offered so would lose his room or simply abandon. Whilst he was staying there with his friend the flat got taken over by county lines dealers and his good friend was arrested and remanded. During this time Sam had been supported by Housing First as a 'secondary' client as Housing First were supporting his good friend. A secondary client is a person who is a friend or 'significant other' of the client that is supported by Housing First and is important in their network. They might frequently stay or visit them, and it can impact on the client's tenancy. When his friend was remanded, we picked Sam up as a full client to support him out of the tenancy. In doing this we liaised with the City Council Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team and the Housing officer to explain to Sam what actions would be taken if the ASB continued.

Housing First worked with Sam to help him understand the impact his behaviour was having on his friend's tenancy and the impact his and associates' behaviours was having on the wider community. Through explanation, discussion and persistence Housing First and Sam broke down some fears around re-accessing the Homeless pathway which he had not access for 3 years. Sam was also at a point where he was ready to accept help and his engagement improved drastically. Due to the ASB surrounding the flat, it was important for Sam's friends' sake that we moved Sam out. Through dialogue and physical support Sam agreed to go to Crossways, the winter provision and settled in well. From his positive experience at Crossways, he agreed to a move to Jimmy's when the provision ended. The conversations his Navigator had with Sam was that he was really keen to access one of the modular homes.

Sam's Navigator completed a referral with Sam for the modular homes and submitted it. Sam was successful and has been offered a modular home, due to move in by the end of June. Sam will continue to be supported by Housing First until he has moved into the modular home, where the support on offer there will take the lead. Sam and his Navigator will continue the work with ID, bank account, benefits and Home-Link.

Whilst Sam has not accessed a Housing First tenancy, the work with him has helped identify a pathway that might work for him and break the 10 year cycle of homelessness. It has also helped Sam to integrate in to services that he had previously felt unable to. It has meant his friend continues to live in a Housing First tenancy.