



Housing First

Rebecca Sloan



FEANTSA

POD MAATSCHAPPELIJKE INTEGRATIE
BETER SAMEN LEVEN
SPP INTÉGRATION SOCIALE
MIEUX VIVRE ENSEMBLE



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Background

- Commissioned to run Housing First by Newcastle City Council in April 2014.
- Had been doing something very similar but loosely structured before this for a number of years, using goodwill and existing private landlord contacts built up through my time working for Your Homes Newcastle.



Job Role

- Service lead for the H1st Project. Previously worked for Your Homes Newcastle for eight years and built up steady, reliable and conscientious private sector landlords.
- Primary contact for liaising with all landlords and allocating clients to support workers. Can be tricky but strive to match up from the very beginning and get the “right” worker to work with the “right” client.



Job Role



Housing First is obviously founded on the principle of housing being a basic human right and provides permanent accommodation for rough sleepers or for those for whom the linear “staircase” model does not work. There are no preconditions of addressing wider social care and support needs but that through housing and supporting those who are chronically street homeless with multiple and complex needs they will, almost by osmosis, find themselves addressing their needs.



Job Role

- Due to primarily using private landlords a large part of the role is also to ensure that all staff members on the H1st team (both new and established) know how to go about ensuring the tenancy is set up as best as possible from the beginning in order to give the client the best possible chance at success.



Added Value of Peer Worker

Concrete Example

- M.S. Male client. Entrenched rough sleeper (5+ years), mental health, substance misuse, recidivist, distrusting of services and accommodation providers.



Added Value of Peer Worker

Concrete Example

- S.R. Female client, entrenched rough sleeper for 4+ years. Prison to streets to prison. Poly drug misuse, high levels of self harm, severe mental health; almost became institutionalised in supported accommodation.



Support Workers with Previous Experience of Services

- Shared experiences of service provision. Workers with experience can use insight and “know” what worked for them in that situation and advise clients how to navigate services, especially when the client has previously had poor reactions to services.



Support Workers with Previous Experience of Services

- Apart from natural “empathy” and understanding in a number of instances, support workers with previous experience of services also have a large and positive impact on other staff members who have not had the same experiences.



Challenges

- Client expectations!

Some clients have too high expectations of what is available to them. It is a matter of balancing out these expectations and ensuring that the client is not disappointed but knows what they are entering into.



Challenges

- Landlords!

We utilise a relatively small “pool” of landlords who we have built up trust and a sound working relationship with over a number years.

Landlords largely want an “easy” life with no issues. Our client group often bring issues in abundance.



Challenges

- Most difficult?

Apart from constantly dealing with clients' expectations and landlords contacting about issues the most obvious challenge we have faced has been (intermittently) a financial one relating to repairs through damage by a handful of clients.



Remaining Challenges

- Total integration of services as wraparound support mechanism.
- Identifying new landlords (ongoing but will always be a challenge as we cannot use social / council housing).
- Area of settlement.
- Continuous support to clients; can become too dependent on the worker but with level of need it can sometimes be difficult to “discharge” from service. Further work to be done to identify other organisations / agencies to provide lower level floating support.



Thank You

Rebecca Sloan

rebecca.sloan@changing-lives.org.uk

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