

Housing First supporting people to leave homelessness behind

There she saw how the team are supporting people to move off the streets into housing.

Housing First is designed to support people who need significant levels of help to move away from homelessness. People receiving support are offered a place to live and then offered tailored, long term support to help enable them to manage a tenancy independently.

Last month, the Minister announced over £548,000 for the Salvation Army and Cardiff Council for two projects to work closely in the capital. Cardiff Council are establishing a new Housing First pilot to run alongside the existing Salvation Army pilot project, meeting demand locally. Since the Salvation Army's project began, not only have they supported eight people into tenancies, but their help has resulted in none of the eight people having been admitted to A&E.

Julie James said:

“The fantastic team here in Cardiff are supporting people to live independently. I was able to speak with Chris and hear how this approach is helping him to move forward with his life.

“Housing First can help people who are homeless and who often have complex needs including mental illness, problems with drug and alcohol abuse, poor physical health and a lack of a wider support network.

“This approach provides people with flexible support for as long as they need it and focuses on what that person might need to recover and live independently.

“This project is supporting some of the most vulnerable people in Wales to move away from living on our streets. I share the determination of everyone here at the Salvation Army, across the local authorities and charities working to tackle homelessness and improve the lives of people who find themselves without a secure, suitable home.

“We know that this not the right approach for everyone who is homeless – there is still a need for supported housing and temporary accommodation. However, projects like this one in Cardiff can play an important role in supporting people, particularly those who have been sleeping rough for a long time, to be able to sustain a tenancy.”

Yvonne Connolly, Regional Manager for The Salvation Army's Homelessness Services Unit Wales and the South West said:

"It was a pleasure to discuss with the Minister the ground-breaking results that have been achieved by the Housing First Cardiff programme with some of the most marginalised and hard to reach people in our capital city.

"Housing First is a lifelong model which supports individuals out of rough sleeping by first making them a tenant in their own home and intensive, assertive and flexible support to maintain tenure of the property is offered throughout."

Housing First Projects are designed to ensure that the individual has choice and control – they are actively encouraged to engage with support services such as mental health or substance abuse, but they are not required to do so in return for support.