

Homelessness programme continues in Walsall



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A programme which helps tackle homelessness in Walsall has been given funding to continue its work for a minimum of a further two years.

FryAccord, which is part of Accord Housing Association, along with Walsall Council launched the Housing First programme as a pilot in November 2017, and has so far helped 25 long term homeless people find somewhere to live in Walsall, and supported them to stay there.

The additional funding will allow the partnership to continue to support these 25 and help up to a further 63 homeless people within the Walsall area.

Council Outreach Officers will work closely with FryAccord to identify people who may be in need of support. Once a person is identified and they are happy to receive help, they will be given a tenancy, and FryAccord will provide them with the support they want. The accommodation will be provided by Accord and a number of other landlords in a partnership approach.

The service not only offers people a home, but it also provides support which is flexible to the needs of the individual, links to mental health and substance abuse support services where required, as well helping people register with a GP.

One person, who was sleeping rough for seven years, accessed the service during the pilot. He said: "I was homeless for seven years and the staff at Housing First have looked after me. I couldn't ask enough of Housing First, it is too good to be true."

Housing First in the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) is funded through a Â£9.6 million grant from the Government and the West Midlands is the first area in the UK to trial the scheme as part of this government funded

pilot. First launched in Finland, Housing First works with councils, housing associations and support groups.

Chris Handy, Chief Executive at Accord said: "Tackling homelessness is at the heart of what we do and Housing First is a brilliant programme. We are pleased that we have been successful in our bid meaning we will be able to continue providing and expand this service in Walsall.

"This is a really important bid for us as it meets one of our critical aims in terms of supporting rough sleepers in to independent tenancies, our pilot has seen some really positive customer outcomes and we now have the opportunity to replicate our service offer with a number of opportunities arising across the Midlands."

Councillor Adrian Andrew, Deputy Leader of Walsall Council said: "The success of Housing First stems from its unique working partnership with the WMCA (West Midlands Combined Authority) Walsall Council, local housing groups and the private sector. We are pleased that this relationship is set to continue.

"The project has already supported a considerable number of vulnerable rough sleepers in the borough and will continue to offer them hope and appropriate support so they can make meaningful change in their lives that we are committed to continue."

For more information about Housing First visit: <https://bit.ly/2RXw1gb>
