

An Introduction to Housing First

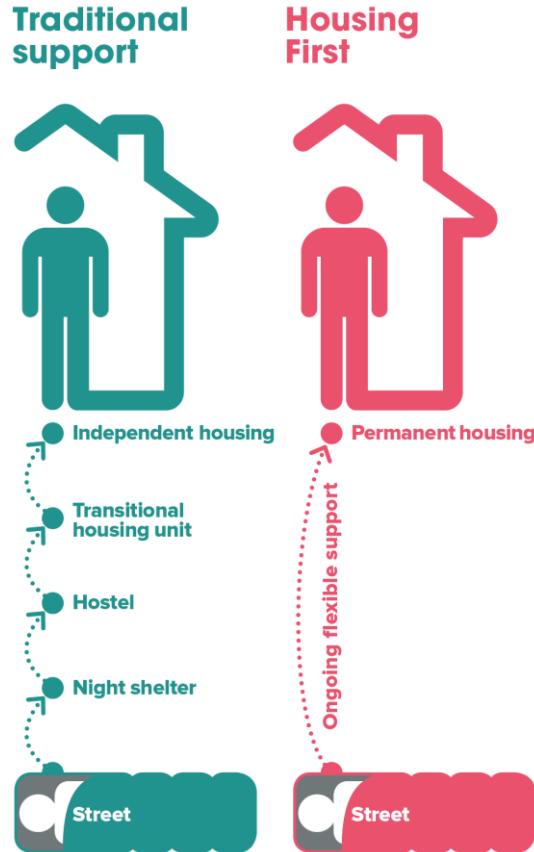
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Piloting Housing First for survivors of domestic abuse

Louisa Steele

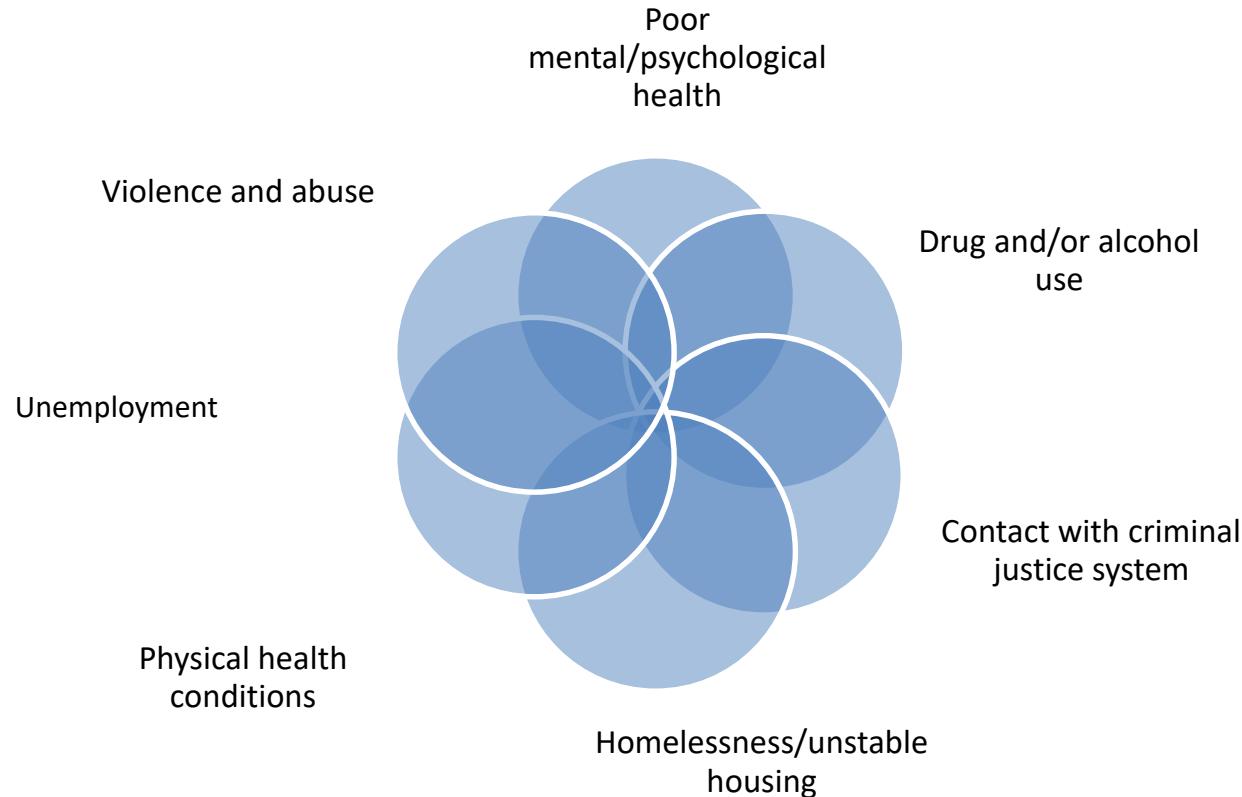
Housing First and Homelessness Coordinator
Standing Together Against Domestic Violence

What is Housing First?



- Unlike traditional staircase approach
- Permanent offer of a home
- No conditions other than maintaining tenancy
- Flexible, person-centred support – the accommodation and support is tailored to the individual.
- International evidence base

Who is Housing First for?

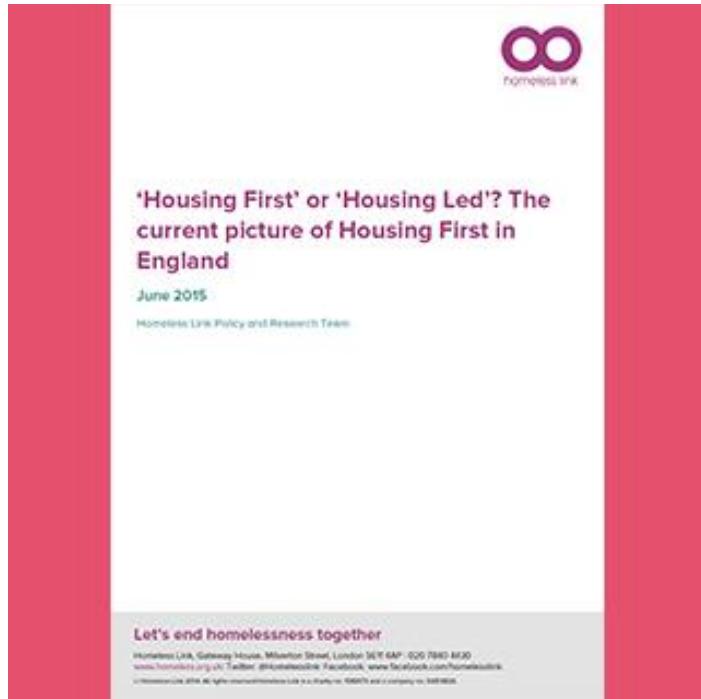


Where is it being used?

- Widely adopted across the US
- Central to national homelessness strategies in some countries
- Growing in popularity across other European countries
- A number of services and pilots in England and devolved nations
- Service models vary depending on context



Background in England



'Housing First or Housing Led' scoping report (2015) found:

- The fidelity to the core principles in practice was mixed
- 1. Some adopting core principles of Housing First
- 2. Others drift – low intensity support or lower needs clients
- 3. Others - just floating support

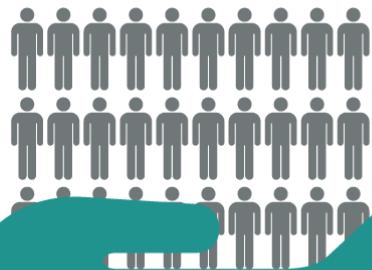
The principles

1. People have a right to a home
2. Flexible support is provided for as long as 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
7. Harm reduction approach is used



That sounds like floating support..

Traditional support



20-40 people

Caseload

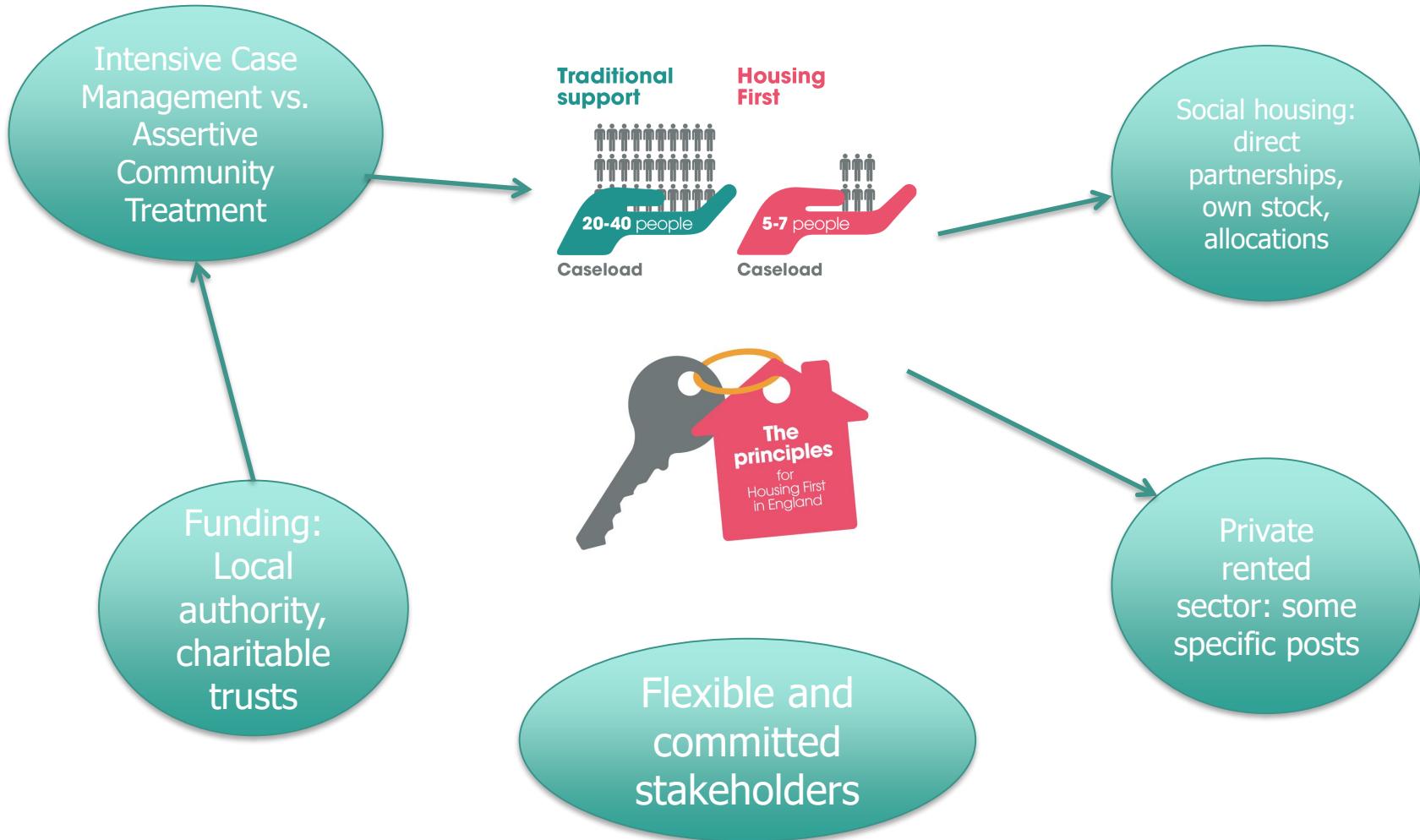
Housing First



5-7 people

Caseload

Ingredients of Housing First



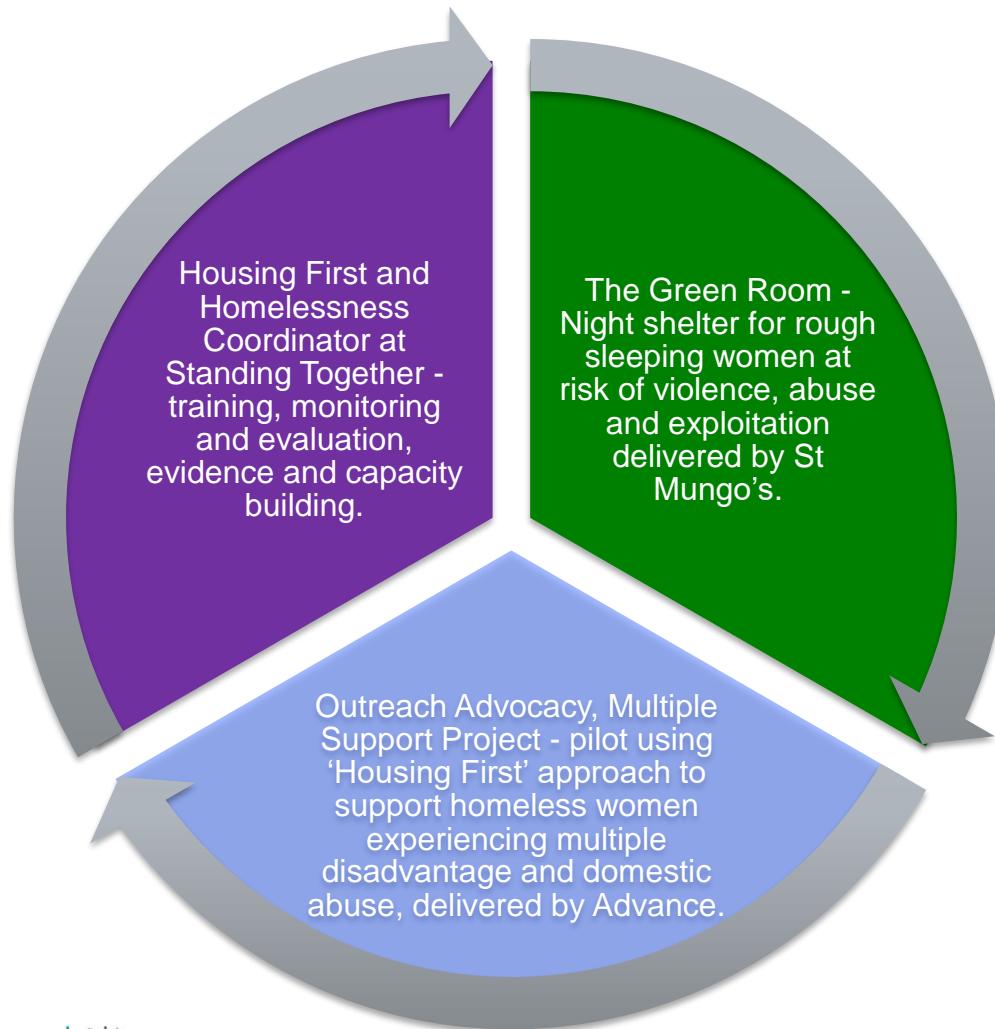
Does it work?



International evidence base:

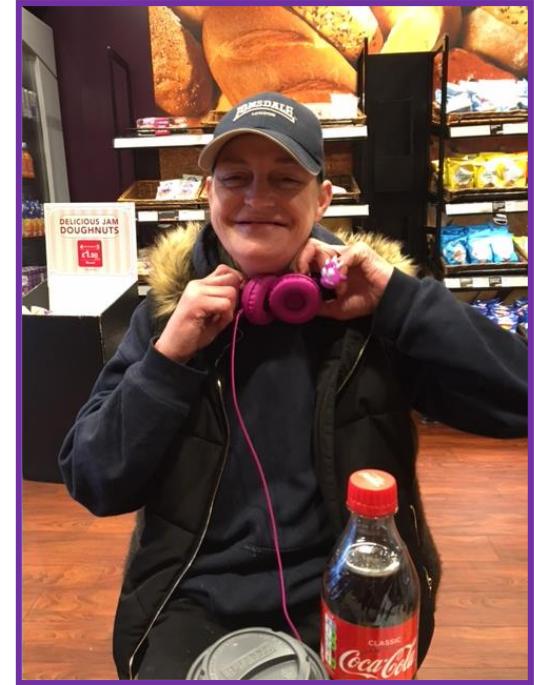
- Consistent trends despite context
- Tenancy sustainment
- Health and wellbeing
- Substance misuse
- Anti Social Behaviour and ineffective service use

Supporting women affected by domestic abuse and multiple disadvantage in West London: the partnership response



Piloting Housing First with women experiencing domestic abuse in West London

- Two specialist outreach advocates are supporting up to 20 women, and will pilot Housing First with this client group. Assertive outreach to engage women in hostels/street homeless women.
- Delivered by Advance, a women's specialist service provider.
- Innovative partnership with housing providers.
- Wrap around, trauma informed support with added focus on specialist risk management and safety planning around domestic abuse.
- Physical safety as a pre-requisite for emotional safety – trauma and gender informed support.



Case Study: Debbie

Women tell us what works for them

“**Women need to feel safe** with the person they are talking to, this is the most important. I met them for the first time and I felt really comfortable talking with them

“And actually I have gone through a lot, I have survived abuse, the streets... what I want is someone to say, **you are strong.**”

“Its constant. I don’t like being given a worker, and then them being taken and then given different people all the time. They’re there, even when I tell them to fuck off.
Consistency.”

THANK YOU!

Thank you all for listening!

Special thanks to the organisations who have worked closely with Standing Together to better support women affected by domestic violence and abuse, and multiple disadvantage:

St Mungo's, Advance, Homeless Link, LB Westminster, LB Hammersmith and Fulham, LB Kensington and Chelsea.