

Housing Association secures two more Housing First contracts in the West Midlands



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A leading housing association will change the lives of 170 rough sleepers, as it prepares to launch two more Housing First programmes in the West Midlands.

Accord Housing Association, will deliver the service in Sandwell and Solihull working closely with both councils to help 82 long-term rough sleepers get off the streets and into accommodation.

The service not only offers people a home, but it also provides support which is flexible to the needs of the individuals; for example creating links to mental health and substance misuse support services where required, and help to register with a GP to improve overall health and wellbeing.

These two new contracts build on the success of Accord's existing Housing First programme, which has been supporting long-term rough sleepers in Walsall since November 2017.

Chris Handy, Chief Executive at Accord said: "Housing First is a fantastic programme and working with Sandwell Council and Solihull Borough Council, Accord will now be able to support even more long-term rough sleepers across three West Midlands boroughs, helping people to get back on their feet and find suitable accommodation.

"Being able to support rough sleepers into independent tenancies is one of our key aims, and as we have already seen real progress in Walsall; I am confident that we can now make a real difference to people's lives in Sandwell and Solihull."

In total Accord has secured around Â£2.2million of funding from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), which will help support a total of 170 rough sleepers across the three boroughs by 2021. The WMCA is funding the delivery of Housing First programmes through a Â£9.6 million grant from the government to the West Midlands.

Councillor Joanne Hadley, Sandwell's Cabinet Member for Homes, said: "We are pleased to have appointed Accord

Housing Association to deliver our Housing First pilot and we have been impressed with the way they have delivered this service in other parts of the West Midlands.

“We believe we will develop a positive partnership that will provide access to safe, secure and affordable housing with appropriate levels of support for homeless people in Sandwell who otherwise might be excluded from accessing these services because of the complexity of their needs.”

Councillor Karen Grinsell, Solihull Council’s Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health and Deputy Leader, added: “Solihull Housing First will receive more than £500k to support up to 27 people with multiple and complex needs over the next three years.

“The accommodation is not conditional upon the person accepting offers of support or presenting as ‘housing ready’. People are allocated a secure tenancy and support is tailored to meet their needs, delivered in their home or their community. We have commissioned Solihull Integrated Addiction Service and Accord to provide this service and they are already making progress with our clients.”

A major success in Europe, especially in Finland, Housing First works with councils, housing associations and support groups. For more information about Housing First visit: <https://bit.ly/2RXw1gb>
