

Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) in Europe: Concept, Developments and Prospects

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Aims of session

- Detail aims of HF4Y Europe programme of work
- Outline proposed principles, and broader framework, of HF4Y
- Introduce Rock Trust (Scotland) pilot
- Case study of Focus Ireland (Ireland) project
- Outline other developments in Europe
- Consider the future for HF4Y
 - potential and challenges
- Conclusion

Why HF4Y?

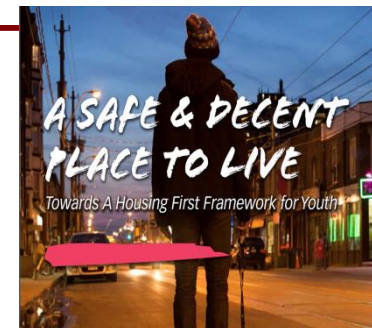
- How are youth different from the adult homelessness population?
 - Age
 - Adolescent development
 - Experience
 - Dependency and support



Aims of HF4Y Europe

- define the concept of HF4Y in Europe
- test HF4Y in several pilot projects:
 - Dublin, Ireland (Focus Ireland), Edinburgh, Scotland (Rock Trust) & possibly England, The Netherlands, France & Slovenia.
- identify and deliver staff training
- establish a community of practice
- develop an evaluation model and
- develop a knowledge mobilization strategy

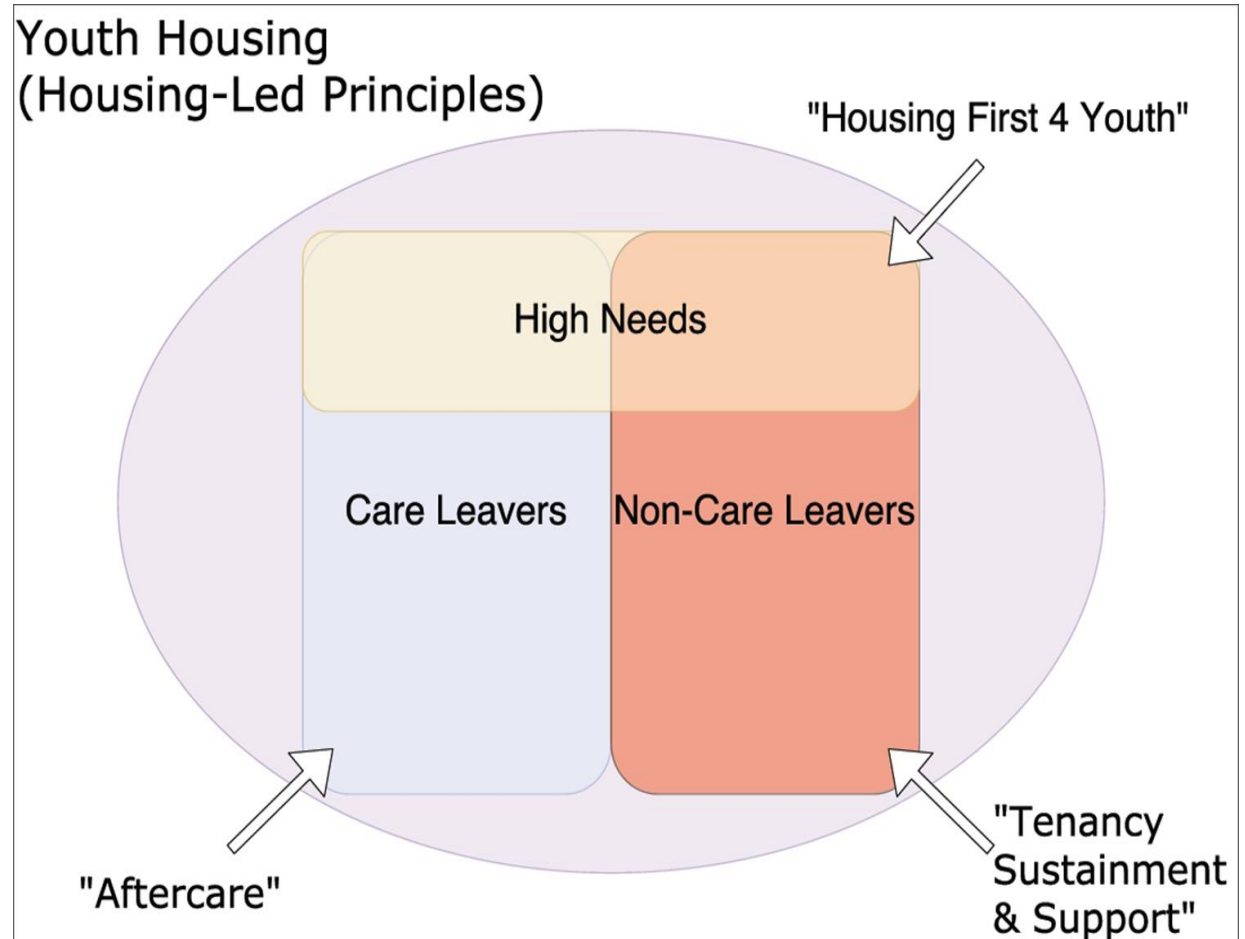
Concept of HF4Y



- Canada leading development of a HF4Y framework – ‘A Safe and Decent Place to Live’ (Gaetz, 2017)
- 5 core principles:
 - A right to housing, with no preconditions
 - Youth choice, youth voice and self-determination
 - Positive youth development and wellness orientation
 - Individualised and client-drive supports with no time limits
 - Social inclusion and community integration

Youth housing model

FOCUS
Ireland



Rock Trust, Scotland

- Priority on young people leaving care
- Fully furnished tenancies by Almond HA
- Intensive Case Management approach – 5 young people; f/t worker and p/t assistant; 24/7 cover with on-call systems
- Funding – guaranteed for 2 years, working to extend
- Adopted Housing First for England principles
- Evaluation and training

Focus Ireland Youth Housing

- Focus Ireland Strategic Plan 2017-2020
 - Prevention
 - Sustained exits
- Built on research and evidence base.
- Expanding HF4Y in Dublin

Objectives of Focus Ireland Youth Housing:

- Experience stable accommodation and create permanent connections.
- Provide a home with supports until young people are ready to move on to appropriate long-term secure accommodation.
- Personal development, attainment of independent living skills and the acquisition of social capital.



Limerick Youth Housing

- Commenced in May 2013 – housing and outreach service
- First young person housed in July 2013
- The service is funded jointly between Focus Ireland, Tusla, Limerick City/County Council & the JP Mc Manus Trust.
- Referral agents; Tusla Aftercare, Homeless Action Teams and HSE Disability service.
- Partnership approach to supporting young people.

Evaluation of Limerick Youth Housing

- Evaluator = Just Economics UK
- Research design:
 - 14 semi-structured interviews were conducted with young people at different stages of using the service
 - Before/after scales on key areas incorporated into interview.
 - Three workshops with Tusla, Focus Ireland and Limerick Council (total of 50 attendees)
 - Analysis of service level data
- Literature review focusing on determinants of exits from homelessness
- Basic cost-benefit analysis

Key findings (1)

■ Service level data:

- ❑ 60 young people have accessed the service
- ❑ Outcomes:
 - 85% have achieved some kind of housing stability, with over half showing some ability to manage own tenancy (e.g. tenancy agreement) (n=32)
 - 85% of all customers (including outreach) have also accessed some kind of education/training or employment, although we do not know about how sustainable this outcome was over time (n=54)

■ Staff perspectives:

- ❑ Partnership approach key to success
- ❑ Regular meetings (allocations)
- ❑ Allows for creative thinking and forward planning
- ❑ Resolves inter-agency problems that may emerge

Key Findings (2)

- Before and after YH:
 - Before youth housing, **physical health** was below average; after in line with average for self-reported health for Ireland (82%) (Eurostat, 2015).
 - Scoring of **life satisfaction** saw a change in average ratings from 4.8/10 to 8/10. These scores move from being in the very low range to being above the national average (7.4/10)
 - 7/14 who answered the question had been in contact with the **criminal justice** system prior to engaging with the service but there were no reported contacts since joining the service
 - Improvement in average scores for satisfaction with **relationships** (4/10 to 7.6/10)
 - ½ of young people were in **education/training**.
 - **Areas of weakness** – mental health support and engagement in employment.
- A simple comparison between the cost of the service and the costs of emergency accommodation showed a 'return on investment' of **€1.60 is saved for every €1 invested**

Other developments

- England (following Homeless Link request for information)
 - 1625 Independent People; Bristol; care leavers
 - St Mungo's HF; Brighton and Hove; 2 places on existing scheme
 - SHE project, Lancashire, looking at potential for young people with offending histories
 - Sheffield City Council looking at scheme for young people with high needs not doing well in hostels
 - The Y (Leicester), P3 and Derbyshire YMCA; large, existing scheme; 14:1 ratio
 - DePaul Trust; setting up large scheme, 100 plus young people, particular focus on young people in and leaving care

Other developments

- Denmark - Esbjerg municipality, local housing associations, Hjemløses Venner (NGO) / Copenhagen?
- Finland – part of wider HF approach - National Youth HA
- Belgium - Kaizen and Cachet – transitioning to HF
- Netherlands – Humanitas Onderdak
- Slovenia – Kings of the Street
- Others – perhaps some of you sitting here?

Future potential

- Likely to be many service providers working very closely to the model (for example, housing for care leavers); potential to harness and develop their experiences and grow network
- Possibly easier to gain consensus within youth homelessness sector than whole housing sector?
- Trans-Atlantic connection providing inspiration and potential structures
- Housing First Europe Hub's mission to scale up HF – this is a key area to support research, training & practice
 - www.housingfirsteurope.eu

Challenges

- A number of challenges to operationalising HF4Y were identified at the 2017 FEANTSA Youth Study Session, including:
 - Often no local or national recognition of a right to housing; requires investment in affordable housing (in right locations to facilitate choice)
 - Trauma Informed Care (TIC) and Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) are not widespread in services
 - Time limits/ deadlines for services are common throughout Europe; how to change this?
 - Employment and education opportunities are constrained for young people across Europe

Other challenges

- Confusion and/or watering down of concept:
 - around separation of housing and support and where transitional services sit within framework;
 - intensity and length of support (re: housing led services)
- More generally, challenging and changing existing systems of youth homelessness support
- Also risk of switching completely leading to end of transitional housing? (Sunderland, England)
- How development fits into wider Housing First developments – how different/ niche should it be?
- Fighting general trend that (single) young people should stay at home/ share housing
- **Resources!!!!**

Conclusions

- Early days but moving relatively quickly/
momentum building
- Potential for European and western world
approach
- Existing systems (funding; cultures; housing) are
key barriers
- Need to build in evaluation and monitoring to
demonstrate if working
- Watch this space!!!!