



# Helping long-term rough sleepers in the West

Helping long-term rough sleepers in the West Midlands find accommodation

10 October, 2019

Today is World Homelessness Day, where people around the world mark day to raise awareness and help change the lives of homeless people in their local community.

Leading West Midlands housing association, Accord is proud to have helped 33 long-term rough sleepers in the region find accommodation since 2017, through its Housing First programme, and aims to help a total of 170 people by 2021.

*Chris Handy, Chief Executive at Accord writes:*

Today marks World Homelessness Day and I am proud to say supporting long-term rough sleepers into independent tenancies is one of Accord's key aims.

Housing First is a fantastic programme, which allows us to work closely with the local councils to offer support to long-term rough sleepers in the West Midlands, helping people to get back on their feet and find suitable accommodation. Since 2017 we have helped more than 30 people find accommodation, in three West Midlands boroughs; Sandwell, Solihull and Walsall.

We launched our first Housing First programme in Walsall as a pilot scheme in November. Following its success we were able to launch two more Housing First programmes in the West Midlands this year, where we aim to help a total of 170 long term rough sleepers across all three boroughs by 2021.

Working closely with the local borough councils we are able to offer people a home and provide 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 helping people register with a GP.

In total we have secured around Â£2.2million of funding from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA); the WMCA is funding the delivery of Housing First programmes through a Â£9.6 million grant from the government to the West Midlands.

Even in areas where we are not running the programme, such as Birmingham and Coventry, we are still offering help to rough sleepers by making properties available to them. As we mark World Homelessness Day, I am proud to say that I am confident that we will continue to make a real difference to people's lives.