Developing a Tenancy Sustainment Strategy

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Outline

• Why tenancy sustainment strategy developed
• Process of developing the strategy
• Services developed
• Achievements to date
• Advice to others
Why strategy developed

- GHA established 2003, following stock transfer from Glasgow City Council
- High rents - insufficient investment
- Unmodernised stock – poor condition
- Falling demand for social rented housing
Key tenancy sustainment problems

High turnover – particularly in ‘non-core’ stock
A quarter of lets to homeless and waiting ended within a year - half ended in two years
Glasgow - high repeat homelessness rates
High cost of early termination
  – £1,300 per void for repairs, security and rent loss
  – Staff resources – GHA and GCC
  – Cost to individuals
Joint approach

- Research jointly commissioned by GHA and Glasgow Homelessness Partnership
- Heriot-Watt University – reporting to small joint steering group
- Methods – data analysis, interviews with staff and former tenants
- Research report produced Mar 2006
Findings

Who is most at risk of early termination?

• Under 25’s have high risk – but relatively few are housed

• Most common early terminations are from:

  • Tenants aged over 25

  • Tenants with Community Care needs

  • Single households
Findings

- Homeless and waiting list applicants have similar rates of early termination (25%)
- But GHA houses more waiting list applicants
- So majority of people terminating tenancies within a year are waiting list applicants
Findings

- Risk Factors
- Unfurnished Lets
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Social isolation and debt problems
- Lack of choice
Customer Views – Lack of support

• *I had a (housing officer)… but every time I tried to phone her she was always out the office or in a meeting and never, ever, ever phoned back.* (Shona and Jim, 20s, homeless).

• *There was a woman from the Hamish Allan Centre, you had to phone her if you've got any problems now … but … You could never get hold of this woman … she was never there.* (Alan, 20s, homeless)
Customer Views – what would help

- A furnished flat would have a lot better… I would have settled in a lot quicker, probably ( 
- I think it was quite a good idea if there was somebody there to help you. Cover like all your paperwork ..that would get you on your feet a bit.
- Maybe a visit to see how things are going would be good. Just something a bit more ‘substantial’.
Developing the strategy

• Series of joint events-2006
• Input and discussion by senior staff, managers, front-line staff, tenants
Strategy – Key Objectives

• Improve the allocations & offers process

• Identify & respond to tenants needs

• Develop & support tenancy sustainment initiatives

• Enhanced information sharing & joined working

• Monitor & evaluate
Actions

- Developing GHA homechoice
- Pilot Letting Standard
- More flexible furnished lets
- Resource Directory for staff
- New Neighbour Relations Manual
- Assessing support needs of new tenants and improving referrals
- Promoting better information sharing and joint working
- Joint training events
Wider Action

- Environmental improvements
- Youth projects
- Tenancy support projects
- Welfare Benefits Advice
- Scotcash
- Energywise
Working in partnership

- Community Health and Care Partnerships
- Homelessness Partnership
- Social Work
- Addiction Services
- Leaving Care Services
- Voluntary agencies
- Other RSLs
Tenancy sustainment rates improving

![Bar chart showing tenancy sustainment rates over the years 2003 to 2006. The chart displays two categories: Waiting List/homeless and Transfers. The rates show an overall increase over the years.]
Advice to others

• Tenancy sustainment rates – symptom of underlying problems
• Avoid leaping to conclusions – establish real causes by talking to customers (exit interviews)
• Work on solutions that address the problems (poor condition, anti-social behaviour, lack of support)
• Partnership approach essential
• Shared understanding of problems
• No quick fix – problems are complex - solutions multi-faceted
• Monitor and evaluate progress
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