The Housing Options Approach: Offering a Wider Range of Services under CBL

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Housing options – what is it?

- Traditional approach – apply for a housing allocation
- CBL – move to lettings
- Housing solutions narrow definition – options for homeless prevention
- Wider definition – extend to ‘lettings prevention’, outcome driven

Changing nature of housing management

- From managing houses to managing people living in houses – Leeds Research into demand for social housing
- Increased rationing
- Social housing allocation systems are based upon the premise that one day you may be offered a house

Policy Context

- Hills report
  - Noted success of CBL despite supply constraints
  - Called for a more’ varied menu’ of housing options
- Every Tenants Matters (Cave report)
  - Challenged the monopoly of social housing providers

Leeds

- Common Housing Register – 1999 – with 10 RSLs connected to council IT system
- Introduced CBL – 2003
  - 5,000 lettings made p.a.
  - RSLs advertise

  Homeless
  - 1722 homeless acceptances
  - 103 homeless preventions per 1000 population (BV213)
  - 25% council lettings = to Stat. homeless
  - 80 private sector lettings made monthly

Harnessing CBL for Housing Options

- CBL's strengths
  - Accessibility
  - Simplicity
  - Transparency
  - Interactivity
  - Feedback
  - Myth busting
  - Managing expectations
- CBL needed as a foundation for housing options

CBL underpins housing options

–Transparency and fairness:

“Increased transparency is variously seen as helping applicants to appraise housing options more realistically, and to legitimise lettings decisions taken by landlords”

–Show all stock not just voids to help myth busting

–Blind faith to brutal truth – openness and honesty – treating people like adults

–Aim to put all stock in to cbl scheme

What does Housing options involve?

- Tenancy support
- Mediation: family & friends
- Prevention through CAB, money advice, benefit maximisation
- Discretionary housing payments
- Outreach: private sector landlord & tenant
- Outreach: tackling threatened homelessness, rent arrears & anti-social behaviour
- Adaptations, extensions, conversions

and…

- Target hardening
- Tenancy support resettlement
- Frontline homeless prevention fund
- Sanctuary scheme for victims of domestic violence
- Floating support
- Equity release
- Accredited landlord scheme
- Rent deposit

Housing Options - Private rented sector

- Know where the private rented stock is (for your housing options advice)
- Know the local market – prices, availability etc
- Identify top ten HB landlords in area and liaise with (pamper) them
- Establish protocol for NTQ
- Dedicate HB officer to your Rent Deposit Scheme
- Judicious use of discretionary HB
- Separate RDS function from tenancy sustainment
- Manage RDS team closely with targets
- Improve partnerships with PRS

Questions

- How many authorities/ RSLs in the audience have begun to develop Housing options?
- Can CBL survive in current high demand/ low supply climate?
- What do housing options entail to you?