

CITY BOARD
13 OCTOBER 2011

ITEM B4

REVIEW OF SUPPORT SERVICES DELIVERED TO VULNERABLE TENANTS

Report of the Director of Housing and Customer Service

1. SUMMARY

This report is to inform the City Board about the progress made in reviewing support services to vulnerable tenants.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the City Board notes the report and progress.

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Following a restructure at the end of 2010, there are now four services that sit together under the Supported Services section of the organisation. These include:

- Supported Living
- Tenancy Support
- Family Intervention Project
- Tenancy Sustainment.

3.2 The service area is managed by Lorraine Testro, Customer Services Manager.

3.3 This report provides a brief overview of each service area and highlights what additional work has been carried out in order to improve services for clients.

Supported Living

3.4 The Supported Living Service was launched in February 2007 to replace the traditional Sheltered Housing Warden Service provided by Derby Homes. The team is made up of fifteen very experienced Support Workers, two Seniors and two team leaders.

3.5 Support Officers visit clients on a daily, weekly or monthly basis, depending on their needs. The aim is to help clients stay in their home, maintain their independence, and get involved in local community events or other activities if they want to. The team work closely with a variety of voluntary and statutory agencies to ensure a person centred approach to support.

Additional work carried out this year

3.6 The Supported Living Service has recently submitted their first Quality Assessment Framework submission under the revised framework and is currently awaiting

validation. The framework very much focuses on service delivery and is therefore a good tool to use when considering service improvement. As a result of this the needs assessment, risk assessment and support plan has been changed. After initial consultation with clients, the revised documents are now being trialled and further consultation is underway.

- 3.7 There have also been improvements made to the information clients receive when they sign up for a Derby Homes property and within the welcome pack they receive when signing up for the service. This includes information on service standards, client friendly information on what happens if an appointment is missed, useful procedures and generally better information about what clients can expect from the service.
- 3.8 Each service has a Service Improvement Target (SIT) to develop and improve the delivery of one area of their support service by March 2012. Supported Living is looking at promotion of their service area. This includes promoting the services at citywide events, improving information leaflets, updating the website and improving the welcome pack. Some of this work has already been completed as highlighted above.
- 3.9 Prior to 2008 there were a number of stand alone properties that were not connected to what were previously classed as “sheltered” schemes; these were termed “Piper” properties. Clients living in these properties had an alarm only service and a visit on a fortnightly basis. All of these properties have been visited and clients have been assessed to identify whether they would benefit from the floating support service. Some decided that they didn’t want the service, however a large number now have support plans and receive visits in line with their assessed needs.

Tenancy Support

- 3.10 The Tenancy Support Service provides low level tenancy support (up to 2 hours a week) for the following client groups:
- People who have been re-housed after a period of homelessness
 - Survivors of domestic abuse
 - Ex offenders or people who are at risk of offending
 - Young people
 - People living with HIV
- 3.11 The team is made up of 8 very experienced Support Workers, a Senior and a Team Leader who is also a mental health specialist. They offer a variety of support including advice and guidance on:
- Budgeting and household bills
 - Debts and debt management
 - Accessing employment opportunities and training
 - Settling clients into their new home
 - Advice on domestic skills and personal safety and security issues
 - Contacting people and agencies on behalf of the client
 - Dealing with family and neighbour problems

- Healthy eating advice
- Other housing related support

Additional work carried out this year

- 3.12 The Tenancy Support Service has recently submitted their second Quality Assessment Framework submission under the revised framework and is currently awaiting validation. Previously their overall scores were 2 C's and 3 B's; they are hoping to increase this to 5B's. Reviewing the Quality Assessment Framework has now become an integral part of the Senior role with the aim of achieving some A's in next year's submission.
- 3.13 As a result of the review, the needs and risk assessment has been combined to make it more client friendly. Clients have been consulted on the new process and report that the revised form is better. Clients will continue to be consulted on new policies, procedures and forms this will help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service. The referral form has been amended so more information is initially gained about the client. The team now try to attend initial visits with the referrer as they often already have a relationship with the client and can introduce the new worker to them. This generally makes the client feel more relaxed and comfortable with the process.
- 3.14 A buddying system has also now been introduced. Clients are introduced to another member of the team early on in the process who is able to provide cover during periods of annual leave and sickness. Amendments have been made to the welcome pack; there is now a list of emergency telephone numbers, a more client friendly version of the service description and guidance on professional boundaries.
- 3.15 Tenancy Support has a SIT to develop and improve the delivery of training provided by the team by March 2012. This team deliver training to other members of Derby Homes to raise awareness on domestic abuse and mental health issues. Awareness raising across the organisation is crucial in providing the best service we can to tenants of Derby Homes. The team have now revised their training programme and are all being trained to support the process.
- 3.16 **Family Intervention Project (FIP)**
- The team is made up of six very experienced Support Workers and a Team Leader. The FIP provides intensive support and focused challenge to high need families. The families are amongst the most challenging with many having chaotic lifestyles which impact on their ability to manage their day to day responsibilities and successfully parent their children. In some cases this also has an impact on the community in which they live.
- 3.17 The project works with the whole family to bring stability to their lives, prevent homelessness and helps improve opportunities for children and young people.
- 3.18 **Additional work carried out this year**

The FIP team carried out a full review of their processes last year when they were still part funded by Supporting People. On submission of the new Quality

Assessment Framework in 2010, they were validated as achieving 1 C, 3 B's and 1 A. As a result of the review, they updated their client handbook. A consultation exercise was completed with clients who confirmed that they were happy with the improvements. The assessments, support plans and a number of procedures were also improved and these have since been used to help the other support services to revise theirs.

- 3.19 The FIP has a SIT to develop new and effective ways to deliver parenting training by March 2012. This is due to the fact that parenting funding has been cut and clients have fewer opportunities to attend parenting programmes in the City. The team has been trained in Triple 'P' which is an Australian based programme aimed at parents with teenagers. As parenting work is a crucial part of the work, the team has developed their own Triple 'P' course tailored to the needs of FIP clients. They will shortly begin to deliver group sessions.

3.20 **Tenancy Sustainment**

Research has shown that new tenants are more likely to fall into rent arrears and cause anti-social behaviour than existing tenants. Due to this Derby Homes launched the Tenancy Sustainment Service in April 2010 which is aimed at helping new tenants to sustain their tenancies. The service lasts for the duration of the introductory tenancy period, which is usually 12 months. The team is made up of six Support Workers and a Team Leader.

3.21 **Additional work carried out this year**

The Tenancy Sustainment Service has carried out a review of all of their processes this year. They have revised their assessment process in order to make the questions more client friendly and they have also devised an improved support plan. A customer satisfaction survey is issued to clients three months into the service and the comments received are used to improve service delivery, the survey questions are currently being reviewed.

- 3.22 The team has improved their relationships with housing staff this year and are now regularly attending their team meetings to discuss issues. They are also carrying out joint nine monthly review visits with Housing Officers to ensure that there is a smooth handover at the end of the introductory period and that the tenants have an opportunity to meet their Housing Officer.
- 3.23 They are carrying out regular audits on clients rent accounts to ensure that problems are identified early and support can be given whilst the debt is still manageable. This helps to avoid a detrimental impact on the tenancy.
- 3.24 The Tenancy Sustainment team has a SIT to produce an information leaflet for new tenants by March 2012. They are currently producing a document that will act as a self help guide. They are hoping that it will assist tenants when they are moving into their new property.

3.25 **Joint Working Initiatives**

A lot of work has been carried out to ensure that the Support Services are working more closely together. The teams recently had a joint away day during which they completed a number of team building activities. This was very successful in getting the teams to work together and generally get to know each other better.

- 3.26 A number of joint SITs have been created which include a working party made up of representatives from each service area. There are four of these in total with each service area taking a lead in one area. Tenancy Support is leading on developing a sustainable plan for the recycling project across the support services. The project involves the collection of small household items which are distributed to clients in need through a referral process. Supported Living is looking at standard processes to ensure there is good client involvement across the four services. FIP are looking at interlinking information and good practice across the service areas and Tenancy Sustainment are leading on developing a strong working partnership across the support services.
- 3.27 In order to enhance the services provided to clients, it is crucial to develop good working relationships with partner agencies. We have already done a lot of work to build these partnerships. However, in order to strengthen the partnership work further, we are holding a showcase event in November during which all of the four services will promote their work. We will also present this to staff at the Staff Briefing in February to ensure that staff have a good understanding of the work and how it can complement theirs.
- 3.28 Supported Services have been involved in a number of events so far this year. Supported Living hosted the Board tour at Rebecca House. They also coordinated an event at each of the category two schemes during “Be Inspiring” week. The other support services also attended to promote their services. The FIP are having a stand at an Friendship Care and Housing (FCH) event next week and Supported Living will be having a stall at Derby’s Older People’s event on 1 October in the city centre.
- 3.29 Staff in all Supported Services regularly attend multi-agency meetings. They also spend time visiting partner agencies to build links and talk about their service as well as inviting them along to speak at their team meetings.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

Consultation
Financial and Business Plan
Legal and Confidentiality
Council
Personnel
Environmental
Equalities Impact Assessment
Health & Safety
Risk
Policy Review

If Board members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact the author, or Phil Davies, Chief Executive, phil.davies@derbyhomes.org – Phone: 01332 888528

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Background Information: None

Supporting Information: None