New Approaches to Allocations, Lettings & Homelessness
Conference & Exhibition 2012

20-21 November 2012, Crowne Plaza Nottingham

Conference Day One – Tuesday 20 November

11.30  Delegate registration, buffet lunch & exhibition viewing

12.50  Chairs welcome & introduction
       Mark Easton, Home Editor, BBC News

13.00  Panel debate – current and future climate
       Abigail Davies, Assistant Director of Policy & Practice, CIH
       This keynote session will debate the impact of welfare reform and localism on allocations and lettings policies.

13.50  Morning workshops

1.  Private sector leasing schemes  Highgrove Suite
    Issy Taylor, Business Development Manager, Swift Training & Hub
    Kate Ringrow, Swift Coordinator, Swift Training & Hub
    To be confirmed

2.  Preparing for welfare reform-size criteria  Hampton Suite
    David Clayton, Head of MBUS Team, Chartered Institute of Housing
    The Welfare Reform Act 2012 includes the implementation of social sector size criteria, which will introduce housing benefit reductions for working age tenants who are considered to be under-occupying their homes. This workshop will provide an overview and impact of the new measures for landlords and tenants, examine a range of practical examples of how landlords are preparing for the changes and consider allocation policies in terms of the new measures.

3.  New approaches to tackling homelessness  Windsor Suite
    Jason Pryce Kennedy, Head of Arlington, One Housing Group
    This session will showcase how their holistic approach to tackling homelessness makes Arlington different, based on the Times Square model pioneered by the organisation Common Ground in New York to tackle homelessness. The session will also discuss how Arlington is working to provide accommodation, support, advice, training and job opportunities to the homeless and those in need. Arlington is unique and leads the way in supported accommodation because it is ‘more than a roof’ it is also a ‘one stop shop to change’ where former homeless people can realise their dreams & aspirations.

4.  Discharging homelessness duty to the private rented sector  Main conference room
    Andy Gale, Consultant
    The session will consider all things a local authority may wish to consider in implementing the end of duty Localism Act changes.
Partnership working

St James Suite

Neil Morland, Director, Neil Morland Housing Consultant Ltd

The Government’s recent strategy to Making Every Contact Count emphasises value of partnership working to prevent homelessness and promote housing options. This workshop will analyse successful approaches to partnership working by local authorities and housing associations, including a focus on initiatives between other public, private and third sector organisations to tackle the effects of legislative and welfare reforms and public sector deficit reductions.

15.10 Refreshments & exhibition viewing

15.30 A perfect storm: How can housing effectively prevent homelessness?
Chaired by Mark Easton, Home Editor, BBC News
Rick Henderson, Chief Executive, Homelessness Link
John Thornhill, Policy & Practice Officer, Chartered Institute of Housing
Toby Lloyd, Head of Policy, Shelter

With a Government comprehensive spending review and a general election on the horizon, what needs to be done to help sustain homelessness services in the future and guide future housing policy?

16.20 Afternoon workshops

1. Transforming your allocations scheme-flexible approaches to allocations
Highgrove Suite
Mel Godfrey, Housing Access Manager, Manchester City Council

Manchester is a city of 500,000 people with all the complex issues that being a terminus (both trains and international airport) and having areas of high and low demand accommodation brings. Manchester and its partners have overhauled their common housing register and the Council’s Part VI Allocations Scheme over the past three years – including pioneering increased priority for working households and those making a community contribution. There has been change to business systems, a major IT project, new governance and the outsourcing of back office functions. The workshop will explore the continuing journey of change that is taking place in the city as housing markets (and homelessness) are shaped by welfare reform, migration and economic pressures.

2. How to improve housing mobility
Hampton Suite
Chris Hancock, Housing Needs Manager, Exeter City Council

As part of the CLG funded pilot looking at increasing mobility within social housing, the Devon Home Choice partnership has (and plans to) adopt a number of innovative changes to practice and policy to support this work. This session will details those changes and look at initial findings.

3. Delivering effective enhanced housing options services
Windsor Suite
Bryonie Shaw, Head of Housing Options, New Charter Housing Trust Group

Charter Housing Trust Group are contracted to provide Housing Advice and Options services in Tameside and Knowsley. This workshop will explore innovation and good practice, how to improve efficiencies in how services are operated and how added value can be achieved in the current challenging climate.

4. Discharging homelessness duty to the private rented sector
Main conference room
Andy Gale, Consultant

The session will consider all things a local authority may wish to consider in implementing the end of duty Localism Act changes.

5. ‘Gold Standard’ for housing options and homelessness service
St James Suite
Anne Doyle, Homelessness Specialist Advisor Team
Sarah Richards, Housing Options Manager, Exeter City Council
Andrew Burnip, Homelessness Specialist Advisor Team
This workshop will provide delegates with an overview of the new 10 Local Authority Challenges, the Gold Standard, plus, an overview of the recently launched specialist advisor self-diagnostic toolkit. The interactive workshop will show you how to complete a peer review and how the process can help you improve your service and make the argument to future front line investment.

17.40 Day one of conference closes

19.30 Pre-dinner drinks reception

20.00 Conference dinner & entertainment

Conference Day Two – Wednesday 21 November

9.00 Registration, refreshments & exhibition viewing

9.35 Chairs welcome & introduction
Mark Easton, Home Editor, BBC News

9.45 Keynote session – Legal update
Jan Luba QC, Barrister, Garden Court Chambers
This session will update delegates on the recent legal changes to allocations and homelessness.

10.45 Refreshments

11.10 Morning workshops

1. New approaches to allocations
Owen Buckwell, Head of Housing, Portsmouth City Council
Elaine Bastable, Housing Options Manager, Portsmouth City Council
Portsmouth Council has come to be regarded as a leader in the field for the innovative way it provides housing services, and this workshop will explore how Portsmouth have transformed their approach to allocations using systems thinking.

2. Meeting the housing needs of 16/17 year olds and young people with complex needs
Lorna Esien, Director of Operations, St Basils
Kathleen Kelly, Programme Manager, Policy & Research, Joseph Rowntree Foundation
This session will highlight research into people’s experiences of complex homelessness and what effective policy and practice responses might be to effectively prevent and tackle homelessness.

3. Working with private sector landlords to end homelessness
Susanne Bjork, Private Renting and Housing Development Officer, Crisis
This workshop offers guidance to assist in the development of a good private rented sector access scheme, discussing how the PRS should be effectively opened up to provide sustainable housing for vulnerable and homeless people through the provision of good quality local services.

4. Learning from the experiences of a Direct Payment Pilot
Steve Rawson, Deputy Chief Executive, Wakefield & District Housing
Sharon France, New Tenancy Manager, Wakefield & District Housing
The workshop will outline the details of the Direct Payments Demonstration Pilot and what the initial outcomes have been and what lessons have been learned. The session will focus on the implications for developing allocations strategies ahead of the introduction of Universal Credit in 2013.
5. Value for money in housing options and homelessness services  
Main conference room  
Vicky Hines, NHAS Local Authority Practitioner, Shelter  
Ruth Bamford, Head of Housing and NHAS Co-ordinator  
Harinder Birring, Business Support & Project Manager, Shelter  

Budget constraints arising from current austerity will compel housing providers to look ever more closely at the costs of their housing provision, whilst ensuring they maintain and deliver a quality service. This innovative workshop will offer new insights in how to reduce costs and improve efficiency.

12.30 Lunch & exhibition viewing

13.30 New approaches to...private sector working  
Chaired by Mark Easton, Home Editor, BBC News  
Steve Partridge, Director of Financial Policy and Development, CIHconsultancy  
David Lawrenson, Founder, LettingFocus.com  

Panel debate discussing the question ‘how can we attract landlords to rent or lease their properties?’

14.20 Afternoon workshops

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2. Working with migrants  
Hampton Suite  
Sue Lukes, Consultant, Researcher & Trainer  

This workshop will focus on eligibility for housing and allocations for people with different kinds of immigration status and the barriers to getting adequate housing faced by migrants, how to help overcome them and how to make sure advice services are migrant-friendly.

3. Fixed term tenancies  
Windsor Suite  
Sarah Clarke, Tenancy Standards Manager, Midland Heart  

This session will look at practical approaches to introducing and using fixed term tenancies from developing a Tenancy Policy to understanding legal implications, combined with housing advice and guidance to help meet tenants’ longer term housing aspirations and ensure best use of the housing stock.

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Close of conference

* Programme may be subject to minor changes