

DRAFT Sustainable Tenancies Strategy action plan

Version 1.8 – December update

Introduction

This action plan is currently in draft form, and will be informed by feedback from colleagues and from ongoing work with residents as the impacts of welfare reform unfold in a cumulative way. The plan will be constantly reviewed and kept up to date as new actions emerge, changes are needed, and as work is completed.

Risks and challenges

- § Buy in from all teams
- § Culture change amongst staff - more difficult conversations with tenants and residents versus or as well as more supportive approaches with them
- § Management of media interest and public criticism of our approaches
- § Knowing our customers better and using the information we know about them
- § Communications - the need for more targeted approaches, person specific rather than broad brush, and internal comms
- § Reaching and communication with private rented sector tenants
- § Data capture and monitoring - building a suite of useful and informative data needs.

Format

This action plan possibly works okay as it is, but we might want one that is summary points by team, by date, by specific welfare reform change or by customer journey - eg starting with pre-tenancy work (eg even with Homemove applicants) and ending with evictions. This could be manipulated once the action plan is in Excel format to suit specific needs.

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	Action	Purpose	Specific welfare reform	Lead person	With whom	Priority High, medium or low	Ease Difficult, moderate or easy	Target	Costs/notes
Policy, procedure or process changes									
1.1	<p>TIS Amended in May to include under occs</p> <p>Need to promote more</p>	<p>1.) No claims rating 2.) Average assessment Team</p> <p>Support tenants needing to downsize</p>	Social Sector Size Criteria (SSSC)	<p>Sue Baker</p> <p>Mark Richardson</p>	<p>Visiting Officers</p> <p>HIMT</p> <p>Re-Housing</p> <p>Customer Service</p>	H	M	All done by March 2014	<p>Are they bidding?</p> <p>Promote mutual exchange with support as the quicker option.</p> <p>As at Nov 2013, 37 households have moved through TIS</p>
1.2	<p>Discretionary Housing Payments Eg for removal costs (where we can't cover with TIS)</p>	<p>Maximise DHP to tenants. Support those tenants who, for whatever reason, will not be moving, or need help with downsizing.</p>	All	Lynn Yule	<p>HIMT</p> <p>Visiting Officers</p> <p>Rehousing</p> <p>CSA</p>	H	E		<p>Removal costs will be paid direct to removal companies.</p>
1.3	<p>Allocations Policy Ensure now matches the HB size criteria rules</p>	<p>Ensure we're not knowingly allowing tenants to over-occupy except in exceptional circumstances</p>	SSSC	Verity					<p>This will require Legal input re previous Allocs Policy in light of legislative changes to HB</p>

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1.4	Bedroom policy Agree new policy	Caution not to inadvertently increase bedroom sizes and therefore rent liability	SSSC	Miriam Gee	Property & Investment	H	D	Completed	Completed, agreed at LT on 13.6.13
1.5	Arrears policy and associated work. Ensure congruence with political decisions and amend letters	To link with Corporate Debt policy currently under review	SSSC	Lynn		H	E	Completed	Scrutiny panel Completed
1.6	*Promote customer online service Communications to all tenants	Ensure tenants can use automated payment systems		Janet Dowdell	Laura T				NB: Resolve system deficiencies
1.7	Mutual exchange Review policy, and devise a matching service	To see that it meets needs of people downsizing Support arrears minimisation Better use of housing stock	SSSC	Helen O'Connell	Graham Peter (P & I) HIMT	H	M	May 2014	Progressing
1.8	Pre-tenancy work and support for new tenants Eg detailed income and	Ensure rehousing targets does not contribute to financial exclusion – eg use of payday loans to pay	All	Ododo Sylvia	Peter Huntbach Homemove Rehousing TSOs	H	D	Vital/key	Some landlords purposely increasing target turnaround times

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	expenditure assessments, group sign ups or presentations	for setting up home costs			Income Management Narinder Sheltered Housing Temp Accom.				to carry out group sign ups with plenty of information.
1.9	Use and occupation accounts Resolve them	Minimise council debt	N/A	Helen O'Connell Lynn Yule	Graham Davies TOs	H	M	End January	£15k - £18k rent arrears
1.10	Work collaboratively with partners to address health and wellbeing impacts	To ensure a wider holistic approach to social deprivation		Narinder/ Ododo	Peter H HIMT				The strategy highlights links between deprivation and health. Refer to JSNA impacts.
1.11									
Project management and data analysis									
2.1	Re-energise Housing welfare reform Project Group	To drive the work.	All	Ododo	Lynn Emma	H	E	Complete	Monthly/6 weekly meetings

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2.2	Update and analyse used rent payment methods and costs including review current and potential methods	Base decisions on knowledge	All	Corp banking	Debbie Sargent Helen Julie	H	M		
2.3	Evaluate learning from Chartered Institute of Housing sustaining tenancies programme and share information	Get the most from working with 12 other organisations	All	Ododo	Lynn Emma	H	E		
2.4	Analyse cap cases .	Preparation, supportive interventions	Cap	Sue Baker Claire Armstrong		H	E	May 13	
2.5	Analyse and renew MACS contract	Understand progress; extend the contract for the second year	All	Emma		H	E	June 13	£80k in budget for Oct 2013-Oct 2014
2.6	Customer Profiling Eg financial circumstances, ability to budget, tenants at risk	To better understand tenants, and help ensure they are ready for Universal Credit	All Esp U.C	Tom Matthews	Homemove Locata Re-housing Housing IS	H	M		OHMS now amended to record if people have access to bank accounts and the internet.

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2.7	Keep track of cumulative and multiple impacts	Better understanding, inform future needs analysis.	All	Project Officer					Keep in mind both council wide and government work on this too
2.8	Preparation for Universal Credit for new claimants from April 2015	Ensure tenants are ready for the changes	UC	Performance & Improvement Team	Department of Work & Pensions	M	D	Deferred to April 2015	
Structural or staffing issues									
3.1	Appoint a project lead	Own and drive this action plan Achieve better coordination of tasks	All	Laura	LT	H	E	Jan 2014	
3.2	Review of HIMT processes and structure	Ensure streamlined and cost effective processes	All	Ododo	HIMT Other services	H	D	After April 2014	
3.3	Service redesign – eg possibly separating enforcement from support	More streamlined approaches, more clarity, avoid duplication	All	Ododo	Emma Lynn	M	D	Aug 2014	
3.4	More staff working on money management, budgeting and	More tenants likely to need one-to-one support – which is time intensive	All	Emma		H	M	Aug 2014	To inform service redesign

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	debt								
3.5	Increased staff resources to support mutual exchanges	Increasing applications. Proactive 'matching' service	Under occ	Graham Davies		M	E		Increased staff resources in place until April 2014. Currently ongoing project work to match tenants.
3.6									
3.7									
3.8	Refocus work of Resident Involvement Team	Need departmental financial, digital, economic inclusion champions and need residents on board. Need a cost effective, outcome focussed service offer – eg tenant mentoring programmes etc	All	Becky	RIT Emma Ododo All teams	H	D	City-wide Sept 2014	Resident groups trained to eg: accompany lone residents to ATOS interviews, share computer skills, support CV writing, set up growing projects
ICT and OHMS (housing computer system)									
4.1	Updates to and new OHMS arrears reports Eg - Under	Better use of IT to support arrears tracking of impacted cases, monitoring, reporting, targets etc	All	Lynn Tom	Housing IT	H	E	Completed	Ongoing decisions for future report needs **Completed**

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	occupiers - DLA to PIP cases - Benefit cap cases								
4.2	Support for public access computers	Support 'digital by default'	UC	Emma	Libraries	H	D		
4.3	Customer profiling and analysis	Know our tenants much better (See 2.6 above)	All UC	Di /Laura	Tom Matthews Housing IT	H	M	In place by March 2014	
4.4	Procure Northgate 'Arrears Express'	To help make arrears chasing more efficient	General			M	M	Pilot complete in June 2013	Outcome: Not helpful
4.5	Use technology to better support income management eg texting arrears alerts and automated rent due date alerts	Some organisations report good results, lower cost, increased productivity. Cost, ease, younger tenants apparently especially receptive to this method of communication.	All	Housing IS Dan Snowdon Project Officer	Lynn	M	D		89% of adults own/use mobile phones (nationally, but may be lower in areas of high deprivation). Dan to set up mass text alerts.
4.6	Develop	For viewing rent	All	Project	Lynn	M	D		

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	housing rents app	account, making payment, online diary reminders for rent due dates		Officer	Peter H Housing Information Systems				
4.7	Citrix receivers on Smartphones or tablets for visiting officers rather than laptops	Increase the work officers can do with tenants in their home, and avoid double data entry. Demonstrations for tenants - eg using online budgeting aids.	General	Project Officer	Housing IS	M	E		Eg. GreenSquare Group
Supporting tenants - minimising debt and income maximisation									
5.1	Detailed income and expenditure assessment	Tenants have reviewed budget and are aware of priority payments	All UC	Lorraine Lynn	Emma	M	E		Consider doing a tenant-wide financial inclusion survey
5.2	Prepare advice and communications regarding taking in lodgers and update website	Increase awareness and provide useful information	Under occ	Laura	Perf & Imp Team	H	E	Feb 2014	
5.3	Support sheltered residents under 65 with transition from DLA to PIP	Seek to maximise tenants' incomes	PIP	Peter Huntbach	Emma Gilbert	H	M/E		Consider that where tenants are supported, ATOS assessment visits are more likely to

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									be successful.
5.4	Meet with colleagues in Children's Services	Consider, share information and plan for known impacts	All	Lynn		M	E		
5.5	support tenants with setting up bank accounts	Ensure tenants have access to relevant products for banking	UC	Ododo	Emma	H	D	Update from Emma re last meeting	Action within corporate Financial Inclusion strategy
5.6	Better promote Credit Union	Support access to affordable credit and savings	All	Emma	HIMT Customer Service	H	E		Action within corporate FI strategy
5.7	Direct Debit/ Standing Order campaign	Cost effective payment method	All	Lynn	HSA Rent Acc HIMT	H	E		Paperless Any day of the week
5.8	Mutual exchange event	Promote speedy moves for under occupiers and over-crowded tenants	Under occ	Andrew Crossey	Ododo	H	D	Complete	Need to replicate with RSLs?
5.9	Contribute to council wide digital inclusion work	Governments' 'Digital by default'	UC	Emma		H	M		
5.10	Increase access to welfare advice	Ensure wider access and take-up, track progress and access		Emma	FI Team				
5.11	Prepare action plan for cash desk closures	Inform accommodation strategy	General	Hilary		H	D	Jan 2014	In progress

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5.12	Promote household contents insurance	Might seem counter intuitive, but for tenants to consider impacts if not covered.	General	Lynn	NOs HSAs	L	E		
5.13	Promote TIS and exchanges to those over pensionable age	Potential changes in 2015 that will impact them	General	Mark Richardson	Peter H	L	M		
Supporting tenants – work & learning									
6.1	Evaluate current impacts/outputs of work and learning activities	Understand progress; possibly re-frame resources	All	Emma		H	M	June feedback to LT	What incentives and interventions, barriers, publicity, targets, outcomes etc
6.2	Arrange Housing apprentices		All	Satti		H M		Complete	
6.3	Mears' apprenticeships – from council tenancies	Support work amongst tenant households	All	Benjamin	James Cryer	H	E		Info re numbers?
6.4	Work placements	For impacted tenants to gain work experience and receive CV/interview support	All Cap	Emma Satti		H	E		

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Support and communications to private rented sector tenants									
7.1		This section needs to be worked up with actionable considerations - eg Cap cases, Credit Union accounts to save for deposits		Louise Lowery	Deborah Grafham				
7.2									
7.3									
Staff communications									
8.1	Share completed strategy and action plan with managers -F2F session	Information dissemination and for managers buy-in and to share in teams		Ododo	Service managers	H	E	July 2013	Complete
8.2	Meet with visiting officers	Progress update, increase learning, bring together what we know so far, evaluate next steps, clarify any changes needed.		Ododo	Lynn, Emma	H	E	June 2013	Completed Extremely useful
8.3	Meet with staff who have personal contacts with tenants	Increase understanding, share info, understand tenant concerns, ensure consistent info.		Managers	Emma Lynn	M	E	June 2013 And ongoing	

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8.4	Identify office WR champions	'Go to' person		Project Officer	Managers				
8.5	Ensure Mears operatives know where to refer tenants to	They have contact with tenants in their own homes		Ododo	James Cryer	M	E	Complete	James confirms all okay – May 2013
8.6	Sharepoint updates	Access information		Project Officer					
8.7	Housing Update updates	Keep all staff up to date Potentially more easily accessible than Sharepoint		Project Officer	Laura Turner	M	E	Ongoing	
8.8	WR agenda item for team meetings	Manager to share and gather information			All managers	M	E	Future meetings	Example sheet produced
Staff training									
9.1	More training for all front line staff –	Topics eg:- 1. The changes 2. Impacts on tenants - ££ and eg stress, mental health, children... 3. Understanding impacts on HRA, services – eg mutual exchange, voids, arrears, advice provision 4. Sign-posting services - where and		Project Officer					More examples... 9. Making use of our website 10. Accessing info and updates from Sharepoint 11. Recognising indicators of financial exclusion 12. Supporting tenants to get online

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		how 5. DHP applications 6. Transactional bank accounts – sensitivity, understanding 7. Updating OHMS, capturing info 8. Safeguarding issues - UC							13. Debt advice - specific staff Benefits advice - specific staff
9.2	Potential communications training for HIMT and other frontline staff	Non-judgemental communications. Update skills in assertiveness and negotiation, removing barriers and engendering support and encouragement.		Lynn	Ododo	L	M		This is likely to be tied in with the review or CIH 6 month consultancy work on sustaining tenancies
Tenant communications									
10.1	Eg You Tube video clip	Easy access to information, simple messages and with consideration of literacy skills		Ododo	Adrian Ashwell	H	D		Fit with corporate messages – council tax etc
10.2	Review HSA FAQ scripts, update website	Ensure consistent information		Project Officer	Janet Dowdell Annie Heath	H	E	June 2013	More to be done as changes occur
10.3	Promote benefits calculator – website, Homing	Increase tenant knowledge			Becky				

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	In, word of mouth, TRAs								
10.4	Personalised MACS article in Homing In – residents' experiences of using the service	To encourage others to self refer before crisis		Emma		H	E	Complete	
10.5	Promote the customer online system (COS)	Ensure tenants can use automated payment systems		Janet					1,023 signed up (Nov 2012)
10.6	Homing In	Eg money matters and promoting the work of other teams eg, Illegal money lending team, Trading Standards, Revs & bens	All	Ododo Emma	HIMT Visiting officers			Ongoing	Possible 'Your money' page
Councillor communications									
11.1	Sustainable Tenancy Strategy to Area Panels and HMCSC - along with detailed information regarding arrears management	Increase information and awareness.		Ododo	Lynn	H	E	Complete	

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11.2	Paper and stats to all councillors – eg NFH briefing for councillor surgeries	Ensure councillors are up to date and armed with info		Project Officer Ododo	Valerie	H	E		Various briefings have been sent – The last one was on 01/11/13 and circulated to the housing leadership team and Bill Randall. More will be needed.
11.3	Prepare information as needed for councillors	Localised information where/if possible		Project Officer	Tom Matthews	L	M		

This action plan will be reviewed at Housing Welfare Reform Project Group meetings with updated versions stored on Sharepoint