

# HousingNorthwest

**Workshop 4 - from Decent Homes to making homes in the PRS**  
**Olive Butler, Shelter NW Regional Campaign Officer**  
**Am session**

## **ISSUES – priorities**

Engagement with landlords

- homelessness prevention
- training

Involved in accreditation

How to find landlords in the first place

Poor tenants can be as significant as poor landlords – tenants accreditation scheme

Additions or selective licenses – does it work?

Local Housing Allowance – debt issues fro tenants

High demand       = no complaints  
                          = difficult in identifying problems

Engaging with letting agents & accreditation of agents

Lack of staff resource – enforcement, monitoring & short-term funding

## **GOOD PRACTICE on Flipcharts**

Tenant Accreditation Scheme – Manchester - Jane Baker Manchester  
Housing Service 07940750379  
Landlord Information Service  
Monitoring & support – Barrow

Landlord Forum – Chester – invite from the Mayor & food  
Change in service delivery – Housing Benefit

Rent Bond Scheme – Wirral & Blackpool

Empty Property Grant – up to £20k for 5 years to Housing Assocs in Eden

[www.housingnorthwest.co.uk](http://www.housingnorthwest.co.uk)

Enforcement – all agencies working together in multi-agency team tasked by one person – Blackpool

### **Issues on post-its**

What is the right mix of enforcement and licensing & accreditation?

How do we engage with persistent & problematic letting agents when enforcement & enticement isn't working? Need practical tips.

Poorer households competing with more desirable households for PR housing.

Landlords won't accept deposit schemes

Lack of support for tenants in PRS

Complexity for landlords of legislation changes

Housing benefit – improved processes in local authorities

Tenants moving around

Housing Assoc as managing companies can only charge restricted rents

Accreditation schemes are voluntary so difficult to incentives involvement. If it was compulsory fees could be used for more staff resource

In New Heartlands HMR area 25% of properties in PRS – how do we persuade landlords to improve their properties?

### **Good Practice on post-its**

Use proactive enforcement to improve property conditions rather than reacting to complaints. Do this on an area by area basis.

Rent bond scheme linking to homelessness with PRS  
Wirral based on HMR & HMI Accredited Landlords

Use other community projects to get info to tenants and landlords e.g. relating to issues relating to accommodation and migrant workers

Successful Accreditation Scheme in Chester

Find specific market that only accredited landlords can access eg: students in Chester worked with University

## **Workshop 4 - from Decent Homes to making homes in the PRS**

### **Pm session**

Housing HSRS – decency standard – central heating etc

Selected licensing – politically (role of elected members) (Research Fylde)

Resource – reactive or proactive

- revenue
- initiative
- staffing – enforcement etc

Accreditation v. licensing (enforcement)

Bad tenants – support needs

Impact of Housing Allowance

Decent Homes Standard – PSL

Enforcement – condition & illegal evictions

Engaging landlords – landlords forum

- personality of la staff
- how la's engage

Housing benefits – delayed payments

### **Good Practice**

Accreditation – Rent Deposit Scheme – Rochdale  
Linked vulnerable households to decent homes

Private Leasing Scheme  
Empty properties back into use – Carlisle

Protocols to assist PSLs – ASB  
La offers support – Burnley

Deposit Scheme – multi-agency virtual teams  
VCS working across boundaries – Bolton, Bury & Rochdale  
Ellesmere Port & Neston also have scheme – no deposits needed

Longer tenancies

Grants for house repairs – 50% with 5 year nomination rights

## **Issues – post-its**

Lack of enthusiasm in consultation by tenants, landlords & residents

Political driver to adopt selective licensing but this may not be the best solution

Buy to let – demand still there

Energy Performance Certificate – compulsory from October 2008.  
Training for staff

Speculative owners who let property in HMR area – non-engaged landlords

Accreditation – inspection, effect of neighbouring properties, absentee landlords

Decency – housing benefit, legal action – expensive

Insecurity with ASTs – need longer tenancies

HB issues – DHP – affordability

LHA – may make the situation worse

Discharging duty to homeless using private rented sector

Engaging with landlords in a thriving private rented market?

Access to private rented sector for homeless households

Value of accreditation schemes? (only helps to 'oil' the better part of the sector)

Impact of LHA?

Resources for selective licensing?

Enforcement has impact on resources and other strategies (area based)

Landlord engagement (not only enforcement)

Resources for tenant support

Resources for management orders

## **Good practice – post-its**

Private sector leasing schemes to help to solve empty homes problem  
Engaging empty property owners  
Offering £10k grants  
Facilitating management of the properties with RSL  
Entering interim EDMO if no other option available

Charging for serving notices

Positive Impact of Landlord Accreditation – [ross.giles@rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:ross.giles@rochdale.gov.uk)  
Used to discharge h/l/n duty through rent deposit scheme  
Improve management standards with training  
Disprove market by improving standards of property  
Link vulnerable households to decency standards  
Two-tier accreditation

50% renovation costs capped at £7.5k per flat, £10k per 2 bed, £12.5k 2 bed+

5 year nomination rights

Rent level 10% below market rent level

[Rachael.stott@ribblevalley.gov.uk](mailto:Rachael.stott@ribblevalley.gov.uk)

HHRS heating requirement (Exen Gold) – Wigan require heating system to come up to 'decency standard' definition of 'efficient' heating