

HousingNorthwest

Marketing Workshop

Speaker:

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Session 1:

- *What were the timeframes of the courses? How long did it take to change officers' mindset?*

There was a one and two day version of the course. Staff came out fired up/energised.

Blue Anchor are going back to do further work in Rochdale with more staff e.g. lettings officers from ALMO.

- *Interesting techniques for marketing?*

Used some of everything- employed people through communities, such as mosques, to talk to people about options in different settings where they may be more open and receptive.

Consultative panels were used as delivery mechanisms.

Guest spots on local radio station, Crescent FM.

Main thing is that there are officers out in the community all the time (e.g. grant assessors etc). Always trying to get people thinking about issues.

- *Concern that individuals may not be capable of making informed choices about things such as equity loans. There may be an assumption that the Council would not tell you to do something which was not in your best interest.*

Property advisors are giving 'informed guidance'- they are very knowledgeable and well trained.

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Safeguards are built into system- someone would always be directed to take independent financial advice before taking out an equity loan.

Oldham MBC- all customers are referred to IFAs paid for by Council before taking out equity loan

West Pennine HA- their equity loan advisors are trained financial advisors.

- *Checking that staff don't have targets for particular products*

No- their role is all about providing quality, appropriate advice.

- *Chester CC have had difficulty in generating new interest in equity schemes and have exhausted their waiting lists. Any suggestions?*
No such problem in Rochdale- a constant stream of people due to poor property maintenance.

Skilling up staff at problem spotting- spot faulty roof, knock on door and point out problem. Suggest ways of dealing with it e.g. equity loan and all work overseen by Council so no problems with shoddy workmanship. Home assessed under Decent Homes and Health and Safety Rating System.

About taking a holistic approach to the area you are working in- e.g. blocks with mortar failure. Property advisors are trying to bring owners together to apply for equity loans to get work done.

Session 2:

- *How many property advisors do you have?*

Currently 3, will soon be 4. 2 working on clearance, 2 in community induction (supporting BME communities moving into non-traditional areas).

Soon to be joined by lettings officers and overcrowding officers- roles will not be so divided in scope.

- *How does it work with property advisors attending evictions after having developed such an intense relationship with the clients?*

There is no problem- it is a natural progression. Support continues after eviction. "Small enough to care"- they are not massive clearance programmes. Advisors operate on a one to one basis.

Relationship all about honesty and openness- it is always on the cards that eviction is an option but at the same time it is not used a blackmailing technique.

- *Regarding community induction, how do you support people to move into non-traditional areas?*

Don't move one person at a time - create a mini-community before you move them.

Intense support- daily visits while required.

Also make links with the new community and work with them. Keep them informed. Make links with residents' associations but also with individuals who are outside of these groups.

Inform youth services and PCSOs as youths can often be a problem.