

# Housing Solutions

## Presentation to Scrutiny Committee January 2018

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Here to help



# Housing Solutions

## What We do

- Here at the Vale of Glamorgan we want to ensure that all our residents have access to the help and support that they need to live in decent affordable homes.
- Work with clients who may be homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- Find creative solutions to resolve their housing need.
- Work with a variety of clients and partnership agencies to find the best outcome for all.



# Housing Solutions



- Housing Act (Wales) 2014
- S66 Duty to Prevent
- S73 Duty to Secure
- S75 Duty to secure where in Priority Need
  
- Total number of presentations 2014/15 - 255
- Total number of presentations 2016/17 - 882
- Total number of presentations year to date - 504



# Housing Solutions

## IMPACTS

- Increase in presentations
- Increase in duties owed & cases opened – 176 currently
- Greater pressures on temporary accommodation
- Longer waiting times in temporary accommodation
- Increase in administration & paperwork due to an increase in duties

## CHALLENGES

- Shortage of affordable housing
- Lean Housing Solutions Team (leanest in Wales)
- Funding – temporary (3 posts out of 8.5 are funded)
- Recruitment of appropriate staff
- Welfare Reform – Universal Credit, benefit cap



## Housing Solutions Help to Resolve (s73)



- Provide Temporary accommodation
- Combination of council, leased, shared and hostel
- Supported Accommodation
- Vale Assisted Tenancy Scheme
- Homes4U



# Housing Solutions

## Final Outcome & Resolution (s75)

- Social Housing – allocated through Homes4U, Rooms4U.
- Private Rented Sector – financial assistance can be provided.
- Supported Accommodation – some of the projects used are through Gwalia or Gofal.





# Housing Solutions - Holistic Housing Advice Service

Here are some organisations that we work with:







# Vale Assisted Tenancy Scheme

**Assisting Homeless/Potentially Homeless  
clients into  
private rented property**



## Private Rental Procurement Officer: Purpose of Role

To secure affordable, suitable private rental property by working with lettings agents and private landlords in order to find housing solutions for individuals and families who present as homeless, to enable the Council to discharge our duty under Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

To secure suitable property for the current Syrian refugee resettlement programme.

## How are properties sourced

### Letting agents

- Check property letting websites twice daily
- Contact letting agents to secure required properties
- Hold face to face meetings with letting agents to build relationships
- Hold regular forums with local letting agents to raise awareness of VATS

### Private landlords

- Engage existing landlords.
- Engage new landlords from recommendations
- Hold regular face to face meetings with existing and new private landlords to build relationships and expand the portfolio of properties available
- Hold regular forums and organise training for landlords from outside agencies i.e Rent Smart
- Providing support – telephone, face to face including legislation

## Once a property is found

### Before tenancy

- Conduct a viewing with potential tenant at the property
- Liaise with environmental health to ensure the property is up to standard
- Compile a video inventory to protect tenant, landlord and Council for claims on bond
- Complete all documentation prior to tenant occupation. (housing benefit, tenancy agreement etc...)
- Ensure prompt payment for the first month's rent to landlord or letting agent

### Post occupancy

- Property inspections in week 2 and 6 of the new tenancy
- Assess if client requires extra tenancy support.
- Ensuring the requested completed documentation has been returned to relevant agencies (housing benefit etc...)
- Ongoing telephone and face to face support to letting agent, landlord & tenant to ensure a successful tenancy
- Video inventory when tenancy ends to protect the Council on any bond claim.

# Challenges

- Insufficient one bed units available in current market to meet demand
- Letting agents sceptical of the bond guarantee certificate
- Challenging clients
- Lack of guarantors, driven by social and economic climate
- Clients presenting with rent arrears - hard upward sell
- Housing benefit not being processed in a timely manner due to inability of client to return important documentation



# Solutions



- 2 x 2 scheme
- Developing and maintaining good working relationships with letting agents and landlords
- Early intervention with the tenant when tenancy issues occur to resolve problems to prevent eviction i.e. Section 21/Section 8

# Success in 2016/17

**We have successfully assisted into private rental properties:**

Year 2016/17		Quarter 1-3 2017	
Total PRS	161	Total PRS	129
1 Bed units	84	1 Bed units	69





One stop shop for 16 – 17 year olds