

Creative Solutions for move on housing

Summary

We hope that this information will be helpful to those developing supported housing in the community.

We believe that in the future commissioners should look to providing self-contained housing as the first option. For homeless people in need of support we would question the assumption that shared housing with floating support could be appropriate.

We do not believe that self contained housing is necessarily more expensive if we take into account the revenue costs required to provide shared housing of a decent quality. Total capital costs worked out at £75,084 per unit. Since this time prices have fallen, and because of mortgage and other financial arrangements Brighter Futures can provide self contained housing at a grant rate of approximately £43.5k per unit.



brighter futures

creative support, housing and employment

Brighter Futures began developing community based housing in 1987, to provide a stepping stone between the hostel and independence. Only shared housing was considered as funding was not available for self contained accommodation.



Brighter Futures offered both the housing and support, staff would visit on a regular basis and very early on the supervision of the property and safety of customers and staff emerged as a major issue.

Over the next 18 years we worked with this model. There were always problems of conflict between customers. Many customers reported feeling unsafe. In the mid 1990's we reduced the size of shared properties, gave up our 4 bed properties in favour of two bed ones. The problems of the relationship between customers forced into sharing with a stranger continued. By 2006 we had made some moves towards self contained accommodation and had 12 units one bed flats which proved extremely popular.

During 2005 we had a number of meetings with our hostel customers and based on their feedback and our experience we decided to:

1. Change the accommodation provided from shared to self-contained accommodation.
2. Come to an agreement with Supporting People that bed spaces would be prioritised for those leaving hostels.
3. Reduce our role as a managing agent for other RSLs and to increase the number of properties we own.



Put simply we have found that self-contained housing is a solution where shared housing was often part of the problem. Comparing data from 05/06 to 08/09 illustrates the impact of the change.

All figures are from the respective annual accounts and do not show any adjustment for inflation.

Benefits to customers

1. The move to self contained housing was at the request of customers.
2. The outcomes for customers in terms of planned move on improved.
3. We accommodate people with more complex needs.
4. Abandonments and evictions are reduced.
5. Customers are becoming less indebted.
6. Rents have reduced in real terms whilst the quality of accommodation is improved.
7. Customers have services more focussed on their support plan and becoming more independent as less time is spent on property damage, lettings and tenant disputes.
8. Security of tenure offered is increased from a licence agreement to an Assured Shorthold Tenancy.



Financial benefit

1. Voids rates have dropped therefore rental income has increased.
2. The staff to tenant ratio is increased so staffing costs are reduced.
3. Maintenance costs are given at actual prices, the cost is lower regardless of inflation. The quality of accommodation offered is considerably improved.
4. Rent arrears are reduced, although some of the reduction maybe due to better HB administration, there are lower tenant arrears.
5. Number of units increased means a greater rental income.
6. More of the rental income comes to Brighter Futures.

Benefits for commissioners and communities

1. Support costs are reduced in real terms.
2. More Supporting People outcomes are achieved for individuals.
3. More LAA national indicators are met at lower costs.
4. Reduced levels of anti social behaviour.
5. Lower turnover helps provide for more stable and cohesive communities.
6. Greater levels of customer satisfaction.
7. Crime associated with disputes between tenants and loss of property is reduced.
8. Evidence to inform future strategic development.
9. Fewer people go back to rough sleeping.
10. Lower turnover means more stable communities.



Community Housing Changes

	08/09	05/06	Year on year impact
Referrals from hostels	90%	not known	
Planned move on rate	93%	47%	46%
Unplanned moves	1	8	-7
Total number of customers	39	64	-25
tenant staff ratio	12:1	10:1	-2 staff
Revenue impact			
Support cost per unit	£1,780	£2,332	-£552
Voids rate	2%	8%	0
Voids costs	£5,940	£10,885	-£4,945
Maintenance repairs cost per property per annum	£672	£896	-£224
Renewals costs per property per annum	£590	£851	-£262
Arrears HB	£5,034	£20,554	-£15,520
Average weekly rent	£87	£85	£2
Number of properties	32	24	8
Number of units – bed spaces	33	29	4
Self contained *To be increase to 36 without additional support costs 10/11	32*	17	15
Compulsory Shared properties	0	6	-6
Properties owned by Brighter futures	19	5	14
Properties owned by others	13	19	-6

Capital costs

Brighter Futures
£473,258

Grant
£653,000

Total scheme costs
£1,126,258

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