



SUSTAINING TENANCIES

SARAH BENTLEY
Service Lead Housing Options/Homelessness
&
Temporary Accommodation

1

NDC Housing Staff Structure

- With the introduction of the HRA, NDC made the decision to re-structure the Housing team to meet predicted demand:
- Housing Options/Homelessness Team
 - 2 x Snr Housing Officers
 - 5 x Housing Officers



2

Private Rented Team

- At NDC we created a new team – Private Rented Sector Team:
- PRS – Co-Ordinator
- PRS Case Officers x 2
- PRS Support Worker



3

Temporary Accommodation

- Due to the increase in demand NDC have also increased this team:
- TA Case officers x 2
- TA Support Workers x 2
- TA Handy Person x 1



4

NDC Area & Population

- North Devon is a rural area
- The NDC area sits to the west of Exmoor National Park, and covers an area of coastline, rural areas, villages and market towns. There are good road links to M5 and North Cornwall but the only rail link runs into Exeter. Most of the population live in market towns, rural settlements or coastal resorts. Barnstaple is the central market town with main further and higher education opportunities, a hospital, and shopping facilities. Other small towns such as South Molton provide a range of services for their communities.



5

NDC Population

- In 2017, the population of NDC was 95,400. Of these, a quarter was over retirement age. Fewer than 10% were aged between 15 and 24. There is high net
- in-migration which tends to be mainly older people. The area's population is growing and is projected to grow by around 12% to 2031.



6

NDC Economy

- The Northern Devon area has a £2.2bn economy encompassing 7,700 businesses and 66,000 jobs. Most companies are small, over 90% employing fewer than ten staff. The largest sectors (in descending order) are retail, health and social care, accommodation and food
- Average income in 2017 was £29,538 for NDC, this masks a significant range with a smaller number of higher-paid roles and a large number of low-paid jobs.



7

NDC Economy - Continued

- NDC has two areas of deprivation which are amongst the most deprived 10% in England (2015 index but many of the underlying statistics are from earlier years). These are Barnstaple Central Town and Ilfracombe central. Amongst the district councils in Devon only Exeter has areas which also feature in the most deprived 10%, although there are 39 areas which feature in the lower quartile for deprivation, covering 8.7% of the population. The indices of deprivation collate figures covering income, employment, health, crime, etc. Along with much of the rest of Devon, NDC scores in the lower quartile for the overall living environment, relating primarily to the quality of housing, air quality and road traffic accidents (also taken from English indices of deprivation 2015, *ibid*).



8

Housing Market

- The housing market in NDC is characterised by:
 - High house prices
 - Low incomes
 - High proportion of second home ownership (4% of total stock of 1% nationally)
 - Poor quality private sector housing
 - Low proportion of social rented housing (about half national average).

9

Continued

- There is a severe shortage of affordable housing. The disparity between incomes and house prices is such that the majority of working households cannot afford to buy a property. Devonomics, information provided by Devon County Council, suggests that the house price to income ratio in the North Devon Council area is above ten. In other words, house prices are more than ten times average annual incomes. There are also a significant number of second homes (3.7% of all homes across the district, but concentrated in a relatively small number of areas where as many as one in four homes are second homes).
- <https://www.devonomics.info/data/earnings/house-price-ratio/>

10

Private rented Sector

- In NDC, the private rented sector is largely made up of landlords who own only one or two properties. While this does not necessarily make it harder to engage with landlords it does mean that NDC has to talk to a larger number of landlords to secure a reasonable number of properties for those with a high housing need.



11

Rental Charges

- Room Only – 300 - LHA – 274.84
- 1 Bed – 425 399.98
- 2 Bed – 550 500.01
- 3 Bed – 650 599.99
- 4 Bed – 800 732.00
- Valuation figures – Oct 17 – Sept 18



12

PRS Team

- Created with the introduction of HRA
- Purpose of new roles to assist housing officers to secure accommodation in the PRS
- To support clients being placed
- To support landlords with the letting process
- To build positive relationships with in the PRS with landlords and agents
- Reduce long term need for TA



13

PRS Service

- Housing Options Officer refer client to service
- Type of accommodation required
- Matrix Assessment completed
- Level of additional tenancy support required
- Landlord/Agent Support



14

Support Worker Role

- Officer maintains regular contact with Landlord/Agents
- Meets with client before agreeing to financially support in PRS
- Attends sign up with client
- Ensure all benefits are in place
- DD are completed
- If issues arise will go back into to do some support work



15

Support Package

- At the start of the Housing journal officers complete a PRS Matrix with clients
- 3 x level of support package
- Dependent on the outcome scoring result



16

Level Of Support

- **RED:**
- High level Support – Daily Visits/Benefit completion/DD/engage other services/update Landlord
- Once completed continue weekly visits
- If any issues landlord/agent contacts support worker goes back in for intensive work



17

AMBER – MEDIUM NEED

- Initial meeting for tenancy set up – Benefits/DD/Register CT etc
- Weekly meetings to check in tenants to address any issues – for up to a 4 week period
- Weekly contact with agent/landlord – 4 week period
- Any issues support worker will go back in and carry out support work



18

GREEN – LOW NEED

- 1 X meeting to check clients aware of tenant/landlord obligations
- 1 x telephone contact 1 week after tenancy to check all obligations completed
- Tenant/landlord/agent has support worker contact details for any issues



19

Deposit Schemes

- 2018 introduced a new re-payment scheme
- Payments made direct to landlord/agent
- Affordable re-payment plan for tenants
- 83% maintaining payment plans
- DHP budget for those unable to re-pay



20

Deposit Administrators

- Responsible for arranging all payments
- Setting up direct debit
- Communication with landlord/agents
- Maintains the re-payments agreements



21

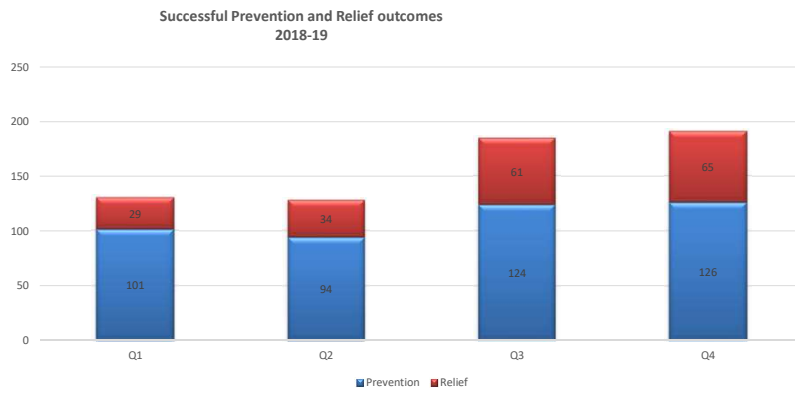
Advantages

- Landlord/Agents – Clear understanding of services
- Good supply of PRS Accommodation
- Tenants – Engaged/Budgeting/Positive tenancy
- Direct contact for both Landlord/Agent & Tenant
- Issue resolutions to maintain tenancies



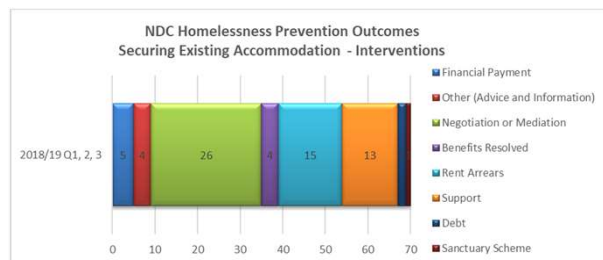
22

Prevention Results



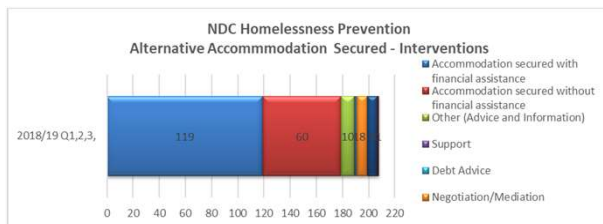
23

Securing Existing Accommodation



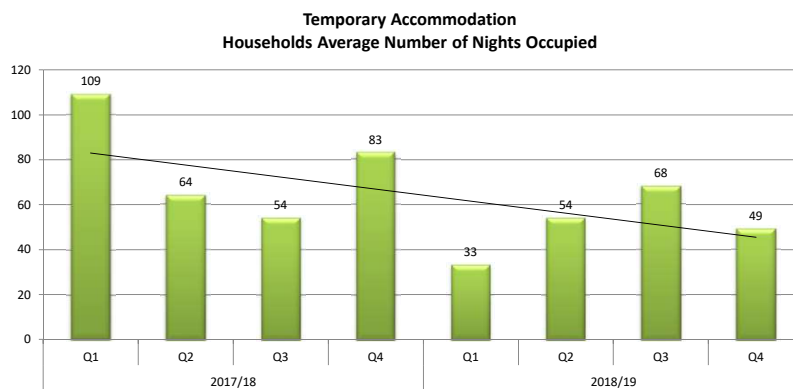
24

Alternative Accommodation



25

Positive Effects on TA



26

Future Concerns

- Tenants Fee Act 2019
- Deposits capped to 5 weeks
- Restrictions on fees
- Debate re s21 Notices



27

RISKS

- Loss of revenue for agents
- Loss of supply of landlords
- Risk averseness – lack of protection for damage
- Impact on rental charges to cover the above potential losses



28

Proposed Options

- Insurance Schemes - External
- Bond Schemes
- Landlord Incentives
- Insurances Schemes - Internal



29

Discussions

- What is your local authority / organisation doing in this area of work?
- What do you see as the biggest challenges you need to overcome?
- How do you plan to overcome these challenges?
- How do you think this work will improve service for your customers?
- What support or guidance would help you to do this?



30

THANK YOU

Thank you for your time and listening to how we work in North Devon.

I look forward to hearing about any incentives you have in your area to ensure a decent affordable supply of PRS accommodation

