

## Housing Delivery Group

### Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 15 April 2010

#### **Present:**

<b>Lisa Willcox</b>	<b>Modernisation and Development Manager</b>
<b>Di Button</b>	<b>Social Worker, Modernisation and Development</b>
<b>Claire Jenkins</b>	<b>CTLD South Social Worker</b>
<b>Kairen Shearon</b>	<b>Partnership and Programmes Manager, Strategic Housing</b>
<b>Sarah Machin</b>	<b>Specialist Accommodation Officer</b>
<b>Chris Lord</b>	<b>Area Manager, Yorkshire Met Housing</b>
<b>Sarah Roxby</b>	<b>Vulnerable Services Manager WDH</b>
<b>Garry Richards</b>	<b>Supported Housing Manager, ChevinHousing</b>
<b>Martin Mullen</b>	<b>Assessment and Care Manager, CTLD West</b>
<b>Samantha Taylor</b>	<b>Administrative Assistant Modernisation and Development</b>

#### **Apologies:**

<b>Tony Leatherbarrow</b>	<b>CTLD East Manager</b>
<b>Anne-Marie Gibson</b>	<b>CTLD North Social Worker</b>

#### **Accuracy of Previous Minutes/Matters Arising**

The previous minutes of Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2010 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

#### **Housing Survey**

The housing survey information will be combined with other sources of information about people in the district with Learning Disabilities, and this will then hopefully provide a more accurate picture of what types of housing we need and where in Wakefield they are needed.

#### **Housing DVD**

The DVD is nearly ready. All the filming and gaining consent is completed, along with most of the editing. The master copy will hopefully be ready by the end of the month.

#### **Use of Housing Options support**

It was agreed that the support from Housing Options offered via Valuing People should be used to help develop an accommodation strategy for people with Learning Disabilities in

Wakefield. Once this strategy has been written, this can hopefully then be used to feed into the mainstream housing strategy.

### Person Centred Planning and Needs

Sarah Machin is in the process of collating information from the CTLD teams regarding individuals who wish to live with someone else in supported living. Sarah has not yet received all the information expected. **Action: This will be addressed at the Team Managers meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, which Sarah and Lisa will be attending.**

### LDDF Bid

Di had costed for additional Training/ Events around housing, and the money for this was approved. The bid for to renew Housing Options membership was renewed and an additional £20,000 was awarded to take forward actions identified by the group over the next year. The restrictions are that it must be used this financial year, and cannot be used to employ a worker (due to recruitment timescales).

### Agenda Items

#### Private Sector Leasing/Accredited Landlords

There are currently not enough social housing properties to meet the housing needs of people with learning disabilities, and therefore solutions within the private sector are needed.

A key barrier is LHA. This does not cover an additional room if needed i.e. for sleep-ins. The amount of money needed on a shared room basis means there will be an shortfall. Lisa distributed an overview of local area average rental prices was handed out with the shortfalls indicated for a sleep in room. The closest area to being cost neutral was South Elmsall. A national review of LHA is being undertaken, and a national response is being coordinated by Mencap and Housing Options to inform the government of the above issue. An accredited landlord scheme was considered and could be a good idea to implement throughout Wakefield and manage the funds for shared room rates via LHA.

One solution to the LHA situation would be for Housing Associations to lease properties from landlords and then rent to people with learning disabilities that would require this extra room, as they are exempt from LHA restrictions. Chris Lord commented this was not an area that Yorkshire Housing were intending to develop at the moment. Sarah Roxby noted this has been carried out in other areas, with Homespace jointly purchasing property from the open market and then leasing to Open Door for a two-year period. This used Homespace's own capital in partnership with local councils. Sarah will check whether private sector leasing would be of interest to WDH. Garry Richards noted that Chevin are involved in a number of private sector leases, but that there is limited capacity to expand this significantly at present.

Another barrier is accessing private rented properties on the 'open market'. Lisa explained a previous attempt to acquire accommodation had encountered difficulties as direct landlords are often reluctant to rent to people 'on benefits' (eg adverts with 'NO DSS'). Equally, a national lettings agency (Reeds Rains) had an established policy of credit

checking. For those people who have not had control of their money, or always lived within their benefits, they do not have a credit rating, and so do not pass the test. Kairen Shearon said more local rental organisations may be an option, such as those based in the Wakefield district.

It may be possible to form some direct links with landlords, to establish the advantages of long term tenants with learning disabilities for them, and it may be useful to work in conjunction with the Accredited Landlord scheme on this.

It was also noted that the need for overnight support may be able to be met in different ways than a sleep in member of staff – eg access to Carelink. This would need to be approached in such a way that reassured family members of people's safety.

**Action: Lisa, Kairen, and Sarah M to meet with Steve Chippendale and David Fowles about private sector landlords and accredited landlord schemes.**

### **Delivering Social Inclusion: The role housing associations can play in PSA 16 (by National Housing Federation)**

This paper was considered by the group as a way to provide more people with settled accommodation. It contained models of good practice, several of which Wakefield were already implementing.

### **Independent Living Fund (ILF) Changes**

ILF has now been stopped for all people with learning disabilities unless they are in 16 hours or more of paid employment. Lisa noted that Steve Flynn (Wakefield Council ILF specialist) is hopeful that this will be reversed at some point in the future. However, this affects the residential reduction strategy as there is no extra money to supplement people moving out of residential homes. This means the strategy is now struggling to be cost effective. Karyn Kirkpatrick (Valuing People Now National Housing Lead) is currently co-ordinating a national response, and Lisa is drafting some information to forward on to Karyn on how this will impact on our residential reduction strategy.

### **Choice Based Lettings Survey**

There is currently a review in Wakefield of CBL processes. The group noted that although CBL worked well in some situations, there were often capacity issues with social workers supporting service users to make bids, and the impact on people's mental well being of applying for, and not obtaining specific properties. These issues have been noted on the survey forms by some members of this group.

### **Update on Housing Projects**

#### **Keyring**

Leona Batty, is now the link manager for Wakefield Council for this project from now on. The contract is due to renewal in October 2010 – although funded until Jan 2011.

## South Kirkby Flats

The foundations are in, and the walls have started to be built up. Photos of the site were passed round at the meeting. The nominations process has been started and Lisa and Sarah M will be attending a CTLD managers meeting to talk about these. All nominations should be passed to Sarah M.

## Alternative Care

A residential property is being converted with Chevin Housing to supported living. The ILF applications have been completed, and the deregistration date is 1<sup>st</sup> June 2010.

## Housing Options Training

The attendance at these two training events was not as good as anticipated, however the feedback received has been positive i.e. the trainer communicated a lot of useful and worthwhile knowledge. It was useful for people to find out what is available. Sarah M has been receiving a substantial amount of emails pertaining to subjects covered in the training. There is also a link to the Housing Options website on the Learning Disability Partnership Board website.

## Housing Event

LDPB feedback has suggested a Housing Event for service users, carers, support providers and professionals. This will meet the group outcomes and will be focused on raising awareness of housing options and issues. It is important to get people interested and give them as much information as possible. Ideas were discussed, which have been listed below:

- Locality based agencies or groups to attend.
- Include visual information
- Open day layout – informal approach.
- Some elements of presentation, perhaps housing options or benefit talks
- Feedback sheets to be given out at the event for people to give us their thoughts/ideas.
- Coincide with launch of DVD, ideally.
- A presented service user 'journey'.
- Large venue needed with parking.

**Action: Modernisation and Development to coordinate.**

## PSA 16 Toolkit

This self-assessment toolkit is to be considered by members of the group before the next meeting, and will help to inform future accommodation strategy in a learning disability friendly way. **Action: Sections 1-4 and 8 onwards to be considered by all members.**

## Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be at 2 pm on **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2010**