

The future contribution and potential of Private Sector Housing
23/24 April 2009
Majestic Hotel, Harrogate

Programme

- 10.00 Registration and Refreshments**
- 11.00 Chair's Welcome & Introduction**
Bob Livermore, Executive Manager – Housing & Property Maintenance Services, West Lancashire DC
- 11.05 The Private Rented Sector – Its contribution and potential**
Dr Julie Rugg, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Housing Policy, York University

Last year, the biggest review of the Private Rented Sector was undertaken by Dr Julie Rugg, looking into the current position and the future role of the sector.

Within this session, Julie will:

- Go through the findings of this review
- Highlight where she sees the potential for areas of the sector to improve are - given the current constraints of the market
- Explore the policy direction of travel on the issues raised in the review

- 11.45 Response to the Rugg Review: the future for the Private Rented Sector**
Simon Llewellyn, Head of Private Renting and Leasehold, Communities and Local Government

Simon will discuss the Government's response to the independent review undertaken by Dr Julie Rugg, and where the Government will be targeting their resources to tackle issues raised by the review.

- 12.10 A review of the sector and what this means for Local Authorities**
Richard Tacagni, Head of Function (Housing), LACORS

Within this session, Richard will:

- Review regulatory changes over the last 12 months,
- Make some comment of the Rugg Review
- Discuss the impact of credit crunch on service delivery from the Local Authority perspective.

12.30 **Lunch**

13.30 **Professional Practice Sessions One:**

1. Cold Homes in the Private Rented Sector

Dr Stephen Battersby, Chartered Environmental Health Practitioner

Within the current economic climate, assuring energy is affordable is a big challenge; through the HHSRS there is a push to improve warmth within the Private Rented Sector.

Stephen will:

- Talk about his experience of tackling fuel poverty
- Discuss his work with CLG on addressing this problem within the PRS
- Link this session to the experiences of the Warmfront and the progress made with this agenda.

2. “Studentification”: success and failure of the PRS

Dr Richard Tyler, Co-ordinator, National HMO Lobby
Dr Darren Smith, Reader in Geography, University of Brighton

Darren and Richard will discuss successful impacts of student housing on the market around purpose built accommodation, and Darren will present some of the findings from his recent paper on this topic.

The workshop will also cover:

- Failures of the student housing market, particularly within a time of shortage in the housing market
- Covering issues such as PPS3 objectives and achieving mixed and sustainable communities
- The impact on second home usage statistics
- Wider implications for communities with high levels of student colonies

3. A Route to homelessness – Why Private Rented tenants become homeless

Dr Julie Rugg, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Housing Policy, York University
Susan Walsh MBE, Housing Options Manager, Blackpool BC

Julie will go through the findings of her research with Shelter on why Private Rented Tenants become homeless, looking into the alternative options which are available to them given the current market conditions. Susan will then discuss Blackpool’s experience of assisting those from within the Private Rented

Sector, and their success in addressing the issue of repeat homeless from this cohort.

4. Review of Housing Benefit allowance and impact on PRS

Professor Steve Wilcox, York University

Steve will highlight some of the issues raised by the current review into housing benefit allowance and how this is likely to impact on tenants in the Private Rented Sector, and the tenures' sustainability in future markets.

14.40 Refreshments

15.00 Professional Practice Sessions Two:

5. Improving partnership working for the benefit of tenants

Alan Elborough, Director, Settled Housing Solutions

Jim McLaughlin, Director, Settled Housing Solutions

The changing economic climate is heightening demands on Local Authority housing services. Authorities around the country are increasingly looking to the Private Rented Sector (PRS) as an alternative to social housing for clients who present themselves as homeless. However, the challenge facing Local Authorities is to develop effective partnerships with the PRS and to design sustainable housing options that are both attractive to their clients, and which also meet the commercial outcomes of the PRS market.

Alan and Jim will:

- Discuss the benefits of an Assured Shorthold Framework
- Demonstrate how it can improve partnership working, improve accessibility and supply within the PRS
- Explore to promote long sustainable tenancies and finally raise standards in the sector
-

6. Making better use of empty properties

John Marr, Policy Officer, LACORS

Given the current pressures on the housing market, ensuring empty properties are utilised is more important than ever.

John will:

- Explain the latest research work he has undertaken in this area
- Highlight his investigation of a wide range of mechanisms to utilise empty properties and bring them back into use effectively and efficiently

- Cite some good practice examples where empty properties have been tackled effectively

7. Tackling overcrowding using HHSRS

David Webber, Policy Officer, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Ian Cole, Senior EHO, Bristol City Council

Lack of supply often results in households residing within unsuitable or overcrowded accommodation. David is currently on secondment to develop new guidance on tackling overcrowding, and he will talk about his work in this area. Ian will discuss how Bristol has been addressing this problem within their area through the Health and Housing Safety Rating system.

8. Migrant workforce and their accommodation

David Nix, Head of Policy and Communications, GLA

Gangmasters Licensing Authority has been undertaking a considerable amount of work in this area and David will inform delegates of the success of this scheme.

This workshop will cover:

- The currently changing migrant workforce and their accommodation requirements within the Private Sector
- The sector's suitability in meeting the needs of this group
- The joint agency working that has been undertaken to ensure an effective response to accommodating this cohort

16.10 Migration: the changing profile and the future prospects for the sector under current economic conditions

Professor Steve Wilcox, York University

Rupert Mackay, Commercial Director, Hometrack

The pressure on the Private Rented Sector has been increasing due to market changes and supply issues; and the need for a better understanding of the Private Rented Sector has been highlighted in report after report. Steve is extremely knowledgeable about migration patterns and data sources and will highlight how to gain the most intelligence from these.

In this session Steve and Rupert will cover:

- Profile changes of those renting privately and what this means for the future of the tenure

- Some of the greatest changes in the market and what this is likely to mean for the long-term viability and effectiveness of the tenure
- An investigation of the migration patterns within the sector

This final session of the first day will allow delegates to question their organisation's knowledge of their Private Rented Sector's profile, and highlight some of the key intelligence and understanding that is required.

17.15 Close of Conference Day One

19.00

for

19.30

Conference Dinner and Entertainment

Programme - Day Two

09.30 Professional Practice Sessions Three:

1. Fire safety in residential accommodation

Kevin Thompson, Policy Officer, CIEH

Paul Dryden, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority

Following the guidance, which was published last year, the session will provide:

- New written clarification to cover the issues raised through the consultation period
- Further advice and detail some of the themes covered within the regional events
-

2. Healthy Homes Initiative

Ian Watson, Team Leader, HMRI HIT Team

The Liverpool Healthy Homes Initiative is being funded with over £9 million from the PCT – to tackle the health impacts of poor housing.

Ian will:

- Talk through some of issues which his team has had to overcome
- How this new initiative is likely to have a significant impact on the lives of people throughout the community
- Where the initiative goes from here

3. Communities in Control – engaging with the private sector

Margaret Wilkinson MBE, Head of Projects and Development, Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation

Following the White Paper published last year, the importance of engaging with all tenures has been highlighted - particularly those who are usually the last to be consulted, households renting from the Private Sector.

Within this workshop, Margaret will:

- Highlight some of her experiences in engaging with the Private Rented Sector
- Review the most successful mechanisms for doing such consultation
- Cover mechanisms for engagement with those households who are often over-looked and under-represented

4. Tackling ASB throughout the community

Sylvia Simpson, Senior Manager, Bolton At Home
Julianne Scarlatt, Private Rented Sector Co-ordinator, Bolton MBC

Ensuring that we have sustainable communities and are able to effectively deal with ASB requires a mechanism for addressing this cross-tenure.

From this workshop delegates will hear from a successful programme within Bolton that has been instrumental in turning around their mixed tenure estates and tackling ASB cases through tenant and landlord engagement.

10.40 Refreshments

11.00 How the agency's role impacts on the Private Sector

Graeme Geddes, Planning Manager, Investment & Renewal Division, HCA (Invited)

The establishment of the new Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is likely to have a significant impact on the delivery of a wide range of development programmes. This session will highlight how the HCA's role is likely to impact on the Private Rented Sector.

11.45 Current Challenges in the market and identifying opportunities

Ian Fletcher, Director, British Property Federation

Ian will end the conference with a round-up of current challenges for the sector and highlight future opportunities which may arise.

Ian will set out how the emerging policies are likely to develop and what impact they will have on the sector over the next 12 months.

12.30

Close of Conference