

Policy Digest

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Further Information

The Policy Digest provides a review of Northern Housing Consortium policy activity and an update on recent national legislative, policy and regulation issues that have an impact on our members in the North. Visit our website at [/www.northern-consortium.org.uk](http://www.northern-consortium.org.uk) or contact the NHC Policy section on 0191 566 1000 for further information on the work of the Consortium featured in the Digest or any other policy areas you would like to highlight.

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News

Save the date for the Northern Housing Summit 2010

This year's Northern Housing Summit will take place on 23rd February 2010 at York Racecourse. The 2010 Summit provides a unique opportunity to consider the key challenges facing the sector and an unparalleled chance to shape the future of housing in the North.

More information on the event and booking details will be released soon.

Quality of Life

Phase two underway of Neighbourhood 2020 – Age Friendly Communities in the North

The Northern Housing Consortium in partnership with Northern Architecture have now moved into phase two of their two year multi disciplinary project ***Neighbourhood 2020 – Age Friendly Communities in the North***, which looks to build a holistic picture of what an *Age Friendly Community*' will look like in the year 2020.

This phase of the project has included a series of interactive workshops involving local communities and residents, around their aspirations and vision of what makes a neighbourhood *age friendly*, local architects and planners have also been involved. These workshops have had a particular focus on:

- **Active ageing** - Enabling people to remain healthy, to participate and to feel secure
- **Inclusive Design** - achieving a well-designed, accessible and pleasant living environment/ the right to chose, but also improved social spaces which encourage social interaction in particular intergenerational considerations
- **Social capital** - Creating an environment that provides places for, and enables people to, engage, get involved, keep in touch, meet up, volunteer, be neighbourly and which encourages grass roots groups and social networks

The outcomes of these interactive workshops will inform a series of recommendations and steps that organisations across the housing sector can take to deliver *age friendly communities across the North*.

The Northern Housing Consortium hosted a series of member Masterclass sessions exploring the key outcomes following the interactive workshops, and the issues raised during our consultation with residents across the North that was undertaken in the first phase of this project. These member Masterclass sessions provided members with the opportunity to consider the short, medium and long term actions to make their neighbourhoods more '*age friendly*', participate in the discussion and share views on our findings to date and share best practice.

The outcomes of the seminars will inform a series of recommendations which will be published in our report ***Neighbourhood 2020***, which we will launch in the New Year.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment & Housing: A Review of Northern Approaches

This month the Northern Housing Consortium published the findings of its review of the links being made between the housing sector and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) within 9 areas across the north of England including Halton, Oldham, Salford, Lancashire, Durham, Gateshead, Wakefield, Doncaster and North East Lincolnshire. The report provides a summary of the policy context, the relevance of JSNA to the housing sector and highlights a series of key messages about progress and challenges. The report is of interest to commissioners and providers of housing and health and social care services as well as policy makers within national and regional government offices. We hope that the findings will enable housing organisations to be more involved in the commissioning of health and social care services – thereby supporting our members’ engagement in this field – and ultimately leading to improved services to communities. The process to date has been extremely useful and is welcomed by Department of Health. In late October will be undertaking a pilot exercise with 14 members in the North West along with their statutory partners to:

- Share ideas, seek views and grapple with issues relating to how to maximise the value of data and intelligence across the HHP area.
- Test and refine the Northern Housing Consortium’s thinking around a “housing to health” offer.

The report is will be available soon. For further information please contact charlotte.harrison@northern-consortium.org.uk

Housing, Health and Social Care Newsletter – Integrated Living Network

NHC have introduced a new newsletter for members on issues around the housing, health and social care agendas through its Integrated Living Network. A focus on the links between housing and health is a key theme of our policy work and the first edition (July 2009) is available on our website now.

The second edition is to be published in early October and will include:

- The Big Care Debate
- Housing Support Conference 2009 summary
- JSNA and Housing: A Review of Northern Approaches report
- Neighbourhood 2020: Age Friendly Communities – member seminar findings
- NHC pilot project on evaluating the impact of assistive technology interventions
- Neighbourhood 2020 Conference - 26th January 2010 at York Racecourse on challenges and solutions facing the demands of an ageing society

If you would like to join the Integrated Living Network and receive the newsletter direct via email, as well as other housing, health and social care related publications, please contact Rachel Collings, Policy Services Manager on 0191 566 1039 or rachel.collings@northern-consortium.org.uk for further information.

Employment in the Social Housing Sector

The profile of the role of social housing in the worklessness agenda is ever increasing, with the recent further addition of new draft statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England entitled 'Fair and Flexible' (July 2009) putting much emphasis on affording priority to those seeking employment within lettings criteria to help to facilitate mobility moves and enable job take up in alternative areas on the country.

The Fair and Flexible guidance is out to consultation now, with a closing date for comment of 23 October 2009. NHC encourage our members to participate in this consultation and to support the inclusion of the encouragement of facilitation of job-related social mobility in line with the enhanced housing options approach.

Following NHC's recent partnership with One North East and Job Centre Plus to deliver a very successful Employability and Housing Providers event on 1st June 2009 in County Durham which brought together housing providers and employability organisations to raise awareness on the benefits of helping tenants into work, NHC plan to continue to focus on the employment agenda and its links within the housing sector to raise the profile of housing and the positive part it can play.

Watch this space for further NHC Policy & Practice Team outputs around the worklessness agenda, and please contact Rachel Collings, Policy Services Manager on 0191 566 1039 or rachel.collings@northern-consortium.org.uk as lead on this policy area if you would like to discuss further.

Demonstrating the Value of Assistive Technology

In the last issue of Policy Digest NHC announced that we are taking a closer look at Assistive Technology (AT) and the associated benefits to both users of telehealthcare solutions and their carers.

There are very strong advantages for those providing AT services to their tenants to monitor and evaluate the benefits achieved and efficiencies gained. NHC have developed a tool to assist members in building a business case to demonstrate and quantify the value of these services. The tool provides an easy to follow process to gather and analyse data on service provision, and also includes clear links to health data sources to assist with data collation on wider issues such as prevention of admission to hospital and prevention of falls. The tool also provides a report template to populate with the data collated which forms a business case that can be used to demonstrate the value of AT and can assist in seeking mainstream funding for AT and encourage additional funding support from your local PCT or other sources. It can also help to illustrate social gains such as improved confidence and independence of users; and benefits to carers which can contribute towards achieving standards and National Indicators set out by regulatory bodies and form a clearer picture for JSNA and CAA etc.

The pilot project will include 6 NHC members and is currently finalising member sign up to participate. Look out for further information on this exciting project in the near future.

For further information on this project please contact Rachel Collings, Policy Services Manager on 0191 566 1039 or rachel.collings@northern-consortium.org.uk

Housing Support Conference – Personalisation: From Inception to Inspection

NHC are pleased to report a successful debut of the new 'Housing Support Conference' on 22nd and 23rd September 2009 in Blackpool (sponsored by Capita and supported by the Integrated Living Network, CLG, DH and the Audit Commission).

The conference provided a continuation of the last six successful years of the NHC's 'Supporting People Conference' to reflect the current landscape and future direction of the personalisation agenda and radical reform of the social care system. Delegates heard a policy update on the personalisation agenda 'from inception to inspection' and were encouraged to embrace opportunity and affect innovative change within their own organisations to meet the demands of the transformation agenda and to continue to deliver effective, value for money services with positive outcomes within housing, health and social care settings.

Some of the key messages that emerged from the plenary speeches and lively Q&A sessions that followed included:

- Empathy is key and a strong message to get out and spend time *in* the schemes and projects *with* the service users to truly get a feel for the services you are delivering
- Workforce development important to ensure staff are equipped with the skills and understanding to delivery their role effectively
- Know your customers – services cannot be delivered effectively based on diagnosis alone – full consideration of personal needs and personal characteristics is required to fully assess a person's need
- Engage tenants and residents in service shaping at every level, including young people and older members of our communities and those with complex needs – their views are invaluable if services are to meet their needs
- Tackling health and wellbeing inequalities can be an even more difficult task for those individuals with higher care and support needs that face a huge 'cliff face' before they even begin to access services etc.
- Encourage those not yet ready to go into employment to engage in voluntary services, and make these available within your organisation where possible to support people into work
- TSA standards praised as a positive move, but must remember that not all people are 'tenants' and may have different priorities by virtue of this
- Audit Commission advised that the KLOEs to be evolved to reflect TSA standards
- Local Authorities – short notice inspections are coming your way soon so be prepared!
- Get housing embedded within the JSNA and CAA to ensure that the invaluable role of housing is noted and evidenced
- Evidence outcomes and shout about the positive work we do to demonstrate value and build a case to fund these services in the future despite tighter budgets and forthcoming spending reviews
- Invest in your services and ensure that improvement is a continual mission – not a one off exercise

Northern Housing Consortium offer a range of member services that can help you to tackle the challenge faced. These include:

- Performance Improvement Team member offer around Customer Profiling, Service Analysis, Peer Reviews and Systems Thinking
- Policy and Practice Team focus and member offer around resident involvement, measuring the impact of assistive technology interventions, mental health and housing, health inequalities, JSNA and housing, ageing communities and the employment agenda
- Consortium Procurement member offer around Adaptations (Bathroom and Stairlift) Framework, Assistive Technology Framework, Community Alarms Maintenance Contract and Fire Safety Framework

Please contact Rachel Collings, Policy Services Manager on 0191 566 1039 or rachel.collings@northern-consortium.org.uk for further information.

Crime and Anti-social Behaviour Conference

Statistics show that while crime and ASB are falling, public perceptions of these issues have not similarly decreased. To tackle this emphasis is on transparency, better partnership working at a neighbourhood level and more support for victims who report ASB.

This year, our 13th Annual Crime and Antisocial Behaviour conference will take stock of the practical remedies available, update delegates on the latest developments in the field and provide tools to further improve the solutions provided.

In particular, this year's conference will explore:

- Working with the media to change perceptions
- Partnership working and Information sharing
- Working with witnesses
- Youth diversionary activities
- Inspection and regulation
- Mental health and ASB
- Powers and interventions

Speakers include:

- Jan Luba QC, Garden Court Chambers
- Lesley Barnard, Standards Advisor, TSA
- Graeme Bennett, National Lead LA & ALMO Landlord Services, Audit Commission
- Steve Arkley, Strategic Manager, Safer Communities, Durham County Council
- Adrian Tonge, Principle Legal Officer, Leeds City Council
- Diana Luchford, Head of Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and Head of Youth Crime Unit, Home Office (invited)
- Ian Brady, Deputy Director, Youth Taskforce (invited)

For more information or booking please go to:

www.northern-consortium.org.uk/Page/Events/CrimeandASB2009.aspx

Homelessness Conference 2009

The Enhanced Housing Options approach has now been adopted by a raft of authorities across the country. This is a good time to hear from organisations in the first wave of

the Trailblazers about their successes, and from organisations in the second wave about how they are planning to build on those experiences.

This one day event will provide an opportunity to learn about the range of work being carried out to prevent homelessness for all groups. It will focus on the many practical tools being developed to make contact with people at an earlier stage, to promote joint working so as to intervene successfully in more cases, and to increase access to settled homes. It will also enable delegates to consider how the links between homelessness and unemployment, health, and community involvement are being addressed, and help to identify the role for housing agencies in contributing to meeting PSA 16.

In particular, the event will seek to explore:

- The successes of Enhanced Housing Options and Overcrowding Trailblazers
- How Housing Associations are lending their weight to widen housing options for all
- Increasing the range of housing options services to help people in rural areas, and across the stock of large housing organisations
- How service user involvement can add to the success of housing options work, and develop skills and expertise for people who have been homeless
- Working across the sectors to address overcrowding, difficulties in accessing the private rented sector, and other factors that can lead to homelessness
- Successful approaches to ending rough sleeping by 2012
- Learning from the implementation of protocols with other agencies
- Messages coming from a study of repeat homelessness in one of the Trailblazer authorities

Speakers include:

- Nick Sedgwick, Homeless Action Team, TSA
- Mark Thompson, Calderdale MBC
- Jenny Edwards, Homeless Link
- Sheila Spencer, Housing Consultant
- Sarah Possingham, Bradford City Council
- Neil Munslow and Gemma Shiel, Newcastle City Council
- Andrew Burnip, Durham County Council
- Julie Griffin, Harvest Housing Group
- John O'Malley, LB Greenwich and SE London Housing Partnership
- Tamzin Taylor-Rosser, National Youth Homeless Scheme

For more information or booking please go to:

www.northern-consortium.org.uk/Page/Events/Homelessness2009.aspx

Quality of Place

Total Place

Total Place is a government initiative through which 13 pilot areas are looking at how a 'whole area' approach to public services in a local area can lead to better services at less cost. This links to Central Government's need to reduce public sector expenditure over the next spending review period, and is part of the Operational Efficiency Programme 'Local Incentives and Empowerment' strand led by Sir Michael Bichard, which seeks to reduce costs and introduce new ways of working through collaboration and local leadership.

The Government has set out 2 key outputs and 5 key outcome areas for the initiative nationally, which are summarised below;

1. Map public spending to understand how this relates to outcomes (a) at a high level across all spending areas, and (b) a 'deep dive' analysis for pilot specific themes.
2. Identifying barriers in local and national delivery structures.

These will then lead to the delivery of 5 key outcome areas:

1. Identify opportunities for service transformation
2. Identify cashable efficiencies both 'quick wins' and longer term opportunities
3. Identify actions to both encourage and remove barriers to local collaboration, including actions for central government.
4. Make recommendations to central government on changes required from the centre and secure support to overcome them
5. Link to wider reforms of the (national) performance management framework

There are several TP pilots operating in the North and the Durham pilot is exploring "Housing in relation to regeneration". The Consortium is involved in the pilot and will seek opportunities as the pilots progress to share housing based learning that may be transferable to other Consortium members – especially as we move towards a general election and we anticipate, whichever party is in power, significant public expenditure cuts.

For more information please contact Charlotte Harrison, Director of Policy, charlotte.harrison@northern-consortium.org.uk or 0191 566 1000

Housing and the Environment – a greener Future

The impact of housing and communities on the environment has well been acknowledged, from new developments to existing homes to behaviour and culture.

Housing contributes approximately 30% of carbon emissions in the UK posing a significant challenge for the sector; resulting in the need for a change in the ways that housing and neighbourhoods are developed and maintained. The Government has highlighted the importance of this challenge through initiatives such as code for sustainable homes, eco-towns, sustainable communities act, energy efficiency policies and retro-fit programmes.

This one day event and exhibition gives delegates an opportunity to listen to a wide range of high profile speakers and experienced practitioners around the environmental agenda and how this impacts on the housing sector.

This important event will ask 'How can we meet the carbon challenge in the housing sector.' The seminar will include an extensive exhibition with examples from renewable and clean energy suppliers to information and advice organisation.

The conference will cover:

- Modern Technologies for low cost housing
- Tackling fuel poverty
- Effective retrofitting of existing homes
- Using renewable energy sources for residential accommodation
- Involving communities and informing residents

- Learning lessons from good practice and case-studies

You will hear from speakers from:

- BRE
- Sustainable Homes
- IDeA
- Salford City council
- Sarsen Housing Association

Plus many more high quality and experienced speakers

This conference is a must attend event for anyone involved in the environmental and energy agendas, as well as strategic and policy makers, maintenance and repairs managers, developing RSLs and new business managers.

Book three delegates for the price of two and book before 1st October and receive £30 discount.

For more information or booking please go to: www.northern-consortium.org.uk/Page/Events/Housingandtheenvironmentagreenerfuture.aspx

Performance Improvement

TSA: Building a regulatory Framework – NHC Response

On 9th June 2009 the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) published their discussion paper *Building a new regulatory framework* which sets out the draft proposals and standards outlining how the TSA will regulate all social landlords across England from 2010. The Northern Housing Consortium has responded to this discussion paper and would like to thank members for their input in shaping this response...

www.northern-consortium.org.uk/assets/policy/consultations/nhc%20response.pdf

Investment and Resources

Progressive Asset Management - in Times of Economic Uncertainty

The current economic climate presents a major challenge for housing providers' asset management; expectations about how assets are managed are higher than ever as the Audit Commission's Report "Room for Improvement" makes clear. Rents are static or reducing and demands on services are rising. It may be harder to secure resources to invest in new or refurbished property and there will be a reduction in receipts from disposal of vacant property. However, there are also opportunities to improve services by gaining a better understanding of the performance of assets, assessing their needs and exploring new methods of delivery.

This conference will explore how to get best possible value out of assets in the current climate and how to meet standards in the new regulatory regime drawing on examples of best practice.

Key Themes to be explored:

- Asset Management for Local Authorities in the new HRA regime
- Understanding use of resources as an assessment approach
- Retrofit agenda – future proofing our homes
- Understanding the asset profile
- Transferring assets to communities
- Understanding the impact of investment decisions
- The future of asset management

Speakers include:

- Tim Sullivan, Regulation Analyst, Tenant Services Authority
- Robert Grundy, Director, Savills
- Ben Ross, Senior Sustainability Advisor, Forum for the Future
- Mervyn Jones, Director, Savills
- Alan Park, Finance Director, Home
- Jo Gooding, Housing & Community Land Trust Officer, Development Trusts Association
- Neil Berry, Regional Development Manager, Development Trusts Association
- Martyn Gorton, Service Director, Wakefield and District Homes
- John Kiely, Director, Savills
- Janet Williams, Senior Research Manager, Audit Commission

For more information or booking please follow this link:

www.northern-consortium.org.uk/Page/Events/AssetManagement.aspx

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