

Housing Strategy and Development Briefing Note 15/2

Housing Options (Prevent 1) Statistics in Scotland
1 April 2014 to 30 September 2014

February 2015



Introduction

Welcome to a series of regular briefings prepared by the Housing Strategy and Development team on the big issues concerning housing. These briefings will be shared with staff, tenants and elected members and keep everyone up to date with regards the ever changing policy context that we are operating within.

The Housing Strategy and Development section is responsible for:-

- Providing the statutory strategic housing authority role within the local authority area;
- Strategic Housing Asset Management delivery;
- The delivery of the Council House New Build Programme and the delivery of the affordable Housing supply programme;
- Supporting the development of a culture of continuous improvement in Housing services and to facilitate opportunities to excel;
- Developing and implementing effective strategies for Housing and Community Safety Services within West Dunbartonshire;
- Developing the Council's housing strategy to ensure that it supports the delivery of our strategic priorities;
- Service development within Housing and Community Safety services; and
- Promoting effective management and the involvement of tenants across all aspects of Housing Services.

For further information on Housing Strategy and Development please telephone 01389 737889 or e-mail: housing.strategy@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Building Homes and Improving Communities



Briefing Note

Housing Options (Prevent 1) Statistics in Scotland 1 April 2014 to 30 September 2014

Background

As a mechanism to monitor and evaluate activity around Housing Options / homelessness prevention work, the Prevent1 measurement tool was developed by the Scottish Government. Data capture and reporting is statutory and commenced in April 2014.

Main Issues

The Scottish Government has published a [report](#) which provides information on the monitoring and impact of housing options work across the sector between 1 April 2014 and 30 September 2014. Some of the main findings are outlined below:

Approaches

- A total of 26,720 approaches were made in the 6-month period (18,183 homeless applications during same period);
- 94% of unique households made one approach to the Housing Options Service and 6% made two approaches (135 households made 3 or more approaches);
- Across Scotland there is an average of 50 approaches per 10,000 of population; and
- West Dunbartonshire has the second highest rate of approaches in Scotland with 95 per 10,000 of population.

Prevention Activity

After considering the needs of the household, the prevention activities carried out by the local authority or external organisation are recorded.

- 65% of all approaches had a single activity recorded, with 35% having two or more activities recorded;
- 55% of all approaches were provided with activities which did not exceed Level 1 information and sign-posting, whilst Level 2 casework was carried out in the further 45% (only 110 approaches received Level 3 advocacy, representation activity).
- The most common activities were:
 - General housing advice (35% of all activities); and
 - Informing clients of their homelessness rights (27% of all activities)

- 78% of all activities were carried out by local authority housing departments and 12% by local authority social work departments (balance by external / voluntary agencies).

Approach Durations

- 50% of all approaches achieved an outcome within 30 days;
- Of these, 3225 or 12% of all approaches achieved an outcome on the same day.

Outcomes

- Between April and September, 69% of approaches had an outcome where contact was maintained, 9% of approaches had lost contact and 22% of approaches were still open;
- The outcomes where contact was maintained were:
 - 49% - household made a homeless application;
 - 26% - household remained in current accommodation; and
 - 24% - household obtained alternative accommodation;
- In West Dunbartonshire the outcomes where contact was maintained were:
 - 92% - household made a homeless application;
 - 6% - household remained in current accommodation; and
 - 2% - household obtained alternative accommodation;

What it means for West Dunbartonshire

The report allows us to consider how the Housing Options approach is operating across the sector and consider our own approach in West Dunbartonshire;

- The high number of approaches being recorded in West Dunbartonshire is positive and it is likely that this will rise over time in other Local Authorities,
- At present West Dunbartonshire, making a homeless application is the recorded outcome in a very high number of cases, 92%.
- This suggests that these households are in crisis when they make contact and that activities undertaken to prevent homelessness are limited in effect, however, the data is skewed by current practice whereby all households approaching the Homeless Service are recorded on the Prevent1 system, even when it is clear that a homeless application is appropriate,
- This practice further skews the data as it results in a high number of cases being closed within one day, with little prevention activity being recorded. If this approach continues it will be difficult to adequately assess the success of the prevention activities we undertake,

- It would be more beneficial to engage with these households at an earlier stage and this should be achieved when the new model of service delivery for the Homeless Service is fully implemented,
- There remain some data quality issues with our Prevent1 return to the Scottish Government and the Homeless Service are engaging with our software provider (AVD Computing) to rectify this.

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