

Housing Strategy and Development Briefing Note 15/7

Housing Options (PREVENT1) Statistics in Scotland: 2014-15

July 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 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



Housing Options (PREVENT1) Statistics in Scotland **1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015**

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. (*Consideration is being given to annual publication of PREVENT1 from the summer 2016*)

Main Issues

The Scottish Government has published a report based on the Housing Options (PREVENT1) statistics. The report gives an overview of key trends and features of housing options work in Scotland over the full year 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015.

Approaches

- There were 58,825 approaches to local authorities for prevention activity over the course of the year (35,764 homelessness applications during the same period);
- 90% of unique households made one approach to the housing options service during April 2014 to March 2015, 9% made two approaches, and only 1% made three or more approaches.
- Over the 12 months, there were 248 approaches per 10,000 households in Scotland;
- West Dunbartonshire has the second highest rate of approaches in Scotland with 382 per 10,000 of population;

Prevention Activity

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

- 61% of all approaches had a single activity recorded, 39% of approaches had two or more activities recorded
- 56% of all approaches were provided with activities which did not exceed Type I advice (active information, sign-posting and explanation). Type II advice (case work) was carried out in a further 44% of approaches. Only 230 approaches received Type III advice (advocacy, representation and mediation at tribunal or court action level).
- The most common activities undertaken were:
 - general housing advice, information and assistance (35% of all activities) and

- informing the client of their homelessness rights under the legislation (26% of all activities)
- 80% of activities were provided by local authority housing departments and 10% carried out by local authority social work departments (the balance was carried out by external/voluntary agencies)

Activities by Local Authorities

The variation in activities across local authorities reflects the nature of the housing options approach.

- Activities overall are dominated by general housing advice, information and assistance and informing the client of their rights under the homelessness legislation
- In West Dunbartonshire a large proportion of activity appears to be informing clients of their rights under the homelessness legislation (around seven out of ten of all activities)

Approach durations

- 51% of all approaches achieved an outcome within 30 days
- Of these, 7,726 or 13% of all approaches achieved an outcome the same day
- In West Dunbartonshire 79% of all approaches achieved an outcome within 30 days

Outcomes

Between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015 70% of all approaches had an outcome where contact was maintained, 9% of approaches were made up of lost contacts and 17% of all approaches were still open.

Of the approaches where contact was maintained:

- 36% households made a homeless application;
- 21% remained in current accommodation; and
- 13% obtained alternative accommodation

In West Dunbartonshire the outcomes where contact was maintained were:

- 77% households made a homeless application
- 9% remained in current accommodation; and
- 4% obtained alternative accommodation

What it means for West Dunbartonshire

This approach 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 can be viewed positively.
- Making a homeless application, 77% in West Dunbartonshire, is the highest outcome in this area, the three highest Local Authorities below West Dunbartonshire are recording 50%.
- This would suggest that there are large numbers of households already in crisis when they make contact with West Dunbartonshire. There is no evidence through PREVENT1 that activities undertaken are contributing to the prevention of homelessness.
- Where it is clear that a homeless application is appropriate this should not be recorded on the PREVENT1 system.
- 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.

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