



HOME

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It seems as if not a week goes by at the moment without a new announcement about the impact of the National cuts in the public sector. At the same time we are all experiencing the rising cost of living. The squeeze has begun, and this will inevitably impact on the most vulnerable in our community. Housing services are being encouraged to do more to help those who so often slip through the net: the non-priority homeless and those who are in a precarious housing situation, but not yet homeless.

Here at Housing Advice, we are trying to do just that. We have changed the way we work so that everyone who comes to us receives a full assessment of their housing need. This is helping us to identify people we can help **before** they actually become homeless. The sooner we can help someone, the more options we have to find the best resolution. And as Prevention is significantly less expensive to deal with than homelessness, it means that the service can help more people. This issue features the Prevention Team, and gives more information about the valuable work they do.

As well as focussing on the work of the Prevention team, this issue outlines some of the other work we do—including our ongoing commitment to local charities. I hope you enjoy this issue of our Newsletter. As always, if you have any comments or questions, please get in touch. I'm very much looking forward to getting to know colleagues in partner agencies, as well as some of our services users who are helping shape the service, and to working with you all to combat homelessness in Tameside.

Genevieve Burleigh, Housing Advice Manager

Recycle presents

If you have received something at Christmas, which you have no need of, or you have children's toys which are no longer played with, **Why not drop them off at Tameside Housing Advice.** We will distribute them to either local Domestic violence unit or homeless unit where families with children will make good use of them.

Our office is open Monday to Friday between 10am and 3pm.

Prevention is better than cure...



Katie
6 years



Julie
15 years



Kath
7 years

Everybody will have heard this cliché but what does it really mean in our jobs at Housing Advice.

Research in 2008 by the **New Economics Foundation** indicated an annual cost to the state of **£26,000** for each homeless person. This figure included the cost of benefits, hostel accommodation, and care of children.

So as you can see if we can prevent clients from becoming homeless the benefits are immense.

At THA we have a six specialist in this role (and a debt advisor) and they all work at trying to prevent clients from having to leave their home.

Some of the methods of prevention are talking to parents to see if children can return home until a permanent solutions can be found, liaising with landlords to stop possession proceeding, entering into repayment plans to address any rent or mortgage arrears, working with existing government schemes (mortgage rescue etc.), trying to secure discretionary housing benefit , making payments from our 'prevention' fund are all examples of the methods we use.

Other ways of prevention include the use of out reach surgeries. At present we work with Adullam floating support giving help and advice to young parents, attend mental health ward at Tameside General, outreach surgeries for women suffering domestic violence. We also attended Forrest bank prison to help prisoners find accommodation upon their release. We are soon to extend the surgeries that we do and as soon as these have been finalised we will let you know.

Whilst some on these options might not lead to a permanent solution it can help in planning a clients move into either the private rented sector (via a rent bond) or into a housing association property.



"To reflect the excellent work that the Housing Advice Team have done over the past year, they have been nominated for the Support/Care Team of the Year and Front line Housing Team of the Year in the National CIH Housing Heroes Awards 2011. Recognition they well deserve."

THA's Prevention Officers....



Hayley
4 months



Melanie
5 years, 6 months



Andrea
4 years ,3 months

We asked our prevention officers what they liked about their jobs, below are a selection of their responses.

I enjoy working with my team, there's a lot of knowledge available to help each other out.

Knowing that I have helped someone in genuine need of help and made a difference to their lives.

Good team, keeping up to date with legal issues, case law etc.

Getting recognition when you have helped someone, genuinely resolving someone's homelessness

Helping young parents to access long term sustainable tenancies with support from Tameside Floating Support service. THA assist with housing options, the support workers assist clients with budgeting and other tenancy related issues.

The team is very supportive of one another often cheering you up when you have had a stressful day

Giving people hope, when they think that they are going to become homeless and I am able to work with them to prevent this.

Additionally we asked what aspect of their job they didn't like, and here are some of their answers

People that expect you to do everything for them and will not help themselves.

People with unrealistic expectations.

Unfortunately can be a thankless job and can sometimes be very difficult to help somebody due to unrealistic expectations of what we can do.

People's expectations are often high, it can be difficult to be the bearer of bad news

Monday mornings!



Help tomorrow take shape

2011 Census coming to a letterbox near you

On 27 March 2011 all residential households in the United Kingdom will be taking part in a census. Since 1801 a day has been chosen every ten years for this purpose (except in 1941 during the war). The census provides an excellent source of information about the population. This enables central and local government, health authorities and many other organisations to identify need for housing, education, health and transport services for years to come.

Did you know that supermarkets use census statistics to work out the kind of foods they need to sell to keep local communities stocked up with their favourites? Water companies use the census data to plan the pipes for clean and wastewater – to make sure there's enough for everyone. Fire brigades and the police use census data to help communities, putting fire alarms and crime prevention measures in specific areas. The benefits are far reaching.

The census statistics also feed into the allocation of funding for local authorities and play a major part in identifying need for local services in communities, so it is crucial the population estimate is as accurate as possible. When the questionnaire envelope comes through the door you'll easily recognise it by the purple 2011 Census logo. Take care of it. If, like many people, you want to complete the questionnaire online, your individual internet code is on the front of the questionnaire.



The 2011 Census doesn't want anyone to fall behind – so there is a wide range of help options available (such as language guidance booklets, large print format, Text Relay and census field staff on hand, as well as online help and telephone call centres).

More information about the 2011 Census can be found at:

www.census.gov.uk

“Open All Hours”



You can find help on

Asked to leave home

Domestic violence

Mortgage/Rent arrears

Relationship breakdown

Violence from outside of the home

Private rent

Repairs

Disabilities

Employment Training and support

Housing Associations

Street Homeless

Pinpoint

If you have nowhere to stay

The days of having a shop on every corner “open all hours” may now be consigned to history (accept on Coronation Street).

The twenty first century though sees goods and services available around the clock via the internet.

Whilst the internet can be used for many exciting things, it can also be used as a fantastic source of information.



www.tamesidehousingadvice.org

is one of these places.

Since its launch last year on the 1st of February last year we have had over

12,000 visitors.

Is this a good or a bad thing?

Hits on website per day = 30

Whilst the numbers of people visiting our website works out at over 30 a day could be seen as alarming, this does mean though people can get the help and advice they need, when they need it, without having to telephone or call into the offices.

This means they are able to take steps in the prevention of homelessness at an earlier stage.

In addition we are finding many of our partners are finding this site a useful source of information and are being able to guide their clients accordingly.

This is just one of the tools at our disposal in tackling homelessness within the borough.

Giving Tree...



Leading up to Christmas Housing Advice aimed to help local charities by decorating a special Giving Tree!

Our aim was to raise money for 7 chosen charities. Friends, partners and the general public were invited to donate money to their chosen charity.

All donations that were made over £1 got to place a coloured decoration on the tree corresponding to the charities listed below.

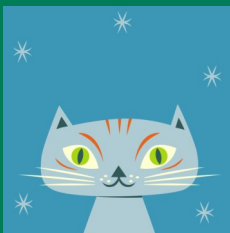
Genesis (breast cancer awareness) **Pink**
Leukaemia (children suffering with Leukaemia) **Green**
Paws for Kids (animals of domestic abuse victims) **Gold**
Willow wood **White**
Topaz (support for people with mental health issues) **Silver**
Making a difference **Purple**
Friends of Tameside young carers **Red**

In total we managed to raise a total of £165.00

A special thanks goes out to everybody that donated, especially **Wilkinson** who kindly donated such a wonderful tree



Its a dogs life.....



People in the borough of Tameside also spared a thought for Abandoned Pets in animal rescue centres this Christmas.

Janice who works at Tameside Housing Advice ran a campaign to collect cat or dog food and asked people to drop them in to her at our office .

This is something she does every year for pets that have been abandoned and have no homes over the Christmas period. The rescue centres are always grateful for donations received and some are currently struggling to maintain the pets well fed and watered because of the amount of pets being abandoned within the Tameside Borough.

Janice said: "Once again I thank everyone who donated and hope that you helped make the animals Christmas in some small way."





Key Points

- **Temperature has to be zero or below for three day**
- **Policy comes into force on first day of cold spell**
- **If the only alternative is to sleep on the street**
- **Maximum of 14 days**
- **Singles or couples**
- **Met Office website is used to check temperatures**

The Cold Weather arrangements are aimed at assisting single persons and couples who would normally be deemed to be non-priority. Although rough sleeping is not common in Tameside, the objective is to prevent rough sleepers during the winter period by offering them temporary accommodation for a 2 week period while they secure alternative accommodation.

Usually practice dictates that the trigger for severe weather provision will be a weather forecast predicting three consecutive nights, or more, of a minimum temperature of zero degrees Celsius.



The temperatures for the next three days are checked daily and the policy comes into force on the first day when the expected temperature is to be zero degree or lower.

Cold Weather arrangements will be in force till 31st of March

The key trigger must be that the applicant has no accommodation for that night, has no prospects of securing short-term accommodation at friends' or relatives' and will therefore have no other option but to sleep rough.



This assistance is with a temporary accommodation placement for a maximum of 2 weeks while the applicant secures alternative accommodation. The placement can be for longer if a provider offers greater security of tenure (e.g. a supported housing scheme offers an Assured Shorthold Tenancy) or if the provider agrees a separate financial arrangement with the applicant to stay on (e.g. a private B&B provider accepts Housing Benefit payments with top-up from the applicant).

Applicants will be assisted with temporary accommodation and advice and information on how to secure accommodation within Tameside. While the Housing Advice Centre will endeavour to find placements for all clients who meet these criteria, if a place cannot be found for an applicant because they have already been evicted by each provider, the Housing Advice Centre will offer advice and assistance on how to secure accommodation in the Borough and refer the applicant to support agencies who may be able to assist (e.g. Social Services, Substance Misuse Services).

It certainly enhanced my opportunities..



From leaving home at 16 and moving at least once a year here is a brief story of the path I have taken to get to where I am now. I used to hate reading these “success stories” and would instantly dismiss them as fiction and yet here I am writing my own.



I started messing with drugs at 16 and very quickly became more than a recreational user. For many years I was injecting amphetamine and living a very chaotic lifestyle. At 21 I progressed onto heroin and was hooked pretty quickly, it did the job I wanted to at the time which was to make me feel anything but NORMAL. I started on methadone and did two detox's in quick succession and booked into rehab. During my time in rehab I was in supported housing in Levenshulme and had no direction or goals to aim for.

I ended up getting kicked out of the housing project a few months after completing rehab because of a lapse. At the time this was the worst possible thing that could have happened and left me homeless. Luckily before I left the housing project I had signed up at a place that helped ex users to do something with their life that they actually want to.

They helped me to arrange a place at Adullam and from then on things have changed drastically.



I completed 2 years of college and managed to get my own tenancy and become more self reliant thanks to the staff at Adullam. Whilst at my Adullam flat I was encouraged to attend lots of training days, events and supporting people groups. I really enjoyed these and got a lot from them including some great friend. I was able to help with the process of selecting a company to provide a new floating support service in Tameside and actually sat on the tender panel.

At a recruitment & selection training day I met with Sharn from the

“Enhanced Opportunities Project”

and helped with doing some interviews for a future jobs fund role. After getting to know what Sharn did, there was no way I wasn't going to sign up for it. From there I have not looked back and my life has changed beyond recognition.



Sharn helped me to regain my confidence in my own skills and abilities and helped me to produce **a killer CV**. She always encouraged me and struck the perfect balance between being patient with me and pushing me when I needed it. One of the things Sharn managed to sort out for me was to get me the chance to shadow New Charters network manager which was initially for 5-6 weeks but I ended up doing for quite a few months and got loads from it.



When I finished college I started looking at jobs and applying for them, because I had a CV I was proud of I sent it to loads of companies looking for a job in IT which I had been doing at college. I found a job at an internet service provider and sent in my CV. On the back of that followed a series of interviews and assessments of which I passed and was offered the job.

When going to the interview I felt confident that I could go in and sell myself well thanks to Sharn and the guidance and tips she gave me.



I recently started the job and am really happy and enjoying myself for the 1st time in my life at work. I actually enjoy getting up at 6am to get to work on time and all of it was made possible thanks to the wonderful people I have met and have helped me over the last 2 years. I will be eternally grateful to all of them (some of whom I've not mentioned) and all have helped in one way or another to help me get from a depressed, drug using

homeless person to the person I am now, a happy working guy with my own secure tenancy in a beautiful flat and really looking forward to the future.

Thanks for reading and I hope somebody somewhere reads this (believes it is not fiction) and gets some hope from it.

Chris

GMOP's Greater Manchester Offenders Achievement



Helen (GMOP) had been working with a female client since August 2010, she moved into Approved premises after her release from prison in October 2009, this was due to being convicted of a serious offence, the offence committed also meant she could not go back to her local area due to an exclusion being applied to her licence. Her son was living with an extended family member.

After three months of living in the Approved premises it was agreed that she should start looking for her own property.

She started to actively look for her own property and applied to several Housing Associations but to no avail. She didn't want to go in to Supported Housing due to part of the move including gaining custody of her son back.

Prior to her committing the offence she had led a chaotic lifestyle that included substance misuse issues and had previously lost her tenancy in Stockport due to going in to custody and accrued substantial rent arrears.

When Helen first met her she was increasingly frustrated at the lack of progress in accessing her own property and at a loss why she kept coming up against barriers she felt that other people hadn't faced. All she wanted was to get her life back on track and start a fresh life with her son.

Originally she wanted to live in the areas of Stockport that she wasn't excluded from however in discussions Helen highlighted how difficult this could be as the exclusion covered Stockport Centre, probation and the job centre.

The option of moving to Tameside was discussed as it was close to Stockport and she could put her forward for the pilot project agreement between New Charter and Greater Manchester Offenders Project, in which they were allocated a set number of properties.

She was unsure if she could access a property through this route as she was subject to the serious panel meeting scheduled for 6th September 2010. But she would consider Tameside albeit through New Charter or a private rented property and had decided that moving away from Stockport was her best chance of starting a fresh life with her son.



Helen spoke to Jenny from Housing Advice who said she would look to place Melanie on the Housing Register for the pilot property but the property offered was still subject to the serious offenders panel.

Due to GMOP and Housing Advice working with her she was accepted on to New Charter's Housing Register and that she didn't have to bid and would be notified when a suitable 2 bedroom property came up.

Although she was being patient and was prepared to wait for the 2 bedroom property other things happened that meant she was faced with more and more barriers in the route to gaining her own home. Progress was made through the Child in Need meetings and plans were put in place for her to gain full custody of her once the property was ready.

She was nominated for a 2 bed property in Ashton and it was just a matter of sitting and waiting until the property became available. With the property being in a nice area that she enrolled her son in the nearby school straightaway.

However New Charter came across a major problem, as there was no gas supply to the property and it was going to take at least 3 months for the property to be ready.

Faced with this new problem New Charter thought 'outside of the box' and installed temporary heaters and a hot water tank in the property until National Grid could install gas to the property.

She has now moved into the property and is looking forward to being a mum again after years of leading a chaotic lifestyle and finally having settled accommodation thanks to the joint work of Greater Manchester Offenders Project (Threshold), Jenni - Housing Register Officer - Tameside Housing advice and New Charter.

The process was a difficult one for all concerned but the effort was certainly worth it and proves joint working can achieve fantastic outcomes.

For further information on the work that Greater Manchester Offenders Project do please visit www.gmop.org.uk





Tameside Housing Advice Opening Hours –

MONDAY – FRIDAY: 10.00AM – 3.00PM

TELEPHONE ENQUIRIES:

MONDAY – THURSDAY: 9.00AM – 5.00PM

FRIDAY: 9.00AM – 4.00PM

TELEPHONE: 0161 331 2700

FREEPHONE: 0808 202 0900

FAX: 0161 339 1728

MAIL: info@tamesidehousingadvice.org

WEBSITE: www.tamesidehousingadvice.org

Emergency Homeless only (outside working hours):

0161 342 2222

If you need any help with translation, please see a member of staff

Jeśli potrzebujesz pomocy w tłumaczeniu, zwróć się do kogoś z personelu.

Si vous avez besoin d'assistance avec cette traduction prière de contacter un membre du cadre.

Se precisa de alguma ajuda com esta tradução faz favor contactat um membro do quadro.