



The role of Housing Associations in Supporting their Residents to find Employment and Training

A summary of feedback from two workshops on 23rd April recording participants views of the research and their perceptions of key issues and good practice examples.

What Residents Want?

The two workshops supported one of the key findings of the Bill Sargent Trust research: "That social housing residents valued the way they were treated was as important as the help they received."

The key words used were:

- Positive experience – Respectful – Friendliness – Personal Service

Workshop attenders used their experiences to define the "perfect service" discussed in the report. They felt residents wanted services that were:

- Accessible – Trusted/Built Trust – Gave a chance to air feelings/ thoughts (innermost) - Provided "hand holding" – Support at every step - Non judgemental – Confidential – Setting achievable goals - A chance to talk to someone – Holistic – IAG trained/expertise – Not top down target driven

The things that blocked/motivated/worried residents were:

- Negative experiences of Job Centre Plus -
- Target driven services that fitted the resident into the service not the other way round
- Lack of awareness that the HA can help – perception HA just taking rent
- Residents fear of transition
- Barriers can be multiple: Health, Childcare, Finance
- Confidence of clients, volunteering brings this and can be a source of fulfilment
- Boredom, feeling stuck in situation
- Support with other issues before they can access work
- What about those new to unemployment? Many services only kick in at 6 months

What can Housing Associations/Agencies/others do ?

- HA branding guidance services – create different perceptions and break down barriers
- Make sure IAG provision has trained staff & builds trust
- Does the HA support this - do they want this on their agenda ?
- Tenant Service Authority standards: as regulating body needs to mention worklessness
- Practitioners – be more broadminded
- Other agencies – work with Housing Associations
- Make it look different from government service
- Use an event – art & coffee mornings /as a vehicle something that will interest people (by back door) – using social events to break down barriers was a key message from both groups
- Shopkeepers can be useful gate keepers/promoters
- Invite providers to RI Conference with stalls
- Talk to each other more frequently – visit one another, gain more detail
- Introduce IAG at sign up to new tenancies
- Segmentation of groups, Mums – returning to work, those with long term sickness

Good Practice Examples

Reach Out Project - Community Outreach Provision – 08.00 to 6.00pm for 1 year (Portsmouth City Council/Wheatsheaf Trust)

- Tower block – getting to residents door knocking being out in community freebies/ info /fruit children (Hyde)
- Faversham – “Doorstep Learning
- working neighbourhood fund (Orbit)
- Future Jobs fund project, very low drop out + work with Highbury (Medina)
- Next Steps in Aldershot, MB Learning worked closely in partnership with strong referral for FW tenants (First Wessex)
- Selsey project with JCP – bus in supermarket car park & links to Selsey Business Partnership (Hyde)
- Leigh Park - long term unemployed partnership with JCP – majority young men 20 – 25, first meeting at pub (Havant BC)