

**Langstane Housing Association**

**Tenancy Sustainment Service**

**Progress Report**

**1<sup>st</sup> February 2019 – 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019**

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## 1. Introduction

This is the ninth 6 monthly progress report produced in order to demonstrate and evaluate the tenancy sustainment work carried out by the Housing Officer – Social Justice in the Aberdeenshire area. The post was created in February 2015 and provides a tenancy sustainment service to new and existing tenants of Langstane Housing Association.

For the purposes of comparison, the statistics in this report cover the period 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019 to 31 July 2019 and are compared with the figures reported in the corresponding progress report of 1 August 2018 to 31st January 2019.

## 2. Referrals

Between 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019 and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019, there were 60 new referrals to the Social Justice Team Tenancy Sustainment Service from applicants/tenants in Aberdeenshire. This is an increase of 2 when compared to the previous reporting period from August 2018 to January 2019. However, there were an additional 47 referrals for EOT (end of tenancies) which totals 107 cases. For the purpose of this report tables 1 – 6 relate to the 60 tenants who were referred for housing support.

All 60 referrals for the current reporting period were accepted and progressed where the tenant engaged with the Housing Officer – Social Justice.

Table 1 shows the geographical areas of origin of referrals with Peterhead being the highest. The second highest area in this reporting period is Fraserburgh closely followed by Inverurie.

Table 1

Area	Number of referrals
Aberchirder	0
Aboyne	1
Alford	0
Balmedie	2
Banff	3
Ellon	0
Fraserburgh	8
Huntly	1
Inverbervie	2
Inverurie	5
Kemnay	1
Kintore	2
Laurencekirk	3
Macduff	2
Peterhead	21

Portsoy	1
Stonehaven	8
Turriff	0
Westhill	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>

Table 2 below identifies the age and gender of the 60 (excluding the EOTs) individuals referred to the service for the reporting period in question.

Table 2

Age group	No of referrals	Female	Male
16-19	6	3	3
20-29	22	5	17
30-39	13	3	10
40-49	7	3	4
50-59	9	3	6
60-69	3	2	1
70-79	0	0	0
80+	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>41</b>

The largest group of referrals for this reporting period came from the 20-29 age groups. This is a change from the same period last year where the largest group of referrals came from the 30-39 age groups. The gender balance of referrals between the former and current reporting period shows that male referrals have increased resulting just over double the amount of males than females.

### 3. Waiting Times

The service has a policy of first contact being made within 3- 5 working days. Of the 60 referrals made, 57 customers were contacted within timescale. (See Table 3)

Table 3

Waiting time for service (days)	No of Referrals
0 - 5	57
5+	3
	<b>Total 60</b>

The delay in contacting the 3 tenants/applicants was due mainly to periods of annual leave and unplanned leave. During such periods, the Housing Assistant (in the officer's absence) will contact the tenant within timescale, gather information and advise that the Housing Officer will be in touch as soon as possible. For recording purposes, the service begins when the Housing Officer makes contact and not the assistant. Any urgent situations arising will be dealt with by another team member as required. The

percentage of tenants being contacted within timescale is 95% which is an increase from the previous reporting period which was 42%.

#### 4. Gender and Age of Current Service User

Of the 20 referrals who were still working with the service as at 31 July 2019, 3 are female and 17 are male. A higher number of referrals (9) sit within the 20-29 age groups. This is followed by the 30-39 groups with 4 referrals, then equally 16-19 and 50-59 age groups where both have 3 referrals each.

Table 4

Age group	No of referrals	Female	Male
16-19	3	1	2
20-29	9	1	8
30-39	4	0	4
40-49	1	0	1
50-59	3	1	2
60-69	0	0	0
70+	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>17</b>

#### 5. Length of Individual Tenure

The length of tenure as indicated in Table 5 relates to the start of tenancy date (where applicable) and the date the service commenced (that is when the Housing Officer first contacts the tenant/applicant). The largest number of referrals (16) came from new tenants 0-<3 months after signing for their properties. There is a significant increase in the number of referrals (12) for clients that have been in their properties between 5-10 years compared to previous period report of only 3. Only 2 were referred to the service when the properties were not ready to let (compared with 3 in the last reporting period). There was substantial increase in the number of referrals occurring at signing 11 compared to the previous period of 5. This may be due to the robust allocation procedure used to reduce void time as well as the reduction and delay in identifying referral need.

Table 5

Length of tenure	No of tenants
0 - <3 mths	16
3 - <6 mths	2
6 - <12 mths	5
1 - <2 yrs	1
2 - <5 yrs	7
5 - <10yrs	12

10 + yrs	4
Day of signing	11
Not ready to let	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>

## 6. Service User Outcomes

The service ended for 40 tenants during the reporting period (see 6.3 Reasons for Service Termination for more details).

### 6.1 Referral Reasons

Table 6 identifies the multiple issues that the 60 individuals presented for upon initial referral to the service.

Table 6

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Number of requests</b>
Bank Account set up	0
Benefit advice	5
Budgeting advice	2
Energy Advice and gas capped	16
Finances	7
Flooring	4
Foodbanks	3
Form filling	30
Furniture	22
Employability/training	3
Health issues	2
Housing advice	16
Support needs	7
White goods	9
Internet Access	0

Excluding referrals for 3 month monitors and Termination of Tenancies which are addressed at 7.1 and 7.2, the main reason for referrals to the service are for tenants requiring help with form filling, furnishings, Housing advice and support with energy supply including gas caps.

### 6.2. Outcomes

Data has been collected to capture the work carried out by the Housing Officer from the point the service started until the service ended. Of the tenants whose cases were closed during the period 1 Feb 2019 – 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019, the agencies tenants were referred or signposted to and other outcomes can be found below at Table 7.

Table 7

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Number of signposts/referrals</b>
Aberdeenshire Employability	0
CAB	3
Charity shops	2
Council	0
DHP	0
DWP	0
Food bank/Vouchers	3
Health agency	3
Housing Benefit	<b>0 LHA Tenant Welfare Advisor (TWA) deals with these referrals.</b>
In-house work (posted scheme flyer/deco voucher)	0
Housing advice/support including Gate keeping	21
Instant Neighbour	0
Internal teams	7
Magpie	2
NESCU	0
Pathways	0
Pest control	0
SCARF	0
Scottish Welfare Fund	35
Social Work	2
Statutory Organisation	0
Transfer applications	3
Universal Credit	<b>0 LHA Tenant Welfare Advisor (TWA) deals with these referrals</b>
Fair start/Enable Scotland	2
WorkingRite	1
Smart Money Advice	1

### 6.3 Reasons for Service Termination

The service ended for 40 service users during this reporting period for the following reasons:

- 21 tenants completed a programme of support
- 6 tenants either did not engage, were unable to contact or lost contact after a period of engagement
- 13 were referred for Gas Capped notification where 7 tenants didn't engage the service or unable to contact or get engagement. The remaining 6 engaged with the

service and were helped to resolve situation and upon engagement further help with other issues was offered and accepted.

## **7. Service Development**

The Team Leader has been in post now for just over a year. The Social Justice Team continues to work towards registration with the Care Inspectorate in 2020. At present the team has been focusing on new ways of working including how they record information in preparation for this.

The Housing officer continues to make referrals to the Tenant Welfare Advisor who provides assistance with making claims for benefits and also accessing tenants for income maximization

### **7.1 3 Month Monitor**

This period there have been no 3 monthly monitors required.

### **7.2 End of Tenancy**

For this reporting period there were 47 EOT referral requests and all were attempted contact 2 times before referral being closed. . Once the Housing Officer receives notification that a client wishes to terminate their tenancy the HO will attempt to make contact (usually within 48 hours of notification) to understand if it was for a negative or positive reason the client wishes to end their tenancy. During telephone contact the officer offers help if the EOT was for a negative reason and discuss possible options to access if there is scope for remaining in Tenancy.

Of the 47 EOT referrals:

- 8 Moving In with Partner
- 7 No contact despite several attempts made by the HO
- 5 Housed by LA or another HA
- 3 Moving to supported accommodation/Care
- 3 Moving to another area/ Closer to Family
- 3 Property Unsuitable/ Never Moved in
- 3 Affordability
- 2 Internal Transfer
- 2 Moved Abroad
- 2 Moving to larger more suitable accommodation
- 2 Neighbour Issues/ ASB
- 2 Moving to Private Let
- 1 In Prison
- 1 Abandoned

- 1 Bought Own Property
- 1 None Given
- 1 Termination was withdrawn – Not contacted as cancelled shortly after requesting termination.

## **8. Staffing**

The Housing Officer – Social Justice has been in post since 27 February 2015 and works 28 hours over Tuesday to Friday. She currently uses the Association's main office in Aberdeen to cover North, South and West Aberdeenshire and for administrative work associated with her role.

## **9. Learning & Development**

The Housing Officer has attended/completed the following in-house training and awareness sessions:

- Equality, Diversion and inclusion
- Customer Care
- Safe guarding Adults
- Managing Attendance
- Stress and Pressure
- Gambling and Addictions
- Serious and Organised Crime
- Lone Working
- Drugs, Alcohol; and Mental Health
- AS&P Level 2
- Domestic Abuse – Coercive Control
- Blood Bourne Virus

The officer continues to identify any gaps in her knowledge and understanding and source appropriate opportunities for training.

## **10. Partnership Working**

Partnership working is crucial if we are to access the best possible range of services for the needs of individual tenants. The Housing Officer continues to develop links and works closely with the following agencies:

- Aberdeenshire Council Housing/Homeless
- Citizens Advice Bureau – throughout Aberdeenshire
- Health professionals
- Here for you – Fraserburgh
- Home Energy Scotland

- Houseability – Peterhead
- Housing Benefit Offices
- Local churches
- Magpie
- Occupational Therapy – Fraserburgh/Peterhead/Huntly/Inverurie
- SCARF Energy Advice – Used for referrals
- Scottish Welfare Fund
- Social Work Depts – Peterhead/Fraserburgh/Huntly/Stonehaven
- Various organisations that provide food parcels – medical centres/churches
- 2 Reuse – Peterhead
- Fairstart

The Housing Officer also works closely with internal teams including Neighbourhood Services (Anti Social Behaviour), Housing Officers (Rent), the Tenant Welfare Adviser (Income Maximisation), Property Services (Repairs), Asset Management (Adaptations) and Allocations.

Partnership working and networking is ongoing as we seek to improve the range of services that can be accessed for helping tenants address the reasons for their referral to the tenancy sustainment service.

## **11. Service Complaints and Outcomes**

No complaints were received about the service during this reporting period. In the absence of tenants' comments, to help illustrate the work carried out by the Housing Officer there are some anonymised case studies attached at the Appendix 1

## **12. Conclusion**

The introduction of the service in Aberdeenshire continues to bring a much needed resource as demonstrated by the level of tenant referrals since being launched at the end of February 2015 – 641 in total.

The number of referrals in the past 6 months has increased slightly compared to the same period last year. There is still a high demand for help from new tenants with furnishings, white goods and flooring which can be challenging due to the pressures on the Scottish Welfare Fund and other providers.

In the meantime, the Housing Officer continues to carry out routine home visits and seek networking opportunities to develop and strengthen partnership working. The officer continues to work closely with the Tenant Welfare Advisor who provides an Income Maximisation Service and other internal teams as highlighted under Partnership Working (Item 10).

The addition of a Housing Officer covering the Aberdeenshire area over a 4 day period continues to be a positive experience both for our tenants and our service delivery.

Helen Gordon  
Team Leader - Social Justice Team – October 2019

## **Case studies**

### **Case study 1**

53 year old male tenant

Tenant has stayed in his flat for the last 7 years. He has led a very chaotic lifestyle involving drink and drugs but has always engaged and has usually done what has been asked. He has no flooring throughout the property and the flat was very dirty and unkempt. I told him if he cleaned and cleared his flat I would do what I could to get flooring for him. It took a while and I had to keep on top of him but eventually there was a big improvement. I applied for a Scottish Welfare Fund on his behalf detailing his background and he was awarded flooring throughout the property. Tenant was delighted and very grateful. I managed to pick up a Hoover for him from Somebody Cares as he didn't have one so he now has everything he needs

### **Case study 2**

58 year old male tenant.

Tenant was given a tenancy after a marriage breakdown. He had never had to do anything for himself as his wife had done it all. He can cook and clean but was struggling with setting up his utility bills, budgeting and he wanted his meter changed to a pay as you go. We contacted his energy provider and changed his tariff to a cheaper one. We arranged for his meter to be changed and put into his name. We then went through his outgoings and income and in theory, the tenant should manage as he had disposable income after bills were paid. He was happy with advice and help given

### **Case study 3**

24 year old female tenant

Tenant was having problems at her tenancy along with her partner. Felt because she had mental health issues she was being victimised and bullied by the other tenants in the area and was isolated. (information redacted to protect privacy of data subject) Langstane have no 2 bed properties in the area and the flat they are in is very small with a living room/kitchen combined, small bedroom and bathroom. The council had originally turned them down for a transfer saying that there was sufficient room in the flat for them. We appealed and they now accept that there are 3 adults in the flat and that it is cramped. The tenants have recently been offered a 2 bedroomed house in (information redacted to protect privacy of data subject). The couple are delighted.

