

APPENDIX 3

Notes of meeting with Pam Bennett on homelessness prevention held on 2nd November 2006

Background

Project in existence in York, which was designed to cope with what could be conflicting aims of reducing rent arrears & preventing homelessness.

Project covered areas of:

- County court housing possession duty scheme
- Money advice outreach workers
- Support services to help manage tenancies
- Financial literacy workshops
- HB troubleshooters

Pam & Julie met to discuss whether there was scope for developing what was currently happening in Bradford as a part of the homelessness prevention agenda.

Current work

BCHT are currently working with CHAS to give money advice/financial literacy workshops to BCHT tenants who are in rent arrears. This is a citywide service with 2 advice workers & 2 support workers. Funded until March 2007. This is not specifically targeted at those who are not BCHT tenants who are facing homelessness.

Housing Possession scheme running in Bradford.

Financial literacy an area of ongoing work.

Was proposed in the past to run a conference to create a strategy on homelessness prevention. (Sarah Possingham/David Palethorpe)

Housing Benefit

Work with Council Benefits is an area that Pam would like to develop.

No. of areas of work discussed:

- Top up funding, as a form of crisis intervention, where shortfall on HB has led to rent arrears.
- Pilot in Leeds where HB have acted as brokers and worked to negotiate with landlords on rents.
- HB troubleshooters. Believe there is some work being undertaken on take up of benefits, certainly for older people.
- Staff development – idea of housing advice team staff shadowing advice workers & others to gain more experience and vice versa.
- Areas of interest: housing rights, immigration, debt, domestic violence, benefits, young people, Bangladeshi community, and older adults.

Actions

- Julie to contact a number of possible interested parties in HB to arrange an initial meeting. (Sue Weeds, Morris Ridgeway, Simon Callaghan).
- Julie to talk to advice centres & others to discuss idea of skills exchange.