

# Eviction Prevention Officer

Outcomes and Lessons learnt





# Background

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- Pilot between WMBC and whg to scope opportunity to reduce evictions, could also expand to other HA's in future
- Post funded by LA and designed to be a cross - partner dual employee
- Post holder to operate out of whg and WMBC offices, building relationships with both
- Work with customers at most serious imminent risk of eviction to prevent it from happening
- Research around similar roles & visits to Wolverhampton homes
- Kylie Morris began 12 month secondment November '19





## **Delivery**

### **Principles**

- Co-location
- Weekly caseload review and monthly whg / Walsall Council meeting
- Threshold set at level of customers with set eviction court date. (or by specific referral)

### **Partnership**

- Walsall Council – whg joint understanding
- Direct access to service areas
- Shared goals



# Steps to Success

## The role

- Contact
  - Perseverance
- Approach
  - Nurturing with short and longer term goals
- Holistic
  - Bigger picture
  - Underlying issues
- Journey
  - Build trust
- Review
  - Learn
  - prevent cycle



# Successful Partnerships



Early referral – Connecting information quicker and earlier, prevent crisis for customer and organisations

Multi-agency – What else do we currently know, who else is connected, build better engagement early on

Information Sharing – timing and relevance of sharing information

Understanding the past – one off crisis or a cycle?

Shared learning and understanding of services – upskill staff, navigate partner organisations



# What did success look like for whg customers?

## Customer

- 81 EPO referrals
  - Single Male – 22
  - Single Female – 8
  - Family with dependants – 42
  - Family with non-dependants – 8
  - Couple – 1
- 41 evictions prevented
- 29 financial support payments
- 12 Evictions
  - 10 abandoned
  - 1 Sub-let
  - 1 refusal to positively engage

## Financial

Payment type	Total
Discretionary Housing payment	£51,276
Homeless prevention Fund	£2,987
Universal Credit	£89,894
Housing Benefit	£5,068
Direct Payment Exclusions	£6,893
Customer Payment	£98,290
TOTAL	£218,278



# Key learning

## The Role

### Communication and Customer Engagement

Persevere – time, method, frequency

Other partners engaged?

### Partnership

Who? What? When?

Customer / other agencies

### Holistic

Look at current issues as a whole, not just financial

Can referrals be made for other concerns?

### Style and Approach

Non confrontational, nurture relationships

### Service Beyond eviction Prevention

Engagement continues beyond crisis to break the cycle



# Partnerships



Scope for other Housing Associations to implement

Early Intervention – understanding pressure points for families

Partnership Forums – right place right time to reduce duplication or risk escalation (early help, case conferences)

Point of contact / coordination – who to contact and how to navigate partner organisations

Information Sharing – key to preventing crisis escalation

Holistic – lead partner, shared end goal, customer focused

## Further Development



- Expand beyond the pilot**
- Beyond whg / Walsall Council
- Walsall as best practice leaders regionally
- Building strong and sustainable connections**
- Children's services
- Adult Social Care
- Mental Health services
- Embed into partnership forums**
- Attendance at key partnership meetings
- Advisory / connection role
- Visibility**
- Improving the identity of the role whg plays
- Communication with a wider audience



# The Future

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## Build on what we already do

- whg Corporate plan aim – Ambition to not evict into homelessness
- Use existing resources to build on model, prevent evictions, sustain tenancies
- Embed key principles across current teams
- Build on contact and communication between WMBC and whg
- Review, respond, adapt

## Innovate to go Further

- Homeless Strategy Steering Group – Strategic
- Chaired by whg chair, Danielle Oum
- Strategic focus for Walsall partners
- Homeless Prevention Delivery Group – whg centric
- Led by tenancy sustainability team
- Pulls together an internal partnership with a homeless prevention focus
- Tenancy sustainability team – operational delivery
- Money Advice
- Community Safety
- Independent Living



**Thank you**