

HOUSING STRATEGIES NEWSLETTER

Issue 13, September 2004



Welcome



Welcome to the Autumn issue of the Housing Strategies Newsletter. This edition precedes the next Housing Strategies Steering Group (HSSG) meeting that is scheduled for Monday 27 September. It includes updates on Shetland's Housing Strategies and other linked initiatives, along with some information on Youth Homeless Presentations.

Housing Strategies Updates

*Housing Strategies Steering Group
Meeting Monday 18 August 2004*



The Scottish Executive has approved the Homeless Strategy. The 4 main areas that they would like us to focus on as the strategy is implemented are Housing Benefit Administration, Providing Child Care provision, more legislation, types of accommodation and resettlement in to permanent housing/employment opportunities should be looked at.

The Homeless Service Outreach Workers proposal to provide leisure facilities tokens was approved. They have become a highly valuable addition to the Service, and a suggestion was made that homeless strategy funding should be used to increase the number of Outreach Workers.

The forthcoming Homeless Service review was explained. This will happen in all Local Authorities across Scotland in the next few years.

The feedback from the LHS assessment was discussed in detail. There will be a meeting with Communities Scotland and members of SIC Housing at the end of the month to discuss this feedback further. It was noted that Council Member representation at this meeting will be important. A Fuel Poverty working group has been established, and the first meeting was to take place on 20 August.

The Common Housing Register working group has been meeting since April 2004, and much work has been done on the new shared application form between SIC and Hjaltland. This is 2 year project which includes the upgrade and redesign of the Housing Options guide.

Neighbourhood Support Worker recruitment is progressing, although delays with Disclosure Scotland checks may slow this down. The 2nd round bid of Anti-social behaviour funding was approved by the Community Services Management team.



SIC Housing Strategy and Policy Team

Homeless Strategy



Training for Streets Ahead and Homeless Awareness is being organised for early October. These 3 hour sessions will run 3 times on 7 October and will cover Awareness of Homelessness, Lesson Plans, Leaving Home and Housing Education, and the Streets Ahead Guide.



There is some information in relation to this training overleaf in the **Did You Know** section. If anyone would like to attend this training, or would like any further information, please either call Allison Taylor on 01595 744348 or e-mail allison.taylor@sic.shetland.gov.uk.

Supporting People Strategy



With the Supporting People Service Provider reviews underway, Steering Group members were given an opportunity to comment on the review tool and the procedure and Providers are invited to give their input into the process. The tool used is based on what the majority of other local authorities are using, however it has been adapted slightly to take into account the unusual situation Shetland is in, being more remote than mainland authorities. All service reviews will be completed by March 2006 as required by Scottish Executive guidance.

Pat Bagot, team leader of the Scottish Executive Supporting People team was in Shetland recently for a visit and to discuss various elements of funding. Additional information will be provided on this when available.

The Scottish Executive have recently announced that they hope to make formal offers of funding in September for Pipeline projects which came 'online' in 2003/04, or slipped into 2004/2005. This funding is for the current financial year and will relate to Shetland's only Pipeline project, Banksbro.

Local Housing Strategy



The feedback report for Shetland's Local Housing Strategy from Communities Scotland will be discussed at the official feedback meeting at the end of September with staff from SIC Housing, Communities Scotland and Council member representation. Feedback from this meeting will be circulated to the Housing Strategies Steering Group in due course.

Building Strong, Safe and Attractive Communities and Anti-Social Behaviour



Offers for the posts of Neighbourhood Support Worker (NSW) have been made and these are dependent on Disclosure Checks. Once all this has gone through and offers have been accepted, the anticipated starting date will be the beginning of November. The training programme will last at least 4 weeks. This means NSWs are likely to be on Lerwick's streets around the beginning of December.

A draft training programme and timetable and Standard Operational Procedures have been drawn up. These documents were taken to the NSW Management Team to be verified and added to by the rest of the team members. The document is mostly complete although has a few sections to be added to yet, in particular issues of confidentiality.

Data collection is beginning to run a bit more smoothly. After September's data has been collected, it should be possible to gauge a 6 month (Apr-Sept 2004) insight into what sort of incidents and problems are occurring throughout Shetland.

A new neighbourhood dispute Mediation Officer has been appointed by CAB on a fixed term 2 year part-time contract. Her name is Alyson Keiller and the post is being funded by SIC Housing through anti-social behaviour funding. Once the service is up and running, Alyson will be providing neighbourhood dispute mediation across all tenures. For further information Alyson can be contacted at the CAB office from Monday to Thursday 9.15 am to 2.30 pm telephone 01595 694696 or e-mail sicab@zetnet.co.uk.



Common Housing Register

The new joint Application Feedback form is now in use, and is being sent out with application forms from both SIC and Hjaltland. There have been a good few returns so far.

Draft 3 of the Application Form was sent out to all SIC and Hjaltland staff, and was taken to the Shetland Tenants Forum for comment, as well as being completed by tenants. Tenants that completed Draft 3 of the form reported that they found it easy to use. The response from all has been very good, and Draft 4 of the Application Form has been created taking into account all the comments that were received. The new form is being tested on SIC Housing's Orchard System.

All other forms in connection with the Application form have been revised, although procedures for collecting certain details e.g. social, medical and child contact information may be revised to take into account the different policies of SIC and Hjaltland.

SIC Housing Strategy and Policy Team



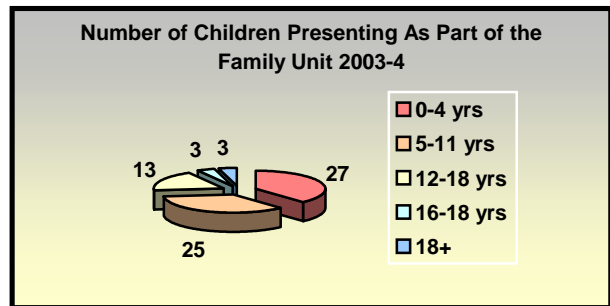
Draft Information Sharing procedures for SIC and Hjaltland have been drawn up. The CHR working group will need to decide exactly how the application process will change and how it will work when the new CHR form is in place, including exactly what information will be shared.

Did You Know?



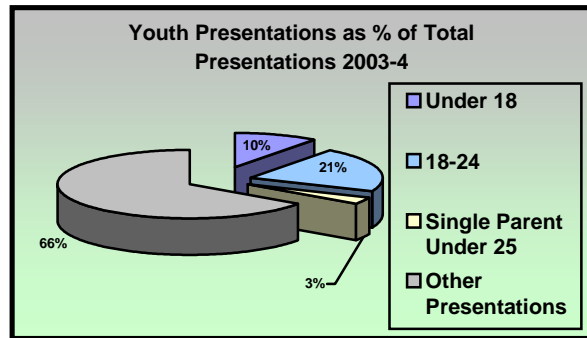
Here is some information on Youth Homeless presentations in Shetland for the years 2003/2004.

In 2003/2004, there were 11 couples with children who presented at SIC Housing as homeless. There were also 28 single parents, the majority of which were female. Over the period 2003/2004, there were 71 children that were part of a homeless family.



Source: SIC Housing

In 2003/2004 the majority of youth presentations were in the 18-24 age group. Those least likely to present as homeless were the single parents under 25 years.



Source: SIC Housing

Feedback



What do you think of this newsletter? Is it useful? Is it informative? Is there anything that has been missed out that could have been in it?

The Strategy and Policy Team would appreciate all constructive comments.

Please forward them to:



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A copy of this newsletter is available in large print on request.