

Sinclair Project

Leeds Housing Concern

1998 No Housing Provision for Drug Users in Leeds

- Homeless Drug Users were refused access to housing services
- People found to be using were asked to leave and made homeless again
- Drug Users were considered to be trouble
- Drug Users were left with little alternative but to live on the street, Compounding both the harm done to themselves and the wider community

Project History

- **Small Beginnings**

1999

A FOUR BED
ROOMED
HOUSE IN
THE LEEDS 6
AREA



First Year

- **Troubled Times (Winter Comfort)**
- **Convincing Others**
- **Discussions with Police**
- **Looking at the Law (section 8 MDA)**
- **Providing housing for chaotic drug users**

Second Year

- Presented our findings to higher management and getting their full support
- Formulating our First Drugs Policy
- We took on more properties
- Entered into discussions in order to start a new project exclusively for housing active drug users

Third Year

- Adopted Harm Reduction Practices
- Partnership Working, Drugs Intervention Program, Leeds Youth Offending Team
- Links with Police, local community policing forum
- Training, all staff trained to high level in relation to drugs and housing, harm reduction and Danos NVQ's

New Project Base

2002



Purchased a large Victorian house and converted into project offices and flats

Tenants training room



Project Aims

- **To house and support both men and women over the age of 16 safely within the community, who are experiencing housing problems due to drugs**
- **To provide a high standard of accommodation together with support tailored to each individuals needs**

Description

- **The project is community based, and can provide accommodation for 32 people in properties throughout Leeds**
- **We support both male and female clients 16 years and above**

FOR MORE INFO...

See relevant contact and referral details at the end of presentation

Working in Partnership

- **Sinclair has strong links with statutory services, such as Probation Service, the Youth Offending Team, Pathway Planning, drug services and other voluntary agencies**

Drug Intervention Program and Youth Offending Teams

- Sinclair is currently involved in a proactive joint-working partnership with Leeds Drug Interventions Program and Youth Offending Teams, Resettlement and Aftercare Provision, and maintains a number of bed spaces exclusively for those agencies

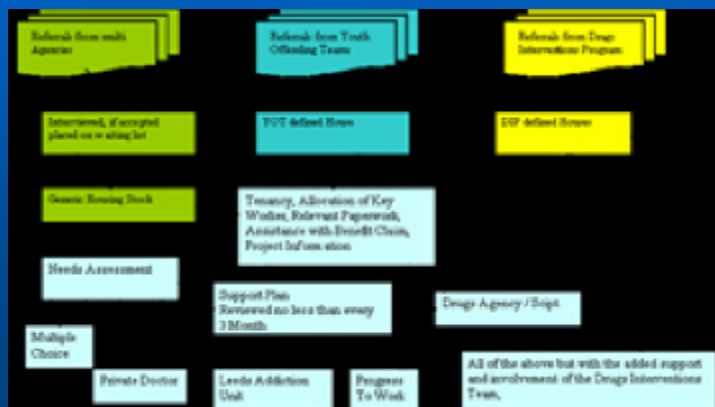
Joint Working

- * Joint staff training.
- * Reciprocal visits.
- * Open days.
- * Shared protocols.
- * Agreed confidentiality policy.
- * Service level agreements.
- * Links with named workers.
- * Staff secondment to partner agencies.
- * Inter-agency planning groups.

Support Services

- Sinclair mostly provides accommodation based support with the opportunity to provide floating support to a small number of service users
- Most of Sinclair's residents are granted Assured Shorthold Tenancies for a fixed 6-month term. All tenancies are reviewed at 6 months and are then renewable for further term as necessary.

Pathways



Housing Management

- Referrals, New referral every 2 days
- Voids, 1.2% over year
- Drug Services, 95% on program within first 4 weeks of entering project
- Length of Stay, average 14 months
- Drugs Intervention Program (prolific offenders) over 60% have not re-offended while in the project

2005 New Drugs Policy

Policy extended across all Leeds Housing concern Projects

(range of services include)

mental health, learning difficulties, drug / substance misuse, domestic violence, refugees, offenders and the elderly.

Good Practice

- **Vacant and unpopular housing**
- **Partnership and joined-up working**
- **Meeting the needs of drug users**
- **Drug use, legal issues and tenancies**
- **Management issues**
- **Staff training and support**
- **Conclusions**

Vacant and unpopular housing

Problematic drug use can both be a factor creating unpopular housing and a negative consequence of it. Such problems are often symptomatic of longer decline and need to be tackled through economic and social programmes.

However a number of measures can be instigated by housing providers to prevent the continuing decline of the communities we work in, as well as dealing with the problems caused by drug use:

- * Securing empty properties immediately they become vacant
- * Make properties fit for letting as soon as possible
- * Action to prevent tenancy failure
- * Sensitive and appropriate allocations policy.

Meeting the housing needs of drug users

Housing should be seen as an integral part of successful drug treatment and rehabilitation. Problematic drug users often need additional support to maintain their tenancies. Support needs of drug users, should be identified at an early stage through interviews. The social mix of a community, and the vulnerability of tenants housed in certain types of accommodation or particular estates, should also be considered when allocating tenancies

Meeting the housing needs of the community

The Sinclair Project is a successful example of providers of supported accommodation aimed at supporting drug-using tenants. Our hands on approach and working closely with other agencies delivers a number of benefits not only to the individual, but to our service's and the wider community :

- * Reduction in rent arrears
- * Less damage to properties
- * Reduction in anti-social behaviour
- * Reduction in the number of evictions
- * Reduction in the number of abandoned properties
- * More successful treatment outcomes for our clients

Conclusions

The use and supply of drugs can bring substantial challenges for providers of supported housing.

Providers of supported housing are key players in challenging and overcoming the harm that drugs can cause to communities. Through effective housing management strategies, providers of social housing can have a substantial impact on reducing drug-related crime and anti-social behaviour within the community. Through engagement in multi-agency partnerships, housing providers can ensure that housing is recognised as an important component in any local strategy to tackle drug use.