



Mindful Housing

Fortunatus Housing Solutions

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OUR BACKGROUND

- Catherine – 24 years in Housing Benefits at St Helens Council
- From 2011 – Business Ops Director at Fortunatus
- From Feb 2012 – Managing Director/CEO of Fortunatus
- A registered charity, audited for charity commission purposes
- Providing supported accommodation in the community in the North West
- Warrington, St Helens, Wigan, West Lancs, Bolton, Halton are our main areas

OUR BACKGROUND CONT.....

- Members of the Institute of Fundraising
- Members of the Charity Finance Group
- Members of the IRRV (Catherine on the Lancs and Cheshire Exec)
- Members of the Chartered Institute of Housing
- Working on an Impact Statement for CFG and Charities Commission

SPECIFIED ACCOMMODATION

- Category 1 – Exempt Accommodation
 - Non met county council, voluntary organisation, charity or registered provider
 - The landlord must have a legal interest in the properties, ownership or lease
 - Tenants must need ‘care, support and supervision’ – more than normal property management functions. I.E – have ‘additional needs’
 - The additional services to meet those needs must be provided by the landlord or an agent on its behalf

Exempt accommodation =

- Enables the landlord to recover the costs of providing additional services to tenants with additional needs via Housing Benefit
- Enables local authorities to fund enhanced level of Housing Benefits

SPECIFIED ACCOMMODATION

- CATEGORY 2 – SUPPORTED HOUSING WHERE A THIRD PARTY (NOT THE LANDLORD) PROVIDES THE ‘CARE SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION’
 - Typically includes agency-managed supported housing and schemes where tenants have personal budgets and purchase care packages from a third party provider
- CATEGORY 3 – REFUGE PROVISION –
 - For people subject to domestic violence and abuse
- CATEGORY 4 – LOCAL AUTHORITY HOSTELS

WHAT HAPPENS IN REAL LIFE?

- We don't decide that someone is 'vulnerable' or that they have additional needs, we receive a referral for housing from social services, community mental health teams or a consultant psychologist (think mental health wards, Hollins Park etc)
- We ask specific questions on the referral regarding someone's ongoing need of housing related support, also risk, requirements etc
- If the referral is agreed, an assessment is done the individual face to face
- A property is sourced and leased and a full furniture package put in. Each tenant is allocated a Housing Support Worker and a Maintenance Engineer who they meet on the day they move in

WHAT KIND OF PROPERTY?

- We tend not to lease flats
- We don't lease on social housing estates – normally our referrals are adults who have been in those situations and failed many times (Impact Statement and Value for Money)
- Potential property ASBOS have to be considered
- We can only lease from owners who will work with us based on our full repairing agreement (often violent and disruptive tenants)
- We have to consider the 'suitable, alternative accommodation' aspect of the regulations, however 'suitable, alternative accommodation' is rarely available

WHAT CAN HOUSING BENEFIT PAY

- Maintenance and Testing of a Heating system
- Personal furniture and fittings provided by the landlord - as long as tenant will never own it.
- External window cleaning – if tenant unable to do it and is vulnerable, this doesn't have to be a physical disability
- Burglar alarms and smoke alarms (not to be confused with emergency alarms, which are ineligible)

WHAT CAN HOUSING BENEFIT PAY

- Time that scheme managers, support workers, caretakers etc spend on undertaking on eligible services
- Costs related to scheme managers, support workers, caretakers etc such as training and travelling (as a percentage of the time spent on eligible services)
- Provision of an office for scheme managers, support workers, caretakers
- Rubbish collection and disposal (depends on costs, due to needs of residents etc)

WHAT CAN HOUSING BENEFIT PAY

- Landlord's content insurance
- Garage – if it is included in the tenancy at the start and its use is related to living in the home and the tenant has no choice but to take it (it should just be in core rent –controversial)
- ANY OTHER SERVICE RELATED TO THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE ACCOMMODATION!!! (Currently DWP are quoting between 200 and 400 eligible service charges that are eligible) – this can include:-
 - Replacement of light bulbs (communal?)
 - Fire equipment, sprinklers and emergency lighting

WHAT CAN HOUSING BENEFIT PAY

- Pest Control
- The cost of providing the building, including mortgage (for us the lease cost)
- Management costs – as long as related to housing management issues
- Printing and stationary – as long as related to housing management issues
- Repair and maintenance of buildings ie bricks and mortar
- Repairs and maintenance of fixtures and fittings

WHAT CAN HOUSING BENEFIT PAY?

- Maintenance of central heating, hot water boilers, pipe work and radiators
- Voids
- Decoration of common parts
- Interior decoration of dwellings where this is the obligation of the landlord
- Apportionment of staff time on the activities above
- Fair apportionment of overheads (eg staff training, recruitment)
- Landlord's liability for council tax
- Depreciation of white goods and furniture provided by the landlord
- Marketing

IF IN DOUBT – SPEAK TO THE PROVIDERS - WE'RE MORE SCARED OF YOU 😊

- Service charges shouldn't change tenant to tenant or weekly, if what you are doing is the same service across the board
- It is easier to talk than send emails
- Go and visit if possible
- Working together is future proofing a very valuable service and how it is funded
 - Arguments that it should always have been in social services etc. Some costs they are covering should have always been HB etc

DISCRETION – BECAUSE MALCOLM IS HERE

- Social Landlords will have a 1% rent reduction imposed
- Already massive concerns how this will impact on supported accommodation schemes within social housing
- November Budget implied that Discretionary Housing Payments would cover this
- National concern that these schemes will cease to set up because of uncertainty
- What can we all do – TALK!!!

OUR FUTURE

- Continued work on the Impact Statement with CFG and Charities Commission
- Continue to lobby on Welfare Reform
- Fundraising to fund gaps – successful so far
- Anyone who wants to visit us, just ring

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