



# Co-operative Councils

## Innovation Network

### HOUSING

#### Hull City Council

## Helping tenants to keep their homes

Welfare reform presents significant challenges with Hull being the fourth most deprived local authority and the Council having two-thirds of tenants in receipt of means test support, and responsible for 23,500 properties. Hull's approach needed to change in order to prevent homelessness and respond to mental health concerns whilst ensuring that the service remained viable through collection of rents.

A cross-agency group was set up to develop new housing options and strengthen tenant support with the aim of slowing down the turnover of properties by making tenancies more sustainable. Three key themes were identified to support the strategy: prevention and tenancy sustainment, minimising income loss, and equipping staff with the tools to do the job. The group also co-located staff that support our tenants from across Job Centre Plus, Humber NHS Trust, Customer Services, and the Housing Service.

Staff awareness and resilience was a key element with 200 front line staff provided with a tailored training programme. Working closely with the Humber NHS Trust has led to an agreement on the provision of specialist support for referrals from frontline housing staff and a commitment to permanent cross agency funding. By offering wrap-around support "high risk" tenancies have been identified earlier which helps to stabilise the rate of evictions and reduce levels of arrears.

The changes put in place have resulted in evictions and tenancy churn showing a downward trend and rent collections have improved to the best ever levels. Using Shelter estimates on the costs of eviction the service is avoiding costs of over £450,000 per annum. Bringing services together has enabled pooling of resources to expand our service offer instead of cutting back tenancy support.

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#### For further information contact:

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