

Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)

Economy & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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Agenda & Objectives

- Background
- Context for County Durham
- SHIP Funding
- SHIP Objectives
- SHIP Outputs
- SHIP – What next?
- Questions

Background



Background

- Supported Housing - a tenant receives support to live independently
- No regulator of non-commissioned supported accommodation
- Can set up without LA approval
- Providers often set up for commercial gain, buying cheap properties often in deprived locations – [BBC Panorama documentary](#)
- Supported housing accommodates the most vulnerable people
- Eligible for 'exempt accommodation' if certain criteria are met, where 'care, support or supervision (CSS)' is above a minimal amount
- Nationally and Regionally – increased reports of poor quality accommodation
- Detrimental impact on communities, health and well-being of tenants and public services

Context for County Durham



Providers Operating in Durham

Addictions North East (77)

Council managed homes (102)

Core Foundation (1)

Cornerstone Housing (12)

East Durham Community Initiative (58)

Free The Way (13)

Handcrafted Project (36 & 1 building with 6 flats)

Harbour (12)

Humankind (28 & 1 building with 6 flats)

Launchpad (1 building with 14 flats)

Moving On (136)

My Space Housing Solution (x 3 buildings each with 11/15/8 flats)

Positive Directions NE (2)

Qualitas (3)

Rainbow Promise (x 3 buildings each with 6/4/5 flats)

Red Supported Living (24)

Roc solid (29)

Vision Supported Housing (1 building 7 flats)

YMCA Sunderland (1 building 24 flats)

YMCA North Tyneside (46)

Providers Operating in Durham

(20 providers, 754 units in total)

Location of SHIP Properties	Total No units.
Central Durham	57
Durham City	8
East Durham	296
Mid Durham	141
North Durham	80
North West Durham	81
South Durham	84
South East Durham	2
West Durham	5
Grand Total	754

* The number of units are bedspaces based on active HB claims, some properties have multiple tenants

SHIP Funding, Objectives, Outputs



SHIP Funding

- MHCLG (formerly DLUHC) launched the SHIP funding opportunity in summer 2022
- National scheme - £20m funding pot to help address poor quality supported housing, improve standards of support and accommodation
- Durham was awarded £578,795 to implement SHIP (March 25)
- Funding had enabled recruitment of a dedicated multi-disciplinary team

SHIP Objectives

- Improved property and management standards of supported accommodation
- Improved knowledge and introduction of a new gateway approach to better manage supply of supported accommodation across the county
- Quality support tailored to meet individual tenant needs
- Value for money for both providers, tenants and the council
- Upskilling of the providers' workforce
- Improved engagement and support to service users from the council
- Collaborative production of a supported accommodation charter to help establish and maintain high standards

Review of existing provision

- Reviewed 17 of 20 providers
- 336 tenant reviews completed to validate HB decision and ensure tenants receiving correct levels of support
- 129 support plans, records of contact, referral forms have been scrutinised to ensure contact with the tenants is taking place
- 18 claims suspended / cancelled as a result of information disclosed during reviews (4 claims amended)
- 48 signed up for Durham Key Options (with 5 being moved on to their own tenancy and 6 in band 1 waiting for a property)
- 168 properties inspected. 154 failed first inspection, 83 since improved to meet standards (5 returned to landlord). Work ongoing with providers to improve standards in remaining properties

Other activity – housing benefit subsidy loss

- Subsidy loss - shortfall in housing benefit payment made to local authorities from the DWP, where provider not registered with the RSH and is set up as a charity, community interest company etc.
- £1.6 million subsidy loss for DCC non-commissioned housing in 2023-2024
- SHIP team working to encourage providers to become registered with the RSH or partner with an existing registered provider (RP) to help tackle the issue.
- Other activity to support with reducing HB subsidy loss include:
 - a) review of the levels of support given to tenants and promotion of tenant ‘move on’ where support is no longer required
 - b) scrutinising non-commissioned supported housing costs submitted by providers
 - c) challenging the increase in housing units that existing non RPs are offering
- Through work of SHIP it is expected that subsidy loss growth as increased at a slower rate in 2024-2025.

Gateway approach

- How DCC manages new provision (new or existing providers)
- New processes developed to enable DCC to scrutinise: costs, referrals, governance, support, procedures
- Mapping of properties geographically
- SHIP team carry out property inspections and tenant reviews prior to HB being paid
- 25 new approaches since January 2023 (all non-RPs)
- Only 2 approaches have progressed to providing supported housing in County Durham - following a rigorous process and DCC receiving noted reassurance that there would not be a rapid expansion of their provision.
- Potentially £114k saved

Added value and social impact



Training/partnership work /collaboration

- Non-Commissioned Supported Housing Forum – meet quarterly, shares best practices
- Training – property standards training, trauma informed principles, HB training, safeguarding
- 198 attendees from 19 organisations



Health and Wellbeing Support

- Health squad – 125 health checks undertaken with tenants in supported housing
- Drug and Alcohol workers – provide weekly drop in sessions for providers



Non-Commissioned Supported Housing Charter

- Minimum set of standards
- Being rolled out with providers



Crime and ASB

- Work with ASB teams and Police to understand trends and promote initiatives

Case study 1

- Tenant X has been with a supported housing provider for over 2 years. Now has limited support needs and is ready for independent living.
- Had previous criminal convictions and rent arrears which prevented tenant from accessing DKO
- SHIP team submitted appeal to enable tenant to access register – this was successful
- DCC also agreed to support the tenant to pay off previous rent arrears
- With support of the SHIP team tenant was registered for DKO, given band 1, and has been successful in applying for a bungalow in Ferryhill

Case study 2

- Tenant Y was struggling to maintain tenancies with supported housing provided.
- Had social care needs (threshold not met for care)
- Lived in a shared property which made it difficult for ASC to support him, putting pressure on house mates to support him.
- Physical and mental health was deteriorating.
- Also had aging dog
- SHIP arranged and supported the tenant to move to another SH provider where he now lives on his own with his dog.
- Provided and SHIP worked to get tenant a care package
- Tenant has stated he is much happier. The provider quoted... *'he is a ray of sunshine with such positive energy. He brightens up the room when he walks in, we really are privileged to have him as a tenant'*.

SHIP – What Next?

Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023

- Initiated in response to the challenges linked to non-commissioned supported housing sector – give local authorities greater control within the sector
- Received Royal Assent 29 June 2023, came into force on 29 August 2023
- Consultation on the Act is expected early 2025 (licencing, Supported Accommodation Strategy)
- With uncertainty in mind, and not to lose momentum of positive work undertaken by SHIP...
- CMT agreed in October 2024 to fund SHIP until March 2026, priorities will include:
 - continuing to play a key role in addressing DCC subsidy loss challenges
 - challenging new provision throughout gateway approach and process
 - ensuring high standards are maintained throughout the sector (support for tenants and property standards)
 - Scrutinising housing benefit claims
 - preventing bed blocking within the sector, to enable homeless people to be housed

Questions

