



Minutes of the Christchurch Housing Forum

October 26th 2016

Attendance: Jeff Jones Salvation Army; Marilyn Gibb CDHB; Marian Pavelich; John Peez Miles Construction; Maria Karako Tait Te Puni Kokiri; Simon Athison People First; Maureen Mundy Comcare Trust; Astha Machea ChCh Resettlement Services; Raewyn Pope CETAS; Sarah Seaford, Karyn Agar MBIE; Emily Dunstall Waipuna SJOG; Kirsten Ward, Nicola Fleming Darroch; Linda Clifford; Denise Jackson, Amanda Cook MSD; Denise Hyisman ChCh resettlement Services; Toni Johnson Habitat for Humanity; Sylvia Barnes SWAP, Karen Curtis, Stephen Wilson Housing NZ; Shelagh Docherty Ruth Syson EO; Nicky Millar Salvation Army; Dawn Clark Presbyterian Support; Gray Crawford City Mission; Hugh Perry St Albans Uniting Parish; Caroline Shone CEA; Bob Hardie Otautahi Community Housing Trust; Bridget Lange, Nadja Grabner-Thornley MBIE; Selwyn Eagle Just Dirt Trust; Kathryn Allen Salvation Army; Ali Brunel TPA; James Hadlee OCHT; Louise Lewis Comcare; Fran Edmonds CDHB; Amanda Foo, Gavin Booth, Anne Marie Nathan Comcare; Karen Terris Rechurch; Alma Sturgess Rowley Resource Centre;

Facilitator: Lisa Coulter

Note taker (Electronic – transcribed by Ali Brunel)

Karakia –

Refreshments: Comcare

Presenters: Gaurav Hirde – Contact Centre Trainer; Centralised Unit Housing

This presentation included a PowerPoint which covers all the main points. To save duplication (and possible error) the PowerPoint is attached with the minutes.

Denise Jackson – Centre Manager Canterbury Region – Also holds the area responsibility for housing.

Update about tenancy reviews – Tenancy Reviews are in place for rest of the country – Canterbury exempt because of the earthquakes. Tenancy Reviews coming to Canterbury early next year.

What are they about?

Ensuring right people in the right house for the right period of time - social houses freed up for those with need. Will begin 6th March next year and initially will be with those paying market rent or close to market rent. First Cohort – people who in four bedroom property that no longer need them. Every review will take into account peoples circumstances and also the availability of alternative accommodation; if the householder is working with other agencies – we will consult with those agencies to see what the effect of the move will impact what they are doing. If moving will be detrimental to a client's health or employment we may find they will still be eligible for social housing – including living in their current property. If there are not any private rentals available in the client's area then we will not find them ineligible.

January 2015 – 5000 reviews completed nationally. Further 3000 reviews started going into 2017

Process:

When a client is selected they will receive a letter advising who their dedicated case manager is. They will be given their phone number so they can contact the staff with any questions. Case manager will contact the client at least once a month to work through the process with them and to obtain any information about circumstances and offer support. This will include advice about home ownership options and help search for properties. All clients are able to be selected at any time. Once in social housing for three years then eligible for housing review. (See above priority for ChCh).

We start with clients in four bedroom property (couple in three bedroom property) may be able to afford market rent for one bedroom property – then they would become eligible for review and have needs assessed.

Four Potential Outcomes:

Either the households will voluntarily exit social housing – rest of country some clients self-elected to move out.

Households have continued eligibility and their current house is appropriate for their needs

Household has continued eligibility but their housing need has changed

The Household does not have continued eligibility and the Ministry advises the provider who may issue a 90 day notice.

How the process works:

Any client may be selected for review – (see above) we will start with clients who pay market rent or close to market rent and those occupying four bedrooms. We can apply desktop checks, a number of Work and Income client can be determined by desktop check.

Where we are not clear about current eligibility we may engage with clients – possible to gather overview. We may need supporting documents in some cases and clients have 10 working days to respond. If they don't respond they will be sent a reminder letter, we will try to phone as well. If they still don't respond we will move to the formal review process. This will be one month plus from the original letter.

From there we will move to independence planning and this will take from 6 to 12 months. We will work to help them to move into the private rental market, or provide information for them to either buy the property they are in or move onto other private purchase.

The formal tenancy review establishes if client is eligible to remain in social housing and if eligible whether they have a change in housing need. If a client identified to remain formal tenancy review completed. If the client refuses to engage or discontinues engaging at any time during the process a formal tenancy review can't be completed. If you are dealing with clients who are in the tenancy review process encouraging them to continue to engage with us would be really helpful.

The client and their housing provider will be advised of the final decision by the housing review process - It is a decision made by the Ministry so the client also has a right of review if it is a decision they do not agree with.

Housing support products:

A whole range of products available to help people move into sustainable housing. See MSD Website.

So far 5200 engaged in review process across the country – Canterbury have seven housing case managers 3 doing tenancy reviews. From 6th March tenancy reviews begin in the Canterbury region. Clients who have been selected will get letters at the end of this month. This is a heads up.- reviews begin March 2017.

A range of questions were asked from the floor – there are outlined below:

Q: If someone is found eligible but not property suitable – will there be transfer process – or stay where they are and go back on register with different need?

MSD Came back to the forum with the following response:

Change in housing requirements

Through the tenancy review process the tenant may be assessed as having continued eligibility to be allocated social housing but their housing needs have changed and they now require a different type of house.

The Ministry of Social Development must inform the housing provider that the client is still eligible for social housing but their housing needs (requirements) have changed. The social housing provider is responsible for deciding whether to act on this information and relocate the client to an available property that meets their new needs.

Q: Do tenants get an opportunity to see how the process works?

A: Yes, website to be updated and clients will get a fact sheet on how the process works.

Q: Will their landlord know tenancy review is happening and will they have an opportunity to provide supporting information for your review?

A: The provider will not be aware – client may be able to advise the provider (tenancy manager)

Q: These reviews solely to do with income change of circumstance and not tenants behaviour?

A: No actually driven by change of circumstance not to do with social behaviour.

Q: Will you provide interpreters where the families need it?

A: We have access to language line – if difficulty we will use other options. Also have deaf relay service.

Q: Are housing support products dependent on people's entitlement or case manager discretion.

A: We are required to look at other options first so where a recoverable assistance is available we look at that first – entitlement to advance also has to be considered first. The real crux to housing support products is the person can access and sustain a tenancy.

Q: IRR – income changing regularly (not stable) how are you adjusting the rent.

A: Income changing every week not changing rent every week - calculate average over 52 weeks a projection based on average annual income. If it falls dramatically client to advise and we will adjust the following week. If it rises significantly advise and a 60 day notice of rent increase will be provided to the tenant.

Property Clearly Not Suitable: - Clients can decline a property if it does not meet needs – we (centralised housing unit) judge if the need is good and sufficient reason. If a client on register and offered a property declines for another reason we would have a discussion with the client. Examples discussed.

Facilitator – there have been lots of changes – we need to advise when the system is working and also advise when it is not working and come up with solution as well. An example - provide as much information as possible for suitable matching.

Caroline Shone Power Point Attached.

This presentation also included a PowerPoint which covers all the main points. To save duplication (and possible error) the PowerPoint is attached with the minutes.

RTA changed this year social housing needed to have insulation to a certain standard and smoke alarms 2016, and private rentals insulated by 2019. ECCA changed its model. Prior Subsidies have existed for homeowners and tenanted properties. For the next two years it is only for tenanted properties. That is Landlords are able to get 50% subsidy to help them insulate their properties.

ECCA will put in 25% and the service providers who have the contracts with ECCA will have to find the other 25% through funding or discretionary funding. CEA is a service contractor.

What we are finding is that people on our lists are getting bigger (those who are homeowners) as there is not any government funding to help them – we are trying to use what funding we have to help them. This is still an issue and not being helped with ECCA Funding.

Government believe there are 120,000 homes in NZ eligible for this subsidy if they can do 20,000 of those homes they are helping a large number of people who are relying on other services including the health service. We have been working proactively CCC and ourselves going through their social houses. Insulating CCC housing – feedback good.

To date 900 CCC units and now working with Grey and Westport District Councils.

We know the consequences of living in cold damp homes (discussed numerous times). Hospitalisation and GP visits, reduced productivity, low academic results and mental health impacts.

DHB Programme 900 households – installation insulation - 30% reduction in hospitalisation. \$millions in savings across the board.

Partners slide highlighted and Caroline talked about partnerships.

Where to from here
Keep doing the same.

We know still a lot of homes that need insulation, stop people going into hospital, babies dying, people enabled to go to work and work productively.

Will always work with like-minded organisations. Here to help and please make sure homes are insulated and energy efficient.

Need to contact CEA and ask about services.

Update from Otautahi Community Housing Trust

Bob Hardie - In week three – thank you to the community for your support. It has been relatively seamless. We have been out and about talking with tenants and others. Just to reiterate thanks for ongoing support.

James Hadlee – Tenancy Relations Manager Otautahi Community Housing Trust. Role includes Applications, Waitlist management and Placements into social housing. If you need assistance or applications please contact James or the team. Applications can be sent online or picked up from 61 Kilmore street happy to provide applications.

We have undertaken 10 information sessions with tenants 20% tenants turn up to sessions – have been provided feedback on maintenance and other issues.

We are introducing quarterly inspections. We have just received our accreditation as a Community Housing Provider. We hope to take people from the housing register on IRRS programme soon. More detail sometime soon.

Questions were asked about whether tenants would receive income related rents, subsidised rents etc. Depending on what waitlist they are on. James spoke generally about the lists and advised he would be talking with MSD about this issue. Currently the OCHT has three rent rates for tenants. Existing tenants (previous CCC tenants) are protected with no more than 5% rent rise per annum. New tenants from OCHT waitlist will pay 70% market rates and IRR tenants will pay 25% income. This is three rent structures. Forum will be updated about this in the future.

The Housing Forum was closed – next forum is the Xmas Forum on 7th December.

