

# Homelessness: How we Provide for the Future

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Housing Options

City and County of Swansea  
Dinas a Sir Abertawe



# The Housing Options Service – An Overview

- Role of Housing Options
- Causes of Homelessness / Dispelling the Myths
- Preventing Homelessness
- What Options?
- Housing Assessment and Allocations
- Assessment Myths
- Key Issues for 15/16 and beyond



# Role of Housing Options

- Provide advice and assistance to any person(s) threatened with homelessness (*some figures*)
- Assess Housing Need in accordance with the Housing Allocations Policy 2009 (applicants and tenants) and manage the Housing Needs list
- Provide affordable options for housing
- Make appropriate referrals for support on assessment of needs
- Work in Partnership with various Agencies & Departments e.g. Barnado's / Social Services / Probation / Police (MAPPA)
- Work in partnership with the Voluntary Sector e.g. 'Move-On' Scheme



# Causes of Homelessness

- Relationship breakdown
- Domestic Violence
- Private Rented – Notice to Quit / too expensive
- Leaving Institution – Prison / Care / Armed Forces
- Rough Sleeping / Substance Misuse
- Mortgage Repossessions
- Evictions through Anti-Social behaviour / Rent Arrears
- Emergency – e.g. fire / flood
- Refugee Status
- Property unsuitable E.g. Medical grounds / condition of property



# Homelessness Myths

- I should only go to Housing Options if I'm street homeless
- I'm entitled to a Council house if I'm homeless
- The Council will put me in Bed & Breakfast if I have nowhere to go
- If I lose my accommodation I will go straight to the top of the Housing Needs Register
- If I'm from a particular area in Swansea the Council will re-house me back in that area
- If I was an Asylum Seeker/Eastern European I would get housed



# Preventing homelessness

- Is it better to stay where you are?
- Mediation & negotiation  
(Parents/Landlords/Courts etc.)
- Money advice / Financial help
- Support & Advice
- Improving the security of a home
- Help with moving into a new home (bond, rent in advance etc.)



# Options for moving into permanent housing

- Council
- Housing Association nominations / direct application
- Private Rented Sector
- Long term supported housing
- Move-on Strategy
- Adapted Housing (LA/ Gwalia /Coastal /Family Housing)
- Sheltered Accommodation
- Purchasing a Home



# Housing Options & The Voluntary Sector

- Important linkages
- Adds value and increases housing options, gives flexibility in service delivery
- Voluntary Sector Grant – Shelter Cymru, Barnado's BAYS, Swansea Bond Board, Rough Sleepers Intervention Team funded.
- Joint Homelessness and Supporting People Collaborative Provider Forum – determines strategic direction for homelessness services





# Assessment Team

- There are just under 4000 households on the Housing Needs Register
- Points based Policy for both Applicants / Tenants;
- Looks at cumulative housing need;
- Points awarded for; *Insecurity of tenure/Condition of Property/Medical Needs/Social Needs/time spent on the list;*
- Review of every application carried out annually
- Not just about Waiting List but about providing appropriate advice and assistance for individual needs
- How to apply – by application form or over the telephone



# Assessment Myths

- I will keep going up the list over time
- My support worker / GP has sent a letter of support in so I will get more points
- I have seen an empty property so can I have it
- You must have something you can offer me? (Choice Advisor/Website)
- My daughter (15) is sharing with my 6 year old boy so you have to move us legally
- I have access to children so I need a house



# Key Issues

- **Continual Pressure on Service** (demand outstripping supply, realistic expectations)
- **Housing Act (Wales) 2014** – Implementation date 27<sup>TH</sup> April 2015 . Significant change. Much greater emphasis on prevention of homelessness, increased use of private rented sector for homeless households and those in housing need, prisoners no longer automatically in ‘priority need’. WG providing short term funding to Council’s to help meet new duties
- **Private Rented Sector Lettings Team**



# Key Issues (cont'd)

- **Welfare Reform**
  - Universal Credit
  - Under Occupation Charge (Bedroom Tax)
  - Shared accommodation rates for U-35's
- **Challenging Client Group** – Increase in substance misuse / mental health etc.



# Key Issues (cont'd)

- **Closer links with Housing Associations** – e.g. Move towards shared referral process, sharing of information and open communication
- **Continued emphasis on reducing the need for use of Bed & Breakfast and tackling Rough Sleeping**
- **Increased use of Technology** – e.g. Housing Options Webpage - launched in 2012 – [swanseahousing.co.uk](http://swanseahousing.co.uk)





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### Welcome to the Swansea Housing Website

The Swansea Housing website aims to help those looking for housing in Swansea to make choices about the most suitable housing options available to them.

It offers information about housing in Swansea including [Council Housing](#), [Housing Associations](#), [Private Renting](#) and [Affordable Housing](#).

The [Waiting Time Calculator](#) provides information to help people who have applied for or are thinking of applying for housing via the Council's Housing Register, in order to decide whether social housing is right for them. This includes details of:

- Where the Council have properties
- The number of lettings in various areas of the city
- The number of applicants waiting to be housed
- Estimated waiting times

The Swansea Housing website also offers [landlords](#) the opportunity to advertise their available private rented properties and provides information about required accommodation standards, accreditation options and other issues.



### If you are looking for a home there are a number of options you may want to think about

The links below provide information which will help you consider the 'pros and cons' of the available options and to decide what might be best for you.

You will also be able to view details of properties that you could rent now, and get information about things you may need to consider such as the different tenancy types, waiting lists and affordability.

Choose an option below for more information about the choices that are available to you.



**Council Housing**



**Housing Associations**



**Private Rented Accommodation**



**Assisted Home Ownership**



**Sheltered Housing**



**Homeswapper**



**Adapted Housing**



**Waiting time calculator**



## Available Private Properties



**Properties available NOW**



# Questions?

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