

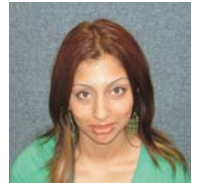


Welcome to the first edition of Housing News, a newsletter specially designed for people who use, have used or need to use the Council's Homeless & Housing Support Service. The aim of this newsletter is to keep you informed of services we provide and our performance throughout the year. If you would like to see other information included that would be useful to you, please let a member of the team know. If you would like to get involved in producing this twice yearly newsletter please again contact a member of the team.

Regards

Councillor Carol Hart
Lead Member for Community Services

A snapshot of the life of a Homeless Prevention Officer



Hi, my name is Nafisa and I work for the Council as the Homeless Prevention Officer. My job is to work with people who are going to lose their home to try and stop this from happening. I try to do this in many ways, from trying to sort out peoples housing benefit claims, to speaking with Landlords to try and find out how we can stop them from asking their tenants to leave.

My work is varied and no two days are the same. Today I have come in to work at 8.30am and the phones have not stopped ringing!

My first call was from a Neighbourhood Warden who has found a man in his late 50's sleeping rough in West Park. With some details from the Warden I telephoned lots of hostels and managed to find a room in a hostel in Derby from tonight. The Warden offered to take the guy to the hostel. I let him know that I would ring him at the hostel once he was settled to talk about what else we could do to help, but it was my first priority for me to ensure he had somewhere to stay in this cold weather.

Next I interviewed an applicant who was struggling to keep his tenancy because he could no longer afford to pay the rent. The guy, who lived with his partner and two young children, had lost his job earlier this year due to health problems. I looked at his income and what he paid out, and found he had more things to pay for, than he had money coming in. We talked about how he could reduce what he paid out and how he could increase his help towards the rent by putting in a claim for Discretionary Housing Payment. This helps when there is a gap between what rent is charged and the amount of housing benefit paid. I also encouraged him to go see his bank with details of his income and what he paid out to discuss reducing the loan repayments each month.

I deal with many people during the day either face to face or on the telephone.

If you or someone you know are having difficulties keeping their tenancy then give me a call on 0845 907 2244 ext 3590 (local rate number) and I might be able to help.

Debt Problems

Whatever you do, don't ignore them.

If you are finding it hard to pay your bills, you can get free advice, offering help, before, during or after you get into difficulties.

ITS FREE, CONFIDENTIAL, AND NO ONE WILL JUDGE YOU.

Erewash Citizens Advice Bureau - 0870 1212028

Derbyshire Housing Aid - 0800 318 034

National Debt Line - 0808 808 4000

Tax Aid - Inland Revenue problems - 0207 8034950

Community Legal Services Direct - 0845 345 4345

Surestart - Debt advice for families registered with Surestart in the Cotmanhay and Kirk Hallam areas. 0115 9098200

Performance information of the Homeless & Housing Support Team Between 1 April 2006 and 30 September 2006

Use of temporary Accommodation

On average a family may have to stay up to 6 weeks in Bed & Breakfast before we can move them on. Since 1 April 2006 we have placed 41 households in Bed & Breakfast

Homeless Applications

A total of 153 homeless applications have been assessed and a decision made. Of which we accepted a duty to secure accommodation for 121 households, 93 were families.

Of the 121 households, the following lists the main cause of their homelessness:

- Ask to leave by parent/relative/friend
= 32 households
- Domestic Violence
= 20 households
- Loss of private rented property
= 21 households
- Loss of property due to mortgage arrears
= 8 households
- 78% of homeless decisions were made within 33 days
- 79 % of homeless decisions were accepted duty to secure accommodation

The total number of requests received from Housing Associations for nomination to a property was 171, of which:

- 82 were for 60+ / Registered disabled
- 36 were for single households
- 54 were for families

Housing Enquiries

Total number of housing related enquiries is 809

Interested in finding Private Rented Accommodation but can't afford the Bond?

Then contact Erewash Borough Council's Homeless & Housing Support Team on the details below, as we may be able to help you.

Erewash Borough Council can provide a *written* bond guarantee to the landlord in place of a cash deposit.

All you need to do is find a suitable home to rent and a landlord who is willing to participate in the Bond Guarantee Scheme. But don't worry, we can help with this too.

The bond will only be agreed if you can afford the property.

If you require any further information about the Bond Guarantee Scheme please contact us, the details are listed below.

Homeless Prevention

We have prevented the homelessness of 42 households.

We have agreed 15 bonds to enable households to access the private rented sector.

4 households have benefited from our independent mediation service.

Satisfaction with services provided

The percentage of you who were either satisfied or very satisfied with our service was:

- 93% Homeless Service Users
- 100% Homeless Prevention Users
- 100% Bond Guarantee scheme

Contact details:

Homeless & Housing Support Team
Erewash Borough Council
Town Hall, 1 Wharncliffe Road, Ilkeston, Derbyshire

Telephone: 0845 907 2244 ext 3590 (local rate number) or at
homelessness@erewash.gov.uk

Or alternatively look on our website for further details at:
www.erewash.gov.uk/Housing/HousingAdvice/

For out of working hours homeless emergency situations, contact Rapid Resonse Team on 01773 728222 who may be able to assist