



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 28TH MARCH 2019

SUBJECT: STAFF TRAINING RELEVANT TO VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Following a request from a Member of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group this information report provides Members with an insight into training being undertaken by Caerphilly Homes' staff that is relevant to improving their engagement with vulnerable tenants.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides Members with detailed examples of formal training courses undertaken by a range of Caerphilly Homes' staff within the last five years that contributes to improving their engagement with service users, including those with particular vulnerabilities, when they are undertaking their professional roles. It includes examples of staff that have undertaken the various types of training. The report does not include awareness raising and training provided through meetings, or professional qualifications such as NVQs.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members to note the range of training provided to Caerphilly Homes' staff to improve the quality of their engagement with tenants who may be vulnerable.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To allow members the opportunity to review the range of training provided to Caerphilly Homes staff that contributes to improved engagement and support to potentially vulnerable tenants.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 Having staff that are fully trained and equipped with the appropriate knowledge and skills to do their job efficiently and effectively is essential for day to day work. Caerphilly Homes recognises that, in addition to supporting personal and professional development, providing access to training for its staff can lead to better outcomes for our service users. Even if staff have already been fully trained and have the required qualifications and skills, keeping up with new legislation, the changing needs and expectations of our customers and developing staff knowledge is essential. This report provides examples of short course training that have been undertaken by Caerphilly Homes' staff in the last five years that is relevant to their roles in engaging with vulnerable households.
- 5.2 The training needs of staff are reviewed on induction, during 1-2-1s, performance

development reviews, as roles evolve and in line with emerging legislation and identified priorities and training is sourced in house, and where required through external training providers and third sector agencies. There is often limited availability of training courses, financial or time constraints and a need to ensure adequate levels of service are maintained whilst training is undertaken so staff are encouraged to cascade their learned knowledge from these training sessions to colleagues.

5.3 Feed back on quality of courses often necessitates a review of referrals for future sessions. New courses are typically trialled by a small number of staff and reviewed prior to further applications being submitted however availability of some courses is time limited. Generally where numbers of relevant staff are small e.g. Tenancy Enforcement Officers (TEO's), all staff involved receive that training provided there is capacity and availability over time and the course is considered to be of sufficient value and quality, however where there are significant numbers of staff that could be nominated there is often insufficient course availability. In these circumstances learned knowledge is prioritised to key officers and cascaded to colleagues. Unfortunately for many of the most popular courses demand exceeds supply and staff can apply on a number of occasions before they are successful in being allocated a place. If training is identified as key to an officer's role they are unable to opt out of that training if a place is allocated.

5.4 In addition to the training detailed below, which will continue to be provided to staff as and when it becomes available and is required, the Caerphilly Homes Service Plan 2018-2023 includes in its Action Plan a key action to provide frontline Public Sector Housing staff with relevant training in mental health and associated support, to support tenants in sustaining their tenancies. Further to this the Housing Services Manager has met with colleagues in Workforce Development to discuss development of a course 'tailor made' for Housing staff. A provisional course content has been agreed and Workforce Development are in the process of developing a course and sourcing a training provider.

5.5 **Domestic Abuse Including Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act (VAWDASV)**

The VAWDASV Act 2015 was introduced by Welsh Government to develop the public service response to these issues. Recognising the importance of this new legislation and its potential impact in identifying and supporting affected tenants and other clients Caerphilly Homes agreed to pilot the introduction of approved 'Ask and Act' training for all frontline staff. 'Ask and Act' is a process of targeted enquiry and describes the recognition of indicators of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence as a prompt for the staff member to ask their client whether they have been affected by any of these issues. Whilst training is mandatory the level of training provided related to the roles of the staff, determined in conjunction with the VAWDASV Regional Co-ordination Team. All Housing staff with access to e-learning were trained to Level 1 which provides basic awareness.

Level 2 – provided to relevant front line staff to ensure they recognise signs and are able to talk to the person sensitively and offer options such as referral to appropriate services.

Level 3 - provided to managers to enable them to perform a 'champion role' and support colleagues to make difficult decisions.

All new staff and those whose roles change continue to be trained together with those staff who did not have access to e-learning and require classroom based training.

Some staff have undertaken additional training on understanding domestic abuse and its effects.

- 5.6 **Awareness of Learning Difficulties and Dementia**
These courses have been provided to a wide range of staff across the Housing service, including managers, Estate Management Officers (EMO's), Tenant Liaison Officers (TLO's), Tenancy Support Officers (TSO's), Sheltered Housing and Floating Support staff. They include increasing understanding of human behaviour, exploring communication, learning to understand the individual, understanding the behaviour response cycle, good practice in recording information, how our behaviour can impact positively on an individual and person centred approaches.
- 5.7 **Working with People with a Learning Disability**
Provided to TEOs. It includes general facts around supporting people with a learning disability, understanding social attitudes around people with a learning disability and difficulties around maintaining relationships. Also improved listening and communication skills and general good practices around understanding behaviours.
- 5.8 **Bereavement and Loss**
Provided to TLOs, Floating Support and Sheltered Housing staff. Includes understanding the stages of bereavement, understanding the symptoms of grief, attachment and loss. Explores how communication techniques can aid others to come to terms with their feelings
- 5.9 **Adults at Risk**
This was previously known as Protection of Vulnerable Adults training. It has been adjusted to include awareness of the Social Service and Wellbeing Act The level of training is dependent on the staff role. It is provided to a wide range of staff across the Housing service, including managers, EMOs, Tenant Liaison Officers (TLOs), Tenancy Support Officers (TSOs), Tenancy Enforcement Officers (TEOs) clerical officers, Sheltered Housing and Floating Support staff. It outlines the adult safeguarding legislative framework, highlights the need for collaborative multi-agency working, the purpose of strategy meetings and case conferences, appropriate use of the PoVA Advice System, and Process.
- 5.10 **Child Protection/Abuse and Neglect in Children**
Provided to a range of visiting staff including Floating Support, Sheltered Housing Officers (SHO's,) EMOs, TLOs, TEOs and TSOs. It raises awareness of the key legislation and policies for working together to safeguard children, an awareness of what is meant by child abuse and neglect and possible signs, symptoms and indicators. It enhances understanding of safeguarding roles and responsibilities and how to report concerns.
- 5.11 **Understanding Hoarding Disorder**
Provided to Managers, TLOs, TEOs, Floating Support and Sheltered Housing staff. It includes understanding underlying reasons for hoarding and links to OCD, depression and anxiety, why hoarding is a problem and how can staff support someone who is a hoarder. Advises on supporting individuals in clearance and change and builds knowledge of legislation, medication, treatment and therapies.
- 5.12 **Drug and Substance Misuse**
A range of different courses have been provided to Housing staff including TLOs, TSOs, Rent Recovery Officers (RROs), managers, Occupational Therapists (OTs), Floating Support, Sheltered Housing staff and TEOs. They explore how and why patterns of drug use are changing. Include information about individual substances (including Alcohol), signs, symptoms and risks of use, basic harm reduction information and making referrals. Substances covered include new psychoactive substances that are used locally. It increases understanding of the reasons for use, types of substance usage, local trends and categories of substances. Explores appropriate harm reduction advice to give those using new psychoactive substances risks and harms. Raise awareness of local service information available and recognises effects of substances on mental health.

- 5.13 **Equalities Awareness**
Provided to a range of staff including managers, Floating Support and sheltered housing staff, EMOs, surveyors, clerical staff and TEOs. It increases awareness of Equality and Diversity and understanding of the barriers to equality. It also increases recognition of the benefits of a diverse community.
- 5.14 **Prevent**
Provided to a range of staff including managers, Floating Support and Sheltered Housing staff, EMOs, surveyors, clerical staff and TEOs. It includes understand what radicalisation is, recognising the signs of someone vulnerable to extremism, how to safeguard against extremist recruitment, feeling confident challenging extreme views wherever they appear, knowing when it's appropriate to make a referral, understanding duties under Prevent.
- 5.15 **Autism**
Provided to TEOs. It includes an insight into a person with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), including sensory factors, assumptions and beliefs, behavioural approaches and support approaches.
- 5.16 **Managing Conflict and Lone Working**
Provided to a range of frontline staff. It covers effective working practices and personal skills to be able to deal with difficult and potentially violent situations when working in or away from the workplace, recognising potentially difficult situations and developing skills in defusing difficult situations
- 5.17 **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness**
Provided to TEOs, Floating Support and Sheltered Housing staff. It improves appreciation of the effects of the condition on the individual and their families/carers, developing practical skills to better communicate with a deaf or hard of hearing person. It provides information on environmental aids for the person and their families/carers and on support services available.
- 5.18 **Understanding Suicide**
Provided to TEOs, Floating Support and Sheltered Housing staff. Improves understanding of the ways personal and societal attitudes affect views on suicide and interventions. It provides guidance and suicide first-aid to a person at risk in ways that meet their individual safety needs. It increases appreciation of the value of improving and integrating suicide prevention resources in the community at large. It recognises important aspects of suicide prevention including life-promotion and self-care.
- 5.19 **Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)**
Provided to TSOs and RROs. A two-day interactive workshop in suicide first aid ASIST teaches participants to recognise when someone may have thoughts of suicide and work with them to create a plan that will support their immediate safety.
- 5.20 **Personality Disorders**
Provided to TEOs and Floating Support staff. It increases awareness and understanding of what personality disorder means and defines and describes the often controversial nature of personality disorders. It identifies treatment and service approaches and outlines key interpersonal skills in working with personality disordered individuals.
- 5.21 **Mental Capacity**
There has been some variation in this training depending on role but it has been provided to managers and OTs within Housing. Includes the Mental Capacity Act, what Mental Capacity and lack of Capacity are, what it means in practice and links with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act. Also, assessing capacity including who should do an assessment and what triggers an assessment.

5.22 **Adverse Childhood Experiences**

Recently introduced this has been provided to the OTs within Housing. It explores Adverse Childhood Experiences, improving understanding of their impact on children and adults in later life, and the Welsh context.

5.23 **Conclusion**

Whilst not all training opportunities are relevant to all staff roles Caerphilly Homes continues to provide a diverse range of training opportunities for Public Sector Housing staff that is relevant to improving their engagement with vulnerable tenants, leading to improved support outcomes and aiding sustainment of tenancies. If circumstances are encountered by a member of staff who has not received training in the relevant area, they are advised to obtain support from another member of staff who has received the training or to refer the matter on to a relevant officer, which could be within or outside Caerphilly Homes.

5.24 The training provided improves officers' ability to identify the potential vulnerabilities of tenants and provide appropriate support but it is recognised that once vulnerabilities and support needs are identified where possible this information should be available to Housing colleagues to ensure that tenants' vulnerabilities can be considered when services are provided. It is acknowledged that our current IT systems limit our ability to make best use of such information and this is currently being considered as part of a review of the existing IT system that supports Landlord Services.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 No assumptions have been made in proposing the recommendations in the report.

7. **LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES**

7.1 **Corporate Plan 2018-2023**

The report content contributes towards or impacts the Corporate Well-being Objectives within **The Caerphilly We Want (2018-2023) Well Being Plan** which are:

Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all by demonstrating examples of training opportunities available for Housing staff.

Objective 2 - Enabling employment through the enhancement of knowledge and skills of Housing staff thereby supporting better employment prospects.

Objective 3 - Address the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's well-being by providing examples of the training available to staff that supports improvements to the quality of advice, assistance and support provided by the Housing Service.

Objective 6 - Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being

The training provided to staff contributes to:

- Improving support provided to people to help themselves
- Improving staff ability to have meaningful conversations to help identify what matters to improve outcomes
- Improving service provision to reduce the need for statutory interventions

7.2 **Caerphilly Homes Service Plan (2018-2023) Priority Objective 7** - Sustaining tenancies by providing a range of housing related services.

7.3 **Improving Lives and Communities: Homes in Wales 2010** which sets out the national context on meeting housing need, homelessness and housing related support services.

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1 Housing Services and our outlined priorities, contributes to a minimum of 6 out of the 7 well-being goals within the *Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015*, including:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A globally responsible Wales

8.2 This report contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in Links to Strategy above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act in that:

Long Term – supports the sustainability of cohesive communities for tenants and residents; providing a fair and transparent service for tenancy support and sustainment.

Prevention – supports tenants and assists in the prevention of eviction and homelessness. It supports the well-being of tenants and residents.

Integration – improved standards of housing support which contribute to stable community environments.

Collaboration – The training programme focuses on internal collaboration and wider partnerships to provide training to meet the needs of staff to support tenant engagement and tenancy sustainment.

Involvement – The training supports the engagement of tenants, residents and support agencies in relation to sustainment of tenancies.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 This report is for information purposes only, so the Council's full Equality Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no financial implications the report.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no personnel implications to this report.

12. CONSULTATIONS

12.1 The report reflects the views of the consultees.

13. STATUTORY POWER

13.1 Not applicable.

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Consultees:

- Cllr Lisa Phipps - Cabinet Member for Homes and Places
- Dave Street - Corporate Director of Social Services & Housing
- Shaun Couzens - Chief Housing Officer
- Paul Smythe - Housing Technical Manager
- Jane Roberts-Waite - Strategic Co-ordination Manager
- Cllr Mike Davies - County Councillor (Crumlin)
- Mandy Betts - Tenant & Community Involvement Manager
- Debbie Bishop - Area Housing Manager
- Julie Reynolds - Area Housing Manager
- Sandra Isaacs - Rents Manager
- Angela Hiscox - Older Persons' Housing Manager
- Rachel Thornett - Tenancy Enforcement Manager
- Karen James - Neighbourhood Housing Manager
- Tracy Lundy - Neighbourhood Housing Manager
- Jason Fellowes - Housing Repair Operations Manager