



County Hall  
Cardiff  
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## CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

**Committee**                    COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date and Time  
of Meeting**                WEDNESDAY, 2 MARCH 2016, 5.00 PM

Please find below correspondence send by the Committee Chair following the meeting,  
together with any responses received.

For any further details, please contact [scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk](mailto:scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk)

10                    **Correspondence following the committee meeting** *(Pages 1 - 36)*

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My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr McGarry

09 March 2016

Councillor Daniel De'Ath  
Cabinet Member (Skills, Safety and Engagement)  
c/o Room 520  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW



Dear Daniel

### **Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 2 March 2016**

Thank you to you, Sarah McGill and Jane Thomas for attending Committee and providing an update on work to progress re-commissioning of domestic violence services in Cardiff. This letter captures the agreed comments, observations and recommendations of the Committee with regard to this item.

Members thank you for sharing the SafeLives report with them and note that this report identifies a number of commissioners, using a variety of different funding pots, to secure a range of services which currently do not meet all the needs of those suffering from domestic abuse. As discussed at the meeting, Members recommend that a systematic gap analysis is now carried out, building on the work in the SafeLives report, to inform re-commissioning.

Linked to this, it is evident that more work is needed to ensure service users have a voice in the re-commissioning process and Members were pleased to hear you spotlight this as an area you wished to improve. Members wish to highlight the need to ensure under-represented groups regarding domestic abuse are heard from, such as (in this context) older people, LGBT service users and Ethnic Minorities service users.

Members note that you agree with many of recommendations of the SafeLives report but will not be limited by the report as you wish to build on it and enhance it with service user feedback. In the meantime, Members note that Cardiff Council is looking to work sub regionally with the Vale of Glamorgan Council, that a strategic group has been established to work at the sub regional level and that a South Wales Board is due to be established to share the lessons from the various sub regions. Members welcome these developments. In order to strengthen and enhance these, Members recommend that the Crown Prosecution Service be invited to join the Cardiff and Vale sub regional strategic group; we are sure their experience will be of

benefit and assistance in shaping domestic abuse service provision. Members also recommend that officers look to see the lessons learnt from the recent Caerphilly, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Neath Port Talbot Domestic Violence courts pilot to see if these can be usefully applied in Cardiff.

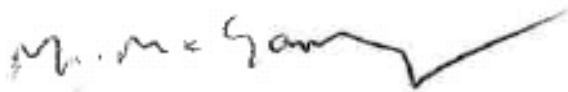
Finally, Members note that you are the Council's Domestic Abuse Champion and thank you for your offer to return to Committee in the future to update on progress; Members will look to include this in future work programming. Linked to this, Members would appreciate a brief review of the relevant timescales pertaining to the re-commissioning process.

This letter requires a response, please, as it contains the following:

- Recommendation - that a systematic gap analysis is carried out, building on the work in the SafeLives report, to inform re-commissioning.
- Recommendation - that the Crown Prosecution Service be invited to join the Cardiff and Vale sub regional strategic group.
- Recommendation - that officers look to see the lessons learnt from the recent Domestic Violence courts pilot.
- Request for information - a brief review of the relevant timescales pertaining to the re-commissioning process.

I hope this letter is of assistance in improving the re-commissioning of domestic violence services in Cardiff, which we are all agreed are of vital importance.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNTY COUNCILLOR MARY M<sup>C</sup>GARRY**  
**Chairperson - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee**

Cc: Sarah McGill                      Jane Thomas  
      Liz Patterson                     Cheryl Cornelius

Fy Ref/My Ref: DD/CC/Scrutiny

Eich Ref/Your Ref:

Dyddiad/Date: 31 May 2016



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Councillor Mary McGarry  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Annwyl/Dear Mary,

**RE:- Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee – 2 March 2016**

Thank you for your letter of the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016 and your recommendations, the process has been of benefit for myself and officers ahead of the re-commissioning of domestic violence services.

**Recommendation - that a systematic gap analysis is carried out, building on the work in the SafeLives report, to inform re-commissioning.**

A systematic gap analysis will be carried out ahead of the re-commissioning of domestic violence services. It will be crucial that there is joined up service delivery that focusses on the needs the individual and is capable of meeting demand in Cardiff.

**Recommendation - that the Crown Prosecution Service be invited to join the Cardiff and Vale sub regional strategic group.**

For the Cardiff and Vale sub regional strategic group to have a real impact all key partner organisations need to be involved. The Crown Prosecution Service I agree will bring vast knowledge and experience and it is important this is captured, so they will be invited to join the group.

**Recommendation - that officers look to see the lessons learnt from the recent Domestic Violence courts pilot.**

Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVC) that have been piloted in neighbouring authorities since 2005 in are in place in Cardiff. As per the previous recommendation, it is key for us to involve the Crown Prosecution Service in the planning of domestic violence services, to understand how successfully these are working and to identify what can be done prior to cases arriving at court to support individuals and ensure suitable evidence is available.



**Request for information - a brief review of the relevant timescales pertaining to the re-commissioning process.**

The overview timeline for the re-commissioning process is

Activity	Date
Carry out Needs / Gap Analysis	April / May 2016
Service Specification Development Workshops	June 2016
Cabinet Decision	June / July 2016
Consultation on Draft Service Specification	July / August 2016
Business Wales Event / Support for Providers	July / August 2016
Issue PQQ	September / October 2016
Issue ITT	November / December 2016
Contract Award	January 2017
Contract Start Date	April 2017

I hope this information suitably responds to your recommendations and once again thank you for your input into such a key area. I welcome domestic violence being added to the work programme to ensure that this committee is both fully informed and can help shape this service in Cardiff.

Yn gwyir/Yours sincerely



**Y Cyngorydd/Councillor Daniel De'Ath  
Aelod Cabinet Dros Diogelwch, Ymgysylltu a Democratiaeth  
Cabinet Member for Safety, Engagement & Democracy  
Cyngorydd Plasnewydd/  
Councillor for Plasnewydd**

*Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn sicrhau ein bod yn cyfathrebu â chi yn eich dewis iaith boed yn Gymraeg, yn Saesneg neu'n ddwyieithog dim ond i chi roi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.*

*The Council welcomes correspondence in English and Welsh and we will ensure that we communicate with you in the language of your choice, whether that's English, Welsh or bilingual as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to any delay.*

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr McGarry

09 March 2016

Councillor Bob Derbyshire  
Cabinet Member  
c/o Room 520  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW



Dear Bob

**Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee – 2 March 2016**

On behalf of the Members of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, I would like to thank you and Bethan Jones for attending our Committee on 2 March 2016 and providing an update on progress with implementing Rent Smart Wales.

Overall, Members are pleased with the progress made to date and reassured by the answers provided at the meeting, which demonstrated that officers understood the dynamics operating in the private rented sector and were responding to these to ensure that Rent Smart Wales is implemented successfully.

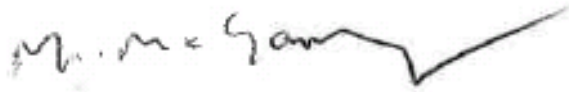
Members note the following points:

- Fewer landlords have been licensed to date than was estimated in the original business case but this is due to landlords now having a year's grace before they have to apply;
- In order to try to avoid a spike in applications (and subsequent renewals), officers are working on incentive schemes to encourage early applications;
- Welsh Government has provided each local authority with approximately £13,000 to meet the costs of promoting Rent Smart Wales and data cleansing;
- Welsh Government has provided Cardiff Council with £400,000 to cover the set up costs for hosting Rent Smart Wales, which means there will be no costs to Cardiff Council;
- Recent case law means that the Rent Smart Wales fees can be used to cover the enforcement costs, including administration costs, borne by individual local authorities.

In order to assist Members understanding, Members would like to receive the following information:

- The milestones and metrics that are in place to measure progress in implementing Rent Smart Wales;
- The actual proportion of money that comes in from fees and goes out to each Local Authority to cover enforcement costs.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary McGarry', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR MARY M<sup>C</sup>GARRY**

**Chairperson - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee**

Cc: Bethan Jones

Liz Patterson Claire Deguara

Alison Taylor





Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM33924  
Dyddiad / Date: 27th April 2016

Councillor Mary McGarry  
Chairperson Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee  
Cardiff County Council  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Annwyl/Dear Mary

### **Community And Adult Services Scrutiny Committee - 2 March 2016**

Thank you for your letter dated the 9 March 2016 and your support and acknowledgment of the progress that has been made to date.

### **The milestones and metrics that are in place to measure progress in implementing Rent Smart Wales**

As part of the performance management framework that has been put in place I attach to this letter Rent Smart Wales monthly Core Data for March. I would welcome the Committees view on this core data set and to know if you believe there is any supplementary information that would be important to ensuring the success and progress of this section is effectively captured.

In addition to this operational reporting the following two Key Performance Indicators are in Corporate Plan:-

- % of Commercial Landlord Agents licensed with Rent Smart Wales (cumulative)
- Number of Landlords in Wales registered with Rent Smart Wales (cumulative)

#### **ATEBWCH I / PLEASE REPLY TO :**

Swyddfa Cymorth Y Cabinet / Cabinet Support Office, Ystafell / Room 518, Neuadd y Sir / County Hall  
Glanfa'r Iwerydd / Atlantic Wharf , Caerdydd/Cardiff, CF10 4UW  
Ffon / Tel: (029) 2087 2631

*Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn sicrhau ein bod yn cyfathrebu â chi yn eich dewis iaith boed yn Gymraeg, yn Saesneg neu'n ddwyieithog dim ond i chi roi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.*

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With the next two in the Communities, Housing and Customer Services Delivery Plan.

- Number of Landlords/Agents completing training sessions with Rent Smart Wales (cumulative)
- Number of Licenses that have been issued by Rent Smart Wales (cumulative)

**The actual proportion of money that comes in from fees and goes out to each Local Authority to cover enforcement costs.**

In the business model over the next 5 years there is £5,459,552 assigned to Local Authority Enforcement (this also includes enforcement for City of Cardiff Council). This is out of the total 5 year costs of £25,690,073, therefore 21.15% of the total fees.

Thank you once again and I hope this letter includes all the information requested.

Yn gywir  
Yours sincerely



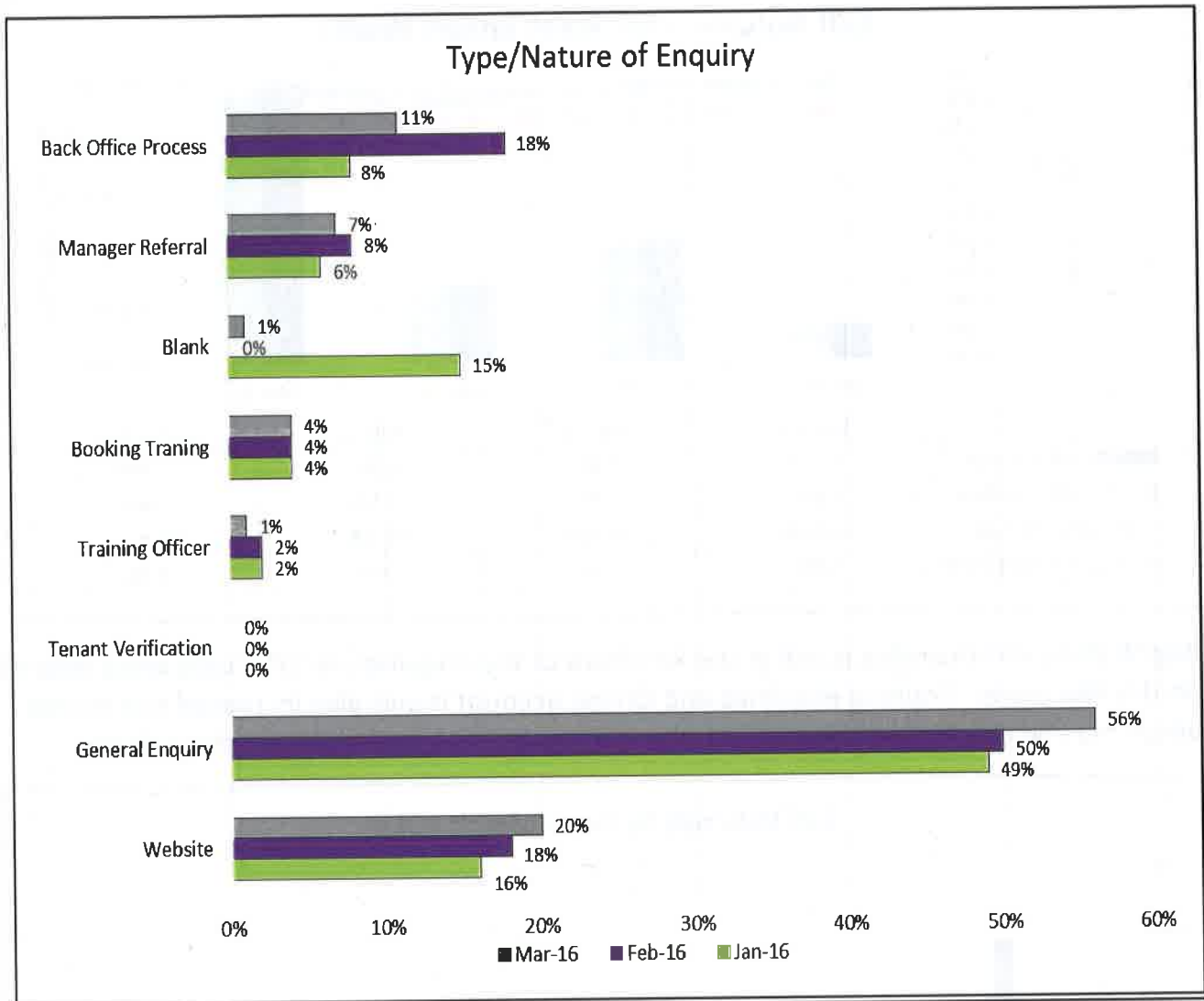
**Y Cyngorydd / Councillor Bob Derbyshire  
Aelod Cabinet Dros Yr Amgylchedd  
Cabinet Member for Environment**

**Enc:** Rent Smart Wales monthly Core Data for March 2016

## Rent Smart Wales (RSW)

### Service requests

Total number of service requests received between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 was **1771**.



The above graph details a breakdown of the service requests each month. The three largest categories in February were **General Enquiries** with 56%, **Website Enquiries** with 20% and **Back Office Process** with 11%.

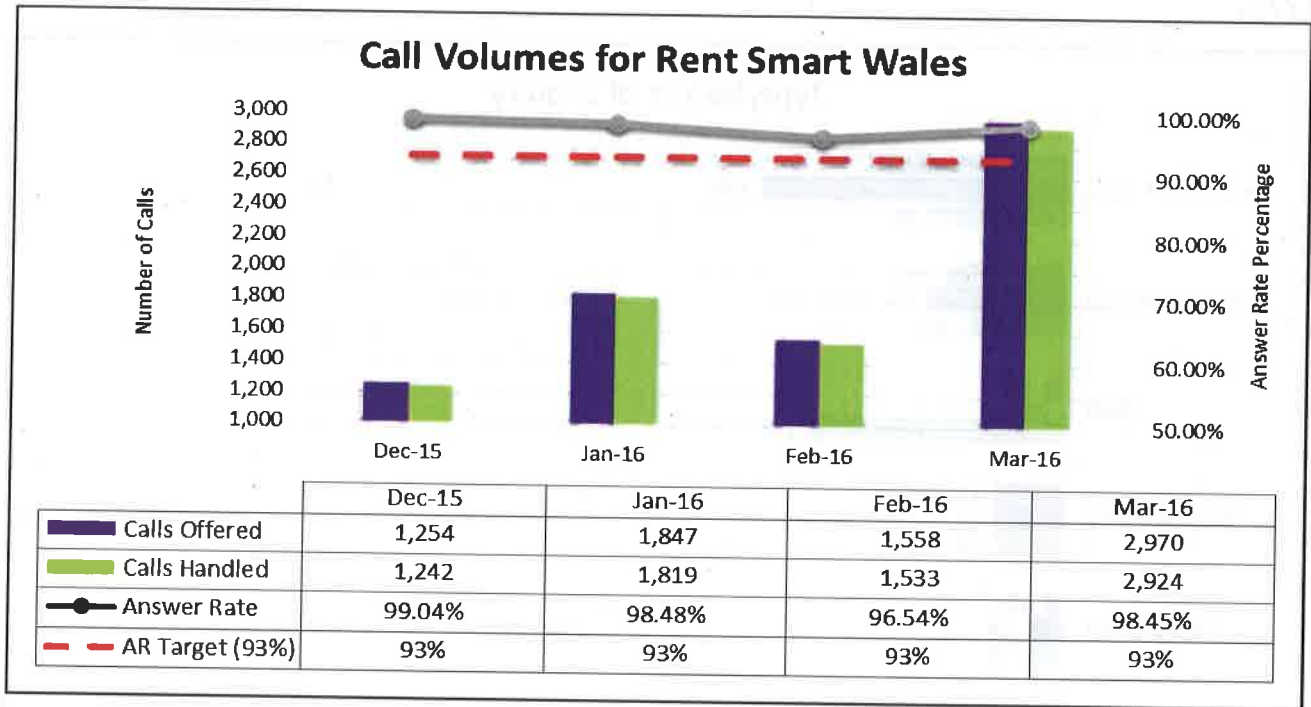
52% (517) of general enquiries required information on fees. 23% (225) requested registration and licensing forms.

In comparison to February, there was an increase of reported 'website issues' of approximately 52%. 131 of the 347 website enquiries were related to 'Logging On' which led to an increase in overall queries being attributed to website issues.

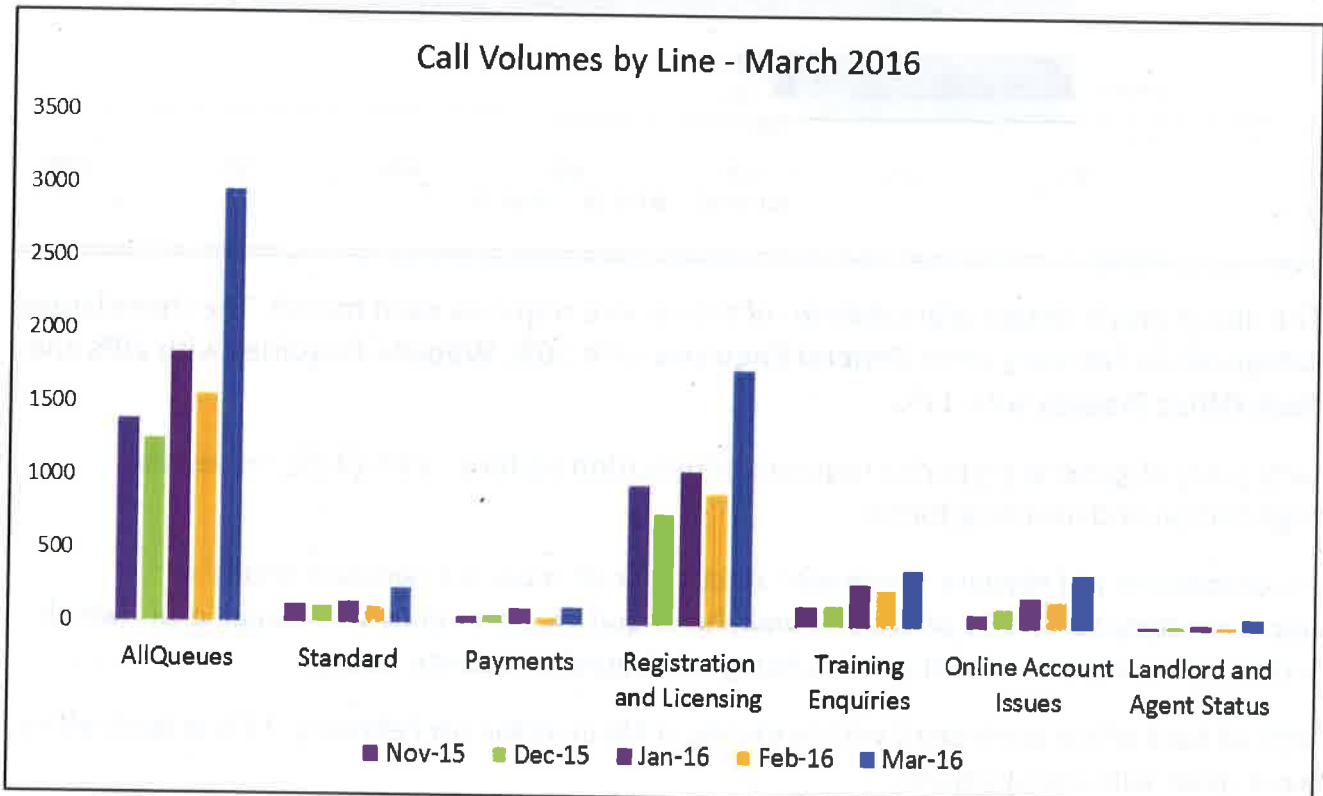
89% of back office work dealt with licensing, a 4% increase on February. 11% of back office work dealt with registrations.

## Call Volumes

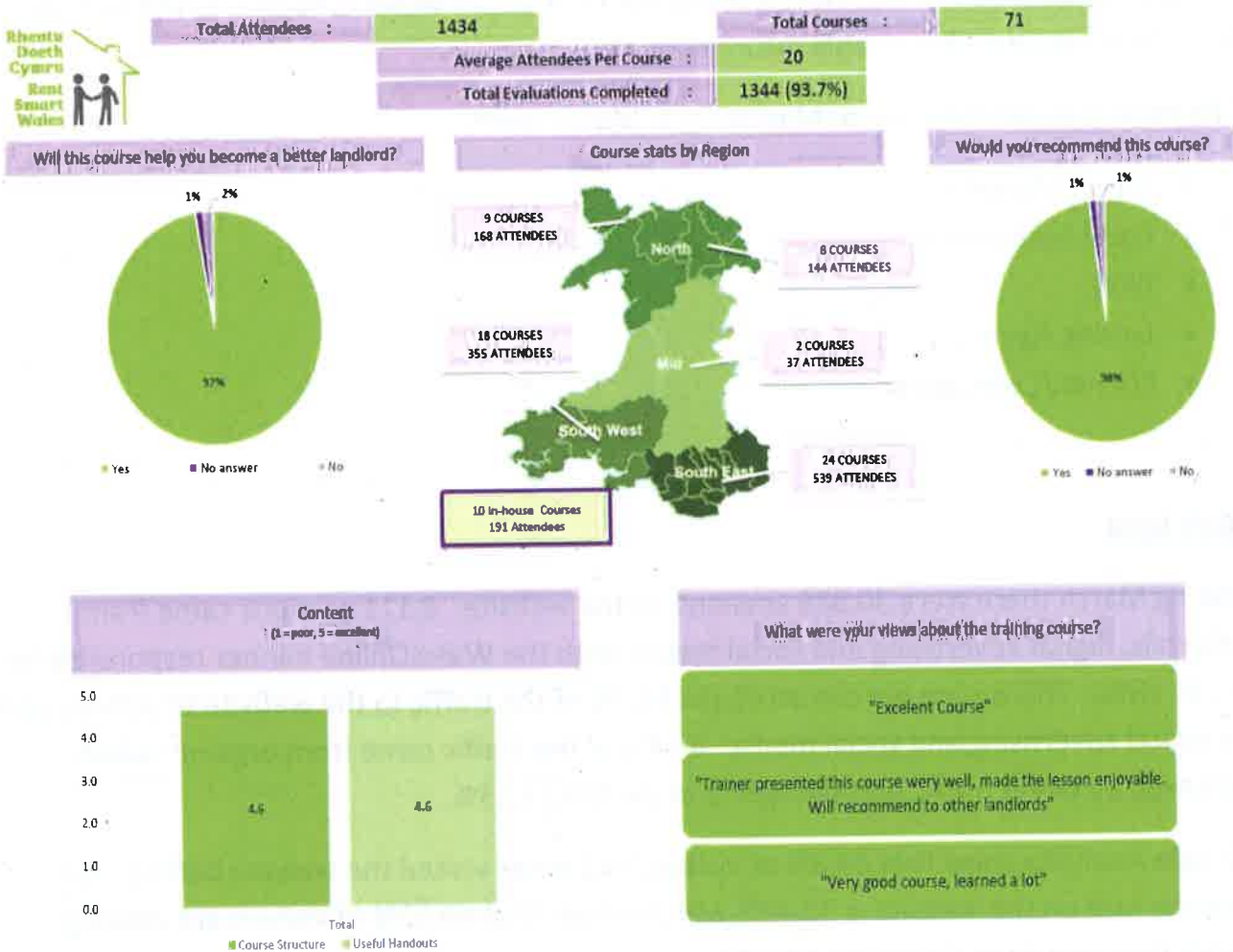
Call volumes dramatically increased in March with a total of 2970 calls offered. This is an increase of 90.62% compared to the previous month. The average time to answer during the month was 1 second.



Registration and Licensing is still at the forefront of the enquiries as 1758 calls were offered on this line alone. Training enquiries and Online account issues also increased this month which may be due to the ongoing updates and increasing functionality to the website.



# Rent Smart Wales Training for Landlords and Agents up to 31.03.16



During March, 19 training events were held across Wales and 381 delegates were trained. The average number of delegates per course was 20 and 91.3% of delegates completed an evaluation questionnaire. New evaluation questionnaires are now being used by trainers, which better capture the manner in which Rent Smart Wales is presented by trainers.. 97% of the delegates would recommend the course to others and 96% felt that the course would help them to become better landlords.

## Launch and Marketing of Rent Smart Wales

Collection of marketing data is still proving to be a challenge with a large number of Service Requests with no data in this field. It is worth noting that enquiries received via email do not ask the question where they heard about Rent Smart Wales. Changes to the website have been requested to enable future capture.

The most popular methods of Marketing in March were;

- Direct Marketing
- Local Authorities
- LAW
- Letting Agents
- Friends/Colleagues

## Web Data

During March there were 30,886 sessions on the website. 8,111 sessions came from referrals, digital advertising and social media, with the WalesOnline banner responsible for 1,165 visits. This means we can attribute 26.2% of the traffic to the website to activity such as digital advertising and social media. 41.4% of the traffic came from organic search, followed by direct traffic (people typing in the URL) 32.3%.

Google Analytics show that 54.8% of visitors had never visited the website before. The bounce rate on the website is 30.48% which means that 69.52% of visitors are viewing more than one page during the session.

The average number of pages per visit was 10.89 which is a very good result and suggests visitors are spending time exploring different areas of the site. The average session was 10 minutes 25 seconds.

The highest percentage of sessions on the website came from Cardiff followed by London.

## Key Performance Data

At of the 4<sup>th</sup> April the Rent Smart Wales database held:

- Users Accounts: **16407**
- Landlords registered: **8172**
- **241** Licence applications had been issued.

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr McGarry

09 March 2016

Councillor Susan Elsmore  
Cabinet Member  
c/o Room 520  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW



Dear Susan

### **Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee – 2 March 2016**

On behalf of the Members of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, I would like to thank you and the officers for attending our Committee on 2 March 2016 for items relating to the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan 2016/17 and Quarter Three performance. Members' recommendations, comments and observations on these items are set out below.

#### **Housing (Wales) Act 2014**

Members thank officers for preparing two presentations providing feedback on progress with using private rented sector housing to meet homelessness duties and with tackling street homelessness in Cardiff.

Members see it as positive news that officers have developed the Housing Solutions package to encourage private rented sector landlords to rent their properties to people who are homeless. Members are keen to understand how private rented sector landlords are responding to this package and as such would appreciate the following information:

- The number of landlords who have rented homes to homeless people, under the Housing Solutions package, as at 2 March 2016;
- The number of properties that have been used to rent homes to homeless people, under the Housing Solutions package, as at 2 March 2016;
- The length of tenancies secured via the Housing Solutions package;
- Feedback from private rented sector landlords at the official launch in March 2016 at City Hall.

With regard to Street Homelessness, Members support the sentiments you expressed at the meeting regarding the hard work and commitment of those who work with street homeless individuals. Members commend the outreach workers and are pleased their number has been increased from three to four workers in recognition of the increase in numbers of street homeless in Cardiff in recent months. Members recognise that the outreach workers have a good understanding of who is street homeless and where these people are sleeping rough, as evidenced



by the fact that new mechanisms for members of the public to report rough sleepers have not resulted in any unknown cases being identified. Members also wish to commend the work with young people and care leavers and are pleased that the Young Persons Gateway approach is working.

Members note that the Homeless Hub meetings are due to be relaunched; we are pleased with this as these meetings help to ensure good communication across the range of agencies working with street homeless individuals.

### **Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan 2016/17**

Members thank officers for ensuring the Plan was available for pre-decision scrutiny. Members scrutinised the proposed Spend Plan at our meeting in February 2016; we were pleased to have had the opportunity at this meeting to explore in more detail the reasons for realignment of funding and the linkages with the Council's Independent Living Services and proposed Locality Based Services. Members also note that this Plan supports the work to tackle street homelessness and domestic abuse, which were also considered at this meeting. Members note that a report on recommissioning floating support is scheduled to be taken to Cabinet in May 2016.

Members are pleased that the Plan recognises more work is needed to engage with service users. Members note that there has been stakeholder consultation and that conversations have been held with all the providers which are affected.

With regard to assessing the needs of service users, Members note that Cardiff Council uses the Welsh Government criteria for assessing supported housing needs, supplementing these with additional criteria based on discussions with providers in Cardiff.

Members discussed the impact of the Welfare Reforms announced in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, (regarding limiting rents to Local Housing Allowance rates and tenants aged less than 35 years old) and the potential impact of these for supporting housing tenants and the sustainability of some supported housing schemes. Members note that there has been a recent announcement deferring the start date for supported housing schemes till April 2017. However, Members recognise the seriousness of these changes and their potential consequences and would welcome a short briefing (a couple of pages) outlining the changes, the likely impact and the work proposed to mitigate the impact. Members are particularly interested in how the Local Housing Strategy and Older Persons Housing Strategy may need to be amended to reflect the changes in regime for supporting people, particularly when taken alongside the pressures in the residential care and domiciliary care markets in Cardiff.

Finally, Members wish to remind officers of the point raised by Councillor Lomax regarding the current height of fuse boxes in some sheltered housing schemes, which makes it unsafe for residents to change a fuse. Members recommend that the height of fuse boxes be considered in refurbishments of sheltered housing, particularly given the changes to the role of wardens.



## **Quarter Three Performance Report**

Members thank officers for attending to answer questions on the sections of the Corporate Quarter Three Performance Report relevant to them.

### Adult Social Services

Members note that there are new governance arrangements, with the new Regional Partnership Board replacing the Integrating Health and Social Care Board, covering all aspects of integration including Delayed Transfers of Care.

With regard to Delayed Transfers of Care, Members note the leadership group aims to get to the root of the issues causing these. Members note the comments regarding the need for a whole systems approach; Members remember the National Assembly for Wales Audit Committee recommended this in their report in 2007. Members believe that this work may be of use; it can be found at:

[www.assembly.wales/cr-ld6962-e.pdf](http://www.assembly.wales/cr-ld6962-e.pdf)

Members also recommend that officers look at some of the practical examples of work being undertaken to tackle delayed transfers of care in areas such as Kent.

Members raised again their concerns about the domiciliary care market in Cardiff; Members note the Director of Social Services' comments that the situation is worrying given the instability in the market. Members also note your comments that you have met with the Minister for Health and Social Services and have raised this with them. Members note that the locality-based services pilot may find solutions that could be of assistance to improving the operation of the domiciliary care market in Cardiff. Members are interested in receiving a copy of the CSSIW thematic inspection of domiciliary care across Wales, due to be published in April 2016, and have asked scrutiny officers to keep an eye out for this.

Finally, Members are aware that the Social Services & Well Being Act (Wales) 2014 requires a move towards outcomes based performance measures; Members request an update on progress with developing these.

### Communities & Housing

Members note the comment that there have been more voids than normal this quarter (due to the impact of recent Welfare Reform announcements and tenants transferring to different properties to mitigate the impact) and that this has affected performance but that work is underway to improve performance. Members await the response to their Voids deep dive report, which we hope has been of assistance.

With regard to Disabled Facilities Grants, Members note that post inspections are carried out to ensure quality is maintained whilst the quantity of works increases. Members note Sarah McGill's comment that an additional indicator is required to capture alternative works undertaken to fast-track adaptations which do not fall into the category of Disabled Facilities Grant work. Allied to this, Members note Sarah's comments that performance in the Disabled Facilities Grant indicator (DFS/001) may decline as resources are directed toward fast-track works to assist other policy aims, such as reducing delayed transfers of care.

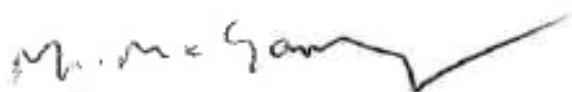
With regard to homelessness indicators, Members welcome and accept Jane Thomas' offer to provide indicators for the Quarter 4 report, noting her comments that different approaches are currently being taken across Wales making it difficult to compare performance across local authorities.

Finally, Members were struck by the fact that it is clear there will be policy impacts from Welsh Government and UK Government policies. Members believe it is essential that we feedback the practical implications of these policies to the policy makers so that they hear and understand the consequences of their decisions, for example with regard to Welfare Reforms, such as those regarding capping social housing rent to Local Housing Allowance levels, and the use of the StreetLife App.

To summarise, I look forward to hearing back from you on the following:

- Recommendation - that the height of fuse boxes be considered in refurbishments of sheltered housing.
- Recommendation - that officers look at some of the practical examples of work being undertaken to tackle delayed transfers of care in areas such as Kent.
- Request for information - The number of landlords who have rented homes to homeless people, under the Housing Solutions package, as at 2 March 2016.
- Request for information - The number of properties that have been used to rent homes to homeless people, under the Housing Solutions package, as at 2 March 2016.
- Request for information - The length of tenancies secured via the Housing Solutions package.
- Request for information - Feedback from private rented sector landlords at the official launch in March 2016 at City Hall.
- Request for information - a short briefing outlining the Autumn Statement Welfare Reform changes, the likely impact and the work proposed to mitigate the impact.
- Members look forward to receiving the response to the voids deep dive.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNTY COUNCILLOR MARY M<sup>C</sup>GARRY**

**Chairperson - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee**

Cc: Sarah McGill Jane Thomas Kate Hustler Tony Young  
Liz Patterson Paula Angel  
Claire Deguara Matt Swindell

**SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET  
CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE**



Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM33941  
Eich Cyf / Your ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/  
Cllr McGarry

Dyddiad / Date: 21 April 2016

Councillor Mary McGarry  
Chair, Community & Adult Scrutiny Committee  
Scrutiny Services  
Room 263  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Annwyl / Dear Mary

**Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee - 2 March 2016**

Thank you for your letter of the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016 and your recommendations contained within it. Please see below my response to each item.

**Recommendation - that the height of fuse boxes be considered in refurbishments of sheltered housing.**

The height and location of fuse boxes is a key consideration when any refurbishment works are being undertaken. Work is currently underway at Sandown Court in Caerau and within this development the fuse boxes will be located at a height of 1.2m from the floor and will be easily accessible in the store cupboards located just off the flat corridors. This will enable residents in wheelchairs or those less mobile to access the fuse boxes more easily.

**Recommendation - that officers look at some of the practical examples of work being undertaken to tackle delayed transfers of care in areas such as Kent.**

The Council's response to addressing delayed transfers of care has looked at many models of best practice. The area that it always cited as a key area for improvement is to ensure the close partnership working between Health, Social Care and Housing. It is in this area that the most progress has taken place over

**ATEBWCH I /  
PLEASE REPLY TO:** Swyddfa Cymorth Y Cabinet / Cabinet Support Office,  
Ystafell / Room 514, Neuadd y Sir / County Hall,  
Glanfa'r Iwerydd / Atlantic Wharf, Caerdydd / Cardiff,  
CF10 4UW Ffon / Tel (029) 2087 2479

*Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn sicrhau ein bod yn cyfathrebu â chi yn eich dewis iaith boed yn Gymraeg, yn Saesneg neu'n ddwyieithog dim ond i chi roi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.*

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the last 12 months with regular joined up working at all levels now becoming the norm. The recent ICF bids are an example of this with joint bids being submitted to all aligned to ensure we are delivering the best outcomes for individuals.

**Request for information - The number of landlords who have rented homes to homeless people, under the Housing Solutions package, as at 2 March 2016.**

71 landlords/agents housed homeless people in the private rented sector.

**The number of properties that have been used to rent homes to homeless people, under the Housing Solutions package, as at 2 March 2016.**

6 residents were housed in one house in multiple occupation, the remainder were housed in individual units.

**Request for information - The length of tenancies secured via the Housing Solutions package.**

As per the legalisation it is a minimum requirement that all the tenancy agreements are assigned with terms of at least 6 months. This is something that will be closely monitored to determine the success and appropriateness of the Housing Solutions package.

**Request for information - Feedback from private rented sector landlords at the official launch in March 2016 at City Hall.**

Attached in appendix 1 to the scrutiny letter is feedback from the Private Rented Sector Private Launch. As a direct result of the event the following properties have been made available to use to discharge duty into:

- 4-Bed House Pentwyn
- 3-Bed House Llanrumney
- 3-Bed House Llanedeyrn
- 2-Bed Flat Cathays
- 1-Bed Flat Grangetown
- 2 x 1 Bed Flat Penarth

The team are continuing to work with private landlords to maximise the number of properties that are available and we will be presenting the landlord offer at a number of landlord events this year.

**Request for information - a short briefing outlining the Autumn Statement Welfare Reform changes, the likely impact and the work proposed to mitigate the impact.**

The number of social housing tenants affected by the under occupation charge (bedroom tax) has reduced to 2,650, from the original number of 4,194 in October 2012; a 37% decrease to date. During this time we have made 2,562 offers of social housing. To date, 713 tenants have chosen to move and we are also helping those who wish to stay with budgeting advice and help to maximise

their income. Support remains available to those who wish to move or who need an additional bedroom due to disability or caring responsibility. No tenant is evicted if they are genuinely working with officers to resolve the issues.

The Benefit Cap is currently affecting 144 tenants of all tenure types, which is a 36% decrease since November 2013. Assistance to get back to work is available at Hubs across the city, with Into Work Advice Services offering support including training and assistance with CVs. 118 of those initially affected have returned to work and claimed Tax Credits. Discretionary housing payments are being made available for those affected by the Benefit Cap while they engage with Into Work Services.

Universal Credit was introduced to Cardiff on the 30th of November 2015, as part of a phased introduction, and affects single people who are fit to work. The claim must be made online and is paid monthly, in arrears, directly to the claimant. Face to face advice and support is provided by Hub staff, on behalf of the Department of Work and Pensions, with Budgeting advice available in Central Library Hub and Digital Inclusion and Into Work Services across the city.

The year ahead will be challenging with many more Welfare Reform changes being introduced. Of particular concern is the further reduction in the Benefit Cap which will be reduced to £20,000 per annum. A date for this change is not yet known, however, it is anticipated that it will affect a further 500 families. Officers have established a multi-agency working group including representatives from DWP, RSLs, Housing, Children's Services and Third sector organisation to consider this change and to develop an action plan.

In the Autumn Statement the Chancellor announced that social housing rents will be restricted to Local Housing Allowance levels; while social housing rents are generally lower than LHA levels there are two areas of concern: Those under 35 years of age will only qualify for the shared accommodation rate of LHA, and currently the Council and RSLs have no accommodation at this rent level. Supported housing rates will also be affected where services charges are traditionally high. This will apply for new tenancies from April 2016 (April 2017 for supported housing) but will not come into effect until April 2018. This is a considerable area of concern and Officers are working with RLS partners to understand the full consequences of this change and what can be done to mitigate this. A full action plan is currently being developed and I would be happy to brief the Committee further once this is completed.

**Members look forward to receiving the response to the voids deep dive.**

Thank you for your report and recommendations for improving performance in void management, I appreciate the time and attention that the Performance Panel have given to this issue.

Regrettably, the time taken to carry out the works on void properties remains a significant area of concern and delivering performance improvements in this area will continue to be a priority in the coming year.

Indeed, the existing contractors have failed to address the issues raised with them and, therefore, an additional contractor has been mobilised and early indications are positive about the performance of this new contractor.

Your findings indicated a need to review and realign resources for void management. I can confirm that a fundamental review of the resources in place to deal with void properties, and how that resource is structured, will be carried out during 2016/17 to ensure that these properties can be re-let as soon as possible, and to avoid duplication of work and confusion over areas of responsibility.

I attach a detailed response to the recommendations made, all of which have been agreed at least in part and the work will be carried out to implement these over the coming months.

Once again, thank you for your letter and I hope that this fully covers the points you have raised.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yn gwyir,  
Yours sincerely,



**Y Cyngorydd / Councillor Susan Elsmore**  
**Aelod Cabinet Dros Lechyd, Tai a Lles**  
**Cabinet Member for Health, Housing & Wellbeing**

Appendix 1: Feedback from the Private Rented Sector Private Launch

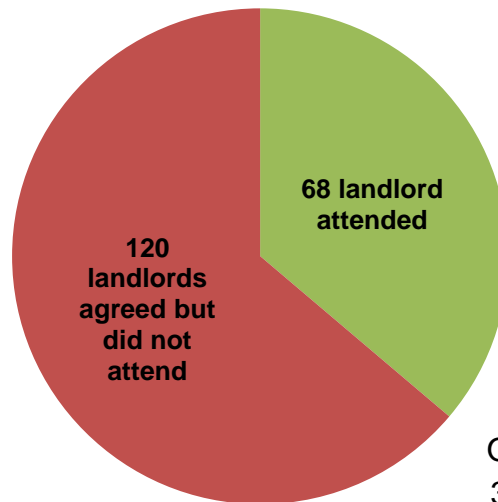
Appendix 2: Voids Deep Dive Action Plan

Cc Sarah McGill  
Jane Thomas  
Kate Hustler  
Tony Young  
Claire Deguara

# Housing Options Service

## Housing Solutions Launch Event City Hall 22.3.16 Feedback

A total of 188 landlords were invited the event



Of the 68 attendees, 35 offered feedback

### 1. "How did you enjoy the event?"

Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
20	10	2	1	1

### 2. "What did you enjoy most about the evening?"

Everything	5
Private Landlord Experience from Kevin Ullah	5
Very informative	5
Information on the new service	5
All staff were very helpful	3
Q&A	2
Rent Smart Wales talk	1
Good to meet the team	1
Chance to talk to Housing Options Manager	1

# Housing Options Service



3. "What did you not enjoy about the evening?"

No audio loop for the hearing impaired	1
Felt that the presentation was knocking letting agents	1

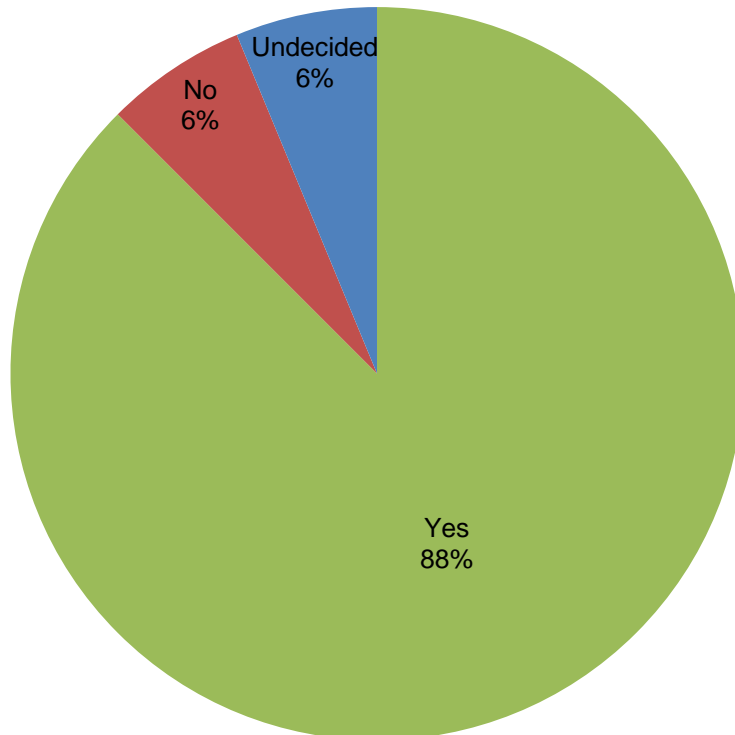


4. "Do you feel anything else could have been included?"

No	25
Rent rescue advise	3
More information of rent arrears and eviction processes	2
Can HOC perform credit checks and share the findings	1
Information on shared housing	1
Examples of case studies of tenants	1
Information regarding LHA (under 35's)	1
Information on tax changes	1



5. "Would you be interested in signing up to the Housing Solutions Service?"



"If not, why?"

No longer want to be a landlord due to age (1)

Letting Agent (1)





# Housing Options Service



6. "Is there anything else you would like to be included in the service?"

No	2
Landlord Liaisons	
Information about furniture and white goods	
Information on Rent Smart Wales	
Incentives for existing properties not just for new to service	
Direct rent payment	
Rent guarantee	
Inspection of the property during the first phase of the tenancy	
Contact numbers	
LHA rates to increase to PRS levels	



7. "How many properties do you currently let?"

0 – 2	3 – 5	6 – 9	10 – 19	20 – 29	30+
11	8	9	3	0	2 (31,100+)



8. "Do you have any properties available at the moment?"

No	28
Yes:	7
Details of 10 properties currently or due to be soon available are:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 bed flat – Canton</li> <li>• 2 bed property – Thornhill</li> <li>• 2 bedroom flat – Tremorfa</li> <li>• 2 bed flat – Barry</li> <li>• 3 bed property – Pentwyn</li> <li>• 3 bed property – Treforest</li> <li>• 3 bed property – Treforest</li> <li>• 2 bed property – Leckwith (Available from May 2016)</li> <li>• 2 bed property – Tremorfa (Available from May 2016)</li> <li>• 1 bed flat – Roath (available from 01/06/2016)</li> </ul>	



# Housing Options Service



## Additional comments

- The event was well organised
- Would like to see these events more often – maybe twice a year
- Would like to invite Cardiff Housing Solutions to speak at the Landlord's Forum in July
- From past experience the service is excellent
- Very helpful with lots of knowledge, everyone seemed to know exactly what they were talking about
- Very supportive Council
- Good to see the local authority working in partnership with private landlords

## CASSC Performance Panel – Voids Deep Dive Action Plan

Number	Recommendation	Response	Officer
1	Work with Ian Williams and Vinci to reduce the clean and clear target to two days.	<p><b>Process amended since the recommendation was made</b></p> <p>The change in the voids process to clear properties as a separate activity before issuing the overall work to the contractor was implemented in order to allow a better assessment of the work required. It was anticipated that this would reduce variation orders being issued once work had commenced.</p> <p>Following a review of this change however it was decided that it was causing undue duplication of work and delay. Therefore this procedure has been amended and the full voids work is issued to the contractor as soon as possible with any variation orders being checked on site before being agreed.</p> <p>Monitoring will take place on the overall time taken to complete the void work.</p> <p>Where, exceptionally, the property does need to be cleared before being issued to the contractor due to large volumes of rubbish /belongings left in the property which prevent any assessment of the work required, we will aim to clear these properties with our in-house Clean and Clear team.</p> <p>All targets will be reviewed as part of the new contract.</p>	SB
2	Carry out Asbestos Management Surveys, where needed, within the notice period and book intrusive sampling, where needed, for as soon as the property is available.	<p><b>Agreed in principle</b></p> <p>We have management surveys on most of our properties, the surveys we require tend to be intrusive surveys and involve taking samples of the fabric of the property, and this is best done when the property is empty. It is unlikely we would do a management survey alone on a void property.</p> <p>However the general point of doing more work within the notice period is accepted and this will be a priority area for change going forward. Where an asbestos</p>	SB

Number	Recommendation	Response	Officer
		survey is needed this will be considered as part of this work.	
3	Expand the quick turnaround project as swiftly as possible.	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>Work is underway to expand and mainstream this work.</p>	EC
4	Continue to manage the current contract as robustly as possible.	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>There are ongoing meetings with contractors on both operational and strategic meetings, however despite this performance has not improved and has deteriorated further over the winter period.</p> <p>A meeting between Jane Thomas and the Director of Ian Williams has been set up to discuss ongoing concerns about performance.</p> <p>A further contractor has now been mobilised and early indications about performance are good. If further monitoring shows this to be the case then voids issued to the other contractors will be reduced.</p>	JT
5	Learn from the shortfalls experienced with the existing contract and ensure these are addressed in the new contract.	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>The shortcomings of the current arrangements are being captured by a series of workshops and these will be used to inform the future procurement arrangements.</p>	SB
6	Ensure the new contract is customer focused, emphasising solutions, outcomes and the work required to ensure successful and timely relets.	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>The contract performance indicators and outcome measures and penalty arrangements will be fully reviewed and amended in the preparation for the new contract in June 2017.</p>	SB

Number	Recommendation	Response	Officer
7	Ensure the new contract contains a suite of performance indicators that enable the identification of problems and enables effective contract monitoring.	<b>Agreed</b> As above	<b>SB</b>
8	Ensure the new contract contains levers to enable effective contract management, including incentives and penalties.	<b>Agreed</b> As above	<b>SB</b>
9	Commence allocations and lettings process for all void properties whilst repairs and decoration works are underway.	<b>Agreed in principle</b>  The practicality of this is being considered taking into account the safety aspect of viewing properties whilst works are ongoing and will be piloted during 2016/17 .	<b>SB</b>
10	Trail multiple viewing and multiple offers to learn success factors and changes required to existing systems to enable successful roll-out for the majority of void properties.	<b>Agreed</b> This is in place for the quick turn around voids and multiple offers are being made. Lessons learned from this will be considered before any general roll out of the approach during 2016/17.	<b>EC</b>

Number	Recommendation	Response	Officer
11	Think through resource allocation requirements to enable the above and redirect resources as appropriate.	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>It is agreed that the current resources for the void process require a fundamental review, to mainstream the quick turn around approach to voids, to make better use of the notice period and to prevent duplication of work across teams. The review will be carried out during 2016/17.</p>	JT
12	Refine void management performance reports to enable quick identification of performance blockages and performance trends in order to improve performance.	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>While considerable monitoring is already carried out there is some room for improvement and the reports will be reviewed by the group ahead of the new financial year.</p>	EC/ SB
13	Redefine the role and focus of the Voids Working Group so that it uses performance report to identify the root causes of poor performance and puts in place solutions in order to improve performance.	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>The work of the voids working group will continue to be developed to target the root causes of delays</p>	EC/SB
14	Design and implement an effective customer satisfaction survey that helps to drive performance improvement by targeting refinements to policy and procedure, whilst	<p><b>Agreed</b></p> <p>A draft survey has been developed and is currently being finalised. Surveys will start to be used in the new financial year.</p>	EC

Number	Recommendation	Response	Officer																
	maintaining high levels of satisfaction.																		
15	Collect and monitor the number of repairs required to properties, within six months of re-letting.	<p><b>Agreed</b> This information will be collected from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016.</p>	SB																
16	Collect and monitor the number of tenancies ending within six months of letting and the reasons given for these.	<p><b>Agreed.</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="730 711 1890 1070"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="730 711 1140 911">Date</th> <th data-bbox="1140 711 1361 911">Tenancy ended within 6 months</th> <th data-bbox="1361 711 1626 911">Total Tenancy Ended</th> <th data-bbox="1626 711 1890 911">% Ended within 6 months</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="730 911 1140 983">2013/14</td> <td data-bbox="1140 911 1361 983">48</td> <td data-bbox="1361 911 1626 983">940</td> <td data-bbox="1626 911 1890 983">5.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="730 983 1140 1027">2014/15</td> <td data-bbox="1140 983 1361 1027">42</td> <td data-bbox="1361 983 1626 1027">887</td> <td data-bbox="1626 983 1890 1027">4.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="730 1027 1140 1070">2015/16 (16 Mar)</td> <td data-bbox="1140 1027 1361 1070">39</td> <td data-bbox="1361 1027 1626 1070">745</td> <td data-bbox="1626 1027 1890 1070">5.2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>As can be seen from the above figures, very few tenancies end during the first 6 months and this is not seen as a significant issue.</p> <p>The reasons for these tenancies ending are set out below, these are limited and do not capture the tenants reason for leaving in most cases. A review will be carried out of the information captured when a tenancy ends to establish if more useful information can be captured. This will be carried out during 2016/17.</p>	Date	Tenancy ended within 6 months	Total Tenancy Ended	% Ended within 6 months	2013/14	48	940	5.1%	2014/15	42	887	4.7%	2015/16 (16 Mar)	39	745	5.2%	JT
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Page 30		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="725 240 1491 312">Termination Reason</th> <th data-bbox="1491 240 1592 312">Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="725 312 1491 360">Death</td> <td data-bbox="1491 312 1592 360">17</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="725 360 1491 424">HA Exchange</td> <td data-bbox="1491 360 1592 424">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="725 424 1491 488">Immediate Surrender</td> <td data-bbox="1491 424 1592 488">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="725 488 1491 552">Inter-Town Exchange</td> <td data-bbox="1491 488 1592 552">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="725 552 1491 616">Mutual Exchange of Property</td> <td data-bbox="1491 552 1592 616">16</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="725 616 1491 679">Notice from Tenant</td> <td data-bbox="1491 616 1592 679">60</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="725 679 1491 743">Notice to Quit</td> <td data-bbox="1491 679 1592 743">7</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="725 743 1491 807">Transfer</td> <td data-bbox="1491 743 1592 807">16</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="725 807 1491 871">Transfer to Housing Association</td> <td data-bbox="1491 807 1592 871">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="725 871 1491 935">Use and Occupation ceased</td> <td data-bbox="1491 871 1592 935">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="725 1078 1491 1142">Grand Total</td> <td data-bbox="1491 1078 1592 1142">129</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Termination Reason	Total	Death	17	HA Exchange	5	Immediate Surrender	3	Inter-Town Exchange	1	Mutual Exchange of Property	16	Notice from Tenant	60	Notice to Quit	7	Transfer	16	Transfer to Housing Association	2	Use and Occupation ceased	2	Grand Total	129	
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My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr McGarry

16 March 2016

Councillor Graham Hinchey  
Cabinet Member  
c/o Room 520  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW



Dear Graham

### **Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee – 2 March 2016**

At the above meeting, Members considered the Committee's recent correspondence, including the response received to our letter following Committee on 15 February 2016. The letter from February 2016 outlined our concerns about the way budget consultation research reports were presented, including those relating to the Day Opportunities Strategy. The response received does not address our concerns, which apply equally to other research activities undertaken by Cardiff Research Centre. As such, Members have asked that I write again explaining in more detail our concerns regarding current practice, in the hope that these can be addressed.

Our main concern focuses on the fact that important aspects of research strategies used and their various limitations are not detailed in recent work produced by Cardiff Research Centre. The *Changes for Cardiff* budget consultation was reporting on a self-selecting sample of the Cardiff population, whereas the aspiration of the Day Opportunities consultation was to seek the views of the whole population of current service users. These surveys were, therefore, methodologically on completely different bases, but this was not made clear in the way that results were reported. It is accepted good practice to explain, in the final research report, the strengths and weaknesses of the research methods used, thus enabling those who use the research reports to bear these in mind when making decisions.

In the case of the Draft Day Opportunities Strategy consultation, Members were concerned that the limitations of the methodological approaches used were not explained in the consultation report. Despite the aspiration to seek the views of the whole population of current service users and carers, 213 surveys were returned of the 1,742 surveys that were posted out. Officers confirmed at the meeting that support had not been offered to the sub-set of the community surveyed who had impaired cognition or who lacked capacity. This leads to an important non sampling

error arising from non- response on the part of a crucial subset of the population surveyed, which in turn leads to an identifiable difference between the population surveyed as a whole and those who actually responded. In other words, it is arguable that the 213 responses to the survey amount to a non- random sample of the target population. Thus it is not possible to generalise from percentages reflecting the reviews of the respondents to the whole of the population surveyed. Tests of statistical significance should only be employed in relation to samples that have been drawn using probability samples<sup>1</sup>.

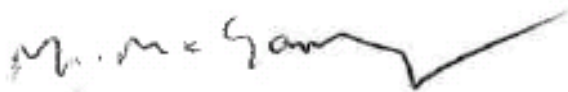
This does not in any way imply that the views of those who did respond are not a valid contribution and give a flavour of the views that some service users, their carers and families hold. What Members are asking is that in reporting their views it should be made clear that decision makers should not assume that their views are representative of the community of current service users as a whole and certainly not of those not currently using day services but who might need care packages in the future.

Members stress their recognition that both quantitative and qualitative research result in valid knowledge and are very important in helping to inform decision makers, as long as findings are presented appropriately.

Members would be grateful if these points were raised with Cardiff Research Centre officers and subsequent consultation research reports designed accordingly, in order to ensure those using and reading the research are appropriately informed.

I realise the points raised in this letter and appendix are technical in nature. I hope that I have explained them clearly but, if you have any concerns or wish to discuss these in more detail, I am more than happy to meet to discuss further. Our aim in raising these points is to improve the use and understanding of consultation research throughout the Council, given its valuable role in assisting decision making.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNTY COUNCILLOR MARY M<sup>C</sup>GARRY**  
**Chairperson - Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee**

Cc: Sarah McGill            Liz Patterson  
Christine Salter        Rita Rohman  
Joseph Reay

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Bryman, A. (2004) *Social Research Methods* (Second Edition) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## **Appendix One**

### Use of confidence levels in non-probability sampling

Confidence levels can only be used with validity where the research method is probability-based and includes normal distribution. This is because they rely on expressing the confidence or probability, as a percentage, of the survey sample evidence including the true population parameter present in the whole population from which the sample has been taken. In order to work out the probability, the sample base has to have been selected via a probability mechanism such as random sampling. If non-probability samples are used, and/or there is skewed distribution, confidence levels only provide an ill-defined index of reliability; in other words, they are not valid. In summary, confidence levels should not be used in non-random sampling. Non-random sampling includes purposive or voluntary sampling, where respondents self – select, such as in the Council’s main budget consultation, *Changes for Cardiff*.

Quantitative data analysis should not include inferences about populations when based on non-random samples, . When reporting back on data gleaned from non-random samples, the limitations of any conclusions being drawn should form part of the report.

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Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM34006  
Eich Cyf / Your ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/  
Cllr McGarry

Dyddiad / Date: 14 April 2016



County Hall  
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CF10 4UW  
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir  
Caerdydd,  
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Councillor Mary McGarry  
Chair, Community & Adult Scrutiny Committee  
Scrutiny Services  
Room 263  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Annwyl / Dear Mary

### **Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee - 2 March 2016**

Thank you for your letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016 relating to the Draft Day Opportunities Strategies consultation and the wider Changes for Cardiff budget consultation. I can confirm that the communication has been read by Cardiff Research Centre with consideration of the points and how to rectify the issues raised.

Just to reiterate what has previously been explained in letters relating to both the scrutiny of the Changes for Cardiff budget consultation and the Draft Day Opportunities Strategy Consultation. It was felt that there was a sound case for the development of separate consultations. This was due to two reasons; firstly that while the Changes for Cardiff budget consultation was aimed at the whole population a second consultation aimed at service users, their families and carers, and concerning their care would be beneficial; and secondly that the breadth of the Changes for Cardiff Budget consultation restricted the number of questions that could be included any single topic with a separate consultation enabling further exploration of public opinion.

We recognise that a significant number of potential respondents may have been unable to participate due to impaired cognition or a lack of capacity. The initial methodology for the work to focus on the users of day centres alone (approximately 100 service users) rather than those in receipt of wider packages, with officers from the Adult Social Services team administering the surveys in person. The Adult Social Services Team later adjusted the consultation to target a significantly larger population in receipt of a range of care packages, but the research team did not revisit the methodology or advise them sufficiently.

We accept that the report methodology needed more detail of the strength and weaknesses of the approach for the benefit of the Members, to enable them to make an informed decision. It is the regular practice of the Cardiff Research Centre that all reports are proof read within the team to resolve issues prior to publication. However in the case of the Draft Day Opportunities Strategy Consultation data entry of paper responses, analysis and report writing were completed over a three day period in order for the report to be published. This



short timescale reduced the time for proof reading where we feel this issue would have been identified.

Thank you again for raising the issues with us, and we hope that you can see how we will look to prevent them from happening again as we move forward.

Yn gwyir,  
Yours sincerely,



**Y Cyngorydd / Councillor Graham Hinchey**  
**Aelod Cabinet dros Wasanaethau Corfforaethol a Perfformiad**  
**Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance**

Cc Sarah McGill  
Christine Salter  
Joseph Reay

**ATEBWCH I / PLEASE  
REPLY TO:**

Swyddfa Cymorth Y Cabinet / Cabinet Support Office,  
Ystafell / Room 514, Neuadd y Sir / County Hall,  
Glanfa'r Iwerydd / Atlantic Wharf, Caerdydd / Cardiff,  
CF10 4UW Ffon / Tel (029) 2087 2479

*Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn sicrhau ein bod yn cyfathrebu â chi yn eich dewis iaith boed yn Gymraeg, yn Saesneg neu'n ddwyieithog dim ond i chi roi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.*

*The Council welcomes correspondence in English and Welsh and we will ensure that we communicate with you in the language of your choice, whether that's English, Welsh or bilingual as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to any delay.*