



# Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Homelessness Trailblazer LANDLORD FOCUS

Briefing note #3 published October 2018

## What is the homelessness trailblazer project?

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's homelessness prevention trailblazer project has been funded by the government for two years and £736,000 to look at new and creative ways to reduce homelessness in our area.

This note sets out the ways the trailblazer project is working at the end of its first year, along with some case studies to give some "real life" examples and quotes from partners.

The Trailblazer is a team of seven people, who work with local authority housing options teams, helping them connect with other public sector professionals and with housing landlords.

The districts covered are

- Cambridge
- East Cambridgeshire
- Huntingdonshire
- South Cambridgeshire
- Peterborough; and
- Fenland who leads the project.

You can find out how to get involved on page 4.



## Landlords helping beat homelessness

Despite competing with the first night of the World Cup, some 23 private sector landlords attended an evening event at the Wisbech Boathouse, organised by the homelessness trailblazer team on behalf of Fenland District Council.

The focus was on launching the new Fenland Landlord Letting service; a free service offering:

- Help with debt issues including rent arrears.
- Coaching tenants on tenancy obligations, including rent payments.
- Helping landlords avoid the expense and inconvenience of evictions.
- Steering landlords through the requirements of new legislation and regulations.

*The Trailblazer project aims to make homelessness the unacceptable outcome across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.*



- Help landlords identify prospective tenants and enable new tenants to find rent deposits and rent in advance.

Information stalls from a variety of statutory, voluntary and commercial organisations provided opportunity for landlords to talk with experts about their specific issues.

Seminars were organised throughout the evening tackling how to avoid the common pitfalls in the rental sector, and how to ensure that a rental businesses will thrive.

The recent raft of new laws and regulations to regulate the private rental sector were explained and representatives from the Department of Work and Pensions provided the detail of how they will be administering Universal Credit in Fenland.

### The landlord rents and solutions service

The landlord rents and solutions service offers a service to private landlords.

The service is free of charge.

Trailblazers promote and market the service to encourage private landlords to work with the local authority to help house the clients in housing need.

The service includes

- Mediation, debt advice and money advice to tenants
- Benefit applications
- Referrals to support agencies
- ...and much more.

The team also promotes the existing schemes councils run which private landlords can work with, such as Town Hall Lettings in Cambridge; Ermine Street and Shire Homes in South Cambridgeshire.

The Trailblazer team has been holding landlord information events to promote these services, starting with an event in Fenland in June 2018. The event was well attended, and gave an opportunity for landlords to get together and share their thoughts with the Trailblazer and other teams.

A further event is planned for East Cambridgeshire in Autumn 2018.

Following that, we hope to hold South Cambridgeshire and Fenland events.

#### Quotes from workshop attendees

*Great Info, wide range of subjects covered*

*GM Property Solutions*

*Lots of useful information*

*National Landlords Association*

*Very helpful staff and knowledgeable on their subjects. Good to be updated on new policies*

*Landlord*

*Our first visit, very informative*

*Landlord*

## Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Trailblazer Project

Landlord Rents and Solutions Service covering Cambridgeshire and Peterborough



**We are here to offer specialist help and advice to landlords and tenants to help resolve issues that may lead to a tenancy being brought to an end. If we are not able to help directly then we may know of other services that we can refer to. The type of help available could include problems with:**

- Housing benefit claims including applications for discretionary housing payments
- Debt problems leading to rent arrears
- Eviction & harassment
- Property repairs/maintenance
- Environmental health/housing enforcement
- Referrals to appropriate tenancy support services

If you are worried about keeping your home, or know someone who is worried about keeping their home, please email our team at [trailblazer@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:trailblazer@fenland.gov.uk) or call **01354 654321** for help and advice.



[trailblazer@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:trailblazer@fenland.gov.uk)  
01354 654321

**'Making homelessness the unacceptable outcome'**



## Case study #1

### Referred by

Homequest letting agency

### Household type and any vulnerability

- 1 adult and 1 child
- Self-employed
- Off sick with no sick pay
- Rent arrears and limited income to address this

### Tenure

Private rented through letting agency

### Risk of homelessness

Medium, as landlord had told letting agency he could not wait much longer before serving a notice if arrears continued to build up.

### Actions taken

- Supported DHP application
- Mediation with benefits over HB issues and appeal
- Supported ESA and PIP application
- Support Homelink application
- Mediation with letting agency for more time while we try and help resolve issues.

### Outcome

Able to remain - DHP awarded clearing arrears, HB claim issue resolved – tenant won appeal and got backdated HB. Sadly, tenant was then diagnosed with terminal brain cancer and we directed her to apply for social housing through Homelink and assisted her with PIP and ESA claim. Mediation with letting agency, guidance to tenant and letting agency who were kindly helping tenant with forms, DHP application, and helping to liaise with benefits about HB issues.

## Case study #3

### Referred by

Landlord

### Household type and any vulnerability

1 adult

### Tenure

Private Tenancy

### Risk of homelessness

- High
- Significant rent arrears due to mother passing
- Potential support needed

### Actions taken

- Met to complete discretionary housing payment form.
- Liaise with the landlord and try to negotiate.
- Look for affordable rented accommodation.

### Outcome

DHP was rejected due to the shortfall of the rent, so NR was referred to Single Homelessness Service and was referred to The Springs Project, and completed an assessment awaiting a void.

Will have arrears with the landlord at private tenancy when leaving the property.

## Case study #2

### Referred by

Local Authority housing options team

### Household type and any vulnerability

- 1 adult on probation who suffers lung condition (COPD)

### Tenure

Private rental accommodation (sister's tenancy)

### Risk of homelessness

- High. Summer 2017 prison release
- Sleeping on sister's sofa
- Struggling to find private rented accommodation
- Sister was served notice meaning tenant had to move out quickly

### Actions taken

- Found a suitable private rental house and negotiated close to the Local Housing Allowance rate with the landlord.
- Tenant viewed and accepted the property straight away.
- Mediated between tenant and landlord while universal credit claim was being set up.
- Assisted tenant further by applying for a £500 grant to help her purchase white goods and furniture for the property.

### Outcome

Tenant happily living in the accommodation located close to her support network. Landlord and tenant can contact the Trailblazer team if there are any problems with the tenancy.

## Case study #4

### Referred by

Fenland District Council Customer Access Team

### Household type and any vulnerability

- 1 adult, 3 children, poor mental health
- Suffered domestic abuse for 11 years
- Self-employed cleaner

### Tenure

Private rental accommodation

### Risk of homelessness

High, significant rent arrears (£4,000 owed by tenant and £1,600 owed by ex-partner who had since moved out).

### Actions taken

- Mediation with letting agency who agreed to be patient while we worked on the issues.
- Support needed with housing benefit claim but difficult as self-employed. Was put in touch with benefits team; issues resolved and claim was backdated.
- Supported a discretionary housing payment claim and was awarded £2,000 one off payment to reduce arrears, and cover some of the rent during a period of sickness.
- Tenant disengaged at times, but we were able to get her engaging again and there was a positive outcome.

### Outcome

Able to remain, letting agency can let trailblazer team know if any further issues. Mediation with the letting agency and benefits team helped.

Look out for

More landlord events

In East and South Cambridgeshire, and Fenland  
Supported by the Trailblazer team

Watch out for more details at  
[www.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/trailblazer](http://www.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/trailblazer)

Want to organise a landlord event with the Trailblazer team?

Local authorities who want to run a landlord event with the Trailblazer team can now get hold of a toolkit to help organise an event, with the Trailblazer team's help. Please contact Karen at <KFreya@fenland.gov.uk> to get your copy of the toolkit.



What kind of help is the Trailblazer team giving?

This list shows the kind of help the Trailblazer team gave, from June 2017 to July 2018... this adds up to more the 697 total number of referrals made over that period because households may well get more than one kind of help...

Type of help	Number of cases
Advice & information	534
Mediation	164
Private or social housing for at least six months	105
Financial payment	109
Other activity	69
Identifying at-risk groups	32
Temporary housing for up to six months	17
Supported accommodation	12
Client training	11
Domestic abuse: refuge or support	4
Fell out of contact	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,057</b>



Landlord event in Wisbech, 2018

Want to get involved?

- Want to get more involved?
- Want to find out more?
- Need the Trailblazer team's help?
- Know someone else who needs the Trailblazer's help?

Please get in touch...



[trailblazer@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:trailblazer@fenland.gov.uk)



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[www.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/trailblazer](http://www.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/trailblazer)

