



DPHS(Fife) Newsletter Summer Edition

Changes At DPHS (Fife)

If you have been contacted lately by the office you will have heard a new voice! Louise Smith is our latest recruit and she is with us for the next six months as Resource Admin Officer. Louise comes with experience in IT and has settled well into her role, making life smoother for all of the hard working staff here!

Noticed any changes when you have phoned with a customer query? Tracy Finnie has now been appointed Trainee Housing Advisor and is covering a period of secondment for up to 3 years. Tracy is to be congratulated on taking up the challenge so well! She is settling well into learning the new systems for recording customer casework, and by the time you read this Tracy will have completed HomePoint training. Well done Tracy!

Congratulations also to Wendy Riveiro who has been promoted to the post of Private Sector Project Worker. Wendy brings a wealth of knowledge with her to this new post which will assist our customers in looking at their options which may include buying to meet their needs, renting privately or adapting their rented or owned home. You will see another article in here inviting you to get in touch if you would like to give your views on the new Scheme of Assistance so that any materials that are developed, meet your needs.

And last but no means least, well done too to our Co-ordinator Jackie Morrison who has just completed her Chartered Institute of Personnel Practice Certificate in Personnel. One thing is sure, nothing ever stands still and DPHS(F) relish the opportunity in these challenging times to continue to look at how our service might develop to meet needs now and in the future. DPHS(F) plans a series of planning days in the summer to help us develop our service to meet changing times and we are always happy to listen to your views on this. John Sandie, our Chairperson, will ensure a survey is put up on the website in due course and if you can't access the internet it will be able to be done via the telephone.



PRESS ARTICLE:

Disabled Persons Housing Service (Fife) Receives National Accreditation

DPHS(Fife) has achieved accreditation from the Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers. The accreditation standards were developed by the Scottish Government to ensure that advice services throughout Scotland are being delivered to an acceptable and consistent level.



The assessment process was extremely thorough and examined every aspect of the Advice Service's activities which included management, planning, accessibility, customer care and service provision. The Co-ordinator and Sub Groups at DPHS(F) had worked extremely hard in the 12 months prior to audit to collate evidence of its compliance with the standards. The Auditor interviewed staff and looked in detail at the case management system which records all advice given.

In the years prior to assessment staff had participated in HomePoint Level 2 training and now have additional staff and Board training to HomePoint Level 1.

John Sandie, Chairperson added:

"This is a wonderful achievement for a person centred organisation like ours. We always knew we delivered a high standard service for our customers and we are delighted to have this recognised by this Level 2 Award in Housing Options."

Co-ordinator, Jackie Morrison said:

"This was a huge undertaking for a voluntary organisation like DPHS(F) as we are a small staff team. However, with support from our dedicated Board of Directors who split into Sub Groups to tackle areas like policies and procedures and customer care, we were supported to systematically record and improve our practices as we went along. We are all so very pleased that the auditor was able to recognise a particular area of good practice – the level of communication between Board, staff and customers and back again. It is crucial to our person centred service."

DPHS(F) provides an independent housing information and advice service for disabled people in Fife. Last year the service worked on 128 new cases and dealt with around 400 telephone enquiries. Out of 123 concluded cases in the year, 42 of them had been disabled people who were homeless. After receiving independent housing information and advice with support in completing forms or a home visit where necessary, customers found housing solutions which varied between local authority housing, housing associations, adapting and private lets.

Deaf Communication Team: Thank you to Debbie Dougall who came along to DPHS(F) to deliver an awareness training for the staff team. This very much supported the staff in how to best communicate with our deaf and hearing impaired customers—both for now and in the future. We have updated our practices as a result of this training and we hope to be doing some more work with Debbie and her team in the future.



Disabled Persons Housing Service Fife

DPHS(F) has now extended its service and is pleased to be delivering a project related to the private sector. You may remember Wendy Riveiro in her previous role as Housing Advisor – Wendy is now our PSP Worker. This will involve Wendy in now working with customers who are currently in a Private Let and Owner Occupiers, who may wish to remain in Private Sector Housing. The project will also work with people who are seeking a private sector housing solution. The first stage of this work will be looking at the route for adaptations for home owners and for those in a private let. Adapting your current housing or moving to property that is adaptable could be a solution to your housing issue.

We would like to ensure all customers interested in Private Sector Housing are consulted on the new Scheme of Assistance* and cordially invite you to meet with Wendy to discuss this on Wednesday 14th July 2010 2 - 4pm at The Roundhouse, Priory Campus, Victoria Road, Kirkcaldy KY1 2QT. Please contact us on 01592 223905 to confirm your attendance or to discuss how to participate if you can't make it on that day.

**Scheme of Assistance*

'Work that involves structural or other permanent changes to a house, but excluding work to extend a structure to create additional living accommodation, or work to create living accommodation in a separate building from the current living accommodation.'

Volume 6 of the Scottish Government's Statutory Guidance for implementing Parts 1 and 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 looks specifically at work to meet the needs of disabled people and gives detailed information on local authorities' duties under the 2006 Act.

Scottish Accessible Housing Network: DPHS(F) continues to work together with other DPHSs in Scotland and to look at joint working. One project which will be started within the next 6 months is a filming of DPHS activities – how we work, what we do, showing issues for disabled people related to their housing and highlighting solutions where these have been found. If this is something you would like to know more about, please contact the office.

Specific Needs Housing Group: DPHS(F) has been pleased to be involved in supporting the council in the development of this group. It will run a pilot for 6 months starting in the summer. DPHS will be able to refer cases to the SNHG where ordinary housing stock cannot meet the need of the customer – for example a large accessible family house. We will not close those cases but will keep in touch to see how this works for people. If your case is being referred to the SNHG you would be asked about this first. If you want to know more, please contact the office.



Janice at her new home with our Housing Advisor Tracy Finnie

Janice contacted us for housing information and advice as she wanted to maximize her chances of being offered housing to meet her needs. She was in a 3rd floor flat and as she has arthritis this was causing her issues as was the very heavy security door which she was finding almost impossible to manage. Janice needed ground floor accommodation and in order to increase her chances of being offered housing she was advised to include ground floor flat in her house type choices.

Route To Solution:

October 2008- Janice contacted DPHS(F) to discuss her housing issue

October 2008- DPHS(F) ensured FHR completed, illness and disability form and Housing Association forms completed for areas of choice.

November 2008- highlighted on FHR to Viewpoint Housing for a void- unsuitable due to stairs

April 09 - highlighted on FHR to Kingdom Housing association for new development-unsuccessful.

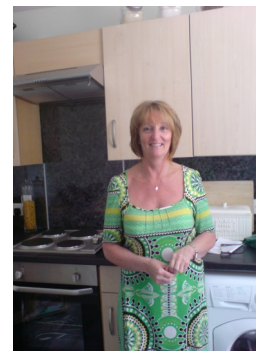
April 09 - January 10 regular review calls

January 10- change in circumstances, advised to complete another illness and disability form to re-assess points awarded

March 10- points awarded increased to reflect need

March 10- highlighted to Fife Housing Association for Void

April 10- offered suitable property



Partners In This Solution: *FHR team, OT service, Fife Housing Association*

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