



Housing is failing but we don't learn

The local authority and registered social landlord (RSL) housing system is failing.

Official reports say landlords need to work harder at getting basic services right, like speedy day to day repairs, affordable and transparent rents, home improvements and good quality accommodation.

Currently in Scotland social housing generates relatively high numbers of complaints to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman but complaints are not being routinely used to drive improvement.

The regulator is far from impressed – in 2009 the Scottish Housing Regulator said that just under half of the landlords they had inspected were poor or only adequate, and that tenants require more explicit information, complaints should be handled better and rents should be consistent and coherent.

What's worse is that those trusted with our housing stock continue to make the same mistakes and somehow expect a different result.

Vanguard Scotland are organisational change consultants who have worked with local authorities and housing associations throughout the UK to turn around housing services for over 10-years. They have now publicly issued a series of free reports challenging assumptions around how to design and run social housing systems and offering solutions to running them better and cheaper.

The reports cover:

- Why more information technology is not the answer
- Why outsourcing will increase costs
- Why setting targets for doing a repair (regulator recommendation) will increase the time to complete
- Why using schedule of rates codes increases costs and decreases service
- Why housing voids don't work and what to do about it
- Why taking people to court costs more money for less rent
- How most authorities and RSLs have failed by putting the wrong staff at front of house

The first report has already been made available to the public on the Vanguard Scotland website at www.vanguardscotland.co.uk/housingreport.html It covers why IT and outsourcing (common practice) is adding to the costs of running social housing. 2 further more detailed reports are anticipated in the coming weeks.

The methodology outlined in the reports is already proven many times over. One example is the turnaround at the UK's largest housing association, GHA, where letting performance is the best since the inception of GHA, properties are being rented out faster with almost 70% of any empty properties being let within 4 weeks (previously 49%) and the average time taken to complete a repair on a tenant's property has fallen from 46 days to 4 days.

Vanguard Scotland hope to make a difference for more Scottish tenants by lobbying those in power to make a change to the system.

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Notes for editors:

Source for Scottish Housing Regulator quote:

http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/shr_soci_allandlordsinscotland_hcsp

Vanguard Scotland:

www.vanguardscotland.co.uk

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