 

**The Wallich Private Rented Sector project, Blaenau Gwent**

The Wallich Private Rented Sector project will be delivered in partnership with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Housing Solutions Team using the ‘Housing First’ approach. This looks to assist rough sleepers and other hard to house groups to achieve settled accommodation first, as a springboard to addressing other ongoing issues they may be experiencing.

It will do this mainly by two means:

* Offering financial incentives to private landlords such as rent in advance, enhanced cash deposits as well as the established bond certificate.
* Providing intensive support in the initial set up of a tenancy to clients referred through various agencies, such as prison leaving, mental health and substance misuse services.

The number of hours and length of intensive support will depend on the client’s needs, and the amount of existing support, though it is anticipated the bulk of this support will be up front, before the tenancy starts. So, several hours’ worth or even days of support in the first week or two, reducing as they move into a property, with referral on to further support if required.

Support available for tenants will include:

* Application for Housing Benefits and direct payments to the landlord, or housing element under Universal Credit and Alternative Payment Arrangements, including a supporting letter
* Discretionary Assistance Fund applications for household items
* Addressing benefits issues, such as stoppages or missed payments
* Setting up utilities
* Setting up bank accounts
* Signposting or referring to other relevant services
* Mediation with landlords should an issue/dispute arise
* Other issues that may affect the setting up of the tenancy, where appropriate

Landlords will qualify to receive the extra rent in advance and the bond when accepting a tenant in the scheme through the following requirements:

* The property will need to be registered with Rent Smart Wales, or if not previously rented out within 30 days of it first being marketed for such
* The landlord or agent managing the property should have a licence with Rent Smart Wales, or be able to show they are in the process of getting one
* That they undertake to address any serious or significant hazards in the property if any are identified during the health and safety inspection we will carry out

Support for landlords will include:

* Setting up of direct payments of Housing Benefits or Alternative Payment Arrangements for the Housing Element of Universal Credit
* Completion of inventories at the start of the tenancy
* Advice and assistance in complying with Rent Smart Wales registration and licencing requirements
* Advice and assistance in complying with health and safety requirements
* Support in understanding tenancy and eviction processes
* Mediation with tenants should an issue/dispute arise

Referrals to the scheme can be made by agencies working with hard to house individuals or households. All referrals to the scheme will need to be made via the Housing Solutions Team. Please contact them on 01495 354600 to get a referral form.