

Southampton City Council Homelessness Health Inquiry Real Lettings South

Introduction

Real Lettings South was set up in 2011 by Two Saints (a Registered Provider - housing association) to provide a professional residential management service for private sector landlords. RLS provides both a good rate of financial return for owners as well as managing homes for vulnerable homeless people. Real Lettings South is a "not for profit company" which will eventually manage a property portfolio of a sufficient size not to require public subsidy.

In the first two years of operation over 70 homes have been provided in Southampton for vulnerable homeless people along with an additional 100 homes across Hampshire, West Berkshire and Poole.

Benefits of RLS

RLS is one way of overcoming the barriers which people face when accessing the private rented sector:-

- no deposits or rent in advance or fees are charged to tenants
- rents covered by Housing Benefit
- additional housing management is provided throughout the tenancy
- professional housing management service
- some security of tenure

In the City RLS has helped meet the following accommodation needs

- move on accommodation for people ready to leave Patrick House, the Booth Centre and other Supported Housing
- accommodation for people assessed by the Street Homelessness Prevention Team
- accommodation for ex-offenders

All RLS tenants are vulnerable on the basis of one or more of the following grounds

- substance misuse
- alcohol misuse
- Ex-offenders
- ill health
- learning difficulties
- mental health
- homelessness

Funding

RLS was set up with funding from Southampton City Council as part of the South Hampshire Cross Authority Group (£30,000 in 2012/13)and additional work in the City has been funded through the national charity Crisis and Southampton Probation Service (2013/14 £47,000).

RLS is also involved in a number of other initiatives to help increase the provision of accommodation in Southampton. RLS was responsible for leasing the property in Southampton used for the Breathing Space project. RLS has secured HCA Empty Homes Grant to help convert an empty property in Northam Road into 6 studio flats.

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