

# Diversification is key for social housing

With changes to the social housing landscape and the consequential cuts to funding, partnership working and income generating streams are set to be vital for housing providers in the future.

Challenged to work in a difficult financial climate, Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) has already looked to diversify, developing a range of services which not only generate income but also build communities and enhance the high level of service it offers tenants.

Here Jason Wylie, Head of Business Services at YHN, talks about a key service area that has already diversified to support the organisation, its tenants and to promote sustainability in the region.

“The Furniture Service helps YHN tenants settle into their homes by providing essential items of furniture. The tenants pay for the furniture out of their housing benefit. This has really supported tenants who are suffering from financial strain and offers them a simple and sensible answer. The service has had a positive impact on the well-being of tenants and local communities because tenants feel happier in their homes.”

“There has also been a positive impact on our organisation. As the service has expanded, we have seen an impressive increase in the length of tenancies, resulting in a reduction of void costs and re-let times.”

“There are also additional benefits for tenants – we offer a frequent delivery service to ensure that the furniture arrives before a tenancy starts, repair and replace damaged or broken furniture and collect it once it is no longer required.”

“YHN’s Furniture Service is also a great example of partnership working within the social housing sector. In addition to the 5,500 YHN tenants currently using the service, YHN holds contracts with 15 external organisations such as Homes for Northumberland and South Tyneside Homes to support an additional 5,500 tenants. The service is now the largest furnished

tenancy provider in the UK - currently supporting over 11,000 households.”

Jason added: “Partnership working is more important than ever. Housing providers are operating in changing times, with new regulations and difficult economic circumstances. This environment presents both challenges and opportunities and we believe that the Furniture Service is a great example of innovation and ‘added value’. We hope to continue to develop the service and replicate it across the UK to help support other housing providers.”



For more information about the service please email [andrew.waters@yhn.org.uk](mailto:andrew.waters@yhn.org.uk) or call 07816 842568



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