



BERWICKSHIRE WELCOME CBL EVALUATION

Berwickshire Housing Association have welcomed the findings, just published, of a major evaluation into the Longer-term Impact of Choice-based Lettings. Berwickshire were one of two Scottish and 11 English landlords involved in the study, all of whom had used CBL for at least 18 months by 2004.

The study, carried out by Professor Hal Pawson and colleagues at Heriot Watt University on behalf of the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), supports many of the more immediate benefits landlords see from using CBL approaches, such as voids reduction, lower refusal rates and customer satisfaction. It also, for the first time, provides independent evaluation in support of improvements in tenancy sustainability, and comments positively on the outcomes for vulnerable and ethnic minority groups under CBL schemes, suggesting that far from concentrating groups into specific areas, *“it tends to result in more dispersal”*.

BHA's Chief Executive, Philip Jones, comments *“Berwickshire introduced **homehunt**, our CBL approach, in 2001 and we have for some time been aware that tenancy sustainability has improved. This is true not only of Berwickshire, but for other Scottish Associations, such as Link HA, who have followed us down the **homehunt** route. With regard to vulnerable groups, the percentage of, for example, elderly people registering with Berwickshire has increased since pre-**homehunt** days, not decreased.”*

If the study does pick up one area of concern, it is that applicants do not always understand priority structures within CBL schemes. Berwickshire feel this is not the case with **homehunt**, since it offers a straightforward approach to priority awards and avoids “vacancy labelling”. Indeed one recent survey of **homehunt** applicants revealed 87% felt its priority system was fair and 98% said it was easy to understand.

The report's key findings are available at:

http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/596/231MonitoringtheLongerTermImpactofChoicebasedLettings_id1503596.pdf

For more information on **homehunt** visit

http://www.homehunt.info/info_for_landlords.shtml