

Shared Housing available to Local people

5 Vine Street

The demand for single person accommodation in Ryedale continues to outweigh supply. So far during 2014/15 the Council has dealt with 677 new housing advice cases. Of the 677, 502 were from single households. With the continuing rise now in housing costs both for purchase and rental, finding affordable private housing can be difficult for single people.

There is insufficient single person accommodation in the social sector in Ryedale as the building of one bedroom properties is not something that Registered Providers or developers have concentrated on for many years. With the introduction of Welfare reforms and the Social Sector Size Criteria (bedroom tax) single households are no longer able to move into larger properties.

Welfare reform changes have also affected the availability of accommodation in the private sector for those on low incomes and those in receipt of benefits.

The Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) used to apply to single people aged under 25 on Housing Benefit in the private rented sector. These claimants were restricted to the rate for a single room in a shared house, rather than the rate for a self-contained one bedroom property. We know that the SAR causes considerable problems for young people, with many unable to secure or sustain affordable accommodation and left facing shortfalls, arrears and homelessness.

In January 2012, the Government extended this lower rate to claimants under the age of 35. This restriction in Ryedale means the only accommodation available to those on Housing benefit has to have a rental cost of £60 to £65 per week.

The cuts mean that all under 34 year-olds' only hope is now to find a room in a shared house but there is only a limited pool of this type of accommodation available across Ryedale.

Ryedale Council has been working with private landlords over many years, supporting them and finding out what assistance the Council could offer in return for which, their accommodation being accessible to our clients.

18 Months ago the Council in partnership with Yorkshire Housing took over the management of a House in Multiple accommodation in Malton, this scheme provide 6 rooms for working people. The scheme has worked very well and now the council would like to expand this work in the private sector.

The Council received £5k in 2014/15 and will receive this again in 2015/2016; this is from the Sub region as part of the Single Homelessness Strategy. This was to part fund the employment of a Lettings Officer for the council. In order to receive this funding the authority agreed to provide a Private Sector Offer to landlords. This offer can where appropriate include either managing or leasing properties from private landlords.

Over the past few months the Council's housing department has been in discussions with the landlord of a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) in Norton, Malton. This landlord feels he is unable to continue to successfully manage the property himself. He is in risk of facing notice being served by Environmental Health under Management Regulations.

The property currently provides 5 letting rooms and is an important form of accommodation for single people. To prevent the landlord selling the property and the potential loss of 5 letting rooms and five current residents losing their home the Council has been requested by the landlord if we would lease the property from them.

The landlord will be receiving a £15K landlord Improvement Grant in order to improve the standard of the accommodation for the tenants.

This property has been a House in Multiple occupation (HMO) for many years and is licensed by the Council. All safety measures are in place and up to date.

The lease would be for 5 years and the Council would have the ability to fill the rooms once they became vacant.
