

# London Breakfast Seminar

## Overview



## What Next for Temporary Housing?

Orchard & Shipman's "What Next for Temporary Housing?" Breakfast Seminar event, held at the Institute of Directors on Friday 5th February was attended by over 40 delegates, representing 19 London Boroughs.

The main topic for discussion was how the Department for Work & Pensions' (DWP) changes to subsidies available for temporary accommodation from April 2010 will impact on the future role of leasing in temporary housing provision.

Delegates listened to presentations from Housing Consultant, Andy Gale (speaking in a personal capacity), outlining the nature of the changes and the impact they will have on local authorities, including challenges they may face. John Taylor, CEO for Orchard & Shipman, then suggested some innovative ways the private sector could assist local authorities in addressing these challenges.

### How can the private sector help?

John Taylor explained in his presentation:

- ❖ There will always be a need for good quality, well managed temporary housing, so it is important for local authorities to examine all the costs within their temporary accommodation now, ahead of the DWP changes coming into effect.
- ❖ The key for local authorities is to plan strategically for current and future needs, re-engineering leasing schemes to ensure that temporary housing provision remains available to local authorities within the new parameters.
- ❖ Working with the private sector means that leasing models can be tailored to suit local authority budgets, maximising the potential and flexibility of mixed portfolios.

### Solutions in Practice

#### Private Agency Lettings Service (PALS)

Orchard & Shipman have listened to what local authorities would like to see and have responded by launching **PALS (Private Agency Lettings Service)**. This is a new leasing model that captures the available Housing Benefit but minimises cost and risk to the local authority. It is likely that the next 1-3 years will see further changes to Housing Benefit (including that payable under HALs schemes). **PALS** provides the necessary flexibility and insulation from the adverse effects of change.

#### The consensus from those in attendance at the seminar was:

- ❖ As central government spend decreases, hand in hand with diminishing local resources, there is an urgent need for new solutions
- ❖ The private sector is vital in identifying and executing these solutions

Another concern raised on the day was that, although local authorities are on course to meet the 2010 target to halve the numbers of people in temporary accommodation, 43,000 households in London alone are currently living in temporary accommodation. With 30,000 of these households living in leased properties, the biggest consideration for local government now is:

**What is the right temporary accommodation leasing option and who will manage it?**

### Follow-up

Since the event, we have been contacted by 12 interested local authorities, some who attended the seminar and some who were unable to. We have arranged meetings with each of these Boroughs to discuss our services and how these could assist local authorities further. Should you wish to arrange a meeting on behalf of your local authority, please contact us directly via the details below.

### Contact Us

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