

Internal Housing Advice Service

The housing advice service will provide all frontline services for housing advice and homelessness. This model has also been recommended by the ODPM's office, in the document entitled 'Homelessness Prevention - Avoiding the crisis'. The new structure would mean that all customers would be seen by an adviser and then referred to specialist services where necessary.

The proposed service will not discriminate against tenure type and will assist all tenures, internally through mediation and negotiation. Only when matters cannot be resolved without possible legal action will the customer be referred to an independent adviser through a referral mechanism.

The advice service will be broken into two elements, the first tier will be a membrane of frontline generic advice workers and will undertake the following functions:

- The reception staff will filter all clients to a generic adviser where the issue is housing or housing related. Reception staff will signpost all other clients (non housing related) to an external provider within the borough most appropriate to deal with the issue presented.
- The generic adviser will
 - carry out a diagnosis of the clients issue
 - provide an objective analysis
 - provide the client with the options available
 - attempt to resolve the clients query by consulting with the third party eg landlord
 - if the client needs further assistance or it appears that the client needs on-going assistance the client will be seen by a second tier specialist adviser e.g. tenancy relations officer, court representation etc
 - Generic adviser will also book appointments and signpost to other housing units for assistance for instance clients who may be entitled a grant for aids and adaptations can be assisted by Private Housing Services
 - Or in other cases social services
- All frontline generic advisers will have the necessary skills to deal with any enquiry; each adviser will also have a specialism.
- The second tier of specialist advisers will include court representation; unlawful evictions etc, in addition to these officers there are specialist officers/advisers within other housing services.