

Nacro **Homes** Agency

Impact report 2016/17



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Impact report

According to Crisis

82% of landlords **will not rent to homeless people because they think it's too big a risk.**

In response to the shortfall of housing and the exclusion of many from accessing private rented accommodation, we developed the Nacro Homes Agency (NHA). The NHA effectively intervenes in the private rented sector to encourage landlords to make accommodation available to people – including prison leavers who face additional barriers – who they may otherwise avoid renting to. We also provide intensive housing management and low-level support for service users who need it.

The products we deliver within NHA are geared not only to put a roof over a person's head but to develop sustainable solutions to the challenges of accessing housing, sustaining a tenancy and maintaining independence. We work with individuals and families across the country providing access to stable, good quality housing. We do this through partnerships with local authorities, the National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs), and Drug and Alcohol services. The NHA now provides services across the East Midlands, South Yorkshire, Staffordshire, Worcestershire, Essex, North West, Teesside and will shortly be developing new services in East Riding and Sunderland.

We currently have strategic relationships with the National Probation Service North West region, the West Mercia and Warwickshire CRC, Sunderland City Council (see below), Wirral District Council, Middlesbrough District Council and work closely with many other local authorities, CRCs and regions of the National Probation Service. We also receive funding from the Virgin Money Foundation (see below).

Virgin Money Foundation funding

In 2016 we secured a grant from Virgin Money Foundation to deliver our NHA service for vulnerable women and families in Teesside, the majority of whom have suffered domestic abuse either previously or immediately before coming to the service. During this period we provided housing and support to 29 families, which included 17 children. In addition, we signposted more than 20 women to other specialist services.

We work in partnership with more than 40 professionals/services – such as drug and alcohol agencies, probation services, domestic abuse services – to support the client. We work closely with local housing providers to secure longer-term move-on accommodation for the women and families, ensuring that successful transitions occur following our interventions. Virgin Foundation feedback said that they were “highly impressed” with what we had achieved and, of all the grants they issued that were housing related, we had, “Delivered the best outcomes in terms of achieving the work plan, evidential outcomes for service users, evidence of strategic engagement and future sustainability.”

Sunderland City Council Housing First Model

Nacro has been working in partnership with Sunderland City Council's Heads of Housing Support and Community Living to develop a solution to replace existing models of supported housing provision. The model we have considered is based on the Housing First model, which offers dispersed housing with wraparound supportive services and connections to community-based services to ensure that people sustain their housing and avoid returning to homelessness. This fits with the strategic direction the local authority is taking to replace the hostel-style provision currently prevalent in the city.

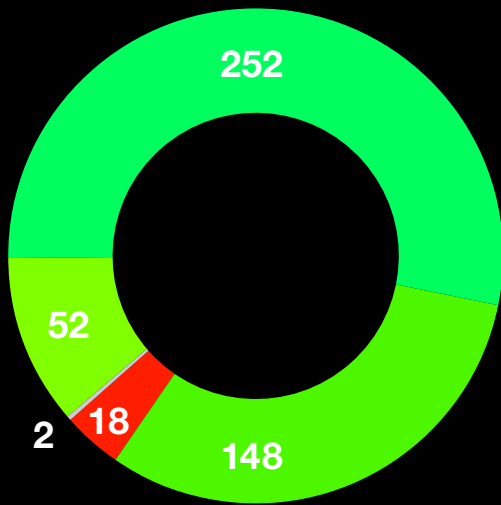
The NHA will look to develop up to a 100 units of dispersed housing for a range of client groups from single people with a range of needs to families with children.

Nacro will work with the Head of Housing Support and Community Living to ensure the various services are brought in to support an individual or family depending on their needs, with the support dropping off as the individuals' needs are met.

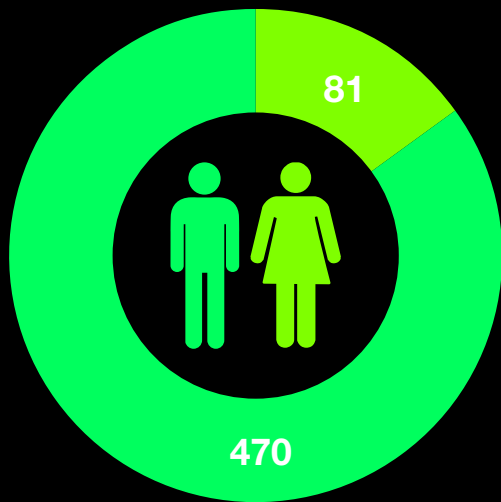
The service will offer high quality accommodation, ranging from self-contained flats and housing to shared housing. Length of stay will range from six months to two years with move-on facilitated by a local authority rent deposit scheme.

Nacro will actively promote this model to other local authorities to consider as part of their Homelessness Prevention initiatives.

Who are our residents?

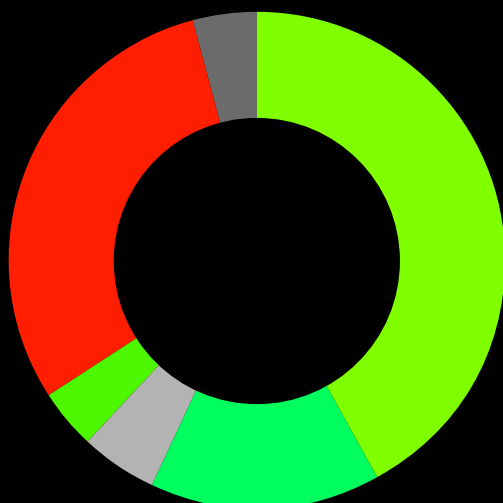


- 0.4% 16-17 year olds
- 9% 18-24 year olds
- 46% 25-40 year olds
- 27% 40-60 year olds
- 3% 60+ year olds



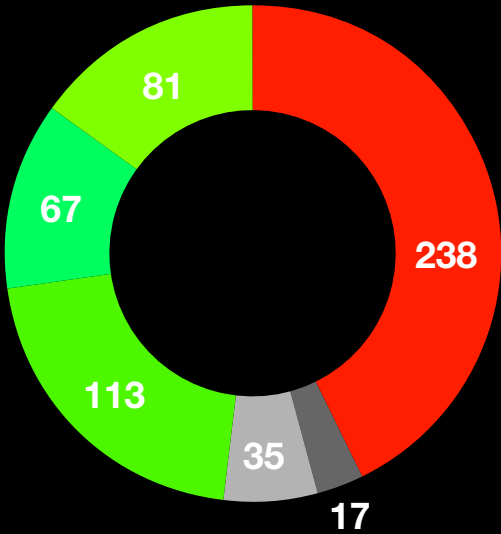
- 85% Males
- 15% Females

Who residents were referred by?



- 42% National Probation Service/CRC
- 15% Prison
- 5% Other supported housing
- 4% Voluntary sector organisations
- 4% Local authorities including domestic violence referrals
- 30% Other including internal transfers

How long have our residents been with us?

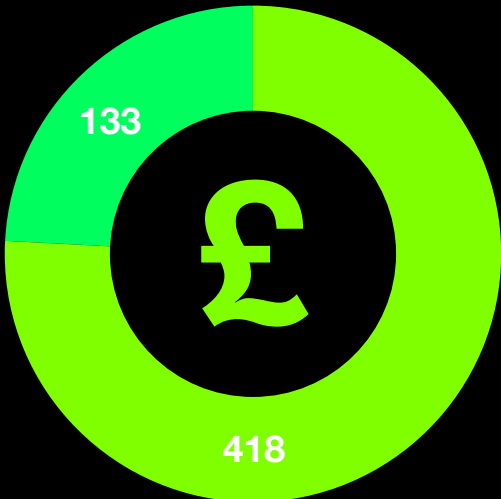


- 43% 0-6 months
- 15% 6-9 months
- 12% 9-12 months
- 21% 12-24 months
- 6% 24-36 months
- 3% more than 36 months



The average length of stay is 10 months

Tenants are paying their rent



- 72% No arrears or within the housing benefit payment cycle
- 24% In arrears

The principle factors in achieving successful move-on

- Good links with local authorities, housing associations and private landlords.
- Support from staff around applications to housing providers, accessing a bond or rent deposit.
- Support with moving into the new property, securing furnishing, white goods etc, settling into the local community, change of benefits, setting up accounts with utility companies.
- Positive motivation and good engagement with Nacro workers (e.g. keeping appointments, completing support plans, responding to guidance, keeping to terms of tenancy agreement, providing required info for HB claims) and other agency workers (abiding by licence or community order, not reoffending).
- Budgeting support – many of our service users have never had a tenancy before or have difficulty in planning and sticking to a budget.

What are the causes of unsuccessful move-ons?

- Client is unable to afford a deposit meaning their choice of move-on property is more limited and often the only landlords that will house people on benefits/with no deposit are less reputable and properties in poor state of repair.
- Failing to engage with Nacro staff and/or other relevant organisations. Some service users, for various reasons, may disengage with not only their Nacro key worker but also the other services that work with them.
- Lack of local connection or not being awarded the correct banding by the council.
- Moving people on before they have acquired the necessary skills to sustain a successful tenancy.
- Non-payment of rent (can include not making benefit claims or providing income/ID information, but also building up arrears when in work).
- Lack of funding for furniture/household items.
- Placing clients in areas they previously had issues in, e.g. past associates that may cause them to reoffend and lose their accommodation.
- Reoffending/recall to prison.
- Continued drug/alcohol use and consequential anti-social and offending behaviour.

Outcomes for our residents

63% of all NHA residents move on successfully to their own tenancy or other safe and secure housing.

Jenny

Jenny was referred to the Womens' NHA service in Teesside in 2016. She was referred to Nacro by a local domestic violence service in Middlesbrough. Jenny who had two young children and had been in an extremely abusive relationship in which both she and the children had been subject to abuse and their front door was covered with petrol. As a result of the abuse, which had been going on for some time, Jenny had developed an addiction to alcohol and at the point of referral was alcohol dependent. Jenny had social services involvement and this was both a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and child protection case. Jenny also displayed some signs of poor mental health.

The NHA was able to provide immediate assistance and the family moved into an NHA property in just over a week. The house was a warm and inviting home, situated in an area away from the dangers that were linked to her last address. Jenny engaged with our service really well and Nacro staff worked within a multi-agency arena to combat the issues that were presented.

With a stable home and support from Nacro and other agencies, Jenny has been free from alcohol for a number of weeks, and the children's behaviour has noticeably improved. Jenny also now feels she is ready to access support for her mental health issues.

Jenny is not quite ready for move-on but, when this does happen, NHA staff will support this process from application to viewing and also in the application for grants/funding that will enable a stable and secure future for the family. We will provide resettlement support to enable the transition to independent living to go as smoothly as possible. Once settled, Jenny will be comfortable in the knowledge that she can still contact NHA staff for ad hoc advice if required.

James

James had no other accommodation options upon his release from prison. He had a physical health problem with his internal and external blood vessels bursting on a regular basis, which required hospital visits several times a week for blood transfusions. James also had a history of binge drinking and thoughts of self-harm.

The NHA agreed to house him as he presented as being determined to try and live a positive life upon release. James had been in his own accommodation before so did have independent living skills and felt that he would be able to maintain his flat with limited support.

Initially James needed support with some tenancy-related issues such as dealing with utility bills and reporting repairs but very quickly became confident to deal with these things himself.

Despite our initial reservations James proved to manage his condition very well and worked with his NHA worker very quickly to set him up with a new GP. He decorated the bathroom straight away and settled in well, keeping the flat clean and tidy.

For several months we have had regular visits with James and each visit he has presented as more confident and positive stating that he feels ready to move on and live fully independently.

James had some job interviews and in February informed us that he had been offered a very good job earning close to £30,000 a year and that he had also been offered private rented accommodation that was connected to the job. James had been with Nacro for only five months and in this time he worked very hard to change his life. He moved out at the beginning of March and sent the support worker this text: "Thank you mate for everything you did for me, I wouldn't have made it this far without your help."

David

David was referred to the NHA from Doncaster prison. He was initially placed in a probation hostel but this was only for three Months. During this time he found he could not access private rented sector or local authority housing as he had no funds or local connection.

David was placed into an NHA property in Sheffield in September 2016 and managed his tenancy really well. Throughout this time he had been looking for work and accommodation to move into. He has had barriers to contend with in achieving this as he has convictions, no money for rent in advance, and a bond.

In March 2017 he started working for a local company and is seeking alternative accommodation. He has an appointment next week to look at a house and, if accepted, will be moving in at the end of the month. David has been ready for independent living for a while and has completed his programme of support.

John

John was referred to Nacro by the National Probation Service in July 2016 after a period in prison and a very chaotic lifestyle. Since being with the NHA Stoke service, he has stopped using illegal drugs, developed a more positive outlook on life and fully engaged with staff, stating he felt safe living in his NHA flat. In his own words, he began "thinking more positively".

John found employment in early 2017. Nacro staff supported him to move on and he found privately rented accommodation, sharing with some friends, as this was more affordable.

The service user remains in touch with Nacro staff and thanks us for helping him to change his lifestyle and attitudes.

Gary

Gary was housed by the NHA Worcester service in July 2015. Previously he had been rough sleeping. While he was a high priority for housing with Worcester Council, he was being overlooked due to rent arrears with a housing association he previously had a tenancy with.

Gary struggles with budgeting, depression and anxiety. The NHA supported Gary to receive counselling offered by the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) team. Gary incurred a few warnings over the period he resided at the NHA but addressed the issues that occurred and currently has a clean record of warnings. We assisted Gary to open a new bank account and apply for PIP benefit.

With the support of the NHA, Gary has set up a repayment plan to pay off £50 per month to the Housing Association he had built up arrears with. Gary has been keeping to this and is gradually reducing his arrears.

When we felt he was ready, we moved Gary to alternative NHA housing in his home town. After receiving support from all agencies involved, Gary has dramatically reduced his drug use/script, manages his money better and is keeping to his licence agreement with Nacro causing no issues.

The NHA manager has written a supporting letter which is visible on Gary's file for all Housing Associations to view when considering Gary for a property. When his arrears have been cleared he will be offered suitable accommodation. We continue to see Gary on a regular basis but have reduced the support as we feel he can manage independently.



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