



Exeter's Digital Housing Programme

Our partnership with LGA and SDS

22.11.2018

Who we are

- ◆ Kevin Neil - Interim housing solutions lead
- ◆ Vicki Whitty - Housing casework team leader

Exeter City Council in numbers

◆ Exeter population estimate =	128,900
◆ Travel to work area population =	470,000
◆ Major teaching hospitals with A&E =	1
◆ Prisons in Exeter (with two more nearby) =	1
◆ HQ for Devon County Council	
◆ Homelessness per 1,000 households	1.35
◆ Prevention & relief per 1,000 households =	17.87
◆ Housing register =	2,417

Our starting point in Exeter

- ◆ Approach by drop in
- ◆ Approach by phone
- ◆ Approach by email
- ◆ Approach by web

- ◆ Homeless tonight seen at drop in
- ◆ Not yet homeless seen by appointment

Barriers to engagement

- ◆ Devon Home Choice partnership needs agreement of about 40 partners to implement change
- ◆ Forthcoming launch of HRA
- ◆ Restructure about to be implemented
- ◆ Lack of buy in from staff and partners
- ◆ IT changes slow to implement

How LGA transformed us

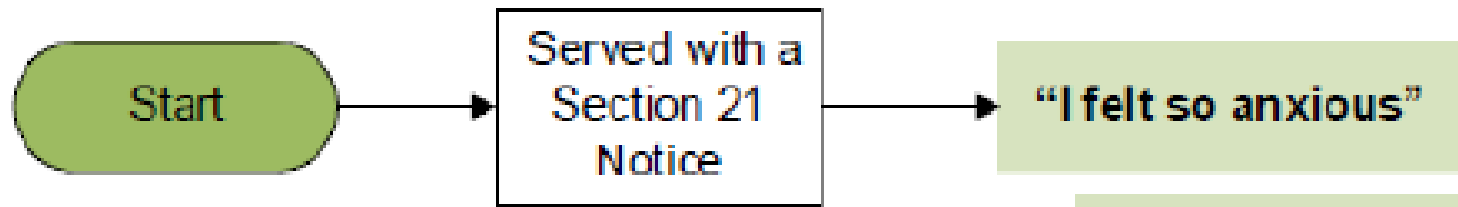
- ◆ Workshops
- ◆ Conference calls
- ◆ Peer support

What we learned from SDS

- ◆ How to put the customer at the heart of our decision making
- ◆ Our customers often know more about our services than we do
- ◆ The answers we need are already out there - we just have to look for them

The customer journey (Practical help from SDS)

- ◆ Supported us through the regular meetings of our peer grouping
- ◆ Advice between meetings
- ◆ Showed us how their research technique works
- ◆ Carried out our initial user research
- ◆ Produced written report on findings



“I called 10 times or so”

Related quotes:

“I didn’t approach the Council straight away because I thought ‘what’s the point’ due to the press reporting on the lack of housing available”

“I’m on benefits, how am I going to get a home”

Related quotes:

“I realised during the process that there was a lot of people in need”

I didn’t want to take the housing due to other people being more vulnerable”

Related quotes:

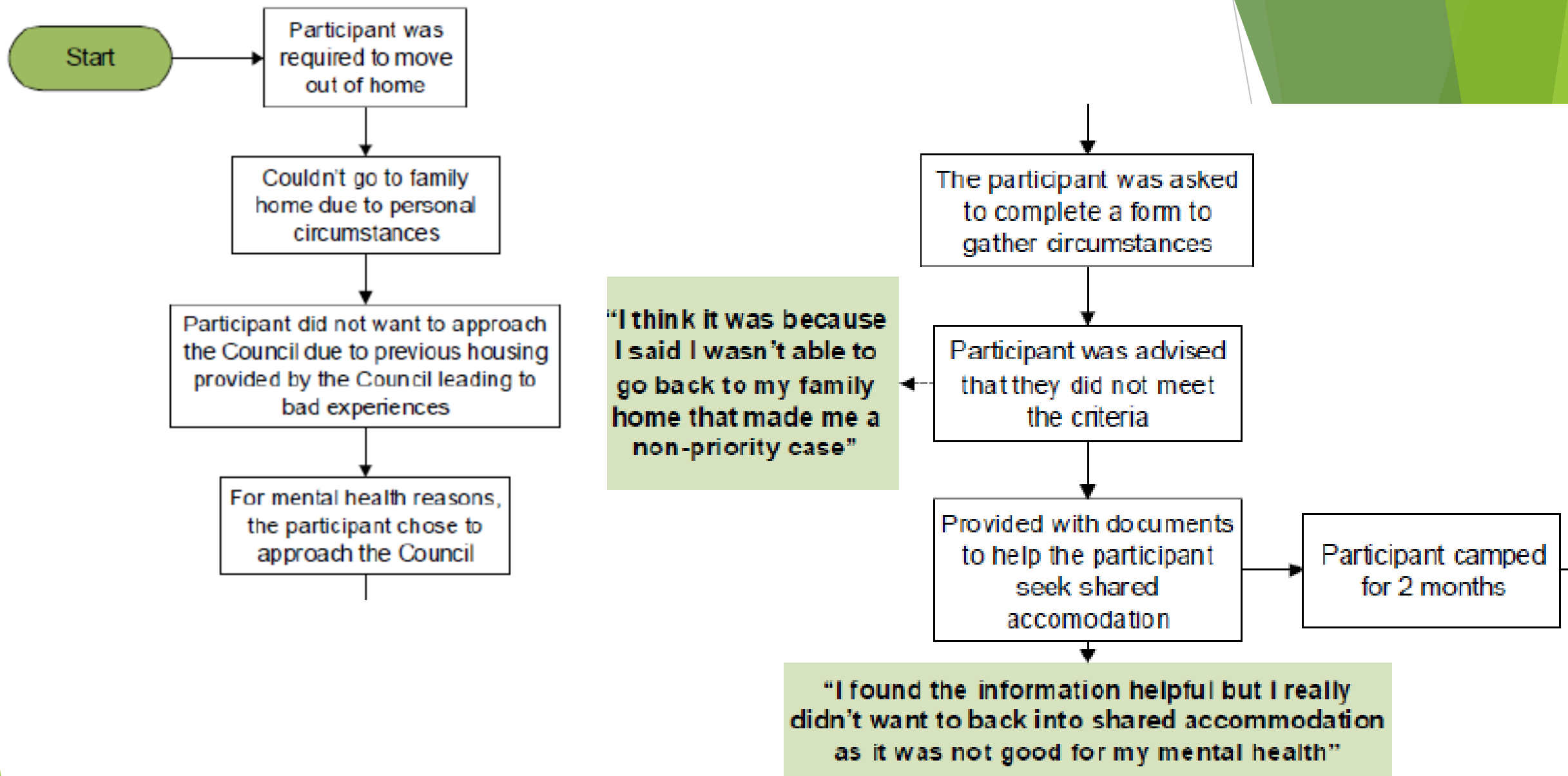
“I’m feeling left completely in the dark”

“They (the Council) haven’t been on it quick enough”

“I’m feeling stressed, nervous and anxious”

“I would find it too overwhelming to go into temporary housing”

“I do not want to be homeless, I suffer from various illnesses”



“Being ex-services I could have gone to ‘Suffer’ but I chose not to”

Related quotes:

“I had to wait for an hour to get an appointment but I am used to it”

“I found all of the paperwork I was given straight forward and easy to understand”

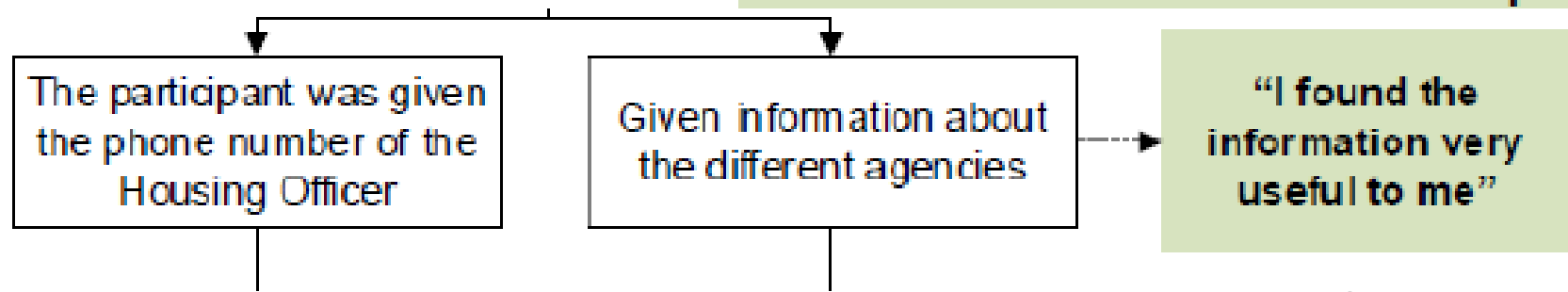
“The Housing Officer was really nice as I was petrified because I felt uncomfortable to ask for help but the officer was really understanding and put me at ease”

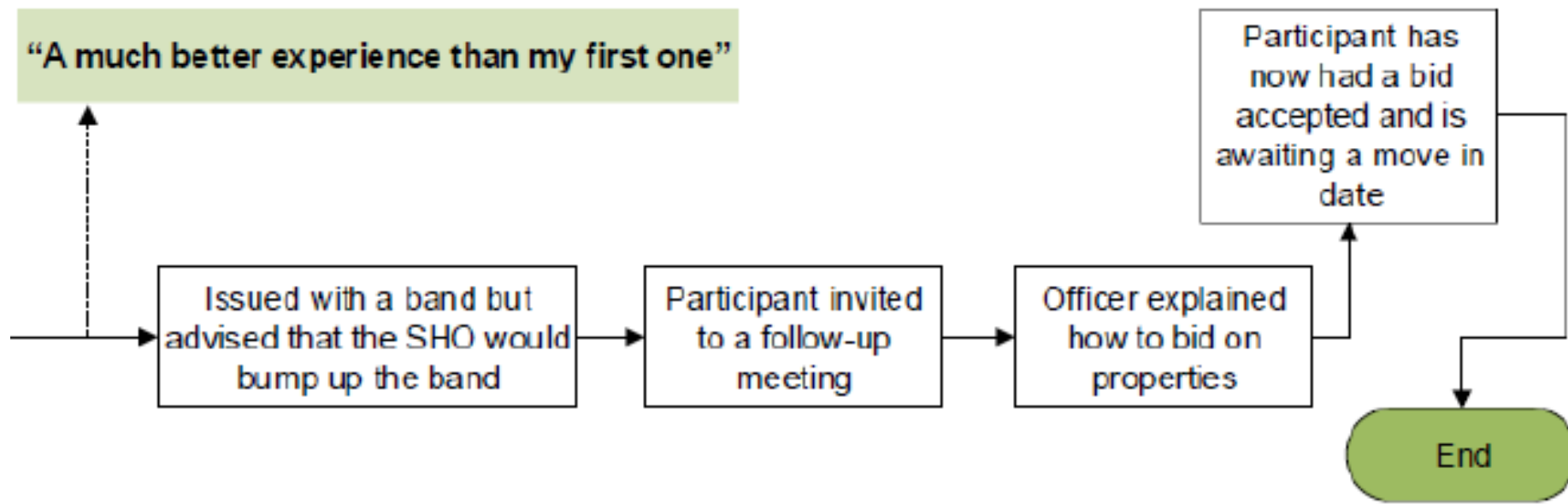
“I assume Devon Home Choice is part of the Council?”

The participant was given the phone number of the Housing Officer

Given information about the different agencies

“I found the information very useful to me”





Related quotes:

"My experience with the Council was perfectly acceptable"

"I found the waiting times to be more than reasonable"

"The leaflet I was issued about Devon Home Choice was easy to understand"

**“The place I am in is staffed
at that really helps me”**

Related quotes:

“The Housing Manager understood my need for support and put me in the right place for me (property)”

“I’m happy and learning to be independent”

“The Council have been very supportive”

“I can’t fault the Council and the person looking after me has been very understanding of my needs which I’m grateful for”

“I don’t think I would have got as far as I have without a disability”

“I know I’m high up the list because of my sight”

**“I have specific requirements
because of my disability so it is
taking time but I don’t feel pressured”**



Our progress and our goals

- ◆ User research carried out establishing typical customer journey
- ◆ Have flash recorder available to carry out further research
- ◆ Next research includes:
 - ◆ Home Choice online form
 - ◆ Appraisal of new self help tool
 - ◆ Planned introduction of self-assessment tool

Some lessons learned

- ◆ Build the team first
- ◆ Engage IT services at the beginning - don't wait until you need them!
- ◆ Maintain a flow of information
- ◆ Create realistic goals and dates - then stick to them!
- ◆ Don't be afraid to ask for help

Welcome to our new online customer self help tool!

- ◆ <https://exeter.gov.uk/housing/housing-homelessness-prevention-and-advice/contacting-us-for-housing-advice/>
- ◆ Self help tool gives us quick assessment of customers needs

Contacting us for housing advice

During normal office hours (9.00am to 17.00pm, Monday to Friday)

You can email us on housing.advice@exeter.gov.uk

You can also call us on **01392 265726**.

You can make an appointment to see us in person at the [Civic Centre](#). See how to [get to our offices](#).

Out of hours service (17.00 pm to 9.00 am Monday to Friday, Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays)

If you've been made homeless outside of our normal working hours, we operate an emergency out-of-hours service.

However, be aware that if you are not eligible for emergency accommodation we won't be able to help you out of hours.

You can contact our emergency out of hours service on **01392 265147**.

Housing services self help

Complete this form if you have recently been made homeless, or if you are about to become homeless

[Your details](#)

[Who else is with you?](#)

[Address history](#)

[Additional information](#)

[Confirm & submit](#)

Your personal details

In order for us to help you, we will need to know a little about you and your circumstance.

Please complete all fields marked with a red asterisk *

About you

Title

Select...



First name *

Last name *

Date of birth *

Gender

Select...



Ethnicity

Select...



Do you know your national insurance number? *

Yes

No

Your contact details

We will need to be able to contact you to tell you about your appointment. We need at least one way of getting hold of you, either by phone or email.

Email address *

Phone number *


Alternative phone number *


What is your preferred method of contact *

 Email Phone number Alternative phone number

Next >

4. How you can help rough sleepers

If you would like to tell us about a rough sleeper in your community please visit the [Street Link website](#) 

We have commissioned an Assertive Homeless Outreach Service which is provided by [Julian House](#) . Our teams of outreach workers and volunteers will find and engage with rough sleepers to help and encourage them off the streets. We provide practical help, including:

- help into emergency accommodation
- help into hostel accommodation, private rented or supported housing
- help with ID and benefits
- information and advice about support services
- assistance with linking in with health services
- access to individual budgets

Any questions?

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Thank you!

- ◆ Kevin.neil@exeter.gov.uk
- ◆ **01392 265614 (Landline)**
- ◆ **07866 126327 (Mobile)**

- ◆ vivki.whitty@exeter.gov.uk
- ◆ **01392 265769**