

**As the financial year draws to a close the burning question for many providers of housing support has been whether their funding council will extend contractual arrangements which otherwise end on 31 March 2008.**

It is disappointing that service providers are facing such a high level of uncertainty at the year end.

At the Unit's recent regional events local authorities were keen to clarify that they aim to maintain current services for another year - although for some, key budget decisions were still to be taken by council committees in March.

The timescale for these budget decisions has resulted in a degree of uncertainty amongst providers which also affects service users and their care managers within social work services as well as those looking to access services.

If you are a provider and have not had confirmation from your local authority about how they intend to proceed, check the terms of your contract or letter of agreement to find out what obligations the council is under.

You can also, make contact with the SP Lead Officer in your council to find out what the council intends to do.

To find out about the budget decisions that have been made more widely across the council you could look at their website for recent reports or council minutes. These should provide an overview of financial priorities for the year ahead.

## Single Outcome Agreements

In February's Bulletin the outcomes and indicators were examined in terms of links with housing support.

Since then the Government has issued further guidance on the Single Outcome Agreement and issued a new list of local indicators which local authorities have the option of including in their SOAs.

The indicator with the most direct link with housing support is local indicator number 29: increase the proportion of people needing care or support who are able to sustain an independent quality of life as part of the community, through effective joint working.

For the full list of indicators and latest guidance on Single Outcome Agreements go to the Improvement Service website at: [www.improvementservice.org.uk](http://www.improvementservice.org.uk)

Single Outcome Agreement

Care Commission

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## Feedback: SP Regional events

The Unit's recent programme of regional events gave providers of housing support the opportunity to raise a number of matters of concern with local authorities and the Government.

### Issues providers raised about procurement

Some providers have already had experience of tendering processes and expressed concern about the resources required to take part in them as well as the impact the uncertainty has on services users and their families.

Concerns were also expressed about the impact of tendering on smaller, possibly specialist services - both in terms of resources to take part in tendering exercises and in terms of downward pressure on contract price.

### Local authorities views on procurement

Of the 10 local authorities that took part in the events, 8 said they intended to extend current contracts for another year but beyond that procurement strategies regarding housing support (or social care more broadly) are still being developed in most cases. (More detail is provided on page 3.)

Some expressed the view that SP service reviews had been a useful process to go through in order to clarify value and appropriateness of services but it does not appear that decisions to enter into full contracts will necessarily flow from

them - although this will vary between councils.

A question frequently posed at the events was whether local authorities are likely to put their own inhouse services out to tender if they decide more broadly to tender existing services. There was one example where a local authority had done this already but others said they would be unlikely to go down this route.

### Government's view on procurement

In 2007 Government's Supporting People Team produced guidance around procurement and housing support which it is useful to re- state here: *'Where there are good quality services being provided the local authority should consider in accordance with the procurement strategy and procurement risk assessment whether it should move to contract, rather than tendering.'*

The Unit understands that the Scottish Procurement Directorate (SPD) has recognised the usefulness of this guidance note and is in the process of drafting further guidance to span social care more generally.

## Tracking and Monitoring of Housing Support

Stakeholders of housing support have been asking how best to track the impact of funding changes on housing support provision over the next couple of years. The removal of the ringfence means the Government will not require local authorities to report on how much money they spend on housing support nor on the type or level of services purchased.

The Unit is currently considering ways it can go about collecting information from service providers over the next two years as a way of tracking, albeit on a small scale, the impact of the funding changes. If you are interested in finding out more about this and possibly participating please contact Moira Weir: [moira.weir@ccpscotland.org](mailto:moira.weir@ccpscotland.org) or tel 0131 346 3145.

## How some local authorities are approaching 2008/09

**Over the next 2 months the Unit will gather information from all local authorities regarding decisions they are making about the future contracting arrangements for housing support services. In the meantime here is a summary of the way those local authorities that took part in the regional events in January and February plan to approach service contracts in 08/09:**

**Angus Council:** one year contracts will be put in place for 2008/09 and reviewed thereafter. It is possible that some will be put out to tender although the council is still considering its legal obligations.

**Dumfries & Galloway Council:** outcomes from service reviews going to committee - this will determine whether interim contracts are extended. The council may tender most services over the next few years subject to the development of a procurement strategy.

**Dundee City Council:** there has been no decision yet as to whether Dundee City Council will tender existing services but the views expressed by staff at the regional event was that services should continue as they are.

**East Ayrshire Council:** Open ended Letters of Agreement are still in place. Decisions about funding in 2008/09 are yet to be taken. Learning disability services are being put out to tender. The council is interested in framework agreements and may develop these in future.

**East Lothian Council:** contracts are to be extended by another year. As contracts come to an end in future it is likely that some sort of procurement exercise will be undertaken and possibly the development of framework agreements.

**Edinburgh Council:** hoping to extend current contracts for another year whilst developing a procurement strategy. Providers have since been alerted to a reduction of 7.6% in contract values from April 2008.

**Highland Council:** the Council has agreed to extend contracts for a further year and at a

subsequent committee meeting on 12th March decided to offer providers a 2% uplift. The contract extension is likely to be done through some sort of contract variation letter. A procurement strategy has yet to be developed.

**Moray Council:** it is likely that contracts will be extended for another year and an inflationary uplift on salary costs is being considered. In March the council decided to offer one off payments to help sheltered housing providers.

**North Lanarkshire Council:** contracts will be extended for one year. The council's legal section accepts that housing support can be 'exempt' from tendering although more recent information indicates that there will be some sort of tendering exercise in 08/09.

**South Lanarkshire Council:** has been tendering learning disability services and homecare services. Amongst other types of services, however, there are examples of 3 year contracts being offered after successful service reviews.

*If your experience as a service provider is different from that suggested above, do get in touch with the Unit. This will help the Unit to reflect actual contracting arrangements.*

### **Stakeholder forum**

The Scottish Government has agreed to continue to facilitate and service a group originally set up in 2003 to assist stakeholders of Supporting People maintain an input in the development and implementation of the programme.

At a meeting of the Supporting People Forum in February 2008 it was agreed that there continues to be a role for it as the new funding arrangements for housing support take shape. The group will meet on a quarterly basis under the name Housing Support Forum and will continue to consist of representatives of the voluntary and private sector providers, of local authorities and the Government. In addition, COSLA has agreed to take part. Minutes from these meetings will continue to be available on the Scottish Government's website: [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Housing/Housing/suportpeople/Page134](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Housing/Housing/suportpeople/Page134)

# Outcomes Framework

## Background

The Scottish Government is developing a system which can be used to monitor how housing support impacts on those using services. Following research conducted by DTZ the Scottish Government commissioned a pilot of a monitoring system called the Distance Travelled Model which is also often referred to as the Outcomes Framework.

This Outcomes Framework is designed to record what progress a person makes during their time with a housing support service. The way it works is that a service user is asked a series of questions at the beginning of their time with a service. Then they are asked the same questions at regular intervals to find out what if any changes are happening.

For example, somebody may be asked to rate their security of tenure from A to E with A being an eviction pending and E being no issues. The Framework is then used to track what changes (if any) are happening.

A	Eviction Pending
B	Received Notice of Proceedings for Recovery of Possession
C	Received warning letters re possible eviction
D	Security of accommodation being managed with support (e.g. rent arrears being addressed through payment plan; anti social behaviour under control)
E	No issues regarding security of tenure

The Outcomes Framework can be viewed on the Scottish Government's website [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1035/0048540.xls](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1035/0048540.xls)

31 providers in 7 local authority areas are taking part in the pilot and a wide range of service are involved including services for:

- people with learning difficulties
- older people
- people with physical disability
- younger people
- people who misuse substances
- people with mental health problems

Each provider was asked to use the Outcome Framework for a period of 3 months. Within this time span providers were expected to take a base line recording with their services users and then undertake a review.

Craigforth, a research company, was commissioned to evaluate the pilot and come up with recommendations about whether or not it would be useful to use the Outcomes Framework in the future. The evaluation is not yet complete but Craigforth was able to discuss some of its interim findings at the Unit's recent regional events. This included interim findings about:

- ease of use
- the time housing support staff took to use it
- quality of the information gathered
- consistency in the use of the framework
- impact on service users

For further details on the interim findings and a report back from the recent events go to: [www.ccpscotland.org/spunit](http://www.ccpscotland.org/spunit)

## Evaluation

Providers raised a number of issues which warrant further consideration if the outcomes framework is to be taken further:

- how the Outcomes Framework links in with other reporting requirements
- ensuring the Care Commission has been sufficiently involved in developing the framework so it can contribute to the Care Commission's inspection / assessment process
- the extent to which the framework can be used across all social services

The evaluation is due to be completed by April 2008 when a decision will be made about whether or not to develop the Outcomes Framework further. A research advisory group has been overseeing the evaluation and papers from its meetings are on the Scottish Government's website at: [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Housing/Housing/supportpeople/OutcomesPilot](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Housing/Housing/supportpeople/OutcomesPilot)

## Sector Skills Agreement

The Sector Skills Agreement is how employers, government and other stakeholders come together to agree what the training and development needs of their sector are. In Scotland the SSSC has been developing the Sector Skills Agreement for Social Care and has just published its Third Stage Report.

The report outlines the training and qualification needs of the sector and highlights some of the new issues the sector is facing including:

- Tendering
- Technology in care
- Needs of migrant workers
- Accessibility of training for rural workers

The report also looks at the practical issues associated with qualifying the housing support workforce in preparation for registration such as a shortage of SVQ assessors and college places.

The report is available on [www.sssc.uk.com/Sector+Skills+Agreement/Sector+Skills+Agreement.htm](http://www.sssc.uk.com/Sector+Skills+Agreement/Sector+Skills+Agreement.htm)

## Governance

The Social Work Inspection Agency have produced a draft self-evaluation questionnaire which is designed to help organisation's management committees assess how well they are governing their organisation.

The questionnaire looks at five areas of governance namely

- openness
- integrity
- accountability
- leadership
- board in control

SWIA have worked with Turning Point Scotland to use the tool to assess Turning Point Scotland's standard of governance and the report on this is available on [www.turningpointscotland.com/raising\\_standards](http://www.turningpointscotland.com/raising_standards)

## Care Commission

The Care Commission has completed its evaluation of the pilot of its new inspection system - the Quality Assessment Framework. The report is available on the Care Commission's website at [www.carecommission.com/images/stories/documents/Care%20Services/Regulating%20for%20Improvement/pilot\\_evaluation\\_analysis.pdf](http://www.carecommission.com/images/stories/documents/Care%20Services/Regulating%20for%20Improvement/pilot_evaluation_analysis.pdf)

The Care Commission has also produced a leaflet for providers on the new grading system which can be viewed on [www.carecommission.com/images/stories/documents/publications/registrationinspectioncomplaints/rfi\\_grading\\_is\\_coming\\_leaflet\\_-\\_sept\\_2007.pdf](http://www.carecommission.com/images/stories/documents/publications/registrationinspectioncomplaints/rfi_grading_is_coming_leaflet_-_sept_2007.pdf)

The quality themes for 2008/09 have been set and are:

- care and support
- environment
- staffing
- management and leadership

More information is available on the self assessment forms which can be seen at [www.carecommission.com/images/stories/documents/Care%20Services/Regulating%20for%20Improvement/self\\_assessment\\_forms\\_-\\_paper/saf\\_housing\\_support\\_services\\_0809.pdf](http://www.carecommission.com/images/stories/documents/Care%20Services/Regulating%20for%20Improvement/self_assessment_forms_-_paper/saf_housing_support_services_0809.pdf)

To complement the new Quality Assessment Framework each year the Care Commission will have an Inspection Focus Area (IFA) which will allow them to concentrate on a particular aspect of social care and then report on this nationally.

In 2008/09 the Care Commission will focus on notification. That is, looking at how and when providers should contact regulators such as the Care Commission or SSSC about issues that have come up for their organisation.

Full details are available on the Care Commission's website at [www.carecommission.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=5823&Itemid=1](http://www.carecommission.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5823&Itemid=1)

## Questions and Answers

**Q. I am new in post and don't understand some of the terminology that is bandied around the office. What is rent pooling and why does it affect local authority charging policies?**

**A.** In the past some the cost of providing some housing support services were paid for from the rent charged to all tenants (even those that did not receive the service) and this was called rent pooling.

In the run up to SP in 2003 rent pooling landlords identified how much it cost to provide housing support and this amount was added to the SP grant. From then on SP covered the costs but there was no requirement to reduce the rent charged in recognition of the amount SP now paid for - so the landlord achieved a 'windfall' which the government decided could be used on planned maintenance programmes and other items to benefit tenants. The government also decided that tenants up to 1.3.03 who used rent pooled services should not in future face housing support charges. They are protected and the expectation is that the landlord's 'windfall' helps fund this protection. This is dealt with at section 2.8 within the SP guidance: which can be seen on [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1125/0016409.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1125/0016409.pdf)

**Q. A colleague who works in England has mentioned that Housing Support costs were cheaper in England due to the property element of warden call systems etc being eligible for Housing Benefit. Do you know where I could find out more about what would be eligible to pass to Housing Benefit?**

**A.** First of all I should clarify that the rules on Housing Benefit by the Department of Work and Pension are applicable in Scotland as well as England. However councils in England approached Supporting People differently to those in Scotland - and where SP has picked up some costs in Scotland it did not do so in England so Housing Benefit paid instead.

A couple of years ago we wrote a 'rough guide' to

recovering housing support related costs and it touches on HB plus provides further links:

[www.ccpscotland.org/spunit/publications/documents/SPEURoughGuide4.pdf](http://www.ccpscotland.org/spunit/publications/documents/SPEURoughGuide4.pdf)

**Q. Do you have any recent statistics about the number of people with disabilities that have been helped through Supporting People?**

**A.** The Scottish Government has produced an annual bulletin on this subject every year since 2004. These reports are available on the Scottish Government's website but the easiest route to them is probably via our website as we have filed all the reports in one place. The link is [www.ccpscotland.org/spunit/publications/practice.php](http://www.ccpscotland.org/spunit/publications/practice.php) and the reports come under the heading People Assisted Through Supporting People. The figures for 2006/07 have just been published.

The statistical bulletin is the main source of information of client statistics however, it is wise to treat it with caution. Some of the figures vary widely from year to year and often this is due to information being gathered differently in different years.

**Q. My local authority has asked me to collect fees from services users who are self funded but I thought that this was the local authority's responsibility. Is there any guidance on this I can refer to?**

**A.** Under SP guidance it was clear that Local Authorities could not force providers to collect fees in this way. However, the situation is less clear now. Probably the best thing to do is find out what the council's policy is for other aspects of care services as housing support will probably follow this.

**Q. I am beginning to find all the changes in housing support overwhelming. How do others feel?**

**A.** You are not alone. At the Unit's recent regional events many people spoke of their concerns for the future. Please remember that the Unit provides a confidential enquiry service. If it is getting too much give us a call as talking things over sometimes helps.

## Scottish Government

**The Housing Support Team in the Scottish Government is keen to keep in touch with providers of housing support services. This section contains news from the Team.**

In this first issue of the Housing Support Bulletin, we thought it would be helpful to set out the new structure in which the Housing Support team now sits and the work we plan to undertake over the coming year.

The Scottish Government's Housing and Regeneration Directorate has been restructured to accommodate staff transferring from Communities Scotland. The Housing Support team is now part of the new Housing Access and Support Division, headed by Shona Stephen, formerly Director of Community Regeneration in Communities Scotland. Other teams in this Division are Homelessness, Homepoint, and Fuel Poverty and Central Heating.

Stephen Sandham remains Head of the Housing Support team, but will in future also have oversight of the Homelessness team. On the Housing Support side he is still supported by Norrie Murray, Katherine Hudson, Jackie Walder, Ben McClory, Tracy Duncan, Lindsey Gray and Roddy McDougall, although Norrie will be taking a well earned early retirement in September. Joining the team from Communities Scotland are Yvonne Harris and Judi Reid to lead on Homepoint.

Over the next year the Team will be focusing on a number of areas of work on housing support following the end of Supporting People. These include:

Working with the Housing Support Enabling Unit to promote the importance of housing support, monitor the impact of removing the

ring fence, and consider the future of the outcomes matrix in the light of the evaluation report on the pilots

Auditing the final SP accounts for 2007-08 and collating client statistics

Contributing to work on Single Outcome Agreements and reviewing the extent to which the needs of vulnerable people are being appropriately reflected

Reviewing policy on commissioning of housing support services

Revising and updating the Scottish Government's Framework Code of Practice on Owner Occupied Sheltered Housing

Undertaking a Review of the Housing Voluntary Sector Grant scheme and homelessness grant schemes

Monitoring follow-up to the Review of Older People's Housing

Development of the Housekey website

Contributing to a review of Care and Repair;

Working with the Joint Improvement Team on the promotion of telecare, older people housing demonstrator projects and other initiatives to promote effective partnership working across the Housing / Social Care and Health spectrums.

**Contact the Housing Support Team at:  
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# For Your Noticeboard

## Introducing the Housing Support Enabling Unit

The Unit has secured funding for a further two years and in recognition of the new funding arrangements for housing support has changed its name to the Housing Support Enabling Unit. The work of the Unit will continue in the belief that now more than ever partnership working between providers, service commissioners, and other stakeholders will produce better outcomes in the delivery of housing support services across the country.

The work of the Unit is being overseen by an executive committee comprising of representatives from:

- Community Care Providers Scotland (CCPS)
- Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)
- Scottish Council for Single Homeless (SCSH)
- Scottish Government
- Local authorities

The majority of the committee members are themselves providers of housing support services.

Further details about the Unit's Executive Committee can be found at: [www.ccpscotland.org/spunit](http://www.ccpscotland.org/spunit)

Over the next year the Unit will:

- provide a central point of information and enquiry for providers of housing support
- gather information from service providers about the impact that the new funding arrangements have on services and their outcomes for service users
- provide information and updates of interest to service providers
- identify issues of common interest or concern to providers and work on finding solutions in partnership with other stakeholders
- organise briefing and training events bringing providers, commissioners and other stakeholders together

### Contacting the Unit:

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