

**Adam Ingram, Minister for Children and Early Years, has announced that the registration of housing support staff will now commence in December 2010, not Autumn 2009 as previously stated.**

Managers of Care at Home services will now be included in Phase 2 of registration. In recognition of the number of combined housing and care at home services, registration of both sets of managers will commence at the same time.

The minister acknowledged how disappointing this would be for the housing support sector by saying:

"I realise that the decision to delay the commencement of registration may disappoint some providers of housing support services. I recognise and support the work you are doing in up skilling your workforce to meet registration requirements, and I'm sure that will continue."

A Scottish Government official said 'The Scottish Government is impressed with the effort the sector has, and will continue to, put into preparing for registration. The delay in opening the register is for practical reasons linked to the inclusion of care at home managers which will benefit the sector in planning to help staff gain qualifications. The delay will not change SSSC registration policy so staff will continue to get 3 years to gain appropriate qualifications after they initially register.'

The whole letter explaining the delay to the opening of the housing support register is available on the Unit's website at [www.ccpscotland.org/spunit/info/documents/573Registrationofcarehomeservicemanagers.doc](http://www.ccpscotland.org/spunit/info/documents/573Registrationofcarehomeservicemanagers.doc)

## **HSEU research Into the funding of housing support**

In 2007/2008 providers of housing support were asked a series of questions about their funding levels and service volume. This year we are asking a similar set of questions so we can compare results.

To do this we are using information that has been collated by the Care Commission. In addition we are getting in touch with every housing support service manager registered with the Care Commission to ask about service volume and funding in 2008/09. The results of this survey will be used to influence policy at a local and national level.

So far the Unit has received responses from providers in 16 local authority areas. By the end of the research we hope to receive information from providers working in every local authority area as that will allow us to see how different areas are responding to the new financial climate and we want to obtain broad representation.

For more information and to get involved contact [moira.weir@ccpscotland.org](mailto:moira.weir@ccpscotland.org)

**Research into housing support**

**Workforce registration  
Charging for services**

**Housing support in practice**

**Providers' Questions**

**The Scottish Government**



The Housing Support Enabling Unit is a partnership Initiative between Community Care Providers Scotland (CCPS) and the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA), funded by the Scottish Government.

# Charging For Services

## The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) has now revised its guidance on charging.

The guidance consists of recommendations for local authorities rather than prescriptions but Scottish Government Ministers do have the power, under the 2002 Community Care and Health (S) Act, to direct local authorities in this matter if they are not satisfied with their policies.

The guidance deals with housing support as the first of its 'Revised and Consolidated Articles' on page 3 stating that:

*'The guidance has been amended to recognise that monies previously ring-fenced under Supporting People have been distributed within the overall local government settlement. As such, all the guidance that previously applied to Supporting People, including on charging, is now not applicable and Councils are no longer obliged to have regards to the Supporting People exemptions and protections.'*

Whilst this statement comes as no surprise in the light of ringfence removal, a later statement could be more controversial with service users and service providers if followed by local authorities.

*'Over the past three years, the COSLA policy has been that the removal of passport protection for clients in receipt of housing benefit should only apply to new recipients of a service. It is now suggested that it should be open to councils to choose whether or not to remove the protection for all clients.'*

This statement opens the way for existing service users who have been using services since 2002/03 without being charged being approached by their local authorities with a view to charging.

One of the issues that providers have raised with the Unit concerns those service users who have not had to contribute to the cost of a service in the past and then refuse to do so when a charge is imposed. On page 8 of the guidance under 'Administration and Assessment Arrangements' the guidance states that:

*'If a person refuses to pay, the service should not be withdrawn if it would impact on their well being but the local authority can pursue the debt while continuing to provide the service.'*

The guidance does acknowledge some of the concerns that the Unit and the voluntary sector generally have raised with councils and COSLA in the past including:

- information about charging policies and procedures being inadequate for service users in some cases
- the fact that information about how charges have been assessed needs to be clear
- the fact that reviews and appeals mechanisms should be publicised
- the fact that there is much concern across the voluntary sector that cost of services go beyond funding by councils

It is disappointing, however, that the guidance does not go into much detail about how it envisages local authorities avoid these pitfalls.

The guidance can be found on the website at: [www.cosla.gov.uk/attachments/execgroups/hw/hwcoslachargingguidance2009-10.doc](http://www.cosla.gov.uk/attachments/execgroups/hw/hwcoslachargingguidance2009-10.doc)

If you have comments to make about how your local authority is revising its charging policies and the impact this is having on your services and service users do get in touch with Yvette Burgess at the Unit: [yvette.burgess@ccpscotland.org](mailto:yvette.burgess@ccpscotland.org)

## Procurement and social care

The Scottish Government Joint Improvement Team and Scottish Government's Procurement Directorate are working with a range of stakeholders to produce good practice guidance on procurement of social care services.

In April 2009 they set up a 'Good Practice in Social Care Procurement Reference Group' to oversee this work. This Group has representation from a wide number of stakeholders including COSLA, Service Providers, Local Authorities, Regulators, Service User Groups and Carers Representatives, Scotland Excel and various government departments. Minutes of the Reference Group and other papers can be found at: [www.jitscotland.org.uk/action-areas/commissioning/procurement/](http://www.jitscotland.org.uk/action-areas/commissioning/procurement/)

JIT is keen to gather information on how procurement affects services and service users. They have already had meetings with the Learning Disability Alliance and Princess Royal Trust for Carers and plan more meetings in the

future.

A series of focus groups have been planned for areas where procurement has taken place namely Edinburgh City, Falkirk, Glasgow City, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Perth and Kinross and Renfrewshire. The HSEU has been involved in nominating delegates for this work to ensure that the experience of the housing support sector is fully represented. A large number of providers expressed interest in taking part which highlights the importance this issue has for those working in the housing support sector.

In addition to the focus groups a survey is being carried out across all 32 local authority areas to find out what methods of procurement are being used. The survey is also intended as a means of identifying good practice and information on the critical areas on which guidance is required.

Information on this work is available on the JIT website at [www.jitscotland.org.uk/](http://www.jitscotland.org.uk/)

## Outcomes of housing support

Work on the Housing Support Outcomes Framework has been continuing and has resulted in a draft development report by Craigforth. The report sets the Framework in context with national outcomes and with other reporting tools as well as summarising the development work they have undertaken this year. This development work is now reflected in the matrix presented at the end of the report although the final format will be influenced by further input from the Steering Group and by development work on an IT tool to support it. One of the areas for further development is to make the framework accessible to service users and consideration is being given to the visual format that may be most appropriate.

The draft report can be viewed at: [www.ccpScotland.org/spunit/info/documents/635DraftDevelopmentReport100609.doc](http://www.ccpScotland.org/spunit/info/documents/635DraftDevelopmentReport100609.doc)

The provision of an IT tool to support the matrix is about to be undertaken by Capita who have been commissioned to adapt a web based tool used and developed in England for Supporting People.

The funding for the IT tool has been provided by the Scottish Government and will cover maintenance costs of the system for 2 years. This will enable the system to prove its worth before its use would have to be charged for.

The IT work will take place over the summer and events will be organised in the autumn to launch the final version of the framework.

If you would like any further information about the framework please contact Yvette Burgess: [yvette.burgess@ccpscotland.org](mailto:yvette.burgess@ccpscotland.org)

## Questions and Answers

### **Q. Is the Voluntary Sector Development Fund still in operation?**

**A.** Yes the VSDF gives grants to assist providers with the fees for staff training and the Scottish Government has now published the application form, guidance and equality monitoring form for the 2009-2010.

The forms and guidance are available to download from the Voluntary Sector Social Services Workforce Unit [www.ccpscotland.org/workforceunit/info/news.php#VSDF](http://www.ccpscotland.org/workforceunit/info/news.php#VSDF).

The guidance document sets out who can apply for funding and what can be funded. As a reminder, funding this year will support:

- Support workers in care home services for adults,
- Practitioners in care home services for adults,
- Supervisors in care homes for adults,
- Managers of housing support services.

Applications must be returned to the Scottish Government by Friday 4th September 2009.

If you have any queries on VSDF, please contact:

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Victoria Quay,  
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### **Q. Last year I heard that SWIA and the Care Commission were going to merge to make one organisation. Has anything happened about this?**

**A.** Yes. It is planned that from April 2011 the Care Commission, SWIA and HMIE will be joining to

form one organisation. This will involve a change in legislation which will come under the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Bill and will be led by the Finance Committee of the Scottish Parliament. The Bill has three stages.

- The first stage will take place in December 2009 and is designed to consider the principle of the Bill and the Finance committee may call for evidence at this point.
- If the principle is accepted by the Scottish Parliament the second stage takes place in January 2010 considers the Bill section by section and may include any amendments.
- The third stage is in February /March 2010 and includes debate by Scottish Parliament on the Bill
- Royal Assent April 2010 and the Bill becomes an Act of the Scottish Parliament.

It is intended that this work should be completed by 2011 but until then the individual agencies will continue their work as normal.

The Scottish Government website includes a section giving much more information and regular updates

[www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/health/scrutiny](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/health/scrutiny)

### **Q. I have been hearing a lot about the personalisation of housing support services and would be interested to know if anything has been written about this with regard to housing support.**

**A.** Yes. Sitra has produced a report called Personalisation, Prevention and Partnership which looks at how the issues affect service users, providers and commissioners in England. It can be viewed on their website at [www.sitra.org.uk/fileadmin/sitra\\_user/2009/Publications/Personalisation\\_prevention\\_and\\_partnership\\_June\\_2009.pdf](http://www.sitra.org.uk/fileadmin/sitra_user/2009/Publications/Personalisation_prevention_and_partnership_June_2009.pdf)

## Questions and Answers

**Q. Housing support services in my area are going out to tender. The only way my organisation will be able to bid for the contract it currently provides will be if we enter into a consortium with other providers. I was hoping to do a bit of research on the subject to get a better idea of what is involved. Can you suggest any literature?**

**A.** The HSEU is getting an increasing number of questions on this topic. More and more providers are expressing an interest in entering into consortia arrangements to bid for contracts but you are right to thoroughly research the idea before committing yourself as it is a different way of working and will not be suited to all services.

Some good information on this topic has been produced by English based organisations and although it will not all be directly applicable to Scotland it is still helpful.

**a)** Tendering For Care is an organisation that was set up to provide help for care, housing, support charities and voluntary sector organisations generally to operate in the new public procurement and tendering environment in England. Their website is full of examples of consortia and can be seen at [www.tenderingforcare.com/](http://www.tenderingforcare.com/)

**b)** Sitra produced a guide to procurement which includes a section on 'Working in Partnership' [www.sitra.org.uk/fileadmin/sitra\\_user/TEMP/A\\_Provider\\_s\\_Guide\\_to\\_Procurement\\_for\\_web\\_site.pdf](http://www.sitra.org.uk/fileadmin/sitra_user/TEMP/A_Provider_s_Guide_to_Procurement_for_web_site.pdf)

**c)** I would also suggest the HACT document which focuses specifically on smaller providers <http://www.hact.org.uk/news.asp?PagelD=42>

Finally we at the HSEU have an area on our website devoted to procurement and there are a couple of documents that might assist you: [www.ccpscotland.org/spunit/info/housing\\_support\\_plans.php](http://www.ccpscotland.org/spunit/info/housing_support_plans.php)

**Q. Where can I find out more information about the new Protection Of Vulnerable Groups Scheme?**

**A.** In 2010, the Scottish Government is introducing a new membership scheme that will replace current disclosure arrangements for people who work with vulnerable groups. The scheme will be managed by Disclosure Scotland who have information on their website [www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/](http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/)

The Scottish Government has also produced information which is available on their website at [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/children-families/pvglegislation](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/children-families/pvglegislation)

**Q. Is the House Key website still in operation? I do not seem to have heard anything about it for a while.**

**A.** It is indeed. The House Key is a national database of housing support services and is now managed by the Scottish Government. It can be found on the Scottish Government's website at [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/access/housingsupport/supportservices/houseKeySearch](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/access/housingsupport/supportservices/houseKeySearch)

The website should give information on every housing support service in Scotland making finding out about housing support easy for the general public. Earlier this month the Unit asked the Scottish Government how often the House Key was used and was told "since the start of the year the House Key website has been viewed by around 6,000 people".

**Q. I keep hearing people refer to the SROI. What is it?**

**A.** SROI stands for Social Return on Investment and is a tool for organisations to measure outcomes in terms of social value. You can find out more from the SROI website at [www.sroi-uk.org](http://www.sroi-uk.org)

## Housing Support in Practice

**Over the past three years East Fife Womens Aid has faced considerable change. Housing shortages in their local area, the changing needs of clients and changes in the way that services are commissioned have all had an effect of the way that the organisation operates.**

“East Fife Womens Aid has 12 properties which are used to house women, children and young people seeking refuge after suffering domestic abuse. The properties are all independent houses based in the community.

Most of the people referred to East Fife Womens Aid come from Fife but some are referred from other areas. East Fife Womens Aid is part of a web based accommodation vacancy system called UK Refuge Online.

On a daily basis staff update the website saying what accommodation is available. Staff from other refuge projects across the UK can then make referrals. This allows women to make a fresh start by coming to Fife. It also allows women from Fife to move to other areas if they feel this is what they would like to do. Having this information online has made referring women and families to other areas much easier as it is clear what is available and it allows women to make a choice about what to go for. Unfortunately this is not the whole story though.

There is a desperate shortage of housing in East Fife which means that in 2008/ 09 East Fife Womens Aid was only able to accommodate 45% of requests for refuge. In the past women and families tended to stay in refuge for six months before moving onto permanent accommodation. This gave them a chance to receive intensive support when they needed it most and also time to heal both physically and emotionally before moving on to their new home. However, the current housing shortage means it is not unusual for women and families to stay in refuge for two years as there is simply no where else for them to go.”

The length of time that women and families are staying in refuge has led to East Fife Womens Aid changing the way they deliver some of their services so that they better fit the needs of their clients. There is now more housing support done with women living in their own home or in local hostels. In addition there is a help line where women can get information about their options over the phone.

In 2008 a new post of Monitoring and Evaluation Officer was created. The purpose of this post was to look at the work carried out and to give women and families the chance to speak freely about their experience of the service and how it could be improved.

Mary Miller said “The evaluation and consultation work done with service users has had a really positive impact on our work and has resulted in a change in some of our policies and procedures. For example, in the past women were not allowed visitors in refuge as they only stayed in refuge for a short time and confidentiality of address was paramount. However, it is now normal for women to stay for two years as they seek permanent accommodation so the policy was changed to allow female visitors. This means that women can now receive visits from their mums’, sisters’ or other female friends and family which greatly enhances their quality of life.”

The monitoring and evaluation also highlighted that women in refuge often felt lonely and isolated at weekends. In response to this East Fife Womens Aid set up a Saturday Group where women and children involved in the service can come together for fun and support. The women themselves decide what the group will do and in the past popular topics have included relaxation and healthy eating.

Rosie Rayer the Quality Assurance and Monitoring and Evaluation Worker said “At East Fife Womens Aid we take a methodical approach to evaluation. This is useful because it allows us to make sure that women have a positive experience of the service and also gives us plenty of evidence for Care Commission inspections and grant applications. I meet with women once every three months to evaluate their progress and also do work with children and young people. Sometimes it can be a challenge to get youngsters to open up so I have to use my imagination! Last month we set up a recording studio like Big Brother and got children and young people to record how they felt about the service. This proved to be a big success so we will be doing that again!”

**For more information about East Fife Womens Aid and the work of Scottish Womens Aid including their recent DVD and publication Changing Lives contact:**

**Email: [info@scottishwomensaid.co.uk](mailto:info@scottishwomensaid.co.uk)**

**website: [www.scottishwomensaid.org.uk](http://www.scottishwomensaid.org.uk)**

## 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.**

### **National reporting on housing support services**

The Housing Support Forum discussed the future of national reporting at its last meeting on 23 June. This discussion followed the recent review which considered the need for data collection and the practicality of collecting information, following the removal of the Supporting People ring fence.

Ministers have decided, in future, to gather data annually in a reference week instead of throughout the year; to align data collection more closely to the home care census; and to make better use, if possible, of secondary sources of statistical information. This should ensure that we continue to have information on the numbers of clients receiving housing support and improve the quality and consistency of the information.

A short life working group will be established to take forward the detailed development of the new data collection. We have asked the Enabling Unit to help identify people to participate in the group.

### **Housing Voluntary Grant Scheme**

Following a recent review, a revised Housing Voluntary Grant scheme has opened for applications for funding from 2010-11 onwards.

The scheme will return to its original purpose of focusing on national projects which tie in with the Scottish Government's national outcomes and indicators relating to housing or homelessness. Funding will be in three categories:

1. Key Strategic Partners (£1m) for national organisations to work with the Scottish Government to make progress towards national outcomes relating to housing access, support or homelessness. Funding is for three years, and successful applicants will have to demonstrate their ability to shape policy in their own field.
2. Proven Services and Activities (£1m) for national organisations providing a service or activity which has been proved to work over a number of years and is aligned with the national outcomes to ensure that progress is being made towards those relating to housing and homelessness.
3. New and/or Innovative Projects (£0.4m) open to national organisations for new or innovative projects linked to the national outcomes. Local organisations may also apply for funding, if the project can be proved to have potential national benefit after three years.

Applications must be submitted by 15 July 2009. Further information can be obtained from David Fairweather on 0131-244-5525.

**Contact the Housing Support Team at:**

**E-mail: [housingsupport@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:housingsupport@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)**

**Telephone: 0131-244-5524**

**Website: [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/access/housingsupport](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/access/housingsupport)**

# For Your Noticeboard

## Events

### **The Scottish Housing and Support Conference**

Thursday 1 October 2009  
Edinburgh

This conference brings together policy makers and service users, providers and commissioners, staff and committee members from housing, support, health, social work and the voluntary sector. It promotes new ways of working helps to improve service delivery, policy and practice across Scotland. It is run on a not-for-profit basis by a planning group from voluntary and not-for-profit organisations.

In response to the demands on everyone's budgets SHASC have made 2009 a credit crunch conference, with 3 special offers:

- There will be a number of free places for individual service users, thanks to Scottish Government sponsorship.
- The standard delegate fee is only £120, a saving of £25 over last year's prices.
- And if you make a confirmed booking by 31 July the cost is only £95 per person, a huge saving for your budget!

It is possible to book now by emailing Norma Jones, Conference Co-ordinator at [shasc@joa.co.uk](mailto:shasc@joa.co.uk)

## Publications

### **A Gathering Storm? Procurement, re-tendering and the voluntary sector social care workforce: A study for the Voluntary Sector Social Services Workforce Unit**

The VSSSWU has commissioned a report which assesses the impact of the re-tendering of social care services on workforce morale and commitment in the voluntary sector, outlining the implications for national workforce policy and planning in Scotland.

The work was completed by Dr Ian Cunningham and Professor Dennis Nickson of the Scottish Centre for Employment Research, University of Strathclyde. A full copy of the report is available on the VSSSWU website at [www.ccpscotland.org/workforceunit/documents/SCERfinal13May.pdf](http://www.ccpscotland.org/workforceunit/documents/SCERfinal13May.pdf)

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