

Supporting People: Research, consultation and information

Impact Monitoring

As reported in the Unit's April Bulletin, the Scottish Executive completed its analysis of returns local authorities made in October 2005 regarding Service Review outcomes. The Scottish Executive has now published the full report and a summary: **Supporting People 1st Report on Service Review October Returns.**

The returns that local authorities are required to complete were devised to monitor the impact of the funding changes on services. This first set of returns should be treated with caution (as the Scottish Executive's covering letter spells out) because the analysis is based on limited information. The next round of returns is due to be completed in June 2006 and the format of the returns is being revised to help build a more conclusive picture particularly around the impact on job numbers, and the impact of pipeline projects not going ahead and the impact of service providers not being offered inflationary increases.

The full report and summary along with a covering letter by the Scottish Executive can be viewed at:

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g / H o u s i n g / s u p p o r t p e o p l e / P a g e 1 1](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Housing/supportpeople/Page11)

Provision of Housing Support in Scotland 2003 - 2006: Impact of Supporting People Funding changes and Service Review

The Supporting People Enabling Unit is undertaking research into Service Review from a providers point of view. The purpose of this research is to investigate the process and outcomes of service review for providers in the independent sector, complementing the information local authorities provide the Scottish Executive through their periodic returns.

This research could impact on decisions the Scottish Executive will make about whether or not local authorities will continue to be required to conduct Service Reviews as well as providing an insight into the impact that funding changes through Supporting People is having on the independent sector and on service levels.

We hope to include the views of a wide range of providers and will be contacting providers over the next month to create a representative sample. More information on the research can be found on the website at

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How to evaluate SP in Scotland?

The Scottish Executive has now issued a consultation document detailing how the Supporting People Programme will be evaluated in Scotland over the next year or so in the run up to the national Spending Review. Comments on the document can be submitted to the Scottish Executive up to 30 June 2006. The document can be found at:

[W w w . s c o t l a n d . g o v . u k / R e s o u r c e / D o c / 1 0 3 5 / 0 0 3 0 5 0 6 . p d f](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1035/0030506.pdf)

supportingpeople

enabling unit

Bulletin

June 2006 Issue 13

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investigating
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SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

The Supporting People Enabling Unit is a partnership initiative between Community Care Providers Scotland (CCPS) and the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA), funded by the Scottish Executive.

Council Tax Liability

Over the past three years some people living in certain homes where a form of care is provided have become liable to pay council tax. In the past people who lived in care homes generally did not have to pay council tax as the homes were placed within the non-domestic rating system and often had relief from business rates.

However, since the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 came into force some services deregistered as care homes and re-registered their service as housing support. This means that the residents are now considered to be tenants and are therefore liable to pay council tax. People living in property that meets the criteria below may have been affected by this change in registration.

The criteria:

- a) The property contains 2 or more self-contained apartments
- b) The property is occupied by persons who do not constitute a single household and each has a tenancy agreement or license to occupy only part of the property, and is not liable to pay rent for the entire property
- c) A housing support services (as defined in Section 91(2) of the 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act) is provided which is registered with the Care Commission.
- d) Where either kitchen, toilet or bathroom is shared

Ministers are currently assessing how to proceed with this issue in the face of the concerns some individuals have raised with them. In the meantime service users can be assisted to obtain advice about how they are currently affected by contacting the following people:

For information about council tax policy contact: Billy McKenzie at the Scottish Executive billy.mckenzie@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or 0131 244 7051

For information about financial assessment with a view to help people who are over 60 years of age maximize their income contact: Christine McFall at the Pension Service Christine.mcfall@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or 01563 506 347

For information for people aged 60 and under contact Linda Prattis at Job Centre Plus Linda.prattis@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

Supporting People Contracts

The Unit has been in contact with all local authorities to ascertain the progress being made on SP contracting.

- 12 local authorities are currently using Letters of Agreement with their providers
- 6 local authorities are currently using Interim Contracts
- 12 local authorities are using some Letters of Agreement and some Interim Contracts
- 3 local authorities are using Full Contracts (one of these uses Letter of Agreement and Interim Contracts as well).

The reason for so few councils using Full Contracts so far has been the slow progress with Service Reviews. There are a couple of cases, however, where local authorities have been prepared to go to Full Contract before carrying out Service Reviews. Concerns about funding beyond 2007/08 may also be playing a part. The length of a Full Contract can, however, be shorter than the 3 to 5 years suggested in the SP Guidance.

One of the disadvantages for providers of the continued wide use of Letters of Agreement can be that they have an end date of less than a year. The Unit has found, in practice, however, that about half the councils using Letters of Agreement do so on the basis that they continue until the Service Review has taken place or until a Full Contract has been entered into.

This does leave 10 local authorities using Letters of Agreement on a short term fixed basis.

The Unit has asked all councils if they will be using the SP Model Contract Framework. 24 (72%) said they will be, 3 (10%) said they will not be, 4 (12%) are undecided and 1 (3%) was not able to say. Of the 72% who are going to use the Model many did advise that they would be using it as a basis and would not necessarily be using all the core clauses within the Model. authorities

If you would like to see the responses that particular local authorities made to the Unit's queries please contact Mark O'Donnell at the SP Enabling Unit at: mark.odonnell@ccpscotland.org

Ever wondered how the Care Commission deals with complaints?

The Care Commission received 138 complaints about housing support services in 2005/06 and has completed 71 investigations. The complaints relate to all sectors providing housing support including voluntary organisations, local authorities, private companies and housing associations. The official, verified figures on complaints will be published in the Care Commission's annual report later this year. In the meantime, the Care Commission have given the Unit provisional information on the volume and type of complaint received in 2005/06.

2005/06 - Housing Support Services (provisional figures)

- 138 complaints received
- 71 complaints fully investigated
- 45 (63%) of complaints were upheld/partially upheld
- 23 (32%) of complaints were not upheld
- 3 (4%) of complaints were withdrawn

Jim Finlayson the Complaints Co-ordinator with the Care Commission said "The types of complaint we receive vary. The most common cause of concern is the breakdown of communication between providers and service users. Concerns related to providers' policies and procedures and how they should be implemented in practice also feature on a regular basis". Complaints can be complex and it is not unusual for one complaint to include several elements of concern as the case below illustrates.

Complaint - an example

A family member of an elderly lady who lived in sheltered housing complained to the Care Commission because she had not been informed that her relative had been unwell. In addition she complained that the service provider did not have an effective procedure in place for dealing with the medical/health emergencies of residents.

Investigation

Once the complaint was received two Care Commission officers were instructed to investigate. The investigation included:

- A visit to the sheltered housing complex where the lady lived
- Interviews with the sheltered housing Warden
- Interview with the Housing Officer and

Manager of the service

- Telephone interview with the service user's former Home Help
- Examination of all relevant documentation concerning the service user and provider

Findings

The Care Commission investigation found that on the day when the service user became unwell the Warden had contacted the doctor and asked the lady if she wanted her family to be contacted. The lady had advised her not to contact anyone as her daughter would be in to visit her later in the day. As there was nothing to indicate that this had been a medical or health emergency, this element of the complaint was not upheld.

On the second element of the complaint, the investigators found that the service provider had not issued any written guidelines to staff on how to respond to a medical or health emergency. Information about when an individual's next of kin should be contacted should have been contained within the care plans; however the service provider had not yet developed these. This element of the complaint was upheld.

Conclusion

The overall outcome was to partially uphold the complaint and the following recommendations were made:

1. Written guidelines should be developed to advise staff on how to respond to a medical/healthcare emergency.
2. Individual care plans needed to be developed for people living in the sheltered housing complex.
3. Care plans should contain clear details of when an individual's next of kin should be contacted.

Follow Up

The Care Commission puts time scales for action on all recommended and required action following an investigation. The Care Commission then follows this up to ensure it has been done - usually through inspection. For more information on the Care Commission's complaints procedure look at their website on www.carecommission.com/complaints/index.php

Area of Focus:

1. Funding of housing support services under the Supporting People Programme
2. Service review
3. Confidence in the SP programme
4. Relationship between providers and local authorities

Providers' Experience of the Supporting People Programme

Introduction and Background

The SP Enabling Unit has undertaken a two year longitudinal project researching how well equipped providers feel in providing housing support services under the Supporting People Programme in a changing environment.

Methodology

Each organisation agreed to undertake a telephone interview once every six months for two years. The first set of interviews was conducted in March 2004. The information gathered from these established a baseline for further findings to be measured against. The second set of interviews was conducted in October 2004, third in March/April 2005, the fourth in September 2005 and the final round in March 2006.

Survey Sample

In total 49 providers (commenting on a total of 57 services) from across Scotland took part in the research.

Type of service: The survey sample has been designed to include the experience of different types of providers and includes 47% offering supported accommodation and 53% offering visiting support.

Type of organisation: 59% of services are voluntary organisations with 32% being registered social landlords and 9% from the private sector.

Size of organisation: 26% of providers in the survey describe themselves as large organisations, with 40% saying they are medium sized and 34% saying they are small.

Primary client group: Providers of housing support work with a diverse range of client groups. The providers participating in the survey reflect this and described their primary client group as:

Learning Disability	9%	Younger People	6%
Homelessness	23%	Physical Disability	6%
Mental Health	11%	General Need	9%
Older People	36%		

Participation in the survey:

65% of the original survey group took part in each round of survey questions. During the two year study there were times when some providers could not contribute to the survey but opted in again later. In this round of the survey questions all providers involved had contributed before.

This is a summary of research carried out by the Supporting People Enabling Unit. For a full copy of the research findings contact:

moira.weir@ccpscotland.org

Summary of Findings

1. Funding of housing support services under Supporting People:

There is considerable uncertainty amongst providers about the future of housing support through Supporting People. 34% of providers have not agreed a contract value for 2005/06 and 55% of providers have no knowledge of their SP funding for 2006/07. In cash terms 98% of services are facing standstill or reduced funding this year compared to last year. In real terms this means that only 9% of services are keeping pace with inflation to cover costs of salaries, training and other items over the past year.

2. Service Volume: In March 2004 80% of providers said they had expanded their service due to the introduction of SP. In March 2006 32% of providers expect their service volume to decrease in the coming year. Two providers of visiting support have already issued redundancy notices to staff. Others are trying to manage staff cuts by not replacing staff members who have left.

69% of providers said their funding had been cut or remained the same but they did not expect their service volume to change. Providers managed this in a number of ways:

- 42% Efficiency savings
- 13% Funding transferred from other organisational budgets
- 16% Funding from other sources (e.g. fundraising events)
- 26% Reserves
- 3% Other

3. Service Review: 36% of providers have undergone service review. Of these 57% have found the process to be satisfactory. 5 providers considered the service review to be unsatisfactory because decisions about funding had been made before the service review took

place. Other providers expressed concern at the delay in hearing the outcome of the service review. One provider had been told that they would not hear the outcome until all services in the area had been reviewed which would take over a year. That provider felt it was too long to wait.

11% are currently in the process of service review. 53% of providers have not undergone service review and of those 80% have not been told when they will be reviewed

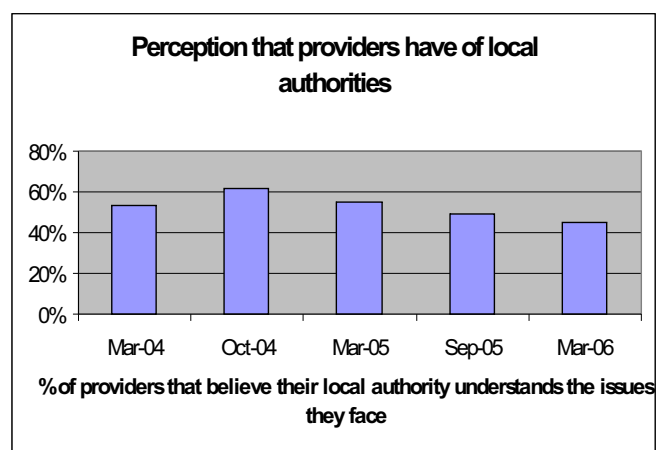
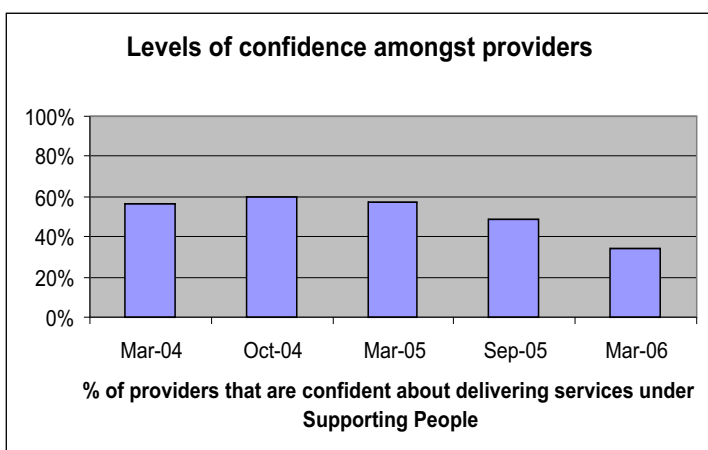
4. Relationships with local authorities. In March 2006 43% of providers said they are able to get information from their local authority with difficulty.

Throughout the two year study providers were asked to describe their relationship with their local authority. The extent to which providers described their relationship as "very good" has changed as follows.

- 17% March 2006
- 27% September 2005
- 32% March 2005
- 53% in October 2004
- 42% in March 2004

Many of the providers that had difficulty in gaining information from local authorities suggested that the local authority staff were not being evasive or deliberately concealing information it was simply that the staff did not know the answers to the questions being asked. It has been a challenging time for both providers and local authorities. There has been a degree of uncertainty about the decision making processes being adopted by local authorities and general difficulty in maintaining communication with providers.

Tracking Providers' Experience



Question Time: Supporting People Issues

Q. I provide tenancy support which is funded through Supporting People. One of my clients has severe obsessive compulsive disorder which means there are times when he cannot open the door (even to his support worker). My client has said he would like to give me a key so that I can let myself in if he is unable to answer the door. However, I am worried that the rules governing Supporting People means that if I carried a door key I would be offering care rather than support and therefore ineligible for SP funding . What do you think?

A. Regarding SP funding there are not any national rules about housing support staff holding people's keys to help access. In fact there are common situations where housing support staff do hold people's keys e.g. wardens in sheltered housing. I would suggest discussing this with your client's care manager who carried out the support needs assessment and set up the package. You can then consider the current barrier to your client accessing the housing support service (i.e. the difficulties he faces in answering the door) and agree a solution.

Q. Is there any restriction on SP funding visiting support for someone coming out of prison and still under the supervision of criminal justice?

A. Eligibility for Supporting People funding is based on the tasks being done rather than the status of the individual. The key issues will be finding a service with capacity to take on a new service user and ensuring a risk management strategy has been developed to cater for any assessed risks in delivering services in this scenario. As for supporting accommodation developed as Criminal Justice provision, the

housing support aspect of the service will be paid for through Supporting People as it would have previously been covered by THB. There are, however, a few examples where the Scottish Executive pays Criminal Justice for housing support costs rather than through SP - in these cases the housing support costs would not be eligible for Supporting People money as well.

Q. I would like to know how the SP grant was divided up amongst providers in my area. Could my local authority give me this information?

A. Yes, if you ask for the information under Freedom of Information. In a recent case involving housing support a local authority decided not to provide the information requested on the grounds of commercial sensitivity. This decision was the subject of an appeal and the Information Commissioner upheld the appeal and the information was released.

For more information about this and other cases visit the website at:

[Www.itspublicknowledge.info/appealsdecisions/index.html](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/appealsdecisions/index.html)

This ruling is significant for anyone entering a contract with a local authority. The information contained within that contract could become the subject of a Freedom of Information request. It is wise to discuss with a local authority when negotiating the terms of a contract how they will deal with such requests. You could ask them to alert you to any requests for information about your service, for example.

The Supporting People Enabling Unit is happy to respond to any questions you may have about the Supporting People programme. If you would like to discuss any issue please contact us on 0131 346 3145 or send an email to moira.weir@ccpscotland.org

Question Time: Supporting People Issues

Q. Do local authorities have to enter into full contracts after they have undertaken a service review? Our service review was very positive but now we have been told that the local authority has a gap in funding and the Councillors do not want to proceed to any full contract before this has been sorted out.

In the SE's guidance on Service Review the underlying assumption is that if a service meets the requirements of being strategically relevant, cost effective and produces a good standard of service then funding should continue using a full contract to underpin the arrangement.

That is the theory but of course the practicalities of Supporting People are more complex as it is has to be a local authority's decision whether or not to enter into a contract with anyone. Local authorities have their own Standing Orders to work within and these may require them to put services to tender before entering a contract. This may depend on the size of the potential contract.

Local authorities do not know what their SP grant level will be beyond 2007/08 so it is unlikely they would be willing to enter into a contract going beyond this.

The options open to councils include:

- extending the current Letter of Agreement or Interim Contract until such times as the council is in a position to enter into a full contract.
- entering into a full contract for 1 year only with a view to reviewing and possibly extending it later on.

From your point of view as a service provider there are pros and cons of both approaches. In the first case things carry on as they are with the decision being effectively delayed whereas in the second case a clearer commitment is being made by the council but without any guarantee beyond a year.

Q. I am currently undergoing a service review. The council has been in touch twice asking for information. The first time they got in touch they asked to see information on all costs relating to *housing support*. The second time the SP team got in touch they asked for information on all costs related to my *organisation*. The housing support service is just one part of our work and we are not keen to disclose information (for the purpose of service review) on aspects of the organisation that has nothing to do with housing support.

A. The Scottish Executive's guidance on service review only refers to services and not providers (or organisations as a whole). My suggestion would be for the organisation's Annual Report to be sent to the Council. It will contain information about income and expenditure of the whole organisation and is a public document.

Q. I am worried that there do not seem to be courses for housing support qualifications for support workers whose first language is sign language. In my experience the concepts used in SVQs do not easily translate into sign language. I am keen to ensure, however, that all members of staff have an opportunity to gain the qualifications necessary in preparation for registration in 2009/10. Is there any work underway to develop these?

A. The Unit has contacted various agencies that work with people with sensory impairment and found there is no consensus about the need for specific courses for people who are deaf. The SSSC has however indicated it is aware that people who are deaf may have special learning requirements and is keen to ensure they have the same level of access to training and qualification as hearing people. The SSSC has talked this over with some organisations that specialise in communication and sign language although it is not clear how this will be taken forward.

For Your Noticeboard

Publications

The Future Care of Older People in Scotland Range and Capacity

Review Group Second Report

Published by the Scottish Executive

May 2006

ISBN: 0-7559-6044-0

The report Investigates older person's issues and can be viewed on the internet at

www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/112906/0027388.pdf

or ordered from

Blackwell's Bookshop

53 South Bridge

Edinburgh, EH1 1YS

Telephone 0131 622 8283

Supporting People: Service Review and Budget Change Impact Monitoring

The report provides some background to the Service Review process before moving onto detailed consideration of the information councils have submitted about the outcomes of service review

Authors: Scottish Executive

Publication date: April 2006

Product description: 19 pages

The whole document is available on the Scottish Executive's Website at

www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1035/0027287.pdf

The Housing Support Directory

A Helpline has just been set up to support the new directory of housing support services across Scotland, "The House Key". The number is 0845 271 2323. To view the directory go to

www.thehousekey.org

Events

The Scottish Sheltered Housing Staff conference 2006

Chartered institute of Housing Scotland

27 and 28 June 2006

Aveimore Highland Resort

The programme reflects the changes happening in sheltered housing and includes input from SPEU.

For more information contact

Scotland.training@cih.org or view the website on

www.cih.org/scotland/conferences/shelteredhousing2006/index.html

Housing Options for Older People Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland

4 July 2006 and 19 September 2006

Opening Address from Malcolm Chisholm, Minister for Communities

This event is an opportunity to discuss the future of housing provision for older people. The event will be held over two days with participants participating in a detailed questionnaire during the first session and then discussing the results during the second.

For more information go to

www.cih.org/scotland/conferences/olderpeoplebook.pdf

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