

Getting ready for the Comprehensive Spending Review

At the SFHA conference on 26th September Stephen Sandham, Scottish Executive, spelt out the challenge that Supporting People faces as a national programme. Next year the Scottish Executive decides how much money it will be able to spend on the SP programme, against the many other competing funding priorities, for 3 years from 2008/09.

The funding of £401 million to local authorities already announced for 2007/08 consists of £383M from the Treasury (this is considered to be the 'baseline' against which funding for the future will be set) and a further £18M from managing underspends and securing savings from other Scottish Executive programmes as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review based on the findings of the various aspects of evaluation of what the SP programme is achieving in Scotland.

Evaluating SP in Scotland

The Scottish Executive has responded to the comments it received to its SP Evaluation Strategy consultation document earlier this year. In its response, the SE has undertaken to do the following:

- Set up a short life working group to examine local and national targets as well as data collecting issues
- those providers who indicated that they have experience of using an outcome model will be put in touch with DTZ Piedad to help with their research on outcome models
- alert its researchers looking at unit cost to the uniqueness of small providers and those delivering services in rural areas

To view the SE's response go to:
www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1035/0038208.pdf

More on research into unit costs

As detailed in the August issue of Bulletin, the Scottish Executive is commissioning research into the unit costs of SP. Tribal HCH has now been awarded the contract to undertake the research.

The focus of this research will be to explain the apparent differences in average costs of housing support services in Scotland compared with England.

The researchers will talk to providers as well as local authorities to examine the variation in SP costs per person across the 2 countries. This will also be an opportunity to reflect on the differences in cost across provider sector (private, LA, voluntary and RSL sectors).

The Scottish Executive has advised the Unit that the research will be concluded by April 2007. A research advisory group has been set up by the Scottish Executive to act as a sounding board for the research team. The SP Enabling Unit will take part on the advisory group.

Frequency of inspection by the Care Commission – have your say!

The Scottish Executive is currently consulting stakeholders on how often housing support services should be inspected.

The proposal is that housing support services run by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) should be inspected every 3 years as a minimum and that other housing support services should continue to be inspected at least once every year.

Do you agree? The Scottish Executive requires responses by 8 December 2006.

You can view the consultation document at:
www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/10/02095030/0

supportingpeople

enabling unit

Bulletin

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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.

Moving to full contract?

The progression to full contract was originally anticipated to be within the first year of Supporting People - that was back in 2003/04. As time goes on full contract, for many service providers, seems to be an increasingly remote possibility as they experience delays in service review and uncertain outcomes from those service reviews that have taken place.

There are some local authorities, however, who are sending full contracts to their providers asking them to sign them. This is particularly likely if you are working within a Letter of Agreement or Interim Contract with an end date which is approaching.

Signing up to a full contract

If you are wondering how to come to a decision about whether or not to sign up to the terms of the contract its worth having a look at the Model SP Contract Framework contained within the Scottish Executive's Supporting People Guidance. The framework can be viewed on the Scottish Executive website at: www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/03/16940/21297

The model consists of Core Clauses that have been developed by 24 local authorities and which could be used in any SP Contract. Alongside these are Variable Clauses which consist of examples of clauses which need to be negotiated locally. To assist understand the implications of the Variable Clauses there are guidance notes as well. It is worth having a look at these Variable Clauses as they go through various options. If you feel unhappy with a clause in the contract you have been presented with then you may find an alternative in the Model that might assist you in your discussion with your local authority commissioner.

Length of contract

The length of contract you are being offered is unlikely to be much more than a year because local authorities do not know what SP grant they will be offered by the Scottish Executive beyond 2007/08. There is currently debate about the processes that should apply when contracts are due for renewal. Some LA's are citing EU regulations as requiring tendering before contracts are let, while others (most) have made no decision. Provider body CCPS is seeking clarification of the legal position over whether re-tendering of

existing services is a requirement of EU legislation. SP Unit research has suggested that the requirement is to advertise the intention to enter into a contract, rather than enter a tendering process. With such uncertainty, the length of contract being offered is an important issue. There is a way of creating the possibility of extending a contract beyond its end date by including an 'option to extend' clause.

Mind the gap!

Unfortunately the Model SP Contract Framework does not include an 'option to extend' clause. You may decide this is something you need to consider in the light of the limited length of contracts being offered and the fact that local authorities may decide to advertise or tender future contracts. Without such a clause a council cannot decide to extend a contract which means that when the end date set in the contract comes up the contract really does end there.

There are some examples of councils including 'option to extend' clauses in SP contracts. If you would like to know more about these talk to your local authority SP Team or get in touch with Yvette Burgess at the SP Enabling Unit: yvette.burgess@ccpscotland.org

Tracking the changes!

As reported in the August edition of Bulletin, there have been revisions to the clauses dealing with Disclosure Scotland checks. These changes are currently not reflected in the Model Contract Framework on the Scottish Executive website so if you want to look at the new clauses go to the Unit's webpage at: www.ccpscotland.org/spunit/info/files/revised_clause.doc

Care Commission issues

At the recent housing support regulation events organised by the SP Enabling Unit providers were able to put a whole range of questions to the Care Commission about inspections and regulation of housing support more generally. Here is a selection of these along with the Care Commission's response:

Is there any work being done to improve the online Annual Return form?

Yes and providers have been consulted with in terms of improvements required. Their input has been of great value to developments.

Positive verbal feedback was not reflected in the report. Why not?

The Care Commission inspection report is an evaluative report reflecting upon a range of aspects considered at inspection. It should note strength areas and development areas for the service. It will not always include all feedback given at the point of verbal feedback as it is working to the set standards for the year and the regulations. There is to be future work on consultation and content of inspection reports.

Will inspection reports be more accessible to service users in the future?

Definitely. A project called Regulating for Improvement is looking at better involvement of service users and their carers. The reports are on the web for the public so they must become more accessible and offer more guidance on quality.

Can you explain what is meant by risk based inspections?

Before a service is inspected the CCO does a regulation support assessment (RSA) which informs the intensity and focus of the Care Commission's inspection. There is a scoring system: Low 1; Medium 2-3; High 4. The score will reflect outstanding requirements, recommendations, notifications, staffing issues, serious complaints, change of manager.

A new manager would immediately be a 2, for instance and a first inspection is automatically a 4. This includes existing services which have changed owners.

Further information about the RSA can be seen on the Care Commissions website:

www.carecommission.com/showpage.php?pageid=504

This approach will be developed over the next few years and will be the subject of academic research in the coming year.

Can a provider ask to see their RSA scoring?

Yes, the RSA should be discussed and shown to the care service manager at the point of inspection in order that they understand why their service is being inspected in the way it is.

Providers welcome informal contact between inspections and would like to invite Care Commission Officers (CCOs) to meetings with staff groups. Would this be possible?

CCOs do welcome informal contact and the ability to develop a partnership approach to regulation with the provider. The office always has a duty officer who can deal with things if the case holder is out. Sadly Care Commission resources are finite so it cannot always meet with staff groups.

When inspecting a combined service is there a different interpretation of standards depending on the nature of the service?

When it is a combined service the standards are weighted to care at home. This is because the care at home standards are more specific. The inspection is proportionate though so during the inspection the CCO will be aware that the service is more weighted towards housing support than care at home. If there is a need to introduce other standards to the inspection, the CCO can do this and will explain this to the provider.

What happens if a service user goes straight to the Care Commission with a complaint?

When first recording the complaint the Care Commission will ask if the complainant has raised the problem with the service. If the complainant has not then the Care Commission will ask if the service user wishes to do this. The service user does not have to do this if they do not wish to.

Has the Care Commission altered a complaint result as a result of a provider's appeal?

Providers do not have a right of appeal to a complaint outcome. This is the construction of the Complaints Procedure. They can of course point out inaccuracies which can be corrected e.g. once a resolution letter was sent out which stated that the complaint was "upheld" when it should have been "partially upheld" so the CC apologised and changed it.

Further issues raised with the Care Commission at the recent events will be posted on the Unit's web pages soon.

Charging for housing support services

As has been highlighted in previous editions of Bulletin councils have been issued new guidance by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) on charging for their services in order to create greater parity between the levels of charges the public face when using social care services.

Under the new guidance charges for housing support would be brought in line with charges for other social care services and could result in a greater number of people having to pay towards the services they use.

Local authorities have told us.....

In the summer the SP Enabling Unit approached councils to find out whether they are revising their charging policies in line with the new guidance issued. 20 councils said they have revised their SP charging policies in the light of the new CoSLA guidance and 1 council has revised their policy but not with reference to CoSLA. A further 5 said they are still in the process of revising their policies. Only 4 councils said they are not revising their policies. Of the remaining 2 councils 1 will revise their policy in the future and the other one is still considering what to do.

Existing service users

Most councils have advised that existing service users will be protected from charges. This is in line with the government's commitment to protect service users who started using services under THB before 31.3.03.

Falkirk and Shetland have advised that they do not charge anyone for housing support whilst 8 councils were not able to confirm yet whether existing service users will be protected or not. Dumfries and Galloway and Inverclyde councils have indicated that protection will cease for existing service users whilst South Ayrshire has advised that sheltered housing tenants will be protected but not other existing service users.

Long term services

Under SP guidance it is only long term services (ie those offering support for 2 years duration or more) that can consider charging for housing support under SP. Councils were asked whether they are likely to re-define short and long term SP services as there has been some discussion around this at a national level.

No council has decided to redefine what constitutes a long and short term service but there were 7 who

could not confirm that they will not do so in the future. One council explained that as part of service review a service may be re-classified. In that example existing service users are being protected from charges.

Providers are expressing some concerns about these developments. In particular there is concern about:

- a) **Take up of additional support** - service users not currently charged but whose needs change may face charges as they either move to another service or need increased hours of support. It may be difficult to gain agreement from service users and their families to accept this charge and therefore to accept the service change.
- b) **Extending charges to a wider range of service users** - in the past councils typically charged people using sheltered housing but not other groups. It is likely that other types of services will be subject to charging under revised policies and may act as a disincentive for people to agree to use services.
- c) **Delays in taking up supported accommodation** - under new policies it will not be enough to know that someone is eligible for housing benefit to know that they will be exempt from charges. A full financial assessment will have to be undertaken before a prospective service user can be advised what they will or will not be charged. This will have to be carried out before someone makes a decision about whether to use the service or not and could cause delays in letting supported accommodation. This is particularly a concern amongst sheltered housing providers.

If you have a view on these or other issues related to charging please get in touch with the Unit. We are keen to hear from you so we can comment on the impact these changes are having.

Charging - the national picture

| LA | Revising Charging Policy? | Date new policy to become effective? | Continued protection for existing service users? |
|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Aberdeen | Yes | 01/04/06 | Yes |
| Aberdeenshire | Yes | 01/04/06 | Yes |
| Angus | Yes | 01/04/06 | Yes unless person moves to another service |
| Argyle & Bute | Paper being Prepared | To be confirmed | Probably |
| Clackmannanshire | Policy reviewed but not in light of CoSLA guidance | 2 years ago | Threshold for charging is benefit + £10 so most people on HB are not charged |
| Dumfries & Galloway | Yes | 27/05/06 | Up to Sept 2007 only |
| Dundee | Yes | 22/05/06 | Yes |
| East Ayrshire | Yes | 10/04/06 | Yes |
| East Dunbarton | No | No | Yes |
| East Lothian | Yes | 01/04/06 | Yes |
| East Renfrewshire | Yes | 01/04/07 | To be confirmed |
| Edinburgh | No | N/A | Yes |
| Falkirk | Yes | 01/04/06 | No service users charged for housing support |
| Fife | Currently assessing impact of revising the policy | Not yet known | Yes |
| Glasgow | Putting proposal to committee | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| Highland | Yes | To be confirmed | To be decided |

| LA | Revising Charging Policy? | Date new policy to become effective? | Continued protection for existing service users? |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Inverclyde | Yes | The proposal is that charges will commence from 1st April 2007. | No. Phased charges of existing service users will apply from 1 st April 2007 leading to full charge from 1 st April 2008. |
| Mid Lothian | Yes | 01/04/06 | Yes |
| Moray | Yes | 01/04/06 | Yes |
| North Ayrshire | Yes | Not known | Yes |
| North Lanarkshire | Yes | 01/04/06 | To be decided |
| Orkney | Yes | To be confirmed | Yes |
| Perth & Kinross | Maybe | Not before 07/08 | To be confirmed |
| Renfrewshire | Yes | 10/04/06 | Three stage transition to charging |
| Scottish Borders | No | N/A | Yes - HB continues to be a passport |
| Shetland | No | No | No service users charged for housing support |
| South Ayrshire | Yes | 01/04/06 | Only residents of sheltered housing will be protected |
| South Lanarkshire | Underway | To be confirmed | Yes |
| Stirling | Yes | 02/10/06 | Yes |
| West Dunbarton | Not yet but may do in the future. | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| Western Isles | Yes | 01/04/06 | Yes |
| West Lothian | Ongoing | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |

Registration of the Housing Support Workforce

Preparation

Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association currently has 226 members of staff who will require to meet the SSSC qualifications criteria for inclusion on the housing support register. At present the vast majority of those staff do not have the required qualifications for registration.

When assessing the work undertaken by staff it became apparent that the most appropriate and minimum qualification would be SVQ 3 for Support Workers rising to SVQ 4 (and the Registered Managers Award) for Managers. Hanover set the qualification at a higher level than the SSSC requirements for Support Workers and Sheltered Housing Managers because the Association felt this was:

- more appropriate for the needs of service users;
- consistent with other providers; and
- more in line with SSSC qualification criteria applicable to equivalent posts in Care.

Hanover also view this more than simply meeting registration criteria. They see it as being part of its culture for continuous improvement; developing a learning environment which will improve the quality of service to its users is important.

Hanover was aware that there would be many implications involved for the organisation and staff in supporting their staff through obtaining their qualifications. As a result the Association decided to undertake a pilot scheme which would help inform them in order to take forward the process to the next stage. This would allow them to assess fully how best to deliver a qualification programme for the organisation. The pilot will take into account all relevant issues including learning support, communication and costs.

50 members of staff put themselves forward to take part in the pilot study and seven staff members were selected. The volunteers agreed to complete the qualification and to give regular feedback to Hanover's Training Officer on how they were progressing.

In addition to the externally resourced verification part of the pilot, Hanover is also running an internal assessment trial scheme using one member of staff as a qualified assessor. The internal assessment will allow most of the work to be done in-house and the fee paid to the college will be less. This fee is mainly to allow the college to verify the work carried out in-house. Hanover has three staff proceeding via internal assessment, allowing the external verification and internal verification routes to SVQ to be compared.

The volunteers are just starting their qualifications but already some issues have been highlighted:

- **Costs.** The cost of SVQs quoted to Hanover varies from one training provider to another.
- **Staff time to complete award.** Many staff are lone workers and therefore relief cover is difficult and costly to arrange. As a result members of the pilot group are expected to undertake the majority of their SVQ out with their working hours.
- **Access to information technology.** The external training providers in the pilot expect that SVQs will be presented in a word processed typed format which may prove a possible barrier to staff and their learning. As a result staff must be given access to computers, and for those staff who do not currently use computers, training in how to use word processing packages will be required.

Over the next year the Unit will keep in touch with Hanover's pilot scheme and will update providers on the issues it highlights.

Work of SSSC's housing support qualification advisory group

In 2005 the SSSC formed a Housing Support Qualifications Advisory Group which met to develop a housing support qualification that is suitable for registration. The group met for the last time on 26 September 2006. At this meeting it was acknowledged that over the last year the group has:

- Agreed additions to the qualifications criteria for phase two workers in Housing support services
- Created Skill Sets of SVQ units at levels 2, 3 and 4 for workers in Housing Support services
- Recommended the development of two new optional HNC units relating to Housing Support and Homelessness for the Higher National Certificate in Social Care
- Agreed to pursue funding for the development of distance and e-learning resources for new housing support and homelessness HNC units

Future updates on the qualification and registration of the housing support workforce will be available from Wendy Johnston, Project Officer Housing, SSSC - Tel 01382 207186, Mob 07795 618348

Funding for training

The Voluntary Sector Social Services Workforce Unit has prepared a funding guide called Navigating the Funding Streams 2. The guide contains:

- Tips for completing application forms
- Details of more than forty funding sources and training courses that will support prior learning requirements, registration and additional learning and development needs such as post registration training and learning

- Information on applying for loans for learning and development
- Updates on the major initiatives and drivers for workforce development, such as the Strategic Funding Review, Learning Networks, and Skills for Care and Development

A copy is available on the WFU website at www.ccpScotland.org/workforceunit/info/publications.php or by contacting vswu.admin@ccpScotland.org

News from Wales

Finding an IT Solution!

Providers in Wales have got together to develop an IT tool which will help them collate the information councils require of them for Supporting People purposes. The tool is called SPriNT and has been developed by Cadarn Housing Group in conjunction with other providers, Cymorth Cymru (a membership organization for SP providers), the Welsh Assembly and British Telecom.

Richard Troote of the Cadarn Group came to Edinburgh in September to demonstrate SPriNT to a group of providers, local authorities and the Scottish Executive.

The general reaction to it was one of interest. Providers felt it was versatile enough to cope with the various types of recording and reporting they have to do and that it has the potential to save time in collating reports. Initial reaction was also that it was cheaper than some other IT options. The Scottish Executive was interested to see that it can record outcomes. Feedback from local authority representatives at the event was less positive because they felt that such a system would be duplicating what they are developing themselves. The extent to which local authorities are developing web based systems for providers to use, however, is not clear at the moment.

So far 32 providers in Wales have signed up to use SPriNT. 1 provider has been using it since April 2006 and the others started using it in August. If anyone would like to know more about it further details are available at from the Cadarn Housing Group at newbusiness@cadarn.co.uk or Tel 0870 242 0673

Cymorth Cymru

Joy Kent, Director of Cymorth Cymru, met with providers and the SP Enabling Unit in Spetember. Cymorth Cymru is the Welsh equivalent of the SP Enabling Unit working with providers of housing related support across Wales. Joy Kent was interested to hear about the Model SP Contract Framework something which has not been developed in Wales. She said 'we've learnt a lot from our partner organisations from across the UK and it was great to meet the team and providers on our visit to Edinburgh; the Celtic connection is one we feel could be particularly beneficial'.

Cymorth Cymru has recently launched a report into the impact of housing support on people's lives and traces financial savings housing support brings by helping people become more self reliant and/or retain independence for longer. Further details are provided on page 8.

For Your Noticeboard

Community Care Providers Scotland Annual Conference 23 & 24 November 2006

Dunblane Hydro

Community Care Providers Scotland is holding its fifth annual conference in November 2006. The event will feature a range of expert speakers and will give delegates an opportunity to share and debate with their public sector

colleagues some ideas about the role of the voluntary sector in social care. The discussion will be set against the backdrop of public sector reform as set out in Changing Lives, Delivering for Health and the National Workforce Strategy.

For more information see the website at www.ccpscotland.org/news/index.php#1

or contact dorothy.robertson@ccpscotland.org

Rough Guide to Service Review

The Unit has produced a series of guides that gives information and advice on Supporting People service review. Topics include, preparation for review, presenting costs and access to sensitive information. Each of the guides are available on the Units website at

www.ccpscotland.org/spunit/publications/rough_guides.php

Publications

Review of Public Procurement in Scotland Report and recommendations

John F. McClelland 2006
ISBN 0-7559-4999-4

This report is a detailed review of public sector procurement in Scotland. This document is available on the Scottish executive's website at www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/96269/0023302.pdf

Printed copies are available from
Blackwell's Bookshop
53 South Bridge
Edinburgh
EH1 1YS
Telephone 0131 622 8283
Email business.edinburgh@blackwell.co.uk

I Don't Want To Miss A Thing: Stories of regenerated lives from people supported by the Thistle Foundation in Renfrew

Julia Fitzpatrick and Jaynie Mitchell 2006
ISBN 09554119-0-4 from In Control Publications

This report tells the story of people who have moved from institutional care to their own homes within the community.

To obtain a copy contact The Thistle Foundation at:
Telephone 0131 661 3366
Email cdarke@thistle.org.uk

Bringing It Home: putting citizens at the centre through housing related support

Liz Millward, Joy Kent and Cath Boswell 2006

This report explores the difference that housing support makes to people's lives in Wales.

To obtain a copy contact Cymorth Cymru at:
Telephone 02920 491 513
Email karendronsield@cymorthcymru.org.uk

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