

Local authorities finalise Single Outcome Agreements

All 32 local authorities in Scotland have now finalised their Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs). The Unit has read through all 32 to identify those outcomes and indicators that relate to housing support. 7 SOAs include the broad ranging Indicator 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.

Some client groups and issues are mentioned with more frequency than others in the SOAs:

- 100% of SOAs specifically mention services for older people
- 90% of SOAs specifically mention homelessness
- 59% of SOAs specifically mention domestic violence
- 59% of SOAs specifically mention suicide prevention

However, other client groups served by housing support, such as people with learning disabilities or physical disabilities, are less prominent. It is not clear yet what impact the SOAs are having on funding decisions. What needs to be remembered is that the SOAs are not required to refer to statutory duties nor to areas of local need currently deemed to be catered for adequately. SOAs, therefore, not the only driver guiding funding decisions.

To assist providers the Unit has

extracted those local outcomes and indicators relating to housing support along with elements of care at home from each SOA.

To view please go to the website at www.ccpscotland.org/spunit/info/documents/SOAs.doc Please note that this is a guide only and no discussion has taken place with the individual local authorities so you should look at the full SOA before entering into any discussion with your local authority about how your service relates to it. You will find the full SOA for each local authority elsewhere on the HSEU website at www.ccpscotland.org/spunit/info/local_authorities.php.

If you have any comments to make about SOAs or the extracts which the Unit has suggested are relevant to housing support please contact moira.weir@ccpscotland.org

The next round of SOAs

The Unit met with Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) in July and raised the issue of how providers are to have any impact on the next round of SOAs. COSLA advised that it will be Community Planning Partnerships (CCPs) that develop future SOAs rather than simply local authorities as was the case this year. A task group has been established with SCVO which will consider how voluntary sector organisations can become involved in CPPs. To find out more go to www.scvo.org.uk/scvo/PolicyAndParliament/ViewPolicyInformation.aspx?al=t&from=h&Info=1734&CatID=10

Single Outcome Agreement

Care Commission

Outcomes Matrix

Service Users' Experience

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.

Housing Support Outcomes Framework

As reported in the last Bulletin, the Scottish Government has decided to fund further development of the housing support outcomes framework. To launch this next stage of its development an event is taking place on 9th October to bring interested stakeholders together to consider the findings of the evaluation and to start work on improving the framework.

Over the next 4 months work will be undertaken to improve the way the framework reflects preventative aspects of services as well as extend its scope to include employment issues and social networking. The next stage after this will include developing an IT tool and a guidance manual to help train housing support staff in the use of the matrix.

A reference group is being set up which will ensure that all interested parties are kept up to date on developments around the outcomes framework with some opportunity to comment on aspects of it. If you would be interested in being involved on this group please email Yvette Burgess at: yvette.burgess@ccpscotland.org

RSLs' Concern About Tendering

Registered Social landlords have been getting in touch with the HSEU to say how concerned they are about the policy and practice of tendering. The concerns were summarised by Fiona Stringfellow of Dunedin Canmore below:

Registered Social Landlords have two main concerns:

- Providers of support services (which are also RSLs) are being asked to tender for services that they may have been running successfully for many years. (Edinburgh is looking at tendering of all homelessness services)
- RSL's have numerous partnership arrangements with the voluntary sector where buildings are either purpose built for use by agencies or where tenancies are provided and support brought in by an agency to enable the tenant to sustain their tenancy.

In the latter case, I have been speaking to support agencies as I was concerned about the impact that reduced housing support funding and tendering

will have on tenants sustaining their tenancies.

If tendering of services happens and the agency loses out on the contract, there is the transition stage between agencies transferring over. There is a danger that the tenants become lost in this process and the impact there could be on the sustainability of their tenancy. The impact would fall on Housing Officers to manage any difficulties with the tenancy as a result of co-ordination difficulties with the "old" service provider and the "new" service provider. I'm just not sure that many RSL's are aware of these developments and issues.

Where RSL's have purpose built developments for particular agencies, they could find themselves being faced with a new provider who they have no knowledge of, or working relationship when they own the building and the council tenders the service being operated in the building.'

The issues raised are important to providers and the HSEU is keen to gather suggestions about how to provide a smooth transition. If this issue has affected you or you have any comment to make please get in touch with moira.weir@ccpscotland.org

Care Commission: Changes to 2009/10 Inspection

In 2008 the Care Commission introduced, Regulating for Improvement (RFI) which placed greater emphasis on service user participation, introduced the grading of services and placed more importance on the providers own self evaluation process.

The Care Commissions RFI process requires providers to consider how well the service is performing against a set of Quality Themes and associated Quality Statements.

For Housing Support Providers there are 3 Quality Themes assessed by the Care Commission:

1. Quality of Care and Support
2. Quality of Staffing
3. Quality of Management

These Quality Themes and the associated Quality Statements will remain unchanged for 2009/10. As such there will be no changes to the Self Assessment document.

There are however going to be some minor changes to the Annual Return document which providers are required to complete. These have been made as a result of consultation with providers, SFHA and the Housing Support Enabling Unit.

The Annual Return is used by the Care Commission for various purposes. Firstly, to inform the Regulatory Support Assessment, this is essentially a risk assessment to ascertain how frequently and for how long a service should be inspected. Currently Housing Support Services which are provided by a RSL are only subject to inspection at least once every 3 years. If a service is assessed as a high or medium risk, this service will be inspected more frequently than this 3 yearly minimum.

The Annual Return is also used to capture information about services which is used for the Care Commissions purposes, for the Scottish Government or other regulators, such as the SSSC.

The most significant change to the Self Assessment document is that this will only be available as an electronic version. Paper versions are not going to be distributed.

Changes to the Annual Return documents include:

1. Removal of references to many policies and procedures

The Care Commission has over the past 6 years asked providers whether they have more than 20 policies and whether these have been updated. As a result of consultation, this information will not be sought in the Annual Return.

This will be looked at during inspection, where a particular issue is being examined within a Quality Theme or an Inspection Focus Area, such as safer recruitment.

2. Nutrition and provision of meals

This is a particular concern for Care at Home services and as such where providers are providing Housing Support with Care at Home providers will be asked to identify:

- Whether staff receive training appropriate to their role in planning menus.
- Whether staff have a training plan to support service users to eat well.
- Details of the training provided.

Providers should also be aware that in 2009/10 the Care Commission will be looking at the following Inspection Focus Areas:

1. Safer Recruitment (revisited)
2. The provision of Meaningful Activities (Housing Support and combined Housing Support and Care at Home services)

More information will be made available on these and additional IFA for 2009/10 on the Care Commission website.

In addition, providers are advised that the SFHA and the Care Commission have been looking at the legal processes - 'Notifications', 'Variation', 'Cancellation' and the requirements of Housing Support providers.

Guidance on these issues will be made available to providers on completion of this work.

HSEU Research into housing support funding levels and service volume in Scotland from 2007/08

In 2007 the Scottish Government decided to remove the ring fence around the Supporting People budget. From 1 April 2008 local authorities are no longer required to spend a specified amount on housing support.

Providers of housing support have expressed concern that the removal of the Supporting People ring fence could have a negative effect on housing support.

In particular there is concern that:

- the SP ring fence removal will impact negatively on funding levels as local authorities face competing pressures on their budgets
- less housing support services may be commissioned in future

In response to this the Housing Support Enabling Unit decided to undertake research to find out:

- if local authorities in Scotland pay the full cost of the housing support services they commission
- if the amount of housing support local authorities purchase changes as the new funding arrangements take effect.

In May 2008 the HSEU contacted all 1198 housing support service managers registered with the Care Commission to invite them to take part in the survey. 322 services responded with 221 giving full information and this provided the foundation of the research findings.

The results of the survey for 2007/08 highlighted four key points.

- 44% of the respondents reported that they were operating in deficit
- Small packages of support (less than 4 hours per week) made up a significant proportion of the housing support delivered by respondents in Scotland
- Respondents exclusively offering packages of less than 4 hours per week

were more likely to be operating in deficit than those offering a mix of services.

- A number of respondents have been taking steps to find funding from other sources and / or find ways of reducing costs

The research also provided a baseline of quantitative information which can be used for comparison in future years.

The information from the postal survey highlighted a number of trends. The HSEU investigated this further by getting in touch with some participants to hear more about their experience. This was then written up as a case study which is designed to illustrate and expand on the findings of the postal survey.

The case studies can be found throughout the report and included information on:

- The impact of long term and short term housing support on individuals lives
- The impact that funding changes have had on a large Registered Social Landlord
- How providers have dealt with funding restrictions
- How a local authority approached the removal of the Supporting People ringfence in 2008/09

The first stage of the research has consisted of gathering information from providers about funding and service levels in 2007/08. The aim of this stage has been to develop a baseline of information with which to compare information from similar exercise in future years.

For more information and to view a copy of the report please contact moira.weir@ccpscotland.org.

A Service User's Experience of Housing Support

Providers have reported concerns that preventative services will lose out in the new funding arrangements due to competing pressures local authority face and the difficulty services face in demonstrating their full impact.

The HSEU has spoken to service users to hear about their experience of housing support and how receiving support has helped them. Mr William Brown of Fife was particularly keen to talk about his experience as he believes that housing support has been instrumental in allowing him to lead an independent life and he wants others to be able to benefit as he has done.

William Brown has been renting a house from Kingdom Housing Association since 1990.

Mr Brown's learning disability and diabetes means he needs a little support to maintain his tenancy and for the first seventeen years of his tenancy Mr Brown received one hour's support a week. The weekly support centred round administrative issues such as paying the bills and other official correspondence.

In 2007 it became clear to Mr Brown that he was not coping well with life. He had lost interest in the care and maintenance of his home and lost interest in his own health and well being. After a long talk with his support worker Heather Morrison, it was decided that his support package would be revised. Heather and Mr Brown decided to increase the support to four hours per week and to focus the support on personal development and well being.

Heather also identified that Mr Brown could do with some specialist help as he had suffered a number of bereavements of close family members over the previous two years and sometimes found the emotional impact of this difficult to cope with. Unfortunately Heather has not been able to find a bereavement counsellor or psychologist who is trained in helping people with learning disabilities.

Mr Brown now uses his support hours to learn about completing household tasks such as:

- cleaning
- washing
- budgeting
- home maintenance

Mr Brown is finding it easier to manage household tasks and is taking a greater pride in his home.

Mr Brown's support also focuses on his physical health and well being by looking at cooking and healthy eating. In the past Mr Brown's staple diet was Lorne sausage sandwiches and Chinese takeaways but since starting the revised support package he has enjoyed trying out different foods and now cooks for himself and includes a variety of vegetables in his diet.

Mr Brown has lost weight and feels fitter. His diabetes has also stabilised. Mr Brown is now looking to the future and plans to go to college where he will study English and job seeking skills.

Both Mr Brown and his support worker Heather agree that without the support on offer Mr Brown would struggle to maintain his home. Four hours of support keeps Mr Brown on track and allows him to lead an independent life. Without the support he feels it is likely he would fall behind with household chores, become depressed and his diabetes would become unmanageable leading him to have extensive periods of time in hospital.

Further examples of housing support in action will be available in the HSEU's research report Research Into Housing Support Funding Levels and Service Volume from 2007/08 shortly.

Questions and Answers

Q. My local authority commissioner has informed me that there has been a change in procurement policy and it is now necessary to “test the market” before issuing a contract.

The commissioning team have been quite candid about the fact they do not want to do this for the Learning Disability group homes I manage as the service underwent a Supporting People Service Review and was considered excellent. The service users have lived here for years and I am concerned that any tendering exercise would cause a good deal of uncertainty. I had thought that under Part B regulations they could state that “testing the market” was not in the interest of the client. Is this not the case?

A. The scenario you describe does sound like one where the local authority could legitimately decide not to go out to tender. The new SPD Guidance note acknowledges that social care services fall within the Part B category and as such are not subject to tendering as other services purchased by public bodies are. The SPD Guidance refers to some of the alternatives to tendering open to local authorities to adopt www.ccpscotland.org/spunit/info/housing_support_plans.php#P7

You might also find it helpful to have a look at a recent document developed in England by the Government and SITRA - it outlines in greater detail some of the alternatives to tendering.

Here is a link to the area on our website where we are constantly adding new procurement related documents: www.ccpscotland.org/spunit/info/housing_support_plans.php The SITRA document is called 'A Provider's Guide to Procurement'.

Q. Can you give me a quick reminder about when housing support staff need to register with the SSSC and what qualifications they need to have?

A. Yes. The register for housing support managers will open in autumn 2009 and

supervisors and workers will follow after that. As for qualifications, the SSSC has a section on its website dedicated to explaining which qualifications are appropriate for registration www.sssc.uk.com/Registration/Other+social+service+workers/Housing+support+services/Housing+support+services.htm

From time to time new qualifications meet the criteria for SSSC registration and this is where they will be posted so it is a good idea to check out the web page for the most up to date information.

Q. I work for a Law Centre and have seen an increasing number of elderly clients who are very concerned about charges now being imposed on them in sheltered housing. I know this was an issue you covered before but when I looked at the back issue of the Bulletin the advice referred to Supporting People Guidance. Is this still applicable since the removal of the Supporting People ring fence?

A. Yes, you are quite right, the protection from charging associated with Supporting People for people who had used services before 1.4.03 can no longer be taken for granted. In a letter from the Scottish Government to local authorities in April this year it was stated that 'decision on whether certain categories of service user continue to be protected from charges are again a matter for each council to decide.' This leaves the way open for councils to decide to start charging individuals who have not had to pay towards the cost of housing support before. What the Scottish Government does expect, however, is that councils keep in touch with services users about any changes in their charging policies. In addition the Government expects councils to obtain a person's written consent before applying any new charge.

You can refer to the Government's letter here: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/access/housingsupport/supportpeople/GuidonenSPProg

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.

New procurement guidance

The Scottish Procurement Directorate issued new guidance on advertising and competition in social care procurement on 22 August. The details are contained in Scottish Procurement Policy Note SPPN 10, which supersedes the Supporting People Procurement Information Sheet issued by the Scottish Government in April 2007. www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Procurement/policy/manual/policy-notes/SPPN102008/

The new guidance does not mark a change in policy, but formalises previous advice on the requirement to advertise social care contracts and to award such contracts through open and fair competition. It includes advice on circumstances where advertising and competition may not be required.

Progress on Telecare

The national Telecare Development Programme started in 2006 and is making a four year £16.5m investment in telecare services. The programme's evaluators, York University Health Economics Consortium, have found that the programme is helping to improve quality of life for service users and their families. Feedback from Health and Social Care Partnerships shows that by December 2007, the programme had funded an additional 6,000 telecare service users and saved 13,000 hospital bed days and 35,000 care home days. Research into the views of 460 service users' showed that:

- Over 93% feel safer at home;

- Over 87% report that their families are less worried about them;
- Nearly 70% feel more independent; and
- Almost 60% report an improved quality of life.

Telecare has also brought benefits for carers, with nearly 70% of 300 carers surveyed reporting that caring for their relatives is less stressful as a result of telecare.

More information on Telecare in Scotland can be found on the Scottish Government Joint Improvement Team's website. www.jitscotland.org.uk/action-areas/telecare-in-scotland/

Registration with the Scottish Social Services Council Final dates to achieve registration

Registration of the social service workforce commenced in April 2003 with the registration of social workers. Since then there has been a phased approach to register other groups of workers employed in the social service sector. Scottish Ministers now intend to introduce final dates for achievement of registration for all groups for whom the SSSC register is opened. A consultation on the proposed final dates and proposals for new staff will shortly be issued and will be available on the Scottish Government website

These proposals will not affect housing support staff, as the register has not yet been opened for applications for registration. However, when registration does commence, final dates will be considered and set.

Contact the Housing Support Team at:

E-mail: housingsupport@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 0131-244-5524

Website: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/access/housingsupport

For Your Noticeboard

Training

Procurement - responding to the challenge.

The HSEU has worked with Sam MacLean of MacLean Consulting to develop a day course on tendering and procurement. This one-day course will complement the previous workshop on tendering, although it will also 'stand on its own'.

The topics covered will be:

- Tendering Challenges for Independent Sector Organisations
- Exploring the Value of Your Organisation
- Collaborative Working

This training day is aimed at those with responsibility for making decisions and submitting & presenting tenders and those

who commission these services. It will be useful to both service managers and commissioners of services.

The course will be held on the following dates:

- Edinburgh 12 November 2008
- Perth 18 November 2008
- Glasgow 25 November 2008
- Glasgow 3 December 2008

More information and a booking form is available on the HSEU website at www.ccpscotland.org/spunit/events/coming_events.php or by emailing liz.pettigrew@ccpscotland.org

Events

Highland and Moray Regional Event Inverness

1.30 pm Thursday 20 November 2008

The Housing Support Enabling Unit is hosting a regional meeting that will give providers an opportunity to hear the latest news about housing support and a chance to exchange views and experiences. There is no charge for this event but places should be booked by contacting liz.pettigrew@ccpscotland.org.

The Housing Support Enabling Unit has moved premises.

The email and website addresses remain the same and the changes to postal address and telephone numbers are outlined below.

Contacting the Unit: Switchboard Telephone: 0131 220 2336

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