

Fresh Thinking, New Ideas

– a discussion on housing policy

The Scottish Government launched a policy discussion paper on housing on 1st June 2010 and is inviting the public to comment on the issues outlined in it. It intends to produce a policy paper towards the end of the year.

The paper sets out the difficult financial situation Scotland faces and the pressures on housing, both new and existing, as a result. It acknowledges changing demographics and the increase in numbers of households as well as the increasing age of the population.

The importance of technology in meeting changing housing needs and the role of housing support in promoting independent living are touched on as well as the increasing need for adaptations. There is an acknowledgement that preventative housing support services may come under increasing financial pressure. This is something which the HSEU highlighted in its research in 2009.

Whilst the paper acknowledges the importance of small amounts of support to help people to remain independent it opens up a debate about the extent to which service users should pay for the housing related services in terms of 'low level support' as well as handyperson services.

'Non-subsidised social enterprise' is suggested as a model for delivering 'low level' support services but examples of this model are not provided. The questions posed in the paper about funding which have a bearing on housing related support are:

- To what extent should individuals be financially responsible for meeting their own support needs and housing adaptations as they grow older and to what extent should the state support them?
- To what extent should RSLs be expected to meet the cost of adaptations to their stock from their overall rental income, in line with LAs?

The paper promotes the role of housing options advice at various stages of a person's life as a way of moving towards more personalised housing services. The adoption of such an approach is regarded as a way to prevent homelessness. The paper asks how knowledge and resources can be pooled to achieve this.

The paper provides an opportunity to answer these questions, and others, from the point of view of housing support and an opportunity to suggest what needs to happen to ensure housing support continues to play an important role in helping people obtain and maintain a home.

A series of events is being organised by the Scottish Government. To find out more go to:

<http://housingdiscussion.scotland.gov.uk/summer-discussion-events>

Join in the discussion and/or contact the Unit with your views to help inform the response the Unit will submit later in the summer at:

<http://www.ccpscotland.org/hseu/information/consultation-by-the-scottish-government#fresh-thinking-new-ideas-housing-policy-discussion-paper>

Housing Support Survey in circulation

The HSEU's latest housing support survey is now with housing support providers who have services registered with the Care Commission. This is the third year of the research which is the only research monitoring changing trends in sector funding in Scotland. Many thanks to all participants.

More about the survey on page 5...

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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.

Focusing on Homelessness and its Prevention

The Scottish Government and COSLA delivered a day conference in June to consider ways to prevent homelessness. The event was used to announce new funding for local authorities to promote a housing options approach in order to prevent homelessness.

This approach is regarded to be one way local authorities can meet the 2012 target under which anyone presenting as homeless will be assisted regardless of being vulnerable or in 'priority need'. The 'housing options' approach encourages a holistic assessment of a person's situation with the focus being on the choices open to them in relation to housing, location and employment. The aim of it is to move away from simply maintaining housing waiting lists and the high use of temporary accommodation. Some local authorities are already demonstrating the impact that this sort of approach can have on homelessness. North Ayrshire Council, for instance, was highlighted as having reduced its use of temporary accommodation and reduced the level of housing allocations to people having presented as being homeless. One of the ways it has done this has been to provide more support to families where young people are at risk of becoming homeless rather than continue to offer tenancies to young people once they reach 16 years of age.

There may be implications for housing support in the housing options approach with its focus on preventing housing crises and possibly greater use of the private rented sector.

An area on the Government's website has been set up to focus on the prevention of homelessness:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/access/homeless/HomelessnessPrevention>

Homelessness and Getting it Right for Every Child

The Scottish Government has updated statutory guidance for meeting the best interests of children facing homelessness in June 2010. It makes reference to Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), the government's overarching approach to meeting the needs of all children and young people. It emphasises the need for coordination between services working with families with children

who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Whilst the guidance is aimed at local authorities there are clearly implications for all services working with such families. With regard to housing support services, whilst the focus of work may be with adults in the family, the GIRFEC approach helps practitioners focus on securing better outcomes for children. In the context of homelessness, the guidance envisages that a named person be identified to coordinate services around a child. The guidance includes links to GIRFEC practice resources.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1033/0100905.doc>

Beyond Homelessness: developing positive social networks - Research into the application and effects of positive social networks in tackling homelessness

As reported in the January Bulletin, the Rock Trust is undertaking a 4 year research project with the support of Glasgow School of Social Work at Strathclyde University. This research will look at the role of housing support services in enabling individuals who have experienced or are at risk of homelessness to build positive social networks.

A full-time research fellow has now been appointed - Katey Staton - and a survey is being planned for release at the beginning of August. It will be aimed at support providers and staff at local authority housing departments.

If you are interested in getting involved please email katey.staton@rocktrust.org or call Katey on 07827851795.

Questions and Answers

This section deals with topical questions which the HSEU enquiry service has dealt with over the last few months.

Q. I have heard that there has been a recent judgment about what 'adequate accommodation' means in terms of housing benefit eligibility where a person needs certain equipment in their home. Can you tell me more about it?

A. Yes, there has recently been a case brought by tenants whose landlord (Margaret Blackwood HA) charges for the provision and maintenance of equipment that is needed to assist disabled people to live independently. The equipment includes enhanced door entry systems, special toilets, track and hoist systems as well as door and window openers. The local authority (Dundee City Council) decided to dispute the eligibility of the charges for housing benefit when an increase in rent was announced.

The council had previously been paying housing benefit for these elements of the rent, in some cases for years. The council notified the claimants that eligibility for housing benefit for the service charges would cease from April 2009, and the landlord helped each tenant to appeal to a tribunal against the decision on this matter. The tribunal decided that, for the purposes of housing benefit, **the standard from which to judge adequacy of accommodation must encompass disabled people, and the individual personal needs of the residents must be taken into account.** On that basis (among others) the tribunal made a decision that was binding on all of the cases, to the effect that all of the service charges were eligible for housing benefit.

Although the tribunal judgement does not create a legally binding precedent in other cases, it does follow principles established in a decision of the Social Security Commissioner in 1995 and a decision of the Upper Tribunal in 2008, both of which are legally binding case law: <http://www.ccpscotland.org/hseu/information/housing-benefits>. The tribunal decision itself is well reasoned and may function as useful guidance for anyone considering similar issues in other cases.

The tribunal's written statement of reasons can be viewed at:

<http://www.ccpscotland.org/assets/files/hseu/information/Housing%20Benefit/SOR%20HB%20Lead%20Cases.pdf>

Q. As a service provider I responded to the Unit's recent questionnaire about charging and am really interested to know if local authorities are being contacted also to find out how they approach charging for housing support.

A. Thank you for completing the online survey. 92 people responded in all and the results are currently being collated. Local authorities have also been contacted to tell us whether or not they would charge in a couple of situations involving housing support. An outline of the findings will be posted on the Unit's website towards the end of the summer.

Q. Do you know when the social care procurement guidance will be finalised?

A. The Government hopes to be able to publish the guidance at the beginning of September 2010. The Unit has devoted an area of its website to procurement issues and updates will be posted here about the new guidance:

<http://www.ccpscotland.org/hseu/information/procurement>

The latest newsletter from JIT about the guidance can be viewed at:

<http://www.ccpscotland.org/assets/files/hseu/Practice/JIT-SPT%20Social%20Care%20Procurement%20Programme%20Newsletter%20May%202010.doc>

Do you have any questions about housing support policy or practice? We'd be happy to help. Just contact the HSEU enquiry service on 0131 229 9468

Better Futures update

Since May, the Unit has recruited 14 people from local authorities and provider organisations to examine the web-based recording tool and provide feedback on it.

Alongside this, two demonstrations of the tool have been conducted for stakeholder groups and the tool was presented at the Scottish Care conference in May. The feedback offered to date has been extremely helpful in guiding the ongoing development work. One of the issues being addressed is the use of graphics during the inputting process and at the end of the process to portray progress made by an individual.

As a result of feedback the 'smiley face' graphics are being replaced.

The IT supplier, Capita, is currently setting up standard reports which will assist system users in the future to run reports for themselves and for commissioners or contract managers.

The tool will be launched in September and training events are being organised to assist organisations and their staff who decide to start using it.

In the meantime if you wish to gain access to the system on a trial basis please contact Liz Pettigrew at: liz.pettigrew@ccpscotland.org

Entries welcome for 'No place like home...' competition

Are any of your service users budding amateur photographers?

The HSEU is calling for entries for a new photography competition for housing support service users.

The competition 'No place like home...' is all about celebrating the achievements and the experiences of people who receive housing support services in Scotland. It will run from June 2010 to September 2010, culminating in a awards ceremony at the annual Scottish Housing and Support Conference in October.

As the name of the competition suggests, it focuses on the home and how important it is as a basis for everything else in a person's life. Service users are being invited, with the help of their support workers, to put forward photographs representing one of three prize-winning categories - home, community and challenges. Yvette Burgess, Director of the HSEU explained the thinking behind the competition: 'So

much good work is carried out by the housing support sector which makes a very real difference to many people's lives. However, it is often hard to convey this. The photography competition is an opportunity to do this in a very powerful manner using images. Service users can enter through their support worker on their own, or as part of a team. We hope that housing support providers will help us by encouraging their service users to participate.'

The photographs will be displayed on an on-line gallery which will become a resource for housing support providers to help them promote housing support.

The three competition winners will each receive a cash prize of £100. The competition is sponsored by Quality Gas Ltd, Kilbarchan Maintenance Services Ltd, TECDEC Ltd, Laidlaw Scott, McDermott Contracts and Connaught plc.

For more information and a 'No place like home..' entry pack, visit www.ccpscotland.org/hseu or contact Cath Cassidy on 0131 229 9468 or cath.cassidy@ccpscotland.org

New on-line case study resource

The HSEU is developing a new case study resource for housing support providers.

The aim of the resource is to showcase good practice in the sector, making it available on-line so that it can be accessed by housing support providers.

Service providers are being asked to help develop the resource by providing examples of good practice in all areas of housing support.

The HSEU is looking for case studies both from the service user's and the service provider's perspective. To make this process simpler, a range of electronic templates has been designed to enable providers to submit their case studies in the same format.

Providers can choose the template which suits their

example best from the HSEU website and return it by email to the HSEU.

Case studies will be featured on a newly-designed section on the HSEU website.

For more information contact:

cath.cassidy@ccpscotland.org

Tel 0131 229 9468

You can view case studies and the case study templates at:
<http://www.ccpscotland.org/hseu/practice/service-provider-case-studies>

Annual housing support survey in circulation

This year's Housing Support Survey is, as before, targeted at all housing support providers who have services registered with the Care Commission.

The survey is the only research of its kind, monitoring long-term trends in housing support funding in tandem with the costs of delivering these services.

This year, the survey touches on the additional issues of self-directed support and the relationship between funding and quality.

"Last year over 30% of housing support providers we contacted returned the survey. This response was very encouraging," says Yvette Burgess, HSEU Director. "It demonstrates that funding is an issue which is high on the agenda for providers. We are

hoping we can do even better with our 2009/10 research by making it easier for respondents to return the survey. We have improved the on-line version of the survey and are distributing this to providers in preference to a printed version where possible.

We are hoping that providers will find it more convenient to submit their responses this way and that the response rate will increase as a result."

The deadline for return of the survey is 1st September 2010. If you haven't received your survey, or would like more information, please contact:

cath.cassidy@ccpscotland.org, tel 0131 229 9468

Award winners at the Scottish Care Conference 2010

Both Glasgow Housing Association and Aspire Housing & Personal Development Service won awards presented at the Scottish Care Conference on 28th May 2010. The Unit invited both services to submit a contribution for our new 'case study' web page.

Helping people move on

Aspire Housing & Personal Development Services

Mick was diagnosed with Schizophrenia in 2003 which was thought to be related to his long term misuse of drugs. Mick has never lived on his own due to being assessed as not having the ability to meet activities of daily living.

Mick describes his personal experience of Housing Support in the Aspire accommodation-based service: "I love living on my own in my own wee hoose. The Aspire staff are magic. They help me keep ma hoose clean. They helped me join the credit union and I now have a bank book that could choke a horse. I never thought I would ever live in my own hoose. I like it here. I can visit my ma every day. I get help when I need to go to the shops for food. I feel safe. This is the best place I have ever lived in all the time I have been homeless."

The purpose of Aspire's accommodation-based Housing Support service has been to work alongside Mick to help him develop his self-confidence and support him in learning the skills needed to be as independent as possible with a view to him progressing to live in longer-term accommodation that he both wants and is appropriate to his needs. He is well on his way towards achieving this and it is envisaged Mick will be moving on to that new chapter in his life in the very near future.

Contact: Peter Millar, Chief Executive, Aspire Housing & Personal Development Services on 0141 548 1552.

Involving tenants to achieve success

Glasgow Housing Association

We have regular 'Your Voice' forums where we invite tenants from all our complexes to come along and comment on the standard of our services and highlight any areas of improvement. The 'Your Voice' forum has proved to be a huge success with the tenants and contributed to the excellent Care Commission inspection results in 2009. The Housing support team achieved 4 'sixes' - the highest grade - and 2 'fives' over the 6 quality statements inspected.

Along with our partners Glasgow City Council, we have reviewed the service and from August 2010 the on-site sheltered housing service will become a five-day service (Monday to Friday). At the weekends (Saturday and Sunday), Cordia (Glasgow City Council's alarm provider) will provide a responder service. A survey was carried out which showed that demand for the service decreases at the weekend. We also had been finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain staff at the weekends. We already operate the same alarm service in the evenings and during the night and it has proved to be successful and popular. In the most recent survey of tenants in GHA's Sheltered Housing complexes 89% of tenants said the emergency alarm service was either very good or fairly good.

Contact: Catherine Wilkie, Housing Support and Accommodation Manager, tel 0141 274 5664.

See more case studies on the HSEU website:

<http://www.ccpscotland.org/hseu/practice/service-provider-case-studies>

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.

Consultation on wider planning for an ageing population

We previously reported on the work of the 'Wider Planning for an Ageing Population' workstream in the January 2010 issue of the Bulletin. Wider Planning is the housing and communities workstream of the joint Scottish Government/COSLA/NHS 'Reshaping Care for Older People' programme, which aims to engage all interests in reshaping care and support services so that we meet policy objectives in ways that are sustainable.

The Wider Planning for an Ageing Population Working Group completed its final report in March 2010. It identified five main outcomes for older people's housing, covering clear strategic leadership; making best use of existing housing stock; new housing provision; low level, preventative support; and supporting infrastructure, and proposed a range of actions to achieve them.

A consultation on the final report of the Wider Planning workstream was launched at CIH's Housing Options for Older People conference on 29 June, by Shona Stephen, Deputy Director for Housing Access and Support in the Scottish Government and Councillor Margaret Davidson of Highland Council. The consultation aims to gather views on the report and its proposed outcomes and actions from a wide range of housing and service providers, older people and others with an interest in ageing population issues.

We would, therefore, be keen to receive responses from providers of housing support services for older people and would encourage you also to pass on details of the consultation to anyone else who may be interested. The consultation can be viewed at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/06/25130641/0>. **The closing date for responses is 29 September 2010.**

Cross sector supported accommodation working group

The Cross Sector Supported Accommodation Working Group met for the second time on 27th May to discuss the theme of mapping of provision and identification of practice. Extensive evidence submitted by stakeholders on this theme was considered by the group alongside presentations on mapping from Glasgow City Council, practice from Aberdeen Foyer and service user involvement from Quarriers.

The key points identified through discussion will be taken forward to the final meeting of the group which will consider recommendations to the Scottish Government in February 2011. The evidence submitted will build up a 'library' for the group over its lifetime and, along with the group papers, will be put on the Scottish Government website. The theme of the next meeting in September will be funding.

<http://scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/access/homeless/CSSuppAcWG>

Contact the Housing Support Team at:

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

Telephone: 0131-244-5518

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

For Your Noticeboard

Events

Housing Support Regional Meetings

Helensburgh - 21st October 2010

Inverness - 28th October 2010

Dumfries - 4th November 2010

Dunfermline - 11th November 2010

The Housing Support Enabling Unit and the Workforce Unit have joined forces to present a series of regional events for housing support providers. These events will provide an opportunity for providers of housing support to:

- meet with other service providers to discuss issues of common concern
- hear about ongoing research into the costs and funding of housing support
- find out more about the Housing Support Outcomes Framework - Better Futures
- hear more about workforce registration and qualifications

Collaborative Working - the legal issues

There are still places available for the Collaborative Working – Legal Considerations half-day events which are being held in both Edinburgh and Glasgow on 2nd and 3rd September 2010 respectively.

First Steps in Marketing

Following the popularity of our Edinburgh based event we have arranged a further event in Glasgow on 15th September 2010.

CCPS conference - 25th- 26th November 2010

Dunblane Hydro DoubleTree Hilton Hotel

Stick, twist or fold? Gambling on the future of care and support

The uncertain future for care and support is giving rise to concern and creativity in equal measure, as third sector providers and their partners face up to major cuts to social care budgets. This conference aims to consider how this will impact on the agenda for personalisation, co-production and community action.

SHASC Conference 2010 - 7th October 2010

Hilton Grosvenor Hotel, Edinburgh

Choices, Cuts and Contradictions

Further details and booking forms for these courses can be found on the HSEU website:
www.ccpscotland.org/hseu/training/events

Contacting the Unit

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www.ccpscotland.org/hseu