

# Charging for housing support - a postcode lottery?

As the debate continues about the extent to which housing support users should pay for housing related services, the HSEU investigates with service providers and local authorities whether service charging is subject to a 'postcode lottery'.

## Background

The Scottish Government's recent housing policy discussion paper Fresh Thinking, New Ideas<sup>1</sup> invited comments as to whether 'low level' housing support should be paid for through charges. This is not, however, a new issue for housing support. Under the Supporting People programme people using 'longer term' housing support services could be charged for services but those using services before the programme started in 2003 had some protection<sup>2</sup>. 'Longer term' housing support consisted of services working with people for two years or more. Since the ring fence around funding for housing support was removed in 2008, local authorities have had more freedom to bring charging for housing support more in line with other types of social care. COSLA made this clear in its revised guidance on charging for non residential social care services in 2010<sup>3</sup>, and has also developed a 'Community of Practice' on its website for local authorities to post their charging policies to help them benchmark charges<sup>4</sup>. This is the context in which the Unit conducted a survey to find out more about policy and practice across the country.

## Extent to which people are being charged for services

92 people across a range of organisations and working in nearly every local authority area in Scotland, responded to the HSEU survey. Most respondents stated that their organisations provide more than simply housing support services e.g. care at home and housing support. Of these, 73% said that some of their service users are charged for the services they use. The Unit also gathered information from a group of

sheltered housing providers. In their experience, 26 out of the 32 local authorities assess and charge some service users in sheltered accommodation.

## Impact of charging on service use

Although 40% of respondents said they did not think there was any impact on the use of services where charging is in place, a significant 36% observed that, in their experience, some people had either reduced their use of services or had stopped using services altogether.

### Summary of HSEU Findings

- The charge for 'low level' support varies between areas – some people pay nothing whereas others pay the full cost.
- Most services taking part in the survey find that some of their service users are subject to charges
- Charges can affect the extent to which people use services
- Most local authorities charge for sheltered housing services depending on a person's income and savings
- Most local authorities have discretion to waiver charges in individual cases.

## Housing Support Outcomes Survey

You still have time to take part in our outcome models online survey which will close on 12th November.

An overview of outcomes models in social care and support settings has also been produced by the HSEU, CCPS and the VSSSWU. (See p. 5)

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# Bulletin

## housingsupport

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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.

# Beyond Homelessness: developing positive social networks

**Katey Staton, Research Fellow at the Rock Trust, provides an insight into recent findings about the significance of social networks in the lives of people who are at risk of or are experiencing homelessness.**

October sees the end of our national survey, and we are pleased to report that we obtained a fantastic response from all local authorities and many voluntary organisations across Scotland. We would like to say a big thanks to all staff who took the time to complete the survey, and are pleased to announce that we obtained an impressive response rate of 43% or 129 responses (an average response rate for this type of survey is 34%). Initial results indicate that social networks can help to sustain tenancies and generally promote positive longer-term outcomes.

For a full report on the initial findings go to <http://www.ccpsscotland.org/hseu/information/Social-networks-research>

## The next step

As part of the next stage in our research we are looking to interview those working in both LA housing/homelessness teams and those in third sector

organisations working with those affected by homelessness.

Interviews will take place throughout November and December 2010, and we hope to gain full representation across Scotland. Interviews will last for up to one hour and will serve to explore the services your organisation currently provides and any issues that are currently being encountered in supporting those affected by homelessness to move on. We are hoping to find many examples of best practice across Scotland which we can use as part of our recommendations to government in our final report, due 2013.

If you are interested in taking part in an interview or would like any more information on the project please get in touch ([katey.staton@rocktrust.org](mailto:katey.staton@rocktrust.org)) or check out our website: [http://www.scottishsocialnetworks.org/beyond\\_homelessness\\_research](http://www.scottishsocialnetworks.org/beyond_homelessness_research)

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## Social care procurement guidance launched

**The Scottish Government launched new guidance on the procurement of social care by public bodies in Scotland in September.**

For the first time explicit statements are made within the guidance about the fact that procurement of social care services require different processes from those of other goods and services which public bodies procure. This is something that has been greatly welcomed by stakeholders of social care services. Whilst the guidance stops short of whole heartedly recommending local authorities to explore alternatives to competitive tendering it does acknowledge that there are other options to it. The guidance expects public bodies to review their financial regulations and standing orders to ensure that they make appropriate provision for the procurement of care and support services and also expects public bodies to evaluate every procurement

exercise they undertake. Both requirements should help to promote improvements in the way local authorities go about procuring care and support services in the future. A complete copy and a summary of the document can be found on the Scottish Government website: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/access/housingsupport/supportpeople/Guidance>

## Consultation Update

**See the Unit's response to recent consultations:**

- Fresh Thinking, New Ideas
  - Wider Planning for an Ageing Population
  - Inquiry into Preventative Spending
- <http://www.ccpsscotland.org/hseu>

## Questions and Answers

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

**Q. As a support provider working with homeless people in accommodation leased by my local authority I am very concerned that apparently rent levels could be capped in future. I have been advised that the result could be a reduction in the funding for the support service – by nearly a third. Can you suggest anything we can do to find out how other local authorities are planning on dealing with this sort of situation?**

**A.**Yes, there are implications for temporary homeless accommodation in the changes to HB which have been consulted on this summer. More details will be needed for local authorities to determine the precise impact on the level of HB they can recover for rent. This will affect properties leased to local authorities for temporary accommodation – both self contained and shared housing. The Scottish Government is setting up a working group to consider the impact of all the changes to HB as they emerge. I will make sure the working group is aware of the challenges support providers may face in this sort of situation. The consultation on Welfare Reform closed on 1st October. The next step is for legislation to be laid in Parliament later this year.

<http://interactive.dwp.gov.uk/21st-century-welfare>

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**Q. I manage housing support services. Can you tell me when I can register with the SSSC as a housing support manager?**

**A.**Yes, the register is due to open on 1st December 2010. To find out more either come to one of our provider events in Dumfries or Dunfermline in November or go to the SSSC website at: <http://www.sssc.uk.com>

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**Q. Can you clarify what we can do after our local authority has reduced the number of support hours it will pay for because it says another local authority should pay for them? My concern is that the reduction in hours does not reflect any reduced need for support and the other local authority has so far failed to come to an agreement about how to deal with the situation. In the meantime we are continuing to provide the service but my organisation will not be able to continue doing this for much longer.**

**A.**Yes, the HSEU is aware that various service providers have been faced with this type of situation. The Scottish Government issued new regulations and guidance about ordinary residence and the funding arrangements for a person's care and accommodation when more than one local authority is involved. These came into force on 6th April 2010. The new regulations allow a local authority to recover the costs of providing care and support from another authority in certain circumstances as outlined in the guidance document. In particular, the regulations extend the scope for local authorities to do this beyond care homes and cover 'the provision of services or facilities in accommodation with support'.

The HSEU has alerted the Scottish Government as well as COSLA that support providers are being left to deal with funding shortfalls. In the Community Care Division Circular CCD3/2010, the Scottish Government states its expectation that disputes between local authorities are resolved and that it is 'inappropriate to expect an independent provider to absorb the costs of care pending the resolution of a dispute.'

If you have experienced such disputes and resulting funding shortfalls, please contact Yvette Burgess at the Unit.

**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**

## Charging and the postcode lottery.....

The Unit has also been in contact with all 32 local authorities to ask how they would deal with people using housing support services. Two scenarios were used to gather and compare charging levels. The first scenario involved three hours of visiting support per week and the second scenario involved sheltered housing.

### Scenario One: Visiting support

Dan is 30 years old and lives in a housing association flat on his own. He has a mild learning disability and uses a visiting housing support service for 3 hours per week to help him with shopping, cooking and other daily tasks. Dan's weekly income is approximately £160 (assuming entitlement to mid rate DLA and low Rate Mobility, but excluding housing benefit). The weekly cost of the housing support service is £45.

### Scenario Two: Sheltered housing

Molly is 73 years old and lives in a one bedroom flat in sheltered housing. She is partially sighted and has some mobility issues but is able to deal with most everyday tasks for herself and has friends who help her with getting out and about. There is a sheltered housing manager on duty for part of the week and a telecare service in place. Together these services maintain daily contact with her and provide her with the security of having someone she can call on anytime of the day or night. Molly has a state pension of £97.65 and an occupational pension of £37.00 per week. She receives the lower Attendance Allowance rate at £47.80. Molly has £9,850 capital. The level of housing support grant available for the whole development is £16,712 which means a weekly amount of £10.37 per tenancy.

TABLE 1: RESPONSE FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES RE CHARGING SCENARIOS

Local Authority	Scenario 1: Visiting Support	Scenario 2: Sheltered Housing
Aberdeenshire	£0	£0
Angus	£10.98	£10.37
Argyll & Bute	£0	£4.20
Dumfries & Galloway	£0	£10.37
Dundee	£45.00	£10.37
East Ayrshire	£37.95 (based on £213.85 income)	£10.37
City of Edinburgh	£0	£7.22
Eilean Siar	£0	£0
Falkirk	£0	£0
Fife	£0	If on HB no charge
Glasgow City	£11.29 (but if on Severe Disability Premium of £53.65pw then £30.07)	£9.61 (but on Severe Disability Premium then £10.37)
Highland	£0	£10.37
Inverclyde	£24.70	£0
Midlothian	£2.03 if income includes DLA. £25.50 if DLA is on top	£31.01
Moray	£28.04	£10.37
North Ayrshire	£12.80	£10.37
North Lanarkshire	£9.03	£10.37
Orkney	£11.34	£0
Perth & Kinross	£0	£10.37
Renfrewshire	£19.23	£16.47
Scottish Borders	£0	£0 if on HB, otherwise £10.37
Shetland	£0	£0
South Ayrshire	£0	£0
South Lanarkshire	£0	£0
Stirling	£19.02	£10.37
West Dunbartonshire	£20 per week (flat rate charged for housing support )	£0
West Lothian	£0	Unlikely

### Summary of Results

- 27 local authorities responded
- 13 would charge for visiting support in scenario one
- 15 would charge for sheltered housing in scenario two

View the full report at:

[Http://www.ccpScotland.org/assets/files/hseu/information/local\\_authorities/Charging.pdf](http://www.ccpScotland.org/assets/files/hseu/information/local_authorities/Charging.pdf)

## Housing support outcomes work in progress

### Outcomes frameworks and tools - an overview

The HSEU has recently produced an overview of outcomes frameworks and tools jointly with Community Care Providers Scotland and the Voluntary Sector Social Services Workforce Unit<sup>1</sup>. The overview considers the various approaches to outcomes across social care and support and provides summary information about 10 tools and frameworks. This provides a backdrop to an online survey being conducted in order to gather information from service providers about their experiences of using and developing such tools. The purpose of this survey is to highlight areas where organisations may require further support or assistance in developing or using outcomes tools. To take part in the survey go to

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/socialcareoutcomemeasurement>

The deadline for the survey is 12<sup>th</sup> November.

### Outcomes and housing support - Better Futures

Work on the Better Futures web based recording tool has been continuing and it is now available for examination by anyone interested in seeing how it works. Although the tool has not been formally launched it was on display at the Scottish Housing and Support Conference and the Unit's regional events since then have provided an opportunity to hear more about it. The tool will be available to use on a trial basis from January up to the end of August 2011. During this time there will be no charge for the use of the system although there will be costs associated with training on its use.

**If you are interested in gaining access to the Better Futures tool please contact Liz Pettigrew at:**

[Liz.pettigrew@ccpscotland.org](mailto:Liz.pettigrew@ccpscotland.org)

## Congratulations to No Place Like Home Winners!

**Congratulations to the winners of the Housing Support Enabling Unit's 'No Place Like Home' Awards announced at the opening of this year's Scottish Housing and Support Conference in Edinburgh.**

The competition aims to raise the profile of housing support services in Scotland and to celebrate the achievements of service users. Entrants were asked to submit photographs illustrating the themes of home, challenges and community accompanied by a short narrative.

### The Winners

The three category awards were all won by groups of service users:

- **Home Category - Group Entry from the South Fort Street Project, Gowrie Care**
- **Challenges Category - Group Entry from Margaret Blackwood Housing Association**
- **Community Category - Group Entry, South Fort Street Project, Gowrie Care**

"We are delighted by the enthusiastic response of service users and their support workers to the competition as this is the first time we have run an initiative like this," said HSEU Director Yvette Burgess. "The standard of entries was very high and the judges had a very difficult, but enjoyable task coming to a decision. The narrative which accompanies the entries helps to shed light on the impact that housing support has on people's lives."

Co-winners David Easton and Chris Henderson represented South Fort Street Project service users at the No Place Like Home Awards ceremony.

The competition was sponsored by Quality Gas Ltd, Kilbarchan Maintenance Services Ltd, TECDEC Ltd, Laidlaw Scott, McDermott Contracts and Connaught plc.

View the winning photos and the best of the entries at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/hseunoplacelikehome/>

The competition images are available as a resource for housing support providers.

# In Practice

Loretto Care provided support for 803 service users from April 2009 to March 2010 through the North Community Housing Support Service in Glasgow. This edition's case study focuses on this service model.

## Service overview

This service offers practical support and aims to develop housing support plans with service users to assist them throughout the process of resettlement from temporary to settled accommodation. It also engages in preventative work with service users if they are at imminent risk of homelessness, with the aim of preventing homelessness recurring.

## Service User Profile

Service users include those fleeing violence, seeking asylum, experiencing breakdown in relationships, and with addiction issues.

## Assessment and Support

An assessment tool is used to identify intended outcomes, and evidences outcome-based practice. Support is provided in a broad range of areas including communication and advocacy; resettlement/moving on skills; managing finances including budgeting and benefits; health and well-being; substance dependency and home and domestic skills. A shared action plan takes individuals through three stages of support.

**Stage 1 - stability/preventative work** to ensure basic needs have been met - i.e. warmth, food, shelter, safety

**Stage 2 - maintaining this stability** and developing life skills such as cooking, cleaning and shopping, building relationships, social network/community links and working with agencies

**Stage 3 - moving on to settled accommodation** using a planned resettlement programme

Service users had been experiencing difficulties when applying for Community Care Grants (CCG), with a high level of applicants being refused. This was hindering service users from moving to settled accommodation. At this point, senior staff liaised with the social fund division which had highlighted that service users did not meet the criteria due to limited evidence regarding a planned resettlement programme (PRP). Senior Staff looked at the set criteria and devised a proforma which clearly

provides evidence of homeless status and of housing support involvement which is part of a planned resettlement programme. To date, no service user who has gone through the service has been declined a Community Care Grant.

## The Future

Once a service user moves to settled accommodation, staff work with the individual for approximately six weeks, at which point the case manager will call a review to discuss the Planned Resettlement Programme (PRP), ensuring all aspects of the PRP are completed. There could be a need for the service user to be referred on to a different service, which the case manager would facilitate. However, if no further support is required, the discharge process is activated. This process is a positive experience - service users take the lead role, agree a date and time to meet with staff, complete an exit questionnaire and discharge paperwork recording positive outcomes, and provide feedback on the service and support they receive.

## Evaluation

This is carried out internally and externally by the Community Case Work Team and Glasgow Homeless Network. A cross section of service users have been involved in evaluating the service via questionnaires and satisfaction surveys.

Some comments from service users....

*SF: "Staff were very helpful - they helped me in my first tenancy and it was very scary for me. I became confident and have learnt how to cope with my life in a better way..."*

*SM: "I was very happy with the information provided..., I would be lost with out the support I received from Loretto ..."*

**Contact: Martin Glackin, Head of Care, Loretto Care, tel 0141 420 7950**

<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.

### Cross Sector Supported Accommodation Working Group

The Cross Sector Supported Accommodation Working Group met for the third time on 22nd September and considered the issue of funding. A sub group has been established to look at possible drivers for funding of supported accommodation for those at risk of homelessness in the future. The group will meet again in November when its theme will be employability before a final meeting to consider recommendations to the Scottish Government in February 2011. Any stakeholder wishing to submit evidence to the group should contact the Scottish Government. More details on the group are available at the Scottish Government website:

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

### Housing Benefit

Following the announcement of further cuts to welfare benefits in the recent UK Spending Review, the Scottish Government is setting up a working group (the Housing Benefit Stakeholder Advisory Group) to assess the impact of housing benefit reform on housing. The Minister for Housing & Communities has invited a range of stakeholders to form this working group including COSLA, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Shelter, Scottish Council for Single Homeless and a housing support provider nominated by the Enabling Unit. It is hoped that the first meeting will take place in November 2010.

### Housing Bill Amendment

Mary Mulligan MSP proposed an amendment at

Stage 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Bill that would require local authorities to assess and provide housing support for people at risk of homelessness. The Scottish Government supported this amendment, subject to further investigation and consultation on the cost implications. This exercise suggested very significant additional costs of between £22m and £40m might result from the amendment.

In a time of considerable financial restraint such costs aren't affordable and there is a significant risk that support for other vulnerable groups might end up being squeezed as a result of such additional legal requirements. COSLA and others also shared these concerns.

Accordingly the Scottish Government will now support an alternative amendment at Stage 3 of the bill lodged by Jim Tolson MSP, which would replace the idea of assessment and provision being a new legislative duty with a requirement for the Scottish Government to issue guidance on the assessment and provision of housing support to those at risk of homelessness. The Scottish Government believes this amendment addresses the risks of unintended consequences, and balances the need to ensure effective support for homeless people while recognising the cost implications for local authorities.

The Scottish Government remains convinced of the importance of housing support in preventing homelessness and meeting the 2012 target. This is why the supported accommodation working group was set up.

We expect new guidance on housing support and homelessness prevention will help local authorities make further progress towards the 2012 target.

Contact the Housing Support Team at:

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

Telephone: 0131-244-5518

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

## For Your Noticeboard

### Events

**CCPS Conference**  
**25th - 26th November 2010**  
**Dunblane Hydro Double Tree 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.

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

### Resources

#### **Charging for Housing Support - a postcode lottery**

The article on page 1 referred to the following information sources:

1. Fresh Thinking, New Ideas  
<http://housingdiscussion.scotland.gov.uk/>
2. Supporting People Guidance, Folder 1  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/access/housingsupport/supportpeople/Guidance>
3. COSLA Health and Well-being Executive Group 18th February 2010, Appendix : COSLA Charging Guidance for non-residential social care services 2010 11  
<http://www.cosla.gov.uk/attachments/execgroups/hw/hw100218item16appendix.doc>
4. COSLA Health and Well-being Executive Group 18th February 2010, Non-residential Social Care Services: Benchmarking Charges  
<http://www.cosla.gov.uk/attachments/execgroups/hw/hw100218item16.doc>

#### **Contacting the Unit**

**Housing Support Enabling Unit**  
8 – 12 Torphichen Street  
Edinburgh  
EH3 8JQ

**Tel:** 0131 229 9468

**Yvette Burgess, Director:** [yvette.burgess@ccpscotland.org](mailto:yvette.burgess@ccpscotland.org)

**Cath Cassidy, Information & Communications Officer:** [cath.cassidy@ccpscotland.org](mailto:cath.cassidy@ccpscotland.org)

**Liz Pettigrew, Administrator:** [liz.pettigrew@ccpscotland.org](mailto:liz.pettigrew@ccpscotland.org)

[www.ccpscotland.org/hseu](http://www.ccpscotland.org/hseu)



