

Fundamental changes ahead for housing support

There are major implications for the funding and shape of housing support under the Government's recently announced Comprehensive Spending Review.

Funding of local government

Overall funding (capital and revenue) for local authorities is set to increase from £10,651.1m in 2007-08 to £12,026.2m by 2010-11.

The year on year percentage increases in funding to local authorities looks like this:

- 4.9% in 2008-09
- 4.3% in 2009-10
- 3.7% in 2010-11

The revenue element of that funding (from which housing support services will in future be funded) increases as follows:

- £9,790.7m in 2007-08
- £10,199.5m in 2008-09
- £10,641.8m in 2009-10
- £11,032.6m in 2010-11,

Giving year on year increases of:

- 4.2% in 2008-09
- 4.1% in 2009-10
- 3.4% in 2010-11

On the face of it this could be good news for housing support providers who have faced standstill funding for up to 4 years in some cases and are keen to see an inflationary uplift in future funding.

Taking away the ringfence

The most significant change for many people, however, is that Supporting People funding will no longer be ringfenced. This

means the Supporting People budget has been absorbed into the main local government settlement and distributed between councils on a pro rata basis.

Under the new arrangements agreed between the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) no indicative figure for housing support funding, or indeed any other absorbed funding stream, is being provided. Under this new system it will be harder to know what local authorities spend on housing support services but it should reduce bureaucracy and allow greater flexibility in how services and client support packages are funded.

What makes this all the more significant for some areas of service provision is that Supporting People is not the only funding stream to be taken out of ringfencing. Other funding streams that will no longer be ringfenced include: Violence Against Women Fund, Mental Health, Homelessness Task Force and Glasgow Hostels Decommissioning.

The Comprehensive Spending Review was presented to Parliament on 14 November 2007. The budget is a draft which Parliament will continue to debate until early February 2008.

supportingpeople

enabling unit

Bulletin

February 2008 Issue 21

Comprehensive Spending Review

Single Outcome Agreement

Future of the Supporting People Enabling Unit

Providers' Questions

Research into Supporting People



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 Government.

Introducing the Single Outcome Agreement

A Concordat has been entered into between the Government and COSLA

Under this Concordat local authorities will be required to develop and report on a Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). These SOAs will incorporate the set of national outcomes and indicators recently announced as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review. In a letter to local authority Supporting People Lead Officers at the beginning of January, the Government clarified what this means:

' Under the new arrangement each local authority will be expected to submit a single report on the year just finished and plans for the year to come, starting in 2008/09, setting out progress and achievements towards the national outcomes. With the exception of statutory requirements and any agreed transitional arrangements in moving to an outcomes based approach, local authorities will not be asked to submit any other monitoring returns or plans to the Scottish Government, without the prior agreement of COSLA.'

What this means for housing support is that local authorities will no longer be required to report to the Government on the amount it has spent on housing support and what that has purchased in terms of service levels and profile of service users. In future there will be no Supporting People grant and therefore no reporting requirements associated with grant conditions. This does not mean, however, that local authorities will cease to require information from service providers about the service they deliver and who they deliver it to.

The concordat can be viewed at www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/923/0054147.pdf.

What might single outcome agreements look like?

In the light of ring fence removal much attention is now focused on the single outcome agreements and the extent to which they may or may not reflect housing support. The reason this is so important is that this will be the main mechanism

by which local authorities will report to the Government and thereby be held accountable. Not surprisingly, therefore, housing support providers are keen to see where their services fit in.

Whilst each local authority will negotiate its own single outcome agreement with the Government there will be a framework for them to work within. It is disappointing to many delivering and commissioning housing support that within the complete set of 15 outcomes and 45 indicators there is no indicator devoted to housing support. Work is currently underway by the Government in conjunction with COSLA to identify those outcomes and indicators relevant to local authorities.

Community Planning Partnership indicators

In addition to these outcomes and indicators the Unit understands that work is underway to consider indicators currently used by Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) across the country. Indeed, the Concordat does hint that in the future there could be single outcome agreements with CPPs. It is not clear when these additional indicators will be decided on. After the framework of outcomes and indicators has been agreed upon for local authorities the work can be undertaken by each local authority to develop individual single outcome agreements.

Timescale for developing SOAs

The work needed to develop individual single outcome agreements by local authorities may not start until April 2008. It is at this stage that local authorities may decide to discuss priorities and targets with providers as part of the SOA development process. One of the challenges for local authorities will be to decide what information to record from April 2008 before the SOAs have been agreed. In terms of housing support, work is well underway to evaluate the pilot of the Housing Support Outcome Framework. Over the next few months it will become clearer how well this framework provides information which local authorities can use for their annual SOA report.

Reaction to the Spending Review

There has been a considerable degree of concern expressed by some groups about the removal of Supporting People funding from the ringfence, particularly groups concerned with preventative services such as homelessness services and services working with women fleeing domestic violence.

These services often deliver relatively modest levels of housing support but provide crucial help when it is most needed to prevent longer term reliance on public services. As reported in the previous Bulletin, there are concerns that when funding for housing support is not protected by the ring fence local authorities will face pressure to spend money on other priorities and that over time funding for housing support will reduce.

Others, however, regard lifting of the ring fence as a step in the right direction. They hope that less reporting requirements associated with funding will reduce bureaucracy. Also, they hope there will be scope for service models to be more flexible in the future when there will not be the same requirement to focus on the 21 housing support tasks.

There may be greater scope in the future to deliver housing support as an integral part of more complex services involving, for instance, assistance with employment or being a parent.

The news in a nut shell

Key points to note:

- In Scotland there will no longer be a funding stream called Supporting People after 31 March 2008 but this does not mean local authorities will stop spending money on housing support.
- The Government has advised local authorities they may carry forward any unspent Supporting People grant from 2007/08 forward into 2008/09. With the removal of the ringfence from April local authorities will have discretion on how these funds will be spent.
- Each local authority will be required to develop a single outcome agreement and report on it each year.
- From April 2008 there will be no requirement for local authorities to record what they spend on housing support for the government but providers will still be required to record information for local authorities and this may vary from one to another.
- 2 more years funding for the SP Enabling Unit has been secured.

Outcomes, indicators and housing support

Making links between housing support and the new set of outcomes and indicators

Unfortunately no outcome or indicator deals simply with being safe at home, or having sustainable accommodation or preventing crisis. The Government is, however, taking steps to identify those outcomes and indicators which have a link with housing support.

The initial list looks like this:

Outcome 6	We live longer, healthier lives
Outcome 7	We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society
Outcome 8	We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk
Outcome 9	We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger
Outcome 11	We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others
Outcome 13	We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity
Outcome 15	Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs

Indicator 10	Decrease the proportion of individuals living in poverty
Indicator 15	Increase the average score of adults on the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale by 2011
Indicator 18	Reduce alcohol related hospital admissions by 2011
Indicator 20	Reduce proportion of people aged 65 and over admitted as emergency inpatients 2 or more times in a single year
Indicator 22	All unintentionally homeless households will be entitled to settled accommodation by 2012
Indicator 26	Increase the percentage of people aged 65 and over with high levels of care needs who are cared for at home
Indicator 29	Decrease the estimated number of problem drug users in Scotland by 2011
Indicator 37	Increase the proportion of adults making one or more visits to the outdoors per week
Indicator 43	Improve people's perceptions of the quality of public services delivered

Outcomes, indicators and housing support

In the Unit's view there is one further outcome and two further indicators which have links with housing support:

Outcome 10	We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.
Indicator 23	Reduce overall reconviction rates by 2 percentage points by 2011
Indicator 28	Increase the percentage of adults who rate their neighbourhood as a good place to live.

Another way of looking at the outcomes and indicators is to consider the extent to which they reflect the needs of different groups of people. Housing support is something which a broad range of people have benefited from so far and these are reflected in the 18 clients groups the Supporting People programme has monitored in the past. The Scottish Government's outcomes are broad enough to reflect all clients groups that are serviced by the Supporting People programme. The extent to which the new indicators reflect these groups has been considered by the Unit:

- 6 can be easily linked to Scottish Government indicators. These groups are:
 - ❖ Older people
 - ❖ People having mental health problems
 - ❖ People who use drugs
 - ❖ People who use alcohol
 - ❖ People at risk of offending, re-offending and leaving prison
 - ❖ People who are homeless or sleeping rough
- 12 cannot be easily linked to Scottish Government indicators. These groups are:
 - ❖ People vulnerable due to young age
 - ❖ People with physical disability/illness
 - ❖ People with a learning disability
 - ❖ Women fleeing domestic violence
 - ❖ Refugees
 - ❖ People with HIV/ AIDS
 - ❖ People with sensory impairment
 - ❖ People with dementia
 - ❖ People with an acquired brain injury
 - ❖ Gypsies/ Travellers
 - ❖ People experiencing psychological trauma
 - ❖ Other vulnerable groups

The lack of any outcome or indicator dealing with housing support in a general way means we have to wait to see the draft outcome agreements to understand the extent to which support for these last groups has been adequately covered under the new arrangements. However the Single Outcome Agreements are expected to go beyond the national indicators and address other local priorities.

If you have views on how housing support links with the new outcomes and indicators the Unit would be interested to hear from you. Do you think the service you provide is reflected in any of those mentioned above? Let us know what you think by emailing moira.weir@ccpscotland.org

Quick Links to the Spending Review

Government announcement

The Scottish Budget Spending Review 2007 can be accessed on the Scottish Government's website at www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/13092240/0

Concordat between the Government and COSLA

The Concordat explains the role of single outcome agreements and the lists outcomes and indicators expected to be included in them.

www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/923/0054147.pdf

Housing and Regeneration Directorate. A letter setting out how the comprehensive spending review affects the housing support sector can be seen on the Scottish Government's website at www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1035/0054382.doc

Details of the amounts that **local authorities** are set to receive are available on the Scottish Government's website at www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/local-government/17999/11203

Representative body reaction

CIH in Scotland briefing on housing and housing related elements of the budget
www.cih.org/scotland/policy/ScottishBudgetSpendingReview-CIH_Briefing.pdf

Shelter Scotland's response to the Comprehensive Spending Review
<http://scotland.shelter.org.uk/policy/policy-421.cfm/plitem/263/>

CCPS response to the budget and concordat www.ccpscotland.org/news/

The Future Role of the SP Enabling Unit

The Unit was set up in 2004 at the instigation of Community Care Providers Scotland and the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations.

Its purpose has been to assist providers of housing support deal with the changes that Supporting People programme brought with it.

Funding was secured from the Government on a 2 year basis.

A further 2 years funding was then agreed from 2006 to 2008. Just before Christmas the Government announced that funding for a further 2 years will be available up to April 2010 through the Housing Voluntary Sector Grants Scheme. The Scottish Government expects the unit to play an important role in facilitating dialogue between the Scottish Government and providers, and helping the Scottish Government assess the impact of removal of the ring fence on providers and vulnerable client groups.

Questions and Answers

Q. Is the SSSC concerned about standards of commissioning and procurement within councils? Providers are concerned that it has been of a poor quality.

A. The SSSC has been working with others to develop National Occupational Standards for Contracting, Procurement and Commissioning. These will be ready for the end of March 2008 to contribute to workforce development and address skills gaps across social services in Scotland.

Q. I feel the tendering process my service has just been put through by a local authority was too rushed and required far more information from us than was necessary. Whilst I am not at the stage of making a formal complaint I would like to alert the Government about what providers are facing. Is there anywhere I can go?

A. Yes, a new service has just been launched by the Government called the Single Point of Enquiry (SPoE). It comes within the remit of the Scottish Procurement Directorate.

The SPoE is not a point of appeal on procurement decisions nor will it seek to influence or change sourcing decisions made by a public body. It complements the existing formal avenues of redress available, such as court proceedings or submitting a complaint to the European Commission.

The SPoE will seek to work with the relevant parties to bring about a positive outcome to supplier issues.

One of the aims of this new service is to help establish best practice in procurement within the public sector. The SPoE can be contacted on a confidential basis at any stage.

To contact the Single Point of Enquiry go to: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Procurement/Selling/supplier-enquiries.

Q. Is the SP model contract being reviewed annually?

A. No. The model framework has not been reviewed annually and at the moment no work is taking place nationally to do so. It is down to any local authority using it to ensure it refers to current legislation where there have been changes since the model was developed in 2005.

Q. Will there be any additional funding for providers given the additional requirements associated with workforce registration?

A. No, there is no additional funding set aside for this at the moment but there is an expectation that contract values should recognise training costs adequately.

Q. I am a bit confused about the way 'housing support' as a term is appearing in contexts unrelated to housing support as a service to support people live at home. Can you clarify what these other uses refer to?

A. Yes, there are currently 2 instances of this:

- **Housing Support Grant** - the recent budget announcement refers to the Housing Support Grant (HSG) within the list of grants that will remain ring fenced. The HSG is a grant paid to those councils who would otherwise be unable to balance their housing revenue accounts. Previously a number of councils used to qualify but now only Shetland is in receipt of the grant.

- **Scottish Housing Support Fund** - the recent discussion document 'Firm Foundations: The Future of housing in Scotland', introduced this concept. The aim of this fund would be to assist first time buyers to find a deposit by providing a £2000 grant.

For Your Noticeboard

Recent research and publications on Supporting People and housing support

Supporting People Service Review and Budget Change Impact Monitoring

Date: December 2007

Author: GEN Consulting

Organisation: Scottish Government

The Supporting People Service Review and Budget Change Impact Monitoring report by Gen Consulting 18/12/07 can be viewed on www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Housing/Housing/supportpeople/SPSRBCIMregen181207

SPICe Briefing: Supporting People (updated) 07/55

Date: November 2007

Author: Kate Berry

Organisation: Scottish Parliament Information Centre

Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) Briefings are compiled for the benefit of the Members of the Parliament and their personal staff. The briefing which offers information on the Supporting People programme can be viewed on <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/research/briefings-07/SB07-55.pdf>

Supporting People: Costs and Benefits

Date: December 2007

Author: Tribal Consulting

Publisher: Scottish Government

ISBN: 9780755969210 (Web Only)

The study aims to explore the costs and benefits of housing related services provided by the Supporting People programme across the range of clients receiving services and can be viewed on www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/12/14141444/0

Supporting People: Unit Costs

Date: December 2007

Author: Tribal Consulting

Organisation: Scottish Government

ISBN: 9780755969104 (Web Only)

This report considers the extent, nature, causes and implications of variations in the unit costs of services provided under the Supporting People programme and can be viewed on www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/12/14135018/0

Contacting the Unit:

Supporting People Enabling Unit
9 Ellersly Road
Edinburgh
EH12 6HY

Yvette Burgess, Director yvette.burgess@ccpscotland.org
Moira Weir, Information and Development Officer moira.weir@ccpscotland.org

Telephone: 0131 346 3144
Website: www.ccpscotland.org/spunit