

**PRESS RELEASE – 8<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2011**

## **Better Futures – measuring the impact housing support has on people’s lives**

Better Futures was launched by Alex Neil, Minister for Housing and Communities on 8<sup>th</sup> March in Edinburgh. Better Futures is a way of recording how support impacts on people’s lives. The development of Better Futures has been funded by the Scottish Government through the Housing Support Enabling Unit (HSEU) which now manages access to Better Futures for service providers and local authorities. The framework is underpinned by a web based recording system delivered by Capita Software Services.

With an ever increasing need to focus on outcomes the Better Futures framework provides a way of identifying and measuring the impact of housing support services. This will help people using services to track their progress as well as allow organisations to generate information about their own performance. Alex Neil, Minister for Housing and Communities has acknowledged that “Housing support services play a vital role in helping some of the most vulnerable members of our society to live independently in a stable environment. Housing providers, those commissioning services and importantly, those using services will be able to take advantage of these tools to measure progress, prevent crisis situations, show the value of investing in services and improve service quality.”

Better Futures has been inspired by various approaches used by homelessness services in Scotland and England and has developed out of the Supporting People Outcomes Framework which was piloted in 2007.

The system is available for service providers and local authority commissioners of services to use on a trial basis up to the end of November 2011. After this the costs of managing and maintaining the system will be passed onto those organisations using it.

Enquiries should be directed to Yvette Burgess, Unit Director, HSEU, at: [yvette.burgess@ccpscotland.org](mailto:yvette.burgess@ccpscotland.org) or telephone 0131 229 9468

Further information can be obtained from the HSEU website at: <http://www.ccpscotland.org/hseu/information/better-futures>

### **What people are saying about Better Futures:**

#### **Alex Neil, Minister for Housing and Communities:**

“Housing support services play a vital role in helping some of the most vulnerable members of our society to live independently in a stable environment.

“Housing providers, those commissioning services and importantly, those using services will be able to take advantage of these tools to measure progress, prevent crisis situations, show the value of investing in services and improve service quality.”



**Marcia Ramsay, Director of Adult Services Regulation, Care Commission:**

‘The Care Commission has supported the development of Better Futures. It provides a system for people using care services to identify their own support goals and review their own achievements as well as being a tool to monitor how well the care service itself is performing. Better Futures can be used as a source of evidence in quality assurance and self assessments, to demonstrate that the care service involves service users in their own support and care planning.’

**Yvette Burgess, Unit Director, Housing Support Enabling Unit:**

‘The contribution that housing support makes to a person’s quality of life is really important but has been difficult to measure in the past. I am confident that Better Futures will be able to tell us a lot about the extent of change people are experiencing in their lives and the important role support services play.’

**Someone who has used support services - James**

‘Aspire is helping me to get back on my feet so that I can cope again. By the time I move into my own house I expect to have no real issues as I would have already dealt with these through the support I get from the Better Futures project. I want to have my own house, paying council tax, have a girlfriend and have a family and a car in five years time - that's where I would like to be.’

**A member of the Better Futures Steering Group – Peter Millar, Chief Executive of Aspire Housing & Personal Development Services:**

‘From the early days when we considered how to develop the outcomes matrix I felt really passionate that we should make it as accessible and straightforward as possible for people using support services across Scotland; that it should always focus on empowering those individuals to be centrally involved in setting out their aspirations, take positive action to achieve desired outcomes and enable them towards being the best they can be – hence the name ‘Better Futures’. Having now had some experience in using the system I am confident that it will become well established as an important planning and information tool in social care that gives individuals greater clarity and control in pursuing better personal outcomes.’

**A service provider - Fiona Stringfellow, Chief Executive, Blue Triangle (Glasgow) Housing Association:**

‘We started using the system a few weeks ago because it offers a way of recording the progress that our service users are making towards independent living. It allows us to demonstrate what we can achieve for vulnerable people and also ensures service users can clearly see and measure their own progress which motivates them in a very positive way.’

**A local authority - Hamish Fraser, Performance & Information Systems Manager at Midlothian Council:**

‘As a local authority, Midlothian Council has put a great deal of emphasis on the development of performance measures that enable us to identify the improvement in outcomes that social care services has had on service users and those relating to homelessness. I have been immediately struck by the good fit between the areas of life in the Better Futures system and the National Outcomes which underpin our performance reporting framework.’

**Roger Birkinshaw, housing director at Capita Software Services,** said: ‘We work with over 25 housing providers in Scotland, so we were keen to support the Better Futures framework. Housing support services are ultimately driven by people’s needs. This framework will help providers to better understand those needs and tailor their services accordingly. It truly is in the spirit of sharing best practice, which is vital during this time of financial constraint.’