

Providers' Experience of the Supporting People Programme

Introduction and Background

The SP Enabling Unit has undertaken a two year longitudinal project researching how well equipped providers feel in providing housing support services under the Supporting People Programme in a changing environment.

Methodology

Each organisation agreed to undertake a telephone interview once every six months for two years. The first set of interviews was conducted in March 2004. The information gathered from these established a baseline for further findings to be measured against. The second set of interviews was conducted in October 2004 and the third in March/April 2005.

Survey Sample

44 services and 42 providers from across Scotland are taking part in this research. This represents 5% of services in Scotland.

Type of service: The survey sample has been designed to include the experience of different types of providers and includes 41% of short term services and 59% of long term services.

Type of organisation: 53% of services are voluntary organisations with 45% being registered social landlords and 2% from the private sector.

Size of organisation 25% of providers in the survey describe themselves as large organisations, with 48% saying they are medium sized and 27% saying they are small.

Primary client group:

Providers of housing support work with a diverse range of client groups. The providers participating in the survey work with:

Learning Disability	14%	Younger People	9%
Homelessness	16%	Physical Disability	5%
Mental Health	7%	General Need	18%
Older People	32%		

Participation in the survey

93% of the original survey group took part in the third round of survey questions. 2 providers were not able to contribute in this round of survey because of other pressures on their time.

This is a summary of research carried out by the Supporting People Enabling Unit. For a full copy of the research findings contact:

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supportingpeople

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Report

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Area of Focus:

1. Funding of housing support services under the Supporting People Programme
2. Service capacity
3. Contract values
4. Service review
5. Supporting People Forums
6. Relationship between providers and Local Authorities



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

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 Executive.

Summary of Findings

1. Funding of housing support services under Supporting People: There is considerable uncertainty amongst providers about the future of housing support through Supporting People. **55%** of providers have not yet agreed a contract value for 2005/06 but most have discussed future funding with their local authority.

- **48%** of providers say that their SP funding is the same as last year.
- **23%** of providers say their SP funding has been cut in comparison to last year.
- **9%** of providers say their SP funding has risen in comparison to last year
- **20%** of providers do not know if their funding will change

2. Service Capacity: In March 2004 **80%** of providers reported that their service had expanded under Transitional Housing Benefit. But by March 2005 **32%** of providers' state they have decreased their service capacity in response to funding issues. Those providers that have already had to reduce service capacity to accommodate for inflation and salary rises express real concern about the future particularly into 2006/07.

3. Contract values: **64%** of providers say they would be confident about entering into a three year contract if their local authority offered this to them. The providers that do not feel confident about entering into a three year contract cited finance as their main concern.

4. Service Review: **68%** of providers have not been reviewed and of them **87%** do not know when they will be reviewed. Of the **32%** of providers that had undergone service review **71%** were satisfied with the process. The **29%** of providers dissatisfied with the service review express disappointment that it appeared to be a desk top exercise.

5. Supporting People Forums: The number of providers saying they have access to an SP forum has remained constant at **60%**. However, a number of providers say while they participated in a Supporting People Forum at the beginning of the SP programme, the forum has not met for several months.

6. Relationships between local authorities and providers: Throughout the survey it has been clear that recent announcements on local authorities' SP grant allocations are testing providers' relationships with local authorities. Most providers still rate relationships with local authorities as 'good' or 'very good' but providers have been finding it harder to get information from their local authorities since October 2004. This may be due, in part, to the turn over of staff within SP teams. Increased communication was seen as a priority and some providers reported that relationships could be strengthened by reviving local SP forums.

Twelve Month Comparison

