

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, third in March/April 2005, the fourth in September 2005 and the final round in March 2006.

Survey Sample

In total 49 providers (commenting on a total of 57 services) from across Scotland took part in the research.

Type of service: The survey sample has been designed to include the experience of different types of providers and includes 47% offering supported accommodation and 53% offering visiting support.

Type of organisation: 59% of services are voluntary organisations with 32% being registered social landlords and 9% from the private sector.

Size of organisation: 26% of providers in the survey describe themselves as large organisations, with 40% saying they are medium sized and 34% 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	9%	Younger People	6%
Homelessness	23%	Physical Disability	6%
Mental Health	11%	General Need	9%
Older People	36%		

Participation in the survey:

65% of the original survey group took part in each round of survey questions. During the two year study there were times when some providers could not contribute to the survey but opted in again later. In this round of the survey questions all providers involved had contributed before.

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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Report

March 2006 Part 5

Area of Focus:

1. Funding of housing support services under the Supporting People Programme
2. Service review
3. Confidence in the SP programme
4. 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. 34% of providers have not agreed a contract value for 2005/06 and 55% of providers have no knowledge of their SP funding for 2006/07. In cash terms 98% of services are facing standstill or reduced funding this year compared to last year. In real terms this means that only 9% of services are keeping pace with inflation to cover costs of salaries, training and other items over the past year.

2. Service Volume: In March 2004 80% of providers said they had expanded their service due to the introduction of SP. In March 2006 32% of providers expect their service volume to decrease in the coming year. Two providers of visiting support have already issued redundancy notices to staff. Others are trying to manage staff cuts by not replacing staff members who have left.

69% of providers said their funding had been cut or remained the same but they did not expect their service volume to change. Providers managed this in a number of ways:

- 42% Efficiency savings
- 13% Funding transferred from other organisational budgets
- 16% Funding from other sources (e.g. fundraising events)
- 26% Reserves
- 3% Other

3. Service Review: 36% of providers have undergone service review. Of these 57% have found the process to be satisfactory. 5 providers considered the service review to be unsatisfactory because decisions about funding had been made before the service review took

place. Other providers expressed concern at the delay in hearing the outcome of the service review. One provider had been told that they would not hear the outcome until all services in the area had been reviewed which would take over a year. That provider felt it was too long to wait.

11% are currently in the process of service review. 53% of providers have not undergone service review and of those 80% have not been told when they will be reviewed

4. Relationships with local authorities. In March 2006 43% of providers said they are able to get information from their local authority with difficulty.

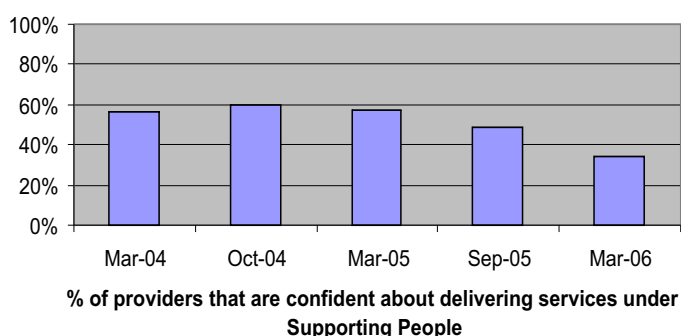
Throughout the two year study providers were asked to describe their relationship with their local authority. The results below show how many providers described their relationship as "very good".

- 17% March 2006
- 27% September 2005
- 32% March 2005
- 53% in October 2004
- 42% in March 2004

Many of the providers that had difficulty in gaining information from local authorities suggested that the local authority staff were not being evasive or deliberately concealing information it was simply that the staff did not know the answers to the questions being asked. It has been a challenging time for both providers and local authorities. There has been a degree of uncertainty about the decision making processes being adopted by local authorities and general difficulty in maintaining communication with providers.

Tracking Providers' Experience

Levels of confidence amongst providers



Perception that providers have of local authorities

