



"SUPPORTING HIGHLAND PEOPLE"

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

SUPPORTING PEOPLE STRATEGY

2003 - 2008

(2007 Update)

(Part 2 of "Housing Highlands Communities" The Highland Council Local Housing Strategy)

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Copies of this report are available in alternative formats such as large print format, or on CD, on request. If you would like any further copies of this strategy, please contact:

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Supporting People Strategy 2003-8 was developed following guidance from the Scottish Executive in 2002 and can be seen as a position statement, focussing on implementation of the programme. Since this strategy was published there has been significant developments in terms of the way in which the programme is to be managed, national priorities have changed, and the budget pressures nationally and locally, have taken priority.
- 1.2 The 2003-8 Strategy outlines areas where there was thought to be unmet need, both geographically and for individual client groups. The strategy outlines actions and priorities to be taken to meet these needs. Some of these have been achieved, but due to the budget cuts, it has not been able to start to address the additional identified needs.
- 1.3 In light of this the current strategy has been reviewed to identify changing context and patterns of support provision and ensure that it reflects the current situation in terms of supply of services, profiles and current actions. The Supporting People Strategy Update 2007 re-aligns Supporting People within the new strategic environment, providing clearer links to current work and highlighting its relevance to activities within Housing, Health and Social Work.

The update refers to plans for a thorough review of the Supporting People strategy to cover the period 2008-13.

2. The Highland Context

- 2.1 The Highland Council covers roughly 1/3 of the land mass of Scotland (26, 484km²), stretching 334km North-South and 304km East-West. The total population of the area is just under 210,000, with 50,970¹ living in Inverness and immediate surroundings. Across the area, the average population density is the lowest in Scotland, with 8 persons/km² - compared to the Scottish average of 66 persons/km².

According to the 2001 Highland census profile, there are in excess of 89,533 households:

65.7% Owner-occupiers,
18% Local authority rented,
3.6% Housing association rented,
7% Privately rented in 1996, and
5.7% In other housing tenure.

¹ From GRO(S) Scottish Settlements publication, 2000.

Although Highland enjoys a diverse economy, the rural economy remains fragile. There are concentrated areas of relatively high deprivation and incomes remain low on average. The wide population dispersion includes people with a diverse range of needs meaning that the delivery of support services, and an ageing population has meant many people have few choices and often have to leave their communities to receive a suitable service.

From 1st April 2003, the introduction of Supporting People provided a single funding programme, through the integration of existing funding streams, for housing related support services throughout Scotland, England and Wales.

Under the Supporting People programme, all local authorities were tasked with the administration and funding of housing support services provided within their areas. As such, The Highland Council gate-keeps this funding stream at a local level, through a limited grant received on a monthly basis from the Scottish Executive.

This change in funding regime gave us an opportunity locally to provide good quality services, focused on the needs of service users, to enable vulnerable people to live independently in the community, in all types of accommodation and tenure. It is therefore an essential element in tackling the problems of delivering social inclusion priorities for the Council.

2.2 The aims of Supporting People are:

Putting the service user in the driving seat
Improving the quality and scope of local provision
Contributing to the well-being of communities
Opening up housing support to people in every tenure.
(Scottish Executive newsletter Issue 6 – October 2002)

This strategy sets out the aims, objectives, actions and resources needed in order to support people in the Highlands.

In relation to Supporting People, The Highland Council's aim is

“To provide and enable the provision of good quality, flexible and affordable housing support services for all people living in the Highlands who need them.”

In order to achieve this aim we have established the following objectives:

2.2.1 Focusing on local needs

In an area as large and diverse as the Highlands there are different needs in different places. We want to meet these diverse needs in appropriate ways.

2.2.2 Improving the range of services

We know that services are not always available to people in some areas in the form they want. We want to improve access to appropriate services across all of Highland.

2.2.3 Ensuring service quality

In the Highlands we are proud of the quality of the housing support services which are currently delivered both by the Council and partners. But we are not complacent. We want to build on and continuously improve existing good practice within housing support services in Highland.

2.2.4 Working together

We will work closely with partners, including providers and service users, to develop more choice for individuals and develop a wider range of services over the life of this strategy. We will also make sure that Supporting People is linked with the wider strategic planning framework.

- 2.3 By working towards these objectives we will improve the quality and scope of services across the Highlands. However when the funding stream was introduced our key priority was to ensure a seamless transition from the old system to the new system for service users and providers, which was achieved successfully. Since then we have been focussing on the initial service reviews in the period up to April 2007. The process of longer term strategic planning to support the ongoing delivery of housing support services will begin in 2007 with the development of a Supporting People Strategy 2008-2013.

3. Decision-making and Governance

- 3.1 Communication and stakeholder involvement are critical for successful implementation and future service development of housing support services. The Highland Council is committed to developing and promoting ongoing stakeholder involvement. The Supporting People team developed a decision-making and governance structure to provide a clear framework for involvement of, consultation with and information dissemination to, all stakeholders in the programme. The aims of this structure are:

To ensure that all stakeholders have access to information about the Supporting People initiative and how it is being implemented in the Highlands

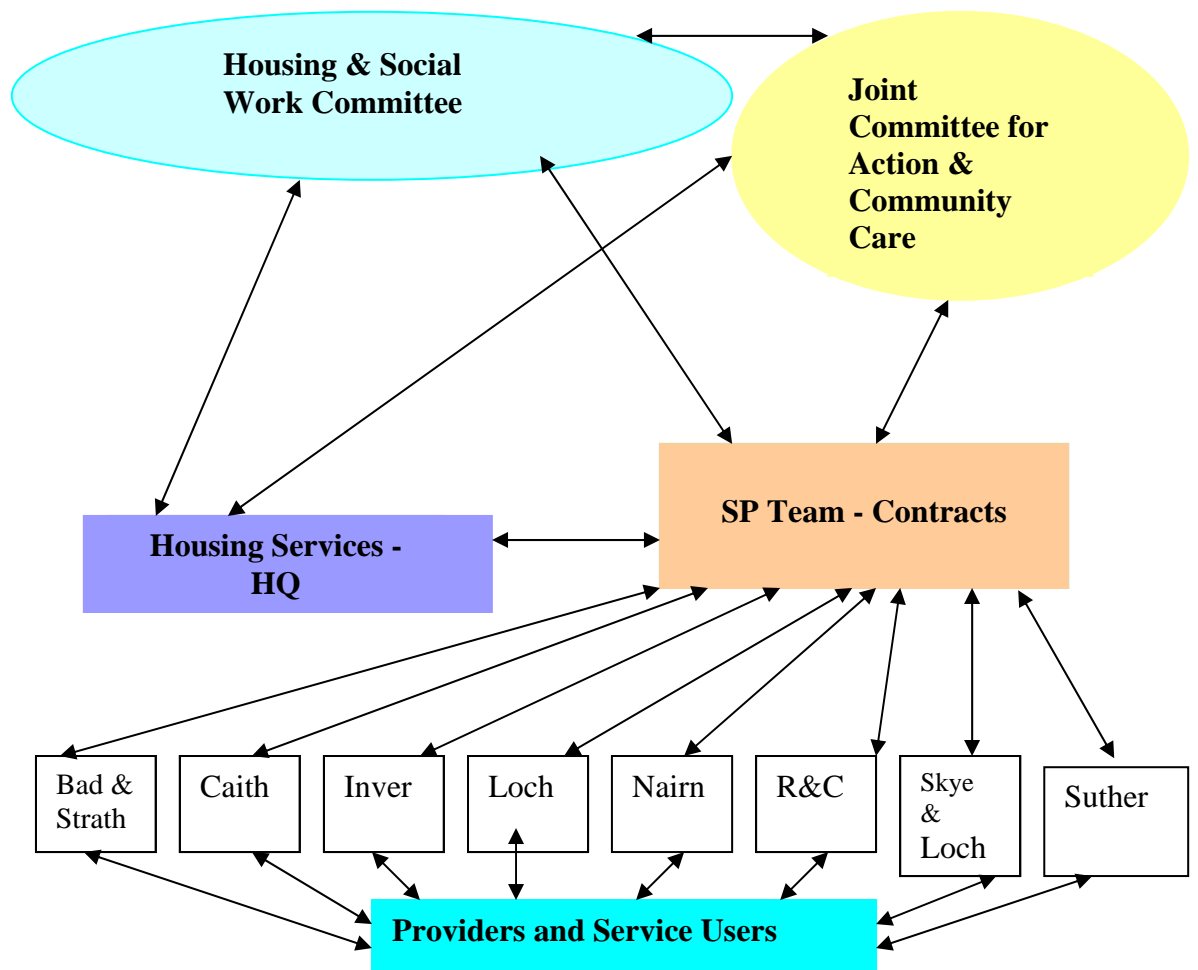
To ensure all stakeholders are consulted on the implementation of Supporting People in the Highlands

To ensure that stakeholders have the opportunity to be involved in the decisions affecting how Supporting People is implemented in the Highlands.

Within the structure a clear decision-making structure was developed to with The Highland Council/Highland Health Board **Joint Committee for Action in Community Care** (JCACC) identified as the main forum for elected member decision making on key issues affecting Supporting People. This would allow Supporting People to be considered within the wider context of strategic planning and development for health and community care services.

The **Housing and Social Work Committee** has acted as the main decision making committee in the development of the programme since implementation. Regular reports are submitted on all aspects of the programme, both for information and update and for decision. Members on this Committee have developed a good knowledge and understanding of the programme and are actively engaged in monitoring progress and development.

- 3.2.1 The Highland Council/NHS Highland **Joint Chief Officer Group** (COG) was identified as the Core Co-ordination Group for Supporting People during the implementation process. The role of this group in the programme is now minimal.



The strategy also outlined a number of existing networks with the Highlands to act as consultative fora for the programme and the development of the strategy. This list included:

- Homelessness Strategy Working Group
- Housing Association Liaison Group
- Highland Voluntary Sector providers Alliance
- Independent Sector Liaison group
- Modernising Community Care reference group.

Since the implementation of the programme the focus has been on the considerable resources, particularly in light of the £2million cuts that have had to be found in Highland. Much of the formal structure has now lapsed and we are keen to re-establish clear structures in terms of developing the strategy and in the on-going delivery of the programme. Consultation on this structure will begin in 2007.

3.3 Equal Opportunities

The aim of The Highland Council is to ensure that we meet the broad definitions as outlined in the Scotland Act 1998 and meet the requirements as stated in the Race Relations Act (amend) 2001, Disability Rights Act 1995, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

More specifically these aims are to:

Provide services that meet the needs of all communities in Highland

Promote Equal opportunities and tackle discrimination

Be a fair employer

Meet its legal obligations under relevant legislation

We intend to ensure all service users are included in Supporting People programme through:

Consultation during the Service Reviews

Consultation on the strategic development of the programme and of individual services

Undertaking impact assessments

Advising on their needs through the Single Shared Assessment and

Having a choice in service provision wherever possible.

In addition, we will continue to promote the mainstreaming of equal opportunity issues throughout Highland in every aspect of policy and practice.

4. Links to Other Strategies

- 4.1 This strategy builds on a wide range of sources and processes, and we have ensured that the strategic planning for Supporting People is integrated with other key plans and the wider strategic planning framework.

In terms of the national framework, Supporting People is influenced by the health and social care agendas, and by the housing agenda. The key messages from the Scottish Executive are those promoting integrated working between the three sectors. A key document in relation to this is the **Essential Connections** report 2006, which highlights a number of fundamental issues:

No single service can effectively meet the needs of any individual. Services have to be tailored to meet the unique and specific requirements of each person.

Early (and preventative where possible) involvement protects and enhances “ordinary living” and is usually less complex and less costly to provide.

Continuing innovation and development is essential if we are to meet increasing demands within the finite resources available.

- 4.2 This is further echoed by the **Joint Future Unit** with their recommendations that are aimed at ensuring:

Quicker and simpler access to services

Better outcomes for people who use services and their carers;

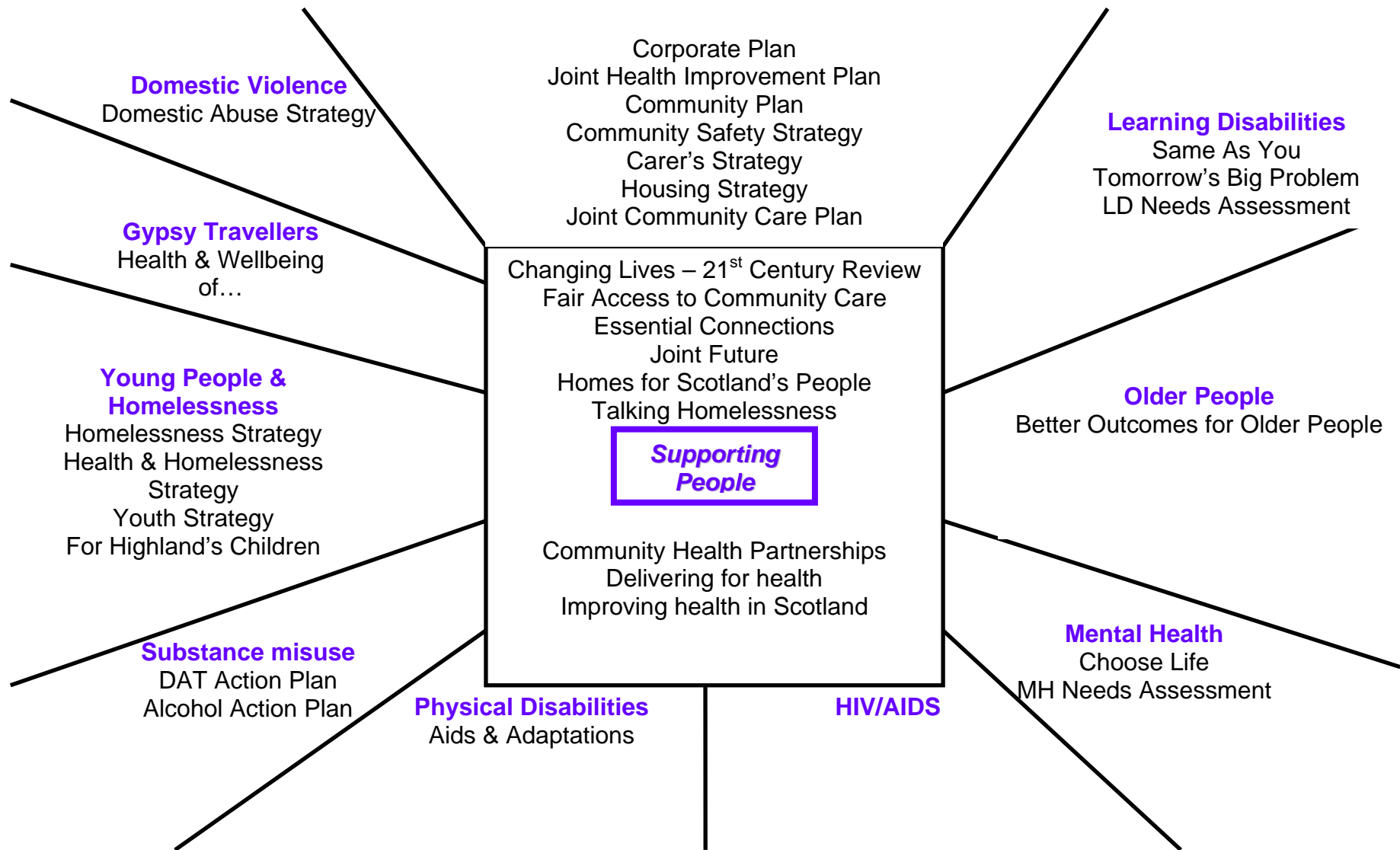
Better use of resources, with decisions about their use which are transparent and in line with shared priorities;

Better management of services under single managers

Better systems, with less bureaucracy and duplication and clearer responsibilities.

Highland Council is currently piloting an electronic Single Shared Assessment process to progress this further.

Supporting People Strategic Map



4.2.1 Social Care

The report of the 21st Century Social Work Review Panel, **Changing Lives**, identifies 3 key areas where Social Work departments nationally need to focus to bring about significant improvements in the delivery of services to vulnerable people. These are:

Doing more of the same won't work. Increasing demand, greater complexity and rising expectations mean that the current situation is not sustainable.

Social work services don't have all of the answers. They need to work closely with other universal providers in all sectors to find new ways to design and deliver services across the public sector

Social workers' skills are highly valued and increasingly relevant to the changing needs of society. Yet we are far from making the best use of these skills

4.2.2 Health

The NHS Reform (Scotland) Act 2004 established **Community Health Partnerships (CHP's)** from April 2005. CHP's provide the opportunity to connect all parts of health and social care systems together with community and voluntary sector interests and link into wider Community Planning Partnerships. Representation from the housing profession is increasingly being recommended and links need to be made across Highland with the CHP's. The importance of ensuring that vulnerable people have access to appropriate housing, to enable the integrated delivery of social care and health services is key.

The key message in **Delivering for Health** (NHS Scotland) is that ;

“Our aim is to improve the health of the people of Scotland . . . with a shift towards preventive medicine and more continuous care in the community. Clearly there is a role for Supporting People in the joint delivery of these community based services and with a preventative role provided by housing related support at home”.

March 2003 saw the publication of **Improving Health in Scotland** (Scottish Executive) which outlined a vision for Scotland in 2020.

“A thriving Scotland with appropriate working, housing and living conditions, Individuals and organisations taking more individual and corporate responsibility, with more people living their lives in good health both physically and mentally.”

All Scotland's children have a positive expectation of appropriate housing, education, community and family life with the aim of maturing into positive, confident and productive citizenship.

4.2.3 Housing

Housing is clearly seen as a key contributor to the health of the nation and the Supporting People programme can contribute to this agenda with the provision of good quality, appropriate housing related support to enable people to live independently.

Homes for Scotland's People (Scottish Executive, March 2005) outlines the challenges involved in transforming the housing in Scotland in terms of quality, quantity, choice and building strong, safe and attractive communities. Within the report the following specific areas of need in relation to vulnerable people are highlighted

To provide support for those who need it, recognising the particular needs of young adults, the elderly and the disadvantaged.

To provide the assistance that will enable elderly or vulnerable people to continue to live independently in their own homes.

Effective means of helping people avoid homelessness and immediate assistance if it should happen.

4.2.4 In Highland

Clearly the Supporting People programme rests at the centre of the triangle of housing, social care and health. This needs to be echoed at a local level and within Highland, the Supporting People Strategy establishes clear links with the following:

The Community Plan for Highland –. This is the second Community Plan for Highland produced by the Highland Wellbeing Alliance. The long term vision set out in the first Community Plan was of – “*a prosperous and dynamic future for Highland as ‘the natural place to be’ – a desirable place in which to live, learn, work and relax*”.

For Highland to remain a successful and attractive region in the coming ten or twenty years there are three strategic issues which have to be addressed. We need to counter the worst effects of demographic change, tackle disadvantage (geographic and personal) and up-grade our infrastructure. This Community Plan explains how we will do this in partnership and with communities.

4.2.5 Corporate Plan

The Plan identifies the key issues of concern to all Services in the Council and action that will be taken under six themes:

- Representing the Highlands
- Working with Communities and Partners
- Improving Quality of Life
- Being Open, Fair and Accountable
- Delivering Services Effectively
- Valuing and Involving our Staff

4.2.6 Joint Health Improvement Plan 2004-7.

This Joint Health Improvement Plan has been developed by the Highland Wellbeing Alliance in recognition of the Scottish Executive's call for improving health to be "everybody's business". The Highland Wellbeing Alliance agreed in April 2002 that achieving a step change in the health of the Highland population was one of its key priority goals. The Plan sets out our jointly agreed strategic framework for improving health, provides a snapshot of current health improvement work and identifies the additional work needed to achieve our agreed objectives and outcomes. The key areas in relation to Supporting People are;-

- Health of children and families
- Health of teenagers
- Health of older people
- Geographical Communities
- Inequalities within communities of interest

4.2.7 Community Safety Strategy

The Wellbeing Alliance Community Safety Steering Group is committed to working together to create a safe, strong and attractive community where people can live, work and visit in safety without fear or risk of harm.

- Tackling drug and alcohol misuse
- Addressing domestic abuse
- Promoting equalities and valuing diversity
- Engaging with young people

4.2.8 Joint Community Care Plan

Outlines the commitment made by agencies to working in partnership with users, carers, and the voluntary and independent sector to promote high quality services to support people in their own homes in their own communities, wherever possible.

4.2.9 Local Housing Strategy

The Highland Local Housing Strategy identifies the housing issues that need to be addressed in Highland, and shows what action we want to take to improve people's housing circumstances. It also highlights how we will help to meet national priorities as well as those in the Highland Community Plan and sets out the resources needed and how we will direct them.

Our overall aim is to make the housing system work so that people in the Highlands, now and in the future, have a decent place to stay that suits their needs, at a price they can afford.

We have set six goals to help us achieve our aim:

Increasing housing opportunities to reduce housing need and the stress on communities.

Helping to develop sustainable communities and addressing social inclusion issues.

Improving the quality and condition of housing.

Reducing homelessness by taking preventative action and resolving incidences quickly and effectively.

Ensuring appropriate housing and housing support is available for people with community care needs.

Continuous improvement - ensuring delivery of high quality services across all tenures.

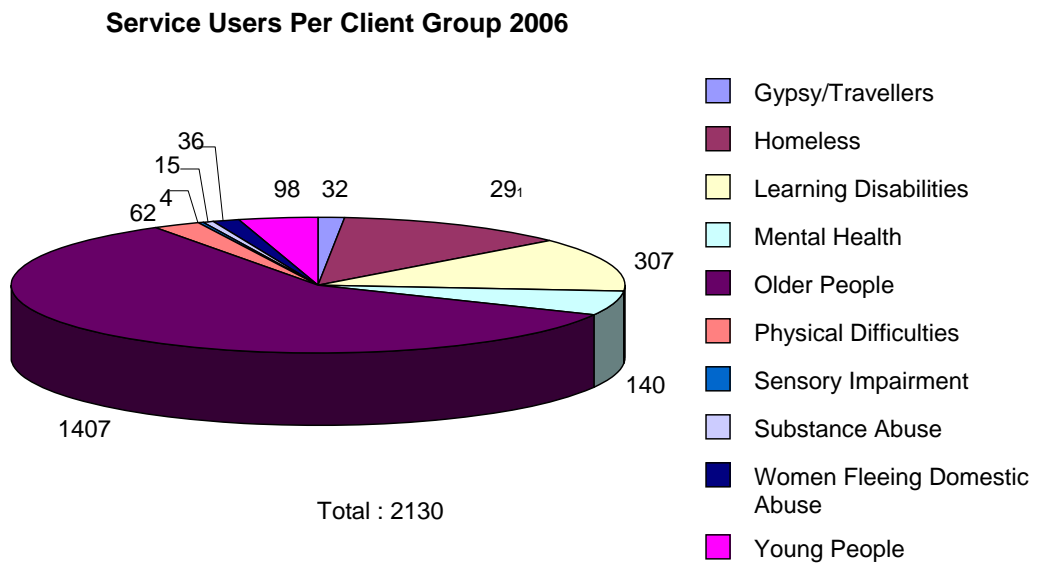
5. Service Users and Client Groups

The Supporting People programme funds support to vulnerable people with a wide range of needs. Services are categorised by the primary client group to whom they provide support e.g. older people. It must be recognised that service users may have support needs due to a number of issues, for example an older person with dementia and a physical disability. It is therefore difficult to provide an accurate picture of the needs of the service user, and also of the services provided by the provider. The following information categorises services by client group type and therefore some assumptions are made about a client's primary need as outlined above. We intend to ensure that services are delivered to people who have been identified as being most in need of housing support and that these services are appropriate, well-planned and responsive. Further work on mapping needs will help to identify the types of services that should be provided to ensure that individual needs are met.

5.1.1 Supply

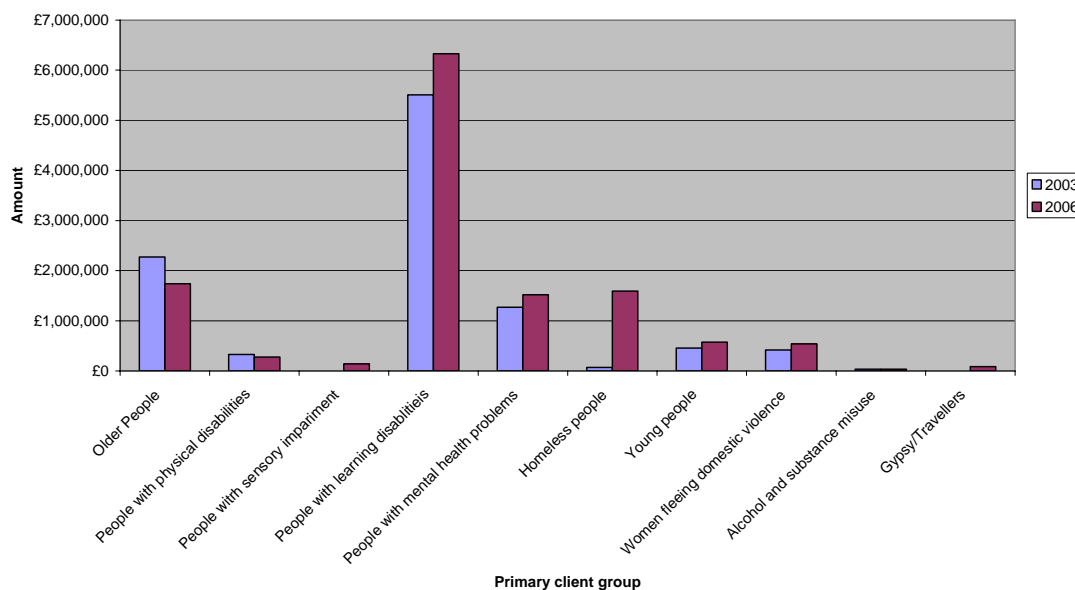
In order to implement the Supporting People programme it was necessary to undertake a supply mapping exercise to identify who the current service providers and service users were. This enabled the Supporting People team to ensure that payment for services continued after implementation.

In 2006 there were around 2400 users of Supporting People services. These are illustrated, as defined by primary client group, below;



In terms of funding for services there have been a number of issues that have affected the distribution of funding over the various client groups. The following chart shows the distribution of funding over the various client groups in 2003 and 2006;

SP Grant per client group 2003 & 2006

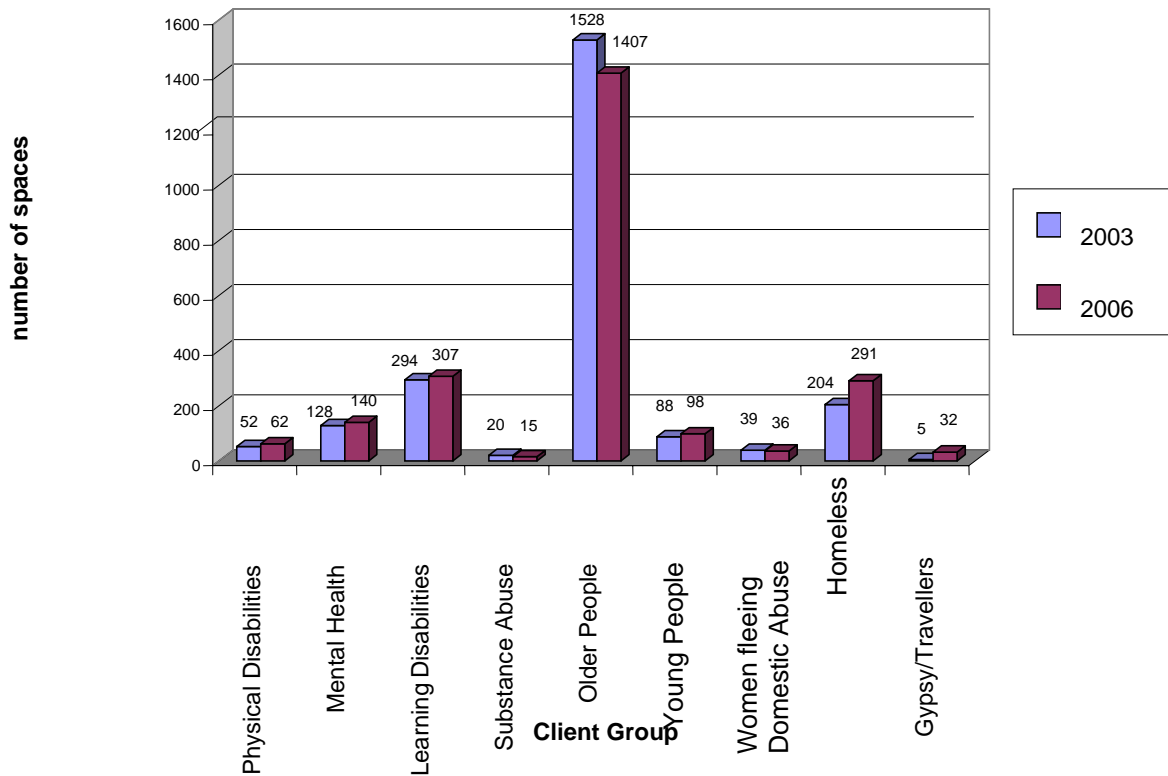


5.1.2 Key Features

These charts illustrate that there has been an increase in the funding for learning disability services due to a number of new services being approved as 'pipeline projects'. These were services for New Craig's re-provisioning, previously identified as requiring Supporting People funding, but not in operation on 1st April 2003.

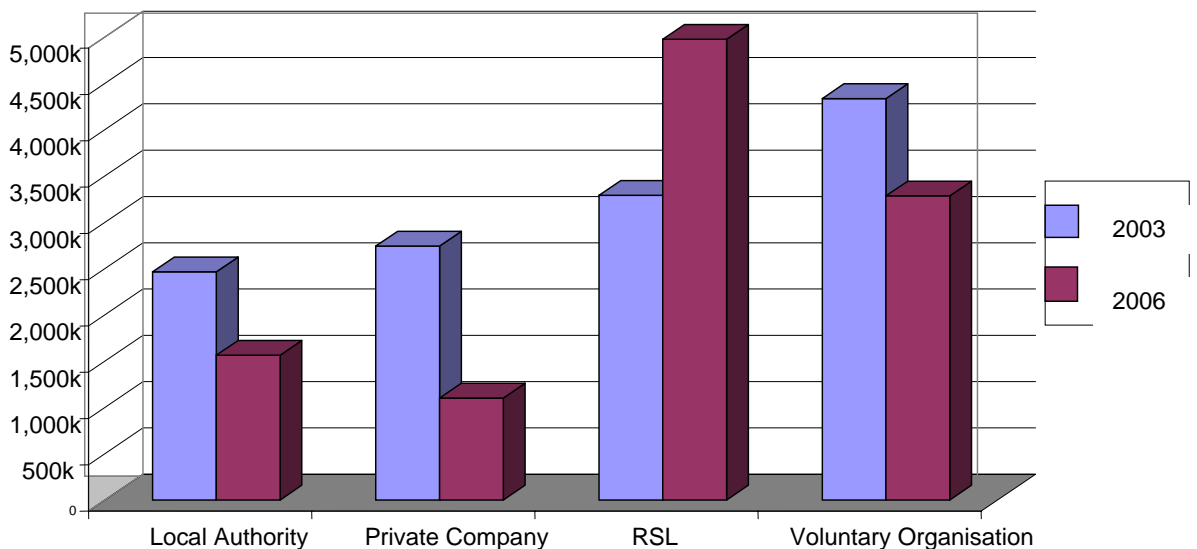
There were new services for women escaping domestic abuse and a small service for older people identified and agreed by the Scottish Executive as 'pipeline services'. There is also a marked increase in the funding for services to homeless people due to a planned growth in provision of services to people in temporary accommodation. In terms of availability of services, the following chart compares the number of available support places in 2003 and 2006.

Number of Spaces Per Client Group - comparison 2003/2006

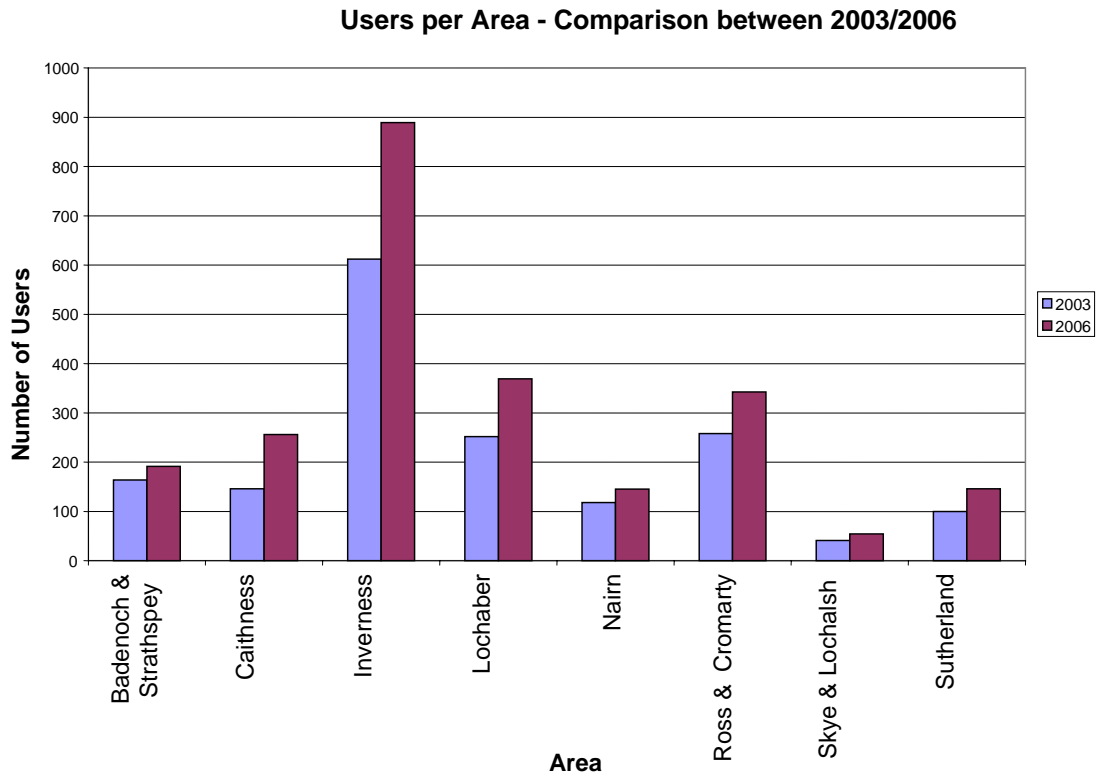


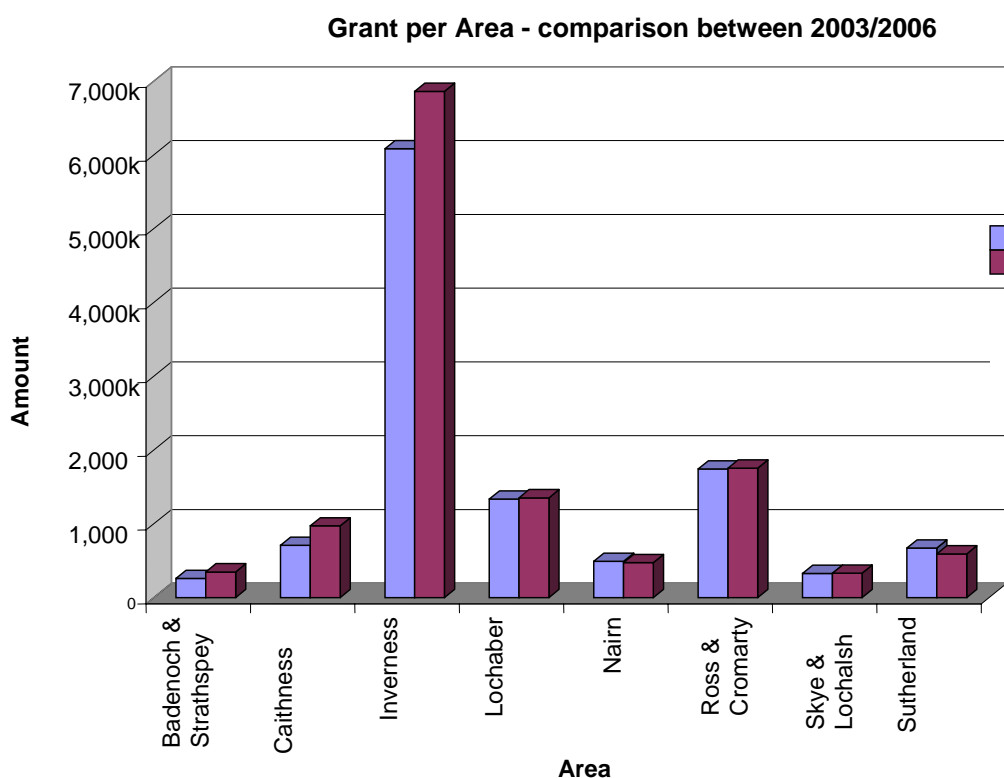
Supporting People funding is available to a wide range of providers of services. The following table identifies the distribution of funding across the 4 main provider types; local authority, private organisations/individuals, Registered Social Landlords and the voluntary sector.

Supporting People Grant per type of provider - comparison 2003/2006



Across the various areas of Highland there has been some change in the distribution of spend, and on availability of services. The following 2 charts show the funding by area and the available support spaces per area.





Clearly there have been some significant changes in the profiles of spending and service provision over the first 3 years of the Supporting People programme. Information on the spending profiles for the financial year 2006/7 are not yet available and are expected to show marked differences from 2005/6, due to the eligibility exercises and the Service Reviews.

The Supporting People strategy 2008-13 will identify the projected need for different types of services for different clients groups across all of Highland and will establish the priorities in meeting these needs

5.2.3 Need

Highland's population is continuing to grow. It experienced the largest percentage population increase of all Scottish local authorities between 2004 and 2005 (1.1%) and currently stands at 213,590. Since 1995, Highland's population has increased by 2.5% whilst Scotland has seen an overall decline of -0.2%. The increase is due to in-migration much of it coming from Eastern Europe. These pressures require responses to manage the demands on services including those to support new workers.

Population projections carried out by the Highland Wellbeing Alliance (WBA) in 2006 highlighted the significant differences between the areas in growth rates and age profiles. The highest growth is expected to be in Inverness and Nairn with falls in Sutherland and Caithness. Inverness is expected to have the most balanced population. The significant growth in older people in all areas is expected to continue with the highest proportions in Badenoch and Strathspey and Sutherland which will also have the most top heavy population profile.

There are wide discrepancies in service provision across Highland. There is often difficulty in finding housing support for people who need more intensive support in rural areas. We therefore intend to look at ways to improve service provision across these areas as well as consider ways to develop services to people across a variety of tenure types.

The WBA partners are taking a number of steps to make sure that services are geared up to manage the demands arising from these changes. In line these demands, and people's aspirations, the Council agreed in May 2006 to develop around 600 new homes over the next 5 years which will be suitable for older people. This will be an integral part of wider changes to service provision for older people such as the provision of flexible care, support and local services so that people can continue to live at home.

Incomes are generally lower in the Highlands than nationally and with many also having seasonal or insecure incomes this can make it difficult for many to secure mortgages to buy their own home. Together with high and increasing house prices and higher rural living costs, housing affordability is an issue for many households. As well as affordability difficulties, migration patterns, commuting patterns and high levels of second / holiday homes are causing pressures on housing. Many households cannot afford to compete in local housing markets.

The severe shortage of housing and affordable housing in particular, has been identified as a major social issue, a constraint on economic growth in the Highlands and could contribute to population loss - particularly in fragile areas. The Highland Housing Needs Assessment in 2003 indicated that there was a shortage of 5,000 social rented homes over the next 5 years. Despite significant increases in affordable housing investment and in the amount of new affordable housing being built, housing organisations in the Highlands are continuing to operate in a context of very high housing need and rising homelessness alongside limited affordable housing supply. There were over 10,000 applicants on the Council's waiting list as at April 2006. In five of Highland's Management Areas the ratio of lets to waiting list applicants is far higher than the national average of 5-6 applicants to each let. In many Highland rural communities, the pressure is even greater.

In addition, RSLs report that new developments are fuelling and uncovering demand in rural communities.

Clearly the lack of available, affordable housing is a key issue in meeting the housing and support needs of vulnerable people. Providing a comprehensive housing support network across Highland presents us with a number of challenges. A wide range of service user needs accompanied by the demands of a disperse and rural community means that we need to be flexible, innovative and responsive in the provision of services to vulnerable people.

In order to appropriately map the need for services and identify gaps in service provision we need to develop a robust method of assessing unmet need. Without this it is difficult and unwise to make significant changes to the profile of Supporting People services in Highland. During 2007 we will develop such a methodology and research the unmet need in Highland. This will inform the Supporting People Strategy 2008-13. In the current environment of pressured budgets, the development of new services alone may not be an option that is available to us. We will need to look at other ways of meeting the need such as remodelling existing service provision and working in partnership with other statutory and voluntary sector agencies to attract funding and provide efficient and effective services.

The following sections present more detailed information by client group. The sections outline the current strategic environment for each of the client groups and provide general information about need from other research and anecdotal opinion from professional, service providers and users.

5.2.4 Supporting Older People

In 2004, approximately 17% of Highland's population was aged over 65. Highland is expected to see a significant rise in the older population in the future with the number of people aged over 65 projected to be approximately 28% of Highland's population by 2024. This means that there is likely to be an increase of 24,000 people aged over 65 living in Highland in 2024 compared to 2004. While the population of Highland as a whole is projected to increase by approximately 3.6% by 2024, in comparison the population aged over 65 is projected to increase by over 62%. This has important implications for the level and type of services required.

The table below shows that the proportion of older people aged over 65 varies between the Council's Areas, ranging from 22.2% of Sutherland's population in 2004, to 15.9% of the population in Inverness in 2004. The table also shows the projected increases in population for each Highland Area, with Sutherland continuing to show the highest proportion of the older population and Inverness marginally the lowest. The high proportions of older people in each Area will have a significant impact on meeting the personal care and support needs of older people in the community and service delivery locally.

Area	Total Pop 2004	Older Pop* at 2004	% of 2004 Pop that is older	Total Projected Pop Year: 2024	Projected Older Pop* Year: 2024	% of Projected Pop (2024) that is older
Badenoch & Strathspey	11,900	2,245	18.9	12,049	3,727	30.9
Caithness	25,164	4,432	17.6	23,846	6,167	25.9
Inverness	67,733	10,783	15.9	71,863	17,335	24.1
Lochaber	18,789	3,205	17.1	18,473	5,264	28.5
Nairn	11,707	2,275	19.4	12,928	3,930	30.4
Ross & Cromarty	49,967	8,462	16.9	51,924	15,528	29.9
Skye & Lochalsh	12,374	2,161	17.5	13,413	3,972	29.6
Sutherland	13,706	3,048	22.2	13,141	4,718	35.9

* Older population: aged over 65

The Council undertook a series of consultation exercises with service users, carers and key stakeholders across the Highlands during 2001/2002. This was part of a review of services for older people. The Council commissioned further consultation with older people which was completed in 2005 by the Highland Community Care Forum. This again showed that enabling people to stay in their own homes was priority for older people. The evidence was very clear that people would prefer to live in their own homes, remaining in mixed communities, with call alarms installed if necessary and support and care provided.

As part of the 2004 Review of Sheltered Housing, the Council identified the future needs of older people for sheltered housing and support at home. This showed the unmet future need of older people for accommodation and future support likely to be needed in the home.

Local authorities in Scotland have always acknowledged the importance of practical help to people at home. The need for domestic help, shopping and laundry services was recognised in the Joint Future Report and has been accepted by the Scottish Executive. These services are important, not simply for the assistance they provide. There is now evidence that they prevent deterioration and delay the need for institutional care.

They are therefore a key component of any strategy to shift the balance of care in favour of supporting people at home.

The main priorities and actions required in relation to older people are set out in the Highland Council's "Strategic Review of Services for Older People". These are still valid following more recent developments including the Sheltered Housing Review carried out in 2004 and the Balance of Care report of 2006. Priorities will also be established by an Older People Strategy which will be published in 2007.

In terms of supporting older people to remain in their own homes, there are 3 key issues to consider:-

Older people should be offered more choice across Highland by establishing suitable housing options to provide for a variety of different levels of needs. This includes enabling older people to remain in their own homes for longer in line with their aspirations.

Current residents of care homes should be given the opportunity, where appropriate, to return to their own homes and communities.

We should prevent the unnecessary admission of older people with dependency needs into institutional settings.

5.2.5 Supporting People with Mental Health Problems

The Highland Council area has been in the highest quarter to all Scottish suicide rates for at least the last 25 years. The number of people diagnosed with a bipolar disorder by the Highland Health Board amounts to 4.8 per 1,000 population and diagnosis of schizophrenia is 4 people per 1,000 population. Between October 2005 and March 2006, 22 people per 100,000 were detained under an Emergency Certificate, 33 per 100,000 were detained under a Short-Term Detention Certificate, and 15 per 100,000 subject to Compulsory Treatment Orders under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003. (Mental Welfare Commission Annual Report 2005/06)

(Philip, Watson & Muir. *NHS Scotland, Mental Health in Scotland: Information Sources and Selected Insights*. June 2002).

The Highland Council currently is working to the Joint Local Implementation Plan for the 2003 Mental Health Act ('JLIP') which followed on from 'The Framework for Mental Health Services in Scotland: A Highland Response – June 2000.' The JLIP is a joint plan signed up to by Highland Council and NHS Highland which was drawn up. This framework has been devised in partnership with Council services, Health, other service providers and people who require access to services. The JLIP makes plans for the future of mental health services generally in light of the new statutory responsibilities arising from the Mental Health Act.

The Scottish Executive announced the Mental Health Delivery Plan in December 2006 which builds on the JLIP work and which sets targets and commitments for both local authority and NHS mental health services.

Between 1998 and 2000, a series of housing and community care needs assessments sought to provide both statistical and qualitative information on the need for housing and community care services across the Highlands. People who use mental health services, carers and professionals all participated in interviews.

This research suggests that current services will be expected to meet the needs of those clients with higher level of needs, but that there are large numbers of people with medium or low needs where there are service gaps (although there are area variations in this situation).

It also indicates a severe shortage of appropriate housing support for people with mental health problems. We also know that supported accommodation in itself may not always be the most appropriate form of provision, particularly for clients with medium or low needs. Consideration is needed for other types of provision such as floating support services, family and friends, Health and/or Social Work resources.

The felt turnover rates for mental health services can vary substantially depending on the level of needs of the service user, particularly people with dual, multiple or complex needs who may find it harder to maintain a consistent level of service delivery. There is also an increasing number of people who have alcohol related brain damage.

In the absence of more appropriate alternatives people with mental health problems may be required to go into registered care accommodation or hospital provision, which may well not be the most appropriate response.

The table below shows the amount, and type, of accommodation in each Area, along with the percentage split across the Highlands for each type of accommodation.

Provision of accommodation for people with mental health problems, by Area, as at February 2005

AREA	Housing Support *		Care Home**		Hospital		Total provision	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Badenoch & Strathspey	9	6%	-	-	-	-	9	2%
Caithness	2	1%	-	-	-	-	2	0.5%
Inverness	90	56%	111	72%	124	100%	325	74%
Lochaber	18	11%	-	-	-	-	18	4%
Nairn	26	17%	-	-	-	-	26	6.5%
Ross & Cromarty	15	9%	42	28%	-	-	57	13%
Skye & Lochalsh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sutherland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Highland	160	100%	153	100%	124	100%	437	100%

* Note: The figures represent the number of people aged 16-64 with mental health problems accessing housing support services, at Jan 2005. This number may fluctuate, as providers' contracts are based on the number of hours of support provided rather than the number of service users.

**Note: The figures include services that provide accommodation for a range of people with mental health problems, including older people.

Between 1998 and 2001, members of the Highland Users Group and Highland Community Care Forum provided information on 'felt need' in the eight service areas. Many views were shared across the Highlands, although there were also some area differences. The following express some of the shared views that were felt:

Needs for support to keep a tenancy going when in hospital and to receive continuity of support on being discharged.

Need for advice on housing issues/information/benefit take-up in a positive manner.

Need for support/accommodation that is flexible and changes in accordance with individual needs.

Need for services such as assistance to furnish properties or to have assistance in moving or arranging deposits for accommodation, as well as the need for assistance with budgeting and benefits.

The importance of feeling safe and secure in your own home is important.

Barriers to accessing housing, including some landlords being unwilling to allocate properties to people with mental health problems, difficulty in finding out about housing options.

5.2.6 Supporting People with Physical Disability

A report on physical disability was completed in the 1998 and 2000 series of housing and community care needs assessments, providing both statistical and ‘anecdotal’ information on the need for housing and community care services across the Highlands. The following table is based on statistics collated in this exercise. The information was identified using Scottish Executive 1997 prevalence rates guidance.

Highland - PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES (aged 16 to retirement)

	1998	2006	2011	2018
Low	2,281	2,279	2,232	2,147
Medium	1,356	1,355	1,327	1,276
High	634	633	620	596
Total need	4,270	4,266	4,179	4,019
Population	126,713	126,597	124,002	119,254

Supporting People funding currently provides support for 62 clients with physical disabilities. These clients are likely to be those with more complex disabilities with physical disability not being the only need. This suggests higher level needs over all, with housing support being complimentary to other care needs. In general, clients with physical disabilities alone don't necessarily require housing support.

5.27 Supporting People with Learning Disabilities

Between 1998 and 2000, a series of housing and community care needs assessments sought to provide both statistical and ‘anecdotal’ information on the need for housing and community care services across the Highlands. People who access services, carers and professionals all participated in interviews.

From statistics collated in this exercise the following information was identified using Scottish Executive 1997 prevalence rates guidance.

Highland - PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES (aged 16 to retirement)

	1998	2006	2011	2018
Low	749	748	733	705
Medium	1,248	1,247	1,221	1,175
High	499	499	489	470
Total need	2,496	2,494	2,443	2,349
Population	126,713	126,597	124,002	119,254

“*The same as you?*” review, published in May 2000, was the first major policy review of services for people with a learning disability in Scotland since 1978. It described people with a learning disability as having,

“A significant, lifelong condition that started before adulthood, that affected their development and which means they need help to: understand information; learn skills; and cope independently.”¹

The general policy direction for the last 30 years has been to develop services and supports in the community and complete a programme of long-stay hospital closures. This approach has rested on valuing people and aiming for their social inclusion

In Highland, 35 people will have moved out of long stay hospital care between 2006 and 2008, all into supported tenancies. None of these are in receipt of Supporting People funding.

“The number of people with learning disabilities in the UK has increased over the last 35 years. Researchers estimate an increase of 1.2% a year between 1960 and 1995 of people with severe learning disabilities, with a significant increase in those who are older.

This means that since 1965 the number of people with severe learning disabilities has increased by 50%. The number of people with moderate needs has probably increased in much the same way.”¹ This increase is expected to continue.

In addition, autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are now clearly part of the policy direction set out in *“The same as you?”* and the number of people identified with an ASD has grown.

The Highland Council remains by far the main provider of services to this client group. Although turnover rates of services to people with learning disabilities are felt to be fairly low, professional opinion indicates a lack of appropriate accommodation and related care / support services for people with learning disabilities. There is also a very limited number of floating support providers in some areas of Highland for learning disabilities.

The Highland Council, in partnership with NHS Highland, Housing Associations and Independent Sector Providers, have been trying to develop new ways of tackling this shortage of support through the development of existing services and through the creation of new services. However due to the cut back in the SP grant and continued lack of incentives and funding for potential providers, there still remains a lack of choice for service users.

The main alternatives available to people are; to rely on family, friends or, increasingly, and sometimes inappropriately, being admitted into registered care home accommodation.

¹ Scottish Executive, 2000, *“The Same As You?”* A Review of Services for People with Learning Disability

Large numbers of people continue to live within the family home. Whilst this is appropriate for some people, it is not appropriate for others, particularly those who continue to reside with elderly carers through lack of an alternative option. There is also the need to avoid over reliance on provision of care home places for people with learning disabilities which runs contrary to both local and national policy objectives

We want to ensure that services meet individual needs and enable each person to develop their full potential. In order to achieve this further research into the needs of people with learning disabilities is required. This research will look at:

the number of people living at home and who may require housing support services either now or in the future,

the number of homeless people or those staying in temporary accommodation who may have learning disabilities,

the number of people currently accommodated in services which require re-provisioning or who could be moved to more appropriate accommodation if funding was available .

5.2.8 Supporting Homeless People

The Joint Highland Homelessness Strategy Group published the Highland Homelessness Strategy for 2003-8. The group continues to meet on a regular basis to implement the actions in the Strategy. With the forthcoming changes in homelessness legislation it is intended that the strategy will be reviewed during 2007/8.

The emphasis of the review of the strategy will be to prioritise the following outcomes:-

Non-one needs sleep rough

Existing homelessness becomes more visible

Sustainable resettlement is secured for people who become homeless

Fewer people become homeless in the first place

The duration of homelessness is reduced.

To ensure that the number of homeless applicants assessed as non priority need is reduced by 50% by 2008/9

In order to meet the target of reducing the number of homeless applicants by 50% it is proposed that we automatically view all applicants aged 16 – 21, applicants aged 21 – 25 who have previously been looked after and applicants aged 55 and over as being in priority need It is also proposed that we look more closely at these applications and where an applicant has a multiple of low level reasons we consider them as being in priority need under the category of vulnerable for ‘other special reasons.’ This may include situations where for example an applicant has a low medical need and has experienced repeat homelessness or is perhaps being released from prison. This may also mean that more housing support needs are identified for those applicants.

The following table gives detail of homeless presentations between 2003/4 and 2005/6

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
	Highland	Highland	Highland	National
Total number of applications assessed in period	1,825	2,057	2,373	57,831
Priority unintentional	41%	36%	39%	52%
Priority Intentional	4%	4%	3%	2%
Non-priority	35%	37%	35%	17%
Not homeless	5%	5%	6%	9%
Lost contact/withdrew before assessment	8%	12%	12%	13%
Resolved prior to assessment	5%	6%	5%	7%

With the recent changes in homelessness legislation the number of people in Highland approaching as homeless rose substantially. Previously, people who were not likely to be deemed to be in ‘priority need’ often did not approach the council as they were aware that they would not get emergency housing. People who are classed as ‘non-priority’ are now eligible for emergency accommodation and this appears to have led to more people making presentations as homeless.

The turnover rate of homeless people in receipt of a housing support service tends to be high, particularly within more chaotic, extreme homelessness.

There are a number of key issues relating to supporting homeless people

There is a lack of supply of affordable rented housing in many Highland communities.

There is a lack of accessible privately rented accommodation.

There is a lack of temporary accommodation.

Readily accessible support in basic numeric / literacy skills is needed for individuals trying to manage independence.

There is a need for more information and advice services for homeless and potentially homeless people.

Action is needed to improve access to existing support services.

There is a continued need for advocacy services.

More supported housing options are required for vulnerable homeless people.

Options are needed to support people to take up employment.

5.2.9 Supporting Women Fleeing Domestic Abuse

Presently, there are three Women's Aid refuges in Highland, one in Caithness, one in Inverness and one in Ross & Cromarty. These services provide emergency accommodation and an outreach support service. There is also a Women's Aid group in Lochaber who offer a drop in centre as well as advice, information and support. The refuge service is intended to provide an interim measure for women and children fleeing domestic abuse and therefore turnover of spaces in the Women's Aid refuges can be variable between short and medium term.

The outreach service, although only partly funded by Supporting People, aims to enable women to be able to access their advice and advocacy services more freely in rural areas.

WOMEN'S AID ANNUAL STATISTICS –	1999/2000
INVERNESS/ROSS & CROMARTY	
Number of request for refuge	229
Number of women admitted	62
Number of children admitted	78
Number of women turned away (no suitable accommodation)	83
Number of children turned away (no suitable accommodation)	155
Number of women turned away (full)	57
Number of children turned away (full)	79
Number of women referred to other refuges	22
Number of children referred to other refuges	42

The Wellbeing Alliance developed a Domestic Abuse Strategy in 2003 to address the abuse of women in the Highlands. One of the key priorities was to develop the refuge network, which has been achieved in partnership with the Supporting People programme.

5.2.11 Supporting Gypsy/Travellers

There are four official sites for Gypsy/Travellers in Highland, providing a total of 53 places as follows:

Area	Site	No of Places
Badenoch & Strathspey	Newtonmore	7 pitches (Summer Seasonal Site)
Inverness	Inverness	19 pitches
Lochaber	Kentallen	12 pitches
	Spean Bridge,	14 pitches

There were 60 unauthorised encampments recorded in Highland in 2004-2006

The Highland Gypsy/Travellers Partnership Group are currently developing a revised traveller Action Plan which is concerned with service provision to the Gypsy/Traveller community in the Highlands. This group is made up of representatives from NHS Highland, the Highland Council's housing, Education Service and Social Works Services, the Northern Constabulary, the Scottish Gypsy travellers Association, Save the Children and local gypsy traveller representative.

We have a Highland-wide traveller Partnership Group, including travellers which is the main forum for service user input into services. In addition local partnership groups have been established to discuss issues affecting gypsy/travellers..

Lochaber Crossroads worked with the Lochaber Gypsy/Travellers Forum to provide 'Lochaber Routes' floating housing support services to people within Lochaber; however this service is no longer operational.

5.2.12 Young People at Risk

There are many reasons young people can be vulnerable and require additional housing support. The main reason is usually breakdown in family relationships, but other factors can be, substance misuse, no place to stay after leaving young offenders institution or leaving care, pregnancy, mental health problems, learning disabilities and/or physical difficulties.

Get update from Janice re mediation service for young people

To avoid the high rate of failure for first time housing occupiers, housing support services would be particularly beneficial for young people including pre-tenancy support to prepare them for managing their own tenancies. It is felt that young people in receipt of the appropriate level of housing support to suit their needs were more likely to succeed in managing their own tenancy in the future.

Calman Trust in partnership with The Highland Council and Moray Council applied to HomePoint for a small grant to deliver mediation skills training. The mediators work with organisations who deliver support to young people and this training is seen as an extension of the skills. This training was delivered to 15 individuals based in both Highland and Moray Areas. All the individuals involved were successful in passing the training. Procedures have been developed and a pilot case is underway. Mediation will be available in most parts of Highland.

For all young people at risk, there are few specialist housing support providers and their needs can be very diverse. There is also a need to link housing support provision to education, employment and training. There is also a requirement to assess and identify need more effectively.

Is need to engage effectively an issue worth mentioning here?

5.2.13 Supporting People who misuse substances

The Highland Drug & Alcohol Action Team (HDAAT) brings together the agencies in Highland which deal with various aspects of substance misuse. The agencies involved include health, social work, police, education, prison service, licensing board and trade, Alcohol Focus Scotland, Scottish Drugs Forum and the voluntary sector. The strength of this partnership is integral in addressing the issues associated with drug and alcohol misuse in this region.

Local Drug & Alcohol Forums are an integral part of the HDAAT structure. They are all very different and this reflects the diversity in character of the localities that they represent. All Forums work with an annual Action Plan and activities are in response to the substance misuse issues particular to their area.

In 2002/03, there were 2,305 alcohol related acute hospital discharges in Highland, an increase of 70% from 1997/98. Alcohol related deaths are also increasing with 93 deaths registered in 2002 where alcohol was a known underlying cause or contributing cause of death. SALSUS 2002 found that 24% of 13year olds and 49% of 15year olds had drunk alcohol in the week prior to the survey. From hospital records, there were 51 alcohol related acute hospital discharges of people under 16 in 2002/03. Almost two-thirds involved acute intoxication. Not only does excessive alcohol consumption have an impact on long-term health, it also impacts on other resources such as the economy, social services, health and criminal justice systems.

From the 'Drug Misuse Statistics Scotland' (2001) report, available from the Scottish Drug Misuse Database, 1% of the Highland population was identified as approaching to have drug misuse problems. On this basis, it would have meant 2,060 to 2,080 people. Substance misuse occurs in different forms in all parts of Highland, however there are pockets in the region where there are higher dependency rates. In Highland there are issues around accessibility and equity in terms of services currently available for those with substance misuse concerns. The geography of the area dictates the need for decentralised services to ensure that all those across Highland can access the support required to address their issues in terms of substance misuse.

The Highland Drug and Alcohol Action team are mapping the current supply of treatment and advice services pan-Highland, to inform the Drugs and Alcohol Strategy 2007-10, which is due to be published Mar 2007.

5.2.14 Supporting ex-offenders

The only prison in the Highlands is HMP Porterfield Prison in Inverness. The prison held an average of 126 people in 2000-2001 running at a 15% over occupancy rate. In the first six months of 2002 there were 632 admissions to the prison, of which 272 referrals relating to substance misuse were made. and 78 were identified as being of no fixed abode –

The prison itself provides a comprehensive substance misuse service for prisoners is provided within the prison, including an enhanced throughcare service providing transitional care programme from prison to the community. for those identified with need by SPS Drug Strategy Team and the Prison Social Work Team also Services are provided by Phoenix House (assessment for all prisoners serving more than 31 days, 1-to-1 and group work), the prison addictions team (intervention) and Criminal Justice Services (throughcare services, including voluntary transitional care arrangements in the period before and after release, which also aim to assist and advice any person due to be released on their options link people into local service in the community).

However, SACRO are the only specialist housing providers for ex-offenders in Highland. They are a voluntary organisation and only have accommodation within the city of Inverness.

They provide supported accommodation through and outreach support for individuals referred by Criminal Justice Service social workers and prison social workers. They have 9 several self-contained units, up to two leased from Housing Services, Cairn Housing Association and from Albyn Housing Society Ltd and the rest are from The Highland Council.

APEX Scotland also provide advice and assistance for ex-offenders to find employment in the area, but do not provide any housing support type services.

Shelter Scotland is based in Aberdeen but also provide various services to people who are in prison in Highland, and provide outreach support to Porterfield Prison.

5.2.15 Supporting other vulnerable people

Supporting People uses specific categories to identify the primary groups and the needs of people for whom the programme can provide support. It must be recognised that many clients will in fact have multiple needs and will not easily fit into one of the categories. The Highland Council recognises that this can be an issue and aims to provide support focussed on individuals needs through a co-ordinated assessment and provision of relevant services in addition to Supporting People funded services.

In addition to the recognised categories there are client groups that Supporting People do not currently fund specialist services for within Highland. These include refugees, people with alcohol related brain damage and people with HIV and Aids. Further work will be undertaken to identify these, and other gaps in provision, and look at appropriate ways of meeting these needs.

6. Ensuring Quality

- 6.1 Since 1st April 2003, the Council has been responsible for the commissioning of new and existing housing support services in Highland. The Highland Council was awarded a Supporting People grant of approximately £13.7 million for 2004/05. However as a result of a new distribution formula introduced by the Scottish Executive the budget was reduced in round terms by £800,000 in 2005/06 and then by a further £1.2 million in 2006/07 and 2007/08. There has therefore been an ongoing requirement for a reduction of £2million in the Supporting People Budget by the end of 2006/2007 as compared to the 2004/05 budget.

A number of actions were agreed to achieve these savings. They have included reducing provider capacity where vacancies were above a set level and by conducting exercises ensuring that all the services that are in receipt of Supporting People funding are receiving this funding for eligible services. It is anticipated that at end of 2006/7 that savings in the region of £2million will have been achieved.

6.1.1 Eligibility Criteria

A key area of work has been the determination of eligibility of services for Supporting People funding. Supporting People funding is available to fund services which provide support as defined under 21 eligibility criteria. An outline of these eligibility criteria can be found in Appendix 1 to this document. In addition to these criteria, the eligibility exercise focussed on the following areas:

1. Focus on a support package
2. Focus on need
3. Focus on adults
4. Focus on housing
5. Exclusion of statutory duties
6. Distinction from care, health and other supports.

As a result of the eligibility exercise, Highland Council have identified a number of services which were either claiming Supporting People grant for services that did not fall under the 21 eligibility criteria (and the above areas), or where the service user no longer needed as many hours of support as previously identified. Some service users received an increase in their allocated hours as a result of this exercise.

6.1.2 Service Review

Services in Highland that are funded through Supporting People have also been subject to a full Service Review. The approach is aimed at being inclusive, consistent and supportive to both service providers and service users, taking into account local circumstances where appropriate. The service review is part of an ongoing process to ensure quality and continuous improvement of service provision across Highland in line with people's needs. The review will ensure funding received is used to meet the level of support identified and will enable service users to raise any issues that they may have and that these will be responded to effectively.

Service reviews have been done in liaison with the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (Care Commission) and have clear links to Best Value principles, the Care Commission Housing Support Standards, contract monitoring and the codes of practice set out by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and any legislative/policy changes.

The review programme is intended to collate information about the services being provided to ensure that the limited Supporting People grant is used to purchase services from effective and appropriate providers. The review process reflects the method outlined in the Scottish Executive service review guidance and consist of three progressive stages of gathering information and reporting to the

Supporting People panel. Each provider may or may not need to progress through all the three stages, dependant on their ability to evidence compliance with a number of criteria. The criteria are;

1. **Provider capacity** – does the provider have the capacity to fulfil all the obligation of a full contract i.e. staffing arrangements, staff training, the financial viability and legal standing of the organisation are all satisfactory.
2. **Strategic relevance** – that the service is strategically relevant i.e. it reflects the Supporting People and wider Highland council strategic aims and priorities; it is accessible to service users and contributes to the preventative agenda.
3. **Demand for service** – that there is sufficient demand for the service i.e. vacancy levels are reasonably low to indicate a stable or increasing demand for the service; stakeholders confirm the need for the service within the community; ; the number if referrals received is stable or increasing and the reasons for service users leaving are generally positive
4. **Service quality** – the service quality is acceptable i.e the service actively utilises the relevant operational policies and procedures to promote the safety and well-being of service users and staff; the housing support needs of service users are regularly reviewed; other agencies are involved where appropriate; feedback is favourable from service users/stakeholder; and the service promotes independence.
5. **Service cost** – the providers costs are reasonable in comparison with providers of similar services.

Services have been reviewed, grouped by service user type. The following table shows the timetable for these reviews.

December 2005	All providers sent self-assessment questionnaire	
January 2006	Learning Disability reviews	Validation visits completed and review reports agreed by Supporting People Panel
February 2006	Homeless reviews	Validation visits completed and review reports agreed by Supporting People Panel
March 2006	Mental health	Validation visits completed and review reports agreed by Supporting People Panel
April 2006	Substance misuse, young people, domestic abuse	Validation visits completed - no panel reports as yet
May 2006	Physical disabilities	Validation visits completed - no panel reports as yet
Target date for completion March 2007	Sheltered Housing	This has different guidance and the service review process is currently being developed to allow for these reviews to be carried out.

After the initial service review the review cycle will be tied to the period of the contract (no more than 5 years).

Housing support services purchased through Direct Payments will be subject to separate reviews, in line with Scottish Executive Health Department guidance to be issued in due course.

The Highland Council are currently working on the development of a full contract for providers of Supporting People services.

6.1.3 Best Value

The Highland Council is committed to the Supporting People programme being within the Best Value framework context, maintaining the four key principles:

- Accountability
- Continuous improvement
- Transparency
- Ownership

Working within the strategic vision set out by the Scottish Executive for creating a 21st Century Scotland:

Working in partnership
Openness and accountability
Inclusion
Delivery

Using an audit framework, we aim to set the vision and direction for services through detailed service planning processes by;
working in partnership with all relevant providers and service users,
ensure equal treatment,
integrating policy,
developing reliable, timely, accurate and available information
and evolving innovative and creative solutions in order to make best use of resources in Highland in order to deliver quality, accessible and affordable services.

6.1.4 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The local authority is required to assist providers in developing common monitoring systems across Highland based on the Scottish Executive's Quality and Monitoring guidance paper.

Performance management information is collected at an area level by Area Housing Offices from commissioned providers, as established in interim contractual arrangements, and collated centrally in order to monitor and report performance information to the Council's Committee and annually to the Scottish Executive.

The Scottish Executive have overall responsibility for poorly performing local authorities. However, through regular local reporting systems being evaluated at a core level, it is intended that any issues raised will initially be determine much early on and remedial action taken in line with interim contract arrangements.

Information on the outcome of services to individual service users is to be managed at a local level, and consideration is being given to this through the service review process and the possible introduction of exit interviews.

6.1.5 Complaints

The Highland Council aims to provide its services efficiently and to high standards. However, complaints by service users, providers or other stakeholders in Supporting People may arise from the way a particular service was or was not delivered.

In Highland the Council has a 3-stage complaint procedures which details how people should make a complaint and what to do if we don't deal with the problem as you expected.

It is also advised within this procedure that individuals may seek independent advocacy if they are not happy with the outcome of they way a complaint is being handled or if they require assistance to make a complaint and do not want the assistance of Council staff.

This procedure does not affect people's rights under statutory formal appeals procedures and if a person still feels that they have not been fairly treated by the Council, they can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Commissioned service providers are also expected to have their own individual complaints procedure which, in accordance with the interim contract, they are required to submit a copy to the Council also.

7. Conclusion & Further Action

This strategy update sets out the current position for Supporting People in Highland. The programme has been operating for over 3 years and has evolved as new guidance has been issued. This has meant that some of the original actions have not been completed as new priorities have taken over or they have become no longer relevant.

The initial strategy outlined a number of areas where it was felt that services needed to be developed to address unmet need. These actions were based on anecdotal evidence and compiled something of a 'wish list'. In light of the current financial constraints, we need to be clear on the actual need and have assessed this based on a robust needs assessment methodology. In addition we will need to be creative an innovative in the ways that we attempt to meet the unmet need.

To this end, work will commence in early 2007 on this needs assessment and developing the strategy for Supporting People for the next five years. This will include a thorough review of the aims and objectives of the programme and where the programme sits within the changing strategic environment. A more detailed project plan will be developed and monitored to ensure that the strategy is delivered on time. A brief overview of the required tasks is outlined below

Establish appropriate structures to oversee and monitor the on-going development and the strategic direction of the programme
Revisit the aims and objectives of the Supporting People programme and develop appropriate strategic links.
Review and develop the Communications Strategy to ensure that appropriate and inclusive consultation is encouraged
Develop a methodology for assessing unmet need in Highland
Undertake the needs assessment exercise and draw conclusions
Establish a commissioning and contracting structure.
Publish the Supporting People Strategy 2008-13 by the end of 2007.

For further information, please contact
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