

This is a brief response to **Supporting People Consultation Paper 9, 'Issues for small and specialist providers'**, submitted by e-mail on behalf of Community Care Providers Scotland (CCPS).

CCPS is the national association of care providers in the voluntary sector. We represent a range of providers of varying sizes, many of whom will be affected by the Supporting People developments. Details of our membership and activities can be found on our website at www.ccpscotland.org. We are represented on the Supporting People Stakeholders Group by Malcolm Matheson, Director of Key Housing.

Firstly can I welcome the consultation document. The provider perspective is often neglected in relation to major policy developments and it is heartening to see that the Executive is not only aware of the potential difficulties that the new arrangements may cause for organisations that deliver services, but is also encouraging local authorities to address those difficulties. Many of the issues raised have been highlighted by CCPS over the last few years and we very much welcome the fact that these are recognised by the Executive.

The only concern that I would have about the paper is the repetition throughout that these will be issues for 'smaller and specialist providers'. It is not clear what "small" or "smaller" means in this context; there is a risk that local authorities will decide this for themselves in a fairly arbitrary way which we feel would not be helpful.

Moreover, the issues raised in the paper are likely to apply to all providers regardless of their size, and will indeed sometimes have even more serious implications for large organisations than for small ones - for example, the paper states that authorities should minimise the level of information required in relation to 'approved provider' and contracting processes, because small providers don't have the resources to deal with all that. For major providers this becomes even more of a problem, because they are often dealing with several authorities, each of which wants large amounts of information in its own 'house' format, leading to very considerable burdens of administration and bureaucracy for the provider trying to co-ordinate all this from the centre.

I therefore feel that the paper's usefulness would be significantly enhanced if the terminology were changed very slightly, so that it is clear that these issues may be relevant to all providers, regardless of their size, and that therefore the capacity of providers to deal with the additional work imposed by Supporting People should be explored by authorities on a case-by-case basis.

I hope these comments are helpful. I would be happy to amplify them if need be.

Many thanks again for the opportunity to comment.

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