

Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan & Domestic Violence Recommissioning

Update for CASC December 2015

Background:

Supporting People Grant funds housing-related support to help vulnerable people to live as independently as possible. Nearly 7,000 units of support are provided - in hostels, supported housing, sheltered housing or in the clients own home. The grant also funds community alarm / telecare services. 32 external providers deliver majority of support although the council does provide some support directly

Supporting People funding has reduced over a number of years. In 2015/16 the cut was 10.2% or £1.8m, this was higher than the average for Wales due to redistribution to other parts of Wales. Providers raised the risk to sustainability of services.

Funding Cuts and Pressures

Further cuts expected in 2016/17. The WLGA has recommended that councils look at cuts of 5%, 10% and 20%, for Cardiff this would be £813,000, £1,6 million and £3.2 million respectively. The exact levels are not yet known.

While funding is decreasing demands on services are increasing. New legislation is placing greater duties on authorities for preventative activity. There is a need to assist Health & Social Care and Children's Services to meet accommodation needs and reduce out of county placements and to cope with the growing elderly population.

Strategic Approach

In 2014/15 savings were delivered through a "value for money" exercise including standardisation of rates for services. For 2016/17 a cross-cutting strategic review, the "Accommodation and Support Programme", is being undertaken looking at all specialist housing provision and support. The approach for 2017/18 is likely to involve a competitive procurement process for at least some services.

The Accommodation and Support Programme has grouped together the various support schemes into 5 separate projects:

- Services for Young People
- Homeless Services
- Generic Floating Support
- Gender Specific Support - including domestic violence
- Longer term services – including older persons and learning disabilities

A comprehensive approach has been adopted including identifying different funding sources and specialist accommodation solutions. A diagram showing how the various elements of the Programme link to together is attached at Annex 1.

Anticipated outcomes

The 5 projects are at various stages of development but they all have similar aims:

- Single access point for services “Gateways” – to ensure most effective use of resource. Previously all scheme had their own waiting list and allocation criteria and there was therefore no way to prioritise the most vulnerable clients.
- Greater understanding of need - through the development of central waiting lists and allocations.
- Developing the right mix of accommodation types
- Developing clear pathways – structured journey to independent living (wherever possible)
- Develop specifications for commissioning
- Identify opportunities for savings.

Young Person’s Project

The Young Person’s Accommodation Gateway was launched on 1st Oct 2015. All supported accommodation for young people is now controlled and allocated by the Council. This is already providing useful information about need.

Staff from Homelessness, Children’s Services and Llamau are now co-located at Basement33 in Charles Street providing an accommodation service for young people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The emphasis is on preventing homelessness and so far, successful mediation has resulted in 73% of young people presenting as homeless not having to be rehoused.

Those Young People who are deemed to be homeless are provided with emergency accommodation at a specialist young person’s hostel where their individual needs are assessed. Once assessed, there is now a clear pathway into a range of supported accommodation.

This joined up approach to housing young people is based on need which allows better prioritisation of accommodation. By using the data gathered through the Gateway it will be possible to better identify future requirements. A need for move on accommodation has already been identified and a scheme to provide training flats, to support young people on their journey to independent living is currently under development.

This project is being developed with the full support of the Support Providers and regular meetings are taking place to assess the success of the changes.

Service user involvement is being planned in partnership with NYAS and a consultation day will be held early in the new year.

Homelessness Project

The Gateway for single homeless people was launched on 9th November. Again, this has brought access to all hostels and supported accommodation into the control of the Council with one central waiting list.

Previously, 30% of hostel presentations were from people who were 'out of county'. New local connection requirements have now been introduced, with exceptions for vulnerable groups. A Reconnection service, operated by the Salvation Army, has been developed to help homeless people who are not local to Cardiff to find support in their own areas. The other Local Authorities in Wales have been made aware of the changes.

Again this project is being developed in partnership with the Support Providers and regular meetings are taking place to assess the success of the changes.

Service users who have passed through the homeless services are currently being identified and a focus group meeting will be held shortly.

Floating Support Project

Floating Support is provided in the clients own home and can help with move on from supported accommodation or can help prevent homelessness. The grant currently funds 971 units of floating support; 183 specialist units, and 788 units of generalist support. At present there is a 'void' rate of 17%, and there is no waiting list for support.

At present there is a lack of clarity around the purpose of floating support and referrals into the service are often incomplete. Clients are often on support for long periods and there is a need to do more to encourage independence.

A new, clearer referral form has been drafted and discussed with providers; this clarifies when a referral for support is appropriate. A briefing for referrers is planned to improve the quality of referrals. A clear review process has been set out to ensure that support does not continue longer than needed and a reduction in the rate paid for long term cases has been proposed.

Schemes with high levels of voids have been identified and discussion is underway with providers about the future of these schemes. Providers have been advised that floating support units are likely to be cut next year and have been asked to comment on how best this should be achieved. Work will continue with the providers to address the above issues.

A telephone survey to obtain service user feedback is currently being organised.

Longer Term Support

A requirement has been placed on Councils to reassess support on a needs basis. For example there can no longer be an automatic entitlement for those who live in sheltered

housing to receive help with the costs of the support provided, the residents must have a need for the support if this is to be funded.

A comprehensive review of older persons services is currently being undertaken. This review will link to work on a locality approach and the review of older person accommodation. There will also be a link to the Independent Living Service and a Day Opportunities approach to ensure a joined up approach is taken. This work is in its early stages.

Gender Specific / Domestic Abuse

Work is ongoing to implement a Gateway to gender specific supported accommodation, including refuges, although this has not yet been implemented.

There is an intention to recommission wider Domestic Abuse services in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The range of current funding sources have been identified which could be included in this project.

Safer Lives have been commissioned by the PCC to undertake work to inform this joint commissioning process. This will include discussions with service funders and support providers and their clients.

A Domestic Abuse Executive has been established with subgroups to take this work forward and to fully consider the requirements of the new legislation.

Proposed approach to funding reductions

While the extensive work outlined above will provide essential information about the level of need for services and allow re-commissioning to take place in the longer term, there is also a need to make decisions in the short term to meet the expected cut in the grant.

Therefore work is underway to review services to identify savings. To ensure this is undertaken in a transparent manner principles have been set out and consultation has taken place with the Regional Collaborative Committee and with provider groups.

The principles underpinning the approach are:

- Ensuring that the most vulnerable Service Users are protected
- Promoting independence
- Delivering support at the lowest appropriate level
- Taking an evidence based approach to voids / turnover and outcomes
- Considering Service User feedback
- Ensuring services are sustainable
- Maximise the time spent on the client and reducing management costs by encouraging collaboration between providers
- Where possible, commission support in partnership with other public / third sector organisations.

Next Steps

Moving forward it is intended to apply the funding reduction principles, starting with floating support & homeless services. Consultation is taking place with key statutory partners and service users about their priorities. There will continue to be regular meetings with providers to discuss the way forward. Proposals for funding reductions will be finalised upon receipt of funding information from Welsh Government and the Local Commissioning plan will then be drafted for consideration by Cabinet.

In 2016/17 it is anticipated that a recommissioning process will undertaken for several of the different support types.