

supportingpeople MATTERS

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Supporting People Evaluation Update

Scottish Executive Officers are regularly told by providers and commissioners how 'fantastic' and 'amazing' Supporting People has been, what 'wonderful opportunities' it provided, and how services to people have been 'transformed' as a result. We know from the life stories we hear that this is the case. However in order to put forward arguments to Scottish Ministers to sustain funding levels the Scottish Executive needs measurable, robust, reliable evidence.

Impact monitoring research evaluated by GEN consultants is looking at the level of efficiency improvements made to the programme and the impact of the budget changes made in the last

Spending Review. In addition, the Scottish Executive has commissioned three independent pieces of research in order to evaluate the programme in Scotland.

Cost Benefits Research

Tribal were successful in tendering for this work, back in 2006, and at the time of writing this article the report was being finalised.

The original piece of work looked at the costs of the programme in Scotland and the financial benefits identified as savings to other services, such as care home admissions, homelessness, hospitalisation, etc. Tribal evaluated £402m (95% of the £422m budget for 2004-5) and identified 90% in financial benefits or avoided costs elsewhere in the system.

However Tribal were also careful to emphasise that there are considerable quality of life benefits, which can't be quantified in monetary terms but which are still crucial in any assessment of the programme's worth. This has been demonstrated in the report through the use of anonymised real life stories, and we are grateful to those concerned for sharing their experiences. Tribal concluded that when these quality of life benefits were also taken into account the programme provided value for money. This is obviously reassuring, although this year's



Frankie benefiting from the Supporting Living Initiative

Spending Review is still expected to be extremely tight, with many competing pressures, leaving an uncertain outlook for the programme at present.

Once finalised, the report and a summary will be available on the SP website.

Unit Costs

The need for this research became apparent when it was shown that the average spend per client was twice as expensive in Scotland than in England. Costs in Scotland vary from local authority to local authority.

This research is still underway. However the findings to date appear to show that:

1. The costs in Scotland are greater because we spend more on older people and adults with learning disabilities

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Relatively speaking

Local authorities will soon be able to offer increased flexibility in tailoring individualised support packages. The rules on employing close relatives are to be changed following amendment of direct payments primary legislation in the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. The new rules will allow, in exceptional circumstances, the employment of certain categories of close relatives. The Act received Royal Assent on 21 March and associated regulations will be enacted in the autumn. Look out for new guidance at that time.

Direct payments for self-directed support

New policy and practice guidance has improved the uptake of direct payments. The number of people receiving direct payments has increased from 207 in 2001 to 1,829 in the year to 31 March 2006. The value of payments has also increased by almost £15.8m over the same period. Updated policy and practice guidance on direct payments will be issued this spring, replacing earlier guidance from 2003, and aiming to increase uptake further by improving local access to self-directed support.

Supporting People Evaluation Update Continued

2. In Scotland the average amount spent on an older person is in the region of £1,400/year compared to £300 per person in England. The reasons for this are:

- the scale of provision is much larger in England; less staff support many more people
- the support arrangements are different (less on site provision and more on call arrangements)

3. In Scotland we spend more on people with learning disabilities and support people who have significant care needs but still wish to occupy their own tenancy. The research suggests that in England the policy on use of Supporting People was different and people with high needs were not eligible.

4. Similarly the policy of capping the number of Housing Support hours funded by SP is a feature in England and whilst it is used by a few Scottish councils this has not been an approach adopted in Scotland.

Again, once this work is finalised the report will be available on the SP website.

Outcomes

DTZ Pieda was commissioned to look at a means of evaluating how people benefit from Supporting People services. The Scottish Executive collects lots of statistics and data about the numbers of people helped, hours of support, type of service offered, but nothing that

evidences how well the service has supported the person, the benefits, the changes to people's lives – in other words, the outcomes.

The outcomes research was concluded in March 2007 and the report and proposed model is available on the SP website.

The next stage of this work is to pilot the model and associated recording system to see if:

- it offers a useful framework that should be rolled out
- it is suitable to a range of client groups and all services
- it should be introduced for all service users or only for samples
- the information generated about the benefits to individuals can produce valuable 'hard' national outcomes
- What practical issues need to be addressed if implementation proceeds around IT, training, etc.

The pilot should be underway from June to November 2007 across the spectrum of Supporting People-funded services, and the evaluation of the pilot will draw on feedback from people who experienced the model: the service users, providers and commissioning staff.

More information on the pilot is available on the SP website at: www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/housing/supportingpeople/dtzpiedareport



Chinese join fact-finding trip on housing options for older people

A group of Chinese older people and their carers have completed a successful fact-finding tour of specialist housing facilities for older people in Edinburgh. The tour was part of an initiative designed to give minority ethnic communities better access to information on housing and care services.



Fifty members of the Chinese community visited five different facilities showcasing examples of sheltered and very sheltered housing. The purpose of the visits was not only to inform them of the potential to live independently, but

also to explain the range of housing and support services available and to address concerns over things like dietary requirements, language barriers and specific cultural needs. The visits also showed the group systems such as the 24-hour community alarm system used in each housing facility, and addressed implications for means-tested benefits if home-owners chose to sell their homes.

Carers and older people were impressed. Mrs Ho commented, 'This course is very useful. I wish I knew sooner. Then I would have made a better decision for my mother.'

Ms Chan also found the visits useful. 'The terms are very confusing,' she said, 'sheltered housing, very sheltered, housing with care. I would not be able to tell the differences until I'd been.'

A third member of the group reported she had struggled to provide 24-hour care for her husband before he died and had found it very useful to learn about the level of support available at the specialist housing facilities. 'I do not want my children to go through this again when I age,' she said. 'I am very glad I had this opportunity. They will know what to do if and when my health deteriorates.'

The visits were organised by Hanover (Scotland), Trust and Bield Housing Associations together with Minority Ethnic Carers of Older People and the Chinese Information Centre.



Supporting People and Mergers



Dunedin and Canmore housing associations decided to improve their services to tenants. In April 2005 they merged to become Dunedin Canmore Housing Association.

Ewan Fraser, Chief Executive, commented, 'With ever-increasing demands and needs for more services, and the pressure to keep

rents affordable, we decided to take positive action. There were a number of differences in the services we supplied. As a growing organisation we could bring the two companies together with a no-redundancy policy and create a more cost-effective structure.'

The new partners have split their tenancy services and property management from their support services. This has enabled them to concentrate their efforts with regards to Supporting People. 'We must be

more accountable in the services we provide,' said Ewan, 'and be clear how the money is spent. With more and more demands for support services and more pressure on Supporting People grant we have to make best use of our funds. Supporting People is staff intensive. The level of training required is increasing and flexibility of working is an issue. The increase in scale of our operation has helped us overcome some of these issues and concentrate on improving the standards of service we provide.'



Chartered Institute of Housing Conference 2007

Changes ahead?

At the annual Chartered Institute of Housing conference this March, Supporting People featured in a number of sessions. Jim Strang introduced Bill Clark, Director of Social Work Services at West Dunbartonshire Council, who spoke in a breakout session on the impact of the Supporting People Review.

Jim introduced the session as 'one of the most important breakout sessions of the conference.' He spoke of difficulties that might arise in future and concerns that might affect service providers and users alike.

Bill presented the view that after the May elections the burdens on Supporting People growth and the issues around sustainability are likely to change. He argued that the high costs of the Supporting People programme in Scotland would not be acceptable. He also felt that the Barnet formula may again arise as an issue. Parliament has many priorities, he said, and wondered who would be the winners and losers when Parliament sets its priorities after the election.

He also had concerns that grant was made available by formula rather than according to individual client needs.

Whilst Bill was critical about the implementation of Supporting People across Scotland he did describe it as 'a wonderful development' that allowed for significant growth in services for

vulnerable people. 'That is why Supporting People is important,' he said.

'No place like home'

Steve Robertson of People First Scotland also spoke at the breakout session. His presentation touched on work carried out by the Same as You? Implementation Group carried out in 2006. The group had been given the job of examining how Supporting People funding cuts had impacted on the recommendations of the Same as You? report. He spoke of the benefits Supporting People has offered people with learning disabilities and was pleased to report in general there was little evidence of funding cuts affecting people currently in receipt of services.

However, the group had expressed concerns about the lack of funding for new clients to support them in achieving personal goals and aspirations, as set down in the Same As You? report.

Steve reinforced the importance of Supporting People in providing housing support services for people with learning disabilities. He called for better planning between Housing and Community Care and the need for safe and comfortable homes. As he said, 'There's no place like home.'

Steve then asked: 'If Supporting People is a benefit which resulted from changes to the Housing Benefit system, then how can it be cut? Was Supporting People not a reserved budget for Parliament?'

We can answer this best by separating it into two questions.

Q: If Supporting People is derived from housing benefit, how can it be cut?

A: Supporting People is not solely a budget derived from Housing Benefit. It pulled together other smaller funding streams which funded housing-related support. Supporting People is not, therefore, a welfare benefit.

Q: Is Supporting People a reserved budget?

A: When housing related support was funded out of housing benefit, this was a reserved budget, funded and administered from Westminster. However, with the introduction of Supporting People, the money identified formed part of the block transfer to the Scottish Executive based on the Barnet Formula, which means that Scotland receives around 10% of what the English departments get. It is worth noting that Scottish ministers have supported the programme financially. The commitment is demonstrated by the £20m additional funding Scottish ministers allocated on top of the money received from Westminster over the past three years (totalling £60m).



Telecare development



Mike Martin

The Joint Improvement Team (JIT) works directly with local health and social care partnerships across Scotland to help develop and deliver personal services for people requiring support to live independent lives. One way of sharing the benefits of joint working and efficient service delivery was the launch last August of the £8m Telecare Development Programme.

Now York Health Economic Consortium is undertaking an independent evaluation of the Telecare Programme, focusing on delivering savings identified in the original business case. The Joint Improvement Team is co-ordinating interim support for the programme through a national partnership network including the Chartered Institute of Housing in Scotland. Partnerships have already been consulted on options for procurement. But JIT is also looking for more detail from partnerships on services, client groups, charging arrangements and levels of response services.

Hanover (Scotland) bids a fond farewell to its retiring Chief Executive

Stewart Kinsman, Chief Executive of Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association, has retired after 31 years in charge of the Association. Stewart has overseen the growth of the organisation from its humble beginnings to today's diverse portfolio of over 5,000 properties throughout Scotland. He has made a significant contribution to Hanover and the sector as a whole.



Hanover residents, staff and committee members, as well as colleagues from throughout the Housing Sector in Scotland, attended a reception to mark the occasion, where staff staged a concert as a tribute to Stewart's dedication to the organisation.

Stewart has many plans for his retirement including sailing round the Mediterranean and spending more time with his grandchildren.

Douglas Boyd, Chairperson of Hanover (Scotland) said, 'I speak for everyone at Hanover in thanking Stewart for his long commitment to the organisation and in wishing him a long and happy retirement.'

Procurement guidance

In April 2007, the Scottish Executive issued a procurement factsheet on why and how local authorities should purchase housing support services from external providers.

Several lead officers had questioned the Supporting People guidance which states that local authorities should issue full contracts to providers on completion of service reviews. Although it is acknowledged that providers currently supply services without service specifications or full contracts, some lead officers were concerned that moving to contract without going through competitive tendering would be in breach of procurement regulations.

The Scottish Executive's view, expressed in the factsheet, is that if service

reviews show the service is suitable to meet users' needs, is providing value for money, and is strategically relevant, then moving to contract without a full procurement exercise would be a defensible position. The factsheet also points out that contract duration does not need to be standardised or limited to 3-5 years. Indeed long-term contracts may be helpful where continuity in staffing and provider is required by the service user (see 'Five user-led evaluation' article for an example of where continuity is important). Finally it reminds local authorities of the need to develop a procurement strategy setting out how and when services such as housing support will be purchased.

Download copies of the factsheet from the SP website.



Pat Bagot remembered



There is no way to describe Pat in a sentence.

When I was interviewed by Pat 15 years ago for a job writing a housing newsletter, she spent most of the interview telling me about planning housing in Cairo. She wondered if I knew how to get rid of the flies that had made a home in her office plant, reflecting that if we got rid of them, we'd contribute to insect homelessness. When I began to write about Supporting People, Pat simply instructed, 'Make it factual. Not feel-good.' That was one of Pat's enormous gifts, to accumulate huge expertise in a field she loved, and never to lose faith in it – or in others. Working with her always stretched our imaginations. 'Believe in yourself,' she said. 'If you believe you can do it, you can.'

- Laure Paterson

Pat sat in the corner of our workplace. She couldn't see us all the time but she could hear us and would make her presence known. Every morning someone would go down for Pat's coffee and hopefully come back with the right kind. She was a very generous person who cared and took an interest in all her colleagues and their families. She 'pretended' she did not see the funny side when we decorated her desk like royalty when she came back from getting her OBE, but we knew better. Pat liked nothing better than sitting with her team talking about life in general, her bridge games, TV, and cooking.

- Lindsey Gray

Have Your Say!

We are depending on you to tell us your views on our newsletter and on what's happening in your part of Scotland. Share your ideas and good practice stories with us.

Send comments to:

Email: supportingpeople@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 0131 244 5522 Fax: 0131 244 5529

Contact the Scottish Executive or request additional copies of this newsletter from the supporting team at:

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www.scotland.gov.uk/housing/supportingpeople/