

ANNEX A



Supporting People in Bracknell Forest 5 Year Strategy March 2012 - March 2015

MARCH 2012



Foreword

Welcome to the 2012 - 2015 Supporting People Strategy.

The Supporting People Programme in Bracknell sits within the Housing Service in the Environment, Culture and Communities Directorate but has strong links with two other directorates, Children, Young People & Learning and Adult Social Care & Health. The Council has six overarching priorities which encompass 11 medium term objectives, two of which are relevant to the Supporting People programme:

- Promoting health and achievement
- Creating a Borough where people are safe and feel safe

The Supporting People programme funds the provision of housing related support, to help prevent the kinds of problems that can lead to hospitalisation, institutional care, custody or homelessness, and provide transitional support when leaving these environments to enable clients to live independently.

The Bracknell Forest Supporting People Programme supports the Council's Housing Strategy, 'The Right Home' 2009 – 2014 [Housing Strategy](#). The overriding priority of the Housing Strategy is:

“to enable the provision of the right homes for the communities of Bracknell Forest, in the right place and of the right quality to allow more choice for the residents of the borough.”

The Council is committed to providing a locally defined approach to meeting the needs of its residents. This includes the need to work in partnership with a range of service providers, to tailor local solutions to the needs of service users. There will continue to be resourcing pressures on the Supporting People Budget and Bracknell Forest in conjunction with its partners will continue to seek out new and innovative approaches to maximise resources.

The Supporting People partnership consists of representatives from Bracknell Forest Council Environment, Culture & Communities, Adult Social Care & Health Departments, Berkshire East health Authority and the Thames Valley Probation Service.

Key Aim

To improve the quality of life for a range of vulnerable people, by preventing homelessness, helping them live as independently as possible, and enabling them to have an active role in our community.

Devising the Strategy

The strategy has been developed in consultation with service users and providers. The service providers include professionals in housing, adult social care and health, children and young people and criminal justice agencies.

Introduction

What is Supporting People (SP)?

- 1.0 The Supporting People programme was launched on 1 April 2003. The aim of SP is to help more people with support needs to achieve a better quality of life, by enabling them to live more independently. It funds the provision of **housing related support**, to help prevent the kinds of problem that can often lead to hospitalisation, institutional care or homelessness. It can also help people leaving institutional environments to make the transition to independent living.

Housing Related Support

- 1.1 Housing related support enables people to move into or continue living in their own homes or move into supported accommodation. It can be either long term or short term (up to 2 years). Support can be provided by staff permanently on site or on site for large parts of the day or it can be provided by visiting staff once or twice a week. Services may also be provided on a drop in basis.
- 1.2 Activities that can be funded through Supporting People include:
- a) Safety within the dwelling
 - Showing the person how to use equipment over and above what would be required for a tenant who is not vulnerable
 - Providing advice on obtaining repairs to personal equipment
 - Providing support to maintain health and safety within the dwelling e.g. proper disposal of rubbish
 - Support to enable maintenance or adaptations to be effected.
 - b) Security of the dwelling
 - Alarm systems
 - Concierge provision
 - Advice on locking up
 - c) Helping the tenant comply with the tenancy
 - Helping claim benefits
 - Budget management and debt counselling
 - Enabling resolution of neighbour disputes
 - Advice/Support to keep the property in good order
 - d) General social support and welfare tasks
 - Liaison with /facilitating services from other professionals or services,
 - Liaison with relatives
 - Occasional welfare tasks
 - Resettlement activities

Defining the current SP eligibility criteria

1.3 A review was carried out in March 2008 and the agreed four key criteria are:

- i. Help to maintain the safety and security of the dwelling, e.g. health and safety, repairs, community alarms;
- ii. Help setting up or maintaining the home or tenancy, e.g. benefits and finances, being a good neighbour
- iii. Advice, advocacy, liaison and personal tasks, e.g. signposting to health, social care, cultural and other services, developing life skills
- iv. Other tasks, e.g. referrals and assessments, service user consultation and empowerment, occasional social events

1.4 The following tasks are not housing-related support, and are not eligible for SP funding:

- Housing management (e.g. lettings, collecting rent, issuing or enforcing occupancy agreements)
- Provision of personal, social care, or health care including specialist counselling and or therapy.
- Provision of any statutory services
- Cleaning of communal areas
- Administering of medication etc

1.5 A full list is attached at Annex 1 of this strategy. Further information on Supporting People can be found on the Bracknell Forest website.

<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/liv-supporting-people.htm>.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE PRIORITIES

The primary need of all of the clients accessing services is a housing need and the services provided via the supporting people programmes enables the client to access or keep their home, and maintain their home successfully. A key objective of the supporting people programme is to prevent homelessness.

Over the last five years, the services funded by the SP programme have included essential activities such as enabling people to secure a home and providing support to enable people to keep their home as well as desirable activities aimed at enabling people to achieve independence and play a positive part in the community. As part of this strategy, the eligibility criteria for SP services have been reviewed to ensure that priority is given to maintaining essential services which:

- Enable people to secure a home, and
- Provide support to enable a person to keep their home

It is unlikely that the wider value added services can continue to be funded from the core programme, but providers will be encouraged to develop partnerships with the voluntary sector to provide these services, in line with the principles of the Big Society.

The Need for Supporting People Services in the Bracknell Forest Borough

The Supporting People Programme funds a range of services for homeless people and housing related support to older people living in sheltered housing. The homelessness services work with people with a range of needs including women fleeing domestic violence, people with mental health problems and ex-offenders, and those with a physical disability.

The SP programme is only spent on housing related support, and where appropriate funding is sought from complimentary funding streams where clients have multiple support needs, such as social care.

The Supporting People programme currently funds both accommodation based and floating support services. The key difference between these two types of service is that with accommodation based services, housing related support is provided to individuals living in specific housing schemes, while floating support services allow housing related support to be provided to individuals regardless of where they are living. Floating support services are therefore more flexible and can support individuals in a wide range of accommodation.

The accommodation based services currently funded by the programme are:

- Sheltered housing for older people
- Short term supported housing for young single people
- Adapted housing for people with a physical disability
- Specialist short term housing for women fleeing domestic violence

The floating support services are:

- A generic floating support service for single people and families who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness
- A floating support service for young mothers

During the last twelve months a needs mapping exercise has been undertaken and has identified the following needs in the borough.

Women Fleeing Domestic Violence

Berkshire Women's Aid provides an essential service for women fleeing domestic abuse, and it is often necessary for the victims to move away from their current accommodation into the refuge while their issues are being addressed. The support provided at the refuges is more specialised in view of the nature of the issues faced by the clients, and the service relies on security and confidentiality to preserve its success.

Violent relationship breakdown features as one of the main causes of homelessness in the borough and the refuges provide an alternative to bed and breakfast

accommodation. During 2009/10, violent relationship breakdown accounted for 19% of homeless acceptances in the borough.

People with Physical Disabilities

The number of referrals to the Council for people aged 18 to 64 with a physical disability has remained fairly static over the last three years, averaging 116 per year. A small proportion of this demand require residential/nursing care, while the services more frequently requested are disabled adaptations, home support and professional support and day care.

The Supporting People programme funds housing related support to a specialist scheme which provides independent housing for 10 tenants

Homelessness

During the 5 year period 2005/6 – 2009/10, the number of households making a homelessness application to the Council fell significantly, from 160 households to 39. During the same five year period, the number of households for whom homelessness was been prevented increased from 110 households to 238 households.

Over the last 18 months, homelessness demand has started to increase again. During 2010/11, 53 households made a homeless application, an average of 4 per month. This has increased further this year, with an average 9 households making a homeless application each month.

The Supporting People programme funds a range of accommodation based and floating support services which are aimed at either preventing homelessness or supporting vulnerable people to live in the community. Access to all of these services is via the Young Persons and Adults Resource Panels. The Panels consider the nature and urgency of the needs of the individuals referred to the panels, and allocate vacancies in supported housing schemes or floating support hours as resources allow.

Older People

The number of people aged 65+ in the borough is expected to increase steadily from its current level of 12,000 to an estimated population of 17,600 in the 65+ group by 2021. The most significant increase in the older population is expected in the 85+ group. It is anticipated that by 2021 there will be 2,700 people in this group, an increase of approximately 50% from 2006. The diversity of this population is also expected to widen, with the proportion of older people from BME communities making up 10% of this group by 2021.

The Council's Strategy for Older People – Adding Life to Years - sets the following vision:

- “a safe, comfortable home that can be adapted as the owner grows older;
- living in a location which has easy access to shops, transport and other amenities;
- having support to carry out daily tasks inside the house and keeping the garden in good order.”

In terms of meeting the housing and housing related support needs of this population, it is important to recognise that more than 73% of Bracknell Forest

residents over 50 years are home owners. At present, the majority of the services for older people funded by the supporting people programme are support services provided in sheltered housing which is owned by Registered Providers (housing associations). There is no housing related support service currently available for older people living in their own home. A priority for this strategy is therefore to consider how the resources that are available in future years can be targeted at people living in a wider range of tenures.

The Older People's Strategy – Adding Life to Years - also identifies the need for an Extra Care sheltered housing scheme which can meet the needs of residents with a range of support needs, including frailer older people, as part of a longer term strategy for reducing the need for residential care. This would be a new provision in the borough and as such will require supporting people funding to be identified within existing resources to meet the cost of SP eligible needs.

RESOURCING THE STRATEGY

Demand remains high for all of the services funded by the Supporting People programme. However, it is recognised that this strategy operates within a climate of constraining financial pressures and an approach to commissioning which maximises flexibility and enables services to be extended to people living in a wider range of tenures needs to be put in place.

In view of the uncertainties around funding, new contracts with providers have been offered on a one year basis with the option of extending for a further year, and the notice period has been reduced to two months.

By working closely with providers, the Council has been able to secure new contracts across all client groups by generating efficiencies. Some services have had to be reduced and re-modelled to ensure those in greatest need continue to receive a service, but it has not been necessary to stop a service in its entirety.

As the ring-fencing for supporting people has been removed, funding which has contributed to services for specialist social care groups such as people with enduring mental health problems and people with learning disabilities has been transferred to the mainstream budgets for these client groups. This Supporting People Strategy will therefore continue to focus on the commissioning of services for homelessness and older people.

TAKING THE PROGRAMME FORWARD

- 3.1. The Supporting People programme faces significant challenges over the four year period of this strategy. It will be necessary to procure services in such a way to generate efficiencies and ensure they can be afforded within available budget constraints, and operate in such a way that ensures services are targeted at those in most need.

The estimated resource available to fund the Supporting People programme over the next four years is as follows:

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Programme budget (Area Based Grant)	1,097,000	1,047,000	1,047,000	1,047,000

The current annual value of the Supporting people contracts is £ 1,134,169. There is therefore a need to generate at least £ 87,169 annual efficiencies or economies within the context of this strategy.

It is proposed that any carry forward remaining at the end of 2011/12 is used firstly, to top up any reduction in the base programme from future Area Based Grant settlements, and secondly to purchase additional hours/services in response to an increase in demand from specific client groups during the term of the strategy.

The commissioning strategy for the next four years needs to address the following priorities:

- i. Flexibility – to support residents across tenure and contribute to new initiatives which may emerge during the life of the strategy
- ii. Effective targeting – support to meet essential needs (securing a home and preventing homelessness)

To deliver these priorities, this strategy will focus on the following actions:

Review of eligibility criteria.

The eligibility criteria for accessing housing related support have reviewed to ensure that priority is given to maintaining essential services which enable people to secure a home, and provide support to enable a person to keep their home. Support for gardening and social activities have been removed along with activities which are actually housing management activities. Consideration was given to the removal of emotional and behaviour support but feedback from consultation with service users and providers argued strongly that given the vulnerable situation of older people and homeless households removal of these activities would be counter productive. These aspects of the criteria have therefore been retained.

Review of current services

It is proposed that all services funded through the SP programme are reviewed against new eligibility criteria to identify options for further efficiencies and ensure services meet the priorities of the programme.

Review of housing related support needs

It is proposed that the support needs across all client groups are reviewed against new eligibility criteria to ensure services can be targeted effectively

Establish a commissioning plan which maximises flexibility and enables services to be extended to people living in a wider range of tenures.

A range of commissioning options have been considered as part of developing this strategy including tendering for two floating support services - one for the homeless client groups, and one for older people or tendering on a hub and spoke basis.

Consultation has been carried out on these models of tendering and the response has been equally divided. It is therefore proposed that a floating support contract for services for older people is tendered as this is considered to offer the greatest flexibility in terms of directing support to where it is most needed. Not all older people in sheltered housing schemes are eligible in terms of their financial circumstances or due to their need for housing related support services. Therefore, procuring a floating support service offers the ability over time to target services specifically where they are needed regardless of the home an older person lives in.

In terms of the homelessness services, the most cost effective model of service would be to retain accommodation based services at Rainforest Walk and Holly House, Templars Lodge and the women's refuges because all the residents living in these schemes are eligible for housing related support and the market for these types of provision is limited. It is however proposed to bring the homelessness floating support service in-house as this will allow significant economies to be achieved.

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE STRATEGY AND NEW ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Principal groups consulted

An estimated 132 service users responded to the Supporting People consultation between October 2011 and the end of January 2012:

- 41 individual questionnaires were received and
- 91 individual people attended consultation meetings

Age and Gender of Respondents

Age (% of all respondents)	Gender		Grand Total
	female	male	
Under 18	0.00%	3.03%	3.03%
18-34	9.09%	6.06%	15.15%
35-49	3.03%	12.12%	15.15%
50-64	9.09%	3.03%	12.12%
65-79	18.18%	12.12%	30.30%
80+	18.18%	6.06%	24.24%
Grand Total	57.58%	42.42%	100.00%

Nearly all the individual respondents were White British, and were heterosexual. Only one person identified herself as being not White British and she identified herself as being from the Gipsy and Traveller Community.

Religious belief of respondents

% of respondents who identified their religious group	Religion				Grand Total
	Christian (all)	Jewish	Other	None	
Total	55.88%	2.94%	2.94%	38.24%	100.00%

Respondents with a disability

% of people with Long term health problem	Long term health problem		Grand Total
	yes	no	
Under 18	0.00%	2.78%	2.78%
18-34	11.11%	2.78%	13.89%
35-49	13.89%	0.00%	13.89%
50-64	11.11%	0.00%	11.11%
65-79	19.44%	8.33%	27.78%
80+	11.11%	11.11%	22.22%
(blank)	2.78%	5.56%	8.33%
Grand Total	69.44%	30.56%	100.00%

Method of consultation

(i) Providers

Providers were consulted by way of specific papers presented to Provider Forum meetings in September 2011 and January 2012. The draft strategy, revised eligibility criteria and questionnaires were also electronically circulated to individual providers.

7/10 current providers responded to the questionnaire.

(ii) Service users

Service Users were consulted by way of meetings with groups of service users on a service by service basis and by being provided with the opportunity to complete individual questionnaires.

A total of 41 individual service user responses were returned and 91 people attended group meetings

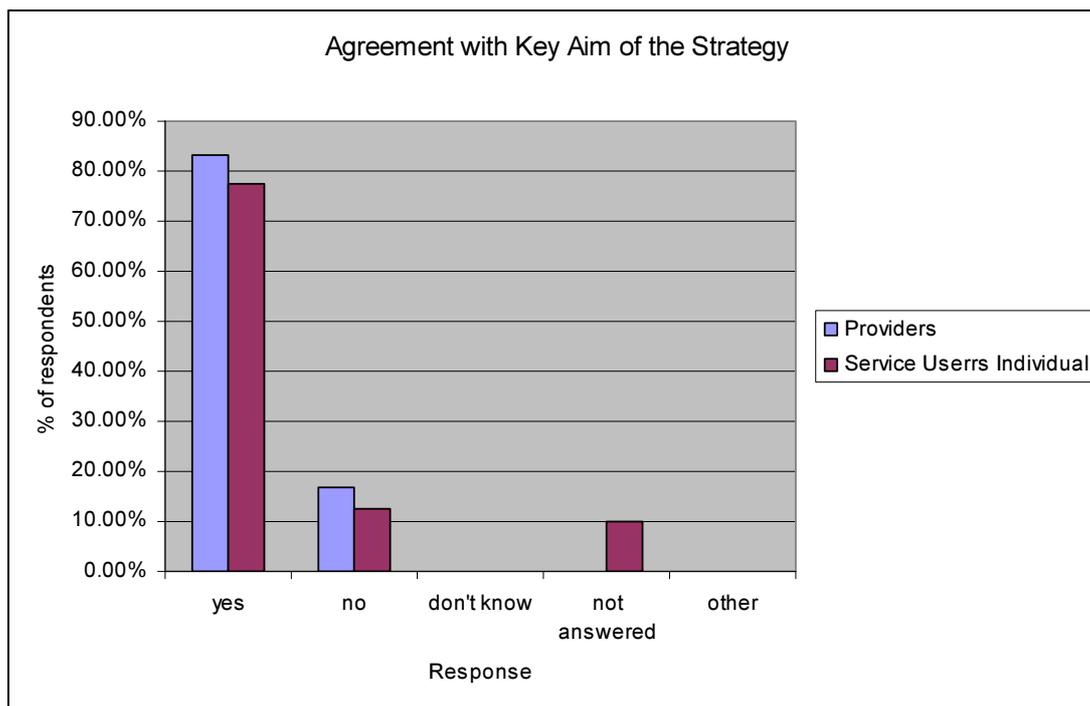
The draft strategy, revised eligibility criteria and the consultation questionnaire were also placed on the Bracknell Forest Website together with a short summary of the draft strategy.

Summary of responses

There was broad support for the strategy and in particular for its key aims. However support for the detail of the strategy was mixed although overall it was positive.

Providers were well aware of the constraints under which local authorities will be operating over the immediate and medium term and of the inevitable effect of these constraints upon the Supporting People Programme. Most providers operate in other local authority areas and reported facing similar challenges elsewhere.

A large majority of both Providers and Service users were in favour of the key aim of the strategy of improving the quality of life for vulnerable people by preventing homelessness and helping them to live as independently as possible and enabling them to have an active role in the community.



Supporting People Priorities

Core Focus : To enable people to secure and keep their home

Providers were unanimous in their support for this as being the core focus of the strategy and the majority of service users agreed with this aim.

Concentrating on Core Activities to support the focus of enabling people to secure and keep their homes and wider value added services should be provided separately

Providers were divided in their views on this question, with just under half of the providers agreeing to the proposal that Supporting People funds should be directed towards the core activities only.

Concerns around the restriction of funding to core activities for both Providers and Service Users were essentially two fold and inter-related – firstly that the wider value added services are key to establishing and maintaining independence and secondly that funding for such activities would be uncertain, either because of cuts to funding elsewhere and or because funding through the Big Society is an untested and uncertain model.

Funding Priorities and Service User Groups

There was majority support from both Providers (71%) and Service Users (75%) for Supporting People funding to be used for homeless or potentially homeless and for older people.

Where concerns were voiced these were around the complexities of needs displayed by homeless or potentially homeless people.

Resourcing the Strategy and Commissioning Services

Just over half the providers were in favour of any future carry-forward being used to purchase additional services rather than being added into the existing three year programme. Those with reservations wanted to ensure that the need for new services should be balanced against the case to expand existing services and that carry forward to fund any new services should be transparent with service providers being able to bid for the funds.

Providers were however unanimous in their support for flexible and effective targeting and many of them had experience of authorities using flexible commissioning in order to obtain increased value for money. These included experiences of some sort of consortium tendering, of the sub-contracting type.

Providers were equally divided as to their preferences for a particular model of service commissioning, floating support or hub and spoke contracts. The uncertainties and experiences of providers regarding of each type of service may have contributed to their responses. Those with experience of offering or starting to offer hub and spoke services were most likely to favour such services.

Service Users were more likely to favour future carry-forward being used to purchase additional services (82%) and those not supporting this proposition were more likely to have not answered the question rather than being actively against the proposition.

Just over half the Service Users were in favour of flexible commissioning, however over 25% of Service Users did not answer this question. Service Users were less certain as to which model of commissioning they supported with only 55% answering this question. Of those who did answer the question equal numbers were in favour of floating support and hub and spoke models of service delivery. Again it may be that responses were influenced by Service Users' experiences of services.

REVISED ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Responses to the proposed Revised Eligibility Criteria were mixed. There were only two activities which more than half the providers considered could be removed from the list of eligible activities, gardening arranged through a handy-person service and the arrangement of social activities.

There was particular concern around the removal support to find employment, emotional support, with almost as much concern around the removal of behavioural support.

There was also concern at the change from providing direct support to that of signposting.

Nevertheless there was an understanding of the reasons behind the proposed changes, and one provider, that provides both accommodation based services and floating support services conceded that for instance emotional support and behavioural advice could be removed from floating support services but needed to remain for accommodation based services.

Many service users were also concerned about the removal of emotional and behavioural support from eligible activities. Some service users saw the emotional support provided by staff as key in preventing conflict with other people in accommodation based services and there was an admission that it was the

behavioural and emotional difficulties people faced which were contributory to their predicament of having found themselves homeless or potentially homeless

Service users and providers were more likely to agree to the removal of eligibility if they understood that the activity could fall under the remit of housing management. The group responses of service users show for instance that people were happy to sacrifice the setting up of social events, and there was less opposition to removing support to maintain safety and arranging repairs than from individual service users.