

By: Angela Slaven, Customer and Communities Directorate,
Director - Service Improvement

To: Supporting People in Kent Commissioning Body

Subject: The Commissioning of Floating Support

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary

The report proposes the tendering of floating support services to reflect the revised schedule of Supporting People Programme spend in the forthcoming year. The paper proposes the tendering of a total of 1,685 units of specialist and generic floating support services to start to deliver a service in the last quarter of 2011/12.

New processes and procedures for floating support will be implemented. It is proposed to commission specialist services on an east/west Kent basis and generic services on an east/west/north and south basis.

1. Introduction

(1) The Supporting People Programme has extended all floating support contracts by a year in anticipation of the intended tendering of these services in 2011/12 so that they fit within the revised schedule of spend in 2012/13. The Programme requests that the Commissioning Body consider the proposal to commence the procurement of floating support services in July 2011, with the intention to let the contracts following a tendering process in the last quarter of 2011/12. This is in order to ensure that services are fully operational by April 2012.

(2) The annual spend on floating support will reduce from just over £5.5m to around £3.3m per year. The Supporting People Programme proposes, subject to funding allocation that investment in floating support will continue at the same level in 2013/14. Legal advice has been sought to establish a two-year contract with a break clause of 6 months.

2. Future Commissioning of Floating Support

(1) The Commissioning Body has agreed a budget of £3.3m for floating support in 2012/13 at its meeting in March 2011. The available funding equates to 1,685 units, and the service will be delivered on the basis of 2 hours per service user per week at a maximum hourly rate of £19. The opportunity afforded from the tendering of floating support may enable the Programme to deliver more units at a reduced hourly rate. The Programme is requesting that the Commissioning Body agrees to additional units being commissioned on this basis.

(2) The Commissioning Body within its strategy recognises the importance of the Floating Support Service and should the Programme achieve greater savings elsewhere, a further proposal will be put to the Commissioning Body to increase the number of floating support units commissioned.

(3) The services are intended to be split between generic and specialist floating support as they are now. However the client groups for specialist floating support is proposed to be marginally different;

- Offenders or people at risk of offending (CLG definition)
- People fleeing domestic abuse
- People with mental health problems (including older people)
- Rough sleepers (delivering a service to people living on the streets)
- Deaf People
- Young people at risk (including teenage parents and young offenders)

All other client groups will be supported through generic floating support (see Appendix 1 for client groups).

(4) The specifications will ensure that the needs of all service user groups are met including those with very specific needs e.g. lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities or people with specific language requirements. The specifications will give clarity to the exact nature of the service user groups and the needs to be addressed. This will be further reinforced by a performance management framework which seeks to ensure that outcomes for services and service users are achieved.

(5) Geographical Distributions.

The Supporting People Programme has traditionally tendered all specialist services on an east/west Kent basis. It is proposed that specialist floating support continues to be commissioned on an east/west Kent basis. and the Programme is proposing a different approach to the commissioning of generic floating support suggesting a configuration that will be north, east, south and west. The Programme seeks to encourage tenders from local organisations or a consortium approach to service delivery. This does not preclude the opportunity for organisations outside of Kent to tender to provide a service that has a more localised focus. The four proposed configurations are as follows:

North - Dartford, Gravesham, Swale

East – Canterbury, Dover, Thanet

South – Ashford, Maidstone, Shepway

West – Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells

It is acknowledged that these areas do not necessarily reflect the geographical boundaries of key stakeholders. However it would be difficult to meet the disparate requirements of housing, health, probation and social care as well as others such as the police.

3. Managing the Transitional Period April 2011- March 2012

(1) The Commissioning Body requested that there should be a regular impact assessment which details the number of people who are waiting for a floating support service during the financial year 2011/12. The first assessment is included within item 9 on this agenda, 'The Floating Support Impact Assessment'.

(2) There will be new processes and procedures for floating support to be implemented at the beginning of 2012/13. These will reflect the newly commissioned services and will include the automation of the floating support referral mechanism.

4. Consultation and Communication

(1) The Programme has consulted service users by making two presentations (one in east and one in west Kent) and via a survey. Service users requested a specialist floating support for deaf people to be retained. The Supporting People Programme is proposing that this service should be retained as requested. It will be tendered together with all other services if the Commissioning Body agrees. There was broad consensus in relation to the commissioning of floating support services apart from the retention or otherwise of a service specific to deaf people.

(2) The Supporting People Programme met with the Executive Forum of Providers in May 2011 to discuss the decisions made by the Commissioning Body in relation to the commissioning of floating support. There was broad acceptance of the proposed measures. The Supporting People Programme is currently meeting providers individually to ascertain the financial impact on currently commissioned services.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

(1) The commissioning of floating support has been subject to an EIA and this is attached as an appendix to this report.

6. Risk and Business Continuity Management

(1) The Supporting People Programme will work with key stakeholders, providers and service users to monitor and evaluate the viability of services relating to any impact of the proposed changes. The Supporting People Programme has set up a risk and business continuity issues log for the implementation of the proposed changes. The log is attached as an appendix. The log identifies specific risks relating to finance, the market place, local service provision and the tendering process. The Supporting People Programme believes that the risks identified can be mitigated.

7. Financial Implications

(1) The Programme is currently funding 1,786 units at a cost of just above £5.5m. A reduction to 1,685 units will be achieved at a cost of £3.3m. Whilst

there will be a reduction in spending on floating support by approximately 40%, actual unit numbers will only be reduced by 6%.

(2) The differential in investment between 2011/12 and 2012/13 in floating support is explained by slight variances in the hourly rates and the number of hours being delivered to service users that need specialist floating support. This allows for reductions in unit numbers to be kept to a minimum. The reduction in support hours represents a reduction of support to service users from an average of 2.85 hours per week to 2 hours per week.

8. Legal implications

(1) The Supporting People Programme will tender for new floating support services in accordance with European Union procurement regulations. Providers will need to seek their own legal advice in relation to the transfer of undertakings of protection of employment (TUPE) in order to resolve whether or not they are able to transfer employees from current floating support contracts into newly configured floating support contracts.

9. Sustainability Implications

(1) Kent County Council, in its Medium Term Plan, agreed an allocation to the Supporting People Programme for the period 2011/13. All commissioning proposals are within the current budget.

10 Conclusion

(1) The Supporting People Programme is proposing to commission new floating support services with a marginally reduced number of units achieved by a reduction in the hours delivered per service user and a cap on the maximum hourly rate. The processes and procedures will ensure that floating support is targeted in an open and transparent way for the people who need the service most.

(2) The services will be commissioned on the basis of a full consultation with service users, providers and other key stakeholders.

Recommendations

1. The Kent Supporting People Programme Commissioning Body is asked to agree the proposals set out in this report to tender floating support services in 2011/12.
2. Retain the specialist service for the deaf as outlined in section 4.
3. That any additional savings that are achieved within the Programme could be allocated to floating support services and brought back to the Commissioning Body for agreement.
4. The Commissioning Body will receive an updated report on the outcome of the tender process.

Background Documents

Delivering the Savings Report, 20 January 2011

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Appendices

Appendix One: Client groups for generic floating support services
Appendix Two: Floating support services to be commissioned
Appendix Three: Risk and business issues continuity log
Appendix Four: Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix One – Client Groups for Generic Floating Support

Single homeless people with support needs

Families with support needs

People with physical disabilities

People with learning disabilities

People with alcohol problems

People with drug problems

Older people with support needs

Frail elderly

Gypsies and travellers

Refugees (Asylum seekers are excluded)

People living with HIV/Aids

Note:- The CLG has never designated a specific client group for Autism/Aspergers within the Programme

Appendix 2 – Floating Support Units to be Commissioned

Generic Services		Specialist Services							
Area	Generic Units	Specialist Units	Mental Health	Domestic Abuse	Young People	Black and Minority Ethnic	d/Deaf Service	Offenders	Rough Sleepers
North	242								
South	268								
East	280	342	100	84	75	17	0	32	34
West	225	308	80	80	63	25	0	26	34
County	N/A	20					20		
Total	1015	670							

Area – Generic		Area - Specialist	
North	Dartford, Gravesham, Swale	North	N/A
South	Maidstone, Ashford, Shepway	South	N/A
East	Thanet, Canterbury, Dover	East	Thanet, Shepway, Dover, Canterbury, Swale, Ashford
West	Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks	West	Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, Maidstone, Dartford, Gravesham

	Number of Units	hrs/unit	hours	Hourly rate (£)	weeks	cost	%
Specialist Unit	670	2	1340	19	52.14	£1,327,484	40
Generic	1015	2	2030	19	52.14	£2,011,040	60
Totals	1685				Total	£3,338,524	

Commissioning Floating Support, Appendix 3 - Risk and Business Issues Continuity Log

Impact & Probability - 1 = Low 3 = High

Risk Description	Impact 1-3	Probability 1-3	Risk Profile	Risk Owner	Countermeasure	Date Identified
FS funding cut as KCC not able to resource the funding allocation for the Programme as anticipated	3	1	Medium	KCC	The county council's medium term plan has already been agreed by full council in January 2011	04/04/2011
Insufficient providers can be found to run the FS services at the cost required	3	1	Medium	KCC	The programme already has a market of 14 providers who operate within the county at similar benchmarked rates. It is anticipated that the programme will attract further providers from outside its current market place.	04/04/2011
The geographical distribution of FS will limit the range of providers able to deliver the services	2	1	Low	KCC	There is already a strong field of providers who are currently operating across some of the current geographical distributions. Further, the programme will be encouraging consortia of smaller providers such as voluntary sector organisations, charities and social enterprises.	04/04/2011
The geographical distribution of floating support is currently commissioned on an east and west Kent basis and it is arguable that local services have been lost due to the non renewal of district/borough based floating support.	2	1	Green	KCC	The Programme will be commissioning generic floating support on a more localised basis. Further, the programme will be encouraging consortia of smaller providers such as voluntary sector organisations, charities and social enterprises.	04/04/2011

Risk Description	Impact 1-3	Probability 1-3	Risk Profile	Risk Owner	Countermeasure	Date Identified
The geographical distribution will give rise to a distortion of allocations between the districts/boroughs.	1	1	Low	KCC	The allocations process will be based on individual need in date order rather than volume of referrals in a particular district/borough.	04/04/2011
The level of reduction in volume of the services means that there will be a rise in demand which is unlikely to be met	3	2	High	KCC	The programme will focus on those who are in greatest need and deliver targeted time limited support, specific to the outcomes required. Applications from those whose needs are not housing related or can be met elsewhere will be signposted. The Commissioning Body has been asked to agree that any future savings can be utilised to increase floating support capacity.	04/04/2011
Smaller organisation, charities and voluntary organisations will be disproportionately affected by the change in geographical distribution.	2	1	Low	KCC	These organisations are being assisted to act as consortia, or act under the umbrella of a less specialised provider to offer expert services	04/04/2011
The new floating support services might not be ready to operate in time	1	1	Low	KCC	A tender timetable has been drawn up that will enable plenty of time for the new provider to recruit, and be fully operational by 1st April 2012	04/04/2011

Risk Description	Impact 1-3	Probability 1-3	Risk Profile	Risk Owner	Countermeasure	Date Identified
Specialist services for particular service user groups are proposed to be discontinued and services are proposed to be provided by generic services, e.g. substance misuse. This could lead to a fall in service quality, the meeting of specific needs and accessibility.	1	1	Low	KCC	Specifications will clarify the exact requirements of the services and eligibility. All new services will be subject to performance monitoring and management.	04/04/2011
A smaller constituency of providers could lead to a monopoly situation or a more limited choice of service providers for service users e.g. should a provider decide to leave the programme in Kent or go into liquidation.	1	1	Low	KCC	There will be a robust tender process which will set out the financial accreditation requirements of each organisation should they be successful. Monitoring and management arrangements will mitigate any risk. There is a sufficient pool of qualified providers to draw upon in any emergency and the number of services proposed and their distribution will reduce the impact of any such event.	04/04/2011

Appendix 4

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Please read the EIA GUIDANCE and the EIA flow chart available on KNet.
This form dated 17/12/2010 supersedes all previous EIA/ CIA forms

Directorate:

Customers and Communities

Name of policy, procedure, project or service

Commissioning Floating Support

Type

The strategic level document sets out the way the Kent Supporting People Programme intends to commission floating support services which will replace currently delivered services as from 1 April 2012. The newly commissioned services will incorporate savings asked for by the reduction in grant allocation and agreed by the Commissioning Body in March 2011.

Responsible Owner/ Senior Officer

Claire Martin, Head of Supporting People

Date of Initial Screening

18 April 2011

Screening Grid

Characteristic	Could this policy, procedure, project or service affect this group differently from others in Kent? YES/NO	Could this policy, procedure, project or service promote equal opportunities for this group? YES/NO	Assessment of potential impact HIGH/MEDIUM/LOW/ NONE/UNKNOWN		Provide details: a) Is internal action required? If yes, why? b) Is further assessment required? If yes, why? c) Explain how good practice can promote equal opportunities
			Positive	Negative	
Age	<p>No – The Quality Assessment Framework requires providers to meet equality & diversity in services, including fair access. SP funding depends on continuous improvement in this area which is regularly reviewed through service reviews and contract monitoring.</p> <p>Yes – Reducing funding for floating support services could lead to less support being available to vulnerable people</p>	<p>Yes – by identifying specific support needs and ensuring that services use best practice to meet the needs as well as identifying gaps in services</p> <p>Yes - Commissioning of specific floating support services for young people at risk will prevent homelessness and enable more of them to stay in their areas of origin and near to their existing social networks.</p> <p>Yes – By retaining as far as possible the current level of floating support services means that the Supporting People Programme will continue to enable as many vulnerable people as possible to have choice and live independently in the community.</p>	High	Low	<p>c) The Supporting People programme is required to mitigate the reduction in funding for floating support services. Reduction in numbers can be kept to a minimum through limiting the number of support hours per service user for all floating support to two hours per service user per week.</p> <p>c) Supporting People will continue to monitor and review services, including the age of those accessing them to ensure that older people with support needs and young people at risk can access the services they need.</p>

Characteristic	Could this policy, procedure, project or service affect this group differently from others in Kent? YES/NO	Could this policy, procedure, project or service promote equal opportunities for this group? YES/NO	Assessment of potential impact HIGH/MEDIUM/LOW/ NONE/UNKNOWN		Provide details: a) Is internal action required? If yes, why? b) Is further assessment required? If yes, why? c) Explain how good practice can promote equal opportunities
			Positive	Negative	
Disability	See Above	Yes – by identifying specific support needs and ensuring that services use best practice to meet them as well as identifying gaps in services Yes – By retaining as far as possible the current level of floating support services means that the Supporting People Programme will continue to enable as many vulnerable people as possible to have choice and live independently in the community.	High	Low	a) Internal action has already been taken following service user consultation. It was initially proposed to incorporate the specialist floating support service for deaf people into generic floating support. However, following consultation the Supporting People Programme proposes to continue commissioning a specialist service. c) The Supporting People Programme is required to mitigate the reduction in funding for floating support services. This can be achieved through limiting the number of support hours per service user for all floating support including services for rough sleepers to two hours per service user per week. c) Supporting People will continue to monitor and review services, including any disabilities that those accessing them may have to ensure that vulnerable people can access the services they need.
Gender	See above	See above and Yes – The Programme will continue commissioning a specialist floating support service for people fleeing domestic abuse which is open to both women and men.	High	None	a) The Supporting People Programme is required to mitigate the reduction in funding for floating support services. This can be achieved through limiting the number of support hours per service user for all floating support including services for rough sleepers to two hours per service user per week. c) Supporting People will continue to monitor and review services, including the age of those accessing them to ensure that vulnerable people can access the services they need.
Gender identity	See above	See above	High	None	See above

Characteristic	Could this policy, procedure, project or service affect this group differently from others in Kent? YES/NO	Could this policy, procedure, project or service promote equal opportunities for this group? YES/NO	Assessment of potential impact HIGH/MEDIUM/LOW/ NONE/UNKNOWN		Provide details: a) Is internal action required? If yes, why? b) Is further assessment required? If yes, why? c) Explain how good practice can promote equal opportunities
			Positive	Negative	
Race	See above	See above and Yes – The Programme will continue commissioning a specialist floating support service for people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities whose particular cultural needs and backgrounds make it difficult for them to access mainstream services.	High	Low	See above
Religion or belief	See above	See above	High	None	See above
Sexual orientation	See above	See above	High	None	See above
Pregnancy and maternity	See above	See above and Yes – The Programme will retain specialist floating support services for teenage parents by incorporating those services into a specialist services for young people at risk	High	Low	See above

Part 1: INITIAL SCREENING

Context

The Supporting People Programme commissions the provision of non-statutory housing related support in a range of services including sheltered accommodation, short and long term accommodation based services, Home Improvement Agencies and handyperson services, community alarms and floating support services for vulnerable people living within the community. The programme is required to make savings of £7 million over the next two years in response to the adjustment of investment and the impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2010.

At the same time, the Programme is implementing the priorities as set out in the Kent Supporting People Strategy 2010-2015 and prioritising services that focus on prevention and help people to stay in their own accommodation. Floating support is the most flexible way to support vulnerable people. Floating support is aimed at providing very focused, practical and time limited housing related support to vulnerable people.

However, in order to contribute to making the required savings, it is proposed to commission floating support from 1 April 2012 in a different way. Some of the measures proposed were already agreed in the strategy, e.g. limiting the duration of housing related support to one year and not renewing the contracts for district/borough based floating support services. The latter measure has resulted in a reduction of unit numbers of floating support from 5,343 units in 2010/11 to 1,736 in the current financial year 2011/12.

The current annual investment in floating support services stands at £5,444,345. Under savings proposals agreed by the Commissioning Body in March 2011, this funding is to reduce to £3,338,554 by April 2012.

Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of the proposals is to ensure that as many vulnerable people as possible can benefit from floating support to benefit whilst at the same time reducing expenditure on the services in order to meet the savings target.

The level of reduction in the numbers of floating support units can be minimised to an overall level of 1,685 units to be commissioned for April 2012. The objectives guiding the proposals can be summed up as follows:

- To target funding at the most vulnerable and those at greatest risk
- To focus service provision on the most vulnerable and those at greatest risk. In specialist floating support services criteria will be tightened to focus on those most at risk of maintaining their housing situations.
- To maximise value for money including reducing provider cost and weekly support hours delivered;

In order to achieve this, the following measures are proposed:

- Reduction in hourly rates to a maximum of £19 per hour
- Reduction in weekly number of support hours to two hours per service user per week in all floating support services
- Specialist floating support services for people with mental health problems, deaf people, offenders, rough sleepers, people fleeing domestic abuse, young people at risk

(including teenage parents and young offenders) and people from BME communities will be commissioned but be more targeted through applying more prescribed service criteria. All other client groups/vulnerable people in need of support services will be supported through generic floating support.

- Specific services for outreach and specialist floating support services for people with alcohol or drug services will not be commissioned. In the latter service this will prevent duplication as other agencies deliver similar specialist services. Outreach clients and people with alcohol or drug problems will be catered for through generic services.

A full impact assessment on the Supporting People Strategy 2010-2015 was carried out in 2010/11 and was signed off by the directorate lead for equalities. The proposed measures of reducing unit cost and incorporating particular specialist floating support services such as HIV/Aids into generic support provision have already been consulted upon and agreed.

Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of the Programme are vulnerable people in need of housing related support services in Kent as defined in the Kent Supporting People Eligibility Policy. They include:

- single homeless people with support needs and rough sleepers
- older people with support needs
- people with physical/sensory disabilities and learning disabilities
- people with mental health problems
- families with support needs and teenage parents
- young people at risk and care leavers
- offenders
- people at risk of domestic abuse
- people with alcohol and/or drug problems

Any provider commissioned by the Supporting People Programme to provide one or more of the proposed services will be awarded a contract which is monitored through the Quality Assessment Framework (QAF). The QAF has clear and explicit standards to ensure that all Supporting People funded services are inclusive to all members of the community. All contracts have clauses requiring providers to work within the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. Providers must all have an equal opportunities policy that complies with all statutory obligations as stipulated by the Equality and Human Rights Commission as far as possible.

Consultation and data

The proposals for commissioning new floating support services are based on:

- Incorporation of the most recent needs analysis undertaken by the Supporting People Programme in September 2010 which included:
 - Demographic data
 - Prevalence data of certain conditions, e.g. learning disabilities and mental health
 - Dissemination of latest relevant strategic documents and data from Health, Housing, Social Care (including the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments for Adults

and Children in Kent), Probation data and homelessness data collated by the districts/ boroughs

- Data obtained from providers and commissioners about the needs of client groups
- Analysis of the supply and demand for floating support services (which are centrally administered by the Supporting People Programme)
- Analysis of service reviews and performance indicators and strategic review of outreach services

As part of the impact assessment, the Supporting People team engaged with service users themselves as well as providers of services as representatives of diverse communities. Providers were consulted with through the Executive Forum of Providers. Further consultations are being held with providers on the basis of individual meetings in May and June 2011.

Consultation focused on the proposals for the commissioning of new floating support services commencing April 2012 on the basis of two hours per week per service users, the commissioning of specialist and generic floating support and the geographic distribution of the services.

Engagement with service users included:

- Feedback from the Service User Panel
- Consultation with service users through two consultation events held in east and west Kent which involved face to face discussions with 55 service users
- Application of a questionnaire which was returned by 427 current recipients of floating support services (and represents 25% of current recipients).

A summary of those consultations is attached as appendix.

Potential Impact

The Supporting People Programme monitors and reviews the services it commissions to ensure that they are accessible to the vulnerable people who need them irrespective of race, religion, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Therefore, potential adverse impacts could only affect the protected characteristics of age, disability, race (where services are focused on particular BME groups) and gender (where services are focused on those fleeing domestic abuse and teenage parents).

In general, floating support services will be retendered in 2011/12 and will need to be reduced within the funding available in 2012/13. The proposed reductions in hourly rates, delivering all services on the basis of two hours of housing related support per service user per week will affect all client groups equally and will not affect groups of people with the protected characteristics more than others.

Adverse Impact:

The savings proposals indicate a reduction in funding of floating support services. However, reductions have been kept to an absolute minimum through the measures described above. With regard to the minority strands, any negative impact is low and will not affect the groups with protected characteristics disproportionate to other groups.

With specific targets incorporated into contracts regarding Equality and Diversity, particularly monitoring arrangements around fair access, this will increase knowledge and ensures that the specific needs of minority groups are constantly reviewed.

Positive Impact:

The proposals for commissioning new floating support services include retaining specialist floating support services for young people at risk including teenage parents, people fleeing domestic abuse, deaf people and people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

This ensures that people with particular cultural needs and backgrounds that make it difficult for them to access mainstream services have access to support. In addition, the specialist service for people fleeing domestic abuse is open to all who need it irrespective of gender and retaining a specific service for young people contributes to preventing young people from becoming homeless and losing supportive networks at a crucial time in their lives.

Supporting People continues to monitor and review services through the Quality Assessment Framework and contractual obligations which oblige providers to ensure that services are accessible to all who need them and do not discriminate against minorities such as people from Ethnic Minorities or lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LBGT) people.

JUDGEMENT

Option 1 – Screening Sufficient YES

Following this initial screening our judgement is that no further action is required.

Justification:

Due to the significant reduction in the overall budget for Supporting People services, the Commissioning Body agreed proposals for a range of measures to reduce funding for certain aspects of the Programme, including a reduction in the funding of floating support services. Despite keeping the reduction in the level of floating support services delivered to a minimum, the Supporting People Programme is mindful that there will be existing and future service users who might no longer be able to access services that are currently available to them or might have been available in the future. However, the assessment has not identified any differential impact of the proposals for commissioning floating support on the groups with the protected characteristics and service users with the highest needs will continue to receive services if they meet the eligibility criteria for Supporting People services.

Using a combination of measures the Programme has maximised the use of available funding to ensure that as many people as possible can access services and to keep the overall level of reduction in service provision to a minimum. Whilst the Programme proposes to maintain specialist floating support services, the majority of funding will be targeted at commissioning generic services to help meet the needs of a range of different client groups.

Where specialist services will be commissioned, this will in part meet the identified particular needs of groups with identified protected characteristics, such as women and men fleeing domestic abuse, deaf people and people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups with particular cultural and communication needs.

The level of specialist provision will be decreased and the specialist services will be more targeted at those who meet the highest priority within the Programme. Some specialist services currently delivered will not be commissioned, for example the services for people with alcohol or drug problems and people living with HIV/Aids. Those client groups will still be able to access floating support but will in future be provided with a generic service (as

many service users with such issues already are). The Supporting People Programme is aiming, within limited resources, to deliver housing related support to the most possible number of individuals in need of such support.

The specifications for floating support services will continue to ensure that the needs of all service user groups are met including those with very specific needs e.g. lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities or specific language requirements. The specifications will give clarity to the exact nature of the service user groups and their needs which will be addressed.

This will be further reinforced by a performance management framework with robust monitoring arrangements which seeks to ensure that the appropriate outcomes for services and service users are achieved.

In further mitigation, the Commissioning Body has been asked to accept the principle that any additional funding that might become available should be utilised to meet the strategic priorities enshrined within the strategy but also to increase the capacity within floating support contracts should this prove possible.

Sign Off

I have noted the content of the equality impact assessment and agree the actions to mitigate the adverse impact(s) that have been identified.

Senior Officer

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Claire Martin', written in a cursive style.

Date: 10 May 2011

Name: Claire Martin

Job Title: Head of Supporting People

Directorate Equality Lead

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Fiona Gaffney', written in a cursive style.

Signed:

Date: 10 May 2011

Name: Fiona Gaffney, Acting Directorate Equality Lead

SUMMARY OF SERVICE USER CONSULTATIONS

1. Survey 1 March 2011-15 April 2011

Demographic Details

Age, by recipient floating support service

Current floating support	Gender		TOTAL	Age Groups						TOTAL
	Male	Female		16-17	18-25	26-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
People with mental health problems	11	12	23		2	12	8	1		23
People with drug/alcohol problems	21	12	33		3	16	12	2		33
Offenders	10	2	12		3	6	3			12
Young people at risk	28	34	62	2	60					62
Teenage parents	1	20	21	3	18					21
People fleeing domestic abuse		28	28		10	13	3	2		28
Rough sleepers and outreach	5	2	7			2	3	1	1	7
Deaf People	6	13	19		1	8	6	1	3	19
People living with HIV/Aids										
People from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities	1	10	11		1	7	2	1		11
Older people	6	8	14					11	3	14
Generic	84	113	197		41	89	51	15	1	197
TOTAL	173	254	427	5	139	153	88	34	8	427

Ethnicity, by recipient of floating support

Current floating support	White British	White-Other	White-Irish	Mixed-White and Black Caribbean	Mixed-White and Black African	Black/Black British-Black Caribbean	Black/Black British-Black African	Black-Other	Mixed – White and Asian	Asian/Asian British-Indian	Asian/Asian British-Chinese	Gypsy/Traveller	Other	Not identified
People with mental health problems	21												1	1
People with drug/alcohol problems	33													
Offenders	11													1
Young people at risk	56			2									3	1
Teenage parents	21													
People fleeing domestic abuse	22	1		1	1		1					1	1	
Rough sleepers and Outreach	1													6
Deaf People	17												1	1
People living with HIV/Aids														
People from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities					1	1			1	5	1	1		1
Older people	14													
Generic	178	4	3					1				1	2	8

Response to Questions

Questions	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know enough about it
1) Commission specialist floating support for people with mental health problems – targeted at people with severe problems that have diagnosed conditions or are supported by their GP in the community	362	20	45
2) Commission specialist floating support for women and men who are fleeing domestic abuse, with a focus on practical measures to stay safe	382	9	36
3) Commission specialist floating support for offenders, to be targeted on those who are going to be homeless when released from prison, or are subject to supervision by Probation or are serving community sentences	260	92	75
4) Commission specialist floating support for young people at risk which will also be available to teenage parents, young offenders and young people leaving care	354	28	45
5) Commission specialist floating support for people who have a habit of sleeping rough on the streets or are developing such a habit and who are willing to engage with support to move away from this lifestyle	327	42	58
6) Commission specialist floating support for people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities who have particular cultural needs and backgrounds that make it difficult for them to use mainstream services	222	109	96
7) Commission generic floating support for a wider group of people to include people with drug/alcohol issues, single homeless including people who are sofa surfing and families with support needs, older people with support needs, people with learning disabilities, people with lower levels of mental health problems, people living with HIV/Aids and people with physical/sensory disabilities including deaf people	308	77	42
8) <i>This question invited comments on generic/specialist floating (see summary below)</i>			
9) Of all new floating support to be commissioned, about a third will be for specialist services and two thirds for generic services	166	134	127
10) From records we know there is more demand for floating support in East Kent than West Kent and the amount of floating support to be commissioned should reflect that.	227	61	139

Summary

- A large majority of respondents agreed with the proposals to commission specialist floating support for people with mental health problems, people fleeing domestic abuse, young people at risk and rough sleepers.
- There was similar support for specialist floating support for rough sleepers but this was markedly lower in responses from teenage parents, deaf people, and people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups and to some extent from young people at risk and people fleeing domestic abuse.
- A much smaller majority of respondents agreed with the proposals to commission specialist floating support for offenders and people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities.
- With regard to offenders, many respondents questioned the ‘vulnerability’ of offenders and wanted to link the provision of housing related support to severity of crime committed, or proof that offenders had changed. Disagreement with the proposal was marked across all client groups but particularly so amongst older people, teenage parents and young people at risk and deaf people.
- With regard to specialist floating support for people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities, many respondents across all client groups perceived this proposal as ‘special’ treatment and commented that everybody should be treated the same. Respondents from such communities, on the other hand, referred to language and cultural barriers exerting a powerful sense of isolation from communities and making it difficult to accessing mainstream services.
- A large majority of respondents (with the exception of deaf people) agreed to the proposal to commission generic floating support services for a range of client groups. However, a number of respondents expressed the view that support workers need to have good and extensive training to meet the needs of all groups.
- When proposing the proportions of specialist and generic floating support services to be commissioned, only a third of respondents agreed with the proposal. Opinions between those disagreeing were more or less evenly divided between those wanting more specialist services, those wanting more generic services and those wanting an even split. However, a sizeable percentage of respondents did not comment because of a lack of knowledge.
- A small majority of respondents agreed to more units to be commissioned in east Kent than west Kent. A third of respondents did not comment because of a lack of knowledge.
- Many respondents added further comments about floating support services: floating support was described as lifeline and safety net, as helping people to find their way, as pushing people not to give up, as saving people from homelessness, as helping people coping and addressing issues to improve their lives. Many respondents commented about the cuts in services in general and posed the question where vulnerable people are to go when there are no services available.

2. Service User Consultation Events

The consultation events were held in Maidstone and Canterbury in April 2011 and involved meeting an overall total of 58 service users from a range of client groups. Following a presentation, service users expressed understanding that Supporting People have limited resources but voiced the following concerns:

- Possible duplication of support in that some client groups have volunteers also supporting individuals. Therefore such groups do not need so much floating support. Service users named offenders as such a group.
- With some specialist services not being commissioned, some client groups might not be provided with support anymore, for example people with drug or alcohol problems.
- Certain client groups should not have specialist support
- Limiting support to 2 hours per week per service user
- Floating support is not widely enough promoted

Many service users expressed particular concerns about limiting duration of support to one year and cuts in services in general:

- Many people need more than 2 years to sort issues out, for example it can take up to a year to get disability benefits or learn the skills to stand on one's own two feet. It can also take months to get people with problems such as mental health issues referred from GPs to specialist services.
- Perception that many referrals are made by statutory services. Such services have been cut and service users have come to rely on Supporting People services. Once Supporting People services start, many statutory agencies walk away from clients.
- Concerns around losing preventative element of services and people sliding back into crisis once the service floats off.
- Many service users have on going or permanent need for support because they have long standing and on going issues, for example mental health problems. But sometimes people are not unwell enough, eligibility criteria for statutory services are too high and support workers are unable to refer people to those services. Supporting People plugs the gaps.
- The most vulnerable people in Kent will suffer most in the cuts. Councils should not cut services and use their reserves.

Many service users queried why social services and health were not present to respond to some of the questions/concerns raised and expressed a wish to meet the people who make the funding/ making savings decisions.

Deaf people made powerful presentation of their issues and why they need specialist support:

- Many deaf people have poor life skills and severe communication problems, in part caused by being unable to read English. This causes problems, for example they cannot read text phones
- Mainstream services are inaccessible to deaf people, for example job centres are supposed to make special provision but do not do so and are not aware of deaf people's support needs. Even CABs have no interpreters.
- Deaf people need speedy access to support because their needs are different
- Many deaf people need ongoing support but do not meet the criteria of statutory services

3. Service User Panel 10.3.2011

The Service User Panel was given a presentation and the following is a summary of the ensuing discussions:

- The panel agreed with the proposals for commissioning specialist floating support for certain client groups and that the support should be more focused on those with the highest need/issues.
- There was concern about what would happen to people who have more long term support needs.
- Service specifications for generic floating support need to clarify what knowledge and training support staff must have in order to link vulnerable people to other more specialist services.
- Agreement that there should be specialist floating support for people from Black and Minority Ethnic. However, there was concern that this might be perceived by some people as 'special' or 'better' treatment.
- Agreement to the proposals for proportions suggested between commissioning specialist and generic floating support services. There was also agreement to the proposal to commission slightly more units in east Kent than west Kent in order to reflect the current level of demand.