

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

To: Supporting People Commissioning Body 11 October 2011

Subject: Strategic Review of Home Improvement Agencies and
Handyperson Services

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary

The Kent Supporting People Programme undertook a strategic review of HIA and handyperson services. The key findings are that there needs to be greater value for money, clarity in relation to outcomes, and a tighter performance management framework. Following legal advice the Programme is proposing to tender 12 separate HIA and Handyperson services within the individual districts/boroughs as one tendering exercise. The Programme has consulted with key stakeholders on the key strategic issues in relation to these services in order to inform the commissioning and procurement processes.

1. Introduction

(1) The Supporting People Programme undertook a strategic review of Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) and handyperson services. HIAs and handyperson services are designed to ensure that private sector tenants and owner occupiers are able to live independently for as long as possible in their own accommodation by making interventions that achieve this e.g. adaptations.

(2) The strategic review evaluated the funding, performance management, service provision and configuration of services.

(3) The current configuration of services and provider is;

- Ashford/Shepway (In Touch)
- Canterbury (In-house)
- Dartford/Gravesend (In Touch)
- Dover (In Touch)
- Maidstone/Sevenoaks/Tonbridge and Malling/ Tunbridge Wells (In Touch)
- Swale (In-house)
- Thanet (In Touch)

(4) Age U.K. are contracted to provide a handyperson service across the whole of the county.

2. Strategic Review Findings

(1) The strategic review resulted in the following key findings:

- The performance of HIAs and handyperson services has not in the past been managed collectively by all the interested parties who regard themselves as stakeholders. This has meant that it has been difficult to adopt a unified approach to the measurement of performance.
- The funding of the agencies is not uniform and there are disparate amounts of money being invested in services by both health and districts/boroughs. It does not demonstrate genuine value for money. The provider agencies need to be as proactive as possible in generating additional income into their services e.g. charging for services
- The specification needed to be reviewed and redrafted. The Supporting People Programme has drafted a new specification of service which more closely reflects the current needs of the interested parties who regard themselves as stakeholders of the services. The specification is being finalised ready for tendering. The specification includes a performance management regime which is output and outcome focused.
- The marketing of HIA/handyperson services needs to be improved so that there is greater public access to them.
- Kent County Council legal and procurement advice is that services should be tendered

3. Strategic Review Recommendations

The recommendations are:

- The County Council should tender as one tender 12 distinct services that replicate the 12 districts/boroughs within Kent
- The County Council should tender utilising one specification which incorporates the findings of the strategic review

4. Managing the transition

(1) The Supporting People Programme is intending to undertake one tender for 12 distinct HIA and handypersons services. The 12 distinct services will represent the 12 districts/boroughs of Kent.

(2) Districts/boroughs will be engaged in the last stage of the tendering process through involvement by the Head of Housing or the Private Sector Housing Manager identified by the relevant district/borough in the final interview and evaluation of applicants for provision of the service. The officer should not have been involved in the direct provision of HIA and handyperson services within a relevant district/borough. Kent County Council will reserve the right to exclude a nominated officer where it is believed that there may be a conflict of interest. In cases where a district/borough is submitting a bid for the service and is successfully shortlisted that district/borough cannot take part in

that process. Kent County Council as the contract holder will make the final decision in relation to the awarding of a contract should there be an inability to reach agreement on who the successful tenderer is.

(3) The Supporting People Programme will be tendering on the basis that the maximum amount of investment within each district/borough will be £57.4k. The Programme is tendering on the basis that the maximum value will purchase a staff complement that is able to deliver a basic HIA/handyperson service. The premise will be that providers may wish to tender at a more competitive rate. There may be economies of scale delivered if an organisation wins a tender within more than one district/borough.

(4) This tendering exercise would commence on the 1 November 2011.

5. Consultation and Communication

(1) As part of the review, the Programme consulted with a wide range of stakeholders, including districts/boroughs, providers and current service users. The customer feedback via satisfaction surveys carried out by HIAs and handyperson services in all areas is good and was confirmed in individual consultations with service users carried out by the Supporting People Programme. This endorses the need for a continuance of HIA and handyperson services. An Equality Impact Assessment is attached as an appendix.

6. Risk and Business Continuity Management

(1) The Supporting People Programme will work with providers to ensure that services continue to be delivered until newly commissioned services can commence in April 2012. The Supporting People Programme has produced a risk and business continuity issue log for the implementation process of the proposed changes. This is attached as an appendix.

7. Financial Implications

(1) Funding for HIAs and handyperson services comes from a number of sources including Kent County Council Formula Funding, district/borough grant funding, and fees. The funding streams reflect the multiplicity of tasks which HIAs and handyperson services undertake. The HIAs and handypersons services will be expected to attract income sources from statutory and non-statutory agencies in order to deliver the services identified within the service specification. For instance they may receive funding from Health or a district/borough or charitable funding.

(2) The Programme is currently investing £1,579k in HIA and handyperson services. The Commissioning Body has agreed that as from April 2012 it will invest £689k. This means that the Programme will confirm within the tendering of services that each district and borough area will receive an annual

maximum amount of £57.4k. The objective is that the newly commissioned service providers generate as much income as possible from charging for their services and attracting charitable funding in order to offset the financial burden for those who cannot pay.

8. Legal implications

(1) The Programme has sought legal advice in relation to the commissioning of HIAs and handyperson services. The legal advice is that all services should be tendered.

9. Sustainability Implications

(1) The Supporting People Programme believes that HIA and handyperson services should be a priority for funding within the Programme and will work with the Commissioning Body to ensure that the investment from the County Council continues to be made by demonstrating the value of the services to the owner occupiers and private rented sector tenants who use it via robust performance management information which is output and outcome focused.

10. Conclusion

(1) The Supporting People Programme is required to tender the Home Improvement Agencies and handyperson services. The strategic review of HIAs and handyperson services has identified that there needs to be a performance management regime which is output and outcome focused, an enhancement of the specifications, clarity in relation to funding, better access to services, and therefore the competitive tendering of the services.

Recommendations

The Commissioning Body is asked to agree to;

1. The tendering of all HIA and handyperson services for new contracts to be let in time for their commencement in April 2012 on a district by district basis

Background Information

Kent Supporting People Strategy 2010-2015

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Appendix One – Equality Impact Assessment of Strategic Review of HIAs and Handyperson Services

Appendix Two - Risk and Business Continuity Issues Log

Appendix Three – Proposed time table with key milestones

APPENDIX 1

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

Strategic Review of Home Improvement and Handyperson Services

Type

The strategic review examined the funding, performance management, service provider and configuration of services and recommends the tendering of services with an agreed specification which includes performance management framework and which addresses the specific requirements of key stakeholders.

Responsible Owner/ Senior Officer

Claire Martin, Head of Supporting People

Date of Initial Screening

5 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	No – HIA and handyperson services are to be retained but at reduced cost. Yes - Some people in need may not have access to services due to lack of service promotion	Yes - Improved quality of life, maintaining independent living, prevention of injuries (e.g. falls), improved health (e.g. addressing fuel poverty)	High	Low	a) Before tendering, revise existing service specification and agree a new one with co-commissioners which sets out improved promotion of the services c) Supporting People continues to monitor and review services, including the age of those accessing them to ensure that vulnerable people who need the services can access them
Disability	As above	Yes - As above	High	Low	a) Before tendering, revise existing service specification and agree a new one with co-commissioners which sets out improved promotion of the services c) Supporting People continues to monitor and review services, including the age of those accessing them to ensure that vulnerable people who need the services can access them c) Under contractual obligations all providers have to meet the particular communication needs of clients and thus can meet the housing related support needs of a wide range of client groups.
Gender	As above	Yes- see above	High	Low	As 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	
Gender identity	As above	Yes - Improved quality of life, maintaining independent living, prevention of injuries (e.g. falls), improved health (e.g. addressing fuel poverty)	High	Low	As above
Race	As above	Yes – as above	High	Low	As above
Religion or belief	As above	Yes – as above	High	Low	As above
Sexual orientation	As above	Yes – as above	High	Low	As above
Pregnancy and maternity	As above	Yes- see above	High	Low	As above

INITIAL SCREENING

Context

The Supporting People Programme commissions the non-statutory provision of housing related support in a range of services including Home Improvement Agencies and handyman services. The commissioning of Supporting People funded services is guided by the Supporting People Strategy 2010-2015 which aims to work in partnership with stakeholders to deliver where possible needs led, value for money and high quality housing support services for vulnerable people.

Supporting People services:

- Have the primary objective of housing-related support which promotes “independent living”.
- Have clear preventative benefits, promote well being and meet identified need and link with partners’ objectives in delivering the Programme
- Are focused on the priority outcomes including the maximisation of independence and prevention
- Address the needs of socially excluded groups, particularly in areas of high deprivation, whose needs are not met by current support provision and that it will apply principles of equal opportunities and fair access. This will enhance diversity and social inclusion in local communities.

Overall, the strategy indicated the need to focus on prevention and more emphasis on time-limited objectives and practical interventions such as those delivered by Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) and handyman services to sustain independence.

The strategic review of Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) and handyman services across the area of Kent County Council addressed the funding, performance management, service provider and configuration of services. The review went beyond a traditional Supporting People review because HIAs and handyman services deliver services over and above the adaptation of homes for those with disabilities and associated support to clients. They also deliver, to varying degrees, part of Kent’s twelve local authorities’ private sector housing strategies and meet the prevention strategies of all commissioners. Funding of the services reflects this multi-agency focus by coming from a number of sources including Supporting People, Local Housing Authority budgets, Primary Care Trust (PCT) funding and fee income raised by the service providers themselves.

Aims and Objectives

Supporting People funded HIAs and handyman services assist older and disabled people and other vulnerable groups such as women fleeing domestic abuse in the owner-occupied and private rented sectors to remain living in their homes independently and safely. Services help to improve their housing conditions through repairs, adaptations, improvements and home safety services and potentially reduce the recourse to statutory services.

A full impact assessment on the Supporting People Strategy 2010-2015 was carried out in 2010 and was signed off by the directorate lead for equalities. With regards to HIAs and handyman services the measures agreed following extensive consultation were to strategically review services and:

- Consider and develop the opportunities for charging for the services provided by the Home Improvement Agencies and the handyman services.
- Require Home Improvement Agencies to charge for handyman services on a means tested basis
- Seek more consistent service models for Home Improvement Agencies and handyman services

The strategic review of the services has led to the following conclusions:

- Performance management needs to be output and outcome focused and not process driven
- The funding of the agencies needs to be as uniform and transparent as possible and demonstrate genuine value for money
- The specification for service delivery needs to more closely reflect the current needs of the interested parties who regard themselves as stakeholders of the services
- Services need to be easily accessed and publicised appropriately

In addition, the Supporting People Programme has sought legal advice in relation to the contracting of services delivered by HIAs and handyman services. The legal advice is that all services should be tendered. The Programme proposes to jointly tender with the twelve districts and boroughs.

Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of the HIAs and handyman services funded by Supporting People include homeowners and private tenants who are:

- Older people (irrespective of income level)
- Adults with physical/sensory disabilities (including lone parents)
- Adults with physically or sensory disabled children (including lone parents)

In addition, in some districts/boroughs HIAs also deliver services under the sanctuary scheme to people at risk of domestic abuse. However, these services are not funded by Supporting People.

Consultation and data

The proposals for HIAs and handyman services already contained within the Kent Supporting People Strategy 2010-15 were widely consulted upon and included a wide range of data including client records, needs analysis and outcomes of extensive consultation with key stakeholders including service users. This Equality Impact Assessment utilises the full customer impact assessment carried out on the strategy.

As part of the strategic review, Supporting People collated the following additional information:

- Current supply data in twelve districts/boroughs
- Demographic data
- Tenure profiles
- Referral data
- Funding data

- Performance data provided by the agencies operating within Kent and covering the period April 2009-March 2010
- Previous service reviews carried out Supporting People
- Results of customer feedback via satisfaction surveys carried out by providers
- Consultations with representatives of the twelve Local Housing Authorities, Adult Social Services, and East Kent Coastal PCT
- Consultations with representatives of the provider organisations
- One to one interviews with 34 service users who were aged 61-80+. The majority were female and 28 were home owners.

Potential Impact

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.

In general terms, the initial screening shows that in relation to people with the protected characteristics there will be no impact on the level of service provision to vulnerable people being provided with HIA and handyperson services. The strategic review recommends commissioning new services and the proposed measures do not impact disproportionately on any groups of people with the protected characteristics. However, making funding more transparent will improve value for money and may result in reduced cost of services. Cost to services users is already based on means testing but there will be a more unified approach across the county.

Adverse Impact:

A review of the proposals has been considered and based on the information currently available no adverse impacts have been identified that may affect one group of people with the protected characteristics disproportionately more than others.

Positive Impact:

The proposals are balanced between a need for achieving maximum value for money through competitively tendering and ensuring that services will be maintained albeit at a potential reduced cost.

Currently, services provided by HIAs and handyperson services are mainly delivered to home owners and there is variability in terms of the range, capacity and quality of services available. The proposed tendering will lead to services being delivered within a standardised framework which is based on transparent funding, and unified performance framework and service specifications. This approach will ensure that the needs of vulnerable people will continue to be met and that services remain viable in the longer-term future:

- A common unified service specification will incorporate the need to focus more effort on targeting people in private rented accommodation who currently underrepresented in the take up of services as well as require the

provider to publicise services appropriately. These measures will improve access to services and hence will lead to more vulnerable people maximising their potential independence.

- A common performance management framework will improve service provision and thus result in better outcomes for service users

Supporting People will continue 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 (LGBT) people.

JUDGEMENT

Option 1 – Screening Sufficient NO

Following this initial screening our judgement is that further action is required.

Justification:

Following this initial screening our judgement is that whilst no adverse impacts have been identified that may affect one group of people with the protected characteristics disproportionately more than others there is room for further improvement.

Option 2 – Internal Action Required YES

There is scope to improve the proposals. Improvement focuses on the need to make HIA and handyperson services more accessible through better publicising of services. An action plan is attached.

Option 3 – Full Impact Assessment NO

Only go to full impact assessment if an adverse impact has been identified that will need to undertake further analysis, consultation and action

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, consisting of several stylized, overlapping loops and lines, positioned below the 'Signed:' text.

Date: 6TH May 2011

Name: Claire Martin

Job Title: Head of Supporting People

Directorate Equality Lead

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fiona Gaffney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Date:
20th April 2011

Name:
Fiona Gaffney, Acting Directorate Equality Lead

Appendix 2 - 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
The districts/boroughs and health do not wish to jointly tender	1	3		Medium	CB	The Supporting People Programme will tender services on its own.	13 Sept 2011
No one tenders for the services.	3	1		Medium	KCC/ CB	The Supporting People Programme would have to retender and temporarily extend existing contracts with the providers' agreement.	14 Apr 2011

Appendix 3 – Time Table with Key Milestones

Activity	Details	Timescales
Agreement to tender	KCC and districts/boroughs will agree to the tendering of HIAs and handyperson services	11 October 2011
Agreement of service specifications	KCC will draft a specification and consult with stakeholders. Feedback to be incorporated into a final agreed specification.	2 September 2011
Tendering exercise	KCC will tender. Districts/boroughs involved in final interview and evaluation of applicants (except where districts/boroughs are bidding for the service and have been successfully shortlisted)	15 October 2011 – 12 January 2012
Award contracts	KCC will award the contract	17 January 2012
Sign Contract	KCC sign the contract with the provider	27 th January 2012