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To: Supporting People Commissioning Body 26 January 2012

Subject: The Future of Floating Support

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary This report sets out the future direction of floating support in order to respond and reflect current and future strategic challenges. There is a need to revise and reshape the principles under which floating support is provided and managed in order to ensure that the programme can manage demand, make the most of its investment and provide truly personalised.

1. Introduction

(1) In its June meeting the Commissioning Body agreed to a proposal to retender and strategically reconfigure floating support services in line with the Supporting People Five Year Strategy 2010-15. The annual spend on floating support has reduced from over £10m to £7.02m.

(2) The programme will be delivering only marginally less units of floating support in the new tendering round. The tendering may lead to the same number of units if not more being delivered. A summary of the floating support contracts tendered is supplied in Appendix 1.

(3) The programme has and will take steps to reduce demand upon floating support, ensuring that the programme is enabled to deliver to the strategy a short term, outcome focussed floating service that promotes independence, self reliance and resilience.

(3) The programme will continue to use a range of techniques to continue to incentivise providers to derive better efficiency at every step of the referral process and ensure that it reaches high levels of performance. It will refresh the application procedure and process to enable automation, reduce duplication and encourage users to take control.

(4) The programme will go further in ensuring personalised service for all. Personalised support plans are user led within the programme and tested for quality. Automation will offer further opportunities to offer personalised services according to user defined need.

2. Managing Demand

(1) Since 2007 over 17,500 people have been referred via the centralised mechanism to receive housing related support service from the programme's

floating support service. The mechanism has enabled the programme to prioritise these individuals and ensure that the service has focussed on those who need it most and signpost those with needs that do not relate to the programme to more appropriate sources of help. In particular, the contact centre has been able to redirect individuals at the pre-referral stage.

(2) The Supporting People Strategy 2010-15 heralds a sharper focus on housing related support and an acknowledgement that those most in need should be prioritised; that the programme should move away from the idea of ongoing maintenance and towards time-limited, housing related support that centralises on securing or stabilising the housing situation of a vulnerable applicant. It is proposed that floating support service will focus on those vulnerable people whose housing situation is most at risk. Those whose support needs can be met elsewhere will be diverted to more appropriate sources of help and guidance.

(3) From April 2012, the programme's revised specification for short term supported housing services will formalise the expectation that providers will deliver resettlement support to service users who move on from supported accommodation rather than refer them for floating support. On current referral levels this will reduce applications by over 100 annually.

(4) The use of a centralised online referral mechanism will encourage and enable potential service users and referrers to access a range of alternative provision to obviate the demand in lower priority cases whilst still ensuring that their needs are met. An intelligent assessment system will ensure that duplication is eliminated and that those in priority need of a housing related support are able to apply. Referrers including self referrers will be enabled and encouraged to track, monitor and manage their own referral online and reduce the resource required. The system will enable the assertive management of the waiting list to continue whilst reducing the back office burden to both providers and the programme whilst increasing the emphasis on providers managing the resource effectively.

(5) The programme recognises that in spite of these steps, homelessness and an ability to maintain housing situation is severely challenged in the current climate and therefore the programme's ability to reduce demand has its limitations. Through comprehensive performance management, the programme will monitor the impact of external forces on the demand for floating support.

3. Incentivisation

(1) The programme will continue to use a range of techniques to continue to incentivise providers to derive better efficiency at every step of the referral process and ensure that it reaches high levels of performance.

(2) Similarly it will encourage users to take control and reach self reliance and build resilience for the future, and avoid the revolving door. The programme has written comprehensive specifications for the service delivery within the

revised services that ensure that providers are clear about the role of floating support and that includes building peer support and capacity building.

(3) The programme will continue to assertively performance manage the floating support mechanism setting targets on service and performance indicators that will maximise the investment made. Such steps have included

- setting and monitoring a maximum term for assessment
- Identifying, prompting and managing prompt appropriate exit from services
- decreasing maximum term from 2 years to 1 year
- benchmarking and target setting against utilisation and throughput and service user outcomes
- Monitoring re-referral rates and equity of access

(4) The performance management report on this agenda outlines the improvement in performance that can and has already been derived in assertively managing the waiting list. This drive for improvement has enabled a single unit of the resource to be reused many times over a given time frame. The programme has been able to maintain or increase the number of people being supported up whilst reducing the level of investment. As an example in the Quarter 2 2011, over 3,000 people benefited from a little over 2000 floating support units. The Floating Support Impact Assessment paper to this meeting also outlines the results of this action on the length of time that potential users wait for a service.

(5) Participation in the national outcome framework has enabled the programme to monitor the effectiveness of the interventions made via floating support across the frameworks domains. The centralised mechanism has provided further information and an opportunity to benchmark across primary client groups.

(6) The programme has continued to encourage services to continuously improve and validate and test its services against the Quality Assessment Framework whilst driving up throughput, utilisation and reducing cost. At present 66 % of all Floating Support services have attained A grade standard.

4. Personalisation

(1) Since the programme's inception its minimum standards have set out the expectation that service delivered should be shaped, monitored and designed with service users at the centre. Each user forms a unique and individualised agreement or support plan with the service to address the outcomes required and how they are to be achieved and assesses for themselves whether these outcomes have been met when the service draws to a close.

In its outcome based commissioning, performance and contract management, the programme ensures that services adhere to these principles via its contract, specifications and monitoring regimes. The programme quality tests the ability of the provider to produce effective support plans, talks to users about their experiences and audits the results reported to the National Outcome framework.

(2) In automating the application process via a site such as Kent Homechoice, not only will application processes for be streamlined, but new opportunities will arise to dovetail referrals for floating support seamlessly with those to other agencies. The referral system will enable applicants to “pull in” other agencies to create a tailor made approach unique to the individual. The aim is to enable users to track any referrals made on their behalf and to decide for themselves which interventions they need. Users will retain the ability shape the service they receive and drive outcomes they will attain

5. Consultation and Communication

(1) The Programme has already consulted widely on the direction of travel set out in the Supporting People Strategy 2010-15. The programme will further consult with stakeholders including service users and providers in order to revise the Floating Support Protocols. These protocols will reflect future custom and practice in relation to the management of floating support. It is envisaged that this work will be reported to the Commissioning Body in April 2012.

(2) An Equality Impact Assessment will be conducted.

6. Risk and Business Continuity Management

(1) The Programme will need to work with key stakeholders, providers and service users to identify alternative solutions to needs that cannot be met by the public sector.

7. Financial Implications

(1) There has been an initial meeting with the Kent Homechoice Board and Locator relating to both the automation of Floating Support referrals and access to short term supported accommodation.

8. Legal implications

(1) An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken

9. Sustainability Implications

(1) The Supporting People Programme will work with its partners to ensure that services are sustainable.

10. Conclusion

(1). Floating Support is a valuable and effective service that is delivering tangible outcomes for vulnerable people in Kent. Despite a reduction in the

capacity, performance management action has enabled more vulnerable people to access the services and driven up quality standards.

(2) There is a need to re-examine the basis upon which floating support is provided and respond to the requirement to manage demand, incentivise providers and staff and ensure that services remain personalised. There will be a need to revise the protocols that relate to its use and this work will be concluded and reported to the Commissioning Body in its April meeting.

(3) There is a further need to automate the application process. Work on this has already begun and is expected to be concluded and reported to the Commissioning Body in its June meeting.

Recommendations

The Commissioning Body is asked to **note** the report.

Background Documents

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Appendix 1 Summary of new tenders to be awarded for 2012/13

Contract	Household Units	Awarded
Generic (North)	242	
Generic (South)	268	
Generic (East)	280	
Generic (West)	225	
Offenders (West)	26	
Offenders (East)	32	
Mental Health (West)	80	
Mental Health (East)	100	
Young People at Risk (West)	63	
Young People at Risk (East)	75	
BME (West)	25	Rethink Sahayak
BME (East)	17	Rethink Sahayak
Domestic Abuse (West)	80	
Domestic Abuse (East)	84	
Rough Sleepers (West)	34	Porchlight
Rough Sleepers (East)	34	Porchlight
Deaf (Countywide)	20	Kent County Council

The remainder of awards will be reported at subsequent meetings of the Commissioning Body.