

By: Oliver Mills, Managing Director, Kent Adult Social Services

To: Adult Social Services Policy Overview Committee –
16 November 2007

Subject: **THE SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This paper provides an overview of current activity in the Supporting People Programme.

Background

1. (1) It was agreed in the April 2007 meeting that this Committee would receive a regular six monthly report on the Supporting People Programme. The main issues reported to the April meeting concerned the grant conditions for Supporting People and the current work programme.

(2) Since that time, there have been further developments in the services, consideration has been given to the relationship of the Programme to the Local Area Agreement, and the Audit Commission have undertaken a full inspection.

Update on Progress

2. (1) The consultation on the Older Persons Strategic Review has been completed. The results of this consultation were reported to the Core Strategy Development Group (the multi-agency officer level of the partnership) in August. This body agreed a set of revised recommendations which were put to the Commissioning Body at its meeting in September, and the result is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

(2) In summary, the main changes to the draft proposals are firstly to soften the approach to resident wardens: the Programme will continue to support these, where providers wish to continue with this model. It will also support providers who wish to move to a peripatetic scheme, provided they consult with their residents on this. Secondly, the Programme will continue to fund community alarms, on the condition that, within a reasonable period, providers move to technology which is compatible with the KASS telecare project. Effectively no decisions were made to redistribute funding, and the Commissioning Body reaffirmed its commitment to undertake a full review of investment, including these services to inform the review of its five-year strategy.

(3) In addition to this major piece of work, the Supporting People Programme continues to develop the service, and has agreed to commission a range of new services to achieve more coherent provision, across the county, for certain defined client groups. The current Local Area Agreement target (regarding the number of people safely “moved on”) has been reached in advance of the due date. Work has been done with the Home Improvement Agencies to benchmark performance consistently across the County via a benchmarking club and manual. Protocols are being put in place for housing and providing support to offenders.

(4) At the next meeting of the Commissioning Body (December 2007), they will be asked to initiate the next programmed strategic review of Supporting People services. This will consider long-term supported accommodation services (excluding those for older people, as these were included in the previous review). The outline brief for this review is currently being developed, and the Supporting People Team will ensure that Members are briefed on the review and its progress.

The Local Area Agreement

3. (1) The Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) has advised that as from April 2008 the administration grant for the programme will subsume into the Local Area Agreement. From April 2009 the main grant will also be put into the LAA. As a multi-agency arrangement it is clearly appropriate that the Programme should be fully engaged within the LAA. At its meeting in September, the Commissioning Body considered this development and agreed that the grant should be aligned with the Local Area Agreement in April 2008, that is a year ahead of the Department of Communities and Local Government timetable. The proposal to align is in order to protect the Programme, particularly while the Kent Partnership Board develop their understanding of the commitments and services covered.

(2) The next Local Area Agreement targets for the Programme have not yet been agreed, since they are dependent on the targets that are agreed across the entire Local Area Agreement. The Programme is also subject to performance monitoring from the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG), and is envisaged that this will continue for the foreseeable future, despite the LAA.

Governance

4. (1) Since the inception of the Programme, the Commissioning Body has been the decision-making body. However the Body has no legal status, and therefore all contracts have been undertaken on its behalf by the County Council, using County Council protocols and procedures. It has been a strong partnership including representatives of the Districts and Boroughs, Health, and Probation, as well as County Council people.

(2) Recent changes to the grant conditions (reported to ASSPOC in April) would indicate that the Government see a diminished role for the Commissioning Body. It is now only formally required to sign off grant usage once a year. This seems to be a short-sighted approach to the future of the Programme. To deliver successful outcomes of partnership activity will require governance arrangements which engage all key partners. To date that has been the Commissioning Body; and while, after April 2008, it could be the Kent Partnership Board, it is not yet clear that this Board would have the capacity, or the inclination, to engage in the level of detail required to sustain the Programme. The Commissioning Body is therefore clearly of the view that it would wish to retain its role in managing the long term development and delivery of the Supporting People Programme, while working within any framework required by the Partnership Board.

(3) This proposal will be the subject of a key decision, and entered into the formal log of decisions to be taken in March 2008, together with the proposal to align the 2008/09 Supporting People Grant to the LAA, a year ahead of the Government's intentions.

(4) Within the County Council the practice has been to take reports regarding significant developments either to Cabinet, or to this Committee. It is apparent that this can leave Members feeling that they have insufficient opportunity to discuss and shape the Programme. It has therefore been agreed that regular, 6 monthly reports will be brought to this Committee, to allow update and discussion of developments.

Audit Commission Inspection

5. (1) The Supporting People Programme was the subject of a full inspection in September this year. It is understood that the result of this inspection will be published shortly before Christmas, at which point it will be shared with Members.

Recommendations

6. (1) Members are asked to NOTE and COMMENT on the contents of this report.

Claire Martin
Head of Supporting People
Ex1179

Previous Committee References:

The Supporting People Programme - Report to Adult Services Policy Overview Committee, 24 April 2007, Item B5

Supporting People in Kent

Final Recommendations from the Older Persons Review 10 September 2007

The full set of recommendations as agreed by the Commissioning Body is as follows:-

1. That we will enable housing related support to be provided to individuals irrespective of where they live. The current predominantly accommodation based services may change to peripatetic or floating support service. Providers will decide the best delivery model dependent on the pattern of needs of older people within individual schemes, and based on local consultation with service users.
2. The Commissioning Body has requested a Strategic Review of Investment in the future, as part of its continuing consideration of its 5 year Strategy. This will include older people's services within the Programme.
3. The Supporting People Programme will continue to fund community alarms in sheltered housing and Almshouses. The Supporting People Programme Team requires providers to ensure that alarms are compatible with KASS Telecare Services.

The Supporting People Team will carry out a 'market test' exercise for alarms and will set a ceiling on charges for alarm services which will be introduced by April 2009 at the very latest. Any excess cost identified by this process would be reinvested in extending the availability of community alarms.

By 2009 at the latest there will be a separate contract schedule for housing related support and a separate contract schedule for community social alarms for each provider. Community/social Alarms will be costed out separately to housing related support following the market testing exercise.

4. Abbeyfields will be assessed against Kent's eligibility criteria. This will be part of normal contract negotiations.
5. The programme will continue to fund existing extra care contracts. Any new developments would need to go through a procurement/commissioning process for funding. This would be dependent on the availability of financial resources.

6. Providers will continue to carry out needs assessments for tenants moving into sheltered housing. The Supporting People Team will devise procedures so that older people can be assessed and if eligible can access a basic alarm service.
7. The Supporting People Team will undertake further work on service specifications for the services provided by scheme managers, peripatetic or floating support workers in conjunction with providers and service users.
8. Steady State Contracts will be issued for a further year in April 2008. In April 2009 these` contracts will be issued for two years in line with other contracts.
9. All existing block subsidy contracts for older people's services will be capped by April 2008.
10. Support for further research into the specific needs of older Minority Ethnic communities specifically in view of cultural/religious requirements in terms of extra care and sheltered housing. Also support the need to carry out research into the support needs of people suffering dementia (including dementia sufferers amongst older minority ethnic groups).
11. A 'good practice' work shop will be held by the Supporting People Team for providers of sheltered housing and extra care who would like to learn from other providers that have already gone down the peripatetic/floating support route. Elected Members would be offered a similar opportunity.