

MINUTES OF THE SUPPORTING PEOPLE FORUM MEETING
03 OCTOBER 2006 CONFERENCE ROOM 11, VICTORIA QUAY

In attendance:

Pat Bagot:	Scottish Executive: Supporting People Team (Chair)
Norrie Murray:	Scottish Executive: Supporting People Team
Ben McClory:	Scottish Executive: Supporting People Team (Minutes)
Heather Dall:	Scottish Executive: Supporting People Team
Yvette Burgess:	CCPS, Supporting People Enabling Unit
Stewart Kinsman:	Hanover HA
David Bookbinder:	SFHA
Patricia Aniello:	SAMH
Malcolm Matheson:	SCVO/CCPS
Marcia Ramsay:	Care Commission
Peter Millar:	Aspire
Tony Fitzgerald:	Angus Council
Sharon Wearing:	Glasgow City Council

Apologies:

Stephen Sandham:	Scottish Executive: Supporting People Team
Alister McDonald:	Bield HA
Linda Leslie:	Communities Scotland
Austen Smyth:	Richmond Fellowship
Jane Kennedy:	CoSLA
Jim Strang:	South Lanarkshire Council

1 Welcome and Introductions

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting asked that everyone introduce themselves.

2 Apologies

The chair gave apologies for those unable to attend.

3 Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes were accepted without amendment.

Action: SE to place minutes on SP website

4 Matters Arising

Update on MOUs with Care Commission.

Marcia informed the group that all Local Authorities should have signed MOUs by the end of 2006.

Action: Marcia Ramsay to respond on behalf of Care Commission

5 SR2007. Are Care Commission fees and training costs to be factored into SR2007?

Points raised included:

- Concern was voiced regarding the additional burdens created by CC fees and training costs.
- Training grants which were available for 3 years have now ended.
- The 'backfill' from SVQ training increases the burden and costs.
- Malcolm advised that LA's were not funding providers at the recommended level of 3% of service costs for training.
- Pat informed the group that the original grant had been reduced by 20%, and that these funds would be collected from self-funders. Sharon pointed out that those in receipt of THB are exempt from charges.
- and that the case to support CC Registration Fees and SSSC qualification costs should be in addition to Supporting People Grant.

Action: Heather to prepare for next meeting to clarify what the process should be, and a sub-group set up to manage this work.

Malcolm informed the group that there has been limited funding available from the SE Voluntary Sector Development Fund specific to the requirements for staff accreditation in registered care services.

The question arose of LAs not charging self-funders. There is a need to know whether this is LA policy or are the non-payers already paying for other services?

Action: Heather to take this forward

Malcolm reiterated providers concerns about the ongoing lack of inflation rises in SP Grant, and that without such a rise in 2007/08 there would be further cuts in services and financial problems for providers, even without the extra costs associated with training and staff accreditation.

6 Tendering and EU Procurement Regulations

Yvette told the group that she had recently attended a Conference on EU procurement in Blackpool which is dealing with Public Service Procurement. It was agreed that some further guidance was necessary in Scotland, as many local authorities were taking their own legal advice on the way forward with contracting and there was a significant divergence in approach. It was also recognised that the current SP Review guidance, issued by the Executive, did not envisage tendering as a standard process in contract renewal. It was agreed that the Executive would prepare further guidance to local authorities on contracting and procurement, with particular reference to the EU Regulations.

Action: Heather to raise matter with Stephen Sandham

7 Research – Update on Cost Benefit Analysis and Unit Cost outcomes (Heather Dall)

Supporting People Evaluation

Heather gave an update on the research being carried out to inform the SP evaluation

Cost Benefit Analysis

This work is ongoing. Tribal have been able to identify financial benefits amounting to half of the SP expenditure from avoided costs, however there is additional work required to draw out the financial benefits in relation to homelessness. Tribal have included people who have presented as homeless but haven't included those at risk of becoming homeless if intervention was not provided.

Tribal have also been asked to carry out a supplementary piece of work for inclusion in the CBA to show what the financial benefits would be if the assumptions used in the research carried out in England and Wales were replicated in Scotland.

The CBA should be finalised by December 2006.

Action: Heather to report at next meeting

Unit Costs

Tribal have been appointed to carry out the unit cost research. This research will explore the variations in costs between England, Wales and Scotland, the variations in unit costs between Scottish LAs and different types of services. The intention is to explain and justify these differences, and for the researchers to provide support to SPLOs in their task of establishing benchmarking.

The membership of the Advisory Group is yet to be confirmed. Some consistency between CBA and Unit Costs groups would be welcomed. However SPLOs have identified people to consider benchmarking and it would be sensible for these individuals to represent SPLOs/LAs.

Action: Heather to confirm membership

Outcomes work

It is hoped that the means of reporting on the SP programme can shift from an outputs and processes, to an outcomes approach. DTZ have reviewed the existing models and are now looking at building on the distance travelled approach to review the outcomes for individuals, and a system of reporting this as hard outcomes to LAs for contract monitoring purposes, and in turn, to SE.

Action: DTZ will be recommending a model and the next stage will be to pilot this in a few LA areas next year.

8 Service Review Monitoring returns - update (Norrie Murray)

The first returns (October 2005)

Received from 30 LAs, and have identified savings of £17.5m.

2/3rd of the savings have had no adverse impact on service capacity.

1/3rd of the savings have had some possible adverse impact on service capacity.

- There is no strong evidence that external providers are being treated unfairly, but it is claimed that by October 2005 the majority of the savings had been absorbed.
- Independent reviews from SFHA/CCPS suggest increasing problems for external providers.

First impressions of second monitoring returns

These findings were reported by Stephen Sandham at the SFHA conference. Inconsistencies have been found in the information LAs have submitted to the SE and these are being investigated by GEN Consulting so these first reports of the findings need to be treated with caution.

- Up to 70% of savings in 2005-06, and 80% in 2006-07 were not judged to be detrimental to service capacity
- 13 Local Authorities predict service growth
- 22 Local Authorities predict service reductions
- “No difference in treatment of external providers” but returns do not show whether providers agree that the review process is fair
- 12 LAs report efficiency improvements in central SP co-ordination
- 30 LAs on track to complete reviews by March 2007

	2005-06	2006-07
	£	£
LA service savings	11.4m	9.2m
External savings	9.7m	10.3m

Although 30 LAs are on track to complete service reviews by March 2007, 1255 services are still to be reviewed (against 949 services already reviewed).

Efficiencies and job losses

47 jobs were lost due to efficiencies
145 jobs were lost due to budget restrictions
146 jobs have been created

Spending Review 2007

The SE are preparing solid ground for the Spending Review 2007, but Supporting People outcome is inevitably unclear.

- Unit cost differences are being explored
- Active on outcome focussed monitoring
- 2007-08 baseline starts below current commitments (even excluding LA underspends).
- Cost/Benefit analysis potentially uncomfortable, with only ½ of SP spend identified in benefits

9 AOB
No other business was discussed

10 Date of next meeting
6 February 2007. conference Room 12, Victoria Quay. 14:00–15:30 (lunch from 1:30)
Scottish Executive February 2007