

**MINUTES OF THE HOUSING SUPPORT FORUM MEETING 07 MAY 2008,**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 3, VICTORIA QUAY**

In Attendance:

Stephen Sandham	Scottish Government, Housing Support Team (Chair)
Norrie Murray	Norrie Murray, Housing Support Team ( Minutes)
Tracy Duncan	Tracy Duncan, Housing Support Team (Minutes)
Yvette Burgess	Housing Support Enabling Unit (HSEU)
Tony Fitzgerald	Angus Council
Austen Smyth	Richmond Fellowship
Peter Millar	ASPIRE
Alistair McDonald	Bield Housing Association
Robert Aldridge	Scottish Council for Single Homeless (SCSH)
David Gilvie	Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)

Apologies:

Sharon Wearing	Glasgow City Council
Patricia Aniello	Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH)
Malcolm Matheson	Representing Community Care Providers Scotland (CCPS)
Helen Murdoch	Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association
Marcia Ramsay	Care Commission
Ron Culley	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA)

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

1.1 Stephen welcomed Robert Aldridge to his first meeting this was then followed by round the table introductions.

**2. Apologies**

2.1 Stephen gave apologies for those who couldn't make the meeting.

**3. Minutes of Last Meeting**

3.1 Item 4 Paragraph 2 "*External providers Services will take 79% of the savings required*" Norrie reminded the group that, while true, this had to be "balanced by the fact that originally external providers received 70% of the available funding" and that the minutes of the previous meeting should be adjusted to reflect that.

**4. Update on Housing Support Research**

4.1 Stephen informed the group that the Evaluation report from Craigforth on the outcomes matrix has been sent round the research advisory group for comments. Stephen explained that although the Excel IT platform hadn't worked as well as hoped, this was reasonably easily solvable; but there were also issues of consistency. Other issues therefore include the need to improve the guidance on how to use the tool and to take account of the

new working relationship with Local Government. This tool might also help underpin tracking of some of the issues covered within Single Outcome Agreements (SOA's). The Research Advisory Group (RAG) will meet next week to discuss the draft report.

4.2 Tony Fitzgerald said that Housing Support (HS) isn't directly covered in his own authority's SOA. Stephen agreed that care for older people tended to be better covered and that HS tends not to be specifically mentioned in SOA and in the Scottish Government's own set of national indicators because it is an intervention rather than an outcome in its own right.

4.3 Robert Aldridge asked how useful is the model? Does it need improvement for individual/provider working with support workers? Stephen agreed it cannot be forced at national level but thought it could be useful at provider level. Stephen informed the group that the report will be published on the web in June 08.

4.4 Austen Smyth asked with the 'In the Control' agenda in mind, whether the client, support worker, service provider or local authority should fill in the assessment. The group noted the dilemma, and that the pilots had tried to work on the basis of trying to reach a shared view between the client and the professional, but the guidance would need to cover this issue.

4.5 Robert Aldridge also raised the question of how do we measure the changes in Housing Support Services (HSS), where it is, and its direction may change following the end of the Supporting People grant. Tony Fitzgerald said local authorities would still need their own internal systems to enable the collection of information to levy charges, as well as assess what providers were doing with the money provided, so some recording would still happen anyway.

4.6 Stephen Sandham explained that Analytical Services Department (ASD) now has Ministerial agreement to consult on future national reporting on housing support looking at 3 options:

- No reporting
- Status Quo
- Lighter touch reporting – focussed on how much HS is provided in overall Support Hours and client numbers, but not going into the type of detail previously required.

4.7 The dilemma is that the lightening of reporting burdens etc is part of the concordat agreement to save costs so if something is still collected it will certainly need to be in more simple terms.

## **5. Relationships between Scottish Government/local Government/ providers**

5.1 Stephen asked the group if anyone has seen the SOAs and went on to say that the Indicator 29 covered community care support.

5.2 The Scottish Government is relatively happy with what's been received from Local Authorities on SOAs.

5.3 Stakeholders were concerned about the level of involvement of voluntary sector in developing the SOAs; to some extent this was understandable given the pressure to submit SOAs in draft by end of March 2008. It is expected that future rounds of developing SOAs will allow more constructive dialogue with community planning partners, but this will need to be monitored .

5.4 Another source of information about HSS is the Care Commission. Yvette Burgess suggested that the information gathered from local authorities focuses on areas that the Care Commission is not required to gather such as funding and support hours/ service volume per client group.

5.5 Yvette passed round a questionnaire that the Housing Support Enabling Unit will send out to providers and local authorities to establish baseline data about funding service levels in 2007/08. About 1,000 questionnaires will go out and she is expecting good feedback and intends to do a similar exercise next year. The Unit has been given access to the Care Commission's data store which summarises publicly available contact information for every registered service. This has been very helpful in ensuring that as many services as possible are included in the survey. There is scope for the Unit to use other information from the data store to chart issues such as staff numbers over the next 2 years.

5.6 Alisdair McDonald noted that contracts were often being renewed only for a year or less while local authorities review options. It is a mixed picture of some councils offering providers standstill budgets, some a small increase and some decreased funding. He noted that the removal of the ring fence provides some opportunities in addition to potential problems.

## **6. Guidance on end of the Supporting People Programme:**

6.1 The guidance was issued in early April 2008 Stephen asked the group if there were any issues to report it back to himself.

6.2 Yvette said the charging section is very helpful as the Unit is receiving queries about revised charging policies and the impact on services and service users. Tony Fitzgerald advised that he is on a national LA Charging Group and can take issues to that group for clarification or discussion.

6.3 David Ogilvie said he would discuss the guidance with housing association support providers on the 08 May and would feedback any comments to Stephen. David also mentioned the need to consider measuring benefits beyond the purely financial, in terms of broader quality of life indicators. A model of social accounting known as "social return on investment" is being worked on by Geoff Pope formerly Communities Scotland (CS). HS team will engage further with this issue.

6.4 Paul Tyrer of ASD has also been attending meetings on Residential Community Care on the cost benefit investment in shifting balance of care. The Housing Support team will get further details on this.

## **7. AOB**

7.1 David asked if the minutes will be published on the website, Norrie said they would be after this meeting.

7.2 Robert Aldridge informed the group that a conference will be taking place on the 25 June "Making the Case for its Housing Support Services" at the Royal Physicians in Edinburgh. Stephen would like more details on the event in due course.

**Date of Next meeting**

13 August 11.00, Conference Room 5, Victoria Quay.

**TRACY DUNCAN/NORRIE MURRAY**

**03 June 2008**