

Flintshire County Council

Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan

2014-2015

Awaiting Approval



supporting independence
cefnogi annibyniaeth

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1. Introduction

In 2012, Welsh Government merged the two Supporting People funding streams – Supporting People Grant (SPG) and Supporting People Revenue Grant (SPRG) into one Supporting People Programme Grant (SPPG). The new SPPG also introduced a new governance framework for the programme with the establishment of a Supporting People National Advisory Board, chaired by the Minister, and a number of Regional Collaborative Committees (RCCs), with elected member and lead officer membership, to ensure high quality services are delivered effectively and efficiently across boundaries. The North Wales RCC includes all six North Wales councils.

The Local Authority is required to develop a 3-year Commissioning Strategy that will inform the priorities within the Regional Commissioning Strategy. Local Authorities in North Wales have developed 12-month Commissioning plans to cover the transition period and allow time for reviewing of existing services, new developments and appropriate targeting of reductions. Welsh Government has been supportive of this approach, recognising that the level of reductions in North Wales makes longer term planning at this stage more of a challenge.

The commissioning plan details how the grant will be allocated for the next year. This plan will be replaced by a longer term strategy to be drafted in the summer of 2014. It is important to note that this plan is set within the context of reduced funding and Flintshire continues to take a pro-active and strategic approach to managing the reductions.

The previous Local Commissioning Plan highlighted that Flintshire was to receive a funding reduction of 5% of the grant for the period 2013/2014.

Welsh Government has now provided Local Authorities with indicative budget allocations for 2014/15 and 2015/16 which show a proposed 5% reduction.

2. Strategic Priorities

Flintshire Supporting People Team continues to ensure that the programme funds the most appropriate housing related support services for the county, in order to maximise the outcomes achieved by service users.

Welsh Government suggested that Local Authorities work within some guiding principles when finding savings. Flintshire has committed to these guiding principles and shared them with providers and invited challenge where providers do not feel the Local Authority is adhering to these principles.

- A Strategic Approach

Flintshire has not proposed blanket cuts to services and the LCP demonstrates a commitment to find efficiency savings through housekeeping and innovative approaches that do not see cuts to services or impact customers, such as remodelling projects or working with providers on leaner processes. Flintshire is aware that some more recently commissioned projects have been through these processes and are in line with Supporting People cost guidelines and could not manage a blanket cut applied across projects.

- Homeless Prevention at Core

Welsh Government has suggested that the commissioning of services is focussed on homeless prevention in preparation for the changes to the Homeless Legislation in 2015. Flintshire recognises the valuable contribution these services make to preventing homelessness and recently commissioned developments contribute directly to the homeless prevention agenda, such as the two homeless prevention projects described in section 4.2 of the plan.

- Quality of Services

The Local Authority and Regional Collaborative Committee are asked to consider alternative appropriate funding wherever this is relevant to prevent the need to lose valuable services. There is ongoing work with Social Services to identify appropriate funding streams where it is identified that services are not eligible or not a priority for supporting people funding. The team have successfully realigned ineligible funding and invested in strategically relevant services such as Extra Care and the Promoting Independence Service for people with physical disabilities.

- Exploring Alternative Funding Options

The Local Authority and Regional Collaborative Committee are asked to consider alternative appropriate funding wherever this is relevant to prevent the need to lose valuable services. There is ongoing work with Social Services to identify appropriate funding streams where it is identified that

services are not eligible or not a priority for supporting people funding. The team have successfully realigned ineligible funding and invested in strategically relevant services such as Extra Care and the Promoting Independence Service for people with physical disabilities.

- Savings through Collaboration and Regional Approaches

The Regional Collaborative Committee has now been fully implemented. There is recognition that partnership working and regional collaboration can achieve efficiencies without reducing or affecting service delivery. Over the last twelve months, Flintshire has achieved savings through collaborative working on a sub regional basis. The LCP proposes further plans for collaborative projects in 2014 including a sub-regional older person's service and sub-regional work on grant administration efficiencies.

- Equality Impact of Reductions and Involvement of Providers

Flintshire will carry out a comprehensive equality impact assessment of its Local Commissioning Plan. Flintshire held a well attended provider forum in September 2013 to consult and seek feedback from support providers. There is also senior level representation on the regional provider forum and the Regional Collaborative Committee. The team invites providers to present their proposals for service improvements and efficiencies throughout the year.

3. Need, supply and service gaps

3.1 Need

North Wales Supporting People Teams have developed a regional Needs Mapping Database, which is hosted by Denbighshire County Council.

Flintshire Supporting People providers submitted the lowest number of Needs Mapping Forms from across the region, for the period 2012/2013. In order to address this and ensure that all relevant information is submitted, with effect from April 2014, the Needs Mapping Form will be a requirement of the Central Referral Gateway, and referrals will not be accepted unless the form has been completed.

The development of the Central Referral Gateway will also provide more detailed information in relation to repeat presentations and complex needs. All referrals to Supporting People projects (other than direct access) will be directed through the Gateway. Any referral highlighted as complex needs, will instigate a complex needs meeting prior to allocation of the referral, in order that all relevant stakeholders can be involved in the development of a support plan.

The council expects Welfare Reform changes to start to have an impact both on the number of people presenting as homeless and also the number of people requesting support to sustain their current accommodation. Supporting People needs to ensure that reductions to the grant funding are implemented whilst also continuing to provide a range of quality, effective services to meet the needs of vulnerable people.

3.2 Supply

The current supply for Flintshire is summarised below into client groups, this corresponds with the spend plan information recently submitted to the North Wales Regional Collaborative Committee.

Client Group	Number of Units 2013/14	Number of Units 2014/15	Reason for Change
Women experiencing Domestic Abuse	54	47	Decommissioned 2 floating support projects – created 1 sub-regional project
Men experiencing Domestic Abuse	0	0	(Supply included in above category)
People with Learning Disabilities	122	116	Withdrawal of funding from BCUHB LD project

People with Mental Health Issues	56	76	Development of low level floating support service
People with Alcohol Issues	0	0	(supply included in substance misuse category)
People with Substance Misuse Issues	46	46	No change
People with Criminal Offending History	40	40	No change
People with Refugee Status	0	0	No targeted provision but this group covered within generic services.
People with Physical and/or Sensory Disabilities	37	32	Withdrawal of funding from Greenfield ABI project
People with Developmental Disorders (i.e. Autism)	0	0	No targeted provision but this group included in other groups and generic provision.
People with Chronic Illnesses (including HIV, Aids)	3	3	No change
Young People who are Care Leavers	0	0	This group is included in the young people provision. No provision exclusively for care leavers.
Young People with Support Needs (16 to 24)	137	125	Amendment of support units for the service user involvement project.
Single Parent Families with Support Needs	0	0	Included with family provision. There is no differentiation between single parents and other families.

Families with Support Needs	71	64	Reduction to number of family units at Plas Bellin
Single People with Support Needs not listed above (25 to 64)	0	0	
People with 55 years of age with Support Needs (this category must be exclusive of alarm services)	2851	2901	Allocation of funding to the new Extra Care project – Llys Jasmine
Generic/Floating Support/Peripatetic (tenancy support services which cover a range of user needs)	169	169	No change
Alarm Services (including in sheltered/extra care)	217	217	No change
Total	3803	3833	Increase in 30 units of provision.

A full breakdown of the types of support provided, either accommodation based or floating support, can be viewed in Appendix A (Spend Plan for 2014/2015).

Over the previous 12 months, Flintshire Supporting People Team has led on a number of sub-regional developments. These are:-

Supported Lodgings – A sub-regional project in conjunction with Denbighshire County Council. Flintshire has been delivering a successful Supported Lodgings Project in the county that provides a supported environment for young people to develop independent living skills in a home environment. This year the team worked with Denbighshire to develop the scheme into a sub regional scheme with additional capacity.

Nightstop – A sub-regional project in conjunction with Denbighshire County Council. Supporting People has joint commissioned this with Housing and Children’s Services. The project provides a safe alternative to emergency B&B accommodation in a family home for homeless 16-18 year olds. The project commenced in April and up to December 2013 provided 511 nights of accommodation. The homeless prevention and move on outcomes for young people have been outstanding and the project has saved approximately £5,000 for Children’s and Housing in accommodation costs.

Domestic Abuse Floating Support – A sub-regional project in conjunction with Wrexham County Borough Council. The Supporting People team has achieved cost efficiencies by decommissioning two domestic abuse floating support projects and commissioning one single sub regional project working across Wrexham and Flintshire.

Body Positive – A regional project with all 6 North Wales Local Authorities. Flintshire has led on the commissioning and review of the North Wales Body Positive Service. The Regional Collaborative Committee has committed to continuing to fund this project based on the positive performance reports and review outcomes.

3.3 Gaps

Building on the work undertaken by the Department of Communities and Local Government, around the Positive Pathway Approach for young people, Flintshire believes these principles can also be applied to other vulnerable groups and will use them to guide the housing solutions and services it provides to deliver the Homeless Prevention Strategy and the Supporting People, Local Commissioning Plan. The principles are:-

- Integrated whole system actions to prevent homelessness, support, where necessary, an individual's planned moves along a positive pathway to independence
- An ethos which places individuals and their families at the heart of planning and delivery – significant, supportive relationships with one or two skilled professionals often the key to success
- Invest in early intervention rather than just reacting to crisis
- Seamless, joined up and coordinated, easy to use services, making the best use of resources, pooling budgets of all agencies, local knowledge, community assets and voluntary effort, whenever it is effective to do so
- Information and advice at all stages of the pathway, not only about housing, but on other aspects of individuals lives where they may need support
- Progress to independence for each individual, through having a range of accommodation options to meet different needs
- Service users involved in how services are shaped and delivered leads to excellence in provision and gives individuals important learning opportunities for the future

We have and will continue to assess our current provision against these principles alongside wider needs information and stakeholder feedback to identify gaps.

4. Consultation evidence

4.1 Stakeholder Involvement

Flintshire Supporting People have had a three year commissioning strategy in place which ended in 2013. This was developed in partnership with stakeholders and providers and Flintshire Supporting People Team hold a provider forum annually to keep providers informed about local, regional and national developments and consult on changes within the annual plans and this transitional plan.

Information on need, supply and gaps is collected through information provided from service users, providers and wider stakeholders through the needs mapping exercise, the annual supply return, quarterly monitoring meetings and formal reviews.

A joint Supporting People and Homeless Forum which includes a range of stakeholders was held in September 2013 to consult on the Local Commissioning Plan. The Plan will be presented to the Regional Collaborative Committee. The Supporting People Team will meet all providers individually to discuss their projects and explore opportunities to make best use of resources.

4.2 Working in Partnership

Supporting People has worked closely with Housing Options, Neighbourhood Housing Services, Children's Services, Adult Social Services, Service Providers, Housing Associations, Probation, Youth Justice and the Health Board on pilot projects. There are currently 2 pilot projects operating within Flintshire Housing Services.

Support Worker – Flintshire Bond Scheme – providing floating support to tenants who access the private rented sector via a Flintshire Bond Deposit.

Support Worker – Temporary Accommodation – providing floating support to those people placed in emergency temporary accommodation, such as Bed & Breakfast, to enable them to move on to more settled accommodation as quickly as possible.

The Flintshire Housing Partnership is currently carrying out the role of the Local Supporting People Planning Group and additional members and stakeholders are co-opted onto this group in order to feed in to the Supporting People Planning Process. This group has overseen the Supporting People Programme since September 2013.

4.3 Service User Involvement

Flintshire is committed to involving service users and is aware that this needs to go beyond consultation events to incorporate meaningful participation and engagement. Flintshire wants to be sure that service user involvement delivers these key outcomes:-

- Increases the influence of service users on how Homelessness and Supporting People and other related services are commissioned and delivered in Flintshire
- To involve and inspire those who have been homeless or are receiving housing related support and give them the confidence to provide constructive feedback on all areas of service planning, delivery, policy and review.

In order to improve service user involvement in Flintshire and deliver these outcomes, the team engaged a service user led Social Enterprise to deliver on the following areas:-

- Delivering opportunities for people who have been Homeless or who are receiving support including volunteering opportunities, involvement in street football and peer mentoring and reviewing opportunities.
- Work with people who've experienced homelessness, supported housing and other forms of social exclusion; to consult, learn and listen; so that they can influence the improvement of services. The organisation will be able to seek views from a more neutral perspective than the Local Authority or service provider.
- When decisions are made it can only be good practice to consult with those who will feel a direct impact. The organisation will build on the peer reviewing programme to train and develop a group of service users / ex- service users who can be called upon to provide advice on policy or service developments and participate as a key stakeholder in development groups and forums.
- The organisation will offer the services of users to undertake questionnaires and interviews in relation to the effectiveness of existing services.

A full review of the outcomes achieved by this project is underway, and it is the intention of the Supporting People Team to continue with this project (albeit at a reduced level) in 2014/15.

4.4 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken on this Plan in March 2014.

5. Priorities for development

The Supporting People Programme Grant covers a range of client groups. These can be split into the three main policy areas to which the programme makes a contribution. The main changes within these three areas are detailed below.

5.1 Community Care

Flintshire Social Services for Adults have provided continued commitment to reduce the amount of ineligible funding currently allocated to the Learning Disabilities Service. Supporting People and Social Services have worked in partnership to ensure that there is a plan for reduction in place which does not destabilise current services.

In addition, further reductions will be made to services delivered by BCUHB where it has been identified that the funding provided does not meet the SPPG criteria.

Supporting People are currently working with Social Services for Adults in order to re-commission the supported housing service based at Ty Nyth in Mold.

Increasingly, Supporting People projects are working with service users with a range of complex needs. One of the major factors in this is the people who present with low-level mental health needs and are not eligible for statutory services. In previous years, Supporting People have funded training for support staff in relation to mental health awareness, in order to try and address the difficulties faced by support workers in achieving outcomes for service users.

A survey undertaken by Homeless Link (2011) identified that around 70 percent of people accessing homelessness services have a mental health problem. Although the causes of homelessness are complex, mental ill health is a major contributing factor.

Flintshire Community Mental Health Teams have seen a 70% increase in the number of referrals from Care Coordinators requesting floating support for service users.

In order to assess the on-going need for services, Supporting People will develop a 2 year pilot project, which will provide low-level floating support to those people who are not eligible for statutory mental health services, and/or those who are ready to move-on from statutory services and require some level of on-going support within the community.

In 2010, Supporting People introduced a small funding element into the Acquired Brain Injury project in Greenfield, to recognise the element of support required in order for people to resettle into homes within the

community. Initially, this worked well and assisted service users to establish their tenancies. However, the need for this continued support is no longer evident. The support required is now predominantly in relation to personal care needs, and as a result, the supporting People element of funding will be withdrawn.

Supporting People are committed to the continuing funding for the disability outreach service and the promoting independence service. Specialist support for people who can not access statutory services, and/or for those who are socially isolated as a result of their disability is key to sustaining independence.

Flintshire Supporting People has led on the Regional Development of the Body Positive pilot project, which ends In March 2014. The Regional Collaborative Committee have agreed an extension to this project and Flintshire will continue to lead on this contract for a further 2 years.

5.2 Community Safety

Over the past 12 months Flintshire, in partnership with Wrexham County Borough Council, have developed a sub-regional domestic abuse floating support service. This service, the Aster Hope project, is delivered by Hafan Cymru and has capacity to support up to 40 individuals across both counties.

In order to ensure that there are appropriate pathways of support available for people experiencing domestic abuse, Flintshire are committed to piloting the dispersed domestic abuse refuge project. The tender for this project will be developed as a priority within 2014/15.

Flintshire Supporting People funds the Doorstop project which provides support and accommodation for people with substance misuse issues. Recently, as a result of welfare reform and the implementation of the spare room subsidy, it has become increasingly difficult for service users to afford to access this project and the service has become reliant upon Discretionary Housing Payments to enhance the Housing Benefit levels. Supporting People are working closely with the Landlord and the service provider in order to resolve these issues, and this may involve some element of remodelling in order to make the project more accessible for this client group and strengthen the links between substance misuse and offending.

5.3 Homeless and Homeless Prevention

Supporting People are committed to ensuring that there are appropriate pathways of support for all young people who need to access homeless or homeless prevention services.

Over the past 18 months, Supporting People has played an integral role in the development of improved joint services as a result of the Southwark ruling. Part of this work has been the development of a Nightstop service in order to provide an alternative to young people accessing Bed and Breakfast accommodation. This is a jointly commissioned service with Denbighshire County Council and involves Housing, Children's and Supporting People funding in each Local Authority.

Supporting People have worked with Social Services for Children to agree a reduction to the Youth Justice Post that works alongside the Housing Options Service to prevent homelessness for 16 and 17 year olds. Funding from children's services budgets will give this post more flexibility to deliver innovative solutions to youth homelessness. It is proposed that the funding withdrawn is invested in the Additional Support to Parents Project that will provide preventative support to families at the earliest opportunity.

In 2012, across Wales there was a transfer of projects from the former Supporting People Revenue Grant funding stream to the new Supporting People Programme Grant funding stream. The final three projects were transferred to Flintshire at in October 2013, with a new support provider. These projects are Plas Bellin, Sunraye and Outreach support, formerly delivered by Save the Family and now delivered by Local Solutions. Flintshire Supporting People Team is working with the provider and wider stakeholders to consider the future specification for all three services and how they will contribute to strategic priorities.

Flintshire Housing statistics show that for the past 3 years 46% of people aged 25 and over, found to be homeless are males. Supported accommodation for males aged 25 and over is limited to one hostel, (Greenbank Villas). Females have previously been able to access both Greenbank Villas and Sunraye. Therefore, Supporting People proposes to remodel the current provision at Sunraye to generic supported accommodation which can be accessed by males and females. This will include the transfer of support for single females from Sunraye hostel to Plas Bellin, where support will be provided in single units in the main house.

The Central Referral Gateway for all referrals into Supporting People services went live in January 2014. The start up period has been phased to initially take referrals for all supported accommodation projects (except those that are Direct Access) and will be followed by the floating support services in April 2014. The aim of the Gateway is to reduce duplication for referrers and projects, and to be able to best match a person requiring support with the most appropriate project.

The project now intends to work with third sector providers to see if the benefits of the gateway can extend to advice services. Community Support Services are keen to develop and pilot a combined Advice and

Support Gateway. The aim is to simplify access to advice and support services and ensure people receive the correct service as early as possible.

5.4 Regional Priorities

Flintshire are committed to continuing to work with North Wales authorities in order to improve the services that we provide.

Flintshire currently lead on a number of regional and sub-regional projects as detailed in **3.2**. During 2014, Flintshire will work with Wrexham County Borough Council to develop a cross-boundary service for Older People, providing short-term support in order to prevent the need to access statutory services.

In addition, Flintshire will continue to contribute to the work of the RCC including delivering on the outcomes required from the current work packages such as the Young People's Work Package and the Consistency Work Package. There are further opportunities to provide efficiencies across all Local Authorities by expanding on the current arrangements for Information Sharing.

Flintshire also feels that there are opportunities for efficiencies within the administration of the grant. Flintshire is commencing discussions with neighbouring Local Authorities to scope the potential benefits and efficiencies of taking a more regional or sub regional approach to some aspects of the grant administration role. Initial areas for consideration will be the contracting, reviewing and commissioning functions.

6. Service Development

Timescale	Client Group	Action	Remodel / New Service/ Decommission / Service Improvement / One-Off Project	Financial Cost (+, -, neutral)	Development Priority (Low, Medium, High, On-going)	Expected Outcome
2014/2015	Domestic Abuse	Continue with the pilot development of dispersed refuge units	New Service	Budget allocation £90,000	High	To enable a full assessment of the housing needs for people fleeing domestic abuse. To be able to provide a range of accommodation based services for people with larger families, pets etc.
		Ensure appropriate pathways of support are available for people experiencing/fleeing domestic abuse	Service Improvement	Neutral	On-going	To ensure that Supporting People funding is targeted at flexible and responsive services in order to meet the needs of individuals and their families
	Learning Disabilities	Reduction to funding for BCUHB LD projects, previously identified as not strategically relevant	Decommission	-£98,280	High	To ensure that all SPPG funding is targeted at those services which meet the strategic aims of the programme
		Reduction to funding for FCC LD projects, previously identified as not strategically relevant	Decommission	-£200,000	High	To ensure that all SPPG funding is targeted at those services which meet the strategic aims of the programme

		Joint commissioning of the Ty Nyth project in collaboration with Social Services for Adults	Service Improvement	Neutral	High	To ensure that appropriate pathways of support are available for people with learning disabilities
	Mental Health	Commission a 2 year floating support service for people experiencing low level mental health issues	New Service	£35,000	High	To assess the need for the provision of low level support for people who fall outside of the criteria for statutory services
	Substance Misuse	Remodel of accommodation and support services for people with substance misuse issues	Service Improvement	Neutral	High	To ensure services are accessible to those most in need
	Offenders	On-going commitment to the requirement for floating support provision for this service user group	On-going	Neutral	Medium	Continue to improve outcomes for this client group
	PDSI	Decommissioning of the Supporting People internal funding element of the Greenfield ABI project	Decommission	-£11,055	High	To ensure that all SPPG funding is targeted at those services which meet the strategic aims of the programme
	Chronic Illness	Continued commitment to the regional HIV/AIDS project	Service Improvement	Neutral	High	To ensure that service users from this client group receive support from a project that understands their needs
	Young People	Continued commitment to the involvement of	Service Improvement	Neutral	High	Service users feel fully involved and informed in

		service users at all levels of the Supporting People commissioning process				relation to all aspects of the Supporting People commissioning process
		Move-on properties – remodelling of the current outreach flats	Remodel	Neutral	High	Better mix of client groups across current provision. Ensures that young people are not faced with unrealistic expectations in relation to the availability of move on properties
		Relocation of the current Sunraye project to Plas Bellin site. This will allow the current property in Connahs Quay to be remodelled to provide generic supported accommodation for both genders age 18+	Remodel	Neutral	High	Better utilisation of the rooms within the main house at Plas Bellin, which are not suitable for use as family accommodation. Increase of supported accommodation available for people aged 18+
		Reduction to the SP funding element for the current Youth Justice Post.	Remodel	-£15,000	High	Allow improved flexibility in relation to support able to be provided by the YJT Accommodation Support Worker
	Families	Reduction to the number of units for families at Plas Bellin.	Remodel	Neutral	High	Reduce the number of families expected to reside in accommodation that is not self contained
		Increase to the Additional Support to Parents project	Remodel	+£15,000	High	To meet the demands of the current service and reduce the amount of time that families are waiting to receive support

	Over 55's	Develop a cross-boundary preventative support service in partnership with WCBC	Remodel	+£40,000	High	To ensure continuing support is available, in order to minimise the need for people to access statutory services
		Continue to monitor the success of the tenure neutral community based accommodation support service. This service has been remodelled to reduce costs and support more people. Move forward to assess how this links with other floating support services for older people	On-going	Neutral	Medium	To ensure that services are targeted at those most in need and ensure as much support is available within existing resources.
	Generic	Provide a 9 bed supported accommodation project for people aged 18+	Remodel	Neutral	High	To ensure that there is appropriate supported accommodation available for both males and females aged 18+
		Expansion of the Central Referral gateway to include complex case support and referrals for advice services	Service Improvement	+£20,000	High	To build on the success of the project implemented in Denbighshire, which shows a drastic reduction in the number of evictions from Supporting People projects
	Local Service Improvements	Value for Money discussions with all former SPRG providers to ensure that funding levels are appropriate	Service Improvement	TBC	High	To ensure that vital services are sustainable as a result of the reduction to the SPPG

		and proportionate to the support provided				
	Regional Service Improvements	Continue to seek opportunities for regional collaboration, where this will provide improved outcomes for service users and improved value for money	Service Improvement	TBC	High	To continue to commit to the WG agenda for the efficient governance of the SPPG
		Continue to work with neighbouring authorities to look for efficiency savings relating to the administration of Supporting People	Service Improvement	TBC	High	To ensure that the SPPG is targeted in the most efficient way, and the administration burden for providers is reduced.