

Supporting People Review 2008

CONSULTATION

Thank you for taking the time to give us this feedback.

We would be happy to receive your responses electronically to the issues outlined below as soon as possible or by the deadline of **Monday 15th December** at the very latest.

Please use the title 'Supporting People Review 2008' and send them to hi@audit-commission.gov.uk

Name:.....**Imogen Parry**.....

Organisation:.....**ERoSH (Essential Role of Sheltered Housing)**

Role: e.g. provider, local authority, service user, advocacy: **National charity representing and promoting sheltered housing**

Contact details: are you happy for us to follow this up with you if necessary? **YES**

e mail:.....**imogen.parry@btopenworld.com**.....

Phone (with landline area code):...01920 870384

Mobile:..... 07774 838825.....

a) What has worked well?

Please give examples of improvements for service users where possible.

1. Needs and risks previously overlooked now identified eg under-claimed benefits, more precise assessment of equipment and adaptations needed, loneliness and depression picked up
2. Pre tenancy needs assessment and support planning has improved tenants' day to day living arrangements and helped to ensure that they find the appropriate type of property to live in. This has also improved voids management of properties for older people.
3. Improvements in quality, standards, outcomes and consistency of support services, partly due to external drivers of QAF, PIs, CSHS Code of Practice and internal drivers of better management, and better written and enforced policies and procedures, backed up by training
4. Some groups who would otherwise not have received support now are, eg through floating support being extended to older people living in general needs accommodation
5. Greater internal recognition and appreciation of housing related support services
6. Improved efficiencies and better value for money through proper review and evaluation of housing related support services

b) What were the key factors that contributed to these successful outcomes?

For example: partnership working, service user involvement, joint commissioning

1. Service user involvement
2. Joint working
3. Benchmarking with other organisations

4. Improved management of sheltered housing
5. The QAF and the CSHS Code of Practice

c) What has not worked well?

Please give examples of the impact on vulnerable people where possible.

1. Grey areas between what is considered housing related support and care.
2. Lack of timely information on future Supporting People funding leading to confusion for service users (often affects peoples' charges because funding decisions are made so late in the financial year).
3. Lack of clarity of what service users can expect from Supporting People
4. Lack of flexibility regarding on what funding can be used for
5. Constant year on year reduction of funding in real terms against a backdrop of an increasing older population, despite the preventative added value that sheltered and supported housing offers.
6. Lack of UK-wide information/service user consultation on the future of SP funding and how it fits with the Personalisation agenda, leaving service users feeling insecure.
7. Limited feedback for service providers and service users when changes have been implemented.
8. Workshops generally only offered to discuss changes in the way the service is provided (one way shop).
9. All the extra work, monitoring, differing requirements of AAs
10. Has not improved social isolation
11. The move from "doing" to empowering and enabling others to do, whilst many older tenants still have the perception that scheme managers are still able to do the old warden role

d) What changes would you like to see and who should be responsible for making these happen?

1. Would like to see more flexibility on what can be purchased with SP funding. This should be in consultation with the service user.
2. Joint working arrangements should be implemented, however, there still needs to be a regulatory body to ensure compliance, using a holistic approach.
3. Lighter touch would be beneficial, less red tape would allow the services to be more flexible.
4. Improved recognition of the role of facilitator that sheltered staff play in ensuring that social activities take place. If staff are being asked to spread their time across the community, there needs to be some continued dedicated support provided to maintain social activities and the social inclusion and well being this brings to communities - this vital work is not funded in many areas and is a serious gap

e) Anything else that you would like to add?

Further concerns:

1. More funding is required. Funding needs to be realistic and fair and there should be minimum requirements in order for service providers to meet the standards now required.

2. Uncertainty about the future direction of services is a matter of concern, a lot of LA's have still not completed a full review of services. Threats of no year on year inflationary uplifts. Large providers such as L&Q and smaller providers are exiting SP and another large sheltered housing provider is likely to leave. Kent is fixing costs for all providers at unrealistic levels. Providers will not continue to meet year on year deficits.
3. What will happen when ring fencing goes? Will some support funding be absorbed into Social Services budgets and we'll see higher and higher thresholds of eligibility for support services – danger of going in the same direction as FACS
4. What are the implications of the personalisation programme? For vulnerable service users (lessons from Hoskin and Hounslow) and for providers (financial viability)? Even more fragmentation of care and support? Could have lots of support providers going in and out of sheltered schemes, as with care providers – waste of public money, no economies of scale. Role of support workers as brokers?
5. Supporting People is based on a model comparable to domiciliary and personal care ie people are assessed as needing a certain amount of one to one support per week. Sheltered housing doesn't operate like this and the community support and the supportive presence of on-site staff is not valued, measured or built into the Supporting People approach.
6. Some sheltered housing schemes are being allowed to “wither on the vine” with the increasing move towards floating support. The resource of sheltered housing lounges to help facilitate hub and spoke models and community engagement and activities is not valued under many floating support models (and see 5 above). See ERoSH position statement Jan 2008 on this (attached, paras D 6-8).
7. The Supporting People model does not concern itself with allocation criteria to sheltered housing (traditionally based on housing need and choice) (see ERoSH position statement Jan 2008, paras F 10-12). ERoSH would welcome the Audit Commission recommending that all local authority housing departments work in partnership with Supporting People lead officers and local sheltered housing providers to develop allocations policies that address this tension and reconcile need, choice, prevention and social inclusion. This recommendation was a significant omission from “Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods, A Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society...” and it would be welcomed if the Audit Commission could help to remedy this omission.

Opportunities:

1. For housing related support providers to be more innovative, flexible and responsive in the way they deliver services
2. More choice and control for older people, less traditional one-size-fits-all services
3. Hopefully much more and better information for older people on services available
4. More older people (outside of accommodation based services) being able to receive “sheltered housing” type services
5. Perhaps more specialist services emerging