

Supporting People Plan 2019-20

and

Strategic Intent 2020-2023

Engagement version

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1.0 Aim of this interim document

This document seeks to set out the activities planned for 2019/20 for the following two purposes:-

- Tasks related to the development of and preparations for a three year Supporting People (SP) strategy (2020/21 to 2022/23)
- Small variations to the current funding distribution during 2019/20 through the development of floating support provision.

The document seeks to be current with and align to several key policies and strategies, most notably:

- DfC's current policy framework for Supporting People
- The recommendations of DfC's Review of Supporting People
- NIHE's Homelessness Strategy

This is not an exhaustive list, and for the purposes of this short document, the links and implications of these strategies and others do not need to be explored in detail, but will be addressed within the three year strategy document.

This document will set out in the following sections:-

3.0 How SP is currently funded

4.0 How SP will be funded in 2019/20

5.0 How we will develop a funding Strategy for 2020/21 to 2022/23

The document will also seek to introduce an Innovation Fund, standardised payment rates, an exploratory approach to procurement, and conclude by reflecting on how the Supporting People Programme will have been significantly developed by the end of the three year strategy in March 2023.

2.0 The purpose of the Supporting People programme

The purpose of the Supporting People (SP) Programme continues to be to provide housing support services vulnerable people to live as independently as possible in the community, and this remains a priority. The SP Programme currently provides housing support services to more than 19,000 individuals annually to enable them to live in their own homes, or in a range of sheltered or supported accommodation options. The SP Programme is delivered through a wide range of delivery partners, including statutory bodies, housing associations, private sector companies and voluntary and community organisations. All stakeholders share the common goal of ensuring that the needs of individual people are met and the best outcomes are achieved for each person.

3.0 How SP is currently funded - current and historical distribution of funding

This section sets out the background to the SP Programme, and describes how it has evolved since its introduction in 2003. This section also provides the current profile of services based on the four thematic groups that form the basis of the recently established decision making structures (see section 5).

The SP Programme has now been in operation for 15 years, having been introduced across the UK in April 2003. SP has operated as a grant programme since its inception. In Northern Ireland (NI) SP funding takes the form of grants administered by NIHE to providers. The budget for the SP Programme in NI is determined by DfC and has increased significantly from £46 million in 2003/04, to £72.8 million in 2014 (since when the baseline budget has remained static at £72.8 million). The programme was formed in 2003 through the amalgamation of a number of distinct funding pots and funding for approximately 650 of the current 850 services was transferred to the SP programme at its inception.

These 650 'legacy' services were all accommodation based services and reflected the range of client groups that we recognise in the current programme. The funding levels in place in 2003 for these legacy services were largely carried forward and maintained throughout for the evolution of the Programme. The variation in current rates paid therefore is often due to the historical amalgamation of different funding sources in 2003. Several circumstances, both strategic and political contributed to shaping the growth of the Programme. This influence of legacy funding arrangements and the more recent allocation of funding aligned to areas such as the Bamford review has resulted in the profile that we have at present in 2018/19 (see Fig 1).

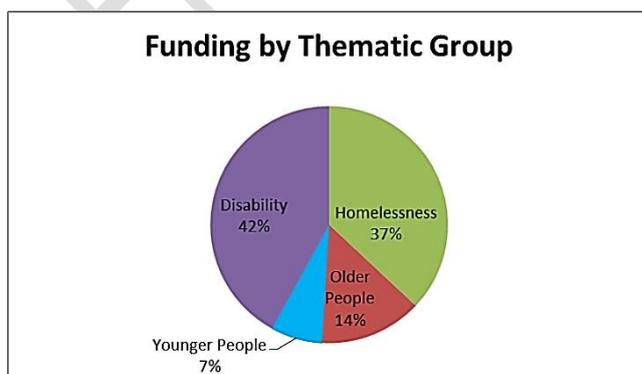


Fig1: Current distribution of total SP budget by thematic group

Throughout the 15 year period of the SP Programme grant funding agreements have mainly been renewed with provider organisations on an annual basis, unless, in a small number of cases, there has been a basis not to renew. These renewals have historically been at the previous year's rate with the exception of 2017/18 where a 5% reduction was applied to accommodation based services only (Floating Support, SNMA and new schemes were protected). Providers have not received an annual funding uplift since 2007.

Approximately 200 new services have been grant funded over the past 15 years. Approximately 70 of these are Floating Support services, and 130 are accommodation based, the majority of which are linked to the Bamford Review. In these instances business case proposals were progressed through the commissioning structures having been scrutinised for value for money against existing local benchmarks. A number of pre 2003 legacy services have been subject to reconfiguration.

In many cases, with the exception of the Floating Support and Homeless, schemes were co-funded by NIHE and Health and Social Care Trusts. The level of funding allocated therefore was also reflective of the level of budget availability across Health and Social Care and NIHE.

The 2015 DSD Review of SP noted that the Floating Support model 'plays a key role in early intervention and prevention' and highlighted the potential to extend SP services across a wider geography, particularly rural areas. Based on these findings, the Review made a recommendation for 'NIHE to actively progress opportunities to extend the floating support service as a cost effective way of meeting need.' (Recommendation No.2). The current distribution of Floating Support funding by theme is detailed in Fig 2 below. Funding allocated to floating support currently represents approximately 15% of the total SP budget.

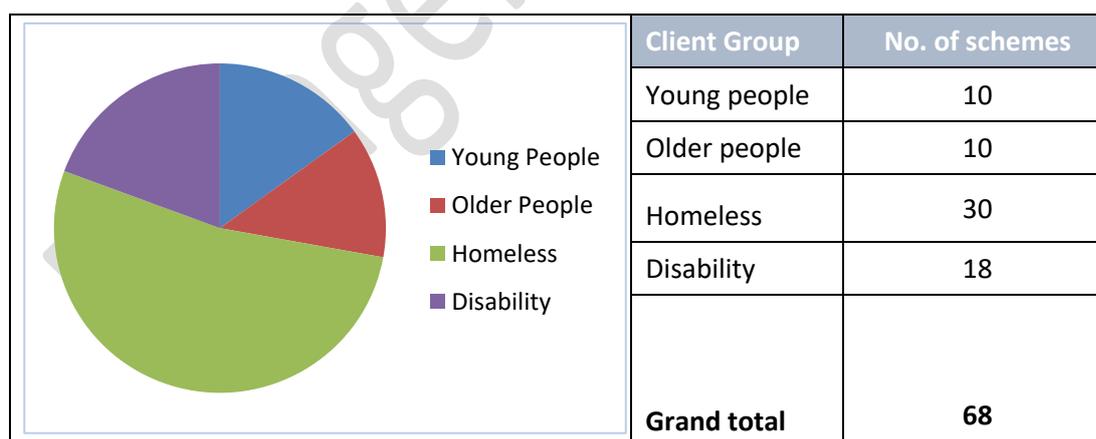


Fig 2: Current distribution of floating support funding by theme

The differences in SP payment rates led to a requirement in the SP Review to develop a more standardised approach to these rates. However the complexity of the way in which the SP Programme has evolved in terms of the grant funding arrangements currently in place provides us with a significant challenge – how to avoid destabilising existing services for vulnerable people while introducing a more standardised approach to paying for those services. Given the need for the SP

programme to evolve to meet future need it may be necessary going forward to develop new frameworks for determining the distribution of funding to ensure consistency and value for money.

An area for exploration therefore during 2019/20 will be procurement and consideration will be given to how this could be applied to this grant programme. Both DfC and NIHE will seek appropriate legal and procurement advice and consider the feasibility of moving the SP grant programme in this direction. Subject to this research and advice a procurement approach may be applied during the three year strategy period.

4.0 How SP will be funded in 2019/20

This section sets out the rationale for the approach taken to planning for 19/20, provides further detail at thematic level of the activities planned and explores of the implications of the proposed changes.

4.1 Rationale for planning approach

Significant changes to the SP Programme are not planned during 2019/20 for the following reasons:-

- Strategic decision making has not been fully enabled for the advisory structures as several of the key tools deriving from the implementation of the SP Review such as the strategic needs assessment framework and standardised payment rates are still under development.
- NIHE considers that an incremental approach will have less detrimental impact on the provision of existing services, whilst paving the way for more significant changes anticipated during the three year strategy. Plans made for 2019/20 are unlikely to contradict the more robust plans envisaged for the three year strategy.
- Any approach to the future potential for procurement of services will still be at the research and development stage during 2019/20.

4.2 The plan for 2019/20

The Housing Executive has developed criteria and assessments to be considered when reviewing and developing existing floating support provision or determining the applicability of reconfiguring short term accommodation- based services to floating support and also in the identification in gaps in existing provision. Through this approach, a number of services have been identified for development. During 2019/20 NIHE will seek to prioritise floating support as a mechanism for promoting an early prevention and support approach to living independently within a home setting. This, of course, will be dependent on the range of housing supply options available.

NIHE has been able to carry out trend analyses in housing waiting list data for the previous four years. These analyses in isolation lack the strategic robustness that data from a variety of sources would bring, however it was evident that if trends continue, the client groups where pressures appear greatest in terms of need for housing and support were Older People and Younger People. These findings were complemented by the identification of a number of gaps in the provision of floating support for these client groups. These were established based on mapping exercises and intelligence gathered through the existing grant framework. Whilst NIHE recognise that

accommodation based services will continue to be at the core of the SP Programme, NIHE has identified that, during 2019/20, if recurrent revenue becomes available with the assumed recurring £72.8m budget, investment in the development of floating support will take priority, in line with the strategic direction to extend this type of provision. There are seven potential areas of service development identified as outlined in sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 below:-

4.2.1 Older People

Based on the approach described in section 4.2 , Fig 3 details the locations where gaps in provision have been identified and indicates the anticipated number of new floating support places older people required in these localities.

| Location | Approximate Places required |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Newry | 40 |
| Lisburn/Downpatrick/Ards | 60 |
| Moyle | 40 |
| Limavady, Derry, Strabane | 60 |
| Totals | 200 |

Fig 3 – Proposed new floating support for Older People

4.2.2 Young People

Based on the approach described in section 4.2 , Fig 4 details the locations where gaps in provision have been identified and indicates the anticipated number of new floating support places older people required in these localities.

| Location | Approximate Places required |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Newry | 25 |
| Lisburn | 30 |
| Magherafelt | 25 |
| Totals | 80 |

Fig 4 – Proposed new floating support for Young People

The full year effect of operating all seven schemes is approx. £560k per annum. As with all new schemes, NIHE will seek to apply the Standardised Regional Payment Rate currently under development. It is envisaged therefore that the above seven schemes will be subject to the standardised rate in 2019/20. This will form part of the first phase of a multi-phase glide path towards the full implementation of a standardised approach.

4.2.3 Homelessness theme

SP funded accommodation facilities within the 'Homeless Families' sub group in Belfast are potentially over funded (not necessarily over provided in terms of places, but the levels of support made available within some services may exceed the level of need presenting) . There is therefore scope, where appropriate, to identify some of these services for reconfiguration to a concierge and/or a floating support model.

Evidence base – operations at two recently appointed family support services in Belfast have demonstrated that a lower level floating support model can be effective, although this is subject to further evaluation and it is likely that there will continue to be a need to retain some high support provision for families within Belfast. A piece of research has been initiated to establish specifically how to realign these existing services. The Strategic Review of temporary accommodation associated with the Homelessness Strategy will be significant in informing the longer term and broader thinking on how to best utilise existing services and reconfigure them going forward. In the context of the three year SP strategy, it is not anticipated that the incremental steps proposed for 2019/20 will contradict the emerging directions of travel, given the alignments of the two strategies. The proposed steps to be carried out during 2019/20 are as follows;

- In order to further develop an evidence base SP will prepare an approach to internal evaluation of homeless families' models and carry out lessons learned in respect of existing Housing First operations.
- Complete internal evaluations and lessons learned to prepare service descriptions for two selection processes to enhance Floating Support for families in Belfast and to enhance Housing Led support in Belfast.
- From evaluation of Homeless Families Provision identify two schemes to be reconfigured to a lower support level model. It is estimated that this could release circa £200k which can be allocated £100k to Floating Support and £100k to Housing led.
- Carry out selection processes, identify preferred providers and notify those providers where remodelling is required and formalise and operationalise the new arrangements. The outcome sought is that there will be an increase in Floating Support places for families and an increase in Housing First places, creating more Floating Support provision. It is envisaged that these changes will be revenue neutral in terms of current overall spend on homeless services.

4.2.4 Disability theme (and Older theme)

During 2019/20 it is proposed to further consider opportunities to reconfigure long term accommodation based schemes to Floating Support models. For the Disability theme, approximately thirty mental health accommodation schemes have been identified as having potential to remodel to Floating Support, in that they already offer low to medium support and are dispersed in nature.

In Particular, the potential impact on Housing Associations and service users brought about by this shift to a Floating Support model is still to be fully understood and the interim year provides an opportunity to explore and test the issues.

Similarly within the Older People theme, over three hundred sheltered accommodation schemes have the potential to remodel to Floating Support and this could be explored during the 2019/20. There is the possibility of an impact on Housing Benefit rates applicable and the status of historic Housing Association grant funding, if the classification of properties is changed as a result of a reconfiguration to floating support. Further consideration of these matters will be required during 2019/20 to explore the possible implications.

4.3 Impact of 2019/20 plan on distribution of funding

On the assumption that funding of £72.8m is available in the year 2019/20, that subsidy scheme payment fluctuations do not exceed anticipated levels, and on the assumption that no other urgent pressures present, it is currently projected that there is approximately £560k available for recurrent investment in new services. The process by which competing priorities are considered takes place within the new decision making structures, with each regional thematic group presenting thematic priorities to the Strategic Advisory Board, and NIHE's SP Finance advising of the budget position to enable fully informed recommendations to NIHE Board.

It is planned during 2019/20 for the available recurrent funding to be allocated to the Older People (£340k) and Younger people (£220k) themes. If this projected level of funding is available, the total funding distributed to Older and Younger people services will increase slightly (from 12.7% to 13.1% for Older People and 7.0% to 7.2% for Young People). There will be no impact due to these plans on the current funding levels for the other thematic groups; however the percentage distribution for these groups will reduce very slightly to reflect the small increase to older and younger peoples themes.

To implement the plan to address the seven Floating Support gaps identified, it will be necessary to carry out a selection process and providers will have an opportunity to apply to deliver these services.

In relation to Homelessness services, the proposed changes are predicated on being able to realise savings within the Homeless Families' accommodation services. This element of the plan will result in a small number of existing providers experiencing a reduction in funding associated with these services.

No funding distribution changes are planned within the Disability theme and there is no planned change to the overall Disability funding envelope. It is anticipated that the ongoing policy framework review by DfC will clarify the policy for Floating Support going forward and in particular the duration for which it can be received. Plans to potentially remodel existing accommodation based schemes for disability and older people themes will therefore be subject to this clarification and the plan for 2019/20 is to further explore these issues, with a view to potentially more significant activity in this regard in the three year strategy.

4.4 Innovation fund

NIHE will, pending the approval of the DfC business case and budget, introduce an Innovation Fund during the financial year 2019-20 designed to assist providers to adapt to new ways of delivering services. A number of areas are currently under consideration for this new fund and it is anticipated that the monies will be available to assist current providers to modernise services and improve value for money and quality of service. It is anticipated that the extent of the innovations could range from initiatives to enhance and improve operational arrangements to deliver more effective customer service to strategic developments at primary client group level aimed at ensuring longer term sustainability of provision.

5.0 How we will develop a three year funding strategy for 2020/21 to 2022/23

This section provides an overview of the new decision making structures and sets out the steps for development, poses a number of questions to be answered, and indicates the scale of change that NIHE seeks to achieve by 2023. The content and detail of the finalised plan will be based on the outworkings of all the development activities set out in section 5.2 below, so are purely indicative at this stage.

5.1 Decision making structures

Recommendation 9 of DfC's review set out the requirement to develop new structures to improve transparency; to increase representation from SP service users and providers; and to ensure an appropriate role for housing, and health and social care professionals. The development of four new Regional Thematic Planning groups overseen by a Strategic Advisory Board (SAB) creates a partnership approach to the thematic delivery of SP, with the involvement of representatives and decision makers at senior level. The new structure came in to operation at the end of 2017/18 and is bedding-in during 2018/19 and will be fully installed by 2019/20 to develop the three year Strategy. The SAB will support the Board of the Housing Executive in making their decision on SP priorities and funding.

5.2 Development process

Critical to the development of the three year strategy will be engagement with the provider sector both in terms of testing new approaches and validating the deliverability of any proposed service model changes. Engagement with statutory decision makers at each stage of the planning process will be through the new structures outlined above, with the roles and responsibilities of members set out in the respective terms of reference for each group. It is envisaged that interdepartmental engagement will be supported by NIHE's Sponsor Department, DfC. Service user groups attached to the new structures will enable productive engagement with service user representatives, and ensure that a healthy perspective is maintained in relation to NIHE's ongoing aim to provide an excellent customer service.

There are a number of steps to be carried out during the development of the three year strategy. These will be carried out by NIHE, in partnership with statutory partners and the provider sector.

See steps detailed in table below:-

| Step Required | Considerations during development |
|---|--|
| Establish timeline | This is the first task to be carried out and will seek to provide a detailed breakdown of tasks and timeline for each of the steps outlined below. |
| Establish baseline funding distribution, and planning assumptions | <p>Clarification as to the three year baseline assumption for the SP budget (currently £72.8m)</p> <p>The glide path for standardised rates (SRPR) will continue during the life of the three year strategy having commenced in in 2019/20. Subject to the outcomes of consultation.</p> |
| Assess need | <p>Based on the application of the strategic needs assessment framework populated on data gathered by NIHE up to June 2019 and any other data that has been made available by HSCB or PBNI.</p> <p>Regional thematic groups to carry out assessments at regional theme level based on data analyses presented to these groups gathered by Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), NIHE Housing Services or Probation Board (PBNI) from local structures which, whilst they operate outside of new structure, inform in at the regional theme level.</p> <p>The above two approaches will enable a top down strategic steer which is informed by a bottom up analyses at regional theme level.</p> |
| Explore new ways of working | <p>Longer term Floating Support – Further explore with providers and Housing Associations, policy direction required from DfC on longer term.</p> <p>Procurement – Subject to legal advice during exploratory discussions during 2019/20 and direction from NIHE Board, NIHE may wish to test procurement on certain client groups or certain service models.</p> |
| Identifying Priorities based on assessment of need, and stakeholder feedback and preferred models of delivery, and research, and engagement with | <p>Thematic considerations</p> <p>Homeless - NIHE’s Homelessness Strategy will be in its fourth year of implementation and in order to meet its objectives NIHE aim to significantly move towards prevention and finding effective solutions for chronic homeless. NIHE collectively aim to deliver on these two aspects of the Strategy through significant development of Housing led and floating support models, and work alongside PBNI and HSCB/PHA to deliver these. (This work will be informed by the Strategic Review of temporary accommodation).</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>providers.</p> | <p>In the event that an existing service is found to be no longer required the newly developed termination of funding framework, and provider selection process, if applicable, will be applied alongside.</p> <p>Older people- The demographic information tells us there will continue to be an increasing demand for older people services, and it is likely that SP will be required to complement the Transforming Your care Agenda in terms of developing community based services.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to remodel the sheltered accommodation model- further research during 2019/20 will help to inform the scale of any such changes.</p> <p>Disability –Progressing towards more flexible longer term community based support models could address some of the pressures on Health and Social Care through creating more support for learning disabled (LD) and mental health (MH) clients with low to medium needs. More discussion is required as to how to address issue of ageing carers of LD clients. This is an area for further exploration with DfC in the context of work done to date in relation to Recommendation 7 of the SP Review.</p> <p>Young People Jointly funded high support –A significant reconciliation exercise is required to reset the baseline and establish appropriate levels of contribution from both SP and the Trusts. There is the potential to recycle significant sums into other models within continuum of support.</p> |
| <p>Plan and cost</p> | <p>Given there is a three year window it will enable a staggered approach to implementation and allow for both immediate outcomes and outputs and for those initiatives that require a longer lead in.</p> |
| <p>Initial Approval</p> | <p>To seek approval from NIHE Board to proceed to engagement.</p> |
| <p>Endorsement</p> | <p>Endorsement will be required from SAB.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation</p> | <p>The NIHE Board will recommend the draft three year strategy to the DfC.</p> |
| <p>Engagement/ Consultation</p> | <p>Engagement to include stakeholder events and workshops.</p> |
| <p>Final approval</p> | <p>NIHE Board</p> |

6.0 Conclusion

This document has set out the activities planned for 2019/20 including:

- Tasks related to the development of and preparations for a three year SP strategy (2020 to 2023). Section 5 has set out the considerations for this and if all the different pieces of preparatory work are carried out and the new tools prove to be effective, NIHE recognise the opportunity to make significant positive changes to the profile of the SP programme during the three year strategy period.
- Small variations to the current funding distribution during 2019/20 through development of floating support provision. Section 4 has set out the rationale for the gradual approach to change and detailed the small strategic changes that NIHE plan to make in 2019/20 which focus on increasing Floating Support provision

NIHE welcomes the opportunity to develop a three year strategy and work will commence on this piece of work in 2019/20.

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