



supportingpeople

Spotlight

Issue 3

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Welcome to the 3rd edition of SP Spotlight. Significant progress has been made since the last issue in terms of our Modernising Services Project. In particular, we have now implemented the new contract management arrangements in 3 of our 5 areas and the response from providers to the new arrangements has been largely positive. In this issue Clarendon Shelter, a provider in the West area, has provided an insight into their experiences of contract management... We are also preparing for the implementation of our new ICT systems in December, with the rollout of the online facilities expected to take place in the new financial year.

It is recognised that this year has been a difficult one for both the NIHE as the administering authority for SP and our providers, in terms of funding. However, the NIHE remains committed to the programme and we continue to make the case for further development of the programme both internally and within the wider government arena.

Within this issue of Spotlight, we have attempted to provide information on the priority areas of the programme and any new developments. If there is anything you would like to see included in future issues, please contact us.

Colm McQuillan
Assistant Director
Strategic Partnerships



SP Modernising Services Update

This team was set up in December 2007, as part of the overall NIHE's Modernising Services programme. The project aims to utilise the most up-to-date technology and business practices to deliver efficient and effective services within SP.

The project is continuing to be progressed in line with the overall objectives and timescales, for both the ICT development and business review elements of the project.

ICT Development – Introducing SPOCC and SPOCC.net

There are 2 main strands to the ICT part of the project. The first consists of the core ICT system (SPOCC) to be used by the NIHE, as the administrators of the programme. This provides the necessary ICT support for the ongoing administration of the SP programme, including the processing of payments to providers, maintenance of funding agreements, performance monitoring and contract management.

The SPOCC system is currently being tested along side our current system and is going through detailed user acceptance testing. It is expected that SP will be operating with SPOCC by the end of December 2009.

The 2nd strand of the ICT development involves the implementation of web-based modules which will aid the sharing and exchange of information externally. This will include an online service directory for all SP funded services which will be accessible from the NIHE's website.

As part of this 2nd strand, we will be implementing SPOCC.net, which will provide a secure online link for data access and exchange between providers and the SP team.

Service providers will be able to log on to view SP's information on their services, clients and schedules and make any authorised additions and changes. It will also enable providers to electronically submit monitoring information, review and sign funding agreements and regularly update contact details and service information which will be publicly available in the service directory.

A demonstration video on the SPOCC.net system, produced by its supplier, Oxford Computer Consultants, is available by following the link below:

<http://www.oxfordcclg.co.uk/SPOCCnet/SPOCCNetDemo2.htm>

From early January 2010, five SP providers will be operating with SPOCC.net, in order to assist in testing the performance and usability of the system prior to its general rollout across the sector. All providers will receive training on SPOCC.net before commencing to use the system, which will be introduced to all providers on a phased basis from April 2010.

Prior to full roll out, it is essential that SP get information from every provider about their technical infrastructure to ascertain their IT compatibility with SPOCC.net. SP has asked every provider to complete an IT questionnaire. Your completed questionnaires were due to be returned by 4th September 2009. This information is vital for the successful roll out of SPOCC.net.

Business Review & Improvement

Since the last edition of Spotlight, further progress has been made in a number of areas.

Contract Management

The new contract management arrangements have now been implemented in 3 of the 5 SP areas and a number of contract meetings have already been completed. The new framework is currently being implemented in the South East and South areas. An overview of the new arrangements in the West area, from both the SP area team and a provider's perspective, is provided in an article in this edition.

Quality Assessment Framework 2 (QAF 2)

SP is currently working to develop a revised QAF, to reflect the changes which have already been introduced nationally. The QAF2 and associated guidance will be available from our section of the NIHE's website from January 2010. Providers will be required to submit annual returns using the QAF2 from April 2010, as part of the 2nd year's operation of the contract management framework. An overview of the main changes to the QAF is provided in a subsequent article and an opportunity to hear more about QAF2 and discuss the changes will be provided at future stakeholder events throughout the year.

Outcomes Monitoring

The providers operating outcomes monitoring on a pilot basis, have now submitted their 2nd quarterly returns to SP and the information is being discussed at regular contract meetings.

Collecting and reporting the information has had positive results for both the providers involved and SP. In addition, feedback from service users would seem to indicate that they too can identify real benefits in measuring their progress within their individual support plans.

The operational phase of the pilots will end in January 2010. The evaluation of the pilot projects will then be undertaken and the final evaluation report will be published in April 2010. This will include an evaluation of the indicators to be included in the final Northern Ireland Outcomes Framework and the various distance travelled models available for use with service users. This report will help inform the general rollout of outcomes monitoring across the provider sector, including consideration of how outcomes should be measured, recorded and reported to SP.

Mulholland After Care Services (MACS), one of the providers involved in the pilot projects, has given an overview of their experiences using outcome measures with service users, in a subsequent article on page 8.

Provider Quality Assurance Group (PQAG)

A meeting of the PQAG was held on 25th June 2009 and was well attended. At the meeting, contract management, outcomes monitoring, the new QAF 2, communications and the SPOCC and SPOCC.net systems were discussed. Below are some of the main points which arose:

SP should consider extending the 20 working day allowance for contract management returns in the next financial year and consider how the duplication of administration requirements can be minimised for providers who are monitored by other bodies

That the revision of the QAF should include consideration of the other frameworks which will provide a passport against the QAF2 standards

Development of mechanisms for sharing good practice identified through the contract management framework

Stakeholder events should provide additional opportunities for providers to network and discuss new ways of working

Training will be provided on the SPOCC.net system prior to its implementation

SP will consider these points when developing the relevant business processes.

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Modernising Services Project Team

The team is lead by Caroline Connor (Project Manager) and includes Helen Irvine, Pamela Stevenson and James Taylor. Each member has a range of housing experiences with Caroline and Helen being involved with SP since its inception in 2003.





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Contract Management Implementation

In the 2nd edition of Spotlight and at each of the stakeholder events, the Contract Management Framework has been introduced to providers. The new arrangements are being phased in across the 5 SP areas and commenced in April 2009 in the West Area.

Louise Clarke and Colin McCloy, the West Area Team, have provided a commentary on the work involved in the implementation of these new arrangements and the manager of Clarendon Shelter, Derry has provided an insight into the provider's role in the process.

West Area Team Perspective

The initial contract meetings with providers have been a learning experience for all parties and we have found it to be a very useful forum to develop working relationships with providers through clarification of roles and responsibilities. There are a number of standard agenda

items to cover during the course of a meeting we have found the framework to be flexible to facilitate discussions of all matters relevant to a group within the context of the framework, and providers are welcome to add their own items to the agenda.

In addition to assessing the quality and eligibility of services, which we will seek to validate through visits to services, the strategic relevance of services has been a particular focus for the West team. At our meetings to date we have encouraged providers to consider their services in a wider strategic context and assess how they sit alongside other services in their region with a view to focusing on the unique aspects of their services and how they complement others. This has led to open discussions with providers as to the future direction of their services.

We have also invited providers to consider the outcomes of their services for their service users, how these might be measured, and how their support planning process might use this information. SP is currently exploring outcomes measures through several pilot projects which will aid more formal discussion and implementation in this area next year.

During our initial meetings with providers we sought to establish the most appropriate content for the quarterly service updates, both in terms of how the provider is managing their business and the information we require to best understand the performance of their service(s). Discussions with providers were progressed based on the information they are already collecting at service and service user levels and then agreeing the content and frequency of the information to be shared with us. For example, in some cases providers survey their service users on an annual basis, so it was agreed that this would be shared annually in the first quarter of each year. With another provider it was agreed to share budget compliance information 6 monthly in quarter 1 and quarter 3 to correspond with their mid year and end of year collection of information. Whilst there are standard pieces of performance information we would expect to receive for all services, the framework allows us to focus on the most relevant information for a particular service or provider organisation and agree reasonable frequencies for return of this information.

Roll-out of the new arrangements during 2009/2010 is ongoing and we aim to continue to develop effective working relationships with our service providers in the West.

West Area Team

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Providers Perspective

Clarendon Shelter – Carol McKeever (Manager)

Based at 63 Clarendon Street, Derry, the organisation provides temporary accommodation with support, to single women and those with children. Regardless of the reason for homelessness all clients receive intensive levels of practical and emotional support with additional support available from the resettlement service. An interdenominational management committee established the Shelter as a charity in 1977 and it has 9 units which can accommodate 9 adults and 10 children and there is a range of communal facilities on site. Direct access project staff are available 24 hours and referrals can be made by the applicant, NIHE, Social Services, and a range of different organisations.

Funded by SP, the Shelter is an accredited provider and the organisation has been involved at all levels of the SP programme since its introduction. Recent developments within the SP programme have been welcomed by the staff and the Management Committee, particularly the new Contract Management Framework arrangements which commenced in April 2009.

Prior to this the validation process was very bureaucratic and the lead-up to the validation visit was stressful for staff and management. As an organisation committed to high quality and professional services, there was never any doubt that the SP programme was the best way to improve services for vulnerable clients. However, the scale of the programme and the subsequent increase in administration tasks were particularly challenging for a small, single service provider.

A preliminary contract management meeting between the Shelter and the West Area Team took place in February 2009 following an overview of the new arrangements presented at the West Area Stakeholder Event. As the manager of the Shelter I was directly involved in the preparation for this and attended the meeting with other staff and Management Committee members. The overall process was different in terms of completing the QAF and Strategic Relevance Questionnaire. Details required were more specific to our service and enabled us, as an organisation, to present the uniqueness of the service delivered. In my opinion the previous review framework failed to encourage small providers to demonstrate the 'personality' of their service. Overall, the new process has so far been more user friendly.

The actual contract meeting was held in May at our offices

with Louise Clarke and Colin McCloy. The SP team had provided an agenda beforehand and we were invited to add other items, which we particularly wanted to discuss. This two-way process was very successful as those attending had the time required to prepare for an open and honest exchange of specific issues pertinent to both parties. From a management perspective this approach enabled the staff rota and the needs of residents to be uninterrupted.

In terms of how the actual meeting progressed, it is fair to say that it was formal in the fact that it was chaired, minutes were taken, formal introductions were made, etc. However, the depth of discussion was honest and Louise and Colin provided a clear report on the outcomes of our QAF and strategic relevance assessment. Genuine interest was evident when issues presented by the representatives of the Shelter were raised and a frank exchange of views were shared. The outcome for management and staff was a clear understanding of how our organisation has progressed to date under SP, and perhaps more importantly, the requirements for future progress were explained. This included agreeing the date for a Service Improvement Plan to be submitted and the date for the next Contract Management meeting.

To conclude, I would encourage other providers to embrace the Contract Management Framework with confidence as our experience has been positive and very informative. Our concerns as a single service provider were discussed at length and we had the impression that we were fully understood.

There are now SP area teams with named lead officers who will meet with providers on a regular basis, and they can be contacted easily if required. In my view, this is the best way to ensure that the services we provide continue to meet the needs of our vulnerable clients.

The Contract Management process and briefing paper is now available on the NIHE website
http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/wwu_home/supporting_people-3/contract_management.htm



www.johnbirdsall.co.uk



The New Quality Assessment Framework (QAF 2)

Background:

Five years into the SP programme a decision was made in England to refresh the Quality Assessment Framework (QAF). The review, headed by CLG in conjunction with SITRA, the National Housing Federation, providers and commissioners, resulted in a new QAF being introduced in England from April 2009.

In Northern Ireland SP has been working to amend the QAF in line with the national direction of travel taking into account recent changes to the legislative and policy framework. This has resulted in a new draft QAF (QAF2) and supplementary guidance being produced. These are currently in draft form and will be part of the modernising services pilot projects this year and consulted on via the Provider Quality Assurance Group (PQAG). The QAF will then be amended if necessary and introduced to all providers from April 2010 as an annual return. In the mean time, a shortened version of the original QAF is being used in the current year as part of the contract management annual returns.

Main Changes to the QAF:

QAF2 is an amended version of the original QAF and is intended to be more streamlined and less burdensome, with a greater focus on outcomes and service user involvement.

The main changes to the framework are:

- Reduced number of core objectives – from 6 to 5 with needs and risk assessment & support planning combined
- Increased emphasis on safeguarding and protection (including children)
- Further emphasis on client involvement (including complaints)
- New scoring mechanism introduced.

In terms of the format:

- No level D
- Level C means that “the service meets, and is able to evidence, the required minimum standards but there is scope for improvement”
- Level B means that “the service can evidence good practice”
- Level A means “excellence and is associated with providers striving to be leaders in their field”.
- Level C is separated from Levels A & B to emphasise the difference in evidence requirements (C) and examples (A & B).
- New reporting form
- Number of standards reduced from 118 to 21.

The main changes under each Core Objective are:

Core Objective 1

C1.1 Assessment & Support Planning

- Risk assessment strengthened
- Risk management made more explicit
- “Appropriate” risk taking encouraged
- SMART objectives used
- Support planning is person centred
- Greater emphasis on resettlement/move-on from the outset.

Core Objective 2

C1.2 Security, Health & Safety

- Emphasis on the protection of all individual clients, staff and the wider community
- “Dynamic approach” to risk assessment
- Ensuring compliance with legislation (level C)

Core Objective 3

C1.3 Safeguarding & Protection from Abuse

- Area with greatest change
- Commitment to safeguarding the welfare of adults and children using or visiting the service to working in partnership to protect vulnerable groups from abuse
- Safeguarding vs protection made more explicit
- Services where children are known to live /may live / may visit / neither live nor visit but clients may have access
- Multi-agency working strengthened
- Introduction of Common Assessment Framework (UNOCINI in NI).

Core Objective 4

C1.4 Fair Access, Diversity & Inclusion

- Demonstrable commitment to fair access, diversity and inclusion. The service acts within the law and ensures clients are well informed about their rights and responsibilities
- Continued emphasis on Equality

Core Objective 5

C1.5 Client Involvement & Empowerment

- Commitment to empowering clients and supporting their independence. Clients are well informed so they can communicate their needs and views and make informed choices. Clients are consulted about the services provided and are offered opportunities to be involved in their running. Clients are empowered in their engagement in the wider community and the development of social networks
- Now incorporates complaints
- Runs throughout the whole QAF2.

A more detailed briefing paper on QAF2 will be produced by January 2010 and an awareness programme will be rolled out across the sector before the QAF2 is introduced. Details will be provided in future editions of Spotlight and on the NIHE website.

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Outcomes Monitoring – Providers Perspective – Mulholland After Care Service Mary Ryan (Director) & Kate Martin (Service Manager)



Mulholland After Care Services (MACS) is piloting the outcomes monitoring framework in its three services, Supported Housing, Floating Support and Mentoring based in Belfast, Colin (Lisburn) and Downpatrick. MACS works with young people leaving care, and vulnerable and at risk young people aged 16-25 years.

As an organisation we had spent several months researching outcomes models across the UK and had introduced, in July 2008, the Outcomes Star model to measure distance travelled for young people using our services. Then in September 2008 we became part of the SP Modernising Services Outcomes Pilot. At this time we reviewed our support plans, assessment and review format and made minor changes to accommodate the Outcomes Star model. Staff and young people were consulted throughout this process and a full days training was given to staff.

As part of the pilot project, SP worked with us to consolidate our manually correlated basket of indicators from 44 down to 15 and funded us to develop a bespoke database called the SPIN System. This may sound simple, however, many months later and a very patient

I.T. consultant tested to the limit, we have finally nailed it! We have created an online system which analyses all our outcomes, distance travelled, case management, referral patterns, geographical spread, ages, housing management, volunteer outcomes, etc. One of the most important elements of the system is that it produces reports which enable us to analyse why hard outcomes are not being achieved and therefore providing the opportunity to develop and improve our service to young people. This system will help us to evidence performance for future contracts and funding, it benchmarks our work with other agencies and provides the means for identifying gaps in service provision. Feedback from staff on the SPIN System and the Outcomes Star model has been extremely positive. They have stated that it is very easy to use and provides improved clarity in their role, demonstrates their achievements and it is a good framework for learning and development. In relation to the Outcomes Star, young people have stated that it is a good visual tool of their journey in the service. For a small minority of young people who have found it difficult to use, we have found an alternative approach to track their journey.

At MACS, we have enjoyed and embraced the challenge of introducing an outcomes approach to our work. Our plans for the future include developing a focus group of staff and young people who will meet quarterly to review and provide feedback on the ongoing development of our outcomes model. On a final note, we are very excited that our SPIN System will enable us to introduce the Balanced Scorecard to our practice and therefore produce tighter, measurable targets for MACS in the future.

Rough Sleepers/Street Drinkers Strategy for Londonderry/Derry



As with many other cities, Londonderry/Derry has reported an increase in the number of people sleeping rough and a greater number of street drinkers. In keeping with the approach adopted by the NIHE in Belfast and other local authorities in England 'A Rough Sleepers/Street Drinkers Strategy' has been developed for the city. The main aim of the strategy was to review existing service provision and to make recommendations based on a statistical analysis of need.

A key task undertaken in developing the strategy was an analysis of the homeless population in the city across existing provision. Results of this exercise indicated that of those within generic hostels as many as 35% were identified as having some degree of alcohol dependency; this is in addition to those within specialist alcohol related projects.

A 'street needs audit' was also carried out which established that 72% of those found on the street had a hostel bed but that their lifestyle led to incidents of drinking and 'crashing out' on the street. The remaining 28% identified in the street audit had no accommodation and were sleeping rough. All were alcohol dependent.

The needs analysis identified that a more effective response to this client group is required for the City.

A key feature of the strategy was the development of a best practice service continuum against which current provision and practice was measured and issues identified include:

A range of existing services that are characterised by medium term arrangements mainly in generic facilities

- Underutilisation of a number of services
- A significant degree of 'silting up' of some temporary accommodation facilities
- A relatively small rough sleeper population
- Difficulties in delivering effective interventions and specialist services to this population
- Lack of effective pathways between services

The findings have informed how current provision should be realigned along the service continuum, making sure that there is an adequate and appropriate range of housing support and care services available. This will reduce the level of on street drinking and help ensure that no one needs to sleep rough.

The Strategy was approved by the NIHE Board in April 2009 and a Project Implementation Plan developed. Stage 1 of implementation has been completed. This included the establishment of interim crisis arrangements to accommodate those who were identified as sleeping rough. This arrangement will also allow for the realignment of services along the continuum during the coming months.

Additional work will include the revision of access and referral pathways and the development of an appropriate outcomes framework which will ensure the needs of service users are placed at the centre of service delivery.

Collaborative working with key providers and local stakeholders through the Project Steering Group will ensure inclusivity and active input into the implementation of the Strategy.

West Area Lead Officer
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Provider Benchmarking for Supporting People Services

SP is pleased to announce an extension to the funding for NI SP providers to participate in the provider benchmarking exercise for the second year running. The exercise, run by Sitra, in partnership with HouseMark and the National Housing Federation, has been developed through extensive consultation with service providers and is the only national benchmarking service for SP providers.

The exercise has been set up for providers to enable them to compare their information on cost, quality, performance and user satisfaction to that of anonymous yet comparable services.

SP is encouraging participation in the exercise as it should inform organisations' own reviews of their service improvement and value for money; particularly important given the difficult economic climate. The reports produced from the exercise are presented in a way that Boards and senior management teams can easily interpret and use to inform their strategic decision making.

The tool has been designed to make use of data already collected for contract monitoring and management accounts, so providers only need to pull together information they already have rather than set up new recording systems. The questionnaires are in the form of a spreadsheet for which only a basic knowledge of Excel is required. Previous participants have indicated that the data collection exercise is easy and the written guidance helpful.

The data collection questionnaire, detailed guidance on completing the questionnaire and frequently asked questions are available on the SITRA website (www.sitra.org.uk) Further information is also available on the NIHE website in the SP section.

The timetable for the 2009 benchmarking exercise is as follows:

Questionnaire and guidance notes available on SITRA website from 1st September 2009.

All returns must be emailed to SPBMHouseMark@cipfa.org.uk no later than the 2nd November 2009.

Reports will be sent to participants in December 2009.

If you have any further questions about the benchmarking exercise please contact us.

Policy & Strategy Team

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Meet the Teams

Southern Area Team



Who Are We?

The Southern Team was set up in April 2008 as part of the restructuring of SP and comprises Eamon Mullan and Joe Quinn. Both have a wide range of housing experience and have been actively involved in the implementation of SP.

The Southern Team covers the Southern Trust area and includes Armagh, Craigavon, Portadown, Lurgan, Newry, Dungannon and Banbridge.

Within the Southern area there are approximately 106 schemes which include 10 floating support services. There are 32 providers responsible for these schemes and the Southern Area accounts for £8.5m of the SP budget; represents 13% of the overall budget.

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Identification of Need/Priorities

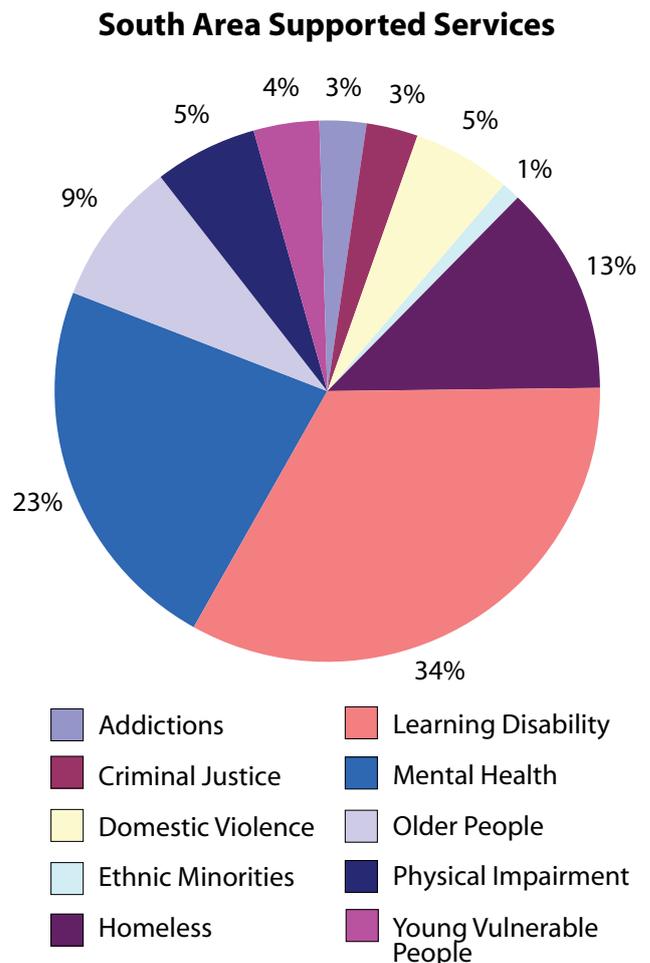
The Southern Team are represented on the Southern ASPP (SASSP). There are some overlaps with the Western Health and Social Care Trust in some schemes within the Enniskillen area, part of the Housing Executives Southern Area.

The Southern Team are undertaking a strategic review of the full range of floating support services in their area. As part of the review, scheme providers have requested the establishment of a floating support forum which will provide an opportunity to discuss operational and strategic issues relevant to the services. SP are currently finalising plans for this forum to meet.

What's New

A number of pipeline schemes have been realised during the last couple of years including in 2008/09, Ardaveen Manor, Bessbrook, Newry (learning disability):

SP Funding by Client Group



Homeless schemes at Castlehill Market Square, Dungannon, Castle Erne, Enniskillen and in 2009/10, Mental Health supported living scheme at Thomas Street, Portadown.

Progress continues to be made in relation to services designed to meet strategic priorities for a number of client groups all endorsed by the SASSP. With the resources currently available SP is continuing to work closely with its partners to bring forward several new services both accommodation based and floating support.

The new Contract Management arrangements will be implemented in the Southern Area by January 2010 following the Stakeholder event in Armagh in October 2009

Communication

The Southern SP team is also represented on the following groups which allow for greater partnership working and aim to provide better services and make better use of resources; The Adult Protection Forum; Joint Commissioning for Leaving and After Care Services and Learning Disability project team meetings.

SP Finance Team



Who are we?

The Finance Team has a wide range of experience in housing, SP and accountancy. It is led by the SP Accountant, John Graham FCA, and includes John Bond and Nicholas McGrath.

What do we do?

The Finance Team collects and reviews financial information from service providers as part of accreditation, value for money analysis and contract management arrangements. The financial analysis is used to support the Area Teams in the application of the contract management framework. We also monitor expenditure on schemes against the approved SP budget.

What's new?

Only 7 service providers are still to be accredited with 9 providers accredited in the last 12 months. This shows progress compared to September 2008, when there were 16 unaccredited service providers.

	Provider Organisations (2009)	% SP funding (2009)	% SP funding (2008)
Current provider organisations	117	100%	100%
Provider organisations meeting accreditation standards	110	95%	90%
Accreditations in progress	7	5%	10%

All service providers are required to provide confirmation that they have a risk management strategy and a fraud response plan in place whether or not they are currently undergoing accreditation/re-accreditation or not.

Monitoring of the 2007/08 annual financial statements for providers and scheme management accounts for individual services has almost been completed and a request for the 2008/09 financial information is being prepared. Service providers are reminded that the funding agreement has a requirement to disclose SP funding as restricted in the annual financial statements and this will be required for all 2008/09 audited accounts.

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Stakeholder Event - North East Area



As part of the SP Communications Strategy annual stakeholder events are being held in each of the five NIHE areas. The focus of these events has been on the developments within the SP programme and modernising of services.

Presentations were given by a variety of stakeholders highlighting the changes in the delivery of SP, its services and commissioning. Sinead Twomey (SP Lead Officer – NE Area) outlined the new Contract Management Framework which started in July. Raymond Nicholl (Director of Housing -Triangle Housing Association) gave an update of how their ways of working had changed through their involvement in the 'outcomes monitoring pilot' project and Kevin Keenan (Assistant Director of Social Services HSCNI) provided an overview of the SP commissioning arrangements and the challenges that lie ahead. Kevin has written the following article for Spotlight, elaborating on his presentation.

The effective delivery of health and social services relies heavily on a range of inter-agency partnership arrangements which give credence to the dictum about the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. Supporting People has been one of the most significant redefinitions of this method of working in recent years with its revising of the linkages, boundaries and interaction between housing, health and social services, voluntary organisations, housing providers and regulatory bodies.

In its attempt to bring greater objectivity, strategy and equity to a market often characterised by ad hoc and opportunistic development it has had notable successes as well as grappling with issues which have proved stubbornly resistant to improvement. The Supporting People Partnerships can be proud of the improved interagency working, the transparency with which they have operated and the commitment to needs based development priorities. The continued inability of government Departments to synchronise funding streams and the difficulty of encouraging some partner organisations and target groups to embrace and exploit the programme's potential to a greater degree remain major challenges.

A potentially greater challenge lies in the significant organisational upheaval with HPSS with the reduction in the number of Health and Social Care Trusts and the radical revision of commissioning arrangements within the new Health and Social Care Board. Further changes are envisaged with the creation of Local Commissioning Groups with lead responsibility for developing services to meet local needs. It is precisely at times like this that we need to recognise and retain the best elements of what we do, to take the opportunity to fine tune what isn't working for us but not to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Within the current Area Supporting People Partnerships and the NIHE led regional Commissioning Body a great deal of work has been done in trying to redraw the organisational 'architecture' to identify how we make it fit for purpose and to align it to any new organisational arrangements.

We are confident of being able to do so in a relatively seamless fashion and to remind and reinforce to our various partners why Supporting People provides the preferred model of jointly commissioning accommodation and support for many vulnerable people in our society. So, hold on to the baby, change the bathwater and keep washing.

Kevin Keenan
Assistant Director of Social Services HSCNI



CHNI/NIFHA Supporting People Project

The Supporting People project, jointly managed by NIFHA and CHNI, has changed significantly from April 09, but the core tasks of providing information, support and networking opportunities remain the same.

From its inception in 2002, the focus of the project was supporting Providers to manage the changes in commissioning, contracts and delivery that the introduction of the Supporting People programme brought in its wake. These changes were radical and often challenging. Many providers attended seminars and focus groups and benefited from the assistance and information provided.

Now, in 2009, the Supporting People framework is a familiar fixture. Providers have adapted to funding environment, and are comfortable with the Quality Standards expected. Concern remains particularly in regard to the impact of the base-lined budget and the global economic downturn. To this end, CHNI /NIFHA will deliver a responsive program in 2009/10, based on addressing specific issues and concerns in these areas.

CHNI/NIFHA no longer have Supporting People Development Officers to organise focus groups and other meetings. However, staff members of both organisations will be available to offer individual support and a programme of activities. In addition an extended accredited training calendar will be offered.

The first of the major pieces of work that CHNI will undertake started in early August, with the Options for Change seminars. These seminars looked at the implications of partnership working, and were presented in both Belfast and Derry. They were facilitated by Alan Cripps a renowned consultant who has been at the forefront of the development of partnership working in England. His breadth of knowledge was evident in the presentations and the feedback was very positive. It is intended that CHNI, in conjunction with NICVA and Supporting People, will enable interested organisations to further explore the potential benefits of partnership working by improving efficiency and effectiveness.

Should any organisations wish to consider professional consultancy services to explore their options for partnership, CHNI has founded a social economy business. REACH NI Ltd marries the services of experienced and effective consultancy for the voluntary

and private sector with the skills needed to deliver key services through the framework of voluntary organisations.

If you would like to explore how Reach NI could help your organisation work through change or tackle challenges, contact REACH NI Ltd directly by email info@reach-ni.co.uk or by telephoning Alison Upton or Margaret Henry on 079 6930 6931 for further information or look on the website at www.reach-ni.co.uk

NIFHA will be focussing on the future development of the Committee Representing Supporting People Providers (CRISPP) and examining how to strengthen and further promote Joint Management Agreements between Housing Associations and their voluntary sector partners.

For providers who have concerns about any other aspect of Supporting People, please contact either Ricky Rowledge 028 9024 6440 or Bernie Heery 028 7136 6363

Glossary of Terms

Accreditation – A process for assessing the viability and competence of an organisation and formally recognising their ability to provide housing support services

ASPP – Area Supporting People Partnership – There are 4 ASPPs which correspond to the Health Trust Areas. Membership consists of representatives from the Housing Executive, NI Probation Board, Health Trusts and the Health & Social Care Board. ASPPs are responsible for agreeing priorities, in their respective localities, to inform the commissioning of new supported housing and support services, in light of emerging strategic objectives, and for identifying unmet housing support needs in their area. e.g. (EASPP – Eastern Area Supporting People Partnership)

CLG – Communities and Local Government. The UK department that replaced the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, (ODPM). It has responsibility for promoting the building of more and better homes, reducing homelessness, regeneration, improving public services and tracking anti-social behaviour.

Distance Travelled Model – a support plan tool to measure the progress a client makes against a particular outcome so that progress can be judged on an ongoing basis.

HA – Housing Association

HouseMark – the Social Housing sector's leading provider of performance improvement services in England which aims to help social housing providers to improve performance and achieve value for money. (www.housemark.co.uk)

ICT – Information and Communications Technology

National Housing Federation – Body representing more than 1200 independent not-for-profit housing associations in England. They provide support and promote the work of housing associations and campaign for better housing and neighbourhoods (www.housing.org.uk)

NIHE – Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Outcomes Star – a distance travelled model developed for work with homeless people. (www.outcomesstarsystem.org.uk)

PQAG – Providers Quality Assurance Group
A group set up to provide assurance for the Modernising Services Project from a provider's perspective.

Provider – Organisations or sole operators who are contracted by the SP team to provide a housing related support service

QAF – Quality Assessment Framework. This framework defines quality standards against which providers carry out a self assessment of their services. This self assessment is then validated by SP to ensure services meet minimum standards

QAF2 – Refreshed version of the QAF introduced in England in April 2009

SITRA – an umbrella organisation for the housing, care and support sector and is the leading provider of training within the sector. (www.sitra.org)

SMART objectives – translation of aims into objectives which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound.

SP – Supporting People

SPIN System – bespoke ICT system developed for Mulholland After Care Services

SPOCC – The core ICT system to be used by the NIHE as the administrators of the SP programme which will enable ongoing administration including the processing of payments to providers, maintenance of funding agreements, performance monitoring and contract management.

SPOCC.Net – ICT system which will provide secure online link for data access and exchange between providers and the SP team.

Stakeholder – *People or organisations that form part of the SP programme. Stakeholders share or contribute to the aims of the SP programme*

UNOCINI – Understanding the needs of Children in Northern Ireland. An inter-agency assessment framework developed in Northern Ireland to provide guidance to support staff to better meet the needs of children and their families through a comprehensive process for assessment leading to action. It also provides guidance about when it's appropriate to refer a child to children's social services and how that's done.



SP Website Updates

Check out the SP section of the NIHE website at www.nihe.gov.uk where you can find the latest news in our 'What's New' section.

Over the coming months, the following will be available:

November 09

Provider Satisfaction Survey

December 09

Draft QAF 2 Information will be available to download

As part of our commitment to improve communication with providers we will continue to develop the website.

If you would like to make suggestions or comments about the website, please contact James Taylor in the SP Modernising Services Project Team on (028) 9031 8820 or

james.taylor@nihe.gov.uk

For the next Issue of the SP Spotlight

Are you a provider and would you like your service to feature in the next issue of the SP Spotlight?

Do you have any suggestions for articles in future issues?

Please let us know what you think of the SP Spotlight and how it can be improved.

Contact Pamela Stevenson

pamela.stevenson@nihe.gov.uk

(028) 9031 8881

Or email:

supportingpeople@nihe.gov.uk

If you know the team member you wish to contact, please use the direct contact details that are provided in this newsletter or on our website. Alternatively you can write to the SP team at:

The Housing Centre
2 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8PB

**Housing
Executive**

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