
SUPPORTING PEOPLE ANNUAL REPORT

2023-24

Housing
Executive

supporting**people** 

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Welcome by Chief Executive

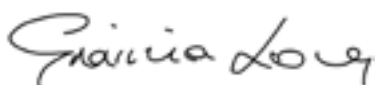
I am delighted to present this year's Annual Report outlining the operational and financial performance of the Supporting People Programme throughout 2023/24 together with information on the development, delivery, performance, quality assurance and management of the Supporting People (SP) Programme.

We proudly celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the Supporting People Programme in 2023/24. This milestone presented the opportunity to showcase the numerous positive outcomes for our service users through our collaborative work with provider organisations and statutory partners. The engagement campaign included visits to Supporting People services by the Department for Communities' Permanent Secretary, Colum Boyle along with the Supporting People team, a social media campaign, a Supporting People film, and a feature article in AgendaNi. The celebration campaign culminated in an engaging stakeholder event at Stormont Parliament Buildings. It was fantastic to see how the campaign was successful in raising the profile and importance of the Supporting People Programme in Northern Ireland.

Throughout the year the Supporting People team and our partners made significant progress in achieving the actions from the Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan 2022-2025. Operationally our Contract Management teams continued to oversee and monitor the quality of services.

In this year's report, we have again incorporated a selection of service users and support services stories to highlight the positive impact of the Programme and showcase the support that is given to service users to help them live as independently as possible.

I would like to thank all our partners, and the Supporting People team for enabling the delivery of our 2023/24 objectives. I would also like to commend everyone in the sector for their commitment to the people we serve.



Grainia Long
Chief Executive

1.0. Introduction to Supporting People

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), as the strategic housing authority for Northern Ireland, has the responsibility for securing the provision of housing-related support services and takes administrative responsibility for delivering the Supporting People (SP) Programme (introduced in April 2003).

The Programme is delivered on behalf of the Department for Communities (DfC), in partnership with the Department of Health (DoH) and the Department of Justice (DoJ). The Programme awards grant-funding to Supporting People provider organisations to enable them to deliver services that provide housing-related support and assistance to service users, thus enabling them to live more independently. Housing-related support enables vulnerable people to develop and maintain the skills necessary to live as independently as possible in their own home.

Supporting People delivers housing-related support services under the [Housing Support Services \(2002 Order\) \(Commencement\) Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2003](#), Articles Three and Four of which empower Supporting People to provide grant funding to eligible housing support services; and the [Housing Support Services Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2003](#).

The Department for Communities (DfC) allocates the annual budget for the Programme, has overarching policy and legislative responsibility for Supporting People and provides an oversight role for Supporting People.

The Supporting People Programme provides:

- Short-term accommodation-based support for those people in housing need (e.g. homeless hostels, refuges for victims of domestic violence).
- Long-term support to enable someone to sustain a home (e.g. in accommodation-based services where the person has a tenancy and housing-related support is provided to assist the person to maintain their tenancy).
- Short-term support through a floating support service to assist vulnerable adults with housing-related support tasks to help them to maintain independence in their own home, regardless of tenure type (typically for up to 2 years in duration).
- For some service users with more enduring or complex needs, support which is delivered on an ongoing, peripatetic basis in their own home.

1.1. Supporting People at a Glance



Almost **20,000** people supported to live independently in 2023/24



Over
800
Housing Support
Services

Delivered by
80
providers

Across
15
Primary Client
Groups

1.2. Purpose, Aims, and Values

The purpose of the SP Programme is:

“To provide housing support services to vulnerable people, to enable them to live as independently as possible in the community.”

This supports the Housing Executive’s values of:

**“Making a difference through Fairness,
Passion and Expertise.”**

The Housing Executive’s values provide the cultural framework from which Supporting People can direct our own purpose, aims and vision.

The aims are to:

- Achieve a better quality of life for vulnerable people to live more independently and maintain their tenancies.
- Provide housing support services to prevent problems that can often lead to hospitalisation, institutional care, or homelessness.
- Help to smooth the transition to independent living for those leaving an institutionalised environment.

2.0. Financial Performance

2.1. Financial Analysis

In 2023/24 a total of £78.75m was made available to Providers, primarily funded through the Supporting People budget allocation and successful recoupment of historical Supporting People reserves. Expenditure on Floating Support from 1st April 2023 to 31 March 2024 was £14.07m, which was 17.9% of the total Supporting People Programme expenditure.



The SP Programme Budget is managed across four thematic areas:

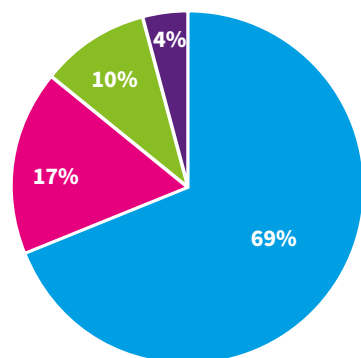
Disability & Mental Health
Homelessness

■ 41.4%
■ 39.6%

Older People
Young People

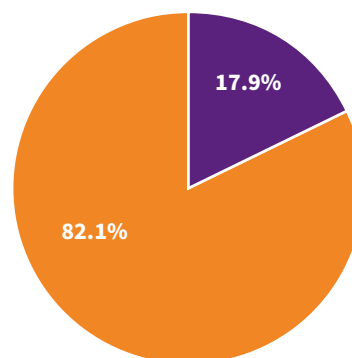
■ 11.2%
■ 7.8%

The current funding split by Provider type is classified by the Charity and Voluntary sector, Housing Associations, Health and Care Trusts (HSCs), and Private and others:



■ **Charity/Voluntary**
■ **Housing Associations**
■ **Health and Social Care Trusts**
■ **Private and others**

The funding split by service type is categorised into Floating Support and Non-Floating Support services (including Accommodation-Based, Home Improvement Agencies and Peripatetic Services):



■ **Floating Support**
■ **Non-Floating Support**

Supporting People carry out validation visits each year on a selected sample of Providers (selection process is via a risk-based methodology), to provide assurance that provider financial returns have been accurately completed by Providers in terms of Supporting People income and expenditure. The Finance Team performed ten remote Financial Validation Visits in the 2023/24 year, in line with the Supporting People Operational Guidelines.

2.1.1. Budget Variance

The variance between units budgeted, and occupied in Block Subsidy Variable payments, is as a result of the movement in the numbers of service users and their eligibility for Supporting People grant funding (determined by Housing Benefit eligibility). For further information please see the Department for Communities [Supporting People Policy Framework](#).

Scheme Type	Budget (Pre-uplift) £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000	Comment
Block Gross	27,407	28,868	1,461	Variance mainly due to additional non-recurrent payment (March 24)
Block Subsidy Variable	31,626	34,366	2,740	Variance mainly due to additional non-recurrent payment (March 24) as well as variance between units budgeted and occupied.
Block Subsidy Fixed (SNMA)	1,004	1,443	439	Variance due to some back-dated payments.
Floating Support	12,829	14,071	1,242	Variance mainly due to additional non-recurrent payment (March 24)
Total Before Reserve Recoupments	72,866	78,748	5,882	
Recoupment of Reserves	0	(4,135)	(4,135)	Recoupment of historic and current Reserves.
Total net of Reserve Recoupments	72,866	74,613	(1,747)	

2.2. Supporting People Non-recurring funding 2023/24

The Department for Communities (DfC) facilitated additional non-recurring funding of £2.725m to be made available to the NIHE to help address cost pressures experienced by Supporting People and Homeless service provider organisations.

The 2023/2024 Funding Agreement terms and conditions applied to this additional funding; therefore, the funding could only be used to meet the cost of Supporting People eligible expenditure incurred in the 2023/24 financial year, any unspent funding will be recouped in the 2024/25 year.

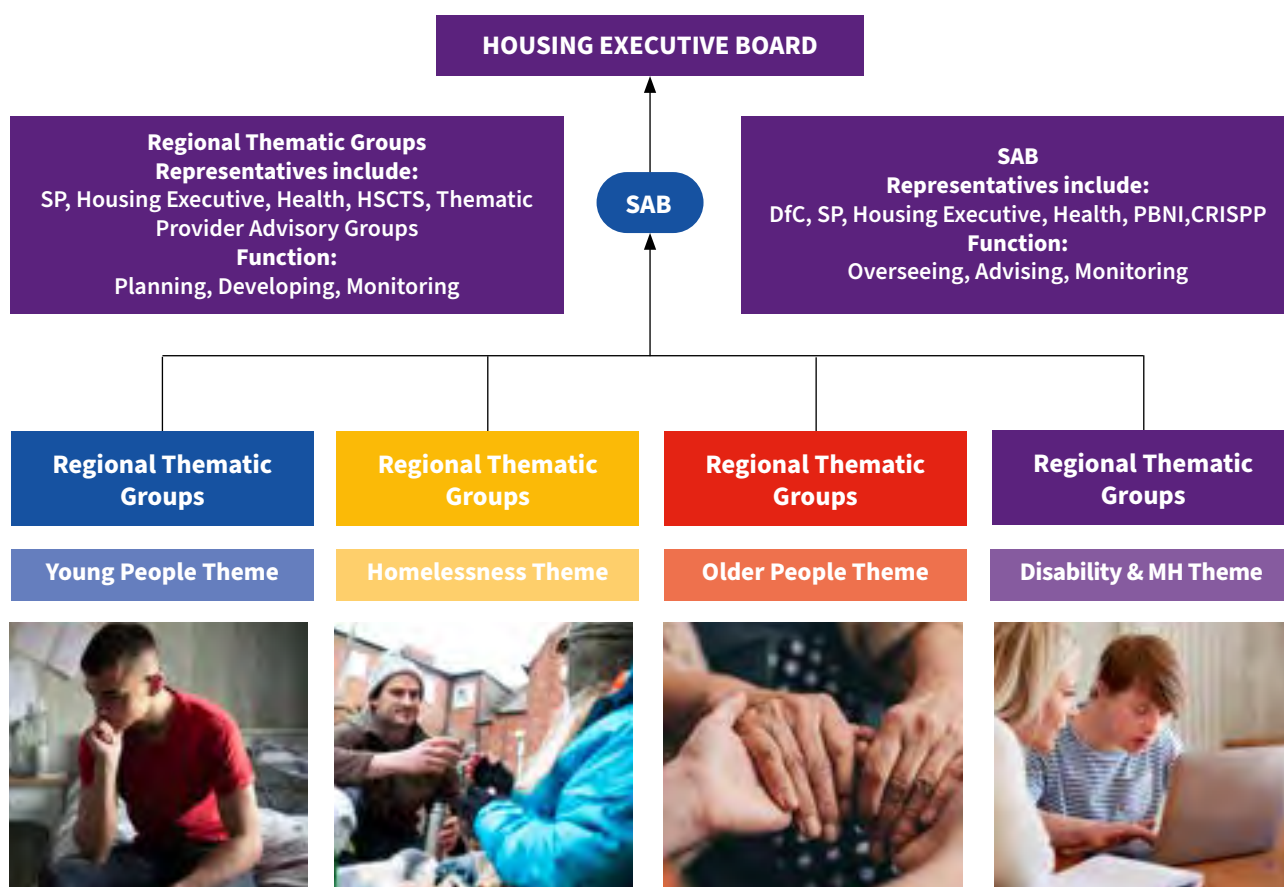
3.0. Governance and Reporting Structures

3.1. Strategic Advisory Board (SAB)

3.1.1. Functions of the Strategic Advisory Board

The principal functions of the Strategic Advisory Board (SAB) are to advise the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) Board of the strategic funding priorities of the Supporting People programme in line with the overarching policy, operational strategy, budget allocation and relevant governance arrangements. The Strategic Advisory Board provides assurance that processes and practices are fair, transparent, and equitable; that Supporting People grant-making policies are clearly defined and that there is proper guidance and accountability arrangements in place with all Supporting People strategic partners. The Strategic Advisory Board is supported in its decision-making by the four Regional Thematic Groups. In the year 2023/24 a total of four Strategic Advisory Board meetings took place.

Fig. 3.1.1. The structure of Strategic Advisory Board and Regional Thematic Groups



3.1.2. The Strategic Advisory Board Achievements 2023/24

The focus of the Strategic Advisory Board during 2023/2024 included:

- Making recommendations relating to business cases and proposals for expenditure.
- Endorsement of five business cases brought forward by the Regional Thematic Groups (RTGs).
- Oversight of the Regional Thematic Groups.
- Providing opportunities to build partnerships and share information, based on a mutual understanding of respective roles.
- Advising and guiding on existing, planned, or emerging policy and strategy matters.

3.2. Regional Thematic Groups (RTGs)

The Regional Thematic Groups are tasked with identifying, assessing, and prioritising housing support needs through contract management participation. Per the RTG's Terms of Reference, meetings are held at quarterly intervals throughout the year. This year a total of 16 RTG meetings were held across the four thematic groups of Disability and Mental Health, Older People, Young People and Homelessness.

3.2.1. Regional Thematic Group - Disability and Mental Health

The focus of the Disability and Mental Health Regional Thematic Group in 2023/24 involved:

- Consideration and progression of a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for accommodation-based services, which was endorsed by the Disability and Mental Health RTG to proceed to a full business case to be submitted to the Strategic Advisory Board.
- Discussions around resettlement, and the recommendations arising from the report commissioned by the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) on the Independent Review on Resettlement published in September 2022. In particular members considered potential impacts to the Supporting People budget in relation to the resettlement of delayed discharges from Muckamore Abbey Hospital (MAH).
- Discussions around a review of pipeline business cases and SOC's that had been previously endorsed at RTG and their progress.
- Discussions around the increase in delayed discharges and the lack of suitable accommodation across all accommodation types and how this has resulted in younger adults under 65 years with complex physical/health issues being placed in services specifically for older people.

3.2.2. Regional Thematic Group - Older People

The focus of the Older People Regional Thematic Group in 2023/24 involved:

- A presentation on Housing and Health by the Housing Executive.
- Presentation by Alpha Housing Association on the Support Connect Social Prescribing pilot which was funded by the Provider Innovation Fund.
- A presentation on the Access Elemental Social Prescribing System; which is also being used in the Support Connect Social Prescribing Pilot. The Elemental platform can be used to drive quality, lower risk, and save money with social prescribing at the core.
- Discussions around the Fundamental Review of Allocations.

3.2.3. Regional Thematic Group - Young People

The focus of the Young People Regional Thematic Group in 2023/24 involved:

- Progression of the Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan 2022-2025 actions (full details in section 3.3.).
- The Strategic Review of Jointly Commissioned Supported Accommodation Projects for Young People (full details in section 4.4.4.).
- Partnership working in place to ensure the delivery of pilot projects to accommodate unaccompanied minors (UASAC), a growing cohort within the region. This has involved succinct planning and interagency working with NIHE, Trusts, Strategic Planning and Performance Group and Supporting People.
- Progression of the provision of accommodation units for the Housing First for Youth model.
- Attendance at a workshop, which was facilitated by Mullholland Aftercare Services (MACS) who are an RTG member and an SP provider, and delivered by Llamu, who are a provider organisation in Wales, that are experienced in youth homelessness prevention and who are involved in research and modelling work within the youth homelessness prevention sector.
- Consideration of the issues and pressures such as difficulties with recruitment and retention of staff, service users presenting with increasing complex support needs, long waiting lists for supplementary support services and stagnant move-on due to limitations with the private rental market and demand on social housing.

3.2.4. Regional Thematic Group - Homelessness

The focus of the Homelessness Regional Thematic Group in 2023/24 involved:

- Endorsement and approval of additional funding for Floating Support for refugees. This service, provided by Extern, is crucial given the overall increase the number of refugees and provides housing support for refugees once they receive their leave to remain status from the Home Office.

- Endorsement and approval of additional funding for extended opening hours in Annsgate female night shelter. The Welcome Organisation have reported that of all the women who use Annsgate, 80% have been presenting and engaging with staff between the extended hours of 6.30 pm and 10 pm. The feedback has been that contact during these hours in the evening make post-10pm engagement more effective.
- Consideration of other initiatives to create additional temporary accommodation and to ensure existing units are used in the most effective way, including additional units in Flush Park, Lisburn, a new building and a floating support service in Saul Street, Downpatrick and an extension to the Ormeau Centre, Belfast by transferring 12 resettlement apartments in Calder Fountain, Belfast.
- Discussion of the issues and pressures such as difficulties with recruitment and retention of staff, service users presenting with increasing complex support needs, long waiting lists for supplementary support services and stagnant move-on due to limitations with the private rental market and demand on social housing. Some providers have also raised that they are experiencing a significant increase in operating costs such as insurance.
- RTG were updated on the SP review of floating support provision for travellers as an outworking of the Traveler's working Group.
- Continued establishment and development of relationships with new and existing partners. In 2023/24, three new Homeless providers were nominated to the CRISPP Committee and links were established with the Adult Protection Board via the Strategic Planning and Performance Group.

3.3. Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan

A reporting framework for the effective monitoring and reporting of the delivery of the strategic actions was developed in November 2022 to monitor and track the achievement of actions under the four strategic priorities of the Strategic Plan:

- COVID-19 recovery.
- Working towards closing the 14% gap between need and supply.
- Innovation.
- Strengthening relationships and collaboration with Supporting People providers.

Fig. 3.3.1. Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan – Update on Year Two Actions

Objective 1 Drive recovery from COVID-19, prevent lasting adverse impacts from the pandemic, and positively reform services by targeting services towards those in need.			
Action	Target met in full	Target met in part	Target not met
<p>1. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Throughout the life of the strategy, we will run two annual competitions, based on non-recurrent funds, for providers to submit business proposals for Covid recovery. ££¹</p> <p>This action cannot proceed at the current time due to budget unavailability.</p>			✓
<p>2. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Support flexibility in contracts, and welcome reconfigurations and service development proposals including those to increase floating support / peripatetic places; in particular those identifying efficiencies and focusing on homelessness, mental health, young people experiencing homelessness and older people.</p> <p>Older People Thematic area:</p> <p>Progress has been made in exploring funding flexibility and a standard payment for sheltered accommodation services for older people.</p> <p>A new Hub & Spoke model providing an additional 12 units of floating support to older people services continues to be piloted in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) area. SP worked in partnership with Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) to remodel dementia services and this will be carried forward into Year 3.</p> <p>Disability and Mental Health Thematic area:</p> <p>SP are awaiting an updated proposal from a provider in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) in relation to a Mental Health Service involving a part reconfiguration of accommodation service into a floating support service. The reconfiguration will ensure better value for money and is revenue neutral.</p> <p>A Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for a reconfiguration of a current Learning Disability service in Belfast to address voids from shared to single occupancy has been progressed. Building work on the project has however been delayed.</p>		✓	

Table continues overleaf

¹ ££ = budget required*

<p>A proposal has been received for services in the NHSCT area. This will involve moving from shared to self-contained accommodation which will benefit the current clients is hoped will futureproof these services. Both proposals are revenue neutral.</p> <p>A business case to add 2 units to a Mental Health service in the BHSCT area was approved at the Strategic Advisory Board (SAB) in September 2023, however this is currently unable to progress due to funding issues.</p> <p>A business case for a new 6-unit Learning Disability service in the BHSCT was approved at SAB in September 2023, however this is currently unable to progress due to funding issues.</p> <p>Young People Thematic area:</p> <p>Two proposals to reconfigure two separate young people services in the Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT) area have been assessed. The proposal would achieve better value for money for SP and provides a more strategic model to address needs to both homelessness and care-experienced young people. The proposal will bring greater stability financially and the bed split between SP and WHSCT is more appropriate to address need and demand for both the Housing Executive and Health.</p> <p>Discussions have been initiated between SP and a provider in the Western area to potentially reconfigure one service to enable the expansion of Shared Tenancies for Young People in the Derry City area. This will be carried forward into Year 3.</p>			
<p style="text-align: center;">Objective 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Work towards closing the 14% gap between need and supply, this will be underpinned by evidence from the Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA), prioritising services for Older people; People with Mental health issues; Single people with alcohol and/or drug problems experiencing homelessness; and women at risk of domestic abuse.</p>			
Action	Target met in full	Target met in part	Target not met
<p>3. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Maximise administrative efficiencies by implementing a new SP Data Collection Payment and Reporting System and replace outdated SPOCC system.</p> <p>The SPOCC Replacement Project continues to progress with the new supplier. The system is anticipated to be operational by July 2024.</p>		✓	
<p>4. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Open two annual competitions for providers to submit business proposals in line with SNA priorities.</p> <p>This action cannot proceed at the current time due to budget unavailability.</p>			✓
<p>5. In years two and three</p> <p>Use the evidence from SROI and in partnership with health, improve services to meet the needs of homeless people with Drug and Alcohol problems and those with dual diagnosis. ££²</p>		✓	

Table continues overleaf

² ££ = budget required*

In collaboration with the Public Health Agency, a pilot needle exchange service commenced in 2023 in four temporary accommodation hostels within the Homelessness Thematic. The Public Health Agency provided £1,000 per service as a one-off payment for this pilot.			
<p>6. In years two and three</p> <p>Remodel services where appropriate to meet the needs of single homeless service users.</p> <p>SP have initiated discussions with NIHE Housing Services to progress the scaling up of the Housing First model in support of the NIHE corporate priority.</p> <p>A Task & Finish Group on Accommodation Solutions within the NIHE has been established. SP, in partnership with NIHE Homeless Policy, to consider how best to remodel/reconfigure existing services to meet the needs of single homeless clients in Derry/ Londonderry. This will be carried forward into year 3.</p>		✓	
<p>7. In years two and three</p> <p>Develop new services and enhanced delivery for people at risk of domestic abuse. ££³</p> <p>A homeless service for women experiencing homelessness opened in Belfast in March 2023.</p>	✓		
<p>8. In years two and three</p> <p>In collaboration with Health, identify gaps in mental health provision and increase services, in accordance with need. ££⁴</p> <p>The review of a Mental Health Floating Support scoping exercise for the Western area noted that there are no Mental Health floating support services in this Trust area. The review recommended that floating support services be included in pipeline development via SP Commissioning processes, subject to additional budget allocation. The 2024/25 Budget Bid includes provision for additional floating support within emerging strategic issues.</p>		✓	
<p>9. In years two and three</p> <p>Work with statutory partners to support resettlement of people with a learning disability or poor mental health currently residing in hospitals. ££⁵</p> <p>A Strategic Outline Case (SOC) from BHSCT requesting revenue and capital funding was received in June 2023 for the discharge of patients from Muckamore Abbey Hospital. SP are having ongoing discussions with the Department for Communities (DfC) and the Department of Health (DoH) regarding progression and affordability.</p>		✓	
<p>10. In years two and three</p> <p>Work with partners in Health to scope future housing support needs for individuals with a learning disability, currently living with family for whom a Supported People-funded service may be appropriate in the future.</p>		✓	

Table continues overleaf

3 ££ = budget required*

4 ££ = budget required*

5 ££ = budget required*

A new Learning Disability service has been created for those transitioning from living with aging carers in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) area. The service is an extension to an existing SP funded service and provides 3 additional units of accommodation in a newly acquired bungalow adjacent to the current service.			
<p>11. In years two and three</p> <p>Working with stakeholders to undertake a review of floating support funding for Traveller support groups to improve housing outcomes for the Irish Traveller community.</p> <p>A report has been completed by SP and shared with the Irish Traveller Inter Divisional Group.</p> <p>A business case is to be developed by the Housing Executive's Traveller Unit and submitted via SP Commissioning processes. This will be subject to additional budget allocation. The 2024/25 Budget Bid includes provision for additional floating support within emerging strategic issues.</p>	✓		
<p>12. In years two and three</p> <p>Support the implementation of the strategic actions from the Strategic Review of Temporary Accommodation including the need for specialist accommodation-based services. ££⁶</p> <p>This action cannot proceed at the current time due to budget unavailability.</p>			✓
<p>13. In years two and three</p> <p>Consult and engage with partners on viable solutions to address voids due to sharing issues in disability and mental health services and implement solutions identified.</p> <p>A Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for a reconfiguration of the building of a current Learning Disability service in Belfast to address voids from shared to single occupancy has been progressed and SP are now awaiting build to commence; however, building work has been delayed.</p> <p>A proposal has been received for services in the NHSCT area. This will involve moving from shared to self-contained accommodation. This will address issues found with shared accommodation and benefit the current clients. It is also hoped that this will futureproof the services. Both proposals are revenue neutral.</p>		✓	
<p>14. In years two and three</p> <p>Increase the number of floating support units for older people.</p> <p>A new Hub & Spoke model providing an additional 12 units of floating support to older people services continues to be piloted in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) area.</p> <p>The Social Prescribing Model was funded by PIF in 2023 and provided floating support to older people in the Belfast Area.</p>		✓	
SP are actively raising awareness and providing enhanced information for older customers on key services including Floating Support by advertising services through our social media outlets.			

Table continues overleaf

6 ££ = budget required*

<p>15. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Use the SNA to prioritise funding for additional floating support, peripatetic and accommodation-based services.</p> <p>This action cannot proceed at the current time due to budget unavailability.</p>			✓
<p>16. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Increase the number of people who are in receipt of a SP funded service by 1000 people.</p> <p>This action cannot proceed at the current time due to budget unavailability.</p>			✓
<p>17. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Increase efficiency by reducing the number of Providers by 10% by facilitating the current trend of Provider mergers.</p> <p>During 2023/24 two providers under the Disability Thematic group completed a merger.</p>		✓	
<p>18. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Work with Providers to develop efficiencies from composite contracts. Target a 15% reduction in schemes by focusing on bundling numerous low-cost support schemes.</p> <p>The Disability and Mental Health Contract Management Team brought in a composite contract that reduced four services with 38 units into one. This reduces the administrative burden of performance, financial and outcome reporting, and monitoring for both SP and the provider.</p> <p>Work is progressing to explore opportunities for the bundling of services. In the Disability and Mental Health Thematic Area, 61 services have been identified which would result in a reduction to 21 services. The Older People Thematic identified a large number of potential contracts which could be amalgamated.</p> <p>In the Young People Thematic Area work is progressing to test the bundling of floating support services, which should allow for greater flexibility on delivery and service operational activities. This will be carried forward into Year 3.</p>		✓	
<p>19. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Work with providers to achieve better value for money.</p> <p>SP and the Housing Executive's Housing Benefit Unit supported Providers to increase their Housing Benefit income, resulting in an increase in uptake of Housing Benefit funding to Providers. In 2022/23, 78% of providers requested a Housing Benefit rent review and this increased to 86% as of February 2024. Work is on-going to encourage the 8 remaining SP providers who have not submitted a request for rent review in 2023/24 to submit a rent review request and maximise uptake among Providers. This includes sending a reminder letter to all relevant SP providers at the start of February in advance of the new financial year in April 2024.</p> <p>Work has commenced to update the Guidance on the Apportionment of Expenditure document 2012 with a view to providing further clarity on the cost apportionment criteria.</p>		✓	

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Objective 3 Work with Supporting People providers, to invest in service innovation to achieve greater value for money and better outcomes for service users.			
Action	Target met in full	Target met in part	Target not met
<p>20. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Work with providers to establish a forum for SP engagement, service development, staff training and cross-provider benchmarking and information sharing.</p> <p>SP has hosted a series of liaison meetings with the Chief Executives of the Housing Associations. Work is ongoing with regards to liaison with CRISPP, ARC and Homeless Connect to progress engagement and information exchange.</p> <p>The Strategic Review of Jointly Commissioned Supported Accommodation (JCSA) Projects for Young People Report has established a Steering Group to oversee the recommendations from the review.</p> <p>Established in Year 1:</p> <p>5 Local Planning Groups within four of the five Health and Social Care Trust areas. These are multi-agency groups to oversee quality and performance and develop actions to address needs and demand for young people. A Provider Forum has been established. Joint training between the Housing Executive and Health and Social Care Trust staff has commenced and will continue into Year 3.</p>		✓	
<p>21. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Work with providers to establish a framework for service users to be engaged in shaping services to reflect their needs. This may include annual surveys, representative forums, or further development of service user outcomes.</p> <p>Discussions have been initiated with CRISPP, NIFHA and ARC to establish a method for SP to engage with SP service users in a meaningful manner.</p>		✓	
<p>22. In year one and two</p> <p>In years one and two we will work with providers to co-produce research on long term impacts of Covid on SP services.</p> <p>The Housing Executive's Research Department have confirmed the submission of the 2023/24 Research Programme which includes the SP research proposal. This is subject to budget availability.</p>		✓	
<p>23. In year two</p> <p>In year two we will focus the innovation fund on Covid recovery, collaboration, resilience, and capacity building.</p> <p>This action cannot proceed at the current time due to budget unavailability.</p>			✓

Table continues overleaf

<p>24. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Drive efficiencies and prioritise projects which propose longevity of outcomes through short term investment/seed money to build into their own structures.</p> <p>This action cannot proceed at the current time due to budget unavailability.</p>			✓
<p>25. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Drive collaboration between providers.</p> <p>SP has hosted a series of liaison meetings with the Chief Executives of the Housing Associations. Work is ongoing with regards to liaison with CRISSP, ARC and Homeless Connect to progress engagement and information exchange.</p>		✓	
<p>26. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Implement funding flexibility and a standard payment for sheltered accommodation services. ££⁷</p> <p>Progress has been made in exploring funding flexibility and a standard payment for sheltered accommodation services for older people.</p>		✓	
<p>27. In year two and three</p> <p>Develop and remodel dementia, frail elderly, and disability services to address voids. ££⁸</p> <p>A Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for a reconfiguration of the building of a current Learning Disability service in Belfast to address voids from shared to single occupancy has been progressed and SP are now awaiting build to commence; however, building work has been delayed.</p>		✓	
<p>28. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Implement the findings of the Review of Jointly funded Young People Services.</p> <p>The Strategic Review of Jointly Commissioned Supported Accommodation (JCSA) Projects for Young People Report was launched in October 2023 and a Steering Group was established to drive the implementation of the recommendations. The Year 1 Action Plan has been updated to reflect completed actions around the 23 recommendations and this is ongoing.</p> <p>Local Area Groups for Young People have been established and are active in four of the five Health & Social Care Trusts as recommended in in the JCSA Review; A Terms of Reference has been agreed by SP and the Strategic Planning and Performance Group and the Local Area Groups are to be chaired by Assistant Directors from Health and Social Care.</p>		✓	
<p>29. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Throughout the life of the strategy, we will ring-fence £1million non-recurrent monies annually for innovation. ££⁹</p> <p>Funding was unavailable for the PIF in 22/23 and 23/24. SP has included the PIF in the bid for funding in 24/25.</p>			✓

Table continues overleaf

7 ££ = budget required*

8 ££ = budget required*

9 ££ = budget required*

<p>30. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Develop models of support for young people experiencing homelessness including improved emergency accommodation options, Housing First, Night stop and shared tenancies. ££¹⁰</p> <p>A Shared Tenancies service for young people has been extended to 40 units.</p> <p>Discussions have commenced in Year 2 with a provider to potentially reconfigure a service to deliver Shared Tenancies in the Western area, this is progressing and will be carried forward to Year 3.</p>		✓	
<p>31. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Work with providers to continue to review and research models of support for older people including Extra Care.</p> <p>This action cannot proceed at the current time due to budget unavailability, but discussions have been held with a provider in the SEHSCT as a solution to clients presenting with increased complex needs</p>			✓
<p>32. In year one and two</p> <p>Work with providers to invest in service innovation to achieve better outcomes for service users.</p> <p>A proposal under the Young People Thematic Area is being progressed in the Western area to develop step-down provision within an existing service, as part of the overall jointly funded supported accommodation model. The objective is to have a service which meets the needs of young people within a continuum of support and create enhanced throughput thereby generating more opportunities for the Housing Executive and Health and Social Care to access supported accommodation. This is the first such model and has been carried forward into Year 3.</p>		✓	
<p>Objective 4</p> <p>Strengthen relationships across health, criminal justice, and housing to achieve greater collaboration and sharing of risk with the aim of achieving better outcomes for service users and generating greater value from public funds to enhance available resources for housing support.</p>			
Action	Target met in full	Target met in part	Target not met
<p>33. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Use existing collaboration in place through Community Planning Partnerships to develop pilots between health, housing, social care, and justice organisations to share resources and greater target support, such as the Strategic Leadership Group in Belfast, which is developing a Programme to target intensive support towards those experiencing homelessness, and with complex needs, including drug and alcohol dependency.</p>		✓	

Table continues overleaf

¹⁰ ££ = budget required*

<p>SP, in October 2023, hosted a Stakeholder Meeting with the DoJ, Probation Board and Housing Services to explore collaboration opportunities to improve support for prison leavers entering the community.</p> <p>In July 2023, the Housing Executive attended the Strategic Planning and Performance Group Learning Disability Summit on resettlement. It was agreed that, following attendance at the summit on Resettlement, SP will engage in a strategic approach via an Action Plan.</p> <p>Local Area Groups for Young People have been established and are active in four of the five Health & Social Care Trusts as recommended in in the JCSA Review; A Terms of Reference has been agreed by SP and the Strategic Planning and Performance Group and the Local Area Groups are to be chaired by Assistant Directors from Health and Social Care.</p>			
<p>34. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Throughout the life of the strategy, make bids for additional funding including through monitoring rounds when appropriate.</p> <p>The monitoring round was available in 2022/23, however no monitoring rounds have been available in 2023/24. The budget bid for 2024/25 includes a request for additional funding.</p>			✓
<p>35. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Throughout the life of the strategy. we will use the SNA and findings in Social Return on Investment to inform bids for additional funding.</p> <p>The monitoring round was available in 2022/23, however no monitoring rounds have been available in 2023/24. The budget bid for 2024/25 includes a request for additional funding evidenced by the Strategic Needs Assessment and the Social Return On Investment findings.</p>			✓
<p>36. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Throughout the life of the strategy, work with DfC to enable greater collaboration across Government departments and achieve greater strategic alignment and greater value for the public purse.</p> <p>Complete for year two. Work will continue in year three.</p>	✓		
<p>37. In years one, two and three</p> <p>Throughout the life of the strategy use tools such as SNA and SROI to seek more investment as there is evidence that prevention produces significant future savings to the public purse. Investment which may cost more initially will have significant long-term gains.</p> <p>The monitoring round was available in 2022/23, however no monitoring rounds have been available in 2023/24. The budget bid for 2024/25 includes a request for additional funding evidenced by the Strategic Needs Assessment and the Social Return On Investment findings.</p>			✓
<p>38. In year two and three</p> <p>Identify potential for new co-funded services.</p> <p>SP have met with DoH to progress and collaborate on the re-settlement of patients from Muckamore Abbey Hospital.</p>		✓	

Table continues overleaf

39. In year two and three Re-define the Strategic Advisory Board to enhance strategic partnership working and outcomes for service users. The review of the Strategic Advisory Board is to be brought forward under the SP Review to take place in year three.		✓	
Value for Money and Value of Outcomes			
Action	Target met in full	Target met in part	Target not met
40. In years one, two and three Drive continuous improvement by utilising contract management tools such as the Quality Monitoring Tool, Operational Guidelines and Termination of Grant Funding framework to help ensure providers are delivering eligible housing support services which are strategically relevant to the objectives of this strategy and value for money. Complete: Will be continued in year three.	✓		
41. In year two and three Reviewing the funding agreement framework, to enable provides greater agility in the delivery of services, while ensuring appropriate levels of accountability To be brought forward under the SP Review Project to take place in Year 3.		✓	
42. In year two and three To increase the Outcomes levels reported by providers and develop an outcomes baseline and improvement measure with the provider sector. To be brought forward under the SP Review Project to take place in Year 3.		✓	
43. In year two and three In 2022/23 we will develop value for money metric in partnership with the provider sector, to gauge the efficiency and effectiveness of services yet avoiding destabilisation. To be brought forward under the SP Review Project to take place in Year 3.		✓	
44. In Year two and three To enhance the Financial Review process that validates eligible costs and consider central cost apportionment. Work has commenced on proposed provider guidance regarding cost apportionment and eligibility to further clarify the criteria within the SP Financial returns. Guidance on the Apportionment of Expenditure document. To be brought forward under the SP Review Project to take place in Year 3		✓	
Total number of Actions met in full, in part, or not met:	4	28	12

4.0. Supporting People Activities

4.1. Contract Management

The Contract Management Teams are the main operational contact for Supporting People providers, giving guidance and support on an ongoing basis and via mandatory Contract Management Meetings. They monitor the performance and quality of Supporting People providers at service level to enable the best outcomes for service users. They also assess proposals and business cases brought forward from statutory stakeholders and providers.

Fig. 4.1.1. shows total figures of contract management activity for each of the Contract Management Themes in the 2023/24-year vs the 2022/23 year.

Fig. 4.1.1. Total figures of Contract Management Activity by Theme 2022/23 and 2023/24

22/23			23/24		
Thematic Area	QMTs	CMMs	Thematic Area	QMTs	CMMs
Disability & Mental Health	12	41	Disability & Mental Health	27	36
Older People	14	25	Older People	22	26
Young People	10	18	Young People	10	17
Homelessness	18	38	Homelessness	30	42
Total:	54	122	Total:	89	121

The total figures for contract management activity in the 2023/24 year have increased by 34 from the 2022/23 year.

4.2. Contract Changes

There were various contract changes during the 2023/24 year as summarised in Figs. 4.2.1. to 4.2.3. below. These contract changes were affordable from normal Supporting People baseline funding.

Fig. 4.2.1. Service Restructuring

Thematic Area	Location & Provider	Action
Disability	Newry, Inspire Mental Health	Cole Court: Reduction in units from 4 to 2.
Young People	Derry, FHASS	Jefferson Court: Service reconfigured to enable 5 of the 25 flats to be repurposed to become step down accommodation for young people as they transition to independence.
Young People	Derry, FHASS	Francis St: Reconfigured the split for over and under 18 years to allow more under 18s to move into the service.
Homelessness	Belfast, Extern	Multi-Disciplinary Homeless Support Team: extra support workers.
Disability	Bangor, Croft Communities Ltd.	Croft Communities Ltd: merged with The Cedar Foundation.
Disability	Downpatrick, Mainstay DRP	Services amalgamated into composite service.
Homelessness	Belfast, The Welcome Organisation	Extended Opening Hours.

Fig. 4.2.2. Service Extensions

Thematic Area	Location & Provider	Action
Disability	Ballyclare, Triangle Housing Association	Units increased from 5 to 6: Ballyclare Supported Living.
Homelessness	Belfast, The Salvation Army	Units increased from 31 to 35: Thorndale Family Centre.

Fig. 4.2.3. Termination of Funding

Thematic Area	Location & Provider	Action
Disability	Newry, Praxis Care	Termination of Service: Connaught House.
Older People	Coleraine, NHSCT	Termination of Service: The Brook – Flats.
Disability	Derry, WHSCT	Termination of Service: Avoca Lodge.

4.3. Major Adverse Incidents (MAIs)

Supporting People providers inform Supporting People of incidents in line with the Supporting People Major Adverse Incident (MAI) Framework, which are reported to the Department for Communities and to the NIHE Safeguarding Team as appropriate.

Fig. 4.3.1. shows the total Major Adverse Incidents figures for each Theme in the 2023/24 year in comparison to the 2022/23 year.

Fig. 4.3.1. Total figures of Contract Management Activity by Theme 2022/23 and 2023/24

Major Adverse Incidents				
Thematic Area	2022/23	2023/24	Percentage Increase/Decrease	Trend Arrows
Disability & Mental Health	88	108	22.7%	↑
Older People	26	21	19.2%	↓
Young People	41	30	26.8%	↓
Homelessness	62	76	22.5%	↑

4.4. Other Supporting People Activities

4.4.1. Supporting People Policy and Strategy

Fig. 4.4.1. Highlights the work stream of the Policy and Strategy team over the 23/24 year.

Fig. 4.4.1. Supporting People Policy and Strategy Activities and Performance 2023/24

Activity/Project	Description
Production and development of the Supporting People Business/ Annual Plans 2023/24	Produced SP Annual Report 23/24 Contribution to NIHE Annual Report 23/24 Contributed to the Housing Investment Plan 23/24
Secretariat for the Strategic Plan Delivery Project Group	To support the delivery of the Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan 2022-2025.
Secretariat for the HA CEO Engagement Meetings	One of the Strategic Actions for the Policy, Strategy and Comms (PSC) Team is to work with Providers to establish a forum for SP engagement in terms of service development, staff training and cross-provider benchmarking. Two stakeholder engagement meetings have been held with the NI Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA) and Housing Association CEOs to discuss the challenges affecting the SP Programme in the context of the cost-of-living crisis during 2023/24.
CRISPP engagement meetings	Two stakeholder engagement meetings have been organised and held with the Committee Representing Independent Supporting People Providers (CRISPP) during 2023/24.
Strategic Plan Actions Year Two	Development of a document to update on the progress made on the Strategic Plan actions for Year Two.
SPOCC Replacement Project	Assisted in the development of briefing papers, training schedules and training invites for the Provider sector.
Muckamore Abbey Hospital Inquiry	Assisted in the collation of data and information relating to the Muckamore Abbey Hospital Inquiry.

4.4.2. Supporting People Communications

Fig. 4.4.2. Highlights the work stream of the Communications team over the 23/24 year.

Fig. 4.4.2. Supporting People Communications Activities and Performance 2023/24

Activity/Project	Description
Supporting People Information Bulletin	Issue of the Supporting People Information Bulletin to all SP providers, DfC, NIFHA, ARC and CRISPP.
Information requests	The Supporting People Communications team responded to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 11 Freedom of Information requests (FOIs) - 3 Assembly Questions (AQs) - 3 Subject Access Requests (SARs) - 59 Formal Requests for Information
Agenda NI Article	Researched and produced an article for Agenda NI publication which reflected on the 20 years of the SP Programme.
SP 20th Anniversary Celebration	Involved in the planning and development of the 20th Anniversary SP stakeholder event held at the Parliament buildings, Stormont on 12 June 2023
Social Media	Involved in the planning and development of the 20th Anniversary SP media campaign which ran for 20 days.

4.4.3. Supporting People Business Improvement

Fig. 4.4.3. highlights the Work Stream of Supporting People's Business Improvement Team over the 23/24 year.

Fig. 4.4.3. Supporting People Business Improvement Activities and Performance 2023/24

Business Area	Improvement
IT Replacement Project	<p>Supporting People successfully procured and awarded a contract to CDPSoft for their SHARP system to replace SPOCC in December 2022.</p> <p>A number of familiarisation sessions took place between CDPSoft and the IT Replacement Project Team in order to train SP staff on basic system functionality. This was followed with training on how to develop reports, forms, tasks, and other more complex areas of the system.</p> <p>The Project Team updated information on the existing SPOCC system and identified all the fields that would be used to transfer this data across to the SHARP system as part of a Data Migration exercise. If any part of the core SHARP system could not accommodate data that needed to be migrated, CDP worked with the Project Team to offer an alternative solution.</p> <p>The Supporting People Project Team established a Provider Working Group in May 2023 following an expression of interest open to all SP funded providers. Participants were chosen from each of the 4 Thematic Service Provider areas of Older People, Young People, Homeless, Disability & Mental Health. There were 14 providers in total chosen to be part of the Provider Working Group.</p> <p>Provider Working Group Nominees were requested for SHARP System Training and providers were advised that information be updated on SPOCC to assist with data migration. Regular Provider Working Group meetings commenced following the initial training session and have continued throughout the life cycle of the project. The Provider Working Group has proved to be a vital resource, assisting the Project Team with system configuration, and testing new parts of the system that have been added incrementally as the project has progressed.</p> <p>System User Training for Provider staff commenced on 12 September 2023, targeted at staff responsible for keying client details onto the SPOCC System or who use it on a regular basis for reporting Contract Management or Financial information. SP Provider Working Group members commenced a 'Parallel Run Testing phase' from 27 September 2023. This testing phase was essential to ensure that the system functions worked as planned from a Provider perspective, prior to 'Go Live' and also to ensure that financial data on SHARP was matching that on SPOCC.</p> <p>The support contract for Supporting People's SPOCC system has been extended until September 2024 to allow the Project Team time to provide additional staff training and complete further system function improvements to the CDPSoft SHARP system following feedback from the Provider Working Group Members and SP Internal Workshops.</p> <p>The NIHE's I.T. Conditions of Connection(CoC) agreement was updated to reflect the use of a cloud-based IT system in CDPSoft SHARP. The Project team reissued these to providers, to sign and return. A signed CoC form is required before any staff user profiles can be activated. Providers have been asked to submit User Access requests for staff members who will require access to the CDPSoft SHARP system.</p>

4.4.4 Strategic Review of Jointly Commissioned Supported Accommodation Projects for Young People

The Review of Jointly Commissioned Supported Accommodation Projects for Young People – Sharing Findings event was held at the Dunsilly Hotel in Antrim on 25 October 2023. The event, in partnership with DOH/HSCNI Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG), shared the report and findings. It included presentations from SPPG, Voice Of Young People In Care (VOYPIC), Supporting People and The Housing Executive's Housing Services.

The Report has now been formally shared with all relevant statutory agencies, partners, Strategic Planning and Performance Group and Housing Services as well as all provider organisations who deliver young people accommodation services. In addition, an implementation plan has also been developed and shared, a steering group has been established with a focused membership and a Provider Forum has been established as an outworking of the recommendations from the report.

Significantly for the sector, Local Planning Partnership Groups (LPPG's) have been established as a primary focus to encourage a holistic approach to the review of services and funding. This was in response to the recommendations from the report and all are active across the five Health trusts. To date these groups are currently working on scoping exercises to determine and establish all provision across the region and are effectively led by the steering group. These groups will also work collaboratively regarding the current funding packages and processes pertinent to jointly funded services.

Actions from the establishment of LPPG's will further enhance and develop policy with a focus on outcomes and achievements for the young people residing within these premises. The LPPGs have a future planning focus and are purposefully established as a multi-agency grouping which encompasses a broad range of opinion and expertise to determine need and demand for care experienced and young homeless in each of the localities. The groups will work in partnership with all agencies and providers.

The [Strategic Review of Jointly Commissioned Supported Accommodation Projects for Young People](#) can be found on the Housing Executive website.

5.0. Outcomes

5.1. Supporting People Outcomes

In order to deliver the Programme for Government Outcomes, Supporting People developed an approach in which the Programme for Government Outcomes inform five high level Supporting People Programme Outcomes, which in turn links into the 11 Supporting People Outcome Indicators (SPOIs) at service level: [The Supporting People Outcomes Framework](#).¹¹

Fig. 5.1.1. Supporting People Outcomes Framework shows how the draft Programme for Government Targets feed into the High-Level Outcomes of the Supporting People Programme. The framework also shows the Service Level Outcome Measure, and the relevant themes that each outcome falls under.

¹¹ The introduction of Outcomes measurement for Supporting People (SP) services was borne out of the 2015 DSD review. Recommendation 3 of the Supporting People review required Supporting People to **“develop a revised approach to outcomes measurement in consultation with service Providers, which will allow for more consistent and meaningful performance monitoring”**.

Fig. 5.1.1. Supporting People Outcomes Framework

Draft PFG Target(s)	SP Programme - High Level Outcome	SP Services - Outcome Indicators	Service Level Outcome Measure	MH & Disability	Older People	Homeless	Young People	Crisis Accommodation Services
We care for others and help those in need	1. Improved Economic Well-being for service users	1a. Service users supported to access welfare benefits	Number of service users in receipt of any relevant benefits as a result of the support provided	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
More people working in better jobs		1b. Service users supported to gain employment (paid or voluntary) and/or enhance skills / education	Number of service users who engaged in employment (paid or voluntary) and/or desired training/education as a result of support provided	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
We care for others and help those in need	2. Increased number of people living Independently	2a. Service users supported to remain in own home (LONG TERM SERVICES ONLY)	Number of Service users in a sustained tenancy 12 months after start of support service	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
		2b. Service users supported to achieve independent living (SHORT TERM SERVICES ONLY)	Number of service users living in permanent/ stable accommodation in the community as a result of support provided	✓	X	✓	✓	X
		2c. Number of service users supported to move into alternative temporary living arrangements (CRISIS ACCOMMODATION SERVICES ONLY)	Number of service users successfully moved into alternative temporary living arrangements as a result of support provided	X	X	X	X	✓
		2d. Service users supported to maintain their tenancy as a result of floating support (FLOATING SUPPORT SERVICES ONLY)	Number of service users who maintained their tenancy as a result of floating support being provided	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
We care for others and help those in need	3. Being Healthy	3a. Service users supported to manage their physical /mental health	Number of service users who accessed primary health care / mental health services / social services as a result of support provided	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
We enjoy long, healthy, active lives		3b. Number of service users supported to access healthcare (CRISIS ACCOMMODATION SERVICES ONLY)	Number of service users who accessed healthcare as a result of support provided	X	X	X	X	✓
We care for others and help those in need	4. Living in Safety & Security	4a. Number of service users who have been supported to feel secure in own home/tenancy	Number of service users feeling more secure as a result of support provided	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other		4b. Number of service users who have been supported to feel secure and protected (CRISIS ACCOMMODATION SERVICES ONLY)	Number of service users feeling secure and protected as a result of support provided by service	X	X	X	X	✓
We enjoy long, healthy, active lives	5. Achieving & making a Positive Contribution	5a. Service users supported to contribute to wider society and enhance social networks	Number of service users who have improved /enhanced their social network as a result of support provided (e.g. improve family relationships; participating in community projects/residents groups/ volunteering etc.)	✓	✓	✓	✓	X

5.2. Outcomes Front-End

The Supporting People Outcomes Front-End collates Supporting People Outcome Indicators from Providers. In the 2023/24 year, the Supporting People Programme showed an overall average success rate of 92% against the Outcomes Indicators across 80 Providers, delivering 816 services.

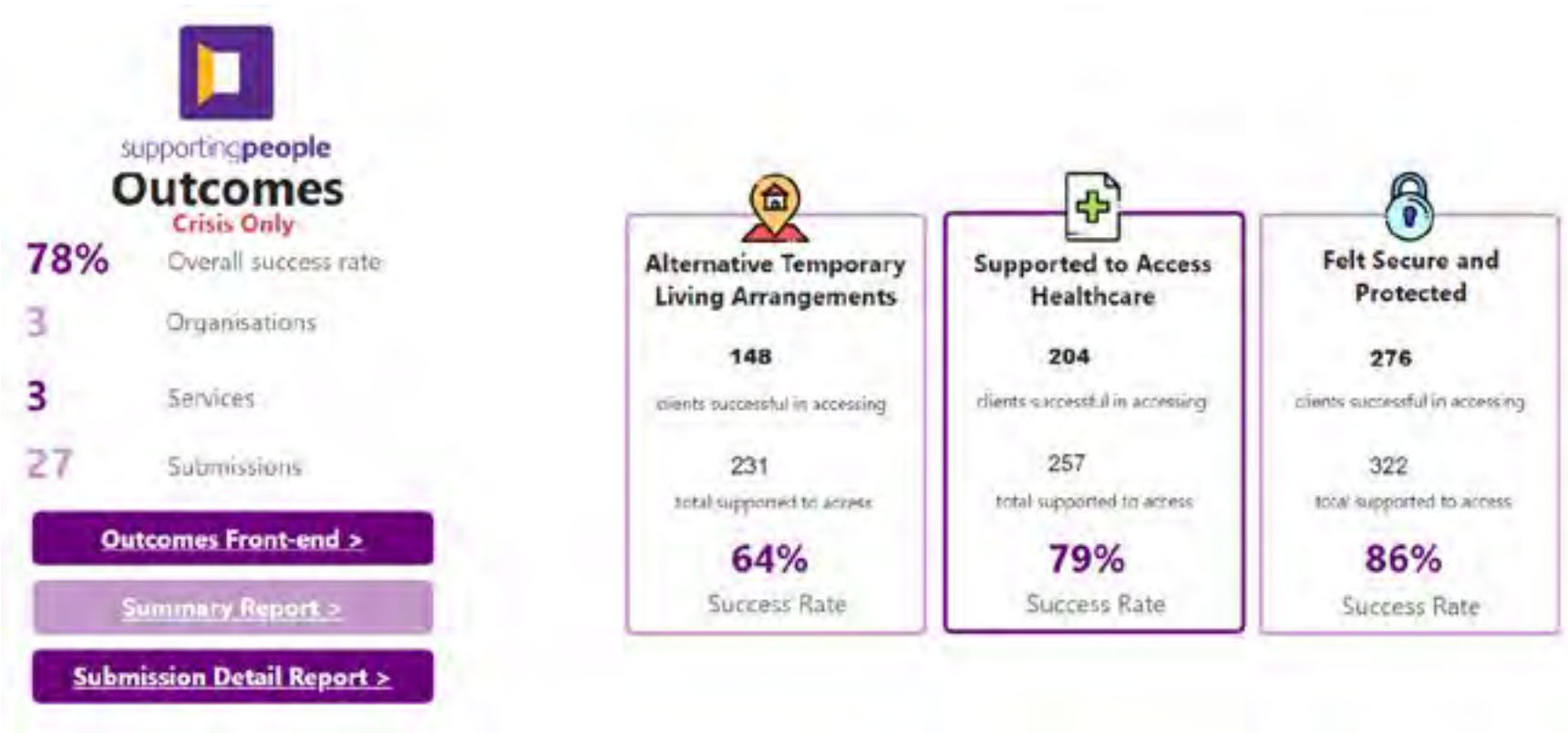
Fig. 5.2.1. Outcomes Indicators reported through the Outcomes System by Supporting People providers for the 2023/24 year.



There are a small number of services known as, crisis accommodation services or “crash services” who provide short-term shelter to vulnerable homeless people . Due to the extremely short turnaround time of when the service user enters and leaves the service, these services do not work on achieving outcomes with the service users, unlike other homeless services. There are outcomes indicators exclusive to these services to ensure that the work being carried out is recognised and not lost. These three outcomes are particular to this service user group and these services are not expected to report on the regular homeless outcomes, nor are the other homeless services expected to report on the three crisis accommodation outcomes.

In the 2023/24 year, the crisis accommodation services showed an overall average success rate of 78% against the Outcomes Indicators across three providers delivering three services.

Fig. 5.2.2. Outcomes Indicators reported through the Outcomes System for the crisis accommodation services for the 2023/24 year.



6.0. Supporting People Performance

6.1. Key Performance Indicators

Through our three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Supporting People contributes to two of the Housing Executive's Draft Corporate Plan 2022-2025's High Level Priorities;

1. Over the next three years we will invest around £1,973m into our local economy, through our housing services, construction activity, employment opportunities and through our support for the health, voluntary and community sectors. In the same period, we will process circa £1,148m in Housing Benefit payments across public and private housing tenures.
2. We will work with our partners to deliver innovative housing solutions for our customers and to help reduce poverty and improve Health & Wellbeing.

Two of Supporting People's three Key Performance Indicators have been met in 2023/24. Further details on these KPIs can be found in other sections of this document outlined in the table below.

Fig. 6.1.1. Status of Regional Services Key Performance Indicators (RSKPIs) for Supporting People in the year 2023/24

Regional Services Key Performance Indicator (RSKPI)	Status	Section
4.10. By 31st March 2024 ensure a minimum spend of 17.5% to floating support	Target Level achieved	2.1. Financial Analysis
4.13. Deliver year one Supporting People Strategy Action Plan	Target Level achieved	3.3. Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan
4.15. Achieve a 5% increase (by 2025) in the number of people benefiting from Supporting People funding with greater coherence between housing support and permanent accommodation solutions (PfG Ref 8) *1% increase in number of clients supported	Target Level not achieved	

7.0. Supporting People 20th Anniversary Celebrations

The Supporting People team worked with Corporate Communications to organise a media awareness campaign, Supporting People Film and Event to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the delivery of the Supporting People Programme.

The Supporting People 20th Anniversary Celebration aimed to:

- Reflect the impact and positive outcomes for customers throughout the 20 years of the Supporting People Programme.
- Raise the profile of the Supporting People Programme with a focus on customer outcomes, social return on investment and value of the Programme for NI.
- Celebrate partnership working with our stakeholders.

To-date (2023/24) the Supporting People Programme has invested over £1.2 billion into providing housing support services and assisting vulnerable people to live more independently in communities across Northern Ireland.

Social Media Campaign

Supporting People, working in partnership with colleagues in the Corporate Communication Team, launched a social media campaign to mark the 20th Anniversary year of Supporting People, highlighting the positive outcomes and impact on service users, celebrating partnership working and raising the profile of the Programme.

The Social Media campaign took place over 20 days, telling the story of Supporting People to increase understanding of Programme and the services it funds, the positive impact these have, the people involved working in partnership and the outcomes for service users.

Supporting People Film

A short film was commissioned to document the work of Supporting People and the impact the Programme has had on the lives of some of the most vulnerable people over the last 20 years. The film tells the story of individuals who receive support, while including elements of the work of the Supporting People team and partnership working province wide. The full film can be viewed here: [20 Years of Supporting Independent Living](#)

20 Years of Supporting People Celebration Article

We published an article in AgendaNi, Northern Ireland's business and public policy magazine, which reaches decision-makers and influencers in government, business, and the voluntary and community sector. You can read the full article here: [Supporting People 20th Anniversary](#)

Celebration Stakeholder Event

The 20th Anniversary of the Supporting People Programme celebration stakeholder event was held in Stormont Parliament Buildings, on the 12th of June 2023.

Guests were welcomed by event sponsor, Kellie Armstrong MLA, stakeholder attendance included cross-party political representatives, the DfC Permanent Secretary, Colum Boyle, the NIHE Board Chair, Nicole Lappin and NIHE Chief Executive, Grainia Long along with Supporting People staff, service providers and service users.

The event highlighted the successful collaboration between the Housing Executive, the Department for Communities, the Department of Health, the Department of Justice, and service providers over the past two decades. Recognition was also given to Supporting People staff who administer the Programme and the invaluable contribution of service provider staff who have made, and continue to make, a remarkable and positive difference to the lives of so many people.

This event was successful in raising the profile of the Supporting People Programme whilst marking the 20th Anniversary of Supporting People. A video that captured the day can be viewed here: [20th Anniversary Stakeholder Event](#)



8.0. Service User and Support Service Stories

Supporting People aims to improve the lives of vulnerable people, enabling them to live as independently as possible, have a better quality of life and achieve positive outcomes. Some examples of how Supporting People have achieved this through the services they fund are detailed below.

** Names and some details have been anonymised to protect the identities of service users.*

8.1. Service User and Support Staff Stories

Homelessness

Refugee Accommodation Project

The Refugee Accommodation Project is a first for Northern Ireland. Supporting People have developed this innovative, low cost, peer to peer support service for single female refugees moving from Home Office accommodation. The Project offers five two-bedroom apartments and one, one bedroom apartment, which allows peer to peer support for ten women. Extern is the Supporting People funded provider delivering the Floating Support Service for the women. The service is based in North Belfast, is close to amenities used by the community and is well served by public transport. Extern identifies refugees who are eligible for the service and then pairs them in a buddy system.

Two women that have used the service have shared their stories:

Service User A's Story

Service User A fled Somalia after having suffered torture and sexual abuse. She was eventually granted leave to remain in the UK and was initially placed in non-standard accommodation. Extern recognised that Service User A needed further support and undertook further assessment to determine her suitability for the Refugee Accommodation Service. After placement a number of successes followed;

- Extern helped to secure a volunteering opportunity with Mindwise and assisted Service User A to apply for registration with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC).
- Service User A then secured paid work as a Nighttime Support Worker with a local voluntary organisation.
- Having paid work enabled her to learn to drive and pass her driving test.
- Extern also supported Service User A to access free immigration legal consultation through the African and Caribbean Support Organisation Northern Ireland (ACSONI) to support family reunification.

- Extern directly supported living arrangements and social outings for residents which helped reduce isolation and build confidence.
- Service User A was selected for a Film and Creative Industries Programme and has started an 18-month work placement.

Service User B's Story

Service User B fled Somalia after having suffered torture and sexual abuse. Working with Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid Human Trafficking Support, Extern were then able to place Service User B into the Refugee Accommodation Project. Through Supporting People's funding for the Floating Support Service, Extern have assisted Service User B with living arrangements, registering for utilities and access to food and furniture vouchers. With encouragement, Service User B has trained as an interpreter and has completed training in Health and Social Care, securing employment as a Support Worker in a nursing home. Service User B now feels confident, safe, and reassured in her accommodation.

Extern Support Worker's Perspective

"I simply want our funders to know that this project is changing lives. Both these very young ladies have been victims of horrendous trafficking, officially recognised by the Home Office, and suffer from post-traumatic distress due to their harrowing history of abuse. But they are both very much survivors and they just needed to feel safe, secure, and supported in order to thrive. I am proud to say that we are offering them this through this project. I have no doubt that they will one day become great contributors to local society."

Older People

Service User C's Story

Service User C was 82 years old when they received a notice to quit from their privately rented accommodation. They had been renting there for 15 years and their partner had died 2 years previously. Service User C was referred to the Supporting People funded service through his local GP social worker.

Advice and advocacy were given to Service User C by the staff in the Supporting People funded service throughout the whole process, with Support Staff reaching out to other professionals in Benefits and Health. Regular phone calls and visits to Service User C were carried out to ensure they were coping and preparing for their change in circumstances.

"My Support Worker was really helpful and always put a smile on my face when I was worried about where I was going. [They] really helped me secure my housing points and did everything to help me find my new home, I wouldn't be living here if it wasn't for [them]".

Through help and support Service User C was offered a bungalow in one of their chosen areas. A discretionary grant was applied for, and they received over £1200 to help furnish their home. Support was provided to assist Service User C to move into their new accommodation, which is lower in rent and thus provides them with an increased disposable income. Service User C feels secure and can maintain independence in a retirement area with a social hub that suits their needs in every way.

Service User D's Story

"I was living in a private rented house and the landlord decided to sell it. At my age I didn't know how I was going to start over again. I was very nervous about what the future held for me. I've been on my own since my wife died and didn't have any friends.

Then I was offered an apartment in a Supporting People Sheltered Housing service. I didn't know what sheltered living would be like or if I could settle somewhere like that. I actually moved in on Christmas Day 2023 and I didn't know anyone. Then I met the Tenant Support Worker, she explained her job role and explained how she would be able to help me. I was anxious because I had a list of things that I had to do, such as register for gas, electricity and an internet connection and change my address with my bank and Credit Union; I didn't know where to begin.

The Support Worker put my mind at ease and told me she would help me do all of these things. We went through the list, and she supported me to sign up for the internet, making sure I got the best deal. I didn't know how to use a computer and she showed me. She supported me to register my address for gas & electricity. I could never have done these things myself as I didn't know where to begin. There are activities that take place every week at the service, for example bingo; I didn't think I liked bingo, but I play every week. It gets me out of my flat and it's a fun way to pass an afternoon. We are starting our gardening project soon and I'm going to be looking after the vegetable plot, which I'm looking forward to, and we also have a day trip planned.

I never thought I would enjoy living in a Sheltered dwelling but it's the best decision I've ever made. I'm never lonely and I've made new friends. If I need help with anything like phone calls or understanding letters or benefits my Support Worker is always on hand to help me. I would recommend sheltered living to anyone and wish I'd moved here years ago."

8.2. Support Service Stories

Homelessness

First Housing African Drum Session

Working in partnership with the Hillside Day Centre, residents of Dillon Court were invited to attend an African Drum music session hosted by Rhythm School Omagh, to promote positive mental wellbeing through music and interaction. All residents were invited to attend and enjoy the session, which also included a social mixer and raffle draw.

First Housing Aid and Support Services paid £100 toward the cost of this session to support our residents to attend, both temporary and permanent. Project staff helped facilitate and prepare sandwiches for the social mixer, and informed residents of the session by putting up posters throughout the project. Project staff also donated five tins of sweets to be used as raffle prizes.



Young People

Permanent Secretary Visit to Young People Service

The Permanent Secretary, Colum Boyle, visited the Francis Street Project and was shown around the premises, and was extremely impressed at the enthusiasm, passion, and dedication towards supporting the young people at the service.

The Permanent Secretary saw first-hand how the housing related support services provided can help prepare young people for independent living in the community.

“It was very evident how the scheme provides a living environment that promotes independence, self-sufficiency, and individual responsibility.

I was enormously proud to see at first hand the real benefits that the Supporting People Program delivers and the positive impact that it brings to people’s lives. It was clear to see the importance...for younger people in our society who have dealt with many challenges in their young lives.” – Colum Boyle, Permanent Secretary

Communities Minister Visit to Young People Service

The Minister for Communities, Gordon Lyons, visited MACs, a supported living service for young people in the University area of Belfast.

“In visiting facilities which illustrate this range of support, it has been my privilege to be welcomed into people’s homes. I heard about the positive impact funding can have through enhanced living conditions and better services. When I took up office, I outlined my key priority to deliver real, positive, and lasting change for the people in Northern Ireland. I also wanted to make sure funding goes to those who need it most, and it would be used to deliver positive impact. I recognise the demands on our housing system are great. Quick fixes and easy solutions do not exist when addressing such complex issues.”

Disability and Mental Health

Masquerade Ball

A Masquerade Ball was organised by South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust for the service users of their Bangor Supported Living Service, Lisburn Supported Living Service, Ardmeen Green and Ward House services, all funded through the Supporting People Programme.

The Clondeboy Lodge Hotel rolled out its red carpet to welcome almost 50 service users, supported by the South Eastern Health Trust’s North Down, Ards and Bangor Supported Living Team for its gala Masquerade Ball.

Regulated Services Manager Diana McIntyre Patel explained how the Ball was “nine months in the making” and how it was a memorable, magical night for all service users and staff. “It was fantastic to see our service users and staff in all their formal finery,” said Diane. “We were delighted that our Learning Disabilities Rock Band, The High and Dead, kicked off the night and got everyone on the dance floor.”

Diana described how lasting memories were made during the occasion as staff personalised the tables in the ballroom and those attending got to take home keepsake chocolates as a memento of the night. Diana added, “It was fantastic to see all the limos and even a few Hummers pull into the Clondeboy Lodge Hotel on the night. Everyone had a fantastic night. The Masquerade Ball is the first of three events we are planning to run this year. After the success of the Ball, it is all systems go for our Spooky Halloween event in October and a Christmas event in December.”

International Women's Day

Service users and staff from the Belfast Trust got together and held events in both Weavershill and Woodstock Bank services. There was a "Women of History" Quiz devised by one of the service users with prizes donated by local businesses. The service users baked and made self-care packs and invited others to join us all. They also chose a local charity (Good Morning Colin) to donate to and staff were encouraged to make a donation for their buns!

There was so much food left that the service users and staff of Sydenham Court were able to enjoy a lovely afternoon tea. It was a great day, and everyone really enjoyed themselves.



9.0. Outlook 2024/25

Throughout 2024/25, Supporting People will focus on completion of the Actions in the Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan 2022-2025, subject to budget availability.

During the 2024/25 year we will:

1. Ensure the services we fund are appropriate to changing need.
2. Continue to work towards closing the 14% gap between need and supply. This will be underpinned by evidence from the **Strategic Needs Assessment**, prioritising services for older people; People with Mental health issues; Single people with alcohol and/or drug problems experiencing homelessness; and women at risk of domestic abuse.
3. Work with Supporting People providers, to invest in **service innovation** to achieve greater value for money and better outcomes for service users.
4. Examine reconfiguration opportunities to ensure best use of services.
5. Ensure we collaborate effectively with our providers and continue to strengthen relationships across health, criminal justice, and housing , with the aim of achieving better outcomes for service users and generating greater value from public funds to enhance available resources for housing support.

