

Housing
Executive

Supporting People Annual Report

2022-23

Contents

Welcome by Chief Executive.....	4
1.0. Introduction to Supporting People	5
1.1. Supporting People at a Glance.....	6
1.2. Purpose, Aims, Vision and Values.....	7
2.0. Financial Performance	8
2.1. Financial Analysis.....	8
2.1.1. Budget Variance	8
2.2. Provider Innovation Fund (PIF) Evaluation.....	9
3.0. COVID-19	13
3.1. Supporting People Special Recognition Payment.....	13
4.0. Governance and Reporting Structures	14
4.1. Strategic Advisory Board (SAB)	14
4.1.1. Functions of the Strategic Advisory Board.....	14
4.1.2. The Strategic Advisory Board Achievements 2022-2023.....	14
4.2. Regional Thematic Groups (RTGs).....	15
4.2.1. Regional Thematic Group Disability and Mental Health	15
4.2.2. Regional Thematic Group Older People.....	15
4.2.3. Regional Thematic Group Young People.....	16
4.2.4. Regional Thematic Group Homelessness	17
4.3. Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan 2022-2025	18
4.4. Public Consultation	18
4.5. Strategic Action Plan	18

5.0. Supporting People Activities.....	30
5.1. Contract Management	30
5.2. Contract Changes	31
5.3. Major Adverse Incidents (MAIs)	33
5.4. Other Supporting People Activities	34
5.4.1. Supporting People Policy and Strategy	34
5.4.2. Supporting People Communications	35
5.4.3. Supporting People Business Improvement	36
5.4.4. Strategic Review of Jointly Commissioned Supported Accommodation Projects for Young People	38
6.0. Outcomes	40
6.1. Supporting People Outcomes	40
6.2. Outcomes Front-End.....	42
7.0. Supporting People Performance	44
7.1. Key Performance Indicators.....	44
7.2. 2015 Ministerial Recommendations	44
8.0. Service User and Support Service Stories	45
8.1. Service User Stories.....	45
8.2. Support Service Stories	47
9.0. Outlook 2023/24.....	49

Welcome by Chief Executive

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

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) is celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the Supporting People Programme this year. Since its inception in April 2003 over £1.2 billion of grant funding has been awarded to provider organisations to ensure the delivery of housing related support to individuals across Northern Ireland.

During the 2022/23 year, Supporting People was delighted to secure additional funding for providers to enable providers to continue providing services for the most vulnerable people in our society. An uplift was paid, in respect of all Supporting People services in the 2022/23 year.

The SP Provider Innovation Fund (PIF) ran over a three-year period from 2019 to 2022 and proved very successful; during the 2022/23 year SP continued the development of short promotional videos to showcase some of the outstanding projects that were funded.

A Strategic Action Plan was developed to monitor and report progress on our Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan 2022-2025; a replacement Supporting People IT System was procured to effectively and efficiently support the delivery of the service, payments and performance monitoring assessments and a new risk assessment procedure was developed.

In this year's report we have incorporated a selection of service users and support services stories to highlight the positive impact of the Supporting People 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 of our stakeholders, partners and the Supporting People staff for enabling the delivery of our 2022/23 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 Housing Executive, 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 Programme (introduced in April 2003).

The Supporting People 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 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 2022/23



The SP Programme Budget is
managed across four thematic areas:

Disability &
Mental Health **40.8%**

Homelessness **39.6%**

Older People **11.6%**

Young People **8.0%**



825

Housing
Support
Services

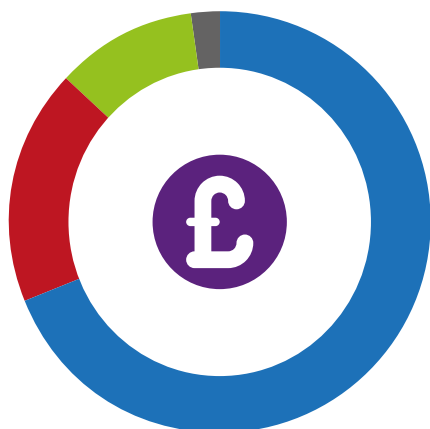
Delivered by

82

Providers

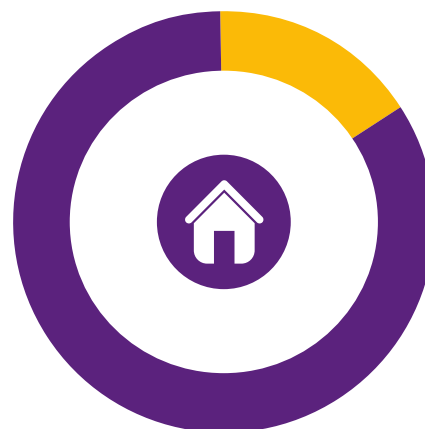
Across **15**
Primary Client
Groups

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



- Charity/Voluntary sector (68%)
- Housing Associations (17%)
- Health and Social Care Trusts (11%)
- Private & others (4%)

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 (17.7%)
- Non-Floating Support (82.3%)

1.2 Purpose, Aims, Vision 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 2022/23 a total of £78.519m was made available to Providers, this comprised of Supporting People Programme expenditure, COVID-19-related expenditure and the Provider Innovation Fund (PIF) expenditure. With approval from the Department for Communities, Supporting People authorised Providers to spend previously frozen Supporting People reserves (unspent SP Grant) on COVID-19-related expenditure.

The budget for the Provider Innovation Fund (a competitive fund that aims to support improvements to the delivery of the Supporting People Programme) was £0.305m. Provider Innovation Fund actual spend was £0.222m.

Expenditure on Floating Support from 1st April 2022 to 31 March 2023 was £13.675m, which is 17.7% of Supporting People Programme expenditure.

During the 2022/23 year, Supporting People worked to secure additional funding for providers to enable them to continue providing services for the most vulnerable people in our society. An uplift was paid, in respect of all Supporting People services in the 2022/23 year (excluding Special Needs Management Allowance (SNMA) Providers), which was backdated. 4.6% was paid from 1 November 2021 to 31st March 2022 and a further 1.2% from April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

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 2022/23 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 (HB) eligibility). For further information please see the Department for Communities [Supporting People Policy Framework](#).

Scheme Type	Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000	Comment
Block Gross	28,068	28,753	685	Uplift paid during year.
Block Subsidy Variable	32,813	33,467	654	Uplift paid during year.
Block Subsidy Fixed (SNMA)	998	3,285	2,287	Adjustment in SNMA accrual.
Floating Support	13,278	13,675	397	Uplift paid during year.
Provider Innovation Fund	305	222	(83)	Successful applications spend was less than had been budgeted.
COVID-19	709	(884)	(1563)	Prior year adjustment.

2.2. Provider Innovation Fund (PIF) Evaluation

The Provider Innovation Fund (PIF) was a competitive fund that aimed to support improvements to the delivery of the Supporting People Programme, thus assisting efficiency and effectiveness within the Supporting People sector.

Supporting People Providers bid for support to help them innovate and improve their service delivery within the three-year period April 2019- March 2022.

Over the three year period of PIF funding, 87 projects were awarded funding which is broken down by year in the table below.

Year	Number of projects
2019/20	30
2020/21	21
2021/22	36

Business Consultancy Service (BCS) of the Department of Finance (DoF) was appointed by Supporting People to undertake a post programme evaluation of the PIF after its completion. The evaluation of the Supporting People Provider Innovation Fund (PIF) Programme Report was produced in June 2022.

The following table from the BCS report, (Table 3 Strategic Context analysis page 17), June 2022, provides an overview of the strategic fit of the PIF with a range of relevant strategies, policies and reports identified.

Strategic Context

NI Strategies	Number of Projects
Document	Analysis of Strategic Fit
NI Executive's Draft Programme for Government 2016-2021 (new PfG under development)	<p>Summary</p> <p>The draft Programme for Government (PfG) contains 14 strategic outcomes which set a clear direction of travel and enable continuous improvement on the essential components of societal wellbeing. They touch on every aspect of government, including the attainment of good health and education, economic success and confident and peaceful communities.</p>
	<p>Strategic Alignment to the PIF</p> <p>PIF directly contributes to the following outcomes within the draft PfG;</p> <p>Outcome 1: "We prosper through a strong, competitive regionally balanced economy"</p> <p>PIF aids the stimulation of innovation, research and development (R&D) and creativity within SP delivery sector enabling more resources to be channeled to a frontline delivery.</p> <p>Outcome 8: "We care for others and help those in need"</p> <p>PIF supports SP providers to make improvements to help and care for the most vulnerable in our society ensuring they have the adequate provisions to meet their needs and giving people the opportunity to help themselves.</p> <p>Outcome 11: "We have high quality Public Services"</p> <p>PIF ensures that the delivery of the SP Programme is efficient and effective by evaluating the need of each project to ensure that it will improve the delivery of the SP Programme and will meet the needs of the service user and improve their wellbeing.</p>
Ending Homelessness Together - The Homelessness Strategy for NI 2017-2022	<p>Summary</p> <p>The Ending Homelessness Together strategy provides strategic direction for addressing homelessness in NI. The strategy recognises the important role of other agencies in providing advice, assistance and support to prevent households reaching crisis point. Partnership working is at the core of our Homelessness Strategy, and is reflected in its vision of 'ending homelessness together'.</p> <p>The strategy highlights the importance of the strong alignment between this strategy and the SP Programme to ensure the effective strategic targeting of the SP resources aligned to the objectives of the Homelessness Strategy.</p>

NI Strategies	Number of Projects
Document	Analysis of Strategic Fit
	<p>Strategic alignment to the PIF</p> <p>Objective 2: To find sustainable accommodation and appropriate support solutions for homeless households: PIF assists in the delivery of efficiency and effectiveness within the SP sector which allows SP resources to help more people live independently.</p> <p>Objective 5: To measure and monitor existing and emerging need to inform the development of appropriate services: PIF is an annual competitive fund provided to SP providers and measures and monitors the outcomes of each SP project and ensures the projects are efficient and effective.</p>
NIHE Corporate Strategy 2017/18-2020/21	<p>Summary</p> <p>The NIHE Corporate Strategy runs over the course of 4 years and illustrates NIHE's latest and previous year's performance against each of their Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each objective. This plan articulates NIHE's vision, priorities and outcomes. It includes ways that they will measure success in delivering their four outcomes, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping people find housing support and solutions; • Delivering better homes; • Fostering vibrant, sustainable communities; and • Delivering quality public services. <p>This plan is supported by annual business plans.</p> <p>Strategic alignment to the PIF</p> <p>Outcome 1 – Helping People find Housing Support purpose is to provide housing solutions, services and support to the people of Northern Ireland - PIF assists the efficiency and effectiveness within the SP sector, which results in appropriate resources and solutions being used to help the service users to stay in their own homes.</p>

The PIF evaluation report noted that the three stated Outcomes of the PIF, as detailed in the Business Case and detailed in the table below, (taken from the BCS report Page 66 Table 17 PIF Outcomes) were all achieved. While COVID-19 impacted on addressing the ratio of administrative costs to service delivery costs associated with the SP Programme, it is evident that provider organisations have been able to improve ways of working through PIF leading to greater efficiency and effectiveness.

The BCS report concluded that "The findings in this table confirm the PIF was successful in achieving the over-arching outcomes as set out in the Business Case, and therefore it may be concluded that the programme has been effective in achieving its objectives".

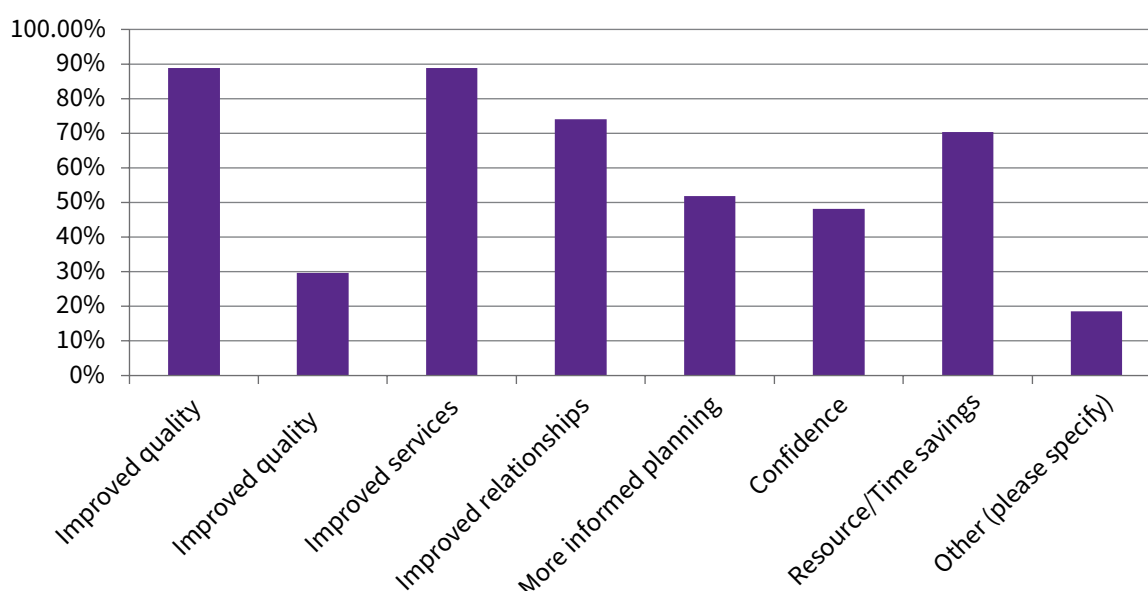
Analysis of the Extent to which Programme Outcomes were Achieved

Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
----------	--------------------	--------------

Outcome(s)	Assessment
Improved value for money of Programme so that SP may continue to be feasible and delivered within budget	Achieved
Improved provider resilience so that they are better placed to continue the delivery of services in a challenging financial environment	Achieved
Improved relationships between service providers and NIHE	Achieved

The BCS report found that SP providers had noted the benefits of PIF which included improved provider organisation resilience and the introduction of more effective and efficient ways of working. There had been an increase in time spent on value added activity both within provider organisations and in NIHE because of the more efficient ways of working introduced. Relationships between provider organisations and NIHE have improved since the introduction of PIF, this is demonstrated in the table below, taken from the BCS report page 59 Figure 29.

The Key Strengths of the Provider Innovation Fund Programme



The report also found that all consultees were satisfied that the processes and funding model set out for PIF were effective as well as straightforward and efficient and PIF provided good levels of additionality.

The report concluded that PIF had been effective in achieving its aims and objectives over the evaluation period, and was well aligned to a number of important aims and objectives outlined in key policies and strategies.

PIF particularly aligned with objectives to assist in the delivery of efficiency and effectiveness within the SP sector which allowed SP resources to help more people live independently. The report also concluded that the PIF programme has been delivered effectively, efficiently and economically and positively impacted Value for Money (VFM) in provider organisations.

3.0. COVID-19

Throughout 2022/23 Provider Organisations continued to work effectively in partnership with the SP Team across the sector to address the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Providers continued to supply information regarding the effects of COVID-19 on their services to the SP Team. Providers highlighted that whilst staff absences had reduced the sector continued to face operational pressures as a result of staff shortages.

In 2022/23, the Department of Health made £526k available to Supporting People. This was for additional support for COVID-19 related staff costs and overheads. Overheads eligible for the funding were staff costs and SP programme related expenditure. Other items such as voids were not allowable under this funding stream.

Vouching of COVID-19 expenditure continued during 2022/23 to ensure expenditure was appropriately evidenced.

3.1. Supporting People Special Recognition Payment

Following a Ministerial decision, Supporting People developed a framework to administer a £500 Special Recognition Payment to service staff employed by SP providers, this payment was to acknowledge their part in delivering critical services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Phase one of the Supporting People Special Recognition Payment was launched in December 2021 for Supporting People funded schemes only. Phase two payments which included claims for agency staff, leavers, those eligible but not included in phase one and Homeless providers funded by the Housing Executive's Housing Services, launched in April 2022. Phase two of the scheme closed to all claims in December 2022.

The total funding that SP administered for both phase one and two of the Special Recognition Payment scheme from March 2020 to March 2023 was £2,919,559.

The SP Finance Team engaged Ernst Young (EY) to carry out follow up validations for the Special Recognition Payment claims and subsequent payments made by providers. As EY currently have the internal audit contract for NIHE, this piece of work is being carried out under the current NIHE contract. A large sample, in adherence with the relevant Executive Team paper, was undertaken by EY. Reconciliations took place regarding payments made to SP Providers from SP Finance as well as monies paid over to employees by the relevant SP Provider.

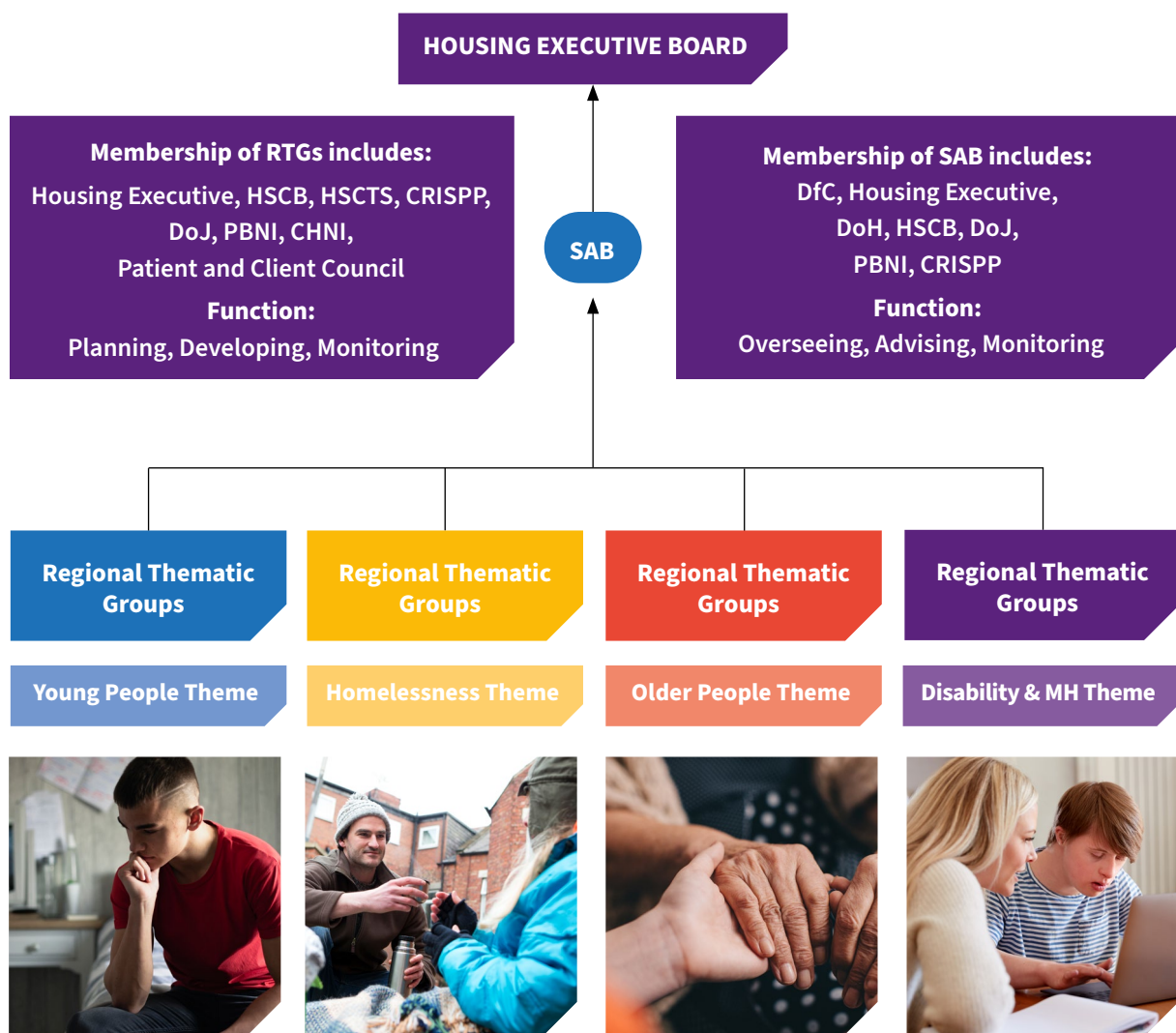
4.0. Governance and Reporting Structures

4.1. Strategic Advisory Board (SAB)

4.1.1. 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 SAB 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 SAB is supported in its decision-making by the four Regional Thematic Groups (RTGs). In the year 2022/23 a total of three SAB meetings took place.

Fig. 4.1.1 The structure of Strategic Advisory Board and Regional Thematic Groups



4.1.2. The Strategic Advisory Board Achievements 2022-2023

After meeting remotely for two years, the SAB began meeting in person to consider funding and priorities for the Supporting People Programme in September 2022.

The focus of the SAB during 2022/2023 included:

- Making recommendations relating to business cases and proposals for expenditure
- Endorsement of one business case brought forward by the RTGs
- Oversight of the RTGs
- 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

4.2. Regional Thematic Groups (RTGs)

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

4.2.1. Regional Thematic Group Disability and Mental Health

The focus of the RTG Disability and Mental Health in 2022/23 involved:

*** Consideration and progression of Strategic Outline Cases (SOCs) for revenue/ capital development funding proposals for new and redevelopment of accommodation-based services.**

These included a SOC seeking a new accommodation service (revenue funding for housing related support and capital development funding for new accommodation) for those with a learning disability, one in the Belfast area and one in the Carrickfergus area. All SOC's were endorsed by the Disability RTG to proceed to a full Business Case to be submitted to the SAB.

*** Consideration of recommendations arising from the report commissioned by the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) on the Independent Review of the Learning Disability Resettlement Programme in Northern Ireland published in September 2022.**

In particular members considered potential impacts to the SP budget in relation to the resettlement of delayed discharges from Muckamore Abbey Hospital (MAH). SPPG/DoH will be leading on the recommendations. Whilst the role of the NIHE/SP is not yet clear, SP will contribute to actions as necessary.

*** Provider concerns around staff recruitment and retention and salary within the sector as wages remained low compared to other similar vacancies in the Health & Social Care Sector. It was noted that this meant an increase in the use of agency staff and therefore caused financial pressures to some providers coupled with lack of SP uplift in recent years.**

Membership of the RTG extended to the NIHE Housing & Health Representative who also raised awareness across existing RTG Members on the role of the Housing/Health Lead and the function of the team including an outline of the key workstreams for both Housing & Health as well as emerging issues and actions taken so far.

4.2.2. Regional Thematic Group Older People

The focus of the RTG Older People in 2022/23 involved:

- The impact of COVID-19. Although the impact of COVID-19 on services has reduced greatly since the pandemic, Members had requested that COVID-19 remain a standing agenda item to ensure ongoing discussion and early oversight of any future impact. Although staff absences due to COVID-19 have greatly reduced, it was also highlighted that low paid care and support staff are most vulnerable to repeat infection and Long COVID, and therefore this has the potential for future workforce challenges.
- Provider issues with staff recruitment and retention. Members engaged in a number of discussions on workforce challenges across the entire Health and Social Care sector with recruitment of staff a challenge due to low pay for many of these posts. It was recognised that the SP sector faced additional pressures in attracting staff as there has been no uplift in funding awarded in a number of years with wages remaining static.
- Policy implications and funding/budget constraints regarding alternative funding models in Sheltered Accommodation. This will be completed as a separate project and an initial paper was submitted to DfC for consideration and it was subsequently agreed that SP could proceed with scoping costs in alternative funding models. Members will be advised of next steps (please see Strategy Actions for details).
- Promotion of the work of Providers who are offering sheltered accommodation via the NICLL working group (please see Strategy Actions section for further details). Research on alternative models of older people services as per the Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan 2022-2025.
- Presentation to Members on Homeshare Model. A Homeshare is when an older person with a spare room is matched with a person who is in need of low-cost accommodation, in return for up to ten hours of household tasks or company per week. The tasks that the homesharer carries out in return for reduced rent are agreed during the initial matching process. These tasks will depend on the want and ability of both parties and will be unique to their match, for example, shopping, cooking and gardening. Homeshare is not a personal care service. All aspects of matching, vetting, supporting, monitoring and ending the Homeshare are managed by expert staff from one of the local delivery schemes.

4.2.3. Regional Thematic Group Young People

The focus of the RTG Young People in 2022/23 involved:

- The disproportionate effects that COVID-19 had on young people between 18 and 25.

The pandemic resulted in feelings of isolation and loneliness for young people as a whole but more particularly for those living in Jointly Commissioned Supported Accommodation (JCSA) properties and hostels. This was largely due to the lockdown restrictions imposed on visitors as a result of the government directives as well as loss of employment and opportunities available in the midst of these restrictions.

- Provider issues in terms of the Cost of Living crisis and recruitment and retention of staff which is impacting training and service delivery.

This issue has been recognised as a sectoral problem which is still evident and apparent in ongoing contract management meetings and anecdotal discussions with Providers. Whilst it had levelled out it is now being discussed and raised again especially in light of the increase to the living wage/minimum wage which has recently been brought in.

- Rising rent costs and rising Housing Benefit as a result of the Cost of Living crisis:

Cost pressures in the Private Rented Sector (PRS) has led to increased rents and accordingly providers have been in discussions with the Housing Executive's Housing Benefit Department regarding potential uplifts to applicable Housing Benefit amounts in payment.

- The Strategic Review of Jointly Commissioned Supported Accommodation Projects for Young People, in relation to the Funding Agreement:

A recommendation from the Strategic Review of Jointly Commissioned Supported Accommodation Projects for Young People, is the acknowledgement that there is no indicative funding formulae available to deal with the costs of jointly funded projects. A forensic financial review process has been suggested to be carried out by specialist consultants, but this will be subject to funding availability.

- Working in partnership with Health in relation to the increasing number of separated and unaccompanied young people arriving in NI and being accommodated in supported accommodation:

The Young People Contract Management Team have been working closely with colleagues in South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust on a pilot which has been successful to-date in provision for this grouping. An independent report is being developed in relation to the success of the pilot. In addition, Supporting People sit on the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) Working Group with Heads of Service from all Trusts, which advises on the issues raised on a monthly basis from the National Transfer Service (NTS).

4.2.4. Regional Thematic Group Homelessness

The focus of the RTG Homelessness in 2022/23 involved:

- The Welcome Organisation were appointed as the provider of a new temporary supported accommodation service, called Catherine House, in Belfast. This facility provides 10 places for women who are experiencing chronic homelessness.
- An Emotional Health and Wellbeing Link Worker, funded to assist the Welcome Organisation. This will complement the housing support for women who are 'falling in and out of the system' and roll out an ARCH (Activity Recovery Coaching Help) programme. ARCH is a unique programme which promotes positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to individuals who are experiencing negative mental health through substance abuse issues.
- East Belfast Mission funded to secure and develop community based accommodation and support within East Belfast to enable women to 'step down' from hostel accommodation into housing, before securing their own tenancy within the community.
- Funding increased to Tarasis for additional peripatetic support, to people who have been chronically homeless, to sustain their tenancies in the community. This will enable a further 40 individuals to be helped, approximately 25 of whom are women.
- Funding increased to Extern's Multi-disciplinary Homeless Floating Support Team for refugees, by 40 places with an in-year evaluation to assess need.
- Working in partnership with Extern in October 2022, the Housing Executive secured a property to provide accommodation for 11 single female refugees, who are also offered other forms of culturally appropriate support.
- Additional funding for extended opening hours for the Annesgate Emergency Night Shelter to extend provision from 7pm each night to 8am in the morning.
- Five additional units of temporary accommodation units for homeless families in Roseville House and Thorndale Family Centre.
- Consideration to re-modelling of two accommodation services for single homeless clients with support needs. Engagement with two homelessness providers and Housing Services has continued in 2023/24.
- Progression of the Derry Dispersed Intensively Managed Emergency (DIME) accommodation Business case.

4.3. Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan 2022-2025

4.3.1. Public Consultation

The Public Consultation on the Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan 2022-2025 (Strategic Plan) was launched on 31st January 2022 and closed on 25th April 2022. In total SP received feedback from 45 respondents; these included political parties, providers, individuals, voluntary organisations and trade unions. The Policy, Strategy and Comms Team examined the feedback and developed the Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan 2022-2025 Public Consultation Report which provides an analysis of the feedback and a response from SP, where appropriate.

The Strategic Plan was amended to reflect feedback from the public consultation, and was approved by the Housing Executive Board on 6th July 2022. In January 2023 the Permanent Secretary endorsed the implementation of the Strategic Plan actions.

4.3.2. Strategic Action Plan

A Strategic Action Plan, and a reporting framework for the effective monitoring and reporting of the delivery of the strategic actions was developed in November 2022 in order to achieve the actions proposed 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 Providers.

Fig. 4.3.2. Progress made on the actions under the four objectives in the Strategic Plan

Strategic Objective	Action	Progress
One: Drive the recovery and re-build beyond COVID-19	In year one, we will administer COVID-19 funding to providers and liaise with health regarding vaccinations, testing and outbreak management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SP administered provider payments of the COVID-19 Special Recognition Payment and completed financial vouching for both the Recognition Payment and the COVID-19 Recovery Schemes. - SP completed Provider Financial Impact Assessments on Provider Restricted Reserves. - SP administered a 5.8% Uplift to all current SP services (excluding SNMA). <p>Status: Complete</p> <p>Note:</p> <p>In 2022/23, the Department of Health made available £526k to Supporting People. This was for additional support for COVID-19 related staff costs and overheads in jointly-funded services.</p> <p>Funding was unavailable for COVID Recovery Schemes in 22/23. SP will continue to work with the Department for Communities (DfC) to resume this action in 23/24.</p>
	Support providers to develop capacity and resilience (Training). We will fund mental health training for staff working in SP services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Scoping Exercise regarding funding of mental health training for staff working in SP services was completed. - A survey of all SP accommodation based services was completed to determine the existing levels of Wi-Fi provision. Subject to funding, this will inform a project roll-out delivery plan. <p>Status: Not progressed (due to budget availability)</p>

Strategic Objective	Action	Progress
Two: Work towards closing the 14% gap between need for services and supply	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>Service Remodelling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The reconfiguration of two Belfast Learning Disability & Mental Health services from shared accommodation to self-contained apartments was agreed at the Disability and Mental Health Regional Thematic Group and the Strategic Advisory Board. When construction has been completed, the changes will give service users autonomy and enhance their quality of life. - The remodelling of a mental health service from accommodation to peripatetic services in the Western Area has enabled more service users to access the service in their own home. - Through proactive contract management meetings, a number of other services have been identified and work will be ongoing over the lifetime of the strategy, in partnership with Providers and the Health and Social Care Trusts. <p>Status: Ongoing</p>
	Work with Providers to develop efficiencies from composite contracts. Target a 15% reduction in schemes by focusing on bundling numerous low cost low support schemes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ten Learning Disability & Mental Health supported living services across the province were amalgamated to create four services, which has reduced the number of Funding Agreements in line with the Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan 2022-2025. This has also reduced bureaucracy and duplication of administration for both the Providers and Supporting People. The amalgamation of services has enabled Providers to improve efficiencies, enabled more effective allocation of staff and enabled service users to move within the services, to accommodation more suited to their needs. - 18 Funding Agreements under the Older People Theme have been reduced to one, which reduces the administrative burden of performance, financial and outcome reporting and monitoring for both SP and the Provider. Financially it shows a more realistic picture. SP have maximum contract values which in theory could be paid, however, in practice due to the large number of self-funders fluctuating voids, SP pays much less than this amount on an annual basis. Contract Management Teams agree the maximum number of units for the contract having the knowledge of past numbers of self-funders and voids and this should allow flexibility should these service users' access to HB change over time. - Further meetings are ongoing with Providers across the province to assess a further 61 services; taking into consideration the changing environments, increase in services users' needs and impact on service users who are not eligible for SP funding. <p>Status: Complete</p>

Strategic Objective	Action	Progress
Two: Work towards closing the 14% gap between need for services and supply	Increase the number of floating support units for older people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In addition to the Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan 2022-2025, the Housing Executive's Older People's Housing Strategy 2021/22-2026/27 states that "we will explore new models of accommodation and housing related support services for a range of older people..." - A Hub and Spoke model is currently being piloted in Newcastle for two years (May 2022- April 2024). Supporting People realise that our sheltered services are usually located in the heart of communities in urban and rural areas across Northern Ireland and we wanted to build on the position that they hold. Hub and spoke models can offer services and facilities to the wider community, as well as to residents of the service. This means that a range of services including housing support can be provided from a central point over a defined geographical area to people within the surrounding community. For service providers, they can offer a working base not previously available and a network to allied agencies, working at a local level and with local knowledge. SP funded two sheltered services and as part of this pilot we brought in a third scheme as part of a composite contract that covers all 65 accommodation units across these three schemes. The three sheltered dwellings are in close proximity to each other in the Newcastle area and will make up the Hub. They have facilities such as common rooms, a library and a hairdressing salon. Through this pilot we are able extend the services they currently offer to the wider community in order to meet the needs of the growing older population. Previously there were no floating support services in the area for older people. The Community Spoke Service now provides support to 12 clients in the Newcastle area. The community-based element of the model will operate on a pilot basis for two years. <p>Status: Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Social Prescribing model is currently being piloted in Belfast for one year (Jan 2023- Dec 2023) - Supporting People have commissioned a Social Prescribing model pilot through our Provider Innovation Fund (PIF). It is a collaboration between two housing associations, and is delivered with the assistance of a digital platform that facilitates referrals, addresses needs and measures impact.

Strategic Objective	Action	Progress
Two: Work towards closing the 14% gap between need for services and supply	Increase the number of floating support units for older people.	<p>The service operates within two mile radius of these two hubs, and accepts self-referrals and referrals from statutory and community referral partners. The project began in January 2023. The project aims to ensure two thirds of the pilot participants are non-tenants of the partner organisation schemes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This project is designed to test viability and sustainability of new supported living support service incorporating a social prescribing model to support services users, existing tenants and older people living in the local community and will run for 1 year. <p>Project objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Broaden access to housing support services to older people in the community through a social prescribing approach, by enabling increased access to sheltered scheme / independent living activities and third-party services through staff support and the digital social prescribing hub delivered by Elemental. 2) Improve the uptake and sustainability of existing SP funded activities in sheltered schemes by enabling participation by suitable older people in the local community, not currently supported by SP services, and in turn increasing participation levels for existing activities and potentially making new activities viable through increased demand or cross-site collaboration. 3) Increase well-being for new and existing service users through increased social engagement, reducing loneliness and isolation and increasing the capacity to live independently in the community. 4) Help improve Supporting People outcomes for existing sheltered tenants through access to extra services identified in the pilot, matched to tenants via the online portal and delivered through a collaborative approach. 5) Help improve opportunities for tenants to sustain an independent lifestyle within their home, but also support those living within the community to remain independent in their own homes <p>Status: Ongoing</p>

Strategic Objective	Action	Progress
Two: Work towards closing the 14% gap between need for services and supply	In collaboration with Health, identify gaps in mental health provision and increase services, in accordance with need. ££	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Strategic Needs Assessment highlighted that due to current/ projected need, Mental Health floating support provision was an area for priority. - The SP Disability Contract Management Team have conducted initial research to include a desktop analysis of current provision across Northern Ireland; identifying gaps and consulting HSCTs on current and projected need at local levels. <p>Initial outworkings showed that the main gaps in provision lay in the WHSCT area, therefore this area may be prioritised should any future funding become available.</p> <p>Status: Ongoing</p>
	Develop and remodel dementia, frail elderly and disability services to address voids.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Housing with Care accommodation-based service for older people has been terminated in Castlederg due to the number and length of voids in the service. - SP Contract teams had worked with the provider to identify demand for other clients groups but due to the geographical location this was not possible. A full exit management plan was completed before termination. <p>Status: Complete</p>

Strategic Objective	Action	Progress
Two: Work towards closing the 14% gap between need for services and supply	Use the SNA to prioritise funding for additional floating support, peripatetic and accommodation based services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 25 additional peripatetic places have been provided to address chronic homelessness; with 40% being dedicated provision for homeless females. Funding increased to Tarasis for additional peripatetic support people who have been chronically homeless to sustain their tenancies in the community. This will enable a further 40 individuals to be helped, approximately 25 of whom are women. - The extension of the DIME mixed hostel provision has been maintained at 118 beds (increased from 112 during the COVID-19 pandemic). - Funding increased to Extern's Multi-disciplinary Homeless Support Team floating support for refugees by 40 places with an in-year evaluation to assess need. - Two providers have been secured to deliver additional units of move-on and therapeutic support in the community. An Emotional Health and Wellbeing Link Worker funded to assist the Welcome Organisation. This will complement the housing support for women who are 'falling in and out of the system' and roll out an ARCH (Activity Recovery Coaching Help) programme. ARCH is a unique programme which promotes positive mental health and emotional wellbeing to individuals who are experiencing negative mental health through substance abuse issues. - A provider has been secured to deliver supported accommodation to women in chronic homelessness. East Belfast Mission funded to secure and develop community based accommodation and support within East Belfast to enable women to 'step down' from hostel accommodation into housing, before securing their own tenancy within the community. - Catherine House has been opened and referrals accepted. Full occupancy as of 30 April 2023. The Welcome Organisation was appointed as the provider of a new temporary supported accommodation service, called Catherine House, in Belfast. This facility will provide 10 places for women who are experiencing chronic homelessness <p>Status: Complete</p>

Strategic Objective	Action	Progress
Two: Work towards closing the 14% gap between need for services and supply	Working with stakeholders to undertake a review of floating support funding for Traveller support groups to improve housing outcomes for the Irish Traveller community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Report on the Review of Floating Support for Irish Travellers has been developed. A gap in service provision was identified within the Mid-Ulster area of Craigavon, Banbridge and Portadown. - The business case is currently in development with the Housing Executive's Traveller Unit and will be dependent on in year budget provision. Status: Complete
	Maximise administrative efficiencies by implementing a new SP Data Collection Payment and Reporting System and replace outdated SPOCC system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial testing of the new system commenced in April 2023. - The SPOCC Replacement Project is progressing and is currently in the system design phase with a Provider Working Group. Status: Ongoing
	Support 20 Providers to achieve maximum Housing Benefit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 Homeless Providers (single-funded) were engaged during 2021/22 to address ineligible SP spend, re-apportionment of management & staff hours to include eligible HB costs etc. which reduced SP budget deficits. Approximately £1.5m of HB increased income was awarded to these SP Providers. - A further 2 Providers were supported to review SP/HB apportionment (Apex HA, and MACS) in Jan 2023. Status: Ongoing
	In year one we will link the central cost reduction with maximisation of Housing Benefit (highlights ineligible spend and clarifies cost allocation).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budget reviews with 15 Providers were completed in order to maximise Housing Benefit revenue whilst reducing SP deficits (mainly Homelessness and Young People). Status: Complete
	In year one we will reinvest monies freed up by voids in accommodation-based services into floating support.	Status: Complete

Strategic Objective	Action	Progress
Three: Collaborate with providers, to invest in service innovation to achieve greater outcomes	Develop models of support for young people experiencing homelessness including improved emergency accommodation options, Housing First, Nightstop and Shared Tenancies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service Extensions: - A Shared Tenancies service for young people has been extended to 40 units. Status: Complete
	Implement the findings of the Review of Jointly funded Young People Services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work has commenced on the recommendations from the Strategic Review of Jointly Funded services for Young People, involving providers, SPPG, NIHE and Trust representatives. Local area partnerships established within Trust localities with wide-ranging stakeholder involvement and participation. Status: Ongoing
	We will continue to work to make compelling cases for both additional funding and inflationary uplifts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SP administered a 5.8% Uplift to all current SP services (excluding SNMA). - The Evaluation of the Supporting People Provider Innovation Fund (PIF) Programme Report was produced in June 2022. The success of the Provider Innovation Fund (PIF) indicates how important this funding is. Status: Ongoing (Funding was unavailable for the PIF in 22/23. SP will continue to work with DfC to secure funding in 23/24).
	In years one and two we will work with providers to co-produce research on long term impacts of Covid on SP services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An SP research proposal on the long-term impacts of COVID-19 on SP services has been submitted for inclusion in the NIHE Research Committee 23/24 research programme. - The Research Programme was approved for 23/24, subject to budgetary availability. Status: Ongoing

Strategic Objective	Action	Progress
Three: Collaborate with providers, to invest in service innovation to achieve greater outcomes	Work with providers to establish a forum for SP engagement, service development, staff training and cross-provider benchmarking and information sharing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SP are currently engaging on an ongoing basis with the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA) and Housing Association CEOs and Directors. Status: Ongoing
	Drive collaboration between providers.	
	Work with providers to invest in service innovation to achieve better outcomes for service users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued engagement with BCS and Providers regarding new outcomes framework. - Outcomes Review Paper updated recommending different approaches relevant to each Thematic Area Feb 2023. - Prepared TOR for Consultative Working Group March 2023.
	In year one we will 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An internal SP workshop was held via webex in February, to gain views from the wider Supporting People Teams and aid ongoing discussion in order to establish a meaningful method for service user engagement. Further internal discussion was held in March regarding the best method to engage service users and consideration was given to use the Provider Engagement Forum to gain views on methods of Service User Engagement. Status: Ongoing
Four: Strengthen relationships across health, criminal justice and housing with the aim of generating greater value from public funds	Establish a regular and formal structure to drive collaboration, risk sharing and enhance resource availability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SP participate in the Joint Policy Forum with our strategic partners, namely the Department for Communities, the Department of Health and the Department of Justice. Status: Ongoing

Strategic Objective	Action	Progress
Four: Strengthen relationships across health, criminal justice and housing with the aim of generating greater value from public funds	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A NICILL Independent Living Conference was held on the 23rd November 2022 with delegates included those representing the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Housing Services and Supporting People, Northern Ireland Housing Associations and the Department for Communities. The event was used to help change perceptions in relation to redefining Sheltered Housing as Independent Living in Later Life. , - Radius Housing Association ran the first public showing of their audio-visual suite of media, which was funded through our Supporting People Provider Innovation Fund. It will be used as a shared asset to communicate with service users, families, staff, statutory and voluntary organisations on what Continued Independent Living in Later Life is. <p>Status: Complete</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.	
	Continue to work with Health and Justice colleagues to develop a partnership approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting People Chair and provide secretariat for the Strategic Advisory Board (SAB) meetings. - SP commenced the planning of the events, activities and film production to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the SP Programme In June 2023. <p>Status: Ongoing</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.	

Strategic Objective	Action	Progress
Four: Strengthen relationships across health, criminal justice and housing with the aim of generating greater value from public funds	In year one work with DfC to review and rationalise Supporting People Governance and decision-making arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reviews of a range of policy and governance documents commenced in February, including the Supporting People Policy Framework 2023 and the Supporting People Future Oversight Review. - DfC confirmed the review of the Draft Future Oversight papers in March, addressing the comments previously provided by Supporting People to the Project Initiation Document, Delivery Group Terms of Reference and the Future Oversight Implementation Plan. Status: Complete
Value for Money and Value of Outcomes	Review the funding agreement framework, to enable providers with greater agility in the delivery of services, while ensuring appropriate levels of accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Briefing Paper in relation to the Ability to Pay Policy has been sent to the Department for Communities. - An action was identified in the SP Draft Strategy to review alternative methods of funding of housing support in sheltered services. SP plan to take this forward in two phases. In the first phase, SP have begun to engage with the DfC to consider whether there would be any policy implications in changing the method of payment. SP plan to explore alternative payment options in Phase 2 over the lifetime of the strategy. It is likely that alternative payment options may require additional recurrent funding. Status: Ongoing
	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting People Chair and provide secretariat for the Strategic Advisory Board (SAB) meetings. - SP commenced the planning of the events, activities and film production to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the SP Programme In June 2023. Status: Ongoing

5.0. Supporting People Activities

5.1. Contract Management

The Contract Management Teams are the main operational contact for Providers, giving guidance and support on an ongoing basis. They monitor the performance and quality of Supporting People Providers at service level, as well as assessing proposals and business cases brought forward from Statutory Stakeholders and Providers. The aim of the Supporting People Contract Management Teams in monitoring Providers' quality and performance is to enable the best outcomes for service users. They do this through utilisation of the Quality Monitoring Tool (QMT) and Contract Management Meetings.

Fig. 5.1. shows total figures of contract management activity for each of the Contract Management Themes in the 2022/23 year vs the 2021/22 year.

Fig. 5.1. Total figures of Contract Management Activity by Theme 2021/22 and 2022/23

2021/22			2022/23		
Thematic Area	QMTs	CMMs	Thematic Area	QMTs	CMMs
Disability & Mental Health	13	35	Disability & Mental Health	12	41
Older People	21	28	Older People	14	25
Young People	7	14	Young People	10	18
Homelessness	21	28	Homelessness	18	38

The total figures for contract management activity in the 2022/23 year have increased by 9 from the 2021/22 year.

5.2. Contract Changes

There were various contract changes during the year as summarised in Figs. 5.2.1. to 5.2.4. below. These contract changes were affordable from normal SP baseline funding .

Fig. 5.2.1. New Services

Thematic Area	Location & Provider	Action
Homelessness	Belfast, The Welcome Organisation, Catherine House	New scheme, 10 units

Fig. 5.2.2. Service Restructuring

Thematic Area	Location & Provider	Action
Disability and Mental Health	Baronscourt, Belfast, Triangle	3 and 7 unit schemes combined to form a 10 unit scheme
Older People	Newcastle Hub and Newcastle Floating Support, Radius	Two existing schemes (32 units and 25 units) amalgamated with a new scheme (8 units) to create a new 65 unit scheme - Newcastle Hub A new 12 unit Floating Support scheme was also created as part of a Hub & Spoke scheme in Newcastle

Fig. 5.2.3. Service Extensions

Thematic Area	Location & Provider	Action
Disability and Mental Health	Altigarron Court (Belfast), Inspire	Extension from 11 to 14 users
Young People	Belfast Floating Support, MACS Supporting Young People	Extension from 57 to 127 units
Homeless	Hosford House Tenancy Support Service (Belfast), East Belfast Mission	Extension from 40 to 66 users

Thematic Area	Location & Provider	Action
Homeless	Cuan Mhuire (Newry, Mourne and Down Council)	Extension from 50 to 70 units
Homeless	Queen's Quarter Housing (Belfast)	Maintained extension from 112 to 18 units
Homeless	Tarasis Support Services (Belfast)	Extension from 30 to 55 units
Homeless	Floating Support Multi-Disciplinary Homeless Support Team (Belfast)	Extension from 97 to 137 units

Fig. 5.2.4. Termination of Funding

Thematic Area	Location & Provider	Action
Older People	Strabane, Apex Housing Association, Parkview House (Housing with Care)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Termination of 14 unit scheme A Housing with Care accommodation-based service for older people has been terminated due to the number and length of voids in the service. SP Contract teams had worked with the provider to identify demand for other client groups but due to the geographical location this was not possible. A full exit management plan was completed before termination.

5.3. Major Adverse Incidents (MAIs)

Across Supporting People-funded services, a wide range of incidents/circumstances can present, given the vulnerabilities of service users. The Supporting People Reporting Framework for Major Adverse Incidents sets out the requirement that Providers should report to the Housing Executive those adverse incidents which fall within the supplied definition of ‘major’¹.

Supporting People therefore continues to monitor major adverse incidents across Supporting People-funded services; this includes providing monthly reports to Department for Communities.

Fig. 5.3.1. shows total Major Adverse Incidents figures for each Theme in the 2022/23 year in comparison to the 2021/22 year. There were 217 major adverse incidents reported in 2022/23, signifying a 13.6% increase across the four themes from the previous year.

Fig. 5.3.1 Total figures of Contract Management Activity by Theme 2021/22 and 2022/23

Major Adverse Incidents				
Thematic Area	2021/22	2022/23	Percentage Increase/Decrease	Trend Arrows
Disability & Mental Health	64	88	37.5% increase	↑
Older People	30	26	13.3% decrease	↓
Young People	29	41	41.4% increase	↑
Homelessness	68	62	8.8% decrease	↓

¹ As Per the Framework for Major Adverse Incidents section 3.2, a major adverse incident is defined as an event or circumstance that could or did lead to possible; permanent injury, serious ill health, damage/loss of function, serious sexual assault, serious breach of security, serious assault, missing person, unexpected death (not age-related), suicide, murder, rape, fire, serious reputation issue, data breach. Descriptions are examples only and this is not an exhaustive list

5.4. Other Supporting People Activities

5.4.1. Supporting People Policy and Strategy

Fig. 5.4.1. highlights the Work Stream of Policy and Strategy over the 22/23 year.

Fig. 5.4.1. Supporting People Policy and Strategy Activities and Performance 2022/23

Activity/Project	Description
Production and development of the Supporting People Business/Annual Plans 2022/23	Produced SP Annual Report 22/23 Contribution to NIHE Annual Report 22/23 Contributed to the Housing Investment Plan 22/23
Review and update of the Supporting People Reporting Framework for Major Adverse Incidents	Review completed and updated document shared with Supporting People staff and providers.
Review of the Department of Communities' Supporting People Policy Framework 2022	The Department of Communities' Supporting People Policy Framework, dated February 2022, was considered by SP and further written feedback was sent to DfC.
Analysed feedback received from the 12 week Public consultation for the Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan 2022-2025 and produced the Strategic Plan Public Consultation Report	The 'Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan' Public Consultation ran for 12 weeks, from 31 January 2022 to 25 April 2022. It was carried out in the format of a Citizen Space online questionnaire and via a consultation response questionnaire form. We also facilitated any requests to receive responses in alternative formats. The team managed 44 written responses, and 4 online consultation sessions which resulted in direct verbal feedback. The Strategic Plan Public Consultation Report was subsequently developed, and the Strategic Plan was amended to reflect relevant feedback.
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.
Developed the SP Strategic Action Plan	Developed in November 2022 in order to achieve the actions proposed under the four strategic priorities of the Strategic Plan.

Activity/Project	Description
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.
SP 20th Anniversary	<p>In partnership with NIHE Corporate Comms, the PSC Team are responsible for the planning and co-ordination of the SP 20th Anniversary Events which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SP Film production - Social media plan and promotion - Celebration Event in Stormont's Long Gallery - 20 Board Member visits to SP services - SP Regional Roadshows

5.4.2. Supporting People Communications

Fig. 5.4.2. highlights the Work Stream of Supporting People Communications over the 22/23 year.

Fig. 5.4.2. Supporting People Communications Activities and Performance 2022/23

Activity/Project	Description
Supporting People Quarterly Information Bulletin	Quarterly issue of the Supporting People Information Bulletin to all SP providers, DfC and CRISPP.
Information requests	<p>The Supporting People Communications team responded to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 Freedom of Information requests (FOIs) - 23 Assembly Questions (AQs) - 8 Subject Access Request (SAR) - 1 Press queries - 91 Formal Requests for Information
Provider Innovation Fund (PIF) and Floating Support Social Media promotion	<p>A series of short films to promote four recent PIF projects were developed, which have been promoted on social media and can be found on YouTube.</p> <p>Short animated information videos on Floating Support for Young People and Older People have been shared on social media.</p>

Activity/Project	Description
HA CEO Engagement Meetings	Engagement meetings held with NI Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA) and Housing Association CEOs to discuss the challenges affecting the Supporting People Programme in the context of the current cost of living crisis.
SP 20th Anniversary	<p>In partnership with NIHE Corporate Comms, the PSC Team are responsible for the planning and co-ordination of the SP 20th Anniversary Events which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SP Film production - Social media plan and promotion - Celebration Event in Stormont's Long Gallery - Board Member visits to SP services - SP Regional Roadshows

5.4.3. Supporting People Business Improvement

Fig. 5.4.3. highlights the Work Stream of Supporting People's Business Improvement Team over the 22/23 year.

Fig. 5.4.3. Supporting People Business Improvement Activities and Performance 2022/23

Business Area	Improvement	Operational
Contract Management Meeting Report	SharePoint form developed to enable Contract Management Teams to make a record of all contract management activity whilst giving the ability to record meeting actions, follow ups and link the minutes of the meeting. The form also links to the SP Performance Dashboard, enabling SP to view at a glance the number of contract management meetings that have taken place in a financial year.	Operational 22/23
Quality Monitoring Tool Register	SharePoint form developed to enable Contract Management Teams to record all QMT visits carried out during a financial year. The form also allows for the Contract Management Teams to link items such as the final QMT report and Service Improvement Plans. The form also links to the SP Performance Dashboard, enabling SP to view at a glance the number of QMTs that have taken place in a financial year.	Operational 22/23

Business Area	Improvement	Operational
Risk Register	A new register currently being built that will allow Contract Management Teams to record risk at service level and then aggregate that risk up to provider level. This will inform the future contract management activity of providers and will also flag issues to the SP Senior Management Team at SP budget meetings.	Operational 22/23
Change Control Register	SharePoint form developed to help move away from the paper-based activity of tracking change controls. The form has in-built audit functionality that allows for monitoring of the progress of the change control as well as an in-built alert system that will flag an email to SP staff when the change control is ready for their input. The register tracks the change control from initiation to final keying and has the ability to link supporting documentation.	Operational 22/23
HB Action List	A new streamlined HB action list developed, which omits nugatory information for SP Finance staff when checking a change in HB circumstances of all SP-funded service users. The improvements made to the HB action list provided considerable administrative efficiencies for the SP Finance Team.	Operational 22/23
SP Board Dashboard	Power BI dashboard developed to assist with high-level reporting for the SP Senior Management Team. The dashboard provides, at a glance, budgetary information, data on void levels and occupancy data across all SP-funded services.	Operational 21/22 with significant enhancements made for 22/23

Business Area	Improvement	Operational
Provider Survey of Wi-Fi Access	A survey of all SP accommodation based services was completed to determine the existing levels of Wi-Fi provision. Should the required funding be identified, this will inform a project roll-out delivery plan.	In Progress
IT Replacement Project	Project initiated to replace the current SPOCC system used by SP by 30th November 2023. CDP's "SHARP" System was successfully procured in December and work commenced on System Design Configuration plus Data Preparation, Data Load and Migration to create a "Test System". A Provider Working Group will be established to ensure that SP Providers are consulted throughout the design and implementation processes. Regular Briefings will be issued to the sector to update them on progress.	In Progress

5.4.4. Strategic Review of Jointly Commissioned Supported Accommodation Projects for Young People

Supporting People carried out a Review of Jointly Commissioned Supported Accommodation Projects for Young People (JCSA) in partnership with colleagues from the Health sector (SPPG). The Review will help funders and commissioners make decisions on the most appropriate use of funding.

The JCSA Review generated 4 key themes with recommendations and a Draft Action Plan, the aim of which is to help to ensure that accommodation sits within an appropriate continuum of support for young people. The purpose of the JCSA Review and Draft Action Plan is to ensure that young people are safe, and that the needs of those young people who are referred to supported accommodation services are met.

The Draft Action Plan focuses on four Themes:

- Theme One: determining strategic relevance of JCSA projects to better inform future commissioning, planning and service development;
- Theme Two: improving young people's pathways into, through and out of project to ensure optimum use of service provision;
- Theme Three: providing an integrated model of social care and housing support that is trauma informed and supports positive transitions to adulthood;
- Theme four: service improvements and remodelling to improve outcomes and ensure value for money and best use of finite funding.

The Draft Action Plan requires all agencies and stakeholders to provide input and commitment of resources, to ensure that the recommendations are delivered. The report is due to be launched in Autumn 2023 with workshops and follow up on implementation planning to follow as an outworking of the recommendations. A key output associated with the implementation of the recommendations is the establishment of Local Area Partnerships across the Trust areas, co-aligned to NIHE regions. This process has begun and will be fully operational in Autumn 2023 with Trust Assistant Directors leading on this element.

Young people who currently and previously lived in the projects had a significant input to the review and their views are vital to ensuring best practice and to influence future service development.

6.0. Outcomes

6.1. 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](#).²

Fig. 6.1.1. 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.

² 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. 6.1.1. 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

6.2 Outcomes Front-End

The Supporting People Outcomes Front-End collates Supporting People Outcome Indicators from Providers. In the 2022/23 year, the Supporting People Programme showed an overall average success rate of 88% against the Outcomes Indicators across 82 Providers, delivering 824 services.

Fig. 6.2.1. Outcomes Indicators reported through the Outcomes System by Supporting People providers for the 2022/23 year

Outcomes

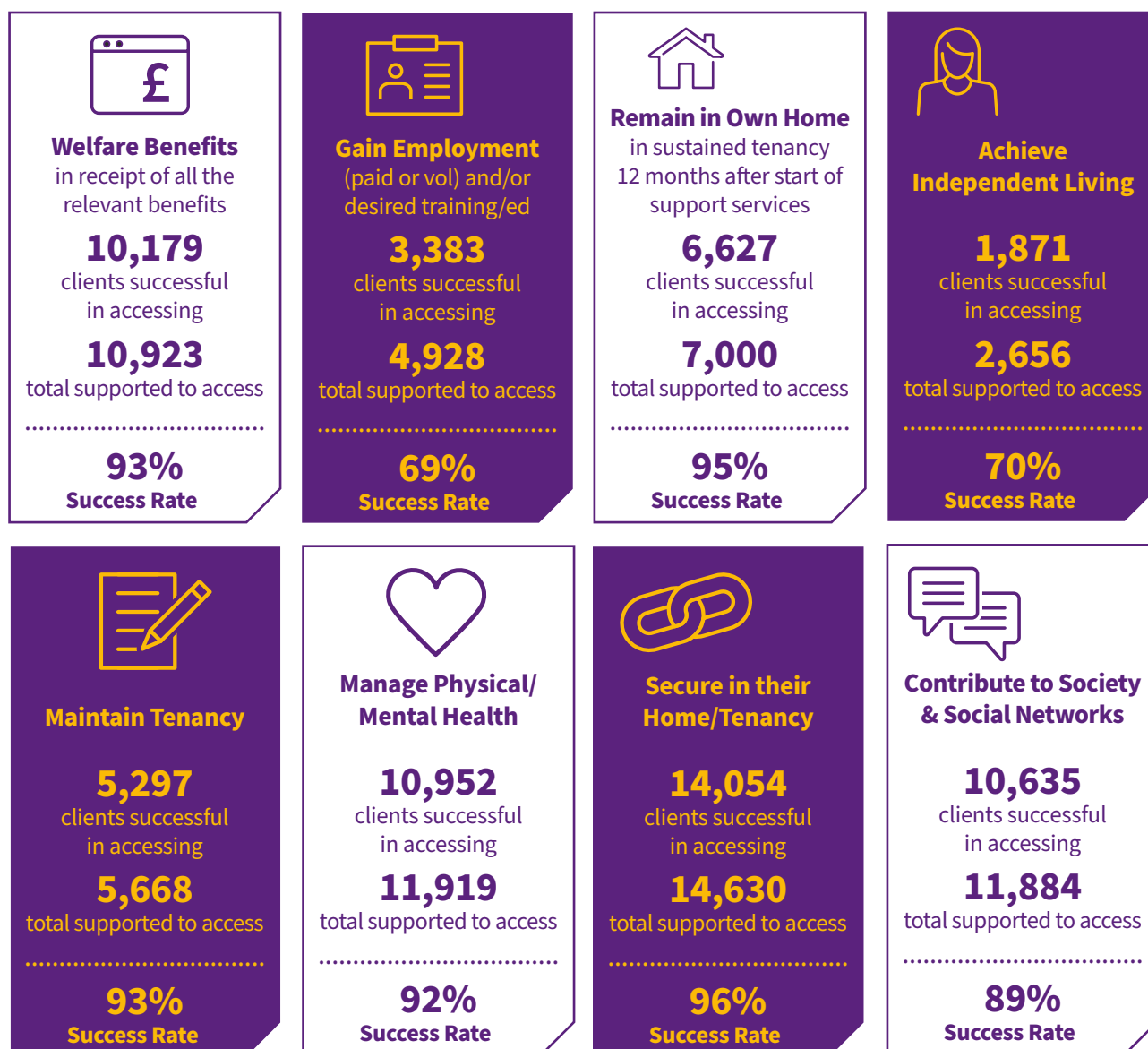
88% Overall success rate

824 Services

82 organisations

563 Submissions

If the indicator displays a blank value this may be that the indicator does not apply to those providers/services filtered or there is no data to show.



There are a small number of services known as crisis accommodation services or “crash services” who are mainly concerned with helping vulnerable people off the streets. 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 2022/23 year, the Crisis accommodation services showed an overall average success rate of 76% against the Outcomes Indicators across three Providers delivering three services.

Fig. 6.2.2. Outcomes Indicators reported through the Outcomes System for the crisis accommodation services for the 2022/23 year

Outcomes Crisis only



If the indicator displays a blank value this may be that the indicator does not apply to those providers/services filtered or there is no data to show.



7.0. Supporting People Performance

7.1. 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.

Supporting People's three Key Performance Indicators have been met in 2022/23. Further details on these KPIs can be found in other sections of this document outlined in the table below.

Fig. 7.1.1. Status of Regional Services Key Performance Indicators (RSKPIs) for Supporting People in the year 2022/23

Regional Services Key Performance Indicator (RSKPI)	Status	Section
4.10. By 31st March 2023 ensure a minimum spend of 17.5% to floating support	Target Performance level achieved	2.1. Financial Analysis
4.13. Deliver year one Supporting People Strategy Action Plan	Target performance level achieved	4.3.2. Strategic Action 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 performance level achieved	5.2. Contract Changes

7.2. 2015 Ministerial Recommendations

In 2015 the Department of Social Development (now Department for Communities) published a review of the Supporting People Programme. Supporting People have closed the final two recommendations in the 2022/23 year:

- Recommendation 5: Standardised Regional Payment Rates (SRPR)
- Recommendation 10: Supporting People Three-Year Strategy

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 Stories

Service User A's Story

Service User A had to leave their hostel accommodation at short notice and was anxious about where they would move to next. The Housing Executive worked in partnership with Extern, who immediately completed a needs assessment with Service User A to understand their situation and how they could be supported.

Service User A had been suffering from mental ill-health and chronic alcohol problems, and also felt socially isolated.

The Housing Executive worked to find Service User A the best suitable housing solution for them, securing an apartment in the community. Support staff helped Service User A to settle in by securing a Home Starter Pack and setting up a gas and electric supplier/supply. They also helped review Service User A's benefits to ensure that their income was maximised.

The area was unfamiliar to Service User A so support staff helped to find local amenities, such as a supermarket, GP surgery and public transport.

Service User A is now settled in their new home, is being supported with their mental health and hopes to get back into education and learning.

Service User B's Story

Service User B was a victim of financial abuse; given their vulnerabilities it wasn't safe to stay where they lived and their current accommodation was deemed unsuitable. The Housing Executive helped Service User B move into a homeless accommodation-based service, where support is provided.

Support staff immediately completed a person-centred support plan and linked Service User B with a Mental Health Worker and counsellor. Life skills such as budgeting and self-care was a struggle for Service User B and they are now being supported to take control of their own finances.

There are lots of activities to get involved with in the service and Service User B spends a lot of time gardening and in cookery classes.

With the service's help, Service User B is becoming more independent and hopes to move into their own home.

Service User C's Story

A referral was received from the Physical Health and Disability Team (under 65) for Service User C. During the first meeting they disclosed that their partner had just passed away. When we met with Service User C again several weeks later, their partner's family wanted them to leave the property as the tenancy was in their partners' name. The house was Housing Executive property and had been poorly maintained by the couple.

Service User C's health was very poor, and although they tried to manage as much as possible by going to the local shop to pay bills, it became apparent that Service User C needed support as the walk to the shops was too much for them. Service User C expressed a wish to move to sheltered accommodation close to the area they had lived with their partner. Their support worker liaised with the Housing Executive's Patch Manager for the area, and soon Service User C received an offer for a flat.

Service User C's support worker:

- Referred Service User C to BHSCT to be assessed for a care package and received it;
- Assisted Service User C to apply for a home starter pack from Homeless Connect NI;
- Assisted Service User C to apply for a discretionary grant for other essential items;
- Helped Service User C to apply for housing benefit;
- Supported Service User C to have Personal Independence Payments (PIP) reviewed, which had a successful outcome;
- Effectively worked in partnership with Service User C's social worker organising easy systems for Service User C to access their finances and pay bills independently, worked alongside GP, OT and carers putting into place plans to help Service User C remain at home for as long as possible; and
- Accompanied Service User C to various hospital appointments.

When COVID-19 restrictions were implemented, Service User C's support worker managed to continue support via telephone. During the COVID-19 period, Service User C became very isolated and their support worker referred them for a 'befriender', who made a phone call every week, something that Service User C looked forward to.

Service User C's health continued to deteriorate, they were admitted to hospital and assessed as needing nursing care which meant they would be unable to return home. This was very hard for Service User C and their support worker as they had built up a very trusting relationship.

Service User C had initially started on floating support with up to 2 years support, but as their needs were re-assessed, it was identified that they would benefit from long-term support. This enabled Service User C to maintain their relationship with their long-term support worker and remain living independently for a further three years. Without this support, Service User C would not have been able to have their own home and independence, which they had never had before.

Service User D's Story

Service User D was referred to a young people's accommodation-based housing support service by the Housing Executive in December 2021 following a breakdown in relations with their parents and subsequent homelessness; at the time of referral, Service User D was sleeping in their car.

Despite holding down a full-time job as a joinery apprentice, Service User D's mental health had suffered as a result of the issues with their parents and they had a history of self-harm and suicide attempts. Service User D had never lived outside of the family home and expressed apprehension about the idea of living alone.

When Service User D first arrived at the service, they found it difficult to approach service staff for support. Over time and with encouragement from staff, a good rapport was developed and eventually Service User D felt comfortable asking for support and communicating their feelings; this was particularly important during periods where they felt the need to self-harm.

In October 2022 Service User D made the decision to end their apprenticeship and focus on their mental health. Service User D was supported in accessing support from their GP and the Community Mental Health Team and as a result of these interventions, and subsequent support from support staff and external agencies, Service User D's mood began to improve and there was a dramatic reduction in incidents of self-harm.

During their time at the service, Service User D developed skills around budgeting and maintaining a property, demonstrating great progress in the area of cooking with many of their keywork sessions involving trying out gluten-free recipes. Service User D also developed social skills and grew in confidence, as evidenced by the friendships they established with other residents.

When Service User D was offered a tenancy in January 2023, they felt their mental health was stable enough to live independently and they felt able to undertake the responsibility of managing a tenancy.

In February 2023, Service User D began a Food Hygiene course through New Horizons and began to explore options for returning to work; Service User D has settled well into their new home and feel their time at the service prepared them for the challenges of independent living.

Service User E's Story

Service User E moved to a young people's accommodation-based housing support service from a children's home, where they were comfortable with staff and therefore fearful of moving. Service User E refused to move to their new support service until the day before their 18th birthday, and after moving into the service was reluctant to interact with support staff.

Support staff were patient and consistent with Service User E and they began to form relationships and eventually trust support staff. When Service User E was offered a tenancy, they relied on the trusting relationships that had been cultivated by support staff and utilised the support available to help set them up for independent living. Support staff continue to link in with and support Service User E as they settle into their new tenancy. Service User E worked hard, and with the continued support of support staff began a stone masonry apprenticeship with a great future ahead of them.

8.2. Support Service Stories

Disability and Mental Health Service

A supported accommodation-based Disability service, jointly funded by the Housing Executive and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT), is supporting and empowering people affected by mental health issues to live their best lives. The service is responsible for providing safe housing, care and support for adults who are experiencing mental health issues, and is focussed on aiding service users to achieve life goals to help them improve and manage their mental health and wellbeing through a person-centred approach.

The 24-hour supported housing service has a dedicated team and the referral process is designed for those who are in the process of being discharged from hospital, or who may be at risk of hospital re-admission. Support and care is offered to achieve as much independence as possible; service users have 24/7 access to the supportive staff team and a full range of services available through the Community Mental Health Teams and Community Day Services which is integrated into the service delivery. Service users can become involved in volunteering, work and social activities.

“When I moved in, I bottled things up and didn't talk to anyone about my problems. Now I know I can talk to any member of staff and they will help me.” – Service User

“We need more places like this in Mental Health Services. People are crying out for help for services like us. I do feel, if we did have more places like the service, people wouldn't be in hospitals as much and for long stays. People would like to live their lives as normal, whatever normal is. The main experience we got out of COVID-19 and what we have learnt from clients is that everybody experiences different things at different times and there is no one size fits all approach to support, which sets our principles but also reinforces that individuality in our clients. Every single client has something to bring to the service as well as the support that the service brings to them. It is very much a two way stream” – Service Staff

Culture Night (Disability and Mental Health Service)

A supported accommodation-based Disability Community Hub have begun celebrating Culture Nights. The first month took service users to Mexico to sample some of their amazing cuisine. Service users wore Mexican themed clothes, created beautiful Mexican style bowls and decorated the Community Hub like they were in Mexico City itself! It was such a fantastic night.

Next up was Spain – To complement the theme, service users worked on Picasso inspired paintings throughout the month to decorate the building. The evening was finished with beautiful traditional Spanish music.

Upcoming months include visiting Morocco, India and Ireland!

Independent Living Service (Older People)

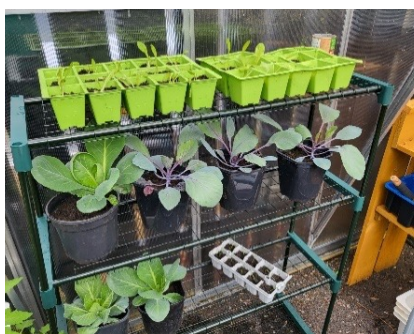
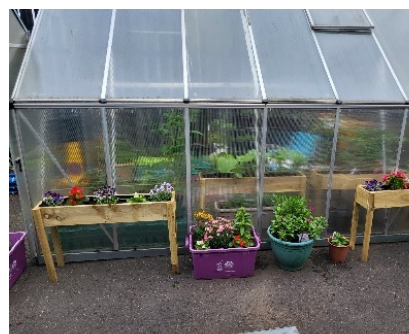
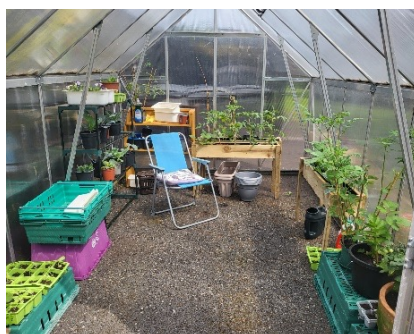
During lockdown, service users at an Independent Living Service struggled with their mental health and it was clear that mobility issues had increased over the COVID-19 period. In order to combat these issues, service staff encouraged physical activity and discovered that service users enjoyed planting and gardening.

A proposal was submitted for a garden project, and Supporting People provided funding for a greenhouse and raised beds. The project aligns with the Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan 2022-2025 and the Housing Executive's Older People's Housing Strategy 2021-2027.

There were a few service users who found the physical side of gardening a struggle, but they still joined in on the activities by offering advice and growing tips!

This garden project promotes independence and gives the service users a sense of empowerment. It has also successfully reduced isolation and loneliness as service users spend more time together in communal areas.

The garden project has helped to develop community relationships in the local area, as residents assisted in building the greenhouse and the raised beds. It is a great project for exercise, social activity, and growing fruits and vegetables helps to educate service users in diet and health.



“We’re having great fun and learning as we go!”

– Service Support Coordinator

9.0. Outlook 2023/24

Throughout 2023/24, Supporting People will focus on implementing the actions outlined under the four objectives in the Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan 2022-2025, subject to budget availability.

During the 2023/24 year we will:

1. Drive **recovery and rebuild from COVID-19**, and prevent lasting adverse impacts from the pandemic, by targeting services towards those in need.
2. 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. 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.

Housing
Executive

   nihe.gov.uk

 facebook.com/housingexecutive

 [@nihecommunity](https://twitter.com/nihecommunity)

supporting  **people**

RS-55-11-23-SM