
Housing
Executive

Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan and Covid-19 Recovery Plan

2022-2025

Driving **recovery**
from **Covid-19**

Work to **close the**
gap between need
and supply

Investing in
service innovation

Strengthening
relationships and
greater **collaboration**

supporting**people** 

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Preface by the Housing Executive Chair

Supporting People is an essential programme, critical to the achievement of health and well-being outcomes for thousands of people in Northern Ireland. With an annual budget of more than £72m, the range of services provided spans many complex forms of support, with multi-disciplinary teams across the public and voluntary sectors working together in partnership.

The primary purpose of the Supporting People Programme remains unchanged, and this vital mission has rarely been more relevant. The new strategy will deliver that original purpose through delivering high quality housing support and independent living to those most in need, while making best use of the available funding. This vision, and the growing importance of the services that it envisages, are all the more relevant given the profound challenges that have emerged during the Covid-19 crisis, including the differential impact of the virus on people and groups.

We see the vision for the next few years as a fundamental contribution to meeting the distinct needs of people living in our communities, and ensuring that they are able to access services that allow them to maintain their independence and dignity. The programme is, in many senses, a practical expression of how a basic human right can be delivered to all those who need it. In an increasingly complex and diverse society, equality of access is ever more important, and this strategy seeks to secure this.

We are proud of the fact that this strategy was produced in partnership, and its delivery is dependent on continuation of that close collaboration. The Housing Executive is committed to making cooperation in delivery as seamless and easy as possible. All of our partners have stressed the importance of listening to our customers in order to inform service design and delivery. This strategy seeks to build on what we have learned during the pandemic. We look forward to continuing to work with all our partners in the delivery of the strategy over the next three years.



Professor Peter Roberts
Chair

Welcome by Chief Executive Grainia Long

Covid-19 has had a profound effect on individuals and households in need of housing support. The impact of the pandemic will likely continue throughout the life of this strategy and for this reason, we have re-framed some of the strategy's original objectives so that it strongly reflects how life has changed for our customers- for those most in need of support- and for the professional staff who work closely with them. As we re-emerge from the pandemic and re-set how we live and work, the Supporting People Programme will focus on recovery and re-build beyond Covid-19.

Assessing need is at the heart of good strategic planning and service delivery and we have taken a strategic, intelligence led approach to identify current and future patterns of need. The Strategic Needs Assessment has strongly informed the priorities set out in the strategy. It evidenced future projections and highlighted, unsurprisingly, that housing support need will continue to be higher than supply for this reason, working towards closing the gap has emerged as a strategic priority.

I am aware that the funding pot remains static this year, despite evidence of the increasing gap between demand and supply of services. While I accept the importance of working within this funding envelope, I do not accept that funding levels are adequate, and therefore identifying opportunities for funding opportunities, and partnering with other funding streams where we can, is a priority. You will see in this strategy there are actions we can deliver on within the £72.8million envelope and there are things that will need additional funding. In the absence of anything extra it is imperative that we target our funding in the most efficient and effective way to ensure that those most in need will receive the support required. The Supporting People programme will require greater collaboration with partner agencies and provider organisations as a key to ensuring that we expand our reach and build on delivering to those most in need.

The Supporting People Programme is central and core to strategies and policy direction within Northern Ireland. There are a wide ranging number of strategies which influence and inform into the Supporting People Strategy and we have considered these and specifically their objectives, aims and priorities to ensure alignment to our strategy. Through the Supporting People Strategy the Housing Executive will collaborate closely with our wide range of partners to contribute to the wider goals of prevention, inclusiveness and anti-poverty.

I am pleased to introduce the Supporting People three year Strategy for 2022-2025. The core deliverables in the strategy focus around helping more people, investment in innovation and Covid-19 recovery and rebuild. There has been extensive engagement with stakeholders including service users from the voluntary, community and statutory sectors in the production of this document. I greatly value our relationship with providers and with statutory partners and re-confirm my commitment to working in collaboration over the next three years. I would also like to thank the Department for Communities for its partnership and commitment to the programme, and for the agility shown to identify additional funding for SP during the pandemic, which was instrumental in enabling services to continue.

Thank you to the Supporting People team who have developed the strategy and I look forward to working closely with them and with providers to ensure its successful delivery, in the interests of the people we serve.



Grainia Long
Chief Executive

Executive Summary

Mission 2022-2025

To provide housing support services to people across Northern Ireland, based on demonstrable need. Aiding recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, working to close the gap between need and supply, and contributing to the achievement of positive housing outcomes for all.

Strategic Priorities



Introduction – About Supporting People

Launched across the UK in 2003, the purpose of the Supporting People Programme is to provide housing support services to vulnerable people, to enable them to live as independently as possible in the community. Supporting people in Northern Ireland has three broad objectives.

- 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.

The Supporting People Programme in Northern Ireland is focused on four thematic areas; working with people who are experiencing homelessness, young people, older people and people with a disability including mental health and learning disabilities. Over 19,000 people are supported to live independently each year.

The Supporting People programme not only provides assistance for vulnerable people to live independently in their own home, it also reduces other costs to the public purse. A report commissioned by NICVA in 2015* estimated that every £1 spent on the Supporting People services saves the public purse £1.90; the Housing Executive commissioned research in 2020 on the Social Return on Investment (SROI) and the findings indicated that every £1 spent on Supporting people between 2018 and 2021 generated a social value of £1: £5.71. Therefore, the preventative value of the Supporting People programme to relieving financial pressure on the wider public sector cannot be underestimated.

* Centre for Economic Empowerment (2015) *The Financial Benefits of the Supporting People Programme in Northern Ireland*, Northern Ireland: nicva.



Housing Support Services

➡ Support ➡ Help ➡ Assistance ➡ Advise

Short Term Accommodation and support for people in Housing Need (hostels, refuges and foyers)

Long Term Accommodation and support to sustain a home (Supported Accommodation & Sheltered Housing)

Floating Support to maintain or regain independent living (temporary)

Peripatetic/dispersed support to maintain independent living (long-term)

Eligible tasks include:

- ✓ Domestic, Life and Social Skills
- ✓ Social Contact & Activities
- ✓ Accessing Other Services
- ✓ Finding Accommodation
- ✓ Setting up home & tenancy
- ✓ Maintaining Safety & Security
- ✓ Managing Finances & Benefits

Helping

- ✓ Frail Elderly
- ✓ People with Drug Problems
- ✓ Families experiencing homelessness
- ✓ People with Learning Disabilities
- ✓ People with convictions or People at risk of Offending
- ✓ People with Mental Health Problems
- ✓ People with a diagnosis of Dementia
- ✓ People experiencing homelessness with support needs
- ✓ Older people with support needs
- ✓ Travellers
- ✓ People with a Physical or Sensory Disability
- ✓ Women at Risk of Domestic Abuse
- ✓ People with Alcohol Problems
- ✓ Young People
- ✓ Refugees

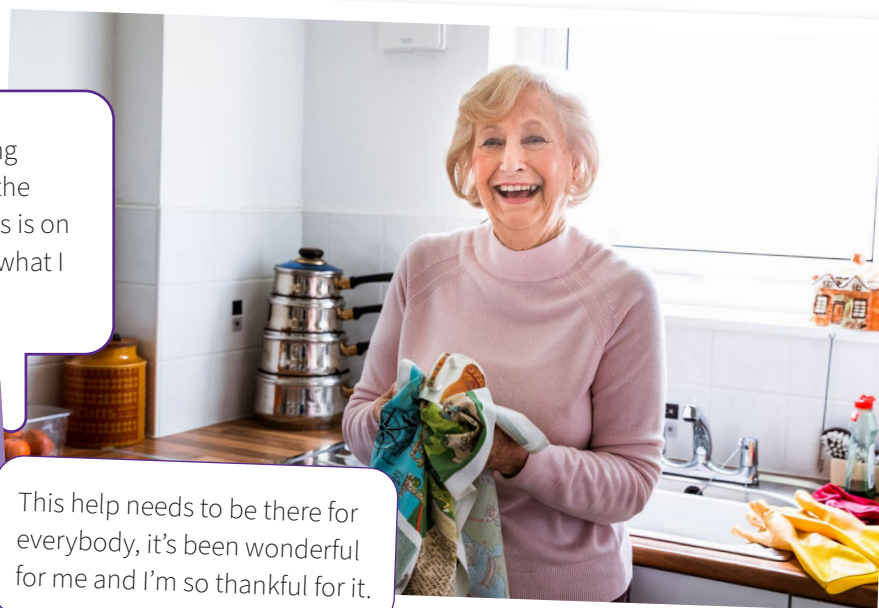
What the Service Users told us...

Older People

The best thing is not feeling lonely anymore and with the support provided my focus is on what I can do rather than what I can't do.

My support worker is just so friendly and helpful and caring. She listens and seems to understand and always gets back to me about things.

This help needs to be there for everybody, it's been wonderful for me and I'm so thankful for it.



Young People

They help me with lots as and when needed, like meal planning and prep, budgeting, social skills, mental health support, education and work, daily routine.

It is a place I feel safe and I know everyone around me is in the same boat.

I always have someone to chat to and they treat me with respect and staff make time for me



Disability & Mental Health

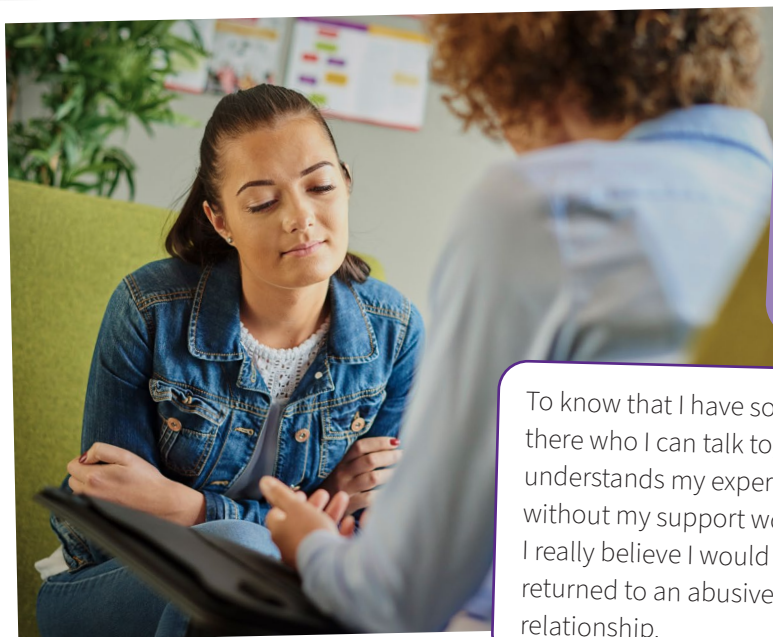
No issue or support need is too much for the staff, especially during lockdown as I have no family and or friend support.

They are a 24/7 service unlike anywhere else as they know mental health isn't just 9-5, Mon to Fri.

Assistance with weekly shopping, emotional support. Support when physically and mentally unwell, they help me solve problems.



Homelessness



My key-worker encouraged me to ensure my rent was a priority...she helped me to obtain benefits and helped me to put a budgeting plan in place. She helped me to feel safe in my own home and supported me through family court proceedings. She helped me to enrol in an educative programme which in turn enhanced my knowledge, skills and confidence.

To know that I have someone there who I can talk to, who understands my experiences... without my support worker I really believe I would have returned to an abusive relationship.

There are people to talk to when you need to talk about anything and the flat is cosy. I have a good rapport with my key worker and I am able to speak my mind without fear of being judged.

Methodology

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive is the strategic housing authority for Northern Ireland, and oversees the delivery of supporting people funding, to meet the policy objectives of the Department for Communities. This responsibility brings a range of governance requirements to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of delivery, quality of the service and positive outcomes for our service users. Our partners are funded to provide housing support services directly to customers, and it is the responsibility of the Housing Executive to monitor performance, in the interests of service users, and the wider public.

This strategy has been developed over two years, and in doing so, we have undertaken a wide range of stakeholder engagement including the following:

Service user voices

Listening to service users views and building these into our strategy is essential, therefore central to the approach of developing this strategy, has been stakeholder engagement. We produced a quick read document to share with service users accompanied by short films explaining what the Supporting People Programme does and some examples of recent projects. We provided feedback mechanisms online, Email and paper response options. We received 181 responses proportionately covering the four thematic areas, including accommodation based and floating support services. We have weaved this feedback into the strategy.

Engagement, Workshops and Public Consultation

From April 2019 there has been ongoing engagement with providers and statutory partners on the development of the strategy. This included face to face meetings with providers during the summer of 2019, online feedback on an initial draft in February 2020, engagement with CRISPP and approval through the Strategic Advisory Board in Autumn 2020. An updated draft was again shared with providers and partners in February 2021. During March and April 2021, four online strategy engagement workshops and two mop up sessions were hosted with over 120 providers and Statutory Partners in attendance to inform the final draft. Finally, a 12 week Public Consultation was launched in January 2022, through which we received 44 responses from a diverse range of consultees.

Research

To ensure the available funding is directed to those in most need in coming years we have undertaken a significant review of available materials and secondary data. A strategic needs assessment has estimated the scale of the gap between current supply of housing support services and current and emerging need, based on demographic trends and other factors.

Mission 2022-2025

To provide housing support services to people across Northern Ireland, based on demonstrable need. Aiding recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, closing the gap between need and supply, and contributing to the achievement of positive housing outcomes for all.

The strategy includes four Strategic Priorities:

1. Drive recovery and re-build 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 (SNA), prioritising services for Older people; People with Mental health issues; Single people with alcohol and/or drug problems experiencing homelessness; and women at risk of domestic abuse.
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.

Strategic Alignment

The successful delivery of the Supporting People fund has a direct effect on a range of policies and strategies across the Northern Ireland Executive, and its departments. This is a delivery focused strategy shaped by the draft 2021 Outcomes Framework* of the Programme for Government. It has been aligned broadly to the objectives and aims of the Strategies emanating from the Departments of Communities, Health and Justice. The SP strategy is designed to meet the existing and emerging needs of people experiencing Homelessness, Older People, Young People and those with a Disability.

In developing this strategy, and most importantly in its delivery, we will seek to ensure strong alignment across strategies, and in particular, to measure how the delivery of the Supporting People fund will deliver positive outcomes across:

- Housing and homelessness policy and strategy
- Health and social care policy and strategy
- Criminal Justice policy and strategy
- Policy and strategy on younger people and older people

We have reviewed this document to ensure it delivers not only on the policy priorities set out in a wide range of associated strategies but also goes with the grain of their intentions even though their implementation timeframes are not always coterminous. The alignment of these documents is set out in the diagram below (Pg13).

In considering these other strategies, aims and objectives and their alignment to the Supporting People programme, the intrinsic links evident are Prevention, Poverty, Social Inclusion, Collaboration, Partnership Working and Value for Money.

In order to react with agility to strategic revisions, we will regularly review the SP strategy to ensure it aligns to the policy and strategies evolving from central government and departments. The harmonisation of these associated strategies is undertaken by the Executive and Leadership Teams of the Housing Executive who work to ensure activities are complementary to relevant strategies in order to achieve the best outcomes possible. Similarly the SP Strategy will inform subsequent strategies such as the Homelessness Strategy and currently reflects the themes in the reset plan.

There are key complementary strategies which are highly relevant to the delivery of the SP Programme e.g. the Housing Supply Strategy (DfC) and the Housing Executive Homelessness Strategy (2022-2027).

New Decade, New Approach Deal

Draft Programme for Government

Delivering Social Change
The Executive's Child Poverty
Strategy 2016-2022
Northern Ireland Executive

Children and Young People's
Strategy 2020-2030
Northern Ireland Executive

Active Ageing Strategy
2016-2022
Northern Ireland Executive

Delivering the
Bamford Vision
Bamford Review
of Mental Health
and Learning
Disability Action
Plan 2012-2015
DoH

Health and
Wellbeing 2026
- Delivering
Together 2016
DoH

Building Inclusive
Communities
Strategy 2020 -25
DfC

Physical and
Sensory Disability
Strategy and Action
Plan 2012-2015
DoH

Power to People:
proposals to reboot
adult care and
support in Northern
Ireland 2017
DOH

Systems not
Structures: Changing
Health and Social
Care 2016
DoH

Mental Health
Strategy 2021-2031
DoH

Supporting Change -
A strategy for women
and girls in or at risk
of contact with the
justice system 2022
DoJ

Housing Executive Supporting People Three Year Strategic Plan

and Covid-19 Recovery Plan

2022-2025

Stopping
Domestic and
Sexual Violence
and Abuse in
Northern Ireland:
A Seven Year
Strategy March
2016
DoH and DoJ

A Life Deserved:
"Caring" for Children
& Young People in
Northern Ireland
2021
DoH and DOE

The Autism
Strategy (2013-
2020)
DHSSPS

Interdepartmental
Homelessness
Action Plan
2019-20
DfC

Improving
Dementia Services
in Northern
Ireland: A Regional
Strategy 2011
DHSSPS

Strategic Framework
for Reducing
Offending
2013
DoJ

The Way Home
Homelessness
Response to
Covid-19
**The Housing
Executive**

Financial Inclusion
Strategy 2016-19
**The Housing
Executive**

Chronic
Homelessness
Action Plan
January 2020
**The Housing
Executive**

Community
Cohesion Strategy
2015-2020
**The Housing
Executive**

Older People's
Housing Strategy
2021/22 – 2026/27
**The Housing
Executive**

Community Safety
Strategy 2020 -2023
**The Housing
Executive**

Ending
Homelessness
Together -
Homelessness
Strategy 2022-27
**The Housing
Executive**

Customer Support
and Tenancy
Sustainment
Strategy 2019-22
**The Housing
Executive**

Value for Money, and Value of Outcomes

In developing this strategy, the Housing Executive has committed to working within the existing £72.8m funding envelope. However we also want to achieve savings within this annual budget in order to re-invest, and we are seeking to 'grow the pot' by making a strong case for additional funding and through better collaboration with health and criminal justice.

On this basis, the actions have been categorised into what can be achieved within the existing pot and what will need additional funding. (££ symbol indicates additional funding or resource is needed to deliver that action).

Good financial planning over the life of the strategy is a crucial element of the management of the Supporting People fund. This includes analysis of various budget scenarios which have the potential to arise.

The 2015 Supporting People Review recognised a principle of equity in funding and sought to achieve this via the development of standardised payment rates to achieve value for money within the programme. This strategy seeks to address the principle of equity in funding, not through standardised rates, but via the work streams detailed below. These will be used to progress value for money, value of outcomes and a fair and appropriate level of funding for tasks undertaken.

1. Contract Management

The Supporting People team will 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. This will include reviewing the funding agreement framework, to enable providers greater agility in the delivery of services, while ensuring appropriate levels of accountability. We will seek to support providers through a review of central cost apportionment to help retain and recruit staff and recognise the valuable work of employees.

2. Administrative Efficiencies

To enhance Programme and provider efficiency by reducing the number of providers in receipt of funding by 10% and the number of programme schemes by 15%.

3. Reconfiguration of Services

To reconfigure appropriate services, to floating support, peripatetic or innovative approaches to service delivery which help support 1000 more people.

4. New Data Collection Payment and Reporting System

To implement a new SP Data Collection Payment and Reporting System and replace the outdated SPOCC system with one better placed to maximise administration efficiencies for SP Providers and the SP Team.

5. Better Outcomes

To increase the Outcomes levels reported by providers and develop an outcomes baseline and improvement measure with the provider sector.

6. VFM Metrics

In 2022/23 we will develop value for money metric in partnership with the provider sector, to gauge the efficiency and effectiveness of services yet avoiding destabilisation.

7. Frontline/central costs

To enhance the Financial Review process that validates eligible costs and consider central cost apportionment.

Objective 1

Drive recovery from Covid-19, prevent lasting adverse impacts from the pandemic, and positively reform services by targeting services towards those in need;

Through our discussions with providers, the three main areas for focus on Covid-19 Recovery have been identified as;

- 1. Mental health and wellbeing - for both service users and staff**
- 2. The impact of increased homeless presentations, particularly in the primary client groups of single homeless households and young people experiencing homelessness coupled with the impact of the increased complexity in the support needs of these service users**
- 3. Long term impacts on service users across all client groups as the result of social isolation and loneliness including the potential for an increased number of older people wishing to stay in their own homes longer**

This objective recognises the profound impact of Covid-19 on services users, on partner organisations, and on service delivery. It commits resources to reducing the long term negative effects of the pandemic, however also seeks to learn from, and positively reform services as a result of the experiences of the pandemic.

There are ongoing financial impacts for providers due to the necessary changes in service models plus homeless presentations across all aged groups have increased during the pandemic. The Housing Executive has adopted a coordinated response to address the impacts of Covid-19 in terms of homelessness in Northern Ireland. The actions taken since early March 2020 have mirrored much of our existing strategic commitments but the pandemic has forced faster progress on key fronts. We need to protect this progress while also considering the wider strategic impacts. The Housing Executive Homelessness Reset Plan “the Way Home” provides a framework to do so and this strategy ensures strategic alignment between its objectives and delivery of the Supporting People fund. The principle of building back better from Covid-19 will underlie the actions detailed below and help us move towards the future we want.

In order to address these challenges;

- **In year one, we will administer Covid-19 funding to providers and liaise with health regarding vaccinations, testing and outbreak management.**
- **In year one, we will support providers to develop capacity and resilience. ££**
- **In year one we will fund mental health training for staff working in SP services**
- **Throughout the life of the strategy, we will run two annual competitions, based on non-recurrent funds, for providers to submit business proposals for Covid-19 recovery. ££**
- **Throughout the life of the strategy we will support flexibility in contracts, and welcome reconfigurations and service development proposals including those to increase floating support / peripatetic places; in particular those identifying efficiencies and focusing on homelessness, mental health, young people experiencing homelessness and older people.**
- **Support flexibility, reconfigurations and service development to release funds from accommodation based services to fund additional floating support places to address mental health and homeless prevention.**

How we will measure success

- Administer eligible Covid-19 funding to providers if available
- Create 1000 additional floating support / peripatetic places
- Successful outcomes reported by providers on Covid-19 recovery, capacity, resilience and staff mental health.
- Establish a Covid-19 capacity, resilience and training budget line for providers to access
- Reduction of Major Adverse Incidents**

* ££ = Achievement of actions requires additional funding and is subject to DfC budget confirmation

** A major adverse incident is one that cannot be managed solely by the provider organisation but also requires investigation by an external agency. A major adverse incident may also be any incident which attracts or is likely to attract media attention that may present a risk to reputation for the provider organisation, the Housing Executive, or the Department for Communities or other funding organisation e.g. Health and Social Care Trust.

Objective 2

Work towards closing the 14% gap between need and supply, this will be underpinned by evidence from the Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA), prioritising services for Older people; People with Mental health issues; Single people with alcohol and/or drug problems experiencing homelessness; and women at risk of domestic abuse.

Strategic Needs assessment

Assessing need is at the heart of good strategic planning and a Strategic Needs Assessment for the Supporting People Programme has estimated that there is a gap of approximately 14% between the current number of housing support services and the estimate of current levels of need for housing support. Covid-19 is a potential accelerator of change and the gaps predicted through the Strategic Needs Assessment may materialise sooner than predicted. Consequently the SP Team will continue to consider new, emerging data sources, changes in trends and ongoing engagement with providers as part of the decision making process.

The key findings of the SNA are summarised below.

- Housing support need is currently 14% higher than supply
- 3 year projection estimates an increase of between 22% - 30%
- 10 year projection estimates an increase of between 31% - 43%

SNA projections have highlighted an increase in complexity of need with particular increases in support needs across:

- Older people
- People with mental health issues;
- Single people with alcohol and/or drug problems experiencing homelessness; and
- Women at risk of domestic abuse.

To begin to close the housing support gap and resource a sustainable recovery from Covid-19, we will work with providers to achieve better value for money however, to realise the aspirations in the strategy, material additional funding is required. We will continue to work to make compelling cases for both additional funding and inflationary uplifts. New approaches to equity of funding will be considered, while the potential of enhanced contract flexibility will be progressed with a review and update of the Funding Agreement in conjunction with our provider partners and DfC.

A combined and concerted approach from Supporting People, Strategic and provider partners is clearly required to create the synergy necessary to deliver services at the enhanced level required over the life of the strategy and beyond.

To work towards closing the gap, we will:

- **In year one we will link the central cost reduction with maximisation of Housing Benefit (highlights ineligible spend and clarifies cost allocation)**
- **Throughout the life of the strategy we will open two annual competitions for providers to submit business proposals in line with SNA priorities ££**
- **In year one we will reinvest monies freed up by voids** in accommodation based services into floating support**
- **Throughout the life of the strategy we will use the SNA to prioritise funding for additional floating support, peripatetic and accommodation based services ££**
- **Throughout the life of the strategy we will remodel low level support services to release funding to floating support / peripatetic support**
- **Throughout the life of the strategy we will increase the number of people who are in receipt of a SP funded service by 1000 people ££*****
- **Throughout the life of the strategy we will increase efficiency by collaborating with partners to reduce the number of Providers by 10% by facilitating the current trend of Provider mergers where feasible and desirable**
- **Work with Providers to develop efficiencies from composite contracts by reducing the number of schemes by 15%, focusing on bundling numerous low cost, low support schemes**

* ££ = Achievement of actions requires additional funding and is subject to DfC budget confirmation

** A long term void is a void that is unlikely to be filled within a year.

*** The 1000 figure relates to the undersupply in base need identified in the SNA of the 4 main categories

Across our themes we will also;

Action	Homeless	Young	Older	Disability
Use the evidence from SROI and in partnership with health, improve services to meet the needs of people with alcohol and/or drug problems experiencing homelessness and those with dual diagnosis. ££	✓			
Remodel services where appropriate to meet the needs of single people experiencing homelessness.	✓			
Develop new services and enhanced delivery for people at risk of domestic abuse. ££	✓			
In collaboration with Health, identify gaps in mental health provision and increase services, in accordance with need.££				✓
Work with statutory partners to support resettlement of people with a learning disability or poor mental health currently residing in hospitals ££				✓
Work with partners in Health to scope future housing support needs for individuals with a learning disability, currently living with family for whom a Supported People funded service may be appropriate in the future.				✓
Working with stakeholders to undertake a review of floating support funding for Traveller support groups to improve housing outcomes for the Irish Traveller community	✓			
Support the implementation of the strategic actions from the Strategic Review of Temporary Accommodation including the need for specialist accommodation based services ££	✓			
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.				✓
Increase the number of floating support units for older people			✓	

How we will measure success

- Run two competitions to consider proposals annually
- Provide support to an additional 1000 people
- Enhance Programme and provider efficiency by reducing bureaucracy and increasing the proportion of funding available for delivery of frontline services.
- Support 20 providers to achieve maximum housing benefit

* A long term void is a void that is unlikely to be filled within a year.

Objective 3

Work with Supporting People providers, to invest in service innovation to achieve greater value for money and better outcomes for service users.

The Provider Innovation Fund is a strategic instrument introduced in 2019 to help develop the role and effectiveness of front line service providers. This was initially a 3 year project running to 2021/2022. However its existence has been a catalyst for innovation and efficiency gains within the sector. The maintenance of this funding is pivotal and attaining the envisaged Central Government funding of £1m per annum is key.

The fund facilitates a focused approach to specific areas and has the potential to build both capacity and resilience within the sector. An annual evaluation and an overall three year evaluation are scheduled.

Where appropriate we will bid through monitoring rounds for funds to resource non-recurrent innovative projects.

The ethos of the programme is around people establishing and sustaining a tenancy or supporting them to be able to stay in their own home and this remains as part of Covid-19 recovery through stepdown services, floating support, flexible outreach, shared tenancies* and Housing First**. It is evident through the outcomes data that we hold and through successful applications to the PIF fund that the programme positively impacts on tenancy sustainment. We will continue to work across the organisation to develop comprehensive plans for the Sustaining Tenancies Funding programme.

To invest in **service innovation** to achieve greater outcomes we will***;

- **In year one we will work with providers to establish a forum for SP engagement, service development, staff training and cross-provider benchmarking and information sharing**
- **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.**
- **In year two we will focus the innovation fund on Covid-19 recovery, collaboration, resilience and capacity building**
- **In years one and two we will work with providers to co-produce research on long term impacts of Covid-19 on SP services**
- **Throughout the life of the strategy we will ring-fence £1million non-recurrent monies annually for innovation ££**
- **Throughout the life of the strategy we will drive efficiencies and prioritise projects which propose longevity of outcomes through short term investment/seed money to build into their own structures**
- **Throughout the life of the strategy we will drive collaboration between providers**
- **Throughout the life of the strategy we will implement funding flexibility and a standard payment for sheltered accommodation services. ££**

* Shared tenancies supports young people experiencing homelessness to find a home, matching young people to share tenancies together and secure housing in the community with a continuum of support provided.

** Housing First moves people directly into houses and provides a stable environment with 'wrap around' support to ensure that an individual is able to sustain their new home in the community.

*** ££ = Achievement of actions requires additional funding and is subject to DfC budget confirmation

Across our themes we will also;

Action	Homeless	Young	Older	Disability
Develop and remodel dementia, frail elderly and disability services to address voids* ££			✓	✓
Implement funding flexibility and a standard payment for sheltered accommodation services. ££			✓	
Implement the findings of the Review of Jointly funded Young People Services		✓		
Develop models of support for young people experiencing homelessness including improved emergency accommodation options, Housing First**, Nightstop*** and shared tenancies**** ££		✓		
Implement recommendations of the lessons learned exercise in respect of the current Housing First delivery model ££	✓			
Contribute to progression of the Strategic Outline Case on the expansion of the Housing First model in NI and the broader Homelessness Strategy ££	✓			
Deliver improvements in services for women at risk of domestic abuse ££	✓			
Work with providers to continue to review and research models of support for older people including Extra Care			✓	

How we will measure success

- Improved collaboration and transparency in engagement with providers
- Produce Covid-19 research
- Administer £1million innovation fund annually
- Develop three new young people pilot services
- Deliver on objectives set to support women at risk of domestic abuse
- Deliver on findings of the review into jointly funded young people accommodation services
- Deliver on the objectives set to improve on the existing Housing First model

* A long term void is a void that is unlikely to be filled within a year.

** Housing First moves people directly into houses and provides a stable environment with 'wrap around' support to ensure that an individual is able to sustain their new home in the community.

*** Nightstop provides emergency overnight accommodation for young people who are facing a night on the streets or sleeping in an unsafe place.

**** Shared tenancies supports young people experiencing homelessness to find a home, matching young people to share tenancies together and secure housing in the community with a continuum of support provided.

Objective 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.

During the pandemic, collaboration with Health colleagues has shown that we need to build housing support together with health and social care. We need to make sure that we are working collaboratively, not in silos, with statutory partners and providers. Success for this objective requires a commitment from all stakeholders which recognises the interdependence of responsibility across the range of stakeholders.

To achieve greater collaboration we will*;

- **In year one, establish a regular and formal structure to drive collaboration, risk sharing and enhance resource availability**
- **In year one, work with DfC to review and rationalise Supporting People Governance and decision making arrangements**
- **In year one continue to work with Health and Justice colleagues to develop a partnership approach.**
- **Throughout the life of the strategy, make bids for additional funding including through monitoring rounds when appropriate.**
- **Throughout the strategy, we will 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.**
- **Throughout the life of the strategy we will use the SNA and findings in Social Return on Investment to inform bids for additional funding**
- **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**
- **Throughout the life of the strategy use tools such as SNA and SROI to seek more investment as there is evidence that prevention produces significant future savings to the public purse. Investment which may cost more initially will have significant long-term gains.**

* ££ = Achievement of actions requires additional funding and is subject to DfC budget confirmation

How we will measure success

- Greater sharing of funding streams
- Establish 3 pilot services co-funded with health
- Secure additional investment to deliver strategic actions

Action	Homeless	Young	Older	Disability
Re-define the Strategic Advisory Board to enhance strategic partnership working and outcomes for service users	✓	✓	✓	✓
Identify potential for new co-funded services		✓		

How we will deliver this strategy

Clear governance is crucial for the efficient and effective delivery of the SP funding programme. The current oversight framework is characterised by a complex structure which will be reviewed in the life of this strategy.

It is anticipated the outcome of the review will result in a more efficient and direct process minimising duplication yet allowing for accountability to be demonstrated and challenged. The outcome must be a structure capable of facilitating a long term view of the SP Programme.

Governance of the SP Programme ultimately sits with the Housing Executive Board as advised by the Strategic Advisory Board which provides an opportunity for enhanced collaboration between Housing Executive, Central Government and provider representatives.

The Strategic Advisory Board will ensure funding priorities are reflected consistently and in a standardised manner and that Supporting People processes and practices are fair and equitable.

Screening

The strategy has been screened for both equality and rural impacts. As action and delivery plans are developed and if additional funding is made available, we will continue to test these for equality and rural impacts in line with our Section 75 obligations.

Equality and Rural will also become standing agenda items on the monthly SP Budget and Risk meeting to ensure a continued analysis of issues during the implementation of the strategy.

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