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| **Title of proposal:** | Reduce the Council's funding for Supporting People services |
| **Directorate:** | Adult Social Services |
| **Lead Officers:**  | Neil Howard, Ben Davey, Sera Hall, Jo Richardson, Jeremy Bone |

## **Equality and rural assessment**

Analysis of proposal & potential impact

**Overview – more about the proposal**

1. The Supporting People partnership currently helps 11,000 potentially vulnerable people a year to live independently and remain in their home. The service users supported include older people with support needs, people with physical and sensory disabilities, people with learning disabilities and mental health problems, people who are homeless or rough sleepers, women at risk of domestic abuse, ex-offenders, people misusing drugs and alcohol and teenage parents.
2. We are proposing to reduce the Council's funding for Supporting People services.
3. Supporting People services are housing-related prevention services. The services provided include:
* Supported housing
* Support to prevent people losing their accommodation
* Crisis housing and support for those who may have lost their accommodation such as:
	+ Young people hostels which support young people to move safely into adulthood and set up home for the first time
	+ Hostels for people who have been homeless with support to enable them to re-establish a secure home
	+ Refuges for women experiencing domestic violence.
* Support to tackle issues such as poor mental health or social skills, which can make it difficult to live independently.
* Sheltered housing, community alarms and home improvement advice for older people
* Help with claiming benefits.
1. We currently spend £12.4m each year on these housing related services.  We decide how to spend the money, but do so in consultation with the Supporting People partnership.  The Supporting People partnership includes: District Councils, Health, Probation, Norfolk Constabulary, Youth Offending and the Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnership.
2. This proposal will save us approximately £5.1m in 2016-17, because it means reducing the funding we currently provide by about 40%.

**What would happen in practice if the proposal goes ahead**

1. To make the proposed saving of £5.1m we would:
	* 1. Remove funding for supported living and ‘visiting support’ for people with learning disabilities and mental health needs.
		2. Change the focus of services for older people so they provide less general advice and more specialist support to prevent people needing social care or health related services.
		3. Reduce adult social care funded housing support for young people aged 16-24.
		4. Reduce our support for people who are homeless or people at risk of losing their accommodation.
		5. Reduce funding that we give district councils for home improvement agencies and instead focus on supporting existing handyperson services to become self-sustaining.

**Who the proposal is most likely to affect**

1. If the proposal goes ahead it would affect around 9,400 service users who currently get, or would be eligible to receive, housing-related support funded by the Council.  It would particularly affect older people, disabled people (including people with a learning disability and people who use mental health services) and some young people, because these groups form the majority of service users.
2. The proposal would also affect providers of housing-related services paid for by the Council.

**Looking closely at the profile of service users who may be affected**

1. The majority of service users affected by the proposal (around 83.3%) are aged 60+, which means that older people will be predominantly impacted[[1]](#endnote-1).
2. A significant number of service users (33%) have a disability, which means that disabled people will also be particularly impacted[[2]](#endnote-2). However, a high proportion of service users (15.4%) have said that they “Don’t know” if they have a disability, so it is possible that the number of disabled people currently receiving Supporting People Services may be slightly higher than recorded[[3]](#endnote-3).
3. Overall, slightly more men (51.8%) than women (45.8%) will be affected[[4]](#endnote-4).
4. The majority of service users (88.1%) are White British, with 4% White other. The remaining ethnic groups are made up of very small percentages, with a further 3.1% unknown[[5]](#endnote-5).
5. A more detailed analysis is summarised below:

**Remove funding for supported living and ‘visiting support’ for people with learning disabilities and mental health needs.**

1. Supported living is an environment where people can live independently with the support that they need to maintain their independence. ‘Visiting support’ is sometimes provided to people in their own homes to support them to maintain their independence.
2. As of 4 October, 130 users were supported by supported living services, all of whom had a learning disability or mental health need.
3. Detailed service user data is not generally collected for these services, but where this information was available, the majority of service users (around 70.3%) were aged 26 to 59. 20.3% were aged 60+ and 9.5% were aged between 18-25[[6]](#endnote-6).
4. People should be able to get all their eligible care needs met through their personal budgets. Each person in the supported living schemes affected by this proposal will have a review by their social worker to re- assess their eligible needs and the funding they need to meet them. Impacts on the overall scheme viability will be closely monitored.
5. It is possible that reducing funding for this aspect of Supporting People services may reduce the number of hours of support that some individuals receive.
6. It is important to note that, if the proposal goes ahead, people will only experience a change in their existing arrangements after a review of their eligible needs is undertaken. This may be much later than April 2016 (queries about this were raised several times at consultation events).

**Change the focus of services for older people so they provide less general advice and more specialist support to prevent people needing social care or health related services**

1. As of 4 October, 7,447 older people were supported through this element of Supporting People Services (excluding Home Improvement Agencies (HIA)). All service users were aged 60+.
2. Services for older people comprise sheltered accommodation where support is provided to people in schemes by mobile wardens, and visiting support, where support is provided to people in their own homes on a time limited basis.
3. Funding reductions would require the remodelling of services to provide a more focused visiting service to older people who are assessed to be particularly vulnerable. It could also mean the removal of support for some sheltered schemes, and changes to the levels of support some older people currently receive. This could mean that some older people currently receiving a service are no longer able to access support.

**Reduce adult social care funded housing support for young people aged 16-24**

1. Supported housing for young people includes hostel and semi-independent accommodation where support is provided, onsite, to enable young people to live safely. Housing related support is provided to ensure that young people are helped to make a positive transition into adulthood and independent living.
2. As of 4 October there were 244 young people supported. The majority of service users (61.1%) were aged between 18 and 25, 31.9% were aged 16 or 17 and 6.9% were aged above 25 years of age.
3. 51.7% of service users were female and 48.3% were male. 12.2% recorded themselves as having a disability. 90.6% of services users were white British, and 3.1% were white other[[7]](#endnote-7).
4. Supporting People funding is used in conjunction with housing benefit to provide a safe and supported environment for young people which may include 24/7 staffing. This means that removal of support for accommodation-based schemes for young people may result in services becoming unviable and closing.
5. Consideration would need to be undertaken with providers about how services could function safely with reduced or removed funding. Work would then be undertaken with providers and district council partners to minimise risks to young people.
6. A reduction in placements for young people may impact on Children’s Services which also use this accommodation for children leaving care (16/17 year olds) and result in an increase of people aged 18+ who then become homeless.

**Reduce our support for people who are homeless or people at risk of losing their accommodation**

1. Supported accommodation for people who are homeless includes direct access hostel provision, ‘move-on’ accommodation, which provides for semi-independent living, and very low level supported housing where support provided may be several hours per person, per week. Support provided is for a period of up to two years after which people are supported to move on to more independent accommodation.
2. As of 4 October, there were 550 homeless service users supported, and 465 service users receiving support in their own home.
3. Support provided to those who are at risk of losing their accommodation is generally provided in people’s own homes and is called visiting support. The existing visiting support service provides a county wide service to up to 830 people at any one time and is aimed at diverting people from becoming homeless
4. Overall, the majority of service users (68.2%) for this element of the proposal were aged between 26 and 59. 23.7% of service users were younger people aged 16 to 25, and 4.1% were older people aged 60+ (a further 4% were unrecorded)[[8]](#endnote-8).
5. A relatively high proportion of service users affected (32.8%) are recorded as having a disability, though a further 3.6% were recorded as don’t know.
6. 57.6% of service users accessing services were male; though this increases to 85% for single homeless services. 38.6% were female (3.8% were unrecorded).
7. 86% of services users were white British and 5% were white other, though a further 2.8% were unrecorded.
8. If the proposal goes ahead, funding would be reduced in consultation with district council partners and providers to minimise impact on people who use services. Services affected would be low level services where support levels are relatively low and people will already have achieved some level of independence
9. The impact of reducing funding for low level homelessness services may result in more people losing their accommodation or being unable to access that accommodation.
10. Hostels may find it harder to move people on from high level placements due to a lack of low level supported accommodation or the withdrawal of this accommodation from the market by landlords. Private landlords in particular may be unwilling to rent to people who have been homeless without a support package in place.
11. Direct access hostels and services where people with chaotic behaviours are accommodated are not included in this proposal. This element of the proposal will not affect refuges for women fleeing domestic violence.

**Reduce funding that we give district councils for home improvement agencies and instead focus on supporting existing handyperson services to become self-sustaining.**

1. Home improvement agencies provide support and advice for people in order to make adaptations and changes to their homes as their needs change or progress.
2. Support may be provided to people to help them access Disabled Facility Grants which are managed and provided through District, Borough and City councils.
3. During 2014/15, 2,558 service users received an initial first visit from a Home Improvement Agency. The primary need or disability of those service users was as follows:

- 36.2% physical or sensory disability

- 31.7% older people

- 27.7% frail elderly

- 0.7% mental health problems

- 0.5% learning disabilities

- 0.4% older people with mental health problems

- 2.9% other or unknown

1. 97% of service users were white British or Irish.
2. Removing funding for HIAs would reduce the level of support available to people to access grants and make adaptations to their homes. Work would be undertaken with District/City and Borough Councils to minimise the impact on individuals and maximise support provided by those councils
3. Some councils already have handyperson services. This proposal would engage districts to consider how these could be provided across all areas of Norfolk on a consistent basis.

Potential impact

1. There is a potential for this proposal to have a disproportionate and significantly detrimental impact on disabled and older people, younger people and homeless people. This is because these groups form the majority of service users, and if the proposal goes ahead, support currently being provided may be reduced or withdrawn. The proposal may also have an impact on carers, who may need to provide significant additional support.
2. Reducing or withdrawing support could have a particular impact on older and disabled people, who may be more reliant than others on the help provided, and find it challenging to maintain daily independence - either in terms of their physical needs, or their confidence levels.
3. The proposal may have a particular impact where services are provided in accommodation, such as young people or homelessness hostels. The impact of reducing or removing funding on accommodation based services may be to make the accommodation service unsafe for service users (particularly the case for younger people) or financially unviable for providers. This is because supported accommodation is funded through a combination of rental income (Housing Benefit) and support funding (SP). Removal of one of these components may put the accommodation service at risk of closure.
4. Most of the people receiving Supporting People services are not eligible for adult social services or are on the margins of eligibility.  Removing services could mean that more people go into crisis or become homeless and require other services, such as adult social care, children’s services, housing and health services. It could lead to an increase in demand for adult social care and other services.
5. There is also a potential impact if some disabled people are not able to receive relevant support around adaptations to help them live independently in their current home This may impact on the accommodation options offered to them.
6. People in rural areas may be particularly affected, because of the limited availability of alternative services or support available, such as support from carers or voluntary agencies, or difficulties in accessing alternatives due to travel costs or logistical issues.
7. Looking more widely at the Council’s other budget proposals, such as the proposal to cease funding transport, this proposal may lead to increased pressure on some people’s personal budgets.

Action to address any negative impact

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|  | **Action/s** | **Lead** | **Date** |
| 1. | 1. Ensure effective transition plans are established for service users who may be affected by the proposals.
 | Sera Hall | From 1 April 2016 |
| 2. | 1. Work with district councils, commissioned services and local community groups to identify alternative support options for supporting people in their homes
 | Sera Hall | From 1 April 2016 |
| 2. | Work with charities, commissioned services and district councils to explore other funding options to continue to support homeless people | Sera Hall | From 1 April 2016 |

List of evidence used to conduct analysis

* **Supporting People Services data analysis**
* **Consultation supporting documents**
* **Feedback from consultation events to support EqIA process**
1. This is based on the number of current clients in older people’s services, as a percentage compared to all services in the proposals. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Data for 2014/15. This does not include older people sheltered services. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Note this does not include Older People sheltered services.The percentage is based on an estimate calculated on 2014/15 CRF returns for those services (other than sheltered) in the proposal. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. This does not include older people sheltered services. It should also be noted that the gender of 2.4% of service users using services during 2014/15 was unrecorded. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Again, this does not include older people sheltered services. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Taken from Carefirst [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. All data for 2014/15 [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. All data for 2014/15 [↑](#endnote-ref-8)