



Norfolk Supporting People Strategy 2008-2013

Promoting Independence and Choice for
vulnerable people in Norfolk

**Norfolk Supporting People Programme
A Partnership of Norfolk Local Authorities
Probation and Health**

1. Introduction

Welcome to Norfolk's Supporting People Strategy 2008-2013. This Strategy sets out our vision and key priorities for housing related support for vulnerable people and people with a disability in Norfolk, assisting them to live independently and improving the range and quality of services for them, over the next 5 years.

There are many changes underway in the way in which the Supporting People programme works in Norfolk.

We continue to work with providers to improve the quality of services for service users.

We are working with user led organisations and other commissioners and providers to enable service users to have a stronger influence over the way in which the programme works. We are also working with the Individual Budgets pilot programme in Norfolk to better understand how this programme interacts with Supporting People.

Norfolk is a pathfinder for the integration of the Supporting People programme into the Local Area Agreement structure and as a result from April 2008 the Programme Grant will be managed as if it was part of the new Area Based Grant. The actual merger of funding in April 2009 will depend on the outcome of this and other pathfinders.

It is likely that local government in Norfolk will change in 2010. By that time this strategy will need a further review.



If you would like this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact

Supporting People Team

Vantage House, Fisher's Lane, Norwich, NR2 1ET

Tel: 01603 729245 or 01603 729243

Fax: 01603 729239

E-mail: supportingpeople@norfolk.gov.uk

and we will do our best to help

Web site www.norfolk.gov.uk/supportingpeople

Who produced and agreed the Strategy?

The Strategy was produced by the Norfolk Supporting People Team (contact details above) with the assistance of and using information from a wide range of organisations who are mentioned in the text, in particular the partner organisations in the Supporting People programme. The Strategy was agreed by the Norfolk Supporting People Core Strategy Group on Feb 26th 2008 and by the Commissioning Body on March 20th 2008.

What other documents are available? (from address above)

1. Part 2 of the Strategy sets out key points for each client group and an action plan for service development
2. Client group proformas, giving detailed information on existing services, from which Part 2 has been developed. These were posted on the Supporting People website in October 2007

CONTENTS

	Page
PART 1	
Executive summary	5
1 Our vision for Supporting People	
Supporting People in Norfolk - Background information	7
Role of the Supporting People Strategy	7
Financial context 2008-2013	8
Vision and objectives for the Norfolk Supporting People Programme	8
2 Focusing resources on needs	
Key principles for service development	10
Our priorities and why we have adopted them	10
Policy on future spending between priority groups	13
Pathways and Move on	13
Floating Support	14
Financial priorities	15
3 Keeping people that need services at the heart of the programme	
Involving service users	15
Self-directed support	17
4 Enhancing partnership with the provider sector and other stakeholders	
Involving providers and other stakeholders	18
Providing stability in funding	19
From identifying needs to commissioning services - our processes	19

5 Improving the joint planning and delivery of services with other commissioners

Background - how the Supporting People programme in Norfolk is managed	20
Local Area Agreement	20
Local Government Reorganisation in Norfolk	21

6 Increasing efficiency and reducing bureaucracy

Improving quality	21
Completion of the service review programme	21
Managing poor quality	21
Decommissioning	22
Review programme 2007-2011	22
Monitoring contract performance	22
Risk based contract monitoring	22
Performance Indicators	23
Overall performance	23
Planned moves	23
Increasing efficiency	23
Local value for money processes	23
Regional benchmarking	23

PART 2

Client group section - keys points and action plans	1
How the Supporting People Programme in Norfolk is managed	23
Statement of Local Charging Policy	25
Glossary of terms used	27

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our vision is “To fund, develop and improve good quality housing support services. These services should help people who are vulnerable to access suitable housing, maintain their accommodation, live as independently as possible, and participate fully in the social and economic life of the community. These services should be available to all who require them, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or disability”

The Supporting People Strategy will be closely related to the new Local Area Agreement. In March/April each year we will publish an Annual Plan with our spending plans and policy development for the following year. We have a three year budget from April 2008 of £16.33 million per year which we use to fund services.

Our objectives, derived from the National Supporting People Strategy are

- To focus resources on needs and outcomes
- To keep people that need services at the heart of the programme
- To enhance partnership with the provider sector
- To improve the joint planning and delivery of services with other commissioners
- To increase efficiency and reduce bureaucracy

We aim to provide most services in people's own homes rather than in specialised forms of accommodation although these may be sometimes needed.

Our first priority groups for additional services are Gypsies and Travellers, offenders and ex-offenders, people who misuse substances and vulnerable young people, because of risk to and arising from these groups if services are not available and because there are few existing services.

Our second priority groups are people affected by domestic abuse, refugees and migrant workers, people who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness and people with a physical or sensory disability, for similar but less pressing reasons than for the first client group.

Our third priority groups are older people, people with a learning difficulties and people with a mental illness. There are relatively more services for most of these groups.

We are developing a shared approach to improving move-on processes and will consult with providers and implement the agreed programme.

We will recommission floating support in Great Yarmouth and monitor and review the new HomeStay service in Greater Norwich and Rural East Anglia.

We have developed a number of client groups strategies and will continue to develop better ways of understanding the needs for services and of commissioning new services where resources permit.

We will work with other organisations to improve ways of increasing the involvement of service users in the programme.

We will extend the use of Individual Budgets among service users if the results of the local and national pilots indicate that this is supported by service users.

We will continue to use the Provider Elected Panel as a means of communication with the provider sector.

We will use the financial resources of the programme to sustain good quality services and provide inflationary uplifts where possible.

We will continue to develop a transparent and needs based approach to commissioning.

We will seek within the framework of the Local Area Agreement to provide better value and more integrated approaches to meeting service users' needs.

We will continue to work with providers to improve the quality effectiveness and value to users of their services.

1. OUR VISION FOR SUPPORTING PEOPLE

Supporting People in Norfolk – Background Information

Norfolk is England's fifth largest county with a growing but sparsely distributed population of 826,000 (2006). Outside the main urban areas of Norwich, Great Yarmouth and Kings Lynn it is very rural in character. There are 21 market towns and 539 parishes, half of them with fewer than 250 residents. The County's population is projected to rise to 860,830 by 2012. Older age groups are projected to increase and young age groups to change relatively little. Using Office of National Statistics 2003 data the population of Norfolk is projected to rise at a marginally greater rate than that of Suffolk, at a greater rate than population rises in Essex but at a lower rate than Cambridgeshire. Rates of increase in the numbers of people aged over 70 are projected to follow similar patterns.

We have to make sure that the Supporting People Strategy takes into account the particular issues and challenges for providing services in Norfolk. Key factors include:

- There are real challenges about people having proper access to transport, services and communication while those providing services face problems caused by the high unit costs of providing them in very rural areas
- As well as being geographically spread out, Norfolk's population is also economically diverse and we have areas of some affluence and pockets of great poverty - sometimes in relatively close proximity
- Twelve wards rank among the 10% of wards nationally that are recognised as being areas of very high deprivation and need
- Almost a quarter of the population is on the margin of poverty
- Norfolk's population is already diverse and continues to change. The county attracts new residents from many backgrounds both to work and as a place to retire. There are significant numbers of refugees and asylum seekers
- We are expecting a 42% increase in the numbers of people of pensionable age in the county by the year 2021, with a sharp rise in the numbers of people aged over 85 years

Role of the Supporting People Strategy and how it fits with other policy documents

The Strategy sets the key principles and strategic direction for the Supporting People programme in Norfolk for the next five years and provides the setting for decisions which the Commissioning Body will make about the use of resources.

From April 2008 the Supporting People programme in Norfolk will be a pilot to see how the programme can work within the Local Area Agreement context. We do not expect the direction of travel of the Strategy to alter, but we hope to find increasingly productive ways of working with partner organisations to provide services which are user focused and cost effective.

Within the framework of the Strategy, we will publish in March/April each year an Annual Plan which is the annual report on the programme, and sets out what actions we will take in the following year to improve services.

We also propose to publish a Commissioning Strategy which will look in more detail at what actions can be taken to make services more readily accessible, improve coordination and identify what improvements can be commissioned to meet priority needs.

The Financial Context 2008 - 2013

The detailed financial context of the Supporting People programme in Norfolk and spending decisions for the following year are set out in the Annual Plan which is published in March/April each year. This section gives an overview.

In December 2007 Communities and Local Government, the government department which funds Supporting People, announced the three year funding for the programme from April 2008. The indicative funding for Norfolk will be £16,336,572 for each year, subject to annual confirmation. This is a generally positive result for Norfolk since the national budget will fall over this period, but is nevertheless a cut in real terms since there is no inflationary uplift.

We will be using existing resources to fund new services which meet priority needs using procedures set out in the Strategy and Annual Plan. Because of uncertainty about the funding of the Supporting People Programme after 2011, arising from the national funding situation, the merger of Supporting People funding with the Local Area Agreement, and local government reorganisation, it will be difficult to make commitments which extend beyond the next three years. Nevertheless we know from experience that our resources fluctuate for a wide variety of reasons and we wish to reinvest wherever possible to meet the needs of service users.

Vision and Objectives for the Norfolk Supporting People Programme

The overarching aim for the Supporting People programme in Norfolk is:

“To fund, develop and improve good quality housing support services. These services should help people who are vulnerable to access suitable housing, retain their accommodation, live as independently as possible, and participate fully in the social and economic life of the community. These services should be available to all who require them, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or disability”

We wish to develop methods for measuring whether and how far we are achieving this vision, and the effects of the programme in enhancing the lives of service users. These indicators will also relate to both the Local Area Agreement and Norfolk County Council's Strategic Objectives.

This is a complex area; Supporting People funds services to a wide range of people with a range of needs, some of whose lives are very stable, others whose lives are chaotic. Some people may be able to develop or revive the skills to live independently in the community with little assistance. For others, staying in a hostel without being evicted for a period of six months may in itself be quite an achievement. While we support the need for outcome measures, we also take both quantitative and qualitative approaches. We monitor services by reviewing them, and by quarterly monitoring of performance indicators. This monitoring has been enhanced by the Outcome

Indicators introduced in 2007 which providers now complete for everyone leaving a short term service, and a sample of people in long term services.

We are developing a suite of indicators as part of the Service Plan 2008-2011 which are summarised below.

The touchstone of the programme is the extent to which services which we fund positively affect the lives of service users, and indicators will contribute to our understanding of this.

Objectives	Performance measures
To focus resources on needs and outcomes	Number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living (NI 142) Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living (NI 141) Percentage of services achieving minimum B standard of the QAF Percentage of subsidy contracts changed to fixed capacity contracts
To keep people that need services at the heart of the programme	Completion of action plan for service users strategy Percentage of services achieving supplementary quality standard (service user involvement) Completion of planning training / briefing of front line staff (partner agencies) Production of three newsletters per annum
To enhance partnership with the provider sector	Provider attendance at Provider Elected Panel Provider satisfaction survey Number of contracts issued for 3 years Attend and contribute to appropriate forums (number and outcomes)
To improve the joint planning and delivery of services with other commissioners	Number of jointly commissioning services Number of jointly funded services Number of services where funding is aligned through the Local Area Agreement Completion of Move On Action Plan
To increasing efficiency and reduce bureaucracy	Performance indicator rate and data integrity. Monitoring of availability, utilisation, staffing, planned moves, evictions, quality of services. Efficiency and Gershon savings from service reviews Spending aligns with SP strategy priorities Benchmarking against other services and regional information

2. FOCUSING RESOURCES ON NEEDS

Key principles for service development

Most people who need housing related support prefer to receive that support in their own self contained accommodation, and support services should generally be provided in this setting.

However a range of types of accommodation may be needed to enable people who are making transitions from institutional or care settings, or chaotic lifestyles, , towards independence, or have previously been homeless, to develop independent living skills within a supportive environment. This may include hostels with a high level of support, grouped flats and shared housing with on-site or visiting support.

Accordingly the following key points will guide investment in new services:

- New services should provide floating support to people where they live, unless there are particular reasons why this is not possible
- New accommodation-based services will only be developed if:
 - the service cannot be provided effectively by floating support, and
 - existing accommodation which meets users' needs is not available, and
 - service users need an intensive or specialist services which can only be provided in an accommodation-based setting
- Within the principles above, new services will be prioritised to meet service users' needs where resources will be used most effectively to meet strategic objectives and fill identified gaps in service according to the priorities for client group development

Our priorities and why we have adopted them

It is recognised that the pattern of use of services is more complex than can be reflected in this analysis, since some services provide for a wide range of client groups and many people have complex and multiple needs. For example, homelessness services provide for ex-offenders who may also have mental health and substance misuse problems. So service users in some client groups with apparently limited specialised services may be getting services elsewhere.

We consider the **highest** need for services to be

- for people who are at a high risk of harm to themselves or to the community if services are not provided
- for people for whom there are relatively few services, either supported housing or floating support, either in the county as a whole or in particular areas of the county
- for people who have few advocates in the form of organisations with a statutory responsibility, or well established voluntary sector providers

The groups for whom the factors exist to the highest extent are in priority group 1, and the services which our research has shown to be the most needed are as follows.

This research is summarised in Section 2 and available in more detail on the Norfolk Supporting People website.

- Offenders and ex-offenders -
 - supported housing in Kings Lynn and Great Yarmouth
 - gender based provision and services for older offenders
 - services for short sentenced prisoners
 - services for people with challenging behaviour and/or a history of serious offending and hostel exclusions
- Gypsies and Travellers -
 - extend floating support to more service users
 - consider how a self directed support model could be used to provide a self managing model of site provision
- People who misuse substances -
 - supported housing in Great Yarmouth and Norwich, additional services for older people and people continuing to use substances
- Vulnerable young people -
 - supported housing in Breckland, Broadland, South Norfolk, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk

There is undeniably public controversy over the siting of pitches for Gypsies and Travellers. Supporting People and partner agencies aim to support all sections of the community by helping Gypsies and Travellers with their accommodation and support needs by linking them to existing community services. By doing so, we would hope to contribute to the positive resolution of pressures and tensions by promoting and increasing neighbourly relationships between the travelling and settled communities.

Provision of services for ex-offenders is also controversial in some people's eyes. There is considerable evidence that if offenders leaving prison have settled and suitable accommodation to go to on release, and also have links to services which will encourage them to develop life skills and overcome some of the issues which have influenced their behaviours in the past, the risk of reoffending will be substantially reduced.

The risks to service users and the community have not diminished and the costs which can be incurred if services are not effective can be considerable. For example, the cost of accommodating an offender in prison is some £37,000 a year setting aside the costs of conviction. Providing suitable accommodation for people released from prison reduces the risk of reoffending by up to 20% and increases public protection.

Successful interventions in the lives of young people who have had a troubled background can give them stability, link them to education training and employment, and make a substantial difference to their life chances.

We consider that **second highest** need for service to be

- for people who are at a substantial risk of harm to themselves or to the community if services are not provided
- for people for whom there are reasonable supply of services, either supported housing or floating support, but there are significant gaps in service in particular areas of the county or in types of service

- for people who have limited advocates in the form of organisations with a statutory responsibility or well developed voluntary sector providers

The clients groups and the service improvements required are:-

- People affected by domestic abuse -
 - Implement proposals for new supported housing in Broadland, North Norfolk and Breckland
 - Increase support in refuges for people with complex needs
- Refugees
 - Improve links to floating support, particularly for people leaving National Asylum Seekers Service accommodation
- Migrant workers
 - Improve links to floating support
- People who are homeless -
 - Commission services for younger and older people and people with complex needs in Breckland, Kings Lynn and Norwich
 - Implement Greater Norwich hostels review and complete reviews for Rural East Anglia and Great Yarmouth
- People with a physical or sensory impairment-
 - Agree and implement the housing and support strategy for people with a physical or sensory impairment

We consider the **third highest** need for services to be

- for people who are at a limited risk of harm to themselves or to the community if services are not provided
- for people for whom there is a reasonable supply of services, either supported housing or floating support, but there are some gaps in service in particular areas of the county or in types of service

Within this priority groups our aims are:-

- Extending choice for vulnerable older people -
 - Implement the sheltered housing strategic review, and commission further use of the Brooke model (providing floating support from existing sheltered housing)
 - Implement the Supporting People elements of the Adult Social Service review of the needs of older people
 - Provide support in additional housing with care schemes where the need for these is identified by the above processes and subject to resources
 - Seek more consistent service models for Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs), and increase handyman services
 - Carry out a strategic review of HIA services
 - Review the service delivery pattern for Community Alarms and increase capacity for links with assistive technologies

- Carry out a strategic review of Community Alarms
- Implementing Valuing People for people with a learning difficulty -
 - Commission self contained accommodation and long term floating support
- Helping people with a mental illness obtain, prepare for and sustain independent living in accommodation appropriate to their and their families' needs -
 - Provide temporary funding for hospital link workers
 - Commission supported housing on Bakery Court model in Great Yarmouth and Kings Lynn

Policy on future spending between priority groups

Priority group	Spending split 2007/8 contracts %	Spending split new services 2003 / 2006 %
Group 1	12.2	42
Group 2	23.6	27.8
Group 3	61.1	30.3

The table above shows that spending 2003-2006 has started to change the distribution of existing spending but to a limited extent. Within the life of this strategy, it is proposed that the majority of new spending should be devoted to higher priority groups, but it is recognised, as set out above, that for all client groups there is lack of provision in some areas, and some inappropriate provision. Therefore, it would not be reasonable to confine all spending to the highest priority group only.

Spending for priority group 3 should only be for services which are very cost effective, those where there is an acknowledged shortage of supply (e.g. self contained accommodation for people with learning difficulties) or to meet severe imbalances in the distribution or quality of services.

Pathways and move on

A key aim of the Supporting People programme is to help people live as independently as possible. Where people have been living in an institutional setting as a result of a health or other problem or a crisis in their lives, the pathway between this and independent living may involve a number of stages between places where they can gain or regain independent living skills. Each stage is likely to have a lesser degree of support. This model applies for example to people leaving hospital after detoxification, a mental health episode or physical injury and where the previous accommodation is no longer available. One of the aims of support planning is to facilitate this process.

Crucial to this process is a well planned pathway between services, and perhaps the most difficult is the move from supported housing into an independent form of accommodation, be it social housing or a private sector letting.

There are known problems in keeping pathways open, some of which are structural and some operational. There is a structural problem; many people with support needs moving into independent accommodation seek a one or two bedroom unit, while the housing stock as a whole is skewed towards three bedroom family dwellings. There

are also practical problems with the limited supply of lettings in the social housing sector, and the need to support tenancy arrangements.

All agencies must seek resolutions to these problems if the aims of the programme are to be achieved.

What we are doing

- Developing a strategic approach to pathways and move on which we will consult on and seek commitment from partner agencies to implement

We have explored with district councils and local housing providers the barriers to accessing move on accommodation. We will develop a strategy to clarify the processes needed to enable service users to move on in an effective and timely way. The Strategy will link to and support the sub-regional homelessness strategies and the homelessness strategy from the Norfolk Registered Social Landlords Alliance. We are seeking to develop good practice with other SP teams and will further develop our means for monitoring move on from short stay services

Floating Support

In late 2006, after some two years of consultation and debate on the specification for the new service and a comprehensive commissioning process, the Norfolk Commissioning Body awarded the contracts for the provision of floating support in the areas of the Greater Norwich Housing Partnership and Rural East Anglia Partnership to what are now called the Stonham HomeStay services. The aim was to provide a more equitable and accessible service for people with a wide range of needs. The new services, which started in April 2007, have a single access and referral service based in Norwich, and local teams provide generic floating support across six of the seven districts in Norfolk. It replaced over 20 different services, some generic and some specialist, and most of the existing staff transferred to HomeStay. Not all existing service users transferred since a number were signed off by the existing service before the change of providers.

The changes were overseen by Sub Regional Implementation Groups which have now become Sub Regional Steering Groups for each area which deal with issues arising from the changes and help to set the strategic direction for the new service.

In Great Yarmouth, it was hoped that a consortium of providers with Great Yarmouth Borough Council would be able to sign a contract for the provision of floating support services on similar terms to the contracts for the other two sub regions. For a variety of reasons this has not been possible and the services in Great Yarmouth will now be commissioned through a tendering process during 2008. Great Yarmouth Borough Council will continue to operate the HomeSupport service until a new provider is in place.

What we are doing

- We will continue to monitor the HomeStay services and ensure that it continues to respond to user need and to assist in meeting the strategic objectives of this strategy

- We will commission a floating support service in Great Yarmouth
- We will review all services by the end of 2009

Financial priorities

As at March 2008 the Supporting People programme has financial reserves. These have built up because:-

- funding has been released from reviews because some services were found to be over funded, or funding should have been from other sources. These are for the most part one off releases resulting from the start up of the SP programme and are not likely to be repeated
- the start of some new schemes for which funding has been allocated have been delayed
- the CLG and its predecessor departments did not give an indication of the level of future funding and there have been concerns that this would fall
- CLG was also unclear on whether underspending could be carried forward from one financial year to the next, although in practice it has been possible every year so far.

The reserves have three roles. Firstly, their role is to safeguard the ability of the programme to meet its contractual commitment to fund services. The current reserves will enable the programme to fund all contracts and allow an inflationary uplift of 2% for 2008/9. Decisions on future uplifts will be made by the Commissioning Body each year.

Secondly, they are the working balance needed in the management of contracts. These are adjusted from time to time as the number of service users fluctuates, as the percentage of those in long term services who require SP funding fluctuates, and as reviews take place.

Thirdly, the reserves will, now that three year funding has been announced, enable us to fund a number of short term (three year duration) new services.

3. KEEPING PEOPLE THAT NEED SERVICES AT THE HEART OF THE PROGRAMME

Involving service users

The Norfolk Supporting People Team has acknowledged the need to set and achieve targets in consulting with service users. In 2004 a mapping exercise was undertaken of the existing methods used by providers in Norfolk to consult with service users. The results are shown below. 27% of providers recorded using no form of consultation. These issues are being picked up during service reviews.

Method of Consultation	% of Providers
Consultation with individuals	59
Feedback form	45
Group feedback sessions	44
Advocates/self-help groups	8
Other consultation methods	17
No consultation methods recorded	27

The Supporting People team is drawing on good practice literature in utilising a range of methods to consult with people using services. Methods are tailored and informed by local knowledge of each client group and have included working with advocates, theatre, social events and practical activities. During the process of consultation we worked collaboratively with local agencies making use of existing forums such as tenants' meetings/residents' meetings/drop-in services with a participatory culture to test information we have on needs and proposed solutions.

A leading challenge is to consult effectively with hard to reach and excluded groups who are unlikely to be firmly engaged with existing services. Sessions have been held in settings used by people who could potentially use housing related support but have experience of being marginalised from existing provision. We have talked informally with people with substance misuse problems, single homeless people and young parents in settings they feel comfortable with. An approach involving use of organisations with developed forums for involving service users also resulted in successful consultation events with people with mental health problems and people with learning difficulties.

Such work has been complemented by more orthodox consultation such as a series of seven consultation meetings for older people, their relatives and service providers in sheltered housing and in public venues held in 2006. The meetings explored the views and experiences people had about receiving support in sheltered housing and the information provided the basis for an audit of sheltered housing provision.

Although it is difficult to generalise, some of the common themes emerging from consultation with people who could and do use Supporting People have been:

- There is a need for accessible information about where services are, what they do and how they can be accessed
- This information is important in allowing people to make choices about housing support options, enabling access to support when needs arise and facilitating consultation processes with service users on future service development
- Access to some services needs to be simplified
- Single homelessness services require better co-ordination because some people find it difficult to access basic supported accommodation and hard to move on to more independent accommodation
- Low level support services where people are supported to learn and develop life skills such as cooking and budgeting, are generally seen as a positive alternative to higher support environments where such tasks are done on behalf of services users
- Genuine consultation is generally welcomed with Supporting People and other organisations are urged to make a commitment to continuing consultation

In Norfolk there is a limited number of service user led and community based organisations. This can mean that some individuals feel they are always sought out when there are issues to consult upon. For this reason it is important to tie in with other consultation processes as these occur. We recognise the significance of asking people directly about how they wish to be consulted rather than making or relying on the assumptions of others. It is important not to let reservations about representation and fear of tokenism become excuses for not consulting effectively.

In some sectors in Norfolk there are lead agencies in advocacy, self-organisation and representation. The Supporting People Team has undertaken joint training and consultation work with People First (a self-advocacy organisation) around involving people with learning difficulties. We have linked and explored joint working with the developing service user involvement initiatives in respect of people with mental health problems and people who misuse substances.

We want to ensure that contact with marginalised groups is maintained and are committing officer time to links with organisations that have links with these groups. We will ensure that information on services is available in appropriate languages, vocabularies and forms.

Since 2007 we have concentrated on work to explore the potential for sustained and genuine input from service users and carers in the governance of Supporting People. Following consultation events in June and July 2007 with users and front line staff, we are now developing links with a group of "expert users" to engage their regular input on strategic issues about the running of the programme. We will work with this group to identify the best ways of enabling them to make their contributions in a way which they are comfortable with. We will also continue to improve links with other agencies developing approaches to service user involvement, including the new health and social care led LINKs programme.

Self-directed Support

Norfolk was one of 13 pilots across the country trialling how giving people their own individual budgets would work in practice. The Norfolk pilot provided individual budgets for people with mental health problems who were eligible for a service from Adult Social Services. For more information on the national programme see <http://individualbudgets.csip.org.uk/index.jsp>

Individual budgets, or self directed support as this has now become known, allows people who have support needs and use some types of service provided by local government to choose and buy the support they consider they need and have support in a way they want. Self directed support puts the person who is supported, or given services, in control of what support or services they get.

For those people who took part in the pilot this meant

- Having to spend less time giving information to different agencies
- Having an amount of money that can be used to buy the services they feel they need and
- Being able to have friends, family or an advocate draw up a support plan with them

At the end of the Norfolk pilot potentially of the 14 people who indicated that they had housing support needs, 11 people have chosen to use Julian Housing Support Services.

The pilot raised a number of issues as to how Self Directed Support and the Personalisation Agenda can work within an SP framework. Service users should have support services that work with them and for them. NSP believe that the work carried out during the service review process and the IB Pilot, and the principals in our Service User Involvement Strategy can be taken forward effectively to further choice and control. It will be important to maintain existing choice and variety of service provision whilst promoting choice and new models of service provision for others.

4. ENHANCING PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PROVIDER SECTOR AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Involving providers and other stakeholders

The Strategy has been developed through regular consultation with providers and other stakeholders. Methods have included:

- Public consultation through the Norfolk County Council web site
- Meetings with key stakeholders
- Consultation events
- Utilising significant forums where these exist to consult and inform
- Consulting groups such as the Norfolk Offenders Accommodation Forum
- Drawing on resources within Adult Social Services and partner agencies to ensure that use is made of a varied media for consultation - this includes specialist newsletters and web sites for people who could use SP services

The Supporting People Team will continue to use the following key existing forums for regular consultation and planning of future services:

Disability Forums

Drug Interventions Programme Strategy Board

Norfolk Learning Disabilities Partnership Board

Teenage Pregnancy Strategic Partnership Board

Gypsy and Travellers Liaison Group

Norwich Asylum Seeker and Refugee Forum

Voluntary Mental Health Providers group

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

Norfolk Offender Accommodation Forum Sub Groups

Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnership - Housing Strategy Group

Greater Norwich Homelessness Prevention Sub Group

The team has developed and is implementing an accessible and effective communication Strategy that raises the profile of SP in Norfolk and provides information about the programme to different target audiences. The Supporting People Team will continue training for providers on aspects on their tasks and responsibilities in respect of the programme. The training arranged to date has been expressly valued by provider organisations.

Supporting People has worked with Space East to initiate a Provider Elected Forum (see page 20).

Providing stability in funding

The Norfolk Supporting People programme aims to enter into three year contracts with providers wherever possible and to provide annual contract uplifts wherever possible. Uplifts have been provided in the last two years and as described in the Financial Priorities section.

As at September 2007 we had agreed 42 three year contracts and two five year contracts. The remaining contracts are one year for one of two reasons. Firstly, we only issue one year contracts where a strategic review is taking place or is imminent, for example sheltered housing, domestic violence refuges and community alarms. Secondly, we issue one year contracts where the provider has not yet completed an action plan to improve service quality.

From identifying needs to commissioning services

This section deals with how we decide how to spend resources from the Programme Grant to meet needs by extending existing services or developing new ones.

This process runs on an annual cycle linked to the Programme Grant budget setting process and the Housing Corporation's capital development processes. From mid year onwards each year we start to gather information and evaluate where there are gaps in service and where there are proposals from partner organisations.

We evaluate these proposals using a prioritisation matrix which has been agreed regionally by all Supporting People teams, GO-East, the East of England Regional Assembly and the Housing Corporation. The matrix includes information about each proposal which is checked by Sub Regional Housing Partnerships and scored by Supporting People teams on the basis of Strategic Relevance (to the Supporting People Strategy and other local regional and national strategies), Evidence of Need, Added Value, Deliverability and Unique Factors. The matrix scoring is then used to decide which scheme could be funded in the following year(s) if resources are available. The outcome of this is a priority list of schemes which the Commissioning Body would like to fund.

We plan to use the proposals in this strategy to guide the commissioning of new or expanded services to meet priority needs, subject to resource constraints. When the SP Strategy 2008-2013 is further developed we will prepare a Commissioning Strategy which will identify the new or expanded services which we will commission.

5. IMPROVING THE JOINT PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF SERVICES WITH OTHER COMMISSIONERS

Background - how the Supporting People programme is managed

Details of the management system for Supporting People in Norfolk are provided in Part 2.

The Supporting People Programme is an inter-agency programme which is given strategic direction by a Commissioning Body comprising representatives of all the local authorities in Norfolk, the Probation Board and the two Primary Care Trusts. Linked to the Commissioning Body is the Core Strategy Group with a similar representation at a more operational level and a wider membership including more statutory agencies and representatives of the voluntary sector. The Member Champions group brings together key members of the district and county councils and the Probation Board, while the Provider Elected Panel brings together representatives of voluntary sector organisations and housing associations. The Supporting People Team supports these structures and while being funded by Communities and Local Government, is employed by Norfolk County Council. The Programme Grant which funds services is also provided by Communities and Local Government.

Local Area Agreements

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are a three year agreement between central government, local authorities and other key partners, which set out the key priorities for the area. The CLG has stated that Supporting People Programme Grant funding, with a number of other local authority funding streams, will be paid through the LAA area based grant from April 2009, subject to the evaluation of the current pathfinder programme which Norfolk has accepted an invitation to join.

A new LAA for Norfolk will supersede the existing one in April 2008. This will be the mechanism for agreeing performance targets between central government, the local authority and partners based on a common understanding of the central local and regional priorities for improvement. Further information is available <http://www.norfolkambition.gov.uk/norfolkambition-laa/home.asp>

The Supporting People Programme Grant contracts with providers for 108 services and these contracts will continue to exist regardless of how the funding is paid to the local authority. The contract is a vital element of the programme since it is the mechanism by which, via reviews, service quality is improved and effectiveness monitored. The scope for alignment or pooling are those services which are joint funded or where there is parallel provision. Other stakeholders also have resources committed to employment contracts so alignment and pooling is likely to be a long term process.

At present we see incremental changes arising from the LAA. We share the wish to make services more person centred, easier for service users and their carers to understand and access, and more effective, so that they contribute to county wide community objectives, and we will work with the LAA to do this.

Local Government Reorganisation in Norfolk

The Government has asked the Boundary Committee to recommend, using five criteria, whether a revised pattern of local government based on one or more unitary authorities in Norfolk could deliver improvements in services. The Boundary Committee is due to report to the Government by the end of 2008.

The Strategy will need to be reviewed within the next three years by which time there different local government organisations may be in place. The need to monitor and review services, to make them more user focused and more efficient will continue whatever local government structure is in place.

6. INCREASING EFFICIENCY AND REDUCING BUREAUCRACY

Improving Quality

Completion Of The Service Review Programme

The Supporting People Team reviewed 171 services between April 2003 and March 2006. Several Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) services were not reviewed because the providers were in the process of transfer. These were subsequently reviewed during 2006-2007.

Twenty two floating support services were found not to be strategically relevant at the first stage of the review process. This is because the Commissioning Body had agreed that floating support should in future be provided by generic services on a sub regional basis, and none of the existing services fitted with this model. Floating support was subject to a re-commissioning process and has seen the development of two sub-regional services delivered by Stonham in Rural East Anglia and Greater Norwich. During the development of the strategic approach to the new services the housing sub regions were asked if they wished to host the new generic services. In the event only Great Yarmouth responded to this invitation and as a result negotiations have taken place for the provision of a service in Great Yarmouth using the same contracts as have been agreed with Stonham. The negotiations have not been successful and as indicated elsewhere the floating support services in Great Yarmouth will be recommissioned during 2008.

Managing Poor Quality

Many services scored a D within the quality assessment framework (QAF). As the QAF is scored by the lowest common denominator usually the overall D was as a result of a provider not meeting basic quality standards on one or two of the six core objectives.

Particular areas not meeting minimum quality standards included support planning and needs assessments for the majority of services supporting people with learning difficulties, exclusions and drug and alcohol policies for services supporting people who were homeless, and health and safety and protection of abuse issues across the sector.

These areas of poor quality have now been addressed for all services following the implementation and validation of action plans following the service review. All

services have now been validated as providing support services to a minimum standard, but we still have action plans outstanding on a number because aspects of the service are not of sufficient quality. We will continue to monitor existing services and seek continuous improvement.

Decommissioning

Several services were not able to address quality issues to the satisfaction of the QAF. In these cases a new service provider has been identified following an open procurement process. This has ensured that much needed services remain in situ and that those service users accessing poor quality services are now supported in an appropriate way to meet their needs.

To date, two homelessness services and one service supporting women fleeing domestic violence have been recommissioned in the Kings Lynn and West Norfolk area. A further service supporting women fleeing domestic violence will be commissioned in the Breckland area.

Review Programme 2008-2013

The Commissioning Body has agreed a risk assessment procedure for future reviews. These will concentrate on:

- Services that present on-going concerns with quality highlighted through contract monitoring processes or stakeholder involvement
- Services whose prices were reduced significantly post review
- Services that have undergone significant remodelling
- Services in sectors covered by strategic reviews

In addition to this, all newly commissioned services will be reviewed within the first 18 months of operation unless the terms and conditions of the SP contract stipulate otherwise (as in the case of floating support).

Now that we have carried out the reviews, we have much clearer information on how services work. We are building on this to look at how best the needs of service users can be met, by seeing how services can work together to provide pathways towards sustained independence.

There is also a need to build on the work the sectoral reviews have identified; these are described in part 2 of the Strategy

Monitoring Contract Performance

Risk Based Contract Monitoring

Aside from the risk based service review programme, the Supporting People Team are taking forward a risk based contract monitoring process. This will enable Planning and Contract Officers to monitor the performance of services throughout the year and take remedial action in response to areas of poor performance.

The risk assessment is based on the following: -

- Whether services have been Accredited
- Whether Performance Indicators are meeting contract requirements
- Whether service review action plans are being implemented

Performance indicators

Performance indicators are routinely monitored on a quarterly basis. Any issues highlighted within the PI submission are raised directly with the support provider in the context of the service. This has allowed the SP team to investigate under-utilisation and occasions where staff have been working in excess of contractual hours. More specifically, the regular monitoring of PIs has provided the SP Team and relevant stakeholders an opportunity to examine performance and key client group related concerns, in particular the number of people making a planned move from short-term services.

Overall Performance

Overall, the majority of long term and short term services present good utilisation and staffing input. The percentage of people maintaining their independence in long term services shows that support services are enabling people to stay in their own homes for longer.

Planned Moves

The number of people making a planned move from short-term accommodation is also considered on a regular basis. A total of 1221 individuals moved from short-term accommodation based services between 1 April 2006 and 31 March 2007. 852 of them made a planned move.

Work will be undertaken during 2008 to address difficulties providers have in accessing move-on accommodation for particular clients.

Increasing Efficiency

Local Value for Money Processes

Norfolk Supporting People Team have developed a bespoke tool to allow accurate and transparent value for money assessments of all services at the point of review and during procurement exercises. This local tool allows an in-depth analysis of an individual service budget and presents a clear and defined way for determining accurate contract values based on what it costs the provider to deliver the service.

This approach allows for full cost recovery for the provider.

This tool has led to some decreases in funding but has also allowed SP to develop a clear understanding of the associated costs of running support services. For many providers, the application of the tool has led to increases in funding for particular budget headings such as training, and has supported arguments for more appropriate housing benefit levels to ensure the right funding stream is paying for the right element of the service.

Regional Benchmarking

The Supporting People Eastern Region Group has undertaken a benchmark exercise to look at the hourly cost, number of hours of support and weekly unit cost for all accommodation based services in the region. This work was undertaken to update the national data made available by the CLG in December 2003 and to allow a more reasonable comparison of services at the point of review. This benchmark will be utilised in Norfolk when considering appropriate support costs for new and existing services and feeds into the revised approach to service reviews.