



Supporting People in Bracknell Forest
5 Year Strategy 2011/12 to 2014/15

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Foreword

Welcome to the 2011/12 to 2014/15 Supporting People Strategy.

The Supporting People Programme in Bracknell sits within the Housing Service in the Environment, Culture and Communities Directorate but has strong links with two other directorates, Children, Young People & Learning and Adult Social Care & Health. The Council has six overarching priorities which encompass 13 medium term objectives for 2009 –2014, two of which are relevant to the Supporting People programme:

- Promoting health and achievement
- Creating a Borough where people are safe and feel safe

The Supporting People programme funds the provision of housing related support, to help prevent the kinds of problems that can lead to hospitalisation, institutional care, custody or homelessness, and provide transitional support when leaving these environments to enable clients to live independently.

The Bracknell Forest Supporting People Programme supports the Council's Housing Strategy, 'The Right Home' 2009 – 2014 [Housing Strategy](#). The overriding priority of the Housing Strategy is:

“to enable the provision of the right homes for the communities of Bracknell Forest, in the right place and of the right quality to allow more choice for the residents of the borough.”

The Council is committed to providing a locally defined approach to meeting the needs of its residents. This includes the need to work in partnership with a range of service providers, to tailor local solutions to the needs of service users. There will continue to be resourcing pressures on the Supporting People Budget and Bracknell Forest in conjunction with its partners will continue to seek out new and innovative approaches to maximise resources.

The Supporting People partnership consists of representatives from Bracknell Forest Council Environment, Culture & Communities, Adult Social Care & Health Departments, the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the Thames Valley Probation Service.

Key Aim

To improve the quality of life for a range of vulnerable people, by preventing homelessness, helping them live as independently as possible, and enabling them to have an active role in our community.

Devising the Strategy

The strategy has been developed in consultation with service users and providers. The service providers include professionals in housing, adult social care and health, children and young people and criminal justice agencies.

Introduction

What is Supporting People (SP)?

- 1.0 The Supporting People programme was launched on 1 April 2003. The aim of SP is to help more people with support needs to achieve a better quality of life, by enabling them to live more independently. It funds the provision of **housing related support**, to help prevent the kinds of problem that can often lead to hospitalisation, institutional care or homelessness. It can also help people leaving institutional environments to make the transition to independent living.

Housing Related Support

- 1.1 Housing related support enables people to move into or continue living in their own homes or move into supported accommodation. It can be either long term or short term (up to 2 years). Support can be provided by staff permanently on site or on site for large parts of the day or it can be provided by visiting staff once or twice a week. Services may also be provided on a drop in basis.
- 1.2 Activities that can be funded through Supporting People include:
- a) Safety within the dwelling
 - Showing the person how to use equipment over and above what would be required for a tenant who is not vulnerable
 - Providing advice on obtaining repairs to personal equipment
 - Providing support to maintain health and safety within the dwelling e.g. proper disposal of rubbish
 - Support to enable maintenance or adaptations to be effected.
 - b) Security of the dwelling
 - Alarm systems
 - Concierge provision
 - Advice on locking up
 - c) Helping the tenant comply with the tenancy
 - Helping claim benefits
 - Budget management and debt counselling
 - Enabling resolution of neighbour disputes
 - Advice/Support to keep the property in good order
 - d) General social support and welfare tasks
 - Liaison with /facilitating services from other professionals or services,
 - Liaison with relatives
 - Occasional welfare tasks
 - Resettlement activities

Defining the current SP eligibility criteria

1.3 A review was carried out in March 2008 and the agreed four key criteria are:

- i. Help to maintain the safety and security of the dwelling, e.g. health and safety, repairs, community alarms;
- ii. Help setting up or maintaining the home or tenancy, e.g. benefits and finances, being a good neighbour
- iii. Advice, advocacy, liaison and personal tasks, e.g. signposting to health, social care, cultural and other services, developing life skills
- iv. Other tasks, e.g. referrals and assessments, service user consultation and empowerment, occasional social events

1.4 The following tasks are not housing-related support, and are not eligible for SP funding:

- Housing management (e.g. lettings, collecting rent, issuing or enforcing occupancy agreements)
- Provision of personal, social care, or health care including specialist counselling and or therapy.
- Provision of any statutory services
- Cleaning of communal areas
- Administering of medication etc

1.5 A full list is attached at Annex 1 of this strategy. Further information on Supporting People can be found on the Bracknell Forest website.

<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/liv-supporting-people.htm>.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE PRIORITIES

The primary need of all of the clients accessing services is a housing need and the services provided via the supporting people programmes enables the client to access or keep their home, and maintain their home successfully. A key objective of the supporting people programme is to prevent homelessness.

Over the last five years, the services funded by the SP programme have included essential activities such as enabling people to secure a home and providing support to enable people to keep their home as well as desirable activities aimed at enabling people to achieve independence and play a positive part in the community. Over the next four years, it will be necessary to review the eligibility criteria for SP services to ensure that priority is given to maintaining essential services which:

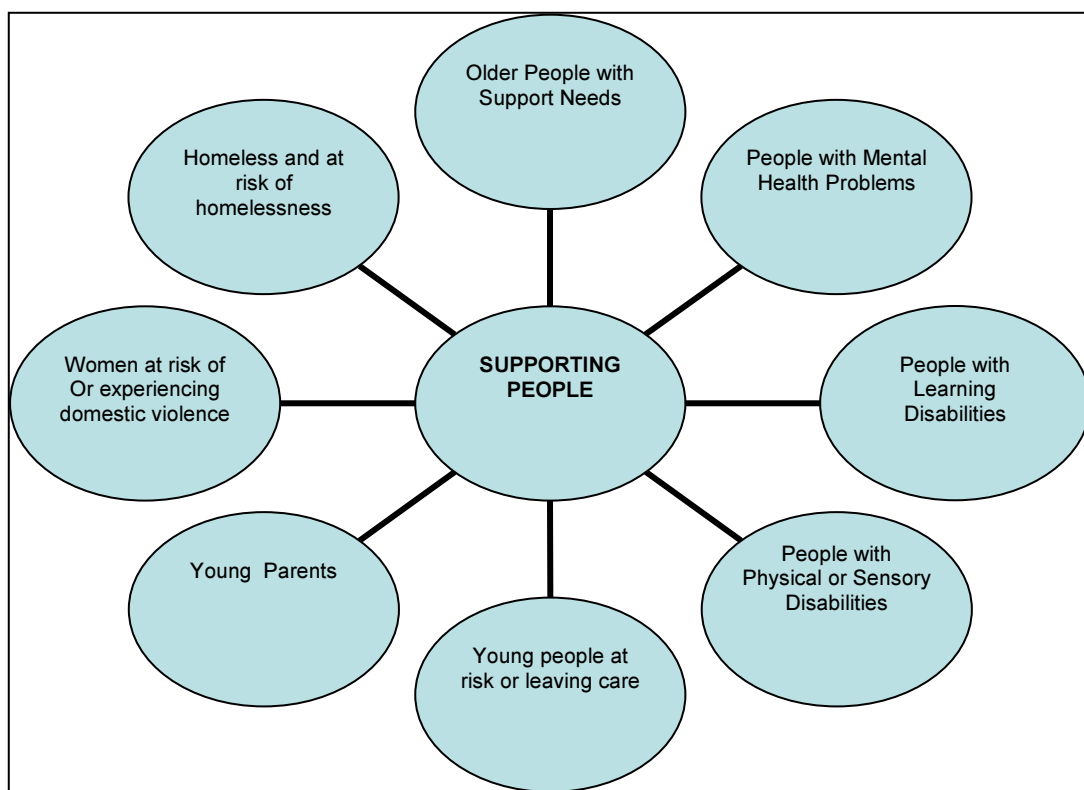
- Enable people to secure a home, and
- Provide support to enable a person to keep their home

It is unlikely that the wider value added services can continue to be funded from the core programme, but providers will be encouraged to develop partnerships with the voluntary sector to provide these services, in line with the principles of the Big Society.

The Need for Supporting People Services in the Bracknell Forest Borough

The Supporting People Programme funds services across 6 primary client groups. Some client groups encompass a range of needs, for example, homelessness services are accessed by women fleeing domestic violence, people with mental health problems and ex-offenders, people with a learning disability may also have physical disabilities.

Figure 1 – Client Groups Accessing Supporting People



The SP programme is only spent on housing related support, and where appropriate funding is sought from complimentary funding streams where clients have multiple support needs, such as social care.

The Supporting People programme currently funds both accommodation based and floating support services. The key difference between these two types of service is that with accommodation based services, housing related support is provided to individuals living in specific housing schemes, while floating support services allow housing related support to be provided to individuals regardless of where they are living. Floating support services are therefore more flexible and can support individuals in a wide range of accommodation.

The accommodation based services currently funded by the programme are:

- Sheltered housing for older people
- Short term supported housing for young single people
- Specialist housing for people with mental health problems
- Adapted housing for people with a physical disability
- Specialist short term housing for women fleeing domestic violence
- Short term housing for young single mothers.

The floating support services are:

- A generic floating support service for single people and families who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness
- A specialist floating support service for people with learning disabilities
- A resettlement service which predominantly supports single vulnerable people to secure accommodation and avoid homelessness
- A Disabled Facilities Grant support service which assists local residents with the making applications for grant to have adaptations made to their homes. The majority of residents supported by this service are owner occupiers.

During the last twelve months a needs mapping exercise has been undertaken and has identified the following needs in the borough.

People with Learning Disabilities

Adult Services are working with around 350 adults with Learning Disabilities and have a further 42 people between the ages of 14 and 17 years in transition. Most, but not all of these people have a moderate or severe learning disability and some have complex needs. Of the adults known to Adult Services, 99 are known to have a priority need.

There are currently 57 people receiving housing related support from Supporting People funded services. Of these individuals, 15 receive 8 or more hours of support per week.

Women Fleeing Domestic Violence

Berkshire Women's Aid provides an essential service for women fleeing domestic abuse, and it is often necessary for the victims to move away from their current accommodation into the refuge while their issues are being addressed. The support provided at the refuges is more specialised in view of the nature of the issues faced by the clients, and the service relies on security and confidentiality to preserve its success.

Violent relationship breakdown features as one of the main causes of homelessness in the borough and the refuges provide an alternative to bed and breakfast accommodation. During 2009/10, violent relationship breakdown accounted for 19% of homeless acceptances in the borough.

People with Physical Disabilities

The number of referrals to the Council for people aged 18 to 64 with a physical disability has remained fairly static over the last three years, averaging 116 per year. A small proportion of this demand require residential/nursing care, while the services

more frequently requested are disabled adaptations, home support and professional support and day care.

The Supporting People programme funds housing related support to a specialist scheme which provides independent housing for 10 tenants. The Disabled Facilities Grant support service also supports households with making applications for disabled facilities grants and commissioning and overseeing the adaptation work. During 2009/10, 80% of households applying for a disabled facilities grant sought assistance with the application process.

People with Mental Health Support Needs

In Bracknell Forest, people experiencing mental health problems are most likely to be living in rented accommodation. Of those open to the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT):

- 45% are living in social housing
- 13% are living in some form of supported accommodation
- 18% are owner occupiers
- 6% are in private rented accommodation
- 18% are living in other types of accommodation such as in the family home or in residential care.

Over half of those open to CMHT are living alone.

As well as being more likely to live in rented accommodation, a large proportion of those supported by CMHT are on the Housing Register, with flats and bedsits being the most frequently requested accommodation.

The Supporting People programme funds both accommodation based and floating support services for this client group and a total of 70 people are supported by these services.

In addition to the services funded specifically for mental health, a number of the Homeless contracts are also accessed by people with mental health problems. During 2009/10, 33 people with either a primary or a secondary mental health problem accessed the following services:

Service Provider	No. service users with mental health issues as an additional need
Floating Support Service	24
Resettlement Service	3
Supported Housing	6
Total	33

These service users all access the homelessness support services via either the Adults or Young Persons Accommodation Panels and present as either homeless or threatened with homelessness. This demonstrates the extent to which there is an overlap between mental health and homelessness.

Homelessness

During the 5 year period 2005/6 – 2009/10, the number of households making a homelessness application to the Council fell significantly, from 160 households to 39. During the same five year period, the number of households for whom homelessness was been prevented increased from 110 households to 238 households.

Over the last 18 months, homelessness demand has started to increase again. During 2010/11, 53 households made a homeless application, an average of 4 per month. This has increased further this year, with an average 9 households making a homeless application each month.

The Supporting People programme funds a range of accommodation based and floating support services which are aimed at either preventing homelessness or supporting vulnerable people to live in the community. Access to all of these services is via the Young Persons and Adults Resource Panels. The Panels consider the nature and urgency of the needs of the individuals referred to the panels, and allocate vacancies in supported housing schemes or floating support hours as resources allow.

Older People

The number of people aged 65+ in the borough is expected to increase steadily from its current level of 12,000 to an estimated population of 17,600 in the 65+ group by 2021. The most significant increase in the older population is expected in the 85+ group. It is anticipated that by 2021 there will be 2,700 people in this group, an increase of approximately 50% from 2006. The diversity of this population is also expected to widen, with the proportion of older people from BME communities making up 10% of this group by 2021.

The Council's Strategy for Older People – Adding Life to Years - sets the following vision:

- “a safe, comfortable home that can be adapted as the owner grows older;
- living in a location which has easy access to shops, transport and other amenities;
- having support to carry out daily tasks inside the house and keeping the garden in good order.”

In terms of meeting the housing and housing related support needs of this population, it is important to recognise that more than 73% of Bracknell Forest residents over 50 years are home owners. At present, the majority of the services for older people funded by the supporting people programme are support services provided in sheltered housing which is owned by Registered Providers (housing associations). There is no housing related support service currently available for older people living in their own home. A priority for this strategy is therefore to consider how the resources that are available in future years can be targeted at people living in a wider range of tenures.

The Supporting People programme funds a Disabled Adaptations support service which helps older people access disabled facilities grants to make adaptations to their homes. Forestcare also operate the community lifeline service, although at present SP funding does not contribute to the provision of lifelines for people in the private sector.

During 2009/10, 70 applications for disabled facilities grants were made. The following table summarises the type of work completed:

Stairlifts	12
Level access showers	45
Other adaptations	2
Windows and doors	
Electrical works	
Energy efficiency works	
Other repairs refurbishment	2
Guttering	
Extensions/Conversions	2
External	7
TOTAL	70*

* some clients had two jobs undertaken

The Older People's Strategy – Adding Life to Years - also identifies the need for an Extra Care sheltered housing scheme which can meet the needs of residents with a range of support needs, including frailer older people, as part of a longer term strategy for reducing the need for residential care. This would be a new provision in the borough and as such will require supporting people funding to be identified within existing resources to meet the cost of SP eligible needs.

RESOURCING THE STRATEGY

Demand remains high for all of the services funded by the Supporting People programme. However, it is recognised that this strategy operates within a climate of constraining financial pressures and an approach to commissioning which maximises flexibility and enables services to be extended to people living in a wider range of tenures needs to be put in place.

In June 2010, the Council received notice that the Supporting People administration grant of £81,000 was being removed with effect from 1 April 2010. This grant funded two supporting people officers who manage the SP programme and service providers. With an SP grant programme of over £1.7million, a resource is required to provide effective programme management. During the last six months, operational changes have been made to deliver efficiencies in the administration of the programme, and the remaining admin costs have had to be absorbed into the mainstream programme.

In view of the uncertainties around funding, new contracts with providers have been offered on a one year basis with the option of extending for a further year, and the notice period has been reduced to two months.

By working closely with providers, the Council has been able to secure new contracts across all client groups by generating efficiencies. Some services have had to be reduced and re-modelled to ensure those in greatest need continue to receive a service, but it has not been necessary to stop a service in its entirety.

As the ring-fencing for supporting people has been removed, funding which has contributed to services for specialist social care groups such as people with enduring mental health problems and people with learning disabilities has been transferred to the mainstream budgets for these client groups. This Supporting People Strategy will

therefore focus on the commissioning of services for homelessness and older people.

TAKING THE PROGRAMME FORWARD

The Supporting People programme faces significant challenges over the four year period of this strategy. It will be necessary to explore new commissioning and service delivery options in order to achieve further efficiencies and maintain the most essential services.

The estimated resource available to fund the Supporting People programme over the next four years is as follows:

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Programme budget (Area Based Grant)	1,097,000	1,076,000	1,076,000	1,076,000

It is proposed that any carry forward remaining at the end of 2011/12 is used firstly, to top up any reduction in the base programme from future Area Based Grant settlements, and secondly to purchase additional hours/services in response to an increase in demand from specific client groups during the term of the strategy.

The commissioning strategy for the next four years needs to address the following priorities:

- i. Flexibility – to support residents across tenure and contribute to new initiatives which may emerge during the life of the strategy
- ii. Effective targeting – support to meet essential needs (securing a home and preventing homelessness)
- iii. Opportunities for new commissioning arrangements such a joint commissioning with neighbouring authorities

To deliver these priorities, this strategy will focus on the following actions:

Review of eligibility criteria.

It is proposed that the eligibility criteria for accessing housing related support are reviewed to ensure that priority is given to maintaining essential services which enable people to secure a home, and provide support to enable a person to keep their home;

Review of current services

It is proposed that all services funded through the SP programme are reviewed against new eligibility criteria to identify options for further efficiencies and ensure services meet the priorities of the programme.

Review of housing related support needs

It is proposed that the support needs across all client groups are reviewed against new eligibility criteria to ensure services can be targeted effectively

Establish a commissioning plan which maximises flexibility and enables services to be extended to people living in a wider range of tenures.

In terms of commissioning options, one option could be to tender for two floating support services - one for the homeless client groups, and one for older people. These services could be based anywhere in the borough with mobile support workers providing housing related support to residents in their current homes, or meeting with residents in a local office.

A second option could be to look at a hybrid model such hub and spoke as a way of providing services to both scheme based residents and residents in the wider community. This type of model could be particularly relevant for older persons sheltered housing, offering the opportunity for those living in sheltered schemes and eligible for support (or self funders) to receive the same “needs-led” service as those in their own home. The model could also work for homeless services. There are existing housing schemes in the borough such as Rainforest Walk, Holly House and the women’s refuge which could operate as hubs, and from which services can also be delivered to residents in the wider community. An advantage of this approach would be that the provider could vary the number of support hours going into each part of the service, in line with client needs at any point in time.

A review of hourly rates for the accommodation based and floating support based services which are currently in place suggests that there is little difference in the cost of the support provided in each service type. What does differ significantly is the number of hours that a client receives in each type of service. Residents in accommodation based services tend to receive more support hours per week, which in the case of the homelessness services, reflects the complex nature of the client groups accommodated in the schemes. The hub and spoke model would accommodate these more complex clients more effectively, and it is therefore proposed that the hub and spoke model is adopted as the new commissioning model for supporting people services.

Supporting People Strategy Action Plan

Objective	Action	Timescale
Ensure SP programme targets priority needs	Review eligibility criteria	September 2011
Ensure existing services meet identified needs	Complete service reviews for all services	November 2011
	Complete review of current clients against revised eligibility criteria	November 2011
Ensure effective joint working	Look at options for joint commissioning of services with neighbouring authorities	March 2012
	Consider options for improving commissioning ability and capacity	March 2012
	Create opportunities for developing	

	markets and improving competition to deliver more effective and efficient services	March 2012
Deliver continuous improvement	Ensure SP providers achieve improvements in their QAF scores during the term of their contracts Work in partnership with providers to identify opportunities for meeting needs in different ways and with fewer resources.	March 2012 March 2012
Re-commission services in line with projected funding levels	Serve notice on existing providers Develop new floating support specifications Re-commission new services	November 2011 November 2011 September 2012