

Supporting People 'safety net' needs funding rethink - CRISPP and Council for Homeless NI

88% of older people presenting as homeless need specialist accommodation and have a special need



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As part of Homelessness Awareness Week 2018 (HAW), the homelessness sector is calling for an urgent funding increase for the Supporting People programme.

Homelessness organisations have warned that services will have to close if action isn't taken to address the significant funding shortfall.

More than 50 homelessness support providers deliver 153 schemes for over 12,000 vulnerable people each year, across a wide range of client groups including domestic violence, at risk young people and homeless families with support needs.

As well as helping tackle homelessness, the Supporting People programme funds a wide range of supported housing projects aiding groups including people with disabilities, young people leaving care, and older people's services. Around 20,000 people across NI are helped annually.

The Supporting People budget has had no inflationary uplift in a decade and requires proper resourcing in order to deliver services effectively. Campaigners are calling for a sustainable funding model to ensure that those in need receive the necessary levels of support.

Increasing demand, universal credit, pension auto enrolment and the increased cost of living have placed significant strain on the SP budget, and funding concerns were further compounded by a 5% cut on all accommodation-based service funding from April 2018.

**In four years,
'homeless & vulnerable'
young people housing
demand has doubled**



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The situation has now become critical as many services are running at a deficit and having to cross-subsidise their homelessness services from other reserves.

Calling for the 'safety net' Supporting People funding to be increased, Ricky Rowledge, CEO at Council for the Homeless and Co-chair of the committee which represents providers (CRISPP) said,

"We already know that homelessness needs are increasing so it is imperative that the budget is revised to meet existing need before it gets completely out of hand. For example, 88% of older people presenting as homeless need specialist accommodation & have a special need and the number of homeless vulnerable young people has doubled in the last four years.

"Independent assessment of Supporting People found it saves the public purse £125million each year by reducing the need for other, more expensive public services. These savings increase significantly to £2.50 for people with mental

health issues, £5.62 for domestic violence support and as high as £11.18 when supporting people with drug problems

To see more Homelessness Awareness Week news and events, or to find out more about the Supporting People Campaign, please visit www.chni.org.uk/haw.html

**Special need applications
for ordinary housing has
risen by 61% in 4 years**



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About the Supporting People Campaign

Supporting People (SP) funding underpins vital supported housing services for around 20,000 vulnerable people in Northern Ireland. A wide range of beneficiaries include frail older people; homeless people; and people with learning disabilities and mental health issues. Many services are provided in purpose-built accommodation; others are provided in the community through 'floating support'. Although varying widely, the common focus of SP services is helping vulnerable people to live with the maximum independence and dignity in the community.

Supporting People is delivered by over 100 organisations, the majority of whom are charities, ranging from small providers who deliver a single service to larger providers of up to 24 services. Providers include housing associations, health and social care trusts and the Housing Executive.

Campaign asks:

1. **Existing Services:** To help ensure the viability of existing services, the 5% funding cut to accommodation-based services should be immediately

reversed (through recurrent funding, rather than an ad-hoc top-up), with a commitment to annual inflationary increases to sustain their quality. 'Barnett Consequentials' for NI resulting from the Budget on 29 October should be prioritised to address the shortfall in SP funding.

2. **Existing Unmet Need:** To help meet existing unmet needs (e.g. for supported living services for people with learning disabilities), an appropriate share of funding from Health and Care modernisation budgets is allocated for much-needed supported living projects (usually jointly commissioned by the Housing Executive and Trusts).
3. **Future Need:** To inform planning and budgeting for SP services in future, the full strategic needs assessment promised in the 2015 fundamental review is expedited and completed in 2019. This will help allow SP services to be delivered in a way that most complements the modernisation of our health and social care system and deliver on other agreed Departmental Strategies