

## Housing Related Support Strategy Consultation

Date: 22 April 2013

### Summary of Paper

The Housing Related Support Strategy, presently being consulted upon, will be operational for the period 2012 to 2015. The strategy aims to bring together a programme that will ensure the implementation of high quality support services for people who need them, in Northern Ireland. The strategy is based around cross cutting policy themes and the provision of housing related support services for specific client groups such as homelessness, older people, learning disabilities and mental health and physical and sensory disability. The strategy contains key actions for the delivery of services for these client groups.

The strategy seeks to build on the main actions and recommendations related to the evaluation of the impact of the Supporting People Policy and Administration (2009). The main impacts of the evaluation for the Housing Association sector are:

- Eligible / ineligible costs for Supporting People grant (June 2012)
- Consideration of the feasibility for transferring Supporting People funding to DHSSPS (discussions underway)

**NIFHA strongly opposes this as we believe that the important housing support service role will diminish if the emphasis is placed more on care**

- Phasing out of SNMA within the CSR Period

**NIFHA strongly opposes this as we believe SNMA assists our members to provide essential services to the most vulnerable people in our society.**

- Development of a regulatory framework for Supporting People services (discussions underway)

**NIFHA wants to see a Regulatory Framework that is proportionate, fair and is based on the needs of the service users.**

- Implementation of new Commissioning Body structures

**NIFHA welcomes the changes to the Commissioning Body Structures and we suggests that a more collaborative and consistent commissioning approach is needed for supported housing and that this should include guaranteed revenue funding to support the day to day running of schemes.**

The Supporting People budget for 2012/13 is £66.4m and additional funding of £94m has been made to provide a supported housing development programme of 800 – 850 units over the next 3 years.

## **Cross Cutting Policy Themes**

### **Strategic planning, commissioning and the development of services**

- Commission new services to deliver against the Bamford priorities – resettlement of people from long stay hospitals

**NIFHA welcomes this as we believe that where it is possible people should live in a home environment**

### **Drive for efficiency and value for money**

- Consideration of the development of a procurement or selection process in respect of funding of housing support services

**NIFHA would like to see how this process and the policies that underpin it would work. We hope that that high quality services would not be lost in the in the drive to reduce costs.**

### **Regulation and Inspection**

- Development of a regulatory framework for Supporting People Services

**NIFHA wants to see a Regulatory Framework that is proportionate, fair and based on the needs of the service users.**

### **Personalisation**

- The introduction of personal budgets and personalisation is being driven by Health and Social Care

**NIFHA believes that this will have implications for the provision and commissioning of housing related support services. Care will be needed to ensure that services are chosen and delivered effectively.**

### **Client Group Specific Housing Related Support Services**

#### **Homelessness Services**

Homelessness accounts for one third of the Supporting People budget for 2012/13 i.e. £26.59m. The majority of homelessness services are delivered by the voluntary and community sector, including housing associations. The strategy focuses on Tenancy Sustainment, Early Intervention and Prevention of

Homelessness and supporting people to move on from the services through the development of effective pathways. The strategy also targets specific groups of homeless people such as those people suffering domestic violence and abuse, people with alcohol and substance abuse, people leaving the criminal justice system and young people leaving care.

There are a number of key actions targeted for each of the specific client groups:

### **Domestic violence and abuse**

- Interagency working to enable people to remain in their own home
- Delivery of support services – ensure refuge accommodation is fit for the purpose

### **Alcohol and substance dependency**

- Interagency working to ensure the needs of the individual are met
- Development of strategies for rough sleepers

### **Services for people leaving the criminal justice system**

- Challenges around offenders needing increased supervision
- Accommodation for sex offenders
- Supported accommodation for women offenders
- Services provided through floating support

### **Services for young people and people leaving care**

- Remodelling existing services to make them accessible to young people
- Greater use of supported lodgings
- Develop service models to respond to the needs of young offenders aged 16 & 17

### **Older People Services**

The total budgeted spend provision for older people's services in 2012/13 is £8.93m. The majority of services in this client group are provided by housing associations, although some are provided by the voluntary sector and Health and Social Care Trusts. There are a number of strategic drivers for this specific group that will determine which services and how the services will be provided over the lifetime of the strategy. These are mainly, changing demographics and an aging population, an increasing number of people with dementia, maintaining independence, the role of sheltered housing and the Home Improvement Agency and the emergence of new assistive technology. The strategy states that NIHE will work to ensure that there are a range of service models that enable older people to live independently in tenure of their choice.

There are a number of key actions targeted for each identified service area:

- Development of a range of service models to ensure a balance between reactive and preventative services
- Provide appropriate models of support for people with mental health issues and dementia
- Review the use of sheltered housing – **Review carried out by NIHE**
- Review the role of the Home Improvement Agency and emerging assistive technology – **Review carried out by NIHE – report not yet published**

## **Learning Disability or Mental Health Services**

The total budgeted spend provision for existing learning disabilities and mental health services is £10.49m for 2012/13 and the majority of the services are provided by the voluntary and community sector. Improving mental health services in Northern Ireland is a key government priority, research has shown that integrated care planning and housing related support will deliver improved recovery outcomes and that the development of sustainable relationships between health and social care and housing is needed to achieve the Bamford vision.

There are a number of key actions targeted for each identified service area:

- Commission housing in the community to allow for resettlement of long stay patients
- Development of accommodation options
- Make best use of supported accommodation – services to support recovery
- Extend the range and choice of community based housing options
- Develop floating support schemes

The benefits of housing related support are widely recognised and this strategy seeks to ensure that housing related support services are commissioned and delivered to maximise the available funding. NIFHA suggests that a more collaborative and consistent commissioning approach is needed for supported housing and that this should include guaranteed revenue funding to support the day to day running of schemes.

We welcome the commitment to develop a more joined-up approach with the DHSSPS and make the best use of available budgets and professional expertise to support people to live independently. We agree that a holistic approach through good partnership working between housing associations and the Health and Social Care Trusts has the potential to deliver cost efficiencies and a better quality of life for clients. It is for this reason that NIFHA believes that Supporting People and other vital funding streams must be protected to ensure that vulnerable people can have independent, dignified lives.

For further information please contact:

**Maire Kerr**

Housing Policy and Research Manager

T: 028 9089 7695 E: [MKerr@nifha.org](mailto:MKerr@nifha.org)