

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

29 September 2006

SUPPORTING PEOPLE

Report by County Manager, Supporting People, Hampshire County Council

RECOMMENDATION

That Members note that the Supporting People inspection will require the co-operation of County and District Councils in Hampshire.

THE SUPPORTING PEOPLE AUDIT INSPECTION

1. Supporting People is a government funded programme ensuring housing related support services are provided to vulnerable people. In Hampshire the Supporting People grant is £31 million, providing services for nearly 20,000 people. The majority of services users are older people in sheltered housing, where Supporting People funds warden services. Other services include homelessness, domestic violence, learning disability services, and support services for offenders.
2. Hampshire County Council administers the programme, but the strategic management is through an inter agency County Core Group (CCG). The CCG includes representatives of the County Council, Hampshire's eleven District Councils, as well as the Health Service and Probation. New Forest District Council is represented by Dave Yates who leads on Supporting People for the Chief Executives' Group.
3. On 4 December the Audit Commission will begin the inspection of the Hampshire Supporting People programme. The inspection will assess the effectiveness of the County Council's management of the programme as well as the broader partnership. It will look at the quality of service and prospects for improvement through 'Key Lines Of Enquiry'.

The relevant Key Lines of Enquiry are :

- Governance & partnerships
- Grant compliance, strategy & needs
- Delivery arrangements
- Commissioning & performance
- Value for Money
- Service user involvement
- Access to services and information
- Diversity
- Outcomes for service users.

WHAT THE INSPECTION INVOLVES

4. The inspection team will consist of a principal inspector, housing inspectors, a tenant inspection adviser, representatives from the Commission for Social Care Inspection and the Probation Inspectorate.
5. The inspectors are likely to interview elected members, for instance the Leader of the County Council, Executive Member for Social Care; Director of Adult Services and other key stakeholders, including District Councils.
6. In their five days 'on site' inspectors will conduct interviews with providers, service users, carers, key staff in other partner agencies and it is expected that inspectors will visit a range of services.
7. In advance of the visit reality checks and "mystery shopping" will be undertaken to examine the range of information available.

TIMETABLE

8. Between now and 4 December a great deal of work will be taking place, including gathering together a range of documents and material to inform the inspectors about Hampshire and how the programme operates.

IMPACT OF THE REPORT

9. The resulting judgement will feed into the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process for Hampshire County Council and will impact upon District (and Health and Probation) Audit inspections as part of the review of their partnership work. Positive feedback for Supporting People will provide excellent evidence in this regard.

WORK TO DATE

10. A project plan is in place and the Supporting People team is concentrating on the following areas:

Governance and partnerships

11. It is essential that all partners are engaged, All of the key partners are required to play a full and effective part in the governance of the programme – Health, Probation, the Administering Local Authority and District Councils should consistently attend the County Core Group with senior representation.
12. Elected members are expected to be well informed and able to demonstrate their involvement. There should be evidence of joint decision making in relation to strategy, wider strategic links, joint commissioning and performance management.

Strategic Priorities

13. Inspectors will require partnership working to be evidenced through shared agreed targets and monitored outcomes across services for vulnerable people.
14. The County Core Group has agreed a detailed five year strategy. The Supporting People team can demonstrate that this is being implemented through the agreed strategic reviews that are taking place in homeless and disability services.

Needs mapping

15. This is being addressed through information received from referral agencies and the Placement Panels that exist in most parts of Hampshire, building on research that has been commissioned by the Supporting People team.

Access to Services and information

16. An action plan has been drawn up and is in hand to include the Supporting People Hub Directory information for service users and an up-dated website. Support in communicating these developments will be appreciated.

Self Assessment

17. A detailed self assessment will be submitted to the Inspectors for 9 October. This Assessment will be shared with key stakeholders.

THE ROLE OF HIOW

18. In December 2000 HIOW received a report on options for implementing the programme and agreed to a Joint County-District structure. Funding had been made available from central government for the County and the District Councils separately. That meeting agreed to pool all implementation funding, enabling the creation of one Hampshire Supporting People team. Hampshire was the first area to adopt this collaborative approach. Since then HIOW has received regular reports on progress.
19. Funding for the Unitary Authorities is separate but there is close collaboration via a Cross Authority Group.

CONCLUSIONS

20. Based on the work already carried out the Hampshire Supporting team feels confident that the report will reflect positively on the achievements of the Supporting People partnership. The three years since the programme was implemented have seen a steady reduction in the Hampshire grant from central government. Nevertheless quality indicators have improved and capacity has slightly increased.

21. It is necessary however to do all that is possible to ensure that the inspection is a success. Members of HIOW may consider that a further briefing on the aims and progress of the programme would be of benefit. If so the Supporting People team, would be very happy to set up a short briefing session in November.

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Supporting People report/word