



Cornwall Supporting People

**Response to Select Committee
Inquiry call for evidence**

Date 08/05/09

Department of Adult Care & Support

Cornwall Supporting People

Response to Select Committee Inquiry Call for Evidence

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1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The Supporting People (SP) programme has delivered tangible value within Cornwall, specifically relating to increased efficiencies, and increase in the number of vulnerable people supported, and a reduction in the need to access more costly crisis interventions.
- 1.2 Cornwall's Supporting People team believe that the government's national strategy has largely been delivered successfully, adding real value to the most vulnerable people in our society.
- 1.3 The Supporting People team has embedded the needs of service users at the heart of its programme through its service reviews and communications. Providers are better equipped to engage with service user requirements as a result of the programme, and the commissioning undertaken in Cornwall is based on real needs evidence, with strong levels of service user engagement.
- 1.4 The value of the Voluntary and Community Sector cannot be underestimated. The Supporting People programme has ensured close partnership working which has added tangible benefits and value to service users as well as the voluntary sector agencies themselves.
- 1.5 Cornwall has had to meet specific challenges following the change to a unitary authority from a two tier system on 1st April 2009. This has added additional pressure to the local team, however has also offered opportunities to streamline decision making processes. Cornwall has prioritised Supporting People and the needs of vulnerable adults in a number of its Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets which give added credence to the value of the preventative work undertaken.
- 1.6 While it is evident that bureaucracy has not diminished since the start of the programme, it is also true that providers value the efficiencies that the SP programme framework has put on them. While there are some difficulties with the level of paperwork and so on, provider agencies in Cornwall have made it clear that they would not wish to remove the Quality Assessment Framework and associated reporting, as it adds real value to their service.

1.7 The removal of the ring fence offers both opportunities and risks. Some of the core messages received by the Cornwall SP team when discussing this with providers and stakeholders were that government could support the local programmes by putting in place the following:

- Remove the national grant conditions and allow local ones to be put in place
- Preserve the SP administration grant
- Mandate that SP sits on the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to ensure a local voice at the highest level
- Develop a national framework for commissioning preventative services
- Develop a national communication strategy on the value of preventative services

2.0 Introduction

2.1 The local context

2.1.1 With a resident population of circa 540,000, Cornwall is a diverse rural County with a patchwork of areas with relative affluence and pockets of marked overall deprivation, notably in West Cornwall but also in the Mid-Cornwall area. Like most rural counties Cornwall lacks frequent and effective transport services and this can present significant challenges. Based upon these estimates the population will grow from 540,000 currently to circa 640,000 by 2028. The most marked rise is likely to be in the 60 plus age group and particularly for those aged over 75.

2.1.2 The SP grant allocation for SP in Cornwall for 2009 / 10 is £14,204,036 and the allocation will remain the same for 2010/11.

2.1.3 Putting People First is the driving force behind the personalisation agenda. Supporting People are the driving force for delivering the preventative agenda to vulnerable people across a range of partners.

2.1.4 The table below gives some core statistics around the services provided in Cornwall that are directly funded by Supporting People. This clearly shows in the six years since the programme started there have been significant efficiencies made, at the same time as an increase in the number of vulnerable people receiving service provision.

SP Service provision in Cornwall

Description	2003/04	2008/09
Number of Supported Accommodation Units in Cornwall	No figures available	6368
Number of People Supported by Floating Support	No figures available	1434
Number of Services funded	510	312
Number of Service Providers	134	66
Total number of Service Users accessing SP funded services	9600	10653

2.1.5 It should also be noted that in 2003/04 there was no service provision in the county for people with HIV and Aids, Gypsy & Travellers, Owner Occupiers (other than through Home Improvement Agencies) and no floating support for people with physical and sensory impairment. Services are now available for all of these groups.

2.1.6 Specific examples of where Supporting People commissioned services have made a tangible difference to people's lives in Cornwall are included in appendix C.

2.2 Aims and Objectives for the Supporting People programme in Cornwall

2.2.1 The mission statement for Supporting People is to help vulnerable people from across the whole community to remain as independent as possible by providing a range of housing related support services, as part of a comprehensive range of publicly funded services.

2.2.2 The Supporting People Team in Cornwall commissioned the revision of their 5 year strategy in 2007/8. Following an extensive needs assessment, this strategy highlighted 5 key strategic priorities for the next five years, which were approved by the Commissioning Body in August 2008.

2.2.3 The five Strategic Priorities for the Supporting People Programme in Cornwall are:

- Older People
- People with a learning disability
- Provision of an Outreach Service, leading to a Gateway
- Ensuring an Appropriate Service Provision through sector service reviews
- Move-On for all short term Accommodation Based services

It should be noted that these are not listed in any order of priority – they all have equal weight and importance.

2.2.4 The overall principles of these strategic priorities are that people will be able to access services they need in an easy, fair and equitable way. The services they receive while needing help will be provided to a high standard and in line with national best practice. They will be able to move out of supported service provision and into independent living in a planned and sustainable way in line with their individual needs. The provision of services for older people and for people with learning disabilities are to address an urgent need in Cornwall to develop services for these client groups. Once this initial investment has been completed, these client groups will then take equal weight and importance with all other client groups in how they move through our services.

2.2.5 The people who benefit from SP services often face a range of problems. SP ensures that housing related support fits in alongside the other services they get. Funded services have a goal of:

- Reducing and preventing homelessness
- Increasing choice
- Reducing levels of offending
- Relieving the problem of bed blocking in hospitals
- Avoiding the need for people to move in to residential care
- Avoiding deterioration in peoples' mental health
- Tackling substance misuse
- Enabling people to live independently for longer

3.0 Delivery of the National Supporting People Strategy

3.1 Keeping people that need services at the heart of the programme

3.1.1 Supporting People Team

3.1.1.1 One of the most positive elements of the Supporting People programme has been the emphasis on service user focus and engagement.

3.1.1.2 Service users are involved in service reviews and their views are heard. Service user feedback and influence, has directed service delivery improvement.

- 3.1.1.3 Service Users in Cornwall are empowered to raise concerns and complaints about their service direct to the Supporting People Team.
- 3.1.1.4 Cornwall's Supporting People quarterly newsletter includes pages specifically aimed at service users. This allows service users to remain in contact with the programme as a whole, and also to share information and stories with other service users.

3.1.2 Providers

- 3.1.2.1 Providers have stated that the support planning process that the Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) provides and the attainment of higher level achievement has ensured greater service user involvement and provider accountability.
- 3.1.2.2 Service contracts require a higher performance level against the QAF for core objective 1.4: protection from abuse, this has improved safeguarding of vulnerable adults and has ensured that the housing related support sector is embedded in the multi agency culture.

3.1.3 Commissioning

- 3.1.3.1 Commissioning is based on needs evidence. We have agreed commissioning priorities that deliver the recommendations of the revised 5 year strategy. These recommendations support the preventative agenda and link very closely to the work carried out by other agencies such as Adult Care and Support, Health and Probation.
- 3.1.3.2 Commissioned services are responsive to need and their development has not been limited by local political priorities. We have successfully commissioned services for some of societies most excluded groups of people including prolific offenders, gypsies, travellers and migrant workers. The 'independence' of the ring fenced grant has enabled us to remain focussed on responding to local need.

- 3.1.3.3 In 2007, Cornwall was chosen to run the Value Improvement Project (VIP). This has enabled us to commission wider floating support services that are now (following a re-commissioning exercise) responding well to the needs of service users with complex needs. Floating support offers a preventative approach to people with low level needs, prevents homelessness providing a cost benefit to the public purse. As part of the VIP service users emphasised the need for out of hours support for a range of vulnerable client groups. This was therefore included in the specification for the service.
- 3.1.3.4 Service users have improved access to floating support services, meaning a more positive transition into independent living, and therefore better outcomes. The SP programme through partnership working has improved the links between accommodation based services and floating support. Information sharing protocols and handovers between services have also improved outcomes for services, and therefore for service users.
- 3.1.3.5 The SP Programme has enabled us to challenge and change the current delivery models of older people services. We have set up an Independent Living Service pilot that is examining and changing outmoded older persons sheltered services. The pilot follows on from the guidance the National Housing Strategy for an Ageing Society. The aim of the pilot is to promote change within the sector providing flexible needs led services that are responsive to service user need and will promote personalisation, a range of housing and tenure neutral support options for older people and the development of Extra Care Housing in Cornwall. The overall aim of the project is to meet the challenge of demographic change in the County.
- 3.1.3.6 The Supporting People team is working with Adult Care and Support to develop specialist support service for people with Learning Disabilities through Individual Budgets, thereby beginning the implementation of the personalisation agenda. Lessons learnt from this pilot will be used to improve processes for other client groups in time.

3.2 Enhancing partnership with the Third Sector (Voluntary and Community Sector)

- 3.2.1 As a result of the SP programme, the Voluntary and Community Sector has been professionalised and staff have better benefits, working conditions and better access to training. SP have been able to assist by facilitating training and funding some specialist training. SP have also, in partnership with the local College, brought a professional support worker qualification into Cornwall.
- 3.2.2 It should be recognised that tendering can be a barrier to partnership with the Voluntary and Community Sector. However as part of the VIP Supporting People were able to provide networking opportunities and support all interested parties to prepare their tender.
- 3.2.3 Raised awareness of the Voluntary and Community Sector in local government and the implementation of the Compact has provided the Voluntary and Community Sector with more opportunities to joint work.
- 3.2.4 The Voluntary & Community Sector has been actively encouraged to work a full cost recovery model, however this has been difficult to implement due to grant level restrictions.
- 3.2.5 Cornwall's SP strategy acknowledges the value of small and Voluntary and Community Sector providers.
- 3.2.6 The range of services offered by the Voluntary and Community Sector provides greater choice to service users.
- 3.2.7 As a result of the SP programme, there is significantly more engagement and transparency between Voluntary and Community Sector providers than there was previously.
- 3.2.8 The Providers Fora in Cornwall are inclusive of all sectors with good models of collaboration. The Voluntary and Community Sector in particular have a strong voice and high profile roles within Provider Fora within Cornwall (e.g. Chair of Forum) enabling them to influence policy/strategy etc.
- 3.2.9 A Risk Information Sharing Protocol has been developed in conjunction with the Voluntary and Community Sector and welcomed by all providers regardless of sector.

3.2.10 The programme has made the Voluntary and Community Sector open to and more comfortable with scrutiny – the training needs audit is fully engaged and open to comparison to statutory and private sector.

3.3 Delivering in the new local government landscape

3.3.1 Cornwall will continue to use the Quality Assessment Framework, in assessing service standards. We have found that the QAF has raised standards and keeps service users at the centre of the support service.

3.3.2 Local Government Reorganisation

3.3.2.1 Cornwall has its own specific challenges due to local government reorganisation, and the change on 1st April 2009 to become a unitary authority, with the amalgamation of the county council and the six district councils in Cornwall.

3.3.2.2 Until 31st March 2009, the Commissioning Body membership comprised six district councils (Housing), the county council (Adult Social Care), the local primary care trust, and the local probation area. Since 1st April 2009 when the district and county councils merged to become a single unitary authority, the membership comprises Cornwall Council's Housing and Adult Care & Support departments, the local primary care trust, and local probation area.

3.3.3 Governance Structures

3.3.3.1 As a result of the changes in local government in April 2009, the Supporting People team have taken the opportunity in the changing landscape to redesign the SP governance structures.

3.3.3.2 In conjunction with the new Cornwall Council we have developed a new governance structure. This means that the Commissioning Body now reports into Cornwall's Local Strategic Partnership, to ensure effective links with key decision makers in the county, and to ensure that the governance arrangements for the SP programme remain clear and up to date

3.3.3.3 A copy of the new governance structure can be found at appendix A.

3.3.4 Local Area Agreement

- 3.3.4.1 The Supporting People team were key contributors to the Sustainable Community Strategy for Cornwall, published in 2008. This led to the development of a specific issues paper around the needs of Vulnerable Adults in the county being written to inform the final strategy.
- 3.3.4.2 Cornwall's Local Area Agreement includes National Indicator 141¹ as a designated target. National Indicator 142² is also included as a local target, giving high profile to the Supporting People programme in Cornwall.
- 3.3.4.3 In addition, there are another 23 of the National Indicator set which have been allocated as either designated or local priorities within Cornwall's Local Area Agreement, on which the Supporting People programme will have a positive impact.
- 3.3.4.4 A list of the designated and local indicators included within Cornwall's LAA for vulnerable adults is included in appendix B.

3.4 Increasing efficiency and reducing bureaucracy

- 3.4.1 Providers have stated that services are more efficient due to the requirements of and the structure the QAF provides. Use of the QAF and Outcomes Framework provides robust monitoring and provides evidence of need.
- 3.4.2 Bureaucracy levels are still high detracting from front line delivery, however, providers do not want to reduce monitoring levels or service reviews. Struggles with bureaucracy seem to stem from Provider organisational infrastructure and systems rather than an onerous reporting framework.
- 3.4.3 Reporting is especially difficult for services that are jointly commissioned – there is no single reporting structure to cover all commissioners and providers often feel there is duplication in the paperwork.

¹ NI141 – Percentage of vulnerable people achieving independent living

² NI142 – Percentage of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living

3.4.4 Providers feel that paperwork can detract from the amount of front line service delivery and that in some instances the amount of paperwork can lead to a high staff turnover. In particular this is true where providers find that support staff who are excellent at support work may have poor administrative skills. This adds stress to the staff, increasing turnover.

3.4.5 It can be difficult for the Voluntary and Community Sector to engage at the level they wish to. This is due to a lack of funding for back-office functions. Where Supporting People grant has funded the front line support staff, there has been no additional funding available to provide administrative support, management etc. In small charitable organisations it can be difficult to find the extra resources available to provide these functions, meaning front line staff are diverted into carrying out these rather than specialist administrative / office staff.

3.4.6 Locally Police have been shadowing support workers. This has led to a much better understanding between both parties and has led to improved outcomes for service users. This has also led to increased professional respect between the parties.

4.0 Removal of Ring Fence

4.1 There have been no significant changes in Cornwall at this early stage following the ring fence removal. Despite this, anxiety across the whole SP programme has increased due to concerns that the removal of ring fencing will result in service cuts as funds are diverted to other priorities in the county.

4.2 33% of the Area Based Grant in Cornwall will be made up of previously ring fenced SP grant. This leads to uncertainty about future funding decisions.

4.3 Concerns over removal of ring fence

4.3.1 Some of the following concerns have been raised regarding the removal of the ring fence in Cornwall:

- Competition for SP grant may be vast and politically motivated when it is within the Area Based Grant. The removal of the ring fence will expose the SP grant to other priorities of the LSP.

- Loss of SP teams and the experience they hold is a real risk. In particular this could jeopardise the relationship between SP teams and providers. SP teams and providers have worked hard over the last 6 years to add real value and trust between commissioners and providers.
- Despite the work to raise the profile, there remains insufficient profile and understanding at both national and local level for the SP programme to guarantee the safeguarding of SP services
- The survival of small providers who provide niche services
- Lack of financial security for larger organisations will reduce willingness to invest in the development of new services
- The direction of the SP programme may be driven by the department in which it is located and their priorities, rather than those of identified need. This may lead to the demise of the partnership and the working relationships established in the county.
- There is a potential threat in the lack of understanding and knowledge about SP and the long term value of preventative services. Local decision makers may not recognise the value of preventative services when higher profile is given to crisis services.
- Without the ring fence decision making will become a political decision and is more exposed to NIMBY-ism (Not In My Back Yard).
- Without a robust independent governance structure, funding could be reduced for non voting groups. This could politicise the support delivery for vulnerable people – in turn jeopardising the needs based process, and further marginalise less popular groups.
- The current economic climate means a likely increase in the client base as more people become at risk of homelessness and require support. This poses a threat at a time when there is less security in funding and no guarantee of longer term funding.

4.3.2 Some of these risks could be minimised by government taking some or all of the following actions:

- Provide a separate administration grant to allow the Local Authority to continue investing in a specific SP team to support the SP programme with a raised profile.
- Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) needs to remain focussed on vulnerable people in future years – not just in the first year after the removal of the ring fence
- Reinstatement of the ring fence with removal, or increased flexibility, of grant conditions. Enable SP Teams to develop local grant conditions
- Mandated SP representation at the LSP
- Clear guidance from Communities & Local Government for the local Commissioning Body on its role
- Continue the development of a national framework for service commissioning and decommissioning

4.4 Opportunities

4.4.1 It is also recognised that the removal of the ring-fence can offer opportunities and flexibility in the delivery of the objectives of the national strategy. These include:

- The ability to work in different ways and using innovative models
- The ease of joint commissioning is increased, leading to greater efficiencies with public spending
- Removal of grant conditions is welcomed as this increases perceived flexibility to achieve the benefits without risks to the sector.
- The possibility of securing extra funding to preventative services from the LSP
- The joint delivery of services

- Developing own local performance framework
- The development of Service User focussed delivery models, particularly in line with the personalisation agenda
- The option to build evidence for 'extra' provision outside of the current framework – the current system compartmentalises clients and services e.g. responsive holistic services delivered regardless of the service user's primary need.

The development of local flexibilities in service development – for example flexibility in contracting.

4.4.2 It should be noted, however, that many of these opportunities could be delivered simply through the removal or relaxation of the grant conditions, without the added risk to funding of the removal of the ring-fence.

Prepared by:

Supporting People Team

Cornwall Council

8 May 2009

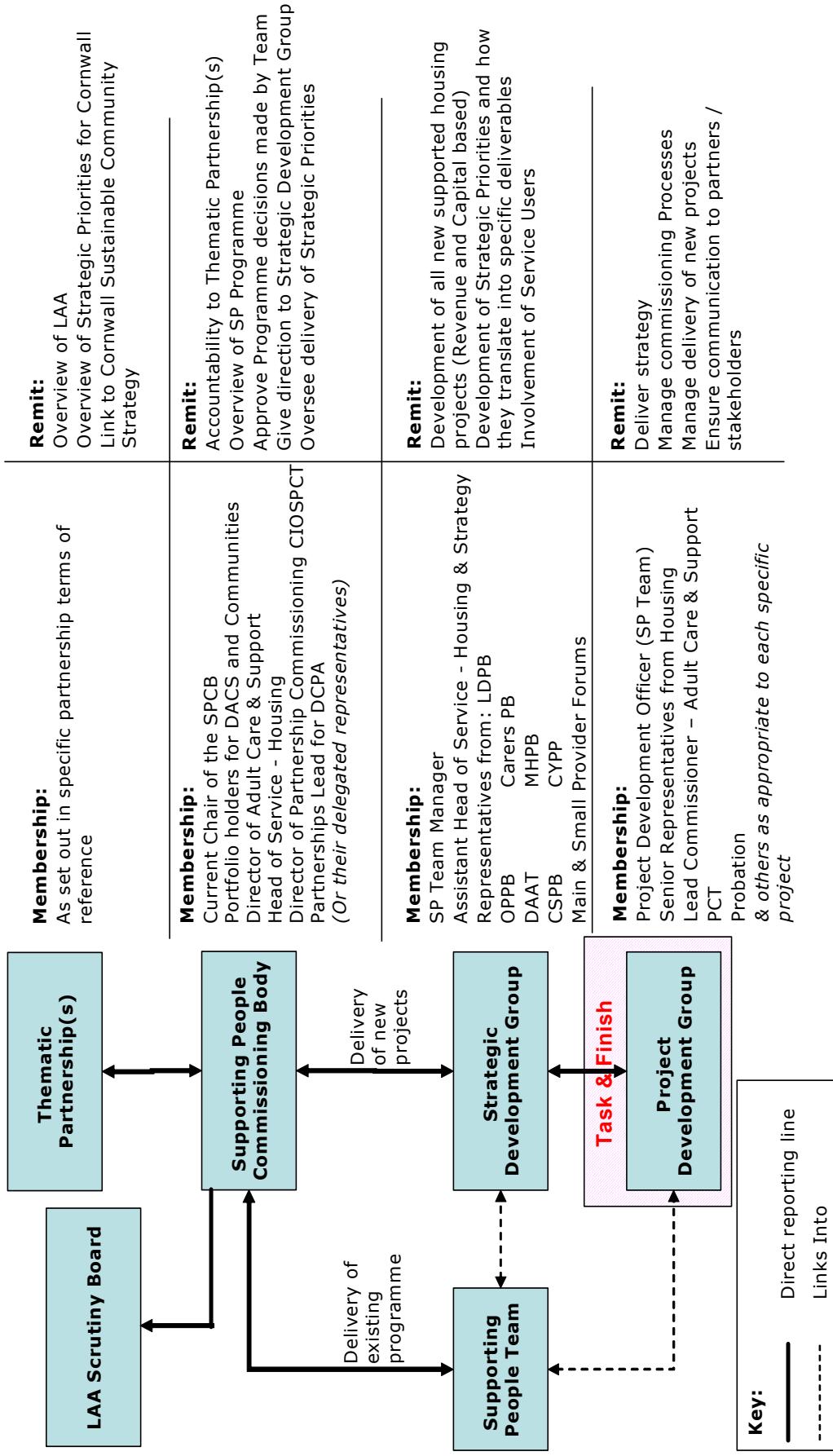
Cornwall's Supporting People team would like to thank their providers, partners and stakeholders for their valuable contributions to this response.

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Appendix A

Supporting People Governance Structure



Cornwall Supporting People

Response to Select Committee Inquiry Call for Evidence
08 May 2009

Appendix A

Appendix B

National Indicators in Cornwall's LAA with a specific impact on Vulnerable Adults

Designated / Local	NI	Description
Designated	18	Adult re-offending rates for those under probation supervision
Designated	26	Specialist support to victims of a serious sexual assault
Designated	39	Alcohol-harm related hospital admission rates
Designated	112	Under 18 conception rate
Designated	116	Proportion of children in poverty
Designated	117	16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET)
Designated	125	Achieving independence for older people through rehabilitation / intermediate care
Designated	130	Social Care clients receiving self-directed support
Designated	135	Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice and information
Designated	141	Percentage of vulnerable people achieving independent living
Designated	145	Adults with Learning Disabilities in settled accommodation
Designated	146	Adults with Learning Disabilities in employment
Designated	153	Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods
Designated	156	Number of households living in temporary accommodation
Designated	187	Tackling fuel poverty
Local	13	Migrant's English Language skills and knowledge
Local	19	Rate of proven reoffending by young offenders
Local	32	Repeat incidents of domestic violence
Local	40	Drug users in effective treatment
Local	45	Young offenders engagement in suitable education, employment or training
Local	46	Young offenders access to suitable accommodation
Local	142	Percentage of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living
Local	143	Offenders under Probation supervision living in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their licence
Local	144	Offenders under Probation supervision in employment at the end of their licence
Local	148	Care leavers in employment, education or training

Case study 1

Overview of Service User History	The client was referred by probation. He was abusing drugs at the time and had a recent history of self-harm. He also has bipolar disorder. During assessment he came across very well. He was sofa surfing and was supported to move within a week. In his first week in supported accommodation, he cut his wrists and began to abuse his prescription drugs.
Service delivered by Provider	He was supported in a residential setting through maintaining his tenancy, ensuring he was receiving the correct benefits and to engage with agencies surrounding his drug use, mental health issues and offending. The provider is meeting with Shelter to facilitate partner agency support.
Outcome for Service User Housing Education Training Employment etc	He has just been awarded a council property and has also successfully completed 2 interviews for a college course which he starts in September. Through this, he has greater independence and confidence and now has a home that he can have access to his son (as children are not allowed at the supported accommodation he lived at).
Service Users current situation	He has just received his Community Care Grant and is furnishing his new home. He is in liaison with Pathways who are sorting out the funding for his college course. His mental health issues are stable, as is his drug use.
Estimate of the number and type of 'statutory' interventions avoided due to support.	Prison/arrest may have been avoided as the client was housed in stable accommodation. Admission to hospital due to mental health issues / self harm has been avoided. Treatment for drug abuse has been avoided as he has stabilised without the need for this. Homelessness avoided.

Appendix C

Case Study 2

Overview of Service User History	The client grew up in severely dysfunctional family – all children were sexually abused and went in and out of care. Siblings have a history of drug abuse, mental health issues, self harming and sex working. The client has been in prison on a number of occasions as have many other members of the family. The client also has many complex health issues including heart problems, severe hearing loss, epilepsy, learning disability, severe arthritis. The client cannot read or write. On assessment of this client this person was living in a freezing cold house with no money for heating. There was no food in the house and the dog was using the house to urinate and defecate.
Service delivered by Provider	The provider helped this client downsize into a more appropriate property. Supported in managing finances. Applied for a Community Care Grant for a cooker which was successful. Applied to Glasspool Charity for a new washing machine which was successful. Re-homed the dog. Got this client a bus pass and supported this person in getting up to date hearing tests and new hearing aids (the previous ones had been destroyed by the dog). Made a referral to Link into Learning to learn to read and write. A referral was made to social services and a social worker has now been assigned. A medical advocate is in place and providing a college place.
Outcome for Service User Housing Education Training Employment etc	The client is now living in a more manageable property. Is improving reading and writing skills as he has maintained the placement at Link into Learning. Is getting about more now that the bus pass is in place. Is preparing for college with support from the Department for Adult Care & Support. Is managing finances better – with support.
Service Users current situation	The client has a learning disability and will need on-going support which will now be provided as the referral to DASC was successful. This client fully engages with services. This client is now writing their own file notes – with support and would like to be more involved in service user opportunities.
Estimate of the number and type of 'statutory' interventions avoided due to support.	Homelessness / Prison / Hospital Admission / physical or mental ill health due to property condition.

Case Study 3

Overview of Service User History	The client was in an abusive relationship, had a young child (2 years old) and wanted to leave the relationship. She had very low self-esteem and was experiencing depression. Also feeling isolated within the community due to having moved from Ghana 3 years ago and feeling the cultural differences. Was dependent on partner for money having no separate income.
Service delivered by Provider	Support to move to independent accommodation and set up tenancy, services, bills etc and leave the relationship safely – involved domestic violence agencies and police. Support to claim benefits (Income Support, Child benefit and Child tax credit) Support to access legal aid due to child custody and divorce issues. Referral to the Black and Ethnic minority service at Pentreath.
Outcome for Service User Housing Education Training Employment etc	The client is now settled in a 2 bedroom private rental property in Penzance with her son and managing her tenancy independently. She intends to apply to the police and wants to work as a Police Community Support Officer. In receipt of full benefit entitlement and has built up a strong social network in Penzance and also has much higher self-esteem. Resolved child custody issues through court and divorce has gone through.
Service Users current situation	Continuing to maintain tenancy and waiting for a vacancy to arise as a PCSO. Works part-time as a play worker in a children's centre.
Estimate of the number and type of 'statutory' interventions avoided due to support.	Homelessness Ongoing domestic abuse Hospital admission

Case Study 4

Overview of Service User History	The client had a family abuse background and was in foster care for the majority of his childhood. As an adult / teenager he spent three years rough sleeping, plus some stays in a small flat with a large number of other young people and sofa surfing on occasion. He had poor literacy levels and was barely able to read.
Service delivered by Provider	He entered the supported accommodation project. His 16 year old girlfriend was pregnant. He was living a chaotic lifestyle with a combination of falling back into negative behaviour patterns of bad money management and nearly losing his accommodation due to not fulfilling responsibilities.
Outcome for Service User Housing Education Training Employment etc	He is due to successfully move on in one week's time. He has accommodation arranged for this. He can now successfully cook healthy meals, manage his money and reliably attend appointments. His literacy has improved - he is able to read letters and other information for himself. He has learned to make mature decisions for himself and to keep appointments and commitments.
Service Users current situation	The client is due to move out of supported accommodation and into independent living in one week's time. It is anticipated that this will be fully successful.
Estimate of the number and type of 'statutory' interventions avoided due to support.	The client did not have the ability to maintain a tenancy, and without support would have been evicted from accommodation, meaning he was street homeless again.

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