SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN WALES

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What is Supporting People?

The Supporting People programme began across the UK in 2003 to provide housing-related support (HRS) services. HRS aims to ‘help vulnerable people develop or maintain the skills and confidence necessary to live as independently as possible. It has housing, and preventing homelessness or people living in inappropriate institutional settings, at its core’.

HRS is enabling, ‘doing with’ as distinct from ‘doing for’. Services should be part of a package, based on a written support plan that is agreed with the service user.

Supporting People funds services such as homelessness hostels, floating support, sheltered housing, domestic abuse refuges, community alarm services, group homes and supported housing schemes.

The Welsh Government invests over £136 million in the Supporting People Programme annually. It supports more than 56,000 people each year to live as independently as they can.

Different arrangements were put in place in England and the three devolved nations of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. In 2003 Supporting People in Wales brought together seven distinct housing streams under a single programme with two types of grant.

Supporting People in Wales is managed by the Welsh Government. Two separate grants were created in 2003; Supporting People Grant (SPG) administered via Local Authorities and Supporting People Revenue Grant (SPRG) directly administered by Welsh Government to accredited support providers (ASPs).

The Aylward Review 2010

In 2010 Welsh Government commissioned Sir Mansel Aylward to undertake a review of the SP programme in Wales to look at funding distribution, value for money of services, increasing the level of partnership working and improving consistency in administration of the programme.

In total 25 recommendations were made to improve the programme in the Aylward Report; including the creation of a single grant within a revised national governance structure.

Three work-streams, reporting to a National Advisory Board, undertook the implementation of the review recommendations. The work-streams were convened under three themes; Finance, Governance and Quality.
Supporting People in Wales 2012/13 (Transitional Arrangements)

In 2012 the Welsh Government published the new arrangements for the programme within the ‘Supporting People Programme Grant Guidance (Wales)’.

This resulted in the creation of a new Supporting People grant called Supporting People Programme Grant (SPPG). This grant is protected through a process called ring-fencing, to provide housing-related support services in Wales. National support service outcomes were agreed and a new governance structure was put in place for a transitional period beginning in 2012.

A set of high level principles and benefits, to underpin the programme were agreed as:

- Improving services and outcomes to the end user.
- Ensuring probity, accountability, transparency and scrutiny.
- Operating on the basis of equality, collaboration and co-production.
- Providing strategic oversight and direction in line with national, regional and local strategy and SP Commissioning plans.
- Being underpinned by and complying with robust and enforceable grant conditions.

The new national structure sees the creation of six Regional Collaborative Committees (RCCs) that support a National Advisory Board (SPNAB).
The Supporting People National Advisory Board (SPNAB)

The SPNAB is chaired by the Welsh Government Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage and will focus on guiding the strategic direction of the programme. It will meet twice a year.

Members include representatives from Community Housing Cymru (CHC), Cymorth Cymru, Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS), All Wales Chief Housing Officers Panel (AWCHOP), Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), Public Health Wales, Wales Probation Trust and independent representatives.

Regional Collaborative Committees

Regional Collaborative Committees will have an emphasis on co-production and co-design of services involving all stakeholders.

The RCCs will be responsible for delivering a three year rolling regional commissioning plan for the area. This plan will prioritise spend and service development for the region. In the transition year this will be for a single year.

The RCC will also be responsible for setting up a Service User involvement framework and facilitating provider and inclusive forums, to ensure and evidence proper representation by all stakeholders at the meeting. The RCC will be required to evidence that service users have directly influenced the regional commissioning plan.
Members include representatives from Local Authorities, Landlords, Providers (both short-term and long-term types of service will be represented), Local Health Board(s), Probation, Service User representation, and co-opted members as required.

Landlord representatives will be supported by Community Housing Cymru and Provider representatives will be supported by Cymorth Cymru who are the Housing Association and Support Provider umbrella organisations in Wales.

Regional RCCs generally follow Local Health Board footprints in Wales. Each region has a lead local authority that is responsible for co-ordinating the RCC and the regional commissioning plan; they also employ a regional Supporting People officer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RCC</th>
<th>Lead LA</th>
<th>Other Authorities in RCC</th>
<th>No. of LAs</th>
<th>Local Health Board(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gwent</td>
<td>Blaenau Gwent</td>
<td>Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Aneurin Bevan Health Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiff/Vale</td>
<td>The Vale of Glamorgan</td>
<td>Cardiff.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cardiff &amp; Vale University Health Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merthyr/RCT</td>
<td>Merthyr Tydfil</td>
<td>Rhondda Cynon Taff.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cwm Taf Health Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Wales</td>
<td>Conwy</td>
<td>Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Wrexham, Ynys Mon.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid &amp; West Wales</td>
<td>Pembrokeshire</td>
<td>Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Powys</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Powys Teaching Health Board and Hywel Dda Health Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Bay</td>
<td>Neath Port Talbot</td>
<td>Bridgend, Swansea.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Local Authority SP Teams**

Local Authority SP teams will receive SPPG and directly contract with support providers. They will continue to be responsible for ensuring that grant conditions are met by collecting monitoring information, including the new national Service User Outcomes, as well as reviewing service quality and strategic relevance through evidence collection and site visits.

They will also continue to be responsible for the procurement of Supporting People services, with reference to the Local and Regional Commissioning Plans, as well as compliance with European Union Procurement Directives and Local Standing Orders.

Local Authorities will continue to have a Supporting People Planning Group, or equivalent, with membership from key stakeholders. A Local Commissioning Plan will replace the Supporting People Operational Plan (SPOP), and will mirror the structure of the Regional Commissioning Plan.

The local SP team will also be responsible for contributing key information to the regional commissioning plan, working in partnership with other SP teams in their region, by collecting and collating relevant needs and supply information.
Transition Year(s) Activities

The years 2012-2014 are considered to be ‘transition years’ for the revised Supporting People arrangements in Wales. A number of activities will be undertaken during this period including:

**Redistribution of funding.** Whilst Supporting People funding in Wales has been ring-fenced, and therefore protected to a great extent, there is a separate issue pertaining to the fair distribution of the funding across Welsh Local Authorities. Welsh Government is looking at the adjustment of SP funding away from a provision-based approach to a needs based allocation. This will be more equitable for local populations.

An interim formula has been agreed to begin the redistribution of funding in Wales that commenced in 2012/13, and this will be refined in forthcoming years. This will result in some local authorities experiencing a substantial reduction in funding and others receiving a significant increase. The majority of Local Authorities in North Wales as well as Cardiff are expected to receive a substantial reduction in funding under the redistribution of SPfG, whilst other areas, particularly in South Wales will receive a considerable increase in funding.

This will mean that, although the overall SP budget has been protected to a great extent in Wales, some local authorities will have to make difficult decisions to manage budget pressures.

**Revised Governance Structure.** Welsh Government has commissioning consultants to undertake a review of the transition period which will assist in devising a robust future governance structure.

**The Support Provider Accreditation process.** All Support Providers in Wales in receipt of SP funding will be required to be registered and accredited with a new national framework. The Accreditation process is currently out for consultation but is expected to be introduced in 2013/14.

**The Service evaluation framework.** A revised evaluation framework to review and inspect SP services is due to be signed off by the SPNAB and/or the steering board in 2012/13. Local Authority SP teams will be required to implement this new approach in their reviewing and monitoring processes.

**Older Persons Services.** The Quality Work-stream will undertake further work on evaluating older persons services in 2013/14.

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**Further Information and Links:**

- [Welsh Government Supporting People Programme](http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/housing/supportingpeople/;jsessionid=65C1961855F105896C00563DD259460D?lang=en)
- [New SP Programme Guidance 2012](http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/housing/publications/sppgguide/;jsessionid=CFD4F61211F7FF738D741F1B82190480?lang=en)
- [LA coordinator, Provider and Landlord RCC Representative details](http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/housing/supportingpeople/publications/rcccontacts/?lang=en)
- [Supporting People Information Network](http://www.ssiacymru.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=887)
- [Cymorth Cymru](http://www.cymorthcymru.org.uk/)
- [Welsh Local Government Organisation](http://www.wlga.gov.uk/english/housing-related-support/)
- [All Wales Chief Officers Panel (Welsh Housing Notice Board)](http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/housing/supportingpeople/publications/rcccontacts/?lang=en)
- [Community Housing Cymru](http://www.chcymru.org.uk)

Please note: The contents of this fact sheet were correct at the time of publication February 2013