

Sitra recommendations compared to CLG Select Committee recommendations

Sitra recommendation		CLG Select Committee recommendation	
1	CLG to have clear responsibility for leading and ensuring delivery nationally of a strategy for responsive client orientated housing related support services.	23	CLG needs to take a stronger ambassadorial role amongst other Government Departments and agencies to promote housing-related support in the context of the health and social care policy areas. Its leadership is crucial in ensuring continued recognition of the value of Supporting People services, and setting a precedent for effective partnership working at local levels. (Paragraph 145)
2	That local authorities or LSPs are required to consult on and publish and regularly update a needs-based strategy detailing how they will meet the housing related support needs of vulnerable and socially excluded people their borough. This to include how their internal resources and commissioning arrangements will ensure that the right expertise and knowledge of HRS is in place and how they will engage with providers, clients and other stakeholders to deliver appropriate, high quality, person-centred services.	30	Concerns remain about less well-performing local authorities with regard to their understanding of the value of Supporting People and in their approaches to commissioning and procurement of services. We understand that CLG is targeting support to such authorities but, despite this, we are concerned that additional freedoms in the spending of Supporting People funds could be misused in local authorities where Supporting People is misunderstood or not seen as a mainstream part of service delivery. We support moves to devolve decision making and control over budgets to the local level. However, as we relate above, we are uncertain at this stage how well the new Comprehensive Area Assessment will identify where the needs of vulnerable people are not being met and believe that there is a possibility that the needs of vulnerable people could go un-served and unnoticed in some areas without a continued specific focus on housing-related support. (Paragraph 205)
		31	We see this as a serious risk to the future of housing-related support and believe that the continued existence of such structures is critical in the absence of a ringfence on Supporting People funding. (Paragraph 206)

	Sitra Recommendation	CLG Select Committee Recommendation
3	That in each local authority there is a mandatory named officer with responsibility for ensuring delivery of the strategy and maintaining the necessary levels of expertise.	15 In the evidence we heard, there was general consensus amongst witnesses that the Supporting People decision-making and delivery structures were so effective that they should be considered as providing a blueprint for partnership working within Local Area Agreements and other partnership arrangements. We therefore see the potential loss of these structures not only as a risk, but also a wasted opportunity to showcase and replicate good practice in multi-agency partnership working across the board. We recommend that local authorities retain Supporting People governance and delivery structures (Teams and Commissioning Bodies). We also recommend that the Government further promote these structures more generally as models of good partnership working for local authorities and their partners. The retention of these structures will also assist in addressing the risks to service user involvement which we discussed earlier in this Report. (Paragraph 87)
4	That consideration is given to introducing a mandatory requirement that commissioners use the QAF and require completion of the St Andrew's outcomes data to ensure consistency and comparability in assessing service quality and outcomes delivery nationally.	<p data-bbox="762 987 1386 1294">3 We recommend that the QAF and the Outcomes Framework should be mandatory for all local authorities unless and until they can demonstrate that they are achieving a high level of involvement, communication and consultation with service users, and a commensurately high level of client satisfaction. (Paragraph 31)</p> <p data-bbox="762 1294 1386 1897">24 Apart from the issues with competitive tendering which we discuss above, the administration and bureaucracy associated with managing Supporting People contracts and services seems appropriate—a 'necessary evil', producing useful outcomes. However, the inconsistent use of the QAF—and the use of different versions of the QAF in different areas—is a concern. We have already recommended the retention of the QAF as a requirement. We further recommend that local authorities be required to use the same version of the Framework, to ensure consistency to providers of SP services across local authority boundaries. (Paragraph 151)</p>

Sitra Recommendation		CLG Select Committee Recommendation	
5	The Audit Commission to be required to include as a key component of their Comprehensive Area Assessments an appraisal based on a clear methodology of how well the LSP is serving the most vulnerable members of the community and the socially excluded.	19	With greater local freedoms, improved accountability is needed. To ensure that Comprehensive Area Assessment is capable of providing that accountability, therefore, we support the proposal by Westminster City Council and others that there should be a requirement for strategic commissioning and contract monitoring frameworks to be in place in each administering authority so that inspectors know where to look for the information they need for CAA. We also reiterate our recommendation that the Outcomes Framework should continue to be a requirement in all local authorities. The Outcomes Framework will be able to provide a clear focus for CAA inspectors' assessment of the effectiveness of SP services in an area. (Paragraph 136)
6	That all the above strategies and evaluation processes place the interests of and engagement with service users at their centre.	5	Comprehensive Area Assessment cannot alone be relied upon to ensure the continued quality of Supporting People services. The development of Local Strategic Partnerships as decision-making forums for Supporting People services may pose a risk to user involvement in some areas. In order to retain a proper focus on housing related support and facilitate good service user involvement in the decisions of local strategic partnerships, there is a very strong argument to keep the existing Commissioning Body and associated service user involvement structures established under the Supporting People programme. We return to this point later in this Report. (Paragraph 35)
7	That the CLG consult on a clear definition for housing related support to enable meaningful national monitoring of it to continue.	<i>No recommendation</i>	
8	That consideration is given to developing a Code of Guidance, to which LAs and LSPs must demonstrate that they have had regard, identifying best practice in the delivery of housing related support.	2	We agree with Hact that a clear evidence base demonstrating the effectiveness of different models of intervention in meeting the needs of service users is crucial if the problems described in the above paragraph are to be addressed and providers and commissioners of Supporting People services are to make decisions which keep users at the heart of services. We recommend that CLG take steps to ensure that evidence base is developed and made widely available to Supporting People providers and commissioners. (Paragraph 19)

Sitra Recommendation		CLG Select Committee Recommendation	
9	That consideration is given to extending statutory duties to protect the most vulnerable, either through a general duty on local authorities to do so, or by extension of existing statutory rights to particular vulnerable or excluded groups.	22	We agree with the prevailing view amongst our witnesses that there is at present no strong case for putting Supporting People services on a statutory basis. Those services would be extremely difficult to define in legislation, and to attempt to do so would be to risk hampering attempts to join up health, social care and housing in a continuum of services appropriate to the needs of service users. We consider that the recommendations which we make elsewhere in this Report should be sufficient to protect Supporting People services. However, the situation should be monitored and we recommend that the case for placing SP services on a statutory basis be reconsidered at a later date in the light of the evolving social care agenda. (Paragraph 144)
10	That the scope of PSA 16 is reviewed to ensure that it prioritises positive outcomes for all vulnerable and socially excluded groups.	<i>No recommendation</i>	
11	That alternatives to un ring-fencing raised within this consultation, including the call for a targeted national, ring-fenced budget for the most vulnerable and socially excluded client groups are evaluated and consulted on.	35	With the lifting of the ringfence, we are concerned that many 'protections' of Supporting People are being lost simultaneously in particularly challenging economic circumstances. Nonetheless, we are supportive of the Government's overall policy of reducing ring-fenced funding, and consider that there is much to be gained from the greater flexibility which it offers. We do not, therefore, recommend the reimposition of the ringfence on Supporting People funding. (Paragraph 211)

Sitra Recommendation	CLG Select Committee Recommendation
<p>12 That clear guidelines are produced requiring local authorities or LSPs to report on their spend on housing related support and the outcomes arising from that spend. Also to monitor cuts and information about types of service and client groups invested in.</p>	<p>36 We conclude that fears about the loss of funding to Supporting People services can best be countered by ensuring that it is clear to all concerned how much money has been allocated to a council for those services; and how much the council has actually spent on them. We therefore recommend continued transparency in the allocation of Supporting People funding in the Area-Based Grant. Local authorities should not be required to spend funds allocated on the basis of assessed need for housing related support on those services if they consider that it would be better spent elsewhere. They should, however, be required to justify, and account for, any decision to do so. This local accountability, combined with the retention and enhancement of the other protections which we have recommended, should ensure that the Supporting People programme continues to deliver vital services to some of the most vulnerable in our society. (Paragraph 212)</p>
<p>13 That the CLG, with the HCA, run a consultation exercise on how best to ensure the continuing link between housing and support, including the continuing provision of accommodation based services where appropriate, and ensure that capital investment in new supported housing is not threatened by the risk of ongoing revenue funding being unavailable.</p>	<p>26 The [Ministerial] Group should also consider the effect of splitting 'accommodation' and 'support' under Supporting People on builders of supported housing, and make recommendations about how to ensure that capital investment in new supported housing is not threatened by the risk of ongoing revenue funding being unavailable. (Paragraph 178)</p>
<p>14 That the current National Indicator set is reviewed to ensure that NIs relating to HRS encourage LAs and LSPs to make it a priority and that the NIs accurately demonstrate the quality of services delivered and outcomes. Specifically that consideration is given to making NIs 141/2, or any successor NI relating to HRS a mandatory indicator.</p>	<p>33 As we discussed earlier in our report, we do not believe that it would be appropriate at this stage to put Supporting People on a statutory footing, nor are we persuaded that there is a need to compel local authorities to adopt mandatory performance indicators for housing-related support. (Paragraph 209)</p>
<p>15 That the value of early intervention and preventative services is recognised and that the cost benefits realisation model for supported housing is regularly updated at a national and local level and that local results from the model are collated centrally to inform the national picture.</p>	<p><i>No recommendation</i></p>

Sitra Recommendation		CLG Select Committee Recommendation	
16	That government actively promotes and supports local and regional structures, such as the Regional Improvement Groups, Core Strategy Groups and Provider Forums, that guarantee joint working and engagement with service providers and users.	15	In the evidence we heard, there was general consensus amongst witnesses that the Supporting People decision-making and delivery structures were so effective that they should be considered as providing a blueprint for partnership working within Local Area Agreements and other partnership arrangements. We therefore see the potential loss of these structures not only as a risk, but also a wasted opportunity to showcase and replicate good practice in multi-agency partnership working across the board. We recommend that local authorities retain Supporting People governance and delivery structures (Teams and Commissioning Bodies). We also recommend that the Government further promote these structures more generally as models of good partnership working for local authorities and their partners. The retention of these structures will also assist in addressing the risks to service user involvement which we discussed earlier in this Report. (Paragraph 87)
17	That the DH, in developing its proposals for Care and Support in the Green Paper consult fully with the HRS sector in order to deliver personalisation in a way which maximises the benefits to service users, building on existing strengths of the HRS sector, while having reasonable regard for the viability of providers.	6	Personalisation of services is good for increasing service user choice, but sometimes too much choice is overwhelming or even inappropriate. Careful consideration must be given to how to balance personalisation with important commissioned services for people who need emergency support, or who are unable—or unwilling—to choose. Careful consideration is particularly needed of how personalisation will work in accommodation-based facilities. We recommend that the Government extend the Individual Budget pilots to learn more about how personalisation works in practice. (Paragraph 41)
18	That the local connection requirements associated with SP funding be updated with a view to ensuring that no-one is prevented from receiving a service they need on residence or other local connection grounds.	<i>No recommendation</i>	
19	That short term support services continue to be available without charge to the user through a variety of formats appropriate to user need including floating support and accommodation based services.	<i>No recommendation</i>	

Sitra Recommendation		CLG Select Committee Recommendation	
20	That CLG works closely with the Office of the Third Sector and representative organisations such as Sitra to develop a programme of capacity building for third sector HRS providers. The detailed programme to be worked up in partnership with the sector but key elements would be: (a) developing the capacity and the structures to enable access to local strategic decision takers such as LSPs; (b) help with the skills and capacity needed for the third sector to compete in a tendering environment, including developing partnerships and consortia; and (c) work to build the capacity of organisations to support their clients in engaging with strategic policy and decision taking processes.	8	Our evidence reinforces the importance of the contribution made by the Third Sector to the Supporting People programme. The Third Sector has a major role both in delivering services and in identifying the needs of vulnerable client groups in the first place. The knowledge and expertise of the sector has significantly contributed to the success of the programme so far and it is crucial that it continue to be retained and exploited. (Paragraph 48)
21	That the CLG commission an independent study of the use of competitive tendering for HRS with a view to developing good practice guidelines for market testing that is legal, proportionate and appropriate to the sector and will deliver the best and most diverse range of services and providers	11	In letting contracts for Supporting People services, we believe that EU procurement rules are being used by councils as an excuse for their own inertia and risk aversion. It is clear to us that unambiguous guidance is needed to assist local authorities in developing approaches to commissioning and procurement which are legal, proportionate to the size of contracts being let and focused on both cost and quality outcomes. This is something CLG should prioritise. The Commission for the Compact published guidance on grants, contracts and EU procurement rules for Third sector organisations and public sector commissioners in July 2009. We recommend that CLG take advantage of this opportunity to disseminate best practice guidance and encourage greater consistency across all local authority areas in approaches to commissioning and procurement. (Paragraph 68)

22	<p>That, in recognition of the significant, but in many respects still uncertain, implications of the removal of the ring fence, and the range of measures put forward by the sector to respond to them, the CLG should extend the transition package and maintain SP funding as a named but not ring fenced grant for a second year. This will offer a measure of support and protection to the sector while the full implications of the changes emerge and are evaluated. It will also enable greater monitoring of the experience of un ring-fencing in Scotland.</p>	16	<p>The increased flexibility and local decision-making which the removal of the ring fence and the funding of Supporting People services through Area-Based Grant has brought is a positive development. However, the maturity of some local strategic partnerships, and consequently the ability of some LSP partners effectively to commission services jointly, is in doubt. There is a risk of losing some of the excellent practice which has been developed in the commissioning of these services. For these reasons we consider that Supporting People services require some continued protection as LSPs continue to develop. (Paragraph 108)</p>
----	---	----	--