



Briefing

Valuing Supporting People: use of the Capgemini tool in housing support services

2011

Introduction

At its very heart, Supporting People is a preventative programme: it exists to help vulnerable people avoid or delay entry into institutional services, and to live as independently as possible for as long as possible. In doing this, it arguably saves the public purse more than is invested in the programme.

The Department for Communities and Local Government has twice commissioned research to financially value housing support services. The latest report¹, by Capgemini, showed that the £1.6 billion spent each year on Supporting People saved the Exchequer £3.4 billion. Put another way, every one pound spent on the programme across England saved £2.11.

Quantifying the value

The Capgemini work compared the cost of current services with those of a range of potential adverse events that might occur to clients if Supporting People services weren't available. The work was broken down to 18 different client groups and tools were provided for administering authorities to estimate the cost-savings locally.

A variation on this method uses data from individual case studies, for example in Yorkshire and Humber², and is sometimes used in conjunction with the Capgemini work. This approach has the advantage of being able to tell the stories of real individuals and assess and cost the likely alternative services without housing support.

It is worth remembering that both methods aim to quantify the financial benefits of housing support services. Reports using both acknowledge that the housing support also provides many other, uncosted benefits like improving health and reducing social exclusion or anti-social behaviour. Other tools, like outcomes data, help to measure these other benefits.

Savings made

The Capgemini work estimated that savings were made for almost every client group at a national level. These findings have been repeated by local authorities and regional groups across the country. For example, the South West Supporting People Working Group estimates that £160 million spent on Supporting People in 2009/10 saved £379 million to the public purse, or £2.36 for every pound spent.³ In Yorkshire and Humber the figure equates to £2.12 saved and in the North East £2.06⁴ for every pound spent.

At an individual level the models have also shown savings. The Yorkshire and Humber report highlighted two case studies, a woman with learning disabilities and an older man. The former showed an estimated cost of some £42,000 with Supporting People, compared to over £63,000 without the programme, or £1.50 saved for each pound spent on her support services. For the older man, the figures were a bit under £12,000 compared to an alternative cost of under £14,000, or £1.18 saved for each pound with housing support. The report uses conservative assumptions, which may explain the relatively low savings compared to national and regional averages. However, it still shows savings made through Supporting People than without it.

¹ Cap Gemini, Jan 2008, *Research into the financial benefits of the Supporting People programme* DCLG www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/supportingpeoplefinance

² Sitra, September 2010, *Prevention and personalisation: The case for housing related support* Yorkshire and Humber Housing Related Support Group www.sitra.org/prevention_and_personalisation

³ T Othen 'CLG financial benefits realisation tool: Regional summary' www.spsouthwest.co.uk/spbenefits.html

⁴ K Bee and H Woods (Sept 2010) *North East region cost benefit analysis and lessons learnt from Supporting People* North East Improvement and Efficiency www.northeastiep.gov.uk/adult/supportingpeople.htm

Use of the tool

The Capgemini tool was purposely designed to be applied at a local level, allowing for the use of some local data. In Torbay⁵, this resulted in some big differences in the cost of residential care, for example, lower in the South West authority than nationally. Elsewhere in that region Somerset⁶ and Dorset councils have also developed the model locally; Bristol, Gloucestershire and Cornwall reported using the national model with their local authority; and North Somerset contributed equivalent data to a corporate model.

Several authorities in the West Midlands also reported using the tool locally, some to useful effect. Three of the authorities at a Regional Information Group meeting felt the tool had helped them locally. Staffordshire and Wolverhampton believed it had; Wolverhampton felt the outcomes data was also useful for this. But Stoke had gone a step further. By using the tool, the Supporting People team was able to access funding from other departments. The lead officer presented two examples:

- “We developed a pilot project to test out a floating support model for people with a learning disability. Originally the pilot was funded solely from Supporting People funds but by demonstrating the outcomes of the project/potential benefits of Supporting People in relation to residential care costs etc we secured funding from colleagues in Adult Social Care to expand the pilot.”
- “The Supporting People team have also been working in partnership with the Joint Commissioning Unit [...] to support social care services and to develop post hospital discharge support and re-ablement. We have secured funding for a three month pilot period to enhance two existing Supporting People services. In general terms the knowledge we have gained from both the outcomes data and the benefits realisation work have helped us to promote the value of investing in HRS [housing related support].”

The value-for-money tool was arguably also influential in dampening the cut to Supporting People budgets. Shehla Husain, the (then) Deputy Director responsible for Supporting People at the Department for Communities and Local Government, said as much for the budget nationally at a conference in the West Midlands.⁷ Representatives from Sandwell Council also believe that the cut of 10.5 percent to their Supporting People budget in 2011/12 could have been as high as 30 percent without the Capgemini data.

Conclusions

Overall the Capgemini tool has been useful for showing the financial savings made by Supporting People and housing support services nationally and in regions and local authorities across England. With constraints in public spending it becomes even more important to value financially the important work of preventative services and to pool resources to save public money and spend it wisely. We should also remember the real uncoded value housing support services make to individual people, helping them escape cycles of homelessness, deprivation, offending and substance misuse, and increasing their independence.

⁵ Torbay Council Supporting People team, July 2010, *Evidencing the financial benefits of the Supporting People programme in Torbay* Torbay Council www.spsouthwest.co.uk/spbenefits.html

⁶ Somerset Council Supporting People team, July 2010, *Somerset Supporting People cost benefit realisation 2009/10* www.spsouthwest.co.uk/spbenefits.html

⁷ S Husain, Nov 2010, ‘Supporting People and beyond: The role of the voluntary and community sector’ www.sitra.org/fileadmin/sitra_user/2009/Policy/News/Shehla_Husain_Presentation_231110.pdf

About Sitra

Sitra is a national membership organisation committed to raising standards in the housing, care and support sector. We are a charity with over 25 years' experience of offering a range of affordable policy, training, consultancy, information, conference and capacity building services. Our membership is comprised of both providers and commissioners and other statutory, voluntary and private sector organisations.

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