



improving performance and efficiency in social housing

## **A review of Year 3 of the Support Benchmarking Project**

June 2008



**NATIONAL  
HOUSING  
FEDERATION**

## On Benchmarking – An Update from the Project Team

The SITRA/HouseMark NHF benchmarking system has now been running for 3 years. Much has changed in that time, not least in the degree to which new commissioning and procurement techniques have affected the sector. These changes are designed to drive up quality and improve Value for Money across the sector.

But, for individual providers, as well as improving the sector as a whole, they want to home in on their particular service. The key perspective that any benchmarking exercise can bring to this task is comparison with similar services. The support benchmarking system we have developed gives participating providers key, anonymised comparisons on financial, performance, quality, and user satisfaction issues

But how feasible are like for like comparisons? Some support or supported housing projects may be quite unique; others may not have particularly uncommon characteristics, but might themselves be the only one of a category of services that has bothered to submit information to this system.

Our system starts from the idea that, in an ideal world, every single submitted service would be supplied with comparative information from between 6 and 25 services run by other providers which:

- **Are in the same region**, using the 9 standard CLG English regions
- **Serve the same primary client group**, as defined under the standard *Supporting People* list of client groups
- **Have the same cover arrangements**. We have divided all services into one of six cover types – 24 hour cover with waking staff; 24 hr cover with sleep-in staff; 7 day a week cover with on call ; 7 day a week cover with no on call; 5 day a week cover with on call and 5 day a week cover without on call. We arrived at these divisions because we believe that staff costs are the major driver of the overall cost of any scheme, and that staff costs are heavily influenced by the amount of cover than it provided as standard.
- **Are classified as the same type of service**, using standard *Supporting People* service type classifications.

Inevitably, not all submitted services generate a minimum of 6 'ideal' comparisons. So we have established a sorting system for arriving at the 'closest possible' comparisons to supply to participants. This default system only comes into operation when insufficient 'ideal' comparisons are generated by the system. So every participant gets a very nuanced set of 'best possible' results against which to benchmark their own particular service. Feedback from participants suggests customer satisfaction is high.

## A Limited National Perspective

This system cannot be adapted to produce national and regional averages for each 4 dimensional category of service (i.e. services which share the same region, client group, cover arrangements and service type). Such 'micro analyses' categories would simply not contain sufficiently robust statistics: there are almost 16,000 potential classifications.

However, averages and ranges for *each* of the categories e.g. per client group, per cover arrangement and per service type can be produced on a national basis. These offer a very different kind of comparison to the tailored, service specific product we offer participating providers. They do not constitute a robust evidence basis for service improvement, which is the ultimate aim of benchmarking. Nonetheless, we recognise they are of interest to both providers and commissioners and therefore we include them in this report. We used information from the last two years of the benchmarking project, and have standardised prices at March 2008 levels.

## 2 yr summary results of SITRA/HouseMark benchmarking system

(N.B.QAF averages are calculated by awarding points for each score against the six QAF core objectives ( A=4,B=3, C=2,D=1) and then calculating them as a percentage out of a 'perfect' score of 24. So six 'A' scores would be 100%; six 'B' scores 75%; and six 'C' scores 50%)

Average of Cost per Support hr	Composition of costs						Average of QAF %age
	Total services	Weighted Average Cost per support hr @ March 2008 prices	Average of % Frontline staff	Average of % 1st tier mngt	Average of % Direct costs (exc staff)	Average of % Overheads	
Cover normally provided							
24 hour Waking Staff - 7 days	455	£ 20.75	73.74%	7.77%	5.64%	12.85%	57%
24 hr presence, inc night time sleep-in cover - 7 days	512	£ 21.75	64.80%	11.73%	10.50%	12.97%	60%
Staff cover < 24 hrs 5 days, on-call or alarm out of hours cover	1,803	£ 25.60	56.80%	10.65%	7.87%	24.67%	55%
Staff cover < 24 hrs 5 days, no out of hours cover	972	£ 25.46	58.54%	12.37%	15.59%	13.51%	58%
Staff cover < 24 hrs 7 days, no out of hours cover	274	£ 22.88	60.09%	12.90%	14.10%	12.91%	59%
Staff cover < 24 hrs 7 days, on-call or alarm out of hours cover	1,220	£ 25.68	64.40%	10.64%	10.85%	14.11%	60%
Grand Total	5,236	£ 24.65	61.19%	11.07%	11.04%	16.70%	57%

Average of Cost per Support hr	Composition of costs							Average of QAF %age
	Total services	Weighted Average Cost per support hr @ March 2008 prices	Average of % Frontline staff	Average of % 1st tier mngt	Average of % Direct costs (exc staff)	Average of % Overheads	Total	
Accommodation for Teenage Parents	64	£ 21.52	55.14%	13.36%	8.70%	22.80%	63%	
Adult Placements	2	£ 25.13	33.95%	15.15%	45.85%	5.06%	50%	
Almshouses	1	£ 20.26	69.00%	9.00%	16.00%	7.00%	54.17%	
Direct Access	141	£ 20.11	66.10%	13.21%	9.32%	11.38%	63%	
Floating Support Services	875	£ 25.34	60.21%	10.30%	13.03%	16.45%	60%	
Foyer	47	£ 24.52	62.86%	10.54%	10.51%	16.08%	58%	
Outreach	14	£ 26.95	59.57%	12.58%	10.93%	16.93%	58%	
Peripatetic Warden	44	£ 29.58	61.27%	9.18%	19.61%	9.95%	41.76%	
Resettlement Service	10	£ 22.25	69.48%	10.26%	8.89%	11.38%	56%	
Sheltered Housing with a Warden	1,128	£ 22.24	65.95%	8.19%	11.86%	14.01%	58%	
Supported Housing	2,707	£ 25.56	60.33%	11.56%	10.46%	17.65%	55%	
Supported Lodgings	3	£ 19.31	53.60%	13.19%	22.80%	10.40%	50%	
Very Sheltered Housing	72	£ 24.28	70.80%	10.68%	8.69%	9.83%	64%	
Women's Refuges	128	£ 27.31	56.96%	15.15%	9.48%	18.41%	74%	
Grand Total	5,236	£ 24.65	61.19%	11.07%	11.04%	16.70%	57%	

Average of Cost per Support hr	Composition of costs							Average of QAF %age
	Total services	Weighted Average Cost per support hr @ March 2008 prices	Average of % Frontline staff	Average of % 1st tier mngt	Average of % Direct costs (exc staff)	Average of % Overheads	Total	
Alcohol Problems	68	£ 25.81	61.87%	8.85%	13.65%	15.63%	47%	
Drug Problems	59	£ 25.64	54.28%	11.84%	16.49%	17.39%	52%	
Frail Elderly	116	£ 23.86	66.82%	10.37%	13.82%	9.00%	57%	
Generic	240	£ 26.63	58.30%	10.11%	13.63%	17.96%	59%	
Homeless Families with Support Needs	95	£ 22.94	64.44%	13.28%	9.94%	12.33%	57%	
Learning Disabilities	423	£ 20.25	68.98%	10.15%	7.44%	13.43%	58%	
Mental Health Problems	986	£ 25.88	59.31%	10.17%	9.39%	21.13%	57%	
Mentally Disordered Offenders	1	£ 24.62	67.00%	5.00%	3.00%	25.00%	50.00%	
Offenders/people at risk of offending	231	£ 24.96	58.88%	10.91%	17.81%	12.40%	51%	
Older People with Mental Health problems	2	£ 58.00	64.00%	3.50%	6.50%	26.50%	56.25%	
Older People with Support Needs	1,199	£ 22.81	63.62%	10.24%	11.21%	14.93%	58%	
People with HIV/AIDS	23	£ 37.09	59.29%	13.10%	5.94%	21.67%	50%	
Physical or Sensory Disability	79	£ 28.89	60.77%	11.68%	8.30%	19.25%	70%	
Refugees	54	£ 32.68	53.82%	20.03%	6.41%	19.74%	59%	
Rough Sleepers	34	£ 26.63	60.15%	15.26%	12.44%	12.16%	48%	
Single Homeless with Support Needs	807	£ 24.72	60.41%	11.54%	11.38%	16.66%	53%	
Teenage Parents	187	£ 23.65	58.04%	11.56%	13.28%	17.11%	59%	
Travellers	3	£ 50.52	70.02%	0.00%	21.35%	8.63%	50%	
Women at risk of Domestic Violence	205	£ 26.39	58.31%	13.46%	9.54%	18.68%	74%	
Young People at risk	373	£ 26.49	60.84%	11.86%	10.82%	16.48%	59%	
Young People Leaving Care	51	£ 29.87	56.05%	15.47%	14.04%	14.44%	56%	
Grand Total	5,236	£ 24.65	61.19%	11.07%	11.04%	16.70%	57%	

### Dates for this year's entries

In response to feedback from participants, we are bringing forward the timetable for the benchmarking system this year. The new questionnaires and guidance will be available on our website from 16 June 08 with a closing date of 3 November 08 so that the comparator reports can be sent to participants in early December.