SERVICE SPECIFICATION FOR: Rough Sleepers / Outreach & Resettlement Floating Support Service

The specification describes the Service to be delivered under the Steady State Contract for Provision of Supporting People Services.

Working in partnership to provide high-quality, cost-effective and flexible welfare services for the vulnerable people of Kent, which promote independent living, facilitate social inclusion and keep them safe and secure. It is envisaged that welfare services will in time complement other service provision across the county.
(Kent Five Year Supporting People Strategy 2005-10)

1. Introduction

This specification relates to the provision of an outreach and resettlement service, which will also include reconnection for service users who have accessed support out of their local areas and wish to reconnect. This service will be accessed by a number of disparate user groups, including homeless people. Providers will demonstrate a broad knowledge of, and experience in, providing services to a wide range of vulnerable people. They will be able to clearly evidence experience of meeting the needs of a wide range of client groups whilst working toward achieving the strategic targets of all the programme's stakeholders.

In entering into a contract with Kent County Council, as the Administering Authority, for a Floating Support Service funded under Supporting People Programme, the Provider agrees to comply with this service specification. The specification states Kent County Council's requirements and is part of the contract for the delivery of a Floating Support Service. Compliance with the contract will take place through regular monitoring and review of progress.

A Floating Support Service can be provided to an individual for a maximum of 2 years duration which is not age limited and is therefore defined as a short-term service, which:

- Aims to develop a service user’s capacity to live independently following the completion of a time-limited programme of support, or
- Aims to sustain / increase the capacity of a service user to live independently through a package of welfare services.

In some exceptional circumstances, a service may be provided to an individual for longer than the two years specified. When this situation occurs, the service provider is required to agree a continuation of service on a case by case basis with the Supporting People Team. A service may be prolonged for a limited amount of time whilst other service provision is sought.

During the provision of services funded under the Supporting People Programme if it is found that a service only maintains a limited degree of independent living and that a service user’s capacity for independent living is unlikely to increase, provision of service should be sought under statutory legislation from other sources of funding.
2. The Aims of Floating Support Services

The key objectives of the Supporting People Programme services are the provision of welfare services to:

- Reduce the incidence of tenancy breakdown and / or individuals losing their homes
- Promote programmes of resettlement and enable people to live independently, including move-on accommodation

The provision of the Floating Support Service will contribute to the following expected outcomes, which link with crosscutting targets of the Supporting People Partnership:

- Reductions in levels of homelessness.
- Reduced levels in incidences of repeat homelessness.
- Reduction in rough sleeping (including those who could be considered as the “hidden homeless”).
- Better access to health care and reduction in health inequalities. This includes better access to both emergency and planned health care.
- Improved access to Mental Health Trust services, thereby reducing the rates of suicide and death by indeterminate causes.
- A reduction in crisis admissions to hospital.
- A reduction in delayed hospital discharges.
- Reduction in the inappropriate use of residential care.
- Enabling the transition of vulnerable young people aged 16 and 17, to independent living.
- Reductions in the numbers of people who re-offend.
- Increased provision of drugs education intervention programmes to people at risk of substance misuse.
- Promotion of wider choice in housing and support and independence.
- Promotion of more stable lifestyles, social inclusion and community cohesion.
- Work with those who are homeless to reconnect with their local area of origin within Kent.

Short-term support is designed to assist individuals who are experiencing difficulties in:

- their housing situation or
- are in transition or
- are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Floating Support aims to stabilise crisis situations; such crises may re-occur and in such circumstances support can be provided again. The level of support can vary and is based on the assessed needs of an individual service user.

Floating Support enables and advises people to gain and maintain suitable accommodation or a tenancy it also offers preventative measures to enable people to remain in their own home. Service users develop skills required for independent living and their broader needs by enabling access to other relevant services. The ultimate aim is to improve a service user’s quality of life and promote / maintain independent living.
3. Service User Group

The Service is specific in nature and would include, but may not be limited to, a range of the following client groups:

- Single Homeless People (including those with complex needs and/or living in temporary accommodation)
- Those from Minority Ethnic Groups
- Gypsies and Travellers
- Those living with HIV or Aids
- Those misusing substances
- Ex-Offenders (including those within bail accommodation)
- Rough Sleepers
- Young Persons at Risk
- Young Offenders (including those within bail accommodation)

4. Service Availability

4.1 Eligibility

- The service user must be identified as being in need of welfare services by the referring agency or provider and should meet the criteria as defined within the Kent County Council Supporting People Eligibility Policy. People living in the following tenures are able to access Floating Support services:
  - Private rented accommodation
  - Bed and Breakfast Accommodation or other Temporary Accommodation (including the "hidden homeless")
  - Accommodation let by a district / borough housing authority either under any form of tenancy agreement
  - Accommodation let by a registered social landlord under any form of tenancy agreement
  - Owner Occupation
  - Other forms of accommodation, such as mobile homes etc.
  - Rough sleepers
  - People who are currently receiving a welfare service which is about to end and can evidence need of further assistance.
  - People who are on the waiting list for a floating support service and require short-term crisis intervention
  - Homeless people who can demonstrate a prior connection to Kent and wish to return to the County.

- Service users generally would be expected to be living within the boundaries of Kent with the exception of people placed in temporary accommodation outside the County or people who can demonstrate a prior connection to Kent and wish to return to the County. In such circumstances there must be an expectation that the person will be re-housed in Kent. The service user must be willing to engage with the Providers support planning process.
People who are considered unsuitable for Floating Support services are as follows:

- People whose support needs fall within a statutory responsibility unless the need for a welfare service is identified as a complementary part of an overall package of support and assistance as agreed within an appropriate assessment plan.
- People whose support needs require more resources than are available to the service unless there are arrangements made by relevant agencies to meet additional care and support needs.

4.2 Access

Referrals can be made by a number of sources including the statutory, voluntary and charitable agencies, as well as organisations in the private sector, outreach workers and individuals referring themselves.

Kent as the Administering Authority operates a central referral system covering the 12 Districts and Boroughs across the county. Referrals can be made to the Supporting People Team but Support Workers can allocate a service provision to a potential service user who is a rough sleeper or requires crises intervention, but should notify the Supporting People Team of this allocation as soon as is practicable.

In relation to service users wishing to be relocated to their local areas, referrals should be made to the Supporting People Team in accordance with the monitoring arrangements under the forthcoming Kent Reconnection Policy.¹

4.3 Exclusions

No service user should be unreasonably excluded from accessing a service. Under the principle of fair access to services, access must not be restricted to those meeting statutory eligibility criteria for service provision.

Reasonable exclusions are where

- People do not meet the organisation’s selection criteria and exclusion arrangements (which reflect the providers’ ability to respond to need).
- Referrals are refused on the grounds of risk as a result of the outcome of a needs assessment process and procedures that meet the requirements of at least Standard C of the Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework (QAF).

The Provider is expected to use its best endeavours to ensure the service is accessible to all minority and hard to reach groups within the County and provide a service that is responsive to the needs of Ethnic Minority groups.

¹ ‘Local area’ is not necessarily where a person originates from but where they have most recently had sustained attachments to the local community. For example where they had stable accommodation or employment, where they have been claiming benefits, engaged with health, probation, Social Services or where they have established social networks.
5. Service Details

5.1 Service Delivery
The service will potentially be available to service users twenty-four hours a day seven days a week.

5.2 Support tasks
An assessment of need and risk will be carried out in collaboration with the service user. A support plan shall be completed and agreed by both the Provider and service user. The support plan will be specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time limited.

The support planning process shall meet the requirements of at least Standard C of the Supporting People QAF.

The support plan must identify and record the service user’s needs arising from specific ethnic, racial, religious, cultural, gender, sexuality, disability, marital status or age requirements.

Each support plan will be reviewed on a consistent and systematic basis to meet changing need.

The service shall provide the basic eligible welfare services as defined within the Kent County Council Supporting People Eligibility Policy. Service provision shall be limited to a maximum of three hours per week per service user. The support is designed to be limited to 2 years and this requirement should be reflected within each service user’s individual support plan.

5.3 Service Values and Principles
The following values and principles will underpin all activities undertaken in the performance of the Service:

• The Service shall promote and encourage choice and be based on promoting independence through support.

• Service users are supported and empowered to achieve their full potential.

• Service users shall be treated with courtesy, dignity and respect and will be at the centre of all decision-making that impacts on their lives.

• The Service shall seek to meet and promote the cultural and religious needs of service users from ethnic minority backgrounds.

• The Service shall actively promote the opportunities for service users to be involved with the Provider and seek their view in establishing good practice, reviewing policies and procedures, maintaining and continuously improving delivery of the service in accordance with the principles of meaningful service user involvement.
• The Service will liaise with other Providers providing services to vulnerable people in order to develop effective and efficient practices and partnerships, which will optimise the effectiveness of all services in Kent.

5.4 Ending Support Provision
Floating Support will be withdrawn from a service user when:
• The service user has received continual support for a 2 year period
• The service user is unwilling to engage in the support being offered or has failed to meet the provider on 3 occasions
• The risk to staff is considered un-manageable
• A structured review identifies that a different service or no further service is required

Where a service user is discharged but the Provider assesses that the service user remains vulnerable, then (with the service user’s agreement) a referral should be made to another appropriate organisation.

6. Quality Requirements

The Provider is aware of all relevant legislation. Providers must also be aware of national, regional or local strategies and policies, as they apply to the service and its service user(s). This will include awareness and adherence to the forthcoming Kent Reconnection Policy.

The Service will work to the minimum standards as contained within the Supporting People QAF under Standard C and will continuously work towards improving the service to the highest standard.

The Service will have policies and procedures in place, to deal with Adult and Child Protection issues as detailed within the Kent & Medway Adult Protection Procedures. The written policies and procedures safeguard service users from any form of abuse or exploitation and staff are familiar with and follow these procedures.

There are procedures for responding to suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect which reflect multi-agency policies and procedures, including the involvement of the Police and other appropriate parties, in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and the Department of Health Guidance “No Secrets”.

Any information given by service users in confidence, any information provided about service users, and any access to a service user’s personal file will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the Service’s written policies and procedures, and in the best interests of the service user.

Support workers have the skills and experience to deliver the service. All support workers are competent and trained to undertake the activities for which they were employed and responsible. This includes knowledge of basic housing law regulations and benefit regulations.

Support workers communicate with the service user in their first or, where agreed, their preferred language. For service users with special communication requirements, there
are clear and agreed ways of identifying support staff from the organisation, or have a methodology to access relevant services.

Support workers are aware of the requirements of legislation as it applies to their employment and to the service user groups who are supported.

The Provider regularly monitors and achieves the requirements for staff training.

7. Performance Indicators/Outcomes

The performance of the Service will be measured by:

Key Performance Indicators

- % of service users who are supported to establish and maintain independent living
- % of service users who have moved on in a planned way from temporary living arrangements

Service Performance Indicators

- Service Availability – the number of available units as a percentage of capacity will average 100%
- Service Utilisation – the number of occupied units as a percentage of available units will average 90%
- Throughput – the number of service users accessing the service in a reporting year as a percentage of the number of units (the capacity).
- Staffing Input – the number of actual support hours in a reporting year as a percentage of establishment support hours will average 80%
- All services will have obtained at least a level B within twelve months of the contract being awarded
- 100% of Service Users will receive a support plan within 14 days of acceptance onto the service
- 100% of Service Users will receive a needs assessment within 14 days of acceptance onto the service
- Less than 10% of referrals into the scheme will be refused
- 100% of Service Users will receive an exit interview undertaken by the Provider

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- % of service users completing move into independence

7.1 Outcomes Monitoring Framework

Service Providers must comply with the Supporting People Outcomes Monitoring Framework for long and short term services.

The provider will contribute to The Supporting People Teams primary performance indicator by ensuring that wherever possible a period of support is completed by enabling service users to move on to independence in a planned manner.
The organisation is required to submit Performance Indicator Returns required by The Communities and Local Government (Department) in the prescribed format quarterly within 14 days of the quarter period end.

Additional monitoring under the Reconnection Policy will include providing the Supporting People Team with data of vulnerable service users accessing services from out of area and of those successfully reconnecting to their local areas.

The service provider should agree to work with the Supporting People Team to develop and meet outcomes specific to each service user which will include the seven main outcomes for adult social care based on the concept of well-being these being:

- Improved health and emotional well-being
- Improved quality of life
- Making a positive contribution
- Choice and control
- Freedom from discrimination
- Economic well-being
- Personal dignity

7.2 Contract Monitoring

The Service will be subject to formal evaluation in the form of a contract monitoring visit before the Contract term end date.

Visits will be made and may be planned or unannounced and will assess, but not be restricted to, such elements as

- Support Planning
- Complaints
- Needs and Risk Assessment
- Fair Access, Diversity and Inclusion
- Security, Safety and Well-being
- Health and Safety
- Continuous Improvement
- Service User involvement
- Review against Performance Indicators
- Key objectives and outcomes

The service may also be visited if the Supporting People Team is alerted of any potential difficulties or as a result of a complaint and/or adult protection issue.