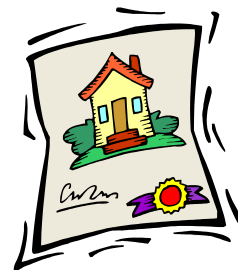


HEREFORDSHIRE SUPPORTED HOUSING FORUM
HELD ON 8TH JUNE 2005



Present : Dave Hider (SHYPP) Chair, Emma Tobin (Marches HA), Maurice Mohan (Stonham), Pauline Munday (Stonham), Richard Kelly (Herefordshire Lifestyles), Diane Rooney (Carr-Gomm), Tim Morgan (Advance Housing), Charlotte Woodward (Women's Aid), Sunita Hopkins (Shelter), Eddie Clark (Herefordshire Housing), Michael King (Kemble Care), Pam Wilson (Kemble Care), Jenny Williams (Hfds Adult Placement), Ian Gardner (Hfds Council – SP Team), Dawn Stradling (Hfds Council – SP Team), Jan Frances (Hfds Women's Aid), Karen Pritchard (St John Kemble HHA).

Apologies : Sandra Evans (National Housing Federation), Sheila Hastie (Railway HA), Lesley King (YMCA), Sue Oddy (Advance), Tony Lafford (Salter's Hill).

1) Welcome & Introduction

Dave Hider welcomed everyone, gave a brief introduction to the purpose of the forum and everyone introduced themselves to the group.

2) Minutes of the previous meeting

Sunita Hopkins had emailed corrections to the previous minutes to Dave Hider to be incorporated in the amended minutes.

Jenny Williams requested that Sandra Lawrence be removed from the attendance/circulation list as she does not attend the forum.

Dates of Regional SP Meetings clashed with today's meeting. RSP have agreed to set out their dates for the coming year.

3) QAF feedback

Dave had some feedback, which he had discussed with Ian Gardner.

The responses were :-

Ian commended Providers for their commitment to continuous improvement and supporting the approach to address all 17 QAF objectives.

A member of the Forum raised a query regarding their ability to meet the demands of all 17.

Ian reflected that achieving level C in the 6 core objectives of the QAF was proving to be a significant challenge for Provider colleagues.

In light of the experience of first review it was hard to envisage a situation where a provider would be "downgraded" through failure to comply with a supplementary objective of the QAF.

4) Supporting People Strategy Group

Meeting scheduled for 28th July. Intention to plan for budget cuts in the Autumn. Terms of reference agenda to be agreed by the group. Dave

advised that members of the group had previously been agreed by the Provider Forum.
However, further members would be welcomed (so long as numbers do not become unwieldy).

Issues of concern to be given to Ian/Andrew to be carried forward.

5) Accommodation Sub-Group – Charlotte Woodward

Experiencing low numbers of attendance. Planning to write to potential attendees to encourage involvement. Planned agenda.

6) Floating Support Sub-Group – Richard Kelly

Also concerns re low numbers of attendance and issues of continuity. Planning to discuss issues of risk management at future meeting. Dave encouraged everyone to ask their staff to attend the relevant groups.

Pauline Munday (Stonham) advised minutes are useful insight into the issues of concern staff are raising and good practice.

Question raised re who should attend the Floating Support Sub-Group. Richard Kelly advised that attendance was geared towards operational staff, however there was recognition that depending upon the organisation, size and structure, various staff levels were attending.

7) Supporting People Update – Ian Gardner

SP 5 year strategy is available on the SP K Web and Herefordshire Council website. The Leader of the Council had attached letter to the strategy raising concerns with the ODPM about how the climate of sustainability and stability could be secured with the threat of budget cuts looming.

Question raised whether cuts would be imposed over a three-year basis. IG advised that the approach has not been formally confirmed yet. However, the recent advice from ODPM – which states that no Local Authority will receive more than a 5% cut, was helpful.

IG was hopeful (given current situation) that the Commissioning Body might be in a position to pass on a non-recurrent inflationary payment for the forthcoming financial year.

Freedom of Information Act

The Information Commissioner has ruled that SP review reports should be released through “Freedom of Information”.

IG advised that the Administering Authority would comply with the ruling.

Dave asked how the group felt about this. Generally the group felt that transparency was a positive move so long as deference was made to personal/confidential information.

Dave asked if provider would have an opportunity to see review report before it was made public. Ian confirmed that they would.

Ian discussed review timetable (ODPM expect this to be completed for all services by 31st March). He has previously sought individual to take up secondment opportunity with SP team (without success). He encouraged all present to consider this secondment opportunity. Charlotte advised that she had undertaken some review practice with Worcester Supporting People and found this a demanding but interesting experience. Ian stated that concerns re conflict of interest would be given due consideration.

The group discussed the demands of the post working hours, staffing levels etc. Ian advised 6 month post, 37 hours per week, good learning opportunity.

8) Update – Mental Health Services

Mental Health Services are drawing up a housing/mental health strategy. Diane Rooney the provider representative on this group says she will keep providers updated on the progress and encouraged them to bring forward their own issues of concern for her to take forward.

9) SP Housing Sub-Group Issues – paper circulated – see attached

Ian reminded group that many of the questions raised have already been discussed at this group, may need to look at how information feedback to providers own staff. Ian had noted a change in general approach to SP issues from staff (more positive) and thanked group for this. Dave encouraged group to update feedback content of paper to their staff.

10) Review Update Dawn Stradling (see attached)

43 reviews have now been completed.

The majority of outstanding reviews are in relation to sheltered housing schemes. Work is in progress to develop a West Mercia “cross-authority” approach to these reviews.

Key themes emerging from reviews undertaken; Preparation is important. An understanding of grant conditions is essential to ensure eligibility of service.

An accurate assessment of strategic relevance is also important – it is therefore essential that providers promote their services, particularly with key stakeholders, to ensure they have an accurate understanding of the services provided

Documentation/evidence – Dawn encouraged group to be creative when identifying documents that can be used as part of the evidence base.

Feedback has indicated that, where Supporting People officers have attended pre- review meetings, the anxiety of staff and clients is reduced.

Following reviews, pre-improvement check discussions have proved useful and Dawn encouraged providers to contact the team with any queries or if they needed clarification re the requirements of the improvement plan.

Service review evaluation form is being sent out once the review is completed, to gain feedback re the process. SP has responded to previous feedback e.g. agreed pre-review meetings with providers, briefing notes of draft report meetings now produced and issued to provider when requested, post-review meetings now available to provide feedback to staff and clients about the outcomes of reviews and Issue Logs are being sent to providers as soon as possible after review.

Sunita asked if documentation could be submitted electronically. Advised this would be acceptable, so long as the information is structured to reflect the QAF.

Dave requested this information be fed back to the sub-groups. Providers agreed this feedback was useful.

Ian advised that reviews were not solely looking at costs and that effective reviews are conducted in partnership with providers. SP are also committed to continuous improvement and value the support and feedback from provider colleagues.

Dave shared recent SITRA details re scheme reviews (see attached).

11) Role of Chair

Andrew Strong to take on the role of Chair from the September meeting. (Dave to produce details of Chair/Vice responsibilities). Requested expressions of interest for Vice Chair role – to be then agreed by Chair, Vice and SP Manager. The group agreed and were happy with the process.

12) National Update (see agenda point 6)

Dave encouraged providers to contribute to consultation documents to ensure representation of local concerns/issues.

13) Regional Implementation Group

The Regional Implementation Group requested priorities for domestic violence and an opportunity to raise the profile of rural issues.

14) Current Issues

Regionalisation of SP, Ring fencing of SP grants. Dave encouraged providers to consult with strategy development.

Query re information available locally.

15) Round the Table Feedback

Group agreed general feeling of improved positive ness re meeting the demands of review – SP Team responding better to needs of providers, more flexible and supportive.

16) Review/SP/Development Feedback

Jan – review due 8th August 05. Feels like preparing for the review for a long time (review date has been changed twice). Keen to have the review now.

Have found it helpful talking to SP in preparation for review. Possible addition of new staff member. Ongoing discussions re development of additional domestic violence/refuge units with SP and St John Kemble.

Pauline Munday – Three reviews have taken place and one desktop review ongoing. Re-review of Pomona Place due. Drug intervention/floating support hoping to be operational by September.

Marches HA – Preparing for reviews pending;

Advance – No review as yet. Looking to develop shared housing (Sue Oddy will update at next meeting).

Development opportunities are few and far between!

TUPE issues discussed. Staff recruitment issues/difficulties discussed. Review date May 2006.

Dave Hider checked group had received SP administrative impact report – all had.

Jenny Williams – Working on action plan/review plan next year. Issues around move-on for clients who do not want to move-on. Development currently ongoing through registration process.

SHYPP – July/August QAF review. Issues around new staff, induction etc. Lone-Parent Outreach Worker service very busy.

17) Future Agenda Items

Chair/Vice Chair.

Provider presentations encouraged.

18) Any Other Business

Basic guide to SP available via SHYPP. Also, signing for support – creative approach via SHYPP.

Worcester list of review expectations to be mailed to group.

Date of next meeting agreed – 28th September 2005

The group thanked Dave Hider for his support to the group as Chair.