



## **STRATEGIC REVIEW – LATEST NEWS**

**Edition 1 July 2011**

Welcome to the first of our updates on the Strategic Review of the Supporting People programme, which will be sent to you monthly.

Following on from the Business Development Group (BDG) Meetings held on 6, 7, 8 July 2011, we will be holding BDGs every 3 to 4 weeks so that we can update you on progress and also give you an opportunity to air your views.

In the meantime, any feedback, suggestions or initiatives should be communicated directly to me at:

[kalvinder.kohli@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:kalvinder.kohli@birmingham.gov.uk)

The questions to be used for consultation with service users are currently being devised by our Citizens Panel and these, together with a template for returns, will be sent out to you within the next week. We will also send you a briefing note so that your staff can explain the need for consultation with your service users.

We have summarised the questions and comments from the BDGs and Citizens Panel/Lay Assessors below. Please feel free to contact me with any further comment or observations. A copy of the presentation is also attached.

Kalvinder Kohli  
Lead Officer  
Supporting People

### **Social Exclusion BDG – 6<sup>th</sup> July 2011**

#### ***“Who will lead on service user consultation?”***

KK replied that she and AMP are holding a joint meeting with Citizens Panel/Lay Assessors on Monday 11.7.11 where they will be asked to develop questions to be sent to providers. We will then ask providers to distribute and collate the information and return it to us on a template that SP will provide.

Gordon Strachan will be able to offer specific guidance to providers and if any additional support is needed providers should let SP know, although SP will not be able to conduct the actual consultation. KK also advised that if providers feel they need to modify a question to fit their client-profile to let us know.

***“What if the provider only has floating support clients, and so no ‘community’ – this will make consultation logistically very difficult. Do you want us to collect data from floating support clients?”***

KK replied that we need to think about resources, we do not want to apply additional pressures on service providers. Floating support clients could be approached by support workers as part of their Support Plan, or use already established forums. What may work for one group may not work for another.

***“There is a big change in the forecast utilisation figures between Year 1 end and Year 2 – what is the reason for this?”***

Mark Sawyer (Performance Manager) replied that the Year 2 figures were the forecast after one social exclusion provider had taken a significant reduction in the size of their contract during the Year 1 targeted savings approach.

***“Will you enter into discussions about service reconfiguration – offering a different service/price which may be higher than the current hourly rate?”***

AMP replied that we will have the discussion but delivery of the service is key. If that means a lower quality service, then the answer is no. KK said that SP were aware of a strong message from the provider sector not wanting to reduce the contract price in Birmingham, but equally we also must not inadvertently increase contract value as this was not an option.

## **General Comments**

***“Some other local authorities have just reduced the hourly rate which in turn will reduce the quality of the service. The different approach is to be welcomed by Birmingham”.***

***“Have In-House services been reduced by 25% over 3 years? Can those clients be fed into under-utilised services?”***

- AMP replied that in-house services have had a slightly higher reduction this year, as SP have given 10% and other services 12%.
- In-house services are being reconfigured as part of the rapid service reviews therefore service user consultation will form part of these discussions.

***“How are SP linking with other stakeholders, for example, BDAAT and how will this link to the prevention agenda and homelessness prevention?”***

KK replied that AMP was overall manager of both SP and Policy and Commissioning we can ensure that actions are not contradicting one another. We are also looking at risk management. We work closely with partner

agencies, for example, a representative from BDAAT sits on CSG, and as a stakeholder they will be asked if any of these actions will have a knock-on effect – this has already been put into practice as a proposed contract reduction was modified as a result of dialogue.

***“What about the Personalisation Agenda?”***

KK replied that CLG had not set out a clear position for SP funded services and further pilots are taking place nationally. This is broader than individual budgets, personalised services has been championed by SP since 2003.

***“Will there be cash projections on under-utilisation?”***

KK replied that SP wanted to start the consultation first to be open and transparent. However, SP will also be working on projections as it would be irresponsible not to do so as part of the potential scenario planning.

***“At what point do you say it is time to reduce the number of options available?”***

KK replied that this would be answered in the timetable which forms the last part of the presentation.

***“Will you be looking into Assistive Technology and how that may deliver savings?”***

KK replied that all options would be considered but would need to be assessed for viability and deliverability within the timescales.

**Disabilities BDG – 7<sup>th</sup> July**

***“When social exclusion contracts expire is the plan to re-tender?”***

MW responded that all contracts will be extended where necessary so all contracts will be up for renewal at the same time.

***“How long have we got to consult with service users and what type of questions will we be required to ask?”***

KK replied consultation has already started and will run until the end of October 2011. The SP team are producing questionnaire for providers to use and this ready for distribution next week. There will be two stages to the consultation and timescales for this will be communicated shortly.

***“With regards to sector champions, would it be a good idea for there to be a representative from each client group?”***

KK felt this was a good idea.

**Older People BDG – 8<sup>th</sup> July**

***“There is concern at the beginning of the commissioning process that the hours commissioned for Disabilities were over specified.”***

KK responded that they were not over specified, referrals for the transition contract were just not coming through. This is due to a number of reasons which had not been anticipated at the time of the commissioning process, e.g.

Adults and Communities directorate potential move to critical care packages only.

### **General Comments**

- There is a need to find ways to deliver services to achieve outcomes whilst achieving savings.
- Which elements of services are critical in achieving goals and aspirations
- Landlords cannot walk away from clients – this issue needs to be mentioned in the strategy.
- Worry over consultation timetable if providers are expected to consult with everybody.
- Worry over eligibility and provision of extra care contracts and the types of tasks that are being carried out.

### **Citizens Panel – 11<sup>th</sup> July**

***“Do you have figures for each area of the city?”***

KK replied that most providers operate across the city, but SP does have information by client group and figures on under-utilised contracts etc.

***“How did you save £4.8m without damage to service users?”***

KK explained that unused hours were taken as savings and SP also used it's underspend.

***“You say existing service users – what about those currently in hospital for example, who are waiting for a service?”***

KK replied that the aim was to not take a service away from a service user.

***“When you say existing service users – what about new ones?”***

KK replied that we need to ensure that those who receive a service still receive one, but we also need to consider move-on, and those that no longer need a service will make space for others. However, in terms of future service users we need to be aware of how much capacity providers will continue to have and there will potentially be smaller contracts. We may need to manage more carefully how service users progress into other services.

***“I am worried that this sounds like a 2-tier system between new and existing service users”.***

KK replied that to avoid this, providers must manage resources more effectively and have clear support planning to manage independence. Providers must look to working smarter.

***“Are you looking for providers to be more efficient?”***

***“Is it more efficient to be mostly scheme based – are you looking to go back to scheme-based support?”***

KK replied no; floating support/cross tenure services are cost effective and we are not going back to paying for housing management costs.

***“Will it make it more difficult to access services due to services being more restricted?”***

KK acknowledged that there may be less support hours available and we would need to look at demand.

***“Suggest more intervention services to avoid service users having to access a full service. Sometimes providers promise too much which doesn’t help service users to be independent”.***

KK replied that where there is genuine need we must try to ensure that these needs are met.

***“When working with existing service users, how do you determine whether someone needs support any longer?”***

KK replied that this was down to effective support planning by the provider.

### **General Comments**

***“This should be all about service users. Some providers are setting up a good service but some key workers are not worth their salt. They are not administering the treatment model. Some service users do not need the service and should be given an exit strategy – service users should have that choice”.*** Another attendee agreed and said ***“all services must be tailored to the individual”.***

***“You have to look at motivation for service users. SP is client centred but the motivation for providers is profit. There are also concerns that a lot more people will need to access the service due to government cuts – lack of job/ill-health etc. It is a vicious circle”.***

***“I agree about motivation, but if a service user exits the service what have they got to look forward to, with no jobs etc?”*** Another attendee agreed but said providers should look at ***“different types of exits”.***

***“What about older people?”*** KK replied that services for older people are slightly different, in that they have not been subjected to external market competition. We also recognise support needs can escalate quickly from very low level to high due to a life incident which affects someone’s ability to live independently.

***“What if a service user is not ready to exit?”*** KK replied that this should be a conversation between the service user and the provider. They should also then ascertain whether it was a genuine SP (support) need or a care need.

One attendee gave an example of someone she knew who was not receiving care. They said ***“I can’t understand the change; we used to get care from SP”.*** GS replied that a lot of things had been changing and it was difficult for everyone to understand the differences between care and support. GS

advised the attendee to tell her friend to talk to Adults & Communities as this is not what SP fund.

***“Doesn’t it cost more to do floating support?”*** KK replied that there are agreed hourly rates but accepted there were different prices in different organisations. However, everything has been costed in to the agreed rate.

***“Wolverhampton Council are doing joint tendering to save money. Is this an option for Birmingham?”*** KK answered that we are already talking to other departments on future commissioning. AMP also sits on a number of important meetings and is starting to have this dialogue.

### **General Comments**

***“We know the cuts have to happen. It would be better to take money from low risk services not high risk vulnerable people”.*** Another attendee replied ***“if you withdraw from low risk you are putting them into the high risk category who statutory services then have to take on board. We have to look at cuts across the board and reducing the number of hours, not taking them away. For example, if I currently receive 10 hours support, I would rather be given 9 hours than none. If low level support is taken away it will impact on health/prisons etc and will be a vicious circle”.***

***“Should be about spreading the load”.***

***“It is balancing the scales – if you take too much from high risk where will they end up?”***

***“Cuts should be across the board – as long as service users are given the information it should even itself out”.***

***“Low level prevention services are very valuable in stopping service users from getting to that point. These could be situated in Hubs and SPAS”.***

***“How will this feedback be monitored?”*** KK replied that there will be a number of key questions which it is in the providers’ best interests to reply to honestly.

***“Due to the cutbacks where will providers get time to do this?”*** KK replied that providers already have mechanisms in place for consulting with service users – they won’t get through their reviews without it – so this should already be in place.

***“A lot of providers impose a support plan; honest feedback will give a more realistic picture”.***

***“If staff need to more flexible to meet needs it will entail training which will mean more cost”.*** KK replied that providers had already been tested on culturally competency under the PET so they should already be at this standard. Plus providers have also costed up training costs as part of their service delivery.

***“What about asking support workers/staff to do 1-hours voluntary work per week?”***

KK replied we can pass this suggestion on to service providers as a specific proposal from Citizens Panel.

***“You say consultation will start in July – which date as it is July now!”***

KK replied that this would happen as soon as CP develop the questions.

***“Who will it be sent out to?”*** KK replied it would be sent out to SP’s contact for each organisation for them to distribute. KK added there may be a separate process for older people services, but we need to consult with the older persons sector further.

***“There is inconsistency in the costs of assessments – could you look at a fixed rate?”***

KK replied all options are being explored as part of the consultation process.

***“A provider I work with is reshaping their service into silos – 4 across the city. This should ensure that people are getting the service they need.”*** KK replied that this probably affects treatment services more but could be looked at.

## **General Comments**

***“Some service users can’t access HUBs”.***

***“Across the board cuts sound egalitarian but the same cuts to everyone won’t have the same impact on everyone. I would rather the cuts actually be equal – if some providers can stand to be cut they should be cut more”.***

***“Across the board cuts for people at high risk would mean they would not be able to cope. Lower level risk could receive support to be more independent – they could take an hours support away for a week”.***

Another attendee replied that this was already happening in A&C.

***“Any support taken away will have an impact”.***

***“I am looking at getting a couple of allotments to train people with LD to learn new skills and help them move on”.***

***“You could start a buddy system to help people access services. For those in long-term/residential care a buddy service could be used rather than an after-care service.”*** GS replied that SP would need to look at how

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you would manage risks and promote such a service. Another attendee added that ***“you need to be well enough yourself to be able to buddy another service user”***.

### **Further Developments**

Since our meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> July, Citizens Panel have offered to undertake a random feedback survey from service users that will be consulted as part of the strategic review process. Citizens Panel wish to provide this external validation as a means of further strengthening the approach to user consultation.

### **Dates for future Business Development Group meetings**

Social Exclusion:	11 August	2.00pm – 4.00pm	venue tbc
	15 September	2.00pm – 4.00pm	venue tbc
	13 October	2.00pm – 4.00pm	venue tbc
Disabilities:	9 August	2.00pm – 4.00pm	venue tbc
	13 September	2.00pm – 4.00pm	venue tbc
	11 October	2.00pm – 4.00pm	venue tbc
Older People:	10 August	2.00pm – 4.00pm	venue tbc
	14 September	2.00pm – 4.00pm	venue tbc
	12 October	2.00pm – 4.00pm	venue tbc

### **Strategic Review Dates for Single Points of Access**

These dates will be communicated to you shortly.