

Blackpool Council - Equality Impact Assessment Record Form from March 2007

Department: Adult Social Care and Housing

Team or Service Area Leading Assessment: Supporting People

Title of Policy/ Service or Function: Generic Floating Support Service

Proposals to introduce a new service

Date of proposals: May 2007

Committee/Team: Supporting People

Lead Officer: Craig McDowell

STEP 1 - IDENTIFYING THE PURPOSE OR AIMS

1. What type of policy, service or function is this?

Existing New/ proposed Changing/ updated

2. What is the aim and purpose of the policy, service or function?

Two generic floating support services. These will provide housing related support to vulnerable adults.

3. Please outline any proposals being considered.

The proposal is to have two services which will provide housing related support, via floating support, in Blackpool.

The definition of floating support is based on that provided by the Department of Communities and Local Government which is 'housing related support service which are not tied to the accommodation'. This means that the support either:

- 1) floats off to another service user when the support is no longer required (usually crisis intervention or short term work) ; or
- 2) the support follows the individual as the service users moves through different types of accommodations (usually exceeding 2 years duration)

4. Why are the proposals being made - for what reason?

The Blackpool Supporting People Five Year Strategy (2005 – 2010) identified a general lack of floating support services for vulnerable people in Blackpool. Current provision was heavily used and many people were excluded from existing services because these were provided for specific client groups e.g. people with mental health issues, teenage parents etc. As a consequence there was a tendency for the provider to concentrate on the primary needs of a service user, when the majority of service users had multiple needs. It was felt that there was a need for floating support services to cater for a wider range of clients and needs. In 2007 the Supporting People Team undertook a comprehensive review and option appraisal of floating support services in Blackpool. The option appraisal was undertaken in consultation with current service providers and other stakeholder groups. A number of issues regarding the way floating support was being delivered at the this time were highlighted:

- Some client groups had no access to a floating support service.
- There were significant differences in contract costs, hourly rates, and the number of hours support some service users received.
- Service specifications developed by providers, restricted many service users from accessing the services.
- Services were not widely known or easy to access.
- Identified differences in the quality of services being delivered.

Following the option appraisal a recommendation to tender for two generic floating support services was accepted by the Supporting People Commissioning Body. These services will replace a number of specialist services currently being provided.

5. What outcomes do we want to achieve

The services will provide floating support to individuals or households because they are vulnerable and have a need for housing related support to help them live as independently as possible by achieving key outcomes in one or more of the following areas:

- Economic Wellbeing
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Being Healthy
- Safety and Security
- Social and Civic Participation

6. Who is the policy; service or function intended to help/ benefit?

People who are vulnerable and have support needs, are at risk of losing their home, are moving on from supported housing or a family home to independent living, and are unlikely to sustain their independence without

support, and have one or more of the following vulnerabilities:

- threatened with homelessness
- previous offending or at risk of offending (excluding prolific or high risk)
- mental health problems (people with mental health problems who do not meet the eligibility criteria of specialist services)
- learning difficulties
- experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse
- teenage pregnancy/young parent(s)
- older people
- young people at risk (excluding young people leaving care)
- drug and alcohol problems (who do not meet the eligibility criteria of specialist services)
- physical and sensory disability
- having HIV or AIDS
- Gypsies, travellers and refugees

7. Who are the main stakeholders/ customers/ communities of interest?

Vulnerable people at risk of losing their tenancies.

Organisations working in a professional or voluntary capacity with people at risk of homelessness:

- Council
- Voluntary Service Providers
- Community Organisations
- PCT
- Police
- Registered Social Landlords
- DWP
- Probation Service
- HM Court Services

Blackpool Residents

Current Floating Support Service Providers

8. Does the policy, service or function have any existing aims in relation to equality, social inclusion or community cohesion?

The service is being introduced to ensure that people from all existing equality strands are able to access a floating support service in Blackpool.

Previously some groups have been unable to access specialist services because they do not fall into the eligibility criteria of existing services.

9. How is the resulting service or function delivered/ administered?

The Floating support services will be administered by the Supporting People Team within the Integrated Contracts Team.

A tendering exercise will be undertaken to select a provider/s for the new services.

The new services will be funded 'block gross' for three years from the Supporting People Grant.

The provider/s of the services will develop, implement and operate a Service Delivery and Performance Plan. The provider/s will operate within the National Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework for service delivery. The provider/s will comply with all recording, monitoring and reporting requirements specified in their contract and service specification.

STEP 2 - CONSIDERING EXISTING INFORMATION AND WHAT THIS TELLS YOU

10. Please summarise the main data/ research and performance management information in the box below.

Data/ information

Supporting People monitoring/review data: Provides quantitative and qualitative information about floating support services currently being provided. A number of client groups are currently unable to access floating support provision:

- People with physical or sensory disability
- People with learning disability
- Older people with mental health issues
- Frail elderly
- Travellers
- Refugees
- People with HIV/AIDS
- Mentally disordered offenders
- Young people at risk
- Families at risk of becoming homeless
- Men at risk of domestic abuse

Supporting People Floating Support Option Appraisal (2007):

Considers the most effective way of providing SP funded housing related floating support services and recommends generic services.

Blackpool Council's & Blackpool Primary Care Trust Comprehensive Equality Policy and Delivery Plan:

This joint equality policy sets out Blackpool Council and Blackpool Primary Care Trust's vision and commitment to ensure equality of access and

opportunities for the population of Blackpool.

Blackpool Council's Gender Equalities Scheme 2007 - 2010

The scheme is part of an overarching corporate equality and diversity policy and delivery plan which sets out our vision to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equal opportunities for all. The purpose of this Scheme is to take forward our statutory duties under the Equalities Act 2006 to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity between women and men.

Research or comparative information

Comparative Information from other authorities:

Collected during the Floating Support Option Appraisal. A number of other local authorities have assessed the way their floating support services are delivered with the aim of ensuring that they are meeting strategic objectives, are cost effective and have a positive impact on strategic and service user outcomes. Lancashire is already operating generic floating support services.

House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, sixth report of session 2007 – 2008. Domestic Violence, Forced Marriage and Honour Based Domestic Violence.

Highlights the need for local authorities to re assess funding and commissioning arrangements for Domestic Abuse services, particularly those under Supporting People and bearing in mind the Gender Equality Duty.

Key findings of consultation and feedback

Consultation during the Floating Support Option Appraisal:

More than 50 stakeholders attended a consultation event. Stakeholders felt there were too many gaps to continue to deliver the services as they were. There was concern about the differences in referral criteria and eligibility and stakeholders wanted to see easier accessibility to services.

Stakeholders felt there was a need for floating support that could be accessed by any person in need of housing related support regardless of any primary specific need, i.e. in need of housing related support is the primary need.

Consultation was also undertaken with providers of current services. All providers acknowledged that their service users, although presenting to them with a primary need relating to their specific service (e.g. teenage parent, domestic abuse), usually had multiple needs and would be referred onto another special service if they could not offer them a place.

Concerns were raised about providers losing contracts and each provider gave a reasoned argument as to why their particular client group should continue to have a specialist floating support service. There was also a view that service user/provider relationships could be built more quickly because service users trust the knowledge and expertise of providers and know that a specialist service is designed for them.

There was an acknowledgement that specialisms could be accommodated within a generic service and that access for service users would be easier if

services were open to everyone.

Supporting People Five Year Strategy 2005 – 2010:

Research and consultation with stakeholders, providers and service users during the Development of the Five Year Strategy identified a need for a generic floating support service which could be accessed by a wider range of clients.

The strategy references data collected for the Council's Housing Needs Survey 2004, which revealed that across the borough, 13% of all dwellings have currently been adapted in some way to meet the needs of a disabled or elderly person. The survey also confirmed that the indigenous older population prefer to continue to live in the area they know and within their own home for as long as possible. An increasing number of frail older people want to remain in their own home, rather than move into residential care and independence is important. Provision of generic floating support will help meet this need, i.e. support in maintaining independence.

The strategy identified the following service users who could not access floating support but would benefit from a service:

- 51.9% of household members with a disability who indicated a requirement for care/support. The most common needs related to supervising health and well-being (55.4%), claiming welfare benefits/managing finances (38.1%) emotional support/ managing behaviour (29.9%) and setting up/ looking after the home (28.4%).
- People who have physical or sensory disabilities require access to floating support services pending assessment of the need for a specific client group service.
- People being discharged from hospital often need housing related support delivered in tandem with physical adaptations to their property.
- There are currently no services for male victims of Domestic Abuse.
- Blackpool has a large population of people with HIV/AIDS, with a current figure of 250 people affected with no specific service to access.

Consultation with stakeholders and providers during the development of Blackpool's Multi Agency Domestic Abuse Strategy identified:

There are no services for men suffering domestic abuse.

The LGBT community in Blackpool is estimated at 15,000. There is evidence of gay transients fleeing domestic abuse in Blackpool.

All domestic abuse victims need support not just women.

There is little support for male perpetrators of domestic abuse, who can find themselves homeless due to their behaviour.

Male perpetrators need to be able to self refer to services.

There is a need for a male floating support worker, not just for domestic abuse but across all groups.

Blackpool Council & Blackpool PCT LGB Open Forum 2006:

Identified a lack of services in Blackpool to support LGBT people experiencing abuse. Current services are predominately women orientated and cannot offer support to male victims, they are also orientated around heterosexual relationships. It has been reported from the police that the majority of violent crimes that occur within the LGBT social community in Blackpool are domestic which would suggest a need for Domestic Abuse services for this community.

Feedback from Homelessness Strategy Consultation Event.

Highlighted the need for floating support to be across all tenures and focused on 'housing related support' and not linked to a specific issue .e.g. drugs, teenage pregnancy etc. There is no floating support available for young people which is not attached to a particular tenure.

11. What are the impacts or effects for communities?

Race or ethnicity

There is no identified differential impact or effects on this group.

The providers of the new services are required to provide a comprehensive Information Plan for the services which will include the ways in which information about the service will be provided and make this information available in a variety of media, formats and languages.

Ethnicity & Race is monitored by Supporting People providers and any adverse impact which is identified will be addressed.

Fair Access, Diversity & Inclusion is an element of The Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework which the new providers will have to meet as standard.

Blackpool's Faith Equality and Diversity team are available to offer support.

Gender and Gender Variance

Replacing specialist floating support services with generic services will impact on women who are at risk of domestic abuse, who have previously been able to access a service specifically for them. There will be some women who feel safer and more comfortable accessing support from a service specifically aimed at them, with workers who have a more in-depth knowledge of the issue of domestic abuse.

However the new services will impact positively on women who are experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse but would not wish to identify themselves with a specialist domestic abuse service, or who do not considered themselves as experiencing or being at risk as domestic abuse.

Blackpool has a generic IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) service. This is a service for people who are experiencing domestic abuse and considered at high risk. Women are not deterred from accessing this service, which currently supports 150 women because it is not gender

specific.

Having two service providers will provide an element of choice which is currently not available for women escaping domestic abuse. In addition men experiencing domestic abuse will, for the first time be able to access a floating support services when at risk of domestic abuse.

Gender is monitored by Supporting People providers as are the primary support needs of Supporting People service users. The service specifications for the new services will ensure that they reflect the diversity and specific needs arising from an individual's gender, gender variance and vulnerability ensuring that services are accessible and appropriate for all, including trans. These will guarantee a level of staff knowledge, skills and experience, including knowledge of domestic abuse. The new service providers will develop and maintain regular operational links with other services, which will help to facilitate access for all women and men.

The service contracts will be monitored quarterly and undergo annual service reviews. If any adverse impacts for women experiencing or escaping domestic abuse are identified these will be addressed.

Age

Replacing specialist floating support services with generic services will impact on teenage parents, who have previously been able to access a service specifically for them. There will be some teenage parents who feel more comfortable accessing support from a service specifically aimed at them, with workers who have a more in-depth knowledge of the issue of teenage pregnancy. However, there are other services in Blackpool which will work with teenage parents around the specific issues relating to being a teenage parent, e.g. midwives, teenage pregnancy team.

The new services will impact positively on all other young people in Blackpool who currently have no access to floating support services, meaning that they will be able to access housing related support.

Frail elderly people who have been unable to access housing related floating support services will also benefit from these services.

Age is monitored by Supporting People providers as are the primary support needs of Supporting People service users. The service specifications for the new services will ensure that the new services reflect the diversity and specific needs arising from an individual's age and vulnerability. These will guarantee a level of staff knowledge, skills and experience, including knowledge of teenage pregnancy. The new service providers will have to develop and maintain regular operational links with other services, which will help to facilitate access for all young people.

The service contracts will be monitored quarterly and undergo annual service reviews. If any adverse impacts for teenage parents are identified these will be addressed.

Disability

There is no identified differential impact or effects on this group.

The services should positively impact on this group as there are currently no floating support services for people with either a learning disability, physical disability or a sensory impairment. The new service will open up provision to this group.

Disability is monitored by Supporting People providers. The service contracts will be monitored quarterly and undergo annual service reviews. If any adverse impacts for people with a disability is identified these will be addressed.

Religion or belief/ faith communities

There is no identified differential impact or effects on this group.

Were specific religious needs or requirements are identified by an individual the service will have the flexibility to accommodate these e.g. women worker, place service is provided.

Religion/belief/faith is monitored by Supporting People providers. The service contracts will be monitored quarterly and undergo annual service reviews. If any adverse religious/belief/faith impacts are identified these will be addressed

Lesbian, gay, bisexual people

The new services will positively impact on this group.

Some current services are predominately women orientated or orientated around heterosexual relationships. The current provider for domestic abuse does not offer support to male victims of domestic abuse either from heterosexual or gay relationships. Lesbian women are able to access this service, but the fact that their partner would be of the same sex could make them feel particularly vulnerable accessing a service geared to addressing needs within a heterosexual relationships. The new generic floating support services will be open to all these groups.

The service specifications for the new services will ensure that they reflect the diversity and specific needs of the LGBT community in Blackpool, ensuring that services are accessible and appropriate for all. These will guarantee a level of staff knowledge, skills and experience, including knowledge & understanding of LGBT issues. The new service providers will develop and maintain regular operational links with other services, which will help to facilitate access for all.

Sexual orientation is monitored by Supporting People providers. The service contracts will be monitored quarterly and undergo annual service reviews. If any adverse impacts are identified these will be addressed.

<i>Other socially excluded communities or groups</i>
<i>Relationships between or within communities</i>

12. What do you know about how the proposals will impact on different communities?

<p>The new services will not negatively impact the different communities but should improve access to floating support services. Some specific groups who have previously had access to specialist floating support services will now have to access support from the generic services, whilst others who have had no support services to access will now be able to access a service.</p> <p>Current specialist floating support services are inherited; developed via the transitional housing benefit route and therefore provider rather than service user led. A tendering exercise for two new generic services will mean that the floating support services will be needs led and outcome focused.</p>

STEP 3 - ASSESSING THE IMPACT

13. Is there any evidence of higher or lower take-up by any group or community, and if so, how is this explained?

<p>These are new services; there is no evidence of higher or lower take up by any group or community.</p>

14. Does the geography or demography of service users reveal anything?

<p>The geography or demography should not affect the take up of the services. Floating support services are delivered in a person's home, regardless of tenure and therefore where a person lives will not have an impact on access to this provision. The two new services will each work across the whole of Blackpool.</p>

15. Do any rules or requirements prevent any groups or communities from using or accessing the service?

The services are intended to address the specific needs of vulnerable people requiring housing related support.

16. Does the way a service is delivered/ or the policy create any additional barriers for any groups of disabled people? (DDA duties arising out of DDA 1995)

No

17. Does the way a service is delivered/ or the policy create any additional barriers for any other groups or communities, for example, due to limited income or because of the time during the week or day when the service is available? E.g. women, cultural reasons.

These services are free to service users. There is limited Supported People Funding available to provide these services which will limit the number of services users who are able to access the services. The service will be available 5 days a week 9 am – 5 pm Monday to Friday. A telephone answering machine will be in operation outside the core hours with referrals being actioned within 48 hours of receipt. To provide more flexibility to services if the need arises, further floating support may be procured on an annual basis, if it is affordable within the Supporting People budget and considered the most effect use of funds.

The new providers will be required to have a comprehensive information plan which will set out the steps the provider will take to promote the services and ensure information is available to potential service users and referral agencies.

The proposed services will deliver housing related support to vulnerable people with due regard to service user’s gender, age, range of abilities, sexual orientation, lifestyle and social, ethnic, cultural and religious background.

18. Do any of these limitations amount to unlawful discrimination?

No ✓

If yes, please explain (referring to relevant legislation) in the box below

19. If No, do they amount to a differential impact, which should be addressed?

No ✓

If yes, please give details in the boxes below.

20. If the impact or effects are adverse for any community or group, can they be defended in order to provide equality for another community under legislation or policy?

Yes No

Please give details below.

Gender Equalities Duty: The duty places the responsibility on public bodies to demonstrate that they treat men and women fairly and are taking active steps to promote gender equality. By requiring public bodies to understand the implications of their policies for women and for men, and leading to a better user focus in service development.

21. Do you have enough information to make a judgement?

Yes

If no, what information do you require, about which communities?

22. Is it possible to get the information quickly and easily or is it recommended that the collection of such data be included as an action for the action plan that will be developed? Please detail below.

STEP 4 - DEALING WITH ADVERSE OR UNLAWFUL IMPACT

23. What can be done to improve the policy, service, function or any proposals in order to reduce or remove any adverse impact or effects identified?

There are no adverse implications at present. The service will be monitored to ensure that any adverse or unlawful impact is identified and minimised.

24. What would be needed to be able to do this? Are the resources likely to be available?

A contract with a clear service specification.
Existing Supporting People monitoring arrangements are in place to monitor the services.

Key stakeholder who will inform Supporting People of any adverse impact they have experienced/identified.

25. What other support or changes would be necessary to carry out these actions?

None Identified.

STEP 5 - CONSULTING THOSE AFFECTED FOR THEIR VIEWS

26. Please outline the steps taken to test out your findings and possible courses of action below.

The services are being introduced following an Option Appraisal of Floating Support Services in Blackpool. See Step 2. During the annual service review key stakeholders, service users and staff will all be consulted.

27. What feedback or responses have you received to the findings and possible courses of action? Please give details below.

N/A

28. If you have not been able to carry out any consultation, please indicate below how you intend to test out your findings and recommended actions.

N/A

29. If you are impact assessing some proposals, what steps have been taken to ensure that stakeholders have been able to voice their opinions on the proposals or the need for change?

Stakeholders have been involved in ongoing consultation during the development of the Supporting People Five Year Strategy and the Floating Support Option Appraisal. Stakeholder will also be involved in service reviews.

STEP 6 - ACTION PLANNING

Please outline your proposed action plan below.

Issues/ adverse impact identified	Proposed action/ objectives to deal with adverse impact	Targets/ Measure	Timeframe	Responsibility	Indicate whether agreed
<p>Gender: Women escaping or at risk of domestic abuse will no longer have a specific service. Some women may not want to access a generic service.</p>	<p>Service specification will state that the new services ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they reflect the diversity and specific needs arising from an individuals gender and vulnerability. • Guarantee a level of staff knowledge, skills and experience including domestic abuse. • Develop and maintain regular operational links with other services 	<p>Service Specification drawn up.</p> <p>Services out to tender</p>	<p>February 2009</p>	<p>Craig McDowell</p>	
<p>Age: Teenage Parents will no longer have a specific service. Some teenage parents want to access a generic service.</p>	<p>Service specification will state that the new services ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they reflect the diversity and specific needs arising from an individuals age and vulnerability. • Guarantee a level of staff knowledge, skills and experience including teenage pregnancy. • Develop and maintain regular operational links with other services 	<p>Service Specification drawn up.</p> <p>Services out to tender</p>	<p>February 2009</p>	<p>Craig McDowell</p>	
<p>Ensuring ease of access to all groups</p>	<p>Service specifications will state that providers are required to provide a comprehensive information plan which will include the way in which information about the service will be provided and make this information available in a variety of media, formats and languages.</p>	<p>Service Specification drawn up.</p> <p>Service out to tender</p>	<p>February 2009</p>	<p>Craig McDowell</p>	

STEP 7 - ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING AND REVIEW

Please outline your arrangements for future monitoring and review below.

Agreed action	Monitoring arrangements	Timeframe	Responsibility	Added to Service Plan etc.
The providers of the new service will provide information about the breakdown of people who access the services.	Supporting People KPIs Returns to the SP team	Quarterly	Supporting People Principle Officer	
	SP Core Monitoring to St Andrews.	Quarterly	Supporting People Principle Officer	
	SP Outcomes Monitoring to St Andrews	Quarterly	Supporting People Principle Officer	

Date completed:

Signed:

Name:

Position: