

HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT BRIEFING NOTE

Summary - What is Housing Related Support?

Housing Related Support funds a range of services provided across Cambridgeshire which support more than 1,500 vulnerable people including those at risk of homelessness, domestic violence, alcoholism, substance abuse and mental health problems. This funding pays for dedicated support staff who are able to deliver specialist support to meet the specific needs of each vulnerable person. Costs relating to accommodation, such as rent and service charges, are **not** covered by this funding.

To ensure that people get the best outcome possible, the County is exploring new models of delivery that promote best practice. These enable the service users to receive a support service which can meet their changing needs in a positive and flexible way. This transformation work can help CCC meet its savings target by finding more effective methods that develop people's independence and therefore reduce their dependency on services.

Background:

- The County Council currently spends £7.5m on Housing Related Support (HRS) services in Cambridgeshire.
- This funding was originally part of a ring-fenced grant allocation to the County Council under the government's former Supporting People Programme. The main aim of the programme was to enable vulnerable people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness to maintain or to achieve independence through the provision of housing-related support.
- In two tier authorities, the Supporting People Grant was allocated to the County Council who administered it in partnership with the District Councils.
- The Supporting People Programme ended in 2010, the ring-fence was removed, and the funding became part of the County Council's core funding from central Government.
- Although the County Council has continued to fund these services to help a range of young people and adults, these are not statutory services and the majority of those using the services would not ordinarily be eligible for care or support from adult's or children's services.

Despite the fact that there is no statutory requirement for the county council to provide these services, we have continued to recognise the value of these services and the potential they have to contribute to the prevention agenda. This is significant given that many Councils across the country no longer have any HRS funding or are dramatically reducing their HRS budgets.

HRS is not a housing budget, its purpose is to provide support to help people address the needs which have led to them becoming homeless or being at risk of homelessness. In some cases, individuals supported have complex and enduring needs. By addressing support needs earlier through these preventative HRS

services, we can divert people away from needing crisis or higher level care and support services. District Council partners, who have the statutory duty of housing and homelessness, use and value the HRS services which the County commissions, as it assists them in preventing and alleviating homelessness for the vulnerable people in their areas.

What is the Housing Related Support Review?

HRS delivery has not been reviewed in Cambridgeshire for many years, although the circumstances that people find themselves in and the landscape within which we operate has changed dramatically. A Commissioning Review of general homelessness services was carried out in 2017, and one of the key recommendations from this review was that a full Housing Related Support (HRS) Review should be carried out across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, which would then inform the development of a Joint Supported Housing Commissioning Strategy.

The aim of the HRS review was:

- To provide an understanding of the needs of people being supported
- To understand the Strategic Relevance of all services:
 - Demand for service
 - Need for service
 - Use of service
 - Length of time people remain in services
 - Whether people move on in a positive way
 - Level of need they are targeted at and level of need they are actually supporting
- To identify opportunities for transformation of supported housing and consider new /innovative approaches to service delivery
- To identify opportunities for joint commissioning
- To determine the best procurement option for services i.e. tender and contract or grant award or spot purchase
- To ensure that commissioned services are providing best value
- To identify areas where savings could be achieved across CCC HRS services
- To gather the views of providers and partners
- To understand what outcomes services are achieving for clients

Based on findings from the review, savings have been identified to be delivered over 3 years. Where possible, savings are being generated through remodelling or redesign rather than decommissioning.

The HRS vision

One of the key goals of the review was to develop a commissioning strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough that identified new and cost effective ways to support vulnerable people and to provide them with better outcomes.

The review identified that many of the approaches currently in place are now out of date and have the potential to lock people in to a cycle of homelessness and temporary accommodation. We are looking at opportunities to explore new models and ways of working to enable us to provide the best outcomes we can with our partners and with the funding we have available. This includes adopting the internationally recognised Housing First model and using the St. Basil's Pathway to influence redesign of Young Person's HRS services in Cambridge City. These models are established best practice and have an evidence base that provides better outcomes for helping people gain greater resilience, independence and stability in their lives, taking them out of crisis. For example, the Housing First initiative aims to place people with complex needs who are homeless or rough sleeping into independent long term accommodation. By providing stable accommodation we can provide people with a foundation to begin to address their other needs and issues, giving access to flexible, personalised and non-time-limited support in their homes and communities. The County Council is working in partnership with Cambridge City Council to deliver Housing First for Cambridge. There is already a small pilot operating in the area and the intention is to build on this and explore variations on this model so it can meet different people's needs.

For more information on Housing First, please visit <https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/abouthousing-first>.

What's next?

The HRS review will implement the changes over a three year period to lessen the impact on providers and residents and to ensure we provide coordination around new developments and models. This will ensure that services commissioned are able to provide the best possible support and outcomes for people and are aligned with recognised good practice. In the medium term future we will be:

- Planning the expansion of the Housing First model
- Developing proposals for the redesign of young persons' services
- Developing a joint HRS commissioning strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

All future decisions relating to individual support arrangements will be taken by the relevant County Council Committee before being implemented. Prior to this, we will also ensure that both County and District Councillors in the areas where we are proposing to make service changes are notified of these proposals.

For further information please contact HRSReview@cambridgeshire.gov.uk