



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL CABINET
18 JANUARY 2005

Report of the Director of Policy

Supporting People Programme – Audit Commission Inspection

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To note the findings and recommendation of the Audit Commission Inspection of the Council's Supporting People Programme.
- 1.2 To agree the Action Plan for implementing the Inspection recommendations.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Audit Commission spent the week commencing 20 September 2004 inspecting Derby's Supporting People Programme. The inspection included: interviews with key staff – both the Council and its partners; focus groups of Supporting People providers, front line staff and carers; mystery shopping; and a review of all relevant documentation. The inspection team also attended a Supporting People Commissioning Board, a Supporting People Inclusive Forum and a Supporting People Core Strategy Group.
- 2.2 On 2 December 2004, the Audit Commission published their findings from the inspection. The inspection team judged the Council to be providing a fair, one star service that has promising prospects for improvement. The full report can be found on the Derby City Council website at www.derby.gov.uk then by selecting 'Living' and 'Supporting People', which can be accessed using this link: <http://www.derby.gov.uk/HiRes/Living/SupportingPeople/spaudit.htm>.
- 2.3 Derby City Council – Supporting People Programme Scoring Chart:

Prospects for improvement?

	Poor	★ Fair	★★ Good	★★★ Excellent
Excellent				
Promising		★		
Uncertain				
Poor				

'a fair service that has promising prospects for improvement'

A good service?

- 2.4 These judgements are based on the evidence obtained during the inspection and the key findings are outlined below.

What works well

- the engagement and commitment of partners is a strength
- services are of generally good quality and are achieving positive outcomes for service users
- grant management and monitoring is robust
- savings are being achieved from the review programme.

Areas for improvement

- the productivity and effectiveness of the team has been compromised by high turnover, sickness and lack of cohesion
- the Inclusive Forum has not proved to be an effective vehicle for the consultation of users
- user and carer influence on the Five Year Strategy has been limited
- the service review programme has slipped
- support for providers lacks consistency
- access to information and services is inconsistent and uncoordinated.

- 2.5 The Audit Commission report goes on to make specific recommendations that offer practical pointers for improvement. These recommendations are:

Within one month

- Issue all Supporting People team members with the notes of their achievement and development meetings in order to ensure that individual targets are drawn to their attention and to provide a benchmark for their next appraisal.
- Devise and implement an induction programme for new starters in the Supporting People team.
- Invite representative(s) of the voluntary sector to complement the membership of the Core Strategy Group.

Within two months

- Bring to a close the causes of dissatisfaction within the Supporting People team and ensure that every possible managerial step is taken that will bring about a stable and mutually supportive team.
- Involve stakeholders and users, develop a formalised consultation strategy and replace the inclusive forum with a new framework designed to meet the individual needs of service users from each client group. Ensure that carers, advocates and voluntary organisations are included.
- Complete the outstanding actions associated with the risk and contingency register, where these need to be in place.

Within six months

- Enhance and clarify access to Supporting People services by improving the quality, clarity, range and accessibility of leaflets and information for service users, stakeholders and referral agencies.
- Introduce further external moderation to enhance the review process and augment the capacity of the Supporting People team as far as possible by drawing in expertise from other departments and agencies to assist with reviews.
- Implement a systematic method to gauge the satisfaction of providers with the review process and use the feedback to improve the service.
- Develop and publish a formal appeals procedure for providers affected by annual cost savings measures, that clearly sets out the criteria by which judgements will be made.
- Help and encourage the health community to raise the profile of Supporting People by enhancing practitioners understanding of the potential impact the programme can have on health issues.
- Ensure that the office procedures are enhanced by the inclusion of task response times and target dates, which can then be monitored to ensure that quality standards are met.

2.6 Appendix 2 to this report details the actions needed to be taken to implement these recommendations. This Action Plan will be submitted to the Audit Commission and will be published on their website alongside their report.

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Background papers:	None other than those already in the public domain
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Action Plan

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 None directly arising from the report but the wider context is one of severe reductions in Government grant for Supporting People, both in 2005/06 and later years. The 2005/06 programme funding has been reduced by £570k, 5%, to £10.734m. This falls on top of previous reductions of £438k, 4.5%.
- 1.2 There are clear indications that a new formula basis of funding will result in a further reduction in grant to £9.7m by 2007/08 in cash terms, with cuts possibly continuing beyond then. If actual reductions reflect these indications, then from 2003/04 – 2007/08, there will have been a reduction in funding of £1.88m, 16.25%. Such losses mean that the review programme will need to continue to be geared to producing financial savings.

Legal

2. None directly arising from the report.

Personnel

3. The Supporting People Administration Grant for 2005/06 has been reduced from £274k to £219k which, with the lack of allowance inflation, equals a cut of £75k. At the same time, we are being given a one-off grant of £32k to help us get up-to-date on reviews.

Equalities impact

4. By implementing the Action Plan, we will be carrying out work that will further enhance the access to services and information about services that vulnerable and excluded groups have to Supporting People services – particularly those whose first language is not English. We will also be further improving our consultation mechanisms and, through these, the influence that service users, carers, and the voluntary sector have over Derby's Supporting People Programme in Derby.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

5. Implementation of the Action Plan will further the Council's objective of **protecting and supporting people**.

Recommendation		Comment	Responsible officer	Target date
1.	Issue all Supporting People team members with the notes of their achievement and development meetings in order to ensure that individual targets are drawn to their attention and to provide a benchmark for their next appraisal.	All outstanding Achievement and Development notes have now been issued. Achievement and Development fully embedded in the team culture.	Linda McCay Commissioning and Contracts Manager	Achieved
2.	Devise and implement an induction programme for new starters in the Supporting People team.	Programme has been devised and the last two starters to the team have had a comprehensive induction.	Linda McCay Commissioning and Contracts Manager	Achieved
3.	Invite representative(s) of the voluntary sector to complement the membership of the Core Strategy Group.	A representative from the CVS now sits on the Core Strategy Group.	Andy Humberstone Supporting People Manager	Achieved
4.	Bring to a close the causes of dissatisfaction within the Supporting People team and ensure that every possible managerial step is taken that will bring about a stable and mutually supportive team.	All possible managerial steps will have been put in place, but timescale for final outcomes is dependent on Council procedures.	Mark Menzies Assistant Director	Dependent on Council procedures
5.	Involve stakeholders and users, develop a formalised consultation strategy and replace the inclusive forum with a new framework designed to meet the individual needs of service users from each client group. Ensure that carers, advocates and voluntary organisations are included.	a The consultation processes involving the Supporting People Inclusive Forum have been re-defined to ensure further consultation with stakeholders and users. b Work is under way on producing a formalised consultation strategy. c Undertake a further review of the Inclusive Forum framework; including consideration of the most effective mechanism for engaging with carers, advocates and voluntary organisations.	Andy Humberstone Supporting People Manager Andy Humberstone / Chair of Inclusive Forum	a Achieved b End of January 2005 c End of March 2005
6.	Complete the outstanding actions associated with the risk and contingency register, where these need to be in place in advance of any adverse event taking place.	There are two outstanding items on the risk and contingency register relating to whistleblowing and incident investigations	Andy Humberstone Supporting People Manager	End of May 2005

Recommendation		Comment	Responsible officer	Target date
7.	Enhance and clarify access to Supporting People services by improving the quality, clarity, range and accessibility of leaflets and information for service users, stakeholders and referral agencies.	Undertake a review of all Supporting People leaflets to achieve this, in consultation with Corporate Communications.	Andy Humberstone Supporting People Manager	End of May 2005
8.	Introduce further external moderation to enhance the review process and augment the capacity of the Supporting People team as far as possible by drawing in expertise from other departments and agencies to assist with reviews.	Moderation in the review process already exists with the main commissioners of services influencing the outcomes. Consideration will be given to how these can be strengthened where reviews are particularly controversial.	Andy Humberstone Supporting People Manager	Achieved
9.	Implement a systematic method to gauge the satisfaction of providers with the review process and use the feedback to improve the service.	Supporting People review procedures will include a satisfaction survey.	Andy Humberstone Supporting People Manager	End of March 2005
10.	Develop and publish a formal appeals procedure for providers affected by annual cost savings measures, that clearly sets out the criteria by which judgements will be made.	An appeals process for reviews already exists. We will further improve our processes for publicising how financial decisions taken by the Commissioning Board that affect individual providers can be appealed against.	Andy Humberstone Supporting People Manager	End of March 2005
11.	Help and encourage the health community to raise the profile of Supporting People by enhancing practitioners understanding of the potential impact the programme can have on health issues.	Develop an induction programme for commissioners within the health community.	Andy Humberstone Supporting People Manager	Ongoing
12.	Ensure that the office procedures are enhanced by the inclusion of task response times and target dates, which can then be monitored to ensure that quality standards are met.	Review procedures will be reviewed to reflect customer service standards.	Andy Humberstone Supporting People Manager	End of May 2005