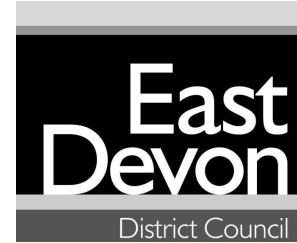


Agenda Item: 11

Housing Review Board

25 June 2009

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Research into the need for mobile housing support services in the private sector

Summary

This report presents the findings of research, funded by the Supporting People programme, into the need for housing related support services in the private sector and other tenures that do not currently have access the type of service provided for sheltered housing tenants.

We have identified a significant need for mobile support services in the private sector and have proposed some ideas in relation to how this need for housing related support might be met.

Recommendation

- 1. To consider the report on the research into the need for mobile housing related support to the private sector, and**
- 2. Invite further proposals on how the recommendations in the report might be taken forward once the views of the Supporting People team are known.**

a) Reasons for Recommendation

To receive the results of our research and determine the way forward if we are to implement the research findings.

b) Alternative Options

Not to act on the research findings.

c) Risk Considerations

That the proposals are not supported by the Supporting People team and they do not wish to progress the recommendations contained in our report.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

Adopting the recommendations in the report will represent a variation of our existing approach to providing housing related support, which currently is only to council tenants. There will be budgetary consideration and these are outlined in the research report.

e) Date for Review of Decision

Once the Supporting People Team have responded to the research report.

1 Research project

- 1.1 In early 2008 we commenced a research project on behalf of the Supporting People team following a successful bid for a grant to investigate whether and how the housing related support services currently provided in sheltered housing could be offered more widely where clients have support needs. This proposal is consistent with the Support People

Strategy, which seeks to provide support services where they are needed irrespective of tenure.

1.2 We were allocated £35,000 to undertake this research and appointed Lee Clayton to carry out the investigation and report her findings.

1.3 Our original objectives set out in the proposal were as follows:

This project builds on the existing East Devon Home Safeguard service with an aim of extending housing related support to vulnerable people living in private accommodation.

The Home Safeguard system currently has three elements:

1. Dispersed alarms for private & public sector clients;
2. Mobile Support Officers and Scheme Managers supporting public sector clients; and
3. 'Out of hours' cover for local emergencies.

Over the last few years the Home Safeguard service has been following through its business and marketing plan to maximise the availability of the 3 elements above. Its range of private sector clients served by dispersed alarms has greatly increased; it also serves other organisations, as a call centre, for 1 and 3 above. The service provided to tenants under 2 has been modernised and transformed into a more professional service without diminishing the 'good neighbour' aspects of the service so highly valued by clients. A small market has been identified for the temporary installation of alarms e.g. for people upon first discharge from hospital or other periods of vulnerability such as threats of domestic violence.

There is an opportunity to develop the Mobile Support Officer and Scheme Manager service to provide floating housing support to new markets in the private sector, however, this will require a full business analysis, service development proposals and market testing, and a review of the investment profile required to capture any market.

The type of service envisaged would be to widen existing housing support to private sector clients to include not just an alarm system but other menus of support e.g. regular phone contact (e.g. to remind clients to take medicine), or regular visits. As well as providing housing support the operatives have an excellent track record of 'sign posting' to other services and handling emergency situations.

Funding is required to carry out a full business appraisal of this proposal (which is not currently part of the local authorities remit) and to plan the detail of how to extend the service into the private sector and determining if this can be made at least self-financing. Thus there is a clear exit strategy for project funding.

The bid meets the evaluation criteria as follows:

1. This is a new approach to working in the private sector in East Devon building on existing skills and service provision.
2. This project is all about supporting people to live independently in their own homes.
3. The project will evidence the business opportunities for extending existing successful services in the 'not for profit' sector, with reduced need for new overheads.
4. The results of this project will be evidence for others to use and provide potential models for application elsewhere.

5. The Council have committed no matching funding as the development of this business may be socially beneficial, but is non-mandatory and unlikely to provide any reliable source of income.
6. The project is directly in line with Supporting People objectives as is clearly for one year only with a definite end point.
7. The funding will be for staffing costs only and involve employment of staffing for this project alone. There is a clear end point where the report and action plan is produced.

The bid, if supported, will simply extend a successful service already provided for public sector clients, to vulnerable clients living in the private sector, enabling them to live independently in their own homes. This will plug a significant gap in local Supporting People services. A full business appraisal will ensure that income is generated to meet future revenue costs.

- 1.4 The research has now been completed and the final report has been reproduced in **annex 1**. The report is a summary of the extensive research and follows on from an interim report, which was presented to the sheltered housing TaFF in January 2009 to inform their work.

2. Conclusions and findings

- 2.1 The report has been sent to the Supporting People team who commissioned the research. We are awaiting their formal response and an indication of how they might want the proposals taken forward, if at all.
- 2.2 One of the key recommendations in the report is that – ***“Support services should be provided on a floating support basis so that support can be focused on those living in sheltered housing that are assessed as needing support , and using any spare capacity to provide support to older people in the wider community”***. We have indicated a willingness to use unclaimed Supporting People Grant on our contracts (due to voids or ineligible residents) to fund an embryonic service for private sector clients.
- 2.3 As I understand matters we could establish a housing related support service providing support to the private sector where private sector clients pay for the service. If we want to provide the service to people without the means to pay this would need to be commissioned by the Supporting People team.
- 2.4 We have quantified and explored what was anecdotally known as a gap in the housing related support market. Once we have a response from the Supporting People team we will be clear whether we or another provider might fill this gap.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications requiring comment.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations.

Consultation on Reports to the Executive

None.

Background Papers

- ❑ Bid for Supporting People funding for research into the needs of housing related support in the private sector.

- Supporting People Older Persons Commissioning Strategy, DCC.

John Golding
Head of Housing and Social Inclusion.

Housing Review Board
25 June 2009.