

# Finance and Resources Committee

10am, Thursday, 28 November 2013

## Extension of Homelessness Contracts

Item number	7.10 (a)
Report number	
Wards	ALL

### Links

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Council outcomes	<a href="#">C09</a> , <a href="#">C10</a> , <a href="#">C11</a> , <a href="#">C13</a> , <a href="#">C14</a> , <a href="#">C16</a> , <a href="#">C23</a> , <a href="#">C25</a> and <a href="#">C26</a>
Single Outcome Agreement	<a href="#">S02</a> and <a href="#">S04</a>

### Mark Turley

Director of Services for Communities

Contact: Mairi Keddie, Planning, Partnerships and Commissioning Manager

E-mail: [mairi.keddie@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:mairi.keddie@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 529 7087

## Extension of Homelessness Contracts

### Summary

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This report requests approval to extend homelessness contracts due to expire in March 2014 in order to allow further time for the implementation of the Homelessness Prevention Commissioning Plan (the Plan).

Contracts for the majority of commissioned services were extended by Finance and Budget Committee on 17 January 2013 to the end of March 2014. The Plan sets out the need to prevent homelessness wherever possible, to ensure people spend as little time as possible without a home if they do become homeless and that resettlement is effective and supports people to live sustainable, independent lives. These services are all within the scope of the implementation of the Plan.

Commissioned services have delivered savings of £6 million since 2008/9, largely through efficiencies of service. Services for Communities currently has a commissioning budget of £16 million with an additional £7 million having transferred to Health and Social Care in 2012/13.

This report outlines the potential contracting arrangements for delivering re-shaped advice and support services.

### Recommendations

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The Committee is asked to:

1. Approve the extension of the contracts for 83 commissioned homelessness and other services until 31 March 2015.
2. Note that contract extensions will include an appropriate break clause to give notice in the event of changes due to procurement and savings requirements.

### Measures of success

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The Plan will be measured by its success in reducing the number of homelessness assessments, the length of time people stay in temporary accommodation and the number of people who become homeless for a second time.

The success of these contract extensions will be measured by the number of people assisted by housing support. A number of other individual measures of success are in place for each contract.

## Financial impact

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The extension of contracts can be accommodated within existing budgets. The Council's budget setting process contains a savings proposal to reduce the commissioning budget by £2.3 million over three years, starting in 2014/15. Break clauses will be included in contract extensions to allow for the implementation of these potential savings.

## Equalities impact

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An Equalities and Rights Impact Assessment (ERIA) was completed for the Plan. The extension of existing contracts will ensure that current levels of service remain in place. This will help to ensure good relations between the Council and providers of services to clients, many of whom are within the protected characteristics. It will advance equality of opportunity by providing services which help people to avoid the crisis of homelessness or to resettle after a crisis. This will have a positive impact on the Single Outcome Agreement objective of improving health and wellbeing. A further ERIA will be carried out for savings proposals and reshaping of services.

All services will continue to be monitored to ensure there is no negative impact on or discrimination against clients within the protected characteristics.

## Sustainability impact

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The proposal in this report will help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh by benefiting the third sector.

## Consultation and engagement

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The agreement of the Plan followed extensive consultation with providers and users on the principles within the Plan. A Checkpoint Group oversees communication and consultation.

The advice and support proposals put to Health, Social Care and Housing Committee on 12 November 2013 have been developed following extensive collaborative consultation. This included 36 drop in sessions, 27 feedback sessions, 17 service user focus groups and a number of specific sessions with groups of providers in addition to questionnaires. The checkpoint reviewed the consultation and proposals at two meetings. A similar process will be followed for the reshaping of other services.

## Background reading / external references

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[Homelessness Prevention Commissioning Plan. Policy and Strategy Committee, 6 September 2011](#)

[Extension of homelessness contracts. Finance and Budget Committee 17 January 2013](#)

[Homelessness Prevention Commissioning Plan – Update and Proposals for Advice and Report. Health Social Care & Housing Committee 12 November 2013](#)

## Extension of Homelessness Contracts

### 1. Background

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- 1.1 The Homelessness Prevention Commissioning Plan (the Plan) was agreed by Policy and Strategy Committee on 6 September 2011 and sets out the need to prevent homelessness wherever possible, to ensure people spend as little time as possible without a home if they do become homeless and that resettlement is effective and supports people to live sustainable, independent lives.
- 1.2 On 17 January 2013, the Finance and Budget Committee agreed to the extension of homelessness contracts for the majority of currently commissioned services for a further year, until the end of March 2014. This was done in order to allow time to develop service proposals to take forward the aims of the Plan. The report noted that implementation of the Plan would not be complete until 2015.
- 1.3 Four services were subject to review and Committee granted part year extensions to allow these reviews to complete. Following the reviews these services were subsequently extended to 31 March 2015 by the Finance and Budget Committee on 29 August 2013.

### 2. Main report

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- 2.1 There are a total of 87 contracts for the delivery of the Plan with a total value of approximately £15 million. Six of these are formal contracts awarded after a tendering process in 2008/9. There is provision within these contracts to extend to a latest date of 26 April 2015. Four contracts of the 87 have already been extended to 31 March 2015 by the Finance and Budget Committee on 29 August 2013.
- 2.2 The contracts for the remaining 83 services have been rolled forward annually since 2003 when many of them commenced funding under the Supporting People programme. This includes services providing housing support, advice and a range of supported accommodation. The service provided by Care and Repair is also included in the scope of this report.
- 2.3 The implementation of the Plan involves a number of workstreams which include advice, visiting support, homeless crisis and complex needs, young people, temporary accommodation, addiction services, domestic abuse, tenancy resettlement, access to the private rented sector, and services for

older people. Extensions to March 2015 allow time to ensure service proposals are developed and agreed by Committee.

- 2.4 These services are likely to be ready to commence during 2014/15 although the actual start date cannot be determined until the Committee has considered this report. The 2014/15 contract extensions for advice and support will therefore have a clause which allows them to end with four months notice and be replaced by revised contracts during 2014/15.
- 2.5 Depending on the outcome of consultation on the proposals within the Plan, contracts in some of the workstreams may require a further extension beyond March 2015, to enable the transition to new services. Requests for any further extensions will be reported back to Committee.

### **Services Subject to Contract Extension**

- 2.6 The projects subject to contract extension are contained within a number of services areas. These are listed below.

### **Advice and Support**

- 2.7 A report on the commissioning proposals for advice and support services was considered by Health, Social Care and Housing Committee on 12 November 2013. This report outlined a more preventative approach to homelessness support and included proposals for mediation and befriending services.
- 2.8 These proposals have been developed following extensive consultation with service users and providers, overseen by the Homelessness Prevention Checkpoint Group chaired by Ella Simpson from EVOG. A copy of the Checkpoint Group's consultation report is attached at Appendix 2.
- 2.9 The report set out two options for commissioning these services and the respective risks with each approach. These options were to end existing contracts and tender for the new services with immediate effect or to work with existing providers to reshape existing services prior to tendering.
- 2.10 The Committee agreed that its favoured option was to work with existing providers to take forward these proposals and allow the Council, providers and service users to review these services and make modifications during the pilot period.
- 2.11 The decision of Health, Social Care and Housing Committee is the subject of a separate report on the agenda of this Committee.

### **Homeless Crisis and Complex Needs**

- 2.12 Work has commenced to develop a more multi-agency approach to the provision of services for those who are in immediate crisis, who regularly sleep rough and those who are at risk of homelessness but also need multi agency involvement. This is being carried out in conjunction with partners in Health and Social Care, Edinburgh Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (EADP) and NHS Lothian. The aim is to complete this by April 2015.

## **Young People's Services**

- 2.13 Joint work is underway with Children and Families to commission accommodation and support services for young people in line with the Councils corporate parenting role. This will also be considered as part of the review of homeless services which will aim to ensure that vulnerable young people, including those have been Looked After, are prevented from entering the homelessness route and can access an appropriate range of services to meet their needs. The aim is to complete this by April 2015.

## **Temporary Accommodation**

- 2.14 It is essential to ensure the most effective use is made of the available temporary accommodation spaces to help the Council in its duty towards homelessness in particular to accommodate single people as an alternative to Bed and Breakfast. To aid this, both Council temporary accommodation and external services are now working to the same 95% occupancy target. Contract renegotiations will aim to maximise the Council's access to these services and the intention is to have these renegotiated contracts in place from April 2014.
- 2.15 The commissioning of non-specialist supported accommodation services will be included in this workstream. Although these are not direct access, they provide a range of short to medium stay accommodation for people who are homeless.
- 2.16 Temporary accommodation is under considerable strain. Although homeless presentations have gone down, the length of stay has tended to increase. The pressures of welfare reform are significant. In addition to a potential increase in demand, reforms are likely to mean that less of the cost of temporary accommodation is met by benefits.
- 2.17 Work is underway to look at how temporary accommodation can be restructured to reduce costs and improve the use of services. Options are also being considered to help to reduce the need for people to go into temporary accommodation. This work is due to be completed by April 2014.

## **Addiction Services**

- 2.18 A review of these services is currently underway as a joint exercise with EADP. The aim is to complete this by the end of December 2013.

## **Domestic Abuse**

- 2.19 Joint work will be undertaken with Health and Social Care and Children and Families to commission accommodation and support services. Current service provision requires little change and this area is not considered a priority for re-commissioning. Such changes to services as required will be completed by April 2015.

## **Establishing a Home and Access to the Private Rented Sector**

- 2.20 These services provide furnishing and other services to help households settle in a new home after homelessness and access to the private rented sector respectively. They were contracted following a tender process in 2008/9. While these service areas remain a high priority, they will be subject to review in preparation for retendering with new services required to be in place by April 2015.

### **Governance**

- 2.21 A Checkpoint Group, which involves providers, service users, trade unions and other stakeholders is in place to oversee consultation and communication on the Plan. The Checkpoint Group has met regularly and has provided valuable oversight for the development of proposals for advice and support services. This process will continue as the various workstreams are implemented.
- 2.22 Proposals for reshaping and procuring services will be reported to the Health, Social Care and Housing Committee as appropriate.

### **Risks**

- 2.23 There is a risk of challenge to the renewal of the contracts which have not been previously tendered as the documentation has no formal provision for extension. Such challenge could come from providers interested in delivering a similar range of services. However, this should be minimal because there are proposals and timescales in place for developing new services.
- 2.24 There is a small risk that some current providers may not wish to renew contracts. As these will be on similar terms as previous contracts, this is considered a low risk. This risk could be mitigated by increasing other contracts to cover any withdrawal if necessary.
- 2.25 The report 'Revenue and Capital Budget Framework' to the Council on 19 September 2013 proposed savings of £2.3 million to the commissioning budget over three years, starting in 2014/15. Provision will be made in these contract extensions to amend or terminate the contracts earlier as required. This can be achieved through the insertion of a break clause within the extension.
- 2.26 Current commissioned service providers have been informed of the budget consultation process. Consultation is being undertaken with them to seek their views on how these budget reductions can be achieved. In the event of savings to the commissioning budget being confirmed, break clauses within contracts will allow strategic decisions to be made.

### 3. Recommendations

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- 3.1 The Committee is asked to:
1. Approve the extension of the contracts for 83 commissioned homelessness and other services until 31 March 2015.
  2. Note that contract extensions will include an appropriate break clause to give notice in the event of changes due to procurement and savings requirements.

**Mark Turley**

Director of Services for Communities

### Coalition pledges

- P8. Make sure the city's people are well-housed, including encouraging developers to build residential communities, starting with brownfield sites
- P11. Encourage the development of co-operative housing arrangements
- P12. Work with health, police and third sector agencies to expand existing and effective drug and alcohol treatment programmes
- P25. Introduce a "living wage" (currently set at £7.20) for Council employees, encourage its adoption by Council subsidiaries and contractors and its wider development
- P30. Continue to maintain a sound financial position including long-term financial planning
- P33. Strengthen Neighbourhood Partnerships and further involve local people in decisions on how Council resources are used
- P36. Develop improved partnership working across the Capital and with the voluntary sector to build on the "Total Craigroyston" model
- P38. Promote direct payments in health and Social Care

### Council outcomes

- C09. Edinburgh residents are able to access job opportunities
- C10. Improved health and reduced inequalities
- C11. Preventative and personalised support in place
- C13. People are supported to live at home
- C14. Communities have the capacity to help support people
- C16. Well-housed – People live in a good quality home that is affordable and meets their needs in a well managed
- C23. Well engaged and well informed – Communities and individuals are empowered and supported to improve local outcomes and foster a sense of community
- C25. The Council has efficient and effective services that deliver on objectives
- C26. The Council engages with stakeholders and works in partnership to improve services and deliver on agreed objectives

**Single Outcome Agreement** S02. Edinburgh's citizens experience improved health and wellbeing, with reduced inequalities in health

S04. Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Providers and Services

Appendix 2 – Homelessness Prevention  
Commissioning Plan Checkpoint Group Report:  
Advice and Support – Collaborative Consultation

## Appendix 1

### Providers and services

<b><u>Workstream</u></b>	<b><u>No. contracts</u></b>	<b><u>Current value</u></b>
Advice and Support	18	£3,682,886
Crisis and Complex	8	£2,072,708
Temporary Accommodation	24	£4,791,656
Domestic Abuse	6	£876,661
Young Peoples Services	11	£845,250
Older People Services	16	£1,439,074
Addictions	2	£406,095
Resettlement/ PRS	2	£526,503
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£14,640,833</b>

# Homelessness Prevention Commissioning Plan Checkpoint Group

## Advice and Support - Collaborative Consultation

**Item number**

**Report number**

**Wards**

ALL

### Links

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**Coalition pledges**

[P08](#), [P11](#), [P12](#), [P25](#), [P30](#), [P33](#), [P36](#) and [P38](#)

**Council outcomes**

[C09](#), [C10](#), [C11](#), [C13](#), [C14](#), [C16](#), [C23](#), [C25](#) and [C26](#)

**Single Outcome**

[S02](#) and [S04](#)

**Agreement**

### Mairi Keddie

Planning, Partnerships and Commissioning Manager

Contact: Mairi Keddie

E-mail: [mairi.keddie@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:mairi.keddie@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 529 7087

# Executive summary

## Advice and Support – Collaborative Consultation

### Summary

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The remit of the Check Point Group includes advising the Council on the consultation processes for implementation plans. This includes the consultation on Advice and Support.

The purpose of this report is to collate all of the feedback that providers and service users have given during the collaborative consultation process used to deliver the advice and support work stream. This will allow the Check Point Group to verify the consultation process, feedback and support for the proposed shape of services.

The feedback has been summarised in a presentation to the Edinburgh Homelessness Forum in August 2013 (Appendix 3).

The key points are:

- Providers were positive about the proposed reshaping for advice and support.
- Providers were positive about the collaborative consultation process.
- There was no clear consensus on how services should be procured. Existing providers identified benefits and risks of negotiation and tendering.

The Check Point Group confirmed:

- That the consultation process has been rigorous and inclusive.
- That feedback has been appropriately taken into consideration.
- That there is broad support for the proposed shape of services.

The group also recommended:

- There is a corporate responsibility for ensuring linkages between services funded through different departments.
- That outcomes should be linked across services.

### Equalities impact

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An Equalities and Rights Impact Assessment was completed for the Plan and a further assessment has been carried out in respect of the proposals for Advice and Support services.

The re-commissioning of advice and housing support services for people that are homeless or threatened with homelessness will have a positive impact in that they will receive help to find and retain a home, overcome poverty and access specialist

health services. This will support the Council's duty to eliminate harassment of people who are homeless. This will apply to all protected characteristics given homelessness can affect them all but especially people with a disability, addictions or from a minority ethnic background because the reshaping of services will help to ensure that the full range of protected characteristics are covered.

If current services are decommissioned, there is the potential for a negative impact on service users. However they would be properly supported to either find alternative provision or make the transition to new commissioned services. This would impact across all protected characteristics.

### **Background reading / external references**

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[Homelessness Prevention Commissioning Plan. Policy and Strategy Committee, 6 September 2011](#)

## Advice and Support – Collaborative Consultation

### 1. Background

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1.1 Stakeholders involved in the collaborative consultation developed the housing support and advice services that are needed to prevent homelessness in Edinburgh.

Providers have said that the initial proposals were “*a range of very exciting ideas about a different approach to preventing homelessness*”.

1.2 There are 17 existing services. The commissioned services that are likely to be included in the work stream provide visiting support to around 1,200 people per annum and advice to around 3,800 people per annum.

1.3 The questions considered during the collaborative consultation included:

- How should advice, visiting support, befriending (and similar) services be delivered?
- What advice and support should services give people to prevent homelessness, help someone get settled accommodation and help someone get the life skills they need to live independently?
- How do we prioritise who gets advice and support?
- What life skills do people need to live independently?

1.4 The consultation did not cover the high level outcomes as these have previously been approved following extensive consultation during the development of the Homelessness Prevention Commissioning Plan. This consultation was carried out in 2011 and included over 800 responses that helped develop the outcomes for services.

1.5 The work streams for domestic abuse, young people, complex needs and crisis outreach and accommodation will be dealt with through other work streams.

1.6 The consultation for Advice and Support ran between February and October 2013 and included current and potential providers as well as service users and other stakeholders.

1.7 Feedback on the proposals and the consultation approach was positive. Providers were generally met on a one to one basis to ensure that they were able to give their views on the proposals or propose alternative models in confidence. Services approached the process in an open and collaborative way that shaped all aspects of the service specifications.

## 2. Main report

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### Proposed Model

2.1 Providers were positive about the proposals for advice and support:

*“We are impressed with the proposed services and believe the new provision will provide comprehensive support in the city.”*

2.2 Following the extensive collaborative consultation the service specifications proposed are:

- Advice – One city wide service
  - Around 3,800 people pa across the city.
  - Advice - information, signposting, casework and advocacy.
- Mediation - One city wide service
  - For people at risk of homelessness.
  - Mediation between members of the household, neighbours or tenant/landlord.
  - Particularly important for young people.
- Food Preparation and Budgeting - One city wide service
  - For people at risk of homelessness.
  - Help people develop the skills to budget and prepare food.
- Neighbourhood based services - Six services
  - Around 1,200 people in Edinburgh.
  - Visiting housing support - short-term to resolve immediate housing crisis.
  - Advice - information, signposting and casework.
  - Preventative/low level support (like befriending).
    - not in immediate crisis.
    - need support for further settlement.

### Collaborative Consultation with Current and Potential Providers

2.3 A summary of the feedback from the Consultation Process went to the Check Point Group in the form of a presentation on 12 July 2013. A draft version of this report was approved by the Group on 20 September 2013.

2.4 The consultation was approved by the Check Point Group and this is recorded in the minutes.

2.5 Subsequent sections of this report summarise the collaborative consultation process and anonymised feedback from participants.

### Steps in the Collaborative Consultation

2.6 Providers were positive about the collaborative consultation that was carried out. Some of the positive comments include:

*“the process was open and transparent and gave our organisation the opportunity to put forward our ideas and to discuss them fully with the team”*

*“this has been a genuine exploration and dialogue - very different to many 'box ticking' exercises!”*

*“Seemed like every effort was made to involve us”*

*“I would applaud the Council for taking this approach – throughout”*

2.7 A Prior Information Notice (PIN) was issued on 19 February 2013 inviting interested organisations with appropriate experience to outline their views on the project. 24 expressions of interest were received. This included eleven services that were likely to be within the scope of the Advice and Support work stream.

2.8 The steps in the consultation were:

- Drop in Sessions
- Feedback Sessions
- Soft Market Testing Questionnaire
- A working group on the lifeskills matrix
- Consultation on the Collaborative Consultation Process
- Consultation with SHAPE and other interested providers on Procurement Options

### **Drop in Sessions**

2.9 All of the organisations that replied to the PIN and all of the services that were likely to be within the scope of the Advice and Support work stream were invited to attend a drop in session to get information about the proposals and give informal feedback.

2.10 34 drop in sessions were held between 20 February and 12 May 2013. The drop in sessions were carried out on a one to one basis.

2.11 Attendees were given background information about advice and support and information on potential proposals for the model, measures and payments for advice, visiting housing support and low level preventative support services like befriending.

2.12 The background information hand outs included:

- The Homelessness Prevention Commissioning Plan
- An overview of the implementation of the Homelessness Prevention Commissioning Plan with likely work streams
- Draft outlines of the potential services
- A draft of the life skills matrix
- A summary of Self Directed Support and the eligibility of potential services for Direct Payments

- Draft Payment options

### **Feedback Sessions**

- 2.13 All of the organisations that replied to the PIN and all of the services that were likely to be within the scope of the Advice and Support work stream were invited to attend a feedback session to give formal feedback about the initial proposals or propose alternative models.
- 2.14 28 services attended one to one feedback session between 3 April and 17 May 2013. This included all of the services that are potentially included in the advice and support procurement work stream.

### **Feedback Sessions - Advice**

- 2.15 The majority of participants agreed with the proposal that advice should be a 'universal' service for anyone who is homeless or potentially threatened by homelessness. A minority suggested that access to advice should be prioritised but did not suggest how this should be done.
- 2.16 It was clarified with providers that the draft service outlines were descriptions of the type of advice that could be offered rather than a prescription of the only advice that can be offered. If services offer other types of advice this would be outwith the scope of the contract.
- 2.17 It was made clear that every commissioned service will be expected to refer to other advice and support services where necessary.
- 2.18 Some providers suggested that advice services could take on a 'triage' role referring people for appropriate advice or support.
- 2.19 No one suggested any of the proposed scope should be removed.
- 2.20 Some providers suggested clarifications to the scope including (with changes in *italics*) and these have been incorporated in the proposals:
- money/debt advice (*including rent, utility bills and fuel poverty*)
  - benefits advice (*including changes due to welfare reform*)
  - tenancy issues (*including leases, repairs, deposits, notices*)
  - housing options (*including private renting, social renting, owner occupation, shared ownership, mid-market rent, supported accommodation, sharing, subletting and managing moves due to changes in welfare benefits*)
  - relationship breakdown (with household, neighbours *and landlords*)
- 2.21 Most participants agreed with the proposed measures but suggested:
- Services will not achieve 100% success and that there needs to be agreed targets that should apply across all providers

- There will be a need to review the targets after the first year of contracts to ensure targets are realistic, challenging and correct. Any changes after the review should apply to all providers
- There was concern that there was a lack of supply of settled accommodations for example; (Short Assured, Assured, Short Scottish Secure Tenancy, Scottish Secure Tenancy and Supported Accommodation) which could make it difficult to achieve outcomes
- Some services wanted background statistics on demographics and current performance to inform and tender submission

2.22 The above points will be incorporated within the proposals and the following point will be explored in more detail for practicality:

- Some providers said that there should be a measure of maintaining accommodation although this will impact on payments.

### **Feedback Sessions - Visiting Housing Support**

2.23 There was support for the need for housing support services and for the proposals developed. The majority of participants agreed with the proposed access criteria for visiting housing support. However, a minority of providers suggested that the criteria should also reflect the person's age, mental health etc. There were no suggestions about how this could be practically implemented.

2.24 It was clarified with providers that the draft service outlines were descriptions of the type of visiting housing support that could be offered rather than a prescription of the only visiting housing support that can be offered. If services offer other types of support this would be outwith the scope of the contract.

2.25 It was made clear that every commissioned service will be expected to refer to other advice and support services where necessary.

2.26 No one suggested any part of the proposed scope should be removed.

2.27 Some providers suggested clarifications to the scope (with changes in *italics*) and these changes have been incorporated in the proposals:

- resolving and preventing homelessness
- providing support required by the Housing (Scotland) 2010 Act
- financial and budgeting skills
- money/debt advice (*including rent, utility bills and fuel poverty*)
- benefits issues(*including changes due to welfare reform*)
- tenancy issues (*including leases, repairs, deposits, notices*)
- housing options(*including private renting, social renting, owner occupation, shared ownership, mid-market rent, supported accommodation, sharing, subletting and managing moves due to changes in welfare benefits*)
- relationship breakdown (with household, neighbours and *landlords*)
- links to employment (*including volunteering, education and training*)

- independent living skills (*as set out in the Life Skills Matrix*)
- being an active citizen (*as set out in the Life Skills Matrix*).

2.28 Most participants agreed with the proposed measures but suggested:

- Services will not achieve 100% success and there needs to be an agree target that should apply across all providers
- There will be a need to review targets after the first year of contracts to ensure these are realistic, challenging and correct. Any changes after the review should apply to all providers
- There was concern at the ? lack of supply of settled accommodation (Short Assured, Assured, Short Scottish Secure Tenancy, Scottish Secure Tenancy and Supported Accommodation) within Edinburgh.
- Some services wanted background statistics on demographics and current performance to inform and tender submission (which will be provided as part of the commissioning process).

2.29 The above points will be incorporated within the proposals and the following point will be explored in more detail for practicality:

- Some providers said that there should be a measure of maintaining accommodation although this will impact on payments

### **Feedback Sessions - Preventative/Low Level Support (like befriending) - Formerly referred to as Befriending plus**

2.30 Most organisations supported the development of this type of service but said that 'Befriending Plus' was not a good description of the service. It is suggested that it is renamed Preventative/Low Level Support (like befriending).

2.31 The majority of participants agreed with the proposed access criteria for preventative low level support. However, most services also said that the person would have to be appropriate for a service particularly if it was provided by volunteers or unpaid peers.

2.32 It was clarified with providers that the draft service outlines were descriptions of the type of preventative low level support that could be offered rather than a prescription of the only support that can be offered. If services offer other types of support this would be outwith the scope of the contract.

2.33 It was made clear that every commissioned service will be expected to refer to other advice and support services where necessary.

2.34 Most people suggested the proposed scope for preventative/low level support should be changed so the services prevent homelessness crisis rather than resolve and prevent homelessness crisis. This point will be incorporated within the proposals.

2.35 Some providers suggested clarifications to the scope including (with changes in *italics*) and these have been included in the proposals:

- social inclusion
- developing independent living skills (*as set out in the Life Skills Matrix*)
- avoiding homelessness (*preventing homelessness crisis*).

2.36 Most participants agreed with the proposed measures but suggested:

- Services will not achieve 100% success and there needs to be an agreed target that should apply across all providers
- There will be a need to review that targets after the first year of contracts to ensure that these are realistic, challenging and correct. Any changes after the review should apply to all providers
- Some services wanted background statistics on demographics and current performance to inform and tender submission.

2.37 The above points will be incorporated within the proposals and the following point will be explored in more detail for practicality:

- Some providers said that there should be a measure of maintaining accommodation although this will impact on payments

### **Feedback Sessions - Mediation**

2.38 The majority of participants agreed with the proposal to develop mediation services and the proposed access criteria (anyone homeless or threatened by homelessness). However, most services also said that the person would have to be appropriate for a service particularly if it was provided by volunteers or unpaid peers.

2.39 It was made clear that every commissioned service will be expected to refer to other advice and support services where necessary.

2.40 No one suggested any of the proposed scope should be removed.

2.41 There was broad agreement that this service should be mediation to help people avoid becoming homelessness.

2.42 Most participants agreed with the proposed measures but suggested:

- Services will not achieve 100% success and there needs to be agreed targets which should apply across all providers
- There will be a need to review targets after the first year of contracts to ensure that these are realistic, challenging and correct. Any changes after the review should apply to all providers
- Some providers said that there should be a measure of maintaining accommodation although this will impact on payments
- Some services wanted background statistics on demographics and current performance to inform and tender submission.

2.43 The above points will be incorporated within the proposals and the following point will be explored in more detail for practicality:

- Should consider 'good outcomes' like leaving the family home in a constructive manner.

### **Feedback Sessions - Food Preparation and Budgeting**

- 2.44 The majority of participants agreed with the proposed access criteria for food preparation and budgeting (anyone homeless or threatened by homelessness). However, most services also said that the person would have to be appropriate for a service particularly if it was provided by volunteers or unpaid peers.
- 2.45 It was made clear that every commissioned service will be expected to refer to other advice and support services where necessary.
- 2.46 No one suggested any of the proposed scope should be removed.
- 2.47 There was broad agreement that this service should be basic food budgeting and preparation to help people avoid becoming homelessness.
- 2.48 Most participants agreed with the proposed measures but suggested the following points that will be incorporated within the proposals:
- Services will not achieve 100% success and that there need to be agreed targets that should apply across all providers
  - There will be a need to review targets after the first year of contracts to ensure that these are realistic, challenging and correct. Any changes after the review should apply to all providers
  - Some services wanted background statistics on demographics and current performance to inform and tender submission.

### **Feedback Sessions - How Delivered**

- 2.49 There was broad consensus on how services should be delivered. Specifically:
- City wide Advice service - providing types I, II and III advice
  - City wide Mediation service
  - City wide Food Budgeting and Preparation service
  - Neighbourhood based Visiting Housing Support and Preventative/Low level support (like befriending) and types I and II advice
- 2.50 Alternatively, a small minority of views suggested that advice should be split with a specialist city wide advice service for court work and neighbourhood based type I and II advice. Similarly, a small minority of views suggested that visiting housing support should be city wide.

### **Feedback Sessions - Life Skills Matrix**

- 2.51 Some providers said that measures would be needed to ensure that support to gain life skills is done in a consistent and 'good' way. It was suggested that life skills training should be certified and lead to a recognised qualification.

- 2.52 A working group was set up to look at life skills. This is included later in the report.

### **Feedback Sessions - Cherry picking**

- 2.53 Some providers said that measures would be needed to avoid cherry picking. It was suggested that access to services would need to be monitored and evidence of 'cherry picking' should be considered a breach of contract.

### **Feedback Sessions - Costs and Payments**

- 2.54 Most services favoured a move from contracts based on hours of delivered housing support to payments based on people and the outcomes they achieve.
- 2.55 There was concern that the measures may not be correct and many suggested that there is a need for a review after year one to ensure measures are correct.
- 2.56 There was also concern that smaller providers would not be able to deal with cash flow shortage in year one. It was suggested that this risk could be addressed through a short term 'loan' or 'float'.
- 2.57 Most providers favour the option of 50% of the money paid up front and 50% of the money paid for achievement of outcomes.
- 2.58 Very few providers made alternative suggestions as to how these services should be funded. One or two providers suggested return to block contracts and that failure to meet targets should result in a service review and potentially ending the contracts.
- 2.59 Two providers were opposed to payment for people and outcomes in any form.

### **Soft Market Testing Questionnaire**

- 2.60 All of the organisations that replied to the PIN and all of the services that were likely to be within the scope of the Advice and Support work stream were invited to respond to a questionnaire to give formal feedback about the updated proposals or propose alternative models.
- 2.61 The questionnaire was issued on 24 June 2013 with responses due in by 20 July 2013. The feedback from this is outlined below.
- 2.62 There were 17 responses covering 19 services. The feedback was qualitative and quantitative.
- 2.63 There was also a combined submission from SHAPE (Strategic Homelessness Action Partnership Edinburgh).

## Provider Information

2.64 There is a market of providers willing and able to provide all of the proposed services either on a City wide or Neighbourhood basis:

- Only one provider said they would only provide services on a city wide basis.
- None of the Neighbourhoods were significantly more popular than others.
- Some providers said they would work in any area.

2.65 There was slightly less interest in mediation and budgeting and food preparation.

2.66 Providers were equally open to providing a service by themselves or in partnership.

**Table 1:** What service areas are your organisation interested in delivering in the future?

Service element	North	East	South	South West	West	City Centre and Leith	Citywide	Any Areas
Advice	5	5	5	5	5	5	12	11
Visiting support	3	3	3	4	4	4	9	11
Preventative / Low Level Support (e.g. befriending)	3	3	3	4	4	4	8	10
Mediation	3	3	3	3	3	3	7	8
Food Budgeting and Preparation	3	3	3	4	4	4	8	9

(respondents made multiple entries of interest, figures are total for each area)

**Table 2:** What areas are your organisation interested in delivering in the future as part of a group of providers or consortium?

Service element	North	East	South	South West	West	City Centre and Leith	Citywide	Any Areas
Advice	5	5	5	5	5	5	13	13
Visiting support	3	3	3	3	3	3	10	11
Preventative / Low Level Support (e.g. befriending)	4	4	4	4	4	4	10	12
Mediation	3	3	3	3	3	3	9	11
Food Budgeting and Preparation	4	4	4	4	4	4	11	12

(respondents made multiple entries of interest, figures are total for each area)

## Questionnaire – Advice

2.67 There was broad agreement with the proposed scope for advice; no service suggested any area of advice should be removed.

2.68 A number of points were raised that will be incorporated into the service specifications. These are:

- Money and debt advice should include mortgage debt as well as rent arrears.
- Services will have to signpost and refer people to specialist services for mental health, addictions, for furniture and furnishings, social needs, emotional wellbeing.
- Benefits advice will include the impact of Welfare Reform.
- Advocacy for benefit appeals.

2.69 Six providers wanted to expand the service specifications for advice. This is not supported as these are provided by other services, though signposting will be covered. These include specialist advice about:

- Addictions (x2)
- Mental health (x4)
- Employment (x3)
- Relationship breakdown (x1)
- Human Rights (x1)

2.70 Every respondent agreed that advice should be available to anyone who is homeless or threatened by homelessness.

2.71 There was less consensus about the proposed measurements for advice. Seven providers agreed with the proposals as they stand. Two said the measure for money related crisis should include mortgage as well as rent arrears and a further two said that there may be times when a person should be encouraged to present as homeless. Both these points can be accommodated within the model. The latter by having an appropriate percentage target for the measure or an appeal system.

2.72 A minority view (two respondents) was against outcome based measurements but there was no pattern or detailed alternatives.

2.73 One provider said that the measurements should be based on each individual's needs assessment and a commitment by the provider to complete the actions in an agreed framework.

2.74 The limited consensus on the measures can be mitigated by agreeing a transition year to pilot measures and targets ensuring they are appropriate and robust.

### **Questionnaire – Visiting Housing Support**

2.75 Fourteen respondents did comment on the proposals for Visiting Housing Support. Three services did not comment. Providers were very supportive of the proposals.

2.76 No one said that any area should be removed from the draft scope for visiting housing support.

- 2.77 There were some suggested additions to the scope including support with isolation, emotional support and motivation. However, these areas will usually be supported through Preventative/Low Level Support (like befriending).
- 2.78 Two providers also suggested a number of points that will not be incorporated into the service specifications for visiting housing support because they are provided by other services or because these were ruled out in the development of the Homelessness Prevention Commissioning Plan. These include specialist support to address:
- recovery from addictions (this work is specifically covered through the Edinburgh Alcohol and Drug Partnership and is not part of housing support. This was outlined in the Homelessness Prevention Commissioning Plan).
  - complex needs (the housing support requirements for those with complex needs is covered in another work stream within the Plan)
- 2.79 There was broad support for the criteria to access visiting housing support.
- 2.80 Some providers had the view that the economic crisis and welfare reform may result in more people seeking visiting housing support because they are in critical risk. This may limit the support available for preventative work. There is a risk that the impact of welfare reform may mitigate against achieving the necessary transformational change.
- 2.81 There was broad agreement with proposed measures although a number of providers suggested that the percentage targets for achieving the outcomes should be revised after a transition year.
- 2.82 Only one service suggested a different model for measuring outcomes. They suggested using one of the outcomes stars that are used in other local authorities
- 2.83 Two providers suggested that service users should set their own outcomes. We will encourage services to incorporate service users own outcomes that fall within the overarching goal of preventing homelessness when they provide support and believe the proposed framework give providers the flexibility to do this.
- 2.84 One provider said that they needed information on what constitutes settled accommodation; this has been done within this report.
- 2.85 Three providers said that the lack of social rented accommodation, the high cost of private rented accommodation will make it very difficult for people to access settle accommodation and therefore the target percent will need to be lower or they will need more time for people to access settled accommodation.

## **Questionnaire – Preventative/Low level support**

- 2.86 Most respondents did comment on the proposals for Preventative/Low Level Support. Four services did not comment. Providers were very supportive of the proposals.
- 2.87 All of the comments were positive about the role that services like befriending, mentoring, group work and peer support etc can play in preventing homelessness crisis and helping people gain independent living skills and achieve softer outcomes like improved confidence.
- 2.88 Several respondents said that some people will take a considerable time to achieve outcomes or may need to return to get this type of support. Some respondents also said that Preventative/Low Level Support should be integrated into wider support services or part of a wider holistic support approach.
- 2.89 One provider said that Preventative/Low Level Support should not be expected to resolve homelessness crisis.
- 2.90 Two services said that access to Preventative/Low Level Support services should only be for people who are appropriate for receiving support from that service if they make use of volunteers or peer support.
- 2.91 Two providers said that volunteers will have to be trained, accredited and monitored.
- 2.92 All of these comments will be incorporated into the final service specifications.
- 2.93 One service suggested that there should be a range of options including befriending, mentoring, group work and peer support. This supports the view that any service specification should be Preventative/Low Level Support to prevent homelessness rather than for specific models to allow providers to develop appropriate solutions.
- 2.94 No one disagreed with the proposed measurements. Some services suggested that there should be additional measurements about self confidence and other softer measures.
- 2.95 One service also said that there would need to be a transitions year to ensure the targets are correct. This seems sensible, can be accommodated and would be of particular benefit to smaller providers.

## **Questionnaire – Mediation**

- 2.96 Most respondents did not comment on the proposals for Mediation. Those that did were very supportive of the proposals. However, two respondents said that more of the payments should be upfront and less for outcomes achieved.

## **Questionnaire – Food Preparation and budgeting**

- 2.97 Most respondents did not comment on the proposals for Food Preparation and Budgeting. Of those who did comment, there was a wide divergence of views. Two felt that it should not be a priority for people threatened by homelessness. Two felt it should remain as part of visiting support (one as part of the lifeskills matrix). Two felt that it should be part of the low/level (befriending) type service.
- 2.98 An analysis of both Visiting Support returns and client cases going to the Housing Support Panel suggests that food preparation remains in high demand (whilst it is not "Housing support"). Nonetheless, it is a useful preventative measure, which when matched with budgeting can be best served by group work to develop independent living skills in this area. Subsequent strengthening can be achieved through neighbourhood based low/level preventative befriending type services.

## **Questionnaire – Costs and Payments**

- 2.99 A number of providers said that payments by person and outcomes would represent a significant shift from the current model of payment by households for advice and hours for visiting housing support.
- 2.100 The majority agreed in principle with payments by person and outcomes but with the caveat that payments would be based on a percentage target of people achieving outcomes. However, one service wanted to be paid for outcomes and outputs (hours of support) and another was against any form of payments by person and outcomes.
- 2.101 Half of the respondents expressed an opinion on the split between the payment per person and the payments for outcomes.
- 2.102 The service that was against any form of outcome based payment said that if there was outcome based payments they wanted 85% of the payment per person and 15% for the outcomes that would be achieved. Other provider's submissions were broadly in line with the initial proposals.
- 2.103 The average suggested split by services was around 60% payments per person for advice, visiting housing support, low level preventative support and food preparation and budgeting with the balance paid for outcomes.
- 2.104 The average suggested split by services for mediation was around 70% payments per person accessing the service with the balance paid for outcomes.
- 2.105 28% of providers said that they would need a float, 43% of providers said that they may need a float to ensure cash flow within the organisation.

**Table 3:** Provider Feedback on Split between Payments per Person and Payments for Outcomes

The model proposed that payment for services be changed from an hourly rate to a fixed (upfront lump sum) payment for clients and subsequent payments for the achievement of outcomes. An example 'option' was given and respondents gave their own suggested split between lump sum and payment for outcomes. The average response is given in the last column.

(note: respondent 3 gave a response in excess of 100% which subsequently skews the average)

Advice	Option	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Average
Payment per person that gets advice (lump sum)	50%		65%	60%	50%					85%	50%					50%	50%	60%	59%
Payment for accessing or keeping settled accommodation for 6 months	15%		15%	40%	0					5%	15%					15%	15%	15%	15%
Payment for not becoming homeless within 12 months	20%		5%	40%	0					5%	20%					20%	20%	10%	15%
Payment for removing or avoiding threat of money related crisis	15%		15%	40%	50%					5%	15%					15%	15%	15%	21%
Total Payment	100%																		
Float			no	no	yes			maybe		yes	maybe	maybe				yes	no	yes	

Visiting Housing Support	Option	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Average
Payment per person that gets visiting support (lump sum)	50%		65%	60%	50%				50%	85%	50%							60%	60%
Payment for accessing or keeping settled accommodation for 6 months	15%		15%	40%	0				15%	5%	15%							15%	15%
Payment for not becoming homeless within 12 months	20%		5%	40%	0				15%	5%	20%							10%	14%
Payment for achieving core skills for independent living on Life Skills Matrix	15%		15%	40%	50%				20%	5%	15%							15%	23%
Total payment	100%																		
Float			no	no				maybe	no	yes	maybe							yes	

Low level B+	Option	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Average
Payment per person getting befriending support (lump sum)	50%		65%	60%	50%				60%	90%	50%							60%	62%
Payment for not becoming homeless within 12 months	20%		5%	40%	0				0	5%	20%							10%	11%
Payment for achieving all core skills for independent living on Life Skills Matrix	30%		30%	40%	50%				40%	5%	30%							30%	32%
Total Payment	100%																		
Float			no	no				maybe		yes	maybe			yes					

Mediation
Payment per person getting mediation (lump sum)
Payment for not becoming homeless within 12 months
Total Payment
Float

Option	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
50%		65%	60%	100%						50%							80%
50%		35%	40%							50%							20%
100%																	
		no	no				maybe										yes

Average
71%
29%

Food
Payment per contact (lump sum)
Payment for not becoming homeless within 12 months
Payment for achieving basic food shopping and preparation skills
Total Payment
Float

Option	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
50%		60%	60%														60%
20%		0%	40%														10%
30%		40%	40%														30%
100%																	
		no	no				maybe			yes							yes

Average
60%
17%
37%

## **Questionnaire – How Should Services Be Delivered?**

2.106 The majority of respondents agreed with the proposed grouping of services as:

- 1 x City wide Advice service - providing types I, II and III advice
- 1 x City wide Mediation service
- 1 x City wide Food Budgeting and Preparation service
- 6 x Neighbourhood based service providing Visiting Housing Support and Preventative/Low level support (like befriending) and types I and II Advice

2.107 However, two services said that the six neighbourhood services should be delivered on a city wide basis. A minority of respondents said that food preparation should be part of the Preventative/low level support. A minority of respondents also said that only advocacy advice should be delivered in a city wide service with all other services delivered in a neighbourhood.

2.108 There were mixed views to the question about the Council or commissioned services providing services. Many respondents did not answer the question or said that the current balance should be maintained. A minority said commissioned services should provide all of the proposed services.

2.109 There was a mixed response to the question about advice services being the first point of contact and providing a triage role.

2.110 There was no consensus as to whether the life skills matrix should be verified with a qualification.

2.111 Everyone agreed that cherry picking should be avoided and monitored.

2.112 Everyone agreed that volunteers, if they were used, should be vetted, trained and monitored effectively. Specific suggestions included Investing in Volunteers, PVG checks, quality assurance from Befriending Network Scotland and following Care Inspectorate policies and procedures.

## **Questionnaire – Other Solutions**

2.113 There were some alternative suggestions for services that could be provided as alternative models. Only one of the proposals included indicative costings and this was significantly higher than the current budget. The alternative proposals were:

- Integrate with other services particularly advice.
- Wellbeing group work.
- A community Hub that would provide activities, group work, a café and visiting support.
- Personal Power and Effectiveness programmes.
- A community based co-production model.

2.114 Although these have not been built into the specification there may be opportunities for providers to take these further as services are developed.

## **Questionnaire – Feedback**

2.115 Respondents were given the opportunity to give any other feedback or comments. The few additional comments received included:

- Questions about other work streams in the Homelessness Prevention Commissioning Plan.
- A comment that Health and Social Care are also making a change to neighbourhood based support.
- A request for a transitional period.
- A request for the Council to provide a template for dealing with TUPE.
- A comment from a mental health provider that some people will not meet the service specifications for any of the commissioning plans within the Council (Specific discussions are underway in relation to existing clients and further joint work will be needed with Health and Social Care in relation to gap analysis).
- A request for further background demographics to help new providers plan services (this will be provided).

## **Consultation on the Collaborative Consultation Process**

2.116 A survey about the collaborative consultation process was sent to all 39 organisations that either provide advice or support within the advice and support work stream or responded to the Prior Information Notice.

2.117 Participants were able to respond to the survey anonymously and most chose to do that.

2.118 18 services responded to the survey:

- 18 services said they attended a drop in session.
- 16 services said that they attended a feedback session.
- 13 services said they submitted a questionnaire.

2.119 The vast majority of people said that each stage of the process was quite or very helpful. Only one person said the process was not very useful and they did not attend a drop in or submit a soft market testing questionnaire.

2.120 Everyone who responded said that the Council had approached the process in the spirit of collaborative consultation.

2.121 Some of the positive comments include:

- “I would applaud the Council for taking this approach - throughout, this has been experienced by us as a process of genuine exploration and dialogue - very different to many 'box ticking' exercises!”
- “Seemed like every effort was made to involve us”
- “The Council appear to have expended significant resources on this consultation process. Very helpful forum to explore thinking and debate the issues.”
- “Appreciated opportunity to focus on some particular thoughts we had about the ideas being tested”.

- “We felt listened to, which was important. We also learned more / had a better understanding of SFC's perspective”.
- “The feedback meetings were helpful in that they provided a forum to develop discussions initiated during the drop-in sessions and allowed for more detailed discussions”.
- “I thought the process was open and transparent and found the meeting with council representatives to be very useful and gave our organisation the opportunity to put forward our ideas and to discuss them fully with the team”.
- “The consultation process was conducted in a manner that encouraged participation and suggestions of alternatives for consideration within the limits of what was realistically possible at such an advance stage of the commissioning plan's development”.

2.122 Suggestions to improve the process include:

- “[The information at the drop in sessions] could have been more focused in the questions asked and responses required”.
- “We were not able to really progress our issue regarding working with people with long term mental health issues. Whilst we were clear that this work would be changing within the new framework we were not able to reach agreement as to where our existing service users would fit within the revised framework for services”.
- “[The Soft Market Testing Questionnaire should have included a] reassurance about protecting any commercially sensitive data on the form”.
- “Some joint meetings with providers could have been held to provide information about the proposals and also focus groups to get feedback. It would have been helpful to produce a summary of the feedback to the initial questionnaire, to demonstrate the range of views and suggestions “
- “it could have also been useful to have an opportunity to say how we think services could be improved in the beginning using open rather than closed questions, however, I do understand that this may have been much more complex”

### **Additional Meetings**

2.123 Additional meetings were held with the Edinburgh Volunteer Centre, the Council's neighbourhood support service and Edinburgh Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.

2.124 There were also two drop in sessions for CEC stakeholders.

2.125 There was feedback from SHAPE on proposals and procurement options.

### **Service User Consultation**

2.126 The Rock Trust carried out consultation on the draft proposals for Advice and Support services with service users between May and June 2013. The Rock Trust is a charity commissioned to carry out the consultation on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council.

2.127 There were a total of 17 focus groups with 106 service users.

2.128 The Reference Group has seen the full report by the Rock Trust and confirmed its accuracy.

### **Participation in the Consultation**

2.129 The consultation was carried out with a representative sample of service users when compared to service users of current services in terms of gender, age, disabilities, race and geographical spread of services and service users within Edinburgh.

2.130 Service users confirmed that the consultation was carried out fairly and efficiently; however some people in larger groups said that they would have liked more time to answer questions.

2.131 Although there was a representative sample of service users, seven providers did not participate. Some felt that it was not appropriate for their clients others did not respond. The services that did not participate were:

- Barony
- Changeworks
- Foursquare
- Granton Information Centre
- Health in Mind
- Prestonfield Neighbourhood Partnership
- Saheliya

### **Broad agreement with the proposals**

2.132 The results of the questionnaire show that the majority of service users agree with all of the proposals. It also shows that the majority of service users think that advice, visiting housing support and preventative services (like befriending) should be provided by both the Council and Commissioned services.

2.133 There was also support for mediation and food preparation and budgeting services.

**Table 4: Service Users Responses**

Questions	Agree		Disagree		Don't Know	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Q1: In general do you agree with housing advice covering the suggested topics?	46	92%	2	4%	2	4%
Q 2 In general do you agree that the examples given are the right kinds of support for visiting support to provide?	43	88%	1	2%	5	10%
Q 3a Do you think that other models of support (like those suggested) have a role to play in preventing homelessness and helping people maintain their home?	40	87%	2	4%	4	9%
Q 3b Do you think that other models of support could provide help with the suggested matters?	42	91%	0	0%	4	9%
Q 4 Do you think that the skills suggested are the right kinds of skills people need to maintain a home?	41	98%	0	0%	1	2%
Q 5a Should Advice be available to everyone?	39	98%	1	3%	0	0%
Q 5b Do you agree with prioritising access to Visiting Support using criteria like those suggested?	28	72%	7	18%	4	10%
Q 5c Should other models of support be available to everyone?	23	79%	2	7%	4	14%
Q 7a Should people be able to access advice, visiting support and other models of support from one single provider?	20	53%	14	37%	4	11%
Q7b Is it important to you that services are based in your neighbourhood?	31	78%	6	15%	3	8%

### Areas to include in Scope of Service

2.134 There is overlap in the some of the suggested amendments to the scope for advice and visiting support. This suggests that service users do not always differentiate between advice and support services. Service users also expressed frustration that they often have to repeatedly give information to different agencies. This suggests that services need to work together and that there would be benefit in information sharing through neighbourhood based services that provide advice and support.

2.135 Some service users also said that there should be holistic services that provide support, care and advice on a range of issues including literacy, mental health, addictions, self esteem and motivation issues. To address this, the service specifications must emphasise that all providers will be expected to be accessible to all protected groups, demonstrate an awareness of other care and support needs and work with and refer to other specialist services to meet the needs of clients.

2.136 There were also a range of 'additional' suggestions for inclusion in the scope of services that are already within the service scope. This can be summarised as:

- Advocacy at evictions.
- Legal advice about tenancies and matrimonial property rights.
- Referrals to education, employment, training and volunteering.
- Improving money management/budgeting skills.
- Referrals to specialist services (health, mental health, addictions, literacy).

- 2.137 As a result the service specification will emphasise that all providers will be expected to be accessible to all protected groups, demonstrate an awareness of other care and support needs and work with and refer to other specialist services to meet the needs of clients.
- 2.138 All providers will need to have an implementation plan that ensures services clearly state the types of advice and support they offer.

### **Keys themes identified by Rock Trust**

2.139 The Rock Trust identified some key themes from the focus groups:

- There is a need to improve interagency communication. This may be helped by having neighbourhood based services.
- There is a perceived lack of impartiality by Council services. It will be important to maintain services provided by the third sector.
- Mental health problems can be cyclical so people may need to reengage with visiting support services. This can be enhanced by providing long term low level support services like group work or befriending to provide a continuity of support with visiting housing support (and other specialist mental health services) being available to intervene in the early stages of crisis.
- Information about services and the advice and support they offer must be accessible.
- Services should be tailored to the needs of each individual. By moving from contracts based on hours to outcome based procurement services will have greater flexibility to meet the housing and homelessness prevention needs of clients. However services will be expected to work alongside specialist support services to meet some needs of some clients.

### **Areas for Further Clarification**

2.140 Whilst service user responses showed support for all proposals and significant support for most proposals, a minority of service users said that they did not know or have enough information to give a yes/no answer to some questions (Table 4). The questions which had the highest levels of uncertainty were:

- The questions around long term low level support like befriending. (9-14% expressed “don’t know”). This may reflect lack of personal knowledge of alternative services.
- The access criteria for visiting housing support services caused some service users concern. (72% in favour, 18% against and 10% don’t know). A minority view was that personal characteristics should be prioritised, but suggestions were so wide that most clients would be prioritised. Additionally some service users did not see where they met the criteria and were concerned with losing an existing service. This should not be the case as existing clients will either transfer into the new service or be assessed on a case by case basis if requiring a longer term service.

- Question 7a “Should people be able to access advice, visiting support and other models of support from one single provider” received the smallest majority (53%) with 37% disagreeing and 10% not knowing. In retrospect, this question was badly phrased and responses could be interpreted in a number of ways.

2.141 It will also be important to let existing service users know that where there are longer term support needs for taking part in the community or learning independent living skills this will be met through the long term low level support services like befriending or group work. From here anyone in a homelessness crisis that meets the agreed criteria will be able to access the visiting housing support service.

2.142 Service users were also uncertain if people be able to access advice, visiting support and other models of support from one single provider.

### **Life Skills Matrix – Working Group**

2.143 After the Homelessness Prevention Commissioning Plan Project Board approved the principles of the lifeskills matrix in March 2013, existing and potential providers were invited to take part in a working group to develop a life skills matrix.

2.144 Ten services attended the working group on 19 April 2013. Three meetings were planned for the working group but the group reached a consensus after the first meeting and the further meetings were not required.

2.145 Participants were given a draft life skills matrix and given the opportunity to suggest changes or alternative measures.

2.146 There were no suggestions for an alternative measure to the life skills matrix.

2.147 During the working group it was confirmed that the purpose of the life skills matrix is to measure people’s knowledge and capacity to act rather than measuring individuals behaviour as some people may choose not to change their behaviour.

2.148 There was a general comment that the phrase ‘can do’ should be amended to ‘can do or ‘knows who to contact’ throughout the matrix.

2.149 The group agreed that the following changes should be incorporated into the matrix:

- Core Money Management/Awareness:
  - Has a bank account should be moved from basic to core.
- Core House Keeping to include:
  - Can understand safety labelling
  - Can change fuse/reset circuit breaker
  - Knows landlords repair duties
- Core House Keeping to no longer include:
  - Can stop a toilet running

- Can use a vacuum cleaner properly (as this is included in another measure)
- Exceptional Housing to include:
  - Can calculate costs associated with different types of housing
  - Knowing what rent deposit scheme their deposit is held in.
- Core Health Skills/Emergency and Safety to include
  - Knows how to switch off water and electricity as well as gas
  - Knows basic fire safety
- Core Knowledge of Community, Networks and Transport to be amended so:
  - Three separate voting measures to be consolidated into one measure
- Interpersonal skills to include
  - Understands the consequences of illegal/antisocial behaviour
  - Understands the benefits of positive social contacts

2.150 These changes will be incorporated into the final life skills matrix.

2.151 Service users were also asked about the Life Skills Matrix and did not suggest any changes.

### **Consultation on the Procurement Options**

2.152 Current and potential providers were consulted about procurement approaches to deliver advice and support services needed to prevent homelessness. Meetings took place in July and September with a survey monkey being sent out in October.

### **First Stage Consultation on the Procurement Options**

2.153 Initially, two meetings were held with the Strategic Homelessness Action Partnership Edinburgh (SHAPE) on the 14 and 19 of July 2013. The purpose of the meetings was to consider impacts of the different procurement options available to deliver the advice and support work stream and discuss any potential actions that could be taken to mitigate the impacts on providers. The three options considered were:

- Tendering
- Pilot
- Renegotiating existing contracts

2.154 There was no clear consensus across two meetings as all of the options had benefits and risks. However, several of the providers were against piloting the approach in one Neighbourhood area as this potentially gives significant advantage to those providers in subsequent tendering. The delay cause by the pilot would also increase the risk of services not in the pilot becoming financially unviable.

2.155 The Commissioning Team subsequently organised a series of meetings in September 2013 to further explore procurement options with providers and potential providers. This was achieved through a pre-meeting with the Strategic Homelessness Action Partnership (SHAPE) Executive and two meetings with

SHAPE members and other interested potential providers. The details of these meetings are included below.

2.156 The purpose of the meetings was to expand and develop the potential of negotiation or tendering around three principles (in reducing order of priority):

- There was an absolute need to have a service in place for April 2015, which was the maximum point for extending existing tendered services.
- Preference is that the proposed new model for advice and support be in place by that time.
- That the new model be introduced as early as possible and preferably by September 2014.

2.157 Gantt charts were tabled showing how both tendering and negotiation could be achieved within the above limitations. Additionally it was highlighted that there were two “pinch points” which would be the greatest areas of challenge in the renegotiation model. These were:

- In terms of those providers who would be delivering neighbourhood services, their allocation into six neighbourhood partnerships (with one provider taking the lead).
- Agreement on a common cost, per client across the six neighbourhood partnerships and separate agreement on costs for the city wide services (advice, mediation, food preparation).

2.158 Timescales are tight but achievable. However there are significant risks of negotiation drift, slippage or failure. This could be managed through a “memorandum of understanding” with rules for participation, dispute resolution, timetabling and prior agreement for deadlines in full. In advance a deadline for agreeing the main negotiation areas by Jan 2014 would be required which (if not achieved) would still allow tendering to take place if necessary.

2.159 The purpose of the pre-meeting was to establish whether the methodology, principles, timetabling and major assumptions were right. Neither the pre-meeting nor the two meetings challenged these.

2.160 In general the feel of the first meeting appeared to be more favourable of renegotiation whereas the second meeting appeared more critical. The following points and observations were raised across both meetings.

2.161 The main concerns regarding renegotiation were around the ability to reshape services within existing budgets and constraints. In particular that during transition resources will need to be made available for (city-wide) mediation and food-preparation, alongside the reshaping within the new (neighbourhood) services.

2.162 It may be possible to have different procurement models for different sub-work streams but there are budgetary relationships between them.

2.163 Alternatively, it was suggested that tendering is a ‘cleaner’ process with well established rules (for example in relation to TUPE). It was suggested that tendering may provide greater provider confidence.

2.164 Also noted that re-negotiation may lead to a shorter (initial) contract whereas tendering would probably lead to a three year contract. A longer contract would support significant service reshaping. The shorter contract length would be because of the potential risk of challenge from providers not involved.

2.165 There was a strong belief that the voluntary sector could work together within a renegotiation process although a number of practical issues that would need to be resolved.

2.166 Both providers and the council acknowledged that further work is required on timetabling, methodology, processes and budgetary issues prior to a definitive view on whether renegotiation is possible within the above constraints.

### **Second Stage Consultation on the Procurement Options**

2.167 The Commissioning team has consulted extensively on procurement options for the commissioning of "Advice and Support". Meetings were held with the Strategic Homelessness Action Partnership Edinburgh (SHAPE), existing and prospective providers. Meetings took place in July and September with a survey monkey being sent out in October.

2.168 The process of consultation narrowed the options down to two main alternatives:

- Tendering
- Providing a window of opportunity for negotiation.

2.169 It was noted that renegotiation would primarily be for a transition period. However, piloting the service within one geographic neighbourhood was discounted. Most providers were of the view that this could give those participants an advantage in the subsequent commissioning of the other neighbourhoods.

2.170 "Full" renegotiation was discounted due to time constraints. Some existing tendered services were coming to the end of their contracts in April 2015. These contracts cannot be extended further and the Council has a responsibility to ensure that new services are in place for clients following the end of these contracts.

2.171 The key points within a window of "renegotiation" are;

- A memorandum of understanding would need to be agreed by all parties, outlining the process, timescales etc. But would include:
  - formation of partnerships for advice and six neighbourhoods.
  - collective agreement with Council on rate for client (and split between upfront and outcome).
  - these major points need to be agreed by January 2014 (if not the service area would move to tendering to allow services to be in place for April 2015).
  - initial contract for around 18 months (12 month transition/pilot then prep for tendering)..

2.172 Some providers said that renegotiation should only happen if the Council is satisfied with the performance of all existing providers.

2.173 There was no clear consensus in the survey for the procurement approach for Advice or Neighbourhood Services. Current providers favoured renegotiation while potential providers favoured tendering. Providers favoured tendering for the Mediation and the Home management and budgeting services.

**Table 5:** Current and Potential Providers' Views on Procurement Options

Providers' Views - Advice				Providers' Views - Mediation	
	Current	Potential	All		Potential
Tendering	1	3	4	Tendering	8
Tendering + Renegotiation	1	4	5	Tendering + Renegotiation	3
No Preference Tendering or Renegotiation	2	2	4	No Preference Tendering or Renegotiation	3
Renegotiation	4	1	5	Renegotiation	2
No or no response	2	0	2	No or no response	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

Providers' Views - Neighbourhood Services				Providers' Views – Food (Home management and budgeting)	
	Current	Potential	All		Potential
Tendering	1	4	5	Tendering	8
Tendering + Renegotiation	1	2	3	Tendering + Renegotiation	3
No Preference Tendering or Renegotiation	2	1	3	No Preference Tendering or Renegotiation	2
Renegotiation	6	2	8	Renegotiation	2
No or no response	0	1	1	No or no response	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

2.174 One potential provider stated that the model is a fundamentally different and reshaped service than those delivered by current providers. Therefore current providers do not have a track record of delivering this model. The provider added that tendering would:

- ensure best value
- provide greater opportunity for innovation
- have a lower risk of delay than negotiation
- have a lower risk of legal challenge
- provide greater clarity for TUPE

2.175 The view from the Union representative was that tendering is clearer in regards of TUPE and a one off change may reduce anxiety.

2.176 EVOC have offered to facilitate meetings with current providers to help facilitate renegotiation.

2.177 At the Homelessness Prevention Commissioning Plan Checkpoint group, it was confirmed that EVOC would be able to assist in partnership formation, had

knowledge of similar memorandums of understanding and was willing to organise another meeting of providers to discuss procurement options.

2.178 The Council sent a “survey monkey” to 39 voluntary organisations who are either current providers or prospective providers. As would be expected current providers tended to support renegotiation whereas prospective providers tended to support tendering.

2.179 However, one significant current provider chose “No preference.” Another current provider ticked both “Tendering” and “negotiation” but their comments stated that their preference was to tender as the proposed “neighbourhood services” were different from existing services. One prospective (i.e. non – current) provider said that they would be happy with the Council taking either route but questioned whether the council could demonstrate that all existing providers were of sufficient quality.

### **Summary of the Consultation**

2.180 There have been unprecedented levels of collaborative consultation through this exercise that has been vital to develop the proposed models for advice and support to prevent homelessness in Edinburgh.

2.181 There has been very positive feedback about the proposed model. While there have been suggestions to improve the original proposals there have not been any alternative models proposed.

2.182 There has also been very positive feedback about the collaborative consultation process.

2.183 This combined feedback gives a mandate to implement the proposed changes.

2.184 Procurement options have been narrowed to tendering or window for renegotiation. Both can be achieved within required timescales. The latter carries significant risks of negotiation slippage or failure and further work is required on steps to mitigate slippage, for example a memorandum of understanding. Agreement on the process would need to be agreed in advance to prevent or manage negotiation failure.

## **3. Conclusions**

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3.1 The Check Point Group confirmed:

- That the consultation process has been rigorous and inclusive.
- That feedback has been appropriately taken into consideration.
- That there is broad support for the proposed shape of services.

The group asked that additional recommendations be added to the report as follows:

- Recommend there is a corporate responsibility for ensuring linkages between services funded through different departments.
- That outcomes should be linked across services.

## Mairi Keddie

Planning, Partnerships and Commissioning Manager

### Links

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#### Coalition pledges

P11. Encourage the development of co-operative housing arrangements  
P13. Enforce tenancy agreements (council and private landlord) with a view to ensuring tenants and landlords fulfil their good conduct responsibilities  
P14. Strengthen Council housing allocation policy to give recognition to good tenants and to encourage responsible tenant behaviour and responsibilities  
P32. Develop and strengthen local community links with the police  
P36. Develop improved partnership working across the Capital and with the voluntary sector to build on the “Total Craigroyston” model

#### Council outcomes

C09. Edinburgh residents are able to access job opportunities  
C10. Improved health and reduced inequalities  
C11. Preventative and personalised support in place  
C13. People are supported to live at home  
C14. Communities have the capacity to help support people  
C16. Well-housed – People live in a good quality home that is affordable and meets their needs in a well managed  
C23. Well engaged and well informed – Communities and individuals are empowered and supported to improve local outcomes and foster a sense of community  
C25. The Council has efficient and effective services that deliver on objectives  
C26. The Council engages with stakeholders and works in partnership to improve services and deliver on agreed objectives

#### Single Outcome Agreement

S02. Edinburgh’s citizens experience improved health and wellbeing, with reduced inequalities in health  
S04. Edinburgh’s communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric

#### Appendices

1 Advice and Support Collaborative Consultation Presentation

# Advice and Support

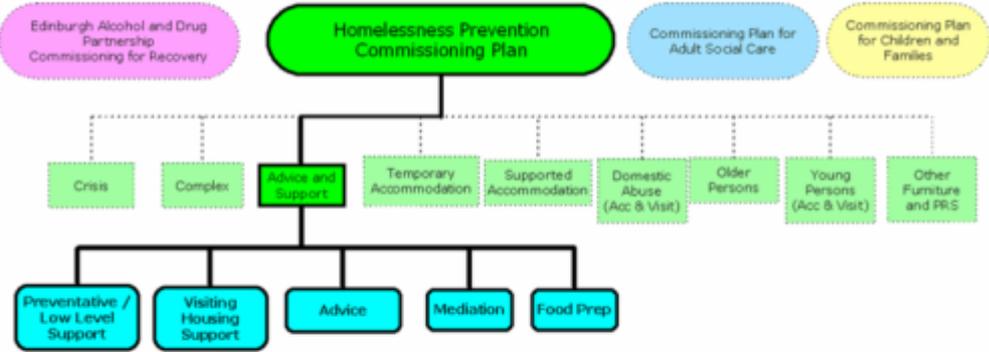
"this has been a genuine exploration and dialogue - very different to many 'box ticking' exercises!"

Edinburgh Homeless Forum  
August 2013



## Advice and Support

One of the plans to help us plan what advice, support and care services people get.



Advice and Support service will provide short term advice and support that will prevent homelessness;

Other work streams will look at care, addictions, accommodation crisis and complex.



## Background

“the process was open and transparent and gave our organisation the opportunity to put forward our ideas and to discuss them fully with the team”

- 17 services
  - 3,900 advice
  - 1,200 visiting housing support
  - £2.8 million\*
- H, WB and H Committee - 10 September 2013
- New model June 2014

3



## Collaborative Consultation

“Seemed like every effort was made to involve us”

- 2 drop in sessions for CEC stakeholders
- Engagement with Volunteer Centre, TAP, NSS
- 34 drop in sessions current/potential providers
- Information to 5 potential providers
- 27 feedback sessions with 28 current/potential providers
- Provider working group on Life Skills Matrix
- 17 focus groups with 106 service users
- Feedback from SHAPE on proposals and procurement options

4



## Changes made because of Feedback

"I would applaud the Council for taking this approach  
– throughout"

- Updated service scope
- Updated entry criteria for visiting housing support.
- Ensure Service User involved in decisions about their support package.
- Updated measurements for services
- Transition year

5



## Proposed Shifts

- More focus on working with Neighbourhoods
- Resource shift from visiting housing support to
  - More advice
  - New mediation
  - New food preparation and budgeting
  - New low level preventative support
- Payment per person and for outcomes

6



## Likely Services - 1

“We are impressed with the proposed services and believe the new provision will provide comprehensive support in the city. ”

- Advice – One City wide service
  - Around 4,000 people pa across the City.
  - Advice - information, signposting, casework and advocacy

7



## Likely Services - 2

“a range of very exciting ideas about a different approach to preventing homelessness”

- Mediation - One City wide service
  - For people at risk of homelessness
  - Mediation between members of the household, neighbours or tenant/landlord.
  - Particularly important for young people.
- Food Preparation and Budgeting - One City wide service
  - For people at risk of homelessness
  - Help people develop the skills to budget and prepare food

8



## Likely Services - 3

### Neighbourhood based services - Six services

- Around 1,200 people in Edinburgh.
- Visiting housing support - short-term to resolve immediate housing crisis.
- Advice - information, signposting and casework
- Preventative/low level support (like befriending)
  - not in immediate crisis
  - need support for further settlement

9



Preventative & personalised support

advice, mediation  
group work  
& befriending

Building capacity in communities

volunteering &  
peer support  
opportunities

## Supporting Wider Outcomes

partnership  
working

focus on  
outcomes

Services focussed in  
Neighbourhoods

Efficient and  
effective services

10