

## **Background**

Supporting People is a Government programme, to promote and deliver housing related support services that are good quality, strategically relevant, robust, co-ordinated and cost effective. Local authorities are responsible for delivering the Supporting People programme in partnership with Housing Departments, Social Services, Health and Probation.

Supporting People gives vulnerable people the opportunity to improve their quality of life by providing housing related services, which will enable them to become more independent and take control in making choices within their lives. Although Supporting People does not replace community care services, at its best, it works to underpin and compliment these services.

## **Why we need an Eligibility Criteria**

Supporting People services support individuals to live independently in the community and are focused on housing. They are **not** general health, personal or social care services or housing management services.

However, as Supporting People grant is made up of various legacy funding streams, which each had their own specific criteria, the assessment of eligibility differed between funds, local authorities, client group, service and landlord type.

It is therefore essential that under Supporting People there is a single eligibility criteria that can be applied consistently across all services and client groups, and which is clearly understood by Commissioners, providers and service users.

Whilst there has been some guidance issued by ODPM in relation to local authority consistency in strategic relevance and service review assessments, there has not yet been any guidance made available on the eligibility of services for Supporting People Grant.

This has led to problems in carrying out service reviews, and it is therefore appropriate that an interim eligibility criteria is adopted by the Commissioning Body, which can then be reviewed when further ODPM guidance is issued.

In practice, it is often very difficult to define what is housing related support, as opposed to personal care, social support or housing management. Whilst in most cases where there is a mixture of the above provided, there is also funding from a range of budgets, often the apportionment is not a true reflection of the tasks performed, and there needs to be some careful 'unravelling' of the service to determine the correct funding streams.

### **Definition of Housing Related Support**

To define Housing Related Support, a number of issues need to be considered:

- Is there a support package?
- Is the service for a specific defined group?
- Is it a service for adults?
- Is it related to housing?
- Inclusion of "ancillary welfare services"
- Exclusion of statutory duties
- Distinction from Housing Management
- Distinction from different forms of Care
- Does the service aim to increase independence?

### **Is there a support package?**

The support offered must be a part of a package of support agreed with the service user. This must result in a written plan that both parties can agree, containing the objectives that the support service will assist the service user in achieving. It is expected that this will be delivered over a finite period of time rather than on a one-off basis, and that reviews of this plan with the service user are built into the process.

This requirement distinguishes Supporting People services from advice services, help-line services, and drop-in services, where relevant support may be provided, but where there is no ongoing agreement to work to a particular set of support plan objectives with that service user.

**Is the service for a specific defined group?**

The service user has to have "vulnerabilities which render them in need of support services". Supporting People services are not supposed to be open to the "general public" but are targeted at groups who have specific need of the support on offer. Agreeing the target client group is therefore key to assessing the eligibility of any service for Supporting People grant. There will be a statement of criteria for admission to the service and potential service users will be assessed against the criteria.

**Is it a service for adults?**

Supporting People services are specifically for adults, since only adults have the capacity to hold an interest in a tenancy and therefore satisfy the criteria for promoting or maintaining independence. Some services will be delivered to households with children, but any support given to them is not eligible for grant (with the exception of childcare which may be given in a Womens' Refuge)

**Is it related to Housing?**

Housing-related support is focused on enabling people to sustain the maximum degree of independence in their accommodation. Therefore, the key question is:

*"Would this person be unable to move to more independent housing, or be at risk of losing their home and moving to less independent care, if this housing-related support was not available".*

This criteria is harder to satisfy. Support that enables people to lead more rounded and satisfying lives in all kinds of ways may be highly desirable, but

not necessarily essential to their maintaining independent accommodation. Therefore a definition is needed as to what is "greater independence" in relation to housing, and what people need to be able to do in order to maintain that independence.

Independence in housing could be defined as accommodation where the user has an "interest" in the property (through a tenancy or ownership), with all the rights and responsibilities that flow from that, and the maximum degree of control over their living environment and those they share it with.

In order to be able to maintain independence they need to be able to:

- Pay for their accommodation
- Fulfill other responsibilities inherent in a tenancy or owner-occupation
- Know how to ensure that they get all the necessary services into their accommodation (utilities etc)
- Know how to and be able to deal with repairs and/or improvements to the property
- Be able to keep their accommodation warm, safe, and comfortable
- Be able to look after themselves with the addition of appropriate care or support services when necessary
- Get on with their neighbours
- Access community services when needed
- Not feel trapped or isolated in the accommodation to the point where they no longer wish to live there

"Short-term" SPG-funded services are aimed at enabling people to achieve independence in this way (either while living in less-independent residential settings or while living in independent accommodation). "Long-term" SPG-funded services are designed to help service-users move towards this independence,(even if they may never achieve it fully) or to minimise the reduction in independence due to increasing age or infirmity.

The type of help that people need to achieve greater independence or avoid a need to move to less independent accommodation will take many forms.

Support that is aimed **principally** at enabling service users to achieve other goals is not eligible for Supporting People funding. This includes support aimed at helping people to:

- look after their health
- be meaningfully and enjoyably occupied
- make friends and build lasting relationships
- avoid becoming involved in criminal and other anti-social behaviour

### **Inclusion of “ancillary welfare services”**

Supporting People Grant may be used to fund “*other welfare services*” (i.e. those that fall outside of the definition of housing-related support) if they are “**occasional**” and if they are “ancillary to housing-related support services”. These services have to be “ad-hoc” in their nature and integral to the delivery of the housing-related support.

Therefore if the predominant amount of assistance provided is housing-related support, **and** if it is not regularly and consistently provided as a matter of course for all service users, then the following could be funded by Supporting People Grant at the discretion of the Commissioning Body:

- Active assistance with shopping and cooking
- Assistance in maintaining a garden where this is the service user's responsibility
- Active assistance with personal hygiene e.g. running baths
- Transport of service user or accompanying them to activities in the community
- Advocacy with health professionals over medication and related matters
- Signposting the service user to appropriate agencies
- Liaising with employers on behalf of service user
- Assistance to service users to take advantage of educational opportunities
- Advice and assistance in relation to maintaining relationships
- Storage and distribution of prescribed medication

### **Exclusion of statutory duties**

*Any services that involve the provision of services by the administering authority in satisfaction of a statutory duty placed on that authority or services to enforce specific requirements imposed by a court of law, are ineligible for Supporting People grant*

This means that any services for adults that Social Services have a statutory duty to fund under community care legislation, and for young people under the terms of the Leaving Care Act cannot be paid for by Supporting People grant.

Those who are funded as Asylum seekers or who receive aftercare funded under S 117 of the Mental Health Act are also ineligible to receive Supporting People Grant

This clause also precludes Supporting People grant being claimed to pay for the supervision by the support service of any orders issued by a court such as a curfew, condition to reside, electronic tagging, drug treatment and testing orders, or specific programmes.

### **Distinction from Housing Management**

In accommodation-based services housing-related support is frequently provided in conjunction with housing management and other accommodation-related services. This is either because it is the landlord that provides the support to their tenants, or because the landlord has employed the same agency to provide the housing management as provides housing-related support.

Housing Management includes the following ineligible tasks:

- Setting, collecting and accounting for the rent and service charges
- Establishing, issuing and enforcing the licence/tenancy agreement
- Organising the inspection, repair, improvement or replacement of the property or contents provided by the landlord
- Ensuring that residents are aware of and receive their rights according to housing law, Housing Corporation guidelines, and contractual commitments through the license/tenancy agreement

Landlords do provide other services as well, and these may be determined as housing management or housing-related support depending on the context. This includes such issues as assisting residents to reduce their rent arrears, ensuring that they know how to safely use equipment, providing advice on and facilitating a move to alternative accommodation. If the service is open to all tenants of a particular landlord or on a particular estate, then this activity would be regarded as housing management, whereas if it was part of a package of assistance directed at specific groups of "vulnerable" people, then this is classified as housing-related support. Such assistance is always classified as housing-related support in supported housing projects, on the assumption that there is a selection criteria that determines the vulnerable group that is catered for e.g., the allocation of properties would be eligible for Supporting People Grant in supported housing (as it is the applicants need for support that is assessed), but not in general needs housing.

### **Distinction from different forms of Care**

Housing-related support does not include care. There are different forms of care, including personal, social, health or domestic care.

### **Personal Care**

The Department of Health provided the following definitions of four levels of "care"

1. Assistance with bodily functions such as feeding, bathing, and toileting
2. Care which falls just short of assistance with bodily functions, but still involving physical and intimate touching, including activities such as helping a person get out of a bath and helping them to get dressed
3. Non-physical care, such as advice, encouragement and supervision relating to the foregoing, such as prompting and supervising a person to take a bath

4. Emotional and psychological support, including the promotion of social functioning, behaviour management, and assistance with cognitive functions

Level 1 and 2 are described as personal care and in all circumstances are ineligible for SPG i.e. any assistance that involves intimate bodily contact on a regular basis is not of housing-related support.

### **Social Care**

Level 3 & 4 care in these terms could be defined as "Social Care".

The extent to which activity under level 3 can be eligible for SPG is not clear-cut. Supervision in relation to basic bodily functions e.g. being present while someone takes a bath is never likely to be within the definition of housing-related support. Advice and encouragement to, for example take a bath on a regular basis **could** be eligible within the terms of the **occasional** welfare activities provision.

Level 4 care is clearly interchangeable with housing-related support where the focus is developing or enabling maintenance of independence in their accommodation.

### **Health Care**

This is not likely to be an issue in relation to support i.e. there is unlikely to be any grey areas of overlap between health care and housing related support. The possible exception to this is the question of medication. The administration of medication, including storing and issuing prescribed medication to service users on a regular basis, should be treated as being outside the definition of housing-related support. It may only therefore be eligible if it is regarded as an ancillary function.

Specialist Counselling and therapy services are also explicitly excluded from eligibility. The definition of "specialist" in this sense would seem to be partly about what the objective behind the programme of activity is, and partly whether it has to be delivered by someone with specialist expertise or training.

## Domestic "Care"

The provision of domestic services is defined as being outside the scope of housing-related support. The provision of cleaning services and the provision of meals if provided by a landlord or body acting as the agent of the landlord, is clearly service chargeable. Such service charges are not HB-eligible (although an element of the costs may find their way into HB eligible service charges), and are also outside the eligibility criteria for Community Care funding as well. Services provided separately from the landlord function have no obvious funding source. In one specific case, domestic assistance i.e. cleaning of personal space where the tenant was considered unable to do this for themselves, was made eligible for Transitional Housing Benefit and therefore is included in the legacy funding handed over to *Supporting People*.

*Supporting People* has inherited an essentially illogical situation. The rationale behind the inclusion of direct cleaning services within the provision of housing-related support is partly that maintaining the condition of the property is likely to be a tenancy condition, and therefore if this is not done the tenant will be putting their accommodation at risk. The same however would apply to maintaining the garden, and this is explicitly stated as being outside the terms of housing-related support in *Supporting People Guidance*. The other rationale would be on the basis of health and safety considerations - a dirty flat or house would ultimately prejudice someone's ability to maintain themselves in independent accommodation. On the other hand, the implications of not eating would be far more immediate and far more deleterious to maintaining independence, and yet the provision of food has not previously been eligible. Greater consistency is needed.

The most consistent approach would be to say that time spent assisting the service user to organise the provision of any form of domestic assistance would be eligible. This includes the time spent assisting them to fund such a service and time spent assisting the service user to complain about the service provided or in liaison with the agency over the service provided, should all be eligible. Time spent (and materials used) actually cooking, cleaning, gardening or other forms of domestic assistance should not be

eligible, unless they meet the criteria set out in the housing management paragraph. Moving to such a clear-cut position may take some time, as individual service users would be clearly disadvantaged by a withdrawal of funding. As an initial step the following approach could be adopted.

All new services could be expected to comply with this definition from the start.

Legacy funded services providing cleaning in service users own personal space could retain such funding only to the extent that it can be clearly demonstrated that this directly contributes to the individual service users ability to maintain their independence

#### **Does the service aim to increase independence?**

There is a general expectation that long-term housing-related support services will over time reduce as service users achieve higher levels of independence, **unless** this is due to increasing age or infirmity. This could be said to be particularly the case where the service is being offered to help service users resettle from higher care or support settings. If the need for assistance does not decrease after a specified period, this could well be an indicator that the service that was being provided at the beginning has changed, and that the level of genuine housing-related support as a proportion of the total package of assistance should be reviewed. The important thing in such cases is to be clear as to how much approximately of the initial support, even in long-term services is aimed at "resettlement", and how much at long-term maintenance. Over time the former should reduce, whereas there is no reason why this should be the case in relation to the latter.

#### **Summary Interpretation of Housing Related Support**

Housing-related support is defined as support services which are provided to any person for the purpose of developing that person's capacity to live

independently in accommodation, or sustaining his capacity to do so provided that the **service user**:

- has specific and identifiable vulnerabilities that render them in need of support services, and that the support service is therefore allocated on the basis of a defined selection / admission criteria that the individual applicant is assessed against
- is over the age of 16, except where the support is provided as part of a package for their parent(s) or carer(s), and the support provided to the under 16 year old(s) has a direct impact on the effectiveness of the support provided to the parent(s) or carer(s)

**and that the support service provided**

- is principally focused on enabling the service user to secure or maintain their accommodation
- is the subject of a formal support plan / agreement
- distinguishes clearly between short-term resettlement and ongoing support maintenance where the service is anticipated to be long-term
- is not the responsibility of a statutory body to fund from other budgets than Supporting People Grant
- is not designed to enforce an order of the court
- is supplementary to any housing management service provided by the same provider to the same service user
- includes no element that would be defined as personal care or seen as personally intrusive
- includes the provision of cleaning services where these are not a landlord responsibility, **and** where the provision is essential in order to ensure that the service user is able to retain their accommodation, **and** where this service was in receipt of legacy funding
- includes the provision of non-housing-related support on an occasional basis, provided it is not regularly and consistently provided as a matter of course for all service users

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Task	Services always eligible for SPG. Must be part of a package of support and users are adults who fall within a specific defined group.	Services eligible for SPG if provided occasionally and in normal circumstances amounting to around no more than 10% of the total value of the sp funded service and the service user is not assessed as needing these services through CCA/S117 assessment	Services never eligible for SPG
<b>Developing domestic skills</b>	<p>Enabling &amp; motivating the service user to clean their home appropriately.</p> <p>Enabling the service user to plan for and shop for their home.</p> <p>Providing basic advice to help motivate the service user to prepare and cook meals safely.</p> <p>Providing advice to service users on how to use the appliances in their home safely.</p>	<p>Regularly accompanying the service user whilst out shopping.</p> <p>Assistance in maintaining a garden where this is the service users responsibility.</p> <p>Active assistance in the preparation of meals.</p>	<p>Shopping for the service user.</p> <p>Preparing meals for the service user.</p>
<b>Help in setting up a home or tenancy</b>	<p>Enabling the service user to understand the terms of their tenancy.</p> <p>Enabling the service user to keep to the conditions of the tenancy.</p> <p>Advice to service users in relation to connection to utilities.</p>	<p>Arranging the delivery of furniture (other than to a new home as part of a resettlement).</p>	<p>Issuing and enforcing tenancy agreements.</p> <p>Signing up for a tenancy.</p> <p>Collecting rent.</p>

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<p><b>Advice, advocacy &amp; liaison</b></p>	<p>Enabling the service user to develop and maintain a budget and manage their finances. Enabling the service user to access advice and advocacy services. Encourage and advise the service user on how to live within their budget. Reminding the service user to pay their rent and bills.</p>	<p>Liaising with other key agencies on behalf of the service user.</p>	<p>Managing finances - paying the service users bills.</p>
<p><b>Advice, counseling &amp; emotional support</b></p>	<p>Talking to and advising service users on how to deal with difficulties relating to any housing problems.</p>	<p>Providing emotional support that is not part of a structured plan.</p>	<p>Any counseling provided by a certified counsellor or therapist.</p>
<p><b>Help in gaining access to other services</b></p>	<p>Enabling the service user to contact and gain access to relevant services. Providing advice about assessment of need, changes in support level accommodation offers and move on opportunities.</p>	<p>Contacting services on behalf of users or organising access to services. Arranging appointments for, referring to, and acting on behalf of the service user when accessing other services.. Giving support to service users to take up employment/educational opportunities.</p>	<p>Regularly accompanying a service user to appointments with other services when not part of a structured, regularly reviewed support plan. Regularly accompanying the service user to meeting with other agencies. Assisting in probation programmes. Provision of formal education in any other area other than the skills required to manage and maintain accommodation.</p>
<p><b>Help in establishing social contacts &amp; activities</b></p>		<p>Providing social activities including activities at a day centre. Encouraging the service user to develop social skills through specific programmes or by encouraging them to participate in the community.</p>	<p>Organising a social event away from the service users home.</p>
<p><b>Supervision &amp;</b></p>	<p>Encourage the service user to manage their medication effectively.</p>	<p>Monitoring service users health/hygiene. Advocacy with health professionals over</p>	<p>Administering medication.</p>

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<b>monitoring of health and well being including supervision of taking medication</b>		<p>medication and related matters. Providing advice and support to maintain relationships. Signposting to appropriate agencies. Storage and distribution of prescribed medication.</p>	
<b>Peer Support and befriending</b>	Enable the service user to access peer support.	Transporting service users.	Operating a befriending service. Child care.
<b>Help finding other accommodation</b>	Providing advice and assistance to service users to enable them to move to more appropriate accommodation.	Identifying potential new accommodation. Accompanying service users to view move on or other accommodation when not part of a resettlement plan.	Allocation vacant properties to individuals on a housing waiting list.
<b>Help maintaining safety and security of the dwelling</b>	Providing advice and support to the service user on how to maintain the security of their home.	Securing accommodation by locking doors.	Installing new locks or security devices.
<b>Cleaning of own rooms</b>	Enabling & motivating the service user to clean their home appropriately.	Cleaning the service users home/own room.	Cleaning communal areas in the home such as landings, lounges.
<b>Advice and support on repair/home improvement</b>	Enabling the service user to deal with minor repairs. Enabling and motivating the service user to keep their home in a good state of repair. Providing advice and assistance to service users in relation to organising repairs to their home.	Arranging appointments with repair agencies, being at the home whilst repairs are undertaken.	Carrying out or paying others to carry out repairs to the service users home. Organising the provision of housing related services/or repairs to the property when these are the responsibility of the landlord.
<b>Management of handyperson services</b>	Enabling the service user to contact and gain access to handyperson services.		Carrying out the duties of a handyperson.
<b>Help with shopping, errands and good neighbour tasks</b>	Enabling the service user to plan and do their shopping. Encourage the service user to have good relations with their neighbours and provide	Regularly going shopping with the service user.	Doing the service users shopping for them and without them.

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	advice at times of dispute.			
<b>Liaison and advocacy support from the same ethnic group</b>			Liaison and advocacy support from the same ethnic group.	
<b>Cultural-specific counseling and emotional support</b>			Cultural-specific counseling and emotional support.	
<b>Access to local community organisations</b>	Enabling and encouraging the service user to develop their social skills through specific programmes or by encouraging them to participate in the community.		Setting up, organising or attending tenant and resident association meetings.	Representing the service user at community events without the service user being present.
<b>Personal care</b>			Providing advice to individual service users about assessment of need changes in support levels.	Dressing, bathing or feeding the service user. Undertaking a community care assessment on behalf of social services.
<b>Domiciliary and home care</b>			Cleaning the service users home.	Providing a meals on wheels service.
<b>Behaviour management</b>			Supervising the service user with behavioural problems in their own home.	Supervision of court orders/curfews/condition to reside/electronic tagging. Accompanying a service user to all external appointments due to behavioural problems and risk of harm to the user. Therapeutic programmes.
<b>Other</b>				Providing a service that is accessible to any member of the public without assessment.