SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN WALTHAM FOREST
10 KEY POINTS

1. What is Supporting People?

The Government’s Supporting People programme aims to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of housing-related support for vulnerable people in the community in line with the national agendas of social inclusion and the modernisation of community services.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)’s mission statement for Supporting People is:

- Supporting People offers vulnerable people the opportunity to improve their quality of life by providing a stable environment which enables greater independence
- It will deliver high quality and strategically-planned housing related services which are cost-effective and reliable
- The planning and development of services will be needs-led
- Supporting People is a working partnership of local government, service users and support agencies

The Supporting People programme provides housing related support services including sheltered housing and extra-care for older people, independent living schemes for people with learning disabilities, people with mental health problems and people with substance misuse problems. It provides resettlement and support services for homeless people and tenancy sustainment services which help to prevent homelessness. It provides specialist services such as refuges for people fleeing domestic violence, housing for young people at risk and street homeless people. Supporting People services are either accommodation based where support is linked to specific accommodation such as hostels or “floating support” which provides flexible support which moves on when the tenant no longer needs the service.

The ODPM has identified 3 broad groupings of service users who benefit from Supporting People:

- People in receipt of care with support
- People living independently with support
- People experiencing or at risk of social exclusion

The type of support funded through the programme includes:

- Help in developing life skills such as understanding tenancy agreement, budgeting and cooking to enable people to live by themselves
- Support in accessing services and benefits
- Support in accessing training and employment
- Support through scheme manager and/or alarm services
2. **How much funding?**

Nationally, Supporting People enables over 1.2 million people to live independently and in 2005/6, the total national funding for the Supporting People programme is £1.7 billion.

In Waltham Forest, our Supporting People grant which pays providers of housing-related support services is £7.66 million in 2005/6 and this will be decreasing next year to £7.56 million due to a reduction in national funding.

We also receive £264,365 Administration Grant to help us run the programme locally. This pays for staffing, publicity, IT, training and consultancy services.

3. **Who benefits from Supporting People?**

In Waltham Forest, over 2800 people a year benefit from Supporting People services. The local programme is managed through 92 contracts with 52 providers in 269 services. The profile of provision by client group is:

![Spend by largest client groups](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spend by largest client groups</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Older peoples services £1.6m</td>
<td>1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning disabilities £1.31m</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health £1.21m</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single homeless £1.24m</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-offenders £302,114</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless families £342,711</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence £212,869</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The highest spend area at present is older people (£1.6m) followed by a relatively even division of spend on learning disabilities (£1.31) and mental health (£1.21m) and single homelessness (£1.24). This compares with the relatively low current spend on homeless families (£342,771). The latter is close to the current funding level of domestic violence projects (£212,689) whilst the domestic violence supply is significantly lower in number of units and significantly higher in cost.

4. How is the programme run locally?

The Supporting People programme is run through the Supporting People Team based in Community Services: Housing. The Team consists of:-

- Unit Head Supporting People: Yvonne Toms
- Supporting People Contracts Officer: Morelda Nanton
- Supporting People Finance Officer: Joy Routledge
- Supporting People Administration Officer: Linda Firth

The Head of Housing & Neighbourhoods Colin Moone, acts as the Accountable Officer for Supporting People in Waltham Forest.

The Waltham Forest Supporting People Commissioning Body, chaired by the Head of Strategy & Resources, Community Services, Deborah Hindson, oversees the Supporting People budget and strategy and is responsible for decisions about service review outcomes.

The Supporting People Core Strategy Group is responsible for development of the Supporting People strategy and assists with implementing the programme.

The Supporting People Team can be contacted on Tel: 0208 496 3000 or email: SupportingPeople@walthamforest.gov.uk.

Supporting People is a partnership programme and connects with joint planning and corporate working structures in Waltham Forest such as the Local Strategic Partnership, Mental Health LIT and Learning Disabilities Partnership Board. Members have been engaged with the programme through briefings from the Portfolio member for Housing and reports to Cabinet and reporting to the Joint Partnership Board is being developed.

5. What activities does the programme involve?

The delivery of Supporting People involves 3 broad areas:-

- Strategy and joint planning
- Budget management and payment processes
- Service monitoring and review
6. **Who are the key partners?**

Supporting People is essentially a partnership programme. Voting Partners on the Commissioning Body are the local authority, Probation and the Primary Care Trust. Supporting People services are delivered by a range of providers including housing associations and voluntary agencies. Voluntary groups and service users are involved in joint planning and consultation including at the stage of service review.

7. **What has Supporting People achieved locally?**

The **Supporting People** Team's achievements include:-

- Development and submission of London Borough of Waltham Forest's **Supporting People Strategy 2005/10** in line with ODPM's deadline of March 2006
- Completing first round service reviews on all **Supporting People** contracts
- Improving procedures to promote timely submission of performance data
- Management of **Supporting People** grant payments
- Attracting funding through successful bids such as the ODPM/DOH Health pilots project to improve assessments of supported housing needs for people with learning disabilities and the DOH Extra care programme
- Commissioning award winning innovative services such as the Y Stop project for young women fleeing forced marriage
- Commissioning new services for people with learning disabilities and people with mental health problems
- Facilitating the user led reviews of mental health provision, sheltered housing and priority homeless hostels
- Organising the **Supporting People** Open Day as an event of learning and celebration of **Supporting People** services, attended by over 110 providers, stakeholders and service users as part of a series of publicity and consultation events
- Being shortlisted and highly commended as London Borough of Waltham Forest's "Team of the Year" in 2004/5

8. **What are the funding priorities?**

The vision of Waltham Forest’s Supporting People Strategy is to ensure Waltham Forest's **Supporting People** services provide high quality housing-related support to improve quality of life and to promote independence, safety and choice.

Waltham Forest's priorities are to: -

- Increase the supply of high support accommodation for people with mental health problems and learning disabilities as alternatives to residential care
- Increased support for homeless households in temporary accommodation and to provide resettlement. This includes homeless families and single
homeless with a focus on care leavers, 16/17 year olds, teenage parents and ex-offenders

- Continue the move towards extended care (Part 2.5) for older people whilst reducing the total supply of sheltered housing
- Increase floating support services rather than “bricks and mortar “

9. **What are the hot issues at present?**

ODPM is currently consulting on its national strategy for Supporting People *Creating Sustainable Communities: Supporting Independence* and its Distribution Formula - the means of assessing each authority's grant level in future. Consultation on both documents closes in February 2006.

The most controversial section of the national strategy concerns the level of future funding and the method for delivering the grant.

Redistribution of grant has been pushed back to 2007-8. Reductions of grant will be no more than 5% annually and growth no more than 10%. Waltham Forest would be likely to receive a gradual increase in grant if the Distribution Formula goes ahead.

Supporting People funding is currently issued to local authorities as a ring-fenced grant. The Government is consulting on the structure of future funding: with the aim to give more flexibility; options include linking to Local Area Agreements, merger with Rate Support Grant or continuation as separate but un-ringfenced grant.

Other areas in the consultation document include: -

- Supporting People in its strategic context
- Focussing and integrating support: with a greater emphasis on outcome measurement
- Administering the programme - which includes the possibility of replacing the Commissioning Body structure; and
- eSupporting People: enhancing e-government. One contribution already made to this has been the development of the National Directory - a search facility for Supporting People services available through ODPM Supporting People website (spkweb).

10. **Audit Inspection: what and when?**

All local authorities are subject to an inspection by the Audit Commission for their delivery of Supporting People. Waltham Forest's inspection is due to start on 27th March 2006. Stakeholders will be contacted by Audit Commission as part of the inspection. The inspection will concentrate on the following areas from the Audit Commission's Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE): -

- Governance
- Delivery arrangements
- Service reviews
• Value for money
• Service user involvement
• Access to services and information
• Diversity
• Outcomes for service users