

## Cambridgeshire Supporting People Client Involvement and Empowerment Strategy

---

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Background – The Supporting People Programme	2
2. Introduction to this Strategy	2
3. Purpose, scope and key drivers of this Strategy	4
4. Key objectives of the Client Involvement and Empowerment Strategy	4
5. Our key values for Involvement and Empowerment	5
6. What we do now	6
7. How we will involve Clients	7
8. Outcomes from Involvement and Empowerment	8
9. Where we want to be	9
<b>Appendix A</b> Involvement and Empowerment Action Plan	
<b>Appendix B</b> Client Involvement Group Member Role Description	
<b>Appendix C</b> Definition of Words/Terms for Strategy and Action Plan	

## **1. Background – The Supporting People Programme**

Supporting People is a government funded programme that provides housing related support to vulnerable people. The overall purpose of the programme is to promote and support independent living and to prevent vulnerable people from becoming homeless. It does this by providing a range of housing related support services to people who need help to find or maintain an independent home in the community. Services in Cambridgeshire include homeless hostels, supported housing, sheltered housing, women's refuges and 'floating support' which is support provided to people in their homes.

The services are provided to a wide range of vulnerable people including:

- Older People/ Frail Elderly with support needs
- People with Mental Health problems
- People with Learning Disabilities
- Young Vulnerable People including Teenage Parents and Care Leavers
- Ex-Offenders or People at Risk of Offending
- People who Misuse Drugs and/or Alcohol
- Women Fleeing Domestic and Sexual Violence
- People Living with HIV/Aids
- Gypsies and Travellers
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- Homeless Families and Single Homeless People with Support Needs

People who use our services are at the centre of the government agenda for improving housing support services through the Supporting People programme. The programme is based on the key principles of needs led services, quality provision and strategically planned services. These are in turn dependent on effective involvement of people who use our services. The government expects that all those involved in delivering the Supporting People programme such as Commissioning Body, Joint Member Group Group, Development and Implementation Group, Supporting People Team and Service Providers, work together to ensure that people who use our services are enabled and supported to engage in all aspects of the local Supporting People programme.

## **2. Introduction to this Strategy**

This strategy links with Cambridgeshire County Council's Equality and Diversity Policy which is committed to promoting fairness and equality of opportunity, and celebrating diversity for all people, particularly in relation to:

- Accessing the County Council's Services;
- Employment opportunities within the County Council or its contractors who supply goods or services to the Council;
- Those who work or seek to work in a voluntary capacity supported by the Council;
- The way in which the Council develops policies that impact upon individuals and communities.

The diverse range of services and Clients supported by the programme presents challenges in developing effective structures for Client Involvement. Some users of services may be excluded from traditional consultation mechanisms. We will work jointly with our Providers and Stakeholders to identify best practice to get these Clients involved. The overall aim of this strategy is to create real opportunities for Clients to get involved on a strategic level in order to influence the management, design and delivery of services in Cambridgeshire. We hope to achieve this through creating a Client Involvement Group, with clearly defined roles for the members of the group. Whilst drawing on Clients' individual abilities and talents, we will strive to enable them to increase confidence, take control of circumstances, achieve goals and maximize quality of life. Through our Involvement initiative we will provide free training and other learning opportunities to facilitate the learning and personal growth of members of the group.

The Supporting People team recognises that communicating with and involving Clients, Providers and Stakeholders is the key to improving services. Therefore, this strategy sets out:

- who we will involve
- our key objectives and values
- what we do now
- what we will do
- intended outcomes of the strategy
- evaluating the outcomes of involvement and empowerment

Our action plan is a working document, which will be reviewed and evaluated annually by the Supporting People team in consultation with our Providers, Client Groups and other Stakeholders.

This strategy will be further supported by a number of policies and initiatives such as:

- The Quality Assessment Framework for Supporting People's expectations on involving and empowering clients at service level
- Cambridgeshire Supporting People Strategy
- Cambridgeshire County Council's Corporate Communications Strategy
- Cambridgeshire County Council's Listening and Involvement Strategy
- Current three year Local Area Agreement (LAA)

### **3. Purpose, scope and key drivers of this Strategy**

Up until now, the main way of involving Clients in the Supporting People team's work was through service reviews of individual services. However, we recognise a lot more remains to be done to make the programme more inclusive. Therefore, this strategy sets out the framework to engage more effectively with Clients in all aspects of the programme.

The Action Plan (appendix A) identifies the actions we will take to move to working in more enhanced partnership with Clients. Our ambition is, not only to provide information and consult with Clients, but to enable them to participate in the decision making process. We believe that comprehensive Client Involvement is about involving past, existing and future Clients, and their families and carers to find out about their experiences of Supporting People services.

The key drivers of our strategy are:

- Supporting People Programme National Strategy – Communities and Local Government (2007)
- Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) – The Audit Commission (2007)
- 'Our health, our care, our say' - The Department of Health (2006)
- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (2007)
- 'Communities in Control' – Communities and Local Government White paper (2008)
- Current Cambridgeshire County Council's initiative in developing the Community Engagement Strategy

### **4. Key objectives of the Client Involvement and Empowerment Strategy**

In line with 'Communities in Control' our key objectives for Involvement and Empowerment are:

**To Involve:**

- To involve Clients in the design, delivery and monitoring of services wherever possible;
- To involve Clients in making decisions about their services;
- Act on the results of consultations to improve services and service delivery and report the changes back to those who influenced them;
- To build on partnerships with Clients, Service Providers and other Stakeholders;
- To make links with the local organisations supporting and advocating for Clients, including self organised user groups;

**To Consult:**

- To know our Client groups and how to reach and consult them;
- To consult with Clients in the design, delivery and decision making process in relation to their services;
- To monitor how well Supporting People services are involving Clients, and consult on and make recommendations on how this could improve;

**To Inform:**

- To communicate regularly with Clients and inform them of any key changes and how they can influence them;
- Provide timely, accessible, accurate and relevant information in a manner that is appropriate to the audience;
- Clearly explain why we are consulting and how the information provided will be used;
- To raise awareness of the Supporting People programme.

## **5. Our key values for Involvement and Empowerment**

Our communication and involvement with the Clients will:

- Be accurate, open and honest
- Be accessible and inclusive
- Be free from jargon and easy to understand
- Be consistent in quality
- Be cost effective
- Value all contributions
- Offer feedback on what has changed as a result
- Develop people to take part and mentor others
- Reward for Client Involvement – free training, voucher reward and out of pocket expenses

## 6. What we do now

- **Commissioning Body** – decision making group that includes senior managers from the County Council, District Councils, Primary Care Trust and Probation Service;
- **Joint Member Group**<sup>1</sup> - the key group in shaping the direction and priorities for Supporting People in Cambridgeshire includes representatives from the County Council, District Councils, Primary Care Trust, Probation Service and Councilors;
- **Development and Implementation Group** – this is a group that helps develop and implement areas for policy for the Commissioning Body and it includes representatives from the County Council, District Councils, Primary Care Trust, Probation Service as well as a Service Providers' representative;
- **Inclusive Forum** – the group is run by Cambridgeshire Supporting People and it aims to involve key stakeholders and providers and keep them informed of changes;
- **Various Client Involvement Groups** – these groups meet regularly and are individually supported by Supporting People Service Providers and other Partners. Clients are involved in consultations/discussions and they are able to comment on new initiatives and policies and procedures. Where appropriate Clients receive free training as part of these initiatives.
- **Diversity** – consultation of black and minority ethnic and other excluded groups;
- **Interviews with Clients using our services** – this is part of the service review and monitoring process;
- **Newsletter** – produced by the Supporting People team to keep Providers/Partners and informed of developments and plans;
- **Directory of Supporting People services** – this contains information about Supporting People services;
- **Client questionnaires** – these are sent out during service review and for specific consultations. This will be continued as and when required;
- **Community events** – County wide Community Engagement consultation workshops, Diversity Week, Homeshield launch
- **Written articles** – we have submitted articles on Cambridgeshire's Daily Briefing.
- **Leaflets** – Supporting People leaflet for Clients; Supporting People sheltered housing leaflet; Regional Supporting People leaflet; Easy Read Supporting People leaflet; Easy Read Involvement leaflet, Floating Support consultation pamphlet
- **CCC Website** – it provides general information about the Supporting People programme.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Joint Member Group became part of the Community Wellbeing Partnership in December 2009

## 7. How we could involve Clients

The Supporting People programme supports a diverse range of groups with differing needs. Therefore, we believe a 'one size fits all' approach to Client Involvement is inappropriate. Instead, we will offer a range of approaches and levels of engagement, and Clients can be involved as much or as little as they would like to be.

The Supporting People team intends to encourage and support Clients to participate in established Supporting People planning and consultation structures but will also make best use of existing mechanisms developed by other agencies such as the voluntary sector and community groups.

### Low level involvement examples:

- Answering and taking part in questionnaires
- Giving feedback on services received
- Attending informal coffee mornings at different supported housing schemes
- One to one meetings with the Supporting People Contract Officer at a time and place to suit the Client, therefore their views can be discussed openly in total confidentiality
- Email us, write to us and telephone us to tell us your complaints or compliments

### Medium Involvement examples:

- Attending meetings to express views
- Involvement in a newsletter
- Helping in the organisation of conferences
- Attending one off gatherings
- Involvement in the tender process

### High Involvement examples:

- Assisting the Supporting People team to co-ordinate meetings, reviews, consultations, select applicants for interview and participate in the interview process
- Assist with coordinating the Supporting People Team Newsletter
- Regular attendance and Chairing of Client Involvement Group meetings
- Involvement with Cambridgeshire County Council's decision making groups
- Attending training

## **8. Outcomes from Involvement and Empowerment**

Feeding back what has changed as a result of consultation and involvement is an important part of this strategy. We believe that appropriate and timely feedback can encourage more reluctant Clients to take part. Furthermore, in line with the Supporting People National Outcomes Framework, Client Involvement contributes to all five high level outcomes. Information on outcomes helps us learn about as well as evidence the effectiveness of the programme. There are two outcomes in particular that our Involvement initiative contributes towards. Firstly, Enjoy and Achieve whereby Clients can participate in voluntary work, training and establish links with other services and Clients. Secondly, Make a Positive Contribution whereby Clients exercise greater choice and become involved with their service as well the Supporting People programme. These outcomes by no means represent all outcomes that a Client may wish to achieve. We expect that our Clients will have individual outcomes outside the identified ones in the Framework and we are happy to support this development.

Also, Client Involvement directly contributes towards Local Area Agreement National Indicators, NI3 and NI4. NI3 represents Civic Participation In The Local Area. NI4 represents percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality. It brings together national standards and priorities set by Central Government with Cambridgeshire priorities based on the vision developed jointly with its Partners. A clear set of National Outcomes and a single set of National Indicators are used as a measure of progress.

Information gained through consultation and involvement will be used to influence and shape the work of our programme. Client, Stakeholder and Service Provider Involvement will influence change to services and to strategic priorities. We will report any changes to those who took part and to the wider community. Results will normally be published in the Supporting People newsletter, Cambridgeshire Supporting People website and/or via the existing Provider communication channels.

Each year the Supporting People Team jointly with Clients and other Stakeholders will update the Involvement and Empowerment Action Plan which will outline the key tasks for that year, as well as incorporate lessons learnt from good and bad practice.

## **9. Where we want to be**

We want to be a programme where we truly work in partnership with Clients, Providers and other Stakeholders and where Clients are fully involved in their services. Our expectation from the Providers is that they will have an effective approach to Client Involvement and Empowerment in line with the current Quality Assessment Framework (QAF).

This Strategy aims to influence and improve Supporting People services and raise the profile of Supporting People and housing related services in Cambridgeshire year on year. This will be achieved by the annually updated Involvement and Empowerment Action Plan. The strategy will also be reviewed annually, focusing on impact and relevance.