

Appendix 1 - Feedback from stakeholders on the future commissioning arrangements for Supported Living Services in Staffordshire

1. This briefing is to provide an overview of all stakeholders the Council have engaged with as part of this process and a summary of the feedback.

Stakeholders engaged with to discuss Supported Living options and proposals

Service Users who reside in Supported Living Settings

2. Asist Advocacy Services supported the Council to engage with service users who reside in supported living settings. 39 providers were contacted to support with the request for feedback either via a questionnaire or an in person visit. 15 of these providers engaged in the process and a total of 34 individuals took the opportunity to share their views with the Council.
3. The 34 service users that took part represented a mix of learning disability, mental health and physical disability placements as well as a mix of models of support for example shared homes and flat schemes.

Families and Carers

4. The Council offered families and carers various options to engage which included an online questionnaire via MS Forms, a drop in event in each district of Staffordshire or to feedback by telephone call or email.
5. In total 36 families and carers engaged with the Council and they represented a mix of learning disability, mental health and physical disability placements as well as a mix of models of support for example shared homes and flat schemes.

Care and Support Providers

6. A briefing paper and questionnaire were distributed to all care and support providers where the Council currently have a placement with, and all providers signed up to the Supported Living DPS. This equates to over 200 providers. Providers were also invited to an engagement session to discuss the recommission via MS Teams.

7. At the point of writing this report, the Council have 424 placements with 65 providers. 18 (28%) of the 65 providers have placements outside the County of Staffordshire.
8. 20 providers completed the questionnaire, and an additional 6 providers attended the engagement events. Of the 26 (40%) care and support providers that engaged with us, they have a total of 186 (44%) the Council Supported Living placements.
9. The 186 placements also represented a mix of learning disability, mental health and physical disability placements as well as a mix of models of support for example shared homes and flat schemes.

Housing Providers

10. A total of 28 housing providers were approached to engage in this process. A total of 8 providers engaged via a MS Team event, email or phone call to gain their views on this process.

Local district and borough councils

11. All eight district and borough councils were invited to a MS teams meeting to discuss the recommissioning. Staff were invited from the Revenues and Benefits departments.

Internal Council Teams

12. As per the Cabinet Report presented in January 2022, SCS have engaged with the following internal teams
 - a. Social Worker Teams which included children's, learning disability, mental health and physical disability teams
 - b. Commercial which included procurement and contract management
 - c. Brokerage
 - d. Finance
 - e. Legal which included contracted and adult social care legal teams
 - f. ASC Pathway
 - g. Information Governance

The Council also engaged with the following additional internal teams:

- h. Health (joint link with social care)
- i. Care Director
- j. Quality Assurance
- k. District Strategic Delivery Managers

I. Older People and Physical and Sensory Disability Commissioning Team

Summary of feedback received on the proposals

- 13. Stakeholders were supportive of the process the Council had followed in terms of the options appraisal and the results that it yielded.
- 14. Overall, the feedback received on the options and proposals were positive. Concerns were raised over the current Supported Living Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) that is in place, that echoed the Council’s own concerns that we have shared with stakeholders and that was documented in the initial cabinet report that was presented in January 2022.
- 15. Stakeholders recognised the need to change the way the Council currently works to support in resolving the current issues the Council and stakeholders are experiencing and to meet the key objectives for the future service.
- 16. Key feedback which has impacted on final proposals is as follows:

Key Feedback Item	Result of Feedback
<p>a. Continued engagement with stakeholders as part of the recommissioning of supported living once final decision has been made by Cabinet. Stakeholders are keen to support the development of the proposed model and shape the service specification. Process will enhance communication and stakeholder partnership approach overall.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Service Users, Asist will support the Council to develop a subgroup to ensure full engagement of service users in the recommissioning process. • A subgroup will also be formed to allow families and carers to engage in the process. • A Supported Living Care and Support Provider Forum will be set up. • All 3 groups noted above will be established and first meetings to be held in October 2022. • An internal stakeholder bulletin will be developed to share with all internal SCC teams including all social work teams. • A Supported Living project group has been formed with

	<p>key leads from internal SCC teams and social work teams to discuss current operational issues and the recommissioning. This group meets on a 6-weekly basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dedicated supported living page on the SCC website will be set up to allow stakeholders to view progress on the project. <p>To maximise the opportunity for co-design with the above groups different communication tools and methods for sharing information are being reviewed.</p>
<p>b. To be clear on the definition of supported living and what is included in this for example the model of care that the Council wish to be delivered and what is the Council's responsibility to pay for.</p>	<p>Summary definition included in Glossary. Please also refer to paragraph 6a of Scrutiny Report. This will form part of the Stakeholder engagement as stated in 16a above. SCC will engage with stakeholders over this and agree final definitions of cohorts of service users.</p>
<p>c. Concerns were raised over the numbers of providers suggested for all highly complex individuals and most complex and less complex individuals. It was agreed that the number of providers is too small, and consideration should be given to increase this figure. This is due to providers working in cycles and not all may have the ability to take on new placements immediately. Concerns were raised that if a smaller number of providers were block contracted that it would put pressure on the flexible framework providers</p>	<p>Please refer to paragraph 6a and 6b of Scrutiny Report. Numbers of providers have changed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previously 1-3 providers for complex individuals. This has now changed to 5. • Previously 8-12 providers for non-complex individuals. This has now changed to 15.

<p>or there will be a need to commission a placement outside of the new arrangements. Smaller numbers of providers may lead to a lack of choice for the service user.</p>	
<p>d. Robust quality assessment does need to be completed up front to enable the Council to contract with providers who are skilled and experienced in working with all service users, whilst also not alienating new providers or Social Micro Enterprises (SMEs) from the market.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please refer to paragraph 8 of the Scrutiny report. A full robust quality assessment will be completed prior to appointment onto the new contracting arrangements, instead of at point of call off which is what currently happens now. • Pre-engagement work will be done with all providers to support them to be prepared for the release of the procurement tenders and reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that SMEs are able to access and take part fully in the procurement exercise.
<p>e. To be clear on cohorts of service users. To be clear on the definition of these to avoid confusion or debate.</p>	<p>Please refer to paragraph 6a and 6b of the Scrutiny Report.</p>
<p>f. Suggested that the use of Individual Service Funds is explored. This is a tri-party agreement between the service user, the Council and the care and support provider to offer flexible personalised support.</p>	<p>Please refer to paragraph 7 of the Scrutiny Report.</p>
<p>g. Contracts need to be as long as possible to allow providers the time to invest in Staffordshire. The specification will need to be</p>	<p>Please refer to paragraph 6c of the Scrutiny Report. SCC will ensure the final specification, once drafted and finalised will be future proofed and</p>

<p>future proofed and fit for purpose to last for the duration of the contract.</p>	<p>allowing for variations over the contract term to provide some flexibility for care providers to meet changing environments and needs as appropriate.</p>
<p>h. The rates proposed need to be financially viable and sustainable to allow for quality, investment and contract term length.</p>	<p>Please refer to paragraph 7 of the Scrutiny Report.</p>
<p>i. Future arrangements are to be fit for potential integration with health.</p>	<p>SCC will ensure that there is a clause in the final contract to allow for health partners to utilise either the block contracting arrangements and the flexible framework to secure care and support if required.</p>
<p>j. Will support with financial stability of care and support and housing providers to prioritise voids when contracted arrangements in place.</p>	<p>Please refer to paragraph 6a and 6b of the Scrutiny Report. As the proposal to is to move to block contracted arrangements, voids will be prioritised as part of this arrangement.</p>
<p>k. The block contracting arrangement will allow for tighter market control and to stop housing providers setting up new services without prior consent of the Council.</p>	<p>The new proposed arrangements will allow SCC to have more strategic conversations with housing and care and support providers around what provision is required. Better working relationships have been developed with district and borough councils as part of the engagement process and is ongoing in terms of communicating around new housing developments.</p>
<p>l. Need to ensure supported living housing qualifies as specialist support housing as is provided by registered providers to ensure service users can access the correct benefits and for the home to be affordable to live in.</p>	<p>This links into 16 k above. Several private and profit-making housing providers are setting up services which are expensive and not in line with specialist supported housing guidance. Expectations will be made clear in contracts in terms of housing providers so ensure our</p>

	service users can access affordable accommodation which is fit for purpose and maintained to a high standard.
m. Concerns were raised around the suggestion of a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) or inhouse model only to deliver care and support to the most complex individuals. It was felt that this could destabilise the existing market. The Council would be at high risk if for any reason the LATC / In house model happened to fail as no additional secure contracting method would be in place to support taking over care on that scale.	Please refer to paragraph 9 of the Scrutiny report.
n. In addition to the above feedback about the recommission, the Council have received invaluable feedback which will support development of details within the service specification for supported living.	All feedback will be reviewed and utilised to draft and finalise the specification and terms and conditions of the contract.
o. Constructive feedback has been received about the current Council teams and processes which will be shared accordingly with the teams involved.	Policies, processes, and guidelines will be streamlined and updated to reflect feedback received from stakeholders and shared as part of the Supported Living Project Group noted in section 16 a above.