

## **SUPPORTING PEOPLE CHARGING – ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To outline the proposed Supporting People charging arrangements and to report on the practical implications of the revised charging proposals.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR), published a second consultation paper on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2002 on Supporting People methods of charging and means testing.
- 2.2 This paper proposes that Supporting People should have two different methods of charging and means testing. Either:-
- a system of contracting for all places and then charging and means testing individuals, or:-
  - a second charging 'model' (model 2) applicable only to sheltered housing. Model 2 changes the point of charging and collection away from the Administering Authority (Essex County Council) towards a new 'Charging Authority' and to providers. It essentially operates on the basis of only paying providers for those individuals who, through being in receipt of full Housing Benefit or as a result of a separate means test, are not liable to pay for the services they receive.
- 2.3 Schemes designated as 'Short term' provision, for example a hostel or refuge, will be exempt from charging. The consultation paper does not contain a definition of what constitutes short term, which will follow in later papers. Determination of those services exempt from charging will be a decision for the Commissioning Body, which it will take having regard to DTLR and Department of Health (DoH) guidance, and advice from the Administering Authority.
- 2.4 Individuals in receipt of full or partial housing benefit will be exempt from charging, as will individuals who are assessed under the non-residential social services means testing system as not being able to meet the costs of their support.
- 2.5 The 'Model 2' Process suggests a direct to provider subsidy system for individuals in sheltered housing schemes that cannot meet the cost of their support services. Under Model 2, the Administering Authority will make payments under contract direct to the service provider. These

payments will be net of any income that the Administering Authority determines can be recovered direct from residents.

- 2.6 Model 2 introduces the concept of a 'Charging Authority'. This organisation is assumed to be the part of Social Services that undertakes means tests for non-residential social services provision. The mechanism by which this will be determined is through a 'charging schedule' produced by the 'Charging Authority'. This schedule will identify those who are in receipt of full or partial housing benefit or have been assessed under the non-residential social services means test as needing help to meet the costs. Providers will then be left to recover income from those individuals not covered by payment from the Administering Authority (as they currently do for non-housing benefit eligible charges at present).

### **3 SUPPORTING PEOPLE CHARGING UPDATE**

- 3.1 The DTLR met with a small number of local authority Supporting People Teams, including Essex on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2002, to review the practicality of their proposals with a view to clarifying their Consultation Paper. The meeting agreed that there should be only one model used for charging, based on "Model 2" used for all schemes. Furthermore that:
- (i) people who "fail" the housing benefit means test would have to apply for a non-residential social services financial assessment
  - (ii) consideration be given to passporting individuals who have already undergone a Community Care means test to avoid them having to go through a second means test
  - (iii) the DTLR will issue guidance advising District Councils that they will be able to subsidise charges for individuals in their area.
- 3.2 The DTLR will publish a final charging and administration document by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2002.

### **4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Supporting People Grant will be a cash-limited grant that will only continue to fund supported housing schemes following appropriate service review recommendations. Furthermore, service providers will have to provide the County Supporting People Team, acting on behalf of the Commissioning Body with sufficient detail to enable them to register organisations as accredited and for those service providers to tender for specific services.

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- 4.2 Once the charging policy is determined, enforcing individual eligibility will be the responsibility of the “Charging Authority”. It is envisaged this function will be carried out by the part of the Social Services Department that deals with non-residential services.

## **5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Government has provided a guarantee of service to existing sheltered tenants, in that tenants will continue to receive the level of support that is currently being delivered. It also states that changes to service providers will be exceptional.

## **6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**
- (1) That the Supporting People charging proposals are noted
  - (2) That a further report is submitted to this Committee when the final charging details are available. (HHHCC)

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### **Background Papers:**

DTLR Supporting People Administrative Guidance

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