



## Future Funding consultation briefing December 2016

On 21 November, the Government announced a consultation on future funding models for supported housing. The consultation documents, [which can be found here](#), explore some of the key issues and principles underpinning the proposed new system. The consultation is very much about how a new system could work, rather than if a new system should be introduced.

This briefing looks at the five key issues identified in the consultation and the relevant questions under each issue. It then lists some questions that have been raised in our initial analysis and engagement around the consultation, which could be helpful for members to consider in drafting their own responses.

The consultation closes on **Monday 13 February 2017**. We would encourage members to submit individual responses to the consultation, and if there is anything you would like included in our organisational response, please email [paula.reid@homelesslink.org.uk](mailto:paula.reid@homelesslink.org.uk).

### 1. The design of the local ring-fence and ensuring that all groups have fair access to funding locally

Consultation questions:

*Q1. The local top-up will be devolved to local authorities. Who should hold the funding; and, in two tier areas, **should the upper tier authority hold the funding?***

*Q2. How should the funding model be designed to maximise the opportunities for local agencies to collaborate, encourage planning and commissioning across service boundaries, and ensure that different local commissioning bodies can have fair access to funding?*

*Q3. How can we ensure that local allocation of funding by local authorities matches local need for supported housing across all client groups?*

*Q4. Do you think other funding protections for vulnerable groups, beyond the ring-fence, are needed to provide fair access to funding for all client groups, including those without existing statutory duties (including for example, the case for any new statutory duties or any other sort of statutory provision)?*

Some additional questions to consider when responding:

- Currently housing related support/ supporting people and care responsibilities, sit with upper-tier authorities, while homelessness responsibilities and Housing Benefit sit with lower-tier authorities
- Would an upper-tier approach mean more strategic planning and allow for a more flexible approach to local connection? Or could it be more political i.e. each district area getting a share of funding without reflecting need?
- Only 48% local authorities responded to the evidence review – how robust is the data these proposals are being based upon? Will there be an exercise to evaluate the amount of supported housing in all local authorities to inform the allocation of the localised pot? What happens if this is a different amount to the £4.12 billion committed to as a result of the evidence review?

- Would new legislation help protect certain groups? What would be the impact on local authorities if more duties are added? Would legislation create arbitrary thresholds for people to meet to access supported housing?

## **2. Clarifying what is expected from local stakeholders, including commissioning, planning and partnership arrangements**

Consultation questions:

*Q5. What expectations should there be for local roles and responsibilities? What planning, commissioning and partnership and monitoring arrangements might be necessary, both nationally and locally?*

*Q6. For local authority respondents, what administrative impact and specific tasks might this new role involve for your local authority?*

Some additional questions to consider when responding:

- Would top-up funding only be available to supported housing that was commissioned locally? What happens to other provision?
- Would a local supported housing strategy help clarify what is needed from partners?
- Would any new responsibilities for local authorities be mandatory or best practice? How light-touch would Government involvement be?
- Could a receiving authority commission services elsewhere (i.e. with a higher rate of LHA) or can they only spend it in their local area?

## **3. Oversight and assurance mechanisms to ensure value for money and high quality services**

Consultation questions:

*Q7. We welcome your views on what features the new model should include to provide greater oversight and assurance to tax payers that supported housing services are providing value for money, are of good quality and are delivering outcomes for individual tenants.*

Some additional questions to consider when responding:

- How can the awareness of supported housing be raised in the local community?
- How can resources provided by supported housing be made available as widely as possible, such as gyms, meeting rooms etc.?

## **4. How best to balance local flexibility with certainty for providers.**

Consultation questions:

*Q8. We are interested in your views on how to strike a balance between local flexibility and provider/developer certainty and simplicity. What features should the funding model have to provide greater certainty to providers and in particular, developers of new supply?*

*Q9. Should there be a national statement of expectations or national commissioning framework within which local areas tailor their funding? How should this work with existing commissioning arrangements, for example across health and social care, and how would we ensure it was followed?*

*Q10. The Government wants a smooth transition to the new funding arrangement on 1 April 2019. What transitional arrangements might be helpful in supporting the transition to the new regime?*

*Q11. Do you have any other views about how the local top-up model can be designed to ensure it works for tenants, commissioners, providers and developers?*

Some additional questions to consider when responding:

- Would longer-term contracts help provide stability and security? What other ways could be used to ensure agencies know their future income streams and make commitments based on these?
- Will development be skewed to areas with high LHA rates because of greater certainty of income in these areas? Do the current proposals offer enough certainty for developers?
- Could the proposals lead to supported housing being more strategically aligned with local health and care services?
- Is the timetable reasonable? What should a shadow year (proposed from April 2018) achieve? Is there a role for pilots or 'test and learn' approaches?
- Do you have any alternative funding models to propose?

**5. Developing workable options for short-term accommodation, such as hostels and refuges**

Consultation questions:

*Q12. We welcome your views on how emergency and short-term accommodation should be defined and how funding should be provided outside Universal Credit. How should funding be provided for tenants in these situations?*

Some additional questions to consider when responding:

- How is short-term defined – 3 months? 6 months? What about supported housing with a mix of clients?
- How will this be funded? Ring-fenced local pot within wider localised pot? Direct grant from government? What funding stream would bring greatest clarity and security?

If you have any queries, please contact:

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