

14/10/2004

Gateway Ref: 3978

Supporting People

Dear Colleagues

Supporting People is an Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) initiative to help vulnerable people live independently at home. Client groups include elderly people, those recovering from addiction problems, people with physical disabilities and people with learning disabilities. The programme has a budget of £1.7 billion a year for the next three years. For further information see:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Bulletins/ChiefExecutiveBulletin/ChiefExecutiveBulletinArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4089643&chk=cNIaNc

The money is distributed by Administering Authorities locally (either unitary authorities or county councils), but the Administering Authority must have a Commissioning Body to make strategic decisions on commissioning services. The Commissioning Body has to have one member to represent the Primary Care Trust(s) in the area. More than one member may be allowed if the Administering Local Authority thinks this is appropriate.

The Commissioning Board must agree their *Supporting People* Strategy, setting out how local needs for housing related support will be met over the next five years. Strategies must be submitted to ODPM by 31 March 2005.

ODPM have received feedback from Administering Authorities that not all PCTs have fully engaged with the Supporting People initiative. This has been confirmed by PCTs that we have spoken to.

Such a situation is probably the result of the many important priorities PCTs have, all of which take up time and resources. However, *Supporting People* has obvious potential to help us reach key targets.

In particular it is directly relevant to the Public Service Agreement (PSA) target to “Improve the quality of life and independence of vulnerable older people by supporting them to live in their own homes where possible, by:

- increasing the proportion of older people being supported to live in their own home by 1% annually in 2007 and 2008; and

- increasing, by 2008, the proportion of those supported intensively to live at home to 34% of the total of those being supported at home or in residential care.”

Supporting People can also help to achieve the long term conditions PSA and should have general advantages in reducing admissions to hospital and visits to A&E.

Can I therefore encourage Chief Executives of PCTs to ensure that their PCT is fully engaged on *Supporting People*.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S G Belfield', written in a cursive style.

Gary Belfield
Head of Primary Care Access