

Supporting People Torbay

Issue 8

Summer 2006

New services go out to tender

1. Supporting People Referral Hub

In the November 2005 newsletter we told you we were working on a proposal to change the way that Supporting People (SP) services are accessed, known as the 'Referral Hub'. We have been working with agencies that refer people to services, providers of services and users of services to finalise proposals.

The principal aims of this new service are to:

- Provide a central, initial point of contact for referrers and service users wishing to access SP services in Torbay.
- Assess needs, utilising agreed processes and either match the needs of individuals (over the age of 16) with available services within the SP programme, or advise/guide/assist people towards more appropriate

services, ensuring maximum choice and involvement from service users.

- Compile statistics on contacts made and the outcomes achieved to inform the general level of need for existing SP services, identifying gaps in service provision.

This new service is open for tenders and has been advertised in the European Journal and on the Devon Tenders website at www.devontenders.co.uk. **Anyone interested in tendering for this service should register their interest on this website, the deadline for registering an interest is the 29th August 2006.** After this date an overview of the service requirements will be sent out and those wishing to continue will need to fill out a questionnaire to progress to the next stage.

2. Accommodation and support for homeless families

Torbay Council will shortly be inviting accommodation and support providers to tender for a number of contracts – expected to be for two years with extension clauses – to provide accommodation and/or support for individuals and families who are homeless.

The SP Team are currently developing a specification for a tender to increase floating support to homeless households while they are in temporary accommodation. Both of these tender opportunities will be advertised soon.

For more information contact Lizz Higgins, SP Service Development Manager at elizabeth.higgins@torbay.gov.uk.



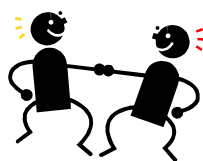
Procurement – a new stage in the Supporting People programme

All Supporting People (SP) service reviews are now complete and where appropriate services' interim contracts have been extended. We are now moving into a new phase for SP and an SP procurement strategy is in development. The process of procurement is the way in which new goods or services are purchased. The Council has published a Corporate Procurement Strategy that can be found at www.torbay.gov.uk. The SP Team is working closely with the Council's Corporate Procurement Team and hope to be able to circulate the draft strategy for consultation in September.

The needs assessment work that is currently in progress will inform the procurement timetable. Interim contracts will be extended, and in some cases time limited steady state contracts will be negotiated, pending the implementation of the strategy. Torbay has used learning and documentation from the Plymouth SP Value Improvement Project to develop the strategy. The objectives of the procurement strategy include:

- Implementing a common framework for the procurement of housing related support (SP) services
- Identifying joint commissioning opportunities and aligning systems and processes to facilitate this
- Ensuring that procurement processes and activities are fair, fully inclusive and promote equality of access

The Council's Standing Orders and European regulations require that services are tendered to ensure the Council is getting the best service. The SP partnership is aware that successful tendering takes a great deal of effort. Providers will also need skills to be able to work effectively towards success in the new environment of competitively tendered SP services. For this reason, procurement training will be available later in the year. This training will be targeted at those individuals within provider organisations who will be expected to completed tender documentation.



New staff in SP Team

We welcomed in July three new members of staff to the SP Team. Pat Marriot joined us as Housing Assistant and carries out the administration for the team. Previously she worked for Jobcentre Plus. Shelley Brown is an SP Service Development Officer who is focussing on monitoring and developing services for people with a disability. Shelley last worked in a community centre; she also has experience working with disabled people and for a SP provider. Lizz Higgins has moved down to Torbay from Southwark. She has taken on the role of SP Service Development Manager. Lizz was working in Southwark Council in contracts and commissioning for SP. We are really pleased

to welcome the new staff and to have a team with such a diverse array of working experiences.

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Supporting People Service User Group update

This group is going from strength to strength. It is made up of people who use a range of different Supporting People (SP) services. They meet to discuss the planning, review and development of services. They comment on the draft versions of new policies, such as the SP Communication and Involvement Strategy, to give service user perspectives. There are opportunities for participating in training courses and for learning about and visiting other SP services.

A leaflet and poster advertising the group have been created. The group also has its own logo (see left) produced for us by local artist John Case. We would like to thank John for his time and effort in creating this. The group are currently arranging a forum (see below) and are hoping to recruit more service users to the group. For further information on the group and the forum please contact the SP Team.

The aims of the Service User Group are to:

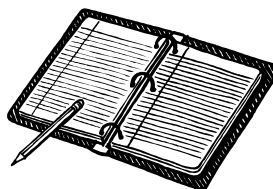
- Give service users a voice
- Influence the planning of SP services
- Bring a service user perspective to the planning, development and review of SP services
- Develop effective communication between service users and the SP working groups in Torbay
- Work in partnership with service providers to reach service users and service user groups
- Gather service user views and feed back how their views have influenced decision making

Service user forum

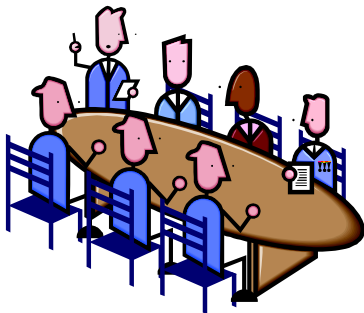
The Supporting People Service User Group is arranging a forum for all people who use Torbay Supporting People (SP) services. The forum will focus on how service users can get involved in improving and developing SP services. This may mean joining the Service User Group or becoming involved in other ways. The forum will take place from 10.30am – 2.45pm on Wednesday 16 August at the Grand Hotel which is situated on the seafront in Torquay. Lunch will be provided. All service users have been invited and lots of people have replied to say they are coming along. We look forward to a really enjoyable day.

Torbay Council contract register

Supporting People (SP) will be adding information to the Torbay Council contract register for all contracts for SP services. The information will appear on the Council website in September 2006. To view the contract register please go to <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/contracts-register.pdf>. Listing this information is a statutory requirement for all contracts that are undertaken by Councils and is one of the measures that are required to provide transparency in undertaking government business.



The Criminal Justice and Homelessness Strategy Sub Group



The Criminal Justice and Homelessness Strategy Sub Group was set up to look at the issues around support and accommodation for offenders,

people who are homeless, and those with drug and alcohol issues. It is attended by the main statutory agencies involved in this area - Housing Services, Supporting People (SP), Probation, The Drug and Alcohol Action Team, Safer Communities, the Police, Torbay Care Trust, and some representatives of agencies that provide services for this group.

The group has been looking at a wide range of issues, such as:

- Completing a 'needs assessment' for this area. This has involved all the agencies sharing data to try to form a good picture of what the accommodation and support needs are for the criminal justice and homelessness area – this data can then be used to plan new services appropriately
- Looking at the work of services such as the Crime Reduction Initiative, a project which goes out on to the streets to work with rough sleepers and try to encourage them to get in touch with services.
- Looking at the work of Project 58, a service that works with rough sleepers and provides support, activities and training.
- Looking at the re-development of the hostel for homeless people on Factory Row – this building is being demolished and re built

- Looking at SP service reviews and helping to make recommendations as to whether the services should be re-commissioned.

The group is an invaluable forum for bringing together representatives from agencies in the criminal justice and homelessness field, and sharing expertise and knowledge. It will form a major part of the assessment of the suitability and range of current SP services in this area, and the planning of any future services.

This group is one of several strategy sub groups set up for the various client groups (i.e. older people, young people, people with learning disabilities) supported by SP services.

Torbay Supporting People Team

The Team is part of Torbay Council

Contact details:

Pearl Assurance House, 101-107 Union Street, Torquay, TQ1 3DW
01803 208729

supporting.people@torbay.gov.uk
www.torbay.gov.uk/supportingpeople

Fran Mason – SP Manager
01803 208424

frances.mason@torbay.gov.uk

The team includes a Service Development Manager, three Service Development Officers, Information and Communication Officer, Housing Assistant, Finance Officer and Finance Assistant