



Supporting People Provider Newsletter: June 2006 Edition

Introduction

Welcome to the Summer 2006 issue of the Lambeth Supporting People newsletter in conjunction with the 3 Borough Forum.

SP areas covered in this issue include the launch of the service user newsletter, steady state contracts, accreditation, contract

monitoring, service review update, Local Area Agreements, BMEspark award, Brixton Hill Pilot and the grant announcement.

Do you have something to say on any of the topics covered in this issue? If so, email Jane Ritchie on jcritchie@lambeth.gov.uk

Department for Communities and Local Government

The ODPM has undergone a name change due to the recent government reshuffle. Therefore it will now be known as the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Throughout this newsletter we will use the new name.

Launch of Service User Newsletter

In tandem with this issue of the provider newsletter Lambeth SP have also issued a service user newsletter. Copies of this are available at today's 3 Borough Forum. We will be distributing further copies to all our providers to forward on to service users at the schemes. We hope that you can cooperate with this distribution effort and we appreciate any suggestions you may have concerning this. Lambeth SP are keen to engage with our service users through a number of methods, so please alert us to any service user groups that you know about.

Grant Announcement

The Department for Communities and Local Government have announced that the National SP Strategy grant announcement will be in July 2006 before the parliamentary summer recess. It is likely that the National SP Strategy announcement will come later in the year. It is still unclear as to whether the grant will be announced according to the latest Distribution Formula or whether there will be an ongoing 5% top slice off the National SP grant. Lambeth's Supporting

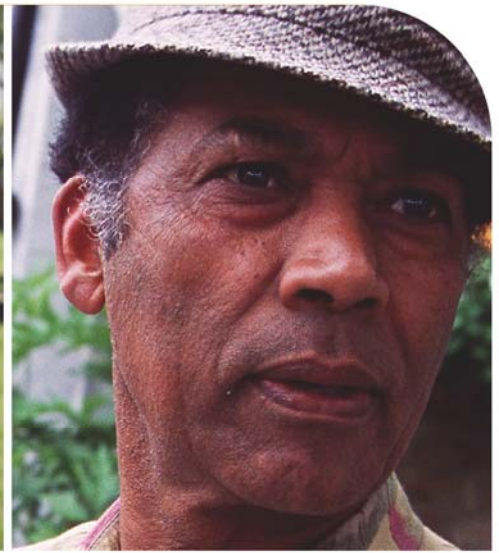
People Commissioning Board have therefore agreed an annual savings plan based on a worse-case scenario of a 5% cut to the Lambeth grant next year. Therefore it is important that providers work with Lambeth SP to continue to examine potential value for money savings and existing contractual arrangements.

Steady state contracts

At present, all Lambeth SP providers are contracted on an interim, block gross contract, though by Oct 2006 services that are considered for three year contracts will have been moved over to the steady state block gross. Services considered for improvement or possible re-modelling will continue to remain on one year, block gross interim extensions before further consideration is made on the services.

With the service review programme having been completed provider services are now being re-aligned, consolidated and grouped into smaller numbers of client group specific contracts. The latter has had the effect of decreasing the number of contracts and services held with providers when compared to the numbers evidenced in the March 2005 Lambeth SP Five-year strategy.

As the SP programme continues and Lambeth support service requirements are reviewed, further streamlining/remodelling of services will take place with cost effective and innovative services becoming more prevalent in Lambeth. At the same time Lambeth SP recognises the importance of small and voluntary based providers and we will address this on a case-by-case basis.



Steady state contracts (cont)

The team is now programming a “rolling out” of SS contracts, which will first see the three year contracts being set up on SPOCC, service specification generated with input from the providers to ensure relevant qualitative data is correct. We will ensure that the bulk of the contracts are processed for despatch whilst those to remain on interim will be extended by one year until a decision is made on them.

Accreditation

To date Lambeth SP have accredited 57 providers to the Exor silver standard, whilst additional information derived from the service review and validated QAF data has ensured that the provider accreditation standard is raised to that of the Lambeth corporate Gold standard. The latter is important because it is applicable to all SP contracts valued in excess of £23k.

The Accreditation process is reviewed annually and as an interim measure Lambeth SP are paying for this, whilst longer term the provider may, after discussions with them, have to ensure they maintain accreditation standard at their own expense.

Contract monitoring

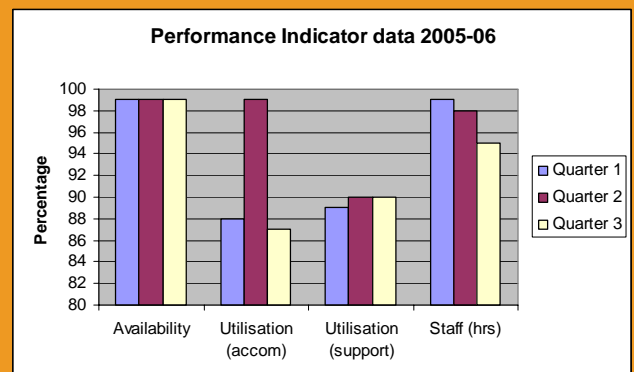
Currently in May 2006, Lambeth SP has 273 services within 122 contracts across 21 client groups. The ODPM Performance Workbook is used to monitor and review performance each quarter and the target return rate is on average above 90%.

The Workbook assesses performance based on the following SP indicators:

- availability (SP1);
- utilisation – housing (SP2a);

- utilisation – support only (SP2b);
- staff input – support hours (SP3);
- throughput (SP4);
- planned departures – short term (KPI2); and
- maintaining independent living – long term / permanent (KPI1).

The table below shows the performance for quarters one to three across four of the indicators, with available data.



The Lambeth SP contract team are closely monitoring the workbook data to ensure service providers are working towards the local PI targets set earlier in 2005. The analysis of this data has allowed us to engage with services that we are concerned about with the intention to resolve ongoing problems.

The Lambeth local targets will be reviewed regularly to ensure client group targets are achievable.

Longer term, the intention is to work with providers to ensure submission of workbook to Lambeth SP is through the SPOCC Net hub system.



Quality Assessment framework (QAF) performance

Target that by 2010, 30% of services will have an A rating and 60% will have a B rating, services assessing themselves with a C rating will decrease from 67% to 10%, and there will be no services with a D rating.

2004/05	A 7% B19% C67% D7% based on validated service performance data
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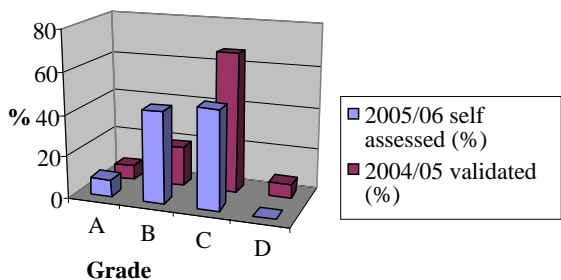
2005/06	A 8.5% B43.9% C47.3% D 0.08% based on Providers self assessed data.
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and social inclusion. Supporting People will form a key part of these targets. The aim is to widen opportunities for the voluntary and community sector through the development of new commissioning arrangements and partnerships with mainstream funding. The SP team will continue to inform you of progress in the development of our Lambeth LAA.

BMEspark Awards

In March, BMEspark had their second annual conference where awards were given to those providers who had demonstrated excellent practice in BME housing and support needs. The 2006 BMEspark award was won by Tuntum Housing Association based in the Midlands. Other providers made it to the highly commended entries in this category including Lambeth's very own Ekaya Housing Association. Ekaya were the winners last year and were highly commended this year due to their outreach and educational work in schools around teenage pregnancy and the robust representation they provide for this client group. Lambeth SP would like to congratulate Ekaya for this achievement.

Lambeth Provider's QAF data



Supporting People & Local Area Agreements

As you are aware, as part of the DCLG Supporting People National Strategy development, one option is to link SP into the LAAs in order to strengthen commissioning partnerships and also to open up opportunities for funding flexibilities across a wider number of local authority grants. Lambeth LAA will focus on targets and outcomes for prevention, community cohesion



Ekaya accepting their BMEspark 'High Commendation'



Brixton Hill Pilot

A tenancy support service based at Brixton Housing Area Office was established as a six-month pilot in July 2005. The purpose has been to assess the demand for housing-related support, the benefits of this localised model and the potential to reduce tenancy breakdown and evictions.

The service provider is Thames Reach Bondway, which has experience operating this type of service across London. The service involves two full-time workers and management support.

The pilot has demonstrated the key benefits of having the service co-located with housing staff. TRB are working closely with housing staff to promote understanding of the signposts that will enable the service to identify and engage vulnerable tenants at the earliest stage.

Having a presence in the Area Office has enabled Thames Reach Bondway staff to establish working relationships with Lambeth staff. This includes staff in the Repairs and Maintenance team and Local Services Teams. Such staff are often the local eyes and ears so essential to identifying those most in need of support. The pilot project has clearly demonstrated that this valuable source of information can be developed to provide an extra safety net for some of the borough's vulnerable tenants.

Rent arrears continue to provide a useful indicator or signpost that a tenant may need some support with their tenancy. Monthly printouts of all rent accounts enable workers to identify arrears early and to see if they are growing or static. Cases are followed-up where there is reason to believe the tenant may be in need of support.

A high number of tenants have a current Notice of Seeking Possession for arrears and so TRB have worked with income staff to help identify tenants who may be vulnerable and in need of support.

Reviews after April 2006 – what next?

Up until now the Interim Contract Review process has been imposed by The Department of Communities and Local Government, however, from April 2006 LA's have some freedom on how to manage the Contract Review process. Currently the South East and South West SP Teams are working together to agree a consistent approach for conducting reviews in the future, and of course we'll keep providers posted on progress.

In the meantime, the Service Review Team in Lambeth are busy with work planning, including;

- Teaming Service Review Officers to Sector/Services as primary SP Contact
- Working with colleagues in the SP Contract Team, identifying services for 1 or 3 Year Contracts respectively. 1 year contracts where further work is required to improve strategic relevance, make service improvements, some remodelling etc. 3 year steady state contracts where Lambeth SP is confident the provider/service meets all the criteria's for steady state contracts
- Working with providers and SP Contracts Team to agree service spec's for Steady State Contracts
- Validation of provider Annual QAF submission
- Scheme visits - agreeing a timetable for service improvements prioritising by risk linked to QAF

During the next few weeks we will be contacting providers to ensure this work is progressed.

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