



Reductions to the Supporting People budget

2017/18

Supporting People



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Introduction

Bristol City Council approved its budget in February 2017. Included in the budget decided by the Full Council was the requirement to achieve budget savings across a number of identified areas.

Reluctantly, one of the identified areas was a requirement to reduce the spend on Supporting People services. The council currently spends £7.2m on these services every year, but there is a need to reduce our spend by £1.8million. The required savings are £643k in 2017/18 with a further £1.16 reduction in 2018/19.

1 What are we consulting on?

We are consulting on our proposals to achieve the required year on year savings of £1.8m. This is a savings requirement of 25 % of the budget.

We will not make the final recommendations to Cabinet (the governing body of the council made up of elected councillors responsible for decisions on all council services), until we have consulted with everyone involved to develop new, affordable ways of delivering Supporting People services.

By encouraging people to become more independent and supporting access to employment and skills training, we will continue to focus on safeguarding our most vulnerable people, preventing crisis and improving outcomes with the aim of reducing reliance upon more costly and complex services.

2 How will we consult people?

We will be asking for views on our proposals from people who use Supporting People services, council staff and organisations who provide these services in the independent and voluntary sectors as well as the general public.

People can tell us their views by completing a survey, taking part in consultation meetings, by emailing or telephoning us – we will listen to and take note of all comments.

We will publish and make widely available what people tell us and what we plan to do next. We will show where we have changed any of the proposals as a result of listening to people's views. In the case where we have not made changes, we will explain why this was the case.

We will write a report to our Cabinet which will include material about what we have found out from this consultation and how we have taken your responses in to account when developing our proposals.

3 How long will this consultation run for and who will it affect?

This consultation will begin on 13 June 2017 and finishes on 5 September 2017.

This consultation affects:

- vulnerable people in need of housing related support services
- some council staff who provide directly managed council Supporting People services
- independent and voluntary sector providers and their staff
- carers and people who support vulnerable adults

Background information

4 What are 'Supporting People' services?

Supporting People services are free and available to help a wide range vulnerable people live more independently. This is a prevention service providing early intervention support which in many cases avoids the need to access higher level and higher cost services.

Examples of how the money is used include:

- buying services that help people to remain independent
- supporting people who may become homeless without this help
- helping people keep a tenancy
- stopping people needing more social care

There are a diverse range of services run by a number of different organisations provided by the council and the independent and voluntary sectors. These include:

- supported living accommodation for people with mental health issues or a learning disability
- sheltered housing
- advice services
- a range of "floating support" that supports people in their own homes

The table below shows all the current services we buy with the Supporting People money and how many people use each service:

Type of service	Number of service users at any one time	Current budget
Advice Services Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service (WRAMAS)	134	£279,532
Supported Living Learning Disabilities (LD)/Mental Health (MH)	340	£2,699,641
Long term floating support (LD/MH)	72	£355,201
Short term Mental Health floating support	260	£1,221,620
Physical and sensory impairment supported housing	8	£111,142
Sheltered housing alarm and warden services	1593	£758,391
Older people floating support	156	£345,542
Floating support for people with HIV	24	£86,053
Physical and sensory impairment floating support	55	£274,760
Generic floating support service	280	£689,699
Community based support for Mental Health	451	£394,460

5 What does each service do? What might happen if we give them less money to do this?

5.1 Advice services

What is provided?

These are advice services provided by the Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service (WRAMAS), a service run by the council. They provide training, telephone support and information for support workers. They also take referrals for complex welfare benefits or debt cases and provide casework support for vulnerable people, particularly disabled people and full-time carers. The service supports people to maximise their income.

What might be the impact of reductions?

If these services are reduced significantly it will mean that fewer people benefit from the advice and therefore may get less income and be at risk of becoming homeless. We are also aware that there are other reductions to welfare rights services elsewhere which could increase the impact of any changes made to this area.

5.2 Supported living

What is provided?

This service provides places to live with support available where they live for people with learning difficulties and for people with mental health needs. Most of the people who use these services have been living in their supported living homes for a long time.

What might be the impact of reductions?

A lot of the people living in supported living places have a high level of need. If we reduced the budget then some places where people live could close and service users may have to be re-housed in residential care or other supported living services (but not paid for from the same budget) – these places might be more expensive.

5.3 Long term mental health and learning disabilities floating support

What is provided?

This service helps people with mental health needs and/or learning disabilities to remain independent. This includes maintaining housing, support to manage physical and mental health, advice regarding welfare benefits, support with budgeting, managing debts and paying bills and help to access other services.

What might be the impact of reductions?

These services support people with complex and long term needs. A large reduction in the money would mean these services see fewer people. We think that this will put some people at risk of homelessness or their needs increasing.

5.4 Short term mental health floating support

What is provided?

This service gives people with mental health issues help for a short time. This can be up to two years. It normally helps people who are having some sort of unexpected problem that means they need help to ensure that they don't lose their home. This includes maintaining housing, support to manage physical and mental health, advice regarding welfare benefits, support with budgeting, managing debts and paying bills and help to access other services.

What might be the impact of reductions?

If there is a large reduction then fewer people will be helped at an early stage. Without the right support at the right time they might develop a higher level of need and would then require either care or homelessness services.

5.5 Physical and sensory impairment supported housing (Buckley Court)

What is provided?

This service is provided directly by the Council. The service accommodates eight people who have sensory disabilities. Buckley Court supports people from age 18 upwards. It is for people to be supported for a period of time and then move out and live independently elsewhere. Some people stay here for up to five years.

What might be the impact of reductions?

With only eight people living there if we made big reductions to this budget the accommodation could not remain open. Current tenants would have to be found places in non-specialist supported housing (that is places that don't have specialist skills for people who have a sensory impairment) where they may not have access to such a high level of specialist support. They might find it hard to learn the skills they need to live independently.

5.6 Sheltered housing alarm and warden services

What is provided?

This relates to sheltered housing for older people. Sometimes the only thing that is given is an alarm that people can use to get help if something goes wrong. In other places there is also a warden that comes to check that people are OK. This sort of service helps prevent future problems.

What might be the impact of reductions?

Reducing the money would mean that there would be less monitoring of older people living in sheltered accommodation or people may have to pay themselves for alarm services. Warden services would be reduced providing less support for tenants. For some people we may need to look at their needs to see if we need to provide alternative care

5.7 Older people floating support

What is provided?

These are similar to other floating support services, providing a range of services to support older people to remain independent. This includes maintaining housing, support to manage physical and mental health, advice regarding welfare benefits,

support with budgeting, managing debts and paying bills and help to access other services with some specific support also around managing issues related to alcohol.

What might be the impact of reductions?

If there is a large reduction, fewer people will be helped at an early stage meaning that may go on to have a higher level of need, either for care or other services.

5.8 Floating support for people with HIV

What is provided?

The service provides similar services to other floating support services but specifically for people with HIV. This includes maintaining housing, support to manage physical and mental health, advice regarding welfare benefits, support with budgeting, managing debts and paying bills and help to access other services.

What might be the impact of reductions?

Significant reductions would affect the number of people that the service can meet with. There are not many HIV specific services in the city. People who do not receive this support may be at risk of becoming homeless if they don't access another advice service.

5.9 Physical and sensory impairment floating support (Sensory Support Services)

What is provided?

This service supports up to 55 people with a sensory impairment and is directly provided by the council. A lot of the staff in this service speak fluent British Sign Language and some members of staff are deaf themselves. They support people to remain independent and help them with tasks such as filling in complex forms and applications. They also provide support for things such as maintaining housing, support to manage physical and mental health, advice regarding welfare benefits, support with budgeting, managing debts and paying bills and help to access other services.

What might be the impact of reductions?

Significant reductions would affect how many people the service can support. These are very specialist services. People would have to be supported by other more generalist services without access to sign language, making the support task harder and the service less effective for people.

5.10 Generic floating support services

What is provided?

These are similar to other floating support services, providing a range of services to support people to remain independent. This includes maintaining housing, support to

manage physical and mental health, advice regarding welfare benefits, support with budgeting, managing debts and paying bills and help to access other services. They are a service run by the council and are open to all people.

What might be the impact of reductions?

If there is a large reduction, fewer people will be helped at an early stage meaning that may go on to have a higher level of need, either for care or homeless services.

5.11 Community based support for mental health

What is provided?

The service provides support to improve mental health in the community. It does this through a variety of different approaches including 1:1 support, community outreach, group work, training and advocacy.

The service also provides a range of support services for carers and works with harder to reach and black and minority ethnic communities.

What might be the impact of reductions?

Significant reductions to this service will either restrict the range of services offered or the number of people to which it is offered. People with mental health issues would have less support to help them to recover. People with mental health problems might need to access care services if their mental health needs are not addressed at an early stage.

6 Proposed budget reductions

The budget amount currently spent on the Supporting People services and the proposed reduction to that budget is shown below:

Total spend 2016/17 on Supporting People budget	Saving in 17/18 £'000s	Saving in 18/19 £'000s
£7.2 m	643K	£1.16
Required saving	£1.8m (25% of the year on year budget)	

7 What are the different options to make the savings?

We have come up with four options on how we could make the savings. We are consulting you on which option you think is best or if you can suggest another way to make the savings. The four options are:

No.	Option	Description
A	Reduction of 25% for all services	All services will need to reduce either the number of people they help, or the level of support they can offer. They will probably have to reduce staff numbers as well.
B	No reductions to Accommodation Based services and some low level Mental Health and advice support. Reduction of 49% to all Floating Support services	This will mean there is no reduction to accommodation places and would protect people with high levels of need. But there would be significant reductions in the floating support services on offer.
C	A reduction of no less than 6% across all services and further reductions based on specific criteria.	These criteria are: how complex the needs are of the people that service supports, Mayoral priorities, highly specialist services, cost per service user. This option allows more targeted reductions.
D	Application of criteria to determine the reductions but with a maximum reduction of 51% applied to any service area	This means that we'll apply the same criteria as described in Option C, but ensure that no one service area will have reductions greater than 51%. This will mean some services will need to take a higher level of reduction than in Option C.

Options C and D

We have identified criteria that we feel help us to determine how we make the savings to develop Options C and D. We think these criteria will help to determine how to make the savings in a fair and useful way, ensuring we achieve the best outcomes from the remaining budget. The consultation survey asks you to tell us how important each of the criteria is to you, using a scale of 1-5. We will use your responses to help us decide which criteria to use and how they will be applied

Further information is provided below on what the impact of each option could be.

Option A:

Apply the same percentage reduction across all current services. This would mean a budget reduction of 25% across all current services.

What might be the impact of this option?

In this option it is likely that all services would have to make budget reductions to either the number of people supported or the level of support they can offer (for example seeing people for shorter periods of time). It is also likely that all services would have to make savings by reducing staff numbers

Option B:

Apply a 49% budget reduction to floating support, warden and alarm services only. There would be no budget reductions to accommodation based services, the mental health community service and welfare advice service. This allows us to reach the savings target whilst protecting all supported accommodation and some low level mental health and advice services.

What might be the impact of this option?

This option would see no budget reduction in accommodation based support. This would mean no reduction to the number of accommodation places we support. This would protect people with high level of needs. It would mean significant budget reductions to floating support services in terms of both the number of people who can be supported and the intensity of that support. It could also mean significant reductions in the staff employed in these organisations. The focus would be in supporting people with the existing highest level needs.

Option C

Apply a set of criteria with no upper cap. This means a budget reduction of at least 6% across all services and then **further** reductions for some of the services based on using the criteria outlined below. These criteria are:

- **How complex the needs are of the people that the service supports.** Some of these services support people who otherwise would quickly develop care needs that the council would have to provide for. Other services, although they are providing a preventative service, support people whose needs are at a lower level.
- **Mayoral priorities.** For example the Mayor has stated that `strengthening the capability of mental health services` is a priority.
- **Where there is a clear specialism in a service that cannot be delivered in another service.** An example of this is the Sensory Support Service which has workers qualified to a very high level in British Sign Language. This is a unique language and it is difficult for service users to discuss complex or

unusual issues if the person that they are speaking to is not fluent in their language.

- **Costs per service user.** Some services have high unit costs. This means that when you consider the actual cost per person who is helped the amount spent is high. In some cases this is justified but in some cases we think it may be possible for the service user to receive their needs in a cheaper way.

What might be the impact of this option?

Whilst a 6% budget reduction may lead to a reduction in service, we hope that most of this could be delivered through efficiency savings with minimal impact on service users.

Some services would be significantly reduced, with reductions to both the level of service and the numbers of staff employed by agencies.

Option D

This option is similar to Option C in that the same set of criteria are applied.. The difference is that in this option a maximum percentage saving is set for each service area so none will be reduced more than 51%. To accommodate this other service areas may receive a slightly higher budget reduction in order that the total saving is made

What might be the impact of this option?

Again the effect would be similar to Option C except that all services have a degree of protection so that none take a larger budget reduction than 51%.

5 What can you do now?

You can complete our survey – the details are shown below. You will be able to tell us what you think of the criteria we have suggested, what you think of our options or a completely different way of how we could make the savings.

Hearing from you

We want to hear from you to help us understand the best way to achieve these reductions.

We have to save a minimum of £1.8m from the budget for these services and we would like your input into how we make these savings.

How to have your say

- Complete the survey. The easiest way to do that is to find it here.
www.bristol.gov.uk/SupportingPeople
- Write to us at
supporting.people@bristol.gov.uk
- We are going to meet with as many existing groups and attend as many meetings as we can to hear your views. We will let people know that we will be attending.
- We are having meetings with the people who provide these services to hear their ideas.