

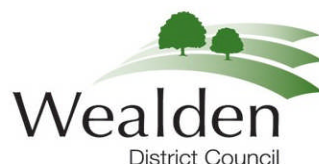


East Sussex Supporting People: Value for money policy

updated June 2009



Sussex



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1 Introduction

The Supporting People programme funds and regulates housing-related support services that help vulnerable adults to live independently. East Sussex County Council is the local authority responsible for administering the programme.

This updated value for money policy has been developed in consultation with Supporting People service providers, Core Strategy Group and Service User Network. It was approved by the East Sussex, Health, Housing, Social Care and Probation Strategic Forum on 11 June 2009.

The policy applies to:

- organisations providing Supporting People funded services (providers);
- people using Supporting People services; and
- East Sussex County Council.

2 Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out the approach that we take in assessing the value for money of Supporting People services. Our aim is to make the assessment process transparent and to ensure that all providers are treated in the same way.

Value for money assessments are used within the monitoring and review framework to improve the value of existing services and to help ensure best value for money when procuring new services. Our approach to monitoring and review is set out in our monitoring and review policy.

Value for money improvements can be achieved by negotiating a lower unit price, 'added value' or efficiencies. This could mean increasing the number of service users receiving support or increasing the level of support. Improvements will be monitored through the review action plans.

3 Central Government guidance

In April 2005 the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), now the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) issued guidance for assessing value for money¹. This guidance stated that Supporting People teams are required to assess the value for money of every Supporting People funded service and that the Commissioning Body is required to agree the process for making those assessments.

The guidance defines a value for money assessment as "a consideration of not only the costs but also the quality, strategic relevance and outcomes delivered by the service".

¹ A streamlined approach to assessing value for money and eligibility in Supporting People funded services (April 2005).

4 East Sussex definition

We have revised the CLG definition for East Sussex as all services have been reviewed and are strategically relevant. The local definition of a value for money assessment that we have adopted is:

“a measurement of not only the price but also the quality, performance and outcomes delivered by the service”.

5 Supporting People Commissioning Project

The East Sussex Supporting People five year strategy was updated in July 2007. The updated strategy is being implemented through the Commissioning Project which has three distinct phases:

- Phase one covers existing Supporting People funded services for people aged 16 to 64 years.
- Phase two covers existing Supporting People funded services for people aged over 65 years.
- Phase three covers existing Supporting People funded services that have been retained as ‘specialised’ services.

Strategic relevance is now being dealt with through the Supporting People Commissioning Project. Services commissioned as part of the project may have specific monitoring and review arrangements and value for money will be dealt with during the tender process.

6 Eligibility

This policy is closely related to our [eligibility policy](#) which sets out the support that is eligible to be funded by Supporting People grant; and the service users that are eligible to receive that support in East Sussex.

Services will only be considered for a value for money assessment if they are an eligible Supporting People service (as defined by the East Sussex policy). Value for money assessments will be carried out alongside assessments of eligibility for Supporting People Grant.

7 Value for money assessment process

Detailed value for money assessments are carried out as part of the Supporting People monitoring and service review process (our revised monitoring and service review policy will be published alongside this policy in June 2009).

We assess each service annually and send the value for money rating and summary of the assessment to the service provider (see Appendix 1). Assessments are made by the named Contracts Officer for the service and moderated by the Head of Supporting People.

There are four areas of the value for money assessment:

- quality;
- outcomes achieved;
- performance; and
- price.

Each area is assessed separately and contributes to the overall value for money judgement. The areas are weighted so that price contributes 40% of the overall judgement and quality, outcomes achieved and performance make up 60%. Our process for assessing each area and our method of calculating the overall judgement are explained in detail below.

7.1 Quality

The quality of a service is assessed using the Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework (QAF). The QAF is a self assessment framework. It will be validated by a Supporting People Contracts Officer before it is used in the value for money assessment. The validation will take account of feedback from service users, advocates, carers and other people who know the service well (such as social workers and housing officers).

There are five core objectives in the QAF and they are listed at appendix 2. Each objective is scored A, B or C based on evidence supplied by the provider. The scores are used to give the service an overall grade which is used to determine the quality rating for the assessment as follows:

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
A	B	C	Fail

7.2 Outcomes achieved

The aim of this assessment is to determine whether a service delivers measurable benefits for the people using it. In discussion with the provider we will agree a rating for outcomes achieved by analysing a range of evidence. The key way that services must demonstrate outcomes achieved is through the national Supporting People outcomes framework and returns made to the Supporting People Client Record Office.

The five outcome areas in the framework are:

- Economic Wellbeing
- Enjoy & Achieve
- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Make a Positive Contribution

Outcomes achieved will also be evidenced through:

- the number of planned departures for short-term services - shown by key performance indicator 2 (KPI 2);
- the number of people supported to live independently for long-term services – shown by key performance indicator 1 (KPI 1);
- service user feedback;
- stakeholder feedback;
- client record data (to see who is accessing the service and where they are going when they leave);
- the service aims and objectives compared with what is actually being achieved;
- whether the service is contributing to measurable improvements in key local or national strategic priority areas; and
- throughput figures (performance indicator SPI 4) showing the length of time people are using the service. These will be considered by taking into account:
 - client group;
 - type of service (accommodation based, floating support, home improvement agency, alarm);
 - intended duration of support (short-term or long-term); and
 - any other information to explain the throughput figure.

We will consider the diversity of the service users using each service and the support needs of service users accessing the service when making a judgement on outcomes. The level of needs should reflect the aims and objectives of the service, the level of funding received and the requirements of referring agencies.

7.3 Performance

The performance of a service is assessed using the national Supporting People Performance Indicators (PIs). These are completed quarterly by service providers for each Supporting People service. Supporting People Contracts Officers routinely monitor the PIs of each service to check that they are within acceptable limits. These limits will be agreed for each service.

Value for money assessments are based on PI figures for the availability and utilisation of a service over a period of at least one year. For the purposes of the value for money assessment the score for each PI will be graded as follows:

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	Excellent 99-100%	Good 95-98%	Fair 90-94%	Poor 0-89%
Availability (SP1)	3	2	1	-1
Utilisation (SP2a or b)	6	4	2	-1

The total score (for availability and utilisation) will determine the performance rating for the assessment as follows:

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
9	6-8	3-5	2 or below

7.4 Unit price

The unit *price* of a service is the amount of Supporting People grant a service provider receives per unit. (This is the amount that is held on the Supporting People IT system, SPOCC). It is calculated by dividing the weekly Supporting People price by the capacity of the service. The overall *cost* of a service is the amount it costs the provider to deliver the service and takes into account any other sources of income.

Value for money assessments are currently based on the weekly unit price of a service. The rating is made by looking at the price and taking into account:

- the cost of the service;
- the support provided; and
- how the cost compares with other similar services.

These considerations are explained in detail below.

7.4.1 Cost

The overall cost of the service is considered by examining the service budget in detail. This will show what the Supporting People Grant is being used for and will highlight whether it is operating within Supporting People Grant Conditions and our local eligibility policy.

This will consider factors such as:

- how the grant is being spent at service level;
- any other sources of income;
- the split between housing management and housing-related support;
- staffing levels; and
- the percentage of 'non front-line staff' time allocated to Supporting People funding.

7.4.2 Support

Unit price assessments also take account of the type of support being provided including:

- staff to service user ratios (the number of full time equivalent front line staff to the number of service users);
- the hourly rate for the service where possible;
- how long the support is intended to last (duration)
- the nature of the client group and the type of support they need; and
- whether the number of hours for the service type seems reasonable when compared with similar services locally, regionally and nationally.

7.4.3 Benchmarking comparisons

Benchmarking is the process of comparing the price of a service with similar services and it helps to inform the overall unit price assessment. The unit price of a service is compared with similar services in different ways:

- by comparing services in East Sussex that offer similar support to the same client group but may be compared with different client groups if it is appropriate;
- by comparing with similar services in our Cross Authority Group²; and
- by using the regional and national statistics from the CLG. These are taken from the quarterly Supporting People data returns³.

7.5 Overall value for money assessment

The overall value for money rating is determined by the assessments of each of four areas explained above (quality, outcomes, performance and price). The rating for each area is given a score (shown in the table below) and the total score is used to give an overall rating. The scores have been weighted so that they consist of 60% for quality, outcomes achieved and performance and 40% for price.

A 'poor' in any of the four areas will automatically result in a poor overall value for money rating.

² East Sussex, West Sussex, Brighton and Hove, Kent, Medway and Surrey local authorities.

³ CLG SPLS extracts.

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	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Quality (QAF)	20	15	10	Poor overall
Outcomes achieved	20	15	10	Poor overall
Performance	20	15	10	Poor overall
Unit price	40	30	20	Poor overall

Overall VFM assessment	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Points needed	90-100	65-89	45-64	A 'poor' in any of the 4 areas will result in a poor rating overall.

7.5.1 Example

The following example demonstrates how the matrix is used to give an overall value for money rating for a service.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Quality (QAF)			✓ 10	Poor overall
Outcomes achieved	✓ 20			Poor overall
Performance			✓ 10	Poor overall
Unit price		✓ 30		Poor overall

This service would have a score of **70** which gives an overall rating of **good**.

8 Equal opportunities

East Sussex County Council recognises the diverse needs of our community and is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and diversity in employment and service delivery.

The Council actively ensures that it complies with the current and forthcoming statutory requirements and standards, and seeks to influence and encourage our partners and contractors to meet their obligations through agreement and contractual arrangements.

The Supporting People partnership recognises that some specialist services to minority groups may have higher costs. This will be balanced against outcomes achieved in promoting equality and challenging discrimination when a value for money evaluation is undertaken.

9 Comments, compliments and complaints

If anyone has any comments, compliments or complaints about the monitoring and review process, we want to hear them. Comments and compliments can be sent to any member of the Supporting People team.

Complaints should be made in the first instance to the Head of Supporting People. All complaints will be resolved in line with the [East Sussex County Council Adult Social Care Department Complaints Procedure](#).

We will send all providers a feedback questionnaire following each review. This gives an opportunity to give feedback on the experience of the review process direct to the Head of Supporting People.

All the feedback we receive will be used to influence and improve our future practice.

10 Fraud

East Sussex County Council is determined that the culture and tone of the organisation is one of honesty and opposition to fraud and corruption. The Supporting People team and financial support officers will work within the county council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy (May 2004).

Overpayments of Supporting People grant arising from fraud will be recovered and specialist advice sought on investigation and prosecution.

11 Data Protection

All personal data held by the Supporting People team and the Supporting People Financial Assessment team will comply with the eight Data Protection Principles in the Data Protection Act 1998.

Appendix 1: Value for money assessment template

Quality

The score for each objective will be graded: A =3 B=2 C=1

A = Excellent	B = Good	C = Fair	Fail = Poor

Outcomes achieved

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor

Performance

Availability: Excellent = 3, Good = 2, Fair = 1, Poor = -1

Utilisation: Excellent = 6, Good = 4, Fair = 2, Poor = -1

	Excellent 99-100%	Good 95-98%	Fair 90-94%	Poor 0-89%
Availability				
Utilisation				
Total score	9 = Excellent	6-8 = Good	3-5 = Fair	2 or below = Poor

Unit price

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor

Overall value for money rating

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Quality (QAF)	20	15	10	Poor overall
Outcomes achieved	20	15	10	Poor overall
Performance	20	15	10	Poor overall
Unit price	40	30	20	Poor overall

Overall VFM assessment	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Points needed	90-100	65-89	40-64	A 'poor' in any of the 4 areas will result in a poor rating overall

Total score =

Value for money rating =

Appendix 2: Quality Assessment Framework

Quality assessment summary

C1.1 Assessment and Support Planning

All clients receive an assessment of their support needs and any associated risks. All clients have an up-to-date support and risk management plan. Assessment and support planning procedures place clients' views at the centre, are managed by skilled staff and involve other professional and/or carers as appropriate.

C1.2 Security, Health and Safety

The security, health and safety of all individual clients, staff and the wider community are protected.

C1.3 Safeguarding and Protection from Abuse

There is a commitment to safeguarding the welfare of adults and children using or visiting the service and to working in partnership to protect vulnerable groups from abuse.

C1.4 Fair Access, Diversity and Inclusion

There is a demonstrable commitment to fair access, fair exit, diversity and inclusion. The service acts within the law and ensures clients are well-informed about their rights and responsibilities.

C1.5 Client Involvement and Empowerment

There is a commitment to empowering clients and supporting their independence. Clients are well informed so that they can communicate their needs and views and make informed choices. Clients are consulted about the services provided and are offered opportunities to be involved in their running. Clients are empowered in their engagement in the wider community and the development of social networks.