



supporting**people**

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East Sussex Supporting People policy on payments to long leaseholders

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1 Introduction

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

The purpose of the policy is to set out the future of Supporting People subsidy payments to long leaseholders in private sector accommodation (leaseholders) in East Sussex.

The policy was approved by the East Sussex, Health, Housing, Social Care and Probation Strategic Forum on 18 May 2006. The Strategic Forum is the Supporting People Commissioning Body. The policy applies to:

- leaseholders using Supporting People services; and
- organisations providing Supporting People leasehold services;

2 Background

In general, organisations providing housing-related support services are paid Supporting People Grant for eligible service users under contract. As part of the contract non-statutory providers must be accredited by ESCC as the administering authority and all services must be subject to formal quality and cost reviews.

The Department of Communities and Local Government (then DTLR and previously ODPM) originally intended that organisations providing housing-related support services to leaseholders would be part of the Supporting People programme and would be subject to the same accreditation and review processes. This intent changed during the implementation phase of the programme and leasehold organisations were not required to submit any information on their organisations or services. Instead, DCLG required administering authorities to pay individual leaseholders Supporting People Grant direct. Hence there was no regulation of leasehold services.

Before 1 April 2003, individual leaseholders on low incomes who were in receipt of a housing-related support service had their support charge met through Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance. This was administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) as a welfare benefit and was identified as a legacy funding stream transferred into the Supporting People Grant on 1 April 2003.

From 1 April 2003 until 31 March 2006 (the transitional period for the Supporting People programme), ESCC paid Supporting People subsidy direct to those leaseholders who were identified by the DWP as eligible on 31 March 2003. ESCC also accepted applications from new service users who were eligible for Supporting People subsidy as advised to the council by DWP or the provider organisation. However, it is likely that DWP and leasehold providers did not advise of all eligible leaseholders.

2.1 Supporting People Grant

The Supporting People Grant received by ESCC has not been uplifted for inflation since its inception in April 2003. There has been an actual reduction in the grant award for two successive years. Payments for the block contracts under which providers receive grant for eligible service users are limited by a fixed capacity. In the case of leaseholders however, the number of potentially eligible individuals is open-ended. Given the increase in private sector sheltered housing in the county, it is unlikely that ESCC could continue to meet even known growth in leaseholder subsidy claims from the limited allocation of Supporting People Grant.

2.2 New policy

The Supporting People Commissioning Body believe that the inherited policy is inequitable and financially unsustainable for the reasons outlined above. Set out below is the new policy which has been adopted following the change in grant conditions.

3 Supporting People Grants (England) Conditions 2006-07

The grant conditions for 2006/7 facilitate a change in the inherited policy on leaseholders.

Special provisions for leaseholders on pages 15 and 16 of the grant conditions state that:

10(1) Where a service recipient receives support services under the terms of a lease and those terms impose a service charge in respect of services which are eligible welfare services the Administering Authority may contribute towards the cost of those services by way of direct payment to the service recipient in accordance with the policy it has developed under paragraph (2) below.

- (2) An Administering Authority shall publish a local policy approved by the Commissioning Body setting out:
 - (a) whether it will contribute towards the funding of the services mentioned in paragraph (1) above; and if so
 - (b) the eligibility criteria which must be satisfied before such a contribution will be made:
- (c) the level of contribution it will make and in what circumstances;
- ...
- (5) The local policy established by the Administering Authority shall be published by 30th June 2006.
- (6) Services funded by the Administering Authority under this condition shall not be subject to the transitional arrangements.

4 Policy for existing leaseholders

East Sussex County Council will continue to pay Supporting People subsidy to all Individual leaseholders who were eligible for subsidy on 1 April 2006. The level of subsidy will remain at the amount agreed for the period 1 April 2006 – 30 September 2006 and will not be increased for any reason.

If a leaseholder currently in receipt of Supporting People Grant moves to other accommodation where the provision of a housing-related support service is part of the lease, the payment of subsidy will be transferred with the individual at the existing rate.

5 Policy on new applications from leaseholders

East Sussex County Council will not accept any new applications from individual leaseholders receiving a housing-related support service in any circumstances. New leaseholders who are notified to us by providers will be referred on to DWP for advice and possible assistance.

6 Change of circumstance

Individual leaseholders who receive Supporting People subsidy in respect of their support charge (or their carers) are responsible for telling the Supporting People team about any relevant change of circumstance.

7 Complaints

If a leaseholder or their carer considers that this policy has been unfairly or inaccurately applied they should complain in the first instance to the Head of Supporting People. All complaints will be resolved in line with the Adult Social Care Department Complaints Procedure.

8 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 subsidy arising from fraud will be recovered and specialist advice sought on investigation and prosecution.

9 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.