

Housing Related Support Service Specification 2020 - 2023

Commissioning service: Economic Growth and Prosperity
Strategic Housing and Development

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1. Introduction:

- 1.1 A service specification details the minimum requirements for a particular service commissioned by Cheshire East Council.
- 1.2 The views of service users, providers, and partners have been taken into account in the review of this Specification.

2. Housing Related Support

- 2.1 Housing is a major determinant of good health and well-being. Access to decent, sustainable and affordable housing is critical to enable people to maintain their social and support networks as well as their independence. As a complete wraparound service, the provision of housing related support can contribute to the policy aspirations of integration and homelessness prevention, as well as providing value for money.
- 2.2 Housing related support is the provision of short - term hostel accommodation, or support that maintains independent living through support at a client's home. This enables people where possible and appropriate to maintain their support networks as well as their independence.
- 2.3 Strategic Housing holds the commissioning and contract management responsibility for a program of housing related support including:
 - Single homeless and rough sleepers
 - Homeless families
 - Young People
 - Older people with support needs
 - Teenage parents
 - People affected with drug and alcohol misuse
 - People with disabilities
 - Offenders or people at risk of offending
 - People affected with mental health issues
 - Resettlement from supported housing

3. Our vision

- 3.1 Strategic Housing has a focus on the re-modelling and delivery of services to enable a sustainable housing related support service.
- 3.2 This more flexible and personalised housing related support is an early intervention and prevention programme, seeking to support the health and wellbeing of Cheshire East residents with support needs, preventing them from falling into crisis and homelessness, and reduces potential demand for more expensive social care, health services and statutory homelessness services
- 3.3 The aim is to develop pathways to move people into sustainable long-term accommodation. A focus will be on offering people short-term support and accommodation as part of their pathway to move people on. We want to significantly reduce the numbers of people who have unplanned moves from services and ensure people have a suitable service which adequately meets their needs – primarily:

Delivering independence

- Through the provision of secure, stable and flexible environments which enable greater independent living whilst simultaneously providing bespoke support packages

Creating opportunities

- Valuing Service Users by supporting them to achieve the goals they set as part of their support planning process

Quality services

- That deliver high quality, cost effective and strategically relevant services that are personalised, flexible to changing support needs, well managed, reliable and can evidence positive outcomes

Enhancing engagement and influence

- By enabling providers to put Service Users at the heart of service development and delivery, including choice, when appropriate, around the support offer available to them

4. A new provision of services

- 4.1 It is increasingly acknowledged nationally that taking a person-centred approach gives better outcomes for service users.
- 4.2 Therefore, in the shaping of a new housing related support programme, Strategic Housing has sought to engage with stakeholders and service users in designing an approach which seeks to support national policy, but is built around the needs of the clients accessing the service at a local level, particularly where their needs are complex in nature.
- 4.3 Data indicates that single homeless and people with mental health issues represent the greatest demand on services, across both accommodation and floating support. However, there is an emerging trend of increasing numbers of complex cases.
- 4.4 Using an evidence - based commissioning model of assessing needs, the new housing related support will ensure services are flexible, providing a more personalised response to need, reducing dependency, avoiding duplication with other services across the Council, and meeting local priorities such as reducing rough sleeping numbers and admissions to hospital or other high support services.
- 4.5 This approach will ensure that those with the most complex needs¹, who receive a range of services, will be supported into independence where this is achievable or

¹ **Complex needs:** multiple, interconnecting needs of a client, that affect their ability to access temporary accommodation and / or living independently

will have a suitable service in place to support them to maintain their accommodation and prevent homelessness. People with lower needs will now receive short term, outcome focused and targeted support, specifically:

4.6

A	Accommodation	Support will be through individual support plans, delivered in the most appropriate accommodation offer for that individual.
B	Floating Support & Resettlement	Key to tackling the continual cycle of demand is providing good foundations for sustainable tenancies – therefore, when Service Users move on to more secure accommodation, the provider will provide resettlement floating support, to ensure continuous support for an agreed period.
C	Floating Support – Sustained	As part of our preventive approach, referrals will be accepted across all tenures, enabling Service Users, support providers, and landlords the opportunity to apply for flexible support at point of need.
D	Floating Support (Weekend Provision)	Providing direct support to identified residents within our statutory homeless hostel and residents in bed and breakfast accommodation within the Borough, during agreed hourly periods over a weekend [between Friday 17:00 hours to Monday 09:00 hours].

5. Core Principles

5.1 Our commissioning intentions are based on key core principles, which inform our approach to the delivery of services:

Early intervention and prevention	A service which works to ensure Service Users support needs are met in a timely manner to avoid an escalation of needs.
Deal with complex needs	Not grouping Service Users in terms of their primary support need, as they often have more than one issue where support is required.
Promote independence, choice and control	Enabling Service Users to be fully involved in their support plan, ensuring they are able to make choices and understand the consequences of these choices.
Create opportunities	We would want to see ideas / innovation in terms of linking support with long - term life opportunities.
Reduce rough sleeping	The aim is to develop pathways to move people into sustainable long – term accommodation from sleeping rough or at risk of rough sleeping.
Promote health and wellbeing	In promoting independence, positively strive towards promotion of a client's health and wellbeing.
Create value for money	Services offer the right kind of accommodation and support to compliment other available services.
Be outcome - based	Working together to build in measures which support successful client pathways and journeys out of the service.

6. Service Overview

Aims:

- 6.1 The service will contribute towards the strategic objective of ensuring reduced homelessness and increased wellbeing of the residents of Cheshire East. It is essential that services have mechanisms in place to ensure early engagement with service-users, to challenge the cycle of homelessness, specifically through the requirements of early intervention and prevention and an effective housing-related support service in which Service Users:

1	Feel safe and secure in their accommodation
2	Are less likely to sleep rough
3	Have flexible support plans, moving with them through their support journey
4	Gain skills to maintain a tenancy, including life and domestic skills
5	Connect with the right formal and informal support networks with a view to sustainment and reducing dependency on housing related support
6	Focus on gaining economic independence through access to education, training and employment

Outcomes:

- 6.2 Supplementary to the service aims are the following required outcomes:

1	Increased prevention and reduced risk of homelessness
2	Stopping the cycle of homelessness
3	Fewer people starting, and less repeated incidences of rough sleeping
4	All Service Users in acute housing need are accessing timely support and getting immediate help that reduces their risk of subsequent homelessness
5	Services are sustainable
6	Improved public perception and actual improvements in community safety and reduced anti-social behaviour

Objective of the Service:

- 6.3 The service will contribute towards the strategic objective of ensuring good emotional health and wellbeing of residents in Cheshire East with housing related support needs. Specifically through the following **minimum requirements**:

1	Provision of services for those approaching end of life ensuring they are comfortable and are treated with dignity.
2	Ability to adapt to Service Users changing needs, if risk, or vulnerability, increase or decrease, in accordance with agreed support plan.

3	<p>Delivering outcomes that are important to individuals and which contribute to the achievement of the broader outcomes. This will include allowing couples to remain together, when appropriate, and an acknowledgement of the role and importance of pets in some client's lives.</p> <p>It will be important to address tenancy sustainment as a key element of housing related support. There will need to be clearly defined pre-tenancy preparation for people with little experience of independent living and / or history of failed tenancy.</p> <p>Wider community wellbeing through developing direct links with the locality, helping to reduce social isolation, and sharing and accessing community assets and resources.</p>
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Promoting Innovation:

6.4 We expect that successful providers should have a track-record of adding value to the community and service users by using their drive, creativity, and innovation.

We would expect services to work in partnership with other services as required to deliver a wrap-around Housing Related Support service.

7. LOTS Configuration and Contract Value:

7.1 The successful providers will hold a contract with Cheshire East Council. The contract will be for 3 year, with options for a further 2 years.

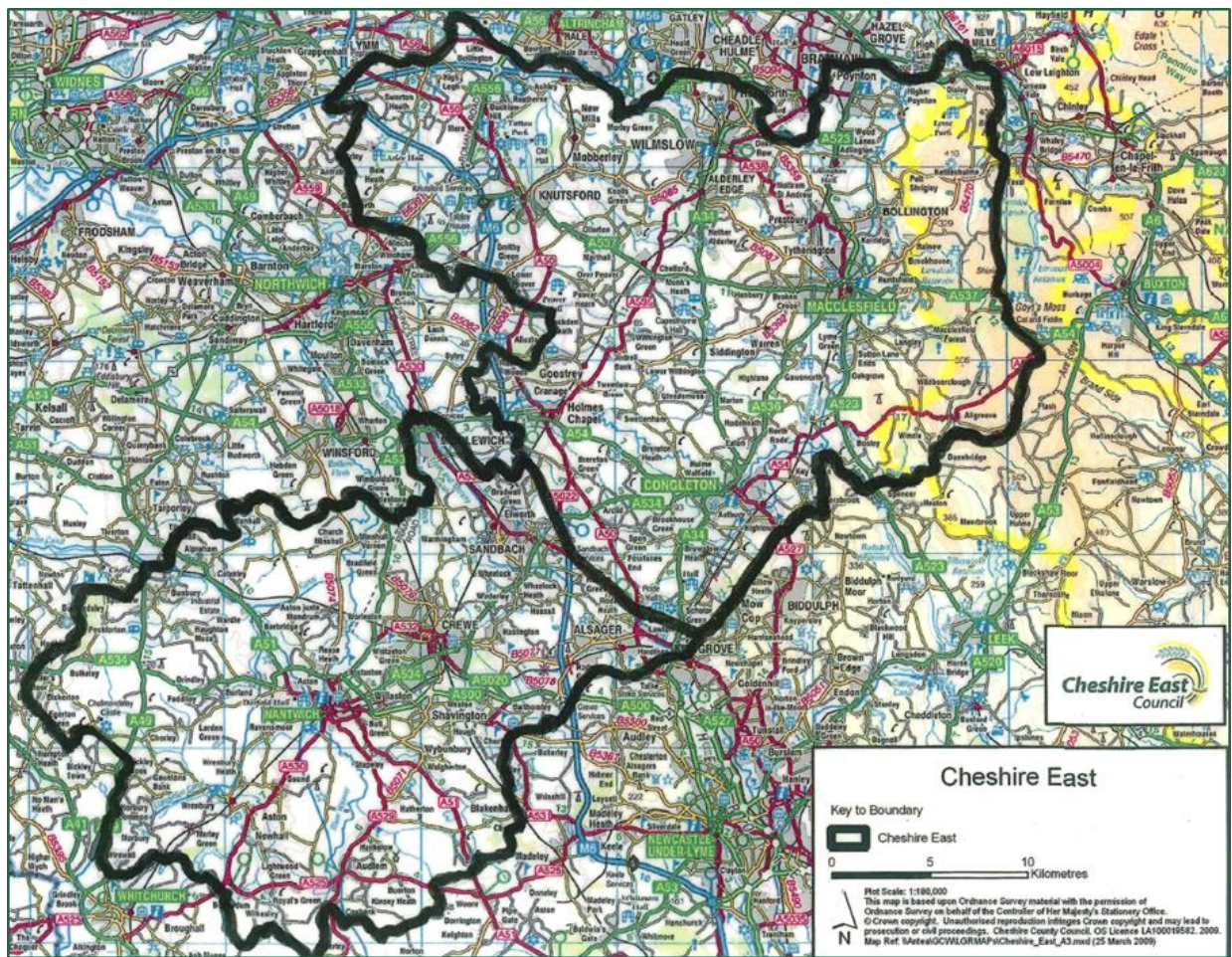
7.2 **The values outlined for the lots with accommodation take into account the fact that these services are likely to be supported exempt for housing benefit purposes.**

It will be delivered across 2 areas within the Borough (North, and South, as outlined on the map included within the tender documentation) as follows²:

North (Macclesfield & Surrounding Areas):		
	Units	Contract value (per annum)
Floating Support (15 resettlement and 40 sustained)	55	£110,000
Complex / 25 & Over / MH Provision	30	£165,000
Under 25 / Fast Track / Women & Families	20	£65,000
NFNO /24/7 Access Service	12	£20,000
Total	117	£360,000

² Qualifying support needs – non - statutory homeless, who are deemed at risk due to personal circumstances

South (Crewe & Surrounding Areas):		
	Units	Contract value (per annum)
Floating Support (20 resettlement and 50 sustained)	70	£140,000
Complex / 25 & Over / MH Provision	27	£125,000
Under 25 / Fast Track / Women & Families	18	£55,000
NFNO /24/7 Access Service / SWEP	24	£40,000
Total	139	£360,000



Supportive Notes:

- Qualifying support needs – non - statutory homeless, who are deemed at risk due to personal circumstances

- All calculations are indicative and subject to change
- Cheshire East Council is looking for a provider to optimise the levels of high quality support for this level of funding
- Tenderers are required to identify the total number of support hours that will be delivered for each element of service and the average number of service users that will be supported per week for this sum
- Tenderers will be required to make provision for transitional re-settlement and direct referral floating support

8. TUPE

- 8.1 It is the view of Cheshire East Council that TUPE considerations may apply to the LOTS, and as such, tenderer's attention is drawn to Transfer of Undertaking [Protection of Employees] Regulations 2006 [as amended] TUPE. The Council will provide more specific information in due course. Government information is available by linking to [TUPE: Guide to 2006 regulations](#)
- 8.2 While the Council will provide details, it is the tenderers responsibility to consider whether or not TUPE applies in the specific circumstances of the tenderer's bid and to tender accordingly.

9. How the Service will be delivered

Who will access the service

- 9.1 The service delivered by the Provider who will support qualifying individuals who are ordinarily resident within the Borough, or are eligible to apply for housing in Cheshire East under the Allocations Policy criteria, local connection, Armed Forces covenant, for example.
- 9.2 The Service Provider will work in partnership with the Council to deliver high quality support services to service users, minimise and reduce demand and crisis, and develop a positive pathway approach.
- 9.3 Housing related support can be accessed and provided to a range of qualifying residents. Eligibility may include [but not exclusive to]:
- Residents facing homelessness or at risk of homelessness within the next 56 days
 - Residents who would be in need of short - term housing related support to enable them to move to a sustainable long term tenancy.
 - Residents that need support to maintain a tenancy.
 - Residents that have barriers to accessing housing.

Applications into the Service

- 9.4 Applications are processed online through the Single Point of Access, which is administered and contract managed by Cheshire East's Housing Options.

9.5 The following information will be provided by the Council at the point of referral:

- Personal details of the Service User [household members if applicable] - name; address; date of birth and age
- Service User contact requirements, including any special communication needs
- Details of current housing status and other information – including risk information, which may be relevant to and / or may have a bearing on the services to be provided.
- All parties should ensure that where possible consent is gained from clients in order that they understand that personal information will be shared on a need to know basis between agencies involved in providing this service. Capacity will have already been ascertained. It is imperative that all parties comply with GDPR requirements and their own policies in relation to records management.
- The key factor is as joint agencies we ensure we are sharing information in the best interests of vulnerable adults and the longer term vision of improving outcomes that they sign up to.

9.6 The provider will accept all qualifying referrals made by Single Point of Access unless refusal is agreed with Cheshire East Council's Housing Options and Homelessness Manager or their representative.

Accommodation

9.7 The service model will include the following accommodation principles:

- Support to Service Users will be based on individual needs / risk assessment
- Support will be provided in the most appropriate accommodation offer for that individual / couple / family
- The accommodation offer must include disabled access where appropriate, in accordance with all relevant regulations, in DDA compliant accommodation
- The Provider will be required to source the accommodation units to deliver the contract. While the Council can introduce the Provider to possible accommodation providers where necessary, it will not specify location or enter into any agreements
- In working together, the support provider and accommodation provider will develop a positive working relationship, agreeing a Service Level / Management Agreement, which clearly define the tasks of the support provider and provision of accommodation, including, if necessary, the housing management tasks administered by the accommodation provider, for example, repairs and maintenance, rent collection, legal notices, evictions and security
- Consideration for accommodation need must be made in accordance with Equality and Diversity, particularly in terms of Protected Characteristics (age, gender, disability, etc.)

10. Service Users Standards / Involvement

- 10.1 The needs and wishes of the Service User are of importance to Cheshire East Council. The provider staff must ensure that Service Users are fully involved in the development and ongoing review of their support plans. Service users must also be supported to develop their potential to live successfully and independently in the community.
- 10.2 The Provider must ensure that the views of Service Users are sought when evaluating service delivery and service development. The Provider must ensure that the views of service users are taken into consideration and utilised where appropriate, when developing action / improvement plans.
- 10.3 The Council expects that Service Users are involved as much as possible in making decisions concerning the way in which the services are delivered through the Provider - managed on a day to day basis, subject to the Provider's rights to be responsible for the overall management of the Service being provided.
- 10.4 The Council recognises that involvement will depend on the ability and interest of Service Users and may be done informally, or by way of formal service user meetings, or by a combination of both methods. Innovative ways in which consultation can be undertaken should also be developed, for example, using social, media, online consultation, and peer reviews.

Service provider knowledge & Skills

- 10.5 The provider must ensure that in delivering this service they will possess as a minimum:
 - A good knowledge of housing legislation relating to the client group. the Housing Act 1996 Part VII as amended by Homelessness Act 2002 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
 - A good knowledge of supporting individuals with complex needs
 - Further information regarding required skills are outlined in 11.4.

11. Staffing & Staff Training

- 11.1 Services will be flexible and person centred. Service users should be able to exercise choice and control over their support. Staffing arrangements must be flexible to ensure that support can be arranged at a time suitable for service users.
- 11.2 In dealing with service users with complex needs, the service provider will aim to match staff skills, knowledge and other attributes to service users' needs and preferences. This will include a range of skills relevant to engaging with people from different backgrounds and circumstances.
- 11.3 The Provider shall ensure that staff are suitably inducted and trained, making them experienced and competent to execute their duties and tasks. Staff should have the necessary skills and experience and / or training required to deliver a quality service to a service user.

11.4 We expect all staff employed by the Provider to have completed or be willing to complete the following training, and must be able to demonstrate knowledge of, as a minimum standard:

- Safeguarding adults and Safeguarding children
- Child protection awareness
- Child Sexual Exploitation awareness
- Drug and alcohol awareness
- Self-Harm
- Managing Confrontation
- Life Skills
- The principles of rights, inclusion, choice and independence
- Mental health awareness
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Awareness of issues facing rough sleepers
- Training in understanding and coping with challenging behaviour
- Self-injury awareness
- Working with people who are difficult to engage
- Health and Safety
- Modern Slavery
- Current data protection legislation
- Equality and diversity
- Benefits and debt awareness

12. Performance Management

12.1 The outcomes seek to measure progress towards increased wellbeing, improvements in social functioning and meaningful activity.

12.2 The service will be subject to key performance outcomes, as specified in each Lot. Additionally, there will be regular review of quantitative outcomes.

12.3 Quantitative Outcomes (6 Monthly Review)

- Sample of Service Plans
- Service user feedback – including client health and wellbeing, evidencing reduced barriers, including substance misuse and mental health services

Induction

At the move-in stage the service provider will complete an induction programme with each new service user to successfully induct them into the service being provided. They will agree upon an initial support plan. The information from the initial support plan will form the basis for the development of a full support / action plan. The support / action plan will be devised and agreed with the service user, principal support contact, and any agencies that the service user would like to be involved, if appropriate.

They shall issue documentation dealing with conduct and issues to be addressed prior to commencing delivery of Services to any Service Users.

The aims of the plans are to reduce over time the need for accommodation and support, by supporting service users to:

- maintain social / community and family networks;
- identify and manage risk within their environment;

- develop life skills;
- maintain their dignity and privacy at all times;
- maintain a person – centred approach and promote the individuality of service users;
- achieve budgeting skills and enable appropriate expenditure;
- access local social / cultural and leisure activities;
- assist in writing / designing their support plan.

Specific tasks will be required as part of induction and the settling in process, which will help to increase successful outcomes. Examples of what will be expected are included in the Lots and Cheshire East Council are looking for potential providers to use their knowledge and expertise to add to these examples.