

### **The South East Housing Project**

Report from Alicia Wood, Housing Options – September 2012

The South East Housing Project is a short term project funded by the Department of Health South-East region and two local authorities. It is led by Alicia Wood of Housing Options. The aim is to commission and enable local and personalised housing solutions for individuals with learning disability and complex needs.

The Challenging Behaviour Foundation has been a partner in this project providing links to families and disseminating learning.

Three local authority areas are participating and the project is also working with individuals living in two other South East local authorities

There has been mixed progress

#### **Local Authority One**

This area has used the project most actively, topping up the project funding with local funds to achieve the following

- Design of a housing assessment process for people with challenging behaviour
- Design of a housing pathway for people with challenging behaviour
- Housing design checklist
- Set up a Challenging Behaviour network for providers, health and social care professionals to develop and share good practice
- Set up a Framework commissioning agreement with 5 providers to deliver specialist support to people with challenging behaviour in a flexible and person centred way
- Set up local housing for 6 people with challenging behaviour by making better use of council property to adapt into a specialist service with individual flats and support
- Worked in partnership with a support provider and private developer to commission a service with 3 individual flats built around the needs of particular young people
- Enabled a young woman with complex needs to return from out of area

#### **Local Authority Two**

- Provided advice and information to rehouse a young man with challenging behaviour but this has not resulted in a move
- Provided workshops for social services and health staff

There has been insufficient local action to enable progress with any individuals.

#### **Local Authority Three**

- Have established a new internal group to identify individuals who can return to to the local area if the right housing and support is put in place
- Have included development of local housing and support services for people with complex needs within the Council's supported accommodation strategy

- Have identified a group of local providers with a track record of delivering housing and support services for people with complex needs

During the project, Local Authority Three has not yet brought anyone back from out of area or delivered a new local development for people with complex needs.

### **Progress with individuals in two other authority areas:**

Person 1: The key to progress for person 1 has been concerted determination on part of the person's parents to tackle unproductive public sector bureaucracy and the apparent indifference of officials. They have done this with assistance from external parties including solicitors, the Challenging Behaviour Foundation and Housing Options.

Person 2: Housing Options has met twice with the family and identified the preferred option of the family to be the construction of an annexe to their property. Housing Options has subsequently provided assistance by phone and provided a housing plan for person 2 for use by the family. The plan sets out for the benefit of other 'partners' why the family's preferred option is the right option for person 2. The key barriers to progress have been the PCT being the 'lead' in the person's support package (CHC funding) yet not demonstrating any leadership in funding a solution that suits the person and their family and a lack of coordination between the PCT and the local authority.

### **Barriers to progress**

These tend to be a focus on process rather than achieving outcomes with a 'disconnect' observed between strategic intentions and the assessment/ care management staff who work directly with individuals and who appear to have competing priorities.

### **Why has Local Authority One made more progress than the others?**

- A committed commissioner with strong values and action focussed, perhaps made easier by being a smaller council
- They understand the business case for enabling people to access local services rather than being sent out of area. They can communicate it confidently to decision makers "*it will cost us a lot to support people well locally but no more than it does to send them away- in some cases we will make savings and in others not*"
- Getting providers on board at an early stage to develop services through the framework agreement means that the collaborative approach sits alongside the competitive tender process well. Ahead of the tender process, they get providers and practitioners together in a room to discuss how they can bring a particular individual back to the local area.
- They have effective staff leading on this process who have a mix of strategic vision and understanding individual need.

For more information about the services and support which can be provided by Housing Options see their website at <http://www.housingoptions.org.uk/>