

# BRIEFING

## Walsall Supporting People Consultation Event

**On Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2009, the Walsall Supporting People Service will be holding an event to discuss and gain the views of professionals and service users on the review of the Supporting People Eligibility Criteria.**

The Eligibility Criteria is what is used to decide what types of services are allowed to be funded from the Supporting People Grant for housing related support services.

Currently, the criteria are based on the grant conditions decided by Communities and Local Government (CLG) – the government department responsible for funding Supporting People programmes. These conditions state what local authorities are allowed to spend the grant on, what kind of activities are allowed to be funded and how the programme should administer the funding.

From April the Supporting People grant will no longer exist. The funding will instead be included within the new Area Based Grant (ABG). The ABG was introduced to provide greater flexibility for an area to address its local priorities. As a result of this, there will no longer be conditions placed on how funding provided for Supporting People services is used.

These activities mean a number of changes for the local Supporting People programme, including:

- **Increased choice in the types of services that can be commissioned and those who can receive them**
- **Developing the activities and types of support that can be delivered by providers**
- **Improving the range of jointly commissioned services with key partners such as Health and Probation**
- **Developing and increasing the outcomes achieved by service users in gaining or maintaining independent living**

Even with the positive implications that these changes bring, there are some serious considerations that now need to be made regarding the future eligibility criteria for funding services. With the funding now being provided through the ABG, local authorities can now spend the ABG on what ever they feel is a priority for the area. In some areas, this may mean that funding currently used for housing related support services is diverted and used for other priorities.

Walsall Council and Walsall Partnership, the local strategic partnership responsible for delivering Walsall's priorities through the Sustainable Communities Strategy, have agreed that the level of funding for the Supporting People programme will be maintained for the next two years.

***You are invited to this consultation event as a first step in discussing the changes and reviewing the existing criteria. We aim to produce a new set of criteria that promotes innovation in service provision, increases choice for service users and protects the housing related support available for vulnerable people in Walsall in future years.***

