



Survey of Scottish Local Authority Housing Practitioners Nov/Dec 2014

Views on Housing input to Health and Social Care Integration Agenda

Summary of Responses

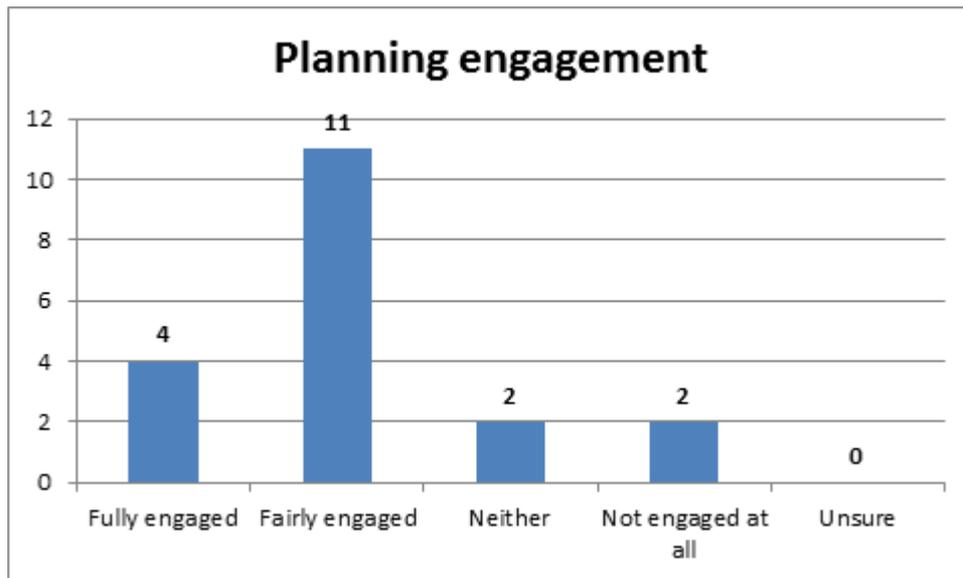
1 Introduction

The aim of the survey is to allow JIT housing team to be more aware of the level of input/engagement of housing teams in the Health and Social Care planning arrangements across Scotland's Local Authorities. We also wanted to create the opportunity for housing practitioners to comment on what further briefing notes/advice might be required as this will help inform and direct our efforts over the next few months.

2 Methodology

Survey Monkey questionnaire developed in conjunction with Housing Coordinating Group and issued to senior housing practitioners in Councils. 18 Councils responded although we have information from a further 2 councils based on earlier telephone interviews. Not every response answered all 12 questions asked. It was agreed that JIT colleagues would retain confidentiality and not reveal externally details of individual respondent's answers. The following sections largely follow the order of the questions and summarise those responses.

3 Level of Engagement at this stage in the planning process

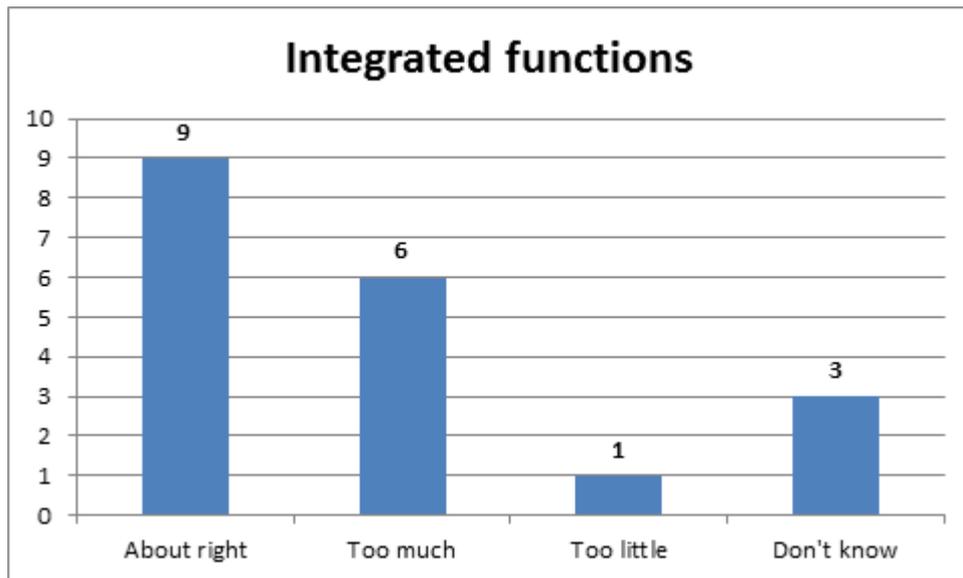


As we can see from the chart, most council housing officers feel that they are involved in the planning process to some extent. Some officers have been invited to sit on Strategic Planning Groups while minorities indicate that information flow is poor.

4 Which Housing Functions are to be delegated?

Sixteen Councils have indicated that Aids/Adaptations are included in the Integration plans. 33% of respondents intend to integrate council housing aids/adaptations as well as private sector. 25% of them said that only statutory functions or 'MUSTS' would be integrated at this stage. A couple of councils indicate that there is confusion over what is to be integrated, or highlight confusion over Care and Repair elements. One council housing service is located within Health and Social Care and Planning Department within the Council structure. A few councils have indicated that they think that over the coming months more functions may be considered for Integration. Another council indicated that 'sheltered housing' will also be integrated, while another large council is considering integration of homelessness and housing support alongside the statutory elements for integration.

5 Views on the range of functions to be Integrated

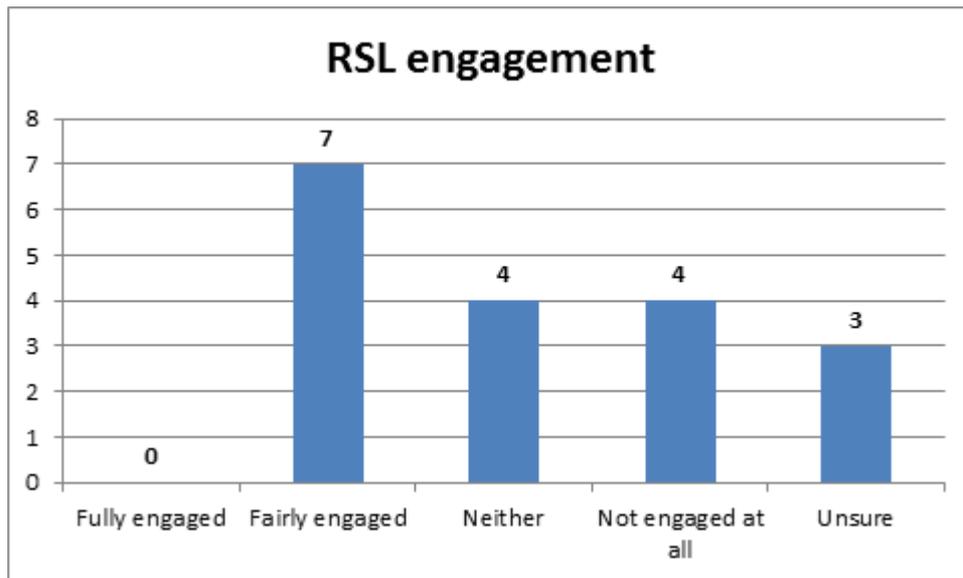


50% indicated that the range of functions to be integrated is just about right while 33% feel that it is too much. It could be that where councils have assumed that council housing aids/adapts are being integrated that this is too much. One council feels that the change fails to reflect that some LA's currently have excellent outcomes in relation to Adaptations and Housing Support. Another feels that it is too early to say. One of the 'don't knows' simply feels that there remains some uncertainty about the Public Bodies Act and the extent of delegation and the implications for related housing services.

6 Awareness of and Involvement in Strategic Planning

Every respondent answered 'YES' to the question about awareness of the Strategic Planning process and the vast majority (14) say they have an involvement. However one or two say that it's difficult due to reporting structures in Local Authority, while one or two others feel they do not have a defined role. One authority confirms that Health and Social Work are represented on their own strategic housing forum and information is disseminated this way. Of those who say they are not involved a couple has indicated that they are trying to get 'a foot in the door'. Another couple of respondents indicate that their level of involvement may only come as part of the formal consultation process.

7 How well informed and engaged is the RSL sector?



A mixed picture here regarding the current level of involvement although a very consistent message when this question is followed up with “how do you intend to involve RSL’s in future?” The response to the latter question is almost unanimously indicating that this would (as a minimum) happen via their existing Local Housing Partnership forums or LHS forum. One of the ‘unsure’s’ indicated however that all social landlords in the North East responded jointly to the consultation process on the draft regulations/legislation; and that discussions have not yet taken place with local authority housing so RSL’s also excluded at this stage. Another said that as RSL’s are excluded for integration of Adaptations funding then this could mean less engagement. Another one of the ‘neithers’ states that they are in the process of recruiting RSL member onto the strategic planning group and a meeting planned in January for RSL’s.

8 Concerns about the process so far

A number of points raised in answer to this question. Some listed below:

- Concern about the timing of guidance to be issued
- Lack of clarity on a range of matters
- Other partners do not recognize the role that housing has to play
- Lack of information and dialogue given that plans to be in place April 2015
- Lack of engagement/coherence locally
- Detailed arrangements are not yet clear/lack of clarity is a concern
- Unclear about which housing functions are to be included
- Worry about unpicking effective services to make them fit into the new body eg scheme of assistance and care and repair issues
- Negative impact on the delivery of core housing services
- Housing functions listed in legislation appear to be ‘add-ons’ and not woven into the bigger picture...reflects lack of knowledge(with health boards)about the role of Housing
- Housing in Scotland was taken into the debate too late.

9 Examples of good practice

JIT housing colleagues are keen to take examples of good practice in this area and share with others with a view to helping promote and understand the potential contribution that housing can give to the desired outcomes for health and social care integration. It would be fair to say that many councils were unable to provide examples where housing are taking the lead. Some felt that it was too early to say. However a few officers offered up good examples that could be followed up with a view to us building up some case studies. A flavour of these is listed below:

- *“ We ran a brief pilot on the joining up of services to improve locally based working. This involved conversions of existing stock to ‘accessible’ as alternative to residential care with more flexible support. Second phase is a redesign of housing support function to provide locality based service across tenures”.*
- *“We are currently piloting joint funding/delivery of adaptations services in part of the council area”.*
- *“We have found that our early involvement in the community care planning structures has been beneficial for us and placed us in a much better position than other housing organisations”*
- *“Collaboration with RSL’s and neighbouring local authorities in response to consultation on Regs was positive in agreeing a common understanding of issues/opportunities and agreeing a common response”.*
- *“Our intermediate care project is designed to help people regain independent living skills following discharge from hospital through a range of services in a controlled environment which provide stepping-stones to independent living. Services are provided in self-contained flats within the newly refurbished properties. A former sheltered housing development which had been ear- marked for possible demolition due to low demand.” ***

**** Provided separate from survey**

10 Have the JIT Briefing Notes been helpful?

Only one authority said ‘no’ and this would appear to be due to the fact that the person who completed the survey has not received them and has asked for a link to the briefings. Otherwise 17 said ‘yes’ so a very positive response with the following comments giving a flavour of their views...

- *“The briefings were both extremely welcome. The 2nd note in particular provided clarity in terms of the interplay of the regulations with the primary legislation”*
- *“We have found these briefings to be very helpful and very welcome”*
- *“The support from the JIT is most welcome”*

- “The addition of housing professionals to the JIT is greatly welcomed”.

11 What other briefing notes would you like to see?

It is important of course that the briefings we produce are relevant and reflect what people want. This question is of course designed to establish a view which should be ideally reflected in the JIT workplan. The following suggestions have been noted:

- Clarity on Aids and Adaptations (more than one authority asks for this)
- More information on how integration is given effect and what liaison arrangements should be put in place post integration
- Clarity on use of HRA funding for adaptations and will officers doing adaptations be employed by Integration authority?
- What are others doing?
- Procurement of services and clarity on role of RSL's(national and local) in respect of aids/adapts
- Not a consistent view on what is housing support
- The extent to which actual budget transfer for integrated services is a legal requirement. In some cases it will be difficult to disaggregate housing budgets
- Would like to be kept advised of progress in the integration of both mandatory and optional housing services.
- Summary of good practice and information on practical arrangements for delivering adaptations in the new joint arrangements.

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