

Coordinated Crisis Support summary.

For too many people, the possibility of a decent, socially acceptable standard of living is undermined by a financial crisis that puts their health and wellbeing at risk. This might include a need for emergency food or fuel, urgent need to replace broken white goods or furniture, or emergency travel expenses.

These needs are often addressed at a local level through local emergency assistance projects. At their best, such schemes can both provide emergency relief, and use this as an opportunity to start to develop relationships with people in need of support, not just to resolve an immediate crisis, but also help them to address any underlying difficulties. However, in many areas support is severely limited, and provision is frequently patchy, with both gaps and duplication. The incoherence of crisis support provision is illustrated in Linda, Mike and Casey's story, from The Children's Society's recent **"Not Making Ends Meet"** report.

Linda, Mike and Casey's story

One day Linda and Mike's godchild, Casey, came to the door having been kicked out of her home. She was in her pyjamas and had her schoolbag and school uniform with her. The police asked Linda and Mike if she could stay with them for the night and told them that social services would be in touch the following day to organise something more permanent for Casey. They obviously did not want Casey to be homeless for the night and so took her in but they were clear it could not be permanent and that it would place them under significant financial strain.

Every day for the rest of the week Linda would telephone social services to ask for help. She felt like she was passed around and ignored. Because Casey had a roof over her head and was safe, they did not seem to care.

Social care did suggest the food bank to Linda as a way to relieve the financial pressure, but they would not provide a referral voucher. Linda went to the food bank and they helped her identify some other referring agencies. Casey's school was on the list and Linda thought that given they knew about Casey's situation they would be the most likely to offer help.

Linda went to the school to ask for a voucher but the school had never given out a voucher. The first staff member Linda asked was not aware they could. It took her several tries to get the voucher. By the time they got the voucher Linda had spent all her money for the week on the energy pre-payment meter as all of Casey's clothes had been dirty and she had needed to wash and dry them all.

A patchy system of emergency provision can lead to people falling through the net. Some may be left without the food, fuel or other emergency essentials they urgently need; others may get some initial help but be left to face longer term problems alone. The Coordinated Crisis Support programme aims to:

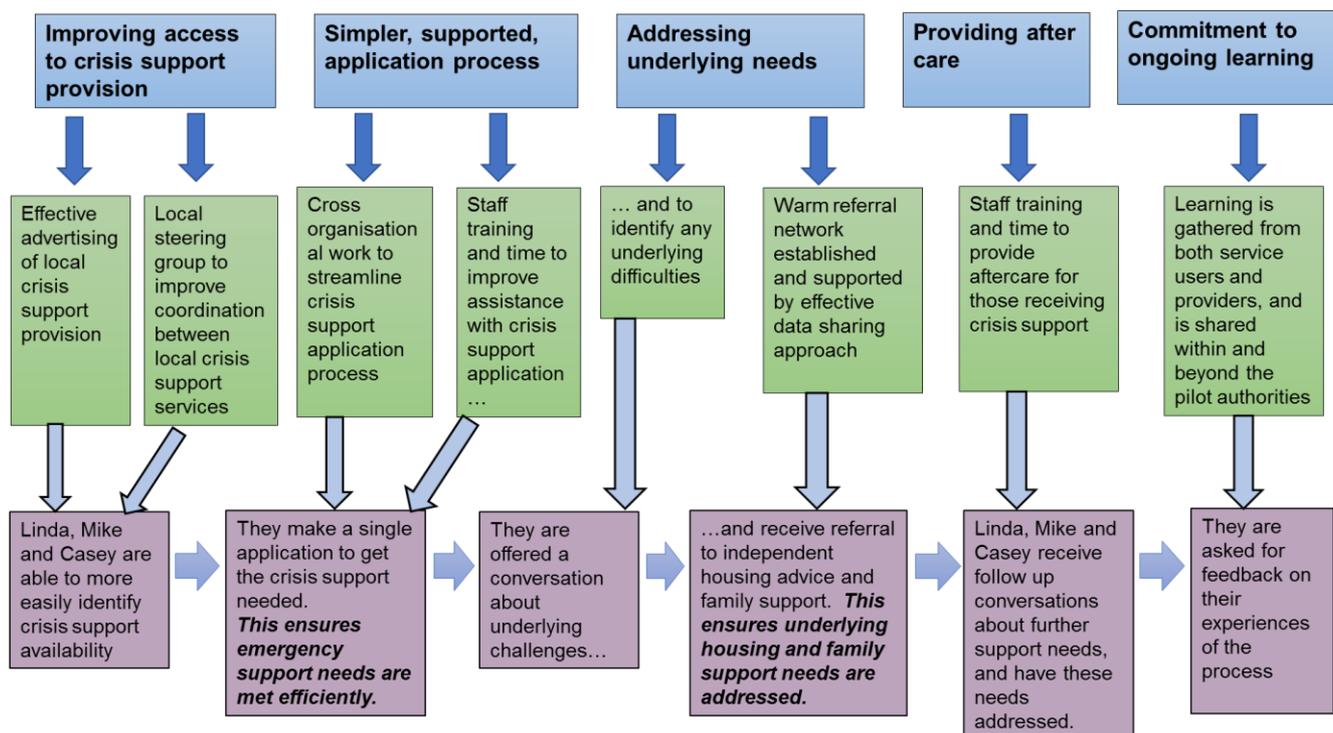
- i. Address the gaps that exist in emergency support provision through better networking of different local agencies involved in the provision of emergency assistance.
- ii. Reduce repeat instances of financial crisis by addressing underlying causes of crises, as well as the immediate emergency.

i. How would the programme work?

Initially the Coordinated Crisis Support Programme would work in five different local authority areas to set up pilot projects providing the support, guidance and resources local community organisations need to better coordinate crisis provision. Whilst the programme will set out clear guidelines for what a local project should look like, and provide support with delivery, the development of the operational detail will be determined by local groups themselves in consultation with a national programme coordinator. Each project would have the following key components:

- **Improving access to crisis support schemes**
- **A simpler, supported, application process**
- **Addressing underlying needs to prevent the recurrence of crisis**
- **Providing aftercare**
- **A commitment to ongoing learning**

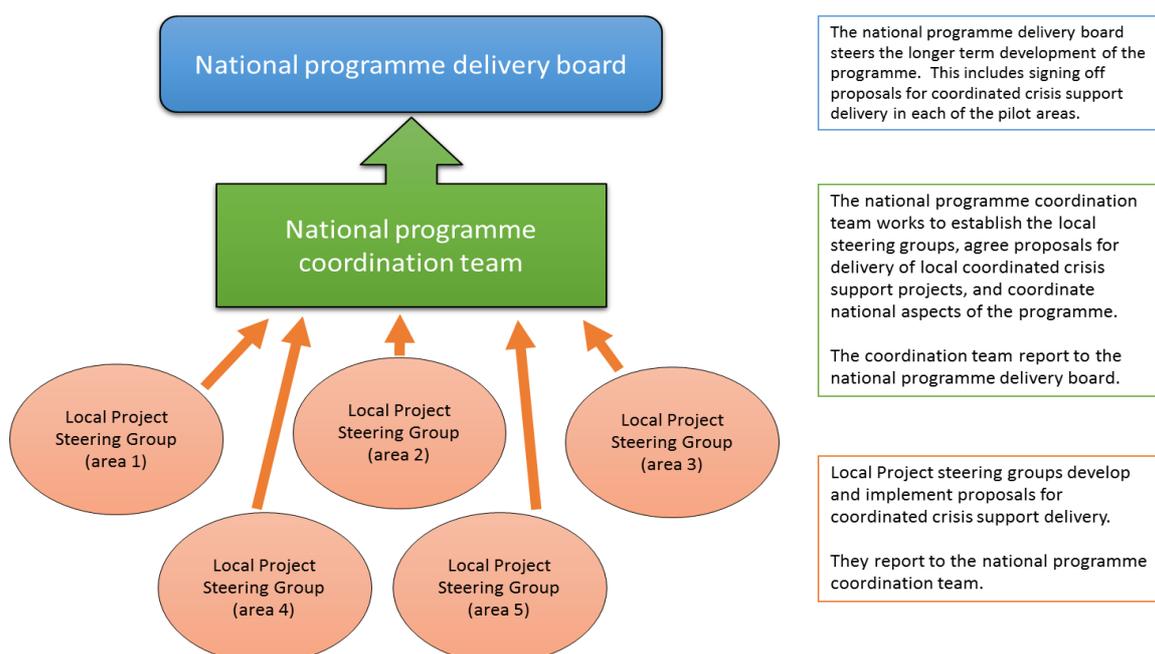
The diagram below indicates how the key programme principles (in blue) would be operationalised in programme activities (green) and the intended impact of this on a household's experience (in purple – the potential impact on Linda, Mike and Casey's experience is used here as an example, also see their "alternative story" further below).



ii. Who would do what?

Delivery will principally operate at a local level in each of the five pilot sites, with support from a national programme coordination team. The prioritisation of local operations will ensure that each pilot is built on existing local experience, networks and relationships. However, some aspects of the programme will be more efficient to deliver at a national level (to enable them to be developed once for all of the pilot areas, rather than developed in each of the pilot areas independently) – these elements will be managed by the programme coordination team.

The programme coordination team will report to a national programme board comprised of principal funders and national delivery partners, and who will steer the ongoing programme development.



iii. What would success look like?

It is clear that there is an urgent need to develop a more effective approach to emergency support provision. This should bring together the VCFS and Local Government in effective collaboration and ensure that different agencies add value to (rather than displace) the work of each other. The ultimate goal of the investment is to address this challenge. To achieve this, the programme would have the following specific objectives:

- (1) To ensure that more people in local areas where projects are delivered have access to the emergency support provision they need, at the point when they need it
- (2) To ensure that, in each area where a project is delivered, any gaps in, or duplication of, crisis support provision available locally are reduced.
- (3) To reduce the recurrence of crises, by improving local referral networks, and thereby ensuring that recipients of crisis support also have access to support to address any underlying causes of difficulty.
- (4) To help identify and where possible address gaps in the services and projects needed to enable individuals and communities to flourish.
- (5) To better understand need and provision within each area in order to steer development of further interventions.
- (6) To improve the provision of crisis support nationwide by sharing learning from those areas where projects are delivered, with other Local Authorities across the country.

Some possible success indicators for the programme are outlined in the table below.

Outcome	Reason for outcome	Numbers affected
<i>(1) Numbers receiving crisis support through increases</i>	Better coordinated crisis support – including involvement from the Local Authority – ensures that additional claimants are receiving crisis support through other sources at the point they need it	Crisis support recipients increase by 4500 above baseline in year 3 across the five pilot areas.
<i>(2) Numbers receiving referrals to other support services at point of crisis increases</i>	Warm referrals process in place ensures claimants receive referrals to services to prevent the recurrence of crisis.	450 successful referrals across the five pilots made through crisis support network in year 3.
<i>(3) Numbers requiring repeat crisis support decreases</i>	Signposting to other sources of support reduces the likelihood of requiring repeat provision.	Of those successfully referred for ongoing support, follow up evaluation finds increases in financial stability and resilience.
<i>(4) Widespread engagement of organisations is secured for a local crisis support network</i>	Building a network of partners focussed on crisis support delivery is crucial to the effective operation of coordinated crisis support provision.	At least 20 organisations engaged in each area in delivery of coordinated crisis support provision (100 across five areas)..

At the start of this document we outlined a real case of where services had failed to provide effective services. It doesn't have to be this way. The rewritten story below suggests how an effectively coordinated crisis support service could have better supported Linda, Mike and Casey when they needed help.

Linda, Mike and Casey's (alternative) story

One day Linda and Mike's godchild, Casey, came to the door having been kicked out of her home. She was in her pyjamas and had her schoolbag and school uniform with her. They obviously did not want Casey to be homeless for the night and so took her in but they were clear it could not be permanent and that it would place them under significant financial strain.

Crisis Support services were effectively advertised locally, so Linda and Mike were able to easily identify how to apply for emergency assistance and a local organisation who could help if needed.

The application process for crisis support has been streamlined to ensure that Linda and Mike can apply for all the support that they need (including immediate additional support with both food and fuel costs,) through a single application. They quickly received additional emergency support with food and fuel costs.

At the point of application, Linda and Mike were also offered a further conversation about their wider support needs. They take up this offer, and it is suggested that they might benefit from advice from an independent housing advice provider to help reconcile Casey's housing needs, and a referral to a family support provider who can help Casey to explore what support she might need in relation to her relationship with her family. The housing adviser provides support to ensure Casey has a permanent place to live. The family support work helps Casey to re-establish a positive relationship with her family.

After contact has been made with these services, the original organisation helping with the household's crisis support needs, gets back in touch to check up on the support Linda, Mike and Casey have received, and whether any further support would be beneficial. A particular emphasis is placed on following up with Casey about her aspirations, and the support she needs in order to flourish.

Appendix 1. Proposed model for setting up a local coordinated crisis support project in each of the five pilot areas

	1. Initial stakeholder meetings to establish a local crisis support network	2. Analyse existing local need and provision	3. Put together a project steering group and local delivery plan	4. Create any project resources needed for improving local crisis support delivery	5. Establish a “warm referral network”	6. Train staff and volunteers to enable them to help with delivery	7. Deliver coordinated crisis provision	8. Provide an opportunity for service users to speak about their experiences	9. Test & learn to improve local delivery, and evaluate the impact of the programme
Stage	<p>The national programme coordination team will get in touch with local organisations in the pilot area, to establish a network of local groups interested in improving local crisis support provision.</p> <p>Organisations contacted will vary, but will always include the Local Authority.</p>	<p>The programme coordination team will work with local stakeholders to better understand local need for crisis support, and existing provision.</p> <p>This will include exploring what crisis support is available locally – including geographical variation; what the eligibility criteria and application process looks like for different forms of support available; the extent to which</p>	<p>The coordination team will establish a small group of key local organisations to form a project steering group.</p> <p>The steering group will work with other local agencies, and previous crisis support service users, to develop a plan for implementation of a local scheme of crisis support delivery and agree this with the coordinator.</p> <p>This plan will set out how the pilot funding will be used in order to deliver the local</p>	<p>The programme coordination team will develop a set of tools to support the delivery of the local project.</p> <p>For example, this may include materials to more effectively advertise the provision of crisis support locally.</p> <p>They will also include a template data sharing agreement to help referrals</p>	<p>A key part of the project is the establishment of a warm referral network to enable participating organisations to signpost people in need to crisis support to other services which can help to prevent the recurrence of crises.</p> <p>A local data sharing agreement will be created, and used to support different</p>	<p>The programme will develop and deliver training to local agencies to assist them with supporting service users to access crisis support.</p> <p>Training will improve understanding of eligibility for, and access to, the different forms of crisis support available locally.</p> <p>Training will also seek to support staff</p>	<p>Services will assist with delivering coordinated crisis support to local people.</p> <p>The approach taken will vary between pilot areas (depending on the plan set out in (3)), but participating organisations will:</p> <p>*Ensure that local people are aware of the different forms of crisis support available in their area and which is most appropriate to an individual’s needs.</p> <p>*Work with individuals to assist them to access crisis support available.</p> <p>*Work with service users to understand the problems which</p>	<p>A framework will be developed to enable service users to voice their experiences of the problems which led to them reaching crisis point, their experience of the crisis support system itself, and systemic changes needed to improve responses in the future.</p> <p>The coordination team will work to ensure that</p>	<p>All projects will be provided with continuous monitoring, evaluation and learning.</p> <p>The evaluator and learning facilitator will hold calls with key members of the local steering group to identify their local objectives.</p> <p>Representatives from all 10 local areas will come together termly to reflect on learning. This will inform local delivery and evaluation.</p> <p>An annual “learning day” in each of the five local areas will</p>

	<p>different forms of support are known about and utilised</p> <p>The team will also explore the different sources of support available to prevent the recurrence of crisis.</p>	<p>scheme. The coordination team will then work with the steering group to unlock the funding.</p>	<p>to be made between local partners.</p> <p>These tools will then be adapted to meet the bespoke needs of the local community.</p>	<p>organisations to share information about a service user between different agencies.</p>	<p>to have conversations with service users about underlying crisis support needs, and any support they may need to help prevent the recurrence of difficulties.</p>	<p>led to them reaching crisis point, and where necessary, make warm referrals to other agencies to assist with these.</p> <p>*Follow up after crisis support has been provided to check their needs have been met, and ensure services are helping to prevent a repeat of crisis.</p>	<p>their voices influence the ongoing development of the programme, and local and national responses to crisis need.</p>	<p>summarise learning and progress.</p> <p>Quarterly monitoring reports, and an annual learning & evaluation report will be prepared covering each of the five local areas.</p>	
Who will be involved?	National coordination team, local organisations and community groups	National coordination team, local organisations and community groups	National coordination team, core group of local agencies	National Coordination team, local steering group	Coordination team; local organisations; legal support to assist with implementing data sharing agreement	Training staff; local organisations	Local services, service users, crisis support providers	Service Users, Coordinator	Evaluator, Learning Facilitator, coordinator; Local Steering Group and five partner area representatives
What support and resources are needed?	This work will produce a report mapping crisis support need and provision for each local area,	A draft Terms of Reference will be needed for establishing the local steering group;	Marketing materials and a template data sharing agreement will need to be produced for adaptation and use in each local area.	A local data sharing agreement will be needed	A training package will need to be developed.	All previously mentioned resources will assist with delivery.	A framework for capturing user experiences will need to be developed.	An evaluation framework and learning programme will need to be established.	
How does this link to the programme	This work will help with addressing outcome (4) which commits the programme to achieve	By establishing a baseline of activities and provision, this work will help establish the	By developing a local implementation plan for the project, this will help to address outcomes	Marketing materials will be key to addressing outcome (1) – numbers of	Establishing a warm referral network will be key to addressing outcome (2) -	Staff training will be key to improving take up of crisis support, and improving	Delivery is directly linked to achieving outcomes (1) to (3). In so far as a range of local organisations are involved, it will also	Learning from service users will be key to ensuring that delivery improves.	Evaluation and learning and will be key to ensuring that delivery improves. This will feed back into

outcomes ?	widespread engagement of organisations is secured for a local crisis support network	knowledge base needed to address all outcomes (1)-(3). By drawing in a range of stakeholders to develop and review this work, it will help address outcome (4)	(1) to (3). By involving a wide range of stakeholders in developing and implementing the plan it will help address outcome (4).	people receiving crisis support. A template data sharing agreement will be key to achieving outcome (2) – improving onwards referrals to prevent recurrence of crisis.	improving onwards referrals to prevent recurrence of crisis.	referrals to prevent crisis recurrence – helping address outcomes (1) to (3). Involvement of a range of organisations in the training programme will help address outcome (4)	help address outcome (4).	This learning will feed back into service development – and so help to build a programme which better addresses all outcomes (1) to (4).	service development – and so help to build a programme which better addresses all outcomes (1) to (4).
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Appendix 2. Customer journey for coordinated crisis support provision

	1. Identify assistance available	2. Discuss options and help with accessing crisis assistance	3. Consider underlying needs and make referrals as necessary	4. Provide an opportunity for families facing crisis to voice issues affecting them	5. Provide aftercare
Step	<p>When someone falls into crisis need they need to be able to easily identify the support available to help them.</p> <p>In order to help with this, the coordinated crisis support project should ensure that (1) local crisis support availability is well advertised and understood amongst those who need it, and (2) that people know where to seek help with the process of making an application for crisis assistance</p>	<p>Once someone has sought help to address a crisis need, they need a response which clearly sets out the options available locally, and help them with accessing support.</p> <p>In order to help with this, the coordinated crisis support service would seek to ensure that families facing crisis are offered (1) a discussion about their crisis needs and information about crisis support assistance available locally – helping to</p>	<p>Once someone’s immediate emergency need has been addressed, consideration also needs to be given to why the crisis occurred, and what support could help to prevent the recurrence of difficulties in the future.</p> <p>In order to address this, the coordinated crisis support service will offer a further discussion of some of the underlying issues in the person’s life which have led to them requiring crisis support.</p>	<p>Once someone’s immediate emergency needs have been addressed, and they have received support to address issues which could risk the recurrence of crisis, they should also have the opportunity to have their voice heard on the issues that affected them, the responses they received, and what improvements could be made in the future.</p> <p>In order to address this, the coordinated crisis support programme will offer</p>	<p>Once someone’s immediate emergency needs have been addressed, and they have received support to address issues which could risk the recurrence of crisis, they should receive on-going support to ensure that provision had had the desired impact, and ensure they receive any further support needed.</p> <p>In order to address this through the coordinated crisis support programme, the local</p>

	<p>The programme will also work to ensure trusted relationships are built with those who may require crisis support in the future, to encourage them to seek help when they need it.</p>	<p>identify the most appropriate form of support available given their circumstances, and (2) advocacy on their behalf to ensure that they are able to access the support needed.</p> <p>The service should work with the service user to ensure that any barriers to accessing support are addressed (for example, any travel needs to collect assistance available.)</p>	<p>Based on this discussion referrals will be made through a “warm referral network” to partners able to deliver support with different issues which may lead to recurrent crises.</p> <p>Improvements in data sharing within the local crisis support network will help ensure that all agencies referred to have shared information about the individual to assist with the provision of support, and avoid duplication.</p>	<p>opportunities for those who have faced crisis to speak out on issues affecting them.</p> <p>The programme coordination team will liaise with local projects to ensure service user voices contribute to on-going service development, and are fed back to key decision makers at a local and national level.</p>	<p>service first engaging with the service user will follow up at given intervals to explore the impact of interventions received, and whether they require any further support.</p> <p>They will make further referrals as necessary to ensure the individual has their on-going support needs met.</p> <p>Individual outcomes will be recorded to assist with programme learning and development.</p>
Actors	Local services, programme coordination team	Local Services	Local services delivering crisis support; <i>and</i> Local organisations to whom referrals are made.	Service users; Local services; Learning and evaluation team; Coordination team	Local services; Learning and evaluation team
Support	<p>Marketing tools will be needed to help with effective advertising of the local crisis support scheme</p> <p>Grant funding for local service providers will be needed to enable delivery of coordinated crisis support provision.</p>	<p>A training programme on supporting people to access crisis support provision will be needed for local services;</p> <p>A local information database about crisis support availability will need to be developed</p>	<p>A warm referral network will need to be developed between local agencies- this will require, and be based on, improved local data sharing approaches</p> <p>A training programme to support identification of underlying needs leading to crises emerging will be needed for local services.</p>	<p>A framework for capturing user experiences will need to be developed.</p>	<p>Training on the provision of follow up support will be needed for local services</p> <p>A database to record outcomes will need development</p>
How does this link to the programme outcomes?	This work will help to address outcome (1) by ensuring more people are able to easily access crisis support.	This work will help to address outcome (1) by ensuring more people are able to easily access crisis support.	<p>By ensuring those receiving crisis support get help to prevent the recurrence of crisis, this will help address outcomes (2) and (3).</p> <p>By involving a range of partner organisations in the referral network, this will also help address outcome (4)</p>	Capturing user experiences and ensuring these help deliver programme learning and wider systemic change, will help address outcomes (1) to (4)	Provision of aftercare to ensure those receiving crisis support get help to prevent the recurrence of crisis will help address outcomes (2) and (3).