

# **Changing Strategies**

**getting better quality and more services  
from a limited budget in Edinburgh**

**Edinburgh Cyrenians**

# About Edinburgh Cyrenians

- An entrepreneurial charity dedicated to those on the margins of society
- A track record of developing innovative approaches which work and scaling them up/passing them on for replication
- Size and Scope of Cyrenians
  - We have increased service levels by an average of 10% a year over the past decade
  - Cyrenians were identified by New Philanthropy Capital (June 2008) as one of the top 9 most effective homelessness charities in the UK
  - Turnover of £2.2 million a year (€2.75 million)
  - Working in 4 local authority areas (Edinburgh, West Lothian, East Lothian, Falkirk)
  - Providing help to around 1000 people each year



# Cyrenians Response to Public Sector Procurement

- We have observed the increase in use of tendering since 2004 by the public sector to purchase services
- We started to develop our capacity to respond to tendering
- We created an internal process for managing our response to the Edinburgh tendering well in advance
- We included middle managers in preparing tenders and staff at all levels in initial implementation

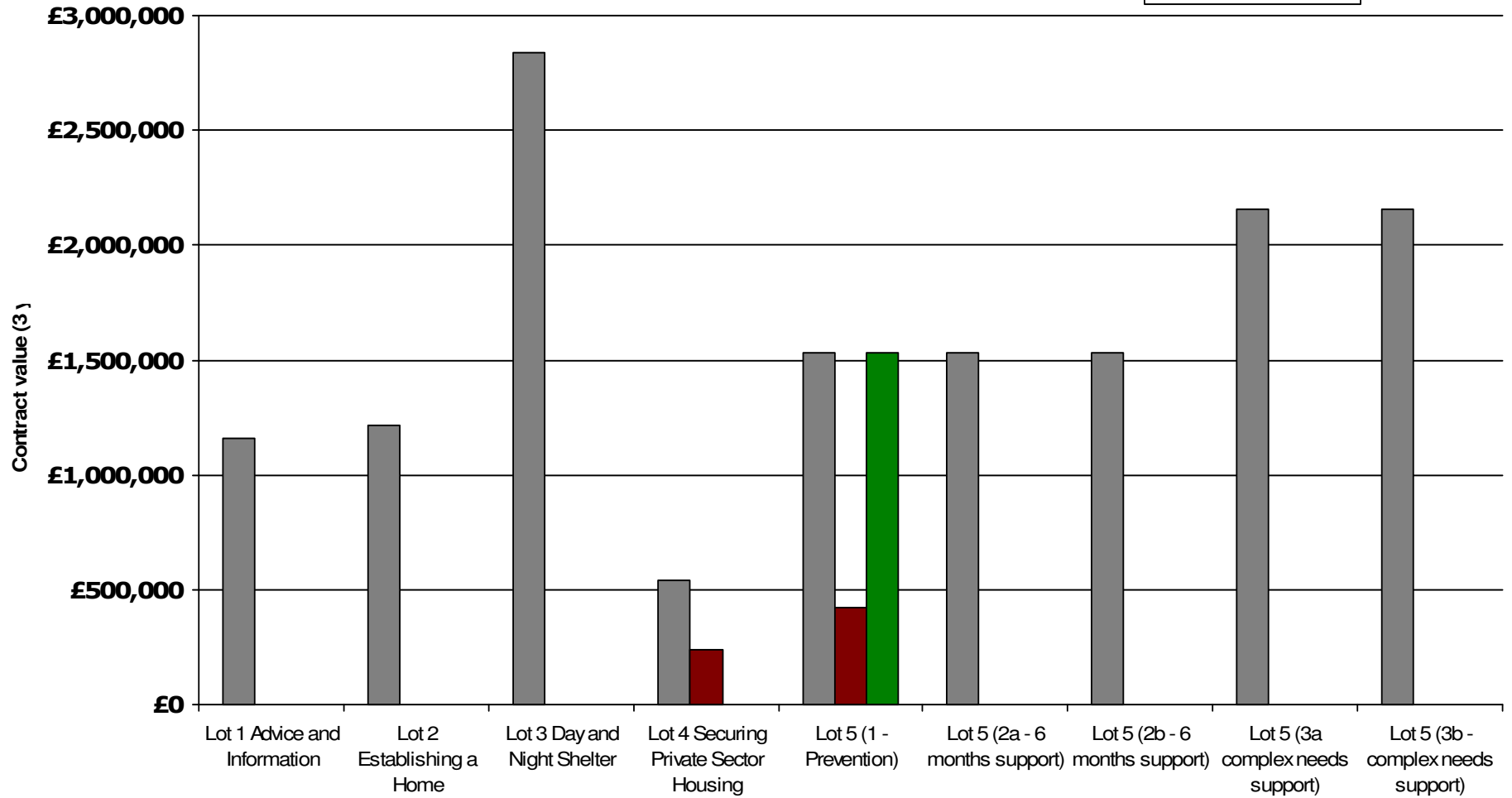
# Our Response to Tendering

- Full participation in the consultation on the Homelessness strategy and subsequent commissioning plans
- Clear indications that changes in services were likely to be dramatic – but with a strategic justification for these changes
- Subsequent choices needed to be made fairly - even if the outcome was controversial
- A strong emphasis on partnership working with the Council and flexibility

# What Happened to Cyrenians?

- The charity were awarded a large contract to deliver Visiting support
- We lost our Edinburgh based Private Rented Sector Service to a major competitor

# Contract values and impact on us



# Transition

- All the winning contractors able and willing to work with other agencies
- Varied experiences of attitudes by outgoing organisations – mainly positive but also some sabotaging
- Disruption minimal in services similar to previous line up
- Some services are changing significantly and transition will take time

# Homelessness Prevention Service

- 18 full time equivalent staff providing prevention support targeting people:
  - in financial difficulty
  - who are having disputes with landlords and others
  - whose relationships are breaking up including young people and their parents
  - who are now resettled and require day to day activity to remain well and stable.
- The service will work with up to 375 people each year across any housing tenure (125 people at any one time)
- Critical success factors:
  - pitching the service at the right target groups of people
  - ensuring staff are able to deliver the right type of support
  - good engagement with other service providers

# Observations

- It's time consuming
- "Marriages of convenience" vs genuine synergy.
- Objectivity vs real understanding of service delivery
- Specific operational detail vs demonstrable strategic thinking
- Demonstrate effectiveness and evidence of ability to deliver
- Value for money tactics employed to achieve this – response to competition
- You don't have to be big to win – particularly if you have a specialism.
- The advantage of size and capacity vs specific local knowledge and operational understanding
- Relatively little room for innovation (in our view)