

# Cwm Taf Regional Collaborative Committee

## Annual Review

1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 – March 31<sup>st</sup> 2019



## Contents

Executive Summary, Cllr Geraint Thomas & Cllr David Hughes	Page 3
Introduction	Page 4
Regional Case Study A	Page 5
Regional Case Study B	Page 6
How People who access services are involved	Page 7
Service Developments	Page 9
Housing Support Grant	Page 17
RCC Members Appraisal	Page 18
Governance and Housekeeping	Page 19
Appendix A	Page 20



## **1. Executive Summary**

As Chairs of the Cwm Taf Regional Collaborative Committee over the past 12 months, it has been our pleasure to oversee the great progress which has been made towards regional commissioning and the continued work to ensure high-quality housing-related support is delivered across the region.

During the last year the committed and dedicated members of the RCC and Local Planning Groups have continued to support the local teams to improve standards across Supporting People Programme funded services throughout the region, through careful monitoring, reconfiguration and re-commissioning where appropriate.

Progress towards commissioning a new regional hostel provision for Cwm Taf is well underway with the first phase of implementation in current provision complete, and the second phase to commission a new service about to begin. This new service will cater for the complex needs of our service users, providing them with a psychologically informed environment within which to begin their journey to independent living. We are also delighted that the first fully regionally commissioned housing related support scheme for people with dementia has recently been launched (April 2019) and is delivering much needed support to vulnerable people within the region.

It is also pleasing to see that as in previous years, service user engagement has been undertaken on a regional basis, as well as within services and provisions; bringing together our experts by experience from Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil to share with us their stories and help us to improve services for the future. We are confident that the Local Authorities will continue to work collaboratively for the benefit of vulnerable people; not just within the Supporting People Programme, but with all funding streams within Children and Communities and Housing Support Grants as they have over the past twelve months.

It has been reassuring to see that during a time of uncertainty for the programme, the RCC has remained committed to the success of the Supporting People Programme within Cwm Taf and has focussed on ensuring that we are delivering services that meet the needs of our Service Users through consultation and engagement.

We look forward to seeing what can be achieved over the next 12 months and welcome the opportunity to work with colleagues from Bridgend who formally joined the Regional Collaborative Committee on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, and to the continued success of the programme within Cwm Taf Morgannwg.



(L-R) Cllr David Hughes, Chair of Cwm Taf Regional Collaborative Committee Cllr Geraint Thomas, Chair of Cwm Taf Regional Collaborative Committee

## **2. Introduction**

Cwm Taf is located in South East Wales and is comprised of the Local Authority areas of Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. Cwm Taf is the smallest of the collaborative areas containing around 9.6 per cent of Wales' total population, with around 293,000 inhabitants. Cwm Taf is the most deprived of the regions in Wales (using a standard area measure based on the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation).



Each region has a collaborative committee which reports to the Supporting People National Advisory Board, which in turn, advises the minister on decisions relating to the Supporting People programme. The Cwm Taf Regional Collaborative Committee is made up of housing and homelessness professionals, representatives of the statutory sector, local authorities, elected members and providers of housing related support within the region. The Cwm Taf RCC benefits from a knowledgeable, motivated and passionate membership who are dedicated to improving housing related support services for some of the most vulnerable members of our communities. The following annual review outlines the progress made in the region and covers the period April 2018 – March 2019.

During 2018/19, the RCC have progressed the regionalisation of hostel provision for Cwm Taf. A detailed two-phase plan has been agreed by the RCC and the local Planning Groups, with the first phase of work complete, and work commencing on the second phase shortly. The new regional hostel provision for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf will launch in April 2020. (Please see Case Study 1) A new regional scheme delivering housing related

support for people with Dementia was developed during this reporting period with the service being launched in April 2019. (Please see Case Study 2)

During the reporting period 2018-2019, the RCC have welcomed colleagues from Bridgend County Borough Council, who have moved from the Western Bay footprint to Cwm Taf, creating a new Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.

The RCC will continue to engage with Welsh Government regarding the new funding arrangements for the Supporting People Programme as part of the Housing Support Grant. We will continue to work alongside our colleagues from the Children and Communities Grant, ensuring that we complement existing work and reduce duplication, working flexibly to provide vital services to our communities.

### **3. Case Studies**

#### **CASE STUDY A:- Regionally commissioning a new hostel provision for Cwm Taf**

Following on from last year's progress to identify hostel provision as an area that could be better delivered regionally, creating a more Psychologically Informed Environment for our most complex and vulnerable service users to begin their journey to independent living; a great deal of work has been undertaken to align current provision in readiness for the second phase of work which will include the commissioning of a new service.

In September 2018 the RCC approved the appointment of Bruce Whitear and Hugh Irwin (housing consultants), to assist the Supporting People teams to deliver a new hostel provision for the region. Initial work to engage with stakeholders and Service Users was undertaken to allow the creation of a statement of intent, which the RCC and SPPG's approved. The statement of intent included the findings of several engagement sessions, case studies and a review of policy within current provisions, to compile recommendations for a two-phase approach to achieving a new service for Cwm Taf.

The first phase of this work (to address short term recommendations from the report, aiming to improve current services and align provision across the region in preparation for phase two), was completed during this reporting period. This work was led by a working group which included representatives of the organisation currently providing hostel provision (Adref), Local Authority SP team leads and officers, the Regional Development Coordinator, LA housing representatives and the consultants.

A work plan was created to address issues identified during the research stage. These included:-

- Inconsistencies in policy / procedure between the 4 hostels across the 2 LA areas
- Use of breathalyser on entrance to provision
- The issuing of 'notices to quit' resulting in evictions
- Availability of training within staff teams and implementation of a Psychologically Informed Environment approach to supporting service users

- Availability and range of meaningful activity within provisions and support to build networks outside of provision.
- Opportunities for Service Users to build and sustain relationships with friends and family while living within 24 hour supported accommodation.

(The above are examples of issues addressed during this phase of work, not an exhaustive list).

The group met on a monthly basis (more often when necessary) and completed actions to address the recommendations within the work plan. Changes have been made to implement a more psychologically informed environment, align policies and procedures across the 4 hostel provisions (with some deviations to allow for specific circumstances), remove the use of breathalyser on entry (opting for an assessment of behaviour instead) and introduce a new inclusion policy (to replace exclusion policies) with the aim of having a zero-eviction rate. Other changes implemented include increased training for staff, including attendance (where possible) in the roll-out of PIE training for support staff and managers, and a review of activities offered and supported within hostels.

A phase 2 working group has now been established to undertake the work necessary to decommission current provision at the four hostels and commission a new service for Cwm Taf to provide a service for the region which meets the needs of service users with complex and multiple needs, providing them with the skills and resilience to live independently in a safe and secure home of their own. Rhondda Cynon Taf will take the lead on the procurement of the service on behalf of the Cwm Taf

#### CASE STUDY B:- A new Housing Related Support service for people with Dementia in Cwm Taf

A proposal was submitted to Merthyr Tydfil's SP Planning Group to offer housing-related support for people with (or in the process of receiving) a dementia diagnosis and was retained in the register of potential 'off the shelf' projects to be commissioned if funds allowed. Support for people living with dementia had previously been identified as an emerging need during an RCC development day. The scheme was already providing services to people with dementia within in Rhondda Cynon Taf, delivering positive results. The Merthyr Tydfil SPPG agreed that this was an area of specialist support they would like to offer within Merthyr Tydfil, and the potential to deliver this on a regional basis would be welcome.

At the January meeting of the planning group, underspend from other schemes and funds released following the decommissioning of a floating support scheme was identified and members agreed to proceed with the dementia housing related support proposal. Rhondda Cynon Taf's SPPG agreed that this scheme could be more efficiently delivered regionally and work began to end the current contract with care and Repair, ready to commission a new regional housing related support scheme for people living with dementia in Cwm Taf.

In January 2019 Merthyr Tydfil CBC led on the commissioning of a regional dementia scheme for Cwm Taf to deliver housing related support to people with dementia diagnosis. The scheme commenced on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 at an annual cost of £45,605.04 (Rhondda Cynon Taf = £33,961.20 and Merthyr Tydfil = £11,643.84) and initial feedback has been very positive.

The service provides housing related support to people with Dementia to live with dignity and respect in their own homes and communities.

The focus of this housing related intervention is to develop or sustain an individual's capacity to live in their own accommodation and achieve increasing levels of independence, participation, choice and control, where it is safe and viable for them to do so. Where it is necessary, the scheme will need to work in collaboration with other services, such as the Community Coordinators (funded through ICF) to access third sector support and ensure people's needs are safely and appropriately met. Typical support includes:

- A review of benefit entitlement and current utility arrangements
- Setting targets relating to independence with are; specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound.
- Ensuring that the service user outcomes have been agreed so that the qualitative aspects of the service can be measured and reported
- Providing a consistent record of contact and involvement to ensure fair treatment of all service users
- Ensuring service users are aware of the terms and conditions of any support and the service user is aware that support will reduce and end

The service provides 47 hours of support weekly (35 for RCT and 12 for Merthyr Tydfil) to approximately 150 people throughout 2019/20. The service is delivered through multiple or one off interventions that are flexible to individual need. As of May 2019, one month after it's launch, the scheme is supporting 53 individuals across the region and initial informal feedback is positive. The scheme will be jointly monitored by the Supporting People teams in both Local Authority areas on a regular basis.

#### **4. How People who access services are involved**

Cwm Taf RCC produced a Service User Framework in 2014 which is publically available and can be viewed at : - <https://www.merthyr.gov.uk/media/3287/service-user-framework-eng.pdf>

In line with this framework, the Regional Development Coordinator led on the delivery of a regional Service User consultation event on behalf of the RCC. As a result of a suggestion made at a Regional Provider Forum, this years' Service User engagement event was facilitated by Social Science students from the University of South Wales. The aim of this third-party involvement was to encourage constructive criticism from service users which could be used to assist service improvement. This

event included focus group engagement sessions for Service Users of both fixed site accommodation and floating support service users.

The regional service user engagement event took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019 in the Orbit Centre, Merthyr Tydfil. Feedback received from service users was very good. The RCC were pleased to see that the Supporting People Programme had positively impacted upon the lives of those who accessed support. Those who had high expectations of the service beforehand expressed that the support that they have received has met or exceeded expectations. Service Users who attended expressed that their quality of life had increased as a result of SP funded support. Comments received about the service included: "I'm very happy with the support I've had – I've come a long way", "Massively changed my life, I don't recognise myself!" and "I feel much safer now". The final question that we invited Service Users to answer was "Where do you think you would be if you hadn't received SP support?". Answers to this question included; "debts getting worse, I'd eventually have been evicted", "Suicidal", "Dead", "In a cemetery", "Prison" and also "Living in an abusive relationship". It is clear to see that the supporting people programme within Cwm Taf is working well to improve the quality of life for service users who were in a variety of negative circumstances prior to receiving support. Please see [Appendix A](#) for further details of the engagement event.

Providers delivering Supporting People services also conducted their own engagement activities throughout the year as part of their standard practice.

Ongoing Engagement Activities undertaken by service providers include:-

- House meetings
- Exit surveys
- Satisfaction surveys
- Service user forums
- Issue-specific focus groups
- Robust complaints procedures
- Informal discussions between service users and support workers
- Suggestion boxes
- 3 monthly review forms
- Service users are trustees on the board of management of some provider organisations
- Person-centred planning
- Open-door policy where service users have access to staff
- Service users participate in the recruitment of staff
- AGM is open to service users to attend

Moving forward, regional engagement will aim to include consulting with (a percentage of) people who were referred to the programme but did not take up, or were not accepted for support as well as those who were initially allocated to a provider but did not engage with the programme and support was ended.



## 5. Service Developments

***How have decisions been shaped by spend plan, needs analysis, outcomes and other sources of data? What changes have resulted?***

Merthyr Tydfil

Throughout 2018/19, the Supporting People Team have revised monitoring processes to ensure data captured can be used as intelligence to not only evidence project impact but value for money, and opportunities for continual improvement have been explored further through service user feedback and consultation. We have also implemented the cost calculator pricing policy (based on Newport's model) to ensure fair and consistent unit costs for commissioned services are available and large disparities of costs for similar services are addressed.

We have used the needs data to inform areas of priority need alongside our homelessness strategy and action plan to work collaboratively to maximise positive outcomes for those accessing housing and support services.

Through the needs assessments from SP and housing data, it was identified that although our existing services met a multitude of needs there were a cohort of entrenched rough sleepers and adults with complex needs coming through the services' revolving door, often in and out of prison with repeat homelessness assessments and support services mobilised, but with limited engagement or successes. From this we developed the Housing First Specification with the aim of taking the learnings from the successful projects in Cardiff. Due to the intensity and flexibility of support required and unit cost we were unable to fund the project solely through SP/Homelessness Prevention Fund but were successful in our application to the Welsh Government's Housing First Trailblazer fund, and the first Housing First Model project began in November with a heavy emphasis on front end support, engagement, relationship and trust building with the hope of more sustainable and positive outcomes for those who were unable to successfully move through our traditional service models.

Through analysis of our needs data and strategic reviews we also took a mutually agreed decision with one of our providers to decommission an older people's floating support service due to lack of demand and inability to effectively deliver the contract, and then proceeded to transition any service users to other appropriate support providers in October 2018.

Following consultation and strategic review of another provider commissioned to deliver floating support to older people, we identified a broader need for all age support to be delivered via this floating support scheme rather than dedicated fifty plus service which was also reconfigured to better meet local need.

We recommissioned our young person's floating support as part of a needs data review, and partly due to the cost calculator implementation which resulted in an almost identical service being commissioned for under half of the cost of the previous contract with an existing provider commissioned through SP with a proven track record in maximising positive outcomes for young people.

In the last year, we also invested in a complex needs worker for those with mental health issues who were in housing need, following a spike in our needs data, evidence of unmet need and pressures on existing support providers to ensure quality support being delivered to an increasing cohort of people. Due to time and budgetary constraints we couldn't commence the project until April 2019 however the tender process was completed in quarter 4 of 2018.

Through reconfiguration we were able to increase units to meet unmet need in some schemes; however other areas of identified need were left on the shelf due to limited/ no funding available i.e. Self-neglect/hoarding issues, adults requiring mediation support, along with a need for a new/ increased capacity scheme supporting those with complex needs/mental health.

We have continued to explore opportunities for jointly commissioned projects on a local scale with other grants within flexible funding. We have jointly commissioned a 'Money Matters' project with Citizens Advice and we continue to focus on collaborative and partnership working to ensure programmes complement each other, reduce duplication of service and achieve increased efficiency where possible.

### Rhondda Cynon Taf

Following the review of our current floating support services, we successfully commissioned a new locality based floating support launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 through the procurement process and decommissioned the existing providers

Throughout 2018 the Supporting People Team have continued to strategically review supporting people services and analyse the demand and needs data along with the outcome data.

Due to the high numbers of MAPPA referrals being received that were high risk offenders we commissioned a Specialist support service for offenders that have been highlighted as MAPPA's and the Wisdom cohort clients who pose a very high risk of serious harm. This model of support offered a flexible Housing First approach, which focuses on individuals who have high offending convictions and complex needs.

The strategic review of the Young People services highlighted that demand and supply was not fit for purpose for 24 hour supported accommodation. However, through monitoring referrals for young person's accommodation there was limited demand for low-level supported accommodation with demand for 24/7 supported accommodation as offered through existing projects including Ty Rhondda and The Old Bakery. The demand had also dramatically dropped for young people's Floating support services.

Therefore, we worked with providers and presented the data to the RCT SP Planning Group to consider the reconfiguration of young people services to meet the changing and current needs of Young people.

Once agreed by the RCT SP Planning Group regular meetings with the providers took place to ensure a smooth transition of services to help reconfigure the current provision to a 24 hour supported accommodation for young people and care leavers. The transition will see an additional 3 units of 24 hour supported accommodation in December 2018 and a further additional 3 units from April 2019.

It is a challenge financially to invest in new projects despite high need. In 2018 the SPPG gave approval to decommission the young people's floating support units as part of the service review by the SPPG in response to low demand. The efficiencies made now fund a higher level of supported accommodation for young people and care leavers in the Pontypridd and Rhondda area. The presenting data was evidence of the change of demand and we needed to reconfigure existing services to meet that demand. This also included reassuring the planning group that if the need for young people's floating support did increase in the future, this could be met through the new flexibility of a multiple needs/complex needs floating support service. We also worked closely to ensure the smooth transition from higher to lower level projects for some clients.

The reconfiguration of services for young homeless people in RCT has reduced the waiting list/times and also enabled a higher level of support to be offered to meet the current demand for young people in supported accommodation.

***What Regional and Sub regional (for RCCs with more than 2 local authorities) work is commissioned and how have services improved since the last Annual Review Report?***

Over the last year, much work has been done to commission services regionally where appropriate to do so. The first phase of work to regionalise emergency accommodation in Cwm Taf has been completed with phase 2 beginning in May 2019 (Please see Case Study 1). Due to the completion of this work, there has been great improvement in the support people who access hostel provision receive. This includes the careful consideration of the needs of service users with multiple and complex barriers to independent living which has led to the removal of breathalyser use and the cessation of notices to quit (unless in exceptional circumstances where the safety of service users and or staff is at risk).

The first fully regionally commissioned service for Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil has been launched, which began providing housing related support to people living with dementia on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 (please see Case Study 2). People who have a housing related support need linked to their dementia diagnosis now have a specialist service that can not only provide direct support and advice, but can also link service users with third sector organisations who may be able to engage them in activities or support which could improve their wider mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.

Both Merthyr and Rhondda Cynon Taf have representation on the Cwm Taf VAWDASV Steering Group to help with the delivery of the priorities set out in the VAWDASV action plan. One of the priorities highlighted is the commissioning of a regional service model for domestic abuse victims. A working group has also been established on a South Wales basis to explore the development of regional male hostel provision which both LA's participate in. A strategic review of domestic abuse services in RCT has confirmed a lack of services for male victims in respect of housing related support provision. Recommendations to implement and pilot a floating support service for male victims of domestic abuse are being explored by the SPPG's.

Both Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils secured funding under the Welsh Governments' Housing First Trailblazer Programme 2018/19 to develop an assertive outreach service for individuals with complex needs. The purpose of the funding is to enable grant recipients to deliver a Housing First project which will not only make an immediate impact on the lives of the most complex rough sleepers in our community, but will also provide an evidence base from which to inform both national and local decisions on commissioning in the future. It is vital that Housing First is fully utilised to support the most complex individuals in our communities in order to break the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping. The schemes are commissioned individually by the Local Authorities with Gwalia providing the RCT scheme and The Salvation Army delivering in Merthyr Tydfil. The schemes have some variances in target clients and the ways in which they are delivered, but a working group has been established to facilitate information sharing and support between the schemes. Colleagues from Bridgend local authority who are delivering a Housing First scheme funded through Supporting People Programme funds are also involved in this group to share best practice and support as widely as possible. In recognition of the increasing number of single homeless people with an offending background who come into contact with the Criminal Justice System and make repeat homelessness applications, additional funding has been secured from Welsh Government for an additional Housing First Projects within RCT and Merthyr Tydfil during 19/20.

***How can you demonstrate a more early intervention and preventative approach to homelessness is being delivered? How is this being addressed on a regional basis?***

#### Merthyr Tydfil

The Supporting People team in Merthyr were re-located to the housing and homelessness services office last year and since the co-location began, the two teams have worked more closely than ever through using shared data and resources including a shared gateway system (Civica) to use intelligence to inform effective commissioning driven by gaps in provision, unmet need and demand on services.

Through the Homelessness Prevention Grant we funded an **Early Intervention and Prevention role** to coordinate preventative work at a far earlier stage; linking in with education providers, public sector departments, third sector and private landlords to raise awareness, dispel myths, and generally better equip people to make positive life choices and understand current housing situation and challenges. An aim of this role is also to promote

and market the key services available and encourage early engagement with them also improving the use of private sector rentals through effective engagement with landlords, along with some assistance with rent in advance and bonds etc, which would be clear barriers to accessing accommodation for a number of our service users.

Supporting People and Families First also jointly commissioned a **money advice project** delivered my Citizens Advice, and plan to further refine this next year to ensure maximum impact and joint working to reduce duplication of effort and realise efficiency where possible. This complements the existing welfare benefit reform work, and the recently commissioned Universal Credit project with required financial advice and support to improve financial literacy and enable people to manage their money, avoiding potential future crisis.

Through partnership working with colleagues in Rhondda Cynon Taf, we received information on the successful resilience project and the outcomes being achieved as part of the wider review of our regional hostel provision. We now plan to identify funds next year to also invest in this pilot service across Merthyr's emergency accommodation settings to help with building resilience amongst our most vulnerable community members to improve and maximise sustainable positive outcomes for those using the services.

#### Rhondda Cynon Taf

The Supporting People Team have built relationships and worked in partnership with other statutory and voluntary Sector organisations to ensure that a range of early intervention and prevention services are delivered to assist the homelessness prevention agenda and compliment the Supporting People services across RCT. Projects funded though the Welsh Government's Homelessness Prevention Grant that compliments the Supporting People funded services include:

**A resilience project** has been piloted to provide emotional support and build capacity to cope with low-level mental health needs. This service is being delivered by Merthyr & The Valleys Mind and was rolled out in our emergency accommodation hostels and two complex needs supported projects to enhance tenant's resilience through psycho-education and wellbeing interventions. Additional funding has been secured from the Oak Foundation to enable the project to expand to all Supporting People supported accommodation projects in RCT throughout 2019.

**The Financial Project** also developed as a pilot with Pontypridd Citizens Advice Bureau offers support to help with benefit maximisation, PIP appeals and other welfare benefit issues. Referrals to this service are made by the Housing Solutions Team and individuals in receipt of a Supporting People funded housing related support service. Due to the success of the pilot he project has been extended in 2019.

During 2018, **the Complex Needs Worker** was funded in order to support the number of single homeless people who present as homeless with high and complex support needs, some of which are ultimately asked to leave supported accommodation for non-compliance with rules. The Complex needs worker helps effectively manage and support individuals leaving services before their homelessness is resolved.

Another new project for 2018 was **The Emphasis Project**, which provides an advice and support service to enable young people to avoid homelessness and remain within family homes or support them to return to their home environment. The project offers interventions through early targeted help, including helping educate and provide information and advice for young people and their families and other agencies about the realities of youth homelessness / welfare reforms impacts etc. The project worker role is located with the RCT Resilient Families Service and Engagement in Education and Training (SEET) team to identify, and offer support to young people who are specifically at risk of presenting as homeless in the future.

***What links does the RCC have with Social Services and Health Services in the region? Have there been any joint service commissioning or pooled resources? If so, can you give details of the project(s).***

Cwm Taf RCC has historically had good links with Social Services departments in both Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil. Senior managers from both LA Social Services departments are RCC members, providing a Social Services contribution to RCC work, ensuring that we link with the Social Services and Well Being Act and the Regional Partnership Board when necessary. In recent months, the RCC has unfortunately lost its health board representative who had been a very active RCC member, encouraging lots of interaction between the two bodies. The RCC is currently trying to recruit a new representative of the new Cwm Taf Morgannwg health board to ensure that we maintain a close relationship with them.

The RCC benefits from the membership of one of Public Health Wales's consultants in public health who is a long-standing RCC member and ensures that the work of the RCC takes into account the health needs of our region in our homelessness prevention, floating support work and supported accommodation.

Merthyr CBC have jointly commissioned Extra Care Contract with Social Services and have also retendered our Supported Accommodation Contract jointly with individual service specs and overarching joint contracts throughout 2018/19.

Links with Health in some areas are currently limited; this is something we have picked up with Welsh Government through our Housing First meetings as a possible piece of work on a regional or national scale. This will be a priority over the next 12 months.

***What links have been made with other regional strategic/planning groups and what joint commissioning work has been undertaken with other key partners/programmes?***

**Merthyr Tydfil**

Supporting People, Housing and Children's services have co-developed accommodation pathways for Young People accessing the services provided on both a statutory and non-statutory basis, and also working together to refine other local strategies including the MTCBC placement strategy.

Partnership working with Children's Services, Housing and SP has also resulted in a jointly developed application to the Youth Innovation Fund for a Housing First for Young People Project to support the cohort of Young People who have chaotic lifestyles, multiple and complex needs and for those who our existing models are unsuitable or deemed as too high risk.

As aforementioned we work collaboratively across the flexible funding/ Children and Communities Grant to explore joint working and commissioning opportunities and are currently exploring the opportunities around our money advice / welfare benefit reform projects.

The two contracts jointly commissioned with Social Services include the Supported Accommodation contract and Extra Care contracts.

We are also represented on the commissioning sub group exploring ways initially to map services, reconfigure where possible to work more efficiently and maximise resource for increasing numbers of people requiring support from the frontline services and explore future commissioning models and services.

**Rhondda Cynon Taf**

RCTCBC's Supporting People team in partnership with Children's Services and the Housing Solutions Team have been exploring alternative temporary accommodation options for young vulnerable people aged 16-21. We are working with a private landlord to source a suitable property in the private rented sector that can be utilised and commissioned for young person's temporary accommodation to offer a safer alternative higher standard of temporary accommodation offering as well as better value for money and improved outcomes for young people.

Funding has been approved from WG to assist with preventing youth homelessness. As part of the agreed delivery plan we will set up a multi-agency steering group to analyse data, identify gaps in data collection, reconfigure outcome measures for organisations collating data, working with young homeless people and preventing youth homelessness. This will then inform the steering group of future developments or commissioning decisions around the prevention of youth homelessness.

RCT's Supporting People Team and Adult Social Care have been working in partnership to look at ways of supporting individuals living in Learning Disability schemes to live more independently in their supported accommodation, or to move to a step down accommodation or even independent living. This has included working with the GRAMO (Get Ready and Move On) project offering a tailored tenancy programme through one to one and group support sessions delivered in each project. This training helps tenants with limited tenancy skills to manage their tenancies, or for those moving into step down accommodation or independent living.

We are also in the process of piloting a panel process to assist with move-on for clients supported by Adult Social Services who are living in supported accommodation, step down provision and moving into their own tenancies.



## **6. Housing Support Grant**

Cwm Taf Regional Collaborative Committee have taken the opportunity to engage with Welsh Government over the past year regarding the new Housing Support Grant. The RCC initially had concerns last year regarding the ability of homelessness to remain a priority if Supporting People grant were to be included in an Early Intervention and Prevention Grant as had been suggested. The RCC communicated their concerns to Welsh Government through formal consultation and through the RDC and SP leads at various engagement events and meetings. The RCC were pleased to hear the ministers' decision to include the Supporting People programme within a Housing Support Grant.

The RCC welcome Welsh Government officials to their meetings to keep us informed of progress towards the implementation of the new grant structure and will continue to actively participate in engagement and consultation whenever the opportunity arises.

The Supporting People Lead Officers within the region recently met with Welsh Government regarding the potential new formula for calculating Local Authority Supporting People allocations. Both Local Authority areas are keen for a new formula to reflect the need for services within our localities which will allow us to address the complex needs of our current and future service users. Both Local Authority areas have identified new schemes that would improve the lives of our vulnerable service users, should an increase in allocation allow for these to be funded.

The RCC have also recently done some work around the funding of housing related support in our schemes for people with learning disabilities in response to the recommendation in the Welsh Audit Office's report (2017). Data relating to current spend and provision of units for people with learning difficulties / disabilities were presented to RCC members for scrutiny and members were able to ask questions of Supporting People Lead Officers in relation to differences in funding across the LA's, and the reasons for these. A more detailed review into housing related support for people with learning disabilities will potentially take place in the near future, depending on what decision is made regarding the future funding arrangements for Learning Disabilities provision under the new Housing Support Grant. The RCC members have various views and concerns relating to the potential for funding for housing support in learning disabilities schemes to be included or removed from Supporting People grant allocations – these have been fed back to Welsh Government at our recent RCC meeting.

Supporting People Lead Officers, the Regional Development Coordinator and members have attended HSG engagement events and will feed-back to the RCC through the RCC's new standard agenda item; 'Housing Support Grant update'. Any comments of note from RCC members will be communicated back to Welsh Government through the RDC / SP Lead Officers

## 7. RCC Members Appraisal

### What worked well?

- Real progress in regional working and commissioning with one project up and running (Cwm Taf Dementia), a joint study commissioned throughout 18/19 and 19/20 as well as the commitment to regionally commission emergency hostel accommodation across Cwm Taf in April 2020.
- Regional working has continually evolved on an operational level with the introduction of SP Monitoring Officers Groups to share best practise, devise common monitoring Frameworks, and look at allowable activities to ensure consistent messages are provided to all providers across the region.
- Service user engagement has been a large focus with this being demonstrated on a provider level through reviews and contract monitoring, as well as regional engagement events (with facilitation from the University of South Wales). Case study booklets have been created as well as a short film to support effective networking and signposting between providers .
- Hostel review involving partners and users of services to gain broad opinion as to what works and what needs to change

### What needs to be progressed over the coming year?

- Apply / Implementation of shared outcomes for CCF / HSG
- Work to ensure representation at RPB's from Cwm Taf Morgannwg if this is agreed to discuss issues and explore opportunities for joint working across a range of disciplines such as health
- Continuation of regional working and the coordination of the regional hostel provision to be effective from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020.
- Further understanding of the potential changes and impact of the work and consultations being progressed through WG in relation to the HSG and specifically the SP funding formula – need a fair distribution of resource to target areas of greatest need and transition planning to do this effectively and feeding into other work streams including the LD review and single outcomes framework.
- Integrating Bridgend into the now; Cwm Taf Morgannwg region and exploring all joint working and commissioning opportunities that this may bring.
- Need to gain Health representation moving forward and be clear on the role of the RCC's moving forward.

### Other comments:

- RCC has been instrumental in supporting the coordination of regional working and commissioning and is an invaluable resource in bringing all representatives around the table.
- The RCC's are well organised, coordinated and a good arena to ensure the planning groups are targeting areas of greatest need and regional opportunities are explored where appropriate.
- Would be useful for all information around future direction of travel for RCC's and RDCs to be communicated at the earliest opportunity and through rigorous consultation to ensure the valuable resource is best utilised and effective models are developed with RCC members and partners.

## **7. Governance and housekeeping**

- a) Does the RCC have an up to date memorandum of understanding signed by all members?  
No – In the process of amending due to new regional footprint (Cwm Taf Morgannwg)
- b) Do all RCC members have an up to date declaration of interest form?  
No – In the process of amending due to new regional footprint (Cwm Taf Morgannwg)
- c) Has the RCC published its last spend plan and spend plans for each local Authority in the region?  
Yes
- d) Has the RCC published it'd latest Regional Strategic Plan?  
Yes. The RSP for 2017-2020 has been published and can be found at [https://www.merthyr.gov.uk/media/3173/rsp\\_2017-20\\_revised\\_with\\_spend\\_plan\\_eng.pdf](https://www.merthyr.gov.uk/media/3173/rsp_2017-20_revised_with_spend_plan_eng.pdf) We have not published the update produced in 2018 as yet.
- e) Has the RCC published last year's annual review?  
Yes, the Annual review for 17/18 can be found on the RCC web pages at <https://www.merthyr.gov.uk/council/partnership-working/cwm-taf-regional-collaborative-committee/annual-reviews/>
- f) Has the RCC published minutes of its meetings?  
Yes, minutes are published bilingually on the RCC pages which can be found at <https://www.merthyr.gov.uk/council/partnership-working/cwm-taf-regional-collaborative-committee/minutes-of-meetings-and-key-messages/>

## **APPENDIX A**

On the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019, the Supporting People teams, with the help of research students from the University of South Wales, hosted a service user consultation event based in the Merthyr Tydfil Orbit Business Centre. The aim of this consultation was to receive qualitative research data based on the workings and impact on the Supporting People programme on its users. User feedback is important because it allows us to come together collectively and evaluate what aspects of the programme are working well and which areas and schemes could potentially be re-modelled.

The morning session was attended by service users who were residing in fixed-site accommodation, whilst the afternoon session was attended by service users who received floating support services.

### **Morning Session**

The morning session consisted of service users from fixed-site accommodation. This included:

- 6 Female service users aged between 17 and 53, and
- 13 Male Service users aged between 19 and 47.

The questioned asked were as followed:

Question 1. Has the support you have received met your expectations?

- I thought it would be really hard and demanding, but it's been easy, I've had so much help and now I'm volunteering
- Yes - I went to the council to tell them I was homeless. I had support to move into the hostel and it's been great
- It's better – I thought it would be noisy and chaotic in the hostel but it's nice and quiet
- I was sofa-surfing with family before I went into support – I didn't know what to expect. At first, the person next to be was really rowdy, but that's sorted now. It's great. I like it there.
- Yes, everyone in the hostel is OK
- It's way better than I thought it would be. I have my privacy there.
- Yes, it's got me back on the right path
- I didn't think it would be as good as it's been
- Helps me see my priorities better
- I didn't want to go into hostel but the support has been wonderful, they've helped me get into college
- Yes, I've learned to cope with things
- Yes, I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the support I've had
- Yes, and I've been signposted to other organisations for help too
- Yes, I'm very happy with support
- It's exceeded my expectations
- It's brilliant, I'm back on my feet and learning to cook

Question 2. Have there been any barriers to you achieving your goals?

- I was supposed to move – I want to move out into my own place, but at the last minute they found out I have arrears, so I can't move until that's sorted.
- Housing benefit took ages to sort out and it meant I missed an opportunity for a new place
- The people I used to hang around with. I had to move to a new area to get myself sorted.

- I want a factory job but public transport is holding me back – it's useless
- The council messed up my application so I lost out on a house
- My drug use
- I wanted to go into supported accommodation but I couldn't because I found out I was pregnant
- Loneliness – it's great in the day but very lonely at night.
- Family problems
- Myself
- Drugs
- My mental health
- I had barriers before I went to refuge
- Adhering to the house rules
- People outside the hostel trying to influence people living there

Question 3. What impact has the support you've received had on your life?

- I've been offered a job
- I've done my CSCS card and got a qualification to help me get a job
- I was rock-bottom, sofa-surfing and sleeping rough. I lost all my friends. Now I feel like a new person
- Before I moved into hostel I had attempted suicide. Now all my troubles have gone thanks to my support worker
- I've got a CSCS card and loads of qualifications now
- I'm clean now I'm in hostel, that's the best change
- When I arrived I was off my face on drugs, I can't thank staff enough for they support I've had. They helped me when nobody else would
- They've helped me go back to education
- Support has helped me get off class A drugs
- Helped me become independent
- I'm more stable now
- Now I'm out of a horrible situation with my Dad, I'm in a safe place now
- Helped me build positive relationships
- Helped me learn to cope
- It feels like I have a family around me
- The overall quality of life has improved
- I'm not in an abusive relationship anymore
- I'm moving in with my girlfriend soon
- I've learnt that I don't need drugs to cope

Question 4. Has the support you've received been flexible enough?

- Yes
- I've set my goals and I'm working towards them
- Yes – I can re-arrange the support if I need to, that's ok
- I can just go and talk to my support worker at any time, the door is open
- Yes, they give you appointments in advance but they also have an open door policy
- Yes, I've had lots of complications with Social Services and my support worker has come with me to meetings
- My support worker does everything that I need – she's very good at her job

- My support worker has helped me with everything and given me really good support.
- Yes, I have a good relationship with the staff
- Yes, the support has met my needs
- Yes, my support worker has attended out of hours appointments with me
- Yes, I always have someone to talk to
- 

Question 5. Are you more able to live independently as a result of receiving support?

- Yes, having my tenancy agreement here is preparing me for having my own tenancy eventually
- I've done a 2 day budgeting course
- I've got cooking skills now
- I was already pretty independent as I've been on my own since I was 18
- I'm managing my appointments now, I remember to go to them
- I'm sticking to my support meetings better now
- I've always been independent but now I'll put money away for my future
- Yes, I've had a dom assessment which was really useful
- Yes and no really, they've helped me to prioritise what I need and not just what I want
- I know I can budget and afford things now
- Yes, I pay my own rent
- I've learnt to cook
- Yes, but I'll still have floating support when I leave
- Yes, I know how to budget my money now
- Definitely
- I'm confident to shop on my own now
- I can manage my money and my tenancy now
- I'm more confident with gatekeeping now
- I'm much more independent now

Question 6. Has your quality of life improved as a result of receiving support?

- Yes, my mental health is so much better
- I'm controlling my drinking now and I feel so much better
- In every way possible, I can't thank them enough
- I've got my CSCS card, I'm getting somewhere to live – things are looking positive.
- Yes – I was in and out of custody, but my support worker helped me to see the bigger picture
- Yes, I feel safe now
- Yes, a lot
- Massively changed my life, I don't recognise myself!
- Yes, I feel safer
- I don't have to worry about where I'll sleep now
- I can see light at the end of the tunnel now
- Yes, I know I have someone to talk to
- Yes, I feel well now
- I'm not so scatty now
- My life's got better

Question 7. Are there any aspects of support that you feel have been very helpful?

- Just having someone there to notice when my mental health starts deteriorating
- Having emotional support and them taking me to TEDS. I'm off all my medication now and I feel better
- Just having someone there for me
- Help with getting my spending sorted and managing my money
- Emotional support was what helped me the most
- Having a healthy routine in hostel. Being bored isn't good for me; I need to keep busy to stay on track. It keeps me focussed and helps me re-train my brain
- Helping me with my social services meetings
- Emotional support
- Having an open door policy so you can speak to someone when you need it
- Being encouraged to do things, like a peer mentoring course
- Being told about courses I could do
- Help with budgeting
- Counselling
- Taken to other organisations for specialist help (mental health)
- Going on organised trips
- Being able to get fit at the gym
- Being introduced to the Princes Trust
- Continuity of staff
- Group sessions
- Learning to cook
- House meetings

Question 8. Has there been any element of support that you feel hasn't worked for you?

- I'd like to be allowed visitors
- I don't like it when support workers come in when you just want privacy
- When the council messed up my housing application
- Having to come to group sessions, I'd rather one to one
- The breathalyser – the limit is too low, if you just have a quiet drink sometimes you can't come back in, it's not fair
- No not really
- I can't think of anything that hasn't worked
- Nothing hasn't worked – if it wasn't for the staff I wouldn't get up
- We need more activities
- I'd like more cooking classes
- More stimulating sessions
- People from outside the hostels try and interfere and try and sell us drugs.

Question 9. Have you been helped to find new accommodation or helped to keep your current accommodation?

- I had help to place bids and choose the right area to live in
- I had help to start think about what I need to do to move into a flat
- I'm having help now to look for private rented flats
- I need more time, I'm not ready yet
- Support workers are on the ball and help me with applications

- I have to pay of my arrears before I can bid on anything – it’s frustrating
- I’m happy in hostel at the moment
- I’m on auto-bids so that will just happen by itself for me
- I won’t have a choice on where I live with auto bid, I can’t turn anything down.
- Yes – I am moving today!
- I’ve been referred to another organisation for a flat
- When I ask about accommodation they tell me what’s available
- Yes

Question 10. Where do you think you would be if you hadn’t received SP support?

- Struggling to get a place
- My mental health would be worse
- Still sofa-surfing
- Taking cocaine and pills still
- Dead
- In a mental institution
- Smoking
- In prison
- Living on the streets
- On drugs
- On the street
- Struggling to get a place
- Taking drugs
- In Jail
- A mental hospital
- Still in an abusive relationship
- Homeless
- In a cemetery
- On the streets
- Supported lodgings
- On someone’s sofa or on the streets
- Without a doubt I’d be on the street because I wouldn’t go back to my Dad

### Afternoon Session

The afternoon session consisted of service users from SP funded floating support services. This included:

- 7 Female service users aged between 30 and 49, and
- 5 Male Service users aged between 23 and 55.

The questioned asked were as followed:

Question 1. Has the support you have received met your expectations?

- Better than I expected
- I’d be totally lost without support



- Above my expectations
- My support worker has helped me a lot
- I was unsure of what to expect but it's been really good
- Yes, my support worker is really helpful, I'm trying to get myself up to the standard I want
- It's exceeded my expectations
- Support has helped me overcome my barriers

Question 2. Have there been any barriers to you achieving your goals?

- My learning disability
- Universal credit
- I want to try and get a job but I'm scared to take risks with my benefits
- My health condition
- Not having a CV
- My mental health
- My short term memory problems
- My disabilities
- Lack of transport to employment
- Availability of IT
- I struggle with IT to try and get a job
- Lack of skills
- Affordable childcare to make it worth working
- Sometimes my support worker can't come with me (like to PIP assessments) when I need her to
- I want to go back to college but my benefits will stop
- My dependency on drugs
- Poor quality rented homes
- Anxiety gets in my way, but my support worker tries to help me with that
- My alcohol dependency
- Universal credit is a big barrier
- I need to go into a dry hostel but if I do that I'll lose my current support worker. I don't want that, but I need the extra support from specialists.
- Universal credit – I'm not computer literate.

Question 3. What impact has the support you've received had on your life?

- I've been able to return to my own home
- I can manage my bills now
- I can live on my own, independently
- I do volunteer work now which I love
- I've signed for a new tenancy
- I've got custody of my children back
- Help managing conflicts
- I'm very happy with the support I've had – I've come a long way
- I'm more independent and trying to work towards coming off support
- Just having someone to call if I need it makes a big difference
- Having a sounding board – someone non-judgemental

Question 4. Has the support you've received been flexible enough?

- Yes, it's been very flexible
- I had to wait a long time to get support (2 months)
- Yes, they are there in the week, not weekends but that's fine, I don't mind
- I wish they could accompany me to PIP appeals and things like that
- They bring a second support worker so you get to know them if they are going to be off work

Question 5. Are you more able to live independently as a result of receiving support?

- Yes, I can manage my money now
- Yes, definitely
- I was hiding letters and bills, burying my head in the sand, but now that I get support that doesn't happen.
- I'm much more confident now
- Yes, now I can live independently
- I recognise when things need to be done now

Question 6. Has your quality of life improved as a result of receiving support?

- Yes, it's definitely improved
- It's taken the pressure off me
- Very much so
- I know my support worker is just a phone call away – that makes me feel better
- Yes, I do voluntary work now, all arranged my support worker, so now I have valuable work experience
- Having my children back is the best thing
- Yes, in a big way, paying bills, budgeting, I'm ok now. Before my benefits had stopped and I was living hand to mouth.
- Yes, but I still have some problems with a violent neighbour

Question 7. Are there any aspects of support that you feel have been very helpful?

- Building relationships again
- Having a tax rebate!
- Everything – it's just given me the confidence to cope with everyday life
- Getting some work experience
- Getting my benefits sorted out
- Helping me keep my appointments and manage my bills etc
- Paying my debts off, it's a big relief
- I've started saving which is a big step for me
- Help to go and see Citizens Advice
- Having my support worker come to my first appointments, that's really helpful
- Not ending support before I'm ready, still being there for me

Question 8. Has there been any element of support that you feel hasn't worked for you?

- Just not being aware of Supporting People. I didn't know I could have the help. If I had, I could have had my support workers help sooner
- It can be frustrating that things don't happen quicker
- It takes a long time to get benefits set up

Question 9. Have you been helped to find new accommodation or helped to keep your current accommodation?

- I'm being supported now to look for somewhere of my own to live
- I've signed a new tenancy
- I had support to buy my ex-partners half of my home
- I was living somewhere that wasn't suitable, now I've moved it's much better
- I want to move but worried a change of address will trigger a migration to UC and I don't want that
- Yes, I've moved from hostel into a new place
- Yes, the landlord was going to evict me because I had arrears but now I've paid my debts off
- Yes, I'm having help to look for somewhere new

Question 10. Where do you think you would be if you hadn't received SP support?

- Debt probably
- Debts getting worse, I'd eventually have been evicted
- Suicidal