

**ANNUAL REVIEW**

**April 2017 to March 2018**

**The Vale and Cardiff**

**Regional Collaborative Committee**

**June 2018**

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**1. Executive Summary**

As Chair of the Vale and Cardiff RCC I would like to welcome you to the Vale and Cardiff Annual Review 2017 to 2018.

The Vale and Cardiff RCC has had its share of difficulties since its inception, and this year has seen its fair share of challenges for the Supporting People Programme as a whole. We are operating in an environment in which legislative and policy changes are bringing new challenges and threats to the people commissioning, providing and receiving support. The constant threat of cuts to the Supporting People Programme Grant coupled with the introduction of flexible funding and the Supported Housing Review has taken up a lot of the focus for everyone working within the Supporting People field.

The introduction of this report gives a brief overview of the governance arrangements for the Supporting People Programme and the responsibilities of the RCC, which at a time of uncertainty in the sector, is more crucial than ever as agencies work together closely to plan for robust services in the future that protect the people the programme supports. The RCC has continued to work together through both the formal meetings and development sessions, as well as through task and finish groups in order to ensure that the programme protects some of the most vulnerable in our region.

Section three of the report shows two case studies that the RCC feels demonstrate some of the achievements the Committee has achieved during the last financial year. The RCC has chosen to concentrate on the work the RCC has carried out collaboratively to produce a data sharing agreement that allows the local authorities to share information with the SAIL Team as this demonstrates how the two Local Authorities in the region are working more closely both inside and outside of the formal RCC meetings, and with other teams within the local authorities to achieve joint goals. The other case study that the RCC has chosen to concentrate on is the work of the Outcomes task and finish group as this demonstrates how working collaboratively has helped the RCC understand why the Vale and Cardiff region appeared to be underachieving in some key outcome areas, and ensure that this is not the case going forward. However the RCC has carried out many pieces of work outside of the formal meetings, including responding to concerns of the RCC members and responding to key consultations, and look forward to taking this collaborative approach as we move into the new financial year.

Section four of the review considers how people receiving services have been involved in shaping decisions through the RCC, an area in which the Vale and Cardiff RCC knows it need to improve.

Section five of the report looks at Service Development through a series of questions about the strategic aims of the RCC and hopefully demonstrates the progress we have made during this reporting period in key areas of the programme.

Finally the report considers the way that individual members feel about the progress of the RCC over the past twelve months and the areas in which it should concentrate as we move into the new financial year.

We hope that this Annual Review will demonstrate some of the achievements made by the Vale and Cardiff RCC over the previous year, and show that we are committed to the continued development and improvement of the functioning of the Vale and Cardiff RCC so that it works collaboratively to strategically improve services across the region, for those in need of Housing Related Support.

**2. Introduction**

The Supporting People Programme Grant (SPPG) - Guidance (June 2013) states that Regional Collaborative Committees (RCCs) across Wales are required to submit annual / regular reports to the Supporting People National Advisory Board (SPNAB), to advise the Minister on progress of each RCC. The RCC forms part of the overall governance structure for the SPPG, the current structure is available on the Welsh Government website: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housing-and-regeneration/services-and-support/supporting-people/programme-structure/?lang=en>

This Annual Review covers the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. It provides the SPNAB with an update on developments and an honest assessment of what’s worked well and areas that still need to be progressed in the Vale and Cardiff RCC. This report is a reflection of all Vale and Cardiff RCC attendees; each member, deputy member, co-opted member and advisor has been given the opportunity to input their views and recommendations on the Vale and Cardiff RCC.

The SPPG – Guidance (June 2013) identifies a number of areas of responsibility for the RCCs across Wales and the High level principles. These are listed below.

The areas of responsibility where the RCC is expected to report to SPNAB:

1. Advise

2. Recommend

3. Planning

4. Priority Setting

5. Membership and Attendance.

The high level principles for the RCC:

1. Improving services and outcomes to the end user.

2. Ensuring probity, accountability, transparency and scrutiny.

3. Operating on the basis of equality, collaboration and co-production.

4. Providing strategic oversight and direction in line with national, regional and local strategy and SP commissioning plans.

5. Being underpinned by and complying with robust and enforceable grant conditions.

The Vale and Cardiff comprises of two local authority areas: Vale of Glamorgan Council; and the City of Cardiff Council. It is covered by the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and the South Wales Police.

**3. Case studies**

As part of the annual review, we are required to provide two examples of work that has been carried out by the Vale and Cardiff RCC between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018. These include what went well, what barriers there were, what was achieved and any lessons learnt by the RCC.

**Example 1: Outcomes task and finish group**

During a development session the Vale and Cardiff region were shown to be achieving a significantly lower number of positive outcomes in some key areas of the Supporting People Programme than other areas of Wales. The Vale and Cardiff RCC were concerned by this and requested that a task and finish group was established to look at the reason the Vale and Cardiff were underachieving in certain key outcome areas, in particular “Feeling safe”, “Managing accommodation”, “Managing money” and “Mentally healthy”. The group was made up of representatives from each local authority and provider and landlord representatives of the RCC, as well as providers and local authority staff who deal with the operational aspect of the outcomes process.

The group carried out an analysis of the way the Vale and Cardiff collate outcomes as well as the way the providers collect the data needed. This in isolation did not highlight any particular issues that suggested the reason for the lack of progress the region appeared to be making in these areas. The group then compared the way outcomes are collated in the Vale and Cardiff region with the way other local

authorities collate outcomes. This led to the group discovering that the way the Vale and Cardiff local authorities count the number of positive outcomes differs from the way other local authorities in Wales produce their outcomes and accounts for the reason the region has appeared to be significantly underachieving in these areas of support.

As a result the Vale and Cardiff have altered the way they collate outcomes in line with the way other local authorities are carrying out this process. This in effect means that the Vale and Cardiff now count the number of positive outcomes within each outcomes period rather than only including the number of positive outcomes that span 2 outcome periods. This will have a huge impact in the region because of the number of short term hostel placements as well as the numbers who receive relatively short term floating support and brief interventions.

**What went well?**

* The Vale and Cardiff Supporting People Teams worked closely together and collaborated with providers in the region to understand the reason for the low number of positive outcomes in the areas “Feeling safe”, “Managing accommodation”, “Managing money” and “Mentally healthy”.
* The Supporting People Teams reviewed the processes they use to collect and collate outcomes.
* The Supporting People Teams have introduced a “brief intervention form” that is used regionally.

**What were the barriers?**

* The task and finish group was unable to understand the reason for the low number of positive outcomes by simply assessing the way the process is carried out in the region and therefore had to liaise with other local authorities before they were able to fully understand the reasons the Vale and Cardiff appeared to under achieve in some key outcome areas.

**What was achieved?**

* The Vale and Cardiff Supporting People Teams reviewed their processes for collating outcomes and have altered the way they collate this data in line with the way that other local authorities carry out this process.
* A regional brief intervention form is now used in both local authorities to better collate this information.

**Example 2: Producing a data disclosure agreement for use with the SAIL project**

The local authorities were tasked with sharing information with the SAIL project in 2016 in order to better demonstrate the impact the programme has on reducing the cost to the public purse by reducing the demand on more costly services such as Health.

The first barrier the Vale and Cardiff local authorities encountered was producing data sharing agreements that allowed the local authorities to share sensitive information about their service users with SAIL. This was raised at an RCC and added to the risk register as the Vale and Cardiff did not want to fall behind other local authorities with this piece of work, as they recognised the importance of proving the value of the programme. The RCC therefore decided to take a regional approach to the exercise in order to make it more efficient. A task and finish group was created and worked closely with the legal teams of the two local authorities to produce the document.

Due to the data being shared directly from each local authority with the SAIL Team it was not possible to produce a regional data sharing agreement but both local authorities worked together to produce a data sharing agreement that was then used for each of the local authorities.

**What went well?**

* This piece of work was prioritised due to the concerns of the RCC.
* The Legal Teams from each of the local authorities worked together to decide the best way to create the document.

**What were the barriers?**

* It was not possible to produce a “regional” document and comply with the Data Protection Act 1988

**What was achieved?**

* Both local authorities have identical, robust data sharing agreements allowing them to share information with the SAIL Team.
* Regional working was extended beyond the RCC to include the 2 local authorities’ Legal Teams.

**4. How have people who access services been involved and shaped decisions?**

The expectation to have a service user involvement strategy is written into contracts between Supporting People and providers. This is monitored as part of the review process by the Local Authorities.

During this financial year the Vale and Cardiff RCC have reconsidered the ways in which they can engage with the people receiving Supporting People services on a regional level. The RCC regards providers as experts in this field and therefore tasked the Regional Provider Forum (RPF) with considering ways in which the RCC can ensure the voice of the service user is heard at all levels. The RPF have formed a task and finish group, made up of provider representatives, Cymorth and the RDC, which answers both to the RPF and the RCC.

The first step the RPF took was to ask providers working in the region to speak to their service users about the changes to the models of support in the Vale and Cardiff to see whether they had noticed the change and how these changes have impacted on the support they receive. Once this exercise is complete the information will be collated and reported to the RCC in order that members can analyse whether services are working more or less efficiently for service users under their new ways of working.

Cardiff carried out service user consultation as part of their recommissioning process for their gender specific contracts. This included online questionnaires for past and present victims of domestic abuse living in the Vale and Cardiff region in order for the local authorities to gain a more in depth understanding of the needs of this client group. As part of its consideration of recommissioning Young Persons services, Cardiff Housing and Children’s Services have carried out consultation and engagement with young people to develop proposals for commissioning and procuring services.

Extensive service user consultation is also being carried out by each of the local authorities as part of their review of services in readiness for the new Homelessness Strategies to be implemented. This will also feed back to the RCC and help to inform service design and delivery going forward.

**5. Service Development**

As part of the Annual Review, and to meet the reporting requirements of Welsh Government we are required to provide additional detail about the following areas:

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

The spend plan, needs analysis and outcomes framework currently make up part of the local planning processes for each area. The RCC recognises that the outcomes data is not currently robust enough to be relied on in the decision making process. The RCC has previously examined the outcomes framework through task and finish groups and a development session. Although this work has helped the RCC to better understand the way the outcomes framework operates it has not increased the committee’s confidence in using outcomes as a commissioning tool, as the RCC established that local authorities collate outcomes in different ways, therefore further undermining the impact of outcomes as a decision making tool. Cardiff are currently looking at their own set of outcomes to underpin the flexible funding work they are doing. They will use these outcomes to help inform decision making. Due to the quality of the current outcomes process, Local Authorities rely more heavily on service reviews and other information to inform decision making on service delivery than the outcomes for the region.

Both Local Authorities have Local planning processes through which they make decisions. In each Local Authority the groups involved in the local planning process include representatives from the Local Authority Supporting People Teams, Service Providers, Health, Probation and Social Services. These groups examine the analysed data from the Supporting People Team’s needs analysis and the spend plans in order to agree the priorities for the Local Authorities. The Vale has a static Supporting People Local Planning Group (SPLPG). Cardiff use different planning groups to specifically reflect the services they are looking to commission at any one time due to the complexity of the services they are commissioning.

The Vale carry out regular needs mapping events with providers and other stakeholders. From the information received during these exercises the Vale established the need for a specialist project for young people who are too chaotic to live in the supported housing already available in the Vale. As a result The Vale are now in the process of implementing a single point of access into services which will provide more comprehensive data to help inform service planning going forward, as well as improving the efficiency of data collection.

Cardiff continued improvement in outcomes collection and use of this information, alongside spend plan data, to prioritise service commissioning and remodelling. The annual survey provides the outcomes and a range of data about services and their users including, equality information and client needs in addition to supply and demand information. This information is collected every year and helps identify the priorities for the Supporting People Programme Grant in the coming year. It is also useful in finding gaps or oversupply in support provision. All of the information is based on the service users that had been supported from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017.

The spend plan also provides limited opportunity for use as an analysis tool due to the rigidity of the system and the fact that the Local authorities are tied into contracts for services.

1. **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 Report?**

The Local Authorities recognise that regional commissioning has advantages for Local Authorities, providers and people receiving services, and have worked towards finding opportunities for joint commissioning during this period.

During this review period the Local Authorities have been working towards a regional Older Person’s Floating Support Service. Discussions regarding the potential regional scheme have been had both inside and outside of the RCC meetings, with the Vale and Cardiff local authorities meeting on a regular basis. However because of the differing priorities of the local authorities this scheme was not commissioned, due mainly to the fact that Cardiff could not establish a need for a specific older person’s floating support service as the needs of this client group are met by Cardiff’s generic support scheme.

The Local Authorities have established a regional alarms criteria, in line with the Aylward recommendations in order to ensure a consistent approach across the region for an alarm service based on need not tenure.

The Vale and Cardiff held regular meetings throughout 2017/18 regarding regionally commissioning domestic abuse services for male victims. This exercise established that the needs in each local authority differed and the Vale commissioned the dispersed domestic abuse scheme that they had piloted.

Cardiff’s Supporting People consultation and planning groups engaged with other services to agree local priorities and develop similar aims around:

* Opportunities for alignment, joint commissioning or delivery.
* Developing single access point for services to ensure effective use of resource and prioritise the most vulnerable clients.
* Greater understanding of need through the development of central waiting lists and allocations.
* Developing the right mix of accommodation types
* Developing clear pathways, structured journeys to independent living (wherever possible)
* Developing specifications for commissioning
* Identifying opportunities for efficiency savings.

An example of this is the Gender Specific/Domestic Abuse Services. Cardiff wants to ensure services can respond to the new duties under the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 and align to the developing Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

As of December 2017 the Gender Specific/Domestic Abuse project is at the procurement stage. The re-commissioned service is intended to join up and further develop services to create straightforward access to a range of provision, to meet the need for preventative services, target hardening and to provide a clear pathway through support. There will be a comprehensive service under one contract in a ‘one stop shop’.

Much work was undertaken to develop a detailed specification for these services in partnership with Children’s Services, Flying Start, South Wales Police, the Police and Crime Commissioners office. Welsh Women’s Aid assisted with the specification and with obtaining feedback from victims of abuse. There will be ongoing contract management and performance monitoring to ensure the service is delivering the intended outcomes for both service users and commissioners.

The main challenges to regional commissioning have been the individual LAs local planning processes and the timings of contracts ending. The LAs have managed to resolve these issues by rolling contracts on a monthly basis in order in order for commissioning timetables to match. The two Local Authorities now meet regularly outside of the RCC to look at the advantages of regionally commissioning services and the best way to overcome the trials this can pose. They will continue to look at opportunities for regional commissioning and take any proposals to the RCC.

1. **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?**

The Vale has employed a provider funded by Supporting People to work alongside the Housing Solutions Team, providing short interventions to people requiring them at the point they present to the Housing Solutions Team, as well as additional support from providers working with the Supporting People Team to work through the waiting list and provide emergency interventions for clients as needed.

The Vale has commissioned a scheme to work with the poverty action groups to provide housing related support to families receiving support from these programmes which will allow vulnerable families to receive support at an earlier point, avoiding escalation of the issues.

In addition the Vale is piloting a scheme to work with standard and medium risk domestic abuse victims that do not meet the threshold for statutory intervention. The service will signpost individuals to appropriate services with the intention being that supporting victims at an earlier stage will prevent escalation of the issue.

The Vale is in the process of implementing a single point of access (Gateway) in order to ensure that support is targeted appropriately. This will allow for more early intervention and prevention for the most vulnerable clients.

Cardiff manages the length of time an applicant can receive support before the provider must formally request a continuation of support. This means providers need to target support effectively, particularly to address the immediate issues in an effort to prevent accommodation loss. Within Cardiff’s Generic Floating Support Service there is provision for people to be contacted within 24hours where an immediate response is required.

Cardiff has a number of homeless prevention projects which have focused work around specific areas of need. The intention is to continue funding these projects for 2018/19.

Women at risk of domestic abuse – Spend in this area is expected to increase to reflect the need to carry out more preventative work. Previously services focused only on victims at medium or high risk of abuse. A service for standard risk victims has been built into the new Gender Specific services which are currently being recommissioned in order to prevent escalation of issues.

In 2017/18 a grant programme was supported to allow third sector organisations to bring forward innovative proposals for new ways of working. These included:

* The Compass Project – intensive support for those who are entrenched rough sleepers or experience a revolving cycle of frontline accommodation, prison, mental health rehabilitation, hospital and rough sleeping.
* Housing First Project - providing mainstream accommodation for rough sleepers; with flexible support for as long as it is needed
* Cardiff Solutions Project - aims to provide assistance to individuals who do not wish to access services through more formal settings by using the Wallich Night Shelter.
* Ty Tarian - provides homeless women who are being exploited or are at risk of exploitation access to secure, female-only hostel accommodation with 24 hour support.

Homelessness Support Service – This service operated by the Councils Housing Options service will work to prevent and address homelessness by assisting families and vulnerable individuals to prepare for, access and relocate to accommodation in the private rented sector.

Youth Mentoring - This Council provided service will enhance the new Employment Service due to commence in April, assisting young people who are furthest from the workplace to and with housing issues

1. **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).**

Health is represented at the RCC and at the local planning groups for each area.

The Vale commissioned a joint service with Health in 2012. This scheme is a six bed dispersed scheme for people with substantive mental health issues, and is jointly funded by Health and the Supporting People Programme Grant. This has been held up as a model of good practice and the Vale have presented the project at the Supporting People Information Network and other Local Authorities have shown an interest in adopting a similar scheme.

The Vale has commissioned a new service in partnership with Social Services for young people with chaotic lifestyles. This is a two bed static support scheme aimed at young people who cannot reside in general needs young people’s supported accommodation due to the complexity of their needs.

The Vale is working closely with Social Services in readiness for the retendering of their Learning Disability schemes.

The Vale Supporting People Programme commissions a twelve unit mental health floating support scheme to work with health and social services, providing support in the community for people involved with the Community Mental Health Team. The Floating Support Service was procured following close working with Social Care, Mental Health, Health and landlord representatives.

Social Services and Health are represented on the Vale’s local planning group and make up the membership of several of the steering groups for access to Supported Accommodation.

Cardiff has always worked closely with colleagues in Social Services particularly in respect of joint commissioning the Supported Living Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. They are currently working closely with Children’s Services and Youth Services as they consider the potential for recommissioning services for young people, bringing together a number of services and funding streams.

Cardiff seconded a worker from Health to look at the needs, particularly the mental health needs, of people in the frontline hostels and supported housing provision to inform future commissioning of these services.

Cardiff is in the process of recommissioning Gender Specific services including Domestic Abuse services and is working very closely with a number of statutory agencies bringing together a variety of funding streams.

Cardiff is also working closely with Children’s Services in their commissioning of young person’s services to ensure the services are effective for the client group.

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

The local authority cabinet members of the RCC are also members of the Regional Planning Board providing a strong strategic link between the two boards, and ensuring that the Vale and Cardiff RCC is meeting its objectives under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The RCC is mapping the various boards to ensure that the RCC has appropriate representation from all key partners in order for it to function effectively.

In the Vale the Supporting People Programme is included in the Wellbeing Action Plan for the Public Service Board. The Poverty Alignment Group (PAG) in the Vale sits under the Public Service Board and therefore provides regular updates to the board via this mechanism. The PAG has been working closely together in order to ensure that the leads for the other poverty prevention programmes have a good understanding of each of the programmes in readiness for flexible funding if this goes ahead in 2019. As a result of previous work with this board the Vale piloted a programme to work with clients receiving support from the other poverty action programmes during 2017/18 and have now commissioned this scheme.

The RCC’s Local Health Board representative is the RCC’s formal link to the Substance Misuse Area Planning Board. Other RCC members are represented on the Substance Misuse Area Planning Board’s commissioning group. This ensures a more holistic approach to sharing strategic needs data and establishing priorities for clients that are shared across the Supporting People and Substance Misuse databases.

The Local Health Board representative is the RCC’s link to the Regional Dementia Taskforce, ensuring that there is a shared understanding of the services available across the two programmes, and any strategic needs data can be shared to make services more effective

Cardiff is a flexible pathfinder authority and has kept the Vale and other RCC members up to date with the way Cardiff are implementing this new way of working.

**6. RCC appraisal**

All Members, Deputies, Co-opted Members and Advisors were asked to give their opinions on the Vale and Cardiff RCC. The following is a summary of the responses received.

1. **What has worked well for the Vale and Cardiff RCC during this reporting period? (April 2017 to March 2018)**

RCC members felt that meetings had become a lot less contentious and more focussed, in part due to development sessions that have helped to break down barriers between members. They also saw the meetings as a good opportunity to be kept up to date on legislative and policy changes as well as sharing good practice and discussing different approaches to both historic and emerging pressures from people working within different sectors. RCC members also thought that the meetings were more productive and a good opportunity to discuss opportunities for joint commissioning, including being able to discuss the reasons some opportunities didn’t move forward.

1. **What barriers do you think the RCC has faced during this reporting period? (April 2017 to March 2018)**

Overwhelmingly the main issue raised by RCC members was the lack of regional commissioning, although some members did comment that this had been explored this year, which they acknowledged was progress on previous years. Members saw the main barriers to regional commissioning as the competing priorities of the local authorities in the region, as well as non aligned commissioning timetables. Other barriers raised included, working less closely with Welsh Government than in previous reporting periods, lack of certainty regarding the future of the Supporting People funding, the need for a clear communication strategy between the RCC and Regional Provider Forum (RPF), changes in key personnel in the Supporting People Teams as well as the RCC membership and lack of service user involvement.

1. **What would help the RCC to develop further?**

The main themes to come from this question were that more strategic direction is needed from the commissioning partners and Welsh Government. RCC members felt that a clearer understanding of the role and purpose of the RCC would make meetings more productive and useful, and allow them to interrogate the data collated by the local authorities more efficiently. A task and finish group has been appointed to consider the role of the RCC and the priorities it should concentrate on for the next reporting period as a result of this concern. Other developments that members would like to see going forward are a better way of measuring outcomes given the delay in a new outcomes framework from Welsh Government; more development sessions concentrating on specific themes identified by members; stronger links with the RPF and direct service user representation at the RCC.

1. **What do you think the RCC should be focussing on progressing over the coming year?**

The views of RCC members were varied on this matter, but the main consensus was that the RCC should focus on effective collaboration, including exploring opportunities for joint commissioning, scrutinising SP spend; sharing resources as well as good practice and working towards a common goal. Other priorities raised by members were service user involvement, highlighting outcomes, looking for ways to build therapeutic interventions into support services and mapping how pathfinder plans are aligning to public service board plans.

1. **Any other reflections or comments:**

Most of the comments were around the fact that Cardiff is a flexible pathfinder local authority and the Vale is not. Some members were concerned that this would make regional working more difficult, while others thought that the RCC could be a useful scrutiny mechanism for the work of the flexible funding. Further direction from Welsh Government on flexible funding was also called for.

**Governance/Housekeeping**

**a. Does the RCC have an up to date Memorandum of Understanding signed by all members? No**

**b. Do all RCC members have an up to date Declaration of Interest form? YES**

**c. Has the RCC published its latest regional Spend Plan and Spend Plans for each local authority in the region? NO (with translation services)**

**d. Has the RCC published its latest Regional Strategic Plan? YES**

**e. Has the RCC published last years Annual Review Report? NO (with translation services)**

 **f. Has the RCC published the minutes of its meetings? YES**