



**Vale of Glamorgan Public Services Board – Financial Inclusion Group**

**13<sup>th</sup> October 2016**

**Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, Barry.**

**Present:**

Ceri Morgan (CM) – Cardiff and Vale Citizen’s Advice (Chair)  
 Fran Howorth (FH) – VoGC, Performance and Policy  
 Lloyd Fisher (LF) – VoGC, Performance and Policy  
 Alison Wood (AW) – VoGC, Money Advice  
 Nicola Eynon (NE) – VoGC, Money Advice  
 Rhianon Urquhart (RU) – Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team  
 Elyn Hannah – (EH) VoGC, Benefits

Ian Sharpe (IS) – Cardiff and Vale Credit Union  
 Joanna Parks (JP) – Newydd Housing Association  
 Karen Thomas (KT) – United Welsh Housing Association  
 Karen Thomas (KT) - DWP  
 Colin Davies (CD) – Barry Communities First  
 Michael Halloran (MH) – Wales and West Housing Association

**Apologies**

Giavanna Inwood – Communities 4 Work  
 Lisa Hordy (LiH) – Hafod Housing Association  
 Beatrice Roberts (BR) – Cardiff and Vale Care and Repair

Deborah Roberts (DR) – Newydd Housing Association

	<b>Action</b>
<p><b>1. <u>Welcome and Introductions</u></b></p> <p>Introductions were made and apologies noted.</p>	
<p><b>2. <u>Note of Meeting 22<sup>nd</sup> July and Matters Arising</u></b></p> <p>Minutes were agreed as an accurate record.</p>	

<p><b>3. <u>Standing Item: Benefits General Update</u></b></p> <p>EH provided an update on a range of benefit issues including the Bedroom Tax, Benefit and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs).</p> <p>EH gave an overview of the number of Vale residents affected by the Bedroom Tax and gave a breakdown of numbers affected by landlord and of those affected by a 14% reduction in Housing Benefit (1 extra bedroom) and those affected by a 25% reduction (2 or more extra bedrooms). It was noted that the numbers affected are reducing slightly each quarter.</p> <p>In relation to DHPs, it was advised that from the Vale’s central government allocation of £233,606.00, as of 6th October 2016, £141,124.49 has been allocated. We have currently spent 60% of our allocation and it is expected that we will exceed our allocation due to the reduced Benefit Cap which comes into effect in the Autumn.</p>	
<p><b>4. <u>Local Housing Allowance Discussion</u></b></p> <p>FH informed the group that discussions on this topic have been on-going for the last two months, with a briefing note advising of the latest position in relation to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) attached to the agenda.</p> <p>As agreed at the previous meeting, to ensure a consistent approach is taken across the Vale, the Council’s Operational Manager for Public Housing Services, Mike Ingram will bring together a task group of RSLs and the Council’s housing teams to discuss the strategic approach particularly in relation to under 35s.</p> <p>It was agreed that Mike’s contact details would be circulated with the minutes (see below).</p> <p>Mike Ingram: <a href="mailto:MIIngram@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk">MIIngram@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk</a></p>	
<p><b>5. <u>In-Work Poverty in Barry Discussion</u></b></p> <p>CD gave a presentation on the role of the Communities First programme and the issue of the in-work poverty in Barry. It was advised that the presentation was prepared prior to the Welsh Government announcement that the Communities First Programme may be phased out in favour of a new approach.</p> <p>CD emphasised that there are already a number of employment support projects in place, the most high profile of which being the Communities4Work programme. There are no Vale specific figures for in-work poverty as it is not an easy issue to uncover, however it is a known issue to those working on the ground in community first areas. CD gave a brief overview of a number of projects run or hosted by Communities First focused upon helping people into</p>	

work. CD clarified that the Communities4Work programme is restricted by the Communities First post-code area, it is possible however to refer into the programme through the triage worker or to check if a person is eligible through utilising the online post-code checker. CD outlined the Parents Childcare and Employment (PACE) programme which is focused on supporting parents into employment and the ESF programmes Inspire2Achieve and Inspire2Work which are not restricted by the Communities First boundaries.

CD opened the floor for a discussion on how partners currently work to address in-work poverty and possible ways of working in the future.

CM echoed Communities First's experience of in-work poverty, the Bureau is seeing an increase in the number of clients monthly who are working over 30 hours a week. CM explained that different client groups are accessing services differently, with a lot of people using the recently launched Citizens Advice online portal chatting from their desks on lunch breaks. CM also highlighted that Jane Clay was currently exploring the issue and trying to develop data around in-work poverty in the Vale.

KT explained that United Welsh work to support employment and training opportunities for tenants, but have a small housing stock across the Vale. A Community Investment team works with tenants to improve access to training opportunities and jobs.

CD enquired if any programmes in particular have worked in the past.

KT explained that a similar approach was being taken to that of Communities First but on a smaller scale with a focus around construction training and recruitment classes for tenants and the provision of in-house apprenticeships. There is a need however to improve collaborative working with other partners. CD agreed that it is often hard to know who is doing what in terms of provision.

KT raised that it is often an issue that provision of schemes is reliant upon funding streams which limits to a degree who can be involved in a project. CD clarified that the ESF funded projects are available across the whole of the Vale and should be able to provide support to partners. Thought will be given to how to convey message out to partners about the potential for support through ESF projects.

KT explained that current upskilling work is on-going through the Job Centre and through work coaches. Rural transport is often raised as an issue in Job Centres.

FH highlighted that the Creative Rural Communities team have undertaken a Community Asset Mapping project in St Athan, which has involved a large engagement project with the community to find out which community assets were important to residents. A major theme that has arisen from the project is adequate access to, and links between public transport services.

CD

CD stated that there is an increasing focus in Job Centres through Universal Credit to encourage those in temporary employment into full-time employment. KT explained that there are currently 9 people in Barry on Universal Credit being supported through the upskilling project to move into longer term employment. Across the UK 39% of those claiming Universal Credit are in some kind of employment.

CD noted that the Job Centre is very much a focal point and offers an excellent opportunity to disseminate information; particularly through the weekly communications meetings on a Wednesday. KT explained that these are open meetings with all partners welcome; invitations have already been extended to RSLs.

EH proposed that there may be potential for the Benefits team to signpost customers to partners and to employment support services through the leaflets and other literature they regularly send out to clients.

AW explained that the money advice service is currently seeing an increase in the number of homeless people working who are not entitled to support.

CD thanked partners for their contributions to the discussions. It was advised that a briefing note is currently being prepared to advise partners on how they can refer to the various ESF funded projects and who is eligible.

## **6. Food Agenda Update**

RU gave a presentation on updating on the development of the food agenda and charter in the Vale of Glamorgan.

It was highlighted that the Food Vale network has been established with the aim of improving access to and availability of good food in the Vale of Glamorgan which is affordable. The Food Vale steering group is a working title, and the first meeting of the group will be held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2016. An Action Plan is in development and the group will work on refreshing a Food Assets mapping exercise that was previously undertaken. The group will also work towards the submission of a Sustainable Food Cities award application, this will involve the group:

- Establishing an effective cross-sector food partnership
- Embedding healthy and sustainable food in policies
- Developing and delivering a food strategy and action plan
- Developing and producing a food charter

RU also gave an overview of the School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) that ran over 3 weeks during the Summer Holidays in the Vale of Glamorgan.

<p>Held at two sites in the Vale, Barry Comprehensive School and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive, the programme was targeted at children aged between 11 and 12 in the transition year between primary and secondary school. Children were provided with 2 meals a day alongside food nutrition advice, educational play, sporting activities, and creative play. As part of the programme for children, parents and siblings were invited into the project for a family meal and nutrition workshops every Thursday. DeCIPHER, a Cardiff University research team conducted a larger scale evaluation of the project with results available in November 2016.</p> <p>RU highlighted that teachers have reported that those children involved in the project have been more focused and engaged when coming back into school following the holidays.</p> <p>KT raised that it is often found that tenants struggle in the summer and Christmas holidays financially. RU explained that the SHEP programme is also focused on targeting parents, with opportunities for talks and workshops on a number of different issues. This was also achieved through food banks through the summer, with children and parents receiving advice as well as food parcels.</p>	
<p><b>7. <u>Financial Inclusion Strategy</u></b></p> <p>FH highlighted that following initial momentum, changes in the membership of the group in addition to increasing work pressures across members of the group has resulted in a loss of focus in delivering the strategy. As a result the Strategy, and accompanying Action Plan has been reviewed. The PSB will now be asked to agree the change and work to deliver the strategy will begin when a new permanent chair is in place for the group.</p>	<p><b>FH</b></p>
<p><b>8. <u>Public Services Board Update</u></b></p> <p>FH reminded the group that this partnership leads on one of three workstreams of the PSB’s Delivery Plan, “mitigating the impact of poverty”. A report is taken to the Board twice a year on the progression of the delivery plan, with the last report taken in May. The next update report is due in December and we will be asking for updates from the group.</p> <p>The group were reminded that the Strategy and Partnership team are currently drafting the Well-being Assessment; this is a large piece of work with the publication of a Well-being Plan by 2018. Partners were presented with a report on the findings from the economic well-being aspects of a survey that was undertaken during the summer as part of the work.</p> <p>FH will circulate the Well-being Assessment’s detailed overview document following its sign of by the PSB.</p>	<p><b>FH</b></p> <p><b>FH</b></p>

<p data-bbox="285 239 596 271"><b>9. <u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="189 320 1262 389">FH advised that this would be the last meeting of the group for the year, however FH and LF are available to circulate information to the group if needed.</p> <p data-bbox="189 436 1023 468">Dates of future meetings of the group will be circulated shortly.</p>	<p data-bbox="1289 309 1326 340"><b>FH</b></p>