

## MINUTES OF MEETING

### SUPPORTING PEOPLE LIASION GROUP MEETING

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2010

#### Attendees:

Delyth Thomas (Chair)	Hafod Care
Pam Tom	Vale of Glamorgan Strategy & Supporting People Manager
Georgia Blackmore	Vale of Glamorgan Supporting People Team
Lisa Doe	Vale of Glamorgan Homeless & Advice Manager
Stephen Brattan-Wilson	Vale of Glamorgan Homeless Prevention Officer
Audrey Broome	Foundation Housing
Zoe Gauci	Foundation Housing
Julie Jones	Gofal Cymru
Kath Hudd	Gofal Cymru
Jen Garroway	Hafod Care
Cath Gallivan	Llamau
Paul Thomas	Llamau
Chris Evans	United Welsh Housing Association
Paul Baker	Gwalia Care and Support
Rhydian Wiggins	Gwalia Care & Support
Gurjit Kaur	Atal Y Fro
Kay Quinn	Atal Y Fro
Karen Berry	Taff Housing
Sarah O'Keefe	Wales and West Housing Association
Lee Powell	The Wallich
Laura Eddins	Vale of Glamorgan Social Services
Richard Cox	Innovate Trust
Phil Jones	Inroads
Gary Cartwright	Inroads
Amber Constant	Flying Start Vale of Glamorgan
Dave Witherall	Newydd Housing Association

#### Apologies:

Jo Carter	Newydd Housing Association
Martine Otton	Foundation Housing
Kim Hughes	Hafan Cymru
Karen Baker	Innovate Trust
Mark Davies	Children & Young Peoples Partnership, VOGC
Gary Brown	Llamau SAFEhouse
Glen John	Vale of Glamorgan Learning Disabilities
Erica Reed	Gwalia Care & Support

#### Minutes.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and agreed.

## **Matters Arising**

### **Presentation – Mark Robinson – Housing Debt Helpline Wales (presentation attached)**

Mark Robinson explained that the Housing Debt Helpline Wales (HDHW) was set up by the WAG to provide a telephone helpline service to the public. Mark informed the group that over 100,000 clients were given advice last year via the HDHW. The group were advised that advice is mainly via the telephone however in certain circumstances face to face appointments can be made. The process is a client will firstly speak to a Helpline Advisor who will gain all information needed. A telephone appointment will then be arranged within the next 48 hours where a realistic budget will be created between the advisor and the client. This will list all benefits / income information with advice on insurances etc to ensure best value for money.

All clients are assessed individually and a tailored plan is created for each client.

There are specialist support teams in place with debt management and a dedicated welfare benefits team.

Mark advised the group that there were over 270 debt relief orders made in the last month.

### **Questions.**

Kath Hudd asked if the helpline contact debtors to arrange payments on behalf of the client. Mark advised that the helpline currently operates a token offer payment for 6 months free of charge.

Mark also advised that for people who are self employed a full self employed budget is created with the client to see if any drawings can be made from the business to help with personal debts.

Kay Quinn asked if the Helpline has been inundated with calls. Mark advised that the Helpline is able to cope with high volumes of calls and can guarantee an appointment within 48 hours.

A question sent in prior to the meeting: It was asked if the helpline can provide advice to people without housing related debt but other debt. Mark informed the group that if the clients debt would lead to them getting into rent or mortgage arrears then they would be able to provide advice, but clients must state at the start that they are in danger of getting into housing debt to be accepted.

Audrey Broome asked if there is any extra provision for people who are vulnerable or with learning disabilities. Mark advised that the Helpline has an arrangement with CAB Cymru to ensure there is assistance for clients who need it.

Lisa Doe asked who funds the Helpline. Mark informed the group that funding is through the IVA and Equity Release companies involved. It is also a registered charity so they are able to reclaim charitable donation tax.

Pam Toms asked if the client has a support worker, is the Helpline able to liaise with the support worker. Mark advised that this would be fine with written consent or if it was during a telephone call the client could give consent over the phone.

### **Presentation – Kay Quinn – Atal Y Fro (presentation attached)**

Kay Quinn gave a presentation on the new direction of Atal Y Fro (formerly Women's Aid). Kay explained that the organisation still belongs to the Welsh Women's Aid group.

Kay stated it was obvious for them to work around prevention and a pilot was created for 5-19 year olds which has been rolled out to schools within the Vale.

Kay informed the group that within the Vale of Glamorgan there are only 5 refuge bed spaces available. Atal Y Fro are currently looking to develop a new refuge and are in discussions about this with the Vale of Glamorgan Council and UWHA.

Atal Y Fro are using the Early Intervention Programme model from New Zealand (detailed within the attached presentation).

Kay stated how Atal Y Fro wanted to encourage families to make use of the service so the name was changed as people felt 'Women's Aid' was a service for women only. Kay informed the group that Atal Y Fro will work with a family as long as the male takes responsibility. A 6 week plan is created for the family by a support worker from Atal Y Fro.

Kay stated that the results from New Zealand and Australia are encouraging.

With regards to early intervention Kay stated they have seen a rise in 15 year olds abusing their mothers and a children's service has been developed with 1-1 counselling available with volunteers and a professional worker.

'Breaking the Cycle' started in Barry Comprehensive School and it has been found that this is a good way of getting the message across to school children. Teachers have explained that they have found it difficult to approach children about this subject and therefore Atal Y Fro are currently developing a programme for teachers to give them confidence to talk to the children and families.

### **Questions:**

Delyth Thomas stated it was very encouraging to know there are new innovative services within the Vale of Glamorgan.

Phil Jones asked if there are any anger management courses available via Atal Y Fro. Amber Constant advised that if there is a child under the age of 4 then this can be accessed via the Flying Start project. The client does not have to be resident with the child. However, there is a catchment area for this service (Cadoxton area, Oakfield School are, Skomer Road right through to Coldbrook and Barry Road).

Kay however advised that if Atal Y Fro are contacted they may be able to support people outside of the Flying Start area to access assistance.

### **Presentation – Chris Evans – United Welsh HA (presentation attached)**

Chris firstly circulated a copy of UWHA's service standards for both Supported Housing and Temp Accommodation (copies attached).

Chris explained that UWHA work with 38 support providers and the issue had been raised why the organisation did not have any accommodation service standards. The Welsh Audit Office was about to carry out an assessment of UWHA so it was decided to develop service standards for all accommodation. A working group was created consisting of UWHA staff and support provider representatives who firstly carried out research into HA service standards. The group found there were hardly any service standards for Housing Associations and it took around 18 months to identify the main categories. The standards then went for full consultation and were finally adopted by UWHA.

### **Questions:**

The following question was sent prior to the meeting:

What is your view on clients evicted from supported accommodation due to rent arrears? Do you feel that more should be done to assist the client during their tenancy to ensure that arrears are not accrued?

Chris explained that UWHA try to ensure that everything possible is done to prevent eviction. However, it is a sad truth that some tenancies do fail and UWHA are not able to develop a policy to say that they won't evict tenants.

Chris went on to explain that the UWHA Hostel run a fruit and veg co-op to encourage tenants to buy cheaper food to help people on low incomes, and also suggested that in the next SPLG meeting someone from UWHA could come to talk about the co-op and the time banking scheme.

### **Julie Jones Gofal Cymru, Aspire Project.**

Julie explained that the Aspire Project is delivering the STEPS program to tenants. It is a training programme similar to life coaching in order to achieve goals and aspirations and to improve confidence. The first programme starts next week within the Newydd office which will run for 7 weeks for approximately 2 hours a week.

The programme will be run again in September and January. The programme was initially for Newydd tenants only, however this has now been opened up

to all tenures and the programme is not only for people with mental health needs.

Julie gave out information on the programme and asked people to contact her for more information if needed:

Julie Jones 01446 742941

[juliejones@gofalcymru.org.uk](mailto:juliejones@gofalcymru.org.uk)

### **Questions:**

Delyth Thomas asked the capacity of the programme. Julie explained that the capacity is 10 clients. Three courses have been ear marked to start 24/06/2010, September/October 2010 and January 2011. So far there are 6 clients signed up for the first course so plenty of vacancies.

### **Training Opportunities or Feedback**

Kay Quinn informed the group that Domestic Abuse training is available once again at levels 1, 2 and 3 free of charge. To book onto the training please contact Kate Hood on 01446 704850.

### **Questions**

Audrey Broome asked how to refer someone to the Newydd Floating Support units. PT explained to the group that voids were occurring in the Newydd Floating Support units so it was agreed as a pilot to open up the units to the partners of Homes4U. Details on how to refer to each of these projects can be found within the Supporting People Service Directory on the Vale of Glamorgan Council website.

Kath Hudd asked if these units are available to people who are privately renting. PT explained that initially she wanted the units to be open across all tenures, however as Newydd are the Managing Agents of the units they were only happy to open up to the Homes4U partners to begin with and so far no voids have occurred.

PT went on to explain that an additional £100,000 has been provided to the Supporting People Team from WAG and from this the Planning Group agreed to fund an extra 18 units of generic floating support for people who are privately renting or owner occupiers. If the spaces are not able to be filled, the scheme will open up to other tenures.

The Supporting People commissioning strategy has now been written and agreed by Cabinet and it is hoped that next month it will go out to tender to set up a Preferred Provider List. The 18 units of floating support will be commissioned using this list with the Council as the Accredited Support Provider. Also the TESS scheme will be commissioned from this list when the existing contracts end on 31/03/2011.

Jenny Prince is the new Housing Strategy Officer who will be working on the Preferred Provider List.

### **Suggestions for Future Meetings**

Delyth Thomas will provide a presentation on Hafod's Service User Participation.

Annette Kerr from Taff Housing will also provide a presentation on Service User Participation.

A representative from UWHA will provide information on the food bank and time banks schemes.

### **AOB**

PT thanked all who contributed to the Service User Participation Framework. The Supporting People Team will be putting together an action plan which will be circulated in the next few weeks.

### **Chair of next meeting, time and date.**

Kay Quinn, Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2010, 2:30pm in Committee Room 1, Civic Offices.