

## MINUTES OF MEETING

### SUPPORTING PLEOPE LIAISON GROUP MEETING

THURSDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2010

#### Attendees:

Kathy Belle (Chair)	Pen Yr Enfys
Pam Toms	Vale of Glamorgan Strategy & Supporting People Manager
Tony Jacques	Head of Public Housing Services
Donna Kenny	Supporting People Contract Officer
Irene Thomas	Supporting People Project Officer
Paul Bevan	Reach
Sarah O'Keeffe	Wales and West Housing Association
Chloe Green	Llamau (Safehouse)
Yvette Tyndall	Newlands
Paul Baker	Gwalia Care & Support
Gary Cartwright	Inroads
Abigail Apollonio	Occupational Therapist – Social Services
Debbie Regan	Hafod Care
Richard Ellis	Social Services
Jo Perkins	Vale of Glamorgan Council – Direct Payments Officer
Lucia Gillespie	Illegal Money Lending Unit
Kim Hughes	Hafan Cymru
Lisa Doe	Vale of Glamorgan Homeless & Advice Manager
Karen Berry	Taff Housing
Lee Powell	The Wallich
Kath Hudd	Gofal Cymru
Richard Cox	Innovate Trust
Jane Billings	Adult Placement
Jennifer Garroway	Hafod Care
Neil Burrige	Turning Point
Amos Geary	Hostel Warden
Leigh Caveney	Housing Manager
Rob Thompson	Vale of Glamorgan Homes4u Manager
Sarah Bartlett	Foundation Housing
Christine Evans	United Welsh Housing Association
Kate Slowinski	Firebrake Wales

#### Apologies:

Fez Fernandez-Bennett	A4E Pathways to work
Cath Gallivan	Llamau
Paul Thomas	Llamau
Amy Forsyth	Safer Vale Partnership

Glen John	Learning Disabilities Team Manager
Kay Quinn	Atal Y Fro
Linda Etheridge	Hafan Cymru
Marijke Jenkins	Adult Placement
Janis Bell	Taff Housing Association
Rhoda Emlyn-Jones	Cardiff City Council
Darren Purvis	Gwalia Care & Support
Delyth Thomas	Hafod Care
Kate Hood	Llamau
Rachel Dickens	Social Services
Sandra Colston	Social Services

### **Minutes:**

There were no objections to the last minutes. However, if anyone has any comments, please contact the Supporting People Team on tel; 01446 709793 or email: [supportingpeopleteam@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:supportingpeopleteam@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

### **Presentation- Tony Jaques, Head of Public Sector Housing – Housing Stock Transfer ‘What is it’**

Tony gave a presentation on Housing Stock Transfer and what it means for Tenants. He explained that the transfer will only go ahead if the majority of tenants vote ‘Yes’. If the stock transfer takes place then the new organisation will be known as Heritage Coast Homes. He informed the group that Tenant Consultation has started and a formal offer document has been developed and will be sent to tenants in January 2011. The offer document will contain all the promises that Heritage Coast Homes would be legally obligated to achieve in the event of a transfer of the housing stock. **(Please see attached presentation).**

### **Questions:**

Abigail Apollonio (OT Department) asked when a grant is needed for adaptations, where would the money come from.  
Tony informed the group that Housing Department currently provides funding for adaptations and there will be sufficient funding built into the Business Plan.

### **Presentation – L Emmons & Lucia Gillespie – Illegal Money lending**

A presentation was given by the illegal money lending team to make the group aware of loan sharks operating in the area.  
The team was set up three years ago to tackle loan sharks and support those who fall victim to illegal money lending.  
Lucia explained that illegal money lenders are unlicensed and operate outside the law. These loan sharks not only take advantage of vulnerable borrowers but also bring disrepute to legitimate lenders. A high percentage of loan sharks convicted to date have been female.

Consumers who may find themselves unable to access credit due to a poor credit history, an inability to manage finances or because their income is simply too low to provide reassurance, may resort to illegal money-lenders. Liz explained that they will often target families with disabilities, language limitations, learning difficulties, homeless etc.

The team asked the group if they could provide any information on clients who they suspect are victim to loan sharks, without breaching client confidentiality.

**Hotline number for Wales: 03001233311**  
**UK: 03005552222**

**Website: [www.direct.gov.uk/stoploansharks](http://www.direct.gov.uk/stoploansharks)**

### **Presentation – Maureen Neave (Benefit Manager)**

Maureen gave a presentation on the housing benefit changes and informed the group that there will be radical changes to the benefit system. These changes will apply to anyone making a new claim for housing benefit from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011. Anyone already claiming housing benefit may be affected by the amount of money they get towards their rent. No one will receive more than £26K in benefits. Some of the changes over the next few years includes:

- Weekly excess – the maximum £15 weekly excess that some customers can get will be removed.
- Removal of the five bedroom local housing allowance rate so that the maximum level is for a four bedroom property.
- Introduction of absolute caps so that local housing allowance cannot exceed weekly rates in any area.
- To reduce all local housing allowance rates to the 30 percentile figures.
- Single room rate currently applies to single people under the age of 25 living in accommodation that they rent from a private landlord. This will be extended to people aged under 35.
- Under 35's will no longer receive housing benefit based on one bedroom self-contained accommodation.

**(Please see attached presentation)**

### **Questions;**

Chloe (Llamau Safehouse) explained to the group that she currently deals with 16/17 years living in supported housing. She asked if housing benefit would be paid to under 35 year olds who are re-housed into social housing. Maureen informed the group that she thought that the local housing allowance would apply at the single room rate to all sectors when introduced.

### **Presentation – Amos Geary (Hafan Treharne Hostel)**

Amos gave a presentation on the hostel refurbishment and explained the reasons for carrying out the works.

Amos informed the group that temporary accommodation must reach certain standards (the homelessness suitability of accommodation (Wales) order

2006. A better living environment must be provided for residents and working environment for staff.

Plans of the internal works were presented to the group along with the changes to the building including facilities. Some of these facilities include:

- A lift will be installed and all residents will have their own bathroom.
- There will be five disabled accessible rooms.
- All residents will have their own fridge and food storage area.
- Communal room available for residents to use.
- There will be opportunities for providing educational facilities for residents and other awareness and life skills training.

The hostel is due to reopen the end of April 2011.

The Flying Start Project has agreed to visit the hostel and deliver services. He asked the group that any ideas/suggestions they have for the hostel, be forwarded to himself or Leigh Caveney. (Please see attached presentation)

[ageary@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:ageary@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)  
[lcaveney@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:lcaveney@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

### **Questions/Suggestions**

Paul Baker (Gwalia Care & Support) suggested a computer suite be set up for residents. Amos advised that they are currently looking at getting computers and have contacted libraries and Colleges for assistance. Also visits to other hostels have taken place to look at facilities they provide.

Paul Baker asked how long people are expected to stay at the hostel. Lisa Doe (Homeless Manager) advised they are there for up to 12 months.

Kim Hughes (Hafan Cymru) suggested surgeries be held at the hostel.

Leigh Caveney advised the group that the Housing Department has launched a money advice service which is available to all tenants.

Other suggestions included a Residents Group for current and former residents of the hostel.

Pam Toms explained to the group that there are no in-house support workers. The support to the hostel residents is provided by the Council's Tenant Support Scheme and this will continue when the hostel reopens.

## **Presentation -Kate Slowinski – FirebrakeWales**

Kate gave a presentation on fire safety. She explained Firebrake Wales is a small, national Welsh charity who work closely with The Welsh Fire Services. Their mission is to focus on the prevention of injuries and deaths in accidental fires in the home. **(Please see attached presentation).**

Kate advised that the main cause of a fire in the home is cooking appliances. Firebrake Wales can provide support and information to people and referrals for home fire safety check's can be sent to them. For more information please contact::

[kate@firebrake.org](mailto:kate@firebrake.org)

**tel: 01633 654000**

## **Questions:**

### **Pam Toms was asked to Provide an update on the retender process:**

Pam advised the group that people on the preferred support provider list have been notified. The team are still trying to set up an interview panel. Pam asked the group for any ideas for an independent member as VCVS were unable to do it.

Pam informed the group that the supporting people review advised Tariffs are to be abolished. The SPRG funding for Tess is currently amalgamated and divided between all units. Pam has spoken to WAG but they are unable to give guidance at this time about the date tariffs are being discontinued.

Pam has suggested that she may invite all those who are tendering to go through the figures beforehand to be sure they are aware what they will be paid. Pam advised if Providers do not want to tender for TESS based on the average tariffs, then existing providers will be sent a letter requesting the existing contracts be extended until WAG give further guidance on the ending of the tariffs.

There are no problems with the Staying Put Scheme or Independence Scheme as both services have 20 units therefore the tariffs are the same amount for each one.

**Pam was asked for initial thoughts on the review:**

Pam advised the group that the team are positive. There will be one funding stream which will be ring fenced, which is a very positive step forward.

The introduction of a multisectional group to administer Supporting People locally is also welcomed and is not much different from the Planning Group in the Vale as it has always included a voluntary sector member who represents the Vale Housing and Homelessness Forum to ensure that it is a transparent planning process.

Cross Boundary Work – the Vale currently work cross boundary but do not want to take away local services from local people. Redistribution may help in the Vale in future. The Vale along with other Supporting People Teams in Wales are awaiting further information from WAG on the timeframe for implementation of these changes.

**AOB**

None

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

Sarah O’Keeffe, Wales and West Housing Association