Let’s Keep on Supporting People, is the new campaign in Wales that has been set up to raise awareness of the Supporting People programme, the people who benefit, the preventative nature of the programme and how the funding is spent. The aim of the campaign is to secure continued investment in the Supporting People Programme Grant and ensure that people who are marginalised and at risk continue to be protected.

The ‘Let’s Keep on Supporting People’ campaign in Wales is being run by Cymorth Cymru and Community Housing Cymru.

Further information and a member resource pack can be found on the Cymorth Cymru and Community Housing Cymru web pages.


The Miller Review of the Transition Year was submitted to the SPNAB in September and its recommendations discussed. An action plan, has been drafted and agreed by the Minister, to address each of the reviews recommendations.
Meet Your RCC Member... I’m Chris Rutson, I work for United Welsh within the Thrive team providing supported housing and housing for older people as well as housing related support. My role focuses on policy, research, good practice and business opportunities. I have been a landlord representative on the Regional Collaborative Committee since it began. I was involved in the setting up of the new collaborative structures for the SPPG programme after the Aylward review and I am very proud of the Gwent RCC’s reputation for demonstrating that true coproduction brings results.

What was the last book you read?... The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher by Hilary Mantel!

What are your interests outside of work?... I like walking, camping and being outdoors. I sing in 2 choirs and spend lots of time with my family especially my 3 year old grandson.

What was your first job?... First Saturday job was working in a bakery/café. First full time job was as a housing officer, and I have stayed in housing and related services ever since.

Describe something that makes you happy?... Human kindness; in a rather cynical world it is wonderful how it still survives and truly makes the world go round.

If we came to your house for dinner, what would you prepare?.... If I had enough time and notice you would probably get one of my vegetarian Indian feasts with lots of different dishes.

If you could be anyone in the world, who would it be and why? ..... I honestly don't want to be anyone other than myself.

What is your favourite Spring thing to do?..... In good weather, a walk to enjoy all the colours of the spring flowers and blossom and making hot cross buns with my grandson.

What’s the best thing about being involved in the RCC?..... The best thing about being involved in the Gwent RCC is seeing people step outside of their organisational concerns to work in a genuinely collaborative way to make the best use of the resources we have for people living in Gwent.
New GNME Form to be used from APRIL 1st 2015!!

The GNME form continues to be an important tool for gathering data to inform the Supporting People needs assessment process. Information gathered from the GNME is analysed and included in the Local Commissioning Plans and helps to evidence gaps in existing supported housing provision. **Planning Officers have recently updated the Gwent Needs Mapping Exercise Form.** Please note that a new Gwent Needs Mapping Exercise (GNME) form is to be used from 1st April 2015. The new form is very similar to the current one, but the main changes are a result of standardising documentation so that it better reflects the Outcomes framework.

Needs Mapping Days will be arranged locally during May and June. Your views are crucial to contribute to the shaping of services across Gwent!! Dates will be circulated by your local team and please encourage people using services to attend to give their views.
Outcomes Returns for October 2014 to March 2015 are due for submission from providers on 15th April 2015. The following outlines an analyses of the April to September 2014 returns

* % demonstrates service users making positive progress or fully achieving their goals

I could not cope without support... ..... the support I receive is excellent.

Andy escaped an abusive relationship with his two young children leaving everything he owned behind.

With the support of Hafan Cymru, Andy has recently secured a permanent tenancy and now has full residency of his children.

Andy has been supported to claim various grants to furnish their new home and replace some of the belongings they left behind. Andy and his children are now looking forward to a short break to Butlins; awarded by the Family Holiday Association, he feels optimistic that he can provide a safe and happy future for his children.
Film Premiere  In recent years we have witnessed increasing numbers of referrals that relate to difficulties people are experiencing with debt; on a number of occasions investigation has revealed the presence of loan sharks and these instances seem to be becoming more common.

Working in partnership with the Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit we have commissioned a short film that highlights two typical stories of how people can be easily drawn into a debt spiral and offers assistance in terms of avoiding such situations and what to do if you find yourself in these circumstances.

We will be 'premiering' the film in the Maxine cinema in Blackwood on Monday 20th April, to maximise it's impact and invite as many people as possible who may come into contact with victims of loan sharks.

*If you are interested in attending the premiere please contact Tiffeny Davies on 01443 864591*

Service User Tender Panel  Caerphilly SP have just retendered the older persons floating support service and as part of the process, we worked with the 50+ Coordinator to organise a service user panel.

The individuals were selected from a variety of sources via the coordinator who facilitated meetings to explain the service required and to devise 4 questions to ask the prospective organisations tendering for the service.

The panel members included existing and previous service users as well as carers and partners of service users. The feedback from all has been really positive and we look forward to more service user panels in the future.
New Ways of Working

Thank you to all providers for their ongoing co-operation whilst new payment systems are introduced by MCCs SP team. Please get in touch if you require any training on these new procedures.

During recent reviews support workers have indicated that they would find a ‘Support Worker Forum’ really useful as this would enable them to share knowledge and best practice with other more experienced colleagues. A Forum could also be used to promote the range of SP services provided in Monmouthshire and the criteria/referral pathways whilst building good working relationships.

The SP team will circulate details once date and venue are arranged!

A new Online Submission tool is being trialled which we hope will be used to complete Outcomes, the GNME forms, and QMQ Questionnaires. We aim to have this up and running by April 1st with GNME submission the first to go live. We then hope to implement the online submission of outcomes and lastly Quarter 4 of the QMQ. The Team will contact providers to confirm the rollout of this with the link.

SPRINT – Upgrade will take place in July. All client information will be migrated to the new system and full training will be given.

Alan is in his 60s and had lived a turbulent and nomadic lifestyle on the streets for many years. He arrived in Abergavenny on foot after walking from Cornwall.

Upon reaching Abergavenny he realised he could go no further and entered the Abergavenny One Stop Shop. Following this initial contact he was referred to the Supporting People Gateway Team who conducted an assessment and allocated him to Gwalia Support. At this point Alan had no accommodation, no food, and no family or friends in Abergavenny who he could contact.

Following 6 months of intensive support work Alan now has a place he can call home. The Support team have helped Alan to challenge decisions around benefits and he is able to budget independently now that this has been addressed. A Discretionary Assistance Fund payment was also secured through his Support Worker and this has enabled Alan to purchase furniture for his flat, something he has never had.

Alan is settled in his new accommodation, has greater control over his finances, and through the Gateway Church he has built meaningful relationships within the community. The Gateway Church has also supported Alan to get some of the other essential items needed for his home. Alan is extremely grateful for all the support and assistance he has received. He feels that he has been able to achieve the unthinkable and puts this down to the support delivered by Gwalia through the Supporting People Programme. Going into the future Alan will continue to receive low level floating support from his housing provider United Welsh; he has Gwalia’s contact details and knows that he is able to drop in or give us a call if necessary.
REVIEW OF LONG-TERM MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Reviews are currently being undertaken of 9 supported housing schemes for people with long-term and enduring mental health problems. As part of these reviews, the Supporting People team has spoken to 34 service users across the 9 schemes. Some comments made by the service users about their support/support workers were:

“I like to live here and go shopping”
“I can live on my own and do things for myself”
“I can speak to staff if I am worried”
“Living here has kept me well”
“I get help with making all my doctor’s appointments”
“I feel more confident living here”

OUTCOMES COLLECTION
(1st Oct 2014 to 31st March)

In Newport, Outcomes information must be submitted by Friday April 17th. Please use the link below to submit any commencements of support, the most recent review of support and/or exits from your service, within the Outcomes collection period. A maximum of 2 submissions should be made for each service user for this collection period.

http://www.newport.gov.uk/_dc/static/SupportingPeopleOutcomes/outcomes.htm
Alcohol and Mental Health researching the gaps – Kieran Towler. Over the past six months I have been researching the gaps in alcohol and mental health services within Torfaen and looking at best practice in other areas of the UK. A full report has been drafted and some of the key points are summarised below:

The research confirms that there is a long way to go for people who have coexisting alcohol and mental health issues. Worryingly the proportion of respondents selecting excellent for entry to statutory services was very low ranging from 2% (statutory alcohol and mental health services) to 6% (statutory alcohol services).

There are pockets of good practice such as the Vanguard initiative in North Caerphilly which truly places people at the centre of their care, but also looks at how services are designed and work. It has recently been agreed that this project continues and expands to other areas in Gwent. They are now known as the LEAP team.

There is a need for greater joint care planning between alcohol and mental health services with the need to work from a person centred approach across all sectors. Frontline staff need training in approaches like alcohol brief interventions, mental health first aid and suicide prevention and this would assist staff to support people accessing services with increasingly complex needs leaving them better equipped to deal with situations as they arise.

The numbers of people accessing services with alcohol related brain injury is likely to increase in the future and so the need for greater information on these issues will be essential to ensure that early interventions and treatments are offered to individuals on a timely basis.

The report provides a number of recommendations across all sectors to assist people to be better prepared to deliver services to people with alcohol and mental health issues. The full report is likely to be available during the first two weeks of April.

Mobile Again: Elsie aged 94 recently raised during a support session that she was really frustrated that she was not able to go out on her own. Elsie was receiving support from Bron Afon’s Supported Living Team who support people to gain or keep their independence for as long as possible. Elsie and her support worker looked at all the possible options available for increasing her independence. Elsie decided that a mobility scooter may give her the freedom and independence that she desperately needed. They contacted a local mobility shop and arranged an appointment for a test drive. Elsie was given instructions on how to use the scooter and took it for a drive, she was confident driving and absolutely thrilled, immediately purchasing it upon return to the shop. Elsie has been able to resolve her mobility problems, gain access to the wider community and maintain her independence.

The impact of loneliness and social isolation on an individual’s health and wellbeing and the cost implications for health and social care services are well known. **SP funded services help alleviate loneliness, improve the quality of life of older people, and reduce dependence on more costly statutory services.**
With the removal of priority need from prisoners, and further developments in recent legislation (Housing (Wales) Act, Social Services & Well being (Wales) Act), as well as the practical changes in probation services, how we ensure the housing needs of prisoners (current and former) are met is a topical issue for providers and their partners throughout Wales. With new pathways being worked on by the Welsh Government and partners, this is an ideal time to gather together to review what has changed, what the challenges are, both now and in the future, and how we are all going to meet them.

Drawing together partners from across the sector, we will hear voices from local authority, provider and Welsh Government, about how the new approaches should work.

We will:
1. Consider challenges around assessment
2. Discuss how housing and homelessness work with the new social services legislation
3. Consider prevention duties on release
4. Look at resettlement plans and how they can work
5. Clarify who is responsible for which roles

This event will help you prepare for the coming changes in the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda.

For more information and to book, please email richardbarningham@cymorthcymru.org.uk

\[cymorth\]
connect • strengthen • influence
New Floating Support Service.

Reach’s Newid service began in January 2015 providing longer term, low level floating support initially for around 110 people. Many of these people, with learning disabilities, had formerly received the Reach Independent Living Service.

Newid will support individuals to develop existing skills and learn many new ones. It will support exploration of new social experiences and opportunity as well as assisting people to negotiate issues relating to their tenancies and income. Many of the people receiving support initially questioned the need for change and found the remit hard to comprehend. Why was this being done? Why did things need to change? People however are achieving really positive outcomes as a result of receiving support from the Newid team.

One long term music buff has started a Thursday night radio DJ slot. Another gentleman has began cooking their own food for the first time at the age of 52. Numerous educational, volunteer and employment opportunities have already been secured. Word is spreading of real beneficial changes to people’s lives and the positive results being produced. Good news travels fast and the understandable worries, relating to support changing, begin to fade. We hope for service expansion in future and information can be obtained via the Newport Supporting People Team on 01633656656 or floating.support@newport.gov.uk

Homelessness Legislation Partner Summits

The Housing (Wales) Act is built on principles of partnership and prevention, and places new duties on local authorities with regards to homelessness. Many Support Providers, Housing Associations and Local Authorities are looking for clarification, support and practical suggestions about how to respond to these changes.

Cymorth Cymru, Community Housing Cymru and the WLGA are holding three events, funded by the Welsh Government, looking at partnership and prevention. They will give an initial overview of the Act new duties and related developments in national policy. From this context they will examine solutions and best practice, and provide an interactive opportunity to develop an understanding of how organisations are expected to work together within the new framework.

The Welsh Government is clear that these events will be essential for all housing organisations which should be represented at the relevant event, and strongly encourages representatives from housing associations and support providers to attend. There is no cost involved to attend the event.

5th May – Glasdir, Llanrwst
6th May – Canolfan Gorseinon, Swansea
8th May – Orbit Centre, Merthyr Tydfil

For further information please contact Cymorth Cymru, Community Housing Cymru or the WLGA
If your home is hard to heat, call Nest

The Welsh Government’s Nest scheme is here to help you keep warm and save money on your energy bills. Nest is open to all householders in Wales and provides advice on saving energy, money management, fuel tariffs, and benefit entitlement.

In addition to free advice, if you own or privately rent your home and you or someone you live with receives a means tested benefit, you may be eligible for home improvements at no cost. These may include a new central heating boiler, loft insulation, or cavity wall and solid wall insulation.

Head of Nest, Lee Parry, said: “Nest offers a wide range of support and advice to help people who are struggling to heat their homes. Over the past three years we have provided advice to over 50,000 householders and installed energy saving improvements in over 13,000 homes, saving householders an average of £470 a year on their energy bills.”

If your home is hard to heat, please contact Nest on Freephone 0808 808 2244 for free advice and to see if you are eligible for energy saving home improvements, or visit www.nestwales.org.uk for more information.

Universal Credit update

On 16 February 2015 the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) began the national expansion of Universal Credit to the remaining areas across Great Britain.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has provided details of the first and second tranches of national expansion to local authorities and jobcentre areas. Universal Credit will roll out to new claims from single people, who would otherwise have been eligible for Jobseeker’s Allowance, including those with existing Housing Benefit and Working Tax Credit claims. Torfaen, Caerphilly and Newport will begin to deliver Universal Credit between April and July 2015.

It is anticipated that Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire will form part of the tranche three roll out between September 2015 and April 2016.

Further information and updates are provided on the Gov.UK website: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-national-expansion
**Liam** was released from Prison after serving two years in custody, he was released into Probation approved premises as he did not have an address to return to upon release. After being in the approved premises for three months he was then placed in a B&B, this is when I first met Liam.

Liam advised that he would need help to set up utilities and organise bills because he had never held his own tenancy before. He advised that although his family were very supportive and able to help a little; he would be unable to furnish his own property. We discussed day to day activities and how Liam would in the future keep himself busy throughout the day. Liam would like to do his fork lift licence and achieving this would be one of his longer term goals.

Liam has recently secured his own accommodation. He has been able to furnish the flat with funding received from the Discretionary Assistance Fund Wales, a Homestarter kit from Gwalia and items received from his family. Liam is becoming more confident and feels that his life can now move forward. He has recently passed his theory test and is starting to learn to drive; he is also now looking for work. Liam is looking forward to a bright and positive future and putting his offending behind him.

**Jamie** is severely epileptic and lives independently in his own home.

Jamie works for a large utility company but has been on sick leave for the last 3 months as his seizures and incontinence had become worse.

His mum lives in Spain and was needing to consider moving back to Wales to take care of him as his condition was becoming more severe.

Jamie's financial situation was also becoming increasingly dire as his statutory sick pay was not enough to pay all his bills. His support worker worked with Jamie to seek help to regain control of his epilepsy and this is now regulated with different medication. His support worker also ensured that his benefits were maximised helping Jamie to apply for housing benefit, council tax benefit, DLA & ESA.

Jamie was helped to obtain telecare, epilepsy bed sensors and a key safe for emergencies with funding secured from social services.

As a result of support Jamie has been able to continue to live independently in his own home and the environment is now safe and secure.