

June 2015

GWENT
REGIONAL
COLLABORATIVE
COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REVIEW
OCTOBER 2013 – MARCH 2015

Working Together for People with Support



Supporting Independence in Gwent
Cefnogi Annibyniaeth yng Ngwent

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1. Executive Summary



Elke Winton, Gwent Regional Collaborative Committee, Chair

I am delighted to welcome you to the second Gwent Regional Collaborative Committee annual review report. Covering a longer period than the Committee's first one, I sincerely hope that this report pays homage to how the RCC has moved from strength to strength in establishing a clear direction for the Supporting People Programme across Gwent, and in identifying and progressing clear strategic priorities, projects and developments that have positively improved services for the people that receive them.

The introduction to the report provides a gentle reminder of the changed governance arrangements for the Supporting People Programme in Wales, and the role and function of RCCs reporting to the Supporting People National Advisory Board and the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty. For Gwent, the RCC is well represented in these arrangements, and members have embraced and proactively exercised the opportunity to have a voice and two-way communication with the SPNAB and the Minister, through the variety of Supporting People work streams and fora. As a result of this constructive dialogue, the RCC, Provider Forum and stakeholders across Gwent have been kept abreast of Programme changes, the direction of travel in Wales, and are more prepared for policy and resource implications.

Although it is hard to choose two examples amongst so many, section three of the report outlines two case studies that help depict some of the progress made by the Committee during the review period. The joint planning day in March 2014, was one of the first development sessions undertaken by the Gwent RCC. This separate meeting was set up as an alternative to the formal business meeting and was clearly a success. Members worked hard to review and evaluate the Gwent Supporting People planning framework and provision of services across the counties and were able to prioritise three target areas for further scrutiny and development. Development sessions are now embedded into the RCC meeting schedule, with attendance and input from Members and presenters bearing testament to their usefulness and relevance. Attendance at all meetings demonstrates how members are committed to working collaboratively and to also ensuring that accountability, scrutiny and probity are in place regarding the planning and commissioning of services across Gwent.

The second case study illustrates how 'getting to grips' with service user involvement in shaping and improving Supporting People services across the region was paramount. With a high client base of circa 20,000 service users, the Gwent RCC wanted to develop an interchangeable and flexible service user engagement framework that was meaningful and catered for a variety of diverse methods. This

resulted in the development of a menu of involvement and communication options that people can choose to opt in or out of, including social media, focus groups and service user incentives. This has allowed the RCC to harness genuine and practical involvement from service users, in turn helping to ensure that services are shaped and developed to improve the user experience.

The final section on service development reflects individual feedback from RCC members along a variety of themed questions. The feedback overall is optimistic, and there are a number of other excellent areas of work that have been successfully progressed. Co-production and collaboration is clearly demonstrated by the RCC, through the work of the various task and finish groups and the Gwent Health & Vulnerable Groups Health Action Plan health needs assessments.

However, there still remain areas for improvement, at a time when uncertainty still lingers in the air. Whilst the Gwent RCC has developed its own unique identity and is able to prioritise and set an agenda and strategy for the region, there are still concerns over key issues such as budget cuts, changing legislation, poverty and the introduction of the Welsh Government RCC Memorandum of Understanding.

These issues will undoubtedly remain top of the agenda for 2015 and beyond, but as RCC members and stakeholders reflect upon how these and other challenges have been faced so far, it feels that there is a genuine continued and building commitment to ensuring that in Gwent the Regional Collaborative Committee is 'working together for people with support!'

Rhian Stone



Rhian Stone, Gwent Regional Collaborative Committee, Vice Chair

It's been a great pleasure to be involved in the Gwent RCC and Provider Forum over the last year. The highlights for me have been the strengthening and maturing of relationships between all the parties involved in the Regional Collaborative Committee and the Supporting People world more broadly.

Within the context of austerity and ever increasing strain on the public purse, the RCC has demonstrated its value and its purpose, as intended by the Aylward review. The collaboration and commitment from all around the table has been heartening. Having been involved in Supporting People in Gwent since 2008, I was aware of the strength of the partnership between Local Authority Supporting People leads prior to the RCC being established. What has been new and exciting to see is the commitment from *probation, health, social services and community safety and providers – both short and long term providers and landlords*. This has allowed us to broaden the conversation and start to identify strategic links across agency

boundaries. This emerging collaborative behaviour will be essential in the years ahead as the Welsh settlement is undoubtedly reduced. I believe we have laid the foundations for the partners within the RCC to identify the solutions we'll need across boundaries to keep delivering for the people who desperately need our services in the coming years.

The dynamic relationship between the RCC and the Gwent Regional Provider Forum has also taken a hugely positive step during this reporting period. Thanks to the work of RCC, short and long term provider reps, the RDC and the Chair of the provider forum we have been able to create a dialogue between the forum and the Committee to feed in the views and concerns of providers and keep them informed of the issues the RCC is addressing. The provider forum has moved from being largely an information giving session, to one where participants have a strong voice and are actively involved in shaping the Supporting People agenda across Gwent.

And finally, the critical relationship and engagement with people who use the services within the programme has taken a major positive turn with the development of the service user website and portal. We hope to have this in place by autumn 2015 with the aim of increasing participation in and awareness of the programme. I hope next year when I am writing this introduction again I will be reflecting on the 'sea-change' in the participation of people receiving support so they are instrumental in shaping our services and seeing real improvements in their lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Stone'.

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 will cover the period from 1 October 2013 to 31 March 2015. It will provide 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 Gwent RCC. This report is a reflection of Gwent RCC attendees; each member, deputy member, co-opted member and advisor has been given the opportunity to input their views and recommendations on the Gwent 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 comply with robust and enforceable grant conditions.

Gwent comprises of the five local authority areas: Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen. It is covered by the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and Gwent Police.

3. Case studies

As part of the annual review, we are required to provide two examples of work that have been carried out by the Gwent RCC between October 2013 and March 2015. These include what went well, what barriers there were, what was achieved and any lessons learnt by the RCC.

Example 1: Development Day: 19th March 2014

The Gwent RCC recognised during 2013 that the formal RCC business meetings did not allow the group enough time to consider specific areas of the Supporting People Programme in the detail that was needed by the Committee.

The first development day was organised for January 2014 and during this annual reporting period further development days were arranged for the Committee during March 2014, Sept 2014 and March 2015. Each session focussed on particular areas of the programme; which enabled RCC Members to further develop their skills and understanding of the programme and gave the time and opportunity to focus, scrutinise and progress various pieces of work during this annual reporting period.

A brief overview of the development day for March 2014 is detailed as the first Gwent RCC case study example. The agenda for the day is attached as Appendix 1.

The focus of this development day was to agree and draft the Gwent RCC work plan. Committee members were provided with several papers prior to the meeting:

- An overview of the Gwent Supporting People Planning processes and cycle.
- A detailed overview of funding across local authority areas and the region by client group and provider.
- A client category “fact sheet” providing detailed information on the distribution of funding within each client category.
- An overview of papers from the January development session with information gained from the Co-production session and Debono Six Hats exercise that was undertaken by the group.
- A draft work plan to be updated and amended.

What went well?

- An overview of the Supporting People Planning process and cycle was delivered to the committee.
- Committee members were provided with a complete overview of the Supporting People Programme Grant funding for Gwent.
- Arranging a separate session to scrutinise the spend gave Committee members sufficient time prior to the meeting and during the meeting through the delivery of a further presentation to fully scrutinise and understand the variances in spend across Local Authority areas and the Supporting People client categories.

What were the barriers?

- Not all members were available to attend this session.
- Knowledge and understanding of this area therefore has developed and increased for some RCC Members and not for others.

What was achieved?

- An updated Gwent RCC planning cycle was developed and it was agreed that the planning cycle document would remain a live document that would be updated regularly. This would ensure that RCC members are able to link into the planning process throughout the year and enable them to attend local forums, needs mapping days and forward relevant data and information to enhance the Gwent Supporting People planning processes.
- It was agreed that a further development session would be arranged to enable members to consider the draft local and regional commissioning priorities and contribute to the development of the 2014 – 2015 Regional Commissioning Plan. This was arranged during September 2014; the event was held at an Extra Care scheme in Torfaen which also gave members the opportunity to visit another project which receives SP funding.
- It was agreed that as part of the planning cycle members needed additional time to scrutinise and consider the regional commissioning plan. An earlier, extended consultation period was agreed and this took place during November 2014.
- The detailed review of spend across the region enabled members to prioritise the following three client groups for further scrutiny:
 - Learning Difficulties
 - People with Substance Misuse issues (drugs and volatile substances) / People with Substance Misuse issues (alcohol)
 - People Over 55 with Support Needs / Alarm Services (including Sheltered / Extra Care)
- It was agreed that in order to commission regional / cross authority projects dedicated funding needed to be agreed. An action from this development session was for SP teams to discuss and agree with their local planning groups an amount of funding to be allocated for regional / cross authority projects. SP teams were able to agree additional funding which led to three regional projects either being extended or commissioned during 2014.
- A work plan for the Gwent RCC was drafted with the following overarching themes and objectives:
 - **Strategic Planning: Objective:** To improve the strategic planning processes to ensure a collaborative approach is taken.
 - **Resource Management: Objective:** To improve service delivery across Gwent.
 - **Involvement: Objective:** To raise the profile of the Gwent RCC across the region.

What lessons were learned?

- The session focussed on several large pieces of work. It would have been advantageous to have arranged separate sessions to focus on the distribution of spend across the spend plan and the planning cycle separately or to have arranged a morning and afternoon session.
- It was recognised that on-going regular additional sessions would need to be arranged in addition the formal business meetings to progress the work of the Gwent RCC.

Example 2: Service User Involvement

The importance of engaging with the people receiving services funded by the Supporting People Programme Grant has been fully recognised by all Committee members since the inception of the Gwent RCC and as part of the requirements of the Supporting People Programme Grant guidance.

Prior to this annual reporting period questionnaires and meetings were held with Service Users across Gwent and the information gathered was used to begin to develop the Gwent Service User Involvement Plan.

It was recognised early on by the Committee that the requirements to engage with the people who use Supporting People services as set out in the Supporting People Programme Grant guidance would be very difficult to achieve; and for one person to be the representative voice of 20,000 plus service users with very diverse needs and requirements risked diluting the current engagement opportunities and of becoming tokenistic and unsustainable.

Members have been committed to ensuring that further development of Service User engagement continues to provide people receiving Supporting People services a wide variety of opportunities to get involved; without losing sight of the many already well developed engagement opportunities that already exist across providers and Supporting People teams.

What went well?

- During this reporting period Planning Officers from each of the Gwent local authorities met and considered a wide variety of Service User Involvement frameworks from across the U.K.
- The group formally reported to the RCC recommending that a Co-production model is adopted and this was considered further at the 23rd January 2014 development session which was attended by Co-production Training who delivered a further co-production training session to the Committee.
- It was then agreed at the January 2014 RCC business meeting that Co-production would be the model used to develop service user involvement and engagement activities across Gwent.
- A task and finish group was established and has met during this reporting period on three occasions, two of these meetings were held with a number of

people who are receiving SP services and the group also included representatives from Public Health, LA Planning Officers, SP Leads, RCC Support Provider Reps and the RDC.

- The group considered the following documents: Gwent Service User Strategy, The Gwent Service User Involvement Principles, previous questionnaire results and the mapping exercise of current opportunities for involvement across Supporting People teams and providers.
- The following actions were agreed by the group and reported to the April 2014 RCC business meeting:
 - Produce a **short easy read** Gwent RCC service user framework.
 - Offer a **range of involvement methods/options** for people to get involved.
 - Develop a range of **communication methods** to raise the RCC profile and encourage service users to get involved inc leaflets, small info cards; Facebook; Twitter; SP newsletter etc.
 - Develop a **rewards strategy** including qualifications for those involved.
 - Ensure there is a **feedback loop** to update people on the impact of their input and **to thank them for their involvement**.
- Engaging with people through the mechanisms of social media has been progressed during the reporting period and agreement to fund the service user web site using Supporting People Programme grant was agreed by Welsh Government, which has enabled further progress to be made.

What were the barriers?

- It was recognised that we were unable to progress this piece of work with large numbers of service users, so an informal task and finish group approach has been used.
- A dedicated officer whose responsibilities are to work directly with service users would have enabled the RCC to progress this area of work further and quicker than currently they are able to achieve.
- A dedicated officer would have the capacity to spend more time meeting people, listening to their views and developing relationships to progress this piece of work in much more depth than current RCC members and RDC capacity allows.
- Lack of specific funding for service user engagement activities has held up the development of this area of work and will continue to do so. The RCC have recognised that engaging with people without being able to fund their travel costs and childcare, or provide rewards, drinks and lunches when they given up their time to engage with the RCC to give their views will continue to be a barrier.

What was achieved?

- An updated framework has been developed and the actions within the framework are being progressed.

- A competition was held with service users to determine the RCCs “Strapline” and the winning statement of “Working together for people with support” was announced by the SPNAB chair at the January 2014 RCC meeting.
- A Twitter account has been set up during the reporting period and this was widely publicised to support providers in order to inform the people who receive SP funded services of this development. The account has been publicised by email, at forums and through the newsletter “SP News in Gwent”. It is anticipated if funding can be agreed that information cards and leaflets will also be produced that would be displayed at projects or given to people who are receiving support; publicising social media and the importance of hearing their views.
- The development of the Gwent Homeless Healthcare Needs Assessment was a great success, due to the ongoing commitment and engagement of Public Health with the Gwent RCC. During the research process they were able to target their questionnaire to SP funded support providers who were then able to facilitate the questionnaire and interviews reaching some very vulnerably housed and street homeless individuals. 109 questionnaire responses were received and a film was made of people’s experiences. The development of an in depth homeless needs assessment and a set of recommendations to improve access to healthcare services for those who are in housing crisis or vulnerably housed has also been produced.

What lessons were learned?

- The development of a range of engagement activities to enable the diverse population of those receiving SP funded services to engage with the Supporting People teams and the RCC will also take time.
- The Gwent RCC are committed to ensuring that this activity does not become tokenistic or lose momentum by the lack of dedicated funding for engagement activities and of a dedicated officer to progress this work.
- Engaging with the people who receive services takes time, particularly when their needs and requirements are so wide and diverse.

4. 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 (word limit for each section of 300 - 500 words maximum):

a). What efficiencies have been introduced by RCCs to ensure that services are commissioned and run in a more effective way for end users particularly given the ongoing pressures on funding?

The RCC has recognised that its role in scrutinising local decision making processes will be increasingly important to ensure that the decisions undertaken locally continue to be transparent, fair and strategically relevant whilst ensuring that projects continue to meet the terms and requirements of the Supporting People Programme Grant Guidance.

During the early part of 2014 development sessions were held with the RCC and from these sessions the RCC identified the following client categories as a priority for further scrutiny as part of their work plan:

- People with Learning Disabilities
- Older Persons Services
- People with Substance Misuse Issues (Drugs and Alcohol)

People with Learning Disabilities

A task and finish group has been established to look at the services and funding provided to this client group. Best practice is being shared across local authority areas and a mapping exercise of services provided under this client category has been completed. Progress is being made across all Gwent local authorities to ensure that housing related support services provided to people with learning disabilities are based on need.

Savings and efficiencies are being achieved in some local authorities through the review and remodelling of services for people with Learning Disabilities and these will be used to mitigate future cuts to the SP budget.

Older Persons Services

Reports and updates have been provided to the RCC throughout 2014 highlighting the progress that is being made to implement the recommendations made in the Aylward Review 2010. Ensuring that services provided to older people are based on need and not tenure is progressing across Gwent and it is anticipated that all services provided will be based on need by April 2016.

Savings and efficiencies that have been achieved from the remodelling of older peoples services will be used by some local authorities to help mitigate the effects of a future reduction to the Supporting People budget.

The following overarching Gwent principles were agreed during the later part of 2014 for managing cuts to the Supporting People budget in 2015/2016:

- *Each Gwent Local Authority will consider their local strategic priorities.*
- *Each Gwent Local Authority will identify potential savings following service evaluations.*
- *Each Gwent Local Authority will identify savings from pilot schemes which are due to end.*

The focus for the RCC development days during 2015 was agreed at the January 2015 RCC business meeting to include a review of the way the housing related support services are currently provided and to consider other models and ways of delivering support; thus ensuring that the Supporting People programme across Gwent continues to deliver cost effective and value for money services for the benefit of some of the most vulnerable citizens in the region.

The “Cuts Discussion” paper was presented to the January 2015 RCC meeting by Chris Price from the WLGA and it was agreed at this meeting that further consideration would be given to the options presented within the paper at future development sessions that would be organised through 2015.

b). How have people using services been involved and shaped decisions?

Involving the people that receive services in the planning process is well developed across Gwent and is illustrated in the cloud diagrams below:

Current engagement opportunities with Supporting People teams



Current opportunities for engagement with support providers

Through the development of the Gwent Service User Involvement Plan; developed with the people receiving services for the people receiving services new ways of involving people in the decision making and planning processes have been identified; there has been a particular focus during this reporting period of developing social media and a service user web site and this has been provided as an example under Case Study 2 on page 5 of this report.

c). How have decisions been shaped by the outcomes data?

The outcomes data is currently used locally as a part of the planning and decision making process. It is recognised by Gwent local authorities and the RCC that the information collected through the outcomes framework is still not robust enough to solely inform the decision making processes.

The information collected is used within and as a part of the Gwent Supporting People Planning processes to make decisions along with other data such as the GNME data, waiting list and referral data and the information collected from the needs mapping days that are held each year, in each local authority for support providers, service users and other stakeholders. Other strategic needs assessment information is also considered within the local and regional planning to inform the decision making processes.

Gwent RCC Members have volunteered to be part of the Outcomes Data Sub group to feed in their thoughts and knowledge, to further the develop the outcomes framework and it has been agreed that pilot work around the outcomes spreadsheet collection will be undertaken in two Gwent Local Authority areas.

Work is ongoing to improve the quality of the data submitted and to better understand the information; so that this can be analysed to further develop services in the future. Gwent wide training has been delivered by officers from the Supporting People teams to ensure consistency across local authorities in the messages given and in the data that providers are submitting.

d). What regional and sub regional work is happening as a result of the RCCs and how has this work developed since the last report that was submitted in November 2013

Since the last report the following RCC task and finish groups have been established:

RCC Service User Involvement task and finish group, is tasked with further developing engagement activities for the people who receive Supporting People services and the work progressed by the group during this reporting period is provided as a case study on page 5 of this report.

RCC Communications task and finish group, is tasked with raising the profile of the Gwent RCC. The group has focussed on drafting, circulating and consulting on a standardised service user case study template; and has agreed the cost benefit analysis toolkit that will be used in Gwent to highlight the benefits of the Supporting People Programme to other statutory services and stakeholders.

The group is developing a case study booklet that will tell the stories of those who have received support, to raise the profile of the issues that are being faced on day to day basis by many people within our communities. The booklet aims to increase understanding of the wide variety of services funded by the programme and the positive outcomes that they and the people they are supporting are achieving. It will also provide some of the much needed additional evidence that is being called for by the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty as it should highlight the savings made to other statutory budgets.

RCC Learning Disabilities task and finish group has been established to scrutinise and review the provision of housing related support services to people with a learning disability in Gwent. The group has met on two occasions and given oversight to the mapping exercises that have been undertaken to date.

The group recognised during its second meeting that a review and update of the “Gwent Allowable Activities and Definitions of Housing Related Support” document was required in order to progress the work required in this area to ensure that services provided under this client category continue to meet the eligibility requirements of the Supporting People Programme grant.

During the reporting period links have been made to the following strategic groups:

OPCC Strategic Commissioning Board: Established RCC representation (Chair Elke Winton) on the Gwent Office of the Police Crime Commissioner's Strategic Commissioning Board. This enables a mutual understanding of each other's strategic goals and priorities, and consideration of any opportunities for closer working to support a shared client base.

Gwent Pathfinder: Domestic Abuse, Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Forum: Established RCC representation on the Gwent Forum (Chair Elke Winton). Established clear links with the new Gwent Regional Advisor and have committed to supporting the development of the Gwent Pathfinder. A key strand of the Pathfinder work is to review services for victims of domestic abuse, domestic violence and sexual violence in all its forms.

Gwent Area Planning Board [Substance Misuse]: Established representation on the Gwent Area Planning Board (RCC Public Health Rep, Julia Osmond). This will ensure cross fertilisation of strategic needs assessment data, which will help us to develop more coherent commissioning priorities and distribution of resources across our shared client base.

Safer Gwent Community Safety Partnership: Established RCC representation (Chair Elke Winton). The Safer Gwent Partnership has recently been established, with a focus on reducing crime and offending, anti-social behaviour, domestic violence, substance misuse and increasing support for victims. Our representation will ensure we are best placed to support the development of the Partnership and increase opportunities for understanding of the challenges facing the RCC and opportunities for closer working and smarter commissioning of support services for our mutual client base.

Other Regional Working Arrangements

Gwent Regional Provider Forum: Support Provider reps have recognised that attendees at the forum meeting were not feeding their views into the strategic process; this has now been reviewed and strengthened through a series of workshop events and by ensuring that it is senior and strategic managers that attend this meeting on a consistent basis.

Supporting People Regional Officers Group (SPROG): works to explore and promote best practice and cross-border approaches and also directs the local and regional work of the following groups:

Planning Officer Group (POG): works to promote and explore best practice and cross border approaches to assess the need and provision of housing related support services, to ensure that effective planning processes are in place. The group have recently updated the GNME, to make links to the outcomes questions, the spend plan and the updated lead need categories.

This group provide the RCC with the detailed information it requires and collates the supply mapping information which is used and reviewed locally and regionally to inform the planning processes.

Gwent Review Officer Group (GROG): works to promote and explore best practice and cross border approaches for contracting, monitoring and review of Supporting People schemes. The group is committed to working together to minimise provider administrative requirements and to offer support and training on request. The Gwent Review Officer Group has worked closely with the RCC LD task and finish group to update and review the “Gwent Allowable Activities” document.

5. RCC appraisal

All Members, Deputies, Co-opted Members and Advisors (twenty seven individuals) were asked to give their opinions on the Gwent RCC. From the fifteen full and co-opted members and five advisors, thirteen responses were received. The following is a summary of the responses received.

1) What has worked well for the Gwent RCC and what are the achievements?

- RCC Members' understanding of national legislation, strategy, policy and legislation, that has enormous influence over the SP Programme e.g. presentations received on SC&WB Act, Housing (Wales) Act, Welfare Reforms, Gwent DA Pathfinder and DA& SV Act.
- The members' induction pack and site visits have helped bring any new members up to speed.
- Building trust and sharing expert knowledge amongst organisations and sectors as truly equal partners.
- Communication across the SP sector in Gwent has improved, whereby RCC members are able to communicate key messages in unison.
- Engagement with Welsh Government through the RCC.
- The inclusion of the RCC Chair on the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner's (OPCC) Strategic Commissioning Group and the OPCC facilitated regional Safer Gwent Community Safety oversight Board has enabled a wider service perspective to be recognised by all attendee partners which has gone some way to identifying opportunities for joint service provision based on mutual understanding of each other organisation's requirements.
- Having the discreet development days.
- The analysis of spend on different client groups across the LAs enabling us to identify areas for closer scrutiny.
- The analysis of spend allowed it to be flagged up that there was an under spend predicted mid-year in 14/15 and a pragmatic approach agreed for ensuring that the budget was fully spent.
- Task and finish group activities on services to people with learning difficulties. Although the changes that have been achieved have been carried out within the respective LAs (and although it appears there is more to do) it also seems that the oversight and scrutiny of the RCC has assisted this process.
- Good contribution from other stakeholders particularly Public Health, Probation and Community Safety.
- Development of ideas to use social media for engagement of people who use SP services.
- Standardised case study template developed; this will help with lobbying for the funding stream.
- We have established cohesion and constructive working relationships. I feel that we are on the verge of moving forward into a new and more practical phase where we will develop strategies and guidance for the SP programme in Gwent.
- Good attendance and participation from members.
- Development days have cemented above.

- Service User Framework and Communication Group developed.
- Older Persons and LD sub-groups have done some good work but need progressing/monitoring more closely and agreeing a timed action plan.
- Re-prioritised regional developments.
- Good range of speakers invited.
- Development Sessions.
- Regional services and contracts for PPO, BAWSO and G&T Research
- Service user involvement –development of the Gwent Twitter Account
- Development of the case study template to further promote the SP Programme.
- Identification of the major issues regarding client groups and prioritisation of Learning Disability, Older people and substance misuse services.- Setting up of task and finish groups to investigate/evidence progress regarding these services.
- Use of development days to gain a greater understanding of the issues facing supporting people and development of relationships and building of trust
- Commencement of the commissioning of a number of regional services – Gypsy travellers, prolific offenders, prison leavers, etc.
- There is a sense of common purpose that supersedes personal or organisational loyalties
- We have developed a shared vision – we also did some really nice work with Chris Maggs on going back to basics on what our Vision & Values are underwriting the SP programme.
- The development days have worked well in looking at how we are prioritising the programme in view of a reduction in funding in Gwent and our Regional Commissioning priorities.
- Development days and Task and Finish Groups have allowed pieces of work to be taken forward, which could not have been achieved via RCC meetings alone (achievements detailed in the first part of this report)
- Close working and discussion at RCC level ensured that Gwent SP leads were able to develop an agreed regional approach to managing the cuts to the budget for 2015/16
- The continued development and commissioning of existing and new pilot schemes on a regional basis in a time of reducing budgets through the sharing of resources across the 5 authorities
- A strong sense of wanting to move forward has developed through the commitment of RCC members

2) How do you feel that the Gwent RCC is meeting the strategic objectives?

- Quite well, especially in current economic climate.
- Particularly strong on strategic oversight and direction of the programme in Gwent. Many RCC members are on a variety of key national and regional strategic planning and policy groups. The meetings mapping clearly depicted this.
- The Gwent RCC has managed to target and prioritise specific areas of work that demonstrate improvement of services and user outcomes, also demonstrating scrutiny and transparency, e.g. LD, OP, SM, HaVGHAP.

- I think that we have performed very well against 2 and 3 of the high level principles:
 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 comply with robust and enforceable grant conditions.

as evidenced by some of the successes above. Specifically no.2 evidenced by identifying and rectifying a potential under spend. No.3 evidenced by the last development day in which a multi stakeholder meeting agreed an outline approach to dealing with reductions in funding. I am not sure that we have progressed to meet no.1 yet but feel sure we will within the next year, through the approach we have agreed e.g. to work on a regional approach to tenancy support co-produced with people who use services. I think we are progressing well on no.4 in the way we are engaging with other initiatives e.g. regional domestic abuse project and our work on ensuring that services for older people are based on need rather than tenure.

I can't think of an example for complying with grant conditions but I am sure that we do.

- So far, very well.
- Not sure exactly what the strategic objectives are therefore difficult to give opinion on whether they have been met or not.
- Representatives of the RCC sit on other strategic partnerships and bodies.
- Development of regional services.
- Agreement on principles in managing budget cuts.
- Ensure key policy changes are on the agenda and raising member's awareness of the changes.
- I think it is being seen as a useful scrutiny tool for the activities of local authorities in delivering the programme
- Not fully established the benefits of the programme to the health service.
- We have developed a robust commissioning plan.
- The RCC has achieved a lot of positives through co-operation and joint working, rather than because of its legal framework / footing, which still mean its work could be disregarded by decision makers locally, as such ability to achieve strategic objectives / high level principles is hampered.
- Could you please clarify what we mean by "strategic objectives"
 - 5 areas of responsibility?
 - 5 high level principles?
 - Service User Cohorts (Learning Disabilities, Substance Misuse, Offenders etc

3) How has being a member of the RCC:

a. Been of benefit to you and the work of your organisation?

- See 1 above but it has also been interesting and informative to examine common agenda requirements e.g. homelessness as an emerging issue for policing. There is much potential in knowing each other's objectives and how they might mutually support each other in the future.
- The presentations we have e.g. on the Housing Wales Act and the Social Services and Wellbeing Act are useful to me in my role. It is useful to develop relationships with people working in other parts of the sector and related sectors.
- Yes. I have gained valuable experience working at a strategic level. I believe the key benefit to my organisation (sector) has been to enhance our profile and reputation
- Not much to be honest. LAs have had to contend with cuts, reviews, outcomes and re-pricing/re-modelling schemes and the RCC has little impact on this area of work. Should it?
- Collaboration has genuinely improved, and the difficult discussions are of a more mature nature, e.g. Gwent Provider Forum suggestions re budget cuts.
- Improved co-ordination of SP and stakeholders framework across Gwent
- Through the development of regional services
- Service user involvement has been a great benefit as we wouldn't have had the capacity locally to undertake this work in such detail e.g. development of the twitter account.
- Enables me to further promote the work of the SP Programme to senior managers and Local members
- RCC has built on the earlier work of the Gwent SP teams in terms of developing a cohesive regional platform for delivery of support services.
- Enabled commissioning of projects that individual authorities could not justify or afford
- Has emphasised the need to comply with Welsh Government Guidance and move to assessments based on peoples assessed support needs.
- Has increased my understanding of the value of the Programme and enabled greater promotion and awareness
- Being a member of the RCC has definitely help me get a wider understanding of the various strategies covering all the client groups that receive SP funding and the challenges and issues all groups face. It's also helped to make strategic connections between funding streams, policy direction and client needs. Networking has also been invaluable in being a member of the RCC and raising the profile of my organisation amongst other members.
- I have welcomed the opportunity to flag up opportunities for establishing closer working arrangements with other strategic partnerships in Gwent, where we have a shared client base. It ensures we do not become 'silo'd' in our strategic planning, co-ordination and service delivery.
- This closer collaboration allows for a broader understanding of our shared client base. It creates the robust dots that we can join as we mature. These are the first steps to open discussion on potential smarter ways of working in relation to, but not limited to, unified strategic needs assessments, and

influencing each other's commissioning priorities and service design to achieve an unprecedented level of efficiencies in these challenging financial times.

- I appreciate the opportunities to work with and access to the Supporting People Network – for example when I delivered a presentation on Preventing Violent Extremism to the Supporting People network of service providers to help them to recognise the issue and signs of vulnerable people who may be at risk of being radicalised and drawn into violent extremism. This was relevant given that we have had two local cases to-date.
- It is a great opportunity to keep abreast of related legislative and policy developments (i.e. Social Services and Wellbeing and Housing etc) as we wouldn't necessarily receive these direct, though we have a very clear shared agenda on some key areas.

b. Enabled you to contribute to the work of other organisations?

- See above. This is equally applicable as our partnership work includes partners which might not otherwise be sighted on RCC objectives and vice versa. This is certainly broadening the discussions around partnership working etc.
- I have been able to bring ideas forward which hopefully are beneficial e.g. use of the Debono Six Thinking Hats. I have been able to bring an understanding of housing related issues e.g. the Renting Homes Bill to the table and explain the potential impact on supported housing.
- This is already fairly well-developed so no noticeable difference, until partners come up with match funding opportunities.
- Further enhances partnership working.
- Members of the RCC have raised the profile of the programme within their own organisations and areas of work. Such as Probation and Public Health
- Continue to emphasise the need for local authorities to cooperate and the advantages of partnership working in the development of services.
- Through my representative role on the GRPF I think this has helped me inform other providers of the work other RCC and how providers will be effected by its plans but how we can contribute to them.
- As a support provider rep., I'd like to think the information flow between Providers and the RCC has been beneficial to providers locally, and has helped them feel engaged with the RCC; we have had positive feedback from providers.
- From feedback from each meeting I attend, it is clear that my small contributions are valued and taken on board and do help influence the way the organisations round the table collectively fulfil the requirements of the Board. Equally the knowledge and information I glean from my involvement with the RCC informs some of the discussions I have within my own organisation and within the varying partnership settings I am actively involved in.
- The RCC meetings and events provide me with opportunities to enhance my knowledge and understanding of the Supporting People Programme and the challenges they face. I can then make more informed contributions at these meetings and events knowing what I know from my own field of expertise

(community safety). This is a multi-way process, as I am able to share my accumulated knowledge and understanding with other partnership fora I am involved with. As examples I cite the linking of the RCC with the OPCC Strategic Commissioning Board, the RCC and the Gwent Pathfinder (Domestic Abuse) etc.

- Gives me the opportunity to make more rounded, informed and comprehensive decisions regarding the organisation I represent. Also has enabled joint organisational ventures to take off at a pace. E.g. Gwent RCC priorities across the sectors.

4) How has being a member of the RCC enabled you to learn about others' challenges and priorities?

- Enthusiastic input from other stakeholders in particular Probation, Public Health and Community Safety has increased my understanding of these sectors (and the overlapping of our client groups).
- Discussions with LA colleagues have increased my understanding of their requirements and processes.
- Through gaining a better understanding of other Committee Members and their diverse organisations.
- Not really as partnership working and reviews have highlighted the challenges and priorities of other organisations rather than just being a member of the RCC.
- Yes in particular the recent changes with Probation and also in relation to Public Health priorities.
- I think it is probably more beneficial for providers and landlords rather than commissioners, I think it has given them a better understanding of the difficulties in planning and commissioning services.
- Getting a wider understanding of the sector from commissioners and providers points of view has helped me understand others priorities and challenges. We have received a number of really useful presentations at each RCC meeting which has informed this knowledge.
- Updates via Probation have been really interesting & informative through what has been a very challenging time for them.
- Many of the Supporting People commissioned services are supporting a shared client base, however because we have stand alone strategic needs assessments and distinct commissioning priorities, then we don't fully appreciate the breadth and depth of services provided to our shared client base. This being the case, participating in the RCC and being presented with their reports and presentations etc has given me a wider appreciation of priorities and challenges they face. I would suggest that this information is essential, as if the RCC need to make cuts to frontline services, this will have a detrimental knock on to some of our shared client group. My membership on the RCC has meant that I can suggest that appropriate contact is made with the relevant commissioners of other related services, to ensure that at the very least and where relevant a clearer exit strategy can be considered. By way of an example is the Floating Support for victims of domestic abuse and suggesting to the RCC that they make links early on with the Gwent Pathfinder – according to each others' commissioning cycles. Another

example is the substance misuse support services and the Gwent Area Planning Board.

- The HaVGHAP work led by Public Health has been an excellent opportunity for my sector to contribute to

5) Can you identify any learning or development needs and / or any support or training required that will further enable you to carry out your responsibilities and undertake your role as an RCC member to the best of your ability?

- Not at present, but I would suggest that where this is identified that all partners should be invited to attend to progress the observations made above.
- A bit more detailed understanding of the spend plans and how they are arrived at and reported against. I sometimes still get confused by this in the detail.
- No
- Not really as regional working was strong in Gwent before the RCC. Perhaps more on co-production, co-housing, co-ops, social enterprises as this area seems to be flavour of the month for some AMs.
- Further training on impact of welfare reforms particularly on valley authorities
- Further training on Community First and Families First.
- Need help in learning how to more effectively challenge and influence debates and decisions (influencing and negotiating skills).
- Spend plans and classifications of projects in relation to lead needs need updating to reflect reality of provision.
- Scrutiny training – so we can improve our scrutiny role.
- Development of an end-to-end commissioning process – using a sound commissioning framework. I believe this could help the RCC to employ a robust strategic and systematic approach to commissioning. I base this upon the last development meeting, where all the component parts of a commissioning framework were identified as key areas of work needed, but they were seen as stand-alone components as opposed to a coherent whole.
- Ongoing development work to strengthen collaborative arrangements and cross fertilisation with other strategic Partnerships, particularly in the areas of strategic needs assessments and the analysis within them, influencing the setting of commissioning priorities, consideration of joint service design and delivery, consideration of joint/coherent review of mutual client services.

6) What would help the RCC to develop further?

- Broaden its activities with a wider audience (more awareness). Seek to involve other orgs in its planning and delivery activities.
- Spend more time on development activity and streamline the administration overview even further with an exception reporting approach.
- Greater use of techniques e.g. the Debono Six Thinking Hats approach to structure discussions and prevent a certain tendency for repetition and debates that don't produce results.

- Longer term thinking/planning, accepting that this is hindered by the year on year nature of the funding and the current reporting system (the latter of which the review of the guidance will hopefully address).
- More engagement from Health (as opposed to Public Health)
- Our development days have been enormously beneficial. A quarterly meeting is not enough in itself.
- Maybe Cabinet Members actually attending would shake things up a bit as it is all a bit too cosy at present
- Health representative to regularly attend RCC meetings
- Regular visits to projects by members of the RCC
- Working with Probation and CRC on the effects of the Housing Act 2014 on ex offenders
- Developing linkage into senior management/Councillors in local authorities
- Going back to basics sometimes and reminding ourselves of our respective roles- collaboration and partnership is great but as a provider rep I am there to represent provider's concerns/views- which may not always be the same as those of the commissioners that attend.
- Better links with the commissioning structures of 'other' funding pots e.g. Communities First / Families First etc. Focussing on real possibilities of co-funding posts / projects.
- Continue with the Development days, as RCC meetings don't allow time for that focus.
- Currently Probation are supposed to represent the Youth Offending Sector, however, I don't believe this is the case, as such we need a route for this input.
- To review the membership of the RCC and differentiate between the role, responsibilities and function at meetings of the Strategic Leads and those of the Support Officers.
- To review the representation on other strategic partnerships and consider a 'job description' for the representative within the context of their role at each Partnership.
- Develop a Commissioning Framework
- Co-location of the Supporting People support officers
- To review the client base and where there is clear cross-over with other strategic partnerships that also commission services for the shared client base, then ensure where possible our needs assessment chapters are aligned, commissioning priorities are aligned and we consider opportunities for joint commissioning.
- The front part of the agenda could be focussed on those items that need a decision to be made – made by the strategic leads
- Limit the amount of general talking at the meeting and focus on action outcomes.
- Scope for WG to top-slice Wales SP budget for regional projects as per RCC priorities.

7) What do you think the RCC should be focussing on for the coming year?

- Poverty agenda
- Investment, revenue and capital assets and opportunities

- Developing agreed Gwent commissioning principles that all can sign up to
- Broaden its activities with a wider audience (more awareness). Seek to involve other orgs in its planning and delivery activities.
- Homelessness is an emerging issue.
- Identifying duplication in service provision in the RCC and with other partners and then seek to streamline it.
- Identifying and discuss how its service provision impacts on other orgs on the same playing field.
- Gaps in provision and how they might be filled.
- Ensuring that reductions in funding are managed in a way that ensures best use of the programme for a preventative purpose strongly linked to preventing homelessness and assisting people to improve their wellbeing.
- Exploring further the synergies with other programmes and any funding opportunities this might bring.
- Funding cuts.
- Cuts and appropriate funding levels to services, especially learning disabilities and developmental disorders as opposed to homelessness/short-term projects.
- Developing one big regional project e.g. domestic abuse supported housing in South Gwent.
- Possible support for developing a regional contract, based on one client group or function e.g. alarms
- Managing budget cuts
- Looking at different models of services and how we can deliver services differently within the current economic climate
- Further developing the Communications Strategy.
- Overseeing implementation of cuts.
- Developing links with other anti poverty programmes – Families First and Communities First.
- Improve the linkage to health.
- Further development of service user involvement.
- Clear principles about level of support there should be to each client group – as determined by programme guidance and strategic direction coming from WG – focus on prevention/ combating homelessness and anti –poverty. More work required on strengthening the cost- benefit analysis evidence underpinning the value of SP services.
- Evidencing the homelessness prevention and anti-poverty outcomes routinely achieved by SPPG providers.
- Working towards a consistent commissioning framework, avoiding the ‘race to the bottom’, & salary levels becoming so low, the sector is no longer a viable ‘career choice’.
- Develop a commissioning framework
- Influence the commissioning priorities of other strategic partnerships where an identified shared client base is known and Supporting People £ cuts are anticipated.
- One Gwent approach – one unified needs assessment – one commissioning plan – regional commissioning priorities – pool of resources.

8) Any other reflections or comments:

- The RCC was the best kept secret in Gwent from our perspective but since linking in with them we have identified significant opportunities to carry out joint work for the benefit of each and the service users common to us.
- We have agreed a co-production methodology but not yet been able to put this in place. Ideas for restructuring services to obtain greater efficiency now give the opportunity for us to put this into practice.
- We have tended to see regional projects as an add-on to the projects that the LAs wish to commission or continue funding. We need to start having discussions about how different types of services might be managed regionally (or not when it isn't beneficial)
- RCC is bit of a talking shop as it has no real teeth and is awfully polite. MOU might provide some catalyst for change but I doubt it. Biggest change will come about with local government reform (Williams) or major cuts/re-alignment to the programme
- Does the fact that there are no councillors or 'senior' LA officers on the Gwent RCC reflect a lack of LA commitment or a realisation that the Committee works more effectively with individuals who understand the issues involved and have a genuine commitment to work together to improve support for vulnerable client groups.
- Being part of the Gwent RCC is really helpful and interesting on both a personal and professional level. The level of information you receive is excellent, our RDC is highly efficient and organised and always extremely helpful, she is key in holding the whole Committee together. The knowledge you gain from being part of the RCC is invaluable. The time commitment is greater than I first envisaged with the need to get involved in, for example, task & finish groups; attendance at one off meetings; national provider reps meetings.etc.
- Need to push on with MOU to develop greater understanding between work of RCC and Local Government.
- Opportunities for 'new' regional projects to be investigated now that the first 'cross boundary' contracts have started to be issued.



Supporting Independence in Gwent
Cefnogi Annibyniaeth a Gwent

Gwent Regional Collaborative Committee Development Session

19th March 2014

Lysaght Institute, Orb Drive, Newport, NP19 0RA

9.00am – 9.30am	Refreshments on Arrival
9.30am – 10.30am	<p>1.a Overview of the Supporting People planning cycle. Elke Winton</p> <p>1.b Funding across localities and the region by client group. Chris Robinson / Nigel Stannard</p>
10.30am – 11.15am	<p>2. Drafting the Gwent RCC work plan:</p> <p>Defining our Vision and drafting a Mission statement Setting the Goals Outlining the actions and the timescales Agreeing responsibilities for delivering the plan? T& F groups, SP teams, RDC etc.</p> <p>Actions from Debono workshop and the Co-production session. 23rd January 2014</p>
11.15am – 11.30am	Refreshment break
11.30am – 12.30pm	<p>2. Drafting the Gwent RCC work plan:</p> <p>Defining our Vision and drafting a Mission statement Setting the Goals Outlining the actions and the timescales Agreeing responsibilities for delivering the plan? T& F groups, SP teams, RDC etc.</p> <p>Actions from Debono workshop and the Co-production session. 23rd January 2014</p>
12.30pm - 13.00pm	Working Lunch