

## Regional Housing Support Collaborative Minutes

March 26<sup>th</sup> 2021 10:00am – 11:30am

Meeting via TEAMS

### Minutes

#### Attendees:

Wendy Hughes – Chair	Hedd Tomos - Gwynedd
Arwel Jones – Anglesey	Linda Hughes – Provider and Landlord rep
Abbe Harvey - Denbighshire	Lynne Evans – Provider Rep
Debbie Williams – Wrexham	Martin Cooil – Flintshire
Debbie Lambe – Conwy	Mark Conlan - Probation
Elliw Llyr – Anglesey	Paul Firth – APB
Elwen Roberts – VAWDASV	Shirley Jones – Wrexham
Emma Wood – Provider Rep	Tracy Hague – Wrexham
Gwenan Ellis – Landlord Rep	Rachel Pierce-Jones - RDC
Gwyn Roberts – Gwynedd	

#### Apologies:

Received prior to the meeting from Sam Parry – Vice Chair, Diane Jones (OPCC), Tim Thomas – NRLA Private Sector Rep, Phil Forbes – BCUHB MH and Lisa Pearson – Flintshire and Steffan L Williams – Provider Rep.

#### 1. Welcome and Introduction and Declaration of interest:

Welcome new members, Hedd Thomas from Gwynedd replacing Dafydd Gibbard and welcome Mark Conlan our new Probation representative.

#### 2. Previous Minutes and outstanding actions:

January 22<sup>nd</sup> minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

Rachel presented all the actions from the January meeting on the slides, all actions had been completed or on today's agenda.

#### 3. Review of Terms of Reference

Rachel updated when we signed the original RHSCG Terms of Reference off in September 2020 we agreed with this being a newly formed group to review the terms of reference in six months' time. The terms of reference were reviewed and it was agreed the content remained the same, all

members happy but if any standout changes in the HSG guidance in April to update the terms of reference to reflect the guidance. (Action)

#### **4. Update from HSG Leads meetings on the regional priorities agenda raised at last RHSCG**

Debbie Lambe, HSG Lead for Conwy chairs the Regional HSG Leads meeting. This meeting has met twice since our January RHSCG, February 4<sup>th</sup> and March 5<sup>th</sup>.

Debbie updated on the regional priorities that were presented at the January RHSCG. To commence some of the below listed initiatives a regional pot has been reinstated, each LA has allocated 0.5% of their HSG allocation to the regional agenda. Rachel explained for 2022-23 as an RHSCG we need to plan earlier to have a bigger pot for regional working, the vast increase this year and the short deadline to allocate the spending has meant each local authority having to rush through Planning Group sign off and has not allowed time for regional working to be discussed, however the below list is a positive start for the RHSCG and will be our priority areas in our next Annual Statement for 2021-22.

- VAWDASV Dual Diagnosis Provision
  - More information required to push this forward, statistics needed from the VAWDASV Team
- Male Domestic Abuse Refuge
  - To be discussed at the next meeting, looking at presentations and need to discuss where a dispersed unit could be located in which authority.
- LGBTQ+ Project
  - This will be worked upon throughout 2021 in the hope to commission regionally from 2022
- LGBTQ+ Training
  - Denbighshire have made links with the trainers they used and this will be commissioned regionally.
- Mental Health First Aid Training
  - Looking at a bespoke training package for Housing.
- PIE
  - Invited Vicky Jones from Trace to the next meeting to discuss our vision.
- Regional Support Officers for Hoarding
  - Further clarity was requested for this at the last meeting.

Debbie also explained that Regional Projects funded in last year's spend plan will be funded again for 2021-22, which are the VAWDASV IDVA Service and Target Hardening and the continuation of the North Wales Assertive Outreach Project.

The group will next meet on 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

#### **5. RHSCG Annual Statement**

Rachel updated to the group that our current Annual Statement was only till March 31<sup>st</sup>. Our new Annual Statement which is essentially our work plan will be shared via draft after this meeting and submitted to WG by May 14<sup>th</sup>. Work has commenced on the statement the listed regional initiatives we agreed at our January RHSCG will essentially be the main part of the work plan as well as making close working links with the Regional Partnership Board and Public Service Boards.

## 6. Local Authority Delivery Plans – Update from each LA

### Anglesey: Update given by Arwel Jones

- Provide an inflationary increase of 3% of staff costs to all support providers from April 2021.
- Develop a Rapid Re-housing Hub. (See next Slide)
- Consolidate our Single Point of Access Gateway project with additional support for the current co-ordinator
- Contribute to the provision of collaborative outreach in partnership with the Area Planning Board to support complex and challenging cases.
- Invest in a training programme and therapeutic support of staff and managers, to enable them to effectively deliver their role. This will include Psychologically Informed Approaches.
- Provide discretionary Payments and incentives to facilitate the purpose of the grant
- Strengthen Project Management and/or Strategic Planning Resources within the Local Authority
- Continue to fund the post of the Private Sector Rent Liaison Officer to engage with both landlords and tenants
- Contribution to regional projects identified and agreed by the North Wales Regional Housing Support Collaborative Grant.
- Increase the HSG workforce with additional support workers across our supply of providers:
  - Generic x 3
  - Housing First (25 - 54 years) x 2
  - Domestic Abuse x 2
  - Vulnerable Families x 2
  - Substance Misuse x1
  - Older People x 1 (emphasis on mental health)
  - Adult Mental Health x 1
  - Vulnerable Young People x1

### Gwynedd: Update by Gwyn Roberts

- Increased Drop In facilities in the Bangor area
- Floating support for Gypsy / Travellers – support will be made available for those currently at the Llandegai site, Bangor and also any visitors to the area
- Hostel provision for Women with multiple / complex needs
- Mental Health Liaison officer based within the Department
- SPOA provision within Gwynedd

### New Provision for Gwynedd:

- Increase in current Floating Support contracts specifically in areas of MH (multiple needs) / DA / Substance misuse
- Phase 2 projects – revenue funding for Phase 2 capital projects in Caernarfon, Bangor, Pwllheli and Dolgellau
- More support within council homeless hostels – this will allow more specialised move on support provision as well as providing a more intensive high needs provision within the hostels

- Discretionary Payment Fund/ No recourse to public funds – funds to allow complimentary support
- Internal Floating Support project being extended to allow more specialised support and reduce clients' ratio for staff. This will ensure better rapid re-housing and avoid long stays in temporary accommodation.
- This will also include more staff based within the Prison re-settlement project

### **Conwy: Update by Debbie Lambe**

Continuing response to COVID-19 Funding of

- Phase 2 COVID-19 Projects
- VAWDASV COVID funded services

Enhancing current provision to ensure services are able to meet current demands and sustain them should we need to remodel / recommission following completion of our HSG Needs Assessment – these include 2% increase on all contracts; increase in target hardening funding; increase in to our Debt & Financial advice contract; additional posts within supported housing projects.

New provision

- Homeless Prevention Officer – Mental Health
- Mental Health Support Worker
- Therapeutic Support Workers
- Supported Accommodation for Ex-Offenders – 8 units
- Supported Accommodation for Young People aged 16-24 – 5 units
- Regional projects – 0.5% of budget allocated for spending on regional projects
- Landlord Liaison Officer
- Funding for bonds, rent in advance, furniture packs etc.
- Increase tenancy support services
- Emergency provisions and discretionary payments for VAWDASV

Debbie was asked for more clarity on the Therapeutic Support Workers, Debbie explained this is an expansion of Care First, somewhere case workers can off load. Appointing this officer with either Care First or via Conwy's recruitment process. Denbighshire explained they are also having a Counselling service that will sit with MDT. This will be available for people Denbighshire look after and clinical care for staff. Abbe said she would share the job description (**ACTION**).

Debbie and Abbe were questioned whether any concern from WG, therapeutic wasn't HSG eligible, and Debbie and Abbe confirmed it came under a training focus.

### **Denbighshire: Update given by Abbe Harvey**

- Giving 3% uplift to contracts
- Developing a homeless hub
- Pulling a multi-disciplinary team together (Some will be paid by the grant and other were Phase 2 Projects that are being continued)
- Substance Misuse and Mental Health Practitioner
- Councillor post for both staff and service users
- Contributing to the regional pot and regional priorities

- Increasing SPOA in relation to triage
- Intensive support in relation to Rapid Rehousing

#### **Flintshire: Update given by Martin Cooil**

- 5% uplift to projects that haven't been retendered in the past three years
- 3% uplift to the other projects
- Joining with Conwy and Denbighshire Housing First and Young Person's Housing First.
- Night Shelter now changed to a 24 hour homeless hub emergency bed provision (this is looking to be relocated)
- Not developing our own Social Landlord scheme but will be developing closer working links with landlords across Flintshire
- Supported housing around complex needs for over 25's. (Flintshire already have this service for under 25's)
- Earlier intervention before people are allocated provision
- Work force development
- Develop on the Trace toolkit
- Warmer Wales / Fuel Poverty and identifying other support needs.

#### **Wrexham: Updated by Shirley Jones**

- Additional assistant gateway officer
- Senior support team officer
- Rapid rehousing officers
- Temporary accommodation officers in some our homeless projects
- Peer Mentor
- Additional Prison Liaison Officer
- Current Mother and Baby unit being relocated (still within Wrexham)
- PRS Officer
- Uplift on existing contracts of 2%
- 2 support officers for BME and LGBTQ+
- Financial inclusion officer
- MH First Aid Officer – in-house
- Housing Standards advisory officer.
- Hoping to run a MH pilot for low level MH
  - Emergency and discretionary fund set aside (rent in advance, bonds etc.)

### **7. Regional Spend Plan**

Rachel shared the regional housing support grant spend plan paper prior to the meeting. No further questions were asked at the meeting. Rachel shared if any further analysis was required on the spend plan to send your request directly to Rachel. The papers gave a comparison of this year's spend allocation against last years.

## 8. Rapid Rehousing Update

This is a standard agenda item for the RHSCG. This will also become part of our annual statement work plan that we ensure regionally we are discussing Rapid Rehousing and we are expecting WG will be asking local authorities to submit their plans for Rapid Rehousing towards the end of the year. Sam Parry chairs Leadership Housing Cymru meetings where Rapid Rehousing is discussed. Debbie Lambe gave an update from Conwy detailing that Conwy have commenced work on a delivery plan for Rapid Rehousing, Debbie shared:

- Looking at the local housing market and homelessness context
- Specific challenges/extent of housing pressure have been identified
  - Population and household growth/trends
  - Housing Pressure
  - Economy
  - Income and Earnings
  - Need for affordable housing
  - Analysis and key messages
- Looking at the Housing Register
- Private sector
  - What's available
  - Rent levels, affordability and LHA
  - PRS access initiatives e.g. Empty Homes Initiative, Rent Bond Guarantee Scheme, WG PSL, Social Lettings Agency
  - Analysis
- Homelessness Presentations

Anglesey also shared at the meeting their structure for our proposed Rapid Re-housing hub, for which the additional posts within their Delivery Plan will be a key part of its success.

It was also stated under this agenda item that we must keep this agenda regional.

## 9. AST Charge Update

Wendy updated there is some good news, Stage 4 of The Renting Homes (Wales) (Amendment) Bill - including the service charges amendment - has been passed by Members of the Senedd.

It has now completed its legislative journey through the Senedd and only needs Royal Assent in order to become an Act.

## 10. Poll on Zoom reviewing the RHSCG for the first six months

Rachel at the meeting set up a poll for each member to answer:

1. Has today's meeting been useful?
2. What has been most beneficial to you from today's meeting?
3. On a scale of 1 to 5 how would you rate the performance of the RHSCG?
4. What do you think could be improved?

The responses to the poll will be pulled together with the previous questionnaire sent to all members reviewing the first six months of the RHSCG.

Under this item, it was raised there were too many meetings regionally to attend. Rachel agreed there has been some repetition lately which has been due to the HSG Regional Priorities meeting set up. Rachel agreed to look at this and resolve the matter (**ACTION**).

**Any other business:**

Wendy Hughes announced she is now the Provider Rep on the Housing Support National Advisory Board, which is focused on the Homelessness Action Plan.

Paul Firth shared he had attended a virtual conference regarding County Lines. Paul was asking if homelessness teams were seeing this as an issue, people being cuckooed. Debbie shared this has happened a couple of times in Llandudno.

Emma Wood asked regarding the recent questionnaire on Special Payments can this be done as a regional or sub regional response if covering more than once authority – Yes it can.

Tracy Hague raised whether underspend was a concern from other LA's. Consensus was yes. Questioned whether as a group there could be a strategy for underspend (**ACTION**).

**Date of next meeting:** June 10<sup>th</sup> 2021 at 10:00am – 12:00pm