EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING COMMITTEE

Review of Foyers – Consideration of the Deputy Housing Minister's Report

Purpose

1. For the Committee to consider and discuss the report of the Deputy Housing Minister following his review of Foyers, and to contribute any views on current and future Foyers or similar provision, to facilitate further development by the Welsh Assembly Government of policy in this area.

Recommendation

2. That the Committee discusses the report and comments as necessary, particularly on the learning aspects.

Background

3. At the request of the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities, the Deputy Minister undertook a review of Foyer provision in Wales and his report is attached at **annex 1**. The term "Foyer" is a brand name used for certain supported housing provision for young people in housing need which aims to combine affordable housing with learning provision in order to enable clients to make a transition to sustained employment.

4. The report was considered by the Local Government and Housing Committee on 20 March and it requested the views of the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee.

Financial Implications

5. The funding of learning provision is addressed in the report.

Compliance

6. There are no issues of regularity or propriety.

Contact Point

Training, Skills and Careers Policy Division

Welsh Assembly Government

Review of Foyer Policy

Introduction

The review took place on the instruction of the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities, Mrs Edwina Hart AM. As the Deputy Minister, I was requested to undertake the review which took place during the months of November and December 2001 and January 2002. The review was intended to be a limited exercise, with a short timescale, which would take a quick snapshot of current provision and perceptions of Foyer provision. This review would then inform policy responses to Foyer development and management by the Welsh Assembly Government.

The review took place to agreed terms of reference, (as attached at Appendix 1.)

Methodology

The review consisted of visits to three Foyer developments in Wales, as well as a further Foyer-like development which is not yet accredited as such. Additionally a visit was made to an English Foyer in order to ascertain differences in the nature of provision. Verbal evidence was offered by a further Foyer development, The Foyer Federation in Wales, and a supported housing provider involved in provision of 'learning and work' services.

Additionally a request for written submissions was issued in the form of a letter (attached at Appendix 2) to relevant RSL's, Local Authorities and providers of supported housing services for young vulnerable people. We received a total of 21 responses to this request.

I would wish to express my thanks to those organisations who presented verbal evidence or facilitated site visits for the review.

Tai Trothwy Ltd, Port Talbot YMCA, Clwyd Alyn Housing Association, Wrexham Foyer Charity, Mid Wales Housing Association, Cardiff Community Housing Association, Llamau Ltd, The Foyer Federation in Wales and Bristol Foyer Ltd.

Additionally I want to thank those organisations who submitted written information.

Powys County Council, NCH Cymru, Cymdeithas Tai Cantref, North Wales Housing Association, United Welsh Housing Association, Mid Wales Housing Association, Cymdeithas Tai Dewi Sant, Cardiff Community Housing Association, Cardiff YMCA Housing Association, Tai Trothwy Ltd, Barnardo's Cymru, Carmarthenshire CBC. Charter Housing Association, Bridgend CBC,

Wrexham CBC, Cymdeithas Caer Las, Llamau Ltd, Monmouthshire County Council, Clwyd Alyn Housing Association, Neath and Port Talbot County Borough Council, Cardiff County Council

Findings

Current Project performance

Of the foyers that we visited most had experienced a significant problem with voids. This was explained as being caused by a variety of factors, including poor needs assessment evidence for the original development, inappropriate referral by local agencies and significant project management problems.

Only one of the projects visited could offer any form of comprehensive needs assessment which demonstrated the level of linked, housing and training need. This assessment had been undertaken in regard to a planned development and as a reaction to problems caused by the poor assessment information available at the development of the current project. Most projects had been developed in response to epidemiological information, such as the extent of homelessness and youth unemployment in the locality.

Decisions about the scale of projects appeared to be based on assumptions about need and subjective evidence. In some cases projects have clearly overestimated. This is mostly true of the larger projects visited, who had experienced endemic voids problems. In one case this has lead to a rescaling of the project, in the other it has called into question the project's long-term future in its current form. Only one project did not report any significant problem with voids and demand. This project currently is not an accredited Foyer, nor was originally developed as Foyer provision. It is not clear whether demand for this project is as a result of the Foyer type services it offers, or is a consequence of the lack of availability of other forms of accommodation, both supported and unsupported, locally.

Several Foyers reported voids that had resulted from an early history of inappropriate referral or lack of availability of appropriate support within the project. These have been linked with associated management problems and have lead to decisions to run projects at lower occupancy or similar responses. The management problems within projects are characterised by the high level of support needs demonstrated by tenants. Needs which are not matched by the available level of support. The initial expectation of Foyer tenants was of a group with little or no support needs and a mix of age range from 16 to 25. In fact projects have frequently found that a great proportion of tenants have medium to high support needs. For example, needs associated with a history of offending, substance misuse and low level of lifeskills. Additionally projects have found it difficult to achieve a balance of age range, with an over-representation of 16 and 17 year olds. These factors have lead to greater levels of chaotic, challenging and non-engaging behaviour than projects were designed to address.

There are knock on effects of this problem such as; poor perception from local communities, poor perceptions of the project amongst the target client group, affecting demand, a need to focus on proactive rather than reactive service delivery, and high levels of eviction. Projects have responded to these problems by tightening up admission procedures to ensure that support needs are limited and by increasing support staffing. However, some of the problems appear an inevitable result of the way these projects have been designed and these responses have had varying levels of success.

None of the Foyer projects in Wales have yet been subject to a Supported Housing Revenue Grant audit. This review was not able to assess projects in sufficient detail to come to a conclusion about the quality of support service. However, the majority of services are delivered by organisations who have experience of providing support services in similar settings. Aside from the noted difficulties of matching the availability of support to the intensity of support needs, there is no reason to assume that the quality of support is not typical of all supported housing.

Some Foyer developments have attempted to provide information about the impacts of the learning and work function on service users. As Foyers provide a holistic response to need, it is difficult to attribute the cause of outcomes. However, the evidence provided is only partially convincing. The factors generally considered are not sufficiently robust to take a view of the long-term impact of services. There is a lack of comparative figures to show the value, to the individual tenant, of the service and contrast effectiveness with other forms of provision. However, Foyers do claim to achieve a positive outcome, in a learning or work context with approximately 75% of service users.

The extent of planned development.

Current provision of Foyers in Wales totals 124 bedspaces on 8 sites. This total includes all provision which is defined as Foyer, by the Foyer Federation, and includes some which have no relationship with Welsh Assembly Government funding, as well as those not yet accredited through the Federation's process. It also includes one development which is shortly expected to expand from its current size of 12 bedspaces on one site, to a total of twenty on a dispersed basis.

One foyer development is currently on site. This will provide 12 bedspaces and has received grant approval from the Welsh Assembly Government. At present there are progressed plans to develop Foyers in seven local authorities. Two of these have not communicated any indication of scale, whilst the other five are expected to total 71 bedspaces. Some of these would also expect to expand from an initial core. Early stage planning is reported to be taking place in a further seven authorities and some providers are considering developing Foyers on the 'Blue Peter' model. That is creating a Foyer out of existing resources. Naturally this last approach would have a limited impact on housing budgets.

Assuming that local authorities are willing to support Foyer developments with sufficient prioritisation, the scale of the Social Housing Grant (SHG) budget should be adequate to cover the consequent demand generated by this level of development. The availability of revenue resources is more of a problem. It is impossible to say what capacity for new developments would be created by the imposition of Supporting People. However, what we can say is that the existing Supported Housing revenue Grant (SHRG) budget has been increased in recent years to allow new development of approximately 100 bedspaces annually. This is to meet needs across all Welsh authorities and across the range of support needs. Two of the proposed developments are for schemes of 25 bedspaces. There must be serious questions about the capacity of the Assembly to approve grant for bids of this scale, should the future growth of the overall programme mirror current levels. It is Directorate policy not to offer capital grant to a project with a revenue need unless the project can demonstrate the availability of long term revenue funding.

Funding issues.

All Welsh service providers, including non-Foyers reported significant problems of accessing funding to meet the costs of the learning and work aspects of the service. Those Foyers developed with the support of the Assembly reported access to capital funding for the accommodation provision as adequate. However, due to the rules of the SHG scheme, the grant cannot meet any of the costs of non-residential accommodation. This means that training suites etc have had to be funded through a variety of means; including charitable sources and the reserve positions of the developing association, as well as other governmental sources such as Capital Challenge etc. Developers reported concerns that, in the lack of a clear governmental funding source, significant problems were being created by the decreasing interest of Trust Funders. Whilst Trusts have shown some enthusiasm for early Foyers, partly as a result of their novelty, it was felt that they could not be relied upon to fund the expansion of provision across Wales.

SHRG and associated support funding provides sufficient funding for support at a low intensity. This has to be qualified by the fact that many schemes had significantly increased rent levels, utilising the availability of Transitional Housing Benefit, in order to increase support-staffing levels. There is a consequence for the affordability of rent levels in projects which are specifically intended to encourage people into paid employment and out of the benefit system. This concern will be addressed by the introduction of Supporting People in April 2003, in which all support costs will be met by grant, whilst rent charges will meet solely accommodation costs. However, should Foyers start to demand funding at higher levels to meet the costs of intensive support this will place a strain on available funding and severely diminish availability for other supported housing purposes.

The revenue costs of learning and work services are met from a variety of sources; including European Funding and some resourcing from former TEC sources. These costs are also frequently met by charitable sources. Providers reported that this funding pattern caused significant problems; including a

disproportionate proportion of resources being utilised to service the monitoring requirements of the varied sources, as well as the work required to secure continuation funding for the service.

The Foyer Federation, on behalf of its' members, has made representation to the Welsh Assembly Government and ELWA seeking the creation of a grant funding system which is capable of meeting the costs of training workers in each of the projects. A tender has been agreed for a research project to be funded by ELWA. This project will meet the costs of providing a dedicated training worker in two Foyer projects as a pilot. It will also fund the development of a good practise handbook to provide information on the content of training modules. The project will also establish the broad extent of learning need for the client group and the adequacy of existing learning provision. The research is expected to be completed within 12 months.

Officials from the Training and Education Division of the Welsh Assembly Government informed the review of the view within the training sector that current funding arrangements should be capable of providing for the costs of learning and work services in Foyers. In particular it was felt that Skillbuild was an appropriate mechanism. However, it was acknowledged that existing funding streams follow the individual, could not offer payment in advance and made no provision for capital costs. This approach is the same as that for mainstream trainers. There is a question as to the suitability of this approach for the needs of this client group. If providers are to be encouraged to move into service provision in this area, they require confidence that the funding stream is flexible enough to allow 'failure' at the individual level, provides a reasonable assurance of a level of funding and can meet the capital costs of setting up the service. Working with the client group at the higher end of need requires considerable flexibility in the funding system. One model may be found in the current SHRG system. SHRG is a specification and tariff system in which the services are defined and paid for at a specific rate. Output and outcome measurements are used alongside quality assurance mechanisms to assure value for money, but the funding level is not adjusted unless there are clear signs of failure. This gives providers the confidence to work with a group who have not interacted successfully with many other services.

The draft annex to next years ELWA remit letter contains a requirement to "Provide complementary housing and learning approaches" it further requires that they should "work with partners to promote access to learning opportunities for people in supported housing, in the light of the recommendation from the Assembly's Homelessness Commission and review support for learning provision for homeless people to ensure that it is accessible and flexible and meets the needs of the client group." This offers the prospect that suitable funding streams may be developed. European funding streams offer the opportunity to realise some resources to this purpose, including objective one, two and three. These appear to be under-utilised at present although there was some criticism of European revenue funding systems as being overly bureaucratic and involving an unhelpful focus on output measurements.

The nature of service users

As previously stated, the original Foyer model envisaged a client group which has not been consistently realised. Indeed, in the early stages of Foyer development, some argued that they should not be able to access funding for support because there would not be a need for support. Others argued the point because as a design model Foyer were unsuited to support provision. Indeed some Foyers in England do not currently provide support services. Additionally many Foyers have restrictive rules about admission which exclude those with clear high support needs such as a substance misuse problems or a history of offending.

However, in Wales, Foyers have been developed with support provision and the majority receive funding for this support from the Welsh Assembly Government. Most Foyers have found that they have accommodated people with higher needs and have restructured their budgets and staffing structure to reflect this. Therefore much of the Foyer provision in Wales is accommodating young people with a similar profile to that in supported housing provision.

Foyer managers reported an ideal applicant for a Foyer project. They describe this as someone who is committed to making the best use of the training facilities available in the Foyer and whose support needs are at the lower end of the scale. The pen picture painted is of two types; someone who has a low level need for supported accommodation but who requires support to access training. For example, someone who has left the family home before achieving a 'settled' lifestyle but who maintains support from family and friends and whose attitude to learning and work is fundamentally positive. The other is someone who has experienced greater levels of need but who has been previously supported in other forms of supported housing, and is ready to make a commitment to learning and work. This commitment principle was believed to be key to making Foyer successful.

Many young people with high support needs are not yet at the stage to make that full commitment. There is an over-representation of people with a care background in the homeless population and many homeless young people will have multi-faceted needs including abuse, substance misuse and offending histories. Often young people with a need for intensive support will have had a history of non-engagement, low self-esteem, poor academic attainment and poor basic and life skills. Supported housing providers have more usually aimed their services towards the higher end of need and therefore are serving this group

In 1994 South Glamorgan TEC published a research report which identified a group not involved in work, training or education which it termed Status A youth. This group typically had a history of non-engagement throughout their education and were not engaging with formal training. Most providers working with young people have experienced the scenario where the young person is supported to access a training scheme, but will fail in that placement within a matter of days either through dropping out or being excluded on the grounds of their behaviour. We can see that the characteristics of this group are the

same as the tenants of supported housing and often, in practise, are the same people.

Where providers are reporting success with this non-engaging group it is on the basis of providing informal opportunities which contrast with the style that they had become used to in education. Typically this may include a drop in facility or the availability of leisure services which would act as a hook to win engagement. An example of this was the project visited which had a gym facility and music production and recording facilities. These were highly attractive to service users and gave workers the opportunity to work alongside young people and encourage the take up of more developmental activities. Syllabuses for this non-engaging group require a focus on issues such self-esteem, substance misuse issues, bereavement, self-harm etc. The intention is that by tackling the underlying issues of the young persons alienation, in a format through which they can be accredited for their learning, the service raises the status of learning in the client group. It also offers validation for the learning that they have achieved. The house style of these services accentuates informal learning methodologies.

Currently some Foyers, particularly the larger developments, are attempting to meet the needs of both groups. Whilst we must be cautious not to label service users, it is fair to say that the non-engaging group often display chaotic behaviour with higher than average levels of challenging behaviour, vandalism, and drug misuse. This is reflected in the management problems which have undermined some Foyer provision. If this group is to be successfully supported, services have to be tailored to meet high needs. Typical supported housing services for this group are small in scale, are flexible, for example by offering support outside 'normal hours'. They also need to be delivered in the context of the 'youth culture' within which the young person lives. The need to design services to meet these needs places fewer constraints on the learning and work provision. These services, can offer flexibility through a modular system, whilst delivering services in the same building and even with the same staff.

The report of the 'Homelessness Commission' made recommendations in respect of the learning and work needs of all homeless people, including older people. The review to be undertaken by ELWA can be expected to demonstrate that similar issues exist across the age range. However, whatever conclusions are drawn about the design of a funding system, there are practical reasons why service delivery should be targeted in an age sensitive fashion.

Design issues in Foyer development.

The Foyer concept is a holistic response to the identified link between housing need and unemployment. The concept very quickly gained considerable kudos amongst many providers and policy makers. This kudos leads to an enthusiasm for developing Foyer as Flagship responses to youth homelessness and to satisfy an area regeneration agenda. The result was early development of 'big' Foyers. In Wales the two pilot projects were 35 and

40 bedspaces respectively. These projects were very clearly conceived as flagship in several senses. They were flagship buildings, having a high profile presence in the community and the regeneration of run down areas. They were also flagship in architectural terms. They were flagship responses to the problems of youth homelessness, allowing an authority to be seen to have a response. In practise each of these efforts to make projects flagships have had a negative impact on the nature of service delivery by moving the focus of design from user needs.

Physically all the large Foyer projects visited during the review were initially attractive but were unable to escape an inevitably institutional feel. There were noticeable differences between the quality of public and residential space. The scale of the development had consequences for the design of the service, for example, in large Foyers, tenants' visitors had to be required to sign in and out. Since the initial pilots, some smaller scale projects have been developed which avoid some of these problems. Following early problems with the pilot projects, the Welsh Assembly Government produced a protocol for the development of dispersed Foyers. The development of a dispersed Foyer no longer provides a high profile building as a public statement of intent. However, it does allow a more positive focus on service delivery issues in design. Newtown Foyer, a small development of four bedspaces, offered self-contained accommodation which was reported as desirable to tenants.

It is apparent that Foyer development, even within the dispersed model, is in danger of being perceived as a flagship response to youth homelessness. Often this is to the detriment of other provision. We have already seen that Foyer developments, particularly those that are large, are not best placed to meet the full range of needs. As an example of this problem, the Assembly is aware of impending plans to present bids to develop Foyers in two authorities which, although dispersed, will be in excess of 20 bedspaces. Given the scale of total supported housing provision for young people in these authorities the projects would constitute an overwhelming proportion of the total provision, and available resources for support services, within the district. There is real doubt that this pattern of provision would reflect the true nature of local need.

In each of the projects, included in the review, the training facilities were provided on site. Only in one case did the design of the provision include any space which could reasonably be considered an inviting and desirable space for young people to spend time outside the receipt of training. This project had a café, gym facilities and widespread public utilisation of the training facilities, giving a strong community involvement in the service. This allowed young people to come to view the training function as part of their everyday lifestyle, operating on a drop-in principle, and reducing the stigma attached to the project and residence within it. It also created a positive culture of engagement in the services by residents. These principles were also at the foundation of the supported housing learning and work provider interviewed as part of the review.

One of the Foyer visited had only a small on-site accommodation but capacity within the training function for greater numbers. This provision was made

available to tenants of other supported housing in the area. A view was expressed that having the accommodation available to the committed group was important but that widening the availability of the training provision allowed support workers to encourage gradual take up of learning and work services. It was also the view that residence on-site by persons not committed to the learning and work service would under-utilise the facility or even undermine the positive dynamic of a project.

The physical design of the properties varied. There were certain design factors which appear key in defining the nature of service provision and customer experience. The project scale question, and its impact on the service, has already been largely rehearsed within this paper, but it is important to note that virtually all respondents expressed a preference for small-scale developments on any one site. One project which offered 14 bedspaces in total had distinct accommodation sections within 3 different parts of the building. Each section was 5 bedspaces or less and had separate secure access. This arrangement was reported as successful in that it allowed separate dynamics within each of the sections and thus management problems could be self-contained. It may be therefore that other aspects of design of this kind affect the issue of the interaction between scale and management issues.

The early purpose-built Foyers attempt to replicate the hall of residence model with study bedrooms, shared kitchen facilities and communal space. This design model appears to be unsuited to addressing the needs of tenants with significant support needs. Leading to the necessity for security measures such as locked fridges and a lack of ownership of communal space which quickly becomes uninviting. The self-contained model appears to have considerable merit in that it is desirable and creates a sense of ownership. The Bristol Foyer offered self-contained flats shared between 3 tenants. This model was felt to offer ownership but facilitate peer support. It was also reported as popular with tenants and prospective tenants.

Each of the schemes visited in the review offered support. The average support staff to tenant ratio was between 1:8 and 1:12. This would compare with medium to low levels of supported housing provision. These ratios would not normally be considered sufficient for dealing with the highest levels of support need. Support was generally being delivered within a similar model to other supported housing provision.

Perhaps as a result of the reported difficulties with funding for the learning and work services, this function was underdeveloped in many of the projects visited. Whilst Foyers did have training programmes, in some cases these are very limited. Many programmes do offer opportunities such as job search. However, there is poor representation of the life-skills and pre-vocational elements, discussed earlier, within these programmes. All the projects visited offered computer suites and had training rooms. There was little evidence that the computer suites had widespread use and training rooms had a traditional design suitable to a chalk and talk approach.

As a holistic response, Foyer projects inevitably bring together service provision from a variety of disciplines. This poses problems of ensuring effective communication and providing ownership for the project from a variety of interests. The review found a variety of management structures for projects including separate landlord, support provider and training provider arrangements. It is not possible to draw any conclusions on an ideal model from the information base represented by the review. However, it was evident that, in those projects which did not have a clear lead agency managing the project, or very strong partnership arrangements, conflicts between agencies have grown. In these circumstances the chances of success within the project are affected.

Role of the Foyer brand

Foyers are not the only form of provision which provide learning and work services in association with accommodation and support. During the review we visited Foyer like services which do not carry the Foyer title or are currently accredited by the Foyer Federation as Foyer. Additionally the review received evidence from support providers who have developed learning and work services as 'value added' extensions of their existing provision. The motivation for these schemes has been a similar recognition of the need for a holistic response to needs. The conceptual basis used to justify the provision of the learning and work service by the supported housing provider is the issue of engagement. As described earlier, there is a hurdle to overcome with the engagement of some higher needs young people. Supported housing providers have a track record of engagement with young people because they have developed a style of service provision which is suited to the cultural context of young people and because they are often the only agency which is engaging with the young people in question. The expansion of these providers into a learning and work setting is no more than taking advantage of this established relationship and 'adding value' to the existing services.

In this way some supported providers are moving towards the Foyer context, as Foyer's have had to move towards supported housing provision from their original concept. This has now reached the point where the boundary between classic supported housing and Foyer provision is becoming blurred. In this context there is clearly a question about what is unique in the title Foyer. Few of the respondents felt that Foyer had no part to play in meeting support needs. However, there was a clear view that some parts of the broad continuum of support needs were better suited to the Foyer concept than others. This was the group who met the commitment principle discussed earlier. Supported housing providers typically have focused on those at the higher end of the needs spectrum. The Foyer movement, as represented by the Foyer Federation, has a developing understanding of its role in this continuum and the supported housing movement has been largely suspicious of Foyer development seeing them as diverting resources to the lower end of the needs scale. However, The Foyer Federation, in its efforts to lobby for a dedicated funding stream for the training elements of service provision has attempted to ensure a role for the Foyer brand by advocating a model of grant payment, and monitoring and evaluation, in which it is the conduit and

regulatory body. It is unlikely that such an approach would receive the support of non-Foyer providers in the field.

As discussed earlier, the need for learning and work services also extends beyond the age range covered by Foyer. It should be noted that some supported housing providers working with single homeless people across other age ranges are also developing services based on similar principles.

Where there is a role for an umbrella body is in the provision of good practise advice. Many of the Foyer developers reported that they had experienced 'teething troubles', in developing projects, and believed that they had repeated some of the mistakes that others had already made. In particular providers felt that model policy and procedure would be helpful and Foyer providers are currently lobbying for support to develop standard training programmes. There is clearly a need for a good practise advice, information and training support for Foyer developers.

Strategic Planning

The efficacy of current general arrangements for strategic planning of supported housing services is questionable. There are, however, real questions whether Foyer development to date has happened within the context of existing strategic planning mechanisms. Supported housing provider bodies reported, through their response to consultation, that they had not been involved in discussions about Foyer development. The Foyer movement acknowledges that it has a part to play in the continuum of supported housing provision, but there must be some doubt that, if Foyers are suited to a particular end of that continuum, their relative priority in the continuum of support provision has been fully assessed.

Several Assembly initiatives are expected to have an impact on this in the short to medium term. The requirement on local authorities to develop homelessness strategies and the need to support the Supporting People initiative with clear strategic plans is expected to improve performance in this area. Learning and work services are part of the holistic provision, yet it appears that Foyers have not had full consideration in planning process for training and economic regeneration. This is also reflected in the lack of clear business cases for developments to this point. Involvement in such planning needs to include consideration of move-on strategies which address, not only the accommodation and support issues, but also the learning and work ones.

Conclusions

The Foyer movement in Wales needs to develop a clear understanding of the nature of the term. For a Welsh context, this understanding should define Foyers as projects which link a learning and work function with supported accommodation, but the term should also define its target client group as young people with a need for accommodation and support who have also expressed a clear commitment to utilising a learning and work facility. In this way the term Foyer has a clear place in the continuum of supported accommodation. However, it is important to note that it is not the only form of provision of supported accommodation with learning and work, nor is its client group the only one which can gain benefit from learning and work services.

The Welsh Assembly Government's interest is in promoting a holistic response to the support, accommodation and training needs of individuals. Therefore the Assembly's approach should not be to promote Foyer specifically but all forms of provision of this kind.

The Foyer Federation in Wales has requested financial support from the Assembly. In its response the Welsh Assembly Government should consider how it encourages the development of those services in a context that addresses the broader needs across supported housing including provision which does not carry the Foyer title.

Current Foyer provision has an inconclusive track record of success. There are clearly significant failures in some schemes, and there is not yet a body of evidence from which to draw objective conclusions on what are the pre-requisites of a successful service. However, there is strong support for the link between supported accommodation and learning and work services and anecdotal evidence of its success. The Welsh Assembly Government should continue to support the concept of holistic services to meet the accommodation, support and training needs of young people and attempt to create the environment in which services can develop.

The available client group for Foyers has developed significantly from the original notion of the model. In practise Foyer are servicing clients with support needs. It is generally accepted good practise that provision for young people with support needs should be on a limited scale in order to minimise management problems. The model of dispersed Foyers with no more than 12 bedspaces on any one site has merit for this reason.

There is no single design model which the Assembly can promote, but even at the scale of the smaller dispersed model designers should consider building in measures to prevent management problems undermining the service across the whole project. The design model of the hall of residence was not convincing in that it created an institutional feel. As young people usually express a desire for self-contained accommodation when asked, design responses should reflect this. However, there is recognisable merit in building opportunities for peer support into the design.

Whilst there is merit in developing learning and work services alongside accommodation and support. The demand for such services extends beyond the group who are at the stage at which they can make the commitment talked about by providers. The scale, and design of any learning and work service should allow access by all users of young peoples supported housing services in the area. This would facilitate a possible extension beyond the users of supported housing, for example into pupil referral unit services etc, although this would be a later stage of development.

When designing the link between the training function and the accommodation developers should think in terms of the range of provision locally. The Welsh Assembly Government should promote a model which is both dispersed and modular. Dispersed should be understood to mean that any provision for the client group that is committed to learning and work should be dispersed with no more than 12 bedspaces on a single site. Modular should be understood to mean a link between the learning and work facility in which a range of supported housing provision is able to access the service. Therefore the accommodation are not necessarily physically linked but that the services are, allowing young people with a range of support needs to use the supported accommodation suited to their needs without this being a barrier to accessing the learning and work function.

When designing local services strategic and commissioning bodies should consider the management arrangements carefully. It is clearly important that provider bodies undertake tasks for which they are suited. Supported housing providers may be able to offer learning and work services for higher needs young people precisely because of their experience of supporting these same people and the skills in engagement that they have developed. However, it is also important that management structures do not over-emphasise the need for partnership working, the delivery of which, in practise is often problematic.

Foyers, or similar provision, should not be developed without clear needs assessment evidence for the nature and extent of need. This evidence should form the basis of a clear business case for proposed projects. As an accommodation and support service, Foyers should only be developed within the context of a clear strategy for supported housing which demonstrates the place that the Foyer has in the continuum of services. However, the business case should also include empirical evidence of the training and economic development case for the project. The planning mechanisms should also develop clear move-on arrangements.

There is a need for Foyers to offer support services to their tenants, if they are to make the most of the learning and work opportunities available to them. However, in the context of placing Foyer provision firmly within the continuum of supported housing services and the modular approach,this support should be commensurate with the level of need. Therefore if the typical client is from the 'committed' group the level of support needs would be expected to be low. Where needs are greater, these should be met in supported housing projects which are designed for the level of need. The modular approach will allow this

distinction whilst ensuring the learning and work provision is more widely available.

Learning and Work provision does not have a clear information base on which to base an assessment of effectiveness. The movement should develop clear concepts of outcome measurement against which projects can be measured.

It is clear that the level of planned provision outstrips current Welsh Assembly Government ability to make resources available. The Welsh Assembly Government needs to offer a clear message to prospective providers about the extent to which bids can be met. This guidance should not discourage development but should build on the modular approach to ensure that existing supported housing provision is integrated, and the scale of the learning and work provision is capable of meeting this wider need. New Foyer accommodation should be developed at a level appropriate to the scale and relative priority of the needs of the Foyer client group.

The lack of a clear and understood funding stream for the learning and work function has lead to inadequate service development in this area. Training functions are not properly resourced in many Foyer and providers report the availability of funds is crucial to developing the holistic approach at the root of the concept. Funding for this part of provision is not a housing function and needs to be addressed by other parts of the Welsh Assembly Government and associated agencies.

A funding stream for learning and work needs to be flexible in its administration to allow services for this difficult client group to be developed and to allow providers sufficient security of funding to ensure that the associated risk issues do not provide a barrier to service development. In its review of suitable arrangements, ELWA should investigate the current Supported Housing Revenue Grant system.

In a modular system, the learning and work function needs to be able to offer a curriculum which addresses the full range of needs from pre-vocational elements and lifeskills to support to access vocational services, key skills access to work services. The training needs to be delivered in a style which recognises the cultural context of the client group.

Given the fact that other client groups demonstrate similar needs to those of young vulnerable people, any funding stream should be applicable to services developed to meet the needs of other groups. Whilst these services would usually need to be provided separately in order to protect vulnerable young people and to ensure that service delivery could be tailored to suit the cultural context.

In order to ensure that learning and work services are attractive to tenants and prospective tenants, providers should attempt to ensure the de-stigmatisation of services. Accentuating the community involvement in the facilities assists this process. For example by linking the provision to other functions such as Arts projects, drop-in facilities and recreational facilities.

Recommendations

1. That the Welsh Assembly Government continues to support a holistic model of linked accommodation, support and learning and work services. This support should be for services for young people and other vulnerable people

2. That the Welsh Assembly Government promotes a model of Foyer which is within a continuum of supported accommodation and learning and work services. The Foyer concept should be targeted service aimed at young people who have low support needs and have made a commitment to utilising learning and work services.

3. That the Welsh Assembly Government promotes a dispersed and modular model of supported accommodation and learning and work services for young people.

   a. Dispersed should be understood to mean that all accommodation linked to the learning and work service should not exceed 12 bedspaces in scale.
   b. Modular should be understood to mean that the learning and work service should link to as wide a range of supported accommodation as possible, whilst it may or may not be physically linked to any part of that accommodation

4. No Foyer, or other learning and work service, should be approved for funding by the Assembly without the presentation of a clear business case. This case should include needs assessments including empirical evidence for the linked accommodation, support and learning and work need. This assessment should demonstrate the level and nature of local need in each of these contexts. It should also be able to demonstrate that the development has been supported within all relevant strategic planning mechanisms.

5. Foyer, or other learning and work services, should only be supported where there is clear analysis of the case within the local authorities housing strategies. Foyers should be considered as part of the range of supported accommodation. They should not be perceived as a solution to all youth homelessness problems nor should they be regarded as flagship projects. There should be no assumption that there should be a Foyer development in every authority.

6. The Welsh Assembly Government cannot promote a single design for Foyer developments. However, there are certain design principles which can be promoted as good practise. The principle ones are:-

   a. Wherever possible Foyer, and other similar development should offer self-contained accommodation, they should offer

communal space but the tenant should be able to conduct all aspects of their life within the unit over which they have control.

    b. The above is the default position but designers may consider some limited element of sharing where this is to promote peer support.

    c. Public and residential space should be of similar quality and designers should avoid creating institutional atmospheres by their design

    d. Learning and work services should be designed in such a fashion as to allow flexible use (i.e. avoiding classroom style)

    e. Service users should be encouraged to attend the learning and work facility outside the times for their training sessions by the use of leisure or drop-in facilities

    f. Wherever possible the learning and work facility should enjoy a wider public use to avoid stigmatisation.

    g. The management structure of Foyer, and similar developments should include a clear lead agency and minimise the reliance on partnership working.

7. The Welsh Assembly Government should publish the above as a policy statement.

8. The Welsh Assembly Government should maintain reference to providing complementary housing and learning approaches in the final annex to the remit letter for ELWA. The review to be undertaken by ELWA should consider:-

    a. The need to provide a funding stream which can assure a level of up-front funding for projects

    b. The availability of European funding including relevant support to agencies to access such funding

    c. The need for capital funding of projects

    d. An appropriate methodology for monitoring and evaluating the funding stream given the nature of the client group.

9. The Welsh Assembly Government should not support any effort by the Welsh Foyer Federation to offer it a funding and regulation role. However, The Welsh Assembly Government should consider how it could best assist the development of good practise assistance to learning and work providers.