

Gwent Regional Collaborative Committee (RCC)

Evidence of the work of the Gwent RCC within the Supporting People Programme: Public Accounts Committee Report, November 2017

Since the new governance arrangements were introduced in 2012 the Gwent Regional Collaborative Committee (RCC) has been committed to working positively and co-productively, with a focus on jointly engaging stakeholders, ensuring positive outcomes for service users, and sharing valuable skills, expertise and resource, the Gwent RCC has made significant progress over the past five years in shaping an improved regional context for the Supporting People Programme across Gwent and beyond.

Some initial quotes from members from the first year of the newly introduced governance arrangements 2012-2013 are provided here: *“There is increased communication and multi-agency interaction across sectors, as well as between providers.”*

“There is more consistent information flow for all, rather than this being dependent on the individual relationships those providers may / may not have had with other agencies via feedback and Providers Forums etc.”

“Being a member of the Gwent RCC has meant that we are now more aware of the work the Supporting Peoples agencies do on behalf of and directly with their clients. This has enabled us to identify strategic and opportunistic vehicles for improving this population’s health”.

“Working in partnership with colleagues in the Gwent RCC has provided us with appropriate and useful opportunities to help us in the production of the Health Needs Assessment for the homeless population in Gwent.”

Challenges since inception have been embraced by the Gwent RCC and changes to legislation unique to Wales in relation to the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Housing (Wales) Act 2014, the Social Care and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014, and the Violence Against Women, Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse (Wales) Act 2015 have been promoted via the current governance arrangements. Members of the RCC have been able to collectively learn, develop, consult and inform upon the wide range of Welsh policy matters relating to the Supporting People Programme, and the Committee has shown how we are able to work together with partners to proactively shape local and regional service provision, whilst also informing, influencing and advising upon national policy matters.

The Gwent RCC has been well represented in these governance arrangements, at a national, regional and local level; members have embraced and proactively exercised the opportunity to have a voice and two-way communication with the SPNAB and with Ministers, 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 have been kept up to date and prepared for changes to policy and resource implications.

The Gwent RCC has undertaken as part of its work plan scrutiny of client categories and to date has undertaken a review of Older Peoples services introducing a timeline for

services to be tenure neutral; it has reviewed services for people with a learning disability establishing eight recommendations collectively agreed with Heads of Social Services across all Gwent Local Authorities to be worked towards and the introduction of a timeline to implement the recommendations across the region. Undertaking this piece of work also included a refresh of the “Gwent Allowable Activities” document, a guidance booklet that assists agencies and individuals to manage expectation and understand the purpose, scope and boundaries of housing related support.

Services for People with Mental Health issues were reviewed during 2016 -2017 and close links through this piece of work have been established with the Regional Learning Disabilities and Mental Health Partnership Board. Currently services for Young People aged 16-24 and Young People who are Care Leavers are prioritised for review along with services available for people across the region sleeping rough.

Other key areas of focus for the Gwent Regional Collaborative Committee have been on promoting and securing ongoing Welsh Government Supporting People Programme Grant funding for the region. The ‘Improving Lives; Preventing Costs’ booklet (mentioned later in this report), is testament to ensuring that service user stories are heard by local, regional and national decision-makers, alongside the cost benefits of the Programme. The booklet was developed and issued by the Committee to Ministers across Welsh Government departments prior to Welsh Government budget setting in 2015, providing evidence of the successful outcomes and cost benefits of the Supporting People Programme across Gwent, as requested by the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty.

We have maintained a proactive approach to promoting and evidencing the benefits of the Supporting People Programme in Gwent, linking the Programme to associated Welsh Government strategies and cross cutting initiatives including recently the Tackling Poverty and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) agendas

Citizen’s views, involvement and engagement continue to be central to our work programme, with our website development and launch providing improved methods of communicating with citizens, with agreement through the RCC that these should be firmly established as part of our annual stakeholder engagement programme. The twitter feed enables service users and stakeholders to stay up to date and the development of an annual on-line survey provides extended reach and opportunity to engage. Branding and marketing have been central to us raising the profile of the Programme and this is considered in all aspects of our work.

The Profile of the Supporting People Programme in Gwent continues to be raised through the work of the Gwent RCC. The Programmes cross cutting policy framework and its links to the wide range of national, regional and local priorities and strategies, have been recognised. Understanding of the Programmes objectives continues to increase; as further links are made with the established and recently introduced regional and local strategic boards. Examples of key pieces of work undertaken by the Gwent Regional Collaborative Committee and evidenced each year through the annual reviews are provided through the rest of the document.

Case Study Example June 2017: Launch of the Gwent Supporting People Service User Engagement Website



The Gwent Supporting People Regional Collaborative Committee (RCC) set up in 2012; is responsible for making sure that housing related support services are delivering the right results for people using them across Gwent. Since inception the RCC has recognised the importance of being able to engage with a wide range of service users, past and present enabling them to have influence and a voice at the Committees strategic level.

The Regional Collaborative Committee and local Supporting People teams have been working closely with Service Users of Supporting People funded services over the past few years to further develop the range of engagement and consultation opportunities available to them.

The **Gwent Supporting People Service User website** is the culmination of several years of co-produced engagement work and now adds to the already well developed engagement activities that are available across the Gwent region.

On June 20th 2017 the **Gwent Supporting People Service User Engagement website** *the first in Wales* was formally launched by the Deputy Leader of Torfaen Council, Richard Clark and Councillor David Daniels, Executive Member for Communities, Housing and Anti Poverty at the **Gwent Service User Needs Planning Event**..

This was the first regional Service User event held by the Gwent RCC and Supporting People teams. Ninety nine Service Users attended from twenty three organisations delivering projects across some or all Gwent local authority areas.

At the event Service Users had the opportunity to complete the annual survey which they could access on-line through the website, browse the provider stalls and meet their RCC Members. Some comments from the day are included here:

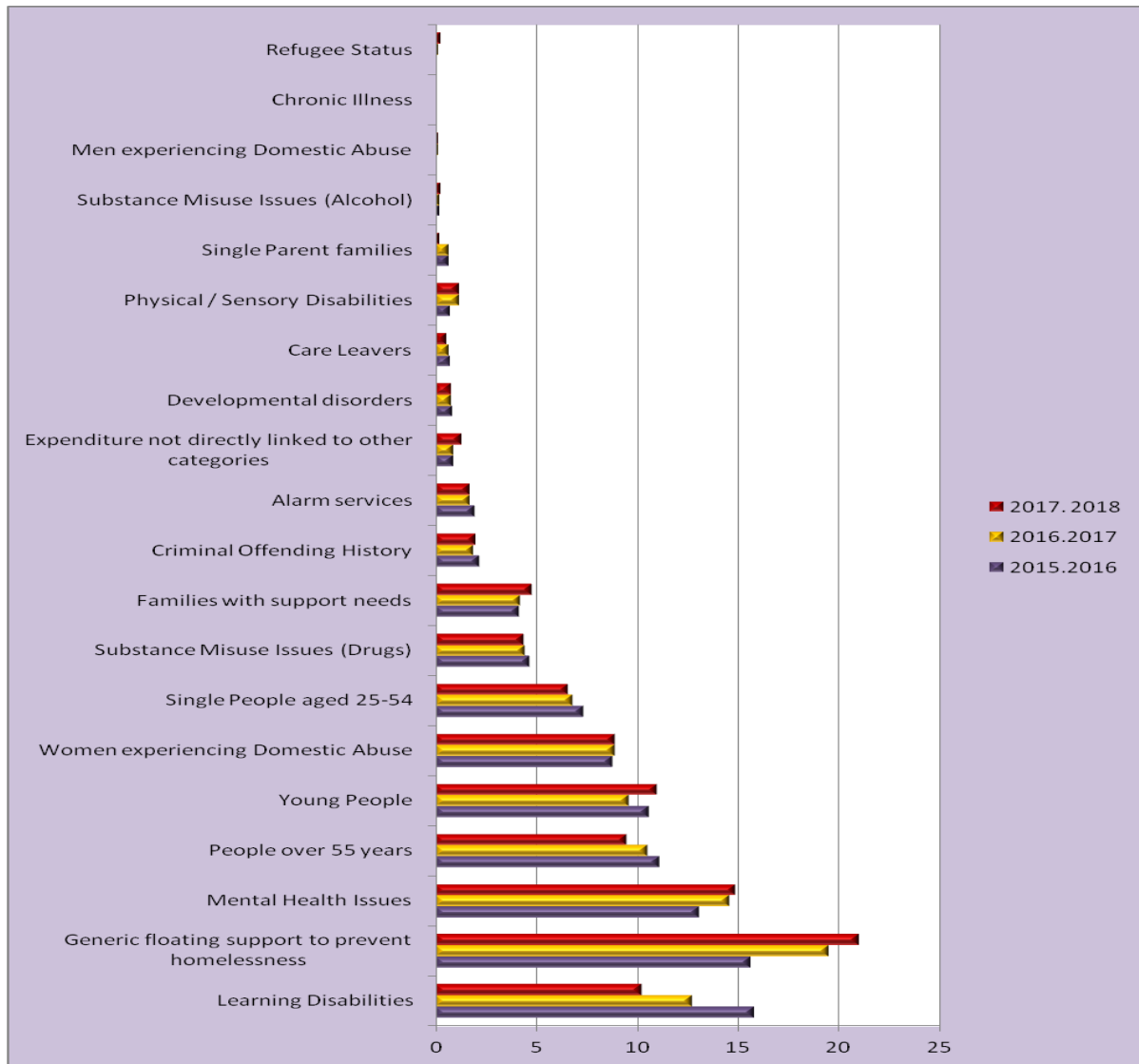
“Fantastic Event” “Having a fab time” “Brilliant day” “Well attended”
“Successful Launch” “Great effort”



Launch Event
Evaluation Report

Spend Comparison

The following chart provides an overview of how spend was allocated against each of the Supporting People client categories in the 2017/2018 spend plan and provides a comparison to the 2016/2017 and 2015/2016 spend plan.



The graph highlights that over 20% (£4,328,998.47) of the total Supporting People budget for Gwent is now spent on generic floating support services to prevent homelessness and the movement of spend across the other top three client categories. The recently introduced new legislation is determining the future direction and delivery of the Supporting People Programme in Gwent; the Supporting People teams, RCC and Local Planning Groups are continuing to develop services that are increasingly preventative in nature in order to meet their requirements to deliver under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Supporting People budget

The Gwent RCC and Supporting People Local Planning Groups continue to consider how potential cuts to the Supporting People budget in future years can be best managed across the region to ensure cost effective quality services continue to be delivered to best meet the needs of citizens in Gwent. The Regional Strategic Plan sets the strategic direction for the Supporting People Programme in Gwent; highlighting the regional priorities and the direction of travel for the Supporting People Programme. This can be viewed on the Gwent RCC pages: <http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/resident/health-wellbeing-social-care/getting-the-help-you-need/supporting-people/gwent-regional-collaborative-committee/> (ctrl/click)

The following table provides an overview of funding received by Supporting People teams since the new Supporting People Programme grant was introduced in 2013.

The figures highlight a fluctuating and more recently a static but uncertain budget that is extremely difficult to strategically plan and commission against. Current advice is that the Supporting People budget is protected for two years, but there is uncertainty of how this will look beyond 2019/2020 if Supporting People grant is included within a new Early Intervention and Prevention fund and in Newport and Torfaen with pilot 100% funding flexibility due to begin from April 2018.

Local Authority	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018 (indicative)
Blaenau Gwent	£2,617,930	£2,699,341	£2,552,176	£2,552,176	£2,552,176
Caerphilly	£6,542,558	£6,592,001	£6,232,790	£6,232,790	£6,232,790
Monmouthshire	£2,171,631	£2,156,785	£2,039,174	£2,039,175	£2,039,175
Newport	£6,670,273	£6,734,211	£6,367,255	£6,367,256	£6,367,256
Torfaen	£3,650,868	£3,636,022	£3,437,833	£3,437,834	£3,437,834
Gwent	£21,653,260	£21,818,360	£20,629,230	£20,629,231	£20,629,231
Wales	£136,333,000	£134,359,000	£124,409,000	£124,409,000	£124,409,000

The following overarching Gwent principles agreed by the RCC in 2014 for managing cuts to the Supporting People budget are still in place and considered as part of the local and regional strategic planning process:

- *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.*

Case Study Examples Annual Review April 2015 – March 2016

Example: To continue the programme of client category and service scrutiny

The Gwent RCC has continued with its programmed review of client categories during 2016 – 2017, providing members with information of services and activity which take place under the Supporting People client categories. At the RCC development day in May 2016 it was agreed that services for People with Mental Health Issues and Young Peoples services would be priorities for the Gwent RCCs 2016 -2017 work plan.

A detailed desktop review of services for People with Mental Health issues was undertaken during 2016 -2017 by the Supporting People Local Authority Planning Officers, with a further workshop organised with both the Supporting People Lead Officers and Planning Officers during February 2017. A detailed report was finalised in March 2017 and presented to the RCC at their April 2017 meeting.

The report provided the RCC with a detailed overview of the range of services currently commissioned for People with Mental Health Issues, an overview of the information collated from the strategic and inclusive needs planning framework during 2016 and some suggested recommendations and actions for the RCC to consider.

The RCC established a Young Peoples Task and Finish Group during this reporting period and the first meeting of the group took place during September 2016. The group recognised that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) were a priority for the Welsh Government and had been highlighted by the Cabinet Secretary as one of his main priorities. The Gwent Regional Collaborative Committee through their Young Peoples Task and Finish group considered the Welsh Adverse Childhood Experiences Study and agreed that it was important to understand how many of these experiences the Gwent Supporting People population may have had personal exposure to.

The group agreed that raising the profile of the Supporting People Programme at a time of uncertainty over the Supporting People budget and highlighting the important work the Programme does to support adults who have had Adverse Childhood Experiences would be the initial piece of work to be undertaken by the group.

It was agreed that a snapshot mapping exercise would be undertaken to map people currently being supported by the Programme to gain an increased understanding of the numbers who may have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences.

A questionnaire was designed and circulated to all support providers across Gwent. It asked support workers to review their case loads as a snap shot on September 30th 2016 and to complete the questionnaire based on the knowledge they had of the person they were supporting. There were limitations to this exercise including a reliance on support workers having this detailed knowledge of the person they are

supporting and whether someone receiving support had disclosed their earlier Adverse Childhood Experiences to their support worker; it raises the question whether Supporting People should be routinely asking about ACEs and if we did how might this influence or change the support intervention that is then delivered.

Analysis of the data highlighted that some populations within the overarching Gwent Supporting People population have experienced a significantly higher amount of Adverse Childhood Experiences than the national average and these experiences may be continuing to impact on their health and wellbeing and their ability to manage and cope during their adult lives. The analysis also provided a snapshot of the number of care leavers currently receiving support.

A briefing was drafted and along with an info graph data and three case studies, this was circulated widely across the region and nationally; with the intention that the results from the mapping exercise would provide senior officials and stakeholders with further evidence and a greater understanding that projects funded under the Supporting People Programme are providing essential and vital services; delivering support to some of our most vulnerable citizens within our communities, preventing and helping to reduce pressure on statutory services such as health and social services.

Collaborative working between the RCCs Young Persons task and finish group with support providers across Gwent, who encouraged their support workers to complete the questionnaire, resulted in 2459 questionnaires being returned. Blaenau Gwent Performance Team Officers helped draft and design the spreadsheet questionnaire and provided support to complete the analysis which enabled this project to be a success. To view the documents please visit the Gwent RCC web pages:

<http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/resident/health-wellbeing-social-care/getting-the-help-you-need/supporting-people/gwent-regional-collaborative-committee/> (ctrl/click)

The client categories; People with Learning Disabilities and Older People Services which were reviewed during the previous reporting period have continued to be reported against on a six monthly basis to the RCC meetings. At the 13th October 2016 RCC meeting it was agreed that reporting against these client categories would form part of the formal local authority quarterly update report, with a section added to the local authority reports to incorporate these updates, providing RCC members with ongoing updates against any recommendations previously agreed.

The main challenges experienced with all the client category reviews is the time needed to complete and draft the detailed overview required for a comprehensive report. What works well is that once signed off by the RCC the reports are circulated to relevant regional planning boards to feed into their planning processes whilst also raising the profile of the Supporting People Programme with other forums and strategic boards across Gwent. Additionally these reports have provided leverage for local authorities to progress the report recommendations within their local authority area.

Case Study Examples Annual Review April 2015 – March 2016

Example 1: Gwent Supporting People case study booklet: *Improving Lives. Preventing Costs*



The Gwent Regional Collaborative Committee recognised during 2014 that coordinating its communications (to ensure that the benefits of the Supporting People Programme continue to be recognised and understood by all stakeholders), was a priority for the Committee.

It was agreed at the Sept 2014 development day that a RCC Communications task and finish group would be established and tasked with co-ordinating its communications and raising the profile of the Gwent Supporting People Programme.

The Communications task and finish group agreed to develop a case study booklet that focused on the stories of people receiving services and the wide range of SP services provided, as well as highlighting

some of the potential cost benefit savings to other statutory stakeholders.

The task and finish group met on regular basis throughout 2015 and from these meetings a case study template was drafted; research was undertaken by the group on cost benefit toolkits and the database that would be used to evidence the costs saved was agreed. This information was then circulated to the Regional Provider Forum (RPF) for information and comment. The RPF provided feedback and suggestions for the template and agreed that all Gwent case studies should be submitted using this template going forward.

Case studies were then requested from support providers across Gwent and a total of 31 were received during the period from across a wide range of Supporting People funded services working in each Gwent Local Authority.

A Support Providers communications team designed and drafted the final glossy layout for the booklet and also provided it in an on-line html format making it easy to circulate on social media and across networks. This formatting also ensured that the booklet was presented in an easily accessible and readable format that encourages greater understanding of the types of services funded by the Supporting People Programme to a wider range of stakeholders.

Once finalised, it was published and circulated to Ministers with Cymorth Cymru's Supporting People Ministerial briefing which made reference to the case study booklet. The booklet was circulated widely across regional and local authority networks to forums, strategic boards, local authority Cabinet members, Councilors and senior management teams and to other interested stakeholders such as Health

and Probation. It was widely promoted on the Gwent Supporting People Twitter account and featured as an article within the SP News in Gwent newsletter. It was further publicised on Community Housing Cymru, Cymorth Cymru's, Gwent RCC and the Local Authority website pages.

The booklet ***“Supporting People: Improving Lives, Preventing Costs”*** is available to view through this link <http://online.fliphtml5.com/jtyt/ssff/> (ctrl/click) and through the on-line Gwent Supporting People publication library links: <http://fliphtml5.com/homepage/ezex> (ctrl/click)

Example 2: Learning Disabilities Services Review

Supporting People services delivered to people with learning disabilities were historically provided based on legacy funding decisions which may in some cases now be considered to be out of date and not in line with the direction of service development that the programme will need to deliver in the future.

The Gwent Supporting People teams and the Gwent Regional Collaborative Committee (RCC) recognised that the review and remodelling of services provided to this client group may deliver savings and efficiencies that could be used to mitigate future cuts to the Supporting People budget, whilst also ensuring that services commissioned meet the priorities of the newly introduced legislation and increased expectations placed on the Programme. It is recognised that by undertaking scrutiny, review and remodelling of services by the RCC to this client category; services will be developed that are of the best quality, preventative in nature, enabling access and offering choice to create a wider range of housing options to people with a learning disability now and in the future.

The Learning Disabilities client group was prioritised for review by the Gwent RCC after the March development day in 2014; a task and finish group was convened to undertake a review of services provided to this client category and it was agreed that they would draft a set of recommendations, that each LA could work towards and report against.

At the initial meeting it was agreed that the “Gwent Allowable Activities” document would need to be reviewed and updated as part of this process; as the original 2007 document, which contained outdated information about the types of support that could be delivered by Supporting People funded projects was still in circulation and being used as a reference document. Contracts Officers from the SP teams met to review and update the document; and once agreed the updated “Gwent Allowable Activities 2015” document was re-launched and circulated widely to stakeholders.

A desktop literature review was undertaken to review best practice for delivery of housing related support services to this client group. Data and statistics from the Gwent Needs Mapping Exercise (GNME) and the regional supply map of services were analysed and collated and relevant information was incorporated within the report; SP teams were able to provide data relating to delivery of services to this client group dating back to 2003 which enabled some detailed comparisons to be made reflecting change in service delivery over the years. Information collated allowed for national, regional and local comparisons to be made and with the

information collated into one document the task and finish group were able to consider the contents and draft some outline principles that could be considered and consulted on.

The document was considered by the RCC and by senior officers from each of the Social Services departments across Gwent, comments and suggestions from these groups were incorporated into the final report.

What went well?

- Working in collaboration to share data and information across the Supporting People teams.
- Collating information into one document for this client category enabled detailed analysis and comparisons to be made.
- Working closely with Heads of Social Services departments across all Gwent local authorities to agree realistic recommendations for future service delivery.
- Scrutiny of this client group was timely and in line with national policy direction being driven from the introduction of the Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

What was achieved?

- Recognition across all LAs that service delivery will need to change to this client group in order to be able to meet future needs is clearly evident from the report.
- A recognition that some current models of service delivery within some Gwent LAs are based on historical funding which may no longer fully meet the eligibility criteria for Supporting People funding.
- Eight recommendations for future service delivery have been agreed by the RCC and by all Gwent Social Services departments, which should enable consistency in service delivery to be achieved across Gwent LAs in the future
- A timeline of April 2016 – March 2018 has been established by the RCC to implement the recommendations contained within the report.
- An up to date “Gwent Allowable Activities” document re-launched and providing clarity to all stakeholders of the types of support that are eligible for funding as part of the terms and conditions of the Supporting People Programme Grant.



Learning Disabilities
Services Review

Case Study Examples Annual Review October 2013 – March 2015

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.

The focus of the development day in March 2014 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.

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.

