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Independent Review of the Supporting People Programme Transition Year Final Report
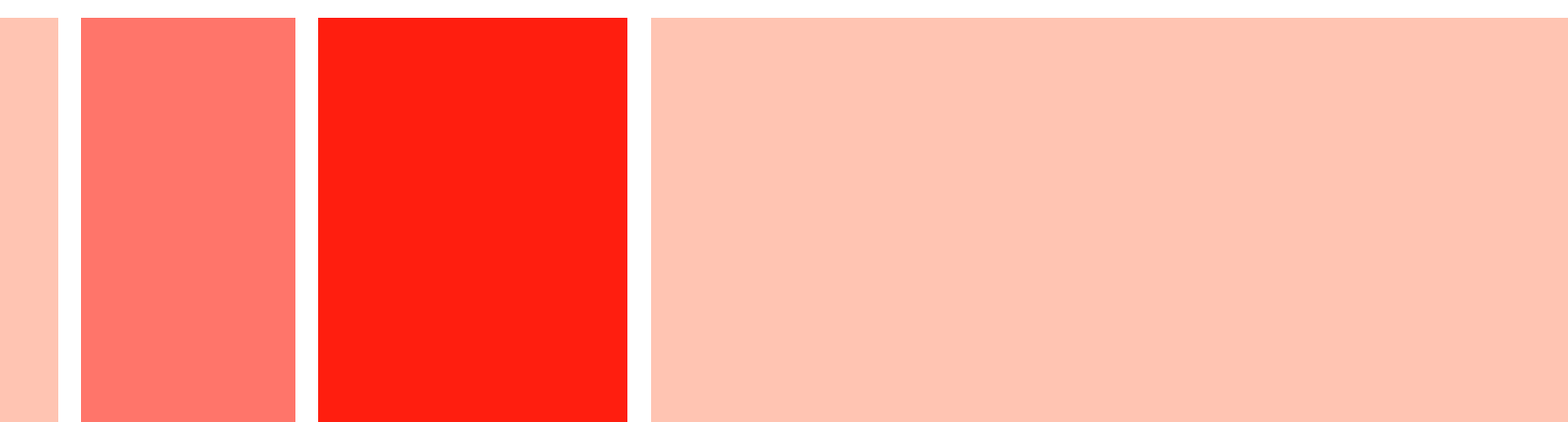
Independent Review of the Supporting People Programme Transition Year

Final Report

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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Glossary of acronyms

ADSS Cymru   Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru

CHC   Community Housing Cymru

GNME   Gwent Needs Mapping Exercise

HLC   Housing Leadership Cymru

LCP   Local Commissioning Plan

MoU   Memorandum of Understanding

PCC   Officer of the Police and Crime Commissioner

RCC   Regional Collaborative Committee

RCP   Regional Commissioning Plan

RDC   Regional Development Coordinator

RSG   Revenue Support Grant

SPIN   Supporting People Information Network

SPNAB   Supporting People National Advisory Board

SPG   Supporting People Grant

SPPG   Supporting People Programme Grant

SPRG   Supporting People Revenue Grant

WAO   Welsh Audit Office

WLGA   Welsh Local Government Association

Executive Summary

Overview and method

1. In March 2014, Miller Research Ltd in association with Shelter Cymru were commissioned by Welsh Government to undertake an independent review of the Supporting People Programme following its transition to new structures in 2012.

2. The Supporting People Programme was launched across the UK in 2003 and aims to help vulnerable people gain and retain independence by remaining in their own homes and by providing a range of housing related support services. In Wales, up to 2012, the Programme comprised two funding streams: one administered directly by Welsh Government to support service and housing providers; the other administered by local authorities. A review of the Programme was commissioned in 2009, led by Professor Sir Mansel Aylward. It recommended merging the two funding streams into a single Supporting People Programme Grant (SPPG) and creating a revised governance structure for the Programme. The Programme's new structures were launched in 2012 and comprise a Supporting People National Advisory Board (SPNAB) to provide advice on the Programme to the Minister for Housing and Regeneration and Regional Collaborative Committees (RCCs) to provide advice to local authorities and other local stakeholders on the regional and local delivery of the grant. Local authorities are allocated the SPPG to directly contract with support service and housing providers. The Programme currently provides approximately £134 million support for around 70,000 people in Wales.

3. The aim of the research was to review the various structures underpinning the Supporting People Programme since the implementation of the re-launched programme in August 2012 and to make recommendations regarding their future.

4. To address this aim the objectives of the Review were to:
   i. Assess the effectiveness of the programme planning and commissioning arrangements for Supporting People, in terms of (both at local and national level):

- Planning and commissioning structure and interrelation between national, regional and local arrangements
- Membership
- Engagement
- Impact/Influence
- Stakeholder awareness
- Delivery of regional commissioning

    ii.   Identify best practice and innovation.

   iii.   Identify areas for improvement or action.

   iv.   Prioritise recommendations regarding the future of the programme.

5. The research programme comprised: a desk review of key documents relating to the programme; semi-structured interviews with 82 individuals involved in the management and delivery of the programme at regional and national levels; and group interviews/ workshops with Cymorth Cymru, Supporting People Information Network (SPIN) and Regional Development Coordinators (RDC).

Key findings

6. The potential of the post Aylward Supporting People Programme structures is recognised and there is a strong will to make regional collaboration and co-production work for the benefit of some of the most vulnerable groups in society. The SPNAB and RCCs have been praised for raising the profile of the Programme both within local and national government and with partner statutory organisations.

7. The role of the SPNAB is seen as crucial in providing strategic oversight and leadership for the Programme. It draws its membership from a range of stakeholder and partnership organisations although understanding and engagement of some members is variable. There are perceptions that the SPNAB has become overly involved in the operational detail of the Programme and that it needs to provide more leadership for the Programme.

8. The role and remit of the Programme's Steering Board is unclear with suggestions that it is duplicating many of the discussions held at the SPNAB. While the workstreams are seen as important there is a lack of clarity regarding their membership, outputs, timescales and accountability.

9. RCCs have brought together a range of regional stakeholders, delivery partners and statutory partner organisations. There is a lack of clarity amongst some stakeholders about RCC function and expectations of their performance. Furthermore there are perceptions that RCCs have been required to frequently (and often unnecessarily) report to the SPNAB with little feedback in return. The Programme's high level principles are vague and it has been challenging for RCCs to assess their performance against them.

10. The extent of regional commissioning taken place to date has been varied and influenced by historical arrangements for the Programme in each region, with more activity in areas with a tradition of regional working such as North Wales and Gwent.

11. RCCs are perceived to: lack the power or authority to make decisions and hold members to account (e.g. many of the current Regional Commissioning Plans are based on an amalgamation of Local Commissioning Plans); lack understanding to scrutinise and challenge as not all members fully understand the Programme and/ or the wider regional strategic context; and increase bureaucracy and workload for many of their members.

12. Areas such as Gwent and North Wales have a legacy of regional collaborative working pre-dating the introduction of the post Aylward structures that took many years to develop, consequently effective collaboration amongst RCC members in other areas is likely to take some time to 'bed in'. Most RCC activity has been around developing member understanding, developing priorities and needs assessment with more progress being made in RCCs where there has been a tradition of regional working. Regional and sub-regional schemes have been commissioned or extended in Cwm Taf, Gwent, Mid and West and North Wales RCCs.

13. RCC membership is seen as representative of regional stakeholders; however there is a lack consensus over whether it would be more beneficial for RCC members to be senior officers with knowledge of wider regional strategies, budgetary and decision making powers or operational officers with an in depth knowledge and understanding of the Programme. In some RCCs input and understanding of statutory partner organisation members is variable.

14. The organisational role of the RCC Chair (e.g. cabinet member, provider or senior officer) is seen as less important than the need to have the appropriate skills, knowledge and competencies to undertake the role.

15. The Regional Development Coordinator (RDC) role is integral to the RCC but there is a lack of clarity over the role and variation in its function across RCCs.

16. The emphasis on service user engagement in the Programme has been recognised although it has proved challenging to implement given the extent of the client groups covered. RCCs have adopted a range of methods often drawing on existing fora to engage service users.

Recommendations

17. The current Supporting People Programme structures should be retained and revisited once decisions have been made regarding the recommendations made by the Williams Review in relation to the reorganisation of local government.

18. The strategic vision for the Programme should be clarified and communicated. This will drive the structures, governance, management and delivery of the Programme and address many of the current issues around leadership and clarity of function. The following actions are recommended:
   - Re-defining the Programme's high level principles and the development of indicators to enable assessment of Programme and RCC performance against them.
   - Clarify and communicate the roles and responsibilities of the SPNAB, Welsh Government and RCCs.
   - Identification and communication of good practice in service design and delivery that can be adapted for local context.

- Ensuring there is common understanding that a robust evidence base, informed by the Outcomes Framework, for the impacts and outcomes of Supporting People funding is required to secure future funding for the programme.

19. When appropriate the SPNAB needs to consider the appropriateness of radical proposals such as potential adjustments to the current funding arrangements for organisations that are not compliant with the Programme.

20. The role and function of the Steering Board should be revisited to assess whether it can contribute to the delivery of the Programme or if task and finish groups (see 21) could report directly to the SPNAB.

21. The workstreams should be replaced by time bound task and finish groups with clear membership, remit and lines of accountability.

22. Welsh Government should explore the opportunities for increasing RCC influence through the use of alternative commissioning models such as Substance Misuse Area Planning Boards. This may incentivise engagement and collaboration of RCC members.

23. Linkages between the Supporting People Programme remit and other Welsh Government policy areas including health, social care and communities need strengthening at the national and regional levels:
- Welsh Government and RCCs should to look at the linkages between Supporting People and other Welsh Government funding streams including Families First, Communities First and Flying Start.
- RCCs should strengthen relationships with regional health and social care groups.

24. Communication of the Programme's strategic vision and decision making as well as expectations of RCC performance should be more explicit:

- Annual or six monthly meetings between the Minister, the SPNAB, key Welsh Government officials and RCC Chairs/ Vice Chairs will reinforce the strategic vision and leadership for the Programme.
- SPNAB and Steering Board meeting minutes, workplans and documentation need to be circulated in a timelier manner.
- Decision making and other salient Programme updates need to be consistently communicated both at a national and regional level.

25. RCCs should be given more freedom to adapt processes and practice to local contexts. Requirements for RCC monitoring and reporting should be fit for purpose and reduced where deemed necessary.

26. Welsh Government officials should undertake a capacity building role to support RCCs to meet the strategic vision. Activities could include:
- Facilitating communication across RCCs to share commissioning and service user engagement good practice.
- Feeding back workstream activity.
- Developing existing networks e.g. RDC network.

27. Welsh Government should consider developing a generic role description outlining the knowledge, skills and competencies expected of an RCC Chair. The organisational role of the RCC Chair should be left to individual RCC discretion.

28. The RDC role should be clarified and standardised across the RCCs. Opportunities for increasing the focus of the role on partnership and relationship building with other strategic regional groups should be explored.

29. Service user engagement should be more meaningful and representative of the Programme's client groups and built into the Programme's Outcomes Framework. Welsh Government should share existing good practice and RCCs should look towards developing more service user-focused methods of performance measurement.

1 Introduction

Introduction

1.1 In March 2014, Miller Research Ltd in association with Shelter Cymru were commissioned by Welsh Government to undertake an independent review of the Supporting People Programme following its transition to new structures in 2012.

Aims and Objectives

Aim

1.2 The aim of the research was to review the various Programme structures underpinning the Supporting People Programme since the implementation of the re-launched Programme in August 2012 and make recommendations regarding their future.

Objectives

1.3 To address this aim the objectives of the Review were to:

   i. Assess the effectiveness of the Programme planning and commissioning arrangements for Supporting People, in terms of (both at local and national level):

   - Planning and commissioning structure and interrelation between national, regional and local arrangements
   - Membership
   - Engagement
   - Impact/Influence
   - Stakeholder awareness
   - Delivery of regional commissioning

   ii. Identify best practice and innovation.

   iii. Identify areas for improvement or action.

   iv. Prioritise recommendations regarding the future of the Programme

Research tasks and activities

1.4 In order to address the objectives above, the review explored and assessed:

    i.   The suitability of the Programme structure and governance to deliver effective regional commissioning; including an assessment of Programme governance, as outlined above.

    ii.   How effectively each Regional Collaborative Committee (RCC) was operating in terms of their role and the high level principles specified in the Supporting People Programme Grant guidance, including specific exploration of:

- Whether the correct stakeholders are represented on each RCC;
- Whether and to what extent members engage with the commissioning process;
- Whether effective arrangements for service users to influence commissioning decisions are in place;
- The nature of each RCC's achievements to date; and
- Whether the group is making effective use of the Regional Development Coordinator (RDC).

    iii.   The role and effectiveness of the Supporting People National Advisory Board (SPNAB), including evaluating whether the correct people are on the Board, their level of engagement and achievements to date, as well as awareness of the Board amongst other groups within Supporting People and the wider stakeholder and service user community.

    iv.   The role of and requirement for the various work groups and workstreams involved with the Supporting People Programme; including how they relate to the SPNAB and the impact they have.

    v.   The views of the wider Supporting People community (including local authorities, RCCs and service providers) on the various structures to determine whether they are considered effective (in terms of the issues outlined above).

    vi.   Examples of innovative or best practice identified across the Supporting People Programme.

Structure of report

1.5 The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 Methodology – outlines the approach to conducting the review.

- Chapter 3 Context – provides a detailed background on the history and development of the Programme in Wales.

- Chapter 4 Findings – presents key findings from the primary research Programme.

- Chapter 5 Conclusions and Recommendations – presents evidence based conclusions, identifies areas for improvement and suggests recommendations for the future structures/delivery of the Programme.

2   Methodology

Introduction

2.1   Given the complex issues to be examined by the review a qualitative research programme was implemented. The research programme was designed to ensure both geographical breadth and representation of Supporting People stakeholders at the national and regional levels of the Programme. Primary research commenced in April 2014 and was completed in early July 2014. Scoping interviews with three stakeholders (representatives of an RCC, the SPNAB and the Supporting People Steering Group) informed the development of topic guides for the wider research programme (see Appendix I).

2.2   A Steering Group comprising Welsh Government officials and representatives of Community Housing Cymru (CHC), Cymorth Cymru, a local authority Supporting People officer and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) provided oversight and scrutiny to the review.

Methodology

Desk review

2.3   A review of national, local and regional documentation relating to the Supporting People Programme provided a contextual understanding of the Programme and informed assessment of the outputs and progress of Supporting People national bodies and RCCs. Documents reviewed are listed in Appendix II.

Interview programme

2.4   A purposive sampling approach was implemented to ensure interviewees from all interested organisations were represented in the research programme. Eighty-two semi-structured interviews were conducted with:

- National stakeholders including members of:
  - SPNAB;
  - Steering Board;
  - Workstreams; and

- Other relevant individuals (e.g. Welsh Government Officers, Ministerial Advisors).

  The National Stakeholder sample was selected to ensure coverage of all organisations involved (e.g. Welsh Government, CHC, Cymorth Cymru, WLGA, Probation, Health and independent members).

- Regional stakeholders including:
  - RCC Chairs;
  - RDCs;
  - A sample of local authority Supporting People Leads; and
  - A sample of provider (housing and support services) representative from all RCCs.

2.5 An in depth consultation with all six RCCs was not feasible within the resource and timescales of the review. However, a more in depth consultation was conducted in three RCCs. Cwm Taf, Mid and West Wales and North Wales RCCs were selected to reflect their location and number of composite local authorities. In these RCCs, in addition to the individuals listed in 2.4 interviews were also conducted with:

- Additional local authority representatives;
- Additional provider representatives
- Representatives of statutory organisations (health and probation);
- The Vice Chair; and
- Cabinet Members

RCC meetings were observed to provide a richer contextual understanding of committee dynamics.

2.6 It was originally intended that the in depth consultation of three RCCs would be developed into individual case studies; however as the data collection progressed, it became clear that the issues and experiences identified in the case study RCCs differed little from those RCCs that were undergoing less consultation. While the analysis and subsequent report were enhanced by the additional information provided by the case studies, the similarities in issues

and experiences negated the need for this information to be presented separately as individual case studies within this report.

Workshops and focus groups

2.7 Workshops and focus groups with Supporting People Information Network (SPIN), RDCs and at a Cymorth Board meeting facilitated discussion about the new structures and recommendations for future delivery.

Data analysis

2.8 Data analysis was conducted using a framework approach whereby a research framework based on the review objectives and activities (paragraphs 1.2 to 1.4) guided analysis.

2.9 A process of data triangulation was adopted in which information collected from the various sources of data (documentation review, interviews and focus groups) was collated to verify findings and check for regularities.

Data collection

Data collection scope

2.10 Eighty two semi-structured interviews were conducted. As many of these interviewees sat on a range of committees and groups relating to the new structures (e.g. there were interviewees who sat on the Steering Group, workstreams and a RCC) an interview with one individual would often enable us to achieve a greater representation of the different boards and groups associated with Supporting People. To ensure anonymity of research participants, where quotes have been used they have been attributed either to a National Stakeholder or Regional Stakeholder[1].

2.11 Table 1 illustrates the scope of the interview programme by Supporting People group:

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[1] In order to ensure anonymity, where quotes have been used by individuals who sit on Supporting People multiple groups they have been attributed according to the topic under discussion e.g. if a quote about an RCC has been taken from an individual who sits on a RCC and a workstream they have been credited as a Regional Stakeholder.

Table 1: Number of representatives of each Supporting People stakeholder group consulted

Organisation	Number of representatives of each group consulted
National Stakeholders	
SPNAB	10
Steering Board	13
Workstreams	11
Other e.g. Welsh Government Officers, Ministerial Advisors etc	6
Regional Stakeholders	
Chairs/ Vice Chairs	9
Cabinet Members	5
Supporting People local authority lead officers	17
Housing and Support Services Providers	21
Probation	2
Health	2
Regional Development Coordinators	6
Total	*102*

Data collection experience

2.12 Overall, the primary research programme achieved a balance in terms of the number of individuals consulted and their group e.g. local authority, provider, Welsh Government, etc. Representation of statutory organisations (health and probation) and cabinet members in the primary research was less than anticipated despite concerted efforts to consult these groups. However we feel this is reflective of their level of engagement in the Supporting People Programme which has been variable at both national and regional level[2].

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[2] See paragraphs 4.14 and 4.54

3   Context

Introduction

3.1   The purpose of this section is to provide a brief background on the history and development of the Supporting People Programme in Wales. This preface is integral to understanding the issues identified in Chapter 4 as well as informing the conclusions and recommendations presented in Chapter 5.

History of the Supporting People Programme

Supporting People Programme 2003 - 2010

3.2   The Supporting People Programme was launched across the UK in 2003 and aimed to help vulnerable people to gain and retain independence by remaining in their own homes and by providing a range of housing related support services. It brought together seven separate housing related funding streams into a single ring-fenced fund. In England and Scotland the Programme was administered by local authorities; in Northern Ireland it is administered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. Up to 2012 the Programme in Wales comprised two funding streams: the Supporting People Revenue Grant (SPRG) administered by the Welsh Government directly to support providers for floating support for homeless and young people, homeless hostels, domestic abuse refuges and supported living for young people; and the Supporting People Grant (SPG) administered by local authorities for the identified support costs of sheltered schemes, community alarm services and community care schemes. In Wales the Programme currently provides approximately £134 million of support for around 70,000 people[3.] Analysis of Supporting People investment in Wales (2006)

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[3] Client groups are: older people; people fleeing domestic violence; people with learning difficulties; people with mental health problems; people suffering from alcohol dependency; people suffering from drug dependency; refugees; people with physical disabilities who require support; young single homeless who require support and young people leaving care; ex-offenders; people who are homeless or potentially homeless and in need of support; people with chronic illness including AIDS, AIDS-related conditions or who are HIV positive; and vulnerable single parents who require support.

found that there was a £1.68 saving to the public purse for every £1 spent by the Programme on housing related support services[4.]

3.3 However by 2004 it was clear that the distribution of money in England, Scotland and Wales was unequal, reflecting provision of existing services rather than need[5]. In contrast Northern Ireland's central commissioning model had ensured a distribution based on need[6]. By 2009 the Programme in Scotland[7] and England ceased to be 'ring-fenced' and local authorities were no longer required to spend this funding on housing related support. In 2011 Supporting People funding in Scotland and England became a non-differentiated part of the Formula Grant and decisions about where to allocate these funds are now entirely at the discretion of the local authorities. In Wales there had been issues relating to the funding and administration of the grant since 2003. There was work in 2006 and 2008 to assess whether local authorities should administer both funding streams but it was inconclusive and no action was taken. In 2010 the Programme in Wales came under further scrutiny as a result of the commissioning of a review conducted by Professor Sir Mansel Aylward which had a remit to provide the then Deputy Minister of Housing, Jocelyn Davies with advice on the current arrangements, systems and resources around the Programme and to make recommendations on how these could be strengthened.

Aylward Review

3.4 The 'Aylward Review' made 25 recommendations regarding the allocation, governance and delivery of funding for the Supporting People Programme in Wales. Unlike in England and Scotland, the Review advocated the continued ring fencing of the grant outside of the

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4 Matrix Research and Consultancy (September 2006) „Costs and Benefits of Supporting People" Report for the Welsh Assembly Government Matrix. London
5 Aylward M, Bailey K, Philips, C, Cox, K and Higgins, E (2010)The Supporting People Programme in Wales: Final report on a Review commissioned by Jocelyn Davies AM, Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration, Welsh Assembly Government, Cardiff
6 Ibid.
7 Ring fence for Supporting People Programme funding was removed in Scotland in 2008 and in England in 2009

Revenue Support Grant (RSG). Other key recommendations included the unifying of the two funding streams into a single grant, a new distribution formula and a revised governance structure for its administration including the establishment of a Supporting People National Advisory Board (SPNAB) to be chaired by the Deputy Minister to provide independent advice and information. The Review placed a strong emphasis on the need for a collaborative approach across local authorities, housing and support providers, health services, probation and other relevant organisations with an *"abiding emphasis on co-design and co-production"* (p.10). The review advocated the establishment of multi-sectorial collaborative committees within each local authority boundary whose remit should include the planning, commissioning, procuring and monitoring of services (p. 70). Acknowledging the potential of regional working, in particular the approach in Gwent and North Wales[8], the Review suggested that these local collaborative committees could act as an interim measure in progressing towards cross boundary arrangements.

3.5   The Review also considered the strengths and weaknesses of regional working or cross-boundary working. Identified strengths included: stronger team working; meeting the needs of some clients e.g. substance misusers and victims of domestic abuse who often travel cross local authority boundary; efficiencies for providers e.g. single regional reporting references. Identified weaknesses included: reluctance of some local authorities to work regionally; differing agendas of some local authorities; lack of a clear 'region' in some areas; and potential for bureaucracy to be increased (p. 51).

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[8] The Review noted at the time of writing that the regional working in Gwent and North Wales had been more operational than strategic in nature.

Post Aylward Review Supporting People Programme

Overall structures

3.6   In 2012 the Welsh Government published guidance on the new arrangements for the Programme[9.] The new grant – the Supporting People Programme Grant (SPPG) – was ring fenced and allocated to local authorities who were to contract directly with support service and housing providers. A set of five high level principles to underpin the Programme were agreed: improvement to services and outcomes to the end user; probity, accountability, transparency and scrutiny; implementation based upon the principles of equality, collaboration and co-production; provision of strategic oversight and direction in line with national, regional and local strategy and Supporting People Commissioning plans; and a system underpinned by a robust and enforceable regime of governance. Figure 1 presents the structures for the Supporting People at the time of data collection commencing in April 2014.

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9 Welsh Government (2013) Supporting People Programme Grant (SPPG) Guidance – Wales, Welsh Government. Cardiff

Figure 1: Post-Aylward Review Supporting People Programme Structures (April 2014)
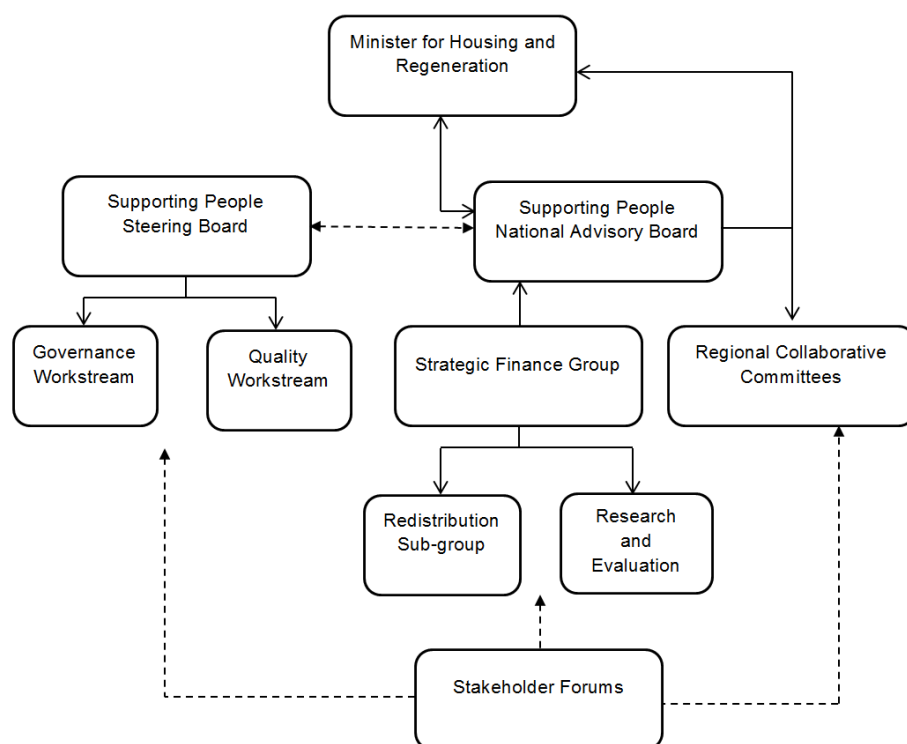
Regional Collaborative Committees

3.7   The 2010 Simpson Review[10] and subsequent 'Compact for Change[11,]' underlined the benefits of collaboration for achieving effective service delivery. Influenced by this broader Welsh Government policy agenda focus on increased regional working, the local multi-sectorial committees advocated by the Aylward Review were applied to a regional level. Six Regional Collaborative Committees (RCCs) (see Table 2) aligned with Health Board boundaries were established with the aim:

> *"To provide advice to local authorities and other local stakeholders, and through the SPNAB, to the Welsh Ministers on regional and local collaborative delivery of the Supporting People Programme to ensure the most efficient and effective services are delivered. The RCCs will inform and advise the Welsh Ministers on the production of proposed Supporting*

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[10] http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/localgov/110325lnrservicesv2en.pdf
[11] http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dpsp/publications/110812compacten.pdf

People Commissioning plans for the allocation of grant against agreed priorities"[12] (p. 14).

Table 2: Regional Collaborative Committees

RCC	Coordinating local authority	Other RCC local authorities
Gwent	Blaenau Gwent	Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen.
Vale and Cardiff	Vale of Glamorgan	Cardiff
Cwm Taf	Merthyr Tydfil	Rhondda Cynon Taff
North Wales	Conwy	Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Wrexham, Anglesey
Mid and West Wales	Pembrokeshire	Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Powys
Western Bay	Neath Port Talbot	Bridgend, Swansea

3.8   The RCCs do not have executive powers and functions and the Guidance states that membership should comprise: local authority Cabinet Members (or delegated officials in their absence); health; probation; providers (representing long term and short term services)[13][14]; and service user representation. Members can be co-opted at the discretion of the RCC but will not have voting rights; and appropriate local authority officers. The Guidance also states that Welsh Government officials can attend the RCCs, but do not have voting rights. It is required that RCCs should meet a minimum of once a quarter and should be chaired by a local authority member with the position of Vice Chair occupied by the representative of another agency.

3.9   The RCC's are coordinated by one member local authority who have the responsibility of coordinating local commissioning plans and support regional partnership working. The RCCs also employ a Regional Coordinator (RDC), a role funded by the Welsh Government but

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[12] Welsh Government (2013) Supporting People Programme Grant (SPPG) Guidance – Wales, Welsh Government. Cardiff
[13] Providers receive support from Cymorth Cymru and CHC but do not need to be members
[14] The Guidance stated that the number of local authority members should be equal to the number of landlord and support provider places.

employed by the coordinating local authority. The Welsh Government provided a job specification[15][16] for the role which details the RDC's purpose and key tasks including: working with the RCC Chair to manage and set agendas and commission papers for RCC meetings; providing a secretariat role to the RCC; working with regional stakeholders to facilitate the agreement of regional priorities; working closely with representative bodies to assist in ensuring provider and landlord representatives are fully engaged and supported to carry out their roles effectively; analysing information submitted to the RCC; undertaking specific pieces of work as requested by the RCC; supporting the RCC to establish procedures for how the RCC will work and regional arrangements for regional planning and commissioning; and working closely with Welsh Government officials.

3.10 The RCCs were established between January and November 2012 and are required to report on progress and performance to Welsh Government on annual basis in September. At the time of writing, these reports had been reviewed by the governance workstream. RCCs have also submitted RCPs outlining spend for the 2014-2017 period.

3.11 There are also a number of national and regional groups that both have an interest in the Supporting People Programme and whose members may also sit on RCCs or be involved in the management and delivery of the Programme: Supporting People Information Network (SPIN); Cymorth Cymru supported Regional Provider Forums; CHC Supported Housing Services Forum. These groups pre-date and operate separately to the formal Programme structures.

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[15] Welsh Government (2012) Regional Development Coordination Advertisement and Person Specification v2.0
[16] The job specification notes that: *"the Salary range of the post may vary from authority to authority depending on local employment policy"* (p.2).

Supporting People National Advisory Board

3.12 As recommended by the Aylward Review the SPNAB has been established to:

> *"provide advice to the Minister for Housing and Regeneration, and to make sure that the Supporting People Programme is focused on meeting the housing-related needs of vulnerable people in Wales"[17] (p.12)*

3.13 Up to June 2013 the SPNAB was chaired by the Minister for Housing and Regeneration; since then an Independent Member has acted as Chair. The Head of Housing Policy Division sits on the board, alongside representatives of the following organisations: WLGA; Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru (ADSS); Public Health Wales; CHC; Cymorth Cymru; Housing Leadership Cymru; Wales Probation Trust; and three independent individuals (including the current Chair). The Board meets four times a year and publishes its minutes and workplan on the Welsh Government website[18].

Steering Board, workstreams and other groups

3.14 A Steering Board, workstreams (quality, governance) and working groups (strategic finance, redistribution, research and evaluation) were set up to deliver the Aylward Review's recommendations. Membership comprises representatives of: Welsh Government, Cymorth Cymru, CHC, WLGA, Welsh Audit Office (WAO), Probation Trust, RCCs and support service and housing providers.

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[17] Welsh Government (2013) Supporting People Programme Grant (SPPG) Guidance – Wales, Welsh Government. Cardiff
[18] http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housing-and-regeneration/services-and-support/supporting-people/national-advisory-board/?lang=en

Wider developments

3.15 The commissioning of this review and its subsequent conduct needs to be considered in light of a number of policy developments and ongoing reviews which have occurred since the implementation of the new Supporting People structures.

Williams Review

3.16 Since the introduction of the new Supporting People structures, the findings of the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery (2014)[19] (also known as 'the Williams Review') has been published. In light of the current challenging financial climate, the Review strongly recommends the reorganisation of local government in Wales in order to effectively manage demand for public services. Several options for reorganisation are presented, all of which include the reduction and restructuring of local authorities and the creation of new local government boundaries. The review also acknowledges the Welsh Government's role in facilitating and driving collaboration but suggests collaboration should not be an end in itself and recommends that: outcomes of collaboration should be defined; law, funding and legislation should facilitate not hinder collaboration; and that detailed models for collaboration should not be prescribed where there are viable alternatives. A decision about the outcomes of the Review is likely to be made after the end of the current Assembly term.

Governance review

3.17 In August 2013 a review of long-term RCC governance options was published[20]. The review sought to address the challenges that have been identified around a collaborative un-constituted body making spending decisions in relation to a grant administered by local authorities. The review developed three options:

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[19] Williams, P (2014) Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery. Welsh Government, Cardiff.
[20] Grace, C, Bennett M, and Martin, S on behalf of UK RCS (2013) Supporting People Programme in Wales. Welsh Government, Cardiff.

- Option one – a stronger local government focus, coupled with a statutory duty to address 'Supporting People' needs.

- Option two – place the RCCs on a statutory footing and/or become corporate legal entities.

- Option three – develop a combination of RCCs established by Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), but linked to legally binding grant conditions on local authorities which confer real authority and leverage on the RCCs.

3.18 Option three was proposed as the most credible option as it enabled that SPPG money would remain with local government as recommended in the Aylward Review but it would come with legal conditions that would require local authorities to disburse it in accordance to the strategic plan developed by the RCC. The MoU would establish the RCC's roles and responsibilities, in particular the underlying principle of the RCC being a collaborative, multi-sectorial body.

Memorandum of Understanding

3.19 During data collection the MoU was published for consultation amongst Supporting People stakeholders. The MoU aims to clarify the roles and responsibilities of RCC members, particularly the relationship between the RCC and local authorities. In a consultation exercise separate to this review, the Welsh Government has asked stakeholders to feedback on five areas: clarity of the MoU; RCC member roles and responsibilities; RCC membership; RCC and Welsh Government roles; and other comments. While views on the MoU and its consequences for the role and function of RCCs have not specifically been sought in this review, interviewees have shared their views on it and these have been considered where relevant.

4 Findings

Introduction

4.1   This section will present the common findings thematically. The findings draw on interviews and workshops with more than eighty individuals involved in the management and delivery of the Programme. Regardless of organisational background (e.g. provider or local authority) there was a common understanding of and views on the Post Aylward structures; however views expressed by specific groups or organisations are indicated in the text.

Understanding and views on post Aylward restructuring

Rationale

4.2   Interviewees understood the rationale for the new structures to be underpinned by the need to achieve greater equality in the delivery of the Supporting People Programme and to improve services for vulnerable people in a challenging financial climate.

4.3   Many interviewees felt that the establishment of RCCs addressed the Welsh Government's regional agenda and offered a compromise to the major Supporting People delivery partners. Some interviewees suggested that there had been concerns regarding the potential implications of removing the Programme funding's 'ring-fenced' status and there was the perception amongst providers that local authorities would be reluctant to fund services for some vulnerable groups.

Appropriateness of new structures

4.4   Interviewees were asked about the appropriateness of the new structures in delivering the Supporting People Programme and there was broad agreement that the ethos of co-production and collaboration underpinning the new structures was valid.

> *"the new structures have been good at letting people input to the operational details, other [Welsh Government] directorates are much more closed."* (National Stakeholder)

4.5 The formalisation of regional collaborative working through the RCCs was welcomed, with many local authorities having already undertaken a degree of local and regional collaborative working. Some interviewees felt that local level collaborative groups should have been developed before the RCCs and this would have facilitated the process of moving towards collaboration on a regional scale.

4.6 There was some acknowledgement that because the RCCs were aligned with existing regional footprints, there is imbalance in terms of the number of authorities included in each RCC e.g. North Wales RCC covers six local authorities whereas Cwm Taf, and Vale and Cardiff comprise two local authorities. Many interviewees also noted that any outcomes of the Williams review may have implications for the current regional structure of the Programme.

4.7 A common concern voiced by interviewees was that the structures do not proffer sufficient authority for the RCCs. Their remit was perceived as being an inevitable compromise between the demands of local authorities who are accountable for the budget and providers, some of whom feared that Supporting People funding would not be spent appropriately:

> *"Local authorities wanted a body that scrutinised, advised and acted as a critical friend. Providers wanted RCCs to have more decision making powers, so we ended up with a half-way house and as a result there is a lack of understanding in their purpose and six very different RCCs".* (National Stakeholder)

4.8 The purpose and effectiveness of the individual boards, groups and committees that make up the new Supporting People structures will be examined in detail in subsequent sections.

Supporting People National Advisory Board (SPNAB)

Purpose and effectiveness of the SPNAB

4.9　There was consensus over the SPNAB's purpose as a high level strategic and advisory body described by one interviewee as:

> *"guardian of the Programme"* (National Stakeholder)

4.10　Seen as having a crucial role in protecting the Supporting People Programme from reductions in spending, it was felt that its responsibilities should include providing strategic direction, governance and oversight of the Programme as well as advising the Minister on issues such as how reductions in budget could/should be applied.

4.11　However there were concerns that SPNAB's ability perform its strategic role had been hindered by a tendency to get waylaid by detail that should be examined by other groups involved in the Programme:

> *"It should be advisory and strategic but is getting bogged down in the detail looking at individual RCC meeting reports and creating another layer of bureaucracy. It should delegate more of the detail to working groups and Welsh Government officials".* (National Stakeholder)

4.12　While the SPNAB Chair's attendance at RCC meetings was welcomed by many interviewees, including RCC members themselves, some felt that this was beyond the strategic remit of the SPNAB and unnecessary given the attendance of Welsh Government officials at RCC meetings.

Membership and engagement

4.13　Despite these concerns regarding its strategic remit, the fundamental concept of the SPNAB in terms of its role and representation of Supporting People stakeholder organisations was seen as valid.

4.14　Overall the membership of the SPNAB was deemed to be representative with no obvious omissions, although a small number of people suggested that the Youth Justice Board may be able to make a useful

contribution given Supporting People's work with young people. A small number of interviewees suggested that the SPNAB could also consider some form of service user representation given the requirement for RCCs to do so (although it was acknowledged that in reality this would be difficult to achieve for many of the same reasons that RCCs face as identified in 4.64 below). The contribution of independent members was valued by many interviewees for their commitment, engagement and neutrality and for bringing a different perspective. Some interviewees commented that the engagement and levels of understanding of the Programme by some statutory organisation representatives was variable.

4.15 The majority of interviewees agreed that the current level of individual representative tended to be at organisational director level and this was essential for giving the Programme the profile it requires, however this did raise some concerns regarding the extent of communication back to the operational delivery of the Programme:

> *"the issue is about how well the representatives sitting on the Board communicate information back to their organisations ... it's about disseminating the information beyond the Board members."* (National Stakeholder)

4.16 Reflecting on the appointment of an independent member to the role of Chair of the SPNAB in July 2013 following the Minister's decision to step down from the role, the majority of interviewees felt that this had had a positive impact and had enabled more open discussions within the Board.

4.17 There were concerns by some interviewees that co-production and collaboration was driving the agenda rather than the Welsh Government providing leadership and there was the risk of decision making by committee both at national and regional levels:

> *"..despite the many benefits that collaboration brings it does make everything 'messy' and it can be challenging. It needs to*

be held together strongly – it's a different way of working for civil servant" (National Stakeholder)

4.18 The frequency of SPNAB meetings was seen as a possible hindrance on its ability to progress its ambitious workplan:

> *"It's difficult to understand the remit of the SPNAB – there are lots of agendas fighting their corners. It only meets four times a year so members don't know each other that well or understand the remit that well"* (National Stakeholder)

4.19 Interviewees recognised that the SPNAB had initiated a number of key activities undertaken by its sub groups including work on a long-term distribution formula and the Outcomes Framework.

Interrelationship with regional structures

4.20 For the majority of interviewees, both at the regional and national level, communication between the SPNAB and the RCCs was an issue. Whilst interviewees were aware of the SPNAB minutes, the delay in them being published meant that there were seen as irrelevant and out of date. For many regional stakeholders, the SPNAB was seen as a remote body with little visibility of its output:

> *" we don't receive a lot of information from SPNAB so not entirely sure what they do. Sometimes they provide useful suggestions but other times they demonstrate a clear lack of knowledge of local governance. This undermines their authority".* (Regional Stakeholder)

4.21 Queries were raised regarding the extent of understanding of RCC performance at the national level with Regional Stakeholders in particular questioning the SPNAB's ability to fulfil its role in challenging and influencing change. This view was also reflected in the process of data collection, where some National Stakeholders (mainly from statutory partner organisations) felt the SPNAB did not have the knowledge to answer questions regarding the performance of RCCs.

4.22 Both national and regional stakeholders questioned the SPNABs reporting requirements citing that the six monthly reports were time-consuming to complete and the RCCs had received little feedback on the information they had submitted:

> *"SPNAB doesn't appreciate the work that is involved in getting things like reports signed off. A lot of preparation goes into reporting such as the outcomes report and data collection"* (Regional Stakeholder)

Steering Board and workstreams

4.23 The work of the Steering Board and workstreams in implementing the new structures and bringing together people from different organisations was acknowledged. However all but a small minority of interviewees felt that their role was now unclear:

> *"the workstreams worked really well during implementation – had good project management but now they have got a bit lost and no one is sure what they are doing".* (National Stakeholder)

4.24 Furthermore there was lack of clarity regarding who sits on the workstreams, their outputs and who they report to both amongst National and Regional Stakeholders:

> *"Who sits on them? Who sets the agenda? Who do they report to?"* (Regional Stakeholder)

4.25 Those aware of the Steering Board's work felt it duplicated a lot of SPNAB's activities and shared similar membership. However for a smaller number of interviewees, both the workstreams and Steering Board still had a role to play in the Programme suggesting that the work of the governance workstream was required until all of the RCCs were operating to the five high level principles[21]. For others, both the

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[21] Five high level principles: improvement to services and outcomes to the end user; probity, accountability, transparency and scrutiny; implementation based upon the principles of equality, collaboration and co-production; provision of strategic oversight and direction in line

workstreams and Steering Board should not be time limited and provided a valuable operational function to the SPNAB's strategic role:

> *"It's not visible as it's designed to be a background group facilitating the ongoing workplan of the Programme overseeing practical work for SPNAB"* (National Stakeholder)

Regional Collaborative Committees function and effectiveness

RCC purpose

4.26 Interviewees understood the RCCs' purpose as one of providing a strategic overview of the region's Supporting People vision through activities such as: coordinating decision making; looking at regional priorities; scrutinising spend; achieving better value for money; and ensuring the five high level principles are adhered to.

> *"the role of the RCC is to drive the commissioning agenda of supporting people, ensure compliance with the grant, ensuring value for money from services, ensuring services are effective and of high quality. Is a key route of connection between stakeholders". (*Regional Stakeholder)

4.27 However there were indications that clarity over their purpose had been diluted:

> *"I thought I knew but actually I'm not too sure…it should be to look at regional plan but in the RCC people are still very territorial – the MoU will help with this".* (Regional Stakeholder)

> *"I'm not sure anyone knows its function. It was set up in November 2012 so it's had 18 months but I'm not sure we know where it's going."* (Regional Stakeholder)

RCC effectiveness

4.28 It was acknowledged that there was variation in the extent to which RCCs were fulfilling their purpose and that this could be linked to

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with national, regional and local strategy and Supporting People Commissioning plans; and a system underpinned by a robust and enforceable regime of governance.

historic arrangements in the region with some areas having a more established traditional of collaborative working than others:

> *"The value of collaboration is strong – but there needs to be something in it…something needs to shift; they need to move up a gear"* (National Stakeholder)

4.29 Terms such as 'talking shop' and 'rubber stamping exercise' were commonly mentioned by most interviewees when asked about the effectiveness of the RCCs. Many of the local authority Supporting People teams felt that their respective RCC had led to an additional layer of bureaucracy instead of providing strategic regional direction.

4.30 The majority of RCC members interviewed were of the opinion that it was still too early to tell whether or not the RCCs were effective. Most RCCs had been involved in developing consistent processes and back office functions rather than developing regional services. National stakeholders seemed to have higher expectations of what the RCCs should have achieved by now than the RCC members themselves. Most regional stakeholders felt the RCCs were where they should be in terms of development with a small number of interviewees referring to Tuckman's 'Forming – Storming – Norming – Performing model'[22] of group development citing that most RCCs were still in the first three phases with a minority moving to performance[23].

> *"Does everyone understand what collaboration and co-production means? Are people actually willing to let down their barriers and work together?"* (Regional Stakeholder)

4.31 A number of common overarching factors hindering RCCs' effectiveness were identified and are explored in further detail below.

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[22] Tuckman, Bruce W. (1965) 'Developmental sequence in small groups', *Psychological Bulletin*, 63, 384-399.
[23] Activity initiated by the RCCs will be discussed in more detail in section 4.68

RCC dynamics

4.32 The dynamics within each RCC varied, with perceptions that the larger RCCs (e.g. Gwent and North Wales) were working better as they had to think differently in order to accommodate multiple views. It was suggested that in RCCs comprised of two local authorities there could be difficulties as there is no 'mediator' and one local authority can dominate:

> *"There is a significant difference in budgets and discussions can therefore be difficult. It is often expected that a deficit/overspend in one area can be balanced through the other. Whilst this may work in other areas which manage multiple local authorities as each one can take a share, it doesn't work in an area with just two local authorities".* (Regional Stakeholder)

4.33 While there was a common understanding of the need to regionalise, there was some evidence of local authorities not always wanting to give up their local autonomy. For example in one RCC, local authorities had agreed an approach to developing joint systems but then one local authority decided to change its approach without consultation or explanation. However it was acknowledged in this case the RCC did challenge the local authority regarding its actions.

4.34 Members noted that they were only now at a point where they were able to work collaboratively. It was acknowledged that more recently the smaller RCCs had begun to gain momentum and that the time taken to embed collaboration should not be underestimated, given that Gwent and North Wales have a long track record of collaborating on both Supporting People and other programmes:

> *"You can't force people to work regionally – it's better to be a natural process, collaborative working in Gwent took ages to get going."* (Regional Stakeholder)

4.35 Regional stakeholders who sat on a number of regional boards noted that any difficulties in collaboration between local authorities was not

unique to this Programme and was often difficult to achieve because of local authority structures and legislation.

4.36 However despite frustration with progress to date, the majority of RCC member interviewees were keen to stress that they saw potential in their RCC and fully supported the intention to work regionally and collaboratively.

RCC remit and status

4.37 The majority of interviewees felt that the RCCs lacked the status to fulfil their roles and were unable to do little more than make recommendations and identify good practice. While the potential of the RCCs was recognised, many interviewees felt that there would be little or no challenge should members not adhere to its decisions, with the views below being typical of RCC members from both statutory and provider organisations:

> *"RCCs have no powers and have nothing to do with money; they're a talking shop really".* (Regional Stakeholder)

> *"It hasn't got the status it needs to fulfil role. There is no clarity on its powers to make and enforce decisions"* (Regional Stakeholder)

4.38 A small number of interviewees noted that to date there had been very few occasions where a 'difficult decision' needed to be made (e.g. changes to existing services in the interest of regional needs and priorities which could impact upon certain local authorities), and that when such a decision needed to be made it would be provide a true test of the RCC's status.

4.39 Many interviewees felt that the RCCs were duplicating what local authority Supporting People officers had been doing anyway prior to their establishment. Most local authorities had been working collaboratively with providers and engaging service users locally and

regionally prior to the new structures. Local authority members in particular commonly expressed the view that :

> *"there were many pre-existing local collaborative groups that already had provider reps involved and had set a culture of collaboration and co-production"* (Regional Stakeholder)

4.40 Many interviewees had seen the Supporting People guidance as overly prescriptive in some areas with an excessive focus on policy and process rather than outcomes. The MoU was published during the latter stages of data collection and a number of interviewees hoped that this would clarify much of the confusion around the RCCs' status, powers and responsibilities:

> *"Overall its role is to provide a strategic and directive overview of the regions Supporting People vision however without the MoU in place it hasn't got the ability to do so".* (Regional Stakeholder)

Funding uncertainties and disparities

4.41 The uncertainty over funding allocations to date had hindered the ability of some RCCs to undertake regional activity:

> *"The RCC started focusing on getting value for money and looking at commissioning regional priorities. However there was a stop on spend so they didn't progress. It has been quite disjointed and this has the potential to happen every year as there is no guarantee of protection of Supporting People funding"* (Regional Stakeholder)

4.42 A small number of interviewees reported difficulties in joint working in RCCs where some member local authorities had experienced a reduction in funding while others had experienced an increase. In regions where all local authorities had experienced cuts in funding the motivation for collaboration (both in terms of sharing back office functions and developing services) appeared to be stronger.

Regional Collaborative Committee membership and engagement

Coordinating local authority model

4.43 The coordinating local authority model was seen to work well. There had been variation between the effectiveness and influence of the coordinating local authority with some coordinating authorities taking more of a leadership role whereas other performed more of an administrative function:

> *"The model is ok, there is a long way to go, there have been struggles around each- others roles and moving away from how they have worked historically, it is felt that the coordinating authority is setting the pace but all in all they work well together and are definitely improving"* (Regional Stakeholder)

4.44 In North Wales the local authorities bid to be elected as the coordinating authority. However the majority of interviewees in other areas were not aware how the coordinating local authority was chosen with the perception that it was probably decided amongst Supporting People lead officers.

RCC membership

4.45 Interviewees agreed that the right organisations were represented on the RCCs; however there was considerable comment on the seniority of the individual representative and the need to achieve a balance between someone who can both influence within their own organisation and who has enough knowledge about the Supporting People Programme at an operational level to be able to actively participate, challenge and scrutinise RCC activity:

> *"RCCs need to ensure that they have the right people at the right level on them – that can influence in and out of the room rather than attempting to be representative as possible."*
> (National Stakeholder)

4.46 The issue of whether cabinet members or senior officers should be RCC members was subject to considerable debate with the views that while the former do not necessarily have the knowledge of the Programme to be in the position to scrutinise fully, their profile did add credence to its importance:

> *"You need to involve politicians in things as we have a democracy – but they are better at making decisions when they have been advised by officers. Local authority officers may have a different conversation and tend to be more cautious if cabinet member is there".* (National Stakeholder)

> *"RCCs should hold Supporting People managers to account and understand strategy. It needs to be senior officers".* (Regional Stakeholder)

4.47 The level of local authority representation was seen to be linked to the historic treatment of Supporting People in individual local authorities – it is a more high profile Programme in some local authorities compared to others:

> *"..While Supporting People is of high priority, we shouldn't be hung up on whether there is an officer or cabinet member on the RCC… it should be down to local determination and the right person making decisions which may not necessarily be the senior officer or cabinet member."* (Regional Stakeholder)

4.48 A small number of interviewees felt that the involvement of provider representatives in making commissioning decisions could raise issues relating to conflict of interest.

4.49 The role of statutory organisations such as health and probation was broadly welcomed and were seen as integral to raising the profile of the Programme. Even in areas where there had been regional working before the RCC, the involvement of health and probation had not been formalised and the RCC had helped enhance relationships. However in

some RCCs the attendance, understanding and contribution of these organisations were considered to be variable.

4.50 A number of RCCs (e.g. Gwent, Western Bay) had co-opted in representatives of other organisations including the Officer of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Community Safety Partnership and Substance Misuse Panel Gwent. Mid and West Wales were also in the process of inviting a representative of the PCC to sit on the RCC. Nonetheless there were concerns that meetings had the potential to get too big and further hinder the RCC's ability to gain consensus, particularly in RCCs with a large number of local authorities.

Engagement and involvement in the RCC

4.51 The levels of engagement and understanding of RCC members varied. e RCCs with more established regional collaborative and co-production working practices felt that all members contributed equally:

> *"RCCs are run very differently ... on paper they've got the right people around the table but I don't feel there is any real integration ... it might be because they are so new."* (National Stakeholder)

> *"The RCC is representative of a wide range of stakeholder groups but does everyone feel part of the RCC? Everyone can turn up but are they actually engaged?"* (Regional Stakeholder)

4.52 Many RCCs had found holding sessions outside of the formal RCC meeting had increased understanding of both of the purpose of the RCC and of other members. In Cwm Taf a 'meet the providers day' was found to be useful in breaking barriers between elected members and providers. Gwent have held a number of planning days including 'De Bono Six Thinking Hats'[24] day which helped members understand the purpose and function of the RCC. In Mid and West Wales, a Corporate

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[24] http://www.debonogroup.com/six_thinking_hats.php

Development Advisor facilitated a workshop with RCC members to explore opportunities for improving the effectiveness of the RCC, an event which participants praised for improving their understanding of their roles and objectives as RCC members. In addition site visits to Supporting People Programme funded schemes had improved understanding of the Programme. Service users had been invited to present to the North Wales RCC which members found useful in improving understanding of the services supported by the Programme and its impacts.

4.53 Where collaboration and co-production were less embedded there was evidence of less equal relations within the RCCs:

> *"In the meetings there's a heavy focus on the local authorities presenting as a fait accompli, without ever listening, wanting to hear views or critiquing things. There's a difference between paying lip service to it and really acknowledging and adhering to it. Support providers are still seeking to protect their own services to some extent, feathering their own nests".* (Regional stakeholder)

4.54 Despite the welcomed presence of statutory organisations such as health and probation, concerns were raised that Supporting People was often a small part of their remit and that they may not have sufficient understanding of the Programme to constructively challenge and scrutinise outputs such as spend plans. In some cases, RCC members were likely to turn to the local authority Supporting People lead officers when a decision needed to be made because they had the most in-depth knowledge of the Programme.

Awareness and understanding of high level principles

4.55 The majority of interviewees were aware of the high level principles of the Supporting People Programme:

> *"Yes we are aware of the principles but we are still a young RCC and trying to adhere to the principles is a key point. Getting*

> *better at providing the strategic overview and developing*
> *processes to do that." (Regional Stakeholder)*

4.56 However some interviewees felt that there was a lack of shared understanding of the high level principles and this was evident in the annual reports in which RCCs had been required to provide an assessment of their performance against them. Both the annual reports and interviews suggested that each RCC had interpreted the high level principles differently. Furthermore even within individual RCCs, interviewees suggested that not all members shared a common understanding of what the principles meant or how the RCC was performing against them.

RCC Roles and responsibilities

Chair

4.57 An effective Chair was seen to be integral to the performance of the RCC. A 'good' Chair was seen to be one that: balanced the management of the agenda with open discussions; challenged; and linked with the national policy agenda. The majority of RCC members were satisfied with the performance of their Chair.

4.58 Although the majority of RCCs (Cwm Taf, Mid and West Wales, Western Bay and Vale and Cardiff) had political Chairs, only a small number of interviewees felt that the Chair had to be a political appointment:

> *"It works well having a political appointment as it's beneficial to*
> *have somebody with political clout. It wouldn't work as*
> *effectively if they had mid- level managers as they need decision*
> *makers to ensure things get done". (Regional Stakeholder)*

4.59 However the vast majority of interviewees did not think a political appointment was essential but this was often caveated with the need to have elected members on the RCC if the Chair was not a politician to ensure the RCC retained a high profile. In general it was felt that provided the Chair had the credibility and skills to drive the agenda, their

background was not important, with a split between interviewees with a local authority background suggesting it had to be a local authority representative and those with a provider background suggesting it could rotate between a local authority and provider representative. A smaller number of individuals suggested that an independent member could be appointed Chair and that this may address some of the perceptions in some RCCs that: local authorities as budget holders drive the agenda; and the involvement of providers in commissioning decisions raises potential conflicts of interest.

Regional Development Coordinator

4.60   The Regional Development Coordinator (RDC) role was seen as an essential albeit complex role with wide ranging responsibilities including: supporting the Chair; arranging meetings; linking with regional stakeholders; coordinating plans. Many interviewees felt that the RCC could not function without the RDC role:

> *"the RDC is an essential driver for the RCC and a linkage to people outside of it, I'd question if we don't need an RDC then do we need an RCC"* (Regional Stakeholder)

4.61   However the nature of the RDC role varied between RCCs, many had different job descriptions, pay and conditions. In some areas (e.g. Gwent[25]) the RDC undertakes more of a business manager role driving the work of the RCC outside of formal meetings, building links and facilitating partnerships with other key regional organisations whereas in other areas the role was more administrative and concerned with servicing the formal meetings. RDCs felt that their role was not clear either to themselves or other partners and as a result for some it had expanded into something more than that outlined in their job description; many were undertaking activities that they did not feel equipped to do such as data analysis and the development of the service user engagement frameworks. While RDCs believed that they should be

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[25] The Gwent RDC roles build on the Gwent Regional Officer role funded by the five local authorities between 2007 and 2012.

working for the RCC, the lack of clarity regarding the RDCs'
responsibilities had resulted in them undertaking work from other groups
and organisations involved in the Supporting People Programme:

> *"the role is loosely defined, it's often a case of 'oh the RDCs' can*
> *do that"* (Regional Stakeholder)

4.62 A small number of interviewees identified a lack of clarity regarding the
RDC role, particularly in terms of accountability due the fact they are
funded by Welsh Government, located in one local authority, and
working on behalf of the RCC. Their location within the coordinating local
authority's Supporting People team could be problematic, for instance
RDCs reported the difficulties of chasing a Supporting People lead for
information when they also happened to be their line manager.

4.63 Both the RDCs and other interviewees recognised that the RDC function
needed to be carefully examined in light of the issues raised above as
well as the fear that local authorities could not afford to fund the role if
Welsh Government were to withdraw funding.

RCC Service user representation and engagement

4.64 While interviewees agreed the principle of gaining service user input into
the Programme was essential, in practice this had been challenging.
The requirement of service user representation on the RCC was
queried, with the majority of interviewees suggesting that one individual
would be unable to represent the views of all 19 Supporting People
client groups. In addition, the RCC meeting was considered too formal a
setting for service users to air their views. A service user had attended
an RCC meeting in Western Bay and fed back their views:

> *"They found it very formal, intimidating, too much jargon, very*
> *'traditional' council meeting style. Not at all like in the voluntary*
> *sector. Service users would need to be very assertive to be able*
> *to have a say"* (Regional Stakeholder reporting views of a
> service user)

4.65 All RCCs have developed a service user engagement framework, though these had not been operationalised at the time of writing. Interviewees expressed concern at their ability to resource service user engagement sufficiently enough to ensure it was not tokenistic and suggested they would need to continue to rely on existing methods of obtaining service user engagement (e.g. via providers) unless it was resourced properly:

> *"There is not capacity in the RDC post to do it; separate resources should have come with it as it's so high on the agenda – it's a major gap"* (Regional Stakeholder)

4.66 In the Western Bay RCC a service user framework based on an existing model from Swansea Council called 'Join In' had been developed allowing service users to contribute to local Community Groups. Representatives from local authorities attend these meetings and feed into a Steering Group at a regional level that report to the RCC. In addition, annual 'Join In' events are reportedly well attended by service users and stakeholders.

4.67 Other RCCs reported that service users were reluctant to be involved directly through formalised representation and had found alternative engagement methods more useful for example: in North Wales service users had been invited to give presentations to the RCC; and RCC members in Gwent and Western Bay had visited a number of Supporting People Programme funded schemes enabling them to talk directly to service users about their experiences; Western Bay and Gwent linked into existing provider and local authority forums, networks and consultation events in their areas which were already well attended. It was also noted that for some groups, such as young people, social media was a key method of involvement. Gwent RCC has a Supporting People newsletter which includes a page for service users. Many RCC member interviewees suggested that offering service users a variety of opportunities for engaging was key:

> *"RCC members each need to be proactive in engaging service users and bringing their feedback to the group rather than expecting service users to attend the RCC meetings. Having one representative on the RCC runs the risk of being tokenistic."*
> (Regional stakeholder)

RCC activities

Overview

4.68 There has been variation in the activities and outputs of RCCs. All RCCs have developed both a Regional Commissioning Plan (RCP) and service user engagement framework. However in many RCCs there was confusion over the extent to which the RCP was a 'true regional plan' rather than simply an amalgamation of the local commissioning plans. Several RCCs were using a workshop based approach to explore regional priorities and needs to inform the next RCP and felt that they were only now in a position to work in this way. At the time of writing no RCCs had operationalised their service user engagement framework.

4.69 Table 3 summarises regional commissioning activities identified by interviewees and from the desk review. All RCCs have been involved in commissioning activities, the majority of which has been around analysing need and service provision, with some planning taking place to a lesser extent. There have been some regional and sub-regional schemes although these have been more common in areas where there was some pre-existing collaboration and many of these had been initiated prior to the establishment of the RCC.

Table 3: Summary of RCC activity

Commissioning activity	Cwm Taf	Gwent	Mid & West Wales	North Wales	Vale & Cardiff	Western Bay
Regional Commissioning Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Service user engagement framework	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Needs mapping/planning	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Supplier mapping		✓				
Service reviews		✓	✓[26]		✓	
Identification of regional priorities	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Joint processes	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Regional schemes	✓	✓		✓		
Sub regional schemes		✓	✓	✓		
Joint monitoring		✓		✓		

4.70 The following paragraphs provide more information on the activities undertaken by each RCC since the transition year. The information is drawn from interviews, RCC annual reports, RCPs and other RCC documentation (e.g. minutes, workplans).

Cwm Taf

4.71 Cwm Taf have agreed regional priorities: remodelling services for older people[27]; and substance misuse where the RCC has extended an existing project across the region. Three planning groups have been set up: service user planning group which developed the engagement framework and are due to hold a workshop to draft an implementation plan; an older persons' planning group which has circulated a questionnaire to gather evidence on services and gather good practice; and the contracting and commissioning group which has been looking at how the different arrangements in each local authority can be brought

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[26] Where services are delivered in more than one county
[27] Welsh Government specified priority for all RCCs

together for regional commissioning. The RCC has explored the potential for amalgamating central referral systems as well as reviewing services to establish opportunities for joint working, which identified the regional substance misuse pilot project as a priority. The RCC has arranged two workshops to enable providers and RCC members to meet each other as well as working days for RCC members. The potential for amalgamating central administration processes for consistency with service providers and across the region (e.g. desk top audit, single point of entry and to establish opportunities for joint working) is being explored.

Gwent

4.72 Officers from the Supporting People teams in the five Gwent authorities have been working in partnership since the commencement of the Programme in 2003 to implement the Programme at both a local and regional level. From 2007 until 2012, regional working was supported by a Gwent Development Officer, funded by the local authorities. Several regional sub-groups for Supporting People lead officers, contracts officers and planning officers worked together to develop regional processes, reduce administrational duplication and improve service provision.

4.73 Regional schemes developed prior to the introduction of the RCC include projects for people with criminal offending history and young people. These projects are managed using a lead authority model whereby one authority co-ordinates the monitoring and review of the regional project and the others provide commitment to purchase a certain number of units of support and / or accommodation. Other pre RCC activities to have continued include: the collation of Gwent Needs Mapping Exercise (GNME); the compilation of a regional Supply Map, publication of a Supporting People Gwent newsletter twice a year; and needs planning and evidence days which both services users and RCC members have been invited to attend.

4.74 A number of task and finish groups have been established to action work initiated by the RCC including the development of a Regional Prioritisation Matrix which provides a transparent way for the RCC to prioritise the regional commissioning intentions highlighted in the Commissioning Plan.

4.75 During early 2014 development sessions and workshops were held for RCC members providing them with the opportunity to analyse how the Supporting People grant is spent and to gain a better understanding of the commissioning and planning cycle. From these sessions the Gwent RCC has developed a work plan identifying the following three client groups for further analysis and scrutiny: older people; people with learning disabilities; and people with substance misuse issues. Task and finish groups or utilisation of the Planning Officers Group will progress this work. For the Gwent RCC and some regional stakeholders, the next step will be to identify regional funding for projects although interviewees admit this may be challenging in the current financial climate.

4.76 Member understanding and engagement in the RCC has been enabled by induction days which include visits to schemes and the opportunity to attend needs evidence days The RCC also has its own web pages which are hosted on the co-ordinating local authority's web site. The Regional Provider Forum has also strengthened since the introduction of the new guidance and has become more strategic to support the RCC Provider Representatives and to feed into discussions at the RCC. A service user engagement framework has been developed by service users and a sub group of the RCC.

Mid and West Wales

4.77 Supporting People Officers from the four Mid and West Wales local authorities have a tradition of working together with regular meetings and discussions to progress and plan the integration of regional services, service reviews, regional needs mapping, joint commissioning

opportunities, shared IT resources, and shared policies and procedures where appropriate.

4.78 A number of regional activities had been implemented before the establishment of the RCC. These include the Supporting People Unified Referral System (SPURS) which operates across three local authorities (Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire); and a HIV/Aids Floating Support Pilot Project which was jointly commissioned by Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion. In addition, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire also embarked on a domestic abuse modernisation pilot.

4.79 With the establishment of the RCC, the RCP prioritised a number of areas for development: older people; young people; homelessness; a unified referral system; and research into innovative working in rural areas. Sub groups have been set up to take forward these priorities. In addition, the sub-regional pilot HIV/Aids Floating Support Service was extended in April 2013 to include the Carmarthenshire HIV/Aids Floating Support Service, creating a three county sub-regional pilot service. However, Aids Trust Cymru, the organisation delivering this service lost their main funding stream and as a result the pilot became financially unviable from November 2013. To ensure that service users were able to continue to receive support, a provider, operating across the four counties, received funding to deliver support. The West Wales Blood Bourne Virus Support Service has been funded until March 2015.

4.80 Since the RCC has been in operation, further regional activity has included the development of a regional service user engagement framework, and an induction process for RCC members. An RCC working group, comprising the RDC, Supporting People officers, landlord and provider representatives, and a young and vulnerable people subgroup have also been established over the period to progress and drive specific pieces of work outlined in the regional work plan. A

workshop, held in May 2014 helped to clarify the aims and purpose of the RCC and set future direction.

4.81 The RCC has agreed the Regional Approach to Procurement and developed and implement a sub-regional service proposal template and prioritisation matrix (two counties, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire) to inform decisions made on service commissioning, remodelling and decommissioning.

4.82 In line with the aims of the RCC, and in order to improve the ease of regional working between local authorities, the Supporting People teams are in the process of standardising administrative procedures including developing a regional service level agreement, alternatives to the needs mapping exercise to capture need and demand for support services, and creating a benchmarking spreadsheet and cost calculator (three counties). Officers share information on evaluations, agree consistency and reduce duplication when evaluating cross border services and providers who deliver services in more than one county.

North Wales

4.83 Regional working was already well developed in North Wales prior to the establishment of the RCC and included: shared databases, information sharing; and back office functions; and a number of regional and sub-regional schemes e.g. Night Stop in Denbighshire and Flintshire and a Domestic Abuse project in Flintshire and Wrexham.

4.84 In the first year of the RCC, North Wales has focused on ensuring consistency in documentation for instance they have produced one Performance Monitoring Form for providers which has replaced previous monitoring forms in each local authority. The RCC has also signed up to, and is currently piloting, a North Wales Clawback Statement to ensure consistency across local authorities. A Consistency Work Package, which is made up of each authority's Contracts and Reviewing Officer reports to the RCC.

4.85 Back-office functions are being shared between local authorities, for example it has been agreed that Denbighshire council will host a North Wales Needs Mapping online database. Conwy council hosts the North Wales Outcomes online database. There is an agreement for both host authorities to release reports on the data at regular intervals.

4.86 The RCP identifies the following as regional commissioning priorities: young people; consistency; remodelling services for older people; needs and supply mapping; and spend plans. Task and finish groups have been set up for the young people, older people, and consistency work packages. The RCC has also discussed and approved: the commissioning of a regional project 'Body Positive' to provide housing related support to people with HIV /AIDS across North Wales, for a two year period; and funding for short term projects in Denbighshire and Flintshire.

4.87 The RCC has agreed a Service User Involvement Framework which will be the platform that monitors and promotes service user involvement at local authority level. All documents agreed by the RCC are available on a North Wales RCC website which contains details of previous minutes, frequently asked questions and annual reports.

Vale and Cardiff

4.88 The Vale and Cardiff was one of the last RCCs to be established and is still in the early stages of the commissioning cycle. The RCC has agreed a RCP which prioritises: the development of a service user involvement framework; remodelling services for vulnerable older people based on need; people who are either homeless or affected by homelessness issues; complex needs; mental health; and unified documentation across the region, including needs mapping. A regional prioritisation matrix was initiated but has not been agreed or operationalised after the RCC decided not to proceed with it. The RCC set up two task and finish groups: one to develop the service user involvement framework which

has been agreed; another to build on the training that had been regionally commissioned around issues of income maximisation, budgeting and debt management in response to welfare reform. The Vale and Cardiff RCC are planning further work around service user involvement such as engaging with 50+ forums to assess potential future needs. A development day with providers is being planned. A task and finish group has been established to ensure the next RCP is a truly integrated regional plan rather than simply an amalgamation of the two LCPs. A regional task and finish group has also been established to look at older persons' services and the requirement for them to be based on need and not tenure.

Western Bay

4.89 Supporting People teams in Western Bay also worked together before the establishment of the RCC and commissioned one service. The commissioning priorities agreed in the RCP are: remodelling of older peoples' services; young people; and people with a complex range of support needs. Much of the RCC's activity to date has been around simplifying process and avoiding duplication.

4.90 While the RCC has not developed task and finish groups, there are a number of regional team meetings that perform a similar role and a recent output has been the development of a regional provider monitoring questionnaire which is now used across all three local authorities. Provider representative meetings have been attended by the RDC.

4.91 A service user engagement framework has been developed drawing on Swansea's successful 'Join In' group. A series of workshops are planned for RCC members in September which are aimed at clarifying the RCC's purpose and priorities. Members also visited Supporting People schemes when the RCC was first established.

Barriers to regional activity

4.92 While it must be acknowledged that the 'bedding in' of the RCCs has taken some time and developing 'true' collaboration will take longer still, a number of other factors were identified as having an impact on regional activity.

4.93 Until recently, RCCs had a prescribed agenda and this, together with the length and size of RCC meetings, were commonly mentioned issues in terms of their ability to initiate activity.

> *"It's currently bogged down in what it has to do, there's no capacity for dealing with other business. The agenda and regular report updates take up the full two hours and there's no time left for progress."* (Regional Stakeholder)

4.94 Many interviewees suggested that the most effective RCCs were the ones that had taken time outside of formal meetings to undertake further work and discussion.

4.95 Individual local authority procurement processes, rules and planning timescales were seen as a challenge to working towards regional collaboration etc. Although a number of RCCs (North Wales, Western Bay) have begun to look at this:

> *"Local authorities have their own procurement rules etc which can be a challenge when combined with the programme/RCC guidance. This may be improved/tackled when the layout changes from the William's Review come into place. Now local authorities know more or less that the changes will happen, they should be preparing for the mergers – seeking to establish common review practices and common paperwork".* (National Stakeholder)

4.96 Some interviewees, particularly those from a local authority background questioned RCCs' ability to commission in the current climate particularly in regions where some local authorities had experienced cuts

"local authorities are on completely different roads so it's often difficult to combine. There's a lack of opportunities for regional commissioning, reviews and timelines don't match. The other problem is that no one's looking to commission at the moment, due to budget cuts it's largely decommissioning. If budgets were growing, perhaps it would be a different story." (Regional Stakeholder)

RCC Impacts and outcomes

4.97 There was almost universal agreement that it was a little too early to attribute any significant impacts and outcomes resulting from the new structures. However there had been changes in processes (although variation in extent across RCCs) and many interviewees were positive that they may initiate changes 'on the ground' overtime:

"the impacts haven't been huge to date, but there will be more from now…..it's helped to provide a regional view and bring stakeholders such as health to the table, it's going from strength to strength" (Regional stakeholder)

4.98 A small number of interviewees felt that the new structures had stifled innovation, possibly temporarily, particularly in areas with a legacy of regional working. One interviewee summed up the current situation:

"this is the challenge of big bureaucracy – how do you balance nimbleness and also stop poor practice – it is difficult to challenge, manage risk while allowing autonomy" (National Stakeholder)

4.99 In most areas, there were perceptions that the impacts of the new structures had yet to affect service users and there were concerns that any potential benefits were likely to have been offset by cuts in funding. However a member of North Wales RCC noted that by identifying regional underspend the RCC had been able to develop a regional service which would hopefully benefit a number of service users. In addition members in the North Wales RCC had found that the new

structure provides more flexibility to remodel services without the need for ministerial approval to the benefit of service users.

4.100 The majority of interviewees agreed that the establishment of the SPNAB and RCCs had: raised the profile of the Supporting People Programme; formalised partnership working; provided a platform to discuss needs at a regional level with decision makers; formalised the involvement of service users in the development of services; and established links with other statutory organisations such as health, probation and the police:

> *"the new structures have ultimately helped things making commissioners and providers re-engage with things in a different way".* (National stakeholder)

Areas for improvement or future action

4.101 Interviewees were asked to suggest any areas of the Programme's structures that needed improvement and potential options for addressing specific issues. Responses broadly covered the following areas: leadership and direction; specific actions that may improve the functions of RCCs; service user engagement; and remodelling of existing structures.

Leadership and direction

4.102 The majority of interviewees felt that the Programme needed more leadership at the national level and the current direction had been process rather than outcome driven as evidenced by the lack of clarity of over the purpose of the SPNAB, RCCs and RDC and perceptions that the Supporting People Grant Guidance was overly prescriptive. Interviewees wanted to see a reduction in the levels of bureaucracy associated with the Programme particularly the amount of reporting RCCs are required to undertake. Interviewees welcomed the fact that RCC meetings no longer have to adhere to the agenda set out in the Grant Guidance and improvements were expected to follow.

4.103 The majority of interviewees were keen to see more communication across the Programme and suggestions included: an explicit communication framework at each level; the SPNAB to complete the same meeting feedback form that RCCs do to provide an insight into meetings on a more timely basis than the current timing and format of minutes enables; RCC Chairs to sit on the SPNAB on rotation; and a representative of SPIN to sit on the SPNAB to enable a more direct channel of communication to Supporting People local authority officers.

4.104 Most interviewees wanted Welsh Government to change their expectations of RCCs and move to a role as facilitator in order to enable RCCs to grow and evolve at their own pace:

> *"They [Welsh Government] could standardise expectations [for the RCCs] and then permit local adaptation or provide more discussion and development support about interpreting the guidance."*(National Stakeholder)

4.105 It was suggested that one way the Welsh Government could implement this role would be to roll out the success of the RDC network and set up forums for good practice and information sharing to enable RCC members from across Wales to meet and learn from each other.

RCC function

4.106 While most interviewees were reluctant to add to the already prescriptive guidance, there were a number of suggestions of what might increase the effectiveness of RCCs including: an increase in the frequency and focus of meetings to enable the RCC to initiate actions quickly; the development of sub-planning groups that could discuss innovative ideas and bring them to the RCC; and the establishment of task and finish groups to decide priorities and gaps in provision.

Remodelling structures

4.107 A small number of interviewees did suggest the current structures could be remodelled or refocused to enable regional commissioning:

- Broaden the function of RCCs: many interviewees, both those from provider and local authority backgrounds, suggested that the credibility of RCCs could be increased by broadening their remit to include other funding programmes such as Flying Start, Families First and Communities First as they shared many of the same client groups.

- Increase the remit of RCCs: a smaller number of interviewees, mainly from a provider background were in favour of giving RCCs a legal status through for example the creation of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV).

- Allocate RCCs a budget: views ranged between those who wanted the RCCs to take responsibility for all of the Supporting People funding in the region to others who felt that they could have an allocation of the grant. It was acknowledged that it would be challenging to determine how this could be allocated e.g. a 'top slice' of all local authority Supporting People funding or a more strategic decision based on need, especially at a time when a lot of local authorities are decommissioning.

- Dismantle the RCCs: a small number of interviewees, mainly from a local authority background advocated the dismantlement of the RCCs possibly to be replaced by the Local Collaborative Committee model advocated by Aylward or to individual local arrangements. Furthermore a number of interviewees referenced the Williams Review recommendations and felt that the RCCs should be restructured to align to the chosen option for local government restructure that is adopted.

Future aspirations

4.108 Interviewees were asked what they would have liked the SPNAB and RCCs to have achieved in one years' and three years' time. There were a number of aspirations for the Programme at the national level including: progress on the long-term finance model; a stronger and more consistent leadership for the Programme; a consistency of practice across RCCs; and the MoU finalised. One year aspirations for individual RCCs ranged in ambition and very much reflected the stage of maturity of each RCC with some interviewees wanting to have achieved a better understanding of their respective RCC's purpose and structure, clear agenda and workplan for each RCC to others wanting to see more effective regional commissioning. The majority of interviewees were keen to see better evidence of outcomes and greater service user engagement and involvement.

> *"RCCs need to develop more innovative thinking about how they come up with projects and services and the service user role is integral in this".* (National Stakeholder)

4.109 Within three years, interviewees were keen to see clearer evidence of the impacts of and outcomes from the Programme:

> *"I'd like to see the benefits of the Programme through the lens of service users being routinely evidenced, as well as more work on the pounds and pence stuff"* (National Stakeholder)

4.110 This was reinforced by RCC members hoping that within three years they would also be able to analyse information more effectively and identify and evidence positive outcomes for service users.

4.111 A small number of interviewees were keen to see more integration between housing and other policy areas at the national and regional level:

"I'd like to see an alignment of budgets with health and probation – commissioning services jointly with them – really looking at the gaps. We are looking at needs but could we be providing jointly commissioned services". (Regional Stakeholder)

4.112 The majority of interviewees wanted to see regional contracts and commissioning as well as sharing of services, back office functions demonstrating value for money. To achieve this, interviewees agreed that RCCs needed to be able to: set and drive agendas more effectively; identify the services currently available both locally and regionally; and establish the demand and the potential for services that could be delivered regionally.

5   Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

5.1   This section draws on the evidence base presented in Section 4 to draw key conclusions about the new structures underpinning the Supporting People Programme since its re-launch in 2012. These conclusions are used to inform a number of key recommendations and areas for improvement for the Programme.

Conclusions

Overall Programme structure

5.2   The ethos of co-production and collaboration underpinning the new structures is seen as valid. However at the regional level there is a sense that embedding collaboration through the local collaborative committees advocated by the Aylward Review may have been a more natural first step. The review has found that both the strengths and weaknesses of regional working suggested by the Aylward Review (see paragraph 3.5) have been realised. However the establishment of RCCs has contributed to a greater awareness of the Supporting People Programme both within local authorities and with partner statutory organisations. Despite some frustrations with the new structures, the potential for this model of working is recognised and there is a strong will to make regional collaboration and co-production work for the benefit of some of the most vulnerable groups in society.

5.3   It is important to acknowledge that the financial climate has become increasingly challenging since the Aylward Review reported its findings and recommendations. Given the likelihood of further financial cuts, there is an increasing need for the Programme to evidence its impacts and outcomes. Subsequently the importance of ensuring delivery structures can facilitate this and other activities such as the work on the Outcomes Framework, needs to be progressed quickly.

National structures

5.4   The role of the SPNAB in providing strategic direction and oversight for the Programme is recognised; however there are concerns that this role has been hindered by its involvement in operational issues and a focus on process rather than setting the strategic direction and outcomes for the Programme. While the concept of the SPNAB is integral to the Programme, there is the sense that it is not quite providing the leadership that is required in terms of clarity over both the purpose of RCCs and expectations of their performance.

5.5   The interrelationship between the SPNAB and the RCCs is unequal with RCCs having to frequently (and often perceived unnecessarily) report to the SPNAB with little feedback in return. Furthermore the communication of SPNAB activity to RCCs could be improved with current system of publishing meeting minutes on the Welsh Government website perceived as insufficient and irrelevant given the delays in their publication.

5.6   The membership of the SPNAB is representative of Supporting People Programme stakeholders; however members' levels of engagement and understanding of the Programme vary. Statutory organisations (e.g. health and probation) in particular sometimes lack a full understanding of the Programme and hence are less able to contribute and engage fully. This finding was also reflected in the RCCs, whereby statutory organisations were reportedly less engaged than other members.

5.7   The appointment of an independent Chair to the SPNAB has been associated with generating more open discussion at its meetings and the Chair's attendance at RCC meetings has provided a useful linkage between the regional and national levels. Some interviewees saw the attendance of the Chair at RCC meetings as contradictory to the strategic role of the SPNAB and presenting the risk of becoming too involved in the operational minutiae of RCCs. In addition these visits are unlikely to be sustainable in the long-term as a future Chair may not have the capacity to continue this activity.

5.8   The current role and remit of the Steering Board is unclear with suggestions that it is duplicating a lot of discussion held at the SPNAB. While the workstreams are seen as important there is a lack of clarity regarding their membership, outputs, timescales and the organisation or body to whom they report.

RCC role and function

5.9   While it was broadly recognised that the role of the RCC is to provide a strategic oversight to the delivery of the Supporting People Programme in each region through collaboration and co-production, the rhetoric differed significantly from the reality. The purpose of RCCs appears to have been diluted and they were seen as lacking in authority, unable to make real decisions or scrutinise local authority outputs such as spend plans. Concerns have been expressed over the increased bureaucracy created by the RCCs and the majority agreed that it had increased the workload for members.

RCC membership, engagement and stakeholder awareness

5.10   The membership of RCCs was seen to reflect all relevant stakeholders and some RCCs had taken the opportunity to co-opt additional members. However the engagement and understanding of members varied. Attendance of local authority cabinet members in particular has been variable with many cabinet members choosing to delegate their membership to senior officers. There was a split between interviewees who were in favour of cabinet members being RCC members and those who felt there were others better suited to contribute. With a large portfolio and commitments elsewhere it can challenging for cabinet members to have a deep enough understanding to be able to fully contribute to the RCC; however it was also acknowledged that their presence gives the Programme greater profile.

5.11   The inclusion of statutory partner organisations such as health and probation on RCCs has been welcomed and has helped increase the profile of the Programme. However in some RCCs the attendance, understanding and contribution of these organisations was not always seen as productive and the strategic links with aligned service areas are not being optimised. The influence

of local authorities in some RCCs was seen as dominant and compounded by the lack of understanding of the Programme by other RCC members. There were concerns that in the case in the larger RCCs in particular, membership was in danger of becoming too big with the potential to hinder its ability to function effectively.

5.12 While there is awareness of the high level principles, the assessment of RCCs' and the SPNAB's performance against them is open to interpretation and it is hard for the RCCs to measure their success objectively based on the current principles. There is confusion over the role and authority of the RCCs which may impact upon their ability to set goals and improve performance.

RCC roles and responsibilities

5.13 There was no clear evidence supporting the appointment of a cabinet member as RCC Chair although this view was often caveated by the need to have cabinet members on the RCC if the Chair is not a political appointment to ensure the profile of the Programme within local authorities is retained. An understanding of the Programme and 'good' chairing skills were seen to be more important than the 'status' of the individual appointed.

5.14 The RDC role is seen as integral to the RCC in terms of both the day to day servicing of meetings, collation of documentation etc and as well as linkage with stakeholders. However there is a lack of clarity about their role and variation both in the extent of their responsibilities across the RCCs and their terms and conditions. There was concern regarding the uncertain future of funding for this role and the impact on RCCs should the RDC post not be funded by Welsh Government.

RCC progress and achievements to date

5.15 The extent of each RCC's progress and achievement to date can be linked to the historic arrangements in the area. Both Gwent and North Wales have long-standing regional collaborative working arrangements and time taken to collaborate should not be underestimated. A number of factors may have hindered RCC activity to date: collaboration appeared to work better in regions

where all local authorities had received a reduction in funding rather than some receiving reductions and others increases; variations in levels of understanding of members, particularly where statutory organisations and elected members have limited understanding of the Programme; reluctance of some members to give up autonomy; an absence of historic regional collaboration – in RCCs with a history of regional working the relationships and spirit of collaboration appeared to be stronger and had initiated greater levels of regional activity.

Service user engagement

5.16 The Programme's emphasis on involving service users in the commissioning and delivery of the Programme is welcomed but has been challenging to implement. Service user engagement with RCCs has been variable and in most cases formal service user engagement frameworks were only agreed in April 2014. Where engagement has occurred it has been through existing local fora. The requirement for a service user representative to sit on the RCC has been difficult to implement with questions raised around the ability of one service user to represent the interests of 19 client groups. Concerns regarding the appropriateness of the formal RCC meeting to engage service users have been reinforced by feedback from a service user who attended the Western Bay RCC meeting.

Delivery of regional commissioning and collaboration

5.17 A key objective for the review was to examine the extent of regional commissioning and to assess the nature of each RCC's achievements to date. Any examination of regional commissioning and activity needs to acknowledge the variation in RCC development (e.g. some had started 'from scratch' others had well established regional working), composition (e.g. some comprise of only two local authorities other up to six) and activities (e.g. some have built on existing schemes whilst others are only beginning to look at need). Figure 2 presents a set of generic RCC processes and activities against which each RCC could be assessed.

Figure 2: Generic RCC processes and activities
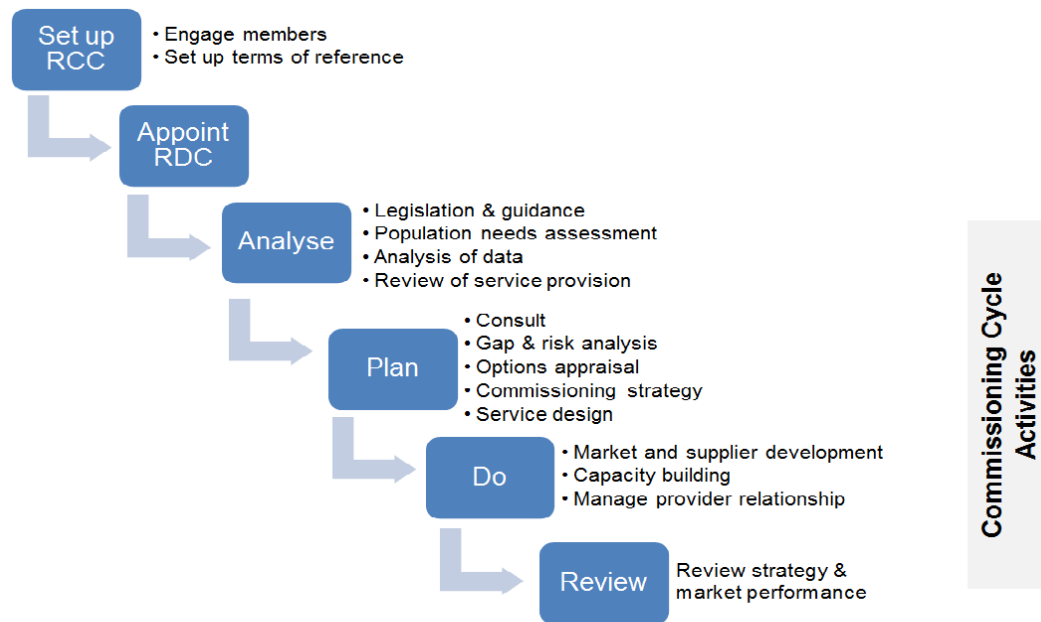
Source: Miller Research Ltd (using the Institute of Public Care's Commissioning Cycle[28])

5.18 In addition when considering the extent of commissioning activities that have been implemented it may be beneficial to consider the nature and extent of collaboration in each RCCs. Collaboration generally refers to a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organisations to achieve common goals. Figure 3 presents the 'Collaboration Continuum' which shows that movement to a more integrated or intense level of collaboration requires an increased level of commitment, shared values and trust. However if done correctly members can benefit from possible costs savings as duplication of work and miscommunication is reduced.

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[28] Institute of Public Care (2014) Commissioning for Health and Social Care, Oxford Brookes University

Figure 3: Collaboration Continuum

Cooperation	Coordination	Collaboration
lower intensity ———————————➤ higher intensity		
• Shorter-term, informal relationships • Shared information only • Separate goals, resources, and structures	• Longer-term effort around a project or task • Some planning and division of roles • Some shared resources, rewards, and risks	• More durable and pervasive relationships • New structure with commitment to common goals • All partners contribute resources and share rewards and leadership

Source: Winer (1994)[29]

5.19 Table 4 presents a potential model for assessing RCC progress in terms of both commissioning activity and collaboration. The reviewers have populated the model with an assessment of where they think each RCC is at the time of writing. The reviewers' assessment shows that RCCs have analysed and planned regional activities to varying degrees. Few have been involved in 'doing' or 'reviewing' activities. Even in areas where regional working was well established prior to the introduction of the RCCs the majority of activity has been focused on their set up and relationship building. Most RCCs are at the 'coordination' stage on the collaboration continuum with only areas where regional working is well established demonstrating any of the characteristics of collaboration.

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[29] Winer, M (1994) Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey, Fieldstone Alliance, Nashville, Tennessee

Table 4: Summary of RCC commissioning activities and collaboration

	Cwm Taf	Gwent	Mid & West Wales	North Wales	Vale & Cardiff	Western Bay
Establish RCC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Appoint RDC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Analyse	Some	Many	Some	Some	Few	Some
Plan	Few	Many	Some	Some	Few	Few
Do	None	None	Some	Some	None	None
Review	None	None	None	None	None	None
Stage on collaboration continuum	Coordination	Coordination moving to Collaboration	Coordination	Coordination moving to Collaboration	Cooperation	Coordination

5.20 This assessment is not definitive and is based on the opinion of the independent reviewers but it may provide a potential model for RCCs to assess themselves against in the future. Providing the high level principles are more tightly defined (see paragraph 5.26), this model would also provide a method of capturing RCC performance against them[30].

Best practice and innovation

5.21 There are a number of examples of good/interesting practice that RCCs have implemented, many of which may address the issues associated with driving regional activity and collaboration.

5.22 Building RCC member understanding and engagement is integral to establishing the RCC and examples of this activity include:

- Presentations to the RCC by experts and service users (North Wales) Member induction days (Gwent, Western Bay, North Wales and Mid and West Wales)
- Visits to Supporting People projects (Gwent, North Wales)

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[30] Welsh Audit Office has produced a number of documents on partnership working and collaboration which may provide further insight e.g. Welsh Audit Office (2011) Improvement Assessment: Collaborative/Partnership Working – Question Hierarchy. Welsh Audit Office, Cardiff

- 'Meet the Providers' day to improve understanding between members and providers (Gwent, Cwm Taf)

- Planning days, in particular the 'De Bono Six Thinking Hats[31]' day Gwent) and Corporate Development Advisor workshop (Mid and West Wales) to help members under the purpose and understanding of their respective RCCs.

5.23 The engagement of service users is valued by RCC members and efforts have been made to ensure that all of Supporting People's 19 client groups have the opportunity to get involved in the Programme:

- Western Bay have adopted a successful Swansea 'Join In' model which brings the views of local community groups to the attention of the Supporting People teams, who take the comments to the RCC in addition to an annual 'Join In' event.

- RCC newsletter with specific pages for service users (Gwent).

- Inviting service users to attend/ present at RCC meetings and feedback to the members (Western Bay; North Wales).

- RCC members visiting Supporting People projects and talking directly to service users (North Wales, Gwent).

5.24 Local authorities in a number of RCCs have overcome different procurement and monitoring processes and shared resources[32]:

- Central referral systems[33] (Mid and West Wales).

- Lead authority model to coordinate a regional project (Gwent).

- Shared databases, information sharing, back office functions (Gwent, Mid and West Wales, North Wales).

- Joint monitoring, claw-back statements (Western Bay, North Wales)

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[31] http://www.debonogroup.com/six_thinking_hats.php
[32] Many of these activities pre-date the RCC
[33] Currently being discussed in Cwm Taf;

Recommendations

Structures

5.25 We advise against any radical restructuring of the Programme at this point in time. The potential of the RCCs is recognised and there is a will to continue with this model of working. Furthermore as the Gwent approach has demonstrated collaboration can take time and so the RCCs should be given time to develop ways of collaborating. At the time of writing there does not seem to be any viable alternative to encouraging regional collaborative working. Little benefit would be derived from implementing a radical restructure at this point in time bearing in mind the recommendations regarding local government restructures made by the Williams Review. We recommend that Supporting People Programme structures are revisited once decisions have been made regarding the Williams Review.

Strategic vision for the programme

5.26 It is essential that strategic vision for the Programme is clarified and communicated. This will drive the structures, governance, management and delivery of the Programme and address many of the current issues around leadership and clarity of function. Actions should include:

- Re-defining the Programme's high level principles and the development of indicators to enable assessment of Programme and RCC performance against them[34].
- Clarifying and communicating responsibilities of the SPNAB, Welsh Government and RCCs within the Programme, for example: the strategic role of the SPNAB; the facilitating, monitoring, guidance role of the Welsh Government; and the coordinating role of the RCCs.
- Identifying and communicating principles of good practice in service design and delivery that can be adapted for local context.
- Ensuring common understanding that a robust evidence base, informed by the Outcomes Framework, for the impacts and outcomes

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[34] Welsh Government may want to consider appointing a group to oversee this.

of Supporting People funding is required to secure future funding for the Programme.

- Gaining engagement in the outcomes framework by embedding it in practice to support continued service improvement.

5.27 Whilst improved service delivery was the original driving force for the Programme, it is recognised that value for money is increasingly important and needs to be evidenced at Programme, RCC and individual local authority level. When appropriate the SPNAB needs to consider the appropriateness of radical proposals such as considering adjustments to the current funding arrangements for organisations that are not compliant with the Programme.

5.28 Clarifying and communicating the strategic vision for the Programme and the expectations of the SPNAB and RCCs in delivering may help resolve many of current issues regarding leadership, role and functions and membership and engagement. However there are a number of supplementary actions that can be actioned:

Steering Board and workstreams

5.29 The role and function of the Steering Board should be revisited to assess whether it can contribute to the future delivery of the Programme. If the Steering Board is retained, its membership, terms of reference and workplan should be revisited. We recommend that the workstreams are replaced by time bound task and finish groups with clear membership and remit and lines of accountability. If the Steering Board is removed, these groups could report directly to the SPNAB.

Opportunities for increasing RCC influence

5.30 We recommend Welsh Government explore the opportunities for increasing RCC influence through the use of alternative commissioning models such as Substance Misuse Area Planning Boards. This may incentivise engagement and collaboration of RCC members.

Cross policy agenda linkages

5.31 Linkages between the Supporting People Programme remit and other Welsh Government policy areas including health, social care and communities need improving. Further work should be undertaken to look at the linkages between Supporting People and other Welsh Government funding streams including Families First, Communities First and Flying Start.

5.32 At the regional level RCCs should strengthen their links and understanding to the wider policy agenda by improving relationships with regional health and social care groups. Strengthening these links at regional level may help give RCCs the role they are currently lacking.

Programme communication

5.33 Communication of the Programme's strategic vision and expectations of RCC performance needs to be more explicit. We suggest annual or six monthly meetings between the Minister, the SPNAB, key Welsh Government officials and RCC Chairs/ Vice Chairs would reinforce the strategic vision and leadership for the Programme, help clarify expectations regarding RCC role and performance as well as facilitate an active dialogue on national and regional issues affecting the delivery of the Programme.

5.34 Overall communication across the Programme requires improvement: SPNAB and Steering Board meeting minutes, workplans and documentation need to be circulated in a more timely manner; and decision making and other salient Programme updates need to be consistently communicated both at the national and regional level.

Welsh Government Supporting People team roles

5.35 The strategic vision will provide greater clarity for the RCCs including expectations of their performance and we believe that this should be accompanied by RCCs being given more freedom to adapt processes and practice to local contexts. The Welsh Government should undertake a capacity building role to support RCCs to meet the strategic vision. Activities could include: facilitating communication across RCCs to share commissioning and

service user engagement good practice; feeding back workstream activity; and developing on existing networks e.g. RDC network. This should be accompanied by a reduction in unnecessary monitoring and reporting requirements.

Membership of RCCs

5.36 The level of seniority (e.g. cabinet member, senior officer or operational officer) of RCC members may naturally fall out of the strategic vision. However we strongly recommend that individuals who sit on other local and regional boards (e.g. Health and Wellbeing Boards, Community Safety Partnerships etc) are encouraged to sit on the RCCs. This would help strengthen the wider strategic purpose of the RCC. Consideration should be given to length of membership term to ensure that the most relevant people sit on the RCCs.

5.37 Input and understanding of RCC members needs to be improved and the best practice examples identified in paragraphs 5.21 - 5.24 should be considered. Both clarity over the RCC role and increased emphasis on the RDC providing a partnership working function (paragraph 5.39) will enable statutory organisation members to provide a more robust input into the RCC.

RCC Chair

5.38 The organisational role (e.g. cabinet member, senior officer, and provider) of the RCC Chair should be left to local discretion, but should be supported by a role description outlining the knowledge, skills and competencies expected of a Chair. The earlier recommendation that Chair's should meet with the Minister on an annual or six monthly basis would further reinforce the Chair's role in driving forward regional Supporting People activity. Furthermore, the appointment of an independent Chair to the SPNAB has highlighted its advantages in terms of ensuring objective oversight and scrutiny and Welsh Government should encourage RCCs to consider this option. The duration of the Chair's term should be considered although further consultation would be needed about the optimum length of a term to ensure stability and continuity is retained.

RDC role and function

5.39 The RDC function should be carefully examined in regard to its future funding function and employment terms and conditions. The role is integral to the operation of the RCC and we advocate continued central funding for it. Local authority funds are limited and continued central funding for the role would enable Welsh Government to address issues regarding the: variation in the role's function across RCCs; discrepancy in employment terms and conditions; and the lack of clarity regarding their reporting channels. Welsh Government should:

- Clarify and standardise the role to ensure that its focus is to support the activities of the RCC and to avoid the issue of RDCs being asked to undertake work for other Supporting People stakeholders.

- Explore possible employment alternatives e.g. the RDC becoming a Welsh Government employee.

- Revisit the RDC job description and consider re-focusing the function of it to ensure the role focuses on making links between the RCC and other local and strategic policy areas (e.g. health, social care). For example the role in Gwent encompasses elements of partnership working and brokerage with stakeholders outside of the immediate programme delivery.

- Examine best practice outside the sector (e.g. Regional Children's and Adult's Safeguarding Boards have dedicated business managers) to gain an understanding of the potential of this role.

Service user engagement

5.40 The Supporting People Grant Guidance stipulation to appoint a service user to the RCC should be removed and left to local discretion. Service user engagement should draw on pre-existing fora and be adapted to local context. It is essential that RCCs continue to evidence service user engagement activities and outcomes and share best practice. Welsh Government should explore possibilities of including measures of service user engagement in the Outcomes Framework.

5.41 If engagement is to be meaningful and representative at a regional level we advise that the Welsh Government explores opportunities for improving service user engagement through facilitating training and sharing of good practice to ensure that it is representative, timely and robust. Methods of doing this could include dedicated events and workshops for RDCs and RCC members; presentations at RCC meetings; and items in the Supporting People Programme bulletin.

5.42 RCCs should look at more meaningful service user involvement and it should include more person-focused methods e.g. customer satisfaction data; qualitative measures; and peer research approaches. As a medium-term goal RCCs could be looking towards developing more service user-focused methods of performance measurement, learning from work that is currently underway by the Welsh Government in relation to homelessness services.

Appendix I: Research framework and topic guides

Four topic guides were developed for use with the following stakeholders: National Stakeholders including members of the SPNAB, Steering Board, workstreams and Welsh Government officers/ ministerial advisors; RCC Chair/ Vice Chair; RCC Members; and RDCs. The research framework incorporating the questions addressed to each stakeholder group is presented in Table 5.

- Topic Guide 1: National Stakeholders
- Topic Guide 2: RCC Chair/ Vice Chair
- Topic Guide 3: RCC Members
- Topic Guide 4: RDC

Table 5: Research Framework

Objectives	Source	Key Questions
1. Assess the effectiveness of the programme planning and commissioning arrangements for Supporting People, in terms of (both at local and national level): • Planning and commissioning structure and interrelation between national, regional and local arrangements • Membership • Engagement • Impact/Influence • Stakeholder awareness • Delivery of regional commissioning	Interviews/focus groups: National Stakeholders RCC Chairs/ Vice Chairs RCC Members RDCs Meeting observations Desk Research	• What do you see as the function of the RCCs? Do you think they are an effective model of delivering regional activity? (TG1) • Have you any views on how it is managed e.g. with one coordinating local authority? (TG 2,3 & 4) • Do you think the RCC is representative of all regional stakeholder groups? (TG 2, 3 & 4) • How do members engage with the RCC? (TG 2,3 & 4) • What do you think the role of the Chair/ Vice Chair is? (TG 2,3 & 4) • Do you have any views on whether the Chair should be a political appointment or not? (TG 2,3 & 4) • What regional activity has taken place in your RCC? (TG 2,3 & 4)
2. Identify best practice and innovation.	Interviews/focus groups: National Stakeholders RCC Chairs/ Vice Chairs RCC Members RDCs Meeting observations Desk Research	• Has the restructure of Supporting People improved services for users? (TG1) • What regional activity has taken place in your RCC? (TG2) • Do you have any structures for service user engagement in place? (TG 2,3 & 4)
3. Identify areas for improvement or action.	Interviews/focus groups: National Stakeholders RCC Chairs/ Vice Chairs RCC Members	• What would you like the programme to have achieved in 1 year, 3 years 5 years? (TG 1,2,3 & 4) • Have you got any suggestions for

Research Question/task	Source	Key Questions
	RDCs Meeting observations Desk Research	improvements to the structure of the Programme? (TG1, 2, 3 & 4)
4. Prioritise recommendations regarding the future of the programme	Interviews/focus groups: National Stakeholders RCC Chairs/ Vice Chairs RCC Members RDCs Meeting observations Desk Research	Informed by the above
Research Question/task	**Source**	**Key Questions**
i. The suitability of the programme structure and governance to deliver effective regional commissioning. This should include an assessment of programme governance, as outlined above.	Interviews/focus groups: National Stakeholders RCC Chairs/ Vice Chairs RCC Members RDCs Meeting observations Desk Research	• What do perceive to be the rationale for the restructuring of the Supporting People Programme? (TG1,2,3 & 4) • Do you think the new structure is fit for purpose in terms of achieving Supporting People Programme goals? (TG1,2,3 & 4) Overall have the new Supporting People Programme structures helped/ hindered in: Regional activity (local authorities, health, probation); Service provision (housing and support providers) (TG1,2,3 & 4)
ii. How effectively each Regional Collaborative Committee (RCC) is operating in terms of their role and the high level principles specified in the Supporting People Programme Grant guidance. In addition to the Objectives set out above, for RCCs this should include specific exploration of: • Whether the correct stakeholders are represented on each RCC; • Whether and to what extent members engage with the commissioning process; • Whether effective arrangements for service users to	Interviews/focus groups: RCC Chairs/ Vice Chairs RCC Members RDCs Meeting observations Desk Research	• What do you see as the function of the RCCs? Do you think they are an effective model of delivering regional activity? (TG1,2,3 & 4) • Have you any views on how it is managed e.g. with one coordinating local authority? (TG2,3) • Do you think the RCC is representative of all regional stakeholder groups? (TG2,3) • How do members engage with the RCC? (TG2,3)

	influence commissioning decisions are in place; • The nature of each RCCs achievements to date; and • Whether the group is making effective use of the Regional Development Coordinator (RDC).		• What do you perceive the role of the RDC to be? (TG2,3 &4) • Do you think the RDC in your area is being used effectively? (TG2,4) • Have there been any facilitators/ barriers in undertaking your role? (TG3) • What do you think the role of the Chair/ Vice Chair is? (TG2,) • Do you have any views on whether the Chair should be a political appointment or not? (TG2) • What regional activity has taken place in your RCC? (TG23, &4) • How does the work of the RCC fit with the operation of the Supporting People Programme in your organisation (TG2) • What have been the impacts and outcomes of the RCC's work to date? (TG 2, 3, & 4) • How are impacts and outcomes of activity being measured? (TG 2, 3, & 4) • Are you aware of any structures for service user engagement in your RCC? (TG 2, 3, & 4) • Do you think service user engagement has benefitted the work of the RCC? (TG 2,3 & 4)
iii.	Assess and make recommendations on the role and effectiveness of the Supporting People National Advisory Board (SPNAB). This should include evaluating whether the correct people are on the Board, their level of engagement and achievements to date, as well as awareness of the Board amongst other groups within Supporting People and the wider stakeholder and service user community.	Interviews/focus groups: National Stakeholders RCC Chairs/ Vice Chairs RCC Members RDCs	• What do you see as the SPNAB's purpose? (TG1, 2,3 & 4) • Do you think the right groups are represented on the SPNAB? (TG1, 2,3 & 4) • How could the SPNAB be improved? (TG1, 2,3 & 4)
iv.	The role of and requirement for the various work groups and workstreams involved with the Supporting People Programme;	Interviews/focus groups:	• What do you see as the purpose of: Steering Board/Workstreams (TG1, 2,3 & 4)

	including how they relate to the SPNAB and the impact they have. This should include evaluating the remit of the groups and determining whether there is clarity of roles or any duplication of effort. Make recommendations regarding structures and roles going forward.	National Stakeholders RCC Chairs/ Vice Chairs RCC Members RDCs	Do you think the right groups are represented on the Steering Board/Workstreams) Are they effective? (TG1, 2,3 & 4) • Can you suggest any improvements to the Steering Board/Workstreams? (TG1, 2,3 & 4)
v.	The views of the wider Supporting People community (including local authorities, RCCs and service providers) should be sought on the various structures to determine whether they are considered effective (in terms of the issues outlined above).	Interviews/focus groups National Stakeholders RCC Chairs/ Vice Chairs RCC Members RDCs	• What regional activity has taken place in your RCC? (TG 2, 3& 4) • How does the work of the RCC fit with the operation of the Supporting People Programme in your organisation (TG 2, 3 & 4) • Do you think RCCs are an effective model of delivering regional activity? (TG1) • Has the restructure of Supporting People improved services for users? (TG 1, 2, 3, & 4) • What have been the impacts and outcomes of the RCC's work to date? (TG 2,3 & 4)) • What you would like the RCC to have achieved in 1 year, 3 years? (TG2) • Have the new Supporting People Programme structures helped/ hindered in: a)Regional activity (local authorities, health, probation); Service provision (housing and support providers) (TG2, 3 & 4) • Has the restructure of Supporting People improved services for users in your area? (TG2, 3 &4)) •
vi.	Highlight examples of innovative or best practice identified across the Supporting People Programme.	Interviews/focus groups: National Stakeholders RCC Chairs/ Vice Chairs RCC Members RDCs	• Do you think RCCs are an effective model of delivering regional activity? (TG1) • Has the restructure of Supporting People improved services for users? (TG1, 2,3 & 4) • What have been the impacts and outcomes of

	Desk Research	the RCC's work to date? (TG 2,3 & 4)
		• What you would like the RCC to have achieved in 1 year, 3 years? (TG 2, 3 & 4) • Has the restructure of Supporting People improved services for users in your area? (TG 2,3 & 4) • Are there any other achievements made by the RCC that you would like to comment on? (TG 2,3 & 4) • Do you have any structures for service user engagement in place? (TG 2,3 & 4)

Appendix II: Documents reviewed for desk review

National documents

Analysis of the RCC Annual reports to the SPNAB 2013 (Paper D)

Aylward M, Bailey K, Philips, C, Cox, K and Higgins, E (2010) The Supporting People Programme in Wales: Final report on a Review commissioned by Jocelyn Davies AM, Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration, Welsh Assembly Government, Cardiff

Grace, C, Bennett M, and Martin, S on behalf of UK RCS (2013) Supporting People Programme in Wales: Design for Governance. Welsh Government, Cardiff

Letter from Minister for Housing Regeneration to Local Authorities and Chairs 22 October 2013

Matrix Research and Consultancy (September 2006) „Costs and Benefits of Supporting People" Report for the Welsh Assembly Government Matrix. London

Regional Development Coordinator Job Description

Report to the Supporting People National Advisory Board (11th September 2013) - Visits across Wales, Chris Maggs (SPNAB Chair)

SPNAB Minutes (December 2012 - December 2013)

SPNAB workplan

Steering Group Minutes (July – November 2013)

Supporting People Bulletins 1 - 10

Supporting People Grant Guidance

Supporting People Research and Evaluation Framework (Paper G)

Draft Memorandum of Understanding

Williams, P (2014) Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery. Welsh Government, Cardiff

Regional documents

Cwm Taf Draft Service User Involvement Framework (April 2014)

Cwm Taf 'off the shelf' projects (Feb 2014)

Cwm Taf RCC voting rights (April 2014)

Gwent RCC Communications Strategy

Gwent RCC Induction Pack

Local Commissioning Plans

North Wales RCC workplan

North Wales Service User Engagement Framework

RCC Annual Reports

RCC membership lists

Regional Commissioning Plans

Appendix III: List of organisations consulted

Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Community Housing Cymru

Cadwyn Housing Association

Caerlas

Cardiff Council

Care Society

Carmarthenshire County Council

Cartref

Ceredigion County Council

Clwyd Alyn

Coastal Housing Group

Conwy County Borough Council

Cymorth Cymru

Denbighshire County Council

Drive

First Choice Housing Association

Flintshire County Council

Gofal

Gwalia Housing

Gwynedd Council

Grwp Cynefin

Hafan Cymru

Hafod Housing Association

Hywel Dda Health Board

Llamau

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Newport City Council

North Wales Housing Association

Pembrokeshire County Council

Powys County Council

Public Health Wales

RCT Homes

Rhondda Housing

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

South Gwynedd Domestic Abuse

Supporting People Information Network

Swansea Young Single Homeless Project

Swansea Council

Taff Housing Association

United Welsh Housing Association

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Wales Probation Trust

Welsh Government

Welsh Local Government Association

Welsh Women's Aid

Wrexham County Borough Council

Ynys Mon Council