



Ein cyf/ Our ref: MA (P) CS 2347 17

John Griffiths AM  
Chair of Equalities and Local Government Committee  
National Assembly for Wales

13<sup>th</sup> July 2017

Dear John

During my appearance before the committee on 21 July I offered to provide a written note in response to some of the committee's questions. I trust the note below will clarify the specific matters.

**Details of the process for querying public service boards' well-being plans, as outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act**

As part of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 a public services board must, in preparing its local well-being plan, seek the advice of the Future Generations Commissioner on how to take steps to meet the local objectives included in its plan. The Commissioner has 14 weeks in which to give that advice. Once it has received the Commissioner's advice but before publishing the plan, each public services board must consult those people listed in the Act on its draft plan. The mandatory consultees include the Commissioner and the Welsh Ministers.

The Act also states that each board must review its local objectives or local well-being plan if directed to do so by the Welsh Ministers and may revise its objectives or amend its plan following such a review. When giving a direction the Welsh Ministers are required to publish a statement giving their reasons for doing so.

However, the focus of public services boards and their local well-being plans is on local accountability and in order to assure that democratic accountability is in place there is a requirement for a designated local government scrutiny committee of the relevant local authority to scrutinise the work of the public services board and its local well-being plan.

## **A note of discussions between the Welsh Government and local authorities, local delivery boards and public service boards on transitional arrangements**

My officials have regularly met with all Lead Delivery Bodies to discuss transition. The first series of meetings followed my oral statement and the team have continued meeting on a bilateral basis to provide bespoke support. In addition, the Lead Delivery Body Network is being held every two months with meetings held in both North and South Wales. These Network meetings have been held in February/March, April/May and June/July in North and South Wales respectively.

## **A copy of the Transition and Strategy Guidance provided to local authorities**

The Communities First Transition and Strategy guidance can be found by following the attached link:

<http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/comm/170622-transition-guidance-en.pdf>

## **A note of the evaluation of the Communities for Work and Lift programmes, including any available data and assessment criteria**

Further detail on the above action can be found at Annex 1

## **A note providing further detail on the employability pathway following engagement on the Lift and Communities for Work programmes**

Further detail on the above action can be found at Annex 2

## **A copy of the guidance on the capital asset programme**

I will be re-opening the Community Facilities Programme (CFP) before the end of July. The programme has been refreshed to take into account the additional £4 million per annum I announced in February. Priority will be given to applications from the former Communities First areas. I want community facilities in these areas have access to capital grants to improve what they can offer people in these communities and also to improve their own long term sustainability as part of the Communities First legacy.

There will be some notable changes to the CFP including the introduction of small grants of up to £25,000 which could for example fund a separate kitchen or toilets to facilitate the building's use as a childcare setting. There will still be larger grants available to a maximum value of £250,000. All applicants will have to provide evidence that the local community has been engaged in the development of the project. This will help to ensure the community gets what it wants and needs.

Community groups outside of Communities First clusters will still be able to apply to the CFP. They will have to show their proposals will improve opportunities for people living in the communities they serve. They will also need to identify key delivery partners such as the local authority. This will help them to evidence the strategic importance of their application. Guidance will be issued shortly.

You also requested further information on the following:

**How the Welsh Government plans to assess the effectiveness of the change in strategic approach to poverty and whether the Welsh Government would consider supporting a longitudinal study on poverty in Wales**

The Welsh Government is committed to undertaking robust research to evaluate the effectiveness of programmes aimed at reducing poverty and has a number of such studies currently being conducted. Examples include the Evaluation of the Lift programme, Evaluation of the Pupil Deprivation Grant, the Evaluation of Communities for Work, the Evaluation of PaCE (Parents and Children), and the Evaluation of the Childcare Offer.

In relation to national data, the National Indicators of Wales are required, as set out by section (10) (1) of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This puts in place a framework to measure the impact of the Act, which includes key poverty indicators looking at the economy, health, education and skills. This is in alignment with this Government's 'Prosperity For All' focus which will be outlined in Taking Wales Forward. Furthermore, we undertake and publish analysis of key cross-sectional datasets (including the Households below Average Income, Annual Population Survey and National Survey for Wales datasets) to better understand poverty and worklessness in Wales. Our 2015 Child Poverty Strategy includes 5 key objectives for tackling child poverty and improving the outcomes of low income families in Wales and on 13 December I published our statutory report on progress.

We already support the longitudinal Understanding Society UK study, which can be used to derive measures of poverty and its persistence over time. In addition, we fund a boost to the Millennium Cohort Study to ensure robust longitudinal data relating to children born in the year 2000 for Wales and this is used to inform reporting about child poverty and well-being and the factors associated with differential levels of achievement for Welsh children and young people; this is reported in the Welsh Government's publication: The Children and Young People's Well-being Monitor for Wales, 2008, 2011 and 2015). Welsh Government also has a programme of data-linking in place to examine a range of outcomes linking administrative and longitudinal survey data, such as in relation to education destinations, fuel poverty and Flying Start. As part of this programme, a project is being undertaken to examine the feasibility of constructing an individual deprivation measure in Wales using administrative data, which is by its very nature longitudinal, and which will add to our understanding of deprivation currently gained from the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD), the Welsh Government's official measure of relative deprivation in Wales, and to address some of its limitations.

We will look to use all these, and other sources to explore poverty trends; and where there are gaps in the available evidence we will explore options for filling these where we can.

**The data used to assess the effectiveness of employability programmes disaggregated on age and / or gender, if available.**

I can provide the following data as requested above which is used to assess the effectiveness of the Programmes.

**ReAct 3 Programme**

Male 66%  
Female 34%

Participants by age (% of total participants):

18-24 3%  
25-49 62%  
50+ 35%

**Jobs Growth Wales 2 (from September 2015)**

Since April 2015  
Male - 54%  
Female – 46%

Participants by age  
16-17 – 4%  
18-24 – 96%

**The Employability Skills Programme ( from September 2016)**

Male - 61%  
Female – 39%

Participants by age  
16-17 – 1.4%  
18-24 – 24.4%  
25-49 – 53.7%  
50+ - 20.3%

Yours sincerely



**Carl Sargeant AC/AM**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant  
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children



## **A note of the evaluation of the Communities for Work and Lift programmes, including any available data and assessment criteria**

### **Lift**

The Programme was formally launched in March 2014 and as at 31 May 2017 had provided 4,583 opportunities, including 939 people from workless households supported into employment, putting it on track to meet its overall target by the end of this year.

### **Lift Evaluation**

The Lift Programme is being independently evaluated by Wavehill Ltd, with the second stage report published on 20 December 2016. The report includes the following findings:

- Tackling poverty is one of the Welsh Government's highest priorities and given the substantial evidence that links worklessness to poverty there is ample justification for policy intervention of this nature.
- The Programme delivery model has been designed with a high degree of flexibility and this has enabled it to adapt to local circumstances and retain a person-centred approach.
- Participants are mostly positive about the support they've received through the Programme.
- A high proportion of participants have been long-term unemployed or have never worked, with only a few having engaged in previous initiatives to support them into employment; suggesting that Lift is effective at engaging with those hard to reach.
- Where participants have engaged in previous support Programmes, over three quarters prefer the approach adopted through Lift.

Further information and a copy of the Phase 2 report can be found at:  
<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/evaluation-lift-programme/?lang=en>.

### **Communities for Work**

#### **Background**

Communities for Work focuses on reducing the number of 16-24 year olds who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and increasing the employability of economically inactive and long term unemployed adults who have complex barriers to employment.

Each Communities for Work delivery team has a Triage Support officer who carries out a suitability assessment. The suitability assessment includes a first stage ESF eligibility check and a low level vocational skills assessment to determine an individual's level of need and which programme would be the best for the participant e.g, Communities for Work or Lift. The Triage Support Officer also provides ongoing case management across Communities for Work and local partnership networks, ensuring the individual receives the appropriate level of service and support available. The suitability assessment would identify a participant as:

0-6 months from employment: low to medium level of support required  
 6-12 months from employment: medium to high level of support required  
 12+ months from employment: high level of support required.

As at 31 May 2017, Communities for Work had provided employment support to 9,367 people and helped 2,272 into employment across Wales. The rate of delivery is expected to accelerate over the coming years and to meet its target of 10,000 people into employment by 2020.

**Data Collection**

Communities for Work adheres to the Welsh European Funding Office guidance on the recording and reporting of outcomes, all outcomes require a strict set of evidence before the outcome can be claimed. This ensures a robust monitoring arrangement, in which Communities for Work Account Managers continually monitor.

As at end 31 March 2017, the outcomes recorded and reported to the Welsh European funding office for Communities for Work are;

Outcome	Percentage of Communities for Work participants
Low or No Skills	54%
Care or Childcare responsibilities	40%
Over 54	11%
From a Jobless household	69%
From a BME group	5%
A work limited health condition	26%
Disability	13%
Male	46%
Female	54%

**Communities for Work Evaluation**

To evidence the benefits of Communities for Work, Old Bell/Dateb has been commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the Communities for Work programme which will look into the longer term benefits for the participants. The evaluation should provide evidence on whether participants entered sustainable employment and whether the programme helped to improve the participant's labour market position.

The three aims of the evaluation are:

- to elucidate the theory of change for Communities for Work and develop the logic model underpinning the programme,
- considering the differences between Priority 1 and Priority 3 Communities for Work operations to assess how the programme has been set up and how it is being operated
- to provide an indication of its overall effectiveness (including any differences between the target groups).

The draft Theory of Change report, which is the first phase of the evaluation was published in April and confirms that the programme is well designed and based on sound evidence. A copy can be found at:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/evaluation-communities-Work/?lang=en>

The second stage report will draw upon the theory of change in assessing how Communities for Work was set up and is being implemented across Wales.

Drafting the second stage report involved:

- interviews with Welsh Government officials, Department of Work and Pensions operations managers and Delivery Managers, Lead Delivery Body staff with direct responsibility for Communities for Work;
- undertaking a package of qualitative fieldwork in 19 selected CF cluster areas which included interviews with Communities First cluster managers; group or individual interviews with Communities for Work triage workers, advisers, adult and youth employment mentors; telephone discussions with a training provider, with a referral agency and/or third sector body, and an employer who have engaged with Communities for Work; one-to-one interviews with programme participants and reviewing a sample of 10 participant portfolios
- reviewing progress reports

The second stage report is due to be published Summer 2017.



**Follow up actions following appearance at the Equalities, Local Government and Communities Committee on 21 June 2017**

**Employment Pathway**

Both the Lift and Communities for Work Programmes follow a person-centred and holistic approach to supporting clients with complex barriers to employment. Following engagement with either programme the mentors and advisors will meet with participants to understand the barriers to employment and the actions that will be agreed to address these. Each participant's plan is individual to their own needs and circumstances.

Following a referral or contact, an appointment will be made with either a triage officer, adviser or mentor who will undertake a first contact triage assessment. Triage will consist of a first level eligibility check and light touch suitability assessment to determine the level of need and therefore which Communities for Work (CfW) advisory service is most appropriate. Results of the suitability assessment could indicate that the person referred requires low, moderate or high level of support or that they are ineligible

When a high level of support is identified, the participant will be referred to a CfW mentor who will agree an action plan for the participant.

When a moderate / medium level of support is required the participant will be referred to a Specialist Employment Adviser dependent on the level and type of need identified. This role is further broken down to two specialisms – parent employer advisors and community employer advisers. Both will agree action plans with the participants and both go on to agree action plans.

Although CfW will aim to engage with those furthest from the labour market, we can anticipate a small number of customers will be able to be supported with a minimum level of advisory support. These participants will be able to be self managed or easily directed to appropriate services and will require low level of support, again, through agreed action plans.

To supplement the advisory service, all participants will have access to a training provision as well as a barriers fund that will provide financial support to overcome barriers to employment.