

CF 20

Ymchwiliad i dlodi yng Nghymru: Cymunedau yn Gyntaf – yr hyn a ddysgwyd Inquiry into poverty in Wales: Communities First – lessons learnt

Ymateb gan: Dinas a Sir Abertawe

Response from: City and County of Swansea

1. Brief description of the role of the organisation

1.1 The City and County of Swansea is the Lead Delivery Body for the Communities First Programme in Swansea. The programme has been managed in recent years within the Poverty and Prevention Department of the local authority. Swansea has five Communities First Cluster areas within which approximately a quarter of the population live.

2. What worked and didn't work about the Communities First Programme?

2.1 What works

2.1a Community based, accessible services allow staff to understand communities, building relationships and trust that support disengaged people to participate in and access services that they would not otherwise.

2.1b Individual progression can be evidenced, for some participants that might be a short intervention and for others it is a longer term collaborative approach that has been required. Participants have been able to develop the confidence where it was lacking and reduce the barriers that prevent individuals from being a position where work readiness can be achieved.

2.1c Communities First has worked collaboratively with other Welsh Government programmes such as Families First as well as other organisations such as Citizens Advice Bureau. Communities First has been able to fill gaps in community service provision that support individuals to improve their employability and successfully continue their personal progression through a multi-agency approach.

2.1d The flexibility of the programme has allowed it to support people that are ineligible for provision from other programmes. In that way, it has provided a preventative approach by helping the short-term unemployed to develop skills for the job market.

2.2 What doesn't work?

2.2a Programme performance monitoring has been unsuccessful in capturing the value of the programme and the difference that it makes to individual lives.

2.2b Geographically limited provision has excluded people living in smaller pockets of deprivation within more affluent areas from being able to access the same level of support, although the personal need might exist.

2.2c No long term commitment to renewal of the programme has repeatedly caused valued staff to leave the programme, ongoing of recruitment processes and carrying of vacant posts.

3. How local authorities will decide which projects continue to receive funding after June 2017.

3.1 The Employability Grant will not see the continuation of existing Communities First Projects. It will continue to support personal progression through intensive case-loaded mentoring to improve employability and into work outcomes.

3.2 Legacy Funding will not necessarily see the continuation of existing Communities First Projects. The allocation of Legacy funding in Swansea will consider;

- Public Service Board priorities identified through the Well-Being Needs Assessment, and;
- Supporting the effective delivery of Employability Grant outcomes

4. How different poverty reduction programmes (Communities for Work, Lift, Flying Start etc.) will change as a result of the end of Communities First.

4.1 Partner programmes will have to adjust to compensate for reduced community engagement resource that supports isolated individuals and leads to referral.

4.2 Reduction of the resource for community based confidence building will mean that there is reduced support for disengaged individuals to assist them into mainstream provision.

4.2 Reduced local capacity will in turn reduce the scope for collaboratively arranged resources and the ability to fill gaps where other provision does not exist.