

Councillor Mary Jones
Chair – Scrutiny Programme Committee

BY MAIL

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Date: 6 February 2019

Dear Councillor Jones

Thank you for your letter dated 17 January 2019 relating to the Scrutiny Programme Committee held on the 10 December 2018. I respond as follows:

Local Area Coordination

Background

The Swansea Local Area Coordination team was established in June 2015 with three co-ordinators and has developed to a team of eleven, the most recent growth being in the last year when the team grew from 5 to 11. Eight of the Coordinators are funded through Adult Services, one by Swansea University, one through the Cwm Tawe GP cluster transformation bid, and one by Pobl Housing.

The co-ordinators use a strength based preventative approach to work with individuals and communities in specific population areas where they can know the community and can become known.

The Local Area Coordination approach is not a service, and cannot be measured in terms of predetermined service outputs. Each person the coordinator works with is different, is facing different challenges and has different concepts of the 'good life' they would like to achieve. The Co-ordinator walks alongside the person, encouraging and enabling them to use their own strengths and abilities to become more confident, connected and healthy.

There are several ways in which the effectiveness of the Local Area Coordination team can be evidenced; Academic Evaluation, Database reports, and stories from individuals.

Academic Evaluation

A formative academic evaluation was carried out by the Institute of Life Sciences at Swansea University, and published in 2016.

The evaluation indicated that:

In line with findings from previous studies, Local Area Coordination is tackling a broad range of social and personal issues.

The cost per supported individual was on average £980, though trending to circa £600 per individual as set-up costs are absorbed into portfolios reaching steady state.

There are high levels of complexity within the portfolio, with positive outcomes as outlined above, indicating that Coordinators are adding value across a range of public service pressures.

Local Area Coordination implementation involved costs of circa £400k (in Swansea and NPT) with benefits in the range of £800k-£1.2m. This represents a benefit/cost ratio of between 2:1 and 3:1 using the core range assumptions, whilst continuing to provide return even under the most conservative parameters.

Sustained LAC activity for the implementation sites alone would see the benefit/cost ratio improve further, rising to between 3:1 and 4:1 with a net return of £1.2m-£1.8m. There would be further benefit with the economies of scale and operational synergies that could be achieved with wider rollout of the approach.

The findings from the formative evaluation of Local Area Coordination in Swansea support research evidence from other UK (and Western Australia) Local Area Coordination sites. People report feeling better connected, less isolated and more hopeful for the future, there are avoided calls upon Social Worker support, fewer unnecessary visits to GPs and fewer calls upon mental health services. Further examples of national evaluations can be found here: www.lacnetwork.org/local-area-coordination/evidence-base.

Now that the Local Area Coordination team in Swansea has been established for 3.5 years and has grown to 11 co-ordinators a further summative evaluation would now be useful to measure the continuing effectiveness of the programme.

Database

The Local Area Coordination team currently use an in-house database which has very limited reporting functionality. A new database that would provide better reports was designed by the in house software team, together with the Local Area Coordination team in mid 2017 but has yet to be given any development time.

The Local Area Coordination manager is now liaising with other colleagues around the national network to identify a recording and reporting tool that will allow easy analysis of such stats as; reduced and prevented service use, improved health status, lower isolation, improved confidence, greater contribution to community. In addition the tool will provide a 'distance travelled' measurement for a handful of key individual outcomes.

SSWBA Outcomes

One of the few outcomes that are recorded in the current database are from the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (SSWBA). Not all the people in contact with a co-ordinator are in a position to report a change in these outcomes (for example they may have been recently introduced to the co-ordinator).

Of the people on the database who were able to report a change, increases were reported in the following;

Confidence- Increased confidence in future	44%
Connected- feeling more engaged in their communities	30%
Contribution- feeling more able to share gifts & skills with community	12%
Control – feeling in more control of their lives	25%
H&W – in more control of health and wellbeing	25%
Information- better informed and able to make decisions	70%
Improved Relationships – increased social networks	22%
Local Knowledge – feel more informed about their local community	57%

The database is not able to produce reports across outcomes or show how many people had more than one increased outcome but these changes do reflect a positive increase in a variety of outcomes.

Cost avoidance

The calculation of the costs avoided through Local Area Coordination involvement is not straightforward as it involves assumptions about the lives of individuals had they had not experienced Local Area Coordination involvement. Some cost avoidance calculations were made for the University evaluation and there are ongoing discussions, again at a national network level, to find a tool that will be able to show this accurately.

Stories

Stories of real people whose lives have been impacted positively by the involvement of a coordinator in their life provides key qualitative evidence. There are many stories recorded by the LAC team. An example is reproduced below:

Alice's Story

Alice was introduced to Fiona, the Local Area Coordinator by a member of the community and distant neighbour. Alice had first come to Swansea from Devon to study at Swansea University. She is a 25 year old who is bright and articulate, however, she has reached a crisis point in her life following an abusive relationship with a man who was addicted to alcohol and drugs. She was a sex worker, advertising online and said she was introduced to this work by her boyfriend. Alice presented as an intelligent and sensitive lady who explained she felt alone, lonely and ashamed.

She was easy to talk with and happily provided an account of her life to date: she had spent a considerable amount of her young life in foster care and from the age of 14 years until University was placed with wonderful foster carers in Devon with whom she had regular telephone and skype contact. Because of the situation she found herself in, she had not returned to the home or visited them for four years and had not allowed the foster parents to visit her in Swansea. Alice said 'I'm lost and have entered a world where morals and feelings are shelved'. She wanted like to discontinue her sex work, however was unsure how to do this.

What happened and what made a difference?

Fiona continued to meet Alice and introduced her to a Domestic Abuse Support worker and the One Stop Shop in the City centre. She also advised her on personal safety and provided her with a personal alarm. During their many conversations, Alice mentioned an interest in animals and Fiona gave her details of a sanctuary that had volunteering opportunities, which Alice took up. Through her voluntary work, Alice rediscovered her love of animals. She heard about Animal Management qualifications available through a local

College. She obtained information on the courses and discussed options available to her with Fiona.

Alice felt able to reduce her sex work clients to three a week and started saving the money earned to enable her to move from her current apartment and start afresh in a new home with no links to her past. Alice successfully applied to the college and enrolled on an animal Management Course. Together they looked at a range of accommodation options for her near the college and visited Housing Options for advice on being placed on a social housing list.

Alice has now moved out of Swansea and started her course. The college have also arranged a work placement at a livery in the area. Her foster parents in Devon have visited her new apartment and purchased some furniture for her. She has made new friends and is no longer sex working. Fiona and Alice continue to correspond through messenger as and when Alice wishes and she is grateful for the non-judgemental assistance provided by LAC saying:

‘You came into my life when I thought nobody could help me. I felt so ashamed and just didn’t want to go on. I’ll always be grateful for the time you spent with me and thank you from the bottom of my heart.’

Analysis: it would be reasonable to assume that had Alice stayed in her situation as a sex worker in Swansea and in a relationship with someone addicted to drugs and alcohol that over a period of time she would have needed – or been identified by - a statutory services, e.g. Health professionals, Social Services, Police, or mental health support. Since her involvement with the Local Area Coordinator she has been able to find the confidence to leave an abusive risky life and embrace a healthier life and enter further education.

Funding For Health & Social Care – Super Grant

In relation to the super grant, WG has confirmed indicative entitlement for 2019/20 which is equal to last year’s grant entitlement. In the absence of inflationary uplift this represents a small reduction in real terms. This level of funding is sufficient to meet commissioning objectives in relation to independent living services that are eligible for funding via this grant. WG is reviewing the formula for calculating each Local Authority’s entitlement to this grant and this may impact capacity to commission services in future. We have been advised by WG that a decision on the criteria for distributing future grant funding will be made in partnership with Local Authorities by April 2020. WG have offered assurances that any changes proposed are likely to be phased to enable local authorities to manage any impacts.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Mark Child
CABINET MEMBER FOR CARE, HEALTH & AGEING WELL