

Subject: North Denbighshire Communities First 2016

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee of the progress being made within Communities First for the first 2 quarters of the 2016/17 financial year. It is also to provide details of how the work of Communities First has contributed towards Denbighshire County Council's Tackling Poverty Board recommendations including:

- Plan how to prevent residents becoming susceptible to the prevalent causes of poverty.
- Plan how we can boost the prevalence of those factors that lead people out of poverty.
- Consider a vision for providing support mechanisms in place for Social housing tenants in the county, and whether current structures/processes are conducive to achieving this
- Consider the poverty premium and how advice for residents in poverty could help mitigate against its effects (interdependency with advice and support work)
- Report on the gap in health and education outcomes for those living in poverty, and recommend further mitigating actions
- Consider the Challenges outlined by managers of the Nationally-funded programmes. How can they support one another to address them

Work supported by Communities First in Denbighshire is specifically intended for those within a defined cluster area against outcomes set by the Welsh Government. Cluster delivery does not require project work to be undertaken across all outcome measures, but Communities First clusters are required to identify which outcome measures they intend to target and for the Lead Delivery Body (i.e. the managing body) to annually agree these with Welsh Government.

Communities First is one of the programmes under the Welsh Government's Anti-Poverty Strategy for Wales and has been awarded £666,020 for work in the North Denbighshire Cluster in 2016/17. Much of the costs for the North Denbighshire Cluster are for staff costs and for work commissioned to other local partners. This award is significantly lower than the funding awarded to the other 3 tackling poverty programmes. Communities First does link with the other tackling poverty programmes and is involved in regular conversations regarding closer partnership working, referral routes between programmes and discussions regarding future alignment recommendations.

For the year April 2016 – March 2017 Communities First is delivering 14 projects with 1158 individuals taking part in a wide variety of activities. 806 sessions have been delivered to date with a current total of 406 hours of volunteer contribution.

As highlighted in the recently written **Barriers to Employment** report it reported that the number of working age people who were claiming one or more key DWP benefits

within the Rhyl Wards totalled 4180 individuals. It is hoped that the scrutiny committee acknowledge that Communities First is working with a large number of these individuals. It should also be noted that the programme is working with those individuals who are deemed to be the hardest to reach and furthest away from entering the jobs market and team members are dealing with all types of community matters such as education issues, low level skills and work experience, mental health, debt/money management issues etc. A large proportion of our work is not measured by Welsh Government as we are requested to submit results based on prescribed Welsh Government outcomes.

Communities First activities are delivered under 3 main themes – these being:

- Education & Learning
- Prosperous Communities; and
- Health & Wellbeing

Learning activities with the Community in Quarters 1 & 2

Headline Data

- 61 individuals accessed Community learning activities
- 50 individuals felt more positive about learning as a result of these activities
- 97 parents involved in family learning activities
- 51 parents felt more engaged with school as a result of these activities
- 51 parents feel more confident supporting their children
- 159 pupils involved in aspirations raising activities
- 84 pupils with a better understanding of the importance of school

The learning officer has supported individuals with their **Basic Skills** to date and 100% of those individuals rated the support as excellent. More referrals were received both internally and from external agencies such as the Job Centre. One to one sessions continue to be the preferred method of support for the individuals in question and it is envisaged that we will receive more referrals in the second half of the year as the support on offer is beginning to be noted by external agencies.

Aspirations work with local universities has continued to be a very successful part of the programme. It is highly valued by the cluster primary schools and the universities (Bangor, Chester and new this year, Liverpool John Moore's). The main aim of this programme is to provide information to the children and parents about universities in order to make higher education a more attractive and realistic goal. Many of these families have no idea that higher education is a possibility or how they could support their child to aim for university. By targeting this programme at year 6 children it is hoped that they will enter the crucial, early years of high school with an "aspiration" that will have a positive influence on their commitment to study.

On the 16th February 2017 one full day of university based activities has been organised at Rhyl Town Hall and each of the five cluster primary schools will be bringing Year 6 pupils to the event to take part in sessions on i) The learning journey from primary school to university; ii) Academic life at university; iii) Student life at university and iv) General university quiz.

The **Youth Diversion** project continues to engage with young people across West Rhyl, but also in South West Rhyl, South East Rhyl and Upper Denbigh – with the aim of diverting them away from anti-social behaviour or crime. All areas are affected by above average or high levels of poverty. Sessions delivered included i) Evening Drop-in sessions provided twice per week in West Rhyl; ii) Weekly afternoon drop-in for young people aged 16+ in West Rhyl; iii) Weekly detached youth work session (Friday evenings) across targeted areas in Rhyl and iv) Sports outreach sessions delivered together with DCC leisure services in the West End and Bruton Parc areas of Rhyl

Prosperous activities with the Community in Quarters 1 & 2

Headline Data

- 107 individuals received support through our Job Clubs
- 35 individuals entered employment
- 48 individuals completed an employment related course
- 104 individuals have accessed digital inclusion support
- 10 have gained basic IT skills
- 99 participants are able to use the internet for online services
- 148 individuals received support with income maximisation
- 119 individuals reducing/managing debt

The **Next Steps** Project remains an integral part of our delivery and offers a holistic in-depth drop-in sessions for those with concerns around a range of issues including: training, employment, benefits, housing, food poverty, debt, financial management and health as a barrier to employment and learning.

Linking closely with the **Rhyl Urban Smallholding (RUSH)** project developed by the Senior Community Inclusion Officer, participants are now able to access project in order to develop their skills, qualifications and confidence.

The project links the work of the Prosperous Officer, the Youth Mentor and the Income Maximisation Officer to create a joined up approach to delivery. The staff also work closely with the DWP “Communities for Work” workers and provides the C4W workers with a place to meet participants within a community setting whilst also accessing the wider resource and training opportunities available through the Next Steps project.

Foodbank referrals continue to grow as has the public awareness of our work – which has resulted in an increase in the number of food donations we receive from organisations and community groups. Our Foodbank accepts referrals from a wide range of local agencies / community groups as well as those customers we identify from within our own thematic work. The reason for Foodbank referrals vary widely, the main underlying need for this service is because of the delays in benefit payments and the struggling to pay priority bills

Our holistic **Income Maximisation** service delivered by our commissioned partner, Citizens Advice Denbighshire provides a wrap-around community member focused service and provides a one stop multi agency referral hub to partner agencies such as the Benefits Advice Shop to leverage the outcomes.

The role of the Income Maximisation Officer helps to remove any financial barriers to work and helps participants see that work pays; maximising income and debt resolution are essential parts of this.

The service is delivered at a range of community venues including the Food Bank and job clubs, this results in a holistic wrap-around service tailored to individual participant circumstances.

We are continuing to work with DCC's Planning and Public Protection Services (Built Environment) and other partners to develop the **IN2 Construction** project which is a programme designed to enhance the employment prospects of unemployed individuals living in Denbighshire. The programme offers individuals the opportunity to access classroom based learning to gain their CSCS Labourer card and a two week on-site work experience placement. DCC's Energy Conservation Project Officer has highlighted repeatedly about how valuable the engagement and involvement with ourselves at Communities First has been and how this has enhanced the whole £5.5 million Energy Conservation Program within Denbighshire.

During this reporting period we supported the **Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit** to develop an event to raise awareness of the dangers of illegal money lenders that are operating in the area.

Health activities with the Community in Quarters 1& 2

Headline Data

- 114 GP (Clarence House) Referrals to 6 month Social Prescribing Project supporting lonely/isolated people
- New Pilot commenced September 2016 at Clarence House supporting people with low to moderate mental health needs to access appropriate support other than tranquilisers (90 people referred in first 40 days)
- 342 individuals accessed Streetgames/US Girls programmes
- 31 girls aged 11-18 regularly attending US Girls Youth Club in Rhyl
- 19 people have taken part in FoodWise a weight management programme with two clients losing over 3 stones each

The **Cob Roundhouse Project** – has achieved Round 2 funding of £26,900 funding from the Co-operative in October 2016 and in partnership with Denbighshire Countryside Services and North Wales Wildlife Trust the site at Glan Morfa will be further developed

The **Social Prescribing Project** was a collaboration between Clarence House Surgery, Communities First (Co-op Group) and the British Red Cross. The project began in May 2016 and ran through to the end of October. Over the course of the project 114 individuals were referred into the project. A high percentage of those referred in (over 90%) accepted the service. Individuals were signposted to a wide range of organisations to support them including Parabl, Silver Line, Royal Voluntary Service, North Wales Women's Centre, CAB, NEWCIS, Vision Support, SSAFA, Parkinson's, CRUSE and the DCC Falls Service.

Street Games had moved into new areas of Rhyl and opportunities to develop new Street Clubs continue. The “Us Girls” programme has run a weekly club (every Tuesday evening) where the young girls can come together and be involved in a variety sports and social activities as well as delivering sessions on building their self-esteem and confidence.