

Welsh Service Improvement Project

Discovery Report – October 2021 RCT

Project aims and outcomes

Aim of the Project

How might we redesign services to reduce the number of customers "falling out" of the statutory housing system within S66 and S73?

Expected outcomes

- Increase successful prevention and relief outcomes for people currently falling out of your service system and those who may do so in the future; helping to eliminate repeat homelessness and its associated costs
- Support to work through specific factors that contribute to people falling out, including wider service improvement and development support in an open, collaborative environment
- Ongoing support to trial changes, learn from them and evaluate the impact over the medium-/longterm
- Opportunity to exchange knowledge and practice with a close group of LAs and access Crisis' knowledge and practice work with other GB local authorities
- Opportunity to involve and upskill officers in co-designing changes and taking ownership for making lasting, continuous improvements to your service
- Learn and adapt your service in light of the pandemic, focusing on developing new customer journeys centered around more remote/ virtual forms of access
- Gain novel and invaluable insight from your service users who will share their experiences as part of
 the project

Approach & methodology: user-centred design and agile

Phases (iterative)

Description

Tools/ Outputs

Outcomes



Research to explore and better understand the problem. Build empathy and understanding of users, their needs and aspirations. Seek inspiration from others. Synthesise research into meaningful and actionable insights, identifying opportunities for design and improvement.

- Business case or benefits case •
- User research report (qualitative, ethnography)
- Secondary research
- User Journey and/ or Experience Maps
- Service Blueprints

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- Insights & Design Opportunities
 - Shared understanding of problem
- Frame design opportunities •
- Understand user types and needs
- Understand user experience today

Brainstorm solutions to opportunities identified. Identify whether to re-use existing practice ideas or develop something new. Select most promising ideas and develop into concepts to take forward

Ideation

- Show and tell
- Brainstorming
- Idea ranking
- Storvboarding
- Create a concept
- Identified solutions
- Key concepts to take forward to next phase

- Prototypes (low-res to high-res and live)
- Minimum viable products/ solutions

Prototyping

Develop rough and working

prototypes of selected concepts.

Share and get feedback early to

test hypotheses, assumptions, risks

and key elements of the idea.

Integrate feedback and keep

iterating. Define a 'minimum viable

solution' that meets key user needs

- Experience prototyping
- Storyboarding
- Feedback capture grids
- Scenarios & Use Cases
- · Tested assumptions with real users and iterated designs accordingly before committing further resources
- Identified biggest risks and reduced this
- Identified what's most important



Implementation

Develop roadmap for full solution. Continuous improvement after 'go live' can include full pilots. Deliver more user needs identified in earlier phases and adapt to changing needs. Measure and monitor against KPIs

- Roadmap and KPI report
- Implementation plan
- Toolkit & outputs for others to adopt
- Product/ service that works for users and meets prioritised needs
- Started measuring the performance



S66 success

71% (high)

			Popula 242,0		4 square ns	71% of LSOAs in the top 50%
S73 success	S66 fallout	S73 fallout	Increasin of comp		evel of leavers	Lack of stock for permanent housing
56% (high)	16% (19/20)	24% (19/20)		High de serv	for sup	in need ported iodation 9/20

Discovery Goals

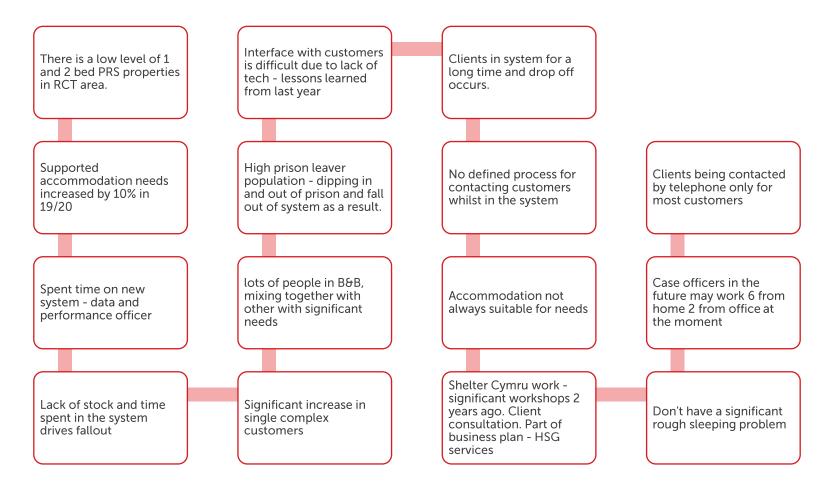
Fully understand the local factors, issues and processes driving fallout rates in RCT; including any changes over time

Identify good/ best practice in this area. Is there anything we can use/ learn from other authorities?

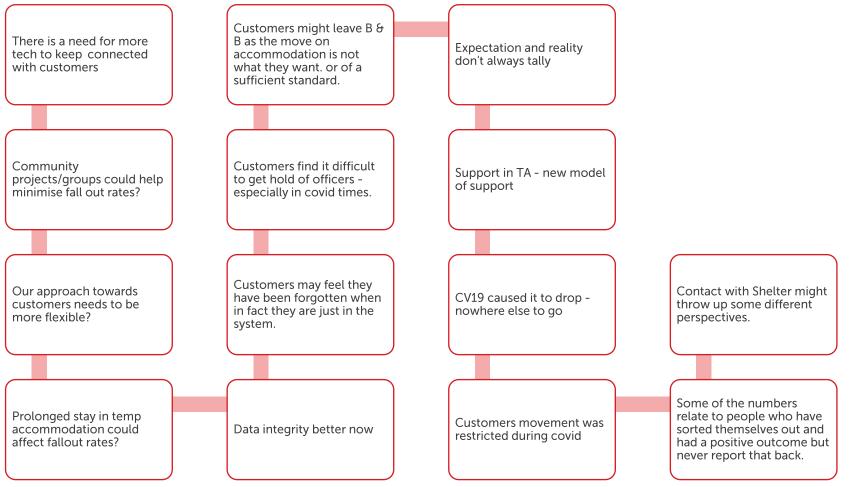
Fully understand who is falling out and capture their needs (types of people/ problems)

Fully understand the impact of the CV19 pandemic on this issue

Identify service strengths, good practice and successful initiatives to build on • What we already know:



Assumptions



Where do we need to learn more?

How any planned collaboration with health/HF might affect fallout?	Could a joined up approach with other agencies help to minimise fallout? Where is this already happening?	How many fallouts come from prison leaver category? Has the wisdom project improved fallouts?	How does the temporary housing shortage affect fallout?	Does the fact that men spend significantly longer in temp than women affect fallout?
How has increase in temp placements in 19/20 affected fallout?	Will phase 2 plans have an affect on fallout numbers?	How can we make the service more assessible to all?	How to be smarter about our communication flow?	The capacity of caseworkers to have that contact
	On an individual basis what happened with the fallout cases	How many people fallout and then represent.	Any customer journey mapping from before	

Discovery activities:

- Data Analysis/ Visualisation
- Good Practice Research
- Peer research interviews
- Auditing case files
- Housing options officer interviews
- Voluntary sector workshop
- Stakeholder/ Partner workshop
- Desktop Review

Data analysis and visualisation Insights		
Fallout rates S66	 Overall trend stayed the same through 18 – 20 Unsuccessful preventions increased by 10% from 2018 – 21 No appreciable difference in fall out for men and women Repeat placements reduced in 20/21 	
Fallout rates S73	 Overall figures stayed similar over three years Loss of contact doubled in 20/21 Large increase in unsuccessful relief from 7% to 31% Double number of representations in S73 than S66 	
Reasons for representation – previous outcome logged:	 Highest to lowest S60 decision S62 decision Successful Unsuccessful Loss of contact Withdrawn Assistance refused 	

Housing Options officer interviews 3 x Officers interviewed Insights			
Options officers hold higher caseload than they think they should to give best service	No set framework for customer contact in place including how many times and when customers should be contacted	Lack of suitable move on accommodation	
Customers spend too long in temporary accommodation	Support worker model can provide good access to customers	Limited options for temporary/supported for ex- offenders	
No control over support worker changes within partner organisations	Links with PRS could be improved to provide access to more properties	Could maximise use of IT system to make customer journey more joined up	
Customer's find it hard to get through to officers using the phones at times	Good concensus around reasons for closure between three officers interviewed	More suitable supported accomodation needed	
TA not always suitable	Need for more HMOs that customer's are actually prepared to live in	Work with drug and alcohol services could be made easier	

Case File Audit

The audit assessed the quality of fact collection, delivery of advice, the implementation of legislation and outcomes for customers.

This section presents the findings from the audit. It provides a baseline or "health check" with the intention to guide any future audits and/or changes to practice.

Further cases can be audited if specific areas warrant further exploration.

The audit was completed during the period 18th and 19th August 2021.

Baseline Sample

As far as possible, the sample (n=41) was representative of cases handled by the Housing Options Team (including distribution between officers).

The baseline sample included the following cases:

Case Туре		
Section 66	20	
Section 73	21	
Household type		
Family	9	
Single	31	

Logged outcome	
Successful	12
Application refused	5
None-cooperation	3
Withdrawn	5
Withdrawn – Loss of contact	12
Other	4

Years assessed	
18/19	13
19/20	12
20/21	15

Scoring Methodology

	Score
Stage 1: Facts and requirements established (and local authority duty)	
Client and household details	2
Current circumstances	1
Health/ support	2
S68 interim accommodation	2
Relevant notification sent	1
Stage 2: Accurate and appropriate advice and PHP	
Advice	1
Signposting/ referrals	1
Develop tailored PHP for reasonable and SMART actions to be taken (by both LA and applicant)	10
Stage 3: Timely and efficient casework	
Prompt, timely, efficient setting completion and recording of tasks	4
Closure/progression at appropriate point	3
Total score	27

*Some sections were nonapplicable in certain cases so not every case could achieve the maximum total score. This is why % of possible score is used when presenting results

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Case Scores

Overall Mean Score (n=40) - 75%

Score Ranges		
90%+	14	
80% - 89%	8	
50% - 79%	12	
<50%	6	

Comments

- Similar scores across S66 and S73
- 17% of cases scored 100%
- 30% of cases scored 90% plus
- Lowest scores within case work phase
- Family and Single cases show identical scores

Click to add text

Mean Scores by Year	
18/19 (n=14)	75%
19/20 (n=12)	73%
20/21 (n=14)	73%

Mean Score by Case Type		
s.66 (n=20)	75%	
s.73 (n=20)	75%	

Mean Score by Household type		
Family (n=9)	75%	
Single (n=31)	75%	

Mean Scores by Outcome	
Successful (n=12)	76%
"Falling out" category (n=28)	74%

Themed Scores

Score for each Stage	
Stage 1: Facts and requirements established	81%
Stage 2: Accurate and appropriate advice and PHP	75%
Stage 3: Timely and efficient casework	75%

Lowest Scoring Elements

Timescales agreed for actions to take place/any reviews to take place	31%
Record of types of support the client/household needs in order to secure and retain accommodation	51%
Evidence that everything that could be was done to help the applicant	61%
Support needs for client/household - specific note where these will influence ability to retain /acquire accommodation recorded	61%
Contact details provided for named caseworker or clear instructions of how to contact during the 56 day period	62%

Comments

- High score for Stages 1 in comparison to Stage 2/3
- Logging of support needs low across both stage 1 and 2
- Lack of agreed timescales logged on files
- Confusion on some files with regard to logging as S66 or S73
- File show variations around contacting customers

Quantitative and Qualitative positives

Quantitative

- Interim accommodation seemed suitable for needs in 100% of cases
- 95% of cases showed detailed and thorough notes on system re advice given to customer
- Relevant and appropriate summary of situation seen in 95% of cases
- Timely S63 letter of decision sent in 90% of cases
- Changes of circumstances quickly addressed in 91% of cases

Qualitative

- Handling of cases often strongest in the initial phase of each case
- Allocation to temporary accommodation usually quickly undertaken
- Initial advice recorded was generally thorough and clear
- Good communication often seen with support workers
- Many simple cases dealt with quickly and efficiently.

Quantitative and Qualitative 'areas of improvement'

Quantitative

- Lack of evidence of timescale discussions on 69% of files
- Logging and referring to support needs throughout missing on 55% of files
- Loss of contact up by 5% for female singles in 20/21
- 34% of cases show lack of efficient contact with customer during the case
- Successful preventions fell by around 10% in 20/21

Qualitative

- Outcomes logged incorrectly on some files
- Lack of meaningful casework seen on some files if initial work is unfruitful
- Support needs not always recorded initially
- No evidence of financial inclusion/debt management/income maximisation on files
- Length of time in temp means some customer abandon and lose contact.

Case Studies from audit:

Study 1:

Customer was vulnerable young woman.

Temp acommodation found quickly but move on not sourced and client had problems with debt (use of a debt specialist could have helped).

Customer left temp after 2 months and lost contact with service - it was noted that there has been a lot of engagement with customer since. Study 2:

File shows lots of behind the scenes case work being undertaken between support worker, Housing Options, Housing register and PRS team to try to achieve best outcome for client.

Good detail on PHP, including client preferences, actions and contact details.

Also carried out PRS affordability sheet.

Statutory/voluntary partner interviews

Positives

- □ HF service now up and running (1 year old)
- More options now for complex customers
- Links with RCT homelessness department are strong

- New project SMHOS which includes specific mental health nurse and substance misuse nurses – devised to help people who have complex needs (those who are not eligible for HF type help)
- Knowledge of difficulties housing officers face in completing their work
- □ Developing restorative approaches for customers

Areas for Improvement

- Homeless route only given one choice of property even if this is unsuitable
- □ Not enough turnover to meet demand
- For perhaps 30% of their cohort the system does not work - It is not a system in which they can achieve. They are set up to fail by not addressing the real problems.

Statutory/voluntary partners cont...

Areas for improvement

- LA don't always see the whole picture each element they deal with is interconnected and this is not always appreciated.
- Uneven power balance between LA, customers and providers
- Stringent criteria of choice based lettings system (not much flexibility) people feel defeated
- Real disconnect between what customers think they should have and what they are entitled to expectations are too high.

- Same decisions keep happening for customers that don't work
- □ Not enough use of PIE and TIC
- □ System based on short term thinking
- Not enough simple information to help customers understand process
- □ Complex customers fall through the gaps

Desktop review

- PRS can be difficult to access and some units are poor quality
- Under 35's cannot afford PRS
- Large number of homeless come from under 35 bracket and over 25s numbers are rising
- Tenancy debt can be barrier to move on
- High level of vulnerable customers with mental health needs/substance misuse issues within the area
- Revolving door ex-offenders are difficult to keep in touch with and track even with additional support in place
- Awareness of homelessness needs to be raised through associated health services

- Most presentations come from friends or family no longer willing to accommodate
- Not enough intelligence around how many are sofa surfing at any one time
- More one bed accommodation needed peppered around the district to meet need
- Customers spending too much time in temporary accommodation
- Lack of suitable HMO accommodation for under 35s
- Lack of suitable move on accommodation causing bottlenecks in temporary accommodation

Areas of insight gained:





Theme	Insight
Communication with customers	 Customers cannot always get through on the phone Covid has meant face to face contact with customers has been reduced Most of customer's contact is with support worker (reducing ability to build link between housing officer and customer) Partner organisations lack access to straightforward information for customers Time not available to utilise PIE and TIC care approaches to customers as per training given Officer caseloads are high and no time to contact all customers properly No system in place to inform officers how frequently they should contact customers during casework or when closing files
Technology	 Desire by staff to see systems used to their fullest Customers don't always have the necessary technology to communicate well with the system Technology is not joined up eg. Could notify customers when they need to interact with it to bid, send in information etc.

Theme	Insight
Complex needs/ repeat cust omers	 Housing First has been successful but could be extended Those registered following say police bail (cannot return to address) may leave the system by choice and not notify Customers may dislike the temporary accommodation offer and return to rough sleeping/sofa surfing Customers who drop out often come back around again with increased complexity Partner organisations feel difficult for customers to navigate the system successfully especially if they have complex needs Same decisions keep happening for customers that don't work Support often not at a high enough level for the customers
Current processes/partners hips	 Links with partners in health and care services could be improved Current system with support workers relies heavily on quality of that support being good Links with drug and alcohol and mental health services could be improved for dual diagnosis customers Council homelessness team well-liked by partnership organisations No consistent way to track whether a customer has been housed by a means other than through the council. Housing dept builds relationships with support provider rather than customers directly

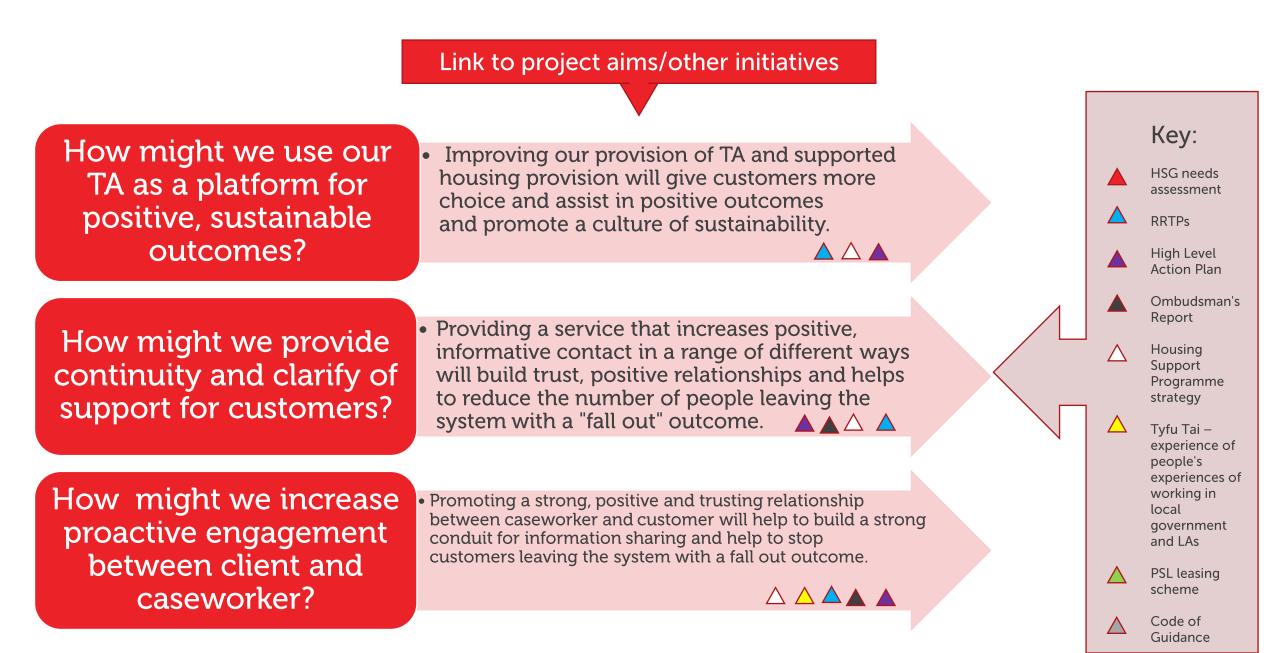
Theme	Insight
Customer insights	 Customer expectations don't always match service Need for debt support Tech issues are a problem as is access to wi-fi or broadband mix of face to face and remote contact would work best Travel can be expensive and difficult Access to more information on the service and how to navigate might be helpful
Accommodation options	 Customers spending too long in temp accommodation Temp accommodation options don't always meet need Move on accommodation from temp not always suitable either and is scarce Need to investigate whether more use of HMOs would alleviate blocks in system System for dealing with tenancy debt can cause feelings of hopelessness Only one offer from homelessness into accommodation even if this accommodation is unsuitable Finding support that meets customer needs is sometimes difficult Too little turn over to meet demand Long distances between areas means difficult to house people where they want to live

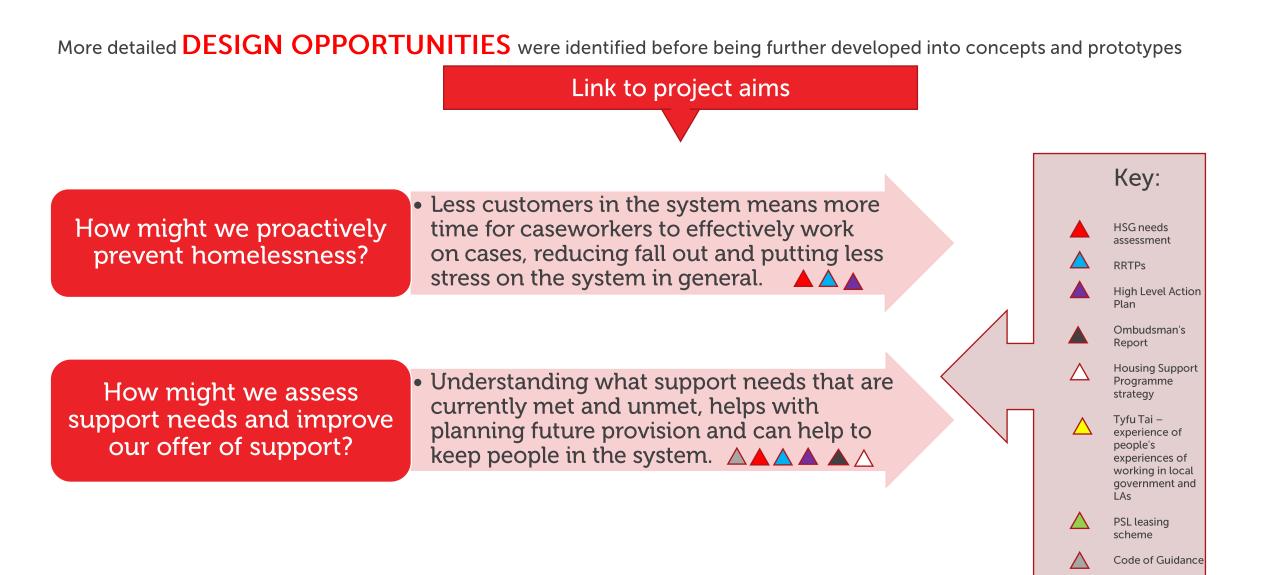
Quick wins and design opportunities

QUICK WINS were identified by the project teams (defined as Things we can do in 8 weeks with some effort, design and consultation)



More detailed **DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES** were identified before being further developed into concepts and prototypes





Concepts and Prototypes

What is the name of your concept?

How might we . . . provide continuity and clarity of support for customers?

Place post-it drawing here

Describe your concept

Reinvigorate partnership working and meetings – definitely with health and care.

How does your concept work?

Consider existing partnership working arrangements and identify where there are gaps in existing provision either in terms of collaboration opportunities, joint working or information sharing.

Consider reinstating CELL meetings

Consider the effectiveness of existing meetings already taking place

Pay particular attention to our relationship with health and care and seek opportunities to work alongside each other and collaborate when dealing with the same customers

Who is the target user or users?

Partners of the homelessness service but particular health and social care colleagues and first and second line health services eg. GPs and hospitals.

Are there any anticipated barriers/challenges to your concept?

Partner buy-in Officer buy-in Time to undertake more engagement with partners Aligned vision and values

What value does it bring? How does it address the design challenge?

Strengthening existing relationships and working towards a service that can offer a multi-agency approach to the management of homelessness throughout Caerphilly.

What are the key factors for success?

A desire from other services both within the LA and outside to engage with the multi-agency approach and to take responsibility for their part in ending homelessness.

Providing opportunities to partners that are suitable and effective.

Example "Prototyping Plan"

What is the concept we are testing? Design Opportunity 2 - How might we provide continuity and clarity of support for customer?

Reinvigorate partnership working and meetings - definitely with health and care

What assumptions do we need to test?

1. There is an appetite for more partnership working from our partners.

2. That we already have some strong relationships that just need revisiting

3.Working more closely with partners would bring extra benefits across all our work.

4. Health and care are particularly useful partners in relation to falling out work.

What key questions do we have about how the concept should work? Are there specific components we want to look at?

1. Can we piggy-back on existing partnership meetings or opportunities?

2. How often should any meetings with partners be?

3. Should we have an all partners meeting or specific meetings with different partners from different sectors/areas?

4. What other types of interaction do we need to think about that will bring relationship benefits?

How will we prototype key questions & assumptions? How will we capture feedback?

1. Telephone/email partners to scope out appetite for meetings and working more closely

2. Survey of partners to rank our relationship and the need for meetings/working more closely. Also offer options with regard to frequency of meetings, participants and reach.

3. Target our partners in health and care services to find out where opportunities to work more closely are being missed.

4. Check out what events/meetings are already on the timetable we could piggyback onto.

5.Research good partnership working principles.

<If role play> What scenarios will we use? What are the roles required and who will play them?

What do we need (activities, resources, people etc.) to implement the concept and turn it into a reality?

1.Staff time to prepare survey, ring or email partners, research existing meetings and partnership working principles.

2.Potential venues – If not online – for meetings to happen.

3. Staff time to evaluate results and feed back to management.

Action Plans

Action Plans

Three separate action plans were drawn up.

The main purpose was to:-

- log and follow the progress of all the ideas generated through their testing phases to completion.
- provide a place to store the backlog of ideas, concepts and prototypes, as yet untested for the future.
- provide an area to store pre-existing ideas and service changes

Three elements of the action plans:

- Quick wins: A log of the quick win ideas, owners and reasons for development
- Concepts and prototypes: a space for keeping the developed concept ideas and any prototypes, created from the design opportunity ideas, showing what is needed to test each concept prior to full implementation/ "go live" in service
- A roadmap: A space for actively planning and managing the implementation of the above, dependent on service capacity

• Action Plan: Quick Wins

Quick wins							
Name	How does this change support "fall out" reduction objectives?	Description	Priority (l/m/h)	Owner	Actions	Progress	
hort Term Improvements					•		
1. Make PHPs more customer friendly	Improves customer awareness, promotes a more open and friendly relationship with the housing adviser and helps to keep customer in the system.	Consider a number of other LA's PHPs and devise more useful version for RCT making it easier to read and more informative for the customer.	н	GG/DH/RG	Meeting to discuss took place 05/01/22 - Crisis supplied sample PHPs for discussion	Meeting set for 31/01/22 to review current wording.	
2. Casework standards	Improves customer relationship with caseworker, improves customer experience, makes patterns of fall-out more identifiable and enables service to be built more successfully around customer need.	Gaps in staff knowledge around how to work on cases and interact with customers has been identified. Many HD officers work to different standards and work methods. A gold standard casework document to provide guidance on how casees should be progressed will aid in making the customer journey more successful.	м	RG	It has been identified that this links with quick wins: Introduce case management standards; 5. Update procedure on end of duty categories; and 8. Updating of preferred contact methods.	Agreed timescale for commencement by 01/02/22 and potential completion date. This is a large piece of work.	
3. Review debt pathway	Improves customer knowledge and their ability to make informed choices. Promotes a climate of help and assistance towards the customer and allows for realistic plans to be made.	Current debt pathway is through CAB. A need to evaluation of the work done by CAB and how effective this is, is needed. More direct referrals to CAB are required and a debt evaluation sheet could help to consistently identify cases which would benefit from the debt pathway.	м	Team	Although the need for this is known and it has been discussed no dates have been set.	Awaiting commencement. Currently on hold.	
. Introduce case management standards	Improves customer journey and effectiveness of data collection. Ensures that customers receives the same journey whichever officer deals with their case.	Provide staff with a comprehensive guide to how cases should be progressed including training on how customers should be communicated with both in terms of time and attitude.	н	Team	It has been identified that this links with quick wins: 2. Casework standards; 5. Update procedure on end of duty categories; and 8. Updating of preferred contact methods.	Agreed timescale for commencement by 01/02/22 and potential completion date. This is a large piece of work.	
	1						

• Action Plan : Design Opportunities > Concepts > Prototypes > Implemented

Design Opportunity	How does this change support "fall out" reduction objectives?	Ideas to support design opportunity	Link to concent	Link to prototype plan	Priority L/M/H	Assigned to	In progress Y/N
1 How might we use TA as a platform for positive, sustainable outcomes?	Teddellon objectives.	1.1 Review the tech used / methods used to communicate with customers	Excel		Н	Assigned to	
	happened from temporary accommodation and that this TA might not be suitable for the needs of the customer, resulting in them leaving the system. Improving our provision of TA and supported housing provision will give customers more choice and assist in positive outcomes and promote a culture of sustainability.	1.2 Increase the provision of TA we need - right type, trauma informed etc. Lease/ RSL?	A Excel		М		
		1.3 Management process/standards. How will we monitor?	A Excel		Н		
		1.4 Complex needs supported housing/housing first provision?	A Excel		L		
		1.5 Regular feedback from TA providers.	A Excel		М		
			-				

• Sample roadmap

Welsh service improvement project	Backlog (not started)	Concept development	Prototyping	On hold	Completed (service change implemented or live prototyping)	Date completed
		1.1 Review the tech used / methods used to communicate with customers - LINKED TO ABRITAS UPGRADE				
sustainable outcomes/		1.2 Increase the provision of TA we need - right type, trauma informed etc. Lease/ RSL? LINKED TO HMO WORK IN TREFOREST.				
			1.4 Complex needs supported housing/housing first provision? LINKED TO EXISTING HF EXPANSION			
		1.5 Regular feedback from TA providers. LINKED TO EXISTING WORK TO STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS				

Evaluation and monitoring



Evaluation will take place from the end of the project for a period of 12-18 months



Regular check-ins will be organised with all three local authorities on a 3 monthly basis to check progress against action plans



Surveys will also be sent out on a three-monthly basis, to track staff's observations on the changes being made



A mid-way staff event will be organised to discuss progress and provide some qualitative feedback A results trackers has been devised to record impacts throughout the 12-18 month period.

Sample of Objective 1.1 below

Objective 1: To reduce prevention 'fallout' from the homelessness system in three Welsh LAs													
				Actual count									
		Target	0-3 month	s since	3-6 month	s since	6-9 month	s since	9-12 month	hs since			Who will collect
Indicator definition	Indicator	larger	start date		start date		start date		start date		Data collection frequency	Data source	data
			Testing	Across	Testing	Across	Testing	Across	Testing	Across			data
			phase in LA	all LAs	phase in LA	all LAs	phase in LA	all LAs	phase in LA	all LAs		1	
Outcome 1.1													
											Data inputted into		
											participating LA system		Front-line staff
Number of households recorded as 'fallen	Proportion of unique households under										daily/weekly, and extracted	Participating LA homelessness	will input - LA
out' under Prevention duty reduced during	Prevention duty categorised as 'fall-out' during										by ?? At end of reporting	monitoring/case management	contact will
reporting period	three-month period (total)										period	system	extract
Outputs contributing to Outcome 1.1													
	Narrative report describing prevention action plan												
LAs implement actions for prevention duty											Report received by Marcia		
reporting period Outputs contributing to Outcome 1.1 LAs implement actions for prevention duty following action plan Outcome 1.2	three-month period (total) Narrative report describing prevention action plan implementation is submitted to Crisis in two weeks following reporting period										period Report received by Marcia at end of reporting period	system	ext

National Policy implications

Comparative findings to the Ombudsman's report

Letters and PHPs too generic, not personalised enough, too technical and difficult to understand.

Guidance around classification of case closure outcomes not clear

No system in place to inform officers how frequently they should contact customers during casework or when closing files – casework standards

Could have wider range and improve use of tech to communicate with customers – more streamlined customer contact journey

Lack of simple, straightforward information available for customers and partners – websites out of date – could increase and improve self-help opportunities

Policy implications of work

Inconsistencies in data recording – importance of data collection to provide true reflections, inform future planning and commissioning.

Lack of suitable and affordable move on – size, location etc.

Data digital and tech – GDPR, data sharing use of technology to contact customers and improve communication

Frustrations regarding lack of availability / ability to provide TA that is suitable for customer needs

Thank you



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