



Pilot site snapshot: Swansea

To accompany the year 2 evaluation
of The Coordinated Community
Support Programme



Swansea 1

Summary of funded activity

- Matthews House, Hope in Swansea App: £12,100
- Housing Justice Cymru Citadel Project: £13,338
- EYST Community Interpreting Project: £22,766
- EYST Hardship Fund (continuation): £3,000
- Swansea Women's Aid, Smallwood Grants: £9,000

Position at the end of year 1

The need to respond in a focused and rapid way to the Covid-19 crisis led to stronger working relationships between organisations. Although the Covid-19 pandemic increased the difficulty of offering face-to-face support, organisations successfully shifted delivery aspects to a remote model. Organisations in Swansea felt this could be built on in the longer-term to improve co-ordination and the user experience

What Year 2 has focused on

Improving capacity through investment in a course for interpreters, increased access through the development of the Hope in Swansea app as well as the provision of grants and support to people in crisis. Engaging with the Regional Advice Network (RAN) to explore opportunities for a referral system.

What has been achieved in year 2

Improved joint working and coordination between organisations - all partners interviewed highlighted that joint working and coordination had improved considerably as a result of the programme while some reported they were also engaging with a broader mix of organisations. This was also reflected in the survey responses

There is a focus on providing holistic support - VCS organisations in Swansea highlighted the importance of getting to know individuals and being able to support their needs through local networks. There was a sense that the nature of CCS funding enabled them to focus on people without categorising either them or their needs according to strict funding criteria. Some organisations felt that 'user stories' could be developed which would highlight the complexity of people's needs and the role that multiple organisations could play in supporting them

CCS has led to increased focus on planning for the future - building on the lessons from Year 1 there is a recognition of the need to ensure that improved referrals and collaboration continue. While the Hope in Swansea App has the potential to play a key role in reducing barriers, we felt that there was some uncertainty as to which organisations would take the lead for ensuring that awareness and communications remained joined-up once the programme ceases

Swansea 2

What has been learned in Year 2

It has been important to frame challenges as issues facing the city as a whole in order to developing a joined-up and collectively owned response between the VCS organisations and the LA

Trust and confidence encourage people to have conversations with organisations who can help : “Our role is not to duplicate but to fill the gaps and that means building a welcoming high energy network that enables you to unpick [people’s needs].”

The Hope in Swansea App allows organisations to work across boundaries and indicate how they can support people and whether they have capacity to do so : “We now see far more support services than ever before. It’s doubled our knowledge of what support services exist and what they offer.”

As organisations plan for the future, there are concerns that demand will increase and that it will become challenging to identify people who need support: “People who are new to experiencing these situations and need to navigate the system... How do we prevent people who are having issues getting to a bigger crisis? We need the time and resource to look at it. The longer it goes past crisis the more complex it gets.”

How is CCS adding value in Swansea?

- CCS external perspective and facilitation has helped build consensus around key priorities
- CCS has provided resource to manage meetings, approach potential partners and have the discussions required to ensure alignment
- Examples and from other CCS areas have helped to challenge established ways of working and show how different areas have been able to respond to similar challenges

About the Hope in Swansea App

- CCS supported the Hope in Swansea App with £12,100 of funding to test and finalise the App and establish a sustainability plan. The App was originally developed with £20,000 of local authority funding
- In the first month after its launch, there were 75 services live on the app and a further 23 registered and awaiting verification. There had been over 400 downloads across both Android and Apple and numerous VCS organisations had reported that they use the app regularly to support their service users.
- The App at a number of external meetings including Swansea Poverty Partnership, Safer Swansea Partnership, and the Food Poverty Network. On top of this, there have been meetings with South Wales Police, council leaders, Swansea City Football Club and local media outlets maximise engagement and awareness.
 - “The Hope in Swansea app has given the Matthew's House team opportunities to share and participate in forums in Swansea that otherwise we would not have been a part of. Forums surrounding health and community safety. Through these meetings we have made contacts and learnt information about services in the city that we never knew existed.”

Programme-level recommendations to inform Year 3

The year 2 evaluation recommends that the CCS team should consider the following recommendations for the programme.

Referral system recommendations

Resourcing referral system as a focus for year 3. Clear progress can be evidenced around building network capacity and setting up digital referral systems. However, the long term resourcing of such networks and systems remains unclear. The long term sustainability of the referral system is critical in encouraging partners to work together. Without it, there is a high likelihood that organisations will fall back to siloed working. It is recommended that options / models for funding the referral system are clearly articulated with partners (and potential funders) in each pilot site.

Training on the referral system. Partners involved in the CCS programme stress that the sustainability of coordination is about more than funding for the referral system – there is a need to continue developing the network and quality of the work. Notably, there is a need for ongoing training costs to be built into any sustainability funding. It is recommended that any longer term funding for networks and referral systems ensure that ongoing training for system-users is part of the funding package.

Other local-system recommendations

Build upon work with statutory services, especially schools. The CCS programme focused primarily on the advice sector in the 4 pilot sites. This is where there has been most traction with the concept of coordination (when compared with other sectors such as food provision, statutory services and others). It is possible that other types of crisis-support providers will engage with the initiative in the future. The increased collaboration between advice services and schools in Tower Hamlets has, up until recently, taken place without a digital referral system (longer term there is an aspiration for at least 1 local school to be on the system). It is recommended that the programme promotes the lessons

learned around increasing collaboration between advice agencies and schools. This will be of interest in areas both with and without plans for a referral system. It is recommended that CCS identifies opportunities to collaborate with schools and leverage funding for specific school-focused collaboration projects both within and beyond the 4 pilot sites.

Long term ownership of local coordination. At the inception of CCS, it was assumed that local steering groups would be set up in each pilot site and would take ownership of the coordination agenda. To some extent, advice networks are fulfilling this role although there is heavy reliance on the capacity and skills delivered via CCS. Setting priorities has been facilitated (and on occasion, directed) by the CCS team and this function has been welcomed in localities. This indicates that coordination work can be facilitated by experts based outside of the area. It also points to a risk that once CCS funding ends, there could be a leadership void. It is recommended that steps are taken to mitigate this void (e.g. pilot-site leaders coaching / shadowing CCS colleagues).

Engagement plan for local authorities. Learning from years 1 and 2 illustrate a somewhat piecemeal approach to engaging local authorities in the programme. For many local authorities there are communication challenges within the organisation and efforts for an “authority wide” commitment to coordination (and associated referral systems, for example) has been unmanageable. Furthermore, the CCS team have had no mandate to incentivise change at this level. For year 3 it is recommended that each of the 4 local pilot sites has an engagement plan for each pilot site local authority which includes:

- Mapping out which teams are interested in the programme and what their needs are in relation to the referral system. Inviting them to join the network.
- Identification of senior stakeholders (revisiting signatories on the initial application to be part of CCS) to remind them of their commitment to the programme.