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Evaluation of the Flexible Funding Programme: final report

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Evaluation of the Flexible Funding Programme: Final Report
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Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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Glossary

Acronyms/Keywords/Initialisms	Definition
ACEs	Adverse Childhood Experiences
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
CCG	Children and Communities Grant
CfW+	Communities for Work Plus
CRIA	Children's Rights Impact Assessment
EIA	Equality Impact Assessment
EIPS	Early Intervention, Prevention, and Support
HSG	Housing Support Grant
MDT	Multi-Disciplinary Team
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (formerly the Department for Communities and Local Government)
NAO	National Audit Office
OBA	Outcomes-Based Accountability
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PPE	Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People
PSB	Public Services Board
RBA	Results-Based Accountability
RCCs	Regional Collaborative Committees
RCT	Rhondda Cynon Taf
RPBs	Regional Programme Boards
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
VAWDASV	Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
WLGA	Welsh Local Government Association

Executive Summary

Flexible Funding

This report provides findings of the final phase of an evaluation of the Flexible Funding approach, which was conducted between November 2018 and November 2019. It builds upon an interim report published in October 2018 (Welsh Government, 2018d) that identified early insights from the initial delivery of the Flexible Funding approach, which was led mainly by pathfinder local authorities (see below for details).

Flexible Funding is the current approach¹ developed by the Welsh Government that enables local authorities to adopt a more strategic way of delivering early intervention, prevention, and support. It seeks to provide local authorities with the opportunity to use different grants for early intervention, prevention, and support to collaborate with the aim of providing greater local authority autonomy in service delivery, particularly in respect of joint planning and commissioning, to better support outcomes for local residents.

Seven self-nominated pathfinder local authorities in Wales tested a new approach in the 2018/19 financial year: Conwy, Cardiff, Newport, Torfaen, Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taf, and Merthyr Tydfil, as well as the Cwm Taf Public Services Board². These pathfinders possessed full (100% of the budget) flexibility across 10 programmes which were combined under one grant in a pilot approach. Furthermore, Flexible Funding provided the remaining 15 local authorities in Wales ('non-pathfinders') with an extended flexibility of 15% movement across five grants (Welsh Government, 2017) — see Table 1 for details of the split between pathfinders and non-pathfinders. In addition, the Welsh Government announced in October 2017 (Welsh Government, 2017) that funding levels for Supporting People would be maintained in line with the 2017/18 budget commitments.

¹ In the interim report, Flexible Funding was referred to as a programme. Flexible Funding is rather an approach utilising a range of funding mechanisms to facilitate change in the way in which local authorities across Wales fund EIPS. Therefore, throughout the report the text will refer to the Flexible Funding approach to encompass the multiple funding mechanisms that local authorities are reviewing and revising in order to fund this key support provision for their residents.

² Working jointly with Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Table 1: Grants included as part of the 2018/19 Flexible Funding approach

Pathfinders (100% funding flexibility)	Non-pathfinders (15% funding flexibility)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting People • Flying Start • Families First • Legacy Fund • Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People • Childcare and Play (formerly Out of School Childcare) • Homelessness Prevention • Rent Smart Wales Enforcement (formerly Independent Living) • St David's Day Fund • Communities for Work Plus (formerly the Employability Grant) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting People • Flying Start • Families First • Legacy Fund • Communities for Work Plus (formerly the Employability Grant)

A Ministerial announcement on 3rd October 2018 confirmed that the Welsh Government would drive delivery forward through a two-grant Flexible Funding approach involving a Children and Communities Grant (CCG) and a Housing Support Grant (HSG), operating across all 22 local authorities in Wales from April 2019 — see Table 2 for how funding programmes are split between the CCG and the HSG.

Table 2: Grants included in CCG and HSG

CCG	HSG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flying Start • Families First • Legacy Fund • Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People • Childcare and Play (formerly Out of School Childcare) • St David's Day Fund • Communities for Work Plus (formerly the Employability Grant) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting People • Homelessness Prevention • Rent Smart Wales Enforcement (formerly Independent Living)

Evaluation aims and method

In April 2018, following a competitive tendering exercise, the Welsh Government commissioned Wavehill to undertake an independent evaluation of the Flexible Funding approach. The aim of the evaluation work is to provide robust and timely information on the implementation and understand how the Flexible Funding approach will affect the achievement of outcomes in the longer term.

A wealth of information has been collated from 58 interviews that were conducted with Funding Alignment team (formerly the Funding Transition team) representatives and grant leads in local authorities (pathfinders and non-pathfinders), as well as with the Welsh Government, partners, and stakeholders. This has been supplemented by literature and policy review work and workshops reviewing the options for an Outcomes Framework for the programme.

Key findings

Local authorities and stakeholders

- Progress in the delivery of the Flexible Funding approach continues to be variable, although progress has been made from the position noted by the interim report in October 2018, and there are examples across authorities of officers from the 10 original programmes meeting together in order to plan and co-commission/co-fund provision.
- These examples are much more likely to be observed in the development and implementation of infrastructure and frameworks with which to support the delivery of Early Intervention and Prevention Support (EIPS) than in developments in the services, wherein there are fewer examples. At present, there are limited examples of service users having yet experienced better services as a result of the changes being made under the auspices of the Flexible Funding approach, meaning that it is very early in developments with respect to seeing changes resulting.

- Flexing of funding in pathfinder authorities and the flexible use of these programme funds in 2018/19 have witnessed around 1–4% of total programme funds being moved between different programmes. This has been most noted in funding arrangements for the Supporting People, Families First, Flying Start, Homelessness Prevention, and Communities for Work Plus programmes.
- In local authorities the most notable examples of where progress has been made include:
 - greater knowledge and awareness of the aims, objectives and nature of delivery of each of the 10 grants covered by the CCG (7) and the HSG (3)
 - increasing examples of, and discussion surrounding the opportunities for, joint working or engagement across grants
 - development of back office functions, commissioning, procurement, IT and data systems
 - mapping of existing approaches to service delivery to identify potential duplication across grants and any gaps in availability
 - some recommissioning and new service development being undertaken, despite contractual and financial barriers to some recommissioning
 - benefits reported in supporting service users more quickly both in entry and in exit with a more joined-up service offer, although the expected impacts are most likely in the 2019-20 financial year, or even from April 2020.
- The single-grant approach for the HSG has also shown positive outcomes through the scheme's development and co-production of new single HSG guidance, agreed approaches for needs assessment, strategic planning and reviews of service delivery, joint working and collaborative working, and the identification of additional funding streams, which has resulted from a range of partnership and joint working between the Welsh Government, local authorities, the third sector, and Registered Social Landlords.

- For the majority of local authorities (18) it remains too soon to state whether or not the Flexible Funding approach is having an impact on working practice, or the services that local residents receive. For the majority of local authorities (pathfinders and non-pathfinders) there is a recognition that there remains much more to do, including exploring the (further) development of joint commissioning arrangements and workforce development.
- The strongest examples of progress are characterised by Flexible Funding approaches that are underpinned by a clear vision and detailed design and planning activities in order to establish a local delivery model that is centred on transformational leadership and accountability.
- Five local authorities have made, or are at least beginning to make, good progress. In this sense, good progress identifies local authorities that have established a clear vision and strategic plan to underpin their Flexible Funding approach, supplemented by emerging collaborative working, clear accountability structures, and some early signs that service users may be more readily able to access services that are relevant to their particular needs.
- A further group (of 12 authorities) are beginning to establish reviews and identify ways in which they can drive Flexible Funding delivery forward through the two grants (CCG and HSG). It is likely that they may begin to see some efficiency gains arise from this, perhaps through removal of the duplication of service delivery, or more integrated support provision through single delivery routes.
- However, three authorities³ have made very little progress due to staff shortages and wider resource pressures and it may be that these authorities need additional support from the Funding Alignment team in the Welsh Government to help them to move forward in 2019-20.

³ Interviews were not possible with two local authorities; because of the lack of interview data, we have been unable to allocate them to a particular group, though it is unlikely that progress is likely to have been good.

Welsh Government

- Welsh Government officials (including members of the Funding Alignment team) admit that they are 'on a journey' with respect to Flexible Funding and that a firm vision for the approach has yet to crystallise fully.
- Welsh Government programme leads are, in the majority, supportive of the concept of the Flexible Funding approach, but greater clarity is sought as to its meaning within the Welsh Government, the roles performed by individual programme teams and how this is communicated externally.
- Members of the Funding Alignment team are keen for the ultimate vision for the Flexible Funding approach to be revisited and, where appropriate, recast so as to better align with the recently restructured policy teams.
- Welsh Government officials (including those in the Funding Alignment team) identify challenges with the coordination and communication of consistent messages regarding how each programme should operate within the CCG and the HSG, which has rendered their tasks in respect of work more complicated, although the HSG has made some positive progress in the development of its guidance documentation co-produced with a range of external stakeholders including local authorities, the third sector, and Registered Social Landlords.
- Several Welsh Government programme leads identify that many local authorities still seek significant amounts of guidance from them with regard to what programmes should be doing within the Flexible Funding approach, as well as alignment with the CCG and the HSG. There have been occasions on which conflicting advice on a Flexible Funding approach and its alignment with programme guidance has needed to be resolved.
- For the Welsh Government there have remained challenges. The Funding Alignment team have faced delivery pressures due to staff turnover, which has rendered the management of relationships with 22 local authorities difficult; despite this, however, relationships have remained positive.

- There is still work to be undertaken within the Welsh Government to enable programme leads to collaborate more closely and adopt more consistent approaches to working with local authority leads (Flexible Funding and programmes) in order to deliver the Flexible Funding approach.

Conclusions

- Progress since late 2018 has mainly involved non-pathfinders establishing reviews of services, assessing their governance and management options and establishing forums, if not already in place, in which the 10 grants covered by the programme can be reviewed. This mirrors approaches that the pathfinders adopted in their delivery from the inception of the programme.
- Progress is not only demonstrated by the more widespread examples across authorities of officers from the 10 original programmes convening in order to plan and co-commission/co-fund provision, as noted in HSG delivery in particular, but also observed in some CCG examples in authorities demonstrating the most advanced development of their Flexible Funding approaches.
- The work undertaken by the non-pathfinders has facilitated the review of local delivery practice for EIPS and the development of understanding other approaches, and helps to begin the process of identifying the options for joint working and the potential for service integration.
- Five local authorities (three pathfinders and two non-pathfinders) have made particularly good progress, as evidenced by formalised structures with respect to vision, design and plan development, structured processes for leadership and accountability, and operational approaches for collaborative working.
- Furthermore, there are already examples in 2018/19 of funding being utilised flexibly by six of the seven original pathfinders and in three non-pathfinders (see Table 4.1). It is in these authorities that the strongest evidence is found of the pooling of budgets to support the ongoing delivery of some services in specialist need areas including domestic violence, mental health, and vulnerable family support.

- Limited examples of joint commissioning have been identified, although the majority (13) of local authorities are actively investigating the options for this across existing Early Intervention, Prevention, and Support (EIPS), with examples being found for domestic violence support, parenting, and training delivery.
- Collaborative working (involving joint meetings) and service reviews by combined programme teams across the 10 programmes encompassed by the Flexible Funding approach are in evidence, though there remains some continued separation of the CCG and HSG structures in some local authorities (4) which has yet to be overcome. Two local authorities identify that collaborative working has been the most notable area of impact instigated by their local Flexible Funding approach, as observed through our analysis of the interview findings.
- More work remains to be undertaken across a range of local authorities and the Welsh Government in order to reduce the variability in progress being made in the delivery of local Flexible Funding approaches, as evident in the evaluation findings. This is best tackled through ensuring that authorities have undertaken clear vision development, design and planning linkage to cover strategic and business plans, as well as using these to influence the ultimate design of EIPS at a local level. In addition, it should involve effectively communicating any changes more widely to staff across authorities so that the levels of understanding of the change ethos and objectives are known more widely.
- Further development is also required to formalise the leadership and accountability structures in local authorities to underpin the transformation needed to support local Flexible Funding approaches in all authorities.
- These areas are critical because literary evidence (DCLG, 2013a) strongly suggests that a clear vision and ethos, as well as strong senior leadership support, are key ingredients for success in the delivery of a transformation like that underpinning the most successful local approaches to Flexible Funding. These are areas that could be emphasised specifically in future monitoring reports requested by the Welsh Government.

- In addition, in all authorities, irrespective of the progress made in the delivery of the local Flexible Funding approach, they will also need to possess a concentrated focus on workforce development and on support for staff to respond to new working practices and roles arising from the approach.
- In the Welsh Government there is a specific need to undertake further work with regard to reviewing and, where appropriate, resetting the strategic aim of Flexible Funding, articulating this to all local authorities. Indeed, there is scope to collaborate with local authorities to co-produce this in order to support the engagement of local authorities in the future work surrounding the Flexible Funding approach.
- There continues to be an underlying sense of suspicion that the ultimate narrative being pursued by the changes is one of reducing the total amount of funding overall for vulnerable groups, or the unintended consequence that grant alignment might mean that the focus of funding moves away from less 'politically popular' groups. Alongside this remain 'pockets' of 'silo working' in which programme teams (in local authorities in the main) isolate themselves from changes being instigated through local Flexible Funding approaches.
- Delivery of the Flexible Funding approach during the remainder of 2019-20 needs to be given time by the Welsh Government across all local authorities to be further developed through support from more advanced authorities. This will enable approaches to become more embedded, helping to support the continued rollout from April 2020. It is important for local authorities that their efforts thus far not be seen to go to waste through any further changes, or revisions, to the policy, and that the commitments made in the October 2018 Ministerial announcement to maintain work on the approach until the end of this Assembly term be met.
- Those authorities that have made less/least progress would warrant being offered further support and insight from the Welsh Government and other local authorities with a more advanced delivery. Indeed, all authorities are keen to learn even more from the pathfinders and mechanisms with which to provide such insight and information would be especially welcomed.

Recommendations

The recommendations identify key areas in which insights provide some useful perspectives on influencing the ongoing implementation and delivery of the Flexible Funding approach, as well as the next steps for any future evaluation work.

Welsh Government

- 1) To investigate the streamlining and simplification of processes in order to facilitate greater consistency across the 10 programmes included in the Flexible Funding approach, all the while recognising the diverse nature and programme fidelity needed across the 10 programmes.
- 2) To review the vision and ultimate objectives of the Flexible Funding approach in order to enable the recasting of its vision for the short, medium and long term, facilitated by a co-production approach of working with local authorities and external stakeholders.
- 3) To identify mechanisms with which to provide ongoing support for the continued implementation of Flexible Funding approaches at the local authority level, drawing upon lessons learnt from practice and evaluation work. This should be undertaken through a consistent programme of updates and of information that highlights how success might best be achieved, while emphasising the importance of a strong vision, design and planning, a formalised leadership and accountability approach, and a specific focus upon identifying structures that facilitate collaborative working, supported by a targeted programme of workforce development.
- 4) To extend engagement with external stakeholders (including representative bodies and national and regional Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations), particularly those directly involved in CCG and HSG delivery, to facilitate further collaborative working opportunities.
- 5) Self-assessment reviews of progress against the 7 Lenses of Transformation should be taken forward by Welsh Government teams linked to the Flexible Funding approach in order to identify key further actions to take, and as a mechanism with which to monitor their ongoing progress.

Local authorities and stakeholders

- 1) Local authorities should review and revise, where appropriate, the vision, plan and design of their local Flexible Funding approach in order to ensure that its local relevance is maintained, as well as consulting with local stakeholders as part of this work.
- 2) Models of collaborative working should be formalised and reviewed regularly in order to identify opportunities for enhancement and extension of the range of partners and stakeholders (internal and external) that they involve.
- 3) Local authorities should actively review ways of adopting a formal and consistent approach to pooling budgets, as well as engaging local stakeholders in such work.
- 4) Local authorities should actively seek opportunities to collaborate with pathfinders and neighbouring authorities so as to share insight and good practice.
- 5) Local self-assessment reviews of progress against the 7 Lenses of Transformation should be taken forward by local authorities and local stakeholders in order to identify key further actions to take, and as a mechanism with which to monitor their ongoing progress.

Conduct of future evaluation work that:

- 1) Assesses the impact that alternative approaches to the delivery of EIPS may be having on the medium- and long-term outcomes in local authorities
- 2) Reviews the further impacts and outcomes of the delivery of the Flexible Funding approach, as well as the mechanisms, processes, and roles played by regional stakeholder structures including Public Services Boards (PSBs), Regional Collaborative Committees, and Regional Programme Boards within them
- 3) Identifies whether or not service users have experienced impacts in service delivery and what delivery components are most likely to generate positive outcomes
- 4) Tests the efficacy of the Outcomes Framework for the Flexible Funding approach and identifies further revisions where appropriate.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Welsh Government is committed to supporting vulnerable people and communities. To this end, it has developed several programmes with which to support vulnerable people or communities. These programmes aim to tackle disadvantage, prevent longer-term negative outcomes for individuals and families, facilitate early intervention, and build resilience in individuals and communities. Each programme has been underpinned by a specific grant with its own requirements and restrictions, as well as associated costs and administration. This has caused challenges for some local authorities, whereas others have sought to challenge the administration of these grants in order to facilitate a more 'flexible' approach to the use of such funding to address local need.

1.2 Since 2017, the Welsh Government has been collaborating with local authorities on enhanced grant alignment, with the intention of facilitating service redesign to deliver sustainable improvements in outcomes for people across Wales, and to enact the five ways of working according to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 so as to apply the sustainable development principle in delivery, including:

- **Long term:** *"The importance of balancing short-term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs"*
- **Integration:** *"Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies"*
- **Involvement:** *"The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves"*
- **Collaboration:** *"Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives"*
- **Prevention:** *"How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives"*

Flexible Funding

- 1.3 Flexible Funding is one approach to implementing the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. It seeks to ensure that different programmes collaborate, with the aim of providing greater autonomy in service delivery, particularly regarding joint planning and commissioning, to better support outcomes. It is hoped that this flexibility will foster a more strategic, cross-organisational approach to delivering early intervention, prevention, and support (EIPS) for the most vulnerable in society, while also allowing local authorities to better 'shape' delivery to the specific needs of their local population (Welsh Government, 2018a).
- 1.4 It is important to note that, whilst the interim evaluation report (Welsh Government, 2018d) referred to the Flexible Funding programme, the emerging ways of working as adopted by local authorities to incorporate Flexible Funding into their work illustrate it to be an approach that utilises a range of funding mechanisms to deliver its aims (see para. 1.3). Therefore, the approach should not be referred to as a programme, given the variety of ways in which local authorities have utilised (or could utilise) these funding mechanisms to deliver those aims. Thus, throughout this report, Flexible Funding is referred to as an approach being adopted by local authorities in Wales.
- 1.5 The objectives of the Flexible Funding approach also draw directly from the Welsh Government National Strategy – Prosperity for All (September 2017). The latter emphasises key principles that the Flexible Funding approach is enacting:
- The delivery of services to ensure the long-term prosperity and well-being of all Welsh residents
 - That early intervention in Early Years, Housing, Social Care, Mental Health, and Skills and Employability prevents problems from escalating and enables long-term prosperity and well-being
 - The need to focus on integration and collaboration as being critical to long-term positive outcomes in those areas

- The key role of joint working towards common objectives.

1.6 This is summarised well in the following excerpt from the Welsh Government's National Strategy – Prosperity for All:

'In developing the strategy, we recognised five areas which emerged as having the greatest potential contribution to long-term prosperity and well-being. They reflect the times in people's lives when they may be most in need of support, and when the right help can have a dramatic effect on their life course. They are priority areas where it has been shown that early intervention - tackling the root causes, rather than treating symptoms - pays dividends. Only a fully co-ordinated response from public services can prevent problems escalating; too often barriers between different services and organisations stand in the way of a truly preventative approach.' (Welsh Government, 2017, p.2)

1.7 In 2017, seven 'pathfinder' local authorities in Wales were identified to provide a testbed for approaches to fulfil these aims during the 2018/19 financial year. These pathfinders were self-selecting. The seven pathfinders comprised: Conwy, Cardiff, Newport, Torfaen, Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taf, and Merthyr Tydfil, as well as the Cwm Taf Public Services Board⁴. Through Flexible Funding these pathfinders possessed full (100% of the budget) flexibility across the 10 grants (see Table 1.1).

1.8 At the time, Flexible Funding also provided the remaining 15 local authorities in Wales ('non-pathfinders') with the extended flexibility of a 15% movement across a smaller number of grants in order to support the start of their journey towards more innovative thinking on service delivery. Table 1.1 shows which grants are included for pathfinders and non-pathfinders. However, the Welsh Government announced in October 2017 (Welsh Government, 2017) that funding levels for Supporting People would be maintained in line with the 2017/18 budget commitments, such that:

⁴ Working jointly with Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf.

‘It is Welsh Government’s expectation that local authorities should allocate funding to the Supporting People programmes at least at the level of the Supporting People allocation unless they can demonstrate that they can be sure of delivering the same, or improved, services for less money as a result of efficiencies.’ (Welsh Government, 2018a, p.2)

Table 1.1: Grants included as part of the 2018/19 Flexible Funding approach

Pathfinders	Non-pathfinders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting People • Flying Start • Families First • Legacy Fund • Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People • Childcare and Play (formerly Out of School Childcare) • Homelessness Prevention • Rent Smart Wales Enforcement (formerly Independent Living) • St David’s Day Fund • Communities for Work Plus (formerly the Employability Grant) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting People • Flying Start • Families First • Legacy Fund • Communities for Work Plus (formerly the Employability Grant)

1.9 Following a review of the Interim Evaluation findings, as well as an internal assessment of the dynamics and early outcomes of the first year of Flexible Funding delivery, a Ministerial announcement in October 2018⁵ identified that the Welsh Government would proceed with a two-grant Flexible Funding approach that would operate from April 2019.

1.10 This meant that there would be a Children and Communities Grant (CCG), and a Housing Support Grant (HSG). These would continue to encompass the 10 programmes originally involved in Flexible Funding, as illustrated in Table 1.2.

⁵ See [Written statement on Early Intervention Prevention and Support Grant](#) for a copy of the statement.

Table 1.2: Grants included in CCG and HSG

CCG	HSG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flying Start • Families First • Legacy Fund • Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People • Childcare and Play (formerly Out of School Childcare) • St David’s Day Fund • Communities for Work Plus (formerly the Employability Grant) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting People • Homelessness Prevention • Rent Smart Wales Enforcement (formerly Independent Living)

1.11 The purposes of the grants are as follows:

- the CCG addresses the support needs of the most vulnerable children and adults in our communities through the range of EIPS mechanisms including the support for childcare providers. It seeks to mitigate, or remove, disadvantage to vulnerable people, affording them the same life chances as those of others, although it also supports some generic services such as available childcare provision to all and, therefore, contributes to a more equal Wales.
- the HSG addresses the housing and housing-related support needs of the most vulnerable individuals in society through a range of early intervention, prevention, and support mechanisms. It will seek to mitigate, or remove, disadvantage to vulnerable people, enabling them to have the same life chances as those of others, therefore contributing to a more equal Wales. As such, the Housing Support Grant is concerned with accessing and maintaining a home.

1.12 It was also intended for 2019-20 that 100% flexibility surrounding the use of these two grants would apply to **all** local authorities in Wales, when it had previously applied only to pathfinder authorities.

- 1.13 The principles of the current approach to Flexible Funding are focused upon several key objectives (adapted from Welsh Government, 2018c):
- to provide greater autonomy surrounding how services are delivered, particularly surrounding joint planning and commissioning
 - to provide greater financial freedom and flexibility to enable local authorities to work differently
 - to enable local authorities to plan strategically and holistically
 - to enable service redesign
 - to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy.
- 1.14 Flexible Funding therefore continues to seek ways for the Welsh Government to enable local authorities in Wales to achieve more effective and efficient coordination of resources by affording them greater flexibility, autonomy and associated accountability with which to better respond to local needs. This is ultimately intended to provide more timely, and effective, EIPS, mitigating the need for more complex support for those in need in the future.
- 1.15 It is also intended that the approach will support local authority capacity building in respect of developing and enhancing their own competencies and experience surrounding strategic and holistic planning, service review and redesign and, ultimately, structural reform of the way in which their local authority operates.

The evaluation

- 1.16 In April 2018, following a competitive tendering exercise, the Welsh Government commissioned Wavehill to undertake an evaluation of the Flexible Funding approach in order to provide robust and timely information on its implementation and understand how its delivery will affect the achievement of outcomes in the longer term. The learning obtained through the evaluation will feed into the effective implementation of future grant alignment and contribute to learning at a local authority level.

- 1.17 The aims of the evaluation work comprised:
- testing the assumptions and working of the Flexible Funding approach
 - reviewing project implementation effectiveness, progress, and any changes that it may have brought
 - identifying efficiencies from implementation, and a comparison with expectations
 - identifying an Outcomes Framework and the associated measures and methods for delivery
 - learning lessons from early delivery regarding what works well and less well
 - identifying recommendations for future evaluation work.
- 1.18 The evaluation work was undertaken in two phases, with an interim phase reviewing and assessing early progress in the delivery of the Flexible Funding approach from January to September 2018, which resulted in an interim report being published in October 2018 (Welsh Government, 2018d).
- 1.19 This final report reports upon the final (second) phase of work and builds upon the interim report findings that highlighted the following key issues:
- many authorities were still in the early days of implementation of their Flexible Funding approach, and review and planning activities were predominant
 - progress is linked most commonly to an existing ‘framework’ or a process for the delivery of change more widely across the authority
 - some pathfinders and non-pathfinders were demonstrating limited examples of joint working, including some ‘flexibility’ in the use of funding, yet many of these approaches were ‘non-strategic’ and often being used to avoid underspend rather than linking to a wider service improvement ethos
 - the majority of early delivery approaches were focused on bringing people together, facilitating ‘new’ conversations and reviewing and assessing the nature of the service user journey

- many early approaches predated the operation of Flexible Funding, demonstrating the continuation of existing joint working; furthermore, alignment is most pronounced in authorities (pathfinders and non-pathfinders) across housing-related support services and those in non-housing-related areas such as Families First, Flying Start, Legacy Fund, and Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People programmes
- the Senior Leadership Team sign-up to the aims and ambitions of the Flexible Funding approach was a critical factor in any successful progress made in the implementation of Flexible Funding; it was important that this was grounded in a good understanding of the needs and barriers/gaps in service delivery and the ‘journey’ upon which users embark in order to receive support, so as to help support that implementation
- outcomes were limited to a local authority level, primarily involving initiating joint grants groups, with some meeting already, along with some organisational restructuring and the identification of working practice change and proposals for other change ‘vehicles’ (Community Hubs, Local Place Focus).

1.20 This final report summarises the main findings from the evaluation reviewing the progress being made in the delivery of the Flexible Funding approach by local authorities and the Welsh Government from November 2018 — through the second (and final) phase of the evaluation work. This covers work including the early development of an Outcomes Framework for Flexible Funding, and a review of the further progress that local authorities had made in the implementation up to September 2019.

1.21 The report highlights key findings and provides recommendations for the Welsh Government, local authorities and stakeholders, as well as future evaluation work surrounding the greater alignment of funding through the Welsh Government.

2. Methodology

2.1 The evaluation work and the methodology with which to complete it link directly to a Theory of Change for Flexible Funding that was developed through the interim reporting phase — further details of this can be found in Annex A.

2.2 Delivering the evaluation has involved:

- **Qualitative telephone interviews⁶** with:
 - local authority Flexible Funding leads in pathfinders and non-pathfinders
 - nominated local authority programme leads for those covered by Flexible Funding in pathfinders and non-pathfinders, with a greater emphasis on leads in pathfinder authorities; these were identified by employing ‘snowballing’ techniques in discussions with local authority Flexible Funding leads
 - Welsh Government Flexible Funding leads in the Funding Alignment team
 - Welsh Government programme leads for each of the 10 programmes covered by Flexible Funding (see Table 1.1). The breakdown of completed interviews by type is summarised in Table 2.1, which shows that 58 respondents were interviewed between March and late July 2019, with 45 of these interviews being repeated with respondents who had been interviewed for the interim evaluation work in order to track the overall progress of Flexible Funding.

⁶ Question schedules for these interviews can be found in Annex C.

Table 2.1: Overview of completed final phase interviews – March - July 2019

Interviewee type	Number of completed interviews
Local authority Flexible Funding leads and nominated contacts (pathfinders)	15
Local authority Flexible Funding leads (non-pathfinders)	14 ⁷
Local authority programme leads (13 authorities)	11 ⁸
Welsh Government Flexible Funding leads	2
Welsh Government programme leads ⁹	9
Other stakeholders ¹⁰	7
Total interviewees	58

2.3 Table 2.2 provides a summary of the specific roles of those interviewed and how they are involved in Flexible Funding. Moreover, it details how they are identified against quotes used in the following sections of this report.

⁷ Due to local resource pressures and recent staff changes, interviews were not possible with Blaenau Gwent and Powys.

⁸ Five local authorities did not suggest additional contacts within their authority to interview, as they felt that the progress made in Flexible Funding approach delivery was not sufficient for others to provide any additional comments on early programme progress.

⁹ Refers to staff who are the nominated leads for each of the 10 grants within the Welsh Government. (Note that some grants are overseen by the same leads.)

¹⁰ Included national and regional stakeholders linked to HSGs and CCGs, including national charities, Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) representative bodies, and specialist Housing and Early Intervention organisations.

Table 2.2: Overview of completed final phase interviews – March - July 2019

Interviewee type	Details of involvement in Flexible Funding
Local authority Flexible Funding lead	Designated lead for the Flexible Funding approach at the local authority level, and overseeing delivery and reporting on progress made to the Welsh Government
Local authority programme leads	Lead for specific programmes covered by the Flexible Funding approach, e.g. Flying Start, Rent Smart Wales, Supporting People, etc.; responsible for managing and overseeing delivery of the programme, and reporting to the Welsh Government
Welsh Government Flexible Funding leads	Lead for the Flexible Funding approach in the Funding Alignment team in the Welsh Government
Welsh Government programme leads	Lead/s for each of the individual programmes encompassed by the Flexible Funding approach; overseeing programme delivery across all 22 local authorities in Wales
Other stakeholders	Individuals ¹¹ from representative bodies for Housing and other national and local charity and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations involved in delivery related to the CCG and the HSG

2.4 It should be noted that we have sought to maintain the anonymity of all those interviewed, and that quotes used in this report may have been edited in order to protect the identity of those staff who kindly gave their time to the research.

2.5 The other data collection approaches used to complete this evaluation work have included:

- **an additional desk-based policy and literature review** to identify further context for our assessment of Flexible Funding implementation to date
- **a desk-based review of the financial monitoring, guidance, and outcome monitoring of the 10 existing grants** — this reviewed existing grant guidance and the first overarching quarterly monitoring reports produced by the pathfinder authorities

¹¹ These were nominated by the Welsh Government and pathfinder local authorities as being key organisations that had been involved closely in Flexible Funding developments since the rollout began.

- **an updated case study** assessment of the programme implementation in three pathfinder authorities: Conwy, Newport, and RCT¹² — full details of the case studies can be found in Annex C
- **outcome framework review workshops** to aid the development of a single-outcome framework, including work with the Flexible Funding Data Group¹³, attendees at the National Housing Support Network, and the Families First and Flying Start National Coordinators group.

Methodological limitations

2.6 One key limitation of the research approach has been the lack of any views on the impacts for service users during the evaluation. Original plans had been to conduct up to 12 citizen impact scenario assessments (CISAs) across the evaluation work, in addition to the elements outlined above. However, these CISAs were postponed when interviews in the interim and final phase evaluation work revealed, across all authorities, that impacts at the service user level of the changes implemented up until July 2019 were too limited to allow a robust assessment of client impacts. Such client assessments should, however, form part of any longer-term evaluation work seeking to identify where changes instigated by Flexible Funding may have led to any change in the experience of services received by clients.

¹² Case studies were chosen in order to provide a geographical split across North and South Wales, a focus on the rollout of common shared working practices, advancement of a Community Hub model, and insight into the PSB focus for programme delivery. These case studies were updated from those conducted during the Interim Evaluation work so as to track the progress made in programme delivery.

¹³ The group is composed of local authority contacts with particular expertise in the data collection undertaken by specific programmes and the wider rollout of the Flexible Funding approach. In addition, key programme leads and members of Knowledge and Analytical Services in the Welsh Government also attend the group in order to review ongoing and future data needs arising from the implementation of the Outcomes Framework.

3. Insight from research and policy literature

3.1 In this chapter, we detail the findings from the literature review undertaken of relevant policy and research. This draws upon a summary of findings from the interim report, as well as new references that provide insight into key approaches that have proven successful in the delivery of major transformational projects across the UK Government.

3.2 The literature review findings in the interim report highlighted that:

- concerns remain regarding the sustainability of local authorities (National Audit Office, 2016), and support the need for the kind of service transformation that is implicit within Flexible Funding at a time when evidence (Devine, 2017) suggests that the number of families in need of support is increasing
- a large number of local authorities in England and Wales are already innovating and trialling new ways of integrating services, the NHS, and Public Health Services through greater strategic alignment of national, local and voluntary sector providers, yet it is clear that there is no conclusive evidence of any particular approach being more successful than any other; there are, however, a range of common principles that do underpin the most successful approaches with respect to integration, alignment and innovation in service delivery
- the practice that underpins this success includes (DCLG, 2013a):
 - developing a clear (outcomes-based) focus and vision
 - using existing knowledge and data on problems/issues
 - developing an understanding of community priorities
 - considering partner openness to engage
 - collaborating with the local community to review and address problems and co-design services through joined-up working
 - making commissioning decisions focused on the needs of the neighbourhood and in partnership with the community
 - developing a clear business case

- using cost–benefit analysis to clarify outcomes based on the best evidence
- this success in integration when utilising such principles is apparent in collaborative purchasing reducing the potential duplication of services, a reduced need for back office and managerial staff, better coordination of services on the front line, and better outcomes for service users (National Audit Office, 2013)
- the changes being taken forward through Flexible Funding occur against the backdrop of continuing declines in funding for local government in Wales — a result of the past nine years of the UK Government’s austerity agenda. The WLGA (2018) show that since 2009/10, funding for local government in Wales, while adjusting for inflation, has declined by 22%, highlighting the need for further improvements in value for money. However, according to Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) research (Amin-Smith, Phillips and Simpson, 2016), cuts to Welsh local government grants were smaller than those to their English counterparts.

3.3 The literature on major transformational projects in UK Government draws upon recent work undertaken by the UK Government’s Digital Service and Infrastructure and Projects Authority¹⁴ as part of the Government’s Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP) and provides insight into the key aspects of managing large-scale transformational projects. A Transformation Peer Group of wider UK Government stakeholders and civil servants has developed a framework (identified as the 7 Lenses of Transformation¹⁵) with which to help guide transformation on a wider scale. It provides a valuable framework against which major transformational approaches, such as Flexible Funding, can be reviewed.

¹⁴ Government Digital Service and Infrastructure Projects Authority (2018) 7 Lenses of Transformation.

¹⁵ For more detailed information on the transformational process see [7 lenses of transformation](#)

3.4 This is useful in consideration of the Flexible Funding approach because it provides a framework that has enabled the fine-tuning of thematic analysis of interviews with Welsh Government, local authority, and stakeholder interviewees involved in the programme in order to identify the progress made in its existing delivery. It also provides a further mechanism that can guide local authorities in the steps that they could take in order to drive their own delivery forward, as the framework identifies delivery levels that are to be attained so as to achieve progress in change/transformational approaches.

3.5 In particular, the 7 Lenses of Transformation are useful because they:

- have been tested and used over the past two years to help projects right across the UK Government's Major Projects Portfolio, which have all involved significant change in service delivery as advocated by the Flexible Funding approach
- are particularly useful in providing a common language and consistent framework for talking about transformation
- are useful throughout the lifecycle of the transformation, thus providing a framework for the operation of working groups, those overseeing the rollout of the Flexible Funding approach in the longer term and providing a mechanism with which deliverers could be held accountable for their approaches.

3.6 In addition, the Government Digital Service and Transformation Projects Authority (2018) identifies their value because they can provide a practical framework with which to help design, plan and implement such change approaches, enabling those using it to:

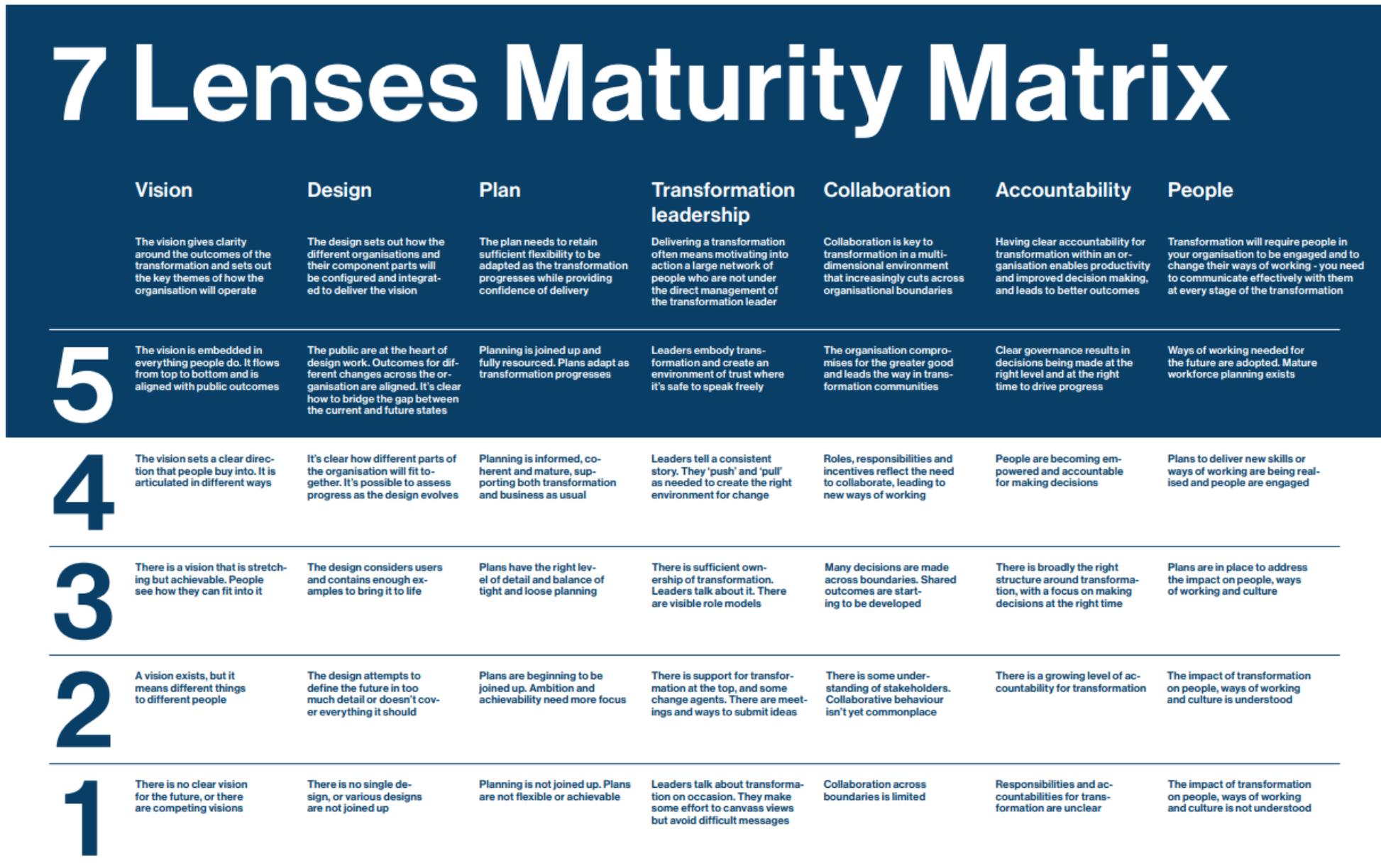
- structure work and get started
- define success and aid the tracking of progress, assess gaps and identify the potential next steps
- secure commitment and support from senior leaders.

- 3.7 In Chapter 4, details of the 7 Lenses¹⁶ are outlined, highlighting how these underpin the evaluations' assessment of progress being made by the Flexible Funding approach at the Welsh Government and the local authority level.
- 3.8 The 7 Lenses that underpin this assessment are:
- 1) Creating a Vision
 - 2) Design
 - 3) Planning
 - 4) Transformational Leadership
 - 5) Collaboration
 - 6) Accountability
 - 7) People
- 3.9 Accompanying the material on the 7 Lenses framework, the Transformation Peer Group has produced a Maturity Matrix¹⁷ that illustrates the levels of delivery success. This has proven to be particularly helpful to the evaluation, as it has facilitated our assessment of the delivery progress, identifying different typologies of local authorities and progress being made. Furthermore, it helps to provide insight into some key actions that local authorities might take in order to enable further progress in their Flexible Funding approach.
- 3.10 Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the Maturity Matrix.

¹⁶ For more detailed information on them see [7 Lenses Matrix](#)

¹⁷ See: [Details on Matrix](#) for a copy of the Matrix.

Figure 3.1: Maturity Matrix (Transformation Peer Group 2018)



4. Insight from implementation and delivery

- 4.1 The findings in this section of the report highlight key themes and insights drawn from an analysis of the qualitative interviews undertaken with local authority Flexible Funding and grant leads (pathfinder and non-pathfinder authorities) and with Welsh Government Flexible Funding and grant leads, as well as with key stakeholders — see Table 2.2 for further details of these roles.
- 4.2 The analysis of the qualitative data derived from interviews has been undertaken through the use of a thematic matrix approach which has drawn extensively upon the 7 Lenses Maturity Matrix in order to provide key foci for the analysis grid.
- 4.3 In the following sections, we highlight key findings against the following themes:
- vision
 - design and planning
 - transformational leadership
 - collaboration
 - accountability
 - people
 - key factors in successful delivery.
- 4.4 Firstly, we consider an overview of the implementation progress that has been made in Flexible Funding, before moving on to an assessment of the delivery progress against each of the themes highlighted above.
- 4.5 The chapter concludes with an assessment of the progress of approach delivery against the 7 Lenses Maturity Matrix, and identifies three broad groups of authorities: those making good progress (1), those with positive signs of progress (2), and those who have made much more limited progress (3).

Progress to date

Local authorities

- 4.6 Across all interviews with local authorities it was clear that progress in the delivery of the Flexible Funding approach continues to be variable, although there are more examples of officers collaborating across the 10 programmes than noted in the interim evaluation report.
- 4.7 Moreover, the single-grant approach for the HSG has shown positive outcomes through the scheme's development and co-production of new single HSG guidance, agreed approaches for needs assessment, strategic planning and reviews of service delivery, joint working and collaborative working, and the identification of additional funding streams, which has resulted from a range of partnership and joint working between the Welsh Government, local authorities, the third sector, and Registered Social Landlords.
- 4.8 Progress was much more likely in the development and implementation of infrastructure and frameworks for the delivery of EIPS, whilst there were some examples of distinct changes occurring for service users (including faster access to services, access via single contact routes, and delivery staff identifying that the appropriateness of support delivery had improved) and their experience of service delivery.
- 4.9 Therefore, for the majority of local authorities (18) it remains too soon to state whether or not the Flexible Funding approach is having an impact on working practice, or the service that local residents receive. For the majority embarking upon the journey of Flexible Funding, there is a recognition that there remains much more to do, including exploring the development of joint commissioning arrangements where this is not already happening. There is, however, a great deal of interest in local authorities learning more from one another, particularly from the pathfinder authorities. As one non-pathfinder highlighted:

'It doesn't feel like we are getting anything from the pathfinder authorities, what has worked or not worked.' (local authority Flexible Funding lead, non-pathfinder)

4.10 Across the majority of local authorities (17) the move to implement the Flexible Funding approach has been a ‘catalyst’ for increased momentum in the delivery of change, whilst also enhancing the amount of joint working between EIPS teams. Furthermore, it has reinforced the need for a new strategic perspective with which to help drive this forward.

4.11 The following quotes illustrate the sheer diversity of the progress that has been made thus far:

‘It’s very early days...in the...[early]...18/19 time period we didn’t make any use at all from the Supporting People’s perspective. Since October, certainly, I have been working much closer with housing and we have enabled housing to support some of our Supporting People contracts, in particular, a support worker for young people’s sheltered housing.’ (local authority Flexible Funding lead, non-pathfinder)

‘The biggest changes have been around resilient families — early intervention vulnerability profiling, assessment brokerage team, family teams...Supporting People fund a role in the team, using combinations of funding to fund different posts.’ (local authority Flexible Funding lead, pathfinder)

‘It has instigated discussions around change. It’s early days, but a shared Families First/Flying Start parenting service has been developed and a new post has been developed, but delivery is not yet being reshaped.’ (local authority Flexible Funding lead, non-pathfinder)

‘A small amount was transferred from Flying Start to Supporting People to undertake and expand some work to identify traveller populations and understand their needs in relation to Flying Start provision.’ (local authority Flexible Funding lead, non-pathfinder)

4.12 In broad terms, as the quotes above illustrate and our analysis shows, the most notable examples of progress in the delivery (in former pathfinders and non-pathfinders) of the Flexible Funding approach have been:

- greater knowledge and awareness of the aims, objectives and nature of delivery of each of the 10 grants covered by the CCG (7) and the HSG (3)
- increasing examples of joint working or engagement across grants

- the development of mixed back office functions, commissioning, procurement, IT, and data systems
- the mapping of existing approaches to service delivery in order to identify potential duplication across grants and any gaps in availability
- some recommissioning and new service development being undertaken, but this has been challenged by existing contractual terms placing financial barriers in respect of being able to recommission services
- some benefits being reported in supporting clients more quickly both in entry and in exit with a more joined-up service offer, but the majority of local authorities are a long way from such implementation and are targeting changes in delivery for clients in the 2019-20 financial year, or even from April 2020 (given the further review work, planning and implementation that are still required in some areas).

4.13 The strongest examples of progress have been characterised by Flexible Funding approaches with a clear vision and detailed design and planning activities with which to establish a local delivery model which is centred on transformational leadership and accountability. In this kind of clear vision there has been a clear articulation of how local authorities will make use both of the flexible use of funding and of the flexibility in the approach(es) to delivery.

4.14 Data from pathfinder local authorities details how they have utilised the 100% funding flexibility that was available to them in the 2018/19 financial year. Table 4.1 presents a summary across the 10 programme areas.

4.15 Table 4.1 illustrates that:

- Funding flexibility has been utilised most extensively in net value to provide additional funds from other programmes to Supporting People and Homelessness Prevention, with an additional £719K (1.44% of the total budget across the seven pathfinders) and £458K (43.34%), respectively, being reallocated from programmes covered by Flexible Funding to these programmes

- Additional funding allocations are most common for Flying Start (five pathfinders have reallocated additional funds to this programme in their authority), Supporting People (4) and St David’s Day Fund (4)
- Reallocation of funding through the use of flexibility has been most common from Communities for Work Plus (£681K has been reallocated to other programmes in six local authorities)¹⁸, Flying Start (£308K, although this has been driven by reallocation in one pathfinder area), and Families First (£223K in five pathfinders).

Table 4.1: Summary of the use of funding flexibility by pathfinders (7) by programme 2018/19

Programme	Number of pathfinders ‘flexing’ funds into programme	Number of pathfinders ‘flexing’ funds into other programmes	Net balance of funding ‘flexing’ across pathfinders ¹⁹	% of all programme funding flexed
Supporting People	4	0	+£719K	+1.44
Flying Start	5	1	-£308K	-0.93
Families First	1	5	-£223K	-1.40
Legacy Fund	3	3	+£4K	+0.14
St David’s Day Fund	4	0	+£16K	+3.76
Homelessness Prevention	2	1	+£458K	+43.34
Rent Smart Wales				-
Enforcement	0	2	-£2K	2.13
Childcare and Play	3	1	+£17K	+1.92
Promoting Positive Engagement	0	0	0	0.00
Communities for Work Plus	0	6	-£681K	-
				12.72

Source: Quarter 4 Pathfinder Monitoring Returns, 2018/19

¹⁸ 2018/19 was the first year of CfW+ and many local authorities across Wales had underspends due to delays in recruiting staff. These delays were partly due to Grant Offers for 2018/19 not being issued until the end of March 2018.

¹⁹ A positive figure here shows that the programme has been able to utilise additional funds allocated to it from other programmes covered by the Flexible Funding approach in the seven pathfinders. A negative figure shows that funds have been utilised in other programmes.

- 4.16 These figures illustrate that there has already been some limited movement in eight of the nine funds that have 'flexed' in 2018/19, accounting for 1–4% of the total programme funding in them. Homelessness Prevention is an outlier, with 'flexing' involving 43% of the total funding for the programme, which reflects the relatively smaller value of the total funding in this instance: £1.05M in 2018/19. It should be expected that over time, patterns of reallocation may vary year on year; however, it does illustrate that when systems have been put in place and discussions between local authority programme leads take place, reallocations can happen in order to support new, or additional, forms of delivery.
- 4.17 There is evidence of progress being made in the approach to the use of flexibility in the establishment of working groups and review panels for considering and identifying alternative ways of aligning services, or of reallocating funding.
- 4.18 In some cases, this has included the joint commissioning of services in specific support areas such as domestic violence, parenting, or some mental health support. In these cases, the joint commissioning has been facilitated by meetings between local authority grant leads encouraged by the Flexible Funding approach, although in some cases such moves were already underway before the approach was initiated. Further alternative approaches to joint commissioning have included examples of the creation of joint-funded posts in which funds have been pooled across several programmes in order to address gaps in service delivery, or to provide additional capacity to address rising demands for support — additional parenting support staff, or additional early years support staff.
- 4.19 In some cases (non-pathfinders), delivery has enabled them to streamline services so that the needs of service users are being delivered by the same support workers, rather than by individuals having to access support through a range of individuals across different services in local authorities.
- 4.20 The picture at a local authority level is therefore mixed, with some (five) local authorities having made, or at least beginning to make, good progress. In this sense, good progress identifies local authorities that have established a clear vision and strategic plan with which to underpin their Flexible Funding approach, supplemented by emerging collaborative working, clear accountability structures,

and some early signs that service users may be more readily able to access services that are relevant to their particular needs.

- 4.21 A further group (of 12 authorities) are beginning to establish reviews and identify ways in which they can drive programme delivery forward through the two grants (CCG and HSG); moreover, it is likely that they may begin to see some efficiency gains arise from this, perhaps through the removal of duplication of service delivery, or through more integrated support provision through single delivery routes, rather than individuals having to engage with multiple services.
- 4.22 However, three authorities²⁰ have made very little progress due to staff shortages and wider resource pressures and it may be that these authorities need additional support from the Funding Alignment team in the Welsh Government in order to help them to move forward in 2019-20.

Welsh Government

- 4.23 For the Welsh Government there have remained challenges. The Funding Alignment team (formerly the Funding Transition team) have faced delivery pressures due to staff turnover, which has rendered the management of relationships with 22 local authorities very difficult.
- 4.24 Welsh Government staff admit that they are 'on a journey' with respect to Flexible Funding and that a firm vision for the approach has yet to crystallise fully.
- 4.25 Individual programme leads across the 10 programmes are, in the majority, supportive of the concept of the Flexible Funding approach; however, greater clarity is sought regarding its meaning within the Welsh Government, the roles performed by individual programme teams and how this is communicated outside of the Welsh Government. As one Welsh Government programme lead argues, Flexible Funding was:

'Opening eyes. Forcing us to hold a mirror up to ourselves... taught me that there needs to be more opportunity for grant [sic] managers to come together to talk more about aims and objectives of each programme and how they could come together'

²⁰ Interviews were not possible with two local authorities; because of the lack of interview data, we have been unable to allocate them to a particular group.

- 4.26 Welsh Government programme leads also identify that several strategic challenges remain because the focus of the two grants is spread across several Ministerial portfolios, which dilutes the strength of the vision and accountability for progress towards the objectives of the Flexible Funding approach. They suggest that there is an urgent need for this to be simplified so as to ensure that more consistent messages can be provided to local authorities.
- 4.27 Furthermore, programme leads within the Welsh Government identify challenges with the coordination and communication of consistent messages regarding how each programme should operate within the CCG and the HSG, which has rendered their tasks in respect of work more complicated. However, there have been positive steps taken in the recent delivery of the new single HSG guidance that has included the co-production of processes and agreed approaches for needs assessment and the strategic planning of services that have been undertaken jointly with external stakeholders including local authority staff, the third sector, and Registered Social Landlords. These could act as an exemplar for future CCG developments.
- 4.28 Several Welsh Government programme leads identify that many local authorities seek high levels of prescription regarding what programmes should be doing within the Flexible Funding approach and alignment with the CCG and the HSG, and that there have been occasions on which conflicting advice on a Flexible Funding approach and its alignment with programme guidance has been received.
- 4.29 An analysis of the findings on progress made within the Welsh Government shows that there remains work to be undertaken to enable programme leads to collaborate more closely and adopt more consistent approaches to collaborating with local authority leads in the delivery of the Flexible Funding approach. Moreover, this should review the ways of working within the Welsh Government to incorporate in a more strategic way the principles underpinning the delivery of the Flexible Funding approach.
- 4.30 In the following paragraphs we outline the progress being made against each of the key analysis themes identified from the 7 Lenses of Transformation and highlighted in paragraph 4.3.

- 4.31 In these we discuss the meaning of each Lens and its relevance to the delivery of the Flexible Funding approach, detail what progress is being made against it (as evidenced by the interviews illustrating changes or emerging trends), and highlight key lessons learnt from it. Furthermore, we highlight, where appropriate, specific findings drawn from local authorities and stakeholders, as well as perspectives relevant to the Welsh Government.
- 4.32 We begin to focus on the vision, design and plans underpinning programme delivery as illustrated in local authority delivery, as well as Welsh Government support for that delivery.

Lens 1: Vision

- 4.33 The 7 Lenses approach advocates that in order to effect a broad systems change, such as the Flexible Funding approach, leaders must develop a **vision** for a desired future outcome into which all can buy (in this case, local authorities and the Welsh Government), alongside a clear definition of the principles according to which future systems will operate, as well as a set of interventions that will start to transform the existing system into the future system. The vision with which to aid delivery needs to be aspirational, long-term, and state clearly the outcomes that organisations seeking the transformation want to achieve.

Emerging trends in progress

- 4.34 Local authorities are at varied stages of vision development, with some having put new strategies in place that are aligned with other organisational plans (such as council corporate plans), and others stating that their vision is under development and not fully formed. It is important to note that progress varies across pathfinders, as well as non-pathfinders, with progress being noted amongst both types of authorities, as well as some pathfinders making much less progress.
- 4.35 In the cases in which local authorities have been able to reallocate funds, or change delivery plans²¹, more developed vision statements (and related plans) had undergone Cabinet approval processes and, therefore, were more embedded in a wider authority strategic focus (which often predated the implementation of the local

²¹ This illustrates that Flexible Funding delivery is starting to be implemented in small steps, or stages.

Flexible Funding approach). This was generating progress because as the Flexible Funding lead in a pathfinder authority identifies:

'[This had created an]...excitement of people collectively saying we'll do it together...[being enthused by]...having delivery model that's based on experience of the service user mapping it out...[and staff stating that it has]...given me a sense that you can make a change' (local authority Flexible Funding lead, pathfinder)

- 4.36 Central to the progress demonstrated by these local authorities was the investment of time and resources in order to shape a vision for their delivery of the Flexible Funding approach, often (as our interim findings particularly demonstrated) being linked to an existing, and ongoing, corporate change programme, or a particular strategic focus for the authority. This enabling the local Flexible Funding approach to act as a 'vehicle' for delivery of that agenda. Moreover, it needs to identify within that vision approaches both to the flexible use of funding and to flexibility in the delivery of EIPS services.
- 4.37 In this context, many authorities do establish strategic links most commonly with key drivers that are aligned with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015²² and local Tackling Poverty Strategies and the National Prosperity for All agenda²³.
- 4.38 The advantage of possessing a clear vision is that it helps to set a context for the changes about which the local Flexible Funding approach is seeking to bring, as well as how it will be implemented through the use of funding **and** flexibility in the delivery approach. When not in place there is a tendency for staff in local authorities to focus on their concerns over cuts in funding, potential further staff restructuring and/or funding uncertainties, which renders implementation more challenging.
- 4.39 Often without a clear local vision, local authority respondents identified a viewpoint that simply viewed any local Flexible Funding approach as a 'cost-saving' measure. This view seemed to be particularly prevalent in the smallest local authorities (by resident population size/area covered by an authority), wherein it was perceived

²² For further details of the Act see [Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act](#)

²³ For further details see [Welsh Government Priorities on Poverty](#)

that it might be more difficult to make efficiencies that were seen as being a key driver for the programme in the ‘cost-saving’ agenda that they were assuming to be the critical focus of Flexible Funding.

- 4.40 Local authority interviewees did highlight that they were seeking more clarity from the Welsh Government with regard to the vision for the overall Flexible Funding approach, and that this was contributing to their own difficulty in developing a local vision for their approach, such that:

‘People on the ground still feel like they have to work to the guidance of a specific fund... [rather than to a specific vision for Flexible Funding]’ (local authority Flexible Funding lead, non-pathfinder)

- 4.41 This is a view that Welsh Government staff also held, with programme leads identifying that the next developmental steps for the overall Flexible Funding approach need to answer some ‘*fundamental strategic questions*’ while looking at the next few years for its continued and ongoing rollout to assist local authorities in their own decision making where a local vision has yet to crystallise.

- 4.42 Indeed, as one member of Welsh Government staff identified, the overall Flexible Funding approach:

‘Needs a vision that has clear intent of what the programme is trying to achieve’. (Welsh Government programme lead)

Lessons learnt

- 4.43 These findings have further emphasised the importance of establishing and communicating a clear vision for the Flexible Funding approach at the local authority and the Welsh Government level. It remains so that the vision for the Flexible Funding approach is something that in the majority of local authorities is not yet fully crystallised and needs recasting/resetting at the Welsh Government level in order to facilitate its adoption in local Flexible Funding approaches. In taking this forward, the revised vision should be owned by those at the top of the organisation and co-produced/created by people who represent the breadth and diversity of the delivery that it is seeking to effect — an approach that is driven at both local authority and Welsh Government levels.

4.44 Furthermore, the evidence shows that this vision is critical for enabling local authorities and the Welsh Government to undertake effective design and planning so as to implement an effective Flexible Funding approach **and** the flexible use of funding, as highlighted below:

‘[What we have learnt is that]...a vision is needed from day one with a clear group of accountable people and a clear plan that group of people had to deliver against, including communication, and planning, and direction of travel for the council to be signed off by group.’ (local authority Flexible Funding lead, pathfinder)

Lenses 2 and 3: Design and planning

- 4.45 The necessity for the vision identified above also provides the context for the **design** that, as argued by the 7 Lenses of Transformation, sets out how organisations and their component parts will be configured and integrated so as to deliver the vision. This is particularly important for operationalising the Flexible Funding approach, as it provides a clear delivery structure at a local and an overall level through which the vision can be delivered, and complex transformations need a view of how the whole picture fits together in order to deliver the vision.
- 4.46 The background literature to the 7 Lenses and our previous interim evaluation findings highlight that creating a systems change requires a clearly articulated **plan** which not only provides a roadmap to change and instils confidence within the actors, but also allows sufficient flexibility to meet the demands of the transformational process.
- 4.47 The plan is expected to detail how services will be sustained during any change delivered under the auspices of the plan, as well as the risk and the methods for measuring progress. Those delivering the kind of transformational change that is likely from Flexible Funding are, as suggested by the 7 Lenses work, likely to need to invest considerable time and skills into developing and monitoring the plan, perhaps looking to a designated lead(s) to help drive this element of delivery.

Emerging trends in progress

- 4.48 The local authorities that have made progress in delivering the Flexible Funding approach are those that have set plans and designed approaches through the operation of working groups. These provide mechanisms for each of the programmes to convene in order to discuss options for reviewing the programme delivery, or pooling budgets, and agreeing upon the 'rules of engagement' regarding how these will go forward in line with the local Flexible Funding approach.
- 4.49 This, as shown by our interviews with local authorities, starts with increasing the understanding of the delivery by each programme, wherein shared objectives lie and opportunities for 'synergies' in delivery might be found, and in which gaps in service might be addressed.
- 4.50 The design and planning of the local Flexible Funding approach should thus seek to agree upon a common understanding of the intended outcomes of the revised delivery and how this might align with the ambitions for that delivery that emerge from the articulated vision. Moreover, from this the design and plan need to focus on identifying clear stages and sequencing of delivery, and (driven by the working groups) shape mechanisms for agreeing upon how decisions will be made with regard to how funding might be used more flexibly.
- 4.51 A critical feature is that the development of the design and plan for moving forward does not become lost in a great deal of delivery detail. Our analysis shows that the Ministerial announcement (October 2018; see para. 1.8) has caused a degree of difficulty for design and planning activities in some local authorities. This is because the move to the two-grant approach has led some to revisit the details of delivery and seek further clarification as to how the shift might need to be reflected in delivery while going forward. This has tended to occur in those authorities in which the approach and the vision underpinning it are less mature, whereby requiring further work in order to finalise them.
- 4.52 However, the move to a two-grant approach has not challenged the strategic vision for delivery in local authorities in which this has been established for much longer and it is understood more widely across a particular authority.

4.53 In these cases, local authority respondents noted that the two-grant approach has not had a material impact, as they have sought to continue their trajectory from before the Ministerial announcement was made. Thus, they continue to bring the same people to the table and use those discussions to shape planning and design. As one respondent notes:

'It's just a bit of a disappointment...[the move to two grants]...we're only doing 'flexible' within these small boundaries, but we are still going to try to do it collectively and still going to do it from a joined-up approach even though it's two funds' (local authority Flexible Funding lead, non-pathfinder)

4.54 Some respondents note that the two-grant approach has been helpful in reducing concerns surrounding money being pulled from service areas. The split appears to have been welcomed within Homelessness and Supporting People, wherein there appear to be bigger concerns surrounding money being reallocated to programmes outside of the HSG.

4.55 Another Welsh Government programme lead highlighted that the two-grant announcement created uncertainty for their own staff that curtailed innovation around programme delivery. Meanwhile, another concurred that a lack of a clear vision was presenting challenges to their engagement with local authorities with respect to the rollout of the programme, which had been further complicated by the move to the two-grant approach to Flexible Funding:

'Without the national direction about what the opportunity...[and vision] is for the programme, my concern is the 'flexibility' just adds to more confusion and variation...[to local authority delivery]' (Welsh Government programme lead)

4.56 It is also the case that the lack of a sense of vision for some also reinforces the sense of a 'silo mentality' or 'preciousness' over funding amongst local authority staff. In some local authority areas this means that there remains an emphasis upon ringfencing funding, fears surrounding money being pulled away from some areas of delivery, or resistance to engaging fully in joint working or discussion forums investigating how budgets might be pooled in order to improve EIPS delivery for local residents. In these areas there is a tendency to be distracted by the minutiae of a specific programme delivery, rather than the broader picture drawn from a

vision that is still being set and the related design and planning that need to come out of it. In areas with stronger, set, visions, this tendency is much reduced.

4.57 There are parallels in issues raised by interviews within the Welsh Government that illustrate that the limited vision and the challenge that presents for design and planning work for the Flexible Funding approach mean that many Welsh Government staff remain very protective of their grant ‘identities’ and focus (a scenario replicated in a number of local authorities), which has been further complicated by the two-grant ‘solution’.

4.58 In addition, many staff are worried about their future — e.g. jobs, roles, issues addressed by grants, future roles of the grants that they oversee — and seek further clarity as to how the vision, design and plan for the overall Flexible Funding approach in going forward might then influence their current working roles:

‘Uncertainty has been there since day one...it has been very unsettling for us working on specific programmes, no clear picture on what happens to our roles and whether they go forward — those questions are not going to be answerable’ (Welsh Government programme lead)

4.59 Moreover, it seems that the specific design and plan for the delivery of the Flexible Funding approach through the 10 programmes have not yet been realised fully, such that some programme leads in the Welsh Government remain unclear as to how the new two-grant solution really fits together:

‘Still at heart...[there is]...no clear agreement whether we are talking about 10 [grants]...into one payment route and 10 policy areas, or are we moving to getting rid of policy areas and policy teams and...[have]...one grant delivered through two pots’ (Welsh Government programme lead)

4.60 What is clear is that the existing approach to Flexible Funding is causing greater demands on staff in specific programme teams. Almost all Welsh Government staff identified that they had witnessed an increased administrative burden on their own programme teams because of the need to help local authorities to work through solutions, as well as addressing questions as to how ‘flexible is flexible’, identifying where existing guidance might be flexed and providing relevant and consistent guidance to those local authorities. This is a burden that is also found amongst local

authority programme staff, particularly in those authorities with less well-developed visions of how their Flexible Funding approach will move forward.

- 4.61 These Welsh Government staff are happy that additional contact is being made with local authorities, but are worried about the resource demands that it entails and whether or not existing approaches are adequately resourced or prepared to address these additional demands on programme teams:

‘We had quite an efficient grant scheme we were running. Getting the money out and the returns in was quite slick. From my perspective, moving it into Flexible Funding has made it massively more bureaucratic because of how it has to be administered. Every day I get messages from local authorities saying how do they move this into a Flexible Funding, yet still report on how they spent it.’ (Welsh Government programme lead)

Lessons learnt

- 4.62 These findings reiterate the value at a local authority and at a Welsh Government level of the time invested in developing and implementing clear designs and plans for the rollout of the Flexible Funding approach. Where these have been put in place, local authority staff have been able to move forward with the agenda by establishing working groups for delivering the approach, actively reviewing the service delivery and beginning to pool budgets/use funding flexibly. There remain challenges as to whether or not all of the approaches being adopted by local authorities are commensurate with all Welsh Government views on the direction that Flexible Funding should be taking, particularly in relation to existing programme guidance and maintaining the fidelity of existing programmes such as Flying Start.
- 4.63 The move to the two-grant solution has presented challenges to local planning and implementation. This suggests that there is scope to explore ways in which guidance and reporting requirements for local authorities might be better aligned (or indeed made consistent) across the two grants. This will help to reduce a degree of confusion surrounding the requirements for the CCG and the HSG and enable local authorities to move further forward with their vision, design and plan for implementing a local Flexible Funding approach.

4.64 At the Welsh Government level there is a need to review the administrative requests that are being received and to identify ways in which responses to these could be streamlined.

Lens 4: Transformational leadership

4.65 The 7 Lenses highlight how delivering the kind of transformation envisaged by the Flexible Funding approach often needs to motivate a larger network of people who are not under the direct management of the transformational leader. Whereas the leadership of traditional projects tends to be concerned with minimising uncertainty, transformational leadership concerns creating the right conditions that allow people to work with uncertainty in a way that enables organisational change. The 7 Lenses of Transformation Framework identifies the importance of providing clarity surrounding the transformational process as a key component in minimising resistance amongst local authority workforces with respect to the changes being implemented.

4.66 It also highlights how leaders are often required to deal with other business pressures outside of their transformational role. These distractions can present challenges to providing successful programme leadership. Leaders require sufficient time and resources to deliver effective leadership. Resource limitations can put a 'brake' on the pace of delivery and progress towards achieving the ultimate objectives of the Flexible Funding approach. Indeed, these issues were highlighted in the previous interim report findings (Welsh Government, 2018d).

Emerging trends in progress

4.67 Transformational leadership for the adoption of the Flexible Funding approach is underpinned in local authorities that have made the most progress by being driven by the most senior levels of a local authority, from the Chief Executive, across the Senior Management team and through the elected members, which provided:

'Very senior buy-in to get commitment...[in the earliest development], a single point of leadership to drive it...[someone who encourages]...people...to be less fearful of the personal consequences and take a more collegiate approach to it. We got off to good start...We had very strong Cabinet

representation at...the early stages' (local authority Flexible Funding lead, pathfinder)

4.68 This provides a clear leadership team for driving the agenda forward:

'[We now have]...a leadership group in place that oversees Flexible Funding, including Chief Officers for health, education and housing' (local authority programme lead, non-pathfinder)

4.69 Key to this is ensuring that the right people with whom to drive the agenda forward are involved with this, referring to those who have:

'The vision and authority to drive it forward...[a]...vision of how this will benefit the client base...[where]...a service user focus has to be key...[it]...needs someone who can encourage people to see the bigger picture beyond individual responsibilities' (local authority Flexible Funding lead, non-pathfinder)

4.70 Across local authorities the drive from senior leadership teams is patchy, or extremely limited in some cases, which is limiting the pace of progress in implementing a local approach, a feature that replicates findings from the previous interim report (Welsh Government, 2018d) on the critical role played by senior leadership input:

'I'm not convinced that our...[leadership]...group understand what they are meant to be doing to pull it together more cohesively. I think they think it's about working together more. They are trying to do it business as usual...there is a real lack of steer in-house...we need a diktat...as to how far they really want us to go with it' (local authority programme lead, non-pathfinder).

4.71 Several local authorities (including those challenged by a limited in-house drive) are seeking a further steer from the Welsh Government in driving the agenda forward. This usually concerns those local authorities that have done very little thus far in implementing their Flexible Funding approach and that are seeking more explicit guidance on what steps to take next and a specific focus on the role of senior leadership teams in helping local approach leads to drive the agenda forward. These authorities, therefore, are those that could be linked more directly to the most active pathfinders to support them in addressing this leadership challenge.

4.72 From a Welsh Government perspective, challenges emerge (given the spread of responsibility for the Flexible Funding approach across several Ministerial portfolios), although accountability rests with the Minister for Housing and Local Government. Furthermore, there remains more shared work for Welsh Government programme leads to advance their shared design for the implementation of the Flexible Funding approach across their programmes in line with a shared vision to which all parties are signed up.

Lessons learnt

4.73 The solutions to these challenges are highlighted in the interviews, in line with the insight from the 7 Lenses of Transformation, and manifest through local authorities developing a leadership approach that incorporates skills and capabilities through an individual, or through a group of individuals who:

- are able to form a compelling vision
- can align people with the vision and build a community invested in the delivery of the vision, design and plan
- possess the ability to create momentum, demonstrate early wins and are able to support people in navigating ambiguity and uncertainty without becoming stopped thereby in changing their own working practices
- have specific time and support with which to undertake the role without distraction from other responsibilities.

For the Welsh Government this could also involve the identification of more simplified/streamlined communication of Ministerial responsibilities, policy expectations, and the longer-term strategic intent of the Flexible Funding approach within and beyond the Welsh Government.

Lens 5: Collaboration

4.74 The 7 Lenses of Transformation identify how collaboration is key in a multi-disciplinary environment that cuts increasingly across organisational boundaries. This is a key component of what Flexible Funding is seeking to achieve (and has always sought to achieve), in that it is focused deliberately upon bringing together delivery and the teams that effect it.

- 4.75 Moreover, it focuses on how such forms of transformation can achieve only specific outcomes when people across inter-organisational and intra-organisational boundaries collaborate in delivering outputs against the agreed sequencing and prioritisation as defined in the plan.
- 4.76 For Flexible Funding a collaborative approach will help to identify a set of component parts required for services, as well as assigning responsibility to agencies to develop delivery. In doing so, it can also address duplication and potentially deliver the transformation more efficiently.

Emerging trends in progress

- 4.77 Collaborative working appears to be taking place across the majority of local authorities (17), although in many cases (11) it is in the early stages of development.
- 4.78 There are variations in the extent to which local authorities credit their Flexible Funding approach for this, although at least two authorities did identify that their approach had specifically initiated collaborative working between programme teams in their authority:

‘Flexible Funding is encouraging collaboration. There was a move to more collaboration anyway, but this programme made it official with two grants now in place of 10.’ (local authority programme lead, non-pathfinder)

‘Flexible Funding has forced us to come together to share information and plan delivery in a different way. We’re not yet pooling budgets but are planning to do so going forward...[the] collaborative working is probably the most significant impact of Flexible Funding...[here]’ (local authority Flexible Funding lead, non-pathfinder)

‘Without flexible funding we wouldn’t invite homelessness leads to our operational meeting.’ (local authority programme lead, non-pathfinder)

‘We are working more closely with adult services than before — a strong argument for getting 10 grants together.’ (local authority programme lead, non-pathfinder)

4.79 However, for some local authorities the collaborative approach 'predates' Flexible Funding:

'No collaboration has been instigated by funding flexibility, but lots of collaborative examples that have been developed over the past eight years.'

(local authority Flexible Funding lead, non-pathfinder)

'Collaboration has become more substantive and focused...as it predates flexible funding...and with more focus on doing, aligned to priorities rather than specific services' (local authority Flexible Funding lead, pathfinder)

4.80 Examples of collaborative working include:

- adding Officers to meetings of other portfolios in order to facilitate collaboration on joint issues
- additional service planning or recommissioning consultations and reviews
- developing/redesigning roles or services that straddle multiple teams, e.g. domestic violence support, provision of parenting services, and young people support
- pooling budgets across programme areas covered by Flexible Funding
- joint contracting
- collaborative approaches to allocating underspend towards specific locally identified needs or service gaps.

4.81 Some barriers to collaborative working remain, including issues surrounding staff capacity to engage with other delivery teams, particularly if those teams do not currently work together:

'There is an ambition to work collaboratively; however, collaboration is limited by resource issues...[staff time and team staffing levels], and there are challenges around engaging external partners due to the ties of contracts and time constraints' (local authority Flexible Funding lead, non-pathfinder)

4.82 At a Welsh Government level there are signs that collaborative working is developing, though programme teams continue to operate largely separately from one another, especially where they are separated by the CCG–HSG split. The internal Data Working Group supporting the development of the Flexible Funding Outcomes Framework has demonstrated one way in which internal and external

teams can be brought together in order to co-produce agreed approaches and outputs. However, this remains in the early stages in the work of this group.

- 4.83 Welsh Government staff are keen to explore ways in which further collaborative working (internally and externally) might be instigated, particularly in relation to the operation of their grants. The development of this, as identified by interviewees, will need to examine the alignment between programmes in each of the grants so as to identify agreed approaches to fostering collaborative working and understanding where commonalities in the programme aims might be aligned for facilitating that work.
- 4.84 Interviews with Welsh Government staff and those in local authorities that have shown less progress in implementing a local Flexible Funding approach identified that this was a key area in which the Funding Alignment team could facilitate teams convening in order to support this and help them to identify opportunities for greater collaborative working at the local authority level.

Lessons learnt

- 4.85 Collaboration can be one of the earliest signs that Flexible Funding is having an impact as programme teams are convened in order to review service needs and identify solutions for addressing them. It is important for local authorities to be actively encouraged to create structures that facilitate collaboration between the CCG, the HSG, the component programmes that compose them, and other functional/sector-specific provision at the local authority level (e.g. employability, early years and childcare, homelessness, or carer services). The evaluation evidence in this report suggests that when these structures are created, the 'flexible' use of funding as envisaged by the Flexible Funding approach is more likely.
- 4.86 Key to achieving this is securing an agreement upon how these discussions are to be conducted, who is to be involved and how disputes might be resolved.
- 4.87 For the Welsh Government there are promising signs that programme teams are convening through the operation of the Internal Data Group linked to the development of the Outcomes Framework and through the internal CCG and HSG groups. The evidence suggests that this needs to be extended in order to identify ways in which more operational collaboration might be facilitated. This may then

help the development of consistent guidance across programme teams regarding how flexibility might be used in delivery.

Lens 6: Accountability

- 4.88 Accountability is concerned with defining clearly the roles within the organisation and the transformation — knowing who is ultimately accountable for what, empowering people to deliver and holding them to account, both internally and externally. The 7 Lenses highlight how as complexity increases, the need for clearly defined governance becomes more important in delivering a successful outcome. The new strategic structures should occupy this role; however, details of that role and the responsibilities and accountability inherent therein should be disseminated clearly to staff across the organisation.
- 4.89 This is particularly relevant for Flexible Funding in relation to the decisions that need to be made regarding how funding can be used more flexibly.

Emerging trends in progress

- 4.90 There are variations in the accountability processes embedded within local authorities for overseeing the Flexible Funding approach. Some of these use pre-existing approaches that reflect a legacy oversight approach that predates its implementation:

‘[We]...have a strategic corporate board, under the Deputy Chief Executive. This is used to bring the grants together and develop the preventative strategy. The group was put together two years ago, but progress was slow whilst there were uncertainties about the grants.’ (local authority programme lead, non-pathfinder)

- 4.91 Others have newly established approaches:

‘A working group is in place that brings together decision makers, operational staff and service managers across all grants.’ (local authority programme lead, non-pathfinder)

‘[We have a]...Leadership group in place that oversees Flexible Funding, including Chief Officers for health, education and housing. Leadership group has only recently been developed and progress appears slow.’ (local authority programme lead, non-pathfinder)

'Stakeholder group exists. Too early to say whether it needs improvement in terms of bringing everyone together and understanding what's going on. Without it in previous we wouldn't have found the time to consider what connections could be made.' (local authority programme lead, pathfinder)

4.92 These accountability structures include approaches to ensuring strategic oversight and overviews of monitoring and reports to the Welsh Government. This is commonly delivered through Boards, with the involvement of Chief Officers/Executives. In some cases, this includes Cabinet accountability.

4.93 In other cases, Working Groups, stakeholder groups or Task and Finish groups have been introduced:

'[We have]... Good political oversight, with Cabinet and Chief Exec sign-off.'
(local authority Flexible Funding lead, non-pathfinder)

'There is strategic oversight. There are task and finish groups chaired by CE and senior staff that have been looking at redesigning services. The vision is at the top of the leadership group, and the children services lead reports into the leadership group.' (local authority programme lead, non-pathfinder)

4.94 Some authorities have yet to establish or formalise approaches and, therefore, lack an overseeing group for their Flexible Funding approach:

'[There is]...no overseeing group/committee at present. Work is done at service level instead.' (local authority programme lead, non-pathfinder)

4.95 A number of interviewees questioned the lack of parity in reporting requirements between individual programmes and between the CCG and the HSG.

4.96 Another concern focused on whether or not an accountability system that was clear 'on paper' was operating effectively, was understood fully by those participating, and whether or not procedures were being followed appropriately. This was a situation that reflected a clear vision and plan for programme delivery, whereby illustrating the importance of these dimensions across key structures in driving Flexible Funding delivery forward.

- 4.97 Welsh Government accountability rests with the Funding Alignment team for the Flexible Funding approach, whilst individual programme teams retain responsibility for their programmes' design and implementation by local authorities. There remain tensions between retaining the fidelity of these grants and the expectations embedded in the Flexible Funding approach, which has led Welsh Government and local authority staff whom we have interviewed to ask, '*How flexible is flexible?*'
- 4.98 As we have observed in the Vision sections of this report (paras. 4.38–4.39), this has yet to be resolved and interviewees in the Welsh Government suggested that it is further complicated by the fact that Ministerial responsibility for programmes included in the Flexible Funding approach rests across several portfolios, although the Minister for Housing and Local Government holds responsibility for Flexible Funding implementation.
- 4.99 The Welsh Government Funding Alignment Implementation Board offers a further dimension of accountability, providing oversight and challenge with regard to the implementation of the CCG and the HSG, as well as having responsibility for the overall direction of the different aspects involved in the successful delivery of the two grants. This includes identifying and managing strategic and crosscutting issues and risks across both of the grants, as well as managing interdependencies, communications, and overseeing implementation rollout to all local authorities.

Lessons learnt

- 4.100 Accountability structures provide a key mechanism with which the use of funding flexibility can be driven forward, particularly regarding decisions to 'move' funding between programmes. Ineffective structures can prevent approaches from being utilised and must link to the overall vision, plan and design for the Flexible Funding approach at a local level.
- 4.101 For local Flexible Funding approaches, there is no need to prescribe accountability structures; these need to be local decisions, but whatever structure is decided upon, it should seek to cover the minimum areas or ways of operating that are underpinned by specific principles including:
- ensuring shared accountability
 - enabling a common understanding of each programme

- enabling the opportunity to identify and establish links between programmes and the higher vision and plan for delivery
- agreeing upon decision-making protocols
- enabling the development of an overview of need and service gaps and duplication
- confirming Flexible Funding decisions.

Lens 7: People

- 4.102 The final Lens from the 7 Lenses of Transformation concerns workforce development and the need for transformation to engage people in order to introduce and embed new ways of working. The framework highlights the importance of effective and regular communication with the workforce at every stage of the transformation.
- 4.103 Engagement starts with those people who are affected by the Flexible Funding approach and those who are supporting the transformation, as well as how uncertainty surrounding the change is generated and can be addressed. The framework highlights how planning and implementing a comprehensive communication campaign is essential to keeping people engaged in the transformational process, as well as being reassured about its consequences.
- 4.104 The 7 Lenses of Transformation also highlight how it is important to have the right people with the appropriate skills and mindset with whom to support the transformation. This will require skills from several functions, such as policy, finance, project delivery, operational service delivery, commercial, and digital, to collaborate on the transformation. Finding people with the right skills and experience is fundamental for success. Given the range of programmes involved in the delivery of the Flexible Funding approach, this is especially important.

Emerging trends in progress

- 4.105 At the local authority level, the people dimension of delivery of the Flexible Funding approach will require further work. In those areas in which those whom we interviewed stated that structures, plans and design have begun to facilitate greater levels of cross-programme collaborative working, attention has focused on some staff training and information provision to help the workforce understand the reason

for the changes being made and how working practice might be changing, though more work is required and in some authorities this work will need to be developed even further.

- 4.106 This is important because local authority respondents highlighted that concerns remain with regard to further restructuring, threats to existing job roles, and perceptions that approaches are another way of managing further funding cuts in the short and medium term. These are positions which are mirrored in the Welsh Government, and in programme teams with whom they have been working in local authorities.
- 4.107 For many local authorities it is too soon to state whether or not the Flexible Funding approach is having an impact on working practice, but for some there is an expressed ambition to get there. There is a recognition that there remains more work to undertake, including exploring redeveloping roles in order to support joint commissioning, other forms of collaborative working where this is not already happening, or the need to focus on a wider range of programmes. It is clear in those authorities that have made progress in delivering more flexibility across their funding approaches that there is a need to focus upon workforce development aspects:
- 'Flexible funding hasn't yet resulted in changes to working practices, though there is an ambition to get there. The working culture is constrained to what you can do within a grant. There is a recognition that the authority has been working in silos, but they are trying not to "throw the baby out with the bath water" and, so, are looking at staff training and defining best practice as a precursor to changing working practice.'* (Flexible Funding lead, non-pathfinder)
- 4.108 In other local authorities there is acknowledgement that a change in working practices has not yet occurred, that 'silo working' remains common and that people's 'identities' are still wrapped up in the delivery of services for a particular grant (rather than a broader perspective across a wider appreciation of EIPS and the value that they can bring). It is for these staff where the concerns surrounding restructuring, funding cuts, and changed working roles are the most pronounced.
- 4.109 There is acknowledgement amongst this group that training and workforce development will help to tackle these issues and the lack of 'buy-in' from some staff.

4.110 Some local authorities not only credit the Flexible Funding approach with encouraging people to collaborate more closely and less in silos, but also highlight that there is more work to undertake here in order to have teams collaborate more effectively. This has been supported by some training delivery:

'We've put on training and workshops and conferences. This has been quite successful...[so that]...across services there has been a lot of interchange of ideas, particularly around the front line, which has been very good...[This is because]...we want front-line officers to work in a more innovative way....and alongside that we are hoping to get a more shared responsibility approach going forward' (local authority programme lead, non-pathfinder)

4.111 It is also the case, from the perspective of joined-up working, that a number of local authorities (5) already believe that they are working in this way and, therefore, the challenge lies in utilising this as effectively as possible in order to help drive the local Flexible Funding approach forward, whilst encouraging other staff to take it up.

4.112 The Welsh Government have recognised that Flexible Funding has impacted upon how grants are administered and have identified a work stream to examine the finance, grant management and account management systems, which will include a focus on workforce issues.

Lessons learnt

4.113 There is a need in local authorities and in the Welsh Government to focus attention more towards how the rollout of the Flexible Funding approach can affect working practice and approaches.

Staff training and regular communication, consultation, and information provision are needed so as to support this, and local authorities are now focusing on this need. Approaches will need to foster collaborative working and support the ways in which local designs and plans are being taken forward.

Key factors in supporting ongoing successful delivery

4.114 The findings across the interviews conducted in this final phase of the evaluation work highlight some key perspectives that show that the following factors underpin the implementation of, and success in, the delivery of local Flexible Funding approaches. Our analysis identifies three broad groups of local authorities and the

local Flexible Funding approaches against the 7 Lenses of Transformation Maturity Matrix:

- those making good progress (1) — covering five local authorities including pathfinders and non-pathfinders
- those with positive signs of progress (2) — covering 12 local authorities including pathfinders and non-pathfinders
- those who have made much more limited progress (3) — three local authorities including non-pathfinders²⁴.

4.115 The analysis of interview findings and the review of delivery plans have sought to identify the progress that local authorities and the overall Flexible Funding approach have made against each of the 7 Lenses of Transformation in terms of their position in the Maturity Matrix, where further improvements or enhancements to delivery might be needed and how they might be supported by the Welsh Government or other local authorities or stakeholders.

4.116 The assessments are summarised in Figures 4.1 to 4.3 and show that:

- for those local authorities demonstrating some, or the least, progress (Figures 4.2 and 4.3) there is a particular need to recast their vision, design and plans for the delivery of the local Flexible Funding approach, and specific approaches to developing and extending collaborative working are also needed
- all local authorities need to review workforce development approaches and communications for staff also need to be focused upon
- to support this delivery there is a need to focus on practice and insight sharing between authorities and the pathfinders (and leading non-pathfinder authorities) should play a dominant role therein, providing more detailed overviews of their experiences and, where possible, acting as mentors for other Flexible Funding leads in other local authorities.

²⁴ Interviews were not possible with two local authorities and it has not been possible to make full assessments of these authorities against the matrix, although each is likely to feature in Group 2 or 3 (as detailed above).

Figure 4.1: Overview profile of local authorities – those making good progress – five local authorities (pathfinders and non-pathfinders)

	Lenses of Transformation						
	Vision	Design	Plan	Transformational Leadership	Collaboration	Accountability	People
Level Already Attained in Maturity Matrix	Level 4 examples: The vision sets a clear direction into which people buy. It is articulated in different ways	Level 4 examples: It is clear how different parts of the organisation will fit together. It is possible to assess progress as the design evolves	Level 4 examples: Planning is informed, coherent and mature, supporting both transformation and business as usual	Level 5 examples: Leaders embody transformation and create an environment of trust in which it is safe to speak freely	Level 4 examples: Roles, responsibilities and incentives reflect the need to collaborate, leading to new ways of working	Level 5 examples: Clear governance results in decisions being made at the right level and at the right time to drive progress	Level 3 examples: Plans are in place to address the impact on people, ways of working, and culture
Areas to Be Developed to Improve Maturity Matrix Rating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing communication of programme vision, design and plan • Leadership succession planning and knowledge transfer mechanisms developed • Further collaborative working opportunities across the CCG and the HSG to be developed, particularly with Public Services Boards, Regional Collaborative Committees, and Regional Programme Boards • Rollout of workforce development plans and related training programmes. 						
Potential Support Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential use as mentor/peer support for other authorities continuing to struggle to establish Flexible Funding approach delivery • Utilise further through programme network meetings, annual events, and future consultations on monitoring and reporting activities • Support workforce development planning • Identify where further flexibilities might be possible, whilst maintaining fidelity and focus of programmes. 						



Source: Transformation Peer Group 2018 and Evaluation Analysis

Figure 4.2: Overview profile of local authorities – those with positive signs of progress – twelve local authorities (pathfinders and non-pathfinders)

	Lenses of Transformation						
	Vision	Design	Plan	Transformational Leadership	Collaboration	Accountability	People
Level Already Attained in Maturity Matrix	Level 3 examples: There is a vision that is stretching but achievable. People see how they can fit into it	Level 3 examples: The design considers users and contains enough examples to bring it to life	Level 3 examples: Plans have the right level of detail and balance of tight and loose planning	Level 4 examples: Leaders tell a consistent story. They ‘push’ and ‘pull’ as needed to create the right environment for change	Level 4 examples: Roles, responsibilities and incentives reflect the need to collaborate, leading to new ways of working	Level 3 examples: People are becoming empowered and accountable for making decisions	Level 3 examples: Plans are in place to address the impact on people, ways of working, and culture
Areas to Be Developed to Improve Maturity Matrix Rating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of more detail for the vision, design and plan for delivery that is more stretching and links more extensively with other strategic plans Enhancement of accountability and leadership structures to provide a greater ‘push’ to work more collaboratively, including the opening-up of external approaches through Public Services Boards, Regional Collaborative Committees, and Regional Programme Boards Identification of detailed plans for workforce development and mechanisms to actively, and regularly, communicate the programme vision, plan and design to all staff and internal and external stakeholders. 						
Potential Support Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing support and reassurance to underpin progress made thus far, and encouragement to take further steps to implement the approach Provision of insight and learning from other local authorities (pathfinders and non-pathfinders) that have made particular strides in areas of need Opportunities to work with other staff to mentor them in further progressing delivery. 						



Source: Transformation Peer Group 2018 and Evaluation Analysis

Figure 4.3: Overview profile of local authorities – those making more limited progress – three local authorities (non-pathfinders)

	Lenses of Transformation						
	Vision	Design	Plan	Transformational Leadership	Collaboration	Accountability	People
Level Already Attained in Maturity Matrix	Level 2 examples: A vision exists, but it means different things to different people	Level 1 examples: There is no single design, or various designs are not joined up	Level 2 examples: Plans are beginning to be joined up. Ambition and achievability need more focus	Level 2 examples: There is support for transformation at the top, as well as some change agents. There are meetings and ways to submit ideas	Level 2 examples: There is some understanding of stakeholders. Collaborative behaviour is not yet commonplace	Level 1 examples: Responsibilities and accountabilities for transformation are unclear	Level 2 examples: The impact of transformation on people, ways of working, and culture is understood
Areas to Be Developed to Improve Maturity Matrix Rating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to co-produce vision, plan and design for Flexible Funding approach delivery • Further formalisation of leadership and accountability structures • Active encouragement of collaborative working, including an emphasis upon moving out of internal 'silos' of working. This should lead to a targeting of mechanisms to build external collaboration • Identification of detailed plans for workforce development and mechanisms to actively, and regularly, communicate the programme vision, plan and design to all staff and internal and external stakeholders. 						
Potential Support Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More detailed support for senior leadership team structures within the local authority, including facilitating partnerships with stronger-performing local authorities (including shadowing and mentoring opportunities) • Provision of insight and learning from other local authorities (pathfinders and non-pathfinders) that have made particular strides in areas of need • Priority access to opportunities to work with other staff to mentor them in further progressing delivery. 						



Source: Transformation Peer Group 2018 and Evaluation Analysis

5. Outcomes Framework

- 5.1 Prior to the Ministerial announcement that confirmed the future of the Flexible Funding approach (October 2018) and the agreement that there should be a single integrated outcomes framework with which to help monitor the programme, work was already underway to develop a single integrated outcomes framework for the programme.
- 5.2 The aim of this Outcomes Framework is to allow the Welsh Government and local authorities to assess the performance of the overall Flexible Funding approach in order to determine the extent to which it is meeting its objective to:
- deliver early intervention and prevention support services to ensure the long-term prosperity and well-being of all residents in Wales, which prevent problems from escalating and those requiring further, and potentially more complex, support later in their life.
- 5.3 The initial developmental work was led by the Supporting People team in Housing Policy within the Welsh Government but was subsequently undertaken by members of the evaluation team. This developmental work involved consultations with all 10 grant leads encompassed by the Flexible Funding approach, with Knowledge and Analytical Services staff in the Welsh Government, as well as consultation with local authority staff in two pathfinder authorities.
- 5.4 This was supplemented by a series of workshops and consultations with local authority Flexible Funding leads, as well as Welsh Government and local authority programme leads, encompassed by Flexible Funding on the content of the draft Outcomes Framework²⁵.

²⁵ There have been three drafts of the framework: January 2019, March 2019, and the revised tables included in this report.

5.5 The work highlighted that the Outcomes Framework needed:

- a limited number of outcomes and measures to be used in a future framework, with the resulting framework being as simple and effective as possible
- to make consistent use of language to describe outcomes and outputs in order to ensure consistent application across grants, and the 10 programmes encompassed by the two grants to balance their relevance to the CCG and the HSG
- to be aligned with the UN Rights of the Child and the Well-being of Future Generations Act outcomes, and to include national indicators related to the statutory duties associated with Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) service
- to not expect all programmes involved in local Flexible Funding approaches to report against all goals and outcomes within the framework. Rather, reporting should only be undertaken against goals/outcomes that are the most relevant to the nature and needs of the client groups with which they work.

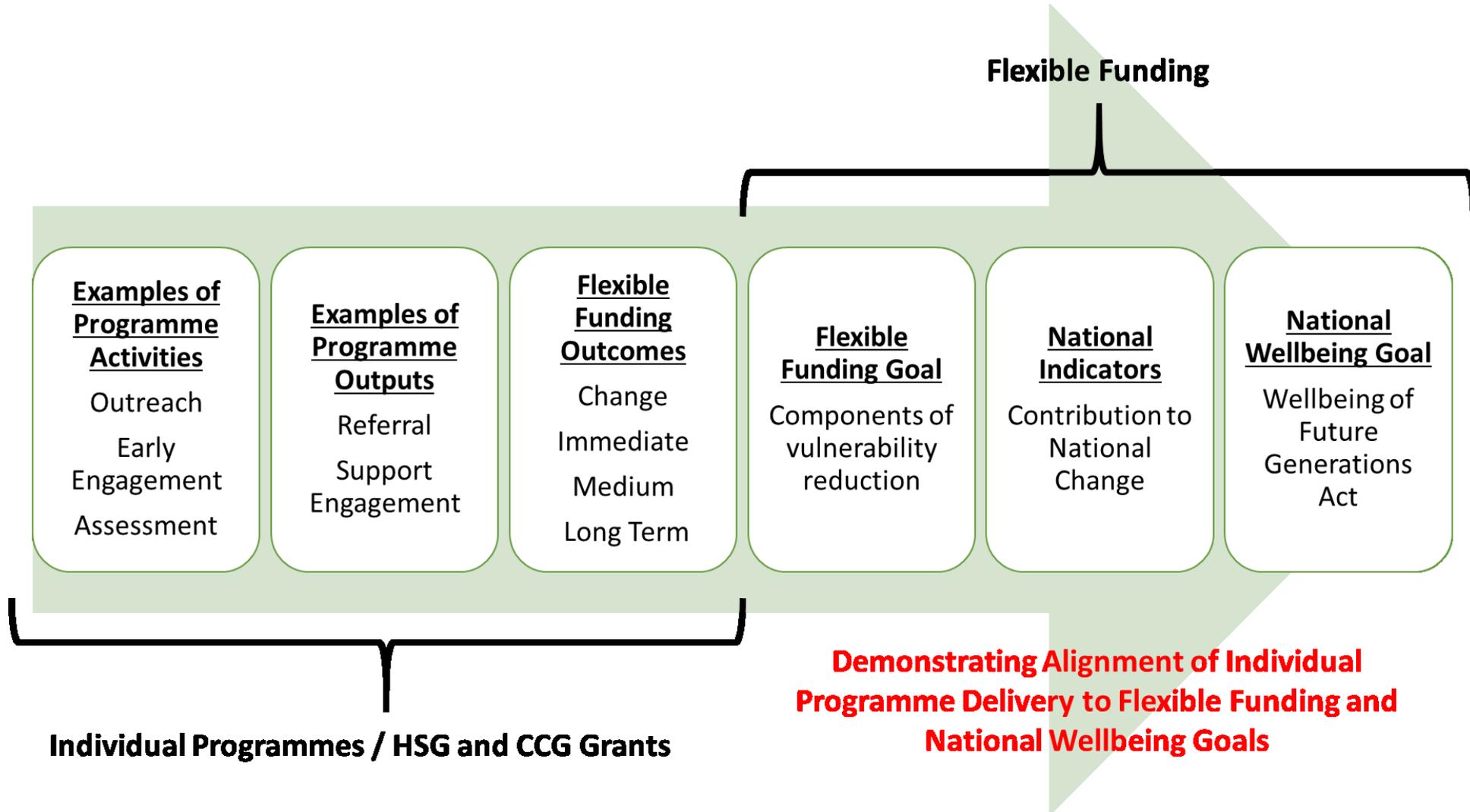
5.6 It highlighted that, **critically**, the framework should ensure that the outcomes upon which it reported made use of existing monitoring and reporting mechanisms and the data that they collected, rather than authorities having to establish entirely new systems. Local authorities should not be expected to have to create a new layer of data collection, but rather use existing approaches to report against the framework.

5.7 The resulting draft Outcomes Framework (updated in September 2019) utilises a tiered structure which builds not only from links to the goals in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015²⁶ (Top Down), but also from the inclusion of specific examples of individual programme activities and outputs (Bottom Up) from each of the 10 programmes encompassed by the two-grant approach.

²⁶ See [Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act](#)

- 5.8 Figure 5.1 provides an illustration of the framework, which shows how its component parts fit together, illustrating how activities and outputs at a programme level can be seen to contribute to the achievement of the programme vision as well as their alignment with the National Indicators and the National Wellbeing Goals.
- 5.9 The example outputs and example activities are **not** expected to be part of all of the delivery in every local authority, or for every programme involved in CCG and HSG delivery, but rather illustrate examples of outputs and activities in order to demonstrate alignment.

Figure 5.1: Overview of how the component parts of the Outcomes Framework for Flexible Funding are interlinked



- 5.10 The design of the Outcomes Framework has also been influenced by the **definition of Early Intervention and Prevention**²⁷.
- 5.11 The focus of the funding alignment work instigated by the Welsh Government since late 2016/early 2017 has been upon improving the efficacy, efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of EIPS in Wales.
- 5.12 EIPS refers to service delivery which the Early Intervention Foundation identifies as follows:
- ‘Early intervention means identifying and providing effective early support to children and young people who are at risk of poor outcomes.’*
- 5.13 This definition highlights the role of this kind of support in the lives of children and young people, identifying the following:
- ‘Effective early intervention works to prevent problems occurring, or to tackle them head-on before they get worse.’* (EIF 2018, p.5)
- 5.14 It adds:
- ‘Early intervention is not just about what happens in the early years. While the years before a child starts school are a particularly important stage of development, problems can arise at any stage. Effective interventions can improve children’s life chances at any point during childhood and adolescence.’* (EIF 2018, p.5)
- 5.15 Furthermore, in a review of Early Intervention and Prevention practice undertaken by the Institute of Public Care²⁸ a wider focus²⁹ on the early life of a child **and** on the early life of the problem(s)/issue(s) being tackled by support **and** an approach to addressing problems across a family unit (with or without dependent children) are identified. Thus, given the wider focus of the 10 programmes encompassed by the Flexible Funding approach, it is important to include a focus upon the ‘family’ unit, regardless of whether or not it includes children.

²⁷ It is appreciated that some programmes are not only focused upon Early Intervention, Prevention and Support, serving other purposes such as sustainability of some service provision; therefore, not all aspects of delivery by these programmes will be captured fully by the Flexible Funding Outcomes Framework.

²⁸ Institute of Public Care (2012) [‘Early Intervention with Children and Families: Getting the Most Out From Team Around the Family Systems’](#), Oxford Brookes University, Oxford.

²⁹ This is understandable because the Early Intervention Foundation (as an organisation) especially targets the needs of children and young people and their families.

- 5.16 Furthermore, the draft Outcomes Framework seeks to encompass the range of single- and multi-agency working and programme delivery associated with the 10 programmes covered by the Flexible Funding approach. Across these it refers to support and services that work with children, young people, and adults to address needs as early as possible in the lifecycle and the lifetime of the **problem(s)** involved in order to reduce the risk of said problem(s) becoming more complex and potentially more damaging to the health and well-being of the individuals/families involved.
- 5.17 The framework links outputs and outcomes to the achievement of the Flexible Funding approach **goals**.
- 5.18 These Flexible Funding **goals** seek to illustrate the aspirational benefit, or difference, made to participants as a result of an intervention, or change, brought about by the programmes within the two-grant approach. Moreover, they identify this in terms of a broad benefit, or difference, explicitly linked to a National Indicator and Wellbeing Goal **and**, thus, derived from the outcomes (immediate, medium- and long-term) that participants have gained from the support that they have received through the Flexible Funding approach encompassing the 10 programmes.
- 5.19 The Flexible Funding **Outcomes** (Performance Measures) are developed based on a definition drawn directly from the Magenta Book (HM Treasury 2011), such that:
- ‘Outcomes are those measurable achievements which either are themselves the objectives of the policy – or at least contribute to them – and the benefits they generate.’ (p.18)*
- 5.20 Furthermore, these are included in the Outcomes Framework in a way that allows individual programmes to align their own delivery and its outcomes and outputs with the Flexible Funding single integrated Outcomes Framework.

5.21 This is intended to best reflect the broad approach adopted by EIPS service delivery in the Outcomes Framework where this would usually involve:

- Initial outreach and engagement of participants (as represented by **activities** undertaken by programmes/grants)
- An assessment of participant need and a referral to the appropriate support (as represented by **activities and/or outputs** at a programme/grant level)
- Engagement and participation in support (as represented by the **activities/outputs (immediate)/Flexible Funding outcomes (immediate)** arising from programmes/grants)
- Reported changes, impacts, and improvements for participants from the programme (as represented by **Flexible Funding outcomes — immediate, medium- and long-term** — arising from the programmes/grants). It is worth noting that links between programme provision and long-term outcomes may be more tenuous, but they remain an important focus in highlighting where the foundations for long-term change are being laid by the support provided through early intervention
- The link and contribution that those outcomes make to attainment as shown by the **National Indicators** and mapped to the achievement of the **Flexible Funding Goals** and the relevant **National Wellbeing Goal**.

5.22 Although all local authorities are expected to deliver against all of the Wellbeing Goals, those below have less direct alignment with the Flexible Funding approach; therefore, to keep the Outcomes Framework as simple as possible, these will not be addressed by the framework:

- A resilient Wales (**Goal 2**) – *“A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).”*
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language (**Goal 6**) – *“A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.”*

- A globally responsible Wales (**Goal 7**) – “A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.”

5.23 In constructing the Outcomes Framework, we have sought to map against the National Wellbeing Goals with which the Flexible Funding approach has the strongest alignment (see Figures 5.2–5.7 in Annex B for the full details), namely:

- **A prosperous Wales**

- **Flexible Funding Goal 1:** Programme participants are supported in finding work, progressing, and staying in work.
 - **Medium-Term Outcome:** A number of people in need gaining employment (minimum of 16 hours per week).
 - **Long-Term Outcomes:** A proportion of supported households that are workless, and an increased number of supported people with disabilities and protected characteristics in employment.

- **A healthier Wales**

- **Flexible Funding Goal 3:** Programme participants’ physical and mental health are enhanced, and they understand the choices and behaviours that will support that.
 - **Medium-Term Outcomes:** A number of people in need reporting an improvement in their mental health and emotional well-being; a number of people in need reporting a more active and healthier lifestyle; a number of people in need reporting an improvement in healthy eating; and a number of parents completing an evidence-based parenting programme.
 - **Long-Term Outcomes:** A reduction in the number of hospital admissions for risky health behaviours associated with Smoking, Alcohol, and Drugs, and a reduction in the number of people in need requiring high-level mental health support.

- **A more equal Wales**

- **Flexible Funding Goal 4:** Programme participants are enabled to fulfil their potential, regardless of what their background is.

- **Medium-Term Outcomes:** A number of people in need improving their basic skills; a number of people in need gaining a nationally recognised qualification or accreditation; a number of children who have improved their school attendance/childcare attendance; a number of parents with an improved ability to support their child with their learning and developmental needs; and a number of supported children reaching developmental milestones.
- **Long-Term Outcomes:** A number of people in need gaining a nationally recognised qualification or accreditation; a proportion of supported households living in poverty relative to the UK median; and a proportion of supported households with children living in poverty relative to the UK median.

- **A Wales of cohesive communities**

- **Flexible Funding Goal 5a:** Participants are not homeless and live in suitable accommodation.

- **Medium-Term Outcomes:** A number of people who have accommodation and are able to manage it; a number of people who are not at imminent risk of homelessness; a number of people with improved financial literacy/capability; and a number of people whose financial situation has stabilised or improved.
- **Long-Term Outcomes:** A proportion of supported households that are homeless; a proportion of supported households living in temporary accommodation; and a proportion of supported households in debt.

- **Flexible Funding Goal 5b:** Participants are in safe and healthy relationships, including VAWDASV.
 - **Medium-Term Outcomes:** A number of supported people completing evidence-based parenting and relationship programmes; a number of supported families completing support programmes on family resilience and relationships; and a VAWDASV outcome to be confirmed³⁰.
 - **Long-Term Outcomes:** A reduction in the number of domestic violence incidents reported by supported people; a reduction in the number of substance misuse cases amongst supported people; a number of children in need cases amongst supported families; and a number of supported children in local authority care.
- **Flexible Funding Goal 5c:** Participating people (including young people) are not engaged in criminal activities or antisocial behaviour.
 - **Medium-Term Outcomes:** A number of supported people completing relationship and parenting courses; a number of supported children who have improved their school attendance/childcare attendance; a number of supported people demonstrating behavioural issues; and a number of supported people engaging in antisocial behaviour.
 - **Long-Term Outcomes:** A reduction in the number of first-time entrants to the justice system in Wales; a reduction in the rate of proven reoffending by people in Wales; and a reduction in the proportion of people who receive a conviction in court then being sentenced to custody.

³⁰ No date is yet specified for the identification of these outcome measures by the Welsh Government in support of the VAWDASV strategy.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 This final report builds upon the interim report findings (October 2018) in order to identify the progress that was made in the Flexible Funding approach from November 2018 to July 2019, with interviews being undertaken in March–July 2019.
- 6.2 Drawing upon the evidence from interviews with leads and key stakeholders, plus an analysis of the first overarching quarterly monitoring reports and delivery plans, it is shown that since September 2018, progress has been slower than expected for some local authorities, especially those that have not already been engaged in a significant change programme for influencing their local Flexible Funding approach.
- 6.3 There are some very positive, and more numerous, examples of officials across the 10 programme areas encompassed by the Flexible Funding approach convening to plan and co-commission/co-fund provision, thus breaking down silo working in some cases.
- 6.4 Progress since September 2018 has involved non-pathfinders establishing reviews of services, assessing their governance and management options and establishing forums, if not already in place, wherein the 10 grants covered by the programme can be reviewed. This mirrors approaches that the pathfinders adopted in their delivery from the inception of the programme.
- 6.5 The work undertaken by the non-pathfinders has facilitated reviews and the development of an understanding of other approaches and helps to begin the process of identifying options for joint working and the potential for service integration.
- 6.6 Five local authorities (three pathfinders and two non-pathfinders) have made particularly good progress, as evidenced by formalised structures in respect of vision, design and plan development, structured processes for leadership and accountability, and operational approaches for collaborative working (see Figure 4.1).

- 6.7 The single-grant approach for the HSG has also shown positive outcomes through the scheme's development and co-production of new single HSG guidance, agreed approaches for needs assessment, strategic planning and reviews of service delivery, joint working and collaborative working, and the identification of additional funding streams, which has resulted from a range of partnership and joint working between the Welsh Government, local authorities, the third sector, and Registered Social Landlords.
- 6.8 Furthermore, there are already examples in 2018/19 and in the early months of 2019-20 of funding being utilised flexibly by six of the seven original pathfinders and in three non-pathfinders. It is in these authorities that the strongest evidence is found of the pooling of budgets in order to support the ongoing delivery of some services in specialist need areas including domestic violence, mental health, and vulnerable family support. That this work is proceeding shows that momentum is starting to be built in some local authorities against the agenda that Flexible Funding is seeking to achieve.
- 6.9 Limited examples of joint commissioning have been identified, although the majority (13) of local authorities are actively investigating options for this across existing EIPS, with examples being found for domestic violence support, parenting, and training delivery.
- 6.10 Collaborative working (involving joint meetings) and service reviews by combined programme teams across the 10 programmes encompassed by the Flexible Funding approach are in evidence, though there remains some separation due to the continued separation of the CCG and the HSG in some local authorities (4) which has yet to be overcome. Two local authorities identify that collaborative working has been the most notable area of impact instigated by their local Flexible Funding approach, as observed through our analysis of the interview findings.

- 6.11 More work remains to be undertaken across a range of local authorities and the Welsh Government to reduce the variation in local Flexible Funding approaches as evident in the evaluation findings. This is best tackled through the further enhancement of key aspects of the 7 Lenses of Transformation Framework, including formalising and extending the vision, design and planning development in order to cover strategic and business plans, as well as the ultimate design of EIPS at a local level. In addition, it should involve effectively communicating any changes more widely to staff across authorities so that levels of understanding of the change ethos and objectives is known more widely. By focusing on these aspects, local authorities that have made less progress (15) will be able to provide foundations for their Flexible Funding approach to advance.
- 6.12 Successful vision development is focused upon ensuring that it underpins both the flexible use of funding and flexibility in the delivery approach that utilises that funding.
- 6.13 Further development is also required to formalise leadership and accountability structures in local authorities so as to underpin the transformation needed for supporting local Flexible Funding approaches in all authorities.
- 6.14 These areas are critical because literary evidence strongly suggests that a clear vision and ethos, as well as strong senior leadership support, are key ingredients for success in the delivery of a transformation like that underpinning the most successful local approaches to Flexible Funding. These are areas that could be specifically emphasised in future monitoring reports requested by the Welsh Government.
- 6.15 In addition, all authorities, irrespective of the progress being made in the delivery of the local Flexible Funding approach, will need to have a concentrated focus on workforce development and support for staff to respond to new working practices and roles arising from the approach.

- 6.16 There is a continued broad acceptance of the principles that have been articulated regarding the aims and ambitions of the Flexible Funding approach and the understanding of these is good and improving. However, this is not universal and those who are furthest removed from the development of local Flexible Funding approaches, especially delivery staff across the 10 programmes, continue to have the poorest appreciation of the aims and ambitions of the programme. This mirrors an area of the key findings highlighted in the interim evaluation report (Welsh Government, 2018d).
- 6.17 In the Welsh Government there is a specific need to undertake further work with regard to reviewing and, where appropriate, resetting the strategic aim of Flexible Funding, articulating this to all local authorities. Indeed, there may be scope to work with local authorities to co-produce this in order to support the engagement of local authorities in the future work surrounding the Flexible Funding approach. Work on the development of the single HSG guidance could offer useful examples of the best ways in which this might be taken forward.
- 6.18 There continues to be an underlying sense of suspicion that the ultimate narrative being pursued by the changes is one of reducing the total amount of funding overall for vulnerable groups, or an unintended consequence that grant alignment might mean that the focus of funding moves away from less 'politically popular' groups. Alongside this remain 'pockets' of 'silo working' in which programme teams (in local authorities in the main) isolate themselves from changes being instigated through local Flexible Funding approaches. This is a feature that is most common in those authorities that have made the least progress in programme delivery, and reflects some poor communication within local authorities in which the full local purpose of the changes being initiated have yet to be articulated fully to all members of programme teams.
- 6.19 Delivery of the Flexible Funding approach in 2019-20 needs to be given time by the Welsh Government across all local authorities to be further developed through support from more advanced authorities. This will enable approaches to become more embedded, as well as helping to support a smoother full rollout from April 2020. It is important for local authorities that their efforts thus far not be seen to go to waste through any further changes, or revisions, to the policy, and that the

commitments made in the October 2018 Ministerial announcement with respect to maintaining work on the approach until the end of this Assembly term be kept.

6.20 There remain three local authorities (non-pathfinders) who are yet to make any real progress in their delivery of their local Flexible Funding approach, and key blockages here seem to have arisen from limited work in developing a clear, locally relevant vision for what the programme will achieve, as well as how this is going to be taken forward. Coupled with the limited resourcing of developments, this has put these authorities at a distance behind the preparedness of other authorities.

6.21 Consequently, those authorities that have made less (or the least) progress would warrant being offered further support and insight from the Welsh Government and other local authorities with more advanced delivery. Indeed, all authorities are keen to learn even more from the pathfinders and the mechanisms with which to provide such insight and information would be especially welcomed.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 The recommendations below are based on our analysis of the evaluation findings as highlighted in this final report. They identify key recommendations for the Welsh Government, local authorities and stakeholders, and the conduct of future evaluation work.

Recommendations for Welsh Government

- 7.2 The Welsh Government should identify ways in which existing programme management processes could be streamlined and simplified and be more aligned with one another in order to ensure a greater consistency of approaches across all 10 programmes. This will need to recognise and reflect the diverse nature of the programmes encompassed by the Flexible Funding approach and focus on opportunities for further alignment, notwithstanding key policy or fidelity issues that need to be maintained.
- 7.3 A review of the vision and ultimate objectives of the Flexible Funding approach should be instigated so as to enable a recasting of its vision, which provides a finalised version of what the approach is trying to achieve in the short, medium and long term. In undertaking this, consideration should be given to undertaking this through co-production approaches with local authorities and external stakeholders. HSG approaches to co-production could be reviewed in order to identify learning in respect of how this might best be taken forward.
- 7.4 The Welsh Government Funding Alignment Team should undertake a self-review of their own progress against the 7 Lenses of Transformation Maturity Matrix and use this to identify key further actions to take, and as a mechanism with which to monitor their ongoing progress.

- 7.5 Continued support for local authorities should be prioritised so as to build upon the ‘deeper’ conversations that Funding Alignment team staff have been able to have with local authority staff. This can be delivered through a systematic programme of updates and information, including sessions by pathfinders that give detailed insight into and consistent messaging upon the approaches being adopted in successful local Flexible Funding approaches. The updates should draw upon evaluation findings, quarterly reporting, and content from pathfinder meetings and emphasise the importance of a strong vision, design and plan, a formalised leadership and accountability approach, and a specific focus upon identifying structures for facilitating collaborative working, supported by a targeted programme of workforce development.
- 7.6 Continue, and widen, engagement with the external stakeholders (including representative bodies and national and regional VCS organisations), particularly those involved directly in CCG and HSG delivery, in order to facilitate further collaborative working opportunities.

Recommendations for local authorities and stakeholders

- 7.7 Local authorities should focus on reviewing and revising, where appropriate, the vision, plan and design of their local Flexible Funding approach so as to ensure that its local relevance is maintained. This should include a specific focus on ensuring that the flexible use of funding and delivery approach flexibility are encompassed by the vision.
- 7.8 Local authorities should undertake a self-review of their own progress against the 7 Lenses of Transformation Maturity Matrix and use this to identify key further actions to take, and as a mechanism with which to monitor their ongoing progress.
- 7.9 Collaborative models should be formalised and reviewed on an ongoing basis in order to identify opportunities for enhancement, whilst also extending the range of partners and stakeholders (internal and external) who are involved in their operation.
- 7.10 Local authorities should invest actively in the local development and review of a formal and consistent approach to pooling budgets. Piloting an initial approach in a service, or area of need, could be undertaken so as to test the process and practice and revise approaches where necessary.

7.11 Local authorities should actively seek opportunities to work with pathfinders and neighbouring authorities in order to identify opportunities to share insight and good practice.

Recommendations for the conduct of future evaluation work

7.12 The focus of any future evaluation work should consider:

- assessing the impact that local approach delivery may be having on medium- and long-term outcomes in local authorities and any benefits that may be arising from the delivery of recast EIPS across Wales
- reviewing the impacts and outcomes of further local rollout of the Flexible Funding approach, particularly the mechanisms and processes used to engage with regional stakeholder structures including PSBs, Regional Collaborative Committees, and Regional Programme Boards
- assessing whether service users have observed any impacts in their experiences of service delivery, and identifying the key features of these and the delivery components that are most likely to generate positive outcomes for them
- testing the efficacy and use of the Outcomes Framework for the Flexible Funding approach and identifying further revisions where appropriate.

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Annex A: Programme Theory of Change

Inputs	Activities →	Outputs →	Outcomes (Short Term)	Outcomes (Medium/Long Term) and Impacts
<p>Support from Funding Transition Team (Welsh Government 4–5 personnel), Funding derived from the 10 grants associated within the Flexible Funding programme</p>	<p><u>Programme-Wide</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of supplementary guidance on implementation of Flexible Funding programme to support delivery planning. • National pathfinder group established and facilitated to enable information and practice sharing. • Support from Welsh Government to implement the programme through pathfinder steering groups and support to non-pathfinder authorities. • Supported information sharing on process and practice between local authorities. • Commissioned evaluation of pathfinders to identify ongoing learning and best practice to help shape delivery through the life of programme delivery. • Administrative, monitoring and evaluation processes established. <p><u>Pathfinders</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of service provision. • Review of needs analysis work. • Redesign of service provision. • Review and redesign of governance structures. • Full use of funding flexibility. <p><u>Non-pathfinders</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of service provision and redesign. • Review of needs analysis work. • Use of funding flexibility in specified grants. 	<p><u>Programme-Wide</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery plans completed by local authorities. • Better information and practice sharing. • Enhanced support to pathfinder and non-pathfinder authorities. • Identification of ongoing learning to shape delivery. <p><u>Pathfinders</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews completed. • Number of service redesigns completed. • Revised governance structures set up. <p><u>Non-pathfinders</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews completed. 	<p><u>Programme-Wide</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced number of referrals to Welsh Government for fund transfers. • Reduced administrative overheads to service less grants. • Outcomes Framework developed to cover all of EIPS delivery. • Changed culture surrounding joint working, reduced silo working. <p><u>Pathfinders</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authority services redesigned to reflect local needs and respond to them. • User needs better addressed. • Number of service users reporting greater satisfaction with the support received rises. <p><u>Non-pathfinders</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service redesign. • Improved needs-based delivery. 	<p><u>Programme-Wide</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authorities take a more joined-up approach to identification of need, enabling them to identify gaps in provision and any potential duplication. • Needs analysis drives joint planning and commissioning of services across traditional departmental boundaries. • Better information sharing across services to aid planning and delivery. • Planning of services across the 10 constituent programmes is aligned with the single set of outcomes. • Administrative arrangements reviewed and reallocation opportunities for staff resources considered as a way of reducing the grant administration overheads. • Demands for support from statutory services decline. • Single referral and support service for vulnerable people. • Learning and sharing on success and failures are improved. • Estimated cost savings made. <p><u>Pathfinders</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved outcomes for service users. • LAs have greater financial flexibility. • Alternative commissioning approaches by LA. • Cost savings recorded. <p><u>Non-pathfinders</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved outcomes for service users. • LAs have greater financial flexibility. • Alternative commissioning approaches by LA. • Cost savings recorded.

Annex B: Outcomes Framework – Revised Flexible Funding Goals

Figure 5.2: Outcomes Framework – Flexible Funding Goal 1 (Revised Sept 2019)

National Wellbeing Goal 1: A Prosperous Wales									
National Indicators (that can be disaggregated to a local level):									
(16) Percentage of people in employment who are on permanent contracts (or on temporary contracts and not seeking permanent employment) and who earn more than 2/3 of the UK median wage.									
(19) Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation.									
Flexible Funding Goal 1: Participants are supported in finding, progressing, and staying in work.									
Underpinning objectives include:									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • young people being engaged in educational learning • people being engaged in employment and voluntary work • parents being supported in working • children not living in poverty. 									
Flexible Funding Approach Outcomes (SMART Performance Measures)									
Immediate (results) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people in need actively seeking employment* • Number of people in need participating in training/courses that help find employment* • Number of people in need engaged by and receiving employability support* 			Medium-Term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people in need gaining employment (minimum of 16 hours per week)* 			Long-Term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of supported households that are workless • Increased number of supported people with disabilities and protected characteristics in employment 			
Example Outputs									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C&P: No. of registered childcare spaces available • CFW+/LF/SP/SDF: No. of people in receipt of support in helping find employment 									
Example Activities									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C&P: Support given to the childcare and play sector to address gaps in provision • CFW+/LF/SP/SDF: Provision of support to help people find employment 									
Programmes Most Aligned with this Flexible Funding Goal									
PPE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SDF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HP		RSWE	
LF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CFW+	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	C&P	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FS	

Figure 5.3: Outcomes Framework – Flexible Funding Goal 3 (Revised Sept 2019)

National Wellbeing Goal 3: A Healthier Wales

National Indicators (that can be disaggregated to a local level):

- (1) Percentage of live single births with a birth weight below 2,500g.
- (2) Healthy life expectancy at birth, including the gap between the least and most deprived.
- (3) Percentage of adults who have fewer than two healthy lifestyle behaviours (not smoking, healthy weight, eat five fruit or vegetables a day, not drinking above guidelines, and meet the physical activity guidelines).
- (29) Mean mental well-being score for people*.

Flexible Funding Goal 3: Participant physical and mental health are enhanced, and they understand the choices and behaviours that will support that.

Underpinning objectives include:

- people in need being physically healthy
- people in need being mentally healthy (for adults and children).

Flexible Funding Approach Outcomes (SMART Performance Measures)

Immediate (results)	Medium-Term	Long-Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parents supported to improve their ability to support their child's health and well-being • Number of people in need who receive support for risky health behaviours associated with: Smoking, Alcohol, Drugs, etc.* • Number of people in need supported for mental health and well-being needs* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people in need reporting an improvement in their mental health and emotional well-being* • Number of people in need reporting a more active and healthier lifestyle* • Number of people in need reporting an improvement in healthy eating* • Number of parents completing an evidence-based parenting programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the number of hospital admissions for risky health behaviours associated with Smoking, Alcohol, and Drugs* • Reduction in the number of people in need requiring high-level mental health support

Example Outputs

- **FF/SP:** Number of people assessed as needing mental and emotional well-being support, physical activity levels, physical health*, and as having risky health behaviours associated with: Smoking, Alcohol, Drugs, etc.*
 - **C&P/FS:** No. of vulnerable children provided with childcare
 - **PPE:** Number of young people identified with substance misuse issues
 - **LF:** No. of people identified with health-related matters and referral to substance misuse support

Example Activities

- **FF:** Provision of parenting classes and referral to health services, pre- and post-birth
- **C&P/FF:** Provision of childcare/respite for families affected by disability/SEN
- **FS:** Provision of health visiting services, health advice and parenting classes
- **LF:** Provision of advice and support on health and related matters

Programmes Most Aligned with this Flexible Funding Goal

PPE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SDF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HP		RSWE	
LF		CFW+		C&P	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Figure 5.4: Outcomes Framework – Flexible Funding Goal 4 (Revised Sept 2019)

National Wellbeing Goal 4: A More Equal Wales

National Indicators (that can be disaggregated to a local level):

- (6) Measurement of development of young children.
- (7) Average capped 9-point score of pupils, including the gap between those who are eligible and are not eligible for free school meals.
- (8) Percentage of adults with qualifications at the different levels of the National Qualifications Framework.
- (24) Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/access the facilities and services they need.

Flexible Funding Goal 4: Participants are enabled to fulfil their potential, no matter their background.

Underpinning objectives include:

- children starting school ready to learn on par with their peers
- those furthest from the labour market being supported into employment
- children impacted by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), or at risk of being impacted by ACEs, not being disadvantaged.

Flexible Funding Approach Outcomes (SMART Performance Measures)

Immediate (results)	Medium-Term	Long-Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people in need enrolled on basic skills courses/training • Number of people in need supported in enrolling in further or higher education • Number of people in need enrolled in informal learning • Number of children with identified developmental needs including Speech and Language Development • Number of children in need supported with school attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people in need improving their basic skills* • Number of people in need gaining a nationally recognised qualification or accreditation* • Number of children who have improved their school attendance/childcare attendance • Number of parents with improved ability to support their child with their learning and developmental needs • Number of supported children reaching developmental milestones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people in need gaining a nationally recognised qualification or accreditation* • Proportion of supported households living in poverty relative to the UK median • Proportion of supported households with children living in poverty relative to the UK median

Example Outputs

- **C&P & FS:** Number of childcare places supported, created and sustained for low-income groups and children with additional needs
- **FS and FF:** No. of parents supported with own and child's health and well-being
- **PPE/LF/SP:** Number identified with basic skills issues prior to qualification deficits

Example Activities

- **C&P:** Programmes to support equality of access to registered childcare settings
- **FS&FF:** Provision of evidence-based parenting classes and support with child well-being
- **PPE/LF/SP:** Provision of programme of training courses and qualifications

Programmes Most Aligned with this Flexible Funding Goal

PPE	☑	SDF	☑	SP	☑	HP		RSWE	
LF	☑	CFW+	☑	C&P	☑	FF	☑	FS	☑

Figure 5.5: Outcomes Framework – Flexible Funding Goal 5a (Revised Sept 2019)

National Wellbeing Goal 5: A Wales of Cohesive Communities

National Indicators (that can be disaggregated to a local level):

(34) Number of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless per 10,000 households.

Flexible Funding Goal 5a: Participants are not homeless and live in suitable accommodation.

Underpinning objectives include:

- people not being homeless or at risk of being homeless
- young people living in a home that best supports them
- people in need being able to manage their accommodation.

Flexible Funding Approach Outcomes (SMART Performance Measures)

Immediate (results)	Medium-Term	Long-Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people who have been supported to prevent homelessness* • Number of young people supported to enable them to remain independently in their own home* • Number of rough sleepers who have been supported into accommodation • Number of people signposted to housing support services* • Number of people signposted to financial/debt advice services* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people who have accommodation and are able to manage it • Number of people who are not at imminent risk of homelessness • Number of people with improved financial literacy/capability* • Number of people whose financial situation has stabilised or improved* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of supported households that are homeless • Proportion of supported households living in temporary accommodation • Proportion of supported households in debt

Example Outputs

- **SP/HP:** Number engaged with housing support services and financial/debt advice services
- **FF:** Number receiving debt advice services

Example Activities

- **SP/LF/FF:** Provision of services to assess advice and service needs, including financial inclusion and independent living
- **HP:** Programme of support to assess needs and prevent homelessness
- **SDF:** Assessment of needs for YP to enable them to remain independent in own home

Programmes Most Aligned with this Flexible Funding Goal

PPE	☑	SDF	☑	SP	☑	HP	☑	RSWE	☑
LF		CFW+		C&P		FF	☑	FS	

Figure 5.6: Outcomes Framework – Flexible Funding Goal 5b (Revised Sept 2019)

National Wellbeing Goal 5: A Wales of Cohesive Communities

National Indicators (that can be disaggregated to a local level):

(25) Percentage of people feeling safe at home

(29) Mean mental well-being score for people

National Indicators associated with VAWDASV statutory duties — yet to be confirmed

Flexible Funding Goal 5b: Participants are in safe and healthy relationships.

Underpinning objectives include:

- people in need being able to manage their relationships
- people in need feeling safe
- people in need feeling part of their community
- people in need being resilient, capable and coping.

Flexible Funding Approach Outcomes (SMART Performance Measures)

Immediate (results)	Medium-Term	Long-Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parents accessing evidence-based parenting programmes • Number of children supported with challenging behaviour • Number of people supported by relationship management programmes • VAWDASV outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of supported people completing evidence-based parenting and relationship programmes • Number of supported families completing support programmes on family resilience and relationships • VAWDASV outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the number of domestic violence incidents reported by supported people • Reduction in the number of substance misuse cases amongst supported people • Number of children in need cases amongst supported families • Number of supported children in local authority care

Example Outputs

- **PPE:** Number referred for support with relationship issues
- **FF/FS:** Number referred to evidence-based parenting programmes
- **SP/HP:** Number referred to specialist advice and support services by type of service

Example Activities

- **PPE:** Programme assessment of YP and family support to identify any issues leading to offending behaviour
- **FF/FS:** Programme of assessment of need for an evidence-based parenting programme
- **SP/HP:** Assessment of need for specialist advice and support services, e.g. domestic abuse services and substance misuse

Programmes Most Aligned with this Flexible Funding Goal

PPE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SDF		SP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HP		RSWE	
LF		CFW+		C&P	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Figure 5.7: Outcomes Framework – Flexible Funding Goal 5c (Revised Sept 2019)

National Wellbeing Goal 5: A Wales of Cohesive Communities

National Indicators (that can be disaggregated to a local level):

(25) Percentage of people feeling safe at home, walking in the local area, and when travelling.

Flexible Funding Goal 5c: Participants (including young people) are not engaged in criminal activities or antisocial behaviour.

Underpinning objectives include:

- people in need being supported with their needs that might contribute to offending and antisocial behaviour
- people in need being diverted from criminal and antisocial behaviour
- people in need being diverted from reoffending, including the use of restorative interventions
- ex-offenders being supported in reintegrating and resettling at end of sentences.

Flexible Funding Approach Outcomes (SMART Performance Measures)

Immediate (results)	Medium-Term	Long-Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people engaged in the project who received a custodial sentence • Number of people supported by youth offending teams • Number of people supported by programme for behavioural issues • Number of parents accessing evidence-based parenting programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of supported people completing relationship and parenting courses • Number of supported people completing relationship and parenting courses • Number of supported children who have improved their school attendance/childcare attendance • Number of supported people demonstrating behavioural issues • Number of supported people engaging in antisocial behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of first-time entrants to the justice system in Wales • Reduce the rate of proven reoffending by people in Wales • Reduce the proportion of people who receive a conviction in court and are then sentenced to custody

Example Outputs

- **PPE:** Number of individuals supported
- **FF/FS:** Number referred to evidence-based parenting programmes
- **SP/HP:** Number referred to specialist offending advice and support services

Example Activities

- **PPE:** Programme of assessment of YP and family support needs to identify any issues leading to offending behaviour
- **FF/FS:** Provision of assessment of need for evidence-based parenting programme
- **SP/HP:** Programme of assessment of need for specialist advice and support services, e.g. domestic abuse services and substance misuse

Programmes Most Aligned with this Flexible Funding Goal

PPE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SDF		SP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HP		RSWE	
LF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CFW+		C&P		FF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	FS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Annex C: Interview Question Schedules

(a) Grant Leads – Welsh Government

1. Name of Interviewee:
2. Can you tell me your job title, please?
 - a. Can you give me an overview of your role and how it relates to the Flexible Funding programme?
3. Which of the following grants do you have responsibility for in your main work role?

Grant
Supporting People
Flying Start
Families First
Legacy Fund
Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People
Childcare and Play (formerly Out of School Childcare)
Homelessness Prevention
Rent Smart Wales Enforcement (formerly Independent Living)
St David's Day Fund
Communities for Work Plus (formerly the Employability Grant)
Overall Flexible Funding programme

The Flexible Funding programme – Progress

4. Can you briefly outline how you feel the Flexible Funding programme is progressing?
 - a. Can you identify any local authorities that are making particularly good progress, and any reasons for that?
 - b. Are there any local authorities that seem to be making less good progress, and any reasons for that?
5. In what way(s) do you think progress on the programme has been affected by the October 2018 decision to move to a two-grant approach for Flexible Funding?
6. Do you think this was a positive, or negative, approach for your grants, and can you please explain why you think that?
7. How well understood do you think the Flexible Funding programme is within Local Authorities?
8. How well understood do you think the Flexible Funding programme is within Welsh Government?
9. What role, if any, have local Public Services Boards (PSBs) played in the implementation of the Flexible Funding programme in relation to your grants?

10. What role, if any, has the voluntary and community sector played in the implementation of the Flexible Funding programme in relation to your grants?
11. Have authorities utilised flexibility around the use of funding allowed by the Flexible Funding programme to date? If yes, could you provide some examples?
12. What benefits have been seen from utilising the funding flexibility allowed by the programme?
13. What constraints have been seen from utilising the funding flexibility allowed by the programme?
14. Has implementation of the Flexible Funding programme had any negative impacts/consequences in relation to your grants?
 - a. Is there any way in which these might be addressed at all?
15. What changes, if any, have you seen being made to delivery approaches for early intervention and prevention services as a result of the Flexible Funding programme?
 - a. If no changes have been made, are there any specific reasons for this?
 - b. If there have been changes, what factors seem to have enabled these changes to be made?
16. What would you say have been the most significant challenges/barriers to progress around Flexible Funding in relation to your grants?

Outcomes

17. In relation to the grants that you have responsibility for, what have been the most significant outcomes in local authorities that the Flexible Funding programme has achieved so far, if any?
 - a. If there have been no outcomes, are there any particular reasons for this?
18. Of those indicated above, what would you say is the most significant outcome in local authorities in relation to your grants, and why?

Key Lessons Learnt

19. What aspects of the Flexible Funding programme have:

- a. Worked well so far?
- b. Worked less well so far?

20. Based on your experience, what areas would you say are critical for the successful implementation of the Flexible Funding programme in going forward?

21. Are there any other comments about the Flexible Funding programme that you wanted to make?

(b) Flexible Funding/Grant Leads – Local Authorities

1. Which of the following grants do you have responsibility for in your main work role? *(Please tick all that apply)*

Grant	Have Responsibility For
Supporting People	
Flying Start	
Families First	
Legacy Fund	
Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People	
Childcare and Play (formerly Out of School Childcare)	
Homelessness Prevention	
Rent Smart Wales Enforcement (formerly Independent Living)	
St David's Day Fund	
Communities for Work Plus (formerly the Employability Grant)	
Overall Flexible Funding programme	

2. Can you tell me your job title, please?

- a. Can you give me an overview of your role and how it relates to the Flexible Funding programme?

The Flexible Funding programme – Progress

3. Can you briefly outline how the Flexible Funding programme is progressing in your authority?
4. In what way(s) has progress on the programme been affected by the October 2018 decision to move to a two-grant approach for Flexible Funding? [This involved identifying two grants: a Children and Communities Grant and a Housing Support Grant]
5. Do you think this was a positive, or negative, approach for your local authority and can you please explain why you think that?
6. How well understood do you think the Flexible Funding programme is:
 - a. Within service areas covered by the 10 grants included in the programme?
 - b. More widely across the authority in other service areas?
7. What role, if any, has/is your local Public Services Board (PSB) played/playing in the implementation of the Flexible Funding programme in your authority?
8. What role, if any, has/is your local voluntary and community sector played/playing in the implementation of the Flexible Funding programme in your authority?
9. How has your authority utilised the flexibility around the use of funding allowed by the Flexible Funding programme to date? Could you provide some examples of how this has occurred?
10. What benefits has your authority seen from utilising the funding flexibility allowed by the programme?
11. What constraints has your authority seen from utilising the funding flexibility allowed by the programme?
12. Has implementation of the Flexible Funding programme had any negative impacts/consequences in your authority area?
 - a. Are there any ways of addressing these at all?
13. What changes, if any, have you made to delivery approaches for early intervention and prevention services as a result of the Flexible Funding programme?
 - a. If no changes have been made, are there any specific reasons for this?
 - b. If there have been changes, what factors seem to have enabled these changes to be made?

Project Implementation and Governance

We want to know a little more about how key components of the Flexible Funding programme are being delivered in your authority. Thinking about the Grant/Grants/Programme that you are responsible for:

Vision and Plan

14. Does your authority have a clear vision and/or plan for how the Flexible Funding programme is going to be implemented/transform delivery in this authority?
- Can you provide any examples of how the vision and/or plan has shaped delivery of the Flexible Funding programme in this authority?

Leadership and Accountability

15. Does your authority have a group/committee that oversees the implementation of the Flexible Funding programme in this authority?
- Can you provide any examples of how the group/committee has shaped delivery of the Flexible Funding programme in this authority?

Collaboration

16. What forms of collaborative working have been instigated by the Flexible Funding programme:
- Within your local authority?
 - With external partners?
17. Are there any ways in which collaborative working could be further enhanced by the Flexible Funding programme in your authority?

People/Working Practices

18. Has the Flexible Funding programme changed working practices or the working culture yet in the way in which your local authority is delivering services?
- Can you provide any examples of how working culture/practices have changed as a result of the Flexible Funding programme in this authority?

Impacts on Service Users

19. Has the Flexible Funding programme had any impacts on service users so far?
- Can you provide any examples of any specific impacts on service users?
 - If yes, we are interested in speaking to some service users about their experiences arising from the Flexible Funding programme. Do you think that we might be able to make arrangements to speak to some individuals and how would we take this forward?
20. What impacts do you think that service users might see in the future as a result of the Flexible Funding programme in your authority?
- In what timescale would you expect these to occur for service users?

21. What have been the most significant challenges/barriers to progress around Flexible Funding in your local authority area?

22. How are these challenges/barriers being addressed?

Outcomes

23. For your local authority area, what have been the most significant outcomes that the Flexible Funding programme has achieved for the grants that you are responsible for so far, if any?

24. Of these, what would you say is the most significant outcome for this authority, and why?

25. Are there any grants/programmes that are not working together in your local authority, and what are the reasons for this?

Key Lessons Learnt

26. What aspects of the Flexible Funding programme have:

- a. Worked well so far?
- b. Worked less well so far?

27. Based on your experience, what areas would you say are critical for the successful implementation of the Flexible Funding programme in going forward?

28. Based on the questions that you have answered for us today, do you think that there is anyone else in your local authority, perhaps linked to the Children and Communities Grant or Housing Support Grant, that we should speak to about the Flexible Funding programme?

Name and Job Role:

Email:

Telephone:

29. Are there any other comments about the Flexible Funding programme that you would like to make?

(c) Stakeholders/Partners

1. Can you tell me your job title, please?
 - a. Can you give me an overview of your role and how it relates to the Flexible Funding programme?

The Flexible Funding programme – Progress

2. Can you briefly outline how you feel the Flexible Funding programme is progressing?
 - a. Can you identify any examples of particularly good progress and any reasons for that?
 - b. Are there any examples of less good progress and any reasons for that?
3. In what way(s) do you think progress on the programme has been affected by the October 2018 decision to move to a two-grant approach for Flexible Funding?
4. Do you think that this was a positive, or negative, change/approach for the overall programme and can you please explain why you think that?
5. How well understood do you think the Flexible Funding programme is within local authorities?
6. How well understood do you think the Flexible Funding programme is within Welsh Government?
7. What role, if any, have local Public Services Boards (PSBs) played in the implementation of the Flexible Funding programme?
8. What role, if any, has the voluntary and community sector played in the implementation of the Flexible Funding programme?
9. How have you seen authorities utilise the flexibility around the use of funding allowed by the Flexible Funding programme to date? Could you provide some examples?
10. What benefits have you seen arise from the funding flexibility allowed by the programme?
11. What constraints have you seen arise from the funding flexibility allowed by the programme?
12. Has implementation of the Flexible Funding programme had any negative impacts/consequences that you are aware of?
 - a. Is there any way of addressing these at all?

13. What changes, if any, have you seen being made to delivery approaches for early intervention and prevention services as a result of the Flexible Funding programme?
- If no changes have been made, are there any specific reasons for this?
 - If there have been changes, what factors seem to have enabled these changes to be made?
14. What would you say have been the most significant challenges/barriers to progress around Flexible Funding in relation to the grants that you are involved with?
- How have you seen these challenges/barriers being addressed?

Outcomes

15. What have been the most significant outcomes that the Flexible Funding programme has achieved so far in local authorities, if any?
- If there have been no outcomes, are there any particular reasons for this?
16. Of those indicated above, what would you say are the most significant outcomes, and why?

Key Lessons Learnt

17. What aspects of the Flexible Funding programme have:
- Worked well so far?
 - Worked less well so far?
18. Based on your experience, what areas would you say are critical for the successful implementation of the Flexible Funding programme in going forward?
19. Are there any other comments about the Flexible Funding programme that you would like to make?

Annex D: Updated Case Studies on Programme Progress

Flexible Funding approach Case Study – Conwy



Background

Conwy has used the Flexible Funding approach as an opportunity to make better use of the 10 programmes that it includes, seeking better coordination between them in order to deliver more support through EIPS. Funding pressures remain significant. In order to make the best use of resources the focus has been placed upon responding to need, rather than historically prescribed postcode-led areas, so as to ensure equity of support.

A key focus in the authority is concerned with moving to an approach that shapes services in order to meet the needs of local people more readily, rather than the contrary, i.e. people being asked to fit the requirements of particular grants. This aligns with a wider transformational agenda for Conwy County Borough Council.

Interesting Features of Approach

Conwy has focused on an approach that seeks to develop localised delivery arrangements. The authority area was divided into five areas. The work, in respect of identifying the areas, was developed through detailed consideration of the boundaries that exist in the county, such as school catchment, health boundaries, and town and community council structures. By overlaying these, five natural boundaries developed that were agreed upon with partners via the Public Services Board.

Initial work was focused on establishing an early intervention and prevention service for families that brought together the work of Families First and Flying Start, following extensive consultation with families. The initiation of Flexible Funding provided the opportunity to move forward with this work, pooling budgets so as to be able to meet the same outcomes in a more efficient way. In the context of delivery, for example, a Parenting Officer, based within the Flying Start delivery team, has been enabled to work closely with the Youth Justice Service in a more flexible way. This joint work has ensured benefit through collaborating in early intervention terms, supporting the newly established Family Support teams and working more closely with Education and Statutory Social Care Services.

Programme Implementation Learning

The agenda was one that Conwy was already seeking to drive forward. Flexible Funding has been used as an enabler to further support this change. Discussions initiated by the drive to implement the Flexible Funding approach in Conwy have raised awareness between all grant leads as to what each of the programmes is delivering. In turn, this has led to an improved understanding of where links/integration can occur. Following from this, improved awareness work has been undertaken, reviewing themes within crosscutting service provision and seeking opportunities for new, more efficient ways of working across the council.

The core of the implementation approach is focused on a detailed programme management model which is well established in the authority. Five different Heads of Service, who lead the 10 programmes within Flexible Funding, have been convened as part of the authority's

programme approach and a delivery group has been established. The delivery group is composed of the lead officers. This work is overseen by the programme board, which includes members and partner organisations. The establishment of the CCG and the HSG led to the programme board being reviewed.

The work that the group is taking forward is overseen by a Scrutiny committee. The PSB was involved in the establishment of the five local areas, but otherwise has had a minimal role in the rollout of this approach, though a greater role would be welcomed.

Over the past year, all of the programmes have been organised into five different work streams:

- Research and assessment of need
- Programme and project activity
- Commissioning and partnership working
- Programme management, finance and administration
- Co-production

Conwy has been divided into five local areas, which has also been adopted by the local health board and the community resource teams. They have also appointed an information analyst to create local area profiles compiling data from a wide range of sources and have established local area forums to consider the priorities in all localities.

Impacts and Outcomes

The group are working together on a day-to-day basis, and implementation is well underway. There are some emerging impacts and outcomes already, including the following:

- Concerns surrounding budgets were apparent initially, but these are being overcome by the consistent approach to joined-up working facilitated by the coordinated programme management approach. This provides a clear line of sight as to how review activities and service delivery redesign fit together.
 - Attitudes towards the programme are beginning to change as people are brought together to report jointly on the practice, process and progress.
 - The review of services is now undertaken in a much more systematic way so that the review of service provision is evidence-based and concerned with delivery experience; it is anticipated that this work will extend to 2022.
 - Progress is being made in strategic planning, although there is much work to undertake following the findings of the reviews that are already underway.
 - The greatest use of Flexible Funding has been in the development of a Family Centre, which is demonstrating some innovative practice.
 - Commissioning has moved forward quite far, with there being a greater understanding and transparency of what is being commissioned across the 10 grants.
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Key Lessons Learnt

- The value of a coordinated programme management approach that applies to grants and provides a clear line of sight for review and any resulting delivery challenges has driven this work, although this has been complicated by the move to a two-grant solution.
- Flexible Funding does enable/facilitate joint working sooner than might otherwise have been possible, and, coupled with the programme management approach, has widened the scale of the work that has been possible across the five Heads of Service. Greater flexibility would be welcomed.
- Those involved have felt part of a wider team as a member of the pathfinder group, but would value more engagement with other members and opportunities to share practice and experience on a more regular basis, as things change so quickly.
- These approaches do take time and enough time must be allowed so as to facilitate contact between different grant teams in order to build trust and foster integrated working.

Recommendations for EIPS Consideration

- There is value in the approach adopted in Conwy, but pathfinders need time to see through to fruition the results of the work being undertaken now. A commitment to, and reinforcement of, the aims and ambitions of Flexible Funding and a move to EIPS would be welcomed, and the authority is keen to move to a reporting approach across both the CCG and the HSG, rather than reporting across all 10 programmes.
 - Any outcome and monitoring approaches need to avoid being too prescriptive; otherwise they will not be flexible enough to reflect the full circumstances and needs of all vulnerable people in the local authority area. This will help to reduce the chance of any 'micromanagement' of the programme by the Welsh Government; authorities want to have the autonomy with which to make the key decisions on how they will deliver the support, perhaps varying it in different geographical areas if needs assessments suggest that such is an appropriate way forward.
 - The local PSB has proven difficult to engage with and there is scope for the Welsh Government to help broker an improved relationship with them for the authority.
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Background

Newport has been working on the concept of Neighbourhood Hubs since 2016 and Flexible Funding has been utilised as a vehicle for facilitating the ongoing development of these and supporting their rollout across the authority area. This runs alongside a focus on developing a much more outcome-focused approach, which seeks to move away from support approaches that were too funding-focused to those which, through an alignment of funding, are better able to support clients more quickly and appropriately. The vision for delivery in Newport lies in making more effective use of funding in order to ensure that it meets local needs by aligning programmes and identifying new ways of working and the potential for the redesign of services, though the focus in the last 12 months has been upon recasting this vision so as to engage a wider number of programme teams in delivery.

Interesting Features of Approach

The authority has been advancing a Neighbourhood Hub model, with developments and funding already being committed to the first one to open in late 2019. Insight is provided into infrastructural developments to support colocation and joint working, as well as a different approach to using local authorities' estate of offices. The developmental approach, which includes a specific emphasis on 'smart working', is a good demonstration of how cultural change is being driven forward and could offer valuable insight into the scale of thought and implementation required for delivery.

The approach has been particularly focused on rollout through the CCG to initiate early delivery. The model will work to develop relationships with the HSG in order to improve the integration of services further once systems and processes are established. Since the two-grant announcement they have sought to focus upon establishing joint working within the programmes in each of the two grants, as well as concentrating on developing 'Newport's' approach to these.

Programme Implementation Learning

An external consultant (Wavehill Ltd) undertook a review of customer experiences, corporate/governance structures, management structures, service commissioning, and service duplication. This built upon existing reviews of grants so as to identify further details of the customer user experiences and an appraisal of the options that might then be open to Newport.

The review identified a particular need to recast the local vision for Flexible Funding and co-produce a specific design and delivery approach across programme staff in order to help move delivery forward, as it had stalled.

Further ongoing key components of work continue, including:

- designing a single monitoring system for the authority and the understanding that the requirements of any future IT system will be critical to successful rollout
- implementing a customer-first approach, delivered through a range of neighbourhood hubs, that has needed to be reset and will be fully formalised once work on the vision is concluded
- reviewing and identifying administrative and management efficiencies
- reviewing delivery impacts on partners, the third sector, and regional working.

The authority is particularly focused on how it can alter the use of its working environment (council offices and other buildings) to accommodate staff and customers working alongside one another. However, this has been set back by limited communication amongst staff of the aims of the new approaches and was held up. The review work undertaken by Wavehill has identified ways in which these communication challenges will be addressed.

All programmes are aligned in departments related to the CCG and HSG approaches. This has particularly enhanced opportunities for joint working, which has been further developed between Flying Start and Families First and CFW+ working more closely with other employability programmes.

However, progress continues to be slower than expected in Newport, which is due to a number of factors:

- The contrasting vision, clarity and acceptance across programmes have contributed directly to the slow delivery progress that the Flexible Funding approach has made in Newport; a recasting of it and a revised strategic framework with which to support delivery are needed. This is now being addressed but will need robust approaches to dissemination in order to ensure the full impact.
- However, there is a strong acceptance of the principles of the programme enabling improved service delivery and enhanced integration of services, as advocated by Newport's local strategic priorities and those of the Welsh Government. Consequently, programmes share many similar values and wishes regarding how EIPS in Newport should be delivered in the future.
- There is a need to develop stronger communication across the workforce, as well as working to gain the wider engagement of operational managers so that any recast vision and strategy can directly influence, or begin to influence, the services that users receive through Early Intervention and Prevention delivery.

Impacts and Outcomes

Although progress in the development of the platform to deliver services is in advanced development, the progress of changes to the alignment of the grants since April 2018 has been limited thus far; however, the major review is complete and a workshop across programmes is being arranged so as to identify the next phases of work.

Significant cultural change is going to be required, which is likely to be very different for different levels of staff within the authority. Key to future delivery is the rollout of a Community Hub model of delivery. Cabinet approval for this model was received in July 2018, with the first Hub refurbishment commencing in mid-2019. These proposals have required investment of up to £9 million, which is to be drawn from the projected savings arising from the improved alignment and integration of services.

A need for a further three-month review has been identified that will identify changes required against each of the grants so as to facilitate moves to deliver against a single set of outcomes across the authority.

Key Lessons Learnt

- Change has proven to be particularly challenging and time needs to be spent with them to explain the purpose and positive outcomes that are likely to arise from the changes that the authority is going to make.
- The development of a shared agenda across the approach has been critical in achieving the moves forward thus far. This has meant that grants understand not only the wider picture but also where they are able to contribute. This also enables these staff to join the journey upon which the authority wants to embark.
- Creative use of existing premises can be especially valuable, but investment is needed in order to effect change, especially involving hard infrastructure such as buildings or supporting IT systems.
- Establishment of a co-produced clear vision is critical in order to help enrol and engage staff in helping to drive the agenda forward, particularly those at senior management level.
- Focus in this kind of work does help to develop a more strategic approach to all prevention work, because it makes everyone more aware of the shared agendas that are at play here, irrespective of the title of the programmes involved.

Recommendations for EIPS Consideration

- For many staff a move to a future single EIPS fund will be a major cultural change. Some are very married to grants and consider these to be the main focus of their 'identity' at work. The single-fund proposal seeks to challenge these and will need to be managed in order to keep staff on board. Clear and regular communication of the aims and ambitions of the fund will be needed, which may need to be repeated many times so as to reiterate to staff that the agenda is one of better supporting vulnerable groups.
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Flexible Funding approach Case Study – Rhondda Cynon Taf



Background

RCT have been working on a Resilient Families Programme since 2016/17 and are using the Flexible Funding approach to drive this agenda forward. The Resilient Families Programme enables the Council to direct and hold to account the collective efforts of public, private and voluntary sector partners in the delivery of effective services to families in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Resilient Families Service delivers an enhanced and fully integrated team around family arrangements as part of the wider local programme, the philosophy of which lies in removing barriers so as to improve family resilience. This focus on early intervention and prevention is part of a wider transformational agenda being taken forward by the council.

Interesting Features of Approach

RCT were actively seeking to pool resources across the authority prior to the development of the Flexible Funding approach, and early intervention and prevention constitute one of the authority's corporate transformational themes. The Resilient Families Service is used as the single approach across the authority area in delivering support to vulnerable families, whether through the council's own work or that undertaken by other partners and stakeholders across the private and voluntary sectors. It has led to the reconfiguring of staff teams to work under the same management structure, as well as the use of an overarching data system to monitor shared outcomes across programmes.

The 10 grants covered by the programme have a relatively long history of collaborating and the establishment of these joint arrangements predates the rollout of the Flexible Funding approach in the authority. Moreover, it has a geographical focus, with the wider transformational agenda being used to establish a network of community zones across the authority area that will seek to co-locate services to support vulnerable individuals and families. RCT is adopting the Flexible Funding approach as a key vehicle through which to deliver this integration agenda. One key philosophy behind the approach lies in focusing on service user experience, and initial reviews have shown the sheer complexity of the support network that users have had to navigate previously in order to access support, and that many service users have become lost during the transition between programmes/grants. Through integration, the aim in the authority is to simplify the system, making the user 'journey' easier to navigate via a single point of access to a range of different support services, in order to ensure that users receive the right support at the right time.

This has been brought together in a Resilient Families Service, with delivery having started in April 2019. It represents a totally different way of working — providers are much more part of conversations surrounding service delivery.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is - as part of an extensive co-construction programme (Early Years Integration System programme) with Cwm Taf Public Service Board - exploring options for how early years services may be reconfigured locally, learning from what works in existing programmes such as the Healthy Child Wales Programme, Flying Start and Families First.

Local authority pathfinders, such as RCT, are looking at piloting/testing different approaches to service delivery as a means of exploring what it will take to create a more joined-up, responsive early years system which meets the needs of children and their families. The Welsh Government is supporting partners along this journey and, where possible, will explore opportunities to remove, reduce or rationalise policies, processes and grant requirements which may be causing blockages to integration or a better join-up. Any changes would need to be formally agreed upon and monitored.

Programme Implementation Learning

Implementation began in July 2018 after proposals for moving the Flexible Funding approach were signed off by the Public Services Board (PSB). Key to this sign-off was the Board recognising not only that approaches needed to reflect local differences between Merthyr Tydfil and RCT (the PSB is a joint board covering both authority areas) but also that a set of general principles were being agreed upon according to which delivery in RCT will now move forward. By July 2019, much of the reconfiguration was in place and the authority was ready to move to the delivery phase.

Implementation of the integrated delivery model for early intervention and prevention is focused on the vision of providing the right support at the right time to the right people, and will involve:

- inclusive target groups to meet individual, family and community needs, so as to facilitate the closer alignment of services and deliver the current benefits of existing individual programmes as a bare minimum
- clear identification of the need for early intervention and prevention support
- a clear pathway of support, as part of a continuum that provides the right support to the right people at the right time, via universal access to a single 'front door'
- a common set of operational delivery principles and a focus on joined-up working, which ensures support access to the right individuals at the right time and in the right locations, with services such as parenting being available universally
- the development of an effective single-outcomes framework.

The catalyst for this integrated model has been the Resilient Families Service (operational since April 2019), which not only is multi-funded across grants but includes core local authority funding, and that the Flexible Funding approach will enable delivery, not restricted by eligibility criteria, through a single point of access for a simplified referral process.

The establishment and early proposed operation of the Resilient Families Services shows that if risks are taken and budgets are pooled effectively so as to be used flexibly, transformation can occur, and the early data shows that service users were benefitting from improved access to support, which had improved their resilience.

Impacts and Outcomes

With implementation signed off in July 2018, and reconfiguration in place by July 2019, impacts and outcomes have been limited. However, it has been noted that much greater collaboration between grant-funded activities on the ground continues, and that referrals are being organised more strategically through a single point of access. Furthermore, there is a much greater focus on the positive impact that integrated delivery has on outcomes for service users, rather than on the barriers created by the eligibility criteria of different grants.

Teams involved with Substance Misuse and Domestic Violence have self-elected to be part of Flexible Funding discussions so as to explore how they might best be sequenced into the continuum of support on offer and whether there is scope to mainstream some of this support.

Key Lessons Learnt

- The link to the wider transformational agenda in the authority, led by Cabinet Members and Senior Officers, has been particularly helpful in bringing people together to discuss integration. Moreover, this has been supported by a strong shared vision of what the Flexible Funding approach was seeking to deliver.
- Getting leads and delivery staff 'in a room' to scope out service delivery from the bottom up is critical. This has clarified that the 'journey' upon which some service users were embarking through different grants and support was very complex and included clear areas of conflict or a mismatch to need. This set of perspectives have been very important in persuading staff to engage with the work and the changes that are to be implemented. The fact that some users have been lost to services, because of complex transition or delivery arrangements, has focused minds. Programmes are realising that they are not supporting people as they thought they were.
- This, though, is an ongoing process; as the understanding of delivery extends, the delivery responses need to be reframed from the bottom up so that individuals are not left behind by the new/revised processes/delivery.
- Development of the Resilient Families Service has taken 2–3 years of research and testing; a full understanding of service delivery needs and opportunities for integration takes time and a continuing commitment to the agenda will ensure that the identified opportunities can be worked up properly.
- One particular advantage that has resulted is that planning approaches now take place on a much larger scale than before, involving a much wider range of programmes involved in the Flexible Funding approach.
- Development of a delivery model that is based on the experience of the service user is critical if you are to facilitate a transformative change; they have the best perspectives on the changes needed.

Recommendations for EIPS Consideration

- A bottom-up, service-needs, user-based experience is critical not only in understanding the support requirements of vulnerable groups, but also in understanding the complexity of the journey that those individuals often currently experience. For success, EIPS needs a systematic, structured approach to needs analysis and subsequent service delivery.
- Active working between CCG and HSG leads helps to bring these grants together, and has meant that in this authority area, joint working has cut across any potential separation that may have arisen from the move to the two-grant approach.