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WELSH GOVERNMENT

REVISED GUIDANCE NOTE FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIPS ON
THE USE OF THE SAFER COMMUNITIES FUND 2012-13

Introduction

It should be noted that this is transitional guidance for 2012-13 only. In future the
fund will be aligned with the proposals that come out of the consultation on the
Prevention of Youth Offending (Wales) Bill and the move to the Welsh
Governments Footprint for Public Service Collaboration in April 2013.

Prevention of Youth Offending (Wales) Bill

The youth justice system is one of the few key areas of policy relating to children
and young people which is not devolved in Wales, however responsibility for
policies in relation to education, substance misuse, health, and social services and
the needs of looked after children are all devolved to Welsh Ministers. Social,
environmental and parenting factors play an integral role in the prevention of
children and young people’s offending and their re-habilitation. Many of the
identified factors which correlate with increased likelihood of children and young
people becoming involved in criminal or anti social behaviour relate to areas of
policy for which responsibility is devolved. These include:

- Substance misuse
- Poor parenting, and/or disrupted family lifestyle
- Child abuse/neglect, and/or domestic abuse
- Being in local authority care
- Mental health issues
- Poor school attendance/engagement, and low
- Educational attainment
- Children and young people not in education, employment or training
- Social deprivation and poor housing

The Programme for Government includes a commitment to consult on a
Prevention of Youth Offending (Wales) Bill. The aims of the proposals are to
strengthen the accountability of all partners for children and young people in the
youth justice system so they can better access a range of welfare, educational and
other services. A consultation will take place in the summer of 2012. The outcome
of this consultation will determine the Welsh Government’s approach in taking any
changes forward, which will also include an update of the All Wales Youth
Offending Strategy.

Welsh Government’s Footprint for Public Service Collaboration

The Programme for Government also sets out the Government’s commitments to
achieve, with its partners, the delivery of effective and efficient public services that
meet the needs of the people of Wales.
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The Welsh Government has a practical programme of action which supports the delivery of improved services against a backdrop of continuing financial challenges. Much of the evidence on what works in improving services supports increased collaboration to deliver better services regionally or nationally. To provide clarity around how public services should collaborate, the Minister for Local Government and Communities has set out a geographical footprint for regional collaborative activity common across public services aligning local authority’s regional boundaries with other public services such as health and police.

In the future the Safer Communities Fund will be much more closely aligned with the Welsh Governments Footprint for Public Service Collaboration. During 2012-2013 officials from the Youth Justice Team in the Community Safety Division will be formulating plans on how this will work across Wales and will be contacting colleagues with a view to taking this forward.

Safer Communities Fund

The Safer Communities Fund (SCF) was set up to support the implementation of the principles of the All Wales Youth Offending Strategy (AWYOS), published jointly by the Assembly Government and the Youth Justice Board (YJB) in July 2004.

During 2012-2013 The Welsh Government will continue to distribute £4.5m between the 22 Welsh CSPs in 2012-13, for projects aimed at the reduction and prevention of youth crime and disorder and that support the following strategic objectives:

- Reduce the number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system in Wales;
- Reduce the rate of proven reoffending by young people in Wales;
- Reduce the proportion of young people who receive a conviction in court then being sentenced to custody.

Action should be taken forward locally to identify children and young people at risk of offending and to provide appropriate programmes to re-engage and divert these children and young people, aged 8–18, away from offending behaviour.

Criteria for Use of Funding

The focus of Partnerships must be on projects relevant to the prevention and reduction of youth crime, that deliver collaborative outcomes that meet national and local priorities across a broad range of associated priority areas such as child poverty, mental health, domestic abuse and substance misuse.

It should be stressed however that these projects should be subject to consultation with the Children and Young People’s Partnership and they must be agreed by the
local Youth Offending Team (YOT) partnership and should complement local Families First plans.

Eligible projects will include any initiative that allows young people in or at risk of entering the youth justice system to progress and fulfil their potential. Such projects should also relate to the six priorities set out in the AWYOS and Delivery Plan:

1. Prevention:

In our Strategic Guidance for Prevention in Wales\(^1\), the Welsh Government, with the YJB made clear its endorsement of multi-agency targeted youth crime prevention as the most effective way to reduce first time entrants to the youth justice system. Consequently, the SCF can be used to establish or maintain:

a. Projects aimed at diverting children and young people who have committed a first offence/less serious offence away from crime and anti-social behaviour and into mainstream services.

b. Projects that create an environment that enables restorative alternatives to police charging to be considered for all first time/less serious offences.

c. Programmes that add capacity for Families First Support Teams to integrate with youth crime prevention programmes.

2. Support in the Youth Justice System

a. Projects to offer non statutory resettlement interventions for those leaving community and custodial sentences.

b. Programmes to add capacity to non statutory parenting and family interventions.

c. Support and mentoring to young people on community or custodial sentences delivered by volunteers

3. Young Peoples engagement and understanding

a. Projects to embed participation and consultation with children and young people within the youth justice system, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

4. Access to services

a. Part funding\(^2\) to projects and initiatives aimed at helping young people access services while in custody and in the community that help them engage or re-engage with mainstream services, such as education, training and employment, housing, health and social services.

The SCF should not be used to fund services that should be provided by mainstream services to whole populations of children and young people.

\(^1\) [http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/youthcrimepreventionguidance/?lang=en](http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/youthcrimepreventionguidance/?lang=en)

\(^2\) Evidence of who else is funding this work will be required for projects to be approved.
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There may be a small amount of additional funding available for projects that are delivered in collaboration on a regional basis in preparation for the move to the regional footprint.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Assurance

During 2012-13, CSD will continue to make the on-line IT Funding System available to monitor the progress of the scheme in each CSP. The Community Safety Division (CSD) will require Partnerships to fully utilise the Funding Tool with regard to completing all relevant fields to an appropriate standard, specifically the inclusion of appropriate targets and milestones before any funds are assigned to a project.

Partnerships are required to put in place measures to monitor and evaluate the interventions carried out in their area, the objective being to ensure that the grant is being spent as the Partnership intended, in line with the criteria and in a timely manner. Monitoring progress of projects should also provide Partnerships with a better insight into the extent of delivery and whether the desired outcomes have been achieved.

All CSPs will be required to undertake an end of year assessment of partnership activity at a strategic and operational level providing evidence, qualitative and/or quantitative, with regard to performance. This assessment together with any supporting documentation will be subsequently evaluated, a report compiled and feedback given which could include personal visits being made by officials from CSD and/or the YJB.

Next Steps

Partnerships are asked to enter their detailed spending plans in respect of 2012-13 onto the IT Funding System before 30th June 2012. The plans should evidence 100% of the overall allocation. No new projects will be approved after 5th December 2012 and any variance between existing projects must be submitted on or before 31st December 2012.

CSP's wishing to consider regional collaboration projects should contact the WG directly with their spending plans.

Partnerships must align their proposals to quantifiable targets, recognising the priority needs of the area and explaining how the aforementioned proposals will contribute to the criteria for the grant.

Whilst there is no requirement for CSPs to provide capital schemes/projects, details of any capital expenditure will need to be outlined within the proposals.

The Welsh Government requires all payment claims against particular projects to be entered and approved on the IT system, before hard copies are printed off, signed and returned to the Welsh Government office at Merthyr Tydfil. Full address and contact details are provided in the allocation letter.
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Following normal procedure, the funding will be passed to the local authority as treasurer for each Partnership. The full conditions of grant relating to this Fund set out the basic requirements on the local authority in terms of audit and accountability, and the conditions on which the money is assigned. CSPs will receive the funding 6 monthly in arrears based on timely progress reports and claims evidencing spend.

Claims will be paid 6 monthly in arrears must be submitted in chronological order.

CSPs are reminded that late submission could result in delayed payments and must provide a reason if claims are delayed or not being submitted.

When satisfactory plans have been considered, the CSP will be notified of the decision. The plan should then be printed off and signed. In order to demonstrate full participation by relevant agencies, it is necessary for the hard copy of the plan to be signed by the Chair of the CSP; the Chair of the YOT Management Board and the Chair of the Children and Young People’s Partnership.

Standard Welsh Government terms and conditions of grant will apply, including requirements regarding the audit, certification and submission of online annual assessments. Partnerships will be asked to sign up to these Terms and Conditions when their proposals for expenditure in 2012-13 are approved.

Further information about this guidance note can be obtained from:

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