

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr Bridgend County Borough Council



Swyddfeydd Dinesig, Stryd yr Angel, Pen-y-bont, CF31 4WB / Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB

Prif Weithredwr (Cyllid) Chief Executive (Finance)

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line: (01656) 643302

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Gill Lewis

Mr Jon Rae
Director of Resources
WLGA
Local Government House
Drake Walk
Cardiff
CF10 4LG

Ein cyf / Our ref:
Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad / Date: 3rd July 2018

Dear Jon

The Funding Settlement for Social Care for Prisoners in Wales in the Secure Estate

As you are aware the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 came into effect on 6th April 2016; and accordingly changed local authorities' responsibilities for people in a secure estate. Since April 2016, we are responsible for addressing and meeting the care and support needs of all adults and children in the secure estate not just upon release but while they are in custody. This has been a significant change and has brought additional responsibility for local authorities that have prisons within their boundaries, because the Act applies equally to those in the secure estate as it does for those individuals in the community. However experience of delivering services to the secure estate has indicated that the delivery of care services are substantially higher within the secure estate than they are in the community. It is in this context I would ask you to reconsider the method used to distribute the funds for social care for prisoners across the 22 local authorities in Wales, to ensure it is targeted to local authorities that have long stay prisons within their boundaries.

Bridgend County Borough has, within its boundary, HMP and YOI Parc, which is a Category B Prison with capacity for 2000 male prisoners; the current population is 1779. People serving long and life sentences are resident within the prison, as are 'vulnerable' prisoners who require being isolated from others because of the nature of their crimes. Many of these prisoners are older adults aged 65 and above, and as a consequence suffer from age-related frailty, illness and disability. In addition there are significant numbers of people requiring assessment, and care and support, who if they lived in the community would be receiving the services of the learning disabilities and mental health teams.

Welsh Government issued a Code of Practice that set out the requirements on local authorities in the exercise of their social services functions in respect of those being held in custody, bail accommodation and on release to their home counties; and on this basis Bridgend County Borough Council recruited a Secure Estate Team to discharge the duties and responsibilities required by the Act. Initially the funding for social care for prisoners in Wales came from within the additional £3m allocated to Welsh Local Authorities for the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act. In May 2016 Welsh Government confirmed the provision of grant funding of up to £236,774 for Bridgend Council in the first year, and £217,448 thereafter; indicating at that time that this would be provided on an ongoing basis to support provision of care and support to those in the secure estate.

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We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please let us know if your language choice is Welsh

For the 2018/19 financial year Welsh Government transferred the £412,000 funding for social care provision for prisoners in the secure estate across Wales into the Local Government Settlement, and this was distributed based on overall funding allocations for social services across all the 22 authorities in Wales, as opposed to a specific distribution to those authorities with prison populations. This decision resulted in Bridgend County Borough Council only receiving approximately £18,000 for 2018/19. However finance officers within the Council have undertaken an analysis of the cost of delivering services within the prison, and the outcome of that work has indicated that the cost of the delivery of care in the secure estate is at least three times that of delivering care in general community settings, and that the delivery of social work is nearly five times higher to delivering it in the community.

Our experience has evidenced that there are considerable challenges to providing the care services required by the Act in the Secure Estate; this is due to the nature of the prison environment being a locked secure premise. In order to access the prison all staff need to go through strict clearance processes in order to visit individuals requiring social care support. Clearance takes approximately eight weeks to complete for each social care professional employed to deliver information, advice, and assistance, assessment, and care and support within the prison; it is therefore not possible to deliver services in the same way that would be provided in the community. In addition all staff not employed by the prison are not cleared to enter cells individually for security reasons, and this has an impact on the overall cost of service delivery. The assessment processes, contact with prisoners and their families takes far longer than it would in community settings as it is limited by opportunity and access to prisoners, which has to be supported by the prison staff. Similarly the delivery of care is complex because of the limitations on access to prisoners, and the need to provide it either from within the prison staff, or directly by the Council, therefore limiting the way the service can be delivered. This has been discussed in detail with colleagues from Welsh Government Policy section.

In order to fulfil our commitment to meet our statutory responsibilities under the Act, we utilised the former grant of £217,448 to develop a Secure Estate Team and to commission care within the prison. The following table illustrates the Council's current commitments:

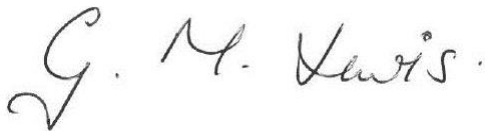
POST	FTE
Parc Prison Secure Estate Senior Social Work Practitioner	1.00
Parc Prison Secure Estate Senior Social Worker	1.00
Parc Prison Secure Estate Senior Occupational Therapist	1.00
Health Care Support Worker G4S	1.00 (to 2.00 as required)*
Administrative Officer	0.50
Team Manager Costs	0.10

In addition there has been an allocation of funding to purchase equipment and aids to daily living throughout the year. In 2017/18 Bridgend Secure Estate Team managed 86 referrals and re-referrals; this resulted in 67 assessments of which 23 resulted in care and support plans within the secure estate. The provision of social care services within the secure estate is labour intensive time-consuming and constrained by the risk management, rules and requirements of the prison. For example officers often have to be accompanied by prison staff or visit people in twos for their own personal safety. There are severe limitations on access to ICT systems which makes assessment, and the provision of care and support, paper driven and often results in duplication of effort, in order to ensure that there is a record on the National WCCIS system. The prison population within HMP Parc consists of people who have committed serious crimes and often spend prolonged periods within the secure estate. A recent review of the Council's work within the prison demonstrated that a complex set of skills were needed to provide

appropriate social care services within the secure estate because many of the adults therein were not only affected by issues of frailty and the illnesses of ageing, but many had mental health and learning disability, personality disorder and were at risk of self-harm, or a combination of these related needs, that required a safeguarding approach as well as the general social work interventions of the team.

Although Bridgend Council had anticipated that the annual allocation would continue to be at £217,448, this in itself falls well short of the actual costs of delivering social care services in this environment, and cannot be compared in any way to the delivery of care in ordinary community settings. In this context I would therefore ask you to reconsider the allocation of this funding, returning it to local authorities with prisons within their boundaries, because without this resource it will be impossible for this Council to continue to discharge its responsibilities fully and lawfully.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'G. M. Lewis'.

Gill Lewis
Interim Head of Finance and
Section 151 Officer

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiath yn Gymraeg. Rhwch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich dewis iaith.

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