



Proposal for a new Housing Support Grant Outcomes Framework

Summary of engagement feedback

January 2023



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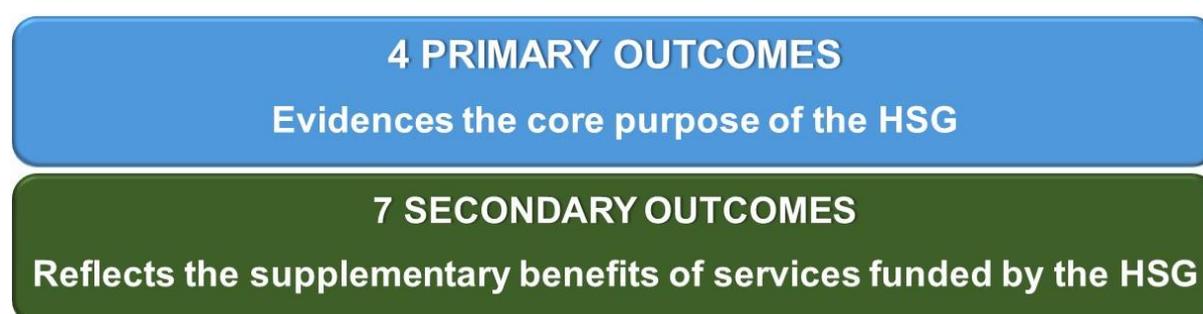
1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Welsh Government's [Housing Support Grant](#) was introduced in April 2019. The overall grant purpose is to prevent homelessness and support people to have the capability, independence, skills, and confidence to access and/or maintain a stable and suitable home.
- 1.2 In 2021, it was agreed that a new Outcomes Framework for the Housing Support Grant (HSG) should be developed to capture the core purpose of the grant and its wider benefits. Prior to this, local authorities (LAs) had, and continue to report against, defined outcomes in the legacy Supporting People (SP) Outcomes Framework for people supported by the legacy Supporting People Grant Programme (which has since been superseded by the Housing Support Grant). The new HSG Outcomes Framework will therefore be a successor to the legacy SP Outcomes Framework and will capture the core purpose of the HSG and the support services funded by it.

2. Development of the HSG Outcomes Framework

- 2.1 In November 2021, the Welsh Government established a HSG Outcomes Framework Task & Finish Group to work collaboratively to co-produce a new HSG Outcomes Framework.
- 2.2 By Spring 2022, a first draft of the new Outcomes Framework was presented to the Frontline Network, a network of homelessness and housing support staff hosted by Cymorth Cymru. The general proposed approach to establish both Primary Outcomes (to reflect the core purpose of the HSG) and Secondary Outcomes (to reflect the supplementary benefits of services funded by the HSG) was broadly welcomed. See **Diagram 1** below:

Diagram 1: Conceptual approach for the new Outcomes Framework



- 2.3 Following this and feedback from the HSG Outcomes Framework Task & Finish Group, a first draft of the Outcomes Framework has been piloted across six local authorities and 32 service providers since June 2022 and is running for a period of 10 months to inform its development ahead of implementation. In addition, the Welsh Government held a series of engagement events to seek wider feedback ahead of finalising the HSG Outcomes Framework – see **Section 2.4** below.

- 2.4 This summary report should therefore be read in conjunction with the [Housing Support Grant outcomes framework](#).

3. Engagement approach

- 3.1 The Housing Support Grant Outcomes Framework is an operational tool to measure the effectiveness of a grant programme – as such, the updated framework has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders who are commissioners, providers and frontline workers of HSG services. In Autumn 2022 the Welsh Government held four virtual engagement events with local authority representatives and homelessness and housing service providers. Cymorth Cymru - in collaboration with Welsh Government - also hosted a separate engagement event to hear the views of frontline homelessness and housing support staff. In total 190 stakeholders attended these events.
- 3.2 To inform event discussions, Welsh Government circulated a paper outlining the approach taken to develop the HSG Outcomes Framework prior to the events, including focussed questions on key features of the Outcomes Framework. During the engagement events, stakeholders had an opportunity to discuss these focussed questions in small groups and provide feedback.
- 3.3 The Welsh Government also held a ‘check-in’ session in early November 2022 with local authorities and support providers who are piloting a first draft of the Outcomes Framework.
- 3.4 Feedback from the engagement events and the piloting has informed the final version of Outcomes Framework before its planned implementation in April 2023 – see [Housing Support Grant outcomes framework](#) which is published alongside this summary report.

4. Summary of engagement feedback

4.1 Primary Outcomes

Overall, stakeholders felt that the primary outcomes were simple and easy to understand. There was also general consensus that the primary outcomes clearly evidence the main purpose of the grant and the support services that people receive from HSG-funded services. Other feedback received included:

- a) Feedback related to capturing and recording the primary outcomes when service users move from one primary outcome to another (when they are with the same provider) and during the same reporting period.
- b) Questions about whether primary outcomes should be captured for people who are 'sofa surfing' or in insecure tenancies (e.g. individuals being evicted but not within 56 days or have not yet presented to homelessness services).
- c) Stakeholders sought clarification on whether providers had to select a minimum of one primary outcome, and whether they could select multiple primary outcomes during a reporting period.

4.2 Secondary Outcomes

Most stakeholders felt that the secondary outcomes captured the supplementary benefits/outcomes for service users. Overall, stakeholders welcomed that the secondary outcomes were framed positively, were concise and user-friendly, which would enable support workers to have meaningful conversations with service users. However, there were a few key themes raised during the events.

- a) **Secondary Outcome 6:** Stakeholders felt that the word 'addiction' in the outcome could be a barrier for people to engage with support services. Due to the negative connotations associated with the word 'addiction', it was suggested that more person-centred language should be used.
- b) Questions were raised about the seven secondary outcomes being optional and clarification was sought on whether it was mandatory for individuals to achieve or record at least one of the secondary outcomes.

A small number of stakeholders provided the following feedback:

- c) **Secondary Outcome 1:** Feedback to include another 'Service User indicator' for this outcome to reflect that although an individual may not feel isolated (e.g. as they're with family etc.), they may not be connecting with the local community. Feedback was also provided about including 'Service User indicators' that distinguish between relationships with family and/or children; relationships with friends and/or peers; and relationships with people that individuals live with. Linked to this, clarity was sought on whether this secondary outcome reflected services that provide family mediation support to families with children.

- d) **Secondary Outcome 2:** Some providers said that they would feel uncomfortable asking a service user about '*not causing emotional or physical harm to others*' (a 'Service User indicator'), as it could be triggering and inappropriate for a service user who is experiencing/ has experienced emotional or physical abuse.
- e) **Secondary Outcome 3:** Feedback that 'Managing Money' should be presented as a separate Secondary Outcome rather than as a 'Service User indicator' in this secondary outcome, as it's usually the main support need / intervention by many service users.
- f) **Secondary Outcome 5:** Reference to 'good physical health' was questioned as some people may have a chronic or terminal illness.

4.3 Scaling responses

Overall stakeholders were positive about the proposed scaling of responses for secondary outcomes. There were a few comments about the scaling approach being subjective and therefore it would be important for support providers to have a good understanding of the scoring and for clear guidance to be made available. Other comments raised included:

- a) There was some confusion regarding the reference to the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) - a measure of subjective well-being which also uses the scaling approach proposed for the HSG Outcomes Framework.
- b) A few stakeholders questioned the use of '*All of the time*' in the scaling responses. There was a suggestion that it could be changed to 'Most of the time'.
- c) A lack of clarity about the appropriate time period for capturing an individuals' experience when recording their responses to 'Service User indicators', for example whether the response should relate to that specific day, the past week or past month etc.
- d) Feedback about whether there will be any intention by Welsh Government to ask local authorities and housing support staff to capture the 'distance travelled' for secondary outcomes recorded for service users i.e. the 'change over time' (over a defined time period) between scaled responses for any relevant secondary outcomes for a service user, to identify whether any positive progress has been achieved.

4.4 General comments

- a) A few general comments were received about the importance of providing clear guidance and consistent training to ensure that everybody understands how to implement the new HSG Outcomes Framework. It was also suggested that new staff have access to a centralised training package which would ensure that support providers and local authorities work consistently.

- b) The inclusion of 'one-off' services/support in the primary outcomes (under primary outcome 1) was well received by stakeholders.
- c) Clarification was sought on how often outcomes should be recorded and reported in between when service users start receiving HSG-funded support and once they end HSG-funded support. It was evident that there were differing approaches taken by support providers and local authorities, often this was dependent on local authority service commissioning arrangements and associated monitoring regimes. Some stakeholders mentioned the issues they have with their current IT systems used to input outcomes data, and costs associated with making changes to the systems. It was suggested that a purpose-built 'data portal' would provide a more streamlined and accurate way of reporting.

5. Welsh Government approach to address feedback

5.1 Whilst this summary report does not provide a response to every point raised, the feedback has been carefully considered to draw out key themes. The following key changes have been made to the final [HSG outcomes framework](#) (published alongside this summary) and in the supporting guidance.

5.2 Primary Outcomes

- a) Revised the 'homelessness status' categories in the HSG Outcomes Framework reporting tool to reflect people who are sofa surfing and in insecure tenancies, where they receive HSG support.
- b) Guidance updated to make it clearer that individuals who receive HSG support should achieve only one of the primary outcome during a period. The one exception to this is where a service user has left HSG support services and subsequently returned for a 'one off' service/support during the same reporting period – in these cases primary outcome 1 can be recorded in addition to another primary outcome (primary outcome 2, 3 or 4). The Guidance also makes clearer that when recording primary outcomes, it will be the primary outcome that is applicable to the service user at the six-month reporting period that should be captured (or whichever is the most recent primary outcome recorded at that point).

5.3 Secondary Outcomes

- a) **Secondary Outcome 6:** Replaced the term 'addiction' with alternative terminology of 'dependency' and made clear in the guidance that it includes all types of addiction and not only substance misuse e.g. alcohol, smoking, gambling, and other behavioural dependencies.
- b) Guidance updated to make it clearer that the secondary outcomes are a **menu of tailored outcomes** to be used to select the secondary outcomes that are most relevant to a service user's needs and corresponding support plan (where applicable). It is therefore not compulsory for an individual to achieve all of the secondary outcomes.

- c) **Secondary Outcome 1:** Amended the supporting ‘Service User indicators’ to reflect ‘*positive and/or healthy relationships with family and my child/children*’, another for ‘*friends and/or peers*’ and another for ‘*positive and/or healthy relationships with the people I live with*’ to reflect individuals who may co-habit with other people who are not their family. Also added a ‘Service User indicator’ ‘*I feel connected to my local community*’ to reflect that although a person may not feel isolated as they’re with their family, they may not be connecting with their community.
- d) **Secondary Outcome 2:** Altered the wording of the indicator ‘*I am not causing emotional or physical harm to others*’ so that it does not cause a triggering effect on someone who has or is experiencing abuse. However, some stakeholders felt this was important to include overall, as often this is relevant to some service users who may be reflective about the impact of their past behaviour on others. Our Guidance emphasises that support workers should select the ‘service user indicators’ that are applicable to the person they are supporting. For example, if the service focuses on VAWDSASV, support workers should apply their own expertise and professional judgement to decide whether this indicator should be asked or not.
- e) **Secondary Outcome 3:** Made more explicit that ‘Managing Money’ is included (as a ‘Service User indicator’) within this in this secondary outcome.
- f) Reiterate in the guidance that the examples of HSG interventions/activities/services for each secondary outcome are not meant to be an exhaustive list, and other services are also valid if relevant.

5.4 Scaling responses

- a) Used the proposed ‘scaling of responses’ for secondary outcomes but removed reference to the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale to avoid confusion.
- b) Provided additional information in the guidance about the appropriate time period for capturing an individuals’ experience when recording their responses to ‘Service User indicators’ – to ‘recently’.
- c) We recognise the importance of capturing the ‘distance travelled’ for relevant secondary outcomes recorded for service users from when they start receiving HSG-funded support to when they end HSG-funded support. This is important on many levels: on a national level to demonstrate the wider benefits of the HSG; as part of local commissioning and monitoring of services; as well as for support providers themselves to demonstrate the impact of their services. However, there are practical implications of how this data would be recorded and reported in practice and the resource implications of doing so. We will therefore explore this matter further into 2023, including considering piloting an approach in parallel to implementation of the HSG Outcomes Framework from April 2023, to inform future plans.

5.5 General comments

- a) Guidance has been issued in January 2023 and we will arrange a series of training sessions between February and March 2023. We will also explore developing a manual/training package that service providers can refer to on an ongoing basis.
- b) We have developed a detailed Excel reporting tool to support piloting of the HSG Outcomes Framework. This tool is intended to be user friendly and minimise manual entries where possible. It also includes automated summaries of the input data. We will issue a revised version of the reporting tool ahead of implementation in April 2023.