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Analysis for Policy



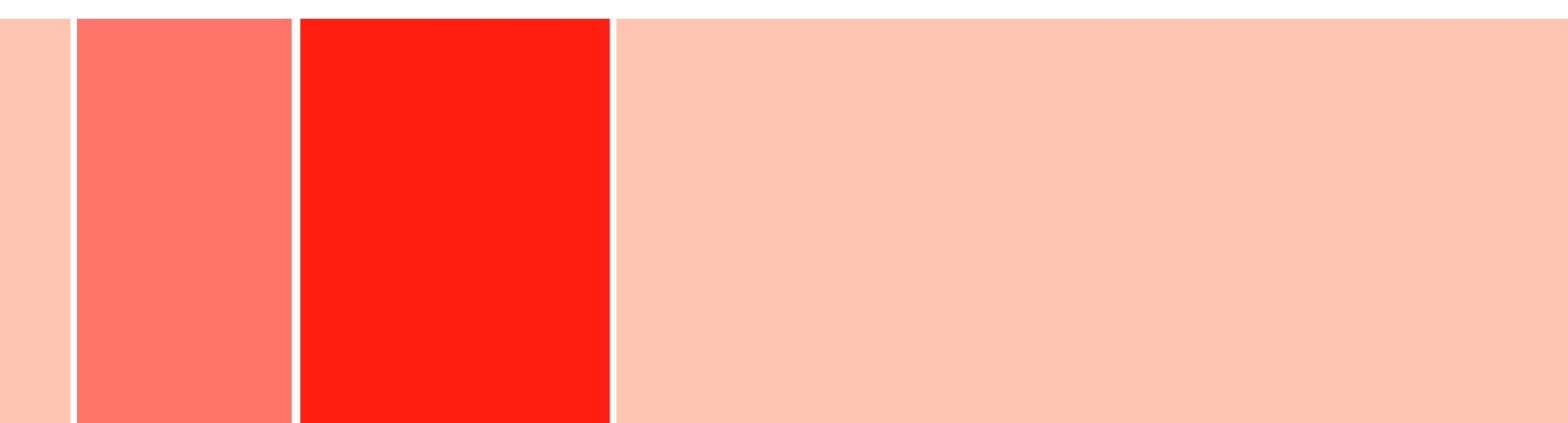
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Process evaluation of Communities First Appendix 3: Cluster level depths discussion guide



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Cluster level depth interviews with Cluster managers and LDB representatives

Introductory notes for Welsh Government

This discussion guide is a tool for the members of the Evaluation team conducting interviews, and outlines key questions to highlight the information that is sought from the interview. Qualitative interviews are designed to maximise the value of the information gathered by enabling a free-flowing discussion between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interview will be fluid and in any particular interview we will not necessarily cover all the questions, nor cover them in the order outlined below (hence the total timing of the current guide comes to more than the 45 minute total interview length). Each interview will be tailored to be relevant to the interviewee (i.e. depending whether they are from the LDB or the cluster management team, and focusing more or less on some sections depending on the nature of their role, and on the responses they gave during the survey). Timings are indicative of the relative weight to be placed on each section but will not be followed exactly.

When speaking with LDB representatives the interviewer will encourage the interviewee to discuss the full range of their experiences drawing on examples from across the different clusters in which they are involved.

Objectives of Cluster level interviews

The objectives of these interviews are to:

- Understand the processes and relationships involved in delivering CF.
- Explore how effectively these processes and relationships are in helping the programme to deliver its intended objectives.
- Build on the topics explored in the online survey to gather a better understanding of the story emerging in the quantitative data.

Overview of interview structure

Section	Aims	Timing
1. Introduction and roles & responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Orientates the interviewee, gets them prepared to take part in the interview.• Outlines the 'rules' of the interview.• Warms up interviewee and provides context to enable subsequent analysis.• Guides line of questioning in relation to role of interviewee.	5 mins
2. Processes of CF	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand experiences of, and attitudes towards, the process by which LDBs were selected by WG.• Understand the experience of processes of applying for funding.• Explore the recruitment of cluster staff and any issues experienced with this.• The focus of this section will vary depending on whether the respondent is from a LDB or is a Cluster Manager.	15 mins
3. Governance of CF	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the role of WG and perception of WG guidance.• Understand the structure of LDB and cluster management teams, and the relationships between them, as well as with the WG	10 mins
4. Delivery and monitoring of CF	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore how well the Clusters are perceived to perform against their Delivery Plan / CIP.• Explore key challenges and opportunities.• Understand what is meant by reaching "hard-to-reach" groups• Understand perceptions of RBA, what are considered to be "soft outcomes" and how these are monitored and reported.•• Explore what processes are in place to align delivery of CF with Welsh Language Strategy objectives.	15 mins

5. Partnership working within CF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigating what collaborative working, both within and between Clusters, means in practice and in what ways it is perceived to be benefiting delivery of the programme. Explore relationships between different stakeholders and whether there are any barriers. 	10 mins
6. Last remarks, thanks and close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sums up, ensuring closure for interviewee. Allows interviewee to make any final comments they would like to make and lets them know about next steps of the evaluation. 	5 mins

Detailed guide

1. Introduction and roles & responsibilities	5 mins
<p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>Explain that this is a follow-up to the online survey the participant was invited to complete previously.</p> <p>Thank participant for taking part and for taking part in the survey (for those who have).</p> <p>Introduce self; explain that Ipsos MORI/Wavehill are carrying out an evaluation of Communities First on behalf of the Welsh Government.</p> <p>Role of Ipsos MORI/Wavehill – independent research organisation; gather all opinions; all opinions are valid.</p> <p>Explain confidentiality and request permission to record with reassurances that the recordings will not be passed outside of the evaluation team.</p> <p><u>Role and responsibilities</u></p> <p>1.1 Can you tell me a little bit about your role and your involvement in Communities First?</p> <p>PROBE ON:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → How long have you been in your current role? → What are your main responsibilities with regards to Communities First? Tackling poverty more widely? → What were you doing before you joined the Communities First programme? 	<p>Orientates the interviewee, gets them prepared to take part in the interview</p> <p>Outlines the ‘rules’ of the interview</p> <p>Warms up interviewee and provides context for subsequent analysis</p> <p>Guides line of questioning in relation to role of interviewee</p>
2. CF Programme Design	10 mins
<p>2.1 What do you understand to be the main aims and objectives of CF in the context of your local area? PROBE ON:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → To what extent would you say that you are clear on how the aims and objectives of the programme relate to the needs of people in your local area? → What does this mean for how the programme is being delivered 	<p>Explores understanding of aims and objectives of Communities First, explores impact of changing outcomes on ability to manage programme, and explores how governance works at a local level.</p>

in your cluster and the way in which you and your team work?

- In what ways did you account for the objectives of CF when designing the activities to be delivered in your cluster?

2.2 Could you talk me through the roles and responsibilities of the various teams that work in your LDB/Cluster?

PROBE ON:

- What is the structure of LDB and Cluster teams – what roles do they have?
- Who has responsibility for reporting outcomes?
- How does progress reporting work? (For LDBs this would cover reporting to Welsh Government on outcomes; for CMs this would cover, for example, the 6 monthly progress reports)

2.3 How would you describe the relationship your team has with....

- Welsh Government
- The Cluster management team (if an LDB rep)
- The LDB (if a Cluster manager)

PROBE ON:

- What do you think is good about this relationship? Anything that is less good?
- What challenges, if any, do you face working with this team?
- **IF YES:** How has it been possible to overcome these challenges?
- Any other barriers to successful relationships with this team?

3. Processes of CF

15 mins

3.1 How well do you think the process of selecting LDBs worked?

What has worked well about this process? Has anything worked less well?

PROBE ON:

- Role of Welsh Government
- Role of other local stakeholders, regional teams

3.2 Do you think that the most appropriate local bodies / organisations were chosen as part of this process?

PROBE ON:

- Gaining support from local partners as part of the process, challenges encountered in doing so?
- How well do you feel that CF is understood by other bodies / organisations?

3.3 Can you talk me through how you have used the guidance issued to help with the preparation of your Delivery Plan(s)? And how did you use the Delivery Plan templates?

PROBE ON: specific documents and templates

- How helpful or not did you find the guidance? Why do you say this?

Explores the processes involved with setting up CF in clusters, including the establishing of LDBs and their Delivery Plans and Community Involvement Plans. The interviews will maintain a focus on issues raised in the online survey to ensure the experiences underlying the viewpoints expressed in the survey are understood.

- How helpful or not did you find the DP template? What makes you say this?
- In what ways do you think this impacted on your final delivery plan?
- **PROBE:** Did it have any impact on...
 - The level of detail you included?
 - The way in which you linked activities back to the objectives of the programme?
- What changes, if any, would you have made to the guidance document? And what about the template?
- What support did you receive from the WCVA in applying for funding? How effective was this support? How could it have been made more effective?
- How did you use the Cluster Level Population Indicators (WIMD) in developing Delivery Plans? In what ways do you feel you benefited from having these, if at all?

3.4 And can you talk me through how you have used the guidance issued to help with the writing of your Community Involvement Plan(s)?

PROBE ON: specific guidance documents

- How helpful or not did you find the guidance? Why do you say this?
- In what ways do you think this impacted on your final Community Involvement plan?
- **PROBE:** Did it have any impact on...
 - The level of detail you included?
 - The way in which you linked activities back to the objectives of the programme?
- What changes, if any, would you have made to the guidance document? And what about the template?

3.5 Please could you talk me through what happened once you had submitted your DP and CIP to the Welsh Government?

PROBE ON:

- How soon after submitting your plans did you receive feedback?
- Did the timeline for provision of feedback cause any problems for implementation?
- How helpful did you find this feedback?
- To what extent did your plans for implementation change as a result of the feedback you received from WG?
- How soon after your funding award was granted did you receive your offer letter? Did this timing cause any issues?
- **FOR EACH POINT CHECK:** How did this fit with your expectations? Did this timing impact on you in any way?

3.6 Please can you talk me through the steps you took to recruit staff in your cluster?

PROBE ON:

- Did you follow a formal process? What was this process? (e.g. whether job roles were advertised for, how they advertised, where they advertised)
- Is recruitment something which you have previous experience of? **IF NO:** Do you feel you had sufficient training/support in recruiting staff for your cluster?
- How useful were the job description templates provided by Welsh Government? Did you use these? In what ways, if at all, could these have been improved?

ASK IF POSSIBLE TO EMAIL COPIES OF THE JOB DESCRIPTIONS WHICH WERE USED IN CLUSTER

→ What further guidance, if any, would have been helpful?

3.7 What problems, if any, have you encountered in recruiting staff? PROBE ON:

- Any delays in agreeing delivery plans hindering recruitment.
- Impact of any delays in receiving offer letter preventing jobs being offered.
- Lack of suitable applicants.
- How many applications they received (if posts advertised)
- How many applicants were invited to interview?
- Any external pressures? E.g. reduced spending, recruitment freezes
- What, if anything, do you think you could have done differently to manage these issues? What, if anything, do you think the WG could have done differently to help you manage these issues? How about the WCVA? Anyone else?

3.8 How easy or difficult has it been for you to hire people with the right skills for your team?

PROBE ON:

- To what extent do you think you have the right people with the right skills in your team currently? If there are gaps, what skill set is lacking / missing? What support do you think you need to help resolve this?
- Have you found some positions to be easier or more difficult to fill? Which? Why do you think this might be? (e.g. lack of suitable applicants in area)
- To what extent do you have access to appropriate training for your staff from WCVA? To what extent has this training helped to address any of the skills gaps/shortages you have encountered? Have you made use of any other sources of training?

4. Delivery and monitoring of CF

15 mins

4.1 In your opinion, how well is the Cluster(s) you are working in performing against their Delivery Plan / CIP?

PROBE ON:

- What are the particular opportunities / challenges that have been faced?
- What strands have you found more challenging to develop and deliver, if any? Any activities or target groups that have been particularly challenging?
 - IF YES: What has been challenging in delivering this strand/activity/to this target group?
 - To what extent have you been able to overcome these challenges? What additional support do you need? From who/where do you think this support could/should come?

4.2 To what extent is your Cluster targeting those “hardest-to-reach”? How have you defined this group in your area?

PROBE ON:

- How have you identified those who are “hardest-to-reach”?

In-depth exploration of key aspects of delivering and monitoring the Communities First programme. Focussing on issues brought up in the survey such as dealing with the “hardest-to-reach” groups. Also explores how CF is working in alignment with the goals of the Welsh Language Strategy.

- In what ways have you targeted this group?
- To what extent are those “hardest-to-reach” in your area also those who are most in need?
- To what extent are you reaching those most in need? What evidence do you have that you are reaching this group?
- What do you expect the impact to be for this group? How do you know this? How are you recording and monitoring these impacts?

4.3 To what extent is community involvement an integrated part of the programme in your Cluster?

PROBE ON:

- Do you feel you know what is being required by the programme in terms of community involvement? Are you clear on how this may be achieved? Is this something you feel you have been able to access sufficient training on?
- What examples do you have of where you think this is successfully being achieved? IF NOT, what challenges have you faced in achieving this?
- In what ways do local people have a say in what activities are provided and how they are run?
- How does this process work? What are the most effective processes for engaging the community?
- How is evidence of community involvement monitored and captured?

4.4 How clear are the desired outcomes for CF? Have these changed at all since you started working with the CF programme?

PROBE ON:

- What impact has this had on the way that you and your team work?

4.5 Which monitoring and reporting tools do you and your team use and how well do they work?

PROBE ON:

- Why are they not used / not easy to use?
- How useful are these processes and what is the information collected used for?
- How useful is Ffynnon to capture monitoring information?
- Have your team had enough training and support in how to use Ffynnon to help monitor the delivery of CF in your area? Do you personally have access? Who is responsible for this in your team?

4.6 What are your perceptions of Results Based Accountability? What do you think the benefits are of this? Are there any disadvantages?

PROBE ON:

How has RBA influenced the activities that are being delivered in your area?

How are you working with the monitoring indicators? What issues, if any, have you had with these?

How straightforward is it to collect the evidence you need in order to demonstrate the results? To what extent do the monitoring indicators provide an adequate account of the results of the

activities?

What does the term “soft outcomes” mean to you? How do you capture and communicate these to WG?

- Is there a formal process? If there isn't already a process, how would you want this process to work?

4.7 The Welsh Language Strategy exists with the aim to create “vibrant and bilingual communities”, to what extent do you feel the programme in your local area is contributing to this?

PROBE ON:

- To what extent is your Cluster working with agencies which are working towards Welsh language goals? Is this related to the linguistic profile of the Cluster?
- How have you assessed the Welsh language needs in the Cluster?
- To what degree do you provide a bi-lingual service in your Cluster? (LOOK FOR: Phone lines available in Welsh and English; literature available in Welsh and English – trying to establish if truly bi-lingual)
- How are language needs and outcomes monitored and recorded?

4.8 In what ways are residents able to become engaged in the language of their choice? How does this work?

PROBE ON:

- To what extent are there any language needs of local community beyond English and Welsh? How have you been able to cater to these needs?

5. Partnership working within CF

10 mins

5.1 Can you talk me through the main external bodies and organisations that are involved in assisting the delivery of CF in this Cluster?

PROBE ON:

- How were the delivery partners for CF chosen within your LDB/Cluster?
- In what ways do these bodies contribute/assist with delivery of CF?
- To what extent do these partners provide inputs to help with the delivery of CF? PROBE: do they provide funding, staff, specialist skills, physical resources?
- To what extent has it been possible to work with these partner bodies and organisations to alter their own goals to work towards the aims of CF?
- How fundamental or not are these partners to the effective delivery of CF in your Cluster? What would the impact be of them not being involved in your Cluster?

To explore both cross-cluster and cross-programme working, how this has contributed to the delivery of Communities First, and any challenges associated with this.

5.2 To what extent are relationships between these different bodies / organisations involved in delivering Communities First effective?

PROBE ON:

- Opportunities represented by these relationships?
- Any aspects of these relationships that were more challenging?
- **IF YES:** How has it been possible to overcome these challenges?
- Are there any types of organisation with which it has been particularly difficult/easy to develop relationships with? Why do you think that was?
- Any other barriers to successful relationships?
- Extent to which other bodies/organisations understand the objectives of CF?

5.2 To what extent has your Cluster worked in collaboration with other Clusters? Can you give me any examples of how this has worked?

PROBE ON:

- What have been the implications of this?
- What have been the challenges and how have they been overcome?
- How has this collaboration enabled you to better deliver the Communities First programme?

5.3 To what extent has your Cluster worked in collaboration with other WG programmes? Can you give me any examples of how this has worked?

PROBE ON:

- What are the opportunities this brings to the work that you and your team do?
- What are the challenges of working with other programmes and how have these been overcome?
- How do you ensure that CF and the other programmes are working to mutually support each other and are not duplicating effort in terms of activities being delivered or groups targeted?
- **PROBE:** Families First, Flying Start, Jobs Growth Wales, Pupil Deprivation Grant, Job Centre Plus

5.4 To what extent have there been any other partnerships which have impacted on you and your team's work?

PROBE ON:

- What are the opportunities this brings to the work that you and your team do?
- What are the challenges of this and how have you tried to overcome these?

<p>5.5 In what ways does WG facilitate partnership working with other Clusters, organisations and programmes?</p> <p>PROBE ON:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → What are the opportunities this brings to the work that you and your team do? → What are the challenges of this and how have these been overcome? 	
<p>6. Last remarks, thanks and close</p>	<p>5 mins</p>
<p>6.1 In general, how well do you think Communities First is being delivered in your area?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <i>Explore the connection between the processes involved and the impact this has on the outcomes of the programme</i> <p>6.2 In general, would you say that the processes involved in the delivery of Communities First set up by WG are facilitating or hindering delivery of the programme? What makes you say that?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <i>What other processes are important in the delivery of the programme, either as facilitating or hindering delivery? Why?</i> → <i>Explore who influences the effectiveness of the delivery of the programme.</i> <p>6.3 Is there anything you were expecting me to cover with you today that we haven't covered?</p> <p>6.4 Is there anything else we should be aware of while conducting this evaluation?</p> <p>Thank and explain next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case Studies – A number of in-depth case study visits will be conducted, and we may be in touch in the next couple of weeks to ask if your cluster would be willing to participate. Explain that won't necessarily re-contact them as looking for a spread of case studies across the clusters involved in the CF programme. - Key informant interviews - telephone interviews also to be conducted with other key stakeholders in the CF programme – and we may be in touch for assistance identifying potential participants for these interviews. <p>Thank participant for their time and confirm how results would be used in reporting i.e. on an anonymous basis unless they would prefer otherwise.</p> <p>Agree how participant is happy for verbatim comments to be attributed.</p>	<p>Summarises discussion, gives participant the opportunity to raise anything that hasn't been covered, and explains next steps.</p>