

# Caerphilly Homes Directorate Performance Assessment



## 2021/22 Six Month Q1 & Q2 Update

Please select a section of your choice:

Directors Summary & Priorities



Performance



Performance



Performance



Additional Public Accountability Measures



Customer Intelligence - Satisfaction



Customer Intelligence - Complaints



Resources - Staff



Resources - Finance & Assets



Risks



Well-being Objectives



Conclusion





**Six Month Summary (April to September 2021/22)**

Despite the ongoing impact of the Covid pandemic, good progress continues to be made in a number of areas, whilst the service has also continued to support wider community aims and objectives to support the most vulnerable within our communities. Although the completion of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard programme remains a priority, this has unavoidably been delayed as a consequence of the pandemic, which has been recognised by WG with the deadline now having been extended to December 2021 and we continue to make good progress in meeting this revised deadline despite experiencing difficulties associated with material and contractor shortages, with a key contractor going into liquidation. A project has just been completed where 20 properties have benefitted from a shared ground source heating system, where significant savings are currently being seen and this will continue to be monitored for future projects

The provision of new affordable housing by Caerphilly Homes continues to be work in progress, with 8 Section 106 purchases being completed for social rent, and additional S106 purchases being progressed for both social rent and low cost home ownership. Development has begun on sites at Trecenydd and Trethomas with good progress being made. The focus currently is on refining the detail of the Ty Darren and former Oakdale School development proposals in order to appropriate the land to the Housing Revenue Accounts, secure outline planning and draw down Social Housing Grant. Consultants are also in the process of identifying a number of sites that could be brought forward during the next 5 years. These include sites that could also be developed in response to the requirement for more emergency housing and homes for people with complex needs.

Partnership working with our Registered Social Landlord organisations also continues to deliver new affordable homes within the borough and this partnership has been further strengthened with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in October 2020. A virtual roadshow is due to take place in October 2021 to showcase the work of all partners in relation to delivering more affordable homes.

Having focussed efforts on the higher priority essential cases for most of last year due to the risks associated with delivering core services to this vulnerable client group the adaptations team have now begun to address the backlog of routine adaptations, however progress has been hampered by the shortage of materials and contractors and associated escalating costs. Private Sector Housing are recruiting a new Empty Property Team who are actively supporting the Welsh Government's aim of bringing empty homes back into use. In partnership with colleagues in Regeneration we have submitted an Empty Property Enforcement Agenda Action plan to Welsh Government and continue to support a Valleys Task Force Empty Homes Grant initiative. Our loan products have reopened to applicants but grants remain restricted to priority applications only whilst we address the backlogs associated with the pandemic. A Floodgates project has recently been undertaken on behalf of the Engineering Department.

Homelessness continues to be a dominant issue this year with the pandemic continuing to impact on the number of presentations. New emergency temporary accommodation continues to be sourced within our communities with additional support required to manage such facilities to avoid rough sleeping within our county borough. The dedicated financial crisis line set up by our Rents Team early in the pandemic continues to assist and advise our tenants and residents by providing financial advice or referring them for appropriate support. This continues to be a worrying time for many who face financial hardship and the team have made a significant difference to the financial security of many households.

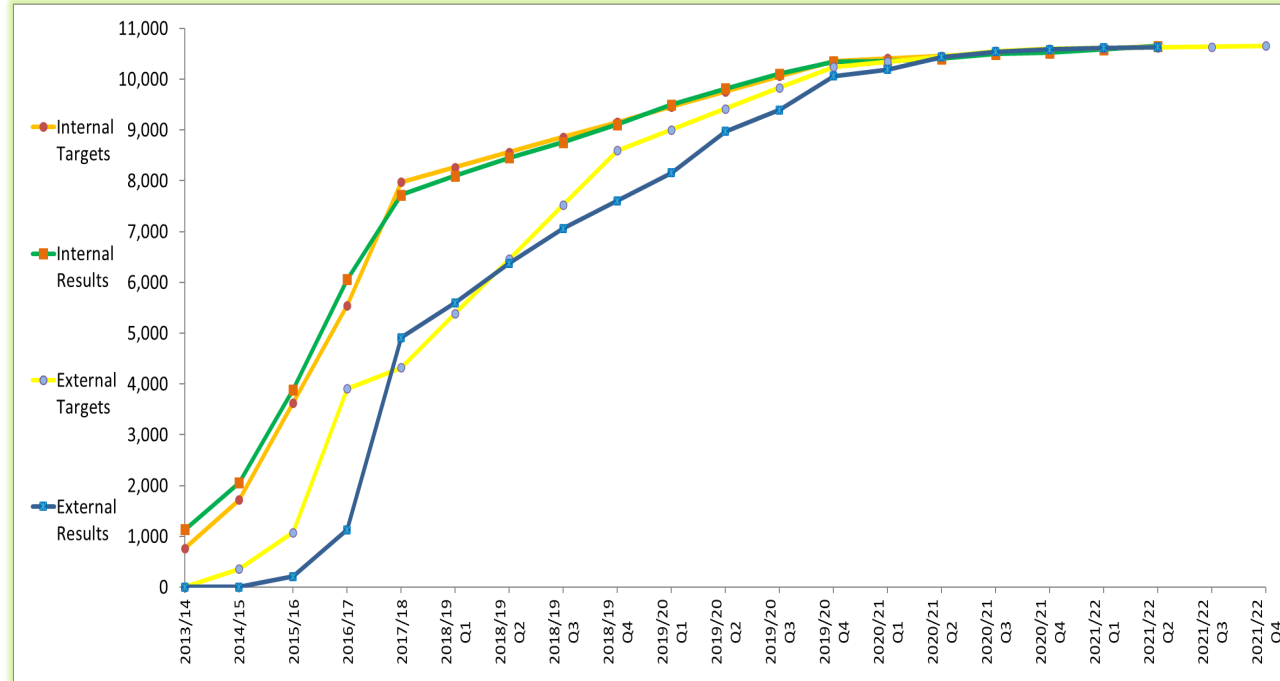
The Older Persons team continues to provide services and support to our sheltered housing residents albeit in a different way and we have been able to reopen the communal lounges of our schemes, enabling those residents who wish to engage with their neighbours to do so in a Covid secure manner. Maintaining services whilst operating under the limitations imposed by the Covid guidance continues to be difficult but the commitment and support provided by staff has been excellent and has clearly been appreciated by our customers. The landlord service continues to operate out of centralised Housing Office staffed by a rota of officers, providing essential services, whilst also working from home, recognising the benefits of agile working, co-location and centralisation.

	Service Priorities	Completion Date	RAG	Progress - Achievements - Comments
1	All council housing is improved to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by December 2021. (Links to Directors Priorities - CPA)	Dec-21	●	The programme has encountered unavoidable delays due to the Covid pandemic which has been recognised by Welsh Government and an extension to the deadline agreed for December 2021. We are on track to complete in advance of the revised deadline
2	Increase the number of zero carbon social rented homes delivered by Caerphilly Homes and members of the Affordable Homes Partnership, at scale and pace.	Ongoing	●	Work on the two Passivhaus schemes in Trecenydd and Trethomas is progressing well with both schemes expected to be completed by June 2021. All Caerphilly Homes schemes which are supported by WG grant will deliver net zero carbon homes as a minimum energy efficiency standard including the next Caerphilly Homes schemes at Oakdale and Ty Darran.
3	Identify HRA and General Fund sites with potential for residential development for inclusion as candidates' sites in the emerging LDP and to underpin a robust Caerphilly Homes Development Strategy.	Ongoing	●	23 sites have been identified and submitted for consideration as part of the Local Development Plan candidate site process. The Land Appraisal Consultants, Currie & Brown have started work on identifying a pipeline of schemes that may be brought forward for development by Caerphilly Homes (subject to viability). Site investigation works will commence on a number of sites in the final quarter of the year. It is envisaged that the land identified will form the foundation of the Caerphilly Homes Development Strategy.
4	Delivery of a Local Housing Strategy, Implementation / Action Plan and Investment Strategy	Ongoing	●	The Local Housing Strategy is being considered by Cabinet on the 27th October 2021 and work has started on the development of a collaborative Delivery Plan which will seek to bring the strategy to life through a portfolio of actions (based on the 5 priorities). Arc4 are currently facilitating a series of workshops and it is anticipated that the Delivery Plan will be finalised by the 3rd quarter of 21/22. Work will start on an Investment Plan which will underpin the Delivery Plan and set out how the actions contained in the Delivery Plan will be resourced / funded.
5	Deliver adaptations to support the health and well-being of residents, enabling them to live well at home. Undertaking the categorisation of Caerphilly Homes properties to identify, and facilitate the appropriate use of, our accessible homes.	Ongoing	●	During 2020/21, on the whole, only priority adaptations were delivered to prevent admissions to hospital and support hospital discharge. Therefore a significant backlog was created relating to routine requests for adaptations. All adaptations are now being progressed however the delivery times are being significantly affected by the extended period of time when the workload was put on hold, as well as the nationally recognised significant issues associated with contractor availability, material supplies and material cost increases. Unfortunately the situation is not likely to improve in the foreseeable future.
6	Increase the supply of housing by the return of empty properties back into residential use.	Ongoing	●	The Council is in the process of creating the new Empty Property Team with 2 of the 4 members now in post. The Empty Property Enforcement Agenda Action Plan has been developed during this time and submitted to Welsh Government for approval. Moving forward the team will be focussing on delivering the actions of the approved plan over the next 5 years. This will result in the return to use of both residential and commercial properties. The Valleys Taskforce Force scheme although closed to new applicants is still ongoing with officers working to complete all grants by the end of 21/22. 7 VTF grants have been certified as completed up the end of Q2.
7	Prevent homelessness by increasing the number of landlords and properties in the Caerphilly Keys programme to assist with the discharge of our statutory duties and increase the successful prevention rate of Homelessness	Ongoing	●	The Council continues to develop the Caerphilly Keys Private Renters Sector scheme and are due to launch a new website as part of this strategy to attract more landlords to sign up to the scheme and be aware of the scheme. In addition the Council is also working with the new empty properties team to maximise any landlord and property sign up. The Council is in the process of drafting a report that will be taken to Scrutiny and Cabinet in February 2022 for a decision to be made on whether we adopt the WG lease scheme proposal or remain with Caerphilly Keys.
8	Reduce the amount of time households spend in Emergency Accommodation to align with the Rapid Re-housing Welsh Government agenda	Ongoing	●	The Housing Solutions team are working to reduce time spent in temporary accommodation and have created a role to employ a specialist Common Housing Register officer attached to the Homelessness team who will be responsible for completing and reviewing applications for those in emergency temporary accommodation to maximise move on. The current structure of the team is also being reviewed with consideration being given to create an additional specialist post for complex cases to support the move on for those who are resident in TA. A draft strategy for Rapid Rehousing will be compiled in line with WG guidance by June 2022 and once finalised will be taken to scrutiny and cabinet which will outline the Councils 5 year strategy for rapid rehousing.
9	Maximise the income of Caerphilly Homes tenants to support tenancy sustainability.	Ongoing	●	Financial savings generated for tenants in 21/22 to date have totalled £1,429,974 significantly impacting on tenancy sustainability, reflected by high levels of customer satisfaction in the Tenancy Support Service within the rents team.
10	Establish the SAP rating for all Council Homes Retro fit programme	Ongoing	●	We are continuing to address properties that have no Energy Performance Certificate and are likely to complete this exercise in Q3.
<b>Directors Priorities - Corporate Performance Assessment</b>				
11	Finalise the WHQS programme (Links to priority 1 above)	Dec-21	●	Please see priority 1 above
12	Progress new build/affordable homes linking with social care/demands & opportunities	Ongoing	●	Two sites have been identified in response to the need to reduce dependency on Bed & Breakfast accommodation and also to provide appropriate accommodation for people with complex needs. Options are scheduled to be discussed shortly with the Housing Solutions Manager and Supporting People Manager.
<b>Strategic Equalities Plan - Linked Action</b>				
13	Through investing in our educational and housing stock, and providing apprenticeships, training opportunities and work placements within our organisation, we will increase the number of local citizens who are skilled and qualified workers and contributing to Community Benefits.	Ongoing	●	Apprenticeship placements within 'Caerphilly Homes' is going well. During 2021/22 9 apprentices (2 Electricians, 2 Carpenters, 3 Plasterers & 2 Bricklayers) have been recruited to assist with the completion WHQS programme and the delivery of the Public Asset Management Strategy (PAMS).

Status	RAG Key	
Not yet started or too early to report any progress (achievements/changes)	●	0
Started but not progressing well	●	1
Started with reasonable progress achieved	●	2
Going well with good progress	●	3



**INTERNAL & EXTERNAL - Programme Profile (Targets & Results Achieved)**



Projected Compliance Date for Internal works - 31/08/2021 Projected Compliance Date for External works - 31/12/21

**WBO 3 (1a)**

**PAM/038 2020/21 PAM/038 % of homes that meet the WHQS 97.02%**

The charts above, have been based on properties surveyed, improvement works undertaken, post-works inspections and portfolio updates, focusing on the following WHQS components:

**Internal Works:** 4 main elements - Kitchens, Bathrooms, Heating & Electrics.

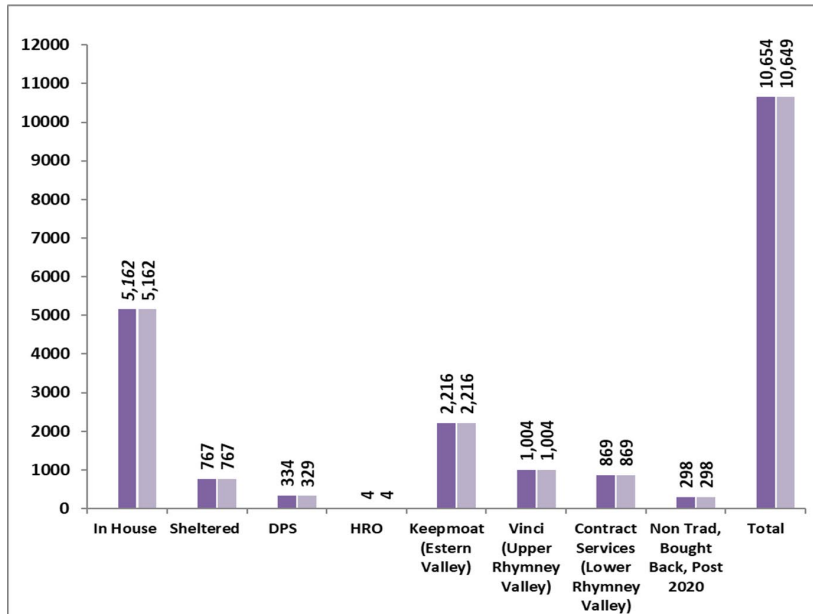
**External Works:** 10 main elements - Boundary walls, Doors, Drainage works, Fences/Railings/Gates, Curtilage works, Paths/Drives, Roofs, Stores/Sheds/Outbuildings, Windows & property skin

Other specialist works/improvements are also undertaken in conjunction with the WHQS Programme, such as Adaptations to meet the specific needs of the tenants

**What is WHQS performance telling us?**

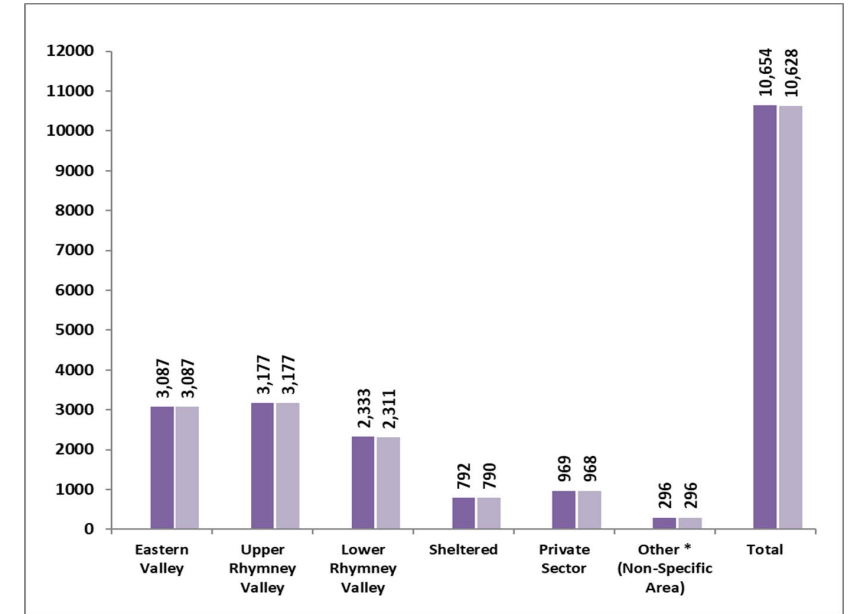
The programme was on track to be completed by June 2020 in advance of the deadline set by Welsh Government of December 2020. Due to the pandemic, Welsh Government have extended the statutory deadline to December 2021. The impact of Covid-19 means the target completion date has been extended to December 2021. Internal works are expected to be completed before this date, however External works now consisting of one contract in the Caerphilly area is subject to weather conditions, however we are working towards completion by the deadline.

Reporting Period	01/10/2021
*INTERNAL Works Programme (Stock v Compliance)	
Internal Target 31/12/21	100.00%
Internal Components (% of stock)	99.95%



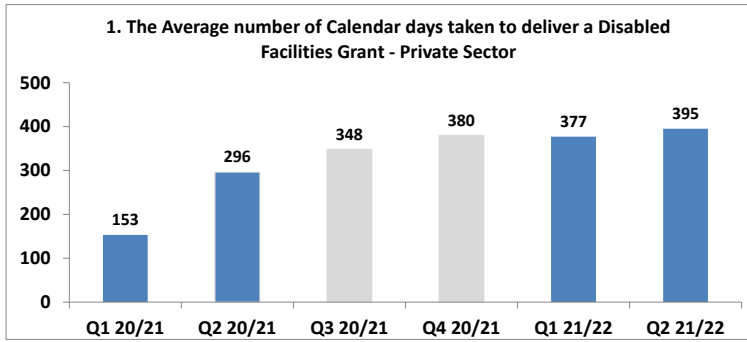
WBO 3 (Outcome 1a)

Reporting Period	01/10/2021
~ EXTERNAL Works Programme (Stock v Compliance)	
External Target 31/12/21	100.00%
External Components (% of stock)	99.76%



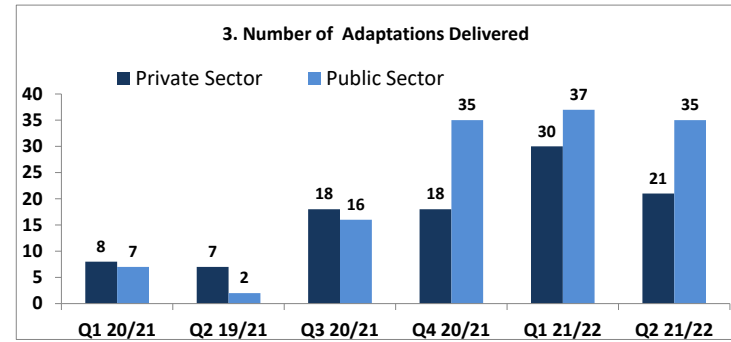
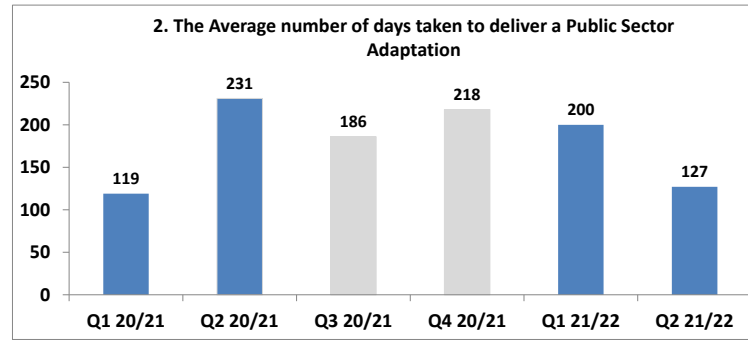
WBO 3 (Outcome 1a)

Priority 5 Deliver adaptations to support the health and well-being of residents

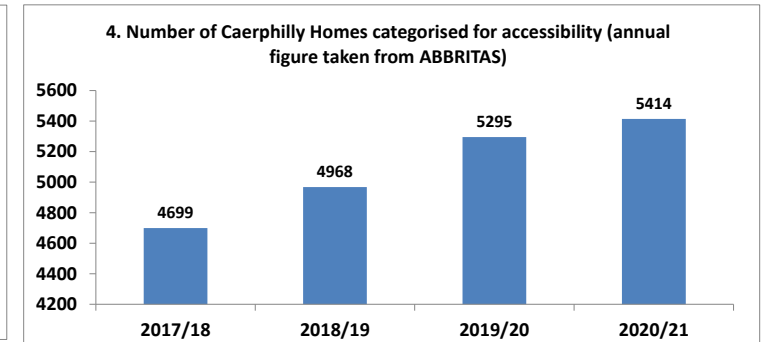


2020/21 Annual Average figure was 321.6

PAM/015

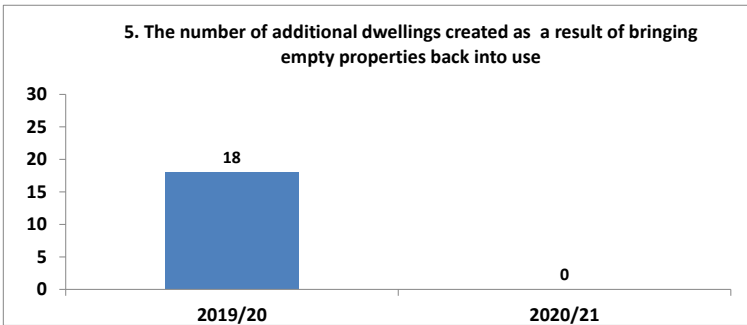


WBO 3 (Outcome 3)



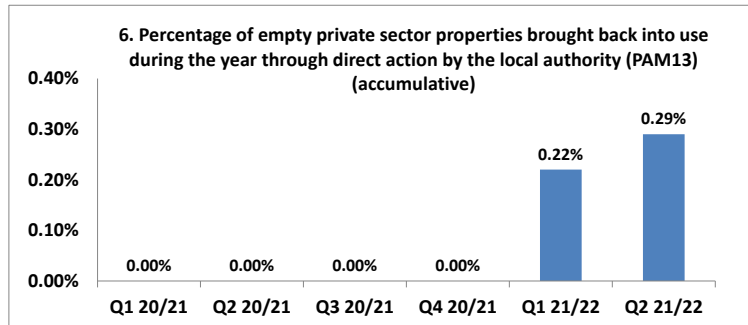
WBO 3 (Outcome 3)

Priority 6 Increase the supply of housing by the return of empty properties back into residential use.



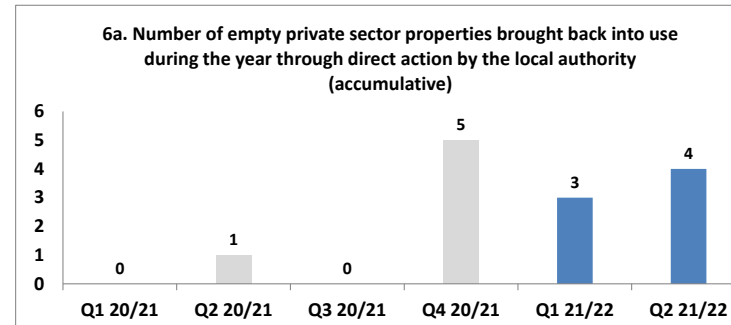
This measure is a part of the PAM set for contextual information only and is not used for comparison across Wales. The 2019/20 figure has been updated as of July 5th 2021

PAM/045



WBO 3 (Outcome 4)

PAM/013



The total number of private sector empty homes in the Borough, which were empty for more than 6 months was 1,441 in 2020/21 and is 1380 in 2021/22

What is the performance telling us?

Performance was significantly impacted during the previous financial year as a consequence of the Covid pandemic, with staff being unable to undertake a number of core activities in order to comply with Welsh Government guidelines.

Measures:

In 2020/21 routine works of adaptation were not undertaken, in accordance with WG Covid guidance and due to risks associated with vulnerable client group. The small number of essential schemes able to be completed during periods of lockdown were largely to prevent hospital admissions and facilitate hospital discharge . . . Therefore a significant backlog was created relating to routine requests for adaptations. All adaptations are now being progressed however the delivery time, from point of initial enquiry to Social Services to completion of works, continues to be significantly affected due to the large period of time when the workload was put on hold as well as the nationally recognised issues associated with Covid secure working practices, contractor availability, material supplies and material cost increases. The ongoing impact on Public Sector Adaptations is currently less pronounced due to the absence of a statutory process and use of a framework arrangement. Unfortunately the situation is not likely to improve in the foreseeable future as the impact of the lockdown will continue to be evidenced in future quarters as resulting backlogs are addressed.

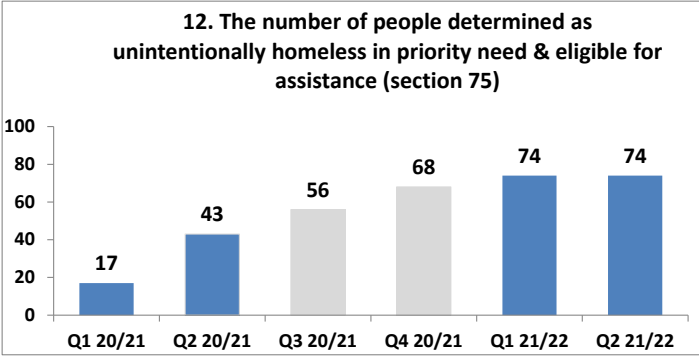
The current PI is very limited as it relates only to timelines rather than customer experience and impact and is not sufficient to enable a full evaluation of performance. Work to replace the PI is ongoing with WG and in the meantime remains for reporting purposes. Adaptations vary in size and scale and a single application may include multiple adaptations and contracts. We offer a comprehensive agency service to support applicants with adaptations delivered. This takes time but ensures those who would be unable to manage the process themselves get the adaptations they need. Members have previously supported our approach to delivering DFGs which focusses on outcomes for the customer rather than speed of delivery and average delivery times.

Empty homes work was considered non-essential and is often proactive in nature, therefore, no work was permitted during periods of lockdown. Work to create additional new homes by the return to use of empty properties often relates to conversion grants which were suspended due to them being deemed not essential so no such grants were completed during 20/21. Such grants necessitate significant lead in times and partnership working with owners so whilst new applications are now progressing this has not yet impacted on the performance data.

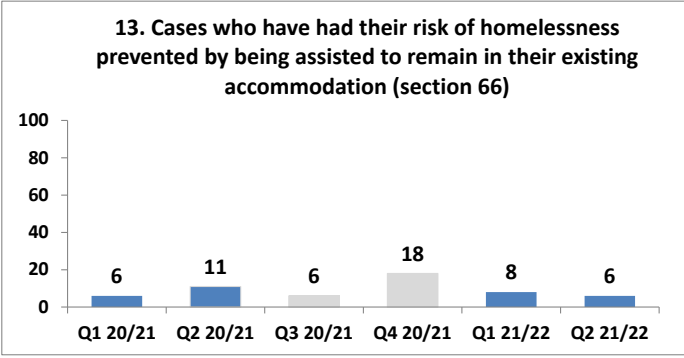
7 properties that met the PI definition were returned to use in Q1 and Q2, 3 were as a direct result of advice and 4 followed completion of VTF grant aided works. Additional long term empty properties returned to use but not listed on the original council tax data or were returned to use as socially rented properties rather than private have been excluded from the figures in line with PI definitions. 1380 properties were recorded as empty for 21/22.

7 Valleys Task Force grants were able to be completed within Q1 and Q2 however 83 formal applications were received in total. 71 of these applications have been approved, of which 64 relate to Phase 2, and completion and return to use of these properties will be reflected in future 21/22 returns.

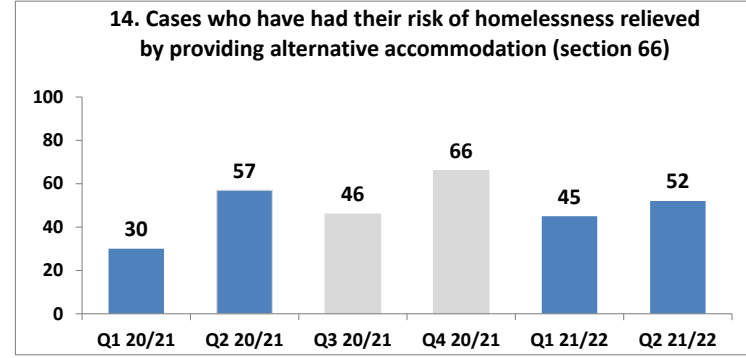
## Priority 7 Prevent homelessness and Priority 8 Reduce the amount of time households spend in Emergency Accommodation



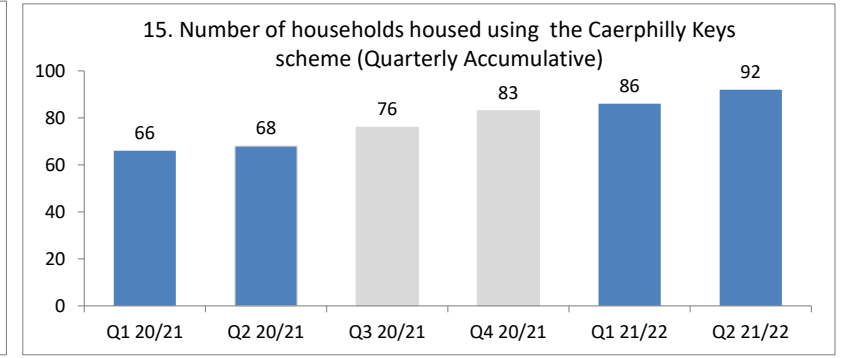
WBO 3 (Outcome 6)



WBO 3 (Outcome 6)

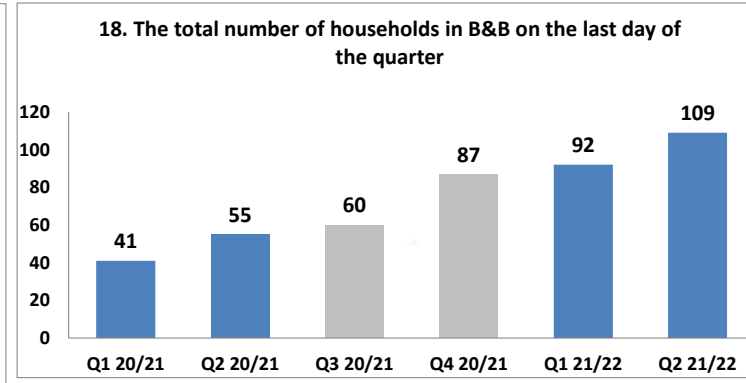
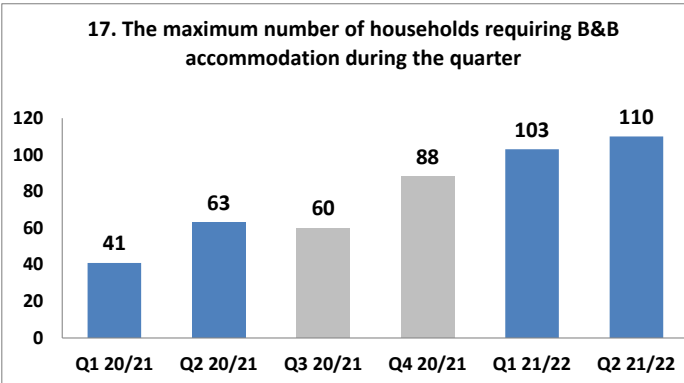
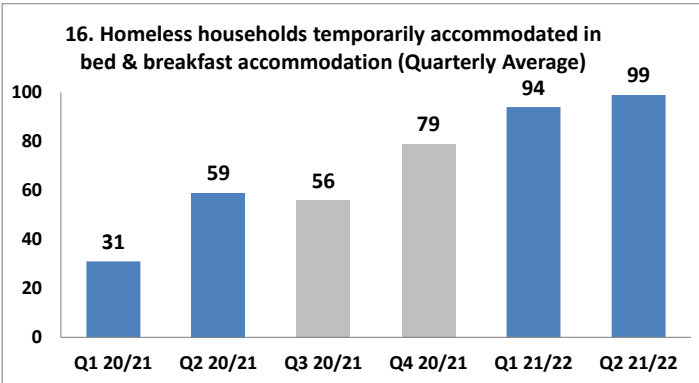


WBO 3 (Outcome 6)



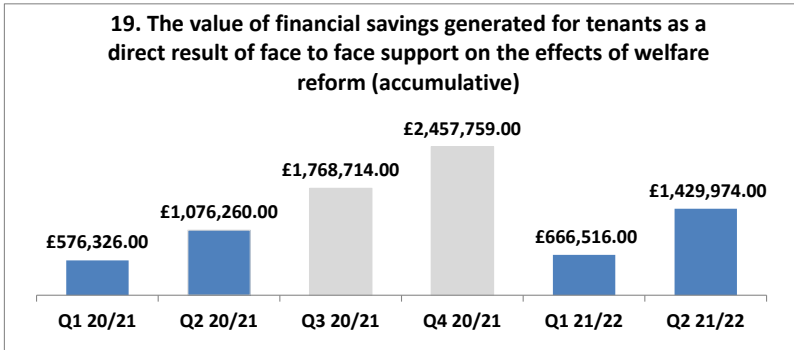
**15. Caerphilly Keys Households housed by type to date**

Couple with dependant Child(ren)	10
Single parent household with dependant children - Male applicants	1
Single parent household with dependant children - Female applicants	17
Single person household - Male applicant	29
Single person household - Female applicant	16
All other household groups	11
No Homeless or A&P case	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>

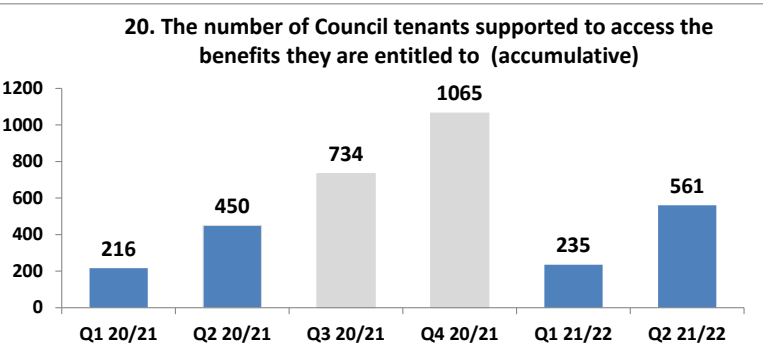


*These two measures show the movement of people in and out of B&B over the quarter*

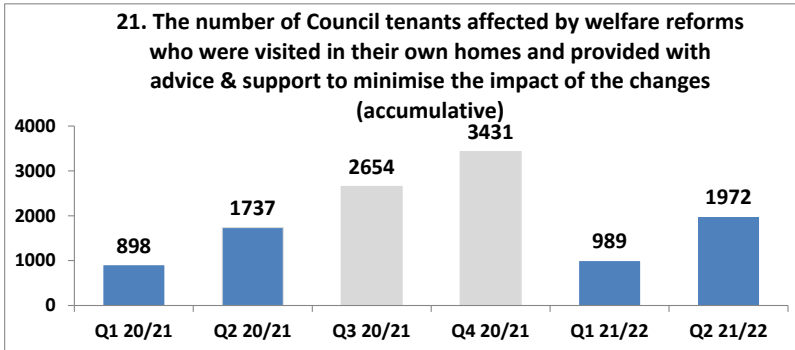
## Priority 9 Maximise the income of Caerphilly Homes tenants to support tenancy sustainability.



WBO 3 (Outcome 7)



WBO 3 (Outcome 7)



WBO 3 (Outcome 7)

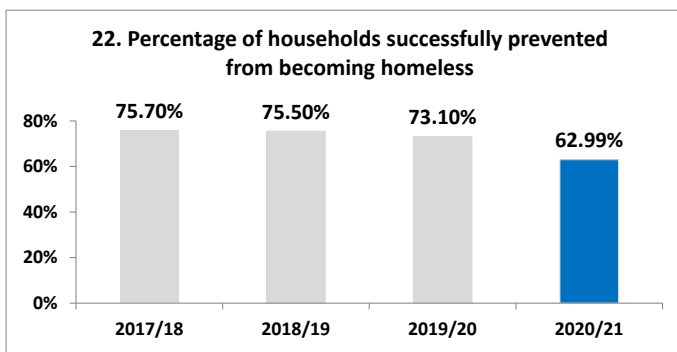
*please note due to Covid-19 restrictions this now relates to remote support engagements*

### What is the performance telling us?

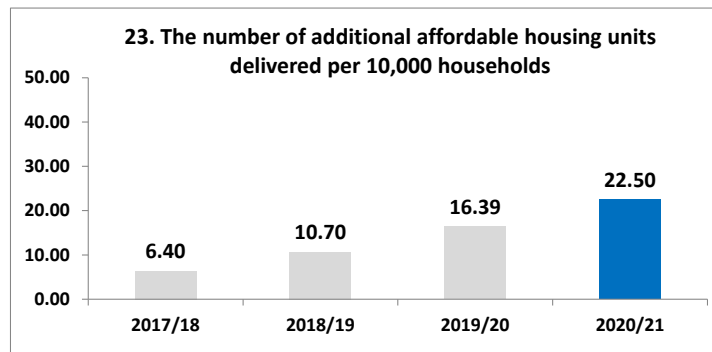
The Housing Solutions Data is demonstrating that we still continue to receive a high level of applications for assistance which is increasing the demand for placements into temporary accommodation. The ability to successfully relieve applicants' housing situation at the Section 73 duty is limited due to the lack of suitable 1 bedroom accommodation availability within the borough and this is having an impact on the total number of cases accepted under the Section 75 duty. Placements and households into temporary accommodation are likely to remain static or increase as we enter the next quarter.

The Caerphilly Keys service has been able to meet some of the accommodation demand by providing much needed accommodation within this sector and the data shows that properties continue to be made available to this service to support the local authority in discharging its duty within this sector.

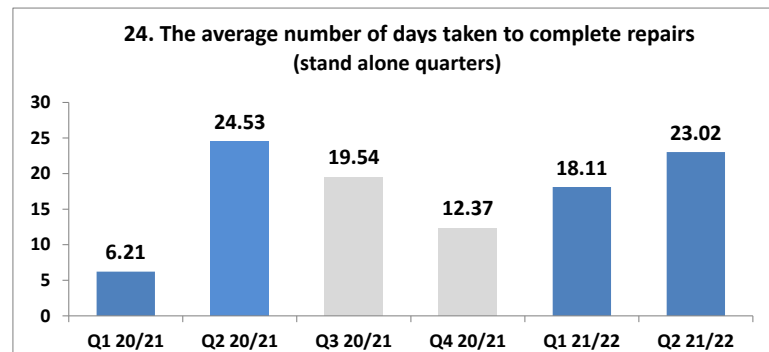
Financial savings generated for tenants in 21/22 to date have totalled £1,429,97, which should significantly impact on tenancy sustainability and tenant wellbeing, as reflected by high levels of customer satisfaction in the Tenancy Support Service within the Rents team.



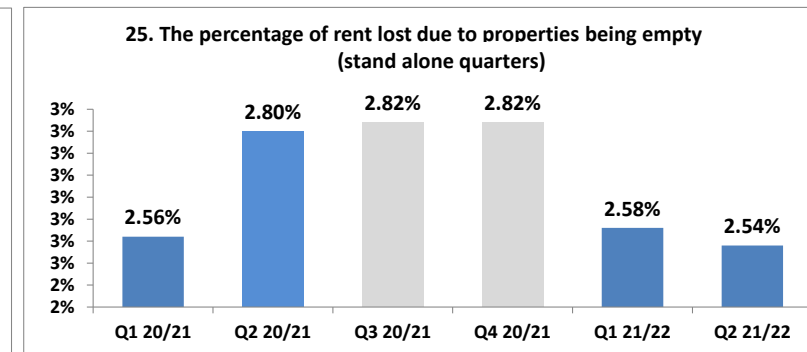
PAM/012



2020/21 figure is draft and subject to change by Welsh Government PAM/036



2020/21 Annual figure is 17.02 days PAM/037



2020/21 Annual figure is 2.82% PAM/039

**What is the performance telling us?**

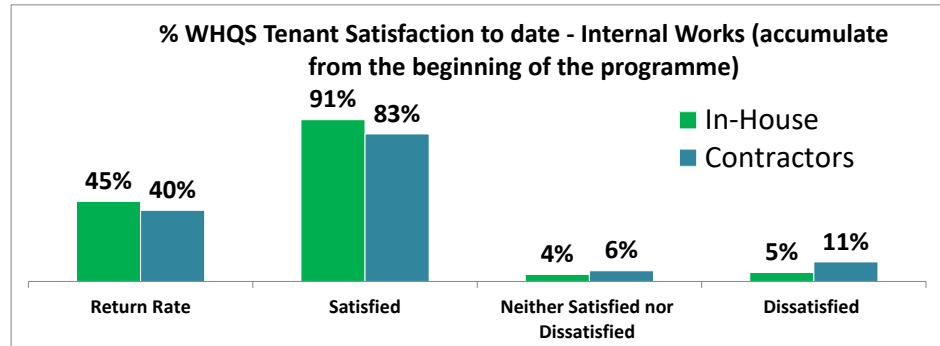
The Public Accountability Measures highlight the detrimental impact the Covid pandemic and lockdown restrictions have had on some of our key indicators. The focus in 20/21 was on the delivery of essential services, aimed at supporting our most vulnerable clients e.g. homelessness, elderly, financial support, emergency repairs, adaptations, works to void properties, and allocations. The number and type of repairs undertaken to our housing stock during 2020/21 was significantly impacted by pandemic restrictions, being limited to external and emergency repairs during periods of lockdown and we are now progressing to clear a backlog of non essential repairs which continues to impact on performance.

The percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless is currently performing in line with internal objectives however with Covid 19 restrictions easing, courts opening for possession / eviction warrants, furlough ending and UC changes then these factors will have an impact on tenancy sustainability and prevention of homelessness for some households going forward.

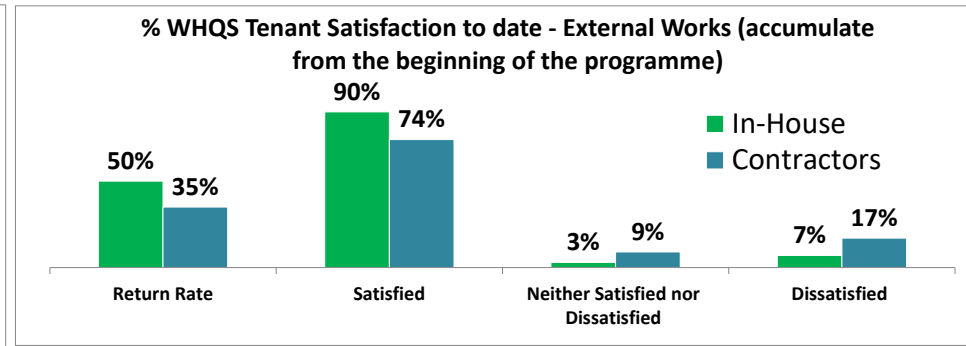




**Satisfaction with Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)**

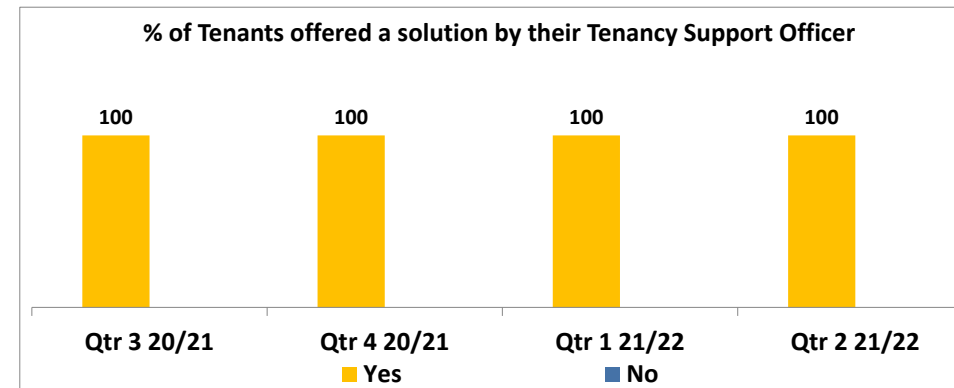
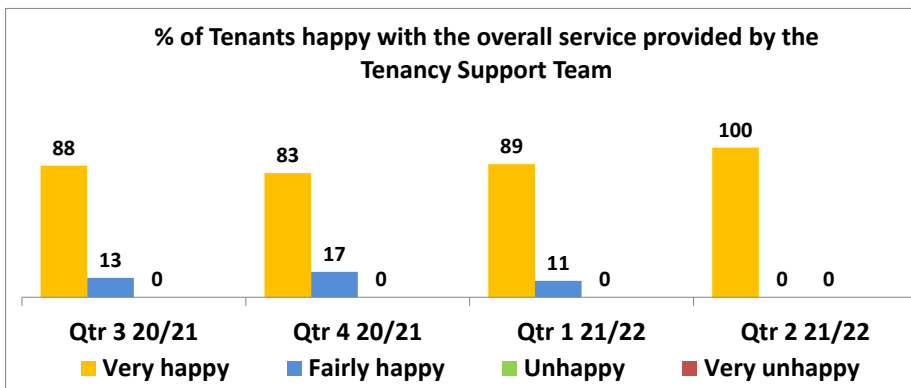


WBO 3 (Priority 1) Tenants satisfaction is reported from the start of the contract to the current date

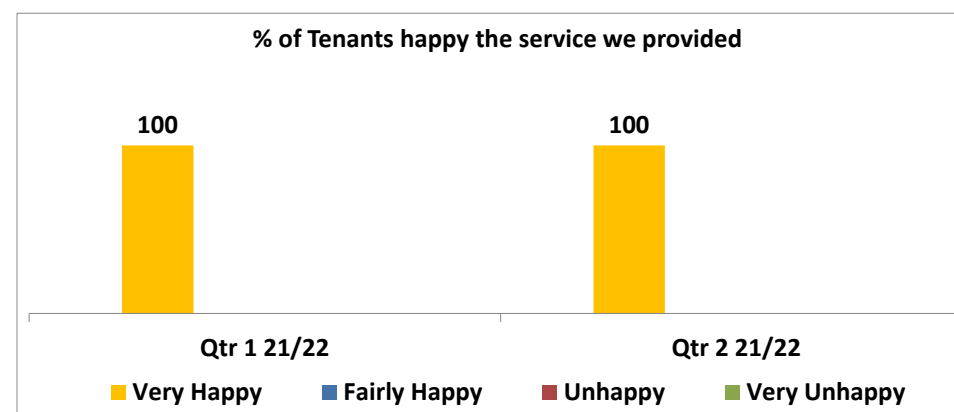
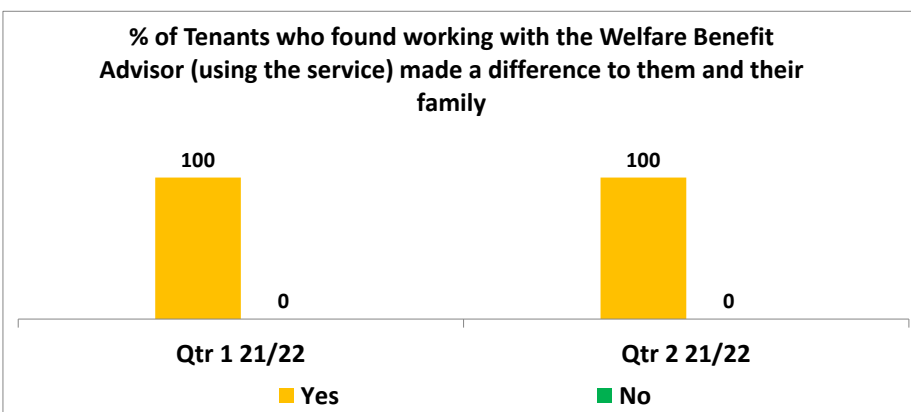


WBO 3 (Priority 1)

**Satisfaction Tenancy Support Team**



**Satisfaction with the Welfare Benefits Team**



**What is Performance telling us about our customer satisfaction?**

The levels of satisfaction with the Tenancy Support Service reflects the positive impact of the service on tenancy sustainability due to their success in maximising the incomes of the tenants that engage with them.

**2 Rents Team case studies showing the benefits made to tenants lives.**

**Case studied 1**

A referral from recovery a officer working within the rents team; a tenant affected by the benefit cap, is not managing rent payments and was building up rent arrears . A discretionary housing application was completed to assist with shortfall whilst income was maximised. Resident advised the officer of child’s mental health issues and the daily struggles the family has. The officer completed a child Disability Living Allowance form and asked child's support workers to provide supporting evidence, child Disability Living Allowance was awarded. Now the child is in receipt of DLA and the resident will no longer be affected by the benefit cap, the officer also completed an on-line Carers Allowance application form and Carers Premium was awarded. Officer contacted child tax credit and advised them child is now in receipt of Disability Living Allowance and the rates and award dates. They will now add this to claim as the family will be entitled to the disabled child element, which has also been awarded. The Resident explained their own mental health struggles and how it affects them daily. The officer completed a Personal Independence Payment application.. The PIP assessment was completed as a conference call with resident.

**Weekly Income before team Caerphilly intervention Total = £380.00**

**Weekly income total after team Caerphilly intervention = £680.00**

**£300.00 extra per week - £15,600 extra per year.**

**Case study 2**

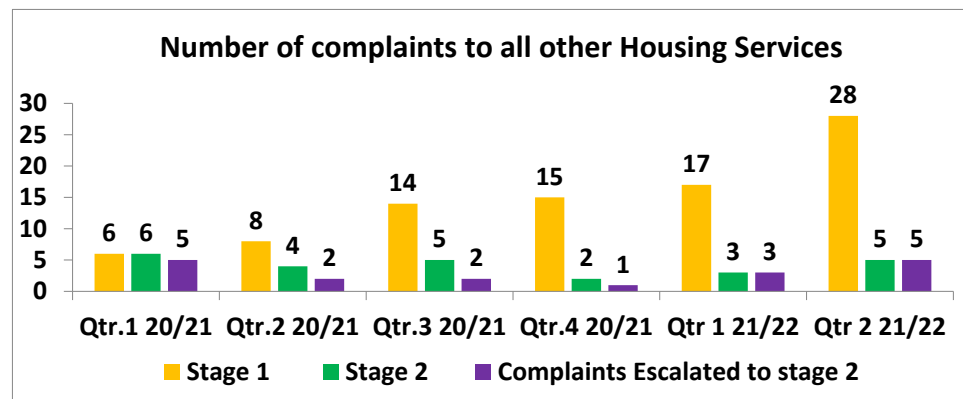
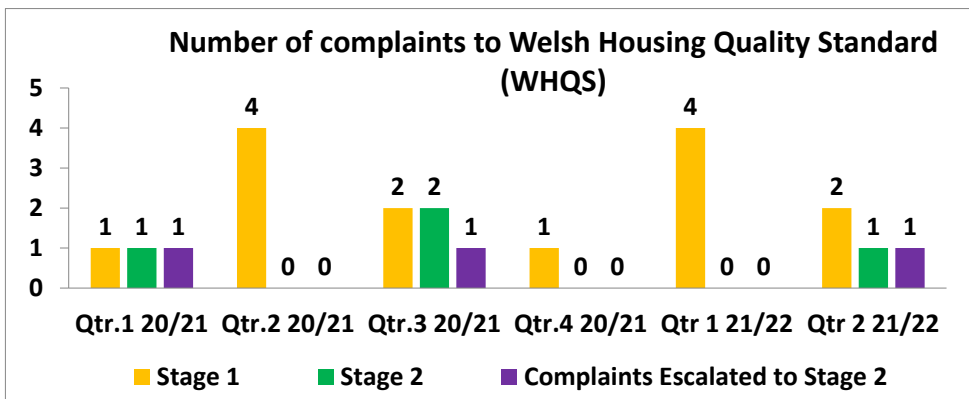
A resident with multiple health conditions was assisted by a rents officer to complete a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) application which was awarded. The residents partner who also has multiple health conditions was assisted by the officer to complete an online Attendance Allowance application form which was also awarded. Along with Pension credit have now awarded with Severe Disability Premium

**Weekly Income before team Caerphilly intervention Total = 200.00 - couple**

**Weekly income after team Caerphilly intervention £450.00 - couple**

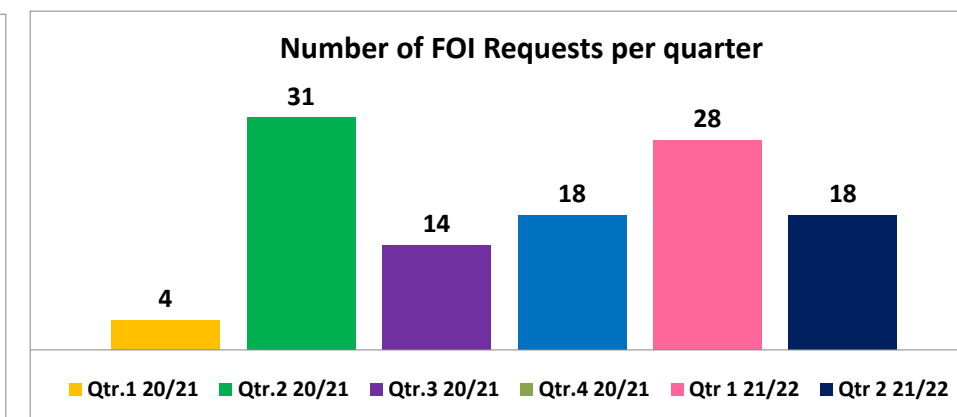
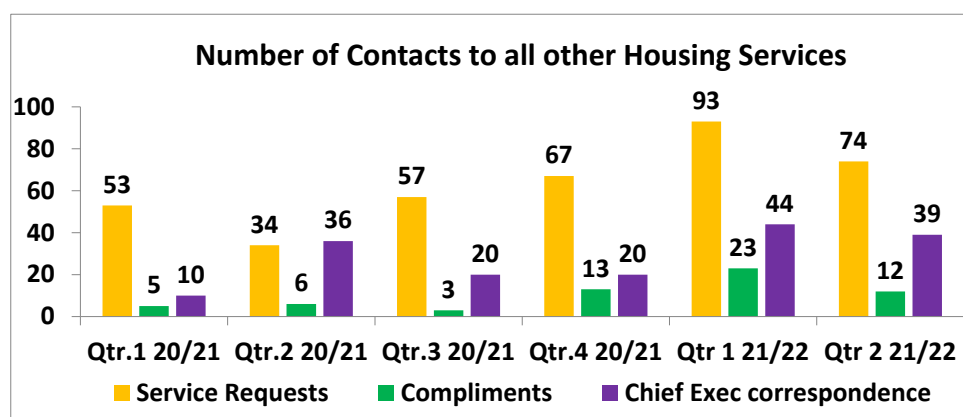
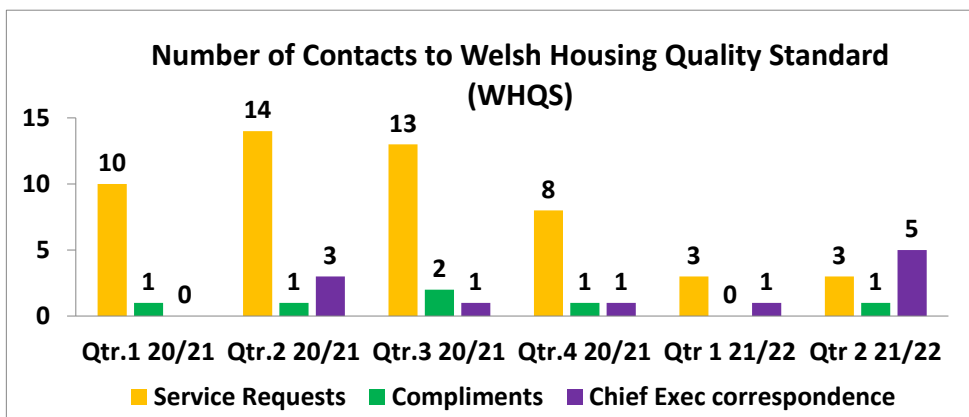
**Additional income of £250 per week £13000 per year**

**WHQS** - The satisfaction data for WHQS evidences that whilst return rates for satisfaction surveys is less than we would have hoped there is a high level of satisfaction with the works carried out to date. Customer satisfaction with the works undertaken by the in house workforce has been consistently higher than for external contractors and, over time, we have increased the capacity of the in house work force to undertake WHQS works.



Chief Executives correspondence are all contacts referring to Caerphilly Homes, which come via the Chief Executives office. If these contacts are deemed to be complaints they will be counted as such by the Caerphilly Homes complaints team and counted in the complaints graphs above. They are then separated from all other Chief Executives correspondence in the contacts graph, not to be double counted. Chief Executives correspondence can include letters from AM's and MPS on the behalf of members of public.

On 1st April 2013, the Council implemented a Corporate Complaints Policy to reflect the model policy introduced by Welsh Government. The Policy was subsequently reviewed and updated in 2016, however, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales has recently issued guidance and a requirement for authorities to review their complaints procedures and update them, which was undertaken and implemented in April this year. Following meetings with Complaints Standards Authorities team, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales is expecting to see an increase in the number of complaints logged for Caerphilly Homes going forward due to changes in categorisation.



#### What is our Customer intelligence telling us?

##### Quarter 1 complaints details

There were four WHQS stage one complaints, one related to a tenant being unhappy with the delay in starting the works, another concerned asbestos that may have been disturbed whilst works were being carried out, another related to a request for copies of the survey carried out on the property 2 years prior as it was felt the agreed works had changed and finally a complaint was received from a resident who reported the contractors had accessed the property without permission and cut the padlock off the gate. The resident also reported the work carried out to the dividing wall was of poor quality and needed rectifying. Three of the complaints were not upheld and one upheld. All four complaints have been resolved and the case closed. No Stage 2 complaints were recorded for WHQS works during this period. There were four Housing Management stage one complaints and two stage two complaints. One stage two complaint escalated from a stage 1 complaint in this quarter and one stage two complaint escalated from the previous quarter (quarter 4). One stage one complaint related to an owner occupier knocking down the garden shed and-discovering a potential encroachment on their land. The second related to a resident who had a water leak resulting in a large water bill and requested compensation from Housing. The third was received from a tenant requesting a boundary wall or fence be erected as hedge had been removed by tenants and now concerned about children's safety and the fourth was from a tenant unhappy that it is his responsibility to pay for flea treatment. Three of the complaints were not upheld and one was upheld, they have been resolved and records closed. One stage two complaint escalated from a stage one and the other was originally considered at stage one in the previous quarter (quarter 4). Both stage two complaints were not upheld and have since been resolved. Adaptations had one stage one complaint during this period and one stage two complaint which escalated from a stage one complaint from the previous quarter (quarter four). The stage one complaint related to a Sub contractor who called on a Sunday without notice to fit handrails when the rear steps were not fitted in the garden. The complaint was upheld and is now resolved. The stage two complaint was received from an advocate questioning why we are not carrying out adaptations rather than suggesting the residents move. This complaint was not upheld however the advocate escalated the case to the Ombudsman who recommended a 'quick fix'. This is currently being implemented. Allocations received four stage one complaints. The first complaint was received from a tenant who advised they were in band 3 for rehousing when they were entitled to be in band 1 due to personal events, the second complaint was received from a sister as applicant has been in band 2 for 5 years and is still waiting for a property despite supporting letters from doctors. The third complaint related to a breach of data protection on a housing application and the fourth complaint was from an applicant who was unhappy at the way a housing application has been handled. Three of the complaints were not upheld and one was upheld. There were no stage two complaints recorded for this period. Leasehold Services received one stage one complaint. The leaseholder was unhappy with the quality of paint work carried out on the railings and fencing. This was reviewed and the complaint was upheld with lessons learned being noted. There were no stage two complaints recorded for this period. Private Landlord Services received one stage one complaint. The business owner raised a complaint as they were concerned with the condition of the property next door and felt Caerphilly Homes were not acting. This case was not upheld and subsequently closed. There were no stage two complaints recorded for this period. Rents Section received two stage one complaints. Both were recorded as not upheld. The first complaint was received from a resident appealing the former arrears balance on a previous address and the second was received from a tenant who felt frustrated and overwhelmed by the prospect of action against them due to arrears. Both were recorded as not upheld. There were no stage two complaints recorded for this period.

##### Quarter 2 complaint details

There were two WHQS stage one complaints, one related to a front wall collapsing and the other related to renewal of dividing fences. Both were recorded as not upheld and one progressed to stage 2 which was subsequently upheld. The cases are now resolved, and records closed. There were nine Housing Management stage one complaints and one stage two complaint. The stage two complaint escalated from a stage 1 complaint from the previous quarter. The first stage one complaint related to an owner occupier having to pay fifty percent towards the erection of a new dividing fence, the second related to a tenant requesting a vent be blocked up, the third was a tenant asking for external stairs to be water tight and sealed so an electric scooter could be stored under there and the fourth related to neighbouring garden conditions. All four complaints were not upheld, and the records closed. The following five complaints were upheld, firstly a complaint was received from a tenant who was told a mutual exchange could not proceed which had financial implications, another was received from an executor unhappy with the lack of correspondence received for rental payments, another complaint was regarding property conditions and another was in relation to the security and boarding up of a property which looked unsightly. The last upheld complaint was due to the poor service received whilst reporting over grown garden conditions. Following investigation all complaints were resolved. The stage two complaint related to a flea treatment and following an investigation the complaint was not upheld. Building Maintenance and Heating had four stage one complaints with one progressing to stage two. All four residents were unhappy with the works associated with Thermal Earth Heating Installation and the damage caused to their properties. All complaints were upheld but have since been resolved and the records closed. There was one Tenancy Enforcement stage one complaint recorded relating to a resident who was unhappy with the service provided by the Tenancy Enforcement Section. This complaint was not upheld, and the case closed. Response Repairs had four stage one complaints and two stage two complaints during this period. The first stage one complaint related to an appointment for a boiler repair, the second and third related to an issue with a front door, and the fourth was regarding the installation of a bath. All four complaints were not upheld. Both stage two complaints progressed from a stage one and related to issues with the front door and both complaints were not upheld. Allocations received five stage one complaints, one of which progressed to a stage two complaint. The first complaint related to a family being matched to a property not big enough for five people, the second was in relation to an applicant being released from prison and housed in temporary accommodation for ten months, the third was from an applicant who felt they had been on the waiting list for too long and the fourth was an applicant who was offered a property but this offer was subsequently withdrawn. Three of the complaints were not upheld and one was upheld. The fifth complaint was received from a tenant unhappy with a response received from an MP as they felt it was factually incorrect. This record is still currently open. The stage two complaint escalated from a stage one complaint in quarter four. This related to the data breach and was not upheld.

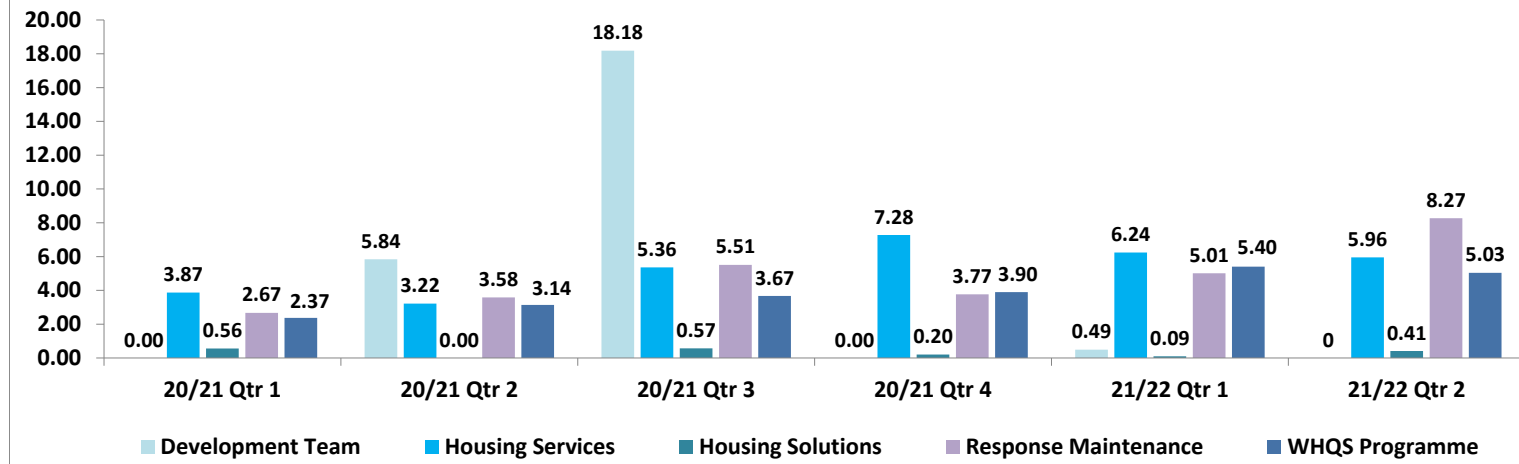
#### Regulatory Proposals

<p><b>Name of Report - WHQS Follow Up</b> (Issued Jan 2019, Reported to Cabinet 30 Jan 19)</p>	<p><b>Regulatory Proposal -</b> On 27th October 2021, the Cabinet will consider a new Local Housing Strategy entitled 'An Agenda for Change' which sets out its long-term vision and future priorities for the delivery and management of homes in Caerphilly (P2)</p>	<p><b>Action-</b> To implement the priorities and actions contained within the new Local Housing Strategy in collaboration with partners via the formulation of a Delivery and</p>	<p><b>Previous Update -</b> The process to develop a Local Housing Strategy started in July 2020 with the appointment of Arc4 Ltd consultants. Arc4 have been working closely with officers and partners throughout the pandemic and have produced a portfolio of background information including a concept document which is currently out for consultation with stakeholders. Public engagement will follow throughout the Spring in order to produce a draft. The Strategy document will be refined throughout the summer and be presented to Cabinet in October for approval.</p>	<p><b>Service Officer Responsible -</b> Jane Roberts-Waite</p>	<p><b>Deadline -</b> October 2021</p>	<p><b>Current Update -</b> The new Local Housing Strategy entitled 'An Agenda for Change' will be considered by Cabinet on the 27th October 2021. The strategy sets out the vision and priorities for the management and delivery of affordable homes in the county borough over the next 5 years. The strategy will be underpinned by a Delivery Plan which will breathe life into the strategy through a portfolio of actions and ensure its deliverability. An investment plan will also be developed and will set out clearly how the actions contained within the Delivery Plan will be resourced and funded. Arc4 Ltd have been commissioned to formulate the delivery plan and a series of workshops (linked to the 5 priorities in the strategy) are currently underway.</p>	<p><b>Status -</b> Ongoing</p>	<p><b>Percentage complete -</b> Local Housing Strategy - 95% Delivery Plan - 50% Investment Plan - 0%</p>
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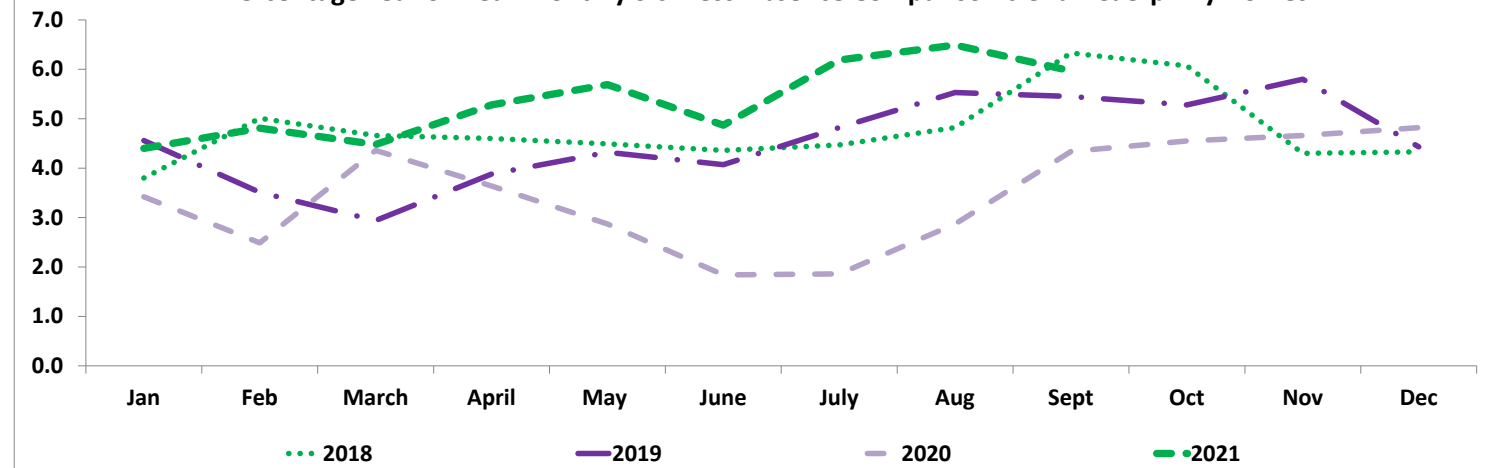




Percentage Quarterly Sickness - Caerphilly Homes



Percentage Year on Year Monthly Sickness Absence Comparison trend - Caerphilly Homes



Q3 Monthly Breakdown	April 2021			May 2021			June 2021		
% Sickness Absence	Short	Long	Overall	Short	Long	Overall	Short	Long	Overall
Development Team	1.52	0	1.52	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Services	2.10	5.38	7.47	0.86	5.34	6.19	0.28	4.79	5.07
Housing Solutions	0	0	0	0.29	0	0.29	0	0	0
Response Maintenance	1.12	3.27	4.38	2.26	3.75	6.02	0.85	3.82	4.67
WHQS Programme	0.89	4.17	5.06	1.35	4.18	5.53	2.39	3.22	5.61

Q4 Monthly Breakdown	July 2021			August 2021			September 2021		
% Sickness Absence	Short	Long	Overall	Short	Long	Overall	Short	Long	Overall
Development Team	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Services	2.54	4.14	6.69	0.28	5.65	5.93	1.45	3.81	5.25
Housing Solutions	0.32	0	0.32	0.65	0	0.65	0.13	0	0.13
Response Maintenance	2.77	4.81	7.59	1.60	7.41	9.02	3.02	5.18	8.20
WHQS Programme	2.06	2.85	4.91	3.02	2.05	5.06	2.76	2.37	5.13

Housing Workforce Information 2021/22						
	Qtr. 1	Qtr. 2	Qtr. 3	Qtr. 4	Qtr. 1	Qtr. 2
Voluntary Leavers*	6	4	7	6	6	6
Other Leavers**	1	2	0	0	0	5
<b>Total Leavers</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>
New Entrants	0	0	0	5	2	9
Agency	20	18	16	17	16	12
<b>Headcount</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>471</b>
<b>FTE</b>	<b>480.40</b>	<b>473.80</b>	<b>465.7</b>	<b>464.51</b>	<b>461.91</b>	<b>457.03</b>
55 and Over	139	137	139	142	143	139
% of headcount	28.08%	28.07%	29.02%	29.58%	29.97%	29.51%

\*Voluntary Reasons: Flexible retirement, retirement, settlement agreement, voluntary resignation & severance, Early retirement, Personal reasons, Transfer, VER release of Pension Benefits, Early retirement by mutual consent on grounds of business.

\*\*Other Leaver Reasons: Death in service, Dismissal, Dismissal on ill health grounds, End of fixed term contract, End of relief employment, Gross Misconduct, Sickness Absence Management, Frustrated Contract, Compulsory Redundancy, failed Probation.

### What is our Workforce Information telling us?

Despite operating in a pandemic situation, sickness absence reduced in the first 2 quarters of 20/21. There has however been a gradual increase in absences since then, with a small number of extended long term absences that have a significant impact on returns for some teams. These staff continue to be supported by their managers and colleagues in HR. There have also been a number of predominantly short term absences associated with the pandemic.

The increase in new starters does not reflect the appointment of replacements needed for those who have left the service in recent quarters, with all teams experiencing ongoing difficulties in recruitment and retention across the full range of roles. It includes appointments to a new Empty Property Team. Leavers include those leaving due to retirement, including for ill health reasons following extended absences

**What is our financial information telling us?**

The Housing Revenue Account for 2021/22 is £52m and variances are typical for a budget this size especially with over 500 staff employed within the service. The HRA remains viable although it has been significantly impacted due to Covid-19. Welsh Government have offered financial assistance to Local Authorities for Covid-19 expenditure but the Housing Revenue Account does not qualify for any assistance as a social landlord. Conversely, expenditure has reduced in major services such as WHQS and Housing Repairs Operations (HRO) due to the inability to enter tenants homes (although essential work remained). The impact of this can be seen on the capital programme projections, with a reduction in spend. This is due to the delay in progressing the PAMS programme whilst still trying to finalise the WHQS programme. Welsh Government (WG) have extended the deadline to achieve WHQS to December 2021. As at Q2 99.76% of the externals and 99.95% of the internals are compliant with the target of December 2021 on track. The small amount of properties outstanding are for external works however, and this could be hindered by weather conditions particularly in the last quarter of the year.

General Fund Housing is utilising its Homelessness Prevention funding in an attempt to reduce homelessness, evictions and B&B accommodation as well as providing temporary accommodation as part of its statutory duty. During Covid-19 pressure was placed on this service to accommodate homeless persons and on average 70 people per month continue to be accommodated. This has been fully funded by the WG Covid-19 hardship fund.

Private Housing agency fee income remains a concern within this budget but WG have continued to offer financial assistance for eligible loss of income. Officers were unable to enter properties during lockdown to process applications and carry out work such as disabled adaptations and home repair grants meaning fee income could not be generated. This service also assists with the WHQS programme

Housing Services	Original Estimate	Revised Estimate	Anticipated Outturn	Anticipated Variance
2020/21 outturn	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22
	£000's	£000's	£000's	Under / (Over)
<b>Housing Revenue Account (HRA)</b>				
Building Maintenance (inc RCCO)	31,018,422	31,018,422	30,935,086	83,336
Public Sector Landlord	6,980,792	6,980,792	6,585,993	394,799
Capital Financing & BDP	9,063,135	9,063,135	8,892,569	170,566
Strategy	1,919,958	1,919,958	1,711,295	208,663
Central Recharges	2,745,024	2,745,024	2,745,024	-
Income (net of voids)	(51,727,331)	(51,727,331)	(51,831,081)	103,750
<b>TOTAL HRA</b>			<b>(961,115)</b>	<b>961,115</b>
<b>HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>	<b>32,884,855</b>	<b>32,884,855</b>	<b>17,527,017</b>	<b>15,357,838</b>
<b>GENERAL FUND HOUSING</b>	<b>1,353,825</b>	<b>1,323,825</b>	<b>1,238,004</b>	<b>85,821</b>
<b>PRIVATE HOUSING</b>	<b>302,937</b>	<b>362,937</b>	<b>422,055</b>	<b>(59,118)</b>

**What is our Assets information telling us?**

Our housing stock is now in a good condition and nearing full compliance with WHQS with less than 1% of our stock outstanding as at Q2. Our financial position also ensures that the standard can be maintained going forward and there is scope to contribute towards meeting the WG decarbonisation agenda and the provision of new affordable housing, although this will need to be reviewed on an ongoing basis as projects come forward. The post asset management programme (PAM) has been agreed and was due to start mid year, however the delay on the WHQS Programme has set this back which has resulted in significant underspends on the capital programme, which will be carried forward into next financial year. The PAMs programme focuses on maintaining the external structures of our council homes.

Office accommodation is also being reviewed along with new ways of delivering our services and this could result in efficiency being achieved through staff relocation and agile working. Relocating staff from Cherry Tree House to Tiryberth has been completed and staff have been agile working successfully since March 2020.

There is a requirement for an increase in the provision of temporary or move on accommodation to assist with increasing levels of homelessness and this is actively being pursued.



Ref & Links	Topic (& Service)	Risks, Opportunities & Impacts	Mitigating Actions (What Actions can we take to address the risks or realise the opportunity)	Progress Update (Are the mitigating actions reducing the risk or realising the opportunity?)	Risk Level 2020-21 Q2	Risk Level 2020-21 Q3	Risk Level 2020-21 Q4	Risk Level 2021-22 Q1	Risk Level 2021-22 Q2	Does the risk affect the Well-being of our Communities?	Well-being Risk Level
  CMT	Brexit	<p>The decision to leave the EU and the looming deadline to secure an exit deal has created considerable uncertainty.</p> <p>Moving forward it is difficult to determine what impact the exit from the EU will have in the medium to longer-term for Caerphilly CBC and our communities. However, in the short-term possible negative impacts from a no deal scenario include the potential for workforce supply shortages in some areas and the possibility of some disruption to the supply of goods and services.</p>	<p>Housing is participating in the Corporate Brexit Working Group and undertaking service specific analysis in preparation for the various Brexit scenarios. We have a dedicated Supply Partner, a Welsh SME on a 10 year contract so we do not need to go through frameworks etc when we need to restock supplies.</p>	<p>There remains a great deal of uncertainty around the long term impacts of the decision to leave the EU. The position is being monitored closely and CMT has established a Brexit Working Group to further consider and monitor the potential consequences of Brexit and the mitigating actions that will be required to assist in managing risks. In relation to Housing, we continue to work closely with our supply partner to limit the impact of Brexit on material supplies and we also look to engage local business where possible, however the limited supply of some core products to assist in the manufacture of our specified materials and associated increase in costs is starting to impact on material supplies with extended lead times on many items. The impact on workforce is not currently a concern.</p>	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Unable to assess currently due to the level of uncertainty.	Unable to assess currently due to the level of uncertainty.
CMT	Medium Term Financial Plan	<p>Insufficient resources to deliver services at expected level. Negative impact on staff morale. Budget pressures will have an impact upon service delivery.</p>	<p>The Authority has a strong track record of delivering balanced budgets and planning is underway to ensure that the 2021/22 Draft Budget Proposals are presented to Cabinet on the 13th January 2021. <i>Housing requires a budget review to align its financial resources more effectively with its current service delivery</i></p>	<p>We have faced an unprecedented situation this year with details of the 2021/22 Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement not being released by the Welsh Government until the 22nd December 2020 (normally received in October each year). The Provisional Settlement included a 3.1% uplift in WG funding for Caerphilly CBC and the 2021/22 Draft Budget Proposals were endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting on the 13th January 2021. The 3.1% uplift in WG funding along with a proposed increase of 3.9% in the Council Tax meant that no new savings were required to balance the budget for the 2021/22 financial year. The Provisional Settlement does not cover the financial implications of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, both in terms of additional costs that continue to be incurred and income losses. These will continue to be funded through grants and the position will be kept under close review as we through the financial year. Financial assistance for the increased presentations of homelessness during the pandemic has been funded from Welsh Government, together with the replacement of lost income from Private Sector Housing agenda fees. This has been confirmed up to March 2022. However, financial funding has not been made available for the Housing Revenue Account</p> <p>The future funding situation for Local Government is likely to be challenging due to the unprecedented fiscal impact of the pandemic and the strain that this will put on public finances for years to come. An updated indicative Medium-Term Financial Plan shows a potential savings requirement for the council of £20.7m for the four-year period 2022/23 to 2025/26. The council's transformation programme will be a key driver in ensuring that financial resilience is maintained in future years. The draft budget settlement for 2022/23 is not expected until 21/12/21 where the Medium Term Financial Plan option appraisal can be updated and reviewed further.</p>	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Effective financial planning is a key element in ensuring that the Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 are met.	High (Short to Medium term)
CMT	Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme	<p>Everyone in Wales should have the opportunity to live in a good quality home within a safe and secure community. To help achieve this, the physical standard and condition of existing housing must be maintained and improved to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS). Failure to meet WHQS for all our social housing stock by the revised deadline of 2021.</p>	<p>The WHQS programme has its own specific risk register which is reviewed and updated by the Project Board quarterly.</p> <p>The highest risks are:</p> <p>Failure to achieve programme objectives - the probability level has greatly reduced as we near the December 31st deadline with the internal works programme almost complete apart from acceptable fails (timing of remedy, tenant choice &amp; Covid) although the acceptable fails are constantly being updated &amp; validated as each element is completed as part of a relet etc. This is ongoing and will reduce the Acceptable Fails to the lowest numbers as possible.</p> <p>The focus has been the outstanding external contracts which are now unfortunately weather dependent. The WHQS elements within these contracts are being prioritised hence although the contracts may not be complete it is expected the WHQS elements will. The outstanding work within these contracts will be pre paint repairs and maintenance.</p> <p>The in-house workforce are completing the additional internal works. This includes the transfer of contracts from the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) of approximately 150 properties that ensured continuity for our in house workforce which did delivered better performance and higher tenant satisfaction levels. Some external works were also transferred to the In house workforce following the liquidation of the Contractor (Creobuild) earlier this year as it was felt that retendering would have risked achieving the December 31st deadline. The completion date for full compliance is currently projecting 31st December 2021 which is the revised WG deadline date.</p>	<p>The programme is now constantly being reviewed with outstanding work undertaken in-house to provide us with a level of certainty and control as we complete the programme. There remain concerns in relation to material supply in particular for contracts on our leasehold properties. This situation is currently being closely monitored and has been raised with WG who advise that other authorities have encountered similar problems.</p> <p>A significant percentage of work to the sheltered housing schemes is being undertaken by the in-house workforce. The programme is progressing with works on track to be completed by the revised 2021 deadline, however due to work content and asbestos issues, three schemes require full decants which will delay completion, but discussions with WG indicate that these can be categorised as acceptable fails. Internal work suspended as a consequence of the Covid pandemic but reinstated following further guidance from WG. Almost all internal work carried out by the In-house workforce has been completed. External works have continued although progress has been affected due to material supplies, social distancing and some households preferring not to have work undertaken at this time. Further lockdown arrangements could obviously impact on our performance, but regular meetings are taking place with WG and indications are that we will still complete the programme by the revised deadline of December 2021 with a very small percentage outstanding (less than 1%)</p> <p>The Housing Revenue Account business plan submitted to WG in March 2021 shows the HRA remains viable with the possibility of additional borrowing to undertake new build. HRA surpluses are generally utilised towards funding the WHQS Programme and then earmarked for potential new build options and decarbonisation works once the programme has been achieved. This is still the case albeit the timeline has moved on.</p>	Green	Green	Medium	Medium	Medium	<p>Yes - Low quality housing impacts the health and well-being of tenants and there is a vast array of empirical evidence that shows good quality housing, located in sustainable communities is known to have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of its occupants. 'A healthier Wales'.</p> <p>Providing good quality housing also contributes to 'A More Equal Wales', giving people a chance to fulfil their potential.</p>	Medium

Homelessness	Demand for homelessness fluctuates considerably based on demand, demographics and changing legislation and the Covid pandemic, The service needs to be flexible to adapt to these changes and have a number of options available to be able to support individuals and where necessary provide suitable accommodation to discharge the homelessness duty.	Support providers and specialists are used to provide support to assist those that are homeless and to sustain tenancies to avoid homelessness occurring. Homelessness strategy has been developed in collaboration with neighbouring authorities. The availability of temporary accommodation to be reviewed to reduce/avoid use of Bed & Breakfasts. Look at opportunities to further increase the availability of properties in the private sector as an alternative means of accommodating homeless persons. Work closely with the police and probation service to plan accommodation for prison leavers. Review the type of accommodation that is required to meet the needs of those presenting to the service forward so that this can be considered in longer term future planning  Presentations and pressures on the service and emergency accommodation provision continue and we continue to seek alternative forms of emergency accommodation other than bed and breakfast accommodation. The demand is likely to increase as we move toward the inclement weather months and the directive from WG has not changed with everybody being accommodated . In addition the decision to not allow Night Shelters to open will place additional pressures on current provision. Support services continue to provide targeted support to those in emergency accommodation but there have been increases in breaches of occupancy and residents behaviour which are placing additional pressures on support workers and staff within the units. In order to move people on the Housing solutions team continue to work with both private sector and RSL landlords to maximise move on .	The Covid pandemic has resulted in increased pressures on this service, however this will be an ongoing process due to lockdown arrangements, policy and legislative changes. Cornerstone, The Wallich and Gofal are main support providers, but additional support provided by in-house Occupational Therapy. and mental health provision. Regional Homelessness Strategy has been completed and agreed actions being progressed. Use of Bed & Breakfast has seen an increase this year, therefore additional temporary accommodation is actively being sourced, with some success. Good success has been achieved in the private sector, with approximately 85 properties and 44 landlords currently being used to assist with homelessness via the Caerphilly Keys initiative. The prison leavers pathway has been implemented and is assisting in the forward planning of suitable accommodation for relevant persons. Out of county placements have been necessary to provide emergency accommodation following the closure of in county hotel and B&B businesses. Success achieved for additional funding from WG of approx £1m. A new Housing Solutions Manager has been appointed following the retirement of the previous postholder.  We continue to work with landlords to provide emergency accommodation and an additional 10 bed HMO unit and 4 bed HMO unit have been brought online to assist with the demand in emergency accommodation provision and we continue to explore additional avenues with proprietors to increase the provision through the inclement weather months. In addition to this a full review is being undertaken to look at the longer term model of emergency accommodation for CCBC and this will be outlined in the Rapid Rehousing Strategy in 2022.  Support services have been realigned to ensure consistency within each accommodation provision and in addition to this specialist substance misuse and mental health workers also support the residents within the accommodation units to assist in tackling some of the challenging behaviours that have been reported.  A new website is due to be launched to promote Caerphilly Keys and to target a wider landlord audience with a view of additional landlords signing up to the scheme. The landlord Forum has also re started and Caerphilly Keys presented at the forum as an additional marketing tool to attract additional landlords. A specialist Common Housing Register for the Housing Solutions Team has been implemented to ensure applications to the register for Homeless Households are completed in a timely fashion and refreshed to maximise move on opportunity and in addition to this work is on going with partners to maximise move on for clients on the Housing First Scheme . Further one partner provides the Housing Solutions team with units of accommodation on new build sights for a star flat, complex needs case and Housing applicant.  General Fund Housing is utilising its Homelessness Prevention funding in an attempt to reduce homelessness, evictions and Bed & breakfast accommodation as well as providing temporary accommodation as part of its statutory duty. During Covid-19, pressure was placed on this service to accommodate homeless persons and on average 70 people per month continue to be accommodated. This is funded by the WG Covid-19 hardship fund.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Yes - Being homeless can increase a persons chances of experiencing physical and or mental health problems. Relieving homelessness and the need to sleep rough will reduce costs to the council, the criminal justice system and health service. Contributing to 'A healthier Wales' and 'A more equal Wales'.	Medium
Universal Credit (U.C.)	Following central governments welfare reform, Universal credit was introduced in CCBC for all new claimants in September 2018. This combines potentially 6 benefit claims into one monthly payment which is made in arrears to the claimant. This payment could include housing costs. The risk to the housing service is the financial impact this system could have on the tenant, the impact on sustaining tenancies and increased rent arrears	Additional support has been provided to Universal Credit claimants via Tenant Support, Welfare Benefit and Floating Support Officers, including assistance with claim completions, budgeting and basic debt advice, warm homes discount scheme, subsidised water tariffs, applications for charitable assistance, food parcels, Personal Independent Payment applications and referrals to employability programmes. Due to the potential impact on individuals as well as rental income, quarterly reports have been presented to PDM. Resources regularly reviewed and impact on rents is closely monitored.	Rent arrears have continued to increase with the roll out of Universal Credit and partly due to the ongoing pandemic situation and as a consequence a Financial Crisis helpline has been opened and additional support staff have been appointed. However this will not be sustainable, as households move onto U.C. If the current pattern continues then rent arrears will increase and it will not be financially viable to provide additional resources. WG have commissioned a study into the impact of U.C. in Wales and we will contribute to this exercise. Regular update reports are being provided to PDM. Discretionary Housing Payments continue to be used to provide temporary financial support to those who meet the criteria and advice provided in relation to rehousing options as a means of reducing rent costs. Face to face support has been replaced with remote support, which has been successful in maximising income, however formal rent recovery processes, including possession actions have been withdrawn and replaced with attempts to support, in line with WG guidance.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Yes	Medium	
Changes to supply and demand chain means rising costs of construction materials and contractors. Lack of available contractors.	The availability of contractors, material shortages and cost increases are having a significant impact on Housing's ability to progress with day to day building projects, including grants and loans. Within Private Sector Housing the current schedules of rates against which tenders are compared are now unrealistic in the current market, even following recent uplifts. Contractors are increasingly declining the opportunity to submit tenders and the prices of those that do are far in excess of our rates. This is a particular concern as all of these products, such as disabled adaptations, are targeted for our most vulnerable residents.  There are several factors causing this impact, such as a buoyant UK construction sector as a result of public investment in their own properties (from money saved through the pandemic) as well as public sector infrastructure investment. International influence on scarcity (and hence price) of certain raw materials (steel and timber for example) There are Import backlog issues, part linked to the Brexit ports issue and shipping industry backlogs. Construction material providers are still recovering from supply backlog when production ceased in lockdown but also many staff were furloughed so some suppliers still not fully staffed. One of the main issues is the significance of price increases of basic building materials such as steel, timber, cement and concrete which is having an adverse cost effect.	The problem of extended start dates from willing contractors cannot be overcome in the short term due to the heightened demand from the private sector but Private Sector Housing have suspended the use of a schedule of rates and moved to a competitive tender model based on the principles of Standing orders. The schedule of rates is being comprehensively reviewed with a view to reintroduction in 22/23. There may be some opportunities to work with procurement to identify other reasons for a reduction in volume of contracts being tendered.  The Single Source Supply arrangement has been particularly beneficial because the relationship is such that we are a key customer and they are able to source on our behalf, holding materials in readiness for our call-off. Though the situation is not to a point where there are no materials available, our supplier is starting to be impacted	This is a new risk for 2021/22, therefore there is no update at this time			Medium	Medium	Yes- this will have a direct impact on vulnerable people within housing, pupils in schools and communities and ensuring access around the borough for travel and work. As Housing projects are Well-being objectives this is also key to the Corporate Plan success.	Medium	





**2021/22 Six Month Update** Address the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's well-being

**What went well in first six months of 2021/22:**

Service delivery is still heavily influenced by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. As such the pandemic continues to present challenges to our service users and to the services we provide. Although Welsh Government restrictions have been relaxed in recent months, there is a longer-term legacy felt by the pandemic, which our services users may continue to be affected by. This will no doubt affect the way we provide services for the remainder of this Wellbeing Objective.

During this period of sustained of pressure many aspects of the service continue to perform well including:

- Being on target to meet Welsh Government's revised target date for ensuring tenants' homes meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.
- Having managed to maintain and enhance levels of support to help people manage their accommodation and help people with their money.
- Utilising Welsh Government funding to provide temporary accommodation to homeless people during the pandemic.
- Significantly increasing the number of tenants provided with support and advice to help mitigate the effects of welfare reform.
- Exceeding the target of providing support to council tenants to access welfare benefits.
- Exceeding the target for the value of financial savings generated for council tenants as a direct result of support.
- Made good progress in the development of a new Local Housing Strategy, Local Housing Market Assessment and Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment.
- Supporting our housing associations partners to draw down Welsh Government grant to build new affordable homes.
- Continuing to actively develop a pool of accessible quality, affordable private rented accommodation for people not able to access social housing, through the Caerphilly Keys project.
- Continuing to provide various forms of support to people who are homeless and rough sleepers.
- Continuing to work closely with the Supporting People team to provide support for council tenants to enable them to maintain their tenancies.
- Making good progress with the Supporting People team to develop a Housing First project for people with complex needs.
- Continuing to provide support to people to live safely and independently in their own homes through the major and minor works adaptation programmes, although this work has been impacted by contractor and material shortages and cost increases.
- Continuing to work in partnership with RCT CBC regarding Valleys Task Force grants for empty properties.
- Producing an Empty Properties Action Plan and submitting to Welsh Government.
- Securing grant funding for a project to target landlords who are not complying with the minimum energy efficiency standard regulations.
- Having made good progress at the Council's first two new build developments in Trecynedd and Trethomas and completed the handover of 6 new Council homes at Bedwellty Fields, Aberbargoed.

**What difference have we made in 2021/22 to date:**

**What difference have we made in 2021/22 to date:**

Although the pandemic continues to have an influence on us meeting the needs of both Caerphilly's tenants and residents and fulfilling the goals of the Well-being Objective, in the first six months of 2021/22 we have:

- Generated £1,429,974 in savings for council tenants between April and September, providing 1,972 tenants affected by welfare reforms with advice and support to minimise the effect of these reforms, and supported another 561 tenants to access the benefits they are entitled to.
- Help tenants to reduce their debt by £302,373 and generated a further £2,065,423 of additional income via Housing Support Grants.
- Prevented 3,839 residents to becoming homeless with supported accommodation and floating support working with our Supporting People Team.
- Supported 3,358 residents to manage their money with new money management skills.
- Provided 20 affordable homes via section 106, help Caerphilly residents find affordable housing.
- 7 of the 70 approved Valleys Taskforce Grants completed works, bring long-term empty homes back into use, to increase the number of available homes in the borough.
- We completed 466 minor and 72 major adaptations, alongside another 51 Disability Grants and 7 stair lifts, helping residents to remain in their own homes which are appropriate to their needs.
- Additionally, a further 76 elderly and disabled residents were assisted by Enable Funding and Care & repair to remain at home.
- Improved the accessibility of 3 sheltered housing schemes, by implementing vamp access to one, automatic doors to a laundry room in another and handrails to a 3<sup>rd</sup> enabling residents to live more independently.
- The 38 new homes that were built on at the former Caerphilly magistrates court are now in use and providing eco-friendly Passivhaus homes to tenants.

**What have we learnt and where do we need to improve in 2021/22 to date:**

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 meant that the Council had to reshape services to provide support to vulnerable people and communities. Some of our services were deemed to be non-essential and staff were temporarily redeployed to support essential services. As a result, performance for these aspects of the service were below that reported in previous updates.

Although Welsh Government Covid-19 restrictions have since been relaxed the impact of the situation remains and is expected to do so for some time. As a result some of the ways of working adopted during the pandemic will need to remain in place for the remainder of this Wellbeing Objective.

An analysis of performance in the first 6 months of 2021/22 shows that most aspects of the service are performing at the anticipated levels. Improvements may need to be made in the following areas:

- Have needed to delay the implementation of the Post Asset Management Strategy due to the WHQS programme being extended by 12 months due to the pandemic.
- The external works programme is weather dependent and may overrun the Welsh Government deadline of December 2021.
- Only made limited progress has been made on the exercise to increase the percentage of social housing stock that has an accessibility code.
- Provided a smaller number of grants and loans due to restrictions imposed by Welsh Government due to the pandemic, the associated redeployment of staff to support essential services, and shortages of materials and contractors with associated increases in costs.
- Below the target for empty properties being returned to beneficial use due to much-reduced levels of engagement and enforcement action against owners of long-term empty homes in the private sector due to reduced capacity in the team and Welsh Government pandemic related restrictions. Although there is now a team in play tasked with this specific function.
- Have been unable to access sufficient external funding to carry out all planned energy efficiency improvements to residents' homes.
- Providing energy efficiency advice to tenants has proven difficult for the team due staff moving to remote working.

**Our future focus:**

- Completing the procurement of a new IT system which will enable us to improve the type and level of data we collect, which in turn will help improve the level of service provision
- Meeting the revised Welsh Government Target for the Welsh Housing Quality Standard of December 2021.
- Continue to work with private landlords ensuring they can maximise funding opportunities for energy saving measures. We are currently working with Rent Smart Wales to target the most fuel inefficient homes in the private rented sector.
- As the pandemic led to an increase in demand on our homelessness services which is amplified by a lack of suitable emergency accommodation, we will continue to source suitable accommodation to address this demand, including Houses in Multiple Occupation, leased properties from registered social landlords to maximise the move to permanent accommodation, and bed and breakfast accommodation.
- We will continue to work with individuals using the Housing First model and help find suitable accommodation, with support from two dedicated support workers, one of which specifically working with young people.
- Adopt a Rapid Re-Housing strategy and ensure that our Common Allocations Policy is reflective of any new priorities.
- We will continue to work with residents in the borough who have difficulties managing their money, by the provision of free, flexible, short term services (floating support), to help resolve immediate crises and improve skills.
- Complete a new Local Housing Market Assessment and Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment.
- Introduce a new Local Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan.
- Reducing fuel poverty by making homes more energy efficient, providing people with advice on how best to heat their home and exploring alternative funding sources, alongside potential Energy Company Obligation funding sources for Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) D, E, F and G rated council properties. This will generate further energy efficiency programmes moving forward with our planned Post Asset Management Strategy programmes in 2021/22.
- Utilise grant funding secured to target landlords who are not complying with the minimum energy efficiency standard regulations.
- Implementing the Empty Property action plan.
- Completing the two new CCBC housing developments at Trethomas and Trecynedd, and bringing other developments forward to meet the Council's new build target.
- Working closely with housing association partners to develop new affordable housing.

**Five Ways of Working - 1. Involvement 2. Collaboration 3. Long Term 4. Integration 5. Prevention**







**Highlights coming out of the information**

The Covid pandemic continues to have a significant impact on services this year. Performance has been impacted as a consequence as we deal with consequential backlogs, contractor and material shortages, and difficulties in the retention and recruitment of staff. Financially we continue to be in a good position and have been successful in accessing various external grant funded opportunities. Good progress continues to be made in some of our key project areas including the WHQS programme, which is nearing completion, and our new build strategy; with works commencing on site on our first new build housing developments whilst further potential development sites are investigated. Services in other areas including adaptations, homelessness, key locations, older persons housing, repairs and tenancy support have continued despite being impacted by restrictions, although we have not yet fully reopened the home repair grant service.

Performance in a number of areas has continued to improve e.g. support provided to tenants to assist them in sustaining their tenancies.

The Valleys Task Force initiative has proved successful in engaging the owners of long term empty homes and it is anticipated that the project, together with the ongoing creation of a new Empty Properties Team will impact positively on our performance in future years in returning empty private sector properties to use.

**What have we learnt and what needs improving and why?**

Generally staff have continued to respond extremely well to circumstances associated with the pandemic and are committed to continuing to deliver Housing related services. The situation has highlighted the importance of having a single source supplier arrangement and our own in-house workforce that we can directly manage and utilise to best meet our and customers needs. We need to ensure that we have the required IT equipment and systems in place for the future which support agile working and must continue to review our existing systems and processes to ensure they are suitable for further changes in working practices. The impact of Covid will continue to be demonstrated in future performance reports as backlogs resulting from the consequences of lockdown are addressed and reinstated services are prioritised in line with capacity of the service and contractors.

As a consequence of Covid there has been a significant increase in demand for our homelessness services with higher numbers of presentations and placements in emergency temporary accommodation. There has also been a significant increase in the use of hotels and Bed & Breakfast accommodation in order to comply with new guidance issued by WG, although alternative options for the provision of emergency temporary accommodation are continually being sought with some success. Moving forward we need to ensure that the Housing Solutions Service is able to respond proactively and meet the housing and support needs of those whom we have a duty to assist. We have devised a Homeless Project Plan identifying clear priority areas for us to enhance the service, allowing us to refocus on early intervention and prevention and also be able to ensure that we are meeting the needs of those presenting with complex needs.

Progress against priority actions from last quarter	By Whom	By when	Update
Address the needs of Rough Sleepers, repeat presentations and those with complex needs ensuring we have an effective holistic person centred assessment process to undertake the welfare and support needs assessment to maximise prevention.	KD	Mar-22	We have been working with Crisis to undertake a pilot to review current service delivery and the "falling out rate " of Homelessness for the service. This project is due to conclude in December 2021 so the Housing Solutions Team will then look to make any service delivery changes in 2022 as a result of the findings and recommendations from this project. With regard to Rough Sleepers we are now looking at how we may look at future models of accommodation both on a temporary and permanent basis to meet their needs and ensure that accommodation is inclusive for all. This has involved looking at Housing First models for those with more complex needs and challenging behaviours and also looking at accommodation provision that allows people to use substances safely within their accommodation and not be a cause of exclusion and further potential cause of rough sleeping. In addition we have made some changes to our data collection so that we can now start to better understand the reasons for people rough sleeping in the borough so that we can use this information to inform change. In addition there is also consideration being given to appointing a specific Rough Sleeper case officer so that we can respond more effectively to reports of anyone rough sleeping and discuss with them their accommodation and support needs so that earlier interventions can be offered. Our Rapid Rehousing Plan will outline in greater detail the strategy to address Rough Sleeping in the borough over the next five years and will also highlight the accommodation models being taken forward to support us with this.
Reopening of the Housing Grants and Loans systems to new applicants.	FW	Jun-21	The Home Repair Grant system remains closed to all but priority applicants. In relation to those being processed there are significant issues with contractors being prepared to tender for the work and if so providing start dates. There are also significant issues relating to material supplies and material costs. The loans system re opened on the 12.07.21.
Procurement of a comprehensive customer satisfaction survey of Council tenants.	FW	Jun-21	Following completion of a successful procurement exercise in Q1 a comprehensive customer satisfaction survey of tenants is currently being undertaken by appointed consultants. The survey is due to close in October 2021.
Ensure the start on site of the Trecenydd and Trethomas Passivhaus new Caerphilly Homes developments	JRW	Jun-21	The Passivhaus housing developments at both Trethomas and trecenydd have both commenced with works progressing well on both sites. In Trecenydd the frame is up and the roof is on. In Trethomas the slab has been laid and the frames are starting to be erected.
Award the Land Appraisal Contract to a multidisciplinary consultancy to begin the process of examining the suitability of HRA, General Fund and privately owned land for development (including the start of the due diligence related to the Ness Tar / Pesci site)	JRW	Jun-21	The Land Appraisal Contract has been awarded to Currie & Brown. 23 potential sites have been identified to be included in the LDP candidate site process. Work has already started on examining the viability and potential of those sites. Work has also started on identifying a pipeline of sites to bring forward over the coming years - those sites include a number in the north, south and east of the borough. The consultants have also started work on exploring the viability of the Ness Tar site.
To look at setting up targets / aims for bringing back empty homes into usage (new)	DS		The numerical information relating to bringing empty homes back to use is reported annually in PAM 013 and PAM 045. The Council has submitted the Empty Property Enforcement Agenda Action Plan to Welsh Government and is currently awaiting its approval. The focus of the newly created Empty Property Team will be to deliver the Action Plan over the next 5 years.
Priority Actions for next quarter	By Whom	By when	Update
Following confirmation of approval of Empty Property Enforcement Agenda Action Plan approval from WG complete the action plan items within the specified timescales	FW	Mar-22	
Reopening of the Housing Grants system to new applicants for non-priority home repair grants	FW	Mar-22	
Gain approval for and implement Local Lettings Policy for S.106 properties at Aberbargoed	FW	Dec-21	
Completion and analysis of Customer Satisfaction Survey for tenants	FW	Dec-21	
Undertake consultation with tenants regarding rent setting and affordability	FW	Dec-21	
Approval of LCHO Policy	JRW	Feb-22	Work is underway to provide a draft of LCHO policy, which will be considered at a special scrutiny committee February 2022
Rapid Rehousing Transitional Plan and Strategy	KD	Jun-22	work is underway to draft and deliver a Rapid Rehousing Strategy in line with updated WG guidance for June 2022. This Plan and Strategy will set out the Local Authorities five year plan on how it will adopt the Rapid Rehousing model and deliver its Homeless prevention service to address Housing need within the borough. The plan will then be presented to scrutiny and cabinet for a decision in late summer / autumn 2022.
Secure outline planning permission, appropriate the land and draw down social housing grant for the acquisition for Ty Darran and former Oakdale comprehensive school site.	JRW	Mar-22	
Seek a decision on the WG leasing scheme proposal	KD	Feb-22	A report will be presented to scrutiny in Feb 22 which will seek a decision on whether CCBC should choose to adopt the WG lease scheme proposal to assist with its statutory duty into the PRS sector or if the LA continues with the current Caerphilly Keys scheme that is in operation.
Feedback / Recognition / Actions from Corporate Management Team	By Whom	By when	Update
Chief exec is interested in how up and coming WG programme for government will impact housing, particularly homelessness and use of B&B	DS	Update Sept	The WG programme will impact Homelessness and the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation as the focus is now back on prevention and rapid rehousing in addition to ease the use of bed and breakfast accommodation by local authorities. We are currently in the process of drafting CCBC Rapid Rehousing Plan and Strategy which will set out CCBC position to address Homelessness moving forward and as part of this strategy it will include a review of the current Allocation Policy. The Plan will also set out the longer term objectives for CCBC to move away from bed and breakfast units of accommodation and thought will be given to longer term stable models that can be managed in house. Discussion with Housing Strategy and Development team are underway to consider any locations / sites and buildings that might allow the Housing Solution team to take their vision forward. In addition work is ongoing with partners of the local authority to ensure that as housing sites are developed they reflect the needs of those residents within the borough in need of accommodation. The Housing Solutions Team are in regular discussion with both our Caerphilly Homes and Development and Strategy team where new build sites the local authority are taking forward can deliver the WG programme and also are inclusive of the needs of those who may be at risk of homelessness or homeless. There will be a stringent consultation process that will include key identified partners and stakeholders both internal and external to inform the plan, the plan will then be bought through the internal CCBC process for Scrutiny and Cabinet summer / autumn 2022
To explore DFG process to understand where improvements can be made	DS		The mandatory DFG process is determined by statute. A report on revised guidance from WG proposing withdrawing the means test for medium DFGs by introducing new discretionary DFGs was presented to PDM in Q3. A further report outlining proposals is planned for Q4 2022/23.