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For all enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Joanne Thomas
(Tel: 01443 864281 Email: thomaj8@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Date: 2nd March 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of the **Social Services Scrutiny Committee** will be held via Microsoft Teams on **Tuesday, 8th March, 2022 at 5.30 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. Councillors and the public wishing to speak on any item can do so by making a request to the Chair. You are also welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, both these requests require a minimum notice period of 3 working days.

This meeting will be recorded and made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. Therefore the images/audio of those individuals speaking will be publicly available to all via the recording on the Council website at www.caerphilly.gov.uk

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chrissy'.

Christina Harrhy
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

AGENDA

Pages

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 Declarations of Interest.

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest (s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

A greener place Man gwyrddach



To approve and sign the following minutes: -

- 3 Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 25th January 2022. 1 - 6
- 4 Consideration of any matter referred to this Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.
- 5 Social Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme. 7 - 18
- 6 To receive and consider the following Cabinet reports*: -
1. Draft Budget Proposals for 2022/23 (Joint Scrutiny Committee) – 19th January 2022;
 2. Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP) Recruitment In The South East Wales Emergency Duty Team (SEWEDT) – 26th January 2022;
 3. Budget Proposals For 2022/23 And Medium-Term Financial Outlook – 23rd February 2022.

**If a Member of the Scrutiny Committee wishes for any of the above Cabinet reports to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting please contact Joanne Thomas, Committee Services Officer, Tel no. 07714 600912 by 10.00am on Monday, 7th March 2022.*

To receive and consider the following Scrutiny reports: -

- 7 Directorate Performance Assessment Six Month Update. 19 - 32
- 8 Housing Support Programme Strategy. 33 - 68
- 9 Caerphilly Cares Year One Evaluation. 69 - 90

Circulation:

Councillors: A. Angel, J. Bevan, C. Bezzina (Vice Chair), C. Bishop, D. Cushing (Chair), K. Etheridge, M. Evans, A. Gair, Mrs J. Stone, D.C. Harse, V. James, L. Jeremiah, Mrs A. Leonard, S. Skivens, C. Thomas and W. Williams

Users and Carers: Mrs P. Cook and Mr C. Luke

Aneurin Bevan Health Board: A. Gough (ABUHB)

And Appropriate Officers

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SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE DIGITAL MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY 25TH JANUARY 2022 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D. Cushing – Chair

Councillor C. Bezzina - (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

Councillors: A. Angel, C. Bishop, K. Etheridge, M. Evans, A. Gair, V. James, A. Leonard, S. Skivens, W. Williams.

Cabinet Member: S. Cook (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Housing).

Together with:

Officers: D. Street (Corporate Director- Social Services and Housing), G. Jenkins (Assistant Director–Children’s Services), J. Williams (Assistant Director- Adult Services), M. Jones (Financial Services Manager), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer), J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer).

Users and Carer: C. Luke

Also, in attendance: R. Green (Aneurin Bevan UHB – Corporate Services), C. Taylor (Caerphilly People First).

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed but would not be live streamed, however a recording would be available following the meeting via the Council’s website – [Click Here To View](#). She advised that decisions would be made by Microsoft Forms.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors J. Bevan, L. Jeremiah, J. Stone, C. Thomas.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 23RD NOVEMBER 2021.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd November 2021 (minute nos. 1 - 4) be approved and signed as a correct record.

4. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CALL-IN PROCEDURE

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

STATEMENT FROM THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

The Chair advised the Scrutiny Committee that she had given permission to Mr D. Street to make a statement and the Corporate Director would take questions following this statement.

It was brought to the attention of the Scrutiny Members the continuing pressures and ongoing difficulties being experienced by Social Services. Mr Street wanted to raise his concerns with the Scrutiny Members with Wales moving back to level zero and remind them of the recent press release that was made by himself and the other four Directors of Social Services in Gwent asking for the support of families and the general community in assisting to overcome extremely acute difficulties that were being experienced. Assurance was given that some of the difficulties have been improved but they have not gone away.

The Scrutiny Members were made aware of the difficulties in terms of staff availability due to how quickly the Omicron virus spread. There are around 9% of staff unwell. Domiciliary care is running with sickness absence of 17% and there is currently around 60 members of staff that are unwell due to COVID and other related issues.

It was advised there is currently a waiting list of around 465 hours for domiciliary care. The Scrutiny Members were made aware that this has improved since Christmas when the list was around 1000 hours. Scrutiny Members were also made aware COVID is still a significant factor in the care homes with only 6 homes being COVID free.

Social Services are having additional demands placed on them from the Health Board to facilitate hospital discharges and supporting the Community Nursing Service within the community. Care packages are being returned to the Authority by independent providers due to staff shortages.

There has been increased pressures in Children Services with increasing numbers of children and young people identifying with emotional and mental health issues also there have been examples of chronic parental neglect. There are continuing demands for placements.

The requirement to self-isolate will be reduced for the general public however, it is still not clear whether this will apply to Health and Social Care as previously there has been separate guidance issued.

Mr Street advised the Scrutiny Members that the situation has improved however, there are still hard times ahead. Mr Street thanked Gareth Jenkins and Jo Williams for their efforts

especially over the Christmas period it has been hugely demanding on staff. Mr Street asked the Scrutiny Members to understand that although the situation may start improving it will be many more months before we could approach any normality.

Following the statement discussions took place around Day Centres a Member understood that the Authority will be engaging an independent organisation to co-produce a model of Day Services and wanted clarification on whether this had gone out to tender and if a specification had been drawn up. Confirmation was also sought that going forward there would be effective engagement with users, carers, unions and staff and there would be a partnership approach with all Officers and the Community working together. They also requested a statement be put out to the users and carers stating the time scale of the consultation and engagement. A query was raised as to whether the Authority was still redeploying staff to assist in the social care setting to assist with sickness absence.

It was clarified there would be a co-production approach to Day Services. It was confirmed that staff had met with Pembrokeshire County Council who shared with us the specification they used. This is being amended for Caerphilly, procurement will manage the tender process. In relation to making any statement to users and carers it would be more appropriate to wait to see what the Welsh Government review of the guideline's states at the end of the week so this can be reflected in any communication. Regarding the redeploying of staff, this is very limited where carers are concerned. However, in areas such as cleaning and kitchen staff shortages, the Authority was able to provide staff to cover in these areas.

A Member acknowledged social care has been the most demanding service in particular throughout the pandemic. They wanted to thank all staff and thank them for the outstanding work that everyone does.

5. SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer introduced the report that informed the Committee of its Forward Work Programme planned for the period January 2022 to March 2022.

Following consideration, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme as appended to the meeting papers be published on the Council's website.

6. CABINET REPORT

There had been no requests for the Cabinet report to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

7. AN UPDATE ON THE INTEGRATED CARE FUND (ICF) AND TRANSFORMATION GRANT PROGRAMME – PRESENTATION BY ANEURIN BEVAN UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD.

The Scrutiny Committee welcomed Roxanne Green (Gwent Regional Partnership Board) to the meeting. The representative gave a brief presentation to Members on an overview of the Structure of the Regional Partnership Board and the use of Partnership. The Partnership structure was detailed, and its governance arrangements were detailed. The Partnership

intends to bring together health and social care and third sector partners to collaborate and support the priority population cohorts. Members were given information on current Partnership funding and where the Partnership has invested some of its resources which showed an allocation of £36,399, 349

Members noted that the first of the strategic partnership programmes was the Carers Programme which showed an RPB investment of £1,215,218 using a model of combined delivery to provide direct support to unpaid carers and peer networking opportunities.

The second and largest strategic programme is the Adult Strategic Programme which had a current investment of £13,988,144 which was being delivered in four key areas, Connected Communities Programme, Keeping Safe at Home, Improving System Flow and Place Based Graduated Care. Ms Green advised Members of the challenges in relation to the improving system flow programme in terms of the Pandemic.

The third programme relating to Mental Health and Learning Disabilities which received £1,550,047 of RPB investment. Reference was made to the increased demands in mental health provision because of the pandemic.

The Children and Families Strategic Partnership Board was detailed next, and it was noted that this had gone from strength to strength, with the scale and depth of this programme evolving and increasing over recent years. Reference was made to the 'Iceberg Model' the concept of which was to take out specialist capacity closer to home provided the foundation for the Nation MYTH/NEST Framework and looked to provide a strategy to bring back in as many children as it is appropriate and possible to do currently in out of county or out of country placements.

The next steps for the Regional Partnership Boards were detailed and Members were asked to note how these would be developed using the existing areas of activity as a foundation to build a five-year strategic programme with the sustainability of services at the forefront of all partnership planning efforts.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the representative for the presentation. The presentation was then discussed. A Member sought further information on the 'Wrong Door Initiative'. The representative explained it was a Partnership effort to ensure that children and their families have a single point of access into the system. They are then reviewed by a multidisciplinary team and placed on the correct pathway for the relevant service as needed. There will be new guidance for Regional Partnerships Boards, with the intent to change to support and integrated/joint models of care this is going to take place over the next five years. Discussions took place as to whether other Local Authorities were providing similar services. It was explained that in relation to services within the Regional Partnership portfolio, most are part of a regional approach, therefore, services that are being delivered by Caerphilly Borough Council are very much part of a regional approach. The Health Board have a collaborative approach to developing their strategies and models of care.

It was requested that a copy of the presentation be forwarded to Members following the meeting.

Following consideration and discussion, the presentation was noted.

8. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT (MONTH 7).

The report which informed Members of the projected revenue expenditure for the Social Services Directorate and the financial impact of the Covid 19 pandemic upon the Directorate for the 2021/22 financial year.

The report identified the reasons behind a projected underspend of £2,896k for Social Services

in 2021/22, inclusive of transport costs. It also identified the funding made available to Social Services during the 2021/22 financial year through the Welsh Government Covid 19 Hardship Fund and the Welsh Government Covid 19 Recovery Fund.

Members were asked to note that the projected underspend of £2,896k against the Social Services budget for 2021/22 (inclusive of transport costs) includes a number of non-recurring underspends attributable to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic which mask an underlying increase in demand for social care along with significant inflationary pressures within the social care market.

The Scrutiny Committee Members thanked the Officer for the report and discussed the report at length. Clarification and further information were sought in relation to underspends, the cost of domiciliary care to the Authority, increased demand in Children Services and whether the service area would be able to cope with the higher demands. The Corporate Director for Social Services and Housing clarified 50% of the underspend from this financial year would revert back to the Corporate Body and the remaining 50% would go back into the Social Services reserves. The Officer advised Members the cost of domiciliary care is around £20 per hour but this is very much dependant on who is providing the care. In relation to discussion around the increased demand on Children Services, the Officer clarified the overall work rate has not increased. However, the complexity of the workload has in terms of staffing issues and the placement of children becoming increasingly difficult.

Discussion took place around the waiting list for Occupation Therapy. Members were advised the demands have remained the same. However, with the recruitment of two new members of staff who will be in post at the end of January, the Office is hoping the waiting list will be significantly improved and be able to update at the next Scrutiny meeting.

In response to a Members query the Corporate Director for Social Services and Housing confirmed that recruitment is an area of concern for the future. It was highlighted that the recruitment of staff within the care sector is a national issue.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the Officer for the detailed report.

Following consideration and discussion the report was noted.

The meeting closed at 6.43 pm.

Approved as a correct record, subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on the 8th March 2022.

CHAIR

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SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 8TH MARCH 2022

**SUBJECT: SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD
WORK PROGRAMME**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND
CORPORATE SERVICES**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To report the Social Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 Forward Work Programmes are essential to ensure that Scrutiny Committee agendas reflect the strategic issues facing the Council and other priorities raised by Members, the public or stakeholder.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That Members consider any changes and agree the final forward work programme prior to publication.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To improve the operation of scrutiny.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 The Social Services Scrutiny Committee forward work programme includes all reports that were identified at the scrutiny committee meeting on Tuesday 25th January 2022. The work programme outlines the reports planned for the period up until March 2022.

5.2 The forward Work Programme is made up of reports identified by officers and members. Members are asked to consider the work programme alongside the cabinet work programme and suggest any changes before it is published on the

council website. Scrutiny committee will review this work programme at every meeting going forward alongside any changes to the cabinet work programme or report requests.

5.3 The Social Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1, which presents the current status as at 14th February 2022. The Cabinet Work Programme is attached at Appendix 2. A copy of the prioritisation flowchart is attached at appendix 3 to assist the scrutiny committee to determine what items should be added to the forward work programme.

5.4 **Conclusion**

The work programme is for consideration and amendment by the scrutiny committee prior to publication on the council website.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 No assumptions are necessary.

7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 As this report is for information only an Integrated Impact Assessment is not necessary.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no specific financial implications arising as a result of this report.

9. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no specific personnel implications arising as a result of this report.

10. **CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been included in this report.

11. **STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 The Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Mark Jacques, Scrutiny Officer jacqu@carphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Dave Street, Corporate Director Social Services
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services/ Monitoring Officer
Lisa Lane, Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer,

Legal Services

Councillor Donna Cushing, Chair of Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Carmen Bezzina, Vice Chair of Social Services Scrutiny
Committee

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Social Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme
- Appendix 2 Cabinet Forward Work Programme
- Appendix 3 Forward Work Programme Prioritisation Flowchart

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Forward Work Programme - Social Services					APPENDIX 1
Date	Title	Key Issues	Author	Cabinet Member	
08/03/22 17:30	Housing Support Programme		Williams, Jo;	Cllr. Cook, Shayne;	
08/03/22 17:30	Directorate Performance Assessment - Social Services 6 monthly Report 2021/22		Street, Dave;	Cllr. Cook, Shayne;	
08/03/22 17:30	Caerphilly Cares Evaluation Report		McMahon, Tina;	Cllr. Cook, Shayne;	
19/04/22 17:30					
14/06/22 17:30	Annual Corporate Safeguarding		Street, Dave;	Cllr. Cook, Shayne;	
14/06/22 17:30	Annual Corporate Complaints Report		Street, Dave;	Cllr. Cook, Shayne;	

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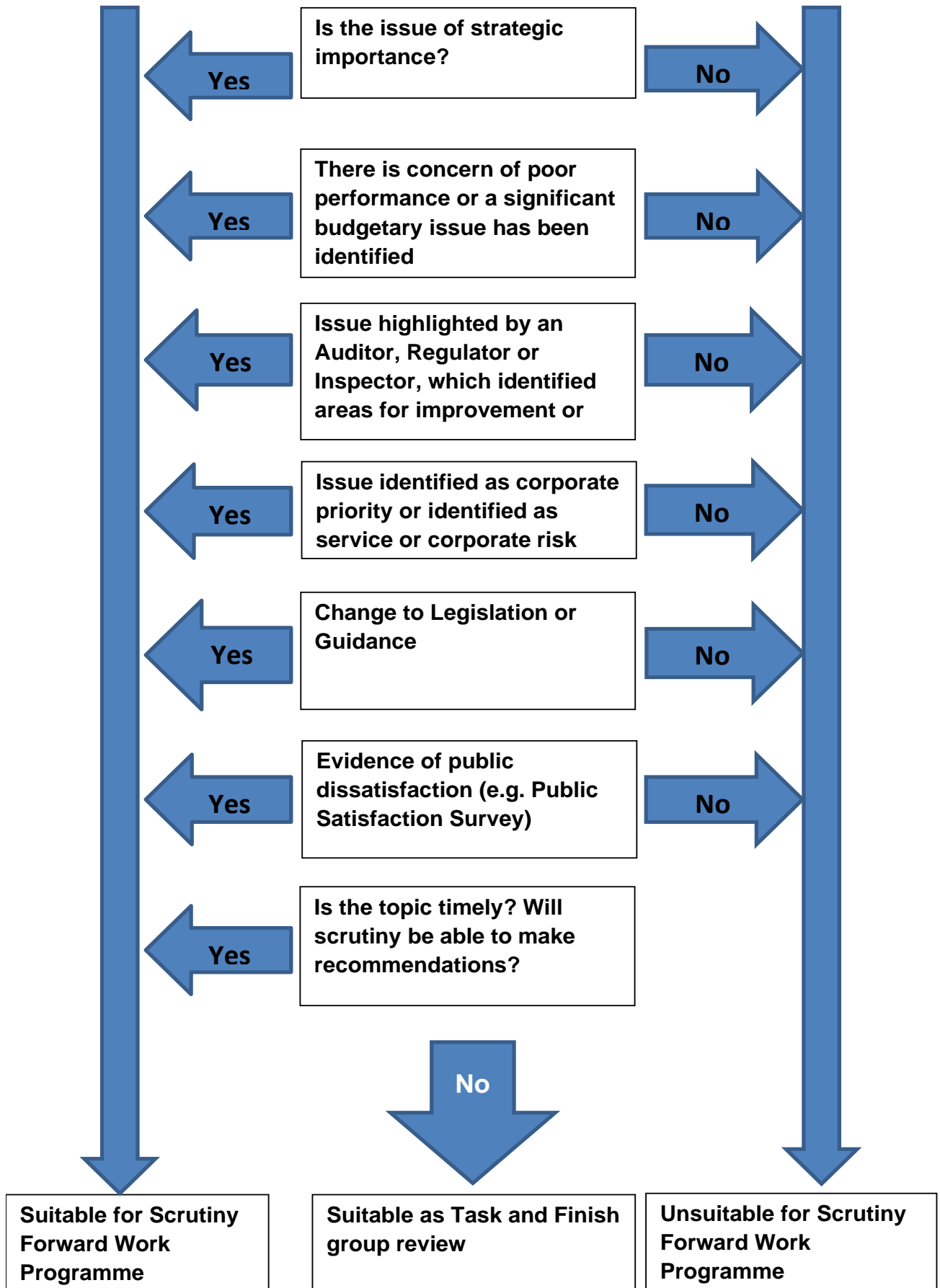
09/03/2022 10:30	Community Learning and Support Hub at Rhymney Library	To seek Cabinet approval for 'in principle' match funding for an application to the Welsh Government to support the creation of a community learning and support hub at Rhymney Town Library and to note the intention for the Library Service to work with Gwent Police to strengthen community engagement through the use of informal settings at Rhymney Library, Risca Library and Caerphilly Library.	Edmunds, Richard (Ed);	Cllr. Whiting, Ross;
09/03/2022 10:30	Corporate Performance Assessments (CPA's/DPA's))	To provide Cabinet with information and detailed analysis of performance for the period 01/04/21 to 31/12/21 and forms part of the Council's self-assessment activity.	Richards, Sue; Roberts, Ros;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
09/03/2022 10:30	Annual Report Against the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2021	For Cabinet to consider and approve the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2020-2021 prior to publication on the Council's website.	Cullinane, Anwen;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
09/03/2022 10:30	Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027	For Cabinet to consider and approve the draft Five Year Promotional Strategy prior to the publication on the Council's website.	Cullinane, Anwen;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
09/03/2022 10:30	Development of a Multi-purpose Visitor Centre at Parc Penallta	To consider funding arrangements, including the acceptance of a Substitution Grant offered by Welsh Government, in order to deliver the multipurpose visitor centre.	Hartshorn, Robert;	Cllr George
09/03/2022 10:30	Regeneration Project Board - Project Proposals	To consider recommendations from the Regeneration Project Board in respect of the allocation of Development Funds to Strategic Regeneration Proposals that align with the Council's	Kyte, Rhian;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;

		Regeneration Strategy; and the allocation of Licence to Innovate Funding to proposals that align with the Council's Commercial and Investment Strategy.		
09/03/2022 10:30	Regeneration Project Board – Land Acquisition Fund (Exempt item)	To consider a request for match-funding from Caerphilly CBC to attract Transforming Towns Funding for strategic acquisitions in Caerphilly town centre to facilitate the delivery of the Caerphilly 2035 Plan.	Kyte, Rhian;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
23/03/2022 10:30	Gender Pay Gap	For CMT and Cabinet to agree the Gender Pay Gap report which must to be published by 31st March 2022.	Donovan, Lynne;	Cllr. Gordon, Colin J;
23/03/2022 10:30	EAS Business Plan	The EAS is required to submit an annual overarching regional Business Plan on an annual basis. This report asks for members to consider the full contents of the draft EAS Business Plan as part of the regional consultation process	Cole, Keri;	Cllr. Whiting, Ross;
23/03/2022 10:30	HRA Business Plan	To update Cabinet on the latest Housing Business Plan position in advance of submitting the plan to Welsh Government by 31/3/22, which is a requirement under the terms of the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) grant. The Housing Business Plan is a 30 year plan and will include rental increase assumptions and forecasted borrowing requirements to enable the HRA to maintain viability while meeting its core objectives.	Allen, Lesley;	Cllr. Cook, Shayne;
23/03/2022 10:30	Coal Tips Inspection and Maintenance Update.	To provide an update on the current coal tip condition status and inspection regimes that are in place for coal tips located within Caerphilly County Borough.	Lloyd, Marcus;	Cllr. Pritchard, James;

<p>23/03/2022 10:30</p>	<p>Housing Support Strategy</p>	<p>The Housing Support Programme Strategy is being developed to outline the strategic direction of the local authority for housing related support services. This single strategic view demonstrates our plan and approach to homelessness prevention and housing support services.</p>	<p>Williams, Jo;</p>	<p>Cllr. Cook, Shayne;</p>
<p>06/04/2022 10:30</p>	<p>21st Century Schools – Band B - Phase 2: Objection Report</p>	<p>For Cabinet to consider the contents of 21st Century Schools objection report and give permission to proceed to the planning application stage, and the submission of the full business case to Welsh Government.</p>	<p>West, Andrea; Richards, Sue;</p>	<p>Cllr. Whiting, Ross;</p>
<p>06/04/2022 10:30</p>	<p>Corporate Complaints - 6 month update</p>	<p>For Cabinet to review the complaints dealt with under the Corporate Complaints policy for the period 1st April 2021 to 30th September 2021 together with outcomes and lessons learned.</p>	<p>Lane, Lisa;</p>	<p>Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;</p>

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Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme Prioritisation



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SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 8TH MARCH 2022

**SUBJECT: DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT SIX MONTH
UPDATE**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND
HOUSING**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Scrutiny with the 6-month Social Services Directorate Performance Assessment (DPA) which is part of the Council's Performance Framework.
- 1.2 The Performance Assessment (referred to hereafter as the DPA) is the Directorate's self-assessment and forms part of the Council's overall self-assessment activity. It provides information and analysis for 6-month period April – September 2021. Members are invited to discuss, challenge, and scrutinise the range of information in the DPA.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council's revised Performance Framework was endorsed by Cabinet in February 2020 and this report introduces one of the key components of the Framework, the Directorate Performance Assessment (DPA). The DPA is a 'self-assessment' of Directorate's progress across a wide range of information types and meets our 'duty as a principal council to keep our performance under review'
- 2.2 DPA's are an opportunity to bring together a range of information and intelligence into one picture to answer the self-assessment questions of 'how well are we performing, how do we know? And what and how can we do better? Appendix 1 is the Social Services Performance Assessment 6-month update 2021/22.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members review the attached document (appendix 1) and discuss, challenge, and scrutinise the information contained within.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Scrutiny members are involved in the 'self-assessment' process by scrutinising the information within the Directorate Performance Assessment. This also supports the principles within the new section (Part 6, Chapter 1) of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act which provides for a new performance and governance regime for principal councils

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Performance Framework has been developed to meet several strategic and operational needs as well as to meet the legislation and further the Council's desire to be a high performing learning organisation focused on meeting the needs of its residents. The framework was piloted in 2019 and endorsed by Cabinet February 2020 and now is reported as a regular part of scrutiny committees. This report introduces and shares the Social Services dashboard (the DPA) 6-month update 2021/22.
- 5.2 The spirit of the DPA (appendix 1) is about providing learning. The DPA is less about performance and targets (though they have their place) and is more so to provide a wider picture of performance that will support reflective and challenging conversations and scrutiny that will ultimately lead to learning and further improvement.
- 5.3 **Conclusion**

This DPA covers the period April 2021 to September 2021, our key messages are:-

Clearly performance during the past six months of 2021 have been impacted by the authority's response to the Coronavirus pandemic, whilst the majority of social care services have remained in place (with the exception of day services and some respite services) the attention of staff has clearly had to be on responding to the virus.

In Adult Services, the number of people receiving services remains fairly consistent, however it should be noted because of the national difficulties in recruiting domiciliary care workers there are currently 74 people awaiting provision of a care package. The first quarter saw an unprecedented demand in terms of increased referrals especially for the Community Occupational Therapy Team, this has started to level off in quarter 2. Assessments and reviews completed have reduced this has been impacted upon by staffing vacancies and staff absences and complexity of the work means assessments take longer to complete. The impact of the upgrade to WCCIS cannot be underestimated, this has caused a significant amount of downtime, thus staff are still catching up with recording work on the system which could impact on figures for quarter 2.

In Children's Services, continued Covid restrictions and changes to guidance have inevitably impacted on working practice. However, it is reassuring to note that the numbers of referrals received and the number of those referrals progressing to assessment have remained relatively stable. Similarly, the overall number of Children Looked After has remained static and the small variance in the numbers of children on the Child Protection Register is unremarkable given our longer-term trend data. As stated above the impact of the upgrade to WCCIS has been significant. However, overall, there continues to be positive performance and there are no exceptions to report for this half year period.

Sickness absence levels across the Directorate, overall, for the Directorate as at the end of September, sickness absence is on a slight upward trend from 6.33% in qtr1 to 6.96% in qtr2. Adult Services has seen a slight increase in their sickness absence figures from 8.18% in qtr1 to 8.19% in qtr2. Children's Services has also seen an increase in their sickness absence figures when comparing the last two quarters, qtr1 was 3.63% compared to 5.65% in qtr2. Absences linked to Covid remained low throughout the 2 Quarters.

The budgetary perspective of the Directorate, an underspend of £671k is forecast for Social Services at the end of Quarter 2. However, the Covid 19 pandemic continues to curtail service activity in many areas during the current financial year and has also led to increased staffing vacancies, reduced travel costs and reduced office running costs. These underspends are unlikely to recur in future years once Covid 19 restrictions have been lifted. However, there is an underlying increase in demand for childcare placements, supported living placements and domiciliary care for adults. The pandemic has highlighted the fragilities in the social care market, which could lead to pressure on fee levels once the Welsh Government Hardship Fund support is withdrawn. Therefore, it is critical that the Directorate continues to focus on initiatives to manage demand and provide cost effective services.

The Coronavirus pandemic has and continues to pose unprecedented challenges for the Social Services Directorate within Caerphilly County Borough Council. It is to the great credit of all our staff, together with our partners in the independent and third sectors that we have been able to respond as effectively as we have. The coming months are going to be unquestionably challenging as we face potential winter pressures.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions were thought to be required in this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 This report is for information only and on this basis an integrated impact assessment is not required.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no financial implications within this report, however the DPA (appendix 1) has a section on resources including relevant budget outturns as part of the overall self-assessment of the directorate.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no personnel implications within this report, although the DPA (appendix 1) has a section called 'resources' which provides data on a range of workforce aspects.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 Any consultation responses have been included with in this report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 The Local Government Measure (2009) and) Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Author: Ros Roberts, Business Improvement Manager, roberr@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Councillor Donna Cushing, Chair - Social Services Scrutiny
Councillor Carmen Bezzina, Vice Chair - Social Services Scrutiny
Councillor Shayne Cook, Cabinet Member for Social Care
Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive
Dave Street, Corporate Director, Social Services & Housing
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services
Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director for Economy & Environment
Jo Williams, Assistant Director of Adult Services
Gareth Jenkins, Assistant Director of Children's Services
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer, Equalities, Welsh Language & Consultation)
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Service and Monitor
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services & S151 Officer

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Directorate Performance Assessment (April – September 2021)



Social Services Directorate Performance Assessment

April to September 2021

Summary & Priorities



Performance



Customer Intelligence



Resources



Risk Register



Well-being Objective



Conclusion



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Directors Self-assessment Summary: April to September 2021:

Clearly performance during the past six months of 2021 have been impacted by the authority's response to the Coronavirus pandemic, whilst the majority of social care services have remained in place (with the exception of day services and some respite services) the attention of staff has clearly had to be on responding to the virus.

In terms of Adult Services:

The number of people receiving services remains fairly consistent, however it should be noted because of the national crisis in domiciliary care there are currently 74 people awaiting provision of a care package. The first quarter saw an unprecedented demand in terms of increased referrals especially for the Community Occupational Therapy Team, this has started to level off in quarter 2. Assessments and reviews completed have reduced this has been impacted upon by staffing vacancies and staff absences and complexity of the work means assessments take longer to complete. The impact of the upgrade to WCCIS cannot be underestimated, this has caused a significant amount of downtime, thus staff are still catching up with recording work on the system which could impact on figures for quarter 2.

In terms of Children's Services:

Continued Covid restrictions and changes to guidance have inevitably impacted on working practice. However, it is reassuring to note that the numbers of referrals received and the number of those referrals progressing to assessment have remained relatively stable. Similarly, the overall number of Children Looked After has remained static and the small variance in the numbers of children on the Child Protection Register in unremarkable given our longer term trend data. As stated above the impact of the upgrade to WCCIS has been significant. However, overall, there continues to be positive performance and there are no exceptions to report for this half year period.

Sickness absence levels across the Directorate:

Overall for the Directorate as at the end of September, sickness absence is on a slight upward trend from 6.33% in qtr1 to 6.96% in qtr2. Adult Services has seen a slight increase in their sickness absence figures from 8.18% in qtr1 to 8.19% in qtr2. Children's Services has also seen an increase in their sickness absence figures when comparing the last two quarters, qtr1 was 3.63% compared to 5.65% in qtr2. Absences linked to Covid remained low throughout the 2 Quarters.

From a budgetary perspective the Directorate:

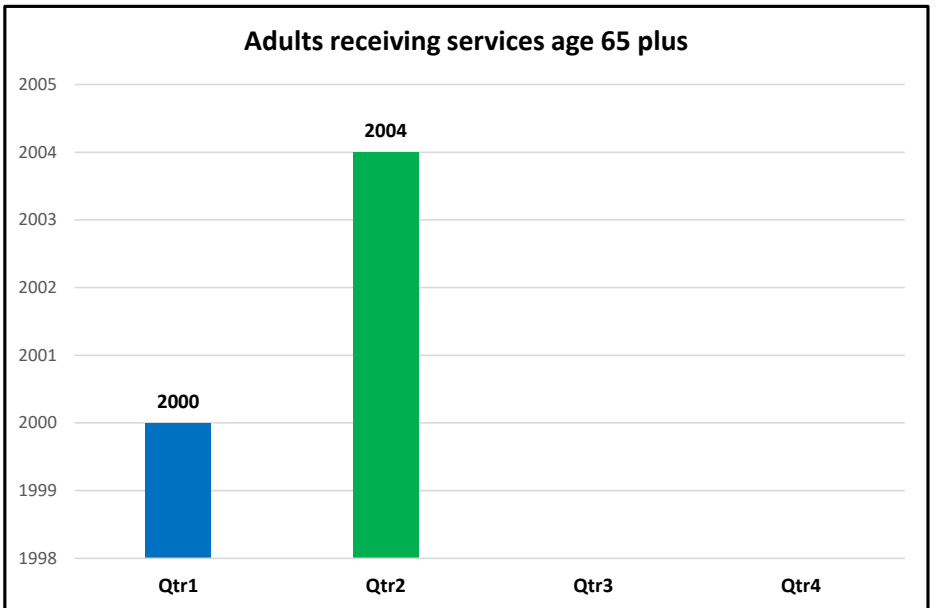
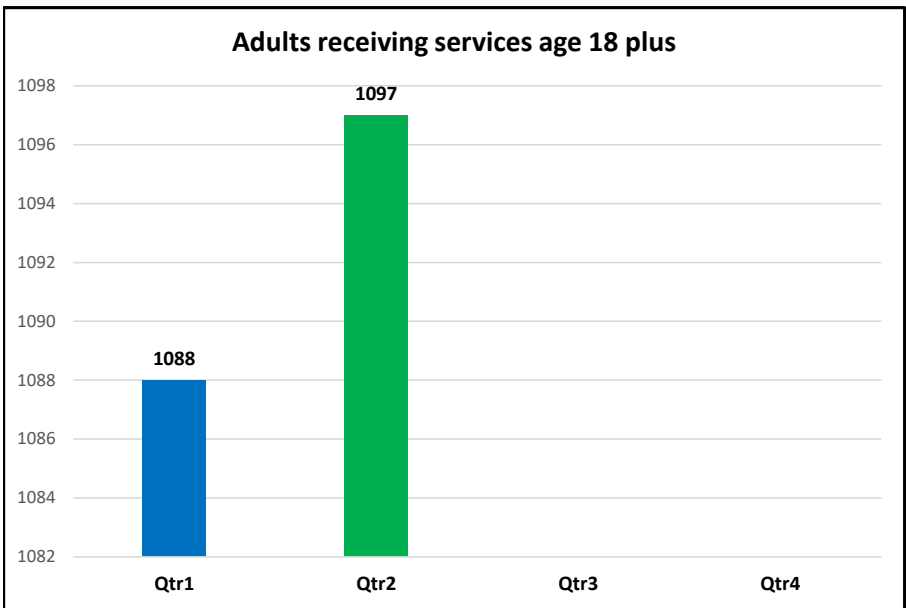
An underspend of £671k is forecast for Social Services at the end of Quarter 2. However, the Covid 19 pandemic continues to curtail service activity in many areas during the current financial year and has also led to increased staffing vacancies, reduced travel costs and reduced office running costs. These underspends are unlikely to recur in future years once Covid 19 restrictions have been lifted. However, there is an underlying increase in demand for childcare placements, supported living placements and domiciliary care for adults. The pandemic has highlighted the fragilities in the social care market, which could lead to pressure on fee levels once the Welsh Government Hardship Fund support is withdrawn. Therefore, it is critical that the Directorate continues to focus on initiatives to manage demand and provide cost effective services.



Standard	Service Priorities 2021-22	RAG	Completion Date	Progress - Achievements - Impacts
	Medium term financial planning	●	2021-22	No savings proposals were required for 2020/21 based on the principle that the Directorate would manage increasing demand within existing resources.
Standard 1	Using Transformation Grant funding, alongside ABHB to embed 'Compassionate Communities' in the North of the Borough.	●	2021-22	Achieved. Transformation fund has been extended until March 2022.. Compassionate communities now to be embedded as part of the caerphilly cares work programme.
Standard 1	Work with colleagues in Health to embed care navigations training & principals	●	2018-23	Links to Transformation Grant Funding in respect of compassionate communities so will continue for the duration of that funding stream.
Standard 1	Implementation of a single point of contact for GP and other professional referrals to Primary Care Mental Health Services	●	2021-22	Achieved. Single point of contact through the SPACE Well-being Panel is now well established and functioning so this action is completed. However, it is important to note that it is reliant on Transformation funding and would be at risk if this ended.
Standard 2	Continue to identify & support carers, enabling them to continue in their role utilising the intermediate care fund to maximise opportunities for service development.	●	2021-22	Links to ICF grant so will continue for the duration of that funding stream. We will be introducing a young carers card scheme. Potential increase in demand due to impact of reduced service levels for carers during the pandemic.
Standard 2	Expansion of 'Home First' to facilitate timely discharges from hospital	●	2021-22	Home First is working well across both District General hospitals along with the Grange University Hospital. Winter pressures money has been used to expand service to Prince Charles Hospital to reduce number of people being repatriated to YYF, positive impact noted by the health board. Work to be done in 2021-2022 in terms of reviewing achievements of the programme and determining mainstream funding can be identified.
Standard 2	Establish a second Children's Home for Caerphilly children and young people	●	2021-22	Achieved. Home fully operational from May 2021
Standard 3	Respond to the WAO Review of Corporate Safeguarding	●	2021-22	Achieved. WAO Action Plan signed off as completed by the Corporate Safeguarding Board in September 2021. New Forward Work Programme will be introduced from April 2022.
Standard 4	Integrated Well-being Networks - Work with health to embed IWN's within communities across the borough	●	2021-22	Achieved. Significant community engagements events held, including session with elected members on healthier Gwent. Workshop planned for November to launch Independent Well-being Networks (IWN) in the north of the borough. Subject to review by IPC initial workshop held.
Standard 5	Monitor recruitment difficulties across the Social Care sector.	●	2021-22	Ongoing monitoring through weekly Divisional Management Team and periodic reporting to Senior Management Team. Wider recruitment issues are now being reported across the Social Care sector.
Standard 5	Review the Market Supplement for Social Workers in Children's Services	●	2020-21	Completed. Market Supplement reviewed and recommended to continue.
Standard 6	Develop bespoke supported accommodation for young people to reduce the use of B&B accommodation	●	2021-22	Private developer continues to look to identify a suitable property for conversion to a 4 bedded unit.
Standard 6	Submit an ICF Capital bid to develop a third residential Children's Home	●	2021-22	Funding has been agreed. Action therefore completed. Staff currently looking at suitable premises.

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

Performance - Adults

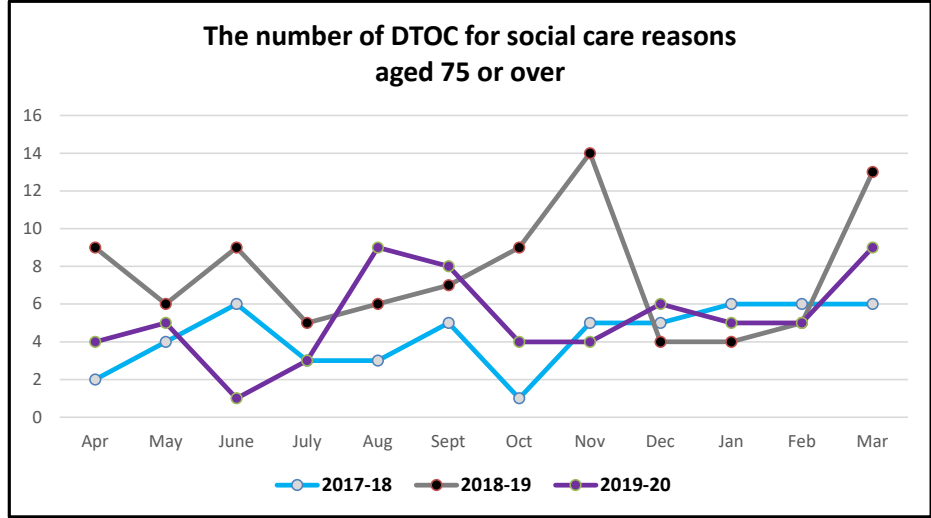
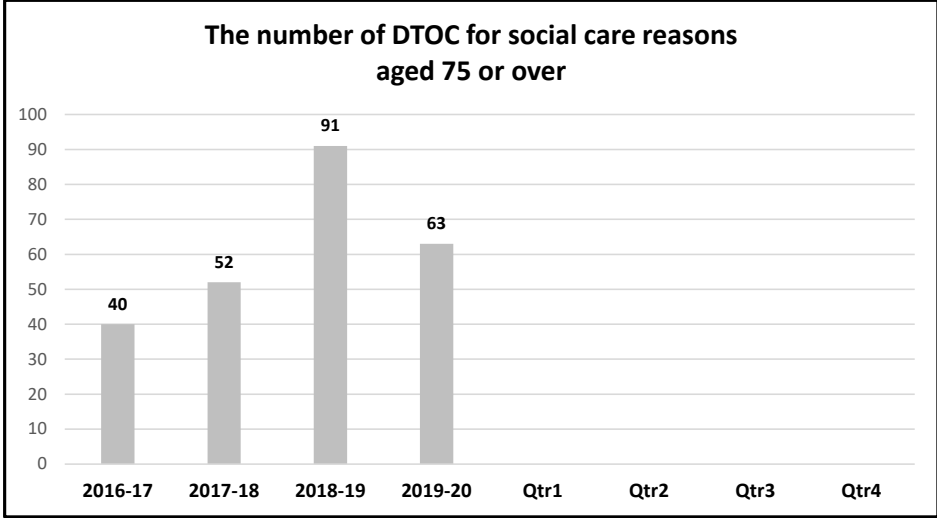
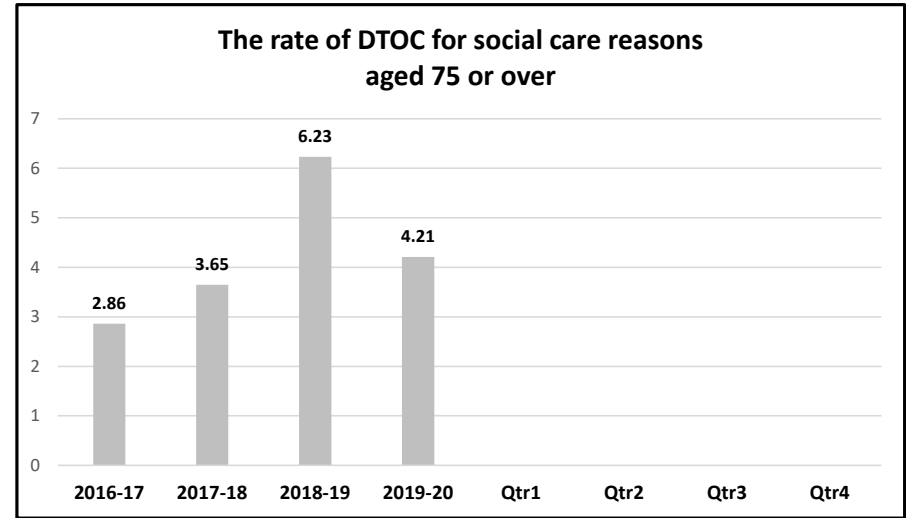
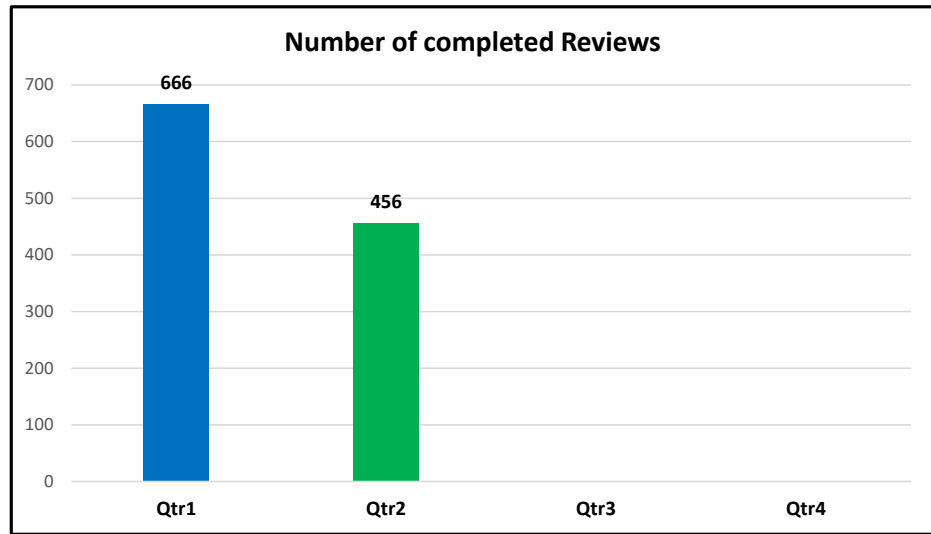
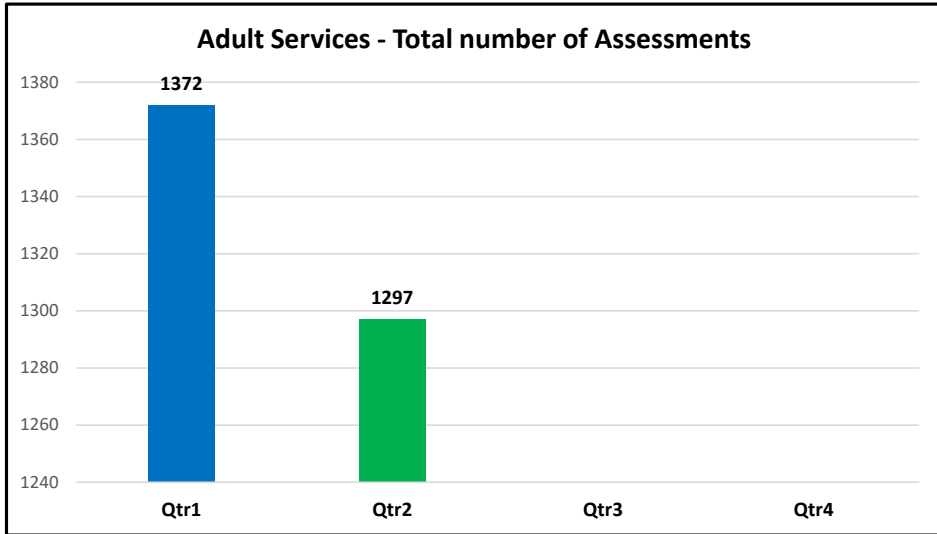
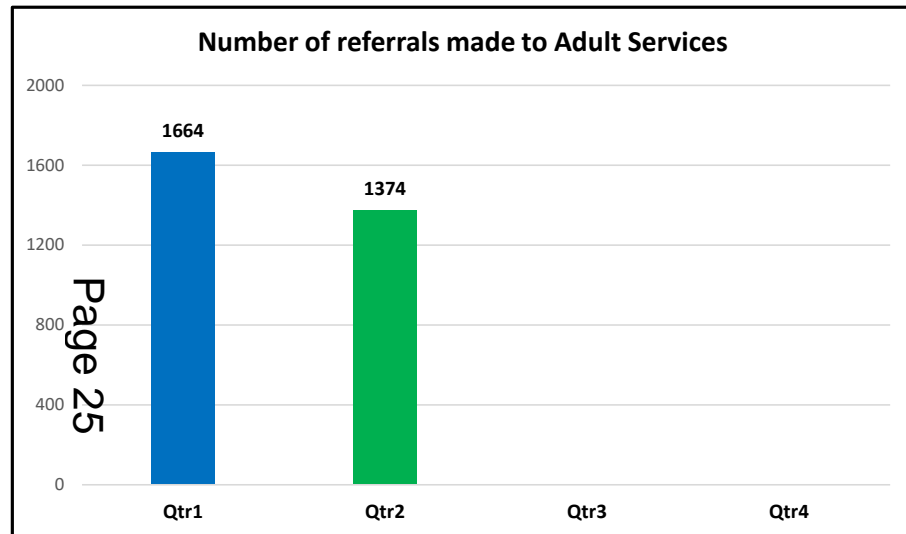


What is the performance telling us? ADULTS: Apr - Sept 2021

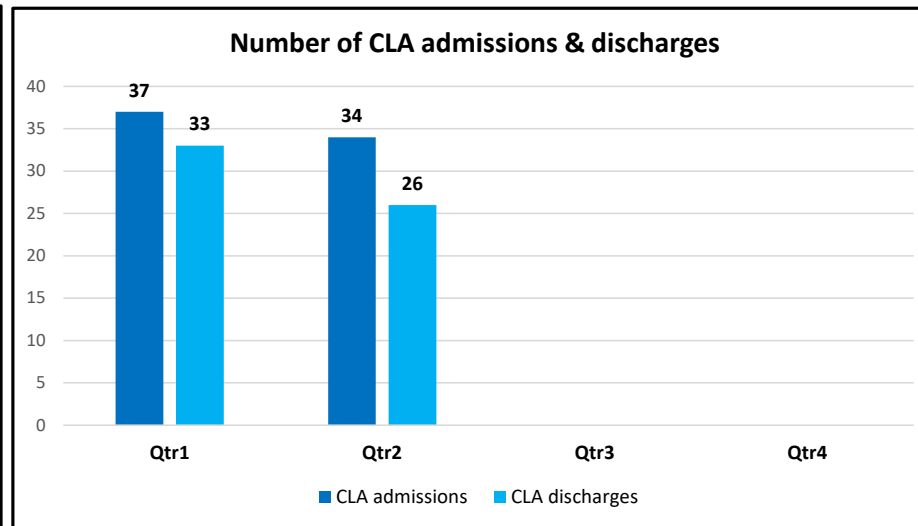
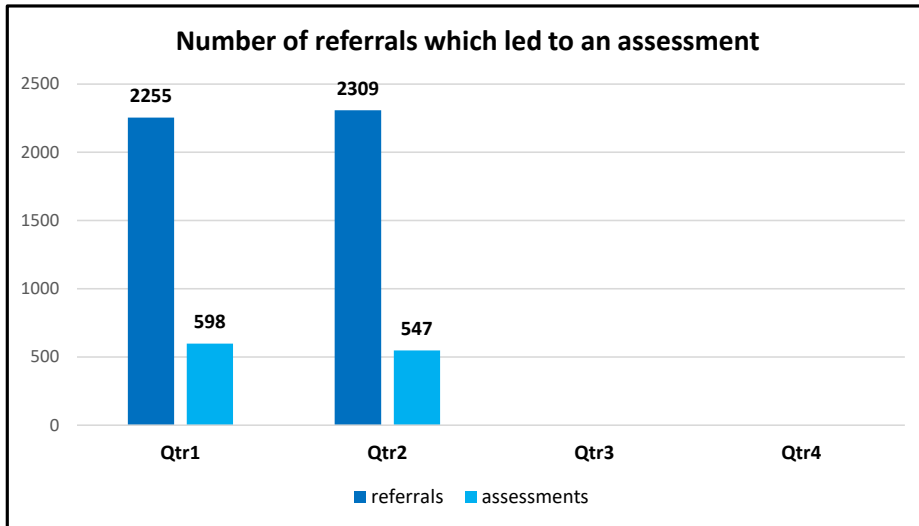
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Performance - Childrens

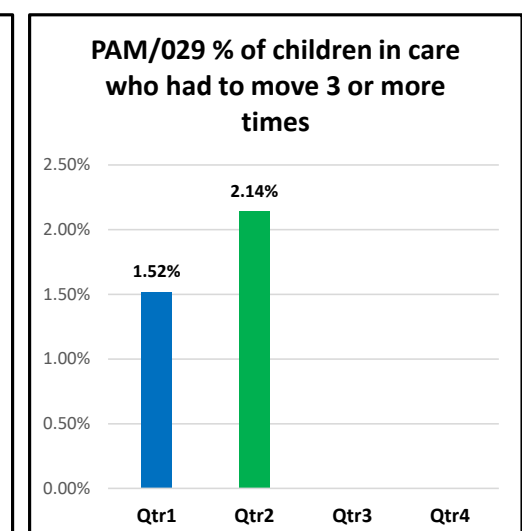
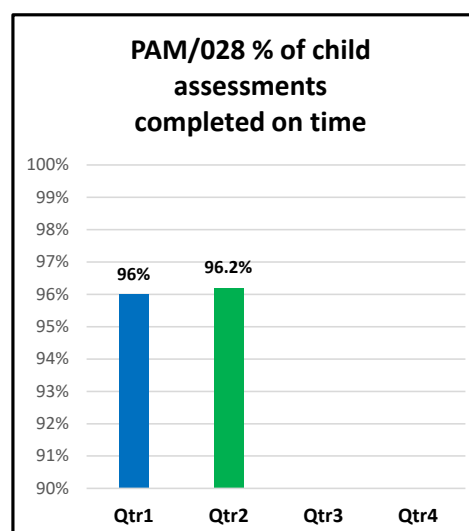
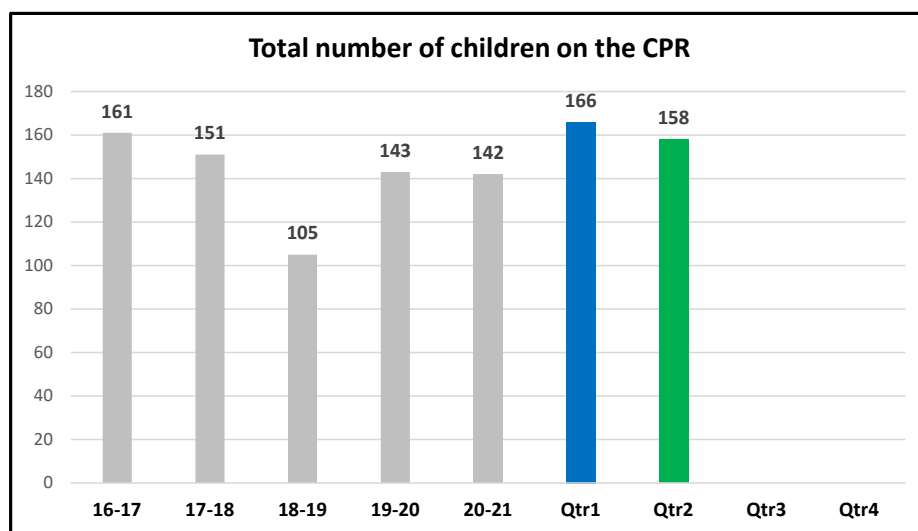
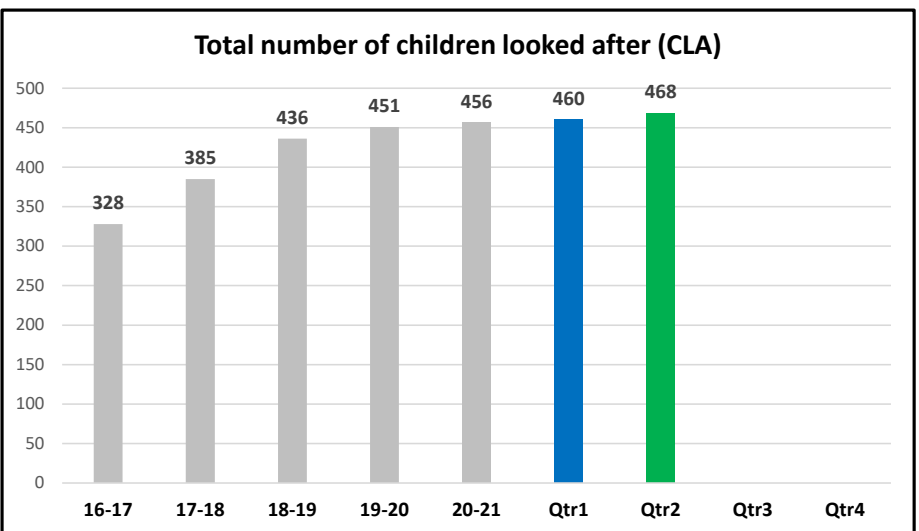
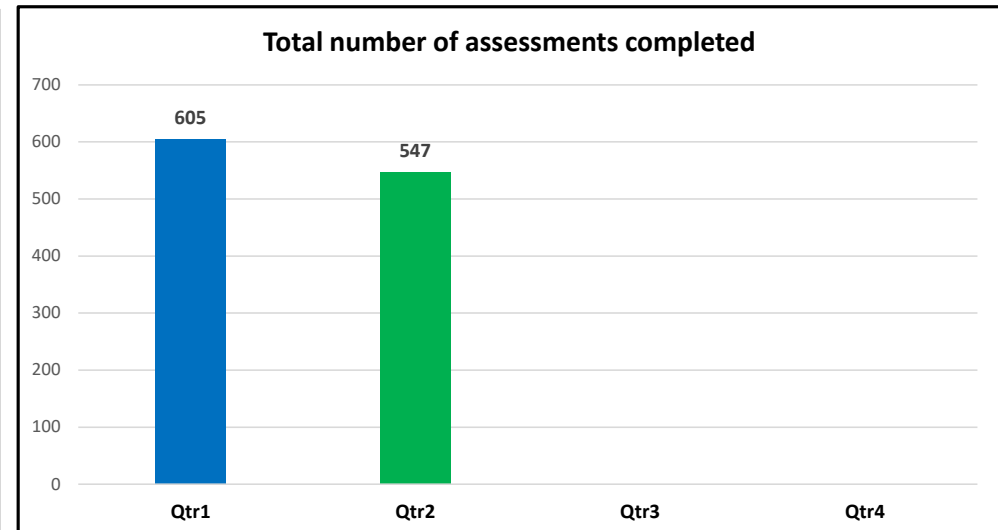
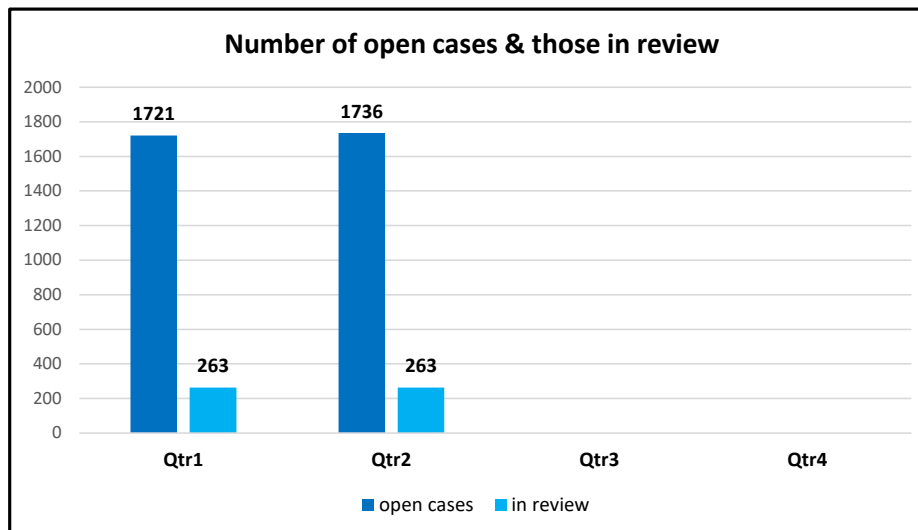
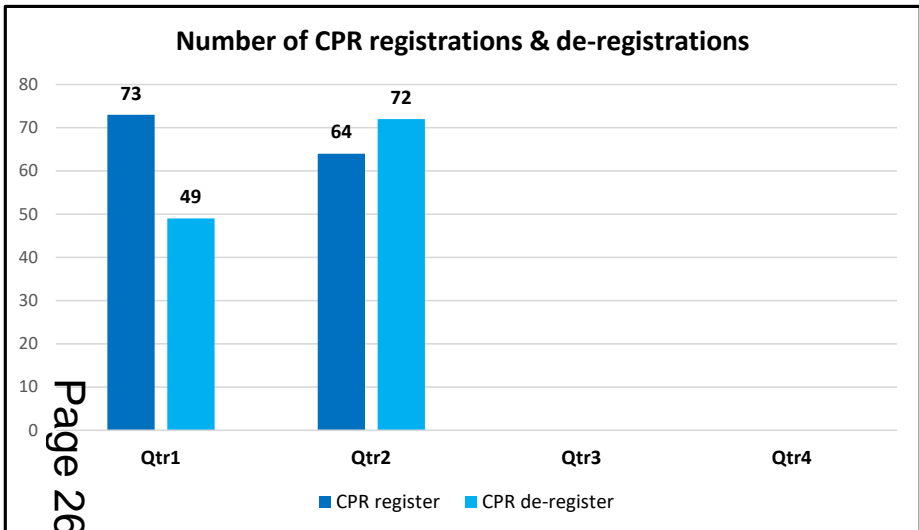


What is the performance telling us? CHILDREN'S: Apr - Sept 2021

Continued Covid restrictions and changes to guidance have inevitably impacted on working practice. However, it is reassuring to note that the numbers of referrals received and the number of those referrals progressing to assessment have remained relatively stable.

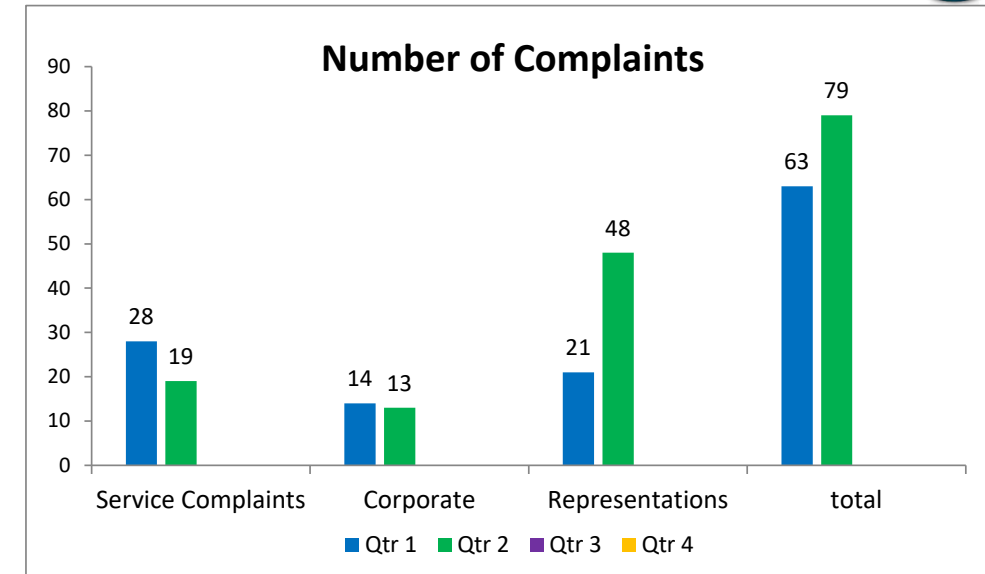
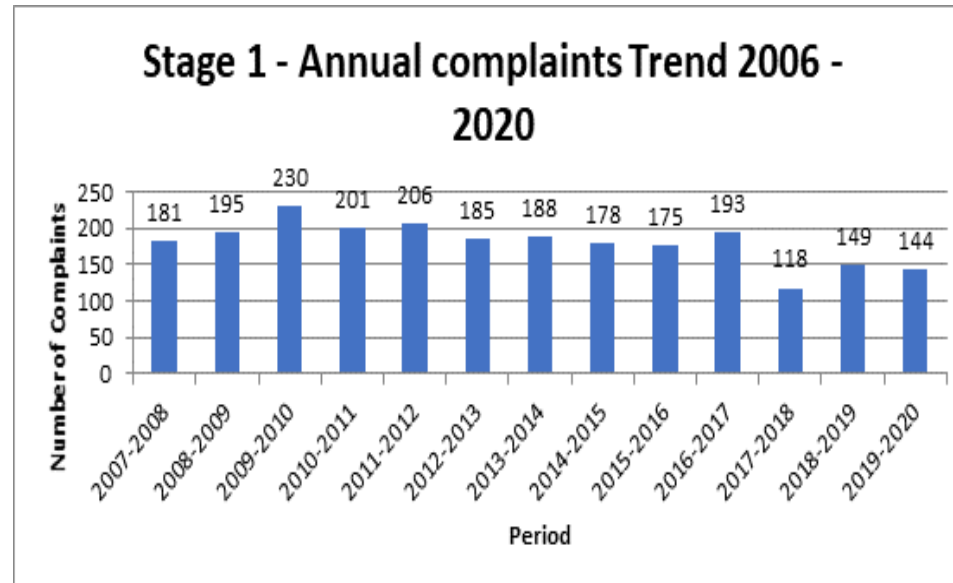
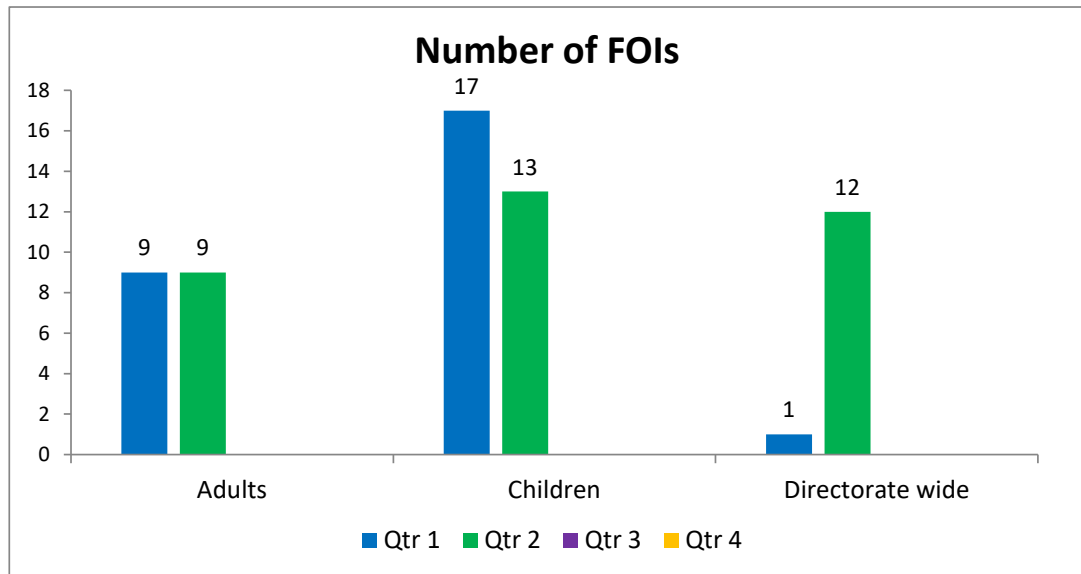
Similarly, the overall number of Children Looked After has remained static and the small variance in the numbers of children on the Child Protection Register in unremarkable given our longer term trend data.

Overall, this is a positive performance report and there are no exceptions to report for this half year period.





Customer Intelligence



What is our customer intelligence telling us?

A total of **27 FOIs for qtr1** have been actioned by the Social Services Directorate.
Of the 27 FOI's: information provided (**18**), refusals (**2**), partial information provided (**4**), nil response (**3**), outstanding response (**0**), information not held (**0**), redirected (**0**)
 Of the 2 responses that were refused, for the following reasons:
 S21 info publically available x 2

A total of **34 FOIs for qtr2** have been actioned by the Social Services Directorate.
Of the 34 FOI's: information provided (**21**), refusals (**3**), partial information provided (**5**), nil response (**2**), outstanding response (**0**), information not held (**3**), redirected (**0**), withdrawn (**0**)
 Of the 3 responses that were refused, for the following reasons:
 S12 Fees Refusal x 1
 S21 Already accessible x 2

What is our customer intelligence telling us?

At the end of **quarter 1**, we received **49 complaints and representations** that were dealt with under the social services complaints procedure. Of the 49 complaints received, 23 related to Adult Services complaints, 26 related to Children's Services complaints

Of the 23 Children's Services complaints

18 were childrens complaints
 5 were representations

Of the 26 Adult Services complaints:

10 were adults complaints
 16 were representations

In addition in quarter 1 we had 14 Corporate complaints that related to Social Services

At the end of **quarter 2**, we received **81 complaints and representations** that were dealt with under the social services complaints procedure. Of the 81 complaints received, 51 related to Adult Services and 16 related to Children's Services.

Of the 16 Children's Services complaints

13 were childrens complaints
 3 were representations

Of the 51 Adult Services complaints:

6 were adults complaints
 45 were representations

In addition in quarter 2 we had 13 Corporate complaints that related to Social Services

Positive Feedback - 6 individual messages received - Childrens Services:

From a parent who had received a malicious referral concerning her son "I can honestly say they the two of them made this a lot less horrific than it felt originally, I would really like for you to pass on my thanks and more importantly I would like you to know that you have two great, professional persons on your team!! "

From Foster Carers "We just wanted to take this opportunity to say it has been an absolute pleasure working with Tracy these past few weeks. She is a credit to her profession and an asset to CCBC. The children are very lucky to be allocated such a caring Social Worker who's goes above and beyond."

Positive Feedback - 66 individual messages received - Adults Services:

From a family member "I write to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to every single member of staff - without exception - who attended on Mary in her hour of greatest need. Even though you have had two unbelievably tough years, you would never know from seeing you guys at work"

From a family member "Thank you for your help and support today and in the past. It is really appreciated by myself and family and makes life almost bearable knowing you have our best interests at heart"

From a Carer: "Thank you. Your team are so wonderful. The support is amazing. Your team and efforts definitely boost moral during really hard challenging times. It gives us little milestones just to make it through. I can not speak more highly and I just wanted you to know"

From ABuHB: *"s you know, all sites were in escalation this week and the Teams quick response to facilitating discharges has really made a difference – you never fail to support us where you can and are a fantastic example of true partnership working"*

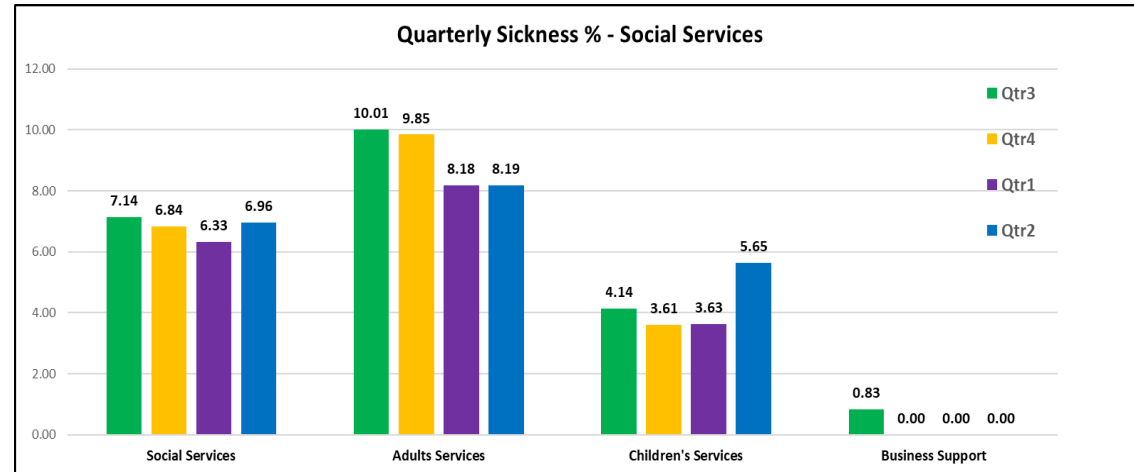
Themes for Children's Services Complaints include:

Requesting change of Social Worker, Poor communication, Believes IRO to be biased , Life story booked not shared, Unclear advice regarding SGO process and payments, Inconsistencies and changes of Social Workers

Themes for Adult Services Complaints include:

Restrictions to Day Centre services due to Covid restrictions, Not being able to secure a care package, Unhappy with the care package times/missed calls , Conduct and professionalism of worker, refusing to fund transport / equipment

Resources



What is our workforce information telling us?

Overall for the Directorate as at the end of September, sickness absence is on a slight upward trend from 6.33% in qtr1 to 6.96% in qtr2.

Adult Services has seen a slight increase in their sickness absence figures from 8.18% in qtr1 to 8.19% in qtr2.

Children's Services has also seen an increase in their sickness absence figures when comparing the last two quarters, qtr1 was 3.63% compared to 5.65% in qtr2.

The Directorate has seen a total of 36 leavers in qtr1 and 26 in qtr2. New starters totalled 45 in qtr1 and 47 in qtr2. The number of agency staff has decreased from 21 to 19 in quarter 2.

Q1 Monthly Breakdown	Apr			May			June		
	Short Term	Long Term	Overall %	Short Term	Long Term	Overall %	Short Term	Long Term	Overall %
% Sickness Absence									
Adults Services	2.12	6.33	8.46	2.25	5.85	8.10	2.10	5.02	7.11
Children's Services	1.18	1.88	3.06	1.18	1.65	2.83	0.64	2.91	3.56
Business Support	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Social Services & Housing	1.69	4.66	6.35	1.78	4.51	6.29	1.45	4.20	5.64

Q2 Monthly Breakdown	July			Aug			Sept		
	Short Term	Long Term	Overall %	Short Term	Long Term	Overall %	Short Term	Long Term	Overall %
% Sickness Absence									
Adults Services	2.01	5.72	7.73	2.12	5.68	7.81	3.07	5.71	8.78
Children's Services	1.90	3.76	5.65	1.79	4.55	6.33	1.84	3.13	4.97
Business Support	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Social Services & Housing	2.07	4.67	6.74	1.82	5.17	6.98	2.50	4.50	7.00

Social Services Workforce Information		
	Qtr1	Qtr2
Voluntary Leavers	27	22
Other Leavers	9	4
Total Leavers	36	26
New Starters	45	47
Headcount	1423	1460
55 and over	411	424
% of headcount	28.88%	29.04%
Agency staff	21	19

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 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.


Budget Monitoring Report - Month 6 summary table

Division	Current Budget	Projection/Commitment	Over/(Under) Spend
	(£000's)	(£000's)	(£000's)
Children's Services	26,485	27,491	1,006
Adult Services	68,291	67,786	(505)
Service Strategy & Business Support	2,156	1,150	(1,006)
Sub Total Directorate of Social Services	96,932	96,427	(505)
Transport Costs	1,564	1,398	(166)
Grand Total	98,496	97,825	(671)

What is our resource information telling us?

An underspend of £671k is currently forecast for Social Services for 2021/22 (including transport costs). However, the Covid 19 pandemic continues to curtail service activity in many areas during the current financial year and has also led to increased staffing vacancies, reduced travel costs and reduced office running costs. These underspends are unlikely to recur in future years once Covid 19 restrictions have been lifted. However, there is an underlying increase in demand for childcare placements, supported living placements and domiciliary care for adults.

The pandemic has also highlighted the fragilities in the social care market, which could lead to pressure on fee levels once Welsh Government Hardship Fund support is withdrawn. Therefore, it is critical that the Directorate continues to focus on initiatives to manage demand and provide cost effective services.

Ref	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 Q4	Risk Level 2021-22 Q2	Does the risk affect the Well-being of our Communities?	Well-being Risk Level
Dir link to Corp Risk Register CMT39	Fragility of the Social Care market. The independent sector social care market across Wales is in an unprecedented position in terms of its fragility and this is starting to be felt in Caerphilly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers unable to sustain existing packages of care National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage creating additional financial strain which providers are expecting LA's to resolve. Little additional capacity to take on new packages of care. 	Further investment of the Social Care Workforce Pressures and Sustainability Grant in 2020/21 to allow fee increases in excess of the 1.7% inflationary uplift for non-staff costs that was provided in the corporate budget settlement	No change in risk level. Further concerns with regard to stability. Coronavirus Pandemic has had major consequences for care homes across the UK. Positive cases have meant that new admissions to care homes have not been possible for a significant period of time with the knock on consequence in relation to the financial viability of homes. Welsh Government funding has eased the position for 20/21 but the ongoing support is unclear for 21/22. Additional payments have been made to care providers with effect from 23rd March 2020 to compensate them for additional costs and lost income resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic. These additional payments will be funded through the Welsh Government's Hardship Fund for Adult Social Care.	High	High	High	Yes - reducing help that can be provided for the most vulnerable in our society will affect our ability to contribute to a 'Healthier Wales' which requires peoples mental and physical well-being to be maximised. Whilst this may be a medium risk operationally from a FGA perspective this would be high as it directly affects those most in need.	High (Medium-term)
CMT01	Exit from the EU (Brexit)	The decision to leave the EU and the looming deadline to secure an exit deal has created considerable uncertainty. 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.	The Directorate has participated in the Corporate Brexit Working Group	For Social Services the predicted areas of risk did not materialise as anticipated.	Medium	Low	Low	Potential impacts may yet to be fully understood but there are no current concerns.	Low
SS01	Medium Term Financial Plan	Insufficient resources to deliver services at expected level. Budget pressures will have an impact upon service delivery.	Work closely with the Section 151 officer to identify demographic pressures and other cost pressures for consideration within the medium term financial plan. Lobby Welsh Government via ADSS Cymru and the WLGA for additional long term funding to address the pressures in the social care market.	The temporary suspension of some services due to the Covid 19 pandemic, coupled with one-off grant funding from Welsh Government have mitigated the impact of demographic pressures and provider fee pressures during the current financial year so a significant underspend is anticipated for 2021/22. However, these pressures will remain for 2022/23 so every opportunity is being taken to lobby Welsh Government for additional long term funding to stabilise the social care market.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Yes, as it may have implications now for interventions that will prevent people from needing more support in the future.	High (Short to Medium term)
SS02	Demographic Pressures	Increasing complexity of cases resulting in increased packages of care and support and increased cost pressures. Increasing demand across both Adults and Children's Services.	Implementation of SS&WB Act principle of supporting people to support themselves by maximising the use of early intervention and preventative services. All packages of care regularly reviewed. Covid has had a significant impact on the way services have had to be delivered and the overall position is volatile with services being exposed to significant demand variations.	Pressures in Adults & Children's are currently manageable, However, careful attention is being paid to pressures in Adult Services, whilst the budget is currently fully committed with further pressures anticipated through the Winter.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Yes- the Act aims to improve the wellbeing of people who need support and carers.	High (Short, medium & long term)
SS03	WCCIS	Failure to build the SQL reports for the statutory National Performance Indicators, due to the decreasing numbers in the SSIT team with SQL knowledge. The planned upgrade to the system resulted in significant downtime with no access for periods of time.	Need to consider additional resources for Digital Services either in-house or commissioned.	National performance issues proving problematic in terms of the availability and reliability of the system, these issues are being pursued via the national programme team.	Medium	Medium	High	No - this is expected to be a short term risk.	Medium (Short-term)
SS05	Social worker recruitment - Children Services	Difficulties in recruiting Qualified Social Workers into frontline (Locality) Child Care Teams with high levels of vacancies being managed across the Service.	Cabinet approved the introduction of a Market Supplement applied to the key posts to attempt to boost recruitment. Secondments of unqualified staff to undertake the Social Work Degree re-introduced.	The Supplement has been reviewed and will now remain in place for those specific teams. However, there are increasing recruitment pressures being experienced across the service, namely, domiciliary care, residential care, cooks and telecare.	Medium	Low	Medium	Yes	Medium (Short-term)
SS06	Foster Carers recruitment	Difficulties in recruiting Foster Carers based on feedback that CCBC's fee levels were poor in comparison to competitors.	Improved remuneration package for foster carers approved by Cabinet in June 2018. Ongoing radio campaign also supported. Significant increase in numbers of enquiries and numbers of assessments being undertaken has now been reported over successive years. Whilst recruitment of carers will remain a priority it is no longer considered to be a risk.	Recruitment levels increased significantly in 2018/19 and have remained steady in each subsequent year.	Low	Low	Low	Yes	Low (Medium-term)
SS07	WG Children Looked After (CLA) reduction expectations	First Minister's Manifesto Pledge to reduce the numbers of children in care in Wales. Each LA invited to set reduction expectations in the three years from 2019 to March 2022.	Systematic reviews of all children placed at home with parents and all Kinship Care placements to identify cases where Care Orders can be revoked. Fully utilise ICF grant funding to develop support services for children on the 'edge of care'.	Children looked after numbers were predicted to continue to rise throughout 2019/20 but actually stabilised in the period running up to Covid-19. The number has remained stable over the last two years.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Yes	Medium
SS08	WAO Corporate Safeguarding Review	WAO Review identified a number of areas for improvement that need to be addressed across the whole Council.	Corporate Safeguarding Board now meets quarterly to monitor progress	Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan was signed off by the Corporate Safeguarding Board as completed in September 2021. Ongoing developments will be captured in a new Forward Work Programme.	Medium	Low	Low	Yes	Medium

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Progress towards our Well-being Objective - Qtr2 update

Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being



Please state what progress has been made against Wellbeing Objective 6, which aims to *support citizens to remain independent and improve their Well-being* through achieving the following outcomes:

Supporting people to 'help themselves' by providing comprehensive advice and information including signposting to other services; and Having 'meaningful conversations' to help people identify 'what matters' to them to inform 'outcome focused' planning.

Social Services have an effective Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) Service in place that fully meets the requirements of the Social Services & Well Being (Wales) Act 2014. All staff have received 'what matters' training in line with a national programme supported by Social Care Wales and Welsh Government. A dedicated Officer has been appointed utilising ICF funding, to support the further development of DEWIS as the 'go to' site.

Providing support to reduce the need for higher tier statutory interventions.

Home First, Emergency Care at Home and Discharge to Assess Schemes are all now fully operational. WG have confirmed grant funding is in place until 31st March 2021 and both Programmes have structured work plans and commissioned services in place. Supporting People continue to monitor and provide services to those individuals who require support whilst in hospital. The Intensive Support Team (IST) provides the edge of care support for Children's Services and utilising grant funding, has been expanded to include a Child Psychologist, Education Worker, Health Visitor, a Family Meeting Service and additional Family Support Workers.

Identifying and supporting carers.

A significantly enhanced range of support is now available to all carers including individual support, groups and leisure and social activities. These are all publicised through a regular newsletter.

Improving the recruitment of Foster carers and Shared Lives carers.

Net increases of: 10 Shared Lives Carers, 15 Foster Carers in past 12 months. Current advertisement is being revised to include reference to the MyST Therapeutic Fostering service.

Continuing to identify opportunities to work collaboratively wherever appropriate.

Welsh Government requires each of the collaborative regions to deliver statutory advocacy services for children and young people. The Gwent region is acknowledged to be leading the work in Wales.

Performance Against Adopted Tracking Measures	Outcome	18/19 Actual	19/20 Target	19/20 Actual	Comment
Relevant staff will receive 'meaningful conversations' training by the end of 2018	1&2	100%	100%	100%	Completed
The DEWIS website will be fully operational by April 2019	1&2	100%	100%	100%	Completed
Undertake a review of all ICF investments to maximise the effectiveness of the grant funding by September 2018	3	100%	100%	100%	Completed
Children's Services Intensive Support Team to be fully operational from April 2018	3	100%	100%	100%	Completed
Numbers of carers (adults above), including young carers (below) supported	4	1130 58	Increase	1303 144	Achieved and ongoing
Levels of respite support provided <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to report for 18/19 following implementation of WCCIS 	4	*	None set	2226 Nights provided	Adult respite: 1470 nights Children's respite: 756 nights
Achieve an increase in the overall number of foster carers recruited – this will be monitored quarterly and annually	5	15	15	13	Ongoing
The Families First programme has 14 outcome measures that are reported yearly to Welsh Government, we will use the relevant measures to support progress with this objective.	1-5	100%	100%	100%	Completed

Conclusions for 2021/ 2022



Please refer to the summary section at the start of the document.

The emergence of the Coronavirus pandemic has and continues to pose unprecedented challenges for the Social Services Directorate within Caerphilly County Borough Council. It is to the great credit of all our staff, together with our partners in the independent and third sectors that we have been able to respond as effectively as we have. The coming months are going to be unquestionably challenging as we face potential winter pressures.

Progress against priority actions from last quarter	By Whom	By when
Previous quarter actions / intentions were overtaken by our response to the Coronavirus epidemic. In the circumstances the Directorate has performed well and responded very effectively		
To develop plans for anticipated demand	DS	Ongoing
Priority Actions for next quarter	By Whom	By when
To ensure we sustain our current levels of service whilst the challenges from the epidemic continue	DS /JW /GJ	ongoing
Feedback / Recognition / Actions from Corporate Management Team	By Whom	By when



SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 8TH MARCH 2022

SUBJECT: HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAMME STRATEGY

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND
HOUSING**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the current Housing Support Programme Strategy for the period 2022-2026 (Appendix 1) as required by Welsh Government to outline our single strategic view of Caerphilly's approach to Homelessness Prevention and Housing Support Services.
- 1.2 The report is seeking the views of Members prior to presentation at Scrutiny and Cabinet.

2 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Welsh Government require all Local Authorities to develop a Housing Support Programme (HSP) Strategy every four years, with a mid-point review every two years. The document is to outline the strategic direction of the local authority for housing related support services. It also provides our single strategic approach to homelessness prevention and housing support services.
- 2.2 The report outlines the main areas of the strategy based on a template provided by Welsh Government. A draft strategy has already been submitted to Welsh Government for verification and feedback has been incorporated into this document.
- 2.3 The strategy also satisfied existing statutory requirements under Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.
- 2.4 The strategy takes into account how delivery of support is in line with Welsh Government's vision and aims for the prevention of homelessness and the transformational shift required to move to a rapid re-housing approach.
- 2.5 The strategy sets out the key priorities for the Local Authority and its partners based on findings from a comprehensive needs assessment and stakeholder engagement.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are requested to consider the strategy and agree with its single strategic direction for housing related support and homelessness prevention.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Housing Support Programme Strategy is produced in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders including Probation, Providers, Landlords (private and social), Housing, Social Services (adults and children) and Service Users. The strategy and action plan (Annex A within the strategy), has been agreed by our Housing Support Planning Group.
- 4.2 The strategy provides a single strategic direction for the local authority.
- 4.3 All services within the portfolio are evaluated regularly, are in line with procurement standing orders, and are currently meeting the needs of individuals.
- 4.4 The strategy lays out a plan of how to address unmet need in the short term and long term in line with Welsh Government vision and principles.
- 4.5 All partners, service users and wider stakeholders have been fully engaged with the process of developing the needs assessment.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The strategy is written in line with the Welsh Government template and feedback from the team has been incorporated into this version.
- 5.2 The strategy provides an outline of the single strategic direction for Caerphilly's approach to homelessness prevention and housing support services for the next four years.
- 5.3 The vision is "All citizens of the Caerphilly borough have safe homes to live in, can easily access integrated support services to meet individual needs, prevent homelessness and ensure all lives are healthy, successful and independent"
- 5.4 A comprehensive needs assessment has been completed via a multi-tiered targeted approach, including desktop research, analysis of local and regional information and a variety of stakeholder engagement processes, the strategy provides focused evidence to support the key findings that follow:
- Additional staffing within current provision to increase the levels of need and/or risk we can accept across all services.
 - Return to our multi partner triage hub within at least one of our emergency housing projects.
 - To develop an Abstinence Led "wet" Accommodation Based Scheme in the borough. This is 24-hour staffed provision for service users who are dependent on or experience significant problems with alcohol. The term "wet" is a recognised Welsh Government term for accommodation projects where residents can continue to drink within their accommodation while being supported to

reduce, control or stop drinking.

- To develop a Co-Occurring / Dual Diagnosis or complex needs accommodation in the borough. This is a staffed provision for service users who have multiple needs and cannot access schemes where we have separate defined mental health or substance misuse for example.
- Further transitional/Rapid Rehousing across the borough to begin to meet the needs of our most vulnerable clients.
- Settled Accommodation, additional one bedroom affordable properties to be delivered.

5.5 Detailed evidence can be found in our Statement of Needs and a brief within the strategy.

5.6 There are four main strategic priorities identified:

- Adopt a rapid Rehousing Approach (includes Increase Housing Supply, Review Temporary and Supported Accommodation, Decrease Emergency Accommodation, Undertake A Multi-Agency Approach)
- End Rough Sleeping
- Increase Early Intervention and Targeted prevention
- Invest In Workforce Development

5.7 Annex A shows details of the activities and outcomes to achieve these four priorities and this will be updated quarterly.

5.8 A wide range of stakeholders were included in our engagement process, including Health, Probation, Internal Services across children and adults, landlords, providers and those individuals who use the service as well as their carers and families.

5.9 Details of the current work with the partners is highlighted in the strategy which covers a wide range of stakeholders and plans for further engagement and collaboration in included.

5.10 **Conclusion**

The report outlines key elements of the strategy for Members to consider in order to agree the strategic direction for Caerphilly's approach to Homelessness Prevention and Housing Related Support Services.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 The strategy has considered many stakeholders feedback.

6.2 The cohort of people requiring these support services is always changing and this creates difficulty with long-term future planning for service demand and delivery, however based on the evidence we have to date, the priorities within the report will remain and the needs assessment shows this to be the case for the near future.

6.3 For all accommodation developments we consider exit strategies prior to any in-depth discussion.

6.4 The costs within the strategy are in line with the grant received from Welsh Government and quarterly monitoring and evaluation, along with submissions to

Welsh Government take place to ensure these are updated and in line with the terms and conditions of the grant.

6.5 The total Housing Support Grant is £8.435,365.71

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Local Authorities have been requested to develop a Housing Support Programme (HSP) Strategy every four years, with a mid-point review every two years. The document outlines the strategic direction of the Local Authority for Housing Related Support Services providing a single strategic view of the approach to Homelessness prevention and Housing Support Services.

7.2 Local Authorities have also been requested to develop a Delivery Plan annual to set out how they intend to deliver the relevant strategic priorities identified in the HSP strategy and any ongoing requirements. The IIA has not identified any negatives impact except those that are outside the scope of the grant.

7.3 This is unavoidable; the age restriction is set out in WG grant terms and conditions. The Housing ACT (Wales) 2014 states that no individual under 16 can legally hold a tenancy.

[Link to full Integrated Impact Assessment.](#)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no financial implications as the services are funded via a Welsh Government Grant.

8.2 Quarterly finance returns are completed along with annual spend plans, signed off by the Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer and reported directly to Welsh Government.

8.3 A breakdown of the Housing Support Grant for 2021/2022 is included in Appendix 2.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Currently there are no personnel implications.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 All consultee comments have been included within the report.

Author: Shelly Jones, Supporting People Manager, jones1@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Dave Street, Corporate Director Social Services & Housing
Jo Williams, Assistant Director Adult Services
Cllr Shayne Cooke, Cabinet Member for Social Care
Councillor Donna Cushing, Chair - Social Services Scrutiny
Councillor Carmen Bezzina, Vice Chair - Social Services Scrutiny

Viv Day, Commissioning Service Manager
Kerry Denman, Housing Solutions Manager

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Caerphilly Housing Support Programme Strategy

Appendix 2 Housing Support Breakdowns

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A single strategic view of Caerphilly's approach to Homelessness Prevention and Housing Support Services. Our vision to brief, rare and unrepeated homelessness for Caerphilly.

HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAMME STRATEGY

2022-2026

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Foreword

I am pleased to share with you Caerphilly's Housing Support Programme 2022-2026. The programme not only builds on the considerable achievements of the authority's housing support service but also notes the work already undertaken to prevent and address homelessness across Caerphilly. The provision of housing support services across the borough is central to our aim of early intervention, preventing homelessness and stabilises housing situations for many people. It is crucial that we ensure all citizens, regardless of tenure have equal access to quality support and accommodation to meet needs, which is vital to prevent further crisis. The Council is systematically looking to expand its housing and support services to meet the need of a broad range of people while working with stakeholders to achieve this. The ongoing pandemic and changes to legislation have expedited service development and engagement with wider stakeholders demonstrating its commitment to joint working and meeting the Housing Support goals of all. This strategy and accompanying statement of needs document evidences our understanding of the borough and its implementation will help achieve continuous improvement in Housing Support Services.

Cllr Shayne Cook

1. Introduction

1a Purpose of the Strategy

The purpose of the strategy is to outline a single strategic direction for the local authorities approach to homelessness prevention and housing support services for the next four years, 2022-2026, whilst considering that there will potentially be many changes throughout the journey during this period.

It aims to identify and set out priority areas and key principles for the Local Authority and all partners to consider and adopt, following extensive evidence from its needs assessment and stakeholder engagement findings. The strategy takes into account how the priorities and delivery actions support the Welsh Government's vision and aims with details of how we plan the transformational shift required to move to a rapid rehousing approach.

This strategy satisfies the existing statutory homelessness functions, funded through the Revenue Settlement Grant under Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. The strategy includes the reviewed and updated Local Authorities Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022.

BRIEF, RARE, UNREPEATED

1b Legislative and policy context

There is plentiful legislative and policy context to support the Housing Support Programme, the key legislation is the Housing (Wales) Act, 2014, Well-being Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. There are many others that all affect the implementation of the strategy with the focus of all being on homeless prevention, partnership working and fluid service delivery.

In terms of local and regional context, again there is a wide range of sources available including Rough Sleeper Action Plan, Caerphilly's Corporate Plan that focus and compliment the HSP strategy around protection of vulnerable people, transforming services to become more efficient and with a greater focus on customer engagement and alternative delivery models. The strategy is in line with the Rough Sleeper Action plan as a key stakeholder across both; understanding the root cause and ensuring services are available to meet a range of needs.

For full details on how each relevant policy and act effects the strategy, please see Appendix 1.

1c Vision and principles

Vision

All citizens of the Caerphilly borough have safe homes to live in, can easily access integrated support services to meet individual needs, prevent homelessness and ensure all lives are healthy, successful and independent.

Principles

- 1- That access to support services is swift and transparent and partners will work to prevent homelessness where possible
- 2- We will work to ensure that everyone has access to fair and suitable accommodation that is affordable sustainable and energy efficient
- 3- That access to advice and assistance is readily available across a number of platforms for people to be able to understand what Housing related rights they have and what support services are available to allow them to have access to good quality housing and related support.
- 4- That relevant pathways for signposting are in place to allow access to information so people are empowered to, where viable, support themselves

2. Needs Assessment

2a Needs Assessment Process

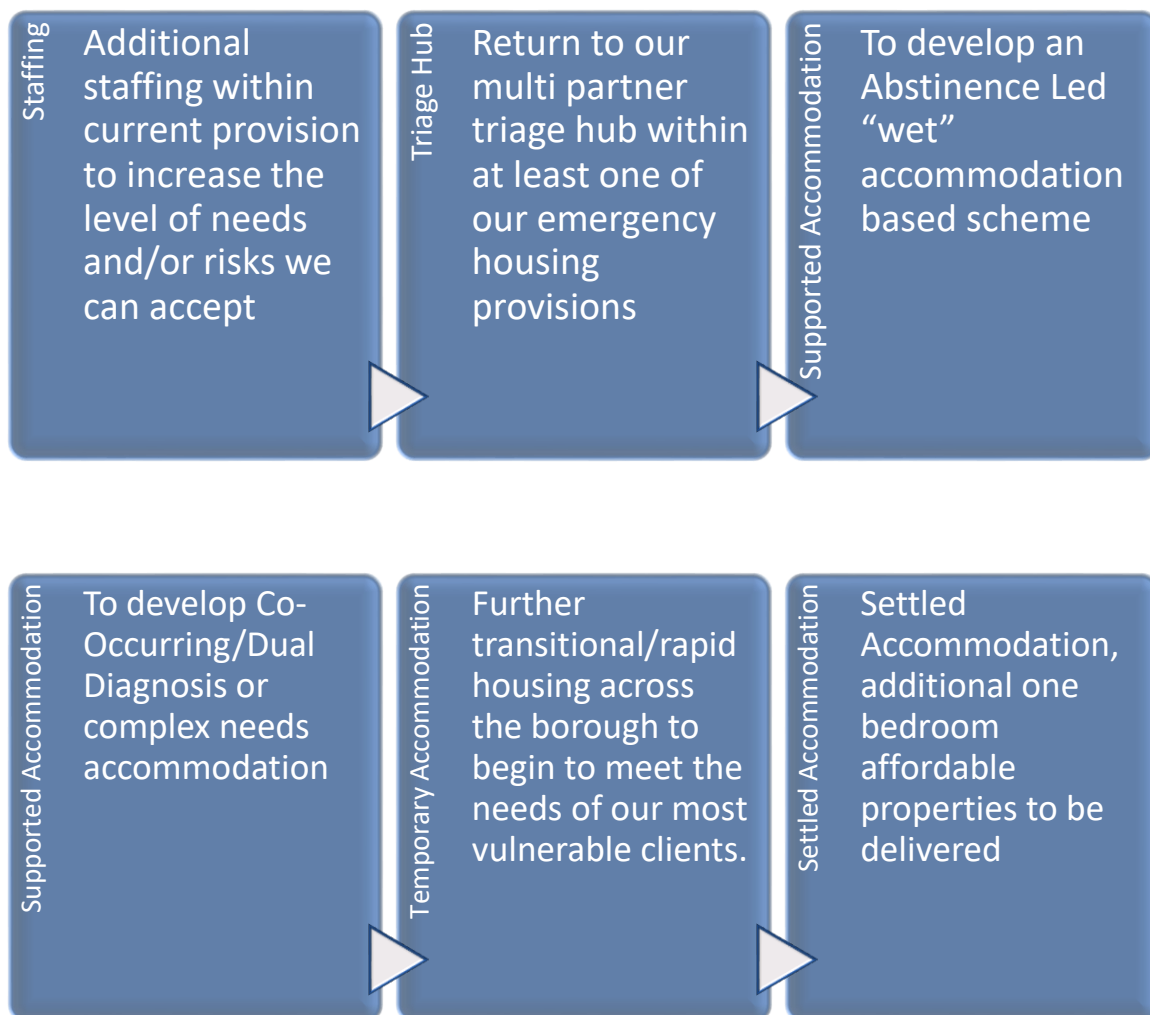
The Local Authority has compiled a comprehensive needs assessment by gathering information and evidence of the individuals and services within the borough from a wide range of sources, using this data to understand the ever-changing needs to prevent homelessness and deliver Housing Support Services.

The process that was undertaken includes both desktop research such as analysing local and regional sources, in addition to interviews, completion of surveys from stakeholders and exploring various case studies. Focus of evidence base is around key outcomes data and various assessments of need.

Here is a link to the Statement of Need document. [To be actioned in due course, document attached in interim]

2b Key findings

The evidence from the findings support our requirement for



Evidence includes

- Multiple and co-occurring needs are increasing and 70% have a common mental disorder, with Mental Health being our highest lead need across Housing Support.
- 66% of referrals for Mental Health Accommodation were accepted and 64% for Substance Misuse. The main reason for refusal of referrals across our supported accommodation is due to Complex Needs, or Dual diagnosis, some require Abstinence led services and input from Health colleagues including palliative care.
- Feedback about the services were generally positive with any negative feedback being related to a lack of suitable provision – i.e. people being in B&B who needed higher levels of service and those in service who needed a different and more focused type of provision for dual diagnosis.
- Number of failed occasions within supported or rehab provisions due to unsuitable or unsustainable goals
- Number of rough sleepers who fall between services (MH and SM) as they don't meet criteria for either service
- Feedback about the services were generally positive with any negative feedback being related to a lack of suitable provision – i.e. people being in B&B who needed higher levels of service and those in service who needed a different and more focused type of provision for dual diagnosis specifically

Adaptation of Floating Support Services is another requirement; to increase early intervention and targeted prevention; increase mental health support and improve access of services

Evidence includes

- 42% of spend is on Floating Support Services, with 15% for Mental Health and 10% for generic which includes Homeless Outreach
- Outcomes show increases in Services for Families, Mental Health and generic services
- 16-64 year old are the highest age band in Caerphilly
- Crisis workers constantly working at full capacity
- Referrals are increasing – 92% increase in referrals received in Jan 20 compared to Jan 21 and a 50% increase between November 2020 and 2021
- Outcomes show increases in Services for Families, Mental Health and our generic service
- Increased length of stay within Interim Accommodation but an increase in the number of people who are maintaining their accommodation independently

Summary of Other key findings/issues identified:

- 16-64 year old are the highest age band in Caerphilly (merged OP into Generic)
- Caerphilly has an above average proportion of Lower Super Output Areas with three wards in the top 7 (increased crisis and geographical support workers)
- 62% of residents are of working age, 75% are economically active, benefit claims and unemployment has decreased across Caerphilly with the number of those claiming JSA unchanged at 0.5% in 2021. 16% have a professional or technical Occupation
- Caerphilly has seen an increase of 15% in its weekly gross pay for full time workers and the Gwent Valleys have a higher than average increase in gross disposable household income by 10.0% since 2015
- Year 11 NEET school age children have increased across Caerphilly, as have the Year 11 school leavers.
- The general health of the population is of concern with 63% of adults overweight, 40% drinking above guidelines daily and the lowest percentage of people eating five or more fruit or veg portions.
- Stakeholder feedback largely focused around one area - Lack of suitable affordable housing, specifically single person accommodation.
- Staffing resource availability is of concern

The source for the key findings are as follows:

- Infobasecymru.net
- NOMIS
- ONS
- SP Team Data – referrals, gateway, monitoring
- Provider data – Hospital Discharge
- Local Housing and Homelessness data
- Outcomes
- VAWDASV
- DWP
- LA Wellbeing Assessment
- Careers Wales
- Trussell Trust.org
- Providers Needs data
- WIMD
- Service User Feedback
- Stakeholder Feedback
- Gwent Population Needs Assessment (findings from the 2020 assessment will be updated as soon as document published.)

2c Conclusion

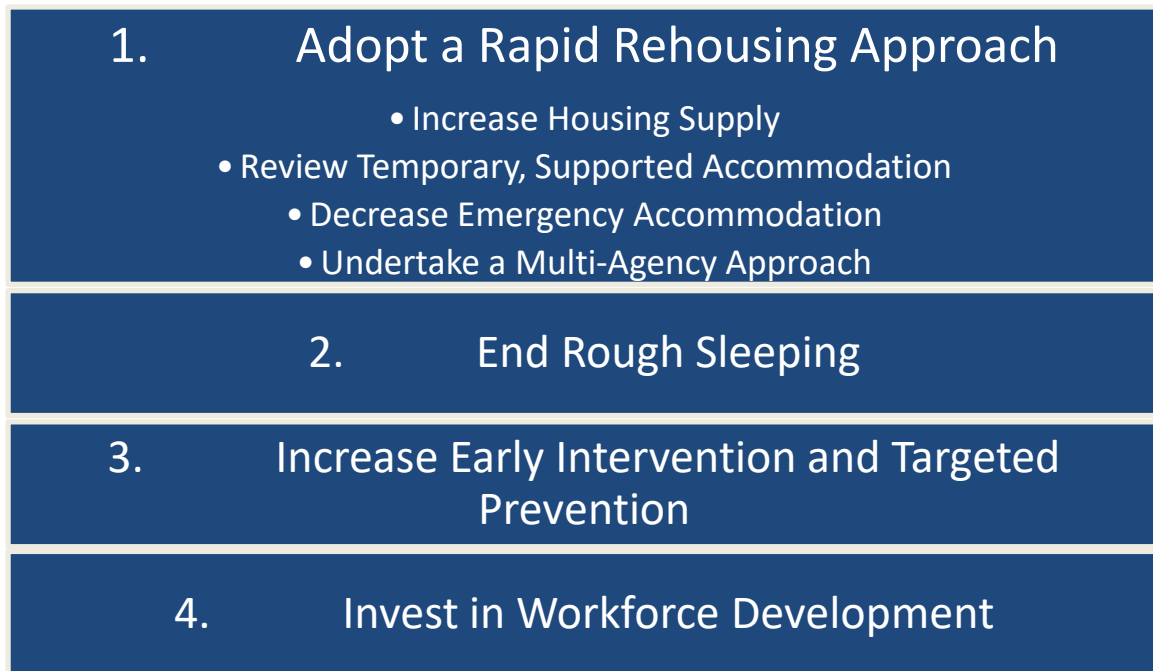
In conclusion we understand where our needs are currently and what we need to change in order to get to a place we need to be – there are many stumbling blocks along the way and these are not such that can be solved over night or in the short term. House building for general needs can take years, accommodation suitable for those with chronic or complex needs has previously taken even longer and so we need to overcome the planning issues and communication with the communities around what we are trying to achieve. It is important that we show how individuals can successfully live within a community if they have the correct levels of care and support.

To meet needs successfully, as identified in this assessment, we will need to undertake joint working and address the continuous concern relating to staff, this includes retaining existing workforce and attracting new labour. By sharing knowledge and skills, set in a holistic service delivery manner will provide optimum services, prevent homelessness and maintain homes by empowering those in our community.

3. Strategic Priorities

There are four clear Strategic Priorities for Caerphilly CBC.

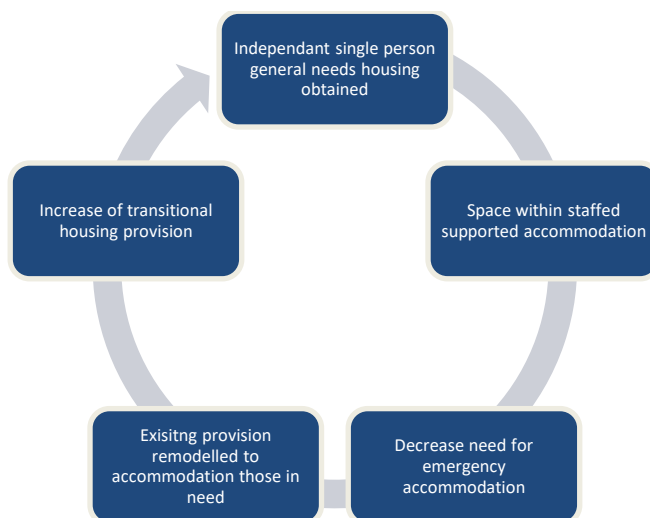
Additional details are contained within Annex A describing key actions



Priority One – Adopt a Rapid Rehousing Model

As part of Welsh Government policy direction, this overarching priority will address a number of sub actions below; details will be available as the Rapid Rehousing Transitional Plan is developed.

In order to achieve rapid rehousing, we have considered the current provision and concluded additional general needs provision will be key to adopt this model. A large number of people currently in supported accommodation need to move to a lesser level of support or on to their own long-term independent housing, both require greater levels of general needs housing to achieve this aim. Accommodation is required across all locations of the borough, mainly in the form of single person accommodation that is affordable, within distance to amenities, transport, employment and existing supportive friends and family and not always, where we currently hold social stock.



It is evident from the statement of needs that there is a large number of people unable to access our existing supported accommodation, we are temporarily considering the option of increasing staffing levels to manage the risks and needs of those accessing services, without causing any negative effect on those current residents.

We need to understand the criteria to access schemes and the reasons people are unable to access those to date. There is a long-term requirement is for a dedicated abstinence led or “wet” scheme and specific complex care or dual diagnosis projects to meet the needs of those currently unable to access existing projects. Numerous stakeholder feedback sessions have also highlighted the gap.

We currently have accommodation that was originally an assessment centre, however over the past two years this emergency housing has become static in its tenants, mainly caused by the lack of single person accommodation needed within the borough. A key action will be to bring this provision back to the multi-agency assessment hub that we require whilst considering the same action for the other existing emergency housing provision we have to provide the assessment centre activities across the borough and reduce the need for individuals to travel. The key priority to achieve this is move on those currently resident.

Work has already commenced with our Development and Housing Strategy teams to consider various parcels of land that would be suitable to build upon, as well as working with our external partners to identify existing developments for refurbishment and remodelling.

A key action will include information analysis from the Local Housing Market Assessment when completed.

In addition to completely new accommodation, we will review our existing services, for some of the services we will be able to remodel by amending current staffing levels and increase the acceptance of referrals. This will in turn provide us with the evidence base we require for the number of units required in future.

We aim to consider our existing emergency housing stock as potential accommodation for repurposing, while decreasing the need for the emergency housing we can develop accommodation-based provision for those with chronic life limiting alcohol problems, those with complex care and dual diagnosis that are currently not eligible for existing services

With an increased general needs and transitional housing portfolio, we can move those no longer needing supported environments on to their preferred accommodation and in turn will use the spaces for those in emergency housing to take their place and benefit from the staff available to help support them to achieve independent housing in the near future.

Working with key partners such as Health, Probation and Social Services, we have seen an increase in successful retention of supported accommodation tenancies as well as successful long-term retention of independent tenancies. Collaboration from colleagues in CMHT have enabled us to work through the cause of homelessness, not only supporting that individual but also using the data to inform future interventions and prevention.

Currently we jointly commission a number of services between Supporting People, Housing and Children’s Services. We aim to build upon this holistic approach and jointly commission further projects, as mentioned above, the requirement for Abstinence Led “Wet” housing and Complex Care/Dual Diagnosis will only be achievable with the direct commissioning between numerous partners; Health, Social Services and Housing. The plan is to develop all staffs skills and share this knowledge with each – recommendations of joint initial visits will achieve our goal of anybody in service only having to tell their story, and repeating their trauma once.

Priority Two – End Rough Sleeping

This priority is around entrenched rough sleepers. how our support can provide innovative and preventative measures. It is evident there are entrenched rough sleepers within the borough, we have an active outreach team who cover the whole borough making sure that any individuals are supported and provided for as necessary. We have directly housed around 40 rough sleepers from the street via this team so far this year and the partnerships created with Estate Agents and other stakeholders including Social Housing provision has assisted with the success of these.

Key actions include improve access to accommodation, as above, we need to increase the single person accommodation across the borough, we also need to provide access to affordable accommodation as well as improve physical contact with our teams, not only during the day but as and when needed which includes weekends and out of hours. A key action will be to scope the current client group, establish the reasons for their rough sleeping and identify how we can mitigate these. Another action is to increase joint visits to those entrenched rough sleepers with Housing Solution team members, colleagues in GDAS, GSSMS and Housing First to provide a holistic service as well as continuing the amazing collaboration we have already started with the Enhanced GP Service specifically for homeless individuals.

Consideration of the criteria for our existing supported and temporary accommodation will take place to understand the reasons for previous evictions etc. and to identify and remove any barriers to accessing this and the support services.

Working with private property owners, through our Caerphilly Keys project and directly with Estate Agents will be key, affordable accommodation for single males is often preventing these individuals successfully accessing accommodation. Our aim is to assist them while in temporary accommodation to obtain a positive rental history and reference for property owners moving forward

Priority Three – Early Intervention and Targeted prevention

While early intervention and targeted prevention are wider than Housing Support, it is a key priority to strengthen early intervention services and jointly work with a range of partners to target specific cohorts. To achieve this we will continue working with our colleagues in offender services, children's services and substance misuse and mental health.

We currently have solid foundations for joint working with colleagues in offender services and key actions include returning to our way of working pre pandemic where we had Housing Support Staff based in the prisons, able to provide support prior to release to improve the housing situation of all leaving custody. This will revert shortly and we will continue to improve on the staff able to access and attend the prison. In conjunction with this we have been assisting colleagues with providing data around housing need for services such as Approved Premises and continue our work with identifying suitable housing for those coming to the borough

We currently have considerable accommodation provision specific to young people; the gap is around emergency provision, short-term assessment provision and those with significant needs over and above housing related support. Children's Services have made a financial contribution towards additional staff resources within an existing supported accommodation project, which has provided activities outside of the HSG terms and conditions. This holistic service is still premature and we are learning more about assessment of needs prior to allocation as well as how we can meet the specific needs of this cohort.

We have identified that both Housing Support and Housing Solutions Workers need to work more collaboratively and as such we are currently undertaking an exercise which identifies the workers

involved with each individual and allows for a more joined up approach to support, actively promoting better communication and thus improving prevention outcomes. Through monitoring of the temporary accommodation projects, it is evident that many individuals do not require the high level of support provided within these provisions. Identifying financial incentives and methods of moving on will be a key action for all involved.

Priority Four – Invest in Workforce Development

Our staff are key – we need to find ways to retain them and attract new people to the sector. As commissioners, we need to improve the understanding of this unique role and help to promote the sector and its achievements. One way of achieving this is to build on the vFair (virtual event platform) that we have recently organised and access many of the dedicated agency or temporary housing and support staff actively seeking employment.

As a driving force to create integration and collaboration we will also be bringing staff from different sectors together to understand each other's roles and language, enhancing their skills and knowledge and enable a faster, more effective service delivery for all. To achieve this next steps will include sharing provisions and environments across partners; this includes Housing Support staff based in the Flying Start Integrated Hub, Health staff based in Homelessness provision, Housing Support staff and Housing staff from Registered Social and Local Authority Landlords sharing community venues to deliver a holistic service directly to service users. Integration of staffing across accommodation and floating support.

Key actions include identification of specialist roles; we already have dedicated workers within various communities, these include crisis services and staff who attend specific events such as the Armed Forces Hub meetings. We are looking to further interact and realign roles across Housing and Support to provide a flexible, yet short pathway into services, specifically for those leaving institutions such as prison or hospital.

We have recently introduced a number of specific workers across our accommodation provisions that cover both pre and post housing support to provide that continual seamless service thus reducing need for individuals to re-tell their stories and as such suffer the re-traumatisation of reliving past trauma. This in turn reduces paperwork and administration burden. Commissioning services in this way allows for services users to receive a consistent service that they will receive maximum benefit from, encouraging them to build relationships and rapport to enable them to feel safe to share how we can support.

Training is core to maintaining a higher effective workforce, ongoing, updated training is core to all service delivery specifications, and we support our providers to access and achieve a high rate of attendance at all training opportunities.

Currently there are at least 23 posts vacant across the service, 9 providers have already had to utilise relief staff and felt they “had no choice to do this, particularly for waking night and double staff cover” they also stated “Christmas cover is a major concern”. There has however been some positive responses including “it's worked well for us, the staff member is brilliant, and we'll be offering a full time position”. Others shared it was “increasingly difficult to attract people to the sector when salaries do not compare favourably” so we will be looking deeper into this feedback and working with providers.

A key theme included across all policy, strategies and responses from our stakeholder engagement included the need to continue with financial capability being at the core of our services. Our priority will continue to be around training and joint working with organisations. A recent example is the work we have initiated across Gwent with the Money and Pension Service, building this relationship has provided free access to training for all of our providers, which in turn will assist us to retain staff and ultimately provide a thorough service for all service users. Our jointly commissioned Citizen Advice service will continue to provide a high level of support and assistance for all those with debt and income support

needs to provide a long-term sustainable solution opposed to short-term remedies that just delay the inevitable. We are also working with providers to deliver substance misuse training for Naloxone delivery

4. Stakeholder Engagement

4a Stakeholders Engaged with

In order to understand our priorities and identify needs in our services we have engaged with many different stakeholders. Due to restrictions around the pandemic still in place and time constraints, majority of the research is via Stakeholder questionnaires and interviews over MS Teams or telephone. Some face-to-face consultation has taken place specifically with internal services, Housing Solutions and Emergency Housing Teams.

As well as consulting with our Housing Strategy Team in the process of developing the Strategy, we consulted with the following stakeholders during the period

- Health
 - NHS
 - GP service – Advanced Nurse Practitioner
 - ABUHB
 - LD/MH Housing Manager
 - GSSMS Team Leader
- Caerphilly Social Services
 - CDAT Team Manager
 - CLDT and PDSI Team Manager (interview)
 - 16+ Homelessness Social Worker/Senior Practitioner (interview)
- Wales Probation Service
 - Accommodation Pathway Coordinator Gwent
- VAWDASV Partnership Boards
- Substance Misuse Area Planning Boards
 - Substance Misuse Team Manager
- Children and Communities Grant
 - Flying Start Team Manager (both survey and interviews)
- Providers – existing information such as LQA's
 - Age Cymru Gwent
 - GDAS - AO
 - Homestart (interview)
 - Llamau YP
 - Llamau DA (interview)
 - Mind (Interview)
 - Pobl Group (both Survey and Interviews)
 - Platform (both Survey and Interviews)
 - St Vincents (Interview)
- Landlords
 - Caerphilly Housing
 - United Welsh
- People who use HSG services – Exit Questionnaires as well as interviews
 - A number of current and previous service users were called via telephone/WhatsApp (FaceTime offered)
- Carers and families of people who use HSG services
 - A number of current and previous service users carers and families were called via telephone/WhatsApp (FaceTime offered)

Discussions will take place around anything specific raised throughout the consultation directly with stakeholders to achieve a collaborative response, to address any concerns and identify how we can improve services. Majority of the points raised through the strategy are directly from stakeholders, usually via our conversations with them that come from their own principles or priorities.

The strategy aims to work in conjunction with all stakeholders own principles and ultimately our joint aim is to prevent homelessness and support all individuals.

4b. Stakeholder feedback

As well as the stakeholder questionnaire completed via our Gwent website [www.gwenhousingssupport.co.uk], we have carried out additional interviews with key stakeholders where a survey was not completed. A summary of the key issues and findings along with improvements suggested and any other comments are below

Lack of

- housing stock, specifically one and two bed properties,
- affordable or suitably located stock, especially around social housing stock, locations that are on public transport routes
- supported accommodation for people
 - who work
 - with a Dual Diagnosis and/or harm reduction TA
 - with addiction issues and addiction with mental ill health and further lack for those with addiction, mental health and forensic needs
- abstinence led schemes
- night shelter provision alternative
- gender specific supported accommodation for women with multiple trauma including exploitation
- accommodation generally for wheelchair uses, age restrictions on extra care and warden controlled accommodation that would be suitable
- housing options when moving from refuge into accommodation
- emergency room for young people

Gap in

- Accommodation for assessment of homeless for under 18's
- Emotional support
- PRS accommodation for those who are not in employment
- Scale and scope of Domestic Abuse staff in Housing Solutions
- Services for those young people in supported lodgings due to the impact on their homelessness application
- Staffing; finding it increasingly difficult to attract and retain staffing in the area of support.

Consider how

- intentionality, priority need and local connection will affect the hardest to accommodate citizens
- High rental cost, specific to Private Rental Sector (PRS)
- PRS only accepting "Mature or Professional" and the additional fees that aren't affordable
- Social isolation created by Covid, Universal Credit cuts and the effects of such on Mental Health
- More location choice for Supported housing for very vulnerable young families who are moving out of the homeless unit and need more intensive support.

Positive Feedback: 55% said it had improved over the last year

- Increased collaboration across Children's and Community Grant and HSG across the region – Caerphilly have a high level of this but unsure of other areas.
- Links across the region with Early Years Integration Transformation Programme
- "Increase Dispersed Supported Accommodation or STAR model – people needing high levels of support can still seek employment without losing the support due to the costs"
- Many respondents mentioned they are now missing the Psychology staff who were based across emergency housing services, "just as they were starting to make everything better it ended"

- Introduction of Health specialist and Dual Diagnosis being identified
- Flying Start report positively closely working with SP both strategically and on the frontline.
- Positive relationships SP and Housing due to individual relationships as opposed to the services as a whole
- High level of HSG funded initiatives to assist removal of barriers to health and wellbeing in relation to their primary and secondary mental health needs
- Network meetings allow for HSG providers to share information and discuss needs, vital for signposting and joint collaborative working
- Working with Gwent Specialist Substance Misuse Service and Rough sleeper services, also Gwent Drug Alcohol Service to improve understanding of services available and know who and how to access services.
- Learning Disability and Physical Disability Sensory Impairment stated they have an excellent relationship with Supporting People and services commissioned by the team as well as Housing Advice colleagues
- Probation Accommodation Pathway has been maintained throughout the pandemic serving the clients with one of the most advanced services, communication and information sharing is vital to continue offer of best possible service

Negative Feedback and areas of improvement 45% stated there had been little or no improvement

- Some stated this was due to Covid and home working
- The wider Covid approach has been to detriment of other service user groups, B&B placements being full and need for out of county placements
- Local Health crisis teams are not responding in a helpful way to our staff contacting for support when one of our tenants is in crisis. This has been a long-term pattern – crisis teams asking us to call the police, the police asking us to call the crisis team.
- As a third sector provider, our voice in meetings involving Caerphilly Mental Health Teams can be limited and undervalued. The workers we have in those teams and the hospitals helps with this on a local level but this does not always permeate out across the borough with people supported in the community by our wider workforce.

Improvements suggested

- Centralised Emails for departments (SP already have a team email)
- Multi-disciplinary teams/Shared or Joint funding streams
- Non specialist HRS staff ability to identify VAWDASV
- Multi agency/disciplinary Forum headed by SP to update on their ongoing successes. Annual or half-yearly progress report and ability to identify support needs across the borough for review.
- Better ways to share information
- Increase multi agency support for those with specialist requirements

Additional feedback

- Increase in children with emerging developmental or complex medical needs with a shortage of suitable homes in the borough in locations that are suitable, close to family support.
- Rising number of families struggling with finances and affordable housing of the right size
- HSG to facilitate workshop / meetings between third sector providers and the Health Board / local CMHTs / HTT's etc., to forge better mutual understanding of expertise and the benefits of person-led responses to the people we are supporting.
- Partnership still not recovered from pandemic and reactive approaches continue.
- Need to return to the full early intervention model to stop the revolving door scenario

- Increase service user involvement in identifying what type of support is most helpful when moving from homelessness not assuming traditional or current support range is what is wanted.
- “I would like to thank SP for their outstanding and ongoing work within the Borough for vulnerable service users during the pandemic - despite the multitude of challenges they have faced.”

Opportunities we are considering

- How to convert or refurbish existing stock
- How to increase PRS involvement
- Increase communication with all landlords
- Develop communities with a mixture of generations
- Increase the buy in from all stakeholders – RPB and PSB to jointly tackle the rise in Mental Health and Substance Misuse issues, address the complex needs and take more of a holistic approach including palliative care.

Also using documents such as Cymorth’s Lessons From The Frontline to inform our commissioning decisions

- considering the caseloads of support workers,
- ensuring they are at the correct levels to include both virtual and face to face meetings
- clarity around the services we need to meet need while working within a post-lockdown way
- we are looking at co-locating a number of staff across developments
- having office bases that are available to all staff regardless of employer

Stakeholder Questionnaire Gwent in Appendix 2, 3 and 4

5. Impact Assessments

CCBC have an integrated impact assessment that is used to support informed and effective decision making whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation including

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Statutory Consultation v Doctrine of Legitimate Expectation and Gunning Principles

The Local Authority includes its Strategic Equality Plan when completing the Impact Assessment.

A link to the document is included here <https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/IIA/IIA-form-housing-support-programme-strategy>

5a Impact Assessment Process

The process includes individual assessment of all protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 to determine if the proposal being made has any positive, negative or neutral impact and how, if any negative impacts are identified, a further investigation is compiled to understand how these can be mitigated and how evidence is recorded to support the view.

Further to this, all socio-economic duties are considered and how each impact on the proposal may or may not have on them –these include Low Income/Income Poverty, Low and/or no Wealth, Material and Area Deprivation, Socio-economic Background and Disadvantage. The impact assessment considers if the proposal has any positive, negative or neutral impacts and mitigation of any identified negative impacts and any evidence data, extracts from legislation guidance policy to support are included.

The Corporate Plan's objectives are considered and how the proposal delivers against such in terms of positive, negative or neutral impacts on each of the six objectives and mitigation of negatives. Further to this consideration of any policies or plans CCBC have in place are considered and listed for reference.

Wellbeing of Future Generations Five Ways of Working are each considered in terms of sustainable development principles and how the proposal improves economic, social, environment and cultural wellbeing. The proposal considers how each of the wellbeing goals will maximise our contribution to each and refers to our outcomes information.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards are separate requirements within the document to which the proposals are compliant with both with no negative impact. Relevant evidence is included within the document.

The proposal uses key relevant data to evidence its findings. There were no gaps identified in terms of the evidence and data used to develop, however we have chosen to revise some of our equal opportunities information to update and keep in line with recent changes.

Consultation such as stakeholder's questionnaire and interviews identify local and regional specific needs. Monitoring and review evidence around implementation and impact of the proposal includes any amended as well as detail of the practical arrangements and how they are used to develop future proposals and when they are due for review.

A final summary provides reasons for recommendations and a summary of the IIA.

5b Key findings

This integrated impact assessment (IIA) has been designed to help support the Council in making informed and effective decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Statutory Consultation v Doctrine of Legitimate Expectation and Gunning Principles

The IIA has identified overall the Strategy and Development Plan will have a positive impact upon all aspects of the Assessment. Promotion of equal opportunity for all citizens over 16 years of age, all tenures including homeless and roofless.

Whilst we do not provide specific services for those under the age of 16, the support provided to adults within the family will prevent homelessness and retain housing. To mitigate this we ensure signposting and collaborative working with other services is paramount and have recently joined Flying Start to include a dedicated Support Worker within their hub, including Health staff as well as Social Services.

The Housing Support Programme is fully inclusive, including people with disabilities and long-term conditions, regardless of anybody's gender identity, marriage or civil partnership status. The strategy includes women who are pregnant, on maternity leave and the wider family. Referrals taken are for the household regardless of race, religion or belief or sex and sexual orientation.

The overarching strategy is to improve people's socio-economic situation, all impacts are positive by providing services to address low income and income poverty, those with low or no wealth and in material or area deprivation. The services are for any socio-economic background and disadvantage and therefore has positive impacts on all.

In terms of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Standards there are no negative impacts on the Welsh language as the services are fully compliant with the measure and all Service Providers are fully aware of their responsibility and obligations. The strategy enables us to procure services based on detailed specifications that include the Welsh Language Standards to mitigate any negative impact. All services are available bilingually and the terms and conditions of the grant enable us to fund any interpretation fees.

6. Implementing, monitoring and reviewing the Strategy

6a Working with partners

The authority will work with key partners such as Health, Social Care and Criminal Justice in order to deliver and optimise the impact of the strategy as follows:

Work with Health

Learning Disabilities and Mental Health

In April 2021, ABUHB via Campbell Tickell commenced their housing needs analysis for LD, Autism Spectrum Disorder and MH. Numerous interviews with Housing Support leads and sessions to gain insight from a housing and support perspective were undertaken. The key conclusions from the assessment evidenced that for those individuals with learning disabilities purpose built supported living would be required, in addition to specific PMLD and specific Autism Supported living as well as a jointly commissioning designated general needs housing scheme between the LA and Health Board. Currently Caerphilly has a plethora of LD supported living provision however this is all shared accommodation and the needs assessment indicated majority of people wanted to live alone. We have a dedicated floating support service for people who are transitioning from supported living to living alone within the community. There is no specific Autism Support currently provided via Housing Support Services; however, we are aware of the Autism Strategy and plan to be involved in the near future.

There were multiple proposals for development around people with mental health problems including step down, semi supported (YP) and long-term supported accommodation. Caerphilly have 3 supported accommodation projects already in place, these are for all from 16 and cover 24/7, 8-8 with on call and intensive support models for step down provision. We are also increasing the number of dispersed supported accommodation options across the borough with RSL's but there is no provision via the LA to date.

The close working relationship with the Housing Manager for Mental Health and Learning Disabilities continues and the addition of the Inpatient Flow Coordinator has cemented the relationship between Housing Support Workers based in the Acute Inpatient Hospital within the borough and across both the Local Authority Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Teams

We continue to discuss a Gwent wide hospital discharge service; one that is co funded across Gwent to provide support with move on and to prevent homelessness regardless of the LA the patient lives in or is currently in whilst attending hospital.

Homelessness HUB

Between June 2020 and August 2021, Phase 2 funding enabled us to offer additional services to the homeless population in conjunction with colleagues in Health. A partnership agreement with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board helped to create a mental health "triage Hub" to employ specific staff to help improve mental health and provide psychological support to everyone within emergency and temporary housing and cover as many floating support individuals as were accessible. The main aim was to consider the psychological effects of homelessness its origins and any underpinning reasons for people becoming homeless in the hope that this might help support an effective and meaningful solution to homelessness and social instability. Staff from across Health and CMHT were delivering a range of

training to support staff and direct provision to service users in collaboration with key workers and Housing Solution Staff. The methodology around the knowledge and skills share was to make the service as sustainable as possible – initially we were not able to guarantee how long the staff would be available for and so this way felt like the optimum measure for ensuring longevity of the service. Unfortunately, due to capacity with the ongoing pandemic, staff were relocated but it is hoped that we can recommence the service as soon as ABUHB are able to provide capacity.

Substance Misuse

In addition, a dedicated GSSMS worker is working across all accommodation provisions, providing training and a knowledge share session with all support workers as well as jointly attending appointments with support workers and the Service User working directly with individuals around their addictions. Other work includes being fully included in developments of services for any future accommodation model in terms of its design and availability.

We also have dedicated GDAS staff who are assisting with all individuals across the Housing Support service, they are currently providing one to one sessions with all people who are in B&B provision and are developing a drop in service to our colleagues in the local Probation Office.

Enhanced GP Services

Early 2020 saw the partnership between an Advanced Nurse Practitioner in a local GP surgery and Housing Support Services, the result was a dedicated Enhanced GP service for people who are homeless; either currently rough sleeping or in emergency or temporary accommodation, by November 1st, 76 patients were assessed and supported with 42 remaining open to the surgery.

The Advanced Nurse Practitioner will register patients at the clinic and holds a clinic once a week at the practice as well as attending projects and going to sites frequented by individual rough sleepers. Rough sleepers are encouraged to engage with the service and transportation can be arranged, as this is the main barrier to addressing significant health issues such as infections, pneumonia, feet and skin issues or alcohol/substances intake. Urgent health needs will be guaranteed a same day appointment.

We have also been able to offer each individual both Covid-19 vaccines due to an expedited schedule and will be offering boosters in due course.

Our colleagues in GDAS and GSSMS as well as the Police and Mental Health Teams work closely with the Rough Sleeper Support team to provide a truly holistic service to ensure we can meet as many needs of this population as safely as possible.

Gwent Suicide and Self Harm Prevention

Attendance at various meetings chaired by Health including the Gwent Suicide and Self Harm Prevention assists us to make links and have an input into the services – just recently; this meeting assisted us to set up support groups with the 2Wish foundation and Papyrus Youth Suicide across our temporary accommodation provision around suicide and attempted suicides.

Neighbourhood Care Network

Housing Support staff continue to attend the three local NCN meetings to understand and collaborate with Health – this has assisted us greatly for mutual benefits around vaccinations for Covid-19 and Flu of late but also around identifying places for support workers to signpost to and promoting the Housing Support Services.

Integrated Wellbeing Network

Housing Support staff continue to attend the ABUHB Integrated Wellbeing Meetings and continue the promotion of the programme but also learn about local groups and how to access services for example:- Community centre co-ordinators, Cub/scout groups, Exercise and wellbeing classes, Choirs, Church

Groups, Foodbank co-ordinators, Volunteer groups, Alzheimer's society. In addition, staff from the SP team are Community Champions for Health and share information with housing and support staff regularly.

Social Care

Mental Health

For many years Housing and Support Services have focused on individuals with mental ill health; we have a number of supported accommodation units across the borough and dedicated staff based within the community delivering Housing Support. A team of people who work across CMHT, CDAT and the hospital service to provide holistic support to those who have complex needs or dual diagnosis. Previously evidence led to the conversion of supported accommodation into long-term housing with social care and secondary MH services to enable the individuals living there to remain. All support workers liaise regularly with the In-patient Flow Coordinator, Housing and other providers to ensure we are offering the full package of Housing and support to these individuals

Drug and Alcohol

We have an increasing number of people with drug and alcohol issues presenting to Housing Support Services, these individuals often also display mental health needs that requires accommodation currently unavailable; models that allow for alcohol consumption and abstinence led schemes are urgently required within the borough, in conjunction with Health and palliative care provision. Our social workers work in conjunction with our support workers and dedicated GDAS and GSSMS staff who provide vital outreach services and enable access to prescribing places to understand needs and future demand for accommodation and support services. Since bringing in dedicated staff, we have gathered various pieces of evidence to support our understanding of need in this area and continue to work with Housing Strategy colleagues to develop suitable provision, until this is completed our floating support staff will continue to provide optimum services to maintain and reduce needs as best we can.

Learning Disability

Previously the HSG and LD teams jointly commissioning a purpose built, eight unit, self-contained apartment block. It originally contained one unit used as a base for care staff who could assist with individuals moving in from supported living, the shared lives scheme or directly from a family home, providing care during transition with a dedicated support worker to assist with any housing related support. The support remains present to the current day and has seen significant advances for each person resident to the point they only receive ad hoc support with no need for staff to be resident on site, which enabled us to use the flat for an additional person. We also continue to support Shared Lives placements and provide housing support to those moving out of service into their own independent accommodation.

Children's Services

Extensive work is ongoing around provision for young people; we have a large number of supported accommodation units for the age group with transitional housing attached and however there are cohorts of young people with additional and complex needs that require a different environment, which will include joint working with our colleagues in 16+. There is also a lack of dedicated young people emergency bed provision since the relocation of the previous supported accommodation, while this is being considered, we continue to work with B&B provision to identify a suitable location to use in its place.

Family First

We currently jointly commission services with Families First around vulnerable families, specifically relating to debt, financial inclusion and housing support. The current service will in future encompass housing services around debt relief to provide a holistic and all-encompassing service for all, regardless of tenure. The HSG Manager is also a member of the Families First Board.

Flying Start

We have worked in collaboration with Flying Start for many years; however, the introduction of the Early Integration Transformation Programme and its Hub has strengthened this work and allowed us to place a support worker directly within the hub that also houses Health Visitors, Midwives, Parenting Programmes and all Flying Start staff. This will enable us to deliver our model in a truly holistic way and work will continue around identifying individuals we work with who may benefit from the wide array of service provided at the Hub and within the community. These staff also work with Support Workers providing support to the dedicated units across the borough for vulnerable families.

Occupational Therapy

Recently we have undertaken some work directly with Occupational Therapists working within our Housing Division; mainly to understand and ascertain how we can assist with overcoming delayed discharge of care from hospital settings but also around the increasing promotion of our services within hospital settings.

Criminal Justice

Probation

Caerphilly are part of the Probation Accommodation Pathway for Offenders and continue to provide dedicated support and accommodation for those leaving prison. Working closely with Probation and Housing we have developed robust pathways for all MAPPA/MARAC and DACC involvement. There are dedicated support services available for those who leave prison with or without an address and currently all offenders accommodation offers are in line with the revised guidelines due to Covid-19.

We continue to work with WG around accommodation pathways, regularly liaising with HMPSS Co-ordinators for Accommodation Pathway and Partnership Integration and attending the Housing First Network for Women quarterly.

We are currently in the process of understanding how the fit of the recently developed National Camau project fits with the local provision of services. In order to avoid any potential duplication we are meeting with partners across Probation and Camau to ensure the existing Pathway Process is not effected and all referral routes are clear.

We have recently instigated drop in sessions at the local Probation office for our dedicated GSSMS staff with a view of knowledge transfer between staff and for direct work with Service Users – this dual use is what we are trying to promote across all platforms currently.

Police

We understand that any new development or change in use is going to cause concern for local neighbourhoods so we always ensure local CADRO officers are involved with all new schemes, we share addresses with them before commissioning to decide if location is optimum as well as regular updates received around any antisocial behaviour or general concerns.

A wide range of partners regularly attends the 'HUB tasking' meeting, its aim is to provide intel about frequent callers and discuss issues within specific neighbourhoods. Various stakeholders attend including the HSG team, Community Safety, Police, Housing, Youth Justice, Social Services, key providers dealing with rough sleepers and the dedicated offender floating support worker attends to provide up-to-date feedback on any service users involved and to take new referrals if needed.

It is important to note there is a lack of involvement in Youth Offending and this is something we continue to work on.

Others

Housing Benefits

Housing Benefits are a key partner, we communicate regularly in terms of emergency and temporary placements as well as all new supported developments to ensure they are aware of the tenancy related to the address; this prevents any delays with claims and ensures the service user does not have any delays with covering rental payments.

Covenant Officer

Over the past few years, we have been working closely with the Regional Armed Forces Covenant Officer providing data to support development of services and business cases for additional funding, and we have a dedicated provider attending the local drop in sessions to address any Housing Support needs.

Environmental Health

Recently we have identified a number of individuals via colleagues in Environmental Health who are at risk of homelessness due to the condition of the property, many of these individuals have mental health or physical health needs and so we have set up a direct referral pathway to deal with these individuals. Further to this work, we continue to work with individuals who have hoarding behaviours and our RSL partners to prevent the issue of notices and offer support and signposting to relevant organisations. This service quickly became inundated with referrals so consideration of its development opportunities with wider partners is underway.

DWP

We continue to work close with our colleagues in DWP; plans are already in place for our dedicated support worker to return to the bases across all DWP offices in the Borough, in line with COVID guidelines. In addition, we plan to increase this opportunity by offering drop in sessions from our newly recruited staff such as Housing First, GDAS and GSSMS to provide a knowledge exchange and skills share session. A member of the HSG team continues to attend quarterly partnership meetings to maintain links between services and to obtain and provide updates and discuss cases anonymously. All job coaches across the borough have contact details for housing support services and know how to contact us when staff are not present in their offices. DWP staff attend our Provider Forum and give updates regularly.

Landlords

We work closely with all RSL partners and of late have been making progress with our Housing First and Transitional RR Housing models across all client groups from 16 years onwards. We currently have 3 HF properties and 4 transitional one bed properties with 2x 2bed room properties in development and a further 5- 8 1 bed properties.

For the last decade, we have been refurbishing our supported accommodation to ensure the quality of stock meets expectations around PI & TI environments.

Across all B&B provision, we currently have dedicated support workers to deal with all housing support needs to address any concerns by the proprietors and as a way to manage the increasing numbers additional staff are employed with a dedicated role around admin and management of the emergency and temporary accommodation.

All property owners involved with supported accommodation provision are invited to attend the panel meetings we hold and involvement with the process and decision making of individual being offered a placement.

Working with RSL's

We continue to identify Step Up-Step Down/transitional and Housing First properties at each new site and are considering existing accommodation that can be remodelled to produced appropriate housing on two sites across the borough

Over the past decade we have refurbished our supported accommodation properties with local RSL's and are currently refurbishing four, two that were due to be completed in 2019 which will hopefully be finalised in the New Year, a third that has just commenced and a fourth that is currently being used for additional emergency accommodation. These developments are being delivered with two different RSL partners. The building were no longer fit for purpose and so a plan of how to refurbish while maintaining maximum independence has been put in place, also an exit strategy (long term use) is the first consideration so we ensure the property can be converted to general needs if we no longer have requirement.

For all new builds, we are asking Automated External Defibrillators (AED) to be included if not already one nearby and that WIFI as a default setting provided for all new schemes or dispersed schemes to ensure we can continue to contact our clients via multiple means.

Outside and over and above – We always looking to work with services for the homeless population and last year we were fortunate enough to work with the owner of a hairdresser who offered all homeless residents known to the HSG team free haircuts. We are looking to replicate this again this year and in future in various areas of the borough.

6b Funding sources

The different funding sources below assist to deliver the Strategy include:

- Housing Support Grant
- Covid-19 Local Government Hardship Fund
- Homeless Prevention Grant
- Youth Innovation Fund
- Revenue Support Grant,
- Housing Revenue Account for council tenants
- Tenancy Hardship Grant
- Social Housing Grant
- Integrated Care Fund – revenue and capital
- Discretionary Assistance Fund DAF
- Provider specific funds – Bright Ideas Fund, Community Assets, National Lottery, NEST

6c Monitoring, reviewing and evaluation arrangements

The monitoring, review and evaluation of the Housing Support Programme Strategy will take place quarterly in line with outturn submissions to Welsh Government. However, there will be a continual review at HSG planning group meetings and as and when different research projects are completed or if any new or additional service needs, are uncovered.

There are also budget monitoring requirements to ensure we are spending according to terms and conditions of the grant and that the spend is based on a credible plan and the strategic priorities in line with the commissioning plan intentions as laid out in the development plan. The quarterly monitoring and local spend plans evidence spend to date and highlight any variances. As well as the spend updates a narrative progress report is provided. To ensure compliance local authority audit departments carry out very thorough audit checks.

Annex A

Strategic Priority	Action required to deliver the priority	Timescales/ By When	Lead person	Outcome/Outputs
<p>ONE</p> <p>Adopt a Rapid Rehousing Approach</p> <p>Increase Housing Supply</p> <p>Review Temporary, Supported Accommodation</p> <p>Decrease Emergency Accommodation</p> <p>Undertake a Multi-Agency Approach</p>	<p>As outlined in RRTP to follow</p> <p>Reclassification of stock</p> <p>Understand LHMA</p> <p>Work with all property owner types</p> <p>Review Allocation policy</p> <p>Understand scheme criteria; needs and risks of each person requiring accommodation</p> <p>Remodel Supported Accommodation</p> <p>Provide abstinence led "Wet House" provision</p> <p>Provide Dual Diagnosis/Complex Needs Accommodation</p> <p>Identify all partners required and provide space to access within assessment centre</p> <p>Consider options within current portfolio on how to improve access, exit and holistic support during stay</p>	<p>June 2022</p> <p>2022 continually</p>	<p>Kerry Denman, Housing Solutions Manager</p> <p>Shelly Jones, Housing Support Manager</p>	<p>Plan produced</p> <p>Increased accommodation general needs, single person / one bed properties</p> <p>Increased options of accommodation, (LCHO/Shared/Social/Transitional/ PRS/ Housing First)</p> <p>Assessment Centre revived and duplicated across sites</p> <p>Supported Accommodation meets needs to all client groups/optimum model reduces evictions and increases sustainable housing</p> <p>Reduced time spent in suitable interim accommodation</p> <p>Access to support is available when needed</p> <p>Work with partners across the board, Health, Probation, Social Services and RSL's.</p> <p>Allocations are quicker and meet individuals needs</p> <p>Successful long term sustainable tenancies, independent living</p> <p>All services delivered understanding PIE and TIE</p>
<p>TWO</p> <p>End Rough Sleeping</p>	<p>Improve access to accommodation</p> <p>Additional affordable accommodation</p> <p>Improve access (Contact) to Outreach support services</p>	<p>2022/2023 continually</p>	<p>Shelly Jones, Housing Support Manager</p>	<p>Increased accommodation</p> <p>Dedicated phone lines for outreach</p> <p>Understanding of entrenched homelessness and consider options to overcome</p>

	<p>Scope current client group and reasons for entrenched rough sleeping</p> <p>Work with multi agency stakeholders to deliver holistic service</p> <p>Consider the criteria of existing supported / temporary accommodation</p> <p>Identify and remove barriers to access support</p> <p>Maintain contact with rough sleepers</p> <p>Identify property owners to assist with housing to meet needs</p>			<p>Collaboration and integrated work with Housing, GDAS, GSSMS</p> <p>Change to access criteria for supported/temporary accommodation</p> <p>Increase Housing First properties</p> <p>Increased number of people able to access services</p> <p>Specialist housing solutions provided</p> <p>Identified new rough sleepers immediately</p>
<p>THREE</p> <p>Increase Early Intervention and Targeted prevention</p>	<p>Identify key partners and stakeholders to be present within the Assessment Centre/HUB</p> <p>Improve the collaboration between providers and Health, Housing, Probation and Social Services</p> <p>Revert to accessing prisons and hospitals pre-pandemic</p> <p>Work with providers to share data and highlight areas for improvement</p> <p>Develop process maps to ensure we understand pathways to all services</p> <p>Consider any other methods of identifying potential referrals before they fall into crisis</p> <p>Attend transitional groups and be aware of changes in legislation, policy or practice that will identify potential service users at the earliest opportunity</p>	2022/2023 continually	Shelly Jones, Housing Support Manager	<p>Reduced number of people accessing homelessness provision</p> <p>Reduced number of people needing supported or temporary accommodation</p> <p>Sustained housing without the need to move, resettle or require expensive services (storage, van etc.)</p> <p>Access services appropriately and in a timely manner.</p> <p>Streamlined approach to services and planned moves, less emergency access and long-term provision required.</p>
<p>FOUR</p> <p>Invest in Workforce Development</p>	<p>Identify staff who can work from various Hubs – Assessment Centre and Flying Start Integration Hub</p> <p>Re-introduce CMHT staff to our Assessment Centre/Hub and across all Supported Accommodation</p>	2022/2023 continuously	Shelly Jones, Housing Support Manager	<p>Holistic services provided at point of contact</p> <p>Access to mental health services improved</p> <p>Evidence need for specific supported accommodation for DD and AL as above</p>

	<p>Integrate and connect CMHT, GDAS, GSSMS, CDAT staff</p> <p>Improve collaboration with Probation, Police and local CADRO officers to improve communication</p> <p>Consider specialist roles (pre and post workers) and increase staffing across accommodation and floating support services</p> <p>Ensure all services are working in a PIE TIE way</p> <p>Identify and assist with recruitment and retention issues for all staffing</p> <p>Improve relationships with colleges to provide apprenticeship opportunities.</p> <p>Establish all staff mandatory training levels and access to training for all types of staffing</p> <p>Identify any unique pilot or training opportunities such as MAPS and support its widespread approach across all providers and services</p>			<p>Improved outcomes for service users and shared knowledge and skills for staff</p> <p>Joint services to improve and enhance Service User experience</p> <p>Realigned services</p> <p>Retain and increase number of staff</p> <p>Support Vfairs partnership work to increase staffing provision</p> <p>Staff have access to numerous training and pilot platforms and are able to keep updated on current practices.</p>
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Annex B

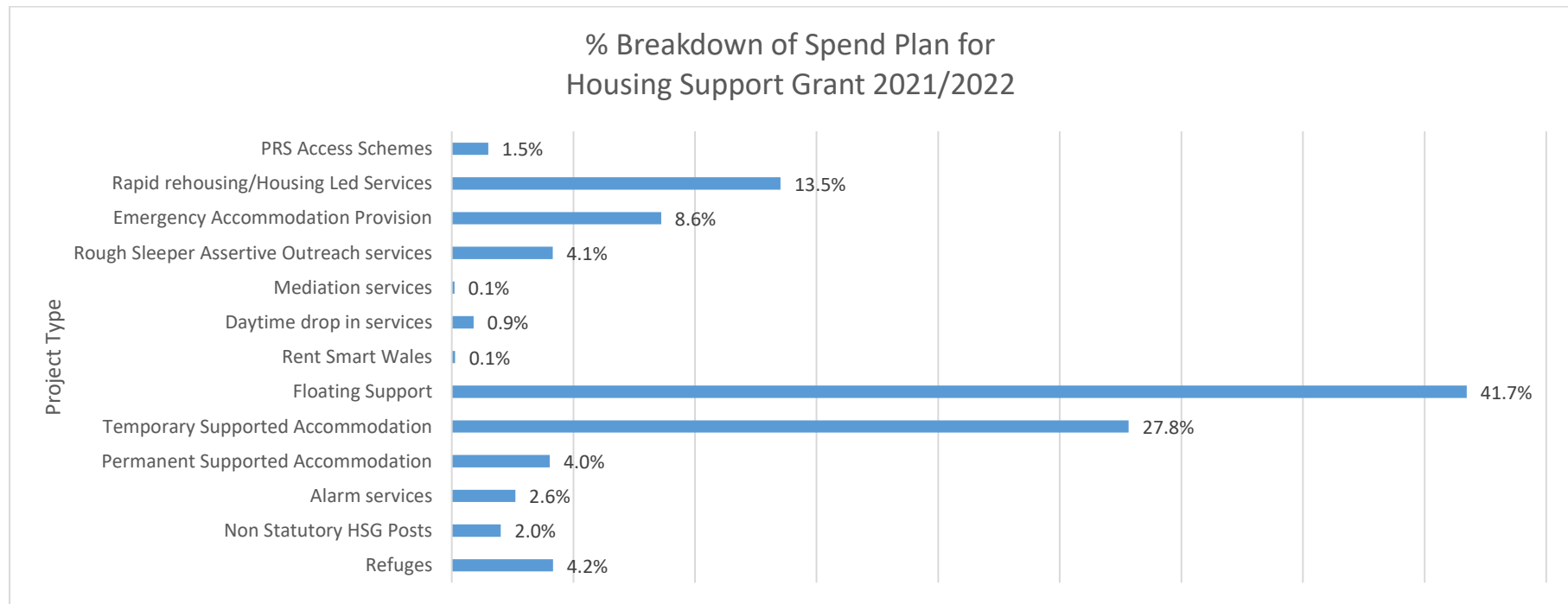
Insert Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan - To follow as per Welsh Government decision to delay deadline until June 2022

Appendices

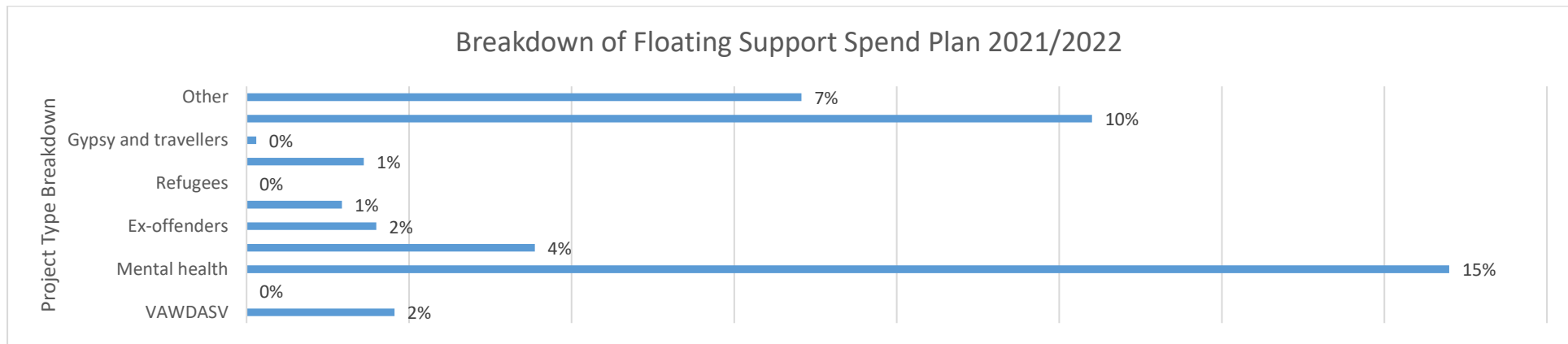
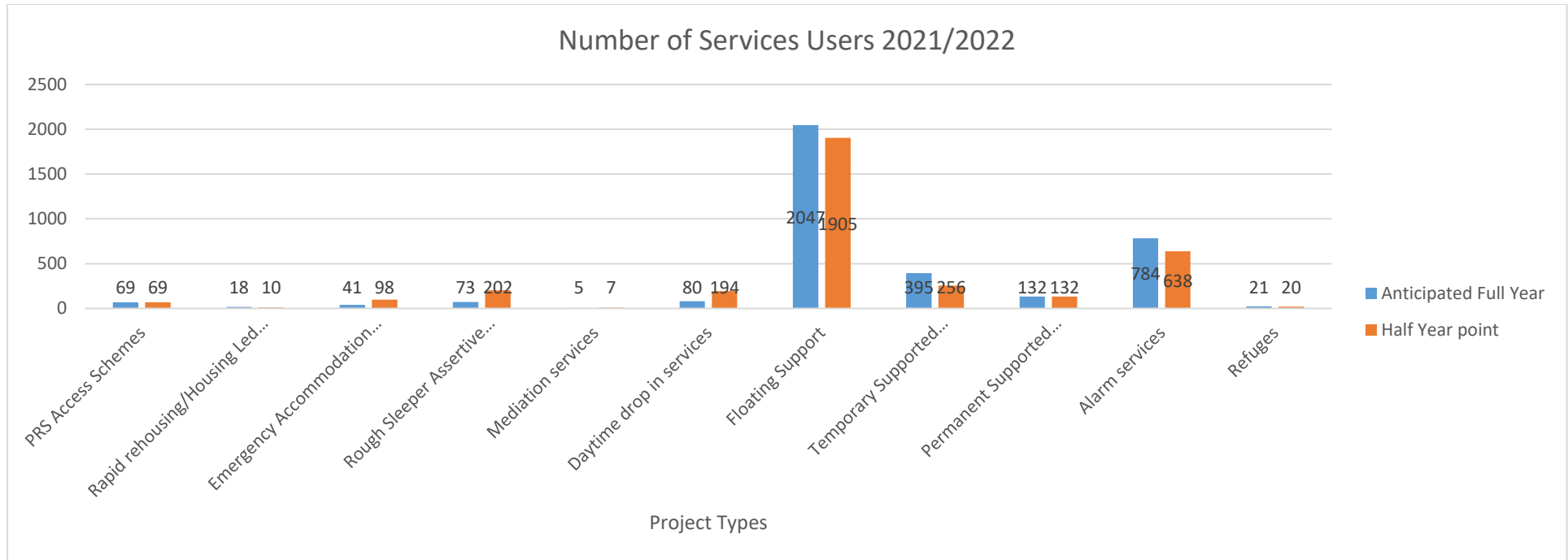
1	Legislative and policy context	https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/Housing/appendix-1
2	Gwent Housing Support Strategic Objectives	https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/Housing/v2-gwent-housing-support-strategic-objectives
3	Gwent Stakeholder Survey responses	https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/Housing/gwent-stakeholder-survey-responses
4	Gwent Housing Support Survey Service User Responses	https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/Housing/gwent-housing-support-survey-service-user-response
	Statement of Need	https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/Housing/statement-of-need
	Integrated Impact Assessment	https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/IIA/IIA-form-housing-support-programme-strategy

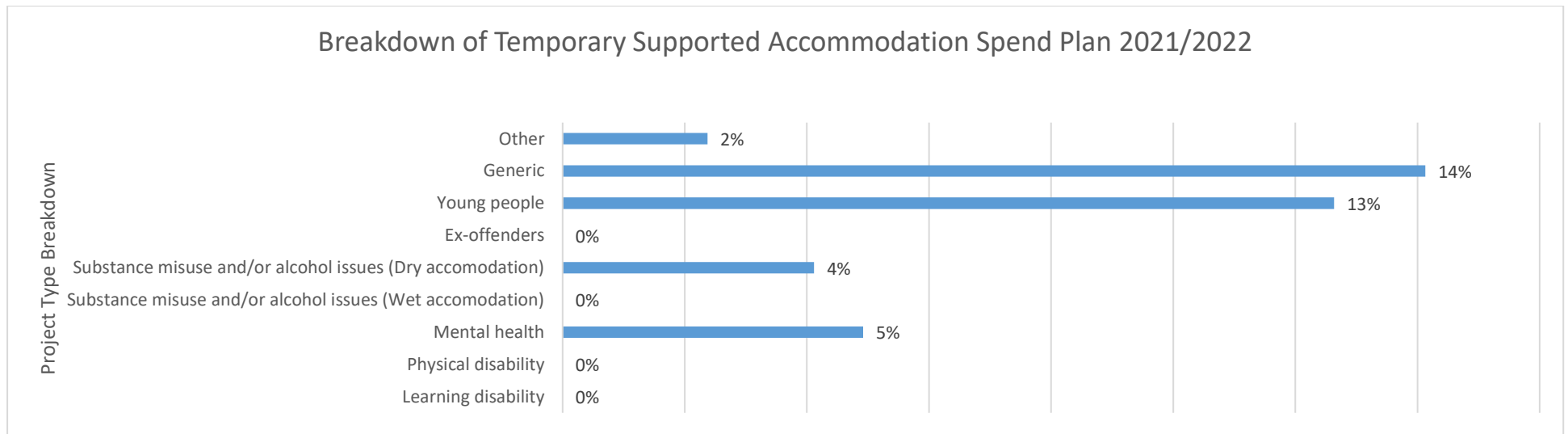
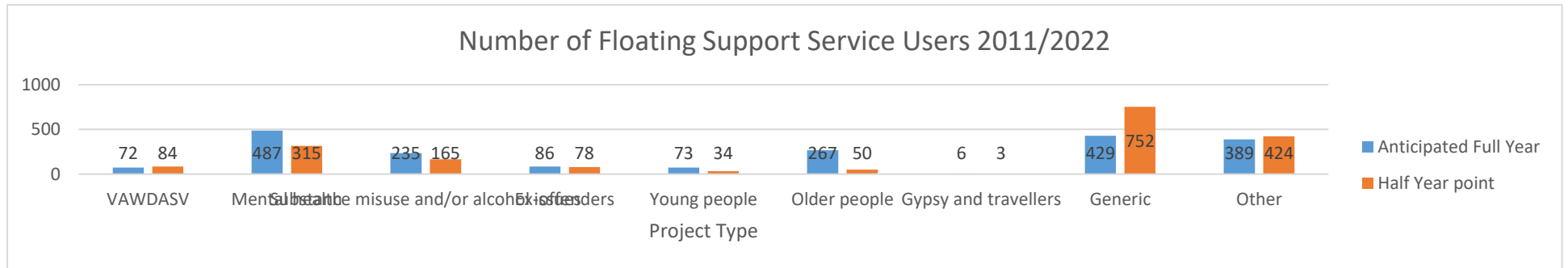
Appendix 2 - Housing Support Breakdowns

The following charts show a breakdown of HSG grant. As noted the Floating Support and Temporary Supported Accommodation projects consume the highest percentage of the grant and therefore a further breakdown of each is included below. The local teams are constantly assessing needs and future demands and with the intelligence from providers and wider stakeholders services are continually changing to keep on top of need. At the end of this financial year we will be able to compare what was actually spent in each area and how the changes to service throughout the year has effected the total spend within the project types.

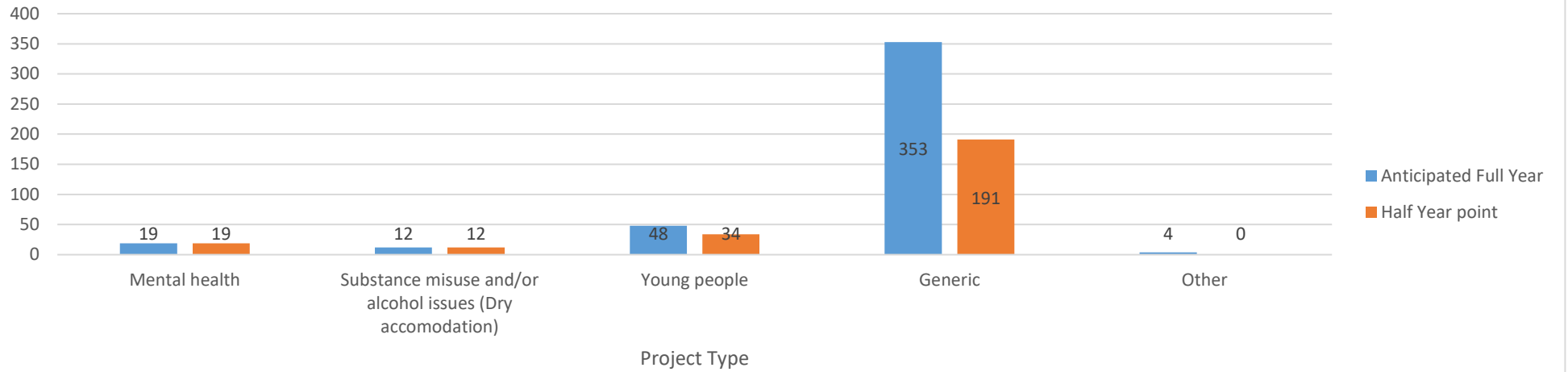


The chart shows how the anticipated number of service users has already changed based on assumptions from 2020/2021 data when compared to actual services as at the end of Quarter two 21/22. You will note that for majority of the projects we are already close to the anticipated number of service users who will access the service and in many cases already





Temporary Supported Accommodation 2021/2022





SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 8TH MARCH 2022

SUBJECT: CAERPHILLY CARES YEAR ONE EVALUATION

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND
HOUSING**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on progress and a first-year evaluation of the Caerphilly Cares Service as a follow up to the report received by Scrutiny Committee on the 2nd February 2021.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 As a result of the pandemic our communities have and will continue to suffer from economic, health and other social challenges. Well-being issues and inequalities existed in our communities before the pandemic, which has only served to exacerbate these and the coming months and probably years could prove particularly difficult as a result. However, conversely, the pandemic also resulted in strengthening of resilience both individually and at community level.
- 2.2 In February 2021 Cabinet endorsed the establishment of the Caerphilly Cares service and associated resources. The service was subsequently launched in April 2021 and the following report provides both an update on its implementation and an evaluation of the service to date.
- 2.3 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 underpins the delivery of Caerphilly Cares, providing support at the earliest point to reduce the need for statutory intervention and helping people to help themselves. Ensuring the 'what matters conversation' is intrinsic to all support offered and is relevant and directed by the individual not the professional deciding what someone needs.
- 2.4 The ethos of Caerphilly Cares is about a changing relationship with our residents and communities, it's about mobilising assets within communities, promoting independence and increasing people's control over their own lives. It is a key strand within the Council's Strategic Recovery Framework Principle four, which aims to wrap support around individuals and communities and enable them to help themselves prosper and grow.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the content of this report.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The introduction of Caerphilly Cares has seen a significant number of people present themselves to the Council for the first time. Individuals have requested support directly due to COVID-19 but also people have been identified with unmet need who could have 'fallen through the net'.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 Caerphilly Cares (CC) was officially launched in April 2021 and the following implementation processes have since been established.

Member seminars have been held and an information package with referral contact numbers was provided. Members have started signposting and directly referring to Caerphilly Cares and the numbers and issues are being monitored as part of the monitoring process.

A community services directory has been created containing details of universal services, as well as more localised community provision. Public and staff pages have been developed and these are now live on Dewis providing a Caerphilly Cares professional view as well as a Caerphilly Cares public view.

A 'What Matters' briefing session has been developed for staff, to support their conversations with vulnerable people to ensure that the discussions are person centred with 'how can you help yourself' being the starting point. Alongside this members of the team have completed the Connect 5 train the trainer course, which is a Health Board brief intervention course for mental wellbeing. Both are initially being delivered to Caerphilly Cares staff and then included in the programme of training available to volunteers. This will mean the reach of the training will be much wider, not only benefitting the volunteers and their personal development but also the people they are supporting in the community.

The Caerphilly Cares team has undergone a range of training both formally and informally. All members of staff are at least Level 2 trained in Safeguarding, with 3 Co-ordinators/managers having completed train the trainer to deliver Safeguarding to staff & volunteers. They are part of the bi-monthly Peer Mentor group for Safeguarding training. As well as delivering training to staff, the Co-ordinators have delivered Level 2 Safeguarding to groups of volunteers from the Buddy Scheme and lead volunteers from local charities.

Mental Health Awareness/First aid is a core requirement for the team and a refresher is due this year. It has been identified that all team members need more enhanced training around Suicide Prevention and how to support people living with suicidal thoughts. The need for a coordinated approach to staff training is required moving forward for consistency and to maintain high standards of service.

The team has been trained to use and now has access to Abavus, Capita, WCCIS and Volunteering Wales so they can access existing data on individuals referred to the

service. A new Abavus recording system has been developed with support from the Customer Services team to help document the resident journey and cross reference to any existing issues elsewhere within the authority. Case studies are continually being compiled.

A forum for volunteer led organisations across the borough to network and encourage peer to peer support has been established. As has a network of all organisations supporting the food insecurity agenda. The groups established common goals, issues and identified areas for joint working/delivery such as training for volunteers and leaders of the community organisations to support their volunteers and sharing foodbank stock.

Collaborative working is also being developed with Health through the Integrated Well Being network and Neighbourhood Care network, which includes health and social care services including GPs. Caerphilly Cares will form part of the workplan for the Integrated Partnership Board.

Over the last year Caerphilly Cares has evolved into three key interconnected areas and the report will provide an update on progress of each strand as well as Caerphilly Cares response to new and immediate demands because of the constantly changing landscape as well as our initial findings and conclusion so far. The key areas are as follows:

Caerphilly Cares Gateway

Since its inception, the Caerphilly Cares Duty Team has received over **1200** calls and **500** emails asking for help. The team has made **330** referrals to appropriate partners & services to provide relevant support. Of the **1200** calls received, over **850** have been direct from residents who have learned of the service over the past several months, it is extremely encouraging that knowledge of the team and the support they provide is becoming more widely known.

Further to the daily one to one support provided by the team, we have also helped in supporting the Benefits team in taking calls around both the Isolation grant and Winter Fuel payments as well as supporting people with transport for their vaccinations. From speaking to these residents, we have been able to identify a plethora of other issues that may not have been reported and have helped to resolve many outstanding problems as part of our case-loaded approach.

There are several key themes identified through caseloads to date, the most common ones being:

- Financial insecurity
- Mental health (all tiers)
- Bereavement
- Physical mobility
- Drug and Alcohol dependencies
- Fibromyalgia
- Obesity
- Isolation
- Domestic Abuse

Due to the impact of the pandemic on the lives of vulnerable people and the needs presented, the focus to date has been within the Social Services and Housing Directorate, where process mapping sessions have been completed with various teams to help shape and develop Caerphilly Cares as a service area that can directly respond to identified need.

- Housing

Several networks have been created at both a management and operational level. There are some strong examples of how the team has worked with individual housing officers and how this has had a positive outcome for several residents. Case studies for these are included in appendix 1 of the report.

Excellent links and referral pathways have been established with the Caerphilly Homes Rents team, which now has a dedicated team with a number of staff funded directly through Caerphilly Cares. In the 12-month period to January 2022 the team has supported eligible residents to claim substantial amounts of additional income. This has been achieved through a two-fold approach:

- For “at risk” residents the team reacted to their immediate crisis by carrying out an analytical review of the benefits in payment and the potential additional entitlement.
- A more proactive approach was also developed using key datasets from the Council systems to identify residents not claiming their full entitlement to benefits. This model has shown that, without support, vulnerable tenants are often unable to fully claim their entitlement to a range of benefits.

Since January 2021 the team has supported **788** eligible residents in gaining additional annual income in excess of **£3m**. This support has been life changing for many of our residents and the quotes highlighted in the appendix give an insight into the difference the team is making to resident’s lives.

The focus moving into year two will be to ensure a seamless transition for residents moving between the two. Management and staff meet regularly to respond to local and national need and any trends that have been identified.

Co-location has been vital to this success in community hubs such as Hafod Deg in Rhymney. Having holistic support and advice on hand has enabled Housing and Caerphilly Cares officers to provide ‘warm handovers’ for sensitive cases, which not only offers excellent customer service but also reduces the risk of disengagement with the person.

With the quality of housing such a key area in a person’s well-being plans are now in process to map how we enhance working together moving forward. There are opportunities to work more collaboratively and incorporate support from Caerphilly Cares within the Common Allocation Policy, as well as supporting the wider customer engagement agenda. Plans to develop pathways for referrals with the Common Housing Register and Housing Solutions Team are being developed and workshops are to be arranged to take this forward. All of which will be explored further with the Head of Housing and the Housing Management team.

- Community Connectors

Supporting isolated people is a key component of the Community Connectors role. With several services across the Council also addressing social isolation, it is crucial to avoid duplication. There are several service areas now working closely to avoid this. Process mapping sessions have been undertaken and the delivery teams are working well together in the community to ensure people receive the most appropriate support. The management team has arranged to meet regularly as have the delivery teams to discuss specific cases and to shape working patterns moving forward.

For example, the Caerphilly Cares team has agreed that the more complex cases will be referred to the Community connectors for an intense period of support. For the less complex cases the CC team will refer/work with the community element of CC to empower people to be part of projects in the community and get involved where appropriate. The team offers a 'warm handover' whenever referrals are made.

The IAA Duty team - Positive working relationships have developed with appropriate referrals moving in and out of each team. Both teams are clear on what / how to refer between each other.

Mental Health Multi-Disciplinary teams – As this theme is reflected across most referrals to varying degrees discussions between teams is on-going, with an agreement to work jointly on individual cases. Support is being provided to the Caerphilly Cares team on a case-by-case basis to enter formal mental health support services when needed. For example, there are several people living with suicidal thoughts waiting sometimes up to six or seven months for support. More work needs to be done around mental health and the emerging gaps. There may be an opportunity to provide a specialist post between Caerphilly Cares and the Mental Health Wellbeing team to support individuals who are on the Caerphilly Cares caseload, and this will be explored further.

Customer Service team - Process mapping sessions have taken place to ensure appropriate referrals are made, the front facing staff have been briefed and the teams are in regular contact. Regular briefings will take place moving forward.

Strengthening communities – where approaches involve building on community capacities to take action together

The Caerphilly Cares team has been maintaining and supporting existing community groups over the past year as well as the new 'Covid' self-help groups which set up in the first phase of the pandemic. The 2 Covid specific groups, the Trethomas based CARE project and the Risca CV19 (RCV UK) group have made great strides not only in the emergency food supplies and pharmacy collections, but, in this past year diversifying into social supermarkets and community transport for hospital appointments at the Grange and the Royal Gwent. This has been in addition to the many community organisations that have diversified their activities to suit the loneliness agenda and self help support locally. Some examples of these, where restrictions have permitted, and risk assessments carried out are:

- Trinity church in Ystrad Mynach has been supported to become a food Co-op.
- Evolution Fitness Community Interest Company in Ystrad Mynach has been supported to install a wellbeing kitchen into the gym, once completed the gym will run wellbeing projects for vulnerable people.
- Bargoed Community Hub has been supported to apply to the Food Poverty Grant.
- Suits You - Project to provide suitable work and interview wear, training opportunities now working with The Working Wardrobe.
- Supported the Parent network to host virtual cooking projects during lockdown periods. Food was delivered to families by a Parent Network member of staff and a check in on the doorstep took place. Several safeguarding referrals were made as a consequence of these doorstep calls, demonstrating the need people had for face-to-face support.
- Worked with Derwen deg primary school in partnership with CCBC Waste management to develop a community book written by children for children explaining the importance of reducing our plastic consumption and encourage the reuse/green culture.
- Worked with Upper Rhymney primary school in partnership with Welsh Water, who had community benefits funding, to write a book to help people understand how to stop the block and only flush the three 'P's down the toilet. (Pee, Poo and Paper)
- Worked with White Rose primary school to develop a book which explored the community development world. This book will now become part of the core Parents Engaging To Raise Expectations (PETRA) books in the range that will be a teaching resource for all the schools in Caerphilly.
- Supported Philipstown Forever to administer financial support to local people who may be experiencing hardship due to furlough, or loss of a job during the lockdown periods.
- Supported Philipstown community house to establish a community hub with several partner agencies running an outreach session. These include Caerphilly Cares, Housing tenancy support, Estate management officer, Careers Wales, Foodbank.
- Rhymney Men in Sheds group has continued in several formats throughout the year. Online sessions took place to maintain a supportive relationship and nature walks have continued when lockdowns ended.
- A mental health art group has been running from Hafod Deg resource centre, restrictions permitted.
- Basic skills classes have been running from Hafod Deg each week, where a mixed approach to learning English literacy and numeracy has been taken.
- Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service (GDAS) has been running appointments from Hafod Deg resource centre allowing people to have face to face supportive appointments.
- The TLC Café in Risca- with successful funding from WG Keep Wales Tidy created a small wildlife friendly garden filled with a variety of habitats for pollinators to thrive.

- The TLC Café has restarted the woodworking classes which tackle loneliness and isolation in the community whilst encouraging them to craft things from recycled wood.
- Secured Food Poverty Grant for the building of 2 bespoke raised beds and established a Fare Share scheme and community fridge scheme in TLC café.

The team has also been doing extensive work setting up and assisting foodbanks, Fareshare schemes and other food poverty initiatives, obtaining Welsh Government funding to employ a Food Development Officer to focus specifically on this area. Foodbanks came under significant pressure as volunteers self-isolated and donations dried up. A system has been put in place to support provision with vouchers, donations, and delivery. Over 2000 people have received foodbank support.

Some of the other food insecurity projects developed to date are as follow:

- Food Bank/Fare Share Directory - being developed in partnership with Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO) and the Rural Development Programme (RDP) team to identify community groups and voluntary organisations offering services across the borough. This will be used to provide information to appropriate agencies on need and services required.
- Community Cooking Champion Project / supported by Morrisons - A “Community Cook Champions” project in partnership with the Catering department as part of the corporate volunteering policy. Catering is formulating the 8-week course, and this will be marketed through the Morrison’s Stores and promoted via our communications department. The pilot will be run in February with a view to rolling out across the borough and using our food banks and fare share organisations to enable people to help learn to cook using vegetables and the ingredients they have with basic recipes and cooking skills. Once they have completed the project Morrison’s have agreed to supply a cooking pack to each attendee.
- Food Poverty Grant - To date 12 grants have been awarded ranging from community gardens, youth cooking classes to Food Bank support.
- Food Poverty and Insecurity Grant - Whilst the allocation of this grant was delayed from Welsh Government the draw down has now started.
- Community growing Projects - Working with the RDP team to promote the Community Growing Funding from Welsh Government.
- Celebratory Event for Community Groups and Businesses- An event in partnership with the RDP team, Procurement, and community groups to celebrate local food and produce, which will be the catalyst for developing a co-ordinated approach to tackling food poverty and insecurity across the borough.

It is envisaged that with the easing of restrictions and a return to ‘normality’ that this element of Caerphilly Cares will grow and expand.

Volunteering, including corporate volunteering

Background

The volunteering focused work of the Caerphilly Cares service began with the volunteering scheme known locally as the ‘Buddy’ scheme. This scheme was set up

by Team Caerphilly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 to support the most vulnerable people in the community with practical support (shopping, prescription collection, befriending phone calls etc). Initially delivered using CCBC employees that were either redeployed or came forward as volunteers, the scheme was very much a response to the immediate crisis. However, following the easing of restrictions in the summer of 2020 & staff returning to their substantive posts, it was handed over to the Caerphilly Cares team to manage and has evolved into a wider community support scheme.

'Buddy' Scheme Progress & Review

Implementation of new working arrangements and partnership activity to facilitate the next stage of the project began in September 2020. The initial work of the Caerphilly Cares team was to contact all the volunteers to establish if they were still providing support to vulnerable people. Many had, in agreement with the people they were matched with, ceased support due to the lifting of restrictions. The team also completed follow up calls with the vulnerable people to ensure that everyone who still needed support had access to it. As a result, the numbers registered as part of the scheme were greatly reduced.

GAVO contributed funding to a post to lead on the administration & co-ordination of the volunteers, signing all volunteers up via Volunteering Wales (online system). The *Community Response Volunteer Co-ordinator* post is currently employed by GAVO but managed in partnership with the council.

During the year, the demand for volunteers has largely remained stable. In the early part of the year (March-April 21) the number of available volunteers was higher than the number of vulnerable people needing support and as such the project was left to 'tick over' as demands on other areas of Caerphilly Cares work took precedence (opening of venues, establishing reporting systems & referral pathways etc.). However, as the team has become more established in the organisation, the incremental increase in self-referrals & caseloads for the Caerphilly Cares team has had an impact on increased demand for the support of volunteers as part of the 'Buddy' scheme. In recent months (October 21 – January 2022) this has 'tipped the balance' and there is currently a waiting list of people requesting a Buddy volunteer. The recruitment of new volunteers will be a priority as we enter 2022.

Discussions with GAVO regarding the future of the *Community Response Volunteer Co-ordinator* post were held during January 2022. The post is fixed term until 31st March 2022, when funding secured by GAVO to contribute the salary ends. An agreement has been made to use external funding secured from the WCVA's Strategic Volunteering Grant to transfer this resource to support the administration of CCBC's Employee Scheme. The Buddy Scheme will be merged with the Social Services Befriending Service by the end of the financial year (details in section below).

It has become apparent that whilst GAVO has been managing the volunteers there is a gap in a point of contact for support for the vulnerable people they are matched with. This is more so the case for people who have retained their 'Buddy' from the initial lockdown. As many directly contacted the council for support, there is no 'case manager' to refer to, which would be the case for individuals referred by officers internally or externally. Therefore, if/when queries have arisen (hospital admissions, welfare concerns etc) the team have had to respond in an ad hoc fashion. Going forward this process will be formalised and access to the WCCIS system will support the team in identifying if/when services are involved with a vulnerable person.

Linked to this, close relationships with the wellbeing (caseload) arm of the team will be vital, particularly for self-referrals into Caerphilly Cares. Whilst the volunteers can provide some practical and emotional & social support, it is likely that vulnerable & isolated community members will also have wider support needs, even if they are not immediately apparent. Relationships with the community development workers but also key partner teams such as the Community Connectors will be a priority to ensure vulnerable people are actively linked with their communities and/or activities can be developed to meet the emerging needs of isolated individuals. Continued working relationships between the Caerphilly Cares and Community Connector teams will be vital to avoid duplication of effort and resources and make best use of the staff resources working out in the community.

Services Volunteer (Befriending) Service

The Volunteer Service within Social Services is very well established within the Directorate and matches volunteers with individuals referred by Social Work teams from Older People, Learning disabilities and Physical Disabilities/Sensory Impairment (PDSI). The volunteers offered support on a 1:1 friendship basis, pursuing shared interests within the community, in residential/day care settings and social clubs. However due to the high levels of demand on Social Services the service has not been operational during pandemic.

The volunteer service has 2 Co-ordinator posts attached to it, covering volunteer induction & management, training, and active promotion of the service to recruit new volunteers.

During the year discussions have been held with Service Managers within Social Services, as part of the establishment of referral pathways and integration of Caerphilly Cares in the Directorate. During these discussions it became apparent that the incorporation of the befriending service within Caerphilly Cares would be a natural fit given links to the Buddy Scheme and the community development agenda.

Rather than operate two projects Caerphilly Cares will merge the 'Buddy' scheme & Befriending Service into one scheme, which will be open to referrals from Social Services and those individuals not under services. This will ensure the alignment of the schemes and standardise processes and procedures including safeguarding requirements. DBS checks for volunteers will be carried out by HR and Workforce Development service has agreed that volunteers will continue to have access to training opportunities. Safeguarding level 2 training was delivered to groups of volunteers during the year and will continue to be delivered to new volunteers registering with the scheme following relaunch

1:1 friendship with individuals by volunteers could stay within remit of the volunteering work stream. Support for social groups (as separate bodies with own bank accounts, committees etc.) could be picked up within the community development work stream so they would benefit from advice & guidance and access to future funding streams.

The merger is scheduled to take place in April 2022 at the start of the new financial year, when the scheme will be relaunched and promoted linked to the CCBC Employee Volunteering Scheme.

CCBC Employee Volunteering Scheme

Caerphilly Cares has been an active member of the internal working group established by Corporate Policy to develop the Employee Volunteering Scheme during the year.

The scheme was fully endorsed by CMT and finally launched in October 2021. Following discussions with Policy it has been agreed that the Caerphilly Cares team will be responsible for the delivery of the scheme, acting as a point of contact for employee & manager queries. The Caerphilly Cares team will utilise existing relationships with community groups and organisations to identify projects/activities that could benefit from additional volunteers and promote these opportunities to staff. Partnership working with GAVO will also continue in this regard.

The scheme was developed using Volunteering Wales system to record & report on volunteer engagement. This system is used by CVCs on a Wales wide basis and is contract managed by the WCVA. Caerphilly Cares has been set up as a 'provider' on the system, registering volunteers for the Buddy Scheme and other CCBC opportunities including Free School Meal deliveries, as well as opportunities in key partner organisations such as the Foodbanks. Whilst a useful, centralised electronic system for volunteer registration and recording it is not without flaws. During January 2022 was a tender process for a new system, which the WCVA hope will be fit for purpose. Caerphilly Cares has contributed to the design of said system based on the emerging needs of the Employee Volunteering Scheme.

Linked to this, Caerphilly Cares was successful in securing funding from the Strategic Volunteering Grant. The WCVA was very impressed by CCBC's approach to volunteering and whilst issued on a short-term basis (ending in June 2022) they are keen to discover if it can be replicated (pilot) across other local authorities.

Initial discussions have been held with Leisure regarding the identification of Council owned community centres that could benefit from volunteers and almost all committees currently have vacancies. This will be developed as an opportunity & promoted via the Volunteering Wales platform. A volunteer opportunity has also been developed by the Armed Forces Covenant Officer to support the weekly Veteran Hub (run out of the Centre of Sporting Excellence) and has been published on the Caerphilly Cares page.

Monitoring measures for the scheme have been agreed with a date for an annual review during September 2022. Whilst there are qualitative measures in place including number of employees signed up, volunteer hours contributed, leave of absence taken etc. it is worth noting that the level of 'take up' of the scheme needs to be viewed within the context of the current environment and should not be the main measure of its success. Many departments are operating at capacity and the community (including employees) continue to struggle with the implications of the pandemic on many levels, therefore volunteering may not be at the forefront of people's minds. That said, the fact the policy is in place and the support that has and will be developed to support opportunities for staff can only be a positive. Qualitative measures including case studies, will be captured to document the impact of the scheme on both the volunteer and the community.

Funding secured

WCVA Strategic Volunteering Grant - £29,927.50 to be spent by 30/06/22

Welsh Government Isolation & Loneliness Grant - £22,727 to be spent by 31/03/22

Future work within the work stream

The following are suggested routes for development of volunteering work within the organisation, which would be subject to appropriate levels of resources.

- **Co-ordination of schemes** – formation of an internal network group, including the development of a 'bank' of volunteers to respond to short term needs or emergencies.
- **Training** – link with workforce development & other training providers to develop a package for volunteers
- **Standards** - Establish minimum standards/expectations for all CCBC volunteering opportunities following WCVA's Code of Practice.
- **Volunteering as a route to employment** – link with employment support programmes & Workforce Planning to support recruitment into the organisation.
- **Crisis/emergency planning situations** – roles & co-ordination of volunteers in response to emergencies such as flooding etc. in conjunction with relevant departments.

5.2 Conclusion

If Caerphilly Cares had not been implemented the pressure on other Council Services is likely to have been far greater. And whilst this is not clearly demonstrable at this point in time, if Caerphilly Cares had not been implemented over **1,700** people could have 'slipped through the net', **788** people would not have had their income maximised and over **2000** people would not have had food. As awareness of Caerphilly Cares grows and the impact of COVID-19 continues to be felt this number is likely to grow substantially.

However, Caerphilly Cares is not a 'service' that operates in isolation, it reflects the ethos of the Transformation Strategy # Team Caerphilly Better Together that influences how we engage with our residents and how our services respond. COVID-19 has created intense pressures on local authorities to respond to unprecedented challenges. Communities have become even more reliant on public services and as a result, building social resilience and self-reliance in citizens is even more important than ever. With potential budgetary pressures due to changing patterns of demands and lingering levels of dependency we will also need to continue to deal with the longer-term impact of the pandemic alongside driving forward any plans for longer-term transformational change. The need for strong networks, effective communication and collaboration across services and programmes that support our residents is essential to achieve this aim.

The vision is for a much larger range of services to work collaboratively 'under the umbrella' of Caerphilly Cares, whether virtually or in holistic service provision hubs in the community.

To date, due to COVID-19, the focus for Caerphilly Cares has been on supporting the most vulnerable directly impacted by the pandemic. Now as we are, hopefully, moving out of the pandemic, we need to re-examine how we intend to support our residents moving forward. To respond to the recovery and build on the work undertaken to date to support our communities, it is felt there is the need to re-establish an anti-poverty group, that can oversee our response and re-focus our activity to citizens, through a more collaborative approach. The group will identify the interface between services internally and make best use of resources to respond to a wide range of community needs to develop further resilience for the Borough.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 We anticipate our communities will suffer from economic, health and other social challenges as a result of the pandemic for years to come. The gap between the most deprived and the most affluent has widened, and with the increase in living costs, fuel costs, National Insurance, and inflation this is likely to be exacerbated.

This highlights the need to take an in depth look on how we intend to support our communities moving forward to respond to the anticipated growing demand for support.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This report is for information only and on this basis an integrated impact assessment is not required.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Caerphilly Cares has been successful in attracting funding over the last year to ensure elements of support offered to the most vulnerable is able to continue throughout the pandemic. For the 2021/22 financial year, over £1.2m has been secured to fund and further develop the team as well enhance services provided to its residents by CCBC and key partners.

Project	Funder	Amount
Caerphilly Cares	CCBC	£284,000.00
Legacy (CCG)	WG	£587,044.28
Food Poverty	WG	£133,070.39
Food Insecurity	WG	£112,007.90
Covid Hub Support (Rhymney)	WG	£35,000.00
Welsh Procurement Alliance	Community Foundation Wales	£16,666.00
Volunteer Strategic Grant	WCVA	£29,927.50
Loneliness & Social Isolation	WG	£22,727.00
		£1,220,443.07

The above funding has enabled key community-based initiatives to continue throughout the pandemic and offer residents supportive solutions during a turbulent time. We have been able to enhance foodbank provision throughout the borough by providing vital resources to voluntary groups and achieve long term sustainability which has been invaluable to residents and families who have found themselves in financial difficulties.

We have also been able to financially maintain the upkeep of our community hub buildings, which provide bases for key services such as Housing Support, Citizens Advice, Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service (GDAS), Foodbanks and FareShare sessions to be delivered. These hubs will continue to play a key part of our service as we gradually move back to face to face support and helping to residents to integrate back into their communities. The provision of IT related resources for residents is also a priority going forward and we are working with Education & Libraries to enhance equipment throughout the borough.

We continue to develop our partnership with GAVO around the volunteering agenda and fund several key resources through the grants.

Since the new year, we have rolled out the Loneliness & Social Isolation grant to local groups and organisations to encourage engagement and activity within communities.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 For Caerphilly Cares to respond to growing need additional staff support will be required. Job Descriptions may also need to be amended to reflect changing / emerging need.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 This report has been sent to the Consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected in this report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 None.

Author: Tina McMahon, Community Regeneration Manager

Consultees: Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive
Dave Street, Corporate Director Social Services and Housing
Cllr Shayne Cooke, Cabinet Member for Social Care
Councillor Donna Cushing, Chair - Social Services Scrutiny
Councillor Carmen Bezzina, Vice Chair - Social Services Scrutiny
Ed Edmunds, Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy, Finance
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer
Steven Harris, Head of Financial Services & S.151 Officer
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Nick Taylor - Williams, Head of Housing
Fiona Wilkins, Housing Service Manager
Kerry Denman, Housing Solutions Manager
Jane Roberts-Waite, Strategic Coordination Manager
Sandra Issacs, Rents Manager
Viv Daye, Service Manager Commissioning
Nicola Barrett, Service Manager
Rod Couper, Senior Social Work Practitioner
Hayley Lancaster, Senior Communications Officer

Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities, Welsh Language and Consultation)

Background Papers:

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Case Studies and Testimonials

Caerphilly Cares Case Study 2: Miss R

Referral From: Self-referral (via phonenumber)

What was the background?

Miss R initially contacted the Caerphilly Cares phone line to request an emergency food parcel for herself and her 3 children. She was struggling financially and had previously applied to the Discretionary Assistance Fund, however this had unfortunately been unsuccessful.

What Matters Conversation

Following a lengthy conversation with the Duty Officer about her situation, it was clear Miss R was struggling financially and she disclosed that her children were sleeping on mattresses on the floor. Despite other pressures, sourcing proper beds for her children was her priority but she admitted not knowing how to access support or indeed if any help was available to her.

What did we do?

The first action the Duty Officer completed was to process the foodbank voucher to meet the family's immediate need for food.

With permission from Miss R, the Duty Officer contacted the Tenancy Support Team (Caerphilly Homes) to outline the issues discussed in the initial phone call and make a referral for support with potential funding for the children's beds. The Tenancy Support Team agreed to contact Miss R to support with an application to Children In Need grant for the furniture.

Again, following permission from Miss R, the Duty Officer linked with St Gwladys Church who operate a project that distributes donated household items back out those in need in the community. St Gwladys Church were happy to support Miss R and issued a request for donations via their social media channels.

What were the Outcomes?

- Family supplied with emergency food parcel.
- Successful application to Children in Need resulting in set of bunk beds, single bed and 3 mattresses for the children.
- Miss R now aware of support available to her from Caerphilly Cares team & local Church project.

Who were the Partners?

- Upper Rhymney Valley Foodbank (Trussell Trust)
- Tenancy Support Team (Caerphilly Homes)
- St Gwladys Church, Bargoed

What are the next steps?

The Tenancy Support Team will review Miss R's circumstances and assess if she is eligible for any further financial support.

The Duty Officer will maintain 'light touch' contact with Miss R, building a relationship of trust to ensure her needs have been met and she knows who to contact should she need support in the future.



Caerphilly Cares Case Study 4 – Mr I

Referral From: Community Connectors

What was the background?

Mr I was initially referred to Caerphilly Cares by Community Connectors with limited information - he was bed-bound due to his MS diagnosis and was looking for a befriender. Mr I had originally reached out to Community Connectors for support but was referred on to Caerphilly Cares to access support via the Buddy Scheme.

What Matters Conversation

During the call with the Duty Officer Mr I stated he had carers who visited daily who supported his physical wellbeing but he would like someone to chat to on a friendship basis, preferably face to face with house visits. He wanted this to take place as soon as Caerphilly Cares were able to find a match, as he was bed-bound and had little interaction with anyone other than his carers. Mr I had previously expressed his love for the Navy, having served for many years and was keen to be matched with someone of similar interests.

What did we do?

The Duty Officer liaised with the CCBC Regional Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer to establish any organisations that could offer befriending support to veterans and agreed that the local Royal Navy Association would be the best fit.

The Royal Navy Association offer a befriending service delivered by veteran volunteers or volunteers with a keen interest in the armed services. The Association also offer a subscription to a monthly thirty-page booklet on related topics. When The Duty Officer contacted Mr I to share this information, he was ecstatic and could not wait to get in contact with the volunteer and receive the monthly booklet. The Duty Officer noticed an immediate difference in Mr I's tone and could tell he was looking forward to getting to know someone new.

What were the Outcomes?

- Volunteer befriender now visiting Mr I on a weekly basis for two hours a time
- Mutual friendship established between the volunteer and Mr I
- Monthly magazine delivered to Mr I's home address

Who were the Partners?

- Regional Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer, CCBC
- Newport Royal Navy Association



Caerphilly Cares Case Study 5: Mrs G

Referral From: Self-referral (via phonenumber)

What was the background?

Mrs G contacted the Caerphilly Cares phone line requesting a foodbank parcel for herself and her child.

What Matters Conversation

Mrs G was very distressed at the start of the call but through gentle questioning the Duty Officer established that she was in significant rent arrears and her private landlord had issued her with notice to leave the property. Mrs G had spent all her income attempting to pay the rent arrears and consequently had no money remaining to feed her family, which was her immediate priority.

What did we do?

The Duty Officer processed the Foodbank referral and arranged for the parcel to be delivered to Mrs G's home address by the Foodbank volunteers, as she had no access transport or budget to cover the cost of public transport.

With permission from Mrs G, the Duty Officer referred the case to the Tenancy Support Team (Caerphilly Homes). Through discussions with the Tenancy Support team, it was established that Mrs G had rent arrears in excess of £1500 and she had been issued with a section 21 notice by her landlord, which meant the threat of losing her home was very real.

As a tenant living in a private rental house, Mrs G was unaware that she was also eligible to apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP), which are available to any tenant in hardship regardless of tenure. The Tenancy Support Officer worked with Mrs G to complete an application for DHP.

What were the Outcomes?

- Emergency Food parcel delivered to the family's home
- Discretionary housing payment awarded lump sum of £1200.00 and an amount of £32.00 paid weekly for a period of 13 weeks
- Mrs G was able to negotiate a repayment plan with her landlord for the remaining debit

Who were the Partners?

- Foodbank (Trussell Trust)
- Tenancy Support Team (Caerphilly Homes)

What are the next steps?

Mrs G was extremely grateful for the support received and commented that "a weight had been lifted" off her resulting in improved wellbeing as she hadn't been sleeping due to the worry. The Duty Officer will maintain contact with her over the next few weeks to ensure she has no further support needs.



Caerphilly Cares Case Study 6: Mrs AY

Referral from: Volunteer Buddy (supporting AY)

What is the background?

During the first initial Covid-19 lockdown, AY received support for shopping from the Buddy scheme. The Buddy made the referral on AY's behalf as her rubbish & recycling collections were being consistently missed. The issue was escalated to the refuse department every couple of weeks and each time the issue was only temporarily resolved.

From this work a professional relationship developed between the Development Officer and AY, trust grew, and AY began opening up about other issues that mattered to her. It became clear more intense support was required for potentially numerous issues, and work continued over a 12-month period and to date is still progressing.

What Matters Conversation

Whilst the relationship developed the Development Officer began documenting AY's issues and facilitated discussions about what mattered most to her. AY found it difficult to explain how they felt but agreed that finances would be the main priority, along with gaining a new boiler having been without heat or hot water for over 6 months - ***'I don't know what to do anymore, I can't go another winter without a boiler, please help!'***

Bereavement support was another priority mentioned, as AY was grieving the loss of their partner and could not afford to pay for a headstone. Food was also a concern for AY as she could not afford to live a basic standard of life anymore.

What did we do?

Due to the multi-faceted nature of the case, the Development Officer has worked closely with a number of key partners (both internally & externally) to put appropriate crisis (short term) support, as well as longer lasting measures, in place for AY. As the initial referral related to issues with waste collections, this was dealt with first and the CCBC Refuse team were able to support with basic education for AY around appropriate recycling. An application to the NEST grant scheme was made for a replacement boiler to ensure the home was heated and hot water accessible.

AY mentioned that she was sleeping on the sofa in her living room as the stair lift in her home was not working and she was unable to climb the stairs. AY had previously paid for repairs but was no longer able to do this. The Development Officer contacted IAA and Occupational Therapy to ascertain if there was any support available, following which the Occupational Therapist submitted a WOA request for support in repairing the stair lift which was granted. AY is currently saving to be able to afford the initial payment and the application is being left open until this time.



Caerphilly Cares Case Study 7– Mr X

Referral From: Community Connectors

What was the background?

Mr X called into the Caerphilly Cares central number asking for support to remove his sofa from his property. He was very angry and frustrated at his situation, having a disability meant he could not physically move the sofa out of his property for refuse to collect from the curb side. Due to Covid restrictions at the time CCBC staff were not able to enter the property. Mr X was so frustrated at 'The Council' he was going to set fire to the sofa and place posters onto the local roundabout to tell everyone how badly he felt he was being treated.

What Matters Conversation

During the first conversation the man was reluctant to engage as he was so angry and continued to shout at the call handler. Using 'what matters techniques' during subsequent calls the Officer was able to de-escalate the conversation and confirm what Mr X wanted that could be realistically achieved. Once calm, Mr X was reassured that Caerphilly Cares would support him to resolve the situation, but it may take a few days to find a solution.

What did we do?

The call handler co-produced a plan with Mr X and agreed to speak to Refuse Team on his behalf, keeping him updated at all stages to maintain his engagement. Refuse Team explained that they could not help the man due to the restrictions and could only collect from the curb side as per CBCB policy.

In order to resolve the situation, Mr X was assigned a Buddy volunteer to help move the sofa from the doorway to the curb side and this was actioned in time for the curb side collection. Mr X was very grateful and thanked the Duty Officer for all their support and said he was glad somebody was listening to him.

What were the Outcomes?

- Trusted, positive professional relationship built with the Council.
- Customer reported he felt 'listened to'
- Sofa moved by Buddy volunteer and collected by CCBC as planned.
- No potential anti-social behaviour took place.
- No loss of reputation for CCBC.

Who were the Partners?

- CCBC Refuse & Cleansing Team
- Buddy Scheme (GAVO & Caerphilly Cares)



What are the next steps?

The Duty Team carried out several follow up calls with Mr X but no further issues were forthcoming and in agreement with him, the case was closed to the team. However Mr X is aware he can contact the team for any support needs in the future.



Caerphilly Cares Customer Testimonials

Members will recognise that the support provided has been life changing for many of our residents and the quotes highlighted below give an insight into the difference the team is making to our residents' lives.

- Mr S, Blackwood
"You are an angel"; "I would have given up without you", "I cannot thank you enough", "I am so grateful" "Honestly, you made my year" "Cannot put into words how grateful I am with all my heart."
- Mr and Mr M from New Tredegar
'Thank you so much for all of the time you spent helping us, it has changed our lives so much and cannot thank you enough for what you have done for us. '
- Mr J from Caerphilly
'You are an outstanding example of CCBC staff that raised hope in the most difficult times I have ever encountered in my life, I could not have managed without you.'
- Mr A from Bedwas
"We would not have got 1/10th of the way without your support", "You are the one who has sorted out all of this for us" "We would not have known what we were entitled to without you"
- Mrs P from New Tredegar
I could not believe it when I got the extra money It was like winning the lottery, a safety net, always there to fall back on.
- Ms T, Cefn Fforest
The welfare benefits officer has been an absolute gem, her support after I came out of work has been great, she is knowledgeable, kind and very patient. Without her help I would not have been able to apply for any benefits, some of which I didn't know existed or thought I won't be entitled too.
- Mr E, Caerphilly:
A big thank you for all your support in helping me with benefits I didn't know I could get and with food parcels. You have supported me through a very difficult time in my life. Thank you. If there was more people in the world like you this world would be a better place.
- Mr C, Risca
Absolutely fantastic service, made us more confident, 100% more helpful than anyone else and if it wasn't for them we wouldn't know how we would have managed.



- Mrs C, Hengoed
Thank you for your recent support, I really appreciate the way you dealt with my call with a friendly and informative manner, displaying excellent customer service and responding promptly and efficiently. It has been quite stressful recently, but your response really helped, thank you.
- Miss T, Caerphilly
The only person who has helped me, going above and beyond for me. Always keeping in touch to keep me updated on everything.” “Always really helpful with everything and you are a “fountain of knowledge, and can always find a way to give the support needed”
- Mrs R, Pontllanfraith
I was so concerned things were causing me a tremendous amount of stress. I am very grateful for the help I received; I could not have sorted this out with your help”
- Mr S, Gelligaer
“it’s been fantastic speaking to you, you’ve taken a load off my mind and I feel better as I didn’t know all the help I could get”

The volunteering opportunities offered as part of Caerphilly Cares have continued to have a positive impact on both the lives of vulnerable people and the volunteers throughout the year. During a period of uncertainty, when it has been difficult for the population to interact & connect in the usual ways, the Buddy Scheme volunteers continued to provide a lifeline for some members of the community.

“My buddy does not have family near and some weeks I am the only face to face contact she has.”

“I think ** appreciates my calls, she’s always grateful and says thanks for ringing.”

“I enjoy chatting to my buddy and hearing about her week. I feel like I’m making a difference, which is great.”

“My buddy has limited mobility & lacks support from family & other services. She is coping with complex medical conditions & mental health issues. She finds it reassuring to know at the very least she has a friendly phone call every week & the food shopping is sorted.”

As these quotes demonstrate, the benefits of volunteering are felt keenly by both the volunteer and the recipient, and this is something that will be built upon as the new Befriending scheme is developed and launched in Spring 2022

“Making a difference to someone’s life by providing support, assistance and helping to reduce loneliness.”

“For me, feeling that I am helping someone who needs it, we never know when ourselves or our family members may need support.”

