



## **HEALTH SOCIAL CARE & WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 3RD MAY 2016**

**SUBJECT: THE PROVISION OF FLOATING SUPPORT TO BED AND BREAKFAST ESTABLISHMENTS**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report has been prepared following an earlier report on bed and breakfast (B&B) submitted to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 22nd October 2015, also attending that meeting were representatives from the Argoed Residents for a Safer Community and the Director of 'Cornerstone', an agency supporting homeless applicants.
- 1.2 At the meeting it was proposed that a further report on the support for homeless clients whilst in bed and breakfast accommodation be presented to the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 As discussed at the earlier Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting, the number of individuals currently being placed by the local authority in bed and breakfast placements has reduced significantly over the past six months, principally, due to the implementation of the Housing Act 2014 and the provision of additional 24 hour supported housing for single people at Maes y Derwyn (Tredomen)
- 2.2 Where it is necessary to place individuals in B&B the local authority (through supporting people) has commissioned a floating support service delivered by an housing support agency called the 'Wallich', that provides a dedicated support worker, who regularly visits the B&B establishments and provides support and advice to the clients. The provision of this support is closely planned and managed with the local authority's Emergency Housing Team.
- 2.3 The reduction in the numbers of people in B&B has allowed the Wallich support worker to dedicate more time to assisting people with tasks such as applying for and maximising benefits, assisting in meeting their health needs (such as registering with a GP), assisting with community integration (particularly for ex-offenders) dealing with crisis situations (such as providing food vouchers) and assisting with a move to more permanent accommodation.
- 2.4 If a person is having difficulty in managing in B&B, then a move to a 24 hour supported housing scheme can be facilitated, whereby, the person can be more intensively supported.
- 2.5 Supporting people and the housing division are now actively seeking to commission a further 24 hour supported housing project, which should further reduce our dependence on the need to place people in bed and breakfast. The continued operation of the countryman is also currently being appraised.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 10 Year Homelessness Action Plan For Wales – 2009-2019, which sets out some guiding principles for the development and delivery of homelessness services.
- 3.2 Caerphilly Delivers: The Single Integrated Plan (2013-17); linking to the Prosperous, Safer Caerphilly and Healthier Caerphilly themes.
- 3.3 People, Property & Places: A Housing Strategy for Caerphilly County Borough, linking to aims 1 and 4.
- 3.4 Caerphilly Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan 2015-2018.

### **4. THE REPORT**

#### **Emergency and Temporary Accommodation**

- 4.1 The use of Bed and Breakfast establishments for emergency accommodation has, throughout Wales, proved necessary for many years. This Authority has relied upon the use of privately owned B&B establishments at several locations within both the county borough and within our neighbouring authorities boroughs, to place individuals and families into B&B for periods of time whilst their homelessness situation is under formal investigation. Following investigation, and depending on whether a full housing duty is owed to the homeless applicant the Authority has either moved clients into temporary accommodation (B&B, Hostel and Private Sector leased accommodation) or directly into a social housing property, either from within the Authority's own stock or that of a Housing Association. Following the introduction of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 we are now also able to discharge our statutory duty by placing clients in private rented accommodation.
- 4.2 The previous report submitted to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on the 22nd of October went into detail regarding issues such as 'reasons for homelessness' and 'the development of the prison leaver pathway' and the efforts that were being made by the local authority to reduce those being placed in B&B to a minimum. To a large extent these efforts have been successful in reducing the numbers currently in b&b which since November 2015 average approximately 4. These figures have however, risen slightly during the winter due to difficulties being experienced in moving people on into permanent single person accommodation.
- 4.3 The local authority is concerned that those people who are placed in B&B are supported to ensure their own and the communities safety are taken into account and also to provide advice and practical support to assist them in the transition from homelessness to being permanently or temporarily housed.

#### **The Support provider – The Wallich**

- 4.4 In 2014 a tender exercise was undertaken to identify a support agency to manage the newly refurbished homeless 'Ty Croeso' hostel in Newbridge and to also deliver a dedicated support service to those people placed in B&B by the authority. The successful tenderer was the 'Wallich'; this is a support agency with a long history in supporting the homeless and a reputation for delivering support successfully to those people at the margins of society.
- 4.5 If a person being placed in bed and breakfast has been identified as being high risk to staff, a two to one visit will be carried out, whereby another member of staff from Ty Croeso will accompany the B&B support worker. The majority of people being placed in B&B are single men and the principal support needs exhibited by clients are:
  - Mental Health
  - Criminal Offending
  - Alcohol issues
  - Substance misuse issues
  - Development disorder

- 4.6 The Wallich work closely with the councils Emergency Housing Team, Housing Advice Centre, probation and other support agencies and landlords to ensure that risk is minimised and that clients stay in B&B is properly managed, so that they can successfully move into a more permanent tenancy when it becomes available.
- 4.7 The support worker meets the client as soon as they move into the B&B and on a regular basis thereafter. On the first visit, a B&B admittance pack is explained and agreed to, which contains the rules for living in the B&B and what their obligations are, a housing benefit claim is also completed, along with a risk assessment and needs assessment. The tasks that the support worker undertakes include:-
- Applying for benefits
  - Repaying debts
  - Engaging with other services
  - Engaging with Health
  - Looking for private accommodation
  - Applying for funds for furniture
- 4.8 Between 1st July and 30th September 2015, the average length of stay was 10 days, with the minimum stay being 1 day and the maximum 51 days. Whilst the client is in B&B the support worker liaises closely with the Emergency Housing Team, proprietor, probation, social services and housing to ensure that information is shared to assist in supporting the client.
- 4.9 The challenges being experienced by this service include lack of engagement by the individuals placed within B&B accommodation which therefore leads to difficulties in assessing what assistance they may need. Information sharing between other key stakeholders has however improved and this has been assisted by the introduction of the National Pathway for Homelessness Services to Children, Young People and Adults in the Secure State as well as improved communication between service areas.
- 4.10 It is widely accepted that the use of B&B accommodation is not the preferred option for the local authority and officers are currently looking at developing a further supported housing scheme in the north of the county, which will further reduce our reliance on using B&B.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council's EqIa process does not need to be applied.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The report itself is an information item and so brings no financial implications. Members should be aware, however, that both the existing and proposed activities outlined in this report are potentially under threat as a result of the uncertainty of future funding such as welfare reform changes to housing benefit:

## **7 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no personnel issues. This report is for information purposes only.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 Any views of the consultees listed below have been incorporated into the report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 That Members note the contents of the report.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 To provide the Committee with relevant information in respect of the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation following a commitment to do so at the full Council meeting of 21st April 2015.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Housing Act 1996, Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Wales) Order 2006, Housing Act 2004, Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

Authors:

Consultees:

Cllr Dave Poole, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing  
Cllr R Woodyatt, Cabinet member for Social services  
Cllr Hefin David, (Chair) Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr Sean Morgan, (Vice Chair) Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr Lyn Ackerman, (Chair) Health Social Care and Well Being Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr P Cook, (Vice Chair) Health Social Care and Well Being Scrutiny Committee  
Chris Burns, Interim Chief Executive  
Dave Street, Corporate Director, Social Services  
Christina Harrhy, Corporate Director, Communities.  
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer  
Fiona Wilkins, Public Sector Housing Manager  
Suzanne Cousins, Principal Housing Officer  
Claire Davies, Principal Housing Officer (Strategy and Standards)  
Janine Edwards, Interim Service Manager, Social Services  
Rhianne Iles, Accommodation Manager, Social Services  
Lee Clapham, Emergency Housing Manager  
Malcolm Topping, Supporting People Manager  
Kenyon Williams, Private Sector Housing Manager  
Social Services Adult DMT  
Housing Advice Team