



CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**A hybrid meeting of the CABINET will be held on
Monday, 18th July, 2022 at 1.00 pm**

Contact: Hannah Williams - Council Business Unit (Tel No. 07385401954)

Councillors and members of the public wishing to request the facility to address the Cabinet on any of the business as listed below, must request to do so by 5pm on the Thursday, 14 July 2022 Councillors and Members of the public should stipulate if this address will be in the medium of English or Welsh.

It must be noted that the facility to address the Cabinet is at the discretion of the Chair and each request will be considered based on the agenda items being considered, the public interest/interest of the member in each matter and the demands of the business on that day. To make such a request please email:- ExecutiveandRegulatoryBusinessUnit@rctcbc.gov.uk

It is the intention to live stream this meeting, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

To receive disclosures of personal interest from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Note:

1. Members are requested to identify the item number and subject matter that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the personal interest; and
2. Where Members withdraw from a meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of a prejudicial interest they **must** notify the Chairman when they leave.

2. MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on the 22nd June 2022 as an accurate record.

3. COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES REPORT

To receive a report from the Director of Finance and Digital Services to provide Members with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective, for the financial year ended 31st March 2022.

(Pages 15 - 54)

4. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

To receive a report from the Director of Finance and Digital Services to set out the Council's updated draft Risk Management Strategy.

(Pages 55 - 74)

5. DRAFT HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAMME STRATEGY 2022-26

To receive a report from the Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services in respect of the Draft Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022-26.

(Pages 75 - 330)

6. REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL: FORMER BRONLLWYN RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME

To receive a report from the Group Director for Community and Children's Services in respect of a redevelopment proposal to provide specialist care accommodation for people with learning disabilities at the former Bronllwyn Residential Care Home.

(Pages 331 - 354)

7. RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

To receive a report from the Group Director for Community and Children's Services, which proposes temporary changes in response to the current demand and capacity of the Council's residential care homes for older people.

(Pages 355 - 364)

8. 2022 CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

To receive a report from the Director of Education in respect of the 2022 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

(Pages 365 - 640)

9. STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

To receive a report from the Director of Education in respect of the Council's statutory duties to establish a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

(Pages 641 - 670)

10. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OFFICERS REVIEW

To receive a report from the Director of Education and Inclusion Services in respect of the implementation of the Family Engagement Officer (FEO) pilot in RCT, and to outline two options for furthering this work whilst also considering the wider work of Family Engagement in RCT schools and the work ongoing toward Community Focussed Schools.

(Pages 671 - 694)

11. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING (FORMERLY 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS): MUTUAL INVESTMENT MODEL - NEXT PROJECTS

To receive a report from the Director of Education and Inclusion Services in respect of Next Projects funded by the Mutual Investment Model (MIM) of Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

(Pages 695 - 768)

12. UK GOVERNMENT SHARED PROSPERITY FUND - OPPORTUNITIES IN SOUTH EAST WALES

To receive a report from the Director for Prosperity and Development in respect of the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), to highlight investment opportunities for Rhondda Cynon Taf and the wider South East Wales region, and to propose arrangements of a South East Wales Regional Investment Plan.

(Pages 769 - 780)

13. URGENT ITEMS

To consider any urgent business as the Chairman feels appropriate.



Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Circulation:-

Councillors: Councillor A Morgan (Chair)
Councillor M Webber (Deputy Chair)
Councillor G Caple
Councillor A Crimmings
Councillor R Lewis
Councillor C Leyshon
Councillor M Norris
Councillor B Harris

Officers: Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Barrie Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Louise Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources
Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Neil Griffiths, Head Of Financial Services - Community & Children's Services
Paul Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services
Christian Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Derek James, Service Director – Prosperity & Development
Paul Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services
David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Andy Wilkins, Director of Legal Services



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Wednesday, 22 June 2022 at 1.00 pm at the Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

County Borough Councillors - Cabinet Members in attendance:-

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

Councillor M Webber Councillor G Caple
Councillor A Crimmings Councillor R Lewis
Councillor C Leyshon Councillor M Norris
Councillor B Harris

Others in attendance

Councillor J Brencher
Councillor A J Ellis
Councillor K Morgan
Councillor D Williams
Councillor D Wood

Officers in attendance

Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Ms L Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr P Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services

1 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the Deputy Leader declared the following personal interest in respect of Item 5 of the agenda - Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme -Proposal To Amalgamate Cefn And Craig Yr Hesg Primary Schools To Create A New Community Primary School: 'I am a School Governor at Heol y Celyn Primary School'.

2 Minutes

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 21st March 2022 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

3 Cabinet Work Programme

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication provided the Cabinet with an update on the Cabinet Work Programme, which included the proposed list of matters requiring consideration by Cabinet over the 2022-23 Municipal Year.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the Cabinet approve the Work Programme for the 2022-23 Municipal Year (with appropriate amendment where necessary); and
2. To receive a further update on a 3 monthly basis.

4 The Council's Tackling Climate Change Strategy 2022-2025

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication provided the Cabinet with the final Tackling Climate Change Strategy – 'Think Climate RCT' following wider engagement with residents, partners and other stakeholders, including staff.

The Strategy set out a framework of the action the Council will take over the next three years to make significant progress and lay the strong foundations to enable the Council to make progress towards achieving the ambitious target to become a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030, and for the County Borough to be as near to Carbon Neutral as possible by the same date.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services was in support of the Strategy and commented that she looked forward to continuing the conversation around climate change with the Council's Climate Change Champion, community groups, residents, businesses and schools in order to share best practice.

The Deputy Leader voiced her support and spoke of the vast amount of work undertaken by the Council's Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the contents of this report and the Council's draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy;
2. To consider the draft Tackling Climate Change Strategy as providing the framework for the Council's work to:
 - a) Meet its stated carbon reduction targets for the Council and the County Borough.
 - b) Contribute to the response to the nationally declared climate and nature emergencies;
3. That monitoring of the strategy is included in the Council's quarterly performance reports to Cabinet and thereafter the Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee; and
4. To continue the Climate Conversation with staff, residents of all ages and backgrounds, partners, communities and businesses, using relevant and different models of engagement so that everyone has the opportunity to contribute.

5 Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme -Proposal To

Amalgamate Cefn And Craig Yr Hesg Primary Schools To Create A New Community Primary School

The Service Director of 21st Century Schools and Transformation sought to advise Cabinet Members of the outcome of the recent publication of a Statutory Notice in respect of the proposal to amalgamate the currently federated Cefn and Craig yr Hesg primary schools.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language welcomed the report and was pleased to note that much of the funding would be covered by the MIM model. The Cabinet Member commented that the two schools referenced needed costly repairs and thus, the amalgamation would provide modern facilities in readiness to deliver the new curriculum.

With the agreement of the Leader, County Borough Councillors D. Williams and A. Ellis spoke on this item.

The Cabinet were in favour of the report and it was **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the one objection received in response to the publication of the statutory notice to progress this proposal;
2. To implement the proposal with no amendments; and
3. To note the financial implications as set out at section 8 of the report, which will be subject to further reports in due course.

6 Review of Learning Support Class Provision within RCT

The Head of Inclusion Services presented the report, which sought to advise Members of the outcome of the publication of the Statutory Notice in respect of the proposal to enhance Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

The officer advised that a Statutory Notice was issued on the 4th April until 11th May 2022 relating to the proposal to open a Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with significant Additional Learning Needs in Ysgol Garth Olwg with effect from 1st September 2022. No objections were received in relation to the notice.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language welcomed the report and commented that the Local Authority were taking steps to create a bilingual system of specialist support for pupils with additional learning needs.

With the agreement of the Leader, County Borough Councillor K. Morgan spoke on this item.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the information contained within the report;
2. To implement the proposal as published in the Statutory Notice which will open a Key Stage 3/4 LSC provision for pupils with significant Additional Learning Needs in Ysgol Garth Olwg with effect from 1st September 2022; and
3. To the publication of the relevant Decision Notices in respect of any proposals taken forward as required by the School Organisation Code.

7 CAR MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT RATE FOR COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

The Director of Finance and Digital Services presented the report, which sought Cabinet to determine the rate of reimbursement payable to Council employees who utilise their own vehicles for work related purposes.

The Leader and Deputy both recognised the substantial increase in fuel prices and spoke in favour of continuing with the increase in the rate of reimbursement payable to staff who utilise their own vehicles for work related purposes to the HMRC rate of 45p per mile as set out in the report.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To continue with the increase in the rate of reimbursement payable to Council employees who utilise their own vehicles for work related purposes to the HMRC rate of 45p per mile as set out in the report.

8 Youth Engagement and Participation Service: Overview of Additional Funding 2020-2022

The Head of Community Wellbeing and Resilience provided Cabinet Members with an overview of the additional support the Youth Engagement and Participation Service has offered young people, as a result of the Council's additional investment since 2020.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language spoke positive of the work of the service and commented that the funding had assisted many young people across the RCT. The Cabinet Member acknowledged the negative impact Covid-19 and lockdowns had had on young people's mental health, wellbeing, and education; and was pleased to note that there were multiple support services available within the YEPS team.

The Deputy Leader spoke of the increase in anti-social behaviour following the pandemic and paid compliment to the Youth Engagement and Participation Service for supporting the youth community in changing attitudes and behaviours.

The Leader endorsed the recommendation to double the use of the youth hub vehicles and commented that it allowed the team to engage with young people whom, otherwise, would not come forward.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To review and comment on the information contained within the report; and
2. To commit to double the number of community youth hub vehicles from two to four vehicles.

9 Play Sufficiency Assessment

The Group Director of Community and Children's Services updated Cabinet Members on the Play Sufficiency Assessment, following Pre-scrutiny by the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 16th February 2022. The Group Director sought endorsement from Members for the

Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) and action plan to be submitted to the Welsh Government by 30th June 2022, as per statutory obligation placed upon the Council in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 and the Play Sufficiency Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2012.

The Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care emphasised the importance of play in the child's formative years and stated that it had been promoted for many years in Rhondda Cynon Taf with continuous investment.

The Deputy Leader was in support of the recommendations and spoke of the significant investment by the Council and the work undertaken by voluntary groups to ensure that children in the most deprived areas of RCT had enhanced play experiences.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the PSA for 2022 - 25 and the supporting action plan;
2. To consider comments from the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee as detailed in section 7.6 of the report; and
3. To endorse the PSA and action plan and agree for it to be submitted to Welsh Government.

10 Food Resilience

The Strategic Arts and Culture Manager provided Cabinet Members with an opportunity to review the support offered to residents who were experiencing food poverty, the work undertaken with partners to develop a strategic approach to food security and the progress made towards achieving a Sustainable Food Places Bronze Award, and plans for further development.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health & Communities spoke of the concerning statistics outlined within the report, such as over 50% of households in poverty in Wales have an adult that is working full-time. The Cabinet Member praised the work undertaken to support the vulnerable in the communities and endorsed the recommendations.

The Deputy Leader spoke of the opening times of a foodbank in a local ward which proved to be difficult for families to attend. The Deputy Leader suggested that moving forward, there is a better line of communication between the Sustainable Food Coordinator and food banks to ensure there is better availability for communities, where possible.

The Leader spoke of additional funding from the Council which allows Groups to apply for up to £500 three times a year to support tackling food poverty initiatives. The Leader advised that one group had used the £500 payment to help with transporting food to communities, which had helped families who could not afford travel fair to and from the foodbanks.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the content of the report;
2. To continue its support for developing Rhondda Cynon Taf as a 'Sustainable Food Place'; and
3. To approve the submission of an expression of interest for a Sustainable Food Place Bronze Award.

11 Community Wardens

The Frontline Services Officer presented the report, which sought approval from Cabinet to introduce a new Community Warden service, effective across RCT, to support the Police in providing a visible, reassuring presence in town centres, parks and communities.

The Leader thanked the officer for the report and explained that it was a commitment to the public by the administration that additional PCSOs would be funded within the Borough. The Leader advised that ultimately, he would like the Government to fund additional police on the street but welcomed the recommendation to establish a new Community Warden Service to support the work already undertaken by South Wales Police, existing PCSOs and the YEPS Service. The Leader concluded by speaking of the vast amount of work undertaken within the town centres and explained that despite this, surveys suggested that some residents still felt unsafe due to incidents such as anti-social behaviour or substance misuse etc. The Leader hoped that the additional presence of partners would be welcomed by the community.

The Deputy Leader welcomed the investment and commented that the additional presence would be paramount.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity echoed previous comments about the visibility of patrolling presence within communities. The Cabinet Member spoke of the need for clear communication with residents to ensure that they feel safer because of the improvements. The Cabinet Member hoped that the investment would support the Council's tackling anti-social behaviour agenda.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

- 1) To delegate authority to the Director – Frontline Services, to proceed with the measures necessary to give effect to the proposals set out in the report, namely: -
 - a. To establish a new Community Warden Service to include a new team of Community Wardens with supervisory staff and provision of appropriate vehicles and equipment to support their deployment.
 - b. To undertake a review of the existing roles and responsibilities of the Streetcare Enforcement team.
 - c. To establish effective working procedures between the new team, the Council's Community Safety Team and the wider Community Safety Partnership to co-ordinate appropriate partner responses to areas of anti-social behaviour or community nuisances.
- 2) To provide funding to South Wales Police to employ an additional 10 Police Community Support Officers, (PCSOs), dedicated to RCT, but nevertheless deployed and directed by the Police.

12 **Armed Forces and War Memorials Commitment**

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication provided an update on the Council's ongoing support for the Armed Forces and Veteran community and outlined how the Council could increase the commitment to those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, through additional investment in the Armed Forces, including War Memorials.

The Leader took the opportunity to thank the Deputy Leader for her continued work and commitment in delivering support to the Armed Forces and veterans. The Leader welcomed the report and spoke of the need for a dedicated officer and budget to carry out the programme of investment over the next five years.

The Deputy Leader noted that RCT was the only Local Authority in Wales to hold a budget for the Armed Forces. The Deputy Leader spoke of positive initiatives within RCT such as breakfast clubs for veterans and praised the Armed Forces Officer for the continuous support and work undertaken.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the wide-ranging support that the Council is currently providing to support our Armed Forces and veterans;
2. That the Council continues with its commitment to the Armed Forces, through a further £100k programme of investment over the next 5 years; and
3. That the recently appointed Heritage and Ancient Monuments Officer will develop a programme of investment and improvement to War Memorials, as well as providing a key point of contact for the community.

13 **Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan - Public Consultation Feedback and Project Updates**

The Director of Prosperity and Development provided Cabinet Members with the results of the public consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the draft Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan and the early ideas for redevelopment of the former M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings. In addition, the Director sought Cabinet to approve the Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan and the proposed changes and the further development and delivery of schemes within the report.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity was pleased to note that resident feedback was largely positive, with over 80% in support of most of the proposals, with the lowest area of support in the proposal to develop a stronger digital presence, to which he emphasised. The Cabinet Member believed that this was an exciting time for Pontypridd and commented that with investment planned elsewhere, the success would be replicated throughout RCT going forward.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity praised the investment already put into Pontypridd such as the Lido, Llys Cadwyn and the new bridge. The Cabinet Member felt that the proposals would bring life into the Southern end of Pontypridd and link it to the success of the Northern end.

With the agreement of the Leader, one public speaker and County Borough Councillors J. Brencher and S. Wood spoke on this item.

Discussions ensued and the Leader addressed comments made in respect of the proposal for a hotel led development on the site of the former Bingo Hall on High Street / Sardis Road. In terms of demand for a hotel, the Leader emphasised that it would be a private sector led development. The Leader explained that a market test analysis had been undertaken by organisations, which had determined there was a demand for a hotel, particularly as Pontypridd becomes a vibrant hub as part of the South Wales Metro.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the responses to the public consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the draft Pontypridd Placemaking Plan and the early ideas for the redevelopment of the former M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings and determines whether any amendments are required to the proposals;
2. To approve the Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan (subject to any changes as result of the consultation process) and the further development and delivery of schemes as set out within the document;
3. To note the progress made towards undertaking a procurement exercise to secure a development partner to deliver a hotel led development on the site of the former Bingo Hall on High Street / Sardis Road; and
4. To note progress made towards the demolition plans of the former M&S and Dorothy Perkins/Burtons buildings.

14 Draft RCT Tree, Woodlands, and Hedgerow Strategy

The Director of Prosperity and Development presented the report, which sought Cabinet to consider the contents of a new, draft RCT Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy and agree that the draft is used as the basis on which to engage the public and other relevant stakeholders in an eight week consultation to ascertain a wider range of views.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services endorsed the recommendation and commented that the tree strategy would provide the foundation of the Council's ambition to deliver RCT's largest tree planting programme in a generation and will promote the principles of 'right tree – right place'.

The Leader was in support of the ambitious strategy and spoke of work already undertaken by Natural Resources Wales.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the draft RCT Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy for consultation with the public and other relevant stakeholders.

15 Proposed Levelling Up Fund Submission for the Cynon Valley

The Director of Prosperity and Development provided Cabinet with a summary of the UK Government Leveling Up Fund (Round 2) and the proposed project application for the Former Chicken Factory, Trecynon for the Cynon Valley Parliamentary Constituency.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity stated that in July 2021, a

total of four bids were submitted from Rhondda Cynon Taf but the Former Mayhew Chicken Factory bid for the Cynon Valley Parliamentary Constituency was unsuccessful. The Cabinet Member advised that with Government feedback, the scheme had been further strengthened for submission for round two of the fund and was hopeful that it would be successful.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To consider the content of the report; and
2. To agree to progress the development of a project application for submission to the UK Levelling Up Fund Round 2, as set out in section 5 of the report.

16 Leader's Scheme of Delegation

The Cabinet Members noted the Leader's Scheme of Delegation for the 2022-2023 Municipal Year.

17 To consider Passing the Following Resolution:

It was **RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act (as amended) for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of the exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act".

18 Sustainable Communities Learning Programme (Formerly 21st Century Schools) - Financial Close for MIM Pathfinder Project

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the position as set out in this report on the submission of a Full Business Case (FBC) to Welsh Government (WG) in respect of the batched project of Pontyclun, Llanilltud Faerdref and Penygawsi primary schools, and the next step which is to proceed to financial close;
2. That subject to Welsh Government's approval of the FBC:
 - 2.2.1 Review and agree the updated costs and funding package for the schools as outlined in section 8 of the report;
 - 2.2.2 Approve the execution, delivery and performance of the Project Agreement with Project Co (to be established by the Welsh Education Partnership Co Limited) together with the Funders' Direct Agreement, the Collateral Agreements, the Independent Tester Contract and the Insurance Proceeds Account Agreement, (together the "**Agreements**") (and any documents to be delivered by the Agreements pursuant thereto) to facilitate the delivery of the batched primary schools Pontyclun Primary, Llanilltud Faerdref Primary and Penygawsi Primary schools;
 - 2.2.3 Approve the Project Agreement which will incorporate Schedule 14 Payment Mechanism and summarised in Appendix 1 and 2 of the report so as to give effect to recommendation (2.2.2), subject to recommendation (2.2.5) below;
 - 2.2.4 Approve the Funders' Direct Agreement, the Collateral Agreements, the Independent Tester Contract and the Insurance Proceeds Account Agreement (also as Schedules of the Project Agreement) (attached at Appendices C, D, E and F) so as to give

effect to recommendation (2.2.2), subject to recommendation (2.2.5) below;

- 2.2.5 Note that the Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer shall complete the Agreements for execution and is approved to:
 - i. complete all information gaps including but not limited to confirmation of financial obligations (including the Annual Service Charge and Monthly Service Payment in consultation with the Director of Finance and Digital Services) and commitments of the Council and programme dates; and
 - ii. make any further genuine project specific drafting changes to the Agreements, as may be required and that by the act of execution any final changes are approved;
- 2.2.6 Give delegated authority to the Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer to approve any further deeds and documents for execution by the Council which are ancillary to the Agreements approved here; and
- 2.2.7 Note that the Chief Executive, the S151 Officer, or the Monitoring Officer will complete certificates under the Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 and agree to indemnify this officer in the act of doing so.

This meeting closed at 4.00 pm

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**

CABINET

18th July 2022

COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 31st March 2022 (Quarter 4)

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR LEYSHON)

AUTHOR: Paul Griffiths, Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services (01443) 680609

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report provides Members with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective, for the financial year ended 31st March 2022.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

2.1 Note the on-going impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on service delivery and, in parallel, the re-introduction of services as Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted.

Revenue

2.2 Note and agree the General Fund revenue outturn position of the Council as at the 31st March 2022 (Section 2 of the Executive Summary) and note the incorporation of Welsh Government Covid-19 funding into this position to support on-going service delivery.

Capital

2.3 Note the capital outturn position of the Council as at the 31st March 2022 (Sections 3a – e of the Executive Summary).

2.4 Note the details of the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as at the 31st March 2022 (Section 3f of the Executive Summary).

Corporate Plan Priorities

2.5 Note the year-end position regarding progress made against agreed Corporate Plan priorities (Sections 5 a – c of the Executive Summary).

2.6 Note the progress update to enhance the Council's short term and long-term response to extreme weather events (Section 6 of the Executive Summary).

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To agree the Council's financial and operational performance position as at the 31st March 2022 to enable elected Members and other stakeholders to scrutinise the performance of the Council.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 This report provides Members with a year-end statement of the Council's financial and operational performance position for the financial year ending the 31st March 2022.

4.2 The aim of the report is to bring together the Council's performance into an Executive Summary and make available more detailed information to the reader through electronic links. Information contained in the Executive Summary includes financial data, progress against our Corporate Plan priorities (with exceptions highlighted within the detailed sections to ensure that elected Members and other readers are able to quickly identify the key issues), investment priority updates and progress made to enhance the Council's response to extreme weather events.

4.3 Members will note that this report is set in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic continuing to pose significant challenges in the delivery of Council Services alongside on-going significant additional costs and income losses that have been funded in the majority of cases by Welsh Government. Further information in this regard is included within the Executive Summary.

5.0 QUARTER 4 REPORT

5.1 The Quarter 4 report is attached and comprises:

- **Executive Summary** – setting out, at a glance, the overall performance of the Council as at Quarter 4 (i.e. 31st March 2022).
- **Revenue Monitoring** – sections 2a – e setting out the detailed year-end financial spend against budget across our Revenue Budget with exceptions highlighted.
- **Capital Monitoring** – sections 3a – e setting out year-end capital spend across our Capital Programme with exceptions highlighted and section 3f covering Prudential Indicators.

- **Organisational Health** – includes year-end information on turnover, sickness absence, organisational health related investment areas and Council strategic risks.
- **Corporate Plan Priorities** – three action plans (Sections 5a – c) setting out year-end position statements for the priorities of People, Places and Prosperity.
- **Enhancing the Council’s response to extreme weather events** - Section 6 setting out progress made to implement the recommendations agreed by Cabinet on [18th December 2020](#).

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS AND SOCI-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 The Council’s Performance Report provides an update on financial and operational performance for 2021/22; as a result, there are no equality and diversity or socio-economic duty implications to report.

7.0 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no Welsh language implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

8.0 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Following consideration by Cabinet, this Report will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for review, challenge and where deemed required, the scrutiny of specific areas in line with the Committee’s Terms of Reference.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no financial implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 There are no legal implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

11.0 LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

11.1 The Corporate Plan progress updates included within this report align with the priorities as set out within the Council's Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 "[Making a Difference](#)". With regard to the [Well-being of Future Generations Act \(Wales\) Act 2015](#), at the 4th March 2020 Council meeting, it was agreed that the Corporate Plan priorities would also serve as its Well-being Objectives in line with the Act.

12.0 CONCLUSION

12.1 This report sets out the financial and operational performance of the Council as at Quarter 4 2021/22, that is, 31st March 2022.

12.2 The Quarter 4 revenue budget position is a £0.213M overspend and continues the trend of an improving position since quarter 2, and reflects the on-going work undertaken across all Council Services to bring the financial position closer in line with budget at year-end.

12.3. The year-end revenue budget position is set in the context of the significant impact Covid-19 has had on service delivery and takes into account in-year Welsh Government Covid-19 Hardship Funding to support additional costs and income losses as a direct result of the pandemic. As has been reported during the year, the Welsh Government Hardship Fund will not continue beyond 31st March 2022 and the Council's robust monitoring arrangements will be assessing the on-going financial implications of the pandemic and will use any flexibility afforded within our available reserves to transition any permanent additional costs into our base budget over the medium term. A further update in this regard will be included within the Council's draft Statement of Accounts for 2021/22.

12.4 Capital investment as at 31st March 2022 is £105.946M, supporting visible improvements to infrastructure and assets across the County Borough.

12.5 With regard to the Council's Corporate Plan priorities of People, Places and Prosperity, positive progress overall has been made during the year in line with the agreed programmes of work, alongside services continuing their recovery from the pandemic.

12.6 The progress update on the delivery of recommendations to enhance the Council's response to extreme weather events shows good progress overall, with key actions being taken forward to further strengthen the Council's arrangements.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Paul Griffiths

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th July 2022

COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 31st March 2022 (Quarter 4)

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN
DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR LEYSHON)**

Background Papers

Officer to contact: Paul Griffiths

**COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT
QUARTER 4 2021/22
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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- 5a – People;
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Progress update on the implementation of recommendations agreed by Cabinet on 18th December 2020 to enhance the Council’s response to extreme weather events.

Section 1 – INTRODUCTION

This Executive Summary, bringing together and summarising the Council's financial and operational performance position as at 31st March 2022 (year-end), continues to be set within the context of Council service delivery operating within a very challenging environment as a result of the on-going impact of Covid-19, as was the case during 2020/21. This has required the Council, like all local authorities in Wales, to continue to adapt and change the way it provides services, many in partnership with others, to help meet the needs of residents and businesses. Where appropriate, service specific information has been included within this Executive Summary to provide the reader with a full as picture as possible in this regard.

In addition, throughout the Executive Summary electronic links have been included that enable the reader to access more detailed information, as required.

Section 2 – REVENUE BUDGET

Revenue Budget Performance

Service Area	2021/22 – as at 31st March 2022 (Quarter 4)		
	Full Year Budget £M	Full Year Expenditure £M	Variance Over / (Under) £M
Education & Inclusion Services (2a)	195.536	195.425	(0.111)
Community & Children's Services (2b)	168.059	168.589	0.530
Chief Executive (2c)	31.720	31.431	(0.289)
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services (2d)	59.237	59.375	0.138
Sub Total	454.552	454.820	0.268
Authority Wide Budgets (2e)	73.351	73.296	(0.055)
Grand Total	527.903	528.116	0.213

Welsh Government Covid-19 funding incorporated within the full year position at Quarter 4 (31st March 2022)

The full year revenue budget variance, as at 31st March 2022, is a £0.213M overspend. This position is based on the majority of additional costs and income losses as a direct result of the pandemic being offset by additional funding made available by Welsh Government to all local authorities during the 2021/22 financial year, via the Local Government Hardship Fund.

With regard to the Hardship Fund, this provided specific financial assistance to local authorities for additional expenditure and income losses incurred as a direct result of Covid-19. The additional financial implications included: additional costs in respect of housing / homelessness, free school meal payments, Adult Social Services and staff cover due to absence; and income losses where there has been a need to temporarily suspend or reduce service provision (for example, Leisure Centres, Theatres and visitor attractions).

During quarter 4, Welsh Government also made available additional funding to local authorities to support the on-going financial implications of the pandemic (for example, demand pressures across social care and council tax collection, and additional capital resources). Any flexibilities available have been set aside to support the Council's on-going financial resilience, noting the cessation of the Hardship Fund and future inflationary pressures which are becoming evident. This has included reinstating the level of general fund reserve balances to the minimum level (£10.292M as at the 31st March 2022). The 2021/22 draft Statement of Accounts has been prepared accordingly. This approach supports our medium-term financial planning arrangements through the prudent use of available reserves.

As referred to above, an updated position in this regard will be incorporated within the Council's draft 2021/22 Statement of Accounts.

The Table below sets out the total full-year additional costs and income losses incurred and accounted for relating to the 2021/22 financial year.

Service Area	Total Full Year Additional Costs / Income *
	£M
Education & Inclusion Services	-8.050
Community & Children's Services	-16.111
Chief Executive	-1.621
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	-2.698
Authority Wide	-1.600
TOTAL	-30.080

* Excludes additional costs incurred in respect of Test, Trace and Protect and supporting the delivery of the vaccination programme, the funding for which is being made available by Welsh Government via the Local Health Board, in line with guidance. The position also excludes spend incurred and funded on Welsh Government schemes which the Council acted as an agent.

Revenue budget variances at Quarter 4 (year-end)

1. Community and Children's Services

ADULT SERVICES

- Long Term Care & Support (£0.223M overspend);
- Commissioned Services (£0.743M overspend);
- Provider Services (£0.247M overspend); and
- Short Term Intervention Services (£0.279M underspend).

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

- Safeguarding & Support (including Children Looked After) (£0.610M overspend);
- Early Intervention (£0.165M overspend);
- Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service (£0.216M underspend);
- Intensive Intervention (£0.201M underspend); and
- Management & Support Services (£0.166M underspend).

TRANSFORMATION

- Service Improvement (£0.058M underspend).

PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROTECTION

- Public Protection (£0.170M underspend);
- Community Services (£0.190M underspend); and
- Communities & Wellbeing (£0.063M underspend).

2. Chief Executive

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- Human Resources (£0.147M underspend); and
- Finance & Digital Services (£0.074M underspend).

3. Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services

PROSPERITY & DEVELOPMENT

- Prosperity & Development (£0.059M underspend).

FRONTLINE SERVICES

- Highways Management (£0.068M underspend);
- Transportation (£0.092M overspend);
- Strategic Projects (£0.128M underspend);
- Street Cleansing (£0.090M underspend); and
- Waste Services (£0.396M overspend).

4. Authority Wide

- Miscellaneous (£0.254M overspend); and
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme (£0.281M underspend).

Earmark Reserve Update

- A breakdown of full year expenditure against approved earmark reserves for Service Areas can be viewed at Section 2f by [clicking here](#). For information, the year-end actual expenditure position is lower than the committed positions reported during the year primarily due to revisions to timescales for completion of projects.

Section 3 – CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Council and its contractors / suppliers have continued to ensure effective and safe working arrangements and, in doing so, enabled the on-going delivery of capital programme projects.

Capital Programme Budget

Service Area	2021/22 - as at 31st March 2022
	Actual Expenditure £M
Chief Executive (3a)	3.765
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services (3b)	68.409
Education & Inclusion Services (3c)	27.062
Community & Children's Services (3d)	6.710
Total	105.946

Key Capital Variances at Quarter 4

- Re-profiling of a number of projects to reflect changes in the total cost of schemes and revised delivery timescales.
- Grant approvals introduced into the Capital Programme: Welsh Government (WG) Local Transport Fund (£2.234M); WG Active Travel Fund (£4.327M); WG Business Development Grant (£0.416M); WG Circular Economy Fund (£0.590M); WG Resilient Roads Funding (£0.403M); WG Absorbent Hygiene Product (AHP) Waste Programme in Wales Grant (£0.346M); WG Sustainable Communities for Learning (£11.039M); WG Universal Primary FSM Grant (£2.026M); WG ENABLE Grant (£0.473M); WG A465 Investment Grant (£0.800M); Integrated Care Fund (£2.615M); WG Transforming Towns (£2.590M); and WG ACL Grant (£0.507M).

For information on how the Capital Programme is funded see section 3e by [clicking here](#) .

Prudential Indicators

For a detailed breakdown of Prudential Indicators, see section 3f by [clicking here](#).

Section 4 – ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH

• Turnover

Service Area	2021/22		2020/21		2019/20	
	As at 31st March 2022		As at 31st March 2021		As at 31st March 2020	
	Staff Nos.	% Turnover	Staff Nos.	% Turnover	Staff Nos.	% Turnover
Turnover – Council Wide	11,079	11.30	10,888	6.84	10,670	9.85
Community & Children's Services	2,976	12.70	2,946	6.59	2,845	8.44
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	945	11.22	941	6.70	964	8.40
Education & Inclusion Services	1,233	9.08	1,258	6.52	1,265	8.14
<u>Schools</u>	<u>5,013</u>	<u>11.35</u>	<u>4,873</u>	<u>7.47</u>	<u>4,855</u>	<u>11.64</u>
Primary	3,238	9.51	3,043	7.49	3,066	9.95
Secondary	1,775	14.70	1,830	7.43	1,789	14.53
Chief Executive's Division	912	9.54	870	4.83	741	8.37

• Sickness Absence

With specific regard to Covid-19 and the recording of sickness absence, where staff have been unavailable for work due to: self-isolating; being part of the shielded list; have underlying conditions that places an individual at risk, such as being pregnant; or lives in the same household as someone that needs to be shielded, these occurrences have not been categorised as 'sickness absence' and as such are excluded from the analysis below.

Service Area	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
	As at 31st March 2022 %	As at 31 st March 2021 %	As at 31 st March 2020 %
% days lost to sickness absence – Council Wide	5.40	3.96	4.16
Community & Children's Services	7.46	6.14	5.61
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	5.62	4.99	4.74
Education & Inclusion Services	4.88	3.20	3.70
<u>Schools</u>	<u>4.61</u>	<u>2.88</u>	<u>3.56</u>
Primary	4.77	3.21	3.79
Secondary	4.31	2.33	3.16
Chief Executive's Division	3.54	2.62	2.48

For a more detailed breakdown of 2021/22 sickness absence information, [click here](#).

Organisation Health related investment areas

There will be a continued focus on investing in organisational health related areas, for example, IT infrastructure and invest to save energy efficiency schemes, with projects being delivered operationally within services across the Council.

- **Council Strategic Risks**

The Council's Quarter 4 Strategic Risk Register can be viewed by [clicking here](#) with specific updates included setting out the implications of Covid-19 and the work undertaken to mitigate the impact as much as possible.

Section 5 – CORPORATE PLAN

Corporate Plan priority action plans for 2021/22 were reported to and approved by full Council on the 20th October 2021 covering the three priorities of People, Places and Prosperity. A summary of the progress made across the three priorities for the year-ended 31st March 2022 is set out in Sections 5a – c and electronic links have been included to each approved action plan, providing more detailed information on progress.

Corporate Plan Priority Progress Update

- **PEOPLE** (Section 5a)

PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

Year-end Position Statement (31st March 2022)

Supporting our residents who are older, vulnerable or who have disabilities, to remain independent and have a good quality of life.

We have continued our work to support our residents who are older, vulnerable or who have disabilities, to remain independent and have a good quality of life. Our new extra care facility in Pontypridd, [Cwrt yr Orsaf](#), opened on the 15th October 2021 and 45 people have agreed a tenancy. Built on the former Pontypridd Magistrates' Court site in Graig, the state-of-the-art building becomes Rhondda Cynon Taf's third Extra Care facility, alongside [Ty Heulog](#) in Talbot Green and [Maesyffynnon](#) in Aberaman. Extra Care helps older people live as active and independent lives as possible, with 24/7 on-site support available for residents' assessed needs. We are also working on a business case and design options for a similar scheme in Treorchy. This work will be progressed in 2022/23 in line with a wider review of health and social care development options in the Rhondda geographical area. [Planning permission](#) for the extra care scheme in Porth has been granted and demolition work has been completed at the site of the former Danymynydd Care Home. The application covers the four-storey facility which includes 60 apartments, as well as associated works relating to landscaping, sustainable drainage, access and parking provision. Groundworks are now progressing on site. The development of Extra Care homes offers an opportunity for older people to lead a more independent life and **prevent** unnecessary admissions to residential care. Extra Care also enables people to have more control and be **more involved** in decisions about their environment and the services they receive. All of the new Extra Care homes have also been designed to achieve 'BREEAM' excellence, the world's leading sustainability assessment.

We have also opened [a supported accommodation scheme in Oxford Street](#), Mountain Ash and all apartments have now been allocated. The scheme has seen the previously derelict Oxford Buildings transformed in to a safe, secure and high-quality environment for adults with learning disabilities. The development provides up to 8 self-contained, high quality apartments specifically for adults with a learning disability, where individuals will have access to targeted support from care partners [DRIVE](#) to enable them to maximise their independence and promote choice. We will open a similar scheme in Llanhari following a refurbishment of Elm Road accommodation – timing for the completion of this scheme has been revised due to material supply issues and dealing with design matters and it is anticipated that the plan will be complete by the end of September 2022. Assessments have been completed and places have been allocated in readiness for the completion of the project. We are also developing a supported accommodation strategy and investment plan to continue to provide a range of modern fit for purpose supported housing options for vulnerable people that meets their needs and is supported, where appropriate, by access to community facilities. This work has been delayed during the year but it is anticipated that the plan will be completed for Cabinet's consideration in 2022/23.

PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

We are taking forward the Council's review on the future shape of residential care for older people to ensure we create the right model of service delivery to respond to increasing demand and changing needs in the **long term**. This includes drafting for approval a modernisation programme and investment plan for the Council's 9 care homes in line with Care Inspectorate Wales standards which will be considered by Cabinet in 2022/23.

We have continued to deliver the practice learning sets put in place as part of the Learning Disability Transformation Programme to operational managers. Practice learning sets are a means of Continuous Professional Development and were rolled out to Managers in October 2021. Practice learning sets are used by managers to problem solve challenges and issues that arise as part of the transformation work programme in Adult Social Services. We had also planned to work with our Training Unit to develop and deliver a Collaborative Communication training programme for phased roll out to all Adult Services workforce in 2021/22; however, due to capacity issues, implementation of the programme has been delayed until 2022/23 and will be incorporated into the Workforce Strategy. This training will develop the skills and capabilities of our social care workforce to allow us to focus on individual and family strengths and resources in each conversation that we have. This will build better relationships with individuals and families as communication will be more open and transparent.

We continue to invest in reablement services to **prevent** escalation of need increasing or enable recovery and independence. This has included a review and redesign of our Support@Home Service and Adaptations & Community Equipment (ACE) Service to reflect demand and promote independence. We are also developing a step up/down transition pathway to avoid hospital admission and support discharge and explore opportunities to expand this service provision across some in-house care homes. This work will continue with Health colleagues and other regional Local Authorities in 2022/23.

We are developing an Adult Services Digital Strategy which will seek to maximise the continued use of new technology and ensure services are accessible and available to people and their families. Some solutions that currently operate in RCT include the regional [Assistive Technology Project](#) which has been further developed as part of [Regional Stay Well in Community Transformation Programme](#) to include a Mobile Responder Service and a proactive caller service which provides wellbeing support to individuals who have received support from services such as reablement and have been independent of long term care. We have also actively promoted the [Insight App](#) which provides over 100 free online activities per week for people with disabilities across the UK and is operated by a [Innovate Trust](#) in Wales.

We are also empowering people to be more independent at home by continuing to promote direct payments as a way of managing individual care needs. We have reviewed our existing direct payment policy and new guidance has been developed and shared with staff, service users and our commissioned direct payment support provider. The number of people in receipt of direct payments has increased to 414 in 2021/22. We have also developed a new "Community Catalyst" service model which will focus on the development of small community enterprises offering homecare or help at home to older and disabled people as an alternative way for people to manage their direct payments. The tender for the new provider to support implementation of a new service model will be completed in 2022/23.

We are working with carers and partners to ensure respite provision is meeting the needs of both the people who use services and their carers so that people are able to live in their family homes for longer. A "More than respite" carer engagement event was held to **involve** carers in the development of the respite service offer for 2022/23.

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Demand for domiciliary care remains high as demand for services increase. We continue to work with homecare providers to build capacity and resilience to improve market stability and ensure we can meet demand and ensure good quality care. Work in this area will continue in 2022/23.

We are also building on our engagement and learning from the pandemic to inform the transformation of day services going forward so that people with a learning disability have access to meaningful activity and opportunities in their own communities, including employment to achieve their personal goals and live ordinary lives. A range of engagement and **involvement** activity has been undertaken, supported by the launch of the "[My Day My Way](#)" website. This website provides an engagement platform so that people can explain the things that are important to them, and how they would improve urgent day services. The "My Day, My Way" engagement programme captured survey responses and the feedback is being collated to inform the development of a draft Day Opportunities Strategy. We have also engaged with [Scrutiny](#) during this process.

Encouraging residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles and maintain their mental wellbeing.

We continue to encourage all residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles and maintain their mental wellbeing as we know that this is key to living a long and healthy life, and reducing the risk of long-term illnesses such as heart disease, stroke and Type 2 diabetes. Following the easing of Covid restrictions, we opened the brand new gym at [Llys Cadwyn](#) in Pontypridd in April 2021 and reopened [Lido Ponty](#) following the damage caused by Storm Dennis in February 2020. The was set to close its doors for the main 2021 season at the beginning of October 2021, having welcomed over 98,000 visitors this year alone – despite the restrictions that remained in place due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. However, due to popular demand, it was decided to extend the main season until 29th October to allow more visitors to enjoy it. The popular Boxing Day swim was also reintroduced as well as a new 'New Year's Day' swim. Both events sold out within minutes of tickets being released. We also reopened [Hawthorn Swimming Pool](#) in November 2021 following some refurbishment to the fabric of the building and mechanical plant to future proof the pool and secure its **long term** future. Hawthorn Pool will continue to offer school swimming, swimming lessons and space for club swimmers as well as introducing some evening and weekend sessions that will be open to the public.

We also have a full programme of outdoor exercise opportunities throughout RCT leisure facilities and in some of our parks. Two outdoor rigs have been installed in Ynysangharad Park and Dare Valley Country Park as part of the Leisure For Life fitness offer. A rig has also been purchased for Abercynon Sports Centre. Installation timescales were revised due to importation delays and poor weather and the rig was installed in February 2022 and a programme is being compiled for [Spring and Summer activities](#). We have also produced [online videos](#) of our most popular walking routes across the County Borough, which provide a visual walk through and directions for the route. Some of the videos have been targeted at new mums via our '[Made For Mams](#)' programme to encourage new mums to exercise in the outdoors alongside other mums. We are also developing a programme for 2022 for wider community outdoor opportunities and promotion of increased participation to encourage residents to utilise our outdoor spaces. We are also planning to further develop the online [Leisure for Life](#) offer to allow members to access classes and workouts at home. This action will be progressed further to staff training being completed.

We have also developed our draft Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2022-26 for the County Borough throughout 2021/22 which is designed to increase regular participation across the Council's comprehensive range of indoor and outdoor physical activity facilities, with a particular focus on residents who are inactive or less active due to barriers. The draft strategy has been shared with [Scrutiny](#) for initial engagement before it is more widely shared with partners, residents

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and service users so that they can be **involved** in a public consultation exercise. The final strategy will be launched in Autumn 2022 once the views from the public consultation have been considered and, thereafter, reported to Cabinet.

Work has commenced on the Treorchy Cultural Hub, with the works to [Treorchy Library](#) completed in December 2021 as part of a joint £150,000 investment by the Council and Welsh Government to improve the facilities for users and the local community. The works also include the creation of a multi-purpose gallery and exhibition space for the display of a wide range of visual and creative art and artefacts, by professionals, community groups and individuals. The main lending library has also been reorganised throughout, along with the relocation and new design layout of the popular children's area, which incorporates a new raised platform that can be used as a performance space. Work at the Park & Dare Theatre foyer area will commence in 2022/23 once funding has been confirmed.

A Community Engagement Plan is also being developed to ensure residents are **involved** in the development of future programmes so that our theatres are more inclusive and accessible to the whole community in the **long term**. Our online and blended delivery over the past year has been well received and the RCT Theatres' digital production of Aladdin, which was enjoyed by thousands in December 2021, when theatres were still closed for live performances, was shortlisted at the first-ever UK Pantomime Association's annual awards. By offering free cinema screenings of Aladdin, alongside the free online digital offer, we ensured that our pantomime reached a wide audience, including any digitally-excluded residents. In line with WG guidance, live shows were reintroduced in the Coliseum Theatre and Park & Dare Theatre in March 2022 for the first time since the global pandemic began.

The pandemic highlighted the importance of community groups, third sector and the voluntary sector in the resilience of local communities. We continue to prioritise strengthening relationships with residents and community groups and finding out what is important to residents. This includes working with our partners to ensure residents are heard and have the opportunity to be **involved** and can influence decisions, activities & services in their communities. An [RCT Together Survey](#) is live and seeks to find out what is important to individuals and communities in RCT. We will share the results of this survey with [Neighbourhood Networks, in our Community Hubs and on our website](#).

Following the outbreak of war in Ukraine in February 2022, we know that many people across the County Borough have wanted to help and show support for the people of Ukraine during this devastating time. There are lots of organisations who are helping in the humanitarian crisis and appeal. RCTCBC is committed to take Ukrainian people through the UK Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme. This scheme will support Ukrainian people with Housing, Education, Health and integration into the community, as well as supporting the people who volunteer to sponsor Ukrainian people and their families. The Council's planning arrangements are well underway to assist Ukrainians fleeing war in Ukraine and provide [information and advice](#) to residents who wish to sponsor a Ukrainian family and to Ukrainian families who will arrive in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Integrating health and social care and providing support for those with mental health problems and complex needs.

We continue to **collaborate** with our partners to support older people to stay in their homes longer, **prevent** unnecessary stays in hospital and to help get people home from hospital more quickly when they are well enough. We are working with Health to explore options for the development of an **integrated** community health and social care locality model and have completed a review of options for an **integrated** community model; subject to agreement of an optimal option, planning and implementation will be undertaken in 2022/23. We are also working together to improve patient

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experience and redesign the pathways for **integrated** primary and community based urgent care services and 'home first' discharge from hospital services. This includes a review and refresh of the hospital discharge protocol, including performance standards and measures to deliver effective transfers of care from Royal Glamorgan hospital. This has also included the creation of hospital discharge hubs at District General Hospital sites and a revision to management structures so that resources are focused on prioritising 'home first' principles. We have also continued to deliver [SW@H Phase 1 and 2 projects](#) as part of the [Regional Integrated Care Fund](#) (ICF) and [Transformation Programmes](#). An evaluation of the project continues in line with the Regional Transformation Programme and draft option appraisal work has commenced. We have also worked with Health to review and improve end of life community care and procedures are in place to ensure end of life care is delivered at a person's home. Our review work in 2022/23 will now look at hospital-based care.

Our work to review and redesign Community Mental Health Services with Health is ongoing. As part of this we will complete a review of current Community Mental Health Services and develop options to redesign our joint Service offer to meet current and future **long term** need and demand pressures. Redesign work has continued but completion timescales have been revised due to covid pressures and planned organisational restructures in the Health Board. A new work programme and timescales will be agreed with Health for 2022/23.

Using the [RCT Neighbourhood Network](#) Groups, we will begin to co-produce/design with partners a social prescribing model. Following development of the social prescribing model, we will work with partners to review gaps in provision and identify ways to address unmet needs. This work will be taken forward in 2022/23 when staff are released from the Test, Trace, Protect Service.

Improving services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do.

We have worked to fully embed the virtual service delivery methods created in response to Covid-19 in core service delivery on a permanent basis to facilitate improved access to, and engagement in, early intervention and **prevention** services for children, young people and families. This has included appointing a Virtual Parenting Support Officer who is supporting the Parenting team to create and upload virtual resources. This officer is also assisting with improving access to timely information, advice and assistance for children and young people including the development of the RCT Families website which will be launched in 2022/23. We have also developed a YEPS app that will improve communication with our young people which will be launched in 2022/23.

We continue to focus our services on early intervention and **prevention** to improve the life outcomes for children in RCT. We continue to ensure that the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of children and young people aged 0-25 and their families are central to the delivery of services. This work has included delivering a programme of Targeted Play provision for vulnerable 5-14 year olds with care and support needs. These play sessions are being offered at pre-pandemic levels, with capacity back to its normal operating level. However, take up has been slow in certain areas with families apprehensive about allowing their child, potentially with medical needs, to mix with a bubble of children outside of their school or personal bubble. We have also enhanced the provision of support to 16–25-year-olds delivered by the Youth Engagement and Participation Service (YEPS). Projects include entrepreneurship courses, pre-employment skills, mental health and wellbeing, amongst others.

Supporting children and families to stay together safely and to thrive, and providing effective support for children who need to become looked after are two essential responsibilities and key aims of Children's Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf . A review of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Looked After

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Children Strategy (2018-2021) co-produced with the Institute of Public Care (IPC) at Oxford Brookes University identified many strengths within our Children's Services which reflect positively on the commitment, experience and expertise of the staff providing these services. The review also identified 4 key areas in which the service could continue to improve and develop. Further information is available in the [Rhondda Cynon Taf Looked After Children Prevention Strategy 2022-2025](#) which was presented to and agreed by Cabinet in January 2022.

We continue to strengthen participation of children and young people to promote engagement and **involvement** specifically with Children Looked After and partner agencies to ensure co-production and that the voice of children and young people are heard in service development and delivery. We have developed a Participation Strategy which incorporates different communication approaches when engaging with children and young people. We have successfully appointed a Graduate Officer who once in post in June 2022, will build capacity and take forward the Participation Strategy in 2022/23.

We are seeking to provide effective Edge of Care services to ensure that children, young people and families receive the right support at the right time, supporting their physical and mental wellbeing. This includes development of the Regional MAPPS Service (Therapeutic Regional Service for CLA) which was approved by Cabinet in January 2022. We also plan to co-produce a **prevention** of youth antisocial and criminal behaviour strategy with the Community Safety Team which will ensure the positive **involvement** of young people in community life. This work will be taken forward in 2022/23.

We also want to make sure that those children that cannot remain with their families can be looked after closer to home. We are continuing to work with providers to develop placement sufficiency close to home which includes carrying out a feasibility study to consider rebalancing residential placement provision over the next 5 years. This study has commenced and will continue into 2022/23 and will inform how we develop and monitor a commissioning mix and range of placements that support children looked after and care leavers to achieve positive **long-term** outcomes.

We continue to focus on enhancing the wellbeing of our learners. The **Integrated** Wellbeing Pathway which was established during the pandemic to help children return to school has been reviewed and is continuing to operate. Additional funding has been secured to continue the additional capacity for dedicated stress and anxiety courses that young people can access outside of school. We have also purchased play therapy and devised a well-being programme with Bluemind for families to help them address their emotional well-being issues that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. The Central South Consortium continues to provide a comprehensive professional learning offer to all schools across the region to develop effective approaches to improve mental health and wellbeing. We are also implementing our Action Plan for Enhanced Counselling Support for Children and Young People to further improve our school-based counselling provision. Our work with Continuing Care and the CAHMS service is not progressing as planned due to recruitment issues and we are now looking at alternative ways of delivering emotional wellbeing outcomes in house and a shared approach has been agreed with Health to take this forward.

We are delivering the Early Years Transformation agenda in Rhondda Cynon Taf to ensure early years services are universally available and specialist services are targeted by need and not geographical location. This will also improve early intervention and **prevention** outcomes across the County Borough. Health characteristics data transfer has been completed. An Early Years Vulnerability Project plan is in place and a full profile test underway and presentation of test findings to the Early Years Transformation Board and Welsh Government was completed in Quarter 4. We

PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

continue to pilot the new integrated Early Years delivery model and are currently leading on the external evaluation of the new delivery model in Rhondda Cynon Taf on behalf of the region. This work will be completed in 2022/23.

A draft Early Years Transformation 3-year strategic plan for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region, identifying key milestones and outcomes at each stage, has been developed. Work is ongoing to widely communicate operational changes to families, community organisations and providers. A series of workforce development sessions for early years practitioners and other partners communicating the vision and aims of the Early Years Transformation Programme were delivered in Quarter 4. An information leaflet has also been produced to share information with families on the changes; meetings have taken place with other Local Authorities to share good practice from Rhondda Cynon Taf's Early Years Transformation Project and a workshop has taken place with all Health Visitors to reiterate the changes.

The full action plan can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 4 (year-end)

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PEOPLE		
Investment Area	Investment Value¹ £M	Quarter 4 Update
Extracare Housing	6.974	<p>This investment funding covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The former Maesyffynnon Home for the Elderly site (Aberaman) – completed and the first residents moved into the new facility in May 2020. • Pontypridd "Cwrt yr Orsaf" Extra Care Housing Scheme) – completed 15th October 2021. • Porth - agreed by the Council's Cabinet on 3rd December 2020. Progress to date includes: the vacation of the building; site surveys and demolition works completed; and planning permission granted 16th December 2021 (following which groundworks commenced). <p>Consideration of development proposals for Treorchy and Mountain Ash schemes are on-going.</p>
Tackling Poverty Fund	0.300	<p>This investment funding, along with Arbed funding, is to help address areas where there are high levels of poverty (including fuel poverty) to increase the disposable income of households, for example, by supporting households to reduce energy bills, helping to overcome barriers to find employment.</p>
Total	7.274	

¹ Investment Values for People, Places and Prosperity – relates to LIVE projects / works only that have been allocated additional investment funding and incorporates additional investment to specific schemes, as approved by full Council on 9th March 2022.

o **PLACES** (Section 5b)

PLACES - Where people are proud to live, work and play

Year-end Position Statement (31st March 2022)

Keeping RCT clean, sending as little waste as possible to landfill, meeting our recycling targets and reducing our carbon footprint

Work continues to encourage good recycling practices that will reduce municipal waste and have a positive effect on the environment. This year 67.18% of our collected waste has been recycled. This is slightly lower than last year, 69.72%. Our comparative data for the last two years has been influenced by pandemic trends and 2021/22 data reflects a more accurate position.

The Council's Enforcement Team continues to tackle environmental crime. 3,293 fly-tipping incidents have been recorded this year, 348 more incidents than reported in the same period of 2019/20. Enforcement action has been taken against 997 incidents this year (215 more than in 2019/20). All [prosecutions](#) relating to [fly-tipping offences](#) have been made public on the Council's [webpages](#), enforcing the zero tolerance message.

Civil parking enforcement continues and during 2021/22 the Council, as lead Authority of the South Wales Parking Group (SWPG), processed in excess of 58,000 Penalty Charge Notices (PCN). Approximately 20,000 of these related to incidents in Rhondda Cynon Taf and included challenges, representations, appeals and payments.

We continue to work successfully with partners on 'blitz' programmes on social housing sites and focussed work with landlords regarding communal bin collection points continues. Our work with landlords, agents and residents to encourage good recycling practices that reduce municipal waste and have a positive effect on the environment continues, for example, reducing plastic bottle use in schools and kitchens and progressing the development of re-use outlets. We have also worked with social landlords at Maes Y Deri, Rhydyfelin and Fernhill to improve recycling practices relating to communal bin collection. This has included engagement with residents either directly or with the presence of the recycling trailer, signage improvements, the distribution of communal bin location maps and letter drops reminding residents how to dispose of their waste correctly.

Public recycling awareness sessions during the pandemic has been limited in line with covid restrictions, but our recycling trailer has been out in communities during [Recycling Week](#) (September 20th – 26th) promoting the '[Be Mighty](#) and 'step it up' for recycling and climate change!' campaign. We also supported [Food Waste Action Week](#) (March 7th – 13th), that encouraged residents to think about the food that is purchased, portion sizes and cut down on food purchases to save waste and money.

We also commenced a 'Let's Talk About Food Waste Recycling' survey between 2nd March and 11th April 2022. Initial results from residents that took part told us:

- 69% throw 'a lot' or 'some' uneaten food each week
- From a list of food items, 95% knew that all of the items could be recycled

[Quick Poll Results]

Other results gave us more information on why residents don't recycle their food waste and comments included – 'Too messy/smelly' and a 'lack of space' for or 'no food caddy'. There were also comments regarding the strength and availability of food bags. Overall, most responded that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the service provided. Information from this survey will be used to inform future food recycling activity undertaken by the Council.

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In partnership with [Keep Wales Tidy](#), we have developed a '[Local Place for Nature](#)' at [Gelli Primary School](#) and progressed the [national dog fouling campaign](#) whereby clear yellow messages have been stencilled on paths and on footways in our parks and playing fields to enforce the requirements of the Dog Fouling PSPO, and encouraging responsible dog ownership. We continue to fine those that commit dog control offences through [enforcement activity](#) within the confines of the PSPO including fouling and admitting access to restricted areas. 36 new dog waste bins have also been installed across Rhondda Cynon Taf and 144 existing bins have been replaced due to wear or damage.

We continue to work towards a sustainable 'Circular Economy' through our partnership work to renew, recycle and repair and our new Aberdare High Street Reuse shop is scheduled to open in 2022/23. In addition, '[The Shed](#)' Llantrisant has now been relocated to a more accessible location. We have also launched the new [Green Waste Collection Service](#), collecting green waste fortnightly from registered residents who have been supplied with new, reusable green waste sacks reducing the Council's overall plastic bag usage by 3 million annually and contributing to the Council's climate change efforts. An update on progress was provided to the [Public Services Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee in February](#) 2022. To date 44,809 residents have signed-up to the new green waste service and 95,153 sacks have been distributed. 97% of residents requesting the service have signed-up online.

In addition, we have worked towards '[Reducing the use of single use items in all Council contracts and premises](#)' by making changes to our procurement processes including:

- removing the ability to order single use items from the Council's online ordering system where there is a suitable alternative product e.g. plastic cutlery, plates cups, etc.
- reviewing the use of janitorial products with a view to switching to climate friendly alternatives e.g. dissolvable pods to be mixed with water in existing containers.
- ensuring our ICT equipment is disposed of in a sustainable way e.g. refurbished / stripped for reuse, recycled.
- using old office furniture to refurbish new office space through upcycling, cleaning and reuse e.g. [Rhondda Fach Leisure Centre and Ty Oldway Porth](#)

An update on how the Council's procurement arrangements are changing to support the Council's climate change agenda was presented to the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group in [March 2022](#). This included the consideration of need and demand both now and in the future linking to the [Well-being of Future Generations Act](#) - Five Ways of Working; what outcomes will be achieved that support the [Council's Corporate Plan](#) priorities; the existing carbon footprint and future impacts; the [social value benefits](#) that will be delivered; and the potential for local market delivery/supply and relevant options for delivery. We also continued to progress plans for the development of [Bryn Pica Eco Park](#) and have applied to Welsh Government for further funding to do this.

Unfortunately, our plans to hold the annual [Love Where You Live Awards](#) and the opening of our Education Centre at Bryn Pica have not been realised due to the pandemic, but we are optimistic that we will progress both in 2022/23.

Our intention to support business and social landlords to comply with new laws that require Trade Waste to be sorted by type (e.g. the separation of residual and recyclable waste) have been postponed until Welsh Government legislation is released. We continue to ensure that residents and businesses are kept updated and relevant information on [Trade Recycling and Waste](#) is updated regularly and made available on the Council's website.

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The Council's climate change agenda continues to be progressed as we engage with developments in alternative fuel for fleet vehicles, public transport and taxis; look at ways where we can create renewable energy and reuse hard plastic; developing the Eco Park at Bryn Pica; and implementing procurement policies to reduce the use of single use plastic items.

A successful trial of an electric van has been undertaken with positive performance fed back on the range and drive, and we plan to trial an electric compact sweeper in 2022/23; we will continue to trial vehicles as and when they become available to us. We have also recently started to investigate the possibility of using hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) fuel instead of diesel in our vehicles.

The Council's [Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy 2021-2030](#) has been published and includes feedback from resident [consultation](#) and an associated Implementation Plan is being developed.

The climate change agenda will continue to be progressed through a new [Tackling Climate Change](#) webpage and the Council's [Climate Change Strategy 'Think Climate RCT \(2022-2025\)](#) which will be presented to the Council's Cabinet in 2022/23.

Keeping the County Borough moving, including improvements to roads and pavements and public transport, whilst also improving air quality

This year we continue to see improvements in the condition of our principal roads. Following an annual survey 3.7% of our principal (A) roads (4.6% in 2020/21): 4.8% of our non-principal 'B' roads (5.9% in 2020/21) and 2.3% of 'C' roads (3.4% in 2020/21) are in overall poor condition. The overall condition improved by 1 percentage point (from 4.6% in 2020/21 to 3.6% in 2021/22).

Our highways investment programme activity continues across the County Borough, together with work on repairs and flood mitigation measures. Various schemes have been completed to date including:

- First Phase repairs to the [Blaen-y Cwm River Road Wall](#), [White Bridge, Pontypridd](#), [Ynysmeurig Bridge](#), Abercynon;
- Future-proofing the [bridge running through Ystrad on the A4058](#);
- Commencement of a new [footbridge at Llanharan railway](#);
- Stabilising the embankment at [Llwynceilyn Road, Porth](#);
- The Park Lane, Trecynon Flood Alleviation Scheme and the commencement of work at [Mostyn Street, Abercwmboi](#);
- Flood Alleviation works to the [A4059 at Aberdare](#);
- Drainage works at [Station Road](#) and [Heath Terrace](#) and bridge scour repairs at [two bridges in Ynyshir](#);
- Replacement of the highway [Culvert under Bronallt Terrace](#), Abercwmboi;
- Upgrading culverts on the [A4061 Rhigos Road](#);
- Storm repairs at [Maerdy Mountain Road](#);
- Improvement works to the [Cefnpennar Road inlet, Cwmbach](#), and the [A4061 Station Road Treorchy](#);
- Ground investigation work at the [B4273 Ynysybwl Road, Glyncoch](#);
- Wall repairs at the A4054 [Cardiff Road, Taffs Well](#);
- Traffic signal replacement at [Talbot Road/ A4119 Junction](#); and
- The design for the [Castle Inn footbridge, Treforest](#), and its [agreed replacement](#).

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Two of our bridge replacement schemes were also recognised in the [Annual ICE Wales Cymru Awards](#). [St Alban's Bridge](#) in Blaenrhondda won the Roy Edwards Award for demonstrating excellence in - concept, planning, design, contract management and construction with a final cost of less than £5m, and the [Ynysangharad Footbridge \(M&S Bridge\)](#) repair in Pontypridd was highly commended in the Alun Griffiths Award for Community Engagement.

During the year, some schemes have been delayed for various reasons including alterations to original plans, third party constraints, lack of contractor resources due to Covid-19, supply chain issues and project complexities being identified. All such projects have revised delivery dates and most are expected to be completed during 2022/23.

We continue our plans to complete various flood schemes across RCT and manage associated work to alleviate flood risk. The requirements of the [Flood and Water Management Act 2010](#) have been progressed together with recommendations contained in the [Review of the Council's Response to Storm Dennis \(see Section 6 of this Executive Summary for recent updates\)](#). Also, a [Review of Regulation, Awareness and Enforcement of Flood and Water Legislation](#) was presented and agreed by Cabinet on 21st September that highlighted the need to build further resilience and sustainability into local flood risk management arrangements. Additional dedicated resources for flood risk awareness and enforcement are being progressed to work proactively with local communities to manage flood risk.

Our statutory work as lead Flood Authority continues and following the installation of new technology, we are now better able to remotely monitor and report on key culverts and drainage systems. This information is relayed directly to the Council's Central Emergency Control Centre that enables monitoring pre, during and post storm activity.

An [update on the work undertaken](#) on flood alleviation and structure repairs was published on the anniversary of Storm Dennis in February 2022. Following the securing of WG funding [additional flood work](#) has taken place in Pentre together with the publication of the Section 19 [Flood Investigation Report](#). During 2021/22 twelve Section 19 reports relating to main flood areas in RCT have been published on our [webpages](#) and a further two are scheduled for early 2022/23.

During the year we have also engaged with residents for their views on [active travel](#) e.g. Proposals for active travel routes and enhancements at [Treorchy and Llwydcoed](#). We also continue to progress opportunities to develop [Active Travel](#) routes including schemes between Pontygwaith and Maerdy, links with Treforest Industrial Estate and the Church Village Community Route. We are also looking at concepts for routes that link with our town centre enhancements at Aberdare, Porth and Pontypridd. We continue to progress ongoing schemes that include cycle networks linked to active travel. During November 2021, a number of activities across RCT were organised supporting [Road Safety Week](#) including child pedestrian training and cycle training. We have also engaged with schools, Councillors and communities on schemes to be considered for the '[Safe Routes in Communities](#)' Programme that informs the Welsh Government grant bidding process. Applications will then be submitted to Welsh Government for consideration.

Linked to the Council's Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy 2021-2030 a report was presented to the Licensing Committee on [14th September 2021 \(Item 52\)](#) to temporarily amend licensing conditions to enable the operation of five electric taxi vehicles delivered as part of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal '[Try before you buy](#)' taxi trial. Five electric taxis have been delivered to the Council as part of the trial which is being managed by Days Motor Group and a [website link](#) with relevant information on the scheme and application process has been provided to any interested parties. Days will be collating the feedback from drivers following their 30-day trial. This

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year local community transport operator TraVol has successfully secured unused ULEV funding through the [Community Transport Association Wales](#) for two electric wheelchair accessible minibuses. The 7 and 14-seater vehicles are expected to be in service early next year.

Three dedicated 65kw electric taxi charging points have been installed this year at Pontypridd, Porth and Aberdare and work is progressing to connect to the electricity supply to enable the charging points to be brought into use during 2022/23. In addition, publicly accessible charging points will be installed at 31 RCT car park sites by the end of December 2022. We are also awaiting confirmation of funding from the [Office of Zero Emission Vehicles](#) for another 34 car park charging points to be installed by the end of March 2023. The EV infrastructure provider [Connected Kerb](#) have been appointed by the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority (CCRTA) to manage and install the roll-out of Electric Vehicle Charging Points across the region.

Linked to our climate change agenda, the latest Annual [Air Quality](#) Report was submitted to Welsh Government in October 2021 and included a recommended delay in the review of Air Quality Action Plans until 2022 due to the uncertainty of how the pandemic has affected air quality and how this could impact on future air quality trends.

Ensuring the County Borough is one of the safest places in Wales, with high levels of community cohesion and where residents feel safe

Our community cohesion work progresses. We have reviewed the approach to community asset transfers and ensured that elements of 'social value' are being considered as part of the process. A draft Community Asset Transfer Policy that also includes a new 'land transfer' option will be presented to Members in 2022/23.

Following the successful appointment of a Sustainable Food Co-ordinator in November 2021, RCT is now a member of the '[Sustainable Food Places](#)' (SFP) Network. The '[RCT Food](#)' partnership has been established and is working to ensure that residents have access to healthy, tasty, affordable food that's good for the environment and for the local economy. A partnership update meeting took place in December and a network meeting hosted by community partners, [Bryncynon Strategy](#), was held on 22nd February 2022. It is intended that face-to-face meetings will be held every quarter hosted by different network members e.g. May 2022 at [Meadow Street Community Garden](#) (Pontypridd Town Council) and August 2022 at [Cambrian Village Trust](#).

RCT Food was successful in receiving funding from [SFP'S Food for the Planet](#) campaign to expand a pilot project looking at meat reduction through reformulation at the Gilfach Goch Community Facility and a [menu taster and consultation event](#) was held at the Day Centre in March 2022. The RCT Food Steering Group are also currently working towards a Bronze SFP accreditation application that will be submitted in September 2022 with the outcome expected in March 2023.

The RCT [Food Support Fund](#) has also helped groups provide food support to residents in a number of different ways including the [FareShare](#) scheme; implementing growing projects; preparing food parcels; and organising community pantries, fridges and tables. In addition, community groups who are part of the RCT Sustainable Food Network were invited to apply for grants of up to £500 to fund initiatives. Examples include: [Bonding Through Real Action](#) provided food bags that gave much needed support to families and individuals through the half term holiday. Fifty bags of fresh fruit, vegetables and unperishable items were delivered to families and individuals on the Brynryrion Estate. We will continue to support RCT to become a sustainable food place and assist those in food poverty.

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Earlier this year, to keep our communities safe, a three-month pilot scheme of Safe Street Ambassadors commenced that helped inform recommendations for safe spaces within our communities. A relaunch of the 'Ask Angela' campaign has also commenced in partnership with South Wales Police, which has been promoted through the [Pubwatch Scheme](#).

We have also continued our work to protect residents from [fraudulent sales](#), working in partnership with the Welsh Trading Standards Team to crackdown on illegal operations in Wales including [Operation CeCe](#) where 1 Million illegal cigarettes were seized. Information for residents on how to report fraudulent activity is available on the RCT [website](#), and incidents where we have prosecuted those responsible for illegal activity are available on the Council's news webpages e.g. Incidents in [Penrhiwceiber, Pentre and Mountain Ash](#).

We have undertaken a review and consulted with residents on the 2018 PSPO on intoxicating substances, including our 'No Alcohol Zones' in Pontypridd and Aberdare town centres to ensure it remains current and reflects the needs of the community. This has resulted in a new three-year Public Spaces Protection Order on intoxicating substances, which was agreed by [Cabinet in September 2021](#). It was also agreed to:

- extend the boundary in Pontypridd to include the area around Taff Vale Flats in the Lower Graig, the area outside Ty Pennant, Pontypridd and the underpass area adjacent to Pontypridd Bus Station,
- provide delegated authority to the Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services to produce the final PSPO and ensure its publication on the Council's website, and
- retain the £100 fine for fixed penalties issued for contraventions of the PSPO.

Following Covid-19 restrictions, the launch of the new Aberdare Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) has been delayed and will now be progressed in 2022/23.

During the year the substance misuse service, [Barod](#), has continued its work to increase outreach services and provide harm reduction services to 'harder to reach' individuals. Work continues to ensure those needing help are supported, with access to clinical nurse specialists to address physical health needs and establish pathways into services e.g. access to GPs, Sexual Health clinics, Podiatry and dentistry.

To support vulnerable people at risk of becoming homeless, a new specialist Housing Outreach Service has been set up that includes specialist mental health and substance misuse nurses and trauma counsellors to support those with complex needs. Outreach services continue to establish links with housing services to provide harm reduction services to those individuals deemed homeless and 'hard to reach'. The [Barod](#) Outreach Team link with hostels and those in temporary accommodation to provide advice and assistance, and work with partner organisations to provide a comprehensive service. A Short-Term Offender Project has also been progressed that will offer support to reduce homelessness and repeat reoffending.

Awareness raising of the harm associated with substance misuse continues through social media and the promotion of events and support e.g. Distribution of Naloxone posters to pharmacies supported by a social media campaign in a bid to save lives and reduce drug-related-deaths; the promotion of [Service User Support](#) Groups; and the opportunity to attend the [Annual Recovery Walk](#) and promoting 'I am Someone' during [International Overdose Awareness Day](#).

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We have also continued to progress our work with partners in Bridgend to recommission Tier 1 and 2 substance misuse services so that they align with the provision at Merthyr and Rhondda Cynon Taf.

To provide help and support to those experiencing domestic violence and sexual violence, and in addition to our work with Women's Aid, we have also progressed a new collaborative service provision between the Council, the Health Board and the Police & Crime Commissioner's Office. The provision includes a specialist Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor (IDVA) based at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital to provide specialist advice and support to domestic abuse victims who make a disclosure of abuse whilst at the health care setting. This provision was developed with the knowledge that victims were making disclosures when attending hospital appointments or when attending A & E for treatment. Having the IDVA on site ensures that victims of abuse can quickly engage with the IDVA to receive specialist advice and support to reduce the risks posed to them and encourages future positive engagement. The IDVA will also raise awareness and the profile of domestic abuse within the healthcare setting, providing advice, guidance and support that will lead to improved signposting for any domestic abuse victims.

In October 2021, an IDVA service providing support to children who have experienced domestic violence commenced. During the first 6 months 25 young people have been referred and 19 cases supported. Outcomes for these young people are still being progressed as their ongoing support continues but early feedback from the young people being supported is positive with one individual saying "*I cannot wait to see xxxx again and talk some more with her*".

An additional IDVA resource was also appointed to support those victims who are housing first clients, homeless clients or clients within the Council's temporary accommodation provision. Relevant information will be gathered to support this provision during its first year of operation in 2022/23.

Throughout the year we have delivered 'Hate Crime Awareness' sessions. Whilst these have not been on the scale of previous years, 4 online awareness sessions have been held with 87 people taking part. To ensure that Year 6 children in Rhondda Cynon Taff have an awareness of the impact of Hate Crime, the Community Cohesion Officer aims to deliver Hate Crime awareness sessions to all year 6 pupils throughout schools in RCT. Coronavirus restrictions have made this difficult, but a face-to-face session did take place at [Penyrenghlyn Primary School](#) in January 2022. Pupils were encouraged to talk about the five protected characteristics with the aim of increasing awareness of diversity, whilst reducing discrimination, prejudice and inequality. They were also taught how to recognise a hate crime, the repercussions of hate crimes and the ways in which they can report it.

Getting the best out of our parks by looking after and investing in our greenspaces

Our Playground Investment Programme is progressing despite some delays due to play equipment and material shortages. In early August 2021, the [Gravity Family Bike Park](#) at Dare Valley Country Park officially opened with an outdoor activity offer for all ages. 'Southern Wales Tourism' have recently filmed a [promotional video](#) at Dare Valley Country Park to promote this Discovery Gateway site, which has been [hosted on their webpage](#). More promotional filming is planned in the future

We continue to access external grant funding where available to improve our park infrastructure and attract tourism to Rhondda Cynon Taf. The [Visit Wales Brilliant Basics project](#) at Dare Valley Country Park (DVCP) is continuing with the aim to complete in Spring 2022 and will improve visitor

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signage and interpretation. A contractor has been appointed to deliver the National Lottery Heritage Fund work which will support further phases of the [redevelopment of Ynysangharad War Memorial Park](#). We have also progressed projects that are grant funded through the [Valleys Regional Park](#) (VRP) and continue to look at ways to promote [Discovery Gateway](#) sites as part of the Valleys Regional Parks initiative. DVCP continues to be promoted on the [Visit RCT](#) website and social media platforms in collaboration with VRP partnership working.

We continue to invest in our green spaces and increase biodiversity. In October, thirteen of our parks and gardens were recognised as [Green Flag and Community Award winners](#) by Keep Wales Tidy. We are progressing our Playground Investment Programme recognising that challenges remain in terms of the availability of play equipment and materials.

A [Report](#) to the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group in November 2021 provided an update on the biodiversity work being undertaken as part of the [Local Nature Partnership](#). We have launched our new [Biodiversity web page](#) and are actively promoting awareness of our wildflower grass management and initiatives like '[Grab a Rake](#)' to get our communities involved in supporting our biodiversity campaigns.

Our work to establish natural carbon storage solutions continues and we are actively engaging with communities on [biodiversity issues](#) and through our [Let's Talk Wildflowers](#) (via '[Let's Talk RCT](#)' – the RCT Engagement' website). The new Draft '[Action for Nature](#)' recovery action plan for RCT has been out for consultation during March 2022 and responses are being considered. We also continue to work with partners such as Natural Resources Wales to support projects like '[Healthy Hillside](#)s' and '[Living Landscapes](#)'.

Work to identify peat bog sites as a source of natural carbon storage solutions has commenced, that will lead to a prioritised restoration programme. This has included site visits to the Council owned Cwm Parc peatbog and bog at Pentre.

It was decided at a meeting of the Council's [Cabinet in Jun-21](#) to accept the recommendations of the [report](#) made to the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group regarding the [Queen's Green Canopy Project](#). It was agreed that the Council would participate in the tree planting initiative to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which aims to create a sustainable legacy in honour of the Queen, to mark and celebrate Her Majesty's 70 years of service to the nation. The campaign is focussed on the role of trees and woodland in enhancing the environment and includes elements of sustainable planting and the protection of ancient woodland and veteran trees. More information on tree planting across RCT is available on our [web pages](#).

The full action plan can be viewed by [clicking here](#)

Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 4 (year-end)

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES		
Investment Area	Investment Value £M	Quarter 4 Update
Highways Infrastructure Repairs	10.928	The additional resources are being used in conjunction with existing resources to deliver a programme of highways infrastructure repairs between 2021/22 and 2023/24.
Unadopted Roads (NEW)	0.500	To support a programme of work to private streets that the Council has identified as requiring specific improvements. Following completion of the necessary works, the streets will be adopted as highways maintainable at public expense.
Play Areas	0.814	There are 22 schemes which form the planned programme of works for 2021/22. As at 31 st March 2022, 15 had been completed 1 had been designed, costed and scheduled and 6 are to be designed. The 6 schemes to be progressed at year-end will be completed as part of the 2022/23 programme of work.
Skate Parks/Multi Use Games Areas	0.191	There are 4 schemes which form the planned programme of works for 2021/22. As at 31 st March 2022, 2 schemes had been completed and 2 are to be designed, costed and scheduled.
Structures: Brook Street Footbridge	1.287	Site clearance work commenced in January 2022 and the main works commenced in March 2022.
Structures	7.221	<p>The investment funding has been allocated to support structure projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ynys Meurig Bridge Parapet Replacement – completed August 2021. • Nant Cwm Parc Cantilever and Institute Bridge Strengthening – the project is scheduled for completion in quarter 2 of 2022/23. • Major retaining wall refurbishments – A4059 Taff's Well Wall works have commenced and are scheduled to be completed in quarter 1 of 2022/23; and the rebuild of the Bryn Eirw retaining wall (Trehafod) was completed in February 2022. • Llanharan Railway Footbridge – demolition completed in January 2022 and a replacement footbridge is in the process of being designed.
Parks Structures	2.097	The investment funding has been allocated to support various footbridge repairs and replacements within Parks:

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES		
Investment Area	Investment Value £M	Quarter 4 Update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge deck and parapet replacement of Maesyfelin Footbridge (Pontyclun) – works completed. • Replacement of Abercynon Recreation Ground Footbridge – bridge installed. • Gelli Isaf – Scheduled Monument Conservation Scheme – currently out to tender. • Tylcha Fawr - culvert replaced. • Ty Mawr Footbridge, Hirwaun – replaced. • Barry Sidings Retaining Wall – refurbished. • Various inspections and surveys continue to be undertaken as advance preparation for future schemes.
Parks and Green Spaces	3.396	This investment funding is supporting drainage, pavilion and infrastructure improvements to various parks sites. The 2021/22 programme comprised of 79 schemes and as at 31 st March 2022, 63 schemes had been completed. The remaining schemes will be progressed during 2022/23 as part of an on-going programme of work.
Llanharan Bypass	6.127	This investment funding is supporting various stages of development, preliminary design, ground investigations and ecology surveys. Further to the pre-Planning Application Consultation (PAC) in October 2021, all feedback has been reviewed and documentation is being prepared to enable a full planning application to be submitted in the first half of the 2022/23 financial year.
A4119 Dualling (Stinkpot Hill)	8.099	This investment funding is supporting the dualling of the highway between the South Wales Fire Service Headquarters roundabout and Coed Ely roundabout. Advanced site clearance works are complete, work is on-going to secure the land required through the Compulsory Purchase Order process and the procurement process to appoint a contractor is progressing to enable commencement in 2022/23.
Community Hubs	0.458	This investment funding relates to supporting the Treorchy Community Hub (at Treorchy Library) - external works have been completed and internal Library works have also been completed.
Gelli/Treorchy Link Road	0.393	This investment funding relates to investigatory works for a solution which will help alleviate congestion at Stag Square. Feasibility and a WeITAG stage 1 has been completed and the next steps are to develop a preferred option through WeITAG stage 2.
Cynon Gateway (North), Aberdare Bypass	1.899	This investment funding relates to the preliminary design, planning application and tender preparation for a bypass continuation from A4059 Aberdare to join the A465 Heads Of

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES		
Investment Area	Investment Value £M	Quarter 4 Update
		the Valleys road. A planning application has been recommended for approval and is subject to Welsh Government sign off.
Bryn Pica Eco Park	1.400	This investment funding is to support enabling works, planning and ecology for the development of an Eco Park at the Bryn Pica Waste Management Facility. Discussions are on-going with Welsh Government in respect of funding opportunities.
Dinas Community Recycling Centre	0.250	This investment funding relates to the provision of a new office building and improvements on the site of Dinas Community Recycling Centre following the demolition of the previous site building. Works have been completed.
Land Drainage	0.511	This investment funding is supporting drainage and culvert network works. The ongoing programme includes works at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cwmbach – completed. • Property Flood Resistance Programme – engagement undertaken with property owners and provision of flood prevention measures e.g. flood gates, vents and floodsax. As at March 2022, 404 residential properties at a higher risk of flooding were invited to participate, with 108 actually participating. • Delivered 22 Welsh Government grant funded schemes across Rhondda Cynon Taf during 2021/22.
Porth Interchange Metro + LTF	--	As set out in the Porth Regeneration Strategy, a new Transport Hub in the Town Centre has been approved and during quarter 4 construction commenced. Resources secured via Levelling-Up funding (£1.5M).
Total	45.571	

o PROSPERITY (Section 5c)

PROSPERITY - Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to - be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper

Year-end Position Statement (31st March 2022)

Investing in Our Town Centres, bringing jobs and homes into our town centres to create vibrant, thriving places people wish to live, work and socialise

Integrated support has been provided for town centre businesses throughout 2021/22, including supporting businesses to adapt their outdoor areas to improve trading opportunities. A final round of covid restrictions business support was delivered on behalf of Welsh Government/Business Wales in March 2022 and we continue to engage with businesses to inform developing packages of support.

The Council continues to lead on the £15M [Transforming Towns](#) grant across the Cardiff City Region and a strong pipeline of potential projects is in development, including review of currently disused sites. During 2021/22 a range of property and site redevelopment projects were undertaken in our town centres with further projects currently underway.

In Mountain Ash, the redevelopment of Rhos (Guto) Square was completed in November, replacing two unused buildings and a derelict area of land with an extension to the town centre car park and other improvements. The redevelopment of [Mountain Ash Town Hall](#) has been completed, providing flexible working spaces, meeting rooms and event space.

In Pontypridd, work continues to [redevelop the YMCA building](#) which will complete this summer. Levelling up funding will support the [redevelopment of the Muni building](#) into a major cultural hub. Works to demolish the Bingo hall have completed with plans being developed for a hotel led mixed use development. In addition, the former M&S, Burton and Dorothy Perkins buildings have been acquired and options for future use are being developed which could provide the opportunity to open up the town centre towards the river and park. A [Pontypridd Town Centre draft Placemaking plan](#) has been set out to provide a vision for the regeneration of the town. The placemaking plan provides an integrated approach, building on the successful projects already delivered and capitalising on the town's location and the opportunities of the Metro to unlock the town's economic, social and cultural potential. Public engagement took place during March and this involvement is being used to shape the final plan, including strengthening tackling climate change and integration of the Welsh language.

In Tonypany, a draft placemaking plan is being developed with support and input of key stakeholders to provide a framework for future development. This will build on existing projects, including the redevelopment of Llwynypia Courthouse which is complete to a high standard, with over 100 people working in the flexible business space across a range of businesses. On January 17th, construction work commenced at [Porth Transport hub](#), with work scheduled to complete in Spring 2023. The transport hub will form a key part of the [Porth Town centre strategy](#), transforming the northern entry to the town and integrating the rail and bus services and the local active travel network to make it easier for people to access the town centre without using cars.

Studies into active travel in Pontypridd, Aberdare and Porth town centres have been completed and design for active travel within these town centres will commence in the new financial year.

Enabling local small and medium sized businesses to access and compete for contracts let by the Council provides support for the local economy and communities and has the potential to reduce environmental impacts. Monitoring through the Social Housing Grant, Housing Grants Contractor

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Framework and Housing Grants and Loans showed that contractors in RCT and the wider South Wales region were able to access and be competitive for a high number of contracts. However, there is more to do to improve communication on available tenders across the whole of the Council's contracts with local small and medium sized businesses, and a graduate officer has been appointed to take this work forward.

Delivering major regeneration and transport schemes, maximising the impact of the South Wales Metro, to create better places to live and work, whilst protecting and enhancing the County borough

Considerable work was undertaken to prepare the Preferred Strategy for the revised Local Development Plan, however the Preferred Strategy process was not suitably advanced to go to public consultation in November. Following consideration of alternative timetables and options, at the [9th March Council meeting](#), approval was given to begin work on a new RLDP with an amended and extended plan period 2022 – 2037 in order to plan for the long-term and fully respond to the key issues we now face, with climate change and carbon reduction at its core and a full and strategic approach to a post pandemic and post Brexit County Borough. Progress continues to be made on the delivery of a masterplan for the [Llanilid Strategic opportunity area](#) and town centre placemaking plans and strategies, as outlined above. Dialogue is also continuing with developers and Cardiff Capital Region City deal to support the development of new housing on brownfield sites.

Following the roll out of wi-fi to Pontypridd and Tonypany, all town centres now provide [free public access to wi-fi](#). Further work to enhance broadband coverage to areas of the local authority will be progressed in 2022/23.

Work to deliver major transport schemes is continuing. The works for dualling the A4119 are currently out to tender with main construction works scheduled to begin in the autumn, with the scheme supported by UK Levelling Up Fund funding. Pre-application for planning permission has been completed for the Llanharran bypass scheme. Preparatory work to progress the Cynon Gateway North project is on-going, although delays to Welsh Government planning decision are impacting project timescales. Planning permission has been gained for expanding park and ride schemes at Porth, Treorchy and Llwynypia.

Cabinet adopted the new [Tourism strategy on 23rd September 2021](#) as the official strategic document to underpin the Council's tourism priorities and efforts. Tourism has the potential to be the main driver of the local economy in certain parts of the County borough. The Strategy aims to capitalise on RCT's potential for adventure tourism, maximising culture and heritage, excellent accommodation, food, drink, attractions and events. Engagement with residents, businesses and visitors showed strong support for the strategy, with 87% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the vision. The Visit RCT Strategic Steering Group was established to drive forward the strategy and continues to meet quarterly. Major developments during the year included the opening of Zip World in April, with 150 people from the RCT area employed during the summer season, and opening of Gravity bike park at Dare Valley Country Park in August. Social media promotional activities have reached over 1 million people.

Ensuring we have good schools so all children have access to a great Education

A new Education strategic plan has been agreed for implementation in 2022/23, outlining priorities for the next 3 years. In partnership with Central South Consortium (CSC), we continue to support

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all schools, regularly reviewing progress and ensuring effective assessment and tracking systems are in place to identify and support those learners most adversely affected by Covid-19. In Spring term 2022, a new system of All Schools review was introduced, which brings all Local authority officers and CSC staff together to discuss strengths and areas for development of all schools. CSC will also continue to monitor how schools devise and implement Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards Plans that deliver improved outcomes for targeted groups of learners, in light of new funding awarded to schools during spring term. Through CSC, support has been provided to schools to deliver improved standards of literacy, including writing. Evaluations have identified positive progress in some schools, ongoing discussion on pupil progress will take place during the summer term. CSC continue to provide help, support and guidance to all schools on their planning for the new curriculum, which will continue to evolve and develop over the next academic year as the curriculum rolls out across schools.

Following the initial [pilot of family engagement officers](#) in six secondary/through schools, there have been encouraging initial results in supporting wellbeing and attendance. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has made it difficult to fully evaluate the impact and the pilot is being continued for another year in secondary schools and extended to 13 primary school settings so further information can be gathered before consideration of any wider roll out. This work will continue to be monitored in 2022/23. Supporting the wellbeing of children and young people continues to be high priority and you can see more about this work in our PEOPLE priority.

Work has continued throughout the year to ensure effective arrangements are in place to meet the requirements of the [ALNET Act](#), a new statutory framework for supporting children and young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). After engaging with school ALN co-ordinators to fully understand their support needs, two behaviour support teachers are now based at the Tai centre, working with centre staff to provide outreach support to mainstream schools. The Early Years outreach support from Ysgol Hen Felin has also been revised and an evaluation of the service will take place in summer term 2022.

Support provided to mainstream secondary schools to establish 13 Step 4 provisions for learners with significant social, emotional and behavioural needs has been evaluated. Although it has been difficult to make direct comparisons with previous attendance and exclusions data due to the impact of the covid-19 pandemic, qualitative and quantitative data shows overall positive impacts on the quality of pupil engagement in lessons, wellbeing and behaviour. It has also promoted more effective collaboration with a range of agencies including Vibe Youth, Empire Fighting Chance, Bard, The Women's Aid, Police School Liaison officer and Eye to Eye Counselling. This partnership work has developed alternative curriculum opportunities and bespoke prevention and early intervention approaches. Support will be extended to additional schools to build on the effective inclusive practice developed during the pilot, which is demonstrated in the following [case studies](#).

In Early Years, an early intervention programme is promoting the acquisition of early developmental skills in the foundation phases. Settings have completed physical literacy training and have created movement and play areas in their settings. There are many examples of the training and resources having a positive impact on children's confidence, self esteem and physical wellbeing and this was reflected in recent findings from a joint Estyn/CIW inspection at one of the settings. Schemes to improve early years facilities at Dolau Primary school, Gwauncelyn Primary school and YGG Llantrisant, funded by Welsh Government's Early Years Grant, have been completed, with 2 additional schemes at [YGG Aberdar](#) and Cwmlai on programme for completion

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by the end of July 2022, ready for occupation in September. The Childcare sufficiency assessment will go to public consultation this summer 2022, with the associated action plan identifying priorities for the next five years.

Investment in our school buildings continues, including funding through the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, providing investment to develop high quality learning environments and community facilities to meet long-term needs, including net zero carbon buildings. Final business case approval has been received for new developments at [Hawthorn High School](#) and a new [Welsh Medium Primary School in Rhydfelin](#). Pontypridd High school and [Bryncelynog Comprehensive](#) schemes have also been approved in principle. Good progress is being made delivering the Welsh Medium capital projects to increase capacity at [YG Rhydywaun](#) and [YGG Aberdar](#), which are on programme for completion in the summer term in readiness for occupation in September 2022. Three pathfinder Mutual Investment Model schemes have been approved by Welsh Government for [Penygawsi Primary school](#), [Llanilltud Faedref Primary School](#) and [Pontyclun Primary School](#) and all three obtained full planning permission in March 2022. A [report on special school provision](#) was presented to Cabinet in October 2021, recommending the development of a new 21st Century special school to meet the needs of learners requiring access to highly specialist therapeutic facilities to meet all needs including complex medical and health needs. This will increase the number of special schools in the County Borough to five. Potential sites are currently being appraised.

Following on from the positive impact of the [Gatsby Good Career Benchmarks](#), which provide a framework for excellent Careers and Work related experience in schools, the Green light project (formerly Gatsby+) has provided more bespoke and intensive career planning and work experience for pupils who are not currently reaching their academic potential. A review of the impact in 3 pilot schools showed very positive feedback from schools, pupils and parents and funding will be made available for a further 12 schools to access the Green light Project. More information can be seen in the [report to Scrutiny 22nd September 2021](#).

Following [agreement by Cabinet](#), the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan was submitted to Welsh Government in January 2022 and approval is pending. Work continues towards new WESP targets, including the submission of a bid for grant funding to support Welsh language immersion.

Increase the number of quality homes available and affordable to provide greater housing choice for residents

We continued to work towards increasing the number of energy efficient, low carbon homes in the County Borough, including working with Development teams in local Housing Associations to raise standards of new homes above current building regulations to provide housing which will be fit for purpose in the long-term. The Social Housing Grant supported 24 schemes classed as Modern Methods of Construction (innovative construction methods which allow building of more better quality homes more quickly) in 2021/22. The Council is working with Registered Social Landlords to support community based energy projects including zero carbon affordable homes, for example, working with Rhondda Housing Association to develop a zero carbon home using local timber as part of the [Skyline project](#) and the sale of Porth Infants school to Cynon Taf Community Housing Group.

The Council continues to [support retrofitting existing housing stock](#) to make properties more energy efficient and reduce carbon emissions, including investing in staff training to improve the

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ability to deliver Heat and save services which balance cost effective approaches with decarbonisation. This has included continuing to work with 6 registered ECO 3 flex installers with energy companies providing funding for energy efficiency improvements for households in receipt of particular benefits; providing assistance to households for low level energy measures and draft proofing; and piloting the promotion of hybrid heating systems through the Heating grant. In addition, £643k of Welsh Government funding was received for Penrhiwceiber through the Arbed am Byth scheme, which assisted 142 homes to deliver 570 energy measures. Further engagements targeting homes with low energy ratings in the area will be undertaken in the new financial year.

Developing effective methods for support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness is key to prevention. Progress against the RCT Homelessness Strategy action plan was [reported to Scrutiny in November](#), and a new Housing Support programme strategy has been completed and is currently out for consultation. Continued funding was secured to provide a new service model for people who experience repeat homelessness with multiple support needs, for example substance misuse or mental health. A steering group has been established and a new project officer will progress this work during this calendar year.

Young people, particularly those leaving care or with complex needs, may have additional challenges in securing suitable accommodation. Several schemes specifically aimed at supporting young people are currently under development including a new build supported accommodation project in Penygraig being delivered with Rhondda Housing Association, and a housing scheme for young people leaving care with complex needs.

Tackling empty homes not only provides additional housing but also prevents associated problems including antisocial behaviour. The RCT Empty Homes Grant and Houses Into Homes loans provide support to bring empty properties back into use and the new Empty Homes Strategy is nearing completion, which will take into account new pressures including the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and increase in house prices and inflation.

The private rented sector is an important aspect of local housing provision and support is provided to RCT landlords via the Landlords Forum and the work of support workers to improve tenancy sustainability. Following the launch of the RCT [Social Housing Letting agency](#) in May 2021, funding has now been secured for a national roll out.

There will be a broad offer of skills and employment programmes for all ages

Support for people seeking work continued through our Employment Support programmes, with a mix of face-to-face and online delivery to suit client needs. The impact of this work is illustrated in [Communities for work + case studies](#). In work support referral pathways are now well established, with increasing numbers of clients receiving assistance in improving their skills and job progression or increasing their working hours. The Council's Cabinet has approved a regional *approach* to Employment and Skills funding and the CELT CRF regional project has had approval. UK Government delays in publishing ESF funding has impacted on timescales, however the [Shared Prosperity Fund](#) detail was made available in April 2022 and this work is now being taken forward.

Work continued to support the delivery of the [Kickstart scheme](#), providing opportunities for young people who are unemployed to gain workplace experience both at the Council and other local employers. Some of the positive impacts of the scheme are demonstrated through [Kickstart case](#)

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[studies](#). In addition, four young people with learning disabilities have undertaken Gateway to employment placements with the Council to develop work related skills.

The Council's graduate and apprenticeship programmes continued to provide opportunities for training and progression whilst supporting the delivery of a variety of Council services. 28 Apprentices and 18 Graduates commenced employment with the Council in September 2022, with 16 further graduate and 38 new apprentice posts being appointed who will begin work in June or September 2022. We also continue to work with contractors to develop apprenticeship and training opportunities on schemes such as the Porth Transport hub.

The Employment, Education and Training Team have been nominated for the [Career Development Institute Careers Programme – Post-16 Education award](#) in June for their work supporting young people through the Care 2 work and Step in the Right Direction programmes. Case studies from many of the programmes described above can be viewed in the [Pathway to Potential newsletter](#).

The full action plan can be viewed by [clicking here](#)

Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 4 (year-end)

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PROSPERITY		
Investment Area	Investment Value £M	Quarter 4 Update
Empty Property Grant	1.245	Following the use of Welsh Government Valleys Taskforce Grant funding during 2020/21 to support bringing empty properties back into use, the Council's funding has been re-introduced for 2021/22. The Council's funding allocation is now fully committed (and the on-line application process has closed): 57 applications approved during 2021/22, 8 completed by March 2022 (£110k) and the remaining schemes to be progressed in 2022/23.
Schools	3.577	This investment funding is supporting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cymmer Primary – demolition of the canteen and erection of fencing was completed in August 2020 and additional works are under review. • YGG Llyn Y Forwyn Primary (transferring the school to a new building on a new site) - site investigation surveys have been undertaken, land has been purchased, project / cost managers have been appointed to support delivery of the scheme and a Design and Build contractor was appointed in quarter 4 to undertake the land reclamation works and construct a new Primary school. • Covid-19 related capital works – following site visits and scoping works, canopies were installed and ventilation works undertaken in 49 schools, with further works planned for 2022/23. • Other works (as approved by Cabinet 21st March 2022) - toilet refurbishments (£0.300M), boiler replacements (£0.700M), roof renewals (£1.445M) and classroom upgrades (£0.126M).
Transport Infrastructure	2.650	This investment funding is supporting a wider programme of highways capital works including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress design work for pedestrian crossing enhancement projects at Tonyrefail, Groesfaen, Llanharan, Nantgarw and Ty Nant (to improve road safety and promote active travel) – all projects are scheduled for construction in 2022/23. • A4058 Asda Tonypany junction - construction works completed to extend entry lane lengths from the north and include cycle facilities to improve junction capacity and traffic flow and promote active travel. • A4059 / Bowls Club junction - feasibility study completed to investigate junction / traffic flow improvements along the A4059 and options will be considered in 2022/23. • A473 Upper Boat - WeITAGs are ongoing.

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PROSPERITY		
Investment Area	Investment Value £M	Quarter 4 Update
Park and Ride Programme	0.586	This investment funding is supporting the development work needed to create additional and formalised ‘park and ride’ car parking spaces with new and improved facilities such as Access for All, improved CCTV coverage and Electric Vehicle charging points at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pontyclun - feasibility design to improve an existing facility is ongoing in partnership with Network Rail and Transport for Wales. • Porth – phase 3 detailed design work is progressing and will be finalised in 2022/23.
Strategic Regeneration Investment	0.200	This funding has been approved for the Guto Square development (Mountain Ash) which has enabled a bigger and improved area for public use in the heart of the town centre for community events and business uses, and also additional car parking spaces for shoppers and visitors to the town. The construction phase of the project is now complete and the area has re-opened for public use.
Robertstown and Coed Ely ERDF Match Funding	4.200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robertstown – good progress continued to be made in quarter 4 with the project scheduled to be completed in the first half of 2022/23. • Coed Ely – scheme completed and the tenant occupied the premises from July 2021.
Total	12.458	

Section 6 – ENHANCING THE COUNCIL’S RESPONSE TO EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

The 18th December 2020 Cabinet meeting agreed a series of recommendations to enhance the Council’s short and long term response to extreme weather events and which limit the impact of flooding on those communities most at risk.

The progress made by Council Services to implement the recommendations can be viewed [here](#).



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th July 2022

RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR LEYSHON)

AUTHOR: Paul Griffiths, Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services (01443) 680609

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the Council's updated draft Risk Management Strategy.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approve the Council's updated draft Risk Management Strategy, as endorsed by the Governance and Audit Committee at its meeting on 23rd March 2022.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To ensure the Council's risk management arrangements continue to be fit for purpose to support the delivery of Corporate Plan and Service Priorities.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council's Risk Management Strategy was reviewed and updated in line with the proposal for improvement set out in the 2020/21 Annual

Governance Statement and also the recommendations reported by Internal Audit in its report 'Risk Management'.

4.2 The updated Risk Management Strategy was reported, in draft form, to the Council's Governance and Audit Committee on 23rd March 2022. At this meeting, the Governance and Audit Committee endorsed the updated Strategy alongside the recommendation for it to be reported to Cabinet for consideration, and if deemed appropriate, approval.

4.3 The 23rd March 2022 report to Governance and Audit Committee and endorsed Risk Management Strategy is set out at **Appendix 1 / A** respectively for Cabinet's consideration (noting that key updates to the Strategy are referenced at paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4 of Appendix 1). Subject to Cabinet's decision, an updated Risk Management Strategy will be communicated to all service areas and made available on the Governance Section of the Council's website.

5. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

5.1 There are no equality and diversity or socio-economic implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

6. **WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no Welsh Language implications as a result of the recommendations set out in this report.

7. **CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

7.1 The updated draft Risk Management Strategy has been reviewed and endorsed by the Council's Governance and Audit Committee prior to being reported to Cabinet. No additional consultation requirements are deemed necessary in this regard.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

8.1 There are no financial implications emanating from the recommendations set out in the report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 There are no legal or legislative implications emanating from the recommendations set out in the report.

10. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 10.1 Effective risk management arrangements are key to the Council's ability to deliver its service and the priorities set out within the Corporate plan 2020 - 2024 'Making a Difference'.
- 10.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 identifies a core set of activities that are common to the corporate governance of public bodies where change needs to happen:
- Corporate Planning;
 - Financial Planning;
 - Workforce Planning;
 - Procurement;
 - Assets;
 - **Risk Management**; and
 - Performance Management

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The Council's updated draft Risk Management Strategy was reviewed and endorsed by the Governance and Audit Committee and the updated document is being reported to Cabinet for consideration, and if deemed appropriate, sign-off.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET
18th July 2022
RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN
DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR
LEYSHON)

Background Papers

None.

Officer to contact: Paul Griffiths

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22

<p>GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE</p> <p>23rd March 2022</p>	<p>AGENDA ITEM NO. 6</p>
<p>REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES</p>	<p>RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY</p>

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & DIGITAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR NORRIS)

Author: Marc Crumbie (Head of Procurement)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Governance and Audit Committee with an updated draft Risk Management Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Review and provide feedback on the updated draft Risk Management Strategy.
- 2.2 Endorse an updated draft Risk Management Strategy and its reporting to Cabinet for consideration and, if deemed appropriate, approval.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure the Council's risk management arrangements continue to be fit for purpose to support the delivery of Corporate Plan and Service Priorities.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council's Risk Management Strategy sets out the overall purpose and framework for risk management within the organisation. The framework sets out two levels of risk:

- Strategic Risks – those that the Council faces when delivering its Corporate Plan Priorities; and
- Operational Risks – those associated with the delivery of service objectives and included within Service Delivery Plans.

4.2 Within the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21, the following proposal for improvement was identified:

“The Council’s Risk Management Strategy was last reviewed and approved by Audit Committee in December 2018. The Strategy should be reviewed and where required proposed updates reported to Audit Committee for consideration. In addition, as part of the review, regard should be given to the findings and recommendations included within the 2020/21 Internal Audit report ‘Risk Management’.”

4.3 Following receipt of the Internal Audit Report earlier this financial year, the following risk management strategy related findings have been incorporated within the draft updated Strategy (this being included at Appendix A):

- The responsibilities of Officers and Cabinet Members in respect of service delivery planning (that incorporates risk management).
- An explanation of how the service delivery planning arrangements support the management of risk.
- An explanation of the concept of risk appetite and the Council’s risk appetite in key areas.

4.4 In addition, housekeeping updates have been incorporated into the updated Strategy, for example, updating references to the Council’s Corporate Plan ‘Making a Difference’ 2020 – 2024 and also the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

4.5 Members are requested to review the updated draft Risk Management Strategy and provide feedback on its adequacy. Thereafter, it is recommended that the draft Strategy is reported to Cabinet for consideration and, if deemed appropriate, approval.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

5.1 There are no equality and diversity or socio-economic implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no Welsh Language implications as a result of the recommendations set out in this report.

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

7.1 There are no consultation requirements emanating from the recommendations set out in the report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 There are no financial implications emanating from the recommendations set out in the report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 There are no legal or legislative implications emanating from the recommendations set out in the report.

10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

10.1 Effective risk management arrangements are key to the Council's ability to deliver its service and the priorities set out within the Corporate plan 2020 - 2024 'Making a Difference'.

10.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 identifies a core set of activities that are common to the corporate governance of public bodies where change needs to happen:

- Corporate Planning;
- Financial Planning;
- Workforce Planning;
- Procurement;
- Assets;
- **Risk Management**; and
- Performance Management

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 Risk management is an integral part of good management and corporate governance, and is central to the Council's service planning and delivery arrangements. In this way risk management is essential to the Council's ability to deliver efficient and effective public services that help improve the quality of life for local people and support its responsibility as a custodian of public funds.

11.2 The updates made to the Strategy aim to further strengthen the Council's risk management arrangements.

Other Information:-

Contact Officer

Marc Crumbie (Head of Procurement)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

23rd March 2022

UPDATED DRAFT RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & DIGITAL SERVICES IN
DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR
NORRIS)**

Item:

Background Papers

None.

Officer to contact: Marc Crumbie (Head of Procurement)



Appendix A – Updated Risk Management Strategy



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Risk Management Strategy (DRAFT)

March 2022

Date of next review: March 2023

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Risk management is an integral part of good management and corporate governance and is central to the Council's service planning and delivery arrangements. In this way risk management is essential to the Council's ability to deliver efficient and effective public services that help improve the quality of life for local people and support its responsibility as a custodian of public funds.
- 1.2 The aim of this document is to set the overall purpose and framework of risk management within the Council.
- 1.3 Risk management is the business of everyone in the Council.

2. Purpose of Risk Management in Rhondda Cynon Taf

- 2.1 In Rhondda Cynon Taf, at a strategic level, the purpose of risk management is to identify and manage the risks the Council faces when delivering its Corporate Priorities as set out within the [Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024](#) 'Making a Difference'. The Council's agreed strategic risks are set out in a Strategic Risk Register that is publicly reported and scrutinised on a quarterly basis as part of the Council's performance reporting arrangements. At an operational level, risk management aims to identify and manage risks associated with service delivery. It is undertaken via the Council's delivery (business) planning and monitoring arrangements.
- 2.2 This Risk Management Strategy is designed to ensure that sound risk management practices are in place, including processes to identify, assess and manage risk on an ongoing basis.
- 2.3 Understanding the risks the Council face and managing them appropriately aids effective decision-making and contributes to the achievement of the priorities that are set out within the Corporate Plan. Risk management is not about eliminating risk and should not be confused with being risk averse; the Council's risk management arrangements aim to encourage innovation within a clear framework.

3. Definition

- 3.1 Risk is the uncertainty of outcome, whether a positive opportunity or a negative threat, of actions or events. The Council's definition of risk is '*something happening that, should it occur, would impact on the Council's ability to successfully achieve its Corporate Plan priorities*'.

4. Well-being of Future Generations Act

- 4.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 identifies a core set of activities that are common to the corporate governance of public bodies where change needs to happen:
 - Corporate Planning;

- Financial Planning;
- Workforce Planning;
- Procurement;
- Assets;
- **Risk Management**; and
- Performance Management

4.2 The accompanying guidance to the Act states that a public body will need to change the way it manages risk. Under section 3 of ‘where change needs to happen’ of the Welsh Government Guidance, it states that:

“There will be long term risks that will affect both the delivery of your services but also the communities you are enabling to improve. Use the well-being goals and five ways of working to frame what risks you may be subject to in the short, medium and long term and together with the steps you will take to ensure they are well managed”.

4.3 The Council’s Strategic Risk Register incorporates controls and actions that aim to manage the risks, these incorporate the five ways of working (ICLIP), these are:

- **Involving** a diversity of the population in the decisions that affect them.
- Working with others in a **Collaborative** way to find shared sustainable solutions.
- Looking to the **Long-term** so that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their-own needs.
- Taking an **Integrated** approach so that public bodies look at all the well-being goals in deciding on their well-being objectives.
- Understanding the root causes of issues to **prevent** them from occurring.

5. The Performance Management Framework and Risk Management

5.1 Performance Management is about setting a clear direction with measures of success that put residents at the centre of what the Council does. This is done by putting in place consistent and robust arrangements across the Council that support service performance, improvement and change.

5.2 Performance Management arrangements include timely and proportionate performance monitoring of Corporate Plan priorities, an annual Service Self Evaluation process and Service Delivery Plans (incorporating relevant performance measures and risk), and help ensure staff are clear about their individual and their team’s priorities.

5.3 The supporting ‘internal’ processes that the Council has in relation to delivering its priorities are encompassed within its Service Delivery Planning arrangements.

5.4 Service Delivery Plans set out the key priorities for each service to be delivered over 12-18 months; they incorporate operational risks to the

achievement of each priority along with actions and milestones against which progress is monitored. These arrangements help each Service Area to:

- support delivery of the [Council's Corporate Plan](#) priorities,
- demonstrate how the service is aligning with the requirements of the [Well-being of Future Generations Act](#),
- provide a framework to ensure the priorities arising from the Council's Corporate Assessment are addressed and support the Council's legal responsibilities in this regard; and
- enable the service to identify and manage operational risks.

5.5 The governance arrangements around the Council's Service Self- Evaluation¹ and Service Delivery Planning processes are set out in Table 1.

Table 1 – Governance Arrangements: Service Self Evaluation and Service Delivery Planning

	Responsibility For Drafting	Responsibility For Sign-Off	Oversight / Challenge / Engagement
Service Self Evaluations	Service Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive (where the service directly reports to the Chief Executive); or • Group Director 	Chief Executive / Cabinet Portfolio Elected Member
Service Delivery Plans	Head of Service / Service Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive (where the service directly reports to the Chief Executive); or • Group Director 	Cabinet Portfolio Elected Member

5.6 The governance arrangements around the Council's Service Self Evaluation and Service Delivery Planning ensure there is appropriate review, challenge and sign-off processes in place that support the delivery of Corporate Plan priorities, service priorities and individual officer priorities. The regular monitoring arrangements also enable managers and team members to understand risks within their services, the changes occurring within them and what mitigating actions need to be put in place.

¹ Service Self Evaluation - is an annual process, within the Council's performance arrangements. The process enables services to formally evaluate and identify their strengths, priorities and areas for improvement which inform annual [Service Delivery Plans](#) and also the [Council's Priority Plans](#).

6. Internal Control and Risk Management

6.1 The Council's system of internal control has a key role in the management of risks. Internal controls are a response to risk.

6.2 The links between internal control and risk management are identified within the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2018 (regulation 4), which states:

'Responsibility for internal control and financial management:

(1) The local government body shall be responsible for putting in place and ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of that body's functions and which includes:

- a. arrangements for the management of risk; and*
- b. adequate and effective financial management.*

(2) The local government body shall conduct a review at least once in a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and shall include a statement on internal control, prepared in accordance with Proper Practices.'

6.3 Proper Practices are deemed to be the Code of Practice for Local Authority accounting which specifies:

'A local authority shall undertake a review of its system of internal control in accordance with best practice. Delivering Good Governance in Local Government, published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), recommends that the review be reported in an Annual Governance Statement.'

6.4 In addition to the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2018 (regulation 4), in a Local Government context, the importance of risk management as a key governance tool is incorporated within the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government – Core Principle F:

'Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

Local government needs to ensure that the organisations and governance structures that it oversees have implemented, and can sustain, an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and are crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision making activities.'

6.5 The Council's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has put in place a series of Policies and Procedures that aim to ensure robust controls are in place to

manage risk efficiently and effectively to deliver its services. SLT receives regular assurance from internal and external sources around the strength of its internal control environment.

7. Risk Appetite

7.1 The Institute of Risk Management (IRM) defines risk appetite as “*the amount and type of risk that an organisation is willing to take in order to meet their strategic objectives*”. A clearly understood risk appetite statement assists with the risk awareness for the Council and supports decision making in delivering Corporate Plan priorities.

7.2 The Senior Leadership Team have collectively agreed that the Council exists in a high-risk environment and that this is likely to continue. This will mean continuing to maintain an effective understanding of acceptable risk levels (high, medium or low), depending on their impact and likelihood, so that risks are prioritised and proportionate mitigating actions put in place.

Risk Appetite Statement

7.3 The underpinning approach supporting the Council's risk appetite is that risks will be taken in a considered and controlled manner, ensuring exposure at a level deemed acceptable. Where there are opportunities for the Council to be innovative and / or work differently, the identified risks will be considered against a range of factors including the impact on service users, legal and environmental responsibilities and anticipated cost and efficiency benefits.

7.4 The Risk Appetite Statement supports elected Members and Officers in decision making, by setting out where the Council will take different levels of risk, and which levels of risk are unacceptable.

7.5 The Council has used the Government Finance Function 'Risk Appetite Guidance Note' August 2021 to inform its Risk Appetite Statement through:

- The identification of a number of risk categories to support a holistic view of risks:
 - Strategy Risk
 - Financial Risk
 - Service Delivery Risks
 - Legal, Regulatory and Governance Risk
 - Reputational Risk
- Defining risk appetite levels - at each level there is a balance between risk and reward, with 'Eager' risk appetite offering the highest risk and reward and 'averse' offering the lowest.
 - Eager
 - Eager to be innovative and to choose options offering potentially higher rewards despite greater risk.

- Open
 - Willing to consider all potential delivery options and choose the one that is most likely to result in successful delivery while also providing an acceptable level of reward and value for money and also moderate / high risk.
- Cautious
 - Preference for safe delivery options that have a low degree of risk and may only have limited potential for reward.
- Minimalist
 - Preference for very safe business delivery options that have a low degree of risk and only have a potential for limited reward.
- Averse
 - Avoidance of risk and uncertainty is a key Organisational objective

7.6 The approved risk appetite levels for each risk category are set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Risk Appetite Levels

Risk Category	Risk Appetite Statement
Strategy Risk	Open – The Council will strive to devise and implement ambitious strategies following engagement with stakeholders, that support service transformation and continuous improvement.
Financial risk – capital or revenue, budgetary and financial planning	Cautious - In looking after its finances the Council will plan and invest appropriately to deliver good value for money; however, in doing so, it is willing to accept, that the financial and service outcomes will not always be as originally anticipated.
Legal, Regulatory and Governance risk – failure to comply with legislation	Averse – The Council recognises the need to place high importance on compliance with legal and regulatory requirements that apply to a local authority and has an adverse appetite in respect of legal / regularity risk.
Service Delivery – failure or underperformance of the services provided by the Council	Open - The Council will strive to deliver and maintain high quality services. However, to do that, the Council is willing to accept a moderate exposure to risk in service delivery.
Reputational risk – that the public will lose confidence in the Council following adverse publicity	Cautious - It is important that the Council maintains a high reputation and, therefore, has set a cautious approach to risk in the conduct of its activities.

7.7 The Council's Risk Appetite levels will be reviewed on an on-going basis as part of consideration of this Risk Management Strategy.

8. Governance & Audit Committee

8.1 The Council's Governance and Audit Committee is charged with overseeing the Council's governance, risk management and internal control arrangements. The statement of purpose for audit committee and relevant sections of its terms of reference state:

The purpose of the Governance and Audit Committee is to provide independent assurance to the Members of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment. It provides independent review of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes. It oversees internal audit and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.

8.2 Section 'C' of the Committee's terms of reference goes on to state:

Review, scrutinise and issue reports and recommendations on the appropriateness of the Authority's risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements, and providing the opportunity for direct discussion with the auditor(s) on these.

8.3 Management and scrutiny of the Council's strategic risks are integrated into the Council's performance reporting arrangements via its Corporate Plan priority action plans. Risks are identified, assessed and scored using a matrix of impact and likelihood, and the outcome of the scoring process results in a score being attributed.

8.4 The Council's strategic risks are brought together into a Strategic Risk Register that is owned and monitored by the Council's Senior Leadership Team.

8.5 Operational risks are monitored and managed separately as part of the Council's Delivery Planning arrangements.

9. Risk Management – Links to other disciplines

9.1 Controlling risk involves a process of reducing the impact and / or likelihood of the risk occurring.

9.2 A number of disciplines are applied across the Council to help achieve this:

- Procurement can be used to manage risks by appointing contractors to undertake services on behalf of the Council and contracts can be used to transfer identified risk(s).
- Insurance can be used to manage risks (for example, the potential financial impact of a risk could be mitigated using an insurance policy).

- A business continuity plan is a control that can help to manage the impact of an event that may arise.

10. Partnerships

- 10.1 Partnership working is playing an increasingly important role in service delivery. In recent years, the focus for the Council has been on the opportunities offered by partnership and joint working arrangements.
- 10.2 Working in partnership usually means committing resources such as time and/or direct funding to develop and deliver desired outcomes. It may not be easy and, whilst there are opportunities there are also risks. It is important to understand and manage these in so far as they affect both the partnership and Council.

Potential benefits of partnership working

- Better co-ordination and integration in the delivery of services for users
- Flexibility and innovation, producing better policy and implementing more credible solutions than those achievable by single agencies
- Improved communication and information-sharing
- More efficient and effective use of resources to deliver value for money, including access to additional skills and expertise
- Greater capacity to plan and develop solutions, including pooling expertise and resources

Potential risks of partnership working

- Lack of clear purpose or setting unrealistic goals and expectations
- Unaware of the extent of financial and legal implications, such as breach of statutory duty or failure in the exercise of statutory functions
- Financial and time commitments outweigh potential benefits
- Different or conflicting cultures, behaviours and policies lead to conflict, distrust, manipulation or domination
- Lack of clarity over partner expectations and responsibilities
- Inadequate governance and scrutiny over planning, decision-making and management of finance, risk and performance

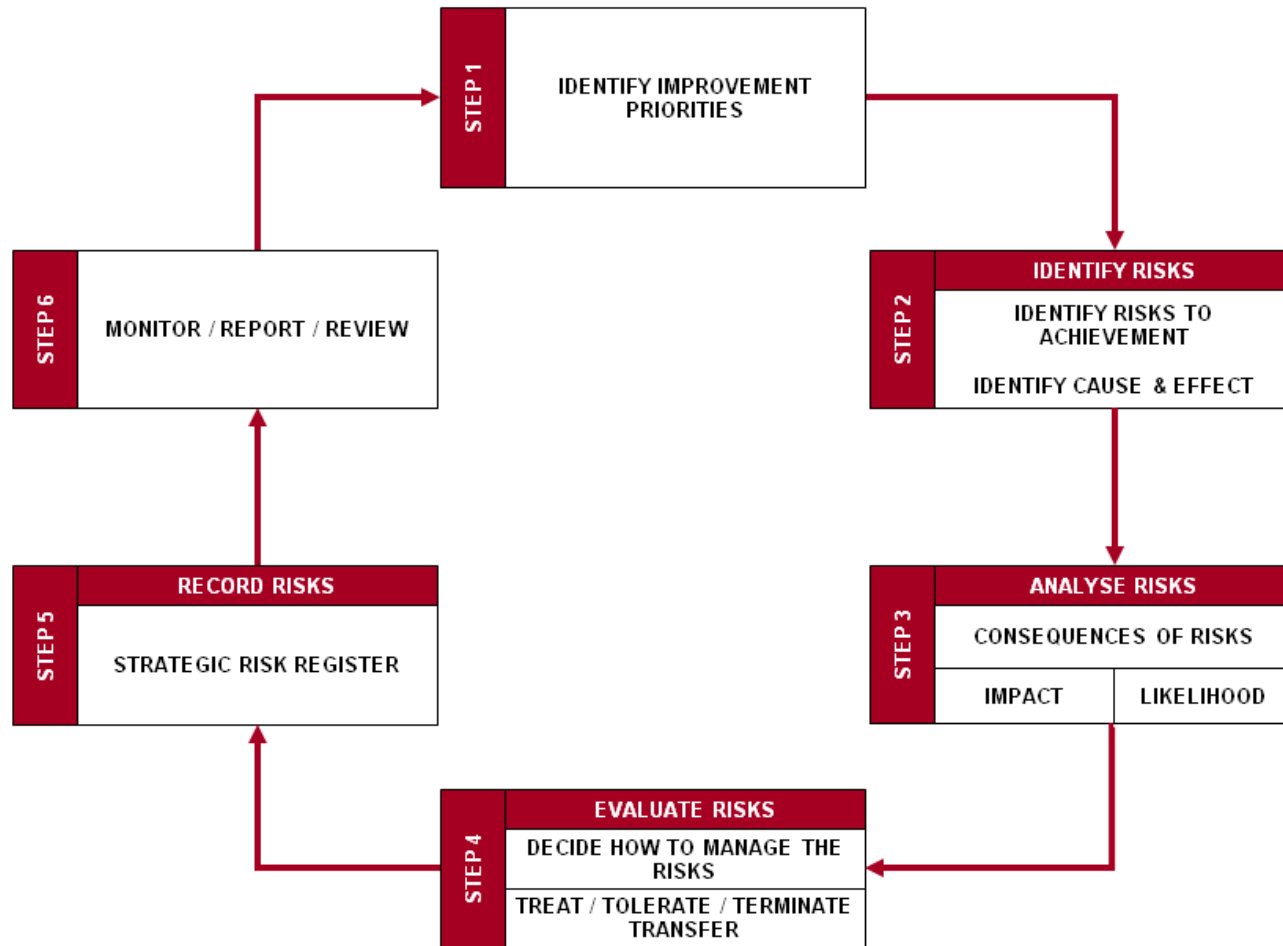
11. Projects

- 11.1 Project risk management defines how risks will be managed during the lifecycle of a project or programme. The arrangements acknowledge actual and potential threats to the successful delivery of a project and determine the activities required to minimise or eliminate them.
- 11.2 Where partners and/or suppliers are involved, it is essential to have shared understanding of risks and agreed plans for managing them.

12. Risk Management - An Overview

- 12.1 A toolkit has been devised that provides managers with a guide when undertaking risk management activities at all levels across the Council. The toolkit is a supporting document to this Strategy.
- 12.2 Figure 1 shows the stages involved in the Council's strategic risk management arrangements.

Figure 1 – Strategic Risk Management Arrangements



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th JULY 2022

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL – DRAFT HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAMME STRATEGY 2022/26

REPORT OF DIRECTOR – PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH CLLR. ROBERT HARRIS, CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

**Author(s): Cheryl Emery – Head of Community Safety and Community
Housing**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present the draft Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022 - 2026 to Cabinet for consideration and approval.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approve the Rhondda Cynon Taf Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022 -2026 as set out at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Subject to approval of the Strategy, support the development of a comprehensive Delivery Plan and Investment Strategy to secure achievement of the Strategy priorities over the next 4 years and specifically to identify the financial requirements and funding opportunities to deliver the development of additional supported housing schemes, including a new scheme to replace the Mill Street Hostel, and to offer further shared housing provision throughout RCT to reduce use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Approval of the Strategy will ensure the Council complies with the legal requirements of Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. In order to ensure the commitments set out in the Strategy can be achieved, there are significant capital and revenue funding implications. Achievement of the Strategy will need to be secured through a realistic and financially viable Delivery Plan and Investment Strategy that identifies

the financial requirements and seeks to use both existing and new funding opportunities through sources including the Welsh Government's Social Housing Grant and Housing Support Grant Programmes, Registered Social Landlord funding and private sector investment where appropriate. Where new funding cannot be identified, the Delivery Plan and Investment Strategy may need to consider any requirements to decommission services currently being delivered in order to recommission new services to meet the new and emerging needs. Any opportunities from or impacts on the Social Housing Grant Programme for the next three years will also need to be considered.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Housing Support Grant (HSG) is a revenue funding stream and an amalgamation of three existing grants; Supporting People Programme, Homelessness Prevention Grant, and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement.
- 4.2 The HSG is an early intervention grant programme to support activity, which prevents people from becoming homeless through stabilising their housing situation, or helps potentially homeless people to find and maintain their accommodation.
- 4.3 The HSG does not fund the statutory duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness, instead HSG funded services augment, complement and support the statutory service. The purpose of the HSG is to prevent homelessness and support people to have the capability, independence, skills, and confidence to access and/or maintain a stable and suitable home.
- 4.4 The HSG supports the aim of working together to prevent homelessness and where it cannot be prevented ensuring "**it is rare, brief and un-repeated**" To do this we need to tackle the root cause of homelessness and work together to enable people to stay in their own homes longer.
- 4.5 The HSG seeks to secure "A Wales where nobody is homeless" and everyone has a safe home where they can flourish and live a fulfilled, active and independent life".
- 4.6 Any person in need of support to prevent them becoming at risk of homelessness, to address homelessness or achieve a more stable housing circumstance, is eligible to receive housing support. If they are eligible to receive help under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (Wales) Regulations 2014, regardless of their tenure or lack of tenure.

5. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 This strategy incorporates the wider vision of the Council and is aligned with our wider corporate plans to ensure the Housing Support Programme supports us to meet our overall ambitions for RCT, particularly through our Corporate Plan. Promoting independence through information and advice and support services and extending the choice of housing available for the most vulnerable are common themes across the Council's policy portfolio relevant to homelessness and housing support. The causes of homelessness and the solutions to it are complex and there are several corporate policy areas that are working collectively to help us deliver this strategy.
- 5.2 Our Corporate Plan, **Making A Difference**, sets out our priorities and directs everything we do. Our vision is to make Rhondda Cynon Taf

'The best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy and prosperous.'

The Council's Housing Strategy Team are currently undertaking a **Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA)**. The needs identified within the LHMA will cover some of the need areas addressed in the Housing Support Grant Programme Strategy and this will enable us to consider accommodation of all tenure types including supported housing provision.

6. THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

- 6.1 There is a legal requirement to develop a single strategy called the "Housing Grant Support Programme Strategy" (HSP). This incorporates the local authority's statutory duty to produce a Homelessness Strategy and the strategic planning requirements for the HSG, becoming the single strategy for homelessness prevention and support. These mechanisms to develop the strategy have been used to inform the entirety of our Housing Support Programme' that encompasses both the statutory homelessness duty funded through the revenue settlement and non-statutory preventative services funded through the HSG.
- 6.2 The Housing Support Programme Strategy as the single strategic document on housing support and homelessness prevention, also satisfies the existing statutory requirements for a homelessness strategy under Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 with the requirement not to produce a separate strategy as required in previous years.
- 6.3 A requirement also of the strategic planning process is the need carry out a comprehensive needs assessment which must be undertaken

every four years, with a light touch review every two years. This should provide a single strategic view of our approach to homelessness prevention and housing support services.

7. RHONDDA CYNON TAF HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAMME STRATEGY

7.1 The Rhondda Cynon Taf Housing Support Programme Strategy was developed further to a review of homelessness services in the area, undertaken between October and December 2021. The approach taken has been one of co-production. An independent consultant was commissioned to undertake the Homelessness Review which offered an independence from the Council and a fresh perspective to inform the Strategy.

7.2 There is no single reason why someone can end up without a home. Often someone facing homelessness approaches the Council for housing assistance for many reasons. The pandemic has changed the landscape across all aspects of our lives in Wales. The Everyone In approach by Welsh Government has led to the removal of the Priority Need Order significantly increasing the number of homelessness presentations and placements in temporary accommodation, particularly for single homeless people who have multiple support needs including mental health, substance dependency and an offending history.

7.3 The new RCTCBC Housing Support Programme Strategy builds on the success of the previous Homelessness Strategy and proposes to continue to focus on prevention and early intervention, whilst also undertaking targeted work on the identified issues highlighted in the Needs Assessment. The new strategy clearly sets out the practical and many ways the Council will achieve its aims and objectives in preventing homelessness and commissioning and delivering housing related support services in partnership.

8. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

8.1 A comprehensive **Needs Assessment** (Appendix 2) was undertaken and this key finding are summarised in the **Statement of Need**, at Appendix 3. It identifies the key issues that need to be addressed through the HSP strategy and specific imperatives for RCTCBC in discharging its statutory duties to prevent and alleviate homelessness. The Needs Assessment was undertaken in line with Welsh Government guidance and combines a wide range of quantitative data with intelligence gathered through extensive engagement with a range of stakeholders. A consultation exercise was conducted with partners and stakeholders seeking their comments on the homeless services in

RCT. The key findings from this exercise have been incorporated into the Strategy but include:

- 8.2 **524** individuals, families and groups were placed in temporary accommodation in 2020/2021. **40%** of the **524** were placed in temporary accommodation multiple times, leading to a total of **852** placements in 2020/2021. **852** placements represent an increase of nearly **257** placements year-on-year, from **595** in 2019/20
- 8.3 The highest percentage of placements in temporary accommodation relates to **single person male households (62%) with an offending background**, which has been a pattern throughout the last two years following the removal of the Priority Need Order in 2020
- 8.4 In 2020/21 homeless **applications by single people accounted for 782 of the 1025 homeless presentations received**. This is particularly relevant to male applicants aged 25+ who made up 60% of homelessness presentations in 2021/22. Many of whom also presented with high support needs linked with a history of offending and substance misuse issues. However, it is pleasing to note that **young people aged 16 and 17 represented only 2% of our cohort** placed in temporary accommodation in 2021.
- 8.5 **Breakdown of relationship with family and friends, leaving prison and loss of rented accommodation**, are the three main reasons for homelessness presentations in RCT over the past three years.
- 8.6 The **complexities and high support needs of clients** presenting as homeless is of concern and has caused significant challenges in trying to secure suitable temporary placements and longer- term move on housing options particularly for our increasing offender cohort
- 8.7 A review of repeat homelessness applications identified **most of the repeat homelessness cases in RCT are made up of prison leavers**. Many of whom have complex needs linked with alcohol and substance misuse addiction.

9. RAPID REHOUSING PLAN

- 9.1 The Rapid Rehousing Plan forms a key element of the Housing Support Programme Strategy and is provided at Appendix 4. This plan within the overall Strategy is a specific requirement of Welsh Government and outlines how we will help meet the needs of clients presenting with complex needs, through the transition of a rapid rehousing approach. As well as supporting our Housing First project, the Plan will seek to enhance our homelessness prevention work and help develop alternative forms of temporary accommodation by moving

away from the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. It is clear the success of the Rapid Rehousing Plan is highly dependent on the wider Council response and other key strategies which impact on the social and economic conditions locally. There are no short-term solutions to many of the challenges faced which will take time and both capital and financial resources and effective joined up working to make the changes required.

The challenges to delivering a rapid rehousing approach include:

- 9.2 **Temporary Accommodation** - There are currently around 138 households in temporary accommodation as at 29/06/22. There is a need to improve move-on options and develop new housing options to help prevent long stays in accommodation and to develop a rapid rehousing approach, so that single people and families can exit homelessness quickly. However current housing market pressures including increasing demand to provide accommodation for households seeking asylum and fleeing war torn countries are compounding the significant challenges in meeting the accommodation needs.
- 9.3 **Demand for Social Housing** - There are over **4,952** households on the RCT Homefinder Waiting List. It is important to note that social housing will not be able to meet the needs of everyone going forward with demand for social housing outstripping supply with **4,952** applicants currently registered on Homefinder RCT as at 31st March 2022 with **2,448** of those applicants requiring a 1- bedroom property and **138** placed in Band A of which **104** have a 1- bedroom need. Out of necessity, we are already allocating a high proportion of our social housing to homeless clients placed in Band A. In 2020/21 over 50% of general lets were made to homeless clients which has also led to a reduction in the average waiting time for these clients.
- 9.4 We recognise there are many applicants who are not homeless who are in significant housing need and therefore demand for social housing cannot be met by the current supply despite our ambitious new build plans
- 9.5 **Private Rented Sector Accommodation** - Access to the private rented sector in Rhondda Cynon Taf has historically been challenging for single person households. The availability of properties to rent in the private rented sector dropped dramatically during the Pandemic particularly for households in receipt of welfare benefits. In consideration of the current housing market pressures which has led to an increased demand for private rented accommodation, private landlords can pick and choose their tenants, particularly where persons can afford to pay market rent and offer advance rental payments.

- 9.6 The Rhondda Cynon Taff Needs Assessment highlights a lack of accommodation for people to move into or to move on from supported or temporary accommodation. A key part of the move on accommodation market is the Private Rented Sector (PRS) but since the pandemic and the increase in house values in RCT. Many private landlords no longer want to work with Council referred clients, preferring to find their own tenants.
- 9.7 Affordability remains a significant challenge with the gap between Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and the average private rent being totally unrealistic and out of reach for many people. This is an issue for all parts of Rhondda Cynon Taff, but is a particular challenge for the Taff area which has higher rents but grouped in the same Broad Rent Market Area (BRMA) as the Rhondda area which has lower rents. It is therefore impossible to secure properties in the Taff area within the LHA rate making all private rented accommodation in most parts of Taff unaffordable particularly for those in receipt of welfare benefits and low incomes.
- 9.8 Many single homeless people are frozen out of the private rented sector, limiting housing options and placing even more pressure on the already high demand for social housing. For families requiring access to larger properties there is a benefit cap This particularly affects household on a low income and/or entitled to benefits which are assessed on the LHA rate making the private rented sector less affordable for these groups.
- 9.9 **The development of specialist provision** for a small cohort of individuals in the homelessness system with high support needs who are unable to sustain a traditional tenancy is both challenging and complex. This will require a wider corporate and partnership approach with Health and Adult Social Care.

10. VISION FOR HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION IN RCT

- 10.1 Our vision for homelessness prevention, relief of homelessness and housing related support services is directly aligned to the vision set out in our Corporate Plan, and its three underpinning principles.

The **vision** is that:

‘Statutory, third and private sector partners work effectively together to make sure that people in Rhondda Cynon Taf have access to suitable housing and can stay within their local communities. The right support is available within local communities, to prevent those at risk of becoming homeless from losing their homes. We strive to secure appropriate accommodation as swiftly as possible for those that have become

homeless, along with the right kind of personalised support, helping them to a secure future and optimising their wellbeing. Rhondda Cynon Taf is a place where homelessness is prevented or rare, brief and unrepeated'.

- 10.2 Providing the right accommodation and high-quality support to people who are or may become homeless are principles that run through our approach. We will continue to develop our offer, building on what we have already established and what we have learnt through the Covid-19 pandemic.

11. HSP STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- 11.1 In delivering our vision the following strategic priorities will be adopted by the Council and partners and include:

Priority 1: Strengthening early intervention and prevention approaches and specialised support to prevent homelessness

- 11.2 Prevention is core business in homelessness services and fundamental to our approach is to return to business as usual with a focus on homelessness prevention and improvement on pre-pandemic performance levels. We have a strong track record in prevention of homelessness with the number of households receiving prevention assistance and resulting in homelessness halving from 2015 to 2017.
- 11.3 Our prevention activity reduced slightly due to the limited housing and support options available during the Pandemic. Also linked with the main reasons for homelessness presentations in RCT during this time, being a significant increase in the **breakdown of relationship with family and friends** and the number of single people presenting as homeless **due to leaving Prison**.
- 11.4 Going forward we recognise early and timely intervention aims to reduce undue escalation to avoid crisis with a knock-on impact to health and independence. We will focus on the following areas to strengthen our approach to prevention:
- I. Ensuring there is a seamless corporate approach to prevention through the review of our Housing Solutions Service.
 - II. Review existing temporary accommodation arrangements to reduce our use of bed and breakfast accommodation to provide a high-quality provision based on our existing community support accommodation models.
 - III. Improve marketing and promotion of prevention and early intervention assistance.

Priority 2: Ensuring people who are homeless or threatened with Homelessness access the right home at the right time and in the right place, as part of our Rapid Rehousing approach

- 11.5 Fundamental to the Housing Support Grant Programme is being able to help people live independently in the community. This includes not just access but assessing and influencing the supply of suitable accommodation. Housing supply, particularly single bedroom accommodation is in particularly high demand in RCT including a difficult private rented market compounded by private rented sector rents set above the Local Housing Allowance rates and many private landlords leaving the market.
- 11.6 Lack of affordable / social housing in the borough remains a significant issue and will impact on our ability to prevent homelessness and to continue to effectively deliver Rapid Rehousing approach. We will focus on the following areas to strengthen our approach to rapid rehousing:
- I. Despite our accommodation challenges. We aim to build on the success of our Housing First project which assisted in 2021/22 34 single homeless people 25+ and 6 young people (aged 16-24) with complex needs through a rapid rehousing approach to access and sustain accommodation through intensive specialist outreach support provision.
 - II. We will ensure there is a seamless corporate approach to prevention activity and improving data sharing between Health, Housing, Probation, and support providers - including use of data for planning services. This will include the development of complex needs panel to offer more joined up service provision particularly those who have multiple support needs and often fall out of traditional service provision.
 - III. Increase generic supported accommodation provision duplicating existing models i.e., Abertonllwyd House and Martins Close helping us to reduce the use of B&B, particularly for service users with complex needs.
 - IV. Review our supported accommodation provision to respond to the increasing level of complex presentations through a multi-agency approach to targeting and managing risk.
 - V. Improving assessment and accessibility for single homeless people through the development of an Assessment Centre.
 - VI. Reducing reliance on the use of bed and breakfast and develop alternative temporary accommodation options, including

extending our shared private rented housing model by 15/20 units over the next three years, to offer more smaller more sustainable community-based provision.

- VII. Relocate Mill Street Hostel over the next two years (subject to the identification of a suitable building and funding) in order to increase the units of accommodation provision in a purpose built facility with multi agency service provision for single homeless people.
- VIII. Improve access to the private rented sector accommodation through the work of the Social Letting Agency.
- IX. Ensure new homes are built to improve move on from temporary accommodation and review local letting requirement

Priority 3: Providing high quality support to people who are or may become homeless, fully utilising available technology and ensuring effective cross-agency working

11.7 We know that timeliness and suitability of support is something that our service users depend upon. We will continue to innovate our offer as more becomes known of user needs, and as new technologies unlock the ability to support people in new and responsive ways. We will build on providing the right service to people with high, medium, and low support needs. This will include:

- I. Review how technology can be used to support people in their own home.
- II. Increase awareness of domestic abuse and develop earlier innovative support options for victims of domestic abuse.
- III. Develop new support provision for perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- IV. To better address services for people with complex needs, the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Outreach Health Team commissioned with Bridgend County Borough Council and Merthyr County Borough Council in partnership with Health and Barod Support workers. The Team is made up of a dedicated Substance Misuse and Mental Health Nurses, a General Nurse covering physical needs, Substance Misuse Support workers and trauma / counselling services.
- V. The continued input of the of the specialist outreach team is having a real and long- lasting impact on homelessness across Cwm Taf Morgannwg; supporting 166 individuals over the last

12 months who were placed in temporary accommodation or working with Housing First projects. Additional complex needs funding has been secured over the next 3 years to further develop the Outreach Health Team to ensure clear pathways are in place to support clients who move on from temporary accommodation into longer term accommodation and who may fall out of services.

Priority 4 – Work collaboratively to provide holistic person-centred support with effective specialist interventions

- 11.8 In order to deliver a more person-centred, holistic approach, we will focus on the following areas to strengthen our services:
- I. Identify joint funding arrangements with partners for the commissioning and delivery of services that require input from NHS, Social Services and Probation.
 - II. Ensure closer working arrangements with Substance Misuse Area Planning Board to address complex/co-occurring challenges.
 - III. Develop training, updates and briefings to staff and providers to keep abreast of service developments, good practice, innovation, and new practices via joint training sessions, HSG Planning Group, and local, regional, and national fora.

12. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 12.1 The report identifies that full Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is appended at Appendix 5. The purpose of the Equality Impact Assessment is to ensure that the Council has understood the potential impacts of the proposal in terms of equality so that it can ensure that it is making proportionate and rational decisions having due regard to its public sector equality duty.

13. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The report identifies that a Welsh language assessment has been carried out and is appended at Appendix 6 to ensure compliance with the [Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#)

14. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 14.1 Stakeholders including service users were engaged in the development of the priorities for the HSPS through a series of on-line workshops,

one to one interview's and via questionnaires including a questionnaire to service users and group work.

- 14.2 The emerging findings of the comprehensive Needs Assessment (Appendix 2) were subject to scrutiny by the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on the 22nd November 2021 <https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=171&Mid=50003732&Ver=4&LLL=0> The Committee also scrutinised progress with the Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022 and their feedback informed the development of the Final Strategy.

15. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 15.1 Delivery of the Strategy has significant financial implications, some of which can be met through existing grant programmes or Council resources. Achievement of the Strategy and in particular development of new housing provision to meet client needs, will need to be secured through a realistic and financially viable Delivery Plan and Investment Strategy.
- 15.2 It is anticipated that many of actions relating to support services which require revenue funding, as set out in the strategy can be met through a combination of existing general fund resources, Area Planning Board funding contribution, Health & Complex Needs Funding and Welsh Government Housing Support Grant (HSG). The level of Housing Support Grant awarded for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council for 2022/23 has been committed and will remain at the current level for the next three financial years.
- 15.3 Despite additional Housing Support Grant funding made available by Welsh Government in 2021/22 and 2022/23, additional capital and revenue funding will be required in line with future ambitions a part of any plans for the relocation of Mill Street Hostel and development of new supported and temporary accommodation particularly for more specialist provision linked with accommodating individuals with high support needs. Where possible this will be considered through the Rhondda Cynon Taf Housing Support Grant Commissioning Plan and the RCTCBC Housing Support Grant Planning Group and the Social Housing Grant Programme. Where new funding cannot be identified, the Delivery Plan and Investment Strategy may need to consider any requirements to decommission services currently being delivered in order to recommission new services to meet the new and emerging needs. Any opportunities from or impacts on the Social Housing Grant Programme for the next three years will also need to be considered.
- 15.4 The continuing and long-term financial implications from Welsh Government's "No One Left Out" policy which was implemented at the start of the pandemic need to be kept under review as we continue to

manage the consequences of the change in legislation which has led to an increase in homelessness presentations and the number of people presenting with complex needs.

- 15.5 The impact of the **cost living crisis** is unknown at this time but will have an impact on our communities and vulnerable citizens and may lead to an increase in homelessness presentations which will place further demands on our homelessness prevention options and place additional financial pressures on the Council.

16. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 16.1 The below legislation also defines the environment in which the Housing Support Grant (HSG) is delivered and will need to be considered in delivering the activity funded through the Grant.

- Housing (Wales) Act 2014.
- Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
- Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015).
- Equality Act 2010.
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and the Welsh Language Standards Regulations.
- General Data Protection Regulation, and the Data Protection Act 2018.

17. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 17.1 The Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Housing Support Programme Grant will contribute to the Council's Corporate three main priorities as followed:

Ensuring People are independent healthy and successful: Housing related support services in RCT help people live as independently as they can or move to more independent living through the provision of floating support and static accommodation. Additional specialist services such as the multi- agency Outreach Health Team and resilience / mental health programmes delivered through Cwm Taf Morgannwg Mind help all members of our communities to overcome and or manage their health needs to become healthy and independent and to lead successful lives.

Creating places: where proud to live work and play: HSG funded support services also play a crucial role in preventing homelessness and enabling people to manage their own lives and live confidently in

safe secure homes. The RCT Locality Based Floating Support Project supported in 2021/22 over 1,000 households to maintain their tenancies. Tackling loneliness and isolation is a key element of the work provided by HSG support services who help build up well-being personal confidence and self-esteem helping individuals to engage in activities their local communities. Our support services also work closely with other Council departments i.e., Communities for Work to assist clients who are part of our support pathways to access volunteering, training, and employment opportunities.

Enabling prosperity: creating the opportunity for people and businesses: to be innovative; be entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper: Housing Related Support services are available to help people gain the necessary life skills to enable them to prosper and seek their own personal goals. For some of our homeless young people this year, this has encouraged them to be part of national sports events such as the Homeless World Cup which has changed their lives and led them to prosper and maximise their personal opportunities.

- 17.2 The Sustainable Development Principle and the 5 ways of working have been fully considered throughout the development of the Strategy, which is heavily focused on homelessness prevention and meeting the long term needs of people, who are homeless or threatened with homelessness through sustainable housing and support options.

The strategy has involved all relevant partners and clients in all aspects of delivery of the strategy and will work in collaboration going forward to address the economic, social, and cultural challenges faced to find shared sustainable solutions.

- 17.3 The values underpinning the HSPS and the principles underpinning strategic planning for the prevention and relief of homelessness across public services are set out below: These and the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2014 should shape the overall approach used across the whole of the housing support sector.

- Tackling and preventing homelessness is a whole public services matter rather than simply a 'housing matter'.
- All services should place the individual at the centre, working to their strengths and supporting them to achieve their aspirations.
- Services should be commissioned and delivered in a psychologically informed way considering the impact of trauma on people who require support, to achieve a sustainable and long-term impact. This includes the five components of psychologically informed approaches: the psychological framework; relationships;

staff support and training; evidence generating practice; and physical environment.

- 17.4 In consideration of the wellbeing goals and the HSG principles underpinning strategic planning for the prevention and relief of homelessness for public services, the HSPS aims to improve the quality of life for many local people living in our communities in RCT through an early intervention and prevention approach. As well as improving the quality of life for our future generations through long term support interventions. These include highlighting clients who will need long term ongoing housing related support to help them sustain their home to prevent repeat homelessness through loss of accommodation.

18. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

- 18.1 The Housing Support Programme Strategy is a Strategic Plan with opportunities and implications across the whole County Borough to meet the goals set out therein.

19. CONCLUSION

- 19.1 Demand on our homelessness and support services is increasing with the needs of our clients are becoming more complex. In meeting these needs the Homelessness Support Grant Programme Strategy sets out our vision to offer earlier intervention options and services and increase the provision of more sustainable housing options for challenging clients. Over time, this aims to reduce the level of demand on homeless services and change the focus from crisis intervention to enable the Council to improve the life chances of the homeless and those at risk of homelessness and have a positive impact on our communities. There are significant financial implications associated with delivering the strategy and these need to be identified and outlined in a detailed Delivery Plan and Investment Strategy.

Appendices

The following appendices are attached:

Appendix 1 - RCTCBC Housing Support Grant Programme Strategy

Appendix 2 - Needs Assessment

Appendix 3 - Statement of need.

Appendix 4 – RCTCBC Rapid Rehousing Plan.

Appendix 5 - Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 6 - Welsh Language Impact Assessment

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th JULY 2022

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR – PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION &
COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH CLLR. ROBERT HARRIS,
CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL –
DRAFT HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAMME STRATEGY 2022/26**

Background Papers:

None

Officer to contact:

Cheryl Emery – Head of Community Safety and Community Housing



**Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough
Council
Housing Support Programme (HSP)
Strategy 2022-26**

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[Annex B: National Policy Landscape](#)

1 Forward



I am delighted to present Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022-2026.

The Strategy builds upon the existing efforts and progress being made by not only the Local Authority, but also its key stakeholders and partners to look forward and develop homes and solutions to meet the current and future demand and prevent future homelessness.

There is also a clear recognition of the 'everyone in and no one left out' approach and much consideration into ensuring the solutions meet the needs of our communities, which are often multifaceted and diverse by nature, by broadening the range of accommodation to give people brighter and sustainable futures, and where homelessness cannot be prevented, ensure that it is brief and non-recurrent.

We welcome the rapid rehousing approach to homelessness and the additional financial support and guidance from Welsh Government to support us in accelerating much of our development programme to increase the creation of quality affordable, low carbon homes at pace and scale to work to better meet the needs of our community going forward.

Whilst this paves the way for innovative solutions, better prevention and rapid responses to homelessness, we also recognise the significant challenge ahead.

With already high levels of deprivation locally, pressure from rising living costs, market rents and the significant challenge in exit planning from the excessive use of temporary accommodation, the scale of the challenge is considerable, but together with our partners we are committed to helping the most vulnerable in our community.

Councillor Rhys Lewis

Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Communities

2 Purpose of the Strategy

This Strategy sets out the approach Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will take to continuing to support our most vulnerable residents - those who are risk of, or experience homelessness and those who need support to maintain their tenancies and live as part of their

communities. Since the Covid-19 pandemic we have stepped-up the services that the Council provide to ensure that everyone who needs shelter is accommodated and can receive support. There is much more that we need to do to prevent homelessness and provide the range and volume of accommodation that is needed to meet demand. We have already made progress in the way that we support people when they first contact us for support with housing, the types of help we offer young people, particularly care-leavers, and our work with Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board in the support we provide to people with mental health and substance misuse challenges. These remain challenging times and we recognise we need to be prepared for increasing numbers of people who will need help with housing, with increasingly complex needs, and this strategy will help us respond to this growth in demand.

Included in this document are the priorities of RCT County Borough Council and our partner agencies for homelessness prevention, homelessness relief and housing related support services over the coming 4 years (2022-26). It refreshes earlier priorities that were included in the Council's former Homelessness Strategy, and the Housing Support Grant (HSG) Delivery Plan for 2021-22. Development of the priorities was informed by a comprehensive need assessment exercise which included direct engagement with stakeholders within the Council, external stakeholders such as the NHS and Probation as well as providers of support services and service users.

The Housing Support Grant (HSG) forms a key element of the overall strategy. This is an early intervention grant programme to support activity which prevents people from becoming homeless, stabilises their housing situation or helps potentially homeless people to find and keep accommodation. The grant is designed to augment, complement and support statutory services, thus ensuring that the overall local offer helps people into the right homes, with the right support to succeed. It makes a significant contribution to the implementation of Part 2 of the Housing Act (Wales) 2014 which focuses on homelessness prevention. Services supported through the HSG should be person centred and address multiple problems vulnerable people who are homeless or likely to become homeless often face (for example debt, employment, substance misuse, violence against women, domestic and sexual abuse and mental health problems). The services should ultimately reduce the need for costly intervention in these areas by other public services.

Strategic planning is key to ensuring alignment of the HSG and RCT's statutory duties to prevent and relieve homelessness and the effective commissioning of HSG services. This will help ensure that homelessness is prevented and that people needing services are supported appropriately. This will also help ensure value for money is achieved in deploying the grant. Welsh Government requires a single strategy incorporating RCT's homelessness prevention and support and covering the statutory homelessness duty funded through the revenue settlement and non-statutory, preventative services funded through the HSG. The strategy recognises the inter-dependency between these elements and more widely with other public services providing support to vulnerable people.

3 Legislative and Policy Context

This strategy incorporates the wider vision of the Council and is aligned with our wider corporate plans to ensure the Housing Support Programme supports us to meet our overall ambitions for RCT, particularly through our Corporate Plan. Promoting independence through information and advice and support services and extending the choice of housing available for the most vulnerable are common themes across the Council's policy portfolio relevant to homelessness and housing support. The causes of homelessness and the solutions to it are complex, and there are a number of our corporate policy areas that, working collectively, will help us deliver this strategy.

Corporate Plan

Our Corporate Plan, **Making A Difference**, sets out our priorities and directs everything we do. Our vision is to make Rhondda Cynon Taf

'the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy and prosperous'.

We are committed to delivering three main priorities:

- Ensuring People: are independent, healthy and successful;
- Creating Places: where people are proud to live, work and play;
- Enabling Prosperity: creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper.

A key part of delivering this plan our Housing Strategy Team are currently undertaking a **Local Housing Market Assessment** (LHMA). The needs identified within the LHMA will cover some of the need areas addressed in the Housing support Programme Strategy and this will enable us to provide accommodation of all tenure types including supported housing provision.

'My Own Front Door' A Plan for housing in later life 2016

The development of a specific Plan for Older Persons Housing is in recognition that some older persons housing issues and the type of provision required are very specific and that there are some gaps in existing provision, for example an over supply of traditional sheltered housing in some areas of the Borough.

Our vision is that "people in later life can live independently in their home of choice for as long as possible". In order that this vision can be realised, three strategic aims have been identified.

- **Strategic Aim 1: Make available person centred and preventative support to minimise the escalation of critical need.**
- **Strategic Aim 2: Easily Accessible Information, Advice and Assistance.**
- **Strategic Aim 3: To enable a range of good quality housing choices that promotes independence, prolonged health and well-being.**

Accommodation and Support Strategy for Young People 16+ Years of Age Leaving Care 2019-2022

The Cwm Taf shared regional statement of intent for supporting children, young people and families sets out a shared vision that children, young people and families in Cwm Taf live safe, healthy and fulfilled lives and that they can achieve their full potential by building resilient communities. This strategy supports RCT Children's Services Delivery Plan 2019-20 Priority 3 to ensure that children who cannot live with their parents live in suitable accommodation in RCT. This is delivered through the Children Looked After Quality Assurance Panel that ensures that children looked after and care leavers in RCT receive good quality placements that support them to live safe, healthy and fulfilled lives. One of the Panel's key objectives is to commission a range of placements that support children looked after and care leavers to develop the skills that enable them to move to full independence. The three strategic aims mirror those above in relation to older people.

- **Strategic Aim 1: Make available person-centred and preventative support to minimise the escalation of critical need.**
- **Strategic Aim 2: Easily Accessible Information, Advice and Assistance.**
- **Strategic Aim 3: To enable a range of good quality housing choices that promotes independence, prolonged health and well-being.**

National Context

Welsh Government has maintained a consistent focus on tackling homelessness in the context of the long-term impact of UK Government policy, in relation to austerity and welfare support, and other non-devolved policy areas that have an impact on homelessness such as the work of the Police and Prisons. Under Part 2 of the **Housing (Wales) Act 2014**, the local authority has a new and strengthened duty to prevent and relieve homelessness which has led to a strengthening of local partnership arrangements.

The guiding principle remains one of preventing homelessness, but where this is not possible, ensuring it is brief and non-repeated. There is a renewed commitment to fundamentally reform homelessness services to focus on prevention and rapid rehousing. Understanding what works, what is promising, and what isn't effective will be crucial to Welsh Government in delivering its policy goals.

In turn, several key principles underpin the Welsh Government approach to homelessness prevention, and these should be enshrined across public and commissioned services. They are as follows:

- The earliest preventions are most effective and most cost effective and should always be the interventions of first choice.
- Tackling and preventing homelessness is a public services matter – rather than a 'housing matter'.

- All services should place the individual at the centre and work together in a trauma informed way.
- The duties in Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 should be the last line of defence – not the first - and all services should work to the spirit not simply the letter of the law.
- Policy, service delivery and practice should be informed and shaped in a co-productive manner and by those with lived experience.

Housing and homelessness policy and practice has continued to evolve in the period since the Housing Act came into force, and the Council can expect a need to respond further to action being taken at the national level to support local authorities with their housing challenges. Most recently, this includes commitments made in the Welsh Government's **Programme for Government (2021)**. This outlines key commitments to legislate in relation to homelessness and care experienced young people. Specifically Welsh Government has committed to:

- Exploring radical reform of current services for looked after children and care leavers.
- Fundamentally reforming homelessness services to focus on prevention, rapid rehousing.
- Supporting innovative housing developments to meet care needs.
- Improving joint working across housing and social services, utilising corporate parenting responsibilities.

Additional commitments that have been incorporated into the programme for Government within the **Labour/ Plaid Cymru Cooperation Agreement (November 2021)** include:

- Taking immediate and radical action to address the proliferation of second homes and unaffordable housing, using the planning, property and taxation systems
- Establishment of Unnos, a national construction company, to support councils and social landlords to improve the supply of social and affordable housing.
- Publication of a White Paper to include proposals for a right to adequate housing, the role a system of fair rents (rent control) could have in making the private rental market affordable for local people on local incomes and new approaches to making homes affordable.
- Ending homelessness through reform of housing law, enacting the **Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016** to give renters greater security and implementing recommendations issued to Welsh Government by the Homelessness Action Group in 2020 in relation to a holistic approach to this issue.

Enaction in July 2022 of the Welsh Government's Renting Homes (Wales) Act will bring significant changes, strengthening the rights and protections of tenants and including:

- Replacement of current tenancies and licences, including assured short hold, assured and secure tenancies with secure occupation contracts (generally issued by community landlords – local authorities and housing associations) and standard occupation contracts (generally issued by private landlords).

- Increased duties on landlords to set out respective duties of the landlord and contract holder (tenant).
- Minimum notice period for termination of a contract where there is no fault to 6 months and requirement for at least 6 months to have elapsed since the start of a contract before any such notice is issued.
- Increased protection for contract holders from break clauses, which can only be issued by landlords where certain conditions are met.
- Requirement that all rented properties are fit for human habitation and that landlords keep the structure and exterior of the property in good repair.
- Protection for remaining tenants subject to a joint contract where one contract-holder leaves the property.
- Enhanced contract succession rights for certain groups, including some carers.

These changes will have implications for local authorities and other agencies with duties to prevent and relieving homelessness, in terms of existing tenants or contract holders having enhanced protection from the risk of becoming homeless, but also potentially on the availability of suitable properties in an area and private landlords willing to rent.

A full schedule of such national policy developments that have influenced this Strategy are included in [Annex B](#).

A person-centred, multi-agency approach to homelessness requires a contribution from, and alignment with, other services. These service areas are themselves subject to specific legislation and policy, all broadly coalescing around the principles of prevention/ early intervention, person-centred support, promoting independence and providing sustainable solutions. Important areas of relevant legislation and policy are set out below.

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Act seeks to strengthen existing governance arrangements for improving the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of Wales to ensure that present needs are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Public bodies listed in the Act need to think about the long term, work better with people and communities, and each other and look to prevent problems and take a more joined up approach.

Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

The Act makes provision for improving the well-being outcomes for people who need care and support, and carers who need support and co-ordination and partnership by public authorities with a view to improving the well-being of people. The Act recognises the need for increased comprehensive early intervention and intensive support services. There is a duty for local authorities to maintain and enhance the wellbeing of people in need in areas such as education, training and recreation, social and economic wellbeing and physical, mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015

This Act aims to improve the public sector response in Wales to abuse and violence through improving arrangements to promote awareness of, and prevent, protect and support victims of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Victims of such abuse and violence are a significant client group for housing services. The Act emphasises the focus on prevention and partnership approaches to working with VWDASV.

Substance Misuse Delivery Plan: 2019 to 2022 (Wales)

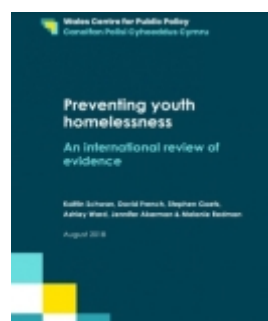
This sets out the Welsh Government’s key policy and operational priorities and has been reviewed to consider where it needs to be updated in light of COVID-19. The review sets out priority areas that include responding to co-occurring mental health problems which are common in substance misuse, ensuring strong partnership working with housing and homelessness services to further support those with substance misuse issues who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and improving access to services and ensuring people get the support and treatment when they need it.

Equality Act 2010

This Act covers the whole of the UK and provides protection for people discriminated against because they are perceived to have, or are associated with someone who has, a protected characteristic. Protection applies to the provision of services and public functions. In addition, a new Socio-Economic Duty was introduced in Wales in 2020 which requires public bodies, when making strategic decisions such as deciding priorities and setting objectives, to consider how their decisions might help reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage.

Preventing youth homelessness

Welsh Government, in its Programme for Government, outlines key commitments to legislate in line with the key recommendations in the documents below in relation to homelessness and care experienced young people. Our HSP Strategy takes account of key recommendations which include improving joint working across housing and social services, and strengthening corporate parenting responsibilities



4 Vision and Principles

Our vision for homelessness prevention, relief of homelessness and housing related support services is directly aligned to the vision set out in our Corporate Plan, and its three underpinning principles. The **vision** is that:

'Statutory, third and private sector partners work effectively together to make sure that people in Rhondda Cynon Taf have access to suitable housing and can stay within their local communities. The right support is available within local communities, to prevent those at risk of becoming homeless from losing their homes. We strive to secure appropriate accommodation as swiftly as possible for those that have become homeless, along with the right kind of personalised support, helping them to a secure future and optimising their wellbeing. Rhondda Cynon Taf is a place where homelessness is prevented or rare, brief and unrepeatable.'

Providing the right accommodation and high-quality support to people who are or may become homeless are principles that run through our approach. We will continue to develop our offer, building on what we have already established and what we have learnt through the Covid-19 pandemic. We will respond to user needs and use new technologies to unlock the ability to support people in new and responsive ways to enable them to fulfil their potential and prosper.

5 Statement of Need

The **Statement of Need**, available as a separate document, summarises the findings from a comprehensive **Needs Assessment**, which is also available separately. It identifies the key issues that need to be addressed through the HSP strategy and specific imperatives for RCTCBC in discharging its statutory duties to prevent and alleviate homelessness. The Needs Assessment was undertaken in line with Welsh Government guidance and combines a wide range of quantitative data with intelligence gathered through extensive engagement with a range of stakeholders. A summary of the key findings from the Needs Assessment is provided below.

Overview of Rhondda Cynon Taf

RCT features some of the most deprived areas in Wales. However, the pattern of deprivation across RCT is uneven and is concentrated in particular areas, in large part along the Cynon Valley in communities such as Penrhiwceiber and Pen-y-waun, and along the Rhondda Valley in communities such as Tylorstown and Treherbert.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the numbers of vulnerable people now owed a homelessness duty by the Council, along with the removal of the 'Priority Order' by Welsh Government at the beginning of the pandemic. The increase in presenting complex needs requires a better coordinated RCT corporate and multi-sector response.

There has been a rapid increase in the numbers of people in temporary accommodation and reduction in availability in the Private Rented Sector, meaning there is an increased pressure to secure new accommodation, particularly single bedroomed accommodation. The pandemic has also highlighted the need for system partners such as Housing, Health and Probation to work better together and improve their data sharing to better support our residents. Below are the key areas for consideration in the strategy that have come from our detailed look at need in the County.

Understanding Need

Housing Support services exist to help prevent homelessness, social exclusion, isolation and institutionalisation. As outlined earlier in the strategy the Welsh legal and policy framework makes it clear that early intervention reduces undue escalation and avoids a crisis, with knock-on impacts to health, inclusion and independence.

The Needs Assessment shows that demand for housing outstrips supply, particularly in relation to one bedroom accommodation, despite the best efforts of the Council to create new options for temporary accommodation, supported accommodation and permanent housing. This makes the role of prevention even more urgent and the need to support people to maintain their existing accommodation. Of the 4720 current (at the time of writing this strategy) applicants on the Homefinder housing application/allocations system just over 50% require a one-bedroom property.

More than three quarters (104 in total) of those in top priority for housing (Band A) require a one bedroom property.

Understanding the activity of system partners such as Health, Probation and Education and having access to the information they have on people's needs is vital to effectively plan services and provide support early, before crises develop.

Our Resilient Families programme was cited by stakeholders as supporting the homelessness prevention agenda and could be built upon. There is clearly some cross over between the prevention agendas of both the HSP and the Resilient Families Programme. We will further explore how these programmes can strategically and operationally complement each other going forward.

Sharing Data

The Needs Assessment highlights Population Assessment findings, Council reviews and stakeholder feedback that indicates that data and intelligence sharing does not happen well enough currently. Where several agencies are involved with a homeless person, information sharing arrangements between local authority, health, probation, housing and third sector partners should be improved, and aligned with agreed national frameworks to better inform future service planning.

Stakeholders stated prevention and early intervention initiatives across RCT need to be strategically and operationally aligned to maximise the benefits that can be achieved through these services.

Mental health and Substance Misuse

Single people aged 25+ currently form the highest proportion of homelessness presentations to the Council. Many of these have co-occurring mental health and substance misuse challenges.

The Needs Assessment identifies meeting the needs of people with mental health conditions, substance misuse, including where the two co-occur, as the most significant issue for the Council and our partners.

RCT has amongst the highest reported incidences of substance misuse, mental illness and poor well-being in Wales. Mental health problems are the most common reason for there being priority housing needs in RCT and housing problems are frequently given as a reason for a person being admitted or re-admitted to inpatient mental health care. People with mental illness are far more likely to live in rented accommodation and their mental ill-health is often given as a major reason for tenancy breakdown.

There are high numbers of people requiring HSG services that have co-occurring mental health and substance misuse issues. Housing support services state that it is difficult to gain access to NHS

mental health and substance misuse treatment services for these people. Services are dealing with an increased complexity of needs since the COVID-19 pandemic and more people with complex needs are being placed in temporary accommodation. Floating Support services, that support people in temporary accommodation, also report referrals having higher complexity of needs.

Services need to adapt to meet these increased levels of need and risk. A new specialist regional service for homeless people experiencing co-occurring mental health and substance misuse needs is now in place and will need to be evaluated.

Young People

18% of homelessness presentations since 2019 have been made by young people under 25. Many of these young people will be 'care-experienced'. Break down in relationships with families is still one of the prominent reasons young people present as homeless in RCT. We will ensure that our corporate approach to supporting young people is strengthened – ensuring a 'one RCT' strategic approach to prevention and targeted early intervention activities.

All Welsh Councils including RCTCBC have recently been tasked by Welsh Government to examine their corporate parenting response in relation to care experienced children and young people (CYP) and their future accommodation needs. Specifically, it requests that councils respond to the need for:

- An active identification process to ensure care experienced young people presenting as homeless can access all the support they are entitled to in cooperation with children's services.
- Multi-agency reviews to be undertaken to identify any gaps within the system or interventions that could have taken place to ensure future similar cases are prevented for care experienced young people presenting as homeless;
- Granting 'local connection' status for care experienced young people who are placed out-of-county, when moving on;
- Extending Personal Adviser support up to the age of 25.

Future corporate joint working and commissioning will need to reflect a more joined up corporate parenting approach to preventing future homelessness.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

Increasing numbers of referrals are unable to be accepted by Refuge services in RCT because of the levels of need and/or risk – this is largely due to co-existing challenges such as history of trauma, substance misuse and mental health challenges.

Whilst homelessness applications for those fleeing domestic abuse are not high, they are more complex and there is a need for service development particularly in respect of enhancing domestic abuse programmes that work with perpetrators of abuse.

Homelessness Relief & Providing Suitable Accommodation

We have a statutory duty to relieve homelessness as well as prevent it. Our ability to fulfil our duties is currently challenged by the increase in the number of people presenting with complex, co-occurring substance misuse and mental health needs. The current accommodation and support options available are not designed to meet the needs of this group. This leads to people being accommodated in the wrong accommodation and can lead to more exclusions. Specifically, the needs assessment highlighted the need for:

- Flexible and semi-permanent (where required) options for more complex serially excluded people with chronic substance misuse and mental health challenges.
- More options that ensure 16–25-year-olds and in particular 'care-experienced' young people are placed in age appropriate accommodation.
- More options to ensure women who are accommodated via an offenders pathway, who often have a history of experiencing domestic violence, are not inadvertently placed alongside men with a history of perpetrating domestic violence.

Fundamental to the Housing Support Programme is helping people live independently in the community. This includes not just access but assessing and influencing supply and suitable accommodation in all communities in the County.

Housing First has been implemented in RCT to support those with the most complex needs, in particular ex-offenders and young people. The services provide accommodation and support that works with people with complex needs, using assertive outreach and rapid response approaches. Rapid Rehousing is a vital part of Welsh Government policy and Housing First in RCT provides a robust foundation for this to move forward. Stakeholders want to see Housing First extended for people with more complex needs – something we are committed to exploring.

Single People

The needs assessment shows that single person households have consistently accounted for the majority of cases where the Council has provided assistance to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Single male applicants form the largest proportion of applicants made by those who have been homeless within the last two years. The proportion of single male applicants has risen from 46% of the total in 2017 to 58% in 2021.

Single male applicants account for more placements into temporary accommodation than all other households combined, with single female applicants accounting for the second highest number of

placements.

Forty per-cent of the people placed in temporary accommodation had been placed multiple times, reflecting the increasing complexity of needs presenting and the number of people requiring temporary accommodation has significantly increased.

Temporary accommodation is provided mostly in privately owned bed and breakfast premises. In 2020/21 524 individuals, families and groups were placed in temporary accommodation (as of the end of March). 40% of the 524 were placed in temporary accommodation multiple times, leading to a total of 852 placements in 2020/2021.

There is an urgent need to reduce the dependence on bed and breakfast accommodation and develop new temporary and supported accommodation suitable for longer stays. Stakeholder engagement called for improved accessibility for all from low to complex needs through a single assessment centre approach with a 'no wrong door' philosophy.

A single assessment approach, with multi-disciplinary assessment of need for single homeless people may help reduce repeat episodes of homelessness by recognising and responding to the complexity of homeless people's challenges.

Private Rented Sector

The Needs Assessment highlights a lack of accommodation for people to move into, or to move on from, supported or temporary accommodation. A key part of the move on accommodation market is the Private Rented Sector (PRS). Since the pandemic, and with the increase in house and rental values in RCT, many private landlords now no longer want to work with Council referred clients, preferring to find private tenants.

We have secured funding from Welsh Government to set up the Social Lettings Agency. This is improving access to the private rented sector but its impact is slower than was hoped because of the current challenges engaging private landlords. Work needs to continue to engage private landlords and develop this market for single people.

Planning and building

We have a housing crisis. Planning and building of new homes is urgently needed, in particular one bedroom accommodation. These developments need to address the urgency of the housing shortage whilst also respecting the needs and uniqueness of local communities.

People with physical difficulties often apply for rehousing from hospital, often with very short timescales. In these situations, the Council need more data and notice at an earlier stage. There is a

need to find more short term solutions whilst a move on accommodation is adapted or built. Two properties are in place for this purpose and the Council are also looking at the use of Extra Care for respite. There needs to be a strategic, multiagency approach to new creative housing and support options.

Supported Accommodation and Floating Support

After being largely constant for several years, referral levels for housing related support increased significantly in 2019/20, with a range of presenting needs:

- Mental Health
- Homeless or needs to prevent Homelessness
- Older Vulnerable People
- Physical Disability
- Domestic Abuse
- Vulnerable Family

This trend continued in 2020/21 for those who were homeless, where there was a need to prevent homelessness and among vulnerable families, but for all other needs there were significantly lower levels of referrals. This can reasonably be attributed to the disruption of the pandemic with additional funding to respond to homelessness and the closure of schools leading to additional need for support for families.

Stakeholders raised concerns about how the pandemic has caused the need for support to be 'saved up' during lockdown and expect a significant increase in demand for 2021/22 and beyond. They also highlighted the higher levels of need and risk they now support and that some people need permanent living options within a supported housing environment. Stakeholders felt housing related support responses, for the most complex and hard to engage, need to be more timely.

The existing National Outcomes Framework used to measure outcomes of the support provided, gives information on how people are progressing but does not give sufficient insight into what has been effective in the support provided to achieve those outcomes. Work, underway in Welsh Government to introduce a Single Outcomes Framework, delayed by the pandemic, will help all services address this going forward.

HSG funding is used as part of the integrated approach in Children's Social Services. However, there is insufficient data on support outcomes from Supported Lodgings for young people to understand their effectiveness. Arrangements are in place with Children's Social Services to start to develop and effectively monitor the effectiveness of this housing option for young people leaving care.

Adult Social Services also utilise HSG funding for Physical Disability, Learning Disability and Specialist Mental Health Placements. There is insufficient data on housing related support outcomes achieved

by these services to be able to draw conclusions on their effectiveness.

Work is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of HSG funded services in light of increasing needs and risks, and to better meet future requirements post-pandemic.

Multi-agency working

There are a high number of people requiring housing support who have challenges associated with mental health and/ or substance misuse and the need for collaborative working across the NHS, the local authority and other sectors to provide appropriate, holistic support. The frequent challenges experienced in securing this have been highlighted by stakeholders.

Stakeholders also frequently commented on the challenges in accessing support from NHS and Probation colleagues. They highlighted the urgency of having a better multi-agency operational response to inclusion with the express aim of agreeing a consensus on how to collectively work with homeless people with complex needs or individuals at risk of losing their accommodation.

It was clear from the Needs Assessment process that effective multiagency working at regional, strategic and operational levels is vital to provide the right integrated support.

Substantial work is needed to develop joint working practices at all levels and with all system partners in RCT.

Conclusion

The range of findings within the Needs Assessment provide clear messages for the future direction of our Housing Strategy and HSG funded services. The following Strategic priorities reflect these messages and indicate how the Council our partners will work together to deliver our collective vision.

6 Strategic Priorities

Our priorities for the delivery of HSP and Homelessness Prevention and Relief services have been informed by both the needs assessment and stakeholder engagement. It has also been informed by national, regional and local wider policy requirements such as the move to rapid rehousing and our learning from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our priorities also take account of the Rapid Review of Homelessness that was undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and we have incorporated actions that arose from that review into our strategic plan. The Health Needs Assessment that was undertaken by Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB in 2020 is also an important influence on our plans, specifically our partnership approach to extending access to healthcare and mental health and substance misuse services are a high priority for this strategy.

The work to analyse local data on homelessness, performance of current services and engagement with stakeholders has enabled us to establish three strategic priorities for our homelessness strategy, and a series of areas where we wish to take action over the next four years to strengthen our approach to preventing and relieving homelessness.

Priority 1: Strengthening early intervention and prevention approaches and specialised support to prevent homelessness

This is important in ensuring that holistic, wrap-around support is available to individuals and that specialised needs and those resulting from the pandemic are effectively addressed. This will help ensure that duties around targeted prevention introduced by the Housing (Wales) Act are fully met.

Housing Support services exist to help prevent homelessness, social exclusion, isolation and institutionalisation. Prevention is core business in homelessness services and fundamental to our approach is to return to business as usual with a focus on homelessness prevention and improvement on pre-pandemic performance levels. We have a strong track record in prevention of homelessness with the number of households receiving prevention assistance and resulting in homelessness halving from 2015 to 2017 and remaining consistently low since then.

Our Housing Solutions Team is critical in homelessness prevention to seek out accommodation options that meet people's needs. This includes, for example, the development of the Social Letting Agency that has sought to build relationships with private rented landlords to make property available to those in housing need. We have also commissioned placements for young people in private homes to alleviate housing need and have a strategy for utilising underoccupied private housing.

This approach to housing alongside on-going support provided to people through floating support services are critical to our preventive approach.

Our approach to prevention will be underpinned by a 'one RCT' philosophy, particularly in relation to care experienced children and young people. A refreshed corporate parenting approach that explicitly outlines how we will plan for the future accommodation needs for care experienced young people will be put in place and supported by a learning and development plan that ensures the approach is understood at both strategic and practice levels both within the council and amongst its strategic partners.

We intend to build on our already positive corporate response to the needs of care experienced young people approach in relation to:

- Commissioning
- Joint working (particularly across social services, housing and education)
- Projecting future need

Early and timely intervention aims to reduce undue escalation to avoid a crisis situation, with a knock-on impact to health, inclusion and independence. We will focus on the following areas to strengthen our approach to prevention:

- a) Ensuring there is a seamless corporate approach to prevention.
- b) Improving data sharing between Health, Housing, Probation and support providers - including use of data for planning services.

Priority 2: Ensuring people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness access the right home at the right time and in the right place, as part of our Rapid Rehousing approach

Fundamental to the HSP is being able to help people live independently in the community. This includes not just access but assessing and influencing the supply of suitable accommodation. Housing supply, particularly single bedroom units is in particularly high demand in RCT including a particularly competitive private rented market. We aim to build on the successes of our Housing First model towards Rapid Rehousing and a refreshed approach to supporting people find the right accommodation with the right support from the outset. A Single Point of Access service and 'no wrong door approach' that we intend to take are fundamental to the future way in which we will support people that approach us for help. We will do this by:

- a) Building on the successes of the Housing First model towards Rapid Rehousing
- b) Reviewing how the future supported accommodation market can be reshaped and commissioned to respond to the increasing level of complex presentations through a multi-agency agreed approach to targeting and managing risk.
- c) Improving assessment, accessibility and assessment for single homeless people, reducing

reliance on the use of bed and breakfast and consider options to make temporary accommodation more sustainable and suitable for longer stays.

- d) Improving access to the private rented sector accommodation through the Social Letting Agency.
- e) Ensuring new homes are built to improve move on from temporary accommodation and review local letting requirements.

Priority 3: Providing high quality support to people who are or may become homeless, fully utilising available technology and ensuring effective cross-agency working

We know that timeliness and suitability of support is something that our service users depend upon. We will continue to innovate our offer as more becomes known of user needs, and as new technologies unlock the ability to support people in new and responsive ways. We will build on the current model of support for providing assistance to people with high, medium and low support needs. This will include:

- a) Improving multi-agency processes for people with complex and multiple support needs.
- b) Reviewing how technology can be used to support people and act on recommendations.
- c) Extending support for people with mental health and substance misuse challenges from the wider system; joint working with partners to further develop and review the multi-agency response on co-occurring issues.
- d) Developing more innovative accommodation and support options for both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Strategic Priority 4 – Work collaboratively to provide holistic, person-centred support with effective specialist interventions where necessary

We know that the complex and multi-faceted nature of homelessness requires a better joined up response across all relevant statutory and third sector partners. We have included specific actions that we feel will improve multi-agency responses and system working.

7 Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholders were engaged in the development of the priorities for this strategy through a series of on-line workshops, one to one interviews and via questionnaires including a questionnaire to service users. This formed a key element of the Needs Assessment. Groups engaged with included:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service users• HSG Team• Housing and Homelessness teams• Adult Social Care• RSLs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children’s Services• HSG Providers• NHS• Probation
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The main themes from stakeholders are included below and have influenced the strategic priorities and are incorporated into the Action Plan in [Annex A](#).

- Improve accessibility for everyone from those with low to complex needs with a one door / assessment centre approach and a ‘no wrong door’ philosophy.
- Improve multi-agency working, in particular for mental health, substance misuse and where these are co-occurring.
- Ensure there is a better multi-agency operational response to inclusion with the aim of agreeing a consensus on how to collectively work with homeless complex individuals or individuals at risk of losing their accommodation.
- Extend the Housing First Model for more people with complex needs
- Recognise that people need permanent living options within a supported housing environment.
- Housing Related Support responses for the most complex and hard to engage need to be rapid: people need support when they need it.
- Review the use of bed and breakfast and consider other approaches to Temporary Accommodation such as temporary beds attached to a new Assessment Centre.
- Ensure prevention and early intervention initiatives are strategically and operationally aligned e.g. Resilient Families with effective information management and profiling.
- HSG intervention should start at the earliest opportunity, be placed based, and target high risk areas.
- Ensure HSG and Children’s Services utilise funding for Supported Lodgings effectively and understand the outcomes for young people.
- Safeguarding procedures for homeless people should be reviewed to ensure that they are sufficiently robust.

8 Impact Assessments

We have carried out an impact assessment on the priorities and actions we have outlined in this Strategy. Our impact assessment encompasses the following:

- Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)
- Welsh Language Impact Assessment
- Children's rights

EIA – Protected Characteristics

The EIA identified that our strategic priorities will have a positive impact on people identified as having protected characteristics. The Local Authority commissions services specifically for **older people** whose housing support needs are related to getting older, as well as services for **young people** who are at risk of homelessness or who are experiencing homelessness. Similarly, it commissions services for people with **disabilities and / or long-term conditions**, all with the aim of the primary aim of maintaining tenancies and avoiding homelessness.

The authority recognises the specific and targeted housing and housing support needs of people who identify as **LGBTQ+** in this strategy and action plan.

There are specific categories such as **pregnancy and maternity** that the Local Authority does not currently commission which are specifically aimed at this protected characteristic, however the Council's housing team and accommodation offer provides universal support to any individual in need of housing advice and support, regardless of their protected characteristics.

Welsh Language

The Council provides **opportunities for people to use and promote the Welsh language, treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language**, compliance with Welsh Language Standards, links with internal and external Welsh Language strategies. We do not currently commission services which are specifically aimed at this protected characteristic; however, advice, assistance and support are available through the medium of Welsh as an active offer.

Children's Rights Impact Assessment

The Council's Housing and Housing Support services address the support needs of the most **vulnerable children** and adults within the borough. The strategic priorities will contribute to the Council's overarching objective which is that all **children and young people get the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals**. The strategic priorities are geared up to ensure that all services are equipped to support those who are at risk or already experiencing homelessness.

Our commitment in this Strategy to strengthening our corporate parenting approach in relation to the future accommodation needs of 'care experienced' young people further protects the rights of children and young people we are responsible for.

9 Implementing, Monitoring and Reviewing the Strategy

The Public Policy Institute for Wales sets out in the Tackling Homelessness, A Rapid Evidence Review 2015 report:

"The evidence shows that homelessness is a complex problem. It often has multiple causes that interact with one another in ways that vary at the individual level and require engagement with multiple policy areas".

The root causes that lead to homelessness and/or evident housing support needs among vulnerable individuals and households are profoundly interconnected. The successful implementation of this strategy fundamentally depends not only on what the Council can do, but on our efforts of service co-ordination, joint planning, commissioning and delivery of services by both internal local authority departments, statutory partners and the housing sector.

We will be monitoring, steering and reviewing progress against the HSP strategy through the RCT HSP Planning Group. The group convenes on a quarterly basis. The chair is ultimately accountable for delivery of the strategy and responsibility for delivery is delegated to the HSP Lead Officer. Delivery against the strategy will be a standing agenda item at this meeting every quarter. A formal review of progress and an evaluation of impact will take place every two years as a minimum, but may be reviewed more frequently should it be deemed necessary. A key area of focus for the group will be to improve the information that is collected on outcomes across all strands of our investment using Housing Support Grant to support adults, children and people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities.

The strong links that have been formed with strategic groups and partnerships across Cwm Taf Morgannwg through the previous Supporting People governance arrangements have been further strengthened through the establishment of the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group (RHSCG), which provides a key forum for collaborative working.

The RHSCG has broad representation across agencies. Service users, providers, wider stakeholders and commissioners work together as equal partners to ensure that services remain fit for purpose, sustainable, resilient and able to meet the demand from those that need to access to them, both now and in the future.

Through these mechanisms we are able to escalate the challenges in homelessness prevention that sit within the responsibility of other public sector bodies. In particular we are able to point to the work we have done with Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board to undertake a detailed health needs assessment of our homeless population and to begin to invest in an improved response to those health needs, particularly in relation to mental health and substance misuse.

Members of the RHSCG also connect the HSP with other bodies have been established, supporting

more focused or specialised planning and delivery. These include:

- Cwm Taf Public Service Board
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board
- South Wales Substance Misuse Area Planning Board
- Criminal Offending and South Wales Safer Communities Board
- South East Wales Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Partnership Board
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board
- South East Wales Safeguarding Children's Board
- National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA)

The delivery of the areas identified within the Regional Workplan is also the collective responsibility of the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group (RHSCG). The regional statement will be a standing agenda item at the RHSCG meetings and regular updates will be provided by members of the group at each meeting. Oversight of this statement is the responsibility of the RHSCG Chair and the Regional Development Co-ordinator. The work to be taken forward through this statement will be detailed in a work plan overseen by the Regional Development Co-ordinator. Regional working provides a forum for us to deliver those things which are best done regionally. These can be categorised as:

- Development of specialist services for which there is not a critical mass locally. New regional projects (2021-2022) include:
 - Creation and launch of a Specialist Housing, Mental Health, Substance Misuse Team.
 - Development of a Research/Scoping project to determine the need for a CTM Regional LGBGTQ+ project.
 - Development of a Research/scoping project to determine the need for a BME project, specifically for those experiencing harmful cultural practices, alongside Housing related support needs.
 - An application via Public Health for funding programme - Communities for change Wales funding programme to aid developing mechanisms to share, interpret and use data for action across partners
- Development of regional services where justified by economies of scale
- Delivery of improvements to be achieved by collaboration
- Collaboration with other public services including strengthening information and data collection and sharing

Funding Sources

Alongside core funding for the Council through the RSG, the Housing Support Grant provides a key element of the resources needed to deliver this strategy. Welsh Government has recently announced the indicative HSG budget allocation set over the next 3 financial years 2022/23 through to 2024/25.

Our priorities for Social Housing Grant spend will also play a fundamental role in particular the delivery of more 1 bedroom units and further supported accommodation.

The 3 yearly indicative allocation is very much welcomed to allow for better strategic planning and assist us in enhancing and delivering new services to help meet the increasing demand for HSG services in the borough. It will also provide the opportunity to consider the demand and needs post the COVID-19 pandemic and enable us to continue to transform services to meet the needs of the citizens of RCT, incorporating new and different ways of working.

At the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, as the stay-at-home regulations came into force in Wales, the Minister for Housing and Local Government announced £10m of extra funding to ensure no one was left without access to accommodation. This meant that everyone could follow public health advice on basic hygiene, and hand washing, enabled them to follow social distancing guidelines and ensured they could self-isolate if they become ill.

A further £20m of extra funding was announced later in the year for Local Authorities to set out how they will ensure that no one need return to the street, focusing on innovation, building and remodelling to transform the accommodation offer across Wales.

Other funding streams such as the Children and Communities Grant will be deployed to facilitate the right support for target groups and optimisation of available resources.

We will continue our collaborative work with our partners in looking for joint commissioning opportunities and to maximise those opportunities, on both a local and regional basis. This includes the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Service Board, our Regional Partnership Board, and work with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, together with the agencies who we work closely with as part of RCT's HSP Planning Group.

Annex A: Action Plan

A: Action Plan

Strategic Priority 1 - Strengthen early intervention and prevention services and specialist support to prevent homelessness				
Action	Activities required to deliver the priority	Timescales/ By When	Responsible Officer	Intended Outcomes
Action 1 - Developing Homelessness Early Intervention & Prevention work	Develop basic workshops with schools, colleges and targeted families and communities to prepare CYP for future tenancies – ensure alignment with Resilient Families work.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The range of commissioned prevention services meet the needs of the citizens of RCT and prevents them from having to access statutory services Reduction in youth homelessness by developing education packages and more information for young people around housing
	Explore potential with Children’s Services for an Housing Advice Hub for CYP			
	Improve marketing / promotion of Prevention and Early Intervention assistance. Make this more visible and accessible.			

	Explore opportunities for a joint working with other LA depts to target early intervention opportunities.			<p>and homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater demonstrable awareness in young people of contributing factors that lead to housing issues and homelessness, with awareness about their rights and responsibilities
	Develop relationships with established community groups and provide regular drop- in sessions to offer IAA			
	Further examine and if necessary, strengthen our corporate parenting approach in relation to the future accommodation needs of 'care experienced' children and young people in response to a recent letter from WG to all Welsh LAs			
	Review the GRAMO Tenancy Ready Courses along with colleagues from Social Care to examine its efficacy for care experienced young people			
	Improve joint working with partners including housing,			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased partnership

Action 2 - Support for mental health and substance misuse - developing wider system joint working on co-occurring issues	health and Adult Social Care for the development of a multi- agency response on co-occurring issues and the review of current service provision through a task and finish group			working and improved access to housing support and homelessness prevention services by building relationships with health, probation, social services and RSLs and jointly reviewing and developing working practices and processes with key partner agencies. Outcomes will be evident through reduced tenancy failures or evictions from Social Housing or supported accommodation/hostel providers, reduced homelessness and reduced community risk
	Ensure closer working arrangements with Substance Misuse APB to address complex/co-occurring challenges			
	Continue to develop the regional specialist mental health and substance misuse outreach team. Work with regional colleagues to examine its potential in wider settings (currently frontline hostels and TA)			
	Jointly coproduce model and subsequent commissioning of services for people with complex co-occurring mental health and substance misuse			

	challenges with housing, HSG, NHS and Adult Social Care			
	Work with CTMUHB leads on mental health and substance misuse to take forward all the recommendations relating to co-occurring mental health and substance misuse challenges from recent Homelessness Health Review			
	Consider options to make temporary accommodation more sustainable and suitable for longer stays for people with complex co-occurring challenges			
Action 3 - Support for young people including	Develop a joint commissioning strategy between HSG and Children’s Services in relation to the future accommodation needs of care experienced CYP			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid response to incidents or individual risks of youth homelessness • Reduction in representations of youth homelessness
	Ensure HSG and Children’s Services review efficacy of and			

<p>an enhanced corporate parenting approach in relation to future accommodation needs</p>	<p>review funding for Supported Lodgings and understand the outcomes for young people</p>			
<p>Action 4 - Support for Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence</p>	<p>Review Regional VAWDASV plan in light of new emerging needs around co-occurring challenges.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services are more responsive to the diverse needs of people experiencing VAWDASV
	<p>Explore development of more accommodation and targeted support for the increasing number of women with more complex needs fleeing violence</p>			
	<p>Ensure existing and newly commissioned services are better equipped in dealing with co-occurring mental health and substance misuse challenges</p>			
	<p>Ensure commissioning of VAWDSA services considers the needs of LGBTQ+</p>			

	community			
	Co-produce an accommodation and support model for perpetrators with RSLs, substance misuse/mental health agencies and probation including the exploration of a 'step down' accommodation model for perpetrators			
	Complete research project jointly with neighbouring CBCs on housing related support needs of women experiencing harmful cultural practices e.g. from BME communities with aim of developing regional support project based on recommendations of report.			

Strategic priority 2 - Ensuring people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness access the right home at the right time and in the right place, as part of our Rapid Rehousing approach

Action	Activities required to deliver the priority	Timescales/ By When	Lead person	Intended Outcomes
Action 5 -Providing suitable accommodation towards rapid re-housing and the 'new normal'	Ensure the LHMA and revised LDP reflect the needs identified in the Housing Support Grant Needs Assessment particularly single bedroom units to assist with move on options			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in the supply of good quality affordable rented sector accommodation, increasing housing options for households faced with homelessness Improved assessment and accessibility for single homeless people, leading to more strategic targeted use of accommodation in line with holistic needs
	Increase Housing First options by implementing the Rapid Rehousing review recommendations and develop the Rapid Rehousing Plan			
	Ensure separate Housing First Options are developed for young people and older adults			
	Develop a robust Housing First Projects Operational Manual to ensure consistency of approach across Housing First Projects – to include review of			

	referral process			
	Finalise proposal to relocate the Mill Street hostel and develop a new 22-bedroom, 24/7 Assessment Centre for single homeless persons aged 18+			
	Include short and medium-term self-contained accommodation options and support to meet the needs of people at the time of assessment annexed to the new Assessment Centre			
	Develop a holistic, multi-disciplinary, multi-agency service model for the Assessment Centre			
	Develop professional relationships with private landlords to increase more long-term tenancy opportunities in PRS			
	Develop options for additional			

	units of shared housing for use as temporary accommodation in the private rented sector			
	Develop options for alternative forms of TA including more generic support accommodation projects			
	Review current allocations policy. Agree and implement policy changes with RSL partners to support transition to RR model.			
Action 6 -Review of Covid impact on temporary accommodation	Reduce numbers of people in B&B			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A plan for reducing the use of B&B accommodation and unsuitable temporary accommodation
	Continue to map support needs of those in B&B/TA to be able to plan appropriate permanent move on options.			
	Increase supported accommodation provision to reduce use of B&B, particularly for service users with multiple complex needs – with flexible expectations around move on.			

	Continual review of utilisation of temporary accommodation			
Action 7 - Increase access to the Private Rented Sector	Facilitate closer working relationships with local private landlords and letting agencies in recognition of current housing situation			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in the number of homeless households who have their homelessness prevented or relieved through the provision of a private rent tenancy.
	Implement the national rollout of the Social Letting Agency			
	Provide 'Tenancy Ready' training to prospective tenants to maximize chances of maintaining tenancies			
	Maximise work on empty properties with a view to using them for social housing, either through PRS or RSLs.			
Action 8 -Ensure new homes are built to improve move on from temporary accommodation	Ensure new developments meet the assessed housing need identifies in the HNA.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased supply of general needs affordable accommodation to be let through via our common allocation policy.
	Establish a healthy development 'main' and 'reserve' programme to meet			

	avoid SHG underspend and meet housing need.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of completed affordable housing units by our partner RSL's will show an annual increase for the lifespan of this Strategy with a significant increase in 1-bed accommodation • Diversified accommodation portfolio to meet the range of presenting need as well as increasing affordable units
	Ensure s.106 arrangements for private developers as outlined in the LDP contribute to the aims of this Strategy			

Strategic Priority 3 – Providing high quality support to people who are or may become homeless, fully utilising available technology and ensuring effective cross-agency working

Action	Activities required to deliver the priority	Timescales/ By When	Lead person	Intended Outcomes
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Action 10 - Supported accommodation and floating support– improve security and consistency for providers, encouraging flexibility and innovation, reducing admin	Provide longer term funding commitment in line with WG 3-year HSG funding allocation to allow better planning and retention of staff.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear reported reduction in unnecessary bureaucracy and non-support facing tasks by providers • Support is delivered in a variety of ways and methods (e.g. face-to-face, virtual and remote), ensuring support is more accessible, engaging and timely, meeting the needs of the people using services
	Hostels/SA given priority for move on from TA where appropriate - operating step up/step down policy to support tenancy sustainability. Provide additional, consistent training for all HSG funded staff; suicide awareness, mental health training, housing legislation training			
	Develop digital inclusion skills across services as well as the people we are supporting – linking into to Digital Communities Wales			

	Review how we have embraced technology and provided services differently during the COVID-19 pandemic.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both staff and people in the community are able to engage digitally and actively have their needs met through these methods
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Strategic Priority 4 – Work collaboratively to provide holistic, person-centred support with effective specialist interventions where necessary

Action	Activities required to deliver the priority	Timescales/ By When	Lead person	Intended Outcomes
Action 11 - Improve multi-agency responses and system working	Ensure the Housing Support Grant Planning Group steer and provide multi-agency oversight for the HSP Strategy and actions, ensuring that monitoring mechanism are in place and that links are sustained with key strategic groups and forums			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued regular meetings to encourage all agencies to support in issues affecting / affected by homelessness Increased knowledge and awareness to ensure effective and innovative housing related support services are
	Establish more frequent HSG Provider Forums to share best			

Passionate about public service

	practice across all multi-agencies and to keep updated on HSG/Housing policies and procedures.			<p>commissioned and delivered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New multi-agency innovative approach to planning and commissioning in place
	Develop training, updates and briefings to staff and providers to keep abreast of service developments, good practice, innovation and new practices via joint training sessions, HSG Planning Group, and local, regional and national fora			
	Identify joint funding arrangements with partners for the commissioning and delivery of services that require input from NHS, Social Services and Probation			

Annex B: National Policy Landscape

The evolving homelessness policy landscape has included:

- Publication in 2016 of 'Preventing Homelessness and Promoting Independence' – essentially a pathway to economic independence for young people through housing advice, options and homelessness prevention
- Introduction in 2016 of the 'When I'm Ready' arrangements under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act, which enabled young people in foster care to remain with their carers beyond the age of 18
- Publication in 2016 by Barnardos of the Care Leaver Accommodation and Support Framework aimed at supporting effective planning and provision of housing and support for young people and care leavers
- Introduction by Welsh Government of 'Housing First' recovery-orientated approach to ending homelessness that centres on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent, permanent housing and providing additional support and services as needed.
- A renewed emphasis, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic on reducing street homelessness by providing temporary accommodation solutions, leading to publication by Welsh Government of Phase 2 planning guidance requiring local authorities and their partners to plan to ensure that all those brought into temporary accommodation are supported into long term accommodation, that the emphasis remains on prevention and keeping homelessness a rare, brief and non-repeated experience.
- Phase 3 planning guidance (2020) supporting the design and development of resilient, sustainable services for the future
- A series of focused campaigns including the End Youth Homelessness Cymru Campaign 2018, focusing on the needs of the LGBT+ community, supporting those with mental health issues and reducing links between homelessness and educational disengagement and the care system
- Significant additional investment by Welsh Government, notably £10m in 2019-20 to tackle youth homelessness through enhancing current provision and developing new services; and launch of a £4.8m innovation fund in 2019-20 supporting 26 projects across Wales to new and innovative approaches to housing support
- A report to Welsh Government from the Homelessness Action Group in 2020 providing a holistic policy perspective to ending homelessness and the Government's response in the form of a consultation document entitled '**Ending homelessness: A high-level action plan: 2021-2026**', building on Phase 2 planning guidance.
- A requirement on Local Authorities to finalise a **Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan** by the end of September 2022.

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Appendix 2



**Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough
Council Housing Support Grant Needs
Assessment**

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Introduction

The Housing Support Grant (HSG) is an amalgamation of three previous grants; Supporting People Programme, Homelessness Prevention Grant, and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement.

It came into being in April 2019 following the Welsh Government funding flexibilities pathfinder project. A Ministerial decision was made in October 2018 to form two grants from the Early Intervention, Prevention and Support grant (EIPS) work, separating the housing-related grants from non-housing elements for all local authorities. Consequently, from April 2019, the Welsh Government established a Children and Communities Grant (CCG) (encompassing Flying Start, Families First, the Legacy Fund, Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People, St David's Day Fund, Communities for Work Plus and Childcare and Play), and a single Housing Support Grant (HSG) (encompassing Supporting People, Homelessness Prevention and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement).

Local authorities must undertake a comprehensive needs assessment every four years, with a light touch review every two years. This assessment is a statement of what the Authority knows about the needs and future demand for homelessness prevention and housing support services. The assessment encompasses the statutory requirement for a homelessness review as well as the full assessment for the HSG. The assessment is informed by the following data:

- Population needs assessment
- Local authority well-being assessment
- Homelessness statistics and other housing data such as waiting lists.
- Welsh index of multiple deprivation
- Feedback from service users
- Regional VAWDASV needs assessments
- Any relevant research/national publication
- Outcome's data
- Needs data from providers, gateway panels
- Unmet needs data over the last 12 months from providers, homelessness reviews

Local authorities should produce a 'Statement of Need' based on findings from the needs assessment. The statement should set out the current and future demands and should include regional needs where the needs are met by the local authority. The statement should also set out how statutory needs identified will be met through the discharge of statutory duties.



Background and National Policy Context

Welsh Government has maintained a focus on tackling homelessness in the context of the long-term impact of UK Government policy, in relation to austerity and welfare support, and also other non-devolved policy areas that have an impact on homelessness such as the work of the Police and Prisons. Local authorities have a duty to prevent and relieve homelessness that has led to a strengthening of local partnership arrangements. The guiding principle remains one of preventing homelessness, but where not possible, ensuring it is brief and non-repeated. There is a renewed commitment to fundamentally reform homelessness services to focus on prevention and rapid rehousing. Understanding what works, what is promising, and what isn't effective will be crucial to Welsh Government in delivering its policy goals.

Housing First was a change of direction for Government, in response to emerging evidence of its efficacy. The Phase 2 response during the initial phases of the pandemic sought to protect homeless people through providing temporary accommodation solutions and significantly reducing street homelessness. The gradual return to 'normality' provides the opportunity to evaluate the impact and benefits of the variously funded programmes to inform the next phase of policy development with a particular focus on prevention and rapid re-housing.

There are a number of principles that underpin the Welsh Government approach to homelessness prevention, that should be enshrined across public and commissioned services:

- The earliest preventions are most effective and most cost effective and should always be the interventions of first choice.
- Tackling and preventing homelessness is a public services matter – rather than a 'housing matter'.
- All services should place the individual at the centre and work together in a trauma informed way.
- The duties in Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 should be the last line of defence – not the first - and all services should work to the spirit not simply the letter of the law.
- Policy, service delivery and practice should be informed and shaped in a co-productive manner and by those with lived experience.

Below is a summary of relevant legislation and policy and their intended impact:

Policy /legislation	Intended action/impact/purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing (Wales) Act 2014 (Part 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new strengthened duty on local authorities to take reasonable steps to prevent and relieve homelessness, with an emphasis on prevention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (Part 6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening arrangements for leaving care including suitable accommodation and support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) 2015 Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a lens through which all public services policy and service planning is to be considered with an emphasis on well-being, prevention, and early intervention

Policy /legislation	Intended action/impact/purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality Act 2010 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duty to promote equality, takes account of protected characteristics, and a new duty to consider socio-economic inequality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of Preventing Homelessness and Promoting Independence: (Welsh Government 2016) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting young people with economic independence through housing advice, options, and homelessness prevention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care Leaver Accommodation and Support Framework, (Barnardo's 2016) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support effective planning and provision of housing and support for young people and care leavers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the "When I'm Ready" (Welsh Government 2016b) Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling young people in foster care to stay with their foster carers for longer;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (Welsh Government 2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment, or training;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of the End Youth Homelessness Cymru campaign 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ending youth homelessness within the LGBT+ community. reducing the links between educational disengagement and youth homelessness. reducing links between the care system and youth homelessness; and support for those with mental health issues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP) 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research into the causes and prevention of youth homelessness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of homelessness services to young people in the secure estate (Welsh Government) 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand the early impacts of the legislation on those young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness as they approach their release.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing First (HF) – National Principles and Guidance for Wales 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy of quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and then providing additional support and services as needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy for Preventing and Ending Homelessness 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out the strategic approach the Welsh Government is taking to prevent and address homelessness in Wales
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 2 – Planning Guidance for Homelessness and Housing Related Support Services 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on transforming approaches to preventing homelessness whilst ensuring that everyone brought into temporary accommodation secures long term accommodation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 3 – Planning Guidance for Homelessness and Housing Related Support Services 2020 Move to 'New Normal' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and build resilient, sustainable services for the future.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The framework of policies, approaches and plans needed to end homelessness in Wales - Report from the Homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What ending homelessness in Wales needs to look like from a holistic policy perspective.



Policy /legislation	Intended action/impact/purpose
Action Group for the Welsh Government 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximum homelessness prevention at all stages, e.g., crisis response, more targeted/earlier prevention for people at risk of homelessness, and a universal approach across society to tackle the root causes.• Rapid rehousing as the default approach to quickly help people experiencing homelessness to be rehoused with all the support they need.• Investing in people to help end homelessness by funding and supporting workforces, involving people with lived experience of homelessness, and mobilising charities and volunteers more.

About Rhondda Cynon Taf

Summary

- Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) is the second largest authority in Wales
- RCT features some of the most deprived areas in Wales. However, the pattern of deprivation across RCT is uneven
- The pattern of deprivation across RCT is uneven and is concentrated areas
- Homes are more affordable RCT than in other areas of Wales but are still often beyond the reach of those on low incomes
- Indicators for health, income, employment, and housing highlight the different pressures that people can face which can put them at higher risk of homelessness
- Rhondda Cynon Taf has an increasing older population which needs to be considered in planning the housing and support needs of the community over the next two decades.

Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) is the second largest authority in Wales with a population of 234,410 according to the 2011 census. The County Borough covers an area of 424 square kilometers and borders Merthyr Tydfil and Caerphilly to the east, Cardiff, and the Vale of Glamorgan to the south, Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot to the west and Powys to the north. The principal towns in the area are Aberdare, Llantrisant and Pontypridd.

Population

At the recording of the 2011 census the total population of RCT was 234,410, and was comprised of:

- 50,131 people under the age of 18,
- 22,403 people between 18 and 24,
- 121,803 people aged 25 to 64 and
- 40,073 people 65 and over.

In 2011, the mean age of the population was 39.8. There were 105,269 dwellings with the population living in a total of 99,663 of these. These were made up of:

- 36,388 owner occupier's households where the property is owned outright.
- 34,422 where the household has an outstanding mortgage on the property.
- 150 households in shared ownership.
- 13,673 households live in social housing lets.
- 13,604 households live in the private rented sector.
- 1,476 households live rent free in some form of tenure.

The Welsh Government estimated that 241,873 people live in RCT in June 2020¹, a decline of 459 people from the 2019 estimate. RCT's total population is predicted to grow modestly, largely as a result of migration, whilst the demographics of the population will change significantly as people aged 65+ become a larger proportion of the population. The population of the area is projected to grow to 252,418 by 2040, a growth of 4% from the 2020 estimate.

¹ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Estimates/Local-Authority/populationestimates-by-localauthority-year>

Between 2018 and 2040, population projections suggest that the number of people aged 65+ will grow from 45,994 to 57,715, a growth of 25%. Older age groups have significantly higher levels of population growth, with people aged 80+ predicted to grow by 45% in the same time, reflecting an ageing population with more complicated and intensive health and social care needs.

Area	Estimated population 2018	Projected population in 2040 based on 2018 estimate	Estimated variance in projected population	Estimated percentage variance in projected population
Rhondda Cynon Taf	240,131	252,418	+12,287	5.1%
Merthyr Tydfil	60,183	63,154	+2,971	4.9%
Bridgend	144,876	157,328	+12,452	8.6%
Cwm Taf Morgannwg	445,190	472,900	+27,710	6.2%

Table 1 Estimated projected population for Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2040 compared to neighbouring local authorities²

Housing

Where people live has a big influence on their well-being, with associations between housing and physical and mental health. In RCT a number of areas have been identified as having significant levels of housing deprivation such as Mountain Ash West and Rhydyfelin Central.

Economic assets:

- Urban regeneration in RCT gives us the opportunity to create places that attract investment and business and improve well-being. Tylorstown is a current example of a regeneration area.

Economic challenges:

- Homes are more affordable RCT than in other areas of Wales but may still be beyond the reach of young people and those on low incomes.
- Welfare reforms have badly affected communities particularly Maerdy and Penywaun
- Less prosperous areas of Wales including RCT have benefitted from investment of European funding. The withdrawal of this funding once Britain leaves the European Union will be a considerable loss.

Wellbeing assessment

The Council has a legal duty to work together with the people of RCT, for their future well-being. This duty is set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Act includes seven national well-being goals, which the Council have to contribute to achieving:

² <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Projections/Local-Authority/2018-based>



Figure 1 Seven National Well-being Goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act

The Authority, with its partners is required to undertake a well-being assessment as part of its commitment to improving well-being. Published in 2017 the picture will be updated in 2022 with the new census data and Wellbeing Assessment. The RCT Housing Support Programme Strategy will be refreshed after two years, allowing this new data to be incorporated into the need’s assessment. The relevant findings of the Cwm Taf Well-being Assessment are summarised below.

Wellbeing Plan

From the Well-being Assessment the Cwm Taf Public Service Board created the Well-being Plan. Housing Support Grant funded services have a significant role to play in delivering several key objectives.

Tackling loneliness & isolation

We will work in new ways to channel the undoubted strengths of our communities, including volunteering to tackle more effectively the loneliness and isolation which often exists within many of them.

Thriving Communities

To promote safe, confident, strong, and thriving communities improving the wellbeing of residents and visitors and building on our community assets.

Healthy People

To help people live long and healthy lives and overcome any challenges.

Deprivation

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is the measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales. It identifies areas with the highest concentrations of several different types of deprivation

including, income, health, and education. Data in the WIMD is broken down into Lower layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) comprised of an average of 1,500 people – in Wales there are 1,909 LSOAs. This enables community level insights into overall deprivation and specific domains, such as health, which are closely linked with people’s vulnerability to homelessness.

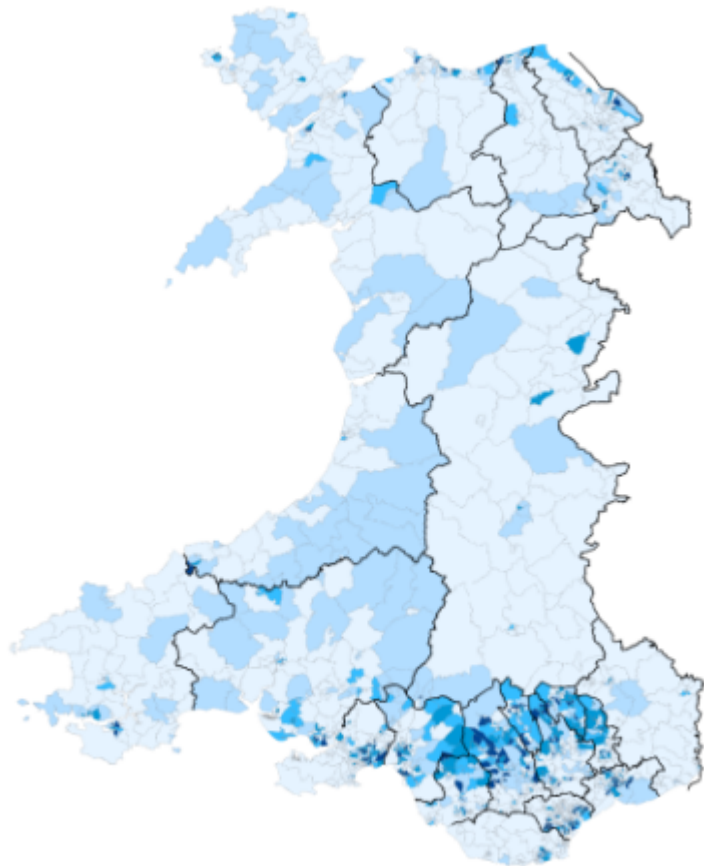


Figure 2: Map of Wales by Lower Super Output Area overall deprivation (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019)

RCT features some of the most deprived areas in Wales with 26 LSOAs classed as among the 10% most deprived in Wales, and the majority of LSOAs in the local authority in the 30% most deprived.

The pattern of deprivation across RCT is uneven and is concentrated areas. Deprivation in RCT is in large part concentrated along the Cynon Valley in communities such as Penrhiwceiber and Pen-y-waun, and along the Rhondda Valley in communities such as Tylorstown, and Treherbert. This is reflected in the table below which highlights the most deprived LSOAs in the area, including Tylorstown where WIMD indicator data states that 47% of people in the area were in income deprivation in 2016/17. In contrast, the majority of LSOAs in the south of the Local Authority are among the 50% least deprived, with deprivation at its lowest around Llantrisant and Llantwit Fardre.

Lower layer Super Output Area	WIMD 2014 rank	WIMD 2019 rank	Change in national rank between 2014 and 2019
Tylorstown 1	5	4	-2
Penrhiwceiber 1	15	6	-9
Pen-y-waun 2	9	15	+6
Rhydfelen Central / Llan 2	17	26	+9
Abercynon 2	37	33	-4

Table 3: Lower Layer Super Output Area Deprivation Rankings

Indicators for health, income, employment, and housing highlight the different pressures that people can face which can put them at higher risk of homelessness. In the health domain this includes mental health conditions, limiting long-term illness and chronic health conditions, all of which can make finding and retaining suitable affordable accommodation challenging.

Domain Construction

There are seven indicators in the health domain, weighted as follows:

- 31% GP-recorded chronic conditions (rate per 100), age-sex standardised
- 30% Limiting long-term conditions (rate per 100), age-sex standardised
- 18% Premature deaths (rate per 100,000) age-sex standardised
- 10% GP-recorded mental health conditions (rate per 100) age-sex standardised
- 4% Cancer incidence (rate per 100,000), age-sex standardised
- 4% Low birth weight (live single births less than 2.5kg, percentage)
- 3% Children aged 4-5 who are obese (percentage)

In the vast majority of cases, more deprived communities in the Rhondda and Cynon Valleys perform worse in the indicators referenced above than communities in the south of the county. The levels of homelessness and accommodation insecurity in RCT likely parallel levels of deprivation, particularly for areas performing worse in the domains identified above.

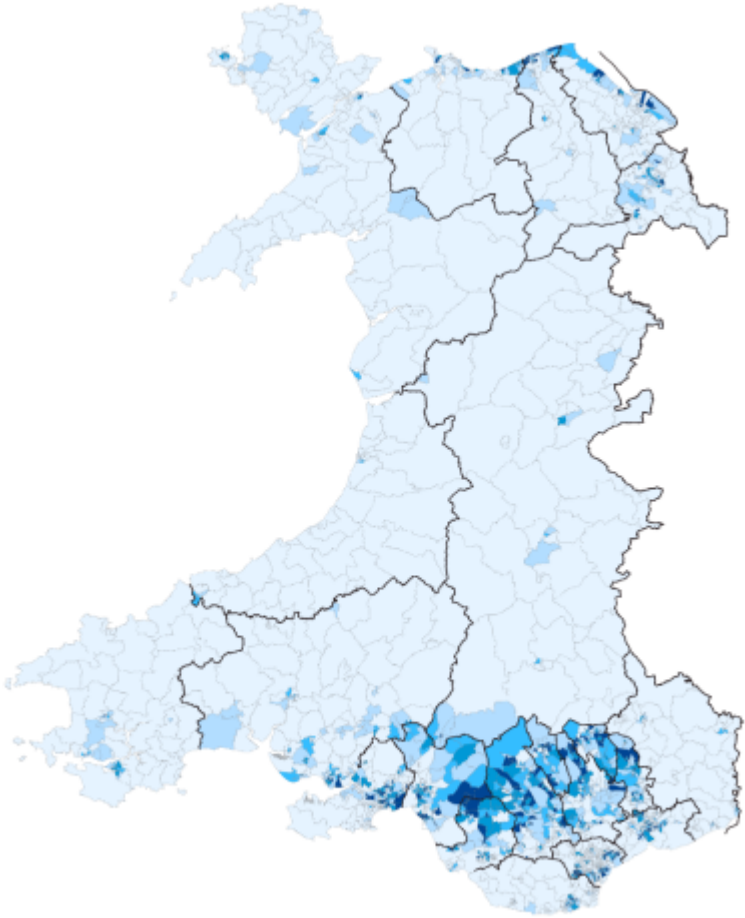


Figure 3: Map of Wales by Lower Super Output Area – health deprivation (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019)

Homelessness in RCT

Summary

- Outcomes following presentations to the Council for both prevention and relief of homelessness are generally better than the national average in the period before the Covid-19 pandemic
- Outcomes following the triggering of the duty to help secure accommodation (section 73) were significantly better in RCT than the Welsh average.
- The proportion of households assessed as homeless and owed a duty to help secure is among the lowest in Wales.
- Good progress is being made with recommendations following a rapid review of homelessness services in December 2020

This section analyses the data for:

- National homeless trends
- The impact of COVID-19 on homelessness presentations
- Performance against each of the duties of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014
- Rapid Review of Homelessness Services in RCT

Homelessness statistics and housing data have been primarily sourced from the LA’s own assistance data and its quarterly WHO12 returns. Data from 2021 covers the period from January to August, unless otherwise stated, and therefore any trends and interpretations from the data will not necessarily account for changes that occur after August.

The data shows that the majority of households that are either homeless or threatened with homelessness in RCT are single person households, of which the majority are male.



Figure 2: Welsh Government Homelessness Duty Flowchart

National trends in Wales

The following trends are identified based on quarterly data returns from Local Authorities to the Welsh Government (WHO12) covering 2019/20, published online by the Welsh Government. The data

shows that outcomes following presentations to RCT for both prevention and relief are on average better than the national average and other Local Authorities in the surrounding region. These results reflect the significant improvement in outcomes following the provision of assistance suggesting that RCT was performing well above average in the run up to the Covid-19 pandemic.³

In the 2019/20 period, RCT performed marginally better than the national average for homeless prevention, with around 73% of cases being successfully prevented in RCT compared to 67% across Wales as a whole. A similar proportion of cases, in RCT and across Wales, which were not prevented involved the following outcome categories: assistance refused, non-co-operation, application withdrawn, loss of contact or other reasons.

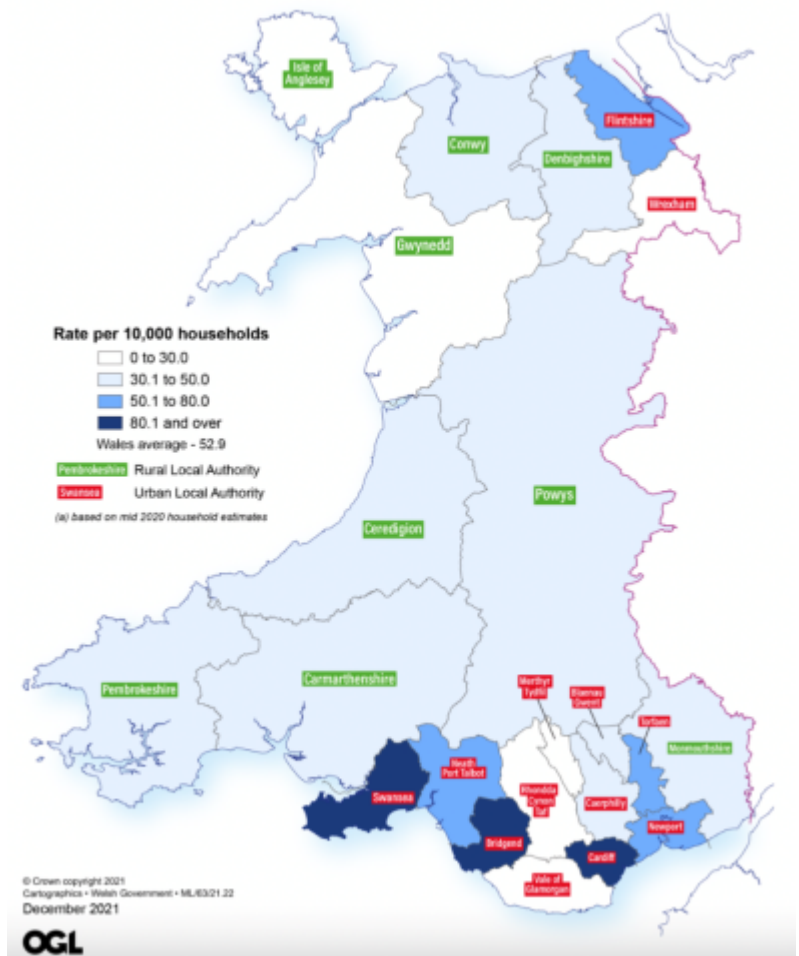


Figure 3: Households threatened with homelessness within 56 days, rate per 10,000 households, April 2020 to March 2021.

Outcomes following the triggering of the duty to help secure accommodation (section 73) were significantly better in RCT than the Welsh average. In the 2019/20 period, of the 12,399 outcomes of the duty to help secure across Wales, 41% resulted in successful relief – in RCT this is reported as 69%.

³<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Housing/Homelessness/householdsforwhichassistancehasbeenprovided-by-outcome-householdtype>

This may be linked with the proportion of households assessed as homeless and owed a duty to help secure in RCT being among some of the lowest in Wales at 68.28 per 10,000 households. In comparison, the lowest rate in Wales is in Ceredigion at 58.03 per 10,000 households and the highest rate in Wales is in the neighbouring LA, Merthyr Tydfil, at 166.47 per 10,000 households.

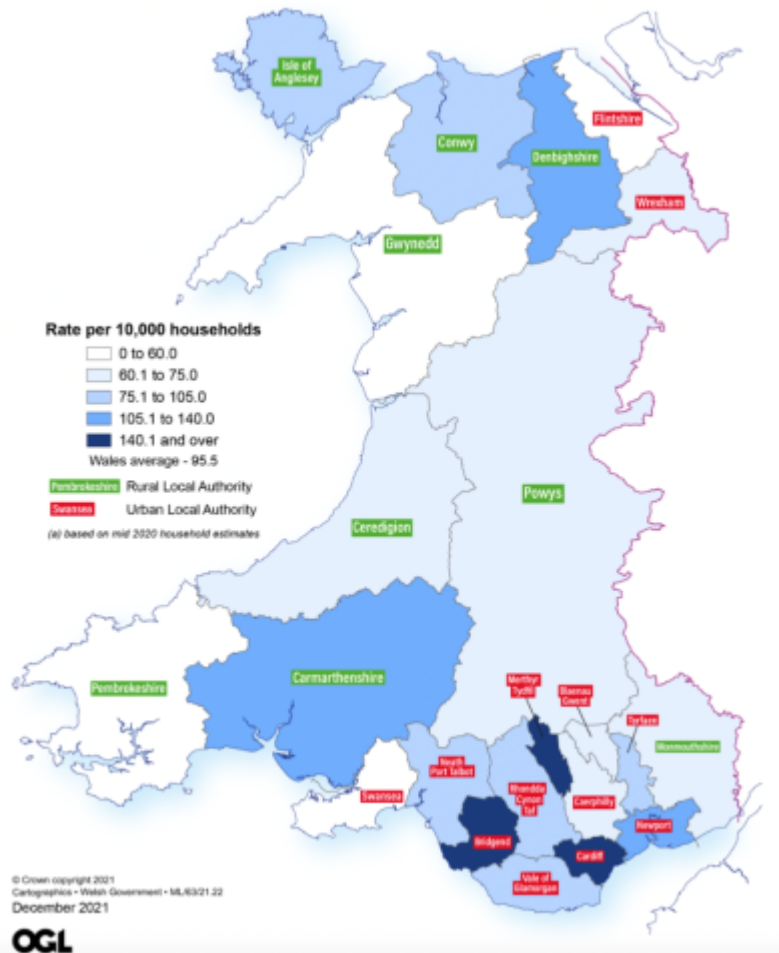


Figure 4: Households assessed as homeless and owed a duty to help secure accommodation, rate per 10,000 households, April 2020 to March 2021.

Outcomes from the final duty are marginally better in RCT with 81% positively discharged, compared to the Welsh average of 78%. A similar proportion, of around 20%, in RCT and Wales are not discharged positively due to the following WHO12 outcome categories: assistance refused, non-co-operation, application withdrawn, loss of contact or other reasons.

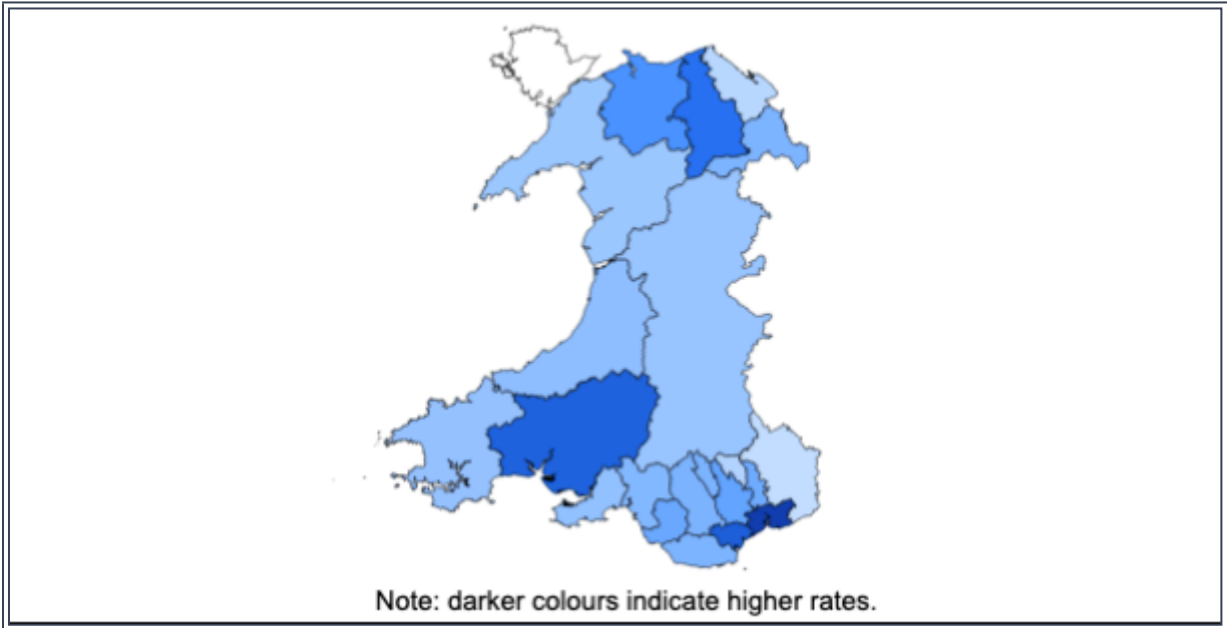


Figure 5: Households assessed as unintentionally homeless and in priority need, rate per 10,000 households, April 2020 to March 2021.

Impact of COVID-19

Summary

- COVID-19 has had a huge impact on the numbers of vulnerable people now owed a homelessness duty, and the range of complex needs that need support.
- It has led to a rapid increase in the numbers of people in temporary accommodation and reduction in availability in the Private Rented Sector.
- The pandemic has also highlighted the need for system partners such as Housing, Health and Probation to work better together and improve their data sharing.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a considerable amount of people being placed into temporary accommodation since March 2020. The situation is unchanged with regards to the change in the Homeless Legislation meaning that all who present are in 'priority need' (also known as the 'All In' policy).

Most of the individuals that typically end up in emergency accommodation have multiple needs and need a wide range of services to assist them. Information provided to Communities4Change Wales⁴ identified the impact of COVID-19 had reflected and exacerbated pre-existing inequalities⁵; its impacts on the population of RCT have been stark, given above average rates of unemployment, long-term conditions, disability, and financial insecurity. Housing, particularly overcrowding, has been identified as a key determinant in the transmission of the virus, as well as outcomes for those infected.⁶ This has posed a number of challenges:

- Supporting individuals with homelessness assistance remains an ongoing challenge; Rhondda Cynon Taf saw significant increases in homelessness applications
- A large proportion of Individuals presenting as homeless had a range of complex physical and mental health needs, (including substance misuse) which can be barrier to sustaining a tenancy in the long term.
- Poor housing has been cited repeatedly in needs assessments as a factor driving re-admissions and presentations to mental health services with tenancy breakdown and inappropriate housing allocation reported as key factors.⁷
- There is an issue of visibility: partners on both sides of the housing and health arena work in relative isolation from one another and it is difficult to gain a sense of the range and breadth of activity taking place aimed at reducing inequalities
- Furthermore, despite several detailed needs assessments and close collaborations between local partners there remains a consensus that existing systems for information sharing between agencies are poor and fragmented between agencies such as Health, Probation and Councils, hindering service delivery and planning.⁷ While each agency holds significant data, access to and sharing of such intelligence is inconsistent, making it challenging to translate such data into

⁴ Communities4Change Wales Application September 2021

⁵ Bamba C, Riordan R, Ford J, Matthews F. The COVID-19 pandemic and health inequalities. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* 2020; 74:964-968. Available from: <https://jech.bmj.com/content/74/11/964> [Accessed 7 Sept 2021].

⁶ Abbs I, Marshall L. 2020. Emerging evidence on COVID-19's impact on health and health inequalities linked to housing. Available from: <https://www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/blogs/emerging-evidence-on-covid-19s-impact-on-health-and-health-inequalities> [Accessed 7 Sept 2021].

⁷ Cwm Taf Public Services Board. 2018. Cwm Taf Population Assessment. Available from: <http://www.ourcwmtaf.wales/cwm-taf-population-assessment> [Accessed 7 Sept 2021].



collective action.

Engagement with staff in the Council and stakeholders highlighted how the pandemic has completely changed the landscape:

- The rapid increase in numbers of people in temporary accommodation.
- Higher levels of needs for people being referred to supported accommodation and floating support.
- Increased incidence of co-occurring needs such as mental health and substance misuse.
- Challenges in moving people on from temporary and supported accommodation particularly impacted by the reduced access to the private rented sector.
- Whilst there were examples of good joint working with system partners such as Health and Probation in initial lockdowns, this has reduced, and stakeholders described significant challenges with clients meeting eligibility for Health input in mental health and substance misuse. This has meant HSG and homelessness services having to manage those needs.
- Stakeholders commented on the challenge of receiving data from system partners such as Health, which restricts the effectiveness of support and future planning.

Rapid Review of Homeless Services

A rapid review of homelessness services was carried out by the Council’s Housing Strategy Department in August 2021. The purpose of the review was to examine current arrangements supporting homelessness and to make recommendations for changes designed to prevent homelessness and make homelessness rare, brief, and unrepeated. The following are the key recommendations from that review, including an update on progress.

Preventing Homelessness

Housing First	<p>The Council should develop a Housing First Projects Operational Manual for staff, that sets out the process, procedures and key responsibilities expected of organisations.</p> <p>Update: Project Officer appointed and in post who will be responsible for developing a HF framework including operational arrangements.</p> <p>The Council should further review the Housing First Rapid Response Project to investigate why service users haven’t received a response to service user feedback.</p>
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⁸ RCT Rapid Homelessness Review August 2021



	<p>The Council should further review staffing resources and capacity for Housing First Projects ensuring there is sufficient staffing to safely support high risk service user. Update: An additional 5 project staff have been funded and are in post to assist the HF Team. This includes a project manager who is responsible for overseeing the day to day operational and staffing arrangements.</p> <p>The Council should further review the Housing First Projects referral process to involve Project Workers within the process. The Project Workers work closely with the service users, their input could benefit the referral process, helping to make further improvements. Update: As above, the new project officer will review the referral form and referral pathway as part of the new role. In addition, there are fortnightly operational multi-agency meetings which are chaired by the Homefinder Team Manager which are attended by the HF Project workers.</p> <p>The Council should continue to manage the Social Housing Grant Programme with a focus on prioritising an increase in the much-needed supply of permanent 1 bedroom accommodation. The council should continue to work closely with local landlords through avenues such as the landlord forum to acquire suitable accommodation to support the needs of projects and service users.</p> <p>The council should continue to secure funding for temporary units for young people, in order to prevent homelessness and provide them with the skills to maintain a permanent tenancy.</p> <p>The Council should ensure that intensive support from Social Services (support workers) is fundamental for individuals with mental health issues to maintain a tenancy.</p>
<p>Allocation Policy</p>	<p>The Council should further review the content of the Homefinder website ensuring that the site is user friendly and accessible. It is recommended that there should be a dedicated Officer who has responsibility for updating the functionality of the website as well as ensuring that customer satisfactions surveys are accessible through the website in order to collect feedback from service users.</p> <p>The Council should carry out a further review of the RCT Allocation Scheme to incorporate any changes that have been adopted during 2020/21 and ensure that the Scheme continues to give overall priority to the reasonable preference categories.</p>

Securing Accommodation

Local Lettings Policy	The Council should continue to support the approvals for Local Lettings Policies, provided robust evidence is provided by the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) to support the need for the policy.
Emergency Accommodation	<p>The Council should employ a Young Persons' Housing Officer to help raise awareness amongst young people of their housing options, where to go for help and assistance and provide advice on the support available. Update: We have recently seconded a HSO to be a single point of contact for care leavers. Having dedicated workers can be challenging linked with cover and lack of expertise for annual leave and sickness absence.</p> <p>The Council should have more efficient data recording and analysis of move on reasons to ascertain if tenancies/family returns have been sustained. There are cases of move on reasons not being recorded and this may prevent a full analysis of the effectiveness of the scheme being able to be undertaken.</p>
Mill Street Hostel	The Council should recommission and relocate the Hostel provision in Mill Street and develop a new Assessment Centre. The new Centre should accommodate 24 units, which would double the capacity of the current provision. This would then take the strain off the use of B&B's for temporary accommodation, resulting in financial savings for the council as well as providing purpose-built units for individuals and support on site.
Rough Sleepers	The Council should ensure that emergency and temporary alternatives to rough sleeping are available with the capacity needed, and the diversity of provision, to maximise impact and dignity.
"Get Ready and Move On" project	The Council should work closely with the service providers at 'Get Ready and Move On' (GRAMO) to identify those who are not within a support system and ensure they have a support worker until a tenancy is found. It is also recommended that plans are made to accommodate service users in a socially distanced classroom environment at the earliest possible opportunity to help with engagement and attendance.

Providing Support

Mediation services	The Council should have more efficient data collection for homelessness data around youth homelessness specific to age ranges, numbers engaging in support and outcomes achieved.
MIND Resilience	The Council should extend training for staff in hostels delivering the MIND Resilience project to overcome any further disruptions to the service due to the Pandemic.
Youth homelessness worker and CAB dedicated worker	The Council should further review the Citizens Advice Bureau Homeless Prevention project as evidence suggests that engagement with service users in difficult circumstances should be prioritised.
Location of Housing Solutions, Homefinder and Supporting People Teams and Training Opportunities for Staff	The Council should have one location for combining office space with hostel provision. The office space should be used to accommodate the Housing Advice Centre (HAC), the Homefinder and Supporting People



teams and aim to reduce the impact of anti-social behaviour on members of the public.

Outcomes for each duty

This section summarises the performance of the Council against the duties of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 specifically Section 66, the duty to prevent and Section 73, the duty to help secure accommodation (for 56 days)

Summary

- Single person households have consistently accounted for the majority of cases where the Council have provided assistance to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- This is also reflected in placements made into temporary accommodation (TA) between April 2020 and 2021. Single male applicants account for more placements into TA than all other households combined, with single female applicants accounting for the second highest number of placements into TA.
- Single male applicants also account for the largest proportion of applications made by those who have been homeless within the last two years. The proportion of single male applicants has risen from 46% of the total in 2017 to 58% in 2021.
- Social housing accounts for the majority of housing allocations where there was a duty.
- 40% of the people placed in temporary accommodation had been placed multiple times, leading to a total of 852 placements in 2020/2021 (as of the end of March), representing an increase of nearly 257 placements year-on-year, from 595 in 2019/20.

Household type

Prior to 2021, single person households have consistently accounted for the majority of cases where RCT have provided assistance to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness between 2015 and 2020. The total number and proportion of multiple person households receiving assistance from the Council has remained consistent, accounting for an average of 37% of total households provided assistance between 2015 and 2020.

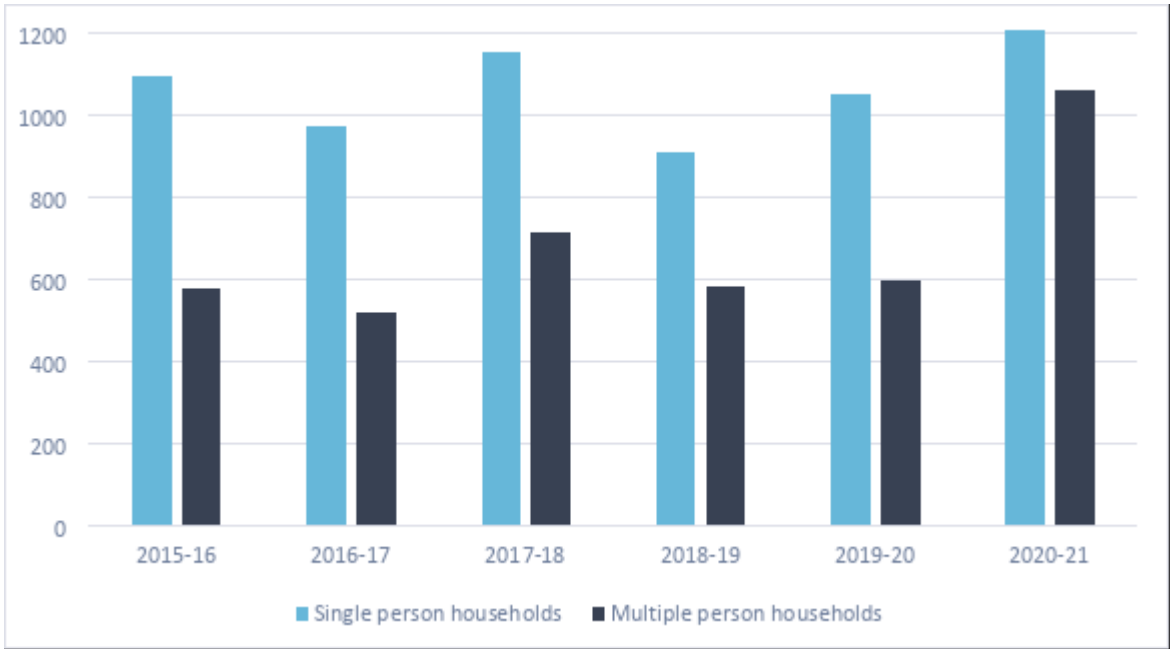


Figure 6: Number of households provided assistance by household type 2015-20

The high proportion of single person households is also reflected in placements made into temporary accommodation between April 2020 and 2021. Single male applicants account for more placements into TA than all other households combined, with single female applicants accounting for the second highest number of placements into TA.

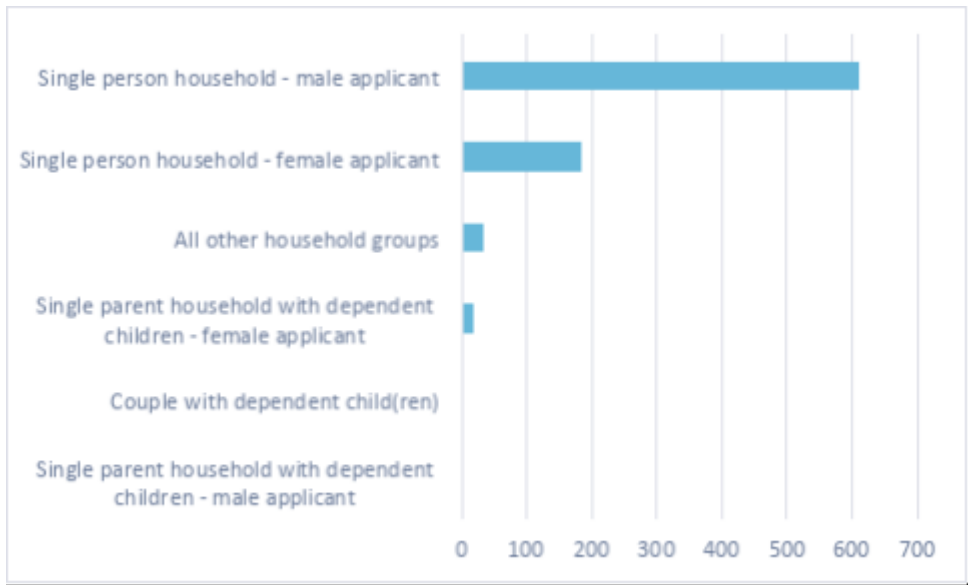


Figure 7: Total cases placed by household type as of 31/03/2021

Single male applicants have consistently formed the largest group of applicants, accounting for around half of the total number of applications in 2020 and 2021, with the pandemic appearing to exacerbate the trend. The next largest groups are single parent households with dependent child(ren) and single female applicants.

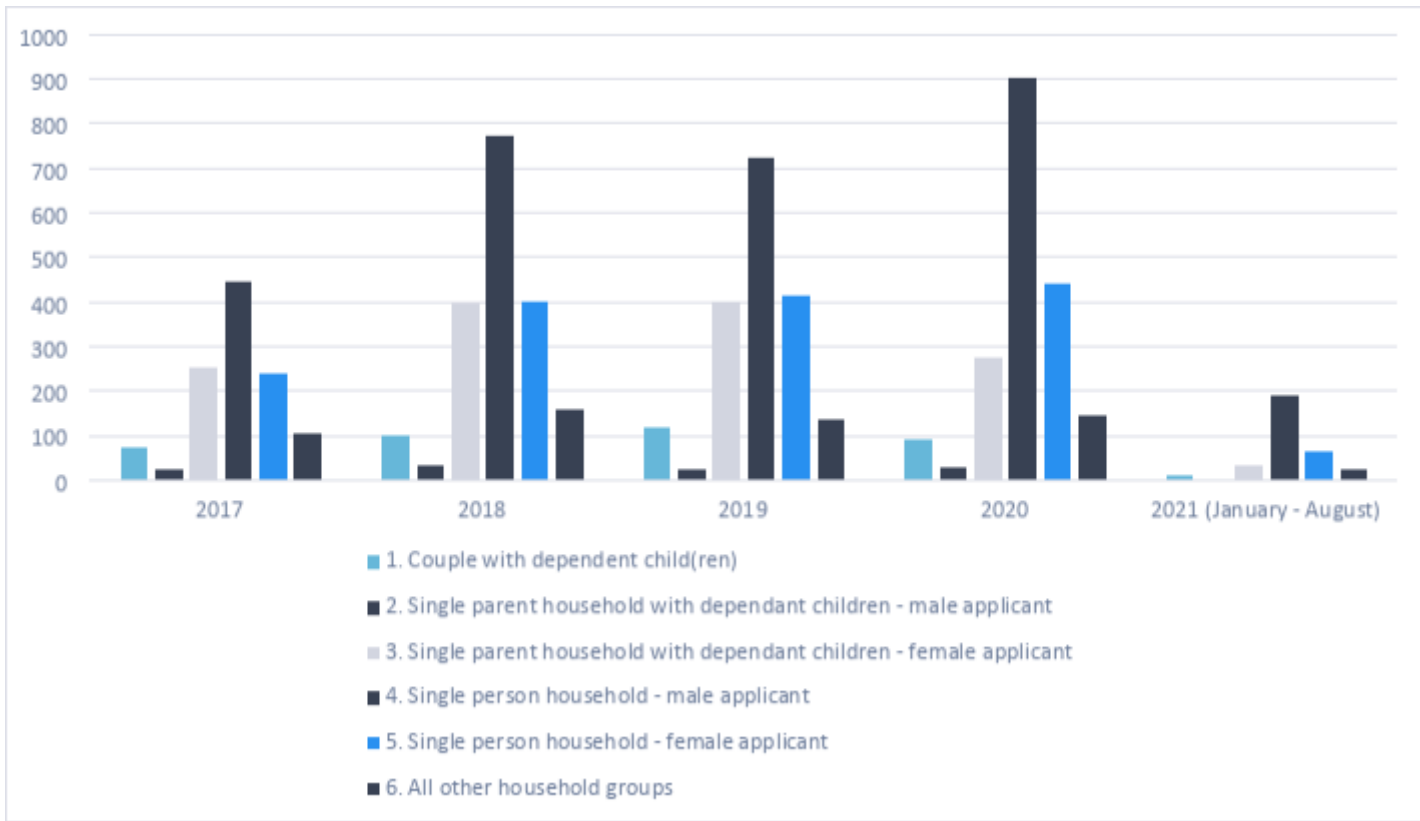


Figure 8: Number of applicants by household type (January 2017 – August 2021)

Single male applicants also account for the largest proportion of applications made by those who have been homeless within the last two years. The proportion of single male applicants has risen from 46% of the total in 2017 to 58% in 2021 (up to August). In the same time frame single female have reduced from 36% of the total in 2017 to 25% in 2021 (up to August).

Household type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 (January to August)
Couple with dependent child(ren)	0	1	0	0	1
Single parent household with dependent children - male applicant		0	1	1	0
Single parent household with dependent children - female applicant	2	5	6	2	0
Single person household - male applicant		5	11	12	14
Single person household - female applicant	4	5	7	8	6
All other household groups		0	2	7	3
Annual total	11	25	25	30	24

Table 2: Applicants who have been homeless in the last two years, by household type

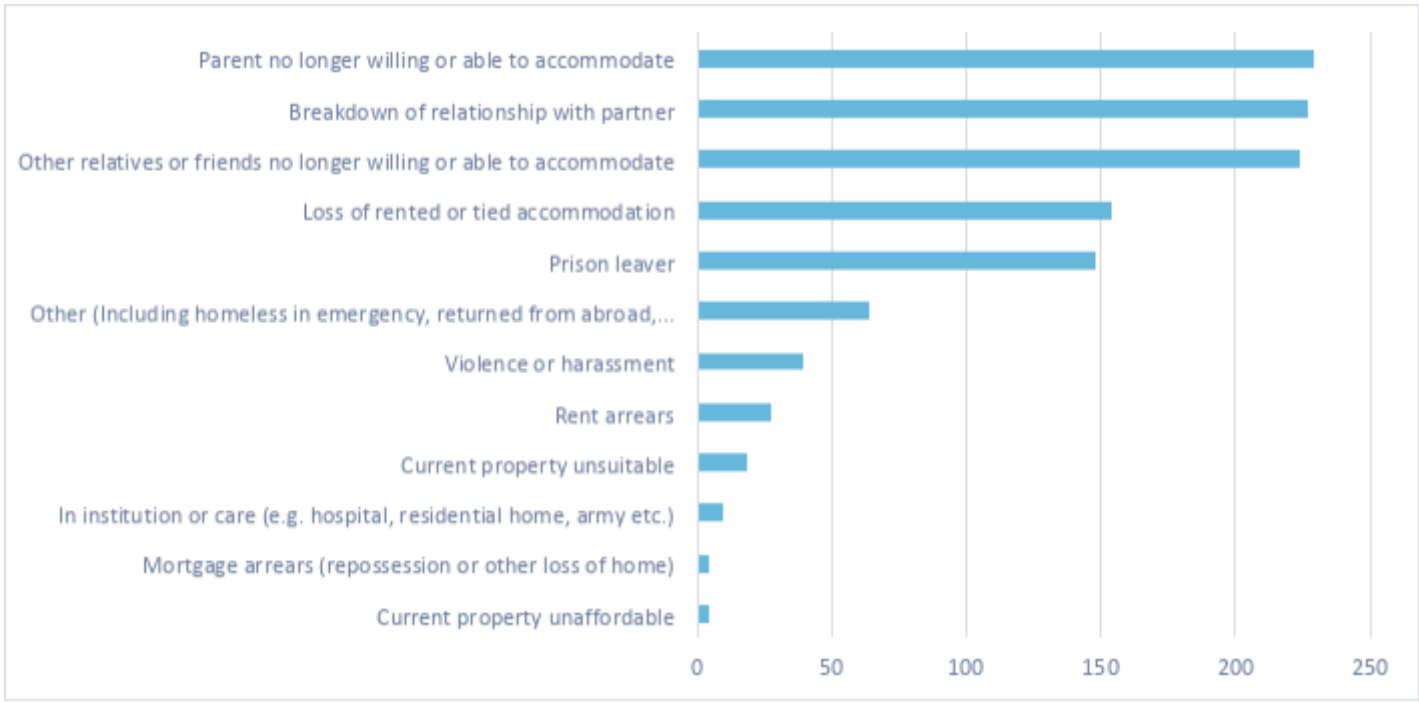


Figure 9: Reason for homelessness or threat of homelessness 2020-21

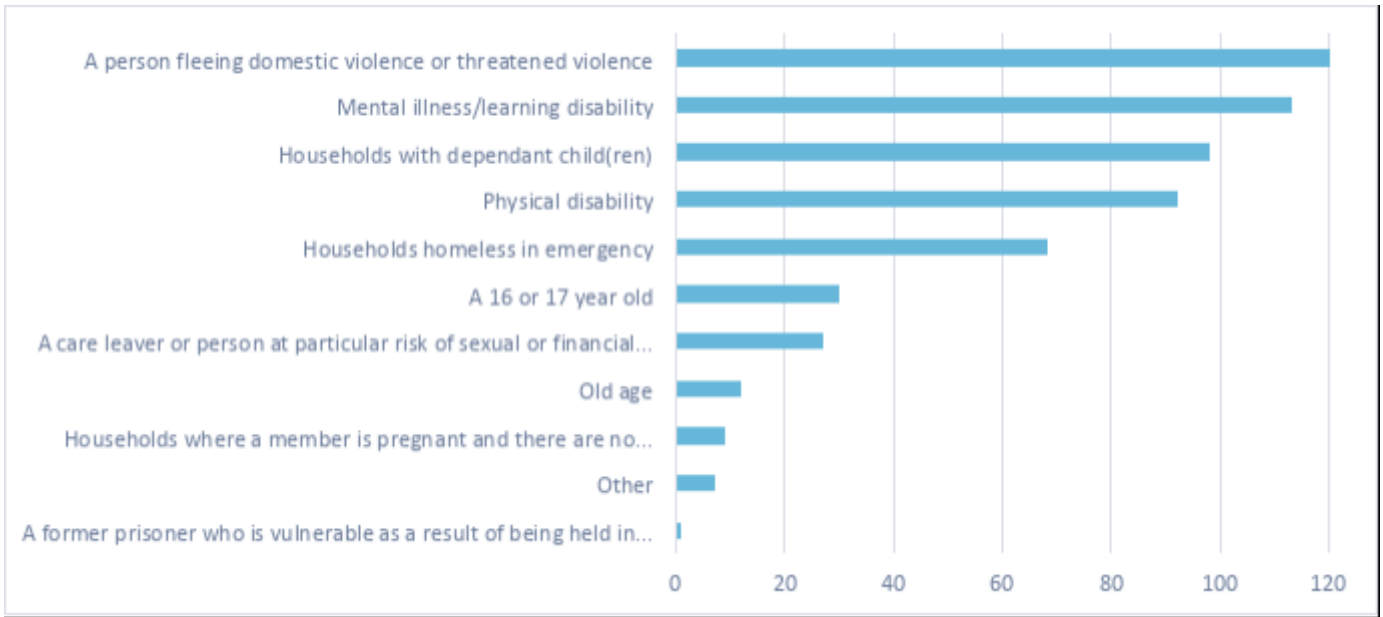


Figure 10: WHO12 Priority need 2020-21

Outcomes from presentations

Data shows that where assistance is provided outcomes are largely positive, for duty to prevent, help to secure and final duty. There has been significant improvement in outcomes following the provision of assistance since 2015, for both prevention and relief. However, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly on the number of people presenting with more complex needs, has not been fully realised and is likely not reflected strongly in the data below.

Housing allocations

Housing applications and allocations are managed through the Homefinder Common Housing Register and Allocations system. Rhondda Cynon Taf Council and its housing partners - Cynon Taf Community Housing Group, Hafod, Newydd, Trivallis, Rhondda and Wales & West Housing Associations are all signed up to the system.

The total number of housing allocations dropped between 2019/20 and 2020/21 from 413 to 317 allocations. However, the number and proportion of applicants subject to final duty being allocated housing rose significantly. The number of applicants allocated housing subject to final duty accounted for nearly half of the total allocations in 2020/21, having previously accounted for a tenth of total allocations in 2019/21.

The decline in the number of homelessness housing allocations is largely due to a sharp drop in the number of applicants subject to a duty to prevent, which reduced by 75% between 2019/20 and 2020/21. Both the number and proportion of applicants subject to a duty to secure (56 days) also declined year on year, although to a lesser extent, remaining the second largest group by duty.

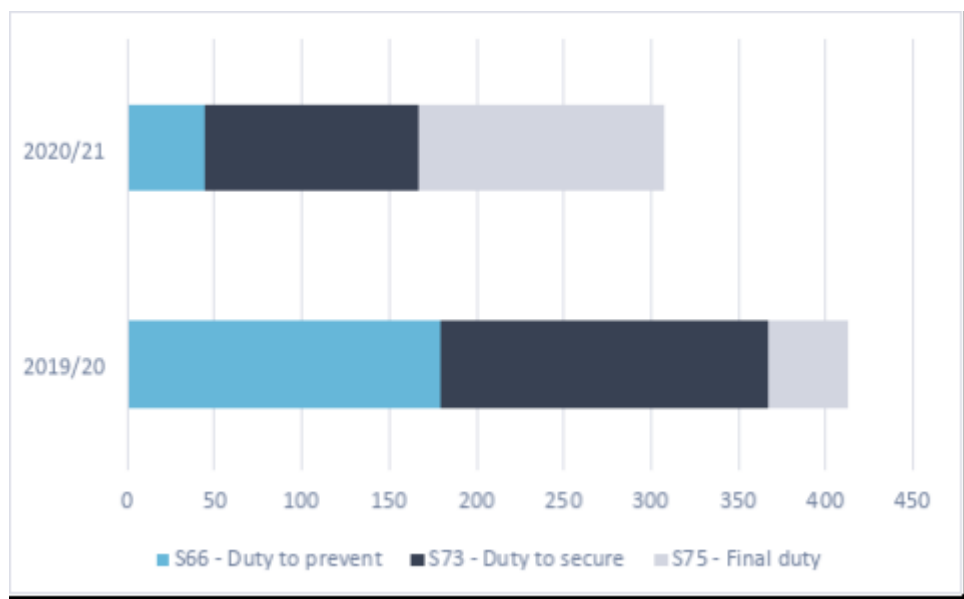


Figure 11: Homefinder homeless housing allocations by duty

Social housing accounts for the majority of housing allocations (where duty exists), with Registered Social Landlords providing 92 units of accommodation between January and August 2021, and the Local Authority directly providing 23 units. Beyond social housing, accommodation with friends and relatives and supported accommodation are two other likely outcomes, with around 10% housed in private rental sector accommodation.

In the first half of 2021 only three cases of homelessness were prevented with the household able to remain in existing home, accounting for fewer than 1% of cases. This is likely due to a combination of factors, including the eviction ban which had been in place until the start of July 2021, the uplift to welfare and potentially fewer cases of mediation with people less likely to kick out family members or close relations during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

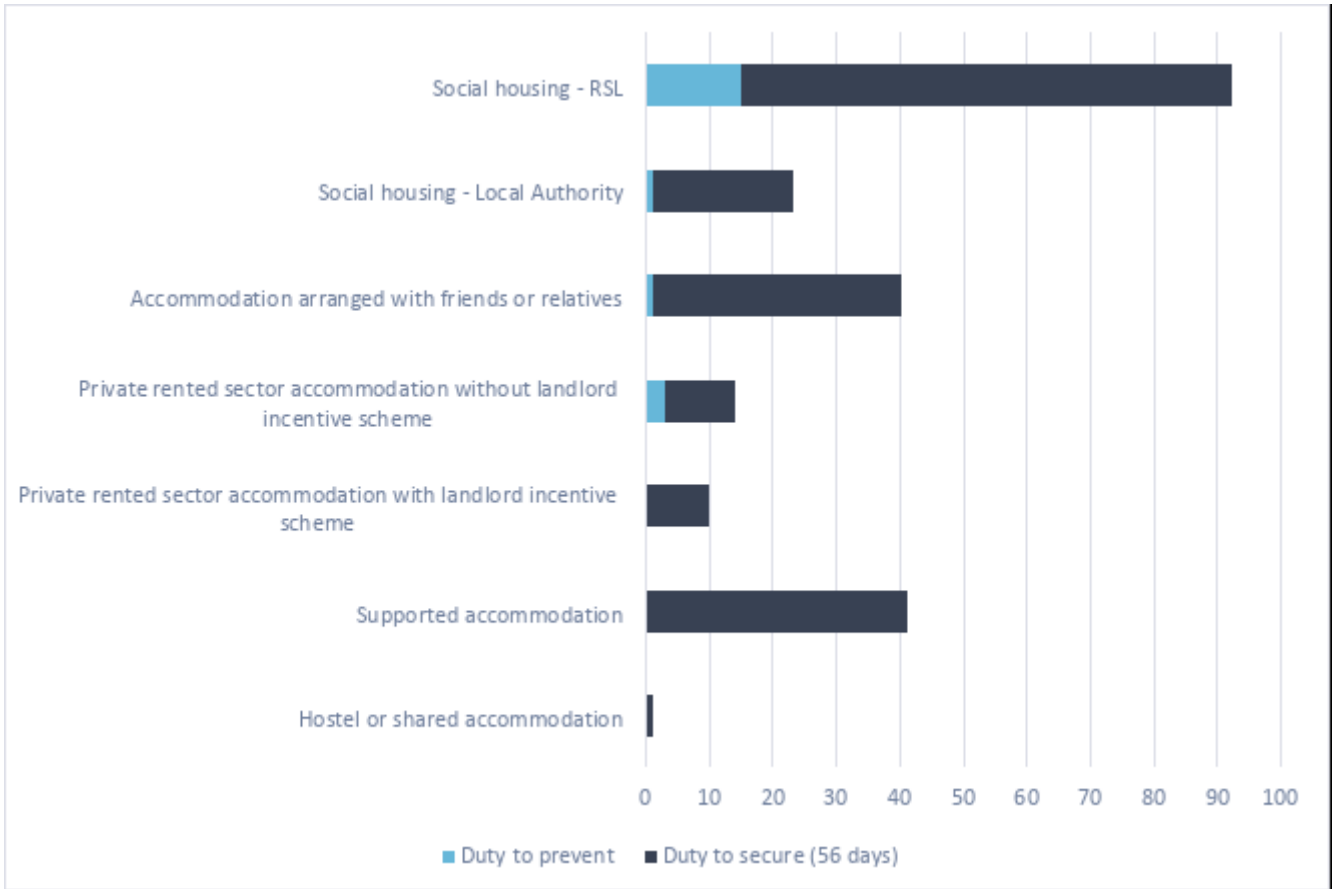


Figure 12: Homelessness prevented or relieved, where duty, household assisted to obtain alternative accommodation, by accommodation type (January to August 2021)

Temporary Accommodation

524 individuals, families and groups have been placed in temporary accommodation in 2020/2021 (as of the end of March). 40% of the 524 were placed in temporary accommodation multiple times, leading to a total of 852 placements in 2020/2021 (as of the end of March). 852 placements represent an increase of nearly 257 placements year-on-year, from 595 in 2019/20.

Nearly half of all cases were identified as having no apparent priority need. Households containing a vulnerable member due to 'mental illness/learning disability' represent the second largest group and physical disability represent the third largest group.

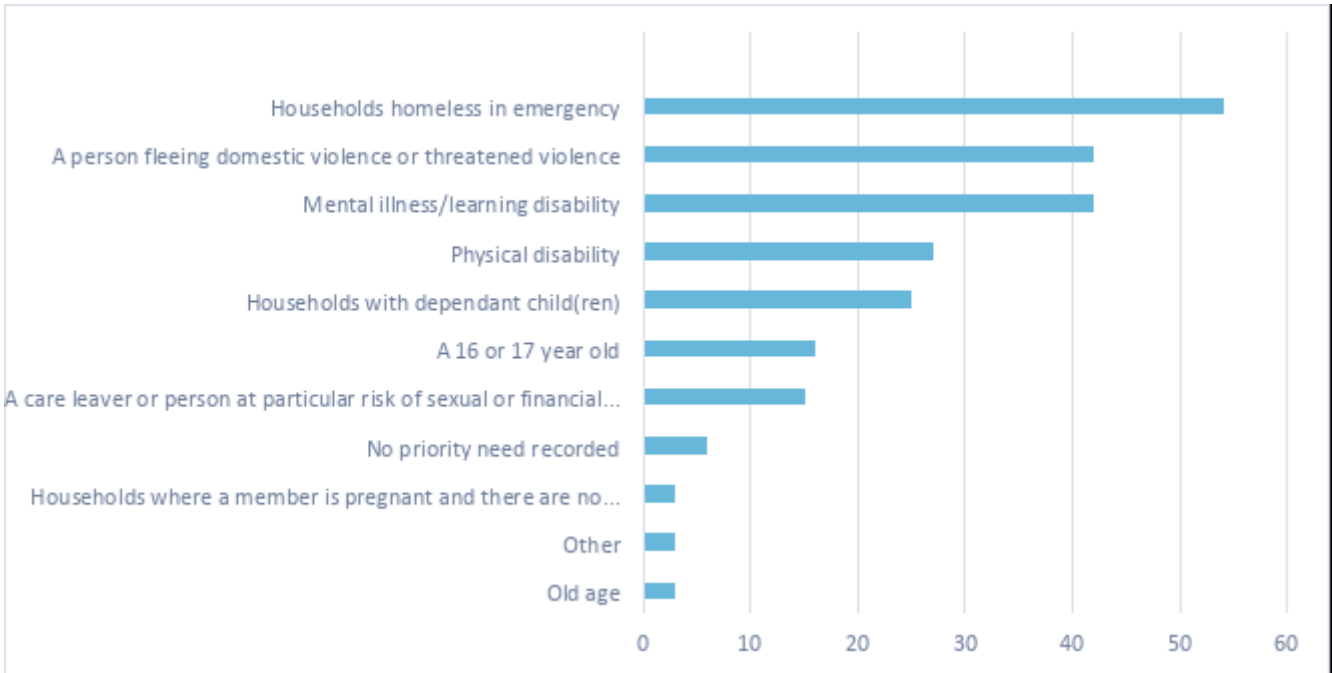


Figure 13: Total Cases Placed in TA by Priority need as of 2020-21

No duty

The number of households provided assistance by RCT with an eventual outcome of no duty has declined over the past five years, both in number and as a proportion of the total, falling from 456 households in 2015/16 to 174 in 2019/20.

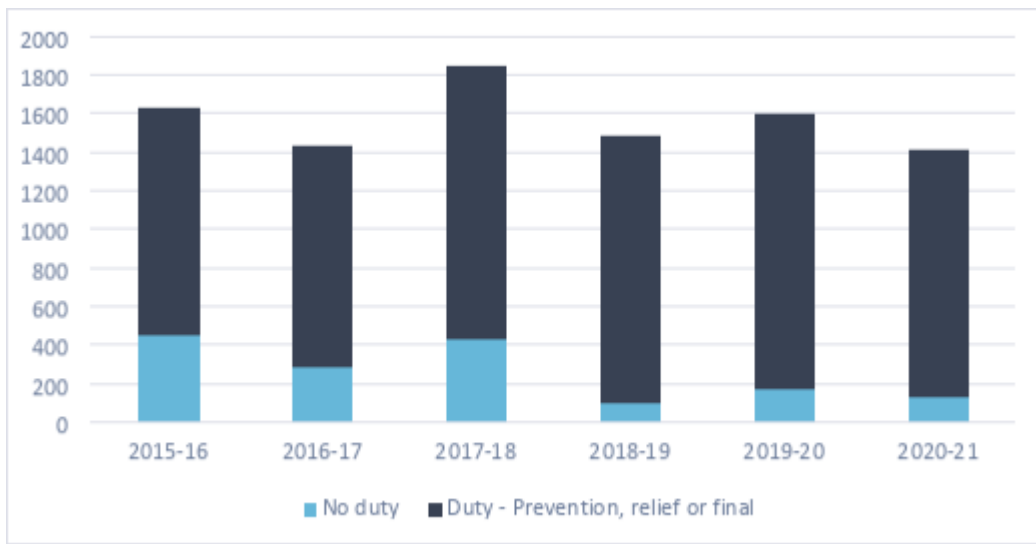


Figure 14: Number of households provided assistance by duty

Outcomes following provision of prevention assistance

The total number of successful preventions of homelessness following the triggering of the duty to prevent (S.66) has, despite undulating, risen between 2015 and 2020. Unsuccessful preventions where the following has not occurred: assistance refused, non-co-operation, application withdrawn, loss of contact or other reasons, have significantly dropped. The number and proportion of

households receiving prevention assistance and resulting in homelessness dropped by more than half between 2015/16 and 2016/17 and have remained consistently low since then.

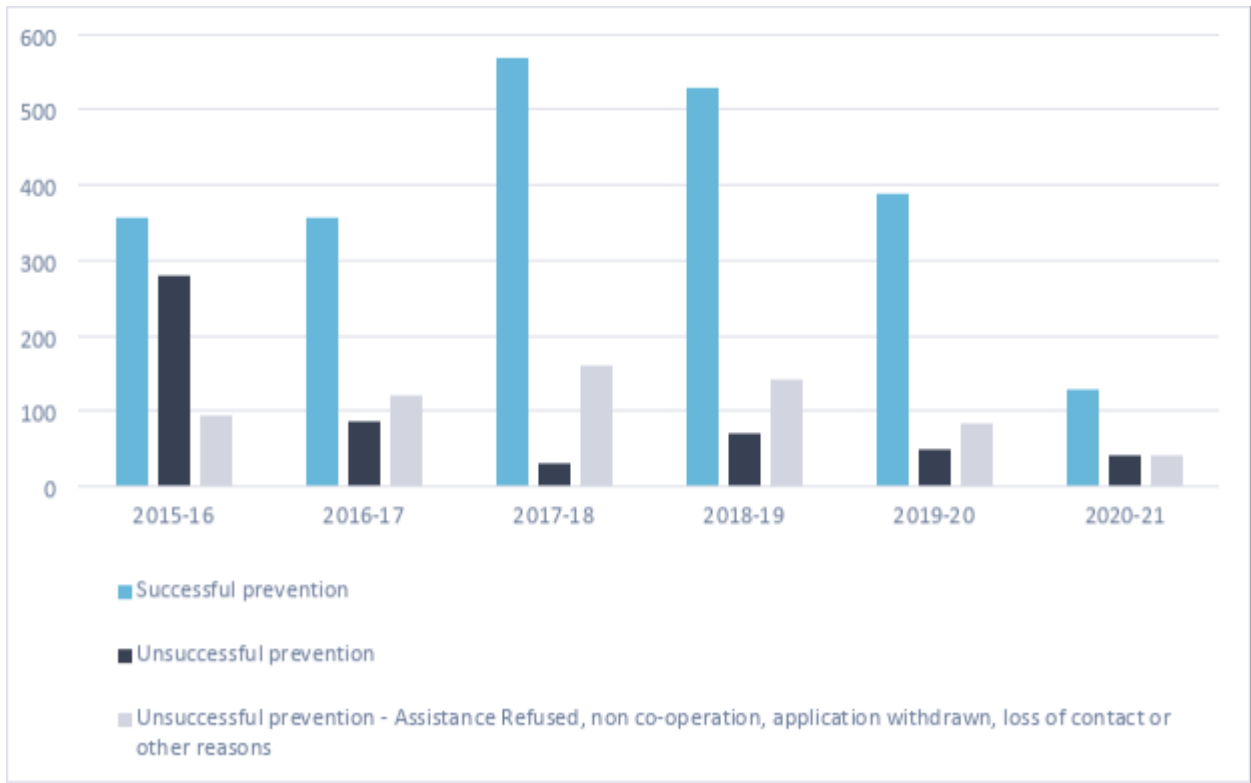


Figure 15: Outcomes following provision of prevention assistance

In 2019/20 the total number of people receiving prevention assistance reduced. This likely reflects the initial effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically the reduction in the cases of households threatened with homelessness (in the next 56 days).

Outcomes following triggering of duty to help to secure accommodation

Successful relief has become by far the most likely outcome following the triggering of the duty to help to secure accommodation.

Outcomes following RCT’s provision of assistance at this stage have improved dramatically since 2015/16 when unsuccessful relief accounted for more outcomes than successful relief. Indeed, in 2019/20 there were ten times more households receiving assistance and resulting in successful relief than unsuccessful relief, following relief duty.

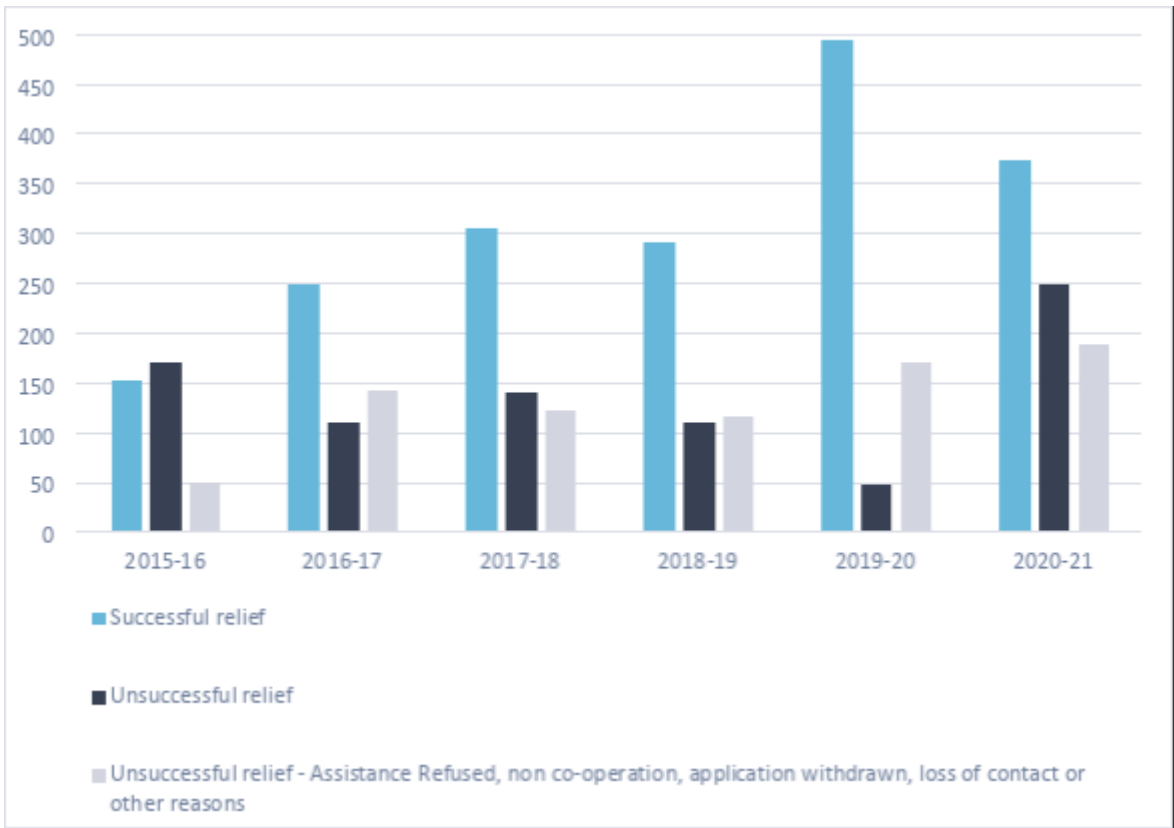


Figure 16: Outcomes of eligible, homeless households subject to duty to help to secure (Section 73)

Outcomes from final duty follow a similar pattern with a growing number of households being positively discharged from final duty. However, the proportion of eligible households, unintentionally homeless and in priority need resulting in unsuccessful relief, have also grown, albeit at a slower rate, and now account for nearly a fifth of all outcomes of final duty.

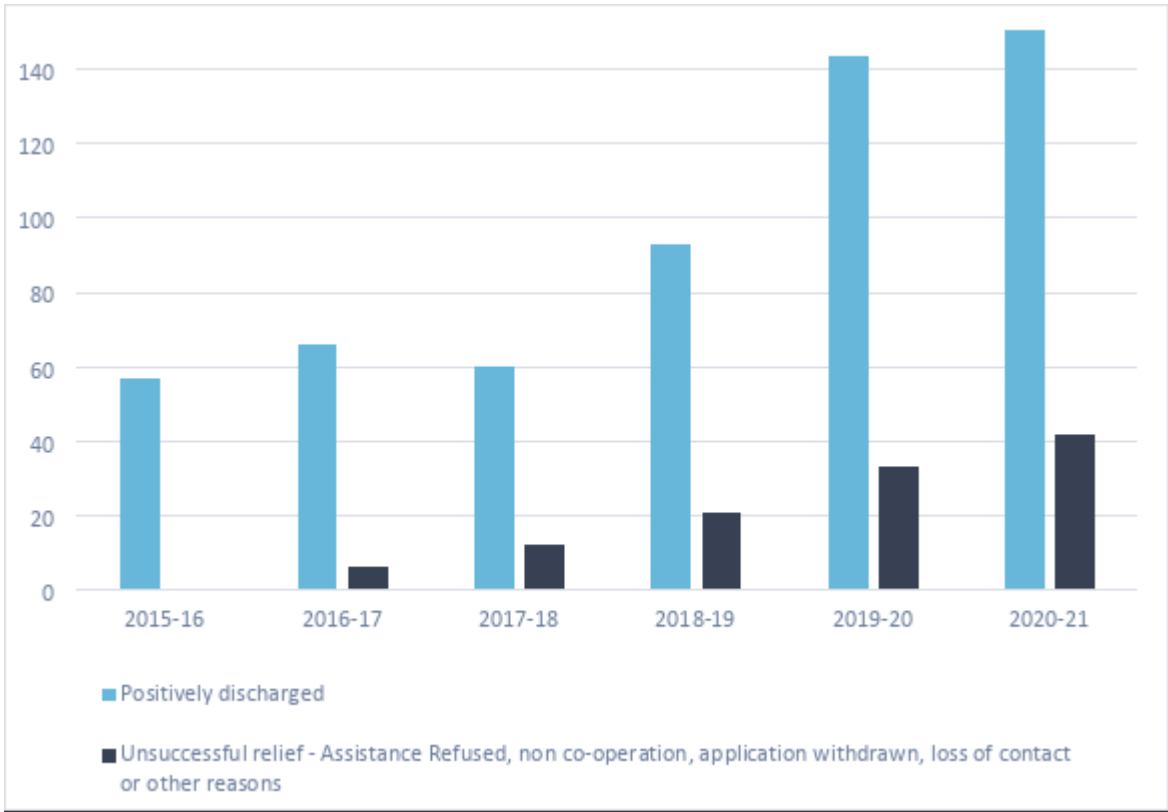


Figure 17: Outcomes of eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need – final duty (Section 75)

Insights into the Most Significant Housing Support Needs

This section brings together the data on needs from the local Population Assessment, referral data and stakeholder feedback for each area of need identified within the assessment, that coincides with the needs of homeless people and people supported by the HSG.

The Social Services and Well-being (SSWB) (Wales) Act 2014 brings together all parts of care and support services and the ways in which they are delivered. The Act put a 'duty' on Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cwm Taf University Health Board, and their partners to jointly carry out an assessment of the care and support needs of their population. The population assessment was published in 2017 and is currently being undertaken again in line with the statutory cycle.

Mental Health

Summary

- RCT has amongst the highest reported incidences of substance misuse, mental illness, and poor well-being in Wales
- The most common reason for priority housing need in RCT is mental health
- There are significant unmet housing needs for adults with mental health issues. Housing problems are frequently given as a reason for a person being admitted or re-admitted to inpatient mental health care.
- People with mental health challenges are far more likely to live in rented accommodation and their mental ill-health is often given as a major reason for tenancy breakdown.
- Where several agencies are involved, information sharing arrangements between partners are essential to optimise the care for individuals and this needs to be improved.
- After previously seeing a year-on-year increase in HSG mental health referrals, the council had fewer referrals in 2020-21 however, it is anticipated that this will rise significantly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- RCT CBC Adult Social Services utilise HSG funding to provide specialist mental health accommodation projects. There is insufficient data on support outcomes achieved by HSG funded services for specialist mental health placements to be able to draw conclusions on their effectiveness.
- Access to primary and secondary mental health services has become increasingly challenging since the pandemic.

Cwm Taf has the highest rates of mental illness and poor well-being in Wales. The challenging picture of adult mental health and well-being in Cwm Taf was shown in the

latest available data at the time of the assessment.⁹

There were significant unmet housing needs for adults with mental health issues. Housing problems were frequently given as a reason for a person being admitted or re-admitted to inpatient mental health care. People with mental illness were far more likely to live in rented accommodation and their mental ill-health was often given as a major reason for tenancy breakdown. Due to the limited availability of housing, they had been offered accommodation in areas that were unsupportive e.g., in areas with known drug problems/ antisocial behavior, which affected their ability to maintain good mental health. Those with tenancies often faced eviction unless appropriate tenancy support was incorporated with care plans.

The various agencies involved in providing care and support to someone with mental health problems all have their own systems of data collection, depending on their funding, accountability, and governance requirements. However, it was often unclear how data was used to inform the provision of the services that people with mental health problems have identified – hence the gaps in preventative services. Information sharing arrangements between partners are essential to optimise the care for individuals. Such data sharing across agencies should be improved and aligned with agreed national frameworks to better inform future service planning. This was confirmed by stakeholder engagement for this needs assessment which identified this is still a significant challenge.

The recent Rapid Housing Review stated that the most common reason for priority housing need in RCT was mental health. A consequence of this increase in complexity was that placements of people in supported accommodation were ending with eviction due to the challenges in complying with tenancy requirements.¹⁰

The Council has previously seen a year-on-year increase of 11% in referrals to HSG mental health support services. Although referrals via the Single Point of Access were lower in 2020/21, national figures sourced from Mental Health Wales have shown:

- 183% increase in requests for information on anxiety
- 188% increase in requests for information on suicide
- 229% increase in request for information on self-harm

Intelligence from stakeholders indicated that although the pandemic lockdowns enabled people to better manage anxieties about being in the community, they have postponed the need to address their underlying issues. It is anticipated there will be a significant 'stored up' demand being seen in referrals from 2021/22 and beyond.

As at the date of this needs assessment there were 105 individuals with Mental health challenges who require different forms of accommodation in the form of specialist mental health placements through Adult Social Care. This included both those who present opportunity for step down along with those who are waiting for accommodation. There is insufficient data on support outcomes achieved by HSG funded services for specialist mental health placements to be able to draw conclusions on their effectiveness.

⁹ Cwm Taf Population Assessment March 2017

¹⁰ Rapid rehousing Review August 2021



Outcome data shows that the complexity of mental health needs has increased in supported accommodation services.

The current outcomes framework does not give enough insight to draw conclusions on what is effective in providing supported accommodation or floating support vis the HSG.

Research undertaken in 2020 to assess the health needs of homeless people for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board identified that accessing help was perceived by homeless people to be difficult for those who do not meet the criteria for specialist/secondary mental health care, and whose symptoms are considered outside the scope of services aimed at managing common mental health problems.

Primary care, where the majority of people with common mental health conditions are treated, often had little capacity to support those who present with co-occurring conditions. Understanding the various and complex pathways into primary and secondary mental health services were confusing for both housing support staff and homeless people in CTMUHB - particularly with how GPs, Community Mental Health Teams (CMHT), Crisis Teams and specialist homelessness teams and medical professionals within hospital settings interfaced with each other.

The report recommended that an existing forum, or new group should be convened, to oversee the implementation of the strategic actions arising from the report.¹¹

Stakeholder feedback indicates that the situation has worsened since the pandemic, and it is even more challenging to access primary and secondary care mental health services.

Substance Misuse

Headlines

RCT has high numbers of people with substance misuse issues in comparison to the rest of Wales.

There are high numbers of people requiring HSG services that have co-occurring mental health and substance misuse issues. These are particularly challenging for support services to get NHS mental health and substance misuse treatment services involved.

A new specialist regional service is now in place, but it is too early to fully evaluate.

Cwm Taf has the highest rates of both drug misuse deaths and alcohol related deaths in Wales. Data from the Welsh National Database for Substance Misuse evidences the continued need for services across Cwm Taf, with approximately 3,000 referrals to substance misuse services received annually

¹¹ A rapid Health Needs Assessment of people that are homeless within the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board footprint June 2020

for the period April 2013 to March 2016.¹²

Substance misuse can affect people regardless of their age background or ethnic origin and can also lead to significant problems in people's lives. The Area Planning Board is responsible for delivering the Welsh Government Substance Misuse Strategy in the RCT area.

Access to Substance Misuse Services

The Rapid Health Needs Assessment of people that were homeless within the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area¹³ described that the Community Drug and Alcohol Team provides a service for people experiencing problems with substance misuse based on a harm reduction approach which includes working towards abstinence where appropriate; providing care programmes that are developed individually with each client. Individuals with significant drug and/or alcohol misuse can access the service where there is a related risk to themselves or others and there is evidence of a commitment to actively engage in the treatment programme and comply with required standard of conduct. Hostel workers working with the homeless interviewed in the report described the following challenges in accessing substance misuse services for their tenants:

- Accessibility is not set up for the chaotic nature of these clients – when people reach the point of 'contemplation' (one of the earlier stages of the behaviour change cycle) there is a six-week waiting list to get into services
- Emotional support is needed to run alongside drug treatment services as part of the overall model of preparing people to be able to manage their own tenancies
- Appointments for homeless people need to be in the morning, as they can be more easily managed by the hostels at this point in the day - if they go off for the day, then they have found drugs, and far more challenging to support in engaging with services, or may not be accepted
- Offenders in the criminal justice system are able to get more direct access to treatment, for twelve months and then transfer to community substance misuse services.
- Access to Community Pharmacy for prescriptions is not a problem though in some areas it is a long walk from the hostels.
- Prescriptions have been adapted since Covid, with more rapid access to initial assessment, to give some people a greater number of days of drugs in one go, or to deliver the prescription to the hostel. In general, these changes were felt to have improved the system.
- Stakeholder engagement undertaken for this report confirmed that it is challenging to engage NHS substance misuse services, particularly services like rehabilitation and detox. HSG providers described having to try to manage these issues through their support.
- Referrals to HSG services with Substance Misuse as lead need are low, however stakeholder feedback indicates that it emerges as a need for a significant number of referrals.

Co-occurring mental health and substance misuse problems

¹² Cwm Taf Population Assessment March 2017

¹³ A rapid Health Needs Assessment of people that are homeless within the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board footprint June 2020



The term, 'dual diagnosis' usually refers to the co-occurrence of a mental illness alongside substance misuse. The relationship between mental illness and substance misuse is complex and can change over time. It can vary between people and evidence suggests that the number of people diagnosed in primary care with a dual diagnosis has increased in recent years, although there is a lack of national data on this.

Compared to people with a mental health problem alone, those with substance misuse and mental health problems are:

- likely to experience more severe mental health problems
- be at increased risk of suicide
- experience unstable housing
- have financial difficulties
- be less likely to engage with treatment interventions
- are more likely to fall through the gap between services.¹⁴

Specialist Mental Health & Substance Misuse Housing Outreach Service

In a regional response to these issues, the Specialist Mental Health & Substance Misuse Housing Outreach Service is a specialist, multi-agency outreach service which spans across Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and RCT Local Authorities. The proposal to provide a regional specialist outreach service to individuals with complex needs who reside in homelessness hostels and Housing First Projects was initially funded by Phase 2 funding and will be funded by HSG, Health and the Area Planning Board as from 1st April 2022.

From 1/04/21 to the 31/12/21 the service received 61 referrals from RCT for individuals residing in Temporary Accommodation and who are part of the Housing First project. 67% of individuals referred to the project were assessed as having overlapping Mental Health & Substance Misuse issues; 47.2% deemed as high- risk individuals with severe mental health / substance misuse and 33% having a mental health need.

55 individuals referred to the Team across the region had quoted difficulties in engaging with substance misuse services, mental health services and health services.

Reason for Referral	Number of Referrals (%)
Mental Health & Substance Misuse issues overlapping	66.9%
Difficulty engaging in generic services / fallen out of generic services for Mental Health and/or Substance Misuse	36.2%
High Risk individual with severe mental health / heavy substance misuse / high risk due to substance misuse & medication	47.2%
Physical Health Need	27.6%
Only mental health support requested	33.1%

Table 4: Specialist Mental Health & Substance Misuse Housing Outreach Service –referral reason as of Dec 2021 (Cwm Taf Morgannwg data)

¹⁴ Cwm Taf Population Assessment March 2017

The project will be fully evaluated in the near future, in the meantime the substance misuse needs of people accessing homelessness and HSG services provide a significant challenge, in particular early intervention to prevent homelessness.

Ex-offenders

Summary

- Ex-offenders are a significant group for the Council's homelessness team in finding suitable accommodation or placement in temporary accommodation on leaving prison. A significant number of referrals are received for housing related support from this group.
- There are a range of Housing First projects to meet the needs of ex-offenders. However, there are multiple challenges in meeting their housing and support needs.
- There are multiple opportunities to review the pathway for offenders from prison to accommodation in the community.

Ex-offenders are a significant group for the Council's homelessness team in finding suitable accommodation or placement in temporary accommodation on leaving prison. A significant number of referrals are received for housing related support from this group.

Stakeholder engagement with probation indicated that COVID-19 led to probation working more collaboratively with local authorities specifically around accommodation, as flooding in early 2020 had put additional pressure on accommodation requirements in the Council area.

Probation acknowledged that the 'prisoner journey' (prison to probation to Local Authority) is unclear, current guidance is out of date and refers to a previous Probation structure that no longer exists. They are working with Welsh Government to review the pathway and reflect probation's move to a 'resettlement model'. Probation commission their own housing support services.

- Initial assessment of people in custody, categorises them by complexity (low/medium/high).
- The aim is to reduce the number of cases that the Local Authority needs to deal with.
- Once 'Day One' services contracts finish Probation are going to commission services that align with Local Authority services and current WG policy.
- Once all options are exhausted, no one necessarily takes responsibility: There is a need to find housing solutions for people who are in this situation – although the solution is unclear
- Probation raised the need for a collaborative approach between probation, the Local Authority accommodation team, and other relevant teams – particularly around the MAPPA process and sharing good practice.

Any individual who is of particular concern within their risk assessment will be referred to local MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements). This is a multi-agency approach to the identification and management of high risk violent or sexual offenders. Housing and move-on options will be discussed at these meetings to prevent the person from becoming vulnerably housed or rough sleeping.

Concern was also raised by Probation around female ex-offenders who often have traumatic experiences that make TA with men unsuitable. Rejected referrals to Domestic Abuse Refuge services due to people's needs being too high and/or complex, reflects how challenging it currently is to find suitable accommodation and services for women in this situation

Despite working more collaboratively, Probation feel that they need more information earlier (i.e., before the point of eviction) so they can play a more preventative role. Their top priorities were:

- A need for more single person accommodation.
- Prevent women having to share with men with DV histories which is currently happening
- Improve the range and quality of TA
- Better joint response around MAPPA – review lessons learnt and commit to more joint approaches and action learning
- Assessing the impact of Regional Homelessness Task Force Meetings being measured in relation to multi-agency responses.

Stakeholders voiced concerns around the potential loss of priority status of ex-offenders and the end of the 'All in' policy.

HSG funded services for ex-offenders

In response to the level of need in RCT, the Council has set up a number of services to support ex-offenders under the umbrella of Housing First, funded through the Welsh Government Trail Blazer funding arrangements. From the 1st of April 2022 this funding stream will be transferred to the Housing Support Grant.

Housing First consists of four projects, three of which are designed for ex-offenders:

- The Wisdom Project,
- The Assertive Project,
- The Rapid Response Project
- The fourth project is the Young People (16-24) Project which is described under the Children and Young People section.

Below is a summary of activity within ex-offender Housing First projects, followed by detail on each project:

- As of December 2021, there were **42** people currently on scheme, with **2** new referrals received during December 2021, bringing the total for accessing the scheme since the beginning to **68**.
- The number of new Housing first tenancies started during December 2021 was **1**, bringing the total to **28**.
- **24** people (**57.1%**) on scheme were maintaining tenancies at the end of December 2021.
- **4** people (**10%**) on scheme were not residing at their tenancy at end of December 2021, due to prison/custodial sentence (**3**) and hospital admission (**1**). These individuals were still being supported where they are residing.
- **14** people (**33.3%**) on scheme had not secured tenancies and were being supported via outreach. **8** were residing in emergency/B&B accommodation, **1** was currently in hospital and to be placed in emergency/B&B accommodation once discharged, **1** was in custody and to be

placed in emergency/B&B accommodation once released, **2** were currently in custody and would be no fixed abode on release, **1** was no fixed abode and **1** was residing in a probation service.

Wisdom Housing Project

The Wisdom Project works with offenders who present with a high level of risk and have difficulty in securing housing, including those with complex needs who sit outside current arrangements in place for the rehousing of Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) designated offenders.

	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
Number of referrals	1	4	5	1
Number of individuals that have ended support	0	1	4	1
Reason for support ending	N/A	Return to prison (1)	Return to prison (1) Support completed (3)	Return to prison (1)
Number of Service users supported	1	5	9	6

Table 5: Wisdom Housing Project performance data 2017-2021

Assertive Outreach Project

The Assertive Outreach Project provides independent and permanent accommodation for offenders, offering a broader housing- led approach, and providing additional support where required.

The properties are provided by each of the housing providers with support arrangements made available by POBL. The project provides furnished one-bedroom general needs accommodation.

	2019/2020	2020/2021
Number of referrals	12	5
Number of new individuals into the project	12	5
Number of individuals that have ended support	1	1
Reason for support ending	Refused support/prison	Prison

Number of Service users supported	12	16
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Table 6 Assertive Outreach Project performance data 2019-21

Rapid Response Project

The Rapid Response Project started in October 2019 and was developed by the Council to support individuals who present themselves as homeless and are repeat offenders. The project aims to support individuals with complex needs with the objective to prevent re-offending in the future. The project has been set up to provide an effective multi-agency response based on the Housing First principles to individuals prior to leaving HMP Cardiff and Eastwood Park. Following acceptance of an individual for the project, the Housing Association takes responsibility for sourcing a suitable property.

Intensive person-centered support is provided by Pobl along with the Housing Association’s Housing Officers daily, tapering off to every other day subject to the individual’s needs. When service users are matched to a social housing property, the project fully furnishes the property for the service users, which enables the service user to move into a property that they can call home and negates the issue of them having to furnish it themselves, which is very often difficult due to lack of funds. The project also pays for one year’s TV Licence for the service users, this is also a great help to them as it assists to manage one utility bill. Service users often get overwhelmed with paying utility bills as many have not done this before, but support is provided to empower them and give them the skills and tools required to manage their finances and their tenancy.

	2019/2020	2020/2021
Number of referrals	7	1
Number of individuals that have ended support	0	3
Reason for support ending	N/A	Return to prison (2) Deceased (1)
Number of Service users supported	7	8

Table 7: Rapid Response Project performance data 2019-21

Learning Disability

Headlines

- **Adult Social Services Learning Disability accommodation services utilise HSG funding. Data capture on support outcomes for people with learning disability need to be developed**

The Cwm Taf Population Assessment estimated in 2016 about 5,500 people in Cwm Taf had a

learning disability and about 2,500 of these are children and young people.

People with a Learning Disability wanted different services than have historically been provided, away from day services to playing an active part in their community. Other challenges highlighted in the population assessment were:

- Difficulties in accessing services urgently
- Services needing to work more collaboratively
- Services need to see the person, not the needs

Young people with a learning disability were known to Children's Social Services; therefore, it was possible to identify actual need rather than projected need. The data showed that over the next 5-year period, 97 young people with a learning disability would transfer through to Adult Social Services and require accommodation.

The Council has historically combined social care and HSG funding to support people with learning disabilities particularly in supported living. Measuring demand and outcomes with specific reference to HSG impact has therefore been challenging.

Welsh Government commissioned research in 2020¹⁵ highlighted the wide range of levels of spend on learning disability placements, using what was then Supporting People funds, across Welsh local authorities. The report proposed a number of options to potentially rebalance the percentages of Supporting People and Social care funding, but implementation has been paused due to the pandemic.

Children and Young People

Headlines

- **Single people aged 16-25 are the highest proportion of homelessness applications to the Council, increasing year on year and through the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of these young people will be 'care-experienced'.**
- **The Single Point of Access saw an increase in referrals from vulnerable families and Vulnerable Single Parent/Expectant Mothers each year for the last three years.**
- **HSG funds Housing projects for young people as well as the Supported Lodgings scheme for care leavers 16-24 years.**
- **Data capture on support outcomes from supported lodgings for young people need to be developed.**
- **There is a need to ensure that RCTCBC examines its corporate parenting response in relation to care experienced children and young people (CYP) and their future accommodation needs.**

¹⁵ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2020-03/understanding-local-authority-funding-for-learning-disability-housing-support-across-wales.pdf>

According to the Population Assessment the child population in Cwm Taf is estimated to have increased slightly between 2005 and 2015 rising by 1.4% in RCT. RCT has a relatively young age profile with children making up 21 percent of the population and young adults (aged 18 to 24) making up 9 percent of the population. The overall population of people aged 0-24 will decline by 1.6 percent between 2016 and 2025 across the Cwm Taf area. Rhondda Cynon Taf will see small percentage increases in the number of children aged 0-17 who experience abuse and neglect.¹⁶

Single people aged 16-25 are the highest proportion of homelessness applications to the Council, increasing year on year and through the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Council Single Point of Access saw an increase in referrals from vulnerable families and Vulnerable Single Parent/Expectant Mothers each year for the last three years.

Young People Project

The Young People Project provides a multi-agency response to prevent homelessness for young people aged 16 – 24 with highly complex and challenging needs, who are furthest away from independence and have disengaged from more traditional pathway services. The model does not simply replicate adult models for Housing First, but also meets the developmental needs and capacities of young people.

The project provides up to 10 units of dispersed supported accommodation to young people with complex needs and a history of repeat homelessness. The young people who are supported on to the project all have a care background and have been supported by Children and/or Adult Services.

	October 2019 - March 2021
Number of referrals	10
Number of referrals accepted onto the project	7
Number of individuals that have ended support	0

Table 8 Young People Project performance data 2019-21

Supported Lodgings Places

The Supported Lodgings Scheme provides supported accommodation to young people aged 16 to 21 years of age, by enabling them to access lodgings in approved private households within RCT. It is part of a range of accommodation options for young people supported by the 16+ Teams.

As part of the Accommodation and Support Strategy¹⁷ a review identified the need to expand the Supported Lodging Scheme however this has been delayed due to Covid-19. The scheme has supported between 10 and 12 placements at any one time in the last two years.

¹⁶ Cwm Taf Population Assessment March 2017

¹⁷ Accommodation and Support Strategy for Young People 16+ Years of Age Leaving Care. 2019-2022

Youth Homeless Support Worker

The outcome of a recent review resulted in the appointment of a Youth Homelessness Support Worker in April 2021. This new role delivers more focused support to young people and will assist with the workload of the Youth Homelessness Officer. Previously the service was funded via Youth Support Grant and delivered through the Emphasis Project. The new project provides immediate and crisis provision and offer 1:1 support to young people aged 16 – 24, who experience family breakdown and are at risk of becoming homeless. The project works closely with the Council's Housing Solutions Team to offer support to young people who present as homeless.

The focus of the support workers role is prevention and assisting the young person in remaining at the property or a return home.

Older People

Headlines

- There is a growing population of older people with more complex needs that will require increased capacity in housing and support options that help people stay in their own homes, or age-designated accommodation.

The Population Assessment states that the number of older people that live in the communities in Cwm Taf is growing as people are living longer healthier lives. The population of people over the age of 65 years to grow by 30% and those over the age of 80 years to grow by 70% in the following 15 years.

The Joint Commissioning Statement for Older People between RCT and CTMUHB seeks to ensure that older people live longer, healthier, fuller, and happier lives; where they are encouraged and supported to maintain their independence for as long as possible, whilst recognising that some may become ill, frail, or vulnerable, and ensuring that these people receive the respect, care, and support they want and need at the right time and in the right place.

Projected increases in the old-age population will lead to increased levels of dementia which will have a large impact on the need for provision of care and support services for this group.

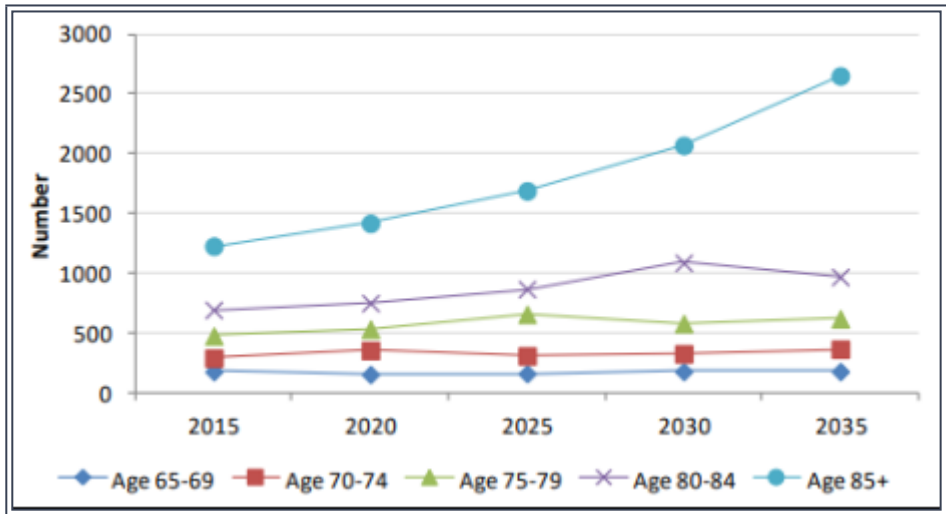


Figure 18 Population estimated to have dementia 2015-2035

Older people are an important and significant part of our community. In the coming years the proportion of people over 55 will grow significantly in RCT.

People will live longer, and as they grow older will have more complex needs.

In general people want to remain living in their own home and community. Some people are willing to move property to enable that to happen. Others will need to support to stay well and continue to play an active part in their communities. Overall, we can expect growth in the demand for our services from the older generation. Better planning/clarity is required in relation to how HSG funding/services can assist with an agenda to:

- prevent need,
- reduce need,
- delay need and
- meet the need for housing, health, and social care services for older people.

Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment

Summary

HSG funds specialist placements for people with physical disabilities within Adult Services.

Data capture on support outcomes from supported lodgings for young people need to be developed

People with physical difficulties apply for rehousing from hospital often with very short timescales. RCT need more data and notice at an earlier stage based on an agreed corporate pathway

At the time of the Population Assessment¹⁸ there were around 4150 people in Cwm Taf registered as

¹⁸ Cwm Taf Population Assessment March 2017

having physical disability or sensory impairment. Service providers believed this number was not a true reflection of the numbers affected as people do not identify with the language, definitions and terminology used.

Deaf and blind, especially culturally Deaf, and blind (those born Deaf or blind), service users felt particularly dis-connected with the term impairment, they did not feel they have an impairment or loss as they have never had that sense to impair or lose. There were also issues with under reporting as people did not want to be on registers as they were not sure how this information would be used, or they were worried about discrimination.

Some of the common themes identified through the population assessment for people with disabilities included:

- Everyone wanted to feel part of their community and not feel socially isolated.
- People didn't know what services were available to them or how to access the support and help they need
- Choice and independence were important to disabled people just as they are for all people. Everyone wants to feel involved, in control and listened to, and respected. People may have multiple needs but don't want to access multiple services, having to retell their story again and again.

Adult Social Care Physical disability specialist placements, partly funded by HSG, have seen a year-on-year increase with a significant spike in need in 2021. At the time of this needs assessment there are currently 26 individuals with physical disabilities in specialist placements. All these individuals would be considered for new accommodation that can better meet their needs and bring them closer to home while promoting independence and choice.

People with physical difficulties apply for rehousing from hospital, often with very short timescales. In these situations, the Council needs more data and notice at an earlier stage. There is a need to find short term solutions whilst move on is adapted or built. Two ICF funded properties are in place for this purpose and the Council are also looking at the use of Extra Care Respite. Going forward this needs a corporate pathway signed up to by all partners.

Carers

Summary

HSG services need to ensure they are integrating the needs of carers into commissioning and delivering support.

At the time of the population assessment nearly 13% of the population in Cwm Taf, some 29,640 people in RCT were providing care to a family member, friend, or neighbour. This is slightly higher

than all Wales figure of 12% and higher than the England and Wales figure of 10%. The Carers Strategy for Cwm Taf sets out key objectives that HSG service need to contribute to:

- Identify carers
- Carers must be able to find the information and support they need easily and quickly
- Carers must be listened to and understood
- Preventative support

HSG services need to ensure they are integrating these objectives into commissioning and delivering support.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

Headlines

- Increasing numbers of referrals are unable to be accepted to Refuges in RCT because of levels of need and/or risk – often associated with history significant trauma, co-existing substance misuse and mental health challenges.
- Whilst homelessness applications for those fleeing domestic abuse are not high as other authorities there is a need for service development particularly in respect of enhancing domestic abuse perpetrator programmes in Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

The key VAWDASV challenges set out in the Population Assessment¹⁹ were:

- People need to be empowered to report incidents of violence and take up the services on offer. Many victims don't report the violence or abuse they are experiencing. Many people who do report incidents to the police or other agencies do not go on to take up the offer of support. The services provided often predominantly help those at the greatest risk and less support is available for others.
- Services need to meet the needs of all groups in our communities. For example, there were no services specifically provided for men.
- Services need to work together to tackle the underlying problems that are leading to violence. Many people who access services are experiencing a range of problems such as substance misuse or poor mental health and may be known to other services. These may be causing or contributing to the violence or abuse they are experiencing and should not be tackled in isolation.
- Services need to protect and support children in families where violence and abuse is happening. The information from services was that children are present in most homes supporting a victim of violence or abuse. Children who see or have experience of domestic abuse are more likely to experience problems in later life.
- The people who use services do not routinely get involved in telling them what they want or

¹⁹ Cwm Taf Population Assessment March 2017

how services can meet their needs. This means that services may be designed by professionals who believe they know what people need without being informed by the people who will ultimately use the service.

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy and Delivery Plan²⁰ has five key aims:

- Increase awareness of violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence across the Cwm Taf population
- To break the generational cycle of VAWDASV behaviour in families by promoting healthy relationships in children and young people.
- Hold perpetrators to account for their actions and support them to change their behaviour.
- Ensure services are designed and commissioned to meet the needs of the Cwm Taf population.
- Ensure that services are fit for purpose and quality assured

Progress against the plan can be found [here](#).

Use of HSG VAWDASV services in RCT

The tables below shows referrals, referral decisions and unmet needs for HSG VAWDASV services in RCT.

Refuge referral information	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	4-year total
Number of referrals	280	316	282	286	1164
Referrals Accepted	193	185	169	154	701
Referrals Not Accepted	87	131	113	133	464

Table 9: Single women fleeing domestic abuse with high complexities / substances misuse and crisis Mental Health

Reasons for referrals not accepted	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	4-year total
Risk of harm violence towards other residents	16	18	12	14	60
Domestic abuse not a lead need	28	27	28	20	103
No recourse to public funds		2	3	4	9

²⁰ Cwm Taf Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy and Delivery Plan 2017-21

Unable to complete risk assessment		19	3	2	24
Not entitled to benefits		2	2		4
No available refuge space		5	14	14	33
Unsafe in RCT client supported to access other area	24	13	6	11	54
Unable to Meet High Support Needs	19	37	42	51	153

Table 10: Reasons for referrals not being accepted

There was a noticeable increase in the number of people where the support needs were complex and could not be met. These are explored further in the table below.

Reasons for not meeting High Support Needs	
Physical disability required adapted facilities / unavailable at time of referral	6
Mental Health- client presenting as suicidal/self-harming at point of referral	48
Chaotic substance misuse – client not current to D&A services	66
Mental health- client requires daily support from MHT – dynamic within refuge inappropriate at point of referral	4
History of violent offending.	18
Total	142²¹

Table 11: Reasons for not meeting high support needs

Whilst homelessness applications for those fleeing domestic abuse are not high there is a need for service development particularly in respect of enhancing Domestic Abuse perpetrator provision in Cwm Taf Morgannwg particularly for those stepping down from the higher level "Drive" Perpetrator Programme.

Accommodation

Headlines

²¹ The reason for this discrepancy in the data is that during 2017- 18 it was not as effectively recorded as the previous three years.



- One bedroom accommodation is the highest need of housing across all bands in RCT, however across all sectors there is a significant lack of single person and one bedroom accommodation
- Placements in Temporary Accommodation have risen in line with the increase in homelessness applications, with people aged 16-25 being the largest client group accommodated.
- Since the pandemic and the increase in house values in RCT, many private landlords now no longer want to work with clients referred by the Council, preferring to find their own private tenants.
- The Council have secured funding from Welsh Government to set up the Social Lettings Agency. This is improving access to the private rented sector, but its impact is slower than was hoped because of the current challenges engaging private landlords.
- The most recent Local Housing Market Assessment (2017) identified that there is a wide disparity in affordability of housing between the most and least deprived areas of the borough.
- A significant percentage of the population rely on the private rented sector for accommodation, and some areas have seen a significant increase in the numbers of people in private rented accommodation.
- The availability of social housing varies widely across the borough.

This section reviews the data on availability of accommodation, specifically:

- Current allocation demand
- Temporary Accommodation
- Private Rented Sector
- Planning and new building

Allocation demand

The Council uses an online system called Homefinder which allows residents to register for housing and view all the properties that are available to rent from housing associations with homes in RCT. As of 12th October 2021, there were 4669 applicants registered for rehousing in RCT. The system categories housing need into four bands as set out below.

BAND A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urgent Housing Need • These are time limited cases to be reviewed every 3 months • Local connection criteria will apply except for MAPPA and Homelessness Cases
BAND B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Housing Need • Applicants awarded Band A but with no local connection • All Homeless Priority Need Regardless of Local Connection
BAND C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Housing Need • Applicants awarded Band B but with no local connection
BAND D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Housing Need • Applicants awarded Band C but with no local connection



- (except Homelessness)

Table 12: Description of band categories for Homefinder RCT

The table below is a snapshot of the applications broken down by band and by size of property need. This shows that only 8.75% of applicants have been assessed as Band A or Band B leaving 91.25% of applicants assessed as having a low or no housing need.

Band A	161
Band B	248
Band C	1641
Band D	2619
Total	4669

Table 13 Number of applicants registered with Homefinder as of 12 October 2021

As can be seen in the table below, the need for 1 bedroom accommodation is the largest area of need across all bands.

	Total	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D
1 bedroom	2232	114	105	840	1321
2 bedroom	911	29	71	420	911
3 bedroom	677	16	38	259	364
4 bedroom	155	2	17	115	21
5 bedroom	21	0	12	7	2
6 bedroom	5	0	5	0	0

Table 14: Applications registered by bedroom size and band

The table below identifies the number of people registered who require home adaptations.

	Total	1 bed-room	2 bed-room	3 bed-room	4 bed-room	5 bed-room	6 bed-room	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D
Level 1	12	5	3	4	0	0	0	3	0	3	6
Level 1 & 2	89	40	18	23	7	1	0	27	3	36	23
Level 2	659	472	120	44	20	2	1	19	12	294	334
Total	760	517	141	71	27	3	1	49	15	333	363

Table 15: Number of applicants registered with Homefinder who require adaptations

Although the number of applicants requiring adaptations is relatively low compared to the overall figures, stakeholder feedback raised the issue of referrals to the Council’s homelessness team for urgent rehousing of those with significant changes in the physical needs. The short timescales in applications from people seeking rehousing from hospital is a particular challenge.

Use of temporary accommodation

TA placements broadly reflect similar patterns to homelessness presentations in RCT with single person households, and in particular single male, composing the majority of placements. 16-25 is the age group with the largest number of placements, with 520 placements between 2018–2021. This decreases to 496 placements in the 26-35 age group with all household types decreasing, apart from single male and single female with dependent children which both increase. From age group 36-45 placements of all household types decrease consistently with age and by age group 56-65 there are fewer than 55 total placements.

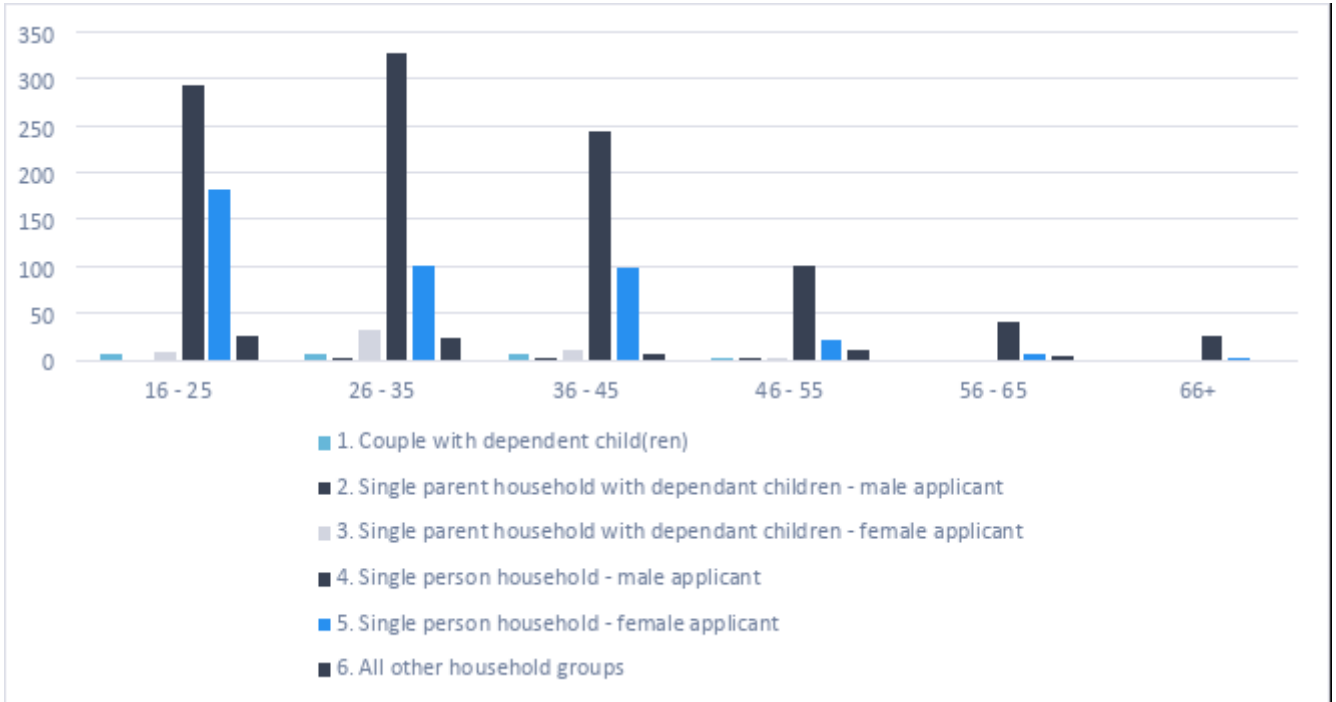


Figure 19: Number of TA placements by Age Group / Household Type 2018-2021

Single male households are the largest household type across all age groups, increasing over time from 57% of placements aged 16-25 to 100% of placements aged 76+. Single female households are the second largest group and decrease in both number and proportion of total placements by age group: comprising 35% of all placements aged 16-25 to 15% by the 46-55 age group.

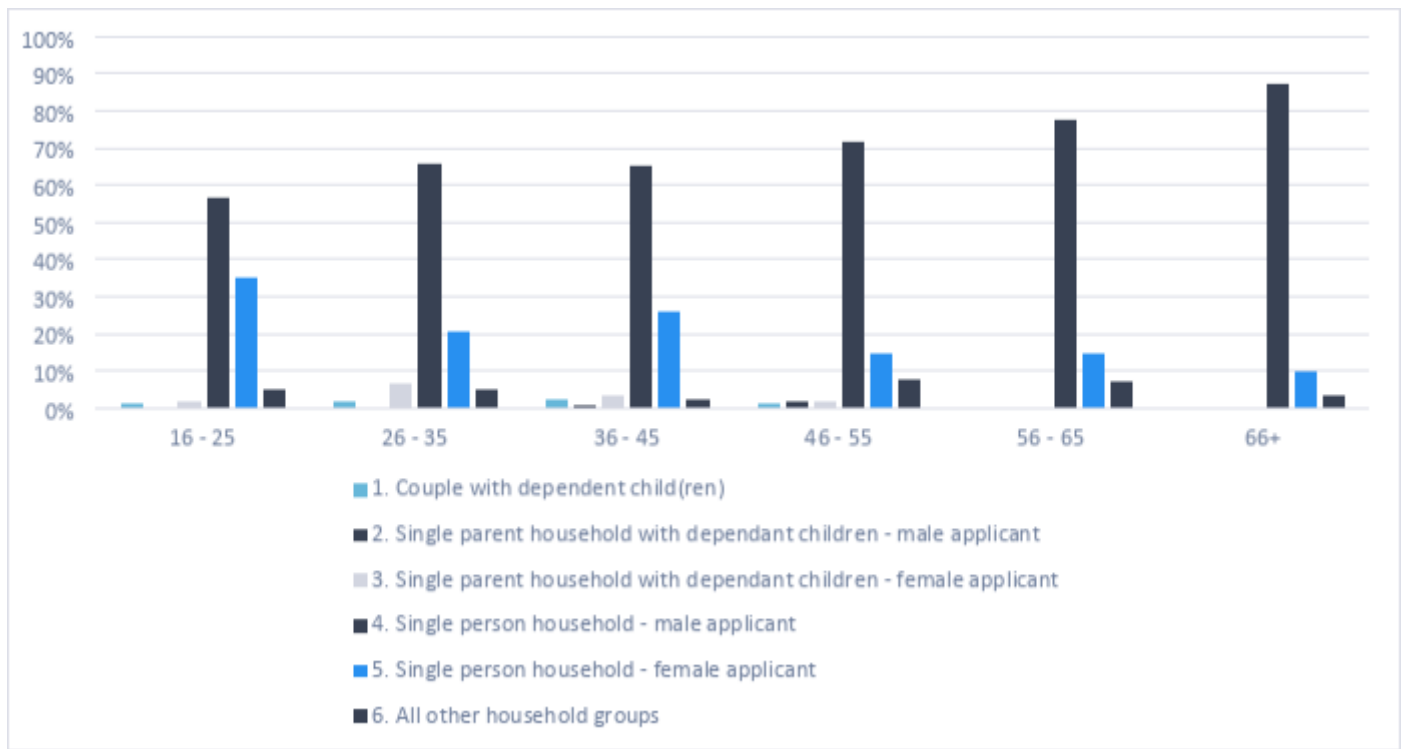


Figure 20: Percentage of TA placements by Age Group / Household Type 2018-21

Private rented sector

Since the pandemic and the increase in house values in RCT, many private landlords now no longer want to work with LA referred clients, preferring to find private tenants. Landlords and Letting Agents have raised a number of concerns:

- Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates are lower than the market rents that are being advertised:
 - 1 beds are on average £15 per week over LHA rates,
 - 2 beds are average £30-£50 per week over LHA,
 - 3 beds are average £70-£120 over LHA rates,
 - 4 beds are average over £100-£450 over LHA rates depending on area (TAFF for the higher rental).
- “The Public Health Team’s inspections are creating more work, and some of the recommendations for works to be completed are unrealistic”. When this has been explored further, this is reference to a need for security windows in a single person unit where no children are being accommodated. Also delays in Public Health inspections is resulting in loss of rental income whilst waiting for the property to be inspected
- Some landlords and letting agents have waiting lists of around 30-40 clients for properties. Some prospective tenants are in bidding wars on who can pay the most up front to secure a property. In one recent case it was reported that the tenant secured the property with six months’ rent up front.
- Reluctance to work with ex-offenders when private renters are seen as having fewer issues.

- “Why would we work with the Local Authority when all we have been promised previously has been brushed under the carpet, we are consistently being told we will get arrears paid but nothing is ever paid”?
- Some landlords have stated that they are struggling to get 1 bed properties available for rent and there is a lack of 1 bed accommodation being made available for sale.
- Landlords are advised people will be given support, however if this doesn't happen for any reason, it is seen as the fault of the LA with consequent reluctance to accept more tenants with support needs.
- When asking if could negotiate lower rent, the response is that they don't need to as enough applicants who will pay the rental price as advertised
- The incentive of paying bond and rent in advance for a month is no longer an incentive – Landlords/Agents have applicants offering to pay 6 months' rent in advance on properties
- The advantage of being able to organise housing benefit to pay straight away has gone due to universal credit. The Council are no longer able to guarantee the direct payment and Landlords are concerned about the delays in receiving first payments from universal credit housing costs
- Working guarantors are being asked for consistently now, Council caseloads do not necessarily have these available
- The difference between the LHA rate and rental prices have increased significantly which is reducing RCT options in terms of finding properties

Social Letting Agency

Welsh Government funding was secured by the Council to establish the Social Letting Agency in RCT in the early part of 2020/21. This provides affordable housing in the private rented sector. This has included the setup of a new team comprising of a Team Leader and two Housing Officers.

The Team are co-located with the Housing Solutions Team who work closely together to help identify housing need and where possible to use the private rented sector to prevent homelessness or discharge legal duty.

Despite the team developing positive relationships with several private landlords in RCT, their participation in the Social Letting Agency has been slower than anticipated due to issues with the current market identified above. Some landlord feedback has also raised the minimum property standards as an issue, which despite the grant and loan offer to help with the works, can put some landlords off working with the Council particularly if they are not residing locally.

The national rollout of the SLA going forward will improve the offer to private sector landlords and will provide additional and enhanced financial opportunities to hopefully improve take up of the scheme.

Planning and building

As it is currently being reviewed, the most recent Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) is for the period 2017 to 2022/23, hence the data therein is from 2016. Nevertheless, it gives useful insights.

- There is a wide disparity in affordability of housing between the most and least deprived areas of the borough.
- A significant percentage of the population rely on the private rented sector for accommodation, and some areas have seen a significant increase in the numbers of people in private rented accommodation.
- The availability of social housing varies widely across the borough.
Across all sectors there is a significant lack of single person and one bedroom accommodation.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Authority to prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP) for the County. The document provides the development strategy and policy framework for the specified plan period. The LDP was being updated at the time of this assessment so the data from the extant plan has been included²². The plan identified sites to provide 5000-5450 new homes:

1. Former Fernhill Colliery Site, Larhonda 350 – 400
2. Former Phurnacite Plant Site, Abercwmbol 500
3. Land at Robertstown Strategic Site, Aberdare 500 – 600
4. Land South of Hirwaun 400
5. Former Cwm Colliery and Coking Works, Tyn-y-Nant Pontypridd 800 – 950
6. Mwyndy / Talbot Green Area 500
7. Former OCC Site Llanilid, Llanharan 1950 – 210

²² RCT Local Development Plan up to 2021 March 2011

Housing Support Grant Services

This section summarises how HSG funded services are provided by the Council. The Housing Support Grant typically funds support activities via three types of services that meet different levels of need:

- High – 24/7 supported accommodation
- Medium – 9-5 flexible support including evenings/weekends
- Low – Dispersed units: these resemble clients living in their own accommodation with floating support.

Floating Support

The Locality Based Floating Support service was implemented from April 2019. Support is available to anyone in Rhondda Cynon Taf and is provided by three support providers, each one responsible for one locality.

The locality-based model operates a multiple needs service. This change has allowed service users to be supported regardless of their lead need and has taken away the need for waiting lists.

Each provider operates a triage service based on presenting level of support need i.e., intervention and prevention, housing related support and low-level ongoing support in which one support worker can assist the service user at all levels. Each provider assists with all aspects of housing related support.

The referral comes into the Single Point of Access (SPA), the application is processed based on area, the HSG team are notified of a vacancy by the support provider, the referral is assessed with the provider determining support needs and service is provided based on presenting need. Throughout support, providers will refer service users to appropriate agencies if required. The SPA does not process referrals for Learning Disability, Physical Disability or Mental health specialist placements with the Council's Adult Social Care Department. It also does not process referrals for Supported Lodgings for Young People. Each of these is dealt with by a bespoke referrals panel.

The locality based floating support service model is delivered in 3 stages:

Stage 1 – Early intervention and prevention (Financial assessment / Agency referral)

At stage 1, support can be up to 3 months. There should be immediate action taken to support individuals with their support needs, including specialist benefit advice, financial inclusion support, and debt management prevented a spiral into a worsening situation.

Stage 2 - Ongoing support up to 6 months

Individuals can move from stage 1 to stage 2 for up to an additional 3 months where the support worker will continue to support them and then end support if all needs are met.

Stage 3 – Ongoing low-level support: Individuals move to stage 3 if there is ongoing low-level support required. Support can continue for as long as needed subject to annual review.

Supported Accommodation

Services for specific needs and client groups are set out in the section on Insights into the most significant housing support needs. Services not mentioned in those sections are summarised below:

Homelessness Support Service

For all service users placed in temporary accommodation, there is a newly developed homelessness support service to ensure everyone placed has a dedicated support worker. A newly established specialist health team also supports service users in temporary accommodation with mental health and substance issues and has enhanced provider's access to trauma therapy.

RCT Refuge Provision – Mitchell Terrace, Tonypany

United Welsh Housing Association provided 4 units of accommodation, to offer refuge provision to house 4 women and their children fleeing domestic violence

Mill Street Hostel

Temporary Accommodation Hostel for the homeless that present to the housing advice centre and are part of the housing advice pathway. It is located at the centre of Pontypridd Town, the building is owned by the Council and a lease agreement is currently in place with Pobl, who are commissioned to provide the support on site.

Other HSG services

Get Ready and Move On (GRAMO)

The project provides information on all aspects of being a good tenant such as paying utility bills to general day to day management of money and tasks with the aim of keeping their tenancy long term. It is there to support care leavers and residents placed in the Council's hostels, supported accommodation and those stepping down from specialist adult care placements.

Mediation

Mediation is usually only one aspect of the support made available in projects; other services offered may include housing advice and information, practical support, and temporary accommodation. Mediation may take place between the young person and their parents, or anyone else who has been providing them with a home, or, more rarely, between the young person and the hostel or supported housing.

MIND Resilience

The Resilience Project is run by Mind Cwm Taf Morgannwg and encompasses Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. Its aim is to support those at risk of homelessness and have mild to moderate mental health conditions.

In Rhondda Cynon Taf, the project works with homeless hostels to assist and support them to become more psychologically informed environments as well as making homeless people more resilient. MIND describe resilience as 'Taking steps to look after your wellbeing can help you deal with pressure, and reduce the impact that stress has on your life. This is sometimes called developing emotional resilience

RCT Citizens Advice

RCT's Citizens Advice Homelessness Prevention Project was established in 2018 to support the

Council in meeting its statutory duty under the Housing Act 2014 to prevent and relieve homelessness. Through the provision of advice and financial assistance to people who are receiving support from RCTCBC’s Housing Solutions team and Supporting People providers in RCT, its aim is to stabilise and improve the financial situation of vulnerable people in RCT, who are facing problems such as debt, employment, tenancy management, substance misuse, domestic abuse and mental health issues and prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity.²³

Referrals for Housing Support Grant Funded Services

The HSG Team operates a Single Point of Access (SPA) for referrals for supported accommodation and floating support services. This data collected through the SPA is used to inform and assist the RCT HSG Planning Group and Cwm Taf Regional Collaborative Committee to highlight the most prevalent lead need categories to support the identification of priority areas for the Housing Support Grant Strategic Plan locally.

It is to be noted that a high proportion of people present with multiple needs and this data is also recorded, however the following data is based on lead need only.

Lead Need.	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/21
Mental Health Problems	838	1055	738
Homeless or Needs to Prevent Homelessness	215	334	431
Older Person (55+)	526	330	314
Physical Disability	125	159	86
Domestic Abuse	133	142	124
Vulnerable Family	42	102	148
Substance Misuse (Alcohol 52 – Drugs 32)	114	90	28
Young Vulnerable Individual (16-24)	98	81	84
Vulnerable Single Parent/Expectant Mother	48	75	88
Learning Disability/Difficulties	71	74	72
Single People 25-54 With Support Needs Not Included Elsewhere in This List	32	42	80
Chronic Illness	50	34	37
Former Offender	33	34	42
Brain Injury	11	20	1
People With Developmental Disorders. i.e., Autism	9	19	12
Young & Vulnerable Care Leaver	31	17	12
Other	10	17	23
Sensory Impairment	12	14	14
Dual Diagnoses	2	4	0
Refugee	0	4	0
Former Armed Service Personnel with Support Needs	1	0	0
TOTAL	2419	2669	2378

Table 16: referrals for supported accommodation and floating support 2018-2021²⁴

²³ RCT Rapid Homelessness Review August 2021

²⁴ The above figures do not include those being supported within existing Learning Disability schemes or those that have direct referrals to emergency temporary accommodation or a Refuge.

After being mostly unchanged for a number of years, referrals increased significantly in 2019/20 for a number of needs:

- Mental Health
- Homeless or needs to prevent Homelessness
- Older Vulnerable People
- Physical Disability
- Domestic Abuse
- Vulnerable Family

This trend continued in 2020/21 for those who were homeless or needs to prevent homelessness and vulnerable families, but for all other needs there were significantly lower referrals. This can reasonably be attributed to the disruption of the pandemic with additional funding to respond to homelessness and the closure of schools leading to additional need for support for families.

Stakeholders raised concerns about how the pandemic has caused the need for support to be 'saved up' during lockdown and expect a significant increase in demand for 2021/22 and beyond.

Current HSG Services

The Table below provides a summary of the services currently in place and how these have changed over the last year.

Project Type	Breakdown by type of need	Total number of units 21-22	Change in number of units from 20-21
Private Rented Sector Access Schemes	Social Lettings	10	+10
Rapid rehousing/Housing Led Services	Housing First (verified)	30	+30
Rough Sleeper Outreach Service	Street Smart Project	15	0
Mediation Services	Family	15	0
Enforcement, Investigation or Compliance with Housing Legislation	Housing Advice	0	0
Floating Support	VAWDASV	105	+10
	Learning Disability	27	0
	Mental Health	65	+20
	Substance Misuse	20	+20
	Ex-Offenders	40	+30

Project Type	Breakdown by type of need	Total number of units 21-22	Change in number of units from 20-21
	Young People	10	+10
	Older People	20	0
	Generic	990	+85
Temporary Supported Accommodation	Mental Health	47	+5
	Substance misuse and alcohol issues (Wet)	7	0
	Young People	51	+17
	Generic	50	+12
Permanent Supported Accommodation	Learning Disability	278	+12
	Other	45	0
Refuges	Female	26	+4
Non-Statutory HSG Funded Posts	Project Officers (temp)	2 Posts	+2
Other Homeless Prevention Projects	Enhance Homeless support service	60	+60
	HIP	60	0
Other	SP - Admin	2	0
	HSG - PATH Training	20	0
	Uplift		0
	Temp funding	0	0
	HSG - New Developments		0
	HSG - Regional projects		0
CUMULATIVE TOTAL		1995	+347

Table 17: Services currently in place and how these have changed over the last year

HSG in Adult Services

The Council’s Housing Strategy Department works closely with Adult Services to provide joined up provision for those with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and enduring mental health needs, including the deployment of Housing Support Grant.

There are 164 specialist placements being sourced by Adult Social Services with HSG input. All individuals in specialist placements are prioritised to step down through different accommodation options that could reduce costs while bringing them closer to home. The Council has seen an average yearly increase of 30% for specialist placements and anticipate this trend to continue for the foreseeable future which will result in an estimated 360 specialist placements by 2025.

HSG in Children's Services

The Housing Strategy Department also works closely with Children's Services via the Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service and the use of the Children and Communities Grant is overseen by the Council's Funding Flexibilities Lead Officer Group. The membership of which comprises the lead Officers of the seven grants that make up the Children and Communities Grant in addition to the lead officers from the Housing Support Grant.

Both strategic and operational responsibility for the HSG and CCG sits within the Community and Children's Services Group. The Director of Public Health Protection and Community Services reports directly to the PSB on both grants on behalf of the Council.

The Council's Funding Flexibilities Lead Officer Group includes all CCG and HSG lead officers to ensure a consistent approach to service delivery from an operational perspective as well as synergy in planning, monitoring and review from a strategic perspective. Operational delivery arrangements that were set up as a result of Pathfinder activities continue, such as the utilisation of early intervention and prevention housing support commissioned by HSG to provide housing appraisals for families open to the Resilient Families Service.

Opportunities for joint commissioning between the two programmes were taken in 2020-21 to allow for greater funding flexibility between CCG and HSG, namely:

- An existing Women's Aid project commissioned by Families First became part of a larger HSG commissioned project.
- A Citizen's Advice Bureau project funded by HSG became part of a larger CCG commissioned project.

The main HSG funded service is the Supported Lodgings Scheme which provides supported accommodation to young people aged 16 to 21 years of age, by enabling them to access lodgings in approved private households within RCT. It is part of a range of accommodation options for young people supported by the 16+ Teams with 26 units being commissioned over a three-year period.

Housing Support Outcomes

Summary

There is limited data available on the outcomes of support, making it difficult to understand why support ended in a planned or unplanned way and whether the outcome was satisfactory to the client.

The new Single Outcome Framework needs to be developed and implemented to fully understand what support is achieving.

Services are seeing more clients with needs that are higher than the service was set up to meet.

The waiting lists show that there is a risk that the needs of young people are not being fully met by the current service provision.

This section reviews the outcome data on HSG services (as separate to homelessness duty outcomes). Until recently RCT have used the Welsh Government Outcomes Framework to measure the impact of their services. As part of the terms and conditions of the grant, the Authority is required to complete the Welsh Government outcomes template to evidence the programme under its four main headings:

- Promoting Personal and Community Safety
- Promoting Independence and Control
- Promoting Progress and Control
- Promoting Health and Wellbeing

However, the outcomes framework, has been found not to be fit for RCT purposes, and so a new outcomes framework is in development. Work is underway in Welsh Government to introduce a Single Outcome Frameworks across both HSG and CCG, which has been delayed as a result of the pandemic. This comes with an expectation that departments will demonstrate that all projects are developed with integration and collaboration at the forefront, looking at co-commissioning where possible and integration amongst the grants to deliver the best outcomes for the service user in the most efficient way.

Outcomes for Supported Accommodation

During 2020-21 102 Individuals moved into supported accommodation and 83 individuals ended support 2020-21. The outcomes at the end of support were:

- 47 went secured accommodation
- 14 to family or friends
- 5 were given notice to quit
- 5 requested to leave the service
- 3 went to prison
- 2 died
- 2 abandoned
- 2 moved out of area
- 2 moved to permanent supported
- 1 moved to low level support

86% of this support ended in a planned way. This would indicate that overall supported

accommodation projects were effective at moving people on to appropriate accommodation in a planned way.

Although it is not reflected in the data, it has been noted in stakeholder feedback that service user's mental health needs have increased, which has then impacted their substance misuse. This can cause challenges to support and engagement. Specialist services for those clients with support needs around substance misuse is a common barrier. Referrals are submitted to the specialist services, however due to the lengthy timescales from referral to receiving the specialist support, this impacts on the client's engagement whilst in a supported accommodation environment.

Outcomes for Floating Support

The number of clients ending stage 3 floating support during 2020-21 was 2547. The reasons for support coming to an end were:

- 1086 left in a planned way
- 478 moved to Stage 2
- 637 moved to Stage 3
- 272 did not engage
- 6 went into hospital
- 5 went into prison
- 24 moved out of area
- 10 moved into Extra Care
- 3 moved to Family Support
- 26 died

Eighty-eight per-cent of this support ended in a planned way. As stated above, the current outcomes framework does not give the information needed to understand fully how successful floating support is for clients. However, we can see that a significant percentage of clients leave the service in a planned way which may indicate that support needs have been met.

Waiting Lists

Waiting lists can give an indication of unmet need in the community, although these waiting lists are dynamic and constantly changing. Snapshots of the waiting lists at two points in the next year show that at the end of March 2021 there were 20 individuals on the waiting list for Supported Accommodation that included:

- 9- High level 24hr supported (Adults)
- 6 - High level 24hr supported (16-24)
- 2- Medium level 9-5 (Adults)
- 2 Low Level (Young people -16-24)
- 1 Low Level (Adults)

By 1st September 2021, 21 people were on the waiting list including:

- 7 - High level 24hr supported (Adults)
- 12- High level 24hr supported (16-24)
- 2- Low Level (16-21)

This shows an increase in demand for supported accommodation for people 16-24 years in the



county. However, the challenges with taking snapshots like these is that all intelligence on referrals, throughput and external factors leading to an increase in referrals needs to be reviewed at the same time to understand the whole picture.

Stakeholder Engagement

Summary

Stakeholders had a range of views and suggestions:

- Improve accessibility consistently for all from low to complex needs through a one door / assessment centre approach with a 'no wrong door' philosophy.
- Improve multiagency working in particular for mental health, substance misuse and where these are co-occurring.
- Ensure there is a better multi-agency operational response to inclusion with the express aim of agreeing a consensus on how to collectively work with homeless people with complex needs or individuals at risk of losing their accommodation.
- Extend Housing First Model for more complex needs
- Recognise that people need permanent living options within a supported housing environment.
- Housing Related Support responses for the most complex and hard to engage with need to be rapid. People need support when they need it.
- Review the use of bed and breakfast and look at other approaches to Temporary Accommodation.
- Ensure prevention and early intervention initiatives across RCT are strategically and operationally aligned.
- HSG intervention should start at the earliest opportunity – should be placed based. Targeting high risk areas.
- Ensure HSG and Children's Services utilise funding for Supported Lodgings effectively and understand the outcomes for young people.
- Safeguarding procedures should be reviewed to ensure that they are sufficiently robust.
- Implement the recommendations of the homeless and health needs assessment.

A range of local stakeholders were involved in developing this needs assessment. Stakeholders included council departments, statutory partners such as health and probation, along with representatives from Registered Social Landlords and HSG providers. Stakeholders were engaged via online workshops, one to one interviews and via a questionnaire.

Statutory Partners

Stakeholders were asked about primary prevention i.e., how to build resilience and creating the conditions in which problems do not arise in the future. What is RCT's current offer? What should it look like in the future? The responses included:

- There needs to be a better focus on family/domestic violence and young people, particularly young people with complex needs, to support resilience in families. A lot of work is already happening through Resilient Families initiative.
- The HSG funded housing officer is working well. There is an opportunity to further amalgamate the resilient families initiative and prevention agenda in the HSG programme.
- Attendance and wellbeing services in schools need to identify issues – making every contact

count. Behaviours in school are often indicators for issues in later life such as mental health and substance misuse.

- Resilient families currently have a process for profiling vulnerability in families. There is an opportunity for a more corporate approach to profiling future need between social services and the Housing Support Programme.

Stakeholders were asked about secondary prevention, targeting action towards areas where there is a high risk of a problem occurring. What is RCT's current offer? What should it look like?

- See Appendix 1 for an example of a prevention programme undertaken by another local authority in Wales. The observations and recommendations of this work aligned with some of the feedback from stakeholders in RCT.
- Housing First projects are having a good impact – they are stopping individuals going around the system. These need to be developed further.
- Existing accommodation projects need to review their access rules given the increase in presenting complex needs i.e., co-occurring mental health and substance misuse.
- A multi-agency Inclusion Panel should be set up for those who are currently experiencing or at risk of serial exclusion. The terms of reference for this panel should have an emphasis on how to accommodate people with even the most complex needs.
- It was felt that the efficacy of Supported Lodgings as an option for young people leaving care should be explored in relation to outcomes and value for money.

Stakeholders were asked about tertiary prevention – i.e. intervening once there is a problem, to stop it getting worse and prevent it reoccurring in the future. What is RCT's current offer? What should it look like?

- Housing First Projects work well for most people.
- WISDOM project (Housing First prison leavers) also works well.
- Move on was successful and prevented many people from re-presenting, however this was becoming more difficult because of a lack of more permanent housing options across the system.

Stakeholders were asked about acute spending i.e., spending which acts to manage the impact of a strongly negative situation but does little or nothing to prevent problems occurring in the future. What is RCT's current offer? What should it look like?

- There were several pockets of good practice in RCT but that agendas could be better aligned e.g., Resilient Families and HSG, thus using resources more effectively.
- Needs to be better investment at an early age e.g., school age to prevent problems spiraling out of control.
- There is an opportunity to enhance corporate parenting ensuring Children's Services and housing colleagues in relation to how they jointly plan around the needs of vulnerable children and children leaving care.

- There should be youth worker presence in schools (See Appendix 2 for thoughts on how youth services could contribute to the homelessness agenda.
- Need to look at the Cardiff assessment centre model to assess its suitability for RCT. The model should include multiagency assessment and bed provision for all single homeless people including those with complex needs.

Stakeholders were asked, what would you stop, start, and continue in relation to HSG programme?

- Continue floating support
- Need more evidence on supported lodgings
- Review reasons for breakdown in placements and use as an opportunity for learning and development.
- Review supported accommodation access rules and length of tenure
- Look at Cardiff Assessment Centre model
- Management information system needs to be improved and understood across the system
- Ensure the Council and its partners align planning and commissioning in relation to the anti-poverty agenda e.g., HSG and CCG build on joint working to develop more single delivery approaches.
- Better joint commissioning with Health, Social Care, HSG and APB for Substance Misuse is required to respond to the increasingly complex needs in RCT.
- Ensure commissioning is based on good quality triangulated data that reflects the intelligence held by voluntary sector, Health, Probation social services and housing partners.

NHS Stakeholders

An interview was carried out with the Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation CTMUHB and a Consultant in Public Health

The interview covered broadly how the CTMUHB was committed to improving its accessibility to homeless people. Specifically, the interview highlighted three broad areas for improving access.

The need to review the remit and outputs of existing community-based posts across the health and social care partnership.

There was recognition that community-based practitioners who understood the importance of providing relationship-based services was vital. There is a clear plan to move towards delivering health services via a locality model. There was a view expressed that there are a number of posts that potentially overlap in their reach and remit e.g., Community Navigators and Inverse Care Team posts. It was recommended that how these posts/services complement each other required exploration across the partnership to ensure best value for money.

The need to ensure a reasonable balance between the development of specialist services and improving access to mainstream services for all.

There was also recognition that a proper locality-based approach would need to be inclusive in its entirety and that some learning and development activities were required to ensure that all

mainstream services are as inclusive as possible – taking account of the specific access needs of e.g., people with learning disability, mental health, homeless people. There was a view that a reasonable balance needed to be struck to between the development of specialist services and improving access to mainstream services for all.

The need to ensure that the recommendations from the recent Health Needs Assessment are properly considered by relevant planning forums.

A recent (2020) health needs assessment carried out in CTMUHB in respect of homeless people highlighted a clear interest in the health needs of homeless people in most service areas in CTMUHB, and the forays that some services have made into understanding and meeting the health needs of homeless people was encouraging.

There is a need to ensure that the recommendations from the Health Needs Assessment are properly reviewed and implemented in CTMUHB in respect of homeless people by existing partnership forums (e.g., area planning boards) that cover:

- Mental health
- Substance Misuse
- Housing and homelessness

Relationships at the local level between some NHS services and hostel providers is also to be welcomed and something to build upon. However, a strategic and co-ordinated multi-disciplinary approach to fully meeting the health needs of homeless people, that would meet best practice standards, appeared to be largely absent at the time of the assessment.

The current focus in the Health Board on a locality management model provides an opportunity for each area to test its service model design to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable in each community, including homeless people, have been addressed.

The following recommendations were highlighted in the health needs assessment for the appropriate authorities and partners in the area to consider as priorities in relation to the health needs of homeless people.

1. Safeguarding procedures should be reviewed to ensure that they are sufficiently robust to ensure that individuals and organisations are able to raise concerns about homeless people and feel that their concerns are being heard and acted on.
2. Existing forum, or new group should be convened, to oversee the implementation of the strategic actions arising from the health needs assessment. This group should be comprised of key stakeholders; health, social care, housing, criminal justice, and welfare services and have a line of accountability to the Regional Partnership Board. A first goal of this group should be to set out its vision for health services for homeless people, drawing on the groundwork that has been undertaken in individual services. An integrated model service delivery for homeless people should be developed for delivery in each local authority area, that takes account of the standards set out by the Faculty of Homeless and Inclusion Health and take an action learning approach to service development.
3. An operational forum should be established in each of the local authority areas to provide a focus for building relationships between the variety of health service providers and the hostel

providers, with a specific emphasis on Primary Care to improve day to day management of healthcare for homeless people.

4. A network of health professionals should be established with an interest in health and homelessness across the Health Board (including primary care) to build professional capacity and understanding of needs and services for Homeless People.
5. Data relating to service use by homeless people across the Health Board should be brought together into a single dashboard to aid understanding of the utilisation of health services by homeless people, and feed into IMTP planning and to inform the HAVGHAP. This can be achieved through interrogating existing service data, rather than needing new systems, and will provide visibility to the needs of homeless people on an on-going basis.
6. Staff in key leadership and clinical roles should undertake awareness raising of the issues raised in this report on a multi-disciplinary basis. This should include people visiting the hostels and meeting homeless people to gain empathy and challenge their unconscious bias. Training should cover these topics:
 - a. Causes and types of homelessness
 - b. Needs
 - c. Access criteria and arrangements
 - d. Escalation
 - e. Shared risk
 - f. Information sharing
7. The Taf Ely cluster's work on the homeless is a significant and highly positive development and should be used as a pilot to test a method of working that can be rolled out across the Health Board as appropriate
8. A specific piece of work is required to further explore the role of mental health services and substance misuse services in supporting the homeless:
9. Primary mental services are available in some but not all hostels, funded from a variety of sources outside of the NHS. Primary mental health services are also provided by the NHS accessed via Primary Mental Health Workers in Primary Care. Homeless people are most likely to access services provided in or near hostels. A consistent offer should be available across all venues that is easily accessible as stabilising mental health underpins all other interventions with homeless people.
10. There is a need for direct and regular liaison between Community Mental Health Teams, Crisis Mental Health Teams, Substance Misuse Services, and hostel services to establish a shared understanding and approach to supporting people homeless people in crisis, including exploring information sharing between mental health services and housing providers.
11. A public health approach to primary prevention of homelessness should be considered, including a review of the local approach to identifying young people at risk of homelessness through school and education services, particularly those at risk due to family breakdown and families in crisis, and to assess if current arrangements are sufficiently targeted. Particular attention should be paid to how young LGBTQ are supported through family breakdown.

12. Partners should review their hospital discharge arrangements to ensure that they are not unwittingly contributing to homelessness.
13. Some service responses to COVID-19 have seen more rapid access to services for people in need – for example more rapid access to substitute prescribing for people using substances. The Health Board should review with homelessness services how this access can be maintained.
14. Health Services should provide information on a regular basis to the homelessness hostel services, as part of their regular service updates, about how to access services e.g., changes in dental service access, accessing podiatry etc.
15. A model to align therapeutic interventions for homeless people with co-morbid mental health and substance misuse should be developed and implemented.
16. Further exploration of the transfer of care on release from Parc Prison should be explored in the context of re-commissioning of prison health services.
17. All organisations should consider how they can offer volunteering and other opportunities that are accessible for homeless people.
18. An opportunistic vaccination service should be introduced to serve the needs of the homeless population in CTMUHB. This should form part of the remit of the immunisation team when human resources allow.
19. Women in the eligible age-groups for breast and cervical screening should be encouraged and supported to attend for screening.

Feedback from service users

Summary

Service users generally report being well-supported by support workers

Ideas for improvement to services are very individual reflecting the need to continue to focus on individual need

The service user view of services is drawn from previous surveys of service users contained in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Housing Support Service User Survey undertaken for the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group, and specific work undertaken directly for this needs assessment.

Cwm Taf Housing Support Survey 2020

A survey was undertaken in December 2020 across the Cwm Taf area with 47 responses from Rhondda Cynon Taf and 21 from other areas. Respondents were people using either supported accommodation services or floating support

When asked about the experience of receiving support during lockdown people generally felt well supported by their support workers and the regular phone calls and face to face meetings had helped to relieve some of the isolation of lockdown for many. It was very clear from the responses what a difference housing support had made.

People generally found it easy to contact their support worker, that support was readily available and that the regular contact had been "a godsend"; as well as being a lifeline. It was clear that the regular contact and support had helped a huge number of responders maintain their mental health and had helped to combat isolation and loneliness. One person advised that:

"I would not have been able to manage without your support through lockdown and feel that I would not be here now if the support was not there".

The interview questions focused on:

- Identifying the main reasons people needed help
- What has helped them the most with their current situation
- How they could achieve a good life that no longer relies on services
- The main barriers to overcoming homelessness or support needs

The activities people received help with were:

- 15 people received help with leading a healthy and active lifestyle
- 45 people received help to stay mentally healthy
- 23 people received help to stay physically healthy
- 7 people received help to engage in employment / voluntary work
- 10 people received help to engage in education / learning
- 53 people received help with managing money

- 20 people received help with feeling part of the community
- 26 people received help with managing relationships
- 64 people received help with managing their accommodation
- 30 people received help with contributing to the safety of themselves or others
- 29 people received support with feeling safe

Everyone was happy with the support received, but many found it challenging not being able to have face to face visits during lockdown if they were due to have them in their own home. However, everyone reported support workers made alternative arrangements either online or over the phone. Most could not give suggestions about how services could be improved except for the following comments:

'I would like the move on panel and home-finder process not to delay and give us a chance to move on sooner, as we are ready to move on to independent living'

'I had difficulty accessing Legal advice or aid - I was referred to Citizens Advice and they passed me on to someone else. I didn't feel I had support in this area'

'There are not enough temporary accommodation placements.'

'Yes, there are barriers, but I think is more to do with funding and the government.'

'Would have liked support with being part of the community and further education but due to Covid lockdown these could not be done.'

'I need Psychological support, but I have been referred to GP.'

'Just be nice to have some face-to-face support when things settle down'

In line with the feedback which highlighted the difficulties people had with accessing support digitally; overwhelmingly people would like to receive future support either face to face, by phone or as a combination:

- 13 people wanted phone calls
- No one wanted just virtual calls
- 21 people wanted face to face
- 36 wanted a combination of all methods.

When asked whether they found it easy to get support 61 said yes and 8 said no. The reasons given by those who struggled to receive support are as follows:

- I struggle with depression
- I was told there is a long waiting list.
- Housing was harder to get hold of as were other services
- Found it very difficult and experienced a lot of fighting and arguments at home.
- I want to be re housed in assisted living which social services are assisting in.
- I was struggling so phoned my support worker and she started supporting me again.

Service user survey 2021:

Service users were surveyed specifically for this needs assessment through interviews undertaken with their support worker following a schedule provided to them. They were asked how they feel about how they were previously or currently helped or how they feel they could be helped differently in the future. A range of services, including fixed and floating support, were represented, including Cynon Floating Support, Llamau Tenancy Support, Pobl, RCT Supported Housing, Hafod and Trivallis.

38 service users provided feedback, of which 21 were male and 17 were female. There was a wide age range among the service users who provided feedback, with the youngest being 17 years old and the oldest being 85 years old. The mean age of the service users was 37 years old.

Appendices

Appendix 1

An example of a prevention programme undertaken by another local authority in Wales. Some of the observations and recommendations of this work closely aligned with the feedback from stakeholders in RCT.

	Youth Service (YS) Input	Activities	Youth Service Impact	Future Outcomes (by age of 25)
Primary Prevention Building resilience – creating the conditions in which problems do not arise in the future. A universal approach. Primary prevention averts new cases of homelessness by intervening well before homelessness may occur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriately trained youth workers • Cabinet champion of Primary Prevention • Schools and YS to introduce wellbeing measuring tool for all children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping young people develop life skills • Helping young people with their personal development • Helping young people with health and well-being matters • Facilitate education around targeted subjects for all as opposed to targeted groups – reducing stigma and ensuring universalism • Life skills training • Budgeting • Managing accommodation • Promote awareness of realistic accommodation options 	Young people develop knowledge and skills	I have a safe, secure place to live
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate approach to school-aged interventions • Trained youth workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising of homelessness for all young people • Agree coordinated programme of support/intervention with schools/Careers Wales and local colleges for all from 14 years 	Young people aware of key issues for homelessness	<p>I have completed my formal education/schooling</p> <p>I have skills, training and/or qualifications that allow me to be work ready</p>

	Youth Service (YS) Input	Activities	Youth Service Impact	Future Outcomes (by age of 25)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth workers • Corporate sign up to assessing, monitoring, and enhancing relationships and purpose as a key activity for social care, education, housing, and Youth Service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in multi-agency casework around individuals • Monitoring circles of support • Putting in place activities that encourage connections with other people and build on existing strengths/interests 	<p>Young people receive tailored multi-professional support</p>	<p>I have stable, consistent, healthy close relationships</p> <p>I have a supportive relationship with my family</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above • Signposting young people to appropriate advice and guidance services • Youth workers trained in mental health first aid • YS activities designed to minimise isolation and loneliness 	<p>Young people access appropriate advice and guidance</p>	<p>I have good mental health</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate learning activities that enhance life and independent living skills for all young people • Inclusive learning for all with specific reference to groups at high risk of homelessness 	<p>All young people are able to access youth services</p>	<p>I'm financially stable</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above • Assist Education Welfare provision (the lead) where appropriate with young people at risk of exclusion to remain in school and 	<p>Young people supported to complete education</p>	<p>I have the skills to live independently</p>

	Youth Service (YS) Input	Activities	Youth Service Impact	Future Outcomes (by age of 25)
		complete their education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to a coordinated programme of support/intervention with schools/Careers Wales and local colleges for all from 14 years 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting young people to build friendship networks with their peers Recognising young people's strengths and building on these as a vehicle for developing healthy relationships (including across generations). 	Young people have friendship groups/activities in their community	I have hobbies and interests that I follow
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychologically informed youth work practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth workers recognise early mental health challenges, provide Tier 1 mental health intervention and signpost to other services where appropriate YS activities designed to minimise isolation and loneliness 	Young people have skills to manage their own mental health	I have developed resilience and/or good coping strategies following a pattern of early trauma

	Youth Service (YS) Input	Activities	Youth Service Impact	Future Outcomes (by age of 25)
<p>Secondary Prevention Targeting action towards areas where there is a high risk of a problem occurring. A targeted approach, which cements the principles of progressive universalism Secondary prevention treats new cases as early as possible, often when a young person presents to LA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted youth service where specialist funding allows for extra provision (above and beyond the statutory universal provision) Target specific funding to support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising young people at early risk of homelessness Providing tailored advice and guidance to individual circumstances Supporting young people to access family mediation Work within a coordinated plan of intervention with schools, social care and 3rd sector Use tool to assess 'high risk' young people 	<p>High risk young people are identified, and tailored support put in place</p>	<p>Ended a pattern of recidivist behaviour/use of services</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skilled youth workers Dedicated team to work with NEET young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting young people not in employment education or training into pathways for employment Work within a coordinated plan of intervention with schools, social care and 3rd sector, colleges etc. Begin transition planning from 14 yrs. 	<p>Young people identify and follow a future training and employment path</p>	<p>I have not been in prison/secure detention for some time</p>



	Youth Service (YS) Input	Activities	Youth Service Impact	Future Outcomes (by age of 25)
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth service managers External contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Service leadership engaged in multi-agency planning for homelessness prevention and service delivery at local level Contracts reflect primary prevention of homelessness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inclusion - psychologically informed - signposting to advice and guidance Support for approaches to peer support groups for high risk/excluded groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LGBTQ+ - neuro-linguistic diversity All contracts reflect primary prevention of homelessness as key focus 	<p>Youth Service is part of a multi-agency response of preventing homelessness</p> <p>All services understand and follow a preventative ethos to homelessness</p>	



Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Housing Support Programme Statement of Need

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Introduction

The Statement of Need uses the findings of the Needs Assessment to identify the key issues for the Housing Support Programme Strategy, RCT's statutory duties to prevent and alleviate homelessness and in the context of its wider strategic objectives.

Rhondda Cynon Taf

RCT has an increasing older population and features some of the most deprived areas in Wales. However, the pattern of deprivation across RCT is uneven and is concentrated areas, in large part concentrated along the Cynon Valley in communities such as Penrhiwceiber and Pen-y-waun, and along the Rhondda Valley in communities such as Tylorstown and Treherbert.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the numbers of vulnerable people now owed a homelessness duty, and the range of complex needs that need support.

It has led to a rapid increase in the numbers of people in temporary accommodation and reduction in availability in the Private Rented Sector.

The pandemic has also highlighted their need for system partners such as Housing, Health and Probation to work better together and improve their data sharing.

Below are the key areas for consideration in the strategy.

Prevention and timely intervention in homelessness

Understanding Need and Sharing Data

Housing Support services exist to help prevent homelessness, social exclusion, isolation, and institutionalisation. The Welsh legal and policy framework makes it clear that early intervention reduces undue escalation and avoids a crisis, with knock-on impacts to health, inclusion, and independence.

The Needs Assessment shows clearly that demand for housing outstrips supply, despite the best efforts of the Council to create new options for temporary accommodation, supported accommodation and permanent housing. This makes the role of prevention even more urgent and the need to support people to maintain their existing accommodation.

Understanding the activity of system partners such as Health, Probation and Education and having access to the information they have on people's needs is vital to effectively plan services and provide support early before crises develop.

The Resilient Families programme was cited by stakeholders as supporting the prevention agenda, and could be built upon, HSG funded initiatives such as Council Housing Officers were also mentioned as having a significant role in prevention.

However, the Needs Assessment highlights Population Assessment findings, Council reviews and stakeholder feedback that indicates that data and intelligence sharing does not happen well enough currently and where several agencies are involved, information sharing arrangements between partners should be improved, and aligned with agreed national frameworks to better inform future service planning.

Stakeholders stated prevention and early intervention initiatives across RCT need to be strategically and operationally aligned.

Mental health and Substance Misuse

The Needs Assessment identified that a key challenge is meeting the needs of people with mental health conditions, substance misuse and where the two co-occur.

RCT has amongst the highest reported incidences of substance misuse, mental illness, and poor well-being in Wales.

The most common reason for priority housing need in RCT is mental health and housing problems are frequently given as a reason for a person being admitted or re-admitted to inpatient mental health care. People with mental illness are far more likely to live in rented accommodation and their mental ill-health is often given as a major reason for tenancy breakdown.

There are high numbers of people requiring HSG services that have co-occurring mental health and substance misuse issues. These are particularly challenging for support services to get NHS mental health and substance misuse treatment services involved. Services are dealing with an increased complexity of needs since the COVID-19 pandemic and following everyone having priority need for homelessness services, temporary accommodation also has increased complexity of needs. Floating Support services also report referrals having higher complexity of needs.

Services need to adapt to meet increased levels of need and risk. A new specialist regional service for co-occurring needs is now in place, but it is too early to fully evaluate.

Young People

Single people aged 16-25 are the highest proportion of homelessness applications to the Council.

Many of these young people will be 'care-experienced'. Break down in relationships with families is still one of the prominent reasons young people present as homeless in RCT.

All Welsh Councils including RCTCBC have recently been tasked by Welsh Government to examine their corporate parenting response in relation to care experienced children and young people (CYP) and their future accommodation needs. Specifically, it requests that council's respond to the need for:

- An active identification process to ensure care experienced young people presenting as homeless can access all the support they are entitled to in cooperation with children's services.
- Multi-agency reviews to be undertaken to identify any gaps within the system or interventions that could have taken place to ensure future similar cases are prevented for care experienced young people presenting as homeless
- Granting 'local connection' status for care experienced young people who are placed out-of-county, when moving on
- Extending Personal Adviser support up to the age of 25.

Future corporate joint working and commissioning will need to reflect a more joined up corporate parenting approach to preventing future homelessness.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

Increasing numbers of referrals are unable to be accepted by Refuge services in RCT because of levels of need and/or risk – this is largely due to co-existing challenges such as history of trauma, substance misuse and mental health challenges.

Whilst homelessness applications for those fleeing domestic abuse are not high there is a need for service development particularly in respect of enhancing domestic abuse perpetrator Programmes in Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

There is a regional Strategy and Delivery Plan with key aims that need to be considered when developing services.

Homelessness Relief & Providing Suitable Accommodation

RCT has a statutory duty to relieve homelessness as well as prevent it. Its ability to fulfil its duties is currently challenged by the increase of people presenting with complex, co-occurring substance misuse and mental health needs. The current accommodation and support options available are not designed or commissioned to meet the increasing needs of this group. This often leads to being

accommodated in the wrong project leading to an eventual exclusion. Specifically, the needs assessment highlighted the need to have:

- Flexible and semi-permanent (where required) options for more complex serially excluded people with chronic substance misuse and mental health challenges.
- More options that ensure 16–25-year-olds and in particular 'care-experienced' young people are placed in age-appropriate accommodation.
- More options to ensure women who are accommodated via an offender's pathway route who often have a history experiencing domestic violence route are not inadvertently placed alongside men with a history of perpetrating domestic violence.

Fundamental to the Housing Support Programme is helping people live independently in the community. This includes not just access but assessing and influencing supply and suitable accommodation.

Housing First has been implemented in RCT to support those with the most complex needs, in particular ex-offenders, and young people. The services provide accommodation and support that works with high levels of risk and complex needs using assertive outreach and rapid response approaches. Rapid Rehousing is a vital part of Welsh Government policy and Housing First in RCT provides a robust foundation for this to move forward.

Stakeholders wanted to see Housing First extended for people with more complex needs.

Single People

The needs assessment shows that single person households have consistently accounted for the majority of cases where the Council have provided assistance to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Single male applicants are the largest proportion of applications made by those who have been homeless within the last two years. The proportion of single male applicants has risen from 46% of the total in 2017 to 58% in 2021.

Single male applicants account for more placements into temporary accommodation than all other households combined, with single female applicants accounting for the second highest number of placements.

40% of the people placed in temporary accommodation had been placed multiple times, and the number of people requiring temporary accommodation has significantly increased.

One bedroom housing is the highest need across all allocation bands, 91.25% of applicants for housing are assessed as having a low or no housing need.

Temporary accommodation is mostly via private owned bed and breakfast accommodation. 524 individuals, families and groups have been placed in temporary accommodation in 2020/2021 (as of the end of March). 40% of the 524 were placed in temporary accommodation multiple times, leading to a total of 852 placements in 2020/2021.

There is an urgent need to reduce the dependence on bed and breakfast accommodation and develop new temporary and supported accommodation options suitable for longer stays.

Stakeholder engagement called for improved accessibility consistently for all from low to complex needs through a one door / single assessment centre approach with a 'no wrong door' philosophy.

A single assessment approach, with multi-disciplinary assessment of need for single homeless people may help reduce recidivism by recognising and responding to the complexity of homeless peoples' challenges.

Private Rented Sector

The Needs Assessment highlights a lack of accommodation for people to move into or to move on from supported or temporary accommodation. A key part of the move on accommodation market is the Private Rented Sector (PRS).

Since the pandemic and the increase in house values in RCT, many private landlords now no longer want to work with Council referred clients, preferring to find private tenants.

The Council have secured funding from Welsh Government to set up the Social Lettings Agency. This is improving access to the private rented sector, but its impact is slower than was hoped because of the current challenges engaging private landlords. Work needs to continue to engage private landlords and develop more PRS options for single people.

Planning and building

Planning and building of new homes is urgently needed, in particular one bedroom accommodation. These developments need to address the urgency of the housing shortage whilst also respecting the needs and uniqueness of the local communities in RCT.

People with physical difficulties apply for rehousing from hospital, often with very short timescales. In these situations, the Council need more data and notice at an earlier stage. There is a need to find short term solutions whilst move on is adapted or built. Two Integrated Care Fund funded properties are in place for this purpose and the Council are also looking at the use of Extra Care Respite. Going

forward this needs a multiagency approach signed up to by all partners.

Providing high quality support

The Council recognises that the timeliness and suitability of support is something that service users depend upon.

Supported Accommodation and Floating Support

After being mostly unchanged for a number of years, referrals increased significantly in 2019/20 for a number of needs:

- Mental Health
- Homeless or needs to prevent Homelessness
- Older Vulnerable People
- Physical Disability
- Domestic Abuse
- Vulnerable Family

This trend continued in 2020/21 for those who were homeless, needed to prevent homelessness and vulnerable families, but for all other needs there were significantly lower referrals. This can reasonably be attributed to the disruption of the pandemic with additional funding to respond to homelessness and the closure of schools leading to additional need for support for families.

As described above, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the numbers of vulnerable people now owed a homelessness duty, and the range of complex needs that need support.

Stakeholders raised concerns about how the pandemic has caused the need for support to be 'saved up' during lockdown and expect a significant increase in demand for 2021/22 and beyond. They also talked about the higher levels of need and risk they now support and that some people need permanent living options within a supported housing environment. They felt Housing Related Support responses for the most complex and hard to engage with need to be rapid.

The existing National Outcomes Framework provides information on how people are progressing but does not give sufficient insight into what has been effective in the support provided to achieve those outcomes. Work is underway in Welsh Government to introduce a Single Outcome Framework across both HSG and CCG, which has been delayed as a result of the pandemic. This comes with an expectation that departments will demonstrate that all projects are developed with integration and collaboration at the forefront, looking at co-commissioning where possible and integration amongst the grants to deliver the best outcomes for the service user in the most efficient way.

Housing Support Grant funding is used as part of the integrated approach in Children's Services.

However, there is insufficient data on support outcomes from Supported Lodgings for young people to understand their effectiveness. Arrangements are in place with Children's Service to start to develop and effectively monitor the effectiveness of this housing option for young people leaving care.

Adult Social Services also utilise HSG funding for Physical Disability, Learning Disability and Specialist Mental Health Placements. There is insufficient data on support outcomes achieved by these services to be able to draw conclusions on their effectiveness.

Work is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of HSG funded services in light of increasing needs and risks, to better meet the requirements of the post-pandemic landscape.

Multi-agency Working

There are high numbers of people requiring HSG services that have co-occurring mental health and substance misuse issues. These are particularly challenging for support services to get NHS mental health and substance misuse treatment services involved.

Stakeholders frequently commented on the challenges in getting support from NHS and Probation colleagues. They highlighted the urgency of having a better multi-agency operational response to inclusion with the express aim of agreeing a consensus on how to collectively work with homeless people with complex needs or individuals at risk of losing their accommodation.

It was clear from the Needs Assessment process that effective multiagency working at regional, strategic, and operational levels is vital to provide the right integrated support.

Substantial work is needed to develop joint working practices at all levels and with all system partners in RCT.

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Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

2022 – 2027



Rapid Rehousing - Rhondda Cynon Taf

Introduction and Purpose.

Rapid Rehousing is about developing a housing led approach for rehousing people, who have experienced homelessness and providing access to settled accommodation as quickly as possible and where possible avoiding the need for temporary accommodation with the time spent in any form of temporary accommodation reduced to a minimum.

The first Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Rapid Rehousing Plan sets out how the council and its partners will work together over the next 5 years to tackle homelessness. We will work proactively to prevent homelessness and where this is not possible help to identify a suitable housing option as soon as possible.

The Rapid Rehousing Plan will contribute to the Councils Housing Support Programme Strategy and the following key actions identified to support in the Strategy to help support this vision:

Strategic Priority 1: - Strengthening early intervention and prevention approaches and specialised support to prevent homelessness.

Strategic Priority 2: - Ensuring people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness access the right home at the right time and in the right place, as part of our Rapid Rehousing approach.

Strategic Priority 3: - Providing high quality support to people who are or may become homeless, fully utilising available technology and ensuring effective cross-agency working.

Strategic Priority 4: - Work collaboratively to provide holistic, person-centred support with effective specialist interventions where necessary

The Rapid Rehousing Plan is focused on which projects are deliverable with the current funding available. The approach we take will try to meet the current challenges we face which include:

- The high number and increasing number of individuals who present with co-occurring health needs

- Demand and supply I.e., high number of single person need and lack of one bedroom accommodation.
- Affordable rents in the private rented sector
- 50% increase in single person homelessness applications and temporary accommodation placements over the past two years.
- Barriers to increasing the supply of affordable housing and supported accommodation.

Background

Welsh Government is committed to making homelessness “**rare, brief and unrepeated** with the prevention of homelessness remaining a primary focus in their “Ending Homelessness Action Plan”.

Rapid Rehousing is seen as essential to reduce the corrosive impact of homelessness and ensure it is un-repeated. The benefits of secure, settled, and self-contained housing for people who have experienced or been at risk of homelessness should not be underestimated. Most people experiencing homelessness should be provided with homes as quickly as possible to help avoid the destabilising and marginalising effects of prolonged homelessness or prolonged stays in emergency or temporary settings while remaining homeless.

In developing our Rapid Rehousing Plan a one- off stakeholder consultation event was held with key stakeholders including internal services, front line teams, third sector agencies. This partnership working event demonstrated how the authority has ensured all parties have a shared vision of rapid rehousing, a common understanding of objectives and clarity on their respective contribution to delivering change. This feedback allowed the Council to detect common themes and priorities, which have informed the development of the Rapid Rehousing Plan.

There has been a rapid increase in the numbers of people in temporary accommodation. As well as a reduction in availability in the Private Rented Sector highlighting an increased pressure to secure new accommodation, particularly for one bedroomed accommodation. The pandemic has also highlighted the need for system partners, such as Housing, Health and Probation to work better together and improve their data sharing to better support our residents.

Strategic Planning

The Rapid Rehousing Plan will align with the

- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022/ 2024
- The Local Housing Support Grant Commissioning Plan
- Substance Misuse Plan
- Local Development Plan

Governance

The governance arrangements for taking forward the RCT Rapid Rehousing Plan are still to be approved. However, will link with the Housing Support Grant Planning Group and the proposed Corporate Council Accommodation Project Board.

Section A - Homelessness Data and Analysing Need in Rhondda Cynon Taff

RCT features some of the most deprived areas in Wales. However, the pattern of deprivation across RCT is uneven and is concentrated in particular areas, in large part along the Cynon Valley in communities such as Penrhiwceiber and Pen-y-waun, and along the Rhondda Valley in communities such as Tylorstown and Treherbert

The last two years have been and remain extremely challenging for clients faced with homelessness, in meeting the unprecedented demand in respect of the provision of temporary and permanent accommodation.

The impact of the Pandemic on health, housing and the local economy cannot at this time be fully quantified, however it has placed unprecedented additional pressure on already scarce resources particularly social housing and increased requirement for emergency accommodation and temporary accommodation.

The demand for housing outstrips supply and despite the best efforts of the Council to create new options including temporary accommodation, supported accommodation and permanent housing the role of prevention is even more urgent particularly the need to help support people to maintain their existing accommodation.

The below table highlights the homelessness presentations over the last 2 years in RCT because of Pandemic and the subsequent removal of the Priority Need Order in Wales.

	2019/20	20/21	21/22	Number change	% Change
No of Homelessness Presentations	1421	1158	1256	+98	8%
Number accepted as homeless / threatened with homelessness.	1247	1025	956	-64	-6%
Not Homeless	174	133	295	162	122%

Age Profile of Homelessness Applicants

The needs assessment shows that single person households have consistently accounted for the majority of cases where the Council have provided assistance to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The below shows that between 2019/20 and 2020/21 there has been a slight decrease in the number of young people aged 16 and 17 and presenting, compared to an increase in homeless application from those aged 25 and over of all applicants in 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Age Breakdown	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Number Change	% Change
16/17	18	23	19	-4	-17%
18/24	161	187	174	-13	-7%
25 +	962	753	724	-29	-4%
60+	106	62	44	-18	-29%
Total	1247	1025	961	-64	-6%

Household Breakdown

Household Breakdown	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Number Change	% Change
Single Male	483	566	475	-91	-16%
Single Female	279	216	204	-12	-6%
Total	762	782	679	-103	-13%
Single parent male	17	21	6	-15	-71%
Single parent Female	266	121	154	+ 33	27%
Total	283	142	160	18	13%
Couple with Children x1	88	34	24	-10	-29%
Couple with Children -2	0	2	17	15	7%
Couple with Children – 3 or more.	0	0	17	17	-
Total	88	36	58	22	61%
All other household groups	114	65	64	-1	-2%
Total	1247	1025	961	-64	-6%

Homeless applications from single people continue to make up the vast majority of applications. In 2020/21 homeless applications by single people accounted for 782 of all homeless applications compared to 762 in 2019/20. It should be noted that there has been a 16% decrease from single men presenting as homeless with a decrease of 6% in applications by single females.

Reasons For Homelessness

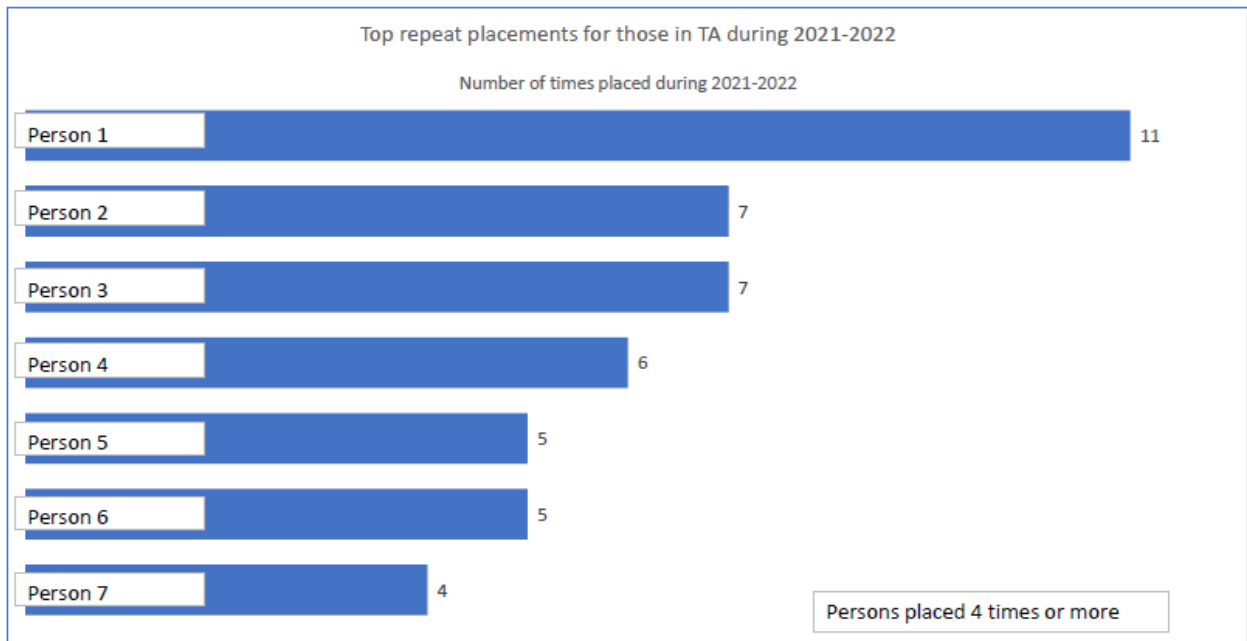
Homeless Reason*	19-20	20-21	21-22	Number change	% Change
07. Loss of rented or tied accommodation	286	165	186	21	13%
01. Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate	120	184	164	-20	-11%
02. Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	132	180	155	-25	-14%
10. Prison leaver	110	151	125	-26	-17%
03ii. Violent breakdown of relationship involving partner	24	101	110	9	9%
03i. Non-violent breakdown of relationship with partner	77	87	85	-2	-2%
12. Other (including homeless in emergency, returned from abroad, sleeping rough or in hostel)	105	56	58	2	4%
06ii. Rent arrears on Private sector dwellings	76	36	27	-9	-25%
04vi. Violence or harassment which is due to another reason	165	27	17	-10	-37%
06i. Rent arrears on social sector dwellings	74	7	9	2	29%
09. Current property unsuitable	15	14	8	-6	-43%
11. In institution or care (e.g., Hospital, residential home, army, prison etc)	10	7	5	-2	-29%
08. Current property unaffordable	28	5	5	0	0%
05. Mortgage arrears (repossession or other loss of home)	23	4	4	0	0%
04iii. Violence or harassment which is due to gender reassignment (gender identity)	0	0	1	1	-
04i. Violence or harassment which is racially motivated	0	0	1	1	-

04iv. Violence or harassment which is due to sexual identity / orientation	1	0	1	1	-
04v. Violence or harassment which is due to disability	1	1	0	-1	-
Grand Total	1247	1025	961	-64	-6%

Breakdown of relationship with family and friends, “leaving prison” and Loss of Rented Accommodation the three highest reasons for homelessness presentations in RCT over the past three years. The reasons have increased presentations significantly during the pandemic with recognition of the impact of covid has had on individuals who were sofa surfing and residing in precarious housing situation. **This is particularly relevant to male applicants aged 25+ who made up 60% of homelessness presentations in 2021/22.**

There has been a noticeable downward trend over the last 18 months in homelessness presentations for households with children due which is primarily down to the eviction ban.

Repeat Homelessness Cases



A review of repeat homelessness applications has identified the majority of repeat homelessness in RCT is made up of Prison Leavers many of whom have complex needs linked with alcohol and substance misuse addiction. The introduction of Housing First and other support initiatives will help alleviate the prevalence of repeat homelessness in the longer term.

Domestic Abuse Homelessness Presentations

	19-20	20-21	21-22	Number change	% Change
A person fleeing domestic violence or threatened violence	93	84	95	11	13%

Prevention Outcomes

Decision Type / description	19-20	20-21	21-22	Number change	% Change
Section66 / Successfully prevented	391	130	105	-25	-19%
Section66 / Unsuccessfully prevented	52	41	36	-5	-12%
Section66 / Other	88	41	11	-30	-73%
Total	531	212	152	-60	-28%
Section73 / Successfully relieved	495	375	339	-36	-10%
Section73 / Unsuccessfully relieved	47	251	268	17	7%
Section73 / Other	174	187	202	15	8%
Total	716	813	809	-4	0%
Grand Total	1247	1025	961	-64	-6%

Prevention outcomes have dropped slightly for both S.66 and S.73 homelessness presentations, over the last three years due mainly to lack of move on accommodation particularly for Prison Leavers.

Crisis

Our work with Crisis as part of the “Welsh Homelessness Improvement Project which began in 2021, will also have an impact on our future service delivery for individuals who present as homeless. To date case file audits have been undertaken to help better understand reasons for fall out rates and representations. An action plan has been drawn up which will outline areas for service improvement for the RCT Housing Solutions Service following a desktop review which highlighted the following issues for our area:

PRS can be difficult to access, and some units are poor quality	Most presentations come from family and friends no longer willing to accommodate
Under 35's cannot access PRS	Not enough intelligence around how many are sofa surfing at any one time
Large numbers of homeless come from the over 25's	More one bedroom accommodation needed peppered around the district to meet need
Tenancy debt can be a barrier to move on	Customers spending too much time in temporary accommodation.
Lack of suitable HMO accommodation for under 35's	Lack of suitable move on accommodation causing bottlenecks in temporary accommodation.
High level of vulnerable clients with mental health needs/ substance misuse issues within the area	Revolving door ex-offenders are difficult to keep in touch with even with additional support in place.
Awareness of health needs to be raised through associated health services.	

Rough Sleeping

Incidents of rough sleeping in Rhondda Cynon Taff are traditionally low and town centres in the borough do not have the visibility of people sleeping rough in shop doorways as witnessed in many of the cities. Night counts undertaken over many years have also identified little evidence to support incidences of sleeping rough.

This trend has continued throughout the Pandemic although there has been a small increase in the number of single males sighted in shop doorways in Pontypridd Town Centre who are mostly associated with begging.

An Outreach Team commissioned as part of the RCT Housing First Project work closely with Probation, Dyfodwl and South Wales Police to offer a multi-agency response to dealing with any issues relating to single people who are known to services and who gravitate to Pontypridd Town Centre

Section B – Understanding the Local Temporary Accommodation Supply.

As a stock transfer authority Rhondda County Borough Council does not own its housing stock and temporary accommodation is therefore arranged and commissioned from several sources and include:

- Self-contained units which are leased from private landlords.
- Hostel provision (Adult and Young People)
- Homeless Persons
- Refuge Accommodation for women (and children) fleeing domestic abuse or coercive control.
- Shared Housing units for single people
- Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

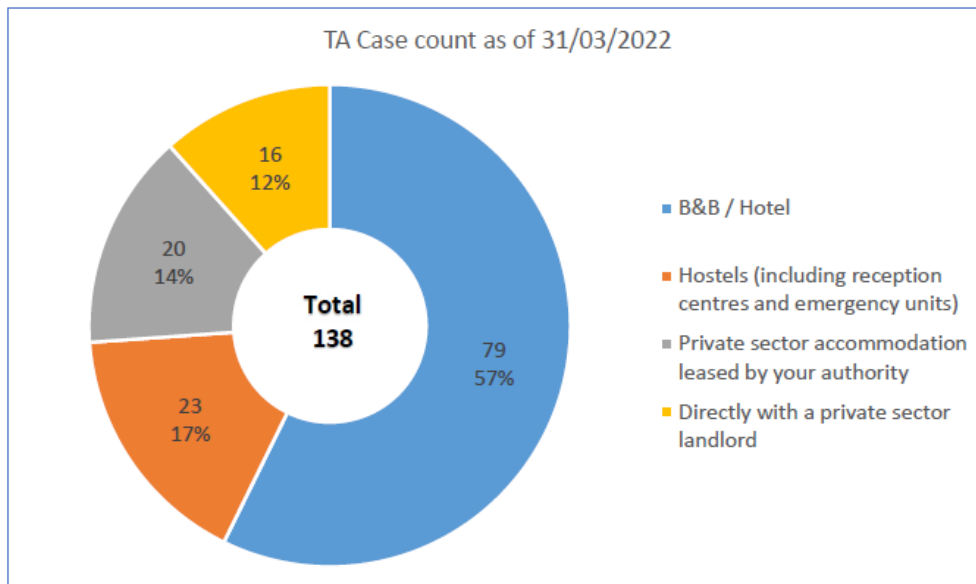
As part of the Council's Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022- 2024. The Council has committed to review its use of bed and breakfast accommodation and develop alternative temporary housing models that would meet the need of service users including Housing First provision.

DATA

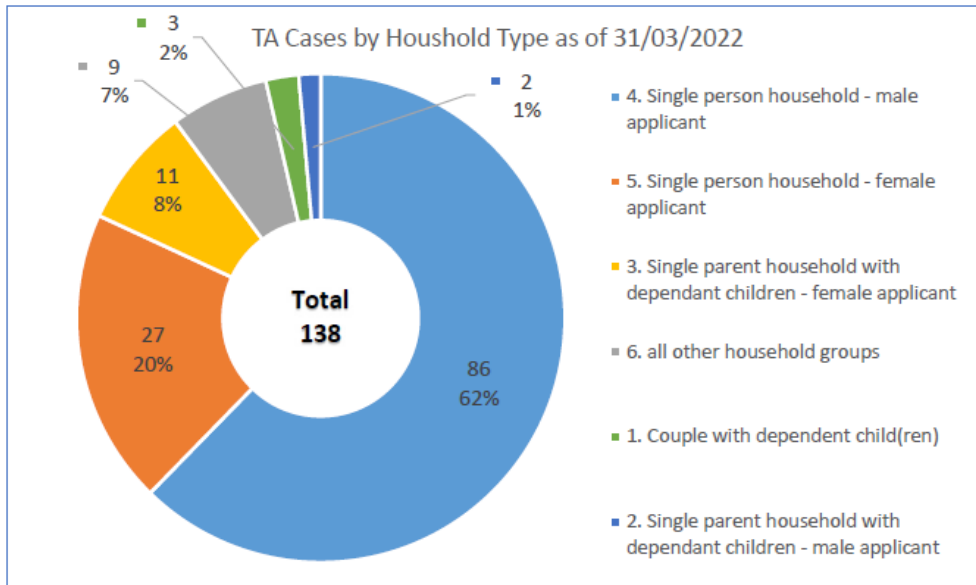
524 individuals, families and groups were placed in temporary accommodation in 2020/2021. **40%** of the **524** were placed in temporary accommodation multiple times, leading to a total of **852** placements in 2020/2021 (as of the end of March). **852** placements represent an increase of nearly **257** placements year-on-year, from **595** in 2019/20

Breakdown of Temporary Accommodation Data as at 31/02/22

Table

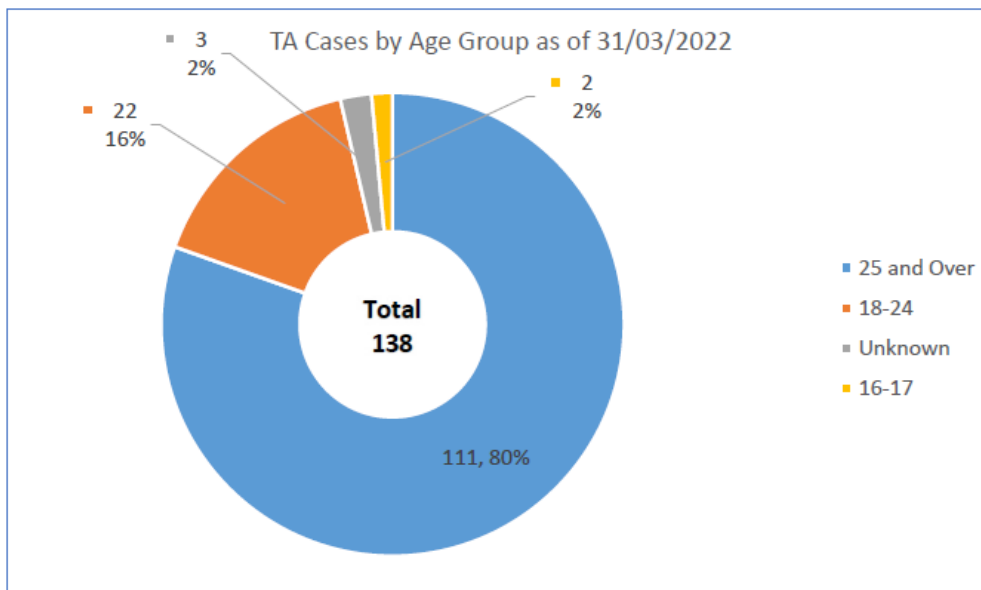


The number of placements in temporary accommodation as the end of March 2021 was 138 Households. This is a reduction on previous figures in 2020 /21 however, we recognise there are still have a high number of placements in Bed and Breakfast accommodation.



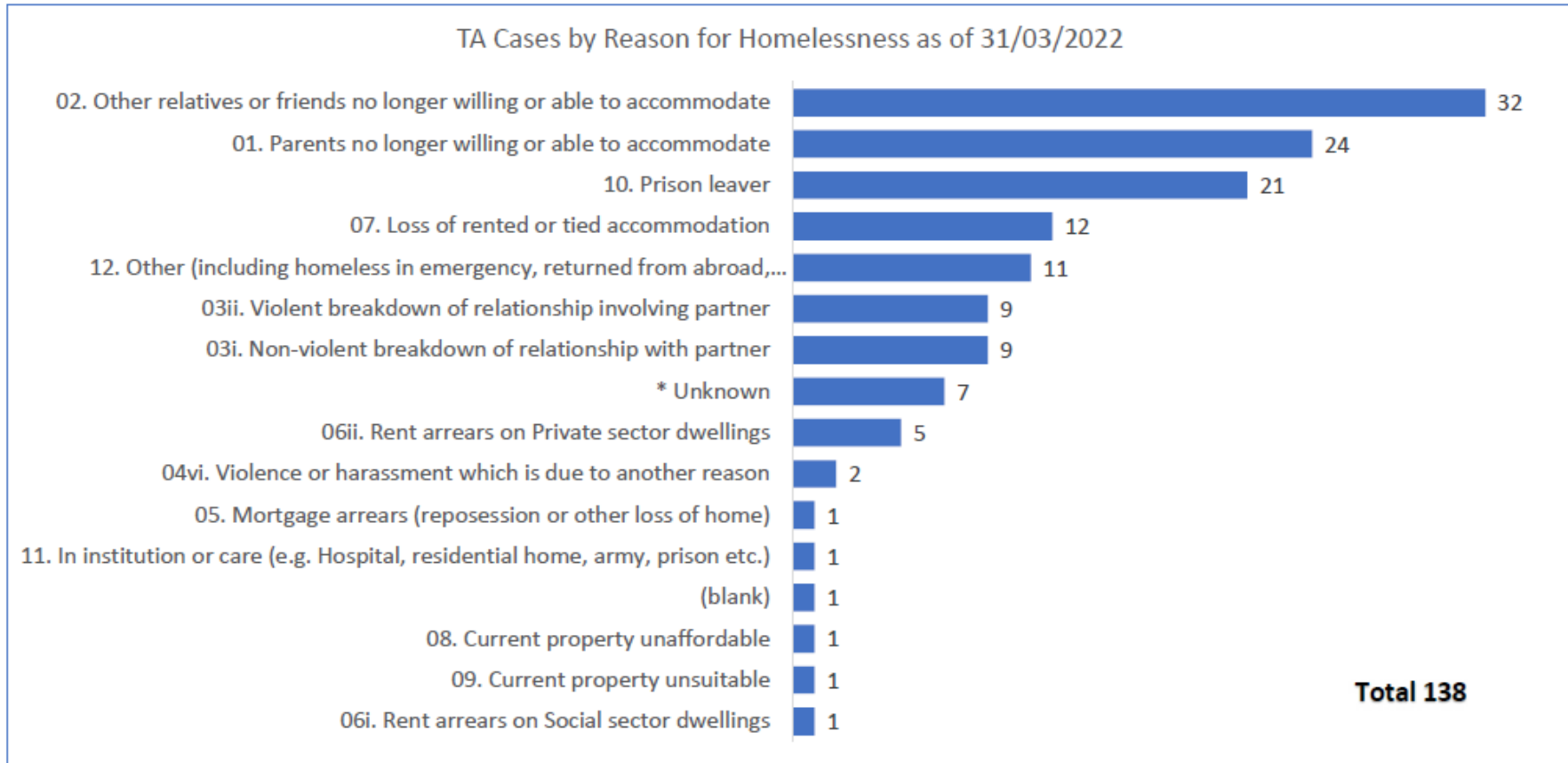
The highest percentage of placements in temporary accommodation relates to single person male households (62%) which has been a pattern throughout the last two years following the removal of the Priority Need Order in 2020

TA Cases by Age Group



The above table highlights the highest number of single homeless people placed are 25+ (805). Many of whom also present with high support needs linked with offending and substance misuse issues. However, it is pleasing to note that young people aged 16 and 17 represent only 2% of our cohort placed in temporary accommodation in 2021/22

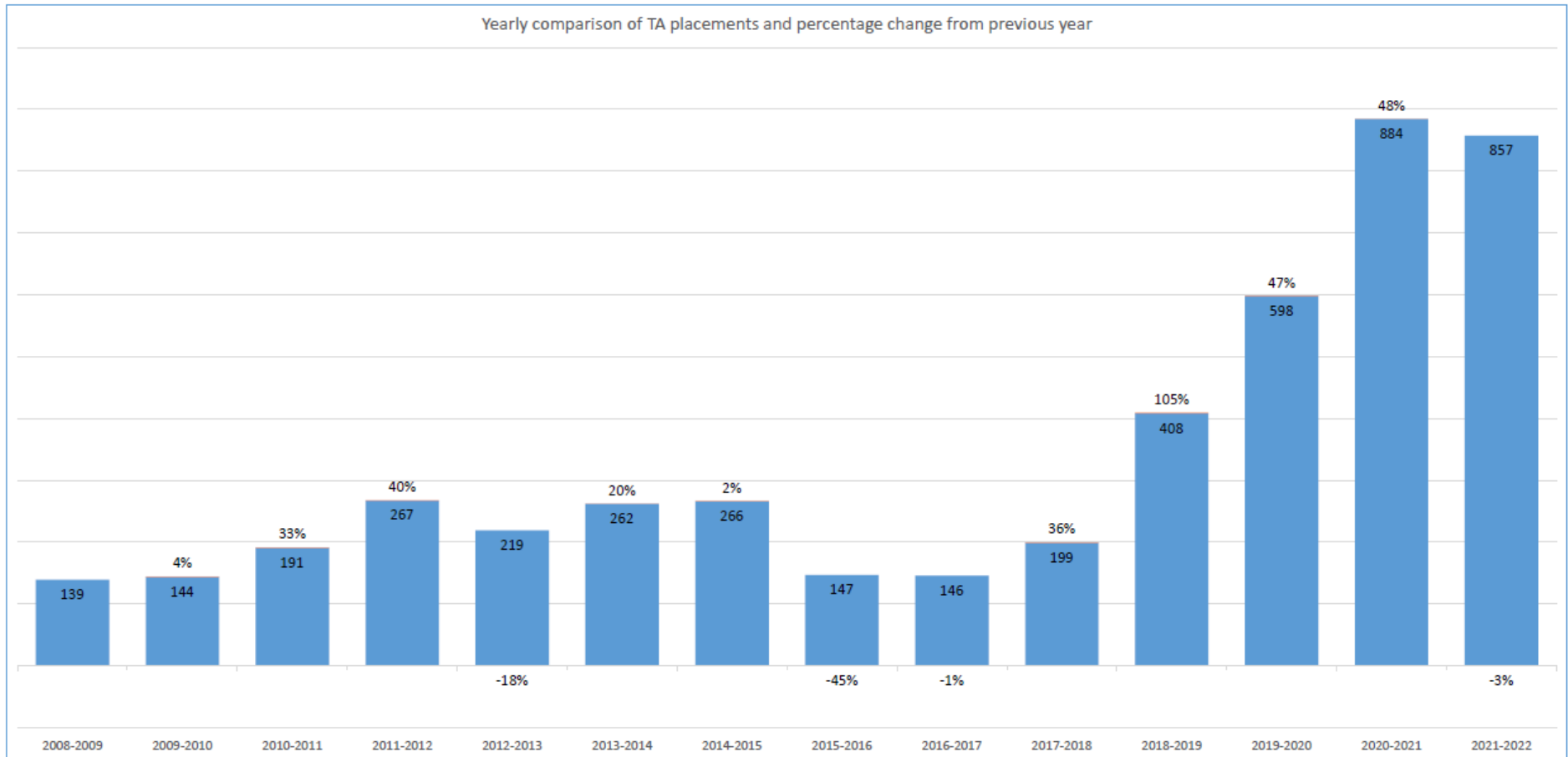
Reasons for Temporary Accommodation Placements.



The three main reasons for a temporary accommodation placement are breakdown of relationship with family and friends and Prison Leavers. This has remained consistent over the past two years with Prison Leavers accounting for all repeat placements and the high drop out of cases linked with no further contact.

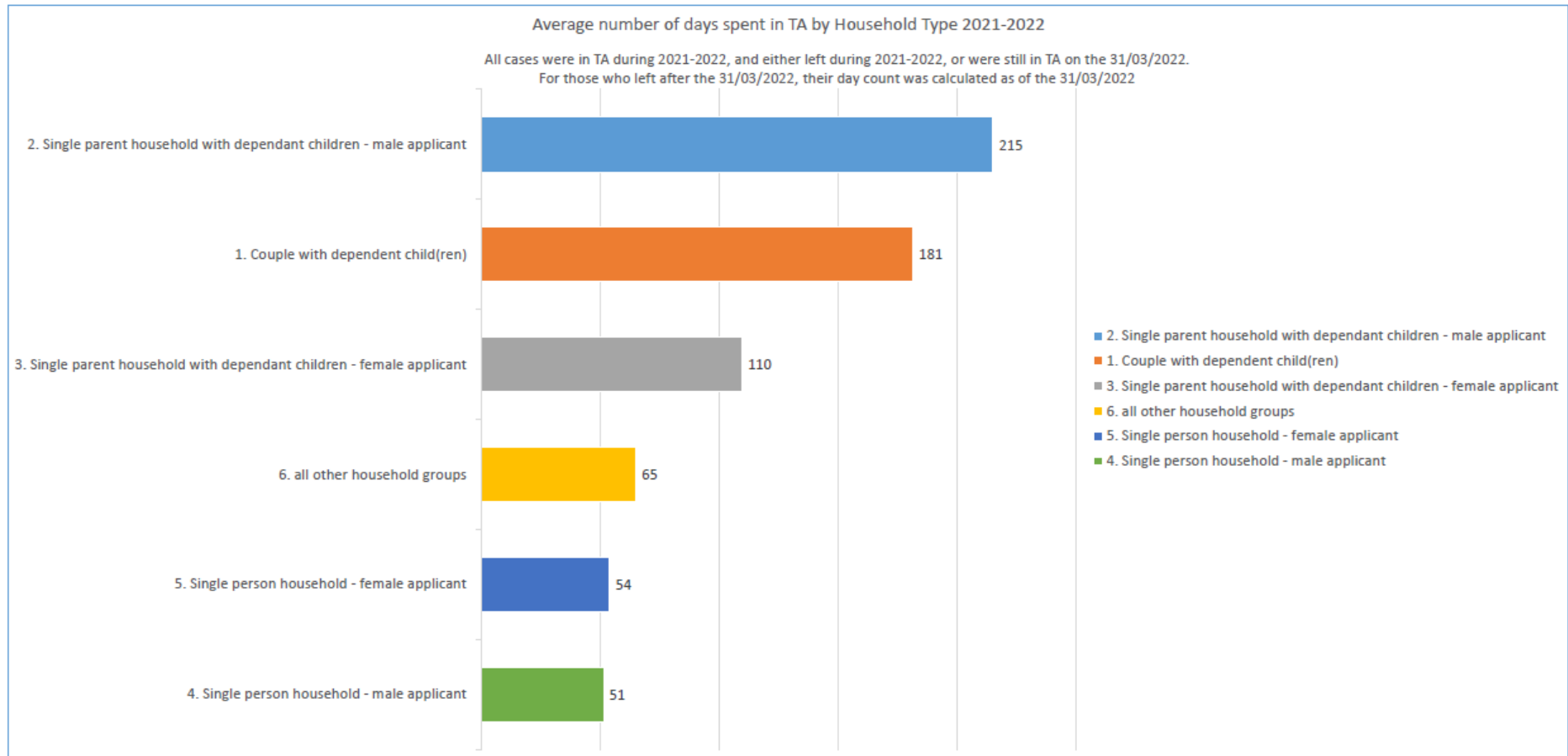
The complexities and high support needs of clients presenting as homeless is of concern and has caused significant challenges in trying to secure suitable temporary placements and longer- term housing. The concerns in respect of a higher number of people presenting with higher support needs and the increasing number of offenders placed in bed and breakfast accommodation has led to many new initiatives and include the commissioning of a new support service for offenders,

The Prison Offender Project (POP) commissioned through Housing Support Grant in 2021 aims to work with repeat offenders to help reduce the cycle of offending by working with the underlying causes linked with substance misuse and the impact of early trauma and adverse childhood experiences. Work begins with an individual whilst they are in Prison and remains until they feel they are no longer in need of support. Referrals can be made back into the service at any time and where possible an individual will be picked back up by their original support worker.



This chart does not take into account those who have moved from one TA to another, hence the 2021-2022 'Total' variations of 857 in this chart and 792 in the charts above

Average Number of Days in Temporary Accommodation



The Pandemic significantly exacerbated the lack of move and limited housing options which has impacted on the length of stay in temporary accommodation. The increasing number of people with complex needs and who are not tenancy ready in the homelessness system, has also had an impact on time spent temporary accommodation with a small minority identified in need of more specialist care provision which is often not accessible to them.

Refuge Provision

Welsh Government Phase 2 funding enabled an additional 4 units of refuge provision to be made available in 2020 to provide 26 units of refuge accommodation in RCT. This offers women and children fleeing domestic abuse safe and warm provision as an alternative to placement in other forms of temporary accommodation.

Refuge referral information	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/22
Number of referrals	316	282	286	220 = 23% decrease
Referrals accepted	185	169	154	137 = 62% accepted
Referrals not accepted	131	113	133	83 = 38% Not accepted
Number of women who placed in a refuge	146	132	117	119
*Number of women who failed to access after being accepted	39	35	37	17
Number of women who have a local connection	43	47	70	39
Number of women who have no local connection	101	95	47	70

*Data above has been taken from quarter reports submitted by RCT DA Services

Referrals for refuge provision have reduced compared to previous annual figures reasons for the reduction are not fully known at this time, however COVID-19 restrictions may have been a contributing factor during the early part of 2021-22.

Refuge provision is seen as the first point of contact for women fleeing domestic abuse and placement in B+B for this priority need category remains low. It is pleasing to note that women declined for refuge space in RCT with complex high support need has also decreased by 56% from previous years which ensures they are accessing specialist provision.

In recognition of the lack of suitable move on accommodation from refuge for women placed from Rhondda Cynon Taff. A Pathway developed with RCT Domestic Abuse Services in early 2022, to support women to return to their previous home in consideration of risk and to help minimise disruption to children in the household with enhanced support and target hardening arrangements. This has already started to help reduced demand for alternative accommodation and repeat homelessness applications.

Section C: Assessing Support and Health Needs

The complexity of individuals presenting as homeless part in the last two years particularly single homeless people is placing considerable pressure on the Housing Solutions Service. This includes a small cohort of individuals with needs so complex they would struggle to live in independently in the community and require more specialist housing provision which can be difficult to access as their needs are often below the high thresholds set for this type of provision or the provision doesn't currently exist.

In order help plan provision and assess and quantify the level of support needs of our homeless cohort in temporary accommodation. The below format has been developed to identify the number of households within each of four need categories, the first two of which were low and or no support needs and medium needs which could be met by mainstream support. The table can vary from day to day or weekly based on the numbers placed and leaving temporary accommodation at any point in time.

The "High" category are people identified with complex needs who are deemed not tenancy ready and referred for 24/7 supported accommodation. High Plus being referral to Housing First, with its intensive wrap around support and rapid rehousing model. A small number of individuals have also been identified in need of more specialist provision.

Homeless RAG list 22 nd June 2022					
	Low	Medium	High	High Plus	Total
22/04/2022	33	46	16	15	110
Percentages 22/04/2022	30%	41.82%	14.55%	13.64%	
29/04/2022	34	49	18	14	115
Percentages 29/04/2022	29.57%	42.61%	15.66%	12.17%	
13/05/2022	33	51	25	13	122
Percentages 13/05/2022	27.05%	41.80%	20.50%	10.66%	
20/05/2022	34	53	21	14	122
Percentages 20/5/2022	27.87%	43.44%	17.21%	11.48%	
27/05/2022	37	52	19	14	122
Percentages 27/05/2022	30.33%	42.62%	15.57%	11.48%	
10/06/2022	37	50	19	12	118
Percentages 10/06/2022	31.36%	42.37%	16.10%	10.17%	

The “complex” cohort ranges from 16% to 10% showing diversity in need, but likely also in assessment approach. However, there are more people in the low to medium support need group which range from 31% to 43% which highlights that many people who present as homeless in RCT have low or no support needs.

RCT has amongst the highest reported incidences of substance misuse, mental illness, and poor well-being in Wales. The most common reason for priority housing need in RCT is mental health with housing problems frequently given as a reason for a person being admitted or re-admitted to inpatient mental health.

There are high numbers of people requiring housing related support services that have co-occurring mental health and substance misuse issues. This can sometimes be particularly challenging for support services to get NHS Mental Health and Substance Misuse Treatment services involved if there are co-occurring mental health and substance misuse needs. This was also identified in the below Health Needs Assessment.

Health Needs Assessment.

A rapid health needs assessment of homeless people within the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board footprint was undertaken by Hugh Irwin, Strategic Homelessness Advisor and Bruce Whitear, Strategic Health Planning Consultant. The Health Needs Assessment was commissioned by the Local Public Health Team of CTMUHB in early 2020 and was finalised in March 2020.

The key findings of the report were:

1. People with co-occurring conditions are often unable to access the care they need. Perceptions and experience of exclusion exist where mental health services are not currently set up to work with co-occurring alcohol/drug use, a particular problem for those diagnosed with mental illness.
2. Accessing help was perceived to be difficult for those who do not meet the criteria for specialist/secondary mental health care, and whose symptoms are considered outside the scope of services aimed at managing common mental health problems. Primary care, where the majority of people with common mental health conditions are treated, often had little capacity to support those who present with co-occurring conditions. Understanding the various and complex pathways into mental health services were confusing for both housing support staff and homeless people in CTMUHB -particularly with how GPs, Community Mental Health Teams (CMHT), Crisis Teams and specialist homelessness teams and medical professionals within hospital settings interfaced with each other.

The perception and experiences for homeless people and support staff is that access to services which can reduce harm, improve health, and enhance recovery for people with co-existing challenges are difficult and that services are not designed to respond effectively and flexibly to presenting needs and prevent exclusion.

Since the report was published in 2020 work has been undertaken to address many of the issues highlighted in the report. These include the development of the regional Specialist Mental Health and Substance Misuse Team.

In addition, a multi- agency task and finish group has been established to better understand Co-occurring mental health and Substance Misuse needs and the changes and services needed to better respond to clients and as well as the establishment of a Suicide Prevention Working Group

The Communities for Change Project also brought together colleagues from Public Health Wales Health and Housing to explore data sharing between Health and Housing. Funding for a data role to further facilitate this area of work is being explore.

Specialist Provision and Pathways

Specialist Mental Health and Substance Misuse Health Outreach Team

The Specialist Mental Health and Substance Misuse Health Outreach Team is a regional project and jointly commissioned by RCTCBC, BCBC and MTCBC, the funding is made available through Housing Support Grant with a contribution made by the Area Planning Board and Health. The integrated multi- disciplinary team includes specialist nurses, support workers (Barod) and Trauma Counsellors to provide outreach support for people experiencing homelessness and placed in temporary accommodation with the aim of ending homelessness and reducing the cycle of repeat homelessness.

The service commenced in March 2021, with nurses joining the team in July of that year. The service brings together health, housing, social care and third sector agencies to address the treatment and support needs of these individuals.

Establishing the team has demonstrated the value of:

- Wrapping services around people
- Breaking down organisational & professional barriers.
- Collaborative commissioning in helping to inform future commissioning and service design

Enhanced staffing resources to increase capacity of the team in 2022/23 have been approved to improve access and engagement with the project by people experiencing homelessness across Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

The below tables highlight's the reasons for referral to the Specialist Health Team as of the 31st of March 2022.

Reason for Referral	Number of Referrals received during Quarter 3 (%)	Number of Referrals in total (%)
Mental Health & Substance Misuse issues overlapping	29 (54.7%)	85 (66.9%)
Difficulty engaging in generic services / fallen out of generic services for Mental Health and/or Substance Misuse*	10 (18.9%)	46 (36.2%)
High Risk individual with severe mental health / hazardous substance misuse / high risk due to substance misuse & medication	11 (20.8%)	60 (47.2%)
Only mental health support requested	24 (45.3%)	42 (33.1%)
Physical health need	15 (28.3%)	35 (27.6%)

Source: Cwm Taf Morgannwg Outreach Health Team

Communication and Links

Service development and progress updates are provided at partnership meetings across the region including the CTM Area Planning Board and local and Regional Housing Support Planning Groups. Case studies are provided to the CTM MH & SM Co-occurring sub- group and presented by a member of the HOS Strategic Group. This innovative service has attracted much positive interest across the Region, partners are keen to receive updates on progress and outcomes. The service is monitored utilising the CTM Substance Misuse Monitoring Framework.

Youth Homelessness

It is positive to note the number of young people presenting as homeless has reduced over the past two years which is due to many reasons. A Mediation service is currently commissioned with Llamau to enhance the Homelessness Prevention pathway and provide support to all young people who present as homeless and their families.

Care leavers / Pathway

The Single Point of Access data has highlighted high demand for young person's supported accommodation provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf particularly for care leavers and young people with multiple support needs.

Additional Housing Support Grant funding in 2021/ 22 will extend our Supported Lodgings scheme by an additional 13 units and will help bring the project up to 26 units over the next two years.

In addition to the above project, Housing Support Grant has been made available in 2021/22 to provide two Mentoring posts to support care leavers on their journey from leaving care to independent living.

In response to the recommendations of the Councils Mercury Project Group. A dedicated Housing Solutions Officer resource provides a single point of contact for care leavers. The role will work closely with the 16+ Team and care leavers at early stage to identify all available housing options to them in consideration of their personal housing and support needs. This will include supported accommodation, Housing First and general needs accommodation. It is recognised that needs of young people will change throughout their journey of leaving care and the housing officer will offer person centred support to the young person to review their housing options in consideration of their changing circumstances.

Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

During 2021-22, it has become evident that within the RCT locality, domestic abuse and sexual violence incidents appear to be disproportionately high within some parts of the Rhondda valley areas. The reasons for which require further investigation and analysis before the Council can consider what bespoke interventions are needed to address this issue.

Additional financial resources are being sought to support a designated Project Officer which would support further research into why there is this differential in the Rhondda areas so that we are able to understand what interventions / priorities we can support to address this and further support the Authority with research and data monitoring activity moving forward to help inform future area priorities.

The Council and partners are undertaking work to assess future needs a part of the review of the Cwm Taf Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2017/21.

Many initiatives are in place to support *Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence* agenda including target hardening and a regionally commissioned Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme (DVPP)

Prison leavers

Over 50% percentage of temporary accommodation placements made in 2020/21 and 2021/22 are by prison leavers who are the third highest category in relation to reasons for homelessness presentations, behind "family and relationship breakdown".

Despite our best efforts to secure accommodation prison leavers are often no fixed abode at the point of release. This has increased the level of offenders utilizing the service, resulting in a higher number of high-risk offenders, with multiple support needs placed in temporary accommodation than prior to the start of the pandemic. The lack of move on accommodation for this cohort has also had an impact on Approved Premises Provision (APP) causing a backlog of move on for this form of provision. This further limits temporary accommodation options for high-risk offenders placing additional pressure on the Housing Solutions Service to identify a suitable placement.

134 homelessness applications were made by individuals leaving Prison in 2021/22 with 12 of the offenders assisted on a prevention basis.

Breakdown of the 134 homelessness applications for Individuals leaving prison

- 91% of applications received were males
- 8% were female
- 1% were a couple/family household
- 133 applicants over 25 years of age

TA placements

- 21% of placements were prison leavers
- 23% of offenders booked into TA left of own accord
- 18% didn't arrive
- 15% evicted due to breach rules
-

Due to the high demand on the service and concerns around the risk management of offenders in temporary accommodation, a new Prison Leaver Pathway was implemented. The pathway was devised by RCT's Housing Solutions Service along with input from Police, the Probation Service, and the Housing Prevention Taskforce (HPT).

This included a new dedicated role of an Offender Housing Solutions Officer who is co-located during the week with the Offender Management Service.

The aim of this new process was to:

- **Allow a multi-agency approach to manage each offender through the service**
- **Explore alternative housing options pre-release (minimising the requirements of TA)**
- **Implement a more comprehensive understanding of the reasons why an offender is unable to return their address (licence conditions)**
- **Confirm Homelessness at an earlier stage (minimizing day of release crisis work)**
- **Implement a robust risk management plan, that is in place upon release**
- **Where TA is provided, ensure that this establishment is suitable/appropriate for the individual**
- **Ensure eligibility panel referrals are completed, prior to release, to avoid any delay in access to housing register applications**
- **Ascertain that all support needs are met for the service user**

In addition to the new referral process and Prison Leaver Pathway, a weekly tasking meeting is held, to discuss all upcoming releases from custody and offenders currently open to the service. Included in the weekly tasking meetings are representatives from the Local Authority, Police, NPS and HPT. The new RCT Prison leaver's pathway went live on the 1st of March 2021 and has received 288 referrals of which 197 are Offender. This figure excludes MAPPA offenders MAPPA and offenders referred to our Housing First cohort Project.

Overview of Immigration Work

Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) / Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) – RCT have received 9 families (44 individuals), six of those families have now been here for five years and have gone through the 'Indefinite Leave to Remain' (ILR) process, so are no longer on the schemes - We are however, still supporting all of the families with general enquiries, employment and matters relating to Housing (Payment of Management fees on 7 of the properties / Move on etc.).

Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) – RCT have received 5 families (23 individuals) - All families have recently been for their bio-metric appointment and have been granted ILR. In addition to this a further family (5 individuals) will be arriving July 2022.

Total of 67 individuals to date

Asylum Dispersal – RCT have recently received our first family which consists of 5 individuals via the Asylum Dispersal Scheme. Clear springs and providing management of the property and providing case workers. Support has been provided to Clear springs with information provided on Education / ESOL provision etc.

Homes for Ukraine Scheme – Recently recruited a Resettlement Team with three new officers to offer support and assistance to Ukrainian families and hosts in RCT.

Veterans Priority with Allocation scheme

All applicants who have served in the regular or reserve Armed Forces of the Crown are prioritised within the Council's Allocation Scheme and granted a Band A.

High priority is also granted to bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular or reserve forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their service spouse or civil partner, and (ii) the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service.

No homelessness presentations were received from veterans in 2020/21 or 2021/22.

Section D - Temporary Accommodation Transformation Plan

As a Council we rely heavily on Bed and Breakfast provision in accordance with the discharge of our legal duties and recognise that it is wholly unsuitable for many of the individuals placed. This arrangement was exacerbated during the pandemic when from early 2020 when the demand for temporary accommodation placements increased by over 50% and required bed blocking of bed and breakfast establishments not previously used by the Council.

When estimating future demand for temporary accommodation, a key consideration is to understand the extent of ongoing need and factor into future temporary accommodation requirements and the current extent of ability to meet duties. In reducing the need for bed and breakfast provision, we need to consider our support profile and the reasons why people present as homeless and how best we meet these presenting needs based on the current challenges in securing affordable longer- term accommodation in the social and private rented sector. As well consider the extreme challenges faced in developing any new form of community based temporary accommodation provision for both shared housing models and supported accommodation projects particularly for young people and offenders.

Despite these challenges our Rapid Rehousing Plan will aim to reduce the Council's usage of Bed and Breakfast accommodation as well as reducing time spent in Bed and Breakfast over the next 5 years.

Based on the recent rise in homelessness presentations from households with children living in the private rented sector who have been served S.21 Notices. We will need to procure additional units for our Private Sector Leasing Scheme to meet increased service demand for families. However, we will proceed with an air of caution as many of the "Buy to Let" landlords we relied on for the provision of private sector leased accommodation are leaving the market.

To redress the balance of temporary accommodation and reduce the average lengths of stay there is a need for careful planning and system change as well as to ensure corporate ownership of the vision.

This will be achieved by increasing the supply of temporary accommodation to reduce the use and eventually move away from the use of bed and breakfast accommodation and decreasing service demand through prevention activity. It will also mean a change in the temporary accommodation used, with a move away from unsupported premises such as Bed and Breakfasts (B&Bs) in favour of dispersed models including shared housing and self-contained premises located in local communities. Where supported accommodation is needed, we recognise that provision should be small, high in quality, and staff and premises should operate within a trauma informed environment.

Negative service user consultation feedback has also highlighted the need to shift from the traditional Bed and Breakfast provision to self-contained units where practicable.

We plan to establish an internal corporate Council Accommodation Project Group. This will seek to identify gaps in our meeting our wider corporate housing responsibilities. As well as explore how we develop temporary and specialist housing models in consideration of our most

vulnerable client groups, including those with a learning disability, older people, care leavers and those with complex and challenging housing needs.

Section E: Development of the Transition Plan

The Council cannot deliver the plan in isolation and partnership working will be essential to ensure the best outcomes and solutions can be reached. To achieve our vision and take forward the priorities identified in the Rapid Rehousing Plan the following areas have been identified as a priority

1. Homelessness Prevention

Homelessness is a complex area with many contributing factors, an effective monitoring system will be needed to ensure that all partners are aware of their role in prevention and are contributing in the right way. There is a real opportunity for culture change and to move away from the assumption that homelessness is just a housing issue

Our current service model also needs to change to focus on very early prevention work i.e., prior to 56 days and the provision of more sustainable housing options for our more complex clients. We hope that over time this will reduce the level of demand on homelessness services and change the focus from crisis intervention

The Council already provides a range of effective homelessness prevention services in partnership with third sector providers and has good support for those in place in housing crisis. Demand on services is however increasing and the needs of our clients are becoming more complex

We recognise these are really difficult times and positive prevention outcomes will be extremely challenging in the current cost of living crisis, this will push some households further into poverty and having to choose between buying food, heating their homes and or paying their rent Partnership working is underway with RSL partners in the region to identify early interventions for tenants in rent arrears at this time to help minimise Eviction into homelessness. Following a series of 1-1 meetings with RSL's, a guidance document has been developed for frontline staff to support no evictions into homelessness.

We will continue to work with our key stakeholders including our Locality Based Floating Project (900 units) to offer advice and support to help prevent loss of accommodation particularly those at risk at risk of losing their tenancy particularly in view of the current economic pressures. We have also introduced a dedicated Private Rented Sector officer resource in each of the locality-based project to work directly with Private Rented Sector Landlords and tenants to promote prevention activity and offer support to in meeting the requirements of the Renting (Homes) Wales Act 2014.

2. Review of all Prevention Services.

There is a need also to reshape service delivery across all partners to ensure sufficient focus is placed on homeless prevention and housing options. This includes the need to raise awareness for frontline staff of pathways to advice and support for clients accessing services across Council, NHS, Health and Social Care and other key partners to allow intervention at the earliest available opportunity.

Initiatives designed to support this workstream include:

- To further improve our prevention outcomes and undertake a review and redesign of the Council's Housing Solutions service in consideration of dedicated Prevention Officer posts
- Continued development and monitoring of the pathways in place for young people and care leavers those with a mental health and substance need and people experiencing domestic abuse to ensure they are working effectively and informing collaborative working arrangements and prevention options.

3. Expanding - Outreach Health Team

We recognise the impact of the Outreach Health Team in providing services to some of our most complex needs clients. Additional Complex Needs Funding will allow us to further develop the team and ensure clear pathways are in place. As well as focus on assertive re-engagement with individuals that fall out of treatment or do not access our traditional service provision and extending the service to supported accommodation provision.

4. Single Homeless Person Pathway.

To enhance homelessness service provision for single homeless people particularly people with multiple and complex needs. A new service model is currently being explored to improve outcomes for this group linked with the development of a Single Homelessness Person Pathway and Assessment Centre. This will focus on good quality, detailed homelessness and support assessments and identify support needs at the very beginning of a household's journey with the aim of putting in place the right services and identification of the right housing options at an early stage.

5. New Supported Accommodation Provision.

We will shortly open the doors to our first cohort of residents who will move into our new 8 bed generic supported accommodation project which will provide additional and much needed move on units.

Additional Housing Support Grant funding has also enabled the new development of a new 24/7 project for young people aged 16 -24 offering 4 x4 bedroom self- contained flats. The project will be managed by Hafan Cymru and will be an extension to their

existing young person's project which offers supported accommodation to young males aged 16 -24.

However, to prevent long stays in temporary accommodation and increase our housing options, we need to improve move on options including the provision of longer term supported accommodation provision for clients who may initially struggle to live independently.

6. **Mill Street Hostel** has been impacted by the Pandemic in respect of the increase in the referrals of higher need clients based on many clients requiring 24/7 support and to help take pressure off bed and breakfast establishments. The long-term vision is to relocate the project to offer a purpose- built project with enhanced support provision and increase the bedspaces to meet new service demand.

7 Shared Housing Development

To meet our new and increasing service demand in RCT we will need to continue to take forward the development of our shared temporary housing model particularly in the Taff area for single homeless people with low to medium support needs. Despite some initial concerns in respect of the shared tenancy model, there have had very few management problems with the 18 units developed to-date with positive feedback from residents with 10 additional units being explored in 2022/23.

8. Social Letting Agency

Despite the extreme challenges in the use of the private rented sector for move on and the prevention of homelessness. We will seek to maximise the contribution of the private rented sector to provide through the work of social letting agency and enhanced Welsh Government funding. However, to do this effectively we need to better understand some of the barriers to accessing private rented accommodation

9. Review of Common Housing Register Allocations Policy.

A review of the Common Housing Register Allocations Policy is planned over the next 18 months and is a key action in the Community Safety and Community Housing Delivery Plan. The review will consider ways in which we can facilitate increased management transfers to help prevent homelessness as well as the increase the supply of more specialist housing such as Extra Care for older and vulnerable with people adapted housing needs as well as exploring how we increase our supply of social housing for Housing First clients.

In consideration of Welsh Government recommendations and the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. The review will need to strike a balance between meeting the needs of statutory homeless households and those who are not homeless, but who are covered by the Equalities Act 2010 and those living in unsuitable accommodation especially those living in overcrowded households.

10. Housing Support Grant

The Councils Housing Support Grant Delivery and Commissioning Plan sets out the strategic and delivery priorities for 2022/25

Recommendations highlighted for HSG spending are set out below:

Recommendation 1 – To increase costs for the 2 projects in development (Hughes Street and Abertonllwyd House) in consideration of the staffing structure required to effectively provide a 24-hour supported accommodation for homeless complex clients.

Recommendation 2 – To review and revise financial templates for the funding of existing static projects to better understand any risks, financial implications/deficits for existing services.

Recommendation 3 – Explore options for expanding/building on existing services to increase bed spaces/units where feasible i.e., Hostel, YP/Care leaver, complex needs etc

Recommendation 4 – Suspend the current proposals for the planned development of supported accommodation in 2022/23 pending further work to provide an understanding of the support models required and affordability to finance any new projects going forward.

The Challenges

In taking forward the Rapid Rehousing Plan the current challenges cannot be underestimated particularly with the current housing market crisis, which has led to a lack of affordable housing and an increasing number of private landlords seeking to sell their properties.

To fully meet the requirements of Rapid Rehousing and avoid placement in temporary accommodation there are many obstacles to overcome namely:

Moving away from the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation going forward, we need to develop at least 60 units of alternative temporary accommodation over the coming years. The number of temporary accommodation units required is difficult to estimate as this can vary based on capacity at the time of year and the current support needs of individuals placed. In considering this figure, we will also need to be mindful of the backlog of the 76 single homeless people currently placed in Bed and Breakfast in need of longer- term accommodation and the future needs for households presenting with children, following the current increase in applications being received for breakdown of relationship in the private rented sector.

Prevention activity has also dropped off slightly over the past two years for many reasons and will need to be addressed as we move forward. Although we still prevented homelessness for 76% households who presented as homeless in 2022/23 due to paying off rent arrears and landlord incentive payments.

The enormity of the cost living crisis is unknown at this time but will have an impact on our communities and vulnerable citizens and may lead to an increase in homelessness presentations which will further limit our prevention options.

The lack of suitable buildings remains an ongoing challenge in developing any new forms of temporary and supported accommodation, particularly self-contained units. This is a particular issue in RCT, as there are a few suitable buildings and available land for development. It must be noted that in considering any form of provision for vulnerable homeless client groups particularly young people and offenders it will always be unpopular with local communities making it difficult and problematic to develop.

In order provide to offer value for money larger developments are often more cost effective to commission and allow higher numbers of people to be accommodated under one roof i.e., the cost of providing housing related support and or a security service for 5 people will be the same for 10 or more people. However, placing high numbers of vulnerable client groups in one building or location is not ideal and can be problematic and would not be the right option for some of our smaller towns **and or clients**. Smaller units and dispersed accommodation are more desirable, but as above can be difficult to identify and a more expensive option with limited funding available particularly for 24/7 staffed projects and security provision.

Lack of affordable housing options and mismatch between supply and the needs of households particularly one bedroom accommodation is an ongoing issue across the borough and despite the planned development of new build social and supported housing will not be easily resolved.

The right property in the right location is also key to ensuring the successful resettlement of homeless people and helping them rebuild their lives and in seeking support from families. This can be a particular challenge as many of our clients are often seeking housing in our higher demand areas which have low property turnover and a limited supply of one bedroom accommodation.

Developing the Private Rented Sector – The impact of the Pandemic has not fully been realised with many landlords have advised they are leaving the market for many reasons including their concerns in respect of their new responsibilities in the Renting (Homes) Act 2014. The impact of this will be twofold in the form of increased homelessness presentations which has already been experienced by the Housing Solutions Team and a further reduction in the availability of suitable PRS housing options.

Staff Recruitment – retention and the lack of experienced specialist support staff has had an impact on the delivery of our support services particularly where short- term contract have needed to be issued.

Planning, procurement, and recruitment of supporteda can be lengthy processes and add to the complication of spending funding within the allocated financial year.

Recognition that homelessness is not just a housing issue and that other organisations need to play their part. Resources within housing and homelessness teams are stretched and more focus needs to be given to homelessness prevention as a long- term strategy shared with partners across different departments and other partners.

The development of specialist provision for households with high support needs who are unable to sustain a traditional tenancy is both challenging and complex and requires a wider organisational approach.

Section F – Future Housing Supply and Wider Resource Planning

Developing high quality affordable housing particularly one bedroom accommodation

The Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) due to be finalised at the end of this financial year will identify housing need across Rhondda Cynon Taf. This data along with the Housing Support Plan assessment of need data, will feed into the Prospectus that is provided to Welsh Government's Social Housing Grant team each year. The Prospectus will inform Welsh Government and other housing partners where we will be investing our allocation of Social Housing Grant and how we have concluded where the investment is needed.

The LHMA will also feed data to Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan. This will allow policies to be created that target affordable housing need to aid the Housing Support Programme Strategy and the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

The development of one bedroom accommodation is a priority with an estimated 154 units planned for completion by 2023/24.

New Build Data.

Property Size	2021/22	2022/23
	Delivered	Planned
1 Bedroom	43	109
2 Bedroom	10	59
3 Bedroom	8	20
4 Bedroom		6
5 Bedroom		1
Total	61	195

Source: RCTCBC Housing Strategy Team

Social Housing

As a stock transfer authority Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council does not own its own stock, social rented properties in the borough are owned by a number of housing associations. We are fortunate in Rhondda Cynon Taf to operate a Common Housing Register and Common Allocation Policy in partnership with 12 Registered Social Landlords. We offer Choice Based Lettings with allocations made in accordance with the Reasonable Preference categories set out in the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

This strong partnership approach not only brings together resources for meeting need, but also lends clarity and consistency to the application and allocation process, lessening complexity for applicants to navigate

Over 50% of lettings in 2021/22 were made to in Band A applicants including homeless applicants, our Housing First project and other priority categories such as move on from supported accommodation projects. It is anticipated that this trend will continue with most housing association lettings going forward being made allocated from Band A.

We recognise there are many applicants registered on the Common Housing Register also have a significant housing need but are not homeless but desperately need alternative accommodation.

RCT Allocations data- 2021/22

	2018	2019	2020	2021
1 Bed	508	482	428	565
2 Bed	524	510	367	451
3 Bed	304	271	176	251
4 Bed	9	18	7	13
5 Bed	0	1	0	0
6 Bed	0	1	1	1
Bedsit	13	15	6	15
Grand Total	1358	1298	1058	1296

Only 1,296 social housing properties were available for letting in **2021/22** which is an increase on 2020/21 lettings but less voids than in previous years

Common Housing Register Application Data as 31/03/22

Bed size	Total
1	2448
2	1548
3	761
4	179
5	12
6	4
Total	4952

It is important to note that social housing will not be able to meet the needs of everyone going forward with demand for social housing outstripping supply with **4,952** applicants currently registered on Homefinder RCT as of 31st March 2022 with **2,448** of those applicants requiring a 1- bedroom property and **138** placed in Band A of which **104** have a 1- bedroom need.

Private Rented Sector Accommodation.

Access to the private rented sector in Rhondda Cynon Taf has historically been challenging for single person households. The availability of properties to rent in the private rented sector dropped dramatically during the Pandemic particularly for households in receipt of welfare benefits. In consideration of the current housing market pressures which has led to an increased demand for private rented accommodation, private landlords can pick and choose their tenants, particularly where persons can afford to pay market rent and offer advance rental payments.

The Rhondda Cynon Taff Needs Assessment highlights a lack of accommodation for people to move into or to move on from supported or temporary accommodation. A key part of the move on accommodation market is the Private Rented Sector (PRS) but since the pandemic and the increase in house values in RCT. Many private landlords no longer want to work with Council referred clients, preferring to find their own tenants.

Affordability remains a significant challenge with the gap between Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and the average private rent being totally unrealistic and out of reach for many people. This is an issue for all parts of Rhondda Cynon Taff, but is a particular challenge for the Taff area which has higher rents but grouped in the same Broad Rent Market Area (BRMA) as the Rhondda area which has lower rents.

It is therefore impossible to secure properties in the Taff area within the LHA rate making all private rented accommodation in most parts of Taff unaffordable particularly for those in receipt of welfare benefits and low incomes.

Despite rent increases over the past two years the Local Housing Allowance will remain frozen in cash terms with no imminent plans to review at this time.

Many single homeless people are frozen out of the private rented sector, limiting housing options and placing even more pressure on the already high demand for social housing. For families requiring access to larger properties there is a benefit cap This particularly affects household on a low income and/or entitled to benefits which are assessed on the LHA rate making the private rented sector less affordable for these groups.

We work closely with our Housing Benefit Department and have a dedicated officer role in place to help facilitate joint working and provide a consistent approach to Discretionary Housing Payments applications supported by the Housing Solutions Team.

Social Letting Agency

A Council run Social Letting Agency has been established in Rhondda Cynon Taff to improve access to longer term, affordable and good quality housing in the private rented sector. Despite attractive landlord financial incentives, there have been initial challenges in setting up the project particularly in attracting landlords who are happy to work with the scheme and to accept rent at the LHA rate minus 10%.

Following a Welsh Government review of the pilot arrangements for the Social Letting Agency set up initially in 2020/21. The Council later signed up to the National Leasing Scheme Wales which offers enhanced revenue and capital incentives for private rented landlords to join the scheme. The scheme support those who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness according to the definition in the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. The scheme will provide tenants with longer term security of accommodation (of between 5 - 20 years) in the PRS at a rent restricted to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels.

This additional funding will help the Council fund and secure a maximum of **161** new private rented accommodation properties by 31st March 2027. It is anticipated that the target of 8 properties in 2022/23 will be met due to the current landlord interest in the scheme, although further work will be needed to attract landlords from higher demand areas such as Taff.

The role the Social Letting Agency will play in rapid rehousing will be through the provision of an additional supply of housing will be dependent on a landlord willingness to engage with the agency and offer up suitable properties at LHA rates. The Council will further encourage take up of offers in the private rented sector through initiatives such as Bond payments and by offering a tailored support package from a dedicated housing team.

Supported Accommodation

All referrals for HSG funded service provision are made to the Single Point of Access (SPA) managed by the Housing Support Grant Team. Each referral is assessed to understand presenting housing and support needs.

The SPA processed **3,351** referrals for a support in 2021/22 which is a 29% increase from 2020/21 with the majority of referrals made are for the Locality Based Floating Support Project and 317 referrals for supported accommodation.

The three lead needs in applying for supported accommodation in 2021/22 were 1. Young Persons (16-24), 2. Mental Health, 3. Substance Misuse.

204 individuals were supported in 2021/2022 in all forms of supported accommodation ranging from dispersed to 24/7 static projects.

RCT has adopted a Panel approach to the allocation of supported accommodation and consider all referrals for each project largely according to the level of support provided i.e., high /medium / low.

The Panel is overseen by the Single Point of Access Officer a support provider and the Homelessness Team Manager. Each vacancy is considered on household need with priority given to those placed in temporary accommodation and who have medium to high support needs.

Move On Leaving Supported Accommodation

All Common Housing Register partners are signed up to the Move on Policy which is clearly outlined in the RCT Common Allocation Policy. This provides an effective framework for move on arrangements in partnership with housing and support providers with all referrals considered by a Move on Panel.

This proactive approach ensures individual seek their own timely accommodation in consideration of property availability when they are ready to move on reducing reliance on support arrangements and freeing up much needed space for those assessed in need of supported accommodation placed in temporary accommodation.

All clients leaving supported accommodation are also required to attend a Tenancy Skills Course (GRAMO) which is also part of the Move on strategy.

The number of individuals moving on from supported accommodation and placed into settled accommodation suitable for their needs for six months or longer as from 1st April - to 31^s April 2022 was 57. Despite the limited supply of one bedroom accommodation this is a 16 % increase in move on for the same period in 2020/21

It is difficult to estimate the number of supported accommodation vacancies which will become available for occupation over a period which will be subject moving on numbers and on small number of individuals being asked to leave. However, we anticipate based on trend data it estimated 102 units will become available over a 12-month period which will further assist us to discharge our legal duty and or reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation for vulnerable client groups.

Housing First

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has had an operational Housing First project in place for the past 4 years delivered in partnership with Pobl. The project was aimed initially at working with individuals held in the homelessness system, with high needs and a history of repeat of homelessness presentations and tenancy failure. Most of the original cohort referred to the Housing First Project have not presented as homeless since becoming part of the early project.

Funding secured through Welsh Government Trail Blazer funding enabled the Housing First model to be further developed to work with additional single person homeless individuals with complex needs including those leaving prison. The success of the funding was immediate and through the vision and support of our Common Housing Register partners, we were able to accommodate high need individuals to offer specialist support.

Due to the success of the project additional HSG funding was made available in 2021 /22 to further expand the Housing First Project and develop the Housing First Project Support Team. This included launching an early intervention and prevention pilot project to work with single person households with complex needs who are not receipt of other services but who are risk of losing their social housing tenancy. This is still in its infancy, but is a tool used to prevent homelessness for those with high support needs, who have previously been through the homelessness system and accommodated but later disengage with services

In partnership with Llamau funding secured through the Innovation Fund for youth allowed us to set up a specialist Housing First Project for young people aged 16-24 again offering us a housing option for higher need young people.

Due to the immediate impact the Housing First project in RCT has been mainstreamed with a referral pathway currently co-ordinated by the Homefinder Team Manager, who also Chairs and oversees a multi- agency panel to oversee referrals to the project. The Panel also consider tenancy issues relating to the current cohort on scheme to ensure the right support is in place and that a " No Eviction into Homelessness policy" is adhered too by housing providers.

A Project Officer has also recently been appointed, to review current working arrangements and to help put in place governance arrangements and a framework to support the success of the RCT Housing First project and extend its vision as a Rapid Rehousing model for with working with complex need individuals.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Housing First Data -2021/22

Housing First (Adult Project)

- **42** people currently on scheme, with **2** new referrals, bringing the total for accessing the scheme to **68**.
- **24** people (**57.1%**) on scheme are maintaining tenancies for six months or longer.

- **4 people (10%)** on scheme are not residing at their tenancy due to prison/custodial sentence (**3**) and hospital admission (**1**). These individuals are still being supported where they are residing.
- **14 people (33.3%)** on scheme have not yet secured tenancies and are being supported via outreach. **8** are residing in emergency/B&B accommodation, **1** is currently in hospital and will be placed in emergency/B&B accommodation once discharged, **1** is currently in custody and will be placed in emergency/B&B accommodation once released, **2** are currently in custody and will be NFA on release, **1** is currently NFA and **1** is residing in a probation service.

Housing First Project - Young Persons.

The young person's Housing First project developed in partnership with Llamau provides support for young people aged 16 – 24 who have multiple support needs.

Key Points:

There are **10** people currently on scheme

- **6 young people (60%)** on scheme are maintaining and residing at their tenancies at the end of December 2021 for six months or longer.
- **4 young** people on scheme and are being supported via outreach. **2** are residing in emergency/B&B accommodation, **1** is currently in custody and **1** is NFA/sofa-surfing.
- **3 young** people are awaiting an offer of accommodation

It is clear the success of the Rapid Rehousing Plan is highly dependent on the wider Council response and other key strategies which impact on the social and economic conditions locally. There are no short-term solutions to many of the challenges faced which will take time and resources and effective joined up working to make the changes required.

The below action plan sets out our vision for delivery of our Rapid Rehousing Plan over the next 5 years.

Section G: Resource Planning Action Plan

Short / Medium Term Plan 1/3 years

Key Action	Lead	Timescale	Comments/ Challenges
Deliver new projects i.e., Abertonllwyd House, and young persons shared project.	Housing Support Grant Team	30/09/2022	Additional 12 units of generic supported accommodation.
Reprofiling of existing temporary accommodation and provision for specific client groups, e.g., Offenders and families to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shared housing (x10 units) - Private Sector Leasing scheme (x 5 /8units) 	Head of Community Safety and Community Housing	2024	Subject to identification of suitable properties, landlords and funding arrangements
Relocate and Remodel Mill Street Hostel (additional10 units)	Housing SSG Team	ongoing	Suitable building, Planning objections
Develop initial proposal and seek approval for the new single person pathway /Assessment Centre	HSG Team /Housing Support Grant Planning Group	September 2023	De-commissioning and Re-commissioning of service provision will be required
Increase supported Lodgings ((Young People)	HSG Team/ Children Services	31/03/23	Expected unit growth over a 3-year period.
Review and reshape service delivery for the Housing Solutions Team	Housing Solutions Team Manager.	31.12.22	.
Review Allocation Scheme in considerate of the identified themes	Homefinder Team Manager/ Housing Strategy Team / CHR partners	Due for completion March 2024/25	Sime aspects of the review will complete earlier than the final planned review date. This will

			include agreed number of annual units for Housing First Project and increase in the number of approved management transfers.
Maximise private rented sector opportunities through the work of the Social Lettings Agency	Social Letting Agency		Sourcing new landlords may be difficult in the current housing market.
Continue to monitor the causes of repeat homelessness and develop actions to address the underlying issues	Head of community Safety and Community Housing	Ongoing	
Finalise Housing First Governance arrangements and implement revised referral and operational Framework	Project Officer – Housing First	31/03 /23	
Further develop the multi-agency Outreach Team in conjunction with new Complex needs funding.	HSG Regional Leads/ Outreach Health Steering Group.	31/12/22	
Establish multi agency Complex needs panel to address the housing and support needs of Single Homeless People.	Housing Solutions Team Manager		Will link with the development of the single person pathway

Long Term – 3 / 5 years

Key Action	Lead	Timescale	Comments/ Challenges
To review and revise financial templates for the funding of existing static projects to better understand any risks, financial implications/deficits.	HSG Team		
Complete understanding of the support models required and affordability to finance any new projects going forward	HSG Team / Project Accommodation Board.		
Work with the Project Accommodation Board to explore options for expanding/building on existing services increase bed spaces/units where feasible i.e., Hostel, YP/Care leaver, complex needs etc particularly where accommodation requirements for adults in the community would not be suitable	HSG Team/ Project Accommodation Board/ Housing Strategy Team		

Identify future supply requirements for new affordable housing stock in year 4 and 5 of the plan.	Housing Strategy Team		
Ongoing development of the Social Letting Agency	Social Letting Agency		

Appendix 5

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

(Revised March 2021)

Please refer to the current Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this document. If you would like further guidance please contact the Diversity and Inclusion Team on 01443 444529.

An equality impact assessment **must** be undertaken at the outset of any proposal to ensure robust evidence is considered in decision making. This documentation will support the Council in making informed, effective and fair decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010.

This document will also contribute towards our duties to create a More Equal Wales within the

- Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015.

The [‘A More Equal Wales – Mapping Duties’](#) guide highlights the alignment of our duties in respect of the above-mentioned legislation.

SECTION 1 – PROPOSAL DETAILS

Lead Officer: Cheryl Emery

Service Director: Louise Davies

Service Area:

Date:

1.a) What are you assessing for impact?

Strategy/Plan	Service Re-Model/Discontinuation of Service	Policy/Procedure	Practice	Information/Position Statement
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.b) What is the name of the proposal?

Housing Support Programme Strategy

1.c) Please provide an overview of the proposal providing any supporting links to reports or documents.

The Housing Support Programme Strategy sets out the approach Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC will take to continuing to support our most vulnerable residents – those who are at risk of, or experience homelessness and those who need support to maintain their tenancies and live as part of their communities. The Strategy will help RCT CBC respond to the growth in demand of people who need help with housing, and with increasingly complex needs.

The Strategy sets out the priorities of RCT CBC and partner agencies for homelessness prevention, homelessness relief and housing related support services over the coming 4 years (2022-26). It refreshes earlier priorities that were included in the Council's former Homelessness Strategy and the Housing Support Grant (HSG) Deliver Plan for 2021-22. Development of the priorities were informed by a comprehensive need assessment exercise, which includes direct engagement with

stakeholders within the Council, external stakeholders such as the NHS and Probation, as well as providers of support services and service users.

The Housing Support Grant (HSG) forms a key element of the overall Strategy and is an early intervention grant programme to support activity, which prevents people from becoming homeless, stabilises their housing situation or helps potentially homeless people to find and keep accommodation. Services supported through the HSG should be person centred and address multiple problems that vulnerable people who are homeless or likely to become homeless often face (for example debt, employment, substance misuse, violence against women, domestic and sexual abuse and mental health problems).

1.d) Please outline where delivery of this proposal is affected by legislation or other drivers such as code of practice.

Under Part of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, the local authority has a new and strengthened duty to prevent and relieve homelessness which has led to a strengthening of local partnership arrangements. The principle is to prevent homelessness, but where this is not possible, ensuring it is brief and not repeated. The HSG makes a significant contribution to the implementation of Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, which focuses on homeless prevention.

Housing and Homelessness policy and practice have continued to evolve since the Housing Act came into force and the local authority will be expected to respond further to action taken at a national level to support local authorities with their housing challenges. This includes commitments made in Welsh Government's Programme for Government (2021) which outlines commitments to legislate in relation to homelessness and young people. The Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 gives renters greater security with an aim of preventing and relieving homelessness.

Other relevant legislation and policy includes:

- The Wellbeing and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014
- Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015
- Substance Misuse Delivery Plan: 2019 to 2022 (Wales)
- Equality Act 2010
- Preventing Youth Homelessness

1.e) Please outline who this proposal affects:

- Service users

- Employees
- Wider community

SECTION 2 – SCREENING TEST – IS A FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?

Screening is used to determine whether the initiative has positive, negative or neutral impacts upon protected groups. Where negative impacts are identified for protected groups then a full Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Please provide as much detail as possible of how the proposal will impact on the following groups, this may not necessarily be negative, but may impact on a group with a particular characteristic in a specific way.

Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and foster good relations between different groups. Please take an intersectional approach in recognising an individual may have more than one protected characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Age (<i>Specific age groups i.e. young people or older people</i>)	Positive	The local authority has already commissioned placements for young people in private homes to alleviate housing need and has a strategy for utilising under-occupied private housing. This approach to housing alongside on-going support provided to people	Stakeholders were engaged in the development of the priorities for the HSPS through a series of on-line workshops, one to one interviews and via questionnaires including a questionnaire to service users. Groups engaged with included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Service users

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>through floating support services are critical to our preventive approach.</p> <p>The approach to prevention will be underpinned by a ‘one RCT’ philosophy, particularly in relation to care experienced children and young people. A refreshed corporate parenting approach that explicitly outlines how the local authority will plan for the future accommodation needs for care experienced young people will be put in place and supported by a learning and development plan that ensures the approach is understood at both strategic and practice levels both within the council and amongst its strategic partners.</p> <p>The local authority intends to build on positive corporate response to the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Support Grant Team • Housing and Homelessness Teams • Adult Social Care • RSLs • Children’s Services • Housing Support Grant providers • NHS • Probation <p>The key themes from stakeholders that have influenced priorities that impact Age and have been incorporated into the action plan include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure prevention and early intervention initiatives are strategically and operationally aligned e.g. Resilient Families with effective information

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>needs of care experienced young people approach in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning • Joint working (particularly across social services, housing and education) • Projecting future need <p>The HSPS will ensure that the local authority's corporate approach to supporting young people is strengthened – ensuring a 'one RCT' strategic approach to prevention and targeted early intervention activities.</p> <p>All Welsh Councils including RCTCBC have recently been tasked by Welsh Government to examine their corporate parenting response in relation to 'care-experienced' children and young people (CYP) and their future accommodation needs.</p>	<p>management and profiling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSG intervention should start at the earliest opportunity, be placed based, and target high risk areas. • Ensure HSG and Children's Services utilise funding for Supported Lodgings effectively and understand the outcomes for young people. <p>The Statement of Need identifies that 18% of homelessness presentations since 2019 have been made by young people under 25, many of which are 'care-experienced'. Break down in relationships with families is</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>Specifically, it requests that councils respond to the need for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An active identification process to ensure care experienced young people presenting as homeless can access all the support they are entitled to in cooperation with children's services. • Multi-agency reviews to be undertaken to identify any gaps within the system or interventions that could have taken place to ensure future similar cases are prevented for care experienced young people presenting as homeless; • Granting 'local connection' status for care experienced young people who are placed out-of-county, when moving on; 	<p>still one of the prominent reasons young people present as homeless in RCT.</p> <p>Cwm Taf's Accommodation and Support Strategy for Young People 16+ Years of Age Leaving Care 2019-2022 has been used to inform the HSPS. The Cwm Taf shared regional statement of intent for supporting children, young people and families sets out a shared vision that children, young people and families in Cwm Taf live safe, healthy and fulfilled lives and that they can achieve their full potential by building resilient communities. The HSPS supports RCT Children's Services Delivery Plan 2019-20 to ensure that children who cannot live with their parents live in suitable accommodation in RCT. This is delivered through the Children Looked</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending Personal Adviser support up to the age of 25. <p>Future corporate joint working and commissioning will reflect a more joined up corporate parenting approach to preventing future homelessness.</p> <p>The statement of need highlights the importance of planning and building properties to meet the need of housing. Strategic priority 1 which aims to strengthen early intervention and prevention services and specialist support to prevent homelessness includes actions to ensure new homes are built to improve move in from temporary accommodation. This will be achieved by ensuring new developments meet assessed housing need as identified in the</p>	<p>After Quality Assurance Panel that ensures that children looked after and care leavers in RCT receive good quality placements that support them to live safe, healthy and fulfilled lives.</p> <p>The local authority's older people's Strategy 'My Own Front Door'; A Plan for Housing in Later Life 2016 has helped to inform the HSPS.</p> <p>All accommodation developed under SHG must be build to Welsh Development Quality Requirements (WDQR) which sets out the minimum standards for new and rehabilitated general needs affordable homes. The WDQR state that 'homes should be flexible, responsive to the changing needs of the occupants, meet the changing needs of a variety of</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		Local Housing Market Assessment and by establishing a healthy Social Housing Grant (SHG) development programme.	<p>households who will occupy the building over its life and be of sufficient size. This requirement enables people to continue to occupy their own home into later life. Homes are built to meet the Lifetime Homes Standards.</p> <p>The local authority commissions services specifically for older people whose housing support needs are related to getting older.</p>
<p>Disability <i>(people with visible and non-visible disabilities or long-term health conditions)</i></p>	Positive	The needs assessment has identified the need for flexible and semi-permanent (where required) options for more complex serially excluded people with chronic substance misuse and mental health challenges.	The Needs Assessment identifies meeting the needs of people with mental health conditions, substance misuse, including where the two co-occur, as the most significant issue for the Council and our partners.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>Priority 1 of the Strategy aims to strengthen early intervention and prevention approaches and specialise support to prevent homelessness. Holistic, wrap-around support will be available to individuals with specialised needs.</p> <p>Early intervention will reduce the escalation to a crisis situation with a knock-on impact to health, inclusion and independence. The Strategy will focus on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring there is a seamless corporate approach to prevention. • Improving data sharing between Health, Housing, Probation and support providers - including use of data for planning services. <p>Priority 2 of the Strategy aims to ensure people who are homeless or</p>	<p>RCT has amongst the highest reported incidences of substance misuse, mental illness and poor well-being in Wales. Mental health problems are the most common reason for there being priority housing needs in RCT and housing problems are frequently given as a reason for a person being admitted or re-admitted to inpatient mental health care.</p> <p>The needs assessment has highlighted a the need for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible and semi-permanent (where required) options for more complex serially excluded people with chronic substance

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>threatened with homelessness access the right home at the right and in the right place, as part of the local authority's Rapid Rehousing Approach.</p> <p>This will be achieved by building on the success of the local authority's Housing First model towards Rapid Rehousing and a refreshed approach to supporting people to find the right accommodation with the right support from the outset.</p> <p>The local authority will also review how future supported accommodation can be reshaped to respond to the increase of complex presentations through a multi-agency approach to managing risk.</p> <p>Priority 3 of the Strategy aims to provide high quality support to people who are homeless or may become</p>	<p>misuse and mental health challenges.</p> <p>Housing First has been implemented in RCT to support those with the most complex needs. The services provide accommodation and support that works with people with complex needs, using assertive outreach and rapid response approaches. Rapid Rehousing is a vital part of Welsh Government policy and Housing First in RCT provides a robust foundation for this to move forward. Stakeholders want to see Housing First extended for people with more complex needs – something we are committed to exploring.</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>homeless by utilising available technology and ensuring effective cross agency working.</p> <p>This will be achieved by ensuring support is innovative and responds to the changing needs of service users, and building on the current level of support for providing assistance to people with high, medium and low needs.</p> <p>The local authority will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the multi-agency process for people with complex and multiple support needs • Review how technology can be used to support people • Extend support for people with mental health and substance misuse challenges from the wider system, joint working with partners to review the response to co-occurring 	<p>The stakeholder engagement identified the following key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve accessibility for everyone from those with low complex needs with a one/door assessment centre • Improve multi-agency working • Ensure a better multi-agency response to inclusion <p>Homelessness data show that in 2020 – 2021 there were 891 Priority Need homeless cases and of these 87 were households where a household member is vulnerable due to mental health/learning disability/learning difficulties</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>issues</p> <p>The statement of need highlights the importance of planning and building properties to meet the need of housing. Strategic priority 1, which aims to strengthen early intervention and prevention services and specialist support to prevent homelessness, includes actions to ensure new homes are built to improve move in from temporary accommodation. This will be achieved by ensuring new developments meet assessed housing need as identified in the Local Housing Market Assessment and by establishing a healthy Social Housing Grant (SHG) development programme.</p>	<p>and 79 were households where a household member is vulnerable due to a physical disability.</p> <p>With regards to physical disabilities, the Strategy highlights that people with physical difficulties often apply for rehousing from hospital, often with very short timescales. In these situations, the Council needs more data and notice at an earlier stage, prior to discharge. There is a need to find more short term solutions whilst a move on accommodation is adapted or built. The Strategy states that there needs to be a strategic, multiagency approach to new</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			<p>creative housing and support options.</p> <p>16% of the Homefinder waiting list are people who require an adapted property. The barrier to accessing housing for this characteristic group is the limited availability of adapted housing within RCT's existing housing stock. The existing housing stock is largely unsuitable for people with a physical disability. What this means that people on the housing waiting list who require an adapted property will often have to wait for quite some time while a new property is being built, which can sometimes take up to 2 years.</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			<p>All accommodation developed under SHG must be build to Welsh Development Quality Requirements (WDQR) which sets out the minimum standards for new and rehabilitated general needs affordable homes. The WDQR state that ‘homes should be flexible, responsive to the changing needs of the occupants, meet the changing needs of a variety of households who will occupy the building over its life and be of sufficient size.</p> <p>This means all homes have a shower (in addition to a bath) and are provided with adequate space on the ground floor with plumbing, electrical and mechanical ventilation connections to allow for the future installation of a barrier free shower facility suitable for use by a person in a</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			wheelchair. All flats and bungalows have a shower in addition to a bath and bungalows, ground floor flats and flats served by a lift have a bathroom designed so it is capable of adaptation for use by a person in a wheelchair.
Gender Reassignment <i>(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they</i>	Neutral	The Housing Support Programme Strategy sets out the Council's approach to supporting our most vulnerable residents, who are at risk	Homeless data for 2020 – 2021 shows that only 1 Priority Need Homeless case identified as Transgender, compared to 620 males and

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<i>were assigned at birth including non-binary identities)</i>		<p>of homelessness regardless of gender or gender identity.</p> <p>However the Council recognises the specific and targeted housing and housing support needs of people who identify as LGBTQ+ in this strategy and action plan.</p> <p>Strategic Priority 1 of the Strategy aims to strengthen early intervention and prevention services and specialist support to prevent homelessness. In order to achieve this one of the action included is to ensure the commissioning of VAWDSA services considers the needs of LGBTQ+ community. The intended outcome of this action is that services are more responsive to the diverse needs of people.</p>	<p>372 females. What this data doesn't tell is whether people are reluctant to disclose their gender if they do not identify as male or female.</p> <p>The strong links that have been formed with strategic groups and partnerships across Cwm Taf Morgannwg through the previous Supporting People governance arrangements have been further strengthened through the establishment of the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group (RHSCG), which provides a key forum for collaborative working.</p> <p>This Group has a broad representation across agencies, including service users, support providers,</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			<p>wider stakeholders and commissioners.</p> <p>The Group also links with other bodies that have been established to support more focused and specialised planning and delivery.</p> <p>A Regional workplan will be overseen by the RHSCG and will detail the work to be taken forward to develop more specialist services. One of the new regional projects that is currently being undertaken is the development of a research/scoping project to determine the need for a Cwm Taf Morgannwg regional LGBTQ+ project.</p>
Marriage or Civil Partnership	Neutral	The Housing Support Programme Strategy sets out the Council's approach to supporting our most	

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<i>(people who are married or in a civil partnership)</i>		<p>vulnerable residents, who are at risk of, or experience homelessness regardless of their marital or civil partnership status.</p> <p>That being said, the Strategy highlights the increasing numbers of referrals for Refuge Services in RCT that are unable to be met due to high levels of need and/or risk.</p> <p>Whilst homelessness applications for those fleeing domestic abuse are not high, they are more complex and there is a need for service development particularly in respect of enhancing domestic abuse programmes that work with perpetrators of abuse.</p>	

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(women who are pregnant/on maternity leave)</i>	Neutral	The Housing Support Programme Strategy sets out the Council's approach to supporting our most vulnerable residents, who are at risk of, or experience homelessness regardless of pregnancy or maternity.	
Race <i>(ethnic and racial groups i.e. minority ethnic groups, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers)</i>	Positive	<p>A number of policy documents underpin this Strategy including the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Strategy, which highlights the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.</p> <p>Strategic Priority 1 of the Strategy aims to strengthen early intervention and prevention services and specialist support to prevent homelessness. In order to achieve this one of the actions included is to complete a research project jointly with neighbouring CBCs on housing related support needs of women experiencing harmful cultural practices e.g. from Black or Minority Ethnic communities with aim of</p>	<p>The Council's Floating Support service is available to all residents of RCT regardless of race and ethnic background. This is evidenced by that fact that referrals for support for some of our Gypsy residents have been made and those residents are now being supported by one of our key support providers.</p> <p>Supporting People governance arrangements have been further strengthened through the</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>developing regional support project based on recommendations of report.</p> <p>Multi-agency discussions and working groups are already in place to meet the needs of Refugees and Asylum Seekers. The Strategy will continue to support the resettlement of Refugees and Asylum Seekers by continuing to deliver housing support services to prevent homelessness. The Housing Solutions Team seeks accommodation options to meet people's housing needs by working closely with partner Registered Social Landlords and the private rented sector through the Social Letting Agency. The Social Letting Agency works closely with the Council's Community Safety Team and other departments to source and secure accommodation for Refugees and Asylum Seekers. The Council's approach to prevention to deliver a 'one RCT' philosophy, will enhance the prevention work that is already on-going and will ensure that all</p>	<p>establishment of the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group (RHSCG), which provides a key forum for collaborative working.</p> <p>This Group has a broad representation across agencies, including service users, support providers, wider stakeholders and commissioners.</p> <p>The Group also links with other bodies that have been established to support more focused and specialised planning and delivery.</p> <p>A Regional workplan will be overseen by the RHSCG and will detail the work to be taken forward to develop more specialist services. One of the new regional projects that is currently being undertaken is</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		those who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness will be able to access Services and receive the support they need.	the development of a Research/scoping project to determine the need for a BME project, specifically for those experiencing harmful cultural practices, alongside Housing related support needs.
Religion or Belief <i>(people with different religions and philosophical beliefs including people with no beliefs)</i>	Neutral	The Housing Support Programme Strategy sets out the Council's approach to supporting our most vulnerable residents, who are at risk of, or experience homelessness regardless of religion or belief.	
Sex <i>(women and men, girls and boys)</i>	Positive	The Strategy points out the difficulties in preventing homelessness. This is due to the increase in the number of people presenting with complex needs and the fact that current support and accommodation is not designed to meet these complex	The Needs Assessment highlighted the need for more options to ensure women who are accommodated via an offenders pathway, who often have a history of experiencing domestic violence, are not

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>needs such as women fleeing domestic violence. The result of this is that people are often accommodated in the wrong accommodation.</p> <p>Strategic priority 1, which aims to strengthen early intervention and prevention services and specialist support to prevent homelessness includes actions to ensure new homes are built to improve move on from temporary accommodation. This will be achieved by ensuring new developments meet assessed housing need as identified in the Local Housing Market Assessment and by establishing a healthy Social Housing Grant (SHG) development programme which will focus on developing 1 bed accommodation which will meet the need of the high</p>	<p>inadvertently placed alongside men with a history of perpetrating domestic violence.</p> <p>The needs assessment shows that single person households have consistently accounted for the majority of cases where the Council has provided assistance to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Single male applicants form the largest proportion of applicants made by those who have been homeless within the last two years. The proportion of single male applicants has risen from 46% of the total in 2017 to 58% in 2021.</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>number of single male applicants in temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Strategic priority 3 states that the Council will develop more innovative accommodation and support options for both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.</p> <p>Strategic Priority 2 explains that the Council will introduce a Single Point of Access service and a 'no wrong door approach' for people presenting as homeless. Within this priority the Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving assessment, accessibility and assessment for single homeless people, reducing reliance on the use of bed and breakfast and consider options to make temporary accommodation more sustainable and suitable 	<p>Single male applicants account for more placements into temporary accommodation than all other households combined, with single female applicants accounting for the second highest number of placements.</p> <p>A Regional workplan will be overseen by the RHSCG and will detail the work to be taken forward to develop more specialist services. One of the new regional projects that is currently being undertaken is the development of a research/scoping project to determine the need for a Cwm Taf Morgannwg regional LGBTQ+ project.</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>for longer stays.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to the private rented sector accommodation through the Social Letting Agency. • Ensure new homes are built to improve move on from temporary accommodation and review local letting requirements. 	
<p>Sexual Orientation (<i>bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight</i>)</p>	Positive	<p>The Housing Support Programme Strategy sets out the Council's approach to supporting our most vulnerable residents, who are at risk of, or experience homelessness regardless of sexual orientation. However the Council recognises the specific and targeted housing and housing support needs of people who identify as LGBTQ+ in this strategy and action plan.</p>	<p>88% of homeless cases in 2020 – 2021 identified as Heterosexual/Straight, with 5% 'not known' and 3% 'preferring not to say'. Of the remaining cases 1% identified as gay, 1% identified as bisexual, 1% identified as lesbian and 1% other.</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>Strategic Priority 1 of the Strategy aims to strengthen early intervention and prevention services and specialist support to prevent homelessness. In order to achieve this one of the action included is to ensure the commissioning of VAWDSA services considers the needs of LGBTQ+ community. The intended outcome of this action is that services are more responsive to the diverse needs of people.</p>	<p>The two main reasons recorded for homelessness for gay, bisexual and lesbian is 'Parents no longer willing to accommodate' and 'Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate'.</p> <p>The strong links that have been formed with strategic groups and partnerships across Cwm Taf Morgannwg through the previous Supporting People governance arrangements have been further strengthened through the establishment of the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group (RHSCG), which provides a key forum for collaborative working.</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			<p>This Group has a broad representation across agencies, including service users, support providers, wider stakeholders and commissioners.</p> <p>The Group also links with other bodies that have been established to support more focused and specialised planning and delivery.</p> <p>A Regional workplan will be overseen by the RHSCG and will detail the work to be taken forward to develop more specialist services. One of the new regional projects that is currently being undertaken is the development of a research/scoping project to determine the need for a Cwm Taf Morgannwg regional LGBTQ+ project.</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?

In addition, due to Council commitments made to the following groups of people we would like you to consider impacts upon them:

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Armed Forces Community <i>(anyone who is serving, has served, family members and the bereaved)</i>	Neutral	The Housing Support Programme Strategy sets out the Council's approach to supporting all of our most vulnerable residents, who are at risk of, or experience homelessness including the armed forces community.	People presenting as Homeless are asked whether they served in the armed forces. The data for 2020 – 2021 indicates 3% of homeless applicants stated they did serve in the armed forces. The main reason for homelessness for this group of people is 'prison leaver'.
Carers <i>(anyone of any age who provides unpaid care)</i>	Neutral	The Housing Support Programme Strategy sets out the Council's approach to supporting all of our most vulnerable residents, who are at risk of, or experience	

		homelessness including carers.	
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If the initial screening test has identified negative impacts then a full equality impact assessment (section 4) **must** be undertaken. However, if after undertaking the above screening test you determine a full equality impact assessment is not relevant please provide an adequate explanation below:

The Housing Support Programme Strategy outlines the Council's approach in continuing to support vulnerable residents who are at risk of, or experience homelessness and require support to maintain their tenancy. The Council's Services aim to ensure that everyone, regardless of age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, sex, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, and/or gender reassignment, has access to shelter and support. Therefore, the Equality Impact Assessment screening form highlights either a positive or neutral impact on each of the protected characteristics groups and also the armed forces community and carers.

Are you happy you have sufficient evidence to justify your decision? Yes No

Name:

Position:

Date:

Please forward a copy of this completed screening form to the Diversity and Inclusion Team.

PLEASE NOTE – there is a separate impact assessment for Welsh Language. This must also be completed for proposals.

Section 3 Socio-economic Duty needs only to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. Definition of a 'strategic nature' is available on page 6 of the [Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty](#) Welsh Government Guidance.

SECTION 3 – SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY (STRATEGIC DECISIONS ONLY)

The Socio-economic Duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services.

Please consider these additional vulnerable groups and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- Pensioners
- Looked after children
- Homeless people
- Students
- Single adult households

- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales
- People with low literacy and numeracy
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People misusing substances
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People involved in the criminal justice system

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p>Low Income/Income Poverty <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i></p>	Positive	<p>The Strategy's principal aim is to prevent homelessness by supporting our most vulnerable residents – those who are at risk of, or experience homelessness and those who need support to maintain their tenancies and live as part of their communities. The Strategy will help RCT CBC respond to the growth in demand of people who need help with housing, and with increasingly complex needs.</p> <p>Strategic priority 1 aims to strengthen early intervention and prevention services and specialist support to prevent homelessness. Action 1 within this priority suggests developing basic workshops with schools, colleges and targeted families and communities to prepare children and young people for future tenancies, whilst ensuring alignment with Resilient Families work. This action will ensure that children and young people understand what is required to maintain a tenancy with the aim of preventing them from</p>	<p>The development of RCT's Housing First and Rapid Rehousing has already set the scene for homelessness prevention and works closely with people to maintain tenancies by helping them with day to day tasks such as shopping, paying bills, seeking employment. The Strategy will continue to build on this work.</p>

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>being unable to afford a tenancy in the future. The action plan also recommends developing relationships with community groups to offer regular drop in sessions.</p> <p>Strategic aim 3 of the Strategy aims to provide high quality support to people who are or may become homeless, fully utilising available technology and ensuring effective cross-agency working. This will be achieved by developing digital inclusion skills across services as well as the people we are supporting – linking into to Digital Communities Wales.</p>	
<p>Low and / or No Wealth <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i></p>	Positive	<p>The Strategy's principal aim is to prevent homelessness by supporting our most vulnerable residents – those who are at risk of, or experience homelessness and those who need support to maintain their tenancies and live as part of their communities. The Strategy will help RCT CBC respond to the growth in demand of</p>	<p>The development of RCT's Housing First and Rapid Rehousing has already set the scene for homelessness prevention and works closely with people to maintain tenancies by helping them with day to day tasks such as shopping, paying bills, seeking</p>

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>people who need help with housing, and with increasingly complex needs.</p> <p>Strategic priority 1 aims to strengthen early intervention and prevention services and specialist support to prevent homelessness. Action 1 within this priority suggests developing basic workshops with schools, colleges and targeted families and communities to prepare children and young people for future tenancies, whilst ensuring alignment with Resilient Families work. This action will ensure that children and young people understand what is required to maintain a tenancy with the aim of preventing them from being unable to afford a tenancy in the future. The action plan also recommends developing relationships with community groups to offer regular drop in sessions.</p> <p>The action plan also recommends reviewing the Get Ready And Move On (GRAMO) Tenancy Ready</p>	<p>employment. The Strategy will continue to build on this work. The support delivered through these schemes are also provided to other residents via floating support and other support schemes and tenancy ready schemes.</p>

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>Courses along with colleagues from Social Care to examine its efficacy for care experienced young people. GRAMO is also delivered to other people of all ages to equip them with the life skills to maintain a tenancy and managing money and bills.</p> <p>Strategic aim 3 of the Strategy aims to provide high quality support to people who are or may become homeless, fully utilising available technology and ensuring effective cross-agency working. This will be achieved by developing digital inclusion skills across services as well as the people we are supporting – linking into to Digital Communities Wales.</p>	
<p><u>Material Deprivation</u> <i>(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)</i></p>	Positive	The Strategy’s principal aim is to prevent homelessness and will build on the prevention work which is already being delivered by the Housing Solutions team. This work includes sourcing and securing white goods for new tenancies, referrals to	The Council already has a strong track record of homelessness prevention and the priorities within the Strategy will build on this.

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		the Council's Heat and Save team for assistance with energy bills.	

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p><u>Area Deprivation</u> <i>(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport))</i></p>	Positive	<p>The Strategy highlights the need to build on the partnership working that already exists. This includes continuing to work closely with Health and Probation Services.</p> <p>Strategy priority 1 identifies the need for early and timely intervention to reduce undue escalation to avoid a crisis situation, with a knock-on impact to health, inclusion and independence. We will focus on the following areas to strengthen our approach to prevention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ensuring there is a seamless corporate approach to prevention. b) Improving data sharing between Health, Housing, Probation and support providers - including use of data for planning services. 	<p>The Statement of Need states that understanding the activity of system partners such as Health, Probation and Education and having access to the information they have on people's needs is vital to effectively plan services and provide support early, before crises develop. This will help develop area based policies interventions where required.</p>

<p>Socio-economic background <i>(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The Strategy highlights the need to build on the partnership working that already exists. This includes continuing to work closely with Health and Probation Services.</p> <p>The Strategy's principal aim is to prevent homelessness and will build on the prevention work which is already being delivered by the Housing Solutions team</p> <p>Strategic priority 1 aims to strengthen early intervention and prevention services and specialist support to prevent homelessness. Action 1 within this priority suggests developing basic workshops with schools, colleges and targeted families and communities to prepare children and young people for future tenancies, whilst ensuring alignment with Resilient Families work. This action will ensure that children and young people understand what is required to maintain a tenancy with the aim of preventing them from being unable to afford a tenancy in the future. The action plan also recommends developing</p>	<p>Stakeholder engagement cited the Council's Resilient Families programme as supporting the homelessness prevention agenda and the Statement of Need identifies that this could be built upon. There is clearly some cross over between the prevention agendas of both the HSP and the Resilient Families Programme. We will further explore how these programmes can strategically and operationally complement each other going forward.</p>
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		<p>relationships with community groups to offer regular drop in sessions.</p> <p>Strategic aim 3 of the Strategy aims to provide high quality support to people who are or may become homeless, fully utilising available technology and ensuring effective cross-agency working. This will be achieved by developing digital inclusion skills across services as well as the people we are supporting – linking into to Digital Communities Wales.</p>	
<p>Socio-economic disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)</i></p>	Positive	<p>The Strategy's aims are targeted to preventing homelessness for all residents of RCT and one of the key priorities is to operate a 'one RCT' philosophy where all residents who are or threatened with homelessness can access services.</p> <p>The Strategy will have a positive impact for all people regardless of their socio-economic disadvantage as it aims to make services more accessible and focuses on building on the joint partnership work that already exists. Working with Health, Probation, and other Council</p>	<p>Stakeholder engagement highlighted the need for improved accessibility for everyone from those with low to complex needs with a one door/assessment centre approach and a 'no wrong door' philosophy.</p>

		Services will ensure that that overall the Strategy will assist all people who are disadvantaged due to protected characteristics, and/or vulnerability.	
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SECTION 4 – FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

You should use the information gathered at the screening stage to assist you in identifying possible negative/adverse impacts and clearly identify which groups are affected.

- 4.a) In terms of disproportionate/negative/adverse impacts that the proposal may have on a protected group, outline the steps that will be taken to reduce or mitigate the impact for each group identified. **Attach a separate action plan where impacts are substantial.**

N/A

- 4.b) If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible, please explain why they are not possible.

N/A

- 4.c) Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning, in particular, the sources used for establishing the demographics of service users/staff.

N/A

- 4.d) Give details of how you engaged with service users/staff on the proposals and the steps taken to avoid any disproportionate impact on a protected group. Explain how you have used feedback to influence your decision.

Stakeholders were engaged in the development of the priorities for this Strategy through a series of on-line workshops, one to one interviews and via questionnaires, including a questionnaire to service users. Groups engaged with included:

- Service users
- Housing Support Grant team
- Housing and Homelessness teams
- Adult Social Care
- Registered Social Landlords
- Children's Services
- Housing Support Grant providers
- NHS

- Probation

The main themes from stakeholders have influenced the strategic priorities and have been incorporated into the action plan of the Strategy.

4.e) Are you satisfied that the engagement process complies with the requirements of the Statutory Equality and Socio-economic Duties?

Yes

No

SECTION 5 – MONITORING, EVALUATING AND REVIEWING

5a) Please outline below how the implementation of the proposal will be monitored:

The Council will monitor, steer and review progress against the HSP Strategy through the RCT HSP Planning Group which convenes on a quarterly basis. Delivery against the Strategy will be a standing agenda item at this meeting every quarter.

5b) When is the evaluation of the proposal due to be reviewed?

A formal review of progress and an evaluation of the impact of the Strategy will take place every two years as a minimum, but may be reviewed more frequently should it be deemed necessary.

5c) Who is responsible for the monitoring and review of the proposal?

The Chair of the RCT HSP Planning Group is accountable for the delivery of the Strategy and responsibility is delegated to the HSP Lead Officer.

5d) How will the results of the monitoring be used to develop future proposals?

A key area of the RCT HSP Planning Group will be to improve the information that is collected on outcomes across all strands of investment using Housing Support Grant to support adults, children and people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities.

SECTION 6 – REVIEW

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not, you are required to forward this assessment to Diversity and Inclusion team – equality@rctcbc.gov.uk and the Consultation and Engagement team – consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.

As part of the Welsh Language, Equalities and Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment Process all proposals that fall within the definition of Significant Key Decision should present at the Officer Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your report is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Strategic Decision please forward your completed impact assessment, policy proposal/report and consultation report to CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. See our guidance document for more information on what a Significant Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in equality/Socio economic considerations wherever possible. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below in collaboration with the relevant departments

Diversity and Inclusion team Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation
Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations

SECTION 7 – SUMMARY OF IMPACTS FOR THE PROPOSAL

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment, to include some of the main positive and negative impacts along with an overview of actions taken since the impact assessment to better contribute to more positive impacts. This summary must be included in the Equality Considerations section of the SLT/Cabinet report template. It is not suitable to only write 'please see full report at Appendix x' in the body of the report. The impact assessment must be published alongside the report.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and the main findings are as follows:-

SECTION 8 – AUTHORISATIONS

Lead Officer:

Name:

Position:

Date:

I recommend that the proposal:

- Is implemented with no amendments
- Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined
- Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on protected groups or socio-economic disadvantage

Head of Service/Director Approval:

Name:

Position:

Date:

Please submit this impact assessment with any SLT/Cabinet Reports.

This Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIS) tool enables RCT Council to consider the principles and requirements of the [Welsh Language Standards \(No.1\) Regulations 2015](#) to ensure compliance with the [Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#).

Stage 1 – Information Gathering

NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for **evidence to support your views**. Please see [Welsh Language Impact Assessment Guidance](#) for more information on data sources.

Proposal Name:	Housing Support Programme Strategy
Department	Community Housing / Housing Strategy and Investment
Service Director	Louise Davies/Derek James
Officer Completing the WLIA	Alex Coole
Email	Alexandra.C.Coole@rctcbc.gov.uk
Phone	07384 919314
Brief Description	<p>The Housing Support Programme Strategy sets out the approach Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC will take to continue to support our most vulnerable residents – those who are at risk of, or experience homelessness and those who need support to maintain their tenancies and live as part of their communities. The Strategy will help RCT CBC respond to the growth in demand of people who need help with housing, and with increasingly complex needs.</p> <p>The Strategy sets out the priorities of RCT CBC and partner agencies for homelessness prevention, homelessness relief and housing related support services over the coming 4 years (2022-26). It refreshes earlier priorities that were included in the Council's former Homelessness Strategy and the Housing Support Grant (HSG) Delivery Plan for 2021-22.</p>
Date	13/06/2022

**Please outline who this proposal affects?
(Service Users, Employees, Wider Community)**

Service Users, Employees, Wider Community

<p>What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?</p>	<p>The Housing Support Grant (HSG) forms a key element of the overall Housing Support Programme Strategy and is an early intervention grant programme to support activity, which prevents people from becoming homeless, stabilises their housing situation or helps potentially homeless people to find and keep accommodation. Services supported through the HSG should be person centred and address multiple problems that vulnerable people who are homeless or likely to become homeless often face (for example debt, employment, substance misuse, violence against women, domestic and sexual abuse, mental health problems and language barriers).</p> <p>Within the Strategy are key strategic priorities aimed at preventing homelessness and some of these will have a positive impact on the Welsh Language. Strategic Priority 1 aims to strengthen early intervention and prevention approaches and specialised support to prevent homelessness. We will achieve this by improving accessibility with a 'no wrong door' philosophy to homeless services delivered through an Assessment Centre offering a bilingual service in accordance with the Council's Welsh Language duties. We will work with both English and Welsh medium schools and colleges to prepare children and young people for future tenancies. We will improve our marketing/promotion of Prevention and Early Intervention assistance, which will be available bilingually. Strategic Priority 2 aims at ensuring people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness can access the right home at the right time and in the right place, as part of our Rapid Rehousing approach. This will be achieved by ensuring our Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) and Local Development Plan (LDP) reflect the needs identified in the Housing Support Grant Needs Assessment. The LDP includes planning policies and site allocations which are used to determine planning applications. When determining planning applications, the local planning authority should take into account Technical Advice Note 20: Planning and the Welsh Language. Strategic Priority 3 will provide high quality support to people who are or may become homeless, fully utilising available technology and ensuring effective cross-agency working. This will be achieved by improving security and consistency for support providers, encouraging flexibility and innovation to reduce unnecessary administration and will provide additional and consistent training for staff, including Welsh Language training. Strategic Priority 4 focuses on collaborative working to provide holistic, person-centred support with effective specialist interventions where necessary to include Welsh Language services. A multi-agency approach to overseeing the Strategy will ensure that all Services are working in accordance to Welsh Language standards.</p>
<p>Who will benefit / Could the policy affect Welsh language groups? If so, list them here.</p>	<p>Residents who are at risk of, or experience homelessness and those who need support to maintain their tenancies and live as part of their communities will benefit from this Strategy. The Strategy could therefore benefit all residents as anyone could find themselves in the position of being threatened with homelessness or require assistance to main their tenancy.</p>

	Any impact on Welsh Language groups should only be positive as the development of new homelessness services and strengthened multi-agency working will mean that the Welsh language is embedded in working practices.															
<p>Current linguistic profile of the geographical area(s) concerned</p>	<p>Every ten years the nation sets aside one day for the Census, a count of all people and households. The Census is a key source of information about the number of people who can speak Welsh. The 2011 Census indicated that of the 225,555 residents living in the County Borough, 12.3% (27,779) were able to speak Welsh. This can be compared to the all-Wales showed of the 2,955,841 residents living in Wales, 19% (562,016) were able to speak Welsh.</p> <p>The Annual Population Survey for the quarter ending December 2021, reported that 20.9% of respondents living in the County Borough said they could speak Welsh, this is compared to the all-Wales percentage of 29.5% of respondents. This can be further broken down to the data contained in the table below:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="600 580 2154 810"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Welsh Language Skills of Residents – (%)</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf</th> <th>Wales</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Can Read Welsh</td> <td>18.9%</td> <td>25.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Can Write Welsh</td> <td>17.7%</td> <td>23.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Can Understand Spoken Welsh</td> <td>24.5%</td> <td>33.4%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Welsh Language Skills of Residents – (%)				County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf	Wales	Can Read Welsh	18.9%	25.9%	Can Write Welsh	17.7%	23.7%	Can Understand Spoken Welsh	24.5%	33.4%
Welsh Language Skills of Residents – (%)																
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Can Understand Spoken Welsh	24.5%	33.4%														
<p>Other relevant data or research</p>	Housing Support Programme Strategy and Needs Assessment 2022 – 2026, RCT's Local Housing Market Assessment															

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

In this section you need to consider the impact, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement. This is to ensure that the opportunities for people who choose to live their lives and access services through the medium of Welsh are not inferior to what is afforded to those choosing to do so in English, in accordance with the requirement of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Please note there is a separate impact assessment for Equality and Socio-Economic duty that must also be completed for policy proposals.

Remember that effects that are positive for some groups could be detrimental to others - even among Welsh language groups. Consider the effects on different groups. For example, a proposal may be beneficial to Welsh learners, but not to Welsh speakers.

Previous Welsh Language Impact Assessments can be found by [clicking here](#).

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language</p> <p>e.g. staff, residents and visitors</p> <p>The rights of Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh when dealing with the council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	Positive	1.) During the Pandemic we have embraced technology in order to provide services differently and this has been an opportunity to promote the Welsh language as people accessing the Council's website and other key partners' websites have access to services in the Welsh language.	<p>1.) Number of users using online tools to access services through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>2.) Both staff and people in the community are able to engage digitally and actively have their needs met through these methods.</p>	1.) Review how we have embraced technology and provided services differently during the COVID-19 pandemic and further enhance these by ensuring we deliver information in the Welsh language.

		<p>2.) The Council will respond to service users' needs by using new technologies to unlock the ability to support people in new and responsive ways to enable them to fulfil their potential. This will provide Welsh speakers and learners an opportunity to use the Welsh language.</p> <p>3.) The Strategy aims to ensure people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness access the right home, at the right time and in the right place. This can include ensuring that Welsh speakers or learners have access to Welsh language services for example schools and colleges.</p> <p>4.) Through working collaboratively with our partners (some of whom, such as the health board, are also subject to the Welsh language standards and therefore obligated to provide services in Welsh) to</p>	<p>3.) An increase in the supply of good quality, affordable housing which has been developed in accordance with the Council's LDP. The LDP has been produced in accordance to TAN 20 and Planning Policy Wales.</p> <p>4.) New multi-agency innovative approach to planning and commissioning of services to ensure the Welsh language is promoted</p>	<p>2.) Develop digital inclusion skills across services as well as the people we are supporting – linking into Digital Communities Wales. We will work with local libraries, community groups, schools and colleges to deliver classes through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>3.) The Council will establish a healthy development programme for Social Housing Grant by assessing and prioritising schemes based on their accessibility to local facilities. This includes access to libraries, schools and colleges (and other facilities) which provide Welsh language services.</p> <p>4.) Develop training, updates and briefings to staff and providers to keep abreast of service developments, good practice, innovation and new practices via joint training sessions, HSG Planning Group,</p>
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		<p>provide holistic, person-centred support with effective specialist interventions where necessary will enable us to promote the Welsh language and have access to a larger pool of staff in order to utilise their Welsh language skills. The Outreach Health Project is a specialist team that would enable us to draw down on resources for Welsh Speakers to provide services in Welsh where required. Where an individual requests to have a meeting in Welsh, we would adhere to standards 26/26A by utilising Welsh Language resources from our key partners (where possible) or alternatively arranging for a translator to be available.</p> <p>5.) The Lead of each Housing Support Grant team will take responsibility for ensuring compliance with Welsh Language Standards to ensure that there is an understanding amongst all partners of the services that</p>		<p>and local, regional and national fora.</p>
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		<p>need to be provided in Welsh.</p> <p>6.) Training (both language and policy) will be provided as well as an assessment on whether the training should be delivered in Welsh (where there is a need to do this and resources allow).</p>		
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Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Numbers and / or percentages of Welsh speakers e.g Welsh Medium Education / Study Opportunities. Links with the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy / RCTCBC Five Year Welsh Language Strategy</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>1.) The Welsh Government's ambition is to see the number of people able to enjoy speaking and using the Welsh language to reach a million by the year 2050, RCTCBC hopes to encourage this ambition by providing the conditions to facilitate an increase in the use of the Welsh language in line with the RCTCBC 5 year Welsh Language Strategy. This Strategy will support these goals by ensuring, wherever possible, that Welsh speakers/learners have access to housing in a location that affords them the opportunities to continue to use/learn the Welsh language. The Housing Allocation scheme gives</p>	<p>1.) In line with the Council's Welsh Language Promotional Strategy and our Welsh Language Standards, this strategy will ensure bilingual text (Welsh first) on all Council owned charge points used in the roll out of a charging network across the County Borough.</p> <p>2.) Increase in the number of staff and service users accessing Welsh language courses. RCTCBC will encourage staff and partners to enable staff to have access to Welsh Language courses and we will monitor this to ensure its effectiveness.</p>	<p>1.) RCTCBC will encourage its key partners to provide and promote information through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>2.) RCTCBC will review the number of new housing developments which are near a WM school.</p> <p>3.) Promote Welsh language courses to staff and service users, particularly promote free Welsh lessons for 16 – 25 year olds which will be provided by WG.</p>

		<p>priority (under Band C) to 'households who need to move to be nearer to a child's school (where the need to move to a school has been recommended by the Director of Education). All properties available for let are advertised via the Council's Choice Based Lettings scheme which enables applicants to bid on properties which meets they needs. This means that applicants are able to research the area and ensure that nearby schools offer Welsh language education.</p> <p>2.) Developing the skills of staff and service users will help to increase the numbers of Welsh speakers by ensuring training is offered in Welsh and by ensuring Welsh language courses are promoted.</p>		
<p>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work and in the community</p>	Positive	<p>1.) All promotional material to access the Homeless Prevention Service and all promotional material of its key partners is bilingual</p>	<p>1.) Reduction in youth homelessness by developing bilingual education packages and more information for young people around housing and homelessness.</p>	<p>1.) Ensure that all material is bilingual with the Welsh provide before the English</p>

<p>Actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time</p>		<p>2.) Improved access to the Council's website and partners' website will provide an opportunity to promote the Welsh language</p>		
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Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Compliance with the <u>Council’s Statutory Welsh Language Standards</u> e.g increasing or reducing the Council’s ability to deliver services through the Medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	Positive	<p>1.) The development of this strategy will increase the Council’s ability to deliver services through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>2.) Consideration to the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh language when dealing with the Council and for staff members who wish to use Welsh at work. The development of homeless prevention services which offers bilingual services will allow staff members to utilise the Welsh language at work.</p> <p>3.) The Council will procure Services in line with the requirements of the Welsh</p>	<p>1.) Increase in services through the medium of Welsh will be evidenced by the increase in the digitalisation of the service which will be accessible bilingually.</p> <p>2.) Increase in the number of service users accessing homeless preventions services in Welsh. The Strategy will be made available to the public in Welsh.</p> <p>3 & 4) The Council has already developed a Contract Strategy Document that includes a section on the Welsh Language Standards that officer must complete before inviting supplier</p>	<p>1.) Ensure that the all homelessness services are promoted bilingually with Welsh first.</p> <p>2.) Actively promote both Council services and services offered by key partners that are available in Welsh.</p>

		<p>Language Standards, specifically Standards 76-80 which will allow suppliers to tender for a contract in Welsh if that is their wish. Additionally all relevant standards will be listed in the Invitation to Tender document so that our suppliers - when acting on our behalf or providing a service on our behalf - comply with our statutory responsibilities. Standard 94 requires the Council to publish a policy on awarding grants – all grants the Council awards must be considered how the proposed use will impact the Welsh language.</p> <p>4.) Back-office services, such as complaints handling, correspondence, publicity, websites and phone services – where these are procured or provided directly by the Council will be available in Welsh in line with the Welsh Language Standards</p>	<p>to tender for a contract. Officers are required to list all the relevant standards in this section to ensure that suppliers are made aware of the Welsh language requirements of the contract.</p>	
Treating the Welsh language, no less	Positive	See above	See above	See above

favourably than the English language

Stage 3 - Strengthening the proposal

Having listed actions in section 2 which may mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts – please record below which ones you will imbed into the policy proposal and who will be responsible for them.

Also consider is the proposal necessary? Would it be possible to meet demand without any new developments? Could other existing provision be used? Where should the development be?

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it?

Who is responsible?

Review how we have embraced technology and provided services differently during the COVID-19 pandemic and further enhance these by ensuring we deliver information in the Welsh language.

TBC

TBC

Develop digital inclusion skills across services as well as the people we are supporting – linking into Digital Communities Wales. We will work with local libraries, community groups, schools and colleges to deliver classes through the medium of Welsh.

TBC

TBC

The Council will establish a healthy development programme for Social Housing Grant by assessing and prioritising schemes based on their accessibility to local facilities. This includes access to libraries, schools and colleges (and other facilities) which provide Welsh language services.

Ongoing

RCT CBC Housing Strategy

Develop training, updates and briefings to staff and providers to keep abreast of service developments, good practice, innovation and new

Ongoing

RCT CBC Housing Support Grant team

practices via joint training sessions, HSG Planning Group, and local, regional and national fora.		
RCTCBC will encourage its key partners to provide and promote information through the medium of Welsh.	Ongoing	RCTCBC Housing Support Grant team
RCTCBC will review the number of new housing developments which are near a WM school.	Ongoing	RCT CBC Housing Strategy
Promote Welsh language courses to staff and service users, particularly promote free Welsh lessons for 16 – 25 year olds which will be provided by WG.	Ongoing	RCT CBC Housing Support Grant team
Ensure that all material is bilingual with the Welsh provide before the English	Ongoing	RCT CBC Housing Support Grant team
Ensure that the all homelessness services are promoted bilingually with Welsh first.	Ongoing	RCT CBC Homelessness and Supporting People
Actively promote both Council services and services offered by key partners that are available in Welsh.	Ongoing	RCT CBC Homelessness and Supporting People
If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible to implement, please explain why. Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning.		
What was identified?	Why is it not possible?	
Offering all services in accordance with Welsh Language standards	Not all of the Council's partners are required to comply with the Welsh Language Standards however we will encourage our partners to promote the Welsh language	

Offering housing in a location that affords people the opportunity to continue to use/learn the language offers them the opportunities It will be difficult to house around W catchment schools

Housing is a limited resource and there is not enough social housing available to house all applicants on our housing waiting list. If social housing is not available near a Welsh Language school then we will not be able to afford people the opportunity to continue to use/learn the language. However, we will work with our Registered Social Landlords to ensure that when they advertise a property which is available to let that the advert includes information on the nearest Welsh schools/colleges

Stage 4 – Review

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not, you are required to forward this assessment to Welsh Language services – welshlanguageofficer@rctcbc.gov.uk and the Consultation and Engagement team – consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.

As part of the Welsh Language, Equalities and Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment Process all proposals that fall within the definition of Significant Key Decision should present at the Officer Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your report is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Strategic Decision please forward your completed (Stage 1>6) impact assessment, policy proposal/report and consultation report to CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. [See our guidance document](#) for more information on what a Significant Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable Welsh language considerations wherever possible. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below in collaboration with the relevant departments.

Welsh Language Services Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Welsh Language Services feedback
<p>This is a detailed impact assessment, which lists many of the intended positive impacts this proposal will have on the Welsh Language.</p> <p>Welsh Language Services encourage you to consider further the following -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- How the new policy on Welsh language considerations when awarding grants might maximise the strategy's positive impacts on the Welsh language.- How we plan to ensure compliance with Welsh Language Standards when undertaking collaborative work.		

- How we capture linguistic/educational background of those presenting to the service in order to offer Welsh medium services from the outset, and plan Welsh medium offer for the future		
Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation

Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

How and who will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposal?

The adoption of the Housing Support Programme Strategy will be accompanied by an action plan, which sets out the actions required to deliver the Strategic aims of the Strategy. The Council will monitor, steer and review progress against the HSP Strategy through the RCT HSP Planning Group which convenes on a quarterly basis. Delivery against the Strategy will be a standing agenda item at this meeting every quarter.

Whilst a formal review of progress and an evaluation of the impact of the Strategy will take place every two years as a minimum, the actions identified in this Impact Assessment will be reviewed more frequently as many are ongoing in terms of making sure updated information is available bilingually and continuous development of staff and service users' skills.

A key area of the RCT HSP Planning Group will be to improve the information that is collected on outcomes across all strands of investment using Housing Support Grant to support all those who are or are at risk of becoming homeless.

Stage 6 – Summary of Impacts for the Proposal

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment, to include some of the main positive and negative impacts along with an overview of actions taken since the impact assessment to better contribute to more positive impacts. This summary must be included in the Welsh Language Considerations section of the SLT/Cabinet report template. It is not suitable to only write 'please see full report at Appendix x' in the body of the report. The impact assessment must be published alongside the report.

A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been completed and the main findings are as follows –

The Housing Support Programme Strategy and its aims will have a positive effect on the Welsh Language, Welsh speakers and Welsh learners, and any future Plans or developments that come from the formulation of the Strategy will comply fully with the Welsh Language Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards.

The vision of the Strategy is that 'Statutory, third and private sector partners' work effectively together to make sure that people in Rhondda Cynon Taf have access to suitable housing and can stay within their local communities. The right support is available within local communities, to prevent those at risk of becoming homeless from losing their homes. We strive to secure appropriate accommodation as swiftly as possible for those that have become homeless, along with the right kind of personalised support, helping them to a secure future and optimising their wellbeing. Rhondda Cynon Taf is a place where homelessness is prevented or rare, brief and unrepeated.'

The vision will be achieved through the delivery of the Strategic aims which focus on strengthening early intervention and prevention approaches and specialised support to prevent homelessness, ensuring people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness access the right home at the right time and in the right place, as part of our Rapid Rehousing approach, providing high quality support to people who are or may become homeless, fully utilising available technology and ensuring effective cross-agency working and working collaboratively to provide holistic, person-centred support with effective specialist interventions where necessary. All of the Strategic aims will promote the delivery of homeless prevention services through the Welsh language by ensuring all information is produced bilingually and is accessible in Welsh, focusing on training and developing Welsh language skill of staff. Awareness raising of homeless prevention services and risks of homelessness will be delivered to service users through a range of different methods all of which will be available in Welsh. When offering our homeless prevention services we ensure that all specialist needs are taking into account, including how the service user request to engage with services.

Stage 7 – Sign Off

Name of Officer completing the WLIA	Alex Coole	Service Director Name:	Derek James
Position	Housing Strategy Manager	I recommend that the proposal: (Highlight decision)	Is implemented with no amendments
			Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined
			Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on the Welsh language
Signature		Service Director Signature	
Date		Date	

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH JULY 2022

**REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL:
FORMER BRONLLWYN RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME**

**REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S
SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT
PORTFOLIO HOLDER, CLLR G CAPLE**

Author(s): Neil Elliott, Director for Adult Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with a redevelopment proposal to provide specialist care accommodation for people with learning disabilities at the former Bronllwyn Residential Care Home "Bronllwyn", as part of the modernisation of the Council's residential care home modernisation programme, which was previously agreed by Cabinet in December 2020 and to seek approval for the funding required to deliver the proposed redevelopment, if approved.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Considers the information in this report.
- 2.2 Approves the redevelopment proposal for Bronllwyn to provide specialist care accommodation for people with learning disabilities as outlined in Section 5 of the report.
- 2.3 Subject to the agreement of 2.2 above, continue the current care and support arrangements for the previous service users of Bronllwyn Day Centre until the new older people day centre facility at the Dan-y-Mynydd Extra Care Scheme in Porth opens in early 2024, and approves the permanent closure of the day centre at Bronllwyn to allow the redevelopment of the site, as set out in paragraph 5.13 of the report.
- 2.4 Subject to the agreement of 2.2 above, approve the relocation of the Council's Supported Living Team Office at Bronllwyn to Ty Elai.

- 2.5 Subject to agreement of 2.2 above, approve the funding package as outlined in Section 9 below, to redevelop Bronllwyn to provide specialist care accommodation for people with learning disabilities.
- 2.6 Subject to agreement of 2.5 above, include the redevelopment of Bronllwyn within the Council's Capital Programme (Modernisation Programme (Adults)).
- 2.7 Subject to agreement of 2.2 above, receive update reports on progress of the Bronllwyn redevelopment.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The redevelopment of Bronllwyn to provide specialist care accommodation for people with learning disabilities in adulthood and older age, which was agreed by Cabinet in December 2020, it was also agreed that a further detailed costed proposal would be reported to Cabinet, for consideration and approval.
- 3.2 The proposed redevelopment of Bronllwyn to provide specialist care accommodation for people with learning disabilities will help to meet existing and future demand, as more people are living longer, with increased complex care and support needs. There is increasing demand for this provision, as there is an absence of specialist care accommodation that is tailored to the needs of older people with learning disabilities.
- 3.3 The recommended proposal also requires redevelopment of the current day centre, as previously reported to Cabinet, and the Council's Supported Living Team Office located at Bronllwyn, to maximise the opportunities of the site and redevelop the modern high quality care accommodation needed to support people with learning disabilities.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In December 2020, Cabinet agreed, following a comprehensive review and stakeholder consultation, to decommission Bronllwyn and to consider the redevelopment of the home to provide specialist care accommodation to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood and older age, to meet changes in need and demand.
- 4.2 Cabinet also agreed to a further report being presented to a future Cabinet meeting setting out a costed redevelopment proposal for Bronllwyn.
- 4.3 Bronllwyn was registered with Care Inspectorate Wales to accommodate up to 12 people over the age of 65 with personal care needs. There were

no residents living at the Home when it was decommissioned in December 2020.

- 4.4 Bronllwyn was constructed in the 1970s and is a dated building, built for a different generation of older and disabled people than is now the case. The Home was not designed to meet the current expectations of accommodation and no longer meets modern standards. Modern purpose-built care homes are now designed to be disability friendly and have a bigger space standard to support mobility/hoisting needs. They also have en-suite facilities, so people are more able to toilet themselves or with support. This is clearly a very important part of maintaining someone's sense of dignity and independence and meets the requirements of the Registration and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) 2016 standards.
- 4.5 Bronllwyn also contains an older person day centre and the Council's Supported Living Service Team Office. Both would require relocation to another site for the proposed redevelopment to happen.

5. BRONLLWYN - REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

- 5.1 Following the Cabinet meeting in December 2020, Quattro Design Architects were contracted to work with Officers to establish the key requirements and develop a detailed scheme design to inform the redevelopment proposal for Bronllwyn.
- 5.2 A draft scheme design has been produced and should the redevelopment proposal for Bronllwyn be agreed by Cabinet, it would involve the demolition of the former care home and construction of a brand new specialist care accommodation scheme for people with learning disabilities. The scheme design would include:
- 14 ensuite rooms - all learning disability friendly, providing a safe and secure environment and offering permanent support for people who require ongoing care and support and short-term respite, designed to support people over a short period to help carers, families or the individual
 - 3 communal day rooms
 - 2 sensory rooms
 - 2 assisted bathrooms
 - Commercial kitchen
 - Sufficient space for 24/7 support staff presence, including training room
 - Private outdoor garden area to support the health and wellbeing of residents
 - Sufficient on-site parking

- 5.3 The architect's draft design drawings are attached as appendices to this report.
- 5.4 However, it should be noted that the final scheme design will be subject to further review to finalise outstanding mechanical and electrical design related issues regarding the type of the ventilation system at the scheme. Depending on the ventilation system chosen this may affect the scheme design, energy rating and cost. However, the scheme design proposals outlined in paragraph 5.2 above will be unaffected.
- 5.5 This recommended proposal provides a modern and innovative design that maximises the potential of the Bronllwyn site and optimises the efficient delivery of the services required in the new care accommodation development to support people with a learning disability. Primarily those older people and adults with complex behaviours, to effectively meet their assessed needs. This proposed redevelopment will help to meet existing and future demand.
- 5.6 The refurbishment of Bronllwyn was considered an alternative option to demolition of the former care home and whilst it was an overall cheaper option it was not considered the preferred one for the following reasons:
- Smaller usable Gross Internal Floor Area compared to new build
 - Not compliant with latest building standards and Registration and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016
 - Limited flexibility as existing structure presents
 - Old building - unknown issues
 - Less outdoor garden space
 - More expensive maintenance costs than new build
- 5.7 Subject to Cabinet approval of the Bronllwyn redevelopment proposal, a Pre-application Consultation (PAC) is expected to be submitted to Planning in August 2022, which will include carrying out a local public information event to present the proposed redevelopment designs for Bronllwyn.
- 5.8 A full planning application is expected for submission in October 2022 and determined by Planning Committee in January 2023.
- 5.9 Subject to planning approval, commencement of the construction programme has been provisionally set for March 2023.

Bronllwyn Day Centre

- 5.10 Bronllwyn Day Centre for older people is currently located on the care home site. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, there were 26 people attending the day centre from around the Rhondda area and whilst it was

valued by the people who attended, it had been underutilised for many years.

- 5.11 As members will be aware, Covid-19 has disproportionately affected day services for older people, with all people who use the Council's Day Centres receiving a reduced, alternative or no service since March 2020.
- 5.12 Bronllwyn Day Centre is currently closed and has been throughout the pandemic, except for opening for 3 days a week during a short period between August 2021 and December 2021. Despite having to close Bronllwyn Day Centre, we have ensured, based on assessed need and risk, that where appropriate, some people have transferred to Tonyrefail Day Centre for day services, whilst others have been offered alternative care and support in their own home. Reviews to date suggest people have settled well, where applicable, within Tonyrefail Day Centre and any revised service offer, is meeting assessed needs.
- 5.13 As members will be aware, the proposed redevelopment of Bronllwyn requires the closure and re-provision of the older people day service currently delivered at Bronllwyn, to redevelop the home site and provide the modern new high quality care accommodation needed for people with learning disabilities. It is therefore proposed that:
- Bronllwyn Day Centre is closed, and the current day services offer continues to be transferred, based on assessed need and risk, to Tonyrefail Day Centre or, where appropriate, to other Council Day Centres, until the new older people day centre facility at the Dan-y-Mynydd Extra Care Scheme in Porth opens in early 2024.
 - Adult Services continues to work with people and their families and carers who are registered at Bronllwyn Day Centre to support them to utilise different methods of achieving what matters to them.
 - Adult Services and, where applicable, commissioned providers and Direct Payments are used to provide outreach home based support, whilst supporting people to enhance their day opportunities, where safe to do so.
- 5.14 In addition to the above, there is a need to relocate the Council's Supporting Living Team Offices from Bronllwyn. In discussion with Corporate Estates and staff concerned, it is proposed the Supported Living Team relocate to Ty Elai.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. This exercise has shown that a full Equality

Impact Assessment is not required. Overall, the impact on protected groups is adjudged as neutral or positive as new the high quality care accommodation development proposed will provide significant benefits for vulnerable people sharing protected characteristics, in particular older people and people with a disability.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no Welsh language implications because of the recommendations set out in the report.

8. CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT

- 8.1 Subject to the agreement of the recommendation in Section 2 above, consultation on the redevelopment proposals of Bronllwyn will be undertaken as part of the formal planning processes, which will start with a local public information event to present the proposed redevelopment designs of Bronllwyn as part of the pre-application consultation expected in Summer 2022.

- 8.2 In addition, Officers will contact all current people registered at the Bronllwyn day centre and their families to discuss the recommendations with those directly affected and arrange, where necessary, a reassessment to ensure their needs will be appropriately met.

- 8.3 Appropriate consultation will also be undertaken with all staff (and their trade union representatives) potentially impacted by the proposal in accordance with the Council's Managing Change Policy, if this report is approved.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 The current overall capital cost of the proposed redevelopment of Bronllwyn is estimated at £4.979m, based on projected March 2023 prices, i.e. the provisional construction commencement date.

- 9.2 A updated detailed cost analysis is due to be received in July 2022, once the outstanding mechanical and electrical design works and associated costs as referenced at paragraph 5.4 above are finalised.

- 9.3 £0.100m of the redevelopment costs relating to surveys and initial architect design work were funded through the Welsh Government Integrated Care Fund - Discretionary Capital Programme in 2021/22.

- 9.4 It is proposed, subject to Cabinet approval of the Bronllwyn redevelopment proposal, to submit a new funding application in July 2022 for the full redevelopment costs, currently estimated at £4.879m, to Welsh Government's Integration and Rebalancing Care Fund (IRCF). If

successful, this will provide additional Welsh Government capital funding and reduce the reliance on the Council's own Capital Programme.

- 9.5 Resources have already been identified as part of a wider funding package to support such investment in the Council's infrastructure, including our ongoing extra care programme. Securing Welsh Government resource will continue to be essential to complement this resource as part of the overall funding arrangements in order to deliver our ongoing aspirations.
- 9.6 Revenue costs related to the operational delivery of the new accommodation scheme, once opened, will be met from within existing budgets.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 In considering the recommendations in Section 2 above, the Council is fulfilling a requirement in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 for local authorities to ensure they deliver a wide range of sustainable high-quality care and support services, available to their communities that promote the wellbeing of every person, and carer, with the need of care and support. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and accompanying Part 4 Code of Practice also requires that local authorities assess need and ensure future services meet those needs.

11. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 11.1 This report supports two of the Council's corporate priorities, namely:
- People - promoting independence and positive lives for everyone.
 - Living within our means - where services are delivered efficiently to achieve value for money for the taxpayer.
- 11.2 The proposals set out in this report would allow the Council to meet the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The proposals meet the needs of an ageing population, including those with more complex needs, are more sustainable and increases focus on wellbeing and independence, resulting in the wellbeing goals of a Wales of cohesive communities, a healthier Wales and more equal Wales being supported.

12. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

12.1 The proposal to redevelop Bronllwyn in Gelli is relevant to the Ystrad Ward.

13. CONCLUSION

13.1 This report presents Cabinet with a proposal for approval for the redevelopment of the former Bronllwyn Residential Care Home provide specialist care accommodation for people with learning disabilities in adulthood and older age to meet changes in need and demand, as requested by Cabinet in December 2020.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH JULY 2022

**REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S
SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT
PORTFOLIO HOLDER, CLLR G CAPLE**

**REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL:
FORMER BRONLLWYN RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME**

Background Papers

Cabinet – 3rd December 2020

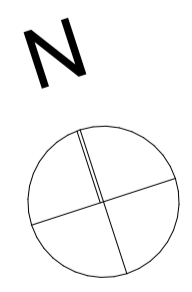
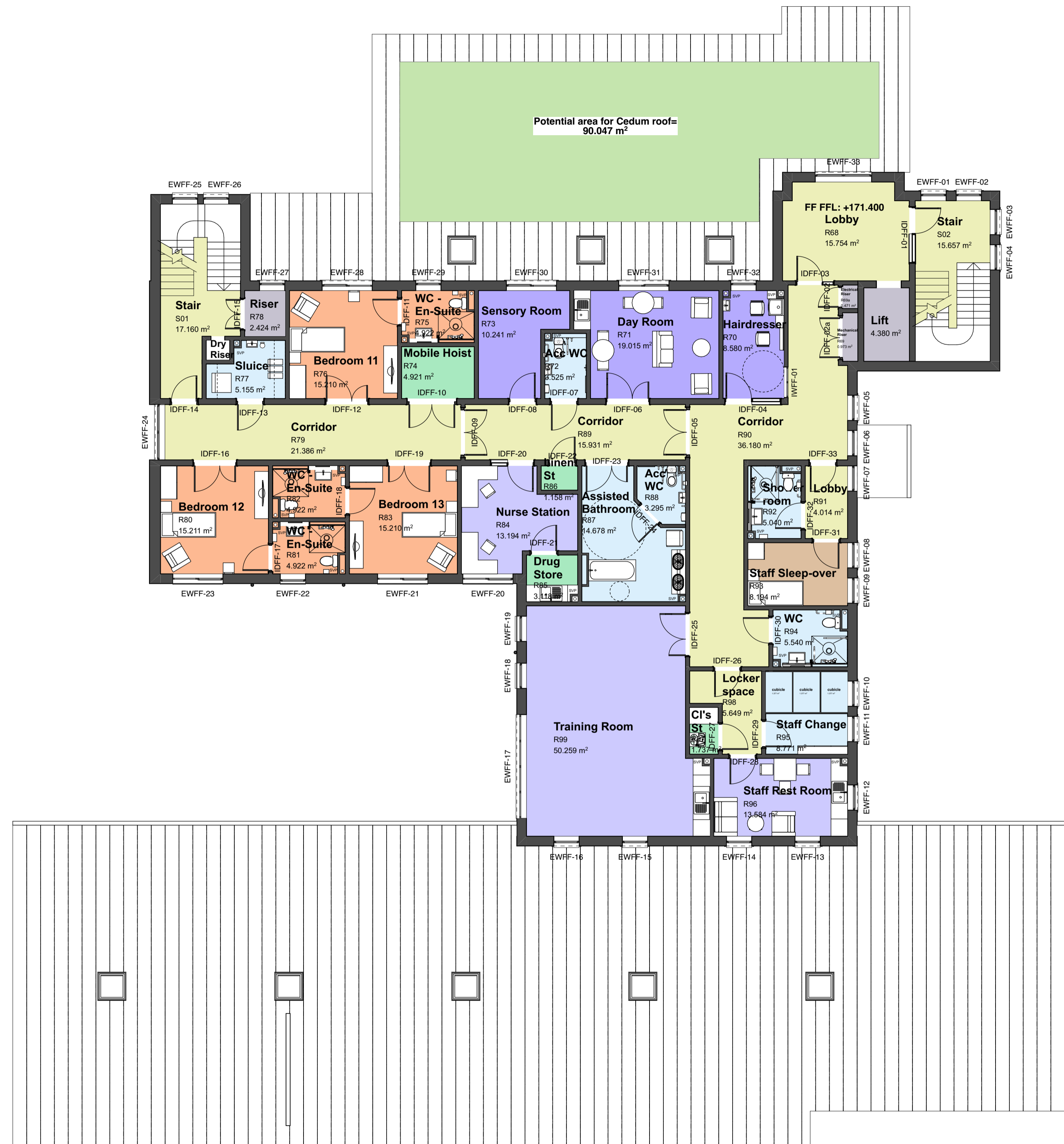
Officer to contact: Neil Elliott, Director for Adult Services

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Key

- Ensuite bedroom
- Respite
- Communal rooms
- Offices and Admin
- Staff sleepover
- Kitchen / WC's
- Storage
- Circulation
- Plant / Risers

Floor	Area (sqm)
-01 GIFA Lower Ground Floor	316.74
00 GIFA Ground Floor	776.69
01 GIFA First Floor	412.51
Total GIFA:	1505.94 m²



Scale 1:100



NOTES

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REVISIONS

REV. DATE - DRAWN - CHECKED: NOTES
 - 06.08.21 - CN - M.J.M. Drawing created.
 B: 20.05.21 - CS: Updated following design development.
 C: 16.06.21 - CS: Updated following design development with M&E and fire consultant; key/GIFA added.

www.quattrodesign.co.uk

PROJECTS

Bronlwyn Adult Care Development, Gelli

SCALE 1:100@A1

CLIENT

RCT CBC

DATE June 2021

DRAWING TITLE

First Floor Plan

DRAWING NO.

6525-F-0202

REV

C

Matthews Warehouse, High Orchard Street Gloucester Quays, GL2 5QY T: (01452) 424234

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Key

- Ensuite bedroom
- Respite
- Communal rooms
- Offices and Admin
- Staff sleeperover
- Kitchen / WC's
- Storage
- Circulation
- Plant / Risers

Floor	Area (sqm)
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REVISIONS

REV: DATE - DRAWN - CHECKED: NOTES
 - 06.08.21 - CN - MJM: Drawing created.
 B: 20.05.21 - CS: Updated following design development.
 C: 16.06.21 - CS: Updated following design development with M&E and fire consultant; key/GIFA added.

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PROJECTS

Bronlwyn Adult Care Development, Gelli

SCALE 1:100@A1

CLIENT

RCT CBC

DATE June 2021

DRAWING TITLE

Ground Floor Plan

DRAWING NO.

6525-F-0201

REV

C

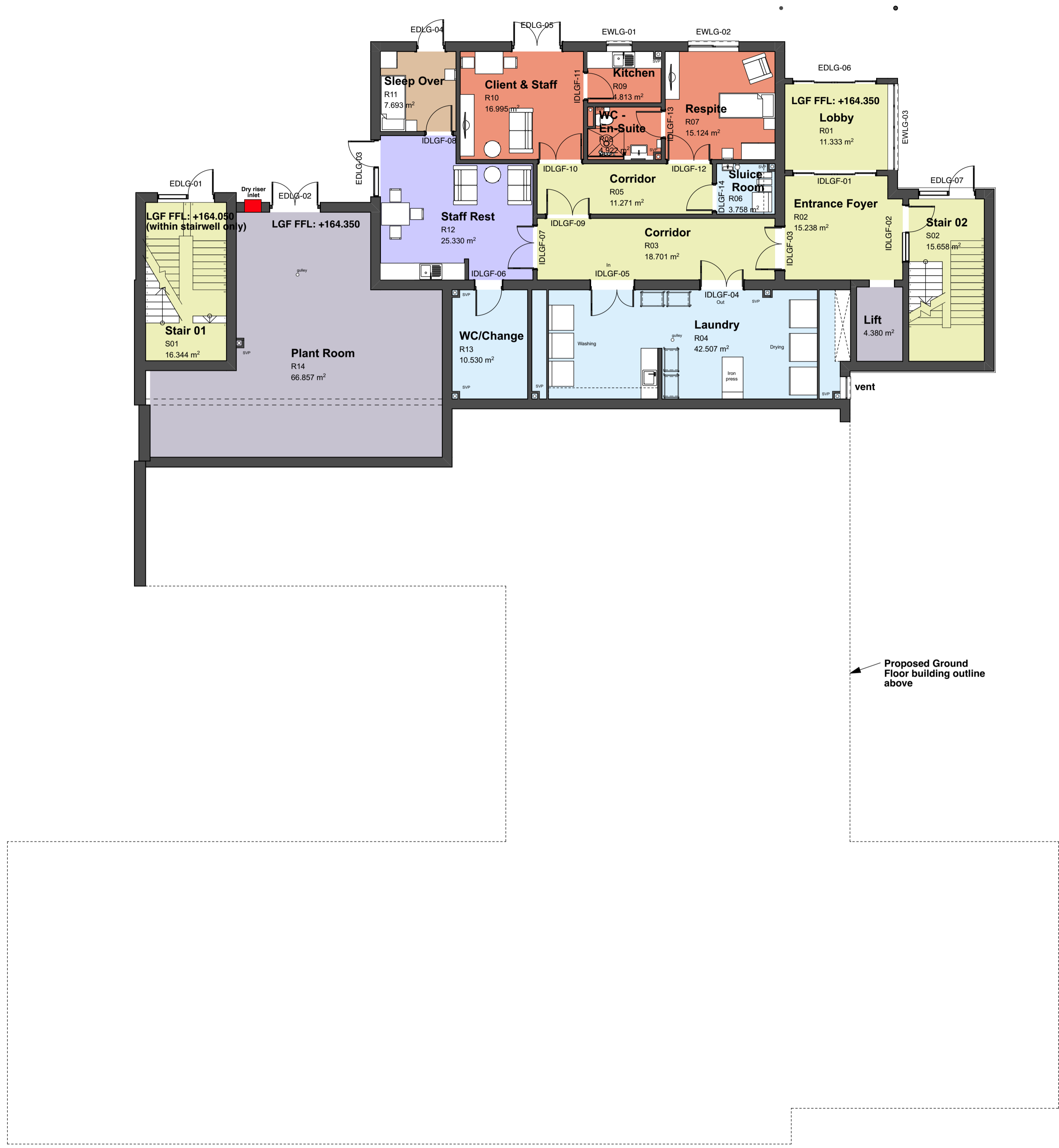
Matthews Warehouse, High Orchard Street Gloucester Quays, GL2 5QY T: (01452) 424234

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Key

- Ensuite bedroom
- Respite
- Communal rooms
- Offices and Admin
- Staff sleepover
- Kitchen / WC's
- Storage
- Circulation
- Plant / Risers

Floor	Area (sqm)
-01 GIFA Lower Ground Floor	316.74
00 GIFA Ground Floor	776.69
01 GIFA First Floor	412.51
Total GIFA:	1505.94 m²



N

Scale 1:100

Quattro
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REVISIONS

REV: DATE - DRAWN - CHECKED: NOTES

-: 06.08.21 - CN - MJM: Drawing created.

B: 20.05.21 - CS: Updated following design development.

C: 16.06.21 - CS: Updated following design development with M&E and fire consultant; key/GIFA added.

PROJECTS

Bronlwyn Adult Care Development,
Gelli

SCALE 1:100@A1

CLIENT

RCT CBC

DATE June 2021

DRAWING TITLE

Lower Ground Floor Plan

DRAWING NO. 6525-F-0200

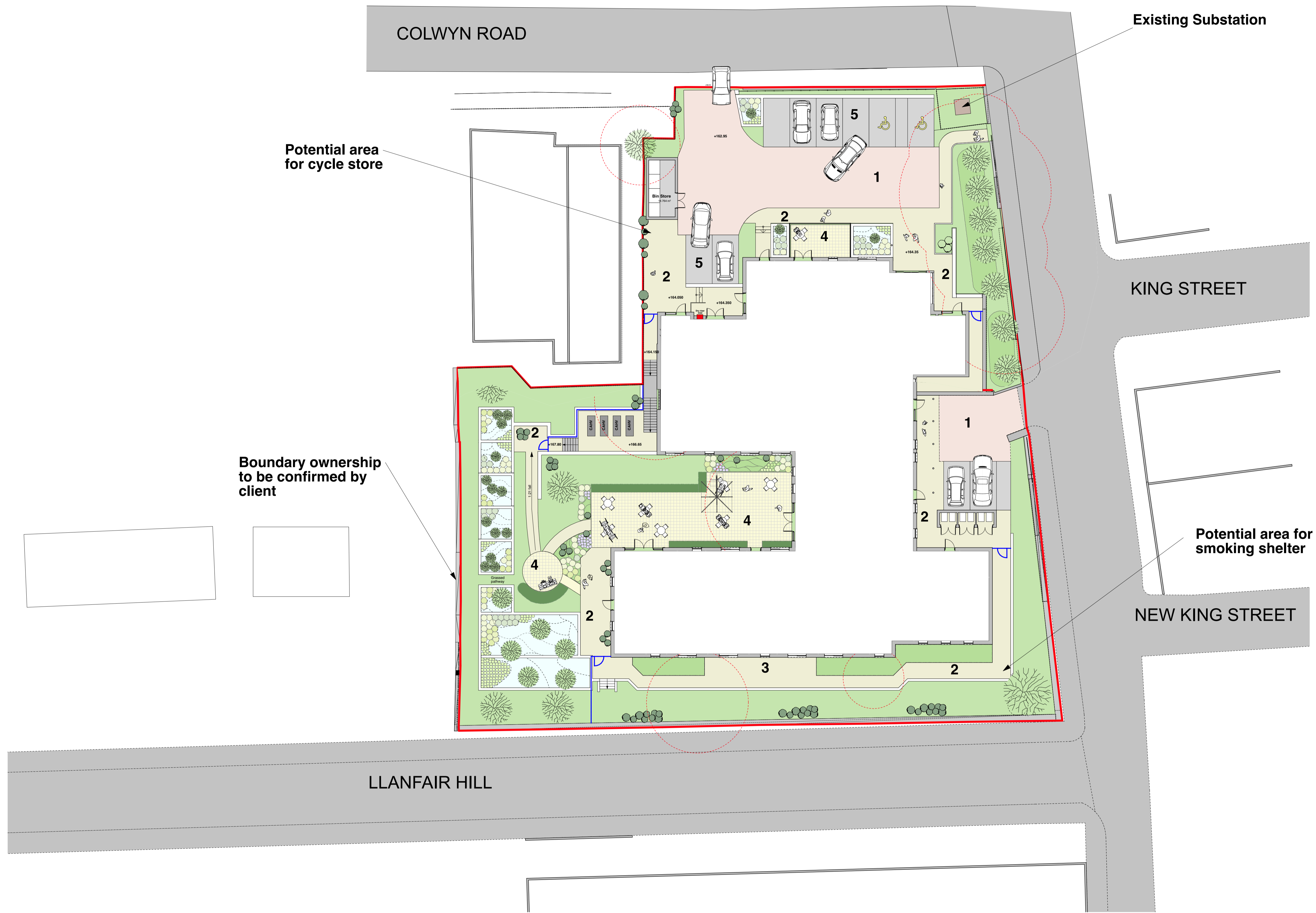
REV C

Matthews Warehouse, High Orchard Street
Gloucester Quays, GL2 5QY T: (01452) 424234

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KEY

- Site boundary
- Existing trees removed
- Proposed trees
- Proposed Rain Gardens
- 1** Permeable block paving. Colour tbc
- 2** Block paving. Colour tbc
- 3** Escape route path, defined in a contrasting block paving. Colour tbc.
- 4** Flag paving. Colour tbc
- 5** Car park spaces - Tarmac
- Retaining Wall



Potential area for cycle store

Existing Substation

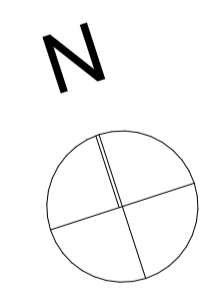
KING STREET

Boundary ownership to be confirmed by client

Potential area for smoking shelter

NEW KING STREET

LLANFAIR HILL



Scale 1:200
2
0
5
10m

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REVISIONS
 REV. DATE - DRAWN - CHECKED: NOTES
 B: 25.03.2022 - CS - AT: Site boundary added; updated following design development.
 C: 27.04.2022 - CN - CS: Plans updated and pathway changed.
 D: 20.05.21 - CS: Updated following design development.
 E: 16.06.21 - CS: Updated following design development with M&E and fire consultant; key added.

www.quattrodesign.co.uk

PROJECTS
 Bronllwyn Adult Care Development, Gelli

CLIENT
 RCT CBC

DRAWING TITLE
 Site Plan

DRAWING NO.
 6525-F-0100

REV
 E

SCALE 1:200@A1 **DATE** March 2022

Matthews Warehouse, High Orchard Street
 Gloucester Quays, GL2 5QY T: (01452) 424234

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Front Entrance View (Lower Ground Floor)



FRONT ENTRANCE VIEW

Street View (Ground Floor Entrance)



Ground Floor (Courtyard)



COURTYARD GARDEN VIEW

Ariel View (1)



GARDEN AXONOMETRIC VIEW

Ariel View (2)



FRONT AXONOMETRIC VIEW

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH JULY 2022

RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

**REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S
SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH CLLR G CAPLE,
CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE**

Author(s): Neil Elliott, Director for Adult Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with information regarding the current demand and capacity of the Council's residential care homes for older people and make recommendations that, if agreed, will temporarily redesign current service provision leading to the:

- temporary closure of the 24-bed Ystrad Fechan care home and the transfer of the eight residents to Pentre House or another home of their choosing which meets their needs; and,
- temporary provision of up to 10 new step up step down beds at Parc Newydd, in partnership with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, to support hospital discharge.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 considers the information in this report.
- 2.2 redesigns the Council's residential care home service to temporarily close Ystrad Fechan and transfer residents to Pentre House or another home of their choice which meets their needs.
- 2.3 redesigns the Council's residential care home service and temporarily provides up to 10 new step up step down beds at Parc Newydd, in partnership with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, to support hospital discharge.

- 2.4 receives a further report in Autumn 2022, setting out proposals to bring forward development proposals and options for the modernisation of, and investment in the Council's residential services.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Covid-19 has had a profound impact on the care home market, and in particular the Council's residential care homes, so it is important that the Council reviews its current residential care home provision in order to ensure it addresses the ongoing challenges resulting from the pandemic and set out in this report.
- 3.2 Since the start of the pandemic there has been an increase in care home vacancies, which in turn has resulted in the over-provision of residential care beds across Rhondda Cynon Taf. The current capacity is not required in its current form, even when considering the uncertainties of the medium to long term impact of the pandemic. In the short term, however, the temporary redesign of the Council's residential care homes should increase stability, reduce some cost pressures, and ensure people can access good quality care and support when they need it, including the need to support timely and safe hospital discharge.
- 3.3 The proposed recommendations are made to manage short term staffing and demand challenges across the residential services, pending a more comprehensive review of the services that is currently underway. Longer term proposals and options for the modernisation and investment in residential services will be presented to Cabinet in Autumn 2022.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In December 2020, Cabinet agreed, following a comprehensive review and stakeholder consultation on the future provision of the Council's residential care homes for older people, to:
- retain nine care homes, refocusing on complex needs, reablement and respite care, namely:
 - Ystrad Fechan, Treorchy
 - Clydach Court, Trealaw
 - Ferndale House, Ferndale
 - Pentre House, Pentre
 - Tegfan, Trecynon
 - Troedyrhiw, Mountain Ash
 - Cae Glas, Hawthorn
 - Parc Newydd, Talbot Green
 - Garth Olwg, Church Village

- decommission two care homes, namely:
 - Danymynydd in Porth and converting the site into extra care housing
 - Bronllwyn in Gelli and redeveloping the site into accommodation with care for those people with a learning disability.
- receive a further report setting out a comprehensive modernisation programme for the Council's nine residential care homes to be retained.

4.2 In making their decision, Cabinet considered the outcomes of stakeholder consultation, the rationale and drivers shaping the preferred options for the future provision of the Council residential care homes for older people and supporting information relating to current capacity and demand, summarised as follows:

- The Council's residential care homes have served their communities well and are popular homes with good standards of care, provided by committed staff.
- There is need to retain some Council residential care homes to ensure that the Council meets its commitment to maintaining an in-house offer of provision in the local residential care home market.
- The difficulty of existing Council's residential care homes to accept the range of referrals and complexity of need being presented unless the current facilities are upgraded to the modern standards identified for dignified care delivery.
- The demand for traditional residential care is decreasing and less residential care will be needed in the future, as more people will receive care in their own homes, including extra care housing and other supported housing schemes.
- The current and forecasted need is for more complex care (including dementia care), reablement, respite care or short breaks for carers and nursing care.
- The need for the most efficient and effective model of service.
- The impact of older people exercising choice now on the occupancy levels in our care homes.
- The over-provision of residential care beds and sufficient alternative provision of the required type and quality in Rhondda Cynon Taf to meet current and forecast demands - less residential care will be

needed in the future geographical market share across Rhondda, Cynon and Taf areas.

- 4.3 In the report to Cabinet in December 2020, it was reported that the average occupancy of the Council's residential care homes in September 2020 was 53% (157 vacancies) and our commissioned independent care homes was 79% (206 vacancies). It was clear that occupancy levels across the care home sector had continued to reduce as shown in the table below:

	In-house care homes		Independent care homes	
	% Occupied	Vacancies	% Occupied	Vacancies
Sep 2020	53%	157	79%	206
Feb 2020	69%	102	94%	63
Aug 2019	77%	71	96%	46
Mar 2019	79%	76	93%	81
Mar 2018	83%	57	88%	135
Mar 2017	89%	27	88%	67
Mar 2016	98%	8	95%	75

- 4.4 Whilst this fall in occupancy levels was attributable to less people being admitted to residential care homes across the sector, occupancy was also affected by previous Cabinet decisions to restrict permanent admissions into Council care homes pending the outcome of the care home review and the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020.
- 4.5 Since the start of the pandemic, we have seen an increase in people being supported to live in their own home. We have also seen an increase in people being placed in dementia and nursing care, and a decrease in people moving to residential care homes. People are now remaining at home for longer and then access more formal care settings when their needs are more complex and challenging to be supported in their own home.
- 4.6 The pandemic has continued to have a significant impact on care homes, in particular the Council's residential care homes. Demand for Council residential care home placements for older people has fallen sharply since the start of the pandemic and bed occupancy has fallen to 50% (145 vacancies) in May 2022. Whilst occupancy across the independent sector is still below pre-pandemic levels, this has now risen to 86% (159 vacancies), primarily due to increased placements in nursing and dementia.

- 4.7 Current vacancies, broken down by market sector and care category are shown down in the table below.

Sector	Residential	Residential Dementia	Nursing	Nursing Dementia	Total
Independent	71 (25%)	32 (12%)	40 (9%)	16 (13%)	159 (14%)
In-house	96 (54%)	49 (44%)	-	-	145 (50%)
Total	167 (36%)	81 (22%)	40 (9%)	16 (13%)	304 (22%)

- 4.8 While the pandemic has created considerable uncertainty about future demand for placements, there is a lot more capacity available in the Rhondda Cynon Taf care home market, and in addition to the extra care developments, it is anticipated that there are sufficient residential care home places for people. As previously reported, there is clear evidence that there remains an over-provision of care home beds in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

5. TEMPORARY REDESIGN OF THE COUNCIL'S RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES

- 5.1 As already reported above, the pandemic has had a profound impact on the care home market and, in particular, the Council's residential care homes. Along with the steady decrease in admissions pre-pandemic, the pandemic has increased the vacancy rate in the Council's residential care homes to around, on average, 50% and inevitability has affected the living environment and experience for residents, increasing the risk of a detrimental impact on their wellbeing. In some care homes, Ystrad Fechan and Parc Newydd vacancy levels are over 60%, as shown in the table below:

In House Home	Registered Beds			Occupancy				Vacancies		
	Res	EMI	Total	Res	EMI	Total	%	Res	EMI	Total
Clydach Court		35	35		20	20	57%		15	15
Ferndale House	16	10	26	6	7	13	50%	10	3	13
Pentre House	29		29	16		16	55%	13		13
Ystradfechan	16	8	24	8	0	8	33%	8	8	16
Tegfan	31	15	46	18	13	31	67%	13	2	15
Troedyrhiw	21	5	26	7	5	12	46%	14	0	14
Cae Glas		39	39		18	18	46%		21	21
Garth Olwg	30		30	15		15	50%	15		15
Parc Newydd	36		36	13		13	36%	23		23
Total	179	112	291	83	63	146	50%	96	49	145

- 5.2 In addition, staffing shortages have created significant pressures across the Council's residential care homes, due to high staff absence and ongoing recruitment difficulties. This is impacting on the wellbeing of our staff in work and will, on times, affect the quality of care and support provided to our residents. In May 2022, staff absence ranged from 13% to 30%, averaging 19% across the Council's residential care homes. There were also 40 vacancies, around 11% of our establishment, together with a shortage of casual staff to supplement our core staffing levels.

- 5.3 There is considerable uncertainty regarding the medium to long term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the future demand for residential care home placements. However, in the short term it is important that the Council reviews its current residential care home provision to ensure it addresses the ongoing challenges resulting from the pandemic accounted for in this report; including low occupancy, reduced demand, staffing shortages and quality of care and support for care home residents. It is therefore proposed that the Council temporarily redesigns its current residential care home provision, and
- 5.4 **Temporarily closes Ystrad Fechan in Treorchy** due to prolonged low resident numbers and occupancy and lack of demand for long term placements at the home.
- 5.5 It is acknowledged that the temporary closure of Ystrad Fechan may cause anxiety for residents, families and staff. It is imperative that if the recommendation contained within this report is agreed, we engage with all interested stakeholders as a matter of urgency.
- 5.6 All residents in Ystrad Fechan would be offered to transfer to Pentre House or another home of their choosing, which meets their needs, if Ystrad Fechan temporarily closes. Each resident and their family will be offered the support of a social care worker or advocate to facilitate the move. Ystrad Fechan staff will also be offered to transfer from the home to accompany residents and enhance staffing levels in Pentre House or another Council residential care home or within Accommodation Services.
- 5.7 **Temporarily provides, in partnership with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, up to 10 step up step down beds at Parc Newydd to support hospital discharge.**
- 5.8 The health and social care system remains under significant pressure with high levels of admissions and bed occupancy across the acute hospitals in the region. The Council is working with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board to facilitate and expedite safe hospital discharges and it is proposed that additional step up step down capacity is created using vacant capacity in our homes. This is in line with Welsh Government Covid-19 Discharge guidance and will support ongoing implementation of “Discharge to Recover then Assess (D2RA)” pathways to support effective and efficient patient flow from hospital.
- 5.9 It is proposed that Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, in conjunction with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, develop a new scheme to utilise the current vacant beds at Parc Newydd to provide up to 10 temporary step up step down beds at the home. The proposed scheme will be designed to reduce avoidable emergency admissions to hospital and facilitate discharge from acute and community hospitals and

improve patient flow through the urgent care system. In addition, it will promote an individual's return to independence and community based support principles in Rhondda Cynon Taf in line with the Council's overarching corporate priority, People: "promoting independence and positive lives for everyone".

- 5.10 Parc Newydd Care Home is suitable for this purpose given its location in close proximity to Royal Glamorgan Hospital and its configuration which would allow a self-contained wing with separate lounge and kitchen provision and designated outside garden area to the main home to be utilised for this purpose. This would not be possible at Ystrad Fechan in Treorchy.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed reviewing the impact of the temporary redesign of the Council's residential care homes for older people as recommended in Section 2 above.
- 6.2 There are potential impacts of the temporary redesign changes on people with protected characteristics particularly older people and people with disabilities and these are set out in the Equality Impact Assessment, together with actions focused on ensuring their assessed care needs continued to be met, so that any negative impact can be mitigated.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no Welsh language implications as a result of the recommendation set out in the report.

8. CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT

- 8.1 Subject to the agreement of the recommendation in Section 2 above, Officers will contact all residents at Ystrad Fechan and their families to discuss recommendations with those directly affected and arrange, where necessary, a re-assessment to ensure their needs will be appropriately met.
- 8.2 In addition, appropriate consultation will also be undertaken with all staff (and their trade union representatives) potentially impacted by the proposal in accordance with the Council's Managing Change Policy, if this report is approved.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 The pandemic has had a significant financial impact on the Council's residential care home provision and continues to result in overall increased cost pressures for Adult Services.
- 9.2 The temporary redesign proposals to address the ongoing pandemic challenges set out in this report should provide more cost-effective arrangements and reduce these cost pressures, the financial impact of which, will be explored further, if the redesign changes are approved by Cabinet.
- 9.3 Any costs that arise from the temporary redesign changes will be met from within existing budgets.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 Any future provision of services will need to be considered in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
- 10.2 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and accompanying Part 4 Code of Practice sets out that where a local authority has carried out an assessment which has revealed that the person has needs for care and support then the local authority must decide if those needs meet the eligibility criteria, and if they do, it must meet those needs.
- 10.3 Any employment issues that arise will need to be considered in conjunction with Human Resources, and in accordance with any relevant policies and legislative provisions

11. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 11.1 This report supports two of the Council's corporate priorities, namely:
- People - promoting independence and positive lives for everyone.
 - Living within our means - where services are delivered efficiently to achieve value for money for the taxpayer.
- 11.2 The temporary redesign of the Council's residential care homes for older people set out in this report would allow the Council to meet the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The proposals meet the needs of an ageing population, including those with

more complex needs, are more sustainable and increases focus on wellbeing and independence, resulting in the wellbeing goals of a Wales of cohesive communities, a healthier Wales and more equal Wales being supported

12. ELECTORAL WARDS AFFECTED

- 12.1 The proposals set out in Section 2 of the report to temporary redesign the Council's residential care homes at Ystrad Fechan in Treorchy and Parc Newydd in Talbot Green will impact Treorchy and Llantrisant and Talbot Green wards respectively, although they may also impact on residents, families and staff from across the County Borough. In addition, proposals at Parc Newydd will support the timely discharge of patients from hospitals who will live across the County Borough, promoting their return to independence and community based support principles.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 A decision to temporary redesign the Council's residential care home provision will ensure we are able address the ongoing challenges from the pandemic set out in this report and remain sustainable for the Council to continue to offer good quality care and support when people need it, including discharge from hospital.
- 13.2 The report also recommends Cabinet receive a further report in Autumn 2022, which would set out proposals and options for the modernisation of, and investment in, the Council's residential services, and include a review of any decision taken to temporarily close Ystrad Fechan Care Home.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Community Services Scrutiny Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH JULY 2022

RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH CLLR G CAPLE, CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

Background Papers

Modernisation of the Council's Residential care Home Service for Older People – Cabinet – 3rd December 2020

Officer to contact: Neil Elliott, Director of Adult Services



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH JULY 2022

2022 CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE SERVICES, COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS

Author(s): Andrea Richards, Service Director, 21st Century Schools and Transformation
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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Members' approval to commence public consultation of the contents of the 2022 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) for the statutory period of 28 days prior to submitting to Welsh Government for formal approval.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the content of this report;
- 2.2 Give formal approval to commence consultation with relevant stakeholders on the contents of the 2022 CSA; and,
- 2.3 Following the consultation period, agree that the CSA be submitted to Welsh Government for final approval.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To fulfil the Council's statutory duty to complete a CSA every five years and make it available for public consultation prior to submission to Welsh Government.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Section 22 of the Childcare Act 2006 (the 2006 Act) places a duty on the Council to secure '*as far as is reasonably practicable*' sufficient childcare to meet the requirements of parents in its area who require childcare to enable them to take up, or remain in, work, or to undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work.
- 4.2 Section 26 of the 2006 Act requires the Council to undertake a CSA every five years, with annual reviews of the assessment and accompanying action plan. This assessment forms an important stage in local planning, allowing the Council to work effectively with local partners, including the private and voluntary sectors, to fill gaps in the market and to develop a realistic and robust picture of parents' current and future needs for childcare.
- 4.3 The report in Appendix 1 replaces the last full CSA report, published in 2017. It sets out the analysis of supply and demand of childcare in RCT and identifies key priorities for the next five years. An Executive Summary of the CSA report is included in Appendix 2 for ease of reference.

5. 2022 CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 This CSA will apply for five years from 2022 to 2027. Since the last CSA report was written in 2017, the childcare development team has moved from Children's Services to Education & Inclusion Services and has grown from 1.5 FTE posts to 3 FTE posts. The support offered to the childcare sector since 2017 has improved considerably, with a more focused training programme for universal childcare settings and an improved support package for prospective childminders. Engagement with the childcare sector has improved significantly with regular engagement events now taking place, termly newsletters distributed, and improved networking via a closed Facebook page.
- 5.2 The CSA assesses demand for childcare services. The main vehicle to gain parent views for the report was via an online parent survey, undertaken in October 2021. For the first time this was led by Welsh Government on behalf of all local authorities in Wales. Prior to this, each Council had been responsible for designing their own parent survey, but this resulted in a lack of uniformity of questions asked. The submission rate for RCT was 823 responses, which is considerably higher than the completion rate for the last CSA (534). Due to the continuing restrictions last autumn caused by the pandemic, officers were restricted with the level of consultation they could undertake, however, they were able to attend some parent and toddler groups to encourage parents to complete the survey and to gather additional feedback.
- 5.3 The principal source of supply data was via the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS). This was undertaken in summer 2021. Despite it being a legal requirement for CIW registered childcare providers to complete a SASS, the completion rate in 2021 for RCT was 87%. Officers contacted all non-responders to offer support to complete the return

and the final completion rate was 92.3%. This was an improvement on the 2017 report when 73.2% of providers submitted their SASS.

- 5.4 The two main sources of supply and demand data are supplemented by data from the Family Information Service, Cwlwm partners (consortium of five childcare and play umbrella organisations in Wales), and local officer knowledge.
- 5.5 For the purposes of the CSA, the electoral wards were divided into seven geographical areas. The Community Resilience Hub and Neighbourhood Network areas were used for the purpose of the report and maps illustrating these areas are contained within the body of the CSA report. These areas are as follows:
- North Cynon
 - South Cynon
 - North Rhondda
 - South Rhondda
 - North East Taf Ely
 - South East Taf Ely
 - South West Taf Ely.

All data contained within this report has been analysed and defined using these geographical areas.

- 5.6 It must be noted that the CSA findings may have been affected by the COVID pandemic. The data was collected at the height of the pandemic and may not be a completely accurate reflection of the current data that will inevitably change as restrictions continue to ease. It is likely that the 2023 action plan update report will reflect a more accurate picture of supply and demand in RCT.
- 5.7 Additionally, the COVID pandemic has had a detrimental effect on the childcare sector in RCT. Many settings remained open during the national lockdowns to offer care to children who were deemed vulnerable or to children of key workers. The settings operated under strict protective measures guidance, which initially reduced the number of children they were able to care for. However, throughout the pandemic many settings had to close for periods of time, with some having to close numerous times, due to positive cases and staff shortages.
- 5.8 As a result of the pressures faced by the sector over the last two years, we have seen a greater number of permanent closures, particularly of childminding settings. The 2022 CSA notes that in the period January 2020 to January 2022, 67 registered settings closed with the loss of 1102 childcare places. In contrast, 39 new settings were established with the creation of 1082 places. Whilst this is only a net reduction of 20 places, analysis in the CSA highlights that there was a net loss of 205 childminding places, with only 58 being created by new childminders. Childminders have been most adversely affected by the

pandemic, as they have been required to close their businesses if they, or any of their family members, tested positive for COVID, even after this requirement was removed from other businesses.

- 5.9 The CSA notes that informal childcare and use of family and friends continues to be a popular source of childcare for parents in RCT. It was reported as the reason for not using formal childcare by 37.7% of parents who responded to this question. This is similar to the findings in the 2017 report. The cost of childcare was also highlighted as prohibitive, with 43.4% of parents stating this is why they do not currently access childcare. No childcare available during atypical hours (particularly before 8am, after 6pm and weekends) was also noted as a difficulty for parents. Again, this is similar to findings in the 2017 report.
- 5.10 For providers, the difficulties to remain financially viable were evident with 22.9% of those who completed the SASS stating that they did not know if they would continue to operate for another year or longer. Whilst 65.6% reported that they were fairly confident of this, the fact that nearly a quarter were unsure signifies the uncertainty that was felt amongst the childcare sector at the time the SASS was collected. During the COVID pandemic, Welsh Government has made significant funding available to support the sustainability of the childcare sector and the Council has made available several grant schemes since 2020. These are noted in Section Eight of the CSA report.
- 5.11 The principal findings in the 2022 CSA show that there are some geographical areas that require further examination in order to establish if additional childcare is required, particularly areas of North East Taf Ely and South Rhondda. Parents reported that there was limited out of school and holiday care for school aged children, however many out of school clubs use shared community venues and some were affected by restrictions imposed in response to COVID, so this feedback may have been a consequence of that. That said, developing more holiday care is an identified priority within the action plan for this CSA. Supporting the expansion of Welsh medium childcare is another key theme, particularly investigating demand for Welsh medium care in the South Rhondda area. Childminder recruitment also continues to be an ongoing priority and will continue to be for the duration of this CSA. Further priorities that have been identified are contained within the action plan at the end of the attached CSA report.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 The Council must satisfy its public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must in making decisions have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics.

6.2 In addition, Section 22 of the Childcare Act 2006 (the 2006 Act) places a duty on the local authority to determine whether the provision of childcare is sufficient to meet certain requirements and must have regard to the needs of parents in their area for *(ii) the provision of childcare which is suitable for disabled children*.

6.3 This duty has been captured within the CSA report and any projects, policies or initiatives that are developed and delivered as a result of this assessment, where appropriate, will have an Equality Impact Assessment completed which will be shared with the relevant parties.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Section 22 of the Childcare Act 2006 (the 2006 Act) places a duty on the Local Authority to determine whether the provision of childcare is sufficient to meet certain requirements and must have regard to the needs of parents in their area for *'(iii) the provision of childcare involving the use of the Welsh language'*.

7.2 This duty has been captured within the CSA report and any projects, policies or initiatives that are developed and delivered as a result of this assessment, where appropriate, will have a Welsh Language Assessment completed which will be shared with the relevant parties.

8. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

8.1 Consultation with key stakeholders has already been conducted in the preparation of the 2022 CSA report. However, a statutory 28 day consultation must now take place in which all stakeholders and members of the public will have the opportunity to comment on the draft report before submission of the final report to Welsh Government.

8.2 The consultation documentation will be disseminated to all key stakeholders and will be available to view on the Council website.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Childcare development and support activities are supported by Welsh Government grant funding. Previously known as the 'Out of School Childcare Grant' this funding has now been amalgamated with other grants and forms part of the Children and Communities Grant. Overall responsibility for this grant sits with Children's Services.

9.2 This funding will support implementation of the priorities identified in the 2022 CSA action plan. It also enables the Council to respond to changing priorities concerning the childcare sector in RCT.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 The Council has duties under section 22(1) of the Childcare Act 2006 to “secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the provision of childcare (whether or not by it) is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in their area who require childcare in order to enable them (a) to take up or remain in work; or (b) to undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work.
- 10.2 Section 26 of the Childcare Act 2006 requires the Council to prepare assessments of the sufficiency of childcare provision and to keep this under review.

11. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 11.1 The 2022 CSA identifies the way in which developments to the childcare sector in RCT have supported the three main priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan 2020–2024:

- **Ensuring People: *are independent, healthy and successful***
The CSA action plan identifies priorities to enable the continued development of high quality childcare services that will support children with their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.
- **Creating Places: *where people are proud to live, work and play***
The CSA notes the improvements to childcare premises over the last four years due to significant capital investment. This has enhanced working conditions for staff and play and learning opportunities for children.
- **Enabling Prosperity: *creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper.***
The CSA notes the development of childcare provision on school sites, resulting in economic benefits to both the childcare setting and parents.

- 11.2 There are clear links to RCTCBC's Education and Inclusion Services Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2025 and its mission: 'To deliver equity and excellence in Education and enhanced well-being for all'.

- 11.3 The CSA contributes to achieving the wellbeing goals, as contained in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 by:

- **Cultural Wellbeing**
Supporting the promotion and expansion of Welsh medium childcare services is a key priority in the CSA.
- **Economic Wellbeing**

Supporting the development of childcare businesses to increase their workforce and enable parents to gain, or continue in, employment.

- ***Environmental Wellbeing***
Supporting the development of improvement projects to outdoor play spaces in childcare settings.
- ***Social Wellbeing***
Supporting opportunities for children to have quality learning and play experiences.

12. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS (please specify)

12.1 The Council has a statutory duty to complete a CSA every five years and make it available for public consultation prior to submission to Welsh Government, which is relevant to all electoral wards.

13. CONCLUSION

13.1 The Council has a statutory duty to complete a CSA every five years and make it available for public consultation prior to submission to Welsh Government. As a result of this it is recommended that Members agree to commence the statutory consultation on the contents of the 2022 CSA and once complete, agree that the CSA be submitted to the Welsh Government.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer

Denise Humphries,
Senior 21st Century Schools Project Manager (Childcare & Special Projects)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH JULY 2022

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE
CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND WELSH
LANGUAGE SERVICES, COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS**

Item: 2022 CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

Background papers

2022 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

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Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

Name of Local Authority: Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Name of Responsible Officer: Denise Humphries

Date of Completion: March 2022



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Executive Summary

Introduction

All Local Authorities in Wales have a responsibility under Section 26 of the Childcare Act 2006 to prepare Childcare Sufficiency Assessments (CSA's). This is to have a clear understanding of the childcare provision in their area, the needs of parents/carers and to develop an action plan to address any gaps identified. This report is based on the guidance *Childcare Sufficiency Guidance (July 2016)* and the Welsh Government circular *WGC 003 2021 WG21-28 Childcare Statutory Guidance (2016): Securing Sufficient Childcare and Childcare Sufficiency Assessments (March 2021)*.

The aim of the report is to identify key strategic priorities for the provision of childcare services in RCT for the next five years.

Methodology

The main sources of supply and demand data used in the production of the CSA are the Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS), data held by the Family Information Service (FIS) and the parent/carer survey that was conducted in autumn 2021.

Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS)

The SASS is a requirement placed on all childcare providers registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). This provides CIW with information to plan their inspections and helps advise Welsh Government on the state of the childcare sector in Wales. The survey was completed between 7th July and 11th August 2021. Despite being a statutory requirement, the completion rate from providers in RCT was 87.0%. Officers contacted those that did not complete their SASS and a further 11 paper returns were submitted, making the overall completion rate 92.3%. The SASS provides the main supply data in this CSA report.

Family Information Service

Supply data for unregistered/exempted childcare providers has been taken from data held by the RCT Family Information Service (FIS) and provider questionnaires completed in November 2021. A total of nine questionnaires were received. Based on Family Information Service (FIS) data and local knowledge, Officers are aware of additional unregistered childcare providers within RCT than the level of returns suggests. Caution must be used, therefore, when analysing unregistered provision data.

Parent/Carer Survey

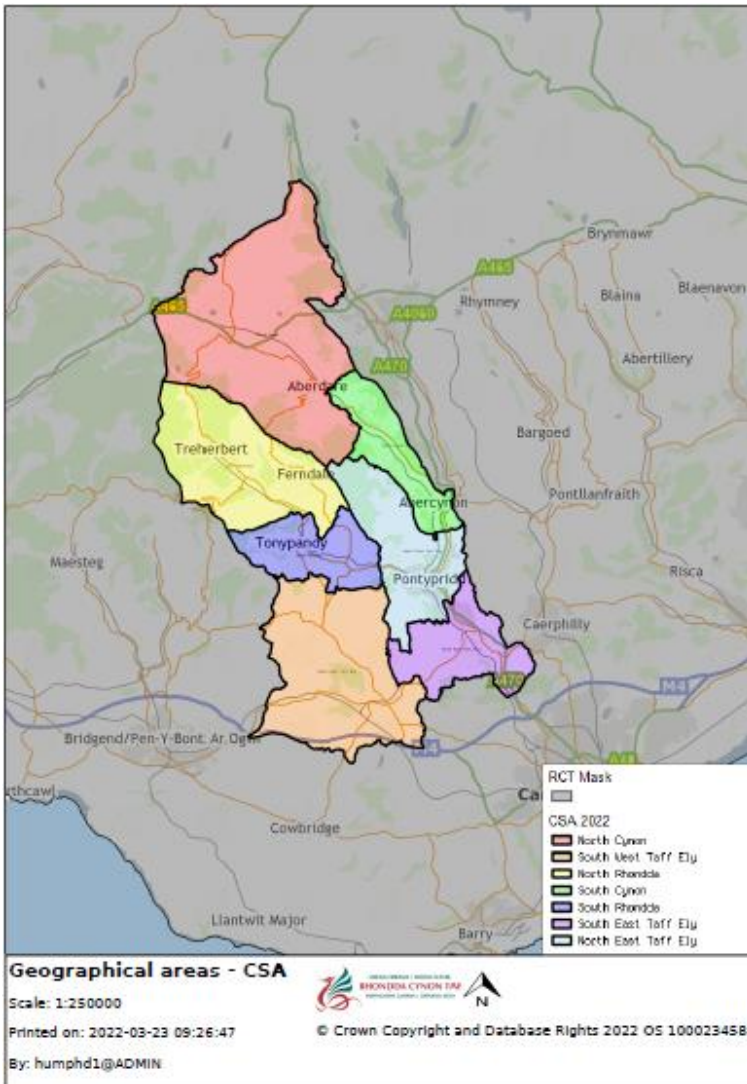
Welsh Government developed a survey that was used by all Local Authorities in Wales to gauge parental views on the supply and quality of childcare. This was undertaken in October 2021. It has provided consistent data that all Local Authorities can use to develop their CSA reports, alongside their local knowledge and datasets. RCT received 823 completed questionnaires. This survey provides the main demand data in this CSA report.

Geographical areas

For the purposes of the 2022 CSA report, wards have been grouped according to the Community Resilience Hub and Neighbourhood Network Areas (see below). These are one aspect of the Council's 'RCT Together' strategy. This is the Council's approach to working in partnership with communities and residents that offers support to individuals, groups and services through Community Asset Transfers, Network Hubs and support with funding, resources and community consultation advice.

Please note, this report was written before the implementation of the electoral ward boundary changes recommended by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales. These come into effect at the May 2022 Local Government elections. Reference will be made to these amended electoral wards in the 2023 CSA annual update report and action plan.

North Cynon	South Cynon	North Rhondda	South Rhondda
Aberaman North Aberam South Aberdare East Aberdare West/Llwydcoed Hirwaun Penywaun Rhigos	Abercynon Cwmbach Mountain Ash West Mountain Ash East Penrhiwceibr	Ferndale Maerdy Pentre Treherbert Treorchy Tylorstown Ystrad	Cwm Clydach Cymmer Llwynypia Penygraig Porth Tonypany Trealaw Ynyshir
North East Taf Ely	South East Taf Ely	South West Taf Ely	
Cilfynydd Glyncoch Graig Pontypridd Town Rhondda Trallwng Treforest Ynysybwl	Beddau Church Village Hawthorn Llantwit Fardre Rhydyfelin Central/Ilan Taffs Well Tonteg Tyn-y-Nant	Brynna Gilfach Goch Llanharan Llanharry Llantrisant Town Pontyclun Talbot Green Tonyrefail East Tonyrefail West	



Partnership Working and Consultation

In the preparation of this CSA, a range of stakeholders were consulted in order to fully understand their views on the childcare market in RCT. The draft report will be published on the Council website in summer 2022 for a period of 28 days so that all interested partners can submit comments on the content.

Partners consulted for their views on the childcare sector in RCT included:

- Family Information Service
- Parents / carers
- Childcare providers
- Persons representing those with an interest in childcare:
 - Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs
 - Early Years Wales
 - Mudiad Meithrin
 - NDNA Cymru
 - PACEY Cymru

- Local employers
- Neighbouring local authorities
- Schools
- Welsh Medium Education Forum
- Play Sufficiency Assessment Working Group
- Job Centre Plus
- Planning department

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

The RCT Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022 to 2032 is due to be adopted in September 2022 (subject to Welsh Government approval). The plan aims to increase the number of year one learners in Welsh medium education by between 8% and 12% during the ten year lifespan of this WESP. This equates to an increase from 506 year one learners now to between 720 and 825 year one learners in Welsh medium education by the end of the new WESP.

The main target within the WESP that relates to the CSA is ***Outcome 1: More nursery / three year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh.*** To support the target of increasing the number of year one learners, the Council will continue to work with external organisations and colleagues to promote Welsh medium childcare and education. We will do this by:

- Supporting Welsh medium childcare providers to extend and improve the services they offer by offering business support, new provision/expansion of provision grants, training and signposting to relevant external organisations.
- Providing information about events and courses that parents/carers can attend with their children will continue to be shared via Council networks and Officers will continue to promote and raise awareness of the Welsh medium childcare available to parents/carers.
- Making changes to the Flying Start commissioning process, which will mean more Welsh medium Flying Start childcare places are available to those families that choose it.
- Keeping under review the number of Welsh medium Registered Education Providers to ensure that those parents/carers that wish to access a pre-nursery FPN education place are able to.
- Working with the WESP steering group and Marketing and Promotion group to support the aims of the WESP.

Parent survey

There were a total of 347 responses to the question 'Can you understand, speak, read or write Welsh'. Of these, 91% stated that they understand Welsh (316), with 61.1% stating they can speak the language (212). Of those that supplied a postcode, the highest level of Welsh language skills appears to be in South West Taf Ely, South East Taf Ely and North East Taf Ely. South Cynon appears to have the lowest levels of Welsh language skills amongst parents. Of course, it should be remembered that this is based on the respondents to the parent survey, and not on demographic data used in the WESP.

Current use of Welsh medium childcare

75% of parents stated that they do not currently access childcare through the medium of Welsh (348). 22.2% responded that they do access Welsh medium childcare (103). The projection in the WESP target is for 20.6% of nursery aged children to receive their education through the medium of Welsh in 2022-2023. This figure is lower than the parent survey suggests are currently accessing Welsh medium childcare. This implies that there may be some parents who do not choose to transition from Welsh medium childcare to Welsh medium education. Therefore more work is needed to analyse transition routes to understand if this is indeed the case.

Future use of Welsh medium childcare

Of those that don't currently use Welsh medium childcare, 9.7% stated that they would like to access childcare through the Welsh language (34), with 18.6% stating 'maybe' (65). The highest number of those stating 'yes' are located in the South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely area, with the highest number of those stating 'maybe' located in South West Taf Ely.

Parents who stated they would like to use Welsh medium childcare were asked what issues they face accessing Welsh medium care. The majority of responses stated that it was due to a lack of availability with 69.8% of parents stating this (58). South West Taf Ely was the area that had the highest number of this response (17), followed by South Rhondda (10). Recent capital projects have increased the number of Welsh medium childcare places available in the South West Taf Ely area, which will improve availability of services. Development of additional Welsh medium childcare provision in South Rhondda should be investigated further to ensure exactly where additional services are required, and whether this is for pre-school or out of school hours services.

Current Welsh medium childcare provision

Whilst there is a good range of CIW registered Welsh medium pre-school childcare available in RCT, services for school aged children remain sporadic and largely unregistered. This is improving and the Council will continue to work with partners to support the registration and expansion of out of school and holiday care where there are identified gaps.

A mapping exercise was undertaken in 2021 to identify gaps in Welsh medium pre-school childcare services. This will be updated regularly and used as a basis for exploration of future developments. Alongside this, Officers will continue to strengthen partnership working with organisations such as Mudiad Meithrin and Menter Iaith in order to develop and extend childcare services through the medium of Welsh.

The SASS returns indicate that South East Taf Ely has the highest number of Welsh medium, or dual language, CIW registered settings (8), followed by North East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely (5 each). Full day care is the childcare type with the most Welsh medium or dual language settings (18), followed by Sessional care (6). Only one childminder reported that they are Welsh medium, whilst two reported they offer a dual language service. There are four unregistered Welsh medium settings reported in the CSA, three Out of school settings and one Sessional setting, all in South Rhondda and South West Taf Ely.

No Welsh medium or dual language childcare settings of any childcare type reported that they had waiting lists for school holiday care. For term time provision, only one dual language childminder, in North Rhondda, reported a waiting list. Welsh medium and dual

language Full day care providers in all areas, except North East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely, reported waiting lists for term time provision. Only two Welsh medium Sessional care providers reported waiting lists, one in South East Taf Ely and one in South West Taf Ely. No Welsh medium or dual language Out of School care providers reported waiting lists for either term time or school holiday provision.

There is a good range of Welsh medium settings that delivery FPN education. A new commissioning model is currently being piloted by Flying Start to increase the number of Welsh medium settings that deliver this scheme. Parents have the choice of which CIW registered provider they use to access the Childcare Offer. Therefore, the number of Welsh medium providers delivering this service is predominantly dictated by demand from parents.

Supply of childcare

The supply data within the report notes the following number of childcare settings in RCT (all languages) at the time the SASS returns were completed:

Number of CIW registered settings – by AREA

Number of CIW registered settings – by AREA	Child-minder	Full day care	Sessional day care	Creche	Out of School care	Open access play provision	Nanny*	Total settings
North Cynon	11	7	1	0	0	1	0	20
South Cynon	4	6	2	0	0	0	0	12
North Rhondda	9	12	2	0	0	1	0	24
South Rhondda	5	9	2	0	1	0	0	17
North East Taf Ely	21	3	5	0	2	0	1	32
South East Taf Ely	25	9	5	0	1	0	0	40
South West Taf Ely	21	10	8	0	6	3	1	49
Total	96	56	25	0	10	5	2	194

**Home Childcare Provider scheme, January 2022*

Number of Unregistered settings – by AREA

Number of Unregistered settings by AREA	Sessional day care	Out of school care	Open access play provision	Total settings
North Cynon	0	0	0	0
South Cynon	0	1	1	2
North Rhondda	3	0	1	4
South Rhondda	4	1	0	5
North East Taf Ely	0	0	0	0

Number of Unregistered settings by AREA	Sessional day care	Out of school care	Open access play provision	Total settings
South East Taf Ely	0	1	0	1
South West Taf Ely	0	3	1	4
Total	7	6	3	16

Childminder

Childminding tends to be the childcare type with the most fluidity within the market. As this childcare type is based in private homes, it is very dependent on the personal circumstances of the childminder, hence a relatively high turnover of registrations. The South Rhondda area has historically seen low levels of childminders, which development and promotional work in previous years has failed to address. Renewed efforts in this area would be advantageous.

Full day care

Since the introduction of the Childcare Offer for Wales in 2017, there has been a move by Sessional care providers to re-register with CIW as Full day care providers. This is not so that they can offer the full range of services that traditional Full day care providers offer. But rather to give them the flexibility to offer additional services to cater for the Childcare Offer, such as wraparound services for nursery aged children and care during lunchtime periods.

The highest concentration of Full day care providers is in North Rhondda (12) followed by South West Taf Ely (10). North East Taf Ely has the least number of Full day care settings (3). This area covers Pontypridd town, as well as the student area around the University of South Wales in Treforest. As a result, the wards in this area have some of the lowest numbers of 0-17 year olds of the whole of RCT. There is also a lack of suitable venues which means that, despite several explorations in the past, the development of Full day care services has been a challenge. Since the last CSA report, there has been significant building developments in Pontypridd including the creation of the Llŷs Cadwyn buildings and the redevelopment of the YMCA building, due to be complete later in 2022. There is space planned in the YMCA for a childcare facility. This will be a small facility but is likely to cater for some unmet demand in the area.

Sessional care

It can be noted that there is a concentration of unregistered Sessional care providers based in the North Rhondda and South Rhondda areas. Engaging with these settings and encouraging them to register with CIW will be a priority for the Council.

There appears to be a low number of CIW registered Sessional care providers in the Cynon and Rhondda valleys. This may be as a result of settings becoming Full day care providers or may be distorted due to the number of unregistered settings. Further investigation may be prudent to establish if there is additional demand for Sessional care services in these areas.

Crèches

Crèches provide flexible childcare solutions to parents who need childcare for specific purposes, such as attending training courses. There are currently no CIW registered

Crèches in RCT. Due to the changing nature of working patterns caused by the pandemic, many parents are working from home, although there are now moves to return to office working albeit on a part time basis. There may be parents, therefore, who only require childcare on an ad hoc basis, or for part of a day in order to attend their offices. Exploration of flexible, ad hoc childcare, or crèche facilities would be prudent to determine if there is sufficient demand for this type of care, and if so, the best way to develop it.

Out of school care

The highest number of CIW registered Out of school care settings is in South West Taf Ely, followed by North East Taf Ely. The highest number of unregistered Out of School clubs is recorded within South West Taf Ely, with South Cynon, South Rhondda and South East Taf Ely recording one unregistered setting in each area. As with unregistered Sessional care providers, engaging with these settings and encouraging them to register with CIW will be a priority for the Council.

Open access play provision

The highest number of CIW registered Open access play providers is in South West Taf Ely, followed by one each in North Cynon and North Rhondda. There is one unregistered setting in each of South Cynon, North Rhondda and South West Taf Ely.

Nanny

Nannies provide care for children, typically within the child's own home. The Approval of Home Childcare Providers (Wales) Scheme (2021) now provides a regulatory framework within which nannies can operate. Registration on this scheme is voluntary, but it allows parents to access a range of financial assistance with fees and enables the nanny to demonstrate that they meet certain criteria within a structured scheme. There are currently two nannies on this scheme within RCT, one in North East Taf Ely and one in South West Taf Ely. To date, engagement with nannies has not taken place. However, the Council is keen to engage with these, and other nannies in the county, so that they can access the support and guidance that other childcare settings receive. They will also be able to access the funded training that the childcare development team provide. This will be a priority over the course of this CSA report.

CIW registrations / cancellations

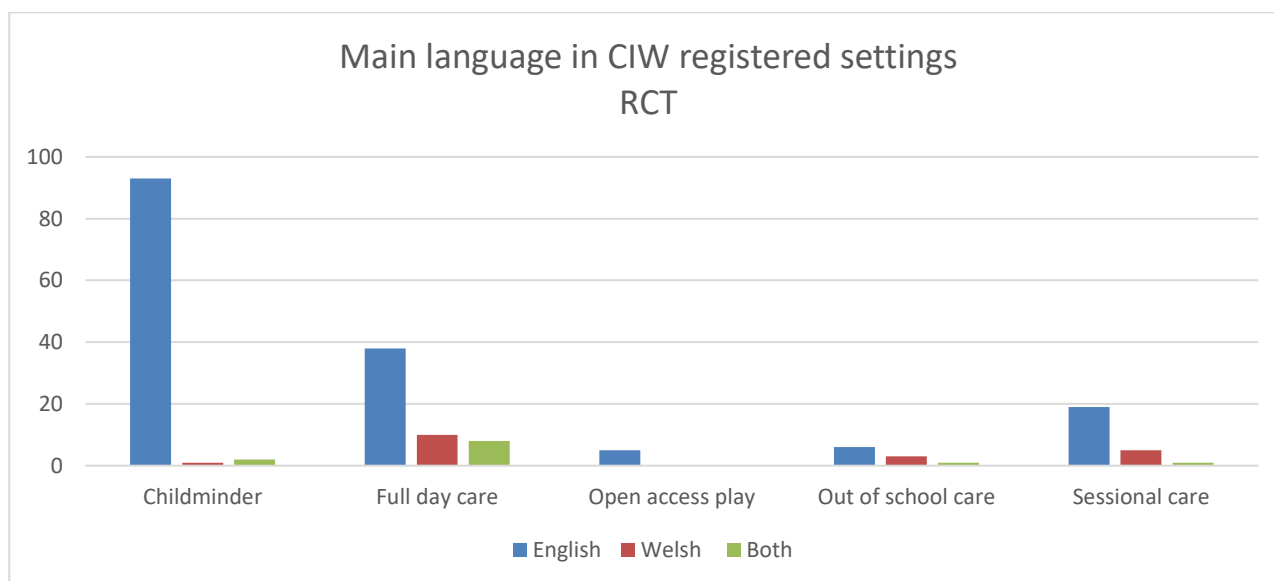
The COVID-19 pandemic has been extremely challenging for childcare providers, and has resulted in decreased attendances, staffing issues and increased costs (such as additional cleaning, heating costs, etc). Keeping their own families safe, as well as the staff and children in their businesses has been particularly difficult for childminders. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that we have seen a significant reduction in the number of childminding places available over the last two years. Since January 2020, 36 childminders have cancelled their CIW registrations and only eight new childminders have registered. This has resulted in a net loss of 205 registered places.

The impact on other childcare types has not been as obvious. Since January 2020, there has been a net increase of 63 places for Full day care. As mentioned, this is likely as a result of Sessional care providers changing their CIW registrations. A net increase of 20 places for Sessional care has been noted, with new registrations in South Rhondda and South East Taf Ely. The only registered Crèche cancelled its registration, resulting in a net loss of 10 places. The Council is not aware of any other Crèche facilities operating or looking to open in the near future.

Since January 2020, there has been a net increase of 167 places for Out of school care. In July 2021, a well-established Out of school club closed in the South East Taf Ely area due to the retirement of the leader. This club collected children from several schools in the area. Two new clubs were established to cater for two of the schools affected. This accounts for most of the increased places.

Language used in settings

It can be seen that, in both CIW registered settings and those that are Unregistered, English is the most common language used. The most common childcare type to offer Welsh medium or dual language provision is Full day care. The highest number of Welsh only settings is in South West Taf Ely (3), followed by North Cynon and North Rhondda (2 each).



Opening times

Childminder

Childminders offer the most flexible opening times for families, with up to 75 stating in their SASS that they offer care before 8am. Ten reported that they offer care after 6pm on weekdays. Nearly all childminders offer care in term time and school holidays (87), with most open for all holiday periods except the Christmas break where only 27 stated that they offer care. Only five stated in their SASS that they offered care in term time only.

Full day care

Full day care providers also offer families the most range of services and the longest opening hours, although not as flexible as childminders. 24 Full day care settings open before 8am during weekdays, whilst only one setting reported that they remained open after 6pm. 17 Full day care providers stated that they work term time only, whilst six stated that their opening times differ in the school holidays from term time. This relatively high number may be the Sessional care providers who have registered as Full day care settings to offer increased services in term time, but do not wish to open in holiday periods.

Of the full day care providers that do open in the school holidays, the majority open every holiday period, except for the Christmas break, with 21 stating that they are open, and 17 stating they are closed.

Sessional care

No Sessional care providers offer atypical opening hours (before 8am, after 6pm, weekends or overnight). 18 Sessional care providers stated that they operate in term time only, whilst 1 stated that their opening times differ in the school holidays from term time. Of the Sessional care providers that do open in the school holidays, all open for some period through the summer holidays, whilst none open at Christmas.

Out of school care

One Out of school setting stated that it opens before 8am and none open after 6pm during weekdays. Four Out of school care providers stated that they only operate in term time, whilst two stated that they were open only in the school holidays. Of the Out of school care providers that do open in the school holidays, the majority open every holiday, except for the Christmas break.

Open access play provision

One Open access play provider reported that they are open during term time as well as holiday periods. This setting reported that their opening hours are 4pm to 5.30pm each Monday. No Open access play providers offer atypical opening hours (i.e. before 8am, after 6pm or overnight). Nearly all open access play providers open in all holidays, with the exception of the Christmas break, when none are open.

Waiting lists / Vacancies

Analysis of waiting lists indicates that childcare settings in all areas have waiting lists for full day care. There are also waiting lists in settings for before and after school care in all areas, other than North Rhondda. However, there are also settings in all areas that have reported that they have vacancies for full day care, as well as vacancies for before and after school care. Therefore, further investigation will be necessary to determine the exact areas that have either a surplus or shortage of required childcare types.

Childminder

For childminders, North East Taf Ely and South East Taf Ely had the highest number of settings reporting waiting lists for before school care (2 each), whilst childminders in South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely reported the highest number of vacancies (9 each) for this type of care. For full day care, childminders in North East Taf Ely reported the most waiting lists (8), whilst South East Taf Ely reported the most vacancies (13), followed by South West Taf Ely (9).

Full day care

Most waiting lists in Full day care settings are for full day care and AM playgroup or Cylch Meithrin sessions. South West Taf Ely had the highest number of settings reporting waiting lists for full day care (3), followed by South Rhondda (2). The highest number of settings reporting waiting lists for AM playgroup or Cylch Meithrin sessions were in South Rhondda (3) followed by North Cynon (2).

Overall, Full day care settings in all areas reported vacancies for full day care, AM and PM sessions and Early Education placements. Settings in North East Taf Ely reported the lowest level of vacancies across the different services offered compared to the other areas.

Sessional care

Most waiting lists in Sessional care settings are for morning sessions, with South West Taf Ely having the most settings reporting this (3). Every area, except South East Taf Ely reported vacancies for afternoon sessions, with only one setting in South Cynon reporting a waiting list for afternoon sessions. North East Taf Ely had the highest number of settings reporting vacancies for morning and afternoon sessions (3 each).

Those registered as Sessional care providers reported that they do not offer any other services, other than Early Education places or lunchtime care. This is not surprising, as most Sessional care providers who have expanded to offer additional services have re-registered with CIW and are now registered as Full day care providers.

Out of school care

Only Out of school settings in South West Taf Ely have either waiting lists or vacancies for after school care (2 of each). One setting in South West Taf Ely reports vacancies for before school care. This does not indicate the level of demand that the parent survey suggests. Further exploration will determine if there is indeed a need for additional Out of school care.

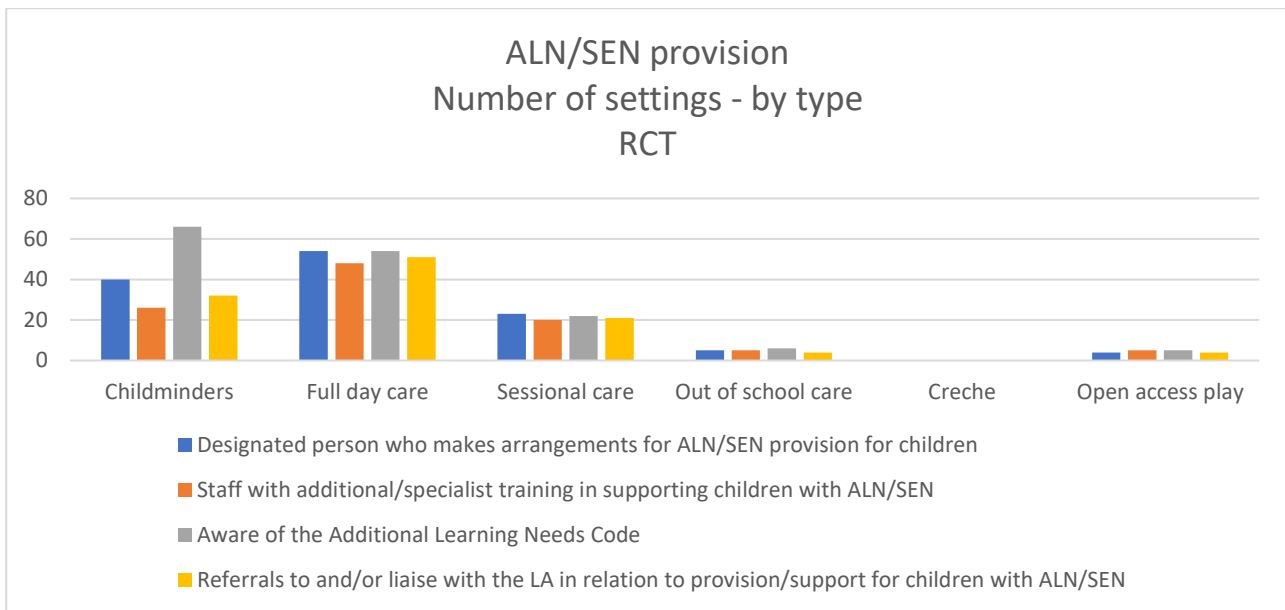
Open access play provision

The provider, based in South West Taf Ely that operates in term time reported in their SASS that they have a waiting list for that service. A waiting list is also noted for play scheme sessions in South West Taf Ely (1), whilst one provider in North Cynon reports that they have vacancies for the same service.

Cater for children with disabilities

68.7% of Childminders who submitted their SASS stated that they are aware of the ALN Code (compared to 92.8% of Full day care providers and 88% of Sessional care providers). However, only 27% stated that they have staff trained to support children with ALN/SEN (compared to 85.7% of Full day care providers and 80% of Sessional care providers). Only Out of school care settings based in North East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely reported that they have a designated person who makes arrangements for ALN/SEN provision for children, have staff that have received additional training or are aware of the Additional Learning Needs Code. Engagement with Out of school settings in other areas would be prudent to ensure that they too know how to support children in their care who have additional learning needs or disabilities.

It can be difficult for all settings to release staff to attend training during the day or early evening. This is especially difficult for childminders as most work on their own. However, since the ALN Lead Officer came into post in January 2021, great progress has been made in ensuring that specialist training is available to all childcare settings at times that are convenient for them. The rise in virtual learning since the pandemic started has helped all settings, but particularly childminders, as this is a much more convenient method of engagement during the weekday.



Charges

Providers were asked to input their fees in their SASS returns, according to whether they charge by an hourly rate, or by session, day, week or term. It is clear by some of the responses that this question was misunderstood by some providers. Therefore, some caution should be used when analysing the rates below.

Childminder

The average hourly rate recorded for childminders ranges from £4.72 to £5.50 per hour. The highest average hourly rate was from the South Cynon area with £6.00 per hour charged for 8-11 year olds. The lowest average hourly rate was £4.00 per hour for under 1 year olds. reported in the North Cynon and South East Taf Ely areas. Rates in South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely are on the lower side of the range. These are the areas with the highest concentration of registered childminders, so perhaps this is indicative of the competition in the area.

Full day care

The average daily rate for Full day care providers ranges from £34.80 to £47.85 per day. The highest average daily rate was from providers in the North East Taf Ely area with £66.00 per day charged for children one year and under. The lowest average daily rate was £31.07 per day for 2-3 year olds reported in the North Rhondda.

Sessional care

The average sessional rate for Sessional care providers ranges from £6.25 to £22.48 per day. The highest average sessional rate was from providers in the North Cynon area with £31.45 per session. The lowest average sessional rate was £5.50 per day reported in North East Taf Ely. Data was not available for settings in North Rhondda so cannot be compared.

Out of school care

The highest average session rate was from providers in South West Taf Ely with £22.00 per session. The lowest average session rate was £7.00 per session reported in South Rhondda. However, caution must be used with this data, as the level of data submitted was

low and the age ranges do not correlate with the ages of children who are cared for in out of school settings (i.e. from 3 years old or minimum school entry age).

Flying Start, Childcare Offer, Early Education

51 settings stated in their SASS returns that they deliver Flying Start, 31 stated they deliver Foundation Phase Nursery education to three year olds and 125 were receiving funding via the Childcare Offer for Wales.

Childcare type	Childminder	Full day care	Sessional care	Out of school care	Open access play	Total
Flying Start	14	26	11	0	0	51
Childcare Offer (currently receiving funding)	55	54	14	2	0	125
FPN education	0	25	6	0	0	31

Flying Start

The highest concentration of childminders offering Flying Start services was in North Cynon (6), followed by North Rhondda and North East Taf Ely (3 each). The highest number of Full day care providers was in North Rhondda (7) followed by South Cynon (5). The highest concentration of Sessional care providers was in South West Taf Ely (3), followed by South Rhondda (2). No Out of school care providers stated in their SASS that they deliver Flying Start or FPN education.

Childcare Offer

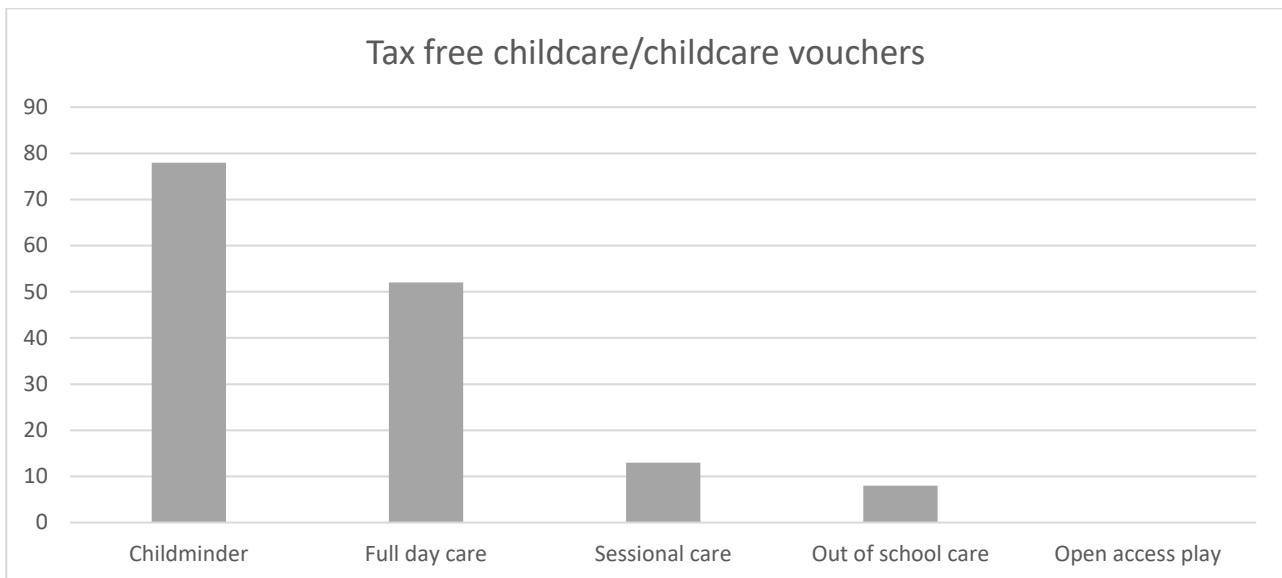
The highest number of childminders delivering the Childcare Offer was in North East Taf Ely (15), followed by South West Taf Ely (12). The highest number of Full day care settings was in North Rhondda (11) closely followed by South West Taf Ely (10). The highest number of Sessional care providers was in South West Taf Ely (6), followed by North East Taf Ely (3). Only two Out of school providers stated that they are currently delivering the Childcare Offer for Wales. This suggests that Out of school care settings do not currently offer the holiday entitlement of the Childcare Offer. Encouraging them to do so would provide this service to parents and make it more sustainable for the setting, as parents are accessing funded childcare to use to use the service.

FPN education

The highest number of Full day care settings delivering FPN education was in South East Taf Ely (6) followed by North Rhondda and South West Taf Ely (5 each). The highest number of Sessional care settings was in south West Taf Ely (3) followed by South East Taf Ely (2).

Tax free childcare / Childcare vouchers

151 stated in their SASS returns that their parents receive tax free childcare or childcare vouchers to support the cost of fees.



Childminders in South East Taf Ely were the most likely to accept the tax free childcare scheme or childcare vouchers (24), followed by North East Taf Ely (18). Full day care settings in North Rhondda were most likely (11), followed by South West Taf Ely (10). Sessional care settings in South West Taf Ely (6), followed by South East Taf Ely (4) stated they accepted these schemes. No Sessional care settings in the Cynon or Rhondda valleys reported in their SASS that they accepted payment via these schemes. Out of school care settings in South West Taf Ely were most likely (5), followed by one setting each in South Rhondda, North East Taf Ely and South East Taf Ely.

Needs of parents/carers

An online survey was published by Welsh Government and was open for completion during October 2021. This was promoted widely within RCT via childcare settings, schools, and partner agencies. The survey was also available on the Council website and social media, as well as Connect RCT, a community online platform. Officers also attended parent & toddler groups to engage with parents directly.

A total of 823 responses were gathered from families living in RCT. Using the postcode data provided, responses were received from all areas of RCT. Parents in South West Taf Ely submitted the most responses (190), whilst South Cynon submitted the least (138). Of those who responded:

- 93.8% have responsibility for children (771)
- Respondents had a total of 1338 children, with the average family size being 2 children
- 38.7% of respondents had children aged 5 to 8 years old (318), closely followed by 37.8% with children aged under 2 years (310) then 25.3% with children aged 3 years (208)
- 28.3% of respondents had children aged from 9 to 17 years (232)
- 7.4% of respondents have a child with a disability or long term illness (61)
- 9.7% of respondents have a child with a special education / additional learning need that requires additional support with their learning (79)

27.6% of respondents (217) strongly agreed that childcare is a barrier to them accessing employment or training, whilst 21% tended to agree (165). Welsh Government funded schemes such as PaCE (Parents, Childcare and Employment) have supported parents to access training and employment opportunities since it was launched. These responses would suggest that further promotional work is needed to ensure that parents/carers are fully aware of the support available to them.

Parents/carers were asked if they had any issues surrounding childcare in the last year that had affected them. 74% of respondents stated that childcare issues had caused problems at work (417), the most of which were from the South West Taf Ely area (178), followed by South East Taf Ely (145). Although the responses on their own do not identify that the COVID-19 pandemic was the reason for these issues, text responses do suggest that it was a contributory factor.

Childcare currently used during TERM TIME

Of those that currently use childcare during term time, 51.8% of parents rely on family and friends (414). Private Day Nursery use was second with 30% of parents using these (240), followed by 24.4% using Before School Club / Breakfast Clubs (195). However, caution must be used with the responses for before school care, as many parents make use of Welsh Government funded Free Breakfast Club provision and would class this provision as childcare. Childminders are currently used by 13.9% of parents (111).

Parents in North Cynon and South Cynon reported using the most number of hours of childcare during term time. The figures for these areas are significantly higher than the other areas and the RCT average, so should be viewed with some caution. This is especially so as parents in North Cynon gave the highest responses for not accessing childcare as it is too expensive. This analysis also includes the use of family and friends, not just fee paying childcare. So it does not give a clear picture of fee paying childcare usage but might explain the reported high number of hours used in North Cynon.

Childcare currently used during SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Again, it is family and friends that respondents state provide their care, with 53.7% stating this is the type of childcare they use during School Holidays (417). Private Day Nurseries are again the second most popular type of holiday childcare with 30.2% of parents using these (220). 14.4% stated that they do not use childcare during school holidays (105).

Parents in North Cynon and South East Taf Ely reported using the most number of hours of childcare during school holiday periods. Again, this analysis also includes, not only fee paying childcare, but also the use of family and friends, so does not give a clear picture of fee paying childcare usage.

Current childcare costs

30% of respondents reported that they spend £0 on childcare per week (224). This would correlate with the responses that indicate the high reliance on informal childcare with family and friends caring for their children. Of those that do pay childcare costs, 21% stated that they pay between £100 and £199 per week (155). Using the Childcare Offer for Wales rate of £4.50 per hour as an indication, this would buy parents between 22 and 44 hours of childcare per week. This seems to correlate with the average number of hours of childcare that parents told us they use. For those that provided their postcodes, parents in South West Taf Ely are most likely to pay more than £200 per week on childcare costs.

Areas of childcare arrangements that could be improved

When asked if they were unhappy with any aspect of their childcare arrangements, 'more affordable' was the most common response with 50.7% choosing this response (33). 'More hours available' (setting is too busy/full) was next with 27.6% of responses (18), closely followed by 'extending opening hours into the evening' with 24.6% of responses (16).

Parents perceptions of childcare costs being too high is familiar to the survey responses in the 2017 CSA report. There are many universal schemes, as well as those targeted as specific demographics, available to parents to support them with the cost of childcare, such as Tax Free Childcare, employer based childcare vouchers, the Childcare Offer for Wales, Flying Start and the childcare element of Universal Credit. Increased promotion of these schemes is prudent.

Reasons for not accessing childcare

The biggest reasons respondents listed for not currently using childcare were that it is 'too expensive' (152) and that they use 'informal childcare such as family or friends' (132). The two likely correlate with each other in that parents use informal childcare as they feel that fee paying care is too expensive. The next most selected reasons were that the 'childcare available is not flexible enough for their needs' (61) and that the 'times it is available are unsuitable' (47). These findings are similar to those from the 2017 CSA. Although work has been undertaken since then to support the childcare sector to offer more flexible sessions/options and to offer care in atypical hours, there has been limited progress.

Accessing information

The main vehicle for parents to access information is via the Family Information Service. Since the last CSA report, FIS has undergone several changes and there have been limited opportunities for the FIS Officer to attend parent engagement events. When asked to score the statement 'I know where to find out information about childcare', 37.2% of respondents 'tended to disagree' or 'strongly disagree' (294). The pandemic has severely limited face to face engagement with parents. It is not surprising, therefore, that parents may be unsure where to find information about childcare or financial support. The Family Information Service does have a successful Facebook page and content on the main Council website. The childcare development team and the Childcare Offer team also promote childcare options to parents whenever they have face to face or virtual engagement events. Now that restrictions are easing, a renewed emphasis should be undertaken on promoting information to parents and clearly explain where they can find information relevant to them.

Future anticipated need for childcare

Parents were asked about their future plans and whether they were likely to require more or less childcare in the next two years. At the time the survey was undertaken, there was still a high level of home working and disruption to normal working patterns. Therefore, it may have been difficult for parents to accurately predict their childcare needs moving forward. Those that did respond, 51.1% stated that they anticipate requiring more childcare in the next couple of years (405), 24.3% anticipated that their childcare needs will stay the same (193), whilst 13.1% anticipate they will require less childcare (104). 11.3% didn't know or were unsure (90).

Geographical distribution

An analysis of the wards within each area found some geographical gaps in provision. The main types of childcare highlighted in this analysis for further investigation were Out of school care and childminding. A lack of registered Sessional care providers in North Rhondda and South Rhondda requires further investigation. However, analysis shows that there are several unregistered Sessional settings in these areas, so encouraging them to register may resolve any potential gaps in provision.

Housing developments in South Rhondda, South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely require monitoring for their impact on childcare needs in these areas over the next five years.

Sustainability

The Council continues to support the sustainability of the childcare sector and to tailor support to meet the needs of childcare providers. This includes funded training courses, childminding start up packages and grant schemes to support new/expansion of provision and severe financial hardship. Over the last two years, there has been additional funding available to support settings deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Specific support offered to the sector over the last two years includes:

- New provision grant – to support the development of new services in areas of identified need.
- Expansion of provision grant – to support the expansion of existing settings to offer new services, or increased hours, in response to identified demand.
- New childminder package - to support individuals to become registered Childminders. This includes funded training, PACEY membership for one year and a small start up grant, as well as individual support from the childcare development team.
- Support with PPE supplies – to support settings with the cost of additional PPE and cleaning materials through the pandemic.
- COVID support grant – to support settings with the reduced income and additional costs caused by the pandemic. The grant was divided into three sections:
 - Full / partial closures – to support providers who had to close their settings due to positive cases amongst staff or children or being unable to meet minimum staffing ratios due to staff self-isolating.
 - Increased costs – to support settings with increased costs associated with the pandemic, such as additional heating, cleaning or uniform costs, or premises related costs due to not being able to open or operate at full capacity.
 - Severe financial hardship – to support settings experiencing severe financial hardship as a consequence of the pandemic and where no other public funding is available to cover the same costs.
- ICT grant – to support providers engage with digital technology in light of the pandemic and in order to prepare them for the roll out of the Childcare Offer digital system later in 2022.
- C02 monitor grant – to provide childcare settings with C02 monitors as one of the protective measures to protect against COVID-19.
- Resource grant – to support settings to continue to deliver high quality services by providing them with a range of resources. Seven different resource packs were available, with settings able to select up to three packs each.
- Small capital grant – to support settings make small capital adjustments or improvements to their settings to help them deliver the Childcare Offer for Wales.

COVID-19

In the immediate response to COVID-19, Welsh Government launched The Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) scheme to provide emergency childcare to key worker families and children who were deemed vulnerable. The scheme ran from April to August 2020, although RCT provided care for some children from 23rd March. In total, 99 childcare providers were funded to support RCT children, 14 of which were settings outside of RCT. 747 children were supported, 95 of which were deemed vulnerable. 223,115 hours of care were funded, costing £1.115m.

An evaluation survey was sent to parents and providers in autumn 2020. In total, 289 responses were received from parents and 46 from providers. 99% of parents were happy with the service they received from the Council (286). All parents were happy with the care that was provided to their children (289). 99% stated that C-CAS enabled them to continue performing their critical role at that time (287), whilst 79% stated that C-CAS enabled them to increase their work hours in order to respond to the pandemic (224). 50% of providers who responded found it 'Very Easy' to find information about the scheme and how to deliver it (23) whilst 44% found it 'Easy' (20). All respondents stated that they found their obligations easy to understand, as was the administration and claim process. All respondents stated that they had sufficient staffing to deliver C-CAS and 91% reported that the scheme had helped their businesses financially (41).

Impact on childcare providers

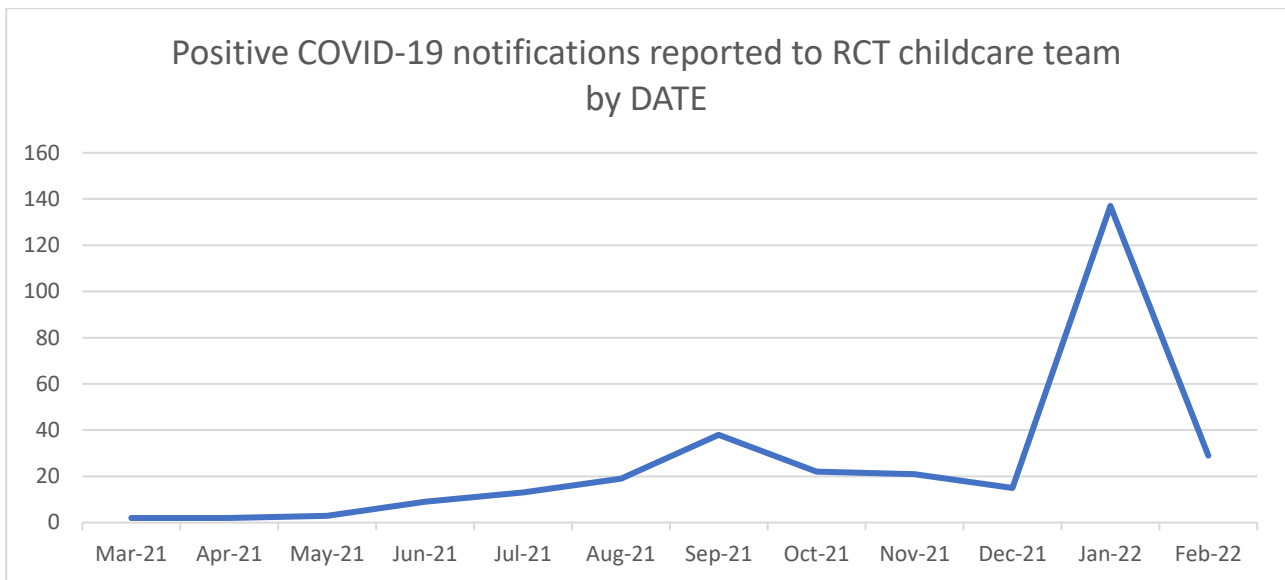
The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on providers has been profound. Staffing issues and managing positive cases continues to be a challenge, particularly for childminders who are working in their own homes. Positive cases amongst their own family can cause disruptions to delivery of their businesses.

Temporary closures

Since September 2020, CIW has issued weekly updates on the number of setting temporary closures / re-openings. The percentage of RCT settings closed up to December 2020 was just under 50%. Since 2021, this has reduced significantly, with a slight increase in the winter of 2021 as the Omicron variant had an impact on numbers of positive cases.

Cases of COVID-19 in settings

As well as having a duty to inform CIW and Test, Track, Protect, settings were also asked to inform the LA childcare development team of any positive cases, so that officers could offer support and guidance. An online form was created in autumn 2020 and the table below shows the number of positive notifications submitted to the childcare team between March 2021 and February 2022. It must be noted that this is not official TTP data and relied on childcare settings to inform the Council childcare team. Therefore it does not reflect all cases that have occurred in settings in RCT.



It can be seen that the Omicron variant had a significant impact on the number of positive cases in settings during December 2021 and January 2022. There was also a spike in September, most likely due to the return to school after the summer break.

Effect of COVID-19 on demand for services

It is difficult to evaluate the long term impact of COVID-19 on demand for childcare services. The short term effect has been significant. Parents working patterns have changed, with many now working from home. This has had a detrimental effect on out of school and holiday care providers particularly. The impact of settings closing due to positive cases and staff shortages has also impacted on the confidence of parents to use childcare services, as has the fear of their children contracting COVID-19 in settings and transmitting it to vulnerable members of their families.

The parent survey highlighted the difficulties that parents faced with children not being able to attend childcare settings with little notice, having to self-isolate as close contacts and the limitations on numbers for breakfast and after school care caused by maintaining bubbles. The parent survey that was undertaken in autumn 2021 will not fully reflect the childcare needs of parents as there was still fluidity in the working arrangements of many parents. The 2023 CSA annual action update report will provide a clearer picture of long term issues with supply or demand of childcare services. The Council will continue to monitor the sector and respond where possible to ensure that services are maintained and viable.

Workforce

The childcare sector in RCT benefits from highly skilled, qualified staff. Work continues to support childcare practitioners to achieve higher qualifications and ensure that regular CPD is encouraged and supported. The Council offers a range of funded mandatory and CPD training to all childcare staff. Changes to qualification requirements in the National Minimum Standards has also placed more emphasis on ensuring a suitably qualified workforce.

For the purposes of this report, data on current qualifications and training of the childcare workforce has been taken from the SASS return data submitted by childcare providers in

September 2021. 57.2% of practitioners hold a Level 3 qualification (439). This is the minimum level of qualification for staff that manage or lead childcare settings, as set out in the National Minimum Standards. Work has been ongoing over recent years, particularly amongst Flying Start settings, to ensure that setting leaders are qualified at NVQ Level 4 or QCF Diploma Level 5. 26.3% of practitioners within RCT state that they now hold a Level 5 qualification (202).

As well as statutory training, the Council has made available a number of funded statutory and CPD training opportunities for the childcare workforce in RCT. These include:

- Food Hygiene Level 2
- Paediatric First Aid Level 3
- Safeguarding Level 3
- Health and Safety
- Manual Handling
- Managing Challenging Behaviour
- Supporting children through ACES
- Covid Born Babies
- Positive Attachments
- Fire Warden
- Active Listening
- Additional Learning Needs
- Building Resilience
- Emotion Coaching
- Makaton
- Mental Health First Aid
- Play Therapy
- Resilience, Self-Assessment and Action Plan Building
- Resource Planning
- Risk Assessment
- Understanding Children's Play

Key findings

The principal findings in the 2022 CSA show that there are some geographical areas that require further examination in order to establish if additional childcare is required, particularly areas of North East Taf Ely and South Rhondda. Parents reported that there was limited out of school and holiday care for school aged children. However many out of school clubs use shared community venues and were affected by restrictions imposed in response to COVID-19, so this feedback may have been a consequence of that. That said, developing more holiday care is an identified priority within the action plan for this CSA. Supporting the expansion of Welsh medium childcare is another key theme, particularly investigating demand for Welsh medium care in the South Rhondda area. Childminder recruitment also continues to be an ongoing priority and will continue to be so for the duration of this CSA.

Identified actions

The actions below are those identified in the CSA report and form the basis of the overarching action plan for the next five years.

1 - Potential unmet demand – childcare types, location, ages

- Encourage existing Out of school care providers to offer holiday care
- Explore demand for ad hoc, flexible care and/or crèche facilities
- Investigate demand for additional childminders in all areas of RCT, but particularly:
 - North Cynon (Hirwaun and Rhigos)
 - South Cynon (Abercynon and Mountain Ash West)
 - North Rhondda (Ferndale and Treorchy)
 - South Rhondda (all wards)
 - North East Taf Ely (Treforest)
 - South East Taf Ely (Rhydyfelin/Central Ilan)
 - South West Taf Ely (Gilfach Goch, Llanharan and Tonyrefail East)
- Investigate demand for additional out of school care services (after school and holiday) in all areas of RCT
- Investigate demand for additional full day care in North East Taf Ely
- Monitor impact of housing developments on childcare needs, particularly in:
 - Llanilid (Brynna)
 - Llantwit Fardre
 - Penygraig
- Support unregistered Sessional care providers to register with CIW and investigate demand for additional Sessional care services in:
 - North Cynon
 - South Cynon
 - North Rhondda
 - South Rhondda

2 - Welsh medium childcare provision

- Engage with, and support, unregistered Welsh medium Out of school care providers to register with CIW and extend services to provide holiday care in areas of identified demand
- Explore the demand for new Cylchoedd Meithrin in geographical areas identified via the mapping exercise
- Investigate possible gaps in Welsh medium Sessional and Full day care in South Rhondda
- Offer support and training to non-confident Welsh speakers to encourage use of the Welsh language in their settings and to promote themselves as Welsh medium or bilingual settings.
- Promote the Active Offer to settings and encourage participation
- Promotion campaign to attract more Welsh speaking childminders
- Support the aims of the WESP to increase transition rates from Welsh medium childcare to Welsh medium education

3 - Affordability of childcare

- Continue to promote the financial benefits of the Childcare Offer, particularly emphasising the holiday entitlement
- Support childcare providers to accept payment via the Tax Free Childcare scheme or employer based childcare vouchers
- Work in partnership with FIS to promote childcare options and financial support to parents

4 - Children with special educational needs or disability

- Explore demand for holiday care for children with additional needs or a disability
- Identify opportunities to improve access to childcare and early years provision for children with additional learning and physical needs
- Increases awareness of ALNET and setting responsibilities to children and their families
- Offer diversity training to childcare providers to improve inclusivity within settings

5 - Support for the childcare sector

- Continue to offer grants to support new provision or expansion of existing provision, and to support settings experiencing severe financial hardship
- Encourage all settings to register with FIS and keep their accounts up to date
- Explore how providers can be supported to offer more flexible care that can accommodate shift patterns and ad hoc demand
- Improve engagement with nannies already on the Home Childcare Provider scheme
- Promote childminding as a career, clearly highlighting the support package on offer to prospective childminders
- Promote the benefits of accessing regulated childcare to a child's wellbeing and development
- Promote the Home Childcare Provider scheme to parents; promote the benefits of registration to them, and to existing nannies not on the scheme
- Support sector to prepare for, and engage with, the rollout of Flying Start to all two years
- Support settings to market their services effectively, particularly unique selling points, such as additional languages, or flexible, ad hoc or atypical services.

6 - Quality and governance

- Engage with unregistered Out of school care and Sessional care providers; encourage and support them to register with CIW
- Improve the quality of childcare settings beyond the CIW National Minimum Standards
- Promote benefits to parents of using CIW registered childcare services

7 - Atypical hours / ad hoc demand

- Explore usage of ad hoc places and encourage settings to offer more flexible contracts
- Undertake further consultation to establish demand for childcare in atypical hours, notably before 8am or after 6pm weekday, weekends and overnight care

8 – Workforce development

- Ensure practitioners have access to relevant statutory and CPD training opportunities
- Promote ALN and inclusion training; improve access to training, particularly for childminders
- Work in partnership with schools and colleges to offer transition routes into the childcare sector for school leavers, particularly Welsh medium students

Section 1: Introduction

All Local Authorities in Wales have a responsibility under Section 26 of the Childcare Act 2006 to prepare Childcare Sufficiency Assessments (CSA's). This is in order to have a clear understanding of the childcare provision in their area, the needs of parents/carers and to develop an action plan to address any gaps identified. This report is based on the guidance *Childcare Sufficiency Guidance (July 2016)* and the Welsh Government circular *WGC 003 2021 WG21-28 Childcare Statutory Guidance (2016): Securing Sufficient Childcare and Childcare Sufficiency Assessments (March 2021)*.

The aim of the report is to identify key strategic priorities for the provision of childcare services in RCT for the next five years.

Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) recognises that affordable, high quality childcare is vital to the prosperity of its residents, by supporting parents to enter education/training or the workplace. It is also vital to the wellbeing of the children, ensuring that they are being cared for in safe, stimulating environments that support and encourage their development. The Council also recognises the importance of a well-trained, qualified workforce.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a turbulent effect on childcare supply and demand. Most childcare providers were closed for several months at the start of the pandemic. Since reopening most have faced disruption to their businesses, due to staff self-isolating, positive cases within the setting and ensuring protective measure guidance is being implemented. A drop in demand as many parents started to work from home has exacerbated the difficulties that some settings have faced.

This CSA is produced at a time when demand for services is still uncertain and changeable, and when childcare supply is still subject to restrictions and limitations on the services offered. Whilst the analysis within this report is as accurate as possible, it is not possible to determine with any certainty what the priorities for the next five years will be. It is hoped that the situation will stabilise over the coming twelve months and that gaps that are subsequently identified will be included in the annual action plan update reports.

Context

The main sources of supply and demand data used in the production of the CSA are the Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS), data held by the Family Information Service (FIS) and the parent/carers survey that was conducted in autumn 2021.

Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS)

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) require all regulated childcare and play services to complete a SASS. This is a legal requirement and provides CIW with information to plan their inspections and helps advise Welsh Government about the state of the sector. Providers were required to complete this year's SASS between 7th July and 11th August 2021. This information has been shared with Local Authorities to enable them to assess supply of childcare in their area, alongside local knowledge, and other datasets.

Although a statutory requirement, completion of the online Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS) by childcare providers in RCT was 87.0%, as detailed below:

Rhondda Cynon Taf		Number of Services eligible to submit SASS returns	Number of services that submitted SASS returns	% of eligible services that submitted SASS returns	Number of services that submitted paper returns to the Council	Overall % of eligible services that submitted either SASS or paper returns
Service Type	Child Minder	107	91	85.0%	5	89.7%
	Creche	-	-	-	-	-
	Full Day Care	57	54	94.7%	1	96.5%
	Open Access Play Provision	6	5	83.3%	-	83.3%
	Out of School Care	11	6	54.5%	4	90.9%
	Sessional Day Care	26	24	92.3%	1	96.2%
Total		207	180	87.0%	11	92.3%

RCT officers contacted each regulated childcare setting that did not complete the SASS online and a further eleven paper returns were submitted to the Council. Therefore, the supply data analysed in this CSA is based on **92.3%** of regulated childcare services in RCT.

Family Information Service

All data for unregistered/exempted childcare is taken from the data held by the RCT Family Information Service and provider questionnaires which were completed in November 2021. A total of nine questionnaires were received. Based on Family Information Service (FIS) data and local knowledge, Officers are aware of additional unregistered childcare providers within RCT than the level of returns suggests. Caution must be used, therefore, when analysing unregistered provision data. It continues to be a priority for the Council to engage with unregistered settings and encourage them to take advantage of our support packages and to register with CIW.

Parent/Carer Survey

Welsh Government developed a central survey that was used by all Local Authorities in Wales to gauge parental views on the supply and quality of childcare. This was undertaken in October 2021. It has provided consistent data that all Local Authorities can use to develop their CSA, alongside their local knowledge and datasets. RCT received 823 completed questionnaires. These families had a total of 1,338 children, which equates to just 2.67% of the 0-17 year olds in RCT.¹ This survey provides the main demand data in this CSA report.

Geographical areas

In the 2017 CSA report, electoral wards were grouped into eight geographical areas. Although these groups were based on natural boundaries and/or similar populations, it proved difficult to analyse the individual needs of communities. For the purposes of the

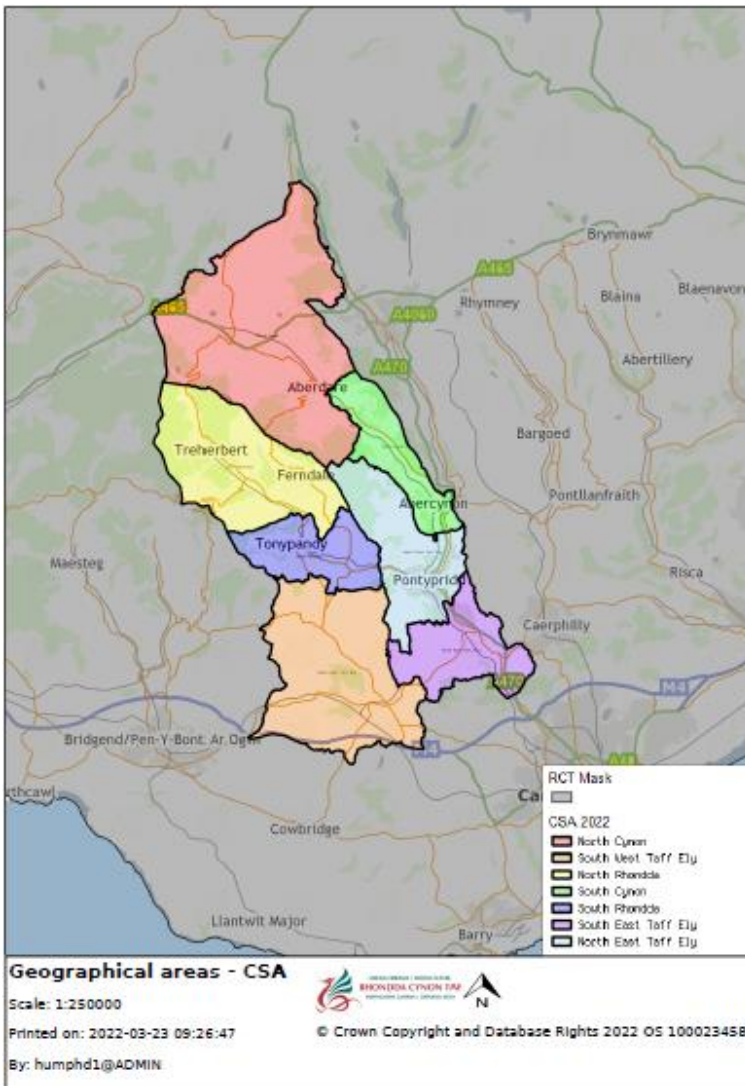
¹ 2020 mid-year population estimates, see Section 11

2022 CSA report, wards have been grouped according to the Community Resilience Hub and Neighbourhood Network Areas (see below). These are one aspect of the Council's 'RCT Together' strategy. This is the Council's approach to working in partnership with communities and residents that offers support to individuals, groups and services through Community Asset Transfers, Network Hubs and support with funding, resources and community consultation advice.

Although, these areas will be used as the basis for narrative in this report, the electoral wards within RCT have been analysed separately in Section Seven. This will ensure a more accurate assessment of supply and demand.

Please note, this report was written before the implementation of the electoral ward boundary changes recommended by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales. These come into effect at the May 2022 Local Government elections. Reference will be made to these amended electoral wards in the 2023 CSA annual update report and action plan.

North Cynon	South Cynon	North Rhondda	South Rhondda
Aberaman North Aberamn South Aberdare East Aberdare West/Llwydcoed Hirwaun Penywaun Rhigos	Abercynon Cwmbach Mountain Ash West Mountain Ash East Penrhiwceibr	Ferndale Maerdy Pentre Treherbert Treorchy Tylorstown Ystrad	Cwm Clydach Cymmer Llwynypia Penygraig Porth Tonypandy Trealaw Ynyshir
North East Taf Ely	South East Taf Ely	South West Taf Ely	
Cilfynydd Glyncoch Graig Pontypridd Town Rhondda Trallwng Treforest Ynysybwl	Beddau Church Village Hawthorn Llantwit Fardre Rhydyfelin Central/Ilan Taffs Well Tonteg Tyn-y-Nant	Brynna Gilfach Goch Llanharan Llanharry Llantrisant Town Pontyclun Talbot Green Tonyrefail East Tonyrefail West	



Section 2: Partnership Working and Consultation

In the preparation of this CSA, a range of stakeholders were consulted in order to fully understand their views on the childcare market in RCT. These are listed below.

The draft report will be published on the Council website in summer 2022 for a period of 28 days so that all interested partners can submit comments on the content.

Family Information Service

The Family Information Service (FIS) in RCT has undergone several changes in the last five years and now employs one FIS officer who is the main contact for childcare related enquiries. Due to this, and the COVID-19 pandemic, the FIS officer has not been able to attend engagement events as they previously did. It is hoped that face to face engagement events will increase as the pandemic restrictions ease.

The FIS officer works closely with the childcare development team to share information with parents and encourage childcare providers to register with FIS to ensure their details are on the DEWIS database. This can be searched directly by parents and is an important free marketing tool that all providers are encouraged to use to their advantage.

Because of changes to the way enquiries are recorded, the FIS Officer was only able to provide data on enquiries via email for the last six months. The majority of enquires were for childminders (18) followed by parent & toddler groups (10). Most enquires came from parents in the South Rhondda area (12), followed by South East Taf Ely (8). There does not appear to be a particular area that asks for specific childcare types. However, South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely saw the most enquiries for childminders and South Rhondda saw the highest number of enquires for parent & toddler groups.

Number of enquiries to FIS	North Cynon	South Cynon	North Rhondda	South Rhondda	North East Taf Ely	South East Taf Ely	South West Taf Ely	Total
Childminders	2	3	1	3	1	4	4	18
Full day care	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
Sessional care	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	4
Holiday activities / playschemes	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	3
Childcare Offer for Wales	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Flying Start	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
P&T groups	1	2	0	4	1	2	0	10
Childcare services (not specified)	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Total	3	7	2	12	6	8	7	

Parents / Carers

Please see section Six.

Childcare Providers

Please see section Four.

Persons representing those with an interest in childcare

Childcare providers in Wales are supported by umbrella organisations, who provide advice, guidance, and training to their members. Collectively known as CWLWM, the views of these organisations were sought regarding the childcare market in RCT. They were asked for views on the sufficiency, quality, affordability, and accessibility of all types of childcare available within RCT. We also asked CWLWM partners to identify improvements for how childcare could better meet the needs of specific categories of parents/carers. All partners

of CWLWM responded to the survey, although many of the comments seemed to be quite generic and not specific to RCT. Individual feedback below:

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs

There are still a high number of unregistered out of school settings in RCT, despite support offered by CPCKC and the LA over several years. Having registered childcare based on school site can be a factor in parental choices, e.g. in choosing Welsh medium education. The closure of a large out of school club during the COVID pandemic had a big impact on provision in RCT. To meet the needs of local communities, there needs to be effective communication and collaboration between childcare and education. School based childcare is often preferable to parents and a more sustainable option for providers (transport). However, access to school sites is often hindered by issues with opening/locking up, not being adequately considered when planning new buildings, increasing demand leading to lack of available space, continued concerns about COVID and mixing of age groups.

Areas of improvement for RCT	
Low income families	Lower paid workers often work atypical shift patterns. Work needs to be done to develop, sustain and promote childcare provision that offers atypical hours. Encouraging unregistered settings to register will support low income families as they will be able to benefit from financial support schemes. Expansion of existing schemes in terms of eligibility and age ranges to ensure that long term impact can benefit as many families as possible (such as Flying Start).
Families with children with disabilities	Ensure there is funding available and support to develop and sustain provision for children with complex needs, as well as funding and support to ensure settings are inclusive and accessible (e.g. funding for 1:1 support/additional staff training).
Working families	Suitable registered childcare for all ages and in the language of choice. Expand Welsh medium especially. Extend childcare offer eligibility to combat in work poverty. Promote tax free childcare better.
Families seeking work	WG explore extension of existing financial support schemes re eligibility and age ranges. School age childcare costs can continue to be a barrier in parents increasing working hours/progressing in careers/ taking up employment.

Response – following the closure of the well-established out of school club mentioned above, the Council worked with a local childcare provider to establish two new out of school clubs on the individual school sites (the previous club had collected children from a number of schools and transported them to a central hub in the local secondary school). These opened in September 2021 and are proving very successful. A local Welsh medium school worked with a local meithrin group to establish their own club on school site.

Out of school care has been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 restrictions and parents working from home. The parent survey suggests that there is still demand for this childcare type and this will be a key priority for the Council over the next few years.

Establish out of school care in areas of identified need

Early Years Wales

Early Years Wales has a wide range of members in RCT, including day nurseries, playgroups, childminders and after school clubs. They are supporting members recover from the impact of COVID, and with specific issues such as sustainability, recruitment, risk assessments and quality. Recruitment was raised as an issue for members and this is having an impact on quality, as well as resulting in some of their members not able to run at capacity.

Areas of improvement for RCT	
Low income families	Extensions to Flying Start provision where there is capacity. There are pockets of need with parents who fall outside of Flying Start.
Families with children with disabilities	They support providers to provide services to all children but are not directly involved with families who have children with disabilities. A clear referral pathway and information from the LA would be beneficial.
Working families	EY Wales do not work directly with families in this county but support providers to offer services to families, particularly the childcare Offer.
Families seeking work	EY Wales are happy to work with other organisations to help disseminate messages to families seeking employment.

Response – workforce development and planning is a key concern for settings at this moment in time. The Council will continue to work with CWLWM, and other partners, to promote childcare as a positive career choice. This includes forging closer working relationships with the local Further Education colleges and to continue to offer a comprehensive training programme so that providers can ensure their workforce is suitably qualified.

Mudiad Meithrin

There is some work to do with promoting and marketing Welsh medium playgroups and care on your [the Council] website and social media pages. When searching for information it is not immediately available/clear. A great deal of searching is required BEFORE the information appears. I've failed to find the 'Being Bilingual' brochure on the website. This needs to be immediately accessible.

Areas of improvement for RCT	
Low income families	Expand Flying Start locations. Being bilingual can have a positive impact on intergenerational poverty. Ensure parent's ability to have unrestricted access to Welsh medium care wherever they live in the county.
Families with children with disabilities	Training for staff and better marketing of the provisions for each child/family. Ensure Welsh medium care is accessible to these families.

Areas of improvement for RCT	
Working families	More provisions to extend hours/more Welsh language day care provisions. Ensure clear and easily understood information regarding the 30 hour care offer.
Families seeking work	As above.

Response – As part of the WESP, work has been undertaken on the Council website to ensure that access to information about Welsh medium childcare and school options is much more easily accessible. These developments have taken place since the Cwlwm partners were consulted so improvements should be evident now. This work will continue as part of the WESP marketing action plan. With regards to expanding Flying Start, Welsh Government has announced that this scheme will be expanded to become available to all two year children in Wales. The first phase of this expansion will place particular emphasis on strengthening access to Welsh medium provision.

NDNA Cymru

The COVID pandemic has resulted in sustainability issues for many of their members. This in turn will have an impact on future availability of childcare places. Recruitment, particularly of qualified staff, is also a major problem currently. They noted that there is concern that settings opening on school sites risk displacing existing childcare places at nurseries, which may result in them becoming unsustainable or placing a larger financial burden on families of younger/unfunded children.

Areas of improvement for RCT	
Low income families	Information on the types of childcare and the available choices, as well as effective communication about financial support available to them.
Families with children with disabilities	Keeping families fully informed about their choices and a full understanding of the requirements of the new ALN Act by providers.
Working families	Ensuring sufficient places in full day care settings, as these better meet the needs of working families. Effective communication of the Childcare Offer.
Families seeking work	Financial support with childcare costs for initial period when a parent starts employment.

Response – there has been several developments over the last five years to improve childcare services on school sites. These have, with the exception of two completely new provisions, involved existing childcare providers relocating into improved venues, either from another building on the school site, or from a building close by. The Council does not wish to put any existing settings at risk. These developments have only taken place where it has been identified that the current premises are unsuitable and/or too small, or where gaps have been identified in current provision.

PACEY Cymru

PACEY Cymru are concerned to note a general decline in the number of childminders across Wales, including RCT. They are also concerned about the low number of new

registrations. They are currently focusing on the promotion of childminding as a career choice and childcare option for families. They would like to work with the LA to discuss any issues that may affect childminder sustainability, such as local planning requirements or trade waste fees.

Areas of improvement for RCT	
Low income families	Some childminders in RCT are funded to provide Flying Start. Opportunities for childminders to access funding for Early Education should be considered by the LA if they meet the defined criteria. This would ensure parity of opportunities within the sector, support sustainability and better outcomes for children through continuity of care. The outcomes to children should be central to decision, as well as cost implications to provide funded services.
Families with children with disabilities	Opportunity to find out more about the transition period to the new ALN Act and this transition is progressing locally for childminders. They believe that approved nannies may be an option to support working families in particular those with children with disabilities, as they would be caring for the children in their own home, and parents can access the Tax Free element and employer based childcare vouchers.
Working families	Childminders are well placed to provide quality childcare for families working atypical hours, shifts or even provide overnight care, from the birth up to the age of 14 (or 16 if the children have additional learning needs). Approved nannies may be an option to support some working families.
Families seeking work	PACEY Cymru work in partnership with JCP, PaCE, Careers Wales, and other agencies to create interest and increase recruitment to become a childminder, which not only provides wider childcare options for families but supports people back into work. They welcome the opportunity to continue to work with the LA and partners to promote childminding as a career option.

Response – The Council is also concerned by the number of childminders choosing to stop trading. An improved support package is now available in RCT and the childcare team are currently reviewing their marketing material to attract new prospective childminders to register with CIW. The Council welcomes the opportunity to work closely with PACEY Cymru to support childminding in RCT.

Local employers

An online survey was promoted to employers in RCT via a social media campaign, targeted emails, and collaboration with colleagues in other departments. 14 responses were received.

Area	Number of consultation responses	Total number of people employed
North Cynon	4	39
South Cynon	0	0
North Rhondda	2	21
South Rhondda	1	18
North East Taf Ely	1	2
South East Taf Ely	3	110
South West Taf Ely	2	49+
RCT wide	1	Not recorded

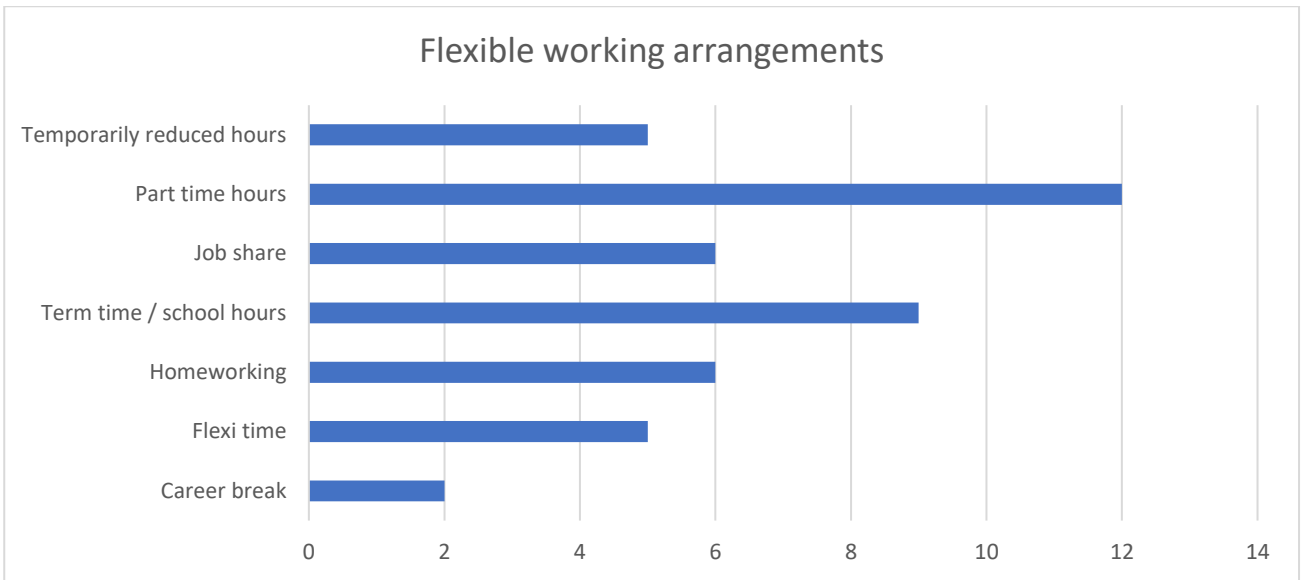
Sufficient childcare

When asked if there is sufficient childcare in RCT to meet the needs of different groups of parents, the following responses were received. The views of most employers was that there was insufficient childcare available or were unsure if there was sufficient childcare. The exception to this was for families who wish to access Welsh medium provision.

Do you think there is sufficient childcare in RCT to meet the needs of:	Yes		No		Unsure	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Working parents	6	43%	2	14%	6	43%
Parents seeking work or training opportunities	3	21%	7	29%	4	50%
Unemployed households	3	21%	2	14%	9	64%
Low income families	3	21%	5	36%	6	4%
Lone parents	3	21%	4	29%	7	50%
Families from ethnic minority backgrounds	4	31%	1	8%	8	62%
Families with children who have disabilities or additional learning needs	4	29%	4	29%	6	43%
Families who wish to access Welsh medium provision	6	46%	2	15%	5	39%
Families where English or Welsh is not their first language	5	39%	1	8%	7	54%

Flexible working arrangements

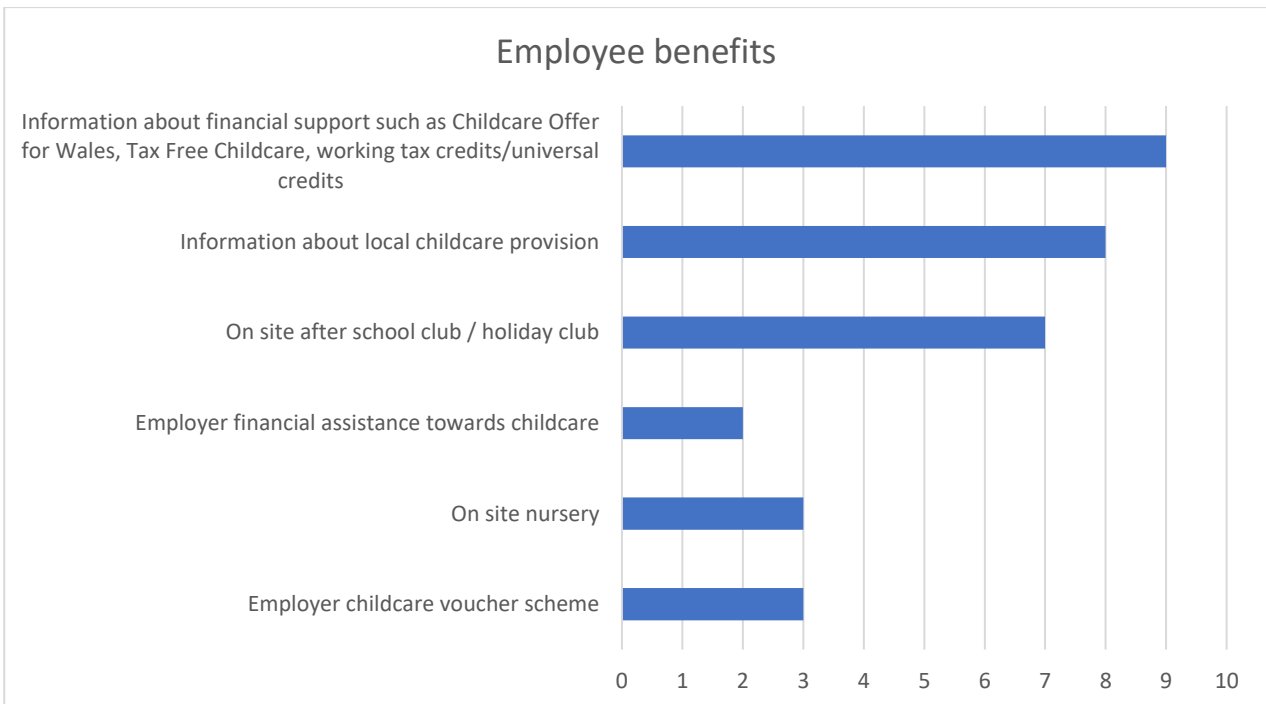
Part time hours was the most common flexible working arrangement offered with 86% of employers offering this working arrangement, followed by term time / school hours working (64%). Alongside these flexible working arrangement, one other offers overtime opportunities at another branch of the company if required.



Employee benefits

90% of employers who responded provided employees with information about financial support schemes, such as the Childcare Offer for Wales, Tax Free Childcare etc, followed by information about local childcare provision (80%). The high rate of employers offering onsite childcare (70%) can be attributed to the fact that 10 of the 14 responses were received from childcare businesses. Of the other four responses, not surprisingly as they were relatively small employers, none offered onsite childcare facilities. One of these employers does offer employees an employee health assured scheme.

90% of respondents stated that the employee benefits listed in the table below were well utilised by employees.



Childcare issues

When asked if childcare issues had stopped an employee taking up employment or continuing to work in their business, 64% of the employers who responded stated 'not at all', with 21% stating 'slightly'.

From the responses below, out of school care for school aged children seemed to be the biggest issue facing employee:

- *We had a job opening for a member of staff, 2 of the applicants said the hours were not suitable because their children went to a different school, and even though we offered after school club places, the parents did not have anyone to pick up their children from a different school and drop them off to us.*
- *Cost of childcare.*
- *Lack of childcare support for 4 to 12 year olds after school and school holidays.*

Childcare issues stopped employee taking up employment	Not at all	Slightly	Don't know	A lot
North Cynon	2	1	1	0
South Cynon	0	0	0	0
North Rhondda	1	0	1	0
South Rhondda	0	1	0	0
North East Taf Ely	1	0	0	0
South East Taf Ely	2	1	0	0
South West Taf Ely	2	0	0	0

COVID-19

In relation to the COVID pandemic, below are some of the comments received when employers were asked if they had noticed any changes to how their employees use childcare or if any concerns had been raised with them about accessing childcare and/or work:

- *Due to schools not having breakfast clubs, staff have struggled to start work at a similar time than before COVID-19. Also with schools adapting school times and nurseries not offering as much wraparound, staff have also struggled with this.*
- *I haven't noticed any changes with my employees use of childcare as we run during school hours this is not an issue.*
- *I've lost staff to term time only vacancies due to lack of holiday and after school clubs.*
- *Flexible working arrangements and fewer contracted hours has helped solve some childcare issues. Frequency of staff absences because children are being sent home from schools continues to be challenging. Rotas are constantly changing.*
- *Staff are wanting to reduce their hours due to the pandemic.*

Since the majority of employer responses were from childcare businesses, there is limited opportunity for staff to work from home. Therefore, the impact of COVID-19 on staffing ratios may have been more apparent than for businesses whose staff could transition to working from home.

Other comments

When employers were asked if they had any other comments about childcare in RCT or how we can improve provision, the following comments were provided:

- *It's all just too expensive for working people. 2 days a week, 9-3pm is £300 per month. The RCT only pushes free childcare for children over 3 years old, this is still as most children can start school at 3 yet, from around 8 months old to 3 we have to pay thousands of pounds to be able to work.*
- *I don't know about other childcare providers in RCT. Our playgroup/wraparound sessions are well supported with numbers increasing due to the childcare offer.*
- *Widen Flying Start areas.*
- *Mae angen mwy o ofal plant cyfrwng Cymraeg yn Ne y sir. [There is a need for more Welsh medium childcare in the South of the county.]*

Response – It is unclear which area in the south of the county the last comment is referring to. There are existing Meithrinfa in Llanharry, Beddau and Church Village. Mudiad Meithrin are currently in the process of establishing a new Meithrin in Taffs Well. This was one of the areas identified in a recent Council mapping exercise and the Council has offered support to develop this new provision.

Neighbouring local authorities

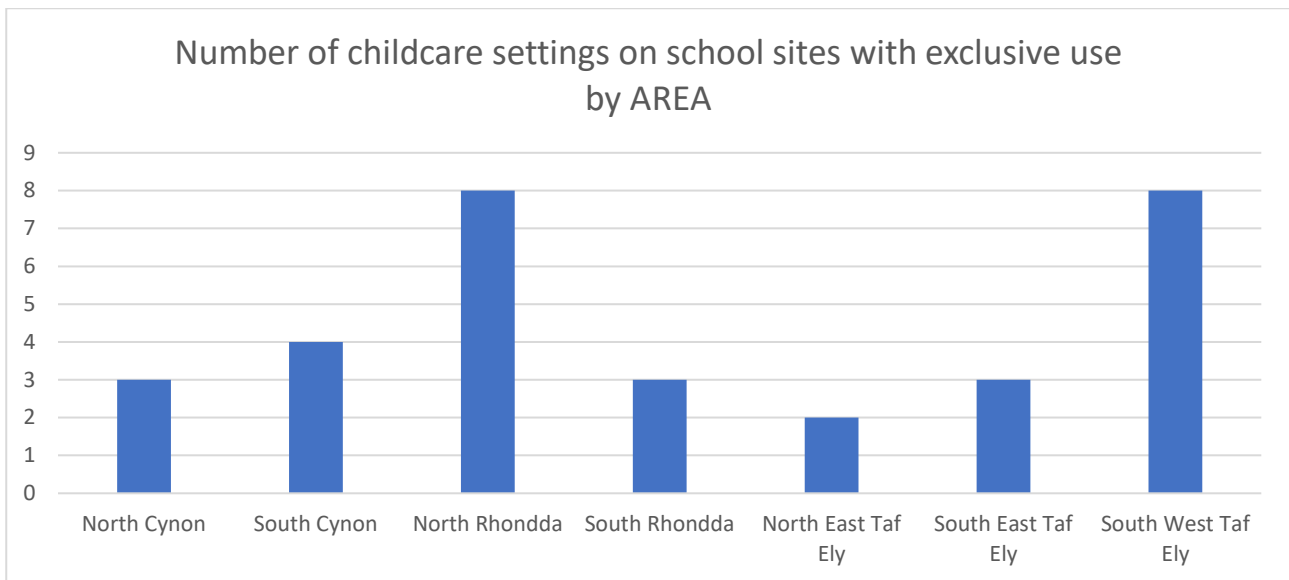
Please see Section Nine.

Schools

Schools were consulted on their views of childcare provision in their areas, and also what (if any) childcare they currently provide or have on school site. It was a short, online survey. Despite sending reminders via the Education department distribution list, and promoting directly to headteachers where possible, no responses were received from schools.

We have several childcare settings now based on school site in their own, dedicated facilities (exclusive use). The number has been increased since the last CSA report in part due to capital investment via the Welsh Medium and Childcare Offer capital grant schemes. Work is ongoing to standardise the lease arrangements, via Corporate Estates, for all exclusive use settings on school sites.

The graph below shows the distribution of settings on school sites by area. This excludes settings, such as out of school care, or wraparound services that share school spaces to deliver their services. Block booking arrangements are in place for these providers directly with the school.



Education and Inclusion Services Strategic Plan 2022-2025

The current Education Strategic Plan² notes the investment that has taken place in the last four years to extend and improve childcare facilities on school sites. As well as projects to support Welsh medium services, outlined in Section Three, projects include providing 21st Century facilities to existing childcare settings on school sites in North Rhondda, South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely areas. It also notes investment in small scale capital projects for many settings within RCT, via the Childcare Offer small capital grant scheme. This has awarded grants to over 80 settings since 2019, totalling £425,000.

It recognises the importance of investment in Early Years as it provides the platform on which future development and learning is built. Key to this is supporting non-maintained education providers to deliver high quality education for pre-nursery aged children.

Further education colleges

Coleg y Cymoedd was consulted as part of this CSA. They have campuses in three areas of RCT, as well as one in Caerphilly County. They offer childcare related courses in both English and through the medium of Welsh. There are childcare facilities based on two of their campuses, with a Flying Start only provision based on a third.

The college provides financial support to learners with the cost of childcare fees. Although this does not always meet the whole cost of childcare, the college aims to reduce this as a barrier to as many learners as possible.

Welsh Medium Education Forum

Please see Section Three.

²<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/SchoolsandLearning/SchoolSupport/RelatedDocument/EducationStrategicPlanfinal27.1.22.pdf>

PSA working group

A joint Play Sufficiency and Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Advisory Group was previously established in RCT. This has been superseded by the Early Years, Childcare and Play Development Partnership (EYCPDP), established in 2021. One of the aims of this group is to work collaboratively to contribute to the development of the CSA and PSA and their annual updates.

The play team now has a dedicated PSA working group to agree key priorities for the play service. A representative from this group sits on the wider EYCPDP.

The Local Authority commissions Third Sector organisations to deliver the majority of play provision across the County Borough. Alongside the PSA working group, there is also Play Provider Forum that gives the play workforce across RCT a platform to come together to discuss ways of working together and to share good practice.

There continues to be a close working relationship between the childcare development and play teams and they regularly share information and work together on joint projects.

The views of the Play Provider Forum have been considered when completing this CSA. The main priority with regards to childcare supply are to work collaboratively to ensure sufficient training opportunities for the out of school childcare workforce and to support the play workforce to deliver out of school and holiday childcare where appropriate.

Job Centre Plus offices

Job centre plus officials and PaCE advisors were consulted and asked for their views on the barriers that their clients face when looking to enter the workplace. The overriding message is that as much childcare as possible is needed and that access to free, or low cost, childcare would assist their clients to find, or remain in employment. There does not seem to be a particular demand from clients for Welsh medium childcare specifically.

As well as PaCE, who provide longer term financial support for parents, the Councils Communities for Work and Communities for Work Plus employment support programmes provide financial support to parents to pay for short-term childcare to access training through a barriers fund. Much of their training is now available online/virtual and feedback from some parents is that this is a better option for them regarding childcare commitments. There is also a Chromebook Loan Scheme in place that allows clients to loan a device with a data allowance so that they can attend training courses, job search, apply for jobs and attend virtual interviews.

Further analysis of job creation and job losses is available in Section Eleven.

Planning Department

Please see Section Eleven.

Section 3: Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

The RCT Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022 to 2032 is due to be adopted in September 2022 (subject to Welsh Government approval). The plan aims to increase the number of year one learners in Welsh medium education by between 8% and 12% during the ten year lifespan of this WESP. This equates to an increase from 506 year one learners now to between 720 and 825 year one learners in Welsh medium education by the end of the new WESP.

The table below outlines the current projections for entry of year one learners into Welsh medium education, and the projections if the Council is to achieve its target of 720 year one learners by 2032 during the lifespan of this WESP.

Projections of nursery / three year old learners receiving their education through the medium of Welsh during the lifespan of this WESP				
Academic year	Projections of nursery / three year old learners who could receive their education through the medium of Welsh (based on November 2020 provisional forecasts)		Projections of nursery / three year old learners who should receive their education through the medium of Welsh if the Council is to achieve its target of 720 year one learners in Welsh medium education by 2032	
	Number	%	Number	%
2022-2023	481	20.6%	481	20.6%
2023-2024	460	18.7%	509	20.7%
2024-2025	471	19.3%	537	22.1%
2025-2026	476	19.5%	568	23.3%
2026-2027	485	19.9%	601	24.7%
2027-2028	485	19.9%	636	26.1%
2028-2029	485	19.9%	672	27.6%
2029-2030	485	19.9%	711	29.2%
2030-2031	485	19.9%	750	29.6%
2031-2032	485	19.9%	750	29.6%

2021 Census data is not yet available. The WESP notes data from the 2011 Census that indicates that 12.3% of RCT residents were able to speak Welsh at that time.³ This is comparable to the Wales wide figure of 19% in 2011.

The WESP also uses data from the Annual Population Survey which is updated quarterly and so is a more up to date dataset. Using this data, the WESP notes that, for the quarter ending September 2020, 19.3% of respondents living in RCT said they could speak Welsh, compared to a Wales average of 28.8%.⁴ Although below the Wales average, this data suggests that the number of residents identifying as Welsh speakers has increased since 2011.

³ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/Census-Welsh-Language/welshspeakers-by-localauthority-gender-detailedagegroups-2011census>

⁴ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/Annual-Population-Survey-Welsh-Language>

The main target within the WESP that relates to the CSA is Outcome One (see below).

Outcome 1: More nursery / three year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh

To support the target of increasing the number of year one learners, the Council will continue to work with external organisations and colleagues to promote Welsh medium childcare and education. We will do this by:

- Supporting Welsh medium childcare providers to extend and improve the services they offer by offering business support, new provision/expansion of provision grants, training and signposting to relevant external organisations.
- Information about events and courses that parents/carers can attend with their children will continue to be shared via Council networks and Officers will continue to promote and raise awareness of the Welsh medium childcare available to parents/carers.
- Making changes to the Flying Start commissioning process, which will mean more Welsh medium Flying Start childcare places are available to those families that choose it.
- Keeping under review the number of Welsh medium Registered Education Providers to ensure that those parents/carers that wish to access a pre-nursery FPN education place are able to.
- Working with the WESP steering group and Marketing and Promotion group to support the aims of the WESP.

Welsh Medium Education Forum

As part of the consultation process for this CSA, Mudiad Meithrin and Fforwm Iaith, a group representing Welsh medium interests in RCT, were consulted. The main response from Mudiad Meithrin is included in Section Two, but in summary, their feedback suggested that it was difficult for parents to find information on Welsh medium childcare and education choices in RCT and that improvements should be made to the Council website so that it is easier for parents to make informed choices about Welsh medium childcare and education.

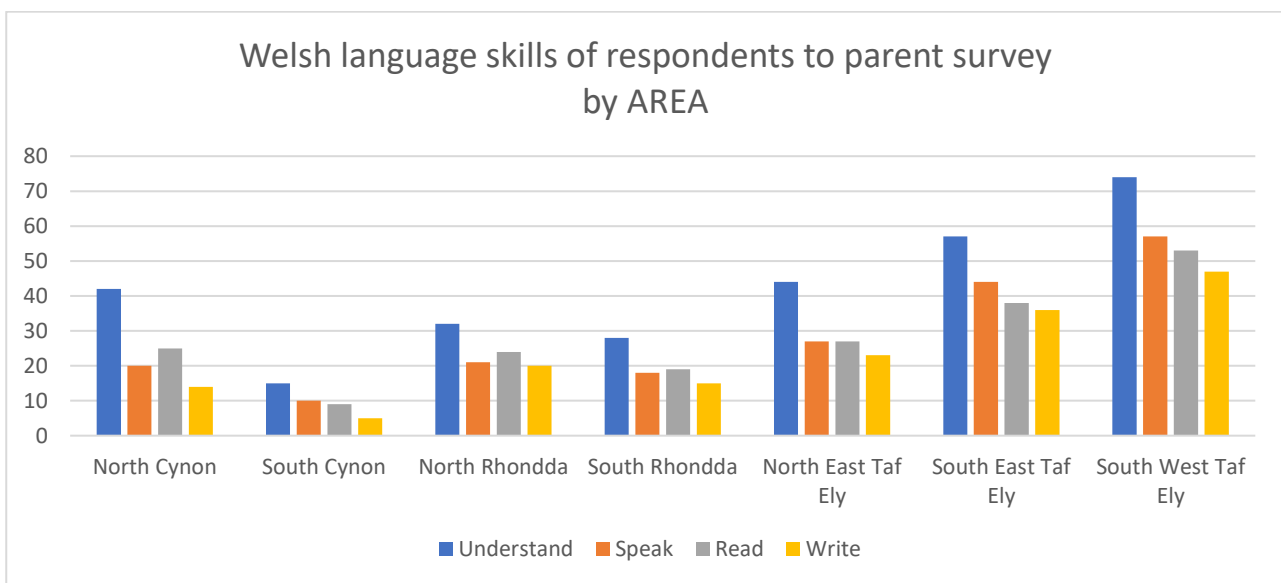
Fforwm Iaith is a discussion and collaboration forum for public, voluntary and private sector organisations. The group is made up of a range of key stakeholders, such as Welsh medium schools, RCTCBC officers, Mudiad Meithrin, URDD and RhAG (Parents for Welsh medium education). The forum aims to increase the range of Welsh medium services in RCT by creating positive partnership working and dissemination of good practice. No specific comments were received from the chair of Fforwm Iaith, but the Council continue to work closely with the forum and with the individual partners to strengthen Welsh medium childcare provision and choices for parents.

Parent survey

There were a total of 347 responses to the question 'Can you understand, speak, read or write Welsh'. Of these, 91% stated that they understand Welsh (316), with 61.1% stating they can speak the language (212).

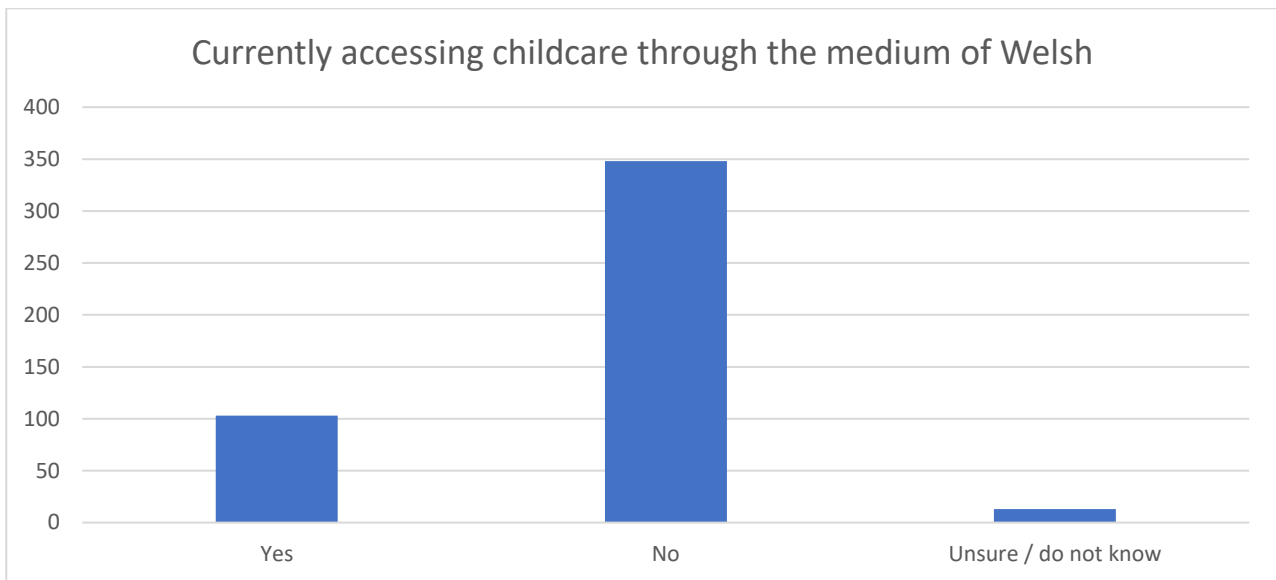
Welsh language skills of respondents to parent survey RCT wide	Number	%
Understand	316	91%
Speak	212	61.1%
Read	208	59.9%
Write	172	49.5%

Of those that supplied a postcode, the highest level of Welsh language skills appears to be in South West Taf Ely, South East Taf Ely and North East Taf Ely. South Cynon appears to have the lowest levels of Welsh language skills amongst parents. Of course, it should be remembered that this is based on the respondents to the parent survey, and not on demographic data used in the WESP.



Current use of Welsh medium childcare

75% of parents stated that they do not currently access childcare through the medium of Welsh (348). 22.2% responded that they do access Welsh medium childcare (103). The projection in the WESP target is for 20.6% of nursery aged children to receive their education through the medium of Welsh in 2022-2023. This figure is lower than the parent survey suggests are currently accessing Welsh medium childcare. This implies that there may be some parents who do not choose to transition from Welsh medium childcare to Welsh medium education. Therefore more work is needed to analyse transition routes to understand if this is indeed the case.



Investigate transition routes from Welsh medium childcare to education

Future use of Welsh medium childcare

Of those that don't currently use Welsh medium childcare, 9.7% stated that they would like to access childcare through the Welsh language (34), with 18.6% stating 'maybe' (65). The highest number of those stating 'yes' are located in the South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely area, with the highest number of those stating 'maybe' located in South West Taf Ely.

Parents who would like to access childcare through the medium of Welsh	Yes	Maybe
North Cynon	0	10
South Cynon	4	5
North Rhondda	1	4
South Rhondda	7	8
North East Taf Ely	4	8
South East Taf Ely	2	15
South West Taf Ely	14	14

Parents who stated they would like to use Welsh medium childcare were asked what issues they face accessing Welsh medium care. The majority of responses stated that it was due to a lack of availability with 69.8% of parents stating this (58). South West Taf Ely was the area that had the highest number of this response (17), followed by South Rhondda (10). Recent capital projects have increased the number of Welsh medium childcare places available in the South West Taf Ely area, which will improve availability of services. Development of additional Welsh medium childcare provision in South Rhondda should be investigated further to ensure exactly where additional services are required, and whether this is for pre-school or out of school hours services.

Issues faced for parents not currently accessing Welsh medium childcare	Number	%
Availability	58	69.8%
Insufficient hours of care	22	26.5%
Distance	18	21.6%
Cost	17	20.4%
Staff language capability	14	16.8%
Quality of Care	5	6%

Investigate demand for Welsh medium childcare services in South Rhondda area

Completed capital projects

In 2018, the Council had the opportunity to bid for capital funding to support an increase in Welsh medium learners as part of the Cymraeg 2050 target. The Council proposed six projects, all of which were awarded. All but one project were to increase and improve Welsh medium childcare facilities:

North Cynon

This project is to create a new childcare facility on the site of YGG Aberdar. This will create approximately an additional 30 CIW registered places and will complement current Welsh medium provision in the area. This is due to open in September 2022.

South Cynon

This project was to create a new childcare facility on the site of YGG Abercynon. This has created an additional 24 CIW registered places in the lower Cynon area and offers morning sessions for two and three year olds. It opened in January 2022. Due to the positive reaction from families, the setting is currently making plans to extend its opening hours to offer afternoon care.

North Rhondda

This project was to relocate an existing meithrin from an old demountable building on the site of YGG Ynyswen to a new, purpose built facility located in an adjacent car park. The project has increased the number of CIW registered places in the settings from 24 to 30. It has also allowed the setting to increase the services they offer to families to include afternoon, after school and holiday care. As part of the project, the old demountable building was demolished and the area was landscaped to provide additional outdoor space for the Foundation Phase pupils in the school. It opened in September 2020.

North East Taf Ely

This project was to reconfigure an area of YGG Evan James to create additional classroom accommodation so that part of the existing nursery classroom could be developed into a dedicated childcare facility. This meithrin previously only operated in the afternoons to offer wraparound care for nursery aged children, but now has its own space throughout the day and has extended its services to offer morning meithrin sessions for two years and after school care for 3-5 year olds. The number of CIW registered places remained at 48, but they are now able to offer two sessions per day, therefore doubling the number of children who can attend the facility. The work within the school included reinstating a break out area as a classroom, refurbishing this space and creating a new intervention room in another

area within the school and refurbishment of a shared outdoor play area. It opened in September 2019.

South West Taf Ely

We were awarded funding for two projects in this area. The first was to relocate an existing Meithrin from an old caretakers cottage on the site of Ysgol Llanhari to a new, purpose built facility located in another area of the site. The project has increased the number of CIW registered places in the setting 45 to 69. It has also allowed the setting to increase the services they offer to families to include afternoon, after school and holiday care. They are also now able to cater for children under two years of age. This project opened in January 2020.

The other project in this area was to provide a classroom extension to increase pupil capacity by 30 in YGGG Llantrisant. This is to cater for future demand for places due to continued housing development in the area. It was completed in 2021.

Additional funding was secured via the Childcare Offer capital grant scheme. One of the successful projects was to create a new childcare facility on the site of Dolau Primary School. This has created 24 CIW registered places. The facility offers Welsh medium session in the mornings for 2-3 year olds and dual language sessions in the afternoons to cater for the nursery aged children that attend this dual language school.

Other developments

In addition to the projects mentioned above, other developments since the last CSA report include moving an existing Cylch Meithrin into a dedicated room within YGG Llwynceilyn in the South Rhondda area. The group were facing closure if they could not secure an alternative venue. The Council refurbished a room within the school and the setting has been able to expand their services to include afternoon wraparound care to nursery aged children.

Another Cylch Meithrin faced a similar dilemma and the Council was able to accommodate this setting in their own room within YGG Tonyrefail in the South West Taf Ely area. When the school moved to a new location, the meithrin, and a separate wraparound childcare service, moved with them and each setting now has its own dedicated facilities within the new school site.

Current Welsh medium childcare provision

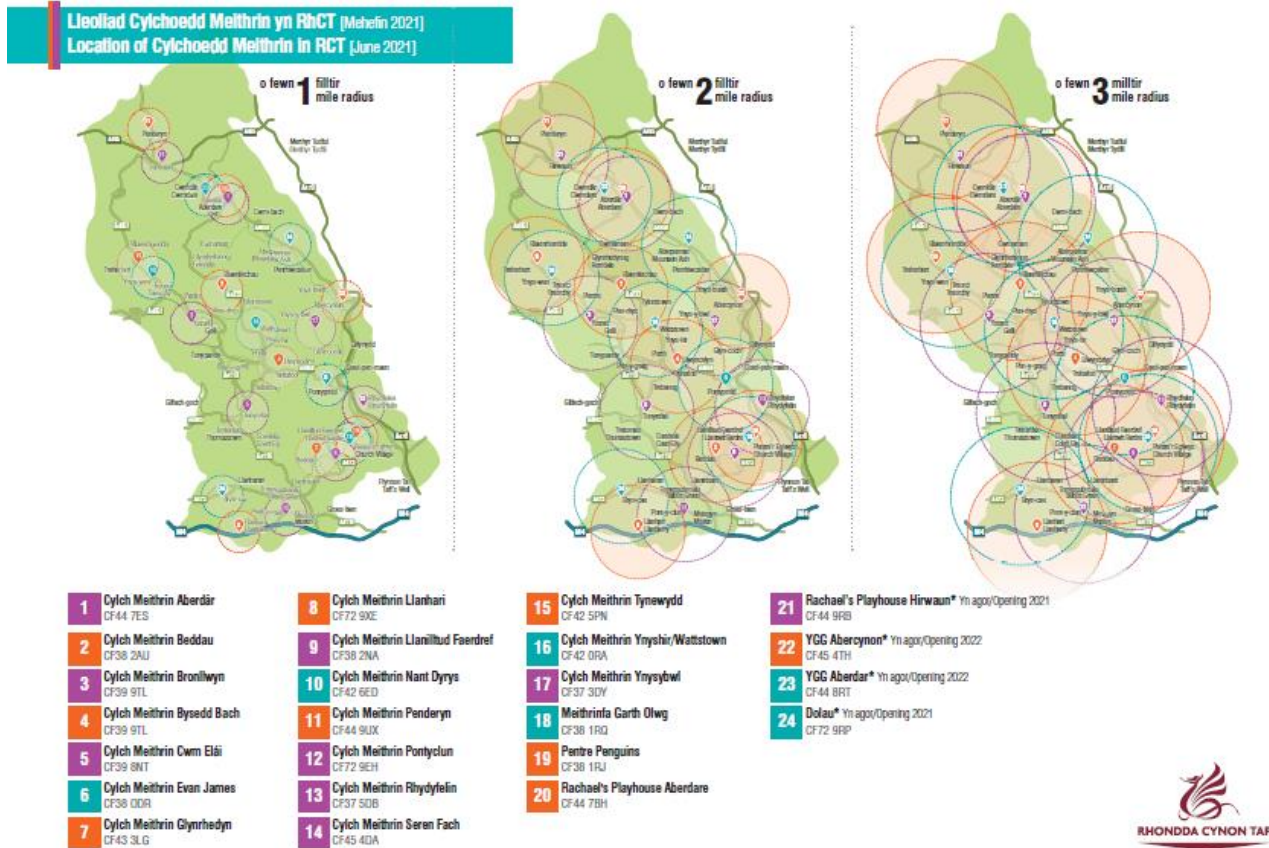
Overview

Whilst there is a good range of CIW registered Welsh medium pre-school childcare available in RCT, services for school aged children remain sporadic and largely unregistered. This is improving and the Council will continue to work with partners to support the registration and expansion of out of school and holiday care where there are identified gaps.

Mapping of current services

A mapping exercise was undertaken in 2021 to identify gaps in Welsh medium pre-school childcare services (see below). This will be updated regularly and used as a basis for exploration of future developments.

Alongside this, Officers will continue to strengthen partnership working with organisations such as Mudiad Meithrin and Menter Iaith in order to develop and extend childcare services through the medium of Welsh. A particular priority will be to support the development of more registered Welsh Medium out of school and holiday care for school aged children.



Explore viability of creating new Cychoedd Meithrin in geographical areas identified via the mapping exercise
Support the development of additional registered Welsh medium holiday childcare

Number of CIW registered settings – by AREA

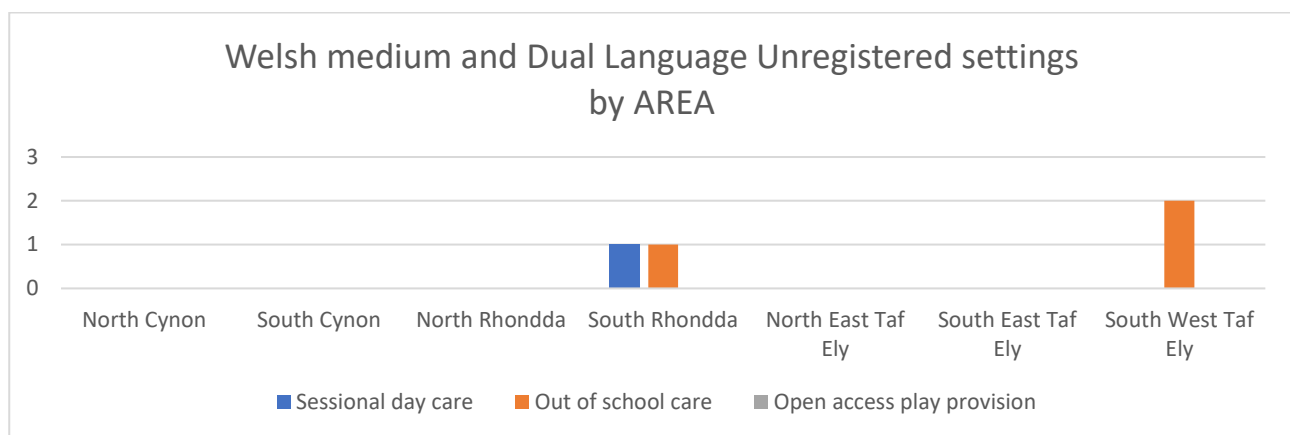
This data is based on SASS returns.

Number of Welsh medium and dual language CIW registered settings – by AREA										
	Childminder		Full day care		Sessional care		Out of school care		Open access play	
	Welsh	Both	Welsh	Both	Welsh	Both	Welsh	Both	Welsh	Both
North Cynon	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Cynon	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Rhondda	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Rhondda	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0
North East Taf Ely	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0

Number of Welsh medium and dual language CIW registered settings – by AREA										
	Childminder		Full day care		Sessional care		Out of school care		Open access play	
	Welsh	Both	Welsh	Both	Welsh	Both	Welsh	Both	Welsh	Both
South East Taf Ely	0	1	3	1	2	0	1	0	0	0
South West Taf Ely	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	1	2	10	8	5	1	3	1	0	0

Number of Unregistered settings – by AREA

Further information is available in Section Four, but it can be seen that only four unregistered settings registered with FIS report that they use either Welsh only or both English and Welsh.



Services offered

Type of care offered (CIW registered only) RCT wide Welsh only and Dual language	Number of settings				
	Childminder	Full day care	Sessional care	Out of school care	Open access play provision
Afternoons	0	0	3	0	0
After school	2	5	0	3	0
Before school	2	3	0	0	0
Creche	0	0	0	0	0
Early Education placement	0	13	2	0	0
Evenings after 6pm	0	0	0	0	0
Full day care/full day nursery	3	13	0	0	0
Half day care AM/half day nursery AM	1	7	0	0	0
Half day care PM/half day nursery PM	2	8	0	0	0
Lunch	0	7	1	0	0
Mornings	0	0	4	0	0
Overnight	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin AM	0	14	0	0	0

Type of care offered (CIW registered only) RCT wide Welsh only and Dual language	Number of settings				
	Childminder	Full day care	Sessional care	Out of school care	Open access play provision
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin PM	0	14	0	0	0
Playscheme sessions	0	0	0	0	0
Weekends	0	0	0	0	0

Number of CIW registered childcare spaces available – by AREA

Number of CIW spaces by AREA Welsh only and dual language	Child-minder	Full day care	Sessional care	Creche	Out of School care	Open access play provision	Nanny*	Total spaces – by AREA
North Cynon	0	89	0	0	0	0	0	89
South Cynon	0	70	0	0	0	0	0	70
North Rhondda	10	114	0	0	0	0	0	124
South Rhondda	0	73	0	0	30	0	0	103
North East Taf Ely	0	19	72	0	54	0	0	145
South East Taf Ely	6	149	57	0	60	0	0	272
South West Taf Ely	9	85	48	0	0	0	0	142
Total spaces – by TYPE	25	599	177	0	144	0	0	

* Data from CIW concerning the number of home childcare providers (nannies) approved to operate in RCT does not state the number of spaces they have available

Opening times

Information on opening times in term time and school holidays is included within each childcare type analysis in Section Five.

Spaces available, spaces filled

Information is available in Section Four.

Attendance patterns

An overview of attendance patterns, broken down by language, is included in Section Four.

Waiting lists / vacancies

Information on waiting lists and vacancies is available in Section Four.

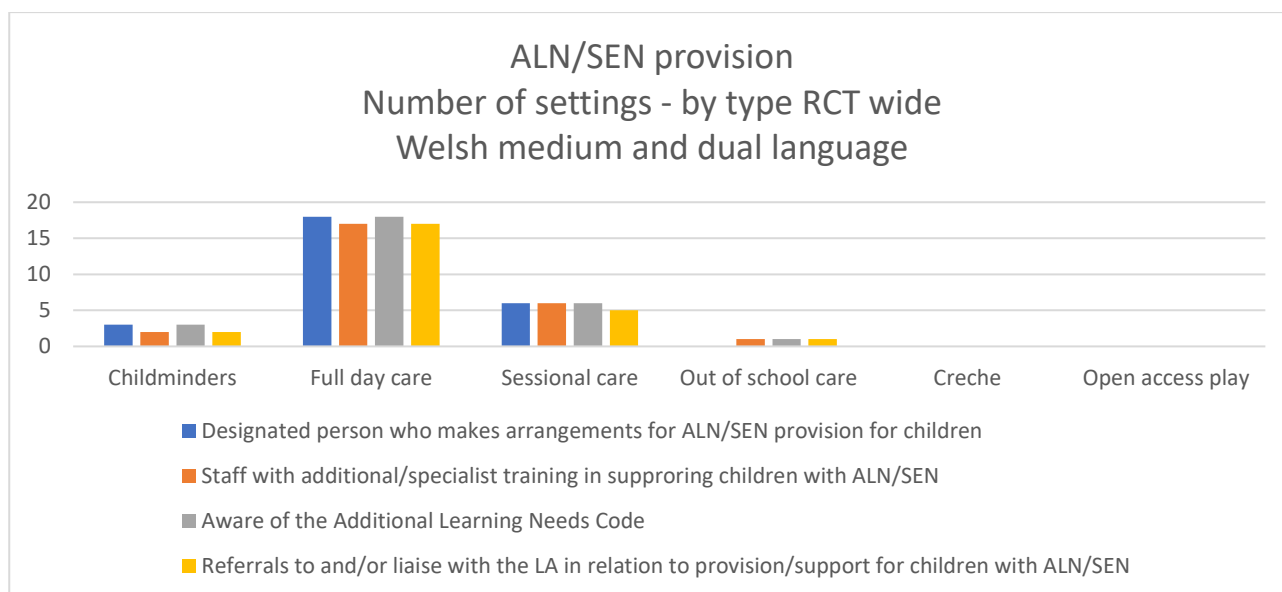
No Welsh medium or dual language childcare settings of any childcare type reported that they had waiting lists for holiday care. Only one dual language childminder, in North Rhondda, reported a waiting list for term time provision. Welsh medium and dual language Full day care providers in all areas, except North East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely, reported waiting lists for term time provision. Only two Welsh medium Sessional care

providers reported waiting lists, one in South East Taf Ely and one in South West Taf Ely. No Welsh medium or dual language Out of School care providers reported waiting lists.

Cater for children with disabilities

Further information is available in Section Four. The table below shows data for Welsh medium and dual language settings as reported in their SASS returns.

Number of settings that currently provide for / support children with ALN/SEN Welsh medium and dual language	Cognition and learning	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Communication and interaction	Sensory and/or physical
Childminders	1	1	1	1
Full day care	15	16	16	15
Sessional care	3	4	5	4
Out of school care	0	1	1	0
Creche	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	19	22	23	20

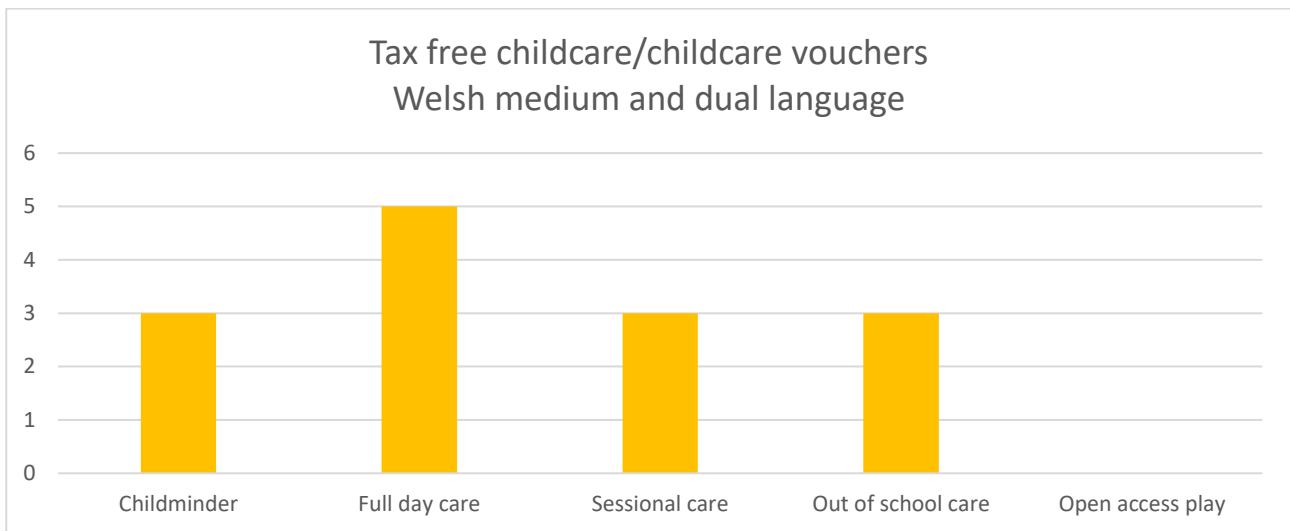


Flying Start, Childcare offer, Early Education

There is a good range of Welsh medium settings that delivery FPN education. A new commissioning model is currently being piloted by Flying Start to increase the number of Welsh medium settings that deliver this scheme (see Section Fourteen for more information). Parents have the choice of which CIW registered provider they use to access the Childcare Offer. Therefore, the number of Welsh medium providers delivering this service is predominantly dictated by demand from parents.

Childcare type Welsh medium and dual language	Child- minder	Full day care	Session al care	Out of school care	Open access play	Total
Flying Start	0	9	2	0	0	11
Childcare Offer (currently receiving funding)	3	18	3	0	0	24
FPN education	0	14	2	0	0	16

Tax free childcare / Childcare vouchers



Strengths

- Good range of registered Welsh medium Sessional care providers
- Significant capital investment in Welsh medium childcare facilities

Weaknesses

- Lack of registered Welsh medium holiday care
- Out of school care not available in every Welsh medium primary school
- Geographical gaps in Welsh medium childcare services

Section 4: Overview – Childcare Types, Services and Places

Overview

For the purposes of this report, the data for registered provision is taken from the SASS return completed by registered childcare providers in summer 2021. This was completed between 7th July and 11th August 2021. Overall, there was a 92.3% completion rate by RCT providers (including those that completed paper copies after the closing date), up from 73.2% for the 2017 CSA report. This can be broken down as follows:

- 85.0% of childminders

- 94.7% of full day care providers
- 54.5% of out of school care providers
- 92.3% of sessional care providers
- 83.3% of open access play providers

One reason for the low completion rate for Out of school care providers may be due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions at the time the SASS was completed. Many Out of school clubs were initially unable to open due to restrictions accessing their venues and a steep reduction in demand for this type of care.

Of those CIW registered settings that did not submit their SASS, eight have subsequently suspended or cancelled their registration (all childminders) and 11 completed the questions manually when contacted by the Childcare Team:

- Four Childminders
- Two Full day care providers
- Three Out of school care providers
- Two Sessional care providers

The data for unregistered provision is taken from provider questionnaires completed in November 2021 and data from FIS.

Number of CIW registered settings – by AREA

Number of CIW registered settings – by AREA	Child-minder	Full day care	Sessional day care	Creche	Out of School care	Open access play provision	Nanny*	Total settings
North Cynon	11	7	1	0	0	1	0	20
South Cynon	4	6	2	0	0	0	0	12
North Rhondda	9	12	2	0	0	1	0	24
South Rhondda	5	9	2	0	1	0	0	17
North East Taf Ely	21	3	5	0	2	0	1	32
South East Taf Ely	25	9	5	0	1	0	0	40
South West Taf Ely	21	10	8	0	6	3	1	49
Total	96	56	25	0	10	5	2	194

*Home Childcare Scheme, January 2022

Detailed analysis on each childcare type is available in Section Five.

Number of Unregistered settings – by AREA

The data for the number of unregistered childcare settings, listed below, is from the DEWIS database used by FIS. This data is dependent on providers registering their information,

and then keeping their accounts updated. Therefore, Officers are aware there may be additional unregistered settings in RCT that are not included in this analysis.

Number of Unregistered settings by AREA	Sessional day care	Out of school care	Open access play provision	Total settings
North Cynon	0	0	0	0
South Cynon	0	1	1	2
North Rhondda	3	0	1	4
South Rhondda	4	1	0	5
North East Taf Ely	0	0	0	0
South East Taf Ely	0	1	0	1
South West Taf Ely	0	3	1	4
Total	7	6	3	16

CIW registrations / cancellations

The COVID-19 pandemic has been extremely challenging for childcare providers, and has resulted in decreased attendances, staffing issues and increased costs (such as additional cleaning, heating costs, etc.).

Keeping their own families safe, as well as the staff and children in their businesses has been particularly difficult for childminders. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that we have seen a significant reduction in the number of childminding places available over the last two years. Recruiting more childminders is an ongoing priority and will continue to be so. The Council offer a comprehensive package of support for prospective childminders and there are currently eight working through the registration process.

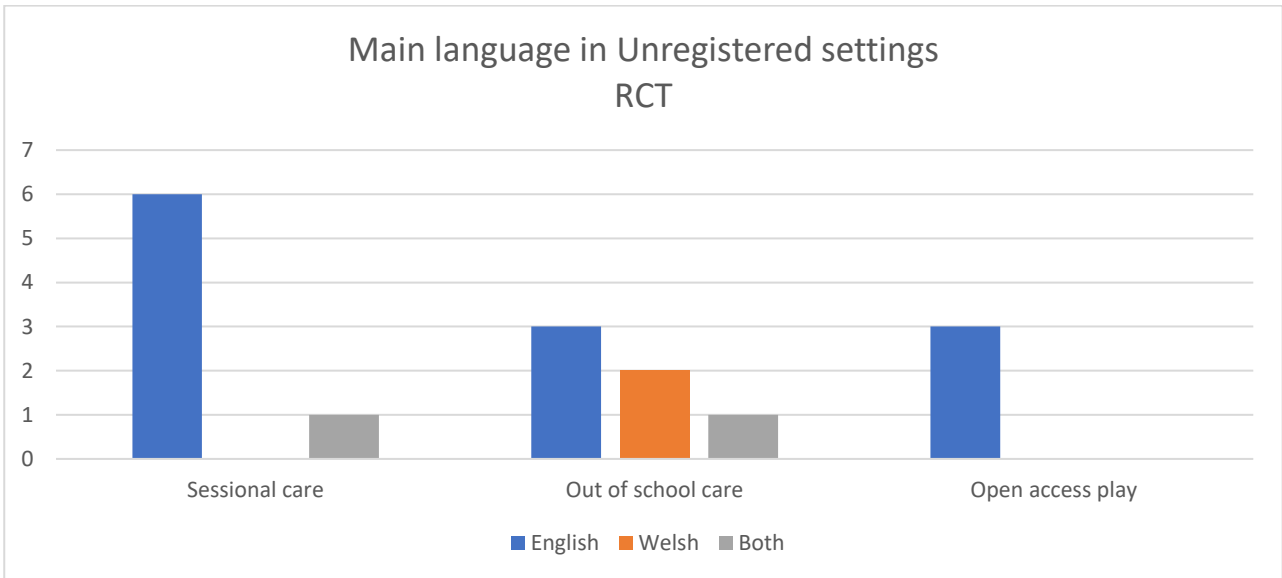
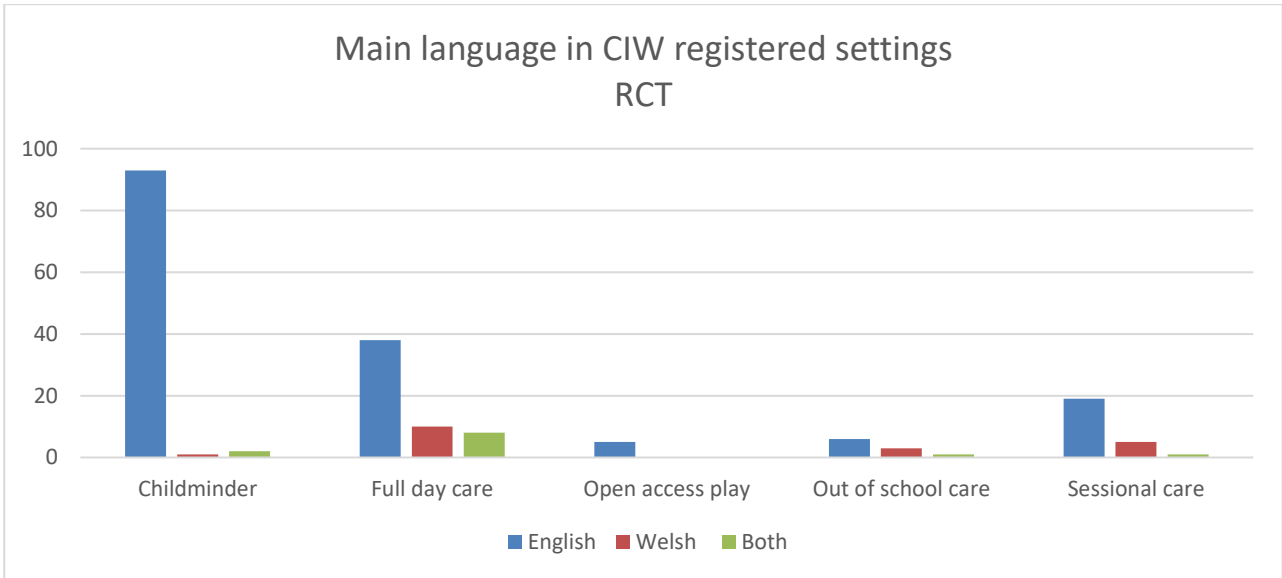
CIW registrations / cancellations Jan 2020-Jan 2022 by TYPE	New registration	Number of new places	Cancelled registration	Number of lost places	Net loss/gain of places
Childminder	8	58	36	263	-205
Full day care	15	488	16	425	63
Sessional care	8	200	7	180	20
Out of school care	8	336	5	169	167
Creche	0	0	1	10	-10
Open access play	0	0	2	55	-55
Total	39	1082	67	1102	-20

Weekly CIW lists

Promote childminding as a career

Language used in settings

It can be seen that in both CIW registered settings, and those that are Unregistered, that English is the most common language used. The most common childcare type to offer Welsh medium or dual language provision is Full day care.

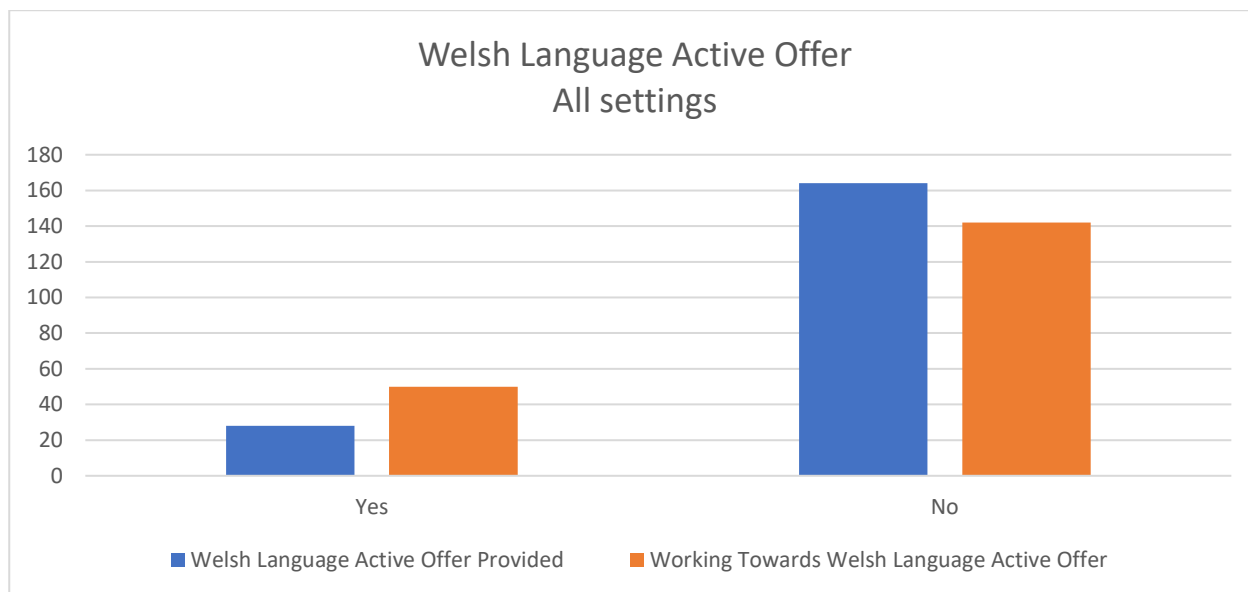


More information on current Welsh medium childcare provision is available in Section Three.

Active Offer

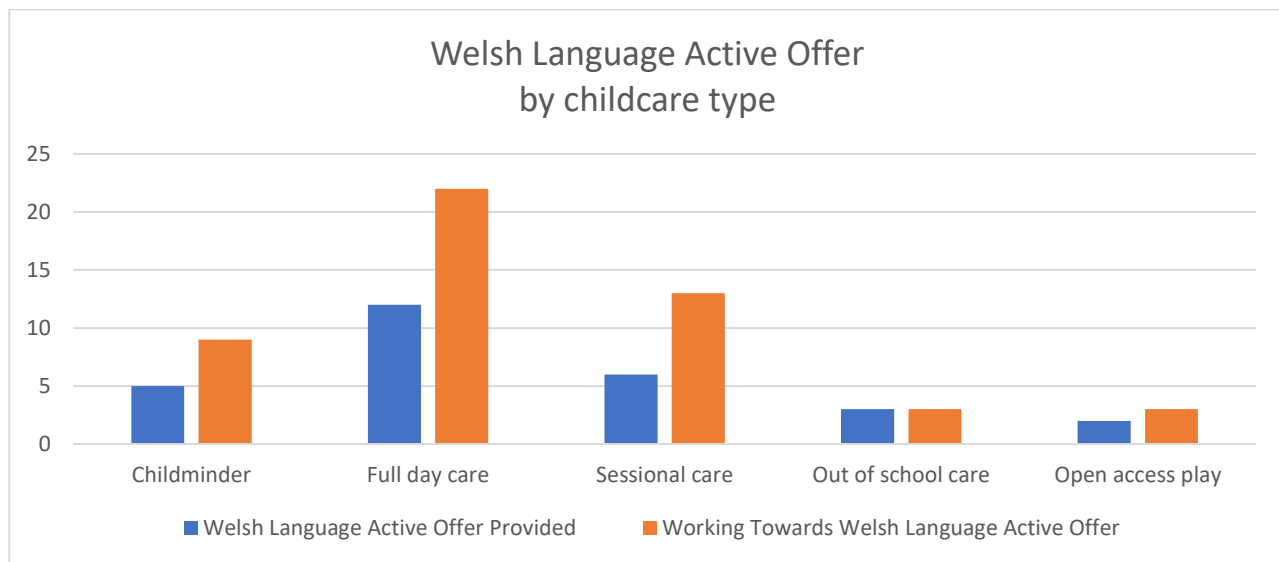
The aim of the Welsh Language Active Offer in Wales is to provide a service in Welsh if required without a person having to ask for it. Childcare providers were asked as part of their SASS return, if they provide the Active Offer in their settings, or if they are working towards it. It can be seen that there are relatively few settings in RCT that stated on their SASS that they either currently provide the Active Offer or are working towards it. As part

of our ongoing work to encourage the use of the Welsh language in childcare, the promotion of the Active Offer will be a priority.



Promote the Active Offer to settings and encourage participation

Of those that do provide the Active Offer, or are working towards it, the graph below shows that Full day care providers are the most common childcare type, following by Sessional care providers. This is no surprise given that these childcare types have more staff and therefore are more likely to employ Welsh speakers who can push forward this type of policy.



South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely are the areas with the most settings either providing, or working towards, the Active Offer.

Welsh Language Active Offer By AREA	Welsh Language Active Offer Provided	Working Towards Welsh Language Active Offer	Total
North Cynon	3	7	10
South Cynon	1	4	5
North Rhondda	3	8	11
South Rhondda	2	7	9
North East Taf Ely	3	6	9
South East Taf Ely	8	10	18
South West Taf Ely	8	8	16

Services offered

At the time of the SASS completion, there were 32 childcare settings registered to deliver pre-nursery education and able to offer early education placements. None of these settings are childminders. It can be seen below that many more providers stated they offer this service. There does not appear to have been a definition contained in the SASS survey to explain what each category meant, so the Early Education Placement data should be viewed with caution.

Type of care offered – RCT wide	Number of settings				
	Child-minder	Full day care	Open access play provision	Out of school care	Sessional care
Afternoons	0	0	0	0	17
After school	75	20	1	9	0
Before school	62	13	0	1	0
Creche	0	1	0	0	0
Early Education placement	31	39	0	0	9
Evenings after 6pm	11	1	0	0	0
Full day care/full day nursery	82	46	0	0	0
Half day care AM/half day nursery AM	52	37	0	0	0
Half day care PM/half day nursery PM	55	38	0	0	0
Lunch	0	19	0	0	7
Mornings	0	0	0	0	18
Overnight	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin AM	0	21	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin PM	0	22	0	0	0
Playscheme sessions	0	0	3	0	0
Weekends	1	0	0	0	0

Number of CIW registered childcare spaces available – by AREA

Number of CIW spaces by AREA	Child-minder	Full day care	Sessional care	Creche	Out of School care	Open access play provision	Nanny *	Total spaces – by AREA
North Cynon	88	246	30	0	0	70	0	434
South Cynon	32	190	38	0	0	0	0	260
North Rhondda	71	343	38	0	0	30	0	482
South Rhondda	31	282	46	0	30	0	0	389
North East Taf Ely	177	98	134	0	54	0	-	463
South East Taf Ely	200	378	133	0	60	0	0	771
South West Taf Ely	179	493	286		213	245	-	1416
Total spaces – by TYPE	778	2030	705	0	357	345	0	

* Data from CIW concerning the number of home childcare providers (nannies) approved to operate in RCT does not state the number of spaces they have available.

Opening times

Information on opening times in term time and school holidays is included within each childcare type analysis in Section Five.

Spaces available, spaces filled

Childcare Type – All languages	CIW registered places	Ages of children attending settings									Attendance pattern			Number of children on books
		Under 1s	1 Years	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5-7 Years	8-11 Years	12-14 Years	15-17 Years	Full time	Part time	Ad hoc	
Childminder	599	27	94	135	108	51	146	96	2	1	93	491	74	660
Full day care	1537	79	401	867	696	123	76	33	0	0	477	1748	88	2317
Open Access play	100	0	0	0	0	0	35	65	30	0	0	100	30	130
Out of school care	114	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Childcare Type – All languages	CIW registered places	Ages of children attending settings									Attendance pattern			Number of children on books
		Under 1s	1 Years	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5-7 Years	8-11 Years	12-14 Years	15-17 Years	Full time	Part time	Ad hoc	
Sessional care	419	0	3	197	147	50	18	13	0	0	86	351	0	433
Totals	2769	106	498	1199	951	224	275	207	32	1	656	2690	192	3540

Childcare Type – Welsh medium	CIW registered places	Ages of children attending settings									Attendance pattern			Number of children on books
		Under 1s	1 Years	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5-7 Years	8-11 Years	12-14 Years	15-17 Years	Full time	Part time	Ad hoc	
Childminder	9	0	1	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	3	6	0	9
Full day care	377	6	33	162	188	22	20	22	0	0	106	367	12	485
Open Access play	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	120*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sessional care	153	0	0	52	65	18	18	13	0	0	40	94	0	134
Totals	659	6	34	214	257	40	42	35	0	0	149	467	12	628

*breakdown not available

Childcare Type – Both English and Welsh	CIW registered places	Ages of children attending settings									Attendance pattern			Number of children on books
		Under 1s	1 Years	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5-7 Years	8-11 Years	12-14 Years	15-17 Years	Full time	Part time	Ad hoc	
Childminder	16	0	6	4	4	4	5	1	0	0	5	12	7	24
Full day care	222	3	21	112	135	12	4	0	0	0	179	119	0	298
Open Access play	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

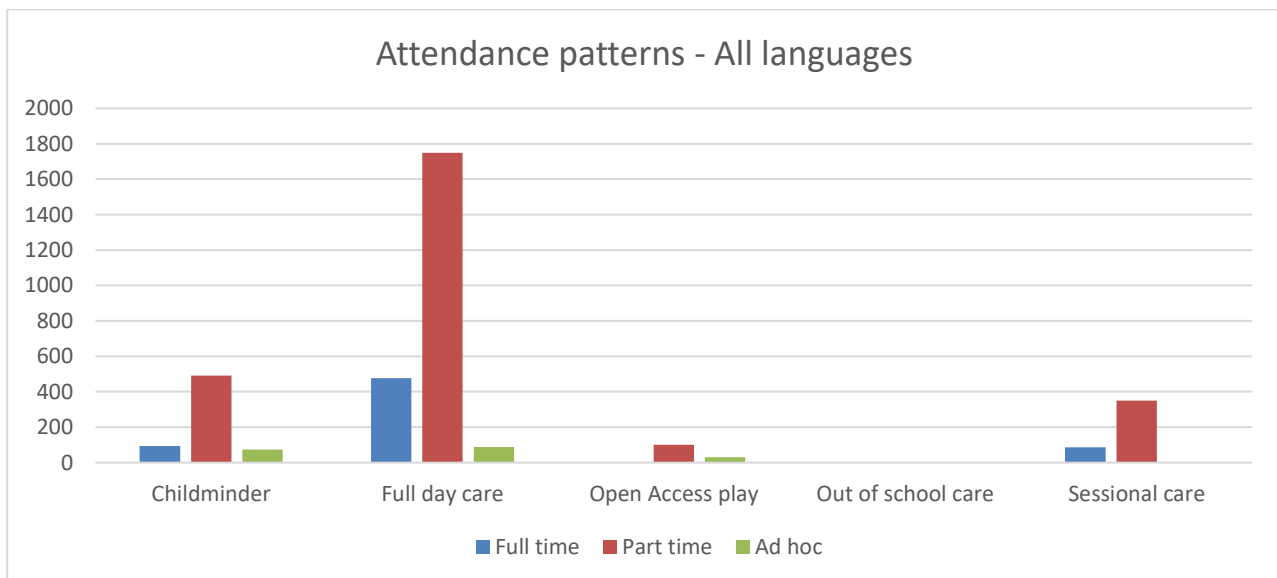
Childcare Type – Both English and Welsh	CIW registered places	Ages of children attending settings									Attendance pattern			Number of children on books
		Under 1s	1 Years	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5-7 Years	8-11 Years	12-14 Years	15-17 Years	Full time	Part time	Ad hoc	
Out of school care	24*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sessional care	24	0	0	0	7	9	0	0	0	0	0	24	0	24
Totals	286	3	27	116	146	25	9	1	0	0	184	155	7	346

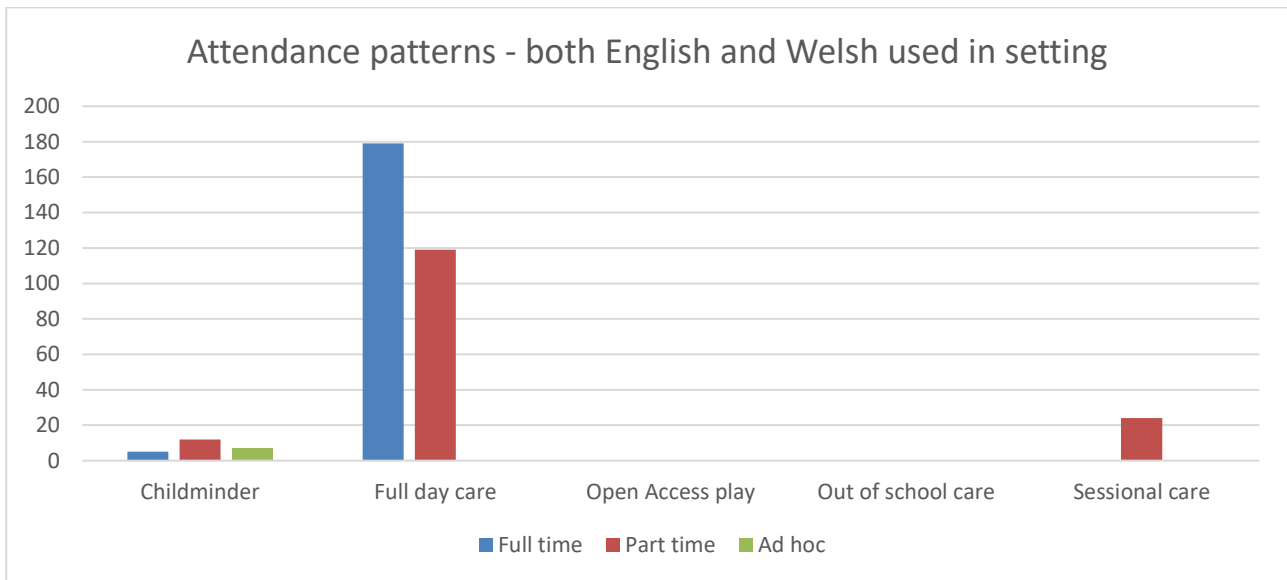
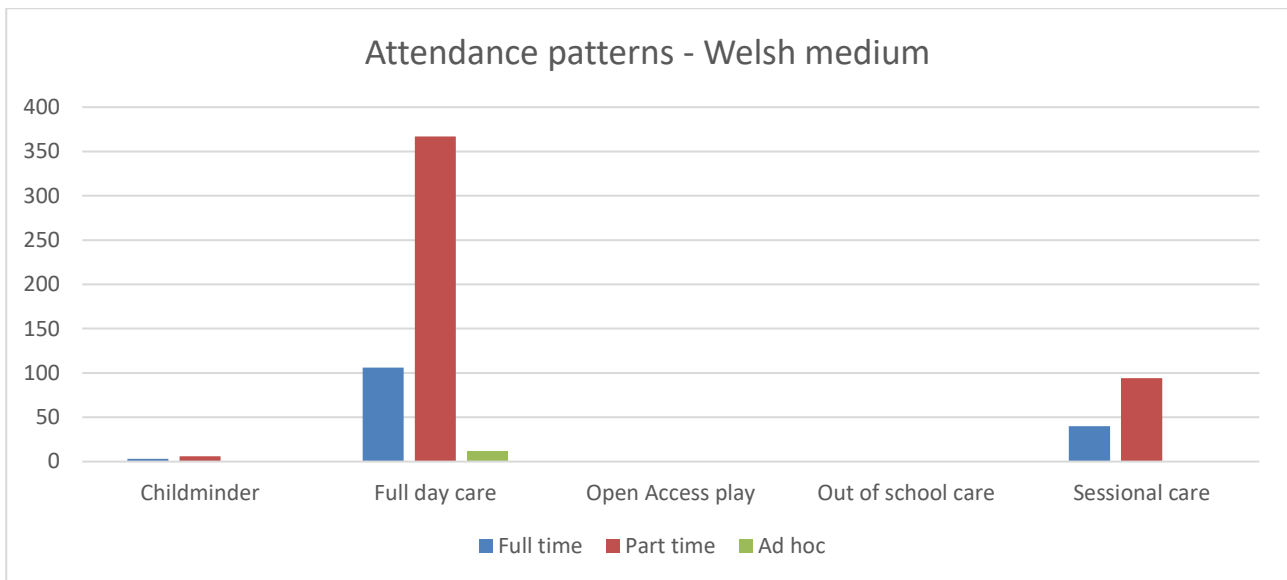
*breakdown not available

Attendance patterns

Part time attendance is the predominant type of placement in each childcare type, except in Full day care settings that use both English and Welsh. There is little ad hoc attendance, suggesting that pre-arranged booked hours are the norm. This may help to explain why one of the issues reported by parents is that there is not enough flexibility in the childcare sector to suit their uses. Exploring this further and supporting settings to offer more flexible places may support this.

Explore usage of ad hoc places and encourage settings to offer more flexible contracts





Waiting lists / Vacancies

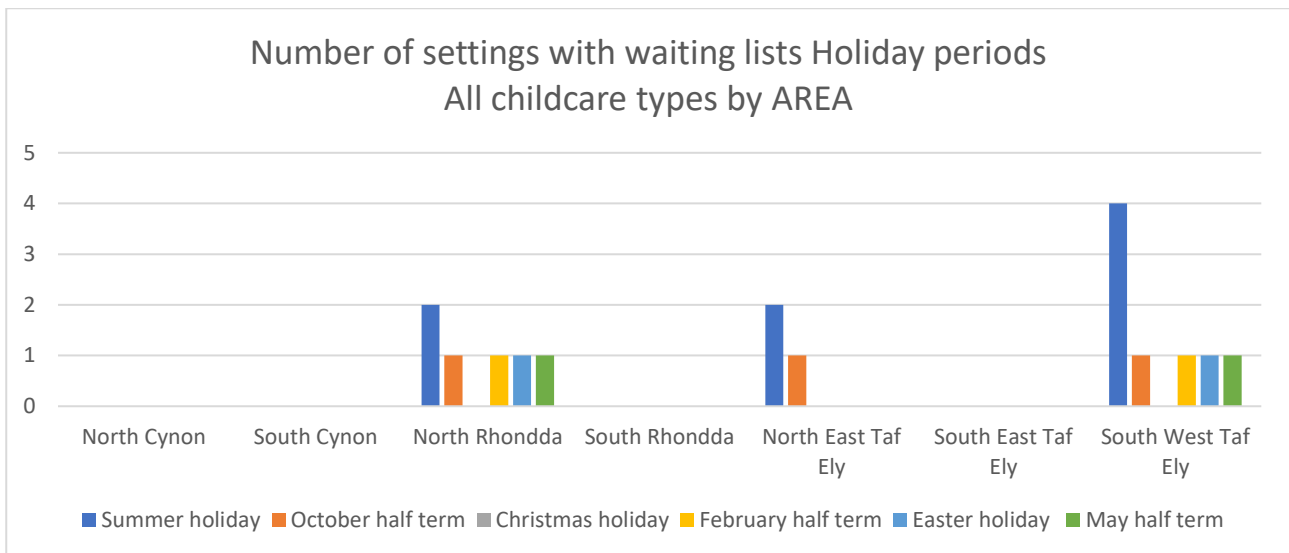
The table below shows the number of CIW registered childcare settings (all types) with waiting lists (in red) and those with vacancies (in green).

It can be seen that most waiting lists are for Full day care, with childcare settings in all areas reporting that they have waiting list for this type of care. The area with the highest number of settings reporting waiting lists is North East Taf Ely (8), followed by West Taf Ely (5). However, there are also settings in all areas that have reported that they have vacancies for Full day care. The highest number of settings reporting this were in South East Taf Ely (18), followed by South West Taf Ely (14). It would be prudent to investigate the North East Taf Ely area further to assess what level of demand is there for Full day care services.

Investigate demand for full day care in North East Taf Ely

Number of settings with waiting lists / vacancies All childcare types TERM TIME	North Cynon		South Cynon		North Rhondda		South Rhondda		North East Taf Ely		South East Taf Ely		South West Taf Ely	
Afternoons	0	1	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	5
After school	1	8	2	2	0	5	1	3	2	3	3	11	5	16
Before school	1	2	0	2	0	4	1	2	2	0	2	10	2	14
Creche	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Early Education placement	0	7	1	4	0	3	0	6	1	2	2	12	1	13
Evenings after 6pm	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Full day care/full day nursery	2	9	2	4	2	8	2	9	8	9	3	18	5	14
Half day care AM/half day nursery AM	0	6	0	4	0	4	3	3	0	2	1	12	0	13
Half day care PM/half day nursery PM	0	6	0	5	0	6	1	6	1	3	2	13	1	9
Lunch	0	2	0	3	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2
Mornings	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	3	1
Overnight	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin AM	2	0	1	1	1	1	3	2	0	1	0	5	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin PM	1	1	0	1	1	3	3	1	0	1	1	4	0	1
Playscheme sessions	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Weekends	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

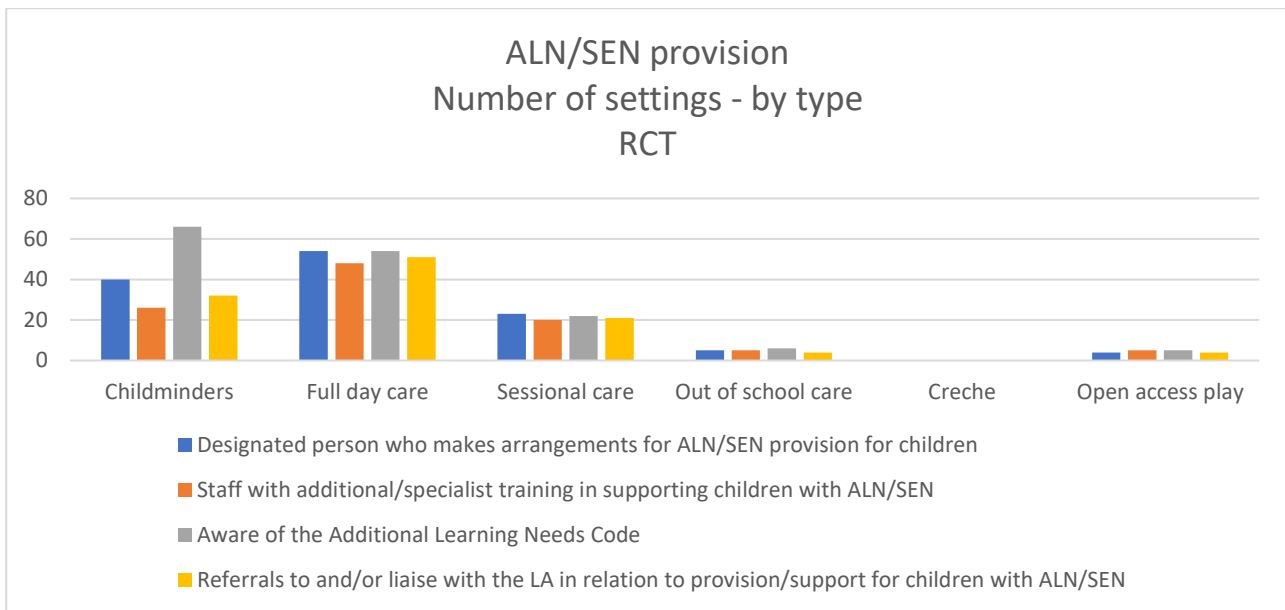
The graph below shows the number of settings that have waiting lists for school holiday periods. It can be seen that the highest number of waiting lists is for the summer holidays, with South West Taf Ely having the highest number of settings reporting this (4). From the parent survey, it seems that after school care is the more pressing need for parents, rather than holiday care. However, the higher number of settings with waiting lists in South West Taf Ely correlates with the highest number of responses in the parent survey that stated that they required holiday care (see Section Six, *More childcare needed* analysis).



Cater for children with disabilities

The data below is for RCT wide and all languages. This data is further analysed in Section Three for Welsh medium and dual language settings.

Number of settings that currently provide for / support children with ALN/SEN RCT wide	Cognition and learning	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Communication and interaction	Sensory and/or physical
Childminders	29	33	34	33
Full day care	44	45	46	43
Sessional care	14	18	21	16
Out of school care	3	4	4	3
Creche	0	0	0	0
Open access play	5	5	5	5
Total	95	105	110	100



68.7% of Childminders who submitted their SASS stated that they are aware of the ALN Code (compared to 92.8% of Full day care providers and 88% of Sessional care providers). However, only 27% stated that they have staff trained to support children with ALN/SEN (compared to 85.7% of Full day care providers and 80% of Sessional care providers). It can be difficult for childminders to attend training during the day or early evening. However, looking at ways to increase access to training opportunities appears to be needed, particularly for this childcare type.

Increase awareness of ALNET and setting responsibilities
Increase access to ALN training, particularly for childminders

Charges

Further information on charges is available in Section Five for each childcare type

Flying Start, Childcare Offer, Early Education

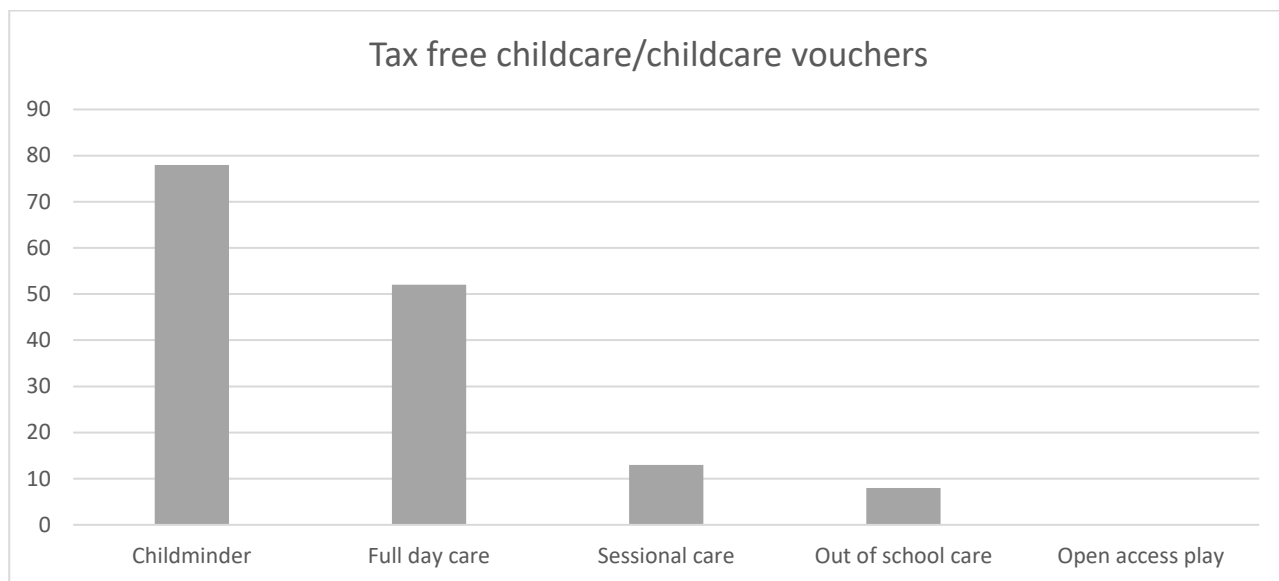
51 settings stated in their SASS returns that they deliver Flying Start, 31 stated they deliver FPN education and 125 were receiving funding via the Childcare Offer for Wales. The breakdown in type of setting is below:

Childcare type	Child-minder	Full day care	Sessional care	Out of school care	Open access play	Total
Flying Start	14	26	11	0	0	51
Childcare Offer <i>(currently receiving funding)</i>	55	54	14	2	0	125
FPN education	0	25	6	0	0	31

Further information on these schemes is available in Section Fourteen.

Tax free childcare / Childcare vouchers

151 stated in their SASS returns that their parents receive tax free childcare or childcare vouchers to support the cost of fees. The breakdown is as follows:



Please see Section Twelve for identified actions relating to this topic.

Provider feedback

As part of the SASS, providers were not asked for feedback, other than text responses for specific questions.

However, providers regularly communicate feedback to the childcare development team via regular satisfaction surveys and engagement events. Feedback is generally positive regarding the level of support they receive and the choice of training offered. ALN and allergen awareness training are two training needs that have recently been requested by settings. Current difficulties for the sector are mainly legacy issues from the pandemic, such as reduced numbers, recruitment issues and financial difficulties caused by two years of disruption.

Section 5: Supply of childcare

Childminder

Overview

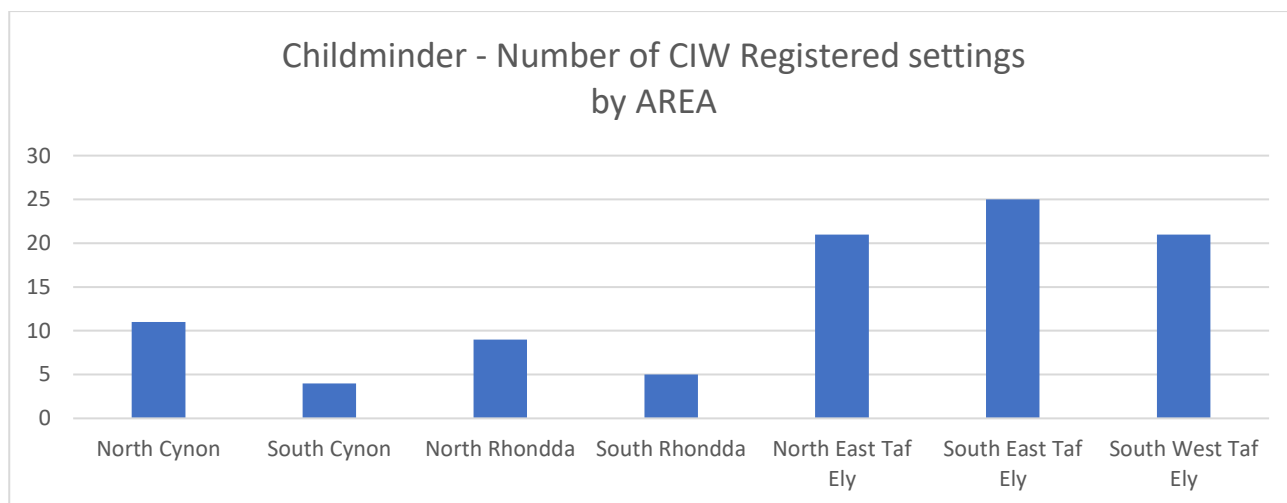
Childminding tends to be the childcare type with the most fluidity within the market. As this childcare type is based in private homes, it is very dependent on the personal circumstances of the childminder, hence relatively high numbers of cancelled registrations, compared to other childcare types.

The COVID-19 pandemic seems to have resulted in a higher than normal number of cancelled registrations, with 36 childminders cancelling their registrations in the last two years. We cannot be sure that the pandemic is the sole reason, but conversations with some of those childminders who have left the sector suggest that it was a contributory factor.

In contrast, only eight new childminders have registered with CIW in the last two years. The lockdowns and restrictions on movement have invariably been a factor in this, as has the uncertainty about levels of demand that the pandemic has caused. The situation is now easing and there are signs that a steady number of new registrations will be coming through the system over the coming months.

Since the last CSA report, the RCT Childminding Network has ceased, due to changing priorities and staffing restructures. A comprehensive package of support has been improved to support prospective childminders complete their CIW registration process. The package includes financial support to complete the pre-registration course, as well as Safeguarding, Food Hygiene and Paediatric First Aid training. A year's membership of PACEY is also offered, as is a small resource start up grant, a quality start pack and a year's public liability insurance. Further information on the current number of prospective childminders being supported to complete their CIW registration is available at Section Eight.

Number of CIW registered settings – by AREA



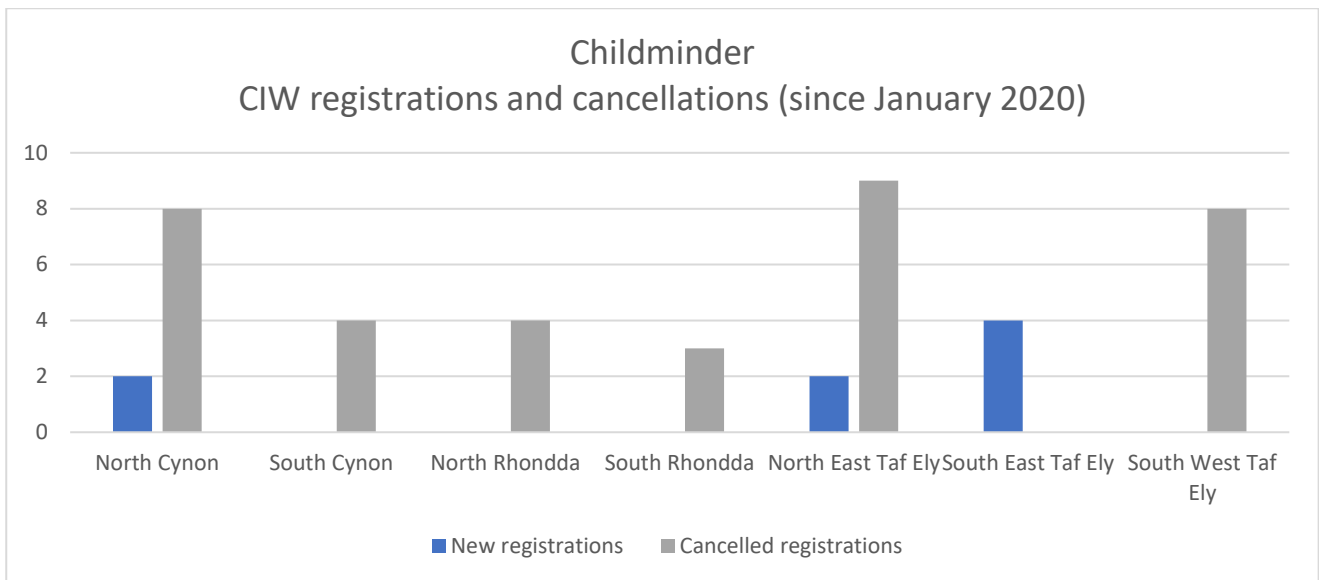
There seems to be low numbers of childminders in the South Cynon and South Rhondda areas. The South Rhondda area has historically seen low levels of childminders which development and promotional work in previous years has failed to address. Renewed efforts in this area would be advantageous.

Explore demand for additional childminders in South Cynon and South Rhondda areas

CIW registrations / cancellations

Since January 2020, 36 childminders have cancelled their registrations with CIW, with a loss of 263 places. In contrast, eight new registrations have been recorded, with 58 places created. This is a net loss of 205 places in the last two years. This is compared to 15 new registrations and 10 cancellations at the time of the last CSA report.

As mentioned above, although there is normally a fairly consistent turnover of registered childminders, the COVID pandemic does seem to have accelerated the loss of registered childminders and led to a decline in the number of new childminders becoming registered.



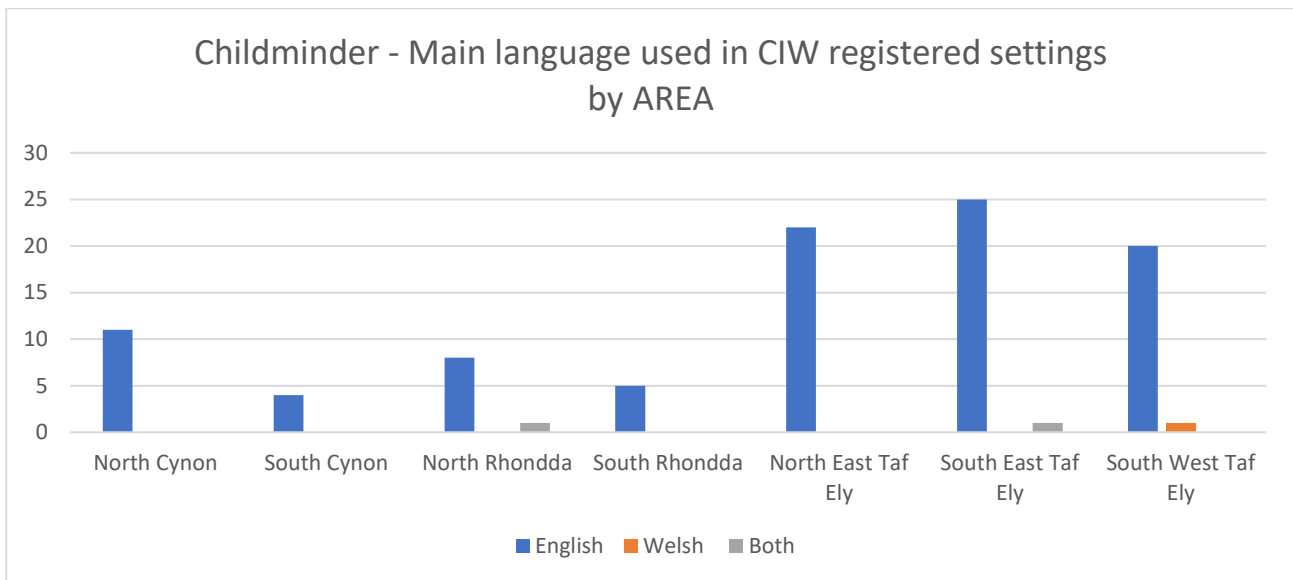
Childminders (since January 2020)	New registration	Number of new places	Cancelled registration	Number of lost places	Net loss/gain of places
North Cynon	2	16	8	72	-56
South Cynon	0		4	17	-17
North Rhondda			4	37	-37
South Rhondda			3	16	-16
North East Taf Ely	2	15	9	64	-49
South East Taf Ely	4	27	0	0	27
South West Taf Ely			8	57	-57
Total	8	58	36	263	-205

Promote childminding as a career, clearly highlighting the support package on offer to prospective childminders

Language – by AREA

The graph below shows that nearly all childminders describe themselves as English medium. Two report that they use both English and Welsh in their settings, with only one reporting that they are a Welsh medium setting. It is likely that many current childminders are able to converse in Welsh with the children in their care quite confidently, but just do not identify as Welsh speakers or do not have the confidence to market their services as Welsh medium or dual language. Working with partners, a priority during the course of this CSA report will be to encourage the use of Welsh in childminding settings and support those that know some Welsh to make more use of it in their practice.

Further information on Welsh medium childcare provision is available in Section Three.



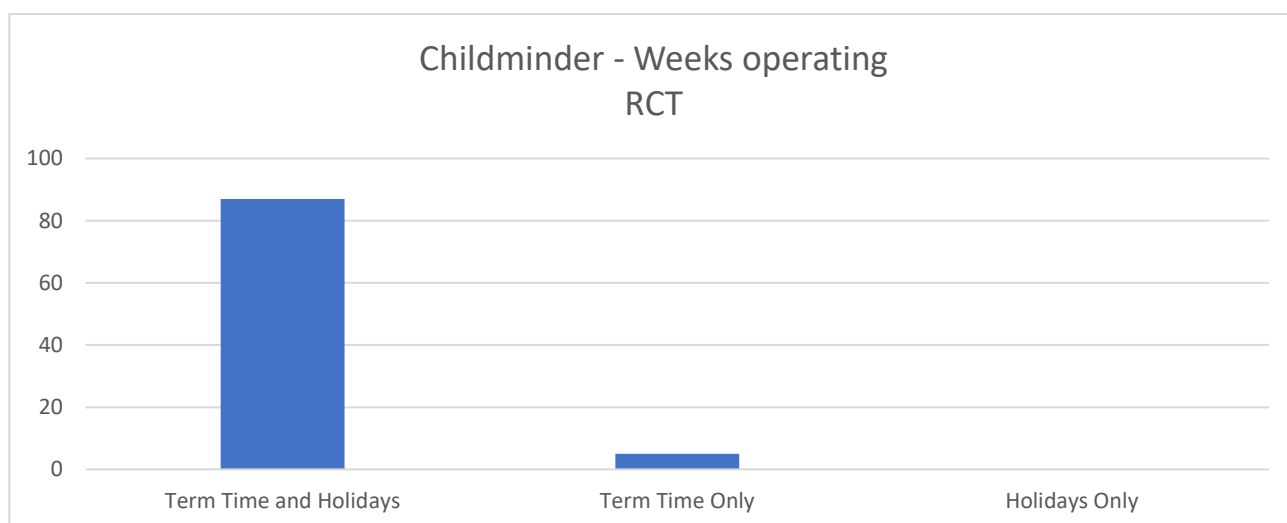
**Promotion campaign to attract more Welsh speaking childminders.
Offer support and training for non-confident Welsh speakers to encourage them to use the language in their settings and promote themselves as Welsh medium settings.**

Services offered

As mentioned in Section Four, there are only 32 childcare settings registered to deliver pre-nursery education and able to offer early education placements. None of these settings are childminders. Therefore, the Early Education Placement data should be viewed with caution.

Childminder Type of care offered	Number of settings							Total
	North Cynon	South Cynon	North Rhondda	South Rhondda	North East Taf Ely	South East Taf Ely	South West Taf Ely	
Afternoons	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
After school	12	3	7	4	12	22	18	78
Before school	6	1	6	4	7	21	17	62
Creche	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Early Education placement	4	2	2	1	1	14	7	31
Evenings after 6pm	1	1	3	0	1	3	2	11
Full day care/full day nursery	10	3	6	4	19	21	19	82
Half day care AM/half day nursery AM	7	3	5	3	8	13	13	52
Half day care PM/half day nursery PM	8	3	4	3	5	19	13	55
Lunch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mornings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

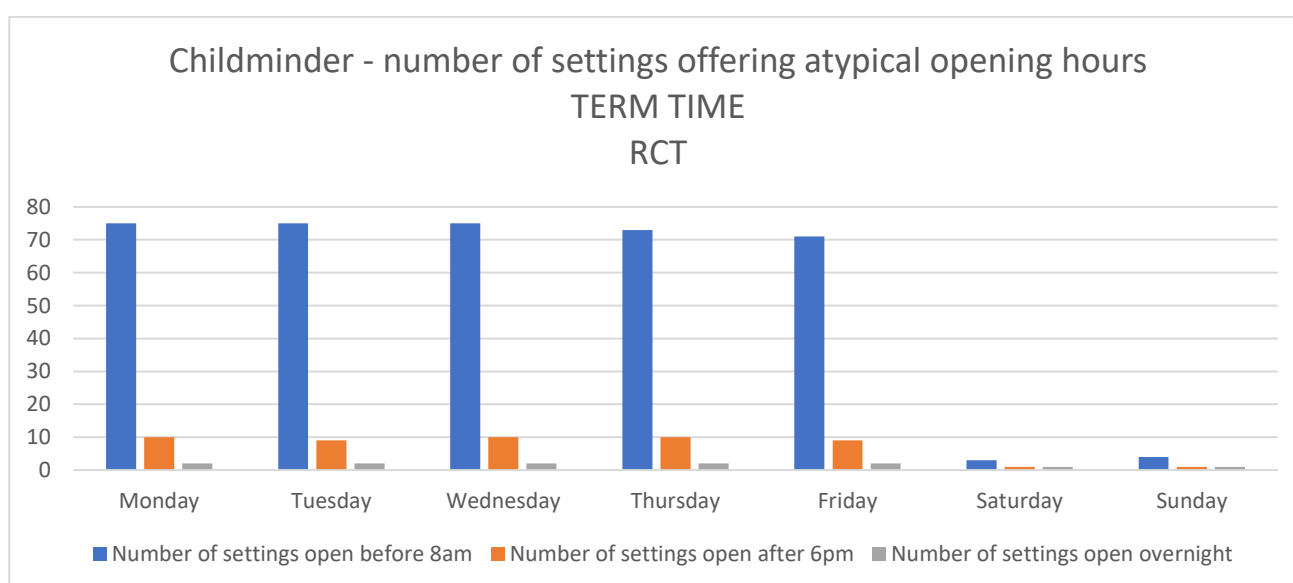
Childminder Type of care offered	Number of settings							Total
	North Cynon	South Cynon	North Rhondda	South Rhondda	North East Taf Ely	South East Taf Ely	South West Taf Ely	
Overnight	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playscheme sessions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weekends	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1



Childminder Weeks operating By AREA	Term Time and Holidays	Term Time Only	Holidays Only
North Cynon	11	0	0
South Cynon	3	0	0
North Rhondda	7	1	0
South Rhondda	4	0	0
North East Taf Ely	21	0	0
South East Taf Ely	23	2	0
South West Taf Ely	18	2	0
Total	87	5	0

Opening times – TERM TIME

Childminder TERM TIME opening times RCT	Earliest opening time	Latest opening time	Earliest closing time	Latest closing time	Number open before 8am	Number open after 6pm	Number open overnight
Monday	05:00	15:00	06:30	20:00	75	10	2
Tuesday	05:00	15:00	06:30	20:00	75	9	2
Wednesday	05:00	15:00	06:30	20:00	75	10	2
Thursday	05:00	15:00	06:30	20:00	73	10	2
Friday	05:00	15:00	06:30	20:00	71	9	2
Saturday	05:00	07:30	10:00	19:00	3	1	1
Sunday	05:00	07:30	10:00	19:00	4	1	1



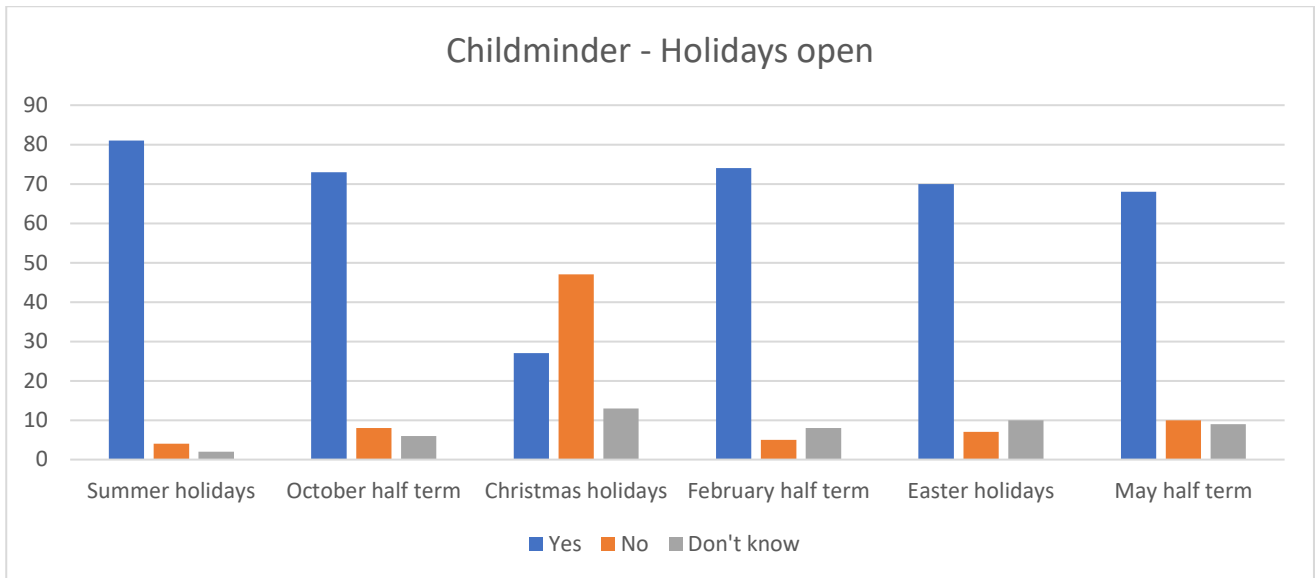
Data for overnight care varies across the SASS submissions. Section Four notes the services offered according to each childcare type. In this part of the SASS, no childminders reported offering overnight care. However, in the section of the SASS asking about opening times, 2 childminders stated that they offer this service. This is reported in the graph above. However, caution should be taken when reviewing the results. Further work will be undertaken to establish if these two childminders do in fact offer overnight care. And further work will be taken to encourage more childminders to offer atypical hours.

Further explore parental demand for weekend / overnight care

Opening times – SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Five childminders stated that they work term time only, whilst 11 stated that their opening times differ in the school holidays from term time.

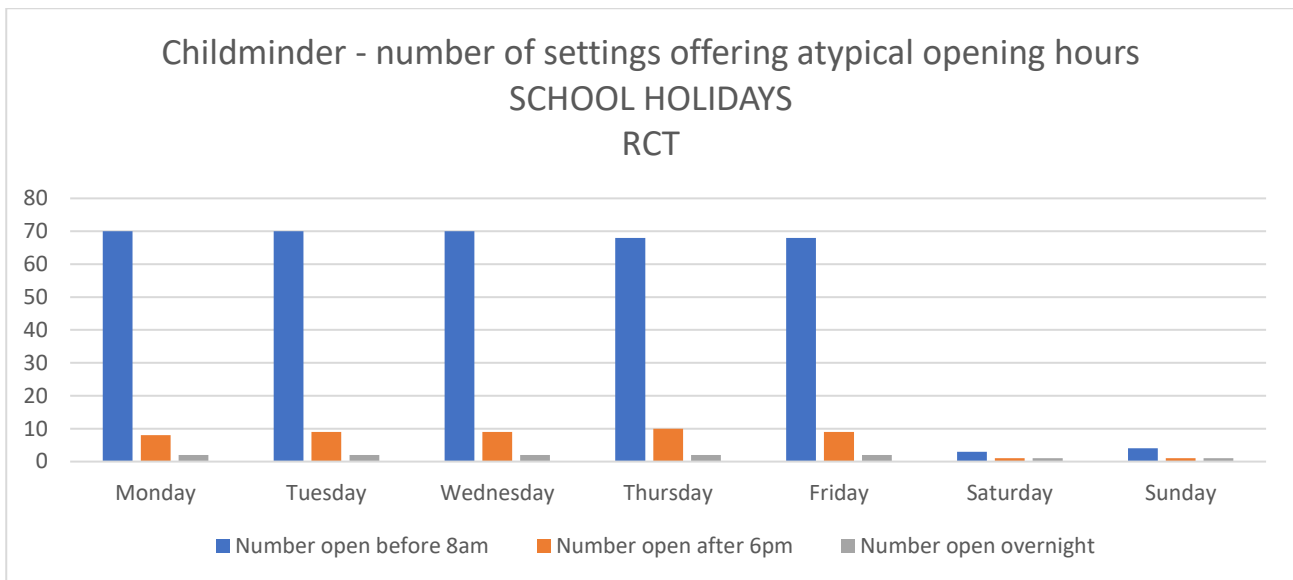
Of those childminders that do open in the school holidays, the breakdown of which holidays they cover are displayed below. As can be seen, the majority open every holiday, except for the Christmas break, with 27 stating they are open, and 47 stating they are closed.



The average number of days delivered in the holidays by childminders is:

- Summer holidays 25
- October half term 5
- Christmas holidays 10
- February half term 5
- Easter holidays 8
- May half term 4

Childminder SCHOOL HOLIDAYS opening times RCT	Earliest opening time	Latest opening time	Earliest closing time	Latest closing time	Number open before 8am	Number open after 6pm	Number open overnight
Monday	05:00	15:00	06:30	20:00	70	8	2
Tuesday	05:00	15:00	06:30	20:00	70	9	2
Wednesday	05:00	15:00	06:30	20:00	70	9	2
Thursday	05:00	15:00	06:30	20:00	68	10	2
Friday	05:00	15:00	06:30	20:00	68	9	2
Saturday	05:00	07:30	10:00	19:30	3	1	1
Sunday	05:00	07:30	10:00	19:30	4	1	1



It can be seen that childminders offer a flexible service for parents, incorporating most of the school holiday periods, as well as offering longer opening hours than other childcare types.

Waiting lists / Vacancies

The table below shows the number of Childminders with waiting lists (in red) and those with vacancies (in green).

It can be seen that most waiting lists are for before school care and full day care. North East Taf Ely and South East Taf Ely had the highest number of childminders reporting waiting lists (2 each) for before school care, whilst childminders in South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely reported the highest number of vacancies (9 each). For full day care, childminders in North East Taf Ely reported the most waiting lists (8), whilst South East Taf Ely reported the most vacancies (13), followed by South West Taf Ely (9). Recruitment of new childminders is an ongoing priority, but a promotional campaign in North East Taf Ely may be prudent.

Childminding promotional campaign in North East Taf Ely

Number of Childminder waiting lists / vacancies TERM TIME	North Cynon		South Cynon		North Rhondda		South Rhondda		North East Taf Ely		South East Taf Ely		South West Taf Ely	
Afternoons	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
After school	1	5	0	2	0	2	0	2	2	3	3	8	1	8
Before school	1	2	0	0	0	2	1	1	2	0	2	9	1	9
Creche	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Early Education placement	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	8	0	4
Evenings after 6pm	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Full day care/full day nursery	1	5	1	1	0	3	0	3	8	6	3	13	2	9

Number of Childminder waiting lists / vacancies TERM TIME	North Cynon		South Cynon		North Rhondda		South Rhondda		North East Taf Ely		South East Taf Ely		South West Taf Ely	
Half day care AM/half day nursery AM	0	4	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	7	0	9
Half day care PM/half day nursery PM	0	4	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	1	1	8	1	4
Lunch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mornings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overnight	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playscheme sessions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weekends	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

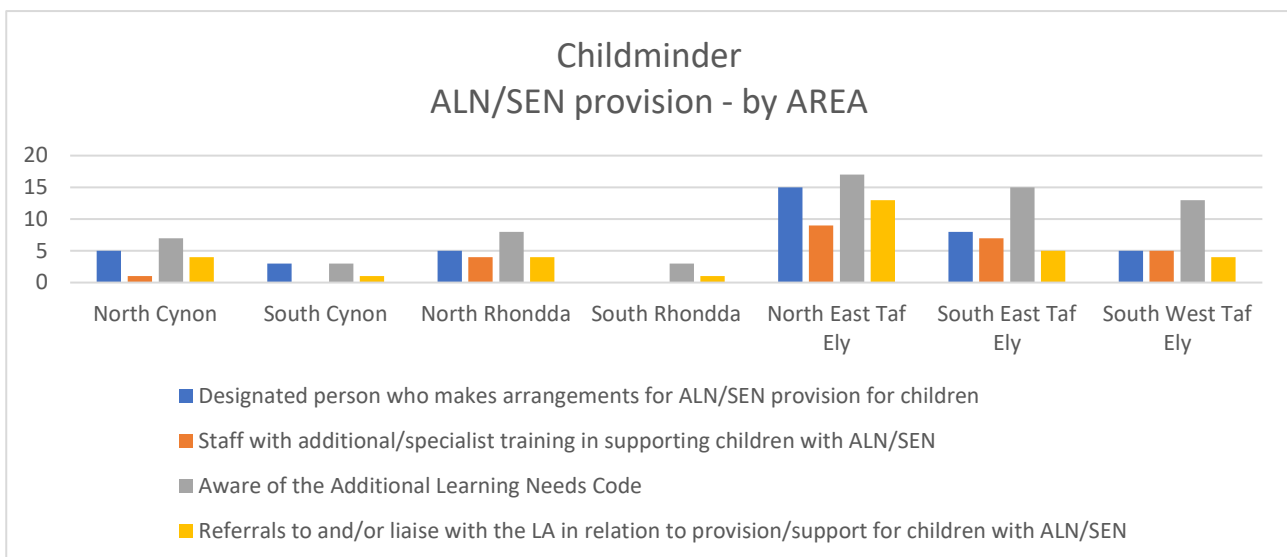
Childminder waiting lists SCHOOL HOLIDAYS RCT	Waiting list?		
	Yes	No	Average number of children on waiting list
Summer holidays	4	77	1.5
October half term	2	71	2
Christmas holidays	0	27	0
February half term	1	73	3
Easter holidays	1	69	3
May half term	1	67	3

Cater for children with disabilities

41 childminders reported in the SASS returns that they currently care for children with learning or physical needs. It can be problematic for childminders to access training to support these children compared to other childcare types, as they are not able to release staff to attend daytime training courses. Even those childminders that employ assistants do so to ensure their ratio is maintained, and so may not be able to leave the setting. The table below illustrates the type of additional learning or physical need that childminders are currently supporting within their settings.

Since the ALN Lead Officer came into post in January 2021, great progress has been made in ensuring that specialist training is available to all childcare settings at times that are convenient for them. The rise in virtual learning since the pandemic started has helped childminders with this, as this is a much more convenient method of engagement for them during the weekday.

Childminder Number of settings that currently provide for / support children with ALN/SEN by AREA	Cognition and learning	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Communicati on and interaction	Sensory and/or physical
North Cynon	5	6	6	5
South Cynon	2	2	1	2
North Rhondda	2	2	1	2
South Rhondda	0	0	1	0
North East Taf Ely	9	10	9	11
South East Taf Ely	6	7	8	5
South West Taf Ely	5	6	8	8
Total	29	33	34	33



Charges

Providers were asked to input their fees in their SASS returns, according to whether they charge by an hourly rate, or by session, day, week or term. It is clear by some of the responses that this question was misunderstood by some providers. Therefore, some caution should be used when analysing the rates below.

Despite this, it can be seen that the average hourly rate for childminders ranges from £4.72 to £5.50 per hour.

Charges – RCT wide

Childminder Highest charge RCT	Charge per hour	Charge per session	Charge per day	Charge per week	Charge per term
Under 1 year	£6.00	£0.00	£48.00	£90.00	£0.00
1 years old	£6.00	£49.50	£48.00	£102.00	£0.00
2 years old	£6.00	£45.00	£49.50	£170.00	£0.00
3 years old	£6.00	£49.50	£48.00	£90.00	£0.00
4 years old	£6.50	£15.00	£45.00	£15.00	£0.00
5-7 year olds	£6.50	£20.00	£45.00	£150.00	£150.00
8-11 year olds	£6.50	£15.00	£42.00	£150.00	£0.00
12-14 year olds	£6.00	£10.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
15-17 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£150.00

Childminder Lowest charge RCT	Charge per hour	Charge per session	Charge per day	Charge per week	Charge per term
Under 1 year	£4.00	£0.00	£35.00	£80.00	£0.00
1 years old	£4.00	£30.00	£33.75	£40.00	£0.00
2 years old	£4.00	£25.00	£33.75	£40.00	£0.00
3 years old	£4.00	£6.00	£15.00	£30.00	£0.00
4 years old	£4.00	£6.00	£16.00	£15.00	£0.00
5-7 year olds	£4.00	£6.00	£16.00	£45.00	£150.00
8-11 year olds	£4.00	£5.00	£10.00	£45.00	£0.00
12-14 year olds	£5.00	£10.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
15-17 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£150.00

Childminder Average charge RCT	Charge per hour	Charge per session	Charge per day	Charge per week	Charge per term
Under 1 year	£4.77	£0.00	£43.10	£85.00	£0.00
1 years old	£4.75	£41.50	£42.06	£71.00	£0.00
2 years old	£4.76	£33.33	£42.07	£105.00	£0.00
3 years old	£4.77	£22.58	£40.94	£56.25	£0.00
4 years old	£4.72	£9.79	£32.67	£15.00	£0.00
5-7 year olds	£4.78	£10.81	£33.20	£77.25	£150.00
8-11 year olds	£4.75	£8.75	£28.83	£85.00	£0.00
12-14 year olds	£5.50	£10.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
15-17 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£150.00

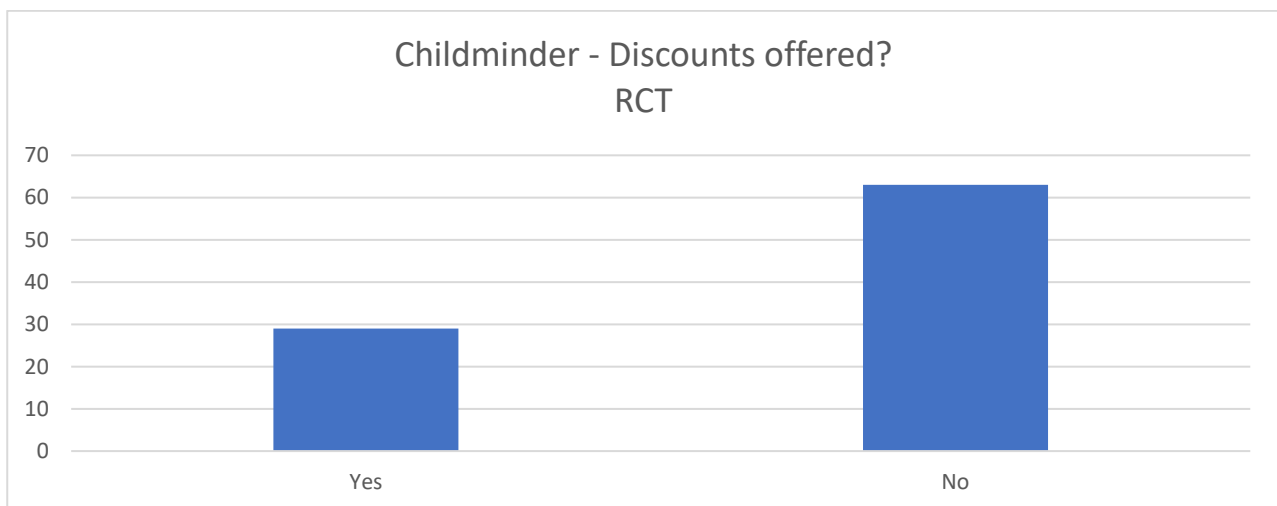
Charges – by AREA

The highest average hourly rate was from the South Cynon area with £6.00 per hour charged for 8-11 year olds. The lowest average hourly rate was £4.00 per hour for under 1 year olds, reported in the North Cynon and South East Taf Ely areas. Rates in South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely are on the lower side of the range. These are the areas with the highest concentrations of registered childminders, so perhaps this is indicative of the competition in the area.

Childminder Average cost per hour By AREA	Under 1 year	1 years old	2 years old	3 years old	4 years old	5-7 years	8-11 years	12-14 years	15-17 years
North Cynon	£4.00	£5.03	£5.22	£5.16	£5.20	£5.13	£5.13	£0.00	£0.00
South Cynon	£5.75	£5.50	£5.50	£5.50	£5.50	£5.50	£6.00	£6.00	£0.00
North Rhondda	£4.50	£4.70	£4.58	£4.60	£4.55	£4.72	£4.78	£0.00	£0.00
South Rhondda	£0.00	£4.50	£4.00	£4.50	£4.25	£4.50	£4.25	£0.00	£0.00
North East Taf Ely	£5.00	£5.00	£5.13	£5.13	£5.17	£5.63	£5.50	£0.00	£0.00
South East Taf Ely	£4.00	£4.60	£4.50	£4.55	£4.64	£4.68	£4.61	£5.00	£0.00
South West Taf Ely	£4.69	£4.46	£4.43	£4.50	£4.38	£4.44	£4.57	£0.00	£0.00

Discounts offered

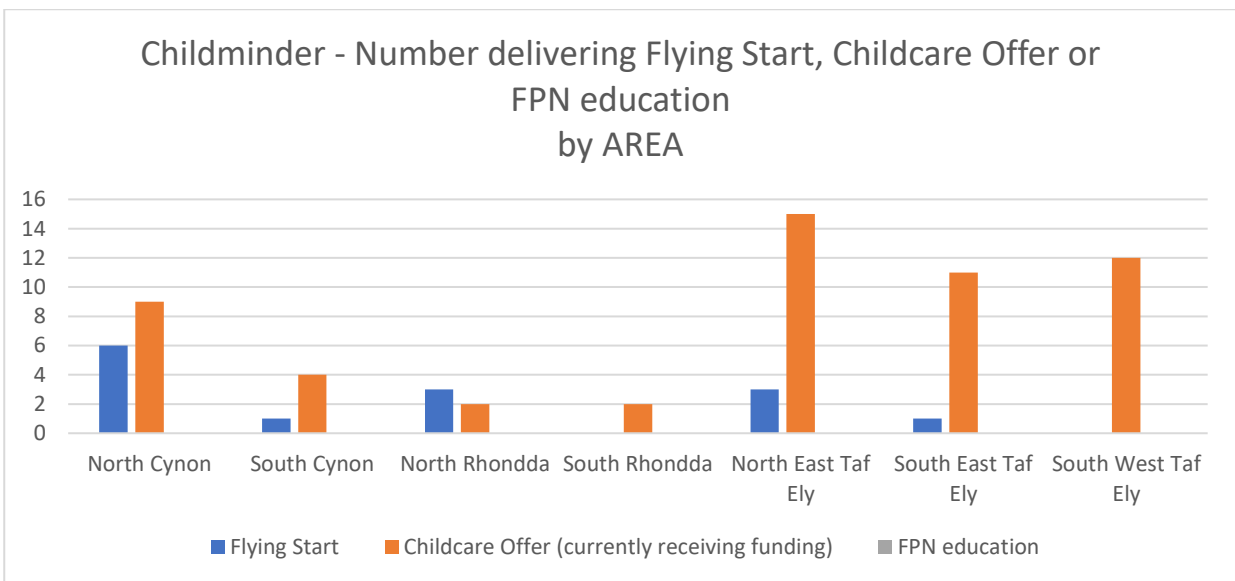
The majority of childminders do not offer discounts to parents. The competition mentioned above may also translate to attracting parents by offering discounts, as the highest proportion of those who reported they did offer discounts were in the South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely areas, as well as North East Taf Ely.





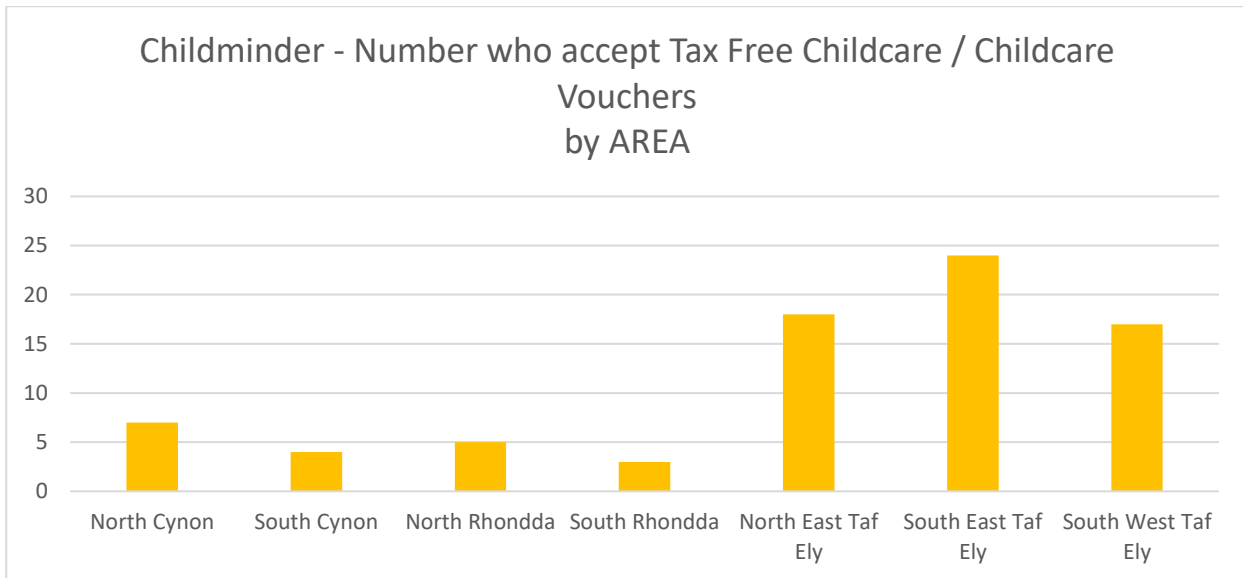
Flying Start, Childcare offer, Early Education

The highest concentration of childminders offering Flying Start services was in North Cynon (6), followed by North Rhondda and North East Taf Ely (3 each), whilst the highest number delivering Childcare Offer was in North East Taf Ely (15), followed by South West Taf Ely (12).



Tax free childcare / Childcare vouchers

Childminders in South East Taf Ely were the most likely to accept the tax free childcare scheme or childcare vouchers (24), followed by North East Taf Ely (18).



Strengths

- Good support package in place for prospective parents
- Encouraging number of childminders in most geographical areas of RCT

Weaknesses

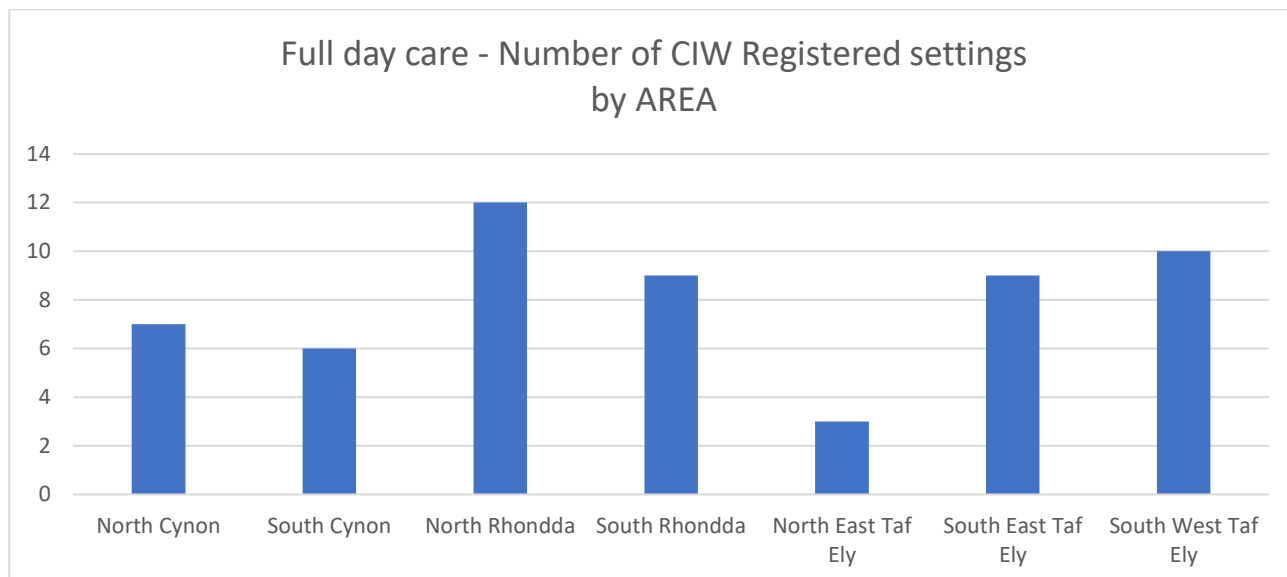
- Low number of childminders in South Cynon and South Rhondda
- Low number of Welsh speaking childminders
- High number cancelling registration is always an issue, but seems to be more so in light of the COVID-19 pandemic

Full day care

Overview

Since the introduction of the Childcare Offer for Wales in 2017, there has been a move by Sessional care providers to re-register with CIW as Full day care providers. This is not so that they can offer the full range of services that traditional Full day care providers offer. But rather to give them the flexibility to offer additional services to cater for the Childcare Offer, such as wraparound services for nursery aged children and care during lunchtime periods.

Number of CIW registered settings – by AREA

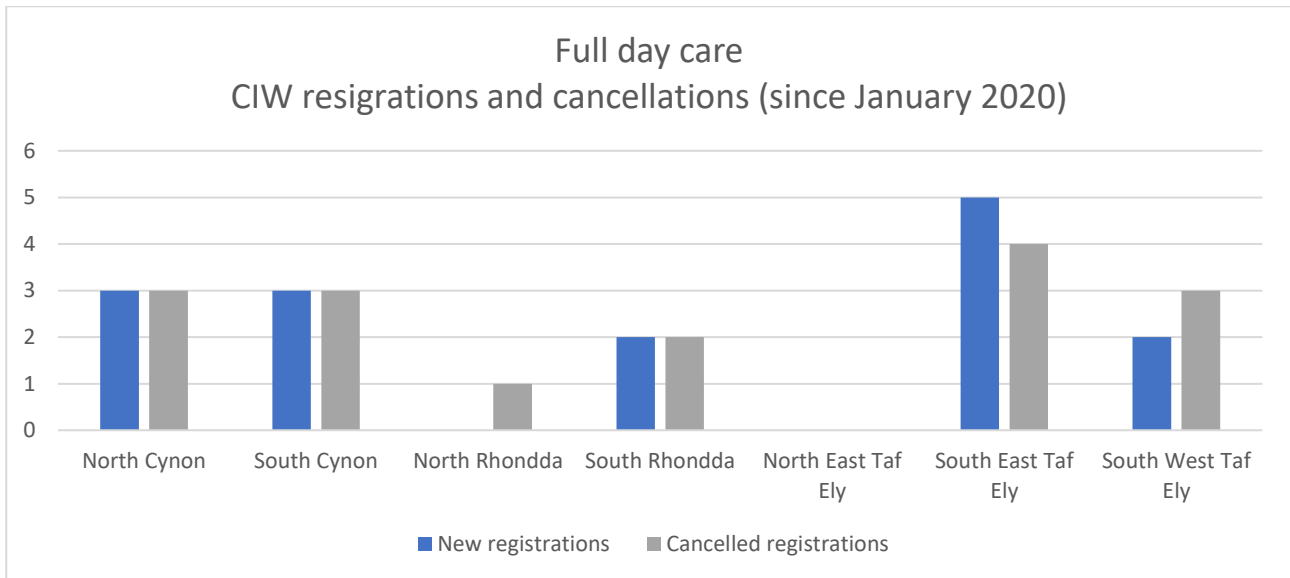


North East Taf Ely has the least number of Full day care providers. This area covers Pontypridd town, as well as the student area around the University of South Wales in Treforest. As a result, the wards in this area have some of the lowest numbers of 0-17 year olds of the whole of RCT. There is also a lack of suitable venues which means that, despite several explorations in the past, the development of Full day care services has been a challenge. Since the last CSA report, there has been significant building developments in Pontypridd including the creation of the Llys Cadwyn buildings and the redevelopment of the YMCA building, due to be complete later in 2022. There is space planned in the YMCA for a childcare facility. This will be a small facility but is likely to cater for some unmet demand in the future.

Monitor demand for Full day care services in North East Taf Ely

CIW registrations / cancellations

Since January 2020, there has been a net increase of 63 places for Full day care. As mentioned above, this is likely as a result of Sessional care providers changing their CIW registrations.



Full day care (since January 2020)	New registration	Number of new places	Cancelled registration	Number of lost places	Net loss/gain of places
North Cynon	3	100	3	72	28
South Cynon	3	86	3	66	20
North Rhondda	0	0	1	60	-60
South Rhondda	2	37	2	41	-4
North East Taf Ely	0	0	0	0	0
South East Taf Ely	5	138	4	97	41
South West Taf Ely	2	127	3	89	38
Total	15	488	16	425	63

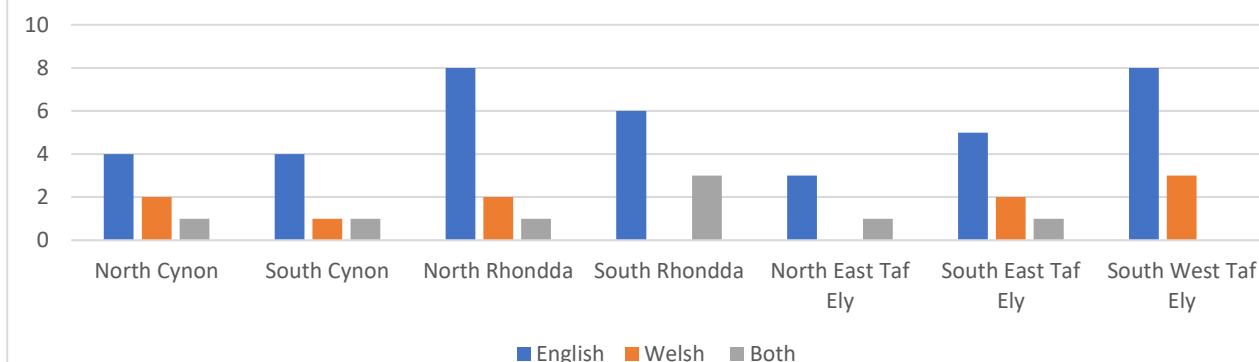
The number of Full day care places has remained fairly constant over the last five years. The net loss in North Rhondda is the result of a Welsh medium setting closing in 2021.

Language – by AREA

The graph below shows the language used in Full day care settings across RCT. Although English medium settings make up the majority of Full day care providers, there is a reasonable selection of Welsh medium and dual language services.

Further information on Welsh medium childcare provision is available in Section Three.

Full day care - Main language used in CIW registered settings
by AREA

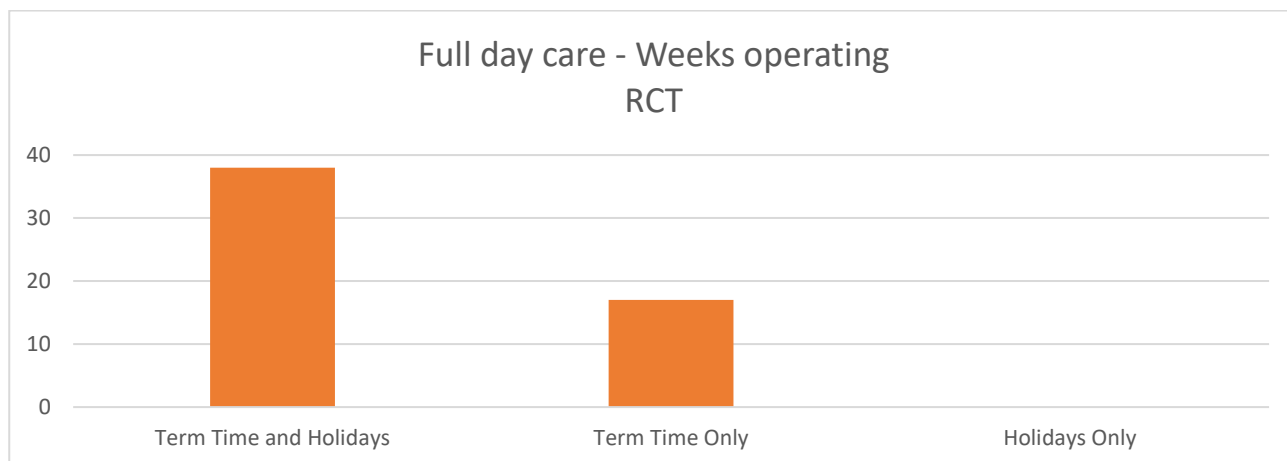


Services offered

As you would expect, Full day care providers offer the broadest range of services for parents, as well as open for the majority of the school holiday periods. Although a high number open before 8am in weekdays, only one setting reported opening beyond 6pm, meaning that care in atypical hours is limited. The one setting that reported they offer overnight care is unlikely to be accurate, although further investigation will be made to determine this.

Full day care Type of care offered	Number of settings							Total
	North Cynon	South Cynon	North Rhondda	South Rhondda	North East Taf Ely	South East Taf Ely	South West Taf Ely	
Afternoons	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
After school	3	2	3	2	0	3	7	20
Before school	1	2	2	1	0	2	5	13
Creche	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Early Education placement	4	3	7	8	1	7	9	39
Evenings after 6pm	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Full day care/full day nursery	4	5	8	8	3	9	8	45
Half day care AM/half day nursery AM	4	3	6	6	3	7	8	64
Half day care PM/half day nursery PM	4	3	7	6	2	7	9	38
Lunch	3	2	7	2	0	2	3	19
Mornings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overnight	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin AM	2	2	5	5	1	5	1	21
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin PM	2	2	6	5	1	5	1	22

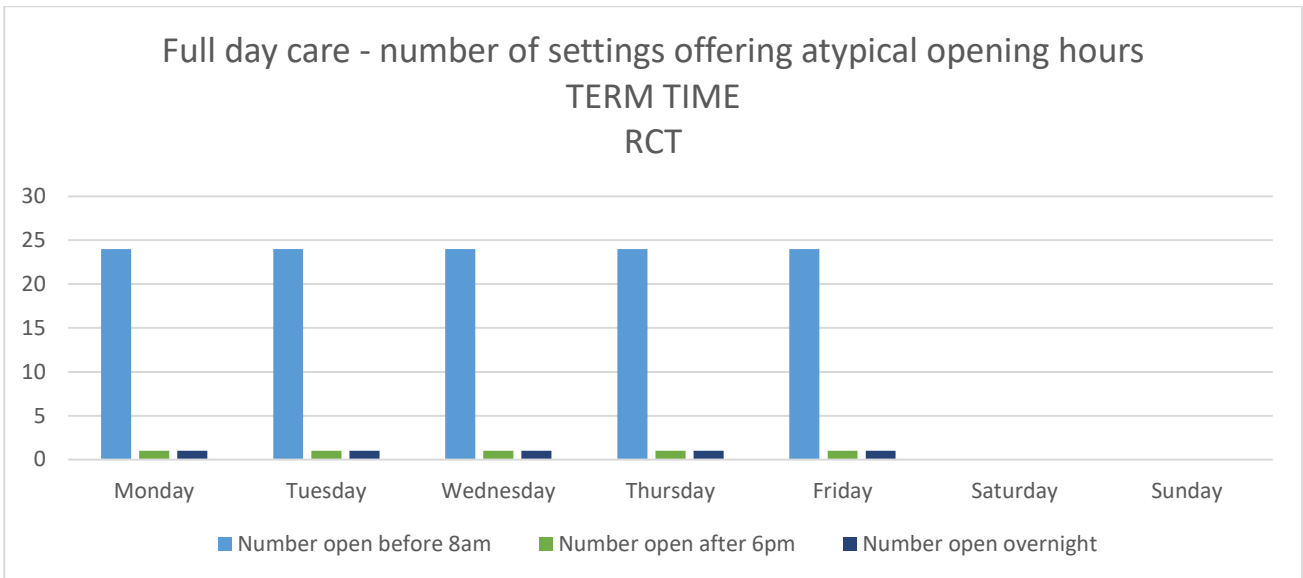
Full day care Type of care offered	Number of settings							Total
	North Cynon	South Cynon	North Rhondda	South Rhondda	North East Taf Ely	South East Taf Ely	South West Taf Ely	
Playscheme sessions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weekends	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Full day care Weeks operating By AREA	Term Time and Holidays	Term Time Only	Holidays Only
North Cynon	5	2	0
South Cynon	1	4	0
North Rhondda	7	5	0
South Rhondda	7	2	0
North East Taf Ely	2	1	0
South East Taf Ely	7	2	0
South West Taf Ely	9	1	0
Total	38	17	0

Opening times – TERM TIME

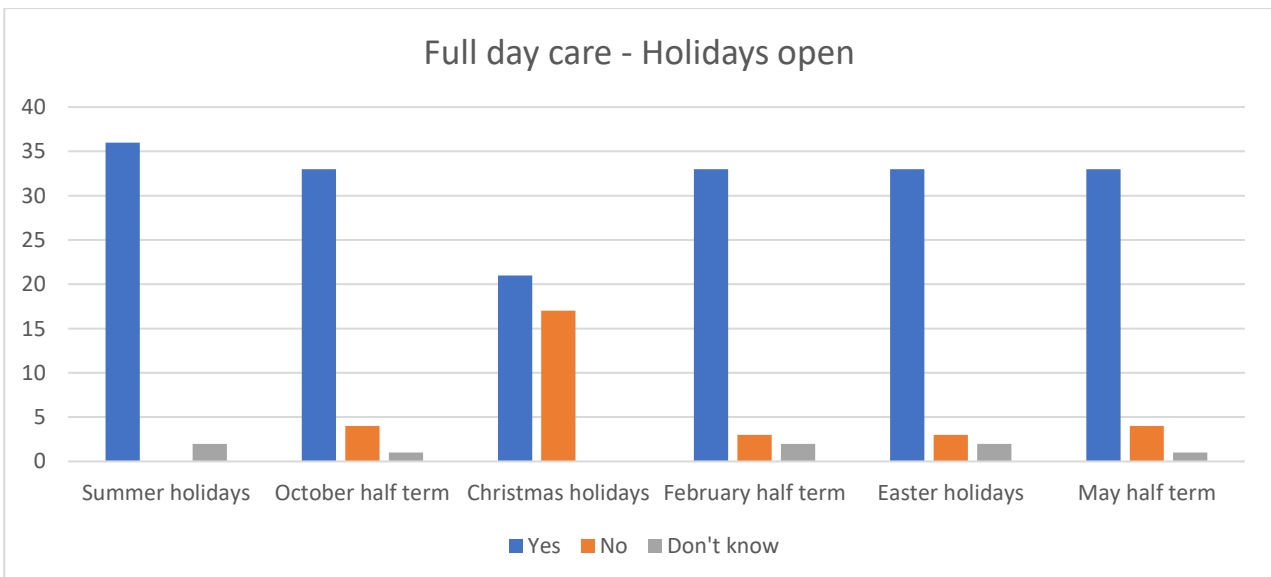
Full day care TERM TIME opening times RCT	Earliest opening time	Latest opening time	Earliest closing time	Latest closing time	Number open before 8am	Number open after 6pm	Number open overnight
Monday	06:45	13:00	12:15	19:00	24	1	1
Tuesday	06:45	13:00	12:15	19:00	24	1	1
Wednesday	06:45	13:00	12:15	19:00	24	1	1
Thursday	06:45	13:00	12:15	19:00	24	1	1
Friday	06:45	13:00	12:15	19:00	24	1	1
Saturday	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sunday	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Opening times – SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

17 Full day care providers stated that they work term time only, whilst six stated that their opening times differ in the school holidays from term time. This relatively high number may be the Sessional care providers who have registered as Full day care settings to offer increased services in term time, but do not wish to open in holiday periods.

Of the full day care providers that do open in the school holidays, the breakdown of which holidays they cover are displayed below. As can be seen, the majority open every holiday, except for the Christmas break, with 21 stating that they are open, and 17 stating they are closed.

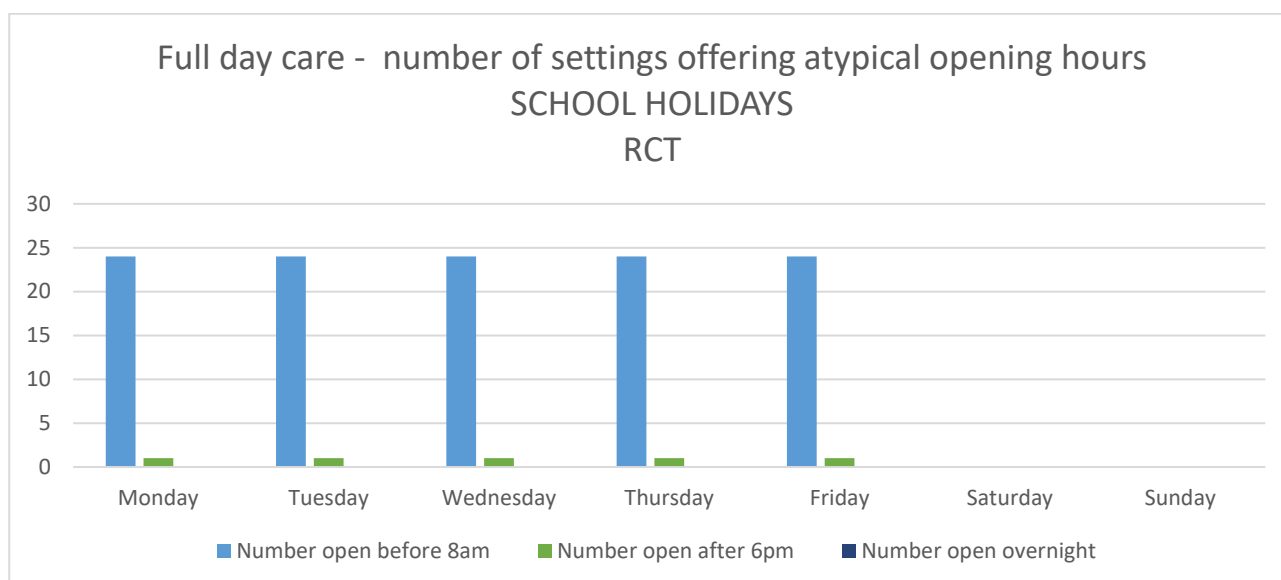


The average number of days delivered in the holidays by full day care providers is:

- Summer holidays 20
- October half term 5
- Christmas holidays 5
- February half term 5

- Easter holidays 7
- May half term 4

Full day care SCHOOL HOLIDAYS opening times RCT	Earliest opening time	Latest opening time	Earliest closing time	Latest closing time	Number open before 8am	Number open after 6pm	Number open overnight
Monday	06:45	12:25	15:00	19:00	24	1	0
Tuesday	06:45	12:25	15:00	19:00	24	1	0
Wednesday	06:45	12:25	15:00	19:00	24	1	0
Thursday	06:45	12:25	15:00	19:00	24	1	0
Friday	06:45	12:25	15:00	19:00	24	1	0
Saturday	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sunday	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Waiting list / Vacancies

The table below shows the number of Full day care providers with waiting lists (in red) and those with vacancies (in green).

It can be seen that most waiting lists are for full day care. South West Taf Ely (3) and South Rhondda (2) reporting the highest number of settings with waiting lists. Overall, Full day care settings in all areas reported vacancies for full day care, AM and PM sessions and Early Education placements. Settings in North East Taf Ely reported the lowest level of vacancies across the different services offered compared to the other areas.

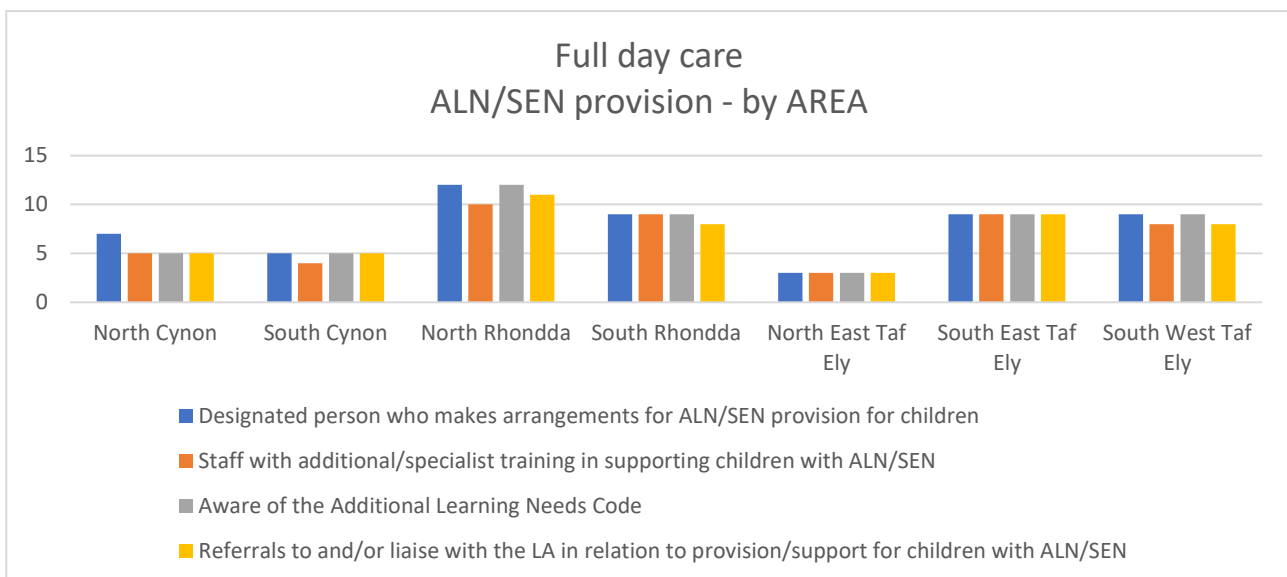
Number of Full day care settings waiting lists / vacancies TERM TIME	North Cynon		South Cynon		North Rhondda		South Rhondda		North East Taf Ely		South East Taf Ely		South West Taf Ely	
Afternoons	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
After school	0	3	2	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	3	1	6
Before school	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	4
Creche	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Early Education placement	0	4	1	2	0	3	0	5	0	1	2	4	1	6
Evenings after 6pm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Full day care/full day nursery	1	4	1	3	0	5	2	6	0	3	0	5	3	5
Half day care AM/half day nursery AM	0	2	0	2	0	4	2	2	0	2	0	5	0	4
Half day care PM/half day nursery PM	0	2	0	3	0	5	1	4	0	2	1	5	0	5
Lunch	0	2	0	2	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Mornings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overnight	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin AM	2	0	1	1	1	1	3	2	0	1	0	5	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin PM	1	1	0	1	1	3	3	1	0	1	1	4	0	1
Playscheme sessions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weekends	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Full day care waiting lists SCHOOL HOLIDAYS RCT	Waiting list?		
	Yes	No	Average number of children on waiting list
Summer holidays	1	35	3
October half term	0	33	0
Christmas holidays	0	21	0
February half term	0	33	0
Easter holidays	0	33	0
May half term	0	33	0

Cater for children with disabilities

47 Full day care settings reported in their SASS returns that they currently cater for children with learning or physical needs.

Full day care Number of settings that currently provide for / support children with ALN/SEN By AREA	Cognition and learning	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Communicati on and interaction	Sensory and/or physical
North Cynon	5	5	5	5
South Cynon	4	5	5	4
North Rhondda	10	11	11	9
South Rhondda	7	7	7	7
North East Taf Ely	3	2	3	2
South East Taf Ely	5	5	5	5
South West Taf Ely	8	8	8	8
Total	42	43	44	40



Charges

Providers were asked to input their fees in their SASS returns, according to whether they charge by an hourly rate, or by session, day, week or term. It is clear by some of the responses that this question was misunderstood by some providers. Therefore, some caution should be used when analysing the rates below.

Based on this data, it can be seen that the average daily rate for Full day care providers ranges from £34.80 to £47.85 per day.

Charges – RCT wide

Full day care Highest charge RCT	Charge per hour	Charge per session	Charge per day	Charge per week	Charge per term
Under 1 year	£10.00	£51.00	£66.00	£300.00	£0.00
1 years old	£10.00	£51.00	£66.00	£300.00	£0.00
2 years old	£10.00	£51.00	£63.00	£290.00	£0.00
3 years old	£10.00	£51.00	£58.00	£270.00	£7,200.00
4 years old	£10.00	£51.00	£58.00	£270.00	£0.00
5-7 year olds	£10.00	£51.00	£51.00	£0.00	£0.00
8-11 year olds	£10.00	£51.00	£51.00	£0.00	£0.00
12-14 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
15-17 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

Full day care Lowest charge RCT	Charge per hour	Charge per session	Charge per day	Charge per week	Charge per term
Under 1 year	£4.28	£10.85	£39.95	£185.00	£0.00
1 years old	£4.28	£10.85	£39.95	£185.00	£0.00
2 years old	£4.28	£9.00	£12.00	£40.00	£0.00
3 years old	£4.28	£9.00	£12.00	£40.00	£7,200.00
4 years old	£4.28	£10.00	£23.00	£190.00	£0.00
5-7 year olds	£4.28	£4.25	£24.00	£0.00	£0.00
8-11 year olds	£4.28	£4.25	£24.00	£0.00	£0.00
12-14 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
15-17 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

Full day care Average charge RCT	Charge per hour	Charge per session	Charge per day	Charge per week	Charge per term
Under 1 year	£7.14	£30.27	£47.85	£221.57	£0.00
1 years old	£8.07	£28.57	£47.35	£219.16	£0.00
2 years old	£7.82	£20.03	£39.57	£197.36	£0.00
3 years old	£7.41	£19.10	£38.40	£189.16	£7,200.00
4 years old	£7.40	£22.64	£43.75	£219.39	£0.00
5-7 year olds	£8.29	£16.13	£36.45	£0.00	£0.00
8-11 year olds	£8.09	£16.14	£34.80	£0.00	£0.00
12-14 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
15-17 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

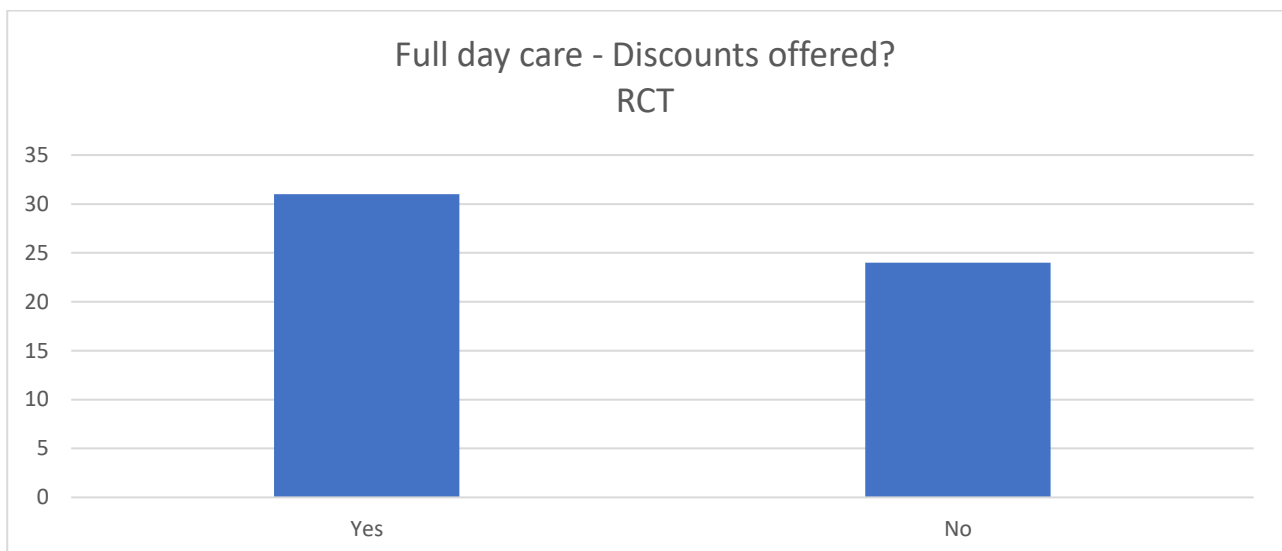
Charges – by AREA

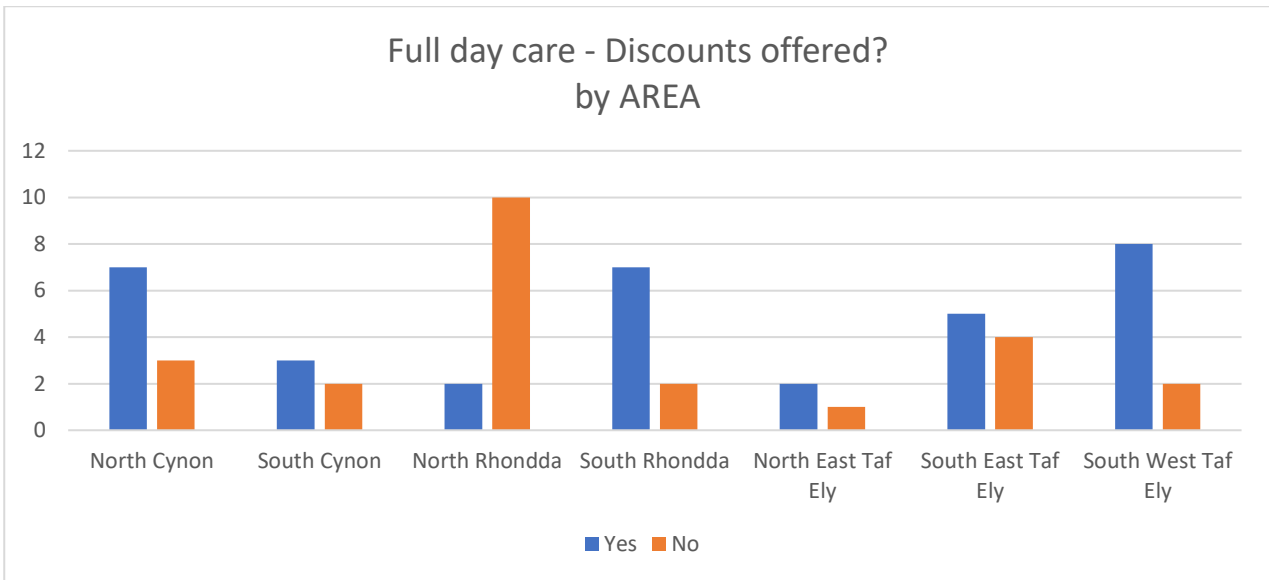
The highest average daily rate was from providers in the North East Taf Ely area with £66.00 per day charged for children one year and under. The lowest average daily rate was £31.07 per day for 2-3 year olds reported in the North Rhondda.

Full day care Average cost per day By AREA	Under 1 year	1 years old	2 years old	3 years old	4 years old	5-7 years	8-11 years	12-14 years	15-17 years
North Cynon	£48.33	£47.88	£41.71	£41.71	£47.50	£32.00	£32.00	£0.00	£0.00
South Cynon	£41.98	£43.98	£36.99	£36.99	£46.00	£48.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
North Rhondda	£47.75	£47.75	£31.07	£31.07	£35.13	£35.00	£35.00	£0.00	£0.00
South Rhondda	£44.88	£43.90	£37.79	£37.79	£46.50	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
North East Taf Ely	£66.00	£66.00	£48.75	£34.50	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
South East Taf Ely	£51.29	£49.83	£42.09	£41.93	£46.92	£36.50	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
South West Taf Ely	£46.25	£46.25	£44.64	£40.81	£43.07	£35.00	£35.67	£0.00	£0.00

Discounts offered

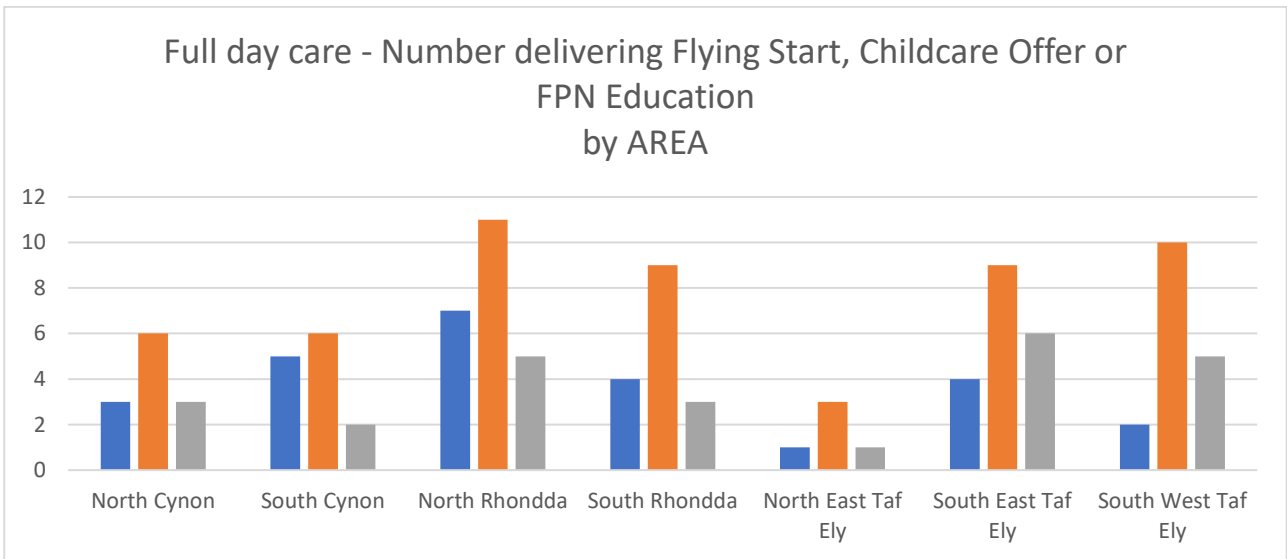
In contrast to childminders, the majority of Full day care providers do offer some form of discounts to parents, with providers in South West Taf Ely most likely to do so. Providers in North Rhondda were most likely not to offer discounts.





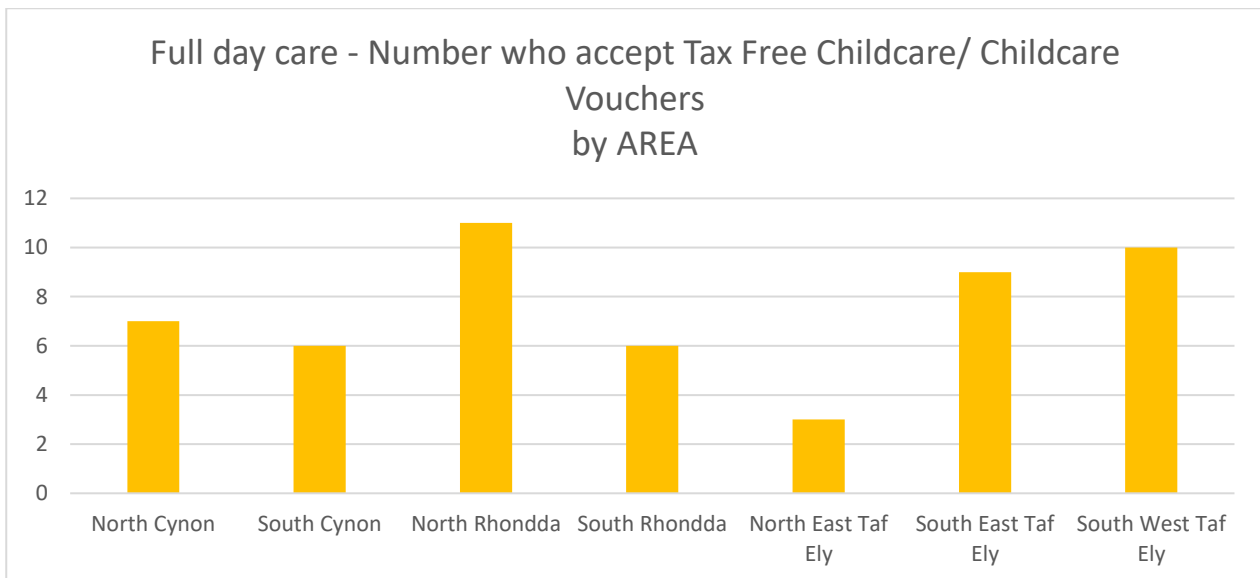
Flying Start, Childcare offer, Early Education

The highest concentration of Full day care providers offering Flying Start services was in North Rhondda (7) followed by South Cynon (5), whilst the highest number delivering the Childcare Offer was also in North Rhondda (11) closely followed by South West Taf Ely (10), South Rhondda and South East Taf Ely (9 each). The highest number of Full day care settings delivering FPN education was in South East Taf Ely (6) followed by North Rhondda and South West Taf Ely (5 each).



Tax free childcare / Childcare vouchers

Full day care settings in North Rhondda were the most likely to accept the tax free childcare scheme or childcare vouchers (11), followed by South West Taf Ely (10).



Strengths

- Lots of sessional care providers have re-registered as full day care, therefore, can offer more services and be more receptive to the needs of parents
- Good selection of Welsh medium provision

Weaknesses

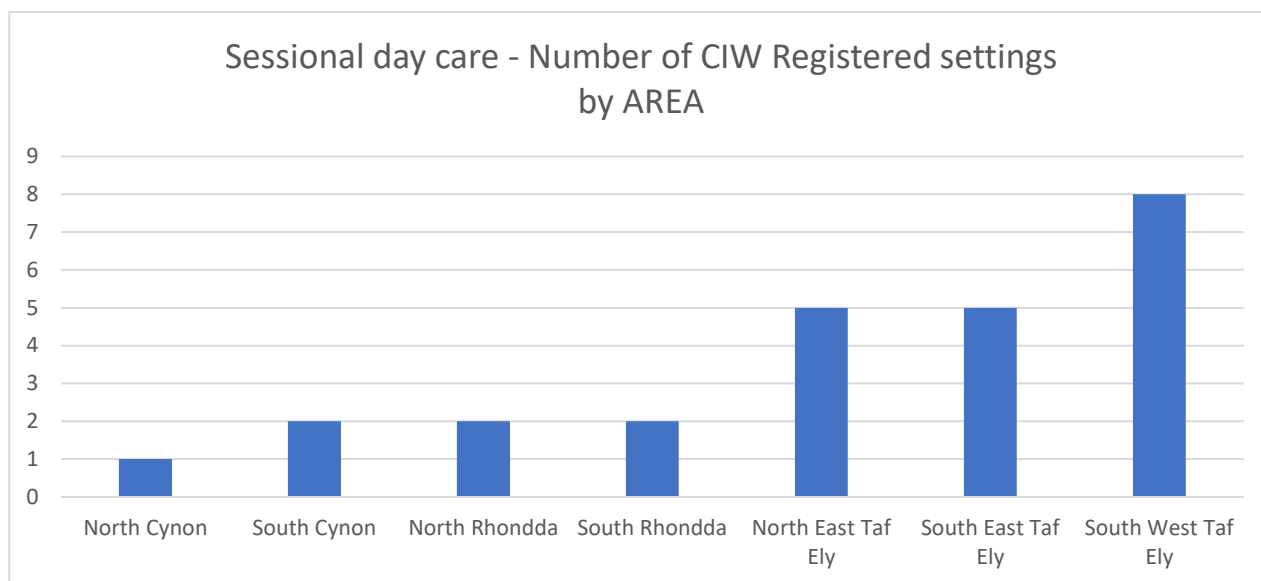
- Limited number of settings in South Cynon and North East Taf Ely areas
- Do not typically offer atypical hours for parents working shifts or unsociable hours

Overview

As mentioned in the section above, a number of Sessional care providers have re-registered in the last few years as Full day care. The number of unregistered Sessional care providers remains a concern. Engaging with these settings and encouraging them to register with CIW has been a priority in previous CSA reports and remains so for the duration of this one.

Engage with unregistered Sessional care providers and encourage them to register with CIW

Number of CIW registered settings – by AREA

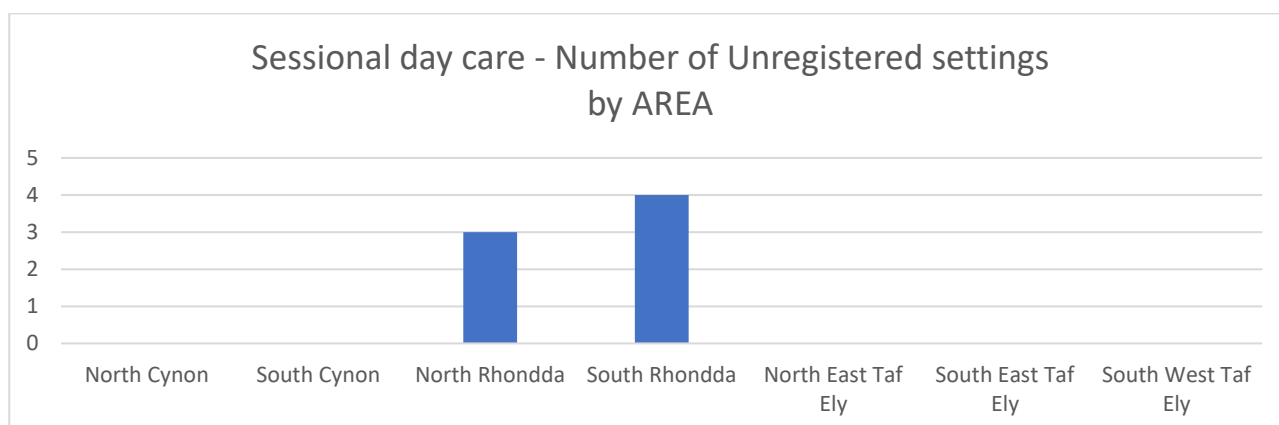


There appears to be a low number of registered Sessional care providers in the Cynon and Rhondda valleys. This may be as a result of settings becoming Full day care providers or may be distorted due to the number of unregistered settings. Further investigation may be prudent to establish if there is additional demand for Sessional care services in these areas.

Investigate demand for additional Sessional care services in Cynon and Rhondda valleys

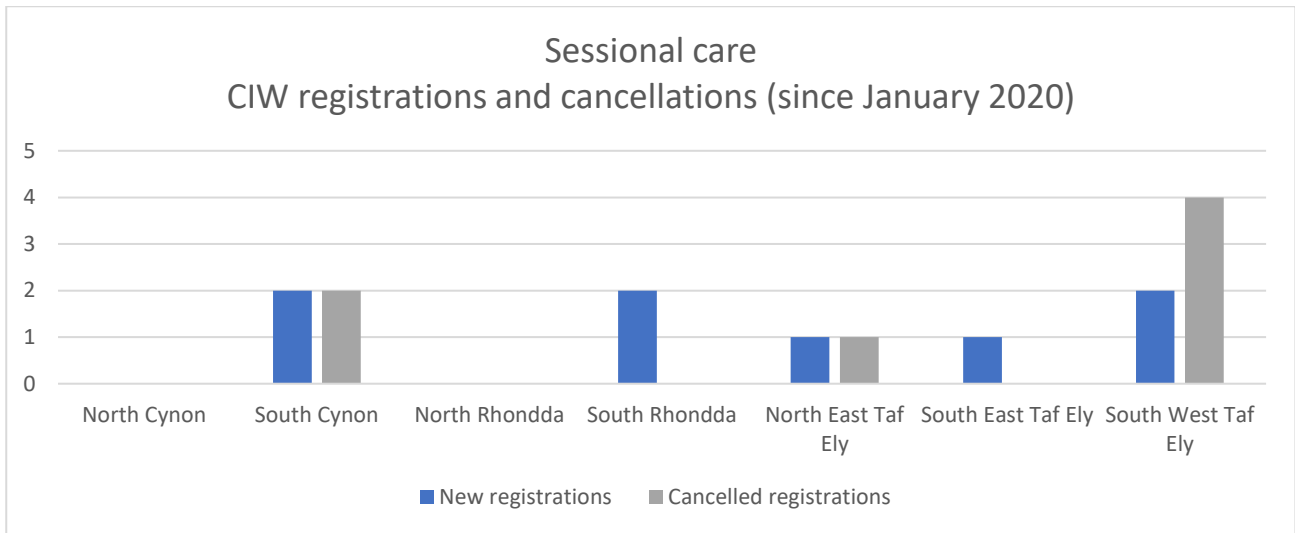
Number of Unregistered settings – by AREA

The data for the number of unregistered childcare settings, listed below, is from the DEWIS database used by FIS. This data is dependent on providers registering their information, and then keeping their accounts updated. Therefore, Officers are aware there may be additional unregistered settings in RCT that are not included in this analysis.



CIW registrations / cancellations

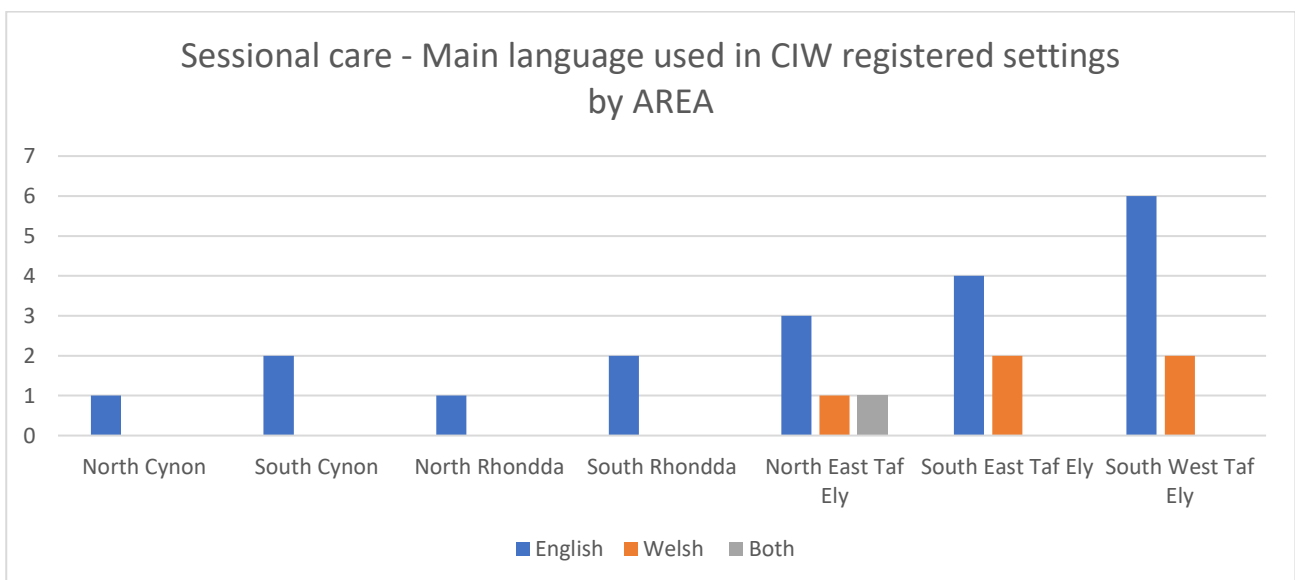
Since January 2020, there has been a net increase of 20 places for Sessional care. The net loss recorded in South West Taf Ely is due to an established Cylch Meithrin closing in July 2021 due to the retirement of the leader.



Sessional care (since January 2020)	New registration	Number of new places	Cancelled registration	Number of lost places	Net loss/gain of places
North Cynon	0	0	0	0	0
South Cynon	2	36	2	36	0
North Rhondda	0	0	0	0	0
South Rhondda	2	46	0	0	46
North East Taf Ely	1	24	1	24	0
South East Taf Ely	1	40	0	0	40
South West Taf Ely	2	54	4	120	-66
Total	8	200	7	180	20

Language – by AREA

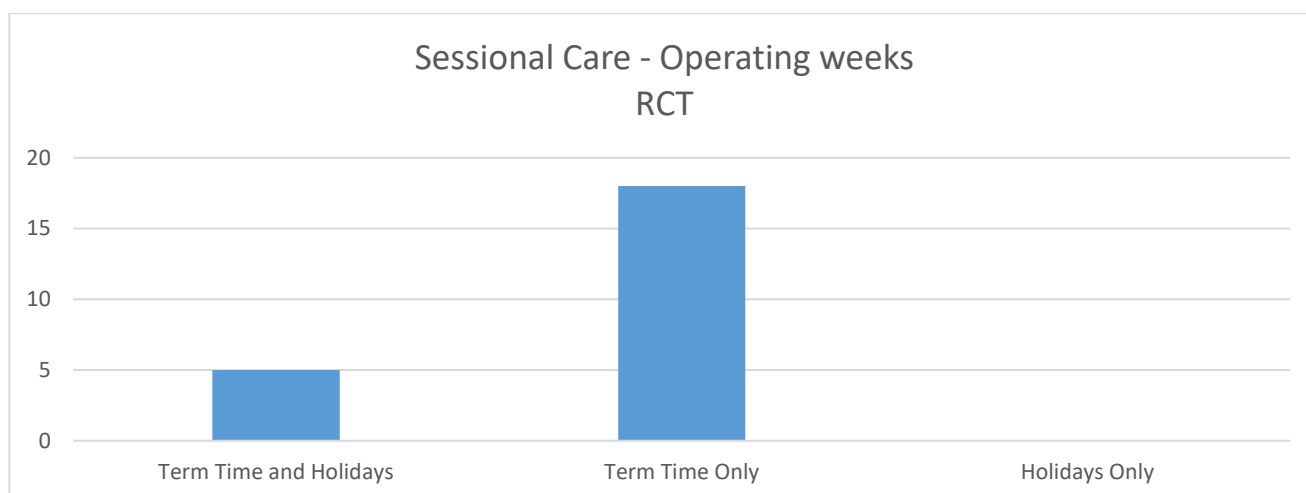
It can be seen from the graph below that English is the most used language in registered Sessional care settings. Section Four notes that there are seven unregistered Sessional care settings identified in the provider surveys or by FIS, all of whom are English medium settings, except for one dual language setting.



Services offered

By the nature of the childcare type, it can be seen that Sessional care settings offer parents a limited number of services, with most offering morning and afternoon sessions and only seven offering lunchtime care. The majority of Sessional care providers also only run in term time and do not offer holiday care.

Sessional care Type of care offered	Number of settings							Total
	North Cynon	South Cynon	North Rhondda	South Rhondda	North East Taf Ely	South East Taf Ely	South West Taf Ely	
Afternoons	1	2	2	2	5	0	5	17
After school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Before school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Creche	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Early Education placement	0	1	0	1	2	1	4	9
Evenings after 6pm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Full day care/full day nursery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Half day care AM/half day nursery AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Half day care PM/half day nursery PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lunch	0	1	0	0	1	0	5	7
Mornings	1	1	1	2	5	2	6	18
Overnight	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playscheme sessions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weekends	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Sessional care Weeks operating By AREA	Term Time and Holidays	Term Time Only	Holidays Only
North Cynon	0	1	0
South Cynon	1	1	0
North Rhondda	0	2	0
South Rhondda	0	2	0
North East Taf Ely	1	4	0
South East Taf Ely	0	3	0
South West Taf Ely	3	5	0
Total	5	18	0

Opening times – TERM TIME

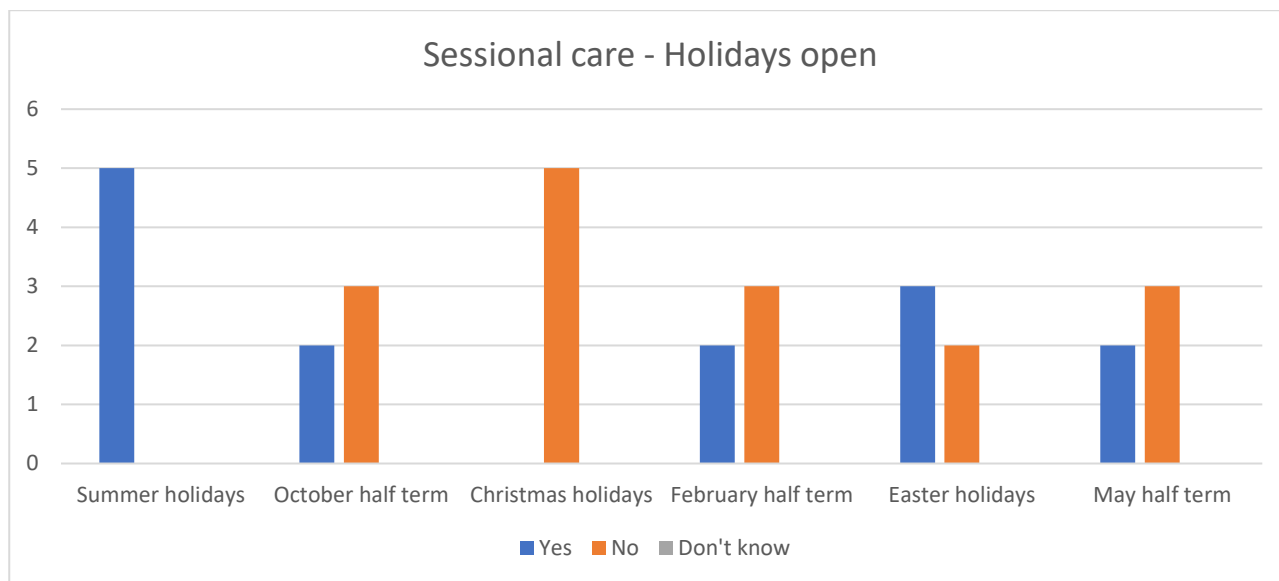
Sessional care TERM TIME opening times RCT	Earliest opening time	Latest opening time	Earliest closing time	Latest closing time	Number open before 8am	Number open after 6pm	Number open overnight
Monday	08:00	15:30	12:00	18:00	0	0	0
Tuesday	08:00	15:30	12:00	18:00	0	0	0
Wednesday	08:00	15:30	12:00	18:00	0	0	0
Thursday	08:00	15:30	12:00	18:00	0	0	0
Friday	08:00	15:30	12:00	18:00	0	0	0
Saturday	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sunday	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

No Sessional care providers offer atypical opening hours (i.e. before 8am, after 6pm or overnight).

Opening times – SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

18 Sessional care providers stated that they operate in term time only, whilst 1 stated that their opening times differ in the school holidays from term time. Of the Sessional care providers that do open in the school holidays, the breakdown of which holidays they cover

are displayed below. As can be seen, all open for some period through the summer holidays, whilst none open at Christmas.



The average number of days delivered in the holidays by Sessional care providers is:

- Summer holidays 16
- October half term 5
- Christmas holidays 0
- February half term 5
- Easter holidays 6
- May half term 4

Sessional care SCHOOL HOLIDAYS opening times RCT	Earliest opening time	Latest opening time	Earliest closing time	Latest closing time	Number open before 8am	Number open after 6pm	Number open overnight
Monday	08:00	09:15	13:00	18:00	0	0	0
Tuesday	08:00	09:15	13:00	18:00	0	0	0
Wednesday	08:00	09:15	13:00	18:00	0	0	0
Thursday	08:00	09:15	13:00	18:00	0	0	0
Friday	08:00	09:15	13:00	18:00	0	0	0
Saturday	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sunday	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

No Sessional care providers offer atypical opening hours (i.e. before 8am, after 6pm or overnight).

Waiting lists / Vacancies

The table below shows the number of CIW registered Sessional care providers with waiting lists (in red) and those with vacancies (in green).

Most waiting lists in Sessional care settings are for morning sessions, with South West Taf Ely having the most settings reporting this (3). Every area, except South East Taf Ely reported vacancies for afternoon sessions, with only one setting in South Cynon reporting a waiting list for afternoon sessions. North East Taf Ely had the highest number of settings reporting vacancies for morning and afternoon sessions (3 each).

Those registered as Sessional care providers reported that they do not offer any other services, other than Early Education places or lunchtime care. This is not surprising, as most Sessional care providers who have expanded to offer additional services have re-registered with CIW and are now registered as Full day care providers.

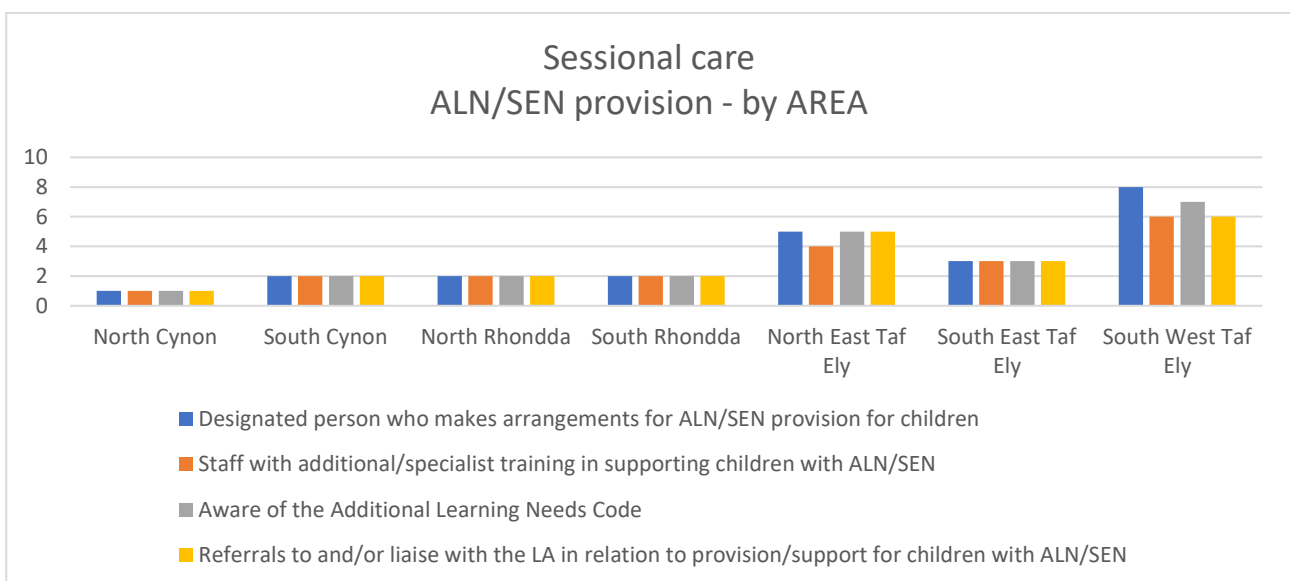
Number of Sessional care settings waiting lists / vacancies TERM TIME	North Cynon		South Cynon		North Rhondda		South Rhondda		North East Taf Ely		South East Taf Ely		South West Taf Ely	
Afternoons	0	1	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	5
After school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Before school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Creche	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Early Education placement	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
Evenings after 6pm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Full day care/full day nursery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Half day care AM/half day nursery AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Half day care PM/half day nursery PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lunch	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Mornings	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	3	1	0	3	1
Overnight	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playscheme sessions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weekends	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Sessional care waiting lists SCHOOL HOLIDAYS RCT	Waiting list?		
	Yes	No	Average number of children on waiting list
Summer holidays	1	4	7
October half term	0	2	0
Christmas holidays	0	0	0
February half term	0	2	0
Easter holidays	0	3	0
May half term	0	2	0

Cater for children with disabilities

21 Sessional care settings reported in their SASS returns that they currently cater for children with learning or physical needs.

Sessional care Number of settings that currently provide for / support children with ALN/SEN By AREA	Cognition and learning	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Communicati on and interaction	Sensory and/or physical
North Cynon	0	1	1	1
South Cynon	2	2	2	2
North Rhondda	1	1	2	1
South Rhondda	1	2	2	1
North East Taf Ely	4	5	5	4
South East Taf Ely	1	1	3	2
South West Taf Ely	5	6	6	5
Total	14	18	21	16



Charges

Providers were asked to input their fees in their SASS returns, according to whether they charge by an hourly rate, or by session, day, week or term. It is clear by some of the responses that this question was misunderstood by some providers. Therefore, some caution should be used when analysing the rates below.

Based on this data, it can be seen that the average session rate for Sessional care providers ranges from £6.25 to £22.48 per day.

Charges – RCT wide

Sessional care Highest charge RCT	Charge per hour	Charge per session	Charge per day	Charge per week	Charge per term
Under 1	£9.00	£13.50	£43.50	£0.00	£0.00
1 years old	£9.00	£31.45	£55.60	£261.60	£0.00
2 years old	£9.00	£30.45	£53.85	£253.45	£0.00
3 years old	£9.00	£70.00	£99.99	£253.45	£0.00
4 years old	£9.00	£70.00	£99.99	£75.00	£0.00
5-7 year olds	£0.00	£7.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
8-11 year olds	£0.00	£7.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
12-14 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
15-17 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

Sessional care Lowest charge RCT	Charge per hour	Charge per session	Charge per day	Charge per week	Charge per term
Under 1	£9.00	£13.50	£43.50	£0.00	£0.00
1 years old	£9.00	£13.50	£43.50	£261.60	£0.00
2 years old	£4.50	£8.75	£13.00	£65.00	£0.00
3 years old	£4.50	£7.00	£13.00	£65.00	£0.00
4 years old	£9.00	£7.00	£13.00	£65.00	£0.00
5-7 year olds	£0.00	£5.50	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
8-11 year olds	£0.00	£5.50	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
12-14 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
15-17 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

Sessional care Average charge RCT	Charge per hour	Charge per session	Charge per day	Charge per week	Charge per term
Under 1	£9.00	£13.50	£43.50	£0.00	£0.00
1 years old	£9.00	£22.48	£49.55	£261.60	£0.00
2 years old	£6.75	£15.94	£30.73	£119.48	£0.00

Sessional care Average charge RCT	Charge per hour	Charge per session	Charge per day	Charge per week	Charge per term
3 years old	£6.75	£18.09	£44.89	£131.15	£0.00
4 years old	£9.00	£18.29	£43.10	£70.00	£0.00
5-7 year olds	£0.00	£6.25	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
8-11 year olds	£0.00	£6.25	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
12-14 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
15-17 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

Charges – by AREA

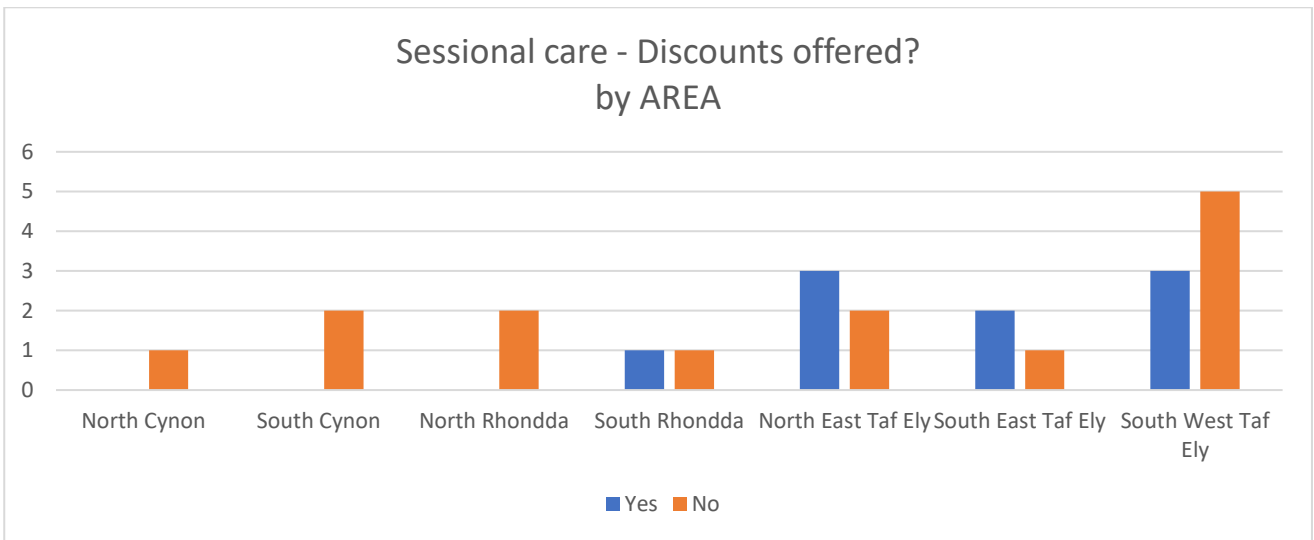
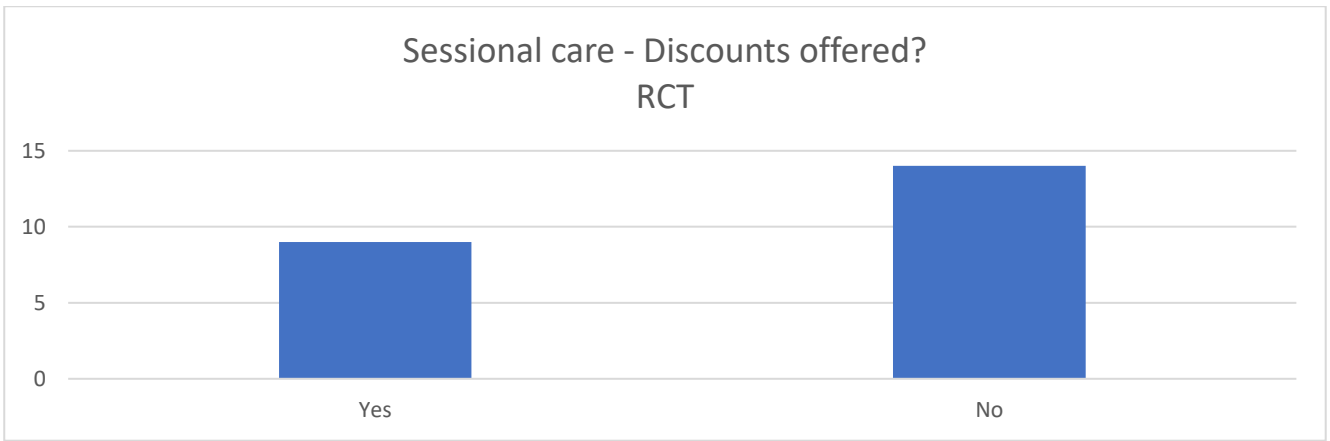
The highest average sessional rate was from providers in the North Cynon area with £31.45 per session. The lowest average sessional rate was £5.50 per session reported in North East Taf Ely. Data was not available for settings in North Rhondda so cannot be compared.

Sessional care Average cost per session By AREA	Under 1	1 years old	2 years old	3 years old	4 years old	5-7 years	8-11 years	12-14 years	15-17 years
North Cynon	£0.00	£31.45	£30.45	£30.45	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
South Cynon	£0.00	£0.00	£20.00	£20.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
North Rhondda*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Rhondda	£0.00	£0.00	£13.50	£13.50	£13.50	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
North East Taf Ely	£0.00	£0.00	£15.33	£25.60	£25.60	£5.50	£5.50	£0.00	£0.00
South East Taf Ely	£0.00	£0.00	£16.33	£16.33	£15.50	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
South West Taf Ely	£13.50	£13.50	£12.85	£12.11	£11.75	£7.00	£7.00	£0.00	£0.00

*No Sessional care providers in North Rhondda entered charges data

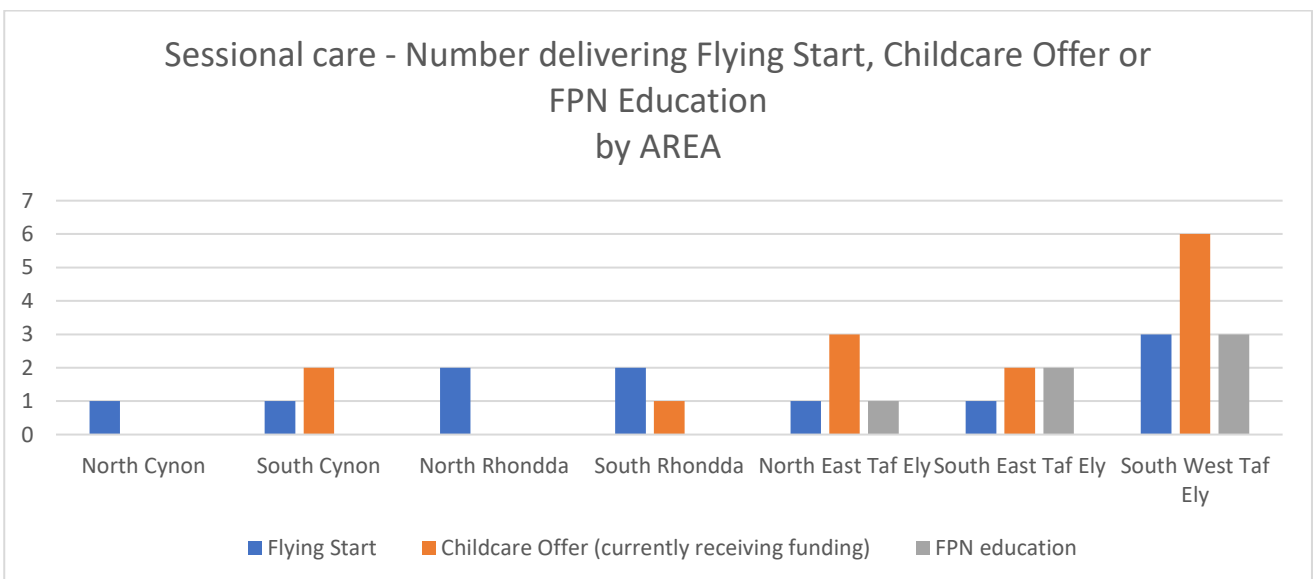
Discounts offered

The majority of Sessional care providers reported that they do not offer discounts to parents. Of those that do, the highest number of settings was in North East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely (3 each).



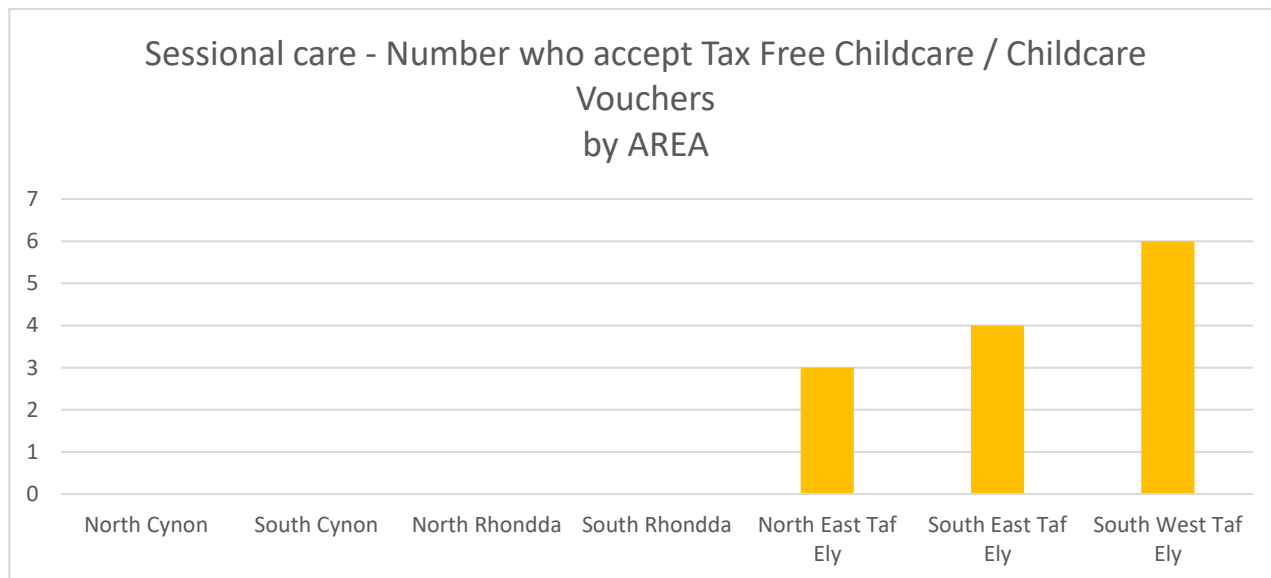
Flying Start, Childcare offer, Early Education

The highest concentration of Sessional care providers offering Flying Start services was in South West Taf Ely (3), followed by South Rhondda (2), whilst the highest number delivering the Childcare Offer was also in South West Taf Ely (6), followed by North East Taf Ely (3). The highest number of Sessional care settings delivering FPN education was in south West Taf Ely (3) followed by South East Taf Ely (2).



Tax free childcare / Childcare vouchers

Sessional care settings in South West Taf Ely were the most likely to accept the tax free childcare scheme or childcare vouchers (6), followed by South East Taf Ely (4). No Sessional care settings in the Cynon or Rhondda valleys reported in their SASS that they accepted these schemes.



Strengths

- Good range of Sessional care providers in Taf areas
- Good selection of Welsh medium providers in Taf areas

Weaknesses

- Number of unregistered Sessional care providers in North and South Rhondda
- Lack of Sessional care during holiday periods
- Low number of Sessional care settings in Cynon and Rhondda valleys

Crèches

Overview

Crèches provide flexible childcare solutions to parents who need childcare for specific purposes, such as attending training courses.

The Flying Start team previously had a registered crèche service that provided care for parents attending Flying Start parenting programmes. Due to a departmental restructure, this facility was disbanded in 2019. The parenting team now spot purchase their programmes and crèche facilities are the responsibility of the successful tender organisation to provide. Since the pandemic, all parenting programmes have been online and so crèche facilities are not currently required.

Due to the changing nature of working patterns caused by the pandemic, many parents are still working from home. Although for many, there is now a move back to office working for part of the week. There may be parents, therefore, who only require childcare on an ad hoc

basis, or for part of a day in order to attend their offices. Exploration of flexible, ad hoc childcare, or crèche facilities would be prudent to determine if there is sufficient demand for this type of care, and if so, the best way to develop it.

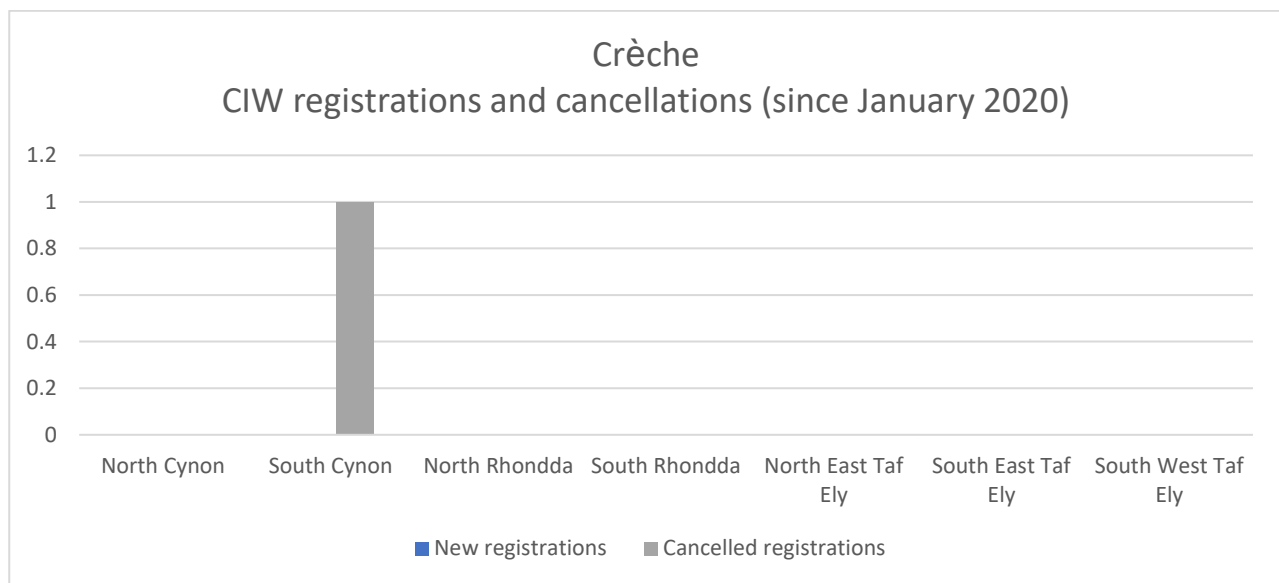
Explore demand for ad hoc, flexible care and/or crèche facilities

Number of registered settings – by AREA

There are currently no CIW registered Crèches in RCT.

CIW registrations / cancellations

The only registered Crèche has cancelled its registration in the last two years, resulting in a net loss of 10 places. The Council is not aware of any other Crèche facilities operating or looking to open in the near future.



Crèche (since January 2020)	New registration	Number of new places	Cancelled registration	Number of lost places	Net loss/gain of places
North Cynon	0	0	0	0	0
South Cynon	0	0	1	10	-10
North Rhondda	0	0	0	0	0
South Rhondda	0	0	0	0	0
North East Taf Ely	0	0	0	0	0
South East Taf Ely	0	0	0	0	0
South West Taf Ely	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	1	10	-10

Strengths

- Flexible choice of childcare for parents who require ad hoc, irregular care, particularly those who are attending training or education
- Can be offered as an extension of an existing childcare service
- The new hybrid arrangements for home working may offer opportunities for some providers to offer crèche facilities when parents need to attend the office

Weaknesses

- Difficult to plan staffing levels and ensure the service is sustainable
- Difficult to cater for each child's individual needs if they only attend on an ad hoc basis, or for a time limited period of time

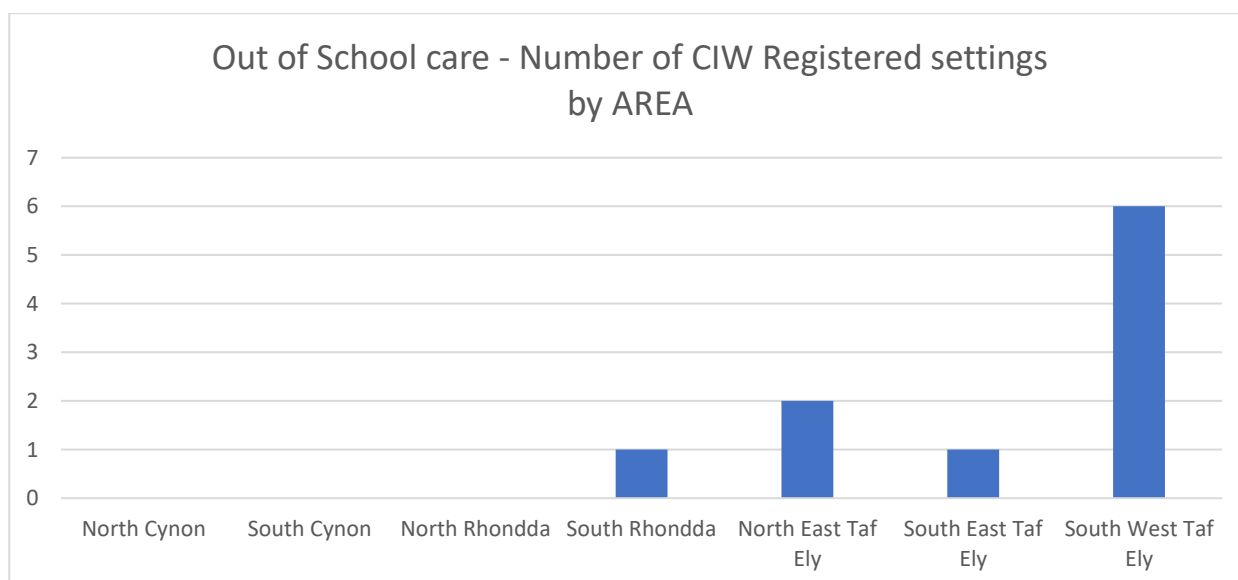
Out of School Care

Overview

Out of school care has been the childcare type most adversely affected by the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. Restrictions on the use of shared venues and more parents working from home has had a detrimental impact on demand for this type of childcare service.

However, feedback in the parent survey suggests that this childcare type is needed by parents of school aged children and that there are gaps in provision across RCT. This has been identified as a priority for further exploration.

Number of CIW registered settings – by AREA

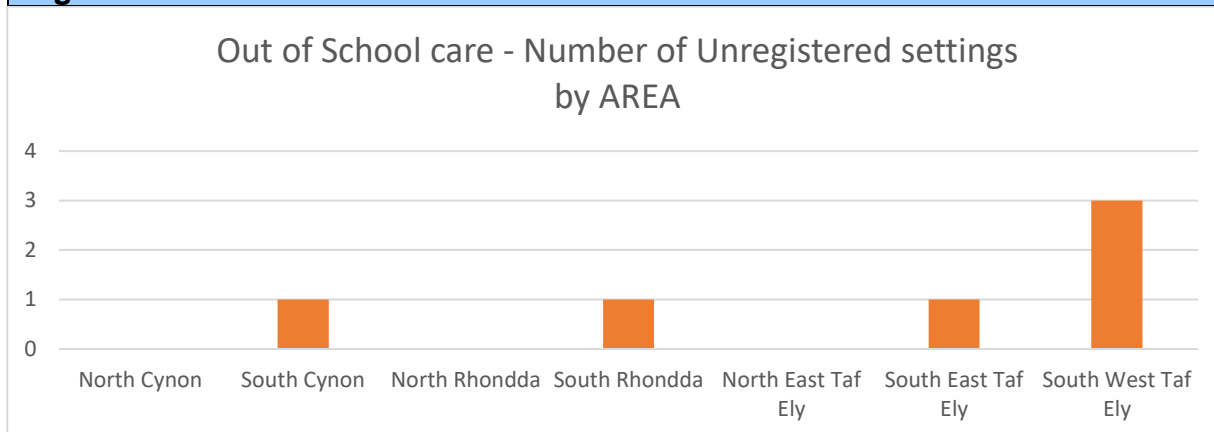


The highest number of Out of school care settings is in South West Taf Ely. This correlates with the parent survey where the highest number of responses stating that they use after school clubs was from parents in the South West Taf Ely area (43).

Number of Unregistered settings – by AREA

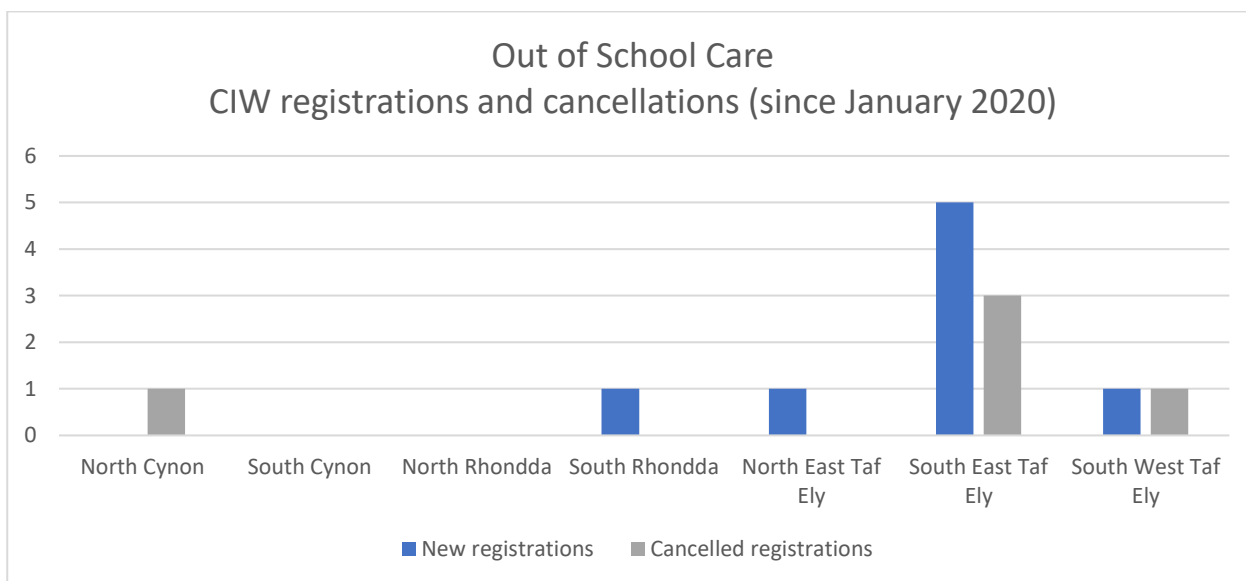
The data for the number of unregistered childcare settings, listed below, is from the DEWIS database used by FIS. This data is dependent on providers registering their information, and then keeping their accounts updated. Therefore, Officers are aware there may be additional unregistered settings in RCT that are not included in this analysis. As with previous CSA reports, the number of unregistered Out of school care settings remains a concern. Engaging with these settings and encouraging them to register with CIW continues to be a priority.

Engage with unregistered Out of school care providers and encourage them to register with CIW



CIW registrations / cancellations

Since January 2020, there has been a net increase of 167 places for Out of school care. In July 2021, a well-established Out of school club closed in the South East Taf Ely area due to the retirement of the leader. This club collected children from several schools in the area. Two new clubs were established to cater for two of the schools affected. This accounts for most of the increased places. The closure in North Cynon was due to a community partnership group closing.



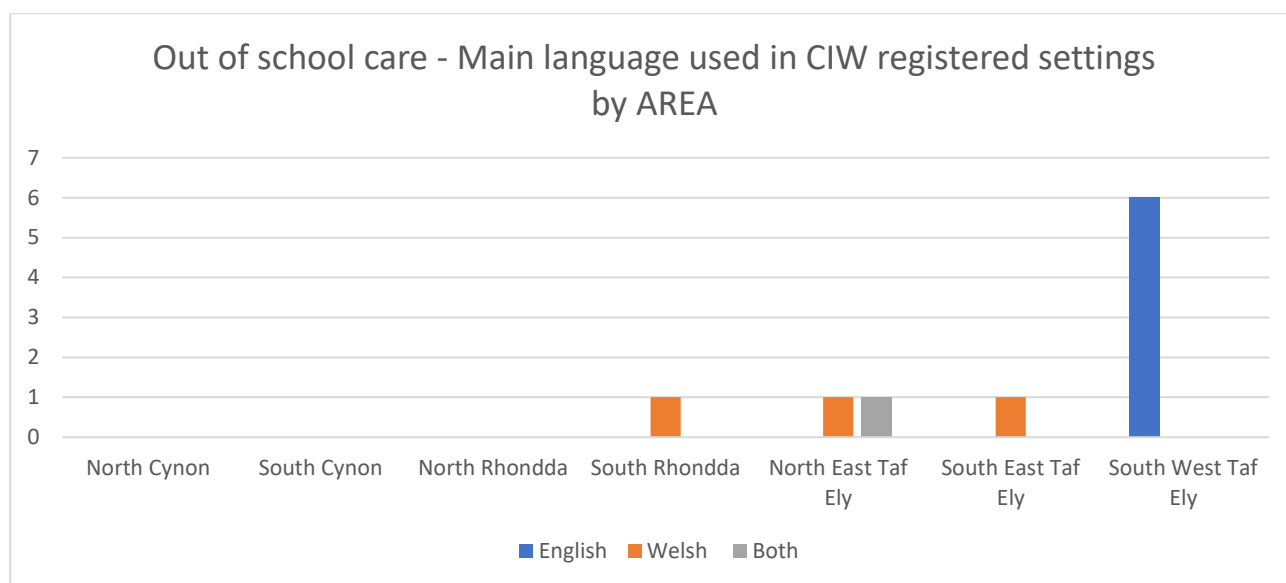
Out of School Care (since January 2020)	New registration	Number of new places	Cancelled registration	Number of lost places	Net loss/gain of places
North Cynon	0	0	1	25	-25
South Cynon	0	0	0	0	0
North Rhondda	0	0	0	0	0
South Rhondda	1	30	0	0	30
North East Taf Ely	1	30	0	0	30
South East Taf Ely	5	246	3	114	132

Out of School Care (since January 2020)	New registration	Number of new places	Cancelled registration	Number of lost places	Net loss/gain of places
South West Taf Ely	1	30	1	30	0
Total	8	336	5	169	167

Language – by AREA

The graph below shows the language used in Out of school care settings across RCT. Although English medium settings make up the majority of Out of school care providers, there is a good range of Welsh medium settings.

Further information on Welsh medium childcare provision is available in Section Three.



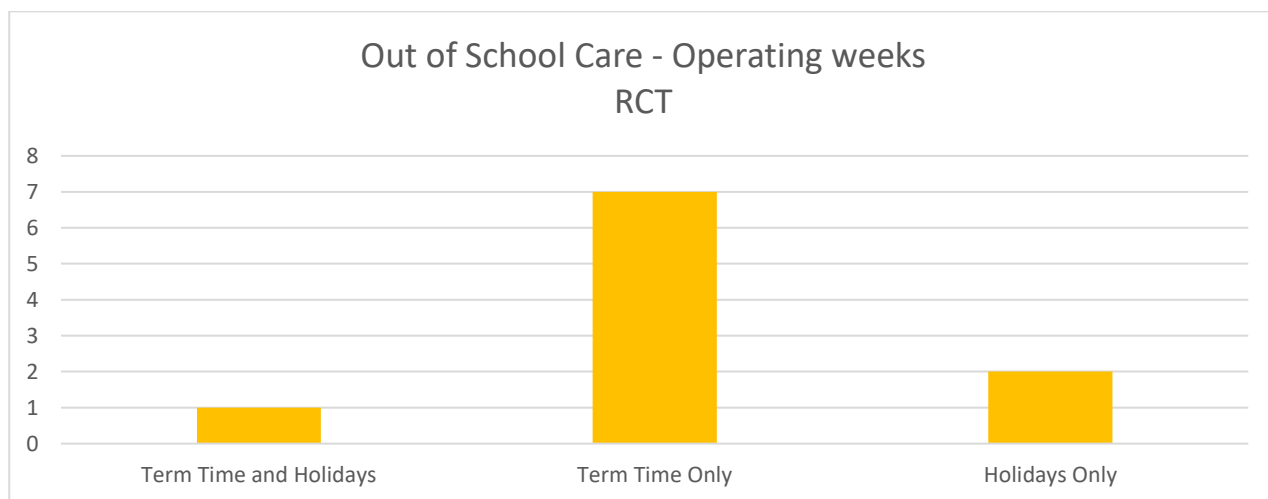
Services offered

Out of school care providers, by the nature of their registration offer limited services to parents. Of those that are registered with CIW, the Council is only aware of two that currently offers holiday care. Based on the parent survey, there is demand for this service and so a priority will be to engage with Out of school providers to encourage them to expand their services into holiday periods.

Encourage registered Out of school care providers to offer holiday care

Out of school care Type of care offered	Number of settings						
	North Cynon	South Cynon	North Rhondda	South Rhondda	North East Taf Ely	South East Taf Ely	South West Taf Ely
Afternoons	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
After school	0	0	0	1	2	1	5
Before school	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Creche	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Early Education placement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Out of school care Type of care offered	Number of settings						
	North Cynon	South Cynon	North Rhondda	South Rhondda	North East Taf Ely	South East Taf Ely	South West Taf Ely
Evenings after 6pm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Full day care/full day nursery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Half day care AM/half day nursery AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Half day care PM/half day nursery PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lunch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mornings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overnight	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playscheme sessions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weekends	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

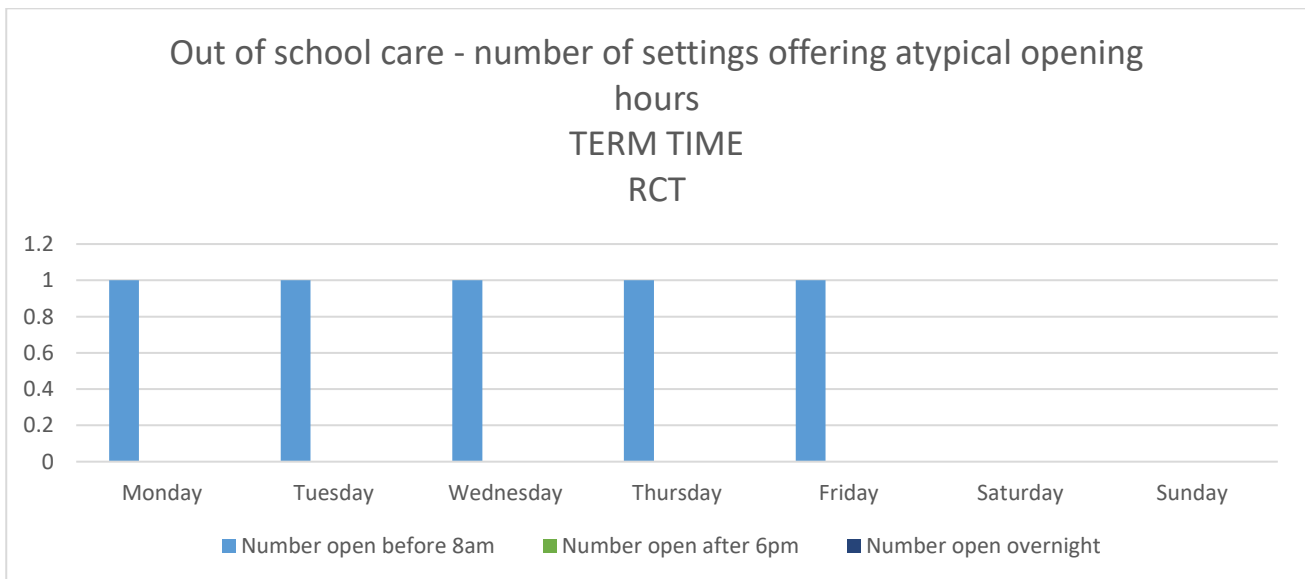


Out of School Care Weeks operating By AREA	Term Time and Holidays	Term Time Only	Holidays Only
North Cynon	0	0	0
South Cynon	0	0	0
North Rhondda	0	0	0
South Rhondda	0	1	0
North East Taf Ely	0	1	1
South East Taf Ely	0	1	0

Out of School Care Weeks operating By AREA	Term Time and Holidays	Term Time Only	Holidays Only
South West Taf Ely	1	4	1
Total	1	7	2

Opening times – TERM TIME

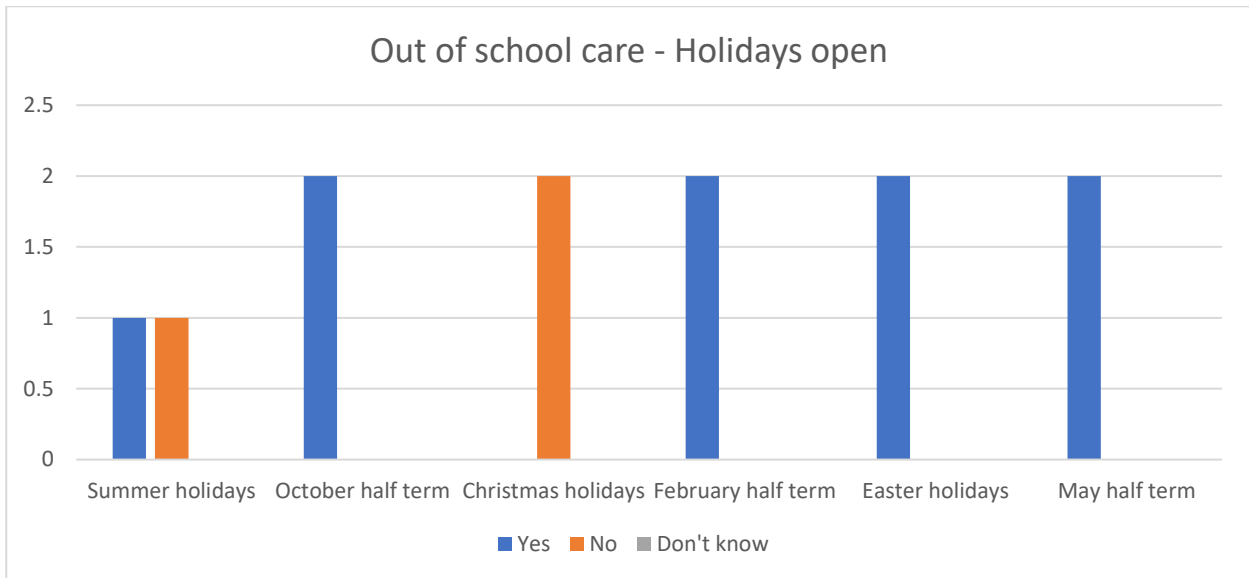
Out of school care TERM TIME opening times RCT	Earliest opening time	Latest opening time	Earliest closing time	Latest closing time	Number open before 8am	Number open after 6pm	Number open overnight
Monday	07:00	15:15	18:00	18:00	1	0	0
Tuesday	07:00	15:15	18:00	18:00	1	0	0
Wednesday	07:00	15:15	18:00	18:00	1	0	0
Thursday	07:00	15:15	18:00	18:00	1	0	0
Friday	07:00	15:15	18:00	18:00	1	0	0
Saturday	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sunday	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Opening times – SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Four out of school care providers stated that they only operate in term time, whilst two stated that they were open only in the school holidays.

Of the Out of school care providers that do open in the school holidays, the breakdown of which holidays they cover are displayed below. As can be seen, the majority open every holiday, except for the Christmas break.



The average number of days delivered in the holidays by childminders is:

- Summer holidays 30
- October half term 5
- Christmas holidays 0
- February half term 5
- Easter holidays 8
- May half term 4

Out of school care SCHOOL HOLIDAYS opening times RCT	Earliest opening time	Latest opening time	Earliest closing time	Latest closing time	Number open before 8am	Number open after 6pm	Number open overnight
Monday	08:00	08:30	17:30	18:00	0	0	0
Tuesday	08:00	08:30	17:30	18:00	0	0	0
Wednesday	08:00	08:30	17:30	18:00	0	0	0
Thursday	08:00	08:30	17:30	18:00	0	0	0
Friday	08:00	08:30	17:30	18:00	0	0	0
Saturday	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sunday	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

No Out of school care providers offer atypical opening hours (i.e. before 8am, after 6pm or overnight).

Waiting list / Vacancies

The table below shows the number of CIW registered Out of school care providers with waiting lists (in red) and those with vacancies (in green).

It can be seen that only settings in South West Taf Ely have either waiting lists or vacancies. This does not indicate the level of demand that the parent survey suggests. Further exploration will determine if there is indeed a need for additional Out of school care.

Number of Out of school settings waiting lists / vacancies TERM TIME	North Cynon		South Cynon		North Rhondda		South Rhondda		North East Taf Ely		South East Taf Ely		South West Taf Ely	
Afternoons	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
After school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Before school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Creche	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Early Education placement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Evenings after 6pm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Full day care/full day nursery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Half day care AM/half day nursery AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Half day care PM/half day nursery PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lunch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mornings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overnight	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playscheme sessions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weekends	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

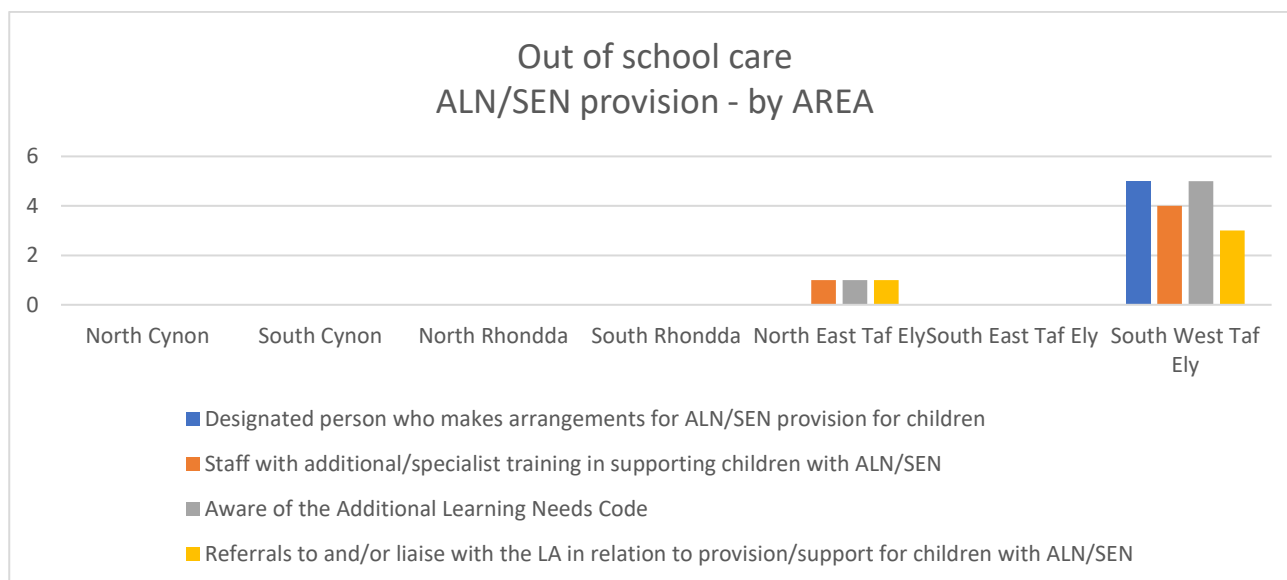
Out of school care waiting lists SCHOOL HOLIDAYS RCT	Waiting list?		
	Yes	No	Average number of children on waiting list
Summer holidays	1	0	10
October half term	1	1	0
Christmas holidays	0	0	0
February half term	1	1	0
Easter holidays	1	1	0
May half term	1	1	0

Cater for children with disabilities

Four Out of school settings reported in their SASS returns that they currently cater for children with learning or physical needs. These were all in the South West Taf Ely area.

Out of school care Number of settings that currently provide for / support children with ALN/SEN By AREA	Cognition and learning	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Communicati on and interaction	Sensory and/or physical
North Cynon	0	0	0	0
South Cynon	0	0	0	0
North Rhondda	0	0	0	0
South Rhondda	0	0	0	0
North East Taf Ely	0	0	0	0
South East Taf Ely	0	0	0	0
South West Taf Ely	3	4	4	3
Total	3	4	4	3

Out of school care settings in North East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely reported that they have a designated person who makes arrangements for ALN/SEN provision for children, have staff that have received additional training or are aware of the Additional Learning Needs Code. Engagement with Out of school settings in other areas would be prudent to ensure that they too know how to support children in their care who have additional learning needs or disabilities.



Charges

Providers were asked to input their fees in their SASS returns, according to whether they charge by an hourly rate, or by session, day, week or term. It is clear by some of the

responses that this question was misunderstood by some providers. Therefore, some caution should be used when analysing the rates below.

Based on this data, it can be seen that the average sessional rate for Out of school care providers ranges from £9.67 to £22.00 per session.

Charges – RCT wide

Out of school care Highest charge	Charge per hour	Charge per session	Charge per day	Charge per week	Charge per term
Under 1	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
1 years old	£0.00	£22.00	£38.00	£0.00	£0.00
2 years old	£0.00	£22.00	£38.00	£0.00	£0.00
3 years old	£3.00	£22.00	£0.00	£38.00	£0.00
4 years old	£8.00	£11.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
5-7 year olds	£8.00	£11.00	£0.00	£38.48	£0.00
8-11 year olds	£8.00	£11.00	£0.00	£38.48	£0.00
12-14 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
15-17 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

Out of school care Lowest charge	Charge per hour	Charge per session	Charge per day	Charge per week	Charge per term
Under 1	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
1 years old	£0.00	£22.00	£38.00	£0.00	£0.00
2 years old	£0.00	£22.00	£38.00	£0.00	£0.00
3 years old	£3.00	£10.00	£0.00	£38.00	£0.00
4 years old	£3.00	£10.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
5-7 year olds	£3.00	£10.00	£0.00	£38.48	£0.00
8-11 year olds	£3.00	£10.00	£0.00	£38.48	£0.00
12-14 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
15-17 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

Out of school care Average charge	Charge per hour	Charge per session	Charge per day	Charge per week	Charge per term
Under 1	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
1 years old	£0.00	£22.00	£38.00	£0.00	£0.00
2 years old	£0.00	£22.00	£38.00	£0.00	£0.00
3 years old	£3.00	£14.33	£0.00	£38.00	£0.00
4 years old	£6.38	£10.50	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
5-7 year olds	£6.38	£9.67	£0.00	£38.48	£0.00
8-11 year olds	£6.38	£9.67	£0.00	£38.48	£0.00
12-14 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
15-17 year olds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

Charges – by AREA

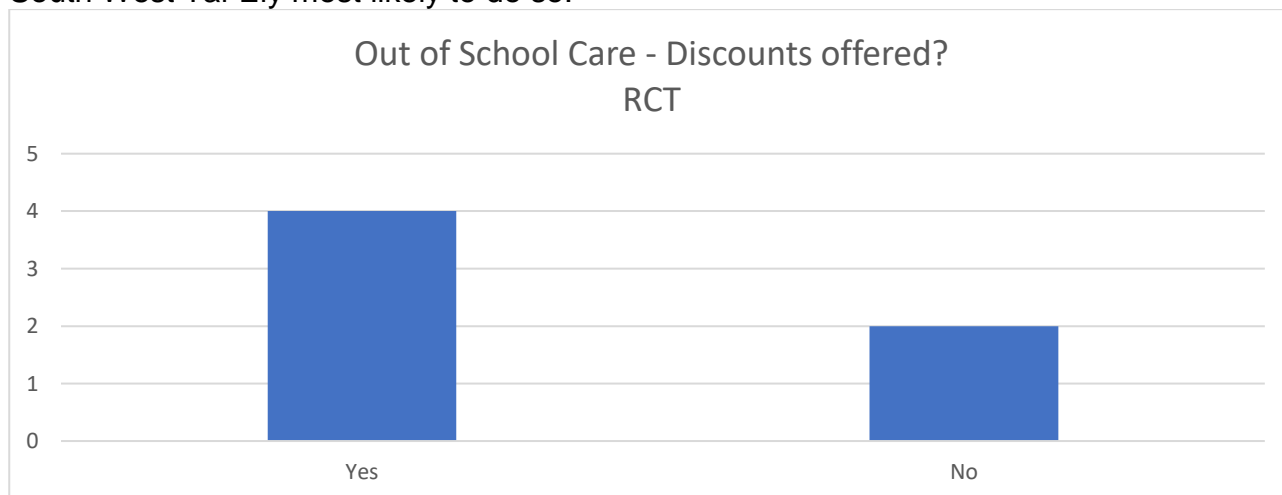
The highest average session rate was from providers in South West Taf Ely with £22.00 per session. The lowest average session rate was £7.00 per session reported in South Rhondda. However, caution must be used with this data, as the level of data submitted was low and the age ranges do not correlate with the ages of children who are cared for in out of school settings (i.e. from 3 years old or minimum school entry age).

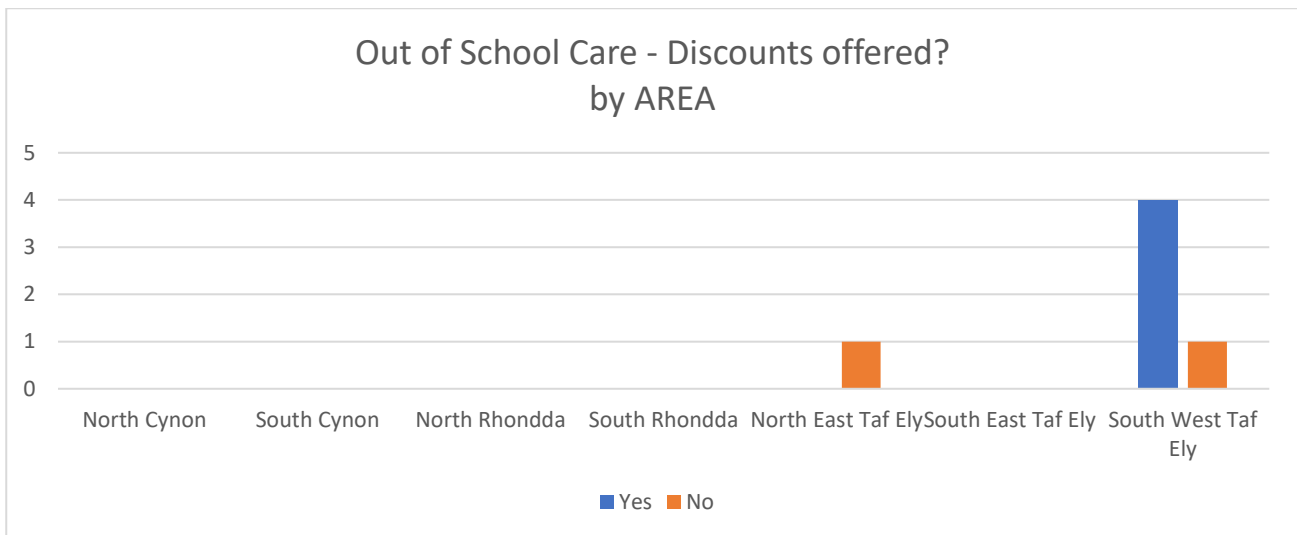
Out of school care Average cost per session By AREA	Under 1	1 years old	2 years old	3 years old	4 years old	5-7 years	8-11 years	12-14 years	15-17 years
North Cynon*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Cynon*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
North Rhondda*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Rhondda	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£7.00	£7.00	£7.00	£0.00	£0.00
North East Taf Ely	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£7.50	£7.50	£7.50	£0.00	£0.00
South East Taf Ely	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£8.00	£8.00	£8.00	£0.00	£0.00
South West Taf Ely	£0.00	£22.00	£22.00	£14.33	£10.50	£9.67	£9.67	£0.00	£0.00

*No Out of school providers in these areas

Discounts offered

The majority of Out of school care clubs do offer discounts to parents, with providers in South West Taf Ely most likely to do so.





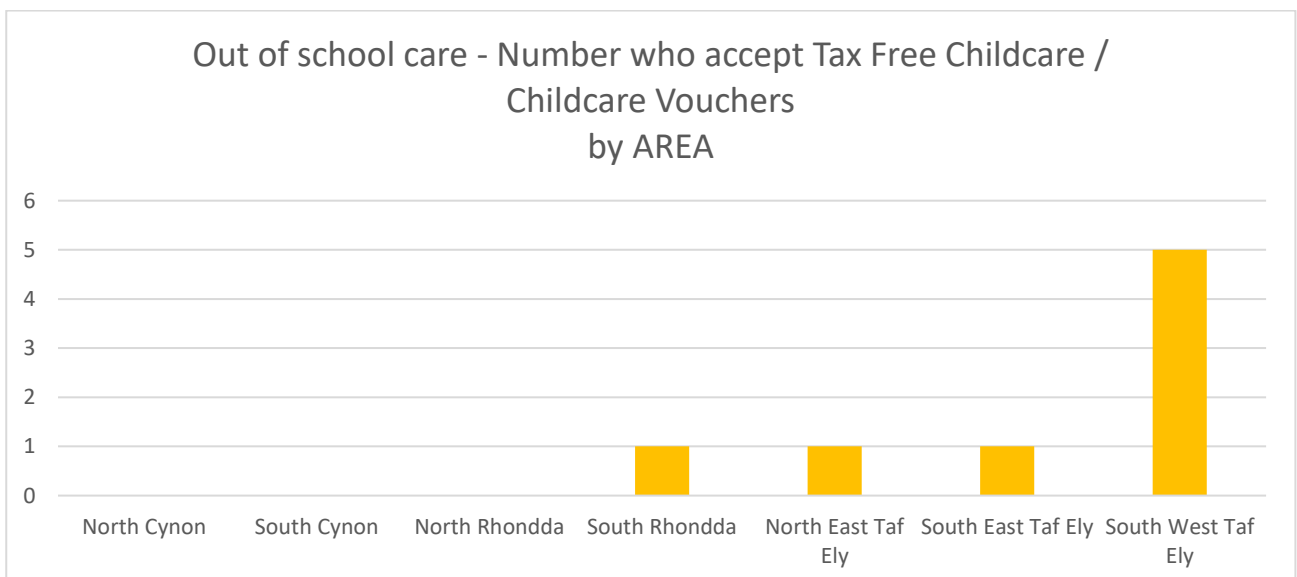
Flying Start, Childcare offer, Early Education

No Out of school care providers stated in their SASS that they deliver Flying Start or FPN education. Only two stated that they are currently delivering the Childcare Offer for Wales. This suggests that Out of school care settings do not currently offer the holiday entitlement of the Childcare Offer. Encouraging them to do so would provide this service to parents and make it more sustainable for the setting, as parents are accessing funded childcare to use to use the service.

Encourage registered Out of school clubs to offer holiday care

Tax free childcare / Childcare vouchers

Out of school care settings in South West Taf Ely were the most likely to accept the tax free childcare scheme or childcare vouchers (5), followed by one setting each in South Rhondda, North East Taf Ely and South East Taf Ely.



Strengths

- Parent survey suggests that there is still strong demand for this type of childcare
- Good selection of registered out of school care providers in South West Taf Ely area

- Good selection of Welsh medium out of school care providers (although most are currently unregistered)

Weaknesses

- Number of unregistered Out of school care providers
- Low number of out of school care providers who offer holiday care

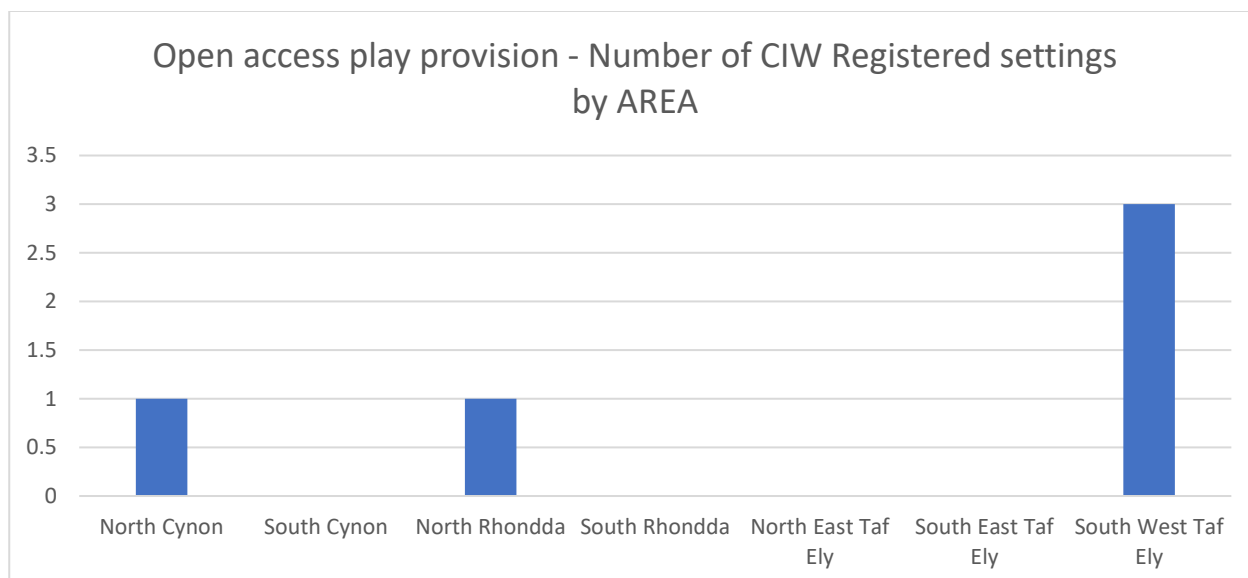
Open Access Play Provision

Overview

The play team currently commission 11 Open access play provides to deliver playscheme sessions on their behalf in 17 venues.

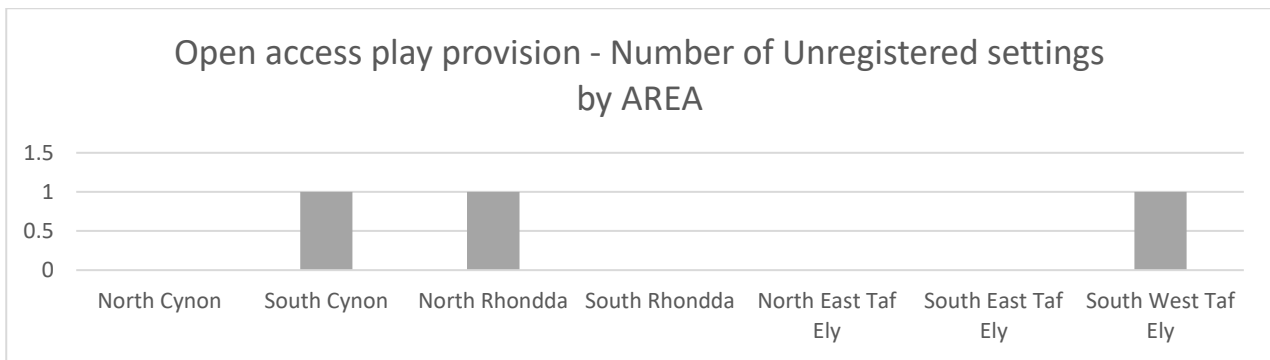
Open access play commissioned sessions By Area	Number of venues
North Cynon	2
South Cynon	1
North Rhondda	4
South Rhondda	2
North East Taf Ely	0
South East Taf Ely	3
South West Taf Ely	5
Total	17

Number of registered settings – by AREA



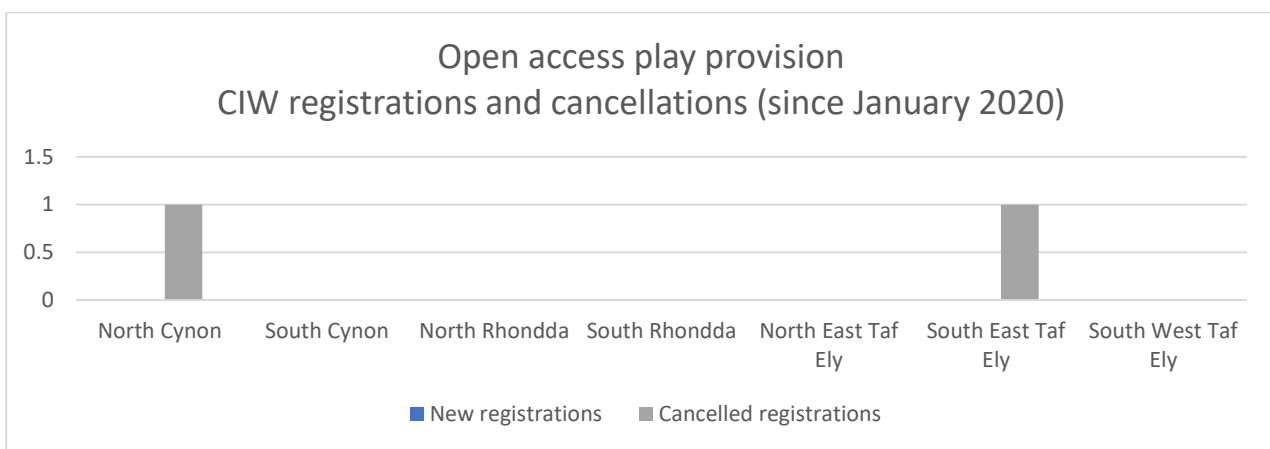
Number of Unregistered settings – by AREA

The data for the number of unregistered childcare settings, listed below, is from the DEWIS database used by FIS. This data is dependent on providers registering their information, and then keeping their accounts updated. Therefore, Officers are aware there may be additional unregistered settings in RCT that are not included in this analysis.



CIW registrations / cancellations

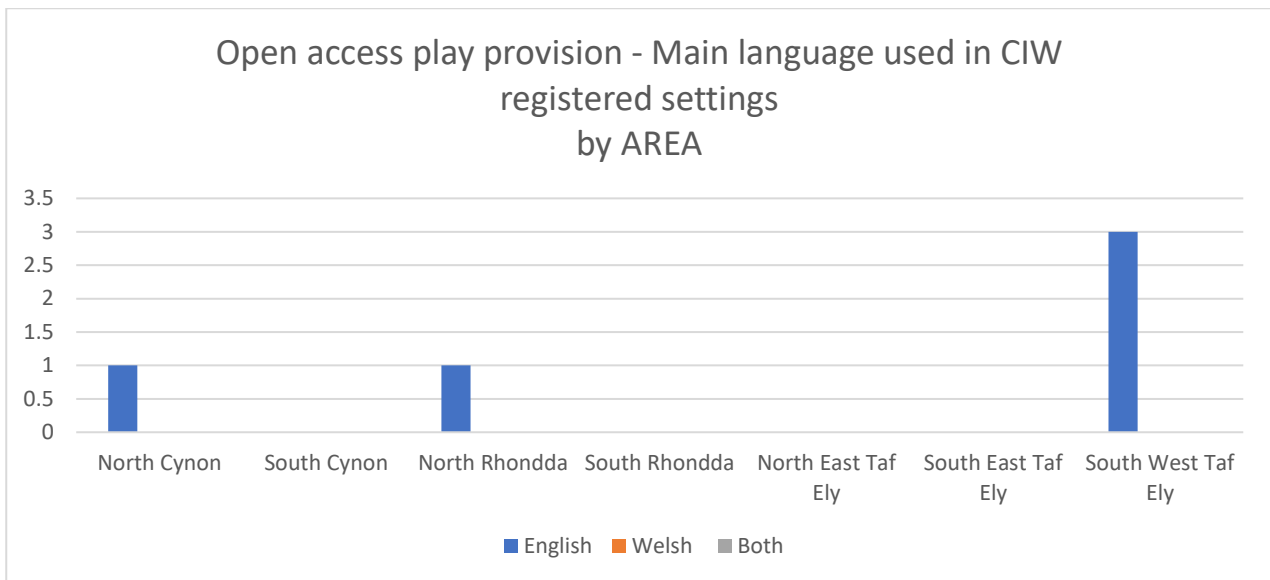
Since January 2020, there has been a net loss of 55 places for Open access play provision. These were in North Cynon and South East Taf Ely.



Open Access Play Provision (since January 2020)	New registration	Number of new places	Cancelled registration	Number of lost place	Net loss/gain of places
North Cynon	0	0	1	25	-25
South Cynon	0	0	0	0	0
North Rhondda	0	0	0	0	0
South Rhondda	0	0	0	0	0
North East Taf Ely	0	0	0	0	0
South East Taf Ely	0	0	1	30	-30
South West Taf Ely	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	2	55	-55

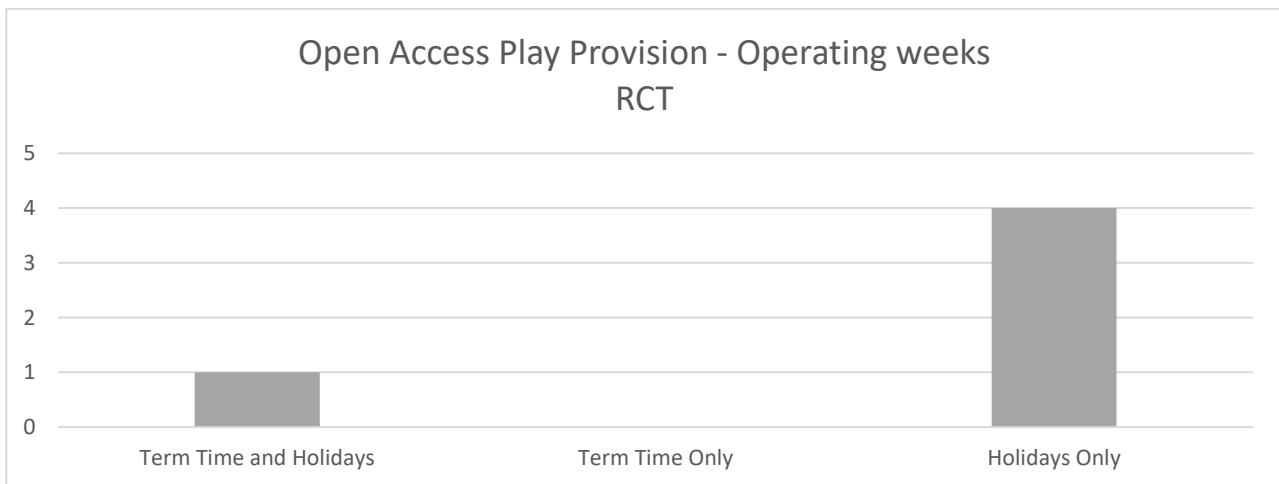
Language – by AREA

It can be seen from the graph below that all registered Open access play providers deliver their service through the medium of Welsh.



Services offered

Only one setting reports in their SASS that they offer after school sessions, as well as normal playscheme sessions. As would be expected, most settings operate in holidays only.



Open Access Play Provision Weeks operating By AREA	Term Time and Holidays	Term Time Only	Holidays Only
North Cynon	0	0	1
South Cynon	0	0	0
North Rhondda	1	0	0
South Rhondda	0	0	0
North East Taf Ely	0	0	0
South East Taf Ely	0	0	0
South West Taf Ely	0	0	3
Total	1	0	4

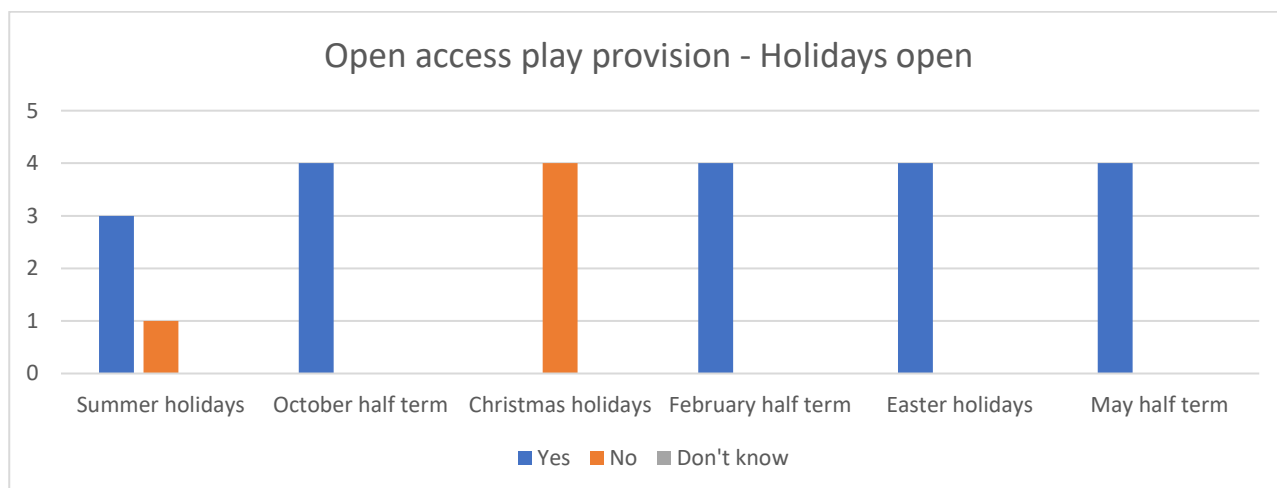
Opening times – TERM TIME

The registered setting that offer after school sessions during term time, reported that their opening hours are 4pm to 5.30pm each Monday.

No Open access play providers offer atypical opening hours (i.e. before 8am, after 6pm or overnight).

Opening times – SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Nearly all open access play providers open in all holidays, with the exception of the Christmas break, when none are open.



The average number of days delivered in the holidays by childminders is:

- Summer holidays 21
- October half term 5
- Christmas holidays 0
- February half term 5
- Easter holidays 8
- May half term 5

Open access play provision SCHOOL HOLIDAYS opening times RCT	Earliest opening time	Latest opening time	Earliest closing time	Latest closing time	Number open before 8am	Number open after 6pm	Number open overnight
Monday	10:00	14:00	12:55	16:30	0	0	0
Tuesday	10:00	14:00	12:55	16:30	0	0	0
Wednesday	10:00	14:00	12:55	16:30	0	0	0
Thursday	10:00	14:00	12:55	16:30	0	0	0
Friday	10:00	14:00	12:55	16:30	0	0	0
Saturday	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sunday	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

No Open access play providers offer atypical opening hours (i.e. before 8am, after 6pm or overnight).

Waiting lists / Vacancies

The table below shows the number of CIW registered Out of school care providers with waiting lists (in red) and those with vacancies (in green).

It can be seen that the provider that operates in term time reported in their SASS that they have a waiting list for that service. A waiting list is also noted for playscheme sessions in South West Taf Ely (1), whilst one provider in North Cynon reports that they have vacancies

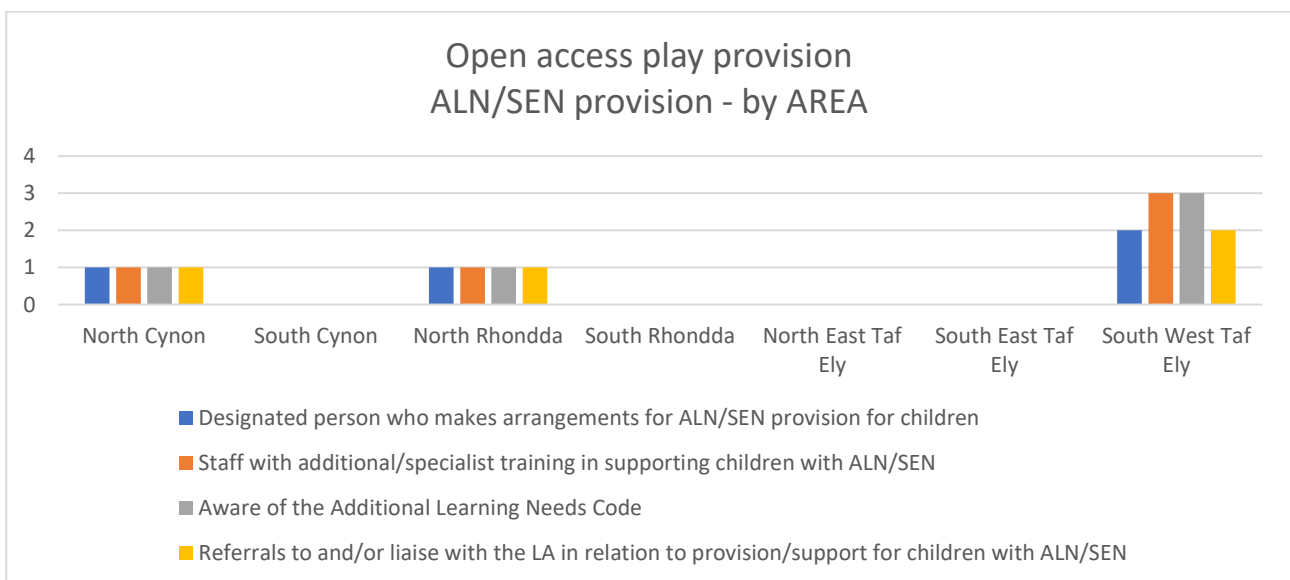
Number of Open access play providers waiting lists / vacancies TERM TIME	North Cynon		South Cynon		North Rhondda		South Rhondda		North East Taf Ely		South East Taf Ely		South West Taf Ely	
Afternoons	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
After school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Before school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Creche	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Early Education placement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Evenings after 6pm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Full day care/full day nursery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Half day care AM/half day nursery AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Half day care PM/half day nursery PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lunch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mornings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overnight	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Playscheme sessions	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Weekends	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Open access play provision waiting lists SCHOOL HOLIDAYS RCT	Waiting list?		
	Yes	No	Average number of children on waiting list
Summer holidays	2	2	10
October half term	2	2	5
Christmas holidays	0	0	0
February half term	2	2	5
Easter holidays	2	2	5
May half term	2	2	5

Cater for children with disabilities

Five Open access play providers reported in their SASS return that they currently cater for children with learning or physical needs.

Open access play Number of settings that currently provide for / support children with ALN/SEN By AREA	Cognition and learning	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Communication and interaction	Sensory and/or physical
North Cynon	1	1	1	1
South Cynon	0	0	0	0
North Rhondda	0	0	0	0
South Rhondda	0	0	0	0
North East Taf Ely	0	0	0	0
South East Taf Ely	0	0	0	0
South West Taf Ely	3	3	3	3
Total	4	4	4	4

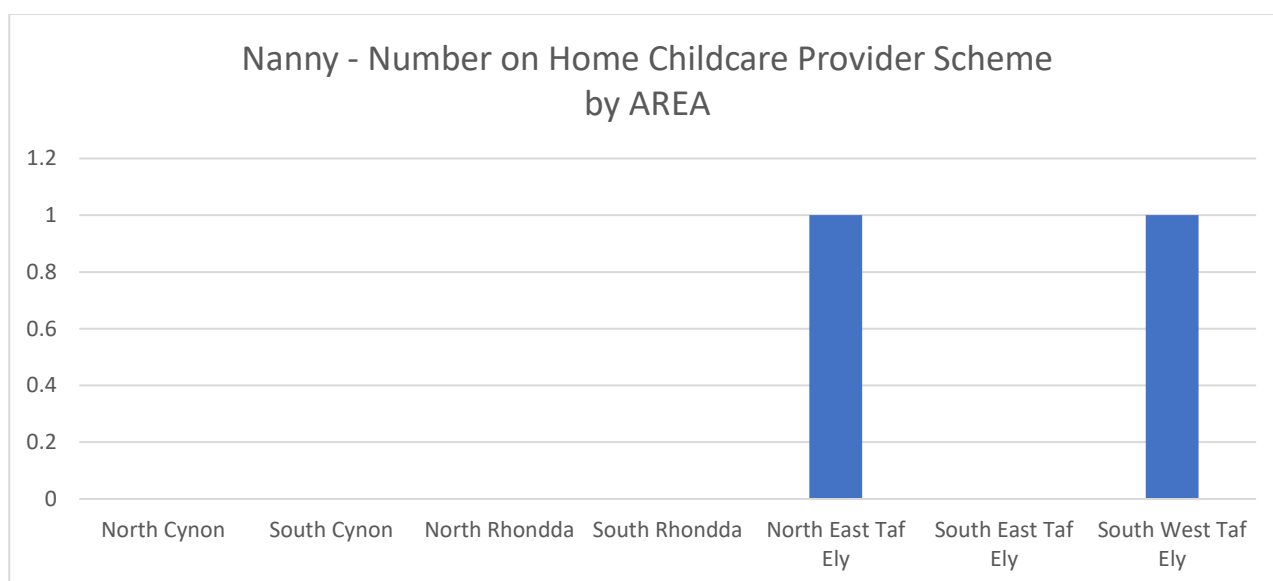


Nanny

Nannies provide care for children, typically within the child's own home. The Approval of Home Childcare Providers (Wales) Scheme (2021) now provides a regulatory framework within which nannies can operate. Registration on this scheme is voluntary, but it allows parents to access a range of financial assistance with fees and enables the nanny to demonstrate that they meet certain criteria within a structured scheme.

Number of registered settings – by AREA

It can be seen that there are currently only two nannies on this scheme within RCT. To date, engagement with nannies has not taken place. However, the Council is keen to engage with these, and other nannies in the county, so that they can access the support and guidance that other childcare settings receive. They will also be able to access the funded training that the childcare development team provide. This will be a priority over the course of this CSA report.



Strengths

- Offers parents flexibility and services tailored to their specific family circumstances
- Can better suit the needs of large families or those with children with complex needs
- Home Childcare Provider Scheme offers structure and recognition to this childcare type

Weaknesses

- No engagement with the childcare development team to date

Promote Home Childcare Provider Scheme

Improve engagement with nannies on the scheme

Other services used by parents as care

Free Breakfast Club Provision

Although not defined as childcare, the Welsh Government funded Free Breakfast Initiative offers a vital support to parents/carers at the start of the school day. 101 schools in RCT

offer this service. The average daily attendance in autumn 2021 term was 3406 pupils per day, as shown below:

Area	English medium	Welsh medium	Dual language
North Cynon	402	55	0
South Cynon	307	27	0
North Rhondda	451	106	0
South Rhondda	443	38	0
North East Taf Ely	296	60	0
South East Taf Ely	418	72	43
South West Taf Ely	526	97	65
Total	2843	455	108

Restrictions have been necessary through the pandemic to limit the numbers of children attending breakfast clubs, and to ensure that group 'bubbles' were maintained. This caused some difficulties for parents who relied on this service in order to travel to their workplace. However, these restrictions are now easing and clubs are returning to pre-pandemic levels of service.

Youth Engagement and Participation Service (YEPS)

In addition to traditional childcare services, the Council offers activities and youth provision for 11-14 year olds. This is often used by parents as a safe, supervised service for their children, particularly those in years 7 and 8 of secondary school.

Each secondary school in RCT offers after school activities until 4.30pm. Youth clubs are also offered in school and community venues, as well as street based youth work provision. This is available 5 days per week. There is currently no provision offered at weekend, however the week time provision is available for 50 weeks per year (only closing for two weeks at Christmas).

Holiday provision includes youth clubs, street based, and community provision, and trips.

Healthy and Sustainable Pre-school Scheme

The Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme (HSPSS) is a scheme that promotes the physical, mental and social health and wellbeing of all who 'learn, work, play and live' within a childcare setting and its connected community. A whole setting approach is taken to topics such as:

- Nutrition and oral health
- Physical activity and play
- Mental emotional health and wellbeing
- Workplace health and wellbeing
- Environment
- Safety
- Hygiene

49 settings in RCT are currently participating in the scheme. Each setting has a designated Healthy Pre-School Practitioner who supports the settings to embed and sustain the required actions. During the pandemic, support was online, but face to face visits are

starting to take place as restrictions ease. During the pandemic, the Healthy Pre-School practitioners were a lead partner in a multi-agency approach to providing settings with advice and guidance regarding COVID protective measures guidelines.

Whilst not childcare, this scheme offers support and guidance to existing settings that enhances their service to children and families

Section 6: Needs of Parents / Carers (demand for childcare)

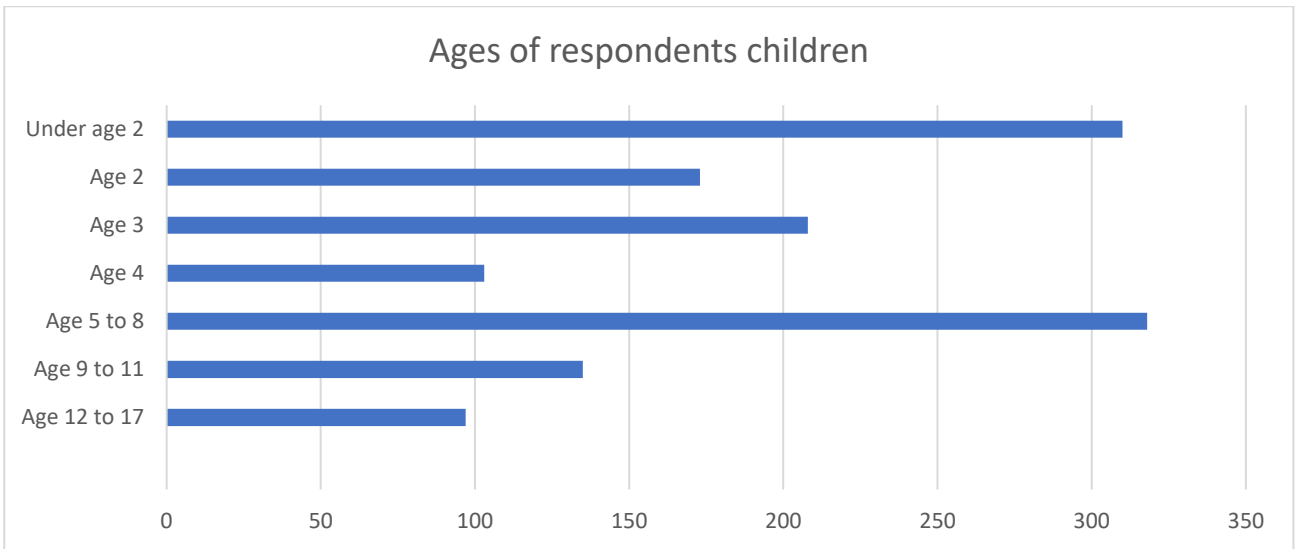
Overview of consultation

An online survey was published by Welsh Government and was open for completion during October 2021. This was promoted widely within RCT via childcare settings, schools, and partner agencies. The survey was also available on the Council website and social media, as well as Connect RCT, a community online platform. Officers also attended parent & toddler groups to engage with parents directly.

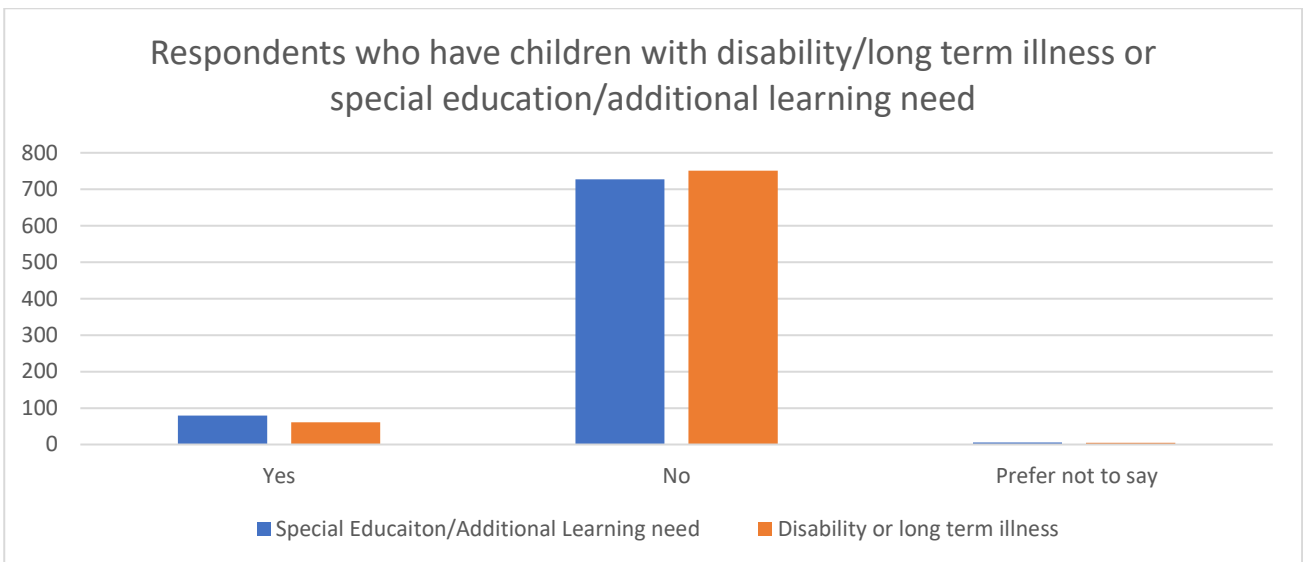
A total of 823 responses were gathered from families living in RCT. Of those who responded:

- 93.8% have responsibility for children (771)
- 1.2% are a parent to be (10)
- 0.4% are foster carers (3)
- 3% are grandparents (25)
- Respondents had a total of 1338 children, with the average family size being 2 children
- 38.7% of respondents had children aged 5 to 8 years old (318), closely followed by 37.8% with children aged under 2 years (310) then 25.3% with children aged 3 years (208)
- 28.3% of respondents had children aged from 9 to 17 years (232)
- 7.4% of respondents have a child with a disability or long term illness (61)
- 9.7% of respondents have a child with a special education / additional learning need that requires additional support with their learning (79)

Household make up of respondents	Number	%
I share responsibility for my children with someone I live with	609	74%
I have sole responsibility for my children	162	19.7%
I share responsibility for my children with someone I don't live with	60	7.3%
I am a grandparent	25	3%
I am a parent to be	10	1.2%
I am a foster carer	3	0.3%

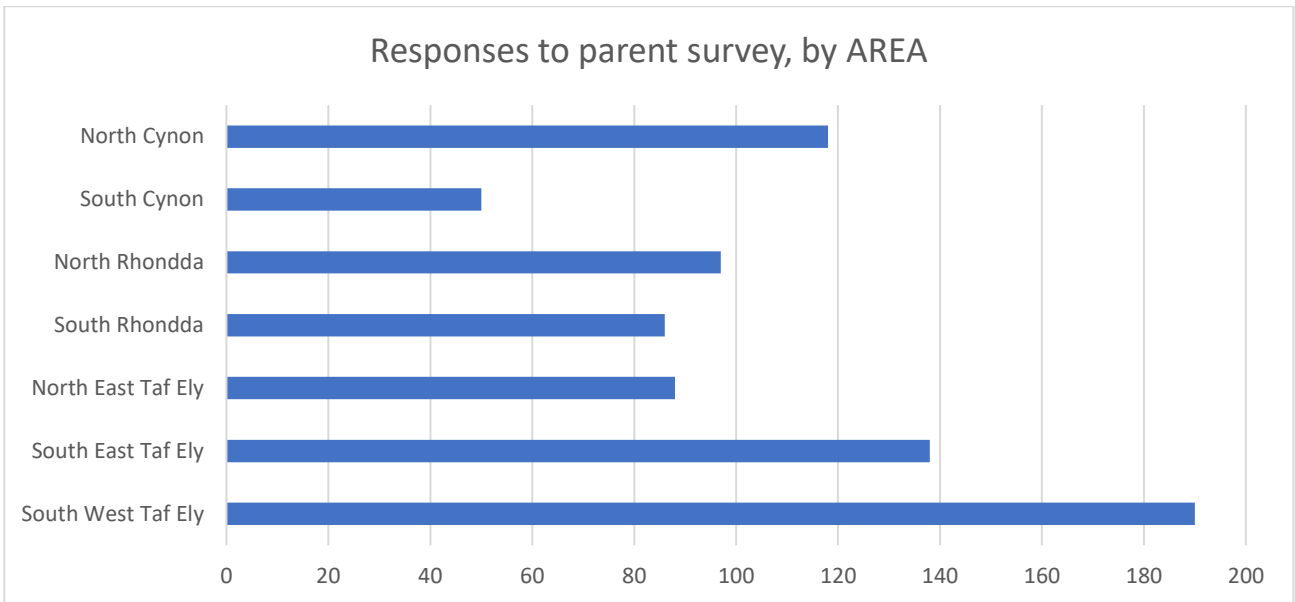


The graph above would suggest that most childcare is needed for children under the age of 2 years and for those aged 5 to 8 years of age.



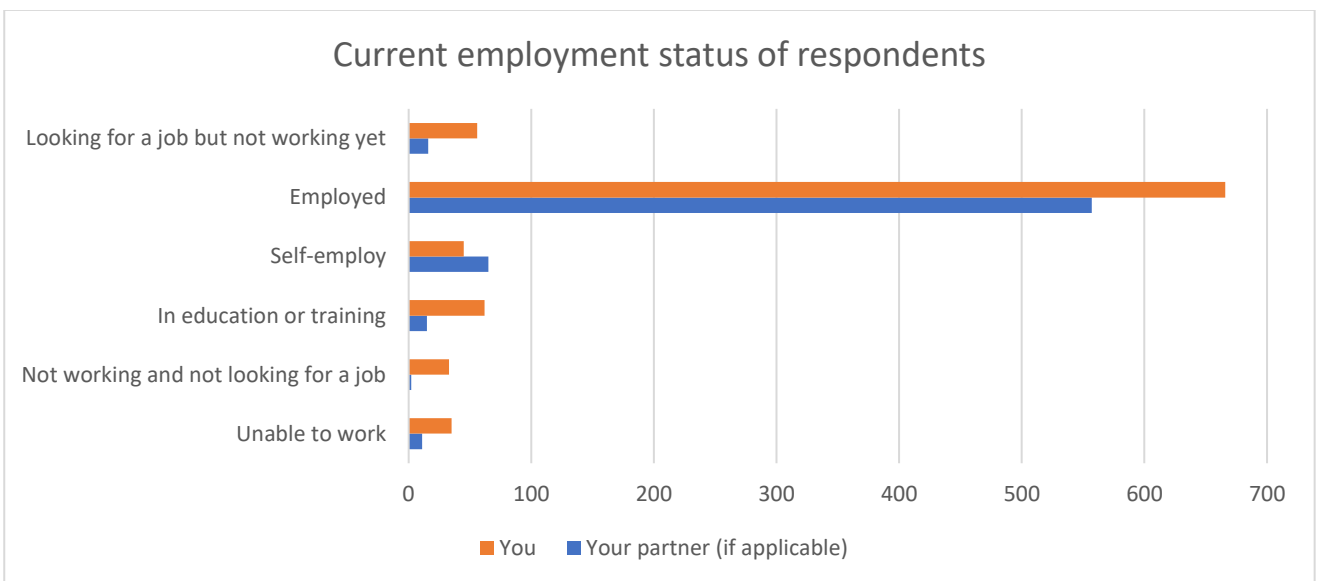
Parent responses – By AREA

Using the postcode data provided, responses were received from all areas of RCT. Parents in South West Taf Ely submitted the most responses (190), whilst South Cynon submitted the least (138).



Employment status / Gross household weekly income

54.5% of respondents stated that they were employed (666), with 45.5% of partners being employed (557). Of those that gave their postcode, most respondents who stated that they, or their partner, were employed lived in the South West Taf Ely (164).

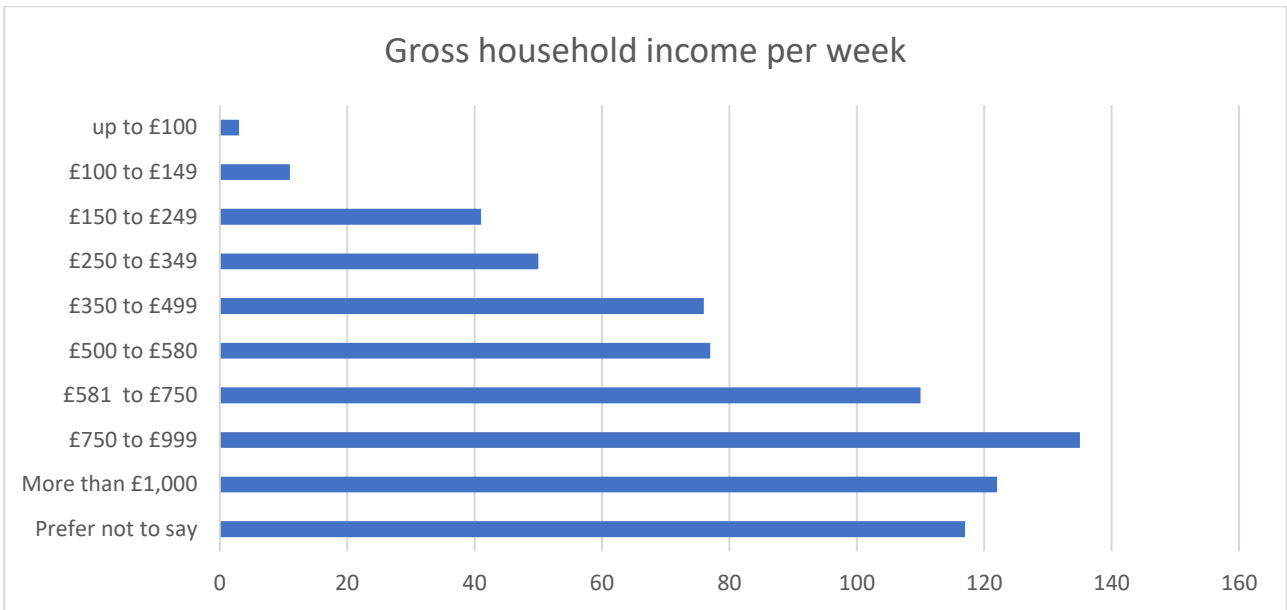


Household income

9.8% did not state their household income (81), whilst 14.2% stated that they preferred not to say (117).

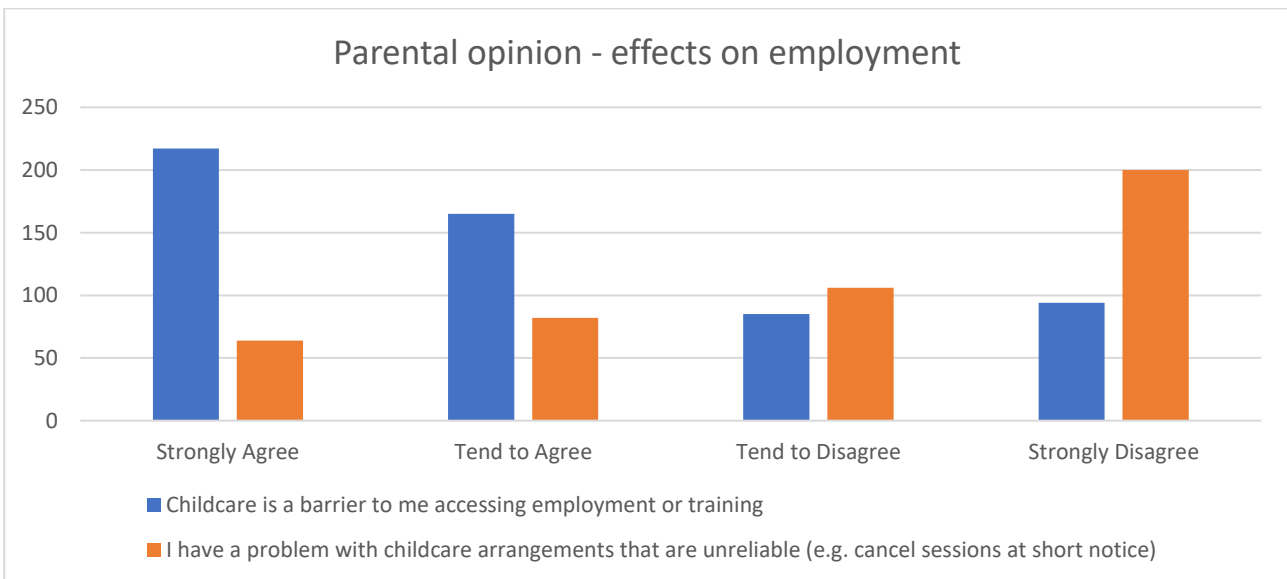
22.0% of respondents had a gross household income of below £500 per week (181). Parents in North Cynon and North Rhondda gave the highest number of responses for this household income bracket.

53.9% of respondents had a gross household income of £500 to more than £1000 per week (444). The highest areas for responses in this household income bracket were South West Taf Ely and South East Taf Ely.

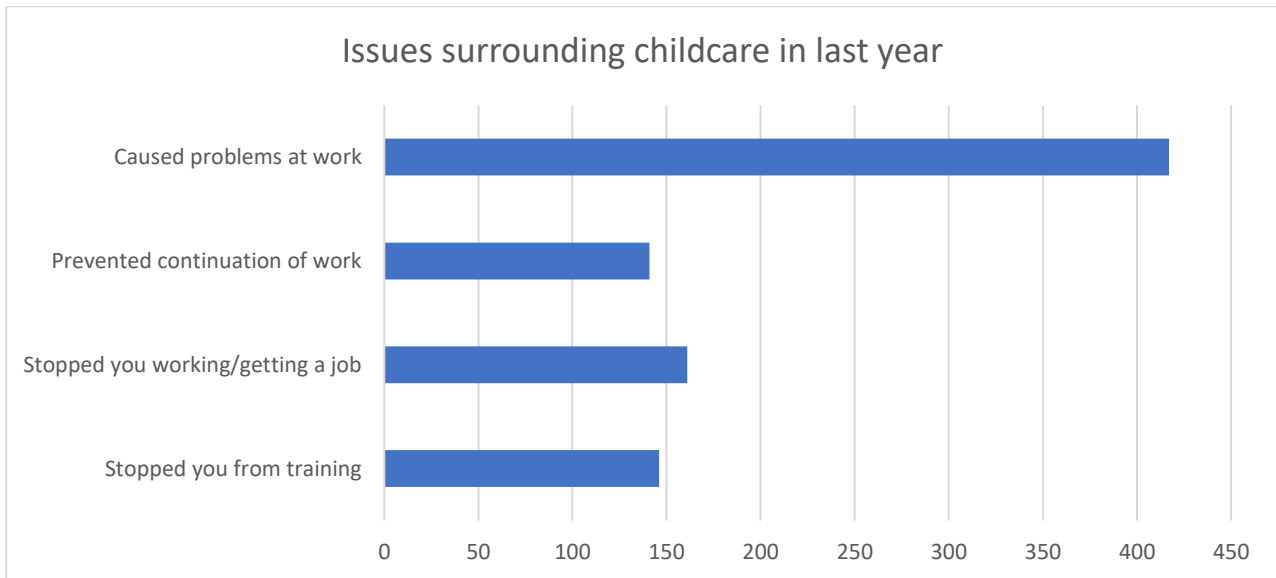


Parental opinion – effects on employment

27.6% of respondents (217) strongly agreed, whilst 21% tended to agree (165), that childcare is a barrier to them accessing employment or training. Welsh Government funded schemes such as PaCE (Parents, Childcare and Employment) have supported parents to access training and employment opportunities since it was launched. These responses would suggest that further promotional work is needed to ensure that parents/carers are fully aware of the support available to them.



Parents/carers were asked if they had any issues surrounding childcare in the last year that had affected them. 74% of respondents stated that childcare issues had caused problems at work (417), the most of which were from the South West Taf Ely area (178), followed by South East Taf Ely (145).



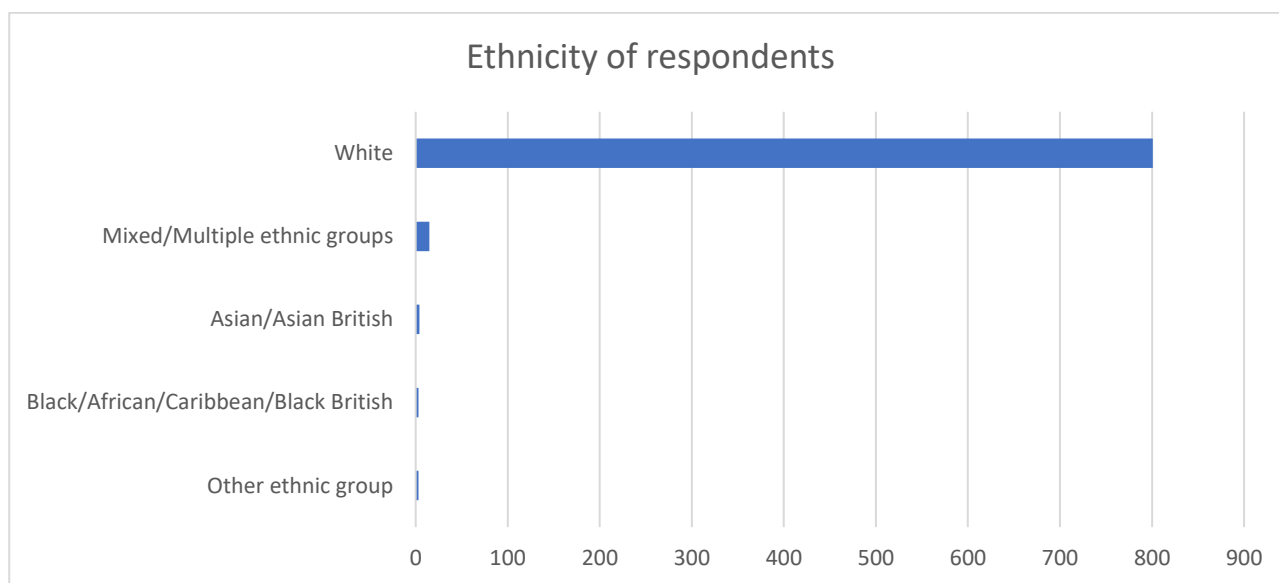
Although the responses on their own do not identify that the COVID-19 pandemic was the reason for these issues, the text responses do suggest this:

- *Due to Covid restrictions, my youngest child has been sent home several times with a high temperature which has resulted in myself or my husband having to leave work to collect her. In the past, paracetamol would've been administered but nursery settings cannot do this now*
- *Having to pay £86 a day for both children to attend nursery, to then be at work for 1 hour and get called to collect one as they have a cough. This affects my job; I don't get paid for the day and then also have to be out of pocket too. Was never an issue before covid to send child in with a cough. Even though child is completely not ill with it*
- *These problems are mostly COVID related as the frequency of nursery/school closures have made work much more challenging*
- *My child is always unwell from his childcare setting. Due to covid restrictions I have to keep my child home almost every other week to isolate and get tested (every cold leads to a cough). It's caused a negative impact on me mentally and physically. I don't have much family support so it's really difficult at times*
- *Stressful as had to apply for spaces in breakfast club, my parents would normally have my son but due to Covid this was not possible. I teach and so a wraparound service would have been the best solution. I had to leave work early to pick my child up*
- *Constant isolation whilst working from home with a 4 year old was very difficult and affected my ability to progress in work*
- *having children at home whilst working has meant I haven't been able to work normal pattern/same standard*
- *I may have to leave my Job if my husband returns to the office as there is no after school/ weekend childcare*
- *Effectd productivity- working from home with young children*
- *During the pandemic we had to balance working full time and 2 small children. We've really struggled to make ends meet to work and manage childcare it's not fair that those not working get more help*

Ethnicity of respondents

97% of those who responded to the survey identified as White (801). Of these, 98% were Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British (781). The 2% of respondents that identified as *'any other white background'* included Polish, Turkish, Spanish, Portuguese, and French (17). Over half of the *'any other'* respondents reside in South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely, closely followed by North Rhondda.

The percentage of responses from Black/African/Caribbean/Black British, Asian/Asian British and Mixed/Multiple Ethnic (3% in total) roughly correlates with the Local Labour Force Survey/Annual Population Survey, updated in November 2021, that states 3.4% of the population of RCT is of Black, Asian and minority ethnicity.⁵ Again, over half of these respondents reside in South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely, followed by North Cynon.

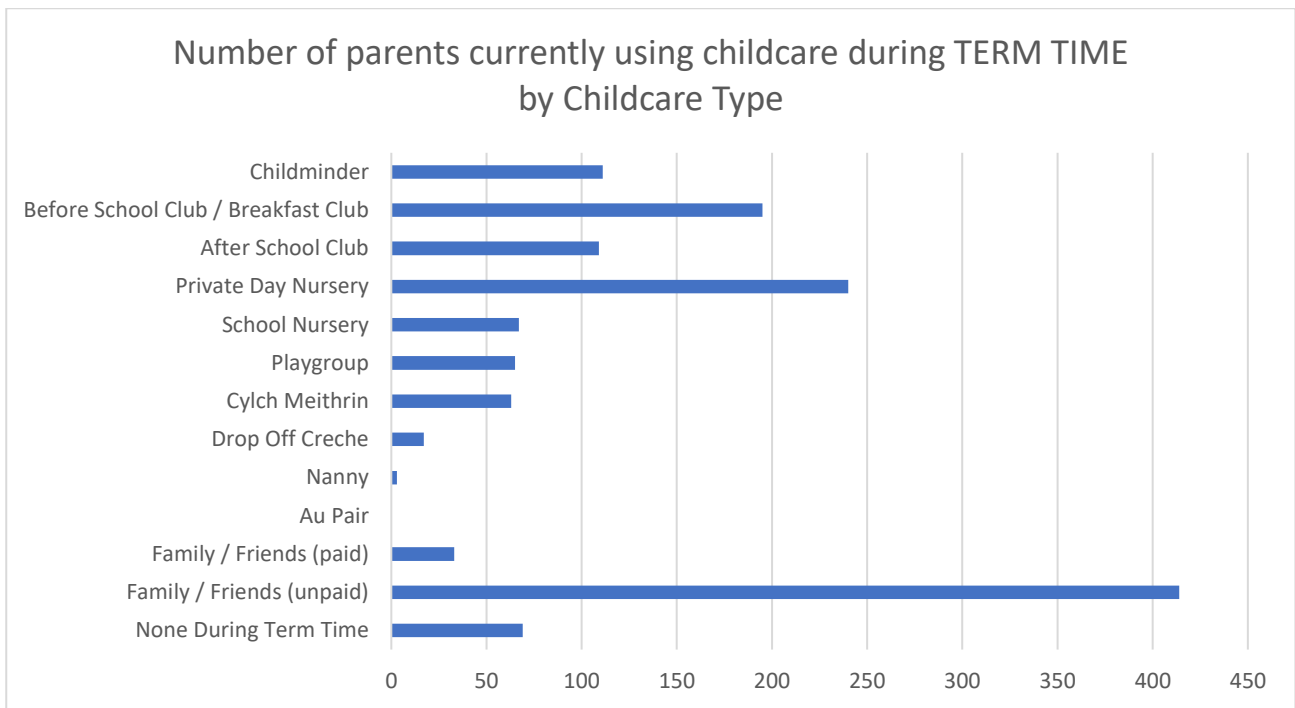


Current usage of childcare

Childcare currently used during TERM TIME

Of those that currently use childcare during term time, 51.8% of parents rely on family and friends (414). Private Day Nursery use was second with 30% of parents using these (240), followed by 24.4% using Before School Club / Breakfast Clubs (195). However, caution must be used with the before school care, as many parents make use of Welsh Government funded Free Breakfast Club provision and would class this provision as childcare. Childminders are currently used by 13.9% of parents (111).

⁵ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Ethnicity/ethnicity-by-area-ethnicgroup>



Of those that gave their postcodes, this can be broken down into the areas as follows:

Number of parents currently using childcare during TERM TIME, by Childcare Type and AREA	Childminder	Before School Club / Breakfast Club	After School Club	Private Day Nursery	School Nursery	Playgroup	Cylch Meithrin	Drop Off Creche	Nanny	Au Pair	Family / Friends (paid)	Family / Friends (unpaid)	None During Term Time
North Cynon	16	30	7	38	7	11	9	3	0	0	9	65	10
South Cynon	6	8	2	11	4	6	6	2	0	0	1	23	6
North Rhondda	14	23	12	17	3	8	9	3	0	0	3	51	7
South Rhondda	11	23	6	30	6	2	6	4	0	0	6	53	7
North East Taf Ely	21	17	9	24	2	7	7	0	0	0	1	52	6
South East Taf Ely	21	40	28	36	16	4	15	1	1	0	4	70	14
South West Taf Ely	18	46	43	78	26	18	8	3	1	0	8	77	13
Totals	107	187	107	234	64	56	60	16	2	0	32	391	63

Reasons for not using childcare during term time included:

- *After school club hasn't reopened had to reduce working hours*
- *Husband works in school hours as no before or after care in our area*
- *My children go to a different family member almost every day for me to be able to work*

- *There are no childcare facilities for 11 year olds in Mountain Ash*
- *After school only on one day as there is no availability for other days which I would like. However, with not being able to have any help to pay for afterschool clubs it could become expensive for me to do anyway*
- *Used private nursery pre covid*

From these comments, it seems clear that some parents are now struggling to find suitable after school provision. The pandemic has had a significant impact on after school care, as many services have not been able to reopen since lockdown eased. One of the main reasons for this is that many out of school clubs use shared venues, such as school hall and community centres. Due to school bubbles, and concerns about mixed usage, these venues have not been available to them. Those that have reopened have struggled to operate at full capacity, again due to venue restrictions, and the implementation of WG protective measures guidance, such as separate bubbles and not having children attend from more than one school.

With regards to after school care for children aged 11 years and over, this issue has been identified in previous CSA reports. The Youth Engagement and Participation Services (YEPS) offers extracurricular activities for young people aged 11 years and over. Although not childcare, these activities are used by many parents as a safe environment for their children during the first couple of years at secondary school, particularly during holiday periods. Please see Section Four more information on YEPS services.

Explore demand for after school care

Number of hours used – TERM TIME

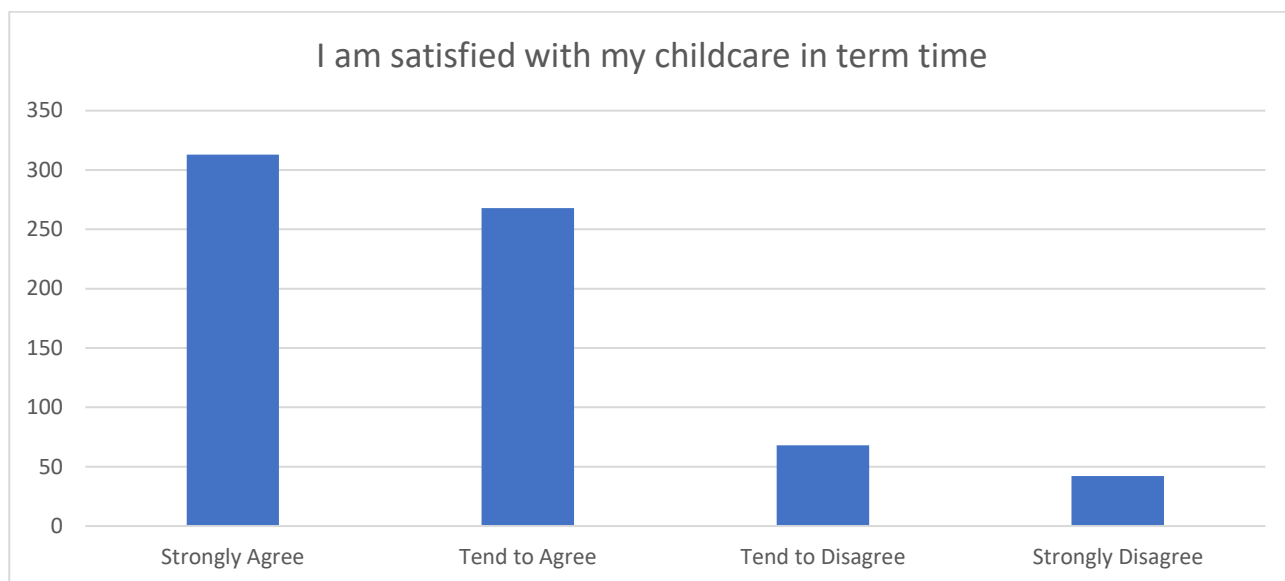
Based on the survey data outlined below, parents in North Cynon and South Cynon use the most number of hours of childcare during term time. The figures for these areas are significantly higher than the other areas and the RCT average, so should be viewed with some caution. This is especially so as parents in North Cynon gave the highest responses for not accessing childcare as it is too expensive. This analysis also includes, not only fee paying childcare, but also the use of family and friends, so does not give a clear picture of fee paying childcare usage but might explain the high usage in North Cynon.

Number of hours of childcare used TERM TIME	Term Time (at least)	Time Time (at most)	Term Time (average)
RCT wide	22.3	26.9	19.3
North Cynon	29.3	40	38.5
South Cynon	-	-	36
North Rhondda	17.5	22.5	17.2
South Rhondda	25	24	19.4
North East Taf Ely	21.8	12.5	14.5
South East Taf Ely	23	-	15
South West Taf Ely	26.5	33.3	19.8

Satisfaction with childcare – TERM TIME

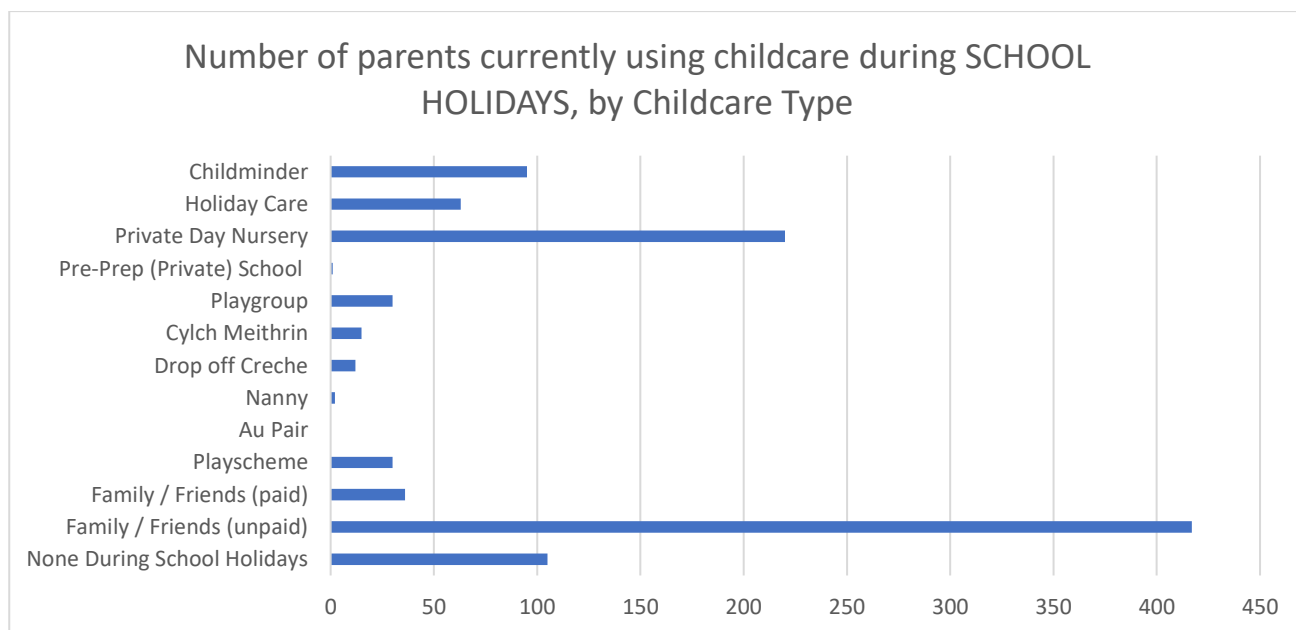
When asked how satisfied parents/carers were with their term time childcare, 39.1% strongly agreed with the statement (313), whilst 33.5% tended to agree (268). This seems to suggest

that, for those parents that do use regulated childcare services, they are happy with the quality and service received.



Childcare currently used during SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Again, it is family and friends that respondents state provide their care, with 53.7% stating this is the type of childcare they use during School Holidays (417). Private Day Nurseries are again the second most popular type of holiday childcare with 30.2% of parents using these (220). 14.4% stated that they do not use childcare during school holidays (105).



Of those that gave their postcodes, this can be broken down into the areas as follows:

Number of parents currently using childcare during SCHOOL HOLIDAYS, by Childcare Type and AREA	Childminder	Holiday Care	Private Day Nursery	Pre-Prep (Private) School	Playgroup	Cylch Meithrin	Drop Off Creche	Nanny	Au Pair	Playscheme	Family / Friends (paid)	Family / Friends (unpaid)	None During School Holidays
North Cynon	14	1	30	0	4	1	1	0	0	1	8	68	18
South Cynon	2	3	9	0	2	1	2	0	0	2	2	24	7
North Rhondda	15	12	16	0	4	4	3	0	0	4	2	49	15
South Rhondda	5	2	26	0	0	1	3	0	0	1	7	49	11
North East Taf Ely	22	3	22	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	48	7
South East Taf Ely	17	17	33	1	1	5	0	0	0	8	4	74	19
South West Taf Ely	17	25	78	0	11	2	2	1	0	11	11	85	20
Totals	92	59	214	1	23	14	11	1	0	29	36	397	97

Reasons for not using childcare during school holidays included:

- *Activity camps*
- *I work term time*
- *Since COVID holiday club will only take children below the age 8 during school hols there is hardly any clubs about for disabled children*
- *Part time childminder in holidays*
- *Take holidays from work*
- *Work from home*
- *Nothing available in my area*

The text comment above stating that nothing was available in their area was from the Hawthorn ward of South East Taf Ely. This area has been raised as a possible area of identified need in the past. There has been housing development in this ward since the 2017 CSA report was published, which is likely to have impacted on demand in this area. In 2019 the Council supported the development of after school care in this area, following consultation with parents. Unfortunately, the club was not able to use an area within the primary school, and so used a local community venue c.1 mile away. This proved unattractive to parents who were concerned about the walk to the venue and the club became unviable and had to close. With the development of a new through school in this area, it may be prudent to re-visit this.

Explore demand for out of school and holiday care in Hawthorn ward of South East Taf Ely

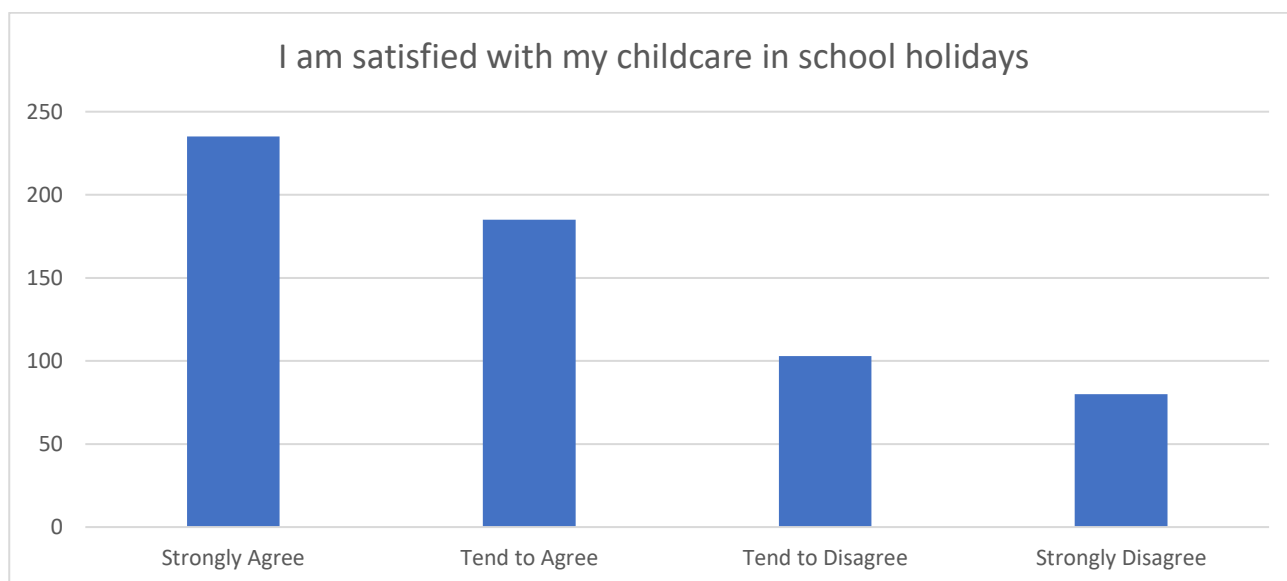
Number of hours used – SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Based on the survey data outlined below, parents in North Cynon and South East Taf Ely use the most number of hours of childcare during school holiday periods. Again, this analysis also includes, not only fee paying childcare, but also the use of family and friends, so does not give a clear picture of fee paying childcare usage.

Number of hours of childcare used SCHOOL HOLIDAYS	School Holidays (at least)	School Holidays (at most)	School Holidays (average)
RCT	25	23.4	24.9
North Cynon	29.3	40	40
South Cynon	-	-	16
North Rhondda	18.5	22.5	17
South Rhondda	25	-	26.6
North East Taf Ely	30	-	-
South East Taf Ely	50.3	-	30
South West Taf Ely	19.5	24	25.2

Satisfaction with childcare – SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

When asked how satisfied parents/carers were with their holiday childcare, 29.8% strongly agreed with that statement (235) whilst 23.5% tended to agree (185). The satisfaction rates are lower than for term time childcare, but still suggest that parents tend to be happy with the service they are receiving.



Current childcare costs

30% of respondents reported that they spend £0 on childcare per week (224). This would correlate with the responses that indicate the high reliance on informal childcare with family and friends caring for their children. Of those that do pay childcare costs, 21% stated that they pay between £100 and £199 per week (155). Using the Childcare Offer for Wales rate of £4.50 per hour as an indication, this would buy parents between 22 and 44 hours of childcare per week. This seems to correlate with the average number of hours of childcare that parents told us they use.

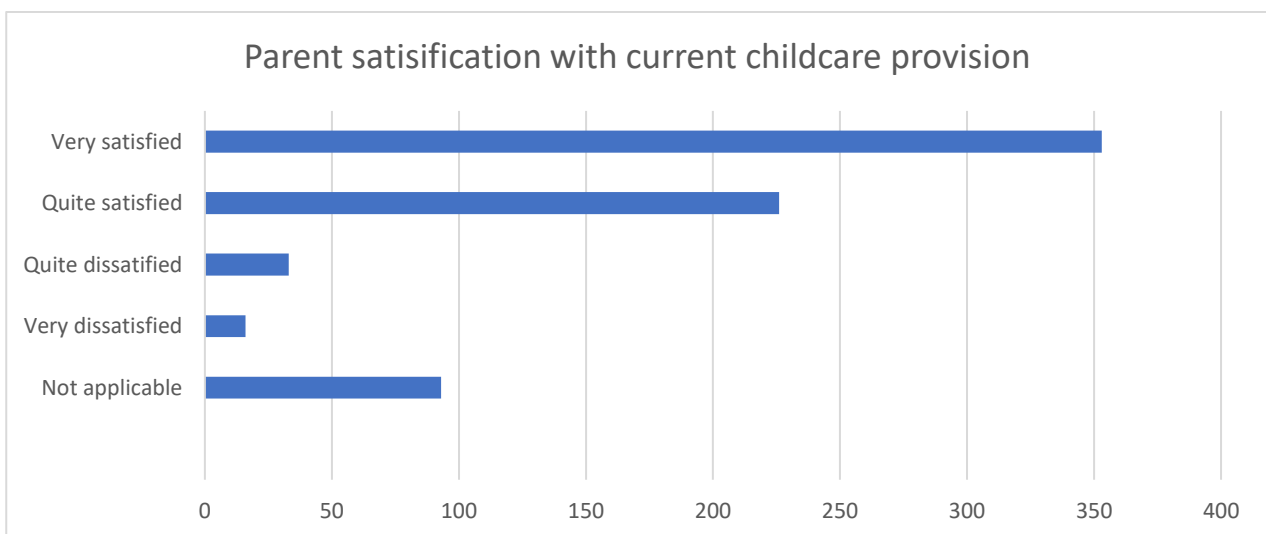
Average weekly spend on childcare (not including government funded childcare) - RCT		
Cost per week	Number	%
£0	224	30.48%
1p-£10	17	2.31%
£10-£49	118	16.05%
£50-£99	139	18.91%
£100-£199	155	21.09%
£200-£299	54	7.35%
£300+	28	3.81%

For those that provided their postcodes, it can be seen that parents in South West Taf Ely are most likely to pay more than £200 per week on childcare costs.

Average weekly spend on childcare (not including government funded childcare) - Number of responses per AREA								
Cost per week	North Cynon	South Cynon	North Rhonda	South Rhonda	North East Taf Ely	South East Taf Ely	South West Taf Ely	Total
£0	44	17	29	19	21	39	34	203
1p-£10	2	1	2	1	0	2	3	11
£10-£49	10	6	15	15	15	18	35	114
£50-£99	27	4	19	8	17	22	39	136
£100-£199	20	9	18	21	14	29	38	149
£200-£299	3	5	2	11	7	5	20	53
£300+	2	1	3	3	6	6	6	27

Satisfaction with current childcare provider

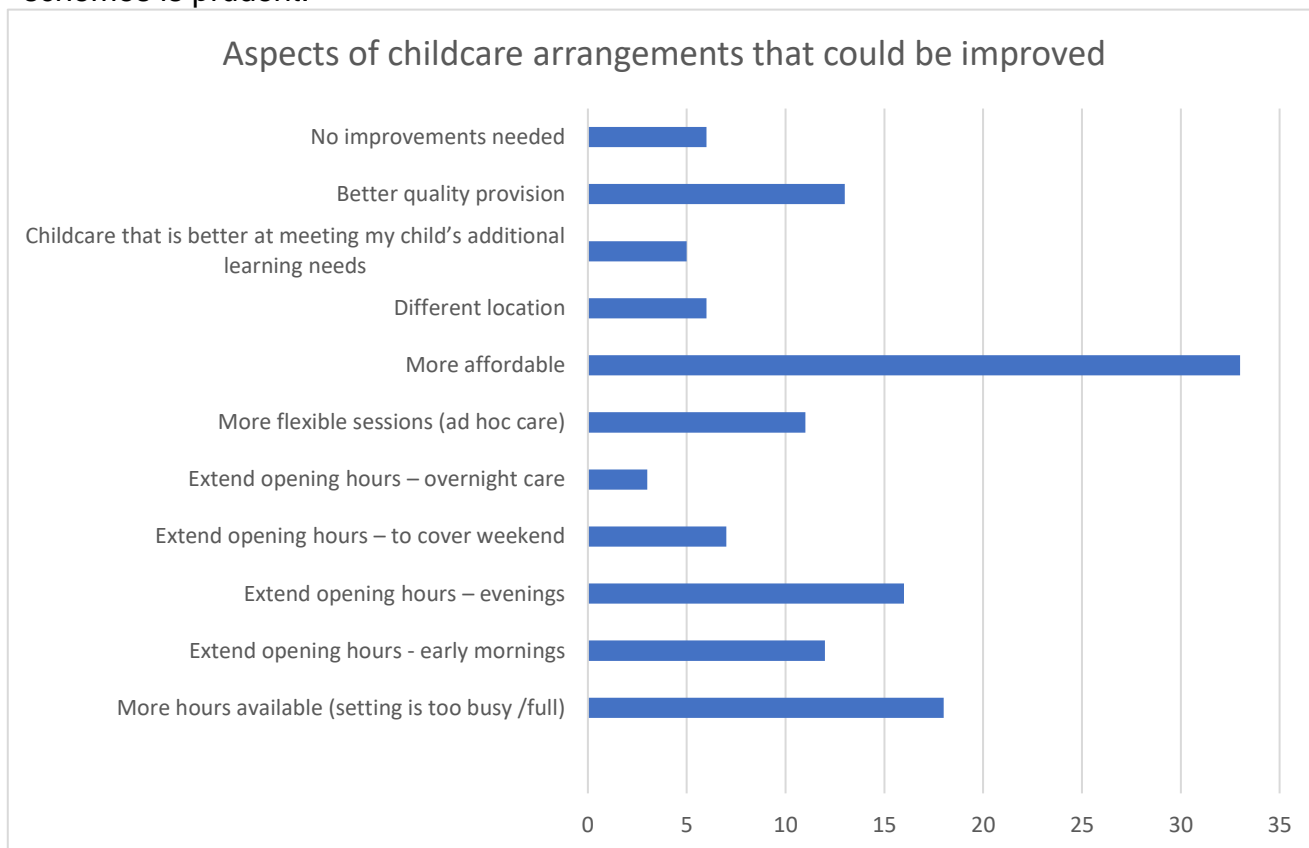
48.9% stated they were very satisfied with their childcare provider (353) with only 2.2% reporting they were very dissatisfied (16). The South East Taf Ely area had the highest number of 'very satisfied' responses (56) whilst South West Taf Ely had the highest number of 'very dissatisfied'.



Areas of childcare arrangements that could be improved

When asked if they were unhappy with any aspect of their childcare arrangements, more affordable was the most common response with 50.7% choosing this response (33). More hours available (setting is too busy/full) was next with 27.6% of responses (18), closely followed by extending opening hours into the evening with 24.6% of responses (16).

Parents' perceptions of childcare costs being too high is familiar to the survey responses in the 2017 CSA report. There are many universal schemes, as well as those targeted as specific demographics, available to parents to support them with the cost of childcare, such as Tax Free Childcare, employer based childcare vouchers, the Childcare Offer for Wales, Flying Start and the childcare element of Universal Credit. Increased promotion of these schemes is prudent.



Improve promotion of financial schemes to help with the cost of childcare

Welsh medium childcare

Please see Section Three.

Reasons for not accessing childcare

The biggest reasons respondents listed for not currently using childcare were that it is too expensive and that they use informal childcare such as family or friends. The two likely correlate with each other in that parents use informal childcare as they feel that fee paying care is too expensive. The next most selected reasons were that the childcare available is not flexible enough for their needs and that the times it is available are unsuitable. These findings are similar to those from the 2017 CSA. Although work has been undertaken since then to support the childcare sector to offer more flexible sessions/options and to offer care in atypical hours, there has been limited progress.

Reasons for not accessing childcare	Number	%
The cost of childcare is too expensive	152	43.4%
I use informal childcare such as a family member or friend	132	37.7%
The childcare available is not flexible enough for my needs	61	17.4%
Childcare times are unsuitable	47	13.4%
There is no childcare available that is suitable for my child's age	41	11.7%
There is no childcare where I need it to be	40	11.4%
I am a stay at home parent and have no need for childcare	29	8.2%
I choose not to access any childcare	22	6.2%
There is no childcare with sufficient quality	19	5.4%
I only use childcare on an ad hoc basis and it is impossible to plan	18	5.1%
There is no childcare that can cater for my child's specific needs	14	4%
My child is on a waiting list for a provider and we are waiting for a place to become available	13	3.7%
There is no suitable Welsh Language provision	13	3.7%
There is a problem with transport	11	3.1%
No suitable provision in our language, which is neither Welsh nor English	3	0.8%
My children are old enough to look after themselves	2	0.5%

Reasons for not accessing childcare by AREA	North Cynon	South Cynon	North Rhondda	South Rhondda	North East Taf Ely	South East Taf Ely	South West Taf Ely	Total
The cost of childcare is too expensive	30	8	23	24	19	23	20	147
I use informal childcare such as a family member or friend	25	12	19	13	14	24	15	122
The childcare available is not flexible enough for my needs	12	3	13	6	11	7	6	58
Childcare times are unsuitable	9	2	7	7	6	7	7	45
There is no childcare available that is suitable for my child's age	7	5	8	6	6	6	3	41
There is no childcare where I need it to be	6	0	6	5	10	3	4	34
I am a stay at home parent and have no need for childcare	7	1	2	4	1	3	8	26
I choose not to access any childcare	3	1	2	0	3	6	2	17
There is no childcare with sufficient quality	3	2	4	2	3	3	1	18

Reasons for not accessing childcare by AREA	North Cynon	South Cynon	North Rhondda	South Rhondda	North East Taf Ely	South East Taf Ely	South West Taf Ely	Total
I only use childcare on an ad hoc basis and it is impossible to plan	0	0	7	1	2	4	3	17
There is no childcare that can cater for my child's specific needs	3	0	2	0	1	4	4	14
My child is on a waiting list for a provider and we are waiting for a place to become available	2	0	5	0	1	1	2	11
There is no suitable Welsh Language provision	2	0	3	2	2	1	2	12
There is a problem with transport	4	0	1	3	2	1	0	11
No suitable provision in our language, which is neither Welsh nor English	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	3
My children are old enough to look after themselves	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2

When this data is broken down into areas, for those parents that supplied their postcodes, the following observations can be made:

North Cynon

Parents in this area gave the most responses for using informal childcare (25), childcare times are unsuitable (9) and that they had problems with transport (4). They also had the most responses stating that childcare is too expensive (30). This may explain why the use of informal childcare is higher than in other areas.

Parent comments for this area include:

- *No available childcare provider to do school pickups when I need them*
- *Hours aren't great for work*
- *Family childcare*
- *In school*

South Cynon

Parent responses from this area were quite limited. However, the use of informal childcare was the most common reason for not accessing childcare (12), followed by the cost of childcare (8).

Parent comments for this area include:

- *Recently stopped using childcare due to job change*
- *I would like my daughter to go into further childcare but I can't afford it*

North Rhondda

Parents in this area had the most responses stating that their child was waiting for a place to become available in their chosen provider (5) and that the childcare available was not flexible enough for their needs (13). They also had most responses saying that there was no childcare with sufficient quality (4), for their child's age (8) or Welsh medium provision (3). This all suggests that there are gaps in provision in this area and that further examination is required.

Parent comments for this area include:

- *I work full time so would value after school hours childcare*
- *Also I am currently working from home due to Covid 19. When my employer wants me back in work it will be a nightmare. Breakfast club prioritised people who don't work - work that out. After school club is good for an hour but our jobs don't finish at 4pm.*
- *I moved my daughters school because there was no suitable provision*
- *There is NO childcare available where we live*

The last two comments were from parents in Tylorstown ward of the North Rhondda area. This area has been highlighted as an area of need in the past. Several attempts have been made at establishing an after school club in the school, but there has been insufficient demand to make it viable. Childminding campaigns have also been undertaken in this ward, again with limited success. There is one prospective new childminder currently engaging in the RCT funding package however, the CIW application is yet to be submitted.

South Rhondda

Again, childcare being too expensive (24) and use of informal childcare (13) were the most frequent responses for this area. This area had the second highest response stating that there was a problem with transport (3).

There were no parent comments from this area.

North East Taf Ely

Parents in this area had the most responses to state that there was no childcare where they need it to be (10). Further investigation will need to be undertaken to establish exactly which areas have gaps in provision.

Parent comments for this area include:

- *I have to work from home as there is no adequate childcare wraparound from Cilfynydd school when my 3 year old finishes at 12pm. I have tried 7 different childcare providers.*
- *My children attend a holiday club in the Caerphilly area during school holidays, as there is limited holiday clubs in the RCT areas. There are no nurseries or childminders that currently service YPSN (YGG Pont Sion Norton?) for wraparound care. There are limited nursery spaces in the Pontypridd area, childcare is a massive challenge for working parents in RCT*
- *There are not enough childcare providers in RCT, Pontypridd area*

South East Taf Ely

Parents here had the most responses stating that the childcare available does not cater for their specific needs (4). South West Taf Ely also had the same number of responses for this. The introduction of the new Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal Act (ALNET)

aims to ensure that children's additional learning needs are identified and supported earlier and in a more co-ordinated manner. All childcare providers have access to free training courses to support identification, and support, of additional learning needs. The RCT Early Years Forum has also been restructured to take account of the terms of the ALNET.

Parent comments for this area include:

- *There are not enough childcare providers on my area*
- *On maternity leave child under 2*
- *Too expensive would cost £76 a week for after school wrap around holidays is £34 a day*

South West Taf Ely

This area had the most responses for stay at home parents (8). Although these parents do not need childcare for work purposes, further promotion of the benefits to children's development and wellbeing may be beneficial.

Parent comments for this area include:

- *No problems with our youngest, it's our oldest we cannot get childcare for*
- *Breakfast club is 8.10 and as I work in a school. I need it from 8.00.*
- *Difficulty finding suitable childcare due to covid - after school club restricted on numbers*
- *Non-verbal autistic child who has difficulty in going with anyone else*
- *Local Childcare is not available and is unable to meet my child's complex needs*
- *It feels too unsafe with current covid rates*

The first parent comment above has children aged under two years and 4 years old. This may suggest issues with care out of school hours and during school holiday periods.

Further explore possible barriers to accessing childcare in North Cynon
Investigate childcare supply in north Rhondda – most on waiting list here
Investigate North East Taf Ely – childcare not where they need it to be
Promote benefits of childcare to children's wellbeing and development
Explore demand for out of school and holiday care in South West Taf Ely

Accessing information

The main vehicle for parents to access information is via the Family Information Service. Since the last CSA report, FIS has undergone several changes and there has been limited opportunities for the FIS Officer to attend parent engagement events. When asked to score the statement 'I know where to find out information about childcare', 37.2% of respondents 'tended to disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. The pandemic has also severely limited face to face engagement with parents. It is not surprising, therefore, that parents may be unsure where to find information about childcare or financial support. The Family Information Service does have a successful Facebook page and content on the main Council website. The childcare development team and the Childcare Offer team also promote childcare options to parents whenever they have face to face or virtual engagement events.

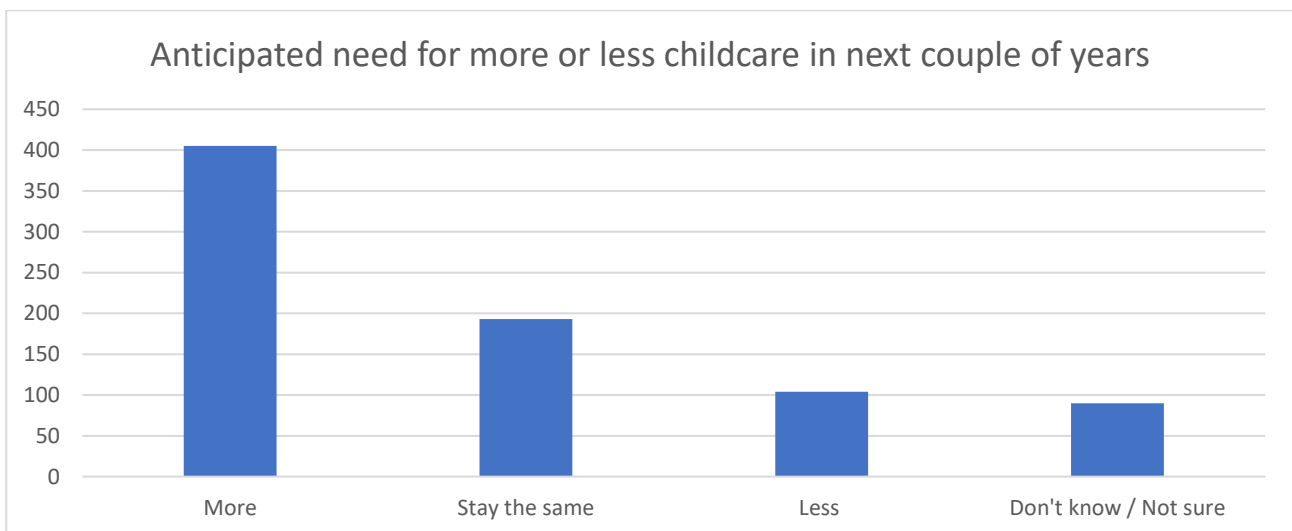
Now that restrictions are easing, a renewed emphasis should be undertaken on promoting information to parents and clearly explain where they can find information relevant to them.

Statement	Strongly Agree		Tend to Agree		Tend to Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
I know where to find out information about childcare	136	17.2%	281	35.5%	189	23.9%	105	13.3%
I know where to find out info on financial assistance for childcare	75	9.4%	192	24.2%	238	30%	212	26.7%

Work in partnership to promote childcare options and financial support to parents

Future anticipated need for childcare

Parents were asked about their future plans and whether they were likely to require more or less childcare in the next two years. At the time the survey was undertaken, there was still a high level of home working and disruption to normal working patterns. Therefore, it may have been difficult for parents to accurately predict their childcare needs moving forward. Those that did respond, 51.1% stated that they anticipate requiring more childcare in the next couple of years (405), 24.3% anticipated that their childcare needs will stay the same (193), whilst 13.1% anticipate they will require less childcare (104). 11.3% didn't know or were unsure (90).



Less childcare needed

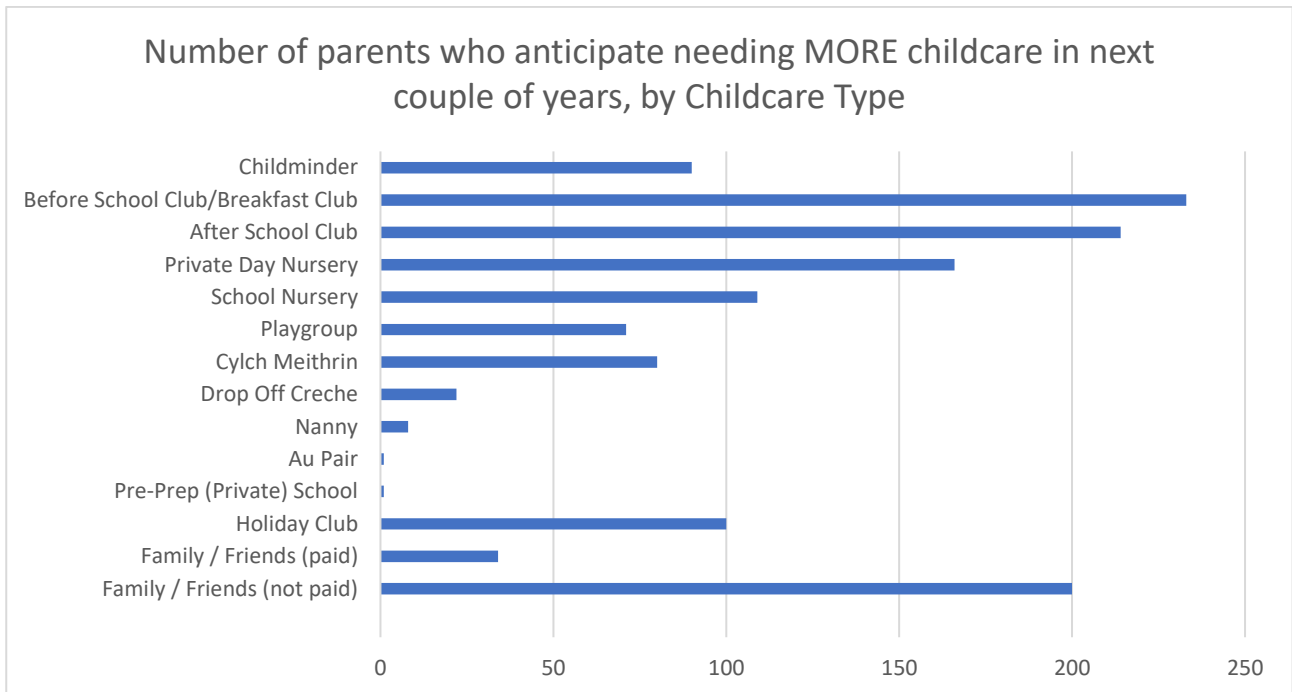
Of those respondents that stated they anticipate needing less childcare, 91.5% stated that this was because their child will be older (108), followed by 10.1% who expect to work/study from home more (12). Of those that feel they will need less, the highest responses were from those living in South West Taf Ely (26), South East Taf Ely (20) and North East Taf Ely (16). Due to changes in the work patterns of many parents over the last two years, it is surprising that the figure expecting to work or study from home more is not higher. The CSA annual action plans for the next five years will evaluate the effect of working from home and whether this has become a permanent feature in working patterns or whether workers have returned to their office bases as the effects of the pandemic reduce. Other reasons for anticipating using less childcare are below:

Reasons for needing LESS childcare in next couple of years	Number	%
Child will be older	108	91.53%
Expect to work / study from home more	12	10.17%
Trying to have more time with family	6	5.08%
Expect to work / study less hours	3	2.54%
Concerns around COVID-19 / infections	2	1.69%
Concern about COVID-19 disruption to services / closure	1	0.85%

More childcare needed

Of those that feel they will need more, the highest responses were from those living in South West Taf Ely (94), South East Taf Ely (66) and North Cynon (61).

55.7% stated that they would need more Before School/Breakfast Club provision in the next couple of years (233), followed by 51.2% stating the need for After School Club (214).



Of those that gave their postcodes, this can be broken down into the areas as follows:

Number of parents who anticipate needing MORE childcare in next couple of years, by Childcare Type and AREA	Childminder	Before School Club / Breakfast Club	After School Club	Private Day Nursery	School Nursery	Playgroup	Cylch Meithrin	Drop Off Creche	Nanny	Au Pair	Pre-Prep (Private) School	Holiday Club	Family / Friends (paid)	Family / Friends (unpaid)
North Cynon	18	37	24	19	10	9	10	10	0	0	0	8	4	38
South Cynon	4	10	10	6	4	6	10	3	1	0	0	4	7	11
North Rhondda	20	38	33	19	9	7	12	1	2	0	0	17	2	26
South Rhondda	7	27	22	29	18	10	13	3	0	0	0	7	6	32
North East Taf Ely	13	22	25	13	15	8	8	0	0	0	0	10	2	19
South East Taf Ely	14	42	42	28	20	8	16	0	0	0	0	24	4	28
South West Taf Ely	11	53	54	46	30	19	10	4	4	1	1	30	8	38
Totals	87	229	210	160	106	67	79	21	7	1	1	100	33	192

North Cynon

The type of childcare that is most likely to be required in the next couple of years is Family/Friends (unpaid) and Breakfast School Club/Breakfast Club. Most respondents to this survey that have selected Before School Club/Breakfast Clubs are likely to be referring to the free, school based breakfast clubs. Therefore, parents in North Cynon anticipate needing to use informal, unregistered forms of care.

South Cynon

Family/Friends (unpaid) was the most popular response in this area too, closely followed by Before School Club/Breakfast Club, After School Club and Cylch Meithrin. For all but the Cylch Meithrin option, it is unclear whether parents are referring to fee paying childcare or free initiatives and activity clubs provided by the schools. A new meithrin opened in Abercynon in January 2022 via funding from the Welsh Government Welsh medium capital scheme. This has increased Welsh medium capacity in this area by 24 CIW registered places. As this opened after the parent survey was undertaken, the parents who require this type of childcare may not have been aware of the planned development.

North Rhondda

Again Before School Club/Breakfast Club was the most selected option for a likely increase in need for childcare over the next couple of years, followed by After School Club and Family/Friends (unpaid).

South Rhondda

The three options mentioned above also feature in the responses in South Rhondda, but Private Day Nursery is the second most popular response. This area also received the second highest response for Cylch Meithrin childcare. It would be prudent to further explore demand for Welsh medium sessional care and full day care in this area.

North East Taf Ely

The most responses in this area were for After School Clubs, followed by Before School Club/Breakfast Club. There is a well-established out of school club in this area. Officers have investigated possible demand for new out of school clubs in other in this area in the past. However, it was not established that there would be enough demand to make any new provision viable. It may be prudent to repeat this exercise now and investigate needs for out of school care in this area.

South East Taf Ely

Before School Club/Breakfast Club and After School Club were again the most common responses for anticipated need for childcare in this area. 24 respondents also stated that they would need Holiday Club services. This was the second highest figure for this type of childcare. Holiday services for children aged 4 years and above is an area of development, as it has been in previous CSA reports.

This area also had the most responses for Welsh medium sessional care. This area has the highest number of Welsh medium childcare settings, as they did in the last CSA report in 2017. However, two Cylchoedd Meithrin have closed since that time. Mudiad Meithrin are currently in the process of re-establishing one of the meithrin.

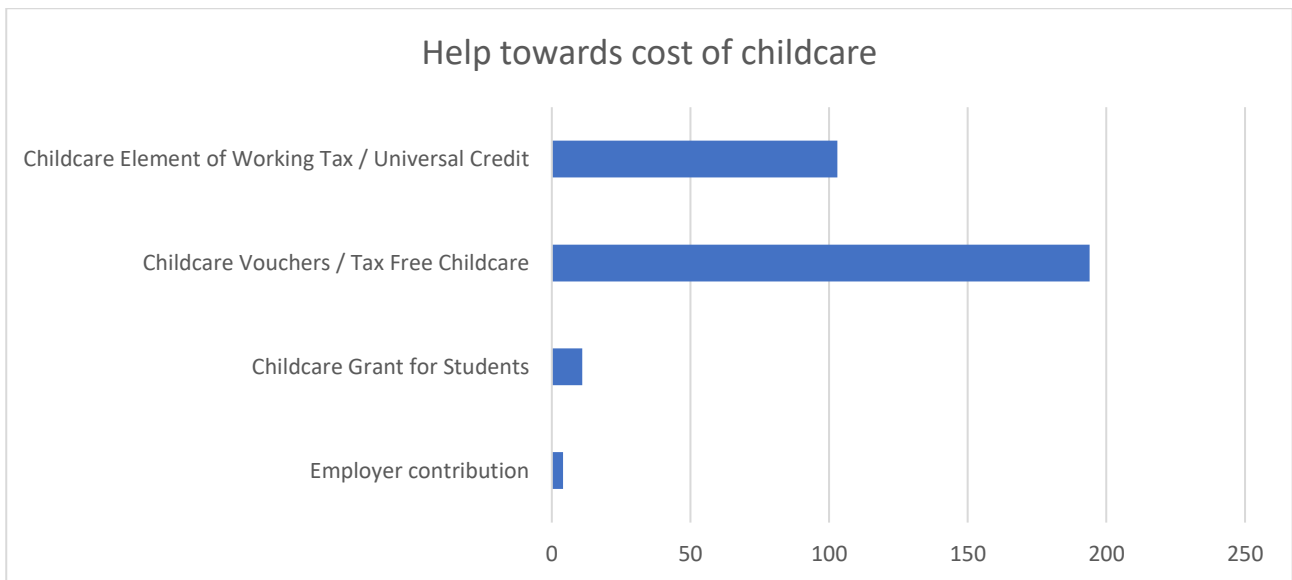
South West Taf Ely

Like the other areas, Before School Club/Breakfast Club and After School Club were the highest responses. However, this area also received the most responses for Private Day Nursery, School Nursery and Holiday Club. This area also had the second highest response for Family/Friends (unpaid). As with South East Taf Ely, further exploration of demand for holiday care is required.

Support settings to market what services they can offer, particularly for older children and those with disabilities
Encourage all settings to register with DEWIS and keep their accounts up to date
Investigate possible gaps in Welsh medium sessional care and cull day care in South Rhondda
Investigate possible gaps in out of school care in North East Taf Ely
Explore demand for CIW registered holiday care for children aged 4 years and over

Help towards cost of childcare

52.2% of respondents stated that they receive Childcare Vouchers/Tax Free Childcare to help them with the cost of childcare (194). This was followed by 27.7% who stated they can access the childcare element of Working Tax/Universal Credit (103).



Of those that gave their postcodes, North Cynon had the most respondents in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax/Universal Credits (23). South West Taf Ely had the most using childcare vouchers/Tax Free childcare scheme (69), followed by South East Taf Ely (42). North Cynon and North Rhondda each had three respondents who were receiving a childcare grant for students. South Cynon, North Rhondda and South West Taf Ely each had one response to state that they receive employer contributions towards the cost of childcare, although they don't state what this support entails.

34 stated in the text response column that they do not receive any financial support with childcare costs.

Other text responses included:

- *Some help with UC (Universal Credit) but having it paid in arrears makes it very difficult and several times I have not received the contribution in error*
- *Tax free childcare as that's all we're eligible for. I feel that it's really unfair that if neither of us were working we could have free childcare but we wouldn't need it then because we'd be here to look after our children the rules just do not make sense*
- *I was receiving child tax credits until they decided they'd overpaid us £5000 which I now have to pay back*
- *Funding through Resilient Families*
- *I'm not sure what I'm entitled to*

No text responses refer to Tax Free Childcare. This is a salary sacrifice scheme that offers parents up to £2000 a year per child towards childcare costs. However, take up of the scheme is currently quite low and the lack of responses would suggest a lack of awareness or understanding amongst parents. Promoting this scheme and explaining its benefits would support many families, as would offering clear information on which agencies can advise parents on support available.

Work in partnership with FIS to promote financial support available for childcare costs

Free nursery education, Flying Start and Childcare Offer provision

Please see Section Sixteen.

Facebook feedback

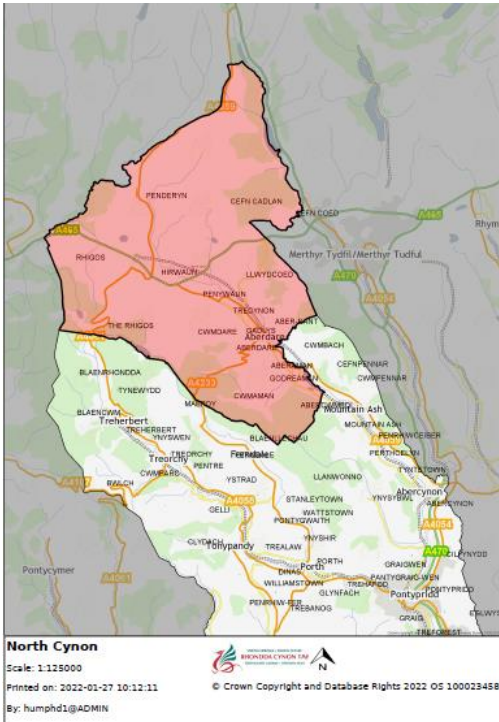
The following comments were posted on the Council Facebook page in response to promotion of the parent survey:

- *It's too expensive*
- *Expensive. Childcare needs to be free or massively discounted for working families*
- *It's so wrong, people who are working should get some support, both my family work and get no support as in wrong postcode area, yet people living around them get it*
- *Too expensive working parents should get help*
- *I don't understand how working mothers have to pay extortionate rates for childcare because they don't live in an area that qualifies for flying start yet some children in flying start parents don't even work I don't get it it's ridiculous*
- *I'm currently on maternity leave and I am constantly faced with the anxiety and reality that I'm going to have to go back to work sooner than I wanted to due to maternity pay not being able to live on the money given. Myself and my partner are in full time employment so receive no support at all even though both not being in highly paid jobs. Luckily my partner does not start work until 2so will be able to have the baby until then and I finish work at 3.20pm so will have to look into alternative arrangements for that time. in the long term we are going to have to start either looking for a creche or I am going to have to leave the job I've been in for 7 years that I love and look for another which works around my partners hours due to childcare being so expensive! I find it unfair that there is no support out there to help with the costs because we are both in full time employment and the only time we would need the extra support would be from 1.30-3,30 but we'd have to pay for the entire afternoon!*
- *I paid just under £2000 a month for childcare as I have twins no support with childcare costs not a single penny. If my husband or I gave up work to look after them, when they started school we would be looking for jobs and wouldn't get back what jobs we had. We struggle through and the most important years of bonding with our babies was taken away by constant worry and anxieties on how we were going to afford paying the bills, working and paying childcare. We both work full time pay our taxes and it resulted in only one wage coming in same as it would have been if one of us gave up work to look after them but with a job at the end of it. it was an absolutely horrendous time. the twins are now in school and we get 30hrs childcare for school holidays until they are 4-which is good but support is needed for working parents to return to work following maternity leave not when they are 3.*

Section 7: Geographical Distribution

Below is an overview of demographic and supply data in each ward within the geographical areas listed in Section One. The data in the tables below is taken from the SASS returns for CIW registered settings and FIS data for unregistered. It must be remembered that there was only an 87.0% completion rate for the SASS returns amongst RCT providers, plus an additional 11 paper returns submitted to the Council, so there are some gaps in the data. Where known, new CIW registrations, confirmed since the SASS was completed, are referenced in the ward analyses and are highlighted in **yellow**.

North Cynon



The North Cynon area encompasses the wards in the north of the Cynon Valley from Rhigos down to Aberdare South. The principal town in this area is Aberdare, and also includes the key settlement of Hirwaun.

Population

20.45% of the population of North Cynon are aged 0-17 years. Aberdare West/Llwydcoed has the highest number of 0-17 year olds (1786) whilst Rhigos has the lowest (304). However, the highest percentage of 0-17 year olds, compared to the overall population, is Penywaun ward with 24.72% of the population aged below 17 years, followed by Hirwaun with 21.98%.

Further population data is available in Section Eleven.

Childcare supply

The tables below show that there are currently no registered childminders in Aberdare East, Hirwaun, Penywaun and Rhigos electoral wards. Cross referencing with the most recent weekly CIW data shows that an additional childminder has registered since the SASS was completed, based in Aberdare East ward and registered to care for 6 children. Further investigation in Hirwaun and Rhigos wards is prudent to establish if there is additional demand for childminding services.

Investigate demand for childminders in Hirwaun and Rhigos electoral wards

There is also a lack of out of school care in this area, with no CIW registered or unregistered out of school clubs. Further investigation is necessary to assess demand.

Investigate demand for out of school care in North Cynon area

Flying Start / Pre-nursery education

There are currently three Registered Education Providers (REP's) in North Cynon, delivering pre-nursery education to 3 year olds. There is an English medium REP in Penywaun ward, a Welsh medium and bilingual provision, both in Aberdare East.

There are four Flying Start commissioned services in this area, one English medium Sessional care provider and three English medium Full day care settings.

Capital projects

Welsh Government capital funding has been used to establish new, or improve existing, childcare services in this area over the last four years. In Hirwaun ward, Flying Start and Childcare Offer capital funding was used to build a dedicated childcare facility on the site of a new primary school. An existing provider moved into the facility in 2021 and has increased

the number of registered places from 19 to 30 and increased its services to cater for parental demand.

In Aberdare West/Llwydcoed ward, a new Welsh medium childcare facility is currently being built on the site of the Welsh medium primary school. This will offer additional Welsh medium sessional care for approximately 30 children per session and is due to open in September 2022.

Economic analysis

According to the 2019 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD)⁶, there are three LSOA's in this area that are in Wales's 10% most deprived LSOA's. It also includes one LSOA that is in Wales's 10% least deprived LSOA's. Penywaun 2 has the highest number of people living in income deprivation (685) in the North Cynon area, whilst Aberdare West/Llwydcoed 6 has the least (55).⁷

Other developments

There have been no full planning applications for housing developments over 10 units approved in this area between January 2020 and December 2021.

Aberaman North	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	2	15	0	0
Full day care	0	0	0	0
Sessional care	1	30	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	3	45	0	0

Aberaman South	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	3	26	0	0
Full day care	0	0	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	3	26	0	0

⁶ https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Community-Safety-and-Social-Inclusion/Welsh-Index-of-Multiple-Deprivation/WIMD-Indicator-Data-By-Age/Income-Deprivation-By-Age/?_ga=2.258485642.1882903630.1632733075-270198967.1631896086

⁷ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Community-Safety-and-Social-Inclusion/Welsh-Index-of-Multiple-Deprivation/WIMD-Indicator-data-2019>

Aberdare East	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	0 1	0 6	0	0
Full day care	3	88	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	3	88	0	0

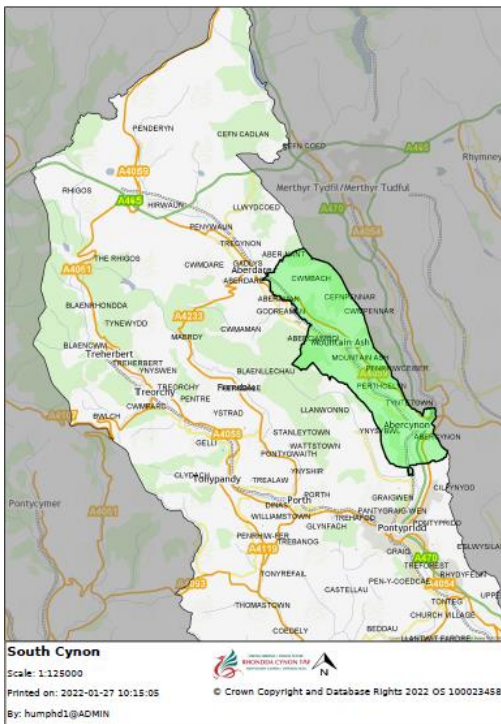
Aberdare West / Llwydcoed	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	3	23	0	0
Full day care	1	79	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	4	102	0	0

Hirwaun	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	0	0	0	0
Full day care	1	30	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	1	70	0	0
Total	2	100	0	0

Penywaun	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	0	0	0	0
Full day care	1	30	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	1	30	0	0

Rhigos	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	0	0	0	0
Full day care	1	19	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	1	19	0	0

South Cynon



The South Cynon area covers the area from Cwmbach to Abercynon. The key settlement in this area is Mountain Ash.

Population

21.69% of the population of South Cynon are aged 0-17 years. Abercynon has the highest number of 0-17 year olds (1410) whilst Mountain Ash East has the lowest (590). However, the highest percentage of 0-17 year olds, compared to the overall population, is Cwmbach ward with 28.87% of the population aged below 17 years, closely followed by Penrhiwceiber with 22.81%.

Further population data is available in Section Eleven.

Childcare supply

The tables below show that there are currently no registered childminders in Abercynon and Mountain Ash West electoral wards. No additional childminders have registered since the SASS was completed.

Investigate demand for childminders in Abercynon and Mountain Ash West electoral wards

There is also a lack of out of school care in this area, with no CIW registered out of school clubs. There is one unregistered setting based in Mountain Ash East ward. Further investigation is necessary to assess demand.

Investigate demand for out of school care in South Cynon area

Flying Start / Pre-nursery education

There are currently two Registered Education Providers (REP's) in South Cynon, delivering pre-nursery education to 3 year olds. There is a Welsh medium REP in Mountain Ash East and a bilingual provision in Penrhiwceiber ward

There are six Flying Start commissioned services in this area, two English medium Sessional care providers, three English medium Full day care settings and one Welsh medium Full day care setting.

Capital projects

Welsh Government capital funding has been used to establish new, or improve existing, childcare services in this area over the last four years. In Abercynon ward, a new Welsh medium childcare facility has been established on the site of the Welsh medium primary school. This opened in January 2022 and offers an additional Welsh medium Sessional care for 24 children per session.

Economic analysis

According to the 2019 WIMD, there are three LSOA's in this area that are in Wales's 10% most deprived LSOA's. Penrhiwceiber 1 has the highest number of people living in income deprivation (645) in the South Cynon area, whilst Cwmbach 3 has the least (70).

Other developments

Between January 2020 and December 2021, there was one full planning application approved in this area for ten units or above. This was for 17 units in Cwmbach ward. It is not likely that this development will have a significant impact on childcare demand in the area.

Abercynon	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	0	0	0	0
Full day care	0	0	0	0
Sessional care	1 1	26 24	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	1	Not known
Total	1	26	1	Not known

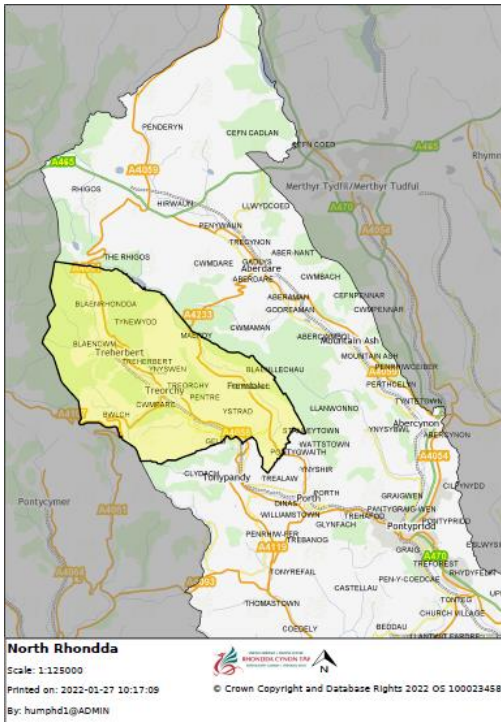
Cwmbach	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	2	16	0	0
Full day care	2	56	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	4	72	0	0

Mountain Ash East	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	2	16	0	0
Full day care	2	85	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	1	Not known
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	4	101	1	Not known

Mountain Ash West	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	0	0	0	0
Full day care	1	19	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	1	19	0	0

Penrhiwceiber	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	0	0	0	0
Full day care	1	30	0	0
Sessional care	1	12	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	2	42	0	0

North Rhondda



The North Rhondda area covers the Rhondda Fawr and Rhondda Fach valleys from Trealaw north. The key settlements in this area are Treorchy and Ferndale.

Population

20.47% of the population of North Rhondda are aged 0-17 years. Treorchy has the highest number of 0-17 year olds (1482) whilst Maerdy has the lowest (684). However, the highest percentage of 0-17 year olds, compared to the overall population, is Tylorstown ward with 23.34% of the population aged below 17 years, followed by Maerdy with 22.06%.

Further population data is available in Section Eleven.

Childcare supply

The tables below show that there are currently no registered childminders in Ferndale electoral ward. However, the rest of the North Rhondda area is well catered for childminders with at least one in each electoral ward. Further investigation in Ferndale is prudent.

Investigate demand for childminders in Ferndale and Treorchy electoral wards

Again, there is also a lack of out of school care in this area, with no CIW registered out of school clubs, nor unregistered ones. Further investigation is necessary to assess demand.

There are only two registered Sessional care providers in the North Rhondda area, both in Tylorstown ward. However, over the last five years, many Sessional care providers have changed their CIW registration to Full day care to accommodate wraparound services for nursery aged children. This is true in this area, as in others in RCT. There are three known unregistered Sessional care providers in this area. Encouraging all unregistered settings to register with CIW is an ongoing priority.

Investigate demand for out of school care and sessional care in North Rhondda area

Encourage and support unregistered Sessional care settings in North Rhondda to register with CIW

Flying Start / Pre-nursery education

There are currently four Registered Education Providers (REP's) in North Rhondda, delivering pre-nursery education to 3 year olds. There are two English medium settings in Ferndale and Pentre wards, and two Welsh medium REP's, one in Treorchy ward and one in Ystrad.

There are nine Flying Start commissioned services in this area, Three English medium Sessional care providers, four English medium Full day care settings and two Welsh medium Full day care settings.

Capital projects

Welsh Government capital funding has been used to establish new, or improve existing, childcare services in this area over the last four years. In Treorchy ward, Childcare Offer capital funding was used to extend and improve an existing Full day care provider on a school site. The project involved building an extension, refurbishing the rest of the building and creating an improved outdoor space. The setting is registered with CIW for 36 places and currently offers wraparound care for nursery aged children and out of school care for children aged up to 11 years.

Economic analysis

According to the 2019 Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD), there are seven LSOA's in this area that are in Wales's 10% most deprived LSOA's. Tylorstown 1 has the highest number of people living in income deprivation (590) in the North Rhondda area, whilst Pentre 2 has the least (125).

Other developments

Between January 2020 and December 2021, there were two full, and one outline, planning applications approved in this area for ten units or above. These were residential developments in Ystrad and Treorchy wards, and the conversion into flats of a former hotel in Ystrad ward. The outline planning application in Ystrad may impact on childcare needs if full planning permission is granted. This will be monitored in the 2023 annual update report. The other development in Ystrad, and the one in Treorchy are unlikely to impact on childcare demand as they appear to be flats for single, or couple, occupancy, and not families with children.

Ferndale	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	0	0	0	0
Full day care	1	38	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	1	30	0	0
Total	2	68	0	0

Maerdy	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	2	13	0	0
Full day care	1	26	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	3	39	0	0

Pentre	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	2	17	0	0
Full day care	3	84	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	1	Not known
Total	5	101	1	Not known

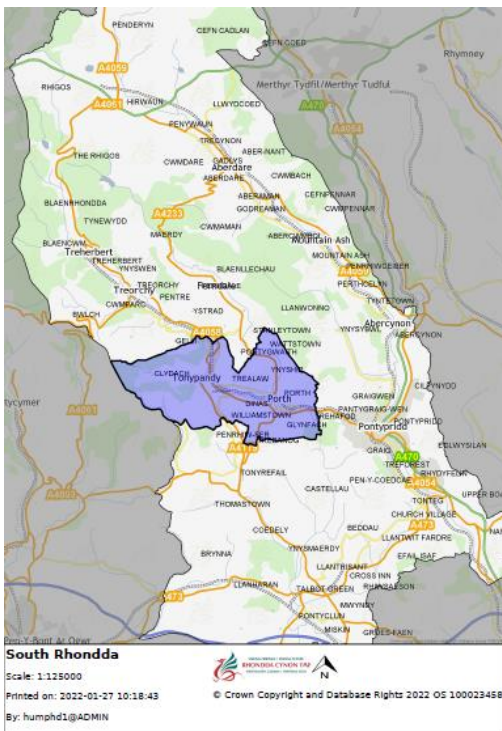
Treherbert	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	2	19	0	0
Full day care	2	79	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	1	Not known
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	4	98	1	Not known

Treorchy	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	1	6	0	0
Full day care	4	92	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	5	98	0	0

Tylorstown	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	1	6	0	0
Full day care	0	0	0	0
Sessional care	2	38	1	Not known
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	3	44	1	Not known

Ystrad	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	1	10	0	0
Full day care	1	24	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	1	25
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	2	34	1	25

South Rhondda



The South Rhondda area covers the southern of the Rhondda Fawr and Rhondda Fach valleys from Gelli and Stanleytown south towards Porth. The key settlements in this area are Tonypany and Porth.

Population

20.51% of the population of South Rhondda are aged 0-17 years. Penygraig has the highest number of 0-17 year olds (1179) whilst Llwynypia has the lowest (448). However, the highest percentage of 0-17 year olds, compared to the overall population, is Cwm Clydach ward with 22.13% of the population aged below 17 years, followed by Penygraig with 21.33%.

Further population data is available in Section Eleven.

Childcare supply

The tables below show that there are currently no registered childminders in Cwm Clydach, Cymmer, Llwynypia, Penygraig and Trealaw electoral wards. There are no new childminders on the CIW list since the SASS was completed. The South Rhondda area has been an area of identified need in the past and recruitment campaigns have targeted this area previously. A renewed campaign in this area would be prudent.

Undertake a childminder recruitment campaign in South Rhondda area

Other than Porth ward, there are no registered out of school settings in this area. Further investigation is necessary to assess demand.

As with North Rhondda, there are a number of unregistered Sessional care providers in this area. Support to register with CIW will remain a priority.

Investigate demand for out of school care in South Rhondda area
Encourage and support unregistered Sessional care settings in South Rhondda to register with CIW

Flying Start / Pre-nursery education

There are currently three Registered Education Providers (REP's) in South Rhondda, delivering pre-nursery education to 3 year olds. There is one English medium setting in Cymmer, and two Welsh medium REP's, one in Porth ward and one in Ynyshir.

There are six Flying Start commissioned services in this area, four English medium Sessional care providers, one English medium Full day care setting and one Welsh medium Full day care setting.

Capital projects

Welsh Government capital funding has been used to establish new, or improve existing, childcare services in this area over the last four years. In 2018, an existing Welsh medium setting moved into a refurbished area of the Welsh medium primary school. This provided them with dedicated premises and enabled them to increase their registered places from 24 to 30 and extend the services offered.

Economic analysis

According to the 2019 Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD), there are four LSOA's in this area that are in Wales's 10% most deprived LSOA's. Cymmer 4 and Ynyshir 1 have the highest number of people living in income deprivation (495) in the South Rhondda area, whilst Porth 2 has the least (185).

Other developments

Between January 2020 and December 2021, there were two full planning applications approved in this area for ten units or above. These were for 27 units in Penygraig ward and a care facility with 60 apartments in Porth ward. The Porth development is not likely to impact on childcare needs in the next five years. However, the development in Penygraig ward may result in some increase in demand for childcare services. This will need to be monitored.

Monitor impact of development in Penygraig ward on childcare demand in that area

Cwm Clydach	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	0	0	0	0
Full day care	1	16	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	1	Not known
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	1	16	1	Not known

Cymmer	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	0	0	0	0
Full day care	1	25	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	1	25	0	0

Llwynypia	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	0	0	0	0
Full day care	1	19	0	0
Sessional care	1	26	1	Not known
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	2	45	1	Not known

Penygraig	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	0	0	0	0
Full day care	2	70	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	1	Not known
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	2	70	1	Not known

Porth	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	3	14	0	0
Full day care	3	128	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	1	30	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	7	172	0	0

Tonypandy	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	1	7	0	0
Full day care	0	0	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	1	Not known
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	1	7	1	Not known

Trealaw	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	0	0	0	0
Full day care	0	0	0	0
Sessional care	1	20	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	1	20	0	0

Ynyshir	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	1	10	0	0
Full day care	1	24	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	2	34	0	0

North East Taf Ely



The North East Taf Ely area includes the areas around the principal town of Pontypridd.

Population

18.61% of the population of North East Taf Ely are aged 0-17 years, which is the lowest percentage of all the areas. Rhondda has the highest number of 0-17 year olds (995) whilst Graig has the lowest (448). However, the highest percentage of 0-17 year olds, compared to the overall population, is Cilfynydd ward with 21.37% of the population aged below 17 years, closely followed by Glyncoch with 21.32%.

Further population data is available in Section Eleven.

Childcare supply

The tables below show that there are currently no registered childminders in Treforest electoral ward. Cross referencing with the most recent weekly CIW data shows that there two additional childminders have registered since the SASS return, one in Glyncoch ward, registered for 10 children and one in Pontypridd Town, also registered to care for 10 children.

Investigate demand for childminders in Treforest ward

Other than Cilfynydd ward, there are no registered out of school settings in this area. Further investigation is necessary to assess demand.

Investigate demand for out of school care in North East Taf Ely area

Flying Start / Pre-nursery education

There are currently three Registered Education Providers (REP's) in North East Taf Ely, delivering pre-nursery education to 3 year olds. There is one English medium setting in Treforest, and two Welsh medium REP's, one in Rhondda ward and one in Ynysybwl.

There are three Flying Start commissioned services in this area, one English medium Sessional care provider, one English medium Full day care setting and one Welsh medium Full day care setting.

Capital projects

Welsh Government capital funding has been used to establish new, or improve existing, childcare services in this area over the last four years. In Rhondda ward, an existing Welsh medium childcare facility was extended and given dedicated facilities within the Welsh medium primary school. This opened in September 2019 and is now able to offer morning

sessions to two year olds, as well as wraparound services to nursery aged children in the afternoon.

Economic analysis

According to the 2019 WIMD, there are no LSOA's in this area that are in Wales's 10% most deprived LSOA's or in the 10% least deprived LSOA's. The 2019 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation reports that the LSOA's Glyncoch 1 has the highest number of people living in income deprivation (550) in the North East Taf Ely area, whilst Ynysybwl 3 has the least (70).

Other developments

Between January 2020 and December 2021, there was one full planning application approved in this area for ten units or above. This was for 20 student flats in Graig ward. This is not likely to impact on childcare demand in the next five years.

Cilfynydd	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	2	10	0	0
Full day care	0	0	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	2	54	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	4	64	0	0

Glyncoch	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	1 1	10 10	0	0
Full day care	0	0	0	0
Sessional care	1	24	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	2	34	0	0

Graig	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	1	6	0	0
Full day care	0	0	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	1	6	0	0

Pontypridd Town	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	7 1	68 10	0	0
Full day care	0	0	0	0
Sessional care	1	24	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	8	92	0	0

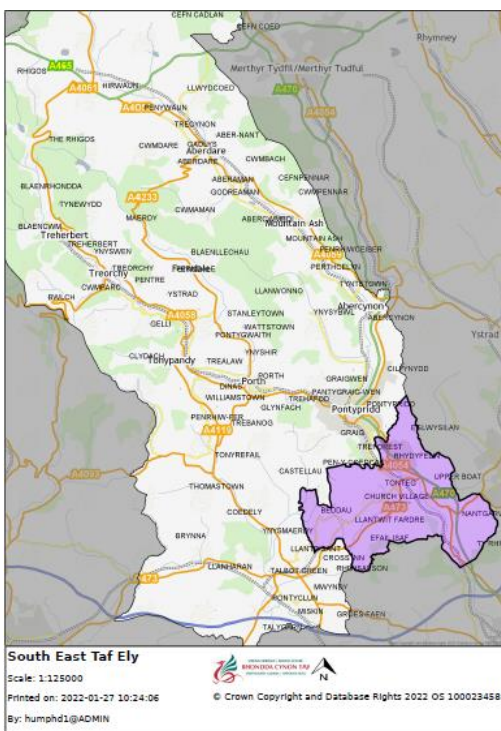
Rhondda	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	4	36	0	0
Full day care	1	19	0	0
Sessional care	1	48	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	6	103	0	0

Trallwng	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	1	10	0	0
Full day care	0	0	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	1	10	0	0

Treforest	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	0	0	0	0
Full day care	1	60	0	0
Sessional care	2	38	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	3	98	0	0

Ynysybwl	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	4	27	0	0
Full day care	1	19	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	5	46	0	0

South East Taf Ely



The South East Taf area, for the purposes of this report, covers the communities from Beddau to Taffs Well, and includes the rapidly expanding communities of Church Village and Llantwit Fardre.

Population

21.06% of the population of South East Taf Ely are aged 0-17 years. Church Village has the highest number of 0-17 year olds (1640) whilst Tonteg has the lowest (628). The highest percentage of 0-17 year olds, compared to the overall population, is Church Village ward with 26.52% of the population aged below 17 years, followed by Tyn-y-nant with 22.9%.

Further population data is available in Section Eleven.

Childcare supply

The tables below show that this area is well catered for childminding services with only Rhydyfelin/Central Ilan with no registered childminders. Cross referencing with the most recent weekly CIW data shows that one additional childminder has registered since the SASS return, located in Beddau ward and registered for 6 children.

Investigate demand for childminders in Rhydyfelin/Central Ilan ward

Other than Church Village ward, there are no registered out of school settings in this area. There is an unregistered out of school setting in Llantwit Fardre ward. However, since the SASS return, two new out of school care settings have opened, one in Beddau and one in Tyn-y-nant. These are based on school site and have replaced a large, well established out of school setting that closed in July 2021.

Flying Start / Pre-nursery education

There are currently nine Registered Education Providers (REP's) in South East Taf Ely, delivering pre-nursery education to 3 year olds. There are six English medium setting, based in Beddau, Church Village, Llantwit Fardre, Rhydyfelin/Central Ilan, Taffs Well and Tyn-y-nant wards, two Welsh medium settings in Church Village and Rhydyfelin/Central Ilan and one bilingual setting based in Church Village.

There are five Flying Start commissioned services in this area, three English medium Full day care settings and two Welsh medium Full day care settings.

Capital projects

Welsh Government capital funding has been used to establish new, or improve existing, childcare services in this area over the last four years. In Tonteg ward, Childcare Offer capital funding was awarded to move an existing English medium childcare service into dedicated facilities on the school site. This opened in February 2022 and has enabled them to extend the range of services they can offer.

Capital funding was also secured to move an existing English medium childcare service into a dedicated room on the school site in Taffs Well ward. Again, this has enabled the setting to extend their services and it now offers full day care.

Economic analysis

According to the 2019 WIMD, there is one LSOA in this area that are in Wales's 10% most deprived LSOA's. Five LSOA's in this area are in Wales's 10% least deprived LSOA's. Rhydyfelin/Central Ilan 2 has the highest number of people living in income deprivation (690) in the South East Taf Ely area, whilst Llantwit Fardre 2 has the least (35).

Other developments

Between January 2020 and December 2021, there was one outline planning application approved in this area for ten units or above. This was for a residential development in Llantwit Fardre ward. If this development progresses, it is likely to have an impact on childcare demand in the area. This will need to be monitored.

Monitor impact of potential development in Llantwit Fardre ward on childcare demand in that area

Beddau	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	3 1	22 6	0	0
Full day care	2	62	0	0
Sessional care	1	18	0	0
Out of school care	0 1	0 48	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	6	102	0	0

Church Village	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	8	66	0	0
Full day care	2	90	0	0
Sessional care	2	59	0	0
Out of school care	1	60	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	13	275	0	0

Hawthorn	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	1	8	0	0
Full day care	1	19	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	2	27	0	0

Llantwit Fardre	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	7	55	0	0
Full day care	0	0	0	0
Sessional care	2	56	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	1	Not known
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	9	111	1	Not known

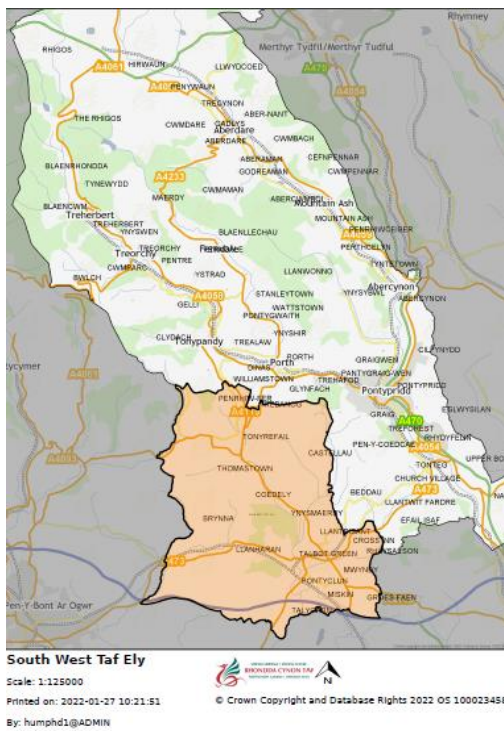
Rhydyfelin / Central Ilan	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	0	0	0	0
Full day care	2	105	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	2	105	0	0

Taffs Well	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	2	11	0	0
Full day care	2	102	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	4	113	0	0

Tonteg	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	2	18	0	0
Full day care	0 1	0 50	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0 1	0 48	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	2	18	0	0

Tyn-y-nant	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	2	20	0	0
Full day care	0	0	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	2	20	0	0

South West Taf Ely



The South West Taf Ely area includes the communities from Gilfach Goch in the north to Brynna in the south. It includes the principal town of Llantrisant/Talbot Green and the key settlements of Llanharan and Tonyrefail.

Population

21.82% of the population of South West Taf Ely are aged 0-17 years, which is the highest percentage of all the areas. Pontyclun has the highest number of 0-17 year olds (1958) whilst Talbot Green has the lowest (548). However, the highest percentage of 0-17 year olds, compared to the overall population, is Llanharan ward with 24.76% of the population aged below 17 years, closely followed by Llanharry with 24.16%.

Further population data is available in Section Eleven.

Childcare supply

The tables below show that all wards have at least one childminder, other than Gilfach Goch, Llanharan and Tonyrefail East wards. However there is a well-established childminder in Evanstown, next to Gilfach Goch but in the Blackmill ward of Bridgend County Borough Council. This setting caters for children in Gilfach Goch as well as Evanstown. Cross referencing with the most recent weekly CIW data shows that one additional childminder has registered since the SASS return, located in Pontyclun ward and registered for 10 children.

Investigate demand for childminders in Gilfach Goch, Llanharan and Tonyrefail East wards

This area is also well covered for CIW registered Out of school care with only Brynna, Gilfach Goch, Llanharry and Llantrisant Town wards not having any registered provision. However, there are two unregistered out of school settings in Brynna ward, catering for children attending the two primary schools in this ward. Unregistered settings also used to operate in the other wards listed above. It is unclear if these are still operating.

Establish if unregistered out of school clubs are still operating in Gilfach Goch, Llanharry and Llantrisant Town wards. If so, offer support and encouragement to register with CIW

Flying Start / Pre-nursery education

There are currently eight Registered Education Providers (REP's) in South West Taf Ely, delivering pre-nursery education to 3 year olds. There are six English medium settings, based in Brynna, Llanharan, Llantrisant Town, Talbot Green and Tonyrefail wards and two Welsh medium settings in Llanharry and Tonyrefail East.

There are five Flying Start commissioned services in this area, one English medium Sessional care setting, one Welsh medium Sessional care setting, two English medium Full day care settings and one Welsh medium Full day care setting.

Capital projects

Welsh Government capital funding has been used to establish new, or improve existing, childcare services in this area over the last four years. In Brynna ward, Childcare Offer capital funding was secured to create a new bilingual Sessional care service in a dual language primary school. This opened in February 2022 and has enabled them to offer fully Welsh morning sessions to 2 year olds and bilingual wraparound care for nursery aged children in the afternoons.

Economic analysis

According to the 2019 WIMD, there are three LSOA's in this area that are in Wales's 10% most deprived LSOA's. Six LSOA's in this area are in Wales's 10% least deprived LSOA's. Tonyrefail East 3 has the highest number of people living in income deprivation (540) in the South West Taf Ely area, whilst Pontyclun 2 has the least (45).

Other developments

Between January 2020 and December 2021, there were two applications approved to do with the development at Llanilid in Brynna ward. This development was considered in the 2017 CSA report and since then, demand for childcare services has increased as predicted. The development of a new dual language sessional care facility has supported the development of additional childcare in this area.

Continue to monitor impact of Llanilid development in Brynna ward on childcare demand in that area

Brynna	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	6	51	0	0
Full day care	0	0	0	0
Sessional care	1	32	0	0
	1	24		
Out of school care	0	0	2	Not known
Open access play	1	60	0	0
Total	8	143	2	Not known

Gilfach Goch	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	0	0	0	0
Full day care	1	34	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	1	100	0	0
Total	2	134	0	0

Llanharan	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	0	0	0	0
Full day care	4	121	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	2	54	0	0
Open access play	1	85	0	0
Total	7	260	0	0

Llanharry	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	3	24	0	0
Full day care	1	69	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	4	93	0	0

Llantrisant Town	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	1	10	0	0
Full day care	1	104	0	0
Sessional care	1	80	0	0
Out of school care	0	0	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	3	194	0	0

Pontyclun	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	8 1	68 10	0	0
Full day care	1	90	0	0
Sessional care	2	56	0	0
Out of school care	1	63	1	Not known
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	12	277	1	Not known

Talbot Green	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	1	10	0	0
Full day care	1	43	0	0
Sessional care	1	28	0	0
Out of school care	1	40	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	4	121	0	0

Tonyrefail East	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	0	0	0	0
Full day care	1	16	0	0
Sessional care	2	56	0	0
Out of school care	1	26	0	0
Open access play	0	0	1	Not known
Total	4	98	1	Not known

Tonyrefail West	Number of CIW settings	Number of CIW places available	Number of unregistered settings	Number of unregistered places available
Childminder	2	16	0	0
Full day care	1	50	0	0
Sessional care	0	0	0	0
Out of school care	1	30	0	0
Open access play	0	0	0	0
Total	4	96	0	0

Section 8: Sustainability

The Council continues to support the sustainability of the childcare sector and to tailor support to meet the needs of childcare providers. This includes funded training courses, childminding start up packages and grant schemes to support new/expansion of provision and severe financial hardship. The financial support offered to the childcare sector since 2018 is detailed below. Information on funded training courses offered is available in Section Fifteen.

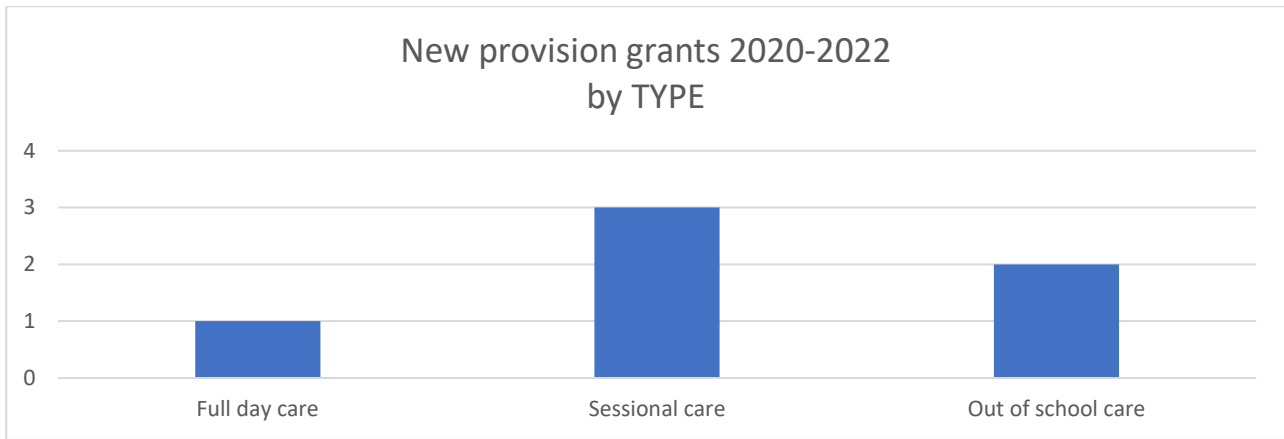
Over the last two years, there has been additional funding available to support settings deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. Further information is available below and in Section Ten.

New provision grant

The focus during the pandemic has been on sustaining the childcare services that are already operating. However, six new provision grants have been awarded in this period.

Two of these, both Sessional care services, were capital projects funded via the Welsh medium capital grant scheme. Two were Out of school care services, to replace a well-established out of school club that closed in June 2021. Officers worked closely with the provider to ensure these two clubs were registered with CIW and operational by September 2021. The other new provision grants relate to a new Full day care nursery that opened in a former nursery building that had closed a few years prior. This setting was due to open in early 2020 but was delayed due to the start of the pandemic. However, the setting opened in early summer 2020 specifically to cater for children funded via C-CAS. The final grant listed below was awarded to a Sessional care setting who took over a service that had closed in early 2021.

New provision grants awarded	2020-21	2021-22
North Cynon	0	0
South Cynon	0	1
North Rhondda	0	0
South Rhondda	1	0
North East Taf Ely	1	0
South East Taf Ely	0	2
South West Taf Ely	0	1
Total	2	4



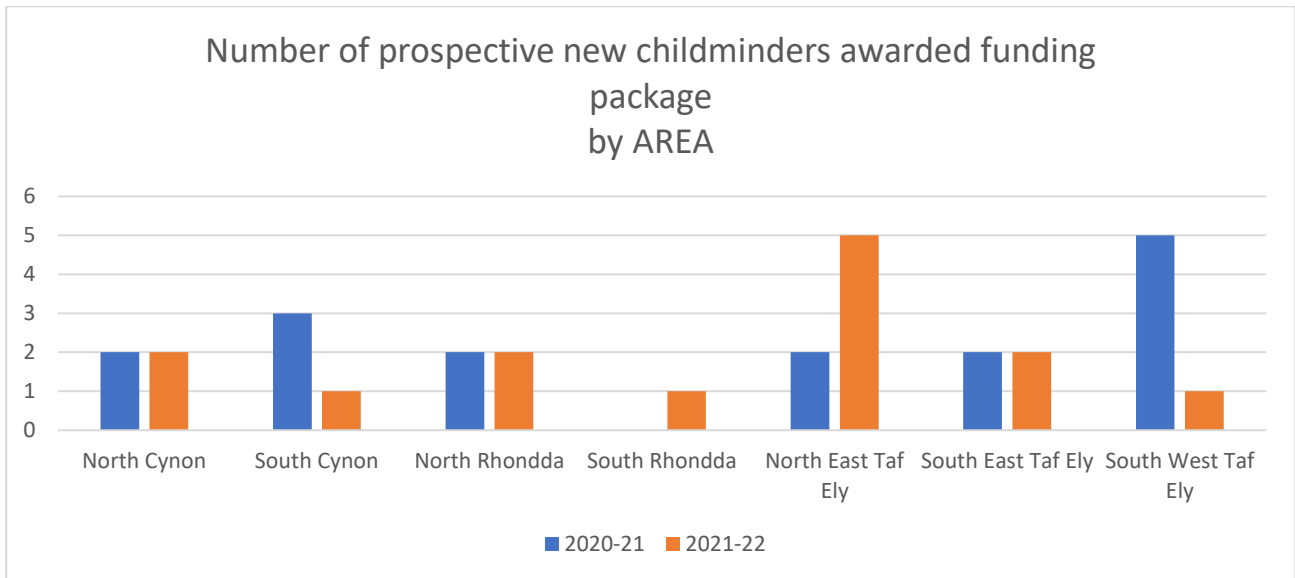
Expansion of provision grant

Only two grants have been awarded since April 2020, both of which were for settings to expand to offer Out of school care. This was as a result of parent consultation in those areas with after school provision identified as a gap in services.

Expansion of provision	2020-21	2021-22
North Cynon	0	1
South Cynon	0	0
North Rhondda	0	0
South Rhondda	0	1
North East Taf Ely	0	0
South East Taf Ely	0	0
South West Taf Ely	0	0
Total	0	2

New childminder package

The Council supports individuals to become CIW registered childminders. The package of support includes the pre-registration training modules, Safeguarding, First Aid and Food Hygiene training, as well as PACEY membership and public liability insurance for one year after registration.



Support with PPE supplies

To support childcare providers with the increased cost of implementing protective measures in their settings, packs of PPE and cleaning materials have been made available. The contents of these packs include items such as face masks, gloves, disposable aprons, hand sanitiser and hand soap. These have been offered since June 2020 and have evolved based on feedback from settings on what they need. As restrictions continue to ease, these packs will cease to be offered.

PPE grants awarded June 2020-January 2022	Applications approved
June 2020	42
October 2020	47
January 2021	97
May 2021	104
September 2021	80
January 2022	96
Total	466

COVID support grant

Funding from Welsh Government has enabled us to offer grants to the childcare sector to support them through the challenges of the COVID pandemic. These grants were available in the 2020-21 financial year and were reintroduced in 2021-22 when additional funding was made available from Welsh Government. The grants offered were:

Section A – Full / partial closures

This grant is to support providers who have to close their settings due to positive cases amongst staff or children or being unable to meet minimum staffing ratios due to staff self-isolating. The breakdown of number of applications approved, and areas, is in the table below. The total amount of funding awarded in 2020-2021 was £68,000, whilst £38,700 has been awarded in 2021-22.

Section B – Increased costs

This grant is to support settings with increased costs associated with the COVID pandemic, such as additional heating, cleaning or uniform costs or premises related costs due to not being able to open or operate at full capacity. The total amount of funding awarded in 2020-2021 was £25,000, with £34,400 in 2021-22.

Section C – Severe financial hardship

This grant is to support childcare settings that are experiencing severe financial hardship due to COVID-19 and where no other public funding is available to cover the same costs. The total amount of funding awarded in 2020-2021 was £79,000, with £57,000 awarded in 2021-22.

The table below shows the number of applications awarded for both 2020-21 and 2021-22. With restrictions easing, officers do not anticipate that Sections A and B will be available in future financial years. Section C will continue to be available to support settings experiencing severe financial hardship, though the amount of funding available will be much reduced without additional Welsh Government support.

Number of COVID support grants awarded by AREA	2020-2021			2021-2022		
	Section A	Section B	Section C	Section A	Section B	Section C
North Cynon	11	7	1	5	6	2
South Cynon	1	3	5	1	7	0
North Rhondda	4	10	0	6	9	0
South Rhondda	1	1	0	0	4	1
North East Taf Ely	3	1	1	8	4	0
South East Taf Ely	3	5	2	5	7	3
South West Taf Ely	2	11	7	7	11	2
Total	25	38	16	32	48	8

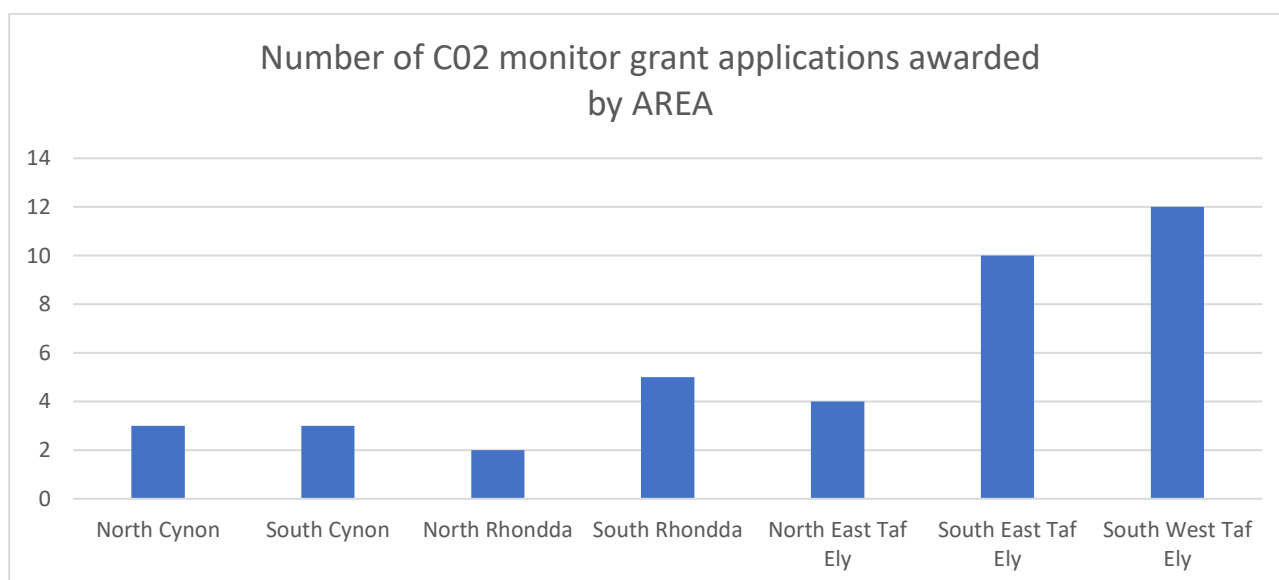
ICT grant

Funding from Welsh Government enabled the Council to offer an ICT grant scheme in 2020-21 and again in 2021-22. The focus of this funding has been to support providers engage with digital technology in light of the COVID pandemic and in order to prepare for the roll out of the Childcare Offer digital system later in 2022. £38,700 was awarded in 2020-21 and £34,300 in 2021-22.

Number of ICT grants awarded By AREA	2020-21	2021-22
North Cynon	10	8
South Cynon	9	9
North Rhondda	13	8
South Rhondda	7	7
North East Taf Ely	9	8
South East Taf Ely	14	21
South West Taf Ely	19	20
Total	81	81

CO2 monitor grant

Funding was made available in 2021-22 to provide childcare settings with CO2 monitors. This was to support providers implement COVID-19 protective measures. 39 applications were received totalling £6,000.



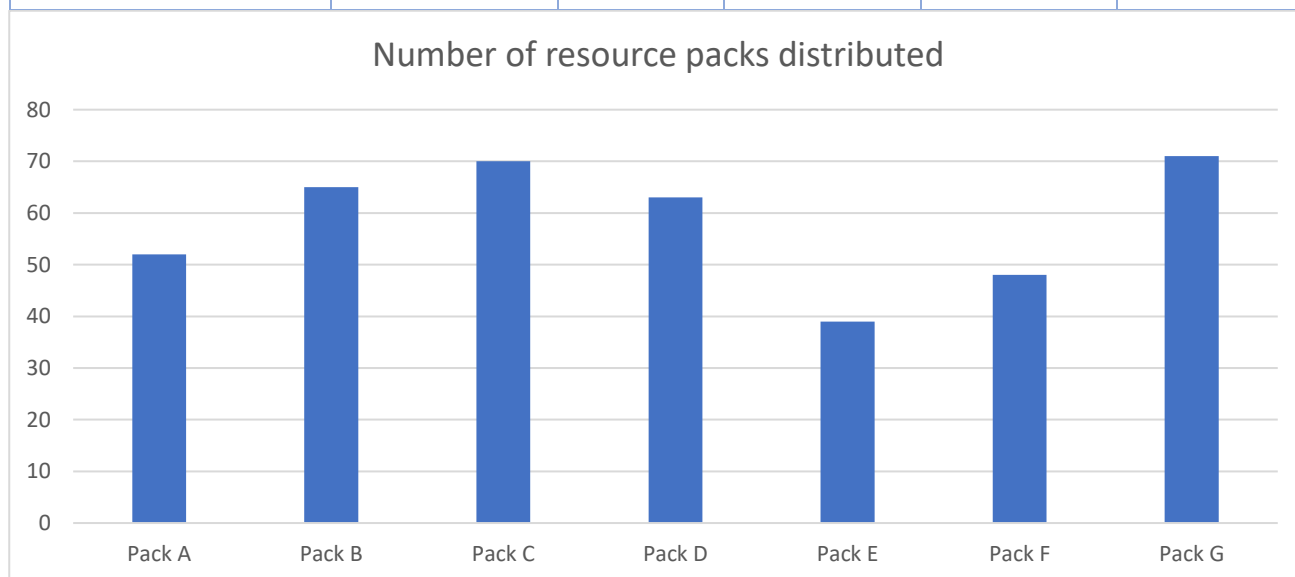
Resource grant

With additional funding from Welsh Government in 2021-22, the Council offered resource packs to settings. This enabled them to expand, or replace, their range of resources, and ensured they could offer specific resources for each group of children when COVID groupings or 'bubbles' were necessary. The total spend for this grant scheme was £72,300.00.

Seven different resource packs were offered, with providers able to select up to three packs per setting. The packs on offer were:

Pack A	ICT
Pack B	Literacy & Numeracy
Pack C	Outdoors
Pack D	Arts & Crafts
Pack E	Cleaning
Pack F	Older children
Pack G	Sensory

Area	Childminder	Full day care	Sessional care	Out of school care	Total
North Cynon	6	4	2	0	12
South Cynon	3	5	3	0	11
North Rhondda	8	6	4	1	19
South Rhondda	2	10	2	0	14
North East Taf Ely	13	4	3	0	20
South East Taf Ely	18	6	7	0	31
South West Taf Ely	14	6	5	4	29
Total	64	41	26	5	

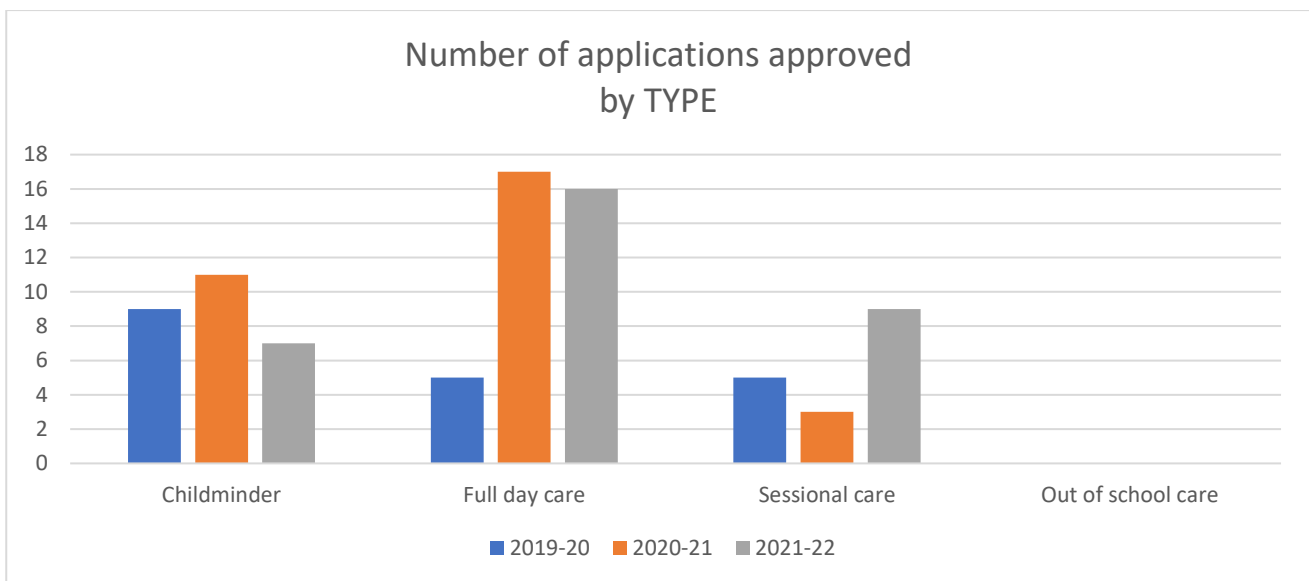


Small capital grant

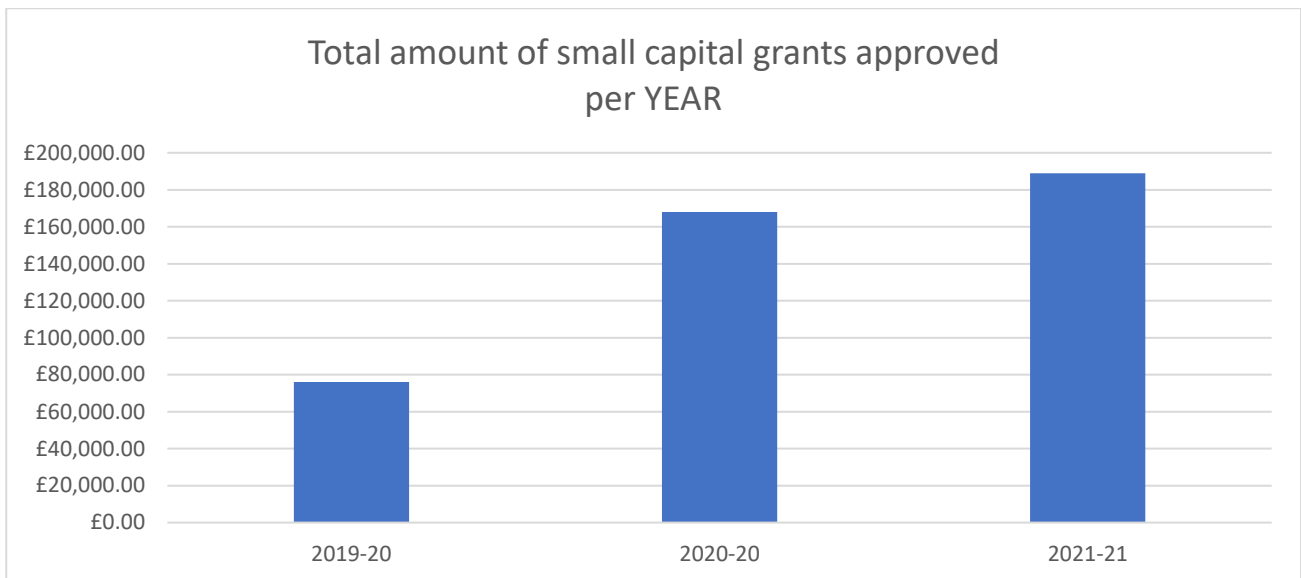
Since 2019, funding has been available to support Childcare Offer providers to make capital improvements to their venues, such as making adaptations to support children with physical needs, upgrading doors and windows or developing outdoor spaces.

Following the COVID-19 outbreak, the emphasis for this funding has been to support settings apply protective measures guidance, such as making more use of their outdoor environments, internal adaptations in order to maintain separate groupings or increase their entrances/exits to prevent congestion in confined spaces. Over the last three financial years, 121 applications have been received with 82 being fully or partially approved.

Number of applications approved by AREA	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Total
North Cynon	3	5	3	11
South Cynon	4	3	3	10
North Rhondda	0	4	4	8
South Rhondda	0	2	5	7
North East Taf Ely	3	3	4	10
South East Taf Ely	1	4	4	9
South West Taf Ely	8	10	9	27
Total	19	31	32	82



In total, £433,000 has been awarded to childcare providers in RCT to support small scale capital works. This figure does not include capital funding that has been available separately to support Flying Start provisions, or the larger capital funding that was secured to create or improve childcare facilities.



CIW registration / deregistration

Information on CIW registrations / de-registrations is available in Section Four. There is a net loss of 20 places across all childcare types. Most losses are from childminders de-registering and due to delays caused by the pandemic, a lower number than usual of new childminders taking their place (-205). There was also a significant loss of registered Open access play providers (-55). Out of school care saw an increase of 167 registered places. However, a key message of this report is that parents require more out of school care and this will be a main priority for the next five years.

Section 9: Cross Border

As part of this assessment, neighbouring Local Authorities were consulted to determine if they had received childcare enquiries from parents who reside within RCT.

Since the last CSA, the Childcare Offer for Wales has been rolled out across Wales. Parents can access the funded childcare in any Local Authority. We currently have 23 children who are resident in RCT accessing their Childcare Offer funded childcare in other LA's. This is 1.65% of the total number of RCT children accessing the Childcare Offer as of February 2022.

Area child resides in	Caerphilly	Cardiff	Vale of Glamorgan
North Cynon	0	0	0
South Cynon	0	0	0
North Rhondda	0	1	0
South Rhondda	1	0	0
North East Taf Ely	4	1	1
South East Taf Ely	1	4	2
South West Taf Ely	0	1	7
Total	6	7	10

In the parent survey, three parents stated that their children access Early education in another Local Authority, whilst two stated they access the Childcare Offer in a different authority.

Bridgend

The following RCT childcare providers are delivering the Childcare Offer to services to families who reside in Bridgend LA:

Area of RCT	Number of providers	Number of children currently attending
North Cynon	0	0
South Cynon	0	0
North Rhondda	0	0
South Rhondda	0	0
North East Taf Ely	0	0
South East Taf Ely	0	0
South West Taf Ely	3	6
Total	3	6

No other information was received concerning RCT families accessing childcare services in their CBC or vice versa.

Caerphilly

Colleagues in Caerphilly reported that the following RCT childcare providers are delivering childcare services to families who reside in Caerphilly LA:

Services offered to Caerphilly parents within RCT	Number of providers
Day Nursery	5
Holiday Care	6
Childminder	1
Playgroup	2
Wraparound	1

There were no responses to Caerphilly's parent consultation and colleagues were not able to provide any further information regarding cross border usage of childcare.

Cardiff

Colleagues in Cardiff reported that the following RCT childcare providers are delivering the Childcare Offer to families who reside in Cardiff LA:

Area of RCT	Number of providers	Number of children currently attending
North Cynon	0	0
South Cynon	0	0
North Rhondda	0	0
South Rhondda	0	0

Area of RCT	Number of providers	Number of children currently attending
North East Taf Ely	1	4
South East Taf Ely	5	21
South West Taf Ely	4	2
Total	10	27

Colleagues were not able to provide any further information regarding cross border usage of childcare.

Merthyr Tydfil

There are currently no families residing in Merthyr LA accessing the Childcare Offer with RCT childcare providers.

No other information was received concerning RCT families accessing childcare services in their CBC or vice versa.

Neath Port Talbot

No information was received from colleagues in NPT concerning RCT families accessing childcare services in their CBC or vice versa.

Powys

No information was received from colleagues in Powys concerning RCT families accessing childcare services in their CBC or vice versa.

Vale of Glamorgan

Colleagues in the Vale of Glamorgan reported that the following RCT childcare providers are delivering the Childcare Offer to families who reside in Vale of Glamorgan LA:

Area of RCT	Number of providers	Number of children currently attending
North Cynon	0	0
South Cynon	1	0
North Rhondda	0	0
South Rhondda	1	0
North East Taf Ely	1	0
South East Taf Ely	0	0
South West Taf Ely	3	3
Total	6	3

No other information was received concerning RCT families accessing childcare services in their CBC or vice versa.

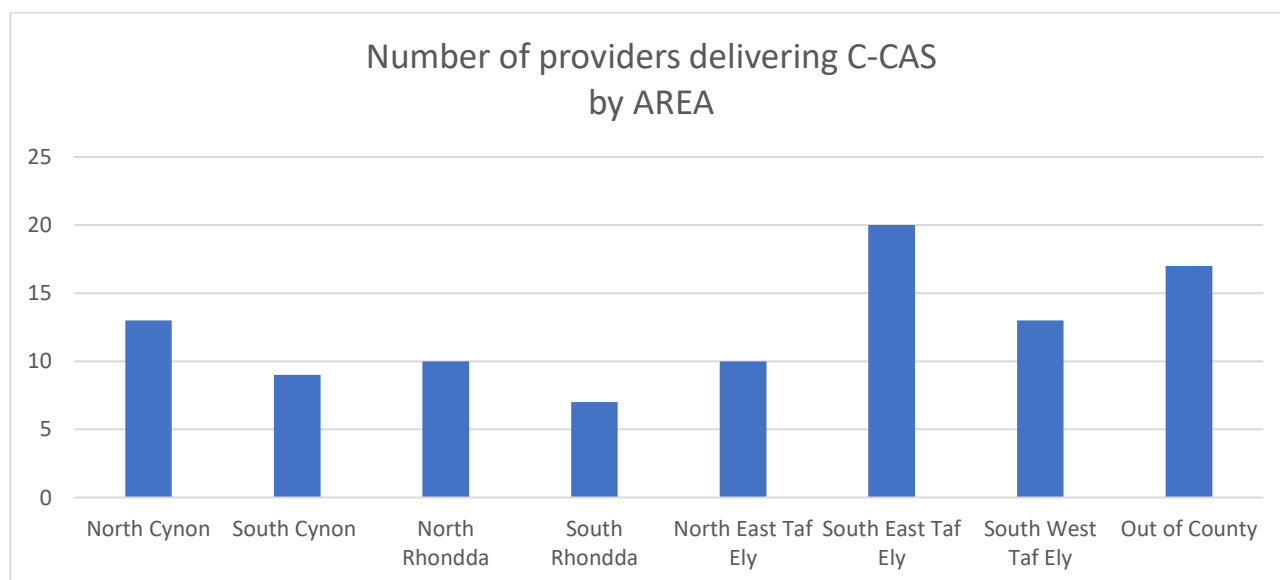
Section 10: COVID-19

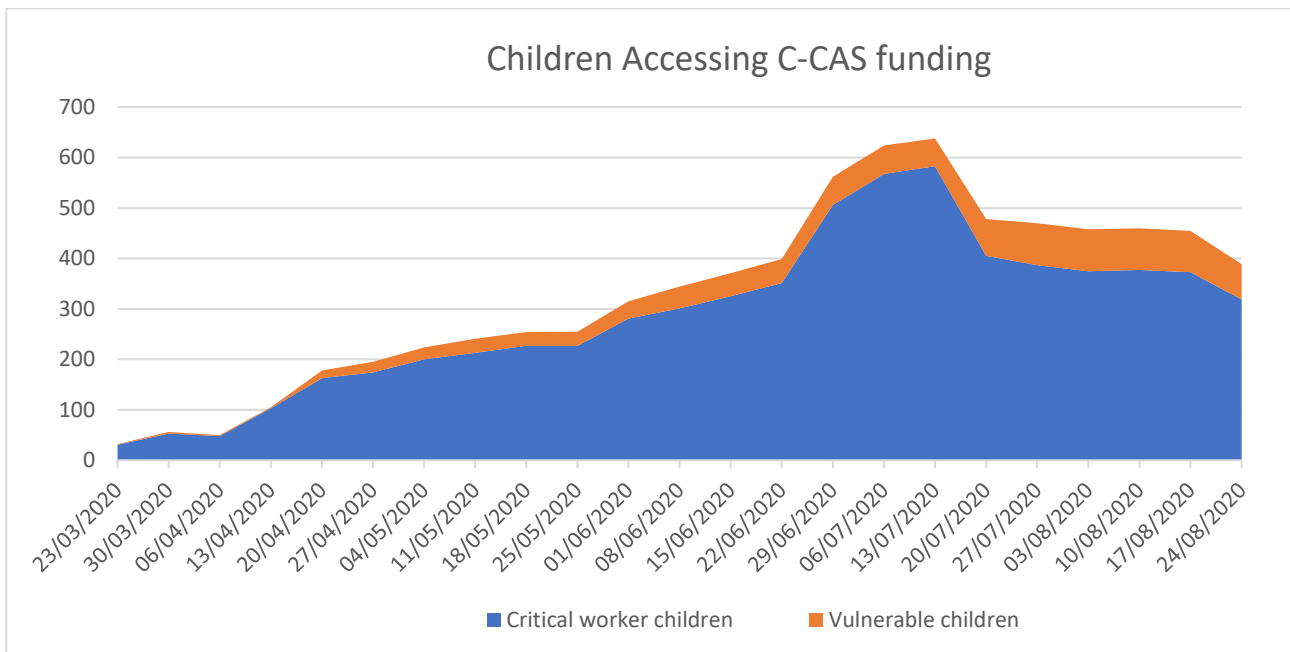
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge effect on childcare providers. However, they have been integral to the response against COVID by continuing to care for vulnerable children, and those of key workers, even when schools in Wales were closed. They have faced positive cases in their settings, staff shortages and reduced numbers with tenacity and have kept the best interests of the children they care for and their staff at the forefront at all times.

Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Schemes (C-CAS)

In the immediate response to COVID-19, Welsh Government launched The Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) scheme to provide emergency childcare to key worker families and children who were deemed vulnerable. The scheme ran from April to August 2020, although RCT provided care for some children from 23rd March.

18 childcare settings remained open at the beginning of the pandemic to provide this care. Many settings that did close reopened and by the time the scheme closed, 56 childcare providers in RCT were providing emergency childcare. In total, 99 childcare providers were funded to support RCT children, 14 of which were settings outside of RCT. 747 children were supported, 95 of which were deemed vulnerable. 223,115 hours of care were funded, costing £1.115m.





Parent and provider evaluation

In autumn 2020, parents and providers were asked to provide feedback on the delivery of C-CAS in RCT. In total, 289 responses were received from parents and 46 from providers.

Parents

99% of parents were happy with the service they received from the Council (286). All parents were happy with the care that was provided to their children (289). 99% stated that C-CAS enabled them to continue performing their critical role at that time (287), whilst 79% stated that C-CAS enabled them to increase their work hours in order to respond to the pandemic (224). Comments from parents on the scheme included:

- *Outstanding response to the pandemic, utterly grateful to all those involved.*
- *The staff were very supportive and understanding during a difficult period. This service gave complete piece of mind.*
- *Fantastic service which allowed me to carry on with my frontline duties without the worry of childcare arrangements.*

Providers

50% of providers who responded found it Very Easy to find information about the scheme and how to deliver it (23) whilst 44% found it Easy (20). All respondents stated that they found their obligations easy to understand, as was the administration and claim process. All respondents stated that they had sufficient staffing to deliver C-CAS and 91% reported that the scheme had helped their businesses financially (41). Comments from providers included:

- *A valuable scheme which helped many of our parents who would otherwise been unable to work the extra hours needed.*
- *It was very helpful for my business during the pandemic because I did not have much money coming in I was able to carry on working, the parents were very grateful for the financial help and knowing they could place their children with someone they already knew.*
- *I was very grateful that this scheme was put in place. I believe it saved a number of staff jobs.*

- *This was a much appreciated lifeline to me during this awful time as I literally lost my business overnight. Don't know what I would have done without the C-CAS scheme, thank you.*

Impact on childcare providers

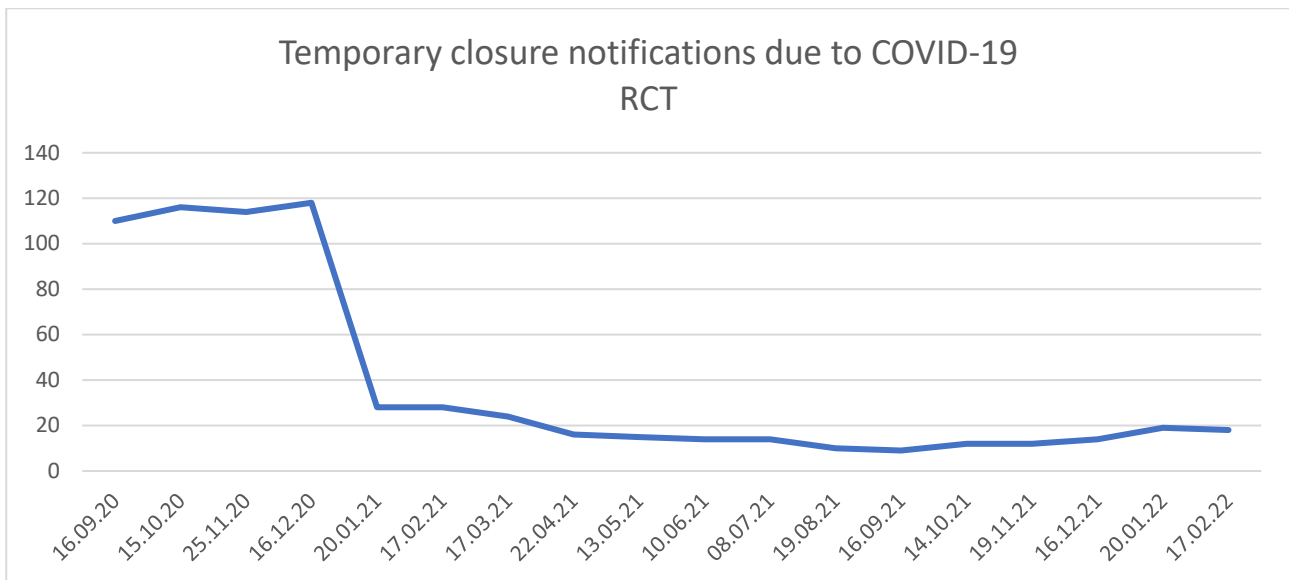
The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on providers has been profound. Staffing issues and managing positive cases continues to be a challenge, particularly for childminders who are working in their own homes. Positive cases amongst their own family can cause upheaval for delivery of their businesses. The narrative below gives an overview of the challenges that providers have faced since March 2020.

Temporary closures

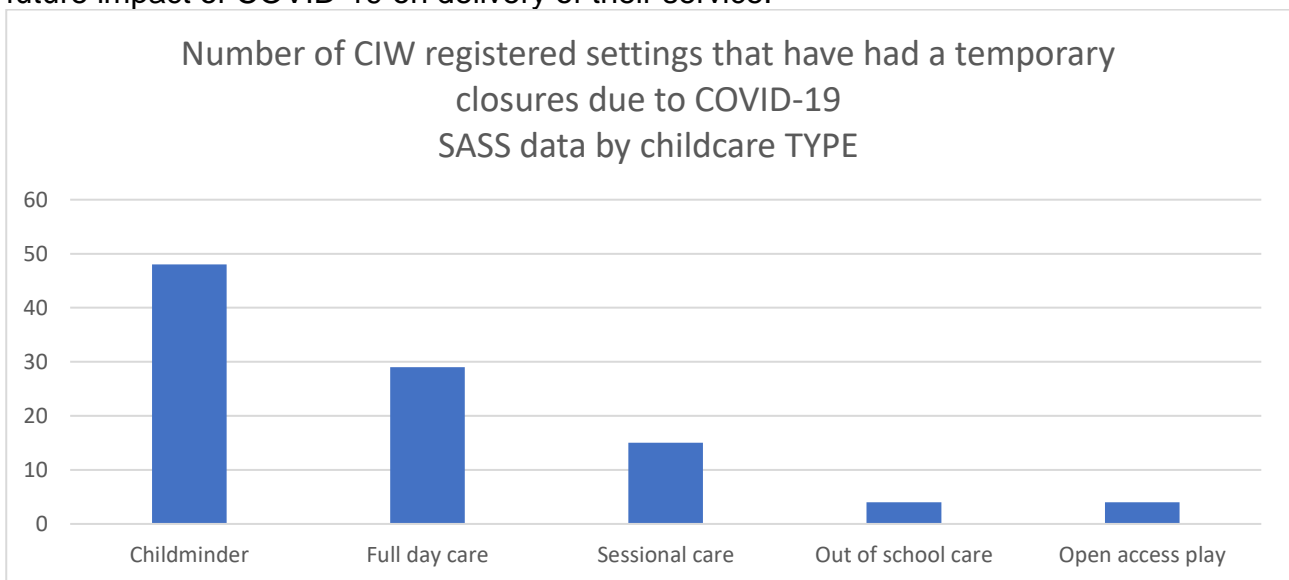
Since September 2020, CIW has issued weekly updates on the number of setting temporary closures / re-openings.⁸ The table below is a selection of these reports, giving an indication of the monthly situation. It can be seen that the percentage of RCT settings closed up to December 2020 was just under 50%. Since 2021, this has reduced significantly, with a slight increase in the winter of 2021 as the Omicron variant had an impact on numbers of positive cases.

Temporary closures due to COVID-19 RCT wide						
Date	Number of services	Maximum capacity Total	Temporary closure notifications due to COVID-19	% of closures by LA Total	Closures - maximum capacity	% of maximum capacity closed
16.09.20	222	4555	110	49.5%	2649	58.2%
15.10.20	265	5084	116	43.8%	2777	54.6%
25.11.20	237	4636	114	48.1%	2800	60.4%
16.12.20	237	4633	118	49.8%	2902	62.6%
20.01.21	236	4628	28	11.9%	884	19.1%
17.02.21	236	4644	28	11.9%	898	19.3%
17.03.21	236	4644	24	10.2%	814	17.5%
22.04.21	237	4625	16	6.8%	541	11.7%
13.05.21	235	4619	15	6.4%	531	11.5%
10.06.21	233	4583	14	6.0%	507	11.1%
08.07.21	234	4613	14	6.0%	507	11.0%
19.08.21	226	4627	10	4.4%	492	10.6%
16.09.21	227	4737	9	4.0%	429	9.1%
14.10.21	226	4724	12	5.3%	463	9.8%
19.11.21	228	4792	12	5.3%	431	9.0%
16.12.21	226	4773	14	6.2%	477	10.0%
20.01.22	227	4797	19	8.4%	503	10.5%
17.02.22	229	4819	18	7.9%	483	10.0%

⁸ CIW temporary closure data



Providers were asked a series of questions about the impact of COVID-19 on their settings as part of the 2021 SASS return. This included asking about the number of closures and how many days of service were lost due to being closed. They were also asked about the future impact of COVID-19 on delivery of their service.



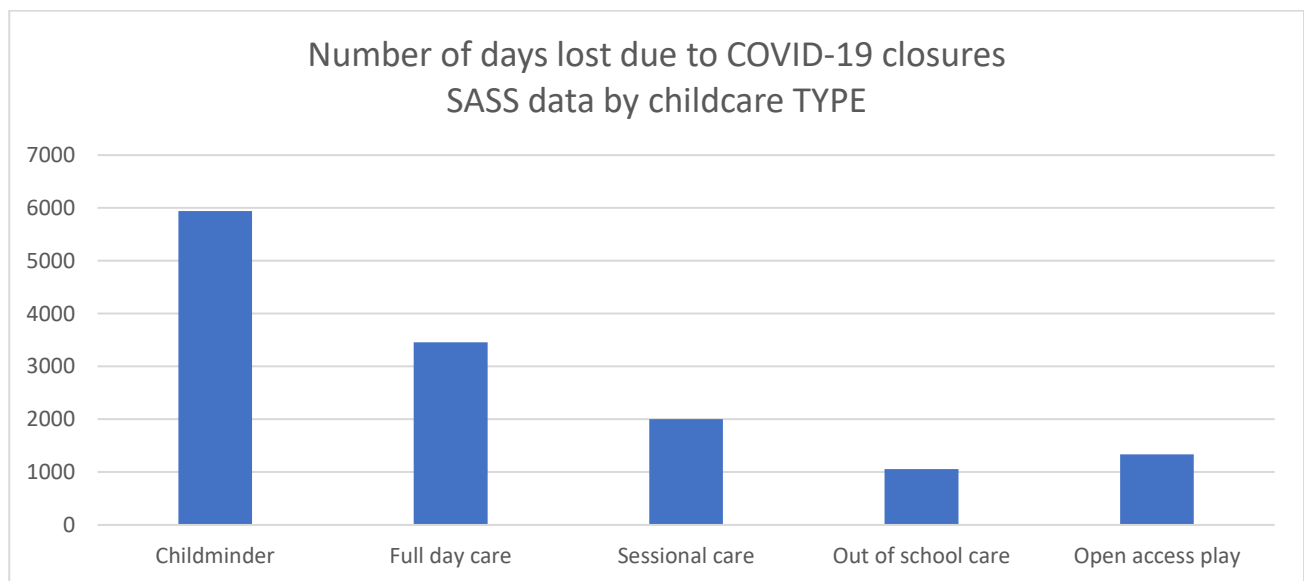
Number of CIW registered settings that have had a temporary closure due to COVID-19						
by AREA	Child-minder	Full day care	Sessional care	Out of school care	Open access play	Total
North Cynon	4	2	0	0	0	6
South Cynon	0	2	0	0	0	2
North Rhondda	3	8	1	0	1	13
South Rhondda	2	6	1	0	0	9
North East Taf Ely	14	1	4	1	0	20
South East Taf Ely	12	4	3	0	0	19
South West Taf Ely	13	6	6	3	3	31
Total	48	29	15	4	4	100

75 of these settings reported that they had temporarily closed one time, with 16 reporting two temporary closures, seven settings reporting three, and two settings reporting four temporary closures (up to SASS submission date in July 2021).

Five settings reported they were closed on the day that they submitted their SASS return:

- Three childminders, two based in South West Taf Ely and one based in North East Taf Ely.
- One Out of school care provider, based in North East Taf Ely.
- One Open access play provider, based in South West Taf Ely.

Providers reported via their SASS returns that a total of 13,798 days of service were lost due to COVID-19 related closures at that point in time.

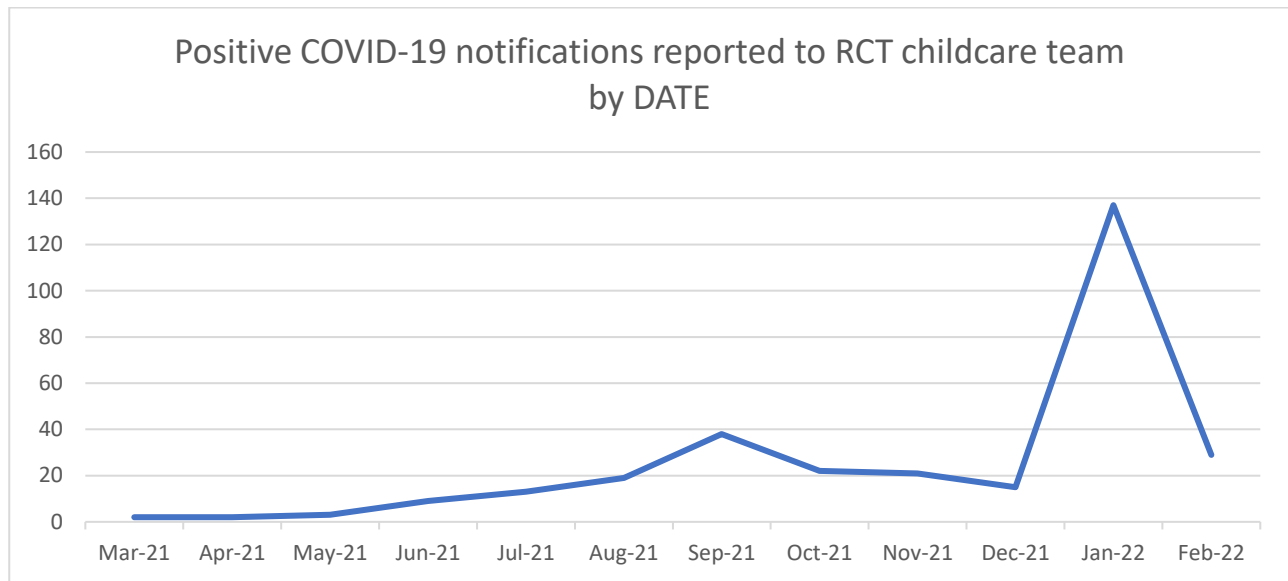


Number of days lost due to COVID-19 closures						
by AREA	Child-minder	Full day care	Sessional care	Out of school care	Open access play	Total
North Cynon	420	688	0	0	0	1108
South Cynon	0	109	0	0	0	109
North Rhondda	109	1225	161	0	371	1866
South Rhondda	192	494	160	0	0	846
North East Taf Ely	2022	101	488	506	0	3117
South East Taf Ely	965	255	488	0	0	1708
South West Taf Ely	2233	583	707	554	967	5044
Total	5941	3455	2004	1060	1338	13798

Cases of COVID-19 in settings

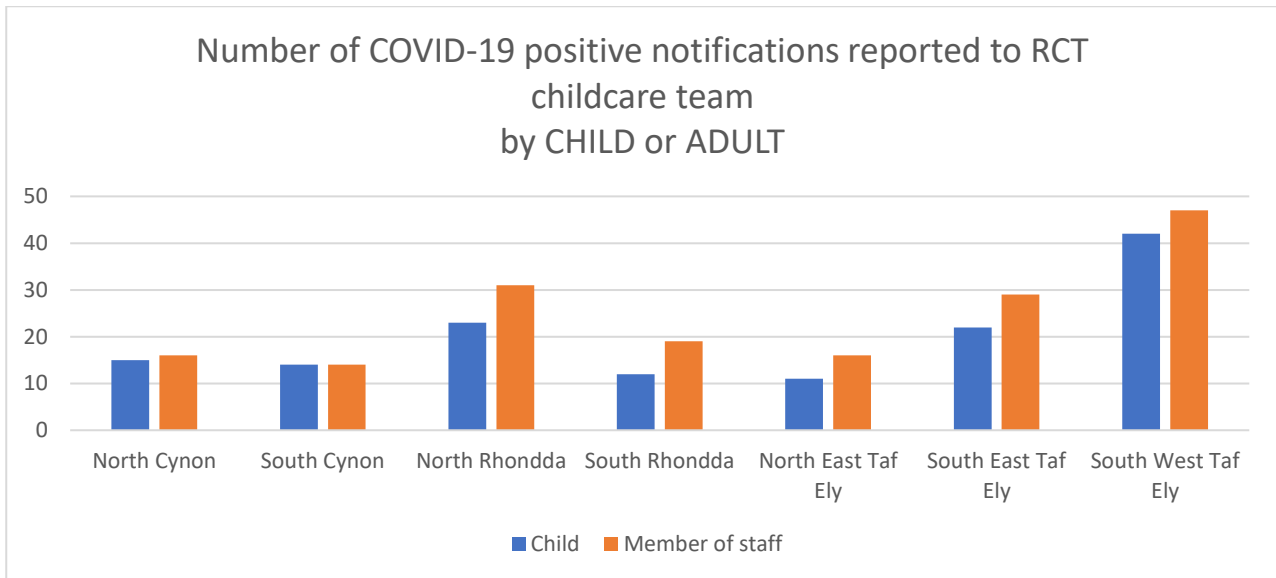
As well as having a duty to inform CIW and Test, Track, Protect, the childcare sector in RCT was also asked to inform the LA childcare development team of any positive cases in their settings, so that officers could offer support and guidance. An online form was created in autumn 2020 and the table below shows the number of positive notifications submitted to

the childcare team between March 2021 and February 2022. It must be noted that this is not official TTP data and relied on childcare settings to inform the Council childcare team. Therefore it does not reflect all cases that have occurred in RCT.



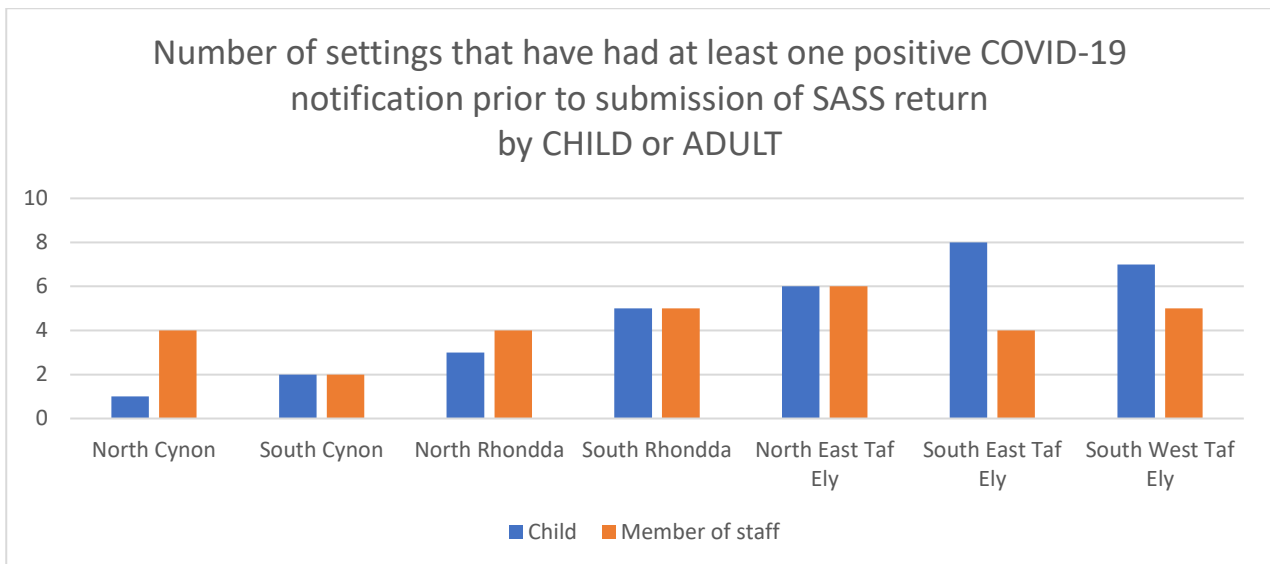
It can be seen that the Omicron variant had a significant impact on the number of positive cases in settings during December 2021 and January 2022. There was also a spike in September, most likely due to the return to school after the summer break.

Number of positive COVID-19 notifications reported to RCT childcare team						
By AREA	Childminder	Full day care	Sessional care	Out of school care	Open access play	Total
North Cynon	6	15	10	0	0	31
South Cynon	3	18	7	0	0	28
North Rhondda	10	34	10	0	0	54
South Rhondda	0	27	4	0	0	31
North East Taf Ely	13	10	4	0	0	26
South East Taf Ely	8	37	6	0	0	50
South West Taf Ely	9	47	21	12	0	86
Total	49	188	62	12	0	311



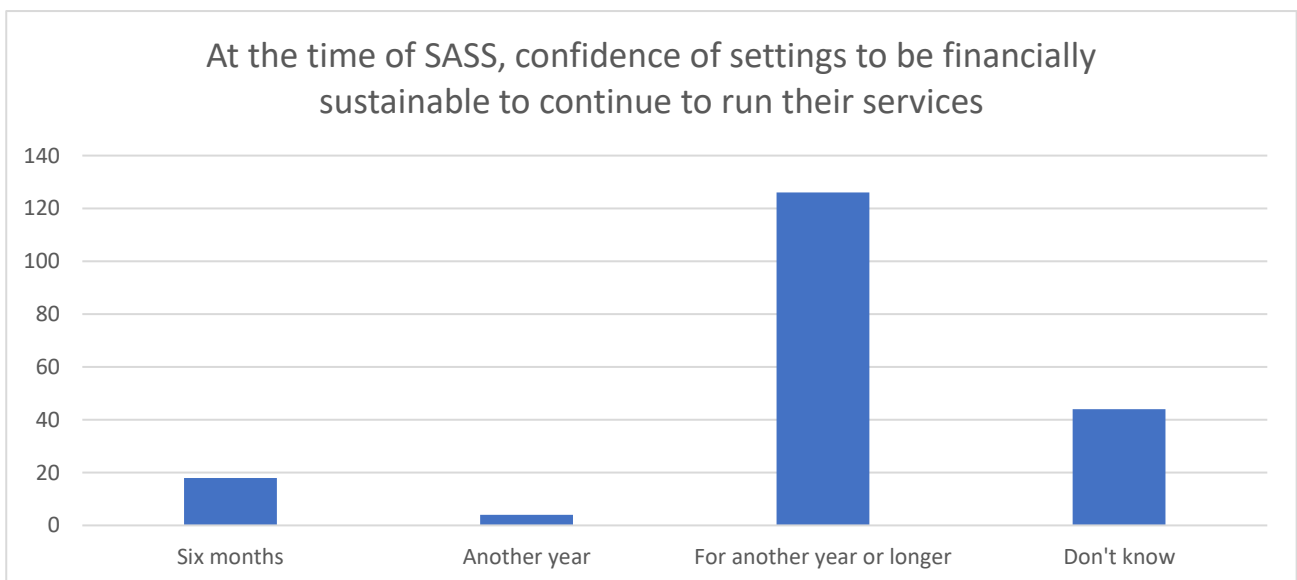
Settings were asked during their SASS return about positive cases within their settings. The data below reflects the situation up to the date they submitted their SASS returns. It should be noted that this data is per setting, not per individual case, as above.

Number of settings that have had at least one positive COVID-19 notification prior to submission of SASS return						
By AREA	Child-minder	Full day care	Sessional care	Out of school care	Open access play	Total
North Cynon	1	3	1	0	0	5
South Cynon	1	2	0	0	0	3
North Rhondda	2	5	0	0	0	7
South Rhondda	0	5	2	0	0	7
North East Taf Ely	8	1	0	0	0	9
South East Taf Ely	3	7	1	0	0	11
South West Taf Ely	1	6	2	0	0	9
Total	16	29	6	0	0	51

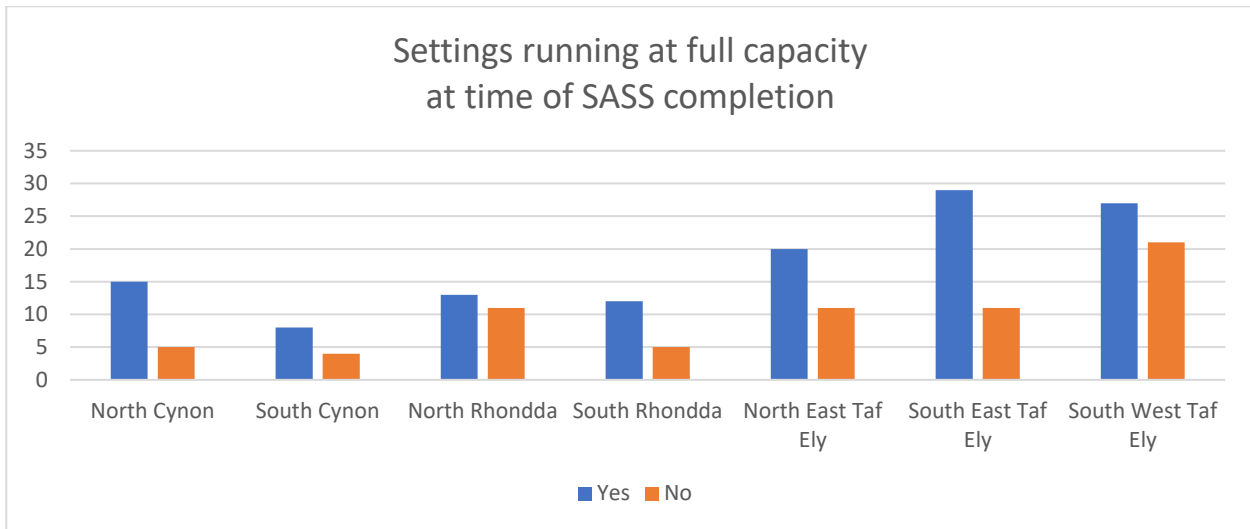


Financial sustainability

Settings were also asked in the SASS about the current and future impact of COVID-19 on delivery of their services. When asked how confident they were that they would be able to continue to run their services, 65.6% were fairly confident that they could continue to operate for another year or longer, whilst 22.9% did not know. Whilst it is pleasing to note that the majority of settings were reasonably confident of the future, the relatively high percentage that did not know illustrates the uncertainty that providers felt in the summer of 2021 that they would survive the pandemic. Of these, the highest number that selected 'Don't know' were from South East Taf Ely area (16), followed by North Rhondda (8). The highest number of settings that selected 'Six Months' were from the South Rhondda area (6), followed by North East Taf Ely (4).



Settings were also asked if they were running at full capacity at the time that the SASS was completed. 64.5% stated 'yes' they were running at full capacity (124) whilst 35.4% selected 'no' (68). The highest number running at full capacity were in South East Taf Ely (29) whilst South West Taf Ely saw the highest number of settings not running at full capacity (21).



Effect of COVID-19 on demand for services

It is difficult to evaluate the long term impact of COVID-19 on demand for childcare services. The short term effect has been significant. Parents working patterns have changed, with many now working from home. This has had a detrimental effect on Out of school and holiday care providers particularly. The impact of settings closing due to positive cases and staff shortages has also impacted on the confidence of parents to use childcare services, as had the fear of their children contracting COVID-19 in settings and transmitting it to vulnerable members of their families.

Comments on the impact of COVID-19 on parents are detailed in Section Six. These highlight the difficulties that parents have faced with children not being able to attend childcare settings with little notice, having to self-isolate as close contacts and the limitations on numbers for breakfast and after school care caused by maintaining bubbles.

The parent survey that was undertaken in autumn 2021 will not fully reflect the childcare needs of parents as there was still fluidity in the working arrangements of many parents. The 2023 CSA annual action update report will provide a clearer picture of long term issues with supply or demand of childcare services. The Council will continue to monitor the sector and respond where possible to ensure that services are maintained and viable.

Support provided to childcare sector

Information on support offered to the sector as a result of COVID is detailed in Section Eight.

Section 11: Population and Local Well-Being Plan

Population

The 2020 mid-year population dataset reports that the total population of RCT is 241,873, which is an increase from the 2017 CSA report of 1.78% (237,626).⁹ There are 50,098

⁹<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/wardlevel/midyearpopulationestimatesexperimental>

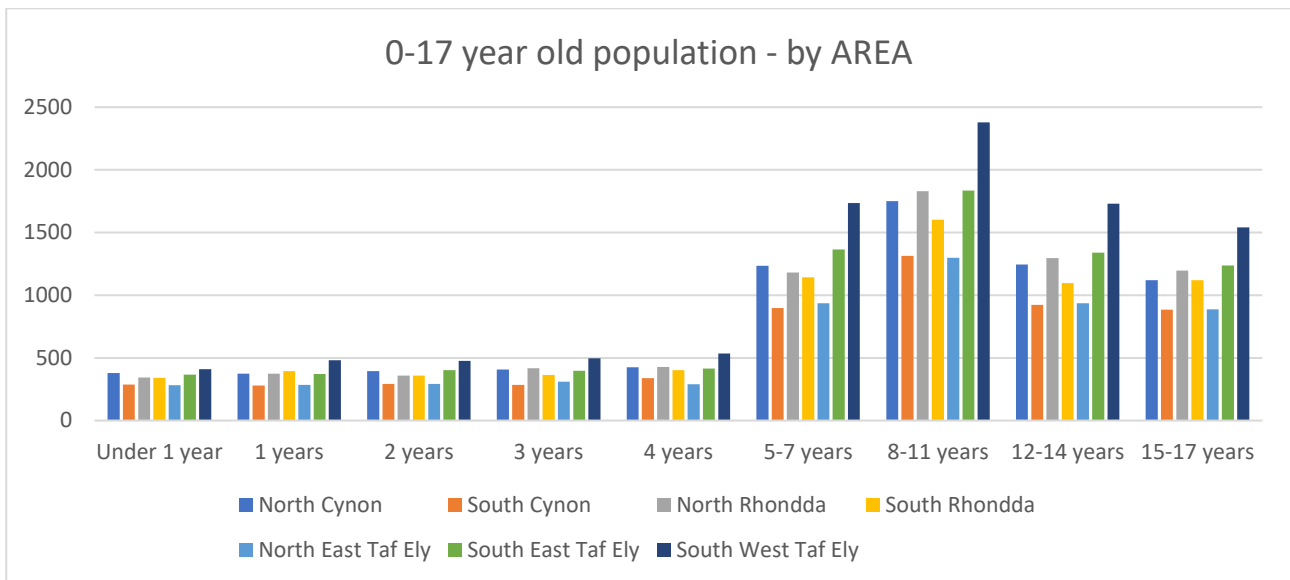
children and young people, aged 0-17 years old in RCT, which equates to 20.7% of the total population.

Area	Total population		0-17 years		18-64 years		65+	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
North Cynon	35858	14.83%	7333	20.45%	21193	59.10%	7332	20.45%
South Cynon	25331	10.47%	5495	21.69%	15038	59.37%	4798	18.94%
North Rhondda	36255	14.99%	7421	20.47%	21256	58.63%	7578	20.90%
South Rhondda	33251	13.75%	6819	20.51%	19931	59.94%	6501	19.55%
North East Taf Ely	29642	12.26%	5516	18.61%	19043	64.24%	5083	17.15%
South East Taf Ely	36710	15.18%	7732	21.06%	21873	59.58%	7105	19.35%
South West Taf Ely	44826	18.53%	9782	21.82%	26686	59.53%	8358	18.65%
Totals	241873	100.00%	50098	20.71%	145020	59.96%	46755	19.33%

From the table above, it can be seen that South Cynon, South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely have populations of 0-17 year olds higher than the RCT average.

Below are the 0-17 year population figures broken down by the age ranges (*as specified in the SASS*):

Area	Under 1 year	1 years	2 years	3 years	4 years	5-7 years	8-11 years	12-14 years	15-17 years
North Cynon	379	375	395	408	425	1,235	1750	1245	1121
South Cynon	287	279	291	284	338	897	1313	922	884
North Rhondda	344	373	359	417	428	1180	1829	1295	1196
South Rhondda	340	394	358	364	401	1143	1602	1096	1121
North East Taf Ely	283	284	293	309	289	937	1299	935	887
South East Taf Ely	367	371	403	398	416	1365	1835	1339	1238
South West Taf Ely	411	481	475	496	534	1735	2380	1730	1540
Totals	2411	2557	2574	2676	2831	8492	12008	8562	7987



Based on population alone, the demand for school aged childcare appears to be highest in South West Taf Ely, South East Taf Ely and North Cynon. This would correlate with the number of Out of school hours childcare places available in the Taf area of RCT. However, there are currently no Out of school hours childcare settings in North Cynon, so this should be investigated further.

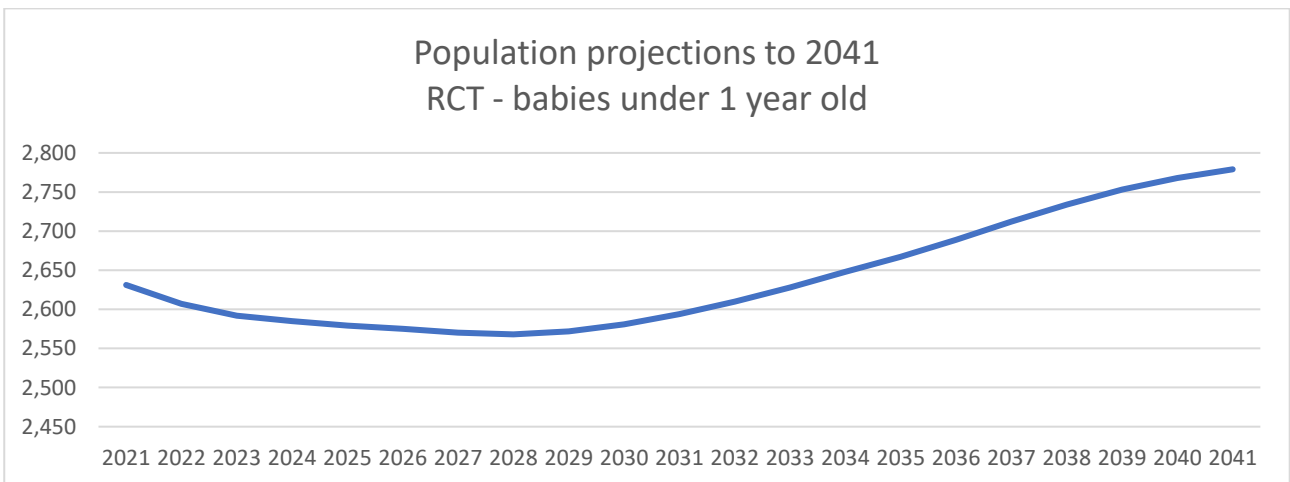
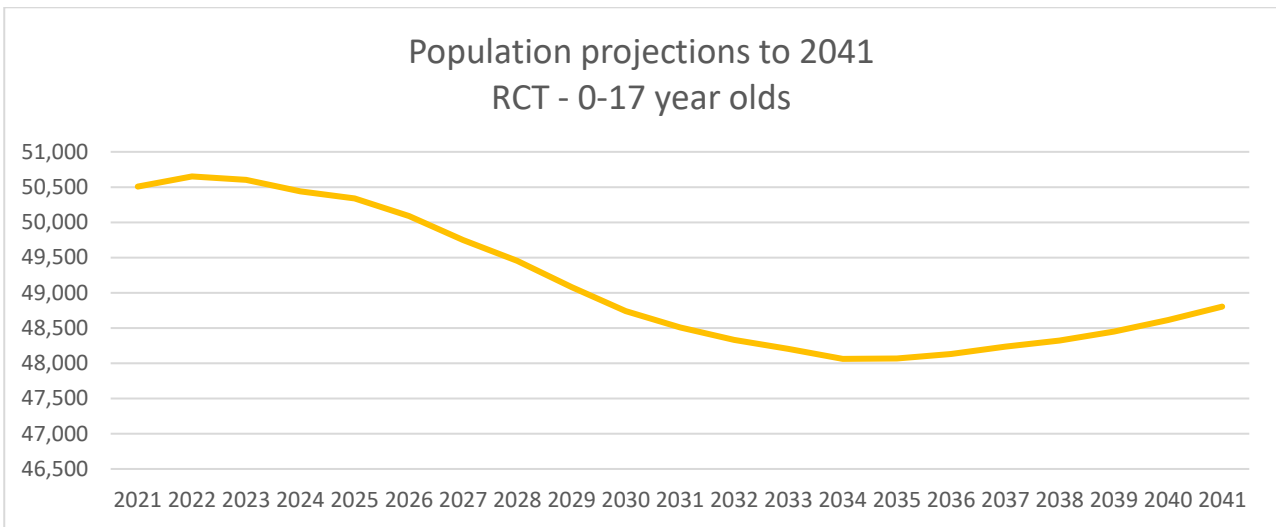
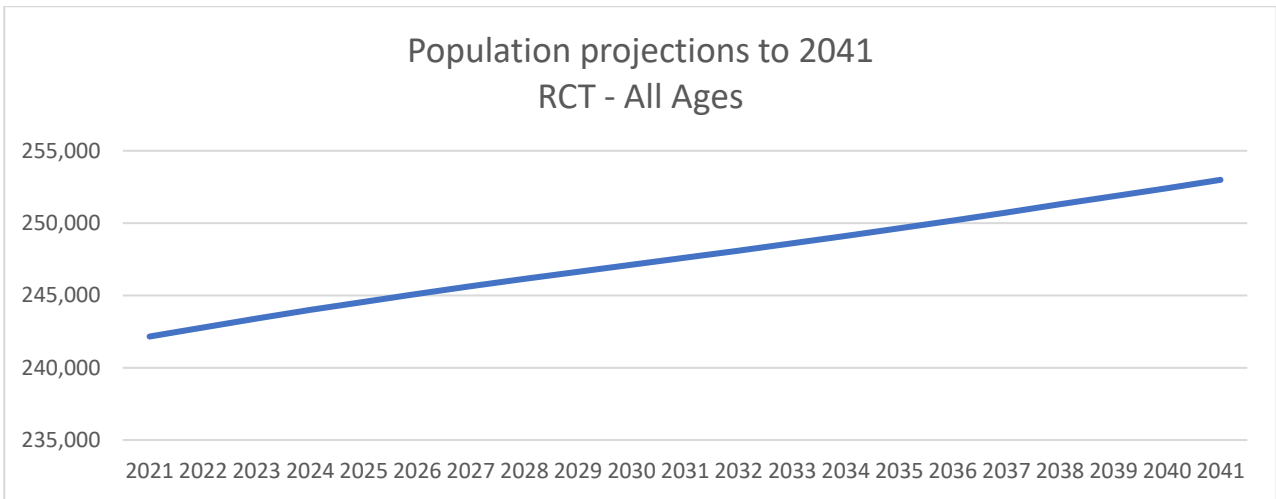
Investigate demand for out of school hours care in North Cynon

Population projections

Using StatWales population projections (2018 based), the population of RCT is estimated to **increase** by 4.47% by 2041, whilst the number of 0-17 year olds will **decrease** by 3.37%.¹⁰ The chart below suggests that the total number of 0-17 year olds will remain fairly stable for the next five years, before starting to reduce in 2027, dropping to a low of 48,602 in 2034, before increasing again to 48,803 by 2041. The number of babies under 1 year old are also projected to dip slightly then remain stable for the next five years.

For the purposes of this CSA, therefore, there is not likely to be significant changes in demand for childcare services in the next five years, due to significant population changes. However, the annual mid-year population estimates will be monitored over the next five years to ensure there are no significant changes to these projections.

¹⁰ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Projections/Local-Authority/2018-based/populationprojections-by-localauthority-year>



Welsh Language

Information on the percentage of the population that can speak Welsh and the Council's plans to increase Welsh medium childcare, please refer to Section Three.

Children with physical or learning disabilities

The Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal Act (ALNET) was implemented in Wales from September 2021 and aims to transform the expectations, experiences and outcomes for children and young people with additional learning needs. The age range now encompasses all children and young people aged 0-25 years, and the Act creates a single statutory plan that will replace the existing variety of statutory and non-statutory plans for learners in school and further education. The Act also aims to increase participation of children and young people, collaboration amongst agencies and make a simpler and less adversarial system.

The Council currently has 665 pupils, aged 0 to 19 years, in four specialist schools, 89 pupils aged up to 16 years in EBD and pupil referral units, and 460 pupils aged up to 16 years in learning support classes within mainstream schools.

ALN Early Years Forum

The ALN Early Years Forum is a multi-agency forum which supports children under compulsory school age with a potential, or determined, additional learning need (ALN). Membership of the forum, and the processes followed, were amended following the appointment of the Early Years ALN Lead Officer in January 2021, a key element of the ALNET.

Early Years Forum - September 2021-January 2022	Number of children
New Referrals	71
Brought back to forum	45
Advisory panel	16
IDP process initiated	13
Referrals made to EPS	14
Referrals made to transition service	21
Referrals made to EY Transition forum (physical/medical needs)	3

Early Years Transition Forum (physical and medical needs)

This forum looks at children with Early Years LA maintained IDP's and ensures that appropriate transition is in place for them, whether this is to a mainstream school (where their IDP would become a school based IDP) or into a specialist placement (special school or learner support class, where their IDP would continue to be LA maintained).

The forum also looks at children with physical, medical or sensory needs and ensures that the relevant team make all the necessary checks and arrangements are made for them to transition into school.

Respondents to parent survey

7.4% of respondents stated that their child has a disability or long term illness (61). For those respondents that gave their postcodes, most responses were from the South West Taf Ely area (20), followed by North Cynon (10).

When asked if they currently use childcare, parents noted that they use a Saturday social skills club, and early intervention centre for Autism and have support via direct payments. However, there were several text comments about difficulties they have encountered, such as:

- Had to cut hours at work as no suitable childcare options in my area
- My husband and I have to take alternate annual leave as unable to find suitable childcare for our son with autism

When asked why they don't currently use childcare, parent responses included:

- Hours aren't great for work
- Non-verbal autistic child who has difficulty in going with anyone else
- Local childcare is not available and is unable to meet my child's complex needs
- The current care is moving away and a new one needs to be found that can meet our son's needs

9.7% stated their child has a special educational need / additional learning need and that they need additional support with their learning (79). For those respondents that gave their postcodes, most responses were from the South West Taf Ely area (23), followed by South East Taf Ely (13).

The text comments for this group of parents were very similar to those of the parents whose children have a disability of long term illness.

Area Analysis

Please refer to Section Seven.

Local Development Plan

The Council has a current Local Development Plan (LDP) for the plan period 2006-2021. Although the plan period for this LDP has expired, due to a decision taken by Welsh Government, the current LDP will remain in place until a new LDP has been adopted. A revised LDP is currently being prepared by the Council but will not be adopted until 2025 at the earliest. Therefore the narrative in this report is based on the current LDP 2006-2021.

The LDP defines three principal towns in RCT:

Aberdare in the Northern Strategy Area, and;
Pontypridd and Llantrisant (including Talbot Green) in the Southern Strategy Area.

These towns are important hubs for social and economic activity by acting as gateways for new investment, innovation and sustainable development.

In addition to these principal towns, the LDP also defines the following key settlements:

Northern Strategy Area	
Hirwaun	North Cynon
Mountain Ash	South Cynon
Ferndale	North Rhondda
Treorchy	North Rhondda
Porth	South Rhondda
Tonybandy	South Rhondda

South Strategy Area	
Llanharan	South West Taf Ely
Tonyrefail	South West Taf Ely

The key settlements are smaller and less strategically significant than the principal towns, nevertheless these settlements provide important services and act as a centre for commercial and community activity.

Strategic and non-strategic sites

The LDP also allocates eight Strategic Sites. These are capable of accommodating significant development and have been identified in locations to maximise the opportunities for sustainable regeneration. These are:

Site	Electoral Ward	Area
Land at Robertstown / Abernant	Aberdare East	North Cynon
Land South of Hirwaun	Hirwaun	North Cynon
Former Phurnacite Plant	Aberaman South	South Cynon
Former Maerdy Colliery Site	Maerdy	North Rhondda
Former Fernhill Colliery Site, Blaenrhondda	Treherbert	North Rhondda
Former Cwm Colliery and Coking Works	Tyn-y-nant	South East Taf Ely
Mwyndy	Pontyclun	South West Taf Ely
Former OCC Site Llanilid	Brynna	South West Taf Ely

The LDP also allocates non-strategic housing sites throughout the County Borough and sites for other uses such as employment, retail, and transport infrastructure.

Examples of large schemes that have commenced since the last plan include but are not limited to:

- Residential developments include:
 - Llanilid,
 - Parc Eirin
 - Gwern Heulog (extension)
 - The former Aberdare High School
 - former Blaengwawr Comp in Aberaman
 - The former Coleg y Cymoedd, Cwmdare Road site has also begun development
- For Employment, the Department for Work and Pensions building in Treforest Industrial Estate has been completed in October 2021
- ZIP World in Hirwaun has been developed and is in operation

Housing developments in Hawthorn and Rhydyfelin have been completed since the last full report in 2017. Over the last five years, an out of school club was established in Hawthorn following requests from parents. Due to issues with the venue, it was not successful and closed within a few months. However, the parent survey conducted for this CSA has highlighted this electoral ward as an area that requires additional consultation to determine childcare needs.

The Llanilid development in Brynna electoral ward continues to see significant housing development during the last five years. Further development is planned during the course

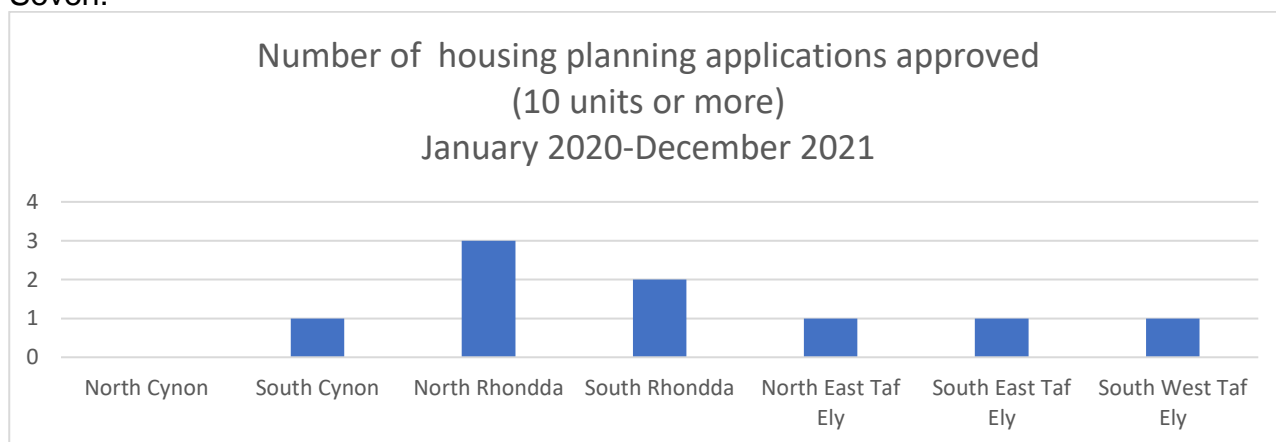
of this new CSA report. Demand for childcare services has increased since 2017, and a capital bid was successful to create a dual language Sessional care facility within the local primary school. An extension to this school is planned as part of this development. During the next five years, the demand for additional childcare as more housing is built will be monitored.

Further investigate childcare needs in Hawthorn electoral ward
Monitor childcare demand created by Llanilid housing development

Planning department

Using housing data, 2296 homes are planned between 2021 and 2026, 573 of which are social housing, with the remaining 1723 private.

The following housing planning applications, for ten or more units, have been approved in the last two years. Analysis of potential impact on childcare demand is available in Section Seven.



Planning applications that received full planning permission prior to 2020 but have not yet started construction are not considered in this report. These will be monitored to ensure that any impact for additional childcare demand is addressed where possible.

Job creation / job losses

Jobcentre Plus staff were consulted on significant job losses and job creations in the last five years that may have an impact on demand for childcare provision. Feedback from Jobcentre Plus suggests that the recurring trend currently is for recruitment rather than job reduction.

Job creation

A new tourist attraction in North Cynon has opened, creating over 50 jobs. These are likely to be local jobs with a mix of part time and full time working hours. There is nothing to suggest that this new attraction will create demand for childcare services that cannot be catered for by existing services in this area. The dualling of the A465 across this area has also created roles in the civil engineering sector. At its peak, it is anticipated that this project will create up to 500 jobs for the local workforce from RCT and the surrounding LA's. This project is forecast for completion in 2025.

The redevelopment of a site in the centre of Pontypridd to create the Llys Cadwyn building has seen the relocation of approximately 400 existing jobs to this site and the creation of

200 new jobs during 2022/23 in North East Taf Ely. There are limited childcare services in the centre of Pontypridd. However, there are services in the surrounding areas and on the travel to work routes that may cater for any additional demand this development may create. The redevelopment of the YMCA building includes plans for a childcare facility which will also provide additional childcare capacity to staff working here.

The Ty Taf development in the South East Taf Ely area has seen existing public sector workers transfer from other sites to this location. More than 1000 staff are currently located at this site with a further 600 to follow by March 2023. The opening of a Full day care provision in summer 2020 on the Treforest Industrial Estate can cater for any additional demand in childcare services that this may create.

Alongside these major developments, manufacturing, production, hospitality, logistics and the care sectors have all seen job increases over the last few years. The pandemic, and changes to employment rules since leaving the EU, have created staff shortages in some of these sectors. Jobcentre Plus staff have advised that employers are offering more flexible contracts and shift patterns, as well as funded/free transport in order to attract workers to fulfil their vacancies.

Job losses

There have been some redundancies amongst companies in RCT since the pandemic. A big employer in North East Taf Ely made 30 staff redundant at the end of 2020, whilst an employer with sites across RCT closed a facility in early 2021 with the loss of 30 jobs. The main job losses at the time this CSA report was written were connected to the COVID-19 pandemic response, with approximately 130 roles ceasing within Track, Trace and Protect services and COVID-19 testing centres.

Well-being Plan

The Cwm Taf Well-being Plan 2018-2023 is the culmination of a well-being assessment that was undertaken in 2018 following the introduction of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015).

The most recent Cwm Taf Public Service Board Annual Report 2020-21 notes the challenges the pandemic has created and how services have adapted to meet the needs of residents. A new Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-being Assessment will be published in May 2022 which will inform the Well-being Plan from 2023 onwards.

The CSA will support the objectives of the Well-being plan, particularly:

Cultural wellbeing

Supporting the delivery of childcare provision through the medium of Welsh will help the Public Services Board achieve their aims of cultural wellbeing in Cwm Taf. RCT has a good range of Welsh medium sessional and Out of school childcare providers. Many of our Welsh Medium childcare settings are registered with Estyn to delivery nursery education to three year olds who cannot access a pre-nursery place within maintained Welsh medium schools. This is helping to support the delivery and development of the Welsh language within RCT and provides a vital choice to parents who want their children to be bilingual. The recent capital investment has further improved the range and accessibility of Welsh medium childcare available.

Economic wellbeing

Employment and training opportunities are inextricably linked to the economic wellbeing of residents of Cwm Taf. The CSA has a vital role in ensuring that there is sufficient childcare available so that parents can access these opportunities and that lack of childcare is not a barrier to improving levels of poverty. The geographical nature of RCT makes travel links difficult and harder for parents to gain employment. Ensuring childcare provision is located where parents need it to access work or training is an ongoing priority for officers. Childcare related training opportunities will also help residents of Cwm Taf improve their economic wellbeing and equip them with the skills to work in the childcare sector. Over the last five years, the childcare development team in RCT has increased the range of training courses, and new childminder support package, available which is supporting the upskilling of residents. The emergence of online training, due to the pandemic, has had the positive affect of increasing availability of training to residents who cannot travel to training venues.

Environmental wellbeing

Safe outdoor environments within childcare and play settings are sometimes the only opportunities children have to play outdoors. The development of outdoor spaces within our childcare and play provision is an ongoing priority for officers within RCT and will help support the environmental wellbeing aims of the Cwm Taf Wellbeing Assessment. The capital investment available in the last five years has made a positive impact on the facilities and outdoor play spaces of more than 80 childcare settings in RCT. Funding for outdoor shelters/canopies has also enabled settings to make use of their outdoor space at any time of year, vital during COVID-19 to support protective measures guidelines.

Social wellbeing

Providing safe, stimulating environments for children can protect them from the adverse effects of social deprivation. The Flying Start programme within Wales is designed specifically to ensure that children from deprived areas are not disadvantaged and can have the same opportunities in childcare and education settings as their peers from more affluent backgrounds. The expansion of Flying Start from autumn 2022 will eventually support all two year olds to access high quality childcare that supports their development.

Childcare and play settings are also an ideal opportunity for children and young people to exercise by having fun and playing, and where they can learn about healthy eating and lifestyles.

RCTCBC Corporate Plan

The RCTCBC Corporate Plan 2020-2024 'Making a Difference' incorporates the Council's vision to make RCT "the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy and prosperous". The three main priorities of the plan are:

Ensuring People: are independent, healthy and successful

Improving services for children is integral to this ambition. High quality childcare services, with suitably qualified staff will support this aim and will support children with their physical, mental and emotional development. This CSA identifies the priorities for the next five years that will help to ensure that the childcare sector in RCT continues to grow and improve.

Creating Places: where people are proud to live, work and play

The capital investment in childcare facilities over the last five years has improved facilities for both children and staff. The enhancement of outdoor play areas has created environments where children can enjoy the outdoors and learn many valuable skills. The CSA has identified areas of further development that can be implemented if further capital investment is secured.

Enabling Prosperity: creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper

The last five years has seen a focus on developing childcare services on school sites. This supports transition for children from childcare into school, supports parents who are reassured that their children can remain on one site all day and supports childcare staff who are working in purpose built, up to date facilities. The economic benefits have included childcare settings being able to expand their services, therefore increasing the number of staff they employ, and has enabled parents to work for longer periods as they do not have to transport their children from one venue to another.

Section 12: Gap Analysis & Summary of Unmet Needs

Childcare provision for children of parents who work atypical hours

Childcare outside of the typical working week has been highlighted as a gap in previous CSA reports, and this report identifies the same gaps. Childminders continue to offer the most flexibility for parents who need care outside of normal trading hours. 78% of childminders open before 8am in weekdays during term time (72% during holidays) and 10% open after 6pm (9% during holidays). Just 3% open at weekends during term time and none during school holidays. 42% of Full day care providers offer care before 8am on weekdays, but just 1% offer care after 6pm. No Full day care providers offer care at weekends. No childcare providers in RCT offer overnight care.

When asked how their current childcare arrangements could be improved, 18.4% of parent survey responses stated extending hours in the early mornings (12), 24.6% extending hours in the evenings (16) and 10.7% extending to cover weekends (7). Just 4.6% stated offering overnight care (3). 13.3% stated that they do not currently use childcare as the times are unsuitable (47). Despite these responses, it is likely that the reality is that there is insufficient demand to make any such provision sustainable for providers. Further work should be undertaken to assess the true need for atypical childcare hours and to support providers to cater for this if demand is enough to ensure viability.

Undertake further consultation on the demand for childcare in atypical hours

Support childcare providers to offer childcare in atypical hours in areas of identified demand and to promote these services effectively

Welsh medium childcare provision

RCT has a good range of Welsh medium sessional (including those registered as Full day care providers but currently only delivering sessional care) and Out of school care. Capital investment since the last CSA report has improved the number of places available and the quality of the venues considerably. 3.7% of parent responses stated that they did not access childcare services because there was no suitable Welsh language provision

available (13). Of the responses that gave their postcode, the most responses were in the North Rhondda area (3), followed by North Cynon, South Rhondda, North East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely (2 each).

Since the parent survey was undertaken, new Welsh medium sessional care services have opened in North East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely areas. Additionally a new Welsh medium sessional care service is due to open in North Cynon in September 2022. These services cater for childcare from age 2 to 4 years. The age ranges of the children in the parent responses suggest that care for under 2's and primary school aged children is a need for these families. A lack of CIW registered, Welsh language out of school and holiday care is already an identified need and will continue to be one of the main priorities over the next five years. Some Welsh medium settings have already started to extend their services to cater for children under 2 years of age and the Council will continue to support them to do this where demand is sufficient.

Explore if additional Welsh medium childcare is required in South Rhondda area
Support settings to extend services to under two's in areas of identified need
Support unregistered Welsh medium out of school clubs to register with CIW and to extend services to holiday care in areas of identified demand

Childcare provision for different language categories

Other than Welsh or English, eight childcare providers, all childminders, stated in their SASS that they used other languages in their service. French (2) and Italian (3) were the most common languages spoken, followed by Polish, Spanish and Shona (1 response each). All of these childminders, bar one, live in the Taf Ely area of RCT, with three living in North East Taf Ely, three in South East Taf Ely and one in South West Taf Ely. One other childminder lives in North Rhondda.

Three responses (0.8% of total responses) in the parent survey stated that they did not currently access childcare services because there was no suitable provision in their language, which was neither Welsh nor English. The responses do not state which language they would like their childcare to use. These parents were based in North Rhondda, South Rhondda and South East Taf Ely and their children were mainly aged 5-8 years and 12-17 years of age. This would suggest that out of school and holiday care is required for these parents.

There is currently not enough demand to warrant the exploration of developing childcare provision in any languages other than English or Welsh. However, the Council will explore training opportunities for providers to increase their cultural and language diversity. All childcare providers will also be encouraged to make full use of marketing unique selling points, such as use of additional languages in their settings.

Offer diversity training to childcare providers to improve inclusivity within settings
Support childcare providers to market unique selling points to parents, such as use of additional languages

Types of childcare available and location

Geographical and childcare type gaps in provision have been identified in Section Seven. From the parent survey, there seems to be a demand for out of school care, as the pandemic has had a particularly detrimental impact on this childcare type. Further investigation is required in all areas of RCT, other than South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely. Encouraging unregistered Out of school settings to register with CIW continues to be a priority for the Council.

Recruiting additional childminders is also a priority for the next five years, again in all areas of RCT, but particularly in South Rhondda.

There appears to be a gap in Sessional care services in the North Rhondda area that requires further investigation. It may be that unregistered Sessional care providers, already in this area and in South Rhondda, cater for any unmet demand. However, encouraging and supporting these settings to register with CIW will ensure that parents can utilise financial support with their childcare fees, and can be confident that their children are being cared for by suitably qualified staff that meet National Minimum Standards.

There are currently only two Nannies on the Childcare at Home Voluntary Approval Scheme in RCT, both of which are based in South West Taf Ely. A priority for the next five years will be to engage with these Nannies and to offer them the level of support and training available to all other childcare settings. Promotional work will also be undertaken to encourage nannies not currently on the scheme to register so that they can be offered support by the childcare development team and their clients can access financial support via Tax Free Childcare and other initiatives.

Explore demand for out of school care
Continue to promote childminding as a positive business choice
Explore demand for Sessional care in North Rhondda and South Rhondda. Support existing unregistered in these areas to register with CIW
Engage with current nannies on the Home Childcare Provider scheme and promote benefits of registration to other nannies within RCT

Age of children for whom childcare is available

11.7% of parent responses stated they did not use childcare as there was no suitable childcare available for the age of their child (41). Of these, most had children aged 5-8 years (28), followed by 9-11 years (11). This would suggest that out of school and holiday care is the type of childcare most required by these parents. North Rhondda had the highest number of respondents for 5-8 year olds (8), followed by South East Taf Ely (6). There are several well established Out of school clubs in these areas, so further research will need to be undertaken to determine if there is additional demand in these areas.

Since the last CSA report, the introduction of the Childcare Offer for Wales has resulted in significant expansion in services for 3 and 4 year olds, including afternoon wraparound care and settings expanding to offer holiday care. Many Sessional care providers have re-registered with CIW as Full day care providers in order to offer increased services for this scheme. There was some evidence initially that expansion of the Offer had a detrimental impact on the number of Flying Start places available. However, this seems to have resolved itself and Flying Start colleagues have reported that this is not currently an issue. the roll out of the Flying Start scheme to all two year olds will impact on places available to other age groups and should be closely monitored.

Explore additional demand for out of school and holiday care in North Rhondda and South East Taf Ely areas
Monitor impact on places for other age groups of rollout of Flying Start to all two year olds

Affordability of childcare

As with previous CSA reports, parental feedback suggests that the cost of childcare is prohibitive for them. In the parent survey for this report, 43.4% of parents stated that they do not currently use childcare services because the cost of childcare is too expensive (152). Of all parents, 65.1% strongly agreed with the statement ‘Childcare is too expensive’ (515), whilst an additional 21.4% tended to agree with this statement (169). Throughout the survey, text responses reported that the cost of childcare services was considered too high.

The number of unregistered Sessional care and Out of school care in RCT means that parents cannot take advantage of financial support for their childcare costs. Supporting these settings to register with CIW remains a priority for the Council and would help families access regulated childcare at an affordable rate.

Increasing parental awareness of the benefits of using registered provision is also a priority, as is promotion of schemes such as Tax Free Childcare and the Childcare Offer for Wales remains a priority. SASS responses suggest that currently 79% (151) of registered settings in RCT accept Tax Free Childcare or employer based childcare vouchers. Of these, Sessional care settings are the least likely childcare type to accept them, with only 52% (13) of responses stating that they do. Supporting childcare providers, particularly sessional care providers, to register with the Tax Free Childcare scheme is also a priority.

The expansion of Flying Start to all two year olds will undoubtedly support more families to access childcare services. Ensuring there are sufficient childcare providers engaged to deliver the expansion will be an ongoing priority over the next five years.

Engage with, and support, unregistered childcare settings to register with CIW
Continue to promote benefits of using registered childcare services to parents
Work with FIS to promote financial support schemes available to parents with childcare costs
Support childcare providers, particularly sessional care providers, to accept Tax Free Childcare and employer based childcare vouchers
Work with the childcare sector to encourage participation in the rollout of Flying Start

Section 13: Barriers to Childcare Provision

Responses from the parent survey have been used as the basis for assessing barriers to childcare services.

Working parents

Of those respondents that are employed or self-employed, barriers to accessing childcare provision included:

- *Attempted to increase childcare with current provider but unable due to limited spaces.*
- *Before and after school, limited out of hours childcare and no suitable Welsh provision.*
- *Before we asked family to help, childcare costs were extortionate and wasn't both of us working. The hours also didn't suit because I couldn't get there in time to collect her by the time they closed plus they charge extra per minutes / 5 mins that you are late.*
- *Breakfast club starts too late for me to get to my job on time so had to find alternative job but difficult for nursing jobs. Childminders are too expensive.*
- *Breakfast club. Pot luck if get place. Appreciate it's free but school should have some paying spaces. This would subsidise free spaces and improve the quality of breakfast.*
- *Childcare is far too expensive and not worth going to work to pay the costs of having someone look after the children.*

Response – Before and after school care, and the cost of childcare seem to be particular concerns to working parents. Out of school care has been adversely affected by the pandemic, as many settings share community venues which have restricted access. The Welsh Government Free Breakfast Clubs are also used by many working parents, and restrictions to accessing those during the pandemic seem to have caused difficulties. As restrictions ease, these facilities should become more available to parents again. However, there is a clear need to further investigate demand for out of school care.

With regards to the cost of childcare, there are several financial schemes to assist parents with the costs. Increased promotion of these is prudent to ensure parents know what support is available and where they can access it.

Further investigate demand for out of school childcare

Improve promotion of financial schemes available to parents with childcare costs

Parents seeking work or training opportunities

Of those respondents that are looking for a job but not working yet, when asked why they do not currently use childcare, responses included:

- *As I was furloughed we lost our childminder space, then I had no childcare when I was asked to return to work resulting in me losing my job.*
- *Early mornings prove difficult. After school club suspended since COVID.*
- *I find it quite hard to find a Childminder in my area Aberaman, also that work until 6:30 and weekends.*

- *Local authorities only allows certain postcodes to receive flying start help. This could of helped me a lot but instead I had to pay when I was working and a single parent but the lady that lives on the other side of the road doesn't work and gets free flying start! I come out of work and started college because it was too expensive and not worth it for me.*
- *The problem is mostly jobs expect you to be fully flexible and start at 6am. Child care or before school clubs start 8am and the new normal work week includes weekends but child care is strictly Monday-Friday finishing at 6pm. And then there's the waiting lists for most of them.*
- *There are only 38 Registered childminders in the whole of RCT- an appalling lack of provision. I have been offered a job recently and had to turn it down because I cannot get afterschool childcare for my children as no childminders pick up from Tylorstown Primary School. The situation is stressful and unfairly discriminates against single parents who do not have family or partners to help with childcare responsibilities. It is especially upsetting as the bullying, draconian nature of the Universal credit system is putting huge pressure on mothers to find work in an area where there is very little opportunity and limited to employment on zero hour contracts requiring evening and weekend work. (for which no childcare exists outside of family). I recently managed to find a job ironically for DWP but am faced with having to turn it down because of lack of childcare in this area. The pressure, stress and frustration families on Universal Credit are under because of these circumstances is most certainly contributing to a rise in mental health issues. I would suggest that ALL Welsh primary schools should have after school childcare facilities to address some of the need- parents could be employed after the right training and checks to run these facilities as play workers providing employment for them and much needed childcare for other working parents. These schemes could be registered childcare providers which parents could pay for and / or reimbursed through Universal credit in order to meet the expenses of running the clubs.*

Response – As at the end of February 2022, there were 102 childminders registered with CIW in RCT, eight of which are in the North Rhondda area. It is possible that the respondent in the last comment used the online FIS search facility to look for childminders. This database is reliant on childcare providers updating their profiles every 6 months. If they do not do this, then their details are not visible in the search facility.

In the last five years, two childminder recruitment campaigns have been held in this area, and for Tylorstown Primary School in particular. The result of these was one new childminder registering with CIW from the first event, and one person is currently going through the registration process who attended the second event.

Lack of childcare provision to accommodate atypical working hours has previously been identified as a gap in services and is evaluated in Section Twelve.

Explore demand for atypical childcare services
Explore how providers can be supported to offer more flexible care that can accommodate shift patterns

Low income families

24.3% of respondents stated their weekly household income was below the RCT average gross weekly earnings of £520.20 (181).¹¹ Specific comments from these respondents included:

- No wrap around at the local school, all childcare full and unable to meet needs of our work. *Having to travel a distance (don't drive) to take one child to child care. Price has increased 3 times since Covid. Now pay more than I earn for childcare. School offers no after school club, no holiday clubs provided (although we took part in the trial holiday club this year and it was fab really helped with work arrangements in the holidays.*
- *Yes, there are no childcare providers that I can find that will drop off/pick up from my daughters school.*
- *Yes, there weren't many choices of childcare that was easily accessible to me, I do not drive so it is very difficult to figure out childcare! It's so expensive, spending more on childcare than anything else.*

Response – A lack of convenient, affordable childcare appears to be a barrier to this group of parents. Identified gaps in services in other areas of this CSA report may help to address these issues. Promotion of financial support for working parents, including those on low incomes, is a priority action for the duration of this CSA.

Promote financial support available to parents for childcare costs

Lone parent families

Of those respondents that stated they had sole responsibility for their child/ren, specific comments included:

19.7% of respondents to the parent survey stated that they have sole responsibility for their children (162), with most of these living in North Cynon (35), followed by North Rhondda (26). This percentage is higher than the 14% of respondents in the 2017 CSA report.

73% of those that have sole responsibility are employed or self-employed (119), whilst 13% are in education or training (21). 16% are looking for a job but not working yet (26), and 7% are not working and not looking for a job (11). 10% stated that they were unable to work (16). Reasons stated for being unable to work included:

- *Most jobs expect you to be fully flexible and start at 6am and work weekends. But childcare is strictly Monday to Friday from 8am. And there's waiting lists for most of them*
- *Hard to find a childminder in my area, also that work until 6.30 and weekends*
- *Childcare is so expensive if I was to put my 3 year old boy in childcare I'd be working for no reason other than to say I'm employed*
- *Cost of childcare*
- *Costs are insane*
- *Do not start early enough*
- *Due to my shift pattern starting at 7am finding childcare before 7 is difficult. Childcare is expensive for a single parent so cannot afford to use childcare facilities like nurseries/childminders so unable to work more unable to get more childcare*

¹¹ <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/People-and-Work/Earnings/medianweeklyearnings-by-welshlocalareas-year>

- *I had to wait to move to the area because there was no available childcare, I now cannot change due to availability and go into debt every school holiday as the charges are well above the limit for help on UC, they are paid in advance for every school holiday and UC pay in arrears at 85% capped below the minimum I could every pay. I often miss work because of childcare issue and fall behind in work as I can't do extra hours like everyone else.*
- *I have a 6 year old daughter for whom I have sole responsibility and I work full time. I'm in the position where I have to look for a part time job due to a lack of wrap around care for children of her age in my area. I currently rely on family (unpaid) but they are not able to continue helping out due to health issues. This has started to cause me problems in work as I have had to reschedule meetings due to family being unable to help at short notice. If I could find suitable wrap around care I would be willing to pay for it; and I would be eligible for tax free childcare.*
- *Limited option for weekend child care only 2 in the Rhondda Cynon Taff and both opposite ends of RCT!*
- *Price of child care is too much for single parents they shouldn't be made to work, or child care should be free it's impossibly hard to balance a monthly budget when £650 of that is your child care costs. £89 council tax £200 on gas water electric tv licence broadband. Leaves me with about £150 - 200 once UC has cut all my money down to £1100 per month it's not funny! And that's without rent/mortgage I have no idea how people are managing! Yes I claim 85% back on UC but that's not the full amount so every month I'm getting stripped that little bit more off my £150-200 plus if I do over time it's extra child care I have to pay for and I have had to contact UC twice this year for non-payment of my childcare, last time was for 4 months non-payment even with all details sent in.*
- *The cost of childcare is out of my reach. I'm only able to use this facility a couple of times a week. This causes me issues with working.*

Response – Flexible childcare that can accommodate shift work seems to be a particular issue for lone parent families. Encouraging childcare providers to offer a more flexible service, and offering care in atypical hours, is an ongoing priority. How best to support settings to offer this will be a priority for this CSA.

Encourage settings to offer flexible care and atypical hours

Families from ethnic minority backgrounds

Of those respondents from ethnic minority groups, specific comments included:

- *I have had childminders avoid taking on my child because of our race. Plus, there are only 2 childminders in the area that are able to provide wrap-around care; both of which have long waiting lists.*
- *I have no childcare in my area, I have to take my children to family in Cardiff for me to work (I'm a single parent). My children's school has no after school club.*
- *There were no difficulty in finding childcare but there should be more help financially. I have been employed and paying taxes several years before having a child. I was made redundant during the pandemic and it's very difficult for me to earn money while taking care of my child. My husband and I have been very strict with the Welsh government guidelines (which we think it's a great thing. We are thankful of how the Welsh government has been working really hard during this time of difficulty) and kept our son at home, which resulting in him being very dependent to me (compare to before the lockdown) and stopped me from many work/ training opportunities.*

Response – Comments from parents reporting that childcare settings are not able to care for their children based on their race is very concerning. Without knowing the full details, it is not possible to address this particular point. However, additional training on diversity would be beneficial to all childcare types.

Offer diversity training to childcare practitioners

Families with children who have special educational needs or a disability

Of those respondents who have children with a disability, long term illness or special education/additional learning need, specific comments included:

- *Can't find childcare for non-verbal children with Autism. Grandparents have been used but this can't go on as they get older. There needs to be far more provision for children with severe special needs.*
- *Childcare normally doesn't include weekends or evenings. Not all jobs are Mon-Fri*
- *Difficulty with resources for children with disability. Limited programme in school holidays. My son will no longer be eligible for place at playscheme from age 14.*
- *Finding childcare via direct payments for my disabled teenager. Also finding flexible childcare as we are both self-employed.*
- *Finding someone locally who drives and has the skills to deal with autism and learning difficulties on the wages offered by local authorities is not easy.*
- *I am unaware of any school holiday childcare options other than the private day nursery my child attended before starting school. That is not going to be suitable for him as he gets older and I don't currently know what I'll do then.*
- *I find it difficult to get funding for childcare for my special needs child who has a P.A*
- *I have 4 I need childcare for sometimes for school runs sometimes to stay overnight due to the odd hours I work*
- *My child has adhd asd so hard finding someone who can deal with him. Also my mum helps out with childcare 2 days but as she is a carer for my elderly nan with dementia sometimes she has to let me down*
- *My children have special needs, my oldest who's 6 is very strong and needs 1-1, sometimes 2-1, and my parents can't manage her and my youngest together. This makes school holidays very difficult, and I often have to book time off work due to the fact I have nobody to have them both together.*
- *My son has severe autism. Private childminders don't want him because he is too much work. The state does NOTHING to help my son other than DLA payments. When we asked for help or a social worker, we were declined because he is 'not at risk' - maybe I should become a drug addict/alcoholic to get my child some support.....*
- *My son is 11 with Downs Syndrome and after the age of 12 there is NO suitable childcare within RCT. Social workers are not aware of any, schools don't know of any.*
- *My youngest child is disabled and Wales (unlike England) does not offer 15 free hours childcare from the age of 2. This seems very unfair.*
- *We found the choice was not great in our area, then had a bad experience with one and was put off for a few months before finding an incredible one, but because they were so good, we had to join the waiting list. Then when we needed extra days cover, we had to wait again because they were full (this was all pre Covid though, so I'm sure the situation would be different now as it seems a lot of people are having their children at home with them rather than using childcare so the wait times aren't as bad)*

- *Yes I had childminders not want to accept my daughter because she has autism and then when they have accepted her dropped her straight away. I went through 3 childminders in 2 months*
- *Yes, 2 of my children have additional needs. We struggle to find places that can accommodate to them, my oldest will need to go to a SEN school because he can't cope mainstream, and we cannot afford for then both to go to nursery.*

Response – It can be difficult for parents to access quality childcare that will best meet the needs of their child.

Promote ALN and inclusion training
Explore demand for holiday care, particularly for older children with ALN/disabilities
Promote financial support available to parents
Explore barriers to accessing childcare for families with children who have additional needs or a disability

Section 14: Free Nursery Education, Flying Start and Childcare Offer provision

Foundation Phase Nursery (FPN) education

RCT offers 15 hours of FPN education to children from the term following their third birthday, and full time nursery education (30 hours per week) from the term following their fourth birthday. This is more than the Welsh Government recommended 10 hours per week.

Number of schools offering FPN education

All children in RCT can access a nursery FPN placement in a maintained primary school. Nursery year is from the September following their third birthday. There are currently 96 infant, primary and through schools in RCT offering FPN education.

For those children who turn three between September and March each year, they can access a pre-nursery place from the term following their third birthday until the following September. Most children access this pre-nursery place in a maintained school if they have available places. Where this is not possible, places are offered if possible in non-maintained Registered Education Providers (REP's) (see below).

Pre-nursery intake (January)					
Academic year	Eligible for pre-nursery	Number of applications received	Allocated	Not allocated	Eligible but not applied
2021/2022	890	750	707	43	140
2020/2021	1003	722	693	29	281
2019/2020	1019	742	684	58	277
2018/2019	991	722	640	82	269
2017/2018	1048	757	655	102	291

Nursery intake (September)					
Academic year	Eligible	Number of applications received	Allocated	Not allocated	Eligible but not applied
2022/2023	2536	2141	2141	0	395
2021/2022	2668	2332	2332	0	336
2020/2021	2623	2308	2308	0	315
2019/2020	2775	2499	2499	0	276
2018/2019	2803	2528	2528	0	275
2017/2018	2642	2487	2487	0	155

Registered Education Providers

As of December 2021, there were 32 Registered Education Providers (REP's). These REP's are non-maintained childcare settings, registered with both CIW and Estyn. 17 of these were English medium settings, 12 Welsh medium, and three used both English and Welsh. This is an increase from 25 REP's at the time of the last CSA in 2017. The increase has been as a result of increased take up of pre-nursery education and a strategic review that identified geographical areas where additional REP's would be beneficial.

During 2021, three settings ceased to be REP's. Two settings, both Welsh medium, one in North Rhondda and the other in South West Taf Ely ceased operating. One was due to the retirement of the Person in Charge and the other due to financial difficulties, exacerbated since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. One English medium setting in South West Taf Ely chose to stop offering FPN education but continues to operate to fee paying families.

A strategic approach is taken when recruiting additional REP's. This is in areas of identified need, based on the number of 3 year olds who are not able to access pre-nursery FPN education places in their local maintained schools.

Number of REP's by Area	Language of setting		
	English medium	Welsh medium	Bilingual
North Cynon	1	1	1
South Cynon	0	1	1
North Rhondda	2	2	0
South Rhondda	1	2	0
North East Taf Ely	1	2	0
South East Taf Ely	6	2	1
South West Taf Ely	6	2	0
Total	17	12	3

All REP's follow the Foundation Phase curriculum and are inspected by Estyn in the same way as maintained schools. Since 2019 Estyn and CIW have collaborated to inspect providers jointly. This alleviates some of the pressure faced by childcare settings when regulatory bodies inspect at the same time instead of two separate visits in any one year. This has also given both organisations a better understanding of the expectations of their inspection procedures and has provided settings with shared evidence and reporting procedures, in turn reducing and streamlining the evidence required.

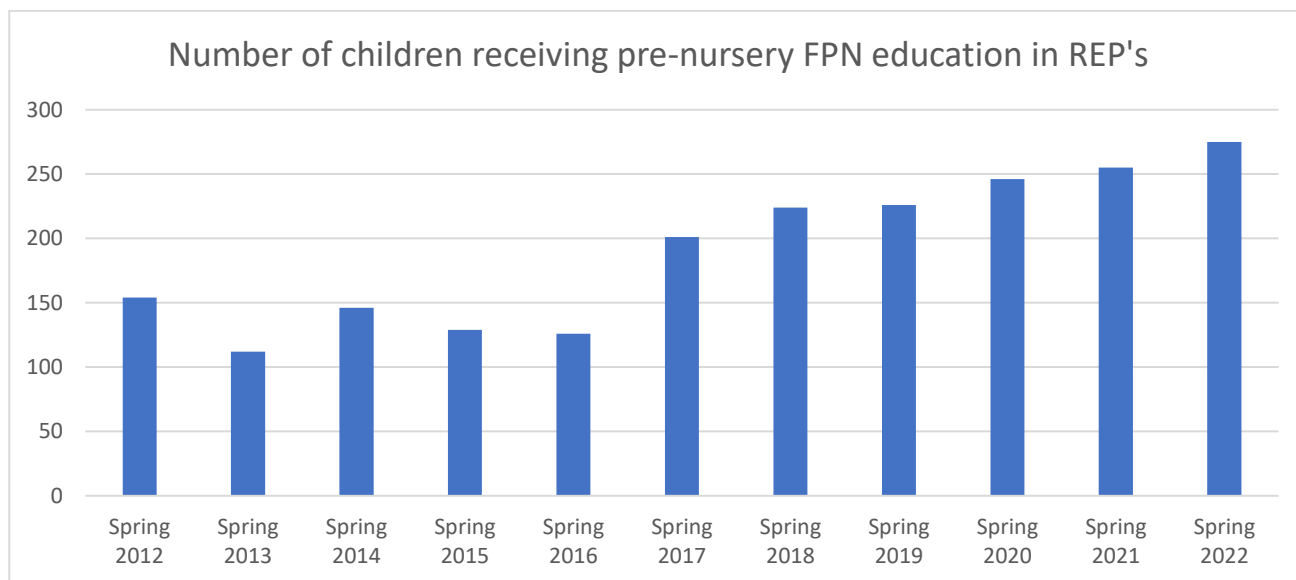
With the introduction of Curriculum for Wales and the Non Maintained Settings Curriculum, practitioners in settings have been familiarising themselves with new documentation, sourcing and attending appropriate training and developing their provisions accordingly.

There are currently two Early Years Advisory Teachers (EYAT's) supporting REP's to ensure principles of the Foundation Phase / Curriculum for Wales are implemented to meet Estyn standards. The Council has supported settings with investment in a wealth of authentic and natural resources and have been developing their environments to reflect current principles and pedagogy in line with curriculum reform.

Five Welsh medium REP's are supported and advised by the Foundation Phase leaders from their feeder primary school. A pilot project was undertaken at the time of the last CSA report in 2017. The aim was to improve transition from Welsh medium REP's to Welsh medium primary schools and to forge closer working relationships. Whilst the pilot did achieve these aims, some of the schools found it difficult to release staff regularly so that the level of support could be maintained. These five REP's continue to be supported by three Welsh medium schools, but the other REP's, and new ones recruited since that time, are now supported by the EYAT's. The pilot did raise awareness and partnership working for all REP's and schools involved and has contributed to support closer working relationships.

Pre-nursery FPN applications

Applications for pre-nursery FPN education are now online, via the School Admissions portal. This, along with the introduction of the Childcare Offer for Wales in 2017, has seen an increase in numbers of children accessing their pre-nursery FPN in non-maintained REP's. Online applications has enabled a more detailed understanding of demand for pre-nursery and nursery FPN places. It has also resulted in places being offered to many more children if their first or second preferences are not available.



Respondents to parent survey

83% of respondents who have children aged 3 or 4 years old access FPN education in RCT schools or REP's (254). Three respondents access their FPN education in other Local Authorities. 4.2% of respondents state that their child will start accessing this soon (13).

8.8% of respondents do not access FPN education places (27). Few gave reasons for this, but some of the text responses included the following reasons:

- *My child wasn't ready, we felt, to start the 'big' school so has returned to private nursery*
- *I am a stay at home mum, so no need to take a funded place for my 3 year old*

2.9% were not sure if their child was accessing this entitlement (9). This is a lower figure than in the last CSA report. This may suggest that awareness amongst parents of FPN education entitlement has increased in the last five years, possibly due to the development of the Childcare Offer for Wales and its intrinsic link to FPN education provision. The introduction of online applications as for other year group admissions has probably also had a positive effect.

Strengths

- Increased number of REP's in areas of identified need
- Centralised online application process

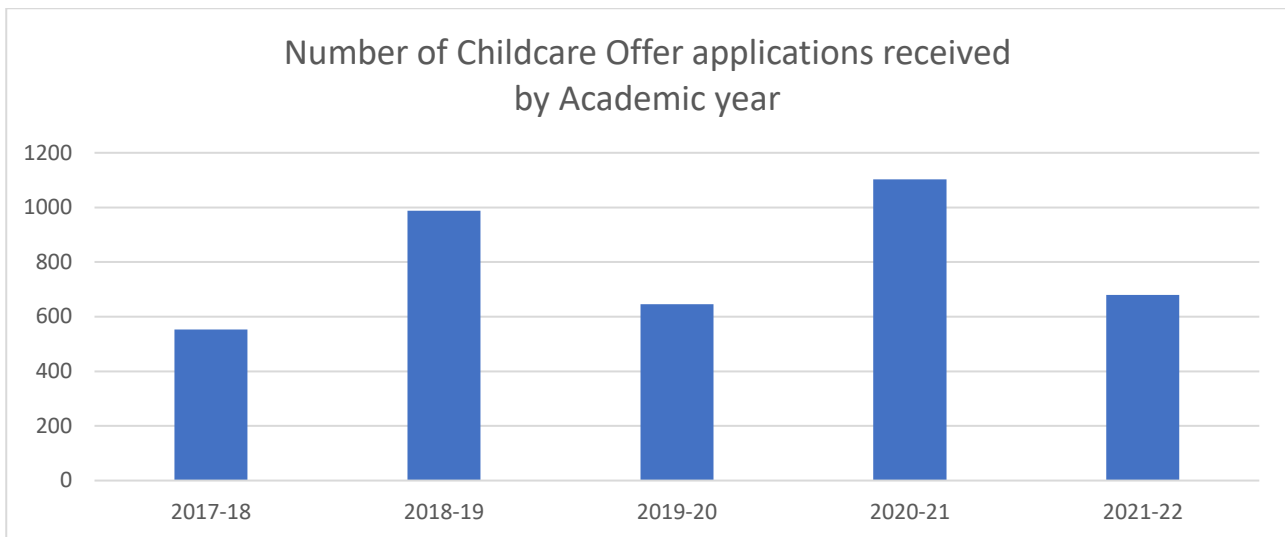
Weaknesses

- Some geographical gaps in number of pre-nursery places available remain
- Application deadlines and processes can be confusing for parents

Childcare Offer for Wales

The Childcare Offer for Wales was introduced in September 2017. It offers working parents of 3 and 4 year olds up to 30 hours per week of combined FPN education and additional funded childcare for 48 weeks a year. It was initially launched in seven pilot Local Authorities, of which RCT was one. Since that date, it has been rolled out across Wales. RCT administers the Offer on behalf of Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend County Borough Councils.

The graph below illustrates the number of applications received since the scheme launched in 2017. It should be noted that the Offer was only in pilot areas in 2017-18 and not available throughout RCT. The figures for 2019-20 are distorted as the Offer was suspended from April to July 2020 due to the pandemic and therefore no applications were received during these months. And the 2021-22 figures are up to the date the report was written and so are only from September 2021 to March 2022 and do not cover the full academic year.



Welsh Government are currently developing a national online system for parent applications and childcare provider claims. This will replace the different systems currently used by each Delivery Authority.

Respondents to parent survey

60.6% of respondents who are eligible for the Childcare Offer access the funded childcare in RCT settings (185). Two respondents access their funded childcare in other Local Authorities.

10.4% of those who have 3 and 4 year olds are not accessing the Childcare Offer but may do so soon or in the future (32) whilst 14.4% have no plans to access it (44). Of those that choose not to, some of the text responses included the following reasons:

- *No one within my area that had space available*
- *There isn't any that can do a drop off/pick up to my daughters school*
- *Childcare with schooling doesn't fit around the new 'work week'*
- *It will affect childcare payment for my under 2 year old*
- *I have to pay as I am a student*
- *Holiday provision would be helpful but most holiday clubs (not nurseries or playgroups) are for children 5 and above. Rarely anything for 4 year olds and under*

Respondents that noted there was no suitable wraparound care were from several areas of RCT. Most notable were those in North East Taf Ely, particularly Cilfynydd and Rhondda wards. Officers have already identified that there is a potential gap in these areas for wraparound care and pick up/drop off services for nursery aged children.

12 respondents stated that they do not access the Childcare Offer due to their child being full time in school. Eligible children are, however, able to access up to 30 hours per week of funded childcare in 9 of the 13 school holiday weeks. This suggests that marketing of the Offer needs to be reviewed and a focus put on emphasising this aspect of the eligibility. The Childcare Offer team continue to review their marketing strategy but will put renewed focus on this aspect in future.

84.8% stated that they wish to access the Childcare Offer when their child becomes eligible (146). 9.3% stated that they did not wish to assess the Offer when their child becomes eligible or were not sure (16). Reasons included:

- *Hours won't work with my working hours*
- *Child will be in full time education then so it's a bit pointless*
- *I would not sure what it is*
- *Not working*

From the comments it seems that parents are unaware that children in full time education can access the holiday element of the Childcare Offer up to the September following their 4th birthday. This is promoted now, but it seems that additional work is required to emphasise this element of the Offer to parents.

Continue to promote the Childcare Offer, emphasising the holiday element

Strengths

- Online application process
- Wide range of providers delivering the scheme

Weaknesses

- Parents are still unclear on the holiday entitlement element of the Offer
- Lack of wraparound services in North East Taf Ely, North Rhondda and South Rhondda.

Flying Start

As of December 2021, there were 24 commissioned Flying Start settings, 9 Approved Suppliers and five LA run settings. Of the 24 commissioned settings, nine deliver their service through the medium of Welsh. The demand for more Welsh medium Flying Start places has resulted in a new tendering process to attract more Welsh medium settings. This is currently underway and 13 Welsh settings have already become registered Flying Start providers and 6 English where there was a need for additional provision. The new approved provider list enables settings to apply to join at any time, therefore it is anticipated that this number will increase. A further procurement exercise for English medium settings will be completed later in 2022.

The expansion of Flying Start to eventually include all two year olds in Wales will have a significant impact on the need to recruit additional settings to deliver Flying Start so the new tendering process is timely and likely to support this.

The chart below indicates the area and childcare type of Flying Start services delivered in commissioned settings, approved suppliers or LA run settings. Childminders do also deliver Flying Start and there are currently nine childminders caring for funded children.

Flying Start: Commissioned settings Approved Suppliers LA run settings	English medium Sessional care	Welsh medium Sessional care	English medium Full day care	Welsh medium Full day care
North Cynon	1	0	3	0
South Cynon	2	0	3	1
North Rhondda	3	0	4	2
South Rhondda	4	0	1	1
North East Taf Ely	1	0	1	1
South East Taf Ely	0	0	3	2
South West Taf Ely	1	1	2	1
Totals	12	1	17	8

During 2021, 1,353 children were eligible for Flying Start. Despite 100% of eligible children being offered a place, only 65% accessed their place (884). This is a decrease on previous years which has been due to the COVID pandemic, with concerns from families about sending their children to childcare settings, along with children and families having to self-isolate. The settings themselves have gone through periods of closure in line with government guidelines, and as a result of positive cases within the settings. Restrictions on home visits has also impacted families' awareness of their Flying Start eligibility.

Resilient Families Service

The Resilient Families Services (RFS) follows a needs based model to fund childcare spaces for families that fall outside of the Flying Start eligible postcodes and are identified as in need of family support which may include childcare. The following table shows the number of RFS placements funded by Flying Start for 2021.

Term	Funded Sessional care placements	English medium settings	Welsh medium settings	Childminders
Spring term Jan-Mar 2021	24	11	6	0
Summer term Apr-Jul 2021	33	12	8	1
Autumn term Sep-Dec 2021	50	17	7	2
Totals	107	40	21	3

Following the end of C-CAS funding in August 2020, RFS continued with their needs based model to identify families in most need of childcare support. An additional 107 children were offered a childcare placement in 2021, to support their social and emotional development as well as meeting the needs of the whole family.

As expected, following the COVID-19 pandemic, families identified as in need of support has increased. 2022 has seen a further increase in need, with 62 families currently identified as in need of support.

Respondents to parent survey

9.7% of respondents who have children aged 2 or 3 years old access Flying Start childcare (36), with 77.4% stating that they don't access Flying Start (285) and 4.6% not sure (17).

Of those that do not access Flying Start childcare, 78 said it was because they do not live in a Flying Start postcode area. These comments were from families located across RCT. The most comments were from families in South West Taf Ely (16), North Cynon (13) and South Rhondda (12).

Some other text responses included the following reasons for not accessing Flying Start childcare:

- *Having trouble with registration due to house move and health visitor not helpful*
- *I don't know what this is*
- *I wasn't able to use it in a nursery he had been in since 9 months of age, in the next village. It wouldn't have been fair to move him for 1 year then move him again for school*
- *Not enough information didn't respond to emails. My current childcare doesn't offer it*
- *There's not a Welsh provision close enough to home to access it*

Strengths

- In addition to offering Flying Start to eligible families (based on geographical eligibility) as part of their Early Years Transformation programme RCT are currently piloting a hybrid model which also funds childcare for families on a needs-based model, utilising vacant Flying Start places. The Council has seen an increase in referrals to Resilient Families Service following the pandemic and this can be seen in the increased number of children allocated an Outreach funded childcare placement.

Weaknesses

- Take up of Flying Start places during COVID is much lower than expected. A new online Flying Start childcare application process is currently in development which is expected to increase take up.
- Between March and October 2021 only 23 or 9.5% of new places were in Welsh medium settings which is a cause for concern. This is currently being reviewed as part of the childcare recommissioning process which aims to encourage additional settings to become approved providers and increase the geographical spread of Welsh settings which will hopefully increase take up.

Section 15: Workforce Development and Training

The childcare sector in RCT benefits from highly skilled, qualified staff. Work continues to support childcare practitioners to achieve higher qualifications and ensure that regular CPD is encouraged and supported. The Council offers a range of funded mandatory and CPD training to all childcare staff. Changes to qualification requirements in the National Minimum Standards has also placed more emphasis on ensuring a suitably qualified workforce.

Ensure practitioners have access to relevant statutory and CPD training opportunities

Supporting settings to improve their practice beyond that required in the CIW National Minimum Standards is also a key priority for the Council.

Improve the quality of childcare settings beyond the CIW National Minimum Standards

For the purposes of this report, data on current qualifications and training of the childcare workforce has been taken from the SASS return data submitted by childcare providers in September 2021. The analysis is based on the 87% of providers in RCT who completed this data return.

The breakdown below states the highest level of qualification held by staff members by childcare providers of all types. 57.2% of practitioners hold a Level 3 qualification (439). This is the minimum level of qualification for staff that manage or lead childcare settings, as set out in the National Minimum Standards.

Work has been ongoing over recent years, particularly amongst Flying Start settings, to ensure that setting leaders are qualified at NVQ Level 4 or QCF Diploma Level 5. 26.3% of practitioners within RCT state that they now hold a Level 5 qualification (202).

Childminder

Childcare qualifications

Amongst CIW registered childminders in RCT the level and percentage of childcare qualifications is as listed below:

Qualification	Number	%
CCLD-Level 2	20	21.7%
CCLD-Level 3	52	56.5%
CCLD-Level 5	9	9.7%
Qualification not listed in SASS relevant to childcare	39	42.3%
None of the qualifications listed	20	21.7%

Of the above childminders 35.8% reported that they hold a relevant CYPOP5 or IHC/PCP qualification (33). However, these pre-registration courses are mandatory in order to register as a childminder in Wales, it is likely that providers submitted their data incorrectly when completing their SASS. We would expect 100% of registered Childminders across RCT to hold these qualifications.

At the time of the SASS return, 0% of childminders stated that they were working towards a Level 2 or Level 3 qualification and 3.2% towards Level 5 (3). It was reported that 2.1% of childminders were working towards qualifications relevant to childcare but not listed in SASS (2), whilst 3.2% were working towards none of the qualifications listed. Of these childminders 29% were unsure if themselves or assistants were working towards any of the listed qualifications in the SASS data report (18).

Play qualifications

Amongst childminders, the play qualifications data is listed below:

Qualification	Number	%
Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2APP)	1	1%
Level 2 Diploma in Playwork	1	1%
Level 2 Diploma Playwork; Principles into Practice (P3) - comprises award, certificate and diploma	0	0%
Level 3 Award in Managing a Holiday Play Scheme	0	0%
Level 3 Award in Transition to Playwork from Early Years	4	4.3%
Level 3 Diploma Playwork	2	2.1%
Level 3 Diploma Playwork; Principles into Practice (P3) – comprises award, certificate and diploma	0	0%
Level 5 Diploma in Playwork	1	1%
Qualification relevant to play, but not listed	10	10.8%
Play Practitioners with no formal qualifications	6	6.5%
Total number of staff who are play practitioners	25	27.1%

Childminding staff / Assistants' qualifications

SASS data suggests that childminding staff/assistants held the following qualifications:

Qualification	Number	%
CCLD-Level 2	2	2.2%
CCLD-Level 3	33	37.5%
CCLD-Level 5	5	5.6%
Qualification not listed in SASS	15	17%
No formal Childcare Qualifications	13	14.7%
Number of Childcare Practitioners	68	77%

Other training that childminders and assistants have been offered or undertaken in the past year include:

- Food Hygiene Level 2 (33)
- Paediatric First Aid Training Level 3 (31)
- Safeguarding Training Level 3 (24)
- Health and Safety Training (24)
- Managing Challenging Behaviour (9)
- Manual Handling Training (8)
- Covid Born Babies (6)
- Supporting children through ACES (6)
- Positive Attachments Training (5)
- Fire Warden Training (3)

Full day care

Childcare qualifications

Amongst Full day care providers, the data is listed below. This is based on 589 staff members:

Qualification	Number	%
CCLD-Level 2	27	4.5%
CCLD-Level 3	302	51.2%
CCLD-Level 5	165	28%
Relevant Childcare qualification not listed in SASS	22	22.3%
No formal Childcare Qualifications	68	11.5%
Number of Childcare Practitioners	584	99.1%

No Full day care providers completed information on staff working towards childcare qualifications and therefore we are unable to report any data related to this topic.

Play qualifications

Amongst Full day care providers, the play qualifications data is listed below:

Qualification	Number	%
Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2APP)	9	1.5%
Level 2 Diploma in Playwork	12	2%
Level 2 Diploma Playwork; Principles into Practice (P3) - comprises award, certificate and diploma	0	0%
Level 3 Award in Managing a Holiday Play Scheme	0	0%
Level 3 Award in Transition to Playwork from Early Years	28	4.7%
Level 3 Diploma Playwork	26	4.4%
Level 3 Diploma Playwork; Principles into Practice (P3) – comprises award, certificate and diploma	8	1.3%
Level 5 Diploma in Playwork	0	0%
Qualification relevant to play, but not listed	0	0%
Play Practitioners with no formal qualifications	108	18.3%
Total number of staff who are play practitioners	191	32.4%

No Full day care provider completed information on staff working towards play qualifications and therefore we are unable to report any data related to this topic.

Other training that full day care staff have undertaken in the past year include:

- Food Hygiene Level 2 (69)
- Paediatric First Aid Training Level 3 (43)
- Manual Handling Training (26)
- Safeguarding Training Level 3 (23)
- Health and Safety Training (18)
- Managing Challenging Behaviour (14)
- Positive Attachments Training (8)
- Covid Born Babies (7)
- Fire Warden Training (7)

- Supporting children through ACES (1)

Sessional care

Childcare qualifications

Amongst Sessional care providers, the data is listed below. This is based on 117 staff members:

Qualification	Number	%
CCLD-Level 2	7	5.9%
CCLD-Level 3	72	61.5%
CCLD-Level 5	24	20.5%
Relevant Childcare qualification not listed in SASS	8	6.8%
No formal Childcare Qualifications	5	4.2%
Number of Childcare Practitioners	116	99.1%

No Sessional care provider completed information on staff working towards childcare qualifications and therefore we are unable to report any data related to this topic.

Play qualifications

Amongst Sessional care providers, the play qualifications data is listed below:

Qualification	Number	%
Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2APP)	1	0.8%
Level 2 Diploma in Playwork	4	3.4%
Level 2 Diploma Playwork; Principles into Practice (P3) - comprises award, certificate and diploma	0	0%
Level 3 Award in Managing a Holiday Play Scheme	3	2.5%
Level 3 Award in Transition to Playwork from Early Years	8	6.8%
Level 3 Diploma Playwork	2	4.4%
Level 3 Diploma Playwork; Principles into Practice (P3) – comprises award, certificate and diploma	8	6.8%
Level 5 Diploma in Playwork	0	0%
Qualification relevant to play, but not listed	6	5.1%
Play Practitioners with no formal qualifications	9	7.6%
Total number of staff who are play practitioners	35	29.9%

No Sessional care provider completed information on staff working towards play qualifications and therefore we are unable to report any data related to this topic.

Other training that full day care staff have undertaken in the past year include:

- Food Hygiene Level 2 (32)
- Health and Safety Training (20)
- Paediatric First Aid Training Level 3 (13)
- Safeguarding Training Level 3 (10)
- Managing Challenging Behaviour (6)
- Manual Handling Training (6)

- Supporting children through ACES (2)
- Positive Attachments Training (1)
- Covid Born Babies (0)
- Fire Warden Training (0)

Out of school care

Childcare qualifications

Amongst Out of school care providers, the data is listed below. This is based on 33 staff members:

Qualification	Number	%
CCLD-Level 2	3	9%
CCLD-Level 3	13	39.3%
CCLD-Level 5	4	12.1%
Relevant Childcare qualification not listed in SASS	7	21.2%
No formal Childcare Qualifications	6	18.1%
Number of Childcare Practitioners	33	100%

No Out of school care provider completed information on staff working towards childcare qualifications and therefore we are unable to report any data related to this topic.

Play qualifications

Amongst Out of school care providers, the play qualifications data is listed below:

Qualification	Number	%
Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2APP)	7	21.2%
Level 2 Diploma in Playwork	6	18.1%
Level 2 Diploma Playwork; Principles into Practice (P3) - comprises award, certificate and diploma	0	0%
Level 3 Award in Managing a Holiday Play Scheme	0	0%
Level 3 Award in Transition to Playwork from Early Years	1	3%
Level 3 Diploma Playwork	9	27.2%
Level 3 Diploma Playwork; Principles into Practice (P3) – comprises award, certificate and diploma	0	0%
Level 5 Diploma in Playwork	0	0%
Qualification relevant to play, but not listed	2	6%
Play Practitioners with no formal qualifications	6	18.1%
Total number of staff who are play practitioners	31	93.9%

No Out of school care provider completed information on staff working towards Play qualifications and therefore we are unable to report any data related to this topic.

Other training that Out of School care childcare staff have undertaken in the past year include:

- Food Hygiene Level 2 (9)
- Paediatric First Aid Training Level 3 (6)

- Safeguarding Training Level 3 (6)
- Health and Safety Training (5)
- Manual Handling Training (3)
- Managing Challenging Behaviour (2)
- Supporting children through ACES (1)
- Covid Born Babies (0)
- Positive Attachments Training (0)
- Fire Warden Training (0)

Open access play

Childcare qualifications

Amongst Open access play providers, the data is listed below. This is based on 33 staff members:

Qualification	Number	%
CCLD-Level 2	0	0%
CCLD-Level 3	7	21.2%
CCLD-Level 5	2	6%
Relevant Childcare qualification not listed in SASS	8	24.2%
No formal Childcare Qualifications	0	0%
Number of Childcare Practitioners	17	51.5%

No Open access play provider completed information on staff working towards childcare qualifications and therefore we are unable to report any data related to this topic.

Play qualifications

Amongst Open access play providers, the play qualifications data is listed below:

Qualification	Number	%
Level 2 Award in Playwork Practice (L2APP)	14	42.4%
Level 2 Diploma in Playwork	4	12.1%
Level 2 Diploma Playwork; Principles into Practice (P3) - comprises award, certificate and diploma	0	0%
Level 3 Award in Managing a Holiday Play Scheme	3	9%
Level 3 Award in Transition to Playwork from Early Years	4	12.1%
Level 3 Diploma Playwork	1	3%
Level 3 Diploma Playwork; Principles into Practice (P3) – comprises award, certificate and diploma	4	12.1%
Level 5 Diploma in Playwork	0	0%
Qualification relevant to play, but not listed	3	9%
Play Practitioners with no formal qualifications	0	0%
Total number of staff who are play practitioners	33	100%

No Open access play provider completed information on staff working towards Play qualifications and therefore we are unable to report any data related to this topic.

Additional workforce development

Funding from the Welsh Government Children & Communities Grant (CCG) is used to provide funded training opportunities for the universal childcare sector in RCT. Over the past year, this has included:

- Covid born babies
- Fire Warden Training
- Managing challenging behaviour
- Manual handling
- Positive attachments
- Supporting children through ACES

In addition to this, the childcare development team work in partnership with agencies, such as Adult Learning Wales, Clybiau Plant Cymru and Apprenticeship training companies to signpost providers to other funded courses such as:

- CCPLD Level 2
- CCPLD Level 3
- Level 3 transition to Playwork
- Any relevant Play qualifications

Flying Start training / workforce development

Flying Start childcare settings can access additional training. Consultation with Flying Start settings identified the need for training to support speech delay, managing challenging behaviour and extending children's learning, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Practitioners have benefited from Schemas training, Makaton, Jabadao (physical movement) and discovery sessions with the Curiosity Approach. The RCT Flying Start Quality Assurance also deliver training on specific identified needs as and when required.

Flying Start childcare providers are required to adhere to the Flying Start Training Guidance and ensure all training identified on the Flying Start Training Matrix is undertaken in accordance with the roles and responsibilities of the childcare practitioner. Practitioners in a senior position must hold a relevant and recognised qualification at Level 4/5 as stated in Social Care Wales (SCW) list of required qualifications to work within Flying Start Childcare. Flying Start childcare practitioners must hold a recognised qualification at Level 3. Termly training audits are undertaken with all Flying Start settings to identify statutory training requirements. Quality Assurance visits are carried out where training requirements are identified and are then highlighted in the settings development plans.

Registered Education Providers training / workforce development

Funding for training is available for REP's via the Welsh Government RRRS (Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards) grant, the PDG (Pupil Development Grant) and the EIG (Education Improvement Grant). Training offered during the last year is similar to that offered to Flying Start settings (see above). In addition, REP's have also benefited from block play training and resources, photography training with resources, Attention Autism training as well as mandatory training such as Safeguarding, Fire Marshall, First Aid and Health & Safety training.

The Early Years Advisory Teachers regularly review the training needs of REP's to ensure that learning is up to date. Settings are supported on an individual needs basis as well as consideration for local and national priorities on a whole sector basis. Collaboration with

colleagues across Wales ensures that equity and consistency is provided in terms of provision.

The settings are supported with curriculum reform with training such as responsive planning, schemas, physical literacy and Foundation Phase modules. Some settings were involved in the testing phase for the NMS curriculum and individual practitioners were part of the co-construction of the new curriculum. Early Years Advisory Teachers work in close collaboration with Cwlwm partners and signpost settings to relevant training offered through these organisations.

Commissioned play providers

Funding is available for commissioned play providers via the Community Wellbeing and Resilience Team in Children's Services. Regular workforce audits identify additional training required by play practitioners. This includes statutory training, such as Safeguarding, First Aid at Work and Food Hygiene. Training on offer during the last twelve months has also included:

- Active Listening
- Additional Learning Needs
- Bereavement Training
- Building Resilience
- Course on Children's play specific to your job role
- Emotion Coaching
- Fire Warden
- Makaton
- Managing Challenging Behaviour
- Manual Handling
- Mental Health First Aid
- Play Therapy
- Resilience, Self-Assessment and Action Plan Building
- Resource Planning
- Risk Assessment
- Sex and sexuality
- Substance misuse
- Understanding Children's Play

Section 16: Action Plan

Priority	Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale	
1 – Potential unmet demand – childcare types, location, ages						
1.1	Encourage existing Out of school care providers to offer holiday care	<p>Conduct targeted consultation with parents to determine exact demand</p> <p>Engage with existing OOS providers to identify possible barriers to extending services and support to overcome these where possible</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>EYCPDP</p>	<p>Lack of parent/carer responses to consultations</p> <p>Parent/carer stating service is required at the time of survey completion. when service is provided not taking it up</p> <p>Expansion grants limited to offer financial support for sustainability</p> <p>Lack of suitably qualified staff/ low staffing in workforce</p>	<p>Sufficient holiday care provision to meet demand</p> <p>Holiday clubs utilised and sustainable</p> <p>Increase in children accessing holiday care</p> <p>Providers engaging with the Childcare Team to consider expanding their services collaboratively</p>	<p>Consultation in first two identified areas by October 2022</p> <p>Local actions from consultation identified by December 2022</p>

Priority	Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale	
			Providers not wishing to expand their service			
1.2	Explore demand for ad hoc, flexible care and/or crèche facilities	<p>Targeted consultations with parent/carers particularly those who require atypical hours</p> <p>Engage with providers to discuss issues, barriers, implementation</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>Childcare providers</p> <p>EYCPDP</p>	<p>Unreliable usage may cause sustainability issues for providers.</p> <p>Due to unreliable hours, there may be issues with retaining staff</p>	<p>Sufficient ad hoc / flexible provision to meet demand</p>	<p>Consultation with parents by March 2023</p> <p>Engage with providers by June 2023</p>
1.3	<p>Investigate demand for additional childminders in all areas of RCT, but particularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ North Cynon (Hirwaun and Rhigos) ○ South Cynon (Abercynon and Mountain Ash West) ○ North Rhondda (Ferndale and Treorchy) ○ South Rhondda (all wards) ○ North East Taf Ely (Treforest) 	<p>Engage with existing childminder's to see where additional places may be needed i.e. where the highest waiting lists are</p> <p>Promotion events / briefing sessions in areas of identified need to attract potential new childminders</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>EYCPDP</p>	<p>Childminders may not be able to offer hours needed for families in the area</p> <p>Lack of interest in becoming a childminder</p> <p>Concerns for potential new childminders around</p>	<p>Sufficient amount of childminders in all areas of RCT to cater for identified needs</p> <p>Registration and CIW applications completed in a timely manner in readiness for commencement of childminding business</p>	<p>Promotion events / briefing sessions in 1st identified area in autumn 2022</p> <p>2nd identified area in spring 2023</p>

Priority	Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ South East Taf Ely (Rhydyfelin/Central Ilan) ○ South West Taf Ely (Gilfach Goch, Llanharan and Tonyrefail East) 		<p>sustainability of their business</p> <p>Timescales for completing pre-registration and CIW application is lengthy. May deter some from progressing</p>	More queries received by the childcare team for those wishing to become a childminder and accessing funding	
1.4	Investigate demand for additional out of school care services (after school and holiday) in all areas of RCT	<p>Parent/Carer consultation to determine exact demand</p> <p>Consult with existing OOS providers to see if they have identified a need</p> <p>Engage with existing OOS providers to expand their service where demand is identified</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>EYCPDP</p>	<p>Parents/carers working patterns have changed and may no longer need OOS services</p> <p>Lack of suitably qualified staff</p> <p>Issues with staff retainment</p> <p>Lack of parent/carers responses to consultation</p>	<p>Sufficient OOS provision to meet need and demand</p> <p>Consultation in first two identified areas by end October 2022</p> <p>Local actions identified by end December 2022</p>

Priority	Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale
1.5	<p>Investigate demand for additional full day care in North East Taf Ely</p> <p>Consult with parents / carers in identified area to determine need</p> <p>Consult with local full day care provision to assess their current occupancy and determine if expansion would be a possibility</p> <p>Identify new providers/venue in the area if need for this provision is confirmed</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>EYCPDP</p> <p>FIS</p>	<p>Lack of parent/carer responses to consultations</p> <p>Parent/carer stating service is required at the time of survey completion. when service is provided not taking it up</p> <p>Expansion grants limited to offer financial support for sustainability</p> <p>Lack of suitably qualified staff/ low staffing in workforce</p> <p>Current providers not wishing to expand their service</p>	<p>New provider and provision identified in the area to offer full day care and meet demand</p> <p>Availability of suitably qualified staff</p> <p>Expansion of current services to meet identified demand</p>	By March 2023

Priority	Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale	
1.6	<p>Monitor impact of housing developments on childcare needs, particularly in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Llanilid (Brynna) ○ Llantwit Fardre ○ Penygraig 	<p>Work in consultation with Planning Department</p> <p>Support current childcare provision in the area with expansion</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>Planning Department</p> <p>EYCPDP</p>	<p>Growth may exceed the places available</p> <p>May be unable to get enough childcare spaces registered to meet demand</p>	<p>Sufficient childcare spaces to meet demand in current childcare establishments</p> <p>Expansion of current childcare provision in identified areas of need</p> <p>Support available to set up new provisions in areas of demand</p> <p>Positive working relationships with planning to identify childcare needs i.e., working groups</p>	<p>Ongoing – review every 6 months. 1st review December 2022</p>
1.7	<p>Support unregistered Sessional care providers to register with CIW and investigate demand for additional Sessional care services in:</p>	<p>Engage with unregistered settings to gauge their interest in becoming registered</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>FIS</p>	<p>Unregistered settings may not be able to register due to issues with the venue.</p>	<p>Existing unregistered settings become registered with CIW.</p>	<p>Mapping of unregistered settings by October 2022</p>

Priority	Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ North Cynon ○ South Cynon ○ North Rhondda ○ South Rhondda 	<p>Liaise with FIS to gather unregistered setting details</p> <p>Complete parent/carer consultations to establish demand for sessional care</p>	EYCPDP	<p>Settings may not be able to register due to access restrictions if they are in a shared venue.</p> <p>Settings unwilling to engage with the team and to register.</p> <p>Due to the unregistered nature the LA may not be aware of all unregistered settings.</p>	<p>Unregistered settings engaging co-operatively with RCT Childcare Team to discuss barriers to registration</p>	<p>Individual contacts made by January 2023</p> <p>Support plans put in place for those who wish to register by March 2022</p> <p>Ongoing communication with those who do not wish to register</p>	
2 – Welsh medium childcare provision						
2.1	Engage with, and support, unregistered Welsh medium Out of school care providers to register with CIW and extend services to provide holiday care in areas of identified demand	<p>Make contact with unregistered Welsh Medium settings to become CIW registered</p> <p>Work with partners to identify needs</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>Menter Iaith</p> <p>EYCPDP</p> <p>FIS</p>	<p>Welsh settings wishing to remain unregistered provision</p> <p>Staff qualifications or venue limitations prevent registration</p>	<p>Welsh medium settings become registered with CIW</p> <p>Welsh settings offering holiday care in areas of identified demand</p>	<p>Individual contacts made by January 2023</p> <p>Support plans put in place for those who wish to register by March 2023</p>

Priority	Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale	
	Identify support packages to enable registration				Ongoing communication with those who do not wish to register	
2.2	Explore the demand for new Cylchoedd Meithrin in geographical areas identified via the mapping exercise	Consult with parents/carers in areas identified via the mapping exercise Work in partnership with Mudiad Meithrin to assess demand	Childcare development team Mudiad Meithrin EYCPDP FIS	Lack of providers willing to open new settings Lack of suitable venues in areas of demand Lack of responses to parent/carer surveys	New Cylchoedd Meithrin opened in areas of identified need Suitable venues identified in areas of need via the mapping exercise	Consultation in first identified area by March 2023 Local actions from consultation identified by May 2023
2.3	Investigate possible gaps in Welsh medium Sessional and Full day care in South Rhondda	Consult with parents / carers in identified areas to assess demand Engage with current Welsh Medium settings in area	Childcare development team Mudiad Meithrin EYCPDP FIS	Lack of responses to parent/carer surveys Limited demand for Welsh medium day care in the area	Sufficient Welsh medium childcare in the area to meet demand Provider in agreement to set up a new Welsh medium provision in the area	Ongoing

Priority	Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale
	Identify opportunities for expansion		Limited uptake on providers wishing to set up provision	Positive working relationships with Mudiad Meithrin to fill gaps in provision	
2.4	Offer support and training to non-confident Welsh speakers to encourage use of the Welsh language in their settings and to promote themselves as Welsh medium or bilingual settings.	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>EYCPDP</p> <p>Training providers</p> <p>Social Care Wales</p>	<p>Lack of take up on training offered</p> <p>Due to staffing issues settings not having time to attend training</p> <p>Availability of courses at suitable times for childcare workforce</p> <p>Lack of suitable training to commission in house</p>	<p>Settings taking up Welsh language training and utilising this in their settings</p> <p>Staff are more confident in their ability to speak Welsh and promote themselves as Welsh Medium or bilingual settings</p>	Ongoing – initial mapping of existing available training autumn 2022
2.5	Promote the Active Offer to settings and encourage participation	Childcare development team	Childcare providers not engaging in training to	Settings offering the Welsh language active offer	Ongoing

Priority	Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale	
	Link providers to available Welsh language training	Mudiad Meithrin EYCPDP Social Care Wales	administer the active offer Training in Welsh language not suitable for the workload of the childcare sector	Settings engaging in training to upskill their Welsh language competency		
2.6	Promotion campaign to attract more Welsh speaking childminders	Work in partnership with Welsh language partners to promote childminding as a career Work in partnership with PACEY Cymru to identify if schemes are already in place to attract Welsh speaking childminders and build into a local promotion campaign Engage with childminders to identify any that are able to speak Welsh but do not promote themselves as Welsh speaking	Childcare development team Mudiad Meithrin PACEY Cymru FIS	Concerns for potential new childminders around sustainability of their business Timescales for completing pre-registration and CIW application is lengthy. May deter some from progressing. Lack of interest in becoming a Childminder	More childminders become registered as offering their service bilingually or in Welsh	Ongoing

Priority	Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale	
2.7	Support the aims of the WESP to increase transition rates from Welsh medium childcare to Welsh medium education	<p>Collate data on transition rates into Welsh medium nursery classes</p> <p>Engage with Welsh medium settings to discuss transition information / barriers / issues</p> <p>Engage with schools to improve links with feeder childcare settings</p>	<p>Childcare team</p> <p>WM settings / schools</p> <p>WESP group</p> <p>EYCPDP</p>	<p>Numbers entering Welsh medium education do not increase in line with WESP targets</p> <p>Not able to overcome any identified barriers</p>	<p>Transition rates from Welsh medium childcare to Welsh Medium education increase</p>	<p>Data analysis by December 2022</p> <p>Engagement with settings / schools</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
3 – Affordability of childcare						
3.1	Continue to promote the financial benefits of the Childcare Offer, particularly emphasising the holiday entitlement	<p>Promote Childcare Offer to parents / cares during public events such as teddy bears picnic, library, leisure centre and Parent and Toddler visits</p> <p>Ensure information on website is accurate, kept up to date and promoted</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>Childcare Offer Team</p> <p>FIS</p> <p>Childcare providers</p>	<p>Providers passing on inaccurate information to parents</p> <p>Parents continue to be unclear about eligibility and benefits of the Childcare Offer</p>	<p>More Childcare Offer spaces available for parents/carers</p> <p>More provider selection for parents/carers</p> <p>Holiday entitlement is accessed and utilised effectively</p>	<p>Initial promotion autumn 2022 in line with roll out of new national system</p> <p>Review every 3 months thereafter</p>

Priority		Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale
		<p>Encourage childcare provisions to advertise and promote Childcare Offer</p> <p>Engagement with local schools in RCT to promote Childcare Offer holiday entitlement for nursery children</p>		No increase in numbers applying for the Offer	Promotion events target parents with eligible 3-4 year olds and an increase in children accessing the Offer	
3.2	Support childcare providers to accept payment via the Tax Free Childcare scheme or employer based childcare vouchers	<p>Promotion of the benefits of becoming registered to offer the Tax Free Childcare scheme or employer based childcare vouchers</p> <p>Support sessions for providers to offer advice on registration to offer the identified schemes</p> <p>Work in partnership with FIS to advertise the schemes and promote to settings and parents</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>FIS</p> <p>Childcare providers</p> <p>EYCPDP</p>	<p>Settings not offering schemes such as Tax Free Childcare</p> <p>Settings unsure how to sign up to the schemes / unable to sign up</p>	<p>Increase in settings accepting payments via Tax Free Childcare or employer based childcare vouchers</p> <p>Settings accessing support and advice sessions on registration to the identified schemes</p>	<p>Initial promotion spring 2023</p> <p>Review every 3 months thereafter</p>

Priority	Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale
3.3	Work in partnership with FIS to promote childcare options and financial support to parents	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>Childcare Offer team</p> <p>EYCPDP</p> <p>FIS</p> <p>Jobcentre Plus / Lone Parent Advisors</p>	<p>Up to date information not uploaded onto FIS website or disseminated to childcare providers</p> <p>Links with Jobcentre Plus Lone Parent Advisors not maintained</p>	<p>Families aware of financial support available for childcare costs and know how to access it</p> <p>Parents/carers supported to enter employment and/or training</p> <p>Increase in quantity and type of information held on FIS website</p>	Review every 6 months
4 – Children with special educational needs or disability					
4.1	Explore demand for holiday care for children with additional needs or a disability	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>ALN EY Lead Officer</p> <p>EYCPDP</p>	<p>Barriers to accessing holiday care not addressed</p> <p>Families not aware of options available to them</p>	Children able to access holiday care that meets their needs	<p>Initial scoping exercise by December 2022</p> <p>Actions identified by spring 2023</p>

Priority	Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale
	<p>Engage with providers to extend holiday services</p> <p>Promote support available to families to access holiday childcare</p>	<p>Flying Start</p> <p>Play team</p>	<p>Identified funding streams not sustainable / not aligned to each other</p>		
4.2	<p>Identify opportunities to improve access to childcare and early years provision for children with additional learning and physical needs</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>Childcare providers</p> <p>EYCPDP</p> <p>FIS</p> <p>Flying Start training team</p>	<p>Cost of enhanced support inhibitive to settings / families</p> <p>Lack of suitably trained staff</p> <p>Lack of suitable provision within proximity of child's home</p>	<p>Families able to access childcare that meets the needs of their children</p> <p>Childcare settings are fully accessible to all children</p> <p>Staff have suitable training to meet the needs of the child</p>	<p>Initial scoping exercise by December 2022</p> <p>Actions identified by spring 2023</p>
4.3	<p>Increases awareness of ALNET and setting responsibilities to children and their families</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>EY ALN Lead Officer</p>	<p>Settings not aware of their responsibilities and therefore not offering correct level of support</p>	<p>All settings able to access training at times convenient to them</p>	<p>Promotion of training schedule ongoing</p>

Priority		Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale
		<p>Include information in childcare termly newsletter</p> <p>Signpost settings to additional information and support</p>	<p>Flying Start</p> <p>EY Advisory Teachers</p> <p>FIS</p>	Settings do not access training available	<p>All childcare staff fully aware of ALNET and their responsibilities</p> <p>Children supported and individual needs are met within childcare settings</p>	Awareness campaign / briefing sessions autumn 2022
4.4	Offer diversity training to childcare providers to improve inclusivity within settings	<p>Identify suitable training and commission identified courses</p> <p>Promote training to sector / evaluate impact</p> <p>Signpost settings to additional information and support</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>EY ALN Lead Officer</p> <p>Flying Start</p> <p>EY Advisory Teachers</p> <p>FIS</p>	<p>Settings do not access training available</p> <p>Issues still being reported</p>	<p>All settings able to access training at times convenient to them</p> <p>Children supported and individual needs are met within childcare settings</p>	Training identified and promoted by December 2022
5 – Support for the childcare sector						
5.1	Continue to offer grants to support new provision or expansion of existing provision, and to support	Support new developments and promote available grants to providers	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>EYCPDP</p>	Funding streams limited and cannot support all applications	All settings that apply for funding are supported	Ongoing

Priority		Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale
	settings experiencing severe financial hardship	Promote financial hardship grant to settings	FIS	Settings experiencing financial hardship may not want to engage with LA Despite offering financial hardship support some settings remaining unsustainable	Sustainability of settings safeguarded	
5.2	Encourage all settings to register with FIS and keep their accounts up to date	Reminders to update details with FIS included in all engagement events/literature with sector Benefits of registering with FIS promoted to new providers Make it a condition of funding/support that FIS accounts must be kept up to date	Childcare development team FIS EYCPDP	Settings do not update their details and their accounts become dormant Settings do not register with FIS	All settings are registered and up to date with FIS Childcare search facility in FIS is accurate and up to date	Review every 6 months in partnership with FIS
5.3	Improve engagement with nannies already on the	Contact all nannies in RCT that are currently on the register	Childcare development team	Nannies may be unwilling to	Nannies are engaged and	Initial contact by October 2022

Priority		Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale
	Home Childcare Provider scheme	Offer funded training opportunities and levels of support to nannies on register	FIS EYCPDP	engage with the team	supported by the Team Nannies on the register accessing funded training opportunities and improving their CPD	Support ongoing
5.4	Promote childminding as a career, clearly highlighting the support package on offer to prospective childminders	Plan timetable of engagement events/briefing sessions to promote childminding and the support package available Promotion campaign via social media and council website Work in partnership with PACEY Cymru to promote childminding and benefits/support on offer Maintain regular contact with individuals funded via the support package	Childcare development team FIS EYCPDP	Concerns for potential new childminders around sustainability of their business Timescales for completing pre-registration and CIW application is lengthy. May deter some from progressing Lack of interest in becoming a childminder Failure of funded individuals to	New childminders are attracted and take up the offer of support PACEY signposting potential learners residing in RCT to the Childcare Team for information and support More queries received from new potential childminders	Ongoing Aim for individuals to complete CIW registration within 8 months of initial briefing session Aim for 80% of those funded to achieve CIW registration

Priority	Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale
	Identify reasons for drop out from the support package		complete CIW registration		
5.5	Promote the benefits of accessing regulated childcare to a child's wellbeing and development	Childcare development team FIS EYCPDP	Parents/carers unaware of differences between registered and unregistered childcare Unregistered settings may be more attractive to parents/carers due to lower fees Registered settings may be at capacity and unable to accept new children CIW registered settings may not be available in areas of demand	All children have access to registered childcare Parents have information to better inform their childcare choices Parents understand benefits of using regulated childcare	Promotion of booklet ongoing Promotion campaign by March 2023

Priority	Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale
5.6	<p>Promote the Home Childcare Provider scheme to parents; promote the benefits of registration to them, and to existing nannies not on the scheme</p> <p>Develop promotion campaign via social media, website, flyers</p> <p>Aim to identify nannies in the LA not on the voluntary register</p> <p>Engage with them and the parents they work for to promote the benefits of registration</p> <p>Identify training/support for those that don't meet the criteria</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>EYCPDP</p> <p>FIS</p>	<p>Parents/carers unaware of the register and the benefit/safeguards it gives</p> <p>Existing nannies unaware of the register / don't meet the requirements</p>	<p>Parents have information to better inform their childcare choices</p> <p>Nannies able to access support to meet criteria for register</p> <p>All nannies in RCT registered and engaging with childcare development team</p>	<p>Promotion campaign by June 2023</p> <p>Individual engagement and support ongoing thereafter</p>
5.7	<p>Support sector to prepare for, and engage with, the rollout of Flying Start to all two year olds</p> <p>Suitable childcare providers identified and commissioned to deliver FS provision</p> <p>FS providers supported to achieve desired level of quality</p> <p>FS providers supported to adapt settings to ensure compliance with FS criteria</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>Flying Start</p> <p>EYCPDP</p>	<p>Lack of suitable childcare provision available to meet the needs of the FS programme in designated areas</p> <p>Commissioning process deter potential providers from tendering for contracts</p>	<p>Adequate levels of childcare available to meet growth in the number of FS areas</p> <p>High quality FS provision to support development of eligible children</p>	<p>Initial expansion by September 2022</p> <p>Support ongoing as programme is extended</p>

Priority	Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale	
	Offer tailored support to settings to expand services/spaces					
5.8	Support settings to market their services effectively, particularly unique selling points (USP's), such as additional languages, or flexible, ad hoc or atypical services.	Encourage all settings to register with FIS and keep their details up to date Develop campaign to highlight benefits of marketing their services effectively Commission marketing, social media and website training for sector	Childcare development team FIS EYCPDP	Settings do not register with FIS or keep their details up to date Settings do not engage with training or offers of support	Settings are aware of their USP's and market them effectively Settings regularly update their profiles via FIS to make the most of the free advertising this allows Settings are confident to use a variety of marketing tools to promote their businesses	Initial campaign by March 2023 Review every six months
6 – Quality and governance						
6.1	Engage with unregistered Out of school care and Sessional care providers; encourage and support them to register with CIW	Detailed mapping of unregistered settings in RCT	Childcare development team EYCPDP	Reluctance of unregistered settings to go through CIW registration	10% per year of remaining unregistered settings started, or achieved, CIW	March 2023

Priority		Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale
		<p>Offer 1:1 support and guidance to non-registered settings</p> <p>Source and commission workshops to support registration</p> <p>Offer financial support and funded training to comply with registration requirements</p>		<p>process</p> <p>Lack of suitably qualified staff to satisfy registration requirements</p> <p>Premises unsuitable for registration requirements</p>	<p>registration</p> <p>Number of registered childcare places increases</p>	
6.2	Improve the quality of childcare settings beyond the National Minimum Standards	<p>Promote suitable QA schemes and encourage settings to participate where possible</p> <p>Offer ongoing support to Flying Start and REP settings to implement relevant QA schemes and recommended actions</p> <p>Offer ongoing funded CPD training opportunities</p> <p>Promote training and resources for the new</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>EYCPDP</p> <p>EY Advisory Teachers</p> <p>FS QA Officers</p>	<p>No funding available to support settings participate in external QA schemes</p> <p>Staff capacity to support FS and REP settings</p> <p>Settings commitment to improving quality</p>	<p>Settings achieve recognised QA schemes and raise standards in their practice</p> <p>FS & REP settings raise quality of practice</p>	Ongoing

Priority	Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale	
		curriculum for non-maintained settings				
6.3	Promote financial benefits to parents of using CIW registered childcare services	<p>Promotional campaign to highlight benefits of registered provision and implications of using unregistered</p> <p>Link with umbrella organisations to promote the benefits of CIW registered provision</p> <p>Link with FIS to promote benefits of using CIW registered childcare on their website and social media pages</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>EYCPDP</p> <p>FIS</p>	<p>Parents choosing lower cost unregistered provisions over CIW registered provisions</p> <p>Lack of understanding from parents of the difference in registered and unregistered provisions</p>	<p>Parents understand benefits and safeguards of using CIW registered provision</p> <p>More parents choosing CIW registered provisions</p>	Ongoing
7 – Atypical hours / ad hoc demand						
7.1	Explore usage of ad hoc places and encourage settings to offer more flexible contracts	<p>Consultation with parents/carers to determine demand for ad hoc/flexible childcare</p> <p>Liaise with settings to understand barriers/issues related</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>FIS</p> <p>EYCPDP</p>	<p>Unreliable usage may cause sustainability issues for providers</p> <p>Due to unreliable hours, there may</p>	<p>Settings can offer more flexible care for those working atypical hours</p> <p>Sufficient childcare available to cater</p>	<p>Initial consultation spring 2023</p> <p>Engagement with settings ongoing thereafter</p>

Priority		Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale
		to offering parents flexible contracts		<p>be issues with retaining staff</p> <p>Lack of parent/carer responses</p> <p>Parent/carer stating service is required at the time of survey completion. when service is provided not taking it up</p> <p>Spaces being unavailable during times of need</p>	for ad hoc or flexible usage	
7.2	Undertake further consultation to establish demand for childcare in atypical hours, notably before 8am or after 6pm weekday, weekends and overnight care	<p>Consultation with parents/carers to determine demand</p> <p>Liaise with settings to understand barriers/issues related to offering atypical opening hours</p>	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>EYCPDP</p> <p>FIS</p>	<p>Insufficient responses by parents/carers to establish demand</p> <p>Parent/carer stating service is required at the time of survey completion but not</p>	<p>Parents/carers able to access sufficient childcare during atypical hours</p> <p>Childcare providers open to discussions around providing</p>	<p>Initial consultation spring 2023</p> <p>Engagement with settings ongoing thereafter</p>

Priority	Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale	
	Work with individual settings in areas where parent survey has indicated a demand for atypical hours		accessing it if available Settings unable to staff atypical hours	care during atypical hours		
8 – Workforce development						
8.1	Ensure practitioners have access to relevant statutory and CPD training opportunities	Existing training programmes promoted to sector Work in partnership with other teams to avoid duplication of training Signpost settings to training restricted to FS/REP's Commission external training to offer CPD courses identified through consultation with sector	Childcare development team Flying Start EY Advisory Teachers EY ALN Lead Officer EYCPDP	Learners unable to attend due to course times Learners not attending designated mandatory training CPD training unsuitable or not accessed by learners Insufficient funding to offer required CPD courses	All practitioners have access to relevant subsidised training All practitioners remain up to date with statutory training Statutory training made available to the sector via a rolling programme to ensure sufficient availability	Ongoing

Priority	Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale
8.2	Promote ALN and inclusion training; improve access to training, particularly for childminders	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>Flying Start / RFS</p> <p>EY Advisory Teachers</p> <p>EY ALN Lead Officer</p>	<p>Alternative training times not possible leading to exclusion of some providers</p> <p>Availability of ongoing ALN training limited or restricted on capacity</p>	<p>All practitioners access able to ALN/Inclusion training</p> <p>Sufficient availability of ALN training to meet demand of the childcare sector</p>	Ongoing
8.3	Work in partnership with schools and colleges to offer transition routes into the childcare sector for school leavers, particularly Welsh medium students	<p>Childcare development team</p> <p>Regional Workforce team</p> <p>Careers Wales</p> <p>Social Care Wales</p> <p>School/college career advisors</p>	<p>Schools/Colleges unwilling to engage</p> <p>Lack of uptake from current childcare providers to become ambassadors</p> <p>Lack of Welsh medium students wishing to take up childcare as a career option</p>	<p>Successful partnership working with schools/colleges and partners</p> <p>Strong cohort of childcare ambassadors to promote childcare as a career to students</p> <p>Increase in number of Welsh speaking students progressing to</p>	<p>Engagement with partners by March 2023</p> <p>Baseline data collated by September 2023</p> <p>Actions identified by December 2023</p>

Priority		Action	By whom	Key issues	Desired outcome	Timescale
		<p>promote to schools and colleges</p> <p>Collate baseline data for exit routes of childcare students from schools/colleges to monitor progress</p>		<p>No increase in numbers of school/college leavers entering childcare workforce</p>	<p>jobs in childcare sector</p>	

Executive Summary

Introduction

All local authorities in Wales have a responsibility under Section 26 of the Childcare Act 2006 to prepare Childcare Sufficiency Assessments (CSA's). This is to have a clear understanding of the childcare provision in their area, the needs of parents/carers and to develop an action plan to address any gaps identified. This report is based on the guidance *Childcare Sufficiency Guidance (July 2016)* and the Welsh Government circular *WGC 003 2021 WG21-28 Childcare Statutory Guidance (2016): Securing Sufficient Childcare and Childcare Sufficiency Assessments (March 2021)*.

The aim of the report is to identify key strategic priorities for the provision of childcare services in RCT for the next five years.

Methodology

The main sources of supply and demand data used in the production of the CSA are the Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS), data held by the Family Information Service (FIS) and the parent/carer survey that was conducted in autumn 2021.

Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS)

The SASS is a requirement placed on all childcare providers registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). This provides CIW with information to plan their inspections and helps advise Welsh Government on the state of the childcare sector in Wales. The survey was completed between 7th July and 11th August 2021. Despite being a statutory requirement, the completion rate from providers in RCT was 87.0%. Officers contacted those that did not complete their SASS and a further 11 paper returns were submitted, making the overall completion rate 92.3%. The SASS provides the main supply data in this CSA report.

Family Information Service

Supply data for unregistered/exempted childcare providers has been taken from data held by the RCT Family Information Service (FIS) and provider questionnaires completed in November 2021. A total of nine questionnaires were received. Based on Family Information Service (FIS) data and local knowledge, officers are aware of additional unregistered childcare providers within RCT than the level of returns suggests. Caution must be used, therefore, when analysing unregistered provision data.

Parent/Carer Survey

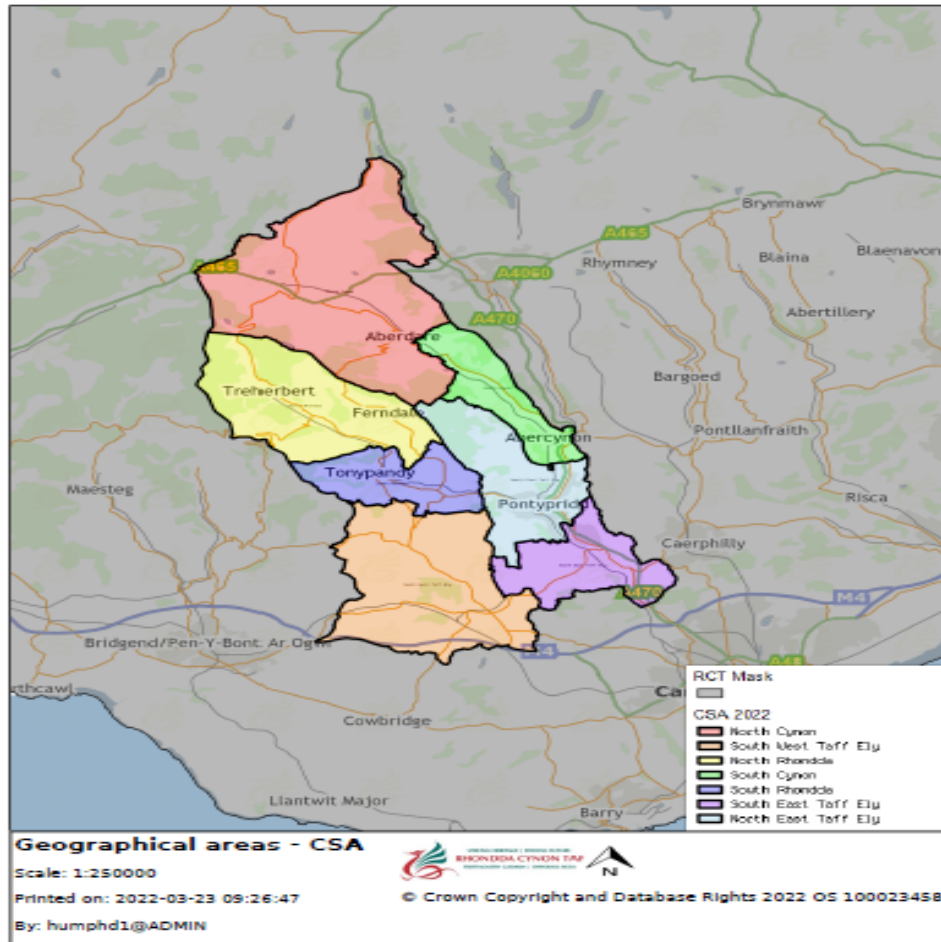
Welsh Government developed a survey that was used by all local authorities in Wales to gauge parental views on the supply and quality of childcare. This was undertaken in October 2021. It has provided consistent data that all local authorities can use to develop their CSA reports, alongside their local knowledge and datasets. RCT received 823 completed questionnaires. This survey provides the main demand data in this CSA report.

Geographical areas

For the purposes of the 2022 CSA report, wards have been grouped according to the Community Resilience Hub and Neighbourhood Network Areas (see below). These are one aspect of the Council's 'RCT Together' strategy. This is the Council's approach to working in partnership with communities and residents that offers support to individuals, groups and services through Community Asset Transfers, Network Hubs and support with funding, resources and community consultation advice.

Please note, this report was written before the implementation of the electoral ward boundary changes recommended by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales. These come into effect at the May 2022 Local Government elections. Reference will be made to these amended electoral wards in the 2023 CSA annual update report and action plan.

North Cynon	South Cynon	North Rhondda	South Rhondda
Aberaman North Aberaman South Aberdare East Aberdare West/Llwydcoed Hirwaun Penywaun Rhigos	Abercynon Cwmbach Mountain Ash West Mountain Ash East Penrhiwceibr	Ferndale Maerdy Pentre Treherbert Treorchy Tylorstown Ystrad	Cwm Clydach Cymmer Llwynypia Penygraig Porth Tonypandy Trealaw Ynyshir
North East Taf Ely	South East Taf Ely	South West Taf Ely	
Cilfynydd Glyncoch Graig Pontypridd Town Rhondda Trallwng Treforest Ynysybwl	Beddau Church Village Hawthorn Llantwit Fardre Rhydyfelin Central/Ilan Taffs Well Tonteg Tyn-y-Nant	Brynna Gilfach Goch Llanharan Llanharry Llantrisant Town Pontyclun Talbot Green Tonyrefail East Tonyrefail West	



Partnership Working and Consultation

In the preparation of this CSA, a range of stakeholders were consulted in order to fully understand their views on the childcare market in RCT. The draft report will be published on the Council website in summer 2022 for a period of 28 days so that all interested partners can submit comments on the content.

Partners consulted for their views on the childcare sector in RCT included:

- Family Information Service
- Parents/carers
- Childcare providers
- Persons representing those with an interest in childcare:
 - Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs
 - Early Years Wales
 - Mudiad Meithrin
 - NDNA Cymru
 - PACEY Cymru
- Local employers
- Neighbouring local authorities
- Schools
- Welsh Medium Education Forum
- Play Sufficiency Assessment Working Group

- Job Centre Plus
- Planning department

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

The RCT Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022 to 2032 is due to be adopted in September 2022 (subject to Welsh Government approval). The plan aims to increase the number of year one learners in Welsh medium education by between 8% and 12% during the ten year lifespan of this WESP. This equates to an increase from 506 year one learners now to between 720 and 825 year one learners in Welsh medium education by the end of the new WESP.

The main target within the WESP that relates to the CSA is ***Outcome 1: More nursery/ three year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh***. To support the target of increasing the number of year one learners, the Council will continue to work with external organisations and colleagues to promote Welsh medium childcare and education. We will do this by:

- Supporting Welsh medium childcare providers to extend and improve the services they offer by offering business support, new provision/expansion of provision grants, training and signposting to relevant external organisations.
- Providing information about events and courses that parents/carers can attend with their children will continue to be shared via Council networks and Officers will continue to promote and raise awareness of the Welsh medium childcare available to parents/carers.
- Making changes to the Flying Start commissioning process, which will mean more Welsh medium Flying Start childcare places are available to those families that choose it.
- Keeping under review the number of Welsh medium Registered Education Providers to ensure that those parents/carers that wish to access a pre-nursery FPN education place are able to.
- Working with the WESP steering group and Marketing and Promotion Group to support the aims of the WESP.

Parent survey

There were a total of 347 responses to the question 'Can you understand, speak, read or write Welsh'. Of these, 91% stated that they understand Welsh (316), with 61.1% stating they can speak the language (212). Of those that supplied a postcode, the highest level of Welsh language skills appears to be in South West Taf Ely, South East Taf Ely and North East Taf Ely. South Cynon appears to have the lowest levels of Welsh language skills amongst parents. Of course, it should be remembered that this is based on the respondents to the parent survey, and not on demographic data used in the WESP.

Current use of Welsh medium childcare

75% of parents stated that they do not currently access childcare through the medium of Welsh (348). 22.2% responded that they do access Welsh medium childcare (103). The projection in the WESP target is for 20.6% of nursery aged children to receive their education through the medium of Welsh in 2022-2023. This figure is lower than the parent survey suggests of families currently accessing Welsh medium childcare. This implies that there may be some parents who do not choose to transition from Welsh medium childcare to Welsh medium education. Therefore, more work is needed to analyse transition routes to understand if this is indeed the case.

Future use of Welsh medium childcare

Of those that don't currently use Welsh medium childcare, 9.7% stated that they would like to access childcare through the Welsh language (34), with 18.6% stating 'maybe' (65). The highest number of those stating 'yes' are located in the South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely area, with the highest number of those stating 'maybe' located in South West Taf Ely.

Parents who stated they would like to use Welsh medium childcare were asked what issues they face accessing Welsh medium care. The majority of responses stated that it was due to a lack of availability with 69.8% of parents stating this (58). South West Taf Ely was the area that had the highest number of this response (17), followed by South Rhondda (10). Recent capital projects have increased the number of Welsh medium childcare places available in the South West Taf Ely area, which will improve availability of services. Development of additional Welsh medium childcare provision in South Rhondda should be investigated further to identify exactly where additional services are required, and whether this is for pre-school or out of school hours services.

Current Welsh medium childcare provision

Whilst there is a good range of CIW registered Welsh medium pre-school childcare available in RCT, services for school aged children remain sporadic and largely unregistered. This is improving and the Council will continue to work with partners to support the registration and expansion of out of school and holiday care where there are identified gaps.

A mapping exercise was undertaken in 2021 to identify gaps in Welsh medium pre-school childcare services. This will be updated regularly and used as a basis for exploration of future developments. Alongside this, officers will continue to strengthen partnership working with organisations such as Mudiad Meithrin and Menter Iaith in order to develop and extend childcare services through the medium of Welsh.

The SASS returns indicate that South East Taf Ely has the highest number of Welsh medium, or dual language, CIW registered settings (8), followed by North East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely (5 each). Full day care is the childcare type with the most Welsh medium or dual language settings (18), followed by sessional care (6). Only one childminder reported that they are Welsh medium, whilst two reported they offer a dual language service. There are four unregistered Welsh medium settings reported in the CSA, three out of school settings and one sessional setting, all in South Rhondda and South West Taf Ely.

No Welsh medium or dual language childcare settings of any childcare type reported that they had waiting lists for school holiday care. For term time provision, only one dual language childminder, in North Rhondda, reported a waiting list. Welsh medium and dual language full day care providers in all areas, except North East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely, reported waiting lists for term time provision. Only two Welsh medium sessional care providers reported waiting lists, one in South East Taf Ely and one in South West Taf Ely. No Welsh medium or dual language out of school care providers reported waiting lists for either term time or school holiday provision.

There is a good range of Welsh medium settings that deliver FPN education. A new commissioning model is currently being piloted by Flying Start to increase the number of Welsh medium settings that deliver this scheme. Parents have the choice of which CIW registered provider they use to access the Childcare Offer. Therefore, the number of Welsh medium providers delivering this service is predominantly dictated by demand from parents.

Supply of childcare

The supply data within the report notes the following number of childcare settings in RCT (all languages) at the time the SASS returns were completed:

Number of CIW registered settings – by AREA

Number of CIW registered settings – by AREA	Childminder	Full day care	Sessional day care	Crèche	Out of School care	Open access play provision	Nanny*	Total settings
North Cynon	11	7	1	0	0	1	0	20
South Cynon	4	6	2	0	0	0	0	12
North Rhondda	9	12	2	0	0	1	0	24
South Rhondda	5	9	2	0	1	0	0	17
North East Taf Ely	21	3	5	0	2	0	1	32
South East Taf Ely	25	9	5	0	1	0	0	40
South West Taf Ely	21	10	8	0	6	3	1	49
Total	96	56	25	0	10	5	2	194

**Home Childcare Provider scheme, January 2022*

Number of Unregistered settings – by AREA

Number of Unregistered settings by AREA	Sessional day care	Out of school care	Open access play provision	Total settings
North Cynon	0	0	0	0
South Cynon	0	1	1	2
North Rhondda	3	0	1	4
South Rhondda	4	1	0	5
North East Taf Ely	0	0	0	0
South East Taf Ely	0	1	0	1
South West Taf Ely	0	3	1	4
Total	7	6	3	16

Childminder

Childminding tends to be the childcare type with the most fluidity within the market. As this childcare type is based in private homes, it is very dependent on the personal circumstances of the childminder, hence a relatively high turnover of registrations. The South Rhondda

area has historically seen low levels of childminders, which development and promotional work in previous years has failed to address. Renewed efforts in this area would be advantageous.

Full day care

Since the introduction of the Childcare Offer for Wales in 2017, there has been a move by sessional care providers to re-register with CIW as full day care providers. This is not so that they can offer the full range of services that traditional full day care providers offer. But rather to give them the flexibility to offer additional services to cater for the Childcare Offer, such as wraparound services for nursery aged children and care during lunchtime periods.

The highest concentration of full day care providers is in North Rhondda (12) followed by South West Taf Ely (10). North East Taf Ely has the least number of full day care settings (3). This area covers Pontypridd town, as well as the student area around the University of South Wales in Treforest. As a result, the wards in this area have some of the lowest numbers of 0-17 year olds of the whole of RCT. There is also a lack of suitable venues which means that, despite several explorations in the past, the development of full day care services has been a challenge. Since the last CSA report, there has been significant building developments in Pontypridd including the creation of the Llys Cadwyn building and the redevelopment of the YMCA building, due to be complete later in 2022. There is space planned in the YMCA for a childcare facility. This will be a small facility but is likely to cater for some unmet demand in the area.

Sessional care

It can be noted that there is a concentration of unregistered sessional care providers based in the North Rhondda and South Rhondda areas. Engaging with these settings and encouraging them to register with CIW will be a priority for the Council.

There appears to be a low number of CIW registered Sessional care providers in the Cynon and Rhondda valleys. This may be as a result of settings becoming full day care providers or may be distorted due to the number of unregistered settings. Further investigation may be prudent to establish if there is additional demand for sessional care services in these areas.

Crèches

Crèches provide flexible childcare solutions to parents who need childcare for specific purposes, such as attending training courses. There are currently no CIW registered Crèches in RCT. Due to the changing nature of working patterns caused by the pandemic, many parents are working from home, although there are now moves to return to office working albeit on a part time basis. There may be parents, therefore, who only require childcare on an ad hoc basis, or for part of a day in order to attend their offices. Exploration of flexible, ad hoc childcare, or crèche facilities would be prudent to determine if there is sufficient demand for this type of care, and if so, the best way to develop it.

Out of school care

The highest number of CIW registered out of school care settings is in South West Taf Ely, followed by North East Taf Ely. The highest number of unregistered out of school clubs is recorded within South West Taf Ely, with South Cynon, South Rhondda and South East Taf Ely recording one unregistered setting in each area. As with unregistered sessional care providers, engaging with these settings and encouraging them to register with CIW will be a priority for the Council.

Open access play provision

The highest number of CIW registered open access play providers is in South West Taf Ely, followed by one each in North Cynon and North Rhondda. There is one unregistered setting in each of South Cynon, North Rhondda and South West Taf Ely.

Nanny

Nannies provide care for children, typically within the child's own home. The Approval of Home Childcare Providers (Wales) Scheme (2021) now provides a regulatory framework within which nannies can operate. Registration on this scheme is voluntary, but it allows parents to access a range of financial assistance with fees and enables the nanny to demonstrate that they meet certain criteria within a structured scheme. There are currently two nannies on this scheme within RCT, one in North East Taf Ely and one in South West Taf Ely. To date, engagement with nannies has not taken place. However, the Council is keen to engage with these, and other nannies in the county, so that they can access the support and guidance that other childcare settings receive. They will also be able to access the funded training that the childcare development team provide. This will be a priority over the course of this CSA report.

CIW registrations/cancellations

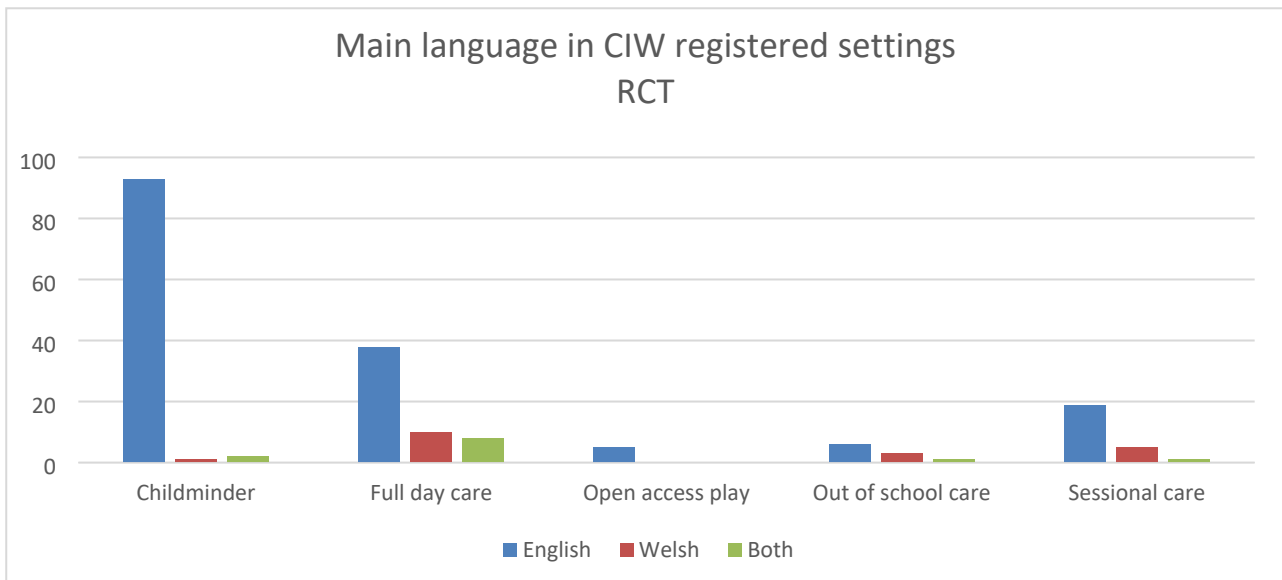
The COVID-19 pandemic has been extremely challenging for childcare providers, and has resulted in decreased attendance, staffing issues and increased costs (such as additional cleaning, heating costs, etc.). Keeping their own families safe, as well as the staff and children in their businesses has been particularly difficult for childminders. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that we have seen a significant reduction in the number of childminding places available over the last two years. Since January 2020, 36 childminders have cancelled their CIW registrations and only eight new childminders have registered. This has resulted in a net loss of 205 registered places.

The impact on other childcare types has not been as obvious. Since January 2020, there has been a net increase of 63 places for full day care. As mentioned, this is likely as a result of sessional care providers changing their CIW registrations. A net increase of 20 places for sessional care has been noted, with new registrations in South Rhondda and South East Taf Ely. The only registered Crèche cancelled its registration, resulting in a net loss of 10 places. The Council is not aware of any other Crèche facilities operating or looking to open in the near future.

Since January 2020, there has been a net increase of 167 places for out of school care. In July 2021, a well-established out of school club closed in the South East Taf Ely area due to the retirement of the leader. This club collected children from several schools in the area. Two new clubs were established to cater for two of the schools affected. This accounts for most of the increased places.

Language used in settings

It can be seen that, in both CIW registered settings and those that are Unregistered, English is the most common language used. The most common childcare type to offer Welsh medium or dual language provision is full day care. The highest number of Welsh only settings is in South West Taf Ely (3), followed by North Cynon and North Rhondda (2 each).



Opening times

Childminder

Childminders offer the most flexible opening times for families, with up to 75 stating in their SASS that they offer care before 8am. Ten reported that they offer care after 6pm on weekdays. Nearly all childminders offer care in term time and school holidays (87), with most open for all holiday periods except the Christmas break where only 27 stated that they offer care. Only five stated in their SASS that they offered care in term time only.

Full day care

Full day care providers also offer families the most range of services and the longest opening hours, although not as flexible as childminders. 24 full day care settings open before 8am during weekdays, whilst only one setting reported that they remained open after 6pm. 17 full day care providers stated that they work term time only, whilst six stated that their opening times differ in the school holidays from term time. This relatively high number may be the sessional care providers who have registered as full day care settings to offer increased services in term time, but do not wish to open in holiday periods.

Of the full day care providers that do open in the school holidays, the majority open every holiday period, except for the Christmas break, with 21 stating that they are open, and 17 stating they are closed.

Sessional care

No sessional care providers offer atypical opening hours (before 8am, after 6pm, weekends or overnight). 18 Sessional care providers stated that they operate in term time only, whilst 1 stated that their opening times differ in the school holidays from term time. Of the sessional care providers that do open in the school holidays, all open for some period through the summer holidays, whilst none open at Christmas.

Out of school care

One out of school setting care provider stated that it opens before 8am and none open after 6pm during weekdays. Four out of school care providers stated that they only operate in term time, whilst two stated that they were open only in the school holidays. Of the out of school care providers that do open in the school holidays, the majority open every holiday, except for the Christmas break.

Open access play provision

One open access play provider reported that they are open during term time as well as holiday periods. This setting reported that their opening hours are 4pm to 5.30pm each Monday. No open access play providers offer atypical opening hours (i.e., before 8am, after 6pm or overnight). Nearly all open access play providers open in all holidays, with the exception of the Christmas break, when none are open.

Waiting lists/Vacancies

Analysis of waiting lists indicates that childcare settings in all areas have waiting lists for full day care. There are also waiting lists in settings for before and after school care in all areas, other than North Rhondda. However, there are also settings in all areas that have reported that they have vacancies for full day care, as well as vacancies for before and after school care. Therefore, further investigation will be necessary to determine the exact areas that have either a surplus or shortage of required childcare types.

Childminder

For childminders, North East Taf Ely and South East Taf Ely had the highest number of settings reporting waiting lists for before school care (2 each), whilst childminders in South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely reported the highest number of vacancies (9 each) for this type of care. For full day care, childminders in North East Taf Ely reported the most waiting lists (8), whilst South East Taf Ely reported the most vacancies (13), followed by South West Taf Ely (9).

Full day care

Most waiting lists in full day care settings are for full day care and AM playgroup or Cylch Meithrin sessions. South West Taf Ely had the highest number of settings reporting waiting lists for full day care (3), followed by South Rhondda (2). The highest number of settings reporting waiting lists for AM playgroup or Cylch Meithrin sessions were in South Rhondda (3) followed by North Cynon (2).

Overall, full day care settings in all areas reported vacancies for full day care, AM and PM sessions and Early Education placements. Settings in North East Taf Ely reported the lowest level of vacancies across the different services offered compared to the other areas.

Sessional care

Most waiting lists in sessional care settings are for morning sessions, with South West Taf Ely having the most settings reporting this (3). Every area, except South East Taf Ely reported vacancies for afternoon sessions, with only one setting in South Cynon reporting a waiting list for afternoon sessions. North East Taf Ely had the highest number of settings reporting vacancies for morning and afternoon sessions (3 each).

Those registered as sessional care providers reported that they do not offer any other services, other than Early Education places or lunchtime care. This is not surprising, as most sessional care providers who have expanded to offer additional services have re-registered with CIW and are now registered as full day care providers.

Out of school care

Only out of school settings in South West Taf Ely have either waiting lists or vacancies for after school care (2 of each). One setting in South West Taf Ely reports vacancies for before

school care. This does not indicate the level of demand that the parent survey suggests. Further exploration will determine if there is indeed a need for additional out of school care.

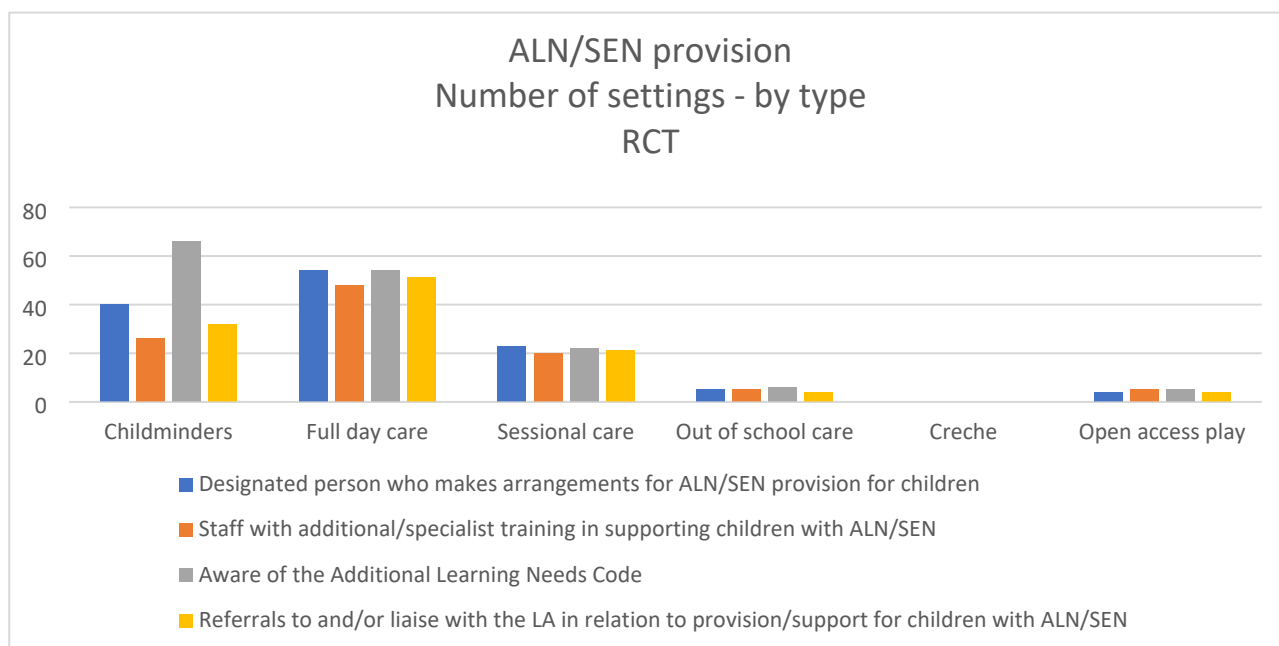
Open access play provision

The provider, based in South West Taf Ely that operates in term time reported in their SASS that they have a waiting list for that service. A waiting list is also noted for play scheme sessions in South West Taf Ely (1), whilst one provider in North Cynon reports that they have vacancies for the same service.

Cater for children with disabilities

68.7% of Childminders who submitted their SASS stated that they are aware of the ALN Code (compared to 92.8% of full day care providers and 88% of sessional care providers). However, only 27% stated that they have staff trained to support children with ALN/SEN (compared to 85.7% of full day care providers and 80% of sessional care providers). Only out of school care settings based in North East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely reported that they have a designated person who makes arrangements for ALN/SEN provision for children, have staff that have received additional training or are aware of the Additional Learning Needs Code. Engagement with out of school settings in other areas would be prudent to ensure that they too know how to support children in their care who have additional learning needs or disabilities.

It can be difficult for all settings to release staff to attend training during the day or early evening. This is especially difficult for childminders as most work on their own. However, since the ALN Lead Officer came into post in January 2021, great progress has been made in ensuring that specialist training is available to all childcare settings at times that are convenient for them. The rise in virtual learning since the pandemic started has helped all settings, but particularly childminders, as this is a much more convenient method of engagement during the weekday.



Charges

Providers were asked to input their fees in their SASS returns, according to whether they charge by an hourly rate, or by session, day, week or term. It is clear by some of the responses that this question was misunderstood by some providers. Therefore, some caution should be used when analysing the rates below.

Childminder

The average hourly rate recorded for childminders ranges from £4.72 to £5.50 per hour. The highest average hourly rate was from the South Cynon area with £6.00 per hour charged for 8-11 year olds. The lowest average hourly rate was £4.00 per hour for under 1 year olds reported in the North Cynon and South East Taf Ely areas. Rates in South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely are on the lower side of the range. These are the areas with the highest concentration of registered childminders, so perhaps this is indicative of the competition in the area.

Full day care

The average daily rate for Full day care providers ranges from £34.80 to £47.85 per day. The highest average daily rate was from providers in the North East Taf Ely area with £66.00 per day charged for children one year and under. The lowest average daily rate was £31.07 per day for 2-3 year olds reported in the North Rhondda.

Sessional care

The average sessional rate for Sessional care providers ranges from £6.25 to £22.48 per day. The highest average sessional rate was from providers in the North Cynon area with £31.45 per session. The lowest average sessional rate was £5.50 per day reported in North East Taf Ely. Data was not available for settings in North Rhondda so cannot be compared.

Out of school care

The highest average session rate was from providers in South West Taf Ely with £22.00 per session. The lowest average session rate was £7.00 per session reported in South Rhondda. However, caution must be used with this data, as the level of data submitted was low and the age ranges do not correlate with the ages of children who are cared for in out of school settings (i.e. from 3 years old or minimum school entry age).

Flying Start, Childcare Offer, Early Education

51 settings stated in their SASS returns that they deliver Flying Start, 31 stated they deliver Foundation Phase Nursery education to three year olds and 125 were receiving funding via the Childcare Offer for Wales.

Childcare type	Childminder	Full day care	Sessional care	Out of school care	Open access play	Total
Flying Start	14	26	11	0	0	51
Childcare Offer <i>(currently receiving funding)</i>	55	54	14	2	0	125
FPN education	0	25	6	0	0	31

Flying Start

The highest concentration of childminders offering Flying Start services was in North Cynon (6), followed by North Rhondda and North East Taf Ely (3 each). The highest number of Full day care providers was in North Rhondda (7) followed by South Cynon (5). The highest concentration of sessional care providers was in South West Taf Ely (3), followed by South Rhondda (2). No out of school care providers stated in their SASS that they deliver Flying Start or FPN education.

Childcare Offer

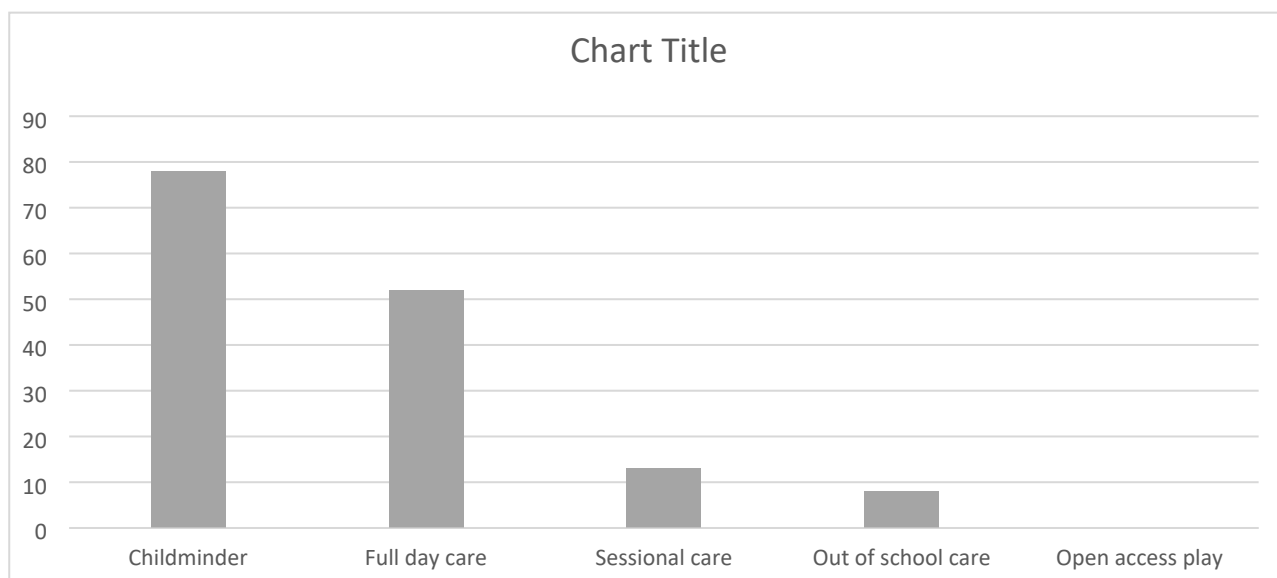
The highest number of childminders delivering the Childcare Offer was in North East Taf Ely (15), followed by South West Taf Ely (12). The highest number of full day care settings was in North Rhondda (11) closely followed by South West Taf Ely (10). The highest number of sessional care providers was in South West Taf Ely (6), followed by North East Taf Ely (3). Only two out of school providers stated that they are currently delivering the Childcare Offer for Wales. This suggests that out of school care settings do not currently offer the holiday entitlement of the Childcare Offer. Encouraging them to do so would provide this service to parents and make it more sustainable for the setting, as parents are accessing funded childcare to use to use the service.

FPN education

The highest number of full day care settings delivering FPN education was in South East Taf Ely (6) followed by North Rhondda and South West Taf Ely (5 each). The highest number of Sessional care settings was in south West Taf Ely (3) followed by South East Taf Ely (2).

Tax free childcare/Childcare vouchers

151 stated in their SASS returns that their parents receive tax free childcare or childcare vouchers to support the cost of fees.



Childminders in South East Taf Ely were the most likely to accept the tax free childcare scheme or childcare vouchers (24), followed by North East Taf Ely (18). Full day care settings in North Rhondda were most likely (11), followed by South West Taf Ely (10). Sessional care settings in South West Taf Ely (6), followed by South East Taf Ely (4) stated they accepted these schemes. No sessional care settings in the Cynon or Rhondda valleys

reported in their SASS that they accepted payment via these schemes. Out of school care settings in South West Taf Ely were most likely (5), followed by one setting each in South Rhondda, North East Taf Ely and South East Taf Ely.

Needs of parents/carers

An online survey was published by Welsh Government and was open for completion during October 2021. This was promoted widely within RCT via childcare settings, schools, and partner agencies. The survey was also available on the Council website and social media, as well as Connect RCT, a community online platform. Officers also attended parent & toddler groups to engage with parents directly.

A total of 823 responses were gathered from families living in RCT. Using the postcode data provided, responses were received from all areas of RCT. Parents in South West Taf Ely submitted the most responses (190), whilst South Cynon submitted the least (138). Of those who responded:

- 93.8% have responsibility for children (771)
- Respondents had a total of 1338 children, with the average family size being 2 children
- 38.7% of respondents had children aged 5 to 8 years old (318), closely followed by 37.8% with children aged under 2 years (310) then 25.3% with children aged 3 years (208)
- 28.3% of respondents had children aged from 9 to 17 years (232)
- 7.4% of respondents have a child with a disability or long term illness (61)
- 9.7% of respondents have a child with a special education / additional learning need that requires additional support with their learning (79)

27.6% of respondents (217) strongly agreed that childcare is a barrier to them accessing employment or training, whilst 21% tended to agree (165). Welsh Government funded schemes such as PaCE (Parents, Childcare and Employment) have supported parents to access training and employment opportunities since it was launched. These responses would suggest that further promotional work is needed to ensure that parents/carers are fully aware of the support available to them.

Parents/carers were asked if they had any issues surrounding childcare in the last year that had affected them. 74% of respondents stated that childcare issues had caused problems at work (417), the most of which were from the South West Taf Ely area (178), followed by South East Taf Ely (145). Although the responses on their own do not identify that the COVID-19 pandemic was the reason for these issues, text responses do suggest that it was a contributory factor.

Childcare currently used during term time

Of those that currently use childcare during term time, 51.8% of parents rely on family and friends (414). Private Day Nursery use was second with 30% of parents using these (240), followed by 24.4% using Before School Club / Breakfast Clubs (195). However, caution must be used with the responses for before school care, as many parents make use of Welsh Government funded free Breakfast Club provision and would class this provision as childcare. Childminders are currently used by 13.9% of parents (111).

Parents in North Cynon and South Cynon reported using the greatest number of hours of childcare during term time. The figures for these areas are significantly higher than the other

areas and the RCT average, so should be viewed with some caution. This is especially so as parents in North Cynon gave the highest responses for not accessing childcare as it is too expensive. This analysis also includes the use of family and friends, not just fee paying childcare. So, it does not give a clear picture of fee paying childcare usage but might explain the reported high number of hours used in North Cynon.

Childcare currently used during school holidays

Again, it is family and friends that respondents state provide their care, with 53.7% stating this is the type of childcare they use during school holidays (417). Private Day Nurseries are again the second most popular type of holiday childcare with 30.2% of parents using these (220). 14.4% stated that they do not use childcare during school holidays (105).

Parents in North Cynon and South East Taf Ely reported using the greatest number of hours of childcare during school holiday periods. Again, this analysis also includes, not only fee paying childcare, but also the use of family and friends, so does not give a clear picture of fee paying childcare usage.

Current childcare costs

30% of respondents reported that they spend £0 on childcare per week (224). This would correlate with the responses that indicate the high reliance on informal childcare with family and friends caring for their children. Of those that do pay childcare costs, 21% stated that they pay between £100 and £199 per week (155). Using the Childcare Offer for Wales rate of £4.50 per hour as an indication, this would buy parents between 22 and 44 hours of childcare per week. This seems to correlate with the average number of hours of childcare that parents told us they use. For those that provided their postcodes, parents in South West Taf Ely are most likely to pay more than £200 per week on childcare costs.

Areas of childcare arrangements that could be improved

When asked if they were unhappy with any aspect of their childcare arrangements, 'more affordable' was the most common response with 50.7% choosing this response (33). 'More hours available' (setting is too busy/full) was next with 27.6% of responses (18), closely followed by 'extending opening hours into the evening' with 24.6% of responses (16).

Parents' perceptions of childcare costs being too high is familiar to the survey responses in the 2017 CSA report. There are many universal schemes, as well as those targeted as specific demographics, available to parents to support them with the cost of childcare, such as Tax Free Childcare, employer based childcare vouchers, the Childcare Offer for Wales, Flying Start and the childcare element of Universal Credit. Increased promotion of these schemes is prudent.

Reasons for not accessing childcare

The biggest reasons respondents listed for not currently using childcare were that it is 'too expensive' (152) and that they use 'informal childcare such as family or friends' (132). The two are likely to correlate with each other in that parents use informal childcare as they feel that fee paying care is too expensive. The next most selected reasons were that the 'childcare available is not flexible enough for their needs' (61) and that the 'times it is available are unsuitable' (47). These findings are similar to those from the 2017 CSA. Although work has been undertaken since then to support the childcare sector to offer more flexible sessions/options and to offer care in atypical hours, there has been limited progress.

Accessing information

The main vehicle for parents to access information is via the Family Information Service. Since the last CSA report, FIS has undergone several changes and there have been limited opportunities for the FIS Officer to attend parent engagement events. When asked to score the statement 'I know where to find out information about childcare', 37.2% of respondents 'tended to disagree' or 'strongly disagree' (294). The pandemic has severely limited face to face engagement with parents. It is not surprising, therefore, that parents may be unsure where to find information about childcare or financial support. The Family Information Service does have a successful Facebook page and content on the main Council website. The childcare development team and the Childcare Offer team also promote childcare options to parents whenever they have face to face or virtual engagement events. Now that restrictions are easing, a renewed emphasis should be undertaken on promoting information to parents and clearly explain where they can find information relevant to them.

Future anticipated need for childcare

Parents were asked about their future plans and whether they were likely to require more or less childcare in the next two years. At the time the survey was undertaken, there was still a high level of home working and disruption to normal working patterns. Therefore, it may have been difficult for parents to accurately predict their childcare needs moving forward. Those that did respond, 51.1% stated that they anticipate requiring more childcare in the next couple of years (405), 24.3% anticipated that their childcare needs will stay the same (193), whilst 13.1% anticipate they will require less childcare (104). 11.3% didn't know or were unsure (90).

Geographical distribution

An analysis of the wards within each area found some geographical gaps in provision. The main types of childcare highlighted in this analysis for further investigation were out of school care and childminding. A lack of registered sessional care providers in North Rhondda and South Rhondda requires further investigation. However, analysis shows that there are several unregistered sessional settings in these areas, so encouraging them to register may resolve any potential gaps in provision.

Housing developments in South Rhondda, South East Taf Ely and South West Taf Ely require monitoring for their impact on childcare needs in these areas over the next five years.

Sustainability

The Council continues to support the sustainability of the childcare sector and to tailor support to meet the needs of childcare providers. This includes funded training courses; childminding start up packages and grant schemes to support new/expansion of provision and severe financial hardship. Over the last two years, there has been additional funding available to support settings deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Specific support offered to the sector over the last two years includes:

- New provision grant – to support the development of new services in areas of identified need.
- Expansion of provision grant – to support the expansion of existing settings to offer new services, or increased hours, in response to identified demand.
- New childminder package - to support individuals to become registered Childminders. This includes funded training, PACEY membership for one year and a small start-up grant, as well as individual support from the childcare development team.

- Support with PPE supplies – to support settings with the cost of additional PPE and cleaning materials through the pandemic.
- COVID support grant – to support settings with the reduced income and additional costs caused by the pandemic. The grant was divided into three sections:
 - Full / partial closures – to support providers who had to close their settings due to positive cases amongst staff or children or being unable to meet minimum staffing ratios due to staff self-isolating.
 - Increased costs – to support settings with increased costs associated with the pandemic, such as additional heating, cleaning or uniform costs, or premises related costs due to not being able to open or operate at full capacity.
 - Severe financial hardship – to support settings experiencing severe financial hardship as a consequence of the pandemic and where no other public funding is available to cover the same costs.
- ICT grant – to support providers engage with digital technology in light of the pandemic and in order to prepare them for the roll out of the Childcare Offer digital system later in 2022.
- CO2 monitor grant – to provide childcare settings with CO2 monitors as one of the protective measures to protect against COVID-19.
- Resource grant – to support settings to continue to deliver high quality services by providing them with a range of resources. Seven different resource packs were available, with settings able to select up to three packs each.
- Small capital grant – to support settings make small capital adjustments or improvements to their settings to help them deliver the Childcare Offer for Wales.

COVID-19

In the immediate response to COVID-19, Welsh Government launched the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) scheme to provide emergency childcare to key worker families and children who were deemed vulnerable. The scheme ran from April to August 2020, although RCT provided care for some children from 23rd March. In total, 99 childcare providers were funded to support RCT children, 14 of which were settings outside of RCT. 747 children were supported, 95 of which were deemed vulnerable. 223,115 hours of care were funded, costing £1.115m.

An evaluation survey was sent to parents and providers in autumn 2020. In total, 289 responses were received from parents and 46 from providers. 99% of parents were happy with the service they received from the Council (286). All parents were happy with the care that was provided to their children (289). 99% stated that C-CAS enabled them to continue performing their critical role at that time (287), whilst 79% stated that C-CAS enabled them to increase their work hours in order to respond to the pandemic (224). 50% of providers who responded found it 'Very Easy' to find information about the scheme and how to deliver it (23) whilst 44% found it 'Easy' (20). All respondents stated that they found their obligations easy to understand, as was the administration and claim process. All respondents stated that they had sufficient staffing to deliver C-CAS and 91% reported that the scheme had helped their businesses financially (41).

Impact on childcare providers

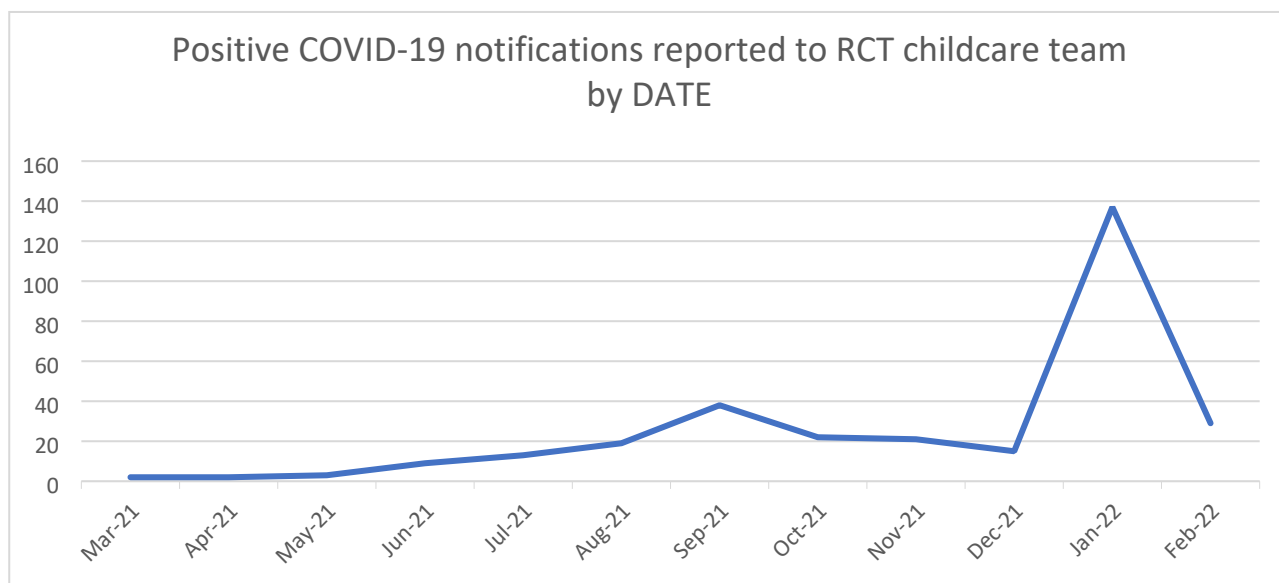
The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on providers has been profound. Staffing issues and managing positive cases continues to be a challenge, particularly for childminders who are working in their own homes. Positive cases amongst their own family can cause disruptions to delivery of their businesses.

Temporary closures

Since September 2020, CIW has issued weekly updates on the number of setting temporary closures / re-openings. The percentage of RCT settings closed up to December 2020 was just under 50%. Since 2021, this has reduced significantly, with a slight increase in the winter of 2021 as the Omicron variant had an impact on numbers of positive cases.

Cases of COVID-19 in settings

As well as having a duty to inform CIW and Test, Track, Protect, settings were also asked to inform the LA childcare development team of any positive cases, so that officers could offer support and guidance. An online form was created in autumn 2020 and the table below shows the number of positive notifications submitted to the childcare team between March 2021 and February 2022. It must be noted that this is not official TTP data and relied on childcare settings to inform the Council childcare team. Therefore, it does not reflect all cases that have occurred in settings in RCT.



It can be seen that the Omicron variant had a significant impact on the number of positive cases in settings during December 2021 and January 2022. There was also a spike in September, most likely due to the return to school after the summer break.

Effect of COVID-19 on demand for services

It is difficult to evaluate the long term impact of COVID-19 on demand for childcare services. The short term effect has been significant. Parents working patterns have changed, with many now working from home. This has had a detrimental effect on out of school and holiday care providers particularly. The impact of settings closing due to positive cases and staff shortages has also impacted on the confidence of parents to use childcare services, as has the fear of their children contracting COVID-19 in settings and transmitting it to vulnerable members of their families.

The parent survey highlighted the difficulties that parents faced with children not being able to attend childcare settings with little notice, having to self-isolate as close contacts and the limitations on numbers for breakfast and after school care caused by maintaining bubbles. The parent survey that was undertaken in autumn 2021 will not fully reflect the childcare needs of parents as there was still fluidity in the working arrangements of many parents. The 2023 CSA annual action update report will provide a clearer picture of long term issues

with supply or demand of childcare services. The Council will continue to monitor the sector and respond where possible to ensure that services are maintained and viable.

Workforce

The childcare sector in RCT benefits from highly skilled, qualified staff. Work continues to support childcare practitioners to achieve higher qualifications and ensure that regular CPD is encouraged and supported. The Council offers a range of funded mandatory and CPD training to all childcare staff. Changes to qualification requirements in the National Minimum Standards has also placed more emphasis on ensuring a suitably qualified workforce.

For the purposes of this report, data on current qualifications and training of the childcare workforce has been taken from the SASS return data submitted by childcare providers in September 2021. 57.2% of practitioners hold a Level 3 qualification (439). This is the minimum level of qualification for staff that manage or lead childcare settings, as set out in the National Minimum Standards. Work has been ongoing over recent years, particularly amongst Flying Start settings, to ensure that setting leaders are qualified at NVQ Level 4 or QCF Diploma Level 5. 26.3% of practitioners within RCT state that they now hold a Level 5 qualification (202).

As well as statutory training, the Council has made available a number of funded statutory and CPD training opportunities for the childcare workforce in RCT. These include:

- Food Hygiene Level 2
- Paediatric First Aid Level 3
- Safeguarding Level 3
- Health and Safety
- Manual Handling
- Managing Challenging Behaviour
- Supporting children through ACES
- Covid Born Babies
- Positive Attachments
- Fire Warden
- Active Listening
- Additional Learning Needs
- Building Resilience
- Emotion Coaching
- Makaton
- Mental Health First Aid
- Play Therapy
- Resilience, Self-Assessment and Action Plan Building
- Resource Planning
- Risk Assessment
- Understanding Children's Play

Key findings

The principal findings in the 2022 CSA show that there are some geographical areas that require further examination in order to establish if additional childcare is required, particularly areas of North East Taf Ely and South Rhondda. Parents reported that there was limited out of school and holiday care for school aged children. However, many out of school clubs

use shared community venues and were affected by restrictions imposed in response to COVID-19, so this feedback may have been a consequence of that. That said, developing more holiday care is an identified priority within the action plan for this CSA. Supporting the expansion of Welsh medium childcare is another key theme, particularly investigating demand for Welsh medium care in the South Rhondda area. Childminder recruitment also continues to be an ongoing priority and will continue to be so for the duration of this CSA.

Identified actions

The actions below are those identified in the CSA report and form the basis of the overarching action plan for the next five years.

1 - Potential unmet demand – childcare types, location, ages

- Encourage existing out of school care providers to offer holiday care
- Explore demand for ad hoc, flexible care and/or crèche facilities
- Investigate demand for additional childminders in all areas of RCT, but particularly:
 - North Cynon (Hirwaun and Rhigos)
 - South Cynon (Abercynon and Mountain Ash West)
 - North Rhondda (Ferndale and Treorchy)
 - South Rhondda (all wards)
 - North East Taf Ely (Treforest)
 - South East Taf Ely (Rhydyfelin/Central Ilan)
 - South West Taf Ely (Gilfach Goch, Llanharan and Tonyrefail East)
- Investigate demand for additional out of school care services (after school and holiday) in all areas of RCT
- Investigate demand for additional full day care in North East Taf Ely
- Monitor impact of housing developments on childcare needs, particularly in:
 - Llanilid (Brynna)
 - Llantwit Fardre
 - Penygraig
- Support unregistered Sessional care providers to register with CIW and investigate demand for additional Sessional care services in:
 - North Cynon
 - South Cynon
 - North Rhondda
 - South Rhondda

2 - Welsh medium childcare provision

- Engage with, and support, unregistered Welsh medium out of school care providers to register with CIW and extend services to provide holiday care in areas of identified demand
- Explore the demand for new Cylchoedd Meithrin in geographical areas identified via the mapping exercise
- Investigate possible gaps in Welsh medium sessional and full day care in South Rhondda
- Offer support and training to non-confident Welsh speakers to encourage use of the Welsh language in their settings and to promote themselves as Welsh medium or bilingual settings.
- Promote the Active Offer to settings and encourage participation
- Promotion campaign to attract more Welsh speaking childminders
- Support the aims of the WESP to increase transition rates from Welsh medium childcare to Welsh medium education

3 - Affordability of childcare

- Continue to promote the financial benefits of the Childcare Offer, particularly emphasising the holiday entitlement
- Support childcare providers to accept payment via the Tax Free Childcare scheme or employer based childcare vouchers
- Work in partnership with FIS to promote childcare options and financial support to parents

4 - Children with special educational needs or disability

- Explore demand for holiday care for children with additional needs or a disability
- Identify opportunities to improve access to childcare and early years provision for children with additional learning and physical needs
- Increases awareness of ALNET and setting responsibilities to children and their families
- Offer diversity training to childcare providers to improve inclusivity within settings

5 - Support for the childcare sector

- Continue to offer grants to support new provision or expansion of existing provision, and to support settings experiencing severe financial hardship
- Encourage all settings to register with FIS and keep their accounts up to date
- Explore how providers can be supported to offer more flexible care that can accommodate shift patterns and ad hoc demand
- Improve engagement with nannies already on the Home Childcare Provider scheme
- Promote childminding as a career, clearly highlighting the support package on offer to prospective childminders
- Promote the benefits of accessing regulated childcare to a child's wellbeing and development
- Promote the Home Childcare Provider scheme to parents; promote the benefits of registration to them, and to existing nannies not on the scheme
- Support sector to prepare for, and engage with, the rollout of Flying Start to all two years
- Support settings to market their services effectively, particularly unique selling points, such as additional languages, or flexible, ad hoc or atypical services.

6 - Quality and governance

- Engage with unregistered out of school care and sessional care providers; encourage and support them to register with CIW
- Improve the quality of childcare settings beyond the CIW National Minimum Standards
- Promote benefits to parents of using CIW registered childcare services.

7 - Atypical hours/ad hoc demand

- Explore usage of ad hoc places and encourage settings to offer more flexible contracts
- Undertake further consultation to establish demand for childcare in atypical hours, notably before 8am or after 6pm weekday, weekends and overnight care.

8 – Workforce development

- Ensure practitioners have access to relevant statutory and CPD training opportunities

- Promote ALN and inclusion training; improve access to training, particularly for childminders
- Work in partnership with schools and colleges to offer transition routes into the childcare sector for school leavers, particularly Welsh medium students



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH JULY 2022

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE SERVICES, COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS

Author: Martyn Silezin, 14-19 Strategy Officer (Tel: 07508472085)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide information to Members on the Council's statutory duties to establish a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).
- 1.2 To update Members on the constitution of Rhondda Cynon Taf SACRE (Appendix A).
- 1.3 To inform Members that the Annual Report of the RCT SACRE for the academic year 2020-2021 is available (Appendix B).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the content of the Annual Report 2020-2021.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that Members are reassured that our statutory obligations are met.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Every local authority (LA) has a statutory duty to establish a permanent body, called a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), to advise on matters concerned with the provision of Religious Education (RE) and collective worship (Education Reform Act 1988).
- 4.2 The main function of SACRE is 'to advise the authority upon such matters connected with religious worship in county schools and the religious education to

be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus as the authority may refer to the Council or as the Council may see fit’.

4.3 The broad role of a SACRE is to support the effective provision of RE and collective worship in schools. Each LA should work with its SACRE to identify whether any changes need to be made in the agreed syllabus or in the support offered which might be taken to improve provision.

4.4 Each SACRE must publish an annual report on its work.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no Welsh Language implications as the contents of the report is for information only.

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

7.1 No consultation exercise has been required.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 There are no financial considerations.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 The local authority has statutory duties under Section 11 Education Reform Act 1988.

10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

10.1 Educational performance has a clear link to the Council’s priority of Building a Strong Economy. Improved educational performance will have a positive impact on this priority.

10.2 SACRE brings together the views and experiences of several groups to enhance the delivery of religion, values, and ethics (RVE) in RCT schools to promote inclusion and understanding of a number of groups. Thus, leading to a more cohesive community.

10.3 The effective delivery of RVE helps to reduce extremist views and to promote wellbeing in an individual. In turn, this helps to reduce intervention in the future

leading to a healthier and more resilient community that values equality both on a local and global scale.

- 10.4 Embedded in the delivery of RVE is the Welsh culture and language and compliments the delivery in other areas of the new curriculum.
- 10.5 The RCT SACRE works with a number of National bodies to help inform national decisions in the delivery of RVE.

11. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

- 11.1 The introduction of the Curriculum for Wales will require the SACRE to establish an Agreed Syllabus (AS) which will roll out over the coming years to replace the Agreed Local Syllabus (ALS). This syllabus will have to pay due regard to the national guidelines whose publication has been delayed due to the pandemic. This may cause a squeeze on the introduction in time for schools to plan their effective delivery.

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 Changes in the way support for schools are organised and delivered have resulted in the provision of a traditional subject led advisory service to a more school-to-school self-supporting system. Therefore such changes in working practices have required SACRE to fulfil its role and functions with schools using a consultative model.
- 12.2 Due to the disruption during the academic year resulting from the COVID pandemic, communication and progress has been hampered and the promised national frameworks have been delayed.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer

Martyn Silezin, 14-19 Strategy Officer (Tel: 07508 472085)



Rhondda Cynon Taf
Standing Advisory Council on
Religious Education

Annual Report
for the Academic Year
2020 - 2021

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1.1 Duty to establish SACRE

All local authorities (LAs) are required to constitute a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) within their local area.

1.2 Composition of SACRE

Representation on SACRE is required as follows:

- such Christian and other religious denominations as, in the opinion of the LA, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area;
- associations representing teachers; and
- the LA.

It is the duty of the LA to ensure that members of the groups are appointed and that they are representative.

1.3 Membership of SACRE

The list of members of Rhondda Cynon Taf SACRE is set out in Appendix 1.

1.4 Functions of SACRE

The main function of a SACRE is to:

- advise the LA on worship and the religious education to be given in accordance with the agreed syllabus, including methods of teaching, advice on materials and the provision of training for teachers;
- consider whether to recommend to the LA that its current agreed syllabus should be reviewed by convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference;
- consider applications from schools for determinations (to be exempt from the requirement that worship be “Christian”)
- report to the LA and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) on its activities on an annual basis.

1.5 SACRE meetings

Three meetings of SACRE were held during the 2020– 2021 academic year:

- 17th November 2020
- 13th April 2021
- 15th June 2021

All meetings were held online, via Microsoft Teams.

A record of the main agenda items discussed during the meetings is to be found in Appendix 2.

1.6 Circulation of report

Copies of this report are circulated to the organisations/establishments listed in Appendix 3.

SECTION 2	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
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2.1 Religious Education

Aim: To monitor provision and standards in religious education

Action:

1. SACRE ordinarily considers and analyses school inspection reports. If there are any issues regarding religious education, such as the non-fulfilment of statutory requirements, the LA is alerted in order to follow up on these issues. As the inspection cycle was suspended for this academic year, SACRE has been unable to utilise this method for monitoring standards in religious education.
2. In past years SACRE has analysed examination results over a three-year period and identified trends in performance benchmarked against all Wales data. Schools are usually informed of the outcomes of this analysis and SACRE raises any issues schools should be addressing as a result of this analysis. From summer 2019, Welsh Government introduced new arrangements which prevented the sharing of individual school performance data, Local authority aggregated data and national data. As a result, this analysis did not take place and this continued in 2019-20 due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. SACRE is awaiting guidance from WASACRE on the nature of information that can be shared with SACRE members because of changes to guidance on the sharing of school data from the Welsh Government.
3. The LA and its SACRE usually gather and analyse data regarding key stage 3 teacher assessment in religious education. Due to the continuing pandemic and the major impacts of its disruption of pupils' education, this data has not been requested from schools for this report.
4. SACRE has previously sent all schools the WASACRE guidance document entitled *Managing the Right of Withdrawal from Religious Education*. This useful guidance document is intended to support schools dealing with withdrawal and also to share with parents who may be considering withdrawing their child from RE. It is noted, that under the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act, 2021, the parental right to withdraw children from

Religion, Values and Ethics will cease. The right for parents to withdraw their children from collective worship will remain.

2.2 Agreed syllabus

Aim: To fulfil the legal requirement to review the agreed syllabus for religious education

Action:

1. In 2008 Standing Conference endorsed and adopted a new agreed syllabus for the Authority's schools, which was implemented from September 2008.
2. In 2013 Standing Conference endorsed the re-adoption of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education with an understanding that the syllabus would be reviewed once further information is received in relation to the assessment and national curriculum review.
3. Since 2013 and throughout the academic year 2020-2021, SACRE has been updated on a termly basis of developments relating to Religion, Values and Ethics within the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience in the new Curriculum for Wales. SACRE members have been fully involved in consultations and feedback on developments around the new curriculum and in particular proposals for changes to external qualifications at age 16 (Qualifications Wales) and the development of the guidance on the design and delivery of mandatory RVE (Welsh Government private and public consultations).
4. SACRE still awaits final details from Welsh Government confirming the shape of the statutory guidance for RVE to convene the Agreed Syllabus Conference. SACRE receives advice from WASACRE on the latest developments. WASACRE is involved in these curriculum developments and reports to SACREs on decisions taken by Welsh Government.

2.3 Teaching materials

Aim: To ensure that schools are informed of suitable teaching resources

Action:

1. All schools are informed of the 2020 Holocaust Memorial Day theme. Holocaust resources can be found on their website www.hmd.org.uk – these include lesson plans, film clips, case studies, collective worship/assembly material and worksheets suitable for primary to post 16 students.
2. During the pandemic, SACRE's Consultant, Angela Hill, compiled a comprehensive catalogue of free to access classroom resources for RE, with an emphasis on materials suitable for home learning, online lessons and

socially distanced lessons in the classroom. These were circulated to all Rhondda Cynon Taf schools. The accompanying letter reminded Headteachers of the duty to continue to provide good quality RE as a statutory requirement under law and explained the benefits of good RE for pupil wellbeing and development. Teachers were invited to share good practice with SACRE.

2.4 Training for teachers

Issue: To ensure that teachers are able to access appropriate CPD

Action:

1. With the current Welsh Assembly Government's emphasis on Literacy and Numeracy no subject specific training is on offer.
2. The RS Lead Practitioners' Hwb continues to offer networking meetings to secondary school Heads of RE and teachers of RE, primarily focused on improving outcomes in external qualifications.
3. SACRE is aware of the continuing need for CPD of teachers of RE and also of the shortage of RE specialists.

2.5 Collective worship

Aim: To ensure that schools fulfil statutory requirements for collective worship and provide a worthwhile experience for pupils.

Action:

1. SACRE monitors the sections of inspection reports that are concerned with collective worship and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC) and the LA follows up on any non-fulfilment of statutory requirements by requesting their action plan. There no schools inspected in Rhondda Cynon Taf this year due to the pandemic, therefore, no non-fulfilment of statutory requirements identified. The provision for collective worship had positive comments stating that schools were promoting pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development well.
2. SACRE has continued to inform schools of appropriate resources and websites that support collective worship in schools, including resources and advice on collective worship during the months of the pandemic. WASACRE, via SACREs, provided comprehensive advice and a list of free to access resources to help schools to continue to provide collective worship during the pandemic.

2.6 Other issues

Aim: To ensure a more informed SACRE through providing regular updates on local and national issues.

Action:

1. SACRE has maintained its membership of the Wales Association of SACREs (WASACRE) and receives termly feedback from meetings of the association.
2. Members have received presentations and reports this year at each termly meeting, as well as SACRE circulating information and minutes from WASACRE in between these meetings.
3. SACRE members from faith and belief communities have been encouraged to offer their services to schools in the form of providing online collective worship sessions or observing collective worship in the county's schools.
4. SACRE is exploring options for engaging young people with its work. It has worked collaboratively with the County's secondary schools and has co-opted a youth SACRE member. SACRE will now explore further possibilities, i.e. establishing a 'Youth SACRE'.

SECTION 3	SUMMARY OF THE ADVICE GIVEN TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
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3.1 The locally agreed syllabus

In 2008, the Standing Conference endorsed and adopted a new agreed syllabus for the authority's schools to be implemented from September 2008.

In 2013 Standing Conference endorsed the re-adoption of the Rhondda Cynon Taf agreed syllabus, with an understanding that the syllabus would be reviewed once further information is received in relation to the assessment and National Curriculum review.

During 2020-21, SACRE has been updated on a termly basis of developments affecting RVE in the new Curriculum for Wales. In March 2021, SACRE responded to a Qualifications Wales consultation '*Qualified for the Future*' which proposed changes to external qualifications at age 16. SACRE also responded to a private Welsh Government consultation on the statutory guidance for RVE in April 2021 and the subsequent public consultation on the same in July 2021. The finalised and definitive statutory guidance for the design and delivery of RVE in the Curriculum for Wales is required to enable SACRE to begin the necessary agreed syllabus review, and to call an Agreed Syllabus Conference.

3.2 Standards in Religious Education

SACRE has adopted a number of strategies for monitoring standards achieved in religious education in the authority's schools: these have included analysing school inspection reports, reviewed examination results and analysing end of key stage 3 data, although these measures have not been possible in informing this report, due to Covid-19 pandemic as well as new Welsh Government arrangements for the sharing of data from schools. SACRE has written to all schools reminding them of the statutory duties relating to RVE, signposting them towards high quality learning and teaching materials and inviting schools to contact SACRE should they need further support or guidance, or to share good practice.

Examination results

This annual report SACRE would usually include analysis of examination performance in Religious Studies GCSE full and short course, and AS and A Level for 2020, comparing examination results in the county with the All-Wales figures and with the results in previous years. Due to new arrangements for sharing data introduced by Welsh Government and explained on page 5 of this report, this analysis has not taken place. It is also worth noting that grades for external qualifications in Wales for summer 2020 were centre determined as pupils were unable to sit examinations during the pandemic.

School inspection reports

In order to fulfil its functions effectively, SACRE considers inspection reports and Estyn surveys. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, no school inspections were undertaken in the period covered by this annual report in Rhondda Cynon Taf. SACRE does, however, note that during the academic year 2020-2021, two primary schools and one secondary school in Rhondda Cynon Taf made sufficient progress in addressing Estyn's recommendations from prior inspection to be removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn review. No comments were made by Estyn relevant to the provision of RE and/or collective worship.

3.3 Methods of teaching, choice of teaching materials, teacher training

Continuing professional development

WASACRE has continued to provide resources and advice for RE and collective worship which was distributed to schools via SACRE.

SACRE's Consultant, Angela Hill, compiled a comprehensive catalogue of free to access classroom resources for RE, with an emphasis on materials suitable for home learning, online lessons and socially distanced lessons in the classroom. These were circulated to all Rhondda Cynon Taf schools. The accompanying letter reminded Headteachers of the duty to continue to provide good quality RE as a statutory requirement under law and explained the benefits of good RE for pupil wellbeing and development. Teachers were invited to share good practice with SACRE.

SECTION 4	SUMMARY OF THE ADVICE ON COLLECTIVE WORSHIP
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Monitoring of collective worship has continued through a review of inspection report findings.

SACRE circulated advice and resources compiled by WASACRE to aid schools to fulfil their obligations around collective worship under the challenging and constantly evolving circumstances brought about by the pandemic and invited schools to contact us if they needed any further support. No schools made contact with SACRE regarding this issue.

4.1 School inspection reports

The Estyn Common Inspection Framework notes that inspectors should only report on instances where the school does not comply with statutory requirements in relation to collective worship. There were no full school inspections during the academic year 2020-2021, and therefore, no indication of non-compliance with statutory requirements in relation to collective worship.

4.2 School self-evaluation

It was decided in 2018 that SACRE would not continue to use the school self-evaluation proforma as a means of monitoring provision and standards in religious education.

4.3 Determinations

As last year, no applications were received from schools for determinations to be made on the lifting of the requirements for collective worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

SECTION 5	SUMMARY OF OTHER ISSUES
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5.1 WASACRE

SACRE continues to support the work of WASACRE and recognises the value of the body in promoting religious education and collective worship on a national basis. During 2020 - 2021 issues considered at WASACRE meetings have been fully reported back to SACRE. SACRE is represented on the WASACRE executive committee by teacher representative, Mathew Maidment, who is an elected member of the WASACRE Executive committee as well as Angela Hill, SACRE's professional consultant. Both attend regular meetings.

5.2 National Advisory Panel for Religious Education (NAPfRE)

SACRE was represented on NAPfRE by its independent consultant, Angela Hill. This has facilitated SACRE in keeping abreast of developments across Wales and has enabled it to play a crucial role in informing decisions and policies that affect religious education. NAPfRE have worked closely with Welsh Government and other stakeholders during the development of the new curriculum, and this year on the development of statutory guidance for Religion, Values and Ethics in the Curriculum for Wales.

5.3 Curriculum developments

SACRE has received termly updates and detailed advice from its consultant regarding curriculum developments as they relate to RE/RVE and collective worship. With the passing of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill, RE will, from 2022 be re-named as 'Religion, Values and Ethics' (RVE). RVE will be a statutory curriculum requirement from nursery until age 16 and will form part of the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience. The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act, 2021 removes the current parental right to withdraw children from all or part of RVE in Wales. There are also significant changes in relation to the status of locally agreed syllabi which have been discussed by SACRE. Further clarification on these matters is awaited with the publication of the final statutory guidance for RVE, which has been delayed and is expected by December 2021. SACRE members have received detailed information and advice on these issues with opportunities to comment and put forward questions. SACRE has responded to the two Welsh Government consultations relating to the statutory guidance for RVE this academic year (one private SACRE consultation in April 2021 and the subsequent public consultation in July 2021). In March, SACRE also responded to the *Qualified for the Future* consultation issued by Qualifications Wales, seeking views on proposals relating to qualifications at age 16.

5.4 Training of SACRE members

As part of training for members, SACRE has:

- Kept members updated on developments in RE/RVE and collective worship through regular presentations, discussions and advice from SACRE's consultant to SACRE members. This year Angela Hill gave updates on curriculum developments relating to the New Curriculum for Wales, including the Qualifications Wales *Qualified for the Future* consultation and the Welsh Government consultations on the Guidance on the design and delivery of mandatory Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) and their implications for the future of RVE in Wales.
- Discussed intentions to hold future meetings at places of worship in Rhondda Cynon Taf for members to familiarise themselves with the faith communities, when the situation with the pandemic allows.

- Considered reinstating meetings held at local schools so that members can see first-hand educational contexts for RE in Rhondda Cynon Taf's schools and have opportunities to be addressed by teachers, leaders and learners of RE.
- Invited its members to attend the three annual meetings of Wales Association for SACREs (WASACRE) as well as ensuring that the SACRE was represented at WASACRE by its Consultant, Angela Hill, who gave detailed feedback from these meetings to SACRE members

5.5 Youth representation on SACRE

SACRE have been exploring possibilities with regard to youth representation on SACRE. To date, SACRE has held several discussions on this issue and is working collaboratively with secondary schools in the local authority to consider how best to ensure young people's voices are heard in relation to issues affecting their education in Religion, Values and Ethics and also on matters relating to collective worship. So far, SACRE has co-opted one 'youth member'. Plans for a potential 'Youth SACRE' will be further explored in the next academic year.

Appendix 1	SACRE Membership
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Local authority: 6 Places
 Religions and denominations: 14 Places

Teacher Associations: 10 Places

Organisation	Name
RCT CBC – LA Officers	
	Gaynor Davies
	Martyn Silezin
	Eirwen Davies, RCT Clerk to SACRE
RCT CBC - LA members	
	County Borough Councillor Jeffrey Elliott (VICE CHAIR)
	County Borough Councillor Ann Crimmings
	County Borough Councillor Mark Adams
	County Borough Councillor Sharon Rees
	County Borough Councillor Geraint Davies
	County Borough Councillor Geraint Hopkins
Religions and denominations	
Baptist Union of Wales	The Reverend David Brownutt (CHAIR)
Church in Wales	The Reverend Peter Lewis
Catholic Church	Wendy Lavagna
Sikh	Mrs Balbir Kaur
Bahá'í	Carol Adams
Jewish	Prof. David Cohen
Church in Wales	Ruth Moverley
Humanists UK	Mike Reynolds
Muslim faith	Mark Bryant
Teacher associations	
NAS/UWT	Donna Graves (Y Pant Comprehensive)
NAS/UWT	Mr Mathew Maidment (Bryncelynnog Comprehensive)
NEU	Lynsey Parsons (Cwmlai Primary)
NAS/UWT	Catherine Drew (Tonyrefail Community School)
Co-opted members	
Co-opted	Jane Ward
Co-opted	Anastasia O'Reilly
RE Consultant	Angela Hill

Three online meetings of SACRE were held during the 2020–2021 academic year on 17th November 2020, 13th April 2021 and 15th June 2021.

17th November 2020:

- Welcome and apologies for absence
- Membership updates, election/re-election of Chair and Vice Chair
- Minutes of the last meeting on 29th June 2020
- Action Points and Matters Arising
- SACRE Annual Report 2019 – 2020
- Discussion of youth representation on SACRE
- WASACRE business
- Outcomes of consultation on legislative proposals for RVE
- WJEC updates
- Supporting RE and collective worship in the ‘new normal’
- AOB
- Schedule of future meetings for the academic year 2020-2021

13th April 2021:

- Welcome and apologies
- Membership updates
- Minutes of the last meeting on 17th November 2020
- Action points/Matters Arising
- WASACRE business
- Update on assessment of RS at GCSE, AS and A Level
- Youth representation on SACRE
- Update on supporting RE and collective worship in schools in the ‘new normal’
- May consultation on Draft Framework for Religion, Values and Ethics
- AOB
- Schedule of future meetings

15th June 2021:

- Welcome and apologies for absence
- Minutes from the last meeting
- Matters arising and actions
- Membership updates
- Correspondence: Welsh Government response to letter regarding delaying the new Curriculum
- Welsh Government public consultation: Guidance on the design and delivery of Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE)
- Proposed arrangements for external examinations in 2022
- WASACRE business

- Discussion of future venues for SACRE meetings
- AOB
- Schedule of dates for future meetings

Appendix 3	List of organisations to which this report is being sent
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- All schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf
- DfES
- Welsh Government
- Estyn
- Directors of Education, all other Welsh LAs
- Wales Association of SACREs
- University of Wales Trinity St David
- Welsh National Centre for Religious Education-Bangor
- Central South Consortium
- Church in Wales (Diocese of Llandaff)
- The Roman Catholic (Archdiocese of Cardiff)
- Other Churches
- Association of Religious Education Teachers in Wales
- National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth
- Religious Education Movement Wales
- Religious Education Council for England and Wales
- Cytun
- Swansea Metropolitan University
- Cardiff Metropolitan University

Aim 1: To monitor standards in Religious Education and Religious Studies.**Work with school staff to support the above and to add value to work of the SACRE***Questions to consider*

- *How well do we know how our schools and the SACRE is doing?*
- *Do we have enough information to make judgements?*
- *What else could we do?*
- *Is there any way we can support teachers' professional development –CPD?*
- *What do we need to do to help schools understand the role of SACRE?*

Areas of development	Schedule Actions to consider	People involved	Time and costs	Outcomes	Progress at June 2021
1.1 Monitor standards through regular Review of inspection reports/ Estyn thematic reviews/ school self-evaluation reports and recommend, where necessary, action by Local authority.	Annual agenda item autumn term SACRE to schedule discussions during 2021-2022 meetings on arrangements for using inspection reports to monitor standard when inspections resume and when RVE becomes part of the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience within the New Curriculum for Wales	Full SACRE Consultant	Agenda time Consultant time for strategic planning and analysis	Advice to LA on trends across the county borough; advice, where appropriate, on particular schools; follow up through school visits and review of action plan where necessary.	Inspection analysis will resume once Estyn re-instate school inspections. SACRE's consultation has kept abreast of schools requiring monitoring visits. No issues relating to RE or collective worship were raised.

Areas of development	Schedule Actions to consider	People involved	Time and costs	Outcomes	Progress at June 2021
<p>1.2 Receive information on results of: Teacher Assessment at end of Key Stage 3; GCSE Religious Studies Full and Short Course; A/AS level Religious Studies.</p>	<p>By spring term meeting 2022, SACRE to discuss Welsh Government's new arrangements for analysing data, and consider how best to keep in touch with schools to monitor standards in RE/RVE</p>	<p>Full SACRE Consultant</p>	<p>Agenda time Consultant time for strategic planning and analysis of information</p>	<p>SACRE should be in a position to offer advice to LA on trends and issues arising across the county and, where appropriate, in relation to individual schools during the next academic year</p>	<p>This data has not been scrutinised this academic year due to revised arrangements relating to the pandemic as well as Welsh Government's new arrangements for utilising comparative data.</p>
<p>1.3 Identify CPD needs, monitor and offer advice on training.</p>	<p>Ongoing during 2021-2022</p>	<p>Full SACRE</p>	<p>Agenda time Consultant time for strategic planning and delivery</p>	<p>Training programme implemented and delivered, along with figures on uptake, and feedback (with analysis) from participants; advice to LA.</p>	<p>The Lead Practitioners' Hwb for secondary Heads and teachers of RE has continued termly meetings online termly, focussing on developing resources and improving outcomes for external RS examinations, and, this year on centre-determined grades. There remains a shortage of specialist RE CPD, particularly for primary schools, and the new curriculum will continue to make demands for this. SACRE awaits definitive statutory</p>

Areas of development	Schedule Actions to consider	People involved	Time and costs	Outcomes	Progress at June 2021
					guidance from Welsh Government to move forward with this.
1.4 Involve staff in schools more closely with work of the SACRE	ongoing	Full SACRE teachers	Agenda time Consultant time	Improved understanding of all SACRE members of work in schools and better understanding of the work of the SACRE	School staff contributed to discussions on all matters of SACRE work and contributed to SACRE's responses to the two Welsh Government consultations this academic year as well as the Qualifications Wales consultation. Meetings at school venues will be reinstated as soon as this is possible. Correspondence was sent to schools to remind them of statutory duties around RE and to guide them with resources. Schools were encouraged to enter into a dialogue with/share good practice via SACRE. During the spring term 2021, SACRE's consultant reported on the work of the

Areas of development	Schedule Actions to consider	People involved	Time and costs	Outcomes	Progress at June 2021
					SACREs across the five CSCJES authorities to Directors of Education and discussed curriculum development affecting RVE.

Aim 2: To review the agreed syllabus (as appropriate) and support its implementation, taking into consideration the new curriculum arrangements for RE as they are implemented

Questions to consider

- *How will new curriculum arrangements impact actions?*
- *What support will schools need?*
- *How can SACRE members be best updated on new curriculum?*

Areas of development	Schedule	People involved	Time and costs	Outcomes	Progress
2.1 To review the agreed syllabus for Religious Education	Autumn 2021 onwards/as soon as the Welsh Government publishes definitive and final guidance for RVE in the Curriculum for Wales	Full SACRE Consultant Working group WASACRE NAPfRE	Advisory time to review the agreed syllabus. Establish a working group (if applicable). Convene a Standing Conference to adopt the syllabus Publication/ translation costs (as appropriate)	Agreed syllabus reviewed and adopted by Standing Conference. Agreed Syllabus training programme for schools. Agreed syllabus to be implemented the autumn term after adoption/on commencement of new curriculum.	Curriculum issues are discussed at termly SACRE meetings. As SACRE still unclear about potential changes with new curriculum developments this will need to be on the agenda at each meeting. SACRE still awaits definitive statutory guidance on RVE in

Areas of development	Schedule	People involved	Time and costs	Outcomes	Progress
					the new Curriculum for Wales to progress.
2.2 Materials to support implementation of the agreed syllabus for RE	Ongoing	Full SACRE Consultant	Consultant and members' time Agenda time in meetings and possible extra ordinary meetings/working parties plus the Agreed Syllabus Conference Working group/teachers	Support materials available to schools and accessed through Consortium website.	WASACRE and NAPfRE can be contacted to advise. Statutory guidance for RVE has yet to be published.
2.3 To keep updated on progress in terms of implementation of RVE in new curriculum	In line with WG implementation process	Full SACRE Consultant	Consultant time	Schools well informed and prepared to introduce new arrangements	Curriculum development is to be on each agenda. Members have participated in in-depth discussions on issues relating to the place of RVE in the New Curriculum and have contributed to 2 further WG consultations, plus one from Qualifications Wales.

Aim 3: To monitor provision and provide support for collective worship.

Questions to consider

- *Are there other ways SACRE members can monitor the above?*
- *Links with Estyn?*

Areas of development	Schedule	People involved	Time and costs	Outcomes	Progress
3.1 Monitor provision for collective worship through regular review of inspection reports/ school self-evaluation reports; recommend, where necessary, action by LA.	Annual agenda item autumn term	Full SACRE and Adviser	Agenda time Adviser time for analysis	Advice to LA on trends across the LA; advice, where appropriate, on particular schools; follow up contact and review of action plan where necessary.	This method of analysis has been unavailable this academic year but will resume once the situation in schools becomes more settled and once Estyn resumes its inspection cycle.
3.2 To support the implementation of statutory collective worship	Ongoing	Consultant, SACRE members as volunteers	Consultant time Volunteer time	Schools informed of resources and websites for collective worship. Schools informed of guidance materials available for collective worship	Schools were all provided with comprehensive guidance and direction towards resources for collective worship. Headteachers were reminded, in the accompanying correspondence of their duty to continue to provide collective worship even if social distancing/lockdown measures were in force.

Aim 4: To ensure a more informed SACRE through providing regular updates on local and national issues related to RE and collective worship in schools.

Questions to consider

- *How can SACRE member's best develop their role as a Council?*
- *In what other ways can we ensure that schools and local community understand the role and work of SACRE?*
- *What do we need to do to improve as a SACRE?*

Areas of development	Schedule	People involved	Time and costs	Outcomes	Progress
4.1 To update members on the role of SACRE and its implications; recent developments in RE/RVE and collective worship; guidance materials from relevant bodies; input from practising teachers and outside providers	Termly/ Annually as required	SACRE members, Consultant, practising teachers, outside providers	Member time; Consultant / Officer time	SACRE members fully aware of their responsibilities. SACRE and schools updated and informed of recent developments and initiatives, both local and national.	Input from teacher representatives at SACRE meetings has helped to progress this, alongside advice from SACRE's consultant and updates from WASACRE and, where appropriate, NAPfRE
4.2 Programme of school visits.	Termly/ Annually as required	SACRE members, Adviser/ Officers	Member time; Officer time to arrange visits	More informed SACRE on provision and practice regarding RE and collective worship in schools.	This has not been possible due to the pandemic. SACRE will discuss and resume its scheduled meetings at local schools in the coming academic year, as the situation permits.
4.3 To ensure that members are	Termly/Annually as required	SACRE members,	Member time; Officer time to arrange visits	see 4.1	Ongoing as development plan

Areas of development	Schedule	People involved	Time and costs	Outcomes	Progress
aware of strengths and areas for development of the SACRE		Adviser/ Officers			updated
4.4 To develop cross-SACRE working across the 5 local authorities of CSCJES Consortium	Cross-SACRE working may facilitate the development of the new agreed syllabus for RVE and may be ongoing throughout 2021-2022, with judgements made about continuation thereafter at a later date	SACRE members/ Officers and adviser	Member time, office time, adviser time	Working with other SACREs to share good practice and to gain better insight into issues around RE and collective worship across the 5 local authorities.	This development point has been necessarily put on hold to enable SACRE to fulfil its core duties during the challenging circumstances this year, not only in relation to Covid-19 but also in regard to supporting three consultations on RVE.
4.5 To develop ways of involving the County's learners' engagement with SACRE and explore the possibility of a 'Youth SACRE'	ongoing	SACRE members, teachers, co-opted youth members	Member time, officer time, teachers' time, consultant time for strategic planning	Working with schools in the local authority to explore how best to engage young people with the work of SACRE, to enable them to have a meaningful voice around future developing affecting RVE and collective worship.	SACRE has worked with one of the LA's secondary schools and has co-opted a young person onto the SACRE. From here, SACRE will explore how best to develop youth involvement for the benefit of pupils across the LA.

CONSTITUTION OF RHONDDA CYNON TAF SACRE
Terms of reference

1. To advise the LA on matters connected with collective worship in county schools.
2. To advise the LA on matters connected with religious education, which is given in accordance with the agreed syllabus.
3. To decide when, within the five-year statutory time scale, the LA should review its agreed syllabus.
4. To consider with the LA and the Agreed Syllabus Conference any changes required to the agreed syllabus.
5. To consider with the LA the support offered to religious education in its schools, with particular regard to methods of teaching, the choice of teaching materials and the provision of training for teachers.
6. To offer advice on any other matters related to its function as it sees fit.
7. To publish an annual report on its work, which must:
 - specify any matters on which it has advised the LA;
 - broadly describe the nature of the advice;
 - set out its reasons for offering advice on any matters which were not referred to it in the first place by the LA.

The report should also follow the current guidance from Welsh Government on its structure and information that should be included in the report.

8. To participate in the LA's statutory complaints procedures in those instances where the complaints relate to religious education and/or collective worship.
9. To receive and make determinations in respect of applications from headteachers of county schools for the lifting or modifying of the requirements that collective worship in such schools must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

Composition and Membership

10. The Council shall comprise persons appointed by the local authority to represent respectively:
 - a) Such Christian and other religious denominations as, in the opinion of the LA, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area.
 - b) Such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the LA, ought to be represented having regard to the circumstances of the area.
 - c) The LA.

The Council may also include co-opted members.

In order to qualify for membership of RCT SACRE, all members must either reside within Rhondda Cynon Taf or be employed by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council.

Rhondda Cynon Taf SACRE has agreed the following membership:

Representatives from religious traditions and denominations.

To optimise the efficiency of the SACRE, membership is sought from a wide range of religious traditions.

14 places from a range of religions and denominations which could include but is not restricted to:

- The Church in Wales
- The Roman Catholic Church
- Free Churches
- Bahá'í Faith
- Buddhism
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Judaism
- Sikhism

Teacher representatives

The relevant statutory provision gives discretion to the authority to determine which associations are to represent teachers and will therefore include.

10 places from a range of teacher associations.

The LA

6 members representing the local authority.

Co-opt members (with no voting rights)

Up to 4 members who have an interest in religious education and collective worship and can assist the committee in its functions.

11. Membership of the Council shall be for a period of four years. Any outgoing members may be re-appointed.
12. Membership of the Council is subject to the condition that the LA has taken all reasonable steps to assure itself that the persons appointed are representative, as the case may be, of the denominations or associations in question.
13. Members representing associations of teachers must include teachers of religious education.

14. Individuals may be removed from the Council if they cease to be representative of the denomination, association or of the Authority they were appointed to represent.
15. Any member of the Council may at any time resign his or her office.

Procedure

16. The Council shall meet not less than once in each school term.
17. Meetings are open to members of the public unless confidential information is to be disclosed.
18. RCT SACRE is a member of WASACRE (the Welsh Association of SACREs). It shall nominate up to four members, including the RE Consultant, to represent the SACRE at WASACRE meetings.
19. The Council shall elect from its membership a chairperson and vice chairperson at the first meeting in each academic year. The chairperson and vice chairperson in any one year shall not be drawn from the same representative group. An outgoing chairperson may be re-appointed.
20. On any question to be decided by the Council only the representative groups on the Council shall be entitled to vote, and each group shall have a single vote. Before a formal vote is taken opportunity shall be given to each representative group to determine how its vote is to be cast. Resolutions shall be passed to the education department as appropriate.
21. Co-opted members are not entitled to vote.
22. The agenda for each meeting shall be determined by the chairperson and vice chairperson in consultation with the clerk to SACRE, Director of Education Representative and Professional Officer. Any voting member of SACRE shall be entitled to propose items for an agenda.
23. In the case of any member not being able to attend a Council meeting, a substitute may be nominated by the body which that person represents, provided that the substitute meets the eligibility criteria and the Education Directorate of the LA and the Clerk to SACRE is notified in advance of the meeting.
24. A meeting of the Council will be deemed to be quorate if at least one member of each of the three representative groups is present. The validity of proceedings of the Council shall not be affected by a vacancy in the office of any member of the Council.
25. The representative groups on the Council, other than that representing the local authority, may call, at any time, for a review of the agreed syllabus current in the

Authority. At such time, an Agreed Syllabus Conference shall be constituted and convened.

26. The Council shall consider its annual report at the first meeting to be held in each academic year. Upon the Council's ratification of the report, it shall proceed to publication.
27. The clerk to the SACRE shall arrange for copies of the annual report to be sent to all county schools within the authority, to DfES, the National Library and to such other individuals and institutions as the LA sees fit.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH JULY 2022

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE SERVICES, COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS

Item: STANDARD ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Background Papers

None

Officer to contact: Martyn Silezin, 14-19 Strategy Officer (Tel: 07508 472085)



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th JULY 2022

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OFFICERS REVIEW

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES, COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS

Author: Daniel Williams, Head of Attendance and Wellbeing Service

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on the implementation of the Family Engagement Officer (FEO) pilot in RCT and outline three options for furthering this work. The reports also considers the wider work of Family Engagement in RCT schools and the work ongoing toward Community Focussed Schools.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the positive impact of the pilot of Family Engagement Officer roles as contained in the report.
- 2.2 Consider the options presented for further extension of the project, and agree Option 3, to deploy the additional Welsh Government funding based on the highest identified need and to benefit pupils across all phases - primary, secondary and Pupil Referral Unit learners.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The recent announcement by Welsh Government of funding for Family Engagement Officers, in addition to the funding previously agreed by Cabinet and match funded by schools, has allowed the expansion of the scheme.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In the academic year 2018/19, secondary school attendance (including special schools) in RCT declined 0.1% from the previous year to 92.8%. This is the lowest point since the 2012/13 academic year and placed RCT 22nd in the all-Wales attendance table.

- 4.2 As a result of declining figures in recent years, attendance was made a RCT priority. To ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are supported, the Education and Inclusion Services Directorate identified a model of best practice within our Primary Schools that was considered beneficial to supporting attendance in secondary settings, as well as enhancing relationships with parents/carers in our settings with the greatest engagement challenges. This model is based around the role of Family Engagement Officers and the proposal drew of the good practice that was evident in Glenboi Primary School.
- 4.3 On 13th February 2020, a proposal was approved by Cabinet to fund a pilot across six secondary/through schools. These schools, included:
- Porth Community School (Red)
 - Aberdare Community School (Red)
 - Mountain Ash Comprehensive School (Amber)
 - Ferndale Community School (Amber)
 - Tonyrefail Community School (Yellow)
 - Ysgol Nantgwyn (Yellow).
- 4.4 The rationale for these six schools was a combination of attendance and deprivation data. They were the six lowest performing schools for secondary mainstream attendance in 2018/19, with five also being the lowest performing schools for attendance in the previous academic year as well. All but Porth Community School ranked in the five most deprived secondary/through schools when looking at datasets from the WIMD at the time of proposal. Porth Community School ranked 8th. The two schools falling in 6th and 7th place were Hawthorn High School and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda. However, attendance at these schools was significantly higher in the 2018/19 academic year.
- 4.5 Cabinet approved £174,000 for the employment of the six positions with an April 2020-August 2021 window for the pilot to take place. As specified in the original proposal, the positions were to be managed by each school with a bespoke action plan created and reports being centrally monitored by the Head of the Attendance and Wellbeing Service.
- 4.6 In June 2021, the initial pilot was brought back before Cabinet for review. At this stage, due to the impact of COVID-19, Cabinet agreed to an extension of the pilot for an additional year at secondary/through schools and the introduction of a 24-month primary pilot for 13 settings on a match-funded basis. This was on an equal split basis with 50% funding from reprioritisation of existing and one-off resources by Cabinet and 50% from school budgets. The primary settings chosen for inclusion in the pilot were:
- Pontygwaith Primary School
 - Penywaun Primary School
 - Perthcelyn Community Primary School
 - Trealaw Primary School
 - Maerdy Primary School
 - Penrhys Primary School
 - Pontrhondda Primary School

- Tref-y-Rhyg Primary School
- Tylorstown Primary School
- Heol y Celyn Primary School
- Pengeulan Primary School
- Penpych Primary School
- Penrhiwceibr Primary School.

4.7 Due to underspend from the original secondary/through pilot caused by the pandemic, a further extension of the FEO pilot into the 2022/2023 academic year has been possible. The 2022/2023 continuation will bring the secondary/through school pilot in line with the primary pilot on a match-funded basis and with an anticipated end date of both in August 2023.

5. DELIVERY AND OUTCOMES OF THE PILOT

5.1 As outlined in the feedback report in June 2021, the initial aim of the pilot was to focus on attendance. However, the onset of the pandemic has made it extremely difficult for schools to provide full school comparisons as attendance has deteriorated since this time. This is not to say however that the roles of FEO's have not had significant impacts within their schools and school communities. The primary focus was built upon this rationale that those in our most deprived areas, may need additional support during this time.

5.2 Some schools have been met with challenges including a difficulty to recruit, or staff leaving for new positions. At the time of writing, this has left one vacancy in a secondary school, one vacancy in a primary school and another primary school which has chosen not to take part in the pilot. The funding not used as a result has been reinvested into the pilot in line with the action outlined in 4.7 above.

5.3 In all schools, there has been bespoke interventions to suit the local need but also commonality in the strategic approach. These can be summarised under the following headings.

5.4 Attendance

5.4.1 In all schools, the drive to improve attendance has been made a specific action for FEO involvement. In most schools this took the form of data-led analysis of their current cohort and then targeting those the school deemed most in need. This has taken various forms including targeted support for eFSM pupils; gender targeted support; CLA support; EAL support; those persistently late; and those where wellbeing assessments have shown a need.

5.4.2 All schools which have had FEO's in place for longer than a term, have identified some improvement in attendance with individuals targeted, cohorts targeted or whole school improvements. However, the rates of success do vary.

5.4.3 In the most recent returns from schools, those for spring term 2021/22, a sample of improvements from targeted support include:

- **Mountain Ash Comprehensive School** – targeted cohort: eFSM girls. 47 identified for support with baseline PERMA assessments and parent and form tutor questionnaires. 28 of the 47 (59.6%) improved their attendance. This included 6 pupils improving by over 30% and one pupil who now has attendance above 93%.
- **Porth Community School** – targeted cohort: persistently absent pupils identified from year 6 in feeder schools. 13 pupils identified for support. Attendance average has increased from 69% to 78.8%.
- **Heol y Celyn** – targeted cohort: those in need of attendance and/or wellbeing support. 32 children supported. 70% of those are eFSM. 15% CLA. Following FEO intervention, 67% improved their attendance. 30% have retained this attendance above 95%. Of the 32, 31 have received emotional intervention through ELSA or Thrive approaches with 30% removed from support as it is no longer needed.

5.5 Supporting Families and the Community

5.5.1 The wider aim of the pilot is to support family and community engagement with schools.

5.5.2 In recent months, this has also become a focus area for Welsh Government which has placed RCT in a positive position due to the early adoption of this pilot. On the 21st March 2022 the Education and Welsh Language Minister, Jeremy Miles, announced investment in Community Focused Schools is a Programme for Government Commitment and pledged £25m investment across Wales this financial year with £4.9m toward Family Engagement Officers.

5.5.3 The funding for RCT is proposed for use to extend the longevity of the pilot in place. Schools not currently part of the pilot have been encouraged to look at employing their own Family Engagement Officers where there are surplus budgets as a result of increased Welsh Government funding in recent years.

5.5.4 The impact of FEO focus on family and community engagement is already evident in schools through universal support for learners and their families. Although not targeted directly at supporting pupil attendance, this increased focus to support families does have attendance impacts. Examples of this support are below:

- **Maerdy Primary** – FEO has been used to support whole school attendance. They have introduced attendance circles, regular discussions with parents, awards systems and reward trips. This has supported the school to improve from 86% attendance in the autumn term to 89% in the spring term. The school was also able to successfully

apply for Winter of Wellbeing funding and ran after-school activities organised by the FEO with 92% of all pupils accessing these sessions.

- **Penrhiwceibr Primary** – FEO has offered support for Adult Education including digital literacy lessons, made links with a Community Potential Project Officer for support for parents into work and linked with First Campus to engage year 6 pupils in a project to support their understanding of Further and Higher Education. This has supported whole school attendance to increase from 92.7% in autumn term to 94.6% in spring.
- **Penpych Primary** – the school and the FEO have been working with a range of organisations to offer support to pupils, families, and the community. This includes the Big Bocs Bwyd initiative due to launch in the summer term, as well as working closely toward the Heart of the Community Award and the Making Monsters Educational Theatre programme which addresses serious issues affecting children and young people. Attendance in September 2021 was just 78.5% but at present is 86.6%.

6. **WIDER FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND AGENCIES ENGAGEMENT**

- 6.1 As outlined in 5.5.2, Welsh Government has begun to place increasing focus on family and community engagement particularly Community Focussed Schools. This is also an area of increased focus in RCT in recent years. This includes support for Family Engagement Officers and the continued rollout to 10 schools of the Big Bocs Bwyd scheme to name just two initiatives.
- 6.2 As a result of this increased focus, we have surveyed our schools during the summer term to better understand their approach to family and community engagement and how they utilise their buildings as hubs for community activity. We split the survey into three areas – family engagement, community engagement, and agency engagement. A wider summary of results is included in Appendix One.
- 6.3 To the date of writing we have received 96 responses to the survey which is 83.5% of education establishments in RCT. The breakdown is as follows:
- Primary – 80 responses
 - Secondary – 10 responses
 - Through – 1 response
 - PRU – 2 responses
 - Special - 3 responses.

6.4 **Family Engagement**

- 6.4.1 The majority of respondents (61.5%) indicated that they already have explicit reference in their School Improvement Plans to how they will work with families to improve the wellbeing and achievement of all pupils. The most common

approaches utilised to strengthen family engagement across all schools included regular communication with parents (100%), providing resources to parents to support learning at home (88.5%) and annual parental voice strategies (81.3%) respectively.

- 6.4.2 Schools told us that the overwhelming majority offer support to parents that will, in turn, help parents to support their child's learning at home (96.9%). However, only half of our schools offer tailored workshops to parents as a tool. Of those that do, the main themes are the development of literacy (83.3%), development of numeracy (64.6%) and emotional health and wellbeing (52.1%) are the most popular workshop subject areas. Other subject areas offered include Welsh language development, digital skills and speech and language support. The frequency of the tailored workshops varied with the most popular frequency being termly (39.6%).
- 6.4.3 The vast majority of schools do not offer parenting programs on site (however 26% do). Schools also undertake consultation with parents/carers mainly via surveys (85.4%) rather than face to face consultation (14.6%). This could prove problematic for parents/carers where literacy levels means it is difficult to engage with a survey. However, this preference may be due to the nature of the pandemic where face to face consultation became more difficult to arrange. Termly consultation was the most popular timeframe for consultation from our schools (40.6%).
- 6.4.4 Including the 18 schools currently engaged with the FEO pilot described above, 35 schools indicated that they employ a Family Engagement Officer. 51 schools (53.1% of respondents) also indicated that they have a senior lead for developing Family and Community Engagement. This shows that schools outside of the pilot have already placed emphasis on engaging with families and communities as part of their offer.

6.5 **Community Engagement**

- 6.5.1 Most schools (61.5%) do not explicitly reference how they work with the community to improve the wellbeing and achievement of pupils within their School Improvement Plans.
- 6.5.2 However, the majority of schools do offer activities or services to children outside of the school day (82.3%). This includes after school and sport clubs, debate clubs, revision and catch-up classes, Welsh language clubs as well as forest schools and ELSA support. Some (34.4%) of our schools also offer activities or services to children during the school holidays. This includes playgroups, holiday childcare provision, continued YEPS provision as well as performing arts and sporting initiatives.
- 6.5.3 However, only a minority (20.8%) offer activities/services to families or the community outside of the school day with only 13.5% also providing an offer during the school holidays. 28 of the 96 schools surveyed provide the use of

school assets for wider community use with 11 offering during school hours, 9 offering outside of school hours, and 8 offering both during and outside.

- 6.5.4 Adult Community Learning (ACL) opportunities on school sites are fairly limited. These take place on only 8 school sites from those who responded to the survey. This is a potential area for further development across our internal services to ensure ACL opportunities are accessible within our local communities that also develop wider family and community engagement for our schools. An email gauging interest from schools in this area was sent on the 8th June 2022. 34 schools identified a dedicated community room available for parents and families to use which suggests there is wider capacity for ACL opportunities.
- 6.5.5 At time of writing, 42 schools have indicated their wish to house further ACL opportunities on their school sites. Central government Multiply funding is currently being looked at as a possible avenue to support this and we are in discussion with partners around potential project ideas. This forms part of the Shared Prosperity Fund and the Interventions List for Wales highlights a potential avenue that fits well with our Community Focussed School ambition through 'W45: Courses for parents wanting to increase their numeracy skills in order to help their children, and help with their own progression.'
- 6.5.6 There is also potentially wider opportunities that could be explored with third sector organisations. 23 schools stated third sector partners regularly work from their school and these ranged from Cylch Meithrin and Flying Start provisions to childcare, sports clubs and performing arts and dance groups. However, only 13 schools indicated that services are co-located at their schools. Wider integration with public sector and third sector partners could develop these opportunities further which would hold multiple benefits for the organisations, schools and service user.

6.6 **Agency Engagement**

- 6.6.1 47.9% of schools who responded indicated that their School Improvement Plan makes explicit reference to working with agencies to improve the wellbeing and achievement of all pupils. They achieve this through various means including wellbeing provision mapping and CfW community transformation programmes.
- 6.6.2 The majority of schools (61.5%) have a designated member of staff with responsibility for developing and improving multi-agency working as part of their roles and responsibilities.
- 6.6.3 33 of the 96 schools provide wrap around provision before/after school on the school site.
- 6.6.4 Of the schools responded, many offered varying strategic initiatives they employ to develop mental health, well-being and support services as a whole system model. This includes linking closely with statutory and third sector

partners including Eye 2 Eye counselling, Dementia Friends, FareShare Cymru (particularly in relation to Big Bocs Bwyd projects) and Foodbanks as well as in-house programmes such as ELSA and Thrive as part of a graduated response to wellbeing needs.

- 6.6.5 Further development is needed across our schools to understand the strategic initiatives in place and how to further develop and evaluate these within their own settings. Areas which schools indicated they would be keen to develop include those around mental health provision with particular emphasis on supporting pupils and parents/carers.

7. OPTIONS

- 7.1 As part of the Welsh Government announcement outlined in 5.5.2, the Council has been awarded £341,237.23 for the expansions of Family Engagement Officers.

- 7.2 In each of the 3 options outlined below, we propose to engage with schools on a match-funded basis (50/50 split) for Grade 6 officers at 32.5 hours per week. The Welsh Government funding will enable the extension of Family Engagement support to an additional 13 schools for a further two-year period between September 2022-August 2024. There will be a continuation of the same expectation of termly reports and close working with the Attendance and Wellbeing Service.

7.3 Option One – Extension to all secondary/through schools

- 7.3.1 Secondary attendance since the start of the pandemic has been a cause for concern with rates far below those seen prior to the pandemic. For example, secondary attendance in RCT this academic year from start of the year to Whitsun Half Term is 85.1%. In the comparative period for the last year not impacted by COVID-19, 2018/19 academic year, attendance was 92.7%. Of particular concern is the rate of attendance for Free School Meals pupils across all secondary settings with the gap between eFSM and non-eFSM pupil attendance of 10.8%. This has more than doubled from pre-pandemic levels.

- 7.3.2 This option would look to enhance family engagement provision across all secondary/through settings on a match-funded basis (50/50 split between LA and school budgets). Those 6 schools who were part of the original pilot will continue as planned until August 2023. Those coming into the pilot we would look for a 2-year agreement running from September 2022-August 2024. In a similar vein to the original pilots, we would expect schools involved to show how they may sustain the FEO provision beyond the lifetime of the 2-year agreement.

- 7.3.3 As there are only 11 additional secondary/through settings, this proposal also suggests that we include Ty Gwyn Education Centre and Tai Education Centre as part of the proposal as the 12th and 13th settings. As PRUs, these settings

engage with children through specialist provision where behaviours or attitudes may be challenging. Ty Gwyn has had particular challenges around attendance and enhancement of the family engagement work at the Centre could better support relations with families. Tai Education Centre similarly serves a large geographic area and therefore a dedicated resource for family engagement could support the setting further.

7.4 **Option Two – Extension to additional primary settings**

7.4.1 The evidence behind the effectiveness of FEO's at primary level is longer standing than those at secondary level and can be seen in quoted evidence from Estyn inspections in some RCT primary schools. The ability to engage with parents at primary level is also often a more straightforward task due the ability to liaise with parents at the school gates at drop off and pick up times. An aspect often missing in secondary education due to the nature of how pupils then travel to and from school.

7.4.2 In the previous Cabinet paper to extend the pilot to primary schools we provided a rationale for inclusion based on a scoring system. This scoring system took the % of pupils living in deprived areas according to the WIMD coupled with the historic attendance of the school.

7.4.3 This option proposes to re-use that system with updated attendance information to contain attendance for this academic year to the end of spring term 1. This is included in Appendix Two.

7.4.4 By discounting those schools already part of the pilot that started in September 2022 and those schools who have informed us that they already have a Family Engagement Officer. The following schools are proposed for inclusion:

- Capcoch Primary School
- Bodringallt Primary School
- Hendreforgan Primary School
- Ynysboeth Primary School
- Cymmer Primary School
- Darrenlas Primary School
- Miskin Primary School
- St Margaret's RC Primary School
- Trerobat Primary School
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bodringallt
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn Y Forwyn
- Parc Lewis Primary School
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Abercynon.

7.5 **Option Three – Primary, Secondary and PRU Settings**

- 7.5.1 The third option is a hybrid consideration of Options One and Two above and proposes that resources are targeted at the primary, secondary and PRU establishments in most need following the same rationale as above. We propose to include resources for 3 additional secondary settings, 1 PRU and 9 primary settings. This provides resources at all phases and bases the rationale for inclusion for the settings most in need at each phase.
- 7.5.2 In this option we propose to include Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda at secondary level. The rationale for inclusion of these three schools is the current difficulties faced with attendance as outlined in Appendix Three. Discounting those schools already included in the ongoing pilot, these are the next three schools in terms of need.
- 7.5.3 Option Three would also include Ty Gwyn Education Centre which has faced attendance difficulties over a number of years which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Due to the geographical nature of learners attending the setting, family engagement can be central to ensuring attendance and wellbeing needs are met for pupils whilst also ensuring that families engage with the setting even where geography may make this difficult.
- 7.5.4 At primary level we would therefore choose the next 9 schools outlined in Appendix Two that have the highest combined deprivation and attendance score on the same rationale outlined in Option 1 and the previous primary pilot. This would include:
- Capcoch Primary School
 - Bodringallt Primary School
 - Hendreforgan Primary School
 - Ynysboeth Primary School
 - Cymmer Primary School
 - Darrenlas Primary School
 - Miskin Primary School
 - St Margaret's RC Primary School
 - Trerobart Primary School.
- 7.5.5 Option 3 is the preferred option of the author as it targeted support at various levels based on need and build upon the pilots already in existence at both primary and secondary level. This will give us a wider knowledge base to determine the effectiveness of Family Engagement Officer roles going forward and help us share best practice amongst our schools.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been needed for collation of the FEO pilot outcomes or the school survey undertaken.

9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Not applicable. Surveys were available to schools in both Welsh and English but the results of these do not impact on the Welsh language.

10. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

10.1 The survey undertaken with schools outlined in section 6 is included in summary as Appendix One. The pilot was previously approved by Cabinet.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

11.1 There are no additional financial implications beyond those considered previously by Cabinet for the pilot implementation. However, the report does propose a realignment of this funding due to the income received from Welsh Government.

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

12.1 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

13. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

13.1 The addition of further resources in the form of Family Engagement Officers will meet the objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan for People by 'ensuring People are independent, healthy and successful' through improving services for children and young people as well as their families. It will also meet the Prosperity target by ensuring we have good schools so all children have access to a great education.

13.2 The rollout of an additional 13 Family Engagement Officers will meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 by fostering school and community relations to create a Wales of cohesive communities while improving the prosperity and resilience of our children, young people and families.

14. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

14.1 The proposal is strategic to increase the number of Family Engagement Officers in RCT and comes as a result of previous Cabinet decisions and incoming Welsh Government funding.

15. CONCLUSION

15.1 Although the initial focus of the Family Engagement Officer pilot focused on attendance, it quickly became clear that the COVID-19 pandemic raised multiple barriers to engagement in education and learning which were experienced by all learners but particularly with our most vulnerable families.

- 15.2 Welsh Government has recognised the need for schools to become more community focussed and has provided funding to extend Family Engagement Officer provision in line with the prioritisation provided by RCT over the last two and a half years.
- 15.3 We are seeking agreement to reprioritise the resources previously agreed with Cabinet to extend the provision along one of the options outlined with a preference for Option Three. It is felt that this would have the greatest benefit by targeting support to the areas felt most in need at the time of writing.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Children and Young People Scrutiny

Contact Officer

Daniel Williams, Head of Attendance and Wellbeing Service (Tel: 01443 744298)

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th JULY 2022

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES, COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS

Item: **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OFFICERS REVIEW**

Background Papers

Consideration for Family Engagement Officer Roles, Cabinet, 13th February 2020. Report of the Director of Education and Inclusion Services in Discussions with the Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion Services (Councillor Mrs J Rosser).

Consideration for Family Engagement Officer Roles - Feedback, Cabinet, 17th June 2021. Report of the Director of Education and Inclusion Services in Discussions with the Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion Services (Councillor Mrs J Rosser).

Officer to contact:

Daniel Williams, Head of Attendance and Wellbeing Service (Tel: 01443 744298)

Appendix One

Summary of Survey Results (Open ended questions have been omitted)

1. Do you have explicit reference in your school improvement plans to how you will work with *families* to improve the wellbeing and achievement of all pupils?

Yes 59

No 37

2. What approaches have you used to strengthen family engagement within your setting?

Regular communication with families 96

Provide parents with resources to support the learning at home 85

Workshops opportunities for parents to support children's learning at home 54

Family volunteering opportunities 24

Family participation in school events 65

Communications that support different cultures and languages 30

At least annual parental voice strategies to help shape what you do in school 78

Other 20

3. Does the school offer support to parents to encourage them to support their child's learning at home?

Yes 93

No 3

4. Does your school offer tailored workshops to parents?

Yes 48

No	48
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5. If yes, what type of tailored workshop does your school provide?

Development of literacy	40
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Development of numeracy	31
-------------------------	----

Emotional health and wellbeing	25
--------------------------------	----

Welsh Language	4
----------------	---

Digital skills	21
----------------	----

Speech and language	11
---------------------	----

6. How frequently do you offer tailored workshops?

Weekly	7
--------	---

Half-Termly	4
-------------	---

Termly	19
--------	----

Annually	18
----------	----

7. Are parenting programs run on your school site?

Yes	25
-----	----

No	71
----	----

8. How does the school consult with parents?

Parental surveys	82
------------------	----

Face to face consultation	14
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9. How frequently does the school consult with parents?

Weekly	12
--------	----

Half-Termly	10
-------------	----

Termly	39
--------	----

Annually	35
----------	----

10. Does your school have a Family Engagement Officer (FEO)?

Yes	35
-----	----

No	61
----	----

11. Do you have explicit reference in your school improvement plan to how you will work with the *community* to improve the wellbeing and achievement of all pupils?

Yes	37
-----	----

No	59
----	----

12. Does your school currently offer activities or services to children outside of the school day?

Yes	79
-----	----

No	17
----	----

13. Does your school currently offer activities or services to children during the school holidays?

Yes	33
-----	----

No	63
----	----

14. Does your school currently offer activities or services to families/ the community outside of the school day?

Yes	20
-----	----

No	76
----	----

15. Does your school currently offer activities or services to families / the community during the school holidays?

Yes	13
-----	----

No	83
----	----

16. Does your school offer or co-ordinate any adult community learning (ACL) opportunities?

Yes	8
No	88

17. Does your school have a dedicated community room available for parents and families to use?

Yes	34
No	62

18. Do any third sector organisations regularly work from your school?

Yes	23
No	73

19. Do you provide school assets for wider community use?

Yes - during school hours	11
Yes - outside of school hours	9
Yes - both during school hours and outside of school hours	8
No	68

20. Does the school have any services co-located at your school e.g. police, health, GP, YEPs

Yes	13
No	83

21. Does the school have a senior lead for developing family and community engagement?

Yes	51
No	45

22. To what extent does the school have a vision and plan for family and community engagement (1 being no vision and 5 being clear vision and plan)

3.48

23. As a school do you have explicit reference in your school improvement plan to how you will work with *agencies* to improve the wellbeing and achievement of all pupils?

Yes	46
-----	----

No	50
----	----

24. In your school do you have a designated member of staff with responsibility for further improving multi-agency working as part of their roles and responsibilities?

Yes	59
-----	----

No	37
----	----

25. Does your school provide wrap around provision before/after school on your school site?

Yes	33
-----	----

No	63
----	----

Primary Settings Deprivation and Attendance Data

School	% in 10% most deprived	% in 20% MD	Deprivation Rank (1 being highest w/in 20%)	Attendance % 2021/22 up to Whitsun Half Term	Attendance Rank (1 being lowest)	Deprivation & Attendance (Lowest = most need)
Pontygwaith Primary School	38%	97%	1	86.5%	5	6
Penywaun Primary School	91%	92%	6	85.5%	3	9
Penpych Primary School	21%	93%	4	87.5%	9	13
Perthcelyn Community Primary School	69%	91%	7	87.3%	8	15
Pontrhondda Primary School	65%	69%	16	82.1%	1	17
Penrhys Primary School	89%	91%	8	87.7%	14	22
Capcoch Primary School	5%	88%	10	88.0%	17	27
Maerdy Primary School	93%	94%	3	88.6%	24	27
Tref Y Rhyg Primary School	82%	82%	12	87.7%	15	27
Cwmclydach Community Primary School	56%	56%	27	85.0%	2	29
Glenboi Primary School	77%	90%	9	88.1%	20	29
Craig Yr Hesg Primary School	45%	61%	21	87.6%	12	33
Tylorstown Primary School	73%	96%	2	89.3%	32	34
Bodringallt Primary School	47%	47%	31	86.2%	4	35
Hendreforgan Primary School	57%	61%	22	87.7%	13	35
Hirwaun Primary School	52%	53%	28	86.8%	7	35
Ynysboeth Primary School	70%	73%	14	88.3%	21	35
Heol Y Celyn Primary School	51%	67%	18	88.4%	23	41
Cymmer Primary School	65%	66%	19	88.6%	25	44

School	% in 10% most deprived	% in 20% MD	Deprivation Rank (1 being highest w/in 20%)	Attendance % 2021/22 up to Whitsun Half Term	Attendance Rank (1 being lowest)	Deprivation & Attendance (Lowest = most need)
Trealaw Primary School	35%	87%	11	89.5%	34	45
Darrenlas Primary School	4%	47%	32	88.3%	22	54
Miskin Primary School	4%	34%	40	88.0%	16	56
St Margaret's RC Primary School	13%	28%	46	87.6%	11	57
Trerobart Primary School	1%	71%	15	89.9%	43	58
Cefn Primary School	59%	66%	20	89.9%	41	61
Pengeulan Primary School	24%	82%	13	90.5%	49	62
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bodringallt	51%	59%	25	89.6%	37	62
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn Y Forwyn	39%	68%	17	90.0%	45	62
Parc Lewis Primary School	12%	27%	47	88.1%	18	65
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Abercynon	22%	42%	35	89.3%	31	66
Cwmbach C in W Primary School	0%	59%	26	90.0%	44	70
Llanhari Primary School	2%	61%	23	90.6%	51	74
Hawthorn Primary School	20%	32%	42	89.4%	33	75
Gelli Primary School	17%	19%	55	88.8%	26	81
Trallwng Infants School	3%	6%	73	87.5%	10	83
Cwmbach Primary School	2%	48%	30	90.9%	54	84
Cwmaman Primary	1%	60%	24	91.1%	61	85
Penrhiwceibr Primary School	26%	93%	5	91.8%	80	85
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pontsionnorton	14%	29%	45	89.8%	40	85
Llwynypia Primary School	11%	11%	67	88.1%	19	86
Ynyshir Community Primary School	22%	25%	48	89.8%	38	86

School	% in 10% most deprived	% in 20% MD	Deprivation Rank (1 being highest w/in 20%)	Attendance % 2021/22 up to Whitsun Half Term	Attendance Rank (1 being lowest)	Deprivation & Attendance (Lowest = most need)
Aberdare Park Primary School	10%	17%	60	88.9%	28	88
Caegarw Primary School	2%	18%	58	89.2%	30	88
Cilfynydd Primary School	0%	1%	83	86.6%	6	89
Williamstown Primary School	21%	31%	44	90.0%	46	90
Penderyn Primary School	23%	24%	49	89.9%	42	91
Oaklands Primary School	2%	46%	33	91.1%	59	92
Our Lady's RC Primary School	17%	42%	36	91.0%	56	92
Treorchy Primary School	14%	19%	56	89.8%	39	95
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar	14%	34%	41	91.0%	55	96
Cwmlai Primary School	23%	23%	50	90.4%	48	98
Abercynon Community Primary School	9%	13%	64	89.5%	35	99
Coedpenmaen Primary School	3%	9%	70	89.0%	29	99
Caradog Primary School	7%	38%	38	91.1%	62	100
Penyreglyn Primary School	28%	49%	29	91.4%	72	101
Ton Infants School	11%	12%	65	89.6%	36	101
Hafod Primary School	4%	5%	75	88.8%	27	102
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tonyrefail	39%	43%	34	91.4%	71	105
Abernant Primary School	1%	17%	61	90.0%	47	108
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bronllwyn	14%	21%	54	91.0%	58	112
Llwynocrwn Primary School	14%	15%	62	90.8%	53	115
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Ynyswen	16%	38%	39	91.7%	76	115
Alaw Primary School	8%	23%	51	91.3%	69	120

School	% in 10% most deprived	% in 20% MD	Deprivation Rank (1 being highest w/in 20%)	Attendance % 2021/22 up to Whitsun Half Term	Attendance Rank (1 being lowest)	Deprivation & Attendance (Lowest = most need)
Blaengwawr Primary School	2%	22%	52	91.3%	68	120
SS Gabriel & Raphael RC Primary School	31%	39%	37	92.8%	89	126
Aberdare Town C in W Primary	6%	32%	43	92.5%	85	128
Maesycoed Primary School	3%	11%	68	91.1%	60	128
Darran Park Primary School	13%	14%	63	91.3%	67	130
Gwaunmeisgyn Primary School	20%	22%	53	91.7%	77	130
Rhigos Primary School	3%	3%	78	90.7%	52	130
Ton Pentre Junior School	12%	12%	66	91.2%	64	130
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castellau	6%	6%	74	91.0%	57	131
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llwyncelyn	16%	19%	57	91.5%	74	131
Trehopcyn Primary School	1%	1%	84	90.6%	50	134
Parc Primary School	3%	5%	76	91.2%	63	139
St Michael's RC Primary School	11%	18%	59	92.1%	82	141
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Evan James	4%	9%	71	91.3%	70	141
Llanilltud Faerdref Primary School	4%	5%	77	91.2%	65	142
Ffynnon Taf Primary School	1%	2%	81	91.3%	66	147
Cwmdar Primary School	5%	7%	72	91.8%	79	151
Llantrisant Primary School	3%	3%	79	91.8%	78	157
Llwydcoed Primary School	2%	10%	69	92.8%	88	157
Tonysguboriau Primary School	1%	1%	85	91.4%	73	158
Maesybryn Primary School	1%	1%	86	91.6%	75	161
Llanharan Primary School	0%	2%	82	91.8%	81	163

School	% in 10% most deprived	% in 20% MD	Deprivation Rank (1 being highest w/in 20%)	Attendance % 2021/22 up to Whitsun Half Term	Attendance Rank (1 being lowest)	Deprivation & Attendance (Lowest = most need)
Brynnau Primary School	0%	3%	80	92.2%	84	164
Dolau Primary School	0%	1%	87	92.2%	83	170
Pontyclun Primary School	0%	1%	88	92.7%	86	174
Gwauncelyn Primary School	0%	1%	89	92.7%	87	176
Coedylan Primary School	1%	1%	90	93.2%	91	181
Penygawsi Primary School	0%	0%	91	93.1%	90	181
Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Gymraeg Llantrisant	0%	0%	92	94.0%	92	184

Key: Schools already included in previous pilot Proposed for inclusion Option 2 Schools who already employ an FEO

Appendix Three

Secondary Attendance Start of year to end of Summer 1 2021/22

School	Attendance
Ferndale Community School	80.7%
Mountain Ash Comprehensive School	81.4%
Hawthorn High School	81.8%
Tonyrefail Community School	82.1%
Ysgol Nantgwyn	82.5%
Pontypridd High School	83.1%
Porth Community School	83.9%
Aberdare Community School	83.9%
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda	84.3%
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	85.2%
Treorchy Comprehensive School	85.2%
Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun	86.9%
Ysgol Garth Olwg	87.7%
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	88.1%
Y Pant Comprehensive School	89.7%
St John Baptist C in W High School	89.7%
Ysgol Llanhari	90.5%

Key

: Schools already included in previous pilot Proposed for inclusion Option 3

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH JULY 2022

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING (FORMERLY 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS): MUTUAL INVESTMENT MODEL – PROJECT 2

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE, COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS

Author(s):

Andrea Richards, Service Director 21st Century Schools and Transformation
Nicola Goodman, Lead for Strategic Planning and MIM

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is:

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on progress with the second batch of three primary schools proposed to be funded via the Mutual Investment Model (MIM) funding element of Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.
- 1.2 To request the approval of members to submit a New Project Request to the Welsh Education Partnership Company (WEPCo) requesting the production of a Stage 1 submission which will commence initial design work for proposed new primary school buildings for Maesybryn, Tonysguboriau and Glyn-coch via the MIM funding element of Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. These schemes will constitute the Council's second MIM project.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approve that a New Project Request be issued to WEPCo in relation to proposed new primary school buildings for Maesybryn, Tonysguboriau and Glyn-coch in accordance with the Strategic Partnering Agreement to which the Council is a party (per Cabinet Report dated the 24th of September 2020).
- 2.2 Note Cabinet's approval given at the meeting on the 22nd of June 2022 in relation to the statutory consultation on the proposed closure of Craig-Yr-Hesg/Cefn Primary Schools and the creation of a new primary school for Glyn-coch.

- 2.3 To note that agreeing to issue New Project Requests to WEPCo does not commit the Council to enter into contractual arrangements in relation to any projects. Approval to progress further or enter into any Project Agreements for any MIM Projects will be brought back before Cabinet for determination.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 These recommendations for three new primary school buildings at Glyn-coch, Maesybryn and Tonysguboriau continue the Council's ambitious school modernisation agenda are aligned with the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme's funding criteria and will seek funding via MIM (Welsh Government's revenue funding route of their Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme).
- 3.2 Delivery dates during the 2025/2026 academic year are being targeted for the proposals relating to Glyn-coch, Maesybryn and Tonysguboriau. In order to meet this date, the high-level programme envisages a New Project Request (NPR) submission during summer 2022.

4. BACKGROUND

MIM Funding

- 4.1 Members will recall that, at the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 24th of September 2020, approval was given to enter into the Strategic Partnering Agreement (SPA) with Welsh Education Partnership Co (WEPCo). WEPCo are Welsh Government's private sector partner and have been appointed to assist with the delivery of education and community facilities in Wales, under the MIM Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme (formerly 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme).
- 4.2 The Mutual Investment Model (MIM) is the revenue funding route which enables investment up to a capital value of £500 million across the whole of Wales.
- 4.3 Under the MIM, the private sector partner will build and maintain public assets, and in return the Council, supported by funding from the Welsh Government, will pay an annual revenue fee to the private partner for a 25-year contract period, which will cover the cost of construction, building maintenance and financing the project. At the end of the 25-year contract, the assets revert to the Council at no cost.
- 4.4 At the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 18th of July 2017, approval was given to submit the Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) for Band B of the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools and Colleges

Programme (now the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme). Band B has two different funding routes – a capital funding route and a revenue (MIM) funding route.

- 4.5 An updated SOP which increased the funding envelope from £167m to £252m was subsequently approved by Welsh Government and reported to Cabinet at its meeting of the 4th of October 2021 and included the three schools referenced in this current report.
- 4.6 In accordance with the Strategic Partnering Agreement, the first step in progressing any MIM project which is included within the SOP is to submit a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) to Welsh Government.
- 4.7 Once SOC approval is received, the next step in the MIM process is to submit a New Project Request (NPR) to WEPCo.

MIM Project 2 (Maesybryn, Tonysguboriau and Glyn-coch)

- 4.8 On the 13th of December 2021, Cabinet approved the submission of a Strategic Outline Case to the Welsh Government for three replacement primary schools to be funded via MIM, namely- a new community primary school for Glyn-coch (replacing Cefn and Craig-Yr-Hesg Primary Schools); a replacement community primary school for Maesybryn Primary School and a replacement community primary school for Tonysguboriau Primary School. Collectively, these schemes constitute the Council's second MIM project.
- 4.9 A Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for the proposals relating to Maesybryn, Tonysguboriau and Glyn-coch was submitted to Welsh Government on the 3rd of March 2022 and approval of the SOC was received from the Welsh Government on the 24th of May 2022.
- 4.10 Submission of the SOC for these proposals was subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation in relation to the new community primary school proposed for Glyn-coch. The statutory consultation in relation to the new Glyn-coch primary school concluded on the 11th of May 2022. Following the close of the statutory consultation an objections report was presented to Cabinet at the meeting on the 22nd of June 2022, noting one objection to the proposals. At this meeting, Cabinet approved the closure of Craig Yr Hesg and Cefn primary schools and the opening of a new community primary school in Glyn-coch.
- 4.11 The MIM process is undertaken in accordance with the Strategic Partnering Agreement and to progress these proposals and undertake initial design works and feasibility, the next step is to issue a New Project Request to WEPCo.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared in relation to the proposal to provide three new primary school buildings for Maesybryn, Tonysguboriau and Glyn-coch (Appendix 1).

5.2 No potential negative impacts have been identified affecting any of the target equality groups. In summary:

- The impact on age (particularly the younger generation) is extremely positive as they will have the full benefit of being educated in fantastic facilities fit for the 21st Century and the new Curriculum for Wales.
- The buildings will be fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010 thereby ensuring that no pupil, staff member, parent/carer or member of the wider community is prevented from fully accessing the whole extent of the new facilities.
- The provision of brand new buildings with first class facilities may encourage more parents/carers to choose their catchment school. It also affords greater educational choice which may assist armed forces personnel who may move to an area mid-academic year.
 - The new buildings and the way they are used will bring positive socio-economic impacts across all of the vulnerable groups identified under the socio-economic disadvantage headings.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been prepared in relation to the proposal to provide three new primary school buildings for Maesybryn, Tonysguboriau and Glyn-coch (Appendix 2).

6.2 In summary:

- The new English medium schools will provide improved facilities to assist with the delivery of Welsh as a key element of the curriculum and in line with Cymraeg 2050 and RCTCBC's WESP, as we aim for the teaching of Welsh as a second language in English medium schools to be of the highest quality.

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

7.1 Subject to WEPCo's acceptance of the Council's New Project Request in relation to Maesybryn, Tonysguboriau and Glyn-coch, Stage 1 of the MIM process will commence and headteachers of the three schools will

start to be involved in the initial design phases later this year. Should the projects progress further, as part of the design development, there will be full engagement with the schools, governing bodies and local elected members and relevant consultations with the wider community will be undertaken as part of the planning application process.

- 7.2 Members' approval to begin the relevant and required statutory consultation for the proposal to amalgamate the currently federated Cefn Primary and Craig-Yr-Hesg Primary Schools by closing Cefn Primary and Craig-Yr-Hesg Primary Schools and open a new maintained community primary school in Glyn-coch was provided at a Cabinet meeting on the 13th of December 2021 with consultees providing their views during the consultation period which ran from the 10th of January to the 21st of February 2022, with a statutory notice subsequently being published on the 4th of April and closing on the 11th of May 2022 (as approved by Cabinet at their meeting on the 21st of March 2022).
- 7.3 Following the close of the statutory consultation, an objections report was presented to Cabinet at the meeting on the 22nd of June 2022, noting one objection to the proposals. At this meeting, Cabinet approved the closure of Craig Yr Hesg and Cefn primary schools and the opening of a new community primary school in Glyn-coch.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 WEPCo have 20 Business Days from receipt of a New Project Request to confirm in writing whether it will prepare a Stage 1 submission and subject to WEPCo's agreement to prepare a Stage 1 submission, must develop this with the Council within a period of 3 to 6 months (as agreed between the parties).
- 8.2 In issuing each New Project Request to WEPCo, subject to WEPCo accepting the submission within the 20-day period outlined above and progressing to develop initial designs within a 3-to-6-month period thereafter, the Council is committing to paying:-
- The WEPCo Stage 1 fee which is capped (per the Strategic Partnering Agreement) at £491,342 for a primary school batch of projects with an overall value up to £40 million.
 - Site survey fees incurred at each site.
- 8.3 Should the project proceed, 65% of these fees will be funded via Welsh Government. Should the Council decide not to proceed, the Council are liable to pay 100% of costs incurred up to that date. This will be funded from existing resources already included within Education and Inclusion Services capital programme.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 Part 1 of the Education Act 1996 (“the 1996 Act”) imposes a number of general duties on all local authorities in Wales. The general duty in section 13 of the 1996 Act is to contribute (so far as the Council’s powers enable them to do so) towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient primary education and secondary education are available to meet the needs of the population of their area.
- 9.2 Section 13A(3) of the 1996 Act states that a local authority in Wales must ensure that their relevant education functions and their relevant training functions are exercised by the authority with a view to promoting high standards and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential by every person to whom the subsection applies, including those who are of compulsory school age or are below school age and are registered as pupils at schools maintained by the authority.
- 9.3 Section 14 of the 1996 Act then requires the Council to secure sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education in the Council’s area. Schools available for an area shall not be regarded as sufficient unless they are sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity for appropriate education.
- 9.4 Appropriate education means education which offers such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of (a) the pupils’ different ages, abilities and aptitudes; and (b) the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school, including practical instruction and training appropriate to their different needs.
- 9.5 Powers for Councils to develop school organisation proposals are governed by the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the Code. Local authorities must, when exercising functions under Part 3 of the 2013 Act, act in accordance with any relevant requirements contained in the Code and must have regard to any relevant guidelines contained in it. A copy of the Code is found here: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/schoolorganisation-code-second-edition.pdf>

10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 10.1 There are links to RCTCBC’s Education and Inclusion Services Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2025 and its mission: ‘*To deliver equity and excellence in Education and enhanced well-being for all*’. The proposal will also support delivery against the five strategic priorities, most notably:

- Strategic Priority 2 – Supporting educational settings to deliver a transformational curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and improved outcomes for all.
- Strategic Priority 5 – Delivering 21st Century learning environments and innovative services for our learners and communities.

10.2 There are links to RCTCBC's Corporate Plan for the period between 2020 to 2024, specifically the priority:

- Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper
 - Ensuring we have good schools so all children have access to a great education.

10.3 Due regard will be made to all seven well-being goals and the Five Ways of Working, as contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, during project development.

It is expected that the project will contribute to achieving the wellbeing goals by:

- Improving sustainability of school buildings in the Council portfolio through a commitment to achieving a net zero carbon building and building to BREEAM excellent.
- Providing additional school places to meet Welsh Government targets and to promote the Welsh language in the community.
- Ensuring an inclusive and equitable education is available for all learners.
- Opening new community facilities, creating opportunities for local people to utilise.

These proposals would achieve the five ways of working by:

- Creating a new school environment that can deliver the New Curriculum for Wales as set out in the national mission statement.
- Provide first class learning facilities for pupils and the wider community and contribute towards a healthier Wales by providing additional outdoor sport facilities for pupils.
- Contributing towards a prosperous Wales by committing to opportunities for local tradespeople and to use local resources, wherever possible, to build the new school.

- Engaging with the community on a thorough consultation with opportunities for all stakeholders in the community to engage throughout the process.

10.4 An Equality Impact Assessment, including further detail on the contribution of the project to the Wellbeing of Future generations Act, is prepared for projects progressing through the Welsh Government's five-case business model process, and form an integral part of project development.

11. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

11.1 This report relates to the progression of RCTCBC's second project within Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning (formerly 21st Century Schools Band B) Mutual Investment Model (MIM) Revenue Funding Programme.

11.2 The proposal supports delivery against the five strategic priorities within RCTCBC's Education and Inclusion Services Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2025, most notably:

- Strategic Priority 2 – Supporting educational settings to deliver a transformational curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and improved outcomes for all.
- Strategic Priority 5 – Delivering 21st Century learning environments and innovative services for our learners and communities.

11.3 These proposals seek to deliver new school facilities within the electoral wards of Llanilltud Faerdref (Maesybryn Primary); Talbot Green (Tonysguboriau Primary); and Glyn-coch (Cefn and Craig Yr Hesg primary schools).

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 This Sustainable Communities for Learning MIM funding for Rhondda Cynon Taf provides an exciting opportunity for more learners and our communities to benefit from improved educational and community facilities.

12.2 The proposals for the Council's second MIM project via Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme will deliver exciting opportunities for the community focussed schools' agenda, allow more children to access education provision in 21st Century facilities capable of delivering the New Curriculum for Wales, put schools at the heart of our communities and support the Council in realising our Net Zero Carbon targets.

12.3 The Council is responsible for delivering high educational standards and efficient education provision that serves our local communities. This is achieved by ensuring that modern schools are delivered which are of a suitable size and provide learners with 21st Century learning facilities and the best possible educational opportunities. Members are therefore requested to approve the recommendations outlined in paragraph 2 and approve that the submission of a New Project Request be made to WEPCo to start the initial design process for proposals relating to Maesybryn, Tonysguboriau, and Glyn-coch.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee-

Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers-

Cabinet report 24th of September 2020

[21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme – Mutual Investment Model \(MIM\) 21st Century Schools Welsh Education Partnership – Strategic Partnering Agreement \(SPA\).](#)

Cabinet report 4th of October 2021

[21st Century Schools Programme – Band B Update](#)

Cabinet report 13th of December 2021

[21st Century Schools Programme – Proposals to Improve English Medium Primary Education Provision for Glyncoch, Tonysguboriau and Maesybryn](#)

Cabinet report 22nd of June 2022

[Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme \(Formerly 21st Century Schools\) - Proposal to amalgamate Cefn and Craig Yr Hesg Primary Schools to create a New Community Primary School](#)

Contact Officer:

Nicola Goodman, Lead for Strategic Planning and MIM - 01443 744252

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Equality Impact Assessment – Maesybryn, Tonysguboriau and Glyncoch
Appendix 2	Welsh Language Impact Assessment – Maesybryn, Tonysguboriau and Glyncoch

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH JULY 2022

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES
IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH
PARTICIPATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE, COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS**

**Item: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING (FORMERLY 21ST
CENTURY SCHOOLS): MUTUAL INVESTMENT MODEL – PROJECT 2**

Background Papers

Cabinet report 24th of September 2020
[21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme – Mutual Investment Model \(MIM\) 21st Century Schools Welsh Education Partnership – Strategic Partnering Agreement \(SPA\).](#)

Cabinet report 4th of October 2021
[21st Century Schools Programme – Band B Update](#)

Cabinet report 13th of December 2021
[21st Century Schools Programme – Proposals to Improve English Medium Primary Education Provision for Glyncoch, Tonysguboriau and Maesybryn](#)

Cabinet report 22nd of June 2022
[Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme \(Formerly 21st Century Schools\) - Proposal to amalgamate Cefn and Craig Yr Hesg Primary Schools to create a New Community Primary School](#)

Officer to contact:

Nicola Goodman, Lead for Strategic Planning and MIM - 01443 744252

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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

(Revised March 2021)

Please refer to the current Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this document. If you would like further guidance please contact the Diversity and Inclusion Team on 01443 444529.

An equality impact assessment **must** be undertaken at the outset of any proposal to ensure robust evidence is considered in decision making. This documentation will support the Council in making informed, effective and fair decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010.

This document will also contribute towards our duties to create a More Equal Wales within the

- Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015.

The [‘A More Equal Wales – Mapping Duties’](#) guide highlights the alignment of our duties in respect of the above-mentioned legislation.

SECTION 1 – PROPOSAL DETAILS

Lead Officer: Nicola Goodman

Service Director: Andrea Richards

Service Area: Education and Inclusion Services, 21st Century Schools

Date: 01/07/22

1.a) What are you assessing for impact?

Strategy/Plan	Service Re-Model/Discontinuation of Service	Policy/Procedure	Practice	Information/Position Statement
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.b) What is the name of the proposal?

New school buildings for Maesybryn and Tonysguboriau primary schools and the amalgamation of Cefn and Craig yr Hesg primary schools.

1.c) Please provide an overview of the proposal providing any supporting links to reports or documents.

In summary, the proposal is to create brand new learning environments at Maesybryn Primary School (MPS) and Tonysguboriau Primary School (TPS) on the existing school sites and to amalgamate Cefn Primary (CPS) and Craig yr Hesg (CYHPS) Primary Schools. The amalgamation will be achieved by closing the two existing primary schools, which are in poor condition, and opening a new, bigger community primary school to replace them on the existing Craig yr Hesg Primary School site and the land adjacent to it (the former site of the Ty Gwyn Pupil Referral Unit). The new schools will provide accessible learning environments fit for the 21st Century, including bright, open, flexible learning spaces to maximise the potential for learning. The new schools will be funded by the Council, in partnership with Welsh Government (WG), via the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme's Mutual Investment Model (MIM) revenue funding stream. The catchment areas of Tonysguboriau and Maesybryn schools are not proposed

to be altered. The catchment areas for Cefn and Craig yr Hesg Primary Schools are proposed to be merged to form a single catchment area for the new community primary school.

Previous report to Cabinet dated 24th September 2020 regarding the signing of a Strategic Partnering Agreement associated with the MIM process.

Previous report to Cabinet dated 4th October 2021 regarding the revised Band B Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) funding envelope.

Previous report to Cabinet dated 13th December 2021 regarding proposals to improve English medium primary education provision for Glyn-coch, Tonysguboriau and Maesybryn.

Previous report to Cabinet dated 21st March 2022, regarding a consultation on a proposal to create a new community primary school in Glyn-coch

Previous report to Cabinet dated 22nd June 2022 regarding the proposal to amalgamate Cefn and Craig yr Hesg primary schools to create a new community primary school.

1.d) Please outline where delivery of this proposal is affected by legislation or other drivers such as code of practice.

Must comply with the School Organisation Code 2018, and be subject to a statutory consultation process in the case of the amalgamation of Cefn and Craig yr Hesg primary schools.

Must comply with Building Bulletin 99.

Must comply with planning legislation.

Must successfully progress through Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools and business case approvals process to secure Welsh Government funding.

1.e) Please outline who this proposal affects:

○ Service users



- Employees
- Wider community

SECTION 2 – SCREENING TEST – IS A FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?

Screening is used to determine whether the initiative has positive, negative or neutral impacts upon protected groups. Where negative impacts are identified for protected groups then a full Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Please provide as much detail as possible of how the proposal will impact on the following groups, this may not necessarily be negative, but may impact on a group with a particular characteristic in a specific way.

Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and foster good relations between different groups. Please take an intersectional approach in recognising an individual may have more than one protected characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Age (<i>Specific age groups i.e. young people or older people</i>)	Positive	The replacement of old, dilapidated school accommodation will offer state of the art facilities fit for 21st century learning and teaching in schools in Llantwit Fardre, Talbot Green, and Glyn-coch. The construction of three new schools, with modern classrooms and the removal of mobile accommodation will:	Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout the county borough and their positive impact on the school and wider communities. For example, community facilities are very well used at Y Pant Comprehensive School by groups including Miskin

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver comfortable and attractive learning environments for children previously taught in poor condition accommodation; • Provide 21st century facilities to enable all pupils in the local communities to access learning and activities which can help develop relationships within communities. • Allow easy access to services to improve the lives of children and their families, through the provision of first-class community facilities in a location at the heart of the community. <p>Being part of a larger school will mean that pupils are more likely to be taught in classes with predominantly their own age group, enabling teachers to offer pupils a wider and more varied curriculum to support all learners, including the least and most able.</p> <p>The potential disruption to learning and teaching caused by on-site</p>	<p>Magpies (netball), Pontyclun Athletics Club, Community Wind Band and Rhondda Symphony Orchestra.</p> <p>Similarly, the sporting facilities at Tonyrefail Community School are used for basketball tournaments and for training by local rugby and football clubs; whilst the indoor community facilities are used by local choirs, for Welsh evening classes, community coffee mornings and art classes.</p> <p>The provision of new build accommodation at Tonyrefail Community School has seen a 14% increase in pupil numbers attending the new community school compared with the previous primary and secondary schools, thus providing 21st Century education facilities to even</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>building works at the schools will be minimised by the new schools being segregated from the existing school buildings. The contractor that will be undertaking the works will be experienced in working on live school sites.</p> <p>There will also be opportunity for community use of the schools and sporting facilities. In addition to offering young people in the community a wide range of positive activities to engage in, this will provide older people with the opportunity to meet up with other members of the community and engage in a range of activities that will also help to improve health and well-being and tackle social isolation and loneliness.</p>	<p>more learners. Primary pupil numbers have increased by 18%, whilst secondary (Y7-11) numbers have increased by 13%.</p>
<p>Disability <i>(people with visible and non-visible disabilities or long-term health conditions)</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>At present, all of the schools included under this proposal require improvement in order to be compliant with the Equality Act 2010.</p>	<p>Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout the county borough and their accessibility to all building users as the design of all new schools incorporates</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>As the schools will be new, they will comply with the current requirements of planning and building control legislation and will also fully comply with the Equality Act 2010 and be accessible to all. For example, should any of the buildings be two-storey, a lift will be provided, along with accessible toilets and a hygeine room on each floor. Each Learning Support Class will be provided with appropriate facilities to meet the needs of its pupils. Every social space, internally and external, will be fully accessible.</p> <p>Adjustable and height appropriate furniture is provided to ensure full inclusivity for wheelchair users.</p> <p>Signage and colour schemes are carefully considered to take account of the needs of users who are blind or visually impaired.</p> <p>Sufficient accessible parking facilities will be provided for use by staff and</p>	<p>total accessibility at the heart of the design.</p> <p>Quote from Head of Tonyrefail Community School: "Our 21st century school gives full access to all areas of the curriculum for all children and students. The building is wholly inclusive - lifts, induction loops, wide corridors, accessible toilet facilities and variable height tables and specialist units e.g. cookers and lab benches ensure independence and full access to all learning pathways".</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>visitors, in line with current guidelines.</p> <p>Flexible learning spaces and heartspaces at each of the schools will provide quieter spaces which will benefit all learners, particularly those with ALN and those pupils who are most vulnerable.</p> <p>The two Learning Support Classes (LSCs) currently based at Cefn Primary School will transfer to the new school. Similarly, Maesybryn Primary also has two LSCs on site which cater to children with autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs), which will transfer to the new school building. Pupils attending this provision will benefit from the broader range of learning experiences that a modern, 21st Century learning environment can offer. For instance, flexible heart spaces, forest schools areas, an enhanced outdoor learning environment, improved sports facilities and state-of-the-art ICT</p>	

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		facilities will offer pupils a more engaging and varied learning experience.	
Gender Reassignment <i>(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth including non-binary identities)</i>	Positive	Toilet facilities will be shared / available to all - not designated male/female.	<p>Delivery of new school buildings and the inclusion of toilets which are non-designated with full height cubicles for privacy and shared hand wash facilities have been welcomed for the numerous advantages they bring, including ease of supervision and increased convenience, inclusiveness, cleanliness, visibility, and reducing opportunities for bullying.</p> <p>Quote from Head of Tonyrefail Community School: "Our 21st Century School includes a fabulous Listed Building. This building contains fully refurbished but traditional style toilets, however, the students prefer</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			<p>to use the open plan toilets of the new build as they value how safe they feel. The children and students spoke positively about the benefits of open plan toilets during our recent Estyn Inspection and they use the facilities in a confident, modern manner. They have had a positive impact on pupil handwashing; they are easy to manage in terms of behaviour and safeguarding and provide the capacity for a pupil to access the facilities quickly whilst travelling around the school. They support our students in terms of the LGBTQ+ agenda and have the capacity to accommodate large numbers with no queues at peak times e.g. break/ lunch".</p>
<p>Marriage or Civil Partnership <i>(people who are married or in a civil partnership)</i></p>	Neutral	It is considered that this proposal will have no direct impact on people who share this characteristic.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(women who are pregnant/on maternity leave)</i>	Positive	The new school buildings will be fully accessible. They will have level access and if any of the buildings are two-storey, they will include a lift, avoiding the need for pregnant women to climb steps and stairs if they would prefer not to. The new school buildings will have an efficient and effective heating and cooling system, ensuring that the temperature can be regulated and easily controlled to suit the needs of pregnant women. Accessible toilets will provide privacy if required, and a dedicated hygiene/medical room will provide comfortable rest facilities if needed.	Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout the county borough and their positive impact on the staff, parents and the wider communities due to them being naturally ventilated and having energy efficient heating systems.
Race <i>(ethnic and racial groups i.e. minority ethnic groups, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers)</i>	Neutral	It is considered that this proposal will have no direct impact on people who share this characteristic.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic
Religion or Belief <i>(people with different religions and philosophical beliefs)</i>	Neutral	It is considered that this proposal will have no direct impact on people who share this characteristic.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<i>including people with no beliefs)</i>			
Sex <i>(women and men, girls and boys)</i>	Positive	<p>As the schools will be new, they will be more thermally comfortable with ease of internal temperature regulation which will be of benefit to staff with menopausal symptoms by providing a more comfortable environment to work in. Rest facilities will also be available via a dedicated hygiene/medical room.</p> <p>The new school buildings will be built to 'Secured by Design' standards which will mean they will be safe and secure. All areas will be well lit to ensure that individuals feel safe on site after dark. The sites will be designed to ensure that members of the community are only able to access the community areas, with access to all other areas of the school being controlled by electronic door fobs issued to authorised staff only.</p>	Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout the county borough and their positive impact on the staff, parents and the wider communities due to them being naturally ventilated and having energy efficient heating systems.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Sexual Orientation <i>(bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight)</i>	Neutral	It is considered that this proposal will have no direct impact on people who share this characteristic.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic

In addition, due to Council commitments made to the following groups of people we would like you to consider impacts upon them:

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Armed Forces Community <i>(anyone who is serving, has served, family members and the bereaved)</i>	Positive	The net increase in capacity of the schools will give parents and carers who may move into an area mid-academic year (due to a change in circumstances) greater choice of education provision.	Increased numbers of school places will result in the ability to accommodate more children.
Carers <i>(anyone of any age who provides unpaid care)</i>	Positive	The net increase in capacity of the schools will ensure sufficient places to accommodate families who may move into the area midway through an academic year. The new 21st Century	Increased numbers of school places will result in the ability to accommodate more children.

		<p>learning environments may encourage more parents / carers to choose their catchment school as opposed to schools outside of their catchment area, reducing the time, cost and environmental impacts of longer journeys.</p> <p>Young Carers will also benefit from the new school buildings. Any interventions or support sessions required could take place in the heart space's quieter areas or the interview room. The community facilities and improved external facilities will also enable a wider range of after school activities to be offered by the new school, which could offer Young Carers the opportunity for some much-needed respite.</p>	
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If the initial screening test has identified negative impacts then a full equality impact assessment (section 4) **must** be undertaken. However, if after undertaking the above screening test you determine a full equality impact assessment is not relevant please provide an adequate explanation below:

No negative impacts have been identified for protected groups. All impacts on protected groups will be either neutral or positive.

Are you happy you have sufficient evidence to justify your decision?

Yes

No

Name: Nicola Goodman

Position: Lead for Strategic Planning and MIM

Date: 01/07/22

Please forward a copy of this completed screening form to the Diversity and Inclusion Team.

PLEASE NOTE – there is a separate impact assessment for Welsh Language. This must also be completed for proposals.

Section 3 Socio-economic Duty needs only to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. Definition of a 'strategic nature' is available on page 6 of the [Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty Welsh Government Guidance](#).

SECTION 3 – SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY (STRATEGIC DECISIONS ONLY)

The Socio-economic Duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services.

Please consider these additional vulnerable groups and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- Pensioners
- Looked after children
- Homeless people
- Students
- Single adult households

- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales
- People with low literacy and numeracy
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People misusing substances
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People involved in the criminal justice system

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p>Low Income/Income Poverty (cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</p>	Positive	<p>The areas that the new schools are being built are in differing areas of deprivation.</p> <p>CPS and CYHPS are located just 0.6 miles apart, in a deprived area of Rhondda Cynon Taf. The village is split into the two Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) of Glyncoch 1 and Glyncoch 2. According to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019), Glyncoch 1, the area in which CYHPS is located, is amongst the top 3% of most deprived areas in Wales. This is further evidenced by the Free School Meals entitlement (eFSM) figures which are 50.5% for CPS and 48.4% for CYHPS (compared to the RCT average of 23.9% as at June 2022).</p> <p>MPS is located in the LSOA of Llantwit Fardre 4, which is in the top 20% least deprived areas in Wales. The eFSM figure for MPS is 8.33% (compared to the RCT average of 23.9% as at June 2022).</p>	<p>Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout the county borough and their positive impact on the school and wider communities, e.g. STEM afterschool clubs at Tonyrefail Community School.</p> <p>Wide community use of facilities at Tonyrefail School offering affordable or free community facilities.</p> <p>New schools providing facilities for school uniform recycling provision.</p>

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>TPS is located in the LSOA of Talbot Green 2, which is in the top 30% most deprived areas in Wales. This is further evidenced by the eFSM figure for TPS which is 18.13% (compared to the RCT average of 23.9% as at June 2022).</p> <p>FSM uptake at the four schools is as follows: 65.4% at CPS; 63.3% at CYHPS; 51.22% at MPS; and 70.37% at TPS. The more modern dining environments provided within the new school buildings, along with marketing and input from the respective school councils, should have a positive impact on FSM uptake and bring cost savings for families who are entitled to FSM but are currently providing their children with packed lunches at their own cost.</p> <p>The new buildings will have modern, flexible spaces offering opportunities for additional after-school provision, including homework clubs to offer further support in reducing the</p>	

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>attainment gap evidenced with eFSM learners.</p> <p>The inspiring new learning environments will have modern facilities to enable all pupils to be the best that they can be. It will encourage them to work hard to achieve their full potential and increase their chances of securing a bright future, unaffected by poverty.</p> <p>The new buildings will be accessible to the whole of the local community (regardless of income level) which could involve groups using the 21st Century facilities for meetings / classes etc. The schools included under this proposal are at the heart of their respective communities and therefore there would be no travel costs incurred getting to the facilities, thus making accessing the facilities available to all at no additional cost and bridging the gap between more and less affluent individuals / families. The proposed site of the new school for Glyn-coch is located</p>	

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>in a prominent position in the community, within the more deprived Glyncoch 1 LSOA, but within walking distance for the whole village and on a bus route. There would be no travel costs incurred in accessing the facilities, bridging the gap between more and less affluent individuals / families.</p> <p>Each of the new schools will have a dedicated community facility, and will be designed in such a way that access to the community facility, school hall and toilet provision will be safely available without the need to access the rest of the school building. Subject to the local requirements / needs, the school could be made available for adult education classes; community groups; community meetings etc, which along with the sporting facilities, will provide a valuable community resource for all. from the site of the proposed new school, meaning parents of pupils currently attending CPS will not incur</p>	

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		additional travel costs getting to the new facilities.	
<p>Low and / or No Wealth <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i></p>	Positive	<p>The larger school buildings will have larger main halls which will create additional capacity for breakfast clubs which are utilised by many facilities on low income / families just above the poverty threshold.</p> <p>The new school buildings will also have additional storage facilities which will assist with storage of school uniforms for uniform recycling schemes whereby parents / carers on lower incomes who do not qualify for the Pupil Development Grant will be able to benefit from good quality uniforms.</p> <p>Travel costs can be prohibitive for less affluent individuals. The proposals relating to MPS and TPS involve the construction of new school buildings on the existing school sites, therefore there will be no travel implications for learners attending these schools. The</p>	<p>Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout the county borough and their positive impact on availability of breakfast club places.</p> <p>Successful implementation in many schools throughout the county borough.</p>

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		proposed new school site in Glyn-coch that will accommodate pupils already attending CPS and CYHPS is located in a prominent location in the village, within walking distance for the whole community. There would be no travel costs incurred in accessing the community facilities at the site, ensuring equality of opportunity for all, regardless of wealth status.	
<p><u>Material Deprivation</u> <i>(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)</i></p>	Positive	The new school buildings will offer improved facilities for all users. The FSM uptake is 65.4% for CPS, 63.3% for CYHPS, 51.22% for MPS, and 70.37% for TPS. New dining facilities may have a positive impact upon FSM uptake as more modern dining environments will be provided. Marketing and working with the school councils can also be undertaken to further increase FSM uptake. In November 2021, the Welsh Government announced plans to introduce free school meals for all primary aged pupils. The new catering facilities will be designed to accommodate increased FSM uptake	Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout the county borough and their positive impact on FSM uptake.

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>following the introduction of the policy.</p> <p>The new schools will have additional facilities (e.g. multi-use games areas) which can be used by the schools and the wider community thereby offering increased opportunities for after school clubs / community group use and improving the health and wellbeing of individuals. The new schools will also have brand new state of the art ICT facilities which will benefit the learners and the wider community in terms of opportunities to enhance computer literacy.</p>	

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p><u>Area Deprivation</u> <i>(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport))</i></p>	Positive	<p>Maesybryn and Tonysguboriau primary schools are being rebuilt on their existing sites in the hearts of their communities therefore are accessible to their local communities on foot for most who need to visit the sites. Sufficient accessible parking facilities will also be provided for use by staff and visitors, in line with current guidelines.</p> <p>The new school for Glyn-coch will be built on the existing CYHPS site and the land adjacent to it (the former site of the Ty Gwyn Pupil Referral Unit). Whilst some pupils who currently attend CPS will live further away from the new school, the site is located in a prominent position in the community and is accessible on foot for most who need to visit the site. It is also on a bus route. Sufficient accessible parking facilities will also be provided for use by staff and visitors, in line with current guidelines.</p>	Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout the county borough and the increase in pupil numbers.

		<p>The new schools will provide the opportunity to access 21st Century facilities for educational and wider purposes in a prominent position in their respective communities. The net increased capacity of the new schools will enable more learners to benefit from these brand new facilities.</p> <p>The private sector involved in the creation of the new school buildings will be delivering community benefits by means of apprenticeships, training and job opportunities, bringing local jobs for local people and opportunities for the long-term unemployed. They will also engage in community volunteering and in-kind donations to the benefit of the local community. They will also be engaging with the school community giving learners the opportunity to engage with the contractor in STEM activities.</p>	<p>Community benefits realised by previous 21st Century Schools projects, for example at Y Pant, 47 local jobs were created, with 970 weeks of training provided and 10 apprenticeships created.</p> <p>As part of the MIM Pathfinder Project, 167 learners at Pontyclun, Penygawsi and Llanilltud Faerdref Primary Schools engaged in STEM activities delivered by RIBA.</p>
<p>Socio-economic background <i>(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)</i></p>	Positive	<p>The new schools will ensure that all families requiring English medium education in the respective local communities are given the same opportunity to access first class educational facilities, regardless of</p>	<p>Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout the county borough and their positive impact on the school and wider communities, for example,</p>

		<p>their socio-economic background. As outlined earlier in this assessment, the schools included under these proposals are in differing areas of deprivation. All areas, regardless of their levels of deprivation and poverty, deserve first-class education facilities for pupils and the wider community to enjoy and benefit from.</p> <p>The new schools will have additional facilities (e.g. multi-use games area) which can be used by the school and the wider community thereby offering increased opportunities for after school clubs / community group use and improving the health and wellbeing of individuals.</p> <p>The new schools will also have state of the art ICT facilities which will benefit the learners and the wider community in terms of opportunities to enhance computer literacy.</p>	<p>community facilities are very well used at Y Pant Comprehensive School by groups including Miskin Magpies (netball), Pontyclun Athletics Club, Community Wind Band and Rhondda Symphony Orchestra.</p>
<p>Socio-economic disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their</i></p>	Positive	<p>The new schools will positively impact upon individuals of all ages and will be accessible to all pupils, staff, parents / carers and visitors regardless of any additional requirements. Being at the heart of</p>	<p>Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout the county borough and their positive impact on the school and wider communities, including local</p>

<p><i>protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)</i></p>		<p>the communities that they serve, the schools will bring advantages overall to any individual who may be financially or materially disadvantaged, as the new schools will afford more opportunities for more children and older learners / community members to access fantastic new facilities 'on their doorstep', increasing their skills, providing opportunities for social interaction and improving the health and well-being of individuals.</p>	<p>job creation and community engagement activities as referenced above.</p>
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SECTION 4 – FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

You should use the information gathered at the screening stage to assist you in identifying possible negative/adverse impacts and clearly identify which groups are affected.

- 4.a) In terms of disproportionate/negative/adverse impacts that the proposal may have on a protected group, outline the steps that will be taken to reduce or mitigate the impact for each group identified. **Attach a separate action plan where impacts are substantial.**

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have a disproportionate / negative / adverse impact on a protected group.

- 4.b) If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible, please explain why they are not possible.

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have a disproportionate / negative / adverse impact on a protected group

- 4.c) Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning, in particular, the sources used for establishing the demographics of service users/staff.

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have a disproportionate / negative / adverse impact on a protected group

- 4.d) Give details of how you engaged with service users/staff on the proposals and the steps taken to avoid any disproportionate impact on a protected group. Explain how you have used feedback to influence your decision.

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have a disproportionate / negative / adverse impact on a protected group

- 4.e) Are you satisfied that the engagement process complies with the requirements of the Statutory Equality and Socio-economic Duties?

Yes

No

SECTION 5 – MONITORING AND REVIEW

5a) Please outline below how the implementation of the proposal will be monitored:

The element of these proposals relating to Maesybryn and Tonysguboriau primary schools are for new schools on existing sites with a total increase in capacities of less than 25%. Therefore, no formal consultation is required.

In accordance with the School Organisation Code – 2018 (011/2018), in order to amalgamate CPS and CYHPS, the Council was required to undertake a statutory consultation exercise on the closing of CPS and CYHPS and the opening of a new maintained school. The consultation period took place from 10th January to 21st February 2022, during which time residents and stakeholders were invited to provide feedback on the proposals. A statutory notice was subsequently published between the period of the 4th of April and the 11th of May 2022 and following the receipt of just one objection, Cabinet agreed to the proposal to amalgamate the two schools at their meeting held on the 22nd of June 2022.

Should these new build proposals proceed, the headteachers of MPS and TPS and the Executive Headteacher of CPS and CYHPS will be involved in initial design discussion and scoping requirements and the governors, pupils, staff, and parents/carers of all of the schools included under these proposals will be afforded the opportunity to provide input on the projects in order to ensure they have a voice in how the new schools will look following completion.

Officers from the Council's 21st Century Schools Team within Education and Inclusion Services and the Council's Corporate Estates Team will monitor the proposal throughout the design development period, construction period and operational period by engaging in meetings with the private sector, Welsh Government and key stakeholders.

5b) When is the evaluation of the proposal due to be reviewed?

Reports will be presented to Cabinet at regular intervals as the project develops and the Welsh Government's business case approvals process and associated timescales will be adhered to. Business cases will review and evaluate the proposal at each step to secure funding and Cabinet approval will be sought prior to any construction works starting.

5c) Who is responsible for the monitoring and review of the proposal?

Officers from the Council's 21st Century Schools Team within Education and Inclusion Services and the Council's Corporate Estates Team will monitor the proposal throughout the design development period, construction period and operational period.

5d) How will the results of the monitoring be used to develop future proposals?

Each 21st Century Schools project undergoes a 'Lessons Learnt' review at the end of the construction phase and this feeds into future projects so that each project improves and benefits from lessons learnt (positive and negative) during previous projects.

SECTION 6 – REVIEW

As part of the Impact Assessment process all proposals that fall within the definition of ‘Key Decisions’ must be submitted to the Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your proposal is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Decision please forward your impact assessment to Councilbusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for a Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. The EqlA guidance document provides more information on what a Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that you can demonstrate how you have considered equality and socio-economic outcomes. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below

Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen evidence provided - use specific examples, e.g. schools data and quotes. • More demographic data is needed in respect of the local population to really understand the community, particularly areas where there is a community hub. • More data needed in respect of Young Carers and Armed Forces families. 	04/07/2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of increased pupil numbers and feedback from Headteachers in respect of disability and gender neutral toilets included. Data to follow in respect of Breakfast Club and FSM take up. • Further information provided in relation to Glyn-coch. Data to follow. • Data to follow.
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation

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SECTION 6 – SUMMARY OF IMPACTS FOR THE PROPOSAL

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment. This summary should be included in the equality and socio-economic impact section of the Cabinet report template. The impact assessment should be published alongside the report.

In summary, the Equality Impact Assessment identifies positive and neutral impacts, and no negative impacts upon the protected characteristics.

- The impact on age (particularly the younger generation) is extremely positive as they will have the full benefit of being educated in fantastic facilities fit for the 21st Century and the new Curriculum for Wales.
- The buildings will be fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010 thereby ensuring that no pupil, staff member, parent/carer or member of the wider community is prevented from fully accessing the whole extent of the new facilities.
- There will be positive impacts on the Welsh language as, despite the new schools being English medium schools, they will provide improved facilities to assist with the delivery of Welsh as a key element of the curriculum and in line with Cymraeg 2050 and RCTCBC's WESP, as we aim for the teaching of Welsh as a second language in English medium schools to be of the highest quality.
- The net increase in capacity at the new schools and the provision of brand new buildings with first class facilities will ensure that all families who wish to access places at the schools can be accommodated, and may encourage more parents/carers to choose their catchment school. It also affords greater educational choice which may assist armed forces personnel who may move to an area mid-academic year.
- The new buildings and the way they are used will bring positive socio-economic impacts across all of the vulnerable groups identified under the socio-economic disadvantage headings.

SECTION 7 – AUTHORISATIONS

Lead Officer:

Name: Nicola Goodman

Position: Lead for Strategic Planning and MIM

Date: 01/07/22

I recommend that the proposal:

- Is implemented with no amendments
- Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined
- Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on protected groups or socio-economic disadvantage

Head of Service/Director Approval:

Name: Andrea Richards

Position: Service Director for 21st Century Schools and Transformation

Date: 01/07/22

Please submit this impact assessment with any SLT/Cabinet Reports.

Proposal to Construct Three New Primary Schools in the Taf Area of Rhondda Cynon Taf

Welsh Language Impact Assessment

This Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA) tool enables the Council to consider the principles and requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015 to ensure compliance with the Welsh Language Measure 2011.

It is to be read alongside the Equality Impact Assessment, as the information in both documents is related and the themes within them are cross-cutting.

<u>STAGE 1 – Information Gathering</u>	
NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for evidence to support your views . Please see guidance document for more information on data sources.	
Proposal Name	New school buildings for Maesybryn and Tonysguboriau primary schools and the amalgamation of Cefn and Craig yr Hesg primary schools.
Directorate/ Department	Education and Inclusion Services – 21 st Century Schools Team
Service Director	Andrea Richards
Officer Completing the WLIA	Nicola Goodman
Email	nicola.goodman@rctcbc.gov.uk
Brief Description	<p>The proposal is to create brand new learning environments at Maesybryn Primary School (MPS) and Tonysguboriau Primary School (TPS) on the existing school sites and to amalgamate Cefn Primary (CePS) and Craig yr Hesg (CyHPS) Primary Schools. The amalgamation will be achieved by closing the two existing primary schools, which are in poor condition, and constructing a new, bigger community primary school to replace them on the existing Craig yr Hesg Primary School site and the land adjacent to it (the former site of the Tŷ Gwyn Pupil Referral Unit). The new schools will benefit from 21st Century facilities and provide pupils and staff with an improved and enhanced learning environment. The new schools will be funded by the Council, in partnership with Welsh Government (WG), via the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme's Mutual Investment Model (MIM) revenue funding stream.</p> <p>The catchment areas of Tonysguboriau and Maesybryn schools are not proposed to be altered. The catchment area for the new Glyn-coch school will be an amalgamation of the existing catchment areas for CePS and CyHPS.</p> <p>The new facilities will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modern, flexible learning environments for all learners, a large hall/dining area, a multi-purpose learning resource area and fully accessible facilities.• Internal and external areas for use by the local community.• Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities, including an outdoor classroom and a 'forest schools' area.• Improved on site staff and visitor car parking.

	<p>The proposal will also include a review of safe routes to school, and if required an investment in improvements to walkways, road crossings and traffic calming measures, to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach we have implemented within other communities through the delivery of the 21st Century Schools Programme, which has seen significant improvements being made.</p> <p>The new schools will be built in accordance with Building Bulletin 99 and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.</p>
Date	1 st July 2022
Outline who this proposal affects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils and staff of Cefn, Craig yr Hesg, Maesybryn and Tonysguboriau primary schools. • Parents / carers of pupils attending Cefn, Craig yr Hesg, Maesybryn and Tonysguboriau primary schools. • Residents and communities in the vicinity of Cefn, Craig yr Hesg, Maesybryn and Tonysguboriau primary schools.
What are the aims of the policy/ project, and how do these relate to the Welsh language?	<p>The aim of the proposed project is to relocate Maesybryn and Tonysguboriau primary schools to brand new buildings on their current sites in order to replace their current buildings that are in very poor condition overall. Additionally, the proposed project also aims to amalgamate Cefn and Craig yr Hesg primary schools by closing both schools and opening a new English medium community primary school on a new site which includes the existing Craig yr Hesg Primary School site and land adjacent to it (the former site of the Tŷ Gwyn Pupil Referral Unit). A separate Equality impact assessment specific to the amalgamation of CEPS and CYHPS was also been completed as part of a previous report to Cabinet.</p> <p>Although these are English medium primary schools, Welsh is taught as part of the curriculum and all pupils will benefit from having the opportunity to be taught in brand new facilities fit for the 21st Century.</p> <p>The aim has been to embed positive habits and attitudes towards the Welsh language through purposeful planning within schools and to promote the informal use of the Welsh language amongst learners inside and outside school. Facilitating the use of the Welsh language across the curriculum and in wider contexts in schools, to ensure a continuum of linguistic progression to support learners in the transition between key stages, offers all learners the opportunity to become fully bilingual and aligns with the Curriculum for Wales – 2022. The existing schools currently support this aim by using incidental Welsh wherever possible and employing initiatives such as ‘Helpwr Heddiw’, ‘Seren yr Wythnos’ and ‘Cryw Cymraeg’. The new schools will continue to do so and will build upon this by committing to achieve the ‘Cymraeg Campus’ Language Charter, a framework to promote and increase the use of Welsh across the schools.</p> <p>If implemented, the proposal will also allow for the expansion of community and third-party use of the schools’ facilities which can be used to hold classes through the medium of Welsh. An example of this can be seen at the new Tonyrefail Community School, where Welsh evening classes are held in the community facilities. The schools will be designed to be fully accessible and fully integrated community schools. A dedicated area is being designed within each school so that the local community will be allowed to safely utilise the facilities at the school, which could involve Welsh language groups using the 21st Century facilities for meetings / classes etc.</p>

<p>Who will benefit? Could the policy/project affect Welsh language groups?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils of Cefn, Craig yr Hesg, Maesybryn and Tonysguboriau primary schools. • Parents/carers of pupils attending Cefn, Craig yr Hesg, Maesybryn and Tonysguboriau primary schools. • Academic and support staff at Cefn, Craig yr Hesg, Maesybryn and Tonysguboriau primary schools. • The local communities served by Cefn, Craig yr Hesg, Maesybryn and Tonysguboriau primary schools. <p>Any impact on Welsh language groups should only be positive as the new buildings will be accessible to the local community which could involve Welsh language groups using the 21st Century facilities for meetings / classes etc.</p> <p>While it does not form part of this proposal, the Council is also working to improve and increase Welsh medium provision in the Taf area by building a new purpose-built school to replace the provision of YGG Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh medium stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School (currently a dual language school), on the current site of Heol y Celyn Primary School in Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd. The new school is to include 480 places plus 60 nursery places and is targeted to open in the autumn of 2024 and offer Welsh medium education in a first class 21st Century learning environment.</p>																								
<p>Current linguist profile of the geographical area(s) concerned</p>	<p>Every ten years the nation sets aside one day for the Census – a count of all people and households. The Census is a key source of information about the number of people who can speak Welsh.</p> <p>The 2011 Census¹ indicated that of the 225,555 residents living in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf, 12.3% (27,779) were able to speak Welsh, whilst the remaining 87.6% (197,776) were not able to speak Welsh. This can be compared to the all Wales figures that showed of the 2,955,841 residents living Wales, 19.0% (562,016) were able to speak Welsh, whilst the remaining 81.0% (2,393,825) were not able to speak Welsh.</p> <p>The table that follows illustrates the Welsh language skills of residents living in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf alongside the main electoral divisions that comprise the catchment areas of CePS, CyHPS, MPS and TPS and is obtained from the 2011 Census.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="347 1496 1489 1977"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="6">Welsh Language Skills of Residents – (%)</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>Glyn-coch</th> <th>Llantwit Fardre</th> <th>Llantrisant Town</th> <th>Rhondda Cynon Taf</th> <th>All Wales</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Can Speak, Read and Write Welsh</td> <td>9.4%</td> <td>13.8%</td> <td>13.4%</td> <td>9.7%</td> <td>14.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Can Speak and Read but Cannot</td> <td>0.6%</td> <td>1.1%</td> <td>1.3%</td> <td>0.9%</td> <td>1.5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Welsh Language Skills of Residents – (%)							Glyn-coch	Llantwit Fardre	Llantrisant Town	Rhondda Cynon Taf	All Wales	Can Speak, Read and Write Welsh	9.4%	13.8%	13.4%	9.7%	14.6%	Can Speak and Read but Cannot	0.6%	1.1%	1.3%	0.9%	1.5%
Welsh Language Skills of Residents – (%)																									
	Glyn-coch	Llantwit Fardre	Llantrisant Town	Rhondda Cynon Taf	All Wales																				
Can Speak, Read and Write Welsh	9.4%	13.8%	13.4%	9.7%	14.6%																				
Can Speak and Read but Cannot	0.6%	1.1%	1.3%	0.9%	1.5%																				

¹ [2011 Census](#)

Write Welsh					
Can Speak but Cannot Read or Write Welsh	1.7%	2.2%	1.9%	1.6%	2.7%
Can Understand Spoken Welsh Only	2.5%	4.8%	4.9%	4.2%	5.3%
Other Combination of Skills	1.9%	3.4%	3.5%	3.3%	2.5%
No Skills	84%	74.7%	75.1%	80.4%	73.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The data demonstrates that in the electoral divisions that comprise the respective catchment areas of Maesybryn and Tonysguboriau primary schools, the Welsh language skills of residents are consistently above the total County Borough level, but mostly below the All-Wales Welsh language skills level. Meanwhile, the data also demonstrates that in the Glyn-coch electoral division that encompasses the respective catchment areas of Cefn and Craig yr Hesg primary schools, the Welsh language skills of residents are largely below the total County Borough and All-Wales Welsh language skills levels.

The new school buildings will include facilities for use by members of the local community and could include the provision of Welsh adult learning classes in order to help support the growth of Welsh language skills in the village. Furthermore, the Council's proposed new Welsh medium primary school on the current site of Heol y Celyn Primary School will increase the capacity of Welsh medium primary education in the Taf area, further supporting the growth of Welsh language skills.

The Annual Population Survey² collects information about respondents' Welsh speaking ability and includes a question on how often people speak Welsh. It is updated quarterly, so is a more up-to-date source than the Census. The most recent Annual Population Survey, for the quarter ending March 2022, reported that 20.9% of respondents living in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf said they could speak Welsh, this is compared to the all Wales percentage of 29.5% of respondents. This can be further broken down to the data contained in the table that follows.

Welsh Language Skills of Residents – (%)		
	County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf	Wales
Can Read Welsh	18.9%	25.9%
Can Write Welsh	17.7%	23.7%

² [Annual Population Survey](#)

Can Spoken Welsh	Understand	24.5%	33.4%
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The data demonstrates that in each Welsh language skill area, the ‘all Wales’ percentages are notably higher than the County Borough percentages. However, the current data shows a significant increase in the number of residents that can read, write, and understand spoken Welsh since the 2011 Census.

When asked about their frequency of speaking Welsh, the table that follows shows a breakdown of responses of respondents living in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf compared to the all Wales responses.

Welsh Language Skills of Residents – (%)		
	County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf	Wales
Speak Welsh Daily	8.1%	14.8%
Speak Welsh Weekly	5.0%	5.2%
Use it Less Often	5.6%	7.6%

The data demonstrates that the percentage of respondents that speak Welsh daily is far lower for the County Borough than the all Wales percentage.

The Welsh Language Use Survey³ for the years 2013 to 2015, contains detailed information about Welsh speaker’s fluency and their use of the Welsh language in a range of settings. When looking where respondents living in Wales learned to speak Welsh, the majority, 45.0%, learned to speak Welsh at home, followed by 26.0% who learned to speak Welsh at nursery school and primary school between the ages of 2 to 10 and 14.0% who learned to speak Welsh at secondary school at the age of 11 plus. The remaining 2.0% learned to speak Welsh in other settings, including at ‘Welsh for Adults’ courses.

The proposed new school buildings for Maesybryn and Tonysguboriau primary schools and the proposed new community primary school for Glyn-coch will allow for the expansion of community and third-party use of the school facilities. The schools are being designed to be fully accessible and fully integrated community schools. A dedicated area will be designed within the school itself so that the local community will be able to safely utilise the facilities at the schools with appropriate segregation from the rest of the school.

The data above clearly shows that there is a gap in the Welsh language skills of residents of RCT when compared to the whole of Wales. Proposals such as this significantly improve the learning environment and the opportunities available for our learners. The headteachers of Maesybryn and Tonysguboriau primary schools and the executive headteacher of Cefn and Craig yr Hesg primary schools will be encouraged and supported to consider using the new facilities to increase participation in the Welsh language by offering the opportunity to parents/carers and other members of the community to attend Welsh classes and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh. In recent years, support has been given to promote and increase learners’ use of the Welsh language in primary and secondary schools and in social contexts. This has been done through the Welsh Language Charter (Siarter Iaith), developed by Gwynedd Council, and various other

³ [Welsh Language Use Survey 2013 to 2015](#)

	<p>projects, in partnership with the CSC JES and the Urdd. This will support the Welsh Government’s target of one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the targets set out in the Council’s current (2017 to 2022) and new (2022 to 2032) WESP.</p> <p>The Council recognises the importance of immersion in the Welsh language for learners who wish to transition from English to Welsh medium education, so as to further encourage the uptake of Welsh medium education.</p> <p>Currently, schools requiring Welsh language immersion support for learners who are late comers are funded to support the accelerated acquisition of Welsh language skills for learners as and when the need arises. As such, Welsh medium schools are provided with funding directly to ensure that any late comers to Welsh medium education are provided with the necessary support and skills to enable them to thrive within their school.</p> <p>Funding was obtained in 2021, via the Welsh Government’s Welsh Language Immersion Support Grant, to pilot the creation of Welsh language immersion support for latecomers to the Welsh language, or to provide additional targeted support for those learners within Welsh medium primary schools who required it. We are currently developing another bid to develop and establish a new peripatetic model of Welsh language immersion provision that will support learners throughout the whole of Rhondda Cynon Taf.</p>
<p>Other relevant data or research</p>	<p>The language category and standards of alternative / neighbouring schools</p> <p>RCTCBC has seventeen Welsh medium primary school provisions located throughout the County Borough to ease access. There are two all-through schools for 3 to 19 year olds, namely Ysgol Garth Olwg and Ysgol Llanhari, two dual language primary schools for 3 to 11 year olds, namely Dolau Primary and Heol y Celyn Primary schools and 13 Welsh medium primary schools for 3 to 11 year olds. All learners who attend these schools’ study through the medium of Welsh. In the Taf area of Rhondda Cynon Taf there are nine schools offering Welsh medium education for pupils aged 3 to 11 years of age, comprising of: all-through schools from the ages of 3 to 19 years old, dual language primary schools and primary schools catering for 3 to 11 year olds.</p> <p>In very close proximity to Maesybryn Primary School, there is a well-established Welsh medium all-through school, namely Ysgol Garth Olwg (formerly a primary and secondary school). Ysgol Garth Olwg is 16 years old and was built as part of a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract. It is in very good condition with excellent facilities on site, internally and externally, for the school and the wider community. It has 18.58% surplus capacity in the primary stream (PLASC 2022). When Ysgol Garth Olwg was a separate primary and secondary school, the primary school was at 5.5% surplus capacity (PLASC January 2018). As it was nearing capacity, the Local Authority created additional capacity by utilising rooms within the secondary school and subsequently created the all-through school on the site. A recent investment in the school in the sum of £350,000 has created fully refurbished accommodation for years 5 and 6, which will ensure sufficient Welsh medium spaces at primary and secondary levels in this part of the County Borough, allowing for opportunities for further growth of the Welsh language. There is also a Meithrin and a Lifelong Learning Centre on the current Ysgol Garth Olwg site thereby offering a continuum of Welsh medium provision for learners from the birth to eighteen years and beyond within one school site.</p>

In line with the County Borough's current WESP and in order to achieve the targets of the new WESP, the County Borough will continue to ensure the benefits of Welsh medium and Welsh language education are promoted to parents / carers from the initial early years, through to primary and secondary education, then progressing through to higher and further education for all learners, whatever their learning need is fundamental to increasing the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education. In addition, the headteachers of the schools covered by this proposal will promote and signpost Welsh medium provision available at the Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Centre.

Tonysguboriau Primary is approximately 2 miles from Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Gymunedol Llantrisant, which is a Welsh medium primary school at 35.50% surplus capacity (PLASC 2022). YGGG Llantrisant is also a relatively new build school having been built in 2005. A Meithrin facility was established at the school in September 2021, offering morning sessional childcare for 2-3 year olds and wraparound care for nursery aged children. This provision maximises opportunities for educating through the medium of Welsh in this area for early years children. Also, a proposal to provide brand new 21st Century educational facilities at Ysgol Llanhari (all through school) may further assist with encouraging parents/carers in this area to choose WM education for their children thus also increasing uptake of WM education at neighbouring WM primary schools due to the availability of brand new 21st Century WM secondary school facilities nearby.

Cefn and Craig yr Hesg primary schools are approximately 2.2 miles and 1.6 miles from Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton (YGGPSN) in Cilfynydd; the current catchment Welsh medium primary school for families living in Glyn-coch. It is recognised that a new English medium primary school in Glyn-coch may be attractive when parents/carers are choosing a school for their children. However, proposals to reorganise and transform Welsh medium primary education provision in the Pontypridd area of RCT by building a new school that will replace the provision of YGGPSN and the Welsh Medium stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School (HYCEPS), (currently a dual language school) are underway. This is due to be achieved by September 2024 which is ahead of the timescales for the completion of the new English-medium primary school in Glyn-coch, thus parents/carers who are attracted by new school facilities will have new Welsh-medium provision available. These proposals will see the creation of a new Welsh medium Primary school with a capacity of 480 pupil places, plus 60 nursery places, to be built on the site of the existing HYCEPS, increasing the overall capacity of WM education in the Pontypridd area by 93 places. While the new Welsh medium primary school will be further away from Cefn and Craig yr Hesg Primary schools, all children who currently qualify for home to school transport to access WM provision at YGG Pont Sion Norton will continue to be eligible when the new school opens and the new school can be actively promoted to potential parents/carers. There are also WM places available at other nearby schools of YGG Abercynon and Ysgol Evan James affording ample opportunity for learners to access Welsh medium education.

As part of a wider development to build approximately 1,850 new houses near the current Dolau Primary school, a new building will be constructed with 480 places plus 60 nursery places. Dolau Primary is currently a dual language school, with 441 places plus nursery. The construction of the new building will increase the total available capacity to 921 places plus 124 part-time nursery places, thus considerably increasing opportunities for Welsh medium education in a brand new 21st Century building. Although initial proposals are for this new building to be part of the dual language

Dolau Primary School, subject to further statutory consultation, the new building is likely to become a Welsh medium primary school and will offer Welsh medium education in a brand new, state of the art, 21st Century standard school building. Dolau Primary is 3 miles from Tonysguboriau Primary school.

As can be seen from the data above, there are plentiful opportunities for full Welsh medium education in very good facilities in close proximity to each of the schools forming part of this proposal. Work be undertaken in line with the WESP to further promote WM education in this area to try and ensure some positive outcomes for the WM schools.

The Council recognises the importance of immersion in the Welsh language for learners who wish to transition from English medium education into Welsh medium education, so as to further encourage the uptake of Welsh medium education.

At present, schools requiring Welsh language immersion support for their learners are funded to support the accelerated acquisition of Welsh language skills for learners as and when the need arises.

Funding was obtained in 2021, via the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Immersion Support Grant, to pilot the creation of Welsh language immersion support for latecomers to the Welsh language, or to provide additional targeted support for those learners within Welsh medium primary schools who required it. We are currently developing another bid to develop and establish a new peripatetic model of Welsh language immersion provision that will support learners throughout the whole of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Pupil Numbers in neighbouring Welsh medium schools

The majority of neighbouring Welsh medium schools have surplus capacity to facilitate growth of Welsh medium education provision going forward. As referred to above, Dolau Primary is scheduled to be greatly expanded in the very near future which will provide even more opportunities for Welsh medium education.

School	Capacity	Number on Roll	Surplus Capacity
YGGG Llantrisant	338	218	35.50%
Ysgol Garth Olwg	409 (primary stream)	333	18.58%
Dolau Primary (dual language)	441 (whole school English & Welsh streams)	460	-4.30%
Ysgol Llanhari	194 (primary stream)	171	14.43%
YGG Pont Sion Norton	267	235	11.98%
YGG Evan James	342	254	25.73%
YGG Abercynon	352	242	31.25%

These surplus places are evident at Nursery and Reception level also in several of the schools (see table below), therefore enabling early years provision through the medium of Welsh.

Ysgol Llanhari, being an all through school has the flexibility of use of space throughout the site to create further early years accommodation, therefore exceeding the admission number is not an issue as the school has sufficient capacity and accommodation overall. Also, (subject to future funding approvals) Ysgol Llanhari is due to benefit from new build accommodation for pupils aged 10 to 19 to further complement the refurbished primary and Meithrin facilities and provide additional Welsh medium pupil places in 21st Century facilities.

Demand and projections are regularly monitored across all schools as part of continual school organisation planning, to ensure that all schools have sufficient accommodation to meet in catchment demand and enable growth of the Welsh language.

School	Admission Number	Nursery P/T*	Nursery*	Reception*
YGGG Llantrisant	48	19	12	41
Ysgol Garth Olwg (all-through school)	58 (primary stream)	0	44	51
Dolau Primary (Dual language)	63 (whole school English & Welsh streams)	18	6 (Welsh stream only)	26 (Welsh stream only)
Ysgol Llanhari (all-through school)	27 (primary stream)	13	6	31
YGG Pont Sion Norton	38	0	34	28
YGG Evan James	48	16	22	44
* PLASC June 2022 figures				

Transition rates from Mudiad Meithrin to Welsh medium primary schools

The position at 2019/2020 in terms of progression from Cylch Meithrin into Welsh medium primary schools is shown in the table that follows:

The Position (2019/2020) in Terms of Progression from Cylch Meithrin into Welsh Medium Primary Schools										
Cylch Meithrin	Cylch Meithrin Capacity	Assoc. Primary School	No. of 2-Year Olds (Age At 31.0 8.19)	No. of 3-Year Olds (Age At 31.08 .19)	No. who attend Cylch Ti a Fi	No. who attend Flying Start	Total Transferring to School			
							Welsh Medium		English Medium	
							No.	%	No.	%
Beddau	18	Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castellau	14	24	20	28	26	92.8	2	7.1
Evan James	52	Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Evan James	12	43	10	56	56	100	0	0
Llanilltud Faerdref	24	Ysgol Garth Olwg	6	0	9	6	6	100	0	0
Pentre'r Egwlys	30	Ysgol Garth Olwg	38	1	12	36	22	61.1	14	38.8
Rhydyfelin	40	Ysgol Heol Y Celyn	18	2	11	17	5	29.4	12	70.6
Cwm Elai	15	Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tonyrefail	37	1	21	31	26	83.8	5	16.1
Pontyclun	48	Llanhari	16	0	17	14	13	92.9	1	7.1
Ynysybwl	24	YGG Pont Sion Norton	15	4	14	0	7	43.75	9	56.25

(Note: Updated data is awaited from Welsh Government)

Cymraeg 2050 outlines that Welsh medium immersion education is the principal method for ensuring that children can develop their Welsh language skills and for creating new Welsh speakers. Cymraeg 2050 highlights the importance of the Early Years sector as a point of early entry into Welsh medium education and as a way to increase demand for Welsh medium education. In support of this, the Council regularly invests in Welsh medium pre-school facilities on existing Welsh medium primary school sites. A new peripatetic immersion model will aid the continuum of the Welsh language. This falls in line with the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), along with a range of marketing and promotional strategies which are being implemented to ensure the benefits of Welsh medium education are promoted to increase uptake into Welsh medium pre-school facilities and then in turn aid transition rates into Welsh medium primary education. This will involve working collaboratively with partners such as Mudiad Meithrin to effectively market and promote.

In addition, a new provision, Cylch Meithrin Cilfynydd a Phont Norton, is due to open in nearby Cilfynydd in January 2022. This should also help to increase the take up of Welsh medium education in the area.

What facilities are there for members of the community to learn Welsh or undertake activities through the medium of Welsh

The new school buildings will have capacity that can be utilised by community groups and organisations. Each building will be designed to facilitate safe use of areas by the community whilst maintaining segregation from the rest of the school. The headteachers will be encouraged and fully supported to use these facilities to increase participation in the Welsh language by offering the opportunity to parents/carers and other members of the community to attend Welsh classes and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh, as has been successfully implemented at other new schools. This will support the Welsh Government's target of one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the targets set out in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's (RCTCBCs) current (2017 to 2022) and new (2022 to 2032) Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

Is it appropriate to provide additional after school facilities at any alternative school to further secure standards in the Welsh language?

In very close proximity to Maesybryn Primary School is the Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Centre which is heavily used and offers a variety of courses through the medium of Welsh to children, young people and adult learners.

Given the location and accessibility of the new schools, along with the inclusion of community facilities within the new school buildings, they will lend themselves to offering afterschool facilities accessible to all members of the community through the mediums of Welsh and English, negating the need to travel to an alternative facility.

How parents/carers and learners' engagement with any alternative schools and any specific language enhancement it offers could be supported

The Council, has developed and updated a Being Bilingual booklet, funded by Cronfa Glyndwr which was first published in March 2016 and has recently been updated. The booklet is designed to give information on the benefits of being bilingual, outline the path to Welsh medium education and answer frequently asked questions on choosing Welsh medium education. The booklet is distributed via Health Visitors, Flying Start provision, nursery nurses and through the community in GP surgeries, libraries, dental surgeries, registry offices and hospitals.

The Council's 'Starting School' booklet also provides parents/carers with a range of information including advice on choosing a school, provision of home to school transport and a directory of schools.

In addition, the local Cymraeg i Blant Officer runs weekly bilingual baby massage, baby yoga and Welsh rhyme time sessions for parents/carers and young children across the County Borough working alongside the local Midwifery and Health Visiting Teams. This ensures that parents/carers receive key early messages during the ante-natal and post-natal period and are made aware of the bilingual pathway available for their child.

The Council's Youth Engagement and Participation Service work with Menter Iaith and the Urdd to deliver bespoke language awareness sessions for young people highlighting the value of having Welsh language as a skill. The Youth Engagement and Participation Service also deliver social events and activities for young people through the medium of Welsh which include residential opportunities, eisteddfodau, sport and accreditation.

Information on how the proposal fits with the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and any future actions that will be needed in consequence of the change to continue to comply with the scheme or meet targets in the scheme

The Council believes that all learners should have the appropriate opportunities for learning in both the mediums of Welsh and English to enable them to develop the confidence to use both languages in everyday life in order to meet the demands of the 21st Century.

The Council recognises the importance of the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 target and how central the education system in Wales is to achieving its vision. The Council's new WESP (2022 to 2032) sets out a ten year vision for increasing and improving the planning of the provision of Welsh medium education within the County Borough, in order to maximise its contribution of achieving the target of one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050. It builds on the work of the previous WESP (2017 to 2022) and sets out an action plan which demonstrates how we intend to achieve our ten-year vision.

The majority of the Welsh medium primary schools in the County Borough have sufficient surplus places to meet demand. However, there are a number of schools where demand is close to outstripping supply. As such, the Council has or is currently taking action to address these issues through a number of projects and proposals. Projects being undertaken to address this issue include: the expansion of YGG Aberdar, including a purpose built Welsh medium childcare facility; a new WM primary school in Rhydyfelin to accommodate pupils at YGG Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh stream at Heol y Celyn Primary School; the expansion of YG Rhydywaun with a new teaching block and sports facilities; and a new school building to serve the Llanilid housing development, which will operate as an extension to the dual language Dolau Primary School, in the first instance. Furthermore, the Council has also committed to increasing the quality and availability of early years Welsh medium provision by investing significantly in a number of provisions through various funding schemes. This will assist in ensuring a language continuum of Welsh medium provision and ensure that increased demand for Welsh medium education is met.

Further, as mentioned earlier, the Council recognises the importance of immersion in the Welsh language for learners who wish to transition from English medium education into Welsh medium education, so as to further encourage the uptake of Welsh medium education.

Funding was obtained in 2021, via the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Immersion Support Grant, to pilot the creation of Welsh language immersion support for latecomers to the Welsh language, or to provide additional targeted support for those learners within Welsh medium primary schools who required it.

The Council is currently developing another bid to develop and establish a new peripatetic model of Welsh language immersion provision that will support learners throughout the whole of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

No changes to these proposals are required in order to comply with the WESP.

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

In this section you need to consider the impact, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement. This is to ensure that the opportunities for people who choose to live their lives and access services through the medium of Welsh are not inferior to what is afforded to those choosing to do so in English, in accordance with the requirement of the Welsh Language Measure 2011.

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Yes	No	No impact / Negligible	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or negligible impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Numbers and/or percentages of Welsh speakers	X			<p>The headteachers of all the schools included under this proposal will be encouraged and supported to consider using the new facilities to increase participation in the Welsh language by offering the opportunity to parents/carers and other members of the community to attend Welsh classes and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh. This will support the Welsh Government's target of one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the targets set out in the Council's current (2017 to 2022) and new (2022 to 2032) WESP.</p> <p>The Council recognises the importance of immersion in the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welsh evening classes at Tonyrefail Community School for members of the community wanting to learn Welsh held by Dysgu Cymraeg; also monthly coffee mornings for Welsh speakers to attend to practice their conversational Welsh with each other. - Number of parents/carers and other members of the community attending Welsh medium classes offered at Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Centre: Since September 2021: 505 people attended craft workshops; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of and signposting to Welsh medium classes by the headteachers all schools included under this proposal. - Working with external partners (e.g. Yr Urdd) to provide out of hours activities through the medium of Welsh. - Promotion of the options available to learners who wish to transition from English medium education into Welsh

			<p>Welsh language for learners who wish to transition from English into Welsh medium education, so as to further encourage the uptake of Welsh medium education.</p> <p>Funding was obtained in 2021, via the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Immersion Support Grant, to pilot the creation of Welsh language immersion support for latecomers to the Welsh language, or to provide additional targeted support for those learners within Welsh medium primary schools who required it. We are currently developing another bid to develop and establish a new peripatetic model of Welsh language immersion provision that will support learners throughout the whole of Rhondda Cynon Taf.</p> <p>In contributing towards the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050 and in line with the County Borough's current WESP and in order to achieve the targets of the new WESP, it is vital to ensure a school-based workforce of sufficient size and capability. In order to create more Welsh speakers, our education system is</p>	<p>40 people attended Welsh talks; 90 pupils attended a "Remembering Aberfan" arts project; 140 people attended a fundraising concert for Ukraine; 240 people attended a 'Twm Sion Cati' show.</p> <p>In addition, on a weekly basis: 15 young people attend drama club; 16 families attend 'Clwb Traed Bach' parent and toddler sensory group.</p>	<p>medium education via the WESP marketing group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The establishment of a new peripatetic Welsh language immersion model in 2022. - Ensure that schools are supported locally and regionally, including by the CSC JES Welsh in Education Officer to share best practice. - Employment of a Welsh Language Engagement Graduate Officer who is responsible for the development of new strategies in line the Council's new WESP to support the delivery of the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision of a million Welsh speakers,
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			<p>dependent on its school-based workforce and we must work locally, regionally and nationally to ensure we create a school based workforce with robust linguistic skills, able to inspire and motivate learners in Welsh medium and Welsh language education.</p> <p>In recent years, support has been given to promote and increase learner's use of the Welsh language in primary and secondary schools and in social contexts. This has been done through the Welsh Language Charter (Siarter Iaith), developed by Gwynedd Council, and various other projects, in partnership with the CSC JES and the Urdd. These include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the Welsh Language Charter in all Welsh medium primary and secondary schools in order to develop learners' use of the Welsh language. • Implementing Cymraeg Campus in a number of English medium primary schools and piloting it in two English medium secondary schools. 		<p>and to contribute towards the development of strategies to promote the Welsh language and Welsh medium education across the County Borough.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school-based workforce will be supported with continued professional learning, networking, and opportunities to share best practice. - Promotion of opportunities for teachers to attend the Welsh Language Sabbatical scheme. - To promote and increase learner's use of the Welsh language in primary and secondary schools with all English medium primary
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting English medium secondary schools to provide informal opportunities to use the Welsh language and intensive Welsh language learning opportunities through the Urdd's Cymraeg Bob Dydd project. <p>The aim has been to embed positive habits and attitudes towards the Welsh language through purposeful planning within primary and secondary schools and to promote the informal use of the Welsh language amongst learners inside and outside primary and secondary schools. Facilitating the use of the Welsh language, across the curriculum and in wider contexts in primary and secondary schools, to ensure a continuum of linguistic progression to support learners in the transition between key stages offers all learners the opportunity to become fully bilingual and aligns with the Curriculum for Wales – 2022.</p> <p>The current position (2019/2020) in terms of progression from Cylch Meithrin Ynysybwl into Welsh medium primary school is lower</p>		<p>and secondary schools being supported to achieve the Cymraeg Campus Bronze Award.</p> <p>- The new WM primary school can be actively promoted both by</p>
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				<p>than the Council would like. However, the separate proposals to deliver a new Welsh medium primary school on the current Heol y Celyn Primary School site, to accommodate pupils currently attending Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh medium pupils attending the dual language Heol y Celyn Primary School may result in more parents choosing to progress to Welsh medium education in a brand new 21st Century learning environment.</p>		<p>the school and via the WESP Marketing Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- While the new Welsh medium primary school will be further away from Cefn and Craig yr Hesp Primary schools, all children who currently qualify for home to school transport to access WM provision at YGG Pont Sion Norton will continue to be eligible when the new school opens. (The eligibility criteria for walking distance for learners receiving compulsory primary education has been set by the Council at 1.5 miles which is less than the 2 miles required by the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008).
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<p>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>If implemented, the proposal will allow for the expansion of community and third-party use of the schools' facilities which can be used to hold classes through the medium of Welsh. The schools will be designed to be fully accessible and fully integrated community schools. A dedicated area will be designed within each school so that the local community will be allowed to safely utilise the facilities at the school.</p> <p>Each of the schools will be located within a residential area hence they are very accessible to the communities that they serve.</p> <p>All signage produced will be bilingual and in adherence to the most recent guidelines available.</p> <p>The Council will continue to adhere to The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011⁴ (the 2011 Measure), which requires the Council to produce a five-year strategy to facilitate and promote Welsh language. The first five-year strategy, RCT – Welsh Language Promotion Strategy⁵, was approved in 2016 and outlined a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The demand for classes through the medium of Welsh could be evidenced by the popularity of the Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Centre, as evidenced by the data provided above. Additional opportunities to attend community classes / groups in these new school buildings should further improve accessibility as the buildings will have community rooms and be fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and such opportunities will be within the heart of additional communities thereby facilitating access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encouragement and support to headteachers to promote community use of their facilities for the purpose of Welsh medium education / use by Welsh medium groups and promotion of opportunities via marketing tools currently being developed by the Council's WESP Marketing Group. - The Council will make efforts to establish Welsh for Adults sessions in the new schools as well as look to establish links with the Urdd and Menter Iaith to assist in the promotion of the Welsh language. - In addition, the schools will work with the Councils
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⁴ [Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011 \(the 2011 Measure\)](#)

⁵ [Rhondda Cynon Taf – Welsh Language Promotion Strategy – 2016](#)

				<p>number of key policy areas to maintain and increase the number of Welsh speakers during its lifecycle. In developing this proposal, the RCT – Welsh Language Promotion Strategy has been taken into consideration in order to encourage and facilitate long term growth in Welsh medium and Welsh language education and the Council has and will continue to ensure there is a clear alignment with it. This commitment to promoting the Welsh language, increasing the number of Welsh learners and improving the Welsh language skills of staff and pupils across schools in RCT is reaffirmed in the Education and Inclusion Directorate’s three-year Strategic Plan.</p>		<p>Sports Development Team and the Urdd to establish links with local Welsh medium sporting groups and associations who may wish to utilise the sports facilities available.</p>
Compliance with the Council’s Welsh Language Standards	X			<p>All processes associated with the new buildings will be in accordance with the Council’s Welsh Language Standards.</p> <p>Where possible, the schools, the Council and the CSC will support school support staff, school learning support workers and teaching staff to participate in Welsh language skills courses at different levels in order to meet identified needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All contractual arrangements will ensure that all consultations are undertaken bilingually; the construction of the new school will incorporate bilingual signage etc. with Welsh being the more prominent to further promote the Welsh language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instil contractor awareness of the Welsh Language Standards and ensure compliance.

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of support school support staff, school learning support workers and teaching staff participating in Welsh language skills courses at different levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encouragement of participation in Welsh language skills courses at different levels.
Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language	X			<p>Although these schools are English medium primary schools, they are part of the Council's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme which the Council and Welsh Government jointly fund to ensure that the Council's vision that there are good schools, so all children and young people, whatever their learning need is, have equitable access to good English and Welsh medium education is fulfilled.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RCTCBC's current Strategic Outline Programme contains a wide range of schools (Welsh and English medium) in various parts of the county borough. - For example, a proposal to improve and increase Welsh medium primary education in the Pontypridd area is being progressed separately, hence all primary pupils from Glyn-coch will have the opportunity to be taught in 21st Century learning environments, regardless of whether they choose Welsh or English medium education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of Welsh medium classes for community groups etc. in the fully accessible facilities. - Promotion of the options available to learners who wish to transition from English medium education into Welsh medium education.

Stage 3 - Strengthening the proposal/project

Having listed actions in section 2 which may mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts – please record below which ones you will imbed into the policy proposal and who will be responsible for them.

Also consider is the proposal necessary? Would it be possible to meet demand without any new developments? Could other existing provision be used? Where should the development be?

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?
Ensure that all prospective parents are given the 'Starting Schools' and the 'Being Bilingual' booklets to promote the positive experiences that can be achieved through seeking an education through the medium of Welsh.	Ongoing. Booklets have started to be distributed to health visitors to be provided to parents in the Bookstart packs. Booklets will also be distributed to RCT Registration Services and Merthyr Registration Services in 2022 to be provided to all new parents. This will be a continued collaborative effort between all stakeholders.	RCT / Schools / Partners
Use the grant funding received for the development of a Welsh immersion proposal to formulate a medium/long term strategy aimed at establishing a more permanent provision in RCT.	Submit a proposal for Cabinet's consideration in the summer term 2022 following the completion of the pilot.	21 st Century Schools Organisation and Business Manager
Monitor demand to assess the need for an immersion support in the Southern Taf area of RCT.	This will form an action of the WESP 2022-32 and will be an ongoing action for officers.	RCT
Link with headteachers to promote the availability of Welsh language classes to their parents/carers/wider community	Ongoing. This will be a continued collaborative effort between the Council and the schools.	RCT / Schools

Stage 4 – Review

As part of the Welsh Language, Equalities and Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment Process all proposals that fall within the definition of Significant Key Decision should present at the Officer Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your report is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Strategic Decision please forward your impact assessment to CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. [See our guidance document](#) for more information on what a Significant Key Decision is.

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not you are required to forward this assessment to Welsh Language services in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable Welsh language considerations wherever possible. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below

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Welsh Language Services Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Welsh Language Services feedback
<p>Welsh Language Services encourage you to consider the possible negative impacts new English medium schools may have on the uptake of Welsh medium education and what ways the Council will mitigate this possible impact. This is particularly the case where there are fairly significant numbers of surplus places in Welsh medium schools, and low transition rates to Welsh medium education from Cylch Meithrin. Mitigation will likely be through promotion of the benefits of WM education and continued investment.</p> <p>Additional consideration should also be given to the effects on the whole community and not just the educational community. For example - Will the proposal effect community attitudes towards the Welsh language? Will groups other than Welsh learners be encouraged to use the site and its facilities? Consideration such as these should help inform these proposals.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme delivers significant investment for both Welsh and English medium schools throughout the County Borough - Council investment in Welsh medium 21st Century facilities includes a proposal to provide brand new 21st Century educational facilities at Ysgol Llanhari for secondary aged learners, encouraging parents/carers in this area to choose WM education for their children thus also hopefully increasing uptake of WM education at neighbouring WM primary schools due to the availability of brand new 21st Century WM secondary school facilities nearby; also new Welsh medium primary school provision at Rhydyfelin providing additional WM primary school places.• Marketing and promotional strategies to be implemented (working collaboratively with partners such as Mudiad Meithrin) to ensure the benefits of Welsh medium education are promoted to increase uptake into Welsh medium pre-school

facilities and then in turn aid transition rates into Welsh medium primary education.

- Promotion of the Council's generous home to school transport provision which gives a wider offer than the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008).
- Encouragement and support to headteachers to promote community use of their facilities for the purpose of Welsh medium education / use by Welsh medium groups and promotion of opportunities via marketing tools currently being developed by the Council's WESP Marketing Group.
- The Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) sets out the priorities for improvement over the forthcoming ten years, up to and including 2032, and the actions we will take to ensure that we achieve a 10% growth in the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education. To achieve this, we need to ensure that parents and carers are well informed about the benefits of Welsh medium education and bilingualism and to increase the number of learners who access their education through the medium of Welsh. As part of this, Welsh medium school headteachers and governing bodies are encouraged to promote their schools. The WESP Marketing Group can assist with this.
- A significant growth in the number of learners accessing Welsh medium education also needs to be coupled with measurable gains in the attainment of Welsh in English medium schools. Opportunities to communicate in Welsh need to be experienced in all phases of education so that the Welsh language continues to thrive and flourish in our schools, workplaces, and communities. Strengthening the use of Welsh beyond the school gates in social spaces, in the workplace and across our communities will also be an integral part of creating a thriving and growing Welsh language in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- The new WESP has been submitted to Welsh Government for approval. Once approved, this document will underpin decision

		making within the Council, and will be a strategic driver for all new policies and strategies developed over the next 10 years.
Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage community usage of the new English medium schools by Welsh medium usage for the community. Could mention working with external partners although are typically exclusive for Welsh medium schools but should be accessible to English medium schools for out of hours activities etc., especially Yr Urdd. • The need to recognise that a new build English medium attracts footfall and new pupils - how to overcome the barrier of English medium new builds detracting people from accessing the new Welsh medium schools. There is surplus student spaces for Welsh medium schools in primary sector, thus how does a English medium new build help that situation. Recognising issues around that will show partners that we are aware of that situation. • Surplus places in Welsh medium – focusing on how having an improved secondary school could help to fill some spaces in Llantrisant and other Welsh Medium primaries. • Being bilingual booklet has been updated 2022 and is ready for distribution. • The need for broader impact on how Welsh Language of the community will be impacted by the new school; • Transition from English to Welsh medium education – are there any examples or guidance where this has happened in other Local Authorities;* • English Medium Primary Section – Recognise there might be a negative impact on Welsh medium education take up and quite a bit of surplus capacity in 	01/07/22	<p>Document updated to reflect all comments.</p> <p>*A number of Local Authorities have language immersion services to support those learners that for a variety of reasons are late comers to the Welsh language. Some Authorities have established immersion provision with some still in their infancy. Officers have recently been</p>

<p>some places but with the WESP, things we can do to promote the Welsh schools and a mention of the use of Home to School Transport availability;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When opening the English medium for Welsh medium community use, look at buildings themselves. Make them look and feel neutral / promote Welsh language more. Even in new English medium school, bilingual signage for rooms /canteen. Welsh larger than English in line with Cymraeg 2050. This way promoting Welsh language visually and its usage. 		<p>working collaboratively with their counterparts in other Authorities gathering information on the different immersion support services and packages that are available, and discussing lessons learned and identifying best practice.</p> <p>Formally establishing this support within RCT is a priority that is identified within the new WESP, and a commitment will be made to establish and maintain Welsh language immersion provision to support latecomers to the Welsh language and Welsh medium education within the first five years of the WESP.</p>
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Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation

Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

The project will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed by officers within the Education and Inclusion Services Directorate and the Corporate Estates Department on a regular basis throughout the design, build and operational period.

Stage 6 – Summary of Impacts for the Proposal

A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been completed and the main findings are as follows -

The aim of proposed project is to relocate Maesybryn and Tonysguboriau primary schools to brand new buildings on their current sites in order to replace their current buildings are in very poor condition overall. Additionally, the proposed project also aims to amalgamate Cefn and Craig yr Hesg Primary Schools and to build a brand new English medium community primary school on the current site of Craig yr Hesg Primary School and land adjacent to it (the former site of the Tŷ Gwyn Pupil Referral Unit). Although these are English medium primary schools, Welsh is taught as part of the curriculum and all pupils will benefit from having the opportunity to be taught in brand new facilities fit for the 21st Century.

The aim of the Council is to embed positive habits and attitudes towards the Welsh language through purposeful planning within schools and to promote the informal use of the Welsh language amongst learners inside and outside school. Facilitating the use of the Welsh language across the curriculum and in wider contexts in schools to ensure a continuum of linguistic progression to support learners in the transition between key stages offers all learners the opportunity to become fully bilingual and aligns with the Curriculum for Wales – 2022.

If implemented, the proposal will also allow for the expansion of community and third-party use of the schools' facilities which can be used to hold classes through the medium of Welsh. The schools will be designed to be fully accessible and fully integrated community schools. A dedicated area is being designed within each school so that the local community will be allowed to safely utilise the facilities at the school, which could involve Welsh language groups using the 21st Century facilities for meetings / classes etc. The headteachers will be encouraged and fully supported to use these facilities to increase participation in the Welsh language by offering the opportunity to parents/carers and other members of the community to attend Welsh classes and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh.

In summary, the proposal will therefore assist with delivering the targets outlined in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's (RCTCBCs) current (2017 to 2022) and new (2022 to 2032) Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and will support the aim of Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 target of one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050.

Stage 7 – Sign Off

Name of Officer completing the WLIA	Nicola Goodman	Service Director Name:	Andrea Richards, Service Director for 21 st Century Schools and Transformation
Position	Lead for Strategic Planning and MIM	I recommend that the proposal: (Highlight decision)	Is implemented with no amendments
			Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined
			Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on the Welsh language
Signature	N. Goodman	Service Director Signature	A. Richards
Date	01/07/2022	Date	01/07/2022

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18 JULY 2022

UK GOVERNMENT SHARED PROSPERITY FUND – OPPORTUNITIES IN SOUTH EAST WALES

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (COUNCILLOR MARK NORRIS)

Author: Derek James, Service Director Prosperity and Development

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to:

- 1.1 Provide an update on the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) which supports the government's wider commitment to level up all parts of the UK and provides funding for local investment between 2022 and 2025.
- 1.2 Highlight the investment opportunities for Rhondda Cynon Taf and the wider South East Wales region.
- 1.3 Provide detail of the proposed delivery arrangements and the timescales for the submission and appraisal of a South East Wales Regional Investment Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Consider the detail of the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund for the period 2022 to 2025 and the potential investment opportunities for Rhondda Cynon Taf and the wider South East Wales region.
- 2.2 Agree the delivery arrangements for SPF in RCT and the wider Cardiff Capital Region and the requirement for a 3 year Regional Investment Plan to access the Fund as set out in Section 7 of the report.

- 2.3 Endorse the Council's role as lead authority for South East Wales and the development and submission of a Regional Investment Plan to UK Government by 1 August 2022.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that Rhondda Cynon Taf and the wider South East Wales region is able to take advantage of the significant resources available for investment projects from the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund for the period April 2022 to March 2025.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Following the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union on 31 January 2020, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is the UK government's replacement for the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).

- 4.2 The UKSPF will provide £2.6 billion of support for local investment and is a key part of the UK Government Levelling Up agenda, forming part of a range of complementary funding, including the Levelling Up Fund and Community Ownership Fund.

- 4.3 The Fund will support the UK Government Levelling Up objectives which are to:

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging.
- Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest.
- Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost.
- Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency.

- 4.4 The primary aim of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. Underpinning this aim are three investment priorities:

- The **Communities and Place** investment priority will enable places to invest to restore their community spaces and relationships and create the foundations for economic development at the neighbourhood-level;

- The **Supporting Local Business** investment priority will enable places to fund interventions that support local businesses to thrive, innovate and grow; and
 - The **People and Skills** investment priority will help reduce the barriers some people face to employment and support them to move towards employment and education. Places can also target funding into skills for local areas to support employment and local growth.
- 4.5 As part of the People and Skills priority there is a dedicated and ringfenced element of the UKSPF called **Multiply**, which seeks to improve adult numeracy skills through free personal tutoring, digital training, and flexible courses.
- 4.6 Each of these investment priorities includes a wide range of eligible interventions which provide significant opportunity to develop a flexible funding package. Full details of the Fund are set out in the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund Prospectus](#) and [Interventions List for Wales](#).
- 4.7 All areas across the UK will receive a conditional allocation from the UKSPF for core SPF activity as well as the delivery of Multiply. In Wales, local government has been given responsibility for developing an Investment Plan for approval by the UK government, and for subsequent management and delivery of the Fund.
- 4.8 To access their allocation, each local authority in Wales needs to develop a local Investment Plan which identifies a range of interventions that meet the 3 investment priorities identified in paragraph 4.4 and reflect local needs and opportunities. Each local plan will contribute to one of four Welsh regional investment plans which will be submitted to the UK Government for assessment.
- 4.9 There will be local flexibility over how the Fund is best delivered - for example, competition for grant funding, procurement, commissioning or in-house delivery. Local authorities can also determine the most appropriate scale for each intervention – for example, local or regional.
- 4.10 It is expected that local authorities engage widely with local partners and stakeholders to ensure that plans are comprehensive and do not duplicate existing provision. Engagement with local MP's and Members of the Senedd is also expected, and plans will need to take into account other national policies and priorities, including those of the Welsh Government.

5. FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

5.1 The funding allocation is confirmed for three financial years and covers the period April 2022 to March 2025.

5.2 Across Wales there is a total allocation of £585M which includes £484M core SPF funds and a further £101M for Multiply and the funding allocations have been determined on the following basis;

- 40% of funding is allocated on a per capita basis across Wales.
- 30% of the allocation uses the same needs-based index previously used to identify UK Community Renewal Fund priority places.
- 30% is allocated using the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

5.3 The following table details the allocation per Authority within the South East region:

Local Authority	Core UKSPF £	Multiply £	Total £	% of allocation
Blaenau Gwent	23,301,572	4,863,920	28,165,492	10.11
Bridgend	19,116,296	3,990,295	23,106,591	8.3
Caerphilly	28,272,298	5,901,499	34,173,797	12.27
Cardiff	34,587,594	7,219,740	41,807,334	15.01
Merthyr Tydfil	22,698,977	4,738,136	27,437,113	9.85
Monmouthshire	5,919,533	1,235,631	7,155,164	2.57
Newport	27,177,563	5,672,986	32,850,549	11.79
Rhondda Cynon Taf	37,320,994	7,790,305	45,111,299	16.2
Torfaen	20,431,241	4,264,774	24,696,015	8.87
Vale of Glamorgan	11,606,505	2,422,717	14,029,222	5.04
Total	230,432,573	48,100,003	278,532,576	

5.4 Each local authority will be able to use up to 4% of their allocation to undertake necessary fund administration, such as project assessment, contracting, monitoring and evaluation and ongoing stakeholder engagement.

5.5 The Fund can support investment in activity that started from 1 April 2022 where it clearly fits with the relevant interventions and all Fund requirements. However, any such interventions will be undertaken at risk prior to approval of the Investment Plan.

5.6 There is an expectation from UK Government that the minimum proportion of the allocation spent on capital should be 10%. The Regional Investment Plan will need to set out the preferred mix of

capital and revenue funding subject to the minimum proportion and taking account of local need and opportunities.

- 5.7 Match funding is not required and will not form part of the Investment Plan assessment criteria, but local authorities are encouraged to consider match funding and other leverage to maximise the value for money and impact of the Fund.
- 5.8 It is important to note that any funding not utilised in year cannot be carried forward and will be lost. Mechanisms are however being explored to maintain the funding within the region through the development of a legal agreement.

6. DELIVERY OF UKSPF IN SOUTH EAST WALES AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A LEAD AUTHORITY

- 6.1 In Wales the Investment Plans will be developed on a regional basis, meaning that for South East Wales one plan must be developed to cover the 10 local authority areas.
- 6.2 A lead local authority will receive an area's allocation to manage and take responsibility for assessing and approving applications, processing payments and day to day monitoring. For the South East, it is proposed that Rhondda Cynon Taf Council undertake the lead authority role.
- 6.3 As lead authority, Rhondda Cynon Taf will have responsibility for a single funding agreement with UK Government for the full South East Wales SPF allocation of £278.5M. There will need to be back to back Service Level Agreements between RCT and the other nine local authorities to pass on accountability and the terms and conditions of the UK Government funding.
- 6.4 RCT will also need to establish the Local Partnership Group and in Wales existing regional partnership structures such as those in the Cardiff Capital Region can be used to contribute to the partnership arrangements.
- 6.5 Funding is available to support the extra work required to establish new delivery and governance arrangements in the region. As lead authority, RCT can therefore secure an additional £40,000 for undertaking this role which is in addition to the individual local authority allocation detailed in paragraph 5.3.
- 6.6 The lead authority will have overall accountability for the funding and how the fund operates. Responsibility for particular interventions can be delegated to a specific local authority and it is intended that a

significant element of funding will be delivered at the local level in order to target support to communities, places and businesses in most need.

7. RHONDDA CYNON TAF LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN

7.1 RCT has 16.2% of the allocation for South East Wales with a total of £45,111,299 which includes £37,320,994 core SPF funds and a further £7,790,305 for Multiply. This is the highest allocation of all Welsh local authorities.

7.2 The total funding is broken down to a yearly allocation with 12% in Year 1 (22/23), 24% in Year 2 (23/24) and 64% in Year 3 (24/25).

7.3 The 3 main investment priorities for the UKSPF of Communities and Place, Supporting Local Business and People and Skills includes a wide range of eligible interventions. In RCT this will allow us to align many of the priorities identified in the Council's Corporate Plan with the investment priorities.

7.4 The RCT local investment plan will include projects that will deliver against a range of Council priorities including, but not limited to the following:

- Development and resilience of communities by improving facilities and access to services and supporting community-based organisations.
- Action to support individuals and community-based organisations to deal with the challenges of the current economic environment and cost of living crisis.
- Supporting the improvement and redevelopment of town centres and community places to revitalise them.
- Small business support and development including finance for growth and resilience.
- Small business support for key growth sectors, research and development and innovation.
- Employability and Skills initiatives to support people in employment and in key sectors, unemployed and economically inactive people and young people to enter employment.

7.5 Significant interest has been received from third sector organisations expressing an interest in delivering against the priorities of the UKSPF. It is therefore proposed that an amount of the local allocation is made

available for a competitive process, similar to the current Community Renewal Fund. This will ensure an open and transparent process that is open to all.

- 7.6 It is envisaged that more targeted engagement with the third sector and other key bodies will take place over the summer and autumn periods with a view to establishing which organisations can deliver projects and programmes aligned to the investment priorities in RCT and/or in partnership across the region or sub-region.
- 7.7 Once this exercise is complete and a funding agreement from UK Government is in place a more detailed delivery plan for the SPF in RCT can be presented to Cabinet.
- 7.8 The RCT Local Investment Plan will form part of a wider Regional Investment Plan which essentially will be an amalgamation of the 10 Local Authority Local Investment Plans in the Cardiff Capital Region. There will also be an opportunity to pool elements of the allocations to be used to deliver projects at a regional level where there is added value in doing so. It is proposed that the Regional Investment Plan be signed off by the CCR Cabinet ahead of submission to the UK Government.

8. PLAN SUBMISSION AND ASSESSMENT TIMESCALES

- 8.1 The timescale for submission and approval of the Investment Plans is as follows;
 - **1 August 2022** - Plans to be submitted to UK Government via an online portal by 1 August 2022. As lead authority, RCT will be responsible for this. (The Regional Investment Plan will require CCR Cabinet approval)
 - **July to September 2022** - Indicative period for UK Government assessment led by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
 - **October 2022 onwards** - Anticipated date for first investment plans to be approved and anticipated first payment to be made to lead local authorities.

9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 9.1 There is no requirement for an Equality Impact Assessment or Socio-Economic Analysis for the purposes of this report, but these

assessments will be undertaken as part of the ongoing developing of the Investment Plan.

10. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There is no requirement for a Welsh Language Impact Assessment with this report, but Welsh Language Impact Assessments will be undertaken as part of the ongoing development of the Investment Plan.

11. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 11.1 As detailed in paragraph 4.10 there is an expectation that local authorities engage widely with local partners and stakeholders to ensure that plans are comprehensive, and any interventions do not duplicate existing provision. This engagement has already commenced and will continue during the period leading up to the regional plan submission and beyond as authorities enter the delivery phase.

12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 12.1 Section 5 of the report sets out the detail of the 3 year UKSPF programme. It should be noted that there is no requirement for match funding although lead authorities are encouraged to consider the inclusion of other funding sources to maximum the impact of the UKSPF.
- 12.2 Subject to endorsement of the lead authority role, the Council will require additional staff resources to ensure effective management and delivery of the funds. 4% of the total allocation for the region (as detailed in paragraph 5.4) can be used for administration costs some of which will need to be retained to ensure RCT has sufficient resource/capacity to undertake the lead authority role, and some of which will need to be distributed to each local authority to support the administration of their local investment plans. The exact split will be determined once further technical guidance is issued by the UK Government around the nature and extent of the monitoring and evaluation requirements.

13. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 13.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report, but any implications will be identified as part of developing the Investment Plan and on receipt of associated terms and conditions of funding from UK Government.

14. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

14.1 The 3 investment priorities of the UKSPF – Communities and Place, Supporting Local Business and People and Skills directly complement the main priorities identified in the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024 'Making a Difference' of:

- People: independent, healthy and successful.
- Creating Places: where people are proud to live, work and play.
- Enabling Prosperity: creating the opportunity for people and business to be innovative, be entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper.

14.2 All activity within the South East Wales Regional Investment Plan will need to contribute to the goals of the Well Being of Future Generations Act. In particular, the economic and environmental well-being of Wales, supporting the delivery of a prosperous Wales, a more resilient Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

15. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

15.1 Successful development of the Regional Investment Plan and its associated projects are of strategic significance to Rhondda Cynon Taf and the wider South East Wales region.

16. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

16.1 The UKSPF will provide £2.6 billion of support across the UK during the period 2022 to 2025 and is a key part of the UK Government Levelling Up agenda.

16.2 In South East Wales, £278.5M is available during this period with £45M of this allocated for local investment in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

16.3 Within the context of the Fund's aims, each authority area has the flexibility to invest across a range of activities that represent the right solutions to improve local pride in place, increase life chances, to help spread and create opportunity, and a sense of community and belonging.

16.4 Local authorities have been invited to collaborate and develop one investment plan for the South East Region to maximise the opportunities available from the 3 year funding programme.

- 16.5 It is proposed that the Council performs the role of lead authority, takes responsibility for submitting a Regional Investment Plan by the 1 August 2022 and undertakes the ongoing management of the Fund following approval by the UK Government.
- 16.6 Detailed guidance to support the development and submission of the Investment Plans is still awaited from UK Government and is expected to be published during July. In the meantime, RCT officers will continue to work with internal departments as well as each local authority in the South East region to develop and refine a programme of potential activity that will form the basis of the 3 year Regional Investment Plan.
- 16.7 The plan will identify overarching interventions for each authority that relate to the three investment priorities detailed in paragraph 4.4 and will allow local priorities to be further developed in partnership with our communities and stakeholders over the coming months.
- 16.8 In the period between submission of the investment plan and approval by UK Government, significant work with local partners and stakeholders will also be required to further consider the delivery phase of the UKSPF in South East Wales and fully develop the necessary governance arrangements and associated legal agreements.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services

Contact Officer:

Derek James, Service Director Prosperity and Development 01443 281115

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18 JULY 2022

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN
DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER
(COUNCILLOR MARK NORRIS)**

Item:

Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer:

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