



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

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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)

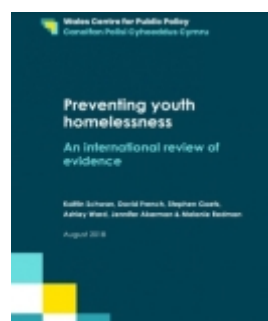
This sets out the Welsh Government's key policy and operational priorities and has been reviewed to consider where it needs to be updated in light of COVID-19. The review sets out priority areas that include responding to co-occurring mental health problems which are common in substance misuse, ensuring 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 unrepeated.'

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.			

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	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

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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			

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	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
	Ensure HSG and Children's Services review efficacy of and			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in representations of youth homelessness

<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.			

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	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			

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	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			

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	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			

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	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.