



# **Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan**

**2022 – 2027**



# **Rapid Rehousing - Rhondda Cynon Taf**

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## **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.

	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>20/21</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>Number change</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>No of Homelessness Presentations</b>	1421	1158	1256	+98	8%
<b>Number accepted as homeless / threatened with homelessness.</b>	1247	1025	956	-64	-6%
<b>Not Homeless</b>	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
<b>16/17</b>	18	23	19	-4	-17%
<b>18/24</b>	161	187	174	-13	-7%
<b>25 +</b>	962	753	724	-29	-4%
<b>60+</b>	106	62	44	-18	-29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1247</b>	<b>1025</b>	<b>961</b>	<b>-64</b>	<b>-6%</b>

## 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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>762</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>-103</b>	<b>-13%</b>
Single parent male	17	21	6	-15	-71%
Single parent Female	266	121	154	+ 33	27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>13%</b>
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	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>61%</b>
All other household groups	114	65	64	-1	-2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1247</b>	<b>1025</b>	<b>961</b>	<b>-64</b>	<b>-6%</b>

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**

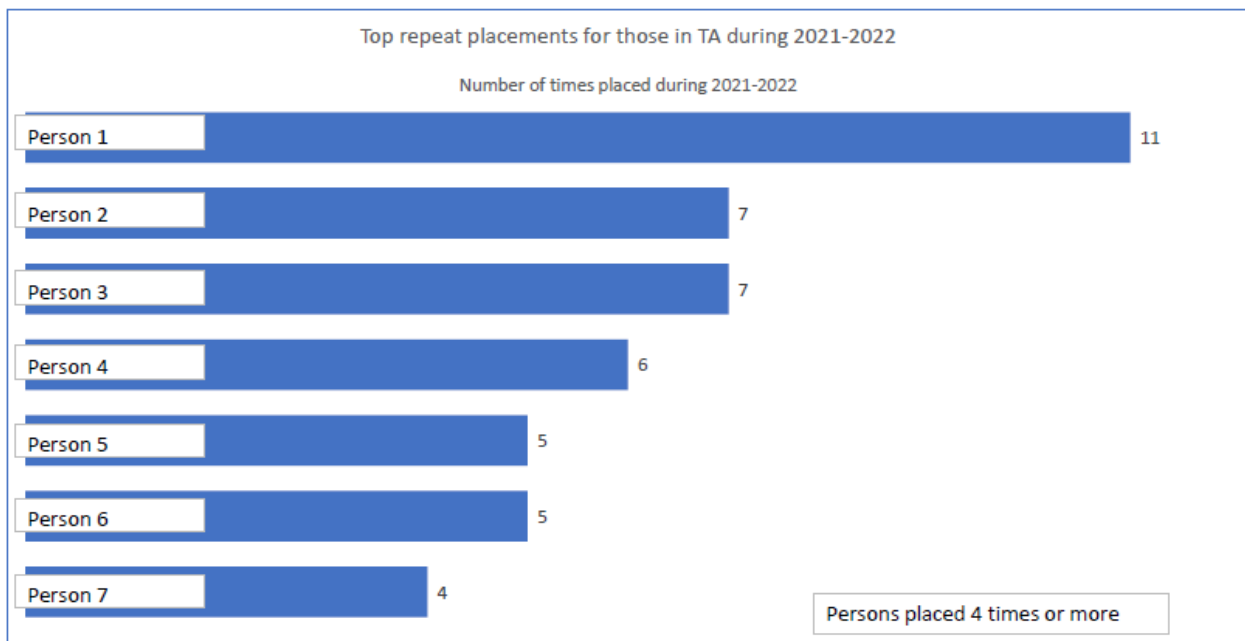
	19-20	20-21	21-22	Number change	% Change
<b>Homeless Reason*</b>					
07. Loss of rented or tied accommodation	286	165	186	21	13%
01. Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate	120	184	164	-20	-11%
02. Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	132	180	155	-25	-14%
10. 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	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1247</b>	<b>1025</b>	<b>961</b>	<b>-64</b>	<b>-6%</b>

**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
<b>A person fleeing domestic violence or threatened violence</b>	93	84	95	11	13%

## Prevention Outcomes

<b>Decision Type / description</b>	<b>19-20</b>	<b>20-21</b>	<b>21-22</b>	<b>Number change</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Section66 / Successfully prevented	391	130	105	-25	-19%
Section66 / Unsuccessfully prevented	52	41	36	-5	-12%
Section66 / Other	88	41	11	-30	-73%
<b>Total</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>-60</b>	<b>-28%</b>
Section73 / Successfully relieved	495	375	339	-36	-10%
Section73 / Unsuccessfully relieved	47	251	268	17	7%
Section73 / Other	174	187	202	15	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1247</b>	<b>1025</b>	<b>961</b>	<b>-64</b>	<b>-6%</b>

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.

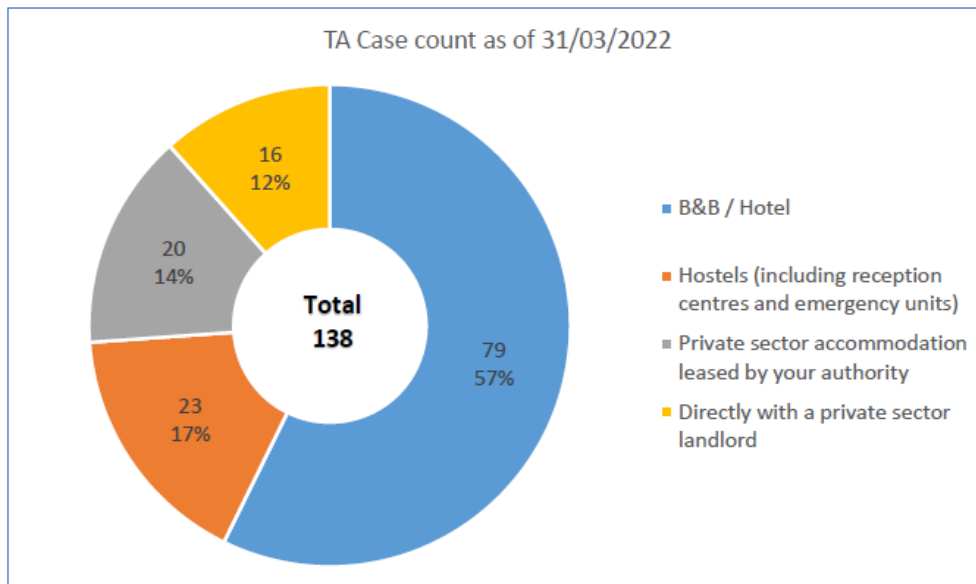
As part of the Council's Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022- 2024. The Council has committed to review its use of bed and breakfast accommodation and develop alternative temporary housing models that would meet the need of service users including Housing First provision.

### **DATA**

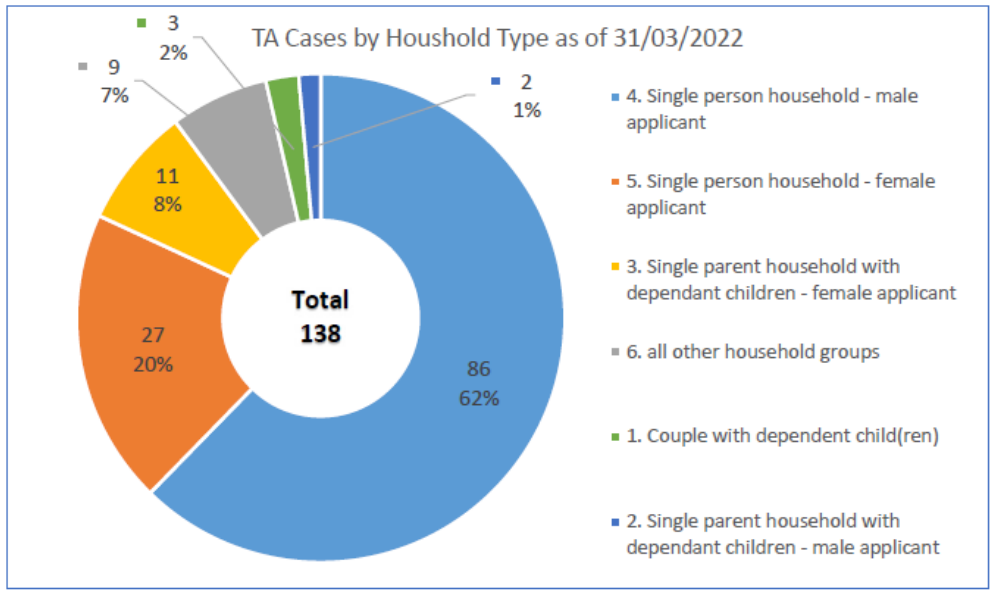
**524** individuals, families and groups were placed in temporary accommodation in 2020/2021. **40%** of the **524** were placed in temporary accommodation multiple times, leading to a total of **852** placements in 2020/2021 (as of the end of March). **852** placements represent an increase of nearly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

## Breakdown of Temporary Accommodation Data as at 31/02/22

### Table

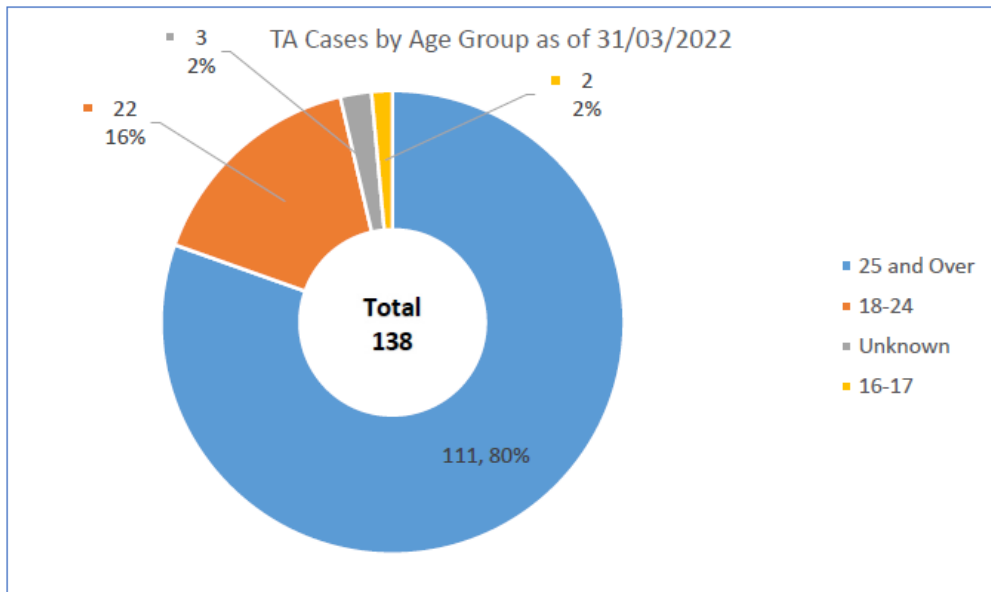


The number of placements in temporary accommodation as the end of March 2021 was 138 Households. This is a reduction on previous figures in 2020 /21 however, we recognise there are still have a high number of placements in Bed and Breakfast accommodation.



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

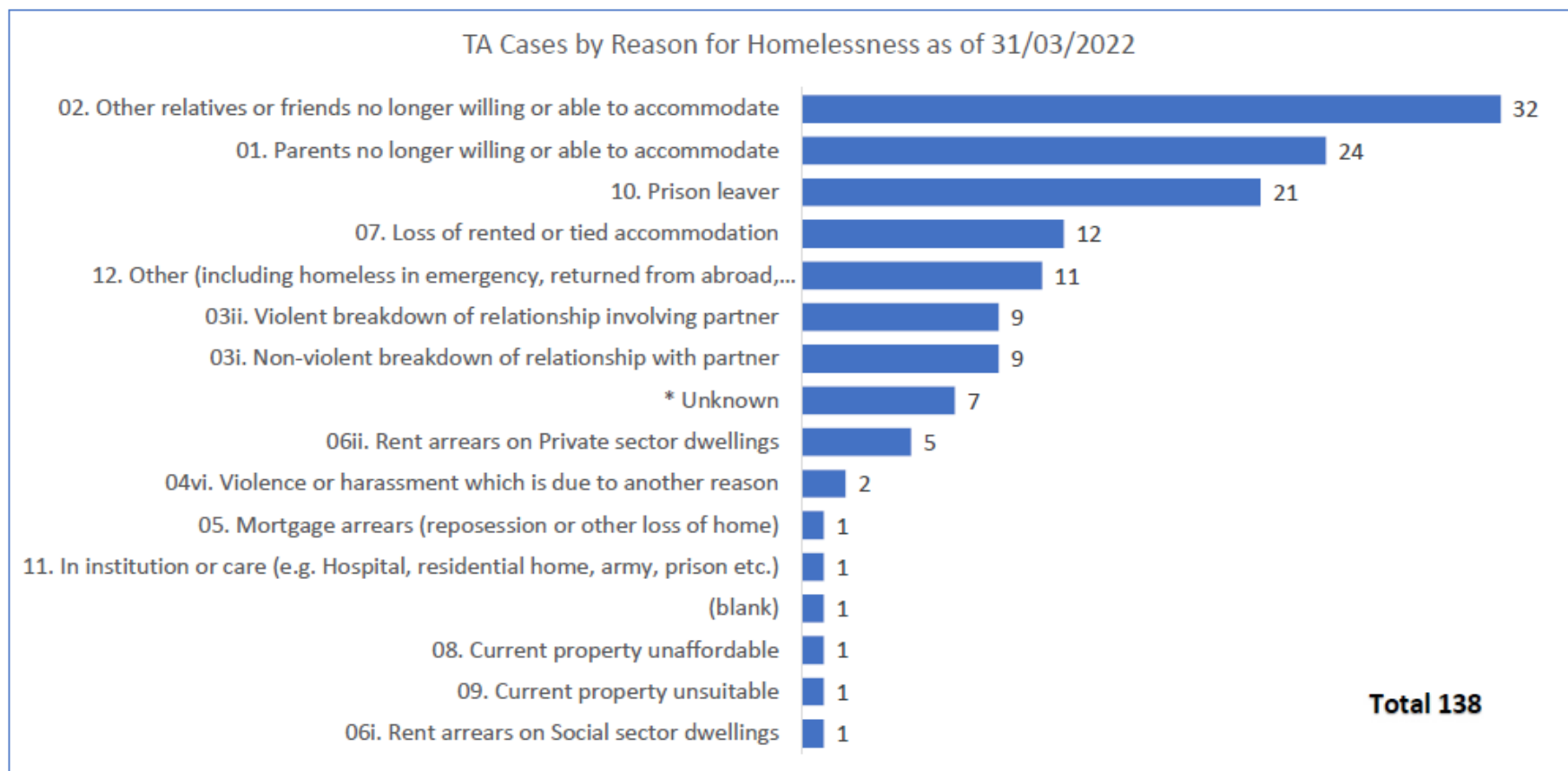
**TA Cases by Age Group**



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.



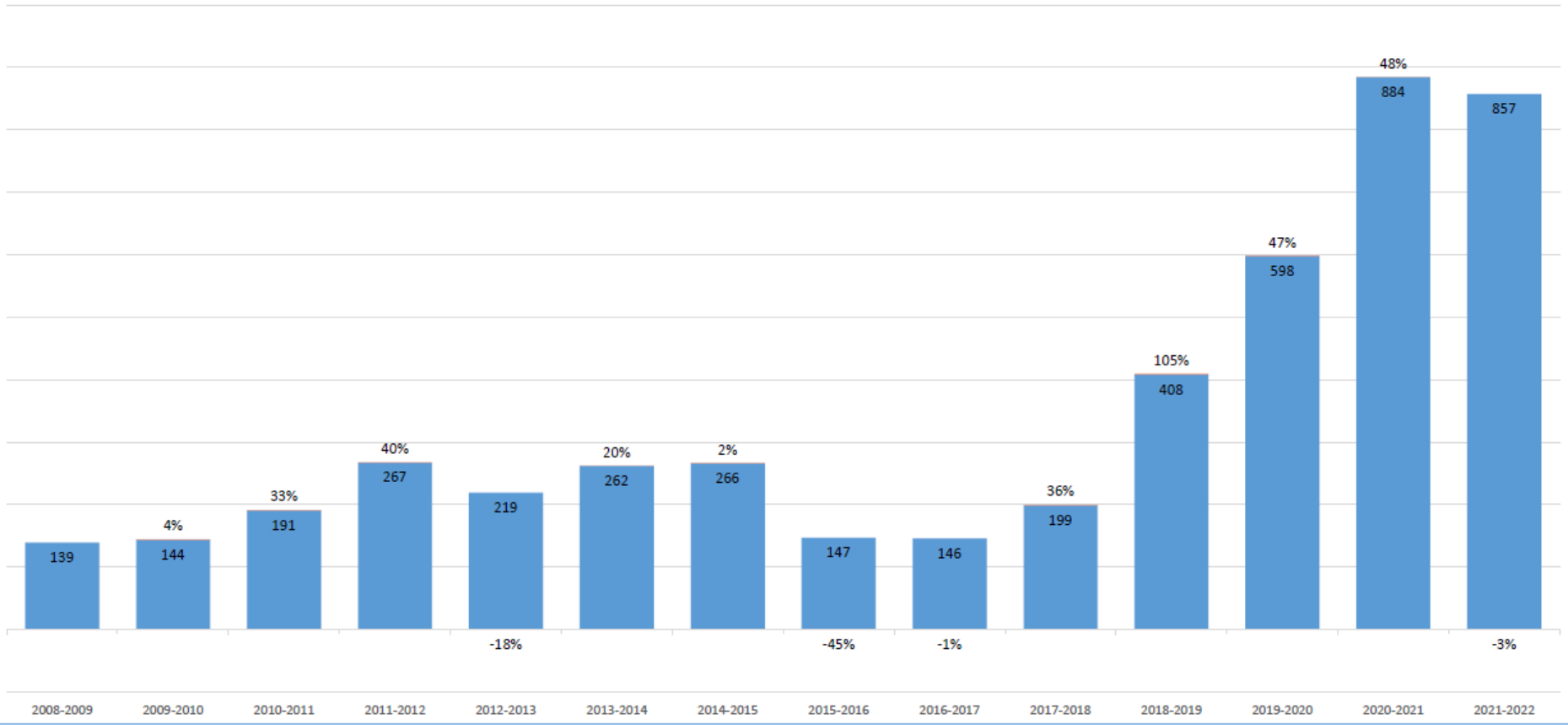
The three main reasons for a temporary accommodation placement are breakdown of relationship with family and friends and Prison Leavers. This has remained consistent over the past two years with Prison Leavers accounting for all repeat placements and the high drop out of cases linked with no further 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.

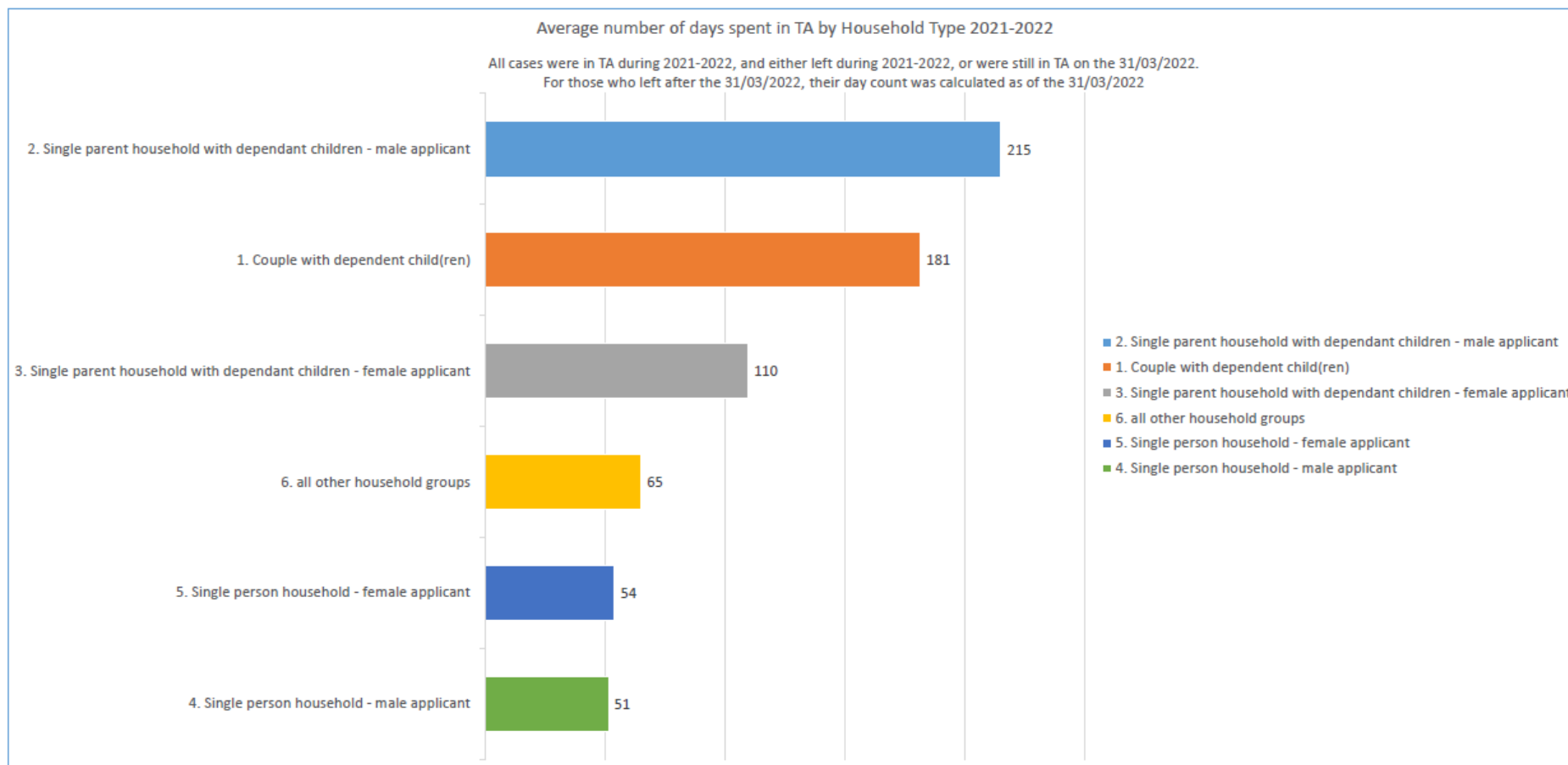


Yearly comparison of TA placements and percentage change from previous year



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	<b>220</b> = 23% decrease
Referrals accepted	185	169	154	<b>137</b> = 62% accepted
Referrals not accepted	131	113	133	<b>83</b> = 38% Not accepted
Number of women who placed in a refuge	146	132	117	<b>119</b>
*Number of women who failed to access after being accepted	39	35	37	<b>17</b>
Number of women who have a local connection	43	47	70	<b>39</b>
Number of women who have no local connection	101	95	47	<b>70</b>

\*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 <sup>nd</sup> 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	<b>31.36%</b>	<b>42.37%</b>	<b>16.10%</b>	<b>10.17%</b>	

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 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2022.

Reason for Referral	Number of Referrals received during Quarter 3 (%)	Number of Referrals in total (%)
<b>Mental Health &amp; Substance Misuse issues overlapping</b>	<b>29 (54.7%)</b>	<b>85 (66.9%)</b>
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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

<b>Property Size</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>
	<b>Delivered</b>	<b>Planned</b>
1 Bedroom	43	109
2 Bedroom	10	59
3 Bedroom	8	20
4 Bedroom		6
5 Bedroom		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>195</b>

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
<b>1 Bed</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>565</b>
<b>2 Bed</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>451</b>
<b>3 Bed</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>251</b>
<b>4 Bed</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>5 Bed</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>6 Bed</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Bedsit</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1358</b>	<b>1298</b>	<b>1058</b>	<b>1296</b>

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
<b>Total</b>	<b>4952</b>

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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> April - to 31<sup>st</sup> 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"> <li>- Shared housing (x10 units)</li> <li>- Private Sector Leasing scheme (x 5 /8units)</li> </ul>	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	Some 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		