

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH JULY 2022

RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

**REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S
SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH CLLR G CAPLE,
CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE**

Author(s): Neil Elliott, Director for Adult Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with information regarding the current demand and capacity of the Council's residential care homes for older people and make recommendations that, if agreed, will temporarily redesign current service provision leading to the:

- temporary closure of the 24-bed Ystrad Fechan care home and the transfer of the eight residents to Pentre House or another home of their choosing which meets their needs; and,
- temporary provision of up to 10 new step up step down beds at Parc Newydd, in partnership with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, to support hospital discharge.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 considers the information in this report.
- 2.2 redesigns the Council's residential care home service to temporarily close Ystrad Fechan and transfer residents to Pentre House or another home of their choice which meets their needs.
- 2.3 redesigns the Council's residential care home service and temporarily provides up to 10 new step up step down beds at Parc Newydd, in partnership with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, to support hospital discharge.

- 2.4 receives a further report in Autumn 2022, setting out proposals to bring forward development proposals and options for the modernisation of, and investment in the Council's residential services.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Covid-19 has had a profound impact on the care home market, and in particular the Council's residential care homes, so it is important that the Council reviews its current residential care home provision in order to ensure it addresses the ongoing challenges resulting from the pandemic and set out in this report.
- 3.2 Since the start of the pandemic there has been an increase in care home vacancies, which in turn has resulted in the over-provision of residential care beds across Rhondda Cynon Taf. The current capacity is not required in its current form, even when considering the uncertainties of the medium to long term impact of the pandemic. In the short term, however, the temporary redesign of the Council's residential care homes should increase stability, reduce some cost pressures, and ensure people can access good quality care and support when they need it, including the need to support timely and safe hospital discharge.
- 3.3 The proposed recommendations are made to manage short term staffing and demand challenges across the residential services, pending a more comprehensive review of the services that is currently underway. Longer term proposals and options for the modernisation and investment in residential services will be presented to Cabinet in Autumn 2022.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In December 2020, Cabinet agreed, following a comprehensive review and stakeholder consultation on the future provision of the Council's residential care homes for older people, to:
- retain nine care homes, refocusing on complex needs, reablement and respite care, namely:
 - Ystrad Fechan, Treorchy
 - Clydach Court, Trealaw
 - Ferndale House, Ferndale
 - Pentre House, Pentre
 - Tegfan, Trecynon
 - Troedyrhiw, Mountain Ash
 - Cae Glas, Hawthorn
 - Parc Newydd, Talbot Green
 - Garth Olwg, Church Village

- decommission two care homes, namely:
 - Danymynydd in Porth and converting the site into extra care housing
 - Bronllwyn in Gelli and redeveloping the site into accommodation with care for those people with a learning disability.
- receive a further report setting out a comprehensive modernisation programme for the Council's nine residential care homes to be retained.

4.2 In making their decision, Cabinet considered the outcomes of stakeholder consultation, the rationale and drivers shaping the preferred options for the future provision of the Council residential care homes for older people and supporting information relating to current capacity and demand, summarised as follows:

- The Council's residential care homes have served their communities well and are popular homes with good standards of care, provided by committed staff.
- There is need to retain some Council residential care homes to ensure that the Council meets its commitment to maintaining an in-house offer of provision in the local residential care home market.
- The difficulty of existing Council's residential care homes to accept the range of referrals and complexity of need being presented unless the current facilities are upgraded to the modern standards identified for dignified care delivery.
- The demand for traditional residential care is decreasing and less residential care will be needed in the future, as more people will receive care in their own homes, including extra care housing and other supported housing schemes.
- The current and forecasted need is for more complex care (including dementia care), reablement, respite care or short breaks for carers and nursing care.
- The need for the most efficient and effective model of service.
- The impact of older people exercising choice now on the occupancy levels in our care homes.
- The over-provision of residential care beds and sufficient alternative provision of the required type and quality in Rhondda Cynon Taf to meet current and forecast demands - less residential care will be

needed in the future geographical market share across Rhondda, Cynon and Taf areas.

- 4.3 In the report to Cabinet in December 2020, it was reported that the average occupancy of the Council's residential care homes in September 2020 was 53% (157 vacancies) and our commissioned independent care homes was 79% (206 vacancies). It was clear that occupancy levels across the care home sector had continued to reduce as shown in the table below:

	In-house care homes		Independent care homes	
	% Occupied	Vacancies	% Occupied	Vacancies
Sep 2020	53%	157	79%	206
Feb 2020	69%	102	94%	63
Aug 2019	77%	71	96%	46
Mar 2019	79%	76	93%	81
Mar 2018	83%	57	88%	135
Mar 2017	89%	27	88%	67
Mar 2016	98%	8	95%	75

- 4.4 Whilst this fall in occupancy levels was attributable to less people being admitted to residential care homes across the sector, occupancy was also affected by previous Cabinet decisions to restrict permanent admissions into Council care homes pending the outcome of the care home review and the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020.
- 4.5 Since the start of the pandemic, we have seen an increase in people being supported to live in their own home. We have also seen an increase in people being placed in dementia and nursing care, and a decrease in people moving to residential care homes. People are now remaining at home for longer and then access more formal care settings when their needs are more complex and challenging to be supported in their own home.
- 4.6 The pandemic has continued to have a significant impact on care homes, in particular the Council's residential care homes. Demand for Council residential care home placements for older people has fallen sharply since the start of the pandemic and bed occupancy has fallen to 50% (145 vacancies) in May 2022. Whilst occupancy across the independent sector is still below pre-pandemic levels, this has now risen to 86% (159 vacancies), primarily due to increased placements in nursing and dementia.

- 4.7 Current vacancies, broken down by market sector and care category are shown down in the table below.

Sector	Residential	Residential Dementia	Nursing	Nursing Dementia	Total
Independent	71 (25%)	32 (12%)	40 (9%)	16 (13%)	159 (14%)
In-house	96 (54%)	49 (44%)	-	-	145 (50%)
Total	167 (36%)	81 (22%)	40 (9%)	16 (13%)	304 (22%)

- 4.8 While the pandemic has created considerable uncertainty about future demand for placements, there is a lot more capacity available in the Rhondda Cynon Taf care home market, and in addition to the extra care developments, it is anticipated that there are sufficient residential care home places for people. As previously reported, there is clear evidence that there remains an over-provision of care home beds in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

5. TEMPORARY REDESIGN OF THE COUNCIL'S RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES

- 5.1 As already reported above, the pandemic has had a profound impact on the care home market and, in particular, the Council's residential care homes. Along with the steady decrease in admissions pre-pandemic, the pandemic has increased the vacancy rate in the Council's residential care homes to around, on average, 50% and inevitability has affected the living environment and experience for residents, increasing the risk of a detrimental impact on their wellbeing. In some care homes, Ystrad Fechan and Parc Newydd vacancy levels are over 60%, as shown in the table below:

In House Home	Registered Beds			Occupancy				Vacancies		
	Res	EMI	Total	Res	EMI	Total	%	Res	EMI	Total
Clydach Court		35	35		20	20	57%		15	15
Ferndale House	16	10	26	6	7	13	50%	10	3	13
Pentre House	29		29	16		16	55%	13		13
Ystradfechan	16	8	24	8	0	8	33%	8	8	16
Tegfan	31	15	46	18	13	31	67%	13	2	15
Troedyrhiw	21	5	26	7	5	12	46%	14	0	14
Cae Glas		39	39		18	18	46%		21	21
Garth Olwg	30		30	15		15	50%	15		15
Parc Newydd	36		36	13		13	36%	23		23
Total	179	112	291	83	63	146	50%	96	49	145

- 5.2 In addition, staffing shortages have created significant pressures across the Council's residential care homes, due to high staff absence and ongoing recruitment difficulties. This is impacting on the wellbeing of our staff in work and will, on times, affect the quality of care and support provided to our residents. In May 2022, staff absence ranged from 13% to 30%, averaging 19% across the Council's residential care homes. There were also 40 vacancies, around 11% of our establishment, together with a shortage of casual staff to supplement our core staffing levels.

- 5.3 There is considerable uncertainty regarding the medium to long term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the future demand for residential care home placements. However, in the short term it is important that the Council reviews its current residential care home provision to ensure it addresses the ongoing challenges resulting from the pandemic accounted for in this report; including low occupancy, reduced demand, staffing shortages and quality of care and support for care home residents. It is therefore proposed that the Council temporarily redesigns its current residential care home provision, and
- 5.4 **Temporarily closes Ystrad Fechan in Treorchy** due to prolonged low resident numbers and occupancy and lack of demand for long term placements at the home.
- 5.5 It is acknowledged that the temporary closure of Ystrad Fechan may cause anxiety for residents, families and staff. It is imperative that if the recommendation contained within this report is agreed, we engage with all interested stakeholders as a matter of urgency.
- 5.6 All residents in Ystrad Fechan would be offered to transfer to Pentre House or another home of their choosing, which meets their needs, if Ystrad Fechan temporarily closes. Each resident and their family will be offered the support of a social care worker or advocate to facilitate the move. Ystrad Fechan staff will also be offered to transfer from the home to accompany residents and enhance staffing levels in Pentre House or another Council residential care home or within Accommodation Services.
- 5.7 **Temporarily provides, in partnership with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, up to 10 step up step down beds at Parc Newydd to support hospital discharge.**
- 5.8 The health and social care system remains under significant pressure with high levels of admissions and bed occupancy across the acute hospitals in the region. The Council is working with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board to facilitate and expedite safe hospital discharges and it is proposed that additional step up step down capacity is created using vacant capacity in our homes. This is in line with Welsh Government Covid-19 Discharge guidance and will support ongoing implementation of “Discharge to Recover then Assess (D2RA)” pathways to support effective and efficient patient flow from hospital.
- 5.9 It is proposed that Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, in conjunction with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, develop a new scheme to utilise the current vacant beds at Parc Newydd to provide up to 10 temporary step up step down beds at the home. The proposed scheme will be designed to reduce avoidable emergency admissions to hospital and facilitate discharge from acute and community hospitals and

improve patient flow through the urgent care system. In addition, it will promote an individual's return to independence and community based support principles in Rhondda Cynon Taf in line with the Council's overarching corporate priority, People: "promoting independence and positive lives for everyone".

- 5.10 Parc Newydd Care Home is suitable for this purpose given its location in close proximity to Royal Glamorgan Hospital and its configuration which would allow a self-contained wing with separate lounge and kitchen provision and designated outside garden area to the main home to be utilised for this purpose. This would not be possible at Ystrad Fechan in Treorchy.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed reviewing the impact of the temporary redesign of the Council's residential care homes for older people as recommended in Section 2 above.
- 6.2 There are potential impacts of the temporary redesign changes on people with protected characteristics particularly older people and people with disabilities and these are set out in the Equality Impact Assessment, together with actions focused on ensuring their assessed care needs continued to be met, so that any negative impact can be mitigated.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no Welsh language implications as a result of the recommendation set out in the report.

8. CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT

- 8.1 Subject to the agreement of the recommendation in Section 2 above, Officers will contact all residents at Ystrad Fechan and their families to discuss recommendations with those directly affected and arrange, where necessary, a re-assessment to ensure their needs will be appropriately met.
- 8.2 In addition, appropriate consultation will also be undertaken with all staff (and their trade union representatives) potentially impacted by the proposal in accordance with the Council's Managing Change Policy, if this report is approved.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 The pandemic has had a significant financial impact on the Council's residential care home provision and continues to result in overall increased cost pressures for Adult Services.
- 9.2 The temporary redesign proposals to address the ongoing pandemic challenges set out in this report should provide more cost-effective arrangements and reduce these cost pressures, the financial impact of which, will be explored further, if the redesign changes are approved by Cabinet.
- 9.3 Any costs that arise from the temporary redesign changes will be met from within existing budgets.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 Any future provision of services will need to be considered in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
- 10.2 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and accompanying Part 4 Code of Practice sets out that where a local authority has carried out an assessment which has revealed that the person has needs for care and support then the local authority must decide if those needs meet the eligibility criteria, and if they do, it must meet those needs.
- 10.3 Any employment issues that arise will need to be considered in conjunction with Human Resources, and in accordance with any relevant policies and legislative provisions

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

- 11.1 This report supports two of the Council's corporate priorities, namely:
- People - promoting independence and positive lives for everyone.
 - Living within our means - where services are delivered efficiently to achieve value for money for the taxpayer.
- 11.2 The temporary redesign of the Council's residential care homes for older people set out in this report would allow the Council to meet the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The proposals meet the needs of an ageing population, including those with

more complex needs, are more sustainable and increases focus on wellbeing and independence, resulting in the wellbeing goals of a Wales of cohesive communities, a healthier Wales and more equal Wales being supported

12. ELECTORAL WARDS AFFECTED

- 12.1 The proposals set out in Section 2 of the report to temporary redesign the Council's residential care homes at Ystrad Fechan in Treorchy and Parc Newydd in Talbot Green will impact Treorchy and Llantrisant and Talbot Green wards respectively, although they may also impact on residents, families and staff from across the County Borough. In addition, proposals at Parc Newydd will support the timely discharge of patients from hospitals who will live across the County Borough, promoting their return to independence and community based support principles.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 A decision to temporary redesign the Council's residential care home provision will ensure we are able address the ongoing challenges from the pandemic set out in this report and remain sustainable for the Council to continue to offer good quality care and support when people need it, including discharge from hospital.
- 13.2 The report also recommends Cabinet receive a further report in Autumn 2022, which would set out proposals and options for the modernisation of, and investment in, the Council's residential services, and include a review of any decision taken to temporarily close Ystrad Fechan Care Home.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Community Services Scrutiny Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers

Modernisation of the Council's Residential care Home Service for Older
People – Cabinet – 3rd December 2020

Officer to contact: Neil Elliott, Director of Adult Services