



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

24TH NOVEMBER 2022

**LOCAL AUTHORITY'S OFFER OF ACCOMMODATION AND HOUSING
SUPPORT RELATED SERVICES TO CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG
PEOPLE**

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Housing**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to provide the Corporate Parenting Board with an update in respect of the housing and support assistance to young people leaving care for the period 1st April 2022 to the 31st of October 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board acknowledge the information contained within the report.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 This is an information report.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Legislative change in Wales has led to a strengthening of duties on local authorities to prevent, and address, homelessness more effectively. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 requires local authorities to produce a joint strategy between housing and social services to address homelessness. This reinforces the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 requirement that housing and social services work together to meet the needs of young people in care as they move to independent living. The statutory responsibility of social services to provide a pathway plan for all those leaving care – to facilitate their transition to independence – can now, where necessary, include a

personal housing plan which focuses specifically on their housing needs.

- 4.2 To meet the above duties and ensure effective collaboration officers from Children Services and Community Housing are working together to enhance joint working arrangements, through a care leaver pathway. The development of a care leaver pathway will offer a joined-up assessment and a single planning process.
- 4.3 This includes a dedicated Housing Solutions Officer role to provide a single point of contact and help identify all available housing options in consideration of a young person's housing and support needs. This will include supported accommodation, Housing First and general needs provision

An outline of the Housing and Support Options that are presently available to Young People Leaving

Social Housing Homefinder (Allocations)

The Community Housing Department manages the gateway to social housing in RCT in partnership with social housing landlords. Care leavers can apply directly for social housing with applications considered by the Move on Panel, who determine if the young person is ready to live independently. If approved care leavers are placed in Band A which is the highest priority band and are then able to bid for 1 bedroom accommodation in the areas of their choice. It must be noted there is limited supply and a high demand for one bedroom accommodation particularly in the south of the borough.

Between the 1st of April and 31st October 2022, 14 care leavers have applied to Homefinder and have been assessed as ready to live Independently and registered for housing and placed in Band A. 8 allocations of social housing have made to care leavers during this period with 2 young people leaving care awaiting a tenancy in a new build project in Taff's Well.

Private Rented Accommodation

The availability of single person accommodation in the private rented sector is a significant challenge in the borough. The Council has received Welsh Government funding to set up a Social Housing Letting Agency (SLA) in Rhondda Cynon Taff. This is a pilot scheme which aims to improve access and support to private landlords to offer long term affordable and good quality accommodation with support in the private rented sector. However, the challenge remains affordability and securing accommodation within Local Housing

Allowance rates which has become almost impossible for anyone in receipt of benefits or a low income.

Housing Related Support Services

Our supported and supportive accommodation services for care leavers helps them secure tenancies and address issues preventing them from living independently.

We currently commission through Housing Support Grant wide ranging provision and holistic support services to care leavers and young people aged 16 -25.

This includes as set out below 28 units of supported accommodation and 11 units of emergency accommodation for young people aged 16-25.

Supported Accommodation				
Provider	Project	Project Type	Units	Total Units
Hafan Cymru	Dispersed	Support when required (Low need)	11	28
Hafan Cymru	Boys shared	Support 24/7 (High need)	3	
Hafan Cymru	Girls shared	Support 24/7 (High need)	3	
Llamau	Dunraven Street	Support when required (Low need)	3	
Llamau	Ty Rhondda	Support 24/7 (High need)	3	
Pobl	The Old Bakery	Support 24/7 (High need)	5	
Emergency Accommodation				
Provider	Project	Project Type	Units	Total Units
Pobl	The Grange	24/7 support emergency	10	11
Llamau	Emergency Room	24/7 support emergency	1	

Between the 1st of April and 31st October 2022, 45 young people have accessed the 28 supported accommodation units. Of these 45 individuals, 9 of these were identified as care leavers.

Since April 2022 to date, we have helped 32 young people access the 11 emergency units.

Despite this assistance, demand for supported accommodation remains high with 8 young people currently on the waiting list. Work is underway to develop a purpose-built project offering 4 units of 24/7 supported accommodation for young people aged 16 -25 including care leavers and is due online in early 2023/24. Challenges remain funding to be able to commission new supported accommodation provision and suitable buildings to develop a project.

Floating Support

The RCT locality based floating support project provides person centred support to people who already have their own accommodation or who are in the process of moving into a property from a permanent full time care setting.

This service helps many individuals including young people to further develop their independent living skills and help them to sustain their tenancies. Over the first 7 months of this year 12 referrals from care leavers were received for tenancy related support and accepted on scheme.

Housing First Project

The Housing First Project in RCT is partnership between RCTCBC and Llamau and provides a person-centred approach for young people who have high support needs and who will find living in supported accommodation and general needs accommodation without support a challenge.

The project is designed to address the needs of young adults by providing them with immediate access to housing that is safe, affordable, and appropriate, and the necessary and age-appropriate support that focus on health, wellbeing, life skills, engagement in education and employment, and social inclusion. The project is currently supporting 10 young people with 4 young people (40%) maintaining their tenancies for 6 months or longer at the end of October. 5 young people are awaiting an offer of accommodation and 1 young person placed in emergency accommodation due to ending their tenancy.

Supported Lodgings

Supported Lodgings provision is currently commissioned through Housing Support Grant in partnership with Community Housing and Children's Services; to provide young people leaving care with a safe home and to offer practical advice and help to manage their lifestyle and become independent. 9 care leavers are currently placed in a supported lodgings placement in Rhondda Cynon Taff.

Get Ready and Move on Project (GRAMO)

Early intervention and prevention are viewed as a fundamental and a common theme which connects directly to the Housing Act Wales, Social Services and Wellbeing Act and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

The GRAMO project provides an early intervention pre-tenancy learning environment for all individuals to develop and evidence the skills to manage a tenancy. The learning is tailored to the client attending each session. Areas

covered in each session include money management, understanding a Tenancy Agreement, Life skills, managing a home and digital inclusion.

Sessions for care leavers are held on a 121 basis to help support their learning and understanding of living independently prior to leaving care.

During the period 1st April 2022 to the 31st of October 2022, 9 care leavers were referred to GRAMO and completed the course.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

5.1 This is an information report

6 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 This is an information report.

7 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

7.1 This is an information report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 There are no direct financial implications aligned to this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that children in care and former children in care receive appropriate support in their transition into adulthood.

9.2 Section 1.34 of the Welsh Government's Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness Guidance (March 2016) confirms Local Authorities have a range of duties to care leavers who represent a particularly vulnerable group and require Children's Services and Housing to work together to work together to meet the needs of young people in care as they move to independent living.

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

10.1 The business covered in this report contributes to the Corporate and National Priorities and Well Being and Future Generations Act following well-being goals which include:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A globally responsible Wales

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 The provision of Welsh Government funding to increase the supply of both temporary and permanent accommodation has helped. However, despite this financial assistance there is a limited availability of suitable and affordable accommodation in both the social and private rented sector. This is having a significant impact on young people being able to leave care in a planned way and to be able to live independently.

11.2 Whilst a considerable amount of work has been undertaken to address the immediate housing and support needs of young people leaving care. Further work is to explore more sustainable long- term support and accommodation options.

11.3 Working in partnership with health and our third sector partners is also vital to ensure appropriate support services are in place for young people to address complex needs such as substance misuse and mental health.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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