



**CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**10.00 am FRIDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2023**

**MULTI-LOCATION MEETING - COUNCIL CHAMBER, PORT TALBOT  
& MICROSOFT TEAMS**

This meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet Site. By participating you are consenting to be filmed and the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.

**Part 1**

1. To resolve to exercise the powers set out in Section 35 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 being the designated Overview and Scrutiny Committee for this purpose as approved by Council May 2015.
2. Chairs Announcements
3. Declarations of Interests
4. Neath Port Talbot Well-being Plan 2023-28 - Progress Update - Well-being Objective 2 - All our communities will be thriving and sustainable (*Pages 3 - 70*)
5. Urgent Items  
Any urgent items at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Section 100BA(6)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

**K.Jones**  
**Chief Executive**

**Committee Membership:**

**Chairperson:** Councillor P.Rogers

**Vice  
Chairperson:** Councillor C.Jordan

**Councillors:** T.Bowen, H.C.Clarke, C.Clement-Williams,  
C.Galsworthy, J.Henton, J.Jones, R.G.Jones,  
S.Paddison, R.Phillips, S.Pursesey, S.H.Reynolds,  
A.J.Richards and M.Spooner

**Notes:**

- (1) If Committee Members or non-Committee Members wish to have relevant items put on the agenda for future meetings, then please notify the Chief Executive/Chair eight days before the meeting.*
- (2) If non-Committee Members wish to attend for an item of interest, then prior notification needs to be given (by 12.00 noon on the day before the meeting). Non-Committee Members may speak but not vote, or move or second any motion.*
- (3) For pre scrutiny arrangements, the Chair will normally recommend forthcoming executive items for discussion/challenge. It is also open to Committee Members to request items to be raised - though Members are asked to be selective here in regard to important issues.*
- (4) The relevant Cabinet Board Members will also be invited to be present at the meeting for Scrutiny/ Consultation purposes.*
- (5) Would the Scrutiny Committee Members please bring the Cabinet Board papers with them to the meeting.*



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Cabinet Scrutiny Committee**

**13<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

### **Report of the Director of Strategy and Corporate Services**

**Mr N Daniel**

#### **Matter for Monitoring**

#### **Wards Affected:**

All Wards

#### **Report Title**

Neath Port Talbot Well-being Plan 2023-28.

Progress Update - Well-being Objective 2 – All our communities will be thriving and sustainable.

#### **Purpose of the Report:**

To enable the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee to exercise the powers to scrutinise the work of the Public Services Board set out in Section 35 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 by providing the Committee with a progress report on how the Public Services Board is working towards Well-being Objective 2 of the NPT Well-being Plan 2023-28, 'All our communities will be thriving and sustainable.'

**Executive Summary:**

Section 36 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on public services boards to:

“improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of its area by contributing to the achievement of the well-being goals (S36(1)).

A public services board’s contribution to the achievement of the goals must include (S36(2)):

- a) assessing the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in its area
- b) setting objectives that are designed to maximise its contribution within its area to achieving those goals, and
- c) the taking of all reasonable steps by members of the board (in exercising their functions) to meet those objectives

In 2022, the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board published its Well-being Assessment, discharging a) above. The Well-being Plan 2023-28 was published on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023 discharging b). The PSB are now in the process of delivering on the Plan discharging c).

To deliver on the well-being objective ‘All our communities are thriving and sustainable’ the PSB have agreed on a number of steps.

The first three steps will be taken forward by the Cost of Living and Poverty Prevention Partnership:

- Make sure those who need help and support with the cost of living know what support is available and how to access it
- Identify gaps in help and support and how those gaps could be addressed

- Revisit the work undertaken with the support of the Bevan Foundation prior to the pandemic and reset the strategic objectives and actions to address the root causes of poverty now

The Partnership was repurposed from NPT Safe and Well (set up to address the hardships caused by the pandemic) now responding to the cost of living crisis.

A responsive approach has been taken, signposting to help available and administering support grants whilst working in partnership to coordinate effort.

The Partnership will now look towards a more long-term focus identifying and tackling root causes of poverty in the area and working towards sustainable solutions.

Full details of progress can be seen in the report attached at Appendix 1.

The NPT Community Safety Partnership will lead on the fourth step:

- Collaborate with our communities, to reduce crime, the fear of crime and to make our communities safer and more cohesive

The Community Safety Partnership is a statutory partnership of responsible authorities which is led by the Local Authority and South Wales Police. The partnership is committed to working together to achieve sustainable reductions in crime, fear of crime and antisocial behaviour.

Through the CSP each responsible authority contributes their own particular local knowledge, professional expertise, and resources to ensure that the issues of most concern to local people are prioritised and addressed.

The CSP has agreed six priority areas for 2024- 27, and the delivery against these will help achieve objective 2 of the well-being plan, and the step of collaborating with our communities to reduce crime, the fear of crime and to make our communities safer and more cohesive.

These six priorities will be further outlined in a new Strategic Intent Document, which is in development, and will be formally consulted on in the New Year. An early draft is attached at Appendix 2. Progress will be monitored against an implementation plan, which has yet to be developed. The attached report provides details of the action under-way or planned.

**Background:**

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on local authorities, health boards, fire and rescue services and Natural Resources Wales to establish a Public Services Board (PSB) in each local authority area to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of its area.

The Neath Port Talbot PSB was established in 2016.

The PSB is made up of the following membership:

Statutory partners:

- Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
- Natural Resources Wales
- Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
- Swansea Bay University Health Board

Invited participants/ other partners:

Coastal Housing  
Town and Community Councils  
Department of Work and Pensions

National Probation Service  
NPTC Group of Colleges

Tai Tarian  
Pobl  
Police & Crime  
Commissioner  
Public Health Wales  
South Wales Police

A special meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee was held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023 as part of the consultation process for the NPT draft Well-being Plan 2023-28.

As well as providing comments on the draft Plan, the Committee also wished to exercise its powers (as set out in Section 35 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) to further scrutinise the work of the PSB by requesting more detail around how the well-being objectives will be delivered. To meet this request, a series of Cabinet Scrutiny Committee meetings have been arranged where each Well-being Objective will be considered in turn.

## **Well-being Objective 2 – All our communities will be thriving and sustainable**

### Cost of Living / Poverty

The Well-being Assessment reinforced the PSB's knowledge that there are strong close-knit communities in Neath Port Talbot. This was particularly evident during the Covid-19 pandemic when communities pulled together and supported each other in crisis. This is a strength the PSB wish to build on, however, the PSB is also aware that deprivation is a deep-rooted issue across Neath Port Talbot and there are concentrated areas in the most deprived category of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

The impact of deprivation is likely to worsen over the coming years as levels of poverty increase (e.g. food and fuel), affecting the lowest income families. The pandemic had already left a legacy of increased inequality and this is now being compounded by increases in the cost of living.

The PSB is working collaboratively to alleviate the financial hardship and consequential impact on wellbeing that is being experienced by a growing number of people across NPT.

### Community Safety

The PSB recognises the important work of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in managing and responding to the key issues being faced in Neath Port Talbot in terms of crime and safety, and that the Partnership is committed to working together to achieve sustainable reductions in crime, fear of crime and antisocial behaviour.

The CSP recently reviewed their priorities and agreed the following top five priorities going forward: anti-social behaviour, community cohesion, substance use, VAWDASV and Crime Prevention.

### **Financial Impacts:**

There are no additional resources allocated to the Public Services Board to help implement the Plan, consequently, partners will work together to identify how proposed steps can be moved forward.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment:**

Prior to publication of the NPT Well-being Plan in May 2023 an Integrated Impact Assessment was undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016).

### **Valleys Communities Impacts:**

The steps in the Well-being Plan are being delivered across Neath Port Talbot communities.



**Workforce Impacts:**

The four areas for focus set out in the well-being objectives will have implications for the workforces of all of the organisations who participate in the Board's work.

As the well-being objectives are the same as those featured in the Council's Corporate Plan the impact should be a positive one for the council workforce as there will be a collaborative approach to the issues identified which will help maximise the impact we are able to make.

**Legal Impacts:**

This report enables the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee to exercise the powers to scrutinise the work of the Public Services Board as set out in Section 35 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

**Risk Management Impacts:**

Failure to deliver on the Well-being Plan could potentially lead to the Future Generations Commissioner exercising his powers to conduct a review into the extent to which the Board are meeting duties under the Act which could lead to action also by Welsh Ministers. This could impact on the Council reputationally and also lead to additional resources being required to meet the duties.

**Crime and Disorder Impacts:**

The Council has a legal duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to carry out all its various functions with "due regard to the need to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area". Well-being Objective 2 assists in discharging this duty.

## **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Impacts:**

The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2016 places a new general duty on local authorities to have regard (along with all other relevant matters) to the need to remove or minimise any factors which increase the risk of violence against women and girls or, exacerbate the impact of such violence on victims. Well-being Objective 2 assists in discharging this duty.

## **Consultation:**

There is no requirement to consult on this item.

## **Recommendations:**

For Members to note the information provided on the progress being made by the PSB on delivering Well-being Objective 2 'All our communities will be thriving and sustainable'.

## **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 - Cost of Living and Poverty Prevention Partnership Report

Appendix 2 - Community Safety Partnership Report

## **List of Background Papers:**

[Neath Port Talbot Well-being Plan 2023-28](#)

[Neath Port Talbot Well-being Plan on a Page 2023-28](#)

[Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)

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## **Cost of Living Report – Update to Cabinet Scrutiny Committee**

**13<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

### **Cost of Living and Poverty Prevention Partnership**

This report provides the most recent update of the work of the partnership.

### **Cost of Living Report and PSB Letter to Welsh Government**

In June 2023 the partnership finalised its Cost of Living Report. The report included information on:

- Cost of Living and Poverty Prevention Partnership achievements
- Impact on the Third Sector (Voluntary and Community Sector)
- National Picture
- Feedback from the Cost of Living Workshop (March 2023)

The PSB agreed to raise concerns as a board regarding the cost of living crisis with Welsh Government. In July 2023, a letter was sent to the Minister for Finance and Local Government (Rebecca Evans MS) from the PSB, attaching the partnership's Cost of Living Report as evidence of the scale of the impact being experienced in Neath Port Talbot.

A copy of the PSB's letter and the partnership's Cost of Living Workshop (March 2023) Report are appended for your information.

### **Autumn Workshop**

Following the success of the spring workshop, the Cost of Living and Poverty Prevention Partnership Steering Group set an action to schedule six-monthly workshops with the wider partners. The workshops will help to maintain the strong relationships already established across the wider partnership, enabling partners to meet in person and share the highly valued 'on the ground' feedback in the face of an evolving cost of living crisis.

An autumn workshop will take place on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023, at the Princess Royal Theatre in Port Talbot. Over 65 individuals are expected to gather together from across NPT Council, Neath Port Talbot CVS, members of the Steering Group, Reference Group and Third Sector Strategic Forum.

The focus of the workshop will be preparing for winter, and working together to ensure that people who need help during the cost-of-living crisis know how

to get it. It is important to be proactive to help prevent people getting into crisis, as the level of need remains significant within our communities.

Purpose of the workshop:

- Reporting back to the wider group of partners about the work the Steering Group have been doing;
- Provide information about what is planned for the winter period to ensure it makes sense from the partners' point of view, and whether there's anything missing;
- Develop a logic model that captures current actions and suggestions on how we can work together to achieve the three PSB key outcomes.

### Key Themes

Presentations will be delivered that reflect the work currently under way, as well as the plan for winter. These presentations will reflect key themes:

- Benefits Take-Up
- Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) / Corporate Policy Officer Role
- Warm Spaces
- Hardship Relief Scheme (inc. Energy)
- Food Poverty
- Housing
- Debt
- Mental Health and Wellbeing

Breakout sessions are planned to enable attendees to reflect on the work already under way; is there more that partners could do in advance of winter, and are there any gaps that need to be considered/addressed.

### Logic Model

Public Health Wales (PHW) will facilitate an activity at the workshop, which will focus on the partnership's logic model. The logic model will evidence the inputs/actions as to how the partnership will support Neath Port Talbot PSB's Wellbeing Objective 2: *All our communities are thriving and sustainable.*

The logic model should enable the partnership to test that what they're doing is making a difference, and identify those people in our communities impacted by the actions. The logic model will ensure accountability back to Neath Port Talbot PSB, with detail of who is going to contribute to each part.

The focus of the activity will be the 3 outputs:

- Those who need help and support with the cost of living know what support is available and how to get it
- Gaps in help and support are identified, and a way of addressing them found
- The strategic objectives and actions will be reset

To develop the logic model and ensure the partnership have the right actions in place to achieve them, attendees will be asked to share feedback on the actions outlined in the draft logic model.

To ensure that the activity of the wider partners is built into the logic model, the activity will ask attendees:

- What actions are taking place within your organisation?
- What additional actions do we need to take as a partnership?

### **Autumn Workshop – Next Steps**

All feedback provided by attendees will be captured and a summary produced.

The summary document will pull together the feedback from each of the workshop activities:

- Plan for Winter
  - Is the plan sufficient, or are there any gaps?
  - What more could we do in advance of winter?
- Logic Model
  - Actions to achieve the 3 key outputs

The document will be shared with the wider partners, to enable them to reflect on the information and add any further feedback that they feel was not captured at the workshop.

The updated document will then be presented to the Steering Group (at their November meeting), which will include a collated action plan of activity under way in Neath Port Talbot to support citizens and communities facing hardship as a result of the cost-of-living crisis.

## **Reporting back to the Neath Port Talbot PSB**

To ensure accountability back to the PSB, a report will be produced by the Corporate Policy Officer (Tackling Poverty) that brings together the work being done across the county borough to address hardship.

The report will be presented at the PSB meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024.

## **Develop Further Priorities for 3-6-9 months**

As a result of the workshop, the Cost of Living and Poverty Prevention Partnership's Steering Group will produce an action plan that looks ahead to winter 23/24 and focuses on what partners can do in the 'here and now.'

Communications will continue to be a key element of the partnership's plan to ensure that those who need help and support with the cost of living, know what support is available and how to access it.

With regards to the longer-term approach to tackle hardship, the partnership will look to develop a plan that makes best use of the 'levers' the partnership has to address the root causes of poverty and deprivation.

## **Revising the Structure of the Partnership**

As part of the longer-term approach the Steering Group are proposing to revisit the structure of the wider partnership, to ensure meaningful engagement.

At the spring workshop (March 2023), feedback from partners highlighted six themes in relation to 'on the ground' cost-of-living pressures: energy, food, debt, housing, mental health, and basic skills. Over the summer expressions of interest were sought from the Reference Group and Third Sector Strategic Forum, who were invited to align themselves with one (or more) workstream associated with their area of expertise/interest; 19 responses were received.

As focus areas are agreed and the action plan developed to outline what initiatives will be taken forward, and by whom, the Steering Group will revisit the structure of the partnership and ensure it is 'fit for purpose,' to ensure accountability back to the Neath Port Talbot PSB.



## **NPT Council Poverty Officers / Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT)**

Two officers are now in post (as of end July 2023) at NPT Council, to support the poverty agenda. The posts are both 100% funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF).

The posts will provide additional capacity to coordinate services across the county borough, to further enhance support for households, and to utilise intelligence about what additional support is needed to support our communities (which in turn will inform the development of a Poverty Plan).

Utilisation of the Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) database will enable us to identify people who may not be accessing the benefits they are entitled to. We will target interventions at those most in need, raising awareness of additional support they may be entitled to (e.g., Pension Credit).

LIFT's functionality will also enable us to track the outcome of the intervention, so that we can see what difference has been made (e.g., the financial impact of the benefits claim).

Alongside the specific poverty campaigns, it is intended that the LIFT officer will provide additional capacity to support the wider poverty agenda (e.g., employability). The data within LIFT could provide useful insight to service areas who want to target their own campaigns and projects at supporting people and communities across NPT.

## **Hardship Relief Scheme – Phase 2**

Since its launch in autumn 2022, the Hardship Relief Scheme – delivered in partnership with Warm Wales - has supported 1,020 households (as of 31-Aug-23).

As autumn/winter approach, Warm Wales will move into 'phase 2' of their operation. This will take an outreach approach in order to reach those members of the community not previously engaged with, taking a particular focus on those who don't have access to the internet.

Activities will include attending community events, as well as building networks to support with cross-referrals.

## **Lived Experience**

Feedback received from wider partners at the spring workshop was that 'lived experience' would be an important element of the plan to tackle poverty.

The Corporate Policy Officer will work with Neath Port Talbot CVS to explore options of obtaining 'lived experience,' and how the partnership can incorporate information and feedback from people experiencing hardship.

### **Neath Port Talbot Third Sector Discretionary Cost of Living Crisis Grant**

Neath Port Talbot CVS, in partnership with Neath Port Talbot Council, have launched a one-off grant scheme aimed at supporting third sector organisations that have experienced increased demand for their services due to the cost-of-living crisis.

A total of £70,000 has been made available under the Third Sector Discretionary Cost of Living Crisis Grant Scheme, to support organisations that:

- Provide advice and information to individuals
- Promote income maximisation
- Provide a community facility that offers a range of support services and activities

The scheme is open to applications (max. £10,000) up to 5pm on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

<https://www.nptcvswales.com/neath-port-talbot-third-sector-discretionary-cost-of-living-crisis-grant-scheme-launched/>

### **Communications**

Communications remains a key element in the response to the cost of living crisis.

The cost of living webpages on both the NPT Council and NPT CVS websites have continued to receive views during the warmer months.

NPT CVS:

- Total views since setting up the page (November 2022): 1,300
- Views between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 26<sup>th</sup> Sep 2023: 428

NPT Council:

- Views between 1<sup>st</sup> Sep 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023: 34,505
- Views between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> Sep 2023: 8,451

Stakeholder e-bulletins continue to be circulated, highlighting information about the support available from local and national organisations to help people who are struggling with the cost of living.

NPT Council's social media has been utilised to promote schemes such as the School Uniform Grant, Free School Meals, Food and Fun, as well as free activities for children and families during the summer holidays.

Recent social media activity in September and October has included promotion of the Port Talbot Opportunity Hub, NPT Employability recruitment events, the 'Gathering Place's' community-driven initiative, as well as signposting to help and support available with the cost of living this winter.

### **Appendix 1**

PSB Letter to Welsh Government

### **Appendix 2**

Final Cost of Living Report June 2023

### **Officer Contact**

Victoria Petty, Corporate Policy Officer (Tackling Poverty)

Tel: 01639 686567 / Email: [v.petty@npt.gov.uk](mailto:v.petty@npt.gov.uk)

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

Dyddiad/ Date 11 July 2023  
Rhif Ffôn/ Direct Line 01639 763309  
Ebost/ Email [leader@npt.gov.uk](mailto:leader@npt.gov.uk)  
Cyswllt/ Contact  
Eich cyf / Your ref  
Ein cyf/ Our ref SH/SC

Rebecca Evans, MS  
Minister for Finance and Local Government

Dear Minister

### **Poverty and the Cost of Living**

As partners of the Public Services Board in Neath Port Talbot, we have historically prioritised the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities. We are acutely aware of the impact the current unsustainable costs of living are having on our residents and the pressures they are facing.

In our Well-being Plan 2023-28, we have set out the steps we will take as partners to combat the impacts of poverty in our communities by ensuring all our residents are aware of and able to access the support available. We have also planned a more long term piece of work looking into the root causes of poverty in our area and the influence we can have on these as anchor institutions.

Whilst we are committed to collaborating to provide the best possible outcomes for our residents, we are also aware that many of the levers to tackling the root causes of poverty lie with the Welsh and UK governments. We are also aware that while inflation may be brought under control in the coming months, this will simply slow the rate at which costs are increasing and by itself addresses neither the lack of affordability of essentials nor the issue of increasing indebtedness.

We are writing as a Board to express our deepest concerns that the hardship being experienced by local residents will continue to increase without more fundamental economic reform. A recent workshop involving those working to provide frontline advice and support services highlight a growing problem with debt and associated mental health impacts, additional to ongoing problems associated with food, energy, housing and basic skills. We also heard that third sector organisations are also being stretched both in terms of the growing complexity of caseloads and the financial viability of organisation given inflationary and other cost pressures. I attach a copy of the output from the workshop for your reference.

/Cont.....

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Swyddfa'r Arweinydd Y Cyngor  
Steve Hunt, Arweinydd y Cyngor  
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[www.npt.gov.uk](http://www.npt.gov.uk)

I would highlight in particular the alarming increase in debt assessments carried out by Citizens Advice and a 112% rise in the number of food vouchers distributed during 2022-23 as opposed to 2021-22. Age Connect Neath Port Talbot reports that queries and associated casework around welfare benefits has increased by 140% and information and advice cases by 185%. Its Local Energy Action Partnership Service (which provides energy efficiency checks and provision of equipment) experienced a 75% increase from quarter 3 to quarter 4 of 2022-2023.

There is no doubt that the cost of living is now a public health emergency. We appreciate that the Welsh Government has already taken a number of steps to alleviate hardship, however, we are very concerned at the deteriorating picture across our county borough. Whilst we will continue to work together to support our communities using the levers at our disposal, this will not be sufficient to address the structural causes of poverty and indebtedness in our communities and our communities will need further help from both the Welsh and UK Governments to make a sustainable difference. We would welcome an opportunity as a Public Services Board to discuss our concerns in more detail.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. K. Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end of the name.

**Cllr S K Hunt**  
**Chair of Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board**

# Cost of Living and Poverty Partnership

## Update report June 2023

BWRDD GWASANAETHAU CYHOEDDUS  
CASTELL-NEDD PORT TALBOT



NEATH PORT TALBOT  
PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

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## Introduction and context

Prioritising the needs of the most vulnerable living in our communities has always been a key priority for NPT Council, Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) and many other partners.

In September 2019, a Poverty Symposium was held to identify opportunities for improving the way that services and support are delivered to people on low incomes across the county borough.

Unfortunately, the output from that event was put on hold whilst partners focussed their efforts on the emergency response to the pandemic.

In September 2020, NPT Council set up and facilitated the NPT Safe and Well Partnership which brought together partner organisations that were providing a humanitarian response. Partners began to identify contingency plans should another wave of coronavirus affect our communities.

Whilst responding to the emergency, partners were mindful of how the pandemic was impacting further on inequalities, both in terms of health and finance. Those who faced the greatest disadvantage prior to the pandemic were hardest hit and as a consequence, inequalities across Neath Port Talbot widened.

Nationally, evidence demonstrated how many of Wales' poorest areas had been hardest hit by the pandemic and concerns expressed that Wales was facing a "rising tide of poverty".

In July 2022, a discussion took place regarding the potential to refocus the work of the NPT Safe and Well Partnership to address the cost-of-living crisis. Partners started to identify what they could do collectively to support communities through the crisis and a Cost-of-Living Poverty Prevention Partnership was formed. The NPT Safe and Well Partnership transitioned into a Reference Group and is led by a Steering Group, co-chaired by Karen Jones, Chief Executive of NPT Council and Gaynor Richards, Director of Neath Port Talbot CVS.

The work of the Steering Group is an area of focus for the Neath Port Talbot Public Services Board and helps to achieve the second well-being objective '**To ensure all our communities are thriving and sustainable**'. The Local Well-being Plan for 2023-2028 states that we will work together to:

- Make sure those who need help and support with the cost-of-living know what support is available and how to access it;
- Identify gaps in help and support and how those gaps could be addressed; and

- Revisit the work undertaken with the support of the Bevan Foundation prior to the pandemic and reset the strategic objectives and actions to address the root causes of poverty now.

For the past year, the cost-of-living crisis has dominated the headlines and according to a Public Health Wales (PHW) report, the crisis is a public health emergency, potentially on the same scale as the pandemic.

(<https://research.senedd.wales/research-articles/the-cost-to-life-how-soaring-living-costs-affect-people-s-health-and-wellbeing>). The report details how not being able to afford the essentials, such as food, rent or mortgage payments, heating and hot water, or transport, has significant and wide-ranging negative impacts on mental and physical health.

The current demand for third sector services is unprecedented. Organisations are seeing an increasing demand for mental health support for adults, children and young people. More and more people are accessing food banks, advice services and debt support.

On the 16th March 2023, a Cost-of-Living Workshop was held at the Gwyn Hall. The purpose was to reflect on the work undertaken by the Partnership to date; to better understand how communities are being affected by the cost-of-living crisis; and to determine where the focus of the work should be for the Partnership going forward in order to develop a longer-term approach to poverty prevention.

This report provides information about what the Partnership has achieved to date and provides an overview of the current areas of concerns identified by attendees from the Workshop. It also provides recommendations for the next steps (see page 14).

# **Cost-of-Living and Poverty Prevention Partnership Achievements**

To help our communities through this crisis, the focus for the Partnership to date has been on making sure all Neath Port Talbot residents are aware of the financial help and household support available to them by:

- Signposting to what help and advice is available;
- Administering the help and support which has been made available;
- Working with partners to see what more we can do.

## **Signposting: Help with the cost-of-living communications campaign**

Communication has been key in the response. A dedicated webpage on both the NPT Council and Neath Port Talbot CVS's website was established at the outset which are updated on a continuing basis with new information on what support residents could be eligible for to help with the rising goods and energy costs, inflation and cost of living pressures.

During 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 to 26<sup>th</sup> February 2023 the Council's cost-of-living webpage received 32,312 page views, putting it the 12th most viewed webpage on the Council's website. The cost-of-living page is currently the 3<sup>rd</sup> most viewed webpage on the Neath Port Talbot CVS website, followed by the mental health services directory which does give us an indication perhaps of how the cost-of-living is impacting on people's mental health.

In order to share regular updates around new and existing support available, a stakeholder ebulletin was created. Six ebulletins have been distributed to date.

A Social Media campaign was undertaken to remind individuals about the various grant support and services available, including energy saving tips on the UK Government's "Help for Households" webpage.

Along with a radio advert campaign to reach those that may not be on social media, 15,000 'Help with Cost of Living' leaflets have been distributed.

## **Administering the help and support which has been made available**

- The Welsh Government Warm Hub / Spaces Grant

Welsh Government allocated £55,906 to Neath Port Talbot. As of the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023, £34,488 had been distributed t and 38 applicants had received monies from the grant to support their warm hubs / spaces.

- Welsh Government - Food Poverty Grant 2022/2023

The grant was made up of two different funding streams – The Direct Food Support Award and the Household Support Fund which totalled over £139,000.00. 33 groups received funding amounting to £139,569.38. The majority of groups who applied for the funding were foodbanks and Big Bocs Bwyd Schools, who received approximately £99,017 to help with purchasing food supplies, food hygiene training for volunteers and Fareshare membership fees up to the end of March 2024.

Other beneficiaries ranged from Housing Associations who wished to purchase supermarket food vouchers for their most vulnerable clients, to groups setting up lunch clubs, community growing schemes and cooking on a budget workshops. Funding was also given to Local Area Coordinators to assist their vulnerable clients with supermarket food vouchers.

- The Hardship Relief Scheme

Following the allocation of £2m by the previous Council administration to establish a Hardship Relief Scheme, the Council entered into an arrangement with Warm Wales. As of the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023, 400 householders had received direct support from the fund; approximately 300 have received top-up vouchers (funded via the Fuel Bank Foundation but accessed through interest in the fund), some of whom will also have accessed other forms of support; and around 300 are being supported currently with outcomes pending. Support has totalled just over £110,000.

- Claiming Benefits

Over the last year, the Welfare Rights Service have continued to maximise the incomes of people living in Neath Port Talbot through the Welfare Benefits system. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 24<sup>th</sup> February 2023, the service has supported 2,496 people and raised over £6.2 million.

- Welsh Government's Fuel Support Scheme

With regard to help with Household Bills the Council is administering the Welsh Government's Fuel Support Scheme, the aim of which is to reduce the impact of the rising cost of energy and the cost-of-living crisis. As of the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2023, 21,846 applications had been received of which 21,843 had been processed with 21,098 paid which amounts to £4,219,600. Of those paid, 15,364 relate to the 16,001 who were targeted at the beginning of the scheme meaning 96% of those targeted have been paid.

- Cost of Living Support Scheme

As of 24<sup>th</sup> February 2023, the £150 cost of living payment for all eligible households in Neath Port Talbot that fall within council tax bands A to D has totalled £8,197,800 (54,652 customers). In addition, £150 has been paid to 5,742 customers totalling £861,300 under the Discretionary Cost of Living Support Scheme. From the Discretionary Cost of Living Fund £250,000 has been awarded to the Discretionary Housing Payment Fund and £100,000 to food banks.

### **Working with partners to see what more we can do**

It is important that we continue to build on the incredible work that is already taking place, avoiding duplication but maximising the support for the residents of Neath Port Talbot.

## **Impact on the Third Sector (Voluntary and Community Sector)**

Neath Port Talbot CVS has continued to bring together third sector organisations through forum meetings and networks and understands how the cost-of-living is impacting people and organisations in different ways.

We know that the cost-of-living is having a greater impact on unpaid carers, those who have disabilities and single parent families. It has also emerged that in-work poverty is a significant issue alongside mental health, and access to services.

The cost-of-living crisis has increased client demand for Citizen Advice services including a 37% increase for clients being advised on general benefit entitlement, 20% increase in debt assessments, 10% increase in fuel debt advice with demand for fuel vouchers increasing by 17%.

Citizens Advice supported 3,213 clients from Neath Port Talbot last year with an average of 5.68 issues, which demonstrates the complexity of troubles residents are experiencing. They have seen a 13% increase in requests for advice via email and the number of phone calls made increased by 15% to 31,000. The number of Food Vouchers has more than doubled (increase of 112%) from 320 in 2021-2022, to 678 in 2022-2023.

Celtic Credit Union is reporting a massive impact on disposable income caused by people taking up buy-now- pay-later schemes (which are not regulated, so do not do affordability checks). One of the worst cases saw a customer having 14 agreements in place! Celtic Credit Union is also reporting that the DWP's cost-of-living payments are 'flying out' despite asking every customer if they would wish to save some of the money; to date, not one customer has done so.

Age Connects Neath Port Talbot reports that queries and associated casework around welfare benefits has increased by 140% and information and advice cases by 185%. Its Local Energy Action Partnership Service (which provides energy efficiency checks and provision of equipment) experienced a 75% increase from quarter 3 to quarter 4 of 2022-2023.

To help address some of the issues around fuel poverty, Warm Hubs/Spaces have been set up and the community, as always, has rallied together to look after one another.

Stori Cymru (formerly Hafan Cymru) has said that there continues to be an increase in food bank use and emergency Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) payments across its projects, and a reduction in grants available to support clients financially

that the organisation has been able to access in previous financial years. The impact of cost-of-living challenges, impacts staff as well as those the organisation supports.

Neath Port Talbot are facing an increased demand for mental health support from adults and children and young people. There is also an increase in complex needs of people approaching them for support. It's getting increasingly difficult to plan and develop new services as so much time and energy is spent on trying to maintain existing services.

Thrive Women's Aid reports how the Welsh Government allocation for the Housing Support Grant have remained the same value that they were last year. This means that providers may need to use reserves or seek match funding from other sources to meet the shortfall caused by the strain on their core costs caused by the cost-of-living crisis and increases to organisational costs.

With increased demand for services, some organisations have now got waiting lists and have had to put a hold on referrals for the first time in 20 years. They are also seeing an increase in safeguarding concerns being reported.

Recruitment and retention of paid staff and volunteers in the sector is increasingly difficult. Some organisations are giving their time and expertise to train new staff only to lose them to other sectors where there are higher paid jobs and better terms and conditions. Individuals are using their spare time to take on additional employment rather than volunteering their time.

The Sector is becoming fatigue. It's vital that we continue to support our communities, building resilience and providing sustainability where we can.

# National picture

## Poverty

Some of the concerns raised at a local level isn't too dissimilar to what is being reported Nationally. The [Summer 2022 'Snapshot of Poverty'](#) report by The Bevan Foundation revealed how the majority of people in Wales were reporting how they were cutting back on essentials and how there was a need to do more work in raising awareness of what support is available.

The Cost-of-Living and Poverty Partnership has helped to raise awareness of the support available but agrees that there is much more that could be done. The most recent report from The Bevan Foundation provides information about how they commissioned Policy in Practice to evaluate how data can support the process of developing greater commonality across [Welsh benefits](#) which is likely to increase take-up of support but would have financial implications for Welsh citizens, the Welsh Government, and Welsh councils.

The [Winter 2023 'Snapshot of Poverty'](#) report provides an overview of how people in Wales are managing rising costs and looks in greater detail at the experiences of those that are being most affected. It also explores the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on people's health and how nearly half of people in Wales (48 per cent) report that their mental health is being negatively affected by their financial position. This is a concern that is being raised locally through mental health agencies.

The recent action plan from The Bevan Foundation ['Easing the Cost-of-living Crisis this Winter'](#) sets out a number of recommendations. In the short term, their recommending that the eligibility for free school meals to be extended, an uplift made to Education Maintenance Allowance, a top up the Discretionary Housing Payment budget and for the Wales Fuel Support Scheme to be extended.

Their medium to long-term recommendations includes accelerating the provision of social housing, bringing forward plans for a new Warm Homes programme, improving data used to set LHA rates and seek devolution of powers to determine LHA rates in future, to further extend free school meals, applying inflation-linked uplifts to all devolved, means-tested grants and allowances on an annual basis and to accelerate the implementation of a Welsh Benefits System.

## Housing

Wales is facing a housing crisis. There is a shortage of properties that people in Wales can purchase or rent at affordable prices. Over the course of 2022 the Bevan Foundation published a series of [reports](#) looking at the challenges faced by low-income private renters and found that the support provided by the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is nowhere near sufficient to cover the costs of renting in the



private rental sector in Wales. Of the 22 local authorities in Wales, only 6 have any properties available at or below LHA rate In February 2023. There were 52 properties advertised to let in Neath Port Talbot and none of these properties were covered by the respective Local Housing Allowance rates.

## **Food banks**

Inadequate social security is the main driver of food bank need. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Trussell Trust have come together to campaign for a Welsh Benefits Guarantee. In the recent report '[Guarantee our Essentials: reforming Universal Credit to ensure we can all afford the essentials in hard times](#)', it states that 90% of low-income households on Universal Credit are currently going without essentials. Universal Credit allowance is currently set at £67 for single claimants under 25 (£85 for aged 25 or over) and £106 for a couple under 25 (£134 for a couple aged 25 or over). However, the report analysis indicates that Universal Credit would need to be at least £120 a week for a single adult and £200 for a couple.

Trussell Trust recently published their latest annual statistics on food bank need (showing numbers/breakdowns of food parcels given out in the year to April 2023 and rises since previous years). As part of this they published a [Wales-specific fact sheet](#) and it highlights the resilience, strength, and persistence of food banks in supporting their communities to access emergency food, signposting people to further support, and providing a warm and welcoming space for people to be heard will continue, but they are exhausted.

## **Working together**

In March 2023, Neath Port Talbot CVS held two engagement events to discuss what should be included in a Child Poverty Strategy for Wales. The events were attended by representatives from organisations within the voluntary, statutory and independent sectors that offer support services for all young people aged 11-25 years in Neath Port Talbot.

Attendees highlighted that investment in childcare and transport would help children and their families now and in the future. They would like to see an expansion of the Apprenticeship Programme and a more robust careers advice offer. They call for Welsh Government to support Wales to become a Real Living Wage Nation and to invest long term in early intervention and prevention schemes which address underlying barriers to education, training and work such emotional wellbeing and mental health, low levels of aspiration lack of role models and behavioural change.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation recently published a learning report looking at [designing out the most severe forms of hardship in local areas](#) – it captures how local public services, Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, community

groups and other partners are working to mitigate and tackle the root causes of it poverty in their areas. The report provides a framework to support local areas to make progress towards designing out the most severe forms of hardship. It's based around six key areas of action, in three groups:

1. building a strategy and coalition,
2. shifting power and redesigning the system,
3. creating the conditions for sustainable local change.

## Feedback from the Cost-of-Living Workshop

The Workshop was held in-person at the Gwyn Hall in Neath. It was attended by 36 individuals from across NPT Council, Neath Port Talbot CVS, members of the Steering Group, Reference Group and Third Sector Strategic Forum.

Representatives from Audit Wales also attended and gave an overview of three recent publications that relate to poverty:

1. "Time for Change" – Poverty in Wales (November 2022)
2. "A Missed Opportunity" – Social Enterprises (December 2022)
3. "Together We Can" – Community Resilience and Self-Reliance (January 2023)

During the workshop, attendees were asked to have groups discussions about what issues they were seeing on the ground that evidence how the cost-of-living was affecting communities. They were then asked to pick their top three areas of concern and make notes on how we may be able to address them. The output from each of the groups can be found in Appendix 1.

The key themes that emerged from the discussion were:

- Energy
- Food
- Debt
- Mental Health
- Housing (and furniture poverty)
- Basic Skills

With regard to how can we address the issues, the following ideas / suggestions were highlighted:

Theme	Suggestions
Fuel Debt / Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy saving tips</li> <li>• Education around needing warm/healthy homes</li> <li>• Links to energy/environment</li> <li>• Local Leaders' support</li> <li>• Sharing stories, talking about issues they are facing</li> <li>• Windfall Tax to be completed by Westminster</li> </ul>
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooking on a budget</li> <li>• Information / education</li> <li>• Free equipment e.g. slow cookers / air fryers with cooking instructions</li> <li>• Grow your own veg initiatives</li> <li>• Local food producers</li> <li>• Supporting food banks / hubs</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at where food is being wasted e.g. schools</li> <li>• Supporting people to access healthy, nutritious and affordable food</li> </ul>
Debt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefit entitlement - eligibility criteria</li> <li>• People not knowing what they are entitled to</li> <li>• Raising awareness (not only online)</li> <li>• Community Champions - conduit LA / staff / volunteers</li> <li>• Easier access to locally based debt advice</li> <li>• More advice in communities - lots of small schemes e.g. food / clothing / vouchers</li> <li>• Encourage people to deal with it at an earlier stage</li> </ul>
Mental Health & Emotional Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tips on keeping well</li> <li>• Signposting to services that can help e.g. Mind, Citizens Advice, Credit Union</li> <li>• Co-ordinate resources</li> <li>• Supporting existing provision</li> <li>• Challenge existing processes</li> <li>• Speaking to communities to get their view and ideas of solutions</li> <li>• Cross-Directorate working on key issues - share resource / knowledge / messages</li> <li>• Early intervention and prevention</li> <li>• Better partnership working and awareness</li> </ul>
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with RSLs / private landlords</li> <li>• Suitability of new builds</li> <li>• Making homes sustainable and looking at decarbonisation</li> <li>• Housing clearance - can RSLs leave flooring / white goods / unwanted furniture to help alleviate furniture poverty?</li> </ul>
Basic Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgeting / Maths / English</li> <li>• Living skills - cooking etc.</li> <li>• Identifying and supporting people in communities to be community 'enablers'</li> <li>• Simple pathways for people to get support ('no wrong door')</li> <li>• Social media messages</li> </ul>

Attendees were also asked to consider the structure of the Cost-of-Living and Poverty Prevention Partnership and discussed how we could work better together. We recognise that the Reference Group (formally the NPT Safe and Well Partnership) is a fairly large group and is made up of members who were initially providing a humanitarian response during the pandemic. Whilst all members bring value by sharing intelligence within the partnership, it has been suggested that smaller focus groups may provide more meaningful engagement and will help us to address some of the local concerns that are arising.

## Recommendations for Next Steps

The Steering Group to:

1. Consider the information contained in this report
2. Agree the focus areas for the Cost-of-Living and Poverty Prevention Partnership and develop an action plan outlining what initiatives will be taken forward
3. Revise the Cost-of-Living and Poverty Prevention Partnership structure to provide more meaningful engagement
4. Facilitate six monthly (in-person) Cost-of-Living Workshops, bring partners together to reflect on the work of the Partnership and identify any additional concerns
5. Consider how to involve individuals who are experiencing financial hardship
6. Deliver actions outlined in the NPT PSB Local Well-being Plan 2023-2028:
  - Make sure those who need help and support with the cost-of-living know what support is available and how to access it;
  - Identify gaps in help and support and how those gaps could be addressed; and
  - Revisit the work undertaken with the support of the Bevan Foundation prior to the pandemic and reset the strategic objectives and actions to address the root causes of poverty now.

# Appendix 1

## The output from each of the groups at the Cost-of-Living Workshop

### What issues are we seeing on the ground?

Table 1	Issues	Commentary
1	Mental Health	
2	Voluntary recruitment crisis	
3	Welfare benefits	
4	Working adults/colleagues	
5	People not online are usually the ones who really need support	
6	Relationships	
7	Complex referrals and inappropriate requests	
8	Families taking packed lunches to stay in libraries all day	
9	Cost of cooking food	
10	Physical health impact	
11	Transport costs	
12	Mould/Damp – health issues	
13	Digital exclusion	
14	Heating Homes	
15	Cost of food	
16	Young people using youth clubs/services more now that food/drink provided	
17	Older people using buses to keep warm	
18	Cuts to grants and services	
<b>Table 2</b>		
19	Benefit entitlement	Very little for those not eligible / suffering for those just outside the threshold / eligibility criteria set by WG
20	In-work poverty	Staff concerned – impacting mental and physical health / mortgage, phone bills and utilities impacting on everyone
21	Micro business	Struggling and knock-on effect / same with 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sector
22	Access to services	Transport – lack of services / cost of running vehicles
23	Disparity across county	Food banks / warm hubs (some not being used – do people know where to go?) Can't just use social media / websites.
24	Local Members	60 in NPT, Community Champion on ground / People unable to do things themselves (build resilience)
25	Council seen as answer to everything	

26	Duplication of services	Schools / community centres / rugby clubs / churches – who is best placed to do what?
27	More joined up working across sectors	Collaborate, not compete (i.e. Glynneath – county / town council / 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector / businesses) / Make optimum use of what?
28	Assets of communities	Mapping of communities (area interest)
29	Debt	High interest loans / Apps online e.g. klarna
30	Welfare Rights	Debt advice, benefits advice / Who is best to contact? Streamline!
<b>Table 3</b>		
31	Not enough money from welfare benefits to enable an appropriate standard of living	
32	Budgeting awareness is lacking	
33	Hoarding	
34	Food – appropriate for special diets	
35	Lack of awareness / lack of confidence to access support	
36	Basic skills are at a low level	
37	General mental health issues – Anxiety and depression not being addressed	Affecting lives for years and years – need more support for mental health (resource)
38	Mental health issues of / for BME Communities	
39	Fear and lack of confidence	
40	Increase in social isolation	
41	Debt and debt issues	Loan sharks / exploitation
42	Housing quality	No heating or water / damp / access – stuck in house
43	Impact on children's diets	
<b>Table 4</b>		
44	No flexibility / no way to change	
45	Foodbank fatigue / lifestyle / choices	
46	Resilience is wearing out	Poor mental health
47	Gap between people's needs and them knowing where to go	
48	Pre-payment meters still going in	
49	Employment vs. Benefits	Knowledge of support availability / in-work support
50	Mental health – anxiety and depression	Becoming a barrier to employment
51	Relationships at home	Parents not feeling able to provide for children / stuck in housing situations
52	Complexity of funding / benefits	
53	Financial health	Knowledge / access
54	Housing	Difficult to make financial choices as budgets shrink – housing stock is old / repairs get incrementally bigger

<b>Table 5</b>		
55	Worried about this coming winter regarding fuel crisis	Accruing fuel debt (example of £10k)
56	Worrying about the cost of everything going up	
57	Issues with older people (60+) supporting with fuel debt	
58	Not available to come to services due to fuel costs (petrol)	
59	£500-£1k fuel debt since crisis started	Worried turning on the heating
60	Amount of Universal Credit isn't much	Changes with what they work
61	Work based poverty	Increase in use of food banks
62	Rent increases	
63	Avoidance of financial issues	People terrified of getting into a financial crisis
64	Fatigue – repeating their stories to multiple organisations	
65	Organisations are stretched in every sense of the word	
66	Bedroom Tax – unable to pay	
<b>Table 6</b>		
67	Debt	Hiding or ignoring debt advice / lack of debt advice / no budgeting / can't afford utilities – S/C's on meters
68	People not using fuel	Warm home discount changes / cash flow vs bills
69	Transport costs / isolation	Can't get to appointments or access services
70	Scams	
71	Community centres / Churches – cost of fuel	
72	Lack of housing – affordability	
73	Increase in levels of poor mental health	
74	Un-safe solutions	
75	Crime	
76	Online gambling	
77	Relationship strain	
78	Unaddressed maintenance issues	
79	Loan Sharks	
80	New credit offers e.g. klarna	
81	Cost of services for older people	Some costs for services such as shopping and cleaning are increasing. Also services that were free previously are not costing individuals which is a barrier.
82	Lack of National Insurance contributions	People who are not claiming benefits or are living off their savings are not paying into their NI contributions.
83	Increase in loneliness and isolation	Lack of befriending support locally and those that exist are full to capacity.



## How can we tackle any of our top 3 issues?

	Issue	Commentary
Table 1	Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooking on a budget</li> <li>• Information and education</li> <li>• Free equipment e.g. slow cookers and air fryers with cooking instructions</li> <li>• Grow your own veg initiatives</li> <li>• Local food produce</li> <li>• Supporting food banks and hubs</li> <li>• Look at where food is being wasted e.g. schools</li> <li>• Supporting people to access healthy, nutritious and affordable food</li> </ul>
	Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy saving tips</li> <li>• Education around needing warm and healthy homes</li> <li>• Links to energy / environment</li> </ul>
	Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tips on keeping well</li> <li>• Signposting to services that can help e.g. Mind / Citizens Advice/Credit Union</li> </ul>
Table 2	Duplication of Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating resource and capacity to undertake</li> <li>• Need to map – whose problem is it to solve (everyone's)?</li> <li>• Engagement – change management (collaborate, not compete)</li> <li>• Deliver what is best for the community</li> <li>• Tailored approach</li> <li>• Where does funding come from? LA / WG / Health / Charity</li> <li>• Areas – GP clusters / ward / catchments / Env. Areas – what is the community?</li> </ul>
	Behavioural / Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal / external</li> <li>• Need to learn from others</li> </ul>
	In-work poverty / debt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefit entitlement – eligibility criteria</li> <li>• People not knowing what they are entitled to</li> <li>• Raising awareness (not only online)</li> <li>• Community Champions – conduit LA / staff / volunteers</li> </ul>
Table 3	Housing Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with RSLs / private landlords</li> <li>• Suitability of new builds</li> <li>• Making homes sustainable – decarbonisation</li> <li>• Housing clearance – can RSLs leave flooring / white goods / unwanted furniture to alleviate furniture poverty?</li> </ul>
	Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinate resources</li> <li>• Supporting existing provision</li> <li>• Challenge existing processes (Health)</li> <li>• Speaking to communities to get their view and ideas of solutions</li> <li>• Cross-Directorate working on key issues – share resource / knowledge / messages</li> </ul>
	Basic Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgeting / Maths / English</li> <li>• Living skills – cooking etc.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying and supporting people in communities to be community 'enablers'</li> <li>Simple pathways for people to get support ('no wrong door')</li> <li>Social media messages</li> </ul>
Table 4	Create effective chain of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Response / benefits and support through to beneficiary</li> </ul>
	Expertise in information and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could there be a commitment to specific categories to complete the MAPS (Money Guidance Competency Framework)?</li> </ul>
	Equality of schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful schemes going into all communities equally</li> <li>Link up with what is available to people</li> <li>Fix the system – stop plugging gaps!</li> </ul>
Table 5	Fuel Debt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Leaders' support</li> <li>Sharing stories, talking about issues they are facing</li> <li>Windfall Tax to be completed by Westminster</li> </ul>
	Avoidance of Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local leaders, especially for small groups</li> <li>Marketing campaign re: talking about problems</li> <li>Sharing stories, talking about issues they are facing</li> <li>Managing expectations to people referred into them</li> <li>GP cluster work? GPs understand community groups etc.</li> </ul>
	Organisations stretched	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase co-production working – how it works / set-up</li> <li>Short-term funding issues – create better ways to fund</li> <li>Procurement issues</li> <li>Staff retention / recruitment pressures</li> </ul>
Table 6	Debt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easier access to locally based debt advice</li> <li>More advice in communities – lots of small schemes e.g. food / clothing / vouchers</li> <li>Encourage people to deal with it at an earlier stage</li> <li>Need to raise awareness of impact of scams and door step lending.</li> <li>Staff to complete the MAPS 'Money Guidance Competency Framework'.</li> </ul>
	Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unsafe use of appliances for heating – more education</li> <li>Crime – to supplement income</li> </ul>
	Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early intervention and prevention</li> <li>Better partnership working and awareness</li> </ul>
	'Other' Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simplifying complex referral pathways</li> <li>Concept of '20-min neighbourhood' – the idea that you can access everything needed for a happy / healthy lifestyle in your neighbourhood</li> <li>Bringing partners together regularly to share intelligence and good practice / resource</li> <li>Listening to people with lived experience and making sure they are part of the designing solution</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community focused schools, looking at how communities can benefit from school facilities</li> <li>• Provide a focus on education to prevent issues.</li> </ul>
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## Draft Governance Structure

Review of Governance Structure	Comments
Emergency Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add 'Clothing</li> <li>• Add Furniture</li> <li>• Add 'Crisis Support / Response' (disaster)</li> <li>• Add 'White Goods'</li> </ul>
Services / Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-name as 'Community'</li> </ul>
Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrap as a workstream - the same people are in attendance at all (1-3)</li> <li>• Have sub-group 'Task &amp; Finish' groups (1 – Access to Services / 2 – Skills &amp; Training / 3 – Emergency Support)</li> <li>• Add 'Disabled People'</li> <li>• Add LGBTQ+ / BAME / Asylum Seekers &amp; Refugees</li> </ul>
Access to Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add 'Social Activities'</li> <li>• Add 'Health'</li> </ul>
Skills & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add 'Social Enterprises'</li> </ul>
<b>'Other' Feedback</b>	
Emotional Support & Wellbeing has been completely missed out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not represented in the structure</li> </ul>
Should we be 'silo-ing' into different sub-groups?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisations would fall into many</li> </ul>
Spending a lot of time 'talking' and not 'doing'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This looks very similar to what was done before – should we be looking to 'shake things up' and do something different?</li> </ul>
Takes time to decide on actions and for them to come to fruition	
Lived Experience – needs to be part of it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use 'lived experiences' to identify real life experiences and how it can be supported</li> <li>• This would encourage co-production and partnership working</li> </ul>
Develop 'front door' service in communities	
Need to avoid fatigue and being passed 'pillar to post'	
Agenda needs to be clear and concise on what is to be achieved at the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E.G. what is the problem to be solved?</li> </ul>
Meetings to be held F2F / Hybrid at different organisations to build relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding what each other does</li> </ul>
Case Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A brand new way of working</li> </ul>

What's the purpose of the groups? Is it information sharing? How would the groups connect?	
Overlap between communities group and others	

# Appendix 2

## Presentation slides from the Cost-of-Living Workshop

Cost-of-Living and Poverty Prevention Workshop

16<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Neath Port Talbot County Borough  
Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot

NEATH PORT TALBOT  
CVS  
CASTELL-NEDD PORT TALBOT

Archwilio Cymru  
Audit Wales

1

Karen Jones Chief Executive  
Neath Port Talbot Council

Reflection - What Have We Achieved to Date?

4

Gaynor Richards  
Director  
Neath Port Talbot CVS

Welcome and Introductions

2

Our focus has been on making sure all Neath Port Talbot residents are aware of the financial help and household support available to them by:

- Sign posting to what help and advice is available
- Administering the help and support which has been made available

Always been mindful not to duplicate as we recognised there is a lot going on at the community level – it was important to identify where we could add value.

5

Supporting communities together

- Purpose and structure of today
- Snapshot of poverty in Neath Port Talbot
- Forums and networks
- Resilience and sustainability of third sector

3

Signposting:  
Help with the cost of living communications campaign

[www.npt.gov.uk/costoflivinghelp](http://www.npt.gov.uk/costoflivinghelp)

During 1st September 2022 to 26th February 2023 the webpage received 32,312 page views, putting it the 12th most viewed webpage on the Council's website.

[www.nptcvs.wales/get-help/help-cost-of-living-forces-of-change](http://www.nptcvs.wales/get-help/help-cost-of-living-forces-of-change)

Dedicated webpages

The cost-of-living page is currently the 3<sup>rd</sup> most viewed webpage on the CVS website followed by the mental health services directory webpage.

6

**Signposting:  
Help with the cost  
of living  
communications  
campaign**

- Distribution of 15,000 "Help with Cost of Living" leaflets.
- Social media campaign
- Radio advert campaign
- WalesOnline advertorial (online)
- South Wales Evening Post advertorial
- Five stakeholder bulletins.



Continued

7

**Nick Selwyn  
Audit Manager**

**Charles Rigby  
Senior Auditor**

**Audit Wales**

10

**Administering  
Support:**

- Welsh Government Warm Hub/ Spaces Grant
- Welsh Government - Food Poverty Grant 2022/2023
- Hardship Relief Scheme
- Claiming Benefits
- Help with Household Bills
- Cost of Living Support Scheme



8

**Archwilio Cymru  
Audit Wales**

**Poverty in Wales**

Key messages from Audit Wales

11

**Looking Forward**

Today is an opportunity to think about what more we could be doing

Audit Wales – Nick Selwyn Audit Manager & Charles Rigby, Senior Auditor



- "Time for Change" – Poverty in Wales (November 2022)
- "A Missed Opportunity" – Social Enterprises (December 2022)
- "Together We Can" – Community Resilience and Self-Reliance (January 2023)

9

**Audit Wales 2022-23 programme of poverty related reviews**

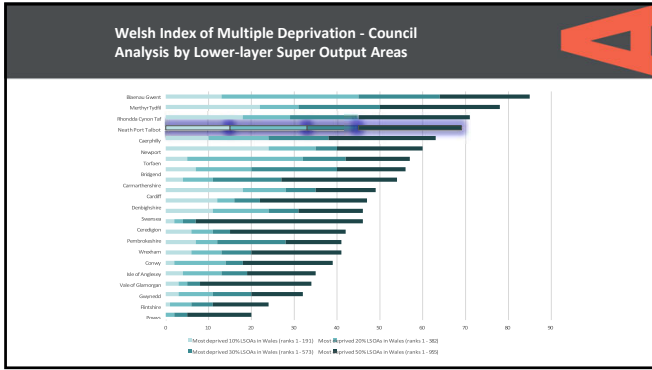
**Baseline setting out the challenge of poverty in Wales**

**Supporting solutions**



November 2022      December 2022      January 2023

12

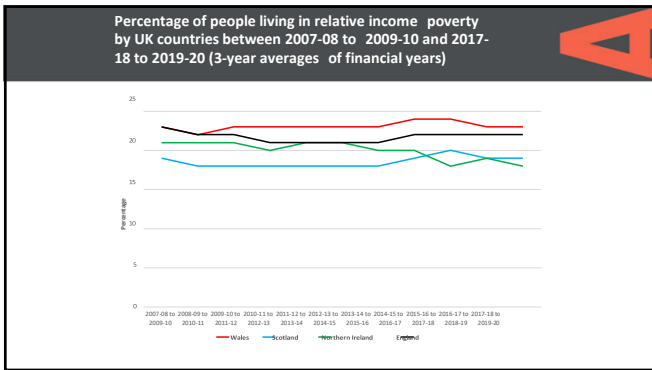


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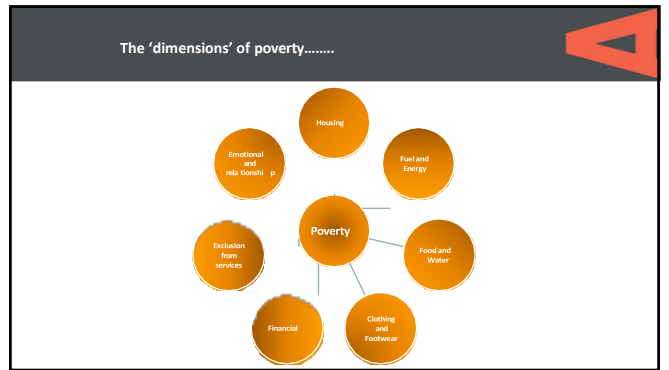
### The cost of living crisis.....

- ONS estimates that inflation is now higher than at any time since 1982.
- Institute for Fiscal Studies reported that the lowest-income tenth of households will face around 1.5% more inflation than the highest-income tenth in 2022-23.
- Resolution Foundation concluded that the poorest quarter of households are set to see their real incomes drop by 6% in 2022-23.

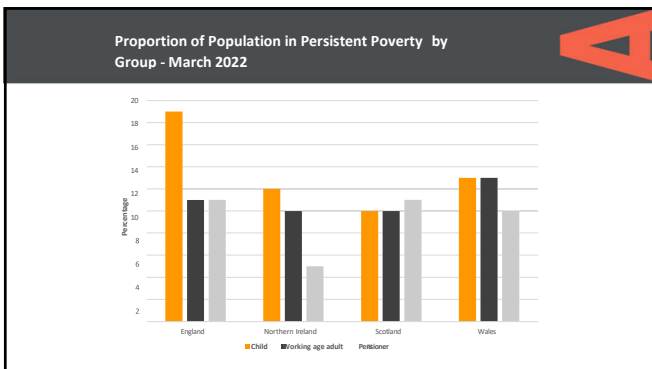
16



14



17



15

### Time for Change Report

Focus on four core issues:

- Strategic approach to tackling and alleviating poverty
- Adequate resources to help tackle and alleviate poverty
- Organising and delivering services in ways that help tackle and alleviate poverty
- Evidence that the local authority and its partners are making a positive impact

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### Poverty – where we are now

- The number of people living in poverty is rising.
- Key levers to alleviate poverty are outside of Wales's control.
- The national Child Poverty Strategy needs refreshing.
- While all councils and partners have prioritised work on poverty, the mix of approaches and a complicated partnership landscape mean that ambitions, focus, actions and prioritisation vary widely.
- The short-term nature of Welsh Government grant programmes, overly complex administration, weaknesses in guidance and grant restrictions mean that funding is not making the impact it could.
- Preventative work is hard to deliver because of the growing demand from people in crisis
- The way services are delivered do not always help people.
- Delivering socio-economic duty varies and is not always effective.

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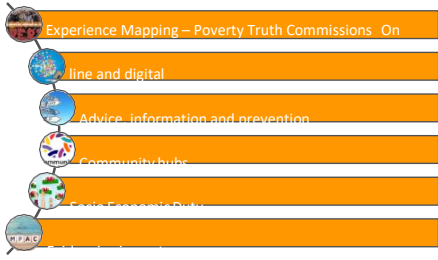
### Cost of living crisis impact on public services

- Higher costs for capital projects as result of inflationary pressures.
- Utility cost increases on key services – schools, day centres, etc.
- Impact of inflation on external contracts and staff costs.
- Rising fuel prices for transport.
- Result - need to invest/spend more money to stand still.
- Setting 2023-24 budget and beyond extremely challenging.



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### Challenges in organising and delivering services to help tackle and alleviate poverty



20

### Councils have opportunities to offer new approaches and solutions building on their recent work in the pandemic to tackle poverty

**Making more of social enterprises**

- S16 of SSWBA 2014

**Social resilience and self-reliance**

- Changing the relationship between the council and citizens

23

### Looking to the future.....



- Austerity 1, 2 and .....
- Reductions in capacity
- Growing demand
- Challenging targets and responsibilities – e.g. carbon emissions
- Efficiency savings are becoming exhausted
- Post pandemic recovery
- Cost of living crisis impact on public bodies

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### What is a Social Enterprise?

#### What Are The Difference Between These Three?

CHARITY	SOCIAL ENTERPRISE	FOR PROFIT COMPANY
Non-profit, not generating revenue or profit.	A combination of business and social goals, but with emphasis on the latter.	Profit maximizing company. CSR and social impact considered an add-on to the core business agenda.
	Profit is reinvested in community or company.	

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### The value of Social Enterprises in tackling poverty

- Social Enterprises focus on **keeping wealth within communities** and can assist people who are in poverty by:
  - directly helping people in disadvantaged communities by providing services that would otherwise not be available;
  - supplying basic public benefits such as social, educational, health and general economic interest services to local communities, including to people who are unable to pay;
  - creating new employment opportunities as a result of the services they supply;
  - contributing to the economic development of deprived communities; and
  - targeting their work to help disadvantaged people, including vulnerable women, people with disabilities and ethnic minority groups.

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### Social Enterprises – where we are now

- Councils are not effectively working with Social Enterprises to maximise their impact, make better use of resources to help people and communities:
  - Gaps in information and a lack of understanding of the scale and range of work undertaken by Social Enterprises in communities.
  - Most councils do not effectively engage with Social Enterprises.
  - Procurement and commissioning approaches do not encourage Social Enterprises to work with councils.
  - Councils not able to judge the value and impact of Social Enterprises because of limitations in management information and reporting.
- As a result, most local authorities are not delivering their S.16 responsibilities under SSWBA 2014.

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### The Social Enterprise Sector in Wales

- Covers roughly **2,250** businesses employing **56,000** people.
- Generates **£3.1 – £3.8 billion** in value.
- Between 2018 and 2020 the Social Enterprise sector in Wales increased by **43%** rising from **1,601** organisations in 2016 to **2,247** in 2020.
- **5%** of Welsh Social Enterprises are medium sized to large (i.e. have at least **50** employees), far above the equivalent for all businesses within the Welsh economy (only **1%**).
- **32%** of Social Enterprises surveyed had no paid staff at all, whilst a further **9%** only had one.
- Mean average turnover level was **£1.25 million**.

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### The case for prioritising community resilience

- Community and self-resilience has begun to appear as a priority in more council corporate plans and strategy documents.
- In essence focus is on equipping people to do more for themselves.
- Prioritising where to focus council activity.
- Recognition that councils cannot do what they always have done.
- **Importantly...** the pandemic showed us councils can work differently and communities can do more.



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### Where Social Enterprises focus their work

Main social or environmental objectives	2016	2018	2020
Improving a particular community	64%	57%	66%
Improving health and well-being	39%	45%	52%
Supporting vulnerable people	35%	46%	48%
Addressing financial exclusion	26%	28%	44%
Encourage people to participate in the arts, sports & recreation	-	32%	42%
Supporting vulnerable children and young people	20%	29%	34%
Creating employment opportunities	21%	24%	31%
Promoting education and literacy	32%	29%	29%
Protecting the environment	16%	26%	29%
Providing access to services	-	22%	27%
Supporting other social enterprises / organisations	9%	16%	25%
Promotes and protect culture, heritage & the Welsh language	-	21%	24%
Addressing social exclusion	7%	9%	21%
Providing affordable housing	5%	4%	3%

27

### Current approaches by councils – a good start to build on



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### Shifting from 'doing' to 'influencing' and 'enabling' – the barriers

- Lack of resources, limited skills and weak capacity to be able to drive this agenda.
- Inability to redirect resources from service delivery to supporting communities to be more self-reliant.
- A lack of trust between the council and residents and a perceived inability and appetite within communities to be more self-reliant.
- The prevailing service delivery culture within the council of needing to be 'direct providers' rather than 'influencers' and 'enablers'.
- Limitations in joined up working with partners on the ground to foster stronger community involvement and influence.
- Lack of a strategic vision and limited understanding of community needs and abilities.
- Ongoing challenges in helping connect and re-connect communities due to challenges of poverty, rurality, transportation and digital exclusion.

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### Opportunities for the future – Audit Wales self-assessments

#### 2 Community resilience and self-reliance evaluation tool

Active

Active	Yes	No	Not Rated
Has been clearly defined and agreed what community resilience and self-reliance means to you			
Has been clearly defined what you need to do and how you will do it			
Has been clearly defined how you will measure and monitor progress			
Has been clearly defined how you will communicate and engage with the community			
Has been clearly defined how you will work with partners			
Has been clearly defined how you will ensure you are inclusive and accessible			
Has been clearly defined how you will ensure you are sustainable			
Has been clearly defined how you will ensure you are resilient			
Has been clearly defined how you will ensure you are flexible			
Has been clearly defined how you will ensure you are adaptable			
Has been clearly defined how you will ensure you are innovative			
Has been clearly defined how you will ensure you are proactive			
Has been clearly defined how you will ensure you are responsive			
Has been clearly defined how you will ensure you are agile			
Has been clearly defined how you will ensure you are resilient			

#### 2 Checklist for local authorities for effectively engaging and working with Social Enterprises

Active

Active	Completed	Not Started	Not Rated
<b>1 Strategic Arrangements</b>			
<b>Values</b>			
Has been an agreed vision on how we will work with Social Enterprises			
The vision has been shared fully, and is understood by all relevant staff in the local authority			
The vision has been shared fully, endorsed by and is championed by elected members			
The vision has been developed in consultation with the Social Enterprise Stakeholder Council			
The vision has been disseminated to Social Enterprise staff			
The vision clearly sets out how we intend to deliver our vision of responsibility for promoting Social Enterprises' priorities			
Our work with Social Enterprises is through the use of an agreed engaged Social Enterprise and Social Enterprise Stakeholder Council			

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### Looking to the future

- Creating a clear vision of how things will work in the future.
- Holding a two-way dialogue and communicating what change will 'look' and 'feel' like.
- Revitalising the role of council members as community champions.
- Refocussing the work of council staff.
- Recognising that recasting community relationships will require different solutions in different places.
- Ensuring wealth stays local and works for all the community.

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### GPX events

Together we can – creating the conditions to empower our communities to thrive (South Wales)

Date: 19 April 2023

Start Time	End Time
10:30	16:30

Your Details

First Name:

Last Name:

Email Address\*:

\* This is your account

- North Wales – March 28, 2023 @ Venue Cymru, Llandudno
- South Wales – April 19, 2023 @ Cardiff, venue by

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### Learning from elsewhere

- Bristol City Council Resilience Strategy
- The role of 'Community Charettes' in Scotland
- Oldham City Council – 'Local leaders'
- Scotland's Plan – Strategic coherence in Scotland
- Preston Model and the role of 'Anchor' institutions

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### Contact details

- Nick Selwyn – [nick.selwyn@audit.wales](mailto:nick.selwyn@audit.wales)  
[nick.selwyn@archwilio.cymru](mailto:nick.selwyn@archwilio.cymru)
- Charles Rigby – [charles.rigby@audit.wales](mailto:charles.rigby@audit.wales)  
[charles.rigby@archwilio.cymru](mailto:charles.rigby@archwilio.cymru)
- [www.audit.wales](http://www.audit.wales)
- [www.archwilio.cymru](http://www.archwilio.cymru)

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**Introduction to 1<sup>st</sup> Workshop**  
(40 minutes)

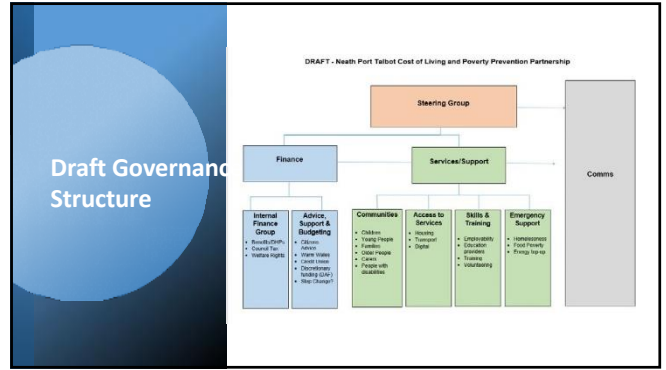


Q1) What issues are we seeing on the ground?



Q2) How can we address any of our top three issues?

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40

**Break (10 mins)**

38

**Closing Remarks**  
**What Next?**

41

**Feedback**  
(5 mins per table)

What are the top three issues?

How could these be addressed?



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## **Community Safety Partnership – Update to Cabinet Scrutiny Committee**

**13<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

The Public Services Board (PSB) recognises the important work of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in managing and responding to the key issues being faced in NPT in terms of crime, crime prevention and community safety. The work of the CSP falls mainly under Well-being Objective 2 'All our communities will be thriving and sustainable'. The CSP is and will help the PSB deliver on the Well-Being Plan and the partnership is leading on delivering the following step:

Collaborate with our communities to reduce crime, the fear of crime and to make our communities safer and more cohesive.

By way of background the Safer Neath Port Talbot Community Safety Partnership (CSP) established by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, is made up of representatives from the five responsible authorities, NPT Council, South Wales Police, Swansea Bay UHB, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Services and the National Probation Service. Our Board is also well supported by other partners including Tai Tarian.

The Police and Local Government hold joint leadership for community safety, the Safer NPT CSP is co-Chaired by Claire Jones (NPTCBC) and Superintendent Eve Davis (SWP). Through the CSP each responsible authority contributes their own particular local knowledge, professional expertise and resources to ensure that the issues of most concern to local people are prioritised and addressed. The CSP is supported by the work of the Councils' Community Safety Team with co-ordination of the Board provided by the Principal Officer, Elinor Wellington.

The partnership is committed to working together to achieve sustainable reductions in crime, fear of crime and antisocial behaviour and has agreed six priority areas for 2024-27 and the delivery against these is how we will make a difference.

These six priorities will be further outlined in a new Strategic Intent Document which is in development and will be formally consulted on in the New Year. An early draft is attached at Appendix 1. Progress will be monitored against an implementation plan which has yet to be developed.

We need then to develop a way of measuring the difference we have made. The PSB has asked that all work-streams produce a logic model to enable the PSB to monitor and evaluate progress on actions and therefore against the Well-being Plan. This will be developed once the strategic intent document has been finalised.

The presentation will outline the six priority areas and the work in progress or planned, giving examples such as our community engagement events, tasking meetings etc. The six priority areas are: Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, Anti-social Behaviour. Community Cohesion, Substance Use, General Crime Prevention including Community Engagement and Acquisitive Crime and Serious Violence.

The presentation will also outline that the Community Safety portfolio is growing and crime trends/fear of crime is changing. We as a Board and as local services have a challenge to keep abreast of these issues and ensure we best support our local communities to prevent and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour across Neath Port Talbot.

**Officer Contact:**

Elinor Wellington Principal Officer, Community Safety,

Email: [e.wellington@npt.gov.uk](mailto:e.wellington@npt.gov.uk)



Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnerships  
**Strategic Intent Document**  
2024-2027

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# Introduction

‘Working in partnership to make Neath & Port Talbot a safer place to live, work and visit.’

This is the Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnerships ‘Strategic Intent Document’ for 2024-2027.

This document outlines the priority areas of our Community Safety Partnership for the next 3 years.

Our local partnership board is a longstanding, action focused forum, committed to improving safety in all of our communities across the borough.

Over the years, the nature of Community Safety has significantly changed, with advances in technology, changes to legislation, new types of crimes, and of course more recently the Covid-19 pandemic.

In December 2022, the Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership Board held a development day in order to realign their priorities, taking into account the changing community safety landscape. The priorities have been carefully selected in order to reflect the continued challenges.

Our aim is to work together more efficiently and effectively, to make best use all of the resources available to us in our communities, and to build positive, strong and resilient communities where the most vulnerable are supported and protected.





# Background to Community Safety Partnerships

Since the Scarman Report in 1981, successive governments recognised that effective partnership working resulted in better crime reduction outcomes. This was consolidated by the Morgan Report in 1991 and culminated in the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act.

This Act established Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs).

Section 5 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, defines a Community Safety Partnership as;

*“An alliance of organisations which generate strategies and policies, implement actions and interventions concerning crime and disorder within their partnership area”.*

Community Safety Partnerships are statutorily responsible for reducing crime and disorder, substance misuse and re-offending in each local authority area.

The make-up and role of CSPs has been altered since 1998, through the Police and Justice Act 2006, Crime and Disorder Regulations 2007, the Local Government and Health Act 2007, the Policing and Crime Act 2009 and finally the Crime and Disorder Regulations 2011.

# Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership – Membership

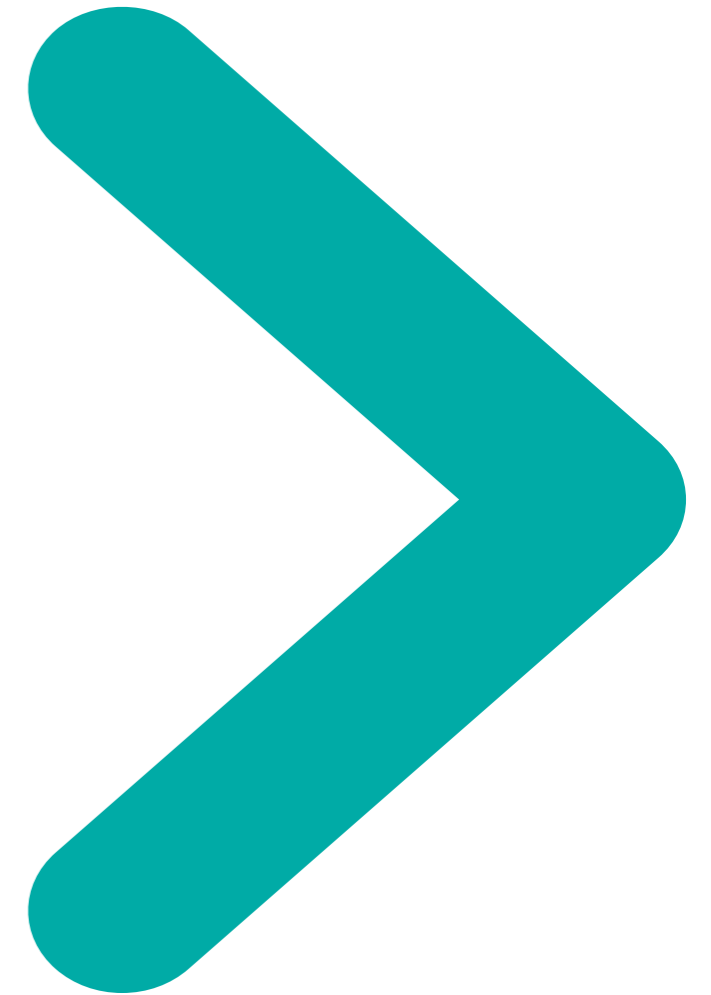
The Safer NPT Partnership Board consists of key representatives from statutory agencies and other organisations with an interest and influence in community safety issues and who are key contributors in the priority setting process.

## Statutory Members include:

- NPTCBC Council
- South Wales Police
- Swansea Bay University Health Board
- National Probation Service
- Mid & West Wales Fire and Rescue Service

## Other Members include:

- Police and Crime Commissioners Office
- Youth Justice Service
- Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Public Protection
- Western Bay Safeguarding Board
- Western Bay Area Planning Board
- Welsh Ambulance Service
- CVS
- Tai Tarian
- Third Sector representation



# Legislation Behind the Partnership

## Welsh Government's Safer Communities Programme

The Welsh Government's Safer Communities Programme was established in December 2017 following the completion of the Working Together for Safer Communities Review – Welsh Government's response to the Auditor General's Community Safety in Wales report of the previous year. At the heart of the programme is a new shared vision for community safety in Wales in which:

1. Every community is strong, safe and confident in a manner that provides equality of opportunity and social justice, resilience and sustainability for all;
2. The shared responsibility of government, public and third sector agencies is to work together with the communities they serve and the private sector to address activity or behaviour that is unlawful, anti-social, harmful to individuals and society and to the environment;
3. Sharing knowledge and ensuring early intervention with prompt, positive action tackles local issues and addresses vulnerabilities.

## Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 puts a duty on specified public bodies to act jointly and establish statutory Public Service Boards (PSBs) for each local authority area in Wales. The Safer NPT Community Safety Partnership Board reports into the Neath Port Talbot PSB on a quarterly basis.

## Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 gave local authorities and police services duties to work together to develop crime and disorder assessments and implement reduction strategies and to work in partnership with other agencies as a Community Safety Partnership - to tackle the identified problems.

Another key strategy taken into consideration when formulating the priorities is the new Serious Violence Duty Dec 2022. The Duty is a key part of the Government's programme of work to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, and to take a multi-agency approach to understand the causes and consequences of serious violence, focusing on prevention and early intervention, and informed by evidence.

The Serious Violence Duty outlines the changes made to section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, ensuring preventing and reducing serious violence is a priority for Community Safety Partnerships and requires specified authorities to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence

## Local Wellbeing Plan

The work and priorities of the Safer NPT Community Safety Partnership will support the development of Local Wellbeing plans.

The priorities set out in this document also co-exist alongside the South Wales Police Chief Constables Delivery Plan 2021-2025 and the Police and Crime Commissioners Police and Crime Plan 2022-2026. These are key strategies that align with the steering group's priorities, both of which strengthen the working links across key partners.

# Organisation Plans

This document will support the following existing plans:

## NPTCBC Corporate Plan

Wellbeing Objective 2 in the Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan states;

*'People live healthy, long and good lives in thriving and sustainable communities where people get along together and support one another'*

The Safer NPT Partnership priorities will support the Council in meeting this objective.

## South Wales Police – Local policing priorities

South Wales Police have local policing priorities that are aligned to the broader community safety priorities. These are:

- Drug trafficking and supply / Rape and Serious Sexual offences / Domestic abuse
- Serious violence/ Terrorism and extreme threats / Child exploitation and abuse
- Fraud and Vulnerable Victims / Modern Slavery

## South Wales Police & Crime Commissioners Plan for 2022-2026

The Safer NPT Partnership priorities align with those outlined in the South Wales Police & Crime Commissioners Plan for 2022-2026

- reduce and prevent crime and anti-social behaviour to keep people safe and confident in their homes and communities
- involve and empower our communities, working with partners in local government, health, fire and Welsh Government, the third sector and education to deliver services that people need
- work to protect the most vulnerable in our communities, understanding causes and taking prompt positive action as issues arise
- work to make the local criminal justice system efficient and effective to meet the needs of victims and reduce re-offending
- ensure that South Wales Police continues to be a high performing force in terms of the operational response to crime, threats, harm and the detection of offenders
- spend money wisely, playing our part to protect the environment and support our people to provide the best possible policing in your community

## The National Probation Service - Reducing Reoffending Plan

The plan illustrates how the Probation Service in Wales will work with partners to reduce reoffending, bring down the costs of crime within communities and protect the public over the next three years.

## Mid and West Wales Fire & Rescue - Service Strategic Plan (2022 – 2027)

The Strategic Plan 2022-2027 outlines MAWWFRS five-year Commitments, which they have developed in accordance with the sustainable development principle and incorporated the five ways of working

The Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership is also directly responsible for the delivery of Community Safety specific actions that come out of these other Partnership plans:

- Neath Port Talbot 'Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy' 2023-2026
- Youth Justice Blueprint
- Western Bay Area Planning Board Commissioning Strategy
- Community Cohesion Delivery Plan
- CONTEST West Glamorgan Regional Plan

## Swansea Bay University Health Board – Recovery & Sustainability Plan (2023/24 - 2025/26)

The Health Board sets out its aim to become a population health focussed organisation in its Plans, and the tools used to deliver are the Four Pillars, Marmot Principles and a set of Wellbeing Objectives. The Health Board's 'Four Pillar' model acknowledges the role we can play in contributing to improving our population's health. The four-pillar model acknowledges the role the Health Board has as a Healthcare Provider, Employer, Anchor Institution and a Productive Partner. The Health Board sets out its Quality & Safety Vision which includes suicide prevention, multi-agency working and delivering preventative services in the community.

# Understanding the Governance of the Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership

## The Neath Port Talbot Public Service Board

The Public Services Board (PSB) brings together senior leaders from public and third sector organisations across the area to work in partnership for a better future. The Community Safety Partnership feeds directly into the PSB and updates on progress made towards the priority areas. The Public Service Board is responsible for agreeing the direction of the Safer NPT Partnership and responsible for transmitting strategic information to inform actions of the partnership.

## The Safer NPT Community Safety Partnership Board

The Safer Neath Port Talbot Community Safety Partnership Board is responsible for the overall strategic steer and governance of the partnership. It receives quarterly progress on the priority areas, performance updates and escalated issues and risks from each priority area and its sub groups. It is responsible for scrutinising these updates, making financial decisions and for signing off this Strategic Intent Document and Delivery Plan.

## Regional Boards

The Safer NPT Community Safety Partnership Board will share information with, and receive information from, the partnered regional groups to ensure that strategies and delivery plans are aligned and actions are assigned to the most suitable partnership across the landscape. This good communication ensures no duplication across other partnerships and work streams.

## Sub Groups & Task and Finish Groups

There are a number of groups responsible for carrying out the work of the Partnership. These groups will report to the Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership Board who will in turn provide guidance and direction or support to resolve issues and barriers.

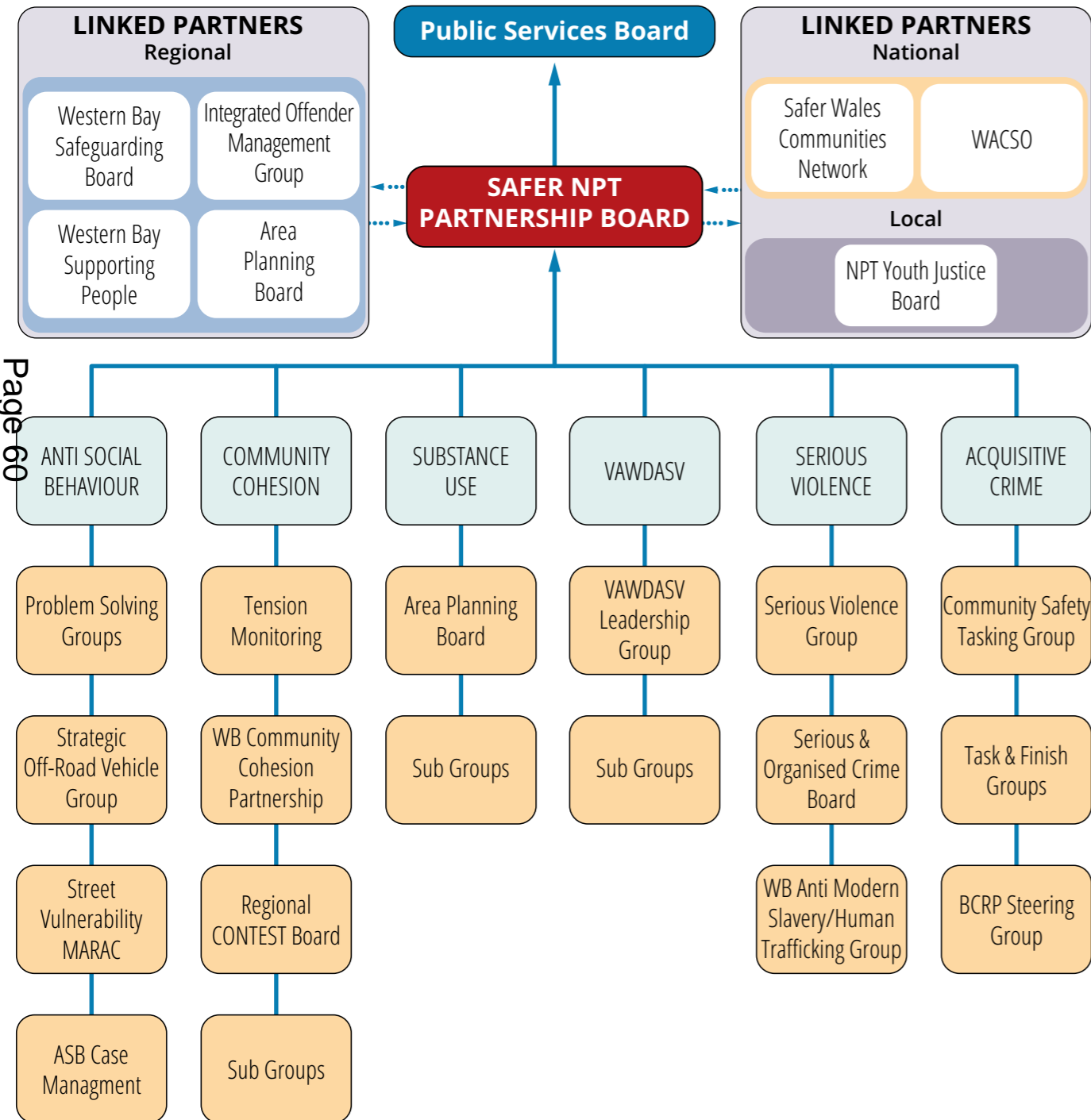
## NPTCBC's Community Safety Team

The Council's Community Safety Team are the bridge that joins the wider partnership together in relation to community safety. The Councils Community Safety Team are co-located in Neath Police Station, enabling them to work together with South Wales Police Community Safety colleagues; to receive all incidents of anti-social behaviour across the borough and to proactively prevent issues where evidence and intelligence indicates a probability of impending crime or disorder.

The teams work in regular partnership with other Council departments, including but not restricted to; adult and children's services, education, enforcement and many others, as well as working in close partnership with wider policing teams, probation, health, probation, substance use teams and other third sector organisations across the borough.

The Community Safety Team are responsible for driving forward the work of the Partnership and responding to the issues that arise in relation to the priority areas outlined in this document.

# Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership – Governance Structure



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# Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership – Priorities for 2024-2027

This document outlines the 6 agreed priorities of the Safer NPT Partnership. They are all of equal importance.

Working in partnership, the Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership will ensure it monitors and responds to other specific crime types that present an ongoing problem in NPT.

Each of the partnership priorities will be assigned to the most relevant subgroup, who will be responsible for driving the work forward. Each priority area will be underpinned and supported by individual action plans. Progress will be monitored on a quarterly basis by the Community Safety Partnership Board.

An annual report will be presented to the Public Service Board.

**PRIORITY 1**  
**Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)**

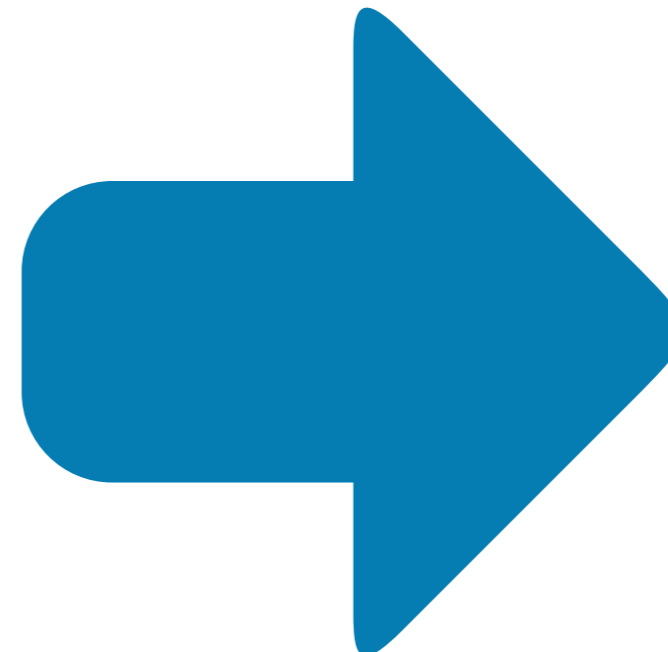
**PRIORITY 2**  
**Anti-Social Behaviour**

**PRIORITY 3**  
**Substance Use**

**PRIORITY 4**  
**Community Cohesion**

**PRIORITY 5**  
**Serious Violence**

**PRIORITY 6**  
**Acquisitive Crime**



## PRIORITY 1

# Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

## Key Areas of focus

- Communications & Engagement
- Children & Young People
- Perpetrators
- Early Intervention & Prevention
- Training
- Accessible Services
- Criminal Justice



## Why is this a priority?

The objectives within our local VAWDASV strategy<sup>1</sup> 'Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities' are derived from those in the WG National Strategy 2022-26. Having similar objectives within NPT enables us to demonstrate how we will support the Welsh Government in achieving its policy objectives regarding Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. These objectives support our vision;

*"To prevent and eradicate gender based violence by promoting: equality; safety; respect; and, independence to enable everyone to live free from abuse and the attitudes that perpetuate it."*

## Our aims and strategic intentions

In line with Welsh Government's National Strategy<sup>2</sup> on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (2022-2026<sup>3</sup>), we have seven objectives:

1. Increase reports of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Neath Port Talbot, through awareness raising and challenging attitudes.
2. Increase awareness in children, young people and adults of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and empowering them to positive personal choices.
3. Increase the focus on holding those who commit abuse to account and supporting those who may carry out abusive or violent behaviour to change their behaviour and avoid offending.
4. Make early intervention and prevention a priority – To reduce the number of repeat victims and reduce the number of high risk cases.
5. Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors.

6. Provide all victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs-led, strength-based, inter-sectional and responsive services across Wales.
7. Increase focus on improving the recognition of, and responses to VAWDASV in all Criminal Justice proceedings<sup>3</sup>.

## Outcomes we want to achieve

- Increase in referrals to local specialist services, and to Police and Health
- All victims to have equal access to appropriate services
- VAWDASV is 'everyone's business'; Negative attitudes are challenged and communities are educated and better informed of the issues around VAWDASV
- Victims and perpetrators are offered support at the earliest possible time and to prevent cases reaching a point of crisis
- Perpetrators are held to account
- Victims are fully informed and supported through the Civil and Criminal justice system
- Professionals are more informed and confident in reporting incidents of abuse

<sup>1</sup> Healthy Relationships For Stronger Communities Strategy 23-26 Final Version.pdf

<sup>2</sup> Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: strategy 2022 to 2026 [HTML] | GOV.WALES

<sup>3</sup> This is a local, additional objective that is not included in the WG National Strategy

**PRIORITY 2**

# Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour

## Key areas of focus

- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
- Street Vulnerability MARAC
- Evening & Night Time Economy



**ZERO TOLERANCE**

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Credit: Kameleon007

### Why is this a priority?

- Anti-social behaviour is an underreported crime. Through the partnership we must continue to raise awareness of what constitutes Anti-Social Behaviour and how it should be reported
- Anti-social behaviour is not as a series of isolated incidents but is a pattern of behaviour that is almost always repetitive and oppressive, often directed at victims who are vulnerable and live in more deprived areas and is often a prediction of more serious offending later down the line
- ASB can devastate communities and can have a profound impact on victims. Any behaviour that intimidates residents or puts them and visitors at risk in our communities is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated
- Proactively dealing with ASB and providing sustainable solutions will increase public confidence in the partnership and will facilitate increased reporting in this area and the levels of community intelligence

### Our aims and strategic intentions

- Continuously deliver a victim-focused response to ASB
- Develop prevention and early intervention initiatives in partnership to ensure a holistic approach to problem solving
- Work in partnership through our local Problem Solving Groups and Contextual Safeguarding Group to safeguard vulnerable victims and perpetrators of ASB
- Continue to raise awareness of what constitutes ASB within our communities, to encourage reporting via the appropriate mechanisms
- Work with partners and residents to address neighbourhood and cross border issues
- Challenge irresponsible business practice through licencing and trading standards functions
- Working in partnership to improve fire safety and fire prevention
- Work in partnership to mitigate the effects and consequences of off-road biking

### Outcomes we want to achieve

- A reduction in the number of repeat victims to incidents of ASB and neighbourhood crime
- Development of a comprehensive ASB profile for the borough, to inform operational tactics
- Correct procedures to report ASB are widely known in our communities
- Improvements in the way issues and concerns are and escalated to Problem Solving Groups and outcomes monitored
- Aim to reduce the number of deliberate fire incidents/ off road biking incidents

## PRIORITY 3

# Substance Use

## Key areas of focus

- Engagement
- Interventions and Treatment
- Prevention and Health Improvement
- Enforcement (SWP)

Page

### Why is this a priority?

- Welsh Governments Substance Misuse Delivery Plan 2019-2022<sup>4</sup> outlines key priorities that have been focused on over the past 3 years
- The plan built on the good progress made in the lifetime of the previous 2008-18 strategy, 'Working Together to Reduce Harm' which saw progress of key harm interventions
- NPT has a high number of drug related deaths
- Western Bay Drugs Commission has been developed and is underway

### Our aims and strategic intentions

- Reducing harms and relative risks associated with drug and/or alcohol use
- Timely support for people to improve their health and aid and maintain their recovery
- Supporting and protecting families
- Tackling substance availability and protecting individuals and communities
- Stronger partnerships, workforce development and Service User Involvement
- Recognise the realities of poverty, class, racism, social isolation, past trauma, sex based discrimination and other social inequalities that affects people's vulnerability and capacity to effectively deal with drug related harm

### Outcomes we want to achieve

- Reduce the number of drug related deaths in Neath Port Talbot (and Swansea)
- Reduce the harms associated with substance use
- Embed Service User involvement into delivery and planning of services
- Substance use issues are identified and challenged early through strong partnership working and information sharing
- Everyone across the region affected by substance use issue can access timely, evidence based, safe and effective quality services



**The ONS data for deaths relating to drug misuse per Local Authority in Wales**

AREA	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Isle of Anglesey / Ynys Môn	1	7	10	4	2	2	3
Gwynedd / Gwynedd	6	4	6	5	9	8	3
Conwy / Conwy	9	5	5	5	2	7	6
Denbighshire / Sir Ddinbych	2	2	2	8	5	3	3
Flintshire / Sir y Fflint	8	5	5	8	9	4	9
Wrexham / Wrecsam	12	12	11	6	7	4	3
Powys / Powys	6	7	10	3	2	4	6
Ceredigion / Ceredigion	3	3	4	7	1	8	5
Pembrokeshire / Sir Benfro	11	2	3	7	6	5	4
Carmarthenshire / Sir Gaerfyrddin	15	7	9	11	19	10	4
Swansea / Abertawe	28	34	22	36	43	26	29
Neath Port Talbot / Castell-nedd Port Talbot	13	11	4	14	19	24	15
Bridgend / Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr	14	11	10	14	8	7	5
Vale of Glamorgan / Bro Morgannwg	3	4	4	12	6	7	7
Cardiff / Caerdydd	26	10	17	15	13	27	16
Rhondda Cynon Taf / Rhondda Cynon Taf	21	9	17	23	16	23	17
Merthyr Tydfil / Merthyr Tudful	8	4	3	6	3	1	9
Caerphilly / Caerffili	12	2	7	7	6	6	5
Blaenau Gwent / Blaenau Gwent	3	1	6	3	2	5	5
Torfaen / Tor-faen	1	2	4	4	1	7	3
Monmouthshire / Sir Fynwy	0	4	3	1	3	3	2
Newport / Casnewydd	8	3	3	9	3	1	9





**PRIORITY 4**

# Ensuring our communities are cohesive, and that any community tensions are reduced

## Key areas of focus

- Community Cohesion
- Hate Crime
- Extremism



## Why is this a priority?

- Any acts or threats of violence, property damage, harassment, intimidation, or other crimes motivated by hate and bias have debilitating effects on victims and wider communities and impact directly on community cohesion
- Confidence in the partnerships ability to both educate and deal effectively with these issues will increase reporting and ensure our joint response is both informed and robust
- Community cohesion is critical to maintaining safer communities and both an understanding and the implementation of strategies to calm local and regional tensions will achieve this goal
- Doing our very best to be proactive as a partnership to deliver locally on the Government's CONTEST Strategy, i.e., Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare, to counter any rise in extremism and acts of terrorism that is critical to community cohesion and safety of the public
- We need the support and confidence of communities to improve our ability to identify those people who are most vulnerable to radicalisation and who may need support and intervention

## Our aims and strategic intentions

- Ensure we deliver on the Welsh Government Community Cohesion Strategic Framework and 'Hate Hurts Wales' agenda
- Increase victims confidence to report incidents of hate crime and to improve third party reporting
- Ensure staff are trained on reporting hate crime/hate incidents through Victim Support or suitable provider
- Through communications campaigns, encourage more residents to be 'supportive bystanders' if they witness any incidents on hate
- To appropriately support victims of hate crimes
- Ensure we safeguard those at risk of radicalisation
- Ensure frontline professionals are trained in the Prevent duty and referral process
- Maintain a strong focus on community cohesion activities and tension monitoring

## Outcomes we want to achieve

- More people are reporting hate crime they experience, and feel well supported
- Offer regular training and awareness of hate crime and Prevent for front line staff
- Increase the number of Prevent Referrals through education and training
- Improved public trust and confidence that support is available and that everybody is treated fairly
- Ensure people know what to do if they are concerned about someone who is vulnerable to radicalisation or think are being radicalised

**PRIORITY 5**

# Serious Violence reduction: Safeguarding those at risk of Violence & Exploitation

## Key areas of focus

- Exploitation/Victimisation
- County Lines
- Knife crime
- Modern slavery
- Serious violence
- Offensive Weapons Homicide Reviews
- Domestic Homicide Reviews
- Contextual safeguarding

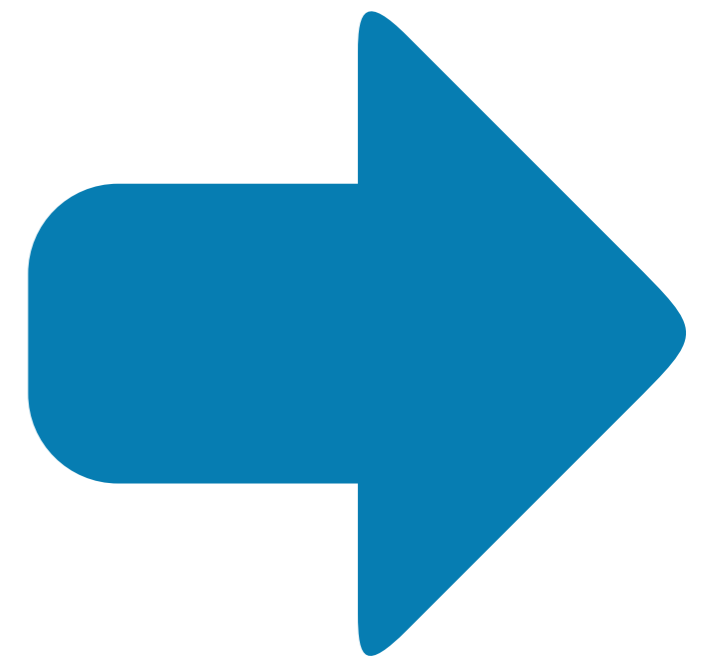
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Credit: Anna Frank

## Why is this a priority?

- Serious violence has a devastating impact on lives of victims and families, and instils fear within communities and is extremely costly to society. Incidents of serious violence have increased in England and Wales since 2014. The newly introduced Home Office Serious Violence Duty<sup>5</sup> is a key part of the Government's programme of work to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence: taking a multi-agency approach to understand the causes and consequences of serious violence, focusing on prevention and early intervention, and informed by evidence
- Tackling serious violence has been a key aim for the Police and Crime Commissioner since 2012, using data sharing with health to pinpoint where and how violence occurs. Working closely with the Violence Prevention Unit, we can seek to understand the epidemiology of violence, and using this evidence to develop interventions focused on tackling the root causes of violence
- We recognise the significant impact youth violence and exploitation can have on a young person's safety, health and wellbeing. The Local Authority are committed to reducing youth violence in Neath Port Talbot and providing the right service at the right time to young people who have been adversely affected by youth violence
- Through our contextual safeguarding board we need to consider the context of where this harm occurs, which is often outside of the family environment and in the places where young people spend time

## Our aims and strategic intentions

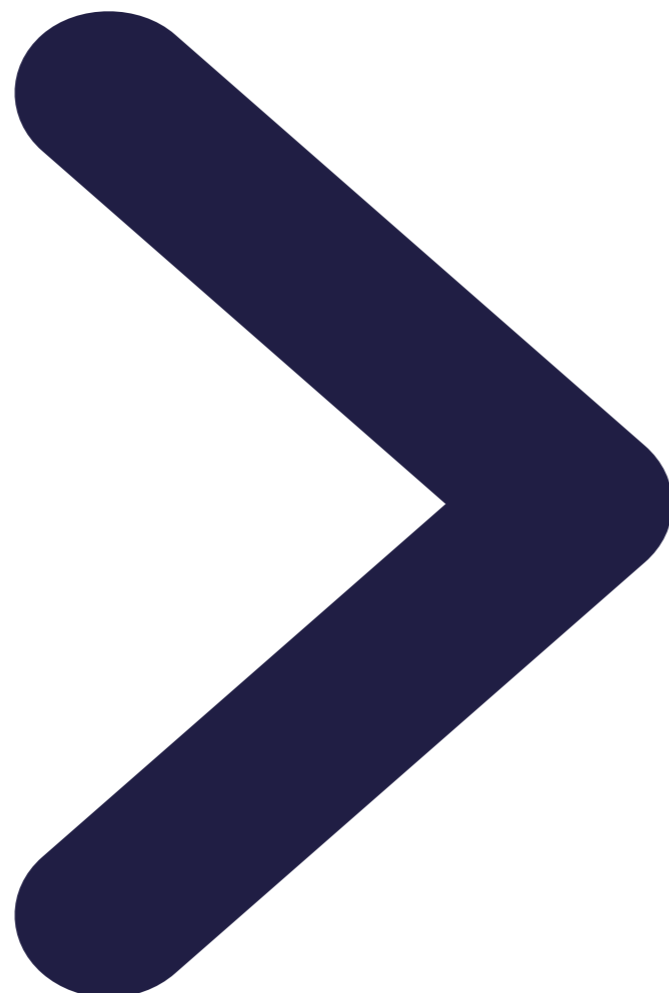
- Tackle hidden, high harm crimes such as modern slavery
- Partnership response to tackling violent crime, including; knife crime, serious youth violence, group offending and gang violence
- Take a safeguarding approach to both victims and perpetrators of violent crime, adopting a public health approach to addressing violence
- Ensure access to statutory mental health support for both victims and perpetrators of violence
- Ensure arrangements are in place throughout the partnership to effectively prevent and address both Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation
- Ensure intelligence is shared and activity is informed to provide both a preventative and enforcement response to county lines throughout partnership arrangements



<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-duty>

### Outcomes we want to achieve

- Strategic Needs Assessment to be completed for the South Wales Police force area relating to the Serious Violence Duty
- Serious Violence Problem Profile completed for NPT
- Development of a local Serious Violence action plan to address issues and provide partnership solutions to tackling the issues
- Development of prevention and intervention initiatives
- A holistic safeguarding approach offered to all young people who experience significant Extra Familial harm
- Operational and Strategic approach to disrupting those that exploit young people.
- A multi-agency approach to recognising and preventing early indicators of youth violence and child exploitation
- Effective multi agency information sharing that supports the disruption of youth violence and exploitation
- Identification and disruption of Exploitation by organised crime groups (OCG)
- Development of safety within the places and spaces young people spend time



**PRIORITY 6**

# Crime Prevention/Acquisitive Crime

## Key areas of focus

- Burglary
- Shoplifting
- Robbery
- Car Crime
- Fly tipping/Graffiti/Dog Fouling



## Why is this a priority?

- Our residents consistently tell us that acquisitive crime and the fear of these types of crimes is what matters to them
- Previous evidence has demonstrated an association between changes in the economy and criminal behaviour, and suggests that economic recession and the cost of living crisis could lead to an increase in acquisitive crime
- The look and feel of a local area has a direct link to residents' fear of crime and whether or not they feel safe where they live, shop and spend their leisure time

## Outcomes we want to achieve

- Continue to tackle acquisitive crimes like burglary with a focus on prolific offenders
- Develop early intervention and prevention initiatives in partnership to ensure a holistic approach to problem solving
- Ensure delivery of a proactive, effective Business Crime Reduction Partnership
- Utilise our Community Safety Engagement Team and the 'Paws on Patrol' scheme to ensure continued bespoke community events that raise awareness of crime prevention, reporting mechanisms, target hardening
- Work with the Crime Reduction Tactical Advisors to help people feel safer, and be safer
- Further develop our 'Feel Safe' Scheme for the most vulnerable in our communities
- Maintain a strong social media presence to raise awareness of relevant crime prevention, community safety campaigns and initiatives





Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## Working Together

The delivery of this document will be overseen by the Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership and it will ensure that all delivery plans are reflective of changes in the landscape and the real time needs of our communities and residents.

The Neath Port Talbot Council's Community Safety Team are responsible for the coordination and secretariat of the Partnership. They are always keen to hear from those who live and work in the borough in order to create an effective partnership.

If you would like to get involved or have any thoughts that you would like to share with us, then please contact us on [communitysafety@npt.gov.uk](mailto:communitysafety@npt.gov.uk)

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