



**SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY CABINET
BOARD**

**IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING CABINET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 25 JANUARY 2024**

**MULTI-LOCATION MEETING – COUNCIL CHAMBER PORT TALBOT
AND MICROSOFT TEAMS**

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DURATION OF THE MEETING**

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Part 1

1. Appointment of Chairperson
2. Chairpersons Announcement/s
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting (*Pages 5 - 10*)
5. Forward Work Programme 2023/24 (*Pages 11 - 12*)
6. Public Question Time
Questions must be submitted in writing to Democratic Services, democratic.services@npt.gov.uk no later than two working days prior to the meeting. Questions must relate to items on the agenda. Questions will be dealt with in a 10 minute period

For Decision:

7. Directors Annual Report 2022-23 (*Pages 13 - 78*)
8. Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan (*Pages 79 - 158*)
9. Neath Port Talbot Children & Young People Social Care Strategic Plan 2023 - 2026 (*Pages 159 - 212*)
10. Neath Port Talbot Adult Social Care Strategy 2023 - 2026 (*Pages 213 - 282*)
11. Urgent Items
Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Regulation 5(4)(b) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 2290 (as amended).

Part 2

12. Access to Meetings - Exclusion of the Public (*Pages 283 - 288*)
To resolve to exclude the public for the following items pursuant to Regulation 4 (3) and (5) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 2290 and the relevant exempt paragraphs of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

For Decision:

13. Housing & Homelessness Strategic Plan - Appendix 6 and 7
(Exempt under paragraph 15) (*Pages 289 - 292*)
14. Neath Port Talbot Children & Young People Social Care Strategic Plan 2023-2026 - Appendix 5 (Exempt under paragraph 14) (*Pages 293 - 302*)
15. Business Case for Establishing an in-house Adult Family Placement Service (*Pages 303 - 372*)

K.Jones
Chief Executive

Civic Centre

Port Talbot

Friday, 19 January 2024

**Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Cabinet Board
Members:**

Councillors. J.Hale, S.Harris and A.Llewelyn

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EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD

SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY CABINET BOARD

16 NOVEMBER 2023

Cabinet Members:

Councillors: J.Hale and S.Harris

Officers in Attendance:

A.Thomas, C.Howard, K.Warren, J.Hodges, N.Jones and P.Chivers

Scrutiny Invitees:

Councillor C.Galsworthy and P.Richards

1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON**

Agreed that Councillor Harris be appointed Chairperson of the meeting.

2. **CHAIRPERSONS ANNOUNCEMENT/S**

There were none.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the 21st September, 2023 will be brought back to the next committee to sign off.

5. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24**

The Forward Work Programme was noted.

6. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No questions from the public were received

7. **PERMISSION TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE 'THE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME - THE ALLIANCE OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE'**

Decision:

That having had due regard to the integrated impact assessment, Members approved the principles, aims and objectives of the Transformation Programme - The Alliance Outline Business Case, and provide support for the continued planning, to enable the future procurement of a new integrated substance use service, using an Alliance contract, that will replace the current range of contracting arrangements for drug and alcohol related interventions.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

Agreement to proceed with the 'Transformation Programme - The Alliance Outline Business Case' will enable the continued Programme development.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period, which ended 9am, Monday 20th November 2023.

8. **NEATH PORT TALBOT YOUTH JUSTICE AND EARLY INTERVENTION DRAFT YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2023-2024**

Decision:

That Members are asked to support the Neath Port Talbot Youth Justice and Early Intervention Draft Youth Justice Plan 2023 – 24 for commending to Council for approval.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To enable the Neath Port Talbot Youth Justice Service (Early Intervention and Prevention) on behalf of Neath Port Talbot Council to undertake its duties to deliver youth justice services in line with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period, which ended 9am, Monday 20th November 2023.

9. **PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT GROUP**

Decision:

That the report be noted.

10. **SOCIAL SERVICES CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT (SPOC)**

Decision:

That the report be noted.

11. **CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE, ADULT SERVICES AND HOUSING & COMMUNITY SAFETY - 2ND QUARTER (APRIL 2023 - SEPTEMBER 2023) PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Decision:

That the report be noted.

12. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were none.

13. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

Decision:

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as set out in Paragraph 14 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007 subject to the Public Interest Test (where appropriate) being applied.

14. **CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PREVENTION AND WELLBEING SERVICE**

Decision:

That having had due regard to the integrated impact assessment, it is recommended that Members:

- Agree to suspend Rule 11 of the Council's Contract Procedural Rules
- Provide permission for the Head of Housing and Communities to enter into a new contract with The Wallich for the provision of a Prevention and Wellbeing Service for a period of 12 months, with an option to extend for a further 6 months. This period being subject to the Council being able to terminate the service early by providing three months' notice to The Wallich.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

So that there is a legally binding contract enabling the continuation of these essential services whilst Officers conclude a review of homelessness services and implement a new service model that enables delivery against the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period, which ended 9am, Monday 20th November, 2023.

15. **HILLSIDE REDESIGN REPORT**

Decision:

1. That having had due regard to the integrated impact screening assessments, authority be granted to the Director of Social Services, Health, and Housing to proceed with the service redesign of Hillside, as set out in appendix 1 to the circulated report (Hillside Service Redesign Report).
2. That authority be granted to the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing to make the necessary workforce changes, with an information report to Personnel Committee detailing the changes.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

Hillside needs to respond to the changing needs and outcomes for the complex children placed within Hillside, the proposed redesign will ensure that the provision in Hillside adapts in the right way to support the most vulnerable children in our society.

Implementation of Decision:

This decision shall be implemented after the three day call in period, which ended 9am, Monday, 20th November 2023.

16. **THE REGULATED SERVICE (SERVICE PROVIDERS AND RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUALS) (WALES) REGULATIONS 2017 AND HILLSIDE SECURE CHILDREN'S HOME UPDATE**

Decision:

That the report be noted.

17. **THE MANAGER'S REPORT ON HILLSIDE SECURE CHILDREN'S HOME**

Decision:

That the report be noted.

18. **ENHANCED SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

Decision:

That the report be noted.

CHAIRPERSON

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Agenda Item 5

Meeting Date 2024	Agenda Item and Type	Contact Officer
2nd February 2024	Nomination Agreement for Private Sector Temporary Accommodation	Chele Howard
	Review of client fees for Assistive Technology Services	Donna Jones/Sarah Waite
	Community Safety Strategic Intent	Elinor Wellington
	VAWDASV Recommissioning Consultation	Chele Howard
	Hollins Care Centre	Angela Thomas
	Waiver Report	Rob Davies

Meeting Date 2024	Agenda Item and Type	Contact Officer
21st March	Responsible Individual on Hillside	Sian Coffey/Mel Weaver/Dave Tiddy
	Hillside Manager Report	Sian Coffey
	Quarterly Performance Report Quarter 3	Dave Harding/Lynette Jones/Leighton Jones
	APB Service Arrangements 2024/25 Financial Plan	Claire Jones/Julia Jenkins
	Housing Support Grant Contract	Chele/Hayley
	Advocacy Contract Extension	Hayley Short
	PAN Peer Advocacy	Keri Warren
	Spot Purchase Contract	Hayley Short
	Family Support Services Annual Report	Keri Warren
	Boundary Change for Social Work Teams	Keri Warren
	NDD Strategic Plan	Keri Warren

	Appointment of Consultant on Behalf of the Western Bay Area Planning Board to carry out an Evaluation of Substance Use Service Provision for Children, Young People & Families	Julia Jenkins/Chele Howard
	Policy on Financial Contributions for Temporary Accommodation'	Chele Howard
	Domiciliary Care Tender	Hayley Short
	Disabled Facilities Grant – Update	Rob Davies
	Participation and Engagement Annual Report	Helen Sinclair/Keri Warren
	Corporate Parenting Charter	Victoria Smith



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY CABINET BOARD

25th January 2024

**Report of the Director of Social Services, Health & Housing –
Andrew Jarrett**

SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is for Members to note the work undertaken throughout Social Services and to adopt the Director's Annual Report 2022-23.

Background

The purpose of the annual report is to set out the local authority's improvement journey in providing services to people in their areas, those who access information, advice and assistance, and those individuals and carers in receipt of care and support. Under the new requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (SSWB) Act, the report needs to demonstrate how local authorities have promoted well-being and accounted for the delivery of well-being standards.

The former reporting requirements for Directors of Social Services in part 6 of the "Statutory Guidance on the Role and Accountabilities of the Director of Social Services" (Welsh Government June 2009) have

been replaced as a consequence of both the SSWB and Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.

The requirements are that every local authority must produce an annual report on the discharge of its social services functions and the report must include:

- an evaluation of the performance in delivering social services functions for the past year including lessons learned (Part 8 Code on the role of the director);
- how the local authority has achieved the six quality standards for well-being outcomes (in a code about measuring social services performance made under s145 of the SSWB Act 2014);
- qualitative and quantitative data relating to the achievement of well-being outcomes (also set out in the code on measuring performance);
- the extent to which the local authority has met requirements under Parts 3 and 4 of the SSWB Act as set out in separate codes covering assessing needs and meeting needs;
- objectives for promoting the well-being of people needing care and support and carers needing support for the following year including those identified by population needs assessments under section 14 of the SSWB Act;
- assurances concerning:
 - structural arrangements enabling good governance and strong accountability;
 - effective partnership working via Partnership Boards;
 - safeguarding arrangements;
- the local authority's performance in handling and investigating complaints
- responses to any inspections of its social services functions an update on Welsh language provision;
- how the local authority has engaged people (including children) in the production of the report.

Financial Impact

Not applicable.

Integrated Impact Assessment

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for adoption of the Director's Annual Report.

Valleys Communities Impacts

No implications.

Workforce Impacts

No implications.

Legal Impacts

No implications.

Risk Management Impacts

No implications.

Crime and Disorder Impacts

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on the Council in the exercise of its functions to have "due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent:

- a) Crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); and
- b) The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area; and
- c) Re-offending the area"

There is no impact under the Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Impacts

Section 2(1) of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and

Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 introduced a general duty where a person exercising relevant functions must have regard (along with all other relevant matters) to the need to remove or minimise any factors which:

- (a) increase the risk of violence against women and girls, or
- (b) exacerbate the impact of such violence on victims.

The proposals contained in this report are likely to have no impact on the above duty.

Consultation

There is no requirement under the constitution for consultation on this item.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members note and endorse the Director's Annual Report 22-23 as detailed in Appendix 1 to the circulated report for commending to Council for approval.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

To ensure Neath Port Talbot Social Services meet the requirements that every local authority must produce an annual report on the discharge of its social services functions.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

Director's Annual Report 2022-23 – Appendix 1.

List of Background Papers

No additional papers required.

Officer Contract

Andrew Jarrett, Director of Social Services, Health & Housing, Neath
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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Social Services, Health & Housing Director's Annual Report 2022-23

www.npt.gov.uk

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Foreword



Welcome to my annual report reflecting the period April 2022 to March 2023. In my introduction last year I noted that we had faced one of the biggest healthcare challenges in a century and that the social care system had been pushed to the limits.

While we have emerged from the other side of a global pandemic, Social Services continues to deal with the legacy of Covid and faces new challenges. A cost-of-living crisis is putting additional pressure on our resources, services, staff and citizens.

Local volunteers and our team of Local Area Coordinators are busier than ever, while our Community Mental Health Teams have seen ever-increasing numbers of referrals, with so many people impacted by lockdowns and social isolation. And we have seen a sharp rise in the number of high risk victims of domestic abuse supported.

Staff, partners and communities continue to show remarkable commitment, compassion, adaptability, and determination to maintain services in these challenging times and for this I send my sincere thanks. Services affected by the pandemic have now fully reopened, with all such as our day services and respite services now operating at full capacity.

The deplorable war in Ukraine has led to a local Neath Port Talbot response with 267 citizens travelling around 2,000 miles, fleeing from their communities and welcomed into ours.

Recruitment and retention of carers remains a challenge across NPT and Wales as a whole. We continue to invest in staff training and advocate the benefits of working in the social care system.

With so much demand on services we continue to innovate, with increasing emphasis on supporting people in their own communities including through Assistive Technology, and adaptations to homes via Disabled Facilities Grants.

We have many challenges to face as a public service and as a community. By continuing to work together we will achieve our goal of ensuring the most vulnerable people get the support they need and deserve.

Andrew Jarrett
Director of Social Services, Health & Housing

Director's summary of performance

As at the end of the year 2,117 adults had a service and care plan (compared to 2,344 in the previous year), a near 10% fall, while those aged 65+ receiving a service was 1,788 (1,758 the year before).

We have remodelled Adult Services into three area networks mirroring the Health Board's GP Clusters to bring care and support closer to our communities, and we are building on our Prevention and Early Intervention, including identifying unpaid carers sooner.

Last year 225 adult carers assessments were completed, up one-third on the previous year, as well as 20 parent carer assessments, as demand returned following the pandemic.

Helping people return to their own homes and communities after leaving hospital is key, and the percentage of adults who received reablement who needed no further package of care increased to 71% from 64% the previous year.

NPT has seen a growth of recruitment agencies entering the local market which are presenting increased competition for social care staff recruitment. This trend could potentially destabilise the ability of local service providers to maintain and grow their local workforce.

As people continue to want to remain at home and providers unable to recruit and train staff this impacts on the residential care sector. When a person either in hospital or in the community requires a domiciliary care package, and the ability to meet this need is not available due to staff shortages the person has to be placed in a residential home which impacts on their independence and skills over time.

We strongly believe that a child's needs are best met by their own families if this can be safely supported. I am pleased to report that the number of Children Looked After continues to fall, standing at 258 (of whom 14 were Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children) at the end of March 2023, down from 268 in the previous year.

During the year 97% of children's assessments were completed within the target 42 days from point of referral.

The use of children's residential care home placements has increased by 40% over the last 12 months; this increase is due to a number of factors including

the impact of insufficient local placement availability within the local foster care market.

We continue to engage with Welsh Government including its 'eliminate profit from care' agenda and the potential risks and implications such approaches present to the local markets.

Hillside Secure Unit is continuing to review its service model to 'future proof' its service to ensure it is able to accommodate the future demands of the provision as well as being financially sustainable in the long term, and NPT's use of secure residential care home placements has remained stable.

The overall number of children and young people accessing advocacy services has increased in NPT by 11% over the last 12 months due to continued efforts to embed advocacy within local practice.

The last year saw 2,650 presentations to the Housing Options Service; an increase of 11% on the previous year, with an average of 40% due to some form of relationship breakdown either with a partner or within the family.

The service also saw an increase in presentations from private sector tenants, with an average of 25% being from tenants who have been served a notice to quit. This has increased due to the implementation of the Renting Homes Act in December 2022 which has resulted in over 50 landlords in NPT leaving the rental market. Temporary Accommodation (TA) numbers continue to increase with 205 households in TA at the end of the 2022/23 financial year.

The time taken to deliver Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) is recovering well, with the number completed for 2022/23 standing at 272, up a third on the previous year while the end to end time (referral to completion) improved to 245 days from 339 days in 2021/22.

Our Commissioning Unit provides support to and undertakes monitoring of the various service providers, including care homes, domiciliary care and others.

Partnership working remains important to us; we work closely with colleagues in Swansea Council, Swansea Bay University Health Board, the third sector and the West Glamorgan regional partners on a plethora of activities including hospital discharges and mental health placements.

As usual we set a number of key priorities for the directorate last year to ensure we continue to meet the care and support needs of the people of NPT.

Priorities for 2022-23 – What we said we would do and what we achieved

- **To strengthen opportunities for early offers of help, to ensure vulnerable children, their families, and adults in need of support are having access to community based support services at the earliest opportunity.**
- ✓ We continue to invest in supporting families at an earlier stage through the strengthening of support services and the recruitment of a full time principal officer with responsibility for prevention and family support. We work in partnership with our colleagues including community services to ensure that we respond to challenges such as the current cost of living crisis and ensure that families have access to support when they need it. We provide family focussed support by working in partnership with families and building on strengths.
- ✓ We work collaboratively with families to build resilience and prevent problems escalating by providing early offers of help and support. We understand that children's needs are best met by their own families, if this can be safely supported. Helping families stay together is a key focus of Children's Services. Early intervention and prevention services helps reduce the number of children and young people reaching the threshold for care and needing to become care experienced, or support them to return safely to their families in a timely way. It is important that families receive the right support at the right time.
- ✓ We reviewed and aligned Adults prevention and early intervention services to place based clusters to ensure people have access to streamlined and timely support.
- ✓ We enhanced the number of Local Area Coordinators across the county borough to 14. The team work with circa 500 people on a 1-2-1 basis and another 400 people in community group settings. 40% of case work is being undertaken with people who aren't known to services and we are looking to increase this number.
- ✓ We completed the mapping of community hubs across the county borough, including food banks. Information from this exercise was fed into the Local Development Plan and used to support services through the cost-of-living crisis.
- ✓ We completed the review and restructure of Safe and Well Volunteering, to create an adult volunteer befriending service. There are currently 40 active volunteers working across the networks and work is ongoing to look at

more specialist volunteering opportunities for people with additional learning needs.

- ✓ We strengthened partnership working with the third sector, bringing a more coordinated approach to community engagement and development.
 - ✓ We provided support and funding of the warm spaces with partner organisations during the winter period to support individuals and communities with the cost-of-living crisis.
 - ✓ We piloted a falls response service within the Afan network, for individuals with a life line. This has been very successful with calls being responded to within 45 minutes, with over half of fallers remaining at home, avoiding a conveyance to hospital. Work is ongoing to support further rollout of the service.
 - ✓ We delivered targeted individual and community interventions directed and influenced by population health mapping undertaken with Public Health Wales.
 - ✓ Continued cross directorate partnership working, with the aim of bringing together services to support community accessibility and help people remain resilient.
 - ✓ Developed a draft Adults Social Isolation and Loneliness Strategy. The implementation plan is being coproduced with the community and partner organisations.
 - ✓ Implementing the development of a community focused school in partnership with Awel Y Mor primary school based in Sandfields, Port Talbot.
- **To support children and young people to live in safe, stable and permanent families and to ensure that only those children who need to be looked after are in care.**
- ✓ In the leaving care cohort, there is now a drive to focus on revocation of care orders where appropriate. We are developing a *When I am ready* cohort and supported accommodation including transitional models for post 16 young people.
 - ✓ In Youth Justice Services, young people in care would be supported by Children's Services and the teams involved with care experienced children, and plans are created in conjunction with Youth Justice and Early

Intervention workers to ensure that only young people who need to be looked after remain in care.

- ✓ Our 'business as usual' approach has enabled us to maintain a concerted effort in managing our Children Looked After population and ensuring that the long term care plans for our children and young people are regularly reviewed. During the period we have seen **65** children discharged from care in a planned way. This is a decrease on the previous year (**78**).

- **To further embed participation and engagement across the directorate, to ensure the voice of vulnerable children and adults are at the forefront of our services.**

- ✓ We have developed a Most Significant Change (MSC) approach which gathers stories from the frontline that are focused on capturing change outcomes that have resulted from an intervention or programme. Using MSC to capture stories provides a rich suite of qualitative information that can be used to inform practice, policy and decision making throughout the directorate.

- ✓ The Engagement and Participation Officer and the Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service have continued to deliver the Life Skills programme to support care leavers and the YJES service users. Over an 8 week period young people attend every Tuesday 10am to 1pm. The participants successfully learn a range of culinary skills and become competent at cooking healthy, budget meals. Further training around budgeting and laundry are also delivered. It has become evident the project offers more than basic life skills as the participants enjoy the social aspect and improved wellbeing from regular interaction with peers and professionals. The voice of the young people continues to be captured in the Exit Questionnaire conducted when young people no longer need the support of the service.

- ✓ A Young Persons Interview Panel was set up to help appoint a Principal Officer. Four young people designed questions to ask the applicants and feedback their thoughts and opinions to the senior panel. It was pleasing to see the chosen applicant was also one of the top interviewees selected by the young people. The YP Panel will continue to be involved in future management interviews.

➤ **To ensure a robust, resilient, compassionate and consistent approach to safeguarding practice across Social Care.**

Our approach to Safeguarding across Children and Adults continues to be streamlined and strengthened by the following:

- ✓ We have brought consistency in the recording of strategy discussions and strategy meetings across the Directorate; our designated safeguarding officer role is now well established and proving effective in response to professional abuse;
- ✓ A neglect tool has been developed in conjunction with the University of Birmingham, practitioners, parents and partner agencies to enhance our response to neglect, whilst recognising social harms and how such skews perceptions of neglect;
- ✓ We have worked regionally to understand our assessment of mental capacity and best interest meetings and the findings of audit work will shape standardised assessment tools moving forward; our response to harm outside the family home continues to be developed and refined and has extended across Adult Services;
- ✓ The rapid response to suspected suicide forum has been extended to respond to 'significant attempted' suspected suicides.
- ✓ The Corporate Safeguarding Group has led on the revision of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy, which brings it in line with Wales' national Corporate Safeguarding Practice Guidance. The group has also revised its Terms of Reference and has also revised the Safeguarding Self-Assessment – to be administered in 2023/24. Unfortunately the rollout of Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) has been halted, however the LPS project group will continue to take forward the key central tenets of LPS: necessity, proportionality and the need to better front-load the process. Our work on transitional arrangements has continued and we received funding from Welsh Government to make Parent Advocacy operational over the coming three years. We remain committed to make Neath Port Talbot the safest place in Wales for Citizens and are working closely with the many partnership boards: Community Safety, Area Planning, VAWDASV, Serious Organised Crime, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, Regional Safeguarding, Junior Safeguarding and CONTEST to achieve this goal.

- **Support people to live a fulfilling life at home, connected to the community and resources around them, and provide care and support where needed.**
- ✓ For both Leaving care and the Youth Justice services, community and resources are key. Most of our young people remain living in our area, and in education or further education where they are supported by either Youth Justice Intervention workers or social workers and Young People’s Advisors. We have developed and opened a fully functional resource centre where life skills training, interventions and support are provided, and young people across both cohorts are encouraged to develop their skills whilst maintaining their community links.
- ✓ Our 14 Local Area Coordinators cover the whole county borough, and work with on average 534 individuals who are supported through 1:1 provision at any one time, with community groups and activities promoted throughout the year.

- **To enhance the support afforded to unpaid carers of adults and the contribution they make to our communities.**
- ✓ In September 2022 we employed a full time Carers Development Officer focused on enhancing engagement with carers, identifying unpaid carers, improving access to support services, and improving the link between statutory and non-statutory support. We continue to contract with NPT Carers Service and have directly supported them in a successful bid for Carers Trust grant funding for short breaks. We also allocated time of the Carers Development Officer to provide NPT Carers direct support for administration of this grant.
- ✓ Since November 2022 we have undertaken an internal review of carer support, including the Council’s current Service Level Agreement for carers. This work initially focused an adult carers but has now been expanded to include both young carers and parent carers also. To date this has resulted in a demonstrator pilot in Neath Cluster that focuses on enhancing:
 - ✓ Integration of support, by identifying carers where individuals who are being cared for are receiving social work support and liaising between ‘cared for’ and ‘carer’ support providers;
 - ✓ Prevention and Early Intervention, by proactively identifying carers earlier in their carer journey. Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA),

- signposting and general (non-statutory) support provided to carers as early as possible from presentation to services;
 - ✓ Response time to meet carers' needs, by undertaking a proportionate carers needs assessment, which will identify if a carer needs statutory or non-statutory support;
 - ✓ Learning from the model and the outcome of the review of existing processes which will help shape a robust model of support for carers;
 - ✓ To date we have been involved in the design and delivery of the Regional Carers Strategy and a recent engagement event held in Swansea.com Stadium to understand 'what matters' to unpaid carers.
 - ✓ We have supported the Carers Partnership Board to undertake a carers' survey to enquire into carers respite/short breaks provision. These two exercises will form the basis of our own engagement with carers with the view to shaping our services for the future.
 - ✓ We have also employed a manager who now holds responsibility for services to unpaid carers.
- **To further develop the local social care market to improve the range and quality of services.**
- ✓ Our Commissioning Unit have continued to follow robust processes to ensure quality care is provided to vulnerable people when they need it. We have worked closely with a number of providers throughout the year to ensure that they are meeting quality standards of care and contract compliance and implemented Performance Management measures where providers have fallen below acceptable standards.
 - ✓ In addition to this we have commissioned a number of new services to support diversifying and transforming the way we deliver social care.
 - ✓ We delivered our first pan-disability Extra Care scheme, enabling individuals to live independently with access to support when needed. The scheme is made up of self-contained flats and access to 24-hour staff support to enable individuals to live independently. Those living at the scheme utilise communal areas to take part in activities such as cooking workshops and mindfulness sessions.
 - ✓ Officers have also worked with families to co-produce a supported living scheme, which specialises in supporting individuals with an ASD diagnosis. The scheme has been developed to ensure that the environment and care and support commissioned is centred on the needs of the individuals identified for the scheme. Officers worked with families, Care Managers, OT

and the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) on the property development and procurement of a support provider.

- ✓ We have piloted an outcome focused Domiciliary Care Model to move away from prescribed call times and ensure calls are delivered in line with people's changing needs and requirements. The pilot has had a positive impact and made an improvement to how quickly we can respond to requests for Domiciliary Care.

- **To continue the use of technology in supporting people to achieve their personal outcomes.**
- ✓ We have expanded our Assistive Technology offerings to include a mobile lifeline option to support confidence with independent outdoor mobility and access to communities.
- ✓ We secured capital funding and began remodelling and refurbishment work to provide a Digital Solutions Suite, to showcase and demonstrate how mainstream digital technology can support independent living, and/or enhance other care/telecare support.
- ✓ Prevention and Early Intervention Team are developing a digital platform to support community connections, reduce loneliness and isolation, and provide easy access to helpful resources to support self-management and wellbeing both online and in their communities.
- ✓ We are on target regarding our planned programme for upgrading all lifeline units to be ready ahead of retirement of analogue telephone lines and switch to digital by December 2025.
- ✓ Working closely with the Community Medicines Management Team we are supporting individuals to safely take their medicines using reminder and /or automatic dispensing devices.
- ✓ We continue to work with supported living residents to identify how technologies can support their independence, quality of life and personal outcomes.
- ✓ Working with the Fire Service we now ensure all lifeline packages include a smoke alarm that connects to the lifeline call response centre to ensure timely alert to emergency services.
- ✓ We have undertaken some exploratory work to establish how mainstream digital and Assistive Technology can support developing life skills in Bspoked which will go into work plans for 2023-24.

- ✓ We have also been piloting a mobile response service in Afan cluster area to explore how a lifeline based mobile response can impact on wellbeing for non-injurious falls and other non-medical emergencies.
- **To continue to develop a robust social care workforce.**
- ✓ We use succession planning, HR policies and procedures to sustain and maintain a strong stable workforce. We monitor sickness and absence from work and ensure staff maintain their training and development.
- ✓ In addition to areas of training and management oversight, we ensure everyone has a clear role, good supervision, and quality appraisals. Everyone has supervision in line with the NPT supervision policy and appraisals will form a part of that process going forward. We are committed to the health and well-being of our staff, and this is covered in our development days and will form part of everyone's appraisal. Staff well-being will be kept a priority. The building of staff morale has been essential to maintain commitment to reduce sickness and improve staff continuity.
- ✓ We are championing a research culture by promoting evidence-based guidance to support evidence-informed social care practice.

How are people shaping our services?

This is about how we find out what people think about our services so we can build on good practice.

Most Significant Change (MSC) Stories and Story Telling Panel

MSC is an approach which starts by gathering stories from the frontline that are focused on capturing change outcomes that have resulted from an intervention or programme. Unlike case studies, MSC stories are *by* people, not *about* them. They are first person stories that are led by the people being interviewed. We continuously seek the views of individuals that are involved within services in Social Care. This sometimes takes the form of a view on their plan or assessment, or historically we have sent feedback questionnaires at the point of case closure. But some of the evidence gathered in this way lacks the depth we would like to have. Using MSC to capture stories will provide a rich suite of qualitative information that can be used to inform practice, policy and decision making throughout the directorate. We will be offering opportunities

regularly for individuals to share their stories. Enabling and empowering individuals to have a voice more generally rather than specific to an intervention, a plan or an assessment will help illicit quality information that may not otherwise be captured. As well as those receiving services, the views of staff also inform internal practices and strategic planning.

This year we have been gathering stories from individuals receiving services across the directorate which are then be heard at a Story Selection Panel. The group listen to and reflect on a small number of stories by exploring what is significant and why. Participants will have different opinions on this, and exploring these differences helps them to deepen their understanding of the stories and each other. The learning and implications of the panel discussions are compiled into a short feedback report, with the stories and lived experiences of the individuals we support used to shape and inform policy and practice.

Community Safety Team

The Crime & Disorder Act places a duty on local authorities to ensure they work in partnership to reduce and prevent crime in their local area. One of the best ways for us to raise awareness of crime prevention campaigns and initiatives is to actively engage with our local communities whenever and wherever possible.

In order to achieve this, the Community Safety Team ensure delivery of a programme of suitable events and community talks in various areas of the county borough. During 2022/23 the team organised and/or attended **35** community engagement events to promote crime prevention campaigns and initiatives, and talk to residents about any crime or anti-social behaviour issues that are affecting them.



Community Safety event

We use the opportunity to talk to residents about: Domestic Abuse; Anti-Social Behaviour; Hate Crime; County Lines; Scams; Community Tensions; Business Crime; Terrorism.

We use the anecdotal information from these events to steer our future work and campaigns. Information is also fed back to any relevant forum like Tasking, Problem Solving Groups, or the Community Safety Partnership Board.

Since the pandemic and the start of the cost of living crisis, the nature of issues that our residents experience is different and ever changing. It is a challenge for the team to keep abreast of emerging issues and trends, ensuring we are able to provide the most appropriate advice and signposting, and develop campaigns to prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime.

A Safer Croeserw

In partnership with

WILDFOX
YOUTH FOR YOUTH SERVICE
COMMUNITIES IN WALES

Friends of Croeserw - FREE 'Roly Poly Entertainments LTD' providing Disco, Games and Dances

FREE Activities provided by NPT Youth Service Information from Wildfox Resorts

Partner Agencies Offering Advice - Communities For Work Plus - NPT Paws on Patrol
Community Safety - South Wales Police - Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Family Information Service - The Childcare Offer - Housing Justice Cymru - Flying Start
Devon's Wales Information - Victim Forum - NPT Recycling - NPT Road Safety Team
Local Area Coordinator - CVS

DATE	TIME	VENUE
16 MAR 2023	3PM - 6PM	CROESERW COMMUNITY CENTRE SA13 3PL

Advert for one of our events organised during 2022/23

The team also deliver talks to local community groups to provide information on home security and to promote our Feel Safe Scheme, which offers home security surveys and appropriate safety items to those who are vulnerable, on a low income and / or are impacted by domestic abuse.

During 2022/23 the team delivered **6** talks to local community groups.

The team produced 'Safe and Sound' newsletters every quarter, which were shared with the general public, local Councillors, members of our CSP Board, and partner agencies. These newsletters help to further raise awareness of crime prevention messaging

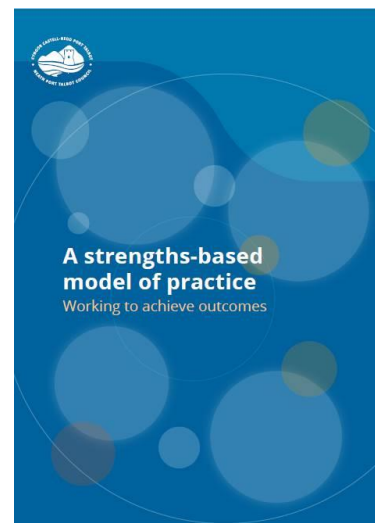
and campaigns, as well as notify residents of any emerging trends or matters to be aware of.

The team runs the Safer NPT Facebook page which reached **2,600** followers during the year.

Quality Standard 1 - Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve
This is about how we work in partnership to help people achieve positive outcomes.

We have continued to implement across all services the Outcomes Focused Approach introduced via the *Framework for Strengths-Based Practice Working to Achieve Outcomes* which was co-produced with Social Care Wales (SCW).

We focused training and development on linking in co-production, improving case recordings and working with parents and partners. Training is now part of all induction for new starters and students working in the authority to ensure that all are aware of the underpinning ethos of NPT to support the people we work with to better outcomes.



Following auditing plans within Children's Services we have developed additional training which will specifically look at how plans can be co-produced with families ensuring we are capturing the voice of the children and families we work with. This will also look at the introduction of the use of one page profiles in practice.

Consultant Social Workers (CSW) have continued to champion outcome focused practice within their teams holding peer group reflection sessions and this has been supported by three multi-agency training days completed on a patch basis with partner agencies from health, housing and third sector organisations. This training looked to improve joint understanding of communities and strengthen collaborative working and relationships between multiagency practitioners. There have been some challenges with this work to ensure that we get the right people to attend, however it is hoped that we will continue to build on this and hold regular repeats of the training to continue to spread the word across the Children's Services community teams. Discussions have begun regarding how this can be replicated in Adult Services.

Unpaid Carers

The pandemic has had a notable impact on unpaid carers with many reporting significant increased feelings of loneliness and isolation and worsening mental health. The pressures of caring for others has also increased, as community services have yet to return to pre-pandemic levels and traditional ‘face to face’ health care has been replaced by more online or telephone consultations. As such, the opportunities to identify and support carers has reduced.

The existing availability of formal care and mounting pressure on the NHS to release patients from hospital may also cause carers to provide longer-term care, including for patients with more complicated needs, adding to the pressure already placed on unpaid carers.

The care that unpaid carers provide is essential in the delivery and sustainability of Adult Social Care services. There would be significant costs if a carer were unable to carry on their caring role and therefore supporting carers to remain resilient should help to avoid any breakdown in caring.

An evaluation of support provided to adult unpaid carers has been completed which has identified several areas of improvement that would enable an unpaid carer to access more timely support, and work to progress these improvements is ongoing. To understand the “whole system” the next phase of the review will include carers engagement and a broadening of the scope to young carers and parent carers with the aim to enhance carer support in the county borough.

There are more than 20,000 unpaid carers in Neath Port Talbot

Supportive performance data for this quality standard

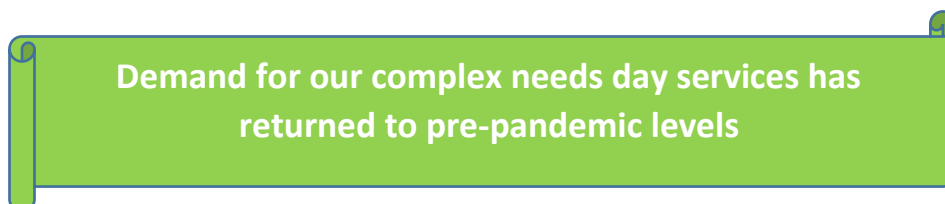
PI Reference	PI Description	April 21 - March 22	April 22 - March 23
New Measure PI24	The percentage of assessments completed for children within 42 days from point of referral	99.2%	97.0%

Quality Standard 2 – Working with people and partners to protect and promote people’s physical and mental health and emotional well-being

This is about how we help people to look after their physical, mental and emotional health.

Complex Needs Day Services

Day services for people with complex needs are delivered across three sites in Neath Port Talbot, (Trem Y Mor, Brynamlwg and Rhodes House), providing high levels of care from day services staff and enabling individuals to receive support from Health colleagues including nursing staff, therapists and behavioural support. There are over 60 individuals attending the complex needs day services. Surgeries with Health staff have been set up at Brynamlwg facilitating direct contact between Health, Social Services and parents and carers. The day services also provide valuable respite care to families and carers, enabling them to take a break from their caring role. **Demand for day services remains high and the services are currently operating at full capacity.** Individuals attending day services are offered a range of activities within the day services bases and also in the community to enable them to meet their personal outcomes.



Demand for our complex needs day services has returned to pre-pandemic levels

Direct Payments

Direct Payments (DP) are offered, following an assessment, to people as an alternative to either in house services or commissioned care, allowing them to employ Personal Assistants (PAs) of their choice. Direct Payments enable people to exercise choice and control over the care they receive to meet their outcomes. 405 people were being supported with a Direct Payment package at the end of March 2023 compared to 395 at the end of March 2022.

The service has started to grow again following the effects of the Covid pandemic. As with other sectors of the social care market, **recruitment of PAs**

remains challenging and the service has focused on expanding its recruitment strategy. DP recipients employ people from the social care market, from within their network of family and friends, or use their DP to commission services themselves, and find creative solutions in using their DP for care and support.

Support to individuals is provided by the in-house Direct Payments Support Service (DPSS) which sets up new packages, provides employment guidance and supports with the recruitment of PAs as well as providing a range of other services including a training programme. The DPSS continued to deliver a comprehensive service throughout the year supporting employers and PAs to work as safely as possible and in line with employment law. Payroll support is provided by external organisations from the approved providers list. A Suitable Persons Service is commissioned from *Me, Myself and I* (Trading with Care) which provides valuable support to enable individuals who lack mental capacity to still access DP.



More than 400 residents in Neath Port Talbot have greater choice and control over their care and support by using Direct Payments.

We want more people to benefit but recruiting Personal Assistants is challenging.

We want to recruit more Personal Assistants (PA) so that more people can experience the benefits of Direct Payments for their care and support.

We think there are many people who haven't considered being a PA who would enjoy the role.

Case study – recruiting a Personal Assistant

After 35 years of working in the engineering sector, Ron had retired but realised he missed the routine and social interactions of a job. Ron decided he wanted to get a new part time job, something different to his previous role.

Working Wales referred Ron to the Neath Port Talbot Workways+ team. Workways+ helps people get jobs through 1-1 support, training, paid work experience and introductions to employers. Workways+ welcomed Ron and assigned him a mentor, Vicky.

Vicky suggested working in the hospitality sector, but Ron felt that wasn't what he was looking for, so Vicky then suggested social care as a Personal Assistant (PA) funded through Direct Payments.

The PA role really appealed to Ron and, with support from Vicky, interviewed for two care posts and was successful in both. Ron now supports two Neath Port Talbot residents and is employed for 16 hours per week, doing something he enjoys.

Ron said, *"Vicky was absolutely excellent, wonderful. The PA role is a million miles from my previous career and it is such a positive change for me. The role of a PA appeals to my caring side and it is very rewarding helping people enjoy their lives. I would say that anyone looking to get back into work, no matter their age, should give Workways+ a call"*.

Workways+ is part funded by the European Social Fund through the Welsh Government.

In-house Domiciliary Care and Reablement Service

The Council's Community Wellbeing Team (CWT) and Reablement Service delivers domiciliary care to people across the county borough. The teams focus largely on providing personal care (washing, dressing, toileting) and supporting people with medication and feeding. Offering both short- and long-term support, the teams use a reablement ethos to support individuals in their own homes to enable them to remain as independent as possible. Regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales, the in-house service (CWT and Reablement) delivers

care to 202 people, which is approximately one quarter of the local domiciliary care market. During the course of the year the service delivered a service to over 650 people. Plans remain in place to increase the share of the market and a recruitment and training officer has been employed to drive this forward.

Bspoked

Bspoked provides opportunities for adults with a range of disabilities, focusing on what each individual is interested in and what they'd like to achieve from the service. In the last year ICF (Integrated Care Fund) funding has been granted to enhance the Bspoked service from its previous training and employment model and develop it to become an independent living hub by creating two new training flats where people can develop daily living and independence skills, and where assessments can be carried out by practitioners. It is anticipated that this will support people to reach their potential and in some cases reduce their need for statutory care and support. The purpose is to create an environment which prepares and provides service users with the skills to develop their potential. Alongside the two training flats a range of other activities are offered which focus on supporting people to become as independent as possible, for example cooking, gardening, IT skills, woodwork, and a bicycle workshop. **There are currently 75 adults attending Bspoked but this figure is likely to rise as the opportunity to use the training flats becomes available.**



One of the training flats at Bspoked

Respite at Trem Y Mor

Overnight respite care for Adults with Learning and Physical Disabilities is provided in the Local Authority's respite unit at Trem Y Mor, a 16 bedded unit located on Aberavon seafront. The service provided care to 115 individuals in the last year. **This facility is now operating at full capacity and demand for the service is extremely high.** There are a number of residents who live there on a longer term basis whilst waiting for alternative permanent accommodation to be arranged which reduces the capacity for respite care for others. This service provides valuable respite care for families and carers enabling them to take a break from their caring roles. The residents receive a high level of care from an experienced and well-trained staff team, and are able to enjoy activities both within the home and in the community to enable them to meet their personal outcomes.



Trem Y Mor respite and day service

Sensory Support Team

The Sensory Support Team (SST) aims to maintain, promote and maximise independence for those with a sensory impairment so that they are able to live more productive and enjoyable lives, supporting them to achieve their personal outcomes.

The SST undertakes functional assessments of need and meets those needs via a range of interventions, including provision of advice, specialist equipment and signposting to relevant organisations. Mobility training is also provided. The SST works closely with other Social Services teams, Audiology and Ophthalmology Services in the local health board, and have well-established links with third sector community and hospital based sensory organisations as well as local Opticians.

In 2022/2023 the team received 387 requests for assessments across the Neath (145), Afan (140) and Upper Valleys (102) hubs.

During the year, SST:

- Closed 339 cases
- Undertook 279 home visits
- Assisted 81 clients to be registered as sight impaired/severely sight impaired
- Assisted 15 clients with Audiogram registration

Community Occupational Therapy Service (COTS)

The Community Occupational Therapy Service (COTS) aims to maintain, promote and restore independence for people of all ages, so that they are able to live more productive and enjoyable lives and achieve their personal outcomes. In the last year the team has integrated with social work teams in the network areas facilitating seamless and co-ordinated services for individuals. The team undertakes functional assessments of need and meets those needs via a range of interventions, including the provision of advice, equipment and adaptations. They also undertake manual handling assessments to support in-house and external domiciliary care providers and

informal carers, working closely with colleagues and partner agencies to provide a comprehensive service to maximise independence for people of all ages and to minimise risks.

In 2022/2023 the team received almost 2,000 referrals (including 519 manual handling assessments) across the Neath (738), Afan (797) and Upper Valleys (462) hubs, and provided a services to 1,617 people (up 10% on the previous year).

During the year, COT:

- Closed 1,873 cases
- Undertook 2,718 home visits
- Undertook 436 manual handling assessments
- Undertook 103 wheelchair assessments
- Placed 1,358 equipment orders
- Assessed 638 clients and recommended works of adaptation via Disabled Facilities Grant
- Assessed 369 clients and recommended works of adaptation to be processed by Tai Tarian and Registered Social Landlords

“All I can say is that I can’t fault her she was courteous, excellent and I would recommend to anyone. Brilliant service”

Community Mental Health Teams (CMHT)

Since coming out of lockdown the CMHTs have seen an increase in the number of people requesting support and mental health assessments undertaken. Both teams now have a Consultant Social Worker in post to support social work staff in developing outcome-based practice as part of the quality assurance mechanism. They also act as a resource to improve links with other Adults and Children's Services teams to develop an understanding of referral pathways in both primary and secondary mental health services.

Within the last year 24/7 mental health support is now available over the phone in Swansea Bay. People living in Neath Port Talbot (and Swansea) who need urgent support with mental health issues, or relatives seeking advice, can now call a team of mental health professionals for free, day or night. Calling 111 and choosing option 2 puts callers in direct contact with a team of 20 mental health professionals based at Neath Port Talbot Hospital, staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, offering a triage service and support or signposting as appropriate. Callers will be supported by fully trained clinicians working as part of a multi-disciplinary team including mental health nurses, psychological wellbeing practitioners and occupational therapists.



The CMHTs continue to remain responsive to the challenges of increasing demands on services and have a good working relationship with inpatient care services to ensure timely discharges from acute mental health units throughout the Swansea Bay University Health Board area.

One of the most significant issues for CMHTs is the lack of specialist accommodation (including residential, supported living and extra care) for people with a severe and enduring mental illness. As a consequence a number of service users are currently accommodated in high cost placements in neighbouring authorities. NPT Commissioning Unit are working proactively to understand the level of demand and in the process of developing a range of accommodation in NPT to address the identified deficits. A recent success story has been the development of a 5 bed Pan-Disability Extra Care facility in the Margam area. There are several service users known to the CMHT in this

particular resource where significant progress in achieving recovery-based goals has been made. One of our clients, who was previously street homeless and spent a number of years in acute mental health units and subject to a Supervised Community Treatment Order (CTO), is now ready to move to her own flat nearby and supported as part of a core and cluster arrangement.

Assistive Technology

Working with people's strengths, Assistive Technology (AT) can be used to promote health, wellbeing and self-management, and has potential to enable more resilient communities, thus reducing demand/reliance on more traditional support services.

The switch from analogue telephone lines to digital by December 2025 necessitates a timely upgrade of all analogue Lifeline based equipment and systems to ensure a safe and smooth transition. A key priority for the service, AT are now in the second year of the roadmap to achieve this 'digital switch' for 2,500 users of the service, and this is well underway with 38% of lifeline units having been upgraded so far.

Although challenging for AT and the technology enabled care industry, the switch to digital technologies opens many new possibilities and improved choice for citizens. Recently we introduced the Lifeline mobile service using a wearable device allowing individuals to raise an alarm when they are out and about. This has been well received by the 100 users of this service so far and proved valuable in promoting confidence to maintain outdoor activities and engage with their communities. This impacts positively on wellbeing, reducing loneliness and isolation, as well as playing an important role in falls prevention by maintaining levels of physical activity.

"My mum is 'severely sighted' and has not been out on her own since before Covid - she had lost her confidence and feared falling and not being able to use her phone to get help.

Since having the [mobile lifeline device] she started to go out for short walks. This was quickly followed by attending coffee morning by herself and now catching a bus and going into town alone. Mum takes the [mobile lifeline device] with her everywhere and finds it easy to use and charge up, it has really improved her confidence and increased my peace of mind knowing she can call me or the contact centre if she falls or needs any assistance."

Other exciting initiatives this year have included piloting a Mobile Response Service in the Afan Cluster Network area and creating a Digital Solutions Suite at Cimla Health & Social Care Centre to enable citizens to view and experience mainstream smart technology. It is anticipated this will be ready to launch in July 2023, and development will include wraparound facilities to support digital inclusion, working in partnership with Digital Communities Wales and NPT's Digital Inclusion ambassador.

Substance misuse

The Area Planning Board (APB) is a regional (NPT and Swansea) multiagency group which aims to ensure that people with substance use issues and their families are able to get the support they need when they need it. Our work is also focused around education and prevention, such as commissioning educational services in schools and ensuring that people have access to timely information and advice.

Each substance use agency commissioned by the APB has a testing target of 45 per quarter.

For the first time since pre pandemic we have tests recorded by every commissioned service, albeit some services have significantly lower figures. However, the total agreed target across all services has been more than achieved. There is still work to be done to ensure consistent levels of testing are being seen across all services, and a 'Test on Assess' model has been agreed.

One of the main priorities for the Team is to ensure robust oversight of overdoses and drug related deaths in the region, along with improving the harm reduction provision available for people.

We now have access to a wealth of data from key partners such as South Wales Police and the Health Board and consequently have a better understanding of where and when the overdoses are occurring. In addition, we have delivered, in conjunction with service providers, a 72 hour outreach response in which 70% of reported overdoses during the year received a follow up visit from an outreach worker. The number of specialist harm reduction interventions that have been delivered in the region has also improved. Data shows that there has been a 20% decrease in needle and syringe transactions

in 2022/23 compared to the previous year; a 31% decrease in unique individuals accessing the needle and syringe programme and a 55% increase in naloxone supply across the county borough. There has also been a 170% increase in the number of BBV (blood-borne viruses) tests completed during the year.

Ukraine response

NPT Council has condemned in the strongest possible terms the actions of Vladimir Putin and the Russian Government and has publicly expressed its dismay at the disregard for human life, national sovereignty and the international rule of law. This Council is committed to helping those displaced from their homes and arriving in Wales through the family sponsorship, Homes for Ukraine, or Welsh Government's super sponsorship route.

Through the "Team NPT" approach, we ensured that relevant people in the Council and across our partnerships were connected and involved. Together we ensured that families and individuals felt safe, welcome and got the help they needed to start a new chapter of their lives and be part of communities which are thriving and sustainable. This included ensuring that housing advice and support was in place, and that financial support was available. Together we put in place orientation support to help people settle and feel part of our communities, and that our communities remained cohesive, including signposting in respect of welfare benefits as well as employment and employability, and extolling the benefits of living in NPT.

Team NPT ensured that the children were safe and safeguarded and that they were enrolled into schools to get the best education, received free school meals, help with uniforms, pastoral care, transport to school and learning support including language support, and so get the best start in life or their new chapter in life.



In addition to the community response, Welsh Government asked NPT Council to host a welcome centre and also to provide support into a hotel commissioned for Ukrainians. There were considerable technical difficulties with the welcome centre site, which had to be overcome, and this would not

have been achieved without the support and expertise from our technical services directorate, IT and external partners.

The welcome centre opened in August 2022, and Adult Services established a Ukrainian support team to provide orientation support to guests at the welcome centre and the hotel. They have been innovative and creative in the support provided and have worked extensively with internal and external partners.

Supportive performance data for this quality standard

PI Reference	PI Description	April 21 – March 22	April 22 – March 23
Measure 20a	The percentage of adults who completed a period of Reablement and who have a reduced package of care after completion	19.5%	18.8%
Measure 20b	The percentage of adults who completed a period of Reablement needing no further package of care	63.8%	70.9%
Measure 21	The average length of time in calendar days adults (aged 65+) are supported in residential care homes	798	786
Measure 22	Average age of adults entering residential care homes	84	84
New Measure PI30	The percentage of children seen by a dentist within 3 months of becoming looked after	48.8%	21.6%
New Measure PI31	The percentage of Looked After Children at 31 st March registered with a GP within 10 working days of the start of their placement	91.6%	85.2%

Quality Standard 3 – Protecting and safeguarding people from abuse, neglect or harm

This is about helping to protect people who might be at risk of abuse, neglect, harm or exploitation.

Community Safety Team

The Community Safety Team help to ensure the residents of Neath Port Talbot feel safe and are safe, by delivering effective crime prevention initiatives and support across the county borough. The team deliver appropriate, relevant initiatives through a variety of means, in partnership with other organisations. Community Safety ensure that the effect any Crime and Disorder has on our local communities is minimised; with oversight, problem solving and providing support on key issues such as Domestic Abuse, Anti-Social Behaviour, Hate Crime, County Lines, Scams, Community Tensions, Business Crime, Terrorism.

During 2022/23 the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) decided on its six agreed priority areas for the next 3 years;

- Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Community Cohesion
- Serious Violence
- General Crime Prevention (including Community Engagement & Acquisitive Crime)
- Substance Use

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

The NPT VAWDASV Leadership Group is coordinated by the Community Safety Team. The Group continues to meet quarterly, and oversees the implementation of our local VAWDASV strategy. Excellent progress has been made in the 7 areas of work: Communications & Engagement; Children & Young People; Perpetrator Interventions; Early Intervention & Prevention; Staff Training; Accessible Services; Courts and Criminal Justice.

A lot of hard work has gone into the development of our revised VAWDASV strategy '*Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities*' for 2023-2026. This

is a joint strategy with the local health board that sets out the work we will do over the next 3 years.



Chief Exec Karen Jones pledges her support for White Ribbon Campaign

Our Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) Service, within Community Safety, supported **650** high risk victims of domestic abuse during the year. This compares to **522** in the previous year. The team continued to work to increased demands since pre-Covid, and the nature of the cases is far more complex in many instances. This remains an ongoing pressure within the service and an area of concern.

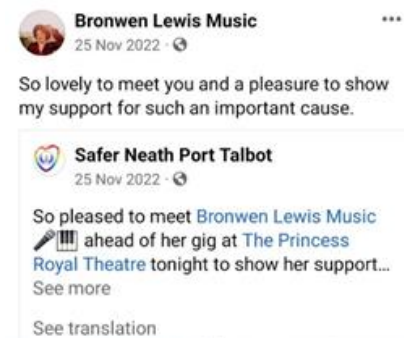
The Community Safety Team were able to utilise some grant money to purchase Christmas presents for the children of the high risk victims we were supporting. This was the first time the team have been able to do this, and these gifts were so gratefully received by the families who were experiencing very difficult, traumatic times. The team also really enjoyed coordinating this project and it really boosted morale.

The Community Safety Team were successful in receiving funding to purchase target hardening items to help victims feel safer, and be safer – alongside all other additional, usual support. This funding allowed us to buy Ring Doorbells, Dash Cams, Mobile Phones, Window Locks, Door Jammers and Personal Safety Alarms. It was reassuring for staff to give physical items to the individuals they support, as well as the holistic support and safety planning they offer. Items were so gratefully received by the families we are working with.

Last year we supported over 650 high risk victims of domestic abuse

The team have responsibility for coordinating the Domestic Abuse MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) forum. During 2022/23 there were **952** referrals into MARAC. There were **1,559** children linked to these referrals. **427** of the referrals were repeat cases, having been discussed at MARAC before.

One of the work streams of our VAWDASV strategy ‘Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities’ is centred on Communications & Engagement, ensuring we raise awareness of all forms of domestic abuse, encouraging people to seek help and support. The Communications & Engagement sub group organised a successful White Ribbon campaign during Nov 22 – holding an engagement event at NPT Hospital, gaining the support of Welsh Singer Bronwen Lewis in promoting our work, and running a successful “16 days of action” on our Safer NPT social media platforms.



Bronwen Lewis lends her support to the White Ribbon campaign.

Anti-Social Behaviour

The **Street Vulnerability MARAC** (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) meetings are coordinated by the Community Safety Team and chaired by South Wales Police. The group meet bi-monthly to discuss some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, ensuring everyone has access to the most appropriate services for their needs. Last year the group discussed **16** new referrals. The meetings are well attended and well supported by partners, with good engagement. However, there are growing concerns regarding availability or access to mental health support post Covid. With changes to rules and regulations of rental properties, many Landlords have sold on their properties, limiting many of our options to support individuals into suitable, affordable accommodation. This adds further pressure to our Housing Options colleagues within the directorate.

Problem Solving Groups have been reinstated, with one for Neath and Pontardawe, and one for Port Talbot. These forums allow us, the Police and other partners to bring ongoing community issues for a partnership discussion and action plan. Issues raised here that cannot be resolved are escalated to the Community Safety Partnership Board. During 2022/23 there were increasing concerns of the use of Cannabis in private dwellings, youth anti-social behaviour in our town centres, and derelict properties. The group helps to inform campaigns of the Community Safety Engagement Team, such as ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour) Awareness Week.

ASB Awareness Week

ASB Awareness Week

We're working together to make communities safer

#ASBAwarenessWeek

Join us at these upcoming events to find out more

Neath Town Centre	Port Talbot Market	Pontardawe Market
Angel Square	Transport Hub	Herbert Street
Friday 22nd July	Thurs 28th July	Friday 29th July
14.00 - 16.00	15.00 - 17.00	15.30 - 17.30

The team supported the first ever ASB Awareness Week – a national campaign to raise awareness of anti-social behaviour and to encourage victims to report incidents through to the right channels. The team held engagement events in Neath Town Centre,

Pontardawe Market and Port Talbot Market. These events proved really useful in speaking to many members of the public and local businesses. Colleagues from South Wales Police, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Tai Tarian, Coastal and Pobl attended these events alongside us.

We are working with partners to tackle anti-social behaviour

Paws on Patrol

We have been coordinating the Paws on Patrol scheme for over seven years, and it continues to go from strength to strength.

Paws on Patrol asks dog walkers to be our eyes and ears in their community whilst on their regular dog walks. It is usually dog walkers who will spot a change in their local area, such as graffiti, fly tipping, faulty street lighting, and anti-social behaviour. Dog walkers are also often the first on the scene of a crime, or may witness a crime taking place. We want to capture all of this information and empower our residents to report the issues they see.

The scheme has over **1,400** members, including 163 who signed up during 2022/23, and members receive quarterly newsletters or latest advice and information, as well as any crime trends or issues to be aware of.

The team regularly promote the scheme via social media and at regular engagement events. The scheme also offers us a 'light touch' way of engaging with our residents about more serious matters that they perhaps may not otherwise discuss, such as domestic abuse or hate crime.

During the year we were approached by Pembrokeshire Council who had heard about our scheme and wanted to develop their own. It was a pleasure to share our experiences and see their own scheme come into being.

Our Paws on Patrol Facebook page reached a total number of **1,100** followers during 2022/23, with some individual posts reaching as many as **70,000** people.



The graphic features the 'Paws on Patrol' logo at the top left, with the letters 'P', 'A', 'W', 'S' in blue paw prints and 'on Patrol' in white text on a blue background. To the right are illustrations of a dog, a cat, and a sheep. Below this are three photos of safety items: a wristwatch, a white pepper spray canister, and a bright green reflective vest. The text 'COMING SOON' is centered in white on a blue background. Below that, 'Exclusive safety items for our members' is written in white, with 'Limited availability*' in smaller text to the right. At the bottom left is a small circular logo for Pembrokeshire Council. A white box at the bottom contains the text: *Advert to promote Target Hardening / Personal Safety item*

During the year we were able to utilise some Target Hardening funding to provide our members with exclusive personal safety items. These reward members for their loyalty and support, but also act as an incentive to encourage new members to sign up.



Paws Event at Taibach

Hillside Secure Children's Home

Hillside Secure Children's Home continues to provide a unique environment, the only secure establishment in Wales providing care and support to some of the most vulnerable and complex children in the country, that cannot be met in other settings. We believe that all children deserve a safe, stable, happy, nurturing environment to grow up in and have the childhood they deserve. This year the completion of the extensive refurbishment to the home was completed which has gone a long way to providing the children with a more homely feel to their personal spaces whilst also enabling them to collaborate in choosing the décor of the communal areas. The children reporting the difference to their mental health and wellbeing as a result of the refurbishment is significant. Hillside is now aiming to be a centre of excellence, and will achieve this through:

- Having an experienced, resilient and happy staff group
- The children are happy and thrive in a home where they feel safe and valued
- The environment is bright, friendly and well-maintained where children have a voice in changes that are being made
- There is a trauma responsive ethos and culture that is embedded throughout the home.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

In December 2021, Neath Port Talbot Council was given formal notice directing it to comply with the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) for UASC under the UK Government's Immigration Act 2016. A UASC is defined as an individual who is under 18 when the asylum application is submitted, is not being cared for by an adult who by law has responsibility to do so, is separated from both parents and has applied for asylum in the UK in their own right. The aim of the NTS approach is to achieve a fair and equitable distribution of UASC across the UK.

Initially NPT were asked to support two young people under this scheme, however this has increased over the last year and we have to date supported 16 young people, two of whom are now care leavers. All the young people that we are supporting have different nationalities, different cultures, different languages and different life experiences.

It has been challenging to find appropriate placements in very short timeframes, putting additional pressures on available foster placements and supported accommodation. The asylum process is significantly delayed at this time, therefore there will be a delay in young people being able to move on and access housing / benefits, meaning they are likely to be reliant on the Local Authority for a much longer period than initially anticipated.

There are significant pressures on placements for children and young people therefore it is important that we continue to develop a specific provision to meet the needs of these young people whom we are and will continue to support. To help them feel part of the local communities, some of the young boys have regularly attended training as part of the Kicks Project run by Swansea City Football Club. The club wanted



UASC boys form a Guard of Honour at Swansea City FC

to raise awareness of refugees and asylum seekers, so the boys were invited to attend one of the matches and acted as 'Guards of Honour' for the game.

In the last year we have supported 16 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Supportive performance data for this quality standard

PI Reference	PI Description	April 21 - March 22	April 22 - March 23
New Measure PI27	The percentage of re-registrations of children on the local authority Child Protection Register	11.6%	14.7%
New Measure PI28	The average length of time (in days) for all children who were on the Child Protection Register during the year	278.1 days	269.2 days

Quality Standard 4 – Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society

This looks at how we help people to learn and interact with other people so they can be part of their communities.

Community Independence Service

This service focuses on prevention following an increase in presentations of homelessness in NPT due to the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. This includes tenancy support and reduction of homelessness supporting adults 16+ who are at risk of tenancy breakdown due to mental health, substance misuse, financial/debt issues. During the year 131 referrals accepted and started as new individuals to the service, with the team focus on outcomes for individuals based on their specific needs to develop independent living skills and facilitates a positive sense of wellbeing to ensure they are able to integrate and retain control in their day to day lives. This support is tailored and can often be diverse ranging from short term intervention around managing finances to multifaceted support over a longer period involving liaison between a number of professionals.



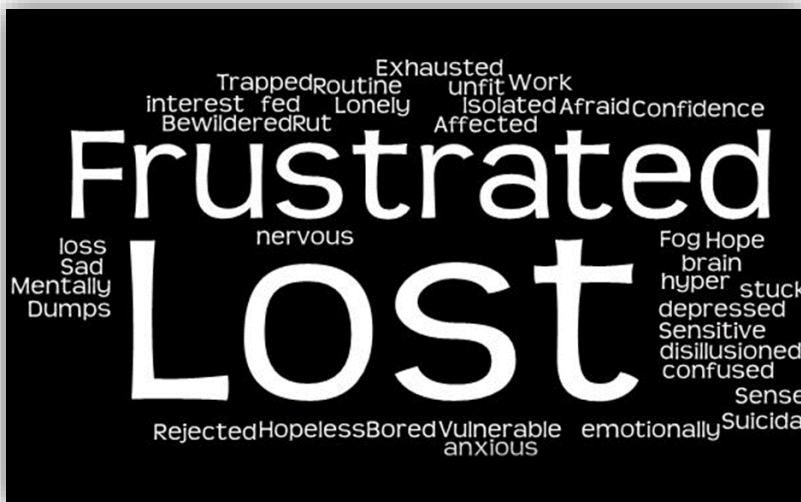
We have seen an increase in people presenting as homeless

Community Connecting Team

The Community Connecting Team (CCT) provide community based opportunities to vulnerable people from the age of 16 years' old living in Neath Port Talbot. This includes local activities for the people they work with to support them to become active members of their community. Groups include exercise, gardening and craft activities. We now have over 30 groups facilitated weekly (Monday to Friday) with more than 65 people known to attend groups regularly, not including occasional attendees that vary week to week.



Below are word clouds created from community group feedback:



How I felt before attending the group

How the group has changed my life



Local Area Coordination

Local Area Coordination aims to support people within the community to help them help themselves in order to build a better life, with more connected and inclusive communities.

There is no formal assessment or eligibility to be introduced to a Local Area Coordinator (LAC). LACs are introduced to people through their network of relationships in the community, membership of associations or groups or via formal service.

Local Area Coordination starts with a positive conversation with a person and a focus on strengths, skills, natural supports and finding non service solutions to make their vision of a better life happen.

Our 14 LACs cover the whole county borough, with population sizes ranging from 4,200 in the most rural area to 16,000 in the more urban areas. On average 534 individuals are supported through 1:1 provision at any one time, with 20% of referrals made for socialisation and 15% of all referrals with a mental health requirement. One third of those making referrals require intensive support of once a week or more, with most common support provided consisting of:

- Intervention to access to basic food, utilities and emergency benefits
- Support to maintain a safe living environment (practical and emotional)
- Support linked to poor mental health
- Navigation of services / advocacy e.g., housing, carer support
- Development of personal resilience and confidence
- Identification and maintenance of local connections to provide meaningful activity

On average direct support is given to three individual community groups by each LAC at any one time, with at least 65 other community groups across the county borough linked to a LAC on an ongoing basis. Circa another 500 individuals access these groups whilst regaining their confidence.

On average a LAC's workload is split 60/40 1:1 vs Community, although this varies by area and demand.

During quarter 3 alone 10 Safeguarding Referrals were made because of LAC involvement.

Approximately 40% of all individuals supported are not currently accessing other statutory services.

Safe and Well – NPT’s Volunteer Befriending Service

The Council’s Safe and Well service was established to provide a critical lifeline of support to people who needed to isolate during the pandemic. Through using volunteer support the service was able to provide shopping, prescription collection, and wellbeing checks to over 1,500 people across Neath Port Talbot. In September 2022 a service review began to ensure that it continues to respond effectively to the needs of our residents as the impact of the pandemic reduced. In February 2023 the service was relaunched as NPT Safe & Well – Befriending Service in response to the negative health and wellbeing impacts of loneliness and isolation on the people of Neath Port Talbot that had been significantly worsened as a result of the pandemic. We have developed the service slowly and carefully with the support of Befriending Networks Scotland to ensure that we have a clear and effective model of support for those who are the most isolated in our communities. Currently the service has 27 volunteers who provide regular befriending support to 42 people chronically affected by social isolation and loneliness. During the year our volunteers also provided support to local church donation points to sort through the vast amount of donations received from the public in response to the Ukraine conflict. These donations were transported to a temporary donation hub set up in Llandarcy Institute and the volunteers were a huge support to the Safe & Well team by assembling the shelving units and clothes rails, sorting over 150 bags and boxes of donations of toiletries, baby items, clothing and shoes, etc. and putting items out on display. Their invaluable support helped to quickly set up a well organised facility for Ukrainian families to have easy access to the supplies that they needed.

The facility is well organised and has been a fantastic support. It was such a comfortable and dignified way for them to have easy access to much needed supplies in difficult times.

Feedback from families

A new recruitment exercise has started with the hope of at least doubling our volunteer capacity to be able to provide more support to those that need it. Ongoing reviews of the service will continue to ensure the Safe & Well

Volunteer Service is able to continue to provide much needed support alongside our Health and Social Care Services.

Some of our successes with the Volunteer Befriending Service:

An 85 year old retired District Nurse wanted to volunteer but was unable to go out herself and was socially isolated, so she became a volunteer befriender for our service. She and the gentleman she supports speak on the phone twice a week. They have both lost their spouses and understand the impact of losing your loved one. Even though they have never met in person 'they feel like they have known each other for years'.

"I am relatively new to the area and from a different culture. Befriending helps me reach out to the community, learn the local culture, history and effortlessly integrate here and be a part of the society.

It also gives me satisfaction and happiness that I can provide support and companionship to older members of the society here, even if it's for a few hours a week. For me, it's important not only to have a career and family, but also to make a positive impact on the society I live in."

Feedback from a Volunteer

Supportive performance data for this quality standard

PI Reference	PI Description	April 21 - March 22	April 22 - March 23
New Measure PI32	The percentage of children looked after at 31 March who has experienced one or more change of school, during a period or periods of being looked after, which were not due to transitional arrangements, in the 12 months to 31 March.	5.3%	3.6%

Below are some quotes from people attending one of our community groups:

LAC Community Development Sandfields Library Case Study

Beatrix (Trixi)

"I'm originally from Germany and since my partner died I was on my own as I didn't know anyone. Now, although I'm a confident person, I'm also shy when meeting new people. I have new friends and really feel part of the community. I attend 3 different activities in the library, a few months ago, I didn't know where the library was."

John

"I hadn't left the house for 2 years until Aled introduced me to the coffee morning at Sandfields library. I now feel more confident, in-fact, I've even started going to gigs again. I'd never have done that a few months ago as I'd lost contact with my friends. I've now reconnected with them"



Terry - "I didn't leave the house for 2 years following a fall. I'm 90 and from London originally. Aled took me out for a few walks to build my confidence and also introduced me to Aileen. I now share a taxi with her. I have early stages dementia and I'm conscious of my speech. My new friends at the coffee morning have helped me realise that my speech is ok and I'm much more confident now and feel part of the community"

Aileen - "Due to my disability, I lost my confidence and sat in the house watching TV all day. Not only am I now attending the weekly coffee morning, I also go on Wednesdays too. I share a taxi with Terry and made a friend for life in Trixi. I often go and visit her at the weekends. My confidence was a 0 now it's through the roof"

Of the 8 people asked –

- 100% said that their confidence has improved as a result of attending the weekly drop in
- 100% said that they now feel part of their local community
- 100% said that they have improved their social circle and have made new friends
- 100% said that they are more aware of services available to them in the community or have a contact (LAC) that can connect them if needed

Quality Standard 5 – Supporting people to develop safely and to maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships
This is about helping people to achieve healthy relationships at home and with the people they are close to.

Participation and engagement

The Engagement and Participation Officer (EPO) and the Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service (YEIS) have continued to deliver the Life Skills programme to support care leavers and the YEIS service users. Over an 8 week period young people attended every Tuesday, where participants successfully learn a range of culinary skills and become competent at cooking healthy, budget meals. Further training around budgeting and laundry was also delivered. It has become evident the project offers more than basic life skills as the participants enjoy the social aspect and improved wellbeing from regular interaction with peers and professionals. The voice of the young people continues to be captured in the Exit Questionnaire conducted when young people no longer need the support of the service.



Girls’ Rights Group “Hope” won a High Sheriff of West Glamorgan Award, NPT Children’s Services Award and a NPTCVS Awards for their outstanding work. They have created an animation video to raise awareness of Period Dignity and improve girls’ and young women’s health. The video will be launched in due course and has attracted interest from the BBC. The group enjoyed their first ever residential stay. 15 girls enjoyed three nights in the wilderness and enjoyed numerous team building exercises. Hope have been awarded a £2000 grant and started work on their new project ‘Safer Spaces for Girls’.



Safer Spaces for Girls project

To provide opportunities for children and young people with disabilities the EPO has continued to support the music group in Ysgol Hendre Felin. The group enjoy fun activities along with singing. Through links developed by the EPO, Circus Eruption attended the group on a fortnightly basis to teach circus skills. Music tuition has been provided giving members the opportunity to learn the piano and enjoy drum sessions. 15 children were taken on a trip to the Wales Millennium Centre to watch The Lion King theatre show.

In late November 2022 the Beaches 2 Beacons (B2B) project concluded. The project developed by the EPO in collaboration with Brecon Beacons National Park aspired to improve the emotional health and well-being of our children and young people through accessing the natural environment. The group participated in activities and environmental work throughout the year and received a John Muir Award for their efforts. B2B included hiking up Pen Y Fan, environmental work in Craig Y Nos Country Park and Talybont on Usk, rock climbing in Pontneddfechan, gorge walking, visiting an Iron Age Fort and more. The project cost £7,000 and 19 children participated. Due to the success of the B2B project planning is underway to deliver B2B in 2023.

Supportive performance data for this quality standard

PI Reference	PI Description	Apr – Mar 21 (4th QTR) Cumulative	Apr – Mar 22 (4th QTR) Cumulative
New Measure PI26	The percentage of Looked After Children returned home from care during the year	35%	Reported annually by Welsh Govt.
New Measure PI33	The percentage of children looked after on 31 March who has had three or more placements during the year.	4.08%	Reported annually by Welsh Govt.

Quality Standard 6 – Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs

This is about helping people to improve their income, benefit from a social life and have a suitable place to live.

Disabled Facilities Grants

The demand for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) remained high and exceeded the available budget. Since the removal of the means test for small and medium works in August 2022 there has been a significant increase in demand for smaller adaptations. Recovery from the pandemic continued with the delivery time of a DFG reducing, however the contractors that carried out larger works were still very busy in the private housing market which is still causing a significant delay in larger work starting on site, while smaller works such as shower conversions have returned to pre-pandemic levels of delivery.

The time taken to deliver a DFG is recovering well, for 2022/23 the end to end time improved to 245 days from 339 for 2021/22, while the number of DFGs completed was 272 for 2022/23.

The rise in building material costs has had a significant impact on the budget, with extensions costing 50% more than pre-pandemic, such that larger extensions are now exceeding the maximum value for a grant.

The service has received a number of compliments from applicants where the new adaptations have made a huge difference in their lives by making their property a far safer place for them to live in, or the installed adaptations have given them more independence in the home.

Housing Options

The last year has seen a further increase in presentations to the Housing Options Service, rising from 2,406 in 2021/22 to 2,650, an increase of 11%. There were various reasons for presentations but an average of 40% were due to some form of relationship breakdown either with a partner or within the family (15% breakdown with partner, 25% breakdown within family).

The service also saw an increase in presentations from private sector tenants, with an average of 25% being from tenants who have been served a notice to quit. This has increased due to the implementation of the Renting Homes Act in December 2022 which has resulted in over 50 landlords in NPT leaving the rental market.

Temporary Accommodation (TA) numbers continue to increase with 205 households in TA at the end of the 2022/23 financial year.

The service has seen an increase in the number of families needing to access TA and a factor in this will be the increased presentations from the private sector as many larger families rely on the private sector due to limited stock of larger family homes within the county borough.

On average the split in TA is 80% single people and 20% families with as many as 40 families in TA at any one time, which is a considerable increase compared to pre-pandemic levels where average family numbers were in single figures.

The changes that were implemented by Welsh Government as part of the pandemic response have now been embedded into the Housing Wales Act as a secondary legislation change in October 2022.

All of the above have contributed to a significant budget overspend during the year.

We have a homeless prevention target of 60% of all cases where a prevention duty is owed. However, due to the implementation of the Renting Homes Act, many landlords were declining any offer of prevention support due to needing to sell their properties, so the level achieved of 53.7% was under target.

Use of B&B/hotels

Numbers of households, both single people and families, in B&B's and hotels is unprecedented. On average there are 120 households within NPT living in these types of accommodation, and it is acknowledged that this is unsuitable and should only be used in the short term. It is therefore part of the ongoing work to ensure use of these is reduced as much as is feasible within the current structure and demand, with a long term view of use being the exception.

Prevention

The longer term plan of reducing presentations and number of households in TA is very reliant on a robust prevention service. Early intervention work will increase to reduce the presentations that are made to the service at crisis point, or where prevention is currently no longer possible.

Part of this is to create a Tenancy Sustainment Panel, which will bring together RSLs to discuss cases as soon as an issue is identified that may result in the tenancy being lost. It is hoped the panel will be running by the end of the summer.

Empty properties

In response to the number of long term empty properties across Wales, the Empty Homes Scheme was developed by Welsh Government (WG) to provide grant aid to owners of long term empty properties for them to undertake the required works to bring them back into use.

WG have made an allocation of £50 million across Wales to fund the Scheme for a period of two years. Each participating Local Authority has been allocated a percentage of the funding based on the number of empty properties registered in the Authority area.

NPT has been awarded 4.8% of the available £50 million, which equates to £2.4 million over the two years of the Scheme with a required contribution from the authority of 10%. This Scheme could potentially result in over 100 empty properties being brought back into use across Neath Port Talbot over the period of the Scheme.

Social Housing Grant (SHG)

The SHG is the main capital grant provided by Welsh Government for the provision of affordable housing. It is used to fund housing schemes that meet local housing need and priorities as identified by the Local Authority. Local Authorities are responsible for choosing their Housing Association partners, who are paid SHG to develop, own and manage the affordable housing.

Examples of SHG Approved Schemes are:

- Social Rent, Intermediate Rent or in some instances Tenure Neutral;

- General needs, older persons, wheelchair adapted, supported housing, extra care, homebuy or mortgage rescue;
- New build, rehabilitation (or a combination) and existing dwellings/empty properties;
- A variety of procurement routes ranging from conventional tender, design and build, and package deals to off-the-shelf projects.

SHG Budget

The SHG budget is an annual budget allocated to Local Authorities by Welsh Government. The SHG programme is planned over three financial years with Local Authorities given a final confirmed budget for the first year and indicative budgets for the following 2 years. These are provided for planning purposes to enable Local Authorities to plan the delivery of their strategic housing priorities via their Programme Development Plan (PDP). Funding cannot be carried forward into future years, therefore it is important that Local Authorities monitor delivery of their programmes and maintain a reserve programme to ensure full spend.

NPT has experienced a significant increase to the SHG budget over the last few years with a 158% increase in 2022/23 (£12.8m) when compared with 2019/20 (£4.9m). The total allocated grant over the three year period of 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 is circa £40 million. This is welcomed as the latest NPT Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) states that, to meet demand, 412 affordable homes per annum need to be delivered in the first five years of the assessment period.

NPT SHG budgets are fully allocated for 2023/24 and 2024/25 and will continue to be monitored very closely to ensure all grant monies are spent in full.

SHG Programme Development Plans (PDPs)

Local Authorities are required to submit their PDPs which contain all Registered Social Landlord (RSL) schemes to Welsh Government on a quarterly basis. The PDPs provide key information on the timescales for delivering Local Authority strategic priorities. PDPs are monitored very closely through monthly PDP scheme update meetings with the RSLs, quarterly meetings with all RSLs

and Welsh Government, and regular meetings with our internal Planning and Estates departments.

SHG Developments

Circa £8.3m of SHG was drawn down during 2022/23 to supply a mixture of general needs housing, older person's housing, mental health supported living and learning disability supported living.

Assuming there are no unforeseen issues or delays SHG schemes typically take around 2 years to develop from start to finish, with an RSL typically drawing down a portion of their allocated SHG to purchase a plot of land (*Acquisition*) in year 1 and then the remainder of the grant drawn down in year 2 to build (*Construction*).

We are currently projected to deliver a total of 685 homes via the SHG scheme during the period 2022/23 to 2024/25.

Welfare Rights

The Welfare Rights Unit is a specialist section, which deals with supporting people claim the benefits, to which they are entitled. The Unit helps local residents via a self-referral, Social Services or other support services; advice is provided on their benefits entitlement. The Unit offers a public helpline, support with form filling and representation at appeals tribunals, assisted via funding from Communities for Work/Families First. During 2022-23, the unit ran a number of outreach advice surgeries throughout the county borough.

The Unit also continues to work in partnership with Macmillan, who provide funding for Macmillan benefit advisors.

Despite the on-going resource challenges during the year, the Welfare Rights Unit assisted **2,704** people and was successful in obtaining **£7,046,831** in benefits for people within Neath Port Talbot, with a **95% success** rate at appeal representation. The Unit retains the ***Advice Quality Standard*** through Recognising Excellence Limited; this is a significant achievement for the Unit and means that the people of Neath Port Talbot can be confident in the service and the advice given by the Unit. Of these figures, the Macmillan team opened over **810** cases during 2022/23; this was carried out completely via telephone,

given the Covid restrictions still in place in Health settings and the inability to provide advice clinics at the hospitals bases. Macmillan raised **£2,389,357** in benefits during the period. The re-establishment of a hospital-based service will be considered in 2023-24.

Welsh Language

Social Services continued to consolidate arrangements in relation to the Welsh Language and the **“More Than Just Words”** Active Offer (whereby a service is provided in Welsh without someone having to ask for it). Directorate senior officers work with corporate colleagues to promote and support the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards and the development of the Council’s Welsh Language Promotion Strategy (WLPS) 2023-28, which will be out for public consultation early in 2023-24. Additionally, the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report will be published by 30 June 2023 to meet the statutory deadline. The directorate received no Welsh language complaints during the year.

Supportive performance data for this quality standard

PI Reference	PI Description	April 21 - March 22	April 22 - March 23
New Measure PI25	The percentage of children supported to live with their family	69.70%	70.90%
New Measure PI34	The percentage of all care leavers who have completed at least 3 months of education, training or employment in the past 12 months since leaving care	63.60%	63.3%
New Measure PI34	The percentage of all care leavers who have completed at least 3 months of education, training or employment in the past 24 months since leaving care	33.30%	66.6%
New Measure PI35	The percentage of care leavers who have experienced homelessness during the year	3.51%	3.52%

How we do what we do

This is about how we support our workforce, make best use of our resources and financial planning, as well as our governance arrangements.

Our workforce and how we support their professional roles

We continue to offer a blended approach to training across Adults and Children's Services, which has been beneficial in both supporting the recruitment of staff to the sector, as well as the continuing professional development of existing staff to support their re-registration with Social Care Wales. We have continued to raise the profile of the various roles within Social Care and worked with Neath College to offer Health and Social Care students work experience opportunities in the Community Wellbeing Team; their experience was further reinforced by access to other training that supports the role of a Social Care Worker, such as Client Manual Handling.

Five Training Officers have completed a Digital Learning Design (DLD) Level 3 Award qualification which has enabled them to design interactive e-learning training for staff across Social Care Services, continuing to build upon a blended-learning approach to learning and development.

We have continued to embed Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) and Positive Behaviour Management (PBM) across Learning Disability and Complex Needs Services to ensure staff safely manage and support individuals' behaviours that challenge when accessing our Day Service and Respite provisions. They provide expert advice and guidance and support the multi-disciplinary process when exploring the most appropriate and safest way to manage behaviours.

Training Officers have been trained to carry out Dementia Care Mapping, which provides the service with an action plan for staff to adapt how they provide care and support to individuals living with Dementia to avoid placement breakdown. We also offer a rolling programme of Dementia Training to internal and commissioned staff including; Introduction to Dementia, Understanding Difficult Behaviours and Meaningful Activities.

We also work closely with Community Occupational Therapists, Health, Community Wellbeing Team, and commissioned providers in developing knowledge, skills and practice relating to the implementation of Single-Handed Care (SHC). This involves exploring safe and alternative ways of providing client handling care and support in the community with one staff member, with commissioned providers actively engaging in this way of working.

During 2022/23 a total of **2,696** training places were accessed by staff across Adult Social Care Services.

In Children & Young People's Services (CYPS) there has been an emphasis on an outcome focused care and support approach and training on outcomes has continued to be rolled out. Using the *NPT Strength Based Model of Practice: 'Working to achieve outcomes'*, bespoke training has been developed to improve joint understanding of communities and strengthen collaborative working and relationships between multiagency practitioners.

We continue to support Consultant Social Workers to deliver refresher training and provide ongoing mentoring within their teams regarding personal outcomes. Focus has been given to linking in co-production, improving case recordings, working with parents and partners, and the development of principles and practice guidance to support a consistent approach to outcome-focused case recording.

The roll out of our Safeguarding Adults and Children from Exploitation interactive training pack continued, raising awareness of county lines, criminal and sexual exploitation, trafficking, radicalisation, and hate crime for both adults and children. Further training has been provided on the role of the Independent Child Trafficking Guardian.

In response to recommendations around work with child sexual abuse, sessions have been provided on harmful sexual behaviour, women who sexually abuse, understanding and preventing online child sexual abuse, sibling abuse, and understanding and assessing the protective carer in the context of child sexual abuse. Specific sessions have been delivered directly to parents.

We have also made significant strides forward ensuring Children's Services has a trauma informed workforce.

During 2022/23 a total of **3,891** training places were accessed by staff across Children's Social Care Services.

During the year we have provided **51** Social Work Degree Practice Learning Opportunities (placements) across Levels 1-3, for students from Cardiff Met and Swansea University. This includes 12 students that are seconded from Neath Port Talbot to the social work degree programme through the Open University. Social work teams across Adult and Children's Services have been invaluable in offering high quality placement experiences and, for the first time

in a while, we have had enough practice educators within the authority which meant that we have not had to outsource to independent external practice educators.

Championing a Research Culture

In 2022 The NIHR Academy were seeking to support individuals or teams to develop team or organisational-level research skills and/or capacity as practice-based research leaders, and by doing so to become research champions within the adult social care sector. We have two Consultant Social Workers (CSW) in Social Services, Liza Turton and Rachel Scourfield, who were successful in their bid to focus on developing a research informed culture in NPT Adult services. This research award will run for a 14-month period where the two CSWs will work intensively with pilot teams in developing practitioners to use guidance and research to support evidence-informed practice. By providing the opportunity for our CSWs to be involved in a research project such as this has led to a number of collaborations that we are able to utilise with other organisations such as the London School of Economics, Social Care Wales, NICE, Swansea University, CARE and Cardiff University and the IMPACT Assembly. Research like this is often undertaken led by academics. For practitioners to be afforded the opportunity to do this is firmly putting Neath Port Talbot on the map in developing and championing a research culture within the organisation.



Launching a research-informed culture in Adult Services

Quality Assurance across the Directorate

Our quality assurance activity across the directorate, overseen by the Quality Practice Strategic Group, provides confidence to the department and other stakeholders that its processes and services are being well managed. It validates the consistent use of procedures and standards, and ensures that staff have the correct knowledge, skills and attitudes to fulfil their roles and

responsibilities in a competent manner. This is undertaken through the Quality Practice and Learning Framework which sets out how NPT will learn from all activity completed to ensure that children, adults, families and carers are being supported in the right way at the right time, and understand what difference has been made. This framework provides a level of confidence about service delivery and the positive impact on children, adults, families and carers in NPT, whilst also measuring impact, such as what difference are NPT and its partners making.

Our guiding principles for embedding the Quality Practice and Learning Framework are that:

1. Children, young people, adults, families and carers are at the heart of what we do. The focus of quality assurance must be on impact and outcomes for the child, young person or adult in their journey through our social work and safeguarding systems.
2. The approach to Quality Assurance will be underpinned by Restorative Practice, and a desire to examine and capture best practice. This means that quality assurance activity is done “with” staff, rather than “to” or “for”, in ways that build relationships and are characterised by respecting each other’s perspectives, high expectations, high support and high challenge, to enable use to learn, improve and change.
3. Throughout the quality assurance processes the views of children, young people, adults, families and carers are integral to improving our services, we will where reasonable and practicable to do so, gain the voice of those who have received our services.
4. Our multi-agency and collaborative working with our partners, whether statutory or third sector will be enriched and where practicable we will include them within our quality assurance processes.

Our financial resources and how we plan for the future

Following last year's local elections, NPT saw a new 'Rainbow Alliance' administration and political leadership. Good working relationships between Councillors and Officers have been maintained and developed, and the Directorate continues to enjoy the advice, support and guidance provided by its Cabinet and Committee Members and, indeed, the wider Council. Partnership working is paramount to the planning and sustainability of service provision, and the Directorate works closely with partners across Health, private and third sector organisations, as well as neighbouring local authorities.

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

The medium term financial outlook over the next five years is extremely challenging. With inflation currently running at 8.7% (CPI May 2023) and the national living wage rising by 9.7% in 2023/24 there looks to be no let-up in the cost increases facing the Council. In addition, the Directorate is having to support more people with more complexities. The current MTFP to 2027/28 includes pay and inflationary increases, unavoidable service pressures and local growth pressures arising from changing demographics. The Council have continued to support the Directorate financially with considerable growth in the budget. However, it is clear that without significant additional central government funding in coming years the outlook is bleak and some difficult decisions will need to be made about the prioritisation of services.

After taking account of assumed Welsh Government funding over the period 2023-2028, there remains a significant funding gap. Work is ongoing in relation to developing a number of strategies to close this gap.

Children's Services and the not for profit agenda

A key component of Welsh Government's new vision for children's services is the *Programme for Government* commitment to remove private profit from the care of looked after children. Whilst the principle of not taking profit out of the care market is absolutely supported this is a significant policy of change which risks driving more supply out of Wales. The delivery of this commitment will affect change across the whole care system in Wales. The duty on NPT in

relation to children looked after is that services are not contracted out to for-profit companies but remain with public sector and not-for-profit providers.

[Our partnership working, political and corporate leadership, governance and accountability](#)

Governance

The Council has adopted the 2016 Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework, developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE). To comply with the Framework, the Council must publish an Annual Governance Statement (AGS), which explains the processes and procedures in place to enable the Council to carry out its functions effectively. Senior Officers from within the Directorate play an active part in the production and monitoring of the AGS.

Complaints & Representations

The Social Services Complaints and Representations Procedure is based upon the good practice guidance issued alongside the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representation Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014. The procedure is available to ensure that everyone who makes a complaint about social services in Neath Port Talbot has a right to be listened to properly. Their best interests must be safeguarded and promoted. Their views, wishes and feelings must be heard. Their concerns should be resolved quickly and effectively.

Following the easing of Covid restrictions, face-to-face meetings have been reinstated where requested and the Complaints Team has continued to provide a responsive service in supporting complainants in addressing their complaints and their desired outcomes.

The Complaints Team dealt with 68 formal Social Services Stage 1 complaints during 2022-23 across Children's Services, Adult Services and Business Management (including Corporate complaints); with a further three Stage 2 complaints. This is an increase from the previous year. Activity in dealing with

complainants on an 'informal' basis is far greater, with the Team being proactive in supporting Managers to achieve satisfactory outcomes for service users, their families and carers.

The Team also recorded/reported on 115 compliments received across Social Services.

Looking ahead: our priorities for 2023-24

Our services are now fully reopened after the pandemic, but this does not signal a complete return to 'business as usual'; rather we look to continue to promote innovative and sustainable ways of providing social care and support. We therefore set out the following as our key directorate priorities for the coming year:

Children and Young People Services

Placement sufficiency

- We are committed to an approach that puts children – and families – first. We will work with families to help them stay together, but we will also ensure there are enough foster placements available for those who need a safe and stable environment.

Recruit, retain and develop a highly skilled workforce

- When social workers have the tools and time to do their job well, it makes a huge difference to children's and families' lives. We want a valued, supported and highly-skilled social worker for every child and family who needs one.

Demand and complexity

- For the majority of children, the best place for them to be is at home with their family, but some families need support to do this. We will provide specific and targeted support to families facing a range of challenges.

Adults Services

Helping people to help themselves

- We will promote self-care and help people to remain in their own communities with minimal intervention.

Building relationships and making connections

- People are the most important asset we have in NPT. It is the relationship between family and friends, between the cared for and the carer, within communities, and between businesses, employees, and customers that has the biggest impact on people's lives.

Living the life you want

- We will continue to promote prevention and early intervention as well as informal care and support. But there will always be people who need more formal care and support. This should put the individual first so that their desired outcomes - how they want to live - are met.

Housing and Homelessness Services

Implement a more strategic approach

- We will work more closely with partners and other Council departments to ensure we make best use of our resources.

Reduce homelessness

- We want to make sure that homelessness is rare, and when it does occur it is brief and doesn't happen again.

Increase access to appropriate affordable housing

- We want to work with landlords and others to increase the amount of available accommodation.

Support those with social care needs to live well in their communities

- We will offer new models of care to help people live in their communities longer, whether they are older, disabled or are young people leaving care.

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Appendix 6 - Not for publication pursuant to Regulation 5(2) & (5) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 2290 and Paragraph(s) 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. Pursuant also to Paragraph 21 of the Schedule, and in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption is considered to outweigh the public interest in disclosing the information.

Appendix 7 - Not for publication pursuant to Regulation 5(2) & (5) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 2290 and Paragraph(s) 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. Pursuant also to Paragraph 21 of the Schedule, and in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption is considered to outweigh the public interest in disclosing the information.

**NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL
SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY
CABINET BOARD**

25th January 2024

Report of the Head of Housing and Communities

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2027

Purpose of the Report

To inform members of the outcome of the consultation on the Draft Neath Port Talbot Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan (“the Plan”) and to seek endorsement of the updated Plan.

Executive Summary

Following a 90 day public consultation process, endorsement of the revised Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan 2024-2027 (Appendix 1) is now being requested.

Background

Draft Plan Development.

Over the last few years, there has been a significant rise in the number of people presenting as homeless and a sharp decrease in access to affordable housing.

The links between access to sustainable affordable housing and homelessness mean that both issues need to be tackled together if we are to successfully prevent homelessness and create cohesive communities.

The Plan sets out a clear statement of intent to take actions that ensure all people of Neath Port Talbot (“NPT”) are able to quickly access quality housing that is affordable and that there are sufficient interventions to prevent and alleviate homelessness.

Nine strategic principles underpin the work that will be taken forward by Neath Port Talbot Council (“the Council”) in this Plan, they are:

- **Plan** by working more strategically with the wider Council, Registered Social Landlords (“RSLs”), developers, private landlords and service providers in the way we utilise our available resources to implement sustainable housing and homelessness interventions in line with population needs.
- **Prepare** for Neath Port Talbot’s future by making best use of our available resources to create sufficiency of housing to ensure thriving and prosperous communities in line with our anticipated needs.
- **Placemaking** principles to underpin our development plans so that we promote sustainable communities.

- **Preservation** of our future through minimising our environmental impact and maximising opportunities for decarbonisation and energy efficiency.
- **Partnership** working by building on our relationships with stakeholders to take forward a collaborative approach to addressing NPTs housing needs and ending homelessness.
- **Prevent** homelessness wherever possible and if it does happen, prevent recurrence through the development of targeted support services and suitable accommodation.
- **Personalised** responses to supporting those with housing needs by putting the person at the centre of our approach, thereby enabling people with complex and/or multiple needs to live in stable accommodation.
- **Positive** outcomes for people with social care needs, including young care leavers, through the development of specialist accommodation models that promote independence and reduce the need for more institutionalised care.
- **Provide** our workforce with the skills and resources to implement a new preventative way of working and providing people with the right interventions and accommodation so that they are able to fulfil their potential.

The Plan also sets out four priority areas, under which are a number of actions for the Council to undertake in order to ensure delivery of our strategic objectives. These priority areas are:

- **Priority Area One** - Implement a More Strategic Approach.
- **Priority Area Two** – Prevent Homelessness.
- **Priority Area Three** - Increase Access to Appropriate Affordable Housing.

- **Priority Area Four** - Support those with Social Care Needs to Live Well in their Communities.

Consultation Process

On 13th July 2023 the Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Cabinet Board approved a 90 day public consultation of the Plan. This consultation period began on 7th August 2023 and ended on 5th November 2023.

An Easy Read version (Appendix 2) and a Plan on Page (Appendix 3) was developed to support the consultation and Welsh language versions of all documents were published alongside the English language versions.

The aim of this consultation process was to strengthen the final Plan by:

- Raising awareness of the draft Plan with stakeholders and members of the public.
- Understanding what stakeholders and members of the public thought about the draft Plan.
- Enabling stakeholders and members of the public to inform the priorities and actions within the Plan.
- Helping to identify any potential negative impacts of the Plan to inform the Integrated Impact Assessment (Appendix 4).

The consultation was made available to members of the public through the Council's web page and a number of hard copies were distributed within Council owned buildings and in commissioned provider services.

To promote the Consultation, the Council's social media accounts were used to raise awareness. These posts were monitored for comments, however no comments in relation to the content of the Plan was received.

In addition, electronic copies and a link to the Council's web-page was distributed to a number of stakeholders including RSLs, homelessness service providers and charities, in order for them to distribute to those that may have an interest in being part of the consultation process, such as residents and users of services.

The Head of Housing and Communities led a number of workshops and attended various meetings as part of the consultation, this included:

- Housing Strategy Forum Workshop, facilitated by Thrive
- Third Sector Workshop, facilitated by CVS
- Lived Experience Workshops, facilitated by the Salvation Army
- Housing Options Team Workshop
- Community Independence Service Team Workshop
- RSL Strategic Partnership Forum
- Llais Service Change Forum
- NPT Community Safety Partnership Board Meeting
- Adult Social Care Senior Managers Meeting
- Children and Young People Senior Managers Meeting
- Planning and Public Protection Senior Managers Meeting

Response from Consultation Events

Feedback from the above sessions was positive, not just in terms of information provided to inform the final Plan, but also the commitment from strategic partners to work with the Council in order to deliver the Plans aims and objectives.

It is important to recognise the invaluable contribution of those with lived experience of homelessness in the development of this plan. Two workshop events were facilitated by the Salvation Army and those that attended provided powerful and insightful feedback, which will directly inform service improvement. These comments highlighted the need for more joined-up working across organisations to support those with co-occurring and complex needs, the impact of undiagnosed neurodiversity on a person's ability to sustain housing, the effects of the stigma attached to those that become homeless, the benefits of increased contact and 1-2-1 work with Housing Options Officers and the need for better models of temporary accommodation. All of these requirements are incorporated within the actions set out within the Plan.

The Plan objectives can only be achieved through close partnership working with Third Sector Providers and RSLs. The overall response to the Plan from these stakeholders was positive and organizations that were part of the Consultation offered their support in delivering the aims of Plan.

In addition to the workshops, the CVS provided a formal written response on behalf of the Third Sector, which was positive and underlined the important partnership between the Council and the Third Sector in tackling the issues within the Plan. Cwmpas also provided a formal written response highlighting how Community Led Housing could support achievement of the Plans objectives.

A new action has been included under Priority One, 'Implement a More Strategic Approach', to strengthen the recognition of the important role that the Third Sector will play in supporting delivery of the Plan. In addition, specific mention has be made to the Council wishing to explore the promotion of community led development within the 'Community Cohesion' action, in order to strengthen its commitment to this.

Operational teams working within the Council to support households that are at risk or are experiencing homelessness offered significant insight to how service delivery could be optimised, and what measures needed to be taken to improve housing and homelessness provision in the borough. These measures will be addressed through the progression of the actions within the Plan.

The Plan also recognises the need to work across Council Directorates, attendance at various senior manager meetings helped to ensure that the Plan was aligned to wider Council and Directorate strategic plans and strategies. It also helped to confirm shared objectives in order to prioritise areas of joint working.

Response from the Public Questionnaire.

Alongside the workshops, important information was gathered from the public questionnaire responses, the questionnaire focused on four questions about the plan and a number of additional questions to help inform the Intergraded Impact Assessment. Fourteen online questionnaire responses were received, alongside three hardcopies.

A numerical overview of data received from this questionnaire can be found at Appendix 5.

➤ Question 1 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed Plan?

The majority of respondents either strongly agreed or tended to agree with the draft Plan (67% - 10 respondents), however it is important to note that 27% (4 respondents) stated that they strongly disagreed with the draft Plan.

Whilst 4 respondents strongly disagreed, comments in relation to this question did not indicate any particular issues that needed to be rectified within the Plan. Some comments under this question appeared to be in relation to a consultation on Council Tax for second

and empty homes and this may have been related to some respondent's strongly disagreeing to the Plan.

Other comments noted a feeling that there was a lack of detail in some aspects of the Plan. Whilst acknowledging the importance of these comments, no changes have been made to this Plan, as the intention is for this to be a 'high level' overarching Plan and a number of more detailed specific strategies will be created in order to progress the actions. These specific strategies include youth homelessness, which was the area that these comments related to.

This question also generated a number of positive comments, in which respondents agreed with the Plan and its aims.

"Agree with the plan, it will be a lengthy process but positive strategy to have in place in time."

"I currently work in the housing and homelessness sector and strongly agree we cannot sustain things as they are. The lack of affordable housing means people are staying in temporary accommodation for longer. In turn this impacts on their mental health and well-being"

"I agree with the necessary steps but feel that it won't work without a significant amount of properties being built via social landlords."

"Young people need housing the same as every age group - there is a shortage of 1 bed properties in NPT for young people and we need a range of different types of accommodation for young people - not just 24/7 complex and/or floating support..."

➤ Question 2 -Do you think the plan will achieve our aims?

Interestingly only 13% (2 respondents) felt that the Plan would achieve our aims, with 47% (7 respondents) saying that the Plan would partly

achieve our aims and 33% (5 respondents) stating that it would not achieve our aims.

However, comments received for this question indicate that the reasoning behind this response is not due to a deficit within the Plan, but rather an acknowledgment of the challenging situation and that there are many other factors that impact on housing and homelessness, which sit outside the council's control.

Comments to this question also highlighted the significant amount of resources that would be required and questioned the ability to fund the proposals. As with question one, there were a number of responses that appeared to relate to proposals around Council Tax on second and empty properties.

Whilst recognising the challenging environment, it is important for the Council to remain ambitious and as such, no changes have been made to the plan in light of these consultation responses. The comments underline the Plans objectives of ensuring that the Council promotes good partnership working with key stakeholders, such as RSLs.

Given the changing and complex landscape, Officers will closely monitor progress of the Plan, including the new Department KPIs to help identify the Plans impact. The Plan will also be reviewed annually, with a progress report provided to Scrutiny.

One comment noted the need for more joining up of youth services and homelessness services. This is an area of great importance to the Directorate and a Youth Homelessness Strategic Group is in place. In addition, a Youth Homelessness Strategy is in the process of development, which will be jointly led by Children and Young Peoples and Housing and Communities Heads of Service.

“The lack of houses are an issue.”

“PRS doesn't feel like a viable option due to the cost and stability of this tenure. Increased support is needed and with the HSG not being increased, this will significantly impact the plans that the LA have.

Better pay for support staff and more money available for organizations who are proving to be successful is crucial.”

“It would be good to see more 'joining up' of YSG and HSG services.”

- Question 3 - Is there anything that you feel is missing from the Plan that we need to include?

This was an open question and the comments provided suggest that there were no notable changes required. Many of the comments were suggestions of how to take forward the Plan and will inform the operational delivery of the Plan.

“Not at the moment, it is a comprehensive plan.”

“...I think consideration should be given to the number of empty properties in disrepair within the local authority, including old office buildings and pieces of land which could accommodate housing "pods" and supported self-contained housing units...”

“More prevention needed such as work with young people, schools, youth services and communities.”

- Question 4 - Do you have any more comments about the Plan or the things that the Plan is aiming to achieve, that you would like to share?

This was also an open question, again the comments did not indicate the need to make changes to the Draft Plan and many appeared to endorse the Plan actions.

A number of comments were specific to the operational delivery of the actions and these comments will inform how we take the actions forward. For example, there was a comment in relation to the importance of bus usage, which will form part of our commitment to the Placemaking Charter (Background Paper 1) in regards to promoting active travel when supporting housing developments.

“We need to ensure rapid rehousing is rolled out. Often people with complex needs are not having their needs met, this often means they have a cycle of failed tenancies and this then is a barrier to them having housing. If the correct support was given this would more likely prevent this from happening.”

“Streamlining the application process is better and utilising 3rd sector support to a wider degree, working collaboratively with other agencies would target specific problems with a multi-agency interest.

Next Steps

In general, the consultation responses from the stakeholder events endorsed the draft Plan and the substance of the draft Plan has remained unchanged.

Many comments from the public consultation provide important feedback into the operational delivery of the plan. All comments have been recorded and will feed into the respective delivery work streams.

Actions within the Plan will be taken forward through a number of project groups, oversight of which will be provided by the Housing and Communities Department Programme Manager. The Programme Manager will directly report to the Head of Housing and Communities, who will have overall responsibility for delivery.

Links with stakeholders will be maintained through task and finish working groups and also established strategic groups, such as the Strategic Housing Partnership. In addition, a new group is to be set up

to maintain good communication with people that have lived experience, in conjunction with the Salvation Army.

New KPIs for the Department have already been established in order to monitor the impact of the actions. An annual review of the Plan and progress of the actions will be provided to Scrutiny, alongside a six monthly Department update.

Financial Impacts

The allocated budget for homelessness services in 2023/24 is £1,261,820, alongside this £1,100,000 has been earmarked for 'pressures to be monitored'.

This year's total overspend is projected to be £1,370,000 (which is £270,000 more than that allocated under the 'pressures to be monitored'). This year's overspend was projected to be even higher, however Welsh Government provided a one-off grant of £309,000 that helped to off-set some of this overspend

By 2027/28, it is anticipated that the homelessness overspend will increase to £2,566,000 per annum. The reason for this overspend is because of the high numbers of people being placed in B&Bs due to the limited ability to prevent homelessness from occurring and the lack of other temporary accommodation options.

The Plan is key to improving outcomes for residents and reducing the financial impact of homelessness on the Council. However there is a need to invest in the Council's workforce in order to deliver the Plan and a business case in relation to this was presented to Cabinet on 13th December 2023 (Background Paper 2).

Integrated Impact Assessment

A first stage impact assessment has been 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.

An overview of the Integrated Impact Assessment (“IIA”) has been included below in summary form only and it is essential that Members read the Integrated Impact Assessment, which is attached to the report at Appendix 4, for the purposes of the meeting.

An initial IIA was undertaken prior to the consultation process and this document has now been updated in light of the consultation responses.

The updated IIA concluded that “The Plan will have a positive impact on people that are experiencing or at risk of homelessness as well as those that require affordable housing or social care services, as it aims to proactively address the housing challenges impacting our communities.”

Valleys Communities Impacts

The issues of reduced access to affordable housing and the increasing number of households at risk or experiencing homelessness can be seen across Neath Port Talbot. This Plan will include supporting the development of affordable housing and social care housing in the valley areas.

Responses to the consultation question “*will this plan have a positive or negative impact on valley communities*” were:

- 6 (38%) Positive
- 3 (19%) Negative
- 7 (44%) Don’t know

Comments from those that felt the Plan would have a positive impact included the fact that more housing would be available. There were no comments to explain why some people felt that the Plan would have a negative impact on valley communities.

The issue of those living in valley areas being able to access town based services, a need to commit to rehousing in peoples native communities in order to avoid valley depopulation and the need for buses were highlighted in the comment section. These considerations will inform the implementation of the Plan actions.

Workforce Impacts

This Plan should be considered alongside the investment report presented to Cabinet on 13th December 2023 (Background Paper 2) in relation to the business case to develop the Homelessness and Strategic Housing function. The business case set out a proposal to invest in a restructure of the Strategic Housing and Homelessness workforce.

At this meeting a request was made to present the proposed structure to Members for information at the next Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Cabinet Board Housing. These draft structures can be found at Appendix 6 and Appendix 7 (Restricted). It is important to note that these structures are draft, the new job descriptions have not yet been taken through the Job Evaluation process and the Establishment of Change process has not yet commenced.

The draft structures are confidential and not in the public domain, as employees potentially impacted by the proposed restructure have not been informed of the detail. This is because the posts connected to the proposed structure have not yet been subject to the Job Evaluation or Establishment of Change process.

Advice from HR has been given in the development of the proposed structures and engagement has taken place with the two main Trade Union organisations. All potential service changes will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Management of Change procedures.

No staff will be at risk of redundancy as a result of the proposed restructure and any existing flexible working arrangements will be protected.

It is important to note that the proposed structures do not impact on the decision to endorse the Plan.

Legal Impacts

The Plan has no direct legal impacts, however implementation of a number of actions within this Plan are intended to support the Council in better discharging its statutory homelessness duties.

Risk Management Impacts

Implementation of Proposal

The main risk associated with implementation of the Plan are the human and financial implications if these actions do not have the desired result of preventing homelessness and increasing access to affordable housing. However, the proposals within the Plan are all evidence based and independent reviews of interventions such as Housing First demonstrate positive impacts.

Non-Implementation of Plan

The biggest risk of not implementing this Plan is the inability to prevent the rising number of people becoming homeless and the increasing utilisation of B&Bs to support these households.

If demand rises in line with our 'do nothing' projections, there will be insufficient availability of B&Bs to temporarily house people. This may then lead to the Council potentially being unable to meet their statutory homelessness duties, as well as having to house more people outside of the area. In addition, rising numbers of households in B&Bs will lead to a significant overspend for the Council.

The human impact of not preventing homelessness and an over reliance on B&Bs, will have wider impacts for the Council. For example, the impact on schooling for those children in B&Bs being moved around the borough.

In addition, non-implementation of this Plan will reduce the Council's ability to encourage the development of affordable housing, which will

result in a negative impact for communities, as people will be unable to access appropriate accommodation for their needs.

Crime and Disorder Impacts

Implementation of actions within the Plan such as establishing Housing First models, specialist complex care services and Triage Centres, alongside embedding Placemaking approaches, is likely to have a positive impact on the Councils duty to reasonably prevent:

- a) Crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); and
- b) The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area; and
- c) Re-offending the area.

Consultation

A 90 day consultation process has been undertaken, the results of which can be found within the body of this report and within the updated Integrated Impact Assessment.

Appendix 5 provides a numerical overview of data received from the public questionnaire.

Recommendations

Having had due regard to the integrated impact assessment, it is recommended that Members endorse the Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan 2024-2027, as detailed in Appendix 1.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

To provide the Housing and Communities Department with a strategic plan of action in order to deliver improved outcomes for the communities of Neath Port Talbot.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan 2024-2027

Appendix 2 - Easy Read Plan

Appendix 3 - Plan on Page

Appendix 4 - Integrated Impact Assessment

Appendix 5 – Questionnaire Data

Appendix 6 – Draft Homelessness Structure (Restricted)

Appendix 7 – Draft Strategic Housing Structure (Restricted)

List of Background Papers

Background Paper 1 – NPT CBC Placemaking Charter -

<https://www.npt.gov.uk/30064>

Background Paper 2 - Funding to Enhance the Homelessness and Strategic Housing Function (restricted) -

<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=158&MId=11339>

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council



A place to call home

Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan 2024-2027

www.npt.gov.uk

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1. Foreword

We are pleased to introduce the new three year Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan for Neath Port Talbot.

The importance of having a home can never be underestimated, and was highlighted all the more during the response to the pandemic.

We have faced significant challenges over recent years, but we have also continued to deliver homelessness services throughout lockdown, forged new partnerships and community support groups, and strengthened existing working partnerships. We remain committed to working alongside our partners to improve the lives of our residents.

The aims and objectives that shape this strategy reflect the need to proactively address the housing challenges impacting our communities, and highlight how we intend to work together to improve the lives and homes of the residents of Neath Port Talbot.

Demand for housing across all tenures is outstripping supply and housing costs are increasing. However, we are always looking for innovative solutions to meet needs and increase available options.

We want to tackle homelessness in all its forms, from rough sleeping, to those experiencing abuse and harm and home, or those living in unaffordable or unsatisfactory housing.

Anyone can be affected by homelessness and the effects for families and individuals, as well as society as a whole, can be devastating, impacting on health and wellbeing, employment and education, and more.

We want to support people to be able to access good quality accommodation and lead dignified, fulfilling and rewarding lives that have purpose.

This is also an opportunity to thank all the organisations and individuals who worked with us during the pandemic to help others.

The strategy will govern our approach for the next three years, but it will be kept under review to ensure it remains responsive to the needs of our communities.

Although we face challenges, this is our opportunity to help reduce and prevent homelessness and improve the quality and availability of housing across the county, so that we can help people find a place to call home.

2. Introduction

We want all citizens of Neath Port Talbot to have access to safe and appropriate housing, this Plan sets out Neath Port Talbot County Borough Councils (the Council) strategic approach to managing the challenges of homelessness and affordable housing across the borough.

This document supports other strategic plans that are already being progressed, such as the [Social Housing Grant Strategy](#) (SHG) and the [Rapid Rehousing Plan](#). The Plan will also complement other Council strategic documents and objectives such as the upcoming replacement [Local Development Plan](#) (LDP) and the updated [Local Housing Market Assessment](#) (LHMA).

Over the last few years, there has been a dramatic rise in the number of people presenting as homeless and a sharp decrease in access to affordable housing. The links between access to sustainable affordable housing and homelessness mean that both issues need to be tackled together if we are to successfully prevent homelessness and create cohesive communities.

Our Plan sets out a clear statement of intent to take actions that ensure all people of Neath Port Talbot are able to quickly access quality housing that is affordable and that there are sufficient interventions to prevent and alleviate homelessness.

3. Current Situation

Post COVID-19 there has been a significant increase in demand for homelessness services resulting in an unprecedented use of temporary accommodation such as B&Bs. The overuse of temporary accommodation and an overreliance on B&Bs to support our homelessness population is not in line with the Council's expectations and values for supporting its most vulnerable citizens and is in direct opposition to our approved Rapid Rehousing Plan.

The causation of homelessness leading to people requiring temporary accommodation as at 14/03/23 was as follows:

Table One: Reason for Temporary Accommodation

Reason for homelessness	Total of all TA residents	%
Prison release	16	8
Relationship breakdown – violent	16	8
Relationship breakdown – non violent	13	6.5
Current property unsuitable	11	5.5
Loss of rented accommodation	49	24.5
Parents no longer willing to accommodate	26	13
Other relatives no longer willing to accommodate	43	21.5
Other (inc emergency)	12	6
Property unaffordable	2	1
Other violence	4	2
Rent arrears private sector	5	2.5
Leaving institution or care	3	1.5
Total	200	

Pressures on homelessness services is due to multiple national and system wide factors affecting people’s ability to access and retain affordable housing, alongside new legislative and strategic requirements from Welsh Government. This level of demand is projected to grow without the Housing and Communities Department implementing a programme of significant transformation.

The last few years has seen the introduction of legislative changes such as the Renting Homes Act and the Housing Wales Act. The purpose of the Renting Homes Act is to drive up standards and offer more security to those in rented accommodation, however some landlords have decided to exit the rental market rather than comply with the relevant measures. It is reported that over 50 landlords have left the market in Neath Port Talbot since the introduction of the Act, which has resulted in renters being served notice and becoming homeless. As can be seen in the above table, 24.5% of people in temporary accommodation became homeless due to loss of their rented accommodation, which is the highest proportion of people in temporary accommodation.

Temporary changes to the Housing Wales Act to provide a legal homelessness duty to a wider number of people as part of the COVID-19 response was made permanent in October 2022. These changes have inevitably resulted in more presentations to Housing Options, who are now working with a much higher number of people that are owed a homelessness duty. Although additional Housing Options staff have been employed, Housing Options Officers are still

working with caseloads of up to 65 households, which prevents them from offering more targeted and intensive support.

Alongside these legislative changes, the cost of living situation is pricing more people out of the private sector and resulting in more people struggling to maintain their tenancies. Financial pressures can also negatively impact on a person's wellbeing and mental health, which can then lead to relationship and family breakdowns. Although only 1% of people in temporary accommodation state they were made homeless due to their property becoming unaffordable and 2.5% due to rent arrears, there is a need to look behind other figures such as the reason why 21.5 % of people were staying with relatives and the reasons why the 24.5% of people that lost their rented accommodation could not find an alternative home. There has also been a change in the demographics of people presenting to Housing Options, with a marked increase in families with children becoming homeless and requiring temporary accommodation, something that was rare only a few years ago.

Housing Options are also working with higher numbers of people experiencing multiple and complex issues, such as mental health, substance use and criminal backgrounds. Currently 20% of people that are being supported by Housing Options have a high need and 6% have intensive needs. The [2022-23 HSG Annual Update Report](#) shows that of the 486 individuals who accessed HSG funded supported or temporary accommodation over the year, 33% had a secondary need of mental ill health and 13% had a criminal offending background.

For a number of people, homelessness is one of many co-occurring complex issues that a person may be facing and this can result in a person finding it harder to access long-term housing and to retain their home. People can become trapped in cycles of homelessness as their complex needs mean that they are unable to sustain their tenancies and then their history of 'failed' tenancies becomes a barrier to accessing another home. For a number of people, provision of accommodation alone does not mean that they will experience long term secure housing as their wider and multiple vulnerabilities have not been addressed.

To better prevent homelessness from occurring, Welsh Government require all Councils to implement a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and develop a Housing First model within the next five years. The Council's Rapid Rehousing Plan was agreed in October 2022 and necessitates a whole scale change in

relation to how we respond to homelessness, including the services we commission and deliver.

Local Authorities are also required to develop and take forward a HSG Strategy in order to ensure a strategic approach to homelessness prevention and housing support services. This approach incorporates both statutory homelessness functions funded through the revenue settlement and non-statutory preventative services funded through the HSG.

Housing is a key element in supporting people with an assessed social care need to achieve the outcomes that matter to them and to remain or retain their independence. Neath Port Talbots [Market Stability Report](#) illustrates the requirement to create a range of new accommodation models in order to meet anticipated demand and to better meet peoples personal outcomes.

For adults with complex care needs, such as a learning disability or mental ill health, there is a drive to reduce reliance on more institutionalised care models, such as care home placements and to support people to obtain their own tenancy. This ambition will be achieved through the development of accommodation models such as supported living, Extracare, Core and Cluster and independent living schemes, alongside the commissioning of appropriate support.

Pressures within social care and the NHS in relation to our aging population is well documented and the development of appropriate accommodation options is a key element of ensuring that peoples social care needs can be appropriately met. For many years, enabling older people to remain at home has been a key priority for Social Services, however there is now a challenge with obtaining sufficient levels of domiciliary care to meet demand and there is a lack of suitable alternatives to care home placements. As a result, alternative community models need to be implemented.

Housing Options also works closely with Children and Young People Services with regards to youth homelessness and care leavers. In 2022/23 Housing Options supported six young care leavers aged 16, 22 young care leavers aged 22 and 12 young care leavers aged 18-21. There is a need to develop more accommodation based services and provide a more specialised response to young people facing homelessness and young care leavers so that they can thrive and achieve their potential into adulthood.

A Housing Strategy is in the process of development and the progression of the strategic housing work plan is fundamental to preventing homelessness. Without improving access to affordable housing, the Council will be unable to prevent homelessness and ensure that those who experience homelessness are quickly and appropriately rehoused. This strategy will be informed by the LDP and the LHMA.

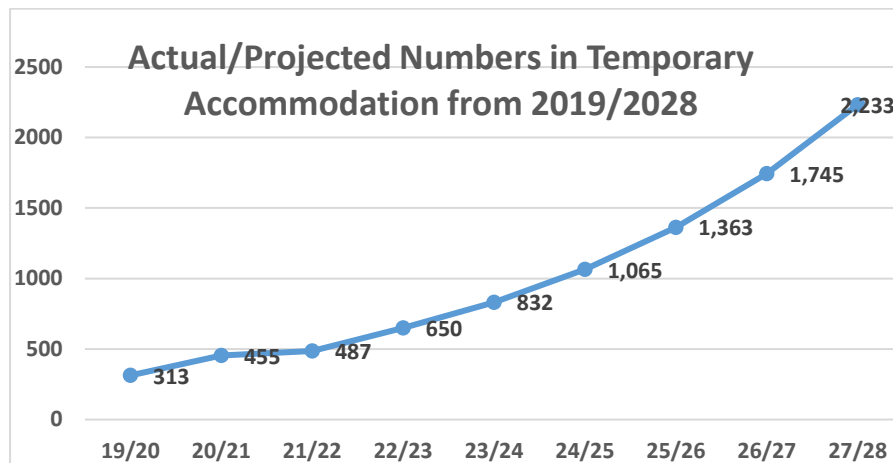
One of the ways we are able to help stimulate development of affordable housing is through the Social Housing Grant (SHG) which we manage in behalf of Welsh Government. There has been a significant increase to the SHG over the last few years with a 158% increase to our budgeted grant in 2022/23, compared with 2019/20 (£4,966,372). The total allocated grant over a three year period of 2022/23- 2024/25 is over £40 million, this £40 million is split into the three financial years. In 2022/23 we were provided with £12,819,862, this money cannot be rolled over into other financial years so if a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) is unable to draw down the money allocated to it for a development then it is lost to the NPT area.

The utilisation of SHG will not in itself fill the gaps in affordable housing and there is a parallel need to look at other ways to stimulate the affordable housing market and create more available housing. Projects like Leasing Scheme Wales, which allows property owners to lease their accommodation to the Local Authority and the Empty Homes Scheme, which provides grants to property owners to bring their empty properties back into use, are also valuable tools.

4. Demand

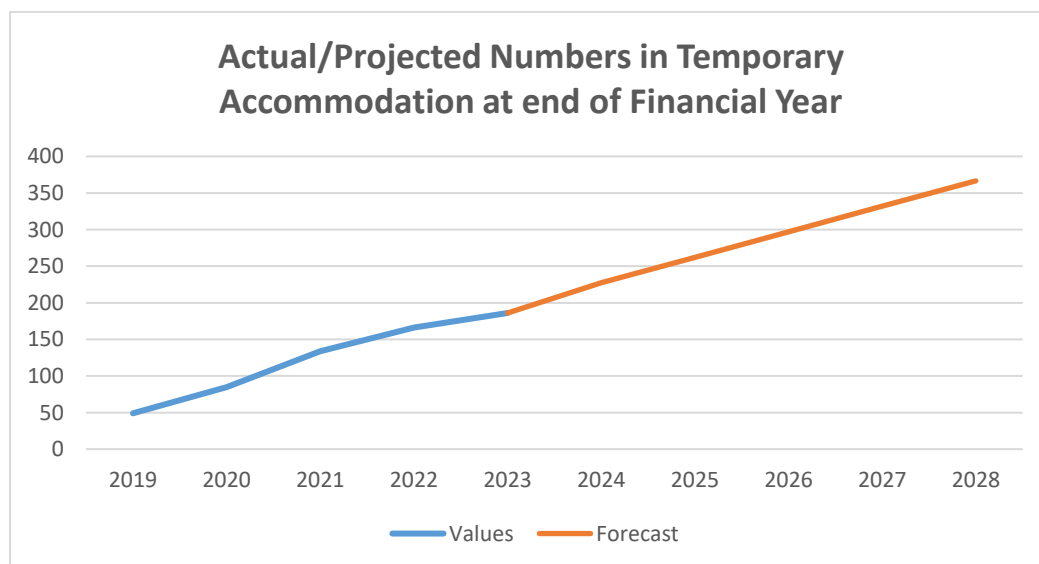
Between 2019/20 and 2022/23, there has been a 108% increase in households accessing temporary accommodation over the year. If we continue with this trajectory, there will be a 244% increase in the next five years, resulting in 2,233 households requiring temporary accommodation per year at a cost of £4,444,000 a year by 2027/28.

Graph One: Actual and Projected Demand for Temporary Accommodation over the Year



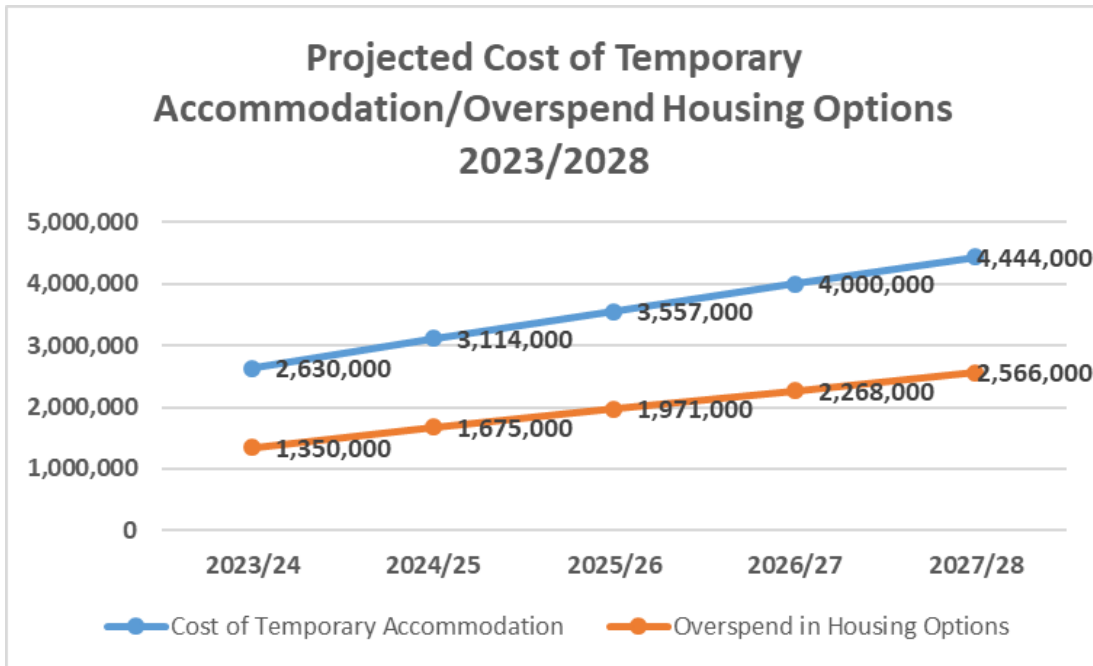
The second graph shows that in the same period, there has been a 280% increase in households accessing temporary accommodation at any one point in time. Forecasting shows that there will be an 87% increase in the next five years, resulting in 349 households requiring temporary accommodation at any one point in time by 2027/28 (i.e. 349 households will need to access temporary housing at the same time).

Graph Two: Actual and Projected Demand for Temporary Accommodation at the End of The Financial Year



The third graph shows the financial impact of this rising demand on the Councils finances over the next five years.

Graph Three: Projected Cost of Temporary Accommodation and Projected Budgetary Overspend

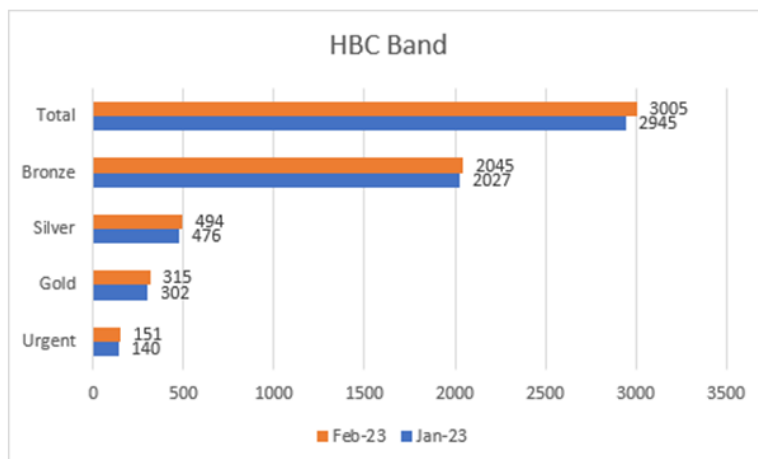


Increasing numbers of people experiencing homelessness and requiring temporary accommodation creates a snowball effect in terms of preventing at risk households becoming homeless through prompt access to affordable housing. People in temporary accommodation are allocated an urgent banding, giving them the highest priority when bidding for social housing. With an average of 180 people at any one time in temporary accommodation, and therefore given priority for available social housing, those in the gold, silver and bronze bands have reduced opportunities to access the housing they need.

The below table shows the current waiting lists for our largest RSL Tai Tarian

Table Two: Tai Tarian Waiting List by Banding

HBC Band	Jan-23	Feb-23
Urgent	140	151
Gold	302	315
Silver	476	494
Bronze	2027	2045
Total	2945	3005



In some cases, the inability for people in non-urgent bandings to access social housing contributes to a breakdown in their current housing arrangement, such as staying for a short period in overcrowded housing or 'sofa surfing', which may have been preventable with more timely access to affordable housing. The figures in table one show that 21.5% of people in temporary accommodation were made homeless due to relatives no longer being able to accommodate them and 13% because parents were no longer able to accommodate them. This type of situation creates even more demand on temporary accommodation, resulting in a situation where some people have to experience homelessness and go into temporary accommodation before they can access affordable housing, which may have been avoidable if they had more prompt access to social housing.

In 2022/23 the Council spent £2.24 million on B&Bs, this figure does not include the cost of the Council operating temporary accommodation and the total amount spent on the Housing Options service in 2022/23 was £4.95 million. At present, grants provided by Welsh Government to support the Council in discharging its homelessness duty is not aligned with the actual costs incurred. There was a projected overspend of £1.45 million in 2022/23 as a result of the increased demand for temporary accommodation, however Welsh Government provided a one off grant of £842k towards the end of the financial year which reduced the overspend.

Based on anticipated demand for temporary accommodation, if we take no action to change the way we respond to homelessness then the Council will see an annual overspend of £2,566,000 by 2027/28. This projected overspend does not take into account the need to increase Housing Options staff to meet the rising numbers of people presenting as homeless, nor does it account for the unit cost of B&Bs to rise each year in line with inflation.

Our projections show that by the end of the 2023/24 financial year there will be 227 households in temporary accommodation, however we are already progressing more quickly towards this figure than anticipated, meaning that we may exceed this projected figure. As at 04.04.23 (i.e. the first week of the 2023/24 financial year), the Council was required to accommodate 200 households in temporary accommodation, which is the highest ever number experienced and represents an increase of 14 households in less than a week.

Of particular concern are the number of families with young children in temporary accommodation. Between 19/20 and 22/23 there was a 620%

increase in families residing in temporary accommodation. This type of arrangement has implications for the children's education, which can be significantly disrupted. In addition, the lasting impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), such as the trauma of experiencing homelessness in childhood, is well understood and we need to take action now to prevent further cycles of poverty and homelessness. By focusing our attention on minimising the harmful impacts of child homelessness we can better ensure that all our young people can thrive and prevent intergenerational deprivation.

As previously noted, sufficient specialist accommodation is also crucial in supporting Social Services to achieve the best possible outcomes for those they support. An accommodation pathway group has been established in order to plan the necessary developments with RSLs and has resulted in the creation of a number of new care models such as specialist Extracare and Core & Cluster.

Despite current work programmes, demand for specialist supported accommodation for adults with an assessed social care need is high and demand is outstripping supply. This has resulted in a need to purchase care home placements, between 2018/19 and 2021/22 there was a 16% rise in learning disability care home placements and a 23% increase in mental health care home placements. Whilst there is a need for some care home placements, this is a more institutionalised model of care and is not always the most optimal care model for the person in regards to achieving their independence outcomes. In addition, there are ongoing pressures with sourcing sufficient levels of care in line with demand for older people, with 136 people waiting for a package of domiciliary care and care home occupancy running at 98% of available dual registered beds and 90% of available residential beds.

Over the next two years 66 young people known to Children Social Services will turn 18, there are a number of services to support young people transitioning into adulthood such as 'When I'm Ready' and 'Supported Lodgings' but a number of these young people will also require accommodation or support from Housing Options as part of their transition plan. In addition, a number of these young people will require ongoing support from Adult Services, which will place further demands on the already limited supply of adult social care services.

Ultimately in order to end homelessness, unsecure accommodation and insterutionised care, we need to ensure that we make best use of our available housing stock and develop more affordable an accessible housing.

The current stock of social housing in 2022 was as follows:

Table Three: Housing Stock in 2022 by LDP Area and Bed Type

RSL Housing Stock by LDP Area 2022	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	Total
	Afan Valley	52	308	428	6
Amman Valley	58	151	122	6	337
Dulais Valley	89	157	187	7	440
Neath	1,327	1,722	1,720	59	4,828
Neath Valley	144	104	279	13	540
Pontardawe	308	305	257	42	912
Port Talbot	850	1,314	2,025	59	4,248
Swansea Valley	126	376	232	3	737
Totals excluding Linc because properties not disaggregated by LDP area	2,954	4,437	5,250	195	12,836
Totals including Linc properties not disaggregated by LDP area	3,190	4,531	5,340	198	13,259

In 2022/23, 195 homeless households were housed with an RSL, of which 63% were single people and 27% were families. It is difficult to obtain accurate figures, but Council data indicates that only 35.5% of RSL lettings in 2022/23 went to people that were homeless. There will be many reasons for this including available properties not being suitable (e.g. demand for one bedroom properties outstripping availability) and there are also cases where available properties receive no bids from homeless households. In addition, people with a history of failed tenancies due to things such as rent areas, anti-social behaviour and criminal backgrounds may find it harder to secure future tenancies.

The Local Housing Market Assessment for the 2021-2036 period is currently being reviewed however initial indications show the following housing needs:

Table Four: Local Housing Need Assessment Figures

Period	Affordable	Of Which Social Rent	Of Which Intermediate	Market	Total for Period	Total PA
1st 5 years	2060	1885	175	1010	3070	614
Remaining 10 years	1180	830	350	2020	3200	320
Plan period 2021-2036	3240	2715	525	3030	6270	418
%	52	43	8	48		

Of the 3,070 homes that need to be developed in the first five years of the LHMA period, 67% would need to be affordable housing and 32% market housing. Draft projections indicate that for the period 2021-2026, there is a net need for 412 affordable homes per annum, of which 92% would be social housing and the remaining 8% intermediate housing. The tool also highlights that in the first five years of the plan, 68% of the affordable housing need for that period should be one bedroom properties.

The balance between affordable housing and market housing evens out for the entire LHMA period 2021-36 to 52% affordable and 48% market rate. The reason for the higher % of affordable housing in the first five years is predominantly driven by the existing unmet need and if we continue to under develop affordable housing then this will have a knock on effect for the 2027-36 period.

The LDP is was adopted in 2016 and the Council is in the process of preparing its Replacement LDP for the period 2021-2036. The existing LDP made provision for 7,800 new residential properties over the period 2011-2026. This figure was based on the creation of new employment within Neath Port Talbot and going forward it will be important that the Council plans for new jobs that will arise from projects such as the Freeport and the Global Centre of Railway Excellence.

Within the LDP was a target of 1,200 affordable homes to be built in Neath Port Talbot over the plan period of 2011-2026. Unfortunately due to low levels of market housing being built, mainly as a result of viability relating to low land values, delivery has been below target for a number of years.

Currently there 23 schemes in our SHG programme, which is anticipated to deliver 629 units over the grant period of 2022/23-2024/25. Of which 93% will be social housing, with the remaining 7% being shared ownership. This falls significantly short of the total number of affordable housing required in the area and as such there is a need to take steps to stimulate investment into the area and to identify opportunities for affordable housing delivery, including bringing empty properties back into use.

5. Challenges

The main challenges for the Council in terms of homelessness and affordable housing noted within this report can be summarised as follows:

- **Demand Outstepping Available Grant Funding** – The amount of funding made available to the Council to support those facing or experiencing homelessness is not sufficient to meet current and projected demand. In addition, no new funding was allocated to provide the measures contained within the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and the 2023/24 Housing Support Grant allocation has remained static, despite rising inflation and increased demand. It is not possible to meet our statutory duties within the available grant funding and this is causing budgetary pressures within the Council.
- **Reduction in Private Rental Sector Housing** – There has been a notable loss of private rental properties within the area as landlords look to leave the sector, which is resulting in more homeless presentations including families.
- **Affordability of Private Rental Sector Housing** – Alongside a reduction in private rental accommodation, rent levels are often unaffordable for those on low incomes or relying on housing benefits, which places more demand on social housing.
- **Availability of One Bedded Properties** – Households are getting smaller and housing benefit levels mean that it is not affordable for many people to rent a home with a spare bedroom. There is a disconnect between demand for one bedroom affordable housing and the available social housing stock, as the majority of RSL properties are family size. This is making it more difficult for homeless people to move out of temporary accommodation and into a sustainable tenancy.
- **Insufficient Volume of Social Housing** – The numbers of people waiting for social housing is far in excess of available properties, in addition the rising number of people in the ‘urgent’ banding as a result of their homelessness status, means that those in other categories are unable to promptly secure social housing.
- **Young Care Leavers & Youth Homelessness** – We will see a number of young people transition from Children and Young People Services over the next few years. In addition, we are seeing increasing numbers of family breakdowns leading to youth homelessness. There is a need to

ensure that there is sufficient specialist services to meet the needs of these young people.

- **People with Complex and/or Multiple Needs** – There are increasing numbers of people presenting to Housing Options with multiple and complex co-occurring needs, which makes it more difficult for them to secure and sustain a long term tenancy and often puts them at risk of repeat episodes of homelessness.
- **Cost of Living** – Rising costs and inflation is likely to have a significant impact on our most economically deprived populations, resulting in more households struggling to maintain their tenancies and becoming homeless.
- **Lack of Strategic Planning** – There has been a historic lack of strategic housing resource, which has resulted in reduced strategic planning and joined up partnership approaches, as well as an inability to maximise the impact of funding and investment opportunities.
- **Land Values** – Low land values have a negative impact on the viability of new developments in the area, which makes it more challenging to achieve our LDP targets and results in a lack of additional housing in line with our projected demands.
- **Sufficiency of Suitable Land** – There are a number of challenges with identifying suitable development land within the area, which can cause barriers in producing sufficient new developments and potentially result in over development in more suitable areas.
- **Community Cohesion and Place Making Concerns** – Overdevelopment in certain areas and a lack of balanced and holistically planned developments can place pressure on existing communities and infrastructure.
- **Increased Development Costs** – Current inflation levels and the cost of living impact is resulting in higher development costs, which presents viability risks and may lead to a slowdown or abandonment of planned new developments. Increasing costs also means that the available Disabled Facilities Grant is insufficient to meet anticipated demand and will result in much longer waiting times for adaptations, which may mean that some people are unable to remain living in their homes.
- **Social Care Needs** – Rising numbers of people with complex disabilities requiring social care services, alongside an aging population and a lack of

available workforce will result in an absence of suitable provision unless there is a programme to implement new care models.

- **Empty Properties** – Unused properties can become a local nuisance and have negative community and environmental impacts, they are also a missed opportunity when considering the pressures on current available housing.
- **Regeneration & Growing Populations** – A lack of sufficient housing to accommodate and complement our regeneration ambitions will reduce the ability to create local jobs for local people and strengthen our local economy.
- **Supporting Asylum** – Multiple global issues means that we need to ensure that we work with Welsh Government, the Home Office and our statutory and third sector partners to ensure that our strategic plans adequately take into account the need to provide suitable and appropriate accommodation for those seeking refuge.

6. Strategic Principles

Our current position is not sustainable and without drastically changing what we do now, we will be unable to manage the human and financial impact of homelessness and unaffordable housing. In order to reverse demand, there is a need to undertake wholesale change to make sure the Council and its strategic partners are equipped to respond to the housing and homelessness situation facing our communities. This change will be underpinned by the following nine guiding principles:

- **Plan** by working more strategically with the wider Council, RSLs, developers, private landlords and service providers in the way we utilise our available resources to implement sustainable housing and homelessness interventions in line with population needs.
- **Prepare** for Neath Port Talbot's future by making best use of our available resources to create sufficiency of housing to ensure thriving and prosperous communities in line with our anticipated needs.
- **Placemaking** principles to underpin our development plans so that we promote sustainable communities.
- **Preservation** of our future through minimising our environmental impact and maximising opportunities for decarbonisation and energy efficiency.

- **Partnership** working by building on our relationships with stakeholders to take forward a collaborative approach to addressing NPTs housing needs and ending homelessness.
- **Prevent** homelessness wherever possible and if it does happen, prevent recurrence through the development of targeted support services and suitable accommodation.
- **Personalised** responses to supporting those with housing needs by putting the person at the centre of our approach, thereby enabling people with complex and/or multiple needs to live in stable accommodation.
- **Positive** outcomes for people with social care needs, including young care leavers, through the development of specialist accommodation models that promote independence and reduce the need for more institutionalised care.
- **Provide** our workforce with the skills and resources to implement a new preventative way of working and providing people with the right interventions and accommodation so that they are able to fulfil their potential.

7. Priority Areas for Action

We know that there is a lot to do in order to achieve our ambition of ensuring all citizens of Neath Port Talbot have access to safe and appropriate housing. The following section outlines the areas of priority that we are planning to take forward over the next three years and beyond.

Priority Area One - Implement a More Strategic Approach

- ✓ **Strategic Approach to Development** - We will provide a more joined up strategic approach to working with our partners to facilitate the development of the right interventions, whether that be more specialised accommodation or the commissioning of targeted homeless prevention services. This will include the development and strategic implementation of specific strategies and plans, such as young care leavers, older people and homeless families. It will also include better strategic planning of our available resources such as the establishment

of a SHG panel to assess applications for grant funding to ensure that the proposals are viable and in line with Neath Port Talbot's requirements.

- ✓ **Enhanced Partnership Working and Multi-Agency Approaches** – We will strengthen our partnership working with key stakeholders including RSLs, private developers and private landlords, as well as ensuring more joined up working with other Council departments such as the Environment and Regeneration department and Social Services, so that there is a shared approach to meeting our housing needs. This will include operating the Strategic Housing Partnership Forum, market management events, RSL engagement and regular partnership meetings with the Council's Planning, Environmental Health and Regeneration Teams. It will also involve working more closely with service providers and other partnership groups such as the Area Planning Board, VAWDASV Leadership Group and the Community Safety Partnership, to ensure the establishment of holistic interventions for those we support.
- ✓ **Improved Third Sector Involvement** – We will build upon our current Third Sector partnerships in order to harness the Sector's wide range of expertise and knowledge when looking at how to best support our communities. This will include working with Neath Port Talbot CVS to involve the Third Sector, including volunteers in the development and delivery of interventions that can prevent or quickly elevate homelessness. It will also include ensuring their expertise informs our strategic plans and that our strategic delivery takes into account the Sector's sustainability.
- ✓ **Internal Opportunities for Development** – We will work more closely as a Council to identify opportunities to overcome some of our barriers for progress such as the lack of available land that is suitable and viable for development. This will include option appraisals and business cases for utilising Council owned land and repurposing Council buildings in line with our identified housing needs. Areas for consideration will include the development of older people accommodation and triage centres, as well as the provision of temporary accommodation for people experiencing homelessness and supported accommodation models for people with health and social care needs.
- ✓ **Maximising Investment Opportunities** – We will look at how we can bring in more development and investment into Neath Port Talbot through the use of grants and other funding sources. As well as

implementing a more strategic approach to the allocation of SHG, this will also include maximising available Welsh Government grants such as the Housing with Care fund to develop a range of social care accommodation models, the Empty Homes Scheme to bring out of use properties back into circulation and the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme to enable those experiencing or at risk of homelessness to move into more permanent accommodation. It will also include working with the wider Council as part of our partnership approach to maximise the benefits of other investment opportunities. In addition, we will focus on facilitating private sector and RSL market management to build more affordable housing, including increasing the number of units allocated to Housing Options in new builds.

- ✓ **Promoting the Local Economy** – We will ensure that our work will support the wider local economy through our commitment to place based working and by ensuring our strategic development plans take into account the need to meet the housing demands for a growing workforce. Our intention will be to support those working in Neath Port Talbot to live more locally to their workplace and reduce economic migration through the provision of suitable housing. This will be achieved through working in partnership with other departments within the Council, RSLs and private developers to ensure we have the right type of housing in the right locations.
- ✓ **Community Cohesion** – We will work to involve local communities and Elected Members in the delivery of our plans and to ensure that we carefully consider and balance local needs when taking forward our priorities. This will include appropriate and timely communication, so that local intelligence informs our strategic planning and that there is a unified NPT approach to housing and homelessness. It will also include improved consideration of how new proposals interact with existing communities and the promotion of community led development.
- ✓ **Supporting the Environment** – We will ensure that the Council's wider environmental objectives are supported through our work plan, both in terms of ensuring environmental considerations are embedded within our planning and by putting in place measures to encourage more energy efficient and environmentally friendly housing. These measures will include requesting evidence of how developments support the lowering of carbon emissions and reduction of energy consumption as

part of the SHG application process and promoting specific decarbonisation programmes, such as the ECO4 Flex Scheme.

Priority Area Two – Prevent Homelessness

- ✓ **Rapid Rehousing** – We will continue to take forward our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan in order to achieve a position where homelessness in Neath Port Talbot is rare, and when it does occur, be brief and unrepeated. Our Rapid Rehousing Coordinator will lead on the implementation of our plan objectives of providing housing that is safe and affordable. This work includes an ambitious programme of activity to completely transform the way we support households facing or experiencing homelessness.
- ✓ **Temporary Accommodation** – We will put in place short-term alternatives to reduce the use of B&Bs whilst we implement and imbed our homelessness prevention plans. Although our ambition is to prevent homelessness and reduce the need for temporary accommodation, there is an urgent need to move away from our current overreliance on B&Bs, as this type of intervention is not sustainable for the Council and creates more transiency and less stability for those experiencing homelessness. This will be achieved by the Council leasing suitable properties and the repurposing of unused Council buildings to increase the number of Council operated temporary accommodation units, including more specialist units for groups such as families.
- ✓ **Triage Centres** – We will establish a new model of short term accommodation for homeless people with more complex or multiple needs, in which their longer term holistic accommodation and support needs are assessed. Through this accommodation and assessment process, we will be able to identify the most appropriate type of long term accommodation and support service in line with the persons individualised needs. Appropriate accommodation for these models will be sourced by the Council from RSLs and also by redeveloping existing Council owned properties, with the support and assessment service undertaken by specialist Officers within the Housing Options Team.
- ✓ **Housing First Service** - We will develop and implement a Housing First model for homeless people who have multiple and complex needs. Those that are referred into the service will be provided with intensive person-centred support to ensure that they are able to maintain a long

term tenancy and prevent them from being caught up in cycles of homelessness. The move towards Housing First can only be achieved through strong partnership working between the Housing Options, RSLs, specialist providers of housing support services and other statutory organisations such as the NHS and Social Services. By building on our strong partnerships and commissioning the right models of support, we will establish a number of Housing First units and reduce episodes of repeat homelessness for our most vulnerable and complex residents.

- ✓ **Review RSL Housing Allocations** – We need to work with RSLs to increase the number of available social housing units that are allocated to homeless households. Stronger collaboration with RSLs will allow us to identify barriers they face in allocating more social housing to those that are homeless. This will include ensuring that there are appropriate housing support services in place for those that require ongoing help in maintaining their tenancies, gaining a better understanding of why some properties receive no bids and why some households do not bid for available properties. This work has strong links to our wider strategic development work, as often the available property is not in line with the needs of those applying for a home, for example a higher number of bedrooms than required by the household.
- ✓ **Strengthening the Housing Options Team** - The Housing Options team are highly dedicated but significantly overstretched and their roles, as well as the level of demand placed upon them, has markedly changed post COVID-19. This necessitates a need for the Council to strengthen the resources and support provided to the Team so that they are best placed to appropriately respond to the prevention and elevation of homelessness.
- ✓ **Transformation of Housing Support Services** – We will undertake a programme of service reviews for all HSG funded services and benchmark current performance outcomes against their contribution to achieving our strategic housing and homelessness objectives. From this review we will begin a process of transformation for those services that do not sufficiently meet our new strategic priorities by remodelling and recommissioning existing services models. This will include realigning funding to provide Housing First and redeveloping existing services to better support the progression of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and better meet the changing needs of our local population.

- ✓ **Specialist Complex Needs Services** – We will implement a more person centred approach to ensure that those with complex and multiple needs are given the right types of interventions to enable them to break cycles of homelessness and achieve secure long term housing. This will be achieved through measures such as the strengthening of the Housing Options Team and the establishment of triage centres. People with more complex needs will also be supported through the establishment of more targeted housing support services that are person-centred and focused on helping them to maintain their tenancies.
- ✓ **Tenancy Sustainment** – We will establish a tenancy sustainment panel with RSLs in order to ensure that residents who might be struggling with their tenancy receive early interventions. By working in partnership across organisations to identify at risk households, this multi-agency approach will ensure that focused work takes place with a household before issues escalate and their tenancy is placed at risk, thereby reducing the number of households that become homeless due to tenancy failure.

Priority Area Three - Increase Access to Appropriate Affordable Housing

- ✓ **Nominations for New Builds** – We will work with RSLs to increase the number of accommodation units to be allocated to support those that are homeless into permanent housing, whilst ensuring that we achieve balanced communities. Through the development of local letting agreements for new developments and ensuring that new housing is aligned to demand in terms of type, location and bedroom size, we will work collaboratively with RSLs to ensure that available housing is prioritised to those that are most in need of affordable housing. This will be done whilst maintaining community cohesion through a more person centred approach to the allocation of housing and offering more tailored services for those with ongoing housing support needs. Community cohesion will also be strengthened through closer partnership working with RSLs through the design and development process.
- ✓ **Bring Empty Homes Back into Use** – We will work with other departments across the Council to develop and implement a strategy for reducing the number of empty homes in the borough. This will include progressing the Welsh Government Empty Homes Scheme as well as looking at how we can support property owners to bring their empty properties back into use and working in partnership with RSLs to support

the refurbishment or redevelopment of empty properties. Our work will also include consideration of buy back schemes for former social housing and how the purchase of empty homes could be used to increase Council owned stock. In this way, the Council will be able to maximise the use of an unused stock of ready-made houses and prevent the community and environmental detriments that come with disused properties.

- ✓ **Private Sector Engagement** - We will aim to increase affordable private sector housing in Neath Port Talbot, in order to enable more people to access suitable housing and reduce reliance on the boroughs social housing stock. This will be achieved by establishing private sector forums and taking forward specific projects to increase the availability of good quality affordable private rentals, including growing the number of properties operated by the Council through the Leasing Scheme Wales programme. It will also involve working with the Council's Environment and Regeneration Directorate to influence the private market in terms of the type and range of housing stock they develop.
- ✓ **Increase Council Owned Stock** – We will build on our previous work to further increase the number of properties owned and managed by the Council in order to offer more affordable housing to homeless households, in particular those households that experience specific barriers to accessing long term accommodation. This work is closely connected to other objectives such as bringing empty properties back into use and developing Rapid Rehousing.
- ✓ **Streamlined Application Process** – We will work with our RSL partners to explore the development of a more streamlined process for people applying for social housing. Neath Port Talbot does not have a common allocation policy or register, as such Officers will explore with RSLs opportunities to implement a Neath Port Talbot wide approach and process to the prioritisation of social lettings.
- ✓ **Housing Strategy Implementation** – We will develop and oversee the implementation of new Housing Strategies for Neath Port Talbot, which will take into account the specific requirements of the borough. This strategy will set out the actions Officers need to undertake in order to respond to the areas identified within the plan, so that the Council is best placed to meet the current and future housing needs of its local population.

Priority Area Four - Support Those with Social Care Needs to Live Well in Their Communities

- ✓ **New Models of Care for Older People** – We will work with Adult Services, support providers and RSLs to implement a range of accommodation models for our aging population, so that people can remain active members of their local area. These models will include Extracare and assisted living, which will result in the development of inclusive communities that enable our older population to retain their independence and reduce social isolation and exclusion. This work will involve supporting the establishment of new developments as well as working with RSLs and support providers to remodel existing services so that they are better positioned to meet the changing needs of our older population, including the provision of more dementia friendly environments.
- ✓ **Independent Living for Adults with Complex Needs** – We will continue to progress our development programme to provide suitable housing that allows people with complex social care needs to live as independently as possible and supports them to achieve the personal outcomes that matter to them. These models will include specialist Extracare, Core and Cluster, Supported Living and independent living flats that incorporate assistive technology and smart solutions. To achieve our aims, we will work with the West Glamorgan Partnership to maximise our allocation of the Housing with Care Fund.
- ✓ **Home Adaptions for People with Disabilities** – We will support people with disabilities to remain living independently in their own homes though the provision of adaptations. By utilising the Disabled Facilities Grant, maximising access to available grants such as the Housing with Care Capital Fund and working with Third Sector Organisations, such as Care and Repair, we will strive to provide timely adaptations for people whose current environment creates a risk to their independence.
- ✓ **Enabling Hospital Avoidance and Discharge** – We will explore how we can support our NHS and Social Care partners to prevent avoidable admissions to hospital and ensure that those who are medically fit can be discharged in a timely way. Some of this work will link to the progression of other objectives such as the provision of adaptations and the development of new models of care for our older population. In addition, we will work with RSLs and support providers to create

alternatives to interim care home placements, which will better support an enabling approach, including increasing the number of Step Down Extracare Units.

- ✓ **Supporting Transition** - We will work with Social Services to ensure that young people with social care needs transitioning into adulthood are able to access an appropriate range of supported accommodation in line with their individual needs, so that they are able to reach their full potential and live fulfilling lives. This will include the development of additional supported accommodation properties and increasing the range of care models to reduce reliance on specialist care home placements. It will also involve working with the West Glamorgan Partnership to implement regional accommodation projects in line with identified need.
- ✓ **Working with Care Leavers and Young People** – We will support the Children and Young Peoples Service to achieve their ambition for care leavers by feeding into their Pathway Plans and through our membership at the Youth Homelessness Group, as well as offering support with delivery of their strategy for care leavers. Our review of HSG funded services will allow us to maximise opportunities for commissioned youth homelessness services and our strengthening of the Housing Options Team will enable us to offer more targeted and specialised support to young people facing homelessness based on trauma informed principles and psychologically informed environments.
- ✓ **Closing the Gaps** – We recognise the link between unstable housing, including cycles of homelessness, and a person’s wider vulnerabilities, such as mental health, neurodiversity and learning difficulties. There are a number of people that would not fit the usual eligibility criteria for statutory social care services but still require additional support in order to enable them to gain and maintain the skills required to live safely and prevent an escalation of their vulnerabilities. By working in partnership with Social Services, we will develop a range of supported specialist accommodation for people that need additional support to live independently. This will include Move On accommodation, in which people will be supported to develop their daily living skills in order for them to progress into general needs housing and Step Up/Step Down accommodation where people will receive targeted levels of support in line with their fluctuating needs.

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Neath Port Talbot Council's Housing and Homelessness Plan 2024-2027

Easy Read



What is the Plan about?



We are Neath Port Talbot Council



We want to stop people from becoming homeless. We also want to make sure that people live in homes that they can afford.



We have made a plan to help us do this, you can find our plan by clicking [here](#).



In the plan there are 4 things that we think are important to do

What we want to do

1. Implement a more strategic approach

This means that we want to work with other people to make more homes. We also want to make sure housing is good for communities and the environment.

2. Prevent homelessness

This means that we want to stop people from becoming homeless. We also want to make sure that people who become homeless get a new home.

3. Increase access to appropriate affordable housing

This means that we want to make sure people live in homes that they can afford.

4. Support those with social care needs to live well in their communities

This means that we want to make sure that people with a disability can have a home. We also want to make sure that young people that have been cared for by the Council can have a home.

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Housing and Homelessness Plan 2024 - 2027

We are Neath Port Talbot Council and we want all citizens of Neath Port Talbot to have access to safe and appropriate housing. This means that we will focus on delivering four key priority areas for action.



Implement a more strategic approach

We will work more closely with partners and other Council departments to ensure we make best use of our resources, including available land as well as grant funding opportunities.



Prevent homelessness

We want to make sure that homelessness is rare, and when it does occur it is brief and doesn't happen again.



Increase access to appropriate affordable housing

We want to work with landlords and others to increase the amount of available accommodation, including bringing empty homes back into use.



Support those with social care needs to live well in their communities

We will offer new models of care to help people live in their communities longer, whether they are older, disabled or are young people leaving care.

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Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

This Integrated Impact Assessment considers the duties and requirements of the following legislation in order to inform and ensure effective decision making and compliance:

- Equality Act 2010
- Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016

Version Control

Version	Author	Job title	Date
Version 1	Chelé Zandra Howard	Interim Head of Housing & Communities	26.06.23
Version 2	Chelé Zandra Howard	Head of Housing & Communities	15.12.23

1. Details of the initiative

	Title of the Initiative: Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan 2024-26
1a	Service Area: Social Services, Health & Housing
1b	Directorate: Housing & Communities
1c	Summary of the initiative: This three-year Plan sets out the actions required to help prevent people from becoming homeless, ensure that those that do become homeless are able to quickly access suitable permeant housing and to increase availability of affordable housing in the borough.
1d	Is this a 'strategic decision'? Yes
1e	Who will be directly affected by this initiative? The intended outcome is that the Plan will improve homelessness services and produce more strategic planning in relation to housing, which will have a positive impact on people that require affordable housing, have a social care need or are facing or experiencing homelessness.

1f	<p>When and how were people consulted?</p> <p>A 90 day consultation took place between 7th August 2023 and 5th November 2023.</p> <p>Alongside online and paper copies of a questionnaire, the Head of Housing and Communities led a number of workshops and attended various meetings as part of the consultation, this included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Strategy Forum Workshop, facilitated by Thrive <input type="checkbox"/> Third Sector Workshop, facilitated by CVS <input type="checkbox"/> Lived Experience Workshops, facilitated by the Salvation Army <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Options Team Workshop <input type="checkbox"/> Community Independence Service Team Workshop <input type="checkbox"/> RSL strategic Partnership Forum <input type="checkbox"/> Llais Service Change Forum <input type="checkbox"/> NPT Community Safety Partnership Board Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Social Care Senior Managers Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Children and Young People Senior Managers Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Planning and Public Protection Senior Managers Meeting
1g	<p>What were the outcomes of the consultation?</p> <p>In general, the consultation responses endorsed the draft Plan and the substance of the draft Plan has remained unchanged.</p> <p>A new action has been included under Priority One, ‘Implement a More Strategic Approach’, to strengthen the recognition of the important role that the Third Sector will play in supporting delivery of the Plan.</p> <p>In addition, specific mention has been made to the Council wishing to explore the promotion of community led development within the ‘Community Cohesion’ action, in order to strengthen its commitment to this.</p> <p>Many comments from the public consultation provide important feedback into the operational delivery of the plan. All comments have been recorded and will feed into the respective delivery work streams.</p> <p>A number of comments directly relate to the development of the Integrated Impact Assessment and so this IIA has been updated in light of the consultation responses.</p>

2. Evidence

What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?

The below equalities information relates to those that were open to Housing Options as at 15/05/23. The provision of equalities information by those that require a service is not mandatory and so consideration in this impact assessment has taken this into account and looked at the potential impact on a person with a protected characteristic rather than whether we currently support people with a particular characteristic.

SEX	
Male	248
Female	301

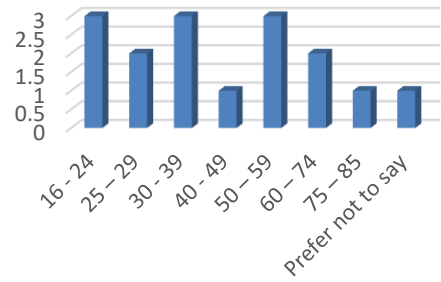
ETHNICITY	
White	517
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group	2
Asian/Asian British	1
Other Ethnic Group	11
Ethnic Origin Not Known	18

AGE	
16-17	2
18-25	76
26-35	155
36-45	146
46-55	100
56-65	42
65+	33

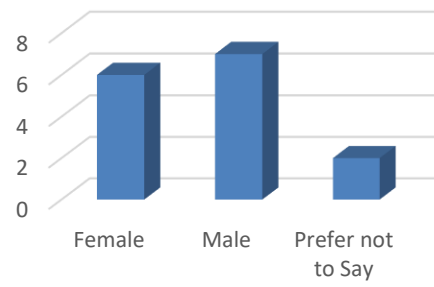
HOUSEHOLD MAKEUP	
Single, No Children	316
Single, Baby Due/Pregnant	8
Single, One Child	75
Single, Two Children	44
Single, Three Children	25
Single, Four Children	3
Single, Five Children	5
Single with 1 Elderly Parent	1
Cohabitants No Children	9
Cohabitants, Baby Due/Pregnant	2
Cohabitants One Children	9
Cohabitants Two Children	8
Cohabitants Three Children	2
Cohabitants Four Children	2
Cohabitants Five Children	9
Married, No Children	5
Married, One Child	8
Married, Two Children	10
Married, Three Children	4
Married, Four Children	2
Married, Five Children	1
Elderly Single	4
Elderly Couple	2
Tenant and One Lodger	1

Data from the surveys completed as part of the 90 day public show that respondents were:
Respondent Demographics

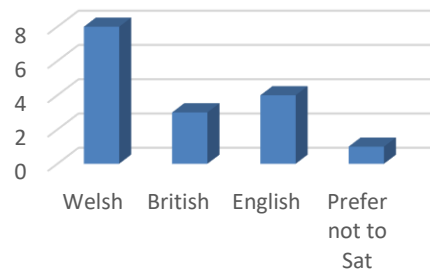
Age



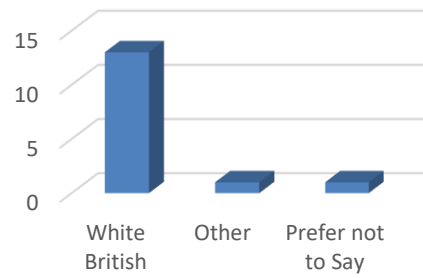
Gender



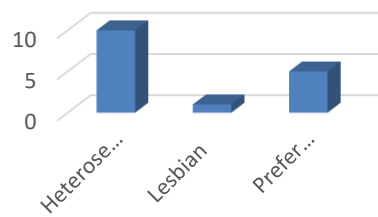
Nationality



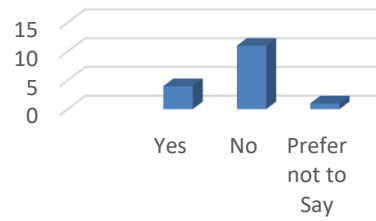
Ehtnic Origin

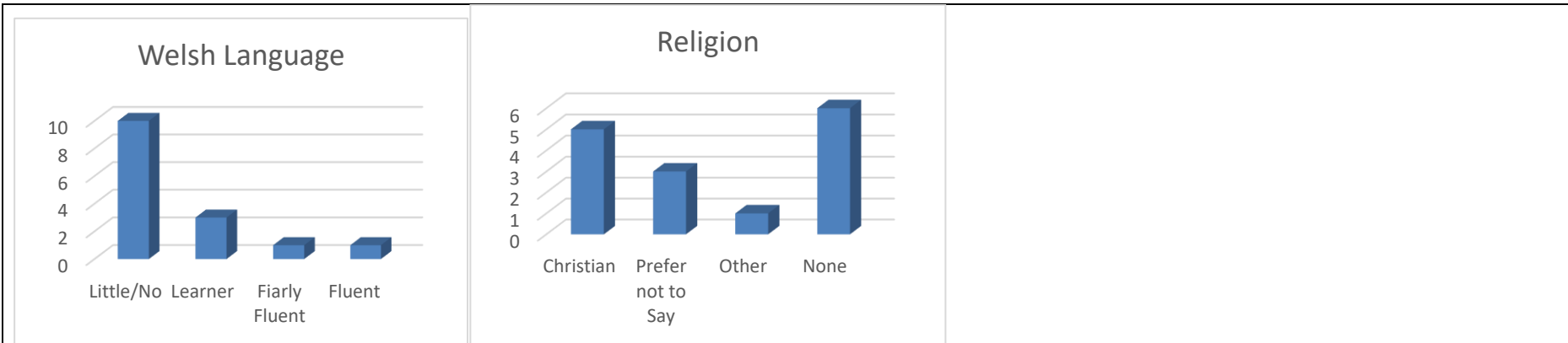


Sexula Orientation



Disability





Additional information has been obtained from the below data sets:

- 2021 Census information <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/initialfindingsfromthe2021censusinglandandwales>
- National Social Care Data for Wales <https://www.socialcaredata.wales/>
- Welsh Government Statistics <https://gov.wales/sexual-orientation-2019>
- Western Bay Population Needs Assessment <http://www.westernbaypopulationassessment.org/en/home/>
- Neath Port Talbot Housing Support Programme Strategy April 2022 – March 2026
<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/documents/s81638/Appendix%20-%20HSG%20Strategy.pdf>
- Neath Port Talbot Housing Support Grant Annual Update 2022
<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/documents/s87160/HSG%20Annual%20Update%202023.pdf>
- Rapid Rehousing Plan <https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/documents/s81738/RRH%20PLAN%20Sept%202022.pdf>
- Local Market Needs Assessment [Appendix 1 NPT MSR.pdf](#)

3. Equalities

a) How does the initiative impact on people who share a **protected characteristic**?

Protected Characteristic	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Age	x			<p>Housing Options provide services to adults across all age groups, the age range most represented according to our data was 26-35. Local housing allowance for most people aged under 35 is set at the shared accommodation rate, which can make it more challenging for single people in this age category to obtain affordable housing and may be a factor in the higher than average presentation by this age group.</p> <p>Although Housing Options supports adults, we are seeing increasing numbers of people with children become homeless and so the Plan will also support children by ensuring that children benefit from secure housing.</p> <p>The Plan will look to encourage development of affordable and specialist housing in line with population needs and trends, for example specialist accommodation for care leavers and older person's accommodation such as bungalows. In addition, having a range of affordable housing will help to prevent population migration of working age people.</p> <p>Respondents to the public consultation were from a range of ages. This public consultation did not identify that the plan would lead to any specific negative impacts on people due to this protected characteristic. However, the consultation responses did include comments that highlighted the need to provide more interventions and accommodation for young people and the need for Children and Young People Services and Homelessness Services to be more joined up. Work is taking place in this respect and a Youth Homelessness Strategy is being Developed.</p>

Disability	x		<p>Although there is no reliable information regarding the disability status of people presenting to Housing Options, data in relation to people receiving a Housing Support Grant funded service suggests that a notable proportion of people at risk or experiencing homelessness in NPT also have a disability.</p> <p>Data from our annual Housing Support Grant review highlights that a significant number of people facing or experiencing homelessness have mental ill health.</p> <p>Homeless Link report that research undertaken by UCL and Kensington and Chelsea Learning Disability Service in 2018 suggested that “adults with autism are overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness and that autism is a likely risk factor for becoming homeless.” https://homeless.org.uk/news/neurodiversity-and-homelessness/</p> <p>By increasing the range of affordable housing and models to rapidly elevate homelessness, there will be a benefit to people with this protected characteristic as evidence suggests that a significant proportion of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness have a disability.</p> <p>The Plan will look to encourage development of specialist housing for those with a disability or social care need, such as specialist Extra care and supported living.</p> <p>The majority of people that responded to the public consultation stated that they did not have a disability. This public consultation did not identify that the Plan would lead to any specific negative impacts on people due to this protected characteristic.</p>
Gender reassignment	x		<p>We do not have any data in relation to people with this protected characteristic in relation to the homelessness services we provide. According to the 2021 Census 93.37% of residents stated that the gender they identify with is the same as their sex registered at birth.</p>

			<p>Crisis reports that 25% of transgender people experience homelessness as some point https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/about-lgbtqplus-homelessness/</p> <p>By increasing the range of affordable housing and models to rapidly elevate homelessness, there will be a benefit to people with this protected characteristic as evidence suggests that transgender people are at higher risk of becoming homeless.</p> <p>No data from the public consultation indicated that respondents had a protected characteristic due to gender reassignment. This public consultation did not identify that the plan would lead to any specific negative impacts on people due to this protected characteristic.</p>
Marriage & civil partnership	x		<p>The data we have indicates that around 30 households presenting to Housing Options were married.</p> <p>By increasing the range of affordable housing and models to rapidly elevate homelessness, there will be a benefit to all people that may face or experience homelessness, including people with this particular characteristic.</p> <p>No data was collected in the public consultation with regards to this protected characteristic. This public consultation did not identify that the Plan would lead to any specific negative impacts on people due to this protected characteristic.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	x		<p>The data we have indicates that around 10 households presenting to Housing Options were pregnant at time of presentation.</p> <p>By increasing the range of affordable housing and models to rapidly elevate homelessness, there will be a benefit to all people that may face or experience homelessness, including people with this particular characteristic.</p> <p>No data was collected in the public consultation with regards to this protected characteristic. This public consultation did not identify that the Plan would lead to any specific negative impacts on people due to this protected characteristic.</p>

Race	x		<p>Data in relation to those that Housing Options have worked with, indicate that the percentage of BAME people that face or become homeless in NPT is in line with NPT's BAME population percentage in the 2021 census. This may indicate that the BAME community are not at higher risk of becoming or experiencing homelessness in NPT. However, there is a need to be mindful that national reviews indicate that across the UK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Black and minoritized ethnic communities in the UK do experience homelessness to a disproportionate degree • There are significant geographical variations in the extent and nature of homelessness risk for different racial and ethnic groups across the UK. • There are evidenced links between experiences of racial or ethnic discrimination and exposure to homelessness. • Race, ethnicity and discrimination-related factors affect homelessness risks both directly and indirectly” <p>https://homeless.org.uk/news/new-research-homelessness-and-black-minoritised-ethnic-communities-in-the-uk/</p> <p>By increasing the range of affordable housing and models to rapidly elevate homelessness, there will be a benefit to all people that may face or experience homelessness, including people with this particular characteristic.</p> <p>The majority of people that responded to the public consultation indicated that their ethnic origin was ‘white British’. This public consultation did not identify that the Plan would lead to any specific negative impacts on people due to this protected characteristic.</p>
Religion or belief		x	<p>We do not have any data in relation to this protected characteristic.</p> <p>By increasing the range of affordable housing and models to rapidly elevate homelessness, there will be a benefit to all people that may face or experience homelessness, including people with this particular characteristic.</p>

			<p>The majority of respondents to the public consultation stated that they did not have a religion or preferred not to say, the majority of respondents that provided details of their religion were Christian. This public consultation did not identify that the Plan would lead to any specific negative impacts on people due to this protected characteristic.</p>
Sex	x		<p>The percentage of women and men presenting to Housing Options is roughly in line with the population split in NPT according to the 2021 Census. This indicates that there is not one sex that is at higher risk of becoming homeless in NPT.</p> <p>Females that present to Housing Options are more likely than males to have dependent children and so the work of the strategic housing and homelessness team in relation to preventing families from becoming homeless and being placed in B&Bs will have a positive impact on females. Conversely, a higher number of single households are male and work to increase access to one bed properties will support this group.</p> <p>By increasing the range of affordable housing and models to rapidly elevate homelessness, there will be a benefit to all people that may face or experience homelessness, including people with this particular characteristic.</p> <p>The sex of respondents to the public consultation was evenly split. This public consultation did not identify that the Plan would lead to any specific negative impacts on people due to this protected characteristic.</p>
Sexual orientation	x		<p>We do not have any data in relation to people with this protected characteristic in relation to the homelessness services we provide.</p> <p>Stonewall reports that almost 1 in 5 LGBT people have experienced homelessness. https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_-_trans_report_final.pdf</p>

			<p>By increasing the range of affordable housing and models to rapidly elevate homelessness, there will be a benefit to people with this protected characteristic as evidence suggests that LGBT people are at higher risk of becoming homeless.</p> <p>The majority of respondents to the public consultation classified themselves as heterosexual, however a number of respondents preferred not to provide this information. This public consultation did not identify that the Plan would lead to any specific negative impacts on people due to this protected characteristic.</p>
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<p>What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake individual impact assessments and consultation for specific programmes of work • Monitor complaints • Monitor externally commissioned services • Review Plan implementation

b) How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Public Sector Equality Duty**?

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	x			This Plan will build on and further develop strategic partnerships with agencies to help develop and implement robust responses for those threatened with, or experiencing homelessness, including high risk clients, such as young people, ex-offenders, those with mental health issues and other complex needs. Examples include our action to ' <i>Close the Gaps - We recognise the link between unstable housing, including cycles of homelessness, and a person's wider vulnerabilities, such as mental health, neurodiversity and learning difficulties. There are a number of people that would not fit the usual eligibility criteria for statutory social care services but still require additional support in order to enable them to gain and maintain the</i>

			<p><i>skills required to live safely and prevent an escalation of their vulnerabilities. By working in partnership with Social Services, we will develop a range of supported specialist accommodation for people that need additional support to live independently. This will include Move On accommodation, in which people will be supported to develop their daily living skills in order for them to progress into general needs housing and Step Up/Step Down accommodation where people will receive targeted levels of support in line with their fluctuating needs.'</i></p>
To advance equality of opportunity between different groups	x		<p>The Plan supports this duty as one of its key outcomes is to support people to overcome challenges in keeping their tenancies and help prevent homelessness. This ensures that there is equality of opportunity for people to have secure and safe accommodation. Examples include our action to <i>'continue to progress our development programme to provide suitable housing that allows people with complex social care needs to live as independently as possible and supports them to achieve the personal outcomes that matter to them. These models will include specialist Extra care, Core and Cluster, Supported Living and independent living flats that incorporate assistive technology and smart solutions. To achieve our aims, we will work with the West Glamorgan Partnership to maximise our allocation of the Housing with Care Fund.'</i></p>
To foster good relations between different groups	x		<p>The Plan supports this duty as it will help support those that have found it difficult to retain a tenancy (for example by helping to reduce a person's ASB) and helps to prevent homelessness. Actions to increase the range and type of accommodation for people with social care needs will help to reduce social exclusion and isolation. It will also help to support cohesive communities and support implementation of the place making charter commitments. Examples of this include our action <i>'Housing First Service - We will develop and implement a Housing First model for homeless people who have multiple and complex needs. Those that are referred into the service will be provided with intensive person-centred support to ensure that they are able to maintain a long-term tenancy and prevent them from being caught up in cycles of homelessness. The move towards Housing First can only be achieved through strong partnership working between the Housing Options, RSLs, specialist providers of housing support services and other statutory organisations such as the NHS and Social Services. By building on our strong partnerships and</i></p>

				<i>commissioning the right models of support, we will establish a number of Housing First units and reduce episodes of repeat homelessness for our most vulnerable and complex residents.'</i>
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What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

- Undertake individual impact assessments and consultation for specific programmes of work
- Monitor complaints
- Monitor externally commissioned services
- Review Plan implementation

4. Socio Economic Duty

Impact	Details of the impact/advantage/disadvantage
Positive/Advantage	<p>This Plan aims to support people and communities that are classed as experiencing some of the highest levels of socio-economic disadvantage. This includes giving people the tools and support to break cycles of homelessness, reduce Adverse Childhood Experiences and increase access to sustainable affordable housing. A high number of the actions within the Plan support this objective, including <i>'Specialist Complex Needs Services – We will implement a more person-centred approach to ensure that those with complex and multiple needs are given the right types of interventions to enable them to break cycles of homelessness and achieve secure long term housing. This will be achieved through measures such as the strengthening of the Housing Options Team and the establishment of triage centres. People with more complex needs will also be supported through the establishment of more targeted housing support services that are person-centred and focused on helping them to maintain their tenancies.'</i></p> <p>38% of public consultation respondents stated that they felt the Plan would have a positive impact on poverty within the Borough. Feedback included:</p> <p><i>"Offering more affordable housing will be a huge in preventing homelessness."</i></p>

Negative/Disadvantage	<p>19% of public consultation respondents stated that the Plan would have a negative impact on poverty within the Borough.</p> <p>One comment was provided in relation to why it was felt that the Plan would have a negative impact on poverty:</p> <p><i>“Reduced spending in the community thereby leading to lower income for the council via taxes and charges from the potentially thriving businesses.”</i></p> <p>Placemaking is a key principle that underpins the Plan and this will involve making sure that there are balanced and mix use of development sites (for example, shops, businesses and housing), which should address this concern.</p>
Neutral	<p>44% of respondents to the public consultation did not know if the Plan would have an impact on poverty.</p> <p>Comments provided in relation to this question included:</p> <p><i>“Poverty is poverty – if there is no money then you can’t get blood out of a stone. People are poorer due to greedy fat cats, displaced funds. I hope it will encourage better jobs and growth at grassroots.”</i></p> <p>It is acknowledged that there are a number of issues that are impacting on our communities that is outside the control of the Council, for example the Local Housing Allowance rate.</p>

What action will be taken to reduce inequality of outcome

- Undertake individual impact assessments and consultation for specific programmes of work
- Monitor complaints
- Monitor externally commissioned services
- Review Plan implementation

5. Community Cohesion/Social Exclusion/Poverty

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Community Cohesion	x			By supporting the implementation of the place making charter commitments. There is a specific community cohesion action within the Plan – <i>‘We will work to involve local communities and Elected Members in the delivery of our plans and to ensure that we carefully consider and balance local needs when taking forward our priorities. This will include appropriate and timely communication, so that local intelligence informs our strategic planning and that there is a unified NPT approach to housing and homelessness. It will also include improved consideration of how new proposals interact with existing communities.’</i>
Social Exclusion	x			By helping people to either retain their tenancies or continue living within their local community by providing affordable housing. An example is the action <i>‘Tenancy Sustainment – We will establish a tenancy sustainment panel with RSLs in order to ensure that residents who might be struggling with their tenancy receive early interventions. By working in partnership across organisations to identify at risk households, this multi-agency approach will ensure that focused work takes place with a household before issues escalate and their tenancy is placed at risk, thereby reducing the number of households that become homeless due to tenancy failure.’</i>
Poverty	x			By encouraging the development of affordable housing and delivering more energy efficient homes. One example is our action <i>‘Nominations for New Builds – We will work with RSLs to increase the number of accommodation units to be allocated to support those that are homeless into permanent housing, whilst ensuring that we achieve balanced communities. Through the development of local letting agreements for new developments and ensuring that new housing is aligned to demand in terms of type, location, and bedroom size, we will work collaboratively with RSLs to ensure that available housing is prioritised to those that are most in need of affordable housing. This will be done whilst maintaining community cohesion through a more person-centred approach to the allocation of housing and offering more tailored services for those with ongoing housing support needs. Community</i>

			<p><i>cohesion will also be strengthened through closer partnership working with RSLs though the design and development process.'</i></p> <p>Responses in relation to poverty within the public consultation process has been addressed within the socio-economic impact section of this assessment.</p>
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What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

- Undertake individual impact assessments and consultation for specific programmes of work
- Monitor complaints
- Monitor externally commissioned services
- Review of Plan implementation

6. Welsh

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
What effect does the initiative have on: – people’s opportunities to use the Welsh language			x	A Welsh Translation of the Plan has been developed. Services will be delivered in line with the Councils Welsh Language Policy.
– treating the Welsh and English languages equally			x	Of those that responded to the public consultation questionnaire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% stated that they felt the Plan would have a positive impact on the use of Welsh Language • 18% stated that they felt the Plan would have a negative impact on the use of Welsh Language • 56% did not know what impact the Plan would have on the use of Welsh Language

			<p>Comments from the consultation included:</p> <p><i>“As new influx with no Welsh language knowledge moves in, it will compromise it.”</i></p> <p><i>“There needs to be a commitment to rehousing people in their own communities – Welsh speaking in the borough is quite concentrated at present and if there’s not commitment to “living at home” then moving people into English speaking areas will compromise and dilute the more Welsh speaking communities.”</i></p> <p>The intention of the Plan is to support those that live in Neath Port Talbot to access sufficient housing in line with identified housing need for the borough. This should help to address concerns around the movement of people that speak the Welsh Language into predominately English Language areas due to a lack of housing in Welsh Speaking areas.</p> <p>The consideration of movement into the area on the Welsh Language is important to recognise. It is difficult to understand the impact of any potential movement of people into the area would have on the Welsh Language at this stage, the Housing and Communities Department will review data in relation to the use of Welsh Language in the area and consider implications as specific actions are progressed.</p>
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<p>What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake individual impact assessments and consultation for specific programmes of work • Monitor complaints • Monitor externally commissioned services • Review Plan implementation • Review data on use of Welsh Language in the borough

7. Biodiversity

How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Biodiversity Duty**?

Biodiversity Duty	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity	x			<p>The plan will support implementation of the Councils place making principles and will encourage the delivery of decarbonisation objectives. There is a specific action within the Plan to support the environment – <i>‘We will ensure that the Councils wider environmental objectives are supported through our work plan, both in terms of ensuring environmental considerations are embedded within our planning and by putting in place measures to encourage more energy efficient and environmentally friendly housing. These measures will include requesting evidence of how developments support the lowering of carbon emissions and reduction of energy consumption as part of the SHG application process and promoting specific decarbonisation programmes, such as the ECO4 Flex Scheme.’</i></p> <p>Of those that responded to the public consultation questionnaire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33% felt the Plan would have a positive impact on the environment • 20% felt the Plan would have a negative impact on the environment • 47% felt that they did not know what impact the Plan would have on the environment <p>Comments received in relation to the question included:</p> <p><i>“[positive] If new builds are eco-friendly, using brownfield land and if homes in the community are updated to eco-friendly standards.”</i></p> <p><i>“[negative] Building more houses (necessary) will compromise greenspaces in new builds.”</i></p>
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.	x			

			<p><i>“Social need for housing traditionally trumps environmental issues in the planning system, the need for alternative uses for sites in existing urban areas should be considered in line with community wishes.”</i></p> <p>The Plan is underpinned by the Councils Placemaking charter which identifies the importance of open spaces. Furthermore, developments will be in line with the Replacement Local Development Plan and Planning Policy, which shows commitment to the preservation of the Boroughs green space.</p> <p>In addition, the Councils Planning Team have a legal obligation to ensure developments comply with the Updated National Planning Policy for Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales. This sets out stringent criteria around matters such as green infrastructure, Net Benefit for Biodiversity and the felling of trees.</p> <p>The above matters should help to address the concerns raised through the public consultation process.</p>
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<p>What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake individual impact assessments and consultation for specific programmes of work • Monitor complaints • Monitor externally commissioned services • Review implementation of the Plan

8. Well-being of Future Generations

How have the five ways of working been applied in the development of the initiative?

Ways of Working	Details
i. Long term – looking at least 10 years (and up to 25 years) ahead	A key aim of the Plan is to ensure that people have access to long term sustainable housing and to reduce repeat episodes of homelessness. Priorities within the Plan, such as taking forward Rapid Rehousing will help this wellbeing objective as it intends to provide stable housing with multi-agency support to prevent repeat episodes of homelessness and reduce the need for temporary accommodation, which will have a long-term positive impact.
ii. Prevention – preventing problems occurring or getting worse	A significant focus of the Plan is the prevention of people from becoming homeless and preventing cycles of homelessness. Actions to prevent homelessness from occurring include establishing a tenancy sustainment panel with RSLs in order to ensure that residents who might be struggling with their tenancy receive early interventions.
iii. Collaboration – working with other services internal or external	<p>Working collaboratively is a key priority within the Plan, including building on the Council's strategic partnerships to implement robust responses for those threatened with or experiencing homelessness. A key action in the Plan is <i>'Enhanced Partnership Working and Multi-Agency Approaches – We will strengthen our partnership working with key stakeholders including RSLs, private developers and private landlords, as well as ensuring more joined up working with other Council departments such as the Environment and Regeneration department and Social Services, so that there is a shared approach to meeting our housing needs. This will include operating the Strategic Housing Partnership Forum, market management events, RSL engagement and regular partnership meetings with the Council's Planning, Environmental Health and Regeneration Teams. It will also involve working more closely with service providers and other partnership groups such as the Area Planning Board, VAWDASV Leadership Group and the Community Safety Partnership, to ensure the establishment of holistic interventions for those we support.'</i></p> <p>The consultation process highlighted a commitment from key stakeholders in working together in collaboration to achieve the aims of the Plan.</p>
iv. Involvement – involving people, ensuring they	The Plan aims to fill known gaps in provision that has been identified through engagement with key partners, such as Registered Social Landlords and support providers. One action in the plan that supports this objective is <i>'Strategic Approach to Development - We will provide a</i>

<p>reflect the diversity of the population</p>	<p><i>more joined up strategic approach to working with our partners to facilitate the development of the right interventions, weather that be more specialised accommodation or the commissioning of targeted homeless prevention services. This will include the development and strategic implementation of specific strategies and plans, such as young care leavers, older people and homeless families. It will also include better strategic planning of our available resources such as the establishment of a SHG panel to assess applications for grant funding to ensure that the proposals are viable and in line with Neath Port Talbots requirements.'</i></p> <p>The consultation process involved a number of stakeholders and plans are in place to ensure the continued involvement of stakeholders in the Plans implementation.</p>
<p>v. Integration – making connections to maximise contribution to:</p>	<p>As noted in the collaboration and involvement sections this is a key aspect of the Plan and in the Plans delivery.</p>
<p>Council’s well-being objectives</p>	<p>Well-being Objective 1: All children have the best start in life – by preventing families that become homeless from being placed in B&Bs and delivering affordable housing for families. In addition, by developing more supported accommodation options for young care leavers and reducing youth homelessness.</p> <p>Well-being Objective 2: All our communities will be thriving and sustainable – by preventing homelessness, supporting vulnerable people that are most at risk of homelessness, developing specialist accommodation for those with care and support needs and by increasing the availability of affordable housing.</p> <p>Well-being Objective 3: Our local environment, culture and heritage can be enjoyed by future generations – by implementing place making principles in our strategic planning and by supporting decarbonisation.</p> <p>Well-being Objective 4: There are more green, secure and well-paid jobs and skills across the area are improved –by stimulating housing development, encouraging environmentally friendly developments and by helping to support the development of housing that enables those that work in NPT to also live in NPT.</p>

Other public bodies objectives	Supports delivery of the Rapid Rehousing Plan, objectives of the PSB, CSP and APB.
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9. Monitoring Arrangements

Provide information on the monitoring arrangements to:

Monitor the impact of the initiative on Equalities, Community Cohesion, the Welsh Measure, Biodiversity Duty and the Wellbeing Objectives.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor complaints and safeguarding referrals • Monitor externally commissioned services • Department KPIs • Review implementation of the Plan

10. Assessment Conclusions

Please provide details of the conclusions reached in relation to each element of the assessment:

	Conclusion
Equalities	It is intended that the Plan will have a positive impact on people that have a protected characteristic.
Socio Economic Disadvantage	It is intended that the Plan will have a positive socio-economic impact on people and communities.
Community Cohesion/ Social Exclusion/Poverty	It is intended that the Plan will have a positive PSED impact on people and communities.
Welsh	It is intended that the Plan will have a neutral impact on Welsh Language.
Biodiversity	It is intended that the Plan will have a positive impact on biodiversity.
Well-being of Future Generations	It is intended that the Plan will support the Council in achieving the five ways of working.

Overall Conclusion

Please indicate the conclusion reached:

- **Continue** - as planned as no problems and all opportunities have been maximised



Please provide details of the overall conclusion reached in relation to the initiative

The Plan will have a positive impact on people that are experiencing or at risk of homelessness as well as those that require affordable housing or social care services, as it aims to proactively address the housing challenges impacting our communities.

11. Actions

What actions are required in relation to obtaining further data/information, to reduce or remove negative impacts or improve positive impacts?

Action	Who will be responsible for seeing it is done?	When will it be done by?	How will we know we have achieved our objective?
Undertake individual impact assessments and consultation for specific programmes of work	Head of Housing & Communities	Before any decision is made	Impact assessments and consultation documents completed.
Monitor complaints and safeguarding referrals	Head of Housing & Communities	As needed	Monitoring and outcome reports
Monitor externally commissioned services	Head of Housing & Communities	Annually	Monitoring reports
Monitor Directorate KPIs	Head of Housing & Communities	Quarterly	KPI Reports
Review implementation the Plan	Head of Housing & Communities	Annually	Review report
Review data on use of Welsh Language in the borough	Head of Housing & Communities	Annually	Report

12. Sign off

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Chelé Zandra Howard	Head of Housing & Communities		15/12/23

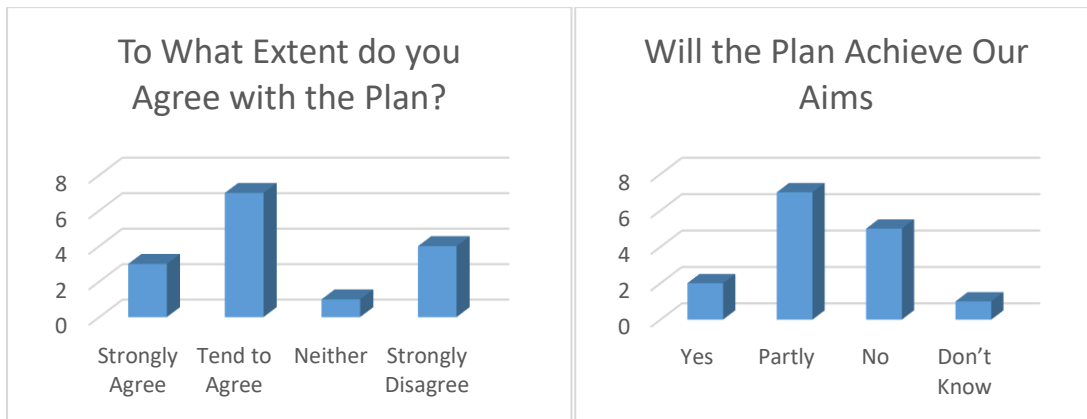
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Appendix 5 – Questionnaire Data

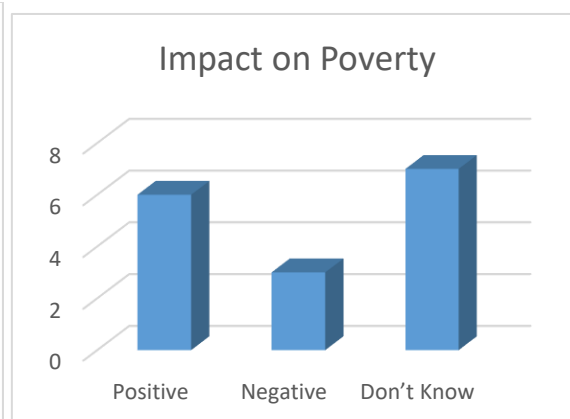
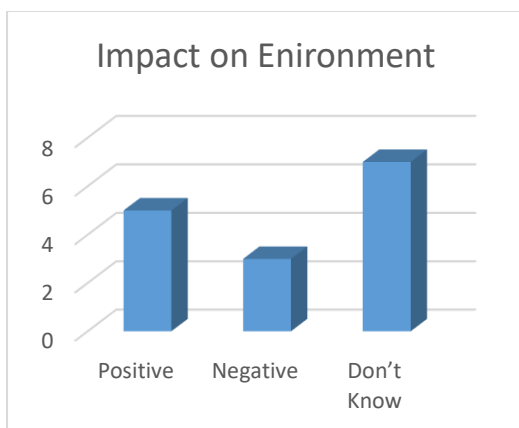
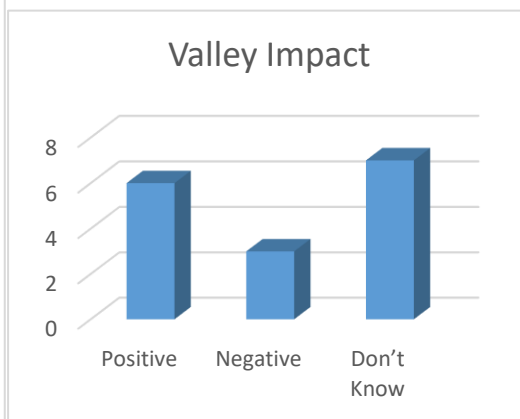
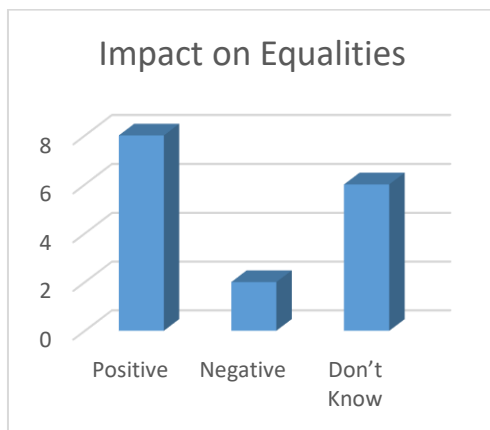
Respondent Demographics



Questionnaire Responses



Impact Assessment Responses





Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Appendix 5- Not for publication pursuant to Regulation 5(2) & (5) of Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 2290 and Paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. Pursuant also to Paragraph 21 of the Schedule, and in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption is considered to outweigh the public interest in disclosing the information.

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

NEATH PORT TALBOT SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY CABINET BOARD

25th January 2024

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES – K. WARREN

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All wards

NEATH PORT TALBOT CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SOCIAL CARE STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 - 2026

Purpose of the Report:

To inform members of the outcome of the consultation on the draft Neath Port Talbot Children & Young People Services Social Care Strategic Plan 2023-25 (“Valuing our children’s future”).

Executive Summary:

This Strategic Plan sets out how Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council ('the Council') aims to create a system that works for all children, young people and families where we work together to provide and commission integrated services for children and young people. Our ambition is for children to have the best start in life with their family, in their school and in their community.

Background:

On 13th July 2023 the Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Cabinet Board approved a 60 day public consultation of the Plan.

The Plan set out the Council's proposals for the medium term future of Children & Young People Services in Neath Port Talbot, and covers the functions of:

- Placement sufficiency (the right service at the right time)
- Recruit, retain and develop a highly-skilled workforce (a highly-skilled social worker for every child and family who needs one)
- Demand and complexity (providing specific and targeted support for families facing particular challenges)

A range of engagement and consultation activities took place between 31st July and 29th September 2023 to help inform the Plan. The purpose of this was to:

- Provide a mechanism for people to contribute their views of the Plan, make comments and suggestions, including alternative proposals
- Find out whether people agreed or disagreed with the proposals and the reasons why.

Our fundamental vision for Children and Young People Services remains: children, young people, families and communities are at the heart of what we do. We are proud of the positive outcomes achieved to date and the strength of partnership working. We are also

ambitious for the future and for our children and young people, and we have high expectations of ourselves and partners, working with children, families and communities to improve outcomes.

Children's needs are best met by their own families if this can be safely supported. Helping families stay together is a key focus of Children's Services. Early intervention and prevention services can reduce the number of children and young people reaching the threshold for care and needing to become Children Looked After (CLA), or support them to return safely to their families in a timely manner.

We must manage risk effectively with families that are approaching the threshold for care, and work to ensure we only provide care to those children who need to be looked after outside of their family, and are supported to remain in the family home when it is safe to do so. We will provide a range of effective interventions which support families to make changes whilst always ensuring that children and young people are kept safe.

Furthermore, the Strategic Plan will be subject to regular review to ensure it maintains relevance.

A copy of the Strategic Plan is attached at Appendix 1.

Financial Impacts:

Taking forward the priorities within the Strategic Plan will be undertaken in line with the available budget.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

A first stage impact assessment has been 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. The first stage impact assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment was required.

An overview of the Integrated Impact Assessment has been included below in summary form only and it is essential that Members read the Integrated Impact Assessment, which is attached to the report at Appendix 4, for the purposes of the meeting.

- No negative impacts identified at this stage and the indication is that the impact will be positive. Processes are in place to monitor the impact for any unintended negative consequences.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

The Strategic Plan is a high level document intended to meet the needs of the whole county borough including the valleys communities.

Furthermore, as actions to take forward the priorities within the Strategic Plan are developed, consideration of the impact on supporting valley communities will be given as part of the individual impact assessments.

Workforce Impacts:

The contents of this report do not have any impact on the Council's workforce.

Legal Impacts:

There are no legal implications associated with this item.

Risk Management Impacts:

There are no known risks associated with this item.

Consultation:

On 13th July 2023, Members approved a 60 day public consultation in respect of the Plan. During this period, 31st July to 29th September 2023, the consultation was promoted via the Council's website and other media, staff teams and forums.

A consultation document, an easy read version of the Strategic Plan, and plan on a page were all developed prior to the consultation. In addition, all materials are available in Welsh.

Unfortunately, no responses were received. Whilst it does not necessarily suggest an endorsement of the Plan, it can also be said that no negative feedback was received and, given how widely the exercise was publicised, could be interpreted as suggestive of general support for the proposed Plan.

Recommendations:

Having due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment it is recommended that Members approve the Neath Port Talbot Children & Young People Services Strategic Plan 2023-26 as detailed in Appendix 1.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To ensure a range of good quality care and support is available to meet the needs of vulnerable children resident in Neath Port Talbot.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Children's Social Care Strategic Plan 2023-26

Appendix 2: Children's Social Care Strategic Plan – Easy Read

Appendix 3: Children's Social Care Strategic Plan – Plan on a Page

Appendix 4: Integrated Impact Assessment

List of Background Papers:

None

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Email: k.warren@npt.gov.uk



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council



Valuing our children's future

Children & Young People Social Care Strategic Plan 2023-26

Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol, Iechyd a Thai
Social Services, Health & Housing

www.npt.gov.uk

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Introduction

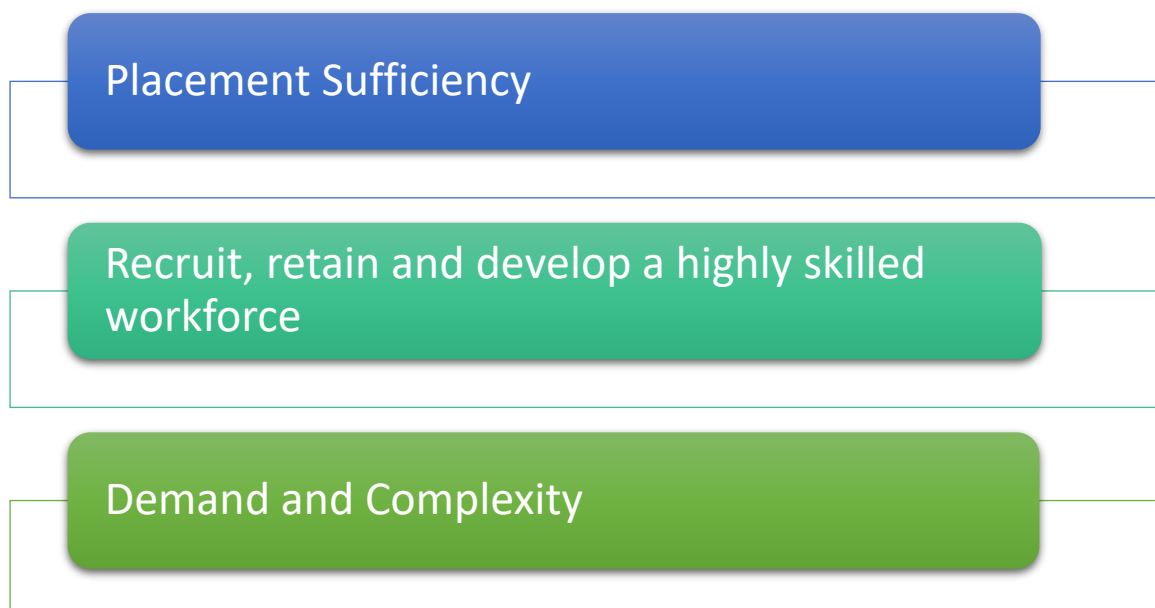
Since we published our NPT Plan for Children and Young People Services in April 2019 we have faced challenges as a society not experienced by this generation: the Covid-19 pandemic that swept across our nation; a war in Ukraine; and a cost of living crisis.

We want everyone to have an equal opportunity to be healthier, happier, safer and prosperous, and for Neath Port Talbot to be a place where *“All of our children and young people have the best start in life, so they can be the best they can be”*.

We want to put an emphasis on building safe and resilient communities that promote people’s strengths, and ensure we intervene early to prevent needs from increasing.

Our aim is to create an environment that works for all children, young people and families. Where we work together to co-create and co-produce and commission services for children, young people and families to ensure they get the right support at the right time. The Covid-19 pandemic taught us that communities and families know what they want and how to create change at an individual, family and community level and we will continue to take their lead.

These are the challenges that this plan seeks to address:



Our Approach – Outcome Focussed Practice

We work in a strengths based way with families and communities, based on these principles:

- Collaborative conversations
- Empowering the voice of the child, the family and the community
- Relationship based
- Outcome focused: what matters
- Whole family focus
- Transparency
- Reflection
- Trauma Informed

These principles are about building on the foundations of wellbeing, for further information about our approach please see the [Outcomes Framework](#).

Our approach is about what matters to children and families and to understand the impact we have and the difference we make we have a dedicated strategic lead for participation and engagement.

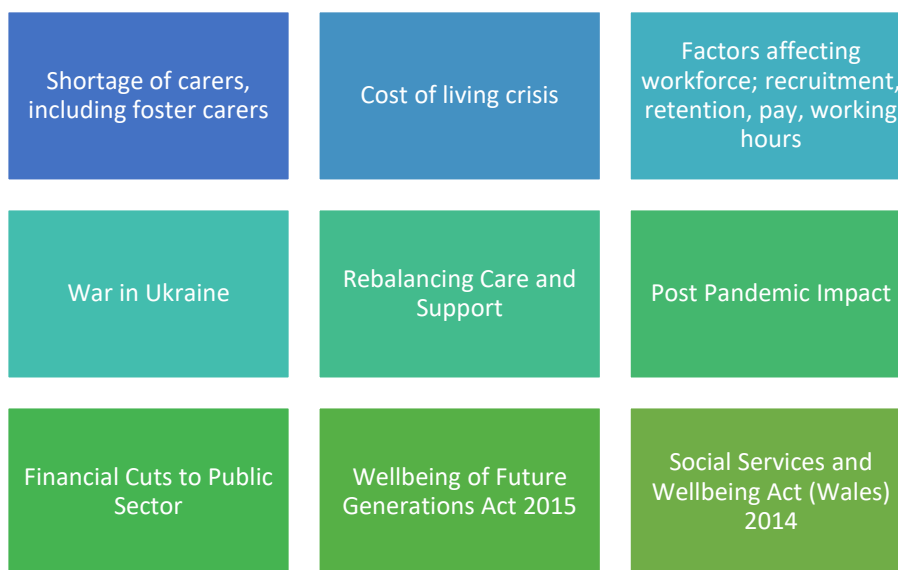
Background – Responding to Changing Demand

We are an ambitious Council and there is much we want to achieve to make sure children and young people get the best possible start in life, the right support when they need it, and have positive life experiences.

Children's needs are best met by their own families if this can be safely supported. Helping families stay together is a key focus of Children's Services. Early intervention and prevention services can reduce the number of children and young people reaching the threshold for care and needing to become care experienced, or support them to return safely to their families in a timely manner.

We must manage risk effectively with families that are approaching the threshold for care, and work to ensure we only provide care to those children who need to be looked after outside of their family, and are supported to remain in the family home when it is safe to do so. We will provide a range of interventions which support families to make changes whilst always ensuring that children and young people are kept safe; and we will update our Care Experienced Children Strategy (formerly Looked After Children Strategy) to ensure it continues to reflect best practice.

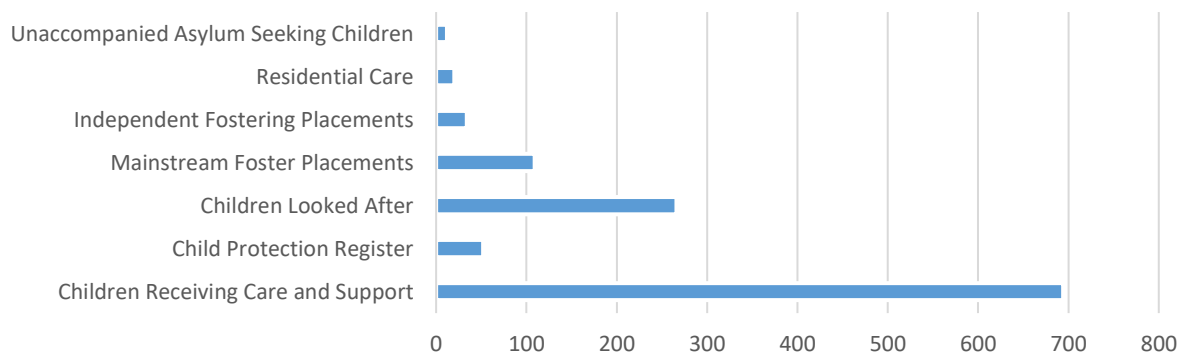
National Context:



Local Context:

There are more than 142,000 people living in NPT. It is estimated that around 28,200 of those are under 18 years of age – a level (about 20%) in line with the Wales average. The Council spends more than £23.3 million, about 6.9% of its total budget, on Children’s Social Care. We know that NPT, like other local authorities across Wales, are facing financial challenges. Increasing demand and tightening budgets will put added pressures on services. The number of children in NPT is projected to decrease over the next decade as the birth rate falls. But future demand for social care cannot be simply linked to population projections.

At the beginning of January 2023 there were 1,272 children, or about 4.5% of the under 18 population in NPT, receiving some level of support from the Council’s Children and Young Person’s Services. This includes:



Placement Sufficiency

Where people live, the quality of their home and who they live with and near is important to children and young people. Providing loving and caring family homes in NPT for children and young people who are looked after is a fundamental part of what we do. We want safe, stable and caring places to live so children and young people can get the most out of life, so they can thrive and be independent.

We believe that the best place for a child is with a loving family. We will work with families to help them stay together, but we also know that there is a need for foster placements to provide safe and stable environments for some. It's all about getting the right service at the right time.

As the needs of NPT's children who are looked after vary, so must the provisions of placements on offer, which means that the service should ensure recruitment of a wide ranging pool of carers, some of whom are able to support older children, short- or long-term placements, sibling groups, overnight short breaks (respite care) and mother-and-baby placements.

When children need to be looked after by the Council, NPT has a responsibility as Corporate Parent to ensure that those children are placed in the most appropriate setting as this impacts their outcomes and ability to thrive.

For most children who are looked after by the Council, a fostering placement in a family environment is most appropriate, but we recognise that for a small proportion of children a residential setting will be most appropriate for their specific needs, and can be especially effective in providing a stable and secure environment in which children can progress and thrive.

Family reunification

When children and young people come into our care our priority is securing their protection from harm. However, wherever possible, we are committed to ensuring they are able to leave our care and be reunited with their families where it is safe and appropriate to do so. Early and robust care planning ensures we work with families proactively and explore options for children and young people's safe return home.

We have also forged better links with the judiciary and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS), including working on accelerated discharges. This applies where the position has changed since the making of a

care order and where families now only require universal services, with the agreement of the local authority, the parents and their extended family.

Residential to fostering

Wherever possible, we want children and young people in our care, to live with foster carers, rather than in a residential home. While for some, depending on their individual needs and circumstances at any given time, it may be best for young people to live in a residential children's home. However, we believe that everyone has the right to grow up in a family environment, and that, in principle, this is best for them and their life chances. The sufficiency of suitable foster carers should never be a reason why any young person is not benefitting from a supportive family environment. In this context, we want to be able to support more young people to be able to move from residential to fostering homes safely and sustainably. Overall, we want to see the number of young people living in a residential home decrease therefore we will focusing on recruiting 'step down' foster carers to be able to support children and young people to transition from residential care to foster care when appropriate to do so.

So we will keep under review the needs and interest of all children and young people living in residential care settings to ensure that this continues to be the most appropriate place for them to live.

And we will review our use of residential provision both in and out of county in line with Welsh Government's aim to eliminate profit-making provision for children who are looked after.

Fostering

For children and young people who are looked after by NPT, where family reunification, adoption or special guardianship is not a viable option, we want them to live in loving and caring fostering homes, where they are safe, protected and able to be themselves. We want to meet the individual needs of the children and young people living with fostering families, including their racial and cultural needs, learning style, age and stage of development and abilities. In this way they are homes that not only provide a roof over their heads, but instead they equip and enable young people to thrive in all areas of their lives.

But there is currently a lack of sufficiency within the Independent Fostering Agency market. Although providers have continued to increase the numbers of carers in recent times, this has not kept up with the demand. We need to maximise the fostering offer as a whole inclusive of in-house services and the Independent Fostering Agencies. We need to increase the number of short- and long-term foster carers for older children and for short break foster carers. This

includes the development of Foster Plus which focuses on children and young people with complex needs. We have developed our in-house therapeutic and outreach services to focus on placement stability and step-down from residential care. Our aim is to grow our own local market and still have the advantages of utilising the regional frameworks as and when required.

Care Leavers

For young adults, moving out of home is an important milestone on the transition to adulthood, this can be even more challenging for our care leavers. Having the right accommodation and support available to care leavers provides the foundations to achieving positive outcomes. Some of our young adults continue to live in foster placements in a “when I’m ready” arrangement, some will move on to supported accommodation and others to independent living.

How will we strengthen placement sufficiency?

- Review our fostering retention and recruitment strategy to ensure that there are carers approved to meet the needs of the children and young people looked after by Neath Port Talbot
- To review our residential accommodation needs
- Ensure that only those young people who need to remain looked after are looked after, to ensure that their voice is heard and that their plans are subject to regular reviews
- Develop a clear set of guidance around Pathway Plans, whilst strengthening practice for Care Leavers
- Review and develop the accommodation and support needs of our care leavers in line with the Housing Strategy
- Review and strengthen Youth Homelessness processes, resources, and strategies, in line with the Housing Strategy
- Support young adults to move out of the family home in a planned way
- Review the regional multi-agency Transition Policy for children and young people to ensure it is making a difference to the experience of young people in transition; and make sure we are meeting the objective with a clear comprehensive and robust process in place to guide the transition of all young people from Children’s to Adult Services
- Map, identify and develop accommodation and care needs for young people aged 14-18. Within 12 months all accommodation needs mapped for young people aged 14 - 18. Identify unmet accommodation models to inform commissioning cycle/development of model of accommodation and care in the community

Recruit, retain and develop a highly skilled workforce

When social workers have the tools and time to do their job well, it makes a huge difference to children's and families' lives. We want a valued, supported and highly-skilled social worker for every child and family who needs one.

Workforce stability is crucial for practitioners' ability to build relationships with children and families. Social workers should have access to high-quality training and continuous support throughout their career, and their wellbeing should be a priority for leaders and the Council.

Together we will review, reflect, learn from and build on our experiences of working with children, young people and families so we can continually improve the support we are able to offer and create a learning culture.

It is important to understand, plan for and meet future demand and the individual needs of children. We want children, young people and families to be supported by a workforce that is resilient, confident and competent.

How will we do this?

- Continue to work regionally and nationally to promote the positive value of working in social care and to attract, retain and develop workers in NPT
- Continue to develop Consultant Social Workers to support practitioners and embed evidence based practice
- Work closely with universities and other organisations to enhance the quality of practice and promote employment opportunities
- Continue to develop leaders by investing in accredited courses and the corporate leadership development programme
- Promote and create opportunities for staff to progress through succession planning; such as building on our successful "grow your own" social worker initiative
- To continue to enhance and embed the learning culture across Social Care
- Support the health and wellbeing of our employees by the development of the wellbeing sub-group and focussing on wellbeing within supervision

Demand and Complexity

For the majority of children, the best place for them to be is at home with their family, some families may need support to be able to do this. We provide specific and targeted support to families who are facing particular challenges resulting from social harms, poverty and inequality, domestic abuse, substance misuse, mental health conditions, as well as learning disabilities. Over the past few years the Local Authority has experienced a significant increase in demand from the front-door through to placement sufficiency. This demand has been compounded by years of austerity and the consequent reduced funding provided to public bodies, a pandemic, a cost of living crisis, and a war in Ukraine all of which have increased complexity.

Early intervention and prevention

We work collaboratively with families to build resilience and prevent problems escalating by providing early offers of help and support. We continue to invest in supporting families at an earlier stage through the strengthening of support services and the recruitment of a full time principal officer with responsibility for prevention and family support. We work in partnership with our colleagues in adult services to ensure that we respond to challenges such as the current cost of living crisis and ensure that families have access to support when they need it. We provide family focussed support by working in partnership with families and building on strengths, we do this in the following ways:

- Team Around the Family
- Family Support Service
- Specialist staff to support parents with a learning disability
- Edge of care service
- Substance misuse services
- Commissioned services such as Family Group Conferencing and Advocacy Services

Care and Support for Children and Young People

We want to make sure that children, young people and families have the support they need, so that children and young people have the best start in life. For those who need care and support (including advice) our aim is to ensure the right information, advice and assistance is available to ensure families stay together.

In childhood and into adolescence, the single most common factor for children who develop the capacity to overcome hardship is having at least one stable and committed relationship with a caregiver. For most children and young people, the family provides the basis for this essential stability, where families struggle with providing this stability we endeavour to strengthen relationships for the child by finding this in extended family or community networks, with the assistance of our partner agencies.

For young adults, moving out of home is an important milestone on the transition to adulthood. People with social care needs, such as autism, learning disabilities, or a physical disability, are no different. For some young people this will mean a fully independent place and for others this will be living with other people. In addition, for those young adults transitioning out of the family home, the young person and parent need to be involved in the conversation. Both need to feel confident that the young person will be able to live well.

[Youth Justice Service \(Early Intervention and Prevention\)](#)

The Youth Justice Service (Early Intervention and Prevention) is incorporated within Children and Young People Services. Our aim is to support young people and their families who are involved in, or on the fringe of, offending or anti-social behaviour. Integral to this is their safety and well-being, ensuring they remain protected from harm and exploitation, whilst balancing their risks with the impact on victims of crime and their communities. It is our objective to improve outcomes for our young people in all areas of their lives in order to achieve their potential and to make a successful transition to adulthood.

How will we respond to demand and complexity?

- Strengthen opportunities for early offers of help to ensure vulnerable children and their families are having access to community based support services at the earliest opportunity
- Continually review and develop specialist services in response to complexity
- Capture the voice of the child/family in care and support plans
- Ensure we work together with families in an outcomes focused way
- Making documents accessible and written in plain language for families to understand
- Further embed children's rights across Children & Young People Services and increase the use of children's rights champions

- Continue to strengthen the transition arrangements for children with complex needs between Children and Adult Services
- Develop our response to adolescence, to include the development of a transitional safeguarding pathway
- Strengthening regional and partnership working
- Having an IT system that supports our practitioners
- Continue to learn through our Quality Assurance Framework

Conclusion

This plan sets out our current thinking and understanding of what can affect children, young people and families, and the types of things we can do to offer support. It is a working document based on assumptions which may change over time. As such we will review the plan on a regular basis to ensure we continue to meet the challenges faced by those who need us most.



**Easy Read Version
of
Neath Port Talbot Council's
Children's Services Strategic
Plan 2023-2026**



What is the Strategic Plan about?



The Strategic Plan describes how Neath Port Talbot Council will help vulnerable children and young people with care and support needs.



The Strategic Plan tells us how the Council will make sure children, young people and families get the right type of care and support to meet their needs.

This will include information and advice, access to community support, or a safe place to live such as foster care.



This Strategic Plan will apply to children, young people and families who already receive support as well as those who may need support in the future.

What does Neath Port Talbot Council want out of the Strategic Plan?

We want to make sure that children, young people and families in Neath Port Talbot have the right amount of help to meet their needs, and that children and young people have the best start in life.

The Strategic Plan is set out along three broad themes:

1. Placement sufficiency

We believe that the best place for a child is with a loving family. We will work with families to help them stay together, but we also know that there is a need for foster placements to provide safe and stable environments for some. It's about getting the right service at the right time.

2. Recruit, retain and develop a highly skilled workforce

When social workers have the tools and time to do their job well, it makes a huge difference to children's and families' lives. We want a valued, supported and highly-skilled social worker for every child and family who needs one.

3. Demand and complexity

For the majority of children, the best place for them to be is at home with their family, but some families may need support to do this. We provide specific and targeted support to families who are facing particular challenges resulting from social harms, poverty and inequality, domestic abuse, substance misuse, mental health conditions, as well as learning disabilities.

Our Aim

The Council wants to help its vulnerable children and young people and make sure those who need support get it.

Our goal is to ensure that children and young people in Neath Port Talbot are safe, and living in families where they can achieve their potential and have their health, well-being and life chances improved within thriving communities.

We want to get it right for our citizens - from childhood to adulthood.

Who will be affected by this Strategic Plan?

Children, young people and families living in Neath Port Talbot who would benefit from formal or informal social care and support.

This means that children and young people currently receiving support and those who might need support in the future will be affected by this Strategic Plan.

We are an ambitious Council and there is much we want to achieve to make sure children and young people get the best possible start in life, the right support when they need it, and have positive life experiences.

Our aim is to create a system that works for all children, young people and families where we work together to provide and commission integrated services for children and young people. Our ambition is for children to have the best start in life with their family, in their school and in their community.



Placement sufficiency

We are committed to an approach that puts children – and families – first. We will work with families to help them stay together, but we will also ensure there are enough foster placements available for those who need a safe and stable environment.



Recruit, retain and develop a highly skilled workforce

When social workers have the tools and time to do their job well, it makes a huge difference to children's and families' lives. We want a valued, supported and highly-skilled social worker for every child and family who needs one.



Demand and complexity

For the majority of children, the best place for them to be as at home with their family, but some families need support to do this.

We provide specific and targeted support to families facing a range of challenges.

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Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

This Integrated Impact Assessment considers the duties and requirements of the following legislation in order to inform and ensure effective decision making and compliance:

- Equality Act 2010
- Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016

Version Control

Version	Author	Job title	Date
Version 2	Andrew Potts	Commissioning Officer	6 th November 2023

1. Details of the initiative

	Title of the Initiative: Children and Young People Services Strategic Plan 2023-26
1a	Service Area: Children & Young People Services
1b	Directorate: Social Services, Health & Housing
1c	Summary of the initiative: To provide strategic direction for Children and Young People Social Care
1d	Is this a 'strategic decision'? Yes
1e	Who will be directly affected by this initiative? People aged up to 18+ who currently need social care and support; those who need care and support in the future; and their families and carers; NPT Children's Services staff; private service providers; third sector service providers.
1f	When and how were people consulted? A 60-day public consultation was held between 31 st July and 29 th September 2023 consisting of online surveys, and promotion via the Council's website and other media, staff teams and forums.

1g **What were the outcomes of the consultation?** Unfortunately, no responses were received. Whilst it does not necessarily suggest an endorsement of the Plan, it can also be said that no negative feedback was received and, given how widely the exercise was publicised, could be interpreted as suggestive of general support for the proposed Plan.

2. Evidence

What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?

- Monitoring reviews of the services
- Internal/monitoring data
- Social Services routinely collects data as part of the assessment/review process of individuals and carers, which is reported annually to Welsh Government.
- Data on complaints, MP and Elected Member contact
- Data on people receiving children's social care and support
- StatsWales data [Social services \(gov.wales\)](https://stats.wales.gov.uk/)
- West Glamorgan Population Needs Assessment [West Glamorgan Population Needs Assessment 2022-2027](#)
- NPT CBC CYPS Plan <https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/16040/cyps-plan-2019-22.pdf?v=20210810131153>

The data below show overall numbers of people accessing Children's Social Care services:

Looked After Children			
Age	Female	Male	Total
0	4	4	8
1	5	7	12
2	1	1	2
3	5	3	8
4	3	4	7
5	5	4	9
6	5	7	12
7	7	3	10
8	2	3	5
9	6	8	14
10	2	5	7
11	10	8	18
12	4	10	14
13	7	14	21
14	11	16	27
15	12	15	27
16	9	18	27
17	14	22	36
Totals	112	152	264

Ethnicity	Number
ARAB	4
BANGLADESHI	1
OTHER	5
OTHER ASIAN	1
OTHER MIXED	2
ROMA	1
WELSH	39
WHITE BRITISH	186
WHITE OTHER	3
NOT STATED	22
Total	264

- 52% of Children Looked After (Care Experienced) are male, 48% are female
- Those aged 17 currently represent the single largest age group at 14% of the total
- Males aged 17 represent the single largest group overall
- More than a third (36%) of children are aged 10 years and under, while 64% are aged 11 to 17 years
- Those who described themselves as White British represent the single largest ethnicity group (70%), followed by Welsh (15%)

Child Protection			
Age	Female	Male	Total
0	4	1	5
1	0	0	0
2	2	0	2
3	3	1	4
4	1	3	4
5	2	2	4
6	1	3	4
7	1	1	2
8	1	2	3
9	2	0	2
10	0	4	4
11	0	2	2
12	1	1	2
13	1	0	1
14	2	2	4
15	1	1	2
16	1	0	1
17	0	0	0
Totals	23	23	46

Ethnicity	Number
WELSH	8
WHITE BRITISH	20
WHITE BLACK/CARIB.	1
NOT STATED	17
Total	46

- There is an equal split between females and males on the Child Protection Register
- Those aged less than 1 year old currently represent the single largest age group at 11% of the total
- Females aged less than 1 year, and males aged 10 years jointly represent the single largest individual groups overall (8% each of the overall total, and 17% each of their respective gender)
- Those who described themselves as White British represent the single largest ethnicity group (43%), followed by those not stated (37%)

Children Receiving Care and Support	
Age	Total
0	31
1	35
2	31
3	21
4	23
5	26
6	42
7	45
8	60
9	40
10	43
11	53
12	56
13	63
14	66
15	48
16	49
17	40
UNBORN	36
Total	808

- There are currently a total of 808 children receiving care and support
- Those aged 14 years represent the single largest group (8.2%)
- More than half (54%) of children receiving care and support are aged 10 years or under, including 4.5% who are unborn
- Care and Support reports do not collect gender and ethnicity data

3. Equalities

a) How does the initiative impact on people who share a **protected characteristic**?

Protected Characteristic	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Age	X			<p>Children and young people receiving care and support do so as a result of their age and circumstances.</p> <p>The various services should have a positive impact as the aim is to offer flexible, personalised and outcome-focused services.</p> <p>There are no changes to the eligibility criteria for any of the services.</p> <p>Providers of various services, both commissioned and in-house, develop care and support plans in conjunction with children, young people and families. This plan is person-centred and will take into account any specific requirements resulting from children's, young persons and families' protected characteristics to ensure that there is equality of outcomes.</p> <p>Contracts with commissioned providers have clauses relating to ensuring compliance with the relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>Commissioned services are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales and inspections take place to ensure that providers meet the relevant Statutory Regulations. This includes Regulations on equality and diversity.</p> <p>All services operating on behalf of NPT CBC are monitored by the Common Commissioning Unit (CCU), which includes receiving staff and service user feedback and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the services. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns</p>

			<p>about the service, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Commissioned providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the service has led to unintended/unidentified negative impacts on children and young people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The various services have monitoring systems in place to ensure that staff are adequately trained and meet relevant standards (e.g. for administration of medication, manual handling). Further monitoring systems are in place to ensure that the services delivered are of a good quality and meet children and young people’s personal outcomes. These monitoring systems will also enable the services to identify whether there are unintended consequences which may impact on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The services will be monitored by the CCU (which includes receiving staff and service user feedback) and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the services. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns about services, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the services has led to unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan will be monitored to understand if its impact has positively improved outcomes for children, young people and families requiring social care and support. This will also help to identify any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p>
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<p>Disability</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>Children, young people and families receiving a care and support service may have a disability.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan aims to provide services that should have a positive impact as the aim is to offer children, young people and families more personalised and outcome-focused services.</p> <p>No changes are being made to the eligibility criteria for service provision.</p> <p>Providers of various services, both commissioned and in-house, develop care and support plans in conjunction with children, young people and families. This plan is person-centred and will take into account any specific requirements resulting from children's, young persons and families' protected characteristics to ensure that there is equality of outcomes.</p> <p>Contracts with commissioned providers have clauses relating to ensuring compliance with the relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>Commissioned services are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales and inspections take place to ensure that providers meet the relevant Statutory Regulations. This includes Regulations on equality and diversity.</p> <p>All services operating on behalf of NPT CBC are monitored by the Common Commissioning Unit (CCU), which includes receiving staff and service user feedback and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the services. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns about the service, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Commissioned providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the service has led to</p>
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			<p>unintended/unidentified negative impacts on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The various services have monitoring systems in place to ensure that staff are adequately trained and meet relevant standards (e.g. for administration of medication, manual handling, safeguarding). Further monitoring systems are in place to ensure that the services delivered are of a good quality and meets a person's personal outcomes. These monitoring systems will also enable the service to identify whether there are unintended consequences which may impact on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Contracts have clauses relating to ensuring providers compliance with the relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>Services are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales and inspections take place to ensure that the providers meet the relevant Statutory Regulations. This includes Regulations on equality and diversity.</p> <p>The services will be monitored by the CCU (which includes receiving staff and service user feedback) and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Service. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns about the Service, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the Service has led to unintended/unidentified negative impacts on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan will be monitored to understand if its impact has positively improved outcomes for children, young people and families requiring social care and</p>
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			support. This will also help to identify any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.
Gender reassignment	X		<p>The services are delivered across all genders and gender identities. Staff employed by the providers will be from across the spectrum of genders and gender identities.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan aims to provide services that have a positive impact as it aims to offer children, young people and families more personalised and outcome-focused services.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan does not make any changes to the eligibility criteria for services.</p> <p>Providers of various services, both commissioned and in-house, develop care and support plans in conjunction with children, young people and families. This plan is person-centred and will take into account any specific requirements resulting from children's, young persons and families' protected characteristics to ensure that there is equality of outcomes.</p> <p>Contracts with commissioned providers have clauses relating to ensuring compliance with the relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>Services are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales and inspections take place to ensure that the Provider meets the relevant Statutory Regulations. This includes Regulations on equality and diversity.</p> <p>All services operating on behalf of NPT CBC are monitored by the Common Commissioning Unit (CCU), which includes receiving staff and service user feedback and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the services. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns about the service, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p>

			<p>Commissioned providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the service has led to unintended/unidentified negative impacts on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The various services have monitoring systems in place to ensure that staff are adequately trained and meet relevant standards (e.g. for administration of medication, manual handling, safeguarding). Further monitoring systems are in place to ensure that the services delivered are of a good quality and meets a person's personal outcomes. These monitoring systems will also enable the service to identify whether there are unintended consequences which may impact on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan will be monitored to understand if its impact has positively improved outcomes for children, young people and families requiring social care and support. This will also help to identify any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p>
Marriage & civil partnership	X		<p>Staff that deliver the service may be married or in a civil partnership.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan should have a positive impact as it aims to offer children, young people and families more personalised and outcome-focused services, which can help alleviate the strain of informal caring relationships, such as husband/wife caring for their children.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan does not make any changes to the eligibility criteria for services.</p> <p>Providers of various services, both commissioned and in-house, develop care and support plans in conjunction with children, young people and families. This plan is person-centred and will take into account any specific requirements resulting from</p>

			<p>children's, young persons and families' protected characteristics to ensure that there is equality of outcomes.</p> <p>Contracts with commissioned providers have clauses relating to ensuring compliance with the relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>Commissioned services are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales and inspections take place to ensure that the Provider meets the relevant Statutory Regulations. This includes Regulations on equality and diversity.</p> <p>All services operating on behalf of NPT CBC are monitored by the Common Commissioning Unit (CCU), which includes receiving staff and service user feedback and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the services. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns about the service, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Commissioned providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the service has led to unintended/unidentified negative impacts on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The various services have monitoring systems in place to ensure that staff are adequately trained and meet relevant standards (e.g. for administration of medication, manual handling). Further monitoring systems are in place to ensure that the services delivered are of a good quality and meets a person's personal outcomes. These monitoring systems will also enable the services to identify whether there are unintended consequences which may impact on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan will be monitored to understand if its impact has positively improved outcomes for children, young people and families requiring social care and</p>
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			support. This will also help to identify any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.
Pregnancy and maternity		X	<p>It is possible that people receiving care and support will have a protected characteristic due to their pregnancy/maternity status.</p> <p>Employees of providers may have a protected characteristic due to their pregnancy/maternity status.</p> <p>There are contractual clauses within the commissioned provider contracts relating to compliance with employment law.</p> <p>Staff recruitment will be in line with HR policies, process and all relevant legislation.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan will be monitored to understand if its impact has positively improved outcomes for children, young people and families requiring social care and support. This will also help to identify any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p>
Race		X	<p>The services are delivered across all ethnic groups. Employees of providers may have a protected characteristic due to their race.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan should have a positive impact as it aims to offer more flexible, personalised and outcome-focused services.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan does not make any changes to the eligibility criteria for services.</p> <p>Providers of various services, both commissioned and in-house, develop care and support plans in conjunction with children, young people and families. This plan is person-centred and will take into account any specific requirements resulting from</p>

			<p>children's, young persons and families' protected characteristics to ensure that there is equality of outcomes.</p> <p>Contracts with commissioned providers have clauses relating to ensuring compliance with the relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>Services are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales and inspections take place to ensure that providers meet the relevant Statutory Regulations. This includes Regulations on equality and diversity.</p> <p>All commissioned care services operating on behalf of NPTCBC are monitored by the CCU, which includes receiving staff and service user feedback and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the services. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns about the service, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Commissioned providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the service has led to unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Services have monitoring systems in place to ensure that staff are adequately trained and meet relevant standards (e.g. for administration of medication, manual handling). Further monitoring systems are in place to ensure that the services delivered are of a good quality and meets a person's personal outcomes. These monitoring systems will also enable the service to identify whether there are unintended consequences which may impact on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan will be monitored to understand if its impact has positively improved outcomes for children, young people and families requiring social care and</p>
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			support. This will also help to identify any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.
Religion or belief	X		<p>The services are delivered to children, young people and families across all religions/beliefs. Employees of providers may have a protected characteristic due to their religion/belief.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan should have a positive impact as it aims to offer a more flexible, personalised and outcome-focused care and support service.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan does not make any changes to the eligibility criteria for services.</p> <p>Providers of various services, both commissioned and in-house, develop care and support plans in conjunction with children, young people and families. This plan is person-centred and will take into account any specific requirements resulting from children's, young persons and families' protected characteristics to ensure that there is equality of outcomes.</p> <p>Contracts with commissioned providers have clauses relating to ensuring compliance with the relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>Commissioned services are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales and inspections take place to ensure that the Provider meets the relevant Statutory Regulations. This includes Regulations on equality and diversity.</p> <p>All commissioned care services operating on behalf of NPT CBC are monitored by the CCU, which includes receiving staff and service user feedback and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the services. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns about the service, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p>

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Sex	X		<p>Services are delivered across all genders. Employees of providers may have a protected characteristic due to their sex.</p> <p>48% of children and young people looked after, and 50% on the Child Protection Register are female.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan should have a positive impact as it aims to offer children, young people and families more personalised and outcome-focused service.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan does not make any changes to the eligibility criteria for services.</p> <p>Providers of various services, both commissioned and in-house, develop care and support plans in conjunction with children, young people and families. This plan is</p>

			<p>person-centred and will take into account any specific requirements resulting from children's, young persons and families' protected characteristics to ensure that there is equality of outcomes.</p> <p>Contracts with commissioned providers have clauses relating to ensuring compliance with the relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>Commissioned services are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales and inspections take place to ensure that the Provider meets the relevant Statutory Regulations. This includes Regulations on equality and diversity.</p> <p>All commissioned care services operating on behalf of NPT CBC are monitored by the CCU, which includes receiving staff and service user feedback and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the services. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns about the service, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Commissioned providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the service has led to unintended/unidentified negative impacts on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Services have monitoring systems in place to ensure that staff are adequately trained and meet relevant standards (e.g. for administration of medication, manual handling). Further monitoring systems are in place to ensure that the services delivered are of a good quality and meet a person's personal outcomes. These monitoring systems will also enable the service to identify whether there are unintended consequences which may impact on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p>
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			<p>The Strategic Plan will be monitored to understand if its impact has positively improved outcomes for children, young people and families requiring social care and support. This will also help to identify any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p>
Sexual orientation	X		<p>Services are delivered across all sexual orientations. Employees of providers may have a protected characteristic due to their sexual orientation.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan should have a positive impact as it aims to offer more flexible, personalised and outcome-focused services.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan does not make any changes to the eligibility criteria for social care services.</p> <p>Providers of various services, both commissioned and in-house, develop care and support plans in conjunction with children, young people and families. This plan is person-centred and will take into account any specific requirements resulting from children's, young persons and families' protected characteristics to ensure that there is equality of outcomes.</p> <p>Contracts with commissioned providers have clauses relating to ensuring compliance with the relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>Commissioned services are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales and inspections take place to ensure that the providers meet the relevant Statutory Regulations. This includes Regulations on equality and diversity.</p> <p>All commissioned care services operating on behalf of NPT CBC are monitored by the CCU, which includes receiving staff and service user feedback and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the services. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns about the service,</p>

			<p>including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Commissioned providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the service has led to unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Services have monitoring systems in place to ensure that staff are adequately trained and meet relevant standards (e.g. for administration of medication, manual handling). Further monitoring systems are in place to ensure that the service delivered is of a good quality and meets a person's personal outcomes. These monitoring systems will also enable the services to identify whether there are unintended consequences which may impact on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan will be monitored to understand if its impact has positively improved outcomes for children, young people and families requiring social care and support. This will also help to identify any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p>
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What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

- Monitoring of the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of CIW Inspection Reports on Services by the CCU
- Analysis of Provider monitoring data by the CCU
- Monitoring of the Strategic Plan by the CCU
- Obtaining feedback from stakeholders

b) How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Public Sector Equality Duty**?

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	X			Prevention and early intervention services will support children, young people and families with care and support needs to remain safe in their own homes and communities.
To advance equality of opportunity between different groups	X			Enables children, young people and families with care and support needs to have equality of opportunity to remain living in their own homes and communities.
To foster good relations between different groups	X			Enables children, young people and families with care and support needs to remain in their local communities.

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

- Monitoring of the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of CIW Inspection Reports on Services by the CCU
- Analysis of Provider monitoring data by the CCU
- Monitoring of the Strategic Plan by the CCU
- Obtaining feedback from stakeholders

4. Socio Economic Duty

Impact	Details of the impact/advantage/disadvantage
Positive/Advantage	<p>Social care helps to support people that may be more likely to have a low socio-economic status to manage their health and wellbeing needs and enables children, young people and families to achieve their personal outcomes.</p> <p>Rebalancing the market will create new employment opportunities within the Council, which will have a positive economic impact within Neath Port Talbot.</p>
Negative/Disadvantage	
Neutral	<p>Rebalancing the market will create new employment opportunities within the Council, which will have a positive economic impact.</p> <p>For employees of the providers, their employment will continue.</p>

What action will be taken to reduce inequality of outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of the Services by the CCU • Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services by the CCU • Analysis of CIW Inspection Reports on Services by the CCU • Analysis of Provider monitoring data by the CCU • Monitoring of the Strategic Plan by the CCU • Obtaining feedback from stakeholders

5. Community Cohesion/Social Exclusion/Poverty

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Community Cohesion	X			Enables children and young people with care and support needs to remain with their families and/or in their local communities wherever possible.
Social Exclusion	X			Enables children and young people with care and support needs to remain with their families and/or in their local communities wherever possible.
Poverty	X			Rebalancing the market will create new employment opportunities within the Council, which will have a positive economic impact. For employees of the providers, their employment will continue.

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

- Monitoring of the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of CIW Inspection Reports on Services by the CCU
- Analysis of Provider monitoring data by the CCU
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6. Welsh

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
What effect does the initiative have on: – people’s opportunities to use the Welsh language	X			There will continue to be a requirement for commissioned providers and in-house services to deliver services to the service users in their chosen first language. External providers are bound by employment legislation relating to the Welsh Language Staff recruitment into in-house services will be in line with HR policies, process and all relevant legislation.
– treating the Welsh and English languages equally	X			There will continue to be a requirement for commissioned providers and in-house services to deliver services to the service users in their chosen first language. External providers are bound by employment legislation relating to the Welsh Language Staff recruitment into in-house services will be in line with HR policies, process and all relevant legislation.

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What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

- Monitoring of the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services by the CCU
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7. Biodiversity

How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Biodiversity Duty**?

Biodiversity Duty	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity			X	N/A.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.			X	N/A.

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?
N/A.

8. Well-being of Future Generations

How have the five ways of working been applied in the development of the initiative?

Ways of Working	Details
i. Long term – looking at least 10 years (and up to 25 years) ahead	<p>The services help to support children, young people and families with achievement of their long term health and wellbeing outcomes. These include services which play an essential part in supporting children, young people and families to live safely within their own homes and local communities.</p> <p>The aim is to help to ensure that there are sustainable services that are more responsive to children, young people’s and families’ individual needs.</p>
ii. Prevention – preventing problems occurring or getting worse	<p>The emphasis of the Strategic Plan is on care and support services that help to minimise or prevent the need for more complex/long-term services. These include services which promote the vice of the child, as well as services in the community e.g. forster care which will prevent the need for more institutionalised support such as a residential care home admission.</p>
iii. Collaboration – working with other services internal or external	<p>Involves working with in-house, private and third sector providers of various services. It also involves more personalised working with children, young people and families in the development of services to meet their care and support needs.</p>
iv. Involvement – involving people, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the population	<p>The Strategic Plan aims to offer a more person-centred approach to the delivery of care, which is more flexible to children, young people’s and families’ individual needs. Feedback from service users and providers (including staff) will be obtained as part of service evaluation.</p> <p>Providers are asked to obtain service user feedback in order to inform the delivery and performance of services. Service user feedback is also gathered as part of contract monitoring.</p>
v. Integration – making connections to maximise contribution to:	<p>Is underpinned by the values and principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014, by offering maximum voice and control to service users and by ensuring market stability.</p>

Council's well-being objectives	All of our children and young people have the best start in life, so they can be the best they can be.
Other public bodies objectives	The Strategic Plan sets out how the Council and its partners can support children, young people and families resident in the county to live as safely and independently as possible with appropriate levels of social care and support. Create safe, confident and resilient communities, focusing on vulnerable children, young people and families.

9. Monitoring Arrangements

Provide information on the monitoring arrangements to:

Monitor the impact of the initiative on Equalities, Community Cohesion, the Welsh Measure, Biodiversity Duty and the Wellbeing Objectives.

- Monitoring of the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of CIW Inspection Reports on the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of Provider monitoring data by the CCU
- Monitoring of the Strategic Plan by the CCU
- Obtaining feedback from stakeholders

10. Assessment Conclusions

Please provide details of the conclusions reached in relation to each element of the assessment:

	Conclusion
Equalities	The indication is that the Strategic Plan will have a positive impact, however systems will be in place that will allow officers to check that the Strategic Plan is having its intended outcomes and not

	resulting in any unintended negative consequences for children and young people with a protected characteristic.
Socio Economic Disadvantage	The indication is that the Strategic Plan will have a positive impact, however systems will be in place that will allow officers to check that the Strategic Plan is having its intended outcomes and not resulting in any unintended negative consequences for children, young people and families in regards to social economic disadvantages.
Community Cohesion/ Social Exclusion/Poverty	The indication is that the Strategic Plan will have a positive impact, however systems will be in place that will allow officers to check that the Strategic Plan is having its intended outcomes and not resulting in any unintended negative consequences for children, young people and families in regards to community cohesion, social exclusion and/or poverty.
Welsh	The indication is that the Strategic Plan will have a positive impact, however systems will be in place that will allow officers to check that the Strategic Plan is having its intended outcomes and not resulting in any unintended negative consequences for children, young people and families wishing to use the Welsh Language.
Biodiversity	Not applicable to the proposal under review.
Well-being of Future Generations	The indication is that the Strategic Plan will have a positive impact, however systems will be in place that will allow officers to check that the Strategic Plan is having its intended outcomes and not resulting in any unintended negative consequences against the aims of the well-being of future generations.

Overall Conclusion

Please indicate the conclusion reached:

- **Continue** - as planned as no problems and all opportunities have been maximised
- **Make adjustments** - as potential problems/missed opportunities/negative impacts have been identified along with mitigating actions
- **Justification** - for continuing with the initiative even though there is a potential for negative impacts or missed opportunities
- **STOP** - redraft the initiative as actual or potential unlawful discrimination has been identified

Please provide details of the overall conclusion reached in relation to the initiative

- No negative impacts identified at this stage and the indication is that the impact will be positive.
- Processes are in place to monitor the impact for any unintended negative consequences.

11. Actions

What actions are required in relation to obtaining further data/information, to reduce or remove negative impacts or improve positive impacts?

Action	Who will be responsible for seeing it is done?	When will it be done by?	How will we know we have achieved our objective?
Monitoring of the Services by the Common Commissioning Unit	PO Commissioning	Annually	Monitoring reports
Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services by the Common Commissioning Unit	PO Commissioning	Ongoing as they are received	Investigation reports and corrective action plans
Analysis of CIW Inspection Reports on Services by the Common Commissioning Unit	PO Commissioning	As they are published	Monitoring reports
Analysis of Provider monitoring data by the Common Commissioning Unit	PO Commissioning	Annually	Monitoring reports
Ensure contracts have clauses relating to compliance with relevant equalities legislation	PO Commissioning	Before service commences	Contract

Ensure contracts have clauses around Welsh Language	PO Commissioning	Before service commences	Contract
Providers to implement own monitoring systems	Provider	On commencement of service	Monitoring reports

12. Sign off

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Andrew Potts	Commissioning Officer	A.Potts	6/11/23
Signed off by	Keri Warren	Head of Service/Director		

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

NEATH PORT TALBOT SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY CABINET BOARD

25th January 2024

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF ADULT SERVICES – A. THOMAS

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All wards

NEATH PORT TALBOT ADULT SOCIAL CARE STRATEGY 2023 - 2026

Purpose of the Report:

To inform members of the outcome of the consultation on the draft Neath Port Talbot Adult Social Care Strategy 2023-26 (“Living the life you want”).

Executive Summary:

This Strategy sets out how Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (‘the Council’) and its partners can support adults resident in the county to live as independently as possible with appropriate levels of social care and support.

Background:

On 13th July 2023 the Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Cabinet Board approved a 60 day public consultation of the Strategy.

The purpose of the Adult Social Care Strategy 2023-26 “Living the life you want” is to outline the strategic direction of the Council for providing adult social care and support.

Individual choice and a flexible approach to service delivery has been vitally important, and listening and acting upon the views of our citizens and service providers will remain key. We have set out the Strategy covering three broad themes:

- Helping people to help themselves (IAA, supporting unpaid carers, promoting Assistive Technology)
- Building relationships and making connections (unpaid carers, social isolation, remodelling Network teams, Prevention and Early Intervention, volunteering)
- Living the life you want (putting individuals at the centre of decision making, positive risk-taking, appropriate accommodation)

A range of engagement and consultation activities took place between 31st July and 29th September 2023 to help inform the Plan. The purpose of this was to:

- Provide a mechanism for people to contribute their views of the Plan, make comments and suggestions, including alternative proposals
- Find out whether people agreed or disagreed with the proposals and the reasons why.

A wide ranging consultation generated three online questionnaire responses. A full consultation report is included as Appendix 5 to this

document, including a “you said, we did” section. Some comments received were statements which did not require a response. All comments received are included for reference purposes.

A key theme was the acknowledgement of a focus on individual’s care and support needs, putting people at the centre of decision making.

In light of the consultation responses the essence of the draft Strategy remains intact, i.e. the themes outlined above.

We are challenging and changing how we deliver social care in NPT in order to improve services, reduce our expenditure as we face a cost-of-living crisis, and live within the Council’s available resources. This will put Adult Social Care on a sustainable footing whilst ensuring that people who need services receive them.

However, our fundamental vision for Adult Social Care remains; residents should live as independently as possible, carers are supported in their caring role, and adults at risk of abuse or neglect are kept safe from harm.

Furthermore, the Strategy will be subject to regular review to ensure it maintains relevance.

A copy of the Strategy is attached at Appendix 1.

Financial Impacts:

Taking forward the priorities within the Strategy will be undertaken in line with the available budget, where appropriate. Programmes of work with financial implications will be outlined separately to seek approval.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

A first stage impact assessment has been 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. The first stage impact assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment was required.

An overview of the Integrated Impact Assessment has been included below in summary form only and it is essential that Members read the Integrated Impact Assessment, which is attached to the report at Appendix 4, for the purposes of the meeting.

- No negative impacts identified at this stage and the indication is that the overall impact will be positive. Processes are in place to monitor the impact for any unintended negative consequences.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

The Strategy is a high level document intended to meet the needs of the whole county borough including the valleys communities.

Furthermore, as actions to take forward the priorities within the Strategy are developed, consideration of the impact on supporting valleys communities will be given as part of the individual impact assessments.

Workforce Impacts:

The contents of this report do not have any impact on the Council's workforce.

Legal Impacts:

There are no legal implications associated with this item.

Risk Management Impacts:

There are no known risks associated with this item.

Consultation:

On 13th July 2023, Members approved a 60 day public consultation in respect of the Strategy. During this period, 31st July to 29th September 2023, the consultation was promoted via the Council's website and other media, staff teams and forums.

A consultation document, an easy read version of the Strategy, and plan on a page were all developed prior to the consultation. In addition, all materials are available in Welsh.

The volume of response was not statistically significant enough to suggest that feedback was representative of any widespread objection or endorsement and, given how widely the exercise was publicised, could be interpreted as suggestive of general support for the proposed Strategy.

Recommendations:

Having had due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment it is recommended that Members approve the Neath Port Talbot Adult Social Care Strategy 2023-26 as detailed in Appendix 1.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To ensure a range of good quality care and support is available to meet the needs of adults resident in Neath Port Talbot.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Adult Social Care Strategy 2023-26

Appendix 2: Adult Social Care Strategy – Easy Read

Appendix 3: Adult Social Care Strategy – Plan on a Page

Appendix 4: Integrated Impact Assessment

Appendix 5: Adult Social Care Strategy Consultation Document

List of Background Papers:

None

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council



Living the life you want

Adult Social Care Strategy 2023-26

Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol, Iechyd a Thai
Social Services, Health & Housing

www.npt.gov.uk

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Foreword

Social care is an essential part of our society. At its best, social care enables and transforms peoples' lives; whether because they are becoming older and in need of care and additional support, or have support needs related to learning disabilities, physical disabilities or mental health conditions, and other vulnerabilities.

But how social care is delivered is changing. Increasingly, people want to remain in their own homes and communities for as long as they can¹. Services are becoming less 'institutionalised' and more flexible with greater emphasis on local community partnership working. Our approach focuses on working *with* people to find solutions, instead of providing services *to* people.

Since we published our NPT Plan for Adult Social Care in April 2019 many things have changed. No one could have foreseen the events of the last few years. The Covid-19 pandemic that swept across our nation, and indeed around the world, has changed our lives possibly forever.

While recognising the sadness, trauma and difficulties of that period there have been some positive outcomes which we want to build on. People and communities have been brought together; there is greater emphasis on individual wellbeing; and a strengths-based approach – building on what people can do for themselves, rather than what they can't – has accelerated.

We have found new ways of reaching out to people, have seen some extraordinary acts of kindness and true innovation, and have learned more about the things that are really important to us all. Feeling safe and well, and being able to live our lives with dignity, independence and meaning is vital for good mental and physical health and wellbeing.

We have reviewed and reflected on our Vision to create a Neath Port Talbot where everyone has an equal opportunity to be healthier, happier, safer and prosperous. And a place where everyone participates fully in community life – socially and economically.

In many ways the pandemic has highlighted and reinforced our key aims and ambitions – to keep the vulnerable people of NPT safe, well and independent, and to provide effective and timely support where it is needed.

¹ [What older people want from home care services – Commissioning home care for older people \(scie.org.uk\)](https://www.scie.org.uk)

Individual choice and a flexible approach to service delivery has been vitally important, and listening and acting upon the views of our citizens and service providers will remain key.

The huge value of formal and informal carers has been reiterated. We know that many people are indebted to those who provide daily care and support, and how much of a lifeline carers continue to be.

Similarly, the role of volunteers has been at the forefront of the pandemic response. Volunteers have stepped up in their local communities, fulfilling a wide range of vital support roles including delivering food, collecting medication, and working in vaccination centres.

Many new relationships have been formed and existing relationships strengthened. We will continue to support carers, volunteers and local communities to build on the great assets they have developed.

We will put greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention services, providing advice, support and early help to individuals to lead their lives with greater control, whilst building community capacity and resilience. This helps people maintain their health and wellbeing and prevents, reduces or delays the need for long term care.

A skilled, resilient and well-trained social care workforce will always underpin what we do and what we want to achieve. We will continue to initiate and support work around recruitment, retention, learning and development for the care sector, as well as support wellbeing and promote positive mental health.

The pandemic has also shown that new ways of working and delivering services, such as the use of new technologies, can offer different and effective value-for-money services to complement or replace traditional service models. We will continue to investigate and invest in new technologies and new ways of working.

We are challenging and changing how we deliver social care in NPT in order to improve services, and ensure we always meet individuals' needs in an outcome-focused way. This will put Adult Social Care on a sustainable footing whilst ensuring that people who need services receive them.

Our fundamental vision for Adult Social Care remains – residents should live as independently as possible, carers are supported in their caring role, and adults at risk of abuse or neglect are kept safe from harm.

Introduction

Our aim is to help people live as safely and independently as possible.

Where possible, we want to enable our residents to have their own front door, to live in the borough and be connected to their communities.

Social care can help enable people to live the lives they want. It can support people to live independently, to work, to socialise, to care and support family members, to play an active role in their communities and, where necessary, protects people to keep them safe from harm. Adult Social Care in NPT is a major employer supporting local jobs and contributing to our local economy.

The number of people who will need Adult Social Care services in the future is expected to rise significantly and local authorities have statutory duties to meet these needs. This strategy outlines the approach we are taking to effectively manage these challenges within the resources we have available over the next three years. In summary we have set out how we will:

- keep adults safe who are at risk of abuse or neglect
- focus on preventive services which help to avoid problems from getting worse
- work with people to increase their independence, health and well-being
- work with partners to provide more joined up health and social care services
- work with local people to design, develop and plan together new and innovative services which deliver better outcomes and better value, and
- continue to manage our own finances and contribute to the Council's prudent financial management

Background – Responding to Changing Demand

- There will be more demand for support for adults of all ages with long-term health conditions, learning and/or physical disabilities, autism, or a mental health condition
- More children, who when they turn 18, will need services

- Newer social challenges highlighted during the pandemic, such as social isolation, obesity and complex mental health conditions, coupled with those with chronic illnesses waiting longer for treatment, add pressures on already stretched social care services and present challenges for individuals.

Expectations are changing. People want good quality, safe, personalised care closer to home and good relationships with the people who care for them and who uphold their dignity. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of these needs.

- Most people prefer to have a home of their own within their communities until it is no longer possible for them to do so
- Residential care is not a first-choice option for most
- People understand that technology will play a part in providing support in some way
- The pandemic made it clear that people value social networks

We will listen to what makes sense to people and offer support to get involved in activities outside the home to help prevent loneliness or conditions such as depression.

It is essential that we recognise people's potential to be more independent and involved in their care, and in doing so we will, where appropriate, help them to access employment and training opportunities, and support them to live independently with the right kind of support.

We will look at innovative ways of delivering care, including learning from other councils and providers. We have found that many of the requests for help we receive could be better met more quickly, and be provided more appropriately, by other organisations working closer to the person. So there is a continued move towards prevention, early intervention and place-based services, where partnership working in people's own communities is promoted.

National context

We have come out of a pandemic but are now entering a cost of living crisis, with high energy costs and inflation, wage increases and other cost pressures in every sector of society including health and social care. There is a national shortage of carers as more people leave the sector for jobs elsewhere.

The number of people aged over 65 is projected to rise to a quarter of the population before 2050. Although future demand for social care cannot be simply linked to an ageing population, the projected increase in numbers of older people with complex care needs (such as severe dementia, which is expected to double within 20 years) is likely to lead to increased pressure on statutory care services.

Welsh Government launched its 'Rebalancing Care and Support' White Paper which seeks to:

- Refocus the fundamentals of the care market – away from price towards quality and value
- Reorient commissioning practices – towards managing the market and focusing on outcomes
- Promote integration mechanisms – simplifying joint planning and delivery

The aim is to rebalance the care and support market based on a national framework where services are organised regionally and delivered locally, so that there is neither an over reliance on the private sector, nor a monopoly by the public sector.

In this context, 'rebalancing' is a broad set of descriptions of system changes including: away from complexity, towards simplification; away from price, towards quality and social value; away from reactive commissioning, towards managing the market; away from task-based practice, towards outcome-based practice; and away from an organisations focus, towards more effective partnership working; to co-produce better outcomes with people.

We will also support moves towards greater collaboration and integration with health services, with support centred on geographical areas such as GP clusters, to deliver local services dependent on local needs.

Local Context

There are more than 142,000 people living in NPT. It is estimated that more than 30,000 people, or around 27% of the local adult population, are aged 65 and over – a level in line with the Wales average.

At time of writing there were in excess of 2,150 adults (about 2% of the adult population) receiving one or more social care services, including nearly 900 people in residential or nursing care, almost 700 people receiving domiciliary care, and 400 in receipt of direct payments. There are more than 400 adults with a learning disability, over 100 with a mental health condition, and 150 with a physical disability receiving some form of external care and support. And there are around 20,000 unpaid carers living in NPT.

Neath Port Talbot will spend approximately £99 million this year delivering Adult Social Care, a sum consisting of grants, other income plus almost a quarter of the Council's total budget. We know that NPT, like other local authorities across Wales, is facing financial challenges. Increasing demand and tightening budgets will put added pressures on services. It is therefore vital that we make the best use of resources to meet people's needs. This means that we need to focus on delivering services differently to prevent, delay and reduce needs from escalating; as well as delivering and commissioning services which people need in the most cost-effective way.

Our guiding principles

The following will guide how we deliver the strategy, how we achieve our outcomes and highlight what we want to do better.

1. Emphasise prevention and early intervention services, reducing the need for long term formal care and support
2. Support people to live a fulfilling life, connected to their community and resources around them, and provide care and support where needed
3. Provide care and support with accommodation where this is needed in a safe and supportive environment that can be called home
4. Make sure support is led by 'what matters to you', with helpful information and easier to understand steps
5. Recognise and value unpaid carers and the social care workforce, and the contribution they make to our communities
6. We will aim to ensure a good choice of care and support is available, with a focus on people's experiences and improving quality

Outcomes from this strategy

Our outcomes are about what we want to focus on getting right. They are about building on the foundations of wellbeing. By working closely in partnership, including with colleagues across the whole of health and social care services, we can deliver care to adults in the most outcome-focused, safe and cost-effective way. These outcomes will help us monitor our progress in making a difference.

Here's what we expect to see when we get things right.

Safe and well

Everyone has the right to feel safe in a place they can call home and be protected from harm. We want everyone in NPT to be able to manage their health and wellbeing for as long as possible and to be able to lead the life they choose after a change in circumstances.

Active and independent

Everyone in NPT should be able to live independently and have choice and control over decisions that affect their care and support. People also have a responsibility to keep themselves fit and well. Our work will support as many people as possible to increase their independence regardless of condition, disability or frailty.

Advocate

This is about representing your interests and helping you to express your needs and wishes. This can involve an independent person working with you.

Connected and engaged

Everyone can connect with communities that care and support them. We listen to their voices and experience. People are engaged in their community, sharing their experience, and contributing to their overall wellbeing. Unpaid carers can access a network that enables them to get support for their own mental health and wellbeing.

Efficient and effective

Everyone is supported by a system that works smartly together. People have a choice of quality services that meet their needs. This is supported by a well-trained professional workforce.

What are we going to do?

The way we want to work will mean that people we support, including carers, will make more informed decisions about what support is right for them.

Our support will be more personalised, easy to access, more joined-up and consistent for the people we support, improving their overall outcomes and experience of adult social care and how we link with our partner organisations.

The voices of the people we support will be heard as individuals and guide us on a path of continuous improvement.

We will work with communities early on to help people feel empowered, resilient and develop their independence and access trusted support - this could mean informal support arranged by the person, or support that is arranged by the voluntary sector or adult social care.

We will support people to make decisions on how they receive their care and support. To achieve this, we will put people at the centre of care, give them choice and control, and provide timely information, advice and assistance.

For ease of reference we have set out our key actions under three broad themes for service change and improvement, but none of the services are mutually exclusive. Some people might benefit from one or another form of care and support. The important thing is that it is tailored to the individual's needs.

Front Door Services

People benefit from information, advice and assistance. This could include simple signposting to early help services, assessments of their needs, or safeguarding vulnerable individuals.

Information, advice and assistance

Having easily accessible information, advice and assistance on what support is available, and who can access it, is important for people to make informed decisions. This is particularly the case when people are first identified as requiring support or having social care needs.

To access wider opportunities in the community, people need:

- **Information about what is available** – people need to know what groups, support and activities are available and how to access them. Online information will play a role in future service delivery.

- **Inclusive communities and businesses** – Communities and businesses should be open to people with different life experiences and needs. That is not to say that all groups need to understand every condition that people may have, but they should have an openness and willingness to learn how to make their groups and activities more inclusive.
- **Support** – when people can access opportunities in their communities on their own, they have more freedom to do what they want, when they want. Some people may need help to develop the skills and confidence to get to this point. There are also people who may continue to need support to participate in the community. Funded care packages and having sufficient care workers are important in these circumstances. However, we also need to think creatively about how people can access their communities, so they have more flexibility and autonomy. This could include exploring how much help and support the community themselves are willing and able to provide.
- **Some people will require more support to access groups for a variety of reasons** – it is important to understand what help and support communities can provide.

[Unpaid Carers](#)

Neath Port Talbot has one of the highest number of unpaid carers (20,000 plus) in Wales. The contribution they make is immeasurable, therefore it is imperative to do all that we can to support them.

Neath Port Talbot invests in a variety of services for carers including information and advice, training, advocacy, drop-in support sessions and respite services. We want carers to be able to access a range of services and assistance which support them to continue their caring role.

[Assistive Technology](#)

Assistive Technology (AT) solutions can range from simple items to more complex products. One element of AT is a Telecare service that acts as a reactive alarm response service, but the adoption of new technology will widen the scope of this service to provide preventive support.

There is no single AT system – each package will be tailored to the needs of the individual, helping people with disabilities, restricted mobility or other

impairments to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible. The pandemic has accelerated digital change, and new technologies are enabling different ways for monitoring services which assist people to maintain their independence for longer.

[Families and close support networks](#)

Families and close support networks, including family and friend (unpaid) carers, are the bedrock of social care. Close personal relationships with partners, children, parents, siblings and close friendship networks are core to people's wellbeing.

While these relationships develop and evolve, having a social care need can add complexity. This is especially true when a person takes on an unpaid carer's role. Carers say they experience stress and struggle to manage their own physical and mental wellbeing alongside their caring role. This is supported by research which shows unpaid carers are more likely to suffer from poor health and wellbeing.

We will:

- ✓ Work with partners to review our collective approach to providing information, advice and assistance
- ✓ Enhance opportunities for people to participate in and benefit from peer support
- ✓ Promote awareness of self-care options to support people to be independent
- ✓ Improve information about what community groups are available
- ✓ Encourage and work with communities and businesses to be more inclusive
- ✓ Collaborate to understand if there are gaps in specific geographical locations and improve the offer across the county borough
- ✓ Work with voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisations to consider how more people who access social care can be supported to volunteer
- ✓ Develop a volunteering network across Adult Services and the wider Council

- ✓ Deliver a Technology Enabled Care Strategy that promotes and enhances the use of Assistive Technology to help people remain independent for longer
- ✓ Deliver a Carers Strategy to reflect a new approach to working with carers in NPT, and aligned to the West Glamorgan Regional Carers Strategy
- ✓ Review and strengthen our carers offer recognising the valuable contribution carers make, including flexible respite services and utilising/repurposing our buildings
- ✓ Work with regional partners to implement the All Wales Dementia Care Pathway of Standards
- ✓ Improve our respite offer, including for people with dementia

[Prevention and Early Intervention: Building relationships and making connections](#)

People are the most important asset we have in NPT. The relationship between family and friends, between the carer and the cared for, can have an impact on people's lives within communities.

One of the main issues facing society is loneliness and social isolation; this in turn has an impact on people's quality of life. This can lead to a higher reliance on communities and more formal support.

The provision of aids, adaptations and equipment can help maintain, promote and restore people's independence so that they are able to stay in their homes safely for longer.

Short term therapy-led reablement in the community can prevent or delay people needing longer term care and support.

We will review our front door arrangements to ensure people contacting Adults Services are dealt with promptly.

[Wider social networks](#)

Having a social life is important to many people. They want to be able to talk to and connect with others beyond the people they live with and their family. Having the skills and opportunities to make friends and maintain these friendships improves people's quality of life and overall wellbeing.

Having meaningful and varied activities in life is fundamental to promoting physical and mental health and wellbeing. Often, people want to connect to the wider community. This might be people in the local area or people with similar interests, hobbies, or volunteering. This can be an important step in recovery. Our Local Area Coordinators play an important part in supporting people who access services to get connected with their wider community.

Accessing community groups and activities is also an essential part of having varied and meaningful activities. Volunteering should be valued as an end in itself. It helps people build confidence and self-worth and provides an opportunity to connect with others. Infrastructure needs to be in place to support volunteers to find suitable placements, ensure volunteers are well managed and supported, and that volunteer roles truly enhance services and support.

NPT is continuing to review and develop volunteer services, and think about the critical impact that the role of volunteering has in enabling the Council to meet its objectives.

[Promotion of self-management](#)

The promotion of self-management is a crucial basis for the future of effective health and social care provision. The aim is to support people to make their own choices and decisions at the earliest stage, and maximise their opportunities for control and ownership, minimising the need for input from services.

Our Community Occupational Therapy Team help people to stay well by enabling them to make healthy choices, understand and manage their chronic conditions, and support people to maintain a quality of life. This is achieved through the identification of and provision of equipment and adaptations. Such provisions can reduce risk and injury, help with people's confidence and their mental wellbeing, and may prevent unnecessary admissions to hospital, and enable people to lead independent lives and achieve their desired outcomes.

The Sensory Support Team provide specialist support to people who are deaf, hearing impaired, vision impaired or deafblind by undertaking assessments and providing training, equipment and support to enable anyone with a sensory loss to live as independently as possible.

Formal help and support

It is important for people to feel listened to and supported in a non-judgemental way. People who provide support inherently understand the challenges they face, and do not define individuals by their condition or situation. As the population ages, the number of people with one or more chronic conditions is expected to increase.

People need services to be accessible in a variety of ways and be joined up so people do not have to repeat their stories multiple times.

We have remodelled our Adult Social Care Services into three community networks and are further developing integrated community hubs to fully promote prevention and early intervention. This will include Mental Health services based in the community hubs.

We will actively support individual wellbeing through the co-location and integration of wide-ranging services, including housing, employment, education and community support services. Our aim is to offer joined-up services to assist people to live independently via support from place based teams who know their area and communities well.

Community Equipment plays a critical role in supporting the effective moving and handling of people who are frail or unable to transfer independently. Where an unpaid carer is assisting the person, the correct equipment plays an equally critical role in enabling them to do so safely.

We will:

- ✓ Geographically co-locate services to enable seamless delivery within communities
- ✓ Develop a 'hub and spoke' network of integrated facilities to ensure access to all types of prevention and early intervention services and support
- ✓ Bring mental health services into community hubs
- ✓ Take a whole family approach when planning and delivering care in all circumstances where it is right for the individual and family
- ✓ Develop and deliver a co-produced loneliness and social Isolation strategy

- ✓ Collaborate with partners, in particular community groups, to tackle social isolation
- ✓ Promote self-management and help people maximise their own independence
- ✓ Support people to remain independent at home, where possible, through the provision of equipment and adaptations

Formal Care and Support: Living the life you want

We will continue to promote prevention and early intervention as well as informal care and support. However, there will always be people who will require formal (or 'statutory') social care services. We will put people at the centre of decision-making about the care and support they receive, identifying what matters to them and the outcomes they want to achieve.

[Putting people at the centre of care: choice, control and flexibility](#)

When people become eligible for social care, they can choose to access the social care and support they need by using a Direct Payment (DP). A DP can be paid to an individual or to someone on their behalf to access care and achieve their personal outcomes. DPs can offer more choice and control, allowing people to explore alternative means of having care and support.

[Decision-making by frontline staff and the role of positive risk-taking](#)

Traditional forms of care and support have sometimes focussed on what people can't do, rather than what they can do. NPT provides an outcome-focused support service with domiciliary care providers. Taking managed risks is part of leading a fulfilling life. It is not only the individual who needs to be willing to consider and make different choices. It is their carers, support networks and, crucially, the professionals involved in their care.

For professionals to be comfortable in supporting positive risk-taking there needs to be a safe supportive culture, where managers encourage staff to empower people to take positive risks, recognising that sometimes things will go wrong. This will be backed up by policies and procedures that promote innovation and creativity to find solutions for people.

We will:

- ✓ Recognise and build on people's strengths, empowering people to co-produce their care and support packages
- ✓ Support people to achieve their personal goals
- ✓ Support a culture of positive risk-taking within NPT Adult Services
- ✓ Work towards a consistent approach of assessment with Health colleagues
- ✓ Implement strength-based, outcome-focused practice across Adult Social Care
- ✓ Remodel domiciliary care services to an outcome-focused approach
- ✓ Re-balance staffing within Adult Social Work services towards a professionally qualified workforce
- ✓ Support young people with complex needs and their families to transition from Children's Social Care into Adults Social Care as seamlessly as possible

[Bridging gaps, improving quality](#)

The paucity of care within Adult Social Care services is recognised both locally and nationally. This is having a direct impact on NPT's ability to deliver its statutory services and is leading to gaps in support.

We are working closely with the wider care sector to develop innovative ways to providing care and support. This includes engaging with Health Board colleagues and Care Inspectorate Wales to ensure that quality of care is not compromised.

There are examples of other areas where local action is going some way to address the care worker shortage. For example we are exploring the promotion of self-employed Personal Assistants as an alternative to traditional care delivery.

We will:

- ✓ Work collaboratively to explore potential local solutions to carer shortages, drawing on lessons from elsewhere
- ✓ Continue to work regionally and nationally to promote the positive value of working in social care and to attract, retain and develop care workers in NPT

- ✓ Support delivery of additional packages of care by recruitment of domiciliary care staff, strengthen the Community Wellbeing Team and increase the number and availability of Personal Assistants (Direct Payments)
- ✓ Scope out and develop a limited company to support future community services delivery across Adult Services
- ✓ Promote best practice, commit to improving and meeting standards, and encourage evidence-based innovation across all parts of Adult Social Care

[A Place Called Home](#)

Home should be a safe, warm environment, where people can live as independently as possible. Where people live, the quality of their home and who they live with and near is important to people.

There are three broad areas:

- Living in your own home
- Living with others
- Moving out of the family home

[Living in your own home](#)

People becoming older and living longer or who have increasing social care needs often want to be able to remain in their own home. They want to do this with quality, reliable support so they can continue to live well and retain control within their own home. Work to help people when they leave hospital, and timely access to adaptations, equipment and technology results in people being able to remain at home for longer, reducing the need for long-term care or residential support. This doesn't only apply to older people. For example, people with complex needs or those who are homeless want a place to call their own.

We will implement our **Housing Support Grant (HSG) Strategy** which sets out how the council will work with its partners towards the aim of ending homelessness.

We will:

- ✓ Support more people to stay in their own homes, building on work with partners to improve support when people leave hospital and timely access to adaptations, equipment and technology
- ✓ Develop a Housing Adaptations Strategic Framework with Swansea Council
- ✓ Implement the means-test removal for small and minor adaptations works
- ✓ Review and re-procure HSG funded services in line with the implementation of our Rapid Rehousing and Housing First plans
- ✓ Increase the amount of prevention work to reduce the number of homelessness presentations
- ✓ Focus on prevention, with early consideration of alternatives to adaptations which may provide a better solution, such as a move to more suitable housing
- ✓ Develop digital prevention services across Adult Services

[Living with others – alternative housing options](#)

Not everyone with social care needs lives on their own or with their families. Adults with social care needs in NPT live in a variety of different care settings, from traditional residential care homes, to Extra Care and Supported Living. Extra Care and Supported Living can be a very positive experience for people. It enables them to feel safe, secure and to connect with people, addressing social isolation.

For this to be a positive experience, people typically want:

- Choice over who they live with, such as people of a similar age who they can 'get on with'
- Their own private living space
- Control over what they do and when they do it, meals and access to family and friends
- To be close to their family and friends so connections can be maintained
- Appropriate support

Essentially, they want it to feel like their home as much as possible. There are already models of care in NPT which demonstrate these qualities, such as Adult Family Placements and Extra Care housing.

Adult Family Placements is a service that matches adults with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, older people and/or people with mental health needs with carers and their families, to live within their home. Adult Family Placements enable people who need support to choose to become part of a family instead of staying in a residential facility or being looked after by a team of support workers. It is also an important element of the '**progression model**' of care. The progression model is centred on strengths-based assessments which maximise opportunities for independence, helping those accessing the service to acquire independent living skills. By moving away from more risk-averse practices and models of support and instead recognise and safely build on people's individual qualities, strengths and abilities, we will be able to ensure that people are able to live more independent lives including, where appropriate, supporting people to live in their own homes and communities. This service is under-utilised in NPT as it is currently available mainly to people with learning disabilities requiring long-term care but we know that, for example, older people could benefit from it for short-term respite.

Extra Care enables people with care and support needs to live in a community setting with on-site support and services. It typically consists of a number of self-contained flats in a purpose-built facility, with access to communal areas and services along with support such as domiciliary care. This type of service is currently under-utilised in NPT.

Supported Living is housing-based support predominantly for people with learning disabilities and complex needs. As part of the progression model, over a number of years it is anticipated that housing-based support will gradually change from being a service that consists of mainly residential care or supported living to one where the majority of individuals are living more independently.

We are planning to expand Adult Family Placements, Extra Care and other alternative accommodation models.

We will:

- ✓ Expand alternative accommodation models, including:
 - For older people: Adult Family Placements and Extra Care, and promote them as viable options; and explore the viability of an older people's / retirement village

- For people with complex needs: promote Adult Family Placements and supported living, and put them at the heart of the progression model of care
- ✓ Increase options and opportunities for Adult Family Placements within an in-house service provision
- ✓ Develop a Rapid Rehousing Plan which includes Housing First model, with improved interventions
- ✓ Remodel the Council's existing suite of temporary accommodation options

Moving out of the family home

For young adults, moving out of home is an important milestone on the transition to adulthood. People with social care needs, such as autism and learning disabilities, or a physical disability, are no different. For some young people this will mean a fully independent place and for others this will be living with other people. In addition, for those young adults transitioning out of the family home, the young person and parent need to be involved in the conversation. Both need to feel confident that the young person will be able to live well.

We will:

- ✓ Support young adults to move out of the family home in a planned way
- ✓ Develop two training flats within the Bspoked Independent Living Hub to support people to develop and maintain independent living skills and facilitate access to community based resources
- ✓ Review the regional multi-agency Transition Policy for children and young people to ensure it is making a difference to the experience of young people in transition; and make sure we are meeting the objective with a clear comprehensive and robust process in place to guide the transition of all young people from Children's to Adult Services
- ✓ Map, identify and develop accommodation and care needs for young people aged 14-18. Within 12 months all accommodation needs mapped for young people aged 14 - 18. Identify unmet accommodation models to inform commissioning cycle/development of model of accommodation and care in the community

Glossary

Adult Family Placements: This is a care and support service for people aged 18+ who want to live independently in their community, with the support of a family and community network; it's an alternative to residential care or supported living.

Care at home / Domiciliary Care / Homecare: These terms refer to the care and support provided by a professional paid carer in an individual's home.

Care homes: This is where individuals live and are cared for in a residential setting.

Day Opportunities / Day Centres / Day Services: These terms all refer to community building-based services that provide care services and/or activities for older people, disabled people or people who need extra support.

Direct Payments: A direct payment is the money that the Local Authority pays directly to somebody for them to arrange and pay for their own care and support services.

Extra Care: This is an independent housing arrangement for older people (aged 65+) who require accommodation and some level of care and/or support, including personal care and chores.

Personal Assistant: These are employed directly by a person who needs care and support and who manages and pays for this themselves or through a direct payment and supports them with various aspects of their daily life.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): This is protective clothing, masks, aprons, or other garments or equipment designed to protect the wearer's body from injury or infection.

Self-funder: A self-funder is someone who pays the full cost of their care and support with no contributions from the Local Authority.

Supported Living: This refers to the arrangements for younger adults with disabilities, mental ill health and social impairments who require accommodation and some level of care and/or support.



**Easy Read Version
of
Neath Port Talbot Council's
Adult Services Strategy
2023-2026**



What is the Strategy about?



The Strategy describes how Neath Port Talbot Council will provide services to adults that have an assessed social care need.



The Strategy tells us how the Council will make sure adults receive services that meet their assessed needs in ways which are fair to all.

This will include helping people to be as independent as possible by supporting them to live in their own homes and communities wherever possible.



This Strategy will apply to adults who already receive services as well as adults who may need services in the future.

What does Neath Port Talbot Council want out of the Strategy?

We want to make sure that the most vulnerable adults in Neath Port Talbot have the right amount of help to meet their needs.

The Strategy is set out along three broad themes:

1. Front Door Services: Helping people to help themselves

This is about people having choice, control and flexibility over the care and support they receive. We will help do this by making sure people have access to information, advice and assistance so that they can make informed decisions.

2. Prevention and Early Intervention: Building relationships and making connections

This is about making sure people have access to formal and informal support in their communities.

3. Formal Care and Support: Living the life you want

This is about having the right amount and type of formal care and support that best meets your individual outcomes.

Our Aim

The Council wants to help its most vulnerable citizens and make sure those who need support get it.

We want to do this in a way that is fair to all those in need.

When assessing or re-assessing your needs, the Council will take into account the social care resources available to it when considering how those needs might be met.

We will offer people choice and control over the services that can best meet their assessed needs and desired outcomes in a way that is sustainable.

Who will be affected by this Strategy?

We will look at what services a person needs as part of their Care and Support Plan assessment.

We will also look at a person's needs as part of their Care and Support Plan review to see if their needs and outcomes have changed, or if their needs can be met by a different type of service.

This means that adults currently using services and those who might need them in the future will be affected by this Strategy.

Adult Services Strategy 2023 - 2026

We are challenging and changing how we deliver social care in NPT in order to improve services, reduce our expenditure as we face a cost-of-living crisis, and live within the Council's available resources. This will put Adult Social Care on a sustainable footing whilst ensuring that people who need services receive them.

However, our fundamental vision for Adult Social Care remains – residents should live as independently as possible, carers are supported in their caring role, and adults at risk of abuse or neglect are kept safe from harm.



Helping people to help themselves

We will promote self-care and help people to remain in their own communities with minimal intervention.

The main areas to enable this include:

- Information advice and assistance
- Supporting unpaid carers
- Increasing the use of Assistive Technology



Building relationships and making connections

People are the most important asset we have in NPT. It is the relationship between family and friends, between the cared for and the carer, within communities, and between businesses, employees, and customers that has the biggest impact on people's lives. Three key relationships are important:

- Families and close support networks
- Formal help and support
- Wider social networks



Living the life you want

We will continue to promote prevention and early intervention as well as informal care and support. But there will always be people who need more formal care and support. This should put the individual first so that their desired outcomes - how they want to live - are met. This will include:

- Putting people at the centre of their care
- Positive risk-taking by frontline staff
- The right type of accommodation and support
- Constantly improving our services

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Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

This Integrated Impact Assessment considers the duties and requirements of the following legislation in order to inform and ensure effective decision making and compliance:

- Equality Act 2010
- Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016

Version Control

Version	Author	Job title	Date
Version 2	Andrew Potts	Commissioning Officer	7 th November 2023

1. Details of the initiative

	Title of the Initiative: “Living the life you want” - Adult Social Care Strategy 2023-26
1a	Service Area: Adult Services
1b	Directorate: Social Services, Health & Housing
1c	Summary of the initiative: To provide strategic direction for Adult Social Care
1d	Is this a ‘strategic decision’? Yes
1e	Who will be directly affected by this initiative? People aged 18+ who currently need social care and support; those who need care and support in the future; and their families and carers; NPT Adult Social Care services and staff; private service providers; third sector service providers.
1f	When and how were people consulted? A 60-day public consultation was held between 31 st July and 29 th September 2023 consisting of online surveys, and promotion via the Council’s website and other media, staff teams and forums.
1g	What were the outcomes of the consultation?

Consultation and engagement activities included:

- An overarching public consultation exercise;
- Online consultation exercise;
- inviting social media response; and
- inviting formal written responses.

Further detailed information on the consultation arrangements is included in the Consultation Report attached as an appendix to the report. Overall, the responses received mean that no substantive changes to the draft Strategy are required.

2. Evidence

What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?

- Monitoring reviews of the services
- Brokerage and other internal data
- Social Services routinely collects data as part of the assessment/review process of individuals and carers, which is reported annually to Welsh Government.
- Data on complaints, MP and Elected Member contact
- Data on people receiving adult social care
- StatsWales data [Social services \(gov.wales\)](#)
- West Glamorgan Population Needs Assessment [West Glamorgan Population Needs Assessment 2022-2027](#)
- NPT CBC Adults Plan <https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/14700/plan-for-adult-social-care-2019-2022.pdf?v=20210914151908>

The data below show overall numbers of people accessing Adult Social Care services:

Age Group	Female	Male	Total
<20	11	17	28
20s	52	94	146
30s	66	62	128
40s	72	51	123
50s	114	86	200
60 - 64	79	57	136
65 - 69	88	60	148
70 - 74	131	85	216
75 - 79	247	121	368
80 - 84	358	142	500
85 - 89	467	163	630
90 - 94	310	110	420
95+	100	39	139
Grand Total	2095	1087	3182

- More than three quarters (76%) are aged 65+
- And almost half of those (49%) are aged 85+
- Two-thirds of service users are female
- Females aged 85-89 years make up the largest group of service users (22% of female service users and 15% of all service users)

Age Group	Female	Male	Total
DIVORCED	132	52	184
MARRIED	418	307	725
NOT DISCLOSED	2	1	3
PARTNERS	16	5	21
SEPARATED	16	16	32
SINGLE	302	288	590
WIDOWED	847	170	1017
NOT STATED	362	248	610
Grand Total	2095	1087	3182

- Marital status was not stated for nearly one-fifth (19%) of service users
- A third (32%) of all service users are widowed
- Widowed females represent the largest recorded marital status group (83% of those widowed and 40% of all female service users)

Ethnicity	Female	Male	Total
BANGLADESHI		1	1
BLACK CARIBBEAN	1	1	2
CHINESE		2	2
INDIAN	1		1
NOT OBTAINED	1		1
OTHER	4	2	6
OTHER ASIAN	1		1
OTHER BLACK	6	4	10
OTHER MIXED		1	1
PAKISTANI	1		1
WELSH	722	292	1014
WHITE BRITISH	876	491	1367
WHITE IRISH	6	3	9
WHITE OTHER	6	4	10
WHITE/SCOTTISH	3	3	6
NOT STATED	467	283	750
Grand Total	2095	1087	3182

- White British is the largest recorded ethnicity group (43%) followed by Welsh (32%)
- A quarter (24%) didn't state their ethnicity

3. Equalities

a) How does the initiative impact on people who share a **protected characteristic**?

Protected Characteristic	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Age	X			<p>The majority (76%) of people receiving a service are aged 65 and over, while almost half (49%) of those are aged 85 and over</p> <p>The various services should have a positive impact as the aim is to offer people more flexible, personalised and outcome focused services.</p> <p>There are no changes to the eligibility criteria for any of the services.</p> <p>Providers of various services, such as domiciliary care (both commissioned and in-house) develop a service delivery plan in conjunction with the service user. This plan is person centred and will take into account any specific requirements resulting from a persons protected characteristic to ensure that there is equality of outcomes.</p> <p>Contracts with commissioned providers have clauses relating to ensuring compliance with the relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>Commissioned services are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales and inspections take place to ensure that providers meet the relevant Statutory Regulations. This includes Regulations on equality and diversity.</p> <p>All services operating on behalf of NPT CBC are monitored by the Common Commissioning Unit (CCU), which includes receiving staff and service user feedback and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the services. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns</p>

			<p>about the service, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Commissioned providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the service has led to unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The various services have monitoring systems in place to ensure that staff are adequately trained and meet relevant standards (e.g. for administration of medication, manual handling). Further monitoring systems are in place to ensure that the services delivered are of a good quality and meet people's personal outcomes. These monitoring systems will also enable the services to identify whether there are unintended consequences which may impact on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The services will be monitored by the CCU (which includes receiving staff and service user feedback) and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the services. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns about services, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the services has led to unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Strategy will be monitored to understand if its impact has positively improved outcomes for people requiring social care and support. This will also help to identify any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p>
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<p>Disability</p>	<p>X</p>		<p>The majority of people receiving a service will have a disability or old age-related frailty.</p> <p>The Strategy aims to provide services that should have a positive impact as the aim is to offer people more flexible, personalised and outcome focused services.</p> <p>No changes are being made to the eligibility criteria for service provision.</p> <p>Providers of various services such as domiciliary care (both commissioned and in-house) develop a service delivery plan in conjunction with the service user. This plan is person centred and will take into account any specific requirements resulting from a persons protected characteristic to ensure that there is equality of outcomes</p> <p>Contracts with commissioned providers have clauses relating to ensuring compliance with the relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>Commissioned services are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales and inspections take place to ensure that providers meet the relevant Statutory Regulations. This includes Regulations on equality and diversity.</p> <p>All commissioned care services operating on behalf of NPT CBC are monitored by the CCU, which includes receiving staff and service user feedback and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the services. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns about the service, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Commissioned providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the service has led to unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p>
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			<p>The various services have monitoring systems in place to ensure that staff are adequately trained and meet relevant standards (e.g. for administration of medication, manual handling). Further monitoring systems are in place to ensure that the services delivered are of a good quality and meets a person's personal outcomes. These monitoring systems will also enable the service to identify whether there are unintended consequences which may impact on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>After new services begin social work teams will undertake a statutory 6 week social work review. This will help to identify at an early stage any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Contracts have clauses relating to ensuring providers compliance with the relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>Services are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales and inspections take place to ensure that the providers meet the relevant Statutory Regulations. This includes Regulations on equality and diversity.</p> <p>The services will be monitored by the CCU (which includes receiving staff and service user feedback) and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Service. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns about the Service, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the Service has led to unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Strategy will be monitored to understand if its impact has positively improved outcomes for people requiring social care and support. This will also help to identify</p>
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			any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.
Gender reassignment	X		<p>The services are delivered across all genders and gender identities. Staff employed by the providers will be from across the spectrum of genders and gender identities.</p> <p>The Strategy aims to provide services that have a positive impact as it aims to offer people a more flexible, personalised and outcome focused services.</p> <p>The Strategy does not make any changes to the eligibility criteria for services.</p> <p>Providers of various services such as domiciliary care (both commissioned and in-house) develop a service delivery plan in conjunction with the service user. This plan is person centred and will take into account any specific requirements resulting from a persons protected characteristic to ensure that there is equality of outcomes</p> <p>Contracts with commissioned providers have clauses relating to ensuring compliance with the relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>Services are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales and inspections take place to ensure that the Provider meets the relevant Statutory Regulations. This includes Regulations on equality and diversity.</p> <p>All commissioned care services operating on behalf of NPT CBC are monitored by the CCU, which includes receiving staff and service user feedback and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the services. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns about the service, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p>

			<p>Commissioned providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the service has led to unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The various services have monitoring systems in place to ensure that staff are adequately trained and meet relevant standards (e.g. for administration of medication, manual handling). Further monitoring systems are in place to ensure that the services delivered are of a good quality and meets a person's personal outcomes. These monitoring systems will also enable the service to identify whether there are unintended consequences which may impact on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Strategy will be monitored to understand if its impact has positively improved outcomes for people requiring social care and support. This will also help to identify any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p>
<p>Marriage & civil partnership</p>	<p>X</p>		<p>People who receive services may be married or in a civil partnership. Approximately 23% of all service users are married, while another 33% are widowed. Staff that deliver the service may be married or in a civil partnership.</p> <p>The Strategy should have a positive impact as it aims to offer people a more flexible, personalised and outcome focused service, which can help alleviate the strain of informal caring relationships, such a husband/wife caring for their partner.</p> <p>The Strategy does not make any changes to the eligibility criteria for services.</p> <p>Providers of various services such as domiciliary care (both commissioned and in-house) develop a service delivery plan in conjunction with the service user. This plan is person centred and will take into account any specific requirements resulting from a persons protected characteristic to ensure that there is equality of outcomes</p>

			<p>Contracts with commissioned providers have clauses relating to ensuring compliance with the relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>Commissioned services are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales and inspections take place to ensure that the Provider meets the relevant Statutory Regulations. This includes Regulations on equality and diversity.</p> <p>All commissioned care services operating on behalf of NPT CBC are monitored by the CCU, which includes receiving staff and service user feedback and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the services. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns about the service, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Commissioned providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the service has led to unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The various services have monitoring systems in place to ensure that staff are adequately trained and meet relevant standards (e.g. for administration of medication, manual handling). Further monitoring systems are in place to ensure that the services delivered are of a good quality and meets a person's personal outcomes. These monitoring systems will also enable the services to identify whether there are unintended consequences which may impact on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Strategy will be monitored to understand if its impact has positively improved outcomes for people requiring social care and support. This will also help to identify any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p>
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<p>Pregnancy and maternity</p>			<p>X</p> <p>It is possible that people receiving care and support will have a protected characteristic due to their pregnancy/maternity status.</p> <p>Employees of providers may have a protected characteristic due to their pregnancy/maternity status.</p> <p>There are contractual clauses within the commissioned provider contracts relating to compliance with employment law.</p> <p>Staff recruitment will be in line with HR policies, process and all relevant legislation.</p> <p>The Strategy will be monitored to understand if its impact has positively improved outcomes for people requiring social care and support. This will also help to identify any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p>
<p>Race</p>	<p>X</p>		<p>The services are delivered across all ethnic groups. Employees of providers may have a protected characteristic due to their race.</p> <p>The Strategy should have a positive impact as it aims to offer people more flexible, personalised and outcome focused services.</p> <p>The Strategy does not make any changes to the eligibility criteria for services.</p> <p>Providers of various services such as domiciliary care (both commissioned and in-house) develop a service delivery plan in conjunction with the service user. This plan is person centred and will take into account any specific requirements resulting from a persons protected characteristic to ensure that there is equality of outcomes</p>

			<p>Contracts with commissioned providers have clauses relating to ensuring compliance with the relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>Services are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales and inspections take place to ensure that providers meet the relevant Statutory Regulations. This includes Regulations on equality and diversity.</p> <p>All commissioned care services operating on behalf of NPTCBC are monitored by the CCU, which includes receiving staff and service user feedback and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the services. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns about the service, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Commissioned providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the service has led to unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Services have monitoring systems in place to ensure that staff are adequately trained and meet relevant standards (e.g. for administration of medication, manual handling). Further monitoring systems are in place to ensure that the services delivered are of a good quality and meets a person's personal outcomes. These monitoring systems will also enable the service to identify whether there are unintended consequences which may impact on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Strategy will be monitored to understand if its impact has positively improved outcomes for people requiring social care and support. This will also help to identify any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p>
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Religion or belief	X		<p>The services are delivered to people across all religions/beliefs. Employees of providers may have a protected characteristic due to their religion/belief.</p> <p>The Strategy should have a positive impact as it aims to offer people a more flexible, personalised and outcome focused service as well as reducing waiting times for commencing a package of care.</p> <p>The Strategy does not make any changes to the eligibility criteria for services.</p> <p>Providers of commissioned services such as domiciliary care (both commissioned and in-house) develop a service delivery plan in conjunction with the service user. This plan is person centred and will take into account any specific requirements resulting from a persons protected characteristic to ensure that there is equality of outcomes</p> <p>Contracts with commissioned providers have clauses relating to ensuring compliance with the relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>Commissioned services are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales and inspections take place to ensure that the Provider meets the relevant Statutory Regulations. This includes Regulations on equality and diversity.</p> <p>All commissioned care services operating on behalf of NPT CBC are monitored by the CCU, which includes receiving staff and service user feedback and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the services. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns about the service, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p>

			<p>Commissioned providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the service has led to unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Services have monitoring systems in place to ensure that staff are adequately trained and meet relevant standards (e.g. for administration of medication, manual handling). Further monitoring systems are in place to ensure that the services delivered are of a good quality and meets a person's personal outcomes. These monitoring systems will also enable the service to identify whether there are unintended consequences which may impact on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Strategy will be monitored to understand if its impact has positively improved outcomes for people requiring social care and support. This will also help to identify any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p>
Sex	X		<p>Services are delivered across all genders. Employees of providers may have a protected characteristic due to their sex.</p> <p>Two-thirds (66%) of people already receiving a service are female.</p> <p>The Strategy should have a positive impact as it aims to offer people a more flexible, personalised and outcome focused service.</p> <p>The Strategy does not make any changes to the eligibility criteria for services.</p> <p>Providers of commissioned services such as domiciliary care (both commissioned and in-house) develop a service delivery plan in conjunction with the service user. This plan is person centred and will take into account any specific requirements</p>

			<p>resulting from a persons protected characteristic to ensure that there is equality of outcomes</p> <p>Contracts with commissioned providers have clauses relating to ensuring compliance with the relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>Commissioned services are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales and inspections take place to ensure that the Provider meets the relevant Statutory Regulations. This includes Regulations on equality and diversity.</p> <p>All commissioned care services operating on behalf of NPT CBC are monitored by the CCU, which includes receiving staff and service user feedback and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the services. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns about the service, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Commissioned providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the service has led to unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Services have monitoring systems in place to ensure that staff are adequately trained and meet relevant standards (e.g. for administration of medication, manual handling). Further monitoring systems are in place to ensure that the services delivered are of a good quality and meet a person's personal outcomes. These monitoring systems will also enable the service to identify whether there are unintended consequences which may impact on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Strategy will be monitored to understand if its impact has positively improved outcomes for people requiring social care and support. This will also help to identify</p>
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			any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.
Sexual orientation	X		<p>Services are delivered across all sexual orientations. Employees of providers may have a protected characteristic due to their sexual orientation.</p> <p>The Strategy should have a positive impact as it aims to offer people a more flexible, personalised and outcome focused service.</p> <p>The Strategy does not make any changes to the eligibility criteria for social care services.</p> <p>Providers of commissioned services such as domiciliary care (both commissioned and in-house) develop a service delivery plan in conjunction with the service user. This plan is person centred and will take into account any specific requirements resulting from a persons protected characteristic to ensure that there is equality of outcomes.</p> <p>Contracts with commissioned providers have clauses relating to ensuring compliance with the relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>Commissioned services are regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales and inspections take place to ensure that the providers meet the relevant Statutory Regulations. This includes Regulations on equality and diversity.</p> <p>All commissioned care services operating on behalf of NPT CBC are monitored by the CCU, which includes receiving staff and service user feedback and the Unit will also analyse any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the services. This will ensure that the Council can identify if there are any concerns about the service, including any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p>

				<p>Commissioned providers are contractually required to implement monitoring systems, which will also help to identify if any aspect of the service has led to unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Services have monitoring systems in place to ensure that staff are adequately trained and meet relevant standards (e.g. for administration of medication, manual handling). Further monitoring systems are in place to ensure that the service delivered is of a good quality and meets a person’s personal outcomes. These monitoring systems will also enable the services to identify whether there are unintended consequences which may impact on people with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Strategy will be monitored to understand if its impact has positively improved outcomes for people requiring social care and support. This will also help to identify any unintended/unidentified negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic.</p>
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What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

- Monitoring of the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of CIW Inspection Reports on Services by the CCU
- Analysis of Provider monitoring data by the CCU
- Monitoring of the Strategy by the CCU
- Obtaining feedback from stakeholders

b) How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Public Sector Equality Duty**?

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	X			Prevention and early intervention services will support people with care needs to remain safe in their own homes.
To advance equality of opportunity between different groups	X			Enables people with care needs to have equality of opportunity to remain living in their own homes and communities.
To foster good relations between different groups	X			Enables people with care needs to remain in their local communities.

What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

- Monitoring of the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of CIW Inspection Reports on Services by the CCU
- Analysis of Provider monitoring data by the CCU
- Monitoring of the Strategy by the CCU
- Obtaining feedback from stakeholders

4. Socio Economic Duty

Impact	Details of the impact/advantage/disadvantage
Positive/Advantage	Social care helps to support people that may be more likely to have a low socio-economic status to manage their health and wellbeing needs and enables people to achieve their personal outcomes.

	Rebalancing the market will create new employment opportunities within the Council, which will have a positive economic impact within Neath Port Talbot.
Negative/Disadvantage	
Neutral	<p>There will be no change to the Council's Fairer Charging Policy in relation to receiving care and support.</p> <p>Rebalancing the market will create new employment opportunities within the Council, which will have a positive economic impact.</p> <p>For employees of the providers, their employment will continue.</p>

What action will be taken to reduce inequality of outcome

- Monitoring of the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of CIW Inspection Reports on Services by the CCU
- Analysis of Provider monitoring data by the CCU
- Monitoring of the Strategy by the CCU
- Obtaining feedback from stakeholders

5. Community Cohesion/Social Exclusion/Poverty

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
Community Cohesion	X			Enables people with care needs to remain in their local communities wherever possible.
Social Exclusion	X			Enables people with care needs to remain in their local communities wherever possible.

Poverty	X			<p>There will be no change to the Council's Fairer Charging Policy in relation to receiving care and support.</p> <p>Rebalancing the market will create new employment opportunities within the Council, which will have a positive economic impact.</p> <p>For employees of the providers, their employment will continue.</p>
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What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

- Monitoring of the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of CIW Inspection Reports on Services by the CCU
- Analysis of Provider monitoring data by the CCU
- Monitoring of the Strategy by the CCU
- Obtaining feedback from stakeholders

6. Welsh

	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this effect?
<p>What effect does the initiative have on:</p> <p>- people's opportunities to use the Welsh language</p>	X			<p>There will continue to be a requirement for commissioned providers and in-house services to deliver services to the service users in their chosen first language.</p> <p>External providers are bound by employment legislation relating to the Welsh Language</p> <p>Staff recruitment into in-house services will be in line with HR policies, process and all relevant legislation.</p>

<p>- treating the Welsh and English languages equally</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>There will continue to be a requirement for commissioned providers and in-house services to deliver services to the service users in their chosen first language.</p> <p>External providers are bound by employment legislation relating to the Welsh Language</p> <p>Staff recruitment into in-house services will be in line with HR policies, process and all relevant legislation.</p>
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<p>What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of the Services by the CCU • Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services by the CCU • Analysis of CIW Inspection Reports on the Services by the CCU • Analysis of Provider monitoring data by the CCU • Monitoring of the Strategy by the CCU • Obtaining feedback from stakeholders

7. Biodiversity

How will the initiative assist or inhibit the ability to meet the **Biodiversity Duty**?

Biodiversity Duty	+	-	+/-	Why will it have this impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity			X	N/A.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of the wider			X	N/A.

environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.				
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What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?

N/A.

8. Well-being of Future Generations

How have the five ways of working been applied in the development of the initiative?

Ways of Working	Details
i. Long term – looking at least 10 years (and up to 25 years) ahead	<p>The services help to support people with achievement of their long term health and wellbeing outcomes. These include services which play an essential part in supporting people to retain their independence and live safely within their own homes and local communities.</p> <p>The aim is to help to ensure that there are sustainable services that are more responsive to people’s individual need.</p>

ii. Prevention – preventing problems occurring or getting worse	The emphasis of the strategy is on care and support services that help to minimise or prevent deterioration of a service user’s independence. These include services in the community e.g. domiciliary care which will prevent the need for more institutionalised care such as a care home admission, and services aimed at preventing homelessness.
iii. Collaboration – working with other services internal or external	Involves working with in-house, private and third sector providers of various services. It also involves more personalised working with service users in the development of services to meet their care and support needs.
iv. Involvement – involving people, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the population	<p>The Strategy aims to offer a more person centred approach to the delivery of care, which is more flexible to a person’s individual needs. Feedback from service users and providers (including staff) will be obtained as part of service evaluation.</p> <p>Providers are asked to obtain service user feedback in order to inform the delivery and performance of services. Service user feedback is also gathered as part of contract monitoring.</p>
v. Integration – making connections to maximise contribution to:	Is underpinned by the values and principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014, by offering maximum voice and control to service users and by ensuring market stability.
Council’s well-being objectives	To improve the well-being of all adults who live in the county borough by delivering services that support their independence and safeguards them from harm.
Other public bodies objectives	The Strategy sets out how the Council and its partners can support adults resident in the county to live as independently as possible with appropriate levels of social care and support. Create safe, confident and resilient communities, focusing on vulnerable people. Encourage Ageing Well.

9. Monitoring Arrangements

Provide information on the monitoring arrangements to:

Monitor the impact of the initiative on Equalities, Community Cohesion, the Welsh Measure, Biodiversity Duty and the Wellbeing Objectives.

- Monitoring of the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of CIW Inspection Reports on the Services by the CCU
- Analysis of Provider monitoring data by the CCU
- Monitoring of the Strategy by the CCU
- Obtaining feedback from stakeholders

10. Assessment Conclusions

Please provide details of the conclusions reached in relation to each element of the assessment:

	Conclusion
Equalities	The indication is that the Strategy will have a positive impact, however systems will be in place that will allow officers to check that the Strategy is having its intended outcomes and not resulting in any unintended negative consequences for people with a protected characteristic.
Socio Economic Disadvantage	The indication is that the Strategy will have a positive impact, however systems will be in place that will allow officers to check that the Strategy is having its intended outcomes and not resulting in any unintended negative consequences for people in regards to social economic disadvantages.
Community Cohesion/ Social Exclusion/Poverty	The indication is that the Strategy will have a positive impact, however systems will be in place that will allow officers to check that the Strategy is having its intended outcomes and not resulting in any unintended negative consequences for people in regards to community cohesion, social exclusion and/or poverty.
Welsh	The indication is that the Strategy will have a positive impact, however systems will be in place that will allow officers to check that the Strategy is having its intended outcomes and not resulting in any unintended negative consequences for people wishing to use the Welsh Language.
Biodiversity	Not applicable to the proposal under review.

Well-being of Future Generations	The indication is that the Strategy will have a positive impact, however systems will be in place that will allow officers to check that the Strategy is having its intended outcomes and not resulting in any unintended negative consequences against the aims of the well-being of future generations.
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Overall Conclusion

Please indicate the conclusion reached:

- **Continue** - as planned as no problems and all opportunities have been maximised
- **Make adjustments** - as potential problems/missed opportunities/negative impacts have been identified along with mitigating actions
- **Justification** - for continuing with the initiative even though there is a potential for negative impacts or missed opportunities
- **STOP** - redraft the initiative as actual or potential unlawful discrimination has been identified

Please provide details of the overall conclusion reached in relation to the initiative

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No negative impacts identified at this stage and the indication is that the impact will be positive. • Processes are in place to monitor the impact for any unintended negative consequences.
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11. Actions

What actions are required in relation to obtaining further data/information, to reduce or remove negative impacts or improve positive impacts?

Action	Who will be responsible for seeing it is done?	When will it be done by?	How will we know we have achieved our objective?
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Monitoring of the Services by the Common Commissioning Unit	PO Commissioning	Annually	Monitoring reports
Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services by the Common Commissioning Unit	PO Commissioning	Ongoing as they are received	Investigation reports and corrective action plans
Analysis of CIW Inspection Reports on Services by the Common Commissioning Unit	PO Commissioning	As they are published	Monitoring reports
Analysis of Provider monitoring data by the Common Commissioning Unit	PO Commissioning	Annually	Monitoring reports
Ensure contracts have clauses relating to compliance with relevant equalities legislation	PO Commissioning	Before service commences	Contract
Ensure contracts have clauses around Welsh Language	PO Commissioning	Before service commences	Contract
Providers to implement own monitoring systems	Provider	On commencement of service	Monitoring reports

12. Sign off

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Andrew Potts	Commissioning Officer	A.Potts	7/11/23
Signed off by	Angela Thomas	Head of Service	A Thomas	21/11/2023

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CONSULTATION REPORT: Neath Port Talbot's Adult Social Care Strategy 2023 - 2026

Background

- 1.1 On 13th July 2023, Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Cabinet Board authorised officers to consult members of the public and other stakeholders for 60 days on Neath Port Talbot's Draft Adult Social Care Strategy 2023 - 2026.

The report highlighted the Council's proposals for the medium term future of Adult Social Care in Neath Port Talbot, including placing greater emphasis on early intervention and prevention services.

Set against a background of increasing demand for our services and economic pressures requiring budgetary savings, the provision of good social care support for adults and carers remains a priority of the Council.

Neath Port Talbot Council's Draft Adult Social Care Strategy 2023 – 2026 sets out three broad themes:

- Helping people to help themselves (IAA, supporting unpaid carers, promoting Assistive Technology)
- Building relationships and making connections (unpaid carers, social isolation, remodelling Network teams, Prevention and Early Intervention, volunteering)
- Living the life you want (putting individuals at the centre of decision making, positive risk-taking, appropriate accommodation)

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 A range of engagement and consultation activities have taken place in order to help inform Neath Port Talbot's Adult Social Care Strategy 2023 – 2026. The purpose of this was to:

- Provide a mechanism for people to contribute their views of the Plan, make comments and suggestions, including alternative proposals
- Find out whether people agreed or disagreed with the proposals and the reasons why.

3.0 Consultation objectives

- To provide a mechanism for people to contribute their views

- To find out if people agree or disagree with the proposals and the reasons for this
- To provide a mechanism for people to make comments and suggestions
- To provide a mechanism for people to suggest alternative proposals
- To ensure that the consultation was available in a format so people could understand

4.0 Overarching public consultation – Methodology

4.1 To help ensure that the consultation was as widely available as possible, people could submit their views by three mechanisms:

- **Online** - a self-completion questionnaire was published on the Council's website. Respondents were not asked to identify themselves, but were asked to indicate why they were interested in the Draft Plans and their postcode. The questionnaire was live from 31st July to 29th September 2023.
- **Email** - The email address ccu@npt.gov.uk was promoted for people who wanted to respond via this mechanism.
- **Corporate social media accounts** – the Council's corporate Facebook and X/Twitter accounts were also monitored for feedback on Neath Port Talbot's Adult Social Care Strategy 2023 – 2026.

4.2 The consultation was promoted via:

- The Council's dedicated web page - Have your say [Consultations - Neath Port Talbot Council \(npt.gov.uk\)](https://www.npt.gov.uk/consultations)
- The Council's corporate staff newsletter 'In the Loop'. The purpose of this was to encourage staff to give their views and as an additional way to raise awareness of the consultation amongst residents as a significant number of staff live in the county borough.

5.0 Overarching Public Consultation – Responses

A total of three completed questionnaires were received during the consultation period. All were completed in English and submitted online.

The following provides a summary of the feedback from the questionnaire responses. All percentages shown in this section are relative to the total number of completed questionnaires.

5.1 **About the respondents**

Of the 3 responses:

- 3 (100%) stated that they are a resident of Neath Port Talbot

5.2 **Age**

The respondents stated they were in the following age ranges: 1 (33%) 30 – 39, 1 (33%) 50-59 and 1 (33%) preferred not to say.

5.3 **Gender**

1 (33%) respondent was female, 1 (33%) was male and 1 (33%) preferred not to say.

5.4 **Ethnic origin**

2 (67%) respondents described their ethnicity as White British with 1 (33%) preferring not say.

5.5 **Sexual orientation**

2 (67%) respondents described themselves as heterosexual with 1 (33%) preferring not to say.

5.6 **Disability**

1 (33%) respondent stated that they did not have a disability, 1 (33%) said they did have a disability, while 1 (33%) preferred not to say.

5.7 **Welsh Language**

2 (67%) respondents reported as learner, while 1 (33%) stated they were a fairly fluent speaker and writer of Welsh.

6.0 **How respondents feel about the proposals**

The following summarises the responses received for each question.

6.1 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed Strategy?**

1 (33%) respondent stated they tend to agree; 1 (33%) neither agreed not disagreed; and 1 (33%) strongly disagreed.

6.2 How easy or difficult do you find it to get information about what social care and support you can have?

2 (67%) respondents stated that it was fairly easy and 1 (33%) stated don't know.

6.3 Do you think that the Adult Social Care Strategy would have a positive or negative impact on any of the adult social care sector?

2 (67%) respondents stated that it would have a positive impact and 1 (33%) stated it would have a negative impact.

6.4 Do you think that the Adult Social Care Strategy would have a positive or negative impact on the Welsh language?

2 (67%) respondents stated that it would have a positive impact and 1 (33%) stated don't know.

6.5 Do you think that the Adult Social Care Strategy would have a positive or negative impact on any protected equalities characteristics?

2 (67%) respondents stated that it would have a positive impact and 1 (33%) stated it would have a negative impact.

6.6 Do you think that the Adult Social Care Strategy would have a positive or negative impact on valleys communities?

1 (33%) respondent stated that it would have a positive impact, 1 (33%) stated it would have a negative impact, and 1 (33%) stated don't know.

6.7 How important is it for the Council to consider the resources it has available to support the most vulnerable residents and reduce overall dependency on social services?

3 (100%) respondents stated that it was very important.

7.0 Social Media and Email Responses

7.1 No responses were received via these sources.

8.0 Formal Responses

8.1 No formal responses were received from other stakeholders.

9.0 Petitions

9.1 The Council received no petitions relating to the Draft Strategy.

11.0 Council Response to the Consultation

11.1 The Council response to comments received is shown below in a “you said - we did” format

Number	You said – Comment	We did – Response
1	When providing care for vulnerable people expenditure should not be a factor. Duty of care is paramount.	The Council’s various policies ensure that individuals with an assessed social care need receive the right type and level of support.
2	I think it is vital that as an individual we are able to exercise choice and an opinion when planning our own support needs. More choice around care and support providers. If receipt of direct payments or attendance allowance we should have more choice in how we procure support.	All social care assessments and resulting care and support packages are person-centred in discussion with the individual and their family/carers. Direct Payments are offered to those who wish to have greater control over the delivery of their care and support.
3	Anything that collates and shares information about what's going on and what's available is a good thing. I like the idea of a central hub and integrating more services into a patch based network system means that you can combine specialist and local knowledge. As a council employee myself I know the value of being made aware of what services are out there.	No response required.
4	As I work within the social care sector, I am confident I am able to get the information I require, I often sign post clients and their families based on my own knowledge	No response required.
5	Sometimes knowing what's available can be quite challenging, there's often lots of different services provided by the authority and 3rd sector doing similar things. It's also hard to find all the information in one place.	The Council’s Single Point of Contact (SPOC) can provide advice and signposting regarding what services are available to individuals. This can often lead to a referral so that the individual receives appropriate care and support.

6	At the end of the day care will be reduced and people's lives will be made more difficult.	The Council's various policies ensure that individuals with an assessed social care need receive the right type and level of support.
7	I like the focus on empowering and informing individuals themselves and having a service model that does with rather than does for or does to. Giving people information early on can help them stay independent for longer and meet needs/outcomes in the community rather than relying on the authority allowing it to focus on things that only the authority can do.	The Council continues to emphasise Prevention & Early Intervention services to help people remain in their own homes and communities for as long as practicable.
8	Anything that is individual focussed will allow people to have services in their preferred language. For Welsh speakers this is important. Similarly if people have the option to get information and advice in their preferred language they'll be able to use it more	All care and support services are person-centred and this includes an individual's language preferences.
9	I firmly believe in empowering people regardless of age, disability etc. I like the focus on working with people, giving them the ability to make choices for them, allowing people to lead the lives they want rather than the ones we (the authority) think they should be leading etc.	No response required.
10	Reduces face to face care.	All those with an assessed social care need will receive the care and support they need, whether this is face to face care, the availability of Assistive Technology to help maintain independence, advice or signposting. This will be based on an individual assessment of the person's needs.
11	Informal carers would and should be recognise for the support that they provide within these communities.	The support of unpaid carers is central to our strategy and activities.
12	Considering the recent published review of the implementation of the Social Services and Well-	The Commissioning Unit and wider Adult Social Care conduct regular reviews of services to ensure individuals'

	<p>being Act by The Welsh Government I think it would be useful to test local NPTCBC implementation using the National review and to include the importance of reviewing implementation within the strategy. There must be an emphasis within the strategy that in accordance with the Act informal carers have the same rights as the people they care for. The strategy needs to recognise that the Voluntary Sector must be considered an equal partner in the planning and the delivery of the service.</p>	<p>needs are met. This includes commissioned services which support unpaid carers. The strategy will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure its relevance is maintained.</p>
13	<p>Couldn't agree more, it's empowering and a great source of self-esteem to be able to manage your own life as independently as possible and not get into a situation where you're dependent on the state for everything. As someone with a disability myself I think it's important to be encouraged to take responsibility and ownership of my own circumstances as much as possible. As the population ages the council has to be judicious and responsible with taxpayer funds and shouldn't be paying for things that can be met in the private/3rd sector.</p>	<p>No response required.</p>



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Name and date of Meeting

ACCESS TO MEETINGS/EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Purpose:	To consider whether the Public should be excluded from the following items of business.
Item (s):	<p>Agenda Item 13 – Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan – Appendix 6 and 7</p> <p>Agenda Item 14 - Neath Port Talbot Children & Young People Social Care Strategic Plan 2023-2026</p> <p>Agenda Item 15 – Business Case for Establishing an in-house Adult Family Placement Service</p>
Recommendation(s):	That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as set out in the Paragraphs listed below of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007 subject to the Public Interest Test (where appropriate) being applied.
Relevant Paragraph(s):	14 and 15

1. Purpose of Report

To enable Members to consider whether the public should be excluded from the meeting in relation to the item(s) listed above.

Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007, allows a Principal Council to pass a resolution excluding the public from a meeting during an item of business.

Such a resolution is dependant on whether it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the public were present during that item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information, as defined in section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972.

2. Exclusion of the Public/Public Interest Test

In order to comply with the above mentioned legislation, Members will be requested to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the item(s) of business identified in the recommendation(s) to the report on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as set out in the Exclusion Paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007.

Information which falls within paragraphs 12 to 15, 17 and 18 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended is exempt information if and so long as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The specific Exclusion Paragraphs and the Public Interest Tests to be applied are listed in Appendix A.

Where paragraph 16 of the Schedule 12A applies there is no public interest test. Members are able to consider whether they wish to waive their legal privilege in the information, however, given that this may place the Council in a position of risk, it is not something that should be done as a matter of routine.

3. Financial Implications

Not applicable

4. Integrated Impact Assessment

Not applicable

5. Valleys Communities Impact

Not applicable

6. Workforce Impact

Not applicable.

7. Legal Implications

The legislative provisions are set out in the report.

Members must consider with regard to each item of business the following matters.

- (a) Whether in relation to that item of business the information is capable of being exempt information, because it falls into one of the paragraphs set out in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended and reproduced in Appendix A to this report.

and either

- (b) If the information does fall within one or more of paragraphs 12 to 15, 17 and 18 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended, the public interest test in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information; or
- (c) if the information falls within the paragraph 16 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 in considering whether to exclude the public members are not required to apply the public interest test by must consider whether they wish to waive their privilege in relation to that item for any reason.

8. Risk Management

To allow Members to consider risk associated with exempt information.

9. Recommendation(s)

As detailed at the start of the report.

10. Reason for Proposed Decision(s):

To ensure that all items are considered in the appropriate manner.

11. Implementation of Decision(s):

The decision(s) will be implemented immediately.

12. List of Background Papers:

Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

13. Appendices:

Appendix A – List of Exemptions

Appendix A

NO	Relevant Paragraphs in Schedule 12A
12	Information relating to a particular individual
13	Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
14	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
15	Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority
16	Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
17	Information which reveals that the authority proposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person, or• To make an order or direction under any enactment.
18	Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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