



***SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY
SAFETY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE***

2.00 PM THURSDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2024

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

All mobile telephones to be switched to silent for the duration of the meeting

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PART A

1. Chair's Announcements
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of Previous Meeting (*Pages 5 - 10*)
 - 19 September 2024

Part 1

4. To consider items from the Cabinet Forward Work Programme
 - (a) Budget 2025/2026
 - (b) Neath Port Talbot Council Children and Young People Services Placement Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027

Part 2

5. To consider items from the Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme
- (a) Update Report on Housing and Communities Transformation Programmes

Part 3

6. Performance Monitoring
There are no performance monitoring items to be considered.

Part 4

7. Selections of items for future scrutiny (*Pages 105 - 124*)
 - Cabinet Forward Work Programme
 - Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme
8. Urgent Items
Any urgent items at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Section 100BA(6)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).
9. Access to meetings
Access to Meetings to resolve to exclude the public for the following item(s) pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the relevant exempt paragraphs of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

PART B

Part 5

10. Scrutiny of Private Items from the Cabinet Forward Work Programme
- (a) Business Case for Establishing an In-House Short Breaks Service for Children with Disabilities
- (b) Business Case for Establishing an In-House Family Link Short Breaks Service for Children with Disabilities

- (c) The Manager's Report on Hillside Secure Children's Home
- (d) The Regulated Service (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) regulations 2017 and Hillside Secure Children's Home update
- (e) Fire Safety Guidance Impact Report

Part 6

- 11. Scrutiny of Private Items from the Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme
 - (a) Update Report on the Children and Young People Services Transformation Programme

K.Jones
Chief Executive

Civic Centre
Port Talbot

Friday, 1 November 2024

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: **Councillor C.Galsworthy**

Vice **Councillor H.C.Clarke**
Chairperson:

Councillors: H.Davies, O.S.Davies, S.E.Freeguard, J.Jones,
A.R.Lockyer, A.Lodwig, P.D.Richards,
D.Thomas, D.Whitelock and C.Williams

Notes:

- (1) *If Committee Members or non-Committee Members wish to have relevant items put on the agenda for future meetings, then please notify the Chief Executive/Chair eight days before the meeting.*

(2) If non-Committee Members wish to attend for an item of interest, then prior notification needs to be given (by 12.00 noon on the day before the meeting). Non-Committee Members may speak but not vote, or move or second any motion.

Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee
(Multi-Location Meeting - Council Chamber, Port Talbot & Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

19 September 2024

Chairperson: Councillor C.Galsworthy

Vice Chairperson: Councillor H.C.Clarke

Councillors: H.Davies, O.S.Davies, S.E.Freeguard, J.Jones, A.R.Lockyer, P.D.Richards, D.Whitelock and C.Williams

Officers In Attendance R.Davies, C.Howard, A.Thomas, S.Coe, V.Smith, M.Potts, C.Griffiths, S.Griffiths and P.Chivers

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors A.Llewelyn, S.Harris and J.Hale

1. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2024 were approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

4. **To consider items from the Cabinet FWP**

Members considered items from the Cabinet Forward Work Programme

(a) Disabled Facilities Grant Options Appraisal

The Chair thanked officers for the detailed and interesting report.

The Head of Housing and Communities provided an overview of the report contained within the agenda pack.

Officers provided members with additional information that was not included in the report. The change to the discretionary element of the grant has driven a change in behaviours with an increase in applications for vertical lifts due to the reduced cost in comparison to extensions. However, this approach does not provide an appropriate long-term solution.

The Chair raised a concern about potential safety risks for some residents using vertical lifts.

Members questioned how lifetime property charges were applied for social housing.

Officers confirmed that discretionary funding would only be available for private and privately rented properties. It was likely that any discretionary funding would be re-paid at some point from private or privately rented properties, but this did not apply to social housing.

Members enquired whether private landlords were required to co-sign any funding agreement.

Officers confirmed that landlord permission must be granted before any work can be carried out on a privately rented property and landlords are made aware of the funding conditions.

Members asked if hospital patients who were awaiting property adaptations were prioritised and whether the Health Board contributed financially.

Officers confirmed that the previously available Hospital Discharge Grant is no longer offered and Occupational Therapists must prioritise need. When a priority need is identified, the application would be

moved as far as possible on the waiting list, depending on the current state of spend. It was noted that there are already commitments for next year's budget.

Members questioned whether more funding is required from the health board and queried why the Hospital Discharge Funding Grant is no longer available.

Officers confirmed that efforts have been made to obtain extra funding from the health board, but this has not been forthcoming. There was a change to the Western Bay Grants, and approval was stopped. It was noted that many people on the waiting list are of equal priority and there are difficulties in prioritising with the limited resources available. In some cases, Occupational Therapists put forward priority pieces of work with the remainder of the works being carried out at a later date.

The Head of Adult Services gave assurances that hospital patients awaiting adaptations would not remain in hospital for extended periods but would be moved into an extended care placement in a residential bed, at a cost to the council.

Members enquired, should the proposal be implemented, how quickly would the current backlog clear.

Officers confirmed that if Cabinet approval were granted, changes would be required to the policy tools and legal document, with the aim for the change to be implemented by the start of the next financial year. There are currently 274 on the waiting list but it is anticipated that some people may leave the list if means testing was reintroduced. People on the waiting list will be notified if means testing was re-introduced.

Members requested to see a copy of the means test and suggested that the council should have some discretionary powers.

Officers advised members that there would be no discretion over large grants where means testing was in place. It was noted that the small/medium grants have been taken out to create a new discretionary grant and discretionary powers have been used to not means test them.

Members welcomed a means test system. Members questioned if deficit monies would be clawed back from Welsh Government and if Western Bay could attend committee to provide clarity over grants.

The Head of Housing and Communities confirmed that Welsh Government provided an extra £90k funding, to help with the increased demand from removing the means test, and some funding will also be available from Western Bay in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's). There has been a change in relation to capital monies which has impacted how much money is available to use towards DFG's. The West Glamorgan Capital Group are in conversation with Welsh Government around the ability to use more of the money that the Welsh Government provide under these grants for DFG's.

The Director of Social Services, Health & Housing confirmed that the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board can be invited to a future scrutiny committee meeting. The Director reminded members that the board is Chaired by the Leader of Council, and the director was also a board member. The director reiterated the change to regional funding that comes through the regional partnership board, there is more focus on transformation and using capital monies to support transformation programmes. This has impacted on available funding for DFG's. In previous years some in year underspend has gone towards DFG's.

Members requested clarity over how much the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board can provide to the council for grants and requested further information in relation to the Welsh Government funding of £90k and the £1m+ deficit mentioned in the report.

Officers confirmed that the amount of £90k was calculated by Welsh Government. However, the figure did not consider the amount of people who cancelled or did not apply because of the means test.

The Director of Social Services, Health & Housing confirmed that the council was not funding an additional £1m; the current lack of means testing has resulted in an increased demand for services. If all requests were delivered it would result in an additional £1m spend over Welsh Government funding.

Members enquired about the timescale for the re-introduction of means testing.

The Director of Social Services, Health and Housing confirmed that there would be a need for consultation and policy change before any change could be made. It is hoped that by the start of the next financial year, arrangements could be in place and rolled out. It was noted that Welsh Government may not approve of the change, but officers considered it a necessary step to ensure those most in need are accessing the required services.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services and Health enquired how the cost of vertical lifts compared to stairlifts.

Officers confirmed that vertical lifts are more expensive than stairlifts and could cost in the region of £20k.

Following scrutiny, members supported the recommendation outlined in the draft Cabinet report.

5. **To consider items from the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme**

There were no items selected from the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.

6. **Performance Monitoring**

The Chair advised committee that Quarter 1 & Quarter 2 performance reports were added to the forward work programme for 12th December, with quarterly performance reports being received for future meetings.

There were no performance monitoring reports for consideration.

7. **Selections of items for future scrutiny**

Officers advised members of new items that had been added to the Cabinet Forward Work Programme and changes to the Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme; members were given the opportunity to request further items for consideration.

The Chair reminded officers of the need for a description of the purpose of the report on the Cabinet Forward Work Programme to aid scrutiny members when selecting items for scrutiny.

Members noted the Forward Work Programmes.

8. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

9. **Access to meetings**

Resolved: to exclude the public for the following item(s) pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the relevant exempt paragraphs of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

10. **Scrutiny of Private Items**

Members considered the private item.

11. **Initial Business Case for the Development of a Triage Centre (Exempt under paragraph 14)**

Following scrutiny, the recommendation was supported to Cabinet

**Cllr. C Galsworthy
CHAIRPERSON**



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee

7th November 2024

MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

Budget 2025/26

Purpose of Report

To consider the savings and income generation proposals currently subject to early engagement, as agreed at Cabinet 2nd October 2024.

Background

On 2nd October 2024 Cabinet agreed that early engagement could be undertaken on a suite of savings and income generation proposals which have been developed to assist in closing the 2025/26 budget gap.

Appendix 1 of this report includes the proposals within the purview of the scrutiny committee.

Financial Impact

Not applicable.

Integrated Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

Valleys Communities Impacts

Not applicable.

Workforce Impacts

Not applicable.

Legal Impacts

Not applicable.

Risk Management Impacts

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder Impacts

Not applicable.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Impacts

Not applicable.

Consultation

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

Recommendations

Member of the committee scrutinise the proposals and if appropriate suggest alternatives for Cabinet to consider.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Savings and income generation proposals

List of Background Papers

Not applicable.

Officer Contract

Andrew Jarrett - Corporate Director of Social Services, Housing and Community Safety

Directorate	Chief Officer	Reference	Service Area	Description of how budget reduction will be delivered	Risk / Impact	£
SSH&CS	Chele Zandra Howard	SSH&CS-A	Housing & Communities	Reducing the costs of providing homelessness services through service redesign and preventing people from requiring temporary accommodation	Minmial risk	112,000
SSH&CS	Keri Warren	SSH&CS-B	Children & Young People Services	Natural reduction in the number of non-looked after children (LAC) allowances (Residence Orders, Special Guardianship Order (SGO) & Adoption Allowances)	Zero impact initially however if the number of SGO/Adoption allowances increase there will be limited scope to provide financial support to new SGO Carers & Adoptive Parents.	232,000
SSH&CS	Keri Warren	SSH&CS-C	Children & Young People Services	Reduction in staffing costs including the restructure of the Practice Support Worker (PSW) service	The deletion of posts will have a negative impact as there will be less staff available to carry out front line duties which could impact on service delivery.	386,000
SSH&CS	Keri Warren	SSH&CS-D	Children & Young People Services	Fostering Service - Reduction in budget for in-house allowances, external agency costs & Carer travel	Historically the underspend for in-house allowances has offset the overspend in external residential provisions. This would no longer be an option so there would be continued pressure to reduce the numbers of children in residential care. Also any changes in relation to the harmonisation of fostering allowances/fees across Wales would be a potential risk as there would be limited scope to significantly increase standard rates.	630,000
SSH&CS	Keri Warren	SSH&CS-E	Children & Young People Services	Income Generation - provide fostering placements to neighbouring LA's	Any impact or risks will be effectively managed by the Fostering Service to ensure it will not impact on the capacity and demand in NPT.	52,000
SSH&CS	Keri Warren	SSH&CS-F	Children & Young People Services	Health visitor post	No impact – vacant post	21,000
SSH&CS	Keri Warren	SSH&CS-G	Children & Young People Services	Reduce Section 17 (S17) discretionary spend budget	Reduced scope to fund S17 related provisions, items etc.	50,000
SSH&CS	Keri Warren	SSH&CS-H	Children & Young People Services	Reduction in the number of Looked After Children Taxi Routes	Less contingency if the demand for transport increases	21,200
SSH&CS	Angela Thomas	SSH&CS-I	Adult Services	Direct Payments Review	Risk of challenge due to reluctance of individuals/families/carers accepting service	250,000

Directorate	Chief Officer	Reference	Service Area	Description of how budget reduction will be delivered	Risk / Impact	£
					change.	
SSH&CS	Angela Thomas	SSH&CS-J	Adult Services	Developing in-house provision for Complex Care (Mental Health, Learning Disabilities, Neurodivergent) [Included in Cabinet report as consideration of Gelligron £750k , Trem y Mor £1m and a Day Service Provision £250k– proposals have evolved so updated for Scrutiny with a combined savings target of £2m]	Ability to deliver within required timescales.	2,000,000
SSH&CS	Angela Thomas	SSH&CS-K	Adult Services			
SSH&CS	Angela Thomas	SSH&CS-N	Adult Services			
SSH&CS	Angela Thomas	SSH&CS-L	Adult Services	Placement efficiencies	Risk of challenge due to reluctance of individuals/families/carers accepting service change.	650,000
SSH&CS	Angela Thomas	SSH&CS-M	Adult Services	Review of Domiciliary Care, sit in services and night time support to develop alternative models of care.	Risk of challenge due to reluctance of individuals/families/carers accepting service change.	500,000
SSH&CS	Angela Thomas	SSH&CS-O	Adult Services	Implement Trem y Glyn Reablement Capacity	Risk of delay in achieving full capacity of Reablement beds.	260,000
SSH&CS	Angela Thomas	SSH&CS-P	Adult Services	Reduction in staffing costs (6FTE)	Risks will be managed via the Council's Management of Change in partnership policy.	250,000
Total						5,414,200



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee

7th November 2024

MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

Neath Port Talbot Council Children and Young People Services Placement Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027

Purpose of Report

To allow for pre-decision consideration of the Neath Port Talbot Council Children and Young People Services Placement Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027 by scrutiny members.

Background

The scrutiny committee have selected this item for pre-decision scrutiny before it is presented to Cabinet on 4th December 2024 for approval.

Financial Impact

Not applicable.

Integrated Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

Valleys Communities Impacts

Not applicable.

Workforce Impacts

Not applicable.

Legal Impacts

Not applicable.

Risk Management Impacts

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder Impacts

Not applicable.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Impacts

Not applicable.

Consultation

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

Recommendations

Following scrutiny, members to support recommendation outlined in the draft Cabinet report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 -

Draft Cabinet Report – Neath Port Talbot Council Children and Young People Services Placement Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027

List of Background Papers

Not applicable.

Officer Contract

Keri Warren, Head of Children & Young People Services

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CABINET

4th December 2024

Report of the Head of Children and Young People Services – Keri Warren

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All wards

Report Title:

Neath Port Talbot Council Children and Young People Services Placement Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027.

Purpose of the Report:

To seek Member approval to implement Neath Port Talbot Council Children and Young People Services Placement Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027.

Executive Summary:

The Placement Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027 (Appendix 1) sets out Neath Port Talbot Council's ('the Council') plans to deliver on

placement sufficiency for Children and Young People and Welsh Governments Eliminate Profit Agenda.

Officers are seeking Members approval to implement the strategy.

Background:

The Council has a duty to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for Children and Young People who are looked after under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2024 ('The Act').

In line with the Act, the Council's primary objective is to support children to remain with a parent or person with parental responsibility. If this is not possible, then consideration should be given to a placement with a family, friend or other person connected to the child or young person. If these options are not possible then a range of alternative provisions will be considered.

These can include foster carers, residential childrens homes or supported accommodation for example.

Welsh Government has recently introduced the Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill which seeks to remove profit from childrens social care which will likely reduce the number of providers operating in Wales, particularly within the residential care provision.

The Placement Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027 sets out our plans to ensure sufficient quality alternative accommodation is available to children and young people, taking into account the eliminate profit agenda.

Financial Impacts:

Taking forward the priorities within the Placement Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027 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 2, for the purposes of the meeting.

Overall, the initiative is expected to achieve positive outcomes as it sets the plan to deliver on placement sufficiency and eliminating profit.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

The Placement Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027 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 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:

Consultation will be carried out for individual initiatives set out in the Placement Commissioning Strategy.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members approve Neath Port Talbot Council Children and Young People Services Placement Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To ensure a robust plan is in place to continue to deliver and commission a range of services for Children and Young People.

Implementation of Decision:

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

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Neath Port Talbot Council Children and Young People Services Placement Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027.

Appendix 2: Integrated Impact Assessment

List of Background Papers:

- West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Area Plan 2023-2027
- West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Population Needs Assessment 2022-2027
- West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Social Care Market Stability Report 2022
- NPTCBC Corporate Plan 2024-2027
- NPTCBC Children & Young People Social Care Strategic Plan 2023-2026
- NPTCBC Adult and Children's Social Care Market Stability Report 2022
- NPTCBC Public Participation Strategy 2023-2027
- Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru, Eliminating Profit from the Care of Children who are looked after. Contribution to the Regulatory Impact Assessment March 2024
-  [Eliminating Profit RIA Final .docx](#)

Officer Contact:

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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Neath Port Talbot Council Children and Young People Services

Placement Commissioning Strategy

2024 - 2027

Executive Summary

Neath Port Talbot Council (NPTC) recognises that for most children, the right place is to be at home with their families. NPTC continues to deliver and commission a range of early intervention and prevention-based services to support families which can also prevent the need for children to become looked after.

For those children who become looked after, NPTC recognises and takes seriously its responsibility as their Corporate Parent. NPTC seeks to ensure that care experienced children and young people are placed in the most appropriate type of placement and to maximise the most appropriate permanence options. For most care experienced children and young people this is within a family setting. The availability of high-quality support in local, stable placements is integral to supporting our care-experienced population to achieve good outcomes.

The voice of the children and young people that we support is of utmost importance to NPTC and is enshrined within NPTC's strengths-based, outcome focused model across Children and Young People Services. NPTC is on a coproduction journey that is gaining momentum and aims to effectively embed coproduction in service planning and design.

The NPTC care experienced population has been steadily decreasing and is projected to continue decreasing over the next few years. Whilst our demand for placements is decreasing, this picture is not replicated across Wales. Other placing Local Authorities have reported increasing numbers of care experienced children and young people and due to placement sufficiency issues in their areas, high numbers of independent foster care and residential placements within Neath Port Talbot are occupied by children from outside of Neath Port Talbot (NPT). This has created a sufficiency dilemma and presents placement challenges for us.

Welsh Government has committed to move away from for-profit provision in children's social care. Due to our reliance on private residential care provision to provide us with placement capacity, NPTC is carefully considering how it can support this commitment.

This strategy provides an overview of our current placement options, our challenges and an analysis of our future placement need. This strategy concludes with an action plan to achieve our priorities for development, which are to:

- **Increase** provision of local foster care placements
- **Achieve** sufficiency of local residential care placements
- **Improve** access and capability for local services to care for complex support needs
- **Strengthen** the young person's housing pathway and accommodation options for young people aged 16+
- **Maximise** commissioning processes to assist in achieving best value for money

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National Placement Market
Local Population and Policy Context
Corporate Policies
NPTC Key Approaches
Existing Strategic Placement Commissioning Partnerships
Key Challenges

Section 2: Data, Facts and Feedback

NPTC Care Experienced Children and Young People Data Trends
Foster Care Provision
Residential Care Provision
Supported Accommodation Provision
Stakeholder Engagement
Placement Costs

Section 3: Analysis and Options

Future Service Needs
Future Consideration of Local Placement Market
Projection of our Future Needs

Section 4: Decisions, Planning and Strategy

Placement Commissioning Intentions
Action Plan

Corporate Links

This strategy should be read in conjunction with relevant strategies and policies, including the following key documents:

- West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Area Plan 2023-2027
- West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Population Needs Assessment 2022-2027
- West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Social Care Market Stability Report 2022
- NPTC Corporate Plan 2024-2027
- NPTC Children & Young People Social Care Strategic Plan 2023-2026
- NPTC Adult and Children's Social Care Market Stability Report 2022
- NPTC Public Participation Strategy 2023-2027
- Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru, Eliminating Profit from the Care of Children who are looked after. Contribution to the Regulatory Impact Assessment March 2024

 [Eliminating Profit RIA Final .docx](#)

Section 1: Background and Context

Introduction

NPTC recognises that for most children, the right place is to be at home with their families. Some families may need support and we will continue with our strategic approach to innovatively deploy a range of Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP) support services which can prevent the need for children to become looked after. These EIP based services provide specific and targeted support to families facing a range of challenges.

NPTC recognises children's welfare and safety are paramount and we will ensure the best safeguards and support continue to be in place. For those children who become looked after, NPTC takes seriously its responsibility as their Corporate Parent. Ensuring that children are placed in the most appropriate setting is a key part of this responsibility to maximise their potential and to best support them to achieve their personal outcomes.

The effectiveness of any commissioning approach to our care experienced children and young people is influenced and impacted by a number of factors including:

- Effectiveness of universal, targeted and specialist support services across the whole system;
- Quality of care planning;
- Involvement of children and families by informing, coproducing and evaluating services;
- Availability, sufficiency and quality of services provided by the local social care market;
- National Policy initiatives e.g. 'Eliminate' private profit from children's care agenda.

Placement Overview

A 'placement' refers to an arrangement by which NPTC places a child or young person in a suitable home environment in order to safeguard and promote their wellbeing.

Our guiding principles when making placements are:

- Stay at home or with family when possible
- If in care, to be in the best suitable placement
- If in care, to stay local when safe to do so
- To exit care when safe and timely to do so

NPTC accesses a range of different placement types, as follows:

Family and Friends Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement With Parents • Special Guardianship Order (SGO) • Child Arrangement Orders • Connected Carers
Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Term Permanence via National Adoption Service and Western Bay Adoption Service
Foster Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency • Short Breaks • Short Term • Long Term
Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Term Assessment • Medium Term Transition • Long Term Permanence
Other Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported Accommodation • Supported Lodgings • Independent Living • When I'm Ready (WIR) • Shared Lives
Secure Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court Order (Permissive Order Short Term Only)

The factors we consider when making placements in the best interest of a child includes if the placement:

- a) Can meet the needs of the child as set out in their Care and Support Plan or Pathway Plan;
- b) Supports continuity in the child's education or training (section 78(2) duty to promote educational achievement);
- c) Enables the child to live together with any siblings who are also being looked after by NPTC;
- d) Supports the views, wishes and feelings of the child (in accordance with the child's age and understanding);

- e) Supports the child's religious persuasion, racial origin, cultural and linguistic background;
- f) Supports the child's sexuality and gender identity;
- g) Can meet any additional needs or sensory impairment, including any emotional, behavioural and mental health needs;
- h) Supports positive contact arrangements with family and known support network;
- i) Supports arrangements to spend time with friends and maintain sporting, social and leisure pursuits.

Strategy Purpose

The agreed approach to the strategic commissioning of placements by Children and Young People Services in NPTC is to:

- Shape our internal services to maximise the benefits of public sector provision in terms of quality and value for money;
- Shape our externally commissioned service market to maximise the benefits of commissioned provision in terms of quality and value for money;
- Work in collaboration with public sector partners across the Regional footprint where this offers identifiable benefits;
- Increase placement choice supplemental to our sufficiency duty to enable good matching;
- Co-produce outcome focussed services acknowledging that there are a range of different methods for strategic commissioning with multiple partners who may be co-operatives, charities or commercial partners.

The purpose of this strategy is to pull together in one document the identified strands of placement commissioning, ensure there is a clear vision, which underpins our approach to commissioning, and ensure this vision aligns with our corporate planning.

This strategy will inform:

- The shaping of our internal placement services;
- Our partnership working approach to placement commissioning with stakeholders, and a range of public and private sector partners;
- Our Market Position Statement

The desired outcomes of this strategy is to support the achievement of:

- Improving outcomes for our care experienced children and young people;
- Achieving best delivery of our Corporate Parenting functions;
- Ensuring children placed in high quality and value for money local placements

which safeguard and promote their wellbeing, build resilience and support positive relationships;

- Developing a more robust local market, which can respond to future changing demands.

National Legislation and Policy Context

NPTC will ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for all children who are looked after under Section 76 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 ('The Act').

NPTC has a duty to ensure placements are made within NPTC (Section 81(9) of the Act) unless it is not reasonably practical to do so or there are overriding reasons for placing a child out of area, the primary overriding reason being safeguarding.

In keeping with the duty and aim of promoting the upbringing of a child by their family, there is a clear emphasis in the Act that, unless it is not consistent with the child's wellbeing, arrangements must be made for the child who needs accommodation to live with a parent or a person with parental responsibility. Where this is not possible, preference should be given to a placement with a relative, friend or other person connected to the child or young person. If these options are not possible, a range of sufficient alternative provision should be available including foster carers, residential children's care homes, supported accommodation, supported lodgings etc. It is this 'sufficient alternative accommodation' which is the focus of this Strategy.

Placement sufficiency has a national focus as the population of foster carers continues to decline and the sufficiency of placement types across the spectrum is impacted. The Ministerial Advisory Group on Improving Outcomes for care experienced children and young people has two key projects considering placement sufficiency, quality and outcome delivery: the National Fostering Framework (NFF) and the Task & Finish Group on Residential Care. We will continue to factor the learning from these projects into our local strategies, planning and implementation.

The Welsh Parliament (Senedd) has recently introduced the Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill which seeks to remove profit from Children's Social Care. This initiative is likely to reduce the number of providers operating in particular residential care in Wales and so is likely to impact on the sufficiency of placements for all authorities. NPTC is carefully considering how we support this initiative.

National Placement Market

The number of children looked after within Wales has been on an upward trend in recent years and peaked at 7,241 in 2021. Following a decrease in 2022, the number increased to 7,208 in 2023 (a 2% increase from the previous year). The rate per 10,000 children aged under 18 was 116.3 in 2023, higher than the rate in 2022 (114.4) and the second highest rate ever¹.

In 2022, the Competition & Markets Authority (CMA) reported across England, Scotland and Wales that placement needs were shifting with a greater number of placements sought for older children, UASC and those with more complex needs. The CMA also reported an increasing gap between the number of placements available and the number of care experienced children and young people requiring placements.

The MCA reported significant problems with the Welsh placement market due to:

- A lack of placements of the right kind, in the right places, means that children are not consistently getting access to care and accommodation that meets their needs;
- The largest private providers of placements are making materially higher profits and charging materially higher prices than they would expect if this market were functioning effectively;
- Some of the largest private providers are carrying very high levels of debt, creating a risk that disorderly failure of highly leveraged firms could disrupt the placements of children in care;
- The impact of the enactment of Health & Social Care Bill is also likely to have an impact on the national placement market, reducing the number of available placements within a relatively short timescale.

¹ Taken from Children looked after by local authorities: April 2022 to March 2023 | GOV.WALES

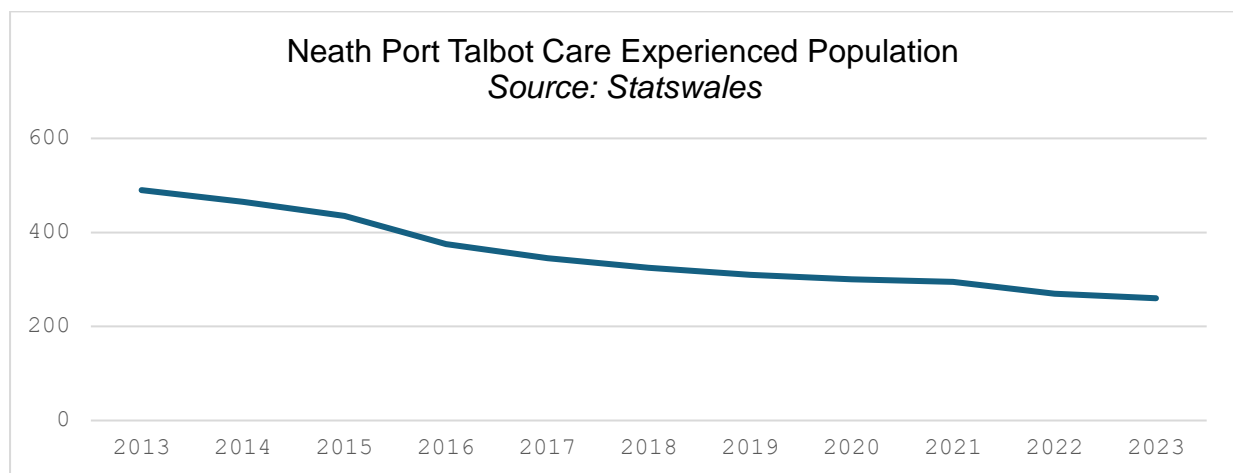
Local Population and Policy Context

General Population Summary

NPTC is the 9th largest Local Authority in Wales with a total population of 142,300². Between 2011 and 2021, the population of children aged under 15 years increased by 2.5%³.

NPTC Care Experienced Children and Young People Population Summary

The NPTC care experienced children and young people population has steadily decreased over the past 10 years.

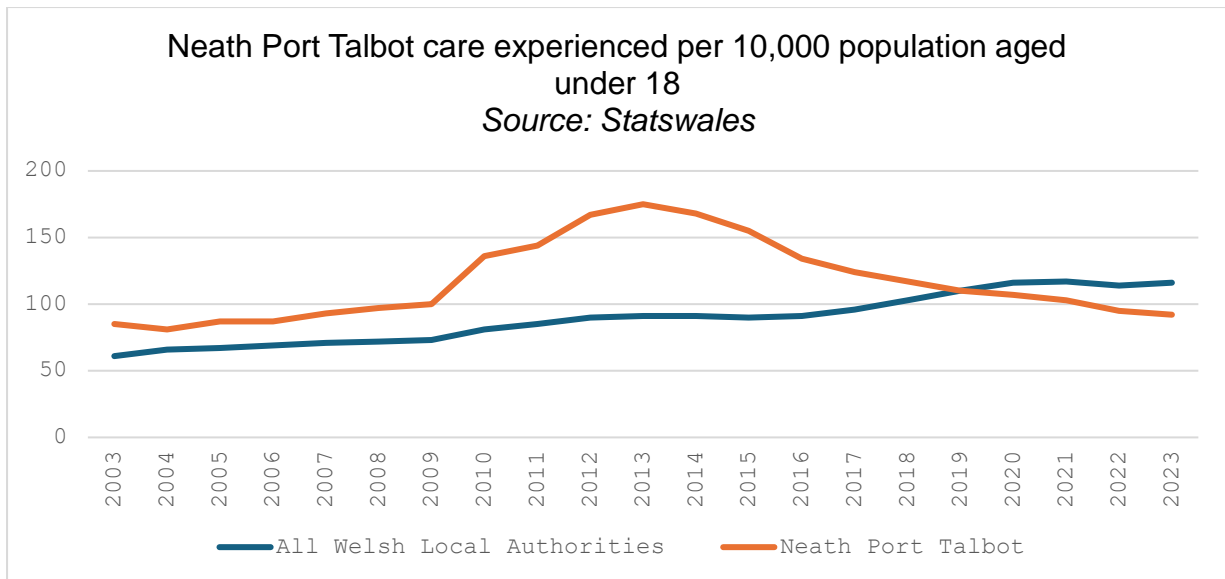


Research suggests the rates of care experienced children and young people across Local Authorities are influenced by the demographic and socioeconomic profile of each Local Authority as well as factors which are within the control of the Local Authority, including the way in which services are designed and delivered to support the most vulnerable in the community.

The rate of the NPTC care experienced children and young people per 10,000 population aged under 18 has seen a rise and fall pattern which has remained lower than the Welsh rate since 2019.

² 2021 ONS Census

³ 2011 and 2021 ONS Census Comparison



Corporate Priorities

One of the NPTC Corporate Plan’s key objectives is *‘to ensure all children get the best start in life’*.

The NPTC’s Children & Young People Social Care Strategic Plan sets out the key service priorities to contribute to the corporate objective, which are:

Placement Sufficiency:

We are committed to an approach that puts children and their 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 suitable 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.

This strategy specifically supports the delivery of the priority to achieve ‘placement sufficiency’.

NPTC Key Approaches

The following summarises NPTC's key approaches in order to support the key objectives and priorities from the Corporate Plan and Children and Young People Services Strategic Plan:

Early Intervention & Prevention

Helping families stay together is a key focus of NPTC Children's Services. The continued investment in early intervention and prevention services aims to support children to live at home wherever possible and reduce the number of children and young people reaching the threshold for care and needing to become care experienced.

The portfolio of services commissioned by NPTC has increased over the previous few years which now includes the provision of Family Group Conferencing, parent peer advocacy services for parents experiencing care processes and a range of family focused wellbeing programmes.

Embedded Outcomes Based Approach

NPTC has embedded a strengths-based outcomes focussed model across Children and Young People's Services. Social work practice is focused on a personal outcomes approach, which informs service design and delivery to contribute positively to children's lives, maximising children's potential and to promote long term child and family stability.

Supporting Good Placement Outcomes

Where children and young people cannot live with their birth parents, preference is given to a placement with a relative, friend or other person connected to the child or young person. When this approach is not possible, NPTC strives to ensure the selected placement is stable, supportive and is well matched to maximise positive childhood experiences.

Placements are robustly monitored and by working closely with partner organisations, NPTC aims to ensure the right support services are available to care experienced children to ensure the placement meets their needs, the ability to achieve personal outcomes is maximised and to prevent unnecessary placement breakdown. For example, the NPTC therapeutic support team is a multi-disciplinary team that aims to help children with complex needs to remain in stable placements by providing specialist placement support.

Whilst the vast majority of care experienced children and young people experience

stable placements which contribute to the achievement of positive outcomes, limitations within the local placement market are presenting challenges for NPTC to effectively secure local placement choice and sufficiency. These key challenges and identified mitigating actions are discussed further within this Strategy.

The progression and achievement of personal outcomes is recorded within NPTC's electronic software system. NPTC is developing a new software system; the design of which will create more service wide data collection on the progression and achievement of outcomes. The new software will enable us to gain a greater understanding of detailed outcome progression for a range of factors including specific placement types. This will increase our ability to ensure each child is placed in the most appropriate placement to meet their needs

Positive Exits from Care

NPTC aims to plan effectively for care experienced children and young people to ensure that all stakeholders are working together with the child or young person to meet their needs, ensuring they do not remain in care longer than is necessary and to support positive exits from care at all age points.

We adopt clear placement planning processes, robust placement scrutiny and promote reunification with families when safe to do so. For young people who are progressing towards adulthood, we provide supported accommodation options to help them to develop their independent skills in order to promote a positive transition into adulthood when safe and suitable to do so.

Existing Strategic Placement Commissioning Partnerships

NPTC work closely with internal and external partners on an individual and strategic level. NPTC plays an active role in the **West Glamorgan Regional Partnership** which has a number of transformational work streams which drives local and regional strategy, planning and implementation.

NPTC is a member of the **Western Bay Regional Adoption Service** in collaboration with Swansea City Council and Bridgend County Borough Council. This regional arrangement delivers all functions related to placements for permanence through the use of Adoption endorsed by the Courts.

NPTC is also a member of **Foster Wales** which is a national network of 22 Local Authority fostering services. NPTC works closely with neighbouring Swansea City Council to develop a regional approach to the recruitment and assessment of foster carers.

NPTC is a member of the **Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru** (4C's) which is a strategic commissioning alliance between Welsh South & Mid Local Authorities to support placement commissioning needs in respect to Fostering and Residential placement types. These may be short term placements or placements for permanence and cover a range of models of care that are outcomes focused specific to individual Children's Care & Support Plans.

NPTC utilises the All Wales Local Authority Framework for the Provision of Foster Care Services for Children & Young People and the All Wales Local Authority Framework for the Provision of Residential Care Services for Children & Young People. These frameworks deliver strategic level commissioning partnerships with independent sector providers in fostering and residential services to meet NPTC's Sufficiency Duty which necessitates external individual placement commissioning. The All Wales Frameworks are managed by the 4Cs.

NPTC commissions a number of services to deliver daytime and overnight short breaks to children who have disabilities and families. These commissioning arrangements have been designed in conjunction with children and their families and have been procured through competitive tender exercises.

NPTC commissions a number of supported housing services for young people preparing to leave care. These commissioning arrangements have been procured through competitive tender exercises. Since 2023, a number of new supported housing service models have been introduced which are in pilot stage and are subject to review. This approach has sought to introduce innovative models into the young person's housing pathway in order to provide the best types of placement to meet placement needs.

Key Challenges

NPTC continues to face challenges in achieving local placement sufficiency.

We have an ageing population of foster carers. In line with Local Authorities across Wales and the UK, the number of foster carers is reducing. We have a key challenge of recruiting and retaining enough foster carers to provide sufficient placements for all children who need foster care.

The vast majority of residential placements located in NPT are occupied by children from neighbouring Local Authorities, resulting in the lack of placement choice and availability of local placements for local children. This is a key challenge because despite being numerically oversupplied, the local placement market is not providing us with placement sufficiency.

The housing market within NPT has received investment to grow but there is a lack of

local affordable housing to enable young people including care leavers to move into independent accommodation when they are ready. This is creating blockages within our supported accommodation services where young people are experiencing delayed move on to more appropriate housing. This is a key challenge and one which is being collaboratively addressed with the NPTC housing department.

NPT is located close to the Swansea city area and is adjoined to a number of neighbouring Local Authorities. This has contributed to a continued pattern of organisations developing services and placements in the area to serve the wider south Wales area and are not designed to meet local placement need and demand. This is a challenge which is contributing to our placement sufficiency dilemma and new placements are not meeting local placement needs.

The buying power of NPTC is small as compared to Local Authority areas across South Wales. This is making our efforts to positively shape the local placement market to meet local needs harder. This is a challenge which we will work closely within our regional structure to address.

Section 2: Data, Facts and Feedback

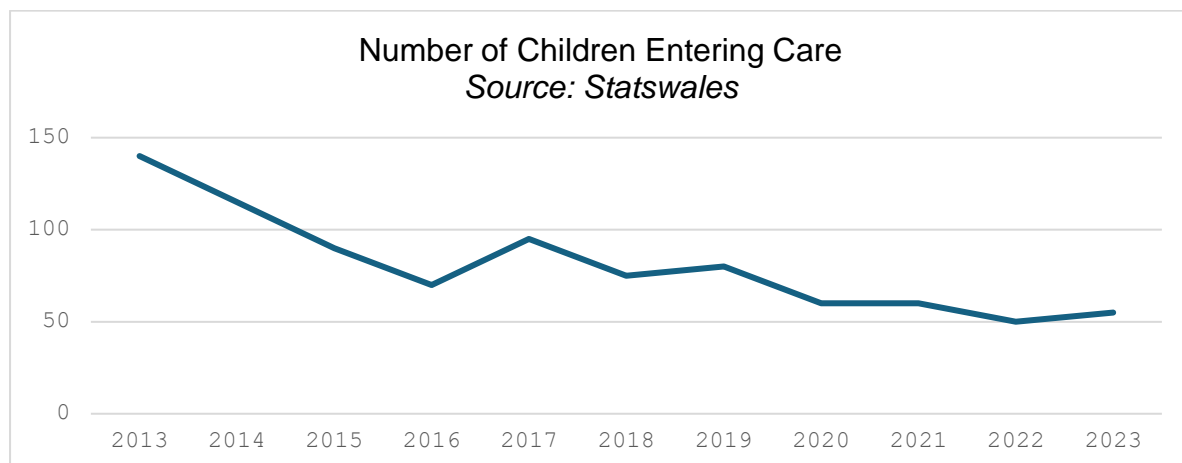
Neath Port Talbot Care Experienced Data Trends

Entry into Care

The most prevalent reasons why children enter care in Neath Port Talbot continues to be⁴:

- Abuse or neglect
- Family dysfunction
- Absent parenting (including placing a child for adoption)

The following chart demonstrates a continued reduction in the number of children entering care in Neath Port Talbot:

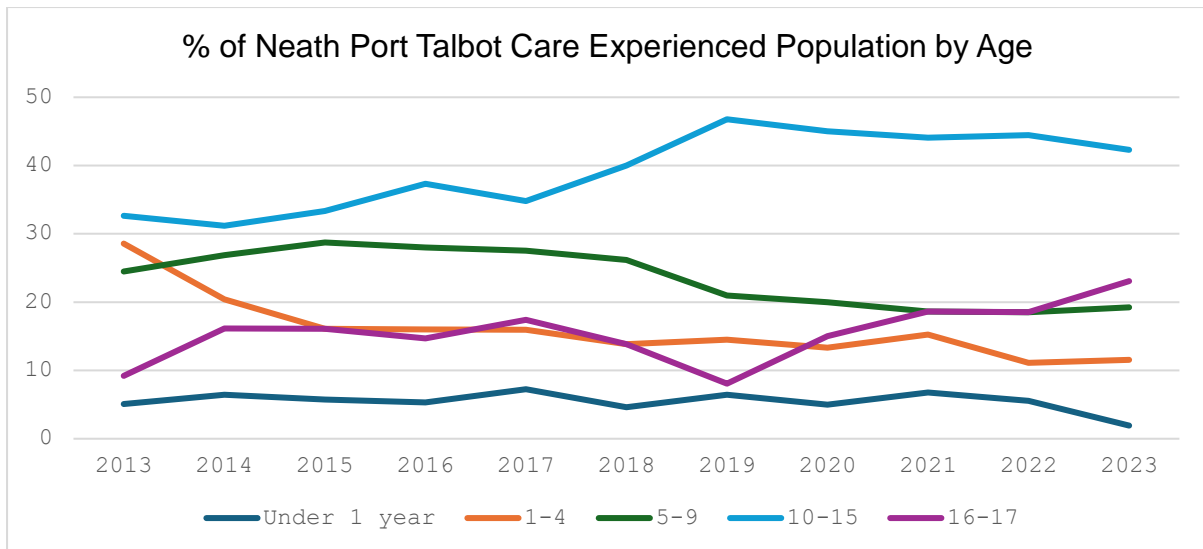


The continued reduction in the number of children entering care can be attributable to a range of measures which includes the effective deployment of NPTC's key approaches to support families to stay together to prevent entry into care. This is having an impact upon the age of children when entering care; children are staying with their families for longer and therefore the age of entry into care is more prevalent for children aged 10+.

Care Experienced Population: Age

The following chart demonstrates trends of change associated with the age of children within the Neath Port Talbot Care Experienced population:

⁴ definitions as per Statswales

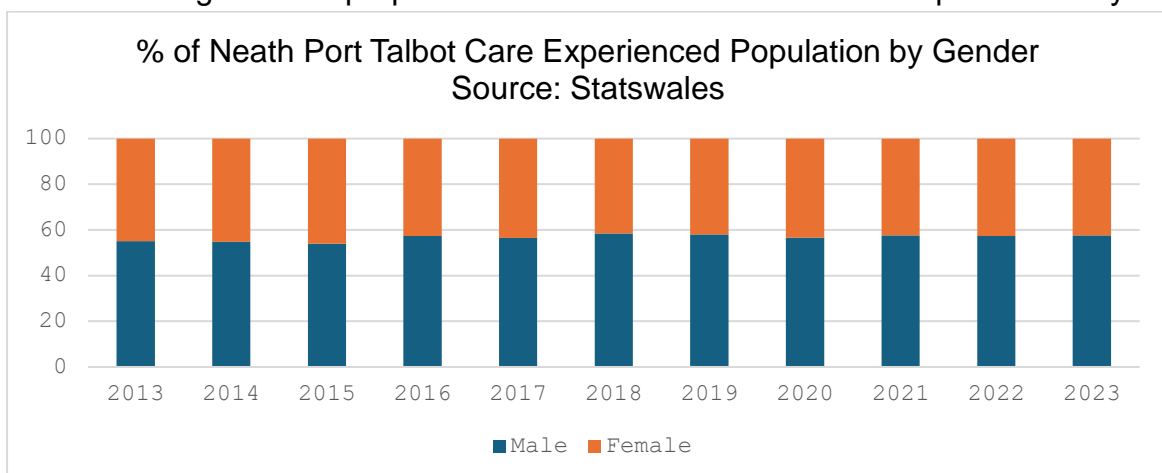


The chart above demonstrates the following age associated trends over a 10 year period (2013-2023):

- The highest demand for placements continues to be the 10-15 age category which is a challenge due to the shortage of local placements for this cohort;
- The 16-17 age category is presenting recent growth which has included a growth in arrivals of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. The growth for this age category has led to NPTC piloting new models of supported accommodation in order to provide suitable placements for this cohort;
- Demand for placements for the 0-9 age category has continued to steadily decrease which has a correlation with the decreasing rate of entry into care for this cohort.

Care Experienced Population: Gender

Males continue to be overrepresented in the Neath Port Talbot care experienced population, with males representing 57%. The trend line in the below graph shows minimal changes to the proportion of males and females over the previous 10 years.



Placement Types

The table below shows a breakdown of the types of placements occupied by care experienced children and young people as on 31st March 2024.

	As on 31.03.2024 <i>(rounded to nearest 5)</i>	% of Total
Placed with Parent	40	16%
Family/ Friend Carers	50	20%
Pre-Adoption	5	2%
Mainstream Fostering	90	36%
Independent Fostering	20	8%
Secure Residential	0	0
Residential/ Educational	20	8%
Supported Accommodation	20	8%
Independent Living	0	0
Other	5	2%

To compare against the placement types occupied by care experienced children and young people in 2021 (comparing a period of 3 years), of significance are the following trends:

- An increased use of residential placements (from 10 to 20);
- A decreased use of independent fostering agency placements (from 40 to 20).

Of the above trends, the increased use of residential care is a concern due to budgetary impact this has due to the cost of residential placements.

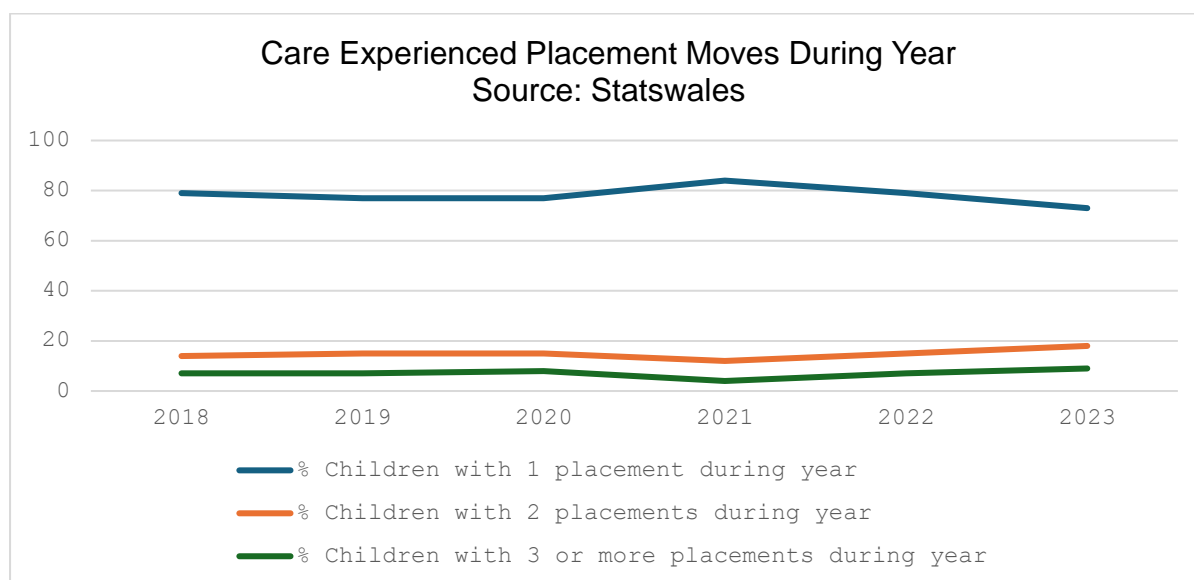
Care Experienced Population: Placement Moves

The rate of which care experienced children and young people move between placements during a year can provide an indication of how effective NPTC is when selecting and matching young people to the most appropriate placement to meet their needs.

Between 2018 and 2023 (a 5 year period), on average, NPTC's rates of placement moves were lower than compared to the Welsh average. To illustrate:

	5 Year Average (2018-2023)	
	NPTC	Wales
% Children with 1 placement during year	78%	76%
% Children with 2 placements during year	15%	18%
% Children with 3 or more placements during year	7%	9%

The following chart shows the trend of care experienced children and young people who experienced a placement move during each year for the previous 5 years.

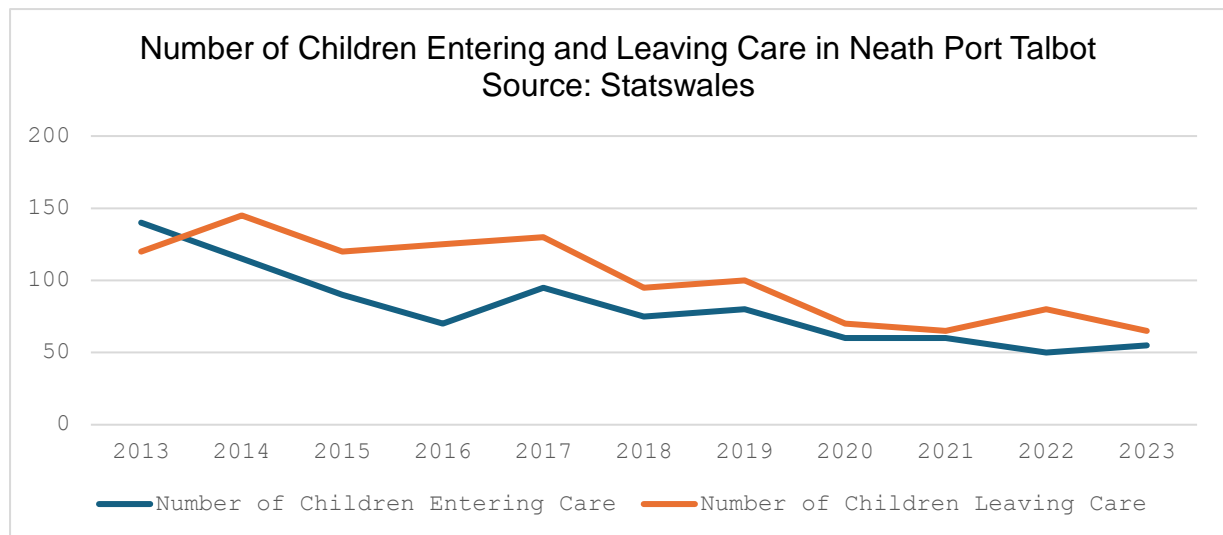


The chart above demonstrates that the percentage of care experienced children and young people who have 1 placement during the year is reducing and the percentage of care experienced children and young people who are experiencing multiple placement moves during a year is increasing.

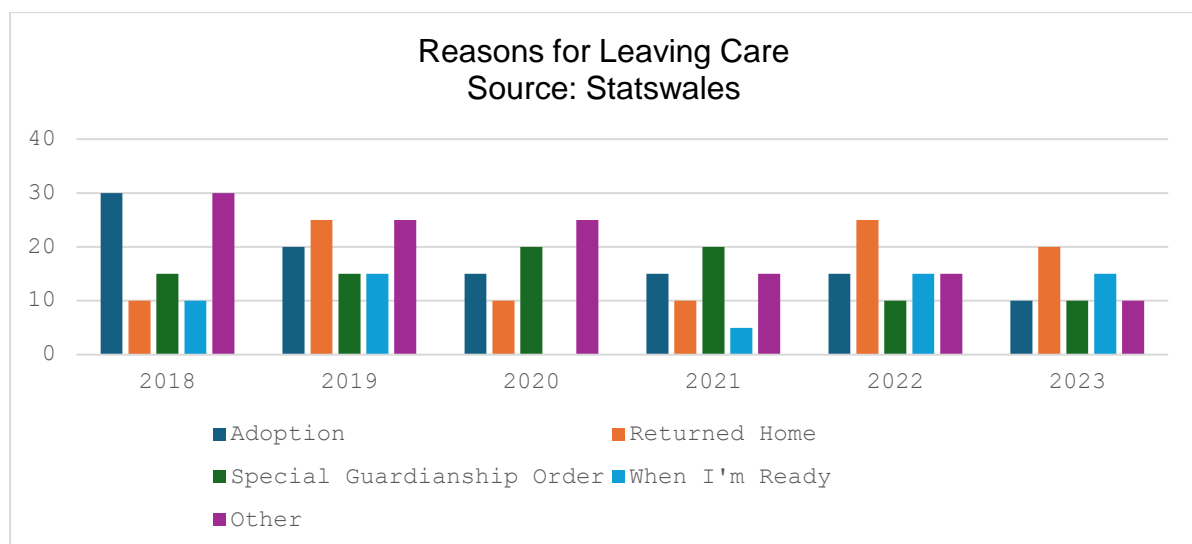
A contributing factor to these trends is the lack of local placement sufficiency which is resulting in care experienced children and young people being placed out of county and then experiencing a placement move to return to Neath Port Talbot. Further examination of case files will be explored to analyse the causes and potential solutions to these trends.

Exits From Care

The number of children exiting care is on a reducing trajectory. When compared to the rate of entry into care, the overall impact is contributing to reducing the number of care experienced children and young people in Neath Port Talbot.



The following chart shows the most prevalent reasons why children exited the care of NPTC over the 5 year period between 2018 - 2023:



The chart above demonstrates the following exit trends over the previous 5 years:

- The rate of exits into adoption is reducing, however this is in line with Best Practice Guidance and a reduction in children who are made subject to Placement Orders as a permanency plan.
- The rate of children returning home to live with parents, relatives or other persons with parental responsibility is fluctuating which is due to the individual

- circumstances of each family;
- When I'm Ready placements are increasing on average which contributes to positive outcomes for young people but it can reduce the availability of foster carers which is a challenge that NPTC is exploring;
 - The 'other' category includes young people who exit care due to turning 18.

Foster Care Provision

In recent years, the number of children and young people placed in foster care provision has steadily reduced (attributable to a reducing local care experienced children and young people population).

The local foster care market consists of Foster Wales NPT (operated and managed by NPTC) and the use of IFAs, which are procured through the 4C's All Wales Fostering Framework. As on 31st March 2024, 110 children were placed in mainstream fostering, of which 82% were placed with in-house Foster Wales NPT carers and 18% were placed with IFA based foster carers.

In line with the individual child's assessed needs, foster care placements are initially sought from within the NPTC boundary when safe to do so. Local placements for local children provide continuity of family time with family and friends and continuity of local community connections.

The vast majority of foster carers registered with the Foster Wales NPT are located within the NPTC boundary. While IFA placements are present within NPTC, due to their limited placement availability, suitable IFA placements tend to be located within other Local Authority areas. It is unclear what impact the Eliminate Profit agenda will have on fostering provision within Wales as foster carers are self-employed and can move between agencies relatively easily.

The NPT foster care market presents a sufficiency challenge to NPTC. Based on numerical placement numbers, there are more local IFA placements than we need but many IFA placements located in Neath Port Talbot are occupied by Local Authorities from across Wales.

Our local market gaps relate to local fostering placements for:

- Children aged 11+
- Children with complex support needs
- Children with disabilities and or/ behaviours which challenge
- Parent and child placements
- Short breaks
- Sibling groups

The Foster Wales NPT service has a declining and ageing pool of foster carers. Additionally, whilst the use of 'When I'm ready' and SGO placements are positive for the permanence and stability for the child, the use of these placements has had an impact upon the availability and size of the local foster carer pool.

All 22 local authorities, collectively as Foster Wales, have been taking steps towards recruiting more local authority foster carers and retaining the current local authority fostering population. Going forward Foster Wales will need to accelerate this work to significantly grow the numbers of foster carers fostering for their local authority and to realise their collective ambition of placing more fostered children in local authority placements within their home area while reducing dependence on more costly options.

The long-term sustainability of Welsh Government grant funding for Foster Wales remains imperative to ensure that local authorities can build on this progress, continue the work already underway and achieve their aim to grow in house fostering provision.

In 2024, NPTC launched Foster Plus Step Down to support the recruitment and retention of foster carers for children who have complex support needs, to address this market gap and to support effective step-down from residential care.

Our key challenge is to address the gaps in the availability and capability of the local foster care market in order to provide suitable placements for all children who need foster care.

Residential Care Provision

NPTC operates Hillside Secure Children's Home (the only children's secure residential provision in Wales). This home takes placements from across England and Wales. NPTC does not currently own or operate any children's general residential care provision, therefore NPTC is currently reliant upon the external market for residential care placements. NPTC has recently carried out an options appraisal to support its ongoing sufficiency needs based on the likely impact of the Eliminate Profit agenda.

Between 2017 – 2021 the number of children NPTC placed in residential care placements remained at a consistent level, however since 2021 the number of children in residential care has risen significantly. This is due to the lack of suitable foster placements for a small number of children.

Whilst the population of care experienced children and young people has reduced, this has not resulted in an overall decline in demand for residential care provision. The use of residential provision is determined by the assessed needs of the child and although the overall care experienced population is declining, there is a continued need for residential provision for a small number of children and young people on both a long term and interim basis.

	31st March of each year (2018-2024) (rounded to the nearest 5)						
Number of placements in residential care	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	10	10	10	10	15	25	20

The NPTC residential care market has grown by over 20% over the previous 5 years and currently consists of 8 service providers who operate 13 residential care settings, which collectively provide 56 bed spaces.

Based on local demand, the NPTC residential care market continues to be numerically over-supplied as the local market has more than enough local provision than we have needed although this is likely to change with the Eliminate profit agenda.

Occupancy data relating to residential settings located within NPTC demonstrated limited placement availability due to the majority of bed spaces being occupied by placements from neighbouring Local Authorities and from across south Wales. Placements have also been made within NPTC from around Wales and England. This has led to NPTC having to place children in residential care placements which are outside of the local and regional footprint due to the lack of local placements being available for local children. As on 31st March 2024, 70% of children in residential care were placed within the Neath Port Talbot or Swansea regional area. If local residential care provision was available, 100% of this cohort would be placed locally. NPTC strives to increase this number to support children to maintain their local support connections.

The local NPTC residential care market has also been unable to effectively meet local demand for placements for children who present complex support needs. The impact of this has resulted in local children again moving outside of the local and regional footprint in order to receive a suitable residential placement. NPTC wants to reduce and avoid this situation due to the negative impact this has upon the child's outcomes and the disruption they will experience to accessing their local support connections. Regional service planning has commenced to explore opportunities to address the sufficiency of residential placements for children who present complex support needs.

Due to our sufficiency dilemma and gaps in local provision, our key challenges are addressing the lack of availability and capability of local residential care provision in order to provide suitable local placements for all children who need residential care.

Supported Accommodation Provision

NPTC supports and commissions a range of supported transitional placements which are available to care experienced children and young people (when assessed as safe and appropriate) and care leavers.

Supported transition placement types include 'When I'm Ready' placements with foster carers, supported lodgings, shared supported accommodation, targeted supported accommodation targeted for those with complex support needs and crisis based accommodation.

NPTC support young people with additional needs to transition into shared lives placements when appropriate.

To suit a range of support needs, the portfolio of supported transition placements provides variable support provision ranging from 24 hour waking staff to the lower end of the support spectrum of floating support.

The demand for local based supported accommodation has increased over the past 2 years due to the increasing population of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) who are assessed as suitable for supported accommodation. It is unclear what impact the Government's immigration policies will have on UASC arrivals over the coming years but based on previous UASC arrival data, UASC based demand for supported accommodation is projected to steadily increase over the coming years.

An analysis of the overall demand for supported accommodation has concluded; demand for low level support needs has been decreasing, while demand for placements catering for more complex support needs has been increasing.

A recent review of the Neath Port Talbot housing pathway identified various blockages which have affected the move-on flow from within the housing pathway into independent accommodation. The lack of local, affordable independent accommodation is compounding this challenge. This has resulted in some supported accommodation services operating at capacity and young people are unable to move to a more appropriate placement when ready to do so.

Over the previous 5 years, our commissioned crisis bed provision has increasingly been used for longer term placements which is not an appropriate use of a dedicated temporary, crisis-based service. NPTC will undertake a review of the crisis bed service in 2025 to inform the future design of this service.

NPTC has developed a new youth accommodation strategy. This has led to a number of new pilot supported accommodation models being tested for young people aged 16+ and which are reporting a positive impact for young people.

NPTC is currently undertaking a strategic youth housing pathway review which will involve the review and evaluation of many commissioned supported accommodation services. Consultations with young people are ongoing in order to effectively co-design and co-produce supported accommodation services. The findings from the youth housing pathway review will inform NPTC's future commissioning intentions within this market.

Our key challenges are to address the availability of independent accommodation to support an effective mode on flow from supported accommodation and to ensure our portfolio of supported accommodation services can provide suitable local placements for all young people who need supported accommodation services.

Stakeholder Engagement

NPTC regularly engages with children, young people, parents, carers, foster carers, internal staff, service providers, partner organisations and the wider community. Various consultations are led by NPTC Children and Young People Services teams including Social Work teams, the Commissioning team and the Engagement & Participation team. We also have a number of active child focused engagement groups which provides a platform for them to have a voice in decisions that affect them. These groups include YoVo (Your Voice Matters), Junior YoVo for younger children and a Junior Safeguarding Board.

Stakeholder engagement has been used to inform social work practices, service design, pathway planning and service performance evaluations. In line with NPTC's coproduction approach, NPTC is on a coproduction journey which is gaining momentum and aims to continue effectively embedding coproduction in service planning and design.

NPTC also works with partner organisations and stakeholders to support and contribute to regional and national consultations with care experienced children and young people and stakeholders. The findings are again used to inform our plans.

The key messages we obtained during 2023 and 2024 from children and families were:

- Children and families and foster carers were positive about the services and the quality of services they receive;
- Children and families want to access local based services and travel/ transport can be a barrier for them;
- Parents of children who have disabilities want to access more support services such as short breaks to help them to continue to meet their caring responsibilities;

- The terminology in which NPTC requires change to more child friendly terminology;
- Children and families want to be involved in designing services they receive.

NPTC has fully embraced the above feedback which had led to the creation of a 'language tool' for professionals and the idea to develop the role of 'children's champions' where children and young people are more involved in commissioning processes is being explored.

During 2023 and 2024, NPTC focused consultations produced the following key findings:

Children's Residential Home Co-Design Workshops:

These workshops provided us with an overview of what local children want from residential homes. This included being close to their school, close to sports facilities, having a home which does not stand out in the community. This feedback has been used to inform the service design plans for future residential care provision.

Young People's Supported Accommodation 'What Matters' Workshops:

These workshops provided us with an overview of what local young people want from supported accommodation. This included the need to feel safe with responsible adults present to support with any conflicts between young people, being located close to town centres and community facilities and their preference to have private washing facilities e.g. en-suite rooms. Feedback with this group is continuing to ensure services are co-designed with young people.

Residential Provider Market Engagement Event:

This event provided us with an overview of how local residential care providers are business planning in relation to the eliminating profit agenda. This provided us with a mixed picture of the local market with some intending to diversify their business models but a small number reported consideration of leaving the market.

This event also provided us with provider feedback regarding potential options on how we can commission or potentially collaboratively develop local residential care provision in the future.

Foster Carer consultation event:

This event supported us to learn about the areas of our service which are highly valued, along with the areas that carers suggested improvements for. They day focused around topics chosen by foster carers. These topics were; finance, placement stability, our retention offer and the support to children and young people's health and education.

Further engagement events will be held (and we will explore holding regional based

market engagement events) to continue conversations with the residential care market which will inform our future commissioning plans.

Placement Costs

The required financial commitment to support our care experienced population is rising which is due to the increased use of residential care provision and rising placement costs across the placement market.

For example, in response to the increased use of residential care provision, the NPTC budget has in turn increased:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Annual budget for residential care provision	£1,091,580	£2,043,610	£4,152,610	£3,614,240

A crude calculation of the cost of placements both currently and as compared to April 2022 can be summarised as:

Placement Provider	Average cost per placement per year (April 2022)	Average cost per placement per year (April 2024)	Difference between 2022-2024 (2 year period)
NPT Foster Wales (operated by NPTC)	£20,265	£22,447	+ 11% Difference
Independent Fostering Agency	£46,217	£58,170	+ 26% Difference
Residential Placement	£196,383	£303,026	+ 54% Difference

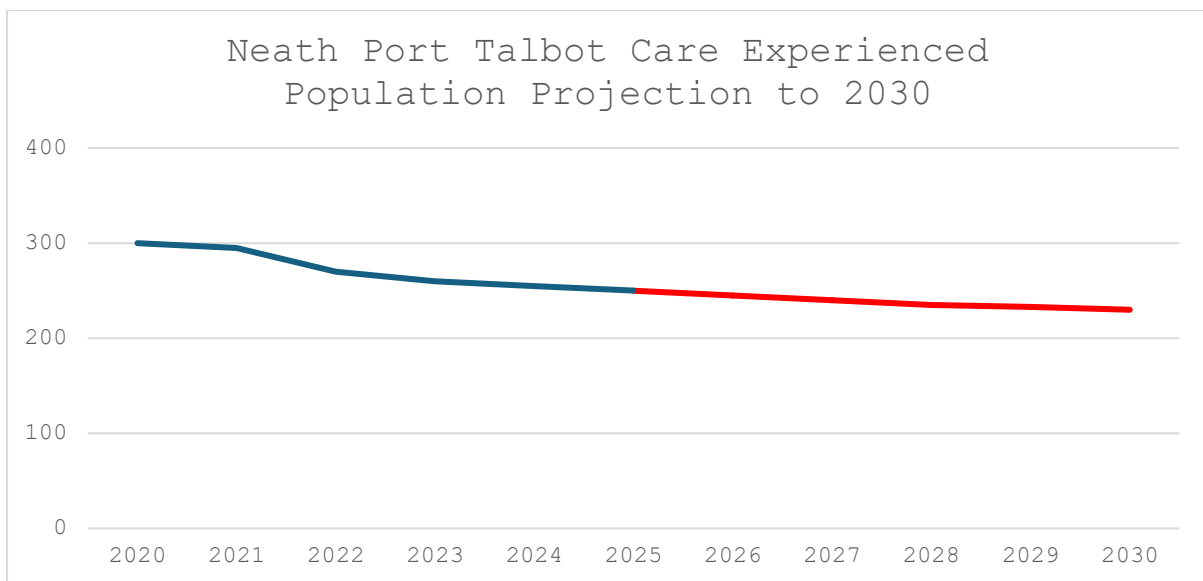
There are clear financial advantages in ensuring we maximise the potential of using our in-house fostering service, avoid unnecessary use of residential care placements and support prompt step-down from residential care when safe and appropriate.

Section 3: Analysis and Options

Future Service Needs

NPTC is experiencing continued pressures to achieve placement sufficiency, improve services and reduce costs.

An analysis of past and emerging data sets (including for example NPTC care experienced population data, NPTC general population data and entry/ exits from care trends) projects the NPTC care experienced population to continue reducing albeit at a slower rate of reduction as previously seen within NPTC.



From analysing the placement trends and needs profiles of the current care experienced children and young people population, if we achieve placement sufficiency, our placement demand will result in:

- A decreased need for residential care provision
- An increased need in step-down foster plus carers
- An increased need for foster care (which is projected to include an increased demand on the Foster Wales NPT Service and a consistent level of demand for IFA placements)
- A reduced level of demand for transitional supported accommodation services for young people aged 16+
- An increased need to work regionally to better influence market shaping across the local and regional footprint.

We Need:

- A fostering service which can provide placement choice, good placement options and skilled foster carers to support complex needs and older children;
- Access to suitable local residential placements which can support children with complex needs which are available when we need them;
- Access to a range of suitable supported accommodation options to best support 16+ and care leavers to prepare for independent living;
- To ensure ongoing access to care placements during and subsequent to the enactment of the eliminate profit agenda

Our Weaknesses:

- Competition between IFAs and Foster Wales NPT for local foster care recruitment is not supporting local placement availability. We need to find ways to work in partnership with the sector to improve local accessibility and reclaim in-area availability;
- The Eliminate agenda is likely to reduce the number of providers operating within Wales and therefore impact negatively on the sufficiency of placements, we do not have a complete picture yet of how our local providers will react to the Eliminate agenda. We need to increase communication with local providers to better understand how the local market will react to the Eliminate agenda;
- NPTC has weak buying power within the residential care market and we are competing with other Local Authorities for a limited number of available local residential placements. We know encouraging the development of more local residential placements is not the answer to our placement challenges because other Local Authorities will continue to use available placements within NPTC. We need to find ways to better work in partnership with the sector to improve local accessibility and reclaim in-area availability.

Future Considerations of Local Placement Market

From our initial market engagement event with local residential care providers and the changes to foster care provision already taking place in 2024, we envisage the Eliminate agenda as resulting in:

- Less volume of placements as private providers leave and voluntary sector providers slowly begin to deliver. Based on market engagement, we believe

the voluntary sector will not replace the current private sector provisions within the local and regional area;

- There will be a reduction in the volume of local placements for spot purchasing as the market shrinks and as larger Local Authorities enter block arrangements.

There are options which we are currently exploring to better secure local provision and to achieve placement sufficiency, which includes:

- Investing in our own internal estate to develop local residential care homes;
- Collaboratively working with a strategic partner from the voluntary sector for the development of new residential care homes;
- Reviewing how attractive our offering is to current and potential foster carers which can potentially lead to foster carers transferring from IFA's to Foster Wales NPT;
- Exploring opportunities for capital development with our internal estates and local registered social landlords to develop new supported and independent housing opportunities for young people and care leavers.

Section 4: Decisions, Planning and Strategy

Placement Commissioning Intentions

Our intentions are to:

- Increase provision of Foster Wales NPT local foster care placements, including placements which are able to support children and young people who have complex support needs;
- Increase availability of local residential care placements, including placements which are available to local children and young people who have complex support needs;
- Strengthen the young persons housing pathway and accommodation options for young people aged 16+ and care leavers;
- Explore new service models and new commissioning approaches to ensure sufficient local placements are available to local children and young people which provide value for money;
- Increase and strengthen our discussions with the provider market to improve communication, understanding and collaborative working where possible;
- Increase and strengthen our market shaping approach in conjunction with regional partners;
- To improve our internal software system to improve our data collection on the progression and achievement of outcomes;
- To improve the quality and scope of information we share with providers and stakeholders which will underpin our efforts to strengthen our market shaping approach.

Action Plan

The following action plan will be reviewed and progress noted on a 6 monthly basis.

Key Theme	Desired Outcomes	Action
Increase provision of local foster care placements, including placements to meet complex needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide placement choice • Achieve good matches • Able to place locally • Support placement stability • Prevent unnecessary use of residential care • Able to support step down from residential care when appropriate to do so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue regular reviews of our foster care marketing, recruitment and retention approach • Monitor and evaluate our new Foster Plus Scheme • Review and update our Foster Wales NPT Recruitment & Retention Plan on a Page • Continue to work with regional partners to implement regional recruitment campaigns and regional initiatives • Increase dialogue and further develop relationships with local IFAs • Regular Carer consultation events
Increase local residential placement availability, including placements to meet complex needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide placement choice • Achieve good matches • Access suitable models of support • Able to place locally • Support placement stability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclude service planning work which is currently exploring options such as developing internal residential care homes and/or collaboratively developing residential care homes with the local voluntary sector for example • Develop a market shaping plan • Continue to work with regional partners to develop feasible regional initiatives • Increase dialogue and further develop relationships with local providers

Strengthen the young persons' housing pathway and accommodation options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access suitable models of accommodation & support • Prevent delayed move-on • Achieve a clear accommodation pathway to meet need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the effectiveness of pilot supported accommodation projects • Strategically review youth housing pathway • Review and evaluate current commissioned services within youth housing pathway • Develop service model options for consideration and development
Explore new service models and new commissioning approaches to achieve placement sufficiency and best value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced demand on placement budget • Access suitable models of accommodation & support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate sufficient resources to project research and design • Work with regional partners to improve regional placement landscape • Undertake market and stakeholder engagement activities to co-design services in line with what children and families need and want
Improve our communication with the provider market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve our understanding of the local market • Improve the market's understanding of NPTC intentions • Create opportunities to develop new or remodelled services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a market and stakeholder engagement plan
Improve our market shaping approach in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide placement choice • Access suitable models of support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop regional market shaping activities with regional partners (which will inform the local market shaping plan)

conjunction with regional partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to place locally 	
To improve our internal software system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve range of data collection • Improve quality of data collection • Improve analysis of data to inform strategic plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclude the development of our new internal software system
To improve the information we share with providers and stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve our understanding of the local market • Improve the market's understanding of NPTC intentions • Create opportunities for collaborative working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the current material released via our media channels • Develop a market and stakeholder engagement plan

This action plan is a live document and will be updated on a 6 monthly basis or whenever there are key changes which materially changes the scope of the actions listed.

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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	Hayley Short	Commissioning Officer	29/10/2024

1. Details of the initiative

	Title of the Initiative: Neath Port Talbot Council Children and Young People Services Placement Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027.
1a	Service Area: Children & Young People Services
1b	Directorate: Social Services, Health & Housing
1c	Summary of the initiative: The Placement Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027 (Appendix 1) sets out Neath Port Talbot Council's ('the Council') plans to deliver on placement sufficiency for Children and Young People and Welsh Governments Eliminate Profit Agenda.
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? Children and Young people will be consulted as part of individual initiatives highlighted in the Placement Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027.
1g	What were the outcomes of the consultation? Children and Young people will be consulted as part of individual initiatives highlighted in the Placement Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027.

2. Evidence

What evidence was used in assessing the initiative?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Area Plan 2023-2027 • West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Population Needs Assessment 2022-2027 • West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Social Care Market Stability Report 2022 • NPTCBC Corporate Plan 2024-2027 • NPTCBC Children & Young People Social Care Strategic Plan 2023-2026 • NPTCBC Adult and Children’s Social Care Market Stability Report 2022 • NPTCBC Public Participation Strategy 2023-2027 • Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru, Eliminating Profit from the Care of Children who are looked after. Contribution to the Regulatory Impact Assessment March 2024 <p data-bbox="197 1101 772 1145">Eliminating Profit RIA Final .docx</p>

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 strategy sets out plans to deliver on placement sufficiency for Children and Young People and Welsh Governments Eliminate Profit Agenda, which will have a positive impact to children and young people requiring 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>In-house and Commissioned providers are 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</p>

			<p>there are unintended consequences which may impact on children, young people and families with a protected characteristic.</p> <p>The services will continue to 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 and in-house services 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 Placement Commissioning Strategy 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>
Disability	X		<p>Children, young people and families receiving a care and support service may have a disability.</p> <p>The strategy sets out plans to deliver on placement sufficiency for Children and Young People and Welsh Governments Eliminate Profit Agenda, which will have a positive impact to children and young people requiring 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</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>In-house and Commissioned providers are 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 continue to 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>
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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 sets out plans to deliver on placement sufficiency for Children and Young People and Welsh Governments Eliminate Profit Agenda, which will have a positive impact to children and young people requiring 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>In-house and Commissioned providers are 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,</p>

			<p>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 continue to 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 Placement Commissioning Strategy 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 Placement Commissioning Strategy 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 strategy sets out plans to deliver on placement sufficiency for Children and Young People and Welsh Governments Eliminate Profit Agenda, which will have a positive impact to children and young people requiring 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>In-house and Commissioned providers are 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 continue to 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</p>
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			<p>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 Placement Commissioning Strategy 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>
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 the Council or providers may have a protected characteristic due to their pregnancy/maternity status.</p> <p>There are contractual clauses within the commissioned provider contracts and the Council's employment 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 Placement Commissioning Strategy 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>

<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 sets out plans to deliver on placement sufficiency for Children and Young People and Welsh Governments Eliminate Profit Agenda, which will have a positive impact to children and young people requiring 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>In-house and Commissioned providers are 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>
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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 strategy sets out plans to deliver on placement sufficiency for Children and Young People and Welsh Governments Eliminate Profit Agenda, which will have a positive impact to children and young people requiring 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</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>In-house and Commissioned providers are 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 continue to 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 Placement Commissioning Strategy will be monitored to understand if its impact has positively improved outcomes for children, young people and families requiring</p>
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			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.
Sex	X		<p>Services are delivered across all genders. Employees of providers may have a protected characteristic due to their sex.</p> <p>The strategy sets out plans to deliver on placement sufficiency for Children and Young People and Welsh Governments Eliminate Profit Agenda, which will have a positive impact to children and young people requiring 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>In-house and Commissioned providers are 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</p>

			<p>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 continue to 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 Placement Commissioning Strategy 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 Placement Commissioning strategy sets out plans to deliver on placement sufficiency for Children and Young People and Welsh Governments Eliminate Profit Agenda, which will have a positive impact to children and young people requiring 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>In-house and Commissioned providers are 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 continue to 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>
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				<p>The Placement Commissioning Strategy 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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What action will be taken to improve positive or mitigate negative impacts?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of the Services by the CCU • Monitoring of internal services by CYPS • 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 • Ongoing monitoring of the Placements Commissioning Plan 2024-2027

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
- Monitoring of internal services by CYPS
- Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services.
- 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
- Ongoing monitoring of the Placements Commissioning Plan 2024-2027

4. Socio Economic Duty

Impact	Details of the impact/advantage/disadvantage
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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>Consideration of in-house services will create new employment opportunities within the Council, which will have a positive economic impact within Neath Port Talbot.</p>
Negative/Disadvantage	
Neutral	<p>Consideration of in-house services 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 • Monitoring of internal services by CYPS • Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services. • 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 • Ongoing monitoring of the Placements Commissioning Plan 2024-2027

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			Consideration of in-house services 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
- Monitoring of internal services by CYPS
- Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services.
- 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
- Ongoing monitoring of the Placements Commissioning Plan 2024-2027

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.

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

- Monitoring of the Services by the CCU
- Monitoring of internal services by CYPS
- Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services.
- 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

- Ongoing monitoring of the Placements Commissioning Plan 2024-2027

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 Placement Commissioning Strategy outlines how we plan 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 Placement Commissioning Strategy highlights the need to focus 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 voice of the child, as well as services in the community e.g. foster 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 Placement Commissioning Strategy supports 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>

	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.
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	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 Placement Commissioning Strategy 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
 - Monitoring of internal services by CYPS
 - Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals relating to the Services.
 - 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
- Ongoing monitoring of the Placements Commissioning Plan 2024-2027

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 Ongoing monitoring of the Placements Commissioning Plan 2024-2027 will have a positive impact, however systems will be in place that will allow officers to check that the Ongoing monitoring of the Placements Commissioning Plan 2024-2027 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 Ongoing monitoring of the Placements Commissioning Plan 2024-2027 will have a positive impact, however systems will be in place that will allow officers to check that the Ongoing monitoring of the Placements Commissioning Plan 2024-2027 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 Ongoing monitoring of the Placements Commissioning Plan 2024-2027 will have a positive impact, however systems will be in place that will allow officers to check that the Ongoing monitoring of the Placements Commissioning Plan 2024-2027 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 Ongoing monitoring of the Placements Commissioning Plan 2024-2027 will have a positive impact, however systems will be in place that will allow officers to check that the Ongoing monitoring of the Placements Commissioning Plan 2024-2027 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 Ongoing monitoring of the Placements Commissioning Plan 2024-2027 will have a positive impact, however systems will be in place that will allow officers to check that the Ongoing monitoring of the Placements Commissioning Plan 2024-2027 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.

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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?
Monitoring of the Services by the Common Commissioning Unit	PO Commissioning	Annually	Monitoring reports
Monitoring of internal services by CYPS	PO CYPS	Annually	Internal reports
Analysis of any complaints and safeguarding referrals	PO Commissioning	Ongoing as they are received	Investigation reports and corrective action plans

relating to the Services by the Common Commissioning Unit			
Analysis of CIW Inspection Reports on Services by the Common Commissioning Unit	PO Commissioning	As they are published	Monitoring reports
Analysis of CIW Inspection Reports on Internal Services	PO CYPS	As they are published	Internal 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
Internal Services to implement Monitoring systems	PO CYPS	On commencement of service	Internal reports

12. Sign off

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	Hayley Short	Principal Officer for Commissioning	H Short	29/10/2024
Signed off by	Keri Warren	Head of Service		



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7th November 2024

Report of the Head of Housing and Communities – Chelé Zandra Howard

Matter for Information

Wards Affected All Wards

HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT - ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT

Purpose of the Report

To inform Members of the progress made against key work programmes of the Housing and Communities Department (“the Department”).

Executive Summary

This report provides information in respect of the work undertaken by the Department to progress its strategic objectives since the previous update report.

Background

The Department was established in January 2023 and brought together a number of Council functions including the Community Safety Team, Area Planning Board Team, Refugee & Asylum Team, Housing Strategy, Homelessness and Housing Adaptations & Renewals.

On the 21st September 2023, a six month update report was presented to Members outlining progress against key programmes of work (Background Paper 1). Twelve months on from the last report, Officers have developed an annual report (Appendix 1) to provide a further update on the Department's progress.

Financial Impacts

No implications as the report is for information purposes.

Integrated Impact Assessment

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for information purposes.

Valleys Communities Impacts

No implications as the report is for information purposes.

Workforce Impacts

No implications as the report is for information purposes.

Legal Impacts

No implications as the report is for information purposes.

Risk Management Impacts

No implications as the report is for information purposes.

Consultation

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item as the report is for information purposes.

Recommendations

To note the contents of this report

Reasons for Proposed Decision

To ensure oversight of the Housing and Communities Department work programme.

Implementation of Decision

This report is for information purposes only.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Twelve Month Update Report

List of Background Papers

Background Paper 1: Housing and Communities Department Mid-Year Progress Report (Agenda Item 5) -

<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=497&MId=11321>

Officer Contact

Chelé Zandra Howard: Head of Housing and Communities

Email: c.howard@npt.gov.uk

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Appendix One – Annual Progress Report on Key Projects

<u>Strategic Housing</u>	
Housing and Homelessness Strategy	<p>The Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (Council) Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan 2024-2027 (Strategic Plan) was agreed by Cabinet in January 2024 and complements our Rapid Rehousing Plan (RRP), which was agreed in October 2022.</p> <p>Following agreement of the business case and subsequent restructure, The Housing Strategy Team (HST) was established in October 2024, there are a few posts to still appoint into but it is expected that there will be a full team by December 2024. The HST will led the progression of the Strategic Plan and RRP, in collaboration with The Homelessness Team and the Common Commissioning Unit (CCU), as well as our strategic partners such as the Third Sector and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).</p> <p>This Team will enable us to move forward at pace projects that have already commenced, for example the development of 'Triage', recommence work that has needed to be deprioritised due to capacity such as 'modern methods of construction' and also take forward new actions such as implementing co-production into our work.</p>
Housing First	<p>A project group is in place which consists of Officers from the HST and CCU who have researched different models and analysed local needs in order to develop a service model to meet the needs of NPT.</p> <p>Discussions have taken place with key stakeholders to inform the service model and a market engagement event is planned for December 2024/January 2025 to present and test out the proposed service model. Following this event the service model will be finalised and presented to Scrutiny in early 2025.</p>
Review of Housing Options Information Technology (IT) Platform	<p>Work is progressing with the Transformation Digital Board and changes have been made to the Homelessness Web Page and Contact Detail Form.</p> <p>A discovery session is scheduled for the end of October 2024 and the outcome of this event will inform a joint report identifying needs. This report is due to be presented to the Transformation Digital Board November/December 2024.</p>

<p>Triage Centre</p>	<p>Key to replacing the number of B&Bs and hotels in use is the development of 2 triage centres in the NPT area.</p> <p>A service model and accommodation specification has been developed, alongside a financial case for investment. However to date it has not been possible to identify a suitable location/building for the scheme, Officers continue to work with the Property and Regeneration (P&R) Department to understand potential options and to undertake feasibility assessments on the proposed buildings/land.</p>
<p>Increasing the Number of Lettings to Homeless People</p>	<p>Review of the Housing Register A number of improvements have been made following the review and Officers now meet fortnightly with Tai Tarian to effectively manage referrals and allocations. A new data sharing agreement has been entered into with Tai Tarian which has enhanced information sharing, resulting in a reduction in housing options cases.</p> <p>Review of the Nomination Process The current nomination process has been reviewed with recommendations and next steps identified. This work will pick up speed once a Nominations Officer is appointed, this Officer will work with RSLs to put in place the identified changes to increase the nomination success rate.</p> <p>Temporary Accommodation (TA) An analysis has commenced with a target cohort of residents from The Ambassador and The Tree Tops Hotel to better understand people's wider housing and support needs. The next stage of this project will include working with RSLs and the Third Sector to identify housing pathways and provide wrap around support to move people into settled accommodation.</p> <p>Flipping Tenancy This is where an arrangement is made with a landlord to turn a tenancy agreement from temporary to permanent. To date there has been 2 households which have been flipped from TA to settled accommodation with a secure contract. There is also another household currently going through the process and the plan going forward is to identify more households that may benefit from this scheme.</p> <p>Review of social housing stock A review of social housing stock is underway, and this will provide an overall data set of all social housing which will include accommodation type, size, and location in the Neath Port Talbot area. This information will enable frontline officers to have more meaningful discussions with homeless</p>

	households about move on opportunities and enable more accessible data sharing for strategic development opportunities.
Community Led Development	<p>Work is progressing in partnership with Cwmpas and Tai Tarian to explore opportunities for establishing community led developments. A visit to 'We Can Make' in Bristol took place in April 2024 to better understand the potential for community led developments in order to inform our strategic thinking.</p> <p>An initial meeting has taken place with relevant Departments within the wider Council (Planning, Planning Policy, Highways, etc) to scope out various matters of consideration and meetings have also taken place with the P&R Department to understand potential land opportunities.</p>
Private Sector Landlord Forum	<p>In partnership with the Environmental Health Department, the Private Rented Network Forum has been reestablished.</p> <p>Two meetings have taken place, the first meeting attracted over 100 landlords and the second meeting 40 landlords. The Forums included presentations from Welsh Government (WG) in relation to the Leasing Scheme Wales initiative and Rent Smart Wales. In addition, there was representation from the National Residents Landlord Association and advice from a damp and mould expert.</p>
Youth Homelessness/Accommodation	<p>The Children & Young Peoples (CYP) Department and the Housing & Communities Department undertook a joint review of their approach to youth homelessness/accommodation. This has resulted in the development of a joint action plan that is overseen by the revamped Youth Accommodation Strategic Group, Chaired by the Head of Housing & Communities. Actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a single access point for service referrals (e.g. a 'Gateway/Brokerage') ▪ Develop 'Move On' pathways from youth accommodation services ▪ Implement a joint approach to the commissioning of youth accommodation services
<u>Capital Funding</u>	
Social Housing Grant (SHG)	<p>The budget for this financial year of £14.1million has been fully allocated over 6 schemes which will create 186 homes. A number of RSLs are involved and regular meetings and monitoring is in place.</p> <p>In the 23/24 financial year, the full £12.8 million was spent and we were able to secure an additional £9.4 million, which brought the total amount of SHG allocated within NPT to £22.2 million. This was £14 million (+166%) increase when compared to 22/23 (£8 million).</p>
Recycled Capital Grant (RCG)	RCG is SHG that is recycled by an RSL, usually following the sale of land or property and, as such, varies in amount available to spend. All RCG schemes are subject to 50% homelessness nominations

	<p>(However, negotiations are taking place to potentially increase this and 100% nominations for first lets have been agreed on a number of properties).</p> <p>To date in 24/25 we have allocated £1.6 million of RCG to purchase 10 properties from the open market. In the last financial year, £1.5 million of RCG was spent; roughly half of this funding was allocated towards a main scheme within the Programme Development Plan and the remainder to purchase 8 properties from the open market.</p>
Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP)	<p>TACP provides grant funding to Local Authorities (LAs) and RSLs to bring forward longer term accommodation, to support those in TA. All schemes are subject to 100% homelessness nominations.</p> <p>The budget for this financial year has doubled from £2 to £4million and there are currently 27 Priority Schemes in place with a waiting list of another 9 if slippage or withdrawal occurs.</p> <p>In the 23/24 financial year, the full allocation of £2 million, plus £50k tolerance was allocated resulting in 18 priority schemes which are prioritised for reducing families in TA.</p>
Housing Care Fund (HCF)	<p>This is regional capital grant to support the development of health and social care accommodation and is managed by The Western Bay Regional Partnership Board. These schemes reduce the need for care home provision and helps people to remain more independent in the community.</p> <p>Currently, there are 3 schemes being progressed for NPT, which will provide homes for pan disability, mental health and young care leavers, as well as a specially adapted super-bariatric home. The accommodation is developed by our RSL partners and the CCU lead on the project, including commissioning the support services and ensuring the physical build is in line with the needs of residents.</p>

Adaptations & Renewals

ECO4 Flex Scheme

ECO4 Flex is an energy efficiency scheme which places a legal obligation on energy suppliers to deliver energy efficiency and heating measures. This is provided to the least energy efficient domestic homes occupied by low income, vulnerable and fuel poor households. The purpose is to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty.

For local households to access ECO4 Flex, the Council must state publicly through a Statement of Intent (SOI), the criteria it intends to adopt to identify the households that meet the Flex eligibility criteria. The SOI confirms the Council's intention to participate in the Flex scheme and enables contractors / agents to engage with eligible residents on behalf of Energy Suppliers. Warm Wales Administers the scheme with the Council signing the declarations to approve the claims.

Key Facts Between March 2023 and March 2024

- 381 declarations agreed
- £73,000 in income fees to the Council
- Over £5 million ECO4 Flex energy efficiency works has been completed as part of the scheme

Key Facts Between April to end of September 2024

- 169 declarations agreed
- £25,350 in income fees to the Council

Empty Homes Scheme

In March 2023, the Council agreed to take part in WGs Empty Home Grant Scheme to further reduce the number of long-term empty properties in the area and increase housing supply. The Council agreed to invest up to £240,000 with WG providing up to £2.4 million of funding over the 2 year period.

This scheme works by providing grants to eligible homeowners to undertake the necessary work to bring the property back into use.

Key Facts – up to September 2024

- 155 applications received of which 93 progressed to survey and 85 surveys took place.
- 66 applications cancelled and 39 applications were approved.
- A further 50 applications are being processed.
- 9 grants have been completed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The total cost of approved and surveyed applications - £2,006,176. Total cost of grant fund awarded - £786,385.
<p>Leasing Scheme Wales</p>	<p>This is a scheme in which private sector landlords rent a property to the Council for a guaranteed period of 5-10 years and a grant of up to £25,000 can be used to make improvements to the property. The aim of this scheme is to provide access to good, quality private rental properties at the Local Housing Allowance Rate (LHA).</p> <p>Despite a range of activity to promote the scheme, we are yet to sign up any landlord. The main barriers are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Landlords do not wish to rent at the LHA. ▪ Mortgage lenders refuse to give approval to lease the property for a period of 5-10 years ▪ Costs of works to bring the properties back to a suitable standard is in excess of £25,000 <p><u>Key Facts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Received 5-10 enquires a week but very few led to formal requests. ▪ In total 37 formal requests have been received, however the majority have withdrawn. ▪ There are currently 2 properties progressing through the scheme and are at the legal stage.
<p>Home Adaptations</p>	<p>There continues to be significant demand for works, which is in excess of the available budget of £3 million for DFGs and £280,000 for ENABLE. This means that the available budget for DFGs is now being committed earlier in the year, which results in long waiting lists. In addition, the costs of some works is now in excess of the £36,000 DFG limit, which means that some people are unable to obtain the works they have been assessed as needing due to the cost.</p> <p>In October 2024 Officers presented an options appraisal to Cabinet with two recommendations on how to help address the key DFG challenges. The first recommendation was for Officers to undertake a public consultation to consider reinstating the means test for small and medium works. The second recommendation was to implement a discretionary 'top-up' fund for works that are in excess of the DFG limit. Both recommendations were approved by Cabinet and Officers are in the process of implementing the recommendations.</p> <p><u>Key Facts up to September 2024</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 167 DFGs have been delivered.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total end to end time 410 days in Q1 of 24/25 which is increasing due to the high demand and limited budget (284 days in Q1 of 23/24).
<u>Homelessness</u>	
Housing Options Restructure	<p>The implementation of the new structure was finalised August 2024, recruitment continues for some posts and are all expected to be occupied by the end of December 2024.</p> <p>A new training programme for Staff has been implemented with an anticipated completion date of March 2025. Training courses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome Focussed Support Neurodiversity Mental Health Substance Use Personal Resilience Violence and Aggression Psychologically Informed Environments Benefits training Dual Diagnosis Trauma Informed practices <p>Monitoring of cases is in now in place and well established so that Team Leaders can better support staff and ensure workloads are manageable.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring will be conducted at varying levels to ensure TA numbers are starting to reduce as well as the use of B & B's and time spent in TA. These figures will not reduce imminently but will be monitored to ensure the positive impact of the restructure is evident and quantifiable.</p> <p><u>Key Facts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 88% people successfully prevented from becoming homeless in Q1 (42.9% Q1 23/24) Number of Presentations June 2024 – 211 (232 in June 2023) Number of people in TA end of June 2024 – 223 (197 in July 2023)
Increasing Dispersed TA	<p>The Service continues to work on alternatives to B&B by increasing the number of leased units used as TA. Currently the Service has 18 units of owned stock, 9 units of long term leased hostel type accommodation and 68 leased self -contained units. This number has increased slightly since the last</p>

	<p>report, but some units have been returned during that time, as well managing voids in areas of redevelopment.</p> <p>A report was presented to Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Cabinet Board in January 2024 in respect of working with the private sector in the provision of TA. Since that report, further work has taken place and another report is due to be presented in the new year.</p>
Strategy to reduce families in B&B's/overall reduce families in TA	<p>Work is ongoing to increase prevention and reduce the number of families needing assistance. Whilst we are still seeing families presenting to the Service due to landlords selling, numbers are steadily reducing.</p> <p>The peak of families in TA since the implementation of 'The Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016' was 55 families in October 2023. As of 14th of October 2024, there are 41 families in TA of which 6 are in hotels and waiting to be moved to a self-contained unit as soon as vacancies are available (28 families with children were in hotels before this project commenced).</p> <p>Move on options for families has also been reviewed with the allocations of acquisitions via TACP or RCG being prioritised for families in TA. Work is also ongoing to ensure families are put forward for new developments along with work to review and revise the nominations process, again ensuring households are put forward for the most appropriate properties.</p>
Tenancy Sustainment Panel (TSP)	<p>To date the TSP has not received any referrals. Enquiries with RSL's has fed-back that consent is the biggest issue as the tenants that need to be referred are not engaging, therefore the RSL is unable to get consent for the referral to be made. This will be reviewed in the coming weeks when the new Team Manager is in post and work will be done with the RSL's to maximise the opportunities for referrals and reduce any barriers that are currently preventing referrals from being submitted.</p>
Policy Development	<p>In response to the changing presentation and landscape for homelessness services, a new policy on charging fees to people who are not entitled to full Housing Benefit or have failed to make an application for Housing Benefit has been developed and implemented.</p> <p>In addition, the policy for rent arrears was updated to strengthen the Council's ability to recoup payments.</p>

<u>Refugee and Asylum Support</u>	
Ukrainian Humanitarian Support	<p>Both the Welcome Centre and Hotel was wound down by WG in Winter 2023, with the Ukrainian Support Team (US Team) providing intensive support to help households move into more settled accommodation. The US Team was able to offer 94% of the people in the Welcome Centre and 82% of the people at the Hotel more permanent accommodation, with the remaining people being moved into alternative Welcome Centres, alongside those that chose to not take up the offer of accommodation.</p> <p>Currently 64 people are living with 28 sponsors within the Neath Port Talbot area, and it is anticipated there will be a further 51 people to be housed by the end of the year.</p> <p>The US Team have supported 309 people since the beginning of the humanitarian crisis, 169 remaining in the WG Super Sponsor Route and individual sponsorship. Most people living in the area who now private rent are accessing education or employment.</p> <p>Good prevention work has taken place, and the US Team have successfully prevented the majority of people from presenting to the Council as homeless (<i>only 2.9% have required homelessness duty</i>). This work will continue until March 2026 and case numbers will be monitored and reviewed regularly.</p>
<u>Community Safety Team</u>	
Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy	<p>The 'Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy' was refreshed for 2023-2026 and officially launched in Autumn 2023. The strategy outlines the work that will be undertaken to eliminate all forms of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV), and ensures the Council discharge its duties under the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.</p> <p>Key areas of work within the strategy are Communications & Engagement; Children & Young People; Perpetrators; Early Intervention & Prevention; Training; Accessible Services; and Criminal Justice. Each area has a series of actions and is overseen by the VAWDASV Leadership Group and its subgroups. The first annual report for this strategy will be prepared for Christmas 2024 and this will demonstrate progress made in all priority areas.</p> <p>The Council operates an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service which supports those deemed very high-risk victims of domestic abuse. The Community Safety Team (CST)</p>

	<p>continues to work to increased demands when compared to the same period last year. The referrals of high-risk domestic abuse victims into the Service are far more complex in nature, post Covid pandemic. However, engagement rates remain high, at 65%. The Service continues to work with South Wales Police (SWP) and local specialist providers to manage this demand, and ensure victims are appropriately supported with robust safety plans in place. This element of the Service remains heavily reliant on grant funding for staff salaries.</p>
<p>Paws on Patrol</p>	<p>This scheme continues to empower residents to be the eyes and ears in the local community, reporting the issues seen whilst out in the community. It also offers a very light touch way of engaging with residents about other community safety related topics such as domestic abuse and hate crime.</p> <p>Paws on Patrol has celebrated its 10 year anniversary in October 2024, and now has over 1,600 members signed up. An annual survey was conducted early in the year, responses were very positive and the feedback from members will be used to shape the Service over the coming year.</p> <p>Quarterly newsletters are also distributed to our members with information on latest trends, emerging issues, as well as general crime prevention and safety advice.</p>
<p>Grant Funding</p>	<p>The CST has been successful in obtaining a number of grants to support the work of the Community Safety Partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tata Steel provided £3,000 to fund the annual Crucial Crew Event. This covered the cost of venue hire, press release (including vlog), uniforms for facilitators and refreshments. ▪ £4,700 from WG for Target Hardening equipment – This funding will support with the purchase of home security items for the high-risk victims of domestic abuse that are being supported. This includes items such as Ring doorbells, window locks, door jammers, security lighting, dash cams etc. Being able to offer items like this to the people supported, offers an extension of the holistic support, and helps with risk management. ▪ £97,000 of UK Shared Prosperity Fund is being used to continue with the Hangout provision to support young people who are vulnerable to being drawn into anti-social behaviour. This project will be extended to include a mobile unit that can be responsive to emerging hotspots of antisocial behaviour across the borough. This project is led by Community Safety and supported by SWP, NPTCBC Youth Service, Social Services Be Safe Team, and Youth Justice. ▪ The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) continue to fund 4 posts in the CST, to be responsive to issues around domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour. ▪ WG continue to fund 3 roles within the CST which delivers on the Community Cohesion programme and support high risk victims of domestic abuse.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A bid has been submitted for £25,000 to support SWP with Operation Sentinel, a hotspot-based operation focused on serious violence and anti-social behaviour. ▪ During the first 6 months of the year, the CST were successful in securing another 2 additional grants.
Community Cohesion	<p>WG continue to fund Community Cohesion activity across Wales. During the first 6 months of the year, the CST have organised key events, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Cohesion Cup Rounder's Tournament which brought together local services and the local community through sport. The day provided an opportunity to engage with hundreds of residents on hate crime and domestic abuse. ▪ The second NPT Pride - in partnership with local LGBT community groups, Local Area Coordinators, and Local Councillors. ▪ Windrush multi agency awareness raising event at the Princess Royal Theatre, attended by the Mayor of NPTCBC. ▪ Chai & Chat – In partnership with Community Voluntary Services (CVS) support continues with weekly Chai and Chat sessions, aimed at women in our local BME Community. These weekly sessions are now being attended by over 20 people each week. ▪ In the pipeline is the Black History Month event and a film screening to recognise Hate Crime Awareness week.
'Safer' Events	<p>The CST have continued with the piloted approach to Community Safety engagement events and ensure all are bespoke to each area visited. Officers use local intelligence, and anecdotal information to ensure the most appropriate services attend with the CST on the day. This has generated greater footfall and allows residents to speak about what matters are important.</p>
Distribution of Grants to Local Community Groups	<p>The CST continue to form part of the Afan Tawe Nedd Crime Prevention Panel and provide small grants of £500 to the local community to support diversionary activities for young people.</p>
Crucial Crew	<p>Crucial Crew is Community Safety's flagship event and has been running for 28 years. Each year, at least 1500 Year 6 pupils attend the event, and visit a series of 10 -minute safety workshops. The aim of Crucial Crew is to make sure young people stay safe over the summer holidays and during the transition from primary to secondary school.</p> <p>Workshops include Fire Safety, Water Safety, Healthy Relationships, Road Safety, Railway Safety and many more. At this years' event, Year 10 drama students from Ysgol Cwm Brombil supported the event. Provided was a 10 minute peer education production to every school, which was incredibly emotive and thought provoking.</p>

Area Planning Board Team (APBT)

Reducing the Harms Associated with Substance Use

Drug Poisoning Task Force (DPTF)

Western Bay (WB) is the only area in Wales which routinely reviews non-fatal drug over-doses. This process involves assessing each case and assigning it to the appropriate service to make contact within 72 hours of the overdose being picked up. These professionals provide guidance, support, and referrals to specialized services and closely monitors the progress of each person until identified risks are mitigated.

Key Facts

- 171 cases reviewed/monitored by the DPTF; 150 cases (88 %) of those referred received a positive intervention by drug services.
- 30 people were directly referred into services.
- Streamlined the monitoring of positive interventions and expanded the DPTF membership to enhance support available.
- Participated in the Pan Wales approach to drafting a new Information Sharing Protocol (ISP) for fatal/non-fatal overdoses and this will be live in 2024.

Independent Review Panel (IRP)

The APBT plays a pivotal role in coordinating and facilitating the Independent Review Panel (IRP) for suspected drug-related deaths. The primary objective is to identify recommendations, learning points, and best practices from these cases. Subsequently, the findings are shared with relevant services, enabling to adapt the practices and improve service provision.

Key Facts

- Suspected deaths – 97% were reviewed within the 6 months’ timeframe (set by WG) and surpassing the Department’s 90% target.
- Key themes from the reviews have been identified and recommendations made to improve service provision and mitigate risk.
- Reviews identified gaps in co-occurring work between substance use services and mental health services and collaboration took place with a number of working groups.
- Coroner’s input led to the development of an information sharing protocol (ISP) between substance use and mental health services.
- Worked closely with the local coroner’s office to gather intelligence on the drugs taken which supports to produce robust, accurate and timely drug warning alerts to partners and the public.

Learning from Practice

A pathway has been introduced for service providers and other agencies to report matters of concern with current cases and specific issues with practice. The APBT conducts an audit of concerns raised and these are immediately addressed. Over the last year 16 cases were reviewed.

Intensive Multi-agency Meeting (IMAP)

The APBT are collaborating with the PCC Office to coordinate the IMAP. This service was launched in October 2023 and discusses cases referred from a wide range of partners that require multi-agency assessment, treatment, and management. The panel shares information and problem-solves, working together to support those individuals most at risk of a fatal drug poisoning. These individuals may not find services easy to engage with and may also be involved in drug related offending. The panel captures areas of good practice and areas for development from the discussions. The panel received 9 referrals and 7 have been referred to the panel for full discussion.

Naloxone Distribution

- During the year there was an 8% increase in naloxone supply across WB compared to 22/23
- SWP continue to widen the reach of Police Officers carrying nasal naloxone, to date, there have been over 500 named police volunteers to carry naloxone, with over 500 kits issued. There have also been 5 successful uses of naloxone in the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot area from officers first at the scene of an overdose.
- 80 members off staff have been trained in the signs of overdose and administration of naloxone.
- Probation Staff in Swansea are due to be trained in the use of nasal naloxone.
- S.A.F.E (Swansea Bay Against Fatal Episodes) This peer intervention project has now been running for a year and provides vital outreach services across WB and supports key partners such as housing and homelessness, to ensure those at risk of harm have access to timely interventions. Evidence suggests that S.A.F.E became the first peer led project in Wales which delivered all 3 specialist harm reduction interventions. This included take home naloxone (THN), needle and syringe programme (NSP) and blood borne virus screening (BBV).

Key Facts include:

- 263 take home naloxone kits distributed.
- 115 naloxone kits distributed to people at risk.
- 153 naloxone kits distributed to relevant professionals.
- 8 known overdoses where naloxone from the project has been used to reverse an overdose (7 successful reversals) and 2 cases where the peers have administered naloxone.

	<p>Blood Bourne Virus (BBV) Testing Levels BBV testing levels have increased by 56% from 2022/23 and the increase has provided data and intelligence to work collaboratively targeting known hot spot areas of infection. This works towards minimising the impact on the wider community and achieving performance targets.</p> <p>Work continues to ensure robust testing processes are in place across substance use services to screen people with current and historic risk factors. Benzodiazepine training was delivered to upskill and raise awareness of novel/street benzodiazepines that are causing significant harms in the community. This training is part of ongoing work to tackle the problematic levels of benzodiazepine use that is in WB at present.</p> <p>Additionally, the APB has representation of 'lived experience' on the EuroNPWUD (European Network of People who use Drugs). There is a mix of people who currently and historically use drugs, which includes young people.</p>
<p>Co-production and Involvement of People with Lived Experience</p>	<p>A Service User Engagement Officer (SUEO) has been employed as part of the APBT and is funded by the PCC (<i>via the Home Office</i>). This role works across WB and has made positive impacts for individuals with lived experience.</p> <p><u>Examples</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peer Interventions Project - This is co-ordinated by the SUEO and delivers 3 specialist harm reduction interventions which provide support and guidance. The project also distributes naloxone kits/needle & syringe kits and conducts dry blood spot testing for Blood Bourne Viruses. ▪ There are 2 monthly co-production forums which have now been established. These forums have developed governance arrangements for people with lived/living experience who can engage with the APB in line with co-production guidelines. Work is progressing on plans to help shape the work and the forums mantra is 'nothing about us, without us.' ▪ The Lived Experience Alliance Forum (LEAF) is now in place which contributes to the co-design outcomes for the new Alliance Service Model. The SUEO is working with forum members to develop terms of reference, logo and strategy and will also lead on the co-production/co-design of WB Substance Use Alliance. ▪ Work is underway to shape and develop the 'Co-production Strategy' and this will be adopted 2024/25. ▪ Key engagement takes place with a wide range of stakeholders at both local and national level which ensures best practice is implemented.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research is taking place with partner organisations to ensure service users have a voice in the future development of services. This will identify other service user engagement methods which can be adopted to support this work.
Service Developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interim Prescribing Service Pilot (StEPS) - Work has continued throughout the year to implement the new prescribing model. The new model increases investment in, as well as providing clarity on the criteria and processes for accessing, prescribing services. Although there were some challenges affecting implementation of the plan, a consensus has been achieved amongst providers. The changes made are benefitting staff and people who use services by improving movement around the system. The impact of the progress to date is evident in the reduced waiting times to access prescribing services. ▪ A Consultant was appointed to conduct a review of specialist substance use services for children, young people, and families. The report has been finalised and is due to be presented to the APB in Autumn 2024. ▪ Funding was allocated to the Council's Children's Services to increase capacity in the Hidden Harm Service by providing a practice support worker as a pilot project. The worker started in April 2024 and has brought a wealth of expertise by working directly with children and young people whose parents have been referred into the service.
Alliance Commissioning	<p>During 2023/24 a Programme Manager was appointed and partners agreed a Business Case to implement a new 'whole system approach' called the 'Alliance', which will replace the current range of substance use services.</p> <p>Significant work has taken place to develop a regional model for substance use services on behalf of the APB partner organisations. Tender documentation for the new Alliance model has been developed and the procurement 'go live' date is imminent.</p>
Western Bay Drugs Commission	<p>The scoping work of the Drugs Commission has now concluded and the first draft of the Drugs Commission Report has been presented to the APB. It is anticipated that the final draft will be published in early 2025, with the APB agreeing an action plan for implementing the recommendations which will be published alongside the Commission's report.</p>

Common Commissioning Unit (CCU)

Mid-Point Review of the Housing Support Grant (HSG) Strategy	A mid-point review of the HSG strategy has taken place and shows good progress against the agreed priority actions. These actions link to the programmes of work mentioned within this report as HSG is the key funding stream in preventing and elevating homelessness, for example HSG funds the new Rapid Rehousing Officers within the Homelessness Team and HSG will fund/commission the Housing First support service and the Youth Accommodation services.
HSG Commissioned Services Review and Remodelling	<p>A review of all HSG services is underway to ensure alignment with our strategies, WG Guidance and Best Practice, with the intention of all services being recommissioned within the next 24 months.</p> <p>The Business cases for the Youth Accommodation Services and Housing First service will be submitted to Cabinet for approval early 2025 with the intention to commission new models of support.</p>
Violence against Women, Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Emergency Accommodation Review and Remodelling	<p>Following Phase 1, a review of VAWDASV Emergency Accommodation has taken place and a report was presented to Cabinet for approval to consult on a new model which was granted.</p> <p>The consultation commenced in September 2024 and will seek the views of those in receipt of services, those who do not access services and the public. The feedback will be used to develop a proposal for the service remodelling and be presented to Cabinet for decision in early 2025.</p>

CABINET Forward Work Programmes 24/25

KEY – Items marked in Green have been added to the Planner.

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	TYPE	Contact Officer	Purpose of Report	Called for Scrutiny	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet 4 th December	Revenue Budget Monitoring 24-25	For Decision	Huw Jones			Cllr. S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Capital Budget Monitoring 24-25	For Decision	Huw Jones			Cllr.S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Treasury Management Outturn 24-25	For Decision	Huw Jones			Cllr. S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	CSSIW Assurance Check	For Monitoring	Angela Thomas/ Hayley Short		Yes 12 th December	Cllr J. Hale Portfolio 7	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Treasury Management Mid Year Review	For Monitoring	Huw Jones		TBC	Cllr. S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Setting of the Council Tax Base	For Decision	Huw Jones		TBC	Cllr. S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Third Sector Grant & Commissioning Arrangements	For Decision	Caryn Furlow		YES 28 th Nov	Cllr S. Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Audit Wales Report - Springing Forward Strategic Assets	For Monitoring	Dean Nicolas/ Simon Brennan		6 th December 2024	Cllr. J. Hurley Portfolio 4	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Contract Procedure Rules	For Decision Commend to Council.	Craig Griffiths	To agree new standing orders and procedural rules for contracts that are entered into by Neath Port Talbot Council.	Yes 28 th November	Cllr.S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Arboricultural Management Plan includes the tree policy	For Decision	James Davies		Yes 4 th Nov	Cllr. S.Jones Portfolio 10	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Unpaid Carers Ombudsman Report	For Monitoring	Angela Thomas Hayley Short		Yes 23 rd January 2025	Cllr. J.Hale Portfolio 7	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety.

Risk Management and Complex Community Case Work	For Monitoring	Angela Thomas Hayley Short		Post 12 th December 2024	Cllr. J.Hale Portfolio 7	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
Support visits by Education Support Officers in Schools	For Monitoring	Mike Daley	Provides an update on the progress to date with the actions that follow any support visit across all our schools.		Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 23/24	For Decision	Anita James/ Caryn Furlow- Harris	The Annual Report for 2023/2024 provides an account of progress in meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty and in particular against the equality objectives and actions set out in the Strategic Equality Plan.	YES 17 th Oct	Cllr.S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
Community Focussed Schools	For Monitoring	Mike Daley	Provides an update on the progress of the Community Focussed Schools		Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
Elective Home Education	For Monitoring	John Burge	All information available on children and young people who are now Educated at Home.		Cllr N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
Flood Risk Management Plan	For Decision	Mike Roberts/ Steve Owen		YES 19 th July	Cllr. S.Jones Portfolio 10	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
Permission to Consult on the Business Case Remodel for Dom.Care	For Decision	Angela Thomas		Yes 7 th November	Cllr. J. Hale Portfolio 7	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety.
Permission to extend Contract Arrangements for the Prevention of Wellbeing Service	For Decision	Chele Howard		No	Cllr. J.Hale Portfolio 7	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety.
Children's Commissioning Placement Strategy NPTC 2024-2027	For Decision	Hayley Short		Yes, 7 th November 2024	Cllr. S. Harris Portfolio 6	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety.
Appointment of LA Governors	For Decision	John Burge		No	Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
RECURRING ITEMS (IF NEEDED)						
Various Traffic Orders (Detail not available)	For Decision	David Griffiths			Cllr W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
Various Land Disposal Reports (If Needed)	For Decision	Simon Brennan			Cllr J.Hurley Portfolio 4	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
Select Lists	For Decision	David Griffiths			Cllr. W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services

	Debt Write Offs	For Decision	Huw Jones			Cllr. S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Miscellaneous Grant Applications	For Decision	Huw Jones			Cllr.S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	TYPE	Contact Officer	Purpose of Report	Called for Scrutiny	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet 15 th January 2025							
	Hillside Managers Report	For Monitoring	Keri Warren	Private Item		Cllr. S.Harris Portfolio 6	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Hillside Responsible Individuals Report	For Monitoring	Keri Warren	Private Item		Cllr.S.Harris Portfolio 6	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Updating the Side Waste Policy	For Decision	Mike Roberts	To seek Member approval for an updated Side Waste Policy (further to Measure 6 of the approved Waste Strategy Action Plan)	Awaiting Confirmation 6 th Dec	Cllr.S.Jones Portfolio 10	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Management of Japanese Knotweed	For Decision	James Davies	Update on the treatment policy and operational plan.		Cllr. W. Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Fire Safety Guidance Impact Report	For Monitoring	Hayley Short		Yes an early update is going to Scrutiny on the 7 th Nov.	Cllr. S. Harris Portfolio 6	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety.
	Permission to Tender a Carers Service	For Decision	Hayley Short			Cllr. J.Hale Portfolio 7	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Country Parks Car Parking Review	For Decision	Chris Saunders	Consideration of revised management arrangements, a new parking order and pricing structure for car parking at the Country Parks.	Yes, 5 th December	Cllr Cen Phillips	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Flying Start Phase 3 Expansion	For Decision	Sarah Griffiths		Yes 5 th December	Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Regional Transport Plan	For Decision	David Griffiths/Brennan Griffiths/Amanda Phillips		NO	Cllr W.Griffiths	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Direct Payment Whole Service Review this includes the Direct Payments Payroll Service Review	For Decision	Angela Thomas		Yes 12 th Dec	Cllr. J.Hale Portfolio 7	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Use of Containers on Safari Collections	For Decision	Mike Roberts	To establish policy regarding the use of containers as storage on black bag waste collection rounds.	NO	Cllr.S.Jones Portfolio 10	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services

Self Assessment 2023/2024	For Decision	Louise McAndrew/ Anita James		YES 28 th Nov	Cllr. S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
Regeneration Strategy	For Decision	Andrew Collins	Work is being undertaken to produce a strategy which will form a reference and guide for future Regeneration Projects going forward	YES 6 th Dec	Cllr.J.Hurley Portfolio 4	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
Commissioning Intentions for a Housing First Service	For Decision	Chele Howard/ Hayley Short		No	Cllr. A. Llewelyn Portfolio 8	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
Report on HWRC Feasibility	For Decision	Mike Roberts	To inform Members on the outcome of feasibility work into suitable sites for a new HRWC in the Afan Valley area, and seek a decision regarding further work or not (further to Measure 17 of the approved Waste Strategy Action Plan)	Awaiting Confirmation 6 th Dec	Cllr. S.Jones, Portfolio 10	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
Margam Park Business Plan	For Decision	Chris Saunders		YES 5 th December	Cllr. C.Phillips Portfolio 5	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
Impact of the Support by Case Assessment and Progression Team.	For Monitoring	John Burge	It will provide an update on the progress to date with the actions from the Case Assessment Progression Team.		Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
Vulnerable Learners Service	For Monitoring	John Burge	Update on the support offered by the Vulnerable Learners Service and the impact it has had on pupils and families in NPT		Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
Welsh Public Library Standards	For Monitoring	Chris Saunders	Provides an update in respect of the authorities library service performance against current Welsh Language Standards (WPLS) Framework 6 and note the feedback, comments and recommendations in the Welsh Library Report.		Cllr.C.Phillips Portfolio 5	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
Various Traffic Orders (Detail not available)	For Decision	David Griffiths			Cllr W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
Various Land Disposal Reports (If Needed)	For Decision	Simon Brennan			Cllr J.Hurley Portfolio 4	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services.

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	TYPE	Contact Officer	Purpose of Report	Called for Scrutiny	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet 5 th February 2025	Fleet and Heavy Plant Renewals	For Decision	Kevin Lewis	This report seeks approval to procure new and replacement vehicles and heavy plant in 2025/2026 that has reached the end of their economic life cycle and require replacement in line with the Authority's Fleet Renewals Programme.	YES 6 th Dec	Cllr. W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Social Services Directors Annual Report	For Decision (Commending to Council)	Andrew Jarrett			Report of the Director of Social Services.	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Strategic Risk Register	For Monitoring	Caryn Furlow-Harris		YES 9 th Jan	Cllr.S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Permission to Consult on the Business Case Remodel for Dom.Care	For Decision	Angela Thomas		23 rd January 2025	Cllr. J. Hale Portfolio 7	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety.
	Permission to Proceed with Remodelling of Care and Support at Trem y Glyn	For Decision	Angela Thomas		To be Confirmed	Cllr. J. Hale Portfolio 7	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Housing Mid Point Strategic Review	For Decision	Chele Howard Hayley Short		Yes 23 rd January 25	Cllr A.Llewelyn Portfolio 8	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Neath Port Talbot Events Strategy	For Decision	Chris Saunders		YES 16 th Jan	Cllr.C.Phillips Portfolio 5	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Permission to tender Accommodation Models for Young People	For Decision	Keri Warren	Private Item	Yes 23 rd Jan	Cllr. S.Harris Portfolio 6	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Library Strategy	For Decision		To approve the Library Strategy		Cllr.C.Phillips Portfolio 5	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Strategic Development Plan.	For Monitoring	Chris Millis	Provides an Update on the Progress to date with the Actions from within the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Strategic Development Plan.	YES 16 th Jan	Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Young People Housing Support Grant Funded Services (Permission to Re-tender).	For Decision	Hayley Short/ Chele Howard	Proposal for the recommissioning of Young People Housing Support Grant Funded Services		Cllr. A.Llewelyn Portfolio 8	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Aberavon Seafront Masterplan	For Decision	Chris Saunders	To adopt the Seafront Strategy	Scrutiny 16 th Jan	Cllr. Cen Phillips Portfolio 5	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Permission to Tender Supported Accommodation	For Decision	Hayley Short	Private Item		Cllr.A.Llewelyn Portfolio 8	Education, Skills and Wellbeing

	Permission to Tender for Emergency Accommodation for Women – Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.	For Decision	Chele Howard/ Hayley Short	To feedback on the outcome of the consultation for the proposed remodel of emergency accommodation and seek permission to retender VAWDASV Emergency Accommodation on the feedback.	Yes, 23 rd Jan	Cllr. A.Llewelyn Portfolio 8	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Policies for the use of artificial grass and installation of honeybee hives on NPT Council / managed land.	For Decision	Ceri Morris/ Lana Beynon		TBC	Cllr. S.Jones Portfolio 10	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Various Traffic Orders (Detail not available)	For Decision	David Griffiths			Cllr W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Various Land Disposal Reports (If Needed)	For Decision	Simon Brennan			Cllr J.Hurley Portfolio 4	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	TYPE	Contact Officer	Purpose of Report	Called for Scrutiny	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Relevant Scrutiny committee
Cabinet 26 th February <u>BUDGET</u> <u>25/26</u>	Revenue Budget Monitoring 24-25	For Decision	Huw Jones			Cllr.S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Capital Budget Monitoring 24-25	For Decision	Huw Jones			Cllr. S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership
	Treasury Management Outturn 24-25	For Decision	Huw Jones			Cllr. S.Knoyle Portfolio 2	Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	TYPE	Contact Officer	Purpose of Report	Called for Scrutiny	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Relevant Scrutiny committee
Cabinet (Special) 12th March 2025 (This needs to be Confirmed)							
	Education Development – Local Authority Education Grant Spending Plan 2024 -2025.	For Monitoring	Mike Daley	Provides an update on the progress to date with the actions from the grant.		Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Safeguarding Support within Schools	For Monitoring	John Burge	Overview of all Safeguarding Advice and Training offered to Schools	YES 22 th Jan	Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Appointment and Removal of Local Authority Governor Representatives	For Decision	John Burge	Information on the Appointment and Removal of Local Authority Governor Representatives		Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	An overview of the Families First Programme	For Information	Sarah Griffiths/ Allison Harris	The report will provide an overview of the Families First Early Intervention support services available to children, young people and families. It will also provide 2023/2024 data demonstrating the impact of the programme on children, young people and families who have accessed the service.		Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Strategic Schools Improvement Programme Proposal to reorganise ALN Provision at Cwmtawe Comprehensive School	For Decision	Rhiannon Crowhurst	Results of Consultation and permission to advertise Notice for Objections		Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Strategic Schools Improvement Programme Proposal to re-organise ALN Provision at Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School.	For Decision	Rhiannon Crowhurst	Results of Consultation and permission to advertise Notice for Objections		Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Various Traffic Orders (Detail not available)	For Decision	David Griffiths			Cllr W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	
	Various Land Disposal Reports (If Needed)	For Decision	Simon Brennan			Cllr J.Hurley Portfolio 4	

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	TYPE	Contact Officer	Purpose of Report	Called for Scrutiny	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Relevant Scrutiny committee
Cabinet 19 th March	Period Dignity Report	For Monitoring	John Burge	Report on the spend and implementation of Period Dignity Scheme.		Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Family Support in the Early Years. An overview of the family support provided by the Early Years and Flying Start Family Support Team.	For Information	Sarah Griffiths/ Lisa Clement-Jones	This report will provide an overview of the collaborative work across the Local Authority and Health in relation to providing equitable early help for children and families in the Early Years.	YES 6 th March	Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Updating the Missed Bin Policy	For Decision	Mike Roberts	To seek Member approval for an updated Missed Bin Policy (further to the implementation of Measure 1 of the approved Waste Strategy Action Plan, once completed)		Cllr.S.Jones Portfolio 10	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
	Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy	For Monitoring	Chele Howard/Elinor Wellington	12 Month Update		Cllr. A.Llewelyn Portfolio 8	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Various Traffic Orders (Detail not available)	For Decision	David Griffiths			Cllr W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	
	Various Land Disposal Reports (If Needed)	For Decision	Simon Brennan			Cllr J.Hurley Portfolio 4	

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	TYPE	Contact Officer	Purpose of Report	Called for Scrutiny	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Relevant Scrutiny committee
Cabinet 9 th April	Social Services Complaints Annual Report	For Monitoring	Leighton Jones			Cllr.A.Llewellyn Portfolio 8 Cllr S.Harris Portfolio 6 Cllr J Hale Portfolio 7	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Community Safety Strategic Intent Document	For Monitoring	Chele Howard/ Elinor Wellington	12 Month Update		Cllr. A. Llewelyn Portfolio 8	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Permission to Consult and Pilot an Alternative Night Time Support Report	For Decision	Keri Warren/ Hayley Short		Yes, 13 th March 2025	Cllr.S.Harris Portfolio 6	Social Services, Housing and Community Safety
	Various Traffic Orders (Detail not available)	For Decision	David Griffiths			Cllr W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	
	Various Land Disposal Reports (If Needed)	For Decision	Simon Brennan			Cllr J.Hurley Portfolio 4	

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	TYPE	Contact Officer	Purpose of Report	Called for Scrutiny	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Relevant Scrutiny committee
Cabinet 30 th April	Hillside Managers Report	For Monitoring	Keri Warren			Cllr.S.Harris Portfolio 6	
	Hillside Responsible Individuals Report	For Monitoring	Keri Warren			Cllr.S.Harris Portfolio 6	
	Early Years and Flying Start Childcare	For Monitoring	Sarah Griffiths/Lisa Clement-Jones	This report will provide information in relation to the Early Years and Flying Start Childcare Sector including the impact of Flying Start Expansion.	YES 10 th April	Cllr.N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Electric Vehicle On-Street Home Charging	For Monitoring	David Griffiths	To provide Members with an update on the current position regarding on-street electric vehicle charging from home electrical supply and actions required.		Cllr W.Griffiths Portfolio 9	Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services
		Various Traffic Orders (Detail not available)	For Decision	David Griffiths			Cllr W.Griffiths Portfolio 9
	Various Land Disposal Reports (If Needed)	For Decision	Simon Brennan			Cllr J.Hurley Portfolio 4	

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	TYPE	Contact Officer	Purpose of Report	Called for Scrutiny	Cabinet Portfolio Holder	Relevant Scrutiny committee
Cabinet 21 st May							
	Strategic Schools Improvement Programme Proposal to reorganise ALN provision at Cwmtawe Comprehensive School	For Decision	Rhiannon Crowhurst	Final Determination of the Proposal		Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing
	Strategic Schools Improvement Programme Proposal to reorganise ALN provision at Cefn Season Comprehensive School	For Decision	Rhiannon Crowhurst	Final Determination of the Proposal		Cllr. N.Jenkins Portfolio 3	Education, Skills and Wellbeing.
	Various Traffic Orders (Detail not available)	For Decision	David Griffiths				Cllr W.Griffiths Portfolio 9
Various Land Disposal Reports (If Needed)	For Decision	Simon Brennan				Cllr J.Hurley Portfolio 4	

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Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee

(All starting 2pm unless otherwise stated)

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Contact Officer
2024		
7th November	Selected from Cabinet Forward Work Programme	
	Neath Port Talbot Council Children and Young People Services Placement Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027 (Decision)	Hayley Short/Keri Warren
	2025/2026 Budget Progress Report (Information)	Huw Jones
	PRIVATE - Fire Safety Guidance Impact Report (Information)	Hayley Short/ Angela Thomas
	PRIVATE - Business Case for Establishing an In-House Short Breaks Service for Children with Disabilities (Decision)	Hayley Short/Keri Warren
	PRIVATE - Business Case for Establishing an In-House Family Link Short Breaks Service for Children with Disabilities (Decision)	Hayley Short/Keri Warren
	PRIVATE ITEM – Hillside Managers Report (Information)	Keri Warren

	PRIVATE ITEM – Hillside Responsible Individuals Report (Information)	Keri Warren
	Requested by Scrutiny Committee	
	Update Report on Housing and Communities Transformation Programmes	Chele Howard
	Update Report on the Children and Young People Services Transformation Programme	Keri Warren/Victoria Smith/Bethan McGillian/Maria Selby/Hayley Short/Gemma Hargest
12 December	Selected from Cabinet Forward Work Programme	
	Commissioning Intentions for a Housing First Service (Decision)	Chele Howard/Hayley Short
	Corporate Plan Annual Report 2023/2024 (Decision)	Louise McAndrew/Caryn Furlow-Harris, Noelwyn Daniel
	Corporate Plan Six Monthly Update for Quarter 1 and 2 (Information)	Louise McAndrew/Caryn Furlow-Harris
	CSSIW Assurance Check (Information)	Hayley Short/Angela Thomas
	Direct Payment Whole Service Review (Decision)	Hayley Short/ Angela Thomas
	Permission to tender Carers Service (Decision)	Hayley Short/Angela Thomas

	Permission to proceed with remodelling of care and support at Trem y Glyn (Decision)	Angela Thomas
	PRIVATE - Risk Management and Complex Community Case Work (Information)	Hayley Short/Angela Thomas
	Requested by Scrutiny Committee	
	Update Report in relation to Single Point of Contact (SPOC) Service	Angela Thomas
	Prevention and Early Intervention Update	Sarah Waite/Angela Thomas
2025		
23 January	Selected from Cabinet Forward Work Programme	
	CIW - Foster Wales Neath Port Talbot Inspection Report 2024 (Information)	Victoria Smith/Keri Warren
	Housing Support Grant Mid-Point Strategic Review (Decision)	Hayley Short/Chele Howard
	Permission to Consult on the Business Case Remodel for Domiciliary Care (Decision)	Angela Thomas/Hayley Short
	Permission to Tender for Emergency Accommodation for Women – Violence	Hayley Short / Chele Howard

	Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Decision)	
	Unpaid Carers Ombudsman Report (Information)	Hayley Short/Angela Thomas
	PRIVATE ITEM – Hillside Managers Report (Information)	Keri Warren
	PRIVATE ITEM – Hillside Responsible Individuals Report (Information)	Keri Warren
	PRIVATE ITEM - Permission to tender Accommodation Models for Young People (Decision)	Keri Warren/ Victoria Smith/Maria Selby/Hayley Short/Gemma Hargest
	Requested by Scrutiny Committee	
	Area Planning Board Annual Report 2023/2024	Julia Jenkins
13 March	Selected from Cabinet Forward Work Programme	
	PRIVATE ITEM - Permission to consult and pilot an alternative night time support (Decision)	Hayley Short/Angela Thomas
	Requested by Scrutiny Committee	
	Community Safety Update	Elinor Wellington/Chele Howard
	Western Bay Regional Partnership Board	Andrew Jarrett
1 May	Selected from Cabinet Forward Work Programme	

	Social Services Complaints Annual Report (Information)	Leighton Jones
	PRIVATE ITEM – Hillside Managers Report (Information)	Keri Warren
	PRIVATE ITEM – Hillside Responsible Individuals Report (Information)	Keri Warren
Requested by Scrutiny Committee		
	Youth Justice Service	Keri Warren

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