



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

2022-27

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Section One: Introduction

This plan outlines Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's transition to using the rapid rehousing model to tackle homelessness over the next five years. This follows Welsh Government's (WG) high level action plan 2021-2026 "**Ending Homelessness in Wales**"¹ which recognised the significant and increasing pressure on homelessness services, and the urgency of making "a transformational shift required to end homelessness".

The approach the strategy takes is that we will work towards a Wales where homelessness is rare, and where it occurs it will be brief and unrepeatable.

In October 2021 Local Authorities were tasked to develop a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan². Plans would be developed to transition from the current baseline homelessness position, to providing more sustainable models of accommodation and support, moving away from the use of temporary accommodation.

Rapid Rehousing (RRH) is an intervention designed to help households quickly exit a homelessness crisis, and to avoid becoming homeless again. It is a housing led solution, but is focused around the needs of the individual – a person centred approach.

The ultimate objective is to offer housing that is safe, affordable, decent, and meets the needs of the individual in terms of location, proximity to family, services, access to transport and facilities such as shops and schools. It does not require people to be "tenancy ready" before they access accommodation, and instead are offered a bespoke package of assistance, tailored to the issues they are facing. In this way people access permanent accommodation, reducing the risk of repeated episodes of homelessness, and the trauma that can cause.

Context

Our plan to transition to a Rapid Rehousing model will involve a range of actions so everyone in crisis can be housed and supported quickly. Our starting point is an acknowledgement of the increased numbers of households presenting as homeless during the Covid 19 pandemic, with a significant increase in the number of units of temporary accommodation acquired, to accommodate everyone who was homeless or inadequately housed so they could be safe. The Welsh Government amended the legislation relating to our duties to people applying for homelessness support by removing the requirement that a household is in priority need. This has more than doubled the demand for emergency housing in recent years.

¹ [Ending homelessness in Wales: a high level action plan 2021 to 2026 \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-10/rapid-rehousing-transition-plans-guidance_0.pdf)

² https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-10/rapid-rehousing-transition-plans-guidance_0.pdf

Our starting point June 2022:

- We need to procure more housing to offer good quality temporary accommodation to quickly accommodate people who are experiencing homeless, and to facilitate the increased supply of permanent, affordable homes to move on to.
- We need to ensure our support model is fit for purpose, and can deliver tailored and appropriate support to everyone, including those with complex needs.
- We will build on our relationships with our partner housing associations, health services, Police, landlords and support agencies to co-create a housing pathway that works for our community, because we know we cannot end homelessness on our own.
- We will develop services to a personalised response to each person which considers their experience and the underlying causes of their crisis.
- We will build on the success of our preventative work. We have exceeded our target with performance of 61% of all homeless cases successfully prevented during 2021-22.

This plan cannot be delivered in isolation, rather it requires significant partnership working by the entire Council with colleagues in housing associations, health, Police, third sector support providers, private landlords, regional partners and our wider community stakeholders. The plan will have close links with other strategies, and our capital investment plans which support the development of new homes and supported housing schemes. Therefore underpinning this plan is a number of groups and task forces, working together to deliver the aim of ending homelessness which will continue to be enhanced and developed over the early part of this plan.

Strategic Objectives

This plan sits within NPT's wider strategic planning framework for the delivery of housing and tackling homelessness, and supports our overall vision of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy. It will feed into our strategic housing plans, Social Housing Grant, Housing Support Grant and other capital programme decision making. It will also influence the work we do with our Regional and National partners, and our Health and Social Care partnerships.

The plan will be corporately owned by the Corporate Director's Group, who will be the accountable body for the implementation of the plan, with task groups feeding into the monitoring, review and development of the plan going forward.

Corporate Objectives

Neath Port Talbot's Corporate Plan 2022-2027³ describes the objective to ***“help Neath Port Talbot residents live good lives”*** where ***“all communities are thriving and sustainable”***.

The vision for housing, as outlined in the Housing Strategy is that ***“Housing in Neath Port Talbot will be appropriate, affordable, of good quality, in sustainable communities, offering people choice and support if they need it”***.

Through partnership working with other agencies such as Registered Social Landlords, the private sector, the third sector and health and community organisations we will aim to prevent homelessness, and where it cannot be prevented, ensure it is “rare, brief and unrepeated” (Welsh Government). To do this we will aim to tackle the root cause of homelessness, to ensure ***“Neath Port Talbot is a place where nobody is homeless and everyone has a safe home where they can flourish and live a fulfilled, active and independent life”***.

The **Neath Port Talbot Homelessness Strategy**⁴ aims to strengthen existing practices to focus on the continued development of preventative responses to homelessness, and specialist support for those who have complex needs and a history of repeat homelessness, therefore reducing the number of people experiencing crisis and needing emergency responses.

The plan has taken account of our **Local Housing Market Assessment**, the **Social Housing Grant Prospectus** and the **Local Development Plan**. As these are reviewed, any changes and new intelligence will be fed into the assumptions in this plan.

Governance

The rapid rehousing transition planning is led by an **NPT RRH Project Group** – a “core” group of representatives of a range of relevant teams in the council – planning, strategy, housing options, commissioning, and is led by a project manager. There are plans to include colleagues from Health into this group as the work progresses.

This group is accountable to the **Corporate Directors Group**, who have the high level sign off and monitoring of the plan over the five year transition period. This group comprises the Chief Executive, the Directors of Environment and Regeneration; Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning; Social Services, Health and Housing; and the Chief Finance Officer.

The NPT Project Group consults with a number of partners. Key stakeholders are the local housing associations, and an **NPT & RSL Task Force** has been set up to:

³ <https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/17199/corporate-plan-2022-27-recover-reset-renew.pdf?v=20220422124059>

⁴ https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/10632/homelessness_strategy_2018_22.pdf?v=20190807153853

- Track progress, monitor outcomes and advise on changes in the light of changes to our operating environment;
- Share best practice, pool ideas and innovation;
- Develop shared policies and protocols;
- Work collaboratively with a shared purpose and values to end homelessness.

Homeless Cell Group

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic Welsh Government directed local authorities to establish a Regional Homeless Cell to discuss Covid-19 related issues regarding current themes and trends. A Neath Port Talbot Homeless Cell was subsequently established, attended by Local Authority, Welsh Government, South Wales Police, Probation and a range of other partners and service providers.

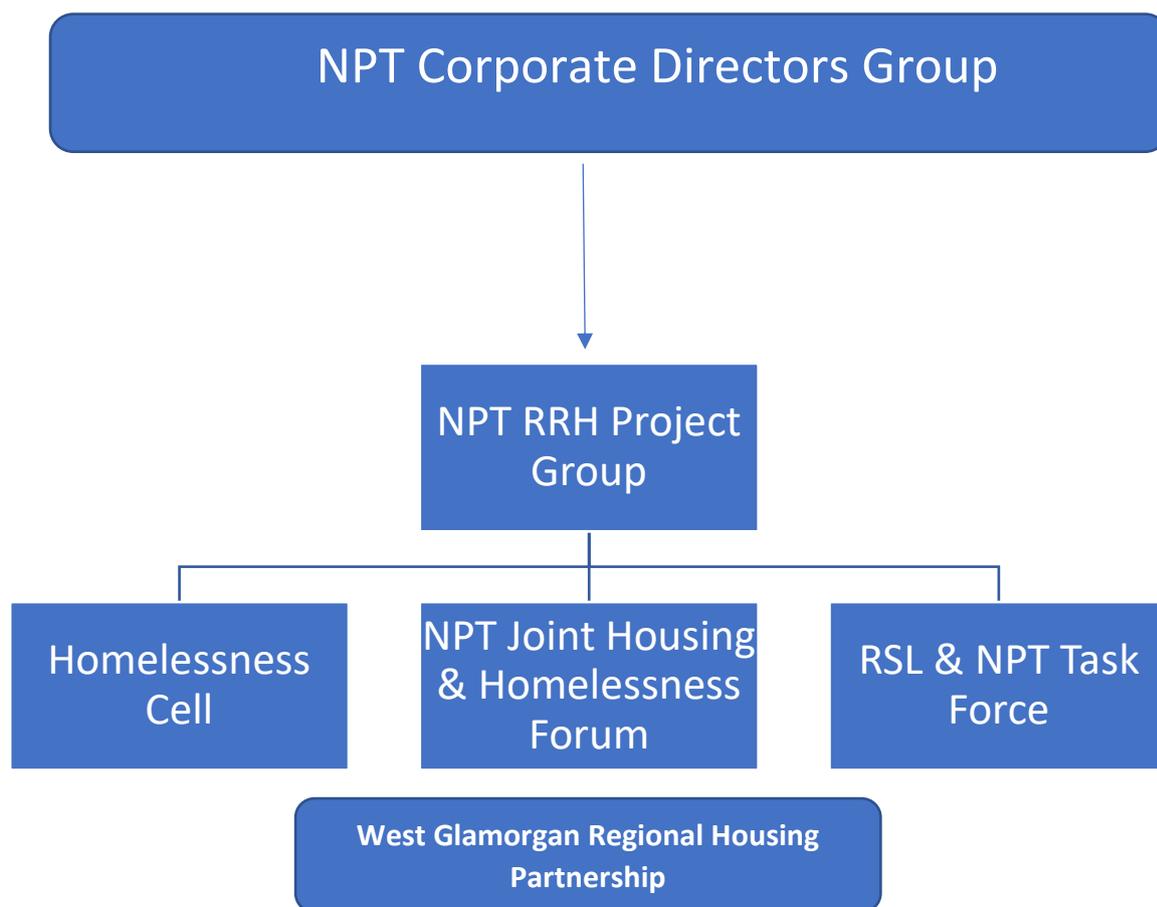
Neath Port Talbot Joint Housing Support and Homeless Forum

The Neath Port Talbot Housing Support and Homeless Forum brings together services in Neath Port Talbot who provide housing support or homelessness services, or actively work towards preventing homelessness within Neath Port Talbot. The Forum allows for information sharing between services, lobbying for housing and homeless issues and engagement in strategy and policy development.

West Glamorgan Regional Housing Partnership (RHP)

The Regional Housing Partnership provides strategic direction for the Housing Work stream of the Regional Partnership Board through meetings to define regional strategy, develop regional action plans commission regional activities. Its primary purpose is to co-produce a 5 year Regional Housing, Health and Social Care Strategy and instigate the work to implement the strategy across the West Glamorgan regions.

As the plan is launched, work will continue to increase the involvement of key partners including Health, Police, Probation and the Prison Service through briefings and workshops to explain and discuss the plan's priority actions, and to encourage their active participation in the working groups.



NPT’s Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

Our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan will be a whole system, transformative change programme to reposition our services and build on our successes, whilst ensuring that we end homelessness.

Welsh Government defines Rapid Rehousing as “taking a housing led approach to rehousing people that are experiencing homelessness, making sure they reach settled housing as quickly as possible rather than staying in temporary accommodation for too long”⁵

This involves a focus on helping people into permanent accommodation at the same time as, rather than after, addressing any other support needs. The expectation is that:

- There will be no requirement to be assessed for ‘housing readiness’ in order to access accommodation;
- A package of assistance and multi-agency support will be offered specially tailored to individual needs where this is required; and

⁵ [Rapid rehousing transition plans: guidance for local authorities and partners \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/government/welsh-government/rapid-rehousing-transition-plans-guidance-for-local-authorities-and-partners)

- Help people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness with lower or no support needs, and in doing so preventing complex needs or chronic problems from occurring or escalating.⁶

Our aim is that wherever possible homelessness should be prevented with compassionate, person-centred solutions. Temporary housing will be used only as a short term measure in an emergency, to enable people to have some support and an assessment to develop a package of advice and support, and to understand what their housing needs are. There will be a need to increase the supply of general needs and supported housing units, as the County Borough repositions its services to achieve the rapid rehousing objectives.

To achieve this vision over the period to March 2027 we aim to do the following:

- We will continue to improve the quality and integration of our homelessness, social care, health and other support services to maximise tenancy sustainment, optimise housing options, and prevent homelessness occurring wherever possible;
- We will work with housing association partners to increase the supply of housing, keeping the needs of homeless people at the heart of our strategic housing planning;
- We will develop a pathway of accommodation options for homeless households to reflect their support needs, the opportunity to move on from temporary housing or supported housing, their choice of where they want to live, and to offer settled accommodation as soon as possible;
- When homelessness cannot be prevented, time spent in temporary accommodation will aim to:
 - Reduce the number of days homeless people wait to receive an offer of accommodation;
 - Increase the number of lets to homeless people in the County Borough.
- We aim to eliminate the use of B&Bs in the long term: it is acknowledged that this will take some time so it is a Priority Action for NPT to reduce B&B use over the five year transition period.
- We will seek to develop and implement a Housing First model that meets the needs of people with multiple and complex needs in NPT.

⁶ [Ending homelessness in Wales: a high level action plan 2021 to 2026 \(gov.wales\)](#) page 12

Section 2: Homelessness data and analysing need

1. Background: Neath Port Talbot Housing Market

Neath Port Talbot (NPT) is a unitary authority with three main towns – Neath, Port Talbot and Pontardawe. The county borough is a mix of rural areas with small villages, and towns near the coast which are still recovering from the loss of traditional heavy industries. The notable exception is the Tata Steelworks in Port Talbot, employing around 3,000 people.

Most of the land is upland, with the lower lying flat land on the coast around Port Talbot, where the majority of the population live. The upland areas have five valleys - Vale of Neath, Dulais, Afan, Swansea and the Amman Valley.

According to the 2011 Census NPT has a population of approximately 140,000, and has the eleventh highest population density of the 22 local authorities across Wales.

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 identified that 15.4% of local super output areas in NPT (areas with a population of 1,000) are in the top 10% of the most deprived in Wales.

The 2011 Census also showed a high level of people with chronic health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and respiratory disorders, with 28% having a long term limiting illness compared to 22.7% across Wales.

As with the rest of the country, it is predicted that the over 65s will increase from 30,035 in 2020 to 37,412 in 2040. The under 60 population is expected to reduce over 2018-33 mostly because of outward migration.

There are some key trends which will affect this plan:

- **Household sizes are getting smaller:** in 1991, the average household size was 2.5 people. By 2001 it was around 2.3 people. It is predicted that by 2033 it will be an average of 2.2.
- **Changes in Housing Tenure:** In the 2011 Census, 68.9% of the 66,000 homes in NPT were owner occupied, 12% were private rented and 19.1% were social rent. The number of social rented housing has declined dramatically from 37% in 1981, and the proportion of private rented homes has increased from 4.8% in 1981. This has therefore had a direct impact on the availability of affordable homes for rent.
- **House prices:** House prices in NPT have been consistently lower than the Welsh average, with average house prices around £81,000 since 2015. However, the affordability of market homes in relation to average earnings is positive, with property becoming steadily more affordable since 2008. Despite this, there is still a significant demand for homes to rent.

Cost of renting & buying

Table 1 Weekly Rents 2018

Weekly Rents 2018				
	Private Rent		Maximum LHA	
Weekly rent	Median	Lower quartile	NPT Broad Rental Market Area	Social Rent (ave)
Room only	-	-	£54.13	-
1 bedroom	£83.71	£78.19	£75.00	£72.69
2 bedrooms	£100.04	£91.99	£91.81	£80.40
3 bedrooms	£109.70	£103.49	£101.11	£89.65
4+ bedrooms	£137.99	£117.29	£121.20	£97.64

There are a substantial number of private renters in NPT, and their rent levels are generally higher than the Local Housing Allowance rates. This is making accommodation very difficult to secure in the private sector, delaying move-on and causing financial hardship.

Average Salaries

The average salary in NPT in 2021 is £31,500, significantly below the UK average of £38,100. This relates to gross average salary for full time employees. The average salary for females in the same period was £28,300 against a UK average of £33,200. The average UK salary for males was £41,500.

Unemployment

The unemployment rate in 2021 in NPT was 3.8%, lower than the national rate of 4.8%.

House prices

House prices are relatively low in NPT, requiring an NPT resident on a middle income to have 4.5 times their gross salary to afford a market property. A resident in Swansea will need 5.6 times their salary, and in England and Wales overall the ratio was 7.69 in 2020.

The average house price in West Glamorgan (2021-22) was £187,000 which had risen by 8% over the previous twelve months. The price of an established property is £186,000 and a new build is £349,000. This average will be inflated by the costs of houses in the desirable Gower peninsular, where prices would on average sell for £300k or more. In the SA13 postcode area of NPT the estimated residential property values, based on historical transactions and adjusted for inflation, range from £71,438 to £248,827 with an average of £138,231. This compares to an England and Wales average of £337,000 during the same period.

Overall housing need

The Local Housing Market Assessment for NPT in 2019 (under review at the time of writing) indicated that 1,037 new affordable homes were required in the County Borough to meet the projected housing need by 2033. At the same time, there were over 4,000 households (February 2022) on the Shared Housing Register list held by Tai Tarian for their housing stock

(NPT does not have a common housing register)⁷. The other RSLs, with the exception of Caredig, do not hold waiting lists for NPT. Instead they open waiting lists for new schemes as they are available and advertise relets on their websites.

There has been a consistent increase in owner occupation over recent decades and a shift away from social rented housing to the private rented sector, as the number of homes in the social rented housing sector has declined because of the right to buy. The population is not predicted to rise dramatically, but where there is an increase, it is in the older age groups (65+ years).

The number of households is predicted to increase by 2,641 households between 2018-2033, the increase relating to single person households forming. The analysis also indicated that there will be changes in the types of dwellings required across all tenures, notably an increase in the number of two- and three-bedroomed properties in the market tenure, and one and two bedroom properties in the affordable tenures.

Table 2: Future unmet housing needs

Future unmet need projected in the LHMA		
LDP Area	Total	%
Port Talbot	351	33.80%
Neath	346	33.40%
Swansea Valley	154	14.90%
Pontardawe	136	13.10%
Dulais Valley	31	3.00%
Neath Valley	29	2.80%
Amman Valley	17	1.60%
Afan Valley	0	0%
Total	1,037	100%

Housing Supply

During 2018-21, a total of 434 additional affordable homes were delivered. Therefore to remain on target according to the LHMA, an additional 603 affordable homes are needed between 2021-33. However, the Waiting List for housing held by Tai Tarian (see Table 14) shows that there are approximately 4000 households on the list, which may indicate the LHMA projections to be an underestimate. The LHMA is currently under review (due Autumn 2022) and it is hoped that a more accurate assessment of housing need is produced to enable NPT to refine its projections.

The current draft SHG allocation 2022-25 currently makes provision for approximately 850 homes. This is because of an increase in the level of capital funding provided by WG, and the strong development strategies of our partner RSLs (Registered Social Landlords). Not is actively working with RSLs through the Rapid Rehousing task force to target specific housing schemes and projects to ensure the SHG funded developments supports the RRH transition plan, i.e., smaller homes and triage centres in key locations,

⁷ The Council has transferred to Tai Tarian the administrative functions and operation of a housing register which is used to allocate their homes.

LDP projections and outcomes

The Local Development Plan⁸ (LDP) was adopted in 2016, with the target of 1,200 affordable homes to be built in NPT over the plan period, 2011-26. Delivery has been below target for a number of years, influenced by the low levels of market housing being built largely because of viability relating to low land values.

Table 3: 2022-23 Development Scheme Priorities

2022-23 Scheme Priorities: Ranking by volume required

Ranking	LDP Area	Need	Size	Homes required
1	Neath	Homeless households	1-bed	16.5%
2	Port Talbot			13.5%
3	Neath		2-bed	8.6%
4	Pontardawe		1-bed	7.8%
5	Port Talbot		2-bed	7.0%
6	Neath		3-bed+	6.9%
7	Neath	Older person (i)	1-bed	5.9%
8	Port Talbot	Homeless households	3-bed+	5.7%
9	Port Talbot	Older persons (i)	1-bed	4.9%
10	Pontardawe	Homelessness	3-bed+	3.3%
11	Neath	Older person (i)	2-bed	3.1%
12	Pontardawe		1-bed	2.8%
13	Neath		3-bed+	2.5%
14	Pontardawe	Homeless households	2-bed	1.7%
15		Older persons (i)		1.5%
16				3-bed+
17	Neath	Supported housing (i)	1-bed	0.0%
	Pontardawe			
	Port Talbot			
	Neath			
	Pontardawe		2-bed	
	Port Talbot			
	Neath			
	Pontardawe			
Port Talbot	3-bed+			

This table sets out the strategic housing priorities for NPT when assessing the relative merit of housing developments put forward by RSLs for social housing grant funding. The lead priority is to provide housing for homeless people, with a focus on smaller units in the three key towns.

Housing Market: Conclusion

The County Borough faces both challenges and opportunities. NPT has a relatively deprived population, an older population and a high proportion of people living with life limiting conditions. House prices are low for market sale, but there is a reducing proportion of affordable social rented homes available for the poorest in the community. With over 4,000

⁸ https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/7321/ldp_written_statement_jan16.pdf?v=20170727124344

households on the waiting list, and only 833 lettings in NPT during 2021-22, the pressure on meeting housing needs continues.

The increase in capital funding for Social Housing Grant is a significant opportunity to increase housing supply, and NPT is working with our RSL partners to ensure that the properties built meet the needs of the people on the waiting list and of people presenting as homeless. A key focus of developments over the next five years in line with the transition plan will be to build appropriate temporary accommodation, supported housing to meet identified needs, and to build general needs homes for move on and for permanent lettings.

2. Homelessness

Presentations

As the Covid pandemic hit, the Welsh Government instructed all councils to ensure all homeless people were housed immediately, and the priority need restrictions were removed. As a consequence, the demand for emergency interim accommodation rose from the average 40 bedspaces to 140 almost overnight. To meet this demand a large number of additional temporary accommodation bedspaces were required. Ninety five bedspaces were acquired in a very short space of time, with the Ambassador Hotel and the L&A Outdoor Centre agreeing to accommodate the homeless. Support was put in place with funding from the Welsh Government, with third sector providers and stakeholders such as the Police working together to put in additional specialist support and services for people with more complex needs.

The pandemic saw additional demand from relationship breakdowns and elderly people shielding and asking other family members to leave. The latter part of the year saw Welsh Government providing additional funding to increase staff in the service to help to meet the additional demand and to also provide more support for service users, and 13 new posts in NPT were created to respond to the changing landscape and demands.

During 2021-22 60.6% (236 of 389) and during 2020-21, 64.7% (226 of 349) households were successfully prevented from becoming homeless (Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicator target: 60%), compared to 51.5% for the same period of 2019-20.

Table 4: Homeless Presentations 2018-22

Homeless Presentations				
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Total presentations	2225	2299	2079	2406
Advice only	608	936	1253	1469
Proceeded to s62 assistance⁹	1617	1363	826	937

The above figures show an increase for a variety of reasons. Covid saw an increase in digital communication to local residents on services available, including Housing Options. As a result

⁹ **Homeless legislation and duties:**

S60 – duty to provide advice and assistance;

S62 – duty to carry out an assessment;

S66 – duty to prevent homelessness;

S68 – duty to provide temporary accommodation;

S73 – duty to help secure suitable accommodation; and

S75 – duty to provide settled accommodation.

an increased number of residents contacted the service for advice, particularly in relation to the temporary changes to notice periods in both the private rented sector (PRS) and social housing sector.

This was also as a result of an already developing and improving prevention service which would work with applicants prior to the s66 prevention duty being owed, therefore would not reach a s62 assessment unless prevention was unsuccessful.

With lockdown restrictions lifted, these numbers have not reduced and in fact have reached the highest levels ever seen in, with 175 households in temporary accommodation in late June 2022.

Household type

Table 5: Homeless Presentation Demographics 2021-22

Homeless Presentations Demographics 2021-22 (s62)								
	Female applicant			Male applicant				
	Age 16-17	Age 18-24	Age 25+	Age 16-17	Age 18-24	Age 25+	Total	Of which single persons
Total applications for assistance which resulted in a s62 assessment	4	108	367	7	81	370	937	586

The number of presentations where an assessment was made was relatively evenly split between male and females. 2020-21 saw a split of 396 females and 430 men, 2019-20 split was not available due to year end reporting being limited due to Covid, and 2018-19 saw a split of 885 females and 732 men.

Single people make up the majority of the applicants, with most of those over the age of 25 years.

The reasons people became homeless have remained reasonably consistent over the last few years, with the following being the most common:

- Parents can't accommodate;
- Other family can't accommodate;
- Violent relationship breakdown; and

- Non violent relationship breakdown.

However 2021-22 saw an increase in the number of people presenting having been threatened with eviction from the private rented sector.

This is for a variety of reasons. Covid legislation in April 2020 initially saw a reduction in presentations, however as soon as the suspension on evictions was lifted many landlords served notice on their tenants due to the lack of action they were able to take up to that point and the uncertainty within the market. The pending implementation of Renting Homes Act has also seen landlords deciding to sell up due to the expectations on landlords under the Act.

Prior to Covid it was evident that Local Housing Allowance¹⁰ rates were not meeting the rent levels locally so presentations were being made based on arrears and/or unaffordability. Again Covid legislation slowed that down as landlords were unable to take action for a period of time, but now restrictions are lifted an increase in presentations is being seen again and the need for cheaper, more affordable accommodation is evident in many cases.

Table 6: Reasons for Homelessness 2021-22

Reasons for homelessness 2021/22					
	S66 accepted	S73 accepted	S75 accepted	Total 2021- 22	Total 2020-21
Parents can't accommodate	67	64	24	155	185
Other family can't accommodate	50	86	34	170	186
Violent relationship breakdown	34	82	18	134	172
Non-violent relationship breakdown	58	73	17	148	156
Other violence	3	7	2	12	24
Loss of rented accommodation	101	54	19	174	80
Unaffordable	8	3	1	12	6
Unsuitable	37	11	8	56	68
Prison release	0	49	21	70	88
Mortgage arrears	0	3	0	3	5
Private Rented Sector arrears	8	12	1	21	26
Other reasons	8	23	11	42	95*
RSL arrears	8	1	1	10	16
Left institution or care	1	0	0	1	7
(*high as it included Skewen floods where 42 households were accommodated in one day)	383	468	157	1008	1114

¹⁰ Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is a means tested benefit paid to those who live in private rented accommodation and who are claiming housing benefit. This is the maximum that can be paid.

Rough sleepers

Prior to Covid, NPT did not have a significant issue with rough sleeping. November 2019 was the last count, when there were three people sleeping rough. At the moment there is no-one sleeping rough.

Repeat presentations

During 20221-22 there were 2,406 homeless presentations (Table 8). A repeat presentation is defined as people who present as homeless more than once in a six month period. The level of repeat presentations remains relatively low, although the number in 2021-22 did increase significantly (see Table 7). Repeat presentations represented 7% of the total, and whilst this is a small number, it represents a group of people with multiple and complex needs.

The majority of these were people on licence called back into prison for a period, i.e., recalled if they are in breach terms of their licences for lower level offenders, only to be released back and to present as homeless. The short time spent back in prison makes it difficult to engage and work with the person to provide support and assistance. There is an agreed accommodation pathway agreed with HMPPS Prison and Probation services but the resettlement teams within the prisons have not been as effective as they would hope, and this is currently under review with the aim of providing information on expected releases in good time to prevent homelessness.

It is acknowledged that people released from prison are not an homogenous group. All have different needs and come from different backgrounds. A range of pathways to reflect these needs will need to be considered in conjunction with relevant partners if the “revolving door” of homelessness for people released from prison is to be ended.

Covid related changes to assistance provided by Housing Options has also contributed to repeat presentations increasing. An unintended consequence of the changes has been that many are seeing homelessness as a way into social housing. It has been widely communicated that Priority Need did not and still does not apply so there has been an increase in presentations of individuals applying as homeless and wanting temporary housing, then returning home and re-presenting at a later date where alternative housing has not been sourced in the meantime.

Table 7: Repeat Presentations 2020-22

Repeat Presentations	
2020-21	2021-22
111	173

The number and type of repeat presentations will be monitored over the life of the plan to understand both the totality of the numbers presenting, but also to understand the specific support needs of each household, as a way of monitoring the effectiveness of our support interventions, e.g., people with high needs receiving Housing First support: do they come back into the system.

Tenure prior to presentation

Table 8: Previous tenure 2021-22

Previous tenure of presentation 2021/22	Totals
Unknown	143
Bed and Breakfast	3
Direct with Private Sector Landlord	726
Family/Friends	739
Flat	1
Homeless at Home	111
Hostel	16
NFA	90
Other	58
Owner Occupier	107
Prison	71
Private Sector Accommodation Leased by Local Authority	31
Private Sector Accommodation Leased by RSL	112
RSL on Assured Shorthold Tenancy	160
Women's Aid Refuge	38
Grand Total	2406

The two main tenures prior to presenting as homeless were the private rented sector and living with family and friends. This has remained consistent with previous years.

Prevention Team – Housing Options NPTCBC

The Prevention Team was set up to focus on early intervention with the aim to reduce homelessness presentations resulting in statutory duties.

A great deal of work has been done in the Housing Options Team to review their service offer, and additional posts have been appointed to focus on prevention. During 2020-11 and 2021-22 the prevention rate exceeded the target of 60% (see Table 9), which was a significant achievement considering the changes to homelessness guidance and the resulting increase in demand.

The team consists of:

- 2 x Prevention Officers
- 1 x Private Sector Officer
- 1 x Financial Inclusion Officer
- 1 x Tenancy Ready Officer
- 1 x Social Worker – Children and Young People

At present referrals are made to the Prevention Officers by the Housing Option Officers. These referrals relate to households who are experiencing housing difficulties or have been served notice or are threatened with notice, but do not meet the eligibility for a Statutory Duty (prior to being threatened with homelessness within 56 days).

The Prevention Officers will work closely with these households to prevent homelessness by assessing their situation including their financial situation, and what the issues may be. They will also work closely with all staff within the Prevention Team. Together they can identify possible support needs and ways of ensuring tenancy sustainment moving forward. All advice, information and assistance provided by the Prevention Team is aimed at preventing homelessness.

There are a number avenues that may be considered:

- Signposting to relevant support agencies;
- Liaison/negotiation/mediation with the Landlord;
- Private Sector Officer can source alternative/more affordable accommodation;
- The Financial Inclusion Officer can assess eligibility to provide financial assistance;
- Ensure maximisation of benefits/income; and
- Liaison with the Tenancy Ready Officer to request/discuss a tenancy sustainment course.

To further strengthen the prevention work, a **Social Worker** will soon be recruited to work with people with mental ill health, and to offer specialist advice and support to the team who are not mental health professionals, but encounter people with complex needs every day. This model is based on the success of placing a specialist Children's And Young People's Social Worker in the team.

As the team is developed further the longer term aim is to work directly with all local RSLs and private sector landlords to identify tenants that may be at risk of homelessness at a much earlier stage, particularly due to rent arrears. Referrals would then be made directly to the Prevention Team. This could be prior to any notice being served in order to provide support and troubleshoot where possible.

Table 9: Prevention Trends 2015-22

Prevention of homelessness (s66)	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Number of households found at threat of homelessness	384	360	351	654	633	348	389
Number of these successfully prevented	201	195	195	348	327	225	236
% of households prevented at this stage	52%	55%	56%	53%	52%	65%	61%
Average % across Wales at this stage	65%	62%	66%	68%	67%	65%	TBC

Additional prevention work

NPT has commissioned a third party provider, The Wallich, to provide a generic homeless prevention service, Prevention and Wellbeing Service (PAWS), for people aged 16 years and over. They have capacity for 340 cases, with 17 workers. People are self-referred or referred by Housing Options where there is an eviction notice, or serious arrears leading to their tenancy being at risk, to offer mediation, befriending and general housing related support. They hold a drop in service at the Ambassador Hotel, which is in use as temporary accommodation.

They have found that cases are becoming increasingly complex and people are more vulnerable. The contract ended in June 2022 but the contract was extended for another 12-18 months to enable all of the homeless related support commissioned services to be reviewed.

Trends in assessment decisions

There are new emerging trends with people presenting as homeless, even after the huge increase in demand since the pandemic. These are:

- The number of young people being asked to leave home has increased;
- An increase in people stating disrepair in properties – landlords were not repairing and contractors not visiting during Covid, but this is hoped to level out;
- The eviction suspension been lifted so now evictions are increasing in the private rented sector (PRS), and in some RSLs;
- The introduction of the Renting Homes Act – landlords are saying that this is resulting in making their rental less economically valuable, and they are selling up. This is expected to increase;
- It is anticipated that financial hardships will lead to a greater number of evictions; and

- Homeless case duration is also expected to increase as there is limited access to both temporary and permanent housing in the PRS and low numbers of lettings to homeless people from RSLs.

At the time of writing these are anecdotal, but the trends are being recorded and monitored, so that effective prevention support can be put in place.

Use of temporary accommodation

Table 10 (below) clearly shows that there was a significant reliance on hotels and bed and breakfast to manage the demand for temporary accommodation during 2021-22. This is not suitable or sustainable, and is the focus of the first few years of this transition plan as we source a range of alternative temporary and housing solutions, including increasing the number of lettings to homeless people by RSLs.

Table 10: Temporary Accommodation Use 31.03.22

Homeless households in Temporary Accommodation at 31.03.22	
Directly with Private Sector Landlord	0
Private Sector Accommodation leased by LA	0
Private Sector Accommodation leased by RSLs	0
Within own stock (leased units with RSLs and Social Lets)	26
RSL Stock	0
Hostels	22
Women's refuge	15
Bed & breakfast	103
Other	0
Total	166

Table 11: Time in temporary accommodation by household type 31.03.22

Time in temporary accommodation 31.03.22								
	Couple with dependent child(ren)	Single parent with dependent children		Single person household		All other household groups	Total	Of which families with children
		Male applicant	Female applicant	Male applicant	Female applicant			
Under 6 months	2	0	6	66	37	6	117	8
6 to 12 months	2	0	0	21	5	0	28	2
Over 1 year	0	1	0	15	5	0	21	1
Total	4	1	6	102	47	6	166	11

The majority of the households presenting as homeless were single people, with only eleven being families with children. However, one of those families lived in temporary accommodation for over a year, and two for 6-12 months. This was because the household had historical arrears and also required a specific area of high demand.

The service is also seeing an increase in larger families and the social housing stock of 4 and 5 bedroom houses is low and in some areas doesn't exist.

Twenty single people have been in temporary accommodation for over a year. Most of these are people with complex needs, who have been placed in the Ambassador Hotel, where security is provided on a 24/7 basis and support is provided for individuals by a number of third sector providers. This will be the cohort of people who most likely require a Housing First solution, or specialist supported housing to help them live independently.

Homelessness Outcomes

Table 12 illustrates the outcomes achieved during 2020-21.

S66 prevention duty – 349 households were accepted under the s66 prevention duty. Of those 349, 226 were successfully prevented from becoming homeless due to various interventions such as financial assistance, mediation or sourcing alternative accommodation. Of the 123 unsuccessful prevention cases, 76 would have proceeded to a s73 relief duty with the remainder being withdrawn applications.

S73 relief duty – 618 households were accepted under a s73 duty and of those 618, 174 had their homelessness relieved by means of sourcing alternative accommodation and the remaining 168 remained homeless at the end of the 56 day timeframe of a s73 duty. Anyone

still homeless at this point is offered temporary accommodation and acceptance of the temporary accommodation determines acceptance of the final s75 duty.

S75 final duty – 141 households were accepted and positively discharged by means of sourcing alternative accommodation.

Table 12: Outcomes by household type 2020-21

Households for which assistance has been provided by outcome and household type 2020-21			
	Total	Single person Household	%
Eligible but not homeless	504	315	
Number of outcomes: prevention assistance provided (s66)			
Successful prevention	225	102	
Unsuccessful prevention	76	48	
Non-cooperation/refused	1	0	
Application withdrawn	24	15	
Loss of contact	22	18	
Other reasons	0	0	
TOTAL s66	348	186	65%
Number of outcomes: eligible, homeless subject to duty to help secure (s73)			
Successfully relieved	174	105	
Unsuccessfully relieved	342	297	
Assistance refused	0	0	
Non-cooperation	3	3	
Application withdrawn	69	57	
Loss of contact	30	30	
Other reasons	0	0	
TOTAL s73	618	492	28%
Eligible but not in priority need	51	51	
Eligible, homeless and in a priority need but intentionally so	0	0	
Eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need (s75)			
Positively discharged	141	120	
Assistance refused	0	0	
Non-cooperation	0	0	
Application withdrawn	0	0	
Loss of contact	0	0	
TOTAL s75	141	120	100%
Total Successful Outcomes	540	327	

Other accommodation pathways

There are a number of accommodation, support and prevention pathways in place in NPT which all work to prevent homelessness.

Prison releases

An accommodation pathway is in place with local authorities and HMPPS to ensure anyone without an address on release from prison is referred to their home local authority, and all relevant risk assessments, exclusion areas and other information is provided in advance to avoid a presentation on the day with little or no information.

Youth homelessness

An NPT Youth Homeless group meets 6 weekly and has representation from social services, Housing Options, Youth Offending Service, and the Youth Service. This group has established a pathway into accommodation and services for young people.

Domestic Abuse

Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) are based in Community Safety services, and other referrals go through the Housing Support Gateway. Referrals to refuges go direct to the domestic abuse (DA) support providers through their helpdesks. There are currently three refuges for each of the towns. There are no specific accommodation services for men. The current model is more traditional with three refuges, operated by two different providers.

Over the last few years a number of different models such as move on and dispersed units have also been commissioned. There is currently a review of domestic abuse accommodation based services to look at how the Council can ensure they are best placed to meet future demands, including meeting accommodation needs across all genders.

Young People

There is a well developed early intervention and prevention pathway service funded by WG. There is a Youth Homelessness coordinator aimed at ensuring young people at risk of becoming homeless are identified and preventive action is put in place for people aged 11-18yrs, focusing on under 16s. They have developed an early identification system in schools, for children who are at risk of becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training), and putting referral pathways in place working with other stakeholders including education and housing.

This service identifies the young person at risk, then to refer into Housing Options for a network of support to be put in place. Their measure of success is people who were at risk received support and then did not present as homeless. The approach is about early intervention and prevention rather than a crisis model.

There are early intervention and prevention projects in place which undertakes awareness raising in schools and youth settings to help them understand what living independently is really like, and the support and help available. Where a young person is identified as being at risk from the sessions a meeting is held with the school and these go forward for one to one and group work.

They also work with young people who are at higher risk of isolation and loneliness which includes young parents, LGBTQ+, care leavers, home schooled, young carers.

There is also a Youth Homelessness Group led by NPT teams, and they are aiming to do a What Matters consultation with young people who have experienced homelessness and can provide insight which will provide helpful information on how to review our services.

Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT)

NPT has an internal poverty group which has access to a system which captures data from all local authority systems to identify households who may be in a difficult financial situation and can do a deeper dive on each to understand the core issues. It is used as an early intervention tool to contact people to review benefits, education, looked after children etc. There is an internal group to review issues arising which is led by NPT's Chief Executive.

3. Housing association partners in NPT

NPT's housing stock was transferred to Tai Tarian in 2011. NPT still owns a small number of housing units, including Beaufort House and Rhodes House, and runs a private rented Social Lettings Agency. All other stock is owned, let and managed by the following RSLs:

- Tai Tarian
- Pobl
- Coastal
- Linc Cymru
- Newydd
- Caredig
- First Choice
- Aelwyd

There are 13,259 affordable homes in management:

Table 13: RSL Housing Stock 2022

RSL Housing Stock by LDP Area 2022					
	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	Total
Afan Valley	52	308	428	6	794
Amman Valley	58	151	122	6	337
Dulais Valley	89	157	187	7	440
Neath	1,327	1,722	1,720	59	4,828
Neath Valley	144	104	279	13	540
Pontardawe	308	305	257	42	912
Port Talbot	850	1,314	2,025	59	4,248
Swansea Valley	126	376	232	3	737
Totals excluding Linc because properties not disaggregated by LDP area	2,954	4,437	5,250	195	12,836
Totals including Linc properties not disaggregated by LDP area	3,190	4,531	5,340	198	13,259

NPT does not have any plans at the time of writing to begin the development and management of housing stock.

Housing Allocations

Only two RSLs hold housing registers in NPT, and there is no Common Housing Register. At the time of stock transfer to Tai Tarian an agreement was reached whereby a Shared Lettings Policy was put in place, with the administration and management of the list outsourced to Tai Tarian. This was last reviewed in April 2022.

During 2021-22 in order to help manage NPT’s response to the increasing number of homelessness presentations we had agreement from the RSLs that they would offer 75% of all lettings to homeless people. At the year end, only 37% of lettings was achieved.

This is partly because the size of homes needed for homeless referrals are one bedroomed, and most of the relets are family homes (see Table 13), and the majority of the stock in NPT is family sized homes. The Waiting List (Feb 2022; Table 14 below) also shows that over half of the demand is for one bedroomed homes. This means that we will need to ensure that these needs are factored into NPT’s development pipeline, and we will need to review the current arrangements so that NPT can discharge its legal duties to our homeless service users. This will be a Priority Action for the RRH Plan.

Table 14: Applicants for housing 2022

Live applicants on housing register - February 2022					
	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	Total
Afan Valley	97	54	37	7	195
Amman Valley	89	51	41	8	189
Dulais Valley	100	52	42	8	202
Neath	744	333	206	40	1323
Neath Valley	148	73	61	11	293
Pontardawe	248	129	89	9	475
Port Talbot	623	374	250	48	1295
Swansea Valley	100	52	42	8	202
Totals	2149	1118	768	139	4174

Housing demand remains high, with over 4,000 people on the two waiting lists. Covid meant that people were not moving house and lettings were not being made, which compounded an already pressurised housing market. With all restrictions lifted, it is hoped that the usual market conditions will reapply themselves, and the turnover of housing will generate capacity to support lettings to homeless people.

4. Conclusion

The pressure to meet the increasing demands from homeless applicants is set against the very challenging local landscape in terms of availability of and access to affordable social rented

homes, the large number of households in unsuitable temporary accommodation who need suitable homes and support, and a shortage of smaller houses and flats to move people on from temporary accommodation.

This has increased the demand for private rented housing, which is pushing up rents and we are seeing the prevalence of houses being let in poor condition. Landlords are beginning to sell their homes as they are economically unviable in the current market, and have concerns about the impact of the Renting Homes legislation. Welfare reform has already created financial challenges for households, and we are anticipating an increase in homeless presentations because of the macro economic situation relating to financial hardship, arrears and debt, as well as family breakdowns because of the impact of this on wellbeing and mental health.

This will bring specific challenges to homelessness services, and there will be an increasing emphasis on developing a range of new homes to meet these needs, as well as securing more lettings from RSLs and the private sector.

Section 3: Assessing Support Needs

A critical part of rapid rehousing is that there is no expectation that people should be “tenancy ready”. That said, there will be a number of people who have support needs at some level, ranging from temporary help to move into a new home, to people with complex and enduring needs including substance misuse, mental health and trauma.

The evidence is that a significant number of people experiencing homelessness have low support needs and can move into mainstream housing with just day to day housing management advice and assistance. A key part of our transition plan will be to ensure that there is a comprehensive assessment of each person’s support needs, and the provision of an appropriate level of support. This could include:

- A Housing First response for people with complex needs and facing multiple disadvantages;
- Specialised supported housing for people who are unable to live independently, with the aim of supporting them to move into independence;
- Floating support to provide practical or emotional support within general needs tenancies with specific outcomes agreed and reviewed for each individual.

Our initial analysis of support needs of homeless people in temporary accommodation is as follows:

Table 15: Support Needs 01.04.22

Support Group	Recommended Housing	Recommended Support	Current cases (01.04.22) (%)	Current cases (01.04.22) (n)
Low/None	Mainstream housing	Individualised support	40%	64
Medium	Mainstream housing	Individualised support, likely to include multi-agency support	34%	53
High	Mainstream housing	Housing First/intensive floating support including multi-agency support	20%	31
Intensive needs (24/7)	Supported Housing	Residential support	6%	10
Totals				158

Current supported services – homeless prevention

NPT currently commissions a range of supported housing and floating support services for homeless people. Fourteen organisations provide a range of housing support services which contribute to the prevention of homelessness. These include supported accommodation, floating support, refuge accommodation, and outreach services. In addition to general homeless support, support is also provided to specific client groups, including those experiencing domestic abuse, mental health, young people, rough sleepers and those with substance misuse issues.

Floating support

Floating support is available to those who are homeless, threatened with homelessness, or just struggling to manage their tenancy. With the exception of VAWDASV Floating Support Services, access is via the Housing Support Gateway, which is a multi-agency referral panel.

Both services are in addition to the temporary accommodation and floating support provided through the council's Housing Options Service, for those who are owed a statutory homeless duty.

Table 16: NPT Commissioned Floating Support Services 2022-23

Provider/Scheme	Client Category	Type of Support	Units
Dyffodol	Ex-Offenders	Support for individuals homeless/ threatened with homelessness and have either been released from custody, or are on licence.	8
Wallich PAWS	Homeless prevention	Floating support for individuals who are homeless, threatened with homeless or struggling to manage a tenancy, regardless of tenure.	340
Platform	Mental health	Support for individuals with mental health difficulties	19
NPTCBC	Pan Disability	Long term floating support for care managed individuals	142
Adferiad	Substance misuse	Support for individuals with substance misuse / alcohol issues and either homeless or inappropriately housed	16
Hafan Cymru	VAWDASV ¹¹ (men)	Floating support for men experiencing Domestic Abuse	5
Calan DVS	VAWDASV(women)	Floating support for women experiencing Domestic Abuse	20
Hafan Cymru	VAWDASV(women)	Floating support for women experiencing Domestic Abuse	1
Thrive	VAWDASV(women)	Floating support for women experiencing Domestic Abuse	10

¹¹ Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

Access to The Wallich’s PAWS floating support scheme is via the Housing Support Gateway. During 2020-21, 573 families/individuals were supported, with 335 referrals being received for the service, of which 126 (38%) came via Housing Options. 399 individuals started to receive support with 386 ending support.

Of the 386 who ceased receiving support during the year, approximately 51% received support for up to 6 months, a further 47% received support for up to 2 years, and 2% for over 2 years.

In both these services the majority of needs identified was mental health support. The support provided included managing accommodation, managing money and their mental health.

Outreach

The following services work alongside the Housing Options Team to deliver support to individuals who are homeless, rough sleeping or in temporary accommodation:

Table 17: NPT Commissioned Outreach Support Services 2022-23

Provider/Scheme	Client Category	Type of Support
Housing Justice Cymru – Citadel Project	Rough sleepers	Low level support and mentoring for homeless individuals
Salvation Army	Homelessness	Provision of life skills training for homeless individuals
Abertawe Medical Centre	Rough Sleepers	Homelessness Nurse
Thrive	VAWDASV(women)	Specialist advocacy and support, to women who are sexually exploited
Pobl	Young people (16-24)	Outreach to young people who are threatened with homelessness
Adferiad	Rough sleepers	Assertive Outreach service for homeless individuals experiencing mental health issues

Supported Accommodation

The following organisations provide a range of supported accommodation with homeless individuals prioritised for allocation. Access is via the Housing Support Gateway (except for refuge provision):

Table 18: Supported Accommodation schemes and providers

Provider/Scheme	Client Category	Type of Support	Units
Calan DVS	VAWDASV(women)	Direct Access refuge provision for women fleeing Domestic Abuse	13
Thrive	VAWDASV(women)	Direct Access refuge provision for women fleeing Domestic Abuse	6
Thrive	VAWDASV(women)	Self contained supported Accommodation for women who have experienced domestic violence	5
Goleudy	Homeless prevention	Shared accommodation for single homeless individuals	9
Hafan Cymru	VAWDASV(women)	Self contained supported Accommodation for families who have experienced domestic violence	14
Llamau	Young people (16-24)	Self-Contained / shared supported accommodation for young people with low – medium support needs	35
NPTCBC	Young People (16-24)	Self-Contained accommodation for young people with low – medium support needs	6
Pobl (Clarewood)	Young people (16-24)	Self-Contained bedsits with 24/7 support for young people with medium to high support needs	10
Caredig	Mental health	Self contained flats for people who are homeless and have a mental health issue	4
Caredig	Mental health / Complex needs	Self contained flats for people who are homeless and have a complex mental health and / or substance use issue	6

Outcomes of supported housing services

In the reporting period April to September 2021, 1,612 individuals were reported on who received services funded by Housing Support Grant, with 1,331 accessing short term services and 281 accessing long term services.

Between the 1,612 individuals reported on, there were 5,957 outcomes recorded as relevant to their needs. The average number of relevant outcomes varies between short term services – 3 and long term services – 5.

Overall, the outcome areas that are most identified are:

- managing accommodation (94%),
- managing money (57%) and
- mental health (50%)

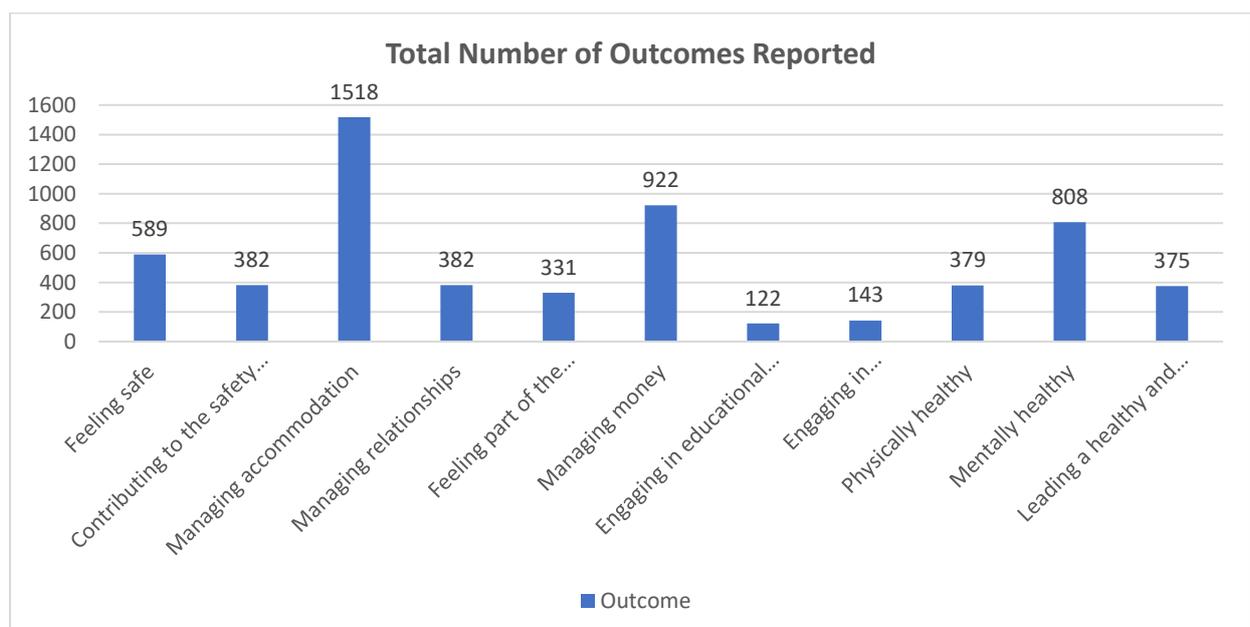
Within long term services, the most identified outcome areas are:

- feeling safe (78%),
- managing accommodation (76%), and
- managing money (58%)

Within short term services the most identified outcome areas are:

- managing accommodation (98%),
- managing money (57%) and
- mentally healthy (49%).

Table 19: HSG outcomes April - Sept 2021



Examples of outcomes achieved / what works (either on an individual basis or project level)

- High number of those moving out of supported accommodation were successful in securing and maintaining their own properties;
- Support from staff with service users joining local groups such as football and church classes, which has allowed service users to become more independent and feel part of the community;
- Staff have supported clients with building relationships with and accessing support from professionals e.g. with YPAs, Adoption Workers, Probation Services, Social Workers/CSE staff and financial appointees;
- Door step and in-house visits have made it easier to identify how individuals are managing their accommodation, especially in relation to hoarding and maintaining general cleanliness. This has also made it more possible to check on well-being and to offer advice, support and to address concerns;
- Targeted work with tenants to ensure they understand the importance of setting up payment plans and to enable them to address historic rent arrears. Helps to address any issues that could hinder them from being moved on such as historic rent arrears;
- Partnership working in order to, when appropriate, support individuals when they leave HMS prisons, and more generally achieve their desired outcomes;
- Working in a Psychologically Informed way so that support is adapted to the individual and their needs and is bespoke to them and their experiences;
- Development of budgeting plans, support to liaise with debtors and setting up agreements for payment of debt within the individual's budget. This helps to reduce stress and anxiety leading to improved mental health and well-being;
- Providers liaised with local pharmacies and GPs during Covid regarding medication ordering and collection processes. Tenants are more independent in that they now collect their weekly medication from pharmacy independently with only a reminder from staff;
- Introduction of anxiety reducing tools in one scheme;
- Joint working with CMHT's/MIND/WCADA to ensure there is a holistic form of approach for the service user;
- Counselling style services through MAMS has helped promote wellbeing and given clients techniques to help deal with low-level mental health.

Issues identified by providers

- Lack of appropriate move-on accommodation;
- Service charge arrears: Clients often require help budgeting their money, so that they can afford their daily living needs as well as their service charge, to prevent them from falling into arrears;
- The Local Housing Allowance for single people in the Neath Port Talbot area does not cover the cost of any accommodation on the private rented market. The average top-up for a client being £50 pcm, for many this is not affordable on their current income. Also people under 35 years are not entitled to full housing benefit in private

- rented accommodation;
- During Covid, many service users have found the strain of the restrictions and guidelines to have a negative effect upon their relationships. Breakdowns in family and social groups continued to occur due to arguments, deterioration in individual's mental health and possible increase in drug/alcohol dependency as well as concerns about finances;
 - Also during Covid the closure/reduction of some specialist services (i.e. Citizens Advice Bureau; the Welfare Rights Unit or Debt Management Services such as Step Change and Christians Against Poverty) has impacted on outcome achievements in this area.

Future provision

NPT’s **Housing Support Grant Strategy 2022-26** places a great deal of focus on ending homelessness. The key objectives relate to reviewing existing support services so that they align with the rapid rehousing model, and ensuring that all contracts provide a seamless support service along the homelessness pathway:

Priority 1— Strengthening approaches to early intervention and prevention: *We will review existing services, how people access them, and ensure all staff are appropriately trained.*

Priority 2—Working in partnership: *We will work with partners to increase the supply of suitable affordable accommodation, and with stakeholders to inform service development.*

Priority 3—Rapid Rehousing: *We will work with stakeholders to develop our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan outlining our approach over the next five years.*

Priority 4—Strengthening or improving access to support services: *We will look at how IT could be better used to help deliver, information, advice and assistance.*

Priority 5—Joint commissioning: *We will establish Service Area Reviews to identify further opportunities for joint commissioning or funding, and update our monitoring arrangements to ensure services are of high quality and deliver value for money.*

Many of the currently commissioned services were conceived years before Covid, and independently of each other. Whilst each service has positive outcomes, the review will enable us to consider any gaps and duplications, and to consider the increase in numbers and service user complexity which has emerged during Covid.

The transition plan template estimates the following needs over five years:

Table 20: Predicted Support Needs 2027

Support Group	Recommended Housing	Recommended Support	Current cases (01.04.22)	Estimate for five year transition period
Low/None	Mainstream housing	Individualised support	40%	50%
Medium	Mainstream housing	Individualised support, likely to include multi-agency support	34%	35%
High	Mainstream housing	Housing First/intensive floating support including multi-agency support	20%	5%
Intensive needs (24/7)	Supported Housing	Residential support	6%	10%

The assumptions used are:

- **Low needs/none:** we are currently seeing an increase in the number of young people presenting as homeless. Many of these will be moving away from home for the first time, and in addition to routine housing management, it is likely that they will need floating support to set up home and learn independent living skills. We are also seeing people being made homeless from the private sector, where they have no support needs other than needing a home. Therefore we have assumed that this percentage will move to 50% over the life of the plan;
- **Medium needs:** we anticipate that as the number of people with high needs reduces as the Housing First project grows, this is where the bulk of the commissioned support services will be targeted.
- **High needs:** we have assumed that we will need approximately 50 units for Housing First service users over five years, rather than calculating that the same number of units being needed each year. This is because there is a core group of people with complex needs who will need Housing First places in the first couple of years. Once this backlog of demand is dealt with, there will be capacity for new applications and for repeat presentations.
- **Intensive Needs:** The review of commissioned support services is likely to highlight an emerging need for people who require practical and specialist support to help overcome trauma, to manage physical and mental health problems and addictions. The supported housing may be for the medium term as they stabilise and gain skills for independence, or may need long term or permanent supported housing.

Housing First

Table 16 shows that there are currently 31 people with severe and multiple disadvantages or complex support needs who would benefit from a Housing First¹² approach to rehousing. At present, these people are largely housed in the Ambassador Hotel in Neath. There is no Housing First provision in NPT, and accordingly we will be seeking to develop this model in partnership with our RSL partners and third sector providers over the life of the plan.

Many of the people presenting with these needs are known to the Housing Options Team, and have often made repeat applications for housing, and have a chaotic housing history which makes tenancy sustainment very difficult. The transition plan has a priority action to develop this model in partnership with local RSLs and the private rented sector to provide homes and the intensive support required. The numbers of units in the project are projected to grow over time, with the first four or five units acting as a pilot to test the supply of accommodation, the effectiveness of the support model, the outcomes achieved and the funding assumptions.

¹² [About Housing First | Housing First England \(homeless.org.uk\)](https://homeless.org.uk/about-housing-first/)

Once the pilot has begun, the partnership group of RSLs and NPT will keep this under review, and plan to add additional units into the project. This will be a key means of ending the use of B&Bs in the area, and re-using the funds to invest in a more effective and positive service.

The numbers required are likely to be in the order of 50 units of accommodation over the life of the plan, to initially house the current cohort, and then to allow for new applicants and returning customers who may have ended their tenancy and then come back.

The plan to introduce Housing First will start during 2023, as we will need to commission the support service, employ the staff, agree the contract terms and – very importantly – secure units from our partners to rehouse the service users.

Tenancy Sustainment

When RSLs rehouse a homeless household, the Housing Options team provide information on the housing history of the referral, so that there can be a risk and support assessment of the person before they move into their new home. The team will have already undertaken an assessment of support needs whilst they are in temporary accommodation, and this feeds into the information provided. We will continue work with our RSL partners to support their tenancy sustainment policies, and by developing a new eviction protocol to enable us to assist them when the tenancy is at risk.

Supported housing

This report highlights that there are a number of supported housing units provided for young people, people with learning disabilities and mental ill-health. Not all of these are directly accessible for people who are homeless. The planned review of commissioned support will consider the demand for specialist low to medium supported accommodation for homeless people. It will also look at the support and accommodation pathway for young people at risk of homelessness, to ensure they can be referred into suitable accommodation by the Housing Options team.

Our aim is that wherever possible people with low to medium support needs will move into mainstream accommodation as soon as possible so that their support enables them to live independently in the community.

Key challenges

- Securing sufficient units for a Housing First solution from RSLs partners to meet the anticipated need;
- Securing funding and suitably qualified staff or provider for support workers to deliver a Housing First solution;

- Undertaking a comprehensive review of all housing related support, including remodelling existing services,
- Engaging with RSLs to support their tenancy sustainment work, aiming to prevent homelessness and to agree eviction protocols to enable homelessness prevention to begin as soon as a risk becomes apparent.

Section 4: Local Temporary Accommodation Supply

Baseline

This section of the plan describes the baseline position of temporary accommodation during 2022. The descriptions of the types of temporary accommodation are the same as used in the RRH guidance:

Triage Centre – enhanced forms of temporary accommodation where people are supported on a short-term basis while an assessment is undertaken in relation to the appropriate accommodation and support requirements.

Temporary Accommodation – term to include all accommodation that is provided upon first presentation to homelessness services, which may or may not under a license agreement, and which is not intended to be longer-term provision. Floor space is not considered suitable under any circumstances.

Supported Accommodation for homeless people – the provision of accommodation alongside support to help people live as independently as possible, but is not intended to be settled accommodation.

Refuges – specialist accommodation and support for people requiring emergency housing and support when escaping domestic abuse.

Hotels and B&Bs – temporary use of a room and en-suite or shared facilities in a commercial hotel. Typically there is no access to cooking or laundry facilities, and support can vary according to the provision.

Pandemic Response

Prior to Covid the service had 34 units of temporary accommodation and utilised Swansea B&Bs for the additional needs over capacity. Pre Covid the number of households in temporary accommodation was approximately 50 on average at any time.

The 34 units were made up of the accommodation below: -

Table 21: Pre pandemic temporary accommodation

Accommodation	Type	Number of units
Beaufort house (NPT owned)	Hostel, shared facilities	15
Tai Tarian units	Self-contained flats	7
POBL leased units	Self-contained units with communal area and office	9
Rhodes House (NPT owned)	Self-contained units	3
Total		34

At the start of the pandemic an additional 95 units were acquired as no permanent lettings were being made by RSLs, and WG had instituted a change to homelessness duties so that we now owed a duty to everyone and we did not consider intentionality. These units were made up of the accommodation below: -

Table 22: Emergency temporary accommodation secured during the pandemic

Accommodation	Number of units
Tai Tarian units	15
NPT Social lets	2
POBL unit	1
Ambassador Hotel	39
L&A Centre, Goytre	22 (until 31.03.2022)
Ibis Hotel	14
New Swan Hotel, Ystalyfera	2
Total	95

Swansea B&Bs were in continuous use through the pandemic with numbers varying between 5 and 25 rooms being used at any one time. The numbers of presentations have continued to grow, so that at 01.04.22 the current number of rooms in use is 87, across several hotels and B&Bs in outside of NPT, in Swansea, Llanelli and even in Bristol.

Baseline position – current temporary accommodation

At 1 April 2022 there were 218 bedspaces of temporary accommodation available. These units were largely concentrated in the three main towns:

Table 23: Temporary Accommodation 01.04.22

Accommodation type	Number of bedspaces	Percentage
Triage Centre	0	0%
Temporary accommodation	36	14%
Supported Housing	46	41%
Other including Hotels, B&Bs	123	37%
Refuges	13	8%
Total	218	100%

The current capacity for temporary accommodation placements is 218 bedspaces. In March 2022 there were 166 households using temporary accommodation, with 918 placements during the year.

The type of households in temporary accommodation are shown in *Table 11*, with the majority being single men.

Table 24: Level of support provided

Level of support provided

None/low, without on-site support	24
None/low, with on-site support	0
Medium - no on-site support, but visiting housing support	195
Medium - on-site support, plus visiting housing support, or other professional support	59
High - intense wrap-around support for individuals (inc Housing First)	0
Intensive support (residential, 24/7)	8
Other	0
Mixed	0

Table 25: Average length of stay in each setting

Average length of stay within each setting

Average length of stay in Temporary Accommodation (weeks)	Most recent financial year
Social - LA	0
Social - RSL	0
Temporary - direct access/triage centre - LA managed	0
Temporary - direct access/triage centre - RSL/third sector managed	0
Temporary - direct access/triage centre - other	0
Temporary - Housing Support Grant - LA managed	42
Temporary - Housing Support Grant - RSL/third sector managed	200
Temporary - Housing Support Grant - other	0
Bed and breakfast/hotel	42
Domestic abuse refuge	43
Private sector lease (on short-term contract)	0
Other	1

The cost to NPT of the temporary housing portfolio is **£4.6m** for 2021-22, mainly because of the large numbers of hotel rooms in use.

The emergency response to the pandemic has resulted in an over reliance on bed & breakfast accommodation. When numbers of applications have increased, the team have had to secure

additional units of B&Bs to take the strain. During Covid we also secured 17 self contained flats on a lease for an agreed period of time, with the intention that these properties would be handed back to the RSL as the Covid pressures relaxed.

NPT owned homelessness units

NPT owns and manages two schemes for homeless people:

- Rhodes House, Neath – three self contained units;
- Beaufort House, Neath – 15 bedrooms with shared facilities.

Beaufort House is temporary accommodation owned and managed by the LA. It is staffed Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm and has a security presence over evenings, weekends and bank holidays. All residents are supported by the in-house support team.

Beaufort House ordinarily tends to be low to medium level support needs as it is shared, but due to the current demand there are individuals placed there with higher needs. It is currently only being used for single people whereas during periods of lower demand it would be used for smaller families as well but this is no longer suitable due to the mix of needs with current residents.

The property is in a good location on NPT owned land. It provided 63 placements during 2021-22. However, it is in need of refurbishment and remodelling. There is an opportunity to decommission, demolish and replace with a Triage Centre to include a hub for support services, such as Housing First teams, to be deployed into the community.

Rhodes House is also temporary accommodation owned and managed by the LA. There is no staff onsite but all residents are supported by the in-house support team. The three units are self-contained so can be used for all levels of support needs and risk. During 2021-22 it provided 26 placements of temporary accommodation.

NPT also manages a Pobl owned scheme in **Lewis Road**, which has five self contained flats with some security presence. This offered placements to 22 individuals during 2021-22.

NPT's Social Lettings Agency

NPT has a Social Lettings Agency which manages approximately 50 units of private rented housing for landlords. They have a management agreement with the landlord, homes are let at LHA rates, and all nominations come from Housing Options. Landlords are responsible for the repairs. At the time of writing, only one property is let as temporary accommodation, as under the service level agreements with the landlords the units are allocated under assured shorthold tenancies with the landlord having the final say on allocations.

The team will advise Housing Options when a property is ready to let, and they will provide a completed pro forma with all the applicants details to enable them to check affordability.

There are a number of challenges that make accessing these houses for homeless people problematic. Universal Credit has made collecting the rent more challenging and impacts on affordability assessments. Covid has had an impact as landlords are re-evaluating what they want to do with their properties. They are also seeing that the incoming tenants are more vulnerable, and landlords are concerned about how this will impact on their properties and their neighbourhood. The Housing Options team therefore has to make several referrals before an applicant will be accepted.

There is an opportunity for increasing the number of private rented homes available to Housing Options, with the Welsh Government funding for a **Private Sector Leasing Scheme**. The funding provides for a portfolio of 82 homes over four years, and the initial response from landlords has been very positive. This scheme effectively hands over the property to NPT for the period, and enables Housing Options to allocate these directly.

Empty homes

There are currently approximately 1500 empty homes in NPT. During Covid, staff were redeployed onto Covid 19 work, and the target of 4.3% of empty homes being brought back into use was not achieved. Whilst it is traditionally difficult and resource intensive to turn these properties around, accessing just 5% of these properties would make a contribution to sourcing accommodation for homeless people. Our partnership with housing associations could also be key as they can facilitate the refurbishment or redevelopment of empty homes using their development capacity. This will be a Priority Action to review the Empty Homes Policy to understand how it can support the addition of homes for letting to homeless households.

RSL lettings

RSLs have described a concern over housing homeless people as they are seen as a high risk group and there is an apparent reluctance to work with them. Whilst many of the people requiring temporary accommodation had low or medium support needs, some of the RSLs in the past had experienced a number of failed tenancies with damage to property and rent arrears following allocations to homeless referrals. The feedback received was that the support provided was insufficient or unsuitable, and this will need to be a key part of the review of the housing related commissioned support which is a Priority Action in this plan.

These concerns were exacerbated during Covid as there were a series of anti-social behaviour incidents in Neath and Port Talbot town centres, where a number of homeless people had been housed in town centre hotels in the immediate aftermath of the “everyone in” initiative. They were predominantly single men, with a range of complex needs such as mental health issues, substance misuse and with a chaotic housing history.

Table 15 shows the support needs of people in temporary accommodations identified at 1 April 2022. 74% had low to medium support needs, whilst 20% had high needs, with complex issues and a probable difficulty in managing a tenancy without intensive support. As described elsewhere in this report, Covid and the WG requirements to house everyone virtually overnight meant that there was a scramble to find accommodation and move people in as soon as possible to keep them safe. In those circumstances, an initial standard package of support was provided rather than a bespoke package which would have been ideal. Consequently there were a number of incidents of anti-social behaviour. In the weeks following the initial rehousing, levels of support were increased, and dedicated staff teams were deployed to meet the needs of the residents.

In addition, a number of activities in the town centres involving Police and Crime and Safety Partnership teams were put in place which were very effective, but the communities are now very sensitive to the presence of homeless men. This is a key consideration in future development plans, as we need to understand a community's capacity and sensitivities, whilst all partners need to work together to ensure we do all we can to make every tenancy successful and sustainable. We will want to work closely with RSLs over their tenancy sustainment approaches, to make sure they are robust, and support them in providing sufficient information for their pre tenancy assessments and to agree early action to prevent eviction.

In addition, the current Shared Letting Policy is not compliant with rapid rehousing approaches, as it has a number of clauses which assess the applicant's housing history as a way of assessing tenancy readiness. This will need to be reviewed. At the same time, we are aware that the current housing application process is not customer friendly, and having to apply to all the housing associations in the county borough, understand their different policies and keep in touch with eight organisations to track their progress is unsatisfactory for applicants.

Therefore NPT will lead on a review of the whole allocation and application situation in the county borough to ensure that all partners can agree a rapid rehousing compliant policy which covers all RSLs and is user friendly for applicants. This is a Priority Action for this plan.

Number of households using temporary accommodation 2021-22

During 2021/2022 there were 699 households who accessed temporary accommodation and 655 people left accommodation, with the net flows in and out being 918 households.

Type of households

During 2021/2022 approximately 93% of these households were households without children. The majority of multiple placements were made by households without children.

Length of placements

The average length of stay in temporary accommodation placements between 2020/2022 was 247 days. The 400 days average in the RSL or third sector temporary housing was usually for longer term supported housing placements, with people being supported to live independently or overcoming other issues such as mental health.

Table 26: Average length of stay in TA

Type of provision	Average length of stay between 01.04.2020 and 31.03.2022 (days)
Bed & Breakfast/hotel	83
Domestic Abuse refuge	85
Other	3
Temporary – HSG – LA managed	83
Temporary HSG – RSL/Third sector managed	400
Grand total average	247 days

Table 27: Time in TA by household type

Length of time in TA x household type 2021-22								
	Couple with dependent child(ren)	Single parent household with dependent children		Single person household		All other household groups	Total	Of which are: Families with children
		Male applicant	Female applicant	Male applicant	Female applicant			
Under 6 months	2	0	6	66	30	6	110	8
6 to 12 months	2	0	0	21	5	0	28	2
Over 1 year	0	1	0	15	5	0	21	1
Total	4	1	6	102	40	6	159	11

Rehousing outcomes for homeless households

Of 547 individuals requiring Housing Options temporary accommodation during 2021-22, NPT rehoused 308 homeless households into social rented accommodation and 115 homeless households into the private rented sector.

When using the calculations within the Transition Tool these 423 lets to homeless households represent 77% of the numbers of people placed in temporary accommodation during the year, showing a gap of 124 lettings required for the year. However, this

calculation removes the 51 households which lost contact. We have recognised that the high level of households losing contact needs to be addressed and we aim to reduce this over the 5 year period within an ongoing service redesign of our homelessness services. This will have an impact on the demand for temporary accommodation, as well as on the permanent lettings required for homeless households.

Section 5: Plan the Temporary Accommodation Transformation

Objectives

A key aspect of our plan is to reduce the reliance on bed and breakfast type accommodation and move towards a temporary accommodation (TA) model which has greater reliance on interim temporary accommodation where on-site support is provided, and the occupant provided with self-contained fully furnished accommodation. It is intended that these units will be secured from new housing supply from SHG funded new build developments, private rented lettings and NPT's Private Sector Leasing scheme.

There will be no test of readiness for a tenancy in any of the units of accommodation. Any placement in temporary accommodation will be for as short a time as possible until settled accommodation is available.

Housing First will be provided for people with complex needs and facing multiple disadvantages where assertive, intensive housing support will be provided.

There is an acknowledgment that a supply of emergency accommodation will be required to provide for the immediate needs for temporary accommodation. This accommodation will be intended for very short stays to alleviate rooflessness. The aim is to eradicate the regular use of emergency accommodation over time.

Currently the average length of stay in temporary accommodation is 88 days. We aim to reduce this over the life of the plan and will be a key performance indicator.

A full assessment of support and accommodation needs will be required in each individual case to identify the most appropriate sustainable accommodation. Where households are allocated permanent supported accommodation, management of this accommodation should be included as part of the main Adult Social Care Service which already commissions this type of accommodation.

The transformation challenge in numbers

Table 28: TA Transformation in numbers

Issue	Statistics	Date
TA placements	918	2021-22
Number of presentations per month	c180	As at June 2022
Number of households prevented from becoming homeless	236 61%	2021-22
RSL lettings to homeless	308	2021-22
PRS lettings to homeless	115	2021-22
Number of households currently in TA	175	As at June 2022
Number of TA units available	218	As at April 2022
Number of people in High Support Needs (Housing First demand)	31	As at 01.04.22
Annual projection of TA need	679	Estimate for 2022-23
Annual shortfall of TA accommodation	256	Estimate for 2022-23

Predicting future demand

The WG Transition Tool indicates that during 2021-22, 679 households required temporary accommodation. It calculates that there is an annual shortfall of accommodation of 256 bedspaces per annum. We have assumed that the requirement to offer a duty to all who apply will remain. We also can see that the current economic pressures is already resulting in an increase of tenancy failure, rent arrears and evictions. Therefore we are expecting that the current demand will remain stable, and very high, for at least three years. The transition plan therefore needs to bridge the gap of the 256 bedspace shortfall, and to manage the reduction of approximately 100 hotel rooms.

This is a significant challenge, and will require cooperation from RSL partners, third sector providers, releasing council owned land for development, as well as building on our prevention work.

RSL Lettings

We will need to ensure that we can increase the number of homeless lettings into RSL accommodation. Assuming that there will be approximately 850 RSL lettings in 2022-23, achieving the quota of 60% of these will provide an additional 510 properties for homeless people. However, much of the RSL stock is family homes, and the predominant demand for homelessness is for one bedroom flats. This will need to feature in future housing strategy feeding into RSLs' development plans and is a Priority Action for this plan.

New developments

At the time of writing we are finalising our Social Housing Grant programme for 2022-25. The indicative amounts for NPT are as follows:

SHG allocations are:

- '22/23 - £12.8m;
- '23/24 - £14.1m; and
- '24/25 - £13.9m.

This level of grant funding is predicting to deliver an additional approximately 850 units in the county borough. Therefore, assuming that approximately 60% of these will be let to homeless people, it could provide an additional 510 homes in the period up to 2026. However, not all of these units will be suitable for people moving from temporary accommodation as they have a need for one bed units predominantly.

The SHG funded programme aims to provide a range of much needed housing, but there will be a strong strategic focus on working with RSLs to increase the number of smaller homes in their schemes.

Some of the new units will be specialist supported housing schemes, triage centres and specific schemes for homeless people, and the need for these, locations and support models will be developed in partnership with the wider RRH partnership.

Temporary accommodation planning

Table 29 below sets out a range of actions that we have identified as key transformations, and critical to our plan. It is acknowledged that this is likely to change as timings may alter and new opportunities emerge, but this is our current starting point.

Table 29: Temporary Accommodation Planning

Accommodation	Current single night capacity	Target capacity by 2027	Work required	Approx costs	Funding Source
Beaufort House	15 bedspaces	20 bedspaces	Demolition and replacement with a Triage Centre and support hub. Plans to be reviewed and drawn up during 2023.	Estimated £3m	SHG
Triage Centre Port Talbot	0	15 bedspaces	Construction of a new triage centre. Start 2024	Estimated £3m	SHG
Bed and breakfast & hotels	87 rooms	5 rooms	Replacement with 50 units of Housing First accommodation, Triage Centre and furnished units leased from RSLs. B&Bs used for emergencies only. Begin 2023 as a pilot.	£814k	HSG
Leased self-contained flats	26 units	31 units	Aim to continue to lease existing portfolio, and add another 5 units during 2022-23	Additional c£48k pa for five units	Housing Options
Refuges	19 bedspaces	19 bedspaces	Decommissioning of Thrive Refuge 2023; Addition of Calan project - replacement with a "places of safety /dispersed model"	Existing funding	HSG
Supported Housing	46 bedspaces	TBC	Review of current commissioned support services to be undertaken during 2022-23. This information will feed into accommodation, support and prevention service planning.	To be confirmed following the service design and review.	HSG
New developments – settled accommodation	35 homes	510 homes over 2022-25	Ensure SHG funded schemes provide additional provision to replace temporary accommodation, as well as providing move on. This to be an ongoing	Already funded.	SHG

Accommodation	Current single night capacity	Target capacity by 2027	Work required	Approx costs	Funding Source
			expectation of all appropriate new developments, aiming at 60% minimum of all lettings.		
Housing First	0 units	50 units total	Agreed with all RSL partners and supported by NPT commissioned support team 2023- ongoing	£814k	HSG
RSL lettings – relets into existing stock	308	468 homes pa	Assuming a target of 55% of c850 lettings each year	Cost of assessing and providing appropriate support	HSG
PSL lettings	0	82 units	WG government funded scheme to secure private rented units for homeless people and families	Already funded	PSL project funding
Empty Homes	0	6	Estimate of 6 units to enable the re-start of the work, and acknowledging the time taken to bring the properties back into use.		Existing resource
PRS lettings – Social Lettings Agency	50	60	Some landlords may move their houses into the new PSL project, so this growth is an estimate at this time.		Existing resource

Partnerships

Critical to the implementation of this plan is the need to work closely with key partners. Some key objectives for partnership working with the RSLs will be:

- Discussions on allocations of existing homes and new homes to homeless people, agreeing a target and monitoring this;
- The development of new homes has to take account of the numbers and type of homes needed, in particular one bedroomed flats. Particular care has to be taken in each scheme to build homes that are affordable, manageable and do not overwhelm a community who may be sensitive to the stigma around homeless people;
- The review of housing related support in NPT will need feedback from RSL partners who have experienced tenancy failure with homeless people, where the support needed was not available. Any new services being commissioned needs to take this into account;
- The review of how the current waiting list is managed will also need to be explored with all RSLs, and with Tai Tarian in particular, so a system can be developed that meets the needs of all partners and supports NPT in meeting its legal obligations;
- There needs to be a pre-eviction protocol agreed with RSLs so that NPT can assist and engage early with a household threatened with homelessness;
- Tenancy sustainment – we will want to work with RSLs to minimise the risk of tenancy failure, providing information and support to their customers as they sign up for tenancies;
- Housing First will be challenging as we will need to secure a significant number of flats to deliver this project. RSLs may be cautious as the people in the project will be very vulnerable and will have a number of challenges to overcome to sustain a tenancy. Critical to this will be the selection of an experienced provider who can demonstrate capability and effective management of a similar project elsewhere; and
- Agreeing targets and outcomes for the rapid rehousing transition period needs to happen early on so that everyone can track progress, e.g. on RSL lettings, and agree remedial actions as necessary.

Section 6: Development of the Plan

Vision

Neath Port Talbot aims to end homelessness. We will do all we can to prevent homelessness from happening, and if it does, that there is an appropriate and compassionate response to enabling all households to obtain secure and safe accommodation.

To do this we need to work differently.

- We need to procure more housing to offer good quality temporary accommodation, and facilitate the supply of permanent, affordable homes.
- We will transition to the development of a Rapid Rehousing model, so everyone in crisis can be housed and supported very quickly.
- We need to ensure our support model is fit for purpose, and can deliver tailored, appropriate support.
- We will build on our relationships with our partners to co-create a housing pathway that works for our community, because we know we cannot end homelessness on our own.
- We will provide a personalised response to each person which considers their experience and the underlying causes of their crisis.

Key challenges

- NPT has a heavy reliance on B&B and hotels for placements, often out of County, following the significant increase in demand for temporary placements during Covid;
- There is no triage centre with direct access or a sufficient number of temporary accommodation units of a good standard;
- NPT has no common housing register so access to RSL lettings can be problematic, and there is limited transparency on data during the year to track progress;
- Supply of general needs housing has been difficult to access so there is a backlog in supported housing as there are insufficient lets to enable people to move on;
- NPT's social housing grant funded development pipeline predicts a strong pipeline of new developments but these will take a while to deliver;
- We do not have Housing First options to offer suitable accommodation and support to the most vulnerable people, and they continue to live in bed and breakfast with minimal support;
- Anti-social behaviour in town centres makes local communities sensitive to developments for single people; and

- RSLs are reluctant to rehouse homeless people who may present a high risk of anti-social behaviour or tenancy failure. Their cooperation to increase the proportion of lettings to homeless people, offering units for the Housing First initiative and making more units available for leasing will take negotiation and a strong partnership based on shared values and objectives.

Priority Actions over the Five Year Plan

The five year plan will involve a number of priority actions each year, which will be subject to monitoring and review. The targets and projects will be subject to amendment and possible changes as the environment changes and new opportunities emerge. The key actions will be developed into annual plans, set out in Appendix One. The priority actions are that:

- We will continue to review the quality of Temporary Accommodation in use, to ensure it meets a minimum standard and to eliminate the use of B&Bs by an agreed date.
- With RSL partners, develop a range of accommodation schemes to support the RRH model, including good quality TA (including the Triage Centre model), as well as supported housing schemes to meet the identified support needs. This will include an increase in general needs accommodation supply for move on, and for lettings directly into settled accommodation where there are no support needs.
- Our housing strategy will reflect the need to develop more one bedroomed apartments to meet the significant demand for homeless people and for move on from temporary or specialist accommodation. This will be done in agreement with our RSL partners as part of our Social Housing Grant discussions.
- We will review how NPT can increase housing supply for homeless people by for example, increasing the numbers of empty homes being brought back into use, developing schemes using private sector lettings, and leading a buy-back scheme for ex LA homes.
- To pilot and then introduce a Housing First service as a response to meeting the needs of people with complex needs.

- To work with RSL partners to review the need for a common allocation policy and register so that there is a NPT wide approach to prioritisation of lettings to homeless people. The policy will need to reflect rapid rehousing principles with no expectation of tenancy readiness.
- To carry out a full audit of all support commissioned by NPT to ensure the current providers are delivering their services to an agreed model, which aligns to our RRH transition plan. The services need to reflect the homelessness pathway and the needs of the various household, including young people, prisoners, survivors of domestic abuse, veterans, people with drug & alcohol issues and people with mental health diagnoses.
- We will undertake a system wide review of the way we deliver our service to ensure we deliver a compassionate and effective service to people who are in crisis. We will also do this to understand the needs of our staff, as they are working with an increased number of people with complex and challenging conditions. Therefore we will develop a detailed training programme for staff and undertake whole system review to move to trauma informed working. In addition we will introduce specialist supervision and support for staff who are working on the front line. The aim is to empower frontline staff with high quality training, a redesign of systems and service delivery (including more flexible means of undertaking homelessness assessments), and an emphasis on personal housing and support planning.
- Review the impact and effectiveness of our homelessness prevention work to ensure we have the right training and tools in place to try wherever possible to prevent homelessness. This could link to the review of housing allocation in NPT, and the agreement of protocols on letting with RSLs, i.e., if eviction is being considered. There are links to RSLs' tenancy sustainment work – people who are most at risk of eviction are identified and supported at allocation stage.
- We will review the software platform for service users, creating or improving online options portals, devising self-assessment and/ or self-service and diagnostic options tools. Also to enable access to the service through our website.
- To work with the local RRH taskforce to include relevant stakeholders including police, health, and other NPT departments to inform and gain wider support for the plan. This will enable us to consult and co-create our plans, and then to track and monitor the delivery of objectives, review our plans in the light of changes to our operating

environment, and to work on key joint plans such as housing delivery, support outcomes, allocation protocols. We may also want to offer briefing sessions to a wider group of stakeholders.

- Consider how service users can be consulted so that their lived experience and experience of our service can shape our plans and review of our service.
- Ensure that elected members and local politicians are recognised as key stakeholders and are appropriately communicated with in a timely way, so that local intelligence informs our strategic planning and that there is a unified NPT approach to housing and homelessness.

Section 7: Resource Planning

The first draft of this plan will of necessity provide outline figures based on assumptions and current costings. However, this review has identified some projects which are essential to the delivery of the transformation, and these will be kept under review and amended as necessary.

Some of the funding streams identified are already in place such as Social Housing Grant and Housing Support Grant. Other elements could be funded by existing resources, including savings made, e.g. by the reduction in the use of highly expensive temporary placements in hotels.

IT – monitoring and recording and reporting module for HOT

NPT is reviewing its IT platforms and is currently in consultation with users to identify the solutions each team needs. The Housing Options Team (HOT) has identified a need for a module to enable managers to produce monitoring reports, to enable them to analyse data in the moment. A provision has been made in the plan for the capital to pay for such a module.

Improved website and more accessible platform for Service Users

NPT has begun to improve its digital platforms for service users, and this needs to continue and to make the website accessible for people in emergency situations to present as homeless. Again, a provision figure for capital investment has been included.

Housing First

The rapid rehousing model requires an accommodation and support solution to help people with the most complex needs move successfully into settled accommodation. A Housing First project will need to be set up to support 50 service users over the five year period. An assumption has been made on the costings of employing a team leader and 7 support workers who will each manage a caseload of seven SUs. It will also include on-costs for specialist training, support and accreditation.

Employment of RRH Co-ordinator

In order to manage this project and the inherent consultation and partnership working, it is proposed that a Co-ordinator is employed. There will be a significant amount of developmental work to achieve the transformation across all the partner agencies, and to ensure key projects like Housing First are kept on track. There has been a recent announcement that Welsh Government is providing funding for these roles for three years.

Development of Triage Centres

Key to replacing the number of hotels currently in use will be the development of triage centres. It is planned that an existing provision in Beaufort House is either re-modelled or rebuilt to provide an estimated 20 units of self-contained accommodation. This will be developed in partnership with an RSL and would attract SHG funding.

We would also wish to develop a second triage centre in Port Talbot. This would be estimated to provide 15 units, and would also attract SHG.

Both of these are in the plan for commencement in 2023-24.

Temporary furnished flats

During Covid we were able to secure leases on flats as temporary accommodation. There are 26 in operation, and it is hoped that these will continue and an additional five units could be secured this year. This will be the subject of negotiation with the RSLs.

Staff training and support

Section 6 of this report refers to the need to review how we support and develop our staff in the context of the rapid rehousing plan, but also to recognise that the service users are more vulnerable and challenging post Covid. The impact on the staff team has been considerable as they now have to work in a far more intensive way with individuals, and this is in addition to the relentless nature of increasing demand.

Consequently we need to train and support the team to work in the new world, to help them develop skills and resources to work effectively and in a way that respects their wellbeing. This will be a significant transformation for the team.

There are a few reports that have been written which support the WG's Rapid Rehousing guidance, and provide clarity on the expectations of how local authorities work with people presenting as homeless in Wales.

Overall, the expectation is that there is a person centred approach to each service user, recognising that each of them will have experienced some level of trauma which has led them to homelessness.

The WG Housing Support Grant guidance sets out their expectation of how the service should be delivered:

“The Housing Support Grant needs to have a sustainable impact on the root causes of homelessness, such as the effects of adverse childhood experiences or other forms of trauma. Services should be commissioned and delivered using a psychologically informed approach that recognises and responds appropriately to the impact of trauma. Local authority commissioners and service providers should ensure that service delivery is shaped by the five key components of psychologically informed environments:

- *Psychological Framework: Service design, development, and evaluation should be informed by an evidence-based, trauma informed model and the organisation's culture is reflective and person centred.*

- *Relationships: High quality support relationships are recognised as the principal tool in effective service delivery and staff have the time to develop trusting relationships with people using services. Psychologically informed approaches are used regardless of whether details of the individual's experiences of trauma are known.*

• *Physical and social environment: Assessment and support environments are safe, welcoming and flexible, enabling positive, trauma-informed interaction between staff and people using services.*

• *Staff training and support: Staff receive training and support to increase their understanding of trauma and how this can impact on people's engagement and relationship with services. Reflective practice, continuous learning, professional supervision and therapeutic support ensure that staff feel confident to work in a psychologically informed way.*

• *Evidence and learning: Evidence is gathered to demonstrate the impact of psychologically informed approaches and this is used to support continuous learning and improve the effectiveness of services."*

A psychologically informed environment¹³ approach to correspondence should be adopted, and all staff should have trauma informed training¹⁴. This recommendation is to support a change to seeing all presentations as the result of a trauma, and working in such a way that reflects the impacts of that trauma on their lives. This moves away from a process driven response to a more compassionate and bespoke response.

Furniture packages

A provision will be made to purchase furniture for people leaving temporary accommodation to move into Housing First or other accommodation.

Planned Resources

The table below shows a summary of the estimated costs of the elements of the plan already discussed. The grand total is the investment required over the five year transition period, and includes £6 million of SHG funding for two triage centres.

It should be noted that during 2021-22 a total of **£4,608,513** was spent on temporary accommodation provision. Most of this was in hotels and Bed and Breakfast accommodation, which is unsatisfactory. The planned investment in the rapid rehousing model will provide a better range of solutions for homeless households at a lower cost.

¹³ A 'psychologically informed environment' should improve the development, delivery and evaluation of a service by taking the client's psychological and emotional needs into account. This will ultimately improve the client's experience and allow them to feel that they are in a safe environment.

¹⁴ A 'trauma informed' process recognises the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients. It recognises and understands the widespread impact of trauma and that many behaviours and symptoms are the result of adapting to traumatic experiences.

Table 30: Resource projections 2022-27

Name of project	Total level of funding 2022-27	Type of funding	Source	Timescales	Totals £
Housing First	£814,500	Revenue	HSG	From 2023	814,500
Software and website development	£40,000	Capital	LA	From 2023	40,000
Rapid Rehousing Development Officer	£283,840 (£54k pa incl 35% oncosts)	Revenue	Welsh Government (for three years)	From 2022	283,840
Staff training and support	£65,000	Revenue	LA	From 2022	65,000
Beaufort House	£3,000,000	Capital	SHG	From 2023-24	3,000,000
Triage Centre Port Talbot	£3,000,000	Capital	SHG	From 2023-24	3,000,000
Furniture Packages	£50,000 (£10k pa)	Both	Year One Welsh Government DHP funding; thereafter LA Spend to Save budget.	From 2023	50,000
Temporary Furnished Flats	£65,000	Revenue	LA	From 2023	65,000
Total 2022-27					£7,399,840

Appendix One: Rapid Rehousing Implementation Plan

Priority Action	Dependencies	Target date	Responsibility	Indicators	Current baseline	2027 target/outcome	Resources required
1. Increase the number of lettings to homeless people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement with NPT Housing Strategic Partners; • Negotiation with Tai Tarian. • Increase quota of lets of new build units to homeless people 	June 2023	Head of Housing; Housing Options Manager	Number of lettings excluding transfers and successions	308	468	Existing Resources
		From Q2 2022		Percentage of lets in new developments	None agreed	60%	
2. Introduce a Housing First service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a multi-agency working group to develop and implement the service; • Identify housing schemes/units to offer the Housing First service users; • Procure suitably experienced provider 	Begin setting up project team December 2022	Head of Housing; Rapid Rehousing Project Officer; Principal Officer Commissioning.	Agreed implementation targets monitored by NPT & RSL taskforce	0	50 units	HSG funding

Priority Action	Dependencies	Target date	Responsibility	Indicators	Current baseline	2027 target/outcome	Resources required
Housing Allocations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open discussions with RSLs; • Agree terms of reference to review the current allocations systems 	Open discussions Q4 2022-23	Head of Housing; Rapid Rehousing Project Officer.	None specifically other than project deadlines.	Shared Allocation Policy	Delivery of a system which provides access for all RSLs, and provides great access and control for NPT	Existing LA resources
Review of support commissioned for homeless services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPT Commissioning Team to undertake full review; • Consultation with RSLs 	2022-23	Principal Officer Commissioning; Rapid Rehousing Project Officer.			A range of support services which fit with the Rapid Rehousing Transformation Plan.	Existing LA resources
Review of service delivery and staff support and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with HR to consult team members on re-design of service and what they need; • Procurement of suitable training provider; • Provision of external support; 	2022-23	Head of Housing; Housing Options Manager; Head of HR	Ongoing provision of support and refresher training for team and managers		Working in a trauma informed way with a team supported and able to access skills and resources to manage their workloads and wellbeing.	Training costs

Priority Action	Dependencies	Target date	Responsibility	Indicators	Current baseline	2027 target/outcome	Resources required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement on a training and development plan. 						
Review Housing Prevention Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing review of the service to add new initiatives and incorporate best practice; Working with RSLs to develop a pre-eviction protocol and to support tenancy sustainment. 	2022-27	Housing Options Manager; Rapid Rehousing Project Officer	% prevention rate	61%	Over 60%	Existing resources
Review software platform for service users to improve access; Homelessness monitoring and reporting software package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with NPT IT implementation team, design a monitoring and reporting tool suitable for the service; Undertake a review of the website so that it is accessible for service users. 	2022 onwards	Housing Options Manager; Rapid Rehousing Project Officer; IT project team	Service user satisfaction	None	To be established and measured	Capital costs

Priority Action	Dependencies	Target date	Responsibility	Indicators	Current baseline	2027 target/outcome	Resources required
Housing development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing development plans with RSLs to ensure units are delivered of the type (one bedroom) and location required; Negotiation of a 60% target of lettings to homeless households 	2022 onwards	Head of Housing; Housing Options Manager; Rapid Rehousing Project Officer; RSLs.	<p>Number of lettings to homeless people;</p> <p>Increase in number of one bedroomed homes developed</p>	0 No measure	60% Measure to be agreed in PDP discussions.	Existing Resources
Empty homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-commence the work to bring empty homes back into use 	2022 onwards	Head of Housing; Head of Planning and Public Protection	Number of homes brought back into use and let to homeless people	4.3% pa	5% pa	Existing Resources
Private Sector Leasing scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilise the Private Sector Leasing Scheme 	2022 onwards	Head of Housing; Housing Options Manager; Rapid Rehousing Project Officer.	Number of units brought into the scheme and let to homeless people	0	82 homes by 2027	Existing resources

Appendix Two: Temporary Accommodation Plan

Year	Close	Open	Comments
Start	291 units of temporary Accommodation. Target – 242 units by 2027		
One	10 units of B&B	9 units in PSL 4 units of Housing First Lease 5 units (furnished flats from RSLs/PRS)	
Total units	242		
Two	15 units of B&B Beaufort House	10 units of housing first 18 units in PSL Develop 20 units Triage Centre 2 empty homes back into use	Close Beaufort House for refurbishment
Total Units	262		
Three	21 units of B&B	12 units of Housing First Develop 20 units Triage Centre Port Talbot Develop 3 units supported housing (YP – shared) 2 empty homes back into use 18 units in PSL	
Total Units	296		
Four	20 units of B&B	12 units Housing First Develop 6 units supported housing 18 units in PSL 2 empty homes back into use	
Total Units	314		
Five	24 units B&B	12 units Housing First	
Total Units	302	Plus RSL lettings estimated at 468 pa (relets) and 510 new build units between 2022-25.	

Appendix Three: Housing First Analysis

The Housing First project will take time to set up and get underway, so this table illustrates an assumed start date of 2023:

Housing First Analysis 2023-28					
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five
New clients	4	10	12	12	12
Existing Clients	0	4	14	26	38
Clients off project	0	0	0	10	10
Cumulative units pa	4	14	26	28	40
Total HF clients	4	14	26	38	50
Cumulative Costs	£ 65,000.00	£ 115,000.00	£ 175,000.00	£ 185,000.00	£ 245,000.00
Additional Costs	£ 5,000.00	£ 5,000.00	£ 6,500.00	£ 6,500.00	£ 6,500.00
Total costs	£ 70,000.00	£ 120,000.00	£ 181,500.00	£ 191,500.00	£ 251,500.00
Cumulative costs	£ 70,000.00	£ 190,000.00	£ 371,500.00	£ 563,000.00	£ 814,500.00

Housing First assumptions	
Caseloads	7 people per support worker
Cost	£5k per service user
Salaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £33,750 Support worker £45,000 team leader 	Includes 35% oncosts Excludes salary increases
Additional costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> External supervision Housing First accreditation Specialist Training Furniture packages 	
Average time on project	Assumes 3 years, but service users can remain as long as is needed.

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